



## Foreword

### Welcome to Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS)

The Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Training (e-learning and face-to-face) you receive whilst working at BFRS, along with this handbook, should give you a far greater understanding of:

- the importance of equality, diversity and human rights;
- why equality and diversity work is relevant to Fire and Rescue Services;
- the types of behaviour which is unlawful; and
- what constitutes bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.

It is the **responsibility of BFRS** to:

- have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination;
- advance equality of opportunity; and to
- foster good relations between different groups of people.

It is the **responsibility of the Diversity Team** to:

- ensure that staff receive information and are suitably trained regarding equality and diversity;
- ensure the Service has information and systems to ensure compliance with equality and human rights legislation;
- monitor and report on compliance with our legal duties.

It is your **responsibility as an employee** to:

- act in accordance with equality and human rights legislation;
- help eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and
- conduct yourself at all times in ways which promote equality.

**“Equality, diversity and human rights is not just about understanding issues. It is about treating people as unique individuals with dignity and respect and not imposing your views on anyone else”.**

**Diversity Advisor**

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## Vision and Mission Statement

To have a workforce (operational, support and non-uniformed roles) that is drawn from and better reflects the diversity of the Community we serve. A workforce that is strengthened by the range of knowledge, experiences and talents of a diverse workforce and one that welcomes respects and values the contribution of every individual equally.

Our Mission is to:

- create an inclusive culture that encourages and enables people throughout the community to join and remain with us;
- ensure there are no barriers to recruitment, selection, training, development and career progression;
- ensure that staff of all faiths and none, and women as well as men, are able to work in an environment that respects and values them;
- ensure that people are free from abuse, religious or sexual innuendos, homophobic or racist remarks or sly comments;
- ensure that people are seen for their abilities not defined by a disability;
- ensure that our policies take everyone into account and are implemented in an equal and fair way;
- ensure that our staff can be open about their sexuality and same sex relationships at work, if they so wish;
- ensure that the culture does not tolerate any form of intimidation, humiliation, harassment, bullying or abuse;
- break down barriers of discrimination and prejudice, misunderstanding or fear which could damage our operational effectiveness or our ability to drive down risk in the community we serve;
- engage with our communities in a way that we can provide an effective delivery of our services and functions.

Our policies make it clear that the Service **will not tolerate** any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying and or victimisation. Staff should conduct themselves, at all times, in a professional manner. Failure to do so, if proven, could lead to disciplinary action being taken.



BFRS has been awarded the status of being a Disability Confident Employer. This recognition was given as a result of our recruitment and employment practices.

# Professional Standards of Behaviour

## Introduction

All Public authorities, including Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, are legally obliged to be proactive and promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination for service users and staff, rather than waiting for individuals to complain. This goes beyond ticking boxes and means that you have a duty to behave appropriately and challenge others whose behaviors may not support the Service.

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service have clearly defined values which are:**

**Humility** – A humble view of one’s own importance, unpretentiousness and modesty;

**Courage** – A state of mind in which a person is able to face danger and fear with confidence and bravery;

**Wisdom** – The ability, developed through experience, insight and reflection, to discern truth and exercise good judgement;

**Tenacity** – persistent determination;

**Prudence** – The measured balance between complicated situations to provide sound judgements;

**Selflessness** – Not seeking self-interest;

**Loyalty** – A strong feeling of support or allegiance;

**Truth** – The accepted integrity of what is considered actual.

These values set the standards of behavior expected of all staff. The Service has set high standards for all staff demonstrating pride in the organisation and the service it provides.

These values and standards of behavior are to be displayed at all times whether at work, at official Service functions and when off duty.

The significance of these values and how each person conducts themselves has always been important to the Service. However, with the drive for increased community partnership, fire prevention, education and a variety of powerful and far reaching pieces of legislation, demonstrating the highest standards of behavior has never been more important.

## About Bedfordshire



Bedfordshire as a whole comprises 3 unitary authority areas; Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, and Luton Borough covering an area of 476.94 square miles.

Bedfordshire can proudly claim to be one of the most culturally diverse counties in the East of England, with over 60 different ethnic groups living within its boundaries.

**Central Bedfordshire** is a mainly rural location in the East of England. Much of the area has a suburban or

rural feel, with picturesque villages, beautiful hamlets and historic market towns. The largest towns are Leighton Linlade, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Biggleswade, Flitwick and Sandy.

**Bedford** borough contains one large urban area that comprises Bedford and the adjacent town of Kempston, surrounded by a rural area with many villages. 75% of the borough's population live in the Bedford Urban Area and the five large villages that surround it, which makes up slightly less than 6% of the total land area of the Borough.

Bedford has one of the most ethnically diverse communities in the region and is home to people from an estimated 60 countries, including large Italian and Asian populations. According to 2011 Census data, 28.5% of the population is from a Black or Minority Ethnic Community (non-'White British'). Nearly two thirds of this population growth has arisen from migration from EU Accession countries, especially Poland and Lithuania.

**Luton** has a long history of migration into the area both from elsewhere in the UK and overseas. The population of Luton has 35% from a Black or Minority Ethnic background and 54% of school pupils from a Black or Minority Ethnic background.

There have been long-standing African, Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Indian, Irish and Pakistani communities in Luton as a result of international migration. The migration patterns became more complex when the University of Bedfordshire opened in mid-1990, which caused a rapid growth in the student population of the town. This growth has been sustained with the inclusion of overseas students. In the mid-2000's, the expansion of eastern Europe led to a significant increase in migration from eastern Europe, in particular Poland and Lithuania. There has also been in-migration from African Countries such as the Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Somali and Zimbabwe. There is also a Turkish population in Luton.

## Projected Growth

Initial estimates are that Bedford Borough's population will increase to approximately 174,700 by 2021, an increase of 7% from 2014. Longer term, the population of the Borough is expected to reach 198,700 by 2037. This would represent a 21% increase between 2014 and 2037.

Authority areas	2014	2021
Bedford Borough	163,924	174,700
Central Bedfordshire	269,076	287,300
Luton	210,962	231,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>643,962</b>	<b>693,000</b>

Within this expected growth, the older population will increase at a much higher rate.

The 65+ population for Bedford is forecast to rise by 67% from 2014-2021, and the 85+ population is forecast to increase by an astonishing level of 156% from 2014-2037. Source: Bedford Borough Council Population Estimates and Forecasts.

Bedfordshire has a growing and ageing population which is expected to increase in the number of people aged 65 and over by over 50% by the year 2021, from 35,900 to 55,000. An even higher rate of increase of almost 65% is projected for those aged over 75.

The population in Luton is growing, with the younger population much higher than the regional average; higher percentages are aged under 16 years and a much lower percentage above pension age.

## **Rates of Dementia**

In Central Bedfordshire it is estimated that there are 3,010 people with dementia (*Dementia Prevalence Calculator, February 2015 dataset*). Of these 1,663 are predicted to have mild dementia, 980 moderate dementia, and 368 severe dementia. Every 3 days, 2 people are diagnosed with dementia via the memory assessment service in Central Bedfordshire. Overall, under the age of 75 dementia mainly affects males, whilst over the age of 75 females are most affected.

In Bedford the number of people with dementia is going to rise significantly with the aging population, estimated to increase by 16% between 2010 and 2016 in Bedford Borough. Today we estimate 1,670 people are living with dementia and 722 people develop dementia each year within the Bedford Borough. Not everybody with dementia is properly diagnosed or known to services. In fact we estimate that only 37% of people with dementia in the Borough are known to service providers.

In Luton it is estimated that there are almost 1,600 individuals living with dementia, this is forecast to rise by 51% by 2025.

## **Poverty**

Bedfordshire has some of the highest concentrations of poverty in the country directly alongside areas of affluence. In spring 2012, 15.1% of households in Bedford Borough were found to be fuel poor. The most deprived areas in Central Bedfordshire are in parts of Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Leighton-Linslade, Flitwick and Sandy, where poverty amongst older people is a particular issue.

Three wards in Luton are in the top 10% of deprived wards in the country (*as defined in the Index of Multiple Deprivation*). The proportion of the working population claiming benefits is 1.4 times higher than that for the East of England.

There are 39,000 young people under the age of 20 in Bedford Borough. 1 in 5 of these young people aged 0-15 live in families that are officially classified as living in poverty. In some local areas this rises to 2 out of every 3 young people. Just over a quarter of children in Central Bedfordshire live in low income families, rising to almost half in parts of Houghton Regis and Dunstable. There are approximately 525 families in Luton having serious problems, including unemployment, family poverty and child absence from school. 28.4% (approximately 14,650) of Luton children live in poverty.



## Health and Life Expectancy Rates

**Life expectancy is rising for both men and women overall but there are inequalities within the county. In the most deprived areas life expectancy is considerably lower than in the least deprived areas.**

It is estimated that nearly a quarter of all adults in Bedford Borough are obese, which is equivalent to over 27,000 adults. Almost 1 in 10 children aged 4-5 years is obese, rising to 1 in 5 of those aged 10-11 years. This means that over 4,500 children in Bedford Borough are obese.

In Central Bedfordshire it is estimated that 49,000 adults (25%) are obese of whom it is estimated 9,000 have high blood pressure, 4,000 have cardiovascular disease and 3,000 have diabetes as a direct result of their weight. 1 in 5 children in the most deprived areas are obese by the time they reach the age of 11.

In the rest of Central Bedfordshire 1 in 7 children are obese by the age of 11. Only 11% of adults in Central Bedfordshire are physically active enough to benefit their health. Obesity in Year R (reception ages 4-5 years), children in Luton (at 11.2%) is significantly higher than the England average (9.4%) and is higher than its statistical neighbour's average of 11.0%; Obesity in Year 6 children in Luton (21.9%) is significantly higher than the England average (19.0 %) and in line with statistical neighbours.

It is estimated that by 2020, 1 in 3 people will be living with physical, sensory or learning impairment. People with such impairments can often find themselves socially excluded by society's attitude to their disability.

## Why Equality Matters



An operational statistics bulletin 2015-2016 from The Home Office reported that Fire and Rescue Services across England employ 34,400 full-time equivalent firefighters;

Only 5% of firefighters were women and, of those who stated an ethnicity, only 3.8% from a Black or Minority Ethnic background.

- Nearly 1 in 5 lesbian and gay employees has experienced homophobic bullying in the workplace during the last 5 years;
- Fire and rescue service staff and volunteers are more likely to experience a mental health problem than the general workforce;
- Women in the UK earn 21.4% less than men;
- 1 in 5 mothers (20%) said they experience harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer/colleagues;
- Many people with disabilities are not visible in society and are prevented from participating in their communities and families;
- More than 50% of women and nearly 10% of men have experienced some form of sexual harassment at work;
- 7 out of 10 economically active disabled people of working age will have become disabled during their working life;
- Unemployment rates are significantly higher for ethnic minorities at 12.9% compared with 6.3% for white people;
- Significantly lower percentages of ethnic minorities (8.8%) work as managers, directors and senior officials, compared with white people (10.7%) This is particularly true for African/Caribbean/ Black people (5.7%) and those of mixed ethnicity (7.2%);
- Pakistani/Bangladeshi and Black adults are more likely to live in substandard and overcrowded accommodation than white people;
- Two thirds of people with dementia live in the community whilst one third live in a care home.

## Did You Know That?

- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups have higher odds of not owning a working smoke alarm; with Asian households the least likely to do so;
- Households from multi-ethnic communities and low income areas are more likely to have suffered a fire in the previous 12 months; In fact, evidence shows that multi deprivation is a key factor in the increased risk of fire;
- People from Black or Minority Ethnic Groups are more likely to experience poor and over-crowded housing, low incomes, ill-health and disability;
- Together with low ownership of smoke alarms, other factors affecting risks for Black and minority ethnic communities are low fire safety awareness and high rates of smoking in some ethnic minority communities;
- Over two-thirds of independently-owned local shops belong to people from Minority Ethnic Groups;
- The number of obese people rescued by firefighters because they are too large to move themselves has risen by over a third in three years. In some cases fire brigades were forced to remove windows, walls and banisters as they rescued more than 900 overweight people in the last year (2015) an average of more than two a day across Britain;
- People with memory loss or dementia are likely to be involved in accidental dwelling fire confined to one room or more than one room. Fire fatalities amongst this group are often linked to smoking and cooking;
- 15 – 19 year olds experience almost double the risk of death from Road Traffic Accidents in comparison to the general population. For males in the age group the risk is higher still;
- There is a significant and notable disparity between the deaths caused by Road Traffic Accidents between men and women, with men being over three times more likely to die from a Road Traffic Accident;
- Statistics show that most people who die in an accidental house fire are aged 65 years and over, while those aged 80 or over are 10 times more likely to die in a fire than those aged 30.

## The Business Case



The business case for diversity is sound, just and compelling.

It drives our objective to be a fair and inclusive employer that makes the best use of talent.

### Improves recruitment and retention

We need to be an exemplary employer that is truly inclusive in thought, word and action, thus strengthening our position. Embracing diversity will help us to tap in to the whole of society and retain the people we need.

### Increases creativity and innovation

Diversity increases innovation and flexibility by capitalising on different experience and knowledge. Employees who feel supported by their organisation are more likely to be innovative

### Supports operational activities

We operate in multilingual and multicultural environments alongside a multitude of diverse peoples. Our success will be improved by being able to understand and respond to different types of situations and people.

### Achieving cost savings

Embedding a culture that embraces diversity can be a significant investment, but it does generate cost savings through improved retention, lower absenteeism and fewer complaints and tribunal costs.

### Upholds our reputation

Unfair or discriminatory behaviour marginalises elements of our workforce, damages our reputation and undermines our corporate responsibility as a public body to do, and be seen to do, the right thing. As our Service becomes more diverse, our corporate image will change in perception of the Service by the community – further enhancing our public image and be associated with a wider force for good.

## How You Can Make a Difference

“The challenges for professionals working in a diverse community are to make sure there is effective, respectful, two-way communication and that services are delivered in culturally appropriate and acceptable ways. This may mean using empathy or cultural knowledge to work out why people are behaving as they are. That in turn may mean questioning our own assumptions about different faiths and communities”

At BFRS we expect every one of our workforce, whether operational or support staff, to fulfil their personal responsibilities. We value the diverse experience that others can contribute to our organisational effectiveness.

We will ensure that no one will harass, bully, abuse, alarm or distress others and that they take action to prevent or address such behaviour by others.

We all have a duty to respect the feelings and sensitivities of others and to behave in a way which does not cause offence. This is true whether we are at work or out in the community. Being sensitive to the needs of others means that we need to be careful that we use language in ways which help people feel included in the communication process and not excluded.

The sort of humour or comments that may once have been described as ‘drill or watch banter’ and acceptable to many people often are no longer. The fact that they were commonly used and accepted in the past does not necessarily mean they were appreciated by those on the receiving end. The language and humour you use does not offend or embarrass anyone or reinforce negative or discriminatory stereotypes.

Religion is not the same as ethnicity and you cannot make assumptions about which religion a person might follow, if indeed they have a religion, from their racial background.

Language – it is important to consider whether support is needed to facilitate two-way communication in English and to consult with the individual before asking someone to interpret for you.

Please report any discrimination, harassment or victimisation that you may come across to your line manager or the Diversity Advisor. Do not allow yourself to be dragged into any negative culture or practice.

## Examples of Good Practice

Because women and men from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities are under-represented as Firefighters across the Service, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has introduced a number of Positive Action measures aimed at recruiting Firefighters from these groups which include;

- targeted recruitment aimed at women and BME communities;
- developing a Positive Action list of people who are interested in the role of firefighter;
- producing recruitment material which reflects under-represented groups;
- raising career opportunities for women and BME communities at Schools, colleges and career fairs.

It is important to note that unlike Positive Discrimination which is illegal, Positive Action has been identified within the Equalities Act 2010 as a legitimate approach to address inequalities across the workforce.

### Other good practice examples:

- Partnership working with equality and community groups to deliver Home Fire Safety Talks;
- Unconscious Bias Training
- Work with health/disability groups to target Fire Safety Advice for people with learning disabilities;
- Targeted support and education programmes for young people to prevent deaths and serious injuries in Road Traffic Incidents;
- Partnership working with Health Boards to share data;
- Joint work with Police on tackling Hate Crime and Mate Crime;
- Fire Safety Guidance for people affected by dementia and their carers/families;
- Firefighters trained to become 'Health Champions' using their contacts with residents to promote healthy messages, give advice and signpost people to help;
- Firefighting Fit and Healthy Programme offers overweight children aged between 13 and 17 access to weekly healthy lifestyle sessions based around what firefighters do in their day-to-day jobs.

## Human Rights



“Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. They apply regardless of where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life”.

Basic rights are based on values like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and independence. But human rights are not just abstract concepts – they are defined and protected by law.

Human rights are relevant to all of us, not just those who face repression or mistreatment. They protect you in many areas of your day-to-day life for example:

- your right to a private and family life as well as expressing your opinions; and
- your right not to be mistreated or wrongly punished by the state.

### What rights are protected?

There are 16 basic rights protected by the Human Rights Act. As you would expect they concern issues such as life, liberty and freedom from slavery and inhumane treatment. They also cover rights that apply to everyday life, such as what we can say and do, our beliefs and the right to marry and raise a family etc.

### Human rights in the workplace

Many of the principles of the Human Rights Act are designed to protect you as a worker within the workplace.

For example, you have the right to a private and family life. So an employer who discriminates against a gay worker, for example, may be violating that worker's right to a private life.

Your employer has the right to monitor communications within the workplace as long as you're aware of the monitoring before it takes place. Monitoring can cover:

- emails;
- internet access;

- telephone calls;
- data;
- images.

You have the right to see any information held about you, like emails or CCTV footage.

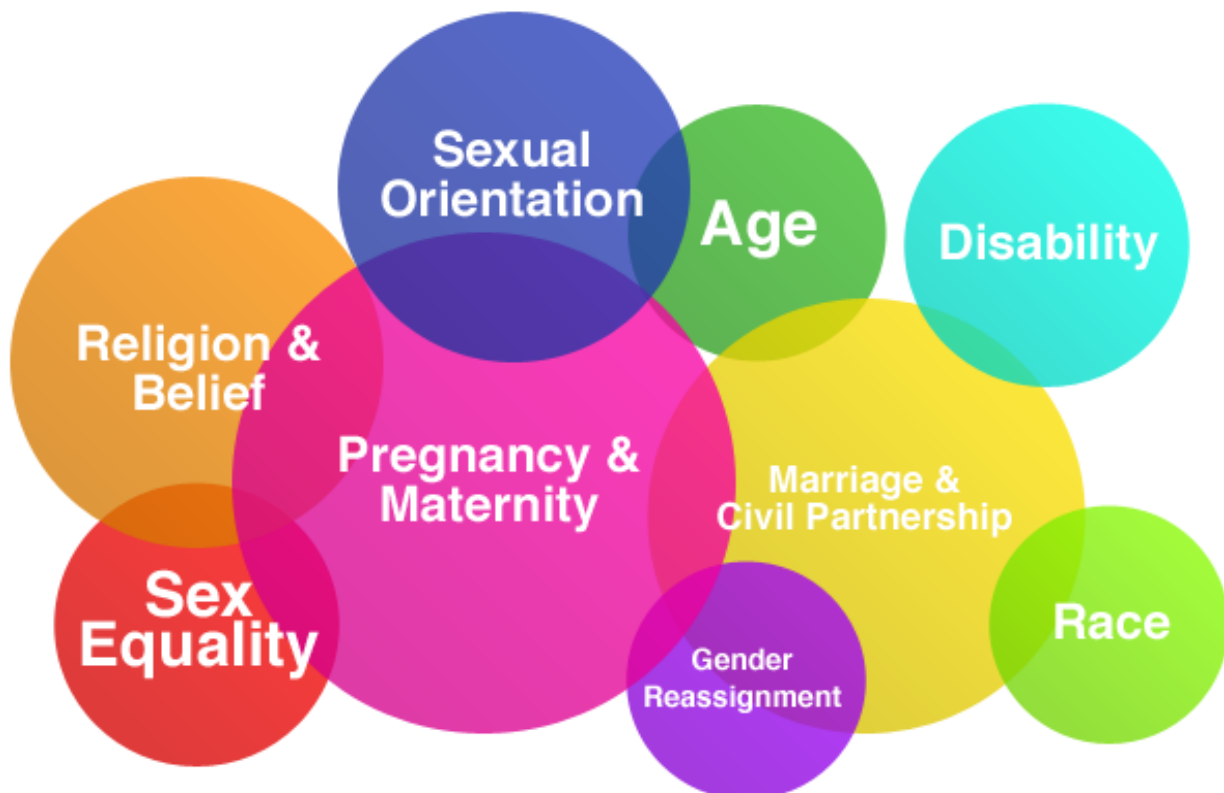
Your right to a private life means you have the right to some privacy in the workplace. You can't be monitored everywhere. If your employer doesn't respect this, they'll be breaching Human Rights Law (as well as United Kingdom Law).

## What the Law Says

The Equality Act became law in 2010. It covers everyone in Britain and protects people from discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation.

### Who is protected by the Equality Act?

Everyone in Britain is protected. This is because the Act protects people against discrimination because of the protected characteristics that we all have. Under the Act, there are 9 protected characteristics:





## Situations in which you are protected from discrimination

Under the Equality Act you are protected from discrimination when you:

- are in the workplace;
- use public services like health care (e.g. visiting your GP or local hospital) or education (e.g. your school or college);
- use businesses and other organisations that provide services and goods (like shops, restaurants, and cinemas);
- use transport;
- join a club or association (e.g. your local tennis club); and
- have contact with public bodies like your local council or government departments.

## Main Types of Discrimination

### Direct discrimination

This means treating one person worse than another person because of a protected characteristic. For example a promotion comes up at work. The employer believes that people's memories get worse as they get older, so doesn't tell one of his older employees about the promotion because he thinks the employee wouldn't be able to do the job.

### Indirect discrimination

This can happen when an organisation puts a rule or a policy or method of doing things in place which has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one. For example a local authority is planning to redevelop some of its housing. It decides to hold consultation events in the evening. Many of the female residents complain that they cannot attend these meetings because of childcare responsibilities.

### Associative discrimination

This already applies to Race, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation. It is now extended to cover Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment and Sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

## Perceptive discrimination

This already applies to Age, Race, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation. It is now extended to cover Disability, Gender Reassignment and Sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess the characteristic.

## Harassment

This means people cannot treat you in a way that violates your dignity or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. For example a man with Downs Syndrome is visiting a pub with friends. The bar staff make derogatory and offensive comments about him, which upset and offend him.

## Victimisation

This means people cannot treat you unfairly if you are taking action under the Equality Act (like making a complaint of discrimination) or if you are supporting someone else who is doing so. For example, an employee makes a complaint of sexual harassment at work and is dismissed as a consequence.

## Discrimination based on age

The Equality Act 2010 says that you must not be discriminated against because; you are (or are not) a certain age or in a certain age group, someone thinks you are (or are not) a specific age or age group or you are connected to someone of a specific age or age group.

## Discrimination based on disability

The Equality Act 2010 says that you must not be discriminated against because; you have a disability, someone thinks you have a particular disability or you are connected to someone with a disability.

In the Equality Act a disability means a physical or a mental condition which has a substantial and long-term impact on your ability to do normal day-to-day activities.

You are also covered by the Act if you have a progressive condition like HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis, even if you are currently able to carry out normal day-to-day activities. You are protected as soon as you are diagnosed with a progressive condition.

You are also covered by the Act if you had a disability in the past. For example:

- If you had a mental health condition in the past which lasted for over 12 months but you have now recovered, you are still protected from discrimination because of that disability.

Under the Act employers and organisations have a responsibility to make sure that people with a disability can access jobs, education and services as easily as able-bodied people. This is known as the 'duty to make reasonable adjustments'.

People with a disability can experience discrimination if the employer or organisation doesn't make a reasonable adjustment. This is known as a 'failure to make reasonable adjustments'. For example:

- An employee with a mobility impairment needs a parking space close to the office. However, her employer only gives parking spaces to senior managers and refuses to give her a designated parking space.

What is reasonable depends on a number of factors including the size of the organisation making the adjustment. If an organisation already has a number of parking spaces it would be reasonable for them to designate one close to the entrance for the employee.

## **Discrimination based on gender reassignment**

The Equality Act 2010 says that you must not be discriminated against because you are transsexual - that is your gender identity differs from the gender assigned to you at birth.

For example a person who was born female decides to spend the rest of his life as a man.

In the Equality Act it is known as gender reassignment. All transsexual people share the common characteristic of gender reassignment.

To be protected from gender reassignment discrimination, you do not need to have undergone any specific treatment or surgery to change from your birth sex to your preferred gender. This is because changing your physiological or other gender attributes is a personal process rather than a medical one. You can be at any stage in the transition process – from proposing to reassign your gender to undergoing or completing a process to reassign your gender.

The Equality Act says that you must not be discriminated against because:

- of your gender reassignment as a transsexual. You may prefer the description transgender person or trans male or female. A wide range of people are included in the terms 'trans' or 'transgender' but you are not protected as transgender unless you propose to change your gender or have done so. For example, a group of men on a stag do who put on fancy dress as women are turned away from a restaurant. They are not transsexual so not protected from discrimination;
- someone thinks you are transsexual, for example because you occasionally cross-dress or are gender variant. This is known as discrimination by perception;
- you are connected to a transsexual person, or someone wrongly thought to be transsexual. This is known as discrimination by association.

Inter-sex people are not explicitly protected from discrimination by the Act but you must not be discriminated against because of your gender or perceived gender.

### **Discrimination based on marriage/civil partnership**

The Equality Act says you must not be discriminated against in employment because you are married or in a civil partnership.

Marriage can either be between a man and a woman or between partners of the same sex. Civil partnership is between partners of the same sex.

### **Discrimination based on race**

The Equality Act 2010 says you must not be discriminated against because of your race.

Race can mean your colour or your nationality (including your citizenship). It can also mean your ethnic or national origins, which may not be the same as your current nationality. For example, you may have Chinese national origins and be living in Britain with a British passport.

Race also covers ethnic and racial groups. This means a group of people who all share the same protected characteristic of ethnicity or race.

A racial group can be made up of two or more distinct racial groups, for example Black Britons, British Asians, British Sikhs, British Jews, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

You may be discriminated against because of one or more aspects of your race. For example people born in Britain to Jamaican parents could be discriminated against because they are British citizens or because of their Jamaican national origins.

### **Discrimination based on religion or belief**

The Equality Act 2010 says you must not be discriminated against because; you are (or are not) of a particular religion, you hold (or do not hold) a particular philosophical belief someone thinks you are of a particular religion or hold a particular belief or you are connected to someone who has a religion or belief. This is known as discrimination by association.

Religion or belief can mean any religion, for example an organised religion like Christianity, Judaism, Islam or Buddhism or a smaller religion like Rastafarianism or Paganism, as long as it has a clear structure and belief system. The Act also covers non-belief or a lack of religion or belief.

### **Discrimination based on gender**

This is when you are treated differently because of your gender, whether you are male or female. The treatment could be a one-off action or as a result of a rule or policy based on gender. It doesn't have to be intentional to be unlawful.

There are some circumstances when being treated differently due to gender is lawful for example a religious organisation can sometimes restrict employment to one gender if the role is for religious purposes. For example, an orthodox synagogue can require its rabbi to be a man.

### **Discrimination based on sexual orientation**

The Equality Act 2010 says you must not be discriminated against because you are heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual, someone thinks you have a particular sexual orientation or you are connected to someone who has a particular sexual orientation.

In the Equality Act sexual orientation includes how you choose to express your sexual orientation, such as through your appearance or the places you visit.

### **Discrimination based on pregnancy/maternity**

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

## Unconscious Bias



Our brains are hard-wired to make intuitive decisions about other people.

We use visual, verbal and behavioural clues to categorise others, for instance by age, gender, ethnicity or social background.

So we go through life making unconscious judgements that affect our attitudes and behaviours towards other people.

This means that we favour people who are like us. That is looks like us, sounds like us and behaves like us. We tend to ignore faults of people we like and notice more of the faults of people from groups we don't like; we interpret what people 'we like' say more positively and actively listen to them more intently.

At work this bias has an impact on recruitment; promotion and those we give opportunities too.

It is important therefore that we are **mindful** of how easy it is too fast think your way into making positive / negative judgements about others.

**Learn** to mistrust your first impressions

**Be curious:** actively seek out and value different perspectives and ideas

**Treat people as individuals:** get to know them on multiple levels

**Reduce the effects of bias** through mindful work allocation, feedback and sponsorship

**Challenge** negative assumptions and cultural stereotypes

## Harassment, Bullying, Victimisation and Inappropriate Behaviour

**Harassment** is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of either violating the recipient's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Harassment is defined not by the intention of the perpetrator but by the negative impact on the recipient. This means that a defence based on the denial of harassment by saying it was unintentional or that it was intended in a humorous way, or that the alleged perpetrator was not aware that the recipient was of a minority group, etc. is not acceptable.

**Bullying** can be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Examples may include:

- Shouting or swearing at an individual;
- Persistent, excessive, unfair or unjustified criticism;
- Public humiliation and/or insults;
- Setting someone up to fail e.g. setting a target that cannot be achieved;
- Intimidation or threatening behaviour;
- Being threatened with demotion;
- Removing areas of responsibility;
- Ignoring or excluding an individual;
- Refusal of reasonable requests ;
- Blocking a person's promotion.

**Victimisation** is a form of harassment and constitutes treating someone less favourably than others because they have or are believed to have reported bullying or harassment or supported someone in making a complaint.

**Inappropriate behaviour** which would be considered unacceptable at BFRS includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour such as threatening gestures or actual violence or assault;
- Verbal abuse (for example, yelling, screaming, abusive or offensive language);
- Unsafe work practices or behavior which may harm the staff member or others;

- Unwelcome physical contact including that of a sexual, intimate or threatening nature;
- Teasing, name calling or ridicule or making someone the brunt of pranks or practical jokes;
- Withholding approval for or denial of requests maliciously, discriminatorily, unfairly or without basis;
- Excluding or isolating individuals;
- Undermining performance, reputation or professionalism of others by deliberately withholding information, resources or authorisation or supplying incorrect information;
- Malicious or mischievous gossip or complaint;
- Abusive or harassing notes, emails, telephone calls, text messages;
- Belittling opinions or unreasonable and unconstructive criticism;
- Viewing or displaying inappropriate images or pornography.

## **How to challenge inappropriate behaviour or language**

In order to provide a quality service to the highest possible standard, the organisation relies on individuals to do the right thing. However, there may be occasions when others allow their behaviour to fall below the desired standard. It is to challenge these individuals and on occasions the informal culture that exists that is vital if the Service is to maintain its excellent reputation with the public.

There are steps you can take:

### **Step one: Inappropriate behaviour**

Confront the **ISSUE**

Remember never to stray from the actual issue. This is vitally important when challenging inappropriate language or behaviour.

### **Step two: State the effect of the issue**

State the effect or impact the comment or behaviour has had either on you as a person or on behalf of the organisation.



### **Step three: Explain what you want to happen**

Clarify what you want to happen, this may be as simple as stating that comment is never to be used again.

This three-step assertion method is a very effective way of confronting someone assertively because of its 'non-blaming' description of behaviour, stating the actual effect and clarification of what is to happen next.

### **When and where to challenge**

This is the most common concern expressed by staff. The 'rule' to apply is if the person makes the inappropriate comment or behaviour in public then you should challenge it and deal with it in public. This re-enforces not only your commitment to fair management but also sends out the message the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue service will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour. However, if the information comes to you privately then deal with the issue privately. The circumstances of personal or welfare issues should of course always be dealt with in confidence.

## **Equality Related Policies**

<b>V0136:</b>	<b>Comprehensive Equality Policy Statement</b>
<b>V100604:</b>	<b>Code of Conduct – All employees</b>
<b>V100607:</b>	<b>Protected Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure</b>
<b>V240801:</b>	<b>Safeguarding Policy</b>
<b>V101601:</b>	<b>Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure</b>
<b>V101602:</b>	<b>Manager's Guide to Bullying and Harassment</b>
<b>V100601:</b>	<b>Grievance Policy and Procedure</b>
<b>V10060101:</b>	<b>Grievance Procedure Guide for Managers</b>
<b>V101801:</b>	<b>Disciplinary Policy and Procedure</b>
<b>V101802:</b>	<b>Disciplinary Guide for Managers</b>
<b>V101803:</b>	<b>Disciplinary Guide for Employees</b>
<b>V10 1804:</b>	<b>Disciplinary Guide for the Contact Person</b>

## Other Resources

Working with Diverse Communities Handbook

Ramadan Handbook

Fire & Rescue Phrase Book

Knowing Our Communities Handbook

(These books are available on-line from the Equality Site of SharePoint or from the Diversity Team)

## Test Your Knowledge

1. Approximately how many people lived in Bedfordshire in 2014?  
A. 620,000       B. 500,000       C. 360,000
2. What is the most widely spoken ethnic minority language spoken across Bedfordshire?  
A. Italian    B. Polish    C. Bengali    D. Punjabi
3. Approximately how many languages are recorded as being spoken across Bedfordshire?  
A. 120       B. 320       C. 220
4. Fire and Rescue Services employs 44,000 full time equivalent staff how many are women?  
A. 1.5%    B. 12.6%    C. 4.7%    D. 9.3%
5. How many people in the UK will have Dementia in 2020?  
A. 250,000    B. 500,000    C. 750,000    D. 1 Million
6. How many adults across Bedfordshire are said to be obese?  
A. 25,000       B. 39,000       C. 49,000       D. 55,000

7. How many people are estimated to have a physical, sensory or learning impairment by 2020?

- A. 1 in 6       B. 1 in 10       C. 1 in 20       D. 1 in 3

8. Are young people protected under the 2010 Equality Act

- A. Yes       B. No

9. How many people will have a mental health condition during their life?

- A. 1 in 4       B. 1 in 10       C. 1 in 6       D. 1 in 12

## **External Organisations for Additional Support**

### **Asian Fire Service Association**

[www.afsa.co.uk](http://www.afsa.co.uk)

### **Fire Brigades Union Black and Ethnic Minority Members**

[www.fbu.org.uk/black-and-ethnic-minority-members](http://www.fbu.org.uk/black-and-ethnic-minority-members)

### **Fire Brigades Union LGBT**

[www.fbu.org.uk/lgbt](http://www.fbu.org.uk/lgbt)

### **LGBT Consortium**

[www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk](http://www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk)

LGBT Consortium

PO Box 934

Taunton

Somerset

TA1 9LU

Telephone: 020 7064 6500

Email: [admin@lgbtconsortium.org.uk](mailto:admin@lgbtconsortium.org.uk)

### **Fire Brigades Union Women**

[www.fbu.org.uk/women](http://www.fbu.org.uk/women)

### **Women in the Fire Service UK**

[www.nwfs.net](http://www.nwfs.net)

Telephone: 01366 381237

Email: [womeninthefireservice@btconnect.com](mailto:womeninthefireservice@btconnect.com)

**For information, advice, training or support contact**

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**Quiz Answers**

1.A, 2.B, 3.A, 4.C, 5.D, 6.C, 7.D, 8.A, 9.A.

