

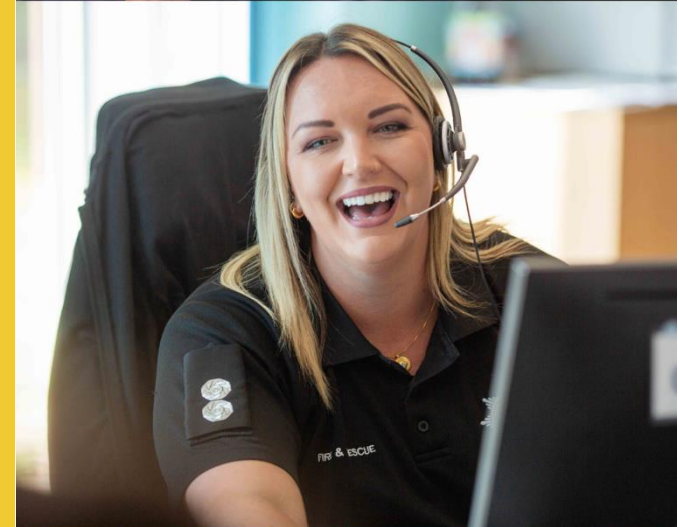


DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

APPENDIX C TO REPORT PC/24/9

People Strategy

2024 – 2027



Introduction

This strategy has been developed with involvement from our staff, including focus groups attended by a broad cross-section of our workforce and engagement with leadership teams. This told us what was good about the previous strategy and where we want to put our focus going forward. Building on the staff involvement, and following the feedback from the consultation, this strategy has evolved further. It has also been informed by feedback from our People Survey and other routes where you have told us what is important to you. It incorporates existing and planned areas of focus designed to support a capable, happy and healthy workforce.

We know that colleagues want to feel included, feel safe to learn, safe to contribute and safe to challenge, and to know that they can make a difference and are growing within our organisation. While we continually work to improve our Service we need to make sure that we put people at the heart of any change and improvement that we do. We want to ensure that where there are difficult changes to be made that they experience a fair and considerate process.

This strategy gives us a narrative in terms of where we want to be, how we can get there, what people will see, how they will feel and the behaviours they will exhibit and promote. This strategy will be underpinned by theme roadmaps and key action plans to detail the tasks and actions to drive progress forward.

The People Strategy enables us to set out what it will be like to work here and how we will treat one another. It gives our overall direction in defining how we will ensure that our staff are able to safely perform at their best, to deliver on our Service objectives and achieve our vision.

Our purpose

We are here to protect and save.

We work every day with our communities and partners to prevent emergencies, to make people safer in their homes, their places of work and where they visit. However, emergencies do happen and when they do, we will respond as quickly as possible in order to help people and save lives.

Our vision

Together we will work to end preventable fire and rescue emergencies, creating a safer world for you and your family.

We will do this by:

- involving communities and colleagues in designing our services
- innovating, using new technologies and approaches to reduce or remove risk
- influencing behaviour, design and legislation, to make living and working environments safer.

Our Values

These values should be at the heart of everything we do, decision making, leadership, designing new ways of working, recruitment, induction, development and progression.

- We are proud to help.
- We are honest.
- We are respectful.
- We are working together



Code of ethics

The code of ethics has been set out by the National Fire Chiefs Council and applies to all fire and rescue services.

With our values in mind we will always:

- put the interests of the public, the community, and service users first
- act with integrity including being open, honest, and consistent in everything that we do
- treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias be positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership. And be accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards
- recognise and promote the value of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, both within the Service and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.



Our culture

How we interact with each other daily is driven by our values, which are designed by our colleagues, and underpinned by the NFCC Core Code of Ethics.

We want a culture that's engaged and where everyone feels included, safe to challenge, safe to contribute and safe to learn from the good and bad things that happen during the course of our work .

We continue to work towards Nationally recognised frameworks including the Fire Standards published by the Fire Standards Board, NFCC Leadership Framework, Culture Action Plan and Code of Ethics as well as our own Service plans including our Target Operating Model always ensuring relevance to each of our priorities.

We will continue to work together to nurture an environment where we all feel worthy and can thrive and succeed.

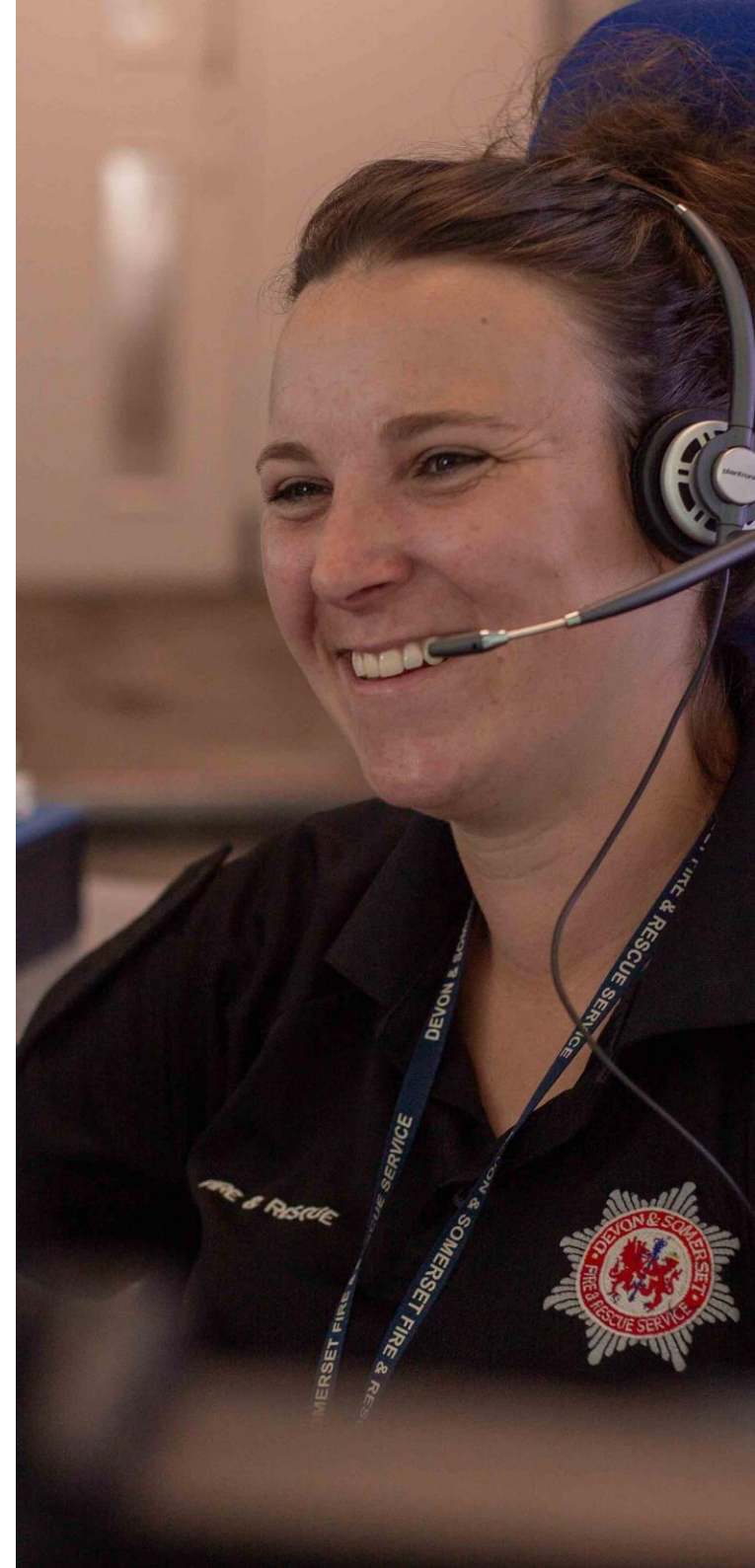


Our strategic people priority

Strategic Priority for People

The Service is recognised as a great place to work. Our staff feel valued, supported, safe and well trained to deliver a high performing fire and rescue service. Specifically, we will:

- a) Ensure that the workforce is highly trained and has the capability and capacity to deliver services professionally, safely and effectively.
- b) Increase the diversity of the workforce to better reflect the communities we serve, promoting inclusion and developing strong and effective leaders who ensure that we have a fair place to work where our organisational values are a lived experience.
- c) Recognise and maximise the value of all employees, particularly the commitment of on-call firefighters, improving recruitment and retention.



What have we done since the previous strategy?

The 2018-2022 People Strategy set out the principles to meet our Service Vision and Priorities and has enabled progress and change in many areas. During the lifecycle we have faced many substantial challenges, including a worldwide pandemic and financial impacts. However, work to continually improve has endured and we continue to adapt to changing landscapes to meet our future vision.

There have been several significant improvements which have been specifically driven by the last strategy.

“We want to collectively create and maintain a safe and healthy environment, where we are growing and embedding our health and safety culture. This is not only referring to our physical health and safety, but also our mental health and social wellbeing.”

Some notable areas of work that have been achieved are:

- We have focussed on the fitness and wellbeing of our staff, improving access to wellbeing interventions, fitness sessions, programs and testing.
- We have enabled access to personal and professional development through coaching, mentoring and a broad range of apprenticeship options for all staff.
- We recognise staff contribution and achievements through our rewards and benefits, including the People Awards and employee assistance program.

- We have introduced additional routes for staff to raise concerns to support staff to feel safe to contribute and challenge.
- We have reviewed and updated multiple policies that support people including a new alcohol and substance misuse procedure.
- We have streamlined recruitment, promotion and progression with new Leadership Potential Skill Build sessions, early access to development and Managers Skills Builds.
- We have developed the Safe To concept to support our staff to feel included, safe to learn, safe to contribute and safe to challenge.
- We have improved our technology hardware and software to support the working environment such as the introduction of MS365 and iTrent employee portal.
- We have introduced our People Impact Assessment process to ensure people are considered at every stage during change, new policies or projects.
- We have been proactive in our approach in the national contaminants project, keeping our staff and community safe and healthy.



People Strategy 2024

Our people strategy is made up of five key pillars that together will enable us to ensure the Service is a great place to work. Our pillars are:

**A safe and
healthy
environment**



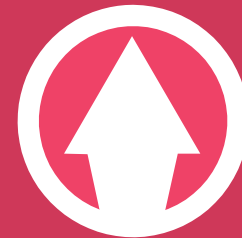
**An inclusive
environment**



**An engaged
and
collaborative
workforce**



**Inspiring
leadership**



**A high
performing
workforce**





A safe and healthy environment

We want to ensure that the environment in which we all work is safe and healthy, and that the Service is a great place to work. Our focus areas include growing health and safety practices, embedding health considerations into projects, ensuring clear fitness policies, promoting fitness through sports and nutrition, supporting employees through change, encouraging mental health awareness, normalising mental health conversations, providing mental health training, increasing access to support services, boosting near miss reporting, supporting staff after challenging incidents, ensuring cyber and physical security.



We will continue to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment by:

- Prioritising the health and safety of staff through comprehensive training, equipment maintenance, and adherence to safety protocols.
- Creating a psychologically safe environment where staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to raise concerns about behaviour, and health and safety. Encouraging reporting of all safety concerns, ensuring events are followed up and outcomes and learning are shared.
- Encouraging managers to proactively support the wellbeing and attendance of their teams. Supporting them with the training, resources and information to deliver this.
- Ensuring the provision of wellbeing services that are accessible for all employees and these are actively promoted. These services will support and develop the physical, mental and social wellbeing of our staff.
- Maintaining fitness standards through clear and consistent application of the Fitness and Capability Policies and Procedures. Providing support and promoting fitness through activity and nutrition to all staff.
- Enhancing security measures to protect staff, equipment, and facilities from potential threats for now and the future.
- Ensuring that safeguarding is promoted to ensure colleagues are clear this is everyone's responsibility. Working with our partner agencies, and ensuring policies are applied to support staff and communities by providing a confidential, sensitive, and empathetic response to concerns.

These themes focus on creating a supportive and safe environment for all colleagues, promoting wellbeing, and improving communication and training.



An inclusive environment

We continue to develop a workforce that represents our diverse communities at every level where everyone can be themselves and work together, no matter their role or location. We will involve employees in planning, idea generation, and decision-making, to create better solutions using different perspectives and experiences. We will also work closely with our representative bodies and staff networks.



We will continue to create an inclusive environment by:

- Creating a culture where everyone feels valued, included, respected and able to be themselves.
- Educating our people on specific EDI topics to increase awareness and foster inclusivity among all employees.
- Enabling attraction, selection, promotion and retention practices that have diversity and inclusion as a core focus, by:
 - introducing more robust and innovative positive action practices
 - identifying, understanding and removing barriers to recruitment, promotion, and between staff groups
 - removing bias from all areas of the employee life cycle
 - make better use of development opportunities – such as apprenticeships and high potential schemes, and ensure they are accessible to colleagues considering and supporting their development needs.
- Embedding the Equality Risks and Benefits Analysis and People Impact Assessment processes so that all staff understand the benefits and how to use them.
- Continuing to acknowledge and understand varying cultural conditions across the Service and work together to improve these where necessary.
- Engaging colleagues in the development of plans and decision-making processes, ensuring a wide range of perspectives, diverse thoughts and experiences are considered.
- Ensuring transparent communication, that it is prompt and inclusive at all levels of the organisation.

- Continuing to provide resources and support for the diverse needs of our staff and make improvements where we identify challenges.
- Creating and sustaining an EDI Strategy to support and prioritise Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for our staff and community in all that we do.

These themes emphasise the importance of promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of organisational culture, from recruitment and retention to decision-making and communication. They underscore the need for proactive measures to address biases, foster inclusivity, and create a workplace where everyone feels valued and respected.





An engaged and collaborative workforce

We want to enable our people to be active, engaged and energised in the operation of the Service, and to enable individuals to bring their best selves to their role. Our focus areas include flexible on-call contracts, smarter recruitment and succession planning, exploring self-rostered working, increasing flexibility in core hours, introducing performance measures for continuous improvement, simplifying processes through digital transformation, and ensuring accountability through service planning frameworks. We will build a positive culture, improve work/life balance, and enhance the quality of working life.

We will provide more regular forums and mechanisms for engagement, setting out an engagement framework and programme which will set out our intentions, explain the benefits, provide examples of existing initiatives and show how we intend to implement, evaluate and report on our engagement activities.

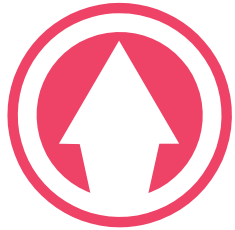
We will work collaboratively towards our vision, recognising and celebrating team successes.



We will continue to enable an engaged and collaborative workforce by:

- Enabling a positive working environment for all our people, being accountable for embracing our core values, and applying policies and procedure fairly and consistently.
- Encouraging a work/life balance through a focus on outcomes, offering flexibility in how and where people work. Ensuring workloads and capabilities are appropriate.
- Setting clear expectations for roles, providing support, feedback, coaching and training for success.
- Recognising and appreciating our people, acknowledging hard work and contributions.
- Encouraging continuous review, improvement, collaboration and engagement to support creativity and innovation.
- Reviewing and improving channels of communication keeping all employees informed about organisational updates, policies, and initiatives. Utilising technology to streamline and enhance communication within the organisation.
- Creating an environment where employees have a sense of belonging and are proud to work for the Service. This will be done through collaboration, understanding of roles, camaraderie, team-building activities and social events at both team and organisational level.
- Utilising our current schemes for recognising and rewarding exceptional performance, bravery, and dedication, whilst looking for new and innovative ways to do this across all sections of the service.
- Ensuring that rewards and incentives are fair and transparent, and that they align with the values, ethics and goals of the organisation.
- Celebrating milestones and achievements to reinforce a culture of appreciation and teamwork.

These themes highlight the importance of flexibility, trust, collaboration, and support in creating a work environment that meets the needs of both individuals and the organisation.



Inspiring leadership

We will create an organisation where our leaders will be accountable for delivering a clear vision, making decisions, and empowering others to drive change and improvement. Our leaders will be approachable, communicate openly and honestly while embodying our values, ensuring everyone is heard. They will role model inclusive leadership styles that value diversity, encourage collaboration, and create psychologically safe environments.

We continually develop leaders at all levels for our future, focusing on effective leadership styles, improving promotion processes, enhancing development programs aligned with the NFCC Leadership Framework. We will recognise those who uphold our values, ensure leadership accountability, promote a culture of continuous improvement, and implement consistent governance and decision-making processes.



We will continue to create inspiring leaders and managers by:

- Encouraging leaders to be transparent about mistakes, embracing feedback, accepting challenges and decisions, and fostering open dialogue within the organisation.
- Provide training programs, mentorship and development to leaders and managers at all levels. Building emotional intelligence and individual resilience to live our values, demonstrate inclusive behaviours, and create a psychological safe space for their team.
- Empowering leaders and colleagues alike to take ownership of their roles, strengthening a culture of shared accountability and autonomy whilst building trust across the whole organisation.
- Setting clear leadership expectations at all levels and maintaining consistency in communication and decision-making, whilst addressing poor behaviours promptly. Role modelling ethical behaviours at all times.
- Holding leaders accountable for their actions, promoting ethical decision-making, and addressing poor behaviours promptly.
- Engaging with all staff through honest communication, recognising achievements, and involving employees in decision-making processes.
- Providing a clear direction for the organisation, tracking progress, and celebrating milestones along the way.
- Recognising the need for leaders to adapt their leadership styles to different situations and challenges, fostering a culture of flexibility and resilience.

These themes highlight the importance of fostering a positive organisational culture, where trust, inclusivity, and continuous improvement are prioritised, and where leaders are accountable, transparent, and committed to the development and wellbeing of their teams.



A high performing workforce

We will create a learning culture which provides consistency and equality of opportunity to allow everyone to achieve their full potential.

We will be innovative and creative in offering various opportunities and career pathways for people to develop and to ensure they have the right skills for their role.

Colleagues will benefit from regular performance conversations and development will be tailored, easy to access and available throughout our careers.



We will continue to create a high performing workforce by:

- Providing ongoing training and development opportunities to ensure that all colleagues are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge. Identifying clear pathways for career growth.
- Establishing partnerships where we can to provide development programs through apprenticeships and other training opportunities.
- Making sure that everybody has access to training and development tailored to individual needs with clear communication about available courses and opportunities.
- Ensuring fair and consistent processes for learning, development and progression.
- Fostering a culture of learning and innovation across all areas of the organisation, with active engagement and support for staff.
- Enabling the capture and sharing of lessons learned in all areas of our work and use these to build a culture where we learn from our mistakes.
- Embedding a Personal Performance and Development (PPD) system and process that enables conversations about performance, progression and setting objectives.
- Creating clear processes, resources and guidance for performance management by way of a person-centred professional approach.
- Ensuring we have robust ways to continually identify, nurture and develop leadership potential through our development centres.
- Ensuring we have processes and pathways to identify, nurture and develop high potential.

- Design and embed clear and consistent standards for all staff across the organisation.
- Adopting and embedding a growth mind-set approach and establish the principles of continuous improvement across our Service.











These themes highlight the importance of investing in staff development, ensuring fairness and inclusivity, and creating a culture where learning is valued and supported for all.



How we will demonstrate and measure our progress

This strategy is important as it involves all of us, no matter what our role in the Service. It's about collectively creating the Service we all want to see, where we all feel proud to serve and excited to come to work and make a difference.

We will measure our progress and be accountable for delivering this strategy through various methods. Our key guiding measures will be:

-  Monitoring our progress against our key performance indicators (KPIs).
-  Feedback from internal forums including outcome of People Survey, Strategic Safety Committee, People Committee, Diversity and Inclusion Commission.
-  Feedback from external forums including inspection outcomes of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspection, Devon Assurance Partnership and other audits.
-  Monitoring colleague concerns through routes such as Speak Up Guardians, confidential reporting lines and HR Business Partners.
-  Delivering the Safeguarding strategy.
-  Providing assurance against the Fire Standards as defined by the Fire Standards Board.
-  Delivering the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and plan.
-  Delivering the Target Operating Model.
-  Achieving the vision of the NFCC Culture action plan.
-  Analysing people data including absence monitoring, recruitment data and equality, diversity and inclusion data.



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