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This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular notifies publication of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Report 2010 and announces the outcome of the 2010 Equality and Diversity Award Scheme		

FRS Equality and Diversity Report 2010 and Equality and Diversity Awards 2010

Issued by:

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Fire and Rescue Service Development Division

Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
London Fire Commissioner
The Chief Fire Officer**

Please forward to:

**In Fire and Rescue Services:
Heads of Human Resources
Equality and Diversity Professionals
Station Managers
Training and Development Managers**

Summary

This circular informs of the publication of the FRS Equality and Diversity Report 2010 and announces the winners and runners-up in the 2010 Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Award Scheme.

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1.0 The Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Report 2010

- 1.1 The Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Report 2010 was published on 24 March in line with the Requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018.
- 1.2 The aim of the report is to provide qualitative and quantitative information on the work being undertaken by Fire and Rescue Authorities and stakeholder organisations both locally and nationally relating to Equality, Diversity and Fairness.
- 1.3 The Report is divided into six sections:
- **Section One** sets the report in the context of both the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy and the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Area Assessment reports 2009.
 - **Section Two** reports on some of the key national initiatives being developed as a positive response to the Strategy and the progress that has been achieved. It includes details of the 2009 Equality and Diversity Award winning initiatives.
 - **Section Three** provides a report on the outcomes from the commitments made by national stakeholders in the 2009 National Action Plan.
 - **Section Four** contains one of the key elements of the report – the 2010 National Action Plan. The Action Plan identifies the initiatives which national stakeholders have committed to progress in 2010.
 - **Section Five** contains information drawn from the equality and diversity questionnaires completed for Communities and Local Government (CLG) by each fire and rescue service regarding their progress and initiatives on equality, diversity and fairness during 2009¹. This section includes a good practice example provided by each Service.
 - **Section Six** gives an overview of current performance on equality and diversity in the Fire and Rescue Service in England and of each individual Authority based on the information provided to CLG by each Authority in their 2008/9 Integrated Risk Management Plan statistical returns. It includes data on recruitment, retention and progression at local level across the statutory strands of diversity.
- 1.4 Chief Fire Officers and Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities will wish to ensure that the Equality and Diversity Report 2010 is circulated among staff and Fire Authority Members.
- 1.5 A National and Local Initiatives report is also being produced to compliment the main 2010 Report. The Initiatives report will include the national good practice initiatives and good practice examples, as put forward by each Fire and Rescue Authority, drawn from the main report. Chief Fire Officers and Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities may find this report suitable for general distribution to staff, Authority Members and more widely.

¹ The questionnaire, which was sent under cover of Fire Service Circular 79/2009, can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fsc792009>

1.6 The FRS Equality and Diversity Report 2010 can be found on the CLG website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/equalitydiversity2010>. The National and Local Initiatives report will be available on the CLG website from the end of March 2010. Printed copies of both Reports can be obtained by contacting Clive Botterill on 0303 444 2939 or e-mail: clive.botterill@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

2.0 The Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Awards 2010

2.1 Fifty seven entries were received for the 2010 Equality and Diversity Award Scheme. A panel of judges, drawn from the wider equality and diversity community of the public sector, considered the nominations and complimented the standard of the submitted nominations. They looked for evidence of:

- innovation
- ambitious objectives
- sound planning
- successful delivery
- good practice that other Fire and Rescue Services would benefit from
- how the work had had a positive effect on progressing equality and diversity

2.2 The winning nominations and runners-up were announced at the Awards Presentation event on 24 March, where the winners were presented with framed certificates by the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (representing the Fire Minister), the President of the Chief Fire Officers' Association and the Equality and Diversity Lead, Local Government Association Fire Services Management Committee. Each runner-up received a letter of commendation from the Fire Minister, Shahid Malik.

2.3 Details of the winners and runners-up in each category, and a brief description of the projects for which they were nominated, are annexed to this Circular and will be available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/working/equalopportunities/> soon. A press release can be found on the Communities and Local Government website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/newsroom/>

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Fire and Rescue Service Development Division

Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Award Scheme 2010

Winners and Runners-up

LEADERSHIP (INDIVIDUAL AWARD)

Winner :

David Prior (Community Safety Task Team Leader, Dorset Fire and Rescue Service – nominated for his work in engaging with the traveller community particularly the vulnerable young)

David Prior, Community Safety Task Team Leader, identified a need to tackle significant fire risks at Traveller sites after facilitating a workshop session with young Travellers at a Diversity Youth Summit hosted by Dorset FRS. David demonstrated leadership by securing funding and resources; liaising with appropriate agencies both within and outside the FRS in order to obtain support; utilising his knowledge and experience from working on the Prince's Trust programme, and gained the trust of the community through effective engagement. The result was long-term positive and open partnership with the traveller community especially the vulnerable young. The judges acknowledged that this was a traditionally hard to reach community; the project followed up the concerns identified at a local meeting by setting a clear plan of action designed to support a vulnerable group; the project targeted that community in a sensitive way; David had engaged the support of the young people in the Traveller community in order to help the project succeed;

Runner-up :

Paul Starling (Station Commander, Manchester Fire and Rescue Service – nominated for setting up a project to reduce accidental fire deaths)

Paul Starling, Station Commander, had set up this project in 2007 to reduce accidental fire deaths and injuries in the Salford area. Paul was involved in setting up service level agreements with local organisations in providing home fire risk assessments, including fitting smoke alarms. The results of the project include a reduction in accidental fire deaths and injuries, and the establishment of positive partnership arrangements with stakeholder groups. The judges agreed that this was an example of good individual leadership which ensure improved outcomes for the community; this was a cohesive project with clear community fire safety objectives; Paul demonstrated personal leadership by converting intelligence about the community into actions, in the process creating a safer community.

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Category : LEADERSHIP (TEAM AWARD)

There were two joint Winners :

- i. **Employment and Equalities Group (Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service – nominated for developing a Strategy for engaging with the minority ethnic community and the workforce to break down barriers and perceptions)**

Nominated for developing the Walk the Talk (WTT) Strategy, to engage with minority ethnic communities and the workforce to break down barriers and perceptions about the Fire and Rescue Service as a career option. The initiative led to successful applications from under represented groups resulting in increased recruitment of minority ethnic and female staff. The judges commented that the groups structure was effective and embraced participation from across all strands of the organisation; Oxfordshire FRS had learned effectively from the challenges they had faced and overcome and were able to share this learning with others; this was an initiative which could be rolled out in other organisations with best practice already being shared with the County Council and other FRS.

- ii. **Strategic leadership Team (Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service – nominated for introducing E&D Champions at senior management level)**

Nominated for successfully introducing a champions' programme at senior management level for each of the diversity strands. The Team's aim was to remove barriers, challenge inappropriate behaviours, encourage team work, build good relations between different groups, and generate ownership of equality and diversity across the organisation. The result was Service wide progression from Level 2 to Level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government within eighteen months; and a number of initiatives including the development of an engagement programme with the Roma community and the establishment of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum. The panel appreciated the approach to this programme and felt it was well managed with some very effective, tangible outcomes across a broad range;

There were no Runners-up under the Leadership (Team) Category

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Category : SERVICE DELIVERY (INDIVIDUAL AWARD)

Winner :

Mehrban Sadiq (Community Safety Advocate, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service – nominated for initiating the 'Hot Shots' project)

The judges commented that the 'Hot Shots' project initiated by Mehrban Sadiq to provide young minority ethnic children with fire safety education as part of football coaching programme had very clear objectives with good evidence of outcomes and supporting arguments. The panel recognised the project provided strong engagement with young people and the community with increased fire safety knowledge and home fire safety checks. As the initiative was delivered after school it provided diversion activities for the young people thereby reducing the opportunity for them to engage in anti- social behaviour. The judges commented that they could sense the Mehrban's sheer enthusiasm and leadership which was clearly making a real difference.

There were two joint runners-up:

i Firefighter Paul Dunn (Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service – nominated for being involved in the Youth Services Embedded Firefighter project)

The Youth Services Embedded Firefighter project in which Paul Dunn was involved is aimed at providing education and intervention services to young people who have been excluded from school or are at risk of exclusion. The judges were impressed by this scheme which focused on young people and had the potential to change their lives. Paul developed and successfully delivered activities aimed at reducing attacks on firefighters, developing fire safety and life skills amongst the young people. The judges recognised that the St Helen's District was a particularly tough area and Paul, in partnership with other agencies, provided opportunities for a community which can be hard to connect with. They were impressed with the top level support this programme had received.

ii Firefighter Will Lonsdale (London Fire Brigade – nominated for working with vulnerable people at risks of fire)

Following a local house fire, firefighter Will Lonsdale took the initiative to research the cause and found the link to fires in homes with pre-payment electricity meters, caused by people using alternative means of heat and light when funds for the meter had run out. Will contacted the energy supplier and encouraged them to work with London Fire Brigade to directly reach this vulnerable group. The Judges agreed that this was an innovative project particularly in the way Will had first researched the issue and then engaged and created a partnership with the energy supplier. The initiative showed clear evidence of outcomes and had resulted in a reduction in the number of fire related incidences amongst vulnerable groups including the elderly and disabled.

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Category : SERVICE DELIVERY (TEAM AWARD)

Winner :

Risk Reduction Team (Burton Fire Station, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service – nominated for having recognised and embraced equality and diversity issues in all their work)

The Risk Reduction Team had been involved in several projects, for example minority ethnic recruitment, providing fire safety booklets in Polish, setting up focus groups with minority ethnic communities to give fire safety advice, and offering coaching and mentoring to applicants to the Retained Duty System. The result of this endeavour was recruitment of five bi-lingual firefighters including one Polish woman, and two minority ethnic Retained Duty System firefighters. The judges agreed that the team's work was commendable as it reached out to different organisations and groups. They were impressed with the amount of activity taking place; the project targets were clear and the outcomes benefited a wide range of people; the impact of the project was also well assessed.

Runner-up :

Donna Finch and Team (Essex Fire and Rescue Service – nominated for initiating the Firebreak Course for children with disabilities)

The judges agreed that the Firebreak Course was an inspirational initiative. Organised in conjunction with the Down Syndrome Extra 21 charity the scheme taught 13 to 17 year olds some skills and disciplines needed to be a firefighter aiming to improve their communication skills, show them how to work in teams, problem solve and give them motivation. The Course enabled the children to demonstrate their abilities and overcome some of the barriers of their disabilities. The panel agreed that the Course was highly effective in building the esteem and confidence of the young people involved as well as developing the skills of the team members. They recognised that this was an emotionally challenging project which had huge benefits to all participants. It was also a project which could be easily replicated elsewhere.

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Category : PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Winner :

Moss Side Fire Station Boxing Project (Manchester Fire and Rescue Service – nominated for initiating the project to engage with vulnerable young people).

This ongoing project, running since June 2008, was an initiative set up by local firefighters to engage with the diverse population of local young people at risk of exclusion, to teach them about respect for the community and themselves; the results have all been positive. The feedback from attendees was that the club had improved their self-discipline and helped to keep them out of trouble. The judges noted that this project had been entered for the 2009 Awards but had lacked evidence of outcomes. This time around a full evaluation of successful outcomes was provided, showing that the initiative had made a real difference to people's lives. This was a great example of engagement with young people. It promoted self-confidence; it was an excellent example of innovative thinking and there were positive outcomes for the local community.

There were two joint runners-up:

i 'Seat Belt On?' project (West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – nominated for initiating the project to increase seat belt wearing rates amongst the Asian Community).

This innovative project was initiated to increase the seat belt wearing rates in the Asian communities in the Calderdale area, with particular focus on child passengers. The issue was addressed by a mixture of enforcement and education by a range of agencies resulting in increased rates of seat belt wearing amongst the group. The judges agreed that this was an excellent initiative with clear and measurable outcomes; it went outside the comfort zone and was a worthy project that had been really beneficial to the community; there was good use of data and evidence that it had made a difference, contributing to increased awareness and understanding and lower casualty rates; the programme was easy to roll out and replicate with excellent evidence of partnership working.

ii London Fire Brigade and Respirex International Ltd – (nominated for their project to provide correctly fitting Gas Tight Suits)

A project working in partnership to provide correctly fitting Gas Tight Suits for smaller stature firefighters (particularly women). The judges noted that Fire and Rescue Service stakeholders and women firefighters had raised concerns that this was an area that tended to receive insufficient attention from the Service generally. This was a strong initiative which linked procurement and diversity. The provision of appropriate kit was an important issue and the project had the potential to help improve the diversity within the Service. This initiative could be rolled out across the Service, deal with a long-standing issue of concern, and providing support in improving the recruitment and retention of women firefighters.