

APPENDIX

DORSET AND WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AGAINST RECOMMENDATIONS – NOVEMBER 2025

PRACTICE TO PROGRESS

WORKPLACE CULTURE				
No.	Recommendation	Documents Reviewed	Commentary	Assessment
16	There is an urgent need for the Service to categorically set out the expected standards of behaviour and how failure to comply will be dealt with robustly. This should be clearly aligned with the Code of Ethics. It is imperative that each member of staff across the organisation understands their own personal responsibility for compliance with these standards and for managers at all levels to challenge inappropriate behaviours consistently.	Dignity & Respect Framework Decision Making Framework Code of Ethics Workshop Role Guides	<p>There is evidence that the Code of Ethics is widely known within the organisation, with all those interviewed being able to discuss the content of the code but, more importantly, the practical application of it. It is referred to in relation to standards and behaviours and how it frames behaviour.</p> <p>There were a range of good examples of how the code is being embedded, such as the Table Toppers, the ‘Safe to...’ programme and EDI training. Capacity within the EDI team has delayed some of the training implementation however we understand that a key vacancy in this team has now been filled which will allow for this essential training to commence.</p> <p>Dignity and Respect framework – this framework sets out a clear position on the service’s expectation of a shared responsibility to create a positive, dignified and respectful working environment for everyone. It also sets out a clear organisational position towards inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours and standards.</p>	Recommendation met

			<p>Code of Ethics – this is a comprehensive document setting out examples of positive and negative behaviours in each of the key areas.</p> <p>Decision making framework – this outlines the various steps in decision making, providing detailed considerations for individuals and including ethical dilemmas.</p> <p>Code of Ethics workshop – this is an e-learning module on the service’s intranet, ‘Connect’. To date 130 members of staff have completed the induction training and a further 44 have undertaken the workshop with their teams.</p> <p>All operational staff now have ‘Role Guides’ that outline their roles and responsibilities and provide standards of behaviour and performance. These are available on ‘Connect’ and are easy to navigate and useful for supervisors and managers. All role guides link to the Code of Ethics.</p> <p>A schematic poster ‘Embedding the Code of Ethics’ is an excellent illustration of how all the aspects of culture change link together.</p>	
23	The proposed Dignity at Work framework policy should include a clear position on social media and its acceptable use. The organisation should also make it clear that unacceptable use of	<p>Dignity & Respect Framework</p> <p>Strengthened Social Media Procedure</p> <p>Strengthened Leadership Development</p>	<p>Dignity and Respect framework – this framework sets out a clear position on the service’s expectation of a shared responsibility in creating a positive, dignified and respectful working environment for everyone and a clear position towards inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours and standards.</p>	Recommendation met

	social media will result in disciplinary action.		Social media policy – this policy updated in August 2024 sets out clear expectations and consequence regarding professional and personal use of social media.	
28	The Service should establish an independent review/advisory board to assist in the monitoring and implementation of the internal action plan and any recommendations emanating from this independent review. Chair/co-chaired by an independent person, this will enhance visibility and generate accountability for the Service. Inclusion of diversity staff associations and other stakeholders would be beneficial.	Culture Development Committee ToR Culture Development Committee Agenda	As stated above, the service has established a Culture Development Committee to monitor and review progress against the Culture Action Plan , the independent review and other recommendations from HMICFRS. Whilst initially this was chaired by the deputy CFO, it has been chaired by the Chief Fire Officer since his appointment in January 2025. It is evident that his leadership has been critical to the delivery and progress against the plan. Since March 2025 Sunita Gamblin QPM has assumed the role of independent co-chair of the CDC which helps to provide important scrutiny and challenge. Six-monthly updates are presented to the Fire Authority’s Finance and Audit Committee.	Recommendation met

ROBUSTNESS OF KEY PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

No.	Recommendation	Documents Reviewed	Commentary	Assessment
6	<p>The review team recommends a further review of the existing suite of procedures pertaining to conduct, performance and capability to ensure that they meet the needs of a modern workforce. This should include accurate and central recording to enable the Service to identify trends and take appropriate action, as required. This would also ensure a consistent approach to discipline. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) accurate and central recording to enable the service to identify trends and take 	<p>Updated Discipline Procedure</p> <p>Updated Managing Performance Procedure</p> <p>Updated Anti Bullying & Harassment Procedure</p> <p>Updated Grievance Procedure</p> <p>Updated Staff Code of Conduct Procedure</p> <p>Safe To portal</p>	<p>The organisation has reviewed its suite of policies and procedures that sit under the umbrella of the new Dignity and respect Framework and link to the Code of Ethics.</p> <p>The 'Safe to...' portal is an excellent resource that allows staff to access information and support for reporting issues in the workplace. It also provides psychological and wellbeing support, and access to internal and external resources.</p>	<p>Recommendation met</p>

	<p>appropriate action, as required including central recording and monitoring of HR043 performance improvement plans.</p> <p>a review of the modified procedure and overall review of the discipline procedure to ensure a consistent approach to discipline sanctions.</p>			
7	<p>The review team also recommends the introduction of a new 'Dignity at Work' framework to deal specifically with unacceptable behaviour relating to bullying and harassment or EDI issues. This would allow greater clarity and fit with the Service's desire for a 'zero-tolerance' approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviour.</p>	<p>Dignity and Respect Framework</p>	<p>The service has developed a comprehensive Dignity and Respect framework which links all policies together. The service has moved away from a 'zero-tolerance' stance in line with its Code of Ethics and applies a positive behaviour approach.</p>	<p>Recommendation met</p>

8	Implement a new EDI policy statement that includes the NFCC position published in July 2023 on embedding EDI in the workplace.	Dignity & Respect Framework Staff survey results	<p>The Culture Vision Statement and the Dignity and Respect Framework set out clear objectives including standards and behaviours expected of the organisation.</p> <p>The staff survey was carried out in 2025 and had an overall response rate of 43% which is sufficient for reliable insights. Women in the service were more than twice as likely to respond than their male colleagues, with fire control and corporate staff more likely to respond than whole time and on call staff. An engagement score of 80% reflects a high level of engagement amongst staff who feel motivated, involved and committed. 98% indicated that they see it as their personal responsibility to follow the Code of Ethics with 77% of responses saying they feel confident to speak up about inappropriate behaviour.</p>	Recommendation met
10	The Service should strengthen their reporting to the Fire and Rescue Authority of the number and type of discipline/grievances and the type of sanctions delivered on a quarterly basis. There needs to be sufficient detail to ensure	Culture Dashboard Finance & Audit Performance Management Report	<p>The Culture Dashboard provides an overview of the key cultural deliverables and diversity indicators.</p> <p>The Fire Authority's Finance and Audit Committee conducts a six-monthly review of the Culture Action Plan. Members of the strategic leadership team meets informally with members prior to each formal meeting to provide additional context.</p>	Recommendation met

	Members are reassured any inappropriate behaviours are being dealt with robustly and trends recognised.			
11	It is equally important to provide relevant training for all managers who are required to carry out investigations (formal and informal), to give them the confidence and support to deal with what are often challenging disciplinary and grievance matters. All supervisors from Crew Manager upwards need to be able to act confidently to resolve or escalate issues at the earliest opportunity. This should ensure victims and perpetrators are dealt with appropriately. This training should be delivered in conjunction with an increased understanding of EDI to ensure they recognise	<p>Leadership Development Programme</p> <p>Management in Lifesaving Programme</p> <p>Training for Investigating Officers</p> <p>Performance Management Data</p> <p>Two stage discipline assessment</p> <p>Strategic Case Review ToR</p>	<p>A range of leadership development and EDI programmes have been designed and delivered to the service. There is evidence of a shared narrative and messaging across the suite of products, helping to reinforce the message. The Safe to portal helps signpost staff and managers to various resources including policies and procedures and 'at a glance' processes. Access to these resources is excellent and easy to navigate.</p> <p>The HR People Partners are equipped to support managers who are dealing with discipline, grievance or performance issues and ongoing training provided to managers.</p> <p>A two-stage discipline assessment is carried out, and the introduction of the Strategic Case Review meeting is a means of assessing and overseeing all cases to ensure consistency of approach. The Strategic Case Review ToR has been reviewed and are appropriate for purpose and best practice.</p>	Recommendation met

	<p>inequality. This should ensure that all managers are accountable for delivering outcomes in line with policy, and in accordance with prescribed timescales. A consistent approach to investigating grievances and other complaints should be undertaken, with trained investigating officers and strong HR support.</p>			
13	<p>DWFRS should consider establishing a central group whose role is to assess and monitor all disciplinary, grievance and bullying/harassment cases. The group's role would be to assess risk, ensure the correct procedure is being applied, appoint investigating officers, provide HR guidance and support, ensure consistency of procedure and monitor progress.</p>	<p>Strategic Case Review ToR</p>	<p>The service has established a Strategic Case Review process that regularly reviews and assesses significant cases likely to present a high level of risk.</p> <p>The review team has had sight of terms of reference for a Strategic Case Review Committee for Performance Case Management Arrangements. These TOR set out the role of the committee in providing a single and consistent point of assessment for all HR performance management matters.</p>	<p>Recommendation met</p>

	DWFRS should ensure that all grievances and other complaints are recorded centrally and monitored for repeat offenders, victims and trends. The HR department will need to be appropriately resourced to deliver this recommendation.			
14	Review the current HR provision to ensure there is sufficient capacity to help it support and develop line managers in managing people. This should include effective HR oversight of all its suite of policies and procedures and central recording and monitoring. The current HR Business Partner model with appropriately qualified and/or experienced professionals is perceived to be best practice and should be	HR Structure – January 2024 Proposed HR structure w.e.f. April 2026	Significant work has been undertaken in the last two years to review and enhance the HR structure. The resulting structure provides a flatter and focused level of expertise, with experienced and qualified professionals. The introduction of the Professional Standards team and the Compliance and Investigation Team provide a consistent approach to managing discipline and performance issues and ensures that line managers are given the support they need. An enhanced HR business partnering function allows the HR managers to support and advise line managers rather than getting ‘bogged down’ with case management, as was the previous experience. This is a significant step in the right direction. Continued professional development of the team is ongoing and with that their confidence will continue to grow. It should	Recommendation met

	enhanced where possible.		not be underestimated the quantum of change in this area and is key to ensuring future success.	
15	<p>Amend the current exit interview process, strengthening it to enable the organisation to learn from the employee experiences, and improve policies and systems accordingly. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) allowing the leaver to consider whom it may be appropriate to share their experiences and reasons for leaving with. b) consistently and confidentially recording all exit interview centrally. c) adopting a suite of indicators that identify workforce turnover, with a particular focus on those with protected characteristics. 	<p>Leavers Discussion Procedure</p> <p>Culture Dashboard</p>	<p>A new Leavers Discussion Process has been introduced.</p> <p>The Culture Dashboard provides an overview of the key cultural deliverables and diversity indicators.</p>	Recommendation met

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN THE WORKPLACE

No.	Recommendation	Documents Reviewed	Commentary	Assessment
1	<p>DWFRS should further develop its range of positive action initiatives to encourage greater levels of recruitment and promotion of all under-represented groups, particularly women. Examples of positive action initiatives include: targeted attraction and recruitment campaigns; targeted career development initiatives including mentoring, shadowing, coaching and bespoke training; identifying positive role models from black and ethnic minority and female staff; ensuring all recruitment and promotion adverts</p>	<p>Positive Action Steering Group ToR and Plans</p> <p>Developing Diverse Leaders evaluation report</p>	<p>There is clear evidence of substantial work ongoing in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. The EDI Manager, along with her team, has introduced a wide range of initiatives and programmes designed to highlight and embed inclusion in the organisation through consistent messaging and interlinking policies and frameworks. The Culture Dashboard provides an overview of the key cultural deliverables and diversity indicators.</p> <p>Six delegates were selected to attend the Developing Diverse Leaders (DDL) programme. The evaluation suggests that this was a valuable course with delegates gaining more confidence in each of the key target areas. Following evaluation, the service has committed to further delegates to the programme.</p>	Partially met

	include a positive action or welcome statement; ensuring all selection panels are diverse; consider anonymising application forms and carry out EQIAs on all promotion and selection processes to ensure they do not inadvertently impact those with protected characteristics.			
2	Establish goals to significantly increase female representation at both the whole time and on-call firefighter level whilst ensuring the selection procedures are fair and transparent	Positive Action Steering Group ToR Annual Workforce Equality report Culture Dashboard	At DWFRS 5.63% of whole time and on call firefighters are female, compared to a UK average of 9.3%. This is largely unchanged since the review undertaken in 2023, with 0.21% increase in whole-time firefighters but 0.2% reduction in on-call firefighters. The annual equality report provides a helpful analysis of the organisation's workforce diversity however it has aggregated three characteristics, sex, ethnicity and sexual orientation, to set a target, rather than having a specific target to increase female representation.	Not met
3	Identify barriers to women and other underrepresented groups from being attracted to joining and being	Operational Women's Group ToR, meeting agendas and minutes Barriers to Progression Survey	The ' potential barriers to promotion ' survey was an initiative of the Operational Women's staff network. The survey was issued to all 44 members of the Operational Women's Group, with a 38% response rate. The results were published in July	Partially met

	<p>successful in the selection process to become a firefighter. Any identified barriers should be removed from the process whilst ensuring no dilution of the robustness of the selection criteria.</p>		<p>2025 and whilst there is evidence of an increased focus on support mechanisms for women, there is still a perceived negative culture in some places. This is encapsulated in the issue with toilets and showers that could appear to be little more than an attempt to undermine progress by the few. Lack of flexible working arrangements, the small number of female role models and ‘imposter syndrome’ are also cited as potential barriers.</p> <p>The Developing Diverse Leaders and Buddy Scheme are two initiatives that have been established in addition to some ‘Ops Women’ days for incident command.</p> <p>The service has a positive action plan in place for attraction, recruitment and progression. Operational women are significantly under-represented (5.63%) in the service in comparison to the UK average (9.3%). The service describes this as ‘slightly lower’ than the national average. It is important for the service to drive the agenda to tackle barriers to women in both recruitment and progression, supported by the Operational Women’s Network.</p> <p>A substantial piece of work identifying potential barriers to recruitment and progression should be undertaken in the service, including learning from Gloucestershire FRS, who have had considerable success in attracting higher numbers of women.</p>	
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4	<p>DWFRS should renew their corporate Women in the Fire Service membership and avail itself of the many opportunities for female progression. (At time of writing we are pleased to note that they have recently renewed their membership.) DWFRS should also consider supporting attendance at the FBU women's school and any other staff association training.</p>	<p>Membership of WFS</p>	<p>We are pleased to note the service's commitment to and engagement with Women in the Fire Service.</p>	<p>Recommendation met</p>
17	<p>The Service should immediately issue communication regarding the appropriate use of WC facilities.</p>	<p>Email from Andy Cole – October 2023 and further email September 2025</p>	<p>Despite the CFO's recent communication, this remains a persistent threat to undermine the organisation. Several examples of men flagrantly using women's facilities, even one of using a female toilet while a woman was in the shower, were provided to the review team. Other examples were given of men complaining about hairdryers being installed in fire stations as a 'waste of money'. Some interviewees cited the male-dominated fire stations as the reason for small numbers of women wishing to join the fire service. The working arrangements, shift patterns and lack of female</p>	<p>Partially met</p>

			facilities are potential barriers to increasing the diversity of the workforce.	
18	The Service should continue, making it a priority, its full survey of its buildings and facilities and prioritise improvements	Estates plan	The review team notes the service is working with staff network leads and wider community regarding the development of the estate and ensuring the provision of separate and appropriate facilities in refurbished fire stations.	Recommendation met
19	The Service should take immediate steps to ensure a consistent approach to welfare and WC facilities at operational incidents. This should include regular audits to ensure the request and use of such facilities.	Welfare Unit project	This initiative provides welfare units at operational incidents. It has been deployed several times and feedback has been positive and learning has allowed for alterations to the service.	Recommendation met
20	The current initiative, 'Not on My Watch', run by a female Crew Manager, is an example of best practice around bystander challenge. The Service is encouraged to actively support the profile of this initiative and consider rolling it out across the organisation.	Not on my Watch Programme and Training records	'Not on my Watch' was an initiative designed by Leah Smith, who was at that time a Crew Manager. Since its inception in 2021/22, more than 203 delegates from the service have completed the training and it remains a highly popular programme. Similar programmes appear to have been developed in other fire services in the UK however it important to note that NOMW originated in Dorset and Wiltshire and is being promulgated throughout the service.	Recommendation met

	It is also recommended that the programme should be externally validated and evaluated to test its effectiveness			
21	The Service should continue to consider the impact of its maternity and menopause procedures and processes and ensure that they are as inclusive and supportive as possible. The most vital element of this recommendation is for policies and procedures in this area being understood, fully supported and applied consistently and empathetically by all managers	Updated Maternity Procedure	<p>A review of maternity arrangements was undertaken at national level and this, alongside work conducted locally, has resulted in a new maternity policy and procedure with increased paid maternity leave. Paternity leave has been increased to two weeks' paid leave.</p> <p>Access to resources on the menopause is available through Connect and discussions are now taking place through training and via the staff networks about how to help people through life events such as menopause, baby loss and maternity.</p>	Recommendation met
22	Dealing with pregnancy, maternity leave and the menopause should be key features in the new EDI training programme.	Leadership in Lifesaving Management in Lifesaving	There has clearly been a large amount of work undertaken in this space, led by the EDI team and supported by the staff networks. All these resources are well signposted through ' Connect '.	Recommendation met
24	The Service should implement <u>formal</u>	Strive, Drive, Thrive programme	The EDI manager and her team have taken the lead in developing a range of products, including ' Safe	Recommendation met

	<p>mandatory face-to-face training on EDI to show the SLT's commitment to changing the culture and ensure that it aligns to the Service's Code of Ethics. This training should be to all members of the Service, training records should be completed to show training completion. The training should be rank and role specific and include challenging inappropriate behaviours, understanding positive action and dealing with specific issues, such as neurodiversity, menopause, racial and cultural awareness and sexism and misogyny. This training must also incorporate key elements, such as victim-blaming, bystanding and tackling difficult conversations</p>	<p>EDI Cross Matrix Document Sparking Conversations packs</p>	<p>to' and 'Drive, Strive, Thrive'. The Safe to portal was widely used as an example of the service's endeavour to create a safer psychological space for people. There is consistency of language across the suite of resources giving an opportunity to reinforce key messages. There is an EDI cross-matrix document that links the various products.</p>	
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BARRIERS THAT PREVENT THE REPORTING OF ISSUES

No.	Recommendation	Documents Reviewed	Commentary	Assessment
5	Continue an ongoing and regular engagement programme to provide visibility of and accessibility to the SLT. The Service needs to articulate properly the responsibility of each leader for visibility. This will include all leadership grades that have responsibility for staff at numerous locations.		<p>It is evident that the CFO is a visible leader and has set out his stall from the outset. He regularly demonstrates commitment to changing the culture and espouses the standards and behaviours in his day-to-day presence. SLT members describe being part of a cohesive and collegiate team. They describe the CFO as an inclusive leader who is driving the culture change. This is exemplified by the appointment of two new ACFOs through an open and transparent selection process which was observed by members of staff associations. The subsequent streamlining of the SLT is a further example of their attempt to be more accessible.</p> <p>The SLT network champions are described as supportive and inspirational, and the staff network leads feel that they can pursue initiatives and ideas with their respective champion's support. There is more visibility of senior leaders on station, however capacity remains a challenge. Given some of the concerns raised about disengagement at middle manager.</p>	Recommendation met

25	<p>Whilst it is inevitable that there will be temporary promotions, on each occasion the incoming manager should be fully briefed and have continual mentoring in their role. The Service should review the number of temporary promotions to provide stability and ensure visible leadership across stations. This may mean that if someone is given a temporary promotion after due process, they are not swapped for another temporary promotion</p>	<p>Temporary Promotion procedure Role guides</p>	<p>The revised temporary promotion procedure outlines the method by which all temporary promotions should be managed. Adherence to this procedure should ensure compliance with equality legislation and fairness.</p> <p>All operational staff now have 'Role Guides' that outline their roles and responsibilities and provide standards of behaviour and performance. These are available on 'Connect' and are easy to navigate and useful for supervisors and managers. All role guides link to the Code of Ethics.</p>	<p>Recommendation met</p>
26	<p>Develop a coaching programme to support senior leaders and managers of the Service in generating cultural change, in line with many modern, progressive organisations.</p>	<p>Colourworks 360 SLT Development Day Programme</p>	<p>The Colourworks programme is a good foundation to identify strengths, preferences and diversity in a team environment. 360 is also a useful tool however all of these should be considered within a broader context of leadership development and mentoring/coaching at all levels.</p> <p>A comprehensive leadership development and mentoring/coaching programme can deliver both individual and organisational benefits. The individual benefits include enhanced self-</p>	<p>Partially met</p>

			<p>awareness and emotional intelligence, improved strategic thinking and decision-making, stronger executive presence and an ability to influence. Organisational benefits include improved leadership performance and team engagement, a stronger leadership pipeline, a more empowered workforce and result in a positive culture shift.</p>	
27	<p>Strengthen leadership development, with particular focus on supervisory and middle managers. The organisation should, through training records, know who has received appropriate by rank and role, leadership training. This will not be functional training on the technicalities on rank and role such as equipment use or incident command. There is a need for high quality leadership training with the golden thread of equality, diversity and inclusion running through it.</p>	<p>Leadership In Lifesaving Management in Lifesaving</p>	<p>There is evidence of some investment in leadership development however interviewees describe this as a ‘work in progress’ due to capacity and resources. Financial challenges have resulted in an inevitable need for the service to prioritise its activity, however there is a clear commitment from the SLT in providing a comprehensive programme of development and mentoring/coaching to all leadership levels (see previous commentary).</p> <p>A new Management in Lifesaving course has been developed, and its delivery has been met with positive feedback.</p> <p>The new temporary promotion procedure clearly aligns leadership pathways to performance however capacity to provide access to the training may stymie progression. Therefore, a programme that provides a suite of development activity that is both accessible and flexible to meet the needs of the organisation.</p>	<p>Partially met</p>

ROBUSTNESS OF FORMER DISCIPLINARY ACTION

No.	Recommendation	Documents Reviewed	Commentary	Assessment
9	The review team strongly encourages DWFRS to find an appropriate way to provide greater levels of transparency regarding the outcome of processes. This will help to provide ‘closure’ and support for all victims. This is a matter for DWFRS to continue to raise at a national level with the Home Office, HMICFRS and the NFCC	Update Discipline Procedure Culture Dashboard Performance Management Data	<p>The Culture Dashboard presents a detailed overview of progress against the key deliverables outlined in the Culture Action Plan. This is an excellent resource that is updated monthly and assessable to all staff.</p> <p>Scrutiny of progress against the Culture Action Plan is undertaken by the Fire Authority’s Finance and Audit Committee on a six-monthly basis.</p>	Recommendation met
12	Provide regular updates to those involved in HR-related investigations to ensure transparency and to help build trust and confidence.	Updated Disciplinary Procedure	<p>The introduction of the Professional Standards team and the Compliance and Investigation team are a massive step forward for the service as they provide consistency of approach to investigations, and a central point of contact for those involved managing staff through performance or discipline processes.</p> <p>The Culture Dashboard is accessible to all staff through ‘Connect’. It provides a comprehensive overview of key organisational metrics, including</p>	Recommendation met

			disciplinary and grievance information, and workforce diversity statistics.	
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