



## Case Study: Commitment to equality marked by national award

**Source: Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service**

**Date: 26 November 2008**

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) has gained national recognition for its commitment to equality and diversity with the achievement of level three of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG).

The award of the Equality Standard, which highlights Hampshire's commitment to equality and diversity in all areas of its work, follows a comprehensive assessment which involved interviews with both staff and managers from across the organisation, as well as a detailed review of the Service's procedures and practices.

John Bonney, Chief Officer of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service said: "I am delighted with this achievement. The award of level three recognises the genuine commitment, hard work and enthusiasm of staff at all levels across the organisation to consider equality in all areas of our work. "Our vision is to make life safer and to achieve this we need to reduce risk in all our communities. We are committed to providing services to the public which are shaped by their specific needs. Moreover as a public body we are striving to have a workforce that is more representative of the communities we serve".

The assessment highlighted many strengths which contributed towards Hampshire's achievement. Particular mention was made of the strong organisational leadership, underpinned by a clear, genuine commitment to equality and diversity, as well as the enthusiasm, understanding and passion for delivering real outcomes. The Service's achievements in community engagement and the development of robust stakeholder scrutiny and challenge were also highlighted as groundbreaking.

Chief Officer Bonney continued: "We have communities throughout Hampshire with a variety of needs and aspirations. In order to improve our service to all, to communicate effectively and in so doing reduce risk we need to be accessible and open to all. Part of achieving this is to ensure that our workforce reflects that same diversity and is always ready to respond to others with understanding, empathy, professionalism and respect.

This award is an important milestone but is by no means the end of this journey. We remain committed to tackling the issues of equality and diversity to ensure we make life safer for everyone in our communities and provide a diverse and inclusive working environment for our own staff".