

## **EIA Supporting Literature**

- 1.1 MAWWFRS has firmly positioned equality and diversity at the heart of its corporate strategy and business plan. When our communities begin to see evidence of organisations driving forward the equality and diversity agenda with real demonstrable change, this undoubtedly enhances the attractiveness of those organisations both as an employer and service provider.
  - 1.2 Equality and diversity are key business issues. The main business drivers for the fire service to endorse strategies relating to diversity are:
    - ◆ Managing risk and reputation
    - ◆ Enhancing individual and business performance
    - ◆ Developing a creative, innovative culture
    - ◆ Meeting the communities needs
    - ◆ Attracting, retaining and developing employees
  - 1.3 Simple fairness demands that people from under-represented groups are not barred from access to services or decision-making processes. The process of undertaking an equality impact assessment provides a useful checklist to eliminate unlawful discrimination against any group(s) or individuals.
- 2. What is an Equality Impact Assessment?**
- 2.1 It is a way of finding out whether a policy, procedure, or change either proposed or existing influences different groups of people in different ways. It is the process of systematically analysing a proposed or existing policy or strategy to identify what effect or likely effect will follow from its

implementation for different groups in the community.

2.2 Similarly it can be the process for analysing the impact of a service or function on different groups in the community.

2.3 Equality impact assessments are designed to anticipate and identify the equality consequences of particular policies, processes or procedures or initiatives and ensure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences for a particular group are eliminated, minimised, mitigated, or counterbalanced by other measures or reasonably justified.

### **3. Why Undertake Equality Impact Assessments?**

#### **3.1 It is a statutory requirement**

3.1.1 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires local authorities to promote race equality in policy making, service delivery, regulation and enforcement and employment. The three key elements for promoting race equality are: -

- ◆ Eliminating discrimination
- ◆ Promoting equality or opportunity
- ◆ Promoting good race relations

3.1.2 Although the specific statutory requirement only relates to Race, we want to ensure that policies and practices do not discriminate against any group, and that every opportunity is taken to promote equality of opportunity both internally and externally. Impact assessments therefore extend to address gender, Trans gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion and belief, people with caring responsibilities, as well as race.

3.1.3 This will ensure that we are working within Employment Equality legislation; included are the Disability Discrimination Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, Sexual Orientation, Age, Religion and Belief regulations.

## 3.2 **It is good practice**

3.2.1 Equality impact assessments will enable us to take into account the needs, experiences and circumstances of those groups of people who will be affected by our policies.

3.2.2 Increasing transparency in the things that we do and improve the public's confidence in the fairness of our policy.

## 4. **How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.**

### 4.1 **There are 2 stages:**

Stage 1 - An 'initial assessment' or 'screening' of functions/policies to assess potential adverse impact.

Stage 2 - A 'full equality impact assessment'

4.2 Comprehensive guidance and forms are included on Bis to assist in undertaking equality impact assessments. These documents are the only ones to be used, to ensure that a consistent and legally compliant procedure is being adopted.

## 5. **Procedures to be Followed**

Best practice suggests that at least two people who are suitably trained and who are not the authors of the policy/procedure, will initially screen all policies, procedures, and changes in practice; they can either work together or individually. Feedback and alterations need to be communicated to the appropriate policy owner.

If a full assessment is required, or if further advice is needed, guidance is available from the Equality and Diversity Officer.

### **The Steps to Take**

5.1 What is the aim of the policy, procedure, practice or change?

5.2 What outcomes do you want from the above?

- 5.3 Will these outcomes be different if a person is a representative of a different group of equality?
- 5.4 Race, Disability, Gender, Trans Gender, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Belief or people with Caring Duties.
- 5.5 Is the outcome adverse?
- 5.6 If yes can you mitigate? If no consider alternatives.
- 5.7 Proceed to Full EIA or Publish results and plan to review.

## **6. Accountability and responsibility**

- 6.1 The Fire Service Management Team, Service Managers and Employees have responsibility for ensuring that equality impact assessments are carried out. Whenever a review of a function or service is proposed or required, or a new policy or strategy is developed, the managers responsible for that service are accountable for the equality impact assessment.
  
- 6.2 The Fire Service has a statutory and moral duty to take account of the need to promote equality. Equality impact assessments may identify something that cannot be solved immediately. However they will provide information to help with longer term planning. New information may also come to light at a later stage, so it is important not to draw a line after the completion of the assessment, and to be open to the need for review and constant improvement

Equality and Diversity Officer

Mid and West Wales Fires and Rescue Service

Autumn 2009

