



## Policy Statement

Our aim is to have a workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve. Having a diverse workforce will enable us to deliver a service that understands and respects the needs of our communities. To support this, we strive to remain an inclusive employer, recruiting, and retaining the best people to work for us from all walks of life.

We only select the best candidates based on their performance, skills, and merit.

BFRS is continually improving the way it engages with, attracts, and recruits candidates. We know that some people may never consider the Fire & Rescue service as a career path. Others do not think the role of a Firefighter is something they can do or worry they may not fit in. We want to ensure that talented individuals know that there are opportunities for them at BFRS and they are wanted and welcome.

## What is Positive Action?

Positive Action is lawful under the Equality Act 2010. Section 158 and 159 allow a range of measures to promote equality of opportunity. The act allows employers to take Positive Action measures to help people overcome certain barriers and improve representation in the workforce, where it can demonstrate it is under-represented within particular groups.

There are two types of Positive Action that are set out in the Equality Act 2010: general and recruitment or promotion.

- ❖ General Positive Action involves proportionate Actions that are designed to meet the three aims of: reducing disadvantage, meeting different needs, and increasing participation.
- ❖ Recruitment or promotion Positive Action involves actions that reduce disadvantage and/or increase representation specifically when it comes to deciding between equally qualified candidates.

Positive Action does not mean lowering or diluting standards to help people from underrepresented or disadvantaged groups pass our tests and meet our role-specific entry or progression requirements, but instead encourages and supports people from disadvantaged groups to help them overcome barriers which are not faced by other groups. Organisations can also run events like 'have a go' days, to encourage underrepresented groups to have a go at key firefighting skills, support with fitness programmes to achieve the level required, as well as supporting skills in completing application forms and developing interview techniques.



Positive Action is very different from Positive Discrimination, which gives preferential treatment to people from particular groups, to ensure greater numbers of those people succeed. BFRS does not advocate or participate in such activities, which are unlawful in the UK.

However, BFRS can and will target its communications to underrepresented groups to encourage them to apply for employment. Within BFRS women are significantly underrepresented among our Firefighters as are people from diverse ethnic groups.

When any recruitment process opens, all candidates, including those who have been involved in Positive Action events and activity, must apply for roles at the same time and be considered with all other applicants. Our recruitment will always be open to everyone and all who apply will have to go through the same selection processes and achieve the same standards.

**Applicants appointed to BFRS are and always will be the very best candidates available and are appointed absolutely and solely on merit.**