DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE

Code of Ethics



Putting Our Communities First



Integrity



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Dignity and Respect



Leadership

NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Local
Government
Association

Association of
Police and Crime
Commissioners

The principles

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

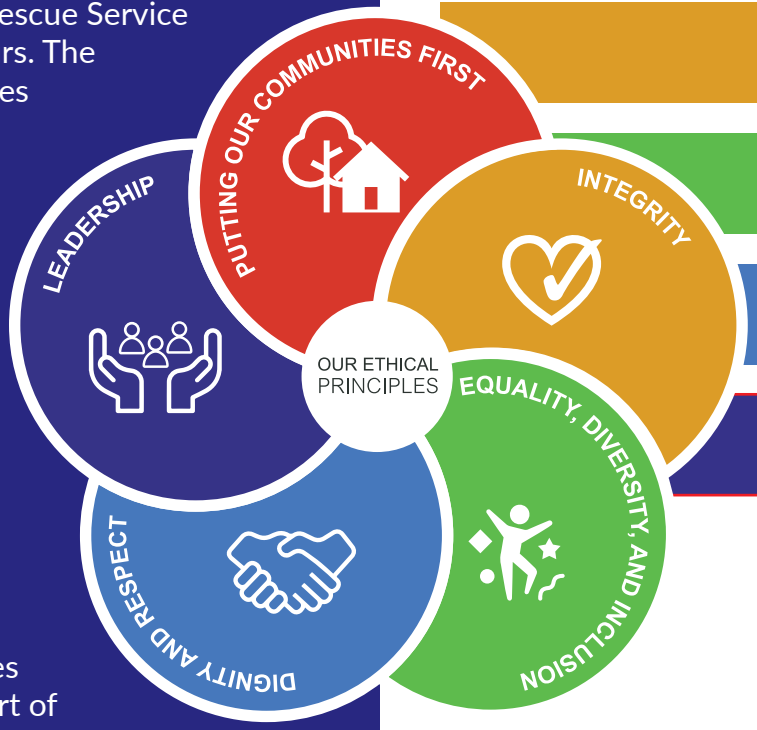
The ethical principles have been produced specifically for Fire and Rescue Services by the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Local Government Association and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

Purpose of our Code

Public trust and confidence in our Fire and Rescue Service rely on us all demonstrating ethical behaviours. The Code of Ethics 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 Code of Ethics. 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:

How we do things

How we treat each other

What we say and how we say it

How we expect to be treated

How others see us

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 Code of Ethics applies to everything we do. It will help us to continue to do our jobs professionally and to the best of our ability. This 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 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 Code of Ethics; however, there are specific responsibilities and expectations at different levels. The Code is split into four distinct tiers:

All Staff

Supervisory and Middle Managers

Strategic Leaders

Fire & Rescue Authorities

All staff

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

- Have a responsibility to implement the 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 Code of Ethics 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 Code of Ethics 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 Code of Ethics in day-to-day activities.
- Should be aware of the escalation process within their 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 Code of Ethics on their specific responsibilities.

The Code of Ethics 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 informal and formal conduct mechanisms that sit alongside the Code of Ethics to be clear of their managerial responsibilities in the case of any contraventions to provide appropriate support to their team members.

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

- Consider the Code in ensuring ethical considerations have been applied to all issues and decisions.
- Utilise the principles of the Code of Ethics as part of all their discussions with team members.
- Take responsibility for implementing inclusion strategies, encouraging different points of view, and utilising the Code of Ethics 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 Code of Ethics. 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 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 Code of Ethics 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.	Approachable and works with individuals and teams to resolve issues that are raised with them.	Does not attempt to understand or thoughtfully consider different perspectives in resolving issues.
Consider the diverse needs of my communities and tailor my work to best meet their specific needs.	Proactively seeks the views of others about service quality and effectiveness to identify ideas for improvement.	Consistently works in isolation, pursuing own solutions without involvement of appropriate stakeholders. Is not willing to build relationships or get to know the needs and thoughts of other people and groups.
Understand and evaluate the impact I have on the public's safety and wellbeing.	Works 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 consider more efficient and effective ways of delivering services.
Continuously improve my performance to better serve the public and my communities.	Looks to solve problems in different ways to improve the service provided.	Does not adapt style or seek to work in the best interests of the public.
Am an ambassador for my Fire & Rescue Service and a role model in my communities.	Finds out about the local community and risks, to ensure the most appropriate service is offered.	Does not adapt style or seek to work in the best interests of the public.
Identify and remove barriers to people joining or accessing our service.	Seeks to understand other people's perceptions and works proactively with them to ensure they can access our service.	Does not attempt to challenge perceptions and does not appreciate other's perspectives and the need to support people in overcoming any physical, mental, or cultural barriers.

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	Creates a cohesive team who support and celebrate each other. Acknowledges, takes responsibility, and learns from mistakes.	Undermines Service decisions or is negative about the Service more generally.
Can evidence my decisions and am able to explain my behaviour.	Considers a range of perspectives and takes time to discuss options and consequences with others so the rationale for the decisions is clearly understood.	Keeping information to themselves that should be shared or using information against people. Taking decisions that cannot be properly justified or backed up.
Build trusting relationships and demonstrate an understanding of everyone's roles and responsibilities.	Treats others with respect, seeking to understand the roles and responsibilities of those around them considering this when delivering against commitments.	Passing the buck and blaming others when things go wrong. Refuses to acknowledge personal mistakes or reflect on their own behaviours and actions. Always pointing the finger elsewhere.
Welcome challenge and adapt the way I work and my behaviour as a result of what I learn.	Persists in the face of obstacles and demonstrates 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 Code of Ethics or my service's values.	Recognises the need for our Code of Ethics and its purpose in being clear and accountable to our communities.	Fails to acknowledge the need for a Code of Ethics and understand its importance in providing a good service to our communities.
Never behave in a way that may cause others to act outside our ethical principles.	Works in line with organisational expectations and the Code of Ethics and support others in being accountable for their conduct.	Dismissive about the Code of Ethics and does not support others to 'do the right thing.'
Remain impartial and objective.	Considers situations from a position of neutrality and fact.	Is easily influenced by others and change's view to remain popular and avoid honest conversations.
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.	Conducts self in line with the Code of Ethics to ensure high levels of public confidence and reputation are maintained.	Does not appreciate that as a member of a public sector service they are a role model for the Service and must always act in a professional and ethical manner.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion EDI

We will continually recognise and promote the value of EDI, both within the Fire and 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.	Positively and deliberately creates 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.	Values their team and colleagues and knows 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.	Values and appreciates differences in people and treats everyone with kindness and respect.	Fails to understand or recognise the value of diversity or take appropriate action to support it.
Behave in a way that celebrates diversity in all its forms, everywhere.	Recognises the value of diverse thinking, considers the values of others, and celebrates difference.	Fails to challenge behaviour which could be upsetting to others or cause them to not give their best at work.
Tackle discriminatory behaviour, policy, and procedure.	Avoids making and expressing preconceptions and stereotyping when interacting with others.	Not recognising own prejudices or stereotypes and being thoughtless about how these might affect others.
Do all I can to encourage people from underrepresented groups to join our Service and feel welcome.	Looks for opportunities to promote the service, particularly to underrepresented groups and encourages community members to consider the Fire Service as an employer.	Does not see engagement and inclusion as an important part of their role. Does not understand the difference between positive action and positive discrimination.
Help everyone to be their best and to always learn from one another.	Looks for ways in which other people's performance can be improved, developed, and supported.	Is only concerned about themselves and their own career, does not see the benefit of learning from and supporting others to develop and be at their best.

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.	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.	Listens to others and creates 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.	Communicates responsibly and with sensitivity and respect for others.	Being dis-interested, 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.	Creates conditions where team members feel confident to suggest and implement creative ideas. Seeks development opportunities for others and provides support, guidance, and positive encouragement.	Does not create a trusting and open environment amongst the team and puts barriers up against progress, change and development.
Create an environment of openness and trust.	Builds trust with others, creating constructive working relationships to achieve Service objectives and expectations. When conflict happens, it is dealt with in a professional manner.	Failing to create open and trusting relationships. Avoids conflict and difficult conversations so unacceptable situations fester.
Treat people with respect and without discrimination, harassment, or bullying; I actively reject these inappropriate behaviours.	Does not tolerate acts of discrimination, harassment or bullying and follow the appropriate procedures when such inappropriate behaviour has occurred.	Sweeps issues under the carpet, ignores, or gives excuses for not dealing with inappropriate behaviour. Allows issues to escalate for others to deal with.
Challenge all inappropriate behaviour when I am at work.	Recognises, challenges and holds colleagues to account for their inappropriate behaviour.	Does not challenge or address inappropriate behaviour as it will set them apart from the team or provoke a difficult conversation.

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.	Is an ambassador for the service, taking pride and responsibility for the work we do and encouraging others to do the same.	Avoids long-standing, difficult, or sensitive performance issues in the interests of an easy life or avoiding difficult conversations.
Am accountable to the public, my employer and my colleagues for my decisions and actions.	Values inclusion and sets a positive example of appropriate behaviour for everyone, consistent with our Code of Ethics.	Apportions blame rather than identify causes and learning when something goes wrong.
Take responsibility for my actions and their consequences.	Considers how their behaviour impact others. Looks after the people around them and looks for signs that someone may need support, ensuring it is provided.	Fails to take account of how their behaviour impact others and takes little interest in the feelings or wellbeing of others, or not takingaction to help or support those who are struggling.
Address inappropriate behaviour in ways appropriate to my role.	Is an active bystander, recognising and challenging inappropriate behaviour.	Overlooks inappropriate behaviour regarding the organisation's processes, values and expected behaviours and in doing so fails to create a trusting and open environment amongst the team.
Recognise leaders exist at all levels in my organisation and communities.	Proactively seeks out opportunities to contribute and engage with others to make positive changes to the workplace, the wider organisation, and the community.	Does not lead by example in line with Service expectations and behaviours, giving a poor impression of self or the Service.
Always demonstrate the principles of a positive culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion.	Contributes and drives forward equality, diversity, and inclusion by making suggestions to improve ways of working.	Actively undermines equality, diversity and inclusion and thinks EDI is a 'tick box.' Thinks 'treating everyone the same' is EDI.
Am committed to implementing and working by this Core Code.	Look for ways to positively contribute to advancing our culture in line with the Code of Ethics	Does not see the importance and the benefits of a Code of Ethics or their role in creating a positive culture