

People Strategy end of year report 23/24

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the achievements that have been made against the People Strategy 2016 – 2020 and presents the new People Strategy for 2021 - 2025.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of the report.

3 Background

The People Strategy 2021 – 2025 provides a framework to support the aims and objectives of the Service as outlined in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The purpose of the Service's People Strategy is to support all that we do to attract, recruit, develop, retain, support and reward our employees and teams to meet our future goals and aspirations.

The Strategy details how the Service intends to achieve this by:

- a. Developing leadership capacity
- b. Organisational development and engagement
- c. Resourcing the service
- d. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- e. Health, wellbeing and fitness
- f. Skills, training and education
- g. New ways of working

To demonstrate how the Service will achieve against these areas, we have four plans that underpin this strategy:

- Workforce and Resourcing Plan
- Organisational Development Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan

Each of the plans reflect the strategic objectives of the People Strategy and detail the work that is being carried out to meet these objectives. The critical success factors outlined in the plans will inform the organisation how well the Service is doing to achieve these objectives over the four-year period.

4 Progress against the existing plans

Developing Leadership Capacity

This subject covers two specific areas ie. Leadership Development and Coaching and Mentoring.

Achievements:

- a) The Service has successfully used the facilities of the NFCC Coaching and Mentoring Portal for two individuals to access external coaching.
- b) There 11 internal mentoring relationships within the Service.
- c) Trained a further 37 managers in Talent management bringing the total to 81.
- d) ILM level 3 and 5 courses Cohort 1 commenced November 2022 and ended June 2023 with 5 SMs (or those that have passed SM CPG) and 2 Green Book managers taking part. Cohort 2 commenced in May 2023 and input ended in December 2023 with 7 SMs / SM CPG passes taking part. Feedback is still positive, and the current trainer has introduced additional learning strategies to aid individual progression through the qualification.
- e) CMI Level 7 to be delivered by Smith-Collins with the inclusion of a personality profile – for GMs – should commence April 2024. Option to undertake the Executive Leadership Programme dependent on aspirations towards a strategic role and capability.
- f) Next ILM Level 3 programme (Cohort 8 with 8 candidates) commences in April 2024 and this will be a mix of both operational and non-operational staff. The Service are currently deciding whether to adopt the NFCC SLDP (which we are currently trialling).
- g) 25 individuals have attended the new in-house Political Awareness sessions, with positive feedback received.
- h) Promotion processes for CM, WM, SM, GM, AM and ACFO were all delivered during 23/24.
- i) Development Officer currently on secondment to the NFCC until March 2024 supporting the creation of Middle Leadership Programme.

- j) The Service has implemented the first stage of the 360 feedback process for SMT members. This is a method of assessment that gathers feedback from several sources including peers, direct reports and senior colleagues.

Organisational Development and engagement

This area covers three specific areas i.e. Workforce Planning, Staff Engagement and Reward and Recognition

Achievements:

- a) Cycle to Work scheme ran from 1/6/23 -14/7/23 – 13 Orders £11,120, Avg Order value £855. Employee Savings £3,566, NIC Savings £1,534. A further window is planned for 3/6/24 – 12/7/24.
- b) Cycle to Work scheme has now been running for 5 years. Since the launch the Service have supported 140 Orders @ £109,039, Avg package £779. SFRS have saved £15,047 in NI contributions. Off-setting 7,878kg carbon i.e. the equivalent of 375 mature trees. Scheme users will have saved £48, 273 in annual travelling costs.
- c) ICT and Performance and Planning structural review was completed with 10 Job roles/ descriptions reviewed using the SFIA (Skills for the Information Age) Framework. All jobs have now been benchmarked and pay uplifted for support staff in line with market values for the roles.
- d) Some staff have been awarded honorariums within the non-uniform section of the workforce to support personal and service areas of development.
- e) Celebration of Success was held on 11 September 2023 – 23 On-call Recruits, 13 Development FFs, 4 Employer Awards and 47 Achievers Awards
- f) Medals Ceremony was held on 2 October 2023 to present 22 Operational Medals (20-year medals), 27 30-year clasps and 5 40-year clasps. This was the first year that 30- and 40-year clasps have been presented since their introduction in 2022.
- g) The new employee reward and benefits website/portal was launched in early 2021.
- h) Continued to maintain strong relationships and to engage effectively with the Trade Unions re. Industrial Action, HMICFRS Culture and Values, Holiday Pay, On-call Leave, CRMP, OSCR, Internal Transfer Process, employee relations matters, new ways of working, positive action and recruitment.
- i) 62 compliments have been received by the Service during 2023 compared to 46 the previous year.

Resourcing the Service

This area covers three specific areas i.e. Recruitment and Attraction, Talent Management and Succession Planning and Widening Participation.

Achievements:

- a) HR launched a new and robust end to end recruitment process in December 2023 called Tribepad which includes a fully managed online application system to streamline and systemise the entire function, thus, reducing time and eliminating paper from the process.
- b) The Recruitment Action Group meeting has been reinvigorated to focus on specific areas for WT Recruitment 2024.
- c) Agreement is now in place with the Unions for Banded Contracts as part of the On-call Sustainability project. Consultation with the workforce has started with individual meetings to follow in due in course.
- d) Work to simplify the On-call IPDR was completed and implemented during late 2023 with a successful completion of all action plans across the board. Work is ongoing now to complete the IPDR self-assessment section.
- e) The Service have provided secondment opportunities for staff in Development, Protection, Ops and externally to the NFCC.
- f) A further 8 support staff roles have been reviewed through the job evaluation scheme.
- g) Successful recruitment of an Admin apprentice, two ICT apprentices and Fire Safety Inspecting Officer apprentice.
- h) Fire Control establishment was increased by 2 FFs and 3, 12-month fixed term contracts to backfill secondments to the replacement Command & Control system project.
- i) Successful recruitment of 3 Volunteers working with Prevention
- j) The Service successfully implemented and recruited 8 individuals through the new Internal Transfer Process allowing On-call FFs to transition across into Wholetime positions.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This area covers two specific areas i.e. EDI and Culture and Values

Achievements:

- a) 31 employees have received the EDI Induction package during 2023, 10 attended the EQIA training and 23 the Dyslexia Awareness training.
- b) A number of Wholetime and On-call Positive Action taster sessions have been held across the Service.
- c) EDI refresher training has been completed for Wholetime watches, prevention & protection teams and the majority of On-call stations.

- d) Currently supporting 37 live Reasonable Adjustment cases, 30 of these for Dyslexia, the Service purchased the licence for Read and Write to be networked and have made this available to all employees.
- e) Voices group work is continuing. Highlights of the groups are that the Service held their first Women's Networking event with prominent women speakers, promoted International Women's Day, the Menopause group has held several Chomp and Chat sessions, Mental Health Chomp and Chat was held on World Mental Health Day both resulted in discussion, advice and information. BAME held their first networking meeting. Several of the reps have attended conferences or courses including the NFCC Menopause Conference, Menopause Champion Training to be qualified Menopause Champions, National LGBT+ Conference. The Voices reps have attended external networking groups such as the National Black Firefighters group, the NFCC Menopause Group and the National Fire Pride group. Several yoga courses were held throughout the year to support health and wellbeing which were open to all employees.
- f) Women's Safety Survey action plan was created further to the Survey.
- g) The Service introduced an external Confidential Reporting line provided by 'Say So' this was launched in May, along with staff briefings which have continued throughout the year.
- h) Further to signing up to the White Ribbon Accreditation a WR Steering Group was created, and an action plan developed and sent to White Ribbon. The Service attended the National White Ribbon Conference and has made connections, shared information with other services and there is now a National White Ribbon Group where all services can share information.
- i) Officers attended the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) Winter Conference, the EDI officer attended SAND (Safe and Ageing No Discrimination) conference, in addition a number of NFCC Lunch and Learn sessions have been attended by Service-wide employees. The Service has also signed the SAND covenant and are developing an action plan as part of this.
- j) Nominated and amongst the finalists for the National Dyslexia Awards 2023 – Supportive Employer Category
- k) The EDI Officer also presented at two LGA Fire Essential Leadership courses during 2023 to share the Service's best practice at Warwick Business School to Fire Authority Members across the country.
- l) 8 attendees at the Fire Services Women's Development programme.

Health, Wellbeing and Fitness

Achievements:

- a) 64 members of staff have been trained by The Fire Fighters Charity in areas including (21) Introduction to Mindfulness, (19) Developing Resilience, (11) Prevention of Musculoskeletal Injuries/injury management and rehab and (8) Nutrition and Healthy Eating. (5) Understanding and managing backpain.

- b) Following the launch of the Serve and Protect Credit Union where staff can now save and borrow with repayment straight from their pay, there are 34 members now saving with scheme. Total savings £23,173 Average savings per member £681. Total of 3 loans issued, £52,900 is on loan to members, with the average loan being £17,633.
- c) To date 48 people have attended the Suicide Prevention training. 17 have attended Suicide Safety Training and 6 people have attended Suicide First Aid and 89 Suicide First Aid Lite.
- d) 72 people have attended a Mental Health First Aid course, with an additional 5 attending the mental health refresher training during 2023. 75 received the Mental Health First Aid Awareness training and an additional 62 attended the Mental Health e-learning Awareness.
- e) An additional 18 people have been trained as TRiM Practitioners providing support for individuals who have experienced traumatic events bringing the total number of TRiM Practitioners in the Service to 45.
- f) Overall, 426 fitness tests were completed during 2023 with 396 individuals receiving a green rating. The remaining 22 were in the Amber and 8 in the red, all of which have received a supportive trainer journey. Positive feedback has been received stating it's been informative and helpful in improving both fitness and mental wellbeing.
- g) The numbers of reported Near Miss incidents have shown a significant increase from 30 in 2022 to 75 in 2023 and we have a substantial drop in personal injuries for 2023 to 17 from 34 in 2022.
- h) 3 trained menopause champions and No's of menopause trained staff remains high at 150 and a further 28 have completed the eLearning menopause awareness package.
- i) 6 individuals attended sighted guide awareness training to support members of the public who have any visual impairment.
- j) 16 people are now fully trained as Family Support Officers amongst both Green and Grey Book staff.
- k) 23 people attended the Financial Wellbeing training.

Skills, Training and Education

This subject covers two specific areas i.e. Statutory and Mandatory Training and Learning and Education

Achievements:

- a) NOG - Products packs continue to be signed off ERDT (Driving) is undertaking a review to align to the new FSB. Incident Command and Competence has been aligned to NOG and signed off. Gap analysis being completed across the range of SIPs/SOPs to align with NOG.
- b) The Service has appointed an XVR developer on a 12-month secondment to assist with developing simulations. XVR continues to be developed with

new product packs (incident types) including Tall Building (High rise). XVR being delivered either remotely or with flexibility on station to support Level 1 (CM/WM) command. L2 command scenarios & assessments are delivered through a range of XVR & Command Unit integration to provide realistic testing.

- c) NOG Middle Managers have been moved on to LEO/TRaCs for all future role map and competency recording.
- d) Secondment opportunities continue within Fire Control department to complete National Operational Guidance work, 2 secondments within the Fire Safety department to assist with the additional funded projects, a GM for the On-call Sustainability project and a GM/AM to complete the Resource Review.

New Ways of Working

This subject covers two specific areas i.e. Managing Change and Organisational Performance Metrics

Achievements

- a) SM (Development) assessing potential alternatives to LEO (Learning Pool) to ensure future functionality, relevant system capacity and administration needs are considered.
- b) Establishment of the workforce (CPI 9a) and demographics (CPI9b) continue to be monitored through the Performance and Risk Group.
- c) Positive engagement with staff and representative bodies continued throughout 2023. Further opportunities to improve the Wholetime shift system were identified. Some of the recommendations for improvement have been implemented for 2024, which included the proposal to amend the operational training delivery model. Several operational training courses are being facilitated whilst staff are on duty with contingency arrangements in place, where necessary, to ensure an operational response is maintained. As a result, staff abstraction rates are reduced maintaining optimum crewing levels. Elements of flexibility within the staffing model remain providing staff with the opportunity to self-roster outside of their standard rota pattern. This provides an improved work and life balance.
- d) Pay negotiations for ~Wholetime staff, support staff and Brigade Managers were agreed and pay awards granted.
- e) Work remains ongoing with the Sargeant and Matthews pensions exercises.
Sargeant – immediate detriment cases are now being processed following the laying of legislation in October 2023, in line with Home Office timelines.
Matthews – On-call firefighters within scope have been asked if they would like to join this second exercise to buy back service, from their start date to

June 2000.

- f) All HMICFRS data collections continue to be submitted in a timely efficient manner.
- g) All support staff working in line with the Home and Hybrid Working Policy, enabling them to work in a more flexible and agile way.
- h) Continue to review and update our digitalised employee benefits and reward package through VIVUP enabling staff to access discounts and purchase items.
- i) Introduced new streamlined and paperless process with Security Watchdog for DBS Vetting and Right to Work processes following the Government amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The above plans are monitored and updated by the HR department on a quarterly basis and the achievements are then reported back through SMT and the Strategy and Resources Committee via an end of year report.

6 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the progress against the new People Strategy for 2021 – 2025.

7 Capacity

The capacity to undertake all of these areas of work is continually reviewed through the People Management meeting. Where growth is required to support areas of work, reports are submitted to the Service Management Team for approval.

8 Collaboration / Partnership Working

There are continued opportunities for us to work in collaboration with other fire services, educational institutions and other emergency services.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct relationship between the People Strategy and equality and diversity. EQIAs have been completed on the People Strategy and associated plans.

10 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

11 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

12 Reputation

The Strategy directly aligns and supports the Service aims and objectives. specifically, Strategic Aims 1 and 5.

13 Appendix

[Appendix - People Strategy 2021 - 2025](#)

14 Background Papers

Workforce and Resourcing Plan
Organisational Development Plan
Health and Wellbeing Plan
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan