



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 14 June 2023

Report title: Exploring our Culture

Lead Member: Councillor Gary Hall, Lead Member - People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance

Report sponsor: Jason Thelwell, Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Author and contact: Anne Stunell, Head of Human Resources,
astunell@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Noting

Recommendations: That the work carried out to date and the planned work in respect of Exploring our Culture be noted.

Executive summary:

Following the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade Culture by Nazir Afzal OBE in November 2022 and subsequent news articles into allegations at South Wales and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services, the service has reviewed what is in place for employees and what actions need to be taken.

A report was presented to March Executive Committee which showed our work to date and planned. A presentation was given on the proposed “Speak Up” campaign. This report is an update on the work to date.

In March 2023 the HMICFRS published the “Values and culture in fire and rescue services” report. An Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting was held on 28 April 2023 where the HMICFRS recommendations were approved. Please see Appendix 4.

Our People Strategy comprises of key areas that support cultural changes which will help the Service to better deliver its vision and strategic priorities, while ensuring behaviours, values and standards are adhered to:

- 1) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- 2) Employee Engagement
- 3) Organisational Development and Resourcing
- 4) Training, Learning and Development
- 5) Employee Health and Wellbeing

The objective is to ensure the Culture experienced by all Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service staff and the public they come in to contact with, is in line with Our Values/Code of Conduct, supported by:

- All employees are aware of the expected behaviours.
- Ensuring all employees are aware of the procedures, process and support in place for them and feel able to come forward with any discrimination or inappropriate behaviour concerns they have experienced or have witnessed.
- All employees are assured that they will be listened to, and action taken as a result. Allegations are dealt with robustly.

The following inputs have helped us Explore our Culture:

- Culture Survey results 2022
- Other Fire and Rescue Service reports
- Staff Group Feedback
- Individual Feedback
- Grievances and Disciplinarys
- Leadership Team Feedback

Actions have been captured and work started, these can be found in Appendix 1: Exploring our Culture - work to date and planned.

Our current area of focus is to ensure our staff know how to raise an issue including the Whistleblowing process.

We continue to engage with HMICFRS including providing them with our historic Grievance/disciplinary information and our work carried out on Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (Appendix 2).

We plan to combine the action plans from the two reports and base them on the Draft NFCC Culture action plan. Updates on progress will be presented in due course.

Financial implications:

Any costs associated with this will come from established budgets. Any continuous training will be taken through the Training Strategy Group who review any training needs identified and growth bids will be submitted for work that is not covered from existing budgets.

Risk management:

The risk of not Exploring our Culture, the HMICFRS Values and culture report and the actions associated with this has been added to the Human Resources Risk Register and the Corporate risk register.

If the Service does not review the measures in place, employee wellbeing is impacted, tribunal claims could increase and the reputation of the service will be impacted, affecting recruitment, employee morale, retention and future improvements to working practices.

The following measures form part of our Quarterly Performance reports presented to members:

- Percentage of Staff turnover
- Percentage of Absence
- Welfare and Support
- Employee engagement
- Grievance and disciplines processed.
- Employee Assistance Programme contact.
- Appraisal completion

Legal implications:

Legal inputs are sought and provided as and when required in respect of all the strands within the attached Exploring our Culture report.

Privacy and security implications:

Previous employee relation cases have been reviewed, the details of these are limited to the Hearing Manager, Investigator and the Employee Relations team. Any future cases will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially. Any learning from investigations, informal and formal management interventions and case hearings will be fed into procedures and guidance notes and communicated to all employees; Neither individual cases or employees will be identified.

The HMICFRS letter on previous cases included case numbers, but no information that was identifiable.

Freedom of Information requests are processed adhering to confidentiality and data protection guidelines.

Duty to collaborate:

South East Employers were contacted to review the Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Procedure, their feedback was incorporated. They agreed to support the Employee Relations team with any cases.

The Addressing Inequalities Group made up of five Fire and Rescue Services were sent the Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Procedures for feedback. Each service's approach to the management of allegations and actions undertaken are discussed at the quarterly meetings, so that learning is shared.

Two members of the Service attended the National Fire Chiefs Council Culture event on 27 and 28 March, learns from the event have been brought back to the service and shared, so they can be incorporated into our processes. The Draft NFCC Culture action plan is being reviewed to ensure all the areas are covered.

Health and safety implications:

Employee Health and Wellbeing is a key area of the People Strategy. The Human Resources Team support managers and employees across the service – for example Employee Assistance Procedure, Welfare Officer, Occupational Health, Mental Wellbeing Champions, a range of procedures on attendance management, code of conduct, whistleblowing, grievances, conduct and capability.

Environmental implications:

There are no Environmental impacts.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group meet every month, they discuss issues of concern with stakeholders from across the service. BFRS Culture is a standing agenda item.

The EDI group continue to work on the EDI objectives, the progress on these can be found in the People Strategy – year 2 update and in the EDI objectives 2020 – 2025 Year 3 update.

An equality impact assessment has been written and reviewed, please see Appendix 3.

Consultation and communication:

The Exploring our Culture report and work to date has been discussed with the following groups:

- Extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting, 28 April 2023
- Executive Committee, 22 March 2023
- Senior Management Team meetings in December 2022, January, February and March, April and May 2023
- Leadership Group meetings on 9 December 2022, 26 January and 10 March 2023
- Joint Consultation Forum 8 December, 1 March and 28 April 2023
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group, 6 December 2022, 10 January, 7 February, 7 March, 4 April, 2 May and 6 June 2023
- Meetings with employees about welfare at incidents, uniform concerns, facilities – 16 January, 2 March and 11 April 2023.
- Business Transformation Board – 4 May 2023
- Meetings with female Firefighters to address any concerns they may have.

The Whistleblowing procedure and contact information has been publicised.

Background papers:

Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade

[Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade \(london-fire.gov.uk\)](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/independent-culture-review)

Cultural Review – South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

[Cultural Review Appointment Panel - South Wales Fire and Rescue Service \(southwales-fire.gov.uk\)](https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/cultural-review-appointment-panel)

Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
[Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service has 'taken steps to improve culture' - BBC News](#)

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service People Strategy 2020-2025 – Year 2 update
<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/09/fa-item-14-121022.pdf/>

HMICFRS Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service report 2020/21 ^(OBI) [Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22 – BFRS - HMICFRS](#)

HMICFRS Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: Cause of concern revisit letter
[BFRS Cause of concern revisit letter](#)

HMICFRS Values and culture in fire and rescue services
[Values and culture in fire and rescue services \(justiceinspectrates.gov.uk\)](#)

HMICFRS Extraordinary Meeting report 28 April 2023
[Agenda Document for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 28/04/2023](#)

Performance Management – Q3 2022/23

[Executive Committee-22 March-2023 Performance-management-Q3-2022 2023](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
Appendix 1	Exploring our Culture – work to date and planned	
Appendix 2	DBS letter to HMICFRS	
Appendix 3	Equality Impact Assessment	
Appendix 4	HMICFRS Values and culture in fire and rescue services recommendations and update	

Appendix 1 Exploring or Culture work to date and planned.						
No.	Actions	Outcomes	Work to date and planned	Owner	Status (BAU/R/A/G)	Due Date
1	<p>Review of LFB Culture report.</p> <p>Collation of leadership group "top areas"</p> <p>NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) maturity models reviewed.</p>	<p>Most important areas for the Service are focused upon.</p>	<p>Review of the LFB Culture report undertaken by Leadership Group, areas of focus identified, and captured throughout this work plan.</p> <p>NFCC EDI maturity models reviewed at leadership group.</p> <p>Other Maturity Models - Meeting of stakeholders held, will continue to be mindful of them in procedures, and ensure best practice benchmarking incorporated into our business as usual.</p>	<p>Leadership Team</p> <p>Head of Human Resources (HR)</p> <p>Senior Management Team (SMT)</p>	Complete	March 2023
2	<p>Draft communication to employees reminding them of Whistleblowing line.</p> <p>Deliver an overarching 'speak-up' campaign.</p>	<p>All employees understand what whistleblowing is. They are aware of our whistleblowing procedure, what it covers and how to report issues or concerns.</p> <p>All employees understand the grievance policy, how to report issues or concerns.</p>	<p>Whistleblowing information published.</p> <p>Marketing Brief to SMT delivered to demonstrate how a consistent, cohesive standard campaign approach is best way forward all work related to raising concerns.</p> <p>"Speak-Up" campaign pitched and approved.</p>	<p>Human Resources</p> <p>MarComms</p>	In Progress	Quarter 1 2023

		<p>Employees trust in the procedure and process.</p> <p>Managers know what to do when someone raises a concern.</p> <p>The independent phone number for whistleblowing and raising concerns is visible and accessible to all employees.</p> <p>Employees feel safe and are positively encouraged to use the confidential help line.</p> <p>Employees understand what we stand for, what is expected of them and that we all have a responsibility to speak up against unacceptable behaviour.</p>	<p>Scoping of campaign aims and objectives with key stakeholders identified; EDI, HR, MarComms, Response completed.</p> <p>Meeting undertaken with current EAP provider; branding discussed.</p> <p>Testing of system to be undertaken</p> <p>Campaign and communications plan to be designed with secondary stakeholder engagement (IT, OD, Finance, Facilities).</p> <p>Plan signed off.</p> <p>Delivery of plan</p>			
3	Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing review and consultation completed. External scrutiny sought.	Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing have external scrutiny, presented for approval to March Overview and Audit and (Code to Executive Committee) for approval	<p>Documents been through governance process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approved at Overview and Audit on 15 March 2023 - Final sign off at Executive Committee 22 March 2023 <p>Documents sent to Fire and Rescue Services and South East Employers (SEE). SEE feedback incorporated into document</p>	Human Resources	Complete	March 2023

4	Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) procedure review and checks	All relevant employees have an up-to-date enhanced DB. DBS procedure reviewed, consulted upon and communicated.	Weekly reports run on DBS status; 90% of checks complete to date, on a rolling programme. HR review the posts that need a DBS on a regular basis. Response to DBS question from HMICFRS submitted 3 March 2023, see Appendix 2 for details. DBS procedure in review and undergoing consultation, before going through governance (presentation to June Business Transformation Board for approval). Once finalised it will be communicated to employees.	Human Resources	In Progress	Rolling programme Procedure expected to be finalised Quarter 1
5	Exploring our Culture added as standing agenda item on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) group.	EDI group are aware of and part of work and communications, no areas are missed.	Added as a standing agenda item. February, March, April and May 2023 EDI group discussed report and concerns.	Head of HR Deputy Director of Finance and Assets	Complete Now part of BAU	January 2023
6	Chief Fire Officer Vlog	All employees are aware of support, and our approach to allegations	Chief Fire Officer Vlog December 2022, makes clear our stance on inappropriate behaviour and the support in place	Chief Fire Officer	Complete	December 2022
7	Review of previous allegations, grievances, conduct and outcomes. HMICFRS response	Scrutiny of previous cases and actions as appropriate	9 February meeting to review cases undertaken, now forms part of BAU. Response to HMICFRS on cases submitted February 2023	Chief Operating Officer Human Resources	Complete Now part of BAU	March - May 2023

8	Contact SEE for investigation support, as appropriate	Support in place for investigations as appropriate	SEE confirmed support would be given as requested	Head of HR	Complete	February 2023
9	Trade Union engagement and support	Trade Unions support our Culture.	Regular meetings take place with Trade Union Officials Joint Consultation Forum takes place every 6 weeks with minutes shared on the Intranet.	Chief Operating Officer Head of HR Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience	Complete Now part of BAU	January 2023
10	Review of exit interviews for themes, concerns raised.	Scrutiny of exit interviews for themes and actions	Draft report produced; refinements underway. Analysis for themes to be undertaken.	Human Resources Data Intelligence	In progress	May / June 2023
11	Manage influx of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests relating to concerns arising from the LFB review and allegations at other FRS	FOI requests are responded to in a timely manner while maintaining compliance with the Authority's data protection obligations	FOI's are responded to as they come in, by the deadline, Director of Legal and Governance consulted on any areas of concern.	Human Resources	Complete Now part of BAU	February 2023
12	Reminder to employees of support in place - Welfare Officer, Mental Health Support Officers, Firefighters Charity, Employee Assistance Programme, procedures etc.	Employees are aware of all support in place and how they can access it.	Reminders sent out regularly and given to employees who approach manager, Mental Wellbeing Support Officers and Employee Relations team for support.	Human Resources	Complete Now part of BAU	April 2023 and ongoing

13	SMT visibility at Stations and across the Service	<p>Show endorsement from top management and foster a speak-up culture.</p> <p>Increase visibility of SMT across the Service allowing employees to discuss and share their views.</p> <p>Ensure key messages are delivered and employee views are listened to.</p> <p>Promote an open, transparent and safe working environment where employees are positively encouraged to immediately flag anything of concern.</p> <p>Employees understand what is expected of them, their responsibility and how this links with the services vision and values.</p>	<p>A plan to be built that shows the themes and when they will be delivered.</p> <p>Book in dates - looking at how we capture all employee groups i.e., station based, on-call, support staff based away from HQ.</p> <p>Continue informal SMT visits to stations, calendar updated to end of 2023, now part of BAU.</p>	SMT Members	In Progress	Quarter 1/2
14	Women's network	<p>Employees are able to talk to those with the same protected characteristics/likeminded individuals on areas of concern and support.</p> <p>Employees can empathise with the types of barriers and</p>	<p>OXFRS confirmed they are happy for us to join up with them for LGBT and Women's network.</p> <p>Consider formal/informal, minutes and actions of what discussed.</p> <p>Most recent meeting took place 7</p>	Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO	In Progress	Quarter 1 2023

		needs of minority groups and can champion solutions when driving the service forward.	February 2023; work continues to develop and agree the format.			
15	EDI facilities and welfare meetings	Female Firefighters are able to raise their concerns around facilities, welfare, uniform, etc.	Meetings December 2022, January, March, April 2023, minutes taken and shared to others who they may impact. Actions fed into EDI group and Officers to progress, now BAU	Head of HR Various across the Service	Complete, Now part of BAU	January 2023 and ongoing
16	Review of Vision and Values to include Code of Ethics	Refreshed Vision and Values, engagement with employees, embed what we stand for	On the 2023/2024 workplan, working group to be established to work on	Various	Not started	Quarter 2 / 3
17	Attend NFCC Culture Conference	Learning from other Fire and Rescue Services ensures we have everything in place to support employees.	2 places booked at the conference, 27 and 28 March 2023 Feedback to be given to Senior Management team on actions and learns, as appropriate.	Head of HR Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO	Complete	March 2023
18	Regular updates to Members	Members are updated on the work being undertaken and planned.	Head of Human Resources briefs Councillor EDI and Assurance at monthly meetings Verbal updates given at Executive Committee and Fire Authority Report to March Executive Committee and June Fire Authority	Head of HR EDI and Assurance Councillor	Complete, Now part of BAU	January 2023 and ongoing
19	Fire Service Standards review.	Review Leading the Service and Leading and Developing People Fire Standard	Leading the Service and Leading and Developing People Fire Standards reviewed, actions to be implemented.	Officers across the Service	In Progress	Quarter 1

20	Review Anti-bullying and Harassment Procedure and consultation. External scrutiny sought.	Anti-bullying and Harassment Procedure have external scrutiny and are presented for approval to Business Transformation Board.	Anti-bullying and Harassment Procedure consultation underway, presented to Joint Consultation Forum (JCF) on 31 May 2023. Consultation closes at 19 July JCF, before presentation to Business Transformation Board.	Human Resources	In Progress	Quarter 1/2
21	Review training/education that is provided to employees at all levels.	All employees at all levels understand their roles in relation to Culture, Equality and Equity. What actions can be done to support inclusion across the organisation.	<p>eLearning packages for range of EDI subjects</p> <p>EDI Group training undertaken in October 2022</p> <p>Face to Face EDI training for EDI Group and Watch Commander/equivalent Support management level training approved.</p> <p>Hearing Manager training for SMT and Employee Relations (ER) Team</p> <p>Meetings in place with provider to discuss content of both courses (EDI and Hearing Manager). Dates to be confirmed</p>	<p>Leadership Group</p> <p>EDI group</p> <p>SMT and ER team</p> <p>MarComms</p>	In Progress	Quarter 1/2 and ongoing



Private & Confidential

Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM
23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham
B2 4BH

Our Ref: HMICFRS Vetting Standards
Enquiries To: HR – Anne Stunell
Direct Line: 01296 744621
Date: 3 March 2023
E-Mail: astunell@bucksfire.gov.uk

Sent via email
Roy.Wilsher@HMICFRS.gov.uk

Dear Roy,

Re: Request for Information – Vetting Standards

1. Does your service undertake background checks on staff (not DBS)? If yes, what are they and who are they for?

BFRS collect the following information:

- a. Right to work in the UK
 - i. This includes Passport/Birth Certificate for all staff and visas where applicable
- b. References
 - i. Two references are requested for all staff, one of which must be from their current or most recent employer
 - ii. For those who are self-employed or have gaps in employment a personal/character reference from a professional person is requested
- c. Training Records/Certificates/Qualifications
 - i. Training records are requested from other Fire Services to confirm the individuals' competencies for those staff in operational roles
 - ii. Relevant qualifications are also requested for their job role such as an LGV licence, CIPD or a degree. Requests are made for all staff where it is relevant to their role
- d. Full Driving Licence that is valid in the UK
 - i. Driving licences are checked for staff whose role requires them to drive a Service vehicle, as well as anyone using their personal car for business use
 - ii. An external service carries out driving licence checks
- e. Some roles require external agencies to carry out further security clearance checks
 - i. For example, NILO, Prevent panel, CTLP Liaison, National Security Vetting



2. Does your service undertake DBS checks on staff?

Yes, Enhanced plus Adult and Children Barred lists.

The DBS procedure has been reviewed and is currently being consulted upon before undergoing the governance process.

Further information on the DBS including risk assessing positive content is being ratified by the NFCC on 3 March 2023.

We have 330 staff who have a current, in date DBS check, which is 93% of all staff who require a DBS check.

We recommend all Fire and Rescue Services adopt our approach to DBS checks.

3. If yes, what is the requirement and renewal for DBS checks?

We undertake Enhanced plus adult and children's barred list DBS checks. These checks are completed for staff who hold any position that requires a DBS check, which includes the following roles:

- a. Firefighter (including On-Call)
- b. Crew Commander (including On-Call)
- c. Watch Commander (including On-Call)
- d. Station Commander
- e. Group Commander
- f. Area Commander
- g. Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- h. Chief Fire Officer
- i. Flexi Firefighter
- j. Flexi Crew Commander
- k. Flexi Watch Commander
- l. Area Trainer
- m. On-Call Support Manager
- n. Community Safety Advisor
- o. Community Safety Officer
- p. Community Safety Coordinator
- q. Community Safety Team Leader
- r. Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager
- s. Business Fire Safety Advisor
- t. Business Fire Safety Inspector
- u. Firesetter Intervention/Youth Inclusion
- v. Firesetter Advisors
- w. Data Intelligence team



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- x. Principal Accountant
 - y. Employee Development Officer

We submit the initial DBS check using three forms of identification through Buckinghamshire Council. Once the results are received, we address any concerns with a risk assessment and meeting with the member of staff. They are then entered onto the Update Service if all is cleared, with a renewal required on an annual basis.

A Status Check is carried out each year when the Update Service is renewed to confirm if there is new content or not. If there is new content, a brand-new DBS check is completed, and a risk assessment is carried out following confirmation. The member of staff must be put on the Update Service again if the risk assessment confirms they are still suitable for the role.

Weekly reports are run to check all DBS checks are currently in date. Any issues are highlighted/escalated.

4. Does your service undertake any other vetting processes? If so, what are they?

As part of the recruitment processes staff are required to undergo different stages including:

- a. Medicals/Medical Questionnaires
 - i. Full medicals where fitness, eyesight, hearing, medical history, drug and alcohol etc. is tested
 - ii. Medical questionnaire, which looks at medical history to confirm if the staff member requires adjustments
- b. Role Related Tests including Bleep Test
 - i. A series of tests that ascertain suitability for the role, such as ladder climb, haul aloft and lower, ladder lift, equipment carry, confined space test etc. and a bleep test
- c. Behaviour Workshop
 - i. A workshop where we observe suitable behaviours such as teamwork, courage to challenge and confidence etc.
- d. Interviews
 - i. A formal interview with set questions and competencies to assess and score candidates against. All interviewers are trained
- e. SHL/Written Tests
 - i. A set of questions in written tests that staff complete such as English and Maths which are carried out alongside interviews to assess suitability for the role
- f. Role specific tests
 - i. The tests are role dependant, for example, asking the applicant to prioritise emails or create a rota based on specific information



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- g. Presentations
 - i. In some interviews applicants are asked to present on a specific topic, these are assessed against predetermined criteria such as confidence and how the presentation looks visually etc.

5. Is your vetting requirement role specific? Please explain in more detail

Yes, as below:

- a. Medicals/Medical Questionnaires
 - i. Full medicals are given to operational staff as their job requires them to be medically fit etc.
 - ii. A thorough medical similar to those given to operational staff is given to workshop staff to ensure they are safe from exposure to any chemicals in their job role
 - iii. Medical questionnaires are given to support services staff, which are assessed for whether any adjustments need to be made to support them carry out their role. They do not require full medicals unless the member of staff states something in the questionnaire that requires further information
 - iv. Medical assessments are completed for operational staff when they come into contact with hazardous chemicals, such as Asbestos, to ensure they are fit to continue their role and monitor their exposure
- b. Role Related Tests including bleep test
 - i. These are carried out for operational staff as there are specific areas we need to test them for, such as working at height, claustrophobia, fitness
- c. The Behaviour workshop
 - i. This test is given to operational staff as specific behaviours are sought, such as courage to challenge etc. due to their role in the community
 - ii. Support Services staff behaviours are tested during interview, such as teamwork
- d. Formal Interviews
 - i. Each recruitment process requires an interview. Competency and skills-based interviews are used in specific roles. The type of interview and the questions asked depend on the type of role and what skills and experience are required
- e. SHL/Written tests
 - i. Written tests are not required but are dependent upon the role the member of staff is applying for. For example, someone working in Finance would need to be tested to ensure they are competent in



maths. Someone working in administration might need to be assessed for their accuracy of data input etc. Specific tests can be picked for specific roles to be carried out alongside interviews to assess their suitability for the role

f. Role specific tests

- i. These tests are role specific and based upon what skills and experience the role requires. For example, someone in Resource Management Team might undertake a test where they have to design a rota based on specific information about the team, this would be a task they would have to undertake in the role

g. Presentations

- i. Similar to role specific tests, presentations are completed for any role, but the topic of the presentation would be specific to the role such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on the email address or telephone number above.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Stunell
Head of Human Resources

Service Document Standard Form:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



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1: Overview information	
Name of activity / change / policy / procedure/project:	Exploring our Culture
Directorate/department:	Human Resources
Name(s) of person(s) completing the assessment	Anne Stunell, Head of Human Resources
Date of commencement of assessment:	8 March 2023 – original version

2: What is the aim and purpose of the activity / change / policy / procedure / project you are assessing?
<p>Following the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade Culture by Nazir Afzal OBE in November 2022 and subsequent news articles into allegations at South Wales and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services, the service has reviewed what is in place for employees and what actions need to be taken.</p> <p>Our People Strategy comprises of key areas that support cultural changes which will help the Service to better deliver its vision and strategic priorities, while ensuring behaviours, values and standards are adhered to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2) Employee Engagement 3) Organisational Development and Resourcing 4) Training, Learning and Development 5) Employee Health and Wellbeing <p>The objective of the work is to ensure the Culture experienced by all Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service employees and the public they come in to contact with, is in line with Our Values/Code of Conduct, supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All employees are aware of the expected behaviours. - Ensuring all employees are aware of the procedures, process and support in place for them and feel able to come forward with any discrimination or inappropriate behaviour concerns they have experienced or have witnessed. - All employees are assured that they will be listened to, and action taken as a result. Allegations are dealt with robustly. <p>The following inputs have helped form part of the work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture Survey results 2022 - Other Fire and Rescue Service reports

This information is held for organisational and legal reasons and will be retained for only as long as necessary.

Service Document Standard Form:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



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- Employee Group Feedback
- Individual Feedback
- Grievances and Disciplinarys
- Leadership Team Feedback

Actions have been captured and work started. Exploring our Culture - work to date and planned was presented to Executive Committee on 22 March 2023 and is to be presented to the 14 June 2023 Fire Authority.

Our current area of focus is to ensure the Whistleblowing process is clear.

An Extraordinary Fire Authority was held on 28 April 2023, where the HMICFRS Values and Culture in the Fire and Rescue services where the three recommendations were approved. There is cross over in some of the work and recommendations – for example background checks, raising concerns, training. The plan is to combine the two action plans using the Draft NFCC Culture action plan.

Executive Committee, 22 March 2023

[Executive-committee-22-March-2023-item-9-exploring-our-culture-report.pdf/](#)

HMICFRS Extraordinary Meeting report – 28 April 2023

[Agenda Document for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 28/04/2023](#)

3: Who will be affected by the activity / change / policy / procedure / project, and how? Consider members of the public, employees, partner organisations etc.

All employees and ex-employees who have concerns not previously raised.

4: What information is already available that tells you what impact the activity / change / policy / procedure / project has/will have on people? (*please reference*) Consider quantitative and qualitative data, consultation, research, complaints etc. What does this information tell you?

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Service Document Standard Form:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



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Case management information
 DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) information and procedures
 Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing procedures
 Support Mechanisms in place for example Mental Wellbeing Support Champions, Employee Assistance Programme, Whistleblowing line, Employee relations team,
 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, Leadership Group, SMB, PMB, BTB, JCF
 Performance Measures
 Feedback from employee groups
 Performance Management reports
 See – 22 March, 28 April and 14 June Executive Committee and Fire Authority reports for further information.

5: Does the activity/change / policy/procedure/project have the potential to impact differently on individuals in different groups? Complete the table below by ✓ the likely impact.

Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement. Assessment of impacts on groups in *italics* is not a legal requirement, however it will help to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.

Protected characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Rationale for decision (<i>use action plan in section 14 for negative impacts</i>)
Individuals of different ages	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able to come forward with any concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
Disabled individuals	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able to come forward with any concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
Individuals transitioning from one gender to another	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able

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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)


Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



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				to come forward with any concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
Individuals who are married or in civil partnerships	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able to come forward with any concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
Pregnancy, maternity and new parents	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able to come forward with any concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
Individuals of different race	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able to come forward with any concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
Individuals of different religions or beliefs	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able to come forward with any concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
Individual's gender identity	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able to come forward with any concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
Individual's sexual orientation	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able to come forward with any

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<p>Service Document Standard Form:</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</p> <p><i>Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note</i></p>	
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	✓			concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
<i>Individuals living in different family circumstances</i>	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able to come forward with any concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
<i>Individuals in different social circumstances</i>	✓			All employees are aware of the support in place, know how to access it and feel able to come forward with any concerns, knowing they will be dealt with.
<i>Different employee groups</i>	✓			Ex Employees feel able to come forward with concerns, knowing they will be dealt with
<i>Other, please specify</i>				

6: What further research or consultation is needed to check the impact/potential impact of the activity/change/policy/procedure/project on different groups? If needed, how will you gather additional information and from whom?

Station and Support Services visits and meetings
 Procedure consultation, feedback and governance
 Consultation on the work to date and this report has taken place with the following groups:

- Extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting, 28 April 2023
- Executive Committee, 22 March 2023
- Fire Authority, 14 June 2023
- Senior Management Team meetings in December 2022, January, February, March, April and May 2023
- Leadership Group meetings on 9 December 2022, 26 January and 10 March 2023
- Joint Consultation Forum 8 December, 1 March and 28 April 2023
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group, 6 December 2022, 10 January, 7 February, 7 March, 4 April, 2 May, 6 June 2023

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Service Document Standard Form:

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Linked documents: Equality Impact Assessment Guidance note



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- Meetings with employees about welfare at incidents, uniform concerns, facilities – 16 January, 2 March and 11 April 2023.
- Business Transformation Board – 4 May 2023
- Meetings with female Firefighters to address any concerns they may have.

7: Following your research, considering all the information that you now have, is there any evidence that the activity/change/policy/procedure/project is impacting/will impact differently or disproportionately on some group of people?

All employees will be supported regardless of their protected characteristics. The Exploring our Culture work objective (see above) will be clear to all employee groups.

8: What amendments will you make/have been made to the activity/change/policy/procedure/project as a result of the information you have? If a negative effect has been identified, how could it/has it been lessened, does the original plan need changing?

If we do not carry out this work, employees and the Service could be impacted negatively – morale, recruitment, retention, reputation, absence, ET claims.

9: After these amendments (if any) have been made, is/will there still be a negative impact on any groups?

Yes – please explain below

No – go to section 11

Workstreams will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure improvements are made

10: Can continuing or implementing the proposed activity/change/policy/procedure/project, without further amendment, be justified legally? If so, how?

Ensuring that all employees are aware of support in place and the process for reporting concerns is vital. Mechanisms are in place; this work will ensure that they are effectively communicated to all employees.

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11: How can you ensure that any positive or neutral impact is maintained?

All employees need to play part in the Exploring our Culture work, consistent communications and signposting are key.

12: How will you monitor and review the impact of the activity/change/policy/procedure/project once it has been implemented?

A report was presented to the March Executive Committee, at an April Extraordinary Fire Authority and at the June Fire Authority and will be presented to future meetings to show progress on actions.

13: Sign off

Name of department head / project lead	Anne Stunell, Head of Human Resources
Date of EIA sign off:	8 March 2023 25 April 2023 15 May 2023
Date(s) of review of assessment:	Ongoing as part of the Exploring our Culture work. Review 25 April 2023, 4 and 15 May 2023

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14. Action Plan - the table below should be completed to produce an action plan for the implementation of proposals to:

- Lower negative impacts
- Ensure the negative impacts are legal under anti-discriminatory law.
- Provide an opportunity to promote equality, equal opportunity and improve relations within equality target groups i.e., increase
- the positive impact

Area of impact	Changes proposed	Timescales	Resource implications	Comments

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No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	May '23 Update
Raising concerns					
1	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes.	BFRS	01-Oct-23	In Progress - On track	We have had a Whistleblowing line in place for a number of years, which is run by an external organisation. However, we recognise we need to do more to give staff the confidence to speak up. We are now working with several service providers to introduce a dedicated confidential reporting line. This will be supported by a strong marketing 'Speak up' campaign to highlight this to BFRS staff. Our current confidential Whistleblowing line will be rebranded and promoted through the 'Speak up' campaign, to ensure a single number for staff to report concerns.
2	By 1 October 2023, National Employers, the Local Government Association and the National Fire Chiefs Council should review any current independent arrangements whereby staff can raise concerns outside their FRS. They should then ensure that all FRS staff have access to an independent reporting line that can be used as a confidential way to raise concerns outside their own FRS.	National Employers, LGA, NFCC	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
3	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review the support available for those who have raised concerns and take any action needed to make sure these provisions are suitable.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	We have a range of support in place for those that raise concerns inc - Welfare Officer - Occupational Health - Allocating a point of contact that's not part of the investigation We will continue to review what our staff and public have available to them, ensuring it works for them. Our processes will document the support available.
4	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should assure themselves that updates on how concerns are being handled are shared with those who have raised them. The updates should be given in an accessible way that encourages trust and confidence in the service response. Consideration should be given to creating a professional standards function to handle conduct concerns in service (or from an external service) to have oversight of cases, to make sure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way and to act as a point of contact for all staff involved.	BFRS	01-Jun-23 01-Jan-24	Off Track	The Service has in place processes that ensure updates are provided to those that have raised concerns, inc face to face meetings/different locations or in writing. We are reviewing different options of how a professional standards function could work at BFRS including. Options include collaboration with other Services or external suppliers. All grievances and disciplines are reviewed the Deputy Chief Fire officer on a fortnightly basis to ensure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way.
5	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure they provide accessible information for all staff and members of the public on how they can raise concerns and access confidential support (including through external agencies). Chief fire officers should also make sure accessible information is provided on how concerns and allegations will be investigated in a way that ensures confidentiality and is independent of the alleged perpetrator.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	We have a whistleblowing procedure in place and are working on a campaign to encourage staff to speak up. We will review our procedure to ensure they are written in an accessible way, easy for staff and public to understand. The public can raise concerns via a number of channels all documented on our website. We have a complaints procedure in place. Both compliments and complaints are part of our performance measures that are reported on quarterly. These actions will support recommendation 31

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No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	May '23 Update
Background checks					
6	By 1 January 2024, the Home Office, working with the Ministry of Justice, should make sure that the Government incorporates fire and rescue authority employees within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 so that they are eligible for the appropriate DBS checks.	Home Office	01-Jan-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
7	By 1 May 2024, the Home Office, working with the fire and rescue sector, should make sure that the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002, or a similar appropriate legislatively enabled solution, makes detailed provisions for fire and rescue services.	Home Office	01-May-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
8	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and underpinning guidance. It should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly state the requirements for background checks undertaken by services; • clarify the minimum requirements (including levels of DBS checks) for all roles, particularly roles where staff have access to vulnerable members of the public; • define the standards required to embed a culture across fire and rescue services that empowers all members of staff and local communities to report concerns; and • be subject to review following any legislative change 	Fire Standards Board	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
9	By 1 January 2024, chief fire officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immediately review their current background checks arrangements, and make sure that suitable and sufficient background checks are in place to safeguard their staff and communities they serve; and • make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing, new staff, and volunteers, according to their roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board. 	BFRS	01-Jan-24	Complete	Since 2016 we have completed DBS checks on all relevant staff including all frontline staff. In 2019 we increased our vetting and moved to the annual 'Enhanced with barred list' DBS. We believe this is leading practice in the way Fire & Rescue Services should vet their staff, and have lobbied the Home Office to make it mandatory for Fire and Rescue services. We welcome the focus on this from HMICFRS. We also carry out other background and vetting checks including <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Right to work in the UK b. References Some roles require external agencies to carry out further security clearance checks. For example, NILO, Prevent panel, CTLP Liaison, National Security Vetting
10	By 1 September 2023, chief constables should make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services.	Police	01-Sep-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

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No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	May '23 Update
Misconduct handling					
11	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle staff disclosures, complaints and grievances	Fire Standards Board	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
12	By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling.	BFRS	01-Mar-24	Not started	
13	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle misconduct and safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes. These should include requirements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct and complete investigations, whether or not the staff member under investigation leaves; • consider whether the incident requires immediate dismissal; • provide training for staff who are carrying out investigations; and • ensure the diversity/neutrality of the investigation panel/person. 	Fire Standards Board	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
14	By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on misconduct allegations and outcomes handling.	BFRS	01-Mar-24	In Progress - On track	Awaiting standard to be released, but continue to provide investigation training to staff and have invested in Case management refresher training for 23/24.
15	By 1 October 2023, the Home Office should work with the National Fire Chiefs Council and fire and rescue service employers to make sure there is a process to handle misconduct allegations against chief fire officers. The Home Office should immediately notify HMICFRS of any allegations and outcomes that it is aware of	Home Office	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
16	By 1 October 2023, the National Fire Chiefs Council should develop and manage a national barred list that holds details of staff who have been dismissed for gross misconduct (including staff who have already left services). It should ensure that this list is referred to in all appointment processes to prevent those who are barred from rejoining another service. After the College of Fire and Rescue has been established (see recommendation 25), it should take responsibility for managing the list.	NFCC	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
17	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in FRs; • are of a serious nature; or • relate to assistant chief fire officers or those at equivalent or higher grades. 	BFRS	Immediate	Complete	We will comply with this requirement with immediate effect in providing disclosures in line with the non-identifiable case histories provided previously to HMICFRS. We are seeking clarification from HMICFRS on any more detailed reporting it requires, to enable us to ensure that we are also compliant with our GDPR obligations

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No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	May '23 Update
18	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations.	BFRS	01-Aug-23	In Progress - On track	<p>We have a range of support in place for those that raise concerns inc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welfare Officer - Occupational Health - Allocating a point of contact that's not part of the investigation <p>But we will continue to review what our staff have available to them and if it works for them and ensure our processes document the support available.</p> <p>Our processes will be shared with HMICFRS in our round 3 inspection</p>
19	By 1 July 2023, the Home Office should examine whether any appeal processes for fire and rescue misconduct cases are appropriate.	Home Office	01-Jul-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
Leadership					
20	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should have plans in place to ensure they meet the Fire Standards Board's leading the service standard and its leading and developing people standard.	BFRS	01-Jun-23 01-Sep-23	Off Track	<p>The 2 standards were released at the end of Jan '23. An initial gap analysis for leading the Service has been completed and the leading & developing people standard is underway.</p> <p>We plan to utilise the standards to feed into our BFRS staff development pathway project, this is at project mandate phase with a plan being built</p>
21	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all senior leaders and managers (assistant chief fire officer equivalent and above) in service.	BFRS	01-Jun-23 01-Jan-24	Off Track	<p>We have started to investigate our current solutions to see if they would be suitable.</p> <p>During Q2/3 NFCC will be publishing options available and best practice tools relating to 360-degree feedback.</p>
22	By 1 September 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports	BFRS	01-Sept-23 01-Jan-24	Not started	
23	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should seek regular feedback from staff about values, culture, fairness and diversity, with due regard to the leading and developing people standard. They should show how they act on this feedback.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	<p>We have completed Bi-Annual staff surveys since 2017 with response rates of over 65% allowing staff to raise their feedback on a broad range of topics anonymously. BMKFA provided funding for this survey to move to annually from 2023/24</p>
24	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should put plans in place to monitor, including through the gathering and analysis of staff feedback, watch and team cultures and provide prompt remedial action for any issues they identify.	BFRS	01-Oct-23	In Progress - On track	<p>This is linked to recommendation 23.</p> <p>Alongside moving to annual staff survey, the following measures form part of our Quarterly Performance reports presented to members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % Staff turnover - % Absence - Welfare and Support - Employee engagement - Grievance and disciplines processed - Employee Assistance Programme contact - Appraisal completion - Mandatory training

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	May '23 Update
Management and leadership training and development					
25	By 1 January 2025, the Government should establish a College of Fire and Rescue, as proposed by the White Paper Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service. There should be no further delay to its implementation.	Government	01-Jan-25	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
26	By 1 October 2023, as a precursor to the development of the College of Fire and Rescue, chief fire officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council should work with the Home Office to consider how they can improve the training and support they offer to staff in management and leadership development. This should include authority members in respect of their assurance leadership roles and should ensure that opportunities are offered fairly across all staff groups.	NFCC	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
27	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their equality impact assessments are fit for purpose and, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality impact assessment toolkit.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	A thorough review of the existing Equality Impact Assessments took place in 2022 which led to the update of the template and supporting guidance. A e-learning package was created and face to face support available across the service. This remains a key focus when items are presented at our governance meetings.
28	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review how they gather and use equality and diversity data to improve their understanding of their staff demographics, including applying and meeting the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality, diversity and inclusion data toolkit.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	While we've always been able to capture equality and diversity data in our systems, we acknowledged that the level of data in our HR system was low. We have completed a campaign to increase awareness of the importance of completing the information and encouraging our staff to update their protected characteristics. We report on our Workforce EDI data annually to the FA. This work will support recommendation 29
29	By 1 December 2023, the Home Office should publish greater detail on the protected characteristic data it collects about FRS staff, including joiners and leavers, by rank and role.	Home Office	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
30	By 30 December 2024, the Home Office should align the data it collects on protected characteristics with the Office for National Statistics harmonised standard and publish this data.	Home Office	30-Dec-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
31	By 1 December 2024, the Home Office should collect and publish experimental statistics on public complaints and conduct matters in relation to FRS staff, similar to that which it currently publishes on police forces in England and Wales.	Home Office	01-Dec-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	May '23 Update
Improving diversity					
32	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should, as a priority, specify in succession plans how they intend to improve diversity across all levels of the service. This should include offering increased direct-entry opportunities.	BFRS	01-Jun-23 01-Nov-23	Off Track	A succession plan options paper is being produced, relating to the CFO and DCFO for review and approval at the September 2023 Executive and October 2023 Fire Authority. The next level succession plan will also be presented at this Executive.
33	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should develop plans to promote progression paths for existing staff in non-operational roles and put plans in place to reduce any inequalities of opportunity	BFRS	01-Aug-23	In Progress - On track	We have developed a Leadership and Management development programme, based on the NFCC leadership framework, that has been delivered via face-to-face training to all managers across the service, Supervisory or above. The next phase of this is the BFRS Staff development pathway project that will cover all staff. In 20/21 we restructured SMT to meet the needs of the service and broaden the views at the table. The NFCC Executive Leadership Programme is open to all Senior managers, two SMT members have recently completed the programme and one has just started.
The Core Code of Ethics					
34	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should review their implementation of the Core Code of Ethics and make sure it is being applied across their services.	BFRS	Immediate	Complete	Our Values have been in place since 2011 and are embedded in our Service. The NFCC Core Code of Ethics was released in 2021. The final document complements and supports our own vision and values, which forms part of everything we do. In March 2023, we reviewed our Code of conduct and chose to add in the Code of Ethics alongside our values.
The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England					
35	By the end of this Parliament, the Government should consider the findings and recommendations in this report when refreshing the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England	Government	End of this parliament	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation