

ROYAL BERKSHIRE

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

EQUALITY SCHEME

2009 - 2012



PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

FOREWORD

Welcome to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Equality Scheme.

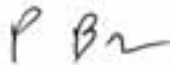
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service exists in order to protect the well-being of the community that it serves. Our aim is to contribute to a safe society by reducing the incidence of death, injury and damage to property from fire and other emergencies. Equality legislation supports us in that aim by helping to ensure that we respond appropriately to the needs of all communities in Berkshire, and to the needs and well-being of all of our employees. It is our aim to embed equality and fairness into the culture of our organisation.

This Equality Scheme sets out a framework of practical steps that we will take in order to fulfil our obligations both to the public and to our employees, because it is through action, not just commitment, that we will move closer to achieving the goal of true equality.

We hope that you will take the opportunity to read through our Scheme and provide us with your comments on it. It is important that employees, the public and our statutory, voluntary and private sector partners are involved in the development and delivery of this Scheme, as this will ensure that it really does have a positive impact on people's lives.



Iain Cox
Chief Fire Officer



Dr Paul Bryant
Chair
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

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THE AIM OF OUR EQUALITY SCHEME

By law, as a public authority, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is required to have Equality Schemes to counter and prevent discrimination based on race, gender and disability. However we do not believe that equality for any particular group can be promoted effectively in isolation - we will only achieve a culture of inclusion and respect if the contribution of all groups is recognised. We also recognise that many people may be subject to discrimination or inequality on the basis of more than one factor.

This Equality Scheme therefore brings our separate Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes together into one document, and in addition includes other equality strands, (such as age, sexual orientation, and religion or belief), because we are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all residents, businesses and visitors in Berkshire, as well as all our employees.

This Equality Scheme outlines how we intend to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity for all
- promote good relations between people of different groups
- promote the inclusion and participation of all groups

This Scheme will identify our equality goals, and the actions we will take to meet them, in consultation with employees and stakeholders.

This Scheme will be reviewed every three years. The Action Plan attached as Appendix C will be reviewed every year. Progress on the Scheme and Action Plan will be reported to the meetings of the Community Engagement and Equality Group, and to the Fire Authority on at least an annual basis.

ABOUT ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) exists in order to make Berkshire safer. Our employees deal with any type of emergency; road, rail or air crashes, collapsed buildings, floods, chemical spills or rescuing people trapped in lifts or other confined spaces. We also work with the owners and occupiers of premises to ensure that people are protected from fire, and try to educate all members of the public about reducing risks. About 435 full time firefighters, 120 retained ('on-call') firefighters, 35 control room operators and 140 support staff deliver this service from 19 fire stations across the county to Berkshire's 800,000 residents.

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority governs RBFRS as a representative body for Berkshire residents, and is made up of elected Councillors nominated from each of the six constituent Unitary Authorities. The Fire Authority's role is to ensure that we provide an effective and cost efficient service, and that we fulfil our legal obligations. It therefore has a responsibility to ensure that the broad strategies, objectives and long term plans of the Service are consistent with its responsibilities as a public body under equality legislation, which includes:-

- Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2006)

As a public authority, these three Acts place upon us obligations in relation to Race, Gender and Disability equality which go beyond mere non-discrimination. These are:-

1. A General Duty to eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.
2. Specific Duties which include training, consultation, assessing the impact of our policies and services, monitoring of employment issues and service delivery, and publication of results.

Equality issues are progressed via the Community Engagement and Equality Group (CEEG), which is chaired by a member of the Fire Authority and includes managers from all functions, equality and diversity specialists, and staff representatives from the Fire Brigades Union and UNISON and other minority groups. CEEG is the steering group for issues relating to the Equality Standard for Local Government.

Advice and direction on equality and diversity issues are provided by a Senior HR Advisor (Equality & Diversity) (SHRA(ED)). Working with the SHRA(ED) is a Community Liaison Officer whose role is to build stronger links with all parts of the community. The Fire Brigades Union is also very active in support of the equality aims of the Service, and has a local representative dedicated to the support of black and minority ethnic staff members.

OUR PRIORITIES

The strategic commitments of RBFRS are to:-

- Minimise loss of life, injury and damage from fire, road traffic collisions and other hazards.
- Improve public and business safety and reduce risk, through targeted education and enforcement of fire safety legislation.
- Demonstrate continuous improvement and efficiencies, ensuring consultation and partnership working.
- Be an employer of choice, offering equality of opportunity and development to all.
- Provide resilient emergency response through risk management and planning.
- Conduct activities in an environmentally sustainable way.

To that end, RBFRS reports regularly to the Fire Authority on progress against key targets. We also report regularly under the Best Value Performance Indicators measurement system.

RBFRS also works to national policies and standards set by Communities and Local Government, which include a national Fire and Rescue Service Equality & Diversity Strategy. The Audit Commission measures RBFRS against these standards as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment process.

In order to deliver our overall commitments on equality and diversity, RBFRS has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government. The Equality Standard includes the six equality areas covered by law; race, disability, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

The Equality Standard has no legal status, but it provides a framework which helps local authorities to meet their legal obligations under anti-discrimination legislation. It has five levels of achievement:

Level 1 Commitment to a comprehensive Equality Policy

Level 2 Assessment and consultation

Level 3 Setting equality objectives and targets

Level 4 Using information systems and monitoring against equality targets

Level 5 Achieving and reviewing outcomes

RBFRS is currently at Level 1 of the Standard, working towards achieving level 3 by March 2010. The Standard is also about making equalities part of our day to day activities. To this end we will require every department and service area within RBFRS to assess its own performance against the Equality Standard, and to incorporate equality objectives into its departmental action plan.

OUR VALUES

We Value...

- Service to the community
- People
- Diversity
- Improvement

Service to the Community

We value service to the community by...

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

People

We value all our employees by practicing and promoting...

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

Diversity

We value diversity in the service and the community by...

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

Improvement

We value improvement at all levels of the service by...

- Accepting responsibility for our performance
- Being open-minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

Procedures for selection and promotion require candidates to give evidence that they behave in accordance with these values.

OUR SERVICES

Achieving Equality in Service Delivery

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service aims to deliver its services in a way which meets the needs of all people in Berkshire.

In addition to our 999 response service we offer a number of services aimed at Making Berkshire Safer, often working in partnership with other public service organisations. These include:-

- Educating people (adults and children) in fire and accident prevention.
- A programme of home fire safety checks, installing smoke alarms where necessary.
- Working to reduce the incidence of arson and hoax calls.
- Road safety education.
- Programmes for young people aimed at encouraging responsible behaviour.
- Training courses and advice on fire protection and prevention to owners of business premises.
- Enforcement of fire protection legislation to protect public safety.

In order to ensure that services are equally accessible to all groups, we will:

- Monitor the satisfaction and take up levels of services by different groups.
- Assess whether the provision of a service or planned service has an adverse impact on any group.
- Take positive action to address any inequality, disadvantage or discrimination.
- Encourage particular groups to use our services where evidence shows that there is a lower level of take-up of a service among that group, but no lower level of need.

OUR EMPLOYEES

Monitoring

In order to meet our Specific Duties in relation to race, gender and disability equality we gather information on our workforce and on applications for employment. Previously this information has come from our computer systems, but the systems have some limitations which mean that we have not been able to gather all the data that we would have liked to. We are working to remedy this.

As good practice, and in order to try to identify disadvantage or adverse impact, we will also gather information relating to age, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. Our aim is to publish as much information as possible. However, we are conscious of the need to protect the privacy of those individuals who prefer to keep some aspects of their lives private, and will not gather or publish data which could compromise this. Employees and applicants will not be placed under any obligation to provide information relating to their sexual orientation or religion, and any data provided will only be accessible to the Senior HR Advisor (Equality & Diversity).

Subject to ensuring privacy, we intend to collect and publish data as follows:-

	Ethnic Origin	Disability	Gender	Age	Sexual Orientation	Religion or Belief
Staff in post	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Applicants for employment, by stage reached	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Applicants for promotion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Applicants for training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Those receiving training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Those who benefit or suffer detriment from performance appraisal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Those raising grievances	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Those which relate to S/O	Those which relate to R/B
Harassment or bullying cases	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Only those which relate	Only those which relate
Those subject to formal disciplinary action	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Those leaving employment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	If cited as a relevant factor	If cited as a relevant factor

The results that we obtain from monitoring will be published annually and used to help us to determine whether any of our policies have an adverse impact on any group of staff, (so that we can take steps to remedy it), or a positive impact, (so that we can ensure that we build on it).

Recruitment

We are acutely aware that, for a number of reasons, the profile of our workforce does not match that of the community we serve in respect of race, gender and disability. We are committed to pursuing positive action initiatives aimed at encouraging people from under-represented groups to apply for positions.

Our recruitment procedures are continually being reviewed through People Impact Assessment to ensure that they meet the highest standards of good practice in eliminating opportunities for conscious or unconscious bias. All personal information is removed before shortlisting, which is done strictly against the criteria laid down in the appropriate person specification. Person specifications are drafted in accordance with strict guidelines in order to avoid unnecessary barriers to employment.

Tackling Harassment and Discrimination

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to tackling any form of harassment, discrimination or bullying in the workplace, and we have specific procedures to deal with allegations of such behaviour. Our harassment and bullying policy is regularly reviewed to ensure that it reflects best practice, and training has been provided to ensure that all employees are aware of the Employee Complaints Procedure and the support and advice available if they experience harassment.

We also have a Confidential Reporting Policy, which enables employees to report any instances of bad practice.

Physical or verbal attacks on our staff by members of the public are unacceptable and are taken extremely seriously: all such incidents will be pursued to the fullest extent possible. Incidents involving racial or homophobic abuse will be reported to the police, with a view to the prosecution of the perpetrator(s).

Training

A modular programme of Equality and Diversity training was first formulated in 2004 and is now being delivered. The purpose of the programme is to provide managers and employees with the skills and knowledge they need to ensure that equality becomes part of our day-to-day activities. The plan will also help to create a culture where diversity is truly valued and is seen as an asset in helping to deliver all the Fire and Rescue Service's objectives.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Impact Assessment is a way of deciding whether an existing or proposed policy, procedure, practice or service does, (or may), have a positive or adverse impact on some sections of society. An adverse impact may often be the result of not taking into account the different needs of women or men, people of different ages and sexual orientations, black and ethnic minority groups, disabled people, or people who hold a religion or belief.

All our policies and procedures were screened for possible significant adverse impact in 2005. As a result of this screening, two procedures were amended.

All policies and procedures are reviewed at least every 3 years. A process has been put in place to ensure that all new policies, and all existing policies upon revision, are assessed for adverse impact on any minority or disadvantaged groups, whether in the community or the workforce. The process used was originally developed by the Commission for Racial Equality. Where a possible adverse impact is identified in an initial screening, a fuller assessment which includes consultation will follow.

The results of Equality Impact Assessments of policies are publicised with the policy documents on the RBFRS website at http://www.rbfrs.co.uk/rbfrs_documents.html (click on RBFRS Manuals Index). If you are unable to access these documents via our website, please contact us. A list of policies that have been identified as relevant to the general duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination is at Appendix A.

Impact Assessments of our services are being conducted by the department responsible for the delivery of the service in question, following a process developed in consultation with the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government. A list of those services that have been identified as requiring assessment is shown at Appendix B. Results of Impact Assessments of services will be published on our website.

Guidance and training have been, and will continue to be, provided to employees who are responsible for undertaking Impact Assessments.

Equality Action Plan

Actions arising from Impact Assessments of policies and services will be included in our Equality Action Plan. This plan is a live document that is updated regularly and published annually as part of our Equality Strategy. The current version can be found on our website at www.rbfrs.co.uk/in_community.html.

WORKING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Partnerships

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service works in partnership with many other public agencies across Berkshire. We have a responsibility to ensure that these partnerships take account of the General Duty to promote equality, and that all members of the partnership are aware of our commitments and obligations. We will seek to ensure that the objectives of all partnership arrangements that we engage in include equality aspects.

Procurement

It is important that our policies and practices are not compromised by engaging suppliers that do not reflect our commitment to achieve the General Duty to promote equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

When a contract for services or goods is put out to tender, we require all suppliers to provide us with evidence of their eligibility to be awarded a contract. This includes information on their equal opportunities policies and whether they are, or have been, subject to formal investigations by any equality body. If a supplier has been found wanting as the result of an investigation, the Service will require evidence that the necessary improvements have been made. Failure to supply satisfactory information will be taken into account when awarding contracts.

CONSULTATION

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service understands the importance of engaging with the people of Berkshire in order to improve services and promote equality in employment.

We use a variety of consultation methods to ensure that community groups, employees and partner organisations have the opportunity to influence our decisions. The mechanism used will always be that which is most appropriate in the specific circumstances, but may include questionnaires, focus groups, face to face, open meetings or joint working groups. Each department and service area will consult with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups on its own service delivery.

Any member of the community, (as an individual or as a representative of a group), who feels that they could help us in making our consultation processes more inclusive is invited to contact the Senior HR Advisor (Equality & Diversity).

Results of consultation exercises conducted as part of impact assessments will be published as part of the assessment document. Outcomes for other consultation exercises that involve the public will be published on our website, and by other means where appropriate.

There has been full internal consultation of this Scheme through the standard consultation process. In addition the views of the following have been sought:-

[A LIST OF GROUPS/INDIVIDUALS WHOSE INPUT HAS BEEN SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED WILL BE INSERTED HERE AFTER CONSULTATION]

This Scheme and associated action plan will be made available through our website for any member of the public to comment upon.

RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

This is the additional action that we intend to take specifically to meet our General and Specific Duties in relation to Race equality.

Promotion of Employment Opportunities

RBFRS recognises the value of a workforce which reflects the multicultural community that it serves – we will have a better understanding of issues which may affect people’s safety, we will communicate better, and our messages will have more credibility. We also recognise our duty to ensure that opportunities to work with us are available to all sections of society.

BME (Black & Minority Ethnic) communities are severely under-represented in firefighting roles, and with low recruitment levels this situation is unlikely to change quickly. We are continuing to work towards increasing the number of BME applications to all roles by:-

- Engaging positively with minority communities so that we can challenge outdated or inaccurate perceptions of the Service and what we do.
- Ensuring that publicity for our vacancies reaches potential BME applicants.
- Highlighting firefighting as a high status career with opportunities for advancement, not just a “job”.
- Encouraging our existing BME employees to act as positive role models.

These measures have resulted in a small improvement in the diversity of our workforce, but further action is required. Our positive action measures will include career awareness workshops with content that addresses areas which are of particular concern to some potential BME applicants, such as accommodating religious practices and advice on English language requirements. Employee representative bodies play a vital role in these workshops.

Community Safety

RBFRS has identified that certain sections of the community are at greater risk of dwelling fires. Factors that increase risk include social deprivation, smoking, living in rented property, recent migration and limited fluency in spoken or written English - factors which may often combine and which affect proportionally more people in some communities.

In order to address this we will:-

- Continue to engage with BME communities to raise awareness of the services that we can provide, and to build trust among communities which may be suspicious of government agencies.
- Train our staff in cultural etiquette issues, so that they feel confident in engaging with people from all communities, and can do so without unintentionally causing offence.

- Target our Home Fire Risk Checks at those that we have identified are at greatest risk.

Access to Information and Services

In order to ensure that we minimise barriers for people in accessing information about RBFRS and the services that we provide, we will:-

- Make key safety information available in a range of languages.
- Continue our subscription to Languageline, an instant telephone interpretation service that our employees can use in order to facilitate communication with members of the public who speak little or no English.
- Assess the need to provide critical safety information in an oral format, as we recognise that fluency in spoken English does not automatically imply a corresponding level of literacy in English.
- Continue to ensure that any written information is as easy to read as possible.
- Continue to work with the education sector to promote safety messages in English for Speakers of Other Languages.
- Ensure that we attend community events that are of primary interest to minority communities, and place information boards in locations where they will be seen by people from minority communities.
- Consider translating corporate documents where there is demand

Procurement

We recognise that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) often find it difficult to access contracts to supply public sector organisations. We are also aware that this difficulty may impact proportionally more on those BME communities which have a higher than average involvement with SMEs. We will therefore strive to make opportunities to supply to RBFRS as widely available as possible within the constraints of competitive tendering legislation and national 'value for money' arrangements.

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

This is the additional action that we intend to take specifically to meet our General and Specific Duties in relation to Disability equality.

Involving disabled people

The specific duties expressly require the involvement of disabled people in the development of the Disability Equality Scheme. “Involvement” requires a more active engagement of disabled stakeholders than “consultation”, and the involvement of disabled service users and staff is critical to the success of the scheme, and will be an ongoing activity.

The priorities of this Scheme, and the items in the Action Plan which relate to disability, have been developed in conjunction with a variety of disabled people from around the county with specific help from the Disability Matters group in Slough, from individual members and associates of the Deaf community, and by involving disabled staff and service users, and trade unions associated with the organisation.

Employment

There is a commonly-held assumption that disabled people cannot work for a Fire and Rescue Service. While some disabilities will always be a barrier to working in operational firefighting, adjustments can be made to accommodate many disabilities. We are committed to making these adjustments both for new recruits and to help us retain existing employees. Adjustments can also be made for staff working in support roles, where a greater range of disabilities could be accommodated even within our existing buildings (which we recognise have limitations).

We recognise that flexibility is sometimes key in ensuring that a disabled person is able to secure and sustain employment. RBFRS is committed to promoting flexible working opportunities, and will make full use of options such as homeworking, flexible hours and part-time working where they facilitate the recruitment or continued employment of a disabled person.

We facilitate and encourage our disabled staff to meet to discuss any issues of relevance or concern and to raise them with the organisation.

RBFRS is proud to have achieved Disability Symbol (“2-tick”) user status in 2007, and is committed to maintaining the standards of that award, which require that we:-

- interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy, and to consider them on their abilities.
- ensure there is a mechanism in place to allow regular discussion with disabled employees over what both parties can do to make sure that disabled employees can develop and use their abilities to the full.
- make every effort to make sure that employees stay in employment if they become disabled.

- take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make sure that these commitments work.
- review these commitments each year and assess what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them, and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

Serving the public

We have identified the following areas for improvement:-

- Buildings access and the built environment – improving access to premises and other facilities, for example, by providing ramped access and hearing loop facilities.
- Communications – improving how we communicate with our customers and staff, and providing information in accessible formats.
- Community Fire Safety – disabled residents are at particular risk from dwelling fires and our programme of Home Fire Risk Checks will prioritise disabled people.
- Training – targeted training and information for all staff so that we are able to provide a better service to disabled people, and to ensure that our staff fully understand their responsibilities in relation to this Scheme.

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

This is the additional action that we intend to take specifically to meet our General and Specific Duties in relation to Gender equality.

Promotion of Employment Opportunities

Women are severely under-represented in firefighting roles, while men are under-represented in control operations and administrative roles. We will therefore work closely with careers advisors and colleges to promote the idea that girls and boys can do jobs traditionally dominated by the opposite sex, and promote positive gender role models such as female Firefighters.

Our positive action measures will include career awareness workshops with content that addresses areas which are of particular concern to women, including advice on developing their physical capabilities.

Opening Up More Part-time Working Opportunities

RBFRS is committed to its flexible working opportunities for employees at all levels, and to make this happen it will:-

- Support job share, part time and flexible working opportunities throughout the organisation. Ensuring full consideration is given to all applicants.
- Promote the availability of job share and part-time opportunities at senior levels.
- Use the Homeworking Policy to encourage retention of staff where possible.

Retained Duty System Firefighters play a vital role in RBFRS, but recruitment to these roles is difficult. We recognise that women form a largely untapped pool of possible candidates, and we are committed to promoting these opportunities and encouraging applications from them.

Support and Advice for Carers

RBFRS has a number of policies in place to support carers which include:-

- A flexible working hours scheme
- Flexible Working policy for parents and carers
- Special leave for carers of sick relatives
- Reimbursement of additional childcare costs incurred during training courses

Equal Pay

RBFRS recognises the importance of the objective evaluation of roles, to ensure that work of equal value is equally rewarded. To that end, all roles are subject to systematic analysis using a reputable Job Evaluation scheme.

We are committed to the development of an equal pay policy, and are currently carrying out an equal pay review in order to ensure that we are complying with the Equal Pay Act (1970). The review will help us to ensure that we have pay structures that are fair, and it is our intention to explore the reasons for any gender pay gaps and address issues where the gap has been influenced by gender.

The Trade Unions will be invited to become involved with all stages of the review, and progress will be reported to the Community Engagement and Equality Group in order that opportunities are given for discussion and for concerns to be raised.

In order to facilitate future equal pay reviews we will:-

- Set out a standard approach for conducting an equal pay audit on a bi-annual basis, concentrating on gender equality, but with the aim of extending this into the areas of ethnicity, ethnicity, age and disability, so that monitoring of these areas is also facilitated.
- Produce clear guidelines for conducting equal pay reviews that are based on the EOC Code of Practice, including checklists and process to follow if discrepancies are discovered.

OTHER EQUALITY STRANDS

While there is currently no legislation that requires us to promote equality and good relations in relation to other groups, we have identified some areas for action and improvement.

Age

We have identified that the vast majority of new Firefighter recruits are between the ages of 22 and 35. We are working to raise awareness of the career to people outside this age group, and in particular to counter misperceptions around an arbitrary upper age limit.

We recognise that the experience of older staff is an asset to the organisation and will not decline requests for employment beyond the age of 65 without good reason. Employees who have retired may be re-engaged, subject to compliance with the rules of any relevant pension scheme

We have identified that age, (often combined with other factors), is a factor in dwelling fire risk and will prioritise Home Fire Risk Checks for the most vulnerable.

Our pay structures are being reviewed to ensure that incremental scales are not unduly long, thus indirectly disadvantaging younger employees.

Religion or Belief

We will continue to engage with religious communities both in order to publicise safety messages and raise awareness of career opportunities.

We will try to make adjustments that would enable individuals to work for us without contravening a requirement of their faith. We recognise that the requirements of an individual's faith may sometimes be impossible to accommodate for reasons of health and safety, but are committed to continue seeking a solution for these situations.

Equality training for our staff will include issues of religion and belief so that they feel confident in engaging with people of other faiths, and can do so without causing unintentional offence.

Sexual Orientation

We will continue promoting and encouraging a culture and environment in which no employee feels it necessary to conceal their sexual orientation.

We will continue to support and attend events such as Gay Pride, in order to demonstrate that RBFRS is an organisation that respects and values all its employees, whatever their sexual orientation. We are members of Stonewall's Diversity Champion's Programme and participate in their Workplace Equality Index.

We will facilitate and encourage our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender staff to network for mutual support, and to raise with us any issues of concern.

COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

We will take all complaints seriously and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour. Members of the public who feel that they have experienced discrimination in the way the Fire and Rescue Service has treated them may make a complaint through our Corporate Complaints Procedure which is as follows:-

- You may register your comment, compliment or complaint in person, by telephone, email (reception@rbfrs.co.uk) in writing or by fax to:-
Brigade Headquarters, 103 Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4FS.
Tel: 0118 9452888, Fax number (0118) 959 0510, Email reception@rbfrs.co.uk
- If you wish, you may ask a friend to do this on your behalf. You may also contact an outside organisation (e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau) to assist you with this process. Please give your name, address, telephone/fax number or email address where you can be contacted, as this will enable us to respond promptly. Please also tell us how you wish to be contacted.
- If you have a complaint, we will endeavour to respond back to you within seven days of receiving this. However if we cannot do so within this timescale, we will contact you and advise you when we will be able to respond.
- If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you should refer the matter direct to Chief Fire Officer at the address above.
- The Chief Fire Officer will endeavour to respond within seven days of receipt. If he is unable to do so he will contact you explaining why, and give you a date by which he will respond.
- If you are still not satisfied with the response and action taken, you may appeal to The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. This appeal must be made in writing (letter, fax or email) to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer at the above address.

Monitoring of all complaints will be completed on an annual basis and reported to the Community Engagement and Equality Group. This data will be used to see whether we are meeting our equality duties.

If you have any questions or feedback regarding this Equality Scheme please contact our Equality and Diversity section at the above address.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Vacancy & Selection managers' guidelines • Transfer policy 	E, R E
Operations Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol for the Recovery of Deceased Persons 	P
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement processes 	P
Brigade Support Officers' Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attacks on Fire and Rescue Service Employees policy & procedure • Complaints procedure • Welfare & Catering for Crews at Incidents 	E P, E E
Service Delivery Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firesetters Scheme • Wearing of Long Hair • Standards of Dress • Home Risk Assessment procedure • Community Safety guidance • Incidents Involving Traveller Sites guidance 	P E, R E, R P P P
Brigade Orders – Fire Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation & Evidence Gathering procedures • Interviews with Suspects guidelines • Prosecution & Formal Caution procedures • Good Enforcement Corncordat • Seasonal Shops Campaign guidance • Pop Concerts & Pay Parties guidance • Children's activity Centres guidance • Hotels & Boarding Houses guidance • Houses in Multiple Occupation guidance • Community safety by Fire Crews guidance • Independent Schools guidance • Licensing of places of Public Entertainment & Sports guidance • Licensing Act guidance • Childminding & Day Care for Young People guidance 	P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P
Training Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training & Development and Assessment policy 	E

APPENDIX B - SERVICES FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This is the list of services which we have identified as needing impact assessment. Our aim is to complete assessments as follows:-

High priority	by 31 March 2010
Medium priority	by 30 SEPTEMBER March 2010
Low priority	by 31 March 2011

Key Area	Department	Service Provided	Priority (H,M,L)		
Finance		Payroll	L		
		Creditors	L		
		Debtors	L		
		Cash Management	L		
Performance Review		Strategic Evaluation & Monitoring	L		
Service Delivery	Prevention	Home Fire Safety Checks	H		
		Arson audits	M		
		School visits	H		
		Education	H		
		Youth engagement (phoenix, evolution, Young Firefighters, firefighter experience, sport, angling)	H		
		Youth participation	M		
		Community engagement	H		
		Road traffic collision reduction	M		
		Firesetters	H		
		Campaigns	H		
		Staff training	M		
		Partner training	L		
		Hoax call reduction	M		
		Volunteering	H		
		Safeguarding	M		
		Partnership working / support	H		
		Events	H		
		Service Delivery	Protection	Post fire inspections	L
				Building consultation	L
				Licensing application	M
Routine re-inspection	M				
Service Delivery	Response	Policy	H		
		Provision of uniform	H		
		Provision of equipment	M		
		Provision of emergency catering	H		
		Station Facilities for staff	H		
		Training	M		
		Exercising	L		
		Operational Response	M		
		CFS Activities	M		
		Other Outward facing activities	M		
		7..2.d inspections	M		
		Staff assessment	L		
		Staff recruitment	M		
		Business continuity	M		

Human Resources	Health & Safety	All aspects of health, safety and welfare guidance to Employees and Fire Authority	H
		Legislation and its application	M
		Accident Reporting and Investigation	H
		Stress Management	M
		Policy	M
		Risk Assessments	H
		Data Protection / FOI	L
		Administration	M
		Auditing	M
		Training	H
		Committees	M
		Regional Committees	M
		National	M
Human Resources	Learning & Development	Policy	L
		Commercial Training	L
		Phase 1 Training	H
		Operational Training	M
		Staff Training	M
		Contracted training	M
		Support	L
		Assessment Centre	M
Human Resources	HR	Recruitment	H
		Selection/Appointment	H
		Data Protection/FOI	L
		Equal Pay Audit	H/M
		Policy	M
		Guidance, Support, Advice	M
		Benefits and Services	L
		Equality and Diversity	M
		Health and Fitness	M
		Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programme	L
		Committees	L
		Regional	H
		Training	M
		Monitoring	M
		Administration	L (Customer bits H)
		Industrial Relations	L
		Job Evaluation	M
		Director of HR	H/M
Corporate Communications	Internal communications	Shout newsletter	H
		Intranet front page	H
		Organisational Briefing Notes	M
	External communications	Media information and press releases	H
		Community safety education and awareness	H
		Website front page	M
		Partner communications	M
		Public relations	M
		Publications and stakeholder communications	
		Internal communications	H
IT and Communications	IS	Systems Support	L
		Training	M
		ORIS Risk Assessments	H
IT and Communications	Comms	Systems Support	L

		Training	M
		ORIS Risk Assessments	H
IT and Communications	Critical Systems Support	Mobilising Systems	M
		Training	M
		ORIS Risk Assessments	H
Procurement & Facilities	Procurement	Purchasing	H
		Contracts Tendering and Selection	H
Procurement & Facilities	Facilities	Contract Management - Premises related	M
		Contract Management - Environment related	M
		Contract Management - staff related	M
		Provision of Washroom Facilities	L
		Provision of Reception facilities	L
Transport		Fleet provision	M
		Fleet maintenance	M
		Fleet management	M
		Fleet administration	M
		Equipment provision	M
		Equipment maintenance	L
Support Services	Integrated Risk Management Plan	Risk modelling & analysis	M
		IRMP communication & consultation	H
		Project research and analysis	M
Support Services	Fire Safety Policy	Policy development	M
		Service Delivery link	M
		Enforcement Action	M
Support Services	Technical	Document management	L
		Water	L
		Equipment Research	H
Support Services	Ops Support	Breathing apparatus	H
		ORIS (Operational Risk Information System)	L
		Ops Support	L
		Emergency Planning	L
		Contingency Planning	L
		Environment	L

APPENDIX C EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

Our Equality Action Plan is an active document that is reviewed annually. The plan in this document was approved by the Fire Authority in September 2009, and a Current version can be found at www.rbfrs.co.uk/in_community.html.)

	Action	Outcome	Target time-scale	Equality strand
1	All stations with significant minority ethnic communities to have on-going links with local minority ethnic community organisations	Evidence of involvement in community activities and provision of facilities for community activities where appropriate.	Relationships established at Stns 1, 3, & 20 by 31 Dec 09	Race
3	Attend minority community events with recruitment & fire safety information	Visible presence and engagement with minority communities.	Ongoing	Race. Sexual Orientation. Religion
4	Review provision of information to the public on the website	All sections of community able to access safety and recruitment information.	Ongoing	Race, Disability, Age
5	Progress the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG)	Continuous improvement in standard achieved, as verified in CPA.	March 10 level 3	All
6	Publish Single Equality Scheme	Scheme conforms to ESLG requirements	30 Sept 09	All
7	Closely monitor case law developments in relation to age issues and amend policies to comply	Simple, workable policies that are legally compliant and reflect best practice.	31 Dec 10	Age
8	Work in partnership with ESOL training providers to include fire safety messages within the material they deliver.	Improve fire safety awareness and knowledge of RBFRS role (& how to access) among speakers of other languages	30 Nov 10	Race,
9	Develop a training workshop for RBFRS staff on communicating with learners of English as part of Know your Community	Staff can make themselves more easily understood by speakers of other languages	31/12/09	Race

10	Develop new WT mentor scheme to include RDS and non-operational staff	New staff members staff feel supported	31 Dec 11	All
11	Deliver modular EO training programme to Firefighters	Detailed training delivered in a way which highlights ongoing commitment	31 Dec 10	All
12	Further develop the relationship with Connexions and extend to New Directions, inc a further event for careers advisors	Knowledge of and interest in careers in RBFRS raised at a younger age among girls and BME pupils	31 Dec 10	Race, Gender
13	Review RBFRS approach to consultation	Larger consultation audience, more community input., better feedback on which to base decisions	31 Dec 08 (Carried over as unachieved – review 31/12/09)	All
14	Ensure all non operational staff receive modular EO awareness training which will cover cultural awareness/ transgender awareness and disability awareness	Will ensure staff are familiar with dealing with all members of the public in a professional and respectful manner	31 Dec 2009	All
15	Work with regional partners to explore ways to facilitate networking for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff	LGBT staff feel supported	30 June 2011	Sexual Orientation
16	Publish guidelines on support for employees with dyslexia	Range of support mechanisms available and easily accessed	30 Sep 09	Disability
17	Carry out a biennial equal pay audit as part of a rolling	Implementation of remedial measures to correct any unjustified pay differences between men and women in respect of work of the same or equal	Dec 10 (non uniform)	Gender

	programme	value.		
18	Produce guidance to ensure improved recording of information on pay to enable effective comparison between jobs.	Improved levels of information to allow for better comparison between jobs.	31 Dec 2008 (carried over as unachieved - review March 10)	Gender
19	All departments(Key Areas) to complete a Self assessment in relation to the Equality Standard for Local Government for level 3	To enable RBFRS to achieve Level 3 of the ESFLG	31 Dec 09	All
20	Review policies following the introduction of the Equality Act	RBFRS legally compliant	Within 9 months of final publication of the Act	All
21	Review recruitment documentation and processes to facilitate highly confidential monitoring of religion and sexual orientation in recruitment.	Some monitoring of these areas can commence	31 Dec 09	Religion, Sexual Orientation
22	Explore delivery of advanced level lessons in English for Emergency Service Workers, in partnership with police/ambulance	Experienced firefighters from other countries are helped to achieve the required standard, (potentially saving training costs)	31 Dec 10	Race
23	Review arrangements for equality monitoring of training and service provision (eg new FDR1 forms, Prevention)	Better data on which to base decisions, better compliance with legislation	31 Sept 10	All
24	Source new photos for use in recruitment literature.	A range of photos available that don't just show white men, so that under-represented groups feel	31/3/10	Gender, Race

		welcome to apply.		
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APPENDIX D SCHEME IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Directorate: HR		Department/Section: HR (Equality & Diversity)		Manager Name: Becci Jefferies Author Name: Kathie Summers		Author Telephone No.	
						Author e-mail:	
Name of Policy/Service to be assessed	Single Equality Scheme			Date of Assessment	8 th May 09	Is this a new or existing policy?	New
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/service.		To bring together and update existing Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes, and to extend the same approach to other strands of equality, in order to address inequality and under representation within the organisation.					
2. Who is intended to benefit from this policy/service, and in what way?		All employees and members of the public by ensuring fair treatment of all in relation to employment and services.					
3. What outcomes are wanted from this policy/service?		A workforce which more accurately reflects the communities of Berkshire. Improved service provision to the communities of Berkshire. To fulfil the requirements of equality legislation and the Equality Scheme for Local Government.					
4. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy/service?		Fire Authority, senior management and managers, employee representatives, community		5. Who implements the policy/service, and who is responsible?		All managers and FRS employees with extended responsibilities under HR	

	representatives				
6. Are there concerns that the policy/service has/could have a differential impact on the following groups and what existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?			Please explain		
Race	Y	N	Y		
Gender	Y	N	Y		
Disability	Y	N	Y		
Has this policy been written in line with the 2005/07 – General Guidance for Producing Written Communication, found in the Support Services Manual (If no please indicate justification)	Y	N	y		
Religion or Belief	Y	N	Y		
Sexual Orientation	Y	N	Y		
Age	Y	N	Y		

Contractual Status (Eg Part Time or Retained etc)	Y	N	n
7. Could the differential impact identified in 6 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy/service?	Y	N	N - the purpose of this scheme is to reduce discrimination and improve service outcomes for all equality strands
8. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Have you consulted those who are likely to be affected by the policy/service?	Y	N	Please explain for each equality heading (questions 6) on a separate piece of paper. N/A Yes
9. Should the policy/service proceed to a full impact assessment?	Y	N N	10. Date on which Full assessment to be completed by. Date:

I am satisfied that this policy has been properly impact assessed.

I understand the Impact assessment of this policy is a statutory obligation and that, as owners of this policy, we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this process.

Completing officer name Jacky Manning Date _____

Line Manager name Becci Jefferies Date _____

Please note – this impact assessment will be scrutinised by the Community Engagement and Equality Group.