

South East Fire Improvement Partnership



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Equality and Diversity - Update

Welcome to the latest South East Fire Improvement Partnership Newsletter. In this special edition, we meet a new member of staff whose role it is to drive the Equality and Diversity agenda for East Sussex and Surrey Fire and Rescue Services.

Equality and Diversity remains one of the biggest challenges facing the fire and rescue service. East Sussex and Surrey Fire and Rescue Services have taken an unusual step by jointly employing an officer to drive this agenda between the two Services. SEFIP met and spoke to her.

SEFIP: So Sarah, introduce yourself

Sarah: My name is Sarah Dyde, I joined East Sussex and Surrey FRS in May 2007. I have a background in the NHS and my Father was a firefighter in Cotwolds

SEFIP: how does your role work, with you being shared between two services?

Sarah: I work two days for Surrey based at the HQ in Reigate and 3 days for East Sussex based at HQ in Eastbourne. The days vary depending on what meetings I need to attend

SEFIP: And what are your impressions of the fire service as a whole so far?

Sarah: Everyone I have met has been welcoming and helpful. It has vastly different issues on E&D than the NHS

SEFIP: A lot of us will be doing an awful lot in our individual services on this issue. What are your top tips for getting equality and diversity into the mainstream?

Sarah: Always sell the business case for E&D – it links with so many top priorities.

Consider what else is already mainstreamed and focus on how to incorporate E&D into that or use a similar process e.g. IRMP

SEFIP: How could we share what we know about the issue and things that work more effectively around the region?

Sarah: There are a number of ways, for example: Website, Newsletters etc, Conferences, Formal

groups e.g. E&D HR group, General networking. I will also be putting some stuff on the SEFIP website, so check there soon!

SEFIP: How can colleagues contact you?

Sarah: As I work between two offices here are both my email addresses
sarah.dyde@esfrs.org sarah.dyde@surreycc.gov.uk

SEFIP: it's been a pleasure to meet you Sarah. Thanks for speaking to us.

Coming up...

We are currently starting to organise the next **Business Planning Away Day**, where we will start to put together the plans for the coming year.

Like last year, the day will be intended for work area lead officers and other people who are actively involved in regional working. The day is not intended for CFOs or elected Members; we will present the draft plans to CFOs at a later date.

The Business Planning Away Day will take place on **22 November 2007 at the Best Western Hotel in Reigate**. Work area leads should have received a **booking form** where they can indicate their own availability, and nominate anyone else they would like to attend. We would like to receive these forms by **28 September 2007**.

Last year was a success because of the way everyone engaged in the event, constructively challenged proposals, and highlighted potential areas for collaboration between work areas. We hope this year's will be as good if not better.

If you have not received a booking form, or would like more information on the Business Planning Away Day, Please contact a member of the Improvement Team.

The South - East Fire Improvement Partnership was formed in January 2006 and is made up of the 9 Fire & Rescue Services in the South - East. Work of the partnership is funded by Communities & Local Government, and the Local Government Association through Capacity Building Funds.

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