

Ref No	HMICFRS Recommendation	Timescales	CFB Self Assessment of Current Status	Status	CFB Action	IOP Ref	Lead
1  (See also Rec 34: Values & Culture)	Chief fire officers should, as a priority, make sure their staff are aware of, and follow the Core Code of Ethics. Services should build the code into all relevant policies and practices.	01.02.2025	<p><b>Employee Code of Conduct</b></p> <p>Following the publication of the Fire Standard 'Code of Ethics' in May 2021, we undertook a gap analysis to help us identify any areas for improvement. The outcome from this work, was minor amendments to our existing Values and Behaviours Framework and Employee's Code of Conduct. Together these set out the standards that uphold our organisational culture. HMICFRS Inspection 2021/22 Page 37: 'CFB is good at promoting its values and culture ..... Brigade values are established, and its culture continues to improve'.</p> <p>HMICFRS acknowledged that the Brigade had carried out an analysis of our values to implement the new national Core Code of Ethics confirming this work had been completed and that the Brigade values were aligned to the National Code. In addition, 79% of survey respondents agreed that senior leaders consistently modelled the Brigade's values. Moreover, it was found that staff were empowered and willing to challenge poor behaviours. HMICFRS 2022/23 Page 37. We were assessed as 'good' by HMICFRS Inspection team in relation to this area. Staff survey findings within the inspection show that over 92% of respondents agreed that line managers and colleagues consistently demonstrate the Brigade's values.</p> <p>In June 2023 we reviewed our Code of Conduct and reformatted the layout of the document to make our standards and values and behaviours more explicit. This review considered Codes of Conduct from other organisations, including the Police.</p> <p>From 1st April 2024 we have introduced an 'Integrity Health Check', which requires every employee, as part of their annual personal development review, to confirm that they have read and understood a number of policies and procedures which includes the Brigade's 'Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework' and the Employee Code of Conduct.</p> <p>In May 2024, we undertook a staff cultural survey which confirmed that 99% of respondents stated that they understood and promoted the Brigade's values and ethical behaviours, and 83% agreed that their manager also promoted those values.</p>		None	N/A	N/A
2	Chief fire officers should make sure a policy for probationary staff is in place. This policy should make clear that services can immediately dismiss probationers who fail to meet the required standards of behaviour set out in the Core Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics fire standard.	01.02.2025	<p>From the very outset, we use our Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework within our organisational interview process as a means of recruiting staff to CFB. On appointment staff are provided with, and asked to sign for, a copy of our Employee Code of Conduct, and Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework. As part of induction, all new employees are given specific training regarding standards of behaviour expected when working with Cleveland Fire Brigade and how to raise any concerns that they may face.</p> <p>Our Recruitment and Selection Policy, paragraph A8.1- A8.3 sets out our arrangements in relation to staff behaviour during their probationary period. Where a member of staff fails to meet the required standards of behaviour as set out in the Brigade's Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework, managers are required to determine whether or not termination of employment should take place. Whilst our Discipline Policy makes reference to 'Summary Dismissal', it does not make reference to probationary periods specifically.</p>		Review the Brigade's Dignity at Work, Discipline and Recruitment & Selection policies to make it clear that probationers who fail to meet the required standards of behaviours, set out in the Values and Behaviours Framework, can be immediately dismissed.	PPP 2433	CChisholm
3	Chief fire officers should make sure their workforce plans allow staff to be moved from a wholtime watch to a different watch or station, within their contractual requirements, proactively and reactively as required AND	01.05.2025	Our 'Contract of Employment' enables the Brigade to transfer staff to any watch, at any fire station, and at any time. The Brigade has recently undertaken an exercise to transfer a number of WT station-based Watch Managers to other watches/stations and the success of this will be evaluated by 31st March 2025.		Evaluate the trial of Watch Manager transfers to different watches or stations	PPP 2434	D Preston
3	Chief fire officers should also make sure firefighters who are promoted are posted to a different watch or station, including when the promotion is temporary for two months or more. If this isn't possible, chief fire officers should show how the risks of reinforcing a negative culture have been addressed.	01.05.2025	Our 'Contract of Employment' enables the Brigade to post staff on promotion to any watch, at any fire station, and at any time. Our current Recruitment and Selection Policy encourages managers to minimise disruption to watches by appointing to the same watch wherever possible.		Review the Brigade's Recruitment and Selection Policy with regards to appointment of individuals following promotion/temporary promotion, to different watch/station wherever possible	PPP 2435	C Chisholm



4 (See also Rec 4: Values & Culture)	Chief fire officers should make sure their services create or have access to a dedicated professional standards function to oversee the investigation of concerns raised within a service or from an external source. This should oversee cases to make sure they are investigated in a fair and transparent way, manage complex cases directly and act as a point of contact for all staff involved.	01.02.2025	<p>The Brigade has recently undertaken a review of its Discipline policy and associated procedure, and this now includes the formation of an 'Employee Relations Advisory Panel. The Brigades' PO's sit on this group, together with Head of HR. The group meet on a weekly basis and are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Authorising action against new allegations and breaches</li> <li>•reviewing suspension risk assessments and recommendations</li> <li>•agreeing the Investigation Manager/ Hearing Manager</li> <li>•reviewing and authorising recommendations for hearing with reference to conduct/ gross misconduct</li> </ul> <p>The review also led to the enhancement of our debrief arrangements following discipline and grievances.</p>		Seek options to include independence in our discipline and grievance arrangements.	PPP 2436	C Chisholm
5 (See also Rec 1 & 5: Values & Culture)	<p>Chief fire officers should make sure all staff understand how to raise a concern and use grievance and whistle-blowing processes. Chief fire officers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make sure staff know how services will handle responses and maintain confidentiality and anonymity; and</li> <li>• explain how staff can access services' whistle-blowing capability and the difference between whistle-blowing and other processes for raising concerns.</li> </ul>	01.11.2024	<p>As part of our staff engagement and communications strategy, we have reviewed our mechanisms for signposting staff to our approved processes for them to raise concerns in a confidential way. The review resulted in enhancements to our existing provision which are a confidential independent reporting line (Safecall) and an easy to access internal reporting tool. These were launched across the workforce and are promoted to staff regularly through traditional methods such as news letters and notice boards as well as innovative methods such as QR codes and digital applications.</p> <p>CFB has well-established Whistleblowing, Grievance and Dignity at Work Policy and Procedures which have recently been reviewed to ensure that the existing and new mechanisms for raising a concern are clear. To make it easier and quicker for staff to raise a concern, we simply ask them to complete a general 'Raise a Concern' form.</p> <p>The Dignity at Work, Grievance and Whistleblowing policies are always accessible for staff to raise a concern via the Brigade's intranet site. They set out details of the process including how confidentiality and independence will be assured and the expectations and timelines associated with every stage.</p> <p>Our key systems such as H&amp;S Reporting and Occupational Health Referral allow staff to report any concerns relating to individual health, safety and wellbeing. The EAP and other services such as counselling, Samaritans, and MIND are signposted throughout the Brigade on various noticeboards.</p> <p>Our face-to-face communications further facilitates staff to raise concerns; these include: Principal Officers visits; Line Managers; PDRs including wellbeing conversations; Peers; Staff Networks (Women, Disability, Cultural Diversity, LGBT+); Mental Health Champions; TRIMS Assessors; Buddies; Staff Surveys; Exit Interviews and Trade Unions.</p>		N/A	N/A	N/A
6	<p>Chief fire officers should make sure a programme of training is in place for all supervisors and managers on how to manage staff performance and welfare and how to raise an issue. It should be supported by relevant policies and procedures. Training should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff welfare and absence management;</li> <li>• the process for managing individual staff performance, addressing poor performance and potential misconduct issues;</li> <li>• how to handle difficult conversations and resolve issues informally, if appropriate, when a concern is identified; and</li> <li>• clarifying the role of HR services in helping managers to deal with staff concerns and misconduct issues.</li> </ul> <p>Chief fire officers should make sure all</p>	01.02.2025	<p>As part of our Personal Development Review arrangements, all supervisors and managers are required to discuss wellbeing, performance, development and conduct issues. Our Discipline policy includes a 'Managers Disciplinary Toolkit' which contains resources to support Investigating Manager, Hearing Managers and staff undertaking risk assessments and debriefs. The pack is available on the Brigade's intranet site and contains, for example, how and when to use a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), and a Welfare Communication Plan. We provided training resource to help managers to better recognise the signs of trauma in their staff so that appropriate action can be taken. We are rolling out a programme of ACAS training to all supervisory, middle and senior managers regarding investigation and hearing. With regards to having difficult conversations and resolving issues informally we have sourced training for all staff which will be rolled out in 2024/25. A member of the HR team is assigned as point of contact for advice and guidance to all staff involved in all discipline, grievance and capability cases.</p>		Roll-out enhanced training on sickness absence to all managers in line with the introduction of Softworks	PPP 123	C Chisholm



7	Chief fire officers should make sure the policies and processes for misconduct are consistent for all staff and are fairly applied within their respective conditions of employment AND	01.05.2025	<p>The Brigade has recently undertaken a review of its Discipline policy and associated procedure, and this now includes the formation of an 'Employee Relations Advisory Panel. The Brigades' PO's sit on this group, together with Head of HR. The group meet on a weekly basis and are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Authorising action against new allegations and breaches</li> <li>•reviewing suspension risk assessments and recommendations</li> <li>•agreeing the Investigation Manager/ Hearing Manager</li> <li>•reviewing and authorising recommendations for hearing with reference to conduct/ gross misconduct</li> </ul> <p>The review also led to the enhancement of our debrief arrangements following discipline and grievances.</p>		Seek options to include independence in our discipline and grievance arrangements.	PPP 2436	C Chisholm
	The National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services and the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council, should make misconduct processes consistent for all staff irrespective of the terms and conditions of their employment.	01.08.2025					
8	<p>Chief fire officers should make sure all allegations of misconduct are handled in a consistent way and staff have confidence in misconduct processes. Chief fire officers should carry out a full review of the processes, from initial identification of a misconduct issue through to the resolution or outcome. This should include a review of how services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitor and manage investigations;</li> <li>• maintain accurate records; and</li> <li>• adhere to required timescales.</li> </ul>	01.11.2024	The main purpose of the Employee Relations Advisory Panel is to ensure fairness and consistency in the application of our Discipline, Dignity at Work and Grievance policies. Debrief processes are carried out by the HR team at the conclusion of each case, to ensure compliance with policy and identify any areas of learning or improvement. Currently a debrief report is compiled and is held as part of the case documentation.		<p>To enhance the debrief process in relation to Discipline, Dignity at Work and Grievance cases to ensure that the outcome of the Debrief is reported back to the Employee Relations Advisory Panel.</p> <p>Seek options to include independence in our discipline and grievance arrangements</p>	<p>PPP 2437</p> <p>PPP 2436</p>	<p>C Chisholm</p> <p>C Chisholm</p>
9	Chief fire officers should introduce a case management system if they don't already have one. The case management system should allow data to be produced that will help them to better understand and oversee misconduct cases in their services.	01.08.2025	Case management is an embedded part of our HR management of Dignity at Work, Grievance and Discipline arrangements. We have key performance indicators that are monitored regularly on the number of Grievance, Whistleblowing and Discipline case. Moving forward we will expand these indicators to capture detail of the protected characteristics.		Expand our existing suite of performance indicators in relation to Grievance, Whistleblowing and Discipline cases to help us to identify trends across protected characteristics.	PPP 2438	C Chisholm
10	Chief fire officers should make sure their services have enough capacity to carry out their misconduct investigations. They should consider using external investigators or a similar independent resource to support the process if required	01.05.2025	One of the considerations of the Employee Relations Advisory Panel is that of capacity when allocating an investigation to an officer. Whilst currently this is not an issue, we have had recent conversations with Cleveland Police in this respect. However, at this time they could not commit to a regular investigation service but have offered to assist us in independently assuring our processes.		Explore options to increase capacity to undertake discipline investigations through the use of external agencies	PPP 2439	C Chisholm



11	<p>Chief fire officers should review the training their services provide for supervisors and managers who investigate misconduct issues at all levels. Chief fire officers should make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all staff who carry out investigations receive adequate training to carry out the task;</li> <li>• a programme of refresher training and ongoing support is available so that staff can maintain a level of competence; and</li> <li>• it is clear how services' HR provision, staff associations and any trade union representative or fellow employee will support the investigation process.</li> </ul>	01.05.2025	<p>Our Discipline Policy sets out the responsibilities of all those involved in investigations, including HR and trade unions. We are rolling out a programme of ACAS training to all supervisory, middle and senior managers regarding investigation and hearings.</p>		Ensure that the TNA captures refresher for investigations and hearings	PPP 2440	C Chisholm
12	<p>With immediate effect, chief fire officers should make sure all staff are aware of the welfare support, including occupational health support, that is available to staff involved in misconduct processes. Chief fire officers should encourage all staff involved in misconduct processes to access this support, whether they are an alleged perpetrator, complainant, witness, investigator or decision-maker.</p> <p>Welfare personnel should be independent of the investigation and have been appropriately trained for this role</p>	Immediate	<p>Following our last review of our Dignity at Work, Discipline and Grievance policies we have strengthened our welfare support arrangements to ensure that all staff involved in cases have access to, or where necessary are provided with appropriate support. This support may include an assigned Welfare Officer, access to Occupational Health Services on a 24/7 basis, signposting to Brigade Mental Health Champions and TRIMS Advisors and other professional support services e.g. Samaritans, Firefighter Charity, Trade Unions.</p> <p>Details of the support available is also set out in letters of notification to individuals. and set out on the Brigade's intranet site and Health and Wellbeing notice boards.</p> <p>A guide to the role of a Welfare Officer is explicit within the 'Managers Disciplinary Toolkit</p>				
13	<p>Fire and rescue authorities and <b>chief fire officers</b> should consider varying the approach to hearing appeals so that appeals for complex or serious cases are heard by a panel rather than one person.</p>	01.11.2024	<p>The Brigade's Grievance and Discipline policies; and notification of hearing outcome letters make it clear that the individual has the right to appeal outcomes from any grievance or discipline hearing. The Policy sets out the roles of individuals, the nature of appeals and the process for undertaking those appeals including timescales.</p> <p>All hearing appeals against dismissal are the responsibility of the Fire Authority. Under the Authority's Scheme of Delegation these are delegated to the Executive Committee for all roles up to and including Area Manager and Audit and Governance Committee for ACFOs and CFOs.</p>		Expand the use of the Fire Authority Appeals Panel to hear appeals relating to complex or serious cases.	PPP 2441	C Chisholm
	<p>Fire and rescue authorities and <b>chief fire officers</b> should make sure all service managers and members of fire authorities who hear appeals receive appropriate training.</p>	01.02.2025	<p>We are rolling out a programme of ACAS training which will be extended to Fire Authority with regards to conducting Appeals Hearings.</p>				



14	Chief fire officers should implement a process that makes sure they can oversee and scrutinise their services' performance relating to misconduct issues. This process should provide:  • a strategic overview of performance and analysis of trends, including disproportionality; • regular reporting of issues, outcomes and trends to the fire and rescue authority; and • identification of learning outcomes and how they will be shared with fire and rescue service staff, to prevent repeat behaviours	01.11.2025	Key performance indicators relating to the number of discipline and grievance cases are monitored by ELT and the Fire Authority on a quarterly basis.		Expand our existing suite of performance indicators in relation to Grievance, Whistleblowing and Discipline cases to help us to identify trends across protected characteristics.  Consider how learning outcomes from discipline cases can be shared with fire and rescue staff to prevent repeat behaviours	PPP 2438  PPP 2442	C Chisholm  C Chisholm
15	Chief fire officers should put in place a process for sharing learning from misconduct cases that have been resolved while preserving the confidentiality of all parties involved. Any learning should feed into the national system, when established.	01.02.2025			Implement a process for sharing learning relating to resolved misconduct cases whilst preserving the confidentiality of all persons involved	PPP 2443	C Chisholm
	The National Fire Chiefs Council should establish a system for sharing learning from more serious cases of misconduct with fire and rescue service staff. The information shared should preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of all parties involved. The College of Fire and Rescue, once it is established, should take responsibility for maintaining this system.	01.05.2025					