



Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2021



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

If you require this Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2021 in an alternative format please contact Jenifer Sutherland, Equality & Diversity Assistant on 01698 402231 or by email at SFRS. equality@firescotland.gov.uk to discuss how we can take steps to accommodate your needs.

The accessibility of our published materials is an important feature in making the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service transparent and accountable. Where we can we will provide printed materials in large print documents and formats suitable for use with screen readers.

Our website functions well with Google Translate to provide individuals access to our web content in languages other than English.

Accessibility of the content of materials is just as important as accessibility of the format. In this regard the Service has written the Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2021 with a broad audience in mind.

The report must satisfy certain conditions for its content but we have tried to restrict unnecessary detail or multiple examples illustrating the same point to a minimum. Should you require more detail about a particular example described in this report or wish a full list of relevant examples against each Equality Outcome please get in touch with Jenifer Sutherland, Equality & Diversity Assistant.

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Introduction and Purpose

This Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2021 is published on behalf of the Board and Chief Officer of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and is in accordance with our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, as amended.

This is our fifth Mainstreaming Report and continues to provide updates on progress since our previous reports published in 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019.

Within this report you will find details on the following:

- The steps that the SFRS has taken to mainstream the general equality duty across the organisation
- Progress made towards achieving the SFRS's 5 corporate Equality Outcomes
- A revised set of Equality Outcomes that we will work towards achieving over the next four years
- Employee information together with details on progress that the SFRS has made in gathering and using the information to better meet the general equality duty
- Information on the gender composition of our Board members
- Current pay gap information relating to gender, ethnicity and disability

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is a national service providing emergency and preventative interventions working in partnership with communities and others in the public, private and third sectors to improve the safety and well-being of the people of Scotland

As a national service, we are proudly committed to our community planning role. Local Senior Officers engage with local authorities, community groups and partners to better understand local risks and identify best how to respond to them.

Our Strategic Plan sets out our priorities and objectives which in turn influence how our resources and assets are used.

Our priorities and goals are also aligned to the Scottish Government's National Outcomes including:

- We live longer, healthier lives (National Outcome 6);
- We live our lives safe from crime, danger and disorder (National Outcome 9);
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others (National Outcome 11); and
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient, and responsive to local people's needs (National Outcome 16).



Mainstreaming Equality in the SFRS

Why we mainstream equality

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 requires the SFRS to publish a report that demonstrates the steps it has taken to mainstream equality across the organisation and, in particular, what steps it has taken to mainstream the three elements of the general equality duty - the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation (GED1);
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups (GED2); and
- Foster good relations between different groups (GED3)

Mainstreaming equality has the benefit of ensuring that people's needs are identified and met at the point of service delivery. It has the further advantage of improving the capacity of the organisation to meet those needs, as the responsibility for achievement does not rest with a small number of individuals it rests with everyone. Those individual employees and teams that work with local communities are the ones best able to establish meaningful relationships with communities and ensure that their specific requirements are met. It means that those fulfilling roles as line managers, trainers, HR practitioners and others involved in the employer – employee relationship can respond to employee needs at the closest point of contact.

The profile of the SFRS as a responsive and responsible public service is enhanced when communities believe that their needs are met within the core business functions of the SFRS, not as an afterthought. This in turn encourages participation and engagement from communities. The profile of SFRS as a modern and compassionate employer is validated when employees feel they have contributed and been heard in the design and implementation of workplace practices.

Mainstreaming equality means not assuming that the circumstances, issues, challenges and needs of people who share a protected characteristic will be the same in every case. Recognising that humans are complex is key to developing a person-centred approach to public service provision and employment practice.

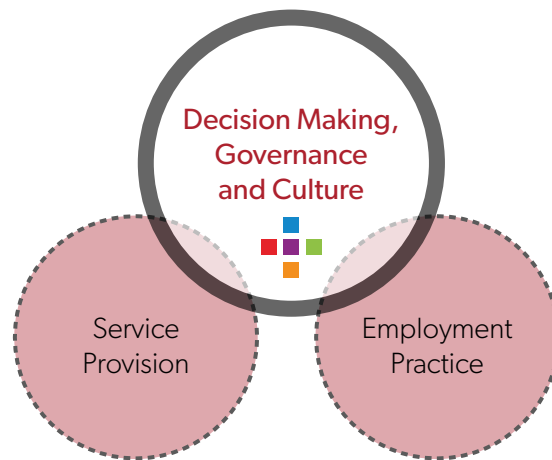
It is understanding that the protected characteristics can at times be limiting as labels and categorisations when trying to address underlying inequalities, improve social justice and enhance the life chances of people in Scotland. Intersectionality across protected characteristics is central to the SFRS's approach to equality, we understand that a person's identity and needs is not comprised of just a single characteristic they may hold, indeed that possession of a particular protected characteristic may not be of great meaning to everyone who holds it.

Finally, the SFRS accepts that mainstreaming equality means more than simply having equality as a standing agenda item at every meeting. In everything that it does and in the decisions it makes, it must consider the needs of those affected, how best it can improve the circumstances of employees and communities and remember the reason it is doing this is to improve the wellbeing, health and prosperity of the people living and working in Scotland.

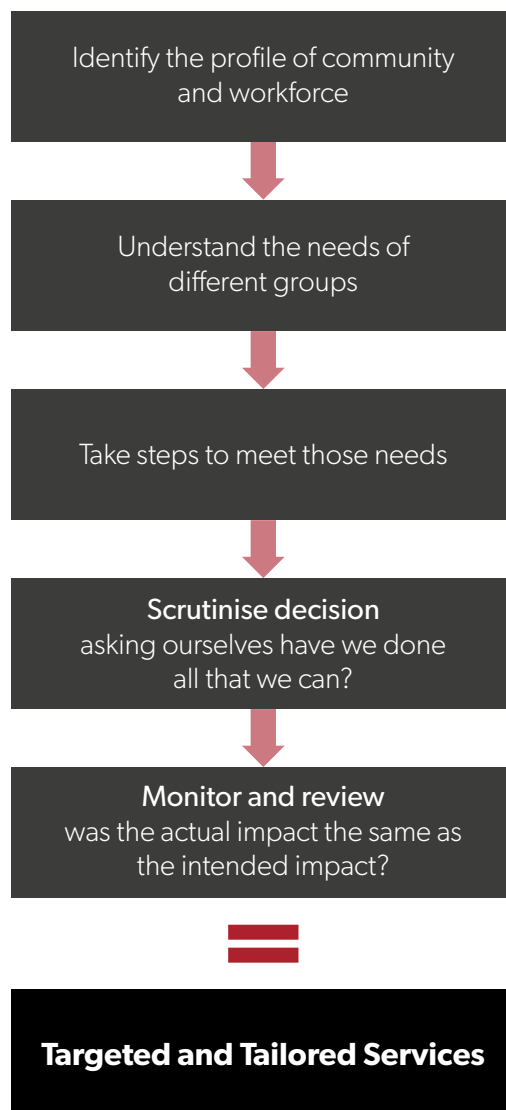
How we mainstream equality

Mainstreaming equality lies at the heart of our governing documents. The Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016 and the SFRS Strategic Plan 2019-2022 set out in detail how we will respond to the needs of Scotland's diverse communities. At this strategic level the importance we place on providing fair and equitable access to our services and considerate workplace practices is clear to see.

At a practical and operational level the Equality and Diversity Charter is central to our approach for mainstreaming equality. Setting out roles and responsibilities it outlines our decision making pathway to ensure that equality is embedded throughout our activities.



The decision making pathway for mainstreaming equality



Leadership and Scrutiny

Whilst it is recognised that all employees of the SFRS have a role to play in mainstreaming equality and acting as leaders who implement our values and principles it is also accepted that strong, committed direction from the most senior members of our organisation is vital to foster a culture where equality is given priority status.

The Board and Strategic Leadership Team have a critical role in ensuring that the decisions the SFRS makes support the general equality duties. Part of this role includes scrutinising the equality impact assessments of any policy decisions that they are being asked to make. The handling of equality issues is covered in guidance notes issued to the Strategic Leadership Team and the Chairs of the SFRS Committees.

Importantly, visible leadership on equality issues is important for any organisation mainstreaming equality. During 2020 senior Equality Champions for age, disability, women, care experienced/carer providers, LGBT, tackling domestic abuse and race were identified and are providing visible leadership to our corporate messaging on a range of issues such as positive action in recruitment to Corporate Parenting.

The Strategic Leadership and Senior Management Teams, supported by other senior managers within the directorates, are focused on ensuring that the SFRS develops an inclusive culture where mainstreaming is ingrained through the integration of positive behaviours in everything we do.

Specialist Equality Support

The SFRS includes within its structure a small corporate team of professional equality and diversity (E&D) specialists whose primary role is to support the mainstreaming of equality across the organisation operating under a 'business partner' model. The E&D Team provide advice and guidance to Directorates and Service Delivery Areas to assist them to identify and meet the equality obligations in each of their functions of the SFRS.

The E&D Team provide a co-ordinating role for corporate, multi-function equality initiatives such as Corporate Parenting and provide the main focus of contact between the SFRS and national equality bodies.

Partnership working with colleagues from across the public sector but especially Scottish Government, Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service is an invaluable tool in meeting our own and our combined equality responsibilities. Participating in the Scottish National Equality Improvement Project, the Cross Justice Working Group on Service Monitoring and Justice Advisory Group on BSL provide for a common approach to shared concerns to be shared across our related public bodies. Working with organisations such as the Asian Fire Service Association, Stonewall Scotland and Deaf Action provide a direct link to the communities we serve.

The E&D Team lead the Equality Partnership Group which was set up following the Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Review project in 2018 to provide a forum for representatives from all Directorates and Service Delivery Areas to meet and share good practice and discuss common areas of concern relating to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights.

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment Process

The Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment Process continues to be one of the most important tools that the SFRS uses to mainstream equality.

This process allows equality and human rights to be embedded in to policy design and the SFRS regards Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments as being an integral part of the overall policy. All staff, not just managers or those responsible for developing policies, are encouraged to read and familiarise themselves with the Assessments as it may provide instruction for policy implementation as well as a means of assessing performance and identifying any discrepancy between intended impact and actual impact.

Within the SFRS impact assessment process we not only incorporate all of the protected characteristics as required by law but we also look at the needs of those with caring responsibilities, are care experienced, socio-economic disadvantage, as well as considering the human rights implications for our decision-making and policy developments.

In 2020 we took steps to extend the impact assessment to include our obligations for Island Impact Assessments and in 2021 we will work towards incorporating a broader assessment of mental health and wellbeing.

Social and economic disadvantage may lack the legal basis that the protected characteristics possess in relation to impact assessments but the SFRS maintains the issue on an equal basis with those characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010. In part this is in recognition of the close link between protected characteristics and socio-economic inequality, such as the link between disability and unemployment or the link between older people and social exclusion.

A further consideration for the SFRS is the link between the incidents of fire and other emergencies and socio-economic inequality. The SFRS recognises social and economic disadvantage in its widest sense from poverty or low levels of economic activity to lifestyle factors such as drug or alcohol dependency.

As part of the 'business partnership' approach described above, the E&D team work in close collaboration with policy owners to ensure that equality considerations are fully incorporated into the full development, implementation and monitoring of policies and other relevant activities. Whilst the policy owners remain in control of the Impact Assessment the E&D practitioners provide support and guidance in identifying negative impacts and maximising opportunities to promote potential positive impacts.

To develop greater capacity and confidence amongst policy owners to mainstream equality and human rights into their work, the E&D Team have developed and delivered an ongoing programme of classroom based training which aims to raise awareness and improve the practical skills of policy owners.

These training sessions are delivered on a rolling basis to small groups of staff who may be involved in the impact assessment process and includes refresher training.

Equality and Service Provision

In 2017 the SFRS introduced five Equality Outcomes, three of which are directly related to service provision and are outlined below.

The examples in this section illustrate some of the progress that SFRS has made towards these outcomes, as well as illustrating how these examples are evidence of a mainstreamed approach to equality within SFRS.

A full analysis of the progress made against each Equality Outcome is available by contacting SFRS.equality@firescotland.gov.uk

EQUALITY OUTCOME 1

People from all Scotland's community groups are safer in their homes and on our roads.

EQUALITY OUTCOME 3

People from across all communities are enabled to live lives free from hate crime, harassment and domestic abuse/violence.

EQUALITY OUTCOME 4

People from across all Scotland's community groups benefit from their engagement and interactions with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

The services provided by the SFRS are managed across the corporate functions of Prevention and Protection, Operations (including Operations Control 999 call handling) and three Service Delivery Areas. Following a recent structural review newly created Directorates for Service Development and Training, Safety & Assurance have been created which have a significant role in the future design of the SFRS and provide support mechanisms that underpin the frontline delivery of services.

Each function is responsible for designing policies and procedures that meet the equality duty at the point of service provision. In short, equality considerations are mainstreamed into policy and procedural design and those implementing our policies meet the needs of the service recipient at the point of service delivery.

Across the range of services provided by the SFRS we have been making improvements to the accessibility of our services. We have been working with colleagues in Scottish Government, Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service to explore where we can make improvements to the experience of individuals accessing 999 call handling where they have a barrier to communication, such as deaf, hearing impaired, poor English proficiency or some other communication barrier as well as barriers to communication on the incident ground. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic work on this project has been paused and we expect to make further progress from 2022 onwards.

Since the publication of our last Mainstreaming Report we have been working closely with third sector community groups such as Deaf Action and have prepared a range of BSL safety videos and other materials on our website. We collaborated to produce a safety guide for students who are deaf and are moving into independent rented accommodation.

At a local level our station based personnel play a vital role in pursuing equality initiatives often based on local circumstances and reacting enthusiastically to opportunities provided by local partners. Glasgow City Area has implemented a train the trainer model on Hate Crime advocacy and reporting.

Colleagues in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray have been working alongside Integrate Grampian to offer support to Syrian refugees accessing public services and adjusting to life in Scotland. This creative approach to supporting local communities is replicated across the Service Delivery Areas on a range of equality issues.

The prevalence of fire and other emergency incidents amongst the over 60s remains noticeable and rightly has specific attention in our prevention and protection engagement and education efforts aimed directly at the community group and those who may act as their carers.

Initiatives arising from the need to take specific action to support this vulnerable group includes the pilot project with Bon Accord Care providers where carers and those they supported were both present during home fire safety visits to ensure that the safety messages were understood and acted upon.

Within the Scottish Borders area, the SFRS worked with Police Scotland to develop an education programme around fire safety advice during the Bonfire period. This was targeted at young people as over half of all firework injuries are suffered by children and over 500 children under 16 are taken to A&E in the four weeks surrounding bonfire night.

Covid-19 meant that these sessions could not be delivered face to face. Instead the partnership utilised technology and uploaded video presentations to YouTube and to the Scottish Borders Council (SBC) Glow SharePoint.

Overall there were 722 views on YouTube and 705 evaluations on forms with positive feedback.

During a preliminary engagement visit with the Gurdwara Singh Sikh Temple in Glasgow City, potential sleeping risks were found around the use of the building. To minimise these risks, a pre-determined attendance was put in place and local stations briefed on the changes. This initial engagement led to a fire safety open day being provided at the Temple, which resulted in approximately 100 members of the Sikh Community receiving fire safety messages.

Home Fire Safety Visits were also arranged and approximately 50 people to date have received lifesaving CPR training. One of the local Crew Commanders, utilised their self-taught knowledge of Urdu to help build these positive relations. The Area received a letter of commendation from the Gurdwara Singh Group for their work and those involved increased their knowledge and appreciation of Sikh culture and now have a greater understanding of the Sikh Community as a whole.

Playing an active role in equality related events such as Deaf Awareness Week, LGBT History Month, International Women's Day and Black History Month provides a high profile means to target specific community groups with fire safety advice and remind all of Scotland's communities that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is a public service for everyone and that we take the obligation of meeting their needs very seriously.



CASE STUDY

EQUALITY OUTCOME 1

Community Safety Engagement – Planning and Evaluation Policy

Engaging with communities is central to the ethos of designing and delivering services that meet the needs of communities. Evaluation and review is a cornerstone of this process and a Planning and Evaluation Policy and Procedure was developed by our Community Safety Engagement Team to increase our positive impact on our communities and helping us to secure greater effectiveness in the delivery of our services.

Planning events appropriately can ensure that they are accessible to all and where relevant the event(s) can be tailored to meet the needs of the community.

Reviewing research findings and emerging practice relating to Community Safety and Prevention and Protection Initiatives enable us to capture and share learning and good practice across the service. It allows us to plan and develop support for SFRS employees and to gain an understanding at an organisation level of additional services and support that can be put in place to meet the needs and improve outcomes for our communities.

An example of this is the partnership working between the SFRS and the Mears Group. Mears provide accommodation and support for asylum seekers in Scotland and the SFRS work alongside Mears, to provide fire safety advice and guidance.



Many of the individuals who are seeking asylum speak little to no English and experience has shown that they can be fearful of uniformed Services, including the SFRS.

Through discussions with the Mears Group, local officers have developed an action plan to allow the partners to work together to achieve safe living outcomes for everyone. Part of this has involved developing key safety information using graphics alone that can be informative but also raise awareness of who the SFRS are and what we do.

The presentation will become an integral part of the induction process that all asylum seekers entering Glasgow receive. With the key message being one of reassurance and basic fire safety, it is hoped that this will encourage individuals to engage with the SFRS at operational incidents and allow the opportunity for future Home Fire Safety Visits with Mears Housing Officers.

The partnership are also looking at developing an e-learning module to train Mears Housing Officers on basic home fire safety.

As part of this process an Events Checklist has been developed for use in planning each individual engagement event.

This is used to ensure that all areas of event planning are accessible and appropriate to the needs of the community participants including things directly related to protected characteristics they hold and includes detail around:

- Arranging an event
- Finding an appropriate venue
- Designing and delivering a presentation
- Gaining feedback and evaluation of the event

Equality in the Workplace

In 2017 the SFRS published two employment related Equality Outcomes which are outlined below.

The examples in this section illustrate some of the progress the SFRS has made towards these outcomes as well as illustrating how these examples are evidence of a mainstreamed approach to equality within SFRS.

A full analysis of the progress made against each Equality Outcome is available by contacting SFRS.equality@firescotland.gov.uk.

EQUALITY OUTCOME 2

Establish the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service as an employer of choice for people across all equality characteristics.

EQUALITY OUTCOME 3

We will seek to improve our record in employing women in all functions and all levels within the organisation.

Responsibility for meeting the employment elements of the Equality Act 2010 and the delivering against the Equality Outcomes rests with all line managers and functions across the organisation. The directorates of People and Organisational Development, Finance and Contractual Services and the Communications Team have a particular role to play in ensuring that the SFRS meets its equality obligations with regards to the employer/employee relationship.

Meeting the needs of our People is not limited to the personal relationships between a line manager and a colleague or the HR policies we implement, we are mindful that it also extends to the equipment we provide to all of our People, the physical working environment is as important as the non-physical working environment and how and when we engage collectively as an entire workforce are all features of providing a safe and inclusive workplace.

All of our People centred policies and initiatives are subject to the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment process. This includes impact assessing as part of the procurement process. Procuring the right equipment and services for our colleagues is a fundamental feature of a supportive and inclusive workplace.

The Equality and Diversity Business Partners have direct input into the procurement process of items such e-learning platforms. Where there is a significant equality issue pertaining to the item being purchased such as PPE (personal protective equipment) those colleagues who will be using the items are also involved in the procurement design and testing.

The SFRS has in excess of 350 premises across Scotland which provides for a significant demand on resources to maintain these let alone make improvements. The provision of dignified and accessible facilities where all SFRS's staff have their needs met has been the subject of considerable effort, consultation and consideration.

A template of a standard design model for the provision of dignified facilities has been developed to apply to all new refurbishment and new build premises. Within this model it has been important for the SFRS to treat employees as individuals with specific privacy and dignity requirements and not just part of a wider grouping such as men or women or people with a disability and people without a disability.

The initiative has also highlighted some workplace culture and work management practices that will be addressed as part of a much broader Culture and Organisational Development piece.

In 2020 ICT procured and installed on all SFRS laptops and desktop computers Read & Write software from Texthelp to assist colleagues such as those with dyslexia. Other adaptations such as adjustments to hand controls in some SFRS vehicles and ensuring compliance with WCAG2.1 web accessibility standards for Safe and Well applications are all working examples of our Positive About Disability Guide in practice.

Involving colleagues in the decisions that SFRS takes about its future is an important part of creating and maintaining an inclusive work environment. The role of the Communications Team has been instrumental in this in supporting the introduction of a Wellbeing and Equalities Calendar of Events, facilitating organisation-wide engagement and staff surveys.

The SFRS acted in advance of the move to end period poverty in Scotland by providing free sanitary products on fire appliances for our operational crew attending incidents. In 2020 we extended the provision of free sanitary products to our occupied premises and accompanied this with a major communications campaign making clear both the availability of the products and the responsibility for ensuring that the supplies are maintained as a matter of business as usual activities.

The SFRS have been working in partnership with Career Ready. Career Ready is a social mobility charity who support young people who potentially face the most barriers in education and employment, and whose talents often go overlooked and undiscovered.

Due to the success of the current pilot we have committed to ongoing work with Career Ready to give young people an opportunity to develop new skills, boost their confidence and gain valuable workplace experience.

The SFRS also has an active working relationship with MCR Pathways which links up care experienced young people with volunteer mentors to help support them in their progression from school to further and higher education or employment.



CASE STUDY

EQUALITY OUTCOME 2

The SFRS is an employer of Choice across all protected characteristics

As part of our Positive Action Strategy and our commitment to addressing underrepresentation of particular groups within the SFRS, we delivered our first LGBT specific Recruitment event on 20th January 2021, with the event facilitated by one of our HR Advisors, the Chair of the LGBT Employee Network and our two Senior LGBT Equality Champions.

To ensure we promoted the recruitment event throughout Scotland we had our own social media campaign, but to ensure we could reach out to an often hard to reach group, we enlisted the help of various LGBT organisations for example Hidayah a charity specifically set up to support LGBTQ Muslims, Stonewall Scotland and LGBT Youth Scotland.

Due to the restrictions in place because of COVID-19, the event was delivered online via Teams, the delivery focussed on the requirements needed to become a Fire Fighter, but also included details relating to our LGBT Employee network and the campaigns we support internal and externally to promote and celebrate LGBT Inclusion.

The event was well attended and as part of improving delivery of events of this nature going forward, we asked delegates to let us know what they thought about the event. Delegates advised that they rated the event as excellent and were extremely likely to recommend it to a friend or colleague.

On her feedback included one delegate saying that personal stories and views on the fire service made the SFRS very appealing and gave a realistic idea of how open and supportive it is of individuals within the service.

Another said that the accessibility of the event was good especially for younger people who may not be open about who they are yet and might be unable to openly go to events like this in person and that this demonstrates that people can participate in the event but with an element of anonymity.

“As a member of the People and Organisational Development Team within the SFRS, I am a champion of transformational change, working to ensure everyone feels included, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

I firmly believe in equality for all. I am proud to be a Stonewall LGBT ally and I enjoy being part of a positive working environment where each person is valued for the contribution they make.”

Susan Gillan, HR Advisor
Facilitator

To further support our commitment to our Positive Action Strategy, we recently advertised our Wholetime FF recruitment campaign on the Proud Employers Website – the Proud employers’ jobsite, is the online jobsite that caters exclusively for LGBT people and their allies. Part of Stonewall, Europe’s largest LGBT charity, Proud Employers helps candidates find roles with organisations committed to true diversity and inclusion.

Equally our ongoing commitment to participating in the Stonewall Diversity Champion programme and submitting to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index has resulted in a number of improvements with regard to key changes to policy, procedure and internal recording systems, the formalisation and launch of our LGBT Employee network, LGBT specific awareness training for all senior managers and introduction of visible cues i.e. rainbow lanyards to demonstrate our support for the LGBT community.

In addition to our LGBT Network we launched a Women’s Network on 8th March 2021 to coincide with International Women’s Day and networks for Neurodiversity and Carers will be launched by 30 April 2021.

CASE STUDY

EQUALITY OUTCOME 3

We will seek to improve our record in employing women in all functions and all levels within the organisation

As part of our Positive Action Strategy and our commitment to addressing underrepresentation of women within the SFRS, we delivered several women only specific recruitment events during the latter part of 2020, these events were facilitated by our HR Advisors, colleagues from within our Health and Wellbeing team, along with uniformed colleagues in wholetime and RVDS.

These online events were well attended and we asked delegates to let us know what they thought about the event, delegates said this about the events:

'Thank You very much for all this info. It really has been so helpful'

'I'm so glad I joined, I really appreciate it ladies you are amazing & thank you so much'

'This has been brilliant and very informative! Thank you so much'

'Respect to you all, amazing to hear and see strong and compassionate women in the Fire service'

Providing awareness briefings, Professional Behavior and Equality training modules and online resources to improve the awareness and understanding of equality matters amongst our workforce is a key feature of supporting a mainstreamed approach to equality.

Specific and detailed training has been delivered on matters such as Leadership and Sexual Orientation and Corporate Parenting and we have worked with others to design bespoke training as outlined in the following case study.

"It was wonderful working as part of a team facilitating online Women Information Events hosted by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. I love my job and so when I was asked to link in I was delighted to help.

I am so proud and privileged to work with highly professional, dedicated, enthusiastic and inspirational female colleagues showcasing the variety of all service roles and the informal and really positive setting encouraged great discussion and Q&A.

I was blown away by the ability to connect with a wider audience across Scotland with females logging in from the Western Isles, Skye and all the cities Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Perth and Edinburgh and wider afield across the central belt and down to the Scottish Borders.

I think the work to get to this point has laid the foundation for online events and has actually showboated the success in reaching out further and more widely which is critical in recruiting a diverse workforce. A strong core of females reaching out across Scotland was really powerful and a focus on diversity and inclusion in the workplace is pivotal in ensuring equality and fairness for all.

I'd like to convey special thanks to my colleagues who enabled these events to take place".

Hilary Sangster, Group Commander
senior manager facilitating the event

CASE STUDY

EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING

The SFRS is an employer of Choice across all protected characteristics

One of our commitments in our Gaelic Language Plan is to increase the awareness and knowledge of Gaelic within our workforce. In partnership with Bòrd Na Gàidhlig we applied for funding to enable us to develop bespoke training for our employees.

Working with an experienced Gaelic speaking trainer we developed an online modular training course, the course itself enables our employees to learn more about the Gaelic language, its history and heritage, and its place in modern Scotland.

To ensure as people as possible could access and use the training, we reached out to other emergency services and all 32 local authorities and advised that the training was available for them to use.

The Scottish Ambulance Service has expressed an interest in using the training as have several local authorities.

One in particular, South Lanarkshire Council, are now using the training to improve the knowledge and awareness within their own workforce.

'The Gaelic Language elearning course shared with us by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has been beneficial in meeting the outcomes of our Gaelic Language Plan but more importantly in raising awareness of Gaelic in our workplace.'

'We were very appreciative of the SFRS for sharing this learning with us'

Alyson Bell, Equality and Diversity Advisor
South Lanarkshire Council

Pay Gap Information and Employee Data

Our Equal Pay and Gender Report 2021 has been published and should be read alongside this Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report to provide a complete picture of employment equality performance.

As of January 2021 the SFRS Mean and Median Pay Gap was as follows:

PAY GAP			
	2017	2019	2021
Mean	5%	4.42%	1.01%
Median	Not available	5.92%	2.5%

SFRS is not currently representative of the communities it serves within its workforce. Moreover, the data held by SFRS about its employees is incomplete.

A significant proportion of employees choose not to disclose their protected characteristics in our self-service employee monitoring system. A Sensitive Information Project has been set up to improve employee confidence in disclosing personal information.

The information that we currently hold is as follows:

BAME EMPLOYEES		
Ethnicity	Number	Percentage of total
White	4695	60.67%
BAME	55	0.71%
Prefer not to say	26	0.34%
Not recorded	2962	38.28%
Total	7738	100%

DISABLED EMPLOYEES		
	Number of employees	Percentage of total
Disabled	62	0.8%
No disability	1955	25.26%
Not known	5721	73.93%
Total	7738	100%

Board Diversity

The SFRS has a Board comprised of 12 members including a Chair and Vice Chair. Between 2013 and 2016 the composition of the Board was 2 women and 10 men. Since that time the membership of the Board was subject to renewal under the Public Appointments Process and following this process the composition of the SFRS Board is 7 women and 5 men.

As noted above, appointment to the SFRS Board is made through the Scottish Government's Public Appointment Process and appointments must have the final approval of the relevant Minister.

Whilst the SFRS has limited ability to directly influence the appointments process it does have some capacity to encourage applications from women from diverse backgrounds.

The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 provides the legal basis for SFRS' continued support of the Scottish Government in promoting gender diversity on Public Boards by raising the profile of Board opportunities in our engagement activities.



Impact of Covid

As with all Scottish public services the SFRS's operations were disrupted by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which forced us to reconsider how we deliver some of our services. Throughout the period of the pandemic we have continued to provide both emergency response services and preventative interventions.

An example of how we have adapted our services to meet the changes forced upon us by Covid-19 is adaptations made to the Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) process.

Although the full programme of HFSV delivery was suspended, operational crews continued to target 'Very High Risk' individuals to try and minimise the risk of fire in their homes.

Statistics showed that more than 20 people who were over the age of 50, smoked and either had mobility issues, lived alone, or used medical oxygen had been injured, some seriously, by such fires between January 1 and April 30 2020.

The SFRS promoted the 'Make the Call' campaign to appeal to communities across Scotland to help save a life and consider home fire safety when checking in on vulnerable neighbours, patients, friends and family members during the lockdown period. The campaign encouraged them to put these vulnerable individuals in touch with SFRS wherever possible using the free Home Fire Safety Visit phonenumber.

The targeted action towards 'Very High Risk' groups did not prevent the Service from providing Covid-19 Home Fire Safety Advice to other vulnerable, at risk, groups. Station based staff and Community Action Teams continued to engage with high risk households on the telephone; using the new Covid-19 specific Home Fire Safety checklist and supporting aide memoire.

Colleagues in the North Service Delivery Area also participated in the Make the Call initiative whereby vulnerable adults were targeted for contact to provide safety information.

Although our Mental Health Strategy was initiated prior to the pandemic it has had particular benefit to our colleagues experiencing the challenges and uncertainties arising from the pandemic. Along with the launch of significant health and wellbeing resources the Mental Health Strategy has generated attention on the support mechanisms available to employees of SFRS and focuses on the ways in which we can be compassionate and kind to ourselves and one another. This attention to the individual employee with unique needs and experiences has been welcomed by colleagues.

Along similar lines the SFRS has fast-tracked work it was planning for 2021/22 relating to domestic abuse in light of the implications of the 'lockdown' and the increasing instances of domestic abuse.

CASE STUDY

EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING

Corporate Parenting through Covid

The SFRS published our second Corporate Parenting Plan in January 2020. At this time, Covid-19 and the consequent measures to prevent the spread, were not in place.

Where safe to do so, the SFRS have been adapting our approach so that we can meet our actions (or a variation of them) within our Corporate Parenting Plan.

This has included colleagues in the East collating care packages for care experienced children and young people and working in partnership with Morrisons to deliver food parcels. Where possible, we have continued to virtually support local champions boards and groups. Within the North and the West, we have also continued to work with other local partners and corporate parents to prepare for Covid-19 restrictions easing.

The Service have also been involved with Care Experience Week and Care Leavers Week in October of this year.

For Care Experience Week, HR delivered a 'focus group' to understand the barriers that care experience young people can face when it comes to employment. Some of the barriers highlighted were:

IT access

Language used in applications

Financial barriers

Lengthy address history due to different placements

Mental health

Criminal convictions

Access to eligibility documentations such as birth certificates

Employers not taking the above barriers seriously

The SFRS are exploring how this feedback can be incorporated into our employment practices and are arranging to have training from with Who Cares? Scotland to assist with this.

For National Care Leavers Week, the SFRS focussed on producing information sessions and materials that will reflect key fire safety messages for individuals leaving their care setting; moving into transition accommodation and/or their own home.

Care Leavers themselves highlighted some of the areas that they felt should be included within any safety guidance and their contribution is a valued and important element of this work.

Engagement is currently on-going and the SFRS are looking to design fire safety 'talks' that can be delivered to care experience people and a leaflet that can be disseminated and accessed at any time.

The Service are also looking at transitional arrangements, as they can be different depending on geographical location.

2021 Onwards

In setting Equality Outcomes in previous years the SFRS was somewhat constrained by the timing of the Public Sector Equality Duty publication deadlines and the development and roll out of our Strategic Plan. In preparing this revised set of Equality Outcomes we were better able to align the Outcomes to our Strategic Plan 2019-2022 and the underpinning corporate reporting mechanisms of the Annual Operating Plan 3-year cycle and functional plans.

Equality Outcomes 2021

1. SFRS services are accessible and appropriate to the needs of Scotland's diverse communities.
2. Scotland will be a safer and fairer place as a result of our collaborative work with other organisations.
3. SFRS is an inclusive employer with a workplace which reflects the diversity of Scottish society.
4. SFRS staff feel valued and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.
5. SFRS employees are supported on mental health and wellbeing in line with policies and initiatives.
6. SFRS will support Scotland's young people reach their full potential.

EQUALITY OUTCOMES 1-5

- are directly linked to the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 and the Annual Operating Plan
- are relevant to all three elements of the general equality duty
- are relevant to all protected characteristics (with the exception of marriage and civil partnership which is only relevant to Equality Outcome 3)

EQUALITY OUTCOME 6

- is in recognition of the extensive work the SFRS does around youth engagement and Corporate Parenting and has relevance to the Annual Operating Plan, functional plans and the Corporate Parenting Plan
- is relevant to all three elements of the general equality duty
- is relevant to all protected characteristics (with the exception of marriage and civil partnership)

Although the Equality Outcomes have a listed lifespan of 4 years there are two points at which they will be reviewed and assessed for continued relevance. The SFRS Strategic Plan is scheduled for review before 2025 and at the point at which we undertake the review of the Strategic Plan we will reconsider the Equality Outcomes and their continued relevance to our new Strategic Plan.

Scottish Government and the Equality and Human Rights Commission are in the process of reviewing the Public Sector Equality Duties including the purpose and format of equality outcomes and this too may precipitate a review and change to our Equality Outcomes before 2025.

Performance managing the progress against the Equality Outcomes that are aligned to the Strategic Plan, Annual Operating Plan and functional plans allows the use of our standard corporate reporting mechanisms which has not previously been possible.

Using this complemented by the E&D business partnering model and a standing agenda item at our Equality Partnership Group will allow for more robust and ongoing assessment of our progress against the Equality Outcomes than has been possible under previous iterations.

Conclusion and Contacting Us

In order to maintain a degree of accessibility to a broad audience this Report has provided summary content and illustrating examples of past performance.

Should you wish to have more detailed information about our progress against the Equality Outcomes 2017- 2021 or further information about how we developed the Equality Outcomes 2021-2024 please contact us at the following email address including Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2021 in the subject bar SFRS.equality@firescotland.gov.uk





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Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2021

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