

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010 Review and Interim Gender Equality Action Plan 2010

RAISING AWARENESS - REDUCING RISK

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If you would like any information in an alternative format please let us know.

We welcome feedback on our Interim Gender Equality Action Plan. You can do this, or request alternative formats, by using the details below:

Vicky Gregory - Diversity Unit
South Wales Fire & Rescue Service HQ, Forest View Business Park, Llantrissant, CF72 8LX
v-gregory@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Telephone - 01443 232000

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1. Introduction

This review of our Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010 and production of an Interim Gender Equality Action Plan has come at a time of change in equality law. The Action Plan sets out how we will include gender equality in our Single Equality Scheme which we hope to publish by the end of 2010 in anticipation of guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission relating to the new all encompassing public duty, early 2011.

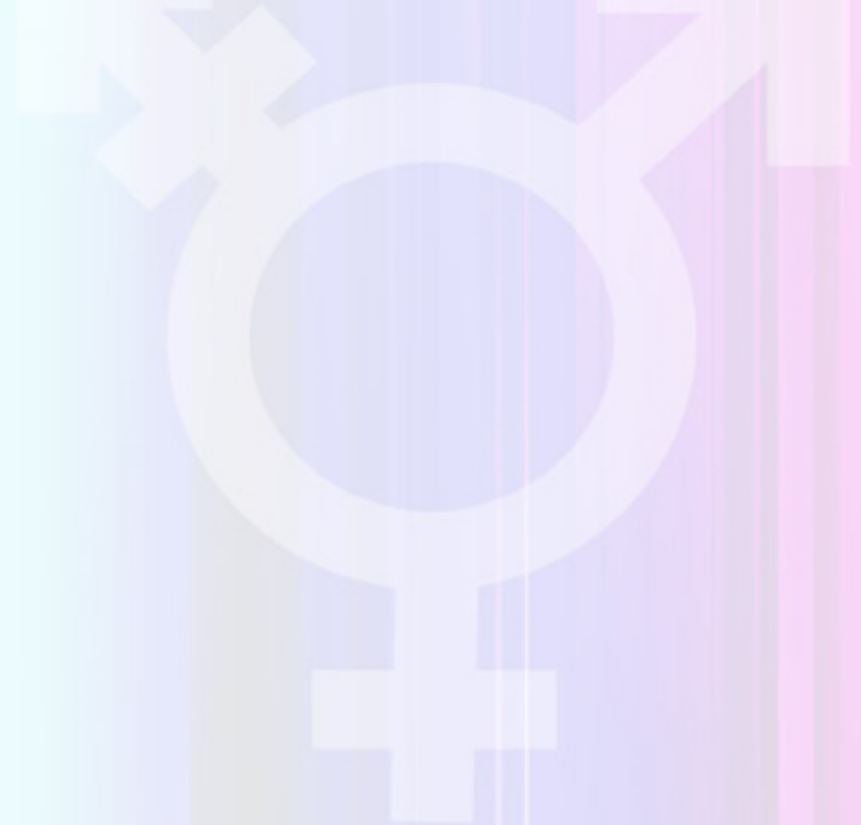
The review has provided us with an opportunity to look at our achievements in relation to gender equality in South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) as well as identify barriers to progress. It sets out what we plan to do over the following year to develop a Single Equality Scheme that clearly sets out our gender equality objectives as part of it.

In order to make this document concise, a background to the gender equality legislation can be found in our Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010 Information relating to our current business, core values, organisational structure and Service objectives can be found in our Improvement Plan and Risk Reduction Plan. These documents are available on our website www.southwales-fire.gov.uk

The Chief Fire Officer is the lead for equality diversity and directly manages the Diversity Unit. All staff have a responsibility to demonstrate equality and diversity through their behavior and in the work that they do for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

2. Equality Policy Statement

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) aims to mainstream equality and diversity in everything that it does. It celebrates the diversity of its staff and delivers citizen centered services to the people of South Wales. The Service will promote equality of opportunity, prevent unlawful discrimination, promote good relations between people and will endeavor to take an integral role in facilitating social justice and regeneration in Wales.



3. Progress

This section of the report sets out our progress against our Gender Equality Scheme 2006-2009 actions. We have established a performance management system that enables us to report on progress against our gender objectives easily and quickly. The system sends an email to an action owner with a link to fill in required fields of a short electronic form. This then immediately updates the status of the scheme enabling us to identify progress and areas that merit attention. It is anticipated as this system gets more sophisticated it will provide the means to report annually or indeed at any point in time.

Our progress is set out below under directorate headings.

People Services

1. Positive action initiatives have been underway for a number of years and are yielding some success, the initiatives are reviewed and evaluated by participants and feedback obtained to further develop these schemes. Feedback from our critical friends was that positive action should be a long term and continual process, preparing under represented groups for the application and recruitment process.
2. All employees were made aware of the discipline procedures in relation to bullying and unfair treatment at work encouraging those who experienced unfair treatment for example on the basis of gender to seek advice from the HR and Diversity Officers.
3. OPPD 24 Assisted Reproduction Policy published.
4. A Mentoring Scheme has been developed to cover all aspects of mentoring both pre and post employment to include those who join the service from all the under represented groups. Additionally the scheme is designed to offer mentoring to those in the service too.
5. The Personal Development Review process has been implemented.
6. An Equal Pay review is planned and briefing papers have been prepared on the applied methodology etc. However we have yet to agree to implement it.
7. New and expectant mother policy developed and consulted upon, health and safety forms amended as a result.
8. A review of operational posts for operational necessity was deferred to works carried out as part of the Risk Reduction Plan 2010.
9. Pay structures for staff were reviewed and organised within comparable levels of management for all staff and the Assessment and Development process includes all strategic managers.
10. Dignity at Work Policy drafted and will be published following a review of the grievance policy.

11. Employee attendance was monitored by gender and patterns were identified, a report was subsequently submitted to the Director of People Services.
12. Fitness equipment and classes at the new HQ were informed by staff survey which include yoga, aerobics as well as cross trainer and other gym equipment.
13. A system to complete an EIA of job descriptions has been developed by the HR department. The EIAs are carried out by respective departments and checked by HR staff.
14. A number of work experience placements were hosted such as volunteers from Women Connect First.

Service Delivery and Performance Planning

1. With regard to our proactive work with the voluntary sector to establish partnerships with women's groups and organisations about community fire safety. Support has been afforded to Women's aid groups as well formal linkage to groups that directly support women threatened or subject to domestic violence. Greater involvement with the voluntary sector will be progressed following a successful bid to WAG for a third sector co-ordinator.
2. The Risk Reduction department and the Diversity Unit have coordinated 4 involvement events with communities in 2010 sharing information about home and business fire safety. The events also offer an opportunity to obtain feedback from our communities to inform the development of our risk reduction activities. The gender profile of attendees for the first two events is balanced.
3. The Risk Reduction Plan sets out progress in relation to equality and diversity as well as actions for the future.
4. All fire stations have received equality audits and thus provision has been made in the revised Capital programme submitted to the Fire and Rescue Authority on 30th March 2009 for £700k/annum for 5 years to fund the necessary equality and diversity alterations to station's. The Asset Management Plan is available to staff.
5. A Group Manager established a working group which aimed to better support our recruitment targets for female firefighters. Part of this work includes developing closer links with local women's groups and organisations.
7. Home Fire Safety Check Forms include monitoring gender this informs departmental targets for generating referrals.
8. Stations carry out a range of activities engaging with community groups.

Communications and Culture

1. The CFO hosted two focus groups with female fire fighters per annum.
2. The Area Manager of Risk Reduction was the corporate lead for gender equality, rather than a strand based approach corporate equality themes have been identified and corporate leads will pursue that reference.
3. The Line magazine will have a regular equality feature to include practical examples of progressing gender equality in the FRS.
4. As part of an MSc in Equality and Diversity research was carried out into the perceptions of females regarding a career in the FRS, as a result a recruitment film was produced highlighting the diversity of roles in the FRS for women and the transferable skills many women have. This film is available on you tube and will be distributed to careers officers and shown at recruitment fairs.
5. It was unrealistic to carryout staff surveys on an annual basis. It was agreed by SMT these should be carried out on a three year basis in order to avoid consultation fatigue and to feed directly into the review of the equality schemes. The results of the staff survey in 2006 were fed into the EIA of the new HQ move as well as HR policies and processes such as special leave for individuals undergoing fertility treatment and enhanced maternity benefits for women. The next staff survey will be completed by July 2010.
6. Alternate working patterns have been explored and implemented by control out side of the traditional 224 rota system; consultations will be held in 2010 with men and women exploring alternate work patterns for operational staff.
7. Staff have highlighted a need to ascertain the experiences of all staff that have recently been pregnant, been on maternity leave and have returned to work. It is anticipated that a consultant will carry out this work for the service early in 2010 in order to inform the single equality scheme and service improvements.
8. A review of all assessment and development centre activity was carried out by the Diversity Officer and a report of findings forwarded to the Director of HR and the ADC Manager. Equality and diversity was successfully integrated into role plays and interview questions and allowed for current and topical issues to be explored.
9. An audit of EIA was carried out by the Diversity Officer the report will be submitted to Mangers and SMT in the spring 2010. All staff have access to EIA training and the Diversity Officers so it is expected that managers will audit their own departments EIAs.
10. There is currently one full time and one part time Diversity Officer this is has increased the unit resource by 50%.
11. Advice has been provided to the training department regarding equality and diversity training but progress has been slow primarily due to the introduction of a pan Wales procurement process.
12. A participation officer was not appointed as planned so annual involvement events were not realistic, but 4 events are planned for 2010 targeting older and disabled people and Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities. We expect to attract approximately 350 people to these events.

13. Communicate with Confidence Information Handbook has been developed for all staff working in the community. Every department and station has at least one copy. The handbook was developed with assistance from Cardiff and the Vale Coalition of Disabled People, Race Equality First, Age Concern and Help the Aged Cymru, Stonewall Cymru and South Wales Police. The Welsh Assembly Government supported the distribution of the handbook to all FRS in Wales.
14. All Directorates integrated their actions from the gender equality scheme into their business and departmental plans.
15. An internal Equality Task Group has been established consisting of middle managers who will go through a process over the next 12 months to assess their functions for impact on equality, including gender equality. This included an assessment made by a group of 'critical friends', 4 involvement days, an analysis of the survey findings from the Mardi Gras 2009, an internal work environment survey as well as data and statistics. This evidence will inform a Single Equality Scheme action plan.
16. As mentioned above the Critical Friends Group consisted of members of the public that represent, as far as reasonably practicable equality groups. The group will assist the service assess its impact on equalities, including gender equality.
17. People Champions is currently being piloted to up skill and empower a number of staff from across the service to champion equality.
18. The Fire Authority (FA) receives regular progress reports on equality. Equality Sub-committee of FA disbanded with a new HR and Equalities Committee established.
19. The Diversity Unit hosted a work experience placement from Women Connect First.

Corporate Support

1. The move from HQ at Lanelay Hall to Forest Business Park underwent a full equality impact assessment. All communications systems, IT based or otherwise were equality impact assessed during the planning stage of the HQ relocation and implemented as a result and an access audit was carried out to inform the internal building requirements and plan.
2. All buildings and stations received equality audits and a report was presented to the Director of Finance and asset management 17.10.08 this informed the Budget, which was included in the 5 year capital programme agreed by the Fire Authority on 26 March 2008. This will form part of budget process to CFA.
3. The procurement process asks relevant questions about a contractor to establish their commitment to equality and diversity. As part of external consultation with a group of critical friend's new ideas for making contractors more accountable for equality and diversity were discussed and will form part of the single equality scheme.
4. The gender budgeting exercise was absorbed into the work undertaken in preparing the asset management plan, specifically an assessment of facilities for men on women on all stations.

5. The Fire Authority equality and diversity committee was absorbed into the HR and equalities Committee. Members receive reports on equality and diversity work and can make requests for specific information such as a breakdown of recruitment data by gender and local authority area.
6. All complaints are monitored by gender and for the subject of the complaint to be gender specific. There have been no complaints made to the fire service by the public on this basis.

Operational Risk Management

1. Staff, the Diversity Unit and equality groups are consulted in order to inform intelligence for policy and standard operating procedures as well as for research and development purposes.
2. Gender equality impact assessments were carried out before purchasing operational equipment, an example in the development of light and accessible water ladders (ladders on fire engines).
3. Equality and diversity was included as part of an Operational Assurance Review, it focused particularly on equality impact assessments and led to the dissemination of good practice between Welsh FRS.
4. Thorough workforce engagement is always undertaken during the trials of new equipment for example new Breathing Apparatus set procurement.

4. Things we did not achieve, barriers to progress and what we intend to do about it

- We were unsuccessful in recruiting a Participation Officer and due to budget constraints the post was withdrawn. It is anticipated part of this role will be carried out by the Communications Manager, now in post. In the meantime a coordinating group has met to oversee an interim piece of work to map out who we currently consult with and what we plan to consult about.
- A review of the personal development review process will be carried out in 2010/2011. This will also enable us to ascertain any discriminatory practice.
- Secondment criteria and access to opportunities was established in policy but not yet published.
- A database of staff involved in any recruitment and selection process who had completed bi-annual recruitment and selection training that included equality, diversity and discriminatory practices was not developed. It was seen as sufficient by the Head of People services that only personnel staff undertake such training.
- Research was undertaken into the introduction of a Junior Fire Fighter Scheme, but difficulty was found in creating a business case in light of the budgetary restraints anticipated in the coming years. Efforts will be concentrated on developing a High Potential/ Fast track scheme for new entrants.
- Progress relating to the roll out of equality and diversity training for supervisory managers and front line staff is slow; this is partly due to the introduction of a new Welsh procurement process, Value Wales.
- The data collated by SWFRS shows no differential impact on the provision of the free home safety check service. Given the inherent difficulties in establishing data sharing protocols with organisations that share our target groups for raising awareness and reducing risk, steps have been taken to secure referrals from other agencies – thereby negating the need for data sharing. Moreover the CS&P function is taking on new staff to advance better engagement in the field of the voluntary sector (at risk groups) and formalising arrangements with organisations tackling domestic violence.

- A consultation and involvement strategy is yet to be established, this was the remit of the Participation Officer who was not employed due to budget constraints. The Service recognises the importance of developing this strategy and this action will be transferred to the Single Equality Scheme action plan led by the DCFO.
- Transgender policy and guidelines are currently in draft format but not yet published.
- The Community Grants Scheme in partnership with WCVA was abandoned.

5. Equality Impact Assessments

How do we carry out EIAs?

Our EIA process has been in place for five years and the majority of our policies, standard operating procedures and other such policy and procedural documents have been revised twice and have thus been through the EIA process. Our OPPD 64 Procedure for Developing Policies and Procedures includes the EIA process, which is mandatory and is checked by the Policy Officer. The Diversity Officer carries out dip sample audits of EIAs, providing feedback to managers and referrals for training. EIAs and audit reports are available on request.

For 5 years the Diversity Officer was a member of the Business Continuity Board, part of the role was to intercept all decisions, policies and procedures for their impact on equalities. It was felt that this was not consistent with mainstreaming equality and from 2009 senior managers would apply the assessment to their decisions, projects and policies themselves.

All Assessment and Development Centre processes and procedures including role plays are subject to an EIA by the HR Manager and Diversity Officer.

A system is in place to EIA all job descriptions to ensure our job opportunities are accessible to the widest possible audience.

All community safety promotional literature and public information receive an EIA in order to assess that all communication needs relevant to the audience have been considered.

6. Staff and recruitment

New software will be introduced in 2010/2011 in order to collate and monitor employee data which will include equality data. Data will be captured and analysed for patterns and trends for applicants, promotions, grievances and disciplinary, dismissals, training and personal development reviews.

A number of adjustments were implemented to ensure that the new HQ was accessible and that all communications were assessed to ensure that all our staff feel included and able to communicate.

Due to the current economic climate it is expected that our turnover of staff will be low over the coming years.

7. Monitoring

- The systems for monitoring staff profile and their access to opportunities as well as identifying patterns or trends is currently via a PS database system which is updated via a staff survey. Not all statutory data is collated, analysed and monitored but the information that is collated is reviewed, reported to SMT and published by the Head of HR and used to inform improvements.
- Monitoring service delivery, specifically fires, is recorded by the Incident Recording System, which superseded the Fire Damage Report Form (FDR1). The system records the gender profile of people who are injured or die. This information is collated by the Fire Policy Unit of Communities and Local Government for audit purposes; it is not clear if and how this information is used to inform risk reduction initiatives or targets.
- The FRS is required to work in partnership with agencies such as the Police and Ambulance services to reduce road traffic collisions. The Police have primary responsibility for this. Casualties and incidents are recorded on a Stats 19 form which includes an option for disclosing gender. Work is underway to share this information between agencies in order to inform educational preventative initiatives.
- The Quality of Service Survey: After the Incident Survey is carried out on behalf of the service by Opinion Research Services, part of Swansea University. It is a postal survey of selected residential and business addresses which had experienced an incident attended by SWFRS. The survey collates data relating to initial contact, at the scene, information and advice in relation to fire safety advice and home fire safety checks for domestic

incidents only. The survey collates information about the persons involved in domestic incidents and this now captures data in relation to disability, age, gender and ethnic origin.

- The research for 2009 - 2010 found that of those who spoke to the Fire and Rescue Service themselves, almost all domestic respondents (100%) and all non-domestic respondents were satisfied with the service they received during initial contact.
- In relation to service at the scene, respondents were extremely positive about the firefighters who attended. All non-domestic respondents agreed that they were polite, whilst almost all domestic respondents report this. Almost all respondents agreed that the firefighters were helpful, efficient and informative. The majority of respondents agreed they were sensitive. Ninety eight percent of domestic respondents and 99% of non-domestic respondents were satisfied with the service they received at the scene.
- In relation to information and advice 38% of domestic respondents had been offered a Home Fire Safety Check and of these 82% accepted it.
- The conclusion was that when taking everything into account, almost all domestic (98%) and non-domestic (97%) respondents were satisfied with the service they received at the scene.
- All questions for incidents at domestic dwellings are analysed by gender, disability, age and ethnic origin. The data is currently used internally but the scope for publishing this specific information will be investigated.
- Reports are submitted to the Senior Management Team quarterly and published annually on our website www.southwales-fire.gov.uk

8. Equality and Diversity Training

The programme of equality training commenced in 2005 with senior management. Senior and middle managers training has been completed, supervisory manager training is out to tender with front line staff still waiting to receive training.

EIA training continues but will be refocused to address new issues and trends in 2010.

The Diversity Unit has facilitated workshops for approximately 100 staff about engaging with communities as part of training for Road Traffic Collision reduction training.

9. Involvement Activity

Internal

Staff workshops and consultations were carried out during the planning stage of the HQ move.

External

Two critical friends sessions were held in February 2010, each member of the Equality Task Group, which is representative of all Directorates presented up to three directive business goals and received feedback from a range of equality experts including, Awetu, Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales, Stonewall Cymru, Novas Scarman, Cardiff and the Vale Coalition of Disabled people as well as independent consultants.

Four involvement days attracting approximately 350 members of the community are scheduled in March, June and July 2010.

10. Conclusion and Action Plan

We are satisfied with our progress toward gender equality but are mindful that we did not achieve everything we set out to, we may have been over ambitious but there is still a lot of work to be done. The next section sets out our interim actions for 2010 to ensure gender, or sex equality as proposed remains distinct yet integrated into a Single Equality Scheme that should be published in the autumn of 2010.

Action	Directorate	Person Responsible	Deadline	Status
Establish Equality Task Group to Develop Single Equality Scheme	Communications and Culture	Diversity Officer	November 2009	Complete
Publish Single Equality Scheme	All	Equality Task Group Diversity Officer	September 2010	
Establish Critical Friends to conduct EIA of FRS functions	All	Equality Task Group	March 2010	Complete
Coordinate Older and Disabled People Involvement days 11th and 23rd March in Merthyr and Cardiff	Communications and Culture	Diversity Officer GM Fire Safety GM Community Safety	March 2010	Older and Disabled Peoples involvement days complete. Planning underway for BAEM Involvement Days on 26th June at Pill Millennium Centre, Newport and 24th July Channel View Leisure Centre, Cardiff.
Coordinate BAEM Involvement days Pill and Cardiff June and July 2010				
Work Environment Survey	All	Equality Task Group		Interviews complete, survey drafted
Equality and Diversity Training for Supervisory Managers	People Services	Director of People Services	Training Complete 2010	Tender drafted
Distribute and promote Communicate with Confidence	Communications and Culture, Operations	Diversity Officer	January 2010	Complete
Review EIA electronic system and establish reporting mechanism. Retender for EIA training and introduce to FRS personnel ASAP.	Communications and Culture, People Services	Diversity Officer IT Officer Training Manager	June 2010	EIA audit complete Tender for EIA review work placed with WCVA
Investigate scope for publishing equalities data collated in the After the Incident survey	Corporate Support	Director of Corporate Support	June 2010	