



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE**

# Core Code of Ethics



Putting Our Communities First



Integrity



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Dignity and Respect



Leadership



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council



# The principles

The Core Code sets out five ethical principles, which provide a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour.

The ethical principles have been produced specifically for Fire and Rescue Services by the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Local Government Association and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

# Purpose of our Code

Public trust and confidence in our Fire and Rescue Service rely on us all demonstrating ethical behaviours. The Core Code sets out these ethical principles and helps us continuously improve our organisational culture and workforce diversity and assists us in supporting our community in the best way.

It is effective only when we all consistently demonstrate the ethical behaviours. Everyone in every Fire and Rescue Service is expected to follow the Core Code. This includes those working with, or on behalf of, the Fire and Rescue Service.

The ethical principles have been reflected within our policies, procedures, and processes to ensure they are embedded and at the heart of day-to-day activity.



# What are behaviours?

Performance at work is not just about what we do (our technical competence) or what we know (our knowledge and experience), this is all underpinned by our culture (how we do things around here) which is made up of our systems, structures, working practices and a whole host of variables – all which centre around our shared values. Behaviours describe the attitudes and approaches that we take to work and explain:



# You and the Code

We operate in rapidly changing environments, often with new ethical challenges. Our decisions are sometimes made in difficult, changing, and unclear situations.



The Core Code applies to everything we do. It will help us to continue to do our jobs professionally and to the best of our ability. This Core Code of Ethics will help you and every other member of the Fire and Rescue Service to act in the right way in your service to the public. The principles in this Core Code guide our individual behaviours and form the basis of ethical decision making as we go about our work to ensure that we consider:

- The needs of communities, partners, our Service, and our employees.
- Our Service's values and its guidance, policy, and procedure.

# What is expected of me?

We all have a responsibility to ensure everyone follows the Core Code; however, there are specific responsibilities and expectations at different levels. The Core Code and is split into four distinct tiers:



# All staff

All staff should understand the Core Code and maintain high standards of ethical behaviour within their working life. The Core Code:

- Sets out principles that support these behaviours.
- Supports all staff to look for opportunities from which to learn, identifying mistakes and celebrating successes.
- Assists all staff in understanding how actions and behaviours impact on others.

Mindful of the Core Code and its ethical principles, all staff:

- Have a responsibility to implement the Core Code and should challenge unacceptable behaviours as and when they occur.
- Have a responsibility to treat each other with respect and recognise individual difference.
- Understand they are representatives of the FRS, their responsibilities within the community, and act in a manner that is in line with the Core Code and any additional individual FRA/FRS expectations.
- Value Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and set a positive example of appropriate behaviour.



- Maintain an open approach with others, taking account of, and accepting, individual differences including age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, social background, disability, sexual orientation, and physical appearance.
- Will challenge or question others constructively in the context of the Core Code to achieve more effective outcomes.
- Understand policies and procedures applicable to them and understand that they have a duty to uphold the principles within the Core Code in day-to-day activities.
- Should be aware of the escalation process within the FRS to ensure that issues of any sort are appropriately dealt with in a timely manner.
- Should not make improper use of information acquired as part of their role, or disclose, or allow to be disclosed, information confidential to the organisation.

## Supervisory and middle managers

In addition to the points applying to all staff, it is incumbent on supervisory and middle managers to understand the impact of the Core Code on their specific responsibilities. The Core Code will assist managers to understand the importance of how to communicate responsibly, with sensitivity and respect for others. It will support managers to take a proactive approach in dealing with difficult or sensitive situations, influencing others to reach an acceptable solution.



Managers need to have a detailed understanding of the FRS's informal and formal conduct mechanisms that sit alongside the Core Code, to be clear of their managerial responsibilities in the case of any contraventions to provide appropriate support to their team members.

Mindful of the Core Code and its ethical principles, managers will:

- Consider the Core Code in ensuring ethical considerations have been applied to all issues and decisions.
- Utilise the principles of the Core Code as part of all their discussions with team members.
- Take responsibility for implementing inclusion strategies, encouraging different points of view, and utilising the Core Code as part of their management approach.
- Be sensitive to the feelings and well-being of others and take actions to support them.

## Senior managers

Senior managers within the FRS must have an in depth understanding of the contents of this Core Code. In addition to the points applying to all staff, senior managers have individual and collective responsibility for the organisation and the exercise of executive judgement in their areas of work. Each senior manager should act in a way which allows decision-making meetings to fulfil their purpose in meeting our communities' needs and improving the success of the organisation.

Mindful of the Core Code and its ethical principles:

- A senior manager should ensure the organisation is financially responsible and properly managed to protect and enhance the interests of the organisation and its customers. They must always be conscious of seeking value for money in all dealings and be accountable to the public for how their money has been spent.
- A senior manager must always act to ensure the organisation complies within the law governing its operations and must evaluate their actions in a broader social context and must be conscious of the impact of their organisation on society.
- A senior manager must be prepared, if necessary, to express disagreement with colleagues, including the chief executive or managing senior manager and the Core Code supports appropriate challenge.
- A senior manager must not take improper advantage of the position as a senior manager to gain, directly or indirectly, a personal advantage or an advantage for any associated person which might cause detriment to the organisation.

- The personal interests of a senior manager, and those of associated persons, must not take precedence over those of the organisation's partners generally. A senior manager should seek to avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible. Full and prior disclosure of any conflict, or potential conflict, must be made to the corporate management board and recorded.
- A senior manager should not make improper use of information acquired as a senior manager or disclose, or allow to be disclosed, information confidential to the organisation.
- Senior managers are impartial in their dealings and remain politically neutral.
- Senior Managers should ensure that they continue to develop so that they can deliver high value services to the public through an effective and efficient FRS that continues to look after its people in an ethical way.



# Putting our communities first

We will put the interests of the public, the community, and service users first.



Fire & Rescue Service Ethical Principle	Examples of Expected Behaviours	Examples of Contra-Behaviours
Act with empathy, compassion, and respect, caring equally for everyone I deal with.	I find out about my local community and risks, to ensure I can offer the best service.	Fails to appreciate the need to engage the support of stakeholders, ignores or does not respond to community suggestions.
Consider the diverse needs of my communities and tailor my work to best meet their specific needs.	I seek the views of others about service quality and effectiveness to identify ideas for improvement.	Consistently works in isolation, pursuing their own solutions without involvement of appropriate stakeholders, is not willing to build relationships or get to know other people and groups.
Understand and evaluate the impact I have on the public's safety and wellbeing.	I work collaboratively with colleagues and partners to improve the service to the public.	Uses resources without consideration to cost or cost effectiveness. Does not take opportunities to save the Service money or resources.
Continuously improve my performance to better serve the public and my communities.	I look to solve problems in different ways to improve the service I provide.	Does not adapt style and deliver messages in the best way for others.
Am an ambassador for my Fire & Rescue Service and a role model in my communities.		
Identify and remove barriers to people joining or accessing our service.		

# Integrity

We will act with integrity, including being open, honest, and consistent in everything we do.



Fire & Rescue Service Ethical Principle	Examples of Expected Behaviours	Examples of Contra-Behaviours
Am honest, open, and fair when dealing with everyone.	I acknowledge and learn from my mistakes and celebrate my successes with the team.	Undermining Service decisions or being negative about them.
Can evidence my decisions and am able to explain my behaviour.	I recognise and challenge inappropriate behaviour.	Keeping information to yourself that should be shared or using information against people.
Build trusting relationships and demonstrate an understanding of everyone's roles and responsibilities.	I always strive to deliver against my commitments.	Passing the buck and blaming others when things go wrong. Refuses to acknowledge personal mistakes or reflect on their own behaviours and actions.
Welcome challenge and adapt the way I work and my behaviour as a result of what I learn.	I persist in the face of obstacles and demonstrate a sense of personal responsibility for delivery.	Having to 'win' at all costs rather than looking for common goals, middle ground, or compromise.
Challenge behaviour that does not comply with our Core Code or my Service's values.		
Never behave in a way that may cause others to act outside our ethical principles.		
Remain impartial and objective.		
Never act in an improper way, or in a manner that could create a perception of improper behaviour for personal gain. I declare relevant interests and relationships and maintain personal and professional boundaries.		



# Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)



We will continually recognise and promote the value of EDI, both within the Fire & Rescue Service and the wider communities in which we serve.

We will stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.

Fire & Rescue Service Ethical Principle	Examples of Expected Behaviours	Examples of Contra-Behaviours
Acknowledge and care about people's diverse needs so they can access the services they need from me and my Service.	I deliberately create an environment where people can be the best they can.	Does not accept the need to change or embrace future thinking, dwells on the past and how things used to be.
Provide an environment where everyone has an equal voice.	I value my colleagues and my team and know how to make best use of their diverse skills and strengths.	Does not value the thoughts, ideas, and contribution of others. Does not allow others' views to be considered or listened to.
Acknowledge my own unconscious bias and consider everyone's perspective.	I value and appreciate differences in people and treat everyone with kindness and respect.	Fails to recognise the value of diversity or take appropriate action.
Behave in a way that celebrates diversity in all its forms, everywhere.	I recognise and challenge inappropriate behaviour.	Fails to challenge behaviour which could be upsetting to others.
Tackle discriminatory behaviour, policy, and procedure.	I avoid making and expressing preconceptions and stereotyping when interacting with others.	Not recognising your own prejudices or stereotypes and allowing these to be seen by others.
Do all I can to encourage people from underrepresented groups to join our Service and feel welcome.		
Help everyone to be their best and to always learn from one another.		

# Dignity and respect

We will treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.



Fire & Rescue Service Ethical Principle	Examples of Expected Behaviours	Examples of Contra-Behaviours
Use unbiased judgement and behaviour and act respectfully.	My manner is always composed and respectful.	Exhibits aggressive, defensive, overpowering, bullying, defensive or controlling behaviour.
Act with decency and impartiality, recognising that my unconscious bias can prevent me considering all perspectives and needs when I am making decisions.	I create an environment where people can be themselves at work and the best they can be.	Fails to understand or appreciate impact on others; does not consider situation from others' viewpoint, could put them at risk.
Do the right thing when delivering services, using the ethical principles set out in this Core Code and my Service's values.	I communicate responsibly and with sensitivity and respect for others.	Being disinterested, hostile or defensive when others try to give you feedback. Shows stubbornness in the face of opposition, even when proved wrong.
Support the development and opportunity of myself and my colleagues.	I strive not to create conflict. When conflict happens, I handle it in a professional manner.	Avoiding conflict and letting unacceptable situations fester.
Create an environment of openness and trust.	I build trust with others, creating constructive working relationships to achieve goals.	Not bothering to check whether plans are on track and whether additional support is required.
Treat people with respect and without discrimination, harassment, or bullying; I actively reject these inappropriate behaviours.		
Challenge all inappropriate behaviour when I am at work.		

# Leadership



We will all be positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership at all levels.

We will be accountable for our behaviour, decisions and actions and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Fire & Rescue Service Ethical Principle	Examples of Expected Behaviours	Examples of Contra-Behaviours
Take responsibility for continuously improving my own performance and the performance of my service.	I am an ambassador for the service, taking pride and responsibility for the work we do and encouraging others to do the same.	Overlooks inappropriate behaviour with regard to the organisation's processes, values and expected behaviours. Avoids long-standing, difficult or sensitive issues.
Am accountable to the public, my employer and my colleagues for my decisions and actions.	I value inclusion and set a positive example of appropriate behaviour for everyone, consistent with our Core Code.	Does not lead by example or stand by own principles or spoken beliefs. Giving a poor impression of yourself or the Service.
Take responsibility for my actions and their consequences.	I look after the people around me and look for signs that someone may need support, ensuring its availability.	Taking little interest in the feelings or wellbeing of others, or not taking action to help those who are struggling.
Address inappropriate behaviour in ways appropriate to my role.	I create conditions where team members feel confident to suggest and implement creative ideas.	Apportioning blame rather than identifying causes and learning when something goes wrong.
Recognise leaders exist at all levels in my organisation and communities.	I make decisions based on evidence and consider all risks.	Avoids making decisions and escalating issues inappropriately to avoid taking responsibility.
Always demonstrate the principles of a positive culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion.		
Am committed to implementing and working by this Core Code.		