

Single Equality Scheme 2009-2012

(Draft: Version 2)

DRAFT



Foreword

We believe Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) excels at providing services that meet the needs of all our communities. We are committed to mainstreaming equality and diversity in everything AF&RS does. We regard equality work as fundamental to any modern public service that is inclusive to the needs to all the community and has a diverse workforce enriched with many talents. We are proud of the equality work already delivered by AF&RS and believe the introduction of this Single Equality Scheme will continue that work to great effect.

Nationally, the equalities agenda is moving towards reducing disadvantage not only on the seven equalities strands of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation, but also on disadvantage arising directly from social and economic exclusion. We believe this inclusive approach is the most effective method for reducing risks to the communities we serve.

We value our workforce, not only as colleagues who deliver an excellent service but as individuals entitled to dignity and respect. Whether colleagues are part of our organisation for twelve months or thirty years, we want to ensure they are able to perform in their role and reach their full potential.

We expect all employees, elected members and partners to make a full contribution to our equality and diversity work. We recognise there is more to be done if we are to fully reflect the community we serve and this Single Equality Scheme contains measures intended to eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote equality and access to services. We will endeavour to provide both the leadership and support in order to assist with the delivery of these activities.

Chair of Avon Fire Authority
Executive

Chief Fire Officer/Chief

Part 1: Introducing equality and diversity in Avon Fire & Rescue Service.

Avon Fire & Rescue Service – About us

Many people believe that our sole function is to provide an emergency response to incidents of fire, road traffic collisions, flooding, biochemical hazards and other crisis. However we work hard to reduce the risk of death and injury by providing safety advice and guidance within our communities and regard this as the most important of our functions. We also work with those responsible for businesses, accommodation and public buildings to ensure that these spaces are safe for people to use them. When fires occur, we investigate the causes so lessons can be learned.

We serve a population of just over one million people living in the four unitary authorities of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. We have 23 fire stations spread throughout the area and our headquarters is in Bristol city centre. We employ nearly 1,200 people working as full and part time firefighters, fire control operators and support staff.

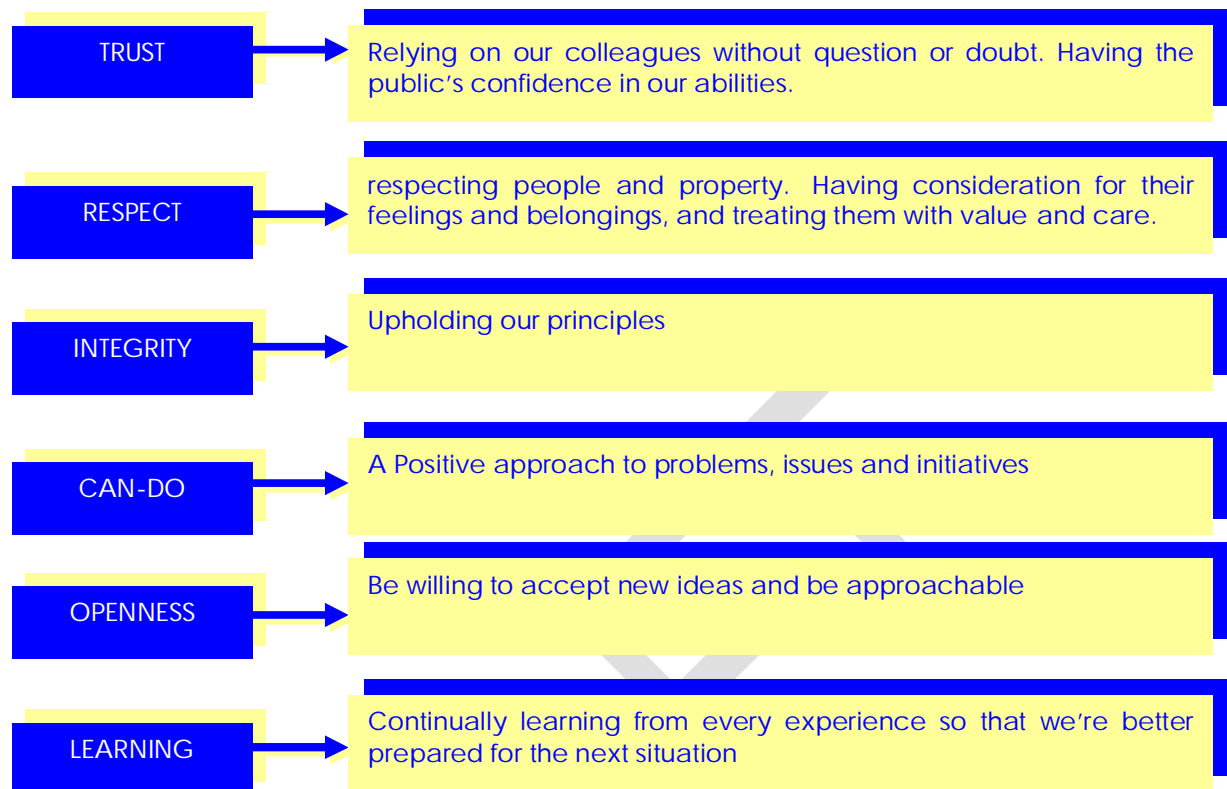
Avon Fire Authority has overall responsibility for AF&RS. It consists of 25 elected representatives drawn from the four unitary authorities. The Fire Authority must ensure that AF&RS is efficient, effective and works with partners to meet the needs of local communities. Statutory and overall responsibility for determining policy and effective implementation of this Single Equality Scheme lies first and fully with the Fire Authority. One sub-committee of the Authority is called the Equalities Forum which is responsible for providing oversight and scrutiny of the equality and diversity work of the organisation.

Our Mission, Vision, Objectives and Values

- Our mission: To improve public safety through prevention, protection and response
- Our Vision: For our people to be motivated and inspired to make all of our communities safer
- Our Objectives: We are striving for a work environment that is free from discrimination for employees, stakeholders and members of the public. This accounts for anyone touched by service delivery, planning, employment or partnership. We aim to embrace and value diversity and acknowledge individual difference through our work plans, practices, policies and procedures.

Our mission, vision, values and objectives should help to enable us to meet the statutory duties to promote equality.

The core values of Avon Fire & Rescue Service that both drive and underpin our work are:



All of these values are integral to work promoting equality.

Our approach to equality and diversity

We have used this Single Equality Scheme to set out in one place what we will do to meet our legislative requirements, mirror best practice and deliver real and sustainable change.

This Single Equality Scheme will:

1. Provide a framework for equality and diversity issues to be continue to be mainstreamed within the organisation. It is the responsibility of every employee, elected member and partner.
2. Ensure that AF&RS meets its legal obligations.
3. Ensure all our functions are assessed for their impact upon equality and diversity and action is taken to prevent or remove discrimination.
4. Provide a framework for improving performance.

The Chief Fire Officer\Chief Executive Officer is the strategic lead for equality and diversity. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the five directorate heads are responsible for implementing the direction set by the Chief Officer. This work includes setting appropriate objectives in the Equality & Diversity Action Plan,

reviewing performance against those objectives and providing leadership and providing leadership and direction on directorate specific tasks.

Responsibility for advancing the equality and diversity agenda is shared throughout the organisation. Every directorate within AF&RS and every functional unit will show appropriate consideration of equality and diversity issues within its business planning processes. They will all have at least one equality related objective in their business plan which will reflect and influence organisational objectives. We are constantly looking for innovative and efficient ways to meet our aims by working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sector. Every new partnership will be reviewed before it commences to ensure it reflects our corporate objectives. All partnerships that have an impact on our workforce or the public will have explicit equality and diversity objectives.

The success of AF&RS is based on the hard work of its employees. We recognise that every employee has a role to play in the equality and diversity agenda. This is one reason why every member of staff will have a Personal Development Review (PDR) setting out their personal objectives for each year. At least one objective will be related to equality and diversity and reflect corporate and directorate objectives.

We recognise that everybody has multiple layers to their identity – many of which are possible causes of discrimination. For example a young Disabled Asian lesbian might experience discrimination because of her age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation as well as exclusion because of her socio-economic status.

Part 2: Understanding the agenda

The Legal Framework

Like all public bodies in Britain, Avon Fire and Rescue Service is subject to a range of legislation that covers its role as an employer and service provider. Laws preventing many forms of discrimination have existed for years – indeed race and gender based discrimination has been outlawed for decades.

In recent years there have been three Acts of Parliament that have placed duties on public bodies to proactively promote equality relating to race, disability and gender. These are the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and the Equality Act (2006). They give Avon Fire and Rescue Service a duty to identify where inequality and disadvantage is occurring, take proportionate steps to tackle it and promote equality and good relations in everything we do. The application of these duties is guided by codes of practice published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Each of the duties is broken down into a general duty which gives the broad outlines, and specific duties designed to help public authorities comply with the general duty. All of them must be implemented. The general duties relating to race, disability and gender equality state that “due regard” must be given to:

- the elimination of unlawful discrimination
- the promotion of equal opportunities.

Each duty then builds on these objectives in a different way. The race equality duty requires the promotion of good relations between people of different racial groups.

The disability equality duty requires public authorities to:

- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- take account of people’s impairments, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than non-disabled people
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The gender equality duty requires the elimination of unlawful harassment. It specifically includes transgender people

Currently public bodies are required to produce equality schemes setting out how they will promote race, disability and gender equality. These schemes should be drafted with the involvement and engagement of community members, employees and trade unions. It is also mandatory to assess the impact all existing and new procedures have on equality.

Legislation relating to equality and diversity is inconsistent and can be confusing as it differs across each equality strand. In the Spring of 2010, Equality Bill is timetabled to be passed by Parliament. This Bill aims to

consolidate and harmonise current equalities legislation. It will also place a new general equality duty on all public authorities covering age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Authorities will be required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations on all these characteristics. A further duty will be placed on authorities to take appropriate consideration of how people can be excluded from employment and service delivery by their socio-economic status.

National Fire & Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018

In 2008 the Government published a new equality and diversity strategy for the English Fire and Rescue Service. It was produced collaboratively with other key stakeholders including the Chief Fire Officers' Association, Local Government Association, Fire Brigades Union and UNISON. The strategy supports the fire service in tackling current inequalities, promoting equality and diversity and establishing a culture of inclusion in employment and service delivery. The strategy sets out a vision of the reduction of death and injury in all the communities by effective working of a workforce that better reflects the diversity of those communities.

The strategy has 5 priorities:

- Leadership and promoting inclusion
- Accountability
- Effective service delivery and community engagement
- Employment and training
- Evaluation and sharing good practice

Equality Framework for Local Government

Since 2001, the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) helped local authorities and fire and rescue services make progress in mainstreaming equality. The ESLG had 5 levels and AF&RS reached Level 2. In 2009, the ESLG was replaced by the Equality Framework for Local Government which has three levels: developing, achieving and excellent. AF&RS is currently performing at the "developing" level. However, we aim to reach "achieving" status by April 2010.

The framework contains several new features including:

- a wider definition of equality, based on equal life chances i.e. "An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish"
- a new section on 'authorities knowing the communities they serve and equality mapping'
- a focus on equality outcomes for all sections of the community, mapping and narrowing gaps
- a central role for self-assessment and peer challenge.

The EFLG has been adapted so it is more applicable to the work of fire and rescue services. The adapted version focuses on the themes set out in the National Fire & Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018.

Age Equality

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations from 2006 made it unlawful to discriminate against employees, former employees and job seekers because of their age. It is prohibited for employers to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone. That is, to treat them less favourably than others because of their age.
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone. That is, to apply a criterion, rule, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular age unless it can be objectively justified.
- Harass or bully someone.
- Victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of age.

The regulations removed the upper age limits on unfair dismissal and redundancy and set a national default retirement age of 65, outlawing compulsory retirement below that age. Employees have the right to request to work beyond 65 and we are generally supportive of such requests. Previously, operational staff were required to retire after 30 years of service. This is no longer the case and we even allow staff to claim part of their occupational pension and continue to work for us. Due to health and safety legislation, we are allowed to set a minimum age of 18 years for new firefighters.

We acknowledge that our services must be tailored to meet the needs of older people as they are often more at risk of death and injury by fire. We have employed an Older Persons Advocate to work in our Community Fire Safety team.

Disability Equality

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 outlawed disability related discrimination for the first time. Direct and indirect discrimination by employers and service providers and the harassment and victimisation of Disabled people were outlawed. Employers were required to provide reasonable adjustments in the recruitment and of employment of Disabled people. Operational firefighters, who make up the vast majority of our workforce, were exempt from the provisions of the DDA until 2004.

As a public authority, we have statutory duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to promote disability equality. There is a general duty supported by a number of specific duties. We strive to meet these duties and published a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) for 2007-2010. This Single

Equality Scheme replaces the DES. Whereas the first DDA outlawed discrimination against individual Disabled people, 2005 legislation requires us to mainstream disability equality into all decisions, policies and actions. We recognise that a robust cycle of Equality Impact Assessments is essential if we are to achieve this.

We follow the “social model” of disability. This states that the exclusion, poverty and disadvantage experienced by Disabled people is not an inevitable result of their impairment or medical condition. Instead it is caused by society’s failure to take into account their needs. For example a person with learning difficulties may not be able to understand fire safety information and then might engage in risky behaviour in the home. Responsibility for this does not lie with the individual but with the fire service who has decided not to distribute information in an accessible format.

We recognise that Disabled people do not form a homogenous community. Most Disabled people experience other forms of discrimination as well. We also recognise the particular barriers experienced by Deaf/British Sign Language users that relate to them being a linguistic and cultural minority.

Gender Equality

We are committed to promoting equality for all employees and members of the public in our role as an employer and as a Service provider in relation to gender.

The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) outlaws sex discrimination in the workplace and in the provision of goods and services. It provides men and women with legal redress if they experience discrimination on the grounds of their gender. Direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of gender, marital status and pregnancy are all illegal.

The Equality Act (2006) amended this legislation and created a number of statutory duties to promote gender equality. There is a general duty supported by a number of specific duties. We published a Gender Equality Scheme setting out how we were going to respond to these duties covering the period 2007-2010. The scheme set out how we were going to mainstream gender equality by identifying areas of inequality and how they can be addressed through policy development, service design and delivery and employment.

We recognise there is a considerable under-representation of women at all levels of our operational workforce. We are committed to carrying out positive action initiatives to engage with women as an employer of choice. Our aim is to significantly increase the number of successful applications for positions as retained and wholetime firefighters. For several years, Avon Women’s Network has created an opportunity for women from across the service to come together to discuss shared issues. We are also committed to a capital

investment programme that will ensure that all of our premises have changing, washing and rest facilities that respect the dignity of all of our employees.

Race Equality

As a public authority we have statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote race equality. There is a general duty supported by a number of specific duties. One of these duties is to produce a Race Equality Scheme (RES). The first RES covered the period 2002-2005, and set out how we planned to mainstream race equality into all of the organisations functions. The RES was reviewed and we published a new one for the period 2005-2008 which is now succeeded by this Single Equality Scheme.

We have a long standing commitment to ensure that irrespective of racial, ethnic or national origins, all people have the same rights of access to services and employment. All people will be treated with equality, dignity and respect when having any contact with the Service. We understand our responsibility to the local community and our workforce to ensure racism is tackled and eliminated both in service delivery and employment. The Race Relations Act 1976 outlawed direct and indirect discrimination by employers and the harassment and victimisation on the grounds of race. Discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services is also prohibited.

We acknowledge that our services must be tailored to meet the needs of ethnic minority groups to ensure that the services are fair and responsive to their needs. We have employed a Black & Minority Ethnic Advocate to work in our Community Fire Safety team.

Black and minority ethnic people are currently under-represented in the Service, and our approach is to strategically target positive action initiatives, to encourage applications from such groups to operational and support staff roles. We emphasise our commitment, wherever possible, to reflecting the composition of the local community. We will seek to have a sustainable community engagement strategy and will use opportunities to interact with BME communities to both promote our services and raise our profile as an employer of choice.

Religion or Belief Equality

In 2003, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations made it unlawful to discriminate against employees, former employees and job seekers because of their religion or belief. Direct or indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation are all outlawed.

Within the regulations, religion and belief is defined as:

- Any religion or religious belief e.g. Christianity, Hinduism or Humanism.
- Philosophical belief e.g. pacifism
- Not having a religious or philosophic belief

We endeavour to accommodate requests for employees to observe their religious belief. There are times when this is not possible, For example some headwear or facial hair is not compatible with Breathing Apparatus or Personal Protective Equipment

The Equality Act 2007 extends unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief to cover the provision of goods, facilities, accommodation and services.

Sexual Orientation Equality

In 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations made it unlawful to discriminate against employees, former employees and job seekers because of sexual orientation. Direct or indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation are all outlawed.

Within the regulations, sexual orientation is defined as:

- Orientation towards persons of the same sex e.g. lesbians and gay men
- Orientation towards persons of the opposite sex e.g. heterosexual
- Orientation towards persons of the same sex and opposite sex e.g. bisexual

Legal protection also extends to those who experience discrimination because of the incorrect perception of their sexual orientation and discrimination arising from an individual's association with someone else eg a friend, parent or sibling of a gay man.

The Equality Act 2007 made it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities, accommodation and services.

We recognise that all Fire and Rescue Services have historically been reluctant to support equality for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals (LGB). This has been slowly changing over recent years but there are still a very small number of LGB who feel comfortable about being "out" about their sexuality in their workplace. Avon has hosted 3 national conferences and seminars on LGBT equality and within the Chief Fire Officers Association, we lead on issues relating to LGBT equality. We are pleased that some of our LGBT employees have set up a staff support and social group.

Transgender Equality

A transgender person is someone who has a deep conviction that their gender - whether they are a man or a woman - does not conform to the sex they were assigned at birth. Many transgender people wish to change their name and personal details and live as a member of the gender with which they identify. This may involve hormone therapy and surgery. The process is referred to as 'gender reassignment' or 'transitioning'.

Protection for transgender people is contained within the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999. These regulations prohibit the direct or indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds that an individual intends to undergo, is undergoing and has undergone gender reassignment.

However, many transgender workers still face discrimination during and after the process of gender reassignment. Over half those responding to a survey by Press for Change, the trans lobby group, had changed employers, either because they were forced to by their employer or because they felt compelled to by intolerable working conditions. 38% had experienced harassment at the time of transition and 25% for a period after transition. Nearly a quarter reported verbal abuse and 6% reported physical abuse. 49% felt frequently discriminated against in recruitment.

The duties placed on public authorities by the Equality Act (2006) to promote gender equality also cover transgender equality.

Avon has hosted 3 national conferences and seminars on LGBT equality and within the Chief Fire Officers Association, we lead on issues relating to LGBT equality. We are pleased that some of our employees have recently set up a staff support and social group. Working in partnership with trans community groups, the Fire Brigades Union and Unison we drafted a transgender equality policy for the English Fire and Rescue Service. We are planning on formally adopting this a policy for AF&RS shortly.

Social and Economic Exclusion

Traditionally, equalities legislation has not fully addressed disadvantage arising from social or economic exclusion. However, discrimination can occur directly as a result of someone's actual or perceived "position" in society, family background or class. Individuals without supportive social networks or financial means do not always have the opportunity to fully engage in society. From a service delivery perspective this can lead to a vulnerable group of the community being "invisible". Avon Fire and Rescue consider this kind of disadvantage as requiring the same kind of consideration and attention that the traditional six equality strands are afforded by legislation. For example, we know that most domestic fires what we attend are in areas of multiple deprivation. We will consider how to engage more effectively with members of these geographic communities.

Part 3: Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity

It is a key objective of Avon Fire and Rescue to build equality in to all that we do. The Service's Equality At Work Policy and its Single Equality Scheme are founded on the principle of mainstreaming equality and diversity. It is recognised that equality and diversity cuts across everything that we do.

Avon Fire & Rescue Service has changed considerably over recent years and is committed to the modernisation agenda. We are committed to improving our organisation's performance on equality and diversity, neither because the government has instructed us nor because we want to be seen as "politically correct". We do it because it is the right course of action. We will become a more effective fire and rescue service if we have a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve, that consists of people with a variety of talents and who know that the contribution of every colleague is valued. We will prevent more deaths and injuries if we know our communities better, tailor services to meet their needs and involve them in discussions about how to keep them safe.

Equality and Values

We recognise that the culture and values of our organisation impacts on our ability to deliver services, workforce attitudes and behaviours, professional competence, morale, our attractiveness as an employer and many other areas. For this reason we are absolutely committed to creating an environment where everyone feels valued for who they are and what they do, whether they are an employee or a recipient of a service. We accept that leadership sits at the centre of everything we are trying to achieve in relation to equality and diversity and that every individual has a personal responsibility to lead by example.

We will continue to seek new ways to draw on positive values and behaviours and work to limit those that have a negative impact. Activities relating to Values include, development of our leaders, listening to our employees and communities and having a zero tolerance attitude towards discrimination.

We will ensure that:

- Equality and diversity is lead from the top
- All employees are aware of their personal responsibility for delivering the equality and diversity agenda
- Our employees are supported and that they are provided with equality and diversity training
- Equality and diversity is mainstreamed throughout the Service
- A zero tolerance attitude towards discrimination is adopted
- Our performance in relation to equality and diversity is monitored robustly

Employment

The Director of Human Resources and People Development has the specific responsibility for ensuring that employment practices are compliant with the race, disability and gender duties and other legal obligations, and wherever possible we implement policies and practices that are considered best practice.

We have a duty to ensure that those policies and practices that affect our employees are fair. One of the ways of doing this is by carrying out Equality Impact Assessments. We want to involve our employees in the work the Service does through effective employee engagement mechanisms such as staff surveys, consultation with representative bodies, and employee support networks

We will make sure all aspects of the working environment (including equipment, travel, training, clothing, facilities, food etc) ensure all employees receive the support and tailored resources necessary to work to the best of their ability. We will provide training and development so employees are aware of their individual responsibilities under the equality and diversity agenda and are confident to deliver services to all communities. We will not tolerate harassment and bullying regardless of the motivation.

We want every community to see Avon Fire & Rescue Service as an employer of choice. We will continue our policy of appointing the right people to the right post, based solely on merit and ability. The monitoring data in Appendix 1 shows that we have a significant under-representation of many communities in our operational and support staff and all of our layers of management. This is particularly true for women, Black and Minority Ethnic communities, Disabled people and Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals. We are committed to carrying out a programme of Positive Action initiatives specifically aimed at these communities.

We have been awarded the "Two Ticks" symbol because of our approach to employing Disabled people and we will continue to guarantee an interview for job applicants who state that they are disabled and who meet the essential criteria.

We have chosen to commit to stretching targets around the recruitment of women and Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Our aim is that by 2013, at least 18% of our operational recruits will be women and that 13.7% of recruits into any position in the organisation are members of BME communities. This will be a considerable increase in our performance. In 2008/9 only 7.3% of our operational recruits were women and only 3.3% of recruits into any position in the organisation were from BME communities. We will consult on the appropriateness of setting recruitment targets relating to disability and sexual orientation.

All applicants are requested to complete a confidential equal opportunities monitoring form as part of the recruitment process. Once every two years we also request existing members of staff to complete one. Across the six equality strands, we currently monitor and publish information on:

- Employees in post
- Managers in post
- Applicants for employment
- New employees

We want to expand our monitoring processes to include:

- Recipients of training
- Employees who are invited to attend Assessment Development Centres and those who are placed on a development programme
- Employees who are offered temporary and substantive promotion
- Employees involved in grievance procedures
- Employees subject to disciplinary procedures
- Individuals that leave the organisation

Equal Pay

There is a pay gap between men and women we employ. Only 3 of the employees earning the 5% of incomes at AF&RS are women. In fact the average salary for men employed by AF&RS is £**** and the average salary for women is £*****. This means that there is a gender gap of **%.

We suspect that this pay gap reflects the fact that the vast majority of better paid jobs within the organisation are uniformed operational jobs and men overwhelmingly occupy these jobs. However, we will undertake an equal pay review in order to explore the reasons for this gender pay gap to ensure there is not any inadvertent pay discrimination. During the review we will compare the men and women doing similar jobs of equal value, identify pay gaps, investigate whether these gaps could be influenced by gender and, if we find any such gaps, we will address them.

Service delivery

Avon Fire and Rescue is committed to ensuring that equality and diversity are integrated into the delivery of our services, whether this be responding to an emergency, engaging in our fire prevention and community safety activities, undertaking fire investigation or delivering education and training initiatives.

We will ensure that:

- Services are accessible, and are delivered appropriately in order to facilitate equality of treatment;
- Information about services is offered in appropriate formats and languages to meet the needs of all members of the community;
- Ensure that resources are targeted to promote equality of access;
- There are improvements in the monitoring of service provision in relation to age, disability, gender and race, religion and sexual orientation and the similar monitoring of complaints
- The equality impact of proposed and amended functions and policies is assessed;
- Awareness and understanding of the needs of different groups is improved through effective community profiling, consultation and involvement; and

- Employees are aware of the impact of the Single Equality Scheme on the services they provide.

Procurement

We enter into a range of contracts and partnerships with other organisations for services, goods and staff. The procurement process plays an important role in ensuring that our policies and practices are not undermined or compromised by engaging partners that do not share our values and commitment to equality and diversity. We ensure that our procurement processes reflect our responsibilities under equalities legislation – particularly our duties on race, disability and gender equality. The standard terms and conditions of our contracts will include information about the key legislation. We will also require that every contractor complies with anti-discrimination provisions when carrying out any duties contracted by us. When appropriate, we will request evidence from them.

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Part 4: Developing and implementing the Single Equality Scheme

Avon Fire & Rescue has taken the decision to consolidate its existing equality schemes of Race, Disability and Gender into a single framework and extend these to cover Age, Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief, and socio-economic exclusion.

This scheme should be seen as the successor to the Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008, Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2008 and the Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010. The decision to consolidate the existing schemes into a single document and extend it to the other equality strands of age, sexual orientation and religion and belief was taken by the Strategic Management Board in recognition of:

- Responsibilities under equality and diversity extending beyond legislative requirements;
- The Equality Bill proposing a streamlining of existing and planned UK legislation relating to all equality strands;
- Current equality impact assessments practices already cover all 6 equality strands;
- That equality issues do not stand in isolation from one another and that multiple discrimination can occur;
- Effective delivery of the equalities and diversity agenda is best achieved under a single, streamlined approach;
- Maintaining a 'hierarchy' of equality may not be the best method for tackling discrimination

To help prepare for this Scheme, we carried out a review of the three existing schemes. The Race Equality Scheme Action Plan contained 31 actions, 30 of which were completed. The Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan contained 32 actions, 2 were not complete, there was no data to assess progress on a further 2, 1 was partially complete, 1 was deemed no longer necessary and 26 had been completed. Outstanding actions relating to creating new opportunities for employing Disabled people will be addressed in this Single Equality Scheme. The Gender Equality Scheme had 17 actions, 2 were not complete, there was no data to assess progress on a further 2, 1 was partially complete, 1 was deemed no longer necessary and 11 had been completed. Outstanding actions relating to Equal Pay and monitoring will be addressed in this Single Equality Scheme.

We have agreed an Action Plan showing what we are going to do over the next 3 years to meet the commitments set out in the Single Equality Scheme. The Action Plan is Part 5 of this document.

Equality Impact Assessments

When used effectively, Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) help mainstream equality within the service planning and decision-making processes of an organisation. We will use Equality Impact Assessments to assess the impact, or likely impact, of all our policies and practices on each equality strand. We will use them to prevent our decisions and activities (including those that arise

from partnerships and procurement) from either inadvertently causing discrimination or failing to proactively promote equality of opportunity.

We will ensure that an Equality Impact Assessment is carried out on all new policies and procedures before either the Senior Management Board or Avon Fire Authority adopts them.

We have considered whether all our existing policies have a high, medium or low impact on equality. During 2007 and 2008, we carried out an Equality Impact Assessment on every policy and practice that had a high or medium impact on equality. In 2009 we will impact assess those policies that we think have a low impact on equality. We will then carry out a further round of EIAs in 2010-2012.

High impact policies and practices will require a “full” impact assessment, and will involve:

- establishment of clear aims and objectives of the policy or practice;
- consideration of available data and research, carrying out further research if necessary;
- assessment of impact, for example what affect will the policy or practice have upon men and women;
- consultation with interested parties, for example members of the public, community groups, or trade unions;
- consideration of measures which might mitigate any adverse impact and alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality while still delivering the aims of the policy;
- a decision;
- agreement on monitoring for any adverse impact in the future; and
- publication of the results of impact assessment.

If it is established that one of our policies or practices does have a negative impact on equality, we will have due regard to the need to modify it to achieve a more favourable outcome. However equality is just one of our, sometimes competing, priorities. After carrying out a thorough Equality Impact Assessment, there may be occasions when we decide to pursue a policy or practice that does have a negative impact on gender equality. We expect this to be a very rare occurrence and when it happens we will ensure that the decision making process is fully transparent and the results are publicised. Only a senior manager has the authority within AF&RS to approve the implementation of a policy when a negative impact has been identified.

Engagement and Involvement

We have ensured that a full range of individuals are fully involved in the production of this Single Equality Scheme. We held meetings with.....The meetings identified the following priorities.....

Annual reporting

Every year we will publish a report containing a summary of our equality work. It will include:

- progress on action plan targets;
- progress on Equality Impact Assessments;
- all information gathered through monitoring; and
- what we have done with the information we gathered.

Revising the Single Equality Scheme

We will produce a new Single Equality Scheme in three years time to establish our work for 2010-2013. We will take into account our progress on the work set out within this Single Equality Scheme, as well as all the information we will have gathered and our Equality Impact Assessments.

Complaints

Feedback

We welcome feedback on our Single Equality Scheme. You can do this by contacting:

Equality & Diversity Unit
Avon Fire & Rescue Service
Headquarters
Temple Back
Bristol
BS1 6EU

Tel: 0117 9262061 extension 246 or 249

Email: equalities@avonfire.gov.uk

Part 5: Action Plan

Reference number	Action	Relevant Equality Strand	Responsible Manager	Deadline
Leadership and promoting inclusion				
1	Achieve "Developing" status under the Equality Framework for Local Government	All	Head of E&D	April 2010
2	Achieve "Excellent" status under the Equality Framework for Local Government	All	Head of E&D	April 2012
3	Fire Authority Members will undertake appropriate training in order to perform their role effectively in promoting equality, diversity and fairness and providing leadership to others.	All	Clerk to the Fire Authority	March 2010
4	Ensure all new policies are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment and existing policies are reviewed at least once every 3 years	All	Head of E&D	Yearly
5	All new managers are given appropriate training so they aware of their responsibilities relating to equality and diversity	All	Head of People Development	Yearly
6	Internal and external communication strategies designed to promote good relations across all local communities.	All	Media & Communication Manager, Social Marketing Manager	Yearly
7	Carry out a review of how we procure goods and services and monitor any contracts to ensure that equality and diversity issues are fully considered	All	Supplies and Services Manager	March 2011
Accountability				

Reference number	Action	Relevant Equality Strand	Responsible Manager	Deadline
8	Avon Fire Authority will receive an annual report on progress on equality and diversity generally, and specifically the Single Equality Scheme. This report will be made available to the public.	All	Head of E&D	Yearly
9	Submit an annual report to the Department of Communities and Local Government on progress on equality and diversity	All	Head of E&D	March 2010
Effective Service Delivery and Community Engagement				
10	Ensure that the Integrated Risk Management Plan takes full account of the needs of local communities and IRMP sets out plans for review of service delivery	All	Risk Reduction Group Manager (IRMP)	March 2010
11	Equality outcomes are integrated into business planning processes. Equality and diversity objectives regularly monitored, reviewed and updated	All	All managers	Yearly
12	Work with partner organisations to improve knowledge of community and identify and address community needs	All	Risk Reduction Area Manager	Yearly
13	Reduce fire incidents, deaths and injuries across local communities	All	Risk Reduction ACFO	Yearly
14	Geographic and demographic communities most at risk of death and injury are engaged on service delivery and planning.	All	Risk Reduction Area Manager	Yearly

Reference number	Action	Relevant Equality Strand	Responsible Manager	Deadline
15	Through targeted use of resources, demonstrate measurable increases in the number of Home Fire Safety Visits being conducted in homes in communities disproportionately affected by fire, particularly BME, Disabled people, people aged 65 and over, and geographic communities that experience high levels of multiple socio-economic deprivation.	Age Disability Race Socio-economic	Head of Community Safety	Yearly
16	Develop community safety strategies targeting those communities most at risk of fire which include specific work to reduce number of hate crime incidences	Age Disability Race Socio-economic	Head of Community Safety	March 2010
17	Establish robust evaluation measures to assess effectiveness of community safety strategies and report progress to partners and public	All	Head of Community Safety	March 2011 March 2012
18	Identify tools to benchmark community satisfaction with performance of AF&RS	All	Head of Community Safety	March 2011
19	Increase satisfaction rates of equalities communities with performance of AF&RS	All	Head of Community Safety	March 2012
20	Widen partnership profile to include third sector and public sector organisations that increase our capacity to target households and communities most at risk	All	Head of Community Safety	March 2011 March 2012

Reference number	Action	Relevant Equality Strand	Responsible Manager	Deadline
21	Increase diversity of young people engaged with to specifically include BME and gypsy\traveller communities, Disabled people, members of faith groups and LGBT communities	Disability Sexual orientation Religion\ belief Race Transgender	Head of Community Safety	Yearly
22	Regular communication with employees to raise awareness and understanding of local community issues and the actions needed to address them	All	Head of Community Safety	Yearly
Employment and Training				
23	Undertake awareness campaigns and positive action to support and encourage applications to all posts from women, members of Black & Minority Ethnic communities, Disabled people and lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.	Disability Gender, Race Sexual Orientation	Head of Equality & Diversity	Yearly
24	Meet minimum yearly targets for recruitment of women into a percentage of operational posts i.e. 13.5% in 2009/10, 15.5% in 2010/11 and 17.5% in 2011/12	Gender	Director of Human Resources & People Development	Yearly

Reference number	Action	Relevant Equality Strand	Responsible Manager	Deadline
25	Meet minimum yearly targets for recruitment of members of BME communities into a percentage of posts i.e 6% in 2009/10, 8% in 2010/11 and 11% in 2011/12.	Race	Director of Human Resources & People Development	Yearly
26	Create at least two employment or work experience vacancies targeted at Disabled people	Disability	Director of Human Resources & People Development	Yearly
27	Create at least one apprenticeship for a young person experiencing long term unemployment	Age	Director of Human Resources & People Development	April 2010
28	Publish, monitor and analyse equality and diversity data relating to employment	All	Director of Human Resources & People Development	Yearly
29	Support the development of an employee support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees	Sexual Orientation, Transgender	Head of Equality & Diversity	Yearly

Reference number	Action	Relevant Equality Strand	Responsible Manager	Deadline
30	Ratify a Transgender Employment Equality policy	Transgender	Director of Human Resources & People Development	March 2010
31	Undertake equal pay audit and agree an action plan with trade unions	Gender	Director of Human Resources & People Development	March 2010
32	Fully implement Equal Pay action plan	Gender	Director of Human Resources & People Development	March 2012
33	Review impact of including equality and diversity objectives in all employees' Personal Development Reviews.	All	Head of People Development	March 2010
34	Introduce mechanisms to record all incidents of harassment and bullying and actions taken in response	All	Head of Equality & Diversity	March 2010
35	Provide anti-harassment training to all managers	All	Head of People Development	March 2011
Evaluation and Sharing Good Practice				

Reference number	Action	Relevant Equality Strand	Responsible Manager	Deadline
36	Work with partners to collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data and information about local communities, identify key equality gaps experienced by local communities and set appropriate objectives to address them	All	Risk Reduction Area Manager	Yearly
37	Ensure organisational culture encourages and supports members of staff to disclose personal diversity data and work for a non-disclosure rate of less than 20% for each equality strand .	All	HR Manager (personnel)	March 2011
38	Undertake employee and community surveys to measure perceptions of Avon Fire and Rescue Service as an employer and service provider	All	Director of Service Improvement	March 2011

Appendix 1: Avon Fire & Rescue Service Employment Data

1. Total Staff in post 31/03/09 (Total 1075)

Table 1.1 Staff by age

	Total	Percentage %
16-19	5	0.5
20-29	161	15.0
30-39	349	32.5
40-49	415	38.6
50-59	125	11.6
60+	20	1.8

Table 1.2 Staff by disability

Yes	13	1.2
No	1062	98.8

Table 1.3a Staff by ethnicity

White British	981	91.3
White Irish	5	0.5
White Other	14	1.3
Dual Heritage: White/Black Caribbean	4	0.4
Dual Heritage: White/Black African	1	0.1
Dual Heritage: White/Asian	2	0.2
Dual Heritage: Other	4	0.4
Pakistani	2	0.2
Indian	1	0.1
Other Asian	1	0.1
Black Caribbean	7	0.6
Other Ethnic Group	3	0.3
Prefer not to say	50	4.5

Table 1.3b Staff – White\Black & Minority Ethnic

White (British & Irish)	986	96.2
All Other Ethnic Groups	39	3.8

Table 1.4 Staff by gender

Women	150	14.0
Men	925	86.0

Table 1.5 Staff by religion and belief

Buddhist	9	0.8
Christian	338	31.4
Jewish	2	0.2
None	224	20.8
Muslim	4	0.4
Sikh	1	0.1
Other	16	1.5
Prefer not to say	481	44.8

Table 1.6 Staff by sexual orientation

Heterosexual	636	59.2
Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	14	1.3
Prefer not to say	425	39.5

2. Operational staff in post 31/3/09 (Total 872)

Table 2.1 Staff by age

	Total	Percentage %
16-19	3	0.3
20-29	127	14.6
30-39	306	35.1
40-49	353	40.5
50-59	80	9.2
60+	3	0.3

Table 2.2 Staff by disability

Yes	9	1.0
No	863	99.0

Table 2.3a Staff by ethnicity

White British	798	91.5
White Irish	3	0.3
White Other	12	1.4
Dual Heritage: White/Black Caribbean	2	0.2
Dual Heritage: White/Black African	1	0.1
Dual Heritage: White/ Asian	2	0.2
Dual Heritage: Other	4	0.5
Other Asian	1	0.1
Black Caribbean	6	0.7
Other Ethnic Group	2	0.2
Prefer not to say	41	4.7

Table 2.3b Staff – White\Black & Minority Ethnic

White (British & Irish)	801	96.4
All Other Ethnic Groups	30	3.6

Table 2.4 Staff by gender

Women	32	3.7
Men	840	96.3

Table 2.5 Staff by religion and belief

Buddhist	8	0.9
Christian	264	30.3
Jewish	2	0.2
None	172	19.7
Muslim	2	0.2
Other	12	1.4
Prefer not to say	412	47.3

Table 2.6 Staff by sexual orientation

Heterosexual	497	57.0
Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	9	1.0
Prefer not to say	366	42.0

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3. Support Staff in post 31/3/09 (Total 203)

Table 3.1 Staff by age

	Total	Percentage %
16-19	2	0.9
20-29	34	16.7
30-39	43	21.2
40-49	62	30.5
50-59	45	22.2
60+	17	8.4

Table 3.2 Staff by disability

Yes	4	2.0
No	199	98.0

Table 3.3a Staff by ethnicity

White British	183	90.1
White Irish	2	0.9
White Other	2	0.9
Dual Heritage: White/Black Caribbean	2	0.9
Pakistani	2	0.9
Indian	1	0.5
Black Caribbean	1	0.5
Other Ethnic Group	1	0.5
Prefer not to say	9	4.4

Table 3.3b Staff – White\Black & Minority Ethnic

White (British & Irish)	185	95.4
All Other Ethnic Groups	9	4.6

Table 3.4 Staff by gender

Women	118	58.1
Men	85	41.9

Table 3.5 Staff by religion and belief

Buddhist	1	0.5
Christian	74	36.5
None	52	25.6
Muslim	2	0.9
Sikh	1	0.5
Other	4	2.0
Prefer not to say	69	34.0

Table 3.6 Staff by sexual orientation

Heterosexual	139	68.5
Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	5	2.5
Prefer not to say	59	29.0

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4. Managers in post 31/3/09 (Total 61)

Table 4.1 Managers by age

	Total	Percentage
30-39	7	11.5
40-49	37	60.7
50-59	13	21.3
60+	4	6.5

Table 4.2 Managers by disability

Yes	61	0
No	0	100

Table 4.3a Managers by ethnicity

White British	56	91.8
White Irish	1	1.6
White Other	1	1.6
Dual Heritage: White/Black Caribbean	1	1.6
Black Caribbean	1	1.6
Prefer not to say	1	1.6

Table 4.3b Managers – White\Black & Minority Ethnic

White (British & Irish)	57	95.0
All Other Ethnic Groups	3	5.0

Table 4.4 Managers by gender

Women	11	18.0
Men	50	82.0

Table 4.5 Managers by religion and belief

Christian	24	39.3
None	21	34.4
Other	1	1.6
Prefer not to say	18	29.5

Table 4.6 Managers by sexual orientation

Heterosexual	43	70.5
Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	1	1.6
Prefer not to say	17	27.9

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5. New staff appointed 1/4/08 - 31/03/09 (Total 68)

Table 5.1 Appointees by age

	Total	Percentage %
16 -19	1	1.5
20-29	34	50.0
30-39	18	26.5
40-49	9	13.2
50-59	3	4.3
60+	1	1.5

Table 5.2 Appointees by disability

Yes	0	0
No	68	100

Table 5.3a Appointees by ethnicity

White British	59	86.8
Dual Heritage: White/Asian	1	1.5
Indian	1	1.5
Prefer not to Say	7	10.2

Table 5.3b Appointees – White\Black & Minority Ethnic

White (British & Irish)	59	96.7
All Other Ethnic Groups	2	3.3

Table 5.4 Appointees by gender

Women	17	25.0
Men	44	75.0

Table 5.5 Appointees by religion and belief

Buddhist	1	1.5
Christian	26	38.2
Jewish	1	1.5
None	29	42.6
Sikh	1	1.5
Prefer not to say	10	14.7

Table 5.6 Appointees by sexual orientation

Heterosexual	57	83.8
Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	1	1.5
Prefer not to say	10	14.7

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6. New operational staff appointed 1/4/08- 31/3/09 (Total 41)

Table 6.1 Appointees by age

	Total	Percentage %
20-29	25	61.0
30-39	14	34.1
40-49	2	4.9

Table 6.2 Appointees by disability

Yes	0	0
No	41	100

Table 6.3a Appointees by ethnicity

White British	34	82.9
Dual Heritage: White/Asian	1	2.4
Prefer not to say	6	14.7

Table 6.3b Appointees – White\Black & Minority Ethnic

White (British & Irish)	34	97.1
All Other Ethnic Groups	1	2.9

Table 6.4 Appointees by gender

Women	3	7.3
Men	38	92.7

Table 6.5 Appointees by religion and belief

Buddhist	1	2.4
Christian	16	39.0
Jewish	1	2.4
None	15	36.6
Prefer not to say	8	19.6

Table 6.6 Appointees by sexual orientation

Heterosexual	32	78.0
Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	1	2.4
Prefer not to say	8	19.6

7. New support staff appointed 1/4/08- 31/3/09 (Total 27)

Table 7.1 Appointees by age

	Total	Percentage %
16-19	1	3.7
20-29	9	33.3
30-39	6	22.2
40-49	7	25.9
50-59	3	11.2
60+	1	3.7

Table 7.2 Appointees by disability

Yes	0	0
No	27	100

Table 7.3a Appointees by ethnicity

White British	25	92.6
Indian	1	3.7
Prefer not to say	1	3.7

Table 7.3b Appointees – White\Black & Minority Ethnic

White (British & Irish)	25	96.2
All Other Ethnic Groups	1	3.8

Table 7.4 Appointees by gender

Women	14	51.9
Men	13	48.1

Table 7.5 Appointees by religion and belief

Christian	10	37.0
None	14	51.9
Sikh	1	3.7
Prefer not to say	2	7.4

Table 7.6 Appointees by sexual orientation

Heterosexual	25	92.6
Prefer not to say	2	7.4

8. Applicants for Employment 01/04/08 - 31/03/09 (Total 1022)

Table 8.1 Applicants by disability

	Total	Percentage
Yes	24	2.3
No	998	97.7

Table 8.2a Applicants by ethnicity

White British	830	81.2
White Irish	10	1.0
White Other	39	3.8
Dual Heritage: White/Black Caribbean	10	1.0
Dual Heritage: White/Black African	1	0.1
Dual Heritage: White/Asian	5	0.5
Dual Heritage: Other	6	0.6
Indian	10	1.0
Pakistani	3	0.3
Bangladeshi	1	0.1
Asian Other	1	0.1
Black Caribbean	7	0.7
Black African	14	1.4
Black Other	2	0.2
Chinese	2	0.2
Other	9	0.9
Prefer not to say	72	7.0

Table 8.2b Applicants – White\Black & Minority Ethnic

White (British & Irish)	840	88.4
All Other Ethnic Groups	110	11.6

Table 8.3 Applicants by gender

Female	508	49.7
Male	514	50.3

Table 8.4 Applicants by religion and belief

Buddhist	8	0.8
Christian	446	43.6
Hindu	4	0.4
Jewish	1	0.1
None	361	35.3
Muslim	8	0.8
Sikh	5	0.5
Other	29	2.8
Prefer not to say	160	15.7

Table 8.5 Applicants by sexual orientation

Heterosexual	814	
Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	31	
Prefer not to say	177	

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9. Applicants for operational posts 1/4/08 – 31/03/09 (Total 26)

Table 9.1 Applicants by disability

	Total	Percentage
Yes	0	0
No	26	100

Table 9.2a Applicants by ethnicity

White British	19	73.1
Dual Heritage: Other	1	3.8
Black Caribbean	1	3.8
Prefer not to say	5	19.5

Table 9.2b Applicants – White\Black & Minority Ethnic

White (British & Irish)	19	90.5
All Other Ethnic Groups	2	9.5

Table 9.3 Applicants by gender

Female	0	0
Male	26	100

Table 9.4 Applicants by religion and belief

Christian	14	53.8
None	3	11.5
Prefer not to say	9	34.7

Table 9.5 Applicants by sexual orientation

Heterosexual	18	69.3
Prefer not to say	8	30.7

10. Applicants for support staff posts 1/4/08 – 31/03/09 (Total 996)

Table 10.1 Applicants by disability

	Total	Percentage
Yes	24	2.4
No	972	97.6

Table 10.2a Applicants by ethnicity

White British	811	81.4
White Irish	10	1.0
White Other	39	3.9
Dual Heritage: White/Black Caribbean	10	1.0
Dual Heritage: White/Black African	1	0.1
Dual Heritage: White/Asian	5	0.5
Dual Heritage: Other	5	0.5
Indian	10	1.0
Pakistani	3	0.3
Bangladeshi	1	0.1
Asian Other	1	0.1
Black Caribbean	6	0.6
Black African	14	1.4
Black Other	2	0.2
Chinese	2	0.2
Other	9	0.9
Prefer not to say	67	6.7

Table 10.2b Applicants – White\Black & Minority Ethnic

White (British & Irish)	821	88.4
All Other Ethnic Groups	108	11.6

Table 10.3 Applicants by gender

Female	508	51.0
Male	488	49.0

Table 10.4 Applicants by religion and belief

Buddhist	8	0.8
Christian	432	43.4
Hindu	4	0.4
Jewish	1	0.1
None	358	35.9
Muslim	8	0.8
Sikh	5	0.5
Other	29	2.9
Prefer not to say	151	15.2

Table 10.5 Applicants by sexual orientation

Heterosexual	796	79.9
Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	31	3.1
Prefer not to say	169	17.0

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