



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSION UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 23 April 2021

Purpose of Report:

To provide members with an update on the organisational development and inclusion workstreams which form part of the People Strategy.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

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1. BACKGROUND

During 2020 the Service has continued its commitment to developing organisational culture and to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion as a guiding principle. The following report provides a broad overview of some of the workstreams the organisation has progressed over the last 12 months. This report should be read in conjunction with the Equality Monitoring report presented to HR Committee in January as well as the paper outlining the recent successful Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment process.

2. REPORT

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSION (ODI) TEAM

- 2.1 Following agreement at Combined Fire Authority in February 2020 to the provision of Transformation and Efficiency funding to promote organisation change, three key support staff fixed-term posts have been filled to support organisational development (OD) and equality and culture workstreams. These are: Community Engagement Manager, Organisational and Development and Improvement Officer and Resources Planning Officer.
- 2.2 Appointment to these roles has ensured that work is now well underway to scope and implement key areas of improvement for the Service, some of which are aligned to the HMI inspection report. A firefighter has also joined the team on secondment in September to assist with ODI workstreams.

STAFF SURVEY 2020

- 2.3 The Service's staff survey was undertaken in June 2020 and the results were first published in August. The Service had its best response rate ever with 62%; a 7% increase on 2018. 80% of the results were more positive compared with the previous survey. An action plan has been drawn up to improve in the areas which have been identified as areas for development.

Some headlines from the survey include:

- 77% of respondents would recommend NFRS as a great place to work;
- 96% of respondents know and understand our values;
- 78% of respondents agreed that we had responded well to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Experience of harassment has reduced;
- Support staff and women wanted to see more opportunities in terms of learning and development;

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff were more likely to report experiencing discrimination than their white British counterparts;
- Middle and senior managers experienced lower levels of engagement than direct line managers. (This is a normal trend in staff surveys, but we will still seek to make improvements in this area).

2.4 The staff survey action plan covers a range of issues including:

- Improving satisfaction with the Performance and Development Review process and quality of outcomes;
- Work to address negative views of learning and development opportunities, in particular among women and support staff, a competency framework workstream for support staff roles will be undertaken in 2021 and employee development will be a key part of this work.
- Improving support for managers to address behaviour and poor conduct including embedding the Behavioural Framework (described above)
- Improving team communications, both face-to-face and digital.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

2.5 As part of the work undertaken by the Community Engagement Manager, a Community Engagement Plan has been drafted to enhance engagement with (BAME) employees and communities. A key part of this plan will be the development of a representative group of people who can provide feedback on services, policy development and employment practices to the Service, as well as acting as a key stakeholder in the development of the Service's next Integrated Risk Management Plan.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

2.6 The Service undertakes Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to ensure that it is paying due regard to protected characteristics within the delivery of services and employment. In order to ensure that inclusive services and employment practices are being delivered, a new schedule of EIAs has been produced in order to identify strengths and potential gaps within current practice/policy.

DEAF COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION TOOL

2.7 As part of the Service's effort to provide more accessible services to the Deaf community - in partnership with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and the British Deaf

Association – the Service has [developed a communication tool](#). This document will be used by operational, incident commanders and other frontline employees to communicate more effectively with the Deaf community and BSL users.

FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAMME

2.8 The Service has been participants of the Future Leaders Programme for over five years. The programme aims to improve the diversity of managers across the public and third sector and is managed by the Renewal Trust in Nottingham. There were forty-three applicants for sixteen places on the programme and four NFRS employees were successful and were recognised as very high performers during the recruitment process. They will now undertake a twelve-month programme of development.

PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (PDR) PROCESS

2.9 In July 2020, as part of the annual Organisational Health paper presented to Policy and Strategy Committee, an update was provided on the Service's new PDR process which ran between April and September.

2.10 The project to review the system, improve governance of information and outcomes has been successfully completed and the 2020's PDR process resulted in a large increase in PDR completion rates from 59% in 2019 to 96% in 2020. This is a huge achievement and demonstrates the work done by NFRS managers to support the new PDR process.

2.11 A significant part of the system review was to introduce performance/development objective setting functionality within the iTrent HR system, aligning this with the employee's electronic record. This resulted in over 3852 objectives being set during PDRs at an average of 5 per employee. This demonstrates really positive engagement by line managers with the new system and provides a clear line of sight between individual and strategic objectives, ensuring that employees can clearly see where their work makes a difference to the achievement of the Service's mission of Creating Safer Communities.

BEHAVIOURAL FRAMEWORK – SHAPING BEHAVIOURS PROGRAMME

2.12 The Behavioural Framework represents the next phase of embedding the Service's values, which are now known and understood by a vast majority of the workforce according to the employee survey outcomes. The Shaping Behaviours Programme will touch all areas of the organisation in the form of face to face workshops, briefings and e-learning. This programme will be delivered by April 2022.

WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

2.13 A firefighter was seconded to the ODI Team in September to reduce the barriers faced by women in the workplace. This work has included collaboration with the Estates and Procurement Teams to address issues

relating to facilities and clothing, delivering positive action sessions to firefighter candidates but also the development and progression of existing firefighters in to supervisory management roles, which is an aim of our current Workforce Plan.

- 2.14 The first '**Look Ahead**' programme has been designed to provide a link between becoming a competent firefighter and considering promotion to a first leadership role, and complements the Aspiring Leaders programme. Whilst not specifically designed for women, pro-active engagement took place to encourage women to apply and this led to three female participants (out of 16 employees) participating in the programme. Participants have been introduced to the Behavioural Framework and taken part in table top operational scenarios to introduce them to the world of incident command in a gradual and safe way. Developmental workshops will continue to be delivered over the next year. It is hoped that this will lead to more female supervisory manager candidates coming forward for promotion in 2022.

LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

- 2.15 The Service continues to build on the leadership programmes it has developed over the last few years as part of its People Strategy. The Aspiring Leaders programme for non-managers has now been expanded to include those aspiring towards middle manager positions – this includes bespoke development workshops delivered in-house and externally. The aim is to raise the aspiration and skill-sets of potential Station Managers (or support role equivalents) as part of a succession planning strategy.
- 2.16 Self-development forms a key part of the Leadership Framework and 360-degree feedback is integral to this, allowing leaders and aspiring leaders to receive feedback on their strengths and areas for development. As part of this, Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) questionnaires also help individuals understand their perception and decision-making preferences and how this might influence their work.

COACHING AND MENTORING

- 2.17 The Service's OD and Improvement Officer is working to further embed a coaching culture at NFRS with a review of coaching and mentoring training and resources as well as continuous professional development (CPD) and supervision sessions. This includes continuation of the Off-Station Support Buddying programme for new starters and collaboration with the Nottinghamshire Police coaching network.

REVERSE MENTORING

- 2.18 Following a successful pilot where the Deputy Chief Fire Officer was mentored by a Crew Manager, reverse mentoring has been rolled out more widely to the Strategic Leadership Team. The purpose of this is to broaden the awareness and understanding of senior staff regarding EDI issues and those associated experiences and identities.

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

- 2.19 As part of the Service's plans to improve the way in which it plans for the challenges of today and in the future, a workstream is underway to analyse and map out the existing skills and competencies in the organisation within the support staff cohort and identify any skills gaps.
- 2.20 The resulting Competency Framework will help managers to build roles within their teams and wider departments. It will also assist with consistency across professional disciplines across the organisation. This will also assist with matching resources to demand and help the organisation to plan its resources in a more holistic way. This work is being undertaken by the new Resource Planning Officer.

SUMMARY

- 2.21 Whilst this update represents an overview of the work undertaken by the ODI team over the past year, it reflects the continued emphasis of the Service to deliver a broad and progressive ODI agenda with clear plans to develop this work to develop workplace culture, services and engagement with communities during 2021-22 and establish a strong foundation for future development. The workstreams align to delivery of the People Strategy and to the HMI improvement agenda.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Service's plans outlined in this report are provided for in existing budgets.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The human resources and learning and development implications are contained within the report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this is an update for members on EDI and OD workstreams. However, as described above an EIA schedule has been produced and will be delivered during 2021-22.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Much of the work described above supports the organisation to meet its requirements under the Public-Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

The Deaf Community Communication Guide was produced as part of a collaboration with Derbyshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services and the British Deaf Association.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER