



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Policy and Strategy Committee

SHAPING OUR FUTURE 'ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH' UPDATE 2020

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 24 July 2020

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on organisational development, equality, diversity and inclusion activities taking place across the organisation.

Recommendations:

That Members note the progress made in the organisational development and inclusion agenda.

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1. BACKGROUND

This report provides an update for Members on the progress made on the organisational development (OD), equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) workstreams within the organisation. Workforce equalities monitoring information is presented to Human Resources Committee every six months.

2. REPORT

2.1 During the last 12 months, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has made further progress in moving forwards the workstreams set out in the Organisational Development and Inclusion (ODI) Strategy (2015-2020). This is to be superseded by the Service's new People Strategy which is currently in development.

2.2 The ODI workstreams are also addressing three of the four areas for improvement arising from the people elements of the HMICFRS inspection which took place in 2019. These are:

- Promoting the right values;
- Culture ensuring fairness and promoting diversity;
- Managing performance and developing leaders.

2.3 This paper seeks to provide Members with an update on progress, and appraise them of future objectives. Key priorities during the last year have included:

- A new performance and development review (PDR) policy;
- A values-based behavioural framework;
- A joint commitment on diverse workforce;
- Advancing the BSL Charter work.

PDR

2.4 The Service's annual PDR process is an opportunity for the line manager to meet with their line reports and discuss their performance over the previous 12 months and consider what training and development needs to be put in place to meet the next year's objectives.

2.5 A project was initiated to deliver the different facets of this work. These included a complete review of the policy, a new form, process and guidance and a new electronic solution for recording the form.

2.6 The PDR form is now recorded on the iTrent system which provides much more functionality than the previous version. Performance objectives have also been created which managers can choose and tailor for their staff. These have also been linked to business plans and Service strategic documents to

show the 'golden thread' between individual work and the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan.

- 2.7 The iTrent system also provides the Service with a great deal more management information, as well as the opportunity for greater quality assurance of the process.
- 2.8 The new policy governing PDRs also further embeds 1:1s, or 'supervision' as it is sometimes known, as a key part of the performance management cycle at the Service.

BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK

- 2.9 Alongside the PDR process has been the launch of the Service's new Behavioural Framework, which is attached at Appendix A to this report. This piece of work is a progression of the Service's values which were launched in 2016. The framework was inspired and influenced by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Leadership Framework and similar competency tools developed by Nottingham City Council and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- 2.10 The document covers all of the four values (value and respect; we are professional; one team; and openness to change) and is split in to three different levels – employees, managers and strategic leaders. Within each area there are positive and negative behavioural indicators.
- 2.11 This tool is to be used by managers during coaching/mentoring conversations, 1:1/supervision meetings, PDRs and will become a key part of the performance management process at NFRS.

JOINT COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

- 2.12 As part of the organisation's drive to communicate the business case for diversity and improve internal understanding of positive action, the Service has developed a Joint Commitment between the Chief Fire Officer, Chair of the Fire Authority and its representative bodies (FBU, FOA and Unison). This is attached at Appendix B to this report.
- 2.13 The document demonstrates that all stakeholders are supportive of the organisation's approach to reducing under-representation in the Service's workforce. It is hoped that this document, alongside training and other methods, can be used to improve employees' understanding of positive action for recruitment, retention and progression.

LGBT+

- 2.14 NFRS continues to support LGBT+ service users and staff. The organisation was proud sponsors of Worksop and Nottingham Pride in 2019 and has shown visible support during International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, in addition to raising awareness of LGBT equality through

the Service's training packages to its workforce. For LGBT History Month in February of this year, Christopher Jones, an on-call firefighter at Harworth Fire Station, [talked on camera](#) about his experiences of coming out to his family and colleagues.

FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT POSITIVE ACTION

- 2.15 The Service is recruiting to wholetime firefighter positions in 2020. In order to prepare for this, the Service has seconded a Crew Manager in to the OD and Inclusion Team. This role will be a central part of the next 'Yes You Can' campaign which will see between 24 and 36 new firefighters enter the organisation from April 2021. In terms of diversity, the Service hopes to build on the excellent outcomes from 2018 when 29% of successful candidates were women and 20% were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

- 2.16 The death of George Floyd in May brought to the forefront the subject of race equality in the workplace and in society. A large number of BAME employees met to speak about their feelings and fears which had been brought to the surface by the recent Black Lives Matter protests. A number of concerns were raised by the group which NFRS will be acting upon over the next 12 months and beyond. It is hoped that this group will continue to meet more frequently in future.
- 2.17 The Service BAME action plan is currently under review and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer is liaising with BAME employees on this action plan during July. Additional funding has also been earmarked to support the action plan's delivery and wider inclusion agenda. This consultation work continues to highlight wider concerns of BAME employees and communities and directly links to the Services positive action to better reflect and serve those communities.
- 2.18 The COVID 19 pandemic, combined with the focus on Black Lives Matter, has further raised concerns over its reported, disproportionate impact upon BAME communities and work is underway to assess impact on the Service BAME colleagues. Line managers have been provided guidance and a risk assessment for each individual to discuss, feedback is currently being collated with the support of the Occupational Health Team.
- 2.19 The Service is also liaising with the National Fire Chiefs Council to ensure the fire sector is sharing information and accessing national government, as well as public health guidance to mitigate the impact of the pandemic upon its BAME employees.

BSL CHARTER

- 2.20 NFRS is signed up to the British Deaf Association's British Sign Language (BSL) Charter, pledging to make its services accessible to BSL users. Since signing up, five NFRS employees from its Fire Prevention and Fire Protection departments have enrolled on a British Sign Language level one course.
- 2.21 In order to improve communication and awareness, a new web page has been designed for BSL users on fire safety, in addition to a communication resource for crews to use at incidents with BSL and other users with communication barriers. Deaf equality training has also been delivered to community safety staff, administrators and the Service's SLT. The Service has also collaborated with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service on a joint non-emergency SMS number for enquiries from deaf service users. The Service also delivered an open day for the Deaf community to raise awareness of what the Service does and of fire safety issues pertinent to the community.

360-DEGREE FEEDBACK

- 2.22 Access to 360-degree feedback for middle and senior leaders continues to be rolled out, with another cohort of five managers taking place since the last report to Policy and Strategy Committee. This feedback enables managers to complete a self-assessment and receive feedback about their management skills and styles from their teams, peers and line manager. This leads to a 1:1 feedback session and action plan for the manager to support personal development.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT - STAFF SURVEY 2020

- 2.23 The Service's Staff Survey in 2018 saw 55% of all employees completing the questionnaire, the highest ever completion rate for the Service. As a result of the last survey, the organisation prioritised the review of the PDR process, improved ICT training including recently invested in an ICT trainer, enhanced signposting and awareness relating to mental health at work and redoubled its efforts to improve internal communication with staff.
- 2.24 This year's survey is open and, so far, 45% of staff have completed it after three weeks. It is hoped that the organisation can improve the response rate again this year.

ENGAGING WITH BAME COMMUNITIES

- 2.25 Since the Government's announcement of business places reopening, the Service's Fire Protection Team have engaged with businesses in relation to ensuring safe practices are engaged as buildings re-open. This includes support and advice to building owners where premises may have changed their operating models or adapted their building layouts in order to adopted 'Covid-secure' requirements. In order to engage more effectively with BAME communities and business owners, the Service engaged with contacts from

the Inclusion Team and engaged directly with a number of organisations that specifically serve BAME communities.

- 2.26 In relation to domestic fire safety, the Prevention Team has been engaging in telephone triaging for safe and well referrals, and also undertaking ‘befriending and support’ phone calls to vulnerable members of the community. Following the publication of the Public Health England research in to the disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19 for BAME communities, the Service has adopted an approach for vulnerable people, where they identify as being from a BAME community, to offer support, advice and signposting to relevant agencies and support services.

COLLABORATION

- 2.27 The Service continues to work with partners across Nottinghamshire and the fire sector. NFRS was part of a multi-agency partnership conference in 2019 on LGBT mental health and wellbeing. The Service was also part of a multi-agency disability history month conference on role models and leadership, at this event Pulp Friction members (the social enterprise working with individuals with learning disabilities who run the Services canteen) spoke about their experience and the skills they have gained. NFRS plans to take part in another Disability History Month conference on hidden disabilities later this year.
- 2.28 The Service also continues to be a proactive member of the Future Leaders Programme. This is a multi-agency positive action leadership programme aimed at reducing under-representation at middle and senior management levels across Nottingham.
- 2.29 NFRS is also part of the working groups for the EDI Strategy and the National Code of Ethics. The latter is a recommendation from Sir Tom Winsor’s [State of Fire and Rescue](#) report. NFRS’s values-based Behavioural Framework, which was developed in advance of the recommendation, is expected to fulfil some of the requirements of the new code.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Human resources and learning and development implications for the workstreams outlined above are addressed by the owners of each project, workstream or initiative.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this is not a policy, function or service. This report is a part of the agreed reporting arrangements for equalities activities.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Some of the work described above will help the organisation to meet its obligations held within the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act (2010)

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Some of the organisation's collaboration workstreams have been highlighted within the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the progress made in the organisational development and inclusion agenda.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER