

Equality and Inclusion

Case Study

'BA procurement process-Compatibility assessments'

CASE STUDY SPECIFICS	YOUR OBSERVATIONS
<p>Case study outline: <i>The Breathing Apparatus procurement process had to have due regard for both men women, and people of different statures and physical abilities, particularly those with mobility or dexterity limiting issues in regards to reasonable adjustments to equipment and workplace activities.</i></p> <p>Overall procurement is reported in section 2.11 of the Equality Framework and this process meets with a requirement to address equality issues in the pre-qualification and tender assessment.</p> <p><i>The trials ran as part of the overall compatibility assessment of function, performance and existing equipment compatibility.</i></p> <p><i>The team invited staff to take part in the assessments and thereafter give constructive feedback on the sets.</i></p> <p>By involving the workforce in the assessment process the service can demonstrate commitment under section 2.17, Workforce strategy and 2.21, Employee engagement</p>	<p>The project was to provide protective breathing apparatus for wearing in firefighting operations. In Oxfordshire there is a higher number of women in operational posts than in the rest of the UK and therefore the assessments on compatibility needed to have due regard for their needs against the needs of the overall employee base particularly with physical form, strength and height differences.</p> <p>Further to this, there are a number of staff who need visual aids and hearing aids to remain operationally active and the project needed to have due regard for their needs in the assessments.</p> <p>Finally, a small number of staff have specific dexterity issue (missing finger) and mobility issues (fused vertebrae) and these needed to be fully considered in the assessments for future provision.</p> <p>Additionally the Fire Brigades Union were invited to take part and did so throughout the process</p> <p><i>Involving and engaging with a diverse range of members of staff and representative bodies in this process shows compliance in section 2.7, 2.17 and 2.21</i></p>

Evaluation

YOUR QUESTIONS	YOUR ANSWERS
<i>Who took part in the compatibility assessments?</i>	Personnel of different physical abilities including height and strength. Women. Operational personnel with vision, hearing, dexterity and mobility or flexibility issues.
<i>How many took part overall?</i>	There were two female members who took a full and active role in the assessment process and two further in the subsequent implementation process. 36 members of staff overall including individual members with issues as described above.
<i>What material benefits have been</i>	The procurement of PPE especially BA needs to

<i>realised for the organisation?</i>	be suitable for the workforce to wear with the least amount of physical adjustment possible, realising cost benefit savings and buy in from the staff concerned.
<i>Are you alone in conducting this assessment?</i>	Other FRS have conducted similar programmes for procurement. We have learned from previous workwear contracting issues and so we used this as our basis.
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS	
YOUR ANSWERS	
<i>What has gone well in this scheme? List your responses.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The equipment was right for Oxfordshire following extensive trials, made better for involving different members of staff. • The process was a good advertisement for equipment trials and all of the candidates gave positive and beneficial feedback to the procurement team. Staff felt engaged. • Staff enjoyed the assessment process and interacting with equipment.
<i>What has not gone well in this scheme? List your responses.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was difficult to get staff with physical issues to take part as they felt it might single them out as being different. Professional judgement was used where no evidence could be gained for certain issues (missing digits). • The process was bound by delivery dates from the manufacturer which precluded some members from taking part and so reduced our overall ability to assess against some protected characteristics (mobility). <p><i>To ensure fairness and remove bias, the process is risk assessed meeting FRSEF criteria 2.8</i></p>

Put it all together

YOUR RESULTS	
<p><i>Give your overall conclusion here:</i></p> <p>How does the scheme relate to any Statutory Duty?</p>	<p>Overall a good scheme worth repeating for workwear especially protective workwear. It allowed us to create a groundswell of good opinion in the process if not all the products, except in this case the product was successful.</p> <p>Clearly, by undertaking assessments of protective workwear and its compatibility with the workforce we are giving due regard to the Statutory General Duty under the Equality Act 2012;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristics (in this case gender, race, belief, sexual orientation and age) and those who do not;• to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristics and those who do not and;• to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act. <p>The work also aligns to the County Councils Equality Plan 2012-17, Objective 4 - Promoting a culture of fairness in employment and service delivery.</p> <p>Furthermore, as we publish data on our WTT projects, we are also in compliance with the Specific Equality Duty (ii), to publish information demonstrating our compliance at least annually.</p> <p><i>This also meets FRSEF criteria 2.9</i></p>

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