

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Title of report:	Operational Recruitment Strategy 2014/15
Department:	POD
Date:	20.10.14
1: What is the aim or purpose of the report	
<p>This EIA focuses on the Operational Recruitment Strategy 2014/15 report being presented to Members of Authority on 23rd October 2014.</p> <p>The EIA considers the equality implications associated with the proposed recommendations.</p> <p>Which are:</p> <p>The proposals for members to approve include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The recruitment process contained in the report b) The recruitment of firefighters under flexible contractual arrangements specified within the report – specifically combined 32 hour whole-time/42 hour whole -time retained contract (average over a 7 day period) c) That the feasibility of recruitment firefighters onto a 120 hour Retained Contract us explored in order to future proof recruitment and maximise flexibility d) The development of an apprenticeship model for future recruitment <p>The EIA is created to ensure the members are aware of the, and give due regard to the equality implications when considering the proposals.</p>	
2. Who will be affected by the policy/report/project?	
Future Recruits into MFRA	

3. Monitoring

Summarise the findings of any monitoring data you have considered regarding this policy/report/project. This could include data which shows whether it is having the desired outcomes and also its impact on members of different equality groups.

What monitoring data have you considered?

There is no monitoring Data available in MFRA in relation to the proposals as these new to the organisation.

What did it show?

N/A- Future monitoring of Recruitment from application to employment will be carried out with Equality monitoring. The impact of the recruitment proposals will be monitored going forward around a variety of criteria including employee retention rates and service delivery standards to assess the impact of introducing the new contracts contained in these proposals

4: Research

Summarise the findings of any research you have considered regarding this policy/report/project. This could include quantitative data and qualitative information; anything you have obtained from other sources e.g. CFA/CLG guidance, other FRSs, etc

What research have you considered?

FRS research and wider Employment /Recruitment Research into Retained contracts and reduced hour contracts

What did it show?

4.1 Very little evidence of any Equality Impact Assessments being conducted on this area, there is more information with regards to Retained Contracts that offer Zero hours. Evidence suggests that providing a guaranteed number of hours in a retained contract is much more favourable and that where possible, those being recruited onto retained contracts should be offered training, induction, appraisals and be closely monitored and supported to ensure they are not disadvantaged in anyway.

4.2 Transparency is key with all of the proposals in terms of making clear the scope of the role, the realistic number of hours available/guaranteed and the way hours are allocated is key to ensure there is no discrimination or bias towards any particular group and individuals are clear on the contract from the start of their employment.

	<p>4.3 Introduction of buddying system/mentoring would be advantageous specifically to those employees who may be posted on different watches and stations and not attached to any specific station to ensure they are getting the important support and induction into the organisations Values, culture, Policies and practices.</p> <p>4.4 Retained contracts and the ability to apply for future Whole-time roles should be explored and considered as a natural progression where possible and to encourage long term retention of those employees and reduce costs on re-recruitment and training</p> <p>4.5 The 32 hour contracts are considered sufficient to class as “living wage”, where additional hours would allow for individuals to gain more income it may not always be considered for financial assessments but would be included in any future FF pension calculations.</p> <p>4.6 Flexible working and reduced hours may be attractive to those with caring responsibilities, especially if there is opportunities to self-roster/select hours worked regularly.</p>
<p>5. Consultation</p> <p><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)</i></p> <p><i>Outline any plans to inform consultees of the results of the consultation</i></p>	
<p>What Consultation have you undertaken?</p> <p>Engagement and Consultation with Merseyside Public representing all groups of the community , conducted by Opinion Research Services(ORS) during in 2013/14 in order to consider options to deliver savings required as a result of Government cuts to Grant funding (CFO/011/14)</p>	<p>What did it say?</p> <p>ORS consultation identified that preferred options for dealing with structural changes to meet the reduced budget from central government included closures /mergers where possible.</p> <p>The mergers were predicated on the ability for MFRA to maintain whole-time crewing model rather than introducing a community retained alternative.</p> <p>No specific equality issues were identified with the consultation conducted.</p>

<p>Consultation with current workforce on expressions of interest for Whole-time retained working</p> <p>The logistics of introducing the proposals will need further consultation with staff and managers and the Diversity Action Group, should the Authority Members agree to them being adopted.</p>	<p>On two occasions Officers have sought expressions of interest for whole-time retained working within the current workforce and neither occasion were sufficient expressions received to crew one appliance.</p> <p>TBC</p>
--	---

6. Conclusions

Taking into account the results of the monitoring, research and consultation, set out how the policy/report/project impacts or could impact on people from the following protected groups? (Include positive and/or negative impacts)

(a) Age

Proposals for Apprenticeships are age specific as the funding from Central Government is provided for those apprentices aged 16 to 24- often the age group in most need of training, education and employment. Although our recruitment practices won't directly discriminate against anyone over 24 applying for an apprenticeship, it is important to ensure that those applying meet the criteria set out in our apprenticeship roles.

(b) Disability including mental, physical and sensory conditions)

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposals contained in this Strategy impact Disabled people disproportionately. MFRA will consider disabled candidates on their ability to meet the recruitment and assessment standards to enable them to do their job as a Firefighter within the agreed national standards. Where reasonable adjustments can be made without compromising the assessment standards these will be considered during the application, assessment and selection processes.

(c) Race (include: nationality, national or ethnic origin and/or colour)

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposals impact people of different Races disproportionately.

A positive action programme has been conducted between July 2014 and October 2014 to highlight MFRA as a potential employer for BME candidates, and to encourage more applications from groups who are underrepresented at MFRA. The programme positively supports the proposals contained in this Recruitment Strategy.

(d) Religion or Belief

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposals impact people of different

religions or no religions disproportionately.

A positive action programme has been conducted between July 2014 and October 2014 to highlight MFRA as a potential employer for candidates from all religions or no religion, and to encourage more applications from groups who are underrepresented at MFRA. The programme positively supports the proposals contained in this Recruitment Strategy

MFRA will consider the religious needs of potential candidates and employees where practically possible during the recruitment process and into employment(e.g. religious observances in relation to food, prayer and religious events)

(e) Sex /Gender (includes considering Maternity/Paternity/Pregnancy /Gender reassignment ,marriage and civil partnerships)

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposals impact different genders disproportionately. There is some evidence to suggest that more flexible contracts in relation to reduced hours or self rostering may attract individuals that require flexibility for a work-life balance reasons and reasons of caring responsibilities.

A positive action programme has been conducted during July 2014 and October 2014 to encourage more Female candidates to consider and apply for future opportunities with MFRA to increase the number of Females.

(f) Sexual Orientation

No specific Equality Issues established

(g) Socio-economic disadvantage

The opportunity for employment is a positive for all potential recruits regardless of their social and economic background. The offer of reduced hour contracts and retained contracts may impact more negatively for those most disadvantaged economically who may need to be guaranteed Full time employment/income.

7. Decisions

If the policy/report/project will have a negative impact on members of one or more of the protected groups, explain how it will change or why it is to continue in the same way.

If no changes are proposed, the policy/report/project needs to be objectively justified as being an appropriate and necessary means of achieving the legitimate aim set out in 1 above.

There is no evidence that any of the recommendations contained within the strategy would have any adverse or negative effects upon any specific groups of people as described in section 7 a) to f) .

With regards to 7 g) – Social economic Disadvantage - further research on the proposals for 120 retained Hour contracts will be carried out and Equality Impacts will be considered where they arise. The opportunity to recruit new staff is positive for both MFRA and for those looking to be recruited into Firefighter roles, however there will be some negative impacts financially in relation to the ability for potential employees to use their employment contracts with MFRA as a main income to secure fiancé/mortgages etc.

As some of these recommendations are new to MFRA, there is a potential that certain groups may identify adverse effects and it will be necessary, through the consultation process, to manage any issues which arise fairly and consistently and to review the strategy on an annual basis.

8. Equality Improvement Plan

List any changes to our policies or procedures that need to be included in the Equality Action Plan/Service Plan.

9. Equality & Diversity Sign Off

The completed EIA form must be signed off by the Diversity Manager before it is submitted to Strategic Management Group or Authority.

Signed off by: Wendy Kenyon

Date: 21.10.14

Action Planned	Responsibility of	Completed by
Further Research into the impact 120 Hour retained contract proposals and impact on equality groups is needed before adoption.	POD /DCM	Before the proposals are implemented
Future Monitoring of Staff recruited on to alternative contracts will be conducted to assess any future equality impacts	POD/DCM	A year after recruitment

For any advice, support or guidance about completing this form please contact the DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk or on 0151 296 4237

The completed form along with the related policy/report/project document should be emailed to the Diversity Team at: DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk

