

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Service**



VALUES AND CULTURE REVIEW



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The national spotlight report by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services was published in March 2023. This has provided an opportunity to reflect and take action to address how we embed values, culture, fairness and diversity in our Service.

The report focused the following themes:

- **values and culture, including bullying, harassment and discrimination**
- **training and skills**
- **fairness and diversity**

Altogether 35 recommendations were made and subsequently we have undertaken a self-assessment and set out our plans on how we are going to meet the recommendations. Some of the recommendations were for other organisations, with 20 of those for Fire Services to action directly.

Our progress against these actions can be found on the **Values and Culture Action Plan**. You can view our update below.

Spotlight report link - [Values and culture in fire and rescue services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/spotlight-report-values-and-culture-in-fire-and-rescue-services/)

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services - Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Recommendation Reference	Recommendation type	Recommendation	Required Completion Date (Assigned by HMICFRS)	TWFRS supporting statement	Status	Actual Completion Date	Review dates
Recommendation 1	Raising concerns	CFO should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes.	01/10/2023	<p>Our Service has a confidential reporting line available to all employees, via Safecall. Safecall was first introduced into Tyne and Wear 24 years ago and is advertised internally on the intranet front page to aid easy access. Promotional Posters are displayed across the Service, including wallet cards and pens sent to Stations.</p> <p>The Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure is available on the intranet for all employees to access.</p> <p>A briefing document has been sent to all Stations/Departments to explain the different between raising a concern and whistleblowing.</p>	Complete	May 2023	March 2026
Recommendation 3	Raising concerns	CFO should review the support available for those who have raised concerns and take any action needed to make sure these provisions are suitable.	01/06/2023	<p>If an employee has raised a concern, their Manager can make a referral to OHU for counselling support if needed.</p> <p>Individuals interviewed as witnesses for an investigation will be offered support if it is required.</p> <p>Contact Officers are briefed on their role and provided with the form to record any contact made, a record will also be made if contact support has been refused/rejected.</p>	Complete	July 2023	May 2026
Recommendation 4	Raising concerns	CFO 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	01/06/2023	<p>Any complaints raised are acknowledged as soon as possible. Complaints can be raised as an internal grievance, external complaint or via the confidential reporting line, Safecall.</p> <p>All grievances raised are monitored on a weekly bases in the HR Management review meetings with the Director of People Services and the HR team. The cases are also reviewed monthly by ACO OD at the Case Management Meetings. The time scales for grievance outcomes are recorded and monitored on a Risk Register List. Having considered a Professional Standards department, it has been decided that this function is fulfilled by HR and we are not large enough as an organisation, neither do we have sufficient cases to warrant this approach.</p> <p>The Service employs external companies to undertake investigations on those occasions when increased transparency is required.</p>	Complete	July 2023	November 2025

		conducted in a fair and transparent way and to act as a point of contact for all staff involved.					
Recommendation 5	Raising concerns	CFO 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.	01/06/2023	Our Grievance Policy and Discipline Policy provides guidance to employees on the process followed when raising a concern or how a discipline is conducted. The complaints and compliments system is handled between the Governance Advisor and Executive Services and the process is detailed on TWFRS website. Conduct concerns can be reported via a grievance or Safecall. The Inclusion Team has introduced Inclusion Allies to support employees across all locations.	Complete	May 2023	April 2026
Recommendation 9	Background checks	CFO should: <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. 	01/01/2024	The Service currently have a process in place with a DBS standard or enhanced (depending on the role - there is a three year renewal timeframe for some roles). Potential to look at DBS procurement as we are currently using an external DBS company. This will be updated when required and then our own timelines can be set. Currently, this information is recorded in CORE and send a notification when safeguarding is due. The service carries out DBS checks on all new starters and is now in the process of introducing a new process of undertaking DBS check for all existing employees that will be a 3 year cycle.	Complete	June 2023	November 2025
Recommendation 12	Misconduct handling	CFO should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard	01/03/2024	The Safeguarding and Code of Ethics Fire Standards have now been updated and the Service has reviewed the policies and procedures in line with this update.	Complete	March 2024	March 2026

		on staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling.					
Recommendation 14	Misconduct handling	CFO should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on misconduct allegations and outcomes handling.	01/03/2024	The Safeguarding and Code of Ethics Fire Standards have now been updated and the Service has reviewed the policies and procedures in line with this update. Various pieces of information were provided to the HMI team as part of their recent thematic inspection of the Service.	Complete	March 2024	March 2026
Recommendation 17	Misconduct handling	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that: <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 	Immediate effect	The Service is actively reporting any concerns raised/investigated that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct. Emails are being recorded and stored with the HR team.	Complete	May 2023	N/A
Recommendation 18	Misconduct handling	CFO should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations.	01/08/2023	Contact Officer Role job description has been created, alongside a letter appointing them, explaining what their role is and the importance of maintaining regular contact with the individual who is under investigation or aggrieved. Procedure has been updated and Intranet pages updated with links to the Contact Officer form.	Complete	May 2023	April 2026
Recommendation 20	Leadership	CFO 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.	01/06/2023	The Service is currently reviewing the Leading the Service Fire Standard, with plans to address any gaps identified which will become our 'plan'. The Service ensures that all Fire Standards are implemented within 12 months. The service has reviewed the Leading and Developing the Service standard and is working alongside the Implementation Liaison Manager to support gap analysis of the standard.	In progress		
Recommendation 21	Leadership	CFO 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.	01/06/2023	The Service are working towards the completion of this action. PDR's are already in place for all staff. Contact has been made with a number of providers to engage with a contract for the provision of 360* feedback for all managers. Senior Managers will be prioritised in the first instance This action is still in progress	In progress		
Recommendation 22	Leadership	CFO should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service. The	01/09/2023	The Service are working towards the completion of this action. PDR's are already in place for all staff. Contact has been made with a number of providers to engage with a contract for the provision of 360* feedback for all managers Managers will be prioritised in the first instance This action is still in progress	In progress		

		process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports.					
Recommendation 23	Leadership	CFO 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.	01/06/2023	<p>Our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meet face to face with every watch and department across the service. These events supplement the annual All Staff Engagement sessions and allow you to ask questions of ELT in a more informal setting and on subjects that may be more relevant to your role. Listening events see teams and departments assigned an ELT member where you are able to engage and ask questions. If the ELT member event does not know the answer to a question, they will find out and respond in writing. The outcome of any engagement events are fed back to those involved and any FAQ are published on our intranet.</p> <p>The Service has undergone a full staff engagement survey which has been carried out by an independent company. The findings have been captured within a report and presented to Senior Officers. A Cultural Working Group has been established made up of specialists from the HR, L&D, OD and Inclusion departments to create action plans and drive improvements in the Service.</p> <p>The Service implemented an independent Cultural review in March 2023, in addition and to support the Employee Survey results. Culture Workshops have been undertaken to gain further understanding of the survey results. Any actions identified during the culture workshops have informed a Service wide action plans</p>	Complete	December 2023	Ongoing
Recommendation 24	Leadership	CFO 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.	01/10/2023	<p>Monthly case management meeting agenda and action plan captures trends based on data evidence. Any issues identified are investigated by the HR People Partners and fed back at Case Management meetings. (Linked to action 23) Employee Relations Tracker implemented, ensuring all cases are monitored and progressed in a timely manner.</p>	Complete	October 2023	N/A

	Management and leadership training and development	As a precursor to the development of the College of Fire and Rescue, chief fire officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council should work with the Home Office to consider how they can improve the training and support they offer to staff in management and leadership development. This should include authority members in respect of their assurance leadership roles and should ensure that opportunities are offered fairly across all staff groups.	01/10/2023	<p>A management training programme has been delivered to our senior management group (SMG) held bi monthly and covers various management topics. These have included Inclusion, Allyship and Psychological Safety, and Menopause Awareness. Further sessions are planned for the following months, with the next subject is 'Inclusive Leadership' being delivered by 'Show racism the red card'. ACAS training has also been introduced to the training schedule, followed by in house Employee Relations Case Work training.</p> <p>Our HR People Partners present the HR Life Cycle Training Package, which covers subjects such as discipline, grievance, absence management, to all new supervisory managers / newly appointed as line managers.</p> <p>Authority Members receive Code of Conduct and Ethics training that covers the standards expected of our Fire Authority Members. This is part of a structured programme of training for FA Members.</p> <p>Additionally, as part of manager's development, the service utilises a number of tools, including the NFCC SLDP and NFCC ELP. Once NFCC introduces the MLDP in April 2024 the Service will utilise all three of these leadership and management programmes to develop employees. These NFCC programmes are complemented by in house development sessions and 'workbooks' aligned to National Operational Standards.</p> <p>Our Development Pathways look at developing our leaders and managers before they move into their new role to ensure that they have the correct knowledge, skills and behaviours to fulfil the role to the best of their ability and potential. Delegates receive leadership training via NFCC support Leadership development programmes, management training via in house and external training courses and also role specific training. People are identified for development via a career conversation with their line manager based on their potential.</p>	Complete	November 2023	April 2026
Recommendation 27	Diversity data	CFO 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.	01/06/2023	<p>The service has a well-established EIA policy that includes comprehensive guidance documents to support managers to complete EIA's on Policies, Procedures and Decisions. The Service EIA is in line with the NFCC Guidance document.</p> <p>Previously EIA's did not have public storage location, the policy template has been reviewed, with the EIA's being added to the document. Managers are reviewing published policies to add the EIA's completed.</p>	Complete	May 2023	May 2024

<p>Recommendation 28</p>	<p>Diversity data</p>	<p>CFO 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.</p>	<p>01/06/2023</p>	<p>The Service is currently undertaking a gap analysis of the NFCC EDI Data Toolkit. Any areas identified will be reviewed and addressed if required.</p> <p>HR Data due to be published on the internal intranet, including Gender, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Age, Disability, Religion. This will be available in September.</p> <p>Workforce data published on our internal intranet, to enable employees to have an understanding of the makeup of the Service. The data is refreshed quarterly, maintaining a record for analysis and consistency.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>January 2024</p>	<p>January 2026</p>
<p>Recommendation 32</p>	<p>Improving diversity</p>	<p>CFO 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.</p>	<p>01/06/2023</p>	<p>This will be captured in ongoing work on our Policies and Procedures whereby we will look to reflect our need to focus on further diversification of the workforce. The Service will seek to review the demographics of all those who are eligible to commence a FF trainee course prior to its commencement. This will allow the service to assess if diversification of the workforce is being achieved. The Service had committed to achieve a minimum of 30% diversity for recruitment campaigns.</p> <p>After reviewing Direct Entry, the Executive Leadership Team have decided to concentrate on developing existing employees through other NFCC initiatives. TWFRS decided not to take part in the current NFCC pilot and the adoption of this is not something that has been built into any plans.</p> <p>To establish any barrier to recruiting underrepresented groups, the service has launched a Public Perception Survey to be used at community events such as Pride, Mela etc. This information is used to inform our positive action plans for future diversification of our workforce.</p> <p>Prior to all promotion processes, 'Preparing for Promotion' sessions are available to all employees. Following all promotion processes, informal and formal debriefs are undertaken to establish future improvements.</p> <p>Positive Action events, promote applications from underrepresented groups, which has shown a 50% diversity recent Trainee Firefighter course intakes. Positive activities included station awareness days, for potential candidates to raise awareness and how to prepare for the recruitment process. Specific positive action days for underrepresented groups were also held, giving the candidates the opportunity to 'have a go' at the role related tests, fitness sessions and interview training skills focused on competency based answers.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>November 2023</p>	<p>February 26</p>

<p>Recommendation 33</p>	<p>Improving diversity</p>	<p>CFO 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.</p>	<p>01/08/2023</p>	<p>The Service has implemented and delivered an awareness session to support those employees looking to progress to a higher role, Preparing for Promotion.</p> <p>The Service has launched a mechanism to collect information to identified high potential employees, to enable support to be given in preparation for promotion. This is for all employees, including non-operational staff. Our Fire Safety and Prevention and Education department reviews have created a number of promotion opportunities for current and external candidates.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>August 2023</p>	<p>December 2026</p>
<p>Recommendation 34</p>	<p>The Core Code of Ethics</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Immediate effect</p>	<p>We have completed all actions required as part of the National Fire Standard. To support this further, an E-learning package has been created and published for annual completion for all employees. Contracts and documents have been updated to reflect any changes and reference to the Code of Conduct and Ethics. Our current values closely reflect the Ethical Principles described, however, we are planning to update them later this year fully incorporating the National Code of Ethics.</p> <p>All discipline investigations are assessed against the Code of Conduct and Ethics, to ensure that Employees behaviours are challenged.</p> <p>We acknowledge, we still have some work to do to demonstrate how we continually monitor how embedded the Code of Conduct and Ethics and its Ethical Principles are within the service.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>October 2023</p>	<p>October 2026</p>