



Our People Strategy

Staffordshire Fire
& Rescue Service

2023-2026



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Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding



Chief Fire Officer

A welcome to Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Our People Strategy. I know that without a strong, healthy, and vibrant workforce, we cannot achieve the strategic priorities that we have established. It is important that we provide an environment where all of our people can be their true self in the workplace, free from any form of inappropriate behaviours or actions. I am committed to listening to all of our people in order to provide a forum for everyone to suggest ideas and to provide solutions to some very challenging situations. In order to support people in achieving their true potential, it is incumbent upon all of us to embrace and promote an inclusive environment in order to provide the highest level of service to our communities, whether that be through prevention, protection, or response.

We will develop leaders at all levels that truly embrace the principles outlined within the Core Code of Ethics, and that demonstrate these on a daily basis. We are operating at a time of significant change, both operationally and organisationally. Whether that be through the changing operational demand picture and the increase in both flooding, and wildfire incidents, or through the legislative framework changes related to protection, these challenges need to be accommodated and it is our people that deliver against these challenges.

Our workforce is becoming more diverse, however, there is much more to do in this area, as such our positive action work and the workforce development planning group, have a crucial role to play in improving this picture in the coming years. In addition, the challenges we face regarding on-call recruitment and retention. We need innovative modern solutions developing, in order to ensure that we can provide timely interventions, when required, with the appropriate resources.

We learned a lot throughout the pandemic period and have adapted our approaches to flexible working and hybrid working accordingly. These new approaches mean that we can appeal to a wider group of potential employees, as the flexibility that we can offer will suit many different lifestyles and provide opportunities for many who previously did not see the fire and rescue service as a career option.

We have some fantastic people that work hard every day, providing the highest level of service to our communities, throughout the county and city. My commitment is that I will provide all of the required support to ensure that the skills that they need in order to perform their roles is delivered, as well as ensuring that the environment in which they work is positive and productive. The wellbeing of our people is vital in order for us to continue to improve.

- Foreword By Rob Barber



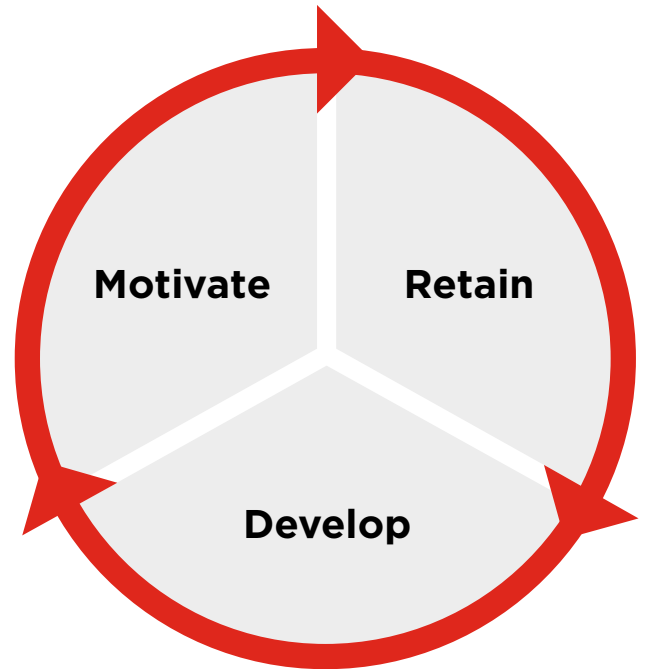


A summary of our Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service People Strategy

This People Strategy is Staffordshire's own plan for its people, putting people at the core of everything we do. It is our guiding document which will help us to retain, develop and motivate our workforce, ensuring that we continue to attract individuals to join us as we continue on our journey to be a leading example of an inclusive and representative employer.

This will be a continual and constantly evolving process to find a balance where firefighters, Managers and Support Staff agree that the culture is good and the treatment of everyone is both inclusive and fair.

Therefore, we have designed this People Strategy to achieve an alignment of goals that unite our own people and the communities we serve.



Our People Vision

Our vision is to have a fully inclusive workforce that embraces difference to make us stronger, more reflective and understanding of the communities, we serve.

In order to do this, we need to focus on leadership, our culture, talent, and the development of essential skills.

All the elements we are committed to, to make the Service proud. Making Staffordshire the safest place to be.



Our Mission



Our Vision



Our Values



Introduction

We have aligned our People Strategy to the Core Code of Ethics, it is important that these five ethical principles are paramount in everything that we do.

Therefore, the People Strategy will focus on:

- **Putting Our Communities First**
- **Equality Diversity and Inclusion**
- **Leadership**
- **Dignity and Respect**
- **Integrity**

Dignity, respect and integrity will form the foundations of all aspects of the strategy and will underpin every element.

For each of the five ethical principles a senior leader has shown a personal commitment by becoming a champion of each principle, proving their own commitment to embedding the ethical principles. This demonstrates that all of the ethical principles are truly considered and promoted by the Senior Leadership Team.

For added strength we have ensured that workforce planning is integral to the changing needs of the Service.





Introducing the senior leaders and the ethic which they champion:

Integrity



Senior Leader Champion:
Chief Fire Officer Rob Barber

We will act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything that we do.

Fundamentally, workplace integrity is about having strong principles and values, which you demonstrate through your conduct in the work environment. One definition of integrity includes that people do the right thing even when nobody is watching. This is something that the Service would like to encourage in every area.

How will we do this?

- Include reference to the CCoE's in every policy as it is updated
- Reference the CCoE in all our training provisions including for new starters and at each course that we deliver
- Continue with the roll out of active bystander training
- Apply integrity to every decision we make
- Ensure our zero-tolerance statement is displayed in all departments/stations.

What will success look like?

- Everyone follows the clear standards of behaviour that are set out with the guiding principles of the CCoE
- Poor behaviour is swiftly called out and dealt with, resulting in a reduction in the amount of issues raised due to poor or misguided behaviour
- Staff are comfortable to challenge
- Staff are willing to fill the "open chairs" at board meetings and contribute to discussions.

Benefits

A culture that is safe for everyone to have an opinion and bring their true selves to work.





Leadership



Deputy Chief Fire Officer:

Glynn Luznyj

We are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

To ensure that our leaders have the ability to lead inspire and direct others in the Service. That they are clear communicators and are able to drive forward the core values and strategies of the Service. Our culture will enable us to identify potential leaders and we will support them and invest in them to ensure that they can reach their full potential.

How we will do this:

- Develop consistent promotion processes that are transparent, fit for purpose, accessible and inclusive for all employees
- Refresh leadership and management programmes ensuring that they reflect the core values of the Service
- Produce rigorous development and training packages which support the leaders and ensure that they can move forward with strategic outcomes and the core values of the Service
- Continue to ensure that the appraisal process enables the Service to offer support and identify where further development is needed
- Work in accordance with the National Leadership Framework to create leaders who are both professionally and operationally excellent and who have the ability to inspire to motivate others
- Ensure individuals are confident and supported in the roles they complete.

What will success look like?

- Improved levels of operational and strategic competence for all of our leaders
- Increased knowledge and understanding of their direct reports
- Promotion processes that are trusted and fully understood
- Greater use of coaches and mentors that are active across the Service
- Confidence of employees that managers can intervene and support where welfare is needed
- More participation in leadership development programmes
- Improved staff retention.

Benefits:

We have inspirational leaders that help to support an effective and positive work environment, leading to great job satisfaction.





Putting our Communities First



Assistant Chief Fire Officer:
Michelle Hickmott

We put the interests of the public, the community and service users first.

We need to be at the centre of communities to make a difference and meet the needs of the different societies and groups within Staffordshire. This means being outward facing and engaging with communities within both the towns and rural areas of a diverse demographic with very different requirements. Ensuring that all of these communities have a voice that can be heard which allows us to represent and serve them. We will work in the communities and include youth engagement and outreach to ensure recruitment is inclusive and diverse.

This means valuing our volunteers and colleagues and those who contribute to our work in the community. We will strive for excellence, and commit to always challenge prejudice and discrimination.



How we will do this:

- Create inclusive communities across the Service and engage with the different voices of these groups, including the silent voices
- Engage and consult with local communities ensuring that local stations give them a direct voice shaping our provision to them
- Use a consistent framework in all stations to ensure inclusion is paramount
- Ensure effective monitoring of our workforce demographic
- Look to increase our diversity, whilst valuing the expertise that we already have in place.

What will success look like?

- Staff who understand the needs of their community and are at the centre of local community events.
- Local groups feel supported and access our youth engagement, volunteer and outreach programmes
- Volunteers who uphold the Service Core Code of ethics, inclusive behaviours and are ambassadors for the service
- A more diverse workforce
- Consultation exercises that have contributions from a diverse range of people.

Benefits:

We understand the needs of our communities and can therefore serve them better.





Dignity & Respect



Director of Finance:

David Greensmith

We treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

A culture of dignity and respect, takes mutual trust across the Service and this is something that is currently embedded and will continue to be at the forefront of how we interact with each other. We should be treating people in the way we would like to be treated and this behaviour should be demonstrated by all irrespective of their role or seniority within the Service.

How we will do this:

- Through the Active Bystander Training, set behavioural expectations and define the way we should treat each other, with dignity and respect. This ensures that we are all aware of what constitutes inappropriate behaviour
- Continue to challenge any behaviour that is not in line with the CCoE by providing corrective feedback and on occasion taking formal action should it be necessary

- Use appraisals as an opportunity to provide clear and honest feedback for issues to be addressed in an a truly constructive manner
- Ensure everyone is aware of the anonymous reporting platform, Say So.

What will success look like?

- A culture in which dignity and respect provides the foundations for individuals to feel valued and supported
- Diversity and inclusion are valued to provide an environment where everyone is listened to and their contribution valued
- A reduction in misconduct cases that have stemmed from inappropriate behaviour that has not been challenged.

Benefits:

The benefits of having a culture that treats everyone with dignity and respect cannot be overstated. It means greater diversity across the Service and creativity of thought to improve everyone's working lives, as we provide a safe environment where poor behaviour is not tolerated.





Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)



Area Manager – Head of Operations:
James Bywater

We continually recognise and promote the value of equality, diversity and inclusion, both within the fire and rescue service and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are the three guiding principles that help to create a fair society where everyone is heard and represented. Equality is about equal opportunities and protecting people from discrimination, whilst diversity is about recognising and respecting the differences in people. We want everyone to feel comfortable and bring their whole self to work with a culture where everyone feels welcomed, accepted and valued.

How we will do this:

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the workforce and highlight the benefits that this brings to any environment
- Ensure that all staff understand and value the benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Support underrepresented groups to ensure they are heard and have influence
- Ensure recruitment processes are appropriate, transparent and inclusive
- Deliver programmes that attract retain and develop underrepresented groups
- Maintain our zero-tolerance approach to bullying an/or discriminatory behaviour in the workforce, including supporting staff who report any incidents of bullying / and or discrimination and investigate cases quickly and fairly
- Listen to staff and communities to grow the ideal work environment
- Use positive action to develop ways of supporting underrepresented groups
- Through our staff support networks, we will increase the number of applicants from underrepresented groups increasing workforce diversity at all levels
- Make inclusion an integral part of our behaviours and policies





What will success look like?

- Staff who fully understand and engage with our standards
- An Increase in number of applicants for roles from underrepresented groups.
- Improved workforce diversity at all levels in the service
- Engaging with seldom heard groups
- Improvement in our staff survey results
- A reduction in grievances and sickness absence
- Changes in processes will take into account individual differences, resulting in happier employees
- Established and trusted Staff Networks that provide support and guidance to members of the Service when needed
- Inclusion that is embedded into everything we do

Benefits

A diverse workforce that is representative of the communities we serve will ensure we are better placed to hear and understand a range of views and perspectives.





How we look after and support our people

Health, wellbeing and fitness:

A healthy workplace is a happy work place and this means continuing to invest in staff welfare. This is both by ensuring that physical fitness is supported and investment is made into providing counselling service, supporting mental wellbeing and occupational health initiatives.

Currently we have multiple ways of supporting all of our people to make this an inclusive place to work.



- Access to Occupational Health (this includes physio and counselling)
- Thrive App
- Access for all staff (not just operational) to the Fire Fighters Charity
- Mental health first aiders
- Leadership training to ensure that anyone responsible for leading has received the appropriate training to support their teams
- Staff networks are starting to form across the service to provide additional support where needed
- TRiM (Trauma Risk Management) is available as immediate support after any incident
- Various incentives from our dedicated Wellbeing Nurse which have included wellbeing walks, yoga taster sessions and a wellbeing day are just a few examples
- Every 6 weeks a meeting is held with all the stakeholders to evaluate the provision
- Fitness training is key for every firefighter and our Fitness Advisor is key to providing support with this as and when needed

We are always listening and looking for ways to improve what we do and what we offer.

Dignity, Respect and Integrity form the foundation of all aspects of this strategy and underpin every element, in order for this to be successful, they must be apparent in everything that we do.





Engaging the ethical principles in all that we do

Workforce planning:

Workforce planning is regularly used to analyse our existing employees and is the starting point for planning for future staffing requirements.

This is done through:

- Knowledge and skills gaps analysis
- Reviewing the age of the existing workforce
- Developing management procedures
- Setting recruitment strategies

Effective workforce planning, ensures that the Service is prepared for the future with the necessary talent, knowledge, and experience to produce positive and proactive Service reflecting the needs of the communities that we serve.

Recruitment and selection:

The aim is to be an employer of choice to attract employees who are the best fit to the Service in a timely manner. Selection needs to be transparent and fair, encouraging diversity to become representatives of the communities we serve, by designing effective selection and relevant recruitment processes. We need to support new employees into the Service with relevant and supportive onboarding. Engaging and encouraging throughout the process.

Robust workforce planning data will underpin our succession plan giving clear direction for the future.

Promotion processes to be transparent and relevant to the future needs of the Service.

Monitoring and evaluation:

HR, EDI and Learning and Development will work closely with managers to provide a Service that is constantly evolving to provide a relevant, professional Service that is both up to date and reflective of historical learning. It will ensure that employees have the correct skills and training. Training programmes to be reflective of the needs of the individuals and ultimately the Service.

Changing how we do things:

In an ever-changing world, being open minded and considering criticism, we will look to learn from our experience and look to change in accordance with what is needed both from our communities and by our staff.

Unions:

We are proud of a long standing history with various Unions, such as the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and Unison. Always endeavouring to achieve a respectful relationship that strives to create a platform for opinions to be shared to create mutually beneficial agreements for employees and members alike. For example, policy updates or changes are negotiated with union officials and followed by consultation with the wider work force to ensure changes are considered from all points of view.

Whilst there can often be challenges to the Union / Employer relationship, SFRS promise to always listen to ensure that employees are always at the heart of any decisions.





People Strategy 1 – 5 Year Plan

Having listened to suggestions from the Service, we have scoped our People Strategy to drive improvement with people being central to everything we do and reflective of the Core Code of Ethics.

Key: Welfare Appraisal

Attracting and keeping talented people	Promoting a positive culture	Developing skills for now and in the future	Developing future leaders
Compete in the recruitment market by continuing to raise our profile and promoting our recruitment offer And look to increase our diversity to reflect our Community	Develop and launch effective culture surveys to drive improvement, throughout all levels of the Service creating the ideal work environment	Effectively monitor the workforce diversity to ensure we are reflecting the demographic of the people of Staffordshire	Development & delivery of People Leadership courses to support and drive effective leadership
Develop and learn from exit interviews & feedback provided during the Appraisal Process	Give Manager's the skills and capability to prevent and manage absence and support wellbeing	Improve mandatory training to ensure everyone has the skills needed for their role	Support leaders to workforce plan and identify opportunities for talent to be developed
Build a great onboarding experience			
Develop robust succession planning to provide clear pathways for progression. To embed consistent transparent, fit for purpose, accessible and inclusive for all employees This is being continually reviewed and developed	Continue to refresh People Policies to support our ambitions and to take swift and corrective action in the management of any incidents of bullying or discriminatory behaviour		
Refresh our recognition arrangements	Improve the speed of response to issues raised by our People		





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