



Document reference	FFP018	Document type	Policy
Version	9.0	Date of issue	August 2025
Classification	External		

FFP018 Equality and Diversity Procurement Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope

- 1.11 This document shows how we ensure our strong diversity and equality principles are practically implemented through our procurement processes and embedded in the procurement decisions we make. This document shall be used as both a guide for procurers when undertaking future procurements and a record of our achievements. Pre-planned and ongoing review of this document, in accordance with the wider review of the Service's Procurement Strategy, will ensure continuous improvement and development in this area.
- 1.12 Suppliers are integral to meeting the Service's strategic objectives as a fire and rescue service. Effective processes ensure we procure fit for purpose solutions from third parties, whilst securing value for money for the taxpayer. Our suppliers act as an extension to us as a service provider and therefore it is important to ensure stringent supplier selection processes incorporate, and do not compromise, our approach to diversity and equality.
- 1.13 The designing of our procurement processes introduces us to a number of opportunities to further our commitment to diversity and equality. This includes drafting our requirements in a manner that ensures the goods, services, and works we procure are suitable for every environment and for use by everyone. It also includes using our influence as a buyer to improve diversity and equality standards within our supply chain by education and careful supplier selection.
- 1.14 To ensure this document and our subsequent approach to procurement delivers practical and tangible improvements and benefits an ambitious action plan has been developed and published within TWFRS Equality Strategy. This action plan is also documented within Appendix A of this document.
- 1.15 TWFRS's Procurement Strategy and Equality Strategy are intended to work together to support the objectives of one another. TWFRS recognise good procurement processes compliment and work directly in support of our commitment to diversity and equality. Public sector procurement directs us to treat our suppliers fairly and equally. Furthermore, the directives require us to remove any barriers any suppliers may face in bidding for contracting opportunities, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Black Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and other (LGBT+) groups.

- 1.16 Our procurement processes afford us the opportunity to develop our commitment to diversity and equality both internally and external. An example of internal development includes undertaking equality impact assessments of our requirements to ensure the goods, services, and works we procure are suitable and inclusive. An example of external development is educating our suppliers on diversity and equality to improve standards in our supply chain using our spending power as leverage.
- 1.17 An important role of a public sector procurer in the spending of taxpayer's, particularly through times of austerity to support economic growth. One of the primary ways TWFRS can fulfil this responsibility is by supporting SMEs by removing barriers to them tendering for public sector contracts.
- 1.18 In addition, the Service also recognises the importance of ensuring their supply base reflects the diversity of Tyne and Wear's population. TWFRS utilises feedback and identifies areas at improving engagement with Black Minority Ethnic (BME) suppliers and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender groups (LGBT). TWFRS proactively work to ensure there are no barriers preventing BME & LGBT+ suppliers from tendering for contracting opportunities.
- 1.19 TWFRS participate in events within the North East to provide an opportunity to meet with suppliers and the third sector. These events give procurers an opportunity to educate suppliers and the third sector on their procurement processes and the legislation that governs such processes. It also gives both the suppliers and the third sector an opportunity to discuss with procurers the barriers they face in tendering for contracting opportunities and introduced procurers to potential solutions. Any feedback from these events is considered and is used so TWFRS not only improve their own procurement processes but that of procurers from local partner organisations.
- 1.20 SMEs frequently identify the resource required to respond to a public sector tender as a barrier for them bidding for contracts. SME's frequently state the tender process is time consuming, resource intensive and bureaucratic. In response to this TWFRS has worked with regional Authorities and considered Procurement best practices and legislation and made changes to procurement documentation. This has reduced the resource required by SMEs to participate in contracting opportunities.

1.2 **Legal and Regulatory Requirements**
N/A

1.3 **Exclusions from this policy**
N/A

2. **Definitions**
N/A

3. Principles of the policy

3.1 PROCUREMENT PROCESSES – DEFINING REQUIREMENTS

TWFRS identify and collaborate on procurement opportunities and have diverse focus groups to contribute to the development of specifications. When specifications are completed in draft stakeholders consider equality as part of that process; this approach results in the amendment of draft specifications which informs the contracts.

3.2 PROCUREMENT PROCESSES – SUPPLIER SELECTION

When sourcing suppliers and awarding contracts of a significant value an investigation and evaluation of a supplier's diversity and equality principles are of primary importance. Contracts are awarded by TWFRS to suppliers with a demonstrable record of achieving high standards in diversity and equality allowing us the confidence that selected supplier will further our own commitment to diversity and equality in the delivery of our contracts.

3.3 TWFRS opportunities documentation contains a section on diversity and equality which suppliers are required to complete. This section is pass or fail therefore should a supplier not have sufficient measures in place to demonstrate a commitment to diversity and equality or, should the supplier have poor past performance or convictions in this area, they will not be invited to tender.

3.4 When inviting tenders TWFRS also consider whether diversity and equality related evaluation criteria can be incorporated within the wider evaluation process subject to such criteria being relevant to the subject area of the contract.

3.5 PROCUREMENT PROCESSES – CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Through contract management and engaging with our suppliers TWFRS identified a need to support our supply base with training and education in diversity and equality to ensure high standards are sustained. Supplier Briefing Days were identified as the appropriate vehicle to achieve this objective. These events will be used to educate our suppliers on their responsibilities and direct them to further support if required. Feedback from our suppliers have led to some of our suppliers seeking to build upon their diversity and equality practices. Due to the success further events are being planned and further communication will continue to be issued by TWFRS to our suppliers ensuring we support them in every way we can.

3.6 TWFRS also hold formal contract management meetings with their strategic suppliers. TWFRS approach to contract management includes adding "Diversity and Equality Issues" into the standardised agenda. This will ensure any equality issues associated with the delivery of a contract are addressed. It also ensures that the standards which the supplier achieved to be awarded the contract in the first instance are upheld throughout the contract life.

4. Accountability and Responsibility

Financial Services

5. Monitoring and Review

- 5.1 TWFRS continually review their Procurement Strategy to ensure both the content is up to date and is successfully meeting our organisational objectives. The latest review undertaken amended the documentation used in line with the Public Contracts Regulations.
- 5.2 TWFRS also continuously report on their progress against the actions and targets documented within the Equality Strategy.
- 5.3 TWFRS also review their procurement processes and their impact on an ad-hoc basis to support changes in legislation, to adhere to best practice and to ensure continuous improvement.

6. Additional Information

- 6.1 Further information regarding this document and how TWFRS use their procurement processes and decisions to embed their diversity and equality principles is available by contacting TWFRS Procurement Department, Service Headquarters.

7. Authority for Issue

Policy	FFP018 Equality and Diversity Procurement		
Classification:	External		
Version Number:	9.0		
Version Date:	August 2025		
Author:	M Hughes Procurement Services Manager		
EIA Completed	Yes / No	Date:	12/06/2025
Consultation:	Staff	Date:	
	Unions	Date:	
	SLT	Date:	20/08/2025
	ELT	Date:	
	FA	Date:	
	Legal Services	Date:	
	Other(s) – please list	Date:	
Authorisation: <i>(ELT Member or Board)</i>	Director of Finance, Estates & Facilities	Date:	
Implementation: <i>(publication date)</i>		Date:	
Review Cycle: Frequency:	24 Months	Date:	
Link to Strategy:			
Links to other policies	Procurement Strategy		



INC002 RECORD OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Title of Proposal: FFP018 Equality and Diversity Procurement Policy							
Completed By: M Hughes				Department: Finance / Procurement			
Contact Details: 01914441681				Date of Submission: August 2025			
Is this Proposal:							
New ☐ Updated ☒ Other ☐ Specify:							
ANALYSIS RATING (Please tick one)				*In the case of an Amber Rating, proportionate, objective justification must also be ticked.			
RED		AMBER		GREEN	☒	Proportionate, Objective Justification	

Intended Outcomes

Summary of intended outcomes and benefits of the proposal? These should be linked to strategic or corporate outcomes where appropriate.	This policy shows how we will ensure that our strong diversity and equality principles are practically implemented through our procurement processes and embedded in the procurement decisions we make.
Who will be affected by the proposal and in what way? (e.g. applicants, employees, local communities' other services etc).	This will have a positive impact on our outcomes, supplier engagement, adherence to legislative obligations and those who participate in our opportunities.

Data and evidence collection

Please list sources of information have been	Procurement best practices, reviews of other public sector policies.
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used to inform this analysis.	
Are there any gaps in the data or intelligence available? If so, please describe what they are and what actions have been taken to obtain or improve the information.	No, however if legislation is updated this will require a further review.

Establishing Relevance and Equality Analysis

- Demonstrate how you used the data and evidence listed above.
- Demonstrate consideration of the actual and potential impact.
- Demonstrate actions taken to reduce or eliminate negative impact.
- Consider whether the proposal will or is likely to influence TWFRS's capacity to meet the PSED aims to:
 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act and other relevant legislation.
 2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups of people.
 3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Justification for rating (neutral/positive/negative) and actions taken to reduce negative impact and / or increase positive impact
Age		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with potential bidders and the general public.
Disability		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with potential bidders and the general public.
Gender Reassignment		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with potential bidders and the general public.
Pregnancy & Maternity		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with

				potential bidders and the general public.
Race - this includes ethnic or national origins, colour, or nationality		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with potential bidders and the general public.
Religion / Belief - this includes lack of belief		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with potential bidders and the general public.
Sex		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with potential bidders and the general public.
Sexual Orientation		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with potential bidders and the general public.

Will this proposal impact people who are marginalised as a result of other characteristics not protected by the Equality Act 2010? E.g. social economic factors (i.e. poverty and or isolation, caring responsibilities, unemployment, homelessness, urbanisation, rurality, health inequalities or any other disadvantage). It may also be relevant to consider whether all employees of the service are able to equally access your proposal, given the diversity of roles within the organisation.

Identified Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Justification for rating (neutral/positive/negative) and actions taken to reduce negative impact and / or increase positive impact

		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with potential bidders and the general public.
		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with potential bidders and the general public.
		✓		Regular review and updates, best practice as well as legislative updates can remove barriers to engaging and encouraging interaction with potential bidders and the general public.

Response to Analysis, Action Plan and Monitoring

Recommendations

Decision	Rating	Statement of Justification
Continue as planned, no major change.	GREEN	✓
Continue as planned but some adjustment to the proposal may be required before proceeding. Ensure actions are completed before submitting proposal.	AMBER	
Stop the proposal.	RED	

Proportionate, Objective Justification		
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Monitoring and review

What procedures are in place to monitor the impacts outlined in the analysis?	Feedback from tender opportunities and colleagues
How often will this take place?	Ongoing
Date of next planned review?	24 months from review or changes in legislation

Declaration: I believe that due regard has been paid to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty as it relates to the proposal.

Completed by:	M Hughes	Date:	19 June 2025
Head of Dept:	M Calvert	Date:	24 June 2025

Please follow section 6 of the BSI001 Policy & Procedure Writing Guidance in order to progress the proposal and accompanying Record of EIA through the consultation process. No proposals are to be published without an accompanying EIA.

If you require further assistance regarding the Equality Impact Assessment, please contact the Inclusion Manager

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IG011 RECORD OF DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT - Screening Questions

DPIA screening questions **must** be completed for any new system, project, activity, or process collecting, storing, using, or disposing of personal data (any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual). They must also be completed for any change in process that for example may collect new personal data or process it for different purposes.

If you answer “Yes” to any of these questions below you should conduct a DPIA.

If you have answered “No to all questions” you are not required to complete a DPIA.

Using your screening questions provide a brief summary as to where a full DPIA is required.

Context

Provide a brief explanation of the initiative / process.	This policy documents how we ensure our strong diversity and equality principles are practically implemented through our procurement processes and embedded in the procurement decisions we make. This document shall be used as both a guide for procurers when undertaking future procurements and a record of our achievements. Pre-planned and periodic review of this document, in accordance with the wider review of TWFRS Procurement Strategy, will ensure continuous improvement and development in this area.
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Step 1 – Identify the need for a DPIA.

Assessment Criteria	Yes/No	Justification for answer
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Will there be a need to collect new information about individuals?	No	
Will it involve the processing of sensitive information?	No	
Will information be shared with other departments or organisations who have not previously had routine access to the information?	No	
Are you using information about individuals for a purpose or in a way it is not currently used for?	No	
Is new technology being used that might be perceived as being privacy intrusive?	No	
Will it require making decisions about individuals in ways that can have an impact on them	No	
Is the information about individuals likely to raise privacy concerns or expectations, for example, health records or information that people would consider to be particularly private?	No	
Full DPIA required	No	

If you require further assistance regarding the Data Protection Impact Assessment, please contact the Data Protection Officer.

APPENDIX A – EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (PROCUREMENT RELATED ACTIONS)

Equality Objective & Actions	Responsible Manager & Target Completion	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Evidence of actions completed to date, documents, etc.	Comments relating to the action. Note if slippage or change to target.
1. Review and update equality and diversity criteria and social value into procurement processes and documentation to ensure new contracts are awarded to suppliers that are compliant.	March 2026 Procurement Services Manager					Reviewing tender documents, update in line with Public Contracts Regulations	Ongoing
1.1 Review and amend the Service's tender documents to include appropriate equality related questions and social value to allow effective evaluation of a tenderer's compliance with the Equality Act 2010 where appropriate.	March 2026					Reviewing tender documents, update in line with Public Contracts Regulations	Ongoing
1.2 Ensure processes are in place, for all significant procurements, to identify and incorporate equality and diversity criteria and social value into both specifications and tender evaluation processes.	March 2026					Workplans generated and projects identified.	Ongoing
1.3 Incorporate equality and diversity considerations and social value into formal contract management and supplier performance measurement processes.	March 2026					Ongoing	Ongoing

Equality Objective & Actions	Responsible Manager & Target Completion	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Evidence of actions completed to date, documents, etc.	Comments relating to the action. Note change to target and slippage reasons.
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2. Provide suppliers with support and guidance helping them to achieve maintaining compliance to the Equality Act 2010.	March 2026 Procurement Services Manager					Ongoing	Ongoing
2.1 Deliver/attend a series of “Equality in Procurement” awareness events/training to enhance knowledge and understanding.	March 2026					Ongoing	Ongoing
2.2 Encourage suppliers to access further training opportunities, if required, on their responsibilities with the Equality Act 2010.	March 2026					Ongoing	Ongoing

Equality Objective & Actions	Responsible Manager & Target Completion	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Evidence of actions completed to date, documents, etc.	Comments relating to the action. Note change to target and slippage reasons.
3. By 2026, continue to review, minimise, and remove any potential barriers to SMEs, BMEs and LGBT+ groups in bidding for TWFR contracts.	March 2026 Procurement Manager					Ongoing	Ongoing
3.1 The Service to be represented at events focussed on educating SMEs, BMEs and LGBT+ on successfully tendering for Service contracts.	March 2026 (annual reoccurring target)					Ongoing	Ongoing
3.2 The TWFRS “How to do Business” guide is updated and published on the website.	March 2026					Ongoing	Ongoing
3.3 Equality and diversity principles, the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Action Plan incorporated with the Service’s Procurement Strategy.	March 2026					Reviewing and updating where required	Ongoing