



## **Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service**

### **Headquarters**

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**Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive**

Colin J Lammey MSc FCIPD FIFireE

11 January 2010

Dear Stakeholder

### **Re Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service Section 75 Screening Consultation on NIFRS Draft Revised Physical Fitness Policy**

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) seeks to sustain a culture of health and well-being amongst staff.

During 1999 HM Fire Service Inspectorate undertook a thematic review of sickness absence and ill-health retirements in the UK Fire and Rescue Service. This review was prompted by concerns that high levels of sickness absence were having an adverse effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. In February 2000 a national report *'Fit for Duty? Seeking a Healthier Fire Service'* was published. As a result of this report, NIFRS introduced its own fitness policy in 2003.

NIFRS Occupational Health team is continually striving to create a better, healthier work environment. The Team is implementing the *'Fit for Life' Occupational Health Scheme* and has now carried out a review on the original 2003 NIFRS fitness policy.

The Occupational Health Team, led by Group Commander Aidan Magennis, has engaged with all Representative Bodies in carrying out a review and drafting a revised 'Draft Physical Fitness Policy' for consideration by all staff and interested stakeholders. In order to complete the review it is important that all equality and fairness impacts are taken into consideration at this draft review stage.

NIFRS is statutorily obligated to 'screen' for equality impacts under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. We are interested in finding out your views on potential impact(s) on equality that the suggested revised Draft Physical Fitness Policy may present for you, or for other individuals. Your comments should be given in the context of the 9 equality categories and how they relate to you. Other general comments on the draft revised policy are also welcome.

A copy of the revised Draft Physical Fitness Policy is attached. A list of the 9 equality categories can be found on the attached Enclosure. We would welcome your response to the brief questionnaire also contained in the attached Enclosure.

If you require further information on the Draft Physical Fitness Policy, or seek to meet with those involved on the review, please contact Group Commander Aidan Magennis at Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, telephone 02892 664221 ext 2354 or by email at [aidan.magennis@nifrs.org](mailto:aidan.magennis@nifrs.org). All efforts will be made to facilitate consultation with stakeholders.

A copy of the revised Draft NIFRS Physical Fitness Policy is also available for download from the NIFRS website, [www.nifrs.org](http://www.nifrs.org), under the 'Current Consultations' drop down menu.

**Consultation comments are being collated by the Equality Manager on behalf of the Occupational Health Team and should be made no later than Friday, 2 April 2010.** Details of how to make your comments are outlined in the table below. Should you require the documentation in an alternative format, please contact the Equality Manager to discuss the options.

#### Contact details

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You are encouraged to participate in this consultation and contribute to developing a Physical Fitness Policy that is equality-proofed and workable in our Fire & Rescue Service.

Yours faithfully



**Adèle Davidson  
Equality Manager**

**Encs**