



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

BEREAVED FAMILIES CHARTER

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 28 April 2023

Purpose of Report:

To present the Bereaved Families Charter to Members and seek support for stating the Service's commitment to the Charter.

Recommendations:

That Members endorse the adoption of the Bereaved Families Charter.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy was written in 2017 by the former Bishop of Liverpool, the Right Reverend James Jones, to ensure the pain and suffering of families affected by the Hillsborough tragedy is not repeated in future tragedies.
- 1.2 To date, the Service has not formally committed to adopting the principles of the Charter.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Adopting the Charter and honouring its principles is highlighted as providing the Service with a framework to support bereaved families and communities in the aftermath of a major incident.
- 2.2 The Charter, attached at Appendix A, highlights the Service's commitment to being more 'people-focused' and providing the vital services that meet the needs of people before, during and after an incident.
- 2.3 The Charter presents six commitments that the Service would prioritise in the event of a major incident or public tragedy. These commitments are:
 - In the event of a public tragedy, support the activation of emergency plans and deployment of resources to rescue victims, to support the bereaved and to protect the vulnerable;
 - Place the public interest above our own reputation;
 - Approach forms of public scrutiny – including public inquiries and inquests – with candour, in an open, honest and transparent way, making full disclosure of relevant documents, material and facts. Our objective is to assist the search for the truth. We accept that we should learn from the findings of external scrutiny and from past mistakes;
 - Avoid seeking to defend the indefensible or to dismiss or disparage those who may have suffered where we have fallen short;
 - Ensure all members of staff treat members of the public and each other with mutual respect and with courtesy. Where we fall short, we should apologise straightforwardly and genuinely;
 - Recognise that we are accountable and open to challenge. We will ensure that processes are in place to allow the public to hold us to account for the work we do and for the way in which we do it. We do not knowingly mislead the public or the media.
- 2.4 The more recently published Core Code of Ethics for Fire Services (England), aligns closely with the principles of the Charter in relation to 'Putting our

Communities First', acting with 'Integrity' and ensuring that the Service always treats people with 'Dignity and Respect'.

- 2.5 The commitments of the Charter also align to the Service's values and the behavioural framework which outlines the expected approach of personnel.
- 2.6 The Chief Fire Officer intends to pledge commitment to the Charter. The commitments of the Charter will be built into future Service policy reviews, the embedding of the Core Code of Ethics within the Service, and incorporated into the Service's response to major incidents.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The commitments of the Charter will be incorporated into the ongoing delivery and embedding of the Core Code of Ethics within the Service.
- 4.2 A review of the policy and procedures will be undertaken to ensure that the principles of the Charter are embedded within the Service.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because of the nature of this report; however, it is noted that the Service's delivery to communities will be improved through the adoption of the commitments of the Charter.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Corporate Risk Register captures the risk of 'Service reputation' and the impact of potentially negative actions or conduct within the Service.
- 8.2 The proposals in this report, and the commitments of the Charter, assist in the mitigation of this risk through ensuring appropriate actions are taken in the event of a major incident or public tragedy.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members endorse the adoption of the Bereaved Families Charter.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



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CHARTER FOR FAMILIES BEREAVED THROUGH PUBLIC TRAGEDY

In adopting this Charter we commit to ensuring that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service learns the lessons from disasters and their aftermath, so that the perspective of the bereaved families is not lost.

Through the Charter, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service will:

1. In the event of a public tragedy, support the activation of emergency plans and deployment of resources to rescue victims, to support the bereaved and to protect the vulnerable.
2. Place the public interest above our own reputation.
3. Approach forms of public scrutiny – including public inquiries and inquests – with candour, in an open, honest and transparent way, making full disclosure of relevant documents, material and facts. Our objective is to assist the search for the truth. We accept that we should learn from the findings of external scrutiny and from past mistakes.
4. Avoid seeking to defend the indefensible or to dismiss or disparage those who may have suffered where we have fallen short.
5. Ensure all members of staff treat members of the public and each other with mutual respect and with courtesy. Where we fall short, we should apologise straightforwardly and genuinely.
6. Recognise that we are accountable and open to challenge. We will ensure that processes are in place to allow the public to hold us to account for the work we do and for the way in which we do it. We do not knowingly mislead the public or the media.

Councillor Michael Payne
CHAIR OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER