



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE**

People Strategy 2024-28



PASSIONATE ABOUT
CHANGING & SAVING LIVES

About this strategy:

To help make Dorset and Wiltshire a safer place to live, work or visit, we need to ensure that all our efforts and resources are focused on having the right people in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills and equipment to prevent, support and respond to emergencies when they happen.

To help guide our thinking, and to keep ahead of an everchanging world, we regularly review both our external operating environment, as well as carrying out an internal analysis of where our Service needs to be. This is delivered through our Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAR). Our SAR supports the development and review of our strategic plan, which we call our Community Safety Plan, along with the delivery of our five organisational strategies, which includes this People Strategy.

This People Strategy sets out the areas of focus for the next four years, to further strengthen and improve our approach to enabling our people to thrive in their roles and deliver a high quality service to our communities.

This strategy is translated into an on-the-ground action at department, station and team level through our Service Delivery Plan, which is underpinned by a comprehensive performance framework. This helps us to remain an efficient and effective Service, planning for the future, to meet the changing needs and ensuring the delivery of our key priorities.

Purpose:

The purpose of this strategy is to set out a long-term pathway to deliver against the priorities set out the Community Safety Plan and the policies agreed by the Authority. In developing this document, we have considered the:

- problems and critical issues we need to respond to
- policy objectives set out by the Authority
- Service priorities and our capacity to achieve them

This strategy is structured to provide a picture of where we are now, and the context for the journey we intend to go on. It outlines what we want to achieve and provides a picture of our intentions over the next four years.

All five Service strategies are interlinked across all of the Service's directorates; therefore, their delivery is overseen by the members of the Cross Directorate team. Each strategy is led by a key director and for this strategy the Assistant Chief Officer - Director of People Services has responsibility. Delivery progress will be monitored through the Service's performance management arrangements, ultimately reported through to the Strategic Leadership Team and the Fire Authority.

These symbols highlight where we have a focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



and Environmental Sustainability







Strategic issues and challenges

From looking at our Strategic Assessment of Risk we expect:

- the need to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of staff
- the need to further improve the diversity of our workforce and better understand the community perceptions of the Fire Service
- the need to make organisational changes in response to financial challenges whilst driving cultural change and improvement
- the need to ensure our attraction, retention and talent progression activities address the loss of skills and experience associated with our ageing workforce
- the need to improve the sustainability of the on-call duty system
- the need to better understand and overcome the barriers in attracting, recruiting and retaining corporate staff
- the need to better understand and improve the leadership capability of our workforce
- the need to further drive increased managerial responsibility and accountability and embedding of the Human Resources(HR) function




The strategic focus for People, for the Service, over the next four years will be to:

-  focus on the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff to ensure an open and positive organisational culture
-  improve the diversity of our workforce
 - continuing to attract, employ, and retain talent to meet current and future Service needs
 - further embed the HR business partnering model as the cornerstone of our HR provision
 - making best use of technology, reducing bureaucracy and duplication by streamlining ways of working
-  focus on the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff to ensure an open and positive organisational culture
 - improve the Service's position for future financial sustainability by reducing the Service's budget by £2.5m over the next 2 years
 - further strengthen our productivity, and value for money including better aligning resources to risk and demand
-  ensure the timely and collaborative delivery of our Culture Action Plan to achieve our cultural vision
 - improve on-call availability, recruitment, and retention and the overall sustainability of the duty system itself
 - further strengthen our leadership development and performance management arrangements






Attracting, employing and retaining talent

Where are we now:

- our strategic workforce planning regime aligns to our financial forecasts, future vision and strategic risk register
- using staffing plans to drive our workforce planning arrangements, identifying and addressing gaps in our workforce capability
- succession planning activities supporting talent management and identifying the risks associated with staff leaving and enabling us to act sooner
- we have a comprehensive understanding of our workforce profile

-  improving our understanding of our community and their perception of the Fire Service to better target our attraction and employment processes and practices
- ensuring the links between workforce, succession planning and learning and development interventions
- using transparent and structured progression processes, developed with our workforce
- identified the need for a new HR system
- reviewed our HR structure and strengthened our HR business partnering model to support line managers in delivering the HR function
- reviewing and streamlining our procedures to ensure they continue to be people centred and provide pragmatic guidance to staff and managers
- an embedded leavers process to better understand the reasons for leaving so, where appropriate, organisational learning can be implemented in ways of working
- an updated pay and grading system for corporate staff has been strengthened to enable us to attract and retain specialist staff
-  using the benefits from our smarter working procedure to help us attract, recruit and retain a more talented and diverse workforce
- undertaking DBS checks to ensure all staff undertake checks at standard level (or enhanced where appropriate) and these are regularly updated
- continuing to recruit and retain on-call firefighters in new and innovative ways
-  continuing to embed the code of ethics throughout our employees' lifecycle

Where will we be in four years:

-  a values and behaviors driven culture where our Safe To programme is embedded and is a key part of our attraction and retention activities
- a new and embedded HR management information system which is more user friendly, flexible and more efficiently supports workforce planning
- an integrated e-recruitment system to support efficient and accessible recruitment practices
- a streamlined approach to recruitment, which is more 'department-led' and 'HR-supported'
-  a stronger wholtime recruitment process aligned to National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) recruitment guidance with an even stronger and more embedded positive action programme that has a history of learning from the community and their perceptions
-  the 'Buddy Scheme' fully supporting those in under-represented groups showing positive recruitment and progression outcomes
- a more sustainable on-call duty system able to deliver increased operational availability and improved retention
-  a more fluid organisational structure that enables us to maximise opportunities to retain a flexible, talented, and increasingly diverse workforce
- a reward and recognition process that is regularly reviewed to better support talent management and retention
-  ensuring our job evaluation, working patterns and employee benefits enhance our employer brand and aid the attraction, recruitment and retention of a more diverse workforce
- making sure that all staff have access to a range of learning and development programmes to support and enhance their careers



How will we get there:

- 🌈 ensure the timely and collaborative delivery of our Culture Action Plan to achieve our cultural vision
- 🌈 review our selection and progression processes to ensure they are values and competency led
 - ensure our induction and probation processes inform, guide and support staff in understanding the organisation
- 🌈 seek feedback from new staff to understand how it feels working for the Service and how we can further improve
 - analyse and seek feedback from unsuccessful applicants to improve recruitment and selection processes
 - develop a new starter network to ensure staff are supported during the commencement of their career
- 🌈 review working patterns to ensure they are future fit and respond to changing societal employment issues
- 🌈 working closely with key stakeholders to strengthen and continuously improve our approach to positive action targeting women and people from underrepresented groups
 - seek and embrace feedback from internal users of HR processes to improve ways of working
- 🌈 ensure our community engagement activities provide valuable two-way learning to enhance our employment offer
 - we will deliver a targeted recruitment campaign
 - we will work collaboratively with the NFCC
 - explore means of overcoming data protection restrictions to allow a greater public interest test to help increase reporting



Staff wellbeing and culture

Where are we now:






- absence management is well managed in accordance with our procedures
- ensuring operational employees undertake annual fitness tests and are supported to improve and maintain their health and wellbeing
- understanding of the financial cost of sickness absence as part of our value for money drive
- managers are equipped with the skills to effectively carry out attendance and wellbeing performance management
- managers have the knowledge and information to recognise the early signs of mental health issues and intervene as necessary
- TRiM arrangements and a 'trauma support' package are in place
- acknowledging the impacts of an ageing workforce that are supported with procedures and processes that provide effective guidance and support
- 🌈 delivering a range of health and wellbeing support and initiatives for our staff
 - delivering a programme of health and wellbeing support in partnership with our Occupational Health provider with satisfaction surveys in place following attendance at Occupational Health
 - committed to support the Mindful Employer, Mental Health Commitment at Work and the Trade Union Congress' 'Dying to Work' Charter
 - updated Discipline, Grievance and Bullying and Harassment procedures to ensure that staff feel able to raise concerns, and carry out monitoring and trend analysis of bullying and harassment, discipline and grievance claims and outcomes
 - greater oversight of performance management cases supported by a case review panel

- comprehensive health and wellbeing information is available on our CONNECT intranet site
- a dedicated Health & Wellbeing Team, working alongside Managers and HR Business Partners, supporting staff wellbeing
-  delivering 'Not on My Watch' awareness sessions to staff to ensure open and honest conversations take place about inappropriate behaviour to promote greater understanding and high performing teams
-  enhanced recruitment campaigns supported by positive action
-  working with external organisations, such as the Asian Fire Service Association (ASFA) and Women in the Fire Service (WFS) to identify and implement good practice approaches to advance our cultural development, particularly of our staff who are under-represented in our workforce

Where will we be in four years:

- embedded staff survey process to strengthen a health and wellbeing culture
- reduced levels of staff absence
- reduced levels of stress and psychological ill health
- an embedded a physical Training Instructor network across the Service
- delivering culture change awareness sessions on emerging topics
- continue to ensure our staff are trained and feel confident and empowered to manage the performance of their teams
-  continually evolving our approach to positive action in response and as an integral part of our community engagement activities
-  introduce and publicise a new Dignity at Work framework and culture statement that is aligned to the NFCC Culture statement

How will we get there:

-  ensure the timely and collaborative delivery of our Culture Action Plan to achieve our cultural vision
-  working with staff networks, representative bodies to improve support to all our staff, particularly those who are under-represented in our Service
- use staff survey and evaluation results to form improvements to our approach to the mental and physical wellbeing
- monitor our wellbeing support mechanisms (counselling & physiotherapy) to ensure they are fit for purpose and staff are fully supported in maintaining psychological and physical health
- strengthen the awareness of health and wellbeing arrangements needed to support our workforce
- continue to deliver our broad range of health and wellbeing support
- expand our station-based physical education network
-  ensure we provide appropriate support for our staff through our range of staff networks
-  continue our membership to the WFS
-  improve our support to our neurodiverse staff






Training and development of our people

Where are we now:



- 🌈 providing a range of leadership and development programmes to our staff to ensure a strong focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), behaviours and culture
 - delivering managerial modules to equip managers with the tools to carry out their role, including a good understanding of issues staff will face
 - using a single competency framework and recording system in place and integrated to relevant systems
 - an Annual Service Training Plan aligned to the skills matrix
 - expanded and enhanced blended learning options and virtual training delivery and assessment arrangements to provide flexible learning and development opportunities to our staff
 - continuing to make best use of technology to enhance our learning and development experience
 - an established Learning Hub providing a 'one stop' area for all learning and development materials including training packs to support the adherence to National Operational Guidance
 - improved Learning and Development Governance and Quality Assurance arrangements
 - strengthened our coaching and mentoring arrangements and increased the number of staff qualified as Level 3 and Level 5 coaches
 - increased number of staff trained as Internal Quality Assurers
 - improved training facilities, with cluster and mobile training delivery arrangements
 - new Incident Command arrangements blending learning technology and world class training facilities
 - Incident Command Board to coordinate and facilitate incident command development
 - a 1:1 review process, tailored to individual needs, developed with our workforce
 - improved assessment of individual's performance at temporary promotion as an aid to individual development captured within our 1:1 process
 - bi-monthly 'Bitesize' Leaders Forums delivered on a range of topics
- 🌈 delivering a Reverse Mentoring Programme, to fully understand and support staff to deliver positive change
 - investing in strategic leaders by supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council's Executive Leadership Programme
 - creating new ways for our staff to identify their strengths and development needs
- 🌈 using a 360-feedback process aligned to the Code of Ethics, to complement the 1:1 review process and enhance the leadership capability of all our managers
- 🌈 undertaking coaching and mentoring that is tailored to individual need, aligned to strategic priorities and supports the progression of our diverse and talented workforce
 - supporting our staff to participate and attend any internal meetings in an open seat capacity, helping them develop their knowledge and understanding of how our Service operates
 - working closely with our staff networks and our culture development committee to ensure barriers to learning and progression are identified and addressed
 - continuing to train our people in good health and safety practices
 - providing flexible learning to reduce the amount of time employees spend away from home, their workplace or their primary employment

- developing leadership expectations aligned to role induction and development pathways

Where will we be in four years:

- continued commitment to apprenticeships which enhance learning opportunities for our employees, that in turn provides for a more enriched and developed workforce and optimise our levy
- continue our Leadership Development Programmes and augment these with coaching and mentoring support; including executive coaching for senior leaders
- continuing to deliver a range of courses and learning events aligned to skills, risk and needs
-  continuing to support staff progression with the Development Pathways Programme tailored to different staff needs
-  continuing to deliver a 1:1 review process aligned to the Code of Ethics and strengthening our workforce planning processes
- two fit-for-purpose training centres, on our own estate, where our firefighters are able to train and maintain their specialised competencies
- continuing to deliver structured incident command arrangements with strengthened supporting technology such as incident ground software, technology and body worn cameras
- undertaken a review of our approach to e-learning and implemented recommended actions, to ensure it is used effectively whilst ensuring behaviour and cultural related topics are delivered face to face
-  developed a decision-making model aligned to the code of ethics, so decisions are made at the most appropriate level and our managers are empowered and confident when undertaking their role
-  a better understanding of barriers to operational female recruitment
-  our leadership training will include awareness of pregnancy, maternity and menopause
- a coaching programme for our senior leaders

How will we get there:

-  ensure the timely and collaborative delivery of our Culture Action Plan to achieve our cultural vision
- further expand and enhance blended learning options and virtual training delivery to provide more flexible learning and development opportunities
- reduce the amount of time employees spend away from home, their workplace or their primary employment, to ensure our training facilities provide cost effective and fit for purpose training delivery
- embed and continuously improve our development pathways so our diverse and talented staff can progress throughout their careers
- continue our commitment to apprenticeships, enhancing learning opportunities for our staff, providing a more enriched and developed workforce
- maximise the benefits of our Leadership Development Programmes, evaluate and further develop them
- effective use of e-learning and streamlined courses to reduce the amount of time employees spend away from home, their workplace, or their primary employment
-  embed coaching and mentoring, to create an encouraging and supportive staff culture

- continue to ensure our leaders have self-awareness, emotional intelligence and develop them as a leadership team further
- provide clear expectations for managers to support prioritisation of workloads.
- further utilise the 360-feedback process for other managers to ensure leadership is developed throughout our Service
- 🌈 deliver any actions in response to our Service's internal workplace cultural review and the independent review
- 🌈 ensure feedback from staff surveys is captured as part of our leadership development, to strengthen workforce understanding of and further develop our inclusive approach
- develop a professional decision-making model to ensure pragmatic decisions are made at the right level
- strengthen role induction arrangements to ensure managers are supported, and have the right skills to carry out their roles
- 🌈 strengthen coaching and mentoring arrangements for female staff
- 🌈 further review maternity and menopause procedures and processes
- 🌈 working closely with key stakeholders to strengthen and continuously improve our approach to positive action targeting women and people from underrepresented groups