

## **EHRC monitoring of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales**

### **Fire and Rescue Services report**

**April 2014**

Our intention is to monitor objectives that:

- impact directly on people
- were identified as priorities in the EHRC assessment of inequality in Wales
- linked with Welsh Ministerial priorities

Following consultation with the Fire and Rescue Services we decided in 2013-14 to monitor the following:

- how the fire and rescue services use relevant information and engagement to identify vulnerable groups, by protected characteristic, in terms of fire risk
- what initiatives are being developed to prevent fires amongst those groups as a result of the intelligence gathered
- whether measures need to be taken to improve the quality of equality data collected.

### **Measuring progress**

Each of the three fire and rescue services were able to report on steps designed to improve the quality and quantity of equality data being collected. There is a collaborative 'All Wales' approach being taken to improving the data collected and the services are laying a stronger foundation for the future to enable more effective delivery of their core activities.

All three services are clearly using the equality data they hold to adopt a more preventative agenda. Each service has analysed data to target their Home Safety Fire Checks at groups with protected characteristics such as older people, disabled people, and individuals with mental health conditions. Analysing and using data to identify emerging issues has led to a number of initiatives such as the North Wales Service targeting support and education towards young people to prevent deaths and serious injuries in Road Traffic Incidents and South Wales focusing on middle aged men with their Biker Down project.

It was reported that the PSED had been the catalyst for improving the quality of the equality data held by the organisations. It is clear from our monitoring that equality and use of equality data is being increasingly embedded into the core activities of the three services.

## **Identifying trends**

From the monitoring discussions and our reports it is possible to identify some specific trends. These include:

- a focus on using equality data to inform Home Safety Initiatives.
- using data to identify emerging issues so that resources can be targeted and services tailored
- greater engagement with communities and equality groups to better understand diverse needs

## **Sharing effective practice**

The Welsh Fire and Rescue Services take a collaborative approach to the equalities agenda through sharing data and effective practice on a range of equality objectives they have set.

All three services reported the importance of their partnership work and data sharing with other agencies to prevent fires and road traffic collisions. For example Mid and West Wales' work with Local Health Boards to share data about people at risk of fire, including people with mental health conditions, to enable targeted support.

## **Ministerial reporting**

Welsh Ministers have a specific duty to publish a report on how devolved public authorities in Wales are meeting their general duty. They are required to publish a report no later than 31 December 2014 and every four years following that, with an interim report every two years.

These reports must set out an overview of the progress made by public authorities in Wales towards complying with the general duty and proposals to coordinate action by public authorities in Wales to bring about further progress on the general duty.

One aim of EHRC monitoring is to assist Welsh Ministers to fulfil their statutory duty.

## **Progress Report on Fire and Rescue Service Actions to Widen Access**

**April 2014**

### **Report on Individual Fire and Rescue**

**Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service** told us that targeting fire prevention activities, including Home Fire Safety Checks, for people with mental health conditions was an increasingly expanding area of work. These initiatives have been informed by UK wide community safety data. The Service is working in partnership with Hywel Dda and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Boards to share data. This ensures that Mental Health nurses are able to risk assess houses and identify individuals. Sharing this data with the Fire Service ensures targeted support and education on fire prevention. Other partnership work reported included working with Dyfed Powys Police on tackling Hate Crime and Mate Crime.

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service reported being increasingly engaged with equality and community groups across its service area. Specific activities noted in their Annual Equality Report include working with the Chinese Community Centre and Ethnic Youth Support Team in Swansea to deliver Home Fire Safety Talks and working with Total Communications to ensure that Home Fire Safety advice was tailored to meet the needs of those with learning disabilities.

Mid and West Wales Fire Service reported that the PSED had helped move equality up the agenda of the organisation and that equality was now seen as a core part of how it delivers its services.

**North Wales Fire and Rescue Service** told us of data identifying the higher risk for young people (16-25 years) being involved in a Killed or Serious Injury Road Traffic Collision. In responding to this data they have secured funding for a joint project with North Wales Police to try and reduce the number of these incidents. The project aims to deliver direct interactive interventions to over 700 of the highest risk individuals in this age group in the next year. This project will build on the success and approach of the Phoenix Programme by involving young people to provide solutions, support and guidance to peers focussed on the impact of these serious or fatal RTC.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service told us that over 12,000 premises in North Wales have a remote care monitoring system to improve the safety and wellbeing of occupiers. These are mostly older and disabled people. Through reviewing data of fire incidents, the Service identified

an increase in the number of calls to properties of older and disabled people. By working with Local Authorities it was found that there were over 3300 of these types of properties that did not have a remote care monitoring system in place. The Service has secured grant funding to immediately install remote care monitoring systems in 30% in these types of properties.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service reported the consultation strategy that had been developed by its Corporate Communications Team which ensured that in each public interaction at external and community events equality monitoring data would be collected.

**South Wales Fire and Rescue Service** told us about its work to improve the quality of the equality data it collects. This has included developing an After Incident equality monitoring form. The new monitoring form captures all protected characteristics, following non-fatal incidents that the service had been called to attend. The Service has commissioned a private research company to analyse the data this captures to better understand the characteristics of those at risk. It is expected that this data will be analysed and available for the 2013-14 Annual Equality Report.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service reported to us their work to develop their Biker Down project. Using monitoring data of serious motorcycle accidents the service identified that men in their 40s and 50s were most at risk of being involved in a serious incident. As a result the service has specifically targeted that group for participation on the course. Biker Down is an education and engagement course aimed at the motorcycling community to reduce the number of deaths or serious injuries from traffic accidents. This is achieved by giving participants a better understanding of what to do if they come across a road traffic collision and how to manage it safely.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service reported that the PSED was the catalyst to improve the quality of the equality data that it collects. Monitoring of their activities by the Commission had been helpful in raising equality and the PSED up the agenda of leaders.