



Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

1. Policy Statement and Scope

1.0.1 ECFRS is committed to the development of a working culture in which fair treatment for all is the norm by promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity. We are committed to developing a culture and practices which recognise difference both in employment and in the delivery of an individualised and responsive service to a high standard. We will work in partnership with our employees and communities to achieve equality of outcomes to all.

1.0.2 We believe in achieving high standards of professional conduct and will ensure that no service user, employee or prospective employee is discriminated against, whether directly or indirectly on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment status, marital/ civil partnership status, race, ethnic or national origin, nationality, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and/or maternity leave, Trade Union membership, HIV status or any other condition or requirement which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

1.0.3 This policy applies to everyone working at ECFRS including employees, temporary or agency workers, trainees, work experience, contractors, and consultants as well as potential new employees and recruitment candidates.

2. Service Values

2.0.1 ECFRS values are:

- We are Open, Honest and Trustworthy.
- We are Always Professional.
- We are Courageous in all that we do.
- We work as One Team.
- We Value the Contribution of All.

3. Policy Wording

3.0.1 ECFRS is fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings to the Service. ECFRS is also committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and against Service users.

3.0.2 This policy is intended to assist the Service to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

3.0.3 Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment, bullying and victimisation and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

3.0.4 All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions, or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the Service Disciplinary Procedure.

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3.0.5 The Service will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, positive action, opportunities for training, promotion, terms and conditions of employment, procurement, discipline and selection for redundancy.

3.0.6 ECFRS will not discriminate unlawfully against service users using or seeking to use our services or facilities provided by ECFRS.

3.0.7 Employees should report any bullying, harassment or victimisation by service users, suppliers, visitors or others to their line manager, or any manager in the Service or HR, who will take appropriate action.

3.1 Responsibilities

3.1.1 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (our "Service") are responsible for:

- Creating and maintaining an environment in which discrimination, harassment and victimisation are regarded as unacceptable.
- The Office of the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive have overall responsibility for the management of equality and diversity within the Service.
- ECFRS, through its managers, have a responsibility to ensure that the policy is applied consistently, effectively, and fairly.
- Specific responsibilities fall upon managers, supervisors and individuals involved in recruitment and people management, in the communication and implementation of policies.

3.1.2 As individuals, employees all have a responsibility to:

- Co-operate with the implementation of the policy and related action plans.
- Not discriminate against, harass, or victimise an individual or individuals, for making a complaint or providing information about discrimination.
- Inform management if we suspect that discrimination is taking place in employment decisions. Where individuals feel unable to approach their line manager, they should approach a next level manager or a trade union representative.
- Avoid indirectly supporting unacceptable or unfair behaviour, by ignoring what is happening around us.
- Make sure their own behaviour is appropriate.

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- Providing a public service which respects and takes account of the needs and background of service users.
- Recognise and respect the diverse backgrounds other employees.

3.1.3 Agencies, contractors and suppliers are expected to carry out their duties with due regard to this policy. Tendering companies will be asked to provide their record of and commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity and this information will be considered when awarding contracts.

3.2 Grievances

3.2.1 If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the Service's Grievance Procedure to make a complaint.

3.2.2 The Service will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

3.3 Monitoring and Review

3.3.1 This policy will be monitored periodically by the Service to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in legislation. In particular the Service will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups and will review its Equality & Diversity policy and guidance note in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the Service will implement them.

3.3.2 Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

4. Related Documents

- Equality and Diversity Guidance
- Grievance Procedure
- Equality Act 2010
- Reasonable Adjustment Guidance

5. Monitoring & Revision History

Implementation /Revision Date	Revision Description (Summary of changes)	Owner/ Author	Date to be reviewed
2011	Creation and implementation of new Policy 7 Procedures		2011
25/02/2016	Equality assessment added		2016
26/01/2018			
14/03/2019	Inclusive workplace form People strategy		2019
13/04/2021	Addition of our Service values to 2.0.1; reference statement to Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority 3.1.1; The Data Protection Act 2018 (post Brexit) reference 3.3.2 and minor entries and format update.	██████████	February 2022
10/05/2024	Review – updated legislation, formatting of values and changing one reference from staff to employees. Included Reasonable Adjustment Guidance within Related Documents.	██████████	Full review scheduled for Phase 23