

Our Plan for Building a Better Workplace



Our Culture Vision Statement

We are proud of being part of our fire and rescue service. We recognise, respect and celebrate the contribution everyone makes across all roles and teams. Everyone works in a safe environment where they feel supported, welcomed and able to thrive. Values-based leadership and good teamwork are clear to see throughout the Service. Everyone is empowered within their role to use professional judgement, make appropriate decisions and contribute to improvement. If things go wrong, we learn and improve. Our leaders at every level are accountable and manage performance and behaviour with everyone feeling a strong sense of belonging.

Introduction

Our first Culture Action Plan marked a significant step in shaping the culture of DWFRS and strengthening how we work for our communities and with each other. Through collective effort, shared commitment, growing leadership confidence and honest reflection, we have made tangible progress in embedding the principles of the Fire and Rescue Service Code of Ethics — putting the public first, acting with integrity, treating people with dignity and respect, and demonstrating inclusive, values-led leadership.

Lessons Learned from Delivery

We have also taken clear lessons from delivering our first plan. In particular, we learned the importance of aligning ambition with capacity by recognising resource constraints and existing workloads, setting realistic timescales that allow quality to be built in, and maintaining tight scope control to avoid duplication as work develops. We also saw how essential strong cross-departmental collaboration and early stakeholder engagement are to successful delivery, alongside clear and consistent communication so staff understand the role of the Culture Development Committee and how improvements are being progressed. These lessons have shaped this Action Plan, strengthening our approach to planning, governance and engagement so that change is sustainable and owned across the Service.

Why Culture Requires Ongoing Focus

However, culture is not something that can be “completed”. It must be continually nurtured, challenged and refreshed to remain meaningful and effective. While we are proud of what has been achieved, we recognise that there is always more to do. Expectations continue to evolve, our communities’ needs change, and we must keep learning as an organisation if we are to remain effective, inclusive and resilient so we can ensure our culture consistently supports high standards of service, accountability and trust.

Strengthening What Is Already in Place

This Action Plan builds on the strong foundations already in place. It focuses on embedding and strengthening the work we have already undertaken, so that positive behaviours, ways of working and standards become consistently lived across the organisation so that the behaviours and standards set out in the Code of Ethics are consistently understood, evidenced and lived at all levels of the Service.

Our Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Above all, this plan reflects our commitment to continuous improvement. It sets out how we will listen, learn and act — using insight, data and evidence to reinforce ethical behaviour, inclusive practice and effective leadership to drive sustained positive change. By doing so, we aim to create a workplace where people feel valued, supported and empowered, and where our culture continues to enable us to serve our communities with professionalism, integrity and pride.

Governance, Accountability and Oversight

This plan is owned by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), with named lead roles identified so accountability remains clear. Progress will be monitored through our existing governance and performance management arrangements, including highlight reports to Culture Development Committee (CDC) reporting, monthly SLT reviews and through our performance reports to the Finance and Audit Committee.

Managing Delivery Realistically and Supportively

Recognising current workloads, action owners will be empowered to manage the delivery of this two-year plan within their own workplans to ensure they are able to prioritise their work accordingly. Where an action owner is responsible for several actions, these will be sequenced into manageable phases, so they can be reviewed regularly, and evaluated where appropriate before further sequenced actions are progressed.

Action owners can provide a high level 'status' position (on track/slipping/not started) with more detailed with a more detailed update provided within our existing performance management arrangements. Updates will focus on evidence, impact, risk, workload and any decisions required to keep delivery on track. This ensures that the success measures contained within the plan can be achieved and action owners supported in their delivery.

Making the Plan Accessible to our staff

To make the plan easily accessible for all staff, it will be signposted from the Connect home page. Key related documents and resources, including the Code of Ethics, Staff Code of Conduct, Competency Framework, dashboards and relevant delivery plans, will be signposted from the same place wherever possible.

Putting our communities first

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



Area	Outcome	Actions	Success Measures	SLT Lead	Lead Officer	Status
1	Provision is in place to help our communities understand the role of the Fire and Rescue Service. Rich feedback strengthens the services we offer, reaching the people who need us most Grow public trust as DWFRS matures as a Service that, listens, understands and acts on the needs of its communities	(1A) Develop and launch a Community Engagement Framework Staff working with our communities will proactively identify and seek to understand challenges and barriers faced by our communities, especially those underrepresented in our Service.	A Community Engagement Framework exists. Community engagement activity is recorded by relevant staff and teams. This includes data which informs changes that aim to improve the benefits and accessibility of our services to all community groups. A quarterly highlight report is presented to CDC outlining any community learning with recommendations for organisational improvement.	Darren Langdown	Brad Stevens	
		(1B) DWFRS positively communicates organisational changes made as a result of community engagement to break down barriers	A record of social media content engagement exists relating to learning from and engaging with communities Public consultation on CSP Introduction of a new website, which focuses on the needs to DWFRS' communities and adapts, based on their feedback	Vikki Shearing	Emily Cheeseman	

		1(C) Develop a process to capture community and organisational learning from Prevention and Protection activities	A process is in place to capture Prevention and Protection activities where engagement and lessons learnt are recorded to inform future decision-making. Learning is shared through the quarterly highlight report within 1(A) outlining any community learning with recommendations for wider organisational improvement.	Dave Waters	Marc House	
2	Structure is in place in support of our workforce representing the communities we serve More underrepresented groups of people are attracted to apply, are recruited, retained and progress across DWFRS roles, particularly operational roles, where there are higher levels of under representation.	Deliver the actions of the positive action plan to improve attraction, recruitment, retention and progression of underrepresented groups across relevant roles, informed by evidence and workforce data, for example: • Go reach • “Call backs” • Mentoring, Shadowing, Coaching • Bespoke training • Promoting Positive Role Models • Reciprocal mentoring	A Positive Action Plan exists A record of data-informed initiatives exists to attract, recruit, retain and progress underrepresented groups, with the rationale for any recruitment targets clearly explained. Evaluation of positive action initiatives takes place Any new internal corporate recruitment target is clearly defined, evidence-based and supported by an explanation of how it will be achieved and monitored.	Jenny Long	Christine Sharma	
3	Communities and staff are assured that organisational progress is effective	Evaluate the actions it has introduced in the Culture Action Plan, using robust internal assurance processes to ensure that they are effective eg. Welfare Provision Units Project Consider steps needed to fully address any issues that are identified.	A programme of evaluation is captured Recommendations are made and built into future delivery These are communicated internally and externally	Jill McCrae	Nick Sjogren	

Integrity

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



Area	Outcome	Actions	Success Measures	SLT Lead	Lead officer	Status
4	All managers that are promoted, including on a temporary basis, are clearly informed of their role and expectations Support is available for newly promoted staff in managerial roles All managers are empowered to make and be accountable for their decisions	Develop staff group guides (as completed for uniformed roles), to incorporate all management roles e.g. Control, Corporate managing Ops and Ops managing Corporate staff Enforce clear expectations of roles and managerial responsibilities, empowering them with the knowledge, skills and tools required Support managers with understanding their role and how to implement HR processes and procedures	A set of staff group guides exist for all managers Guides include links to tools and frameworks like the Decision-making framework There are records of HRPPs offering direct support and training to all managers	Jenny Long	Sadie Price	
5	Staff are empowered and supported to proactively take control of their workloads	5 (A) Implement the recommendations of the Managing Workloads paper.	The recommendations are monitored and evaluated	All SLT	All HoD	

		5(B) Reviews the following restructures to identify any improvements to workloads and lessons learned : • GM/SM cadre • Compliance and Investigation • HR	Progress reports exist and are shared for wider organisational learning	Darren Langdown Dave Waters Jenny Long	Brad Stevens Neil Tidball Sadie Price/Vicky Read	
		5 (C) Staff Survey responses will monitor how staff feel about workloads.	There is evidence that staff perception on workloads is monitored, analysed and acted on	Jenny Long/ Vikki Shearing	Fliss Williams/ Emily Cheeseman	
6	Process and structure is in place for performance data to drive action and improvement	6 (A) Monitor attendance at Managers Briefing Days and Leadership Development. Non-attendance is tracked so action can be taken.	Feedback from attendees demonstrates learning and engagement. Evidence exists that action is taken due to non-attendance. KPIs show an increase in: % of required Operational Managers attending Managers Briefing Days % of required Operational Managers attending Bitesized Leaders	Vikki Shearing	Emily Cheeseman Fliss Williams	
		6 (B) Develop service-wide dashboard to provide strategic oversight of operational standards and department performance.	Dashboards are launched with data that supports managers to uphold operational standards and team performance KPIs to show continued use: Number of unique viewers per quarter Number of page views per quarter	Vikki Shearing	Mark Woodfield	

7	Provision is in place for clarity on roles, expectations and mechanisms for effective communication and engagement with staff at all levels	Publish a Communication and Engagement strategy and internal communication framework. Implement recommendations from internal communication audit and embed Communication and Engagement strategy.	Communication and Engagement strategy is published. A record of implemented recommendations exists	Vikki Shearing	Emily Cheeseman	
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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.

Area	Outcome	Actions	Success Measures	SLT Lead	Lead Officer	Status
8	Processes exist for underrepresented voices to be heard and acted on to drive improvements for the Service	Formalise arrangements for staff network leads and members Facilitate community and organisational scrutiny of challenges experienced by staff networks, to drive systemic and pragmatic improvement	A procedure and process exists, setting expectations and parameters for staff network leads and members A staff Network highlight report is scrutinised at CDC every quarter and any actions for improvement are recorded and tracked	Jenny Long	Chris Sharma	
9	Service continuation of its commitment to tackle disadvantage and discrimination through strategic partnership.	9 (A) Submit our 3-6 year White Ribbon Action Plan when required and deliver on our commitments within.	The 3–6-year White Ribbon Action Plan exists and is approved by White Ribbon.	Jenny Long	Chris Sharma	
		9 (B) Continue corporate partnerships with Women in The Fire Service, Asian Fire Service and Race Equality Matters – making the most of our membership	There are annual records of our membership and partner benefits are embedded in policy and practice, with regular referral to programmes	Dave Waters	Chris Sharma	

		9 (C) Promote male allyship through staff networks, including support for women and other underrepresented groups.	The Men's Support Network includes allyship as a permanent agenda item, invites positive role models as guest speakers and explores partnerships and approaches that support groups currently underrepresented within the Service.	Ryan Maslen	Sam Pyne	
10	Staff engagement is high suggesting belonging, psychological safety and pride	Organisational progress is regularly communicated in a variety of ways in areas relating to this plan	There is a record of communication and engagement with staff relating to work within this plan including: • Follow up to Culture Development Committee • Weekly Updates • Firewire • Opportunities for staff to submit questions for the Chief Fire Officer blog, where appropriate • CFO Blog • Culture Conversations • Social Media	Vikki Shearing	Emily Cheeseman	

Dignity and Respect



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

Area	Outcomes	Action	Success Measures	SLT Lead	Lead Officer	Status
11	Initiatives are in place to build trust and embed collaboration between teams from different functions and with different contracts	Deliver development days or sessions which include a mix of staff contracts and teams needing to work together	There is a documented programme of delivery Staff feedback demonstrates this has helped to build trust and encourage collaboration	Jenny Long/Vikki Shearing	Ant Bholah/ Felicity Williams/ Emily Cheeseman	
13	Managers are empowered and supported to manage complex issues	Meetings take place intermittently for managers to discuss and share learning from complex managerial experiences, maintaining confidentiality and dignity	There are documented Terms of Reference Agendas and actions are recorded Actions include organisational learning	Darren Langdown Jenny Long	Brad Stevens / Sadie Price/ Sarah King/ Adele Smyth	
14	Support, resources and oversight for emotional and mental health wellbeing is strengthened	Elements of the NFCC health and wellbeing related toolkits are considered and implemented into our existing support mechanisms	A record of gap analysis can be evidenced with any subsequent actions	Jenny Long	Vicky Read	

15	Operational standards are clearly set out. Provision is in place to restore professional pride and operational confidence and competence People are empowered to innovate and deliver new initiatives that support improvements in Service Delivery Operational staff have been shown how Code of Ethics and ED&I principles can be evidenced in operational duties	14(A) Development and delivery of an Operational Competence & Standards Framework. Cross-map Operational Standards with Cultural and ED&I expectations Delivery of on call improvement programme will help deliver these.	Delivery of Operational Competence & Standards Framework, including publication and promotion A framework exists, cross mapping operational standards with cultural and ED&I expectations There is a record of deliverables from the On Call Improvement Programme	Darren Langdown	Brad Stevens/ Sarah King/Ant Bholah/Chris Sharma	
		Implement Ethical Command Implement the High Challenge, High Support coaching approach	An Ethical approach is evident in incident command delivery. The Command Behaviour Assessment criteria is cross mapped with the Code of Ethics to ensure ethical command is considered and applied at operational incidents.	Jenny Long	Ant Bholah	

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.

Area	Outcomes	Action	Success Measures	SLT Lead	Lead Officer	Status
16	Development is in place to empower leaders with tools to enhance self-awareness, emotional intelligence, improved strategic thinking and decision-making, stronger executive presence and an ability to influence. DWFRS benefits from improved leadership performance and team engagement, a stronger leadership pipeline, and a more empowered workforce.	Deliver a programme of Senior Leader coaching	A programme of Senior Leadership coaching can be evidenced % of Senior Leaders who have received coaching	Andy Cole	Jenny Long	
17	Leadership Development initiatives are proven to support managers to carry out their role	Conduct a review of existing culture training and sessions to ensure: • They are effective • They are having a positive effect • They are targeted at the staff that need them the most, or who haven't yet accessed the courses on a voluntary basis. • existing provision is combined where possible Strengthen leadership development to: • focus on supervisory and middle managers	A review exists of culture training sessions and recommendations have been implemented Training records exist of who has received leadership training by rank and role, aside from technical and functional training as part of operational competence.	Jenny Long Vikki Shearing	Ant Bholah/ Fliss Williams Emily Cheeseman	

		• Include smarter working principles to support collaborative working and greater understanding.	Smarter working principles are embedded in leadership delivery including: • Bitesized Leaders • Manager's Engagement Days • Other initiatives where possible			
18	E-Learning supports all staff to effectively carry out their role Staff are able to complete training in a timely manner	Review the quantity and quality of our e-learning	There is a record of implemented recommendations Completion rates/percentages of e-learning and digital resources	Jenny Long	Luke Read	
19	Provision is in place to support teams being well led, managed and supported Provision is in place to support a culture of coaching Our leadership strategy is designed to sit at the centre of how we develop our people.	Establish a clear and shared leadership framework and language across the Service Introduce a 360-degree feedback mechanism to capture lived experience of leadership at all levels Develop and embed revised induction and leadership development pathways aligned to identified needs Create an internal cadre of accredited coaches (ICF Level 3 and 5) to support individual and team development Put in place assurance measures to track impact on leadership behaviours, culture and organisational performance Implement a structured leadership diagnostic to provide a clear, evidence-based understanding of leadership behaviours across the Service. Use this to drive targeted development and organisational improvement.	Evidence of 360 feedback exists from appraisals and development reviews There are records of observation in exercises and incident debriefs There is evidence of increased use of coaching and development conversations Positive inspection feedback (e.g. leadership, culture, learning) KPIS: 360 feedback trends show improvement over time Staff survey results (confidence in leadership, willingness to speak up) Reduction in complaints linked to leadership/management issues	Jenny Long	Ant Bholah	

			Reduction in disciplinaries or formal grievances linked to leadership			
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