



HMICFRS 'VALUES AND CULTURE IN FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES'



CFB ASSESSMENT OF ITS
CURRENT POSITION AGAINST
HMICFRS REPORT'S
RECOMMENDATIONS



APRIL 2023

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Recommendation 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.

Current Status

Confidential Formal Ways of Raising Concerns

- In accordance with Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure
- In accordance with Grievance Policy and Procedure
- In accordance with the Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure

Other Formal Ways of Raising Concerns

- Trade Unions, Staff Networks, Buddy System, Mentors, HR Team
- Line Manager Wellbeing Conversations
- Employee Assistance Programme (Health and Wellbeing Issues)
- Personal Development Reviews
- Exit Interviews

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Lack of clarity at policy level of confidential arrangements for raising a concern
- No clear arrangements that set out the ways in which staff can raise a concern in a confidential way.
- Our Whistleblowing, Grievance and Dignity at Work arrangements are not consistently communicated with all staff.
- Our internal safeguarding policies and procedures need to be developed.

Action Required

- 1.1 Review existing Whistle Blowing, Grievance and Dignity at Work policies and procedures for staff to raise a concern including consideration of an external independent reporting line (PPP118).
- 1.2 As part of our staff engagement and communications strategy, develop clear mechanisms to signpost approved processes for staff to raise concerns in a confidential way (EDI 6).
- 1.3 Strengthen the monitoring of other formal arrangements to support the identification of any unreported concerns (PPP 122).
- 1.4 Review our internal safeguarding arrangements utilising NFCC Safeguarding Self-Assessment Toolkit S2 – Managing Allegations Guidance for staff in all roles at all levels (PPP 147)

Recommendation 2

By 1 October 2023

National Employer, the Local Government Association and the Fire Chiefs Council should review any current independent arrangements whereby staff can raise concerns outside their FRS. They should 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 FRS.

Current Status

Whilst recommendation is not applicable to CFB directly, the 'independent reporting line' is a consideration under Recommendation 1 (1.1)

Action Required

No action required by CFB.

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 those provisions are suitable.

Current Status

Our Whistleblowing, Grievance and Dignity at Work policies and procedures all signpost individuals to sources of support and advice for those staff who have raised a concern.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- No evaluation has taken place in relation to the adequacy and suitability of the support and advice within our Whistleblowing, Grievance and Dignity at Work policies.

Action Required

- 3.1 Review and evaluate our Whistleblowing, Grievance and Dignity a Work policies to ensure the support and advice mechanisms, confidentiality, impartiality, and services are suitable and sufficient. (PPP118 Linked to 1.1)
- 3.2 Consider the usage of NFCC Challenging Behaviours toolkit. (PPP 72)

Recommendation 4

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.

Current Status

The internal HR team carries out the 'professional standards function' for the Brigade. This includes the appointment of a HR professional to each case who ensures that the process is carried out in line with policy and is applied consistently. This person is the single point of contact for the case and is responsible for ensuring that the individual raising the concern is regularly updated on progress.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- No formal provision for progression of cases involving staff at senior officer level.
- Not explored external provision of the professional standards function.
- EDI indicators not fully developed and embedded.

Action Required

- 4.1 Review the system for providing feedback for those who have raised concerns. (EDI 10)
- 4.2 Review current 'professional standards' arrangements for staff; explore external, independent provision of these standards and expand to include staff at senior officer levels. (EDI 8)
- 4.3 Monitor EDI indicators to identify any areas of weakness in service processes (core work).

Recommendation 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 that 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.

Current Status

External:

Members of the public can raise a concern through our external website which has been independently assessed as being 'accessibility compliant' by giving access to, for example, people with visual impairment or people where English is not their first language.

Feedback from SHV includes customer satisfaction on the service provided, as does fire safety audits carried out with local businesses.

Internal:

Staff with specific requirements, for example visual impairment or a neurodiversity condition are provided with resources that enable them to access information (e.g. screen to enlarge text on a PC, a filter screen which helps to identify letters).

Key documents are accessible to all staff via the Brigade's intranet site 'The Bridge' 24hrs per day, 365 days per year. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and other services such as counselling, the Samaritans, and MIND are signposted throughout the Brigade on various noticeboards. EDI Allies, Staff Networks, and Blue Light Champions are another source of contact for staff.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Whistleblowing policy is not consistently communicated with staff.
- No external independent reporting line for staff

Action Required

- 5.1 Review our 'Raising Concern' guidance including Whistleblowing, Grievance and Dignity at Work and revise as necessary. (EDI 7 Linked to 3.1)
- 5.2 As part of our staff engagement and communications strategy, develop clear, accessible mechanisms to signpost approved processes for staff to raise concerns (EDI 6)
- 5.3 As part of our community engagement and communications strategy, develop clear, accessible mechanisms to signpost approved processes for the public to raise concerns (EDI 91)

Recommendation 6

By 1 January 2024

The Home Office, working with the Ministry of Justice, should make sure 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.

Current Status

Not an action for CFB but we will keep a watching brief for any implications to policies as a result of any changes in legislation.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None until the new legislation is in place.

Action Required

None until the new legislation is in place.

Recommendation 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.

Current Status

Not an action for CFB but we will keep a watching brief for any implications to policies as a result of any changes in legislation.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None until the new legislation is in place.

Action Required

- None until the new legislation is in place.

Recommendation 8

By 1 December 2023

The Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council should review the existing relevant standards and underpinning guidance. It should:

- clearly state the requirements for background checks undertaken by services
- 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

Current Status

This is an action for Fire Standards Board but we will keep a watching brief and revisit our arrangements once new standard has been issued.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None until the new standard is issued.

Action Required

- None until the new standard is issued.

Recommendation 9

By 1 January 2024

- Chief Fire Officers should 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.
- Chief Fire Officers should make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing staff, new staff, and volunteers, according to their roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board

Current Status

We undertake background checks on staff (not DBS). All new appointments undergo pre-employment background checks in line with the Government Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS), this includes:

- References - obtained for all employment in the previous three years. Where an individual has only had one employment in that 3-year period then a character reference will be sought. No references are accepted from relatives or friends.
- Verification - this will be required in connection with issues of identity, eligibility to work as per the Asylum and Nationality Act, qualifications (where it is necessary to verify these) and other objectively justifiable requirements that the Brigade may have. An individual's passport is required for proof of Right to Work in the UK. If they don't have a current in date passport then we can take another combination of documents as defined under the Asylum and Nationality Act e.g. proof of NI and a Birth Certificate.

All staff undertake a basic criminal records check (DBS) of unspent convictions as part of pre-employment checks, these are reviewed by the organisation and a determination of whether an applicant presents a risk will be made.

Staff in roles that are not exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act e.g. those involving regulated activity undergo an Enhanced DBS check as required by their role. These enhanced DBS checks are renewed every 3 years if still required by the role.

We undertake Non-Police Personnel Vetting (NPPV) level 4 and National Security Vetting (NSV) SC level as per job role requirements.

In summary:

- All staff – Basic DBS
- Roles that are not exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act e.g., those involving regulated activity – Enhanced DBS
- Flexi Duty Officers, Communications Team, Executive Leadership Team, Principal Officers, NILO's, Group Managers and Head of I.T – NPPV Level 4
- Executive Leadership Team, Principal Officers, NILO's, Group Managers, Head of I.T – NSV SC Level

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Most of the vetting standards are set out within our Recruitment, Selection and Promotion Policy and Procedure – thereby taking account of new/newly promoted staff. Retrospective checks on any existing staff that have not been recently appointed or promoted is not clear.
- Vetting standards are not displayed on all role profiles and not included in all adverts.

Action Required

- 9.1 Review DBS policy to ensure that all background check arrangements are included and that they are suitable and sufficient. Publish Policy externally and internally and confirm compliance. Make it clear on all role profiles and job adverts what standards we are applying. (EDI 31)

Recommendation 10

By 1 Sep 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.

Current Status

Action for Chief Constables but keeping a watching brief for implications to FRSs.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- No formal arrangements in place to inform and deal with identified incidents where the sharing of information would be appropriate.

Action Required

10.1 Working with Cleveland Police, establish formal arrangements within our Recruitment and Selection, Dignity at Work, Grievance and Discipline Policies to ensure that we are informed of and deal with identified incidents where the sharing of information would be appropriate under the Common Law Police Disclosure powers. (PPP 134)

Recommendation 11

By 1 Dec 2023

The Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing standards and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle staff disclosures, complaints and grievances.

Current Status

This action is for the Fire Standards Board and NFCC but we will keep a watching brief for any new areas of good practice and adopt this as appropriate.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None until the issue of any revised standards

Action Required

- None until the issue of any revised standards

Recommendation 12

By 1 Mar 2024

Chief Fire Officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling.

Current Status

Any new Fire Standard is implemented through our Internal Fire Standards Board; this is how we will capture the criteria against which we can assess our current practices to give us a gap analysis.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None until the issue of any revised standards

Action Required

- 12.1 Undertake a gap analysis on our current policies against the new Fire Standard relating to staff disclosure, complaint, and grievance. Address any identified gaps. (PPP135)

Recommendation 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:

- conduct and complete investigations, whether or not the staff member under investigation leaves.
- consider whether the incident requires immediate dismissal.
- provide training for staff who are carrying out investigations.
- ensure the diversity/neutrality of the investigation panel/person.

Current Status

This action is for the Fire Standards Board and NFCC but we will keep a watching brief for any new areas of good practice and adopt this as appropriate.

CFB's Discipline policy states that:

'If a member of staff submits their resignation whilst they are under investigation or prior to their disciplinary hearing, they are expected to serve a period of notice as set out in their terms and conditions of service. Every effort should be made to conclude the investigation and any disciplinary hearing prior to the employee's last day of service. Where the disciplinary process cannot be concluded prior to the employee's last day of service, the investigation or disciplinary process may continue past the last day of the employee's service. Any such outcome would be reflected in an employment reference'.

In practice we have been investigating and hearing the cases of individuals who have been subject to allegations of misconduct regardless of whether or not they resign or retire.

With regard to incidents requiring immediate dismissal the Discipline Policy states 'In cases of gross misconduct, an employee may be dismissed without notice. Where employment is terminated for gross misconduct; no payment in lieu of notice will be made.'

Training relating to investigations is currently undertaken by the HR team.

Our Discipline Policy Page 10 sets out clear roles/levels for those carrying out investigations, hearings and appeals at Levels 1,2 and 3.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- There is an opportunity to strengthen the wording within CFB'S Discipline Policy regarding concluding investigations of individuals who leave the Brigade.
- There is an opportunity to make the discipline investigation training more independent.

Action Required (Linked to 14.1 and 14.2)

- 13.1 Review the Brigade's Discipline Policy on receipt of any revised fire standard (PPP136)
- 13.2 Source independent investigation and hearing training for all supervisory, middle, and senior managers (PPP137)

Recommendation 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.

Current Status

Any new Fire Standard is implemented through our Internal Fire Standards Board; this is how we will capture the criteria against which we can assess our current practices to give us a gap analysis.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None until the issue of any revised standards, however as stated in 13 above there are opportunities for some areas to be strengthened.

Action Required (Linked to 13.1 and 13.2)

- 14.1 Review the Brigade's Discipline Policy on receipt of any revised fire standard (PPP136)
- 14.2 Source independent investigation and hearing training for all supervisory, middle and senior managers (PPP137)

Recommendation 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.

Current Status

There is currently a process to handle misconduct allegations against the chief fire officer. These are captured within the Discipline Policy and give requirements for an independent investigation with the Executive Committee of the Fire Authority having responsibility to hear the case and the Audit and Governance Committee having responsibility for hearing the appeal.

We will keep a watching brief on Home Office future work and reflect any identified good practice within our existing arrangements.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None until the new process is issued.

Action Required

- None until the new process is issued.
- See Recommendation 1.4 re Managing Allegations - Safeguarding

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.

Current Status

This recommendation relates to work required by NFCC and we will support this work as necessary.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None until the new system is established.

Action Required

- None until the new system is established.

Recommendation 17

With immediate effect

Chief Fire Officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that:

- 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.

Current Status

For the last three months we have been sending monthly information to the HMICFRS re staff gross misconduct and we have put a system in place to ensure we update this information monthly moving forward.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- There is an opportunity to formalise the arrangements for notifying the HMICFRS re staff gross misconduct through an amendment to the Brigade's Discipline Policy re responsibilities and process.

Action Required

17.1: Formalise the arrangements for notifying the HMICFRS re staff gross misconduct through an amendment to the Brigade's Discipline Policy re responsibilities and process. (PPP138)

Recommendation 18

By 1 August 2023

Chief Fire Officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations.

Current Status

For individuals making allegations against another individual and for individuals under investigation we would, where appropriate:

- appoint a welfare officer.
- signpost to professional help.
- formalised system for maintaining communications.
- support from Trade Unions.
- offer mediation.

Support for individuals carrying out the investigation/hearing includes:

- appropriate training in investigation and hearing manager responsibilities
- the appointment of an HR case advisor re process
- signposting to professional help

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- There is an opportunity to formalise the arrangements for assuring the HMICFRS that all parties re staff gross misconduct through an amendment to the Brigade's Discipline Policy re responsibilities and process.

Action Required

18.1 Chief Fire Officer to write to HMICFRS to give a copy of revised managing allegations guidance and assurance that all parties are supported in relation to on-going investigations (PPP139)

Recommendation 19

By 1 July 2023

The Home Office should examine whether any appeal processes for fire and rescue misconduct cases are appropriate.

Current Status

Appeal processes are clearly set out within our Dignity at Work, Grievance and Discipline Policies including responsibilities, timelines and expected outcomes and are in line with ACAS practice. The outcomes of the appeals are conveyed to the individual.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None unless Home Office advises of any gaps in appeals processes.

Action Required

- None unless Home Office advises of any gaps in appeals processes.

Recommendation 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 developing people standard.

Current Status

The 'Gap Analysis' relating to the Fire Standards re Leading the Service and Leading and Developing People are scheduled for completion to the Internal Fire Standards Board in Oct 2023. Following on from here an action plan will be produced to address any agreed gaps.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None until gap analyses have been concluded.

Action Required

- 20.1 Undertake a 'gap analysis' re Leading the Service Fire Standard (PPP 140)
- 20.2 Undertake a 'gap analysis' re Leading and Developing People Fire Standard (PPP 141)
- 20.3 Develop and implement an action plan relating to the 'Leading the Service' Fire Standard (PPP 142)
- 20.4 Develop and implement an action plan relating to the 'Leading and Developing People' Fire Standard (PPP 143)

Recommendation 21

By 1 June 2023

Chief Fire Officers should make sure that 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.

Current Status

We have a project in place (PPP35.1) to explore and, if appropriate, introduce 360-degree feedback for all managers within CFB and the project is to commence in Apr 2023 and conclude in Mar 2024.

We have researched potential providers and are awaiting the outcome of a NFCC market engagement exercise to support our sourcing of a 360-degree tool and this is due to be completed by 14th May 2023.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Our available capacity and current plans do not align to HMICFRS completion date of 1st Jun 2023 for ACFOs and above.

Action Required

- 21.1 Continue with current Project PPP35.1 and, if appropriate, progress implementation of 360-degree feedback processes for ACFOs and above, first.

Recommendation 22

By 1 September 2023

Chief Fire Officers should make sure that there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in the service. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports.

Current Status

We have a project in place (PPP35.1) to explore and, if appropriate, introduce 360-degree feedback for all managers within CFB and the project is to commence in Apr 2023 and conclude in Mar 2024.

We have researched potential providers and are awaiting the outcome of a NFCC market engagement exercise to support our sourcing of a 360-degree tool and this is due to be completed by 14th May 2023.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Our available capacity and current plans do not align to HMICFRS completion date of 1st Sep 2023 for all other leaders and managers (see Recommendation 21)

Action Required

22.1 Continue with current Project PPP35.1 and, if appropriate, progress implementation of 360-degree feedback processes for all other leaders and managers.

Recommendation 23

By 1 June 2023

Chief Fire Officers should seek 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.

Current Status

We have a project in place (PPP38.1) to review our current staff engagement strategy and arrangements and the project is to commence in Apr 2023 and conclude in Jun 2023. The review will include an assessment of the staff feedback mechanisms already in place and how these might be enhanced.

Project no PPP1 is in place to undertake an independent staff survey over the period Apr 23-Mar 2024 to give insight from staff in relation to culture. This will now commence on completion of review of staff engagement strategy.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Our current plans do not align to HMICFRS completion date of 1st Jun 2023.

Action Required

- 23.1 Review and, as appropriate, revise our staff engagement strategy (PPP 38.1).
- 23.2 Enhance our current arrangements to conduct staff surveys. (PPP 1.1)
- 23.3 Conduct a staff culture survey (PPP 1.2)
- 23.4 Enhance our current arrangements to conduct independent staff surveys. (PPP 148)
- 23.5 Implement actions against our staff engagement strategy (EDI 38.2)

Recommendation 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.

Current Status

We have a project in place (PPP38.1) to review our current staff engagement strategy and arrangements and the project is to commence in Apr 2023 and conclude in Jun 2023. The review will include monitoring arrangements that are already in place and how these might be enhanced.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- No holistic system to measure and monitor culture.

Action Required

- 24.1 Develop and implement a suite of indicators to measure the culture in CFB at all levels (PPP 149.1)
- 24.2 Develop a Dashboard on the Bridge to monitor watch and team cultures (PPP 149.2)

Recommendation 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.

Current Status

Not applicable for CFB

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- If the Government's response to the 'White' Paper confirms a College of Fire and Rescue Service is to be established then we can assess implications, gaps, and opportunities.

Action Required

- Monitor progress of the establishment of a Fire and Rescue College.

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.

Current Status

CFB has aligned the development of leaders in all roles and at all levels to the NFCC Leadership Model and Core Learning Pathway. This includes delivery of leadership and managements qualifications using the Apprenticeship Framework and people modules such as health, safety, and wellbeing, challenging inappropriate behaviours and equality, diversity, and inclusion.

In addition, on an annual basis, we invest in leadership development through our staff conference events which to date have focussed on leadership, EDI and Health and Wellbeing. Our 2023/24 programme of events includes a health and wellbeing conference (EDI 1.2) and several leadership events re Making CFB a Great Place to Work (PPP144).

Member development is mostly undertaken within Members' constituent councils. Specific training is provided on issues relating to the Fire Authority e.g., values and behaviour and code of ethics. Elected member development is aligned to role profiles which includes induction training which is given to all new Members and a rolling programme of maintenance training. The Fire Authority approve a Member Development Plan each year.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- We know from insight from our discipline and grievance cases that we need to do more work with our leaders in respect of challenging inappropriate behaviours.

Action Required

- 26.1 enhance our leadership and development training to support managers in challenging inappropriate behaviours and handling difficult conversations. (PPP 145)
- 26.2 introduce a leadership coaching scheme (PPP 36)
- 26.3 undertake a gap analysis against Level 4 Maturity model for leadership development and address any identified gaps (PPP 24.1)
- 26.4 review training and development arrangements for Elected Members (PPP 146)

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.

Current Status

EQIA's are a requirement in the development of all CFB policies and our processes are well-embedded and aligned to the NFCC EQIA toolkit.

HMICFRS 2021/22 (Page 44)

CFB has an effective process in place to assess equality impact. Our inspection found a comprehensive approach to equality impact assessments and people impact assessment with all published policies and procedures having assessments in date and completed.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None

Action Required

- None

Recommendation 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 the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality, diversity and inclusion data toolkit.

Current Status

We have recently introduced an easily accessible digital platform relating to the equality and diversity profile of both our workforce and our community - project no PPP7.1 refers. The profiles hold up to date data that can be manipulated down to Teesside ward level and support the targeting of community safety initiatives and positive action recruitment campaigns.

Project PPP6.1 saw the review of our existing performance indicators to give us more focussed measurements against the strategic outcomes for equality, diversity and inclusions. New indicators were introduced in Apr 2023 and these will be evaluated after first year (PPP 6.2).

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- None

Action Required

28.1 Evaluate our new suite of equality, diversity and inclusion indicators using good practice guidance and aligning to the requirements of NFCC toolkit and others to better support us in identifying and addressing disproportionality across our recruitment, retention, and progression arrangements (PPP 6.2)

Recommendation 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.

Current Status

Not applicable for CFB

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Once the Home Office publish data we can assess our existing arrangements both for gaps and opportunities.

Action Required

- Monitor progress of Home Office Data Publications.

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.

Current Status

Not applicable for CFB

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Once the Home Office publish data we can assess our existing arrangements both for gaps and opportunities.

Action Required

- Monitor progress of Home Office Data Publications.

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.

Current Status

Not applicable for CFB

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Once the Home Office publish data we can assess our existing arrangements both for gaps and opportunities.

Action Required

- Monitor progress of Home Office Data Publications.

Recommendation 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

Current Status

CFB has a Workforce Plan and a Succession Plan in place which covers our intentions relating to improving skills, capabilities, and the diversity of our workforce across all levels. The well-embedded workforce and succession planning arrangements are strategically led by the Executive Leadership Team.

On going projects to support the diversification of our workforce include:

- New approach to positive action (core work)
- Development of a CFB recruitment brand (PPP15.1)
- Identifying barriers to the recruitment and retention of staff to under-represented groups (PPP14.2)
- Explore Direct Entry as a means of recruiting to senior positions (PPP16)
- Undertake a gap analysis of our recruitment arrangements against NFCC Recruitment Maturity Model Level 4 (PPP25.2)

Our integrated Talent Management Framework includes opportunity for staff to be developed beyond role. The Development Gateway seeks to provide all staff, regardless of role and level, with the opportunity to reach their potential and be the best they can be. Following a pilot, a full roll out of the Gateway commenced in Apr 2023.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Review the direct entry scheme once the outcomes of the NFCC Direct Entry pilots are published (PPP 16)

Action Required

- 32.1 Identifying barriers to the recruitment and retention of staff to under-represented groups (PPP 14.2)
- 32.2 Explore Direct Entry as a means of recruiting to senior positions (PPP 16)
- 32.3 Undertake a gap analysis of our recruitment arrangements against NFCC Recruitment Maturity Model Level 4 (PPP 25.1)

Recommendation 33

By 1 Aug 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.

Current Status

As confirmed by HMICFRS 2021/22 Pages 45 and 46 we have processes for promotion and progression are fair, comprehensive, understood by staff and cover opportunities in all roles. We have improved at identifying, developing, and supporting talent and leadership skills at all levels.

Our integrated Talent Management Framework includes opportunity for staff to be developed beyond role. The Development Gateway seeks to provide all staff, regardless of role and level, with the opportunity to reach their potential and be the best they can be. Following a pilot, a full roll out of the Gateway commenced in Apr 2023.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Opportunities for improvement may be realised following the evaluation of the Development Gateway

Action Required

- 33.1 Evaluate our Development Gateway to ensure fairness in process (PPP 30.1)
- 33.2 Introduce a career pathway for staff in non-operational roles (PPP 150)

Recommendation 34

With Immediate Effect

Chief Fire Officer should review their implementation of the Core Code of Ethics and make sure it is being applied across their services.

Current Status

Together with the Code of Conduct, our Values and Ethical Behavioural Framework sets out those standards that uphold our organisational culture. The current Framework was established following a review in Nov 2018 when we aligned it to the NFCC Fire Standard 'Code of Core Code of Ethics for Fire & Rescue Services (England)'. 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'. To further embed our values and ethical behaviours over the last three years we have:

- embedded them into our recruitment, selection, and promotion arrangements.
- enhanced our induction process to ensure that new employees and newly promoted members of staff are fully aware of their values.
- better aligned our learning and development arrangements to the framework through annual e-learning and Personal Development Review processes.
- Improved our procurement arrangements by mainstreaming equality considerations.

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Opportunity to explore good practice identified following Round 2 HMICFRS inspections (Page 54 of HMICFRS Culture Report)

Action Required

34.1 Review the implementation of the Core Code of Ethics to incorporate any good practice following the HMICFRS Round 2 inspections (EDI 9)

Recommendation 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.

Current Status

N/A to CFB directly, will await a refresh of National Framework document from Government and review existing arrangements as necessary,

Gaps or Opportunities for Good Practice Improvement

- Gaps and opportunities will be assessed once the revised FRS National Framework document is published.

Action Required

- Monitor progress of review of FRS National Framework document.