



# People Strategy

2021 2025



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## Foreword

The People Strategy sets out how Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service will develop every member of staff throughout their employment.

To achieve this, we will ensure our day to day activities are deliberately developmental, we will be inclusive and diverse and intentionally innovative.

This approach will build on our success and secure the future of the Service by putting culture at the centre of a strategy for improvement, ensuring we continue to contribute to making Shropshire safer. We are fully committed to valuing each member of the Service and want Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service to continue to be a great place to work.

We want our workforce to become more adaptable, flexible, and resilient; developing individual and team skills and capacity to maximise health and wellbeing at work.

It is recognised that the way we lead, manage and behave are fundamental elements of creating the culture within the Service and this is represented within our values and the behaviours set out in the Workplace Charter.

Fire and rescue services are in the middle of significant reform and the pace and depth of change is likely to increase as we move forward.

The People Strategy will help the Service and its staff adapt, evolve and respond to a changing landscape, which can be difficult for all.

So, our people plan and policies, will be guided by the objectives, declarations and critical success factors set out over the following pages.

It is important that the contents of this strategy are communicated to all and employees understand that engagement and feedback is expected in order to inform review and amend policies and procedures as we successfully progress through the strategy.



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## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Vision and Strategic Intent

The quality of our people is the key driver to our success.

At SFRS we strive to create an environment in which our people can grow and develop in their work to deliver an outstanding service to the public and our communities. We operate within a defined set of values and behaviours which drive our business practices.

Our vision 'Making Shropshire Safer' can only be achieved with the appropriate numbers of motivated and skilled staff.

The Services strategic aims are:

- To be able to respond to emergencies in an appropriate time with a professional, competent, and equipped team.
- To reduce the number of fires and impact in our community.
- To reduce the number of fire related deaths and serious injuries.
- To work with partners to reduce other relevant risks.
- To mitigate against harmful impacts on the environment.
- To develop our culture to be more purposefully diverse and inclusive, deliberately developmental, and intentionally innovative.

SFRS are committed to developing the organisation to achieve excellence in people and performance management, working collaboratively to deliver an efficient service.

We actively focus on employee engagement, using our employee survey results to develop strategies and increase engagement. We have built a shared sense of purpose and give people a meaningful voice on matters that affect their working lives.

At SFRS we encourage learning and innovation to motivate employees to reach their full potential. Our staff are engaged and empowered to make a difference on their own. Our leaders encourage a culture of trust, people development and wellbeing to enable all our staff to be their very best at work.

We seek out innovative ways to substantiate our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by removing barriers and celebrating differences, to include all in the workplace to share in our success.





## 2.2 Purpose

The purpose of our 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.

This document offers a response to the significant changes in service provision by re-framing what we want from our people over the next four years.

The People Strategy allows us to plan and facilitate the evolving demands of the wider workforce.

Employees are looking for meaningful work, flexible working options, personal development opportunities and a working environment that facilitates upskilling and training.

Our People Strategy provides a framework to support the aims and objectives of the service as outlined in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). This strategy details how the Service intends to achieve this by:

1. Developing leadership capacity
2. Organisational development and engagement
3. Resourcing the Service
4. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
5. Health, wellbeing and fitness
6. Skills, training and education
7. New ways of working





## 2.3 Values and Behaviours

Through defined core values, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority sets out what is expected of employees. We also fully support the national fire and rescue core values of:

### Service to the Community

We value service to the community by;

- Working with all groups to reduce risk.
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect.
- Being answerable to those we serve.
- Striving for excellence in all we do.

### Valuing all our people

We value all our employees by practicing and promoting;

- Fairness and respect.
- Recognition of merit.
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust.
- Personal development.
- Co-operative and inclusive working.

### Valuing diversity in the Service and the Community

We value diversity in the service and community by;

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect.
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations.
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the Service.
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination.

### Valuing improvement at all levels

We value improvement at all levels of the service by;

- Accepting responsibility for our performance.
- Being open-minded.
- Considering criticism thoughtfully.
- Learning from our experience.
- Consulting others.





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Fire and Rescue Service

# The Workplace Charter

## Organisational Effectiveness



- I will explore and consider alternative ways of working to achieve our common purpose
- I will communicate information to people that is relevant and timely
- I understand how my role contributes to the aims of the Service
- I am responsible for the health and safety of myself and others

## Outstanding Leadership



- I will create an environment where people can be the best they can be
- I will recognise and challenge inappropriate behaviour
- I am open to giving and receiving constructive feedback
- I will be open and honest in order to build trust
- I am accountable for my actions and behaviours

## Service Delivery



- I will share my ideas to create improvement and development opportunities
- I will share responsibility to work together to solve problems effectively
- I am committed to, and understand my responsibility towards safeguarding
- I will provide a value for money service considering the needs of my colleagues and our communities

## Personal Impact



- I consider the impacts of my actions on others
- I always welcome alternative views and feedback
- I contribute to an inclusive culture remaining respectful of any differences we may have
- I will remain professional at all times and act with integrity
- I will encourage discussion to improve our wider understanding of health and wellbeing
- I will lead by example to encourage and motivate others
- I am responsible for my own development and that of others

“Our Workplace Charter is a shared way of working that promotes a positive working culture at every level of our organisation” - Dave Myers, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

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## Workplace Charter

The workplace charter is a commitment to changing the way we all think and act in the workplace. It seeks to promote higher standards of behaviour throughout the workplace.

The Workplace Charter is supported by the vision statement and the core values and while many positive behaviours are already regularly demonstrated across the Service, this new charter provides specific guidance, setting a standard of behaviour and conduct for people ensuring everyone feels valued and respected.

The charter captures what staff themselves feel is appropriate and links to the National Fire Chiefs Council's behavioural statements for the fire service sector.

The Workplace Charter behaviours are a condensed set of statements that have come from the NFCC Leadership Framework which outline behaviours that employees are expected to demonstrate in a modern fire and rescue service.



### 3 How the People Strategy Fits

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. This provides the overall strategic direction to authorities which includes the driving forward of workforce reform.

Where practicable Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority supports the achievement of national strategies applicable to the Fire and Rescue Service whilst balancing this with a focus on providing a service that makes Shropshire Safer.

To that end, the following strategies and frameworks have informed the development of our People Strategy:

- Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England – May 2018
- Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020 – 2025
- National Fire and Rescue People Strategy 2017/2022
- Local Government Association – Fire Vision 2024
- NFCC People Programme Inclusion Strategy 2019
- State of Fire and Rescue - The Annual Assessment HMIC 2019
- NFCC Leadership Framework  
NFCC Core Code of Ethics

This strategy doesn't stand alone and is supported and contributed to by other plans derived from, or informed by these include the:

- Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Inclusion Plan
- Workforce & Recruitment Plan
- Organisational Development Plan

These plans are reviewed annually and support the overall delivery of the People Strategy and provide clear goals, time scales, and measures of success.

More detailed planning and activities to support the achievement of our organisational strategy can be found in the human resources and corporate support plan, the training and development departmental plan and the information, communication and technology strategy.







## 4 Internal Drivers for Change

Nationally Fire and Rescue services recognise some of the current challenges with shaping the workforce. Some of the areas we need to address locally include:

- There remains a low-level of female and Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) BAME representation across uniformed roles.
- Gender and BAME progression is low.
- There is an ageing workforce.
- There is a limited pool of recruitment for senior leaders.
- Public sector funding pressures.
- Changes in new technology to maximise productivity and enable flexibility.
- State of Fire findings and recommendations from HMICFRS.
- Recruitment and social media strategies designed to attract talent.
- Organisational culture.
- Collaboration.
- Working with the NJC to ensure reform and changes i.e., terms and conditions, expanding the role, professionalising the service and pensions.





## 5 High-Level People Objectives

### 5.1 Developing Leadership Capacity

Our intention is that our leaders will have the ability to lead, inspire, direct and teach others in the organisation.

They will be visible, demonstrate strong decision making and communication skills and be empowered to drive the organisation forward.

Our deliberately developmental culture enables us to recognise that our success hinges on the capabilities of our people. Therefore, we will support our leaders to grow and invest in their personal and professional development.

#### Leadership Development

We will:

- Review, evaluate and refresh leadership and management programmes ensuring they reflect the core values, the workplace charter and strategic direction.
- Develop our leaders to ensure operational and non-operational leadership capacity is in place to manage the organisation into the future.
- Support the improvement of political and managerial leadership through attracting and developing our senior managers and Members of the Fire Authority.
- Work in accordance with the National Leadership Framework to create leaders who are both professionally and operationally competent and who have the ability to inspire and motivate others.

- Ensure that all leaders and managers have access to appropriate development and training which supports the Service's strategic outcomes and corporate priorities.
- We will ensure our promotion processes remain fit for purpose and are accessible and inclusive for all employees.

#### Coaching and Mentoring

We will:

- Introduce coaching, mentoring and buddying schemes to aid performance improvement and the demonstration of desired values and behaviours.
- We will encourage the use of coaching to support the Individual Performance Development Review (IPDR) process.
- Promote the use of an external coaching network and commit to building a coaching culture to support continuous improvement.





### **Critical Success Factors**

Increase participation rates in leadership development programmes and activities both internally and externally in line with the agreed framework.

Increased levels of operational competence for our leaders.

Managers and leaders demonstrate increased knowledge and understanding of people management activities as outlined in staff survey through being open, approachable and do what they say they are going to do.

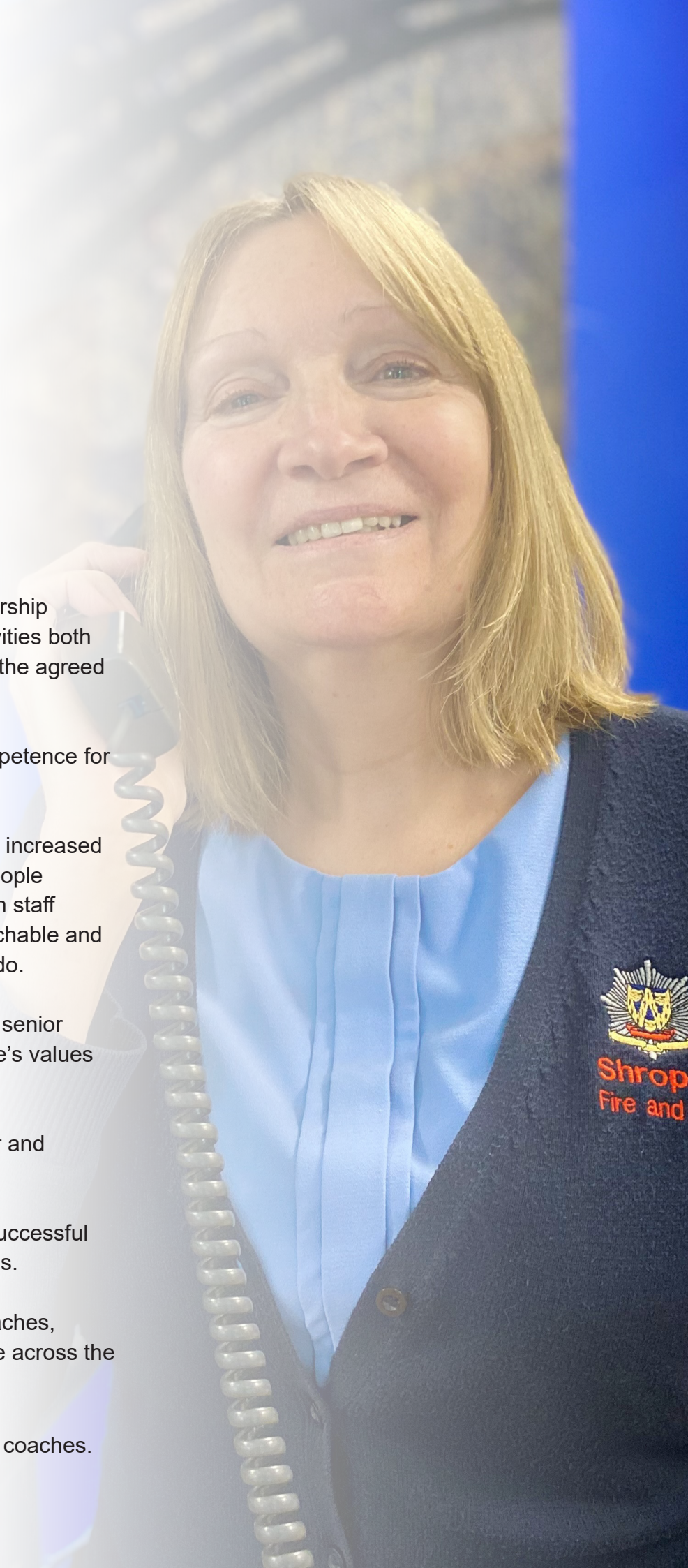
Percentage increase in evidence of senior managers adhering to SFRS service's values as indicated in the staff survey.

Promotion processes are timely, fair and transparent.

Increased levels of staff obtaining successful Career Progression Gateway passes.

Increased usage and training of coaches, mentors and buddies who are active across the organisation.

Increased use in access to external coaches.





## 5.2 Organisational Development and Engagement

Organisational development helps us focus on how we can maximise the value gained from our resources.

HR activity can be redesigned to bring about change that the Service needs, and it helps create better alignment with the organisation's goals and activities. If employees feel engaged, we expect our workforce to be healthier, more fulfilled, and more motivated.

If we allow our employees a voice and to bring ideas to the table this will enable individuals to contribute to innovation at work.

### Workforce Planning

The workforce plan sets out how the Service will meet both current and future workforce demands in line with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

### We will

- Continue to use appropriate performance management data to inform workforce and succession plans and to mitigate any potential risks of inadequate staffing numbers.
- Continue to analyse current and future workforce needs.

- We will maximise resilience through a proactive and supportive approach to attendance management with a focus on employee wellbeing.

### Staff Engagement

Staff engagement is critical to the ongoing transformation of the Service.

### We will

- Continue to undertake the staff survey at regular intervals, obtaining constructive feedback and reviewing the current systems and processes.
- Managers will be expected to demonstrate leadership commitment to engaging staff in service delivery and development.
- We are committed to listening to and acting on what our staff tell us and want to encourage openness and honesty in and communication.
- Work to maintain effective industrial relations with employees and representative bodies and we will engage with staff to ascertain and improve levels of satisfaction and motivation.
- Ensure employees are empowered and that they have the autonomy, flexibility and accountability to make a positive difference in their day to day environment.





## Reward and Recognition

### We will

- Support improvements in staff wellbeing and reward and recognition to offer an excellent staff experience at work and become an employer of choice.
- We are committed to ensuring staff feel valued and recognised, we will continue to recognise the importance of praise via annual awards events and long service awards.
- Support the development of the national pay arrangements which recognise the contribution of all employees.
- Continue to support and monitor performance management and identify excellent performance through the IPDR process.
- We will continue to seek suggestions and improvements from our staff in all areas of the Service.
- Work with staff and their representatives to further consider opportunities to recognise and reward those who innovate and go above and beyond their roles to deliver excellence and support the Service's values.
- Continue to monitor and report on complaints and compliments.

## Critical Success Factors

Workforce shortages/gaps are minimal, and risks are managed.

Reduction in the percentage turnover rate of all staff groups.

Maintenance of high levels of organisational resilience.

Improved attendance levels across all absence categories.

Improved staff satisfaction, engagement score and number of responders from the staff survey.

Increased number of staff respondents to HMICFRS Surveys.

Increased number of staff suggestions and active participation in events.

More staff being recognised for their individual and team achievements.

Improved percentage of staff feeling valued and recognised for the work they do as outlined through the staff survey.

Improved numbers of compliments received by the Service.



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## 5.3 Resourcing the Service

Resourcing is about attracting and selecting people for the right role, at the right time and at the right cost.

Our resourcing activities will be focused on understanding the employee experience, designing effective assessment and selection processes, and making effective recruitment decisions.

Our workforce planning data will inform our decision making and succession planning. By managing talent strategically our organisation can build a high-performance workplace, encourage continuous learning, and create meaningful work and growth opportunities for employees.

### Recruitment and Attraction

#### We will

- Attract, recruit, and select talent with critical skills needed to enable strategy while adapting to significant changes in workforce needs.

- Work with managers to ensure effective recruitment, retention, and progression. We will use proven modern methods of recruitment, making the best use of technology and marketing techniques to ensure robust systems are in place across the Service.
- Identify ways to make jobs more flexible/agile to improve work life balance by enabling staff to have greater flexibility over where, when and the hours they work.
- Create a diverse workforce reflective of the communities we serve.

### Talent Management and Succession Planning

#### We will

- Seek to attract, identify, develop, engage, retain, and deploy individuals who are considered particularly valuable to the organisation.
- Support the development of our organisation to improve productivity and manage performance through the Individual Performance Development Review (IPDR) process and use of the Leadership Framework.
- Support the organisation to implement improved business planning and quality appraisals which hold people to account and develop potential.





## Widening Participation

We will

- Seek to give opportunities to anyone who has the ability and desire, to enter into a fire service career.
- Create opportunities and identify career pathways for young people and other talented members of the community to enter into the Service.
- Look to increase the number of apprentices and provide additional opportunities for work experience working with local partners, schools and agencies.

## Critical Success Factors

Improved use of modern methods of recruitment techniques and technology.

Increased number of applicants for roles from under-represented groups.

Reduction in the use of agency staff.

Reduction in turnover rates across all groups.

Increase in the number of completed IPDRs.

Future talent and supporting succession plans in place, aligned to workforce needs.

Increase number of apprentices and opportunities for work experience.

Increase the number of flexible/agile working requests to include different contract types, shift patterns and working practices.





## 5.4 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

SFRS wants to create a culture where everyone feels welcomed, accepted, valued, and can bring their whole self to work.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are three principles that help to create a fair society where everyone gets equal opportunities.

Equality is about equal opportunities and protecting people from being discriminated against while diversity is about recognising respecting and valuing differences in people.

Meanwhile, inclusion refers to an individual's experience within the workplace and in a wider society, and the extent to which they feel valued and included.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion We will

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the workforce and value the benefits this brings.
- Strengthen our ability to provide an excellent service by welcoming a diverse workforce, promoting inclusion, and creating a fair and equal place to work.
- Deliver positive action programmes to attract, retain and develop under-represented groups.
- Use demographic data and community knowledge to assist with providing equality of access to services and employment for specific protected characteristics.
- Make sure managers understand the importance of completing Equality Impact Assessments and the value this will bring the Service and our communities.
- Ensure under-represented groups are heard and have influence.
- Ensure our recruitment processes are appropriate, transparent, and inclusive.
- Annual completion and publication of the Gender Pay Gap Review







## Culture and Values

### We will

- Promote cultural values and behaviours which make the Fire and Rescue Service a great place to work for all our people.
- Promote a culture of dignity and respect with both the public and our workforce so engagement may flourish, making us more flexible, innovative and create environments where people feel valued and are able to bring their true self to work.
- Listen to our staff, use their feedback to grow the ideal workplace environment.
- Not tolerate bullying or discrimination in the workplace
- Support staff that report bullying and investigate cases quickly and fairly.

## Critical Success Factors

Members of staff understand and act in accordance with our values and standards of behaviour, this will be reflected in a variety of ways including the results of our staff survey, numbers, and types of disciplinary and grievances.

Creation and engagement of the Voices group throughout the Service.

Increase workforce diversity at all levels.

Increased number of applicants for roles from under-represented groups.

Increased number and quality of Equality Impact Assessments.

The creation of positive action events targeted at specific groups based on demographic data. To see a reduction in the Gender Pay Gap.



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## 5.5 Health, Wellbeing and Fitness

Fostering employee health, wellbeing and fitness in the organisation can help prevent stress and create positive working environments where individuals can flourish.

Healthy workplaces help people to thrive and reach their full potential. Our intention is to continue to invest in employee wellbeing to increase resilience, reduce and prevent sickness absence and in turn increase productivity and performance.

### Health and Wellbeing and Fitness

#### We will

- Continue to develop and offer a range of wellbeing initiatives to support the mental and physical wellbeing of staff.
- Continue to provide timely access to occupational health, fitness and Counselling service, ensuring early interventions to prevent sickness absence or support those already absent.
- Develop managers skills to raise awareness of achieving staff wellbeing and train them to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental health issues to support their teams.
- Ensure the physical working environment is safe and that any inherent risks are assessed and managed.
- Use HR data to inform policy and planning.
- Monitor and support changes to the Firefighter fitness testing programme and provide additional support to staff to ensure they remain physically fit for their roles.

### Critical Success Factors

Reduction in all absences

Reductions in the accident statistics and RIDDOR reported incidents.

Increase in the number of flexible working requests to manage work life balance.

Increased levels of firefighters achieving the new fitness target.

Percentage increase in staff believing SFRS do enough to support their mental and physical health at work as outlined in the staff survey.

Increased numbers of mental health (MH) First Aiders/MH Awareness Training/TRIM (min. 10% of the workforce).

A clear supportive fitness testing programme is in place.

An increased proportion of our people reporting they believe the organisation and its management take Health and Safety very seriously as outlined in the staff survey.





## 5.6 Skills, Training and Education

Being a deliberately development organisation enables us to build success by unlocking the potential of every employee. Our workplace is committed to fostering the personal growth of our employees.

Maintaining and enhancing a learning culture provides consistency and equality of opportunity to maximise their potential to progress in their careers and support service delivery.

Our service will be intentionally innovative offering a variety of opportunities and career pathways for people to develop both personally and professionally.

### Statutory and Mandatory Training

#### We will

- Develop safe and realistic training that responds to and meets new demands and challenges placed upon the Service.
- Keep up to date with changing technology, equipment, practices, and innovation so that we can deliver effective and efficient training.
- Provide opportunities and support for the training, development, and maintenance of professional skills.
- Improve our facilities and arrangements to ensure we have the capability to deliver realistic, relevant, and safe training.
- Collaborate with strategic partners and external training and development providers.
- Provide robust quality assurance mechanisms in relation to the delivery of training and development activities.

### Learning and Education:

#### We will

- Continue to digitise and streamline all training and development data reporting systems and provide the most appropriate blend of practical, classroom based, and remote learning opportunities.
- Establish clear career pathways outlining education, training, and technical requirements for all roles.
- Create opportunities for lateral development including opportunities for secondments and collaborative development initiatives.
- Promote opportunities for further education and training, providing funding for role specific academic studies.

### Critical Success Factors

Increase the Service's rate of compliance with statutory and mandatory training requirements e.g. National Operational Guidance and Fire Standards.

Improved efficiency of training and development administration.

Maintenance of high levels of competence across all areas.

Improved training facilities available to staff to and instructors.

Closer alignment and improved collaboration with HWFRS, of training and development practices and procedures.

Increase in the number and frequency of multi-agency training events.

Further development of career pathways for grey and green book staff.

Increased compliance requirements through professionally accredited bodies.



## 5.7 New Ways of Working

Technology, processes, and the existing talent pool are considerations in the implementation of the people strategy.

Technology not only influences the work employees carry out but can also change the full working environment by facilitating more agile working.

Our approach to transformation is an ongoing process for continuous improvement. Our leaders will actively create the right environment for change to happen and we will engage early with staff to motivate staff to overcome their frustrations and challenges.

Learning and adapting the new ways of working takes energy to maintain a continual business momentum.

## Managing Change

### We will

When initiating major change programmes, review the composition of our workforce and adapt to affect these changes.

- Consider opportunities for workforce redesign and transformation following the introduction of new technologies and different ways of working.
- Review organisational systems, processes, and procedures so they are efficient, effective and enable staff to work innovatively and responsively to the changing environment.
- Use HR data to understand the nature of our workforce and support our decision making.
- Create more flexible and adaptive services by shifting emphasis from fixed duty systems to contract types which help create a more flexible response.
- Continue to work with the National Joint Council and Trade Union representatives to ensure reform and changes are introduced effectively.
- Support the Pension Board to monitor the provision of pensions to existing employees and retired members.
- Ensure we have an effective pensions provision in place through an external scheme administrator.

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## Information Systems

### We will

- Work with colleagues to continue to develop and realise the benefits from computerised systems such as the HR dashboard and Resource Link.
- Increasingly simplify processes through digital transformation, continually moving towards 'paperless' processes.

## Organisational Performance Metrics

### We will

- Continue to use the dashboards to improve HR, training and development, LEO and Health and Safety metrics to support HMICFRS data collection.

## Critical Success Factors

Provide HR polices that facilitate innovative workforce change.

Duty systems will be flexible to meet the needs of the Service.

Increased usage of technology to provide useful workforce data to aid decision making.

Further development of computerised systems to reduce reliance on paper-based processes and improve efficiency.

Introduce a range of focussed and relevant HR performance metrics to further develop benchmarking of HR performance.

Adoption of a national set of professional standards.

Smooth transition from one pension scheme administration provision to another.

Percentage increase in the number of staff showing an understanding for change at SFRS given the challenges faced by the Service as outlined in the staff survey.





## 6 Monitoring and Evaluation

The HR, EDI and Training and Development teams will work with managers to influence and contribute to Service strategy ensuring that the workforce agenda is appropriately considered.

The team will regularly engage with relevant stakeholders, internally and externally to ensure workforce issues are addressed.

Our team will continually develop to ensure a progressive, professional and competent approach to the delivery of all HR systems, processes and practices.

Heads of departments and line managers are responsible and accountable for the effective management of their staff and teams and will be held to account for the delivery of effective HR performance in their areas of responsibility.

Delivery and actions will be monitored through the workforce plan and monthly people management meetings.

This will inform the annual business planning cycle and corporate objective setting process which will encompass all elements of the workforce team's delivery areas.

All departmental plans are monitored by the senior management team through exception reporting.

An annual report on the People Strategy will be considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee.

The plans that underpin this strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis taking into account any major organisational changes providing the Service with the most relevant workforce today and in the future. Critical success factors will be reviewed annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and will be updated accordingly.

The People Strategy is available to all staff and will be published on the Portal and on our website at **[www.shropshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk)**

There will be ongoing consultation with the Representative Bodies regarding the implementation of specific elements within the strategy through annual plans. Any supporting plans to the strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## 7 Measuring Effectiveness

We will know our strategy has been effective if we find

- We are achieving against the critical success factors.
- Overall staff engagement shown through the staff survey is good against benchmarks and continues to improve.
- Operational response and performance targets are met.
- Sickness absence levels, including stress-related absence are low compared to benchmark organisations.



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