

**PROMOTING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ON MERSEYSIDE 2010 – 2013**

**An Intentional Inclusion Strategy**

**MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

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### **Foreword by Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer**

I am pleased to introduce Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's Equality Scheme that sets out our commitment to promote equality and diversity on Merseyside. This is an intentional inclusion strategy that enables all people on Merseyside to access the workplace opportunities as well as the services we offer and the community programmes we run.

Our Vision has always been broad and challenging. We have been at the forefront of innovation, looking at new ways to deliver on our commitment to equality. However, I am not complacent and I recognise that there is still a lot that we can achieve. We have challenging equality targets set out in our Service Plan which are designed to make this Equality Scheme a reality.

I am immensely proud of what we do and the way we do it. Our staff are our most important resource and it is through them, with the support of our Authority members and our partner agencies that we will continue to deliver an excellent service to the people of Merseyside.

**Chief Executive and Chief Fire Officer AJ McGuirk**

### **Foreword by Chairman of the Fire Authority**

As Chair and as 'Diversity Champion' for the Authority, I am delighted to present and endorse Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service's Single Equality Scheme for 2010-2013. Merseyside is culturally and socially diverse, with a mixture of people from different background, cultures, beliefs and from different walks of life. MF&RS is committed to developing a culture that respects and values differences in others and to providing genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of our activities.

As with all public authorities, we face challenging times over the next few years, and therefore it is more important than ever that equality and diversity is at the forefront of all that we do, both in delivering our services to the communities of Merseyside and in meeting the aspirations of those who work for us and with us.

We have developed sound structures that facilitate the mainstreaming and embedding of good equality and diversity practices and only by embedding these principles, we are able to achieve our vision of 'Making Merseyside a Safer, Stronger, Healthier Community'.

**Councillor A Newman**

## SECTION 1: MF&RS COMMUNITY PROFILE

### Community Mapping

Merseyside covers an area of 653 sq.km: stretching from Southport in the North to Speke in the South, it extends to Newton le Willows and the M6 in the East and the Wirral in the West. Merseyside has a resident population of some 1.4million. Although we have pockets of affluence, for example in West Wirral and North Sefton, large areas of Merseyside fall within the highest ratings of social deprivation.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation show that 40% of the wards in Merseyside are ranked in the top 5% of the most deprived wards in England. All the local authorities in Merseyside are within the top 20% of the most income-deprived in England. There is a direct correlation between deprivation and greater risk from fire and our various risk mapping techniques have enabled us to identify “hot spot” areas where greatest effort may be concentrated to reduce the risk. The 20% most deprived wards are over twice as likely to have a fire or fire related injury as the 20% that are least deprived.

National statistics show the risk of death from fire is 16 times higher among children in the lower socio-economic group compared to children in the highest. Arson rates are 30 times higher in poorer areas with a 15 times increased chance of death compared to affluent areas. It is a sad fact that an older person is far more likely to die in a fire than any other age group.

The 2001 census data indicated that Merseyside has an increasingly aged population (compared to 1991 census data), particularly in Sefton (18% increase in 85 year olds) and Wirral (17% increase in 85 year olds).

The numbers of pensioners living alone in Merseyside has increased by more than the national average in the 10 years between the censuses. Furthermore, the number of pensioners with a long term limiting illness has increased by over 30% in both Knowsley and Liverpool, although the number of pensioners in rented property has decreased by over 30%. Older people are particularly vulnerable to fire with the vast majority of fire deaths occurring in the over 60s age group. Often this is accompanied by other factors that add to the vulnerability such as mobility and sensory difficulties, and a lack of ability to respond to danger. The elderly are statistically less likely to have a smoke alarm than many other groups in society. When additional factors such as living longer and consequently often living alone longer and the effects of limiting illness are added, the risks to this group increase.

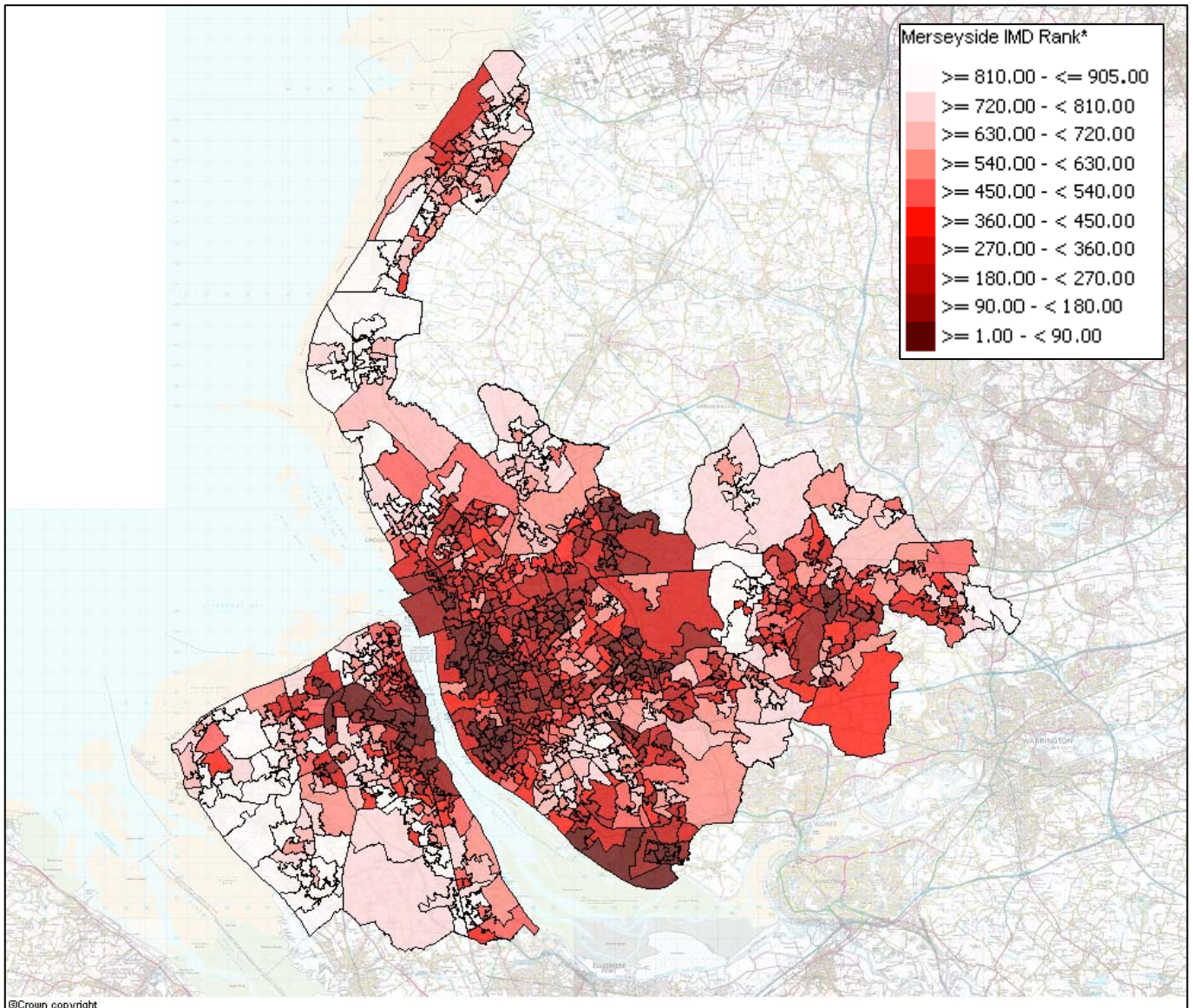
Merseyside has an increasing diversity of people. The census also found a big increase in the number of people born outside of the United Kingdom living on Merseyside. Nationally this increase is 37%. Most areas of Merseyside show increases of less than the national average with the exception of Liverpool where it has increased by 56%. We are actively engaging with people from 31 different language groups and, as Liverpool is the fourth highest recipient of dispersed asylum seekers in the UK, these numbers will increase.

## Deprivation

Created by Communities for Local Government, Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007 is based on lower layer super output area (SOA) geography. SOA are small areas containing between 1000 and 3000 people. There are 905 SOA in the Merseyside area.

IMD 2007 is based on seven domains of deprivation (income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime). Each domain is scored per SOA and a total score given. The SOA are then ranked UK wide and have also been ranked for Merseyside only. \*Merseyside IMD Rank ranges from 1 to 905 where 1 is the most deprived

Merseyside has 320 SOA that are within the UK top 10% most deprived according to the IMD 2007. This is a significant proportion of the total number of SOA in Merseyside with 35.36%. Of the 320 most deprived SOA in Merseyside, 162 (over 50%) are within the Liverpool district.



## Merseyside Statistics

### Age

The number of dependant people i.e. children and pensioners make up over 38% of the population of Merseyside. (ONS/Census mid-2007 estimate)

	Merseyside	%
0 – 15	250,600	18.56
16 – 29	263,600	19.52
30 – 44	265,600	19.67
45 – pensionable age	302,500	22.41
Pensionable age and over	267,800	19.84

### Disability

At 21.69% over 2 in 10 people resident to Merseyside are eligible for disability living allowance. (Department for Work and Pensions, May 2008)

	Merseyside
Number of population entitled to DLA	240,680
All Others	1,109,520
Percentage of population entitled to DLA	21.69%

### Gender

The gender gap within Merseyside shows a female to male difference of 3.72%. There is a difference of 0.9% more females and fewer males in Merseyside than the North-West. (ONS/Census mid-2007 estimate)

	Merseyside	North-West
Male	649,900 (48.14%)	3,366,300 (49.04%)
Female	700,200 (51.86%)	3,497,900 (50.96%)

### Minority Ethnic Groups

The proportion of minority ethnic groups is a lot smaller in Merseyside than the whole of the North-West. Over 97% of Merseyside is white and all other groups are each under 1% of the population. (ONS/Census mid-2006 estimate)

	Merseyside	Merseyside %	North-West
White	2,648,700	97.84	13,194,100
Mixed	15,900	0.59	81,500
Black and Black British	11,400	0.42	70,300
Asian and Asian British	16,100	0.59	290,400
Chinese and Other	15,100	0.56	69,800

### Gypsies and Travellers

Merseyside has a small gypsy and traveller community with settled sites in Sefton, St Helens and Liverpool.

No Authorised Caravans		No Unauthorised Caravans		Total No Caravans
Socially Rented	Private	"Tolerated"	"Not tolerated"	
61	24	7	1	93



### Religion

82.4% of the population of Merseyside is of the Christian religion and 16.18% either have “no religion” or “religion not stated” . This leaves a total of just 1.34% of the population with other religious beliefs. (ONS/Census 2001)

	Merseyside	%	North-West	%
<b>Christian</b>	1,122,356	82.40	5,249,686	78.01
<b>Buddhist</b>	2,298	0.17	11,794	0.18
<b>Hindu</b>	2,508	0.18	27,211	0.40
<b>Jewish</b>	3,803	0.28	27,974	0.42
<b>Muslim</b>	8,344	0.61	204,261	3.04
<b>Sikh</b>	774	0.06	6,487	0.10
<b>Other</b>	1,584	0.12	10,625	0.16
<b>No Religion</b>	118,116	8.67	705,045	10.48
<b>Religion Not Stated</b>	102,243	7.51	486,681	7.23

### Household Structure

The composition of households shows that above 25% of all lone parent households in the North-West are within the Merseyside area. There are also high numbers of students and pensioners residing in Merseyside in comparison to the whole of the North-West region. (ONS / Census 2001)

		Mersey/ side	North- West	
<b>One person</b>	<b>Pensioner</b>	91479	423623	
	<b>Other</b>	94470	446611	
<b>One family and no others</b>	<b>All pensioner</b>	46260	238711	
	<b>Married couple households</b>	<b>No children</b>	57270	345657
		<b>With 1 child</b>	32487	178350
		<b>With 2 or more children</b>	56509	302627
		<b>All children / non-dependent</b>	39625	182482
	<b>Cohabiting couple family households</b>	<b>No children</b>	18129	115123
		<b>With 1 child</b>	8089	47752
		<b>With 2 or more children</b>	8773	49118
	<b>Lone parent households</b>	<b>All children / non-dependent</b>	1740	9519
		<b>With 1 child</b>	28223	112331
<b>With 2 or more children</b>		27014	103279	
<b>Other Households</b>	<b>All children / non-dependent</b>	25204	97737	
	<b>With 1 child</b>	7465	30542	
	<b>With 2 or more children</b>	7096	32186	
	<b>All student</b>	2387	9137	
	<b>All Pensioner</b>	2926	11378	
	<b>Other</b>	16162	76626	

## SECTION 2: DIMENSIONS OF EQUALITY

### Equalities Review

In 2006 the government established an independent Equalities Review into the causes of persistent discrimination and inequality in British society. The Final Report of the Equalities Review "Fairness and Freedom" was published in February 2007. It identified 10 dimensions of equality

1. **Longevity:** including avoiding premature mortality
2. **Physical security:** including freedom from violence and physical and sexual abuse
3. **Health:** including both well-being and access to high quality healthcare
4. **Education:** including both being able to be creative, to acquire skills and qualifications and having access to training and life-long learning
5. **Standard of living:** including being able to live with independence and security; and covering nutrition, clothing, housing, warmth, utilities, social services and transport
6. **Productive and valued activities:** such as access to employment, a positive experience in the workplace, work/life balance, and being able to care for others
7. **Individual, family and social life:** including self-development, having independence and equality in relationships and marriage
8. **Participation, influence and voice:** including participation in decision-making and democratic life
9. **Identity, expression and self-respect:** including freedom of belief and religion
10. **Legal security:** including equality and non-discrimination before the law and equal treatment within the criminal justice system

### Statement on Socio-Economic Inequality

MF&RS recognises that these dimensions of equality can adversely affect people's risk of being a victim of fire and other emergencies, their access to safety advice and their health and well-being. These socio-economic inequalities underpin and drive our service delivery programmes which, in turn, have a positive impact on our employment profile.

***This Equality Scheme sets out our intentional inclusion strategy by which we address socio-economic disadvantage across Merseyside.***

It will be continually reviewed and revised every three years.



### SECTION 3: STATEMENTS ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN MF&RS

We take into account all the protected characteristics in all that we do:

#### Statement on Age Equality

MF&RS is committed to promoting equality by providing a workplace and services to the people on Merseyside without unnecessary or unlawful discrimination because of age or because they are associated with or perceived to be a person of a particular age.

#### Service Delivery

We recognise that age can be a factor when identifying risks of fire or injury. Young people can become fascinated by fire and may be unconcerned about the risks of fire. We target diversion, disruption and educational services for young people in order to reduce the risk of fire and other emergencies. We also target older people, particularly those who develop mobility or mental health disabilities, who may be at increased risk.

#### Employment

We consider everyone for employment on the basis of their ability to perform the requirements of the role. We operate an age bar for recruits to firefighter posts of 18, based on the limitations of legislation that covers shift working, long hours working and the health, safety and welfare of children under 18.

#### Outcomes & Successes

*We employ Older Persons Advocates (some are “older persons” themselves) who work with older people and groups who specialise in services for older people. They have received training to ensure that the most vulnerable older people are receiving all of the welfare benefits to which they are entitled. In this way the Advocates tackle the root cause of poverty which in turn reduces an individual’s vulnerability. For example, if someone cannot afford to pay their electricity bill they may resort to using candles or paraffin heaters, which can increase risk. As a consequence of our efforts many older people at risk have been able to continue living in their own homes.*

*In 2005/6 we were awarded Beacon status for “Services for Older People”, and by acting as Peer Mentors during 2006/7 we worked in partnership with London Fire Brigade and Cleveland Fire and Rescue Service to develop their services to older people.*

## Statement on Disability Equality

MF&RS is committed to promoting equality by providing a workplace and services to the people on Merseyside without unnecessary or unlawful discrimination because of disability or because they are associated with or perceived to be a disabled person.

We have adopted the “social model” of disability which defines disability as “the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal level with others due to social and environmental barriers”. We are working to remove barriers that may disadvantage disabled people from taking a full part in social and economic life on Merseyside.

### Service Delivery

We recognise that disability can be a factor when identifying risks from fire and other emergencies. People with mental or mobility impairments can be at particular risk. We target services at disabled people in order to reduce the risk of fire and hate crime.

### Employment

We consider everyone for employment on the basis of their ability to perform the requirements of the role. We are members of the Employers’ Forum on Disability. We have a Disability Forum for our disabled staff and those with caring responsibilities for a disabled person. We will make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and job holders to enable them to undertake their role. We have been awarded the “Two Ticks” symbol by Jobcentre Plus in recognition of our commitments to employ, keep and develop the abilities of disabled staff.

### Outcomes & Successes

*“I visited Mr K and his partner. Mr K is suffering from cancer and is bed bound. His partner has mobility problems and uses a walking stick. They live in the top floor flat of a 3 storey block. The communal stairs are narrow, steep and do not have any emergency lighting or smoke detectors. The front door has been previously ‘kicked in’ and is not secure. Mr K and his partner would have no means of escape in the event of a fire due to there being no exterior fire escape. Social Services are trying to secure suitable alternative accommodation, care workers visit daily.*

*A phone call was made to a social worker. Mr K had been offered sheltered accommodation, but that would have meant him being separated from his girlfriend. She informed me that she has written to Liverpool City Council and Access Housing in an effort to re-house Mr K in a more suitable home as a matter of urgency. We did a similar thing, from a Community Fire Safety angle, highlighting Mr K’s mobility problems and subsequent inability to vacate the premises in an emergency situation. Mr K has now been re housed with his carer/girlfriend in a bungalow which has all the adaptations necessary”.*

**DISABILITY ADVOCATE**

*“A family in Rockferry had a telephone-linked smoke alarm installed in November due to all members of the family having various conditions which meant that they were unlikely or unable to respond to an ordinary or a deaf smoke alarm. At 11.20pm just a week later a call was received from Wirral Partnership Homes call centre where the alarm had sounded. They couldn’t get in touch with anyone at the property, so alerted the Fire Service. Crews from Bromborough attended and discovered that the alarm had been triggered by a discarded cigarette thrown into a waste paper basket which caught fire. The occupants were apparently completely oblivious to the alarm actuating. However the system operated effectively and the rapid response of the staff in the monitoring centre meant that the Fire Service extinguished the fire with very little damage. One female occupant aged 76 suffered smoke inhalation and received treatment from paramedics”.*

**OLDER PERSONS ADVOCATE**

*“Whilst at an event I was approached by a local MP who had concerns about a local family: a mother, her daughter and son who had learning disabilities. The house was in a poor state of repair and he said they did not appear to be supported and could be at possible risk of fire.*

*I called at the property and the daughter answered the door but refused to let me in. I arranged to go back when the Mum was present. I returned later in the week to find an array of problems: the family is known to Social Services however the Mum has refused any assistance in the past. the son has no social skills, the daughter had also been diagnosed with low level learning disability and the mother has a mental health condition. The house was heated by calor gas heaters and they had had a recent kitchen fire due to careless smoking; Careless smoking, unsafe cooking practices were just some of the issues I noticed during the visit.*

*I fitted a smoke alarm and provided them with fire proof bedding and a deep fat fryer. With the mother’s permission I mediated with Social Services and arranged support for her son. The family also qualified for a disability grant which allowed them to have adaptations made to the house. We arranged for a WarmFront grant for loft insulation, central heating and double glazing”.*

**DISABILITY ADVOCATE**

*We employ two Advocates who can communicate in British Sign Language (BSL). They are both deaf and have extended our engagement with people from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities enormously. In order to support their employment, we delivered training, including BSL training to managers and staff. This has enabled us to employ other deaf and hard of hearing people in a range of posts in MF&RS.*

## **Statement on Gender Reassignment Equality**

MF&RS is committed to promoting equality by providing a workplace and services to the people on Merseyside without unnecessary or unlawful discrimination because someone is a trans person or because they are associated with or perceived to be a trans person.

We regard gender reassignment as a matter of gender, although we recognise that many trans people feel more comfortable with people from the lesbian and gay community.

### **Service Delivery**

We are committed to dealing sensitively and confidentially with trans people, recognising that some will suffer high levels and incidents of harassment and hate crime that can involve fire/arson as a weapon. We are committed to dealing with people as the gender that they present without question or judgement.

### **Employment**

We consider everyone for employment on the basis of their ability to perform the requirements of the role. We have a specific policy for Transgender Matters and have provided specific training for staff.

We do not seek information on a person's trans status at any stage. Should a member of staff indicate that they are to start gender reassignment we will support them to do so. An individual plan will be formulated with the staff from our People and Organisational Development directorate, the trans person and their line manager.

## **Statement on Marriage and Civil Partnership Equality**

MF&RS is committed to promoting equality by providing a workplace and services to the people on Merseyside without unnecessary or unlawful discrimination because they are married or a civil partner.

We recognise that married or civil partnership status does not necessarily affect a person's family status, and that single people as well as those in a marriage or civil partnership may have responsibilities for a partner, children or older relatives.

### **Service Delivery**

We target some services at people who may be more likely to live alone, such as older people; and single parents where there may be one adult in a family unit. We recognise domestic violence as a hate crime and that men as well as women and people in same sex relationships can be victims.

However, our service delivery programmes do not distinguish between people who are married or a partner in a civil partnership and people who are not married or a partner in a civil partnership.

### **Employment**

Our employment policies do not treat people who are married or a partner in a civil partnership less favourably than people who are not married or not a partner in a civil partnership, save in respect of lawfully permitted treatment under the Firefighters Pension Scheme (1992) (amended) 2004. The New Firefighters Pension Scheme 2006 and the Local Government Pension Scheme provides for the same treatment of co-habiting partners of the same and opposite sex, married people and partners in a civil partnership.

## **Statement on Pregnancy and Maternity Equality**

MF&RS is committed to promoting equality by providing a workplace and services to women on Merseyside without unnecessary or unlawful discrimination because of her pregnancy, maternity or because she is breast feeding her baby.

### **Service Delivery**

We target our services to mothers who are young and/or live with their children as the sole adult in a family unit. Our work with teenagers on our Youth Engagement programmes includes information on sexual health and pregnancy.

### **Employment**

We have leaflets for women and their managers that explain what women and their managers need to do during their pregnancy and in preparation for their return to work. These are issued as soon as a woman declares her pregnancy. We have a maternity uniform and can provide other clothing as required. We keep in touch with women on maternity leave, and provide them with details of all vacancies for employment. We consider everyone for employment on the basis of their ability to perform the requirements of the role irrespective of their pregnancy or family status. We actively promote the use of Keeping in Touch (KIT) days so that women on maternity leave can take advantage of activities at work.

We have an enhanced occupational maternity scheme and we offer enhanced maternity and parental leave arrangements. Our policies also apply to people who adopt.

We also seek to retain women employees and recognise that people with caring responsibilities may need particular help to combine work with their family needs. We operate a Flexible Working Panel to consider applications for flexible working across the Service. We consider favourably any and all applications for flexible working.

## Statement on Race Equality

MF&RS is committed to promoting equality by providing a workplace and services to the people on Merseyside without unnecessary or unlawful discrimination because of race, ethnic origin, nationality or colour or because they are associated with or perceived to be a person from a particular race, ethnic origin, nationality or colour.

### Service Delivery

We recognise that race can be a factor when identifying risks from fire and other emergencies. People newly arrived in this country including refugees and asylum seekers, people whose first language is not English, and people who are excluded from mainstream society such as gypsies and travellers, can be at particular risk of fire and hate crime. We have worked with representatives of minority ethnic groups on Merseyside and employ a number of specialist Advocates to provide services that better fit the needs of people from minority ethnic groups.

### Employment

We consider everyone for employment on the basis of their ability to perform the requirements of the role. We have employment targets for black and minority ethnic (BME) staff and operate positive action recruitment initiatives to attract more people from BME backgrounds to work for us. We support an internal Network for BME staff.

### Outcomes & Successes

*We employ Community Safety Advocates who work directly with minority communities to deliver our services. We currently employ five Bi-Lingual Advocates including a Somali Advocate, an Asian Community Advocate, an Arabic Advocate, two Chinese Advocates and an Asylum & Refugee Advocate. They promote our services at local community events, engage directly and consult with minority communities and provide a visual role model for those who may be interested in a career with us.*

*"In Sefton I sit on the Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group. We have a good relationship with the G&T community and carry out Community Engagement Visits approximately every three months. I have also organised a Community Safety event on the G&T site to enable us and our partner organisations to deliver vital home fire safety, health and well being, children's services information and crime prevention advice. We have provided smoke detectors and carbon monoxide monitors as the community is at particular risk because of the heating appliances they use".*

**STATION MANAGER**



*I met an elderly Chinese couple at a Winter Survival Campaign. They did not understand any English. They expressed that the smoke alarm in their house downstairs was not working. They were living in a terraced house. There was no central heating system and the only way they could get warm in winter was the old wall fire in the living room. The staircase was steep. I replaced the smoke alarm for them and carried out a Home Fire Safety Check. I also asked them whether they had any benefits before. They told me that they were not aware of what benefits they were entitled to due to the language barrier. What they got was only affordable for their basic living. I also found out that the elderly lady had difficulty to climb up and down the stairs. I then contacted the Age Concern for them. I carried out a number of joint visits with the officer of the Age Concern and Occupational Therapist. I also offered my service as an interpreter in the visits. After a few months, I was informed by the Age Concern officer that the benefit of the couple had been increased. They also obtained a grant of £500 to improve the condition of their house. The lady had received some adaptations to ease her mobility problem, for example hand rails fitted at the stairs and bathroom. These did not only help her to get down from upstairs, but also helped her to escape in case of fire.*

**CHINESE BI-LINGUAL ADVOCATE**

*I received a call from the Arabic Centre asking if I would visit an elderly gentleman who lived on his own and had mental health problems. He had had a small fire because he left a pan on the cooker. The referral had gone to the Arabic Centre via a social worker because the gentleman does not speak any English and the Arabic Centre passed it on to me.*

*I went to the flat with the social worker. We knocked on the door but there was no response from the gentleman even though he was aware we were attending and we could hear movement in the flat. I decided to talk through the letter box in Arabic to reassure him as he appeared very confused and scared. On entering the flat it became very apparent that the gentleman was struggling with his housekeeping and he had mobility problems. There was evidence of the recent fire in the kitchen – all the walls near the cooker were black and the smell of smoke was very overpowering.*

*I explained that I would be putting smoke alarms up but the gentleman refused point blank. He was convinced they were cameras to watch what he was doing, so I showed him how they worked and explained that they were to save his life if there was ever another fire in his house. Slowly he came round to the idea and the alarms went up.*

*I contacted the Housing Association and told them about the fire. They promised to sort out the kitchen. I visited the gentleman 2 weeks later and the kitchen had been replaced. Carers were visiting twice a day to help with his tidying up and cooking. By working with our partners we were able to provide everything this gentleman needed.*

**ARABIC BI-LINGUAL ADVOCATE**

## Statement on Religion or Belief Equality

MF&RS is committed to promoting equality by providing a workplace and services to the people on Merseyside without unnecessary or unlawful discrimination because of religion or belief or because they are associated with someone or perceived to have a particular religion or belief. This includes people with no religion or belief.

### Service Delivery

We recognise that religion or belief can be a factor when identifying risks from fire and other emergencies. Some religions use candles as part of their worship and this can pose particular hazards at particular times. We have targeted our services at places of worship for some religious groups as being particularly vulnerable to hate crime attacks.

### Employment

We consider everyone for employment on the basis of their ability to perform the requirements of the role.

### Outcomes & Successes

*Following consultation with staff we developed a 'modesty tunic' for female Muslim staff, which enables them to carry out their duties, whilst still protecting their modesty, as required by the Muslim faith.*

*"As the Gaza conflict escalated at the beginning of 2009, we predicted a likelihood of increased tension and risk for members of the Jewish community on Merseyside. In partnership with the Community Safety Trust we conducted hate crime risk assessments on six Synagogues, two Schools, and several addresses where members of the Jewish community lived or socialised in order to reduce risk by target hardening and reassure the community".*

#### **GROUP MANAGER**

*"On behalf of the CST on Merseyside I would like to thank MFRS for the efficient and positive manner in executing this initiative. It is certainly reassuring to know that the various agencies involved recognise the current situation and its possible effect on the Jewish community."*

**David Coleman, Chairman, Community Security Trust**

*As part of our Intentional Inclusion Strategy we have published a Handbook on Reaching all Communities on Merseyside which gives advice on how to deal with people from over 30 minority communities on Merseyside.*

## Statement on Sex Equality

MF&RS is committed to promoting equality by providing a workplace and services to the people on Merseyside without unnecessary or unlawful discrimination because of sex or because they are associated with someone or perceived to be of a particular sex.

MF&RS is committed to achieving equality between men and women in terms of pay and other terms of employment, including the terms of our pension schemes, where the work of men and women is equal.

### Service Delivery

We classify domestic violence as a Hate Crime and have a comprehensive Domestic Violence policy which addresses concerns in employment raised by victims and perpetrators, and our Threat Response Group (TRG) provides extensive help and advice in circumstances where domestic violence is thought to be a factor in a fire call. Training is delivered to staff on issues relating to domestic violence to help them handle incidents that may arise.

### Employment

We consider everyone for employment on the basis of their ability to perform the requirements of the role. We have recruitment targets for women firefighters and operate positive action recruitment initiatives to attract more women to work in these roles. We have a Women's Forum for staff and we are active members of Networking Women in the Fire Service.

We monitor the pay of men and women across the Service; we identify and publish information regarding our Gender Pay Gap and we are committed to taking action to reduce that gap.

### Outcomes & Successes

*At the end of 2009 we employed 37 women Community Firefighters (3.9% of the total operational staff). We have developed a range of innovative shift patterns, including reduced hours, term time working and fixed shifts. In areas where we have non-standard shift patterns, we employed proportionately more women operational officer – in Low Level Activity & Risk (LLAR) stations we employed 6% women operational staff and 13% in the Search & Rescue Team (SRT)*

*In partnership with our neighbouring FRS, Sefton NHS and the Men's Health Forum we ran a programme to encourage men to access health care services during Men's Health Week in June 2009*

*"I was recently door-knocking at a number of asylum properties in Liverpool to carry out home fire safety checks. I accessed the home of a young African woman who had a baby. I carried out a home fire safety check and fitted smoke detectors; however I felt that the risk of fire was still very high. The lady suffered from epilepsy and her medication made her drowsy and confused. She also regularly used a chip pan to cook traditional African food. While I was there a man was in the property who did not live there, and the atmosphere seemed quite tense. I re-visited the property a couple of days later to give the lady a deep fat fryer, which would reduce the fire risk should she fall ill whilst cooking. I spent some time chatting to her about a number of issues, and it became apparent that she was having problems with her asylum claim and wasn't receiving any legal advice. She also disclosed that she felt very isolated, and had been experiencing domestic violence from a former partner who was harassing her. She was scared to inform anyone because he had told her that because he was a British citizen and she was 'just an asylum seeker' she had no rights, no-one would believe her and she would be deported. I referred this lady to a project that provides support to refugees and asylum seeking families who could give her expert advice regarding her asylum claim and also support regarding her child. I also referred her to a local domestic violence charity that has specialist expertise of working with ethnic minority women, and in particular, refugees and asylum seekers. I also advised her to visit her GP to discuss her medication and the side effects. The lady began getting regular support from both organisations".*

**REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKER ADVOCATE**

## Statement on Sexual Orientation Equality

MF&RS is committed to promoting equality by providing a workplace and services to the people on Merseyside without unnecessary or unlawful discrimination because of sexual orientation or because they are associated with someone or perceived to be of a particular sexual orientation.

### Service Delivery

We recognise that sexual orientation can be a factor when identifying risks from fire and other emergencies. We target services at lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people and are sensitive to the needs of LGB people, in particular in respect of hate crime.

### Employment

We consider everyone for employment on the basis of their ability to perform the requirements of the role. We are active members of the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme and aim to be in the top 100 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. We support an LGB Workplace Network and have supported staff to attend the Stonewall Leadership Programme.

### Outcomes & Successes

*In 2007 we teamed up with Merseyside Police's LGB&T community drop in. This takes place twice monthly in the heart of Liverpool's commercial LGB&T community, and provides an opportunity for us to promote our services as an organisation, and to promote the organisation as an employer of choice*

*We have been involved as a partner along with Connexions, Children's services, the Armistead Centre and others in the production of an educational resource pack, aimed at combating homophobia in schools. The 'It's not OK' film and associated resources went live at the end of 2008, and the Diversity Team and Youth Engagement teams have been involved in its development.*

*We regularly take part in Manchester Pride and use the event to promote our positive action recruitment campaign.*

## **SECTION 4: MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

### **Responsibility**

The Chief Fire Officer has overall responsibility for the delivery of equality and diversity throughout MF&RS. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer has responsibility for this Equality Scheme and the associated Action Plan.

The Diversity Team is part of the Performance and Values Directorate reporting through the Director of Performance and Values to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. The Diversity Team provides professional advice and guidance to managers on the delivery of actions under the Action Plan, pro-actively supports the delivery of the Action Plan throughout the Service and supports the Diversity Action Group (DAG) which monitors and drives forward the implementation of the Action Plan.

Two members of the Fire Authority sit on the DAG as Equality and Diversity Champions. The Authority's Performance and Audit Committee scrutinises the work of the DAG and provides the opportunity to discuss matters of interest.

### **Diversity Action Group**

A representative from each department sits on the DAG which is chaired by our Equality Advisor who provides a strategic overview of the work.

Members support those undertaking initial equality impact assessments of policies and functions within their departments and for bringing completing full impact assessments at the DAG. The DAG operates as a two way street – bringing information in from different departments and delivering information out to departments. This ensures that the organisation mainstreams equality initiatives and capitalises on opportunities to engage with the equality agenda inside and outside the organisation.

### **Equality Impact Assessment Process**

All Service policies are agreed by our Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). An initial equality impact assessment is completed as part of the electronic submission process for CLT papers. Those policies that require a full impact assessment are considered at our Community Liaison meeting and the DAG before being referred to CLT. Our completed assessments are available on our website. Our assessment forms are reproduced in Section 5 of this Scheme.

### **Equality Action Plan**

Our Diversity Team develops an annual Equality Action Plan in conjunction with the Diversity Action Group. This is published as part of our Service Plan. Copies of all our publications are available on our website.

### **Equality & Diversity Reports**

The Knowledge and Information Management Directorate produces Equality and Diversity Reports for the DAG on the results of our equality and diversity monitoring and our equality impact assessment process.

**MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY  
...IN OUR PARTNERSHIP WORK**

We work in partnership with over 150 other organisations to deliver our services to all the different communities on Merseyside. We require all our partners to operate within the same equality parameters as ourselves and an Equality Impact Assessment is required to be completed before setting up a partnership.

We have a District Manager in each of the five Local Authorities that make up Merseyside. A Fire Service manager is involved in the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and contributes to the Local Area Agreements (LAA) in their area. Each of these boards has their own Equality and Diversity Agenda to which we contribute.

We have assisted our partners to deliver on equality and to achieve under the Local Government Equality Framework. In 2009 we hosted a seminar on the revised Local Area Assessment Framework which brought together all our partners and the Audit Commission.



## **MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY .... IN THE DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES**

Equality and diversity is central to all that we do to achieve our vision to make Merseyside a safer, stronger, healthier community. We recognise that fire has a socio-economic dimension. Those at highest risk from fires or likely to need emergency assistance include young people, older people, people who are disabled, people with alcohol or drug dependencies or those who suffer from mental health problems. People whose first language is not English may have particular problems accessing our services. We have therefore tailored our services to meet the needs of people from different communities. We also direct a range of distraction activities at persons who may pose particular risk of setting fires or becoming involved in crime and traffic related accidents.

### **Community Safety Advocates**

We pioneered the employment of Community Safety Advocates who work directly with minority communities to deliver our services. We currently employ nearly 40 full time Advocates to engage with specific groups at high risk, and up to 60 more on a part time basis. Community fire safety literature is also available in a number of different languages, specific to the main language needs of Merseyside's non-English speaking communities.

### **Health Inequalities**

We work in partnership with Health providers and fitness specialists to improve the health and well-being of the people on Merseyside. Community Fire Stations have a gymnasium that can be used by our partners for targeted activities, such as the delivery of health advice and obesity counselling. Six of our Advocates have been trained as NHS accredited Health Trainers to spot health problems exhibited by people they deal with.

*"Doctors on the Wirral refer people with cardiac issues to Wirral Heartbeat – one of our partners. People referred attend the firestation where they can get advice about their condition from Wirral Heartbeat and undertake an exercise programme in our gym".*

**GROUP MANAGER**

### **Youth Engagement**

Within the framework of Every Child Matters, underpinned by the Fire & Rescue Service Strategy for children and young people 2006- 2010, we aim to make Merseyside a safer, stronger, healthier community. We do this through targeted youth and community programmes in partnership with all services concerned with improving the quality of life of young people and their environment; our programmes include:

- **Prince's Trust:** The programme helps young people aged 16 - 25 gain self confidence, motivation and resilience to overcome difficult circumstances and assist them to economic independence and employment.

- **The BEACON Project:** This course runs during school term time and young people come one day a week for 12 weeks to learn about Teambuilding, Fire Safety and Fire Fighting. In 2010 we ran our 100<sup>th</sup> Course.
- **LIFE (Local Integration Fire Education):** this 5 day course operates during school holiday periods, at a time when diversionary activities are crucial. LIFE is designed to help young people understand fire safety, prevent arson, provide positive role models and help youngsters develop confidence, resilience and self esteem.
- **Streetcage soccer:** Is a diversionary soccer skills related programme delivered at the heart of challenging communities. Trained football coaches run skills camps for children and young people during evening times at weekends and school holidays.
- **Road traffic collision reduction (Drive 2 Arrive):** 75% of children and young people killed or seriously injured between 15 and 5 do so as a result of road traffic collisions. We have developed a road traffic collision reduction strategy to target the issues of speeding, drink/drug driving, inappropriate use of mobile phones, not wearing a seat belt and showing off amongst young people. Drive 2 Arrive is a series of interactive presentations devised with young people to highlight the hazards of inappropriate driving and change attitudes and behaviour.

*In 2006 MF&RS was awarded Beacon status for Early Intervention with children at risk. Not only was this a tremendous endorsement of the Authority's commitment to youth engagement but it has also led to MFRS becoming a Beacon Peer Mentor, assisting other Authorities to achieve their objectives in this area.*

### **Fire Support Network**

The Fire Support Network is a unique charity providing services to the people of Merseyside through a network of volunteers working with MF&RS. With over 140 volunteers between the ages of 16 and 87, 35% of whom have learning disabilities, they have made a real difference across many community divides. Volunteers work in local community fire stations and carry out home fire safety checks, community safety campaigns and a range of innovative activities that have made Merseyside a stronger, safer and healthier community. FSN's activities and support include:

- After Fire Care: Practical support to the victims of fire
- Oven Clean: Reducing the threat of fire for disabled and vulnerable people
- Water Damage Response: Support and help to dry out and clean properties after flooding
- High Fire Loading: Collecting unwanted clutter which can present a fire risk

- Emergency Response Dogs: placed with vulnerable people with mobility problems who live alone

### **World Firefighter Games 08 Legacy**

MF&RS were tremendously proud to host the 10th World Firefighters Game in 2008 as its contribution towards Liverpool's celebratory year as European Capital of Culture. We built on our reputation for innovation and excellence to work with all of our partners Liverpool City Council, Northwest Regional Development Agency, Telent and Sport England. Together with the community of Merseyside we delivered the best Games yet. The competitions catered for all age groups and abilities, and included everything from football, triathlon, snowboarding and boxing, to chess, poker, table tennis and fishing.

More than 3,000 competitors from over 30 countries took part in a packed programme of events. More than 1,000 volunteers were trained to help the Games run smoothly and many community projects were organised to promote health and fitness as well as fire safety. Funds remaining once the Games closed were split equally between seven charities – The Fire Fighters Charity, Community Foundation for Merseyside, Marina Dalglish Appeal, Lord Mayor of Liverpool's Appeal, Burned Children's Club, Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service's Fire Support Network.

The World Firefighters Games 2008 brought significant and immediate economic benefits to the region, and promoted Merseyside as a tourism destination to visitors from across the globe.

As a consequence we have been awarded "inspire" status by the London Organising Committee of the Games (LOCOG) and are building on the legacy of the Games to deliver grassroots participation in sports and cultural activities as part of the London 2012 Olympic Games

*"Then it was off to St Helens Community Fire Station to see the sports facilities that MF&RS are opening up to the public. MF&RS is trailblazing in that they are establishing community sport links like no other fire service I am aware of. Where their 'streetcage' programme runs they have seen a drop in anti-social behaviour by the order of 34%. I was able to see the programme in action and learn about what their sister station at Croxeth will be putting on for the London 2012 Open Weekend".*

**Lord Seb Coe. London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games**

## **MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

### **... IN OUR EMPLOYMENT**

The People and Organisational Development Department operates a business focused and process driven approach to the management of human resources with the emphasis on a complete employee lifecycle delivery strategy and a robust business orientated service approach to organisational development. We are Investors in People and operate the Two Ticks scheme to support disabled people who apply and who work for us.

#### **Positive Action**

We are committed to ensuring that each appointment to MF&RS is completed in a fair, open and consistent manner. We have produced a values based screening tool to aid the profile of our recruitment. In order to ensure that MF&RS reflects the wide diversity of people on Merseyside and that we have the best pool of people from which to select we recruit using a Positive Action Strategy that has delivered outstanding results and national recognition.

This involves advertisements targeted in areas where there are above average populations of people who are under represented in the Service; active support to develop skills in maths and English before taking the recruit tests and training sessions run by Fire Service instructors to assist with physical fitness. Our work in this area has been recognised by Merseyside Black History Month.

We are committed to the stretched recruitment targets as set out in the National Equality & Diversity Strategy, 2008-2018

In addition to embedding our values throughout the organisation we are working to achieve a culture of excellence by:

- Building leadership capacity through a wide range of programmes including Chartered Management Institute (CMI) through to Post Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management. Programmes accessed through the Assessment Development Centre (ADC) process. All programmes are integrated, including non uniform, uniformed and control staff
- Succession planning to identify and nurture talent in the organisation through the creation of short term and long term successor pool. This approach is linked to ADCs.
- Developing our working practices and arrangements in order to attract and retain a diverse workforce. We are committed to considering every request for changes to work patterns or hours of work, and ensure each application is considered on its merits whilst seeking to support each one as far as possible. This has included the provision of term time working; fixed shifts and weekend only working. We have an enhanced maternity scheme which provides women with half pay plus their statutory maternity pay for 39 weeks.

### **Equality and Diversity Training**

We aim to equip all our staff, managers and elected members with the skills and knowledge to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to promote equal opportunities and foster good race relations in all our employment and service delivery practices and arrangements.

We deliver equality and diversity training according to need in conjunction with training relevant to the person's role. So, for example, elected members receive awareness training on equality issues and legal developments; the DAG members receive comprehensive training on conducting Equality Impact Assessments; members of People and Organisational Development on legal changes; District Managers on partnership working and equality issues related to Local Area Agreements; middle managers on grievance handling and firefighters on cultural awareness issues. Information on the public sector duty to promote equality and the Local Government Equality Framework is interwoven into all the training sessions.

### **Occupational Health**

The objective of Occupational Health Services is to promote and facilitate the maintenance of the highest possible standards of health and fitness, both physical and mental, for Service employees. Occupational Health provide advice to the Service and its employees on their capacity to work and will continually seek to provide support and assistance to ensure that employees are fit to perform their usual role.

### **Monitoring**

Employment monitoring is essential to provide a clear picture of the workforce and help eliminate discrimination and harassment in employment practices. It will also help to demonstrate the success of equal opportunity policies and to measure progress. In terms of our service delivery, the information is needed to help ascertain the effect of our policies and practices on different groups and ensure their impact does not disadvantage or exclude any group.

### **Employment data (January 2010)**

We employed 1446 staff in total, of whom 66 were from minority ethnic backgrounds (4.6%); 1125 were men and 321 were women. We employed 947 wholtime uniformed staff; 37 of whom were women (3.9%) and 5 were from BME backgrounds (0.5%). In our Mobilising and Control Centre (MACC) we employed 42 women and 4 men.

### **Gender Pay Gap (January 2010)**

The equal pay legislation is designed to address the differences in pay that may result from the different life and work opportunities that have traditionally been available to men and women. The Fire and Rescue Service has traditionally had a workforce where there was a great distinction between men's jobs and women's jobs. In recent years we have worked hard to remove those distinctions, but we recognise that this will take time to work through our workforce profile..

In 2009 we implemented our Job Evaluation Scheme which showed that the pay gap for non-uniformed staff was 16.93%  
Men's average hourly rate = £13.77; women's = £11.44

The pay gap for operational staff was 9.54%  
Men's average hourly rate = £14.90; women's = £13.48

We recognise that the key to reducing our gender pay gap is through our employment practices and we have promoted a variety of new ways of working (e.g. self rostering, LLAR) which have increased the opportunities for women in the operational area. We are also undertaking positive action to increase diversity in our non-uniformed roles.



## **MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

### **... IN OUR PROCUREMENT**

We recognise that the promotion of equality and diversity through our procurement arrangements is important. All groups in our community have a right to expect that public money is spent on goods and services that meet their needs, and that it is spent in a way which promotes equality of opportunity.

We operate joint procurement arrangements with Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LF&RS). Our joint policy states 'Purchasing represents significant interface with the local economy and the outside, in which MF&RS and LF&RS actively promote equality and diversity through contractual relationships developed with suppliers'. The policy also states that we are committed to promoting equality in our procurement process.

All Invitation to Tender notices are sent to Targeted Community Groups to raise awareness and encourage tender submissions from these sections of our community.

The purchasing processes and procedures within Procurement are controlled via a Purchasing Operations Manual, and all Suppliers are managed using a Contractors database. All potential contractors and suppliers are assessed for suitability before the Authority will contract with them, and are required to provide the following information :

- CIS certification (if appropriate),
- Insurance Certification,
- Signed Code of Practice book,
- H&S policy,
- Environmental policy,
- Quality policy and
- Promotion of Equality and Opportunity policy.

Preferred suppliers must be able to provide all of this documentation. Approved suppliers do not need to have all of these policies in place as it could unfairly disadvantage small and medium sized businesses.

## **SECTION 5: ASSESSING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN MF&RS**

We have an Action Plan to achieve our commitments set out in this Equality Scheme in our annual Service Plan. Assessment of our progress under this Equality Scheme and our Action Plan is undertaken under the following assessment framework

### **Department of Communities and Local Government Assessment**

We operate within an equality assessment framework set out by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), and the Local Government Equality Framework (LGEF). We have accepted the CLG challenge of delivering stretched diversity targets in employment by 2018

### **Local Government Equality Framework**

We have been awarded “Achieving” status by IDeA by Peer Challenge. We aim to achieve “Excellent” by 2010.

### **Beacon Status**

We have achieved three Beacon status awards by IDeA in recognition of innovation and excellence in public service. First, in 2005/6, we achieved Beacon Status in respect Services for Older People and became Peer Mentors the following year. That same year, 2006/7 we were awarded Beacon Status for our work regarding Early Intervention and Children At Risk. We again became Peer Mentors in respect of this work in 2007/8. That year we were also recognised as a Beacon Authority in respect of our work on Reducing Health Inequalities. We are currently members of the working party to review and redefine the good practice learning process between partners.

### **Trade Union Engagement**

The Chair of the DAG meets with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and representatives of the Fire Brigade Union after each DAG meeting to update on the activities of the DAG and develop a partnership approach to achieving continuous improvement in performance on equality and diversity.

### **Consultation**

We use a number of consultation techniques and approaches to empower our communities to shape the services we provide to meet their needs. This includes using focus groups, surveys and Community Consultation events where we focus on specific themes at different times eg Staying Alive, Service Delivery, and Hate Crime A further example of this is the annual consultation forum based on assessing the consultation (draft) Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which is our strategic document for risk management and service delivery.

Information Sharing with Partners has played a significant element to the successfully understanding our Community, and we now lead on the North West Information Sharing and Security Group. We have been recognised by our partners for the work we have undertaken and now lead on two council groups (Sefton Understood and Knowsley Data Exchange) which support a joined up approach to Consultation. And, in order to manage consultation

across Merseyside and to build on our knowledge of the communities we serve we have set up the pan-Merseyside Consultation Working Group (CWG) which includes lead Consultation Officers from our PCT's, Councils, Police and other key partners.

## **CLG Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018**

The CLG Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy is a ten year high level Strategy which aims to meet the challenge to bring real, radical, lasting change to the Fire and Rescue Service in England. It supports delivery of government commitments to promote equality and diversity, tackle disadvantage, and build cohesive and sustainable communities.

The Strategy requires action in five priority areas, linked to the Fire and Rescue Service Core Values:

### **Priority 1: Leadership and promoting inclusion**

Positive leadership at all levels is essential to drive change, maintain commitment and ensure accountability. Partnership between employers, representative bodies, staff associations, government and other agencies will be essential to provide effective support in achieving the required improvement in performance on equality and diversity.

### **Priority 2: Accountability**

Driving change and developing confidence among employees and the public requires the accountability of everyone in the organisation.

### **Priority 3: Effective service delivery and community engagement**

Effective planning and engagement are key to improving the quality and effectiveness of service delivery to all communities.

### **Priority 4: Employment and training**

To recognise, understand and respond to the needs of all communities we must recruit, develop and retain a workforce which better reflects the diversity of the local community and respects difference.

### **Priority 5: Evaluation and sharing good practice**

Monitoring, evaluation and recognition of good practice are essential to ensure continuous improvement and make best use of resources,

## **Local Government Equality Framework (LGEF)**

We achieved Level 3 of the Local Government Equality Standard by Peer Challenge in February 2009. This equates to “Achieving” on the revised Local Government Equality Framework.

The Peer Challengers commended us for our approach in

### **Leadership and Corporate Commitment**

- Strong direction and commitment from Members and Senior Management
- An effective Diversity Action Group
- Effective partnership working – partnership ethos throughout authority
- Staff professional, enthusiastic and committed to equality and diversity
- Good use of data and intelligence

### **Community Engagement**

- Awareness of community issues– robust data collection process
- Local stations respond to the individual needs of their local communities
- Responds to the changing needs of the emerging communities
- Advocate scheme –example of excellence in community engagement
- Youth engagement

### **Service Delivery & Customer Focus**

- Continue sterling work in this area

We are committed to achieving “Excellent” under the Framework by 2010. An Excellent Authority has the following characteristics:

- Members and officers have a reputation for championing equality issues and ensure that the equality issues relevant to their communities are embedded in strategic plans, LAAs and local delivery plans.
- The authority works with all strategic partners and the third sector to achieve defined equality outcomes.
- It has good evidence of the equalities profile of the community based on national and local data that is regularly reviewed.
- It is measuring progress on equality outcomes, is able to disaggregate data on relevant performance indicators and can demonstrate real outcomes that have improved equality in services and employment.
- It identifies the changing nature of its communities and their expectations and then prioritises its activities and explains its decisions.
- It provides good customer care by ensuring that services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff, who are equipped to cater to particular needs of clients where necessary.
- It has improving satisfaction and perceptions indicators from all sections of the community.
- It uses Equality Impact Assessments to review all major new changes in policy and regularly conducts service Equality Impact Assessments.
- All relevant data on service access is monitored against the equality strands.
- Equality groups are integrally involved in community engagement programmes.
- There are forums for all equality stakeholders to share experiences and evaluate the authority’s progress.
- All parts of the authority can show tangible progress towards achieving outcomes which address persistent inequalities.
- Members, officers, key stakeholders and community members are confident about equality issues and their relevance for the authority and their own responsibilities.
- The authority has implemented action for equal pay outcomes and demonstrates progress on under representation, flexible working, access to training and development and promotes an inclusive working culture based on respect.
- It reviews its equality strategy and public duty equality schemes every three years and seeks innovative, improvement challenges.
- Through its achievements it is an exemplar of good practice for other local authorities and agencies and works with others to share best practice.

## Our Equality Impact Assessment Process

DAG members undertake, or help others undertake, Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) on functions, policies or relevant practices from their departments. Our EIA process is a two-stage process (see below). An Initial EIA is completed electronically as part of the pro-forma for papers for the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) meetings. All policies must go through CLT and cannot go without an IEIA. Any that require a Full Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) are brought to a meeting of the DAG for completion. Completed FEIAs are published on the intranet and intranet.

### Stage 1: Initial Equality Impact Assessment Survey

The purpose of this survey is to ensure that all relevant policies of MF&RS are screened for their impact on people from all different backgrounds both inside and outside the Service.

1. Name of Policy.
2. Is this a new policy? Or an existing policy?
3. Identify the aims and purpose of the policy? *(There may be more than one)*
4. Identify the individuals and organisations likely to have an interest in, be affected by the policy and/or who may need to be consulted the outcomes
5. Explain whether this policy could impact differently on people because of :
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Gender Reassignment
  - Marriage or Civil Partnership status
  - Pregnancy or Maternity
  - Race
  - Religion or Belief
  - Sex
  - Sexual Orientation
6. If you have identified that the policy does or could impact differently on people from different backgrounds, the policy should be forwarded to [DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk](mailto:DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk) for a Full Equality Impact Assessment to be carried out.
7. Completing Officer
8. Service No.
9. Directorate
10. Department/Section
11. Telephone No.
12. Date

Stage 2: Full Equality Impact Assessment Form

<b>Title of policy:</b>	
<b>Department:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

You identified this policy as needing a full Equality Impact Assessment. You should complete sections 1–5 below (where appropriate) before sending to [DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk](mailto:DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk) for inclusion on the next DAG meeting.

<p><b>1: Identify the aims and purpose of the policy.</b> <i>This should identify “the legitimate aim” of the policy (there may be more than one)</i></p>
<p><b>2: Identify the individuals and organisations who are likely to have an interest in, or be affected by the policy.</b> <i>This should identify the persons/organisations who may need to be consulted about the policy or procedure and its outcomes (There may be more than one)</i></p>
<p><b>3. Monitoring</b> <i>Summarise the findings of any monitoring data you have considered regarding this policy. This could include data which shows whether the policy is having the desired outcomes and also its impact on members of different equality groups.</i></p>
<p><b>4: Research</b> <i>Summarise the findings of any research you have considered regarding this policy. (This could include quantitative data and qualitative information; anything you have obtained from other sources e.g. CFOA/CLG guidance, other FRSs, etc)</i></p>
<p><b>5. Consultation</b> <i>Summarise the opinions of any consultation. Who was consulted and how? (This should include reference to people and organisations identified in section 2 above) Outline any plans to inform consultees of the results of the consultation</i></p>



**6. Conclusions**

*Taking into account the results of the monitoring, research and consultation, set out how the policy impacts or could impact on people because of one or other of the following characteristics; including whether they have caring responsibilities or are associated with someone from any of the characteristics*

a) Age

b) Disability

d) Gender Reassignment

e) Marriage or Civil Partnership

e) Pregnancy and Maternity

f) Race

g) Religion or Belief

e) Sex

f) Sexual Orientation

**7. Decisions**

*If the policy will have a negative impact on members of one or more of the protected groups, explain how the policy will change or why it is to continue in the same way. If no changes are proposed, the policy needs to be objectively justified as being an appropriate and necessary means of achieving the legitimate aim set out in 1 above.*

**8. Equality Improvement Plan**

*List the actions to be included in the Equality Action Plan/Service Plan.*

<b>Action Planned</b>	<b>Responsibility of</b>	<b>Completed by</b>

## **Compliments and Complaints**

We have a comprehensive procedure to ensure any compliments are acknowledged and complaints are dealt with in a fair and efficient manner. A complaint can be made in writing, by email through our website, in person or by phone to any Merseyside community fire station or Fire Service Headquarters.

### **Complaints Procedure**

- Step 1 A complaint can be made in person, by telephone, by email or in writing to any Fire Service premises. The officer in charge, should be able to resolve the problem there and then.
- Step 2 Failing an immediate resolution the officer in charge will forward a complaint to Service Headquarters. Acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within two working days of receipt at Headquarters. The complainant will be advised of the findings and decision of these investigations within 28 working days or advised of any delay.
- Step 3 If the complainant disagrees with the findings of their complaint they need to inform us within 28 days. The complaint will be passed on to an appropriate senior officer, who will investigate and advise the complainant of the findings of their investigations within 28 days or advised of any delay.
- Step 4 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the findings they need to inform us within 28 days. The complaint then will be referred to the Clerk to the Authority, who will conduct an independent assessment and inform the complainant of the outcome within 28 days or advise of any delay.
- Step 5 If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the findings they are entitled to send their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

You can contact the LGO Advice Team:

- By telephone on 0300 061 0614
- By email on [advice@lgo.org.uk](mailto:advice@lgo.org.uk)
- Or go to their website on [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

## **Equality Scheme**

Any complaints, feedback or ideas about this Equality Scheme should be directed to the Diversity Team at:

Fire Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle L30 4YD

Tel: 0151 296 4000

Email: [diversityteam@merseyfire.gov.uk](mailto:diversityteam@merseyfire.gov.uk)

And can also be directed to the Fire Authority at:

The Clerk to the Authority

Merseyside Fire & Civil Defence Authority

Fire Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle L30 4YD