



Safest People, Safest Places

Human Resources Committee

5 September 2023

Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services Spotlight Report Action Plan Update

Report of Director of People and Organisational Development

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Human Resources Committee (HRC) as to the progress made towards completion of the Action Plan relating to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Values and Culture Report and the recommendations made.

Background

2. On the 30 March 2023, the HMICFRS released its spotlight report "Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services" which was commissioned by The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire.
3. A paper was delivered to members of the HRC at the May 2023 meeting outlining the contents of the report and advising of the current position of CDDFRS as of April 2023. Updates on progress against the action plan outlined in appendix A.

Progress since the previous update

4. The recent changes Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exemptions) Order 1975 and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) eligibility has brought about changes to working practices relating to safeguarding although we are waiting for further information and guidance from the FSB. Internal processes in the meantime have been amended.
5. The SLT development is progressing with one-to-one sessions commencing in September 2023 following the 360-feedback process.
6. Our processes around Employee relations have been reviewed and we are confident we have sufficient support in place. We do recognise however that more can always be done, and so further enhancements are being considered where appropriate.
7. A staff survey has been planned to run over September / October which will ensure we seek the views of our staff on what it is like to work at CDDFRS and how they believe we could improve.

8. Work on the Leadership Fire standards has commenced and is being monitored through the Project Board. The Project Assurance Manager is working closely with NFCC implementation leads to ensure progress is being made.

Recommendations

9. Members are requested to:
 - (a) **note** and **comment** on the content of the report.

Katherine Metcalfe, Director of People and Organisational Development, Ext.5665

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	Progress
Raising Concerns					
1	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes.	CDDFRS	1 Oct 23	Complete	April 23 Independent complaints service available via DCC (Whistleblowing). Staff can report incidents anonymously with no fear of the repercussions. Independent reporting Service through Safecall Raising a Concern at Work procedure in place
2	By 1 October 2023, National Employers, the Local Government Association and the National Fire Chiefs Council should review any current independent arrangements whereby staff can raise concerns outside their FRS. They should then ensure that all FRS staff have access to an independent reporting line that can be used as a confidential way to raise concerns outside their own FRS.	National Employers, LGA, NFCC	1 Jun 23	Not owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
3	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review the support available for those who have raised concerns and take any action needed to make sure these provisions are suitable.	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	April 23 Robust Dignity at Work and Fairness at Work Policy and Procedure in place (which are utilised) and allow for staff to move locality or perpetrators to be suspended. Dignity at Work Advisors in place (posters and online) Suicide prevention officers in place (posters and online) Mental Health First Aiders in place (posters and online)

					<p>Welfare officers appointed to both parties as support (details included in correspondence). Access to Employee Assistance is advised through correspondence.</p> <p>Option for external investigation where required. Union support made available for members. Code of Ethics implemented and integrated. EDI training for managers via e-learning and face to face learning included in Leadership Programmes.</p> <p>September 23 CFO satisfied that provisions are suitable</p>
4	<p>By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should assure themselves that updates on how concerns are being handled are shared with those who have raised them. The updates should be given in an accessible way that encourages trust and confidence in the service response. Consideration should be given to creating professional standards function to handle conduct concerns in service (or from an external service) to have oversight of cases, to make sure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way and to act as a point of contact for all staff involved.</p>	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	<p>April 23</p> <p>Independent reporting Service through Safecall offers an online platform where concerns are shared, and updates are given both ways. Welfare officers appointed to both parties as support (details included in correspondence). They can be used to gain updates. Both parties are advised who is the IO and so can contact they for updates Dignity at work advisors are available to support either party. External investigations can be undertaken. ER register kept outlining the concern raised and any outcomes / appeal. Professional Standards department not deemed as feasible due to ongoing budgetary pressures. Could be re-evaluated if a high number of complaints are made.</p> <p>September 23 CFO satisfied that provisions are suitable.</p>

5	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure they provide accessible information for all staff and members of the public on how they can raise concerns and access confidential support (including through external agencies). Chief fire officers should also make sure accessible information is provided on how concerns and allegations will be investigated in a way that ensures confidentiality and is independent of the alleged perpetrator.	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	<p>April 23</p> <p>External complaints (from public)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear procedure in place (AD/2/11). • Complaints can be made by a range of different methods (social media, online, in writing, telephone). • There is an accessible leaflet available advising how complaints will be treated. • Complaints are all recorded on the web form and the data is stored securely with only designated people having access. • Generally, complains are handled internally however, there are route to externally investigate should the need arise. • There have been no complaints or concerns raised with the professionalism of our staff when undertaking HFSC's. <p>Internal complaints (from Staff)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear procedures for Fairness at Work and Dignity at Work are in place. • Dignity at Work Advisors in place (posters and online) • Suicide prevention officers in place (posters and online) • Mental Health First Aiders in place (posters and online) • Welfare officers appointed to both parties as support (details included in correspondence).
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Employee Assistance is advised through correspondence. • Option for external investigation where required. <p>September 23 CFO satisfied that provisions are suitable.</p>
Background Checks					
6	By 1 January 2024, the Home Office, working with the Ministry of Justice, should make sure that the Government incorporates fire and rescue authority employees within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 so that they are eligible for the appropriate DBS checks.	Home Office	1 May 24	Not Owned by CDDFRS	<p>CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation.</p> <p>September 23 Changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exemptions) Order 1975 has enabled Fire and Rescue Services employees to be checked through the DBS at a standard or enhanced level. These were agreed in July 2023 however, this does only allow for standard checks for Firefighters.</p>
7	By 1 May 2024, the Home Office, working with the fire and rescue sector, should make sure that the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002, or a similar appropriate legislatively enabled solution, makes detailed provisions for fire and rescue services.	Home Office	1 May 24	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
8	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and underpinning guidance. It should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly state the requirements for background checks undertaken by services; 	Fire Standards Board	1 Dec 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarify the minimum requirements (including levels of DBS checks) for all roles, particularly roles where staff have access to vulnerable members of the public; define the standards required to embed a culture across fire and rescue services that empowers all members of staff and local communities to report concerns; and be subject to review following any legislative change. 				
9	<p>By 1 January 2024, chief fire officers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> immediately review their current background checks arrangements, and make sure that suitable and sufficient background checks are in place to safeguard their staff and communities they serve; and make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing, new staff, and volunteers, according to their roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board 	CDDFRS	1 Jan 24	Complete	<p>April 23</p> <p>Baseline personal security checks are undertaken on all prospective employees to safeguard the Service and the communities it serves.</p> <p>The checks that are undertaken prior to employment with the Service are Identity, Qualification, references (minimum 2 years), medical, DBS (where appropriate), right to work in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>We undertake a basic DBS check on all prospective staff at the point of entry regardless of role.</p> <p>We undertake enhanced DBS checks for those working in Community safety teams and with our cadets.</p> <p>September 23</p> <p>Awaiting guidance from FSB to understand if a change of approach is required. Standard checks were implemented as soon as the legislation was passed.</p>

10	By 1 September 2023, chief constables should make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services.	Police	1 Sep 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
11	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle staff disclosures, complaints and grievances.	Fire Standards Board	1 Dec 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
12	By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling.	CDDFRS	1 Mar 24	Not started	April 23 Awaiting Standard to be released Current process for fire standard implementation sits with the Project Board and Project Assurance Manager. Once available, the process for FS implementation will be actioned. All completed standards are agreed by SLT. September 23 Awaiting Fire Standard to be issued.
13	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle misconduct and safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes. These should include requirements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> conduct and complete investigations, whether or not the staff member under investigation leaves; consider whether the incident requires immediate dismissal; 	Fire Standards Board	1 Dec 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide training for staff who are carrying out investigations; and ensure the diversity/neutrality of the investigation panel/person. 				
14	By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on misconduct allegations and outcomes handling.	CDDFRS	1 Mar 24	Not Started	<p>April 23 Awaiting standard to be released. Current process for fire standard implementation sits with the Project Board and Project Assurance Manager. Once available, the process for FS implementation will be actioned. All completed standards are agreed by SLT.</p> <p>September 23 Awaiting Fire Standard to be issued.</p>
15	By 1 October 2023, the Home Office should work with the National Fire Chiefs Council and fire and rescue service employers to make sure there is a process to handle misconduct allegations against chief fire officers. The Home Office should immediately notify HMICFRS of any allegations and outcomes that it is aware of.	Home Office	1 Oct 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
16	By 1 October 2023, the National Fire Chiefs Council should develop and manage a national barred list that holds details of staff who have been dismissed for gross misconduct (including staff who have already left services). It should ensure that this list is referred to in all appointment processes to prevent those who are barred from re-joining another service. After the College of Fire and Rescue has been established (see recommendation 25), it should take responsibility for managing the list	NFCC	1 Oct 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
17	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the	CDDFRS	Immediate	Complete	We will comply with this requirement with immediate effect in providing disclosures in line

	<p>potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in FRSs; are of a serious nature; or <p>relate to assistant chief fire officers or those at equivalent or higher grades</p>				with the non-identifiable case histories provided previously to HMICFRS. We are seeking clarification from HMICFRS on any more detailed reporting it requires, to enable us to ensure that we are also compliant with our GDPR obligations
18	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations	CDDFRS	1 Aug 23	Ongoing	<p>April 23 As outlined in recommendation 5.</p> <p>September 23 CFO satisfied that provisions are suitable. Awaiting mechanism to do this</p>
19	By 1 July 2023, the Home Office should examine whether any appeal processes for fire and rescue misconduct cases are appropriate.	Home Office	1 Jul 23	Not Owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
Leadership					
20	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should have plans in place to ensure they meet the Fire Standards Board's leading the service standard and its leading and developing people standard.	CDDFRS	1 Jul 23	Complete	<p>April 23 Current process for fire standard implementation sits with the Project Board and Project Assurance Manager. The Director of POD has been designated as the SPOC for both standards. All completed standards are agreed by SLT. September 23 A paper was delivered to SLT on the implementation of the Leadership Fire Standards. Work is currently underway.</p>
21	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all senior leaders and managers	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	<p>April 23 A 360 process is part of the current appraisal process for all staff including PO's.</p>

	(assistant chief fire officer equivalent and above) in service.				As part of wider SLT development / team building plans, a further 360 feedback process will be undertaken utilising the Johari Window tool and linked to i3 and supportive leadership. September 23 360 has been undertaken with all of the senior team. Coaching and feedback to commence in.
22	By 1 September 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports.	CDDFRS	1 Sep 23	Complete	April 23 A 360 process is part of the current appraisal process for all staff including PO's. Procedure includes the requirement for peer feedback.
23	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should seek regular feedback from staff about values, culture, fairness and diversity, with due regard to the leading and developing people standard. They should show how they act on this feedback.	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	April 23 The Service undertake a staff survey which focusses on values, culture, and behaviours. Call it out survey. HMICFRS staff survey Station visits / Manager 121's Station audits / Debriefs Staff networks Safe Call data Exit interview data.
24	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should put plans in place to monitor, including through the gathering and analysis of staff feedback, watch and team cultures and provide prompt remedial action for any issues they identify.	CDDFRS	1 Oct 23	Complete	April 23 Station visits / Manager 121's Staff Surveys (include locality and line manager/colleague related questions) Watch focus groups. SLT action plans (improvement & strategy) – monitored via CFA September 23

					Staff survey to take place over September and October with results being feedback to staff early November.
Management and leadership training and development					
25	By 1 January 2025, the Government should establish a College of Fire and Rescue, as proposed by the White Paper Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service. There should be no further delay to its implementation.	Government	1 Jan 25	Not Owned by CDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
26	By 1 October 2023, 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.	NFCC	1 Oct 23	Not Owned by CDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
27	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their equality impact assessments are fit for purpose and, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality impact assessment toolkit.	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	April 23 A review of CDDFRS process was undertaken in 2022 and aligned to the NFCC toolkit. EqIA's are complete and actions are monitored through the ED&I working group. EqIA's have been complete for all Service premises to ensure inclusivity.
28	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review how they gather and use equality and diversity data to improve their understanding of their staff demographics, including applying and meeting	CDDFRS	1 Jun 23	Complete	April 23 Public sector equality duty Gender pay gap Home office annual returns

	the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality, diversity and inclusion data toolkit.				HMICFRS PowerBi reports Recruitment monitoring September 23 CFO satisfied that provisions are suitable.
29	By 1 December 2023, the Home Office should publish greater detail on the protected characteristic data it collects about FRS staff, including joiners and leavers, by rank and role.	Home Office	1 Dec 23	Not owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
30	By 30 December 2024, the Home Office should align the data it collects on protected characteristics with the Office for National Statistics harmonised standard and publish this data.	Home Office	30 Dec 24	Not owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
31	By 1 December 2024, the Home Office should collect and publish experimental statistics on public complaints and conduct matters in relation to FRS staff, similar to that which it currently publishes on police forces in England and Wales.	Home Office	1 Dec 24	Not owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
Improving Diversity					
32	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should, as a priority, specify in succession plans how they intend to improve diversity across all levels of the service. This should include offering increased direct-entry opportunities.	CDDFRS	1 June 23	Complete	April 23 This is addressed through the People Strategy, ED&I Strategy, Strategic Workforce Plan & Talent Management Strategy. Succession planning arrangements are in place which include Team plans. Direct entry opportunities will be considered at SM level once the current programme provides ROI information and deliverables. Direct entry at CFO level has been facilitated. September 23 Updates to the Talent Management Strategy / SWFP have been made. Positive action

					initiatives being reviewed. Women's development programme initiative to be started.
33	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should develop plans to promote progression paths for existing staff in non-operational roles and put plans in place to reduce any inequalities of opportunity.	CDDFRS	1 Aug 23	Complete	April 23 Development plans are available and in place to align green book / non operational colleagues the same training opportunities as uniformed staff which is relevant to their role
Core Code of Ethics					
34	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.	CDDFRS	Immediate	Complete	April 23 Implemented through project. Fire Standard outcomes met.
The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England					
35	By the end of this Parliament, the Government should consider the findings and recommendations in this report when refreshing the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.	Government	End of this parliament	Not owned by CDDFRS	CDDFRA and CDDFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

Dashboard of Recommendations

Total Number of Recommendations	35
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Owner Breakdown

CDDFRS	19
Fire Standards Board	3
Government	2
Home Office	7
National Employers, LGA, NFCC	1
Police	1
NFCC	2

CDDFRS Progress

Complete	16
Ongoing	1
Not Started	2