Culture and People Strategy

2021 – 2025

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Making Northamptonshire Safer

Contents

Introduction

Our Culture and People Strategy is key to delivering the authority's Fire and Rescue Plan and will play a major part in delivering our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which sets out our core services: prevention, protection and response. This strategy will also assist in delivering the Chief Fire Officers 'Vision 25' plan, recognising the need to create a culture of change, innovation and reform; a workforce that is prepared for the challenge and has the right people with the right attitude and skills in every part of its organisation.

Our Culture and People Strategy describes how we will continue to attract, develop, value, involve and care for our colleagues, so that we have a safe and diverse workforce who we can support to perform well and who have access to excellent, achievable training.

We do these things so that we have a modern, forward-looking and innovative Service that works together to anticipate and meet the changing needs of our communities. We want to continue to benefit from the skills and experiences of everybody who works in our service.

This strategy sets out our aims and the specific steps that are in place, or being developed, to support you in being the best at what you do so that we can support the communities we serve.

Introduction from our Chief Fire Officer

The vision for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is to "Make Northamptonshire Safer": to achieve this, in 2025 NFRS will be a resilient, financially secure, flexible, outward facing organisation focused on delivering high quality services to the public.
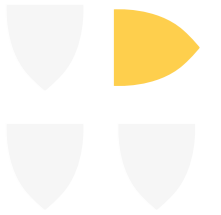
The biggest key enabler is people: we need to have a workforce that is ready, competent and well trained but also flexible, innovative and motivated. This creates organisational capacity as staff are both empowered and confident to "just do" and will create the "high trust – low management" approach we are hoping to build. To do this, skills will be critical and identifying the skills required across the range of roles within the organisation will be key. These range from the generic skills we will all need in a modern day public service such as ICT and management skills, to those specific to the role being performed. Leadership will also be a key part of transformation. We will need leaders throughout the Service, in every station and department, staff who are accountable and responsible and committed to delivering the vision of the Service and also committed to delivering change in order to achieve it.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is also a key enabler as it ensures that the service is both recruiting the best talent across the full spectrum of the population and also importantly, delivering services that are tailored to the needs of the whole community. EDI is also closely linked to leadership and productivity as it will be imperative that leaders throughout the organisation understand that it is key to a well-motivated workforce that people feel confident to be themselves at work and be accepted within an inclusive environment. This is at the heart of delivering quality services.

We also need to be mindful of the pressures the specific role we undertake brings and also that which the pandemic has placed upon us all. We are mindful that fostering employee wellbeing is good for people and the organisation. We recognise that promoting wellbeing can help prevent stress and create positive working environments where individuals and organisations can thrive. I welcome the content of this Culture and People Strategy; It is our people who will make us achieve our vision and be our most important stakeholders; we must invest in our people to improve the safety of the communities we serve.

> " committed to delivering change in order to achieve the vision "

Culture and people commitment

People

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service wants to provide an outstanding Service in all it does on behalf of the community. We can only achieve this success through our people – they are our greatest resource.

We want to be able to attract and retain the very best people for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service who represent our community. It is crucial our staff are engaged, supported and well-cared for, that they buy in to our vision, mission and values and feel an emotional connection to the Service. It is our people who will make us great and be our greatest advocates.

Culture

We want to create a culture where we work together as one team, maximising our effort, with the flexibility to achieve greater effectiveness.

We want a culture that enables us to be the best, able to deliver sustainable improvements for our communities by owning and understanding them and the problems they face. Every one of our team members are accountable, responsible and committed to delivering change in order to achieve the vision.

To do this we need to ensure Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is a great place to work, that our people have a positive attitude, behaviour and values and that we have inspiring leaders who are professionally knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed in carrying out their roles.

Our Vision;
values;
code of ethics

Our vision; values; code of ethics

Our vision is to make Northamptonshire safer and we know that supporting equality, valuing diversity and promoting inclusion within our workforce and among the communities we serve are keys to our success.

This strategy is aligned to the aims and objectives within the PFCC Fire Plan for:

- **Keeping our communities safe and well**

- **Keeping our staff safe and well**

- **Making the best use of our resources**

Service values

We developed our Service values as one team, setting out the behaviours to be upheld by everyone who works in Service.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Making Northamptonshire Safer

EXCELLENCE
PRIDE
TRUST
INTEGRITY
HUMILITY
RESPECT
INCLUSIVE
CARING

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

To save lives, reduce risk and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the communities in Northamptonshire

NFRS Service values

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Making Northamptonshire Safer

Our Ethical Principles

PUTTING OUR COMMUNITIES FIRST

INTEGRITY

DIGNITY AND RESPECT

LEADERSHIP

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Reinforcing a positive culture and diverse workforce that can effectively support and protect the communities of Northamptonshire

NFRS Code of Ethics

> being open, honest and consistent in everything we do

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics sets a standard of which all who work for or on behalf of the Service must adhere to. The code sets out five ethical principles, based on the Seven Principles of Public Life, which provide a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour.

- **Putting our communities first**
  We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first

- **Integrity**
  We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do

- **Dignity and respect**
  Making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias

- **Leadership**
  We are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexibility and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)**
  We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI both within the Service and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality foster good relations and celebrate difference

These ethical principles will help to deliver this people and culture strategy, improving organisational culture and workforce diversity, ensuring communities are supported in the best way.

NFCC People Strategy

The elements within this culture and people strategy take account and build on the 6 key areas within the NFCC People Plan which recognises the Fire and Rescue Service's evolving role, the need for professional development, improved wellbeing and organisational culture, and the need to develop new leadership skills and attract a diversity of thought and knowledge if we are to address the challenge:

- Strengthening leadership and line management to support organisational change and improved community outcomes

- Developing cultural values and behaviours which make the Fire & Rescue Service a great place to work for all our people

- Ways of working that are able to respond to Service needs

- Providing excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the public

- Continue to support the health and wellbeing of all our people

- Strengthen our ability to provide good service by diversifying our staff and creating a fair and equal place to work

NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Culture and People Priorities

The strategy will be delivered through the following priorities

1. Future proof
2. Resilient leadership
3. Engaged, empowered, accountable
4. Skilled and competent
5. Supported

Future proof

We will manage our establishment through a workforce plan that identifies gaps and risks and sets out clear plans to recruit, retain and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community of Northamptonshire.

We will become an employer of choice, attracting and retaining the best people, providing the right skills and knowledge at all levels in the Service. We will put in place effective talent processes and career pathways that develop and secure the skills necessary to future proof this Service and lead us through change.
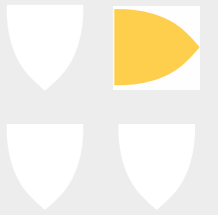
How

- We will develop and maintain an effective Workforce plan through the establishment board structure identifying key positions that are likely to become vacant

- We will ensure effective attraction and recruitment of staff from a breadth of backgrounds through continuous positive action campaigns and effective community engagement

- We will Improve our workplaces, facilities and embed attractive policies so that anyone who may see our Service as a career opportunity will not meet barriers that would prevent them from taking an application further

- We will Put in place a PDR process, staff talent processes and transparent career pathways that address skill gaps and attract those that have in the past been reluctant to take the next step, building up a strong talent pool

Our measure of success

- Capacity is managed and essential organisational skills are identified and maintained

- Evidence of an increased number and improved diversity of applicants to the Service

- Positive feedback from staff groups as to the facilities and policies to support them through all eventualities of work activity

- Staff to have effective and meaningful PDR's through a performance framework which is supported by suitable technology

- Increase in numbers seeking development and an increase in the diversity of applicants for promotion
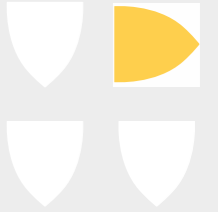
Resilient leadership

Recognising no matter what our role, we are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership in everything we do.

We will support, manage and nurture talent in the workforce, investing in leadership and positive management practices.

We will identify leaders for now and the future, creating plans, and development processes that are streamlined and flexible to enable whoever undertakes development to reap the benefits for themselves and benefit the organisation.

We will manage performance that recognises excellent contributions and deals appropriately with poor performance. We will provide staff with the skills required to make effective decisions, empowered to tackle issues as they arise.

How

- We will utilise the NFCC Leadership Framework and Code of Ethics to provide support to our processes, developing a talent management plan and process that will ensure we have the right people, with the right skills and knowledge, in the right roles at the right time

- We will manage, support and nurture talent in the workforce, to identify potential leaders, streamline our succession planning and make best use of our talent as defined in the NFCC People Strategy

- We will ensure the tools that leaders require to complete effective and timely performance management processes such as PDR's are innovative, easy to use and encourage staff participation

- We will continue to invest in leadership and management development programmes

- We will develop talent processes and create talent pools that attract the right people to the right roles

- We will address any perceived unfairness in talent and promotion processes by providing transparency and consistency

Our measure of success

- Staff are completing appraisals/PDR's and utilising the performance framework as a tool to not hinder but assist them manage their day-to-day activities

- Managers are trained in appropriate leadership and management skills to enable them to be as self-sufficient as the role requires

- We will have talent pools that are diverse and deployable
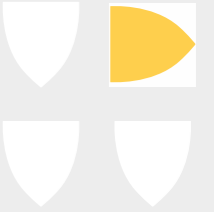
Empowered, engaged, accountable

An empowered workforce that is motivated, inclusive, engaged and consistently challenges any behaviour that is inappropriate and against our ethics, values and principles.

We will inspire a culture of inclusivity, cooperation, dignity and respect for all, with a workforce that is motivated, engaged and takes ownership of issues. We will recognise and reward those who go the 'extra mile' and consistently demonstrate the values and code of ethics within their day-to-day activity.

We will develop our internal communication channels and engagement processes through our dedicated comms team to eradicate any 'layers of clay' and ensure communication is two-way, timely, open and honest.

We will encourage the voice of all through our staff networks, staff surveys and engagement forums so that we are able to solve problems together and promote innovation.

How

- We will seek out and recognise outstanding performance and behaviour

- We will further embed our staff networks, supporting the voices of underrepresented groups within the Service

- We will provide training and support for leaders to manage difficult situations, recognise and deal with grievances and escalate issues when necessary

- We will devolve decision making down to the appropriate level fostering a culture that doesn't need to ask for permission

- We will maintain systems and processes that encourage staff to speak up if feeling harassed, bullied or are witness to wrongdoing in the workplace

- We will deliver on the commitments and targets within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plan and subsequent action plan

- We will benchmark and improve employee engagement through a communication framework that promotes two-way conversation and closes the loop on areas of uncertainty

- We will carry out employee surveys, publish findings and create actions to improve

- We will develop a communication structure so that our FEG visits are less hindered by lots of updates and promote open and honest two way discussions between senior management and staff

- We will review and reinvigorate the intranet and other communication mechanisms for internal communication and two-way feedback

Our measure of success

- We will seek views through an annual employee survey

- Delivery of the EDI plan and subsequent action plan

- Capacity is realised at all levels of the organisation

- Disciplinary cases are reduced due to the early challenge of inappropriateness leading to a positive change of behaviour
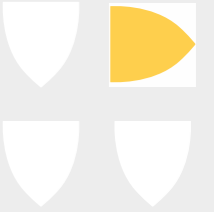
Skilled and competent

We aim to have a workforce that is flexible, deployable and responsive to the community in all aspects of the role, with the right people with the right skills, in the right place at the right time. We will invest in essential skills, training and continual professional development ensuring our training is achievable and learning and development priorities are delivered.

We will have a digitally literate workforce and ensure our technology and IT systems work effectively. We will develop our digital strategy to release capacity and encourage our workforce to be flexible, agile and committed to giving the best service in all we do.

How

- Provide information about the skills and capabilities of our workforce, monitoring performance through competence and establishment board arrangements with visibility at all levels of the organisation

- Review our maintenance of competence frameworks to ensure they are user friendly and achievable

- Ensure all our officers and staff are digitally capable with the right training in place for their role

- Continue to work with our staff networks and trade unions to create an inclusive environment, utilising recognised good practice such as positive action to aid recruitment, retention and diversity within the workplace

Our measure of success

- Targeted training plan

- Essential, risk critical skills training undertaken on time and within competence

- Audit of available technology and how it is used
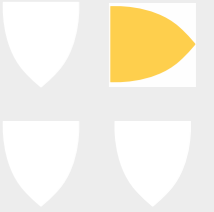
Supported

Supported; continue to create a culture of wellbeing and support so that all feel supported, safe and free to express how they feel whilst at work.

We will create a positive and healthy working environment and increase employee satisfaction within the workplace. We will focus on the wellbeing and fitness of our staff, making effective use of occupational health, counselling and prevention interventions.

We will embed good management practices to ensure regular communication between staff and their line manager. Employees will receive regular honest feedback about their contribution, and have clarity about their role and what is expected of them in respect of values, behaviours and objectives. Managers will deal with concerns and matters of uncertainty at an early stage.

We will enhance the management of attendance through effective leadership, and work to build resilience and reduce absence through the promotion of a healthy work-life balance.

How

- Review our wellbeing plan and action plan and ensure it takes account of the additional pressures the Covid 19 pandemic has placed upon individuals and workplaces throughout

- Review our mental health support provision to ensure it has the necessary mechanisms to cope with the increased pressures of the current climate and Covid 19 recovery issues

- We will further embed our wellbeing support team cadre and provide the skills necessary for them to support staff or triage individuals to professional support

- We will roll out a programme of mental health first aid to assist staff to identify such issues

- We will continue to provide support in relation to improving officer and staff fitness to ensure occupational requirements are met

- We will ensure wellbeing and attendance are discussed with officers and staff through regular supervision and any issues addressed

- We will provide sickness data and information and manage attendance casework through the establishment and HR structures

- We will provide managers with effective supporting frameworks to deal with attendance management issues head on to the benefit of staff and the organisation

Our measure of success

- Attendance levels relating to sickness are reduced

- Successful completion of fitness tests is increased and fitness maintained between tests

- Numbers and types of employee absence attendance cases are managed in line with policy

- Timeframes and people return to work in reduced timescales

- Overall increase in feelings of wellbeing measured through staff surveys

What we will expect from all staff

We will deliver on our strategy but recognise that the strategy cannot deliver on its own without ownership from you all.

> " keep learning and developing themselves throughout their career "

We need all staff to:

- Take responsibility and be accountable for their role and the reputation of the Service

- Promote and embrace diversity, equality and inclusivity

- Look out for each other

- Participate in employee engagement events and surveys

- Be committed to supporting each other and working together in the workplace

- Ensure any matters of concern are raised promptly to facilitate early resolution

- Take responsibility for monitoring personal wellbeing, following occupational health advice, maintaining their own fitness levels and ensuring support is sought where necessary

- Be aware of and adhere to attendance policies and procedures, and follow correct reporting of sickness absence to enable effective monitoring

- Take pride in and personal responsibility for ensuring their own training and skills are up to date and identify any learning or training gaps to their line manager

- Be professionally inquisitive and keep developing themselves throughout their career

- Take personal responsibility for their health and safety at all times including the reporting of accidents promptly and appropriately

- Maintain appraisal documentation and review objectives regularly with their line manager, highlighting areas of achievement, training needs and where development support is required

- Participate in team meetings and briefings, keep up to date with Service news and communications, and get involved in consultation activities

- Raise areas of concerns through the appropriate feedback channels and seek early resolution to any grievance