

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Culture Statement of Intent

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval for the Culture Statement of Intent setting out the key ambitions for the Service's (Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service - HWFRS) organisational culture.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the Culture Statement of Intent is approved and published on the Service website.

Introduction and Background

2. Following the national focus on culture within the fire and rescue sector and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) spotlight report on values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) held a culture summit and released a Culture Action Plan in July 2023, to help deliver sustained improvements and establish an inclusive, safe culture across FRSs.
3. Prior to this, in February 2023, the Service commissioned an independent cultural audit, led by Dr Debra Willoughby in conjunction with ioda, the Service's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training provider. The audit recognised an overall positive culture within the Service and also made a number of recommendations to enable the Service to make EDI and ethics the fabric of the organisation. One key recommendation is to make our 'EDI strategic intent more explicit across the organisation'.
4. In addition to this, the Service has adopted the Code of Ethics, Fire Standards, safeguarding and wider culture and inclusion developments. These areas of focus are channelled through and supported by the Culture and Ethics Steering Group.

The Culture Statement of Intent

5. The Culture Statement of Intent aims to:

- Enable the Service to make our cultural strategic intent more explicit, reinforcing expected behaviours and conduct, and the expectation to call out behaviour that falls below our professional standards.
 - Provide a clear foundation to shape, guide and sustain our strategic goals and priorities, enabling a more inclusive and positive workplace to be developed and nurtured.
 - Provide a baseline to ensure anything we do is aligned to support our desired culture, making EDI and ethics the fabric of HWFRS.
6. The Culture Statement of Intent has been developed in conjunction with the Culture and Ethics Steering Group as a way to define our desired Service culture – where everyone feels safe and included and, where unacceptable behaviour is always dealt with and appropriate action taken. The Culture Statement of Intent can be found at Appendix 1.
7. Feedback from our staff survey, the independent cultural audit and themes from the confidential reporting line have told us the things we are getting right and the things we could do better, to continue to make HWFRS a great place to work. Based upon this feedback, there are four key statements of intent to describe where we want to be:



8. A summary of what this looks like in practice is provided, supported by the key message that achieving our desired culture is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. This culture statement will underpin the People Strategy objectives, and provide the guiding principles for the Culture and Ethics Steering Group workstreams.

Communication and Implementation

9. The Culture Statement of Intent will be launched Service-wide via a TriplePlay video, with promotion on the Organisational Culture SharePoint site. Engagement activities will take place to embed the culture statement, supported by regular messaging from the Strategic Leadership Board and senior managers, as well as

being championed by members of the Culture and Ethics Steering Group within their specific work areas and via staff networks. It will also be published externally via the Service website.

Sector Considerations

10. The NFCC have developed a Culture Action Plan and culture remains a national focus. A follow up national Culture Conference is scheduled for July 2024, which will be attended by a representative from the Service.
11. Alongside delivering against the Culture Action Plan, the NFCC have attended and given evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee and the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee as part of their scrutiny of the culture of Fire and Rescue Services. The NFCC has worked closely with HMICFRS to support their ongoing inspections, including the thematic inspection of misconduct expected to be published soon. They have worked with the Government to support the reforms set out in the White Paper including work around the Code of Ethics, Fire Standards, safeguarding and wider culture and inclusion developments. In addition, they have worked with the national employers and trade unions through the Inclusive Fire Service Group and have engaged with other organisations who are responding to similar cultural challenges to share learning.
12. The Service will continue to remain appraised and engaged with the national picture.

Conclusion/Summary

13. A Culture Statement of Intent will support the Service in continuing to improve and foster an inclusive, safe culture and will make our EDI strategic intent more explicit across the organisation (as recommended by the cultural audit). It is recommended that the Fire Authority approve the Culture Statement of Intent for HWFRS.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<p>All managers responsible for ensuring that the desired culture underpins all service policies, procedures and systems.</p> <p>No additional financial costs are identified.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRMP and core organisational strategies • Core Code of Ethics • People Strategy
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify</p>	<p>A poor organisational culture can significantly impact on the service we deliver to the communities, as well as</p>

any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	reputational damage. Introducing a culture statement enables our EDI strategic intent to be more explicit.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Consultation has been undertaken with the Culture and Ethics Steering group, which comprises of staff members from across the organisation.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Yes, no adverse impacts identified.
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	N/A

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Culture Statement of Intent