



Workforce Plan 2021/22

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service



1. **Background**

Making Northamptonshire Safer is our commitment to making sure that everything we do improves the safety of our diverse communities.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has developed the following strategic objectives to support this intention:

- Keeping our Communities Safe and Well
- Keeping our staff Safe and Well
- Making the best use of our Resources

To achieve our purpose of “Making Northamptonshire Safer” by making sure what we do is guided by our Code of Ethics and Service Values.

Everyone working for Northamptonshire FRS must act in the right way in our service to the public and towards each other as set in out in the FRS code of ethics, Service Values and leadership behaviors; acting ethically and with integrity, taking personal accountability for the reputation of self and the Service.

Our Service Values:

Excellence	Pride
Integrity	Trust
Humility	Inclusive
Respect	Caring

Specifically, we will We put the interests of the public, the community, and service users first. treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias. We will act as positive role models demonstrating resilient leadership, being accountable for our behaviors, decisions and actions, and challenging behavior that falls below this standard. We will continuously promote the value of equality diversity and inclusivity, challenging all forms of discrimination, fostering good relations.

Delivering an excellent service to our communities relies on having people with the capabilities, commitment and behaviors needed for current and future organisational success.

Our annual priorities as detailed in our Service Improvement Plan (SIP) details bringing together organisational planning and delivering against our strategy, Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner’s (OPFCC) Fire & Rescue Plan and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection recommendations.

In light of the evolving operating environment in which we operate and the need for a workforce that is equipped to support these changes; we are focused on the development of a strong organisational culture based on values and leadership.

We are committed to delivering high quality public services while ensuring value for money and, as the highest area of spend for any public service, the effective management of our people and skills is a key enabler for this.

We will ensure that we maintain accurate staffing establishment information, including the staff demographics and competency/skills profile to enable meaningful forward planning from both a budgetary and workforce planning perspective.

However, workforce planning, as a process, cannot exist in isolation and is not owned by human resource professionals. Instead, workforce planning sits as a critical interface between organisational business strategies and the services that we deliver. As such, we recognise that workforce planning is a responsibility of all managers and that it must be delivered as a constant process of horizon scanning, establishment monitoring, and recruitment and retention activity.

The aim of the Workforce Plan is to ensure the Service has the right number of people, with the right people in the right roles, with the right values and behaviors but also that these people have access to the right opportunities, exposure, stretch and development to reach their potential, whether this be in their current role or for a future role.

Workforce planning and succession planning/talent management achieves this objective.

Workforce planning aims to ensure that the organisation has the required number of personnel with the required skills at the required time. It is a straightforward cut-and-dried approach and does not concern itself with any specific employee on an individual basis. Workforce planning concerns itself with the quality and quantity of the entire workforce whereas succession planning concerns itself with the competence of a person in a specific post.

Succession Planning is concerned with individual employees on an individual basis, for the eventuality of the incumbent leaving at a future time that is still uncertain and indefinite. The process of identifying and developing potential future leaders or senior managers, as well as individuals to fill other business-critical positions, either in the short- or the long-term. The aim is for the organisation to be able to fill key roles effectively if the current post holder were to leave the organisation.

This includes not only forecasting staff turnover and ensuring recruitment is aligned, but also identifying talent and facilitating the skills of the workforce in order to accommodate the changing role of the modern Fire and Rescue Service.

With less exposure to operational incidents and a substantial turnover of staff caused by likely retirements over the next few years, the Service recognises the significant amount of experience, specialist knowledge and institutional memory that could potentially be leaving the organisation, at all levels. The Service must understand the key positions and skills across its workforce and put measures in place to maintain capacity and corporate knowledge, to provide for business continuity and the future capabilities of the Service.

The SIP 2020-2023 details the building blocks to improve and enable effective workforce and succession planning to analyse, forecast and anticipate workforce supply and demand, assessing gaps and talent management intervention to achieve the workforce plan objective.

These building blocks and improvement actions are:

- **Workforce & Succession Planning Governance (Establishment Board)**
- **Recruitment**
- **Apprenticeships**
- **Talent Management Plan**
- **Promotion processes**
- **Development processes**

The objectives of the Workforce Plan are to ensure that we have

- The right number of people with the right leadership behaviors and skills employed in the right place, at the right time to deliver the objectives of NFRS.
- The right people are in the right roles considering the experience, skills and qualifications required for the role.
- A better understanding about what sort of workforce is likely to be needed in the future.
- The right resources are allocated to work areas to fulfil the demands for the service now and in the future.
- We develop a diverse workforce which can meet the differing needs of the communities of Northamptonshire.

This workforce plan has been developed by a consideration of the political, economic, sociological, technological, legal and environmental influences affecting NFRS.

The workforce plan is not a rigid narrow plan for forecasting, but rather a plan which contextualises the changes we anticipate may affect our workforce and how we intend to respond.

2. Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

The Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (NCFRA) is responsible for NFRS. In April 2021 transitioned to two Unitary Authorities of Northamptonshire North and West. It employs in the region of **528** employees in a variety of roles including operational firefighters/officers, administrators, fire safety, business support and managerial staff¹. The Service has **22** Stations and adopts a number of different shift systems, **14** stations are purely On-call fire crews, with **3** stations employing Wholetime staff and **5** stations employing a mixture of On-Call and Wholetime staff.

It covers just over **2,364** square kilometers, with a resident population of **748,000**. Our diverse communities that make up our County vary in age, ethnicity and religion.

The Equality Duty Information Report for Northamptonshire 2019 details the latest data (2011 Census) with regards to the ethnic structure of Northamptonshire. It shows that within the county, the majority of the population in 2011 (91.5%) fell within the White ethnic group. The remaining 8.5% are residents who describe themselves as Asian (4%), Black (2.5%), of Mixed Ethnic origin (2%), and those of Other Ethnic group (0.4%). It shows that since the previous Census in 2001 there had been an increase in non-white ethnic groups of 3.5%.

Future population predictions show that the growth rates are different in different areas of the county, but the number of people aged 65 plus will increase.

¹This figure is as at March 31st 2021.

3. Workforce Data

Total Workforce profile as at 31st March 2021

The majority of our staff are white and male and work within the Wholetime uniformed service. A substantial number are also On-Call members of staff.

3.1 NFRS Workforce

Total Number of staff	White British	BME	Male	Female	Disability	Ave Age
528	310	17	430	98	1	41.73
%	58.71	3.2	81.43	18.56	0.18	

Staff Category	Number of staff
Wholetime	238
On-Call	195
On Call (Dual Contract)	43
Fire Control	18
FRS Staff	77
TOTAL	528

3.2 Prevention and Protection

3.2 (i) Fire Prevention (FRS Staff roles)

Total Number of staff	White British and Irish	BME	Male	Female	Disability	Ave Age
5	8		7	8	0	49.33
%	53		46.6	53		

7 unrecorded ethnicity

3.2 (ii) Fire Safety Officers/Practitioners (FRS Staff roles)

Total Number of staff	White British and Irish	BME	Male	Female	Disability	Ave Age
12	10		9	3	0	50.33
%	83		75	25	0	

1 unrecorded and 1 "Other" ethnicity.

3.3. Operational Response Grey Book staff

3.3 (i) Wholetime

Total Number of staff	Role	White British and Irish	BME	Male	Female	Disability	Ave Age
238	All	166	7	214	24	0	42.24
6	Strategic ³	6	0	6	0	0	50.4
27	Tactical ⁴	23	0	26	1	0	47.18
83	Supervisory ⁵	66	2	80	3	0	44.02

63 unrecorded ethnicities in WDS

²Fire Safety Inspectors, Practitioners, Prevention Support Officer, Prevention Support Manager

³CFO, ACFO, Area managers

⁴Group and Station Managers

⁵Operational Crew and Watch Managers

3.3 (ii) On-Call Duty System

Total Number of On-Call staff	Role	White British	BME	Male	Female	Disability	Ave Age
195	All	87	1	173	22	0	38
46	Supervisory Managers ⁶	36	0	44	2	0	41.56
149	FF	51	1	128	20	0	36.84

106 unrecorded ethnicities in entire On call

On-Call is the most diverse group of staff in terms of underrepresented groups, which can be attributed to an area where there is turnover and regular recruitment of staff.

3.3 (iii) Female operational workforce

Crewing System	Rank	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age
		Under 34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-55	56-60	61+
Fire Control	FF	2	1	1			4	
	CM		1			2		
	WM		2			1	2	
	GM				1			
WDS	FF	10	3	4	1	2		
	CM		1	1				
	WM					1		
	SM							
	GM							
	AM							
On-Call	FF	11	4	2	2	1		
	CM	1	1					
	WM							
TOTAL		24	13	8	5	7	6	

We employ a total of 63 Females within our operational workforce through all roles

⁶Crew and watch Managers

3.4 (i) Fire Staff

Total Number of staff	White	BME	Male	Female	Disability	Ave Age
77	40	2	42	35	1	48.46

4. Age Profile Headcount

Within the Wholetime establishment, the majority of staff are aged 45-49 years with a substantial number aged 50-55 years and 40-44 years. The youngest element of the workforce is On-Call, where the largest number of employees is aged less than 34 years of age. Within Fire Staff a significant proportion of staff are aged 35-39, 40-44 and 50-55 years of age.

Staff Category	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age
	Under 34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-55	56-60	61+
Wholetime	52	34	46	52	38	16	0
On-Call	81	36	24	19	24	9	2
Fire Control	2	4	2	1	3	6	0
Prevention/Protection	6	0	2	2	6	5	6
FRS Staff*	9	3	7	2	14	8	7
TOTAL	150	77	81	76	85	44	15

*FRS Staff excluding Prevention/Protection

5. **Sickness Rates related to age of staff 2020/21 based on establishment**

The highest number of days lost due to sickness within the Wholetime firefighting workforce is aged under 34 years of age and 45-49 years of age, the highest number of days lost due to sickness within On-Call is aged 40-44 years of age, the highest number of days lost in non- uniformed staff is those aged 56-60 years.

The most common reasons for absence in the public sector is musculoskeletal injuries and mental ill health. The main reasons for absence within NFRS are musculoskeletal, hospital procedure (for a condition or injury) and mental ill health (which includes stress).

The number of calendar days lost due to sickness in one year per age group is as follows:

Staff Category	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age
	Under 34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-55	56-60	61+
Wholetime	430	228	292	344.5	211	169	4
On-Call	10	4	15.5	0	1	0	0
Fire Control	62	87.5	0	0	52	24	0
FRS Staff	81	24	20	10.5	43.5	186.5	167
TOTAL	583	343.5	327.5	355	307.5	379.5	171

Shifts/Days lost per head of staff by age band

Staff Category	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age	Age
	Under 34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-55	56-60	61+
Wholetime	8.3	6.7	6.3	6.6	5.6	10.6	0.0
On-Call	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fire Control	31.0	21.9	0.0	0.0	17.3	4.0	0.0
FRS Staff	5.4	8.0	2.2	2.6	2.2	14.3	12.8

These figures are based on the staff numbers in each category as of 31st Mar 2021. The sickness figures will include staff who left the service during the financial year. A best-fit approach has been applied to provide realistic information.

6. Retirement Profile based on establishment of Operational staff

The retirement profile has historically been based on the pension arrangements, allowing accurate forecasts around people reaching 30years pensionable service. Due to the current pension changes this position is less predictable and is being considered within our current planning assumptions.

Grey Book Staff:

Under the 1992 Pension Scheme: Firefighters can potentially retire at 50 years of age with 25 years' service; evidence suggests most retire with 30 years pensionable service. Transitional arrangements are in place until 2022.

2015 Scheme: Firefighters can retire from 60 years of age and from the age of 55 with reductions.

In considering the MTFP and workforce plan, two scenarios have been modelled until 2025 to identify the establishment risk associated with the FRS Pension remedy, and the transition date of the 1st April 2022.

Scenario 1 – Rule of 75.

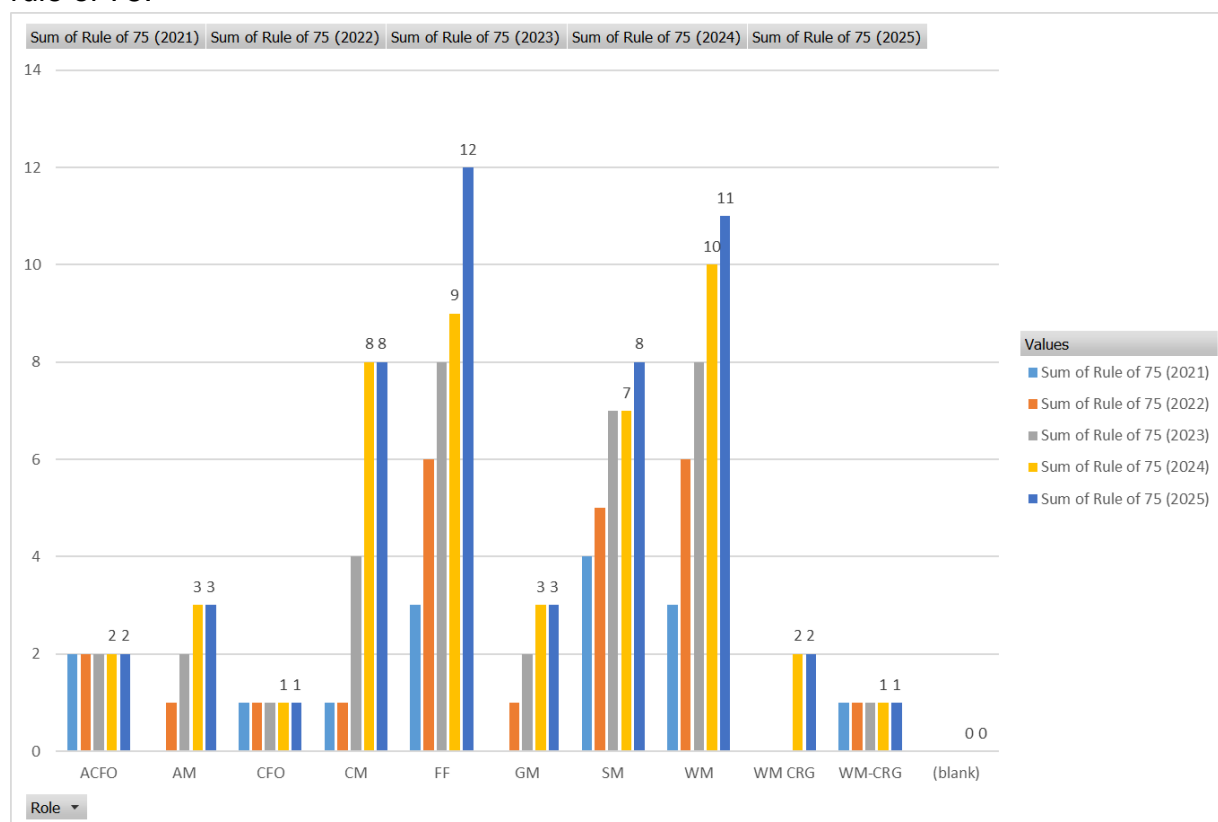
Under the Fire Service Pension 1992, the earliest age you can retire is 50 with a minimum of 25 years' service, and is the worst case planning scenario.

Note: Although the maximum computation for a lump sum is 2.25 times the pension, which may influence if they choose to retire on this date.

Predicted retirements Scenario 1 (By Role)

Row Labels	Sum of Rule of 75 (2021)	Sum of Rule of 75 (2022)	Sum of Rule of 75 (2023)	Sum of Rule of 75 (2024)	Sum of Rule of 75 (2025)
ACFO	2	2	2	2	2
AM	0	1	2	3	3
CFO	1	1	1	1	1
CM	1	1	4	8	8
FF	3	6	8	9	12
GM	0	1	2	3	3
SM	4	5	7	7	8
WM	3	6	8	10	11
WM CRG	0	0	0	2	2
WM-CRG	1	1	1	1	1
(blank)	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	15	24	35	46	51

Note: The above totals are accumulative each year and do not allow for those who actually retire. They demonstrate the number of people who can retire through the rule of 75.



Scenario 2 – 50/ 30

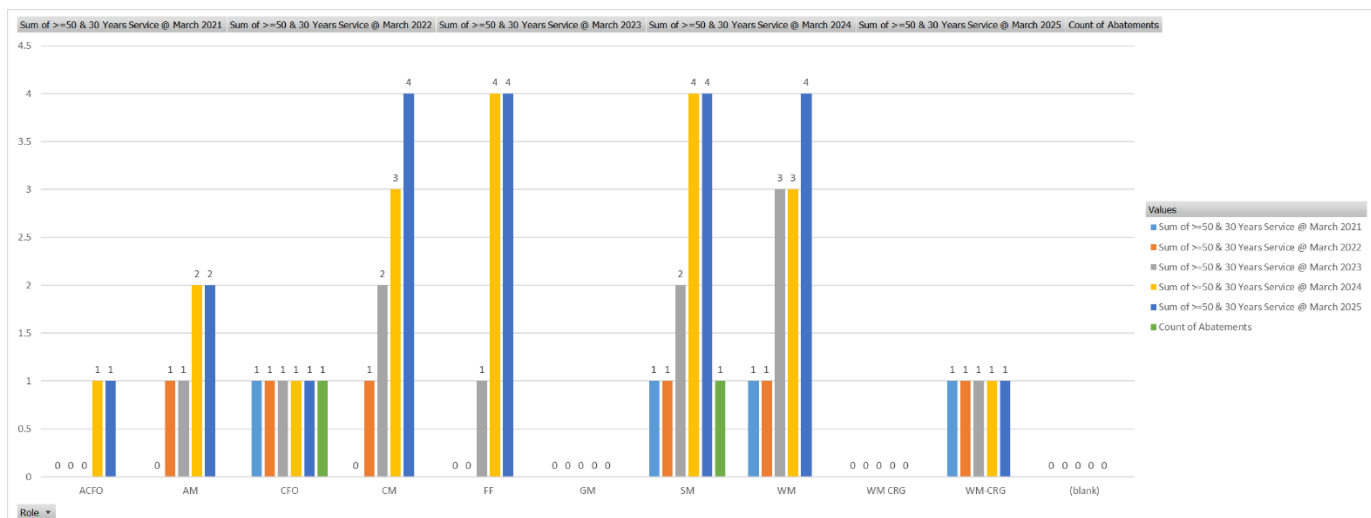
In considering that all (Grey Book) staff will be placed on the 2015 Scheme on the 1st April 2022, with the option to take their accrued pension on their legacy schemes, this scenario looks at those people who would have been eligible to retire with 30 years'

service and are age 50 or more. This matches their expected retirement date and is a more likely scenario for resource planning.

Predicted retirements Scenario 2

Row Labels	Sum of >=50 & 30 Year's Service @ March 2021	Sum of >=50 & 30 Years Service @ March 2022	Sum of >=50 & 30 Year's Service @ March 2023	Sum of >=50 & 30 Year's Service @ March 2024	Sum of >=50 & 30 Year's Service @ March 2025	Count of Abatements
ACFO	0	0	0	1	1	
AM	0	1	1	2	2	
CFO	1	1	1	1	1	1
CM	0	1	2	3	4	
FF	0	0	1	4	4	
GM	0	0	0	0	0	
SM	1	1	2	4	4	1
WM	1	1	3	3	4	
WM CRG	0	0	0	0	0	
WM-CRG	1	1	1	1	1	
(blank)	0	0	0	0	0	
Grand Total	4	6	11	19	21	2

Note: The above totals are accumulative each year and do not allow for those who actually retire. They demonstrate the number of people who can retire after 30years service and present the most likely scenario.



In addition to normal retirement profiles, there is a potential increase in vacancies due to operational staff leaving for other reasons than retirement.

7. Operational WDS Establishment and Strength

Establishment represents the number of operational posts within NFRS, and strength represents the actual number of personnel. Recruits in training are included in the strength figures though they cannot contribute to response until they have completed their initial recruits training.

As at 01/04/2021 the establishment was 254. This was an increase from 242 the previous year due to the Commissioner agreeing to increase the WDS establishment to structuralise the 'Bank Model' and reduce the dependency on pre-arranged overtime.

During 2020/21 a strategic decision was made in response to COVID-19 to suspend the recruitment of the fixed bank in favor of providing a more flexible response model to offset the impact of staff absence and the reduced dependency on bank staff due to On-Call availability increasing as a result of national lockdowns.

As at 01/04/2021: the strength was 241.5. It should be noted that recruitment of the fixed bank was initiated in January 2021 and appointed 1st May 2021. Increasing the establishment by 10.

Forecasted

NFRS's strategy moving forward will be to maintain establishment slightly above to allow for attrition rates to support succession planning. The Service (supported by the Section 151 Officer) will provide the Commissioner with a regular establishment reports, highlighting recommendations to ensure the establishment is maintained.

Based on the current forecasted retirement profile and uncertainty around the impact of the pension remedy the exact numbers required are not certain.

In regards to planning assumptions, the intent is to bring 12 people in each year to offset the current risk and subsequent retirements. This will be modelled within the MTFP based on the likelihood of the above scenarios.

As the new pension scheme (2015 reformed scheme) is a career average scheme and is not limited to 30 years, future forecasting will need to be based on attrition rates and not on age or length of service. The sector may see people being more mobile, transferring between different schemes or professions dependent on their personal circumstances and not being tied to a fixed term pension.

The service will produce an annual establishment report in line with the build of the MTFP and IRMP, allowing for a suitable lead in time to accommodate positive action campaigns.

8. Workforce demand, turnover and supply forecasting

The majority of staff within the Wholetime establishment are aged between 45-49 years of age with a substantial number aged 50-55 years and 40-44 years of age. Over the next 4 years it is anticipated that there will be a loss of up to 51 operational staff as detailed above and therefore the need for suitably skilled firefighters will increase.

Although the turnover of staff will give the organization an issue to ensure it sustains core establishment strength, it does support the services wider strategic objectives around Equality and Diversity and culture. Recruitment campaigns will be supported by positive action to ensure the service reflects the diverse nature of the wider community.

Within the On-Call establishment a large proportion of staff are aged less than 34 years.

However, it is anticipated the need for On-Call firefighters and regular recruitment campaigns will continue, the turnover of On-Call and the lack of interest in On-Call supervisor roles is a concern.

The service will recruit 40 new On-Call members of staff each year to offset normal attrition rates.

Within FRS Staff turnover is low compared to the total number of staff employed.

9. Workforce & Succession Planning

In ideal circumstances, personnel moving into a new role would have completed a period of acquisition development prior to their undertaking the new role to allow for a smooth transition of post-holders. In reality, this is often difficult to achieve, especially with external recruitment or in the more specialised support roles due to limited capacity to undertake development to the next role whilst performing current role. This is recognised by the Service; the Talent Management Strategy will provide the skills and processes to support the identification, nurtured and development of all staff.

Workforce changes may be as a result of either service changes or through impacts resulting from national or local political, economic, financial, social or legislative changes.

Workforce and succession planning can help to:

- Identify and prepare for future workforce needs
- Promote the effective and efficient use of people
- Provide a clearer understanding of future skills needs, development requirements and opportunities
- Identify the critical workforce issues where action is needed to achieve the organisation's strategic aims and objectives
- Help to avoid skill shortages

Talent Management (Succession system)

NFRS is keen to establish a culture of personal improvement and individual responsibility for personal and leadership development. NFRS will adopt an inclusive whole workforce approach to managing and developing talent and will look to identify business critical roles at multiple levels within the Service.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) definition of Talent Management is: 'Talent management seeks to attract, identify, develop, engage, retain and deploy individuals who are considered particularly valuable to an organisation. By managing talent strategically, organisation's can build a high-performance workplace, encourage a learning organisation, add value to their branding agenda, and contribute to diversity management.'

The aim is to develop pools of talented people, each of whom is adaptable and capable of filling a number of roles. Because succession planning is concerned with developing longer-term successors as well as short-term replacements, each pool will be considerably larger than the range of posts it covers.

We want our staff to have opportunities for development and career progression, whether through promotion, expanding their role, or through continuous learning of new knowledge and skills.

To this end, we will work with our staff to consider how best we might provide open and transparent career progression processes that afford clear development pathways for promotion to higher roles and support personnel wishing to expand their responsibilities within their current role by undertaking secondments and/or additional specialist capabilities.

FRS Staff, including Prevention and Protection

Department managers are responsible for forecasting vacancies within their area of responsibility and informing their line manager so that the vacancy information can be presented to the Service Establishment Board for review and recruitment approval. If recruitment is approved, the department manager will be responsible for planning and facilitating the recruitment, selection, and development processes to provide for continuity of service delivery. Support and advice for such processes can be gained from the HR Business Partner.

Wholetime Duty System (WDS) staff, including Fire Control

NFRS will maintain an ongoing record that forecasts vacancies likely to arise at the various role levels. The forecast data will be presented to and overseen by the Service's Establishment Board, which will meet each quarter to review staffing requirements. For promotion processes (Crew Manager (CM) – Area Manager (AM)) this forecast record will be used to provide clarity on the maximum number of staff that will be required with Talent Pools and be developed towards the next role.

On-call staff

The on-call Firefighter recruitment process will be managed by the Community Risk Group (CRG) Managers and will be an ongoing process aligned with anticipated on-call vacancies and the scheduling of recruit firefighter training programs. Training programs will be accommodated as flexibly as possible so that recruits can gain the necessary competence to form part of the crewing establishment strength as soon as practicable.

Recruitment and selection processes

Recruitment and selection processes will be aligned with the ongoing work of the FRS Central Programme Office (CPO) in relation to the people programme, and of the best practice identified through the national FRS Professional Standards Board. The

Service will include assessment against the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Leadership Framework Behaviors as part of all recruitment and selection processes.

The work of the CPO in relation to supporting the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters will also be considered with a view to directing our ongoing arrangements.

All future recruitment and selection processes will focus on the modern role of the FRS, ensuring prospective candidates have clarity of the purpose and requirements of their role. To support this, our recruitment and selection processes, we will include assessment of the applicant's communication and leadership qualities in relation to collaboration; understanding and managing change; community engagement; and how well they model our Service values and against the leadership and behaviors framework.

To help support the building of a more diverse workforce and to promote talent from a wider pool of applicants, consideration will be given to advertising all operational selection processes nationally as well as in Service. Fire staff roles will be advertised externally as well as internally. Consideration will also be given to lateral career progression if deemed appropriate and manageable.

Where possible, the Service will look to use apprenticeships to support the recruitment and development of Firefighters. Firefighter apprenticeships will offer a new way of introducing staff into the Service, providing opportunities for personnel to gain a wider understanding of the role of the modern day FRS during their development, and helping promote cultural change and the diversity agenda.

Staff retention

We recognised that the development of our organisation is dependent upon the commitment and motivation of our staff to continuously develop their talent and abilities to adapt to the changing environment of a modern day FRS. Our people are our most important asset so it is important that we have mechanisms in place that support the attraction and retention of staff.

Our aim is to attract and sustain a high performing, flexible and skilled workforce that is capable of delivering the expanding community safety agenda of the modern fire and rescue service. We aim to empower our staff and support them in reaching their full potential.

To support the wellbeing of our staff we want them to understand fully the purpose of their role and the part they play in the overall purpose of the Service, providing them with the opportunity to make a difference and feel valued by the organisation. We will therefore focus our recruitment, selection, induction, appraisal and talent processes on

the role of the FRS so that applicants clearly understand the purpose and expectations of their job.

Our staff appraisal/PDR process and talent conversations will provide clear objectives, expectations, feedback on performance, ability and aspirations that demonstrates the links to the overall purpose of our FRS against the NFCC Leadership behaviors.

To understand the reasons that any member of our staff leaves our Service, we will conduct a formalised exit interview process that collates data on the reasons for leaving which we will review and use to inform future processes that support staff retention and promote NFRS as an employer of choice.

Apprenticeships

Enterprise Act 2016 Section 24 of Part 4 imposes a duty on all public bodies, which are set an apprenticeship target, to have a regard to the target. NFRS is in scope for the target on the basis that we employ over 250 employees as at 31 March 2017.

The duty to have regard to the target is based on a minimum average headcount of 2.3%.

The Apprenticeship applies to all large public sector and private sector employers in the UK and employers will pay 0.5% of each month's salary expenditure to HMRC via PAYE process alongside tax and NICs.

NFRS has committed to all **new** Wholetime Firefighters undertaking an apprenticeship as a minimum, procured from a provider.

NFRS will continue to explore apprenticeships for other roles within NFRS.

Learning & Development

We will aim to align our development pathways with identified best practice as informed by NFCC Learning pathways model, Fire Standards Body and the work of the CPO People Programme in support of:

- Providing for the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) through professional bodies and access to development events;
- Providing a cohort of assessors and Internal Quality Assurers (IQA) to provide support to those on formal development programmes;
- Providing individual support through coaching, mentoring and wellbeing programmes;
- Introducing apprenticeship schemes where appropriate across the service to support the development of operational, leadership, business and other specialist competences;
- Providing End Point Assessors

Leadership and Management Development

NFRS has recognised the need to invest in the development of its leaders due to the anticipated turnover of staff.

There is also the challenge of delivering a service in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) environment and effective leadership is seen a key in meeting NFRS workforce challenges.

We want to ensure all NFRS leaders have the relevant business skills to manage in today's working environment. This will include core skills pathway requirements and continuous professional development of managers and leaders.

Specialist skills and knowledge management

Many members of NFRS staff have specialist responsibilities that may or may not be specified in their job description or role map. If not managed, can potentially result in a disruption to service delivery or even a single point of failure in the event of personnel becoming unavailable.

In relation to operational specialist roles, these are often linked to the special appliance/equipment capability on a particular station, or take the form of officer specialist competences.

CRG based Watch and Station Managers (SMs) are responsible for identifying and forecasting gaps in the specialist competences of their station personnel caused by the movement of staff. Any identified training needs should be reported by the relevant

station manager or respective Capability User Group, to the Group Manager Training so that personnel can be trained in good time to maintain uninterrupted delivery of the specialist capability.

Gaps in officer specialist skills caused by staff movements are managed by the Group Manager Joint Operations Team in line with the responsibility of managing the flexi officer duty Rota. GM JOT will liaise with the GM Training with regard to any identified skills and training needs. GM Workforce Development & Operational Assurance will liaise with GM JOT and GM Training to ensure all Commander qualifications meet operational requirements.

For specialist skills and knowledge that lie outside of the operational arena, department managers must identify such skills and, where possible, arrange to create resilience and succession plans to provide for continuity of service delivery. The arrangements should be recorded in the department's business continuity plan, highlighting any gaps or the existence of single points of failure. Gaps in skills should be notified to the GM Training with costed proposals.

10. Anticipated changes and challenges to our workforce

NFRS face change and our workforce need to be able to respond to those challenges:

Political

- Governance
- Legal duty to collaborate.
- Introduction of national fitness tests.
- Implementation of the apprenticeship levy and an apprenticeship target of 2.3% apprenticeship starts per year of headcount within the public sector.
- Recruiting a diverse workforce.
- To be transparent, accountable and open to scrutiny.
- Industrial Relations in a climate of public sector pay restraint.
- "Broadening the role" of Firefighters and FRS
- HMICFRS inspection regime.
- IRMP 2022-25

Economic

- Impact of COVID on economy and funding via Business rates.
- Establishing appropriate level of "Reserves".
- MTFP
- Financial challenges of other partners may increase the risks associated with the key functions of NFRS.

Sociological

- Fire Deaths have halved since the 1980's, since 2007 the number of accidental fire deaths in the home have stabilised.
- The number of road traffic collisions has increased by 34%.
- The community NFRS serves has grown increasingly diverse, in terms of population, age, ethnicity and religion.

Technological

- There is a need to integrate NFRS ICT systems and technology and to ensure the skills of those using the ICT Business processes are well developed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

Legal

- Pension regulation changes
- Increase in climate of litigation.
- Outcomes and impact of Public inquiries (Grenfell Tower, Manchester Arena)

Environmental

- To provide an effective and proportionate response to terrorism.
- Climate related incidents - Response to major incidents involving flooding and wildland/rural fires.
- The number of Flooding incidents increased by 70%
- Ability to identify any capability gaps and ability to meet the full range of risks in the area.

11. Evaluation of Plan

The Workforce plan will be reviewed regularly in light of changes to the political, economic, sociological, technological and legal environment. It will also be updated in light of any change projects which impact on the NFRS workforce. Monitoring of the Plan will be via the **Establishment Board** reporting to the Chief Officer Team - Fire Executive Group (FEG). It is also anticipated that when the Joint Head of HR has recruited to the additional posts identified within the Joint HR business case and are in a position to fully embed the management of establishment within that Department a full review of Fire staff roles will be undertaken to identify critical key roles and succession initiatives.

Appendix 1

Managing Operational Workforce Planning (Establishment)

The quarterly Establishment Board will oversee operational staff numbers across the Service and identify the need for recruitment, selection and where applicable talent pool processes, based on predicted vacancy information.

Operational (including Fire Control) Firefighter to Watch Manager:

CRG Group Managers are responsible for the ongoing collation of vacancy information and expected timelines for Ff, CM and WM positions (including Fire Control). They will report this through the Establishment Board so that numbers can be agreed that need to be accommodated through the relevant processes.

All other department managers will notify the CRG Managers of expected changes in relation to Ff, CM, and WM posts in their area.

Based on vacancy numbers forecast, the **AM Response** will lead the planning for the recruitment of WDS Ffs and Fire Control Ffs supported by GRG Group Managers.

Operational Station Manager and Group Manager:

The **AM Operational Support** is responsible for the ongoing collation of vacancy information and expected timelines for GM and SM positions. They will report this through the Establishment Board so that numbers are agreed that need to be accommodated through the selection processes.

All other departments will notify the AM Operational Support of expected changes in relation to SM and GM posts in their area.

The **GM Workforce development & Operational Assurance** will coordinate the SM assessment process. The **AM Operational Support** will coordinate plan the GM promotion processes.

Timelines for Operational Role Talent pools

The need to run operational talent pool processes will be based on the number of vacancies required and the number of people that have already completed and held on the talent pool list.

Note: Where possible, the size of a talent pool should be at least the number of vacancies expected in the next 12 months, plus a further 50% to help support a competitive process that selects the best performing people.

- January – March: GM promotion/talent pool process – to provide a talent pool for all vacancies forecast for the following 12 months 01 May to 30 April (number of vacancies identified by the GM JOT).

Lead – AM Operational Support

- April – June: SM promotion/talent pool process – to provide a talent pool for all vacancies forecast for the following 12 months 01 January to 31 December period (number of vacancies identified by the GM JOT).

Lead - GM Workforce Development & Operational Assurance

- September – October: WM promotion/talent pool process – to provide a talent pool for all vacancies forecast for the following 12 months 01 January to 31 December (number of vacancies identified by CRG Managers).

Lead - CRG Managers and respective Department heads

- November – December: CM promotion/talent pool process – to provide a talent pool for all vacancies for the following 01 March to 28 February period (number of vacancies identified by CRG Managers).

Lead - CRG Managers and respective department heads

- October – February: WDS Firefighter recruitment - to provide for all WDS Firefighter vacancies forecast for the following 12 months 01 August to 31 July (number of vacancies identified by CRG).

Lead – WDS Recruitment AM Response

Note: for the processes scheduled above, if no vacancies are predicted in the specified period, the process may be delayed or deferred to the following year. Conversely, additional processes will be accommodated should vacancies outnumber successful candidates. The establishment board will determine such delayed or deferred processes.

- On-call Firefighter recruitment will be an ongoing process aligned with anticipated on-call vacancies. Recruit firefighter (acquisition) training programmes will be scheduled quarterly.

Lead – CRG Management

- Fire Control Room Operator recruitment will be an ongoing process aligned with anticipated Fire Control Operator vacancies, where possible, scheduled to allow completion of acquisition training prior to vacant position arising.

Lead – CRG Management