

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	PC/23/6
MEETING	PEOPLE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	26 APRIL 2023
SUBJECT OF REPORT	PEOPLE AND CULTURE UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the Committee notes the content of the paper
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The service has been driving its cultural improvements since 2019. In 2021 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) issues the service with a Cause of Concern for its culture, and specifically for how staff treat one another. The Executive Board has developed an action plan and provides the strategic leadership and drive through the DCFO. Several actions have been complete or are on track for completion. Our cultural improvements and plan are also measured against the outcomes of national recommendations, such as the LFB independent cultural review, the Met Police cultural review and the spotlight report published by the HMICFRS. The service continues to drive the improvements through staff engagement and the delivery of initiatives and training.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Considered within the Action Plan where appropriate.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	Considered within the Action Plan where appropriate.
APPENDICES	None
BACKGROUND PAPERS	HMICFRS Report – Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Since 2019, the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (the Service) has had a focus on driving cultural improvements following an area for improvement highlighted by the 2019 (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report. In 2021, the HMICFRS issues the Service with a Cause of Concern for its culture, and specifically for how staff treat one another. The Executive Board has developed an action plan and provides the strategic leadership and drive through the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO). A number of actions have been complete or are on track for completion. The Service's cultural improvements and plan are also measured against the outcomes of national recommendations, such as the London Fire Brigade (LFB) independent cultural review, the Metropolitan Police cultural review and the spotlight report published by the HMICFRS. The service continues to drive the improvements through staff engagement and the delivery of initiatives and training.
- 1.2. The paper below has been written to show the progress made and the continued focus on cultural improvement by the Executive Board.

2. PROGRESS ON IMPROVING CULTURE SINCE 2019

- 2.1 In 2019, the Government Equality Office released guidance aiming to reduce the gender pay gap, again highlighting the importance of creating an inclusive culture and supporting women's careers and progression for part time workers.
- 2.2 Within the above guidance, recommendations were made to facilitate a sponsorship programme for women. The Service initiated a collaboration with Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, Dorset Constabulary and Devon County Council to facilitate implementation of a sponsorship programme, 'Our Time', originating from Greater London Authority with the aim to remove barriers to increasing diversity and inclusivity in our workforce particularly in relation to progression for female staff. The first cohort of women participating in the programme began their 12-month sponsorship in June 2020, with the second starting in September 2022.
- 2.3 Evaluation of the first cohort demonstrated that the women who took part found it valuable, and three of the cohort have since been promoted. The Service will continue to evaluate and review the model to ensure that those who take part do not have any barriers to participation, can continue their development after finishing the programme and support the development of others.
- 2.4 Other initiatives in relation to progression include Action Learning Sets, undertaken in collaboration with various regional emergency service partners.

- 2.5 Since 2019, the Service has been a member of the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (ENEI), which is a leading employer network covering all aspects of equality and inclusion in the workplace. They provide guidance, support around developing policies and facilitate benchmarking through an assessment called TIDE. This assessment measures an organisation's approach and progress on diversity and inclusion (D&I) in areas like Strategy, Leadership, Recruitment Training, Communication and Procurement.
- 2.6 In 2018/19, the Service completed the assessment for the first time and received a Bronze Award. In the year 2019/20, the Service received a Silver Award, which was maintained for 2022/23.
- 2.7 In December 2020, the Service introduced the intervention programme 'Safe To'. The intervention aims to foster organisation-wide psychological safety so our people feel included, safe to learn, safe to contribute, and safe to challenge.
- 2.8 This work also supports the Service in developing an engaged safety culture, improving behaviours around health and safety in the workplace.
- 2.9 The Service has also developed a toolkit, the Respect and Fairness Toolkit (RAFT), to provide staff with options and resources needed to deal with experiencing, witnessing or managing unwanted behaviour.
- 2.10 The Diversity & Inclusion policy has been published and implementation has commenced. The purpose of this policy is to ensure we promote an environment and culture that is consistent with our values and code of ethics, where individuals are valued and treated with respect and fairness.
- 2.11 The implementation of the Core Code of Ethics is continuing to feature in reviews of policies, procedures and training in line with the gap analysis undertaken. 'Leading Conversation' sessions for middle and senior management have raised awareness of the Core Code of ethics and training at On Call Watch Manager meetings is being undertaken on a face-to-face basis, bringing together the concepts of Safe To, acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, and introducing the Core Code of Ethics.

3. PROGRESS AGAINST THE CAUSE OF CONCERN

3.1. In July 2022, HMICFRS published the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) 2021 inspection report. The report included a Cause of Concern in relation to values and behaviours.

3.2. The Cause of Concern is as follows:

The service has shown a clear intent from the executive board to improve the culture of the service. However, more needs to be done throughout the organisation. We have found evidence of poor behaviours that are not in line with service values. Some staff didn't have the confidence to report these issues. By 31st August 2022, the service should develop an action plan to:

- Make sure that its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation.; and
- Make sure that staff are trained and supported to identify and challenge inappropriate behaviour when identified and that they have clear mechanisms in place to raise their concerns.

- 3.3. 23 actions were established to address the Cause of Concern, Progress against these actions is detailed below.
- 3.4. Two new eLearning packages on Diversity and Inclusion, one for all staff and one for managers, have been completed by 96% of the workforce (as at 12 April 2023). This is now a required annual assessment and a core skill on the competency dashboard.
- 3.5. The Service is in the process of delivering a new training presentation on values, behaviours and ethics through senior and middle managers. As at 13/04/2023, 90% of staff had undertaken this training. There has already been great feedback about the training from teams across the Service. In addition to this, work continues around 'Safe To', ensuring individuals feel safe to learn, contribute and challenge, and the 'It's ok, it's not ok' campaign which outlines appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- 3.6. All inappropriate material has been removed from Service premises. Managers continue to monitor workplaces to ensure that no new inappropriate material is introduced.
- 3.7. Mandatory questions on bullying, harassment and discrimination have been added to PPDs which are now being completed through a new PPD form, introduced on 10 March 2023.
- 3.8. The Service has agreed to develop three expectations charters; a trainee/ trainer charter, a customer service charter (external) and an internal charter for staff. The trainee/ trainer charter and the customer service charters are in development and currently both out for consultation and review. Work has started on developing the internal charter through work with the Service's Cultural Leads.
- 3.9. A presentation and input on expected behaviours, role modelling, values and ethics was delivered to managers (Station Manager/Grade 7 and above) at leading conversations events on 3 November 2022, 10 November 2022 and 28 November 2022. 138 individuals attended one of these events out of a possible 208 members of eligible staff. After the events, the presentations were made available via Yammer for those unable to attend.
- 3.10. New optional performance and conflict training for managers has been made available via the eLearning portal.

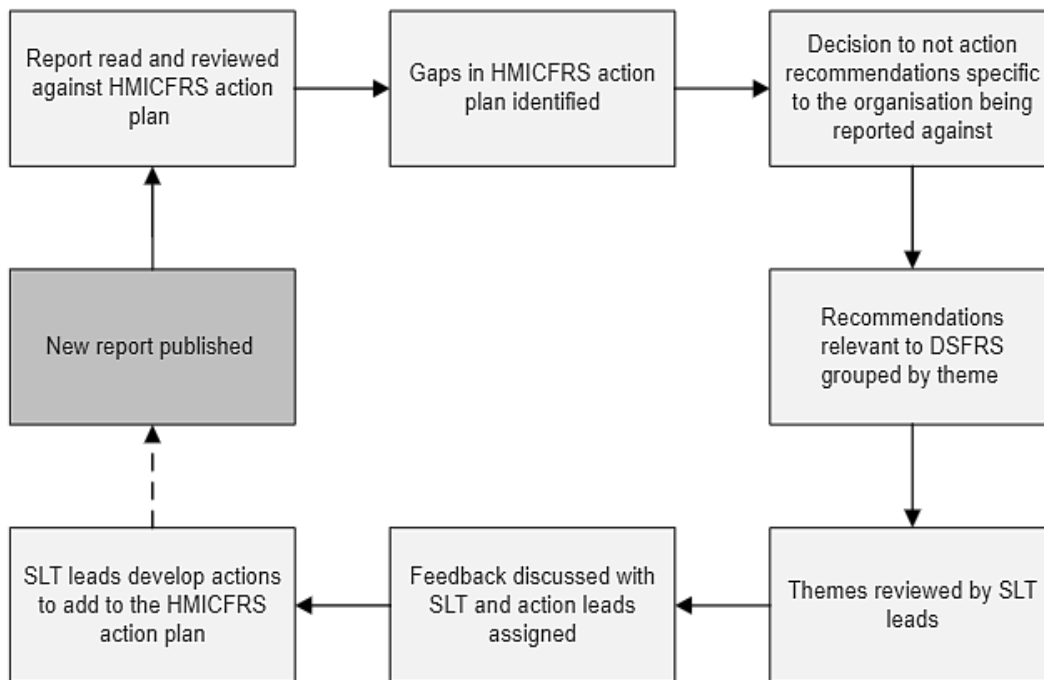
- 3.11. The first communication to the workforce on concluded disciplinaries was published in the Chief Fire Officer's blog on 24 February 2023. These are expected to be published on a monthly basis. A report has been produced for EB on grievance and disciplinary cases to include type of case, speed of completion and outcome.
- 3.12. All standard DSFRS presentation templates now have a slide on values, expected behaviours and ethics.
- 3.13. A confidential reporting line has been established where individuals can raise concerns directly to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. The confidential reporting line was launched on 01/02/2023 in a blog by the Chief Fire Officer (CFO). The reporting line is open to all members of staff and involves leaving a message via voicemail. In the blog, the Chief also outlined that the Service are also welcoming feedback on concerns via email or post. The Respect and Fairness Toolkit was also linked.
- 3.14. The Executive Board has now approved the plans to implement a 'Freedom to Speak Up Guardian' in Service as part of an existing role. A working group was established to develop the initial concept, and progress continues through work with the Organisational Development department.
- 3.15. An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Commission has been established, which includes representation from representative bodies, staff support groups and service leaders. The commissions aims to ensure there is collective ownership and coordinated action towards addressing diversity and inclusion challenges, both within the Service and with the communities we serve.
- 3.16. Questions on culture and ethics are now included in the recruitment and selection processes.
- 3.17. A working group has been created to revise our onboarding and induction process for all staff, specifically but not solely, to include the setting of expectations of behaviour, values and ethics.
- 3.18. A number of other services were identified as doing well in the people pillar. As a result of this, internal HMI Team facilitated meetings between Merseyside, Oxfordshire and Lancashire and DSFRS. These meetings included discussion around leadership training, staff networks, staff engagement and feedback, positive action and mental health and wellbeing.

4. LEARNING FROM OTHER SERVICES

- 4.1. As a service, it is important to consider learning from other organisations and how this may link to improvements internally. Over the past couple of months, the HMI Team have undertaken a review of the recommendations outlined in the London Fire Brigade Independent Culture Review, the Met Police Culture Review and the HMICFRS report on Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services.

4.2. The methodology for reviewing these reports is outlined in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1 – Methodology for Reviewing Learning from Other Services



4.3. The review of these reports has been undertaken using the same process for each. The report is reviewed by the HMI Team against current actions in the Service’s HMICFRS action plan and any gaps are identified. Recommendations from the report are considered in relation to relevance to the Service with a decision not to action recommendations specific to the organisation being reported against, or in the case of the HMICFRS culture review, those which are for national level action. Recommendations relevant to DSFRS are the grouped by theme and reviewed by SLT. Feedback from SLT is discussed and action leads assigned. It is the responsibility of these leads to then develop actions to add to the HMICFRS action plan, either under existing improvement areas or under the new improvement area that the Service has created, ‘Learning from Other Services’.

5. **HMICFRS REPORT – VALUES AND CULTURE IN FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES**

5.1. On Friday 31 March 2023, HMICFRS published a report into the values and culture in fire and rescue services. The report contains 35 recommendations, 1 specific for the police, 16 which require action at a national level and 18 which are specific for fire and rescue services.

5.2. Table 1 overleaf outlines the 18 recommendations which are specific to fire and rescue services.

Recommendation	Details
1: Confidential Reporting	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes.
3: Support for individuals raising concerns	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review the support available for those who have raised concerns and take any action needed to make sure these provisions are suitable.
4: Handling of raised concerns	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should assure themselves that updates on how concerns are being handled are shared with those who have raised them. The updates should be given in an accessible way that encourages trust and confidence in the service response. Consideration should be given to creating a professional standards function to handle conduct concerns in service (or from an external service) to have oversight of cases, to make sure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way and to act as a point of contact for all staff involved.
5: How to raise concerns (staff and public)	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure they provide accessible information for all staff and members of the public on how they can raise concerns and access confidential support (including through external agencies). Chief fire officers should also make sure accessible information is provided on how concerns and allegations will be investigated in a way that ensures confidentiality and is independent of the alleged perpetrator.
9: Background Checks	<p>By 1 January 2024, chief fire officers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately review their current background checks arrangements, and make sure that suitable and sufficient background checks are in place to safeguard their staff and communities they serve; and • Make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing, new staff, and volunteers, according to their roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board.
14: Misconduct Allegations standard	By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on misconduct allegations and outcomes handling.

Recommendation	Details
17: Allegations of staff gross misconduct	<p>With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in FRSs; • Are of a serious nature; or • Relate to assistant chief fire officers or those at equivalent or higher grades.
18: Support during ongoing investigations	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations.
20: Fire Standards	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should have plans in place to ensure they meet the Fire Standards Board's leading the service standard and its leading and developing people standard.
21: 360 Feedback (ACFO and above)	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all senior leaders and managers (assistant chief fire officer equivalent and above) in service.
22: 360 Feedback (all managers)	<p>By 1 September 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports.</p>
23: Feedback from staff	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should seek regular feedback from staff about values, culture, fairness and diversity, with due regard to the leading and developing people standard. They should show how they act on this feedback.
24: Monitoring and Evaluating Feedback	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should put plans in place to monitor, including through the gathering and analysis of staff feedback, watch and team cultures and provide prompt remedial action for any issues they identify.
27: Equality Impact Assessments	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their equality impact assessments are fit for purpose and, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality impact assessment toolkit.

Recommendation	Details
28: Equality and Diversity Data	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review how they gather and use equality and diversity data to improve their understanding of their staff demographics, including applying and meeting the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality, diversity and inclusion data toolkit.
32: Diversity in succession planning	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should, as a priority, specify in succession plans how they intend to improve diversity across all levels of the service. This should include offering increased direct-entry opportunities.
33: Progression of non-operational staff	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should develop plans to promote progression paths for existing staff in non-operational roles and put plans in place to reduce any inequalities of opportunity.
34: Code of Ethics	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should review their implementation of the Core Code of Ethics and make sure it is being applied across their services.

- 5.3. The HMI Team have reviewed these recommendations against the current HMICFRS action plan to identify areas which are already captured within existing actions and where additional actions may need to be undertaken in order to address the recommendation. This analysis also considered existing actions with target completion dates that needed to be moved to meet the new deadlines outlined.
- 5.4. Figure 2 overleaf outlines this analysis. Recommendations highlighted in green are linked to an existing Area for Improvement (AFI) and on-track for the completion deadline outlined within the recommendation, orange is the recommendation links to an existing AFI but the target completion date needs to be moved to align with the completion deadline, and red is no current link to an AFI. It is important to note that recommendations are shown as red solely based on whether or not they link to a current AFI being tracked through the HMICFRS action tracker. This does not suggest that there is no work going on to achieve them.

Figure 2 – Analysis of Recommendations against HMICFRS Action Plan

Recommendation 1 Confidential Reporting	Recommendation 3 Support for individuals raising concerns	Recommendation 4 Handling of raised concerns
Recommendation 5 How to raise concerns (staff and public)	Recommendation 9 Background Checks	Recommendation 14 Misconduct Allegations standard
Recommendation 17 Allegations of staff gross misconduct	Recommendation 18 Support during ongoing investigations	Recommendation 20 Fire Standards
Recommendation 21 360 Feedback (ACFO and above)	Recommendation 22 360 Feedback (all managers)	Recommendation 23 Feedback from staff
Recommendation 24 Monitoring and Evaluating Feedback	Recommendation 27 Equality Impact Assessments	Recommendation 28 Equality and Diversity Data
Recommendation 32 Diversity in succession planning	Recommendation 33 Progression of non-operational staff	Recommendation 34 Core Code of Ethics

- 5.5. Service Leadership Team (SLT) Leads have been assigned responsibility for each recommendation and meetings are being held to discuss the additional actions required.
- 5.6. The actions will be reviewed and discussed, including any identified barriers to completion, at a full SLT meeting on Wednesday 19 April 2023.
- 5.7. Updates will be provided to the HMI Team and uploaded to the same software used to manage the HMICFRS action tracker (SharpCloud). The tracking and management of actions against these recommendations will also follow the same governance process as the HMICFRS action plan, coordinated centrally by the HMI Team.

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