



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

15 September 2023

NFCC Culture Statement and Action Plan

Report of Director of People and Organisational Development

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to highlight to Combined Fire Authority (CFA) members the publication of the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Organisational Cultural Statement and Culture Action Plan.

Background

2. Following the NFCC's Culture and Inclusion Conference on 27 and 28 March 2023 and the Spotlight Report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 'Values and culture in fire and rescue services', released on 30 March 2023, the NFCC has developed a Culture Action Plan to support improvements in culture and inclusion within fire and rescue services.
3. The NFCC consulted fire and rescue services and national fire service partners on the draft action plan throughout May and June 2023 and received extensive feedback, both written and through focus group discussions. The Action Plan is a renewed call to action to improve culture and address discrimination, bullying and harassment across UK fire and rescue services.
4. On 26 July 2023, the NFCC released their Organisational Culture Statement and Action Plan. The Action Plan sits within and complements the wider strategic framework in which fire and rescue services operate and aims to draw together a range of influential documents all of which have responsibilities for FRA's around related to people, cultural values, behaviours, equality, diversity, professionalism, leadership, skills and tackling harassment, bullying and discrimination. These include the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, Fit for the Future 2023 and the NFCC Strategy 2023-2026.
5. The main aim of the culture plan is that by working together we can change our culture for the better through a shared ambition. Working with partners such as the Fire Standards Board (FSB), Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG), Safeguarding Board and HMICFRS a common standard can be applied to ensure consistency across the sector.

The Culture Statement and Action Plan

6. The statement itself is a clear statement of intent from the NFCC on how its organisation will operate and that inappropriate behaviours will not be tolerated. A copy of the Organisational Statement and Action Plan are included in Appendix A.
7. On a local level, the Service have these intentions included in the People Strategy and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Both are supported with an action plan which has activities to support a positive culture and remove inappropriate behaviours.
8. The overarching outcomes of the plan are to:
 - a) Improved public confidence.
 - b) Improvement trust and confidence of staff
 - c) More diverse workforce that is inclusive of underrepresented groups, and people of diverse backgrounds and experiences.
9. The plan highlights a range of key deliverables which range from current NFCC product implementation, adoption of fire standards, HMICFRS inspections and spotlight report recommendations, further research, and improved data collection. All of which are designed to support FRA's continually improve.
10. There are several high-level measures of success which have been outlined in the action plan which are:
 - a) Improvements in HMICFRS inspection judgements for FRSs in relation to values and culture, including progress against the recommendations in the HMICFRS Spotlight report.
 - b) Improvement in FRS workforce diversity in relation to recruitment, retention, and progression.
 - c) Consistent service reporting and benchmarking of cultural performance enabled through sharing of good practice and cross sector support including identification and sharing of exemplar cultural dashboards.
 - d) All fire and rescue services have independent confidential reporting lines.
 - e) Increased take-up of NFCC leadership development, products and support in relation to culture, safeguarding and inclusion.
 - f) Completion of NFCC Safeguarding self-assessment and any local authority audits, enabling an adaptable and improved approach to safeguarding practice.

Conclusion

11. Good progress has been made through the People Action Plan, the EDI Action Plan and the Spotlight Report Action Plan on many areas which are highlighted above. All of which are monitored through the Human Resources Committee.
12. Further work has been identified around safeguarding through the Fire Standard implementation process which the Service are currently working towards. The recent changes Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exemptions) Order 1975 and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) eligibility will also bring about changes to working practices relating to safeguarding. Further information and guidance are awaited from the FSB.
13. The Service will continue to engage with NFCC and utilisation of products as and when they are created which support our internal processes and offer. We will also continue to

be part of national working groups to ensure we are sighted of the national direction in the people area and help shape future interventions and products.

Recommendations

14. Members are requested to **note** the content of the report.

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