

# **PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONDING TO BULLYING, HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND VICTIMISATION**



## **REPORT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**For Information**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the National Joint Council circular NJC6/2025 which provides Fire & Rescue Services with ten principles for raising and responding to bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation misconduct claims.
- 1.2 To outline the Brigade's current arrangements for dealing with these issues of misconduct and plans to strengthen training, policies and procedures in the future.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Members note the National Joint Council circular on Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Victimisation at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That Members note the Brigade's current arrangements for dealing with Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Victimisation and future plans to strengthen how these claims are handled.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The National Joint Council's Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) has recently published a set of principles aligned to ACAS guidance and produced with both the Employer and Employee sides of the NJC.
- 3.2 The NJC is continuously committed to ensuring Fire and Rescue Services have the right cultures and behaviours in place and has agreed ten principles to support the handling of misconduct cases in relation to bullying, harassment, discrimination and/or victimisation.

The principles are listed below and detailed at Appendix 1:

- Leadership accountability
- Collective responsibility
- Working together
- Effective training
- Robust processes
- Identify recurring patterns

- Providing support for everyone
- Balancing confidentiality with victim communication
- Continuous improvement
- Legal compliance

- 3.3 The NJC recognises that the “Grey Book” provides minimum grievance and disciplinary procedures, as well as additional guidance, and each service will have their own policies and procedures which have been developed locally in line with the ACAS code of practice, and in agreement with union representatives.
- 3.4 The principles aim to provide additional clarity and confidence to all parties; those raising concerns, those who have had concerns raised about them, and those who are responsible for handling misconduct cases.

#### **4. OUR CURRENT APPROACH**

- 4.1 Our Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework and Dignity at Work Policy set clear expectations for all staff, promoting respect, fairness, and accountability. We provide clear reporting routes, impartial investigations, and confidential support to ensure concerns can be raised safely. Policies and Procedures are regularly reviewed with Trade Unions and staff networks to drive continuous improvement.
- 4.2 We recognise the need to strengthen training provision, and a plan is in place to address this.
- 4.3 Case data is monitored quarterly at ELT People & Culture meetings to identify patterns and take corrective action.

#### **5. FUTURE STEPS**

- 5.1 In 2026, we will launch a Dignity at Work and Culture training programme for all staff and managers, combining workshops and e-learning to build understanding of roles, responsibilities, inclusive behaviours, and early intervention.

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