

People Strategy

2021-2025



East Sussex
Fire & Rescue Service



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Strategy Foreword

Roy Galley Chairman

I am delighted to present the People Strategy 2021 - 2025. This strategy underpins the Integrated Risk Management Plan that was approved by the Fire Authority in September 2020 and seeks to address the improvements required as identified with our Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services inspection outcome report following our inspection in 2019.

There are many challenges facing us as an organisation moving forward and this strategy seeks to support further improvements in our service performance through developing our people, equipping you with the necessary skills, abilities and behaviours to deliver in both current and changing future environments.

We need to further develop our employees and our managers so that you all feel equipped to identify and implement new ideas and better ways of working, in how we do our jobs and to work more collaboratively with each other and our partners



Dawn Whittaker Chief Fire Officer

We employ just over 850 people in both full and part-time roles, some operational, some professional, but each and everyone has a key role to play in delivering our purpose to make our communities safe through prevention, protection and response. Our staff work within multi-disciplinary teams and collaborate with partners and other agencies to deliver our services to the public and we will strive for continuous improvement in the way we do that. This people strategy sets out our ambition for our employees for the next 5 years.



Strategic Context (External)

There have been a number of external reviews of the fire and rescue sector and external factors which impact on the People Strategy and have influenced the development of this strategy. These are listed below:

- The Government Fire Reform Programme
- The Thomas Review
- The National Fire Chief Council's (NFCC) People Strategy
- The NFCC Leadership Framework
- The NFCC Draft Code of Ethics
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England
- HMICFRS Inspection Report*
- HMICFRS State of Fire & Rescue – Annual Assessment of Fire & Rescue Services in England 2019
- NFCC Professional Standards
- Apprenticeship Levy

In addition there is significant uncertainty about future funding of local government, including the fire service, which makes planning over the short to medium term challenging

*In 2019, the HMICFRS inspection into ESFRS identified some areas for improvement within the People strand of the Inspection process

Strategic Context (External)

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, along with all other public sector organisations, faces an unprecedented period of change with a drive to deliver services to the public at a significantly lower cost. The need to deliver efficiencies whilst delivering better services and retaining a high level of staff motivation and performance means we are operating in a challenging environment. This strategy focuses on our intended response to the challenges, risks and opportunities in terms of people and outlines our broad commitments and planned actions in the coming years.

East Sussex Fire Authority is responsible for providing prevention, protection and response services to the communities of Brighton and Hove and East Sussex.

In September 2020 the Fire Authority approved a new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for the Service. An IRMP is a key planning document and describes how we will keep our residents, and those that work or travel through our area, safe over the coming years. It describes the main risks to our communities and how we are proposing to use our available resources efficiently to reduce those risks.

Our People Strategy underpins the IRMP and articulates what focus we will have on our people in order to fully implement the IRMP over the next 5 years.

The latest Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP) indicates a revised funding gap of £1.7 million in 2021/22 rising to £3.0 million in 2024/5 plus there is a risk that current one off pensions grant does not continue into 2021/22 adding a further £1.7 million to the savings required each year.

This will require the Authority to adopt a more strategic approach to delivering efficiencies across all areas of the service, including our people resources. Staffing costs currently make up 75% of our total budget of £39.7m (2020/21) and this means we will need to consider how our People Strategy can contribute to this strategic approach.

Moving forward, the key drivers of this strategy are the efficient and effective use of our people and processes. We will also continue to review opportunities for collaboration.

Our Service operates from 24 Community Fire Stations, a Training Centre, Vehicle Workshops, Fire Control Centre and our Joint Service Headquarters at Lewes. Our staffing comprises:

- East Sussex Fire Control – receive emergency calls, mobilise fire appliances for firefighting, rescue and humanitarian services, and also support the management and collection of operational information. From September 2021 this service will be delivered through a collaboration with Surrey & West Sussex Fire Services.
- Wholetime and Retained Duty System Fire Fighters – based at our community fire stations they provide the key intervention responses to incidents and proactive safety advice to the community.
- Specialist Staff – who provide community fire safety advice and legislative fire safety services to the public and businesses.
- Senior operational managers and specialist advisors located at Joint Service Headquarters in Lewes.
- Support Staff – providing core services including information management, financial and procurement services, engineering services, estates management, health & safety, human resources (which includes inclusion & diversity, payroll and occupational health), training services, performance management, communications and key administration services

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) is committed to its purpose of “making our Communities safer” and it has the following commitments to support this intention:

- Delivering high performing services
- Educating our communities
- Developing a multi-skilled, safe and valued workforce
- Making effective use of our resources

Our Service values support our purpose and commitments by making sure the way we operate is guided by strong principles (page 18).

The People Strategy has a number of People Services key documents and plans that sit underneath and support this strategy, which include:

- Strategic Workforce Plan
- People Services Annual Business Plan
- Gender Pay Gap Report and action plan
- Leadership and Behavioural Framework

These documents are aligned to and derived from the Services’ overarching strategic plans (the IRMP and the corporate annual plan) and have given due consideration to the National Fire Chief’s Council (NFCC) national documents.



Purpose of the Strategy

The People Strategy is an integral part of the way we work and ownership for its delivery rests across the Service. Our staff are our most important assets. We have a wide range of professionals working in the Service, not just our firefighters but technical specialists, qualified inspectors, community safety practitioners, control room operators, analysts, IT experts, health and safety and HR advisers, communication specialists, accountants and more.

Our People Strategy (2021-2025) will support and refine the culture for the Organisation to ensure everyone who is working here now, or joins us in the future, understands our ambition, our expectations of each other and how it should 'feel' to work here.

Our People Strategy sets out our ambition and aspirations for our teams, our key workforce priorities and importantly how we aim to support and develop our workforce to deliver the very best service possible to our communities.

The strategy directly underpins the Integrated Risk Management Plan (2020-2025) and the Corporate Annual Plan, focusing on providing our talented people with the support, development and a working environment that efficiently and effectively enables delivery of our Strategic Purpose & Commitments.

This strategy is supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council People Strategy and the NFCC Equality, Diversity & Integrity Strategy and offers a response to the recommendations the HMICFRS report following our inspection in 2019 and the HMICFRS State of the Fire & Rescue Service Report published in 2019 (as well as previous reports by Sir Ken Knight 'Facing the Future', and Adrian Thomas 'Independent Review of Conditions and Service for Fire and Rescue Staff in England' report). It has been developed to support the local delivery of the Fire Authority's purpose and commitments and strategic plans including the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Integrated Risk Management Action Plan (IRMP). It also draws out the main drivers for change over the next five years and the impact on our people. The delivery of this strategy will be monitored through the HR Strategic Group and through a detailed action plan, with regular reporting both to Senior Leadership Team and the Fire Authority



APPROACH TO EFFICIENCY

There are a number of ways that the work articulated within this strategy will create efficiencies within our people both within People Services and more broadly across the Service.

Digitising our processes will enable us to consider alternative operating models both within People Services and across the Organisation. Using our systems such as Firewatch and the Business Intelligence System effectively, will ensure that managers are provided with real-time data thus providing them with the intelligence they need to better equip themselves to manage their teams and departments.

Further to that, streamlining and digitising HR processes will enable the HR department to move away from the transactional services that currently take much of their time and energy to focus on delivering strategic and value added services.

The next 5 years is heavily focussed on ensuring our managers and leaders have the necessary skills and knowledge in order for the Service to thrive in ambiguous times. Development of people management capability in all line managers is paramount in achieving efficiencies.

Fundamentally part of that journey of upskilling our managers is to ensure our people policies and processes are simple to follow and are understood by all

We continue to consider approaches to collaboration and different delivery models to ensure efficiencies can continue to be found.

This strategy can deliver financial efficiencies through reduced levels of sickness absence, support for wellbeing and by taking a more holistic approach to mental and physical health to provide resilience in the work force. Streamlining of HR processes will improve operational productivity and reduce our administrative costs.

Improvements in the Occupational Health provision will ensure better case management of absences due to injury or ill health service helping to support our staff to return to work and also mitigating any potential mental health impacts that can be associated with long term absences. Improving and contributing to employee and organisational health and wellbeing is a multi-faceted approach to support employees to remain at work, or return more quickly, whilst building individual resilience, embedding positive messaging and developing healthy lifestyle habits.



ENVIRONMENTAL

It is recognised that the People Strategy and the underpinning work can contribute in making the Service environmentally friendly. We commit to ensuring our underpinning work falling from this strategy follows the Green Human Resources Management (GHRM) approach meaning that our policies, practices, and systems stimulate a green behaviour across the Organisation in order to create an environmentally sensitive, resource efficient and socially responsible workplace and overall organisation.

COLLABORATION

We do have a number of collaborations already in place, such as our joint approach to Occupational Health and Wellbeing with Surrey Fire & Rescue Service and Surrey and Sussex Police forces which started in July 2018.

We will continue to seek out opportunities for collaboration across the People Services strategy with our partners where they offer opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness. We will also continue to review the collaborations we already have in place to ensure the best possible delivery solution is being achieved whilst continuing to drive efficiencies.

MEASURING SUCCESS

The success of the Strategy will be measured against the aims and objectives of the Strategy and associated KPIs, as set out in Appendix A of this strategy. We will seek an improvement in our feedback from the HMICFRS across the People Pillar and will use the inspection process to assess our improvement journey.

Further to that we will have managers that are confident in managing their staff and navigating people processes when needed and have a motivated workforce where dialogue is entered into at every level of the Organisation.

Formal management processes such as disciplines and grievances will be dealt with at a line management level and therefore, creating capacity both for our managers and our HR team.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & REVIEW

This strategy covers the period from 2021 to 2025 and will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure alignment with the Corporate Plans and other key priorities.

The Organisation has both an established Strategic HR Group and an Equality, Diversity & Integrity Group made up of key stakeholders from across the Service. The progress of the work outlined within this strategy will be scrutinised on a quarterly basis at both of these meetings to provide assurances against progress.

As part of our commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion we also have a Lead EDI Fire Authority Member that further provides scrutiny over the activity we are undertaking as well as ensuring EDI is championed at the Fire Authority.

Further to that, quarterly updates providing strategic oversight will be provided to both our Senior Leadership Team and the Fire Authority's Scrutiny & Audit Panel.

We will also monitor our progress through our Staff Survey and associated pulse checks and stress surveys as that ensures we understand and act on all feedback that influences our staff morale, through our Occupational Health, HR, Training and our health and safety hazard reporting services.

We will develop Key Performance Indicators under the 7 themes of our People Strategy that can be scrutinised at the above Boards which can be found in appendix A.

SCOPE

The People Strategy supports the development of our people to enable the Organisation to deliver our IRMP (2020-2025) and the Corporate Annual Plans for the same period. This strategy will be reviewed annually against the corporate plan to ensure it remains cognisant and agile to the needs of the Organisation. Like all of our strategies, this strategy will be underpinned by annual action plans over a 5 year period.

Within the scope of this strategy, a number of internal and external challenges may influence the delivery:

- The need to make the most effective and efficient use of resources;
- Advances in technology changing how and where we can work;
- Changing workforce demographics with an ageing population;
- Changing expectations of colleagues regarding flexible approaches to work, health and wellbeing;
- Increasing competition for talent in a digital economy;
- Drive to maximize colleague engagement and empowerment;
- Political and financial uncertainty and legislative changes.

The strategy itself has been developed through an iterative process based on engagement with our Trade Union colleagues and staff networks through a series of workshops. We have also taken the opinions of over 300 staff who completed the staff survey in 2018 and the subsequent events which we held in response to the survey – information gathered through Appreciative Inquiry demonstrating a commitment to improving the engagement culture and value of the workforce's opinion.

OUR VALUES

Our values are important to us as in their simplest form they provide a psychological contract we make with everyone working here as to how they can be expected to be treated and likewise our expectations as to how they are expected to treat others.

Our values are integral to the People Strategy as they define the principles that guide ESFRS's internal culture as well as its relationships with external communities, stakeholders and partners.

Our values are further broken down into expected behaviours by all those working for or on behalf of ESFRS (ESFRS Leadership & Behavioural Framework) and the Service works alongside the NFCC to support the development of a national Code of Ethics and a set of standards for leaders moving forward.



OUR PEOPLE DELIVERABLES

Describing an ambition is one thing; delivering it is another. This strategy describes 7 strategic themes which we will focus on during the next 5 years to support and develop our staff and strengthen our capabilities as an organisation to continue to improve our offering to the communities of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Further to that, the IRMP clearly outlines how we will use our resources and through this People Strategy ensure that we can balance our resources across the Service to reinvest in more: prevention work (e.g. home safety) protection work (e.g. business safety) and training (e.g. firefighter safety).

We have considered the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and reviewed our internal HR complaints and cases and have concluded that there is a need to have a clearer focus on behaviours internally to ensure our staff treat each other and others in a way that you would expect to see in any professional workplace.

Critical to this is a need for us to make sure our standards, policies and training support are fit for purpose to support that change. With that in mind, we are launching a Leadership and Behavioural Framework based on the National Fire Chiefs Council's national guidance. This sets out what is expected of staff and we will give our staff the resources, skills and knowledge to enable them to meet these expectations through training, engagement and one-to-one support.

We are anticipating a significant number of operational staff to retire due to changes in pension regulations and due to the fact that the operational workforce average age is 46.

This inevitably puts pressure on recruitment and training as we bring in the next generation of firefighters and upskill our current workforce to take on more senior roles.

Our interim Strategic Workforce Plan will take us through the immediate challenges we face but will be reviewed in order to take into account the impact of the agreed changes from the IRMP.

This will set out our future requirements in terms of numbers, roles and skills and will focus on

identifying and nurturing talent.

We are also developing directorate, station and departmental workforce plans (for identification of required workforce specialist skills to meet community and therefore Service need) and departmental / directorate role profiles and competencies. This will strengthen our approach to workforce planning.

We will also ensure that:

We all model our values and demonstrate the behaviours that actively promote a culture of empowerment, accountability, engagement and delivery.

We cultivate an inspiring leadership and management approach that focuses on providing clarity of priority and purpose, fostering an inclusive environment where all colleagues are valued and can thrive.

We are skilled, capable and innovative, delivering services of the highest standard to the communities of both East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

We are a flexible organisation capable of responding to our community needs at pace and inspiring the development of new, creative ideas and solutions that provide value to our communities.

We are recognised as a learning organisation that continually improves, confident in our knowledge and skill to respond to external drivers.

Colleagues have a clear understanding of our people priorities and will be confident that they can deliver for our communities.

The People Services Directorate works closely with leaders, managers and colleagues across the Service to deliver the People Strategy, providing consultancy, expertise and practical tools that meet the business needs through a Business Partnering model.

A set of principles (Appendix B) underpins all our people related activities and will shape how we work

to support the delivery of our IRMP and the rolling Corporate annual plan.

There is a lot to do, therefore, we have devised a 5 year rolling plan outlining the work that will be completed over the next 5 years as outlined in the Priorities for Years 1-5 section of this strategy. It is also important to remind ourselves that we already have some real strengths to build on, such as the commitment of our staff to deliver an excellent service to our communities as well as having some well regarded training and development programmes.

As well as changing and developing some of our processes we know that we will also need to challenge and change our own mindsets and how we behave with each other. We all have a contribution to make and our everyday habits will be at least as important as our organisational processes in bringing about the change as outlined in the Measuring Success section.

OUR PEOPLE THEMES FOR 2021 – 2025

The People Strategy 2021–2025 sets out the future direction for the development of our people across the Organisation.

To ensure the Strategy achieves the People Outcomes as outlined above, the Strategy is broken down into 7 strategic themes. Each theme is supported by a number of specific initiatives and measures.

The 7 strategic themes are:

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	This theme runs across all of the other themes ensuring that ED&I is fully integrated into the work that the People Services Directorate delivers
Leadership	We will develop all leaders to influence and motivate effectively, giving them the behavioural, process and business skills to effectively serve our communities. We will maximise impact through identifying and developing all our talent at every level in the organisation to perform to the best of their ability
Talent	We will ensure we attract, select, recruit, develop, performance manage and retain the right people, in the right place at the right time, doing the right things, with the optimum level of motivation
Training & Education	We will provide high quality learning outcomes for our workforce
Engagement	We will motivate our people to do the best that they can by living our values and creating a culture of trust and real engagement
Health, Safety & Wellbeing	We will ensure that we create an environment where our People are physically and emotionally sustained to enable them to give their best and to be able to be at work more of the time in order to better serve our communities
Quality	We will provide robust infrastructure and quality process, policy, procedures with a clear assurance framework to support and monitor our ability to lead our People.

THEME 1 - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Working towards inclusive practice is everyone's responsibility. Evidence from [the CIPD \(2019\)](#)¹ indicates that Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) initiatives delivered in isolation do not work, they will not make workplaces more diverse or inclusive.

Inclusive behaviour allows individuals to work together effectively and creates a healthy environment for employees - it enables people, regardless of their differences, to work together effectively and avoid stereotyping. Therefore having a separate EDI strategy would not be beneficial as the other strategic themes are intrinsically linked and mutually supportive.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) is intrinsic in all that we do and should be ingrained as part of our 'DNA' as an organisation. It dovetails into and complements each theme within this People Strategy as well as mirrors the recommended approach as laid out in the NFCC Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and the NFCC Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Position Statement.

The People Strategy recognises the need for transformational change and as such supports changes needed in our fire and rescue service (FRS) to better serve our communities. One of the fundamental areas of improvement within the strategy is to:

Strengthen our ability to provide an excellent service by diversifying our staff, promoting inclusion, and creating a fair and equal place to work.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are three principles that help to create a [fair](#) society where everyone has access to [equal](#) opportunities. Equality is about equal opportunities and protecting people from being discriminated against while diversity is about recognising respecting and valuing differences in people. Meanwhile, inclusion refers to an individual's experience within the workplace and in a wider society, and the extent to which they feel valued and included.

We value diversity and recognise that different people bring different experiences, ideas, knowledge, and culture, and that this difference brings great strength. We want people to bring themselves to work completely. We believe that discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) or unique difference (e.g. caring responsibilities) represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for a great career in the fire and rescue service.

Ultimately, it is unlawful to discriminate - In order to improve the way we deliver services to our communities, we need to ensure we have a service that is reflective of the community it serves.

We want our workforce to be more reflective of society at all levels in the organisation. Having a range of perspectives, cultures and experiences brings a greater understanding to our organisation, which contributes to decision making. We know our workforce does not reflect the communities that we serve in terms of diversity and gender.

We will take positive action to help encourage recruitment from underrepresented groups. We want to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for our employees, the communities we serve and our partners as we understand these are mutually beneficial relationships.

Why is Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) a specific theme?

- The needs, expectations and composition of our workforce and communities are changing. To address this fast pace of change we need to tackle recruitment, progression, and retention issues, and increasingly looking to innovate in order to develop more flexible, sustainable service delivery models and innovative methods of engagement.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), have identified some cultural aspects of the sector that could be improved by a more inclusive approach at individual, team, organisational and sector levels.
- The private sector has demonstrated that a more inclusive approach can bring wide-ranging benefits, and this offers fire and rescue services an opportunity to build on this learning - inclusive workplaces, increase productivity and employee engagement which in the public sector has been evidenced to correlate with outcomes thus benefitting the workforce, the organisation and the community we serve.

The vision is to ensure we continue to work towards having inclusive workplaces and services by assuring diversity and inclusion is designed into everything we do, whether that is service delivery, people development or future innovation. We know we can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of our response, protection, and prevention services by:

- Using the benefits of diversity to better understand the communities we serve
- Promoting cultures of dignity and respect with the public and within our workforces so that engagement may flourish, making us more flexible, innovative and create environments where people feels valued.

THEME 2 – LEADERSHIP

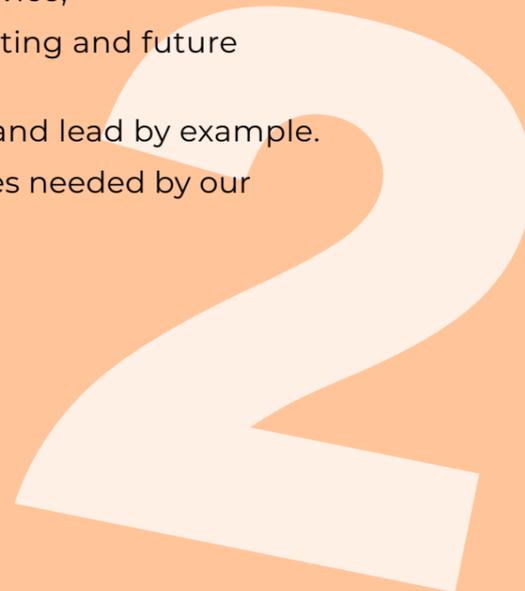
Our leaders have a critical role in achieving outcomes and supporting the effective transformation of our services. The continued development and empowerment of our leaders and managers is a key priority to ensure they promote a positive and inclusive culture; creating an environment that encourages effective engagement, open communication, empowerment and high performance

More than ever before, we need leaders who are both operationally and professionally competent as well as being capable of creating and delivering a compelling vision for the future to inspire and motivate others. We need resilient leaders who will take responsibility for continuous improvement in our performance as a public service and bring other people with them.

We need leaders who are able to collaborate across our different functions internally as well as being able to cross traditional boundaries with other agencies and businesses to deliver community leadership and achieve more efficient, effective and joined up services for the public.

Further to that we need to continue to ensure our Service design remains fit for purpose and continue to integrate services with chosen partners to ensure we can continue to provide both the best possible service and value for money to our communities that we serve.

- We will develop leadership and management skills and capacity across the Service;
- We will ensure coaching and mentoring capabilities are developed in both existing and future leaders;
- We will ensure our leaders and all our staff are visible, accessible, accountable and lead by example.
- We will develop our competency framework to identify the skills or competencies needed by our leaders to achieve the organisational objectives.



THEME 3 – TALENT

People development, talent management and succession planning are essential in addressing workforce challenges, in particular, shaping the current and future workforce to meet service needs. This People Strategy will enable improved performance management and people development through our new simplified appraisal documentation and process. Also monitoring appraisal returns to ensure that training needs are identified and incorporated in to reporting, product design, programme procurement, and actions required

- We will be flexible, creative and offer learning opportunities and solutions. We will design, develop and deliver a talent management framework for the Service. Our talent management processes and development will aim to:
- Create a tangible means of identifying, selecting and deploying outstanding talent.
- Be proactive around talent spotting, and succession planning and consider how we can develop our own internal talent pipelines.
- Become and remain responsive to changing business needs through increased capability.
- Strengthen personal accountability by making development goals clear and measurable and visible across the organisation through appraisal review.
- Strengthen the use of the apprenticeship levy to map to new role development and leadership programmes.



THEME 4 – TRAINING & EDUCATION

We are committed to providing all of our staff with high quality training and education to ensure we are prepared to tackle the challenges we are facing moving forward. The Service's IRMP articulates the reasonably foreseeable risks that we may face. This will mean training our prevention, protection and response staff to meet these risks. Where possible this will be to national best practice and aligned to a qualification framework to ensure quality assurance and audit of our training. For our support staff, this will be providing training in the skills we need now and in the future and aligned, where possible, to the apprenticeship framework and relevant professional training schemes. We will support our professional staff to demonstrate continuous professional development

We know that to facilitate training effectively there cannot be a single method of delivery. We will provide training and education for our staff in multiple formats that allow the best experience and outcome for the individual, team and Organisation. By evaluating, investing and aligning our training facilities to this strategy, we are able to focus on individual skills sets and provide the best possible training to achieve learning outcomes. This will at times require extracting individuals to be supported by enhanced facilities, qualifications and experience of instructors/trainers in order to deliver the most effective training. We are also able to define, develop and deliver training accessible and supported in the workplace ensuring our operational availability modelling through the IRMP is achievable.

Training will be prioritised using a corporate training needs analysis approach to ensure the training most needed is delivered swiftly and effective whilst ensuring it is within the cost envelope identified. We will work closely with our Procurement team to ensure best value is achieved and delivers value for money.



Our operational training will be defined through a clear competence framework providing clarity over acquisition, application and maintenance of competence. The framework defines skillsets required for competence and provides support and facilities to deliver training against clear operational performance criteria. This performance and resulting improvement of firefighter safety is assured through an appropriately supported assessment programme. The competence of our response, prevention and protection staff at all levels is a key focus of our 5 year strategy.

Internal assurance processes and National influence will inform the training content in order to continually define and achieve competence. National and Joint Operational Guidance, Learning is evaluated internally and training support refined to ensure operational training is targeted to improve competence and safety



THEME 5 – ENGAGEMENT

In order for us to meet the challenges that we face, we must ensure that staff are committed and loyal to our organisation, and that they give their very best to their roles and to the communities we serve. We want our people to be engaged in our operational strategy and also, in our culture and in living the values of our organisation. The People Strategy will support improved engagement and motivation of our staff by:

- The development and cascade of the Leadership & Behavioural Framework and training and development tool kit for leading people and leading change
- A review and refresh of our current reward, recognition and benefit schemes
- The creation of an instant pulse check system (a fast and frequent survey system) and focus on pulse check questions and results development and leadership programmes.



THEME 6 – HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

We want the experience of working for ESFRS to be a positive one, and to have a positive impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees. Responsibility for health and wellbeing at work belongs to both employers and employees. The organisation's Health, Safety & Wellbeing Strategy is a supporting strategy and underpins this People Strategy, it specifically outlines how we will continue to ensure the health, safety & wellbeing of all our staff and in particular Firefighter Safety when undertaking operational (and operational training) activity.

It is recognised in health and safety management that the workplace can be inherently dangerous. This is a reality for us, a number of our staff sometimes have to work in very dangerous and dynamic environments. This can sometimes include exposure to dangerous and unpredictable situations when attempting to save life and mitigate other emergencies.

We adopt the 'safe person concept' to minimise the risk. As an organisation we have a number of organisational responsibilities including:

- recruiting suitable candidates, training them appropriately and maintaining their competence
- ensuring that detailed guidance is available on how to establish a safe system of work for operational incidents
- ensuring that suitable equipment is available including fire appliances and that the necessary personal protective equipment is provided
- providing welfare arrangements for rest, recovery and replacement of personnel during operational incidents
- learning from post event debriefs in order to do things differently next time to enable safe systems of work.

The safe person principles detail the organisational responsibilities together with those placed on individuals themselves. Individuals should:

- work as effective members of a team within safe systems of work
- they should be competent and knowledgeable about hazard and risk



- they should have the personal skills and attributes necessary to remain safe, even in an environment where there may be limited controls over hazards and risks.

There are two specific Well-being strands that we will focus on over the next 5 years.

1. Contributing to the Future Health and Mental Wellbeing of all Employees

Investing in employees' physical health and mental wellbeing in order to support them in delivering frontline services. We will use the Bluelight Wellbeing Framework to identify what wellbeing initiatives we should consider and how we can continue to improve our offering to our staff.

2. Organisational Wellbeing

To develop health and safety management systems in consultation and collaboration with our staff, promoting organisational learning, openness and transparency. To develop Occupational Health systems and processes in collaboration with stakeholders, to promote organisational learning, openness and a culture of health

The key factors that we believe can determine whether workers will have a positive or negative relationship with work are:

- The relationships and communication between line managers and their people
- Whether employees are involved in organisational issues and decisions and feel empowered and involved in our organisation
- Job design and practicality, flexibility and versatility of role
- Appropriateness and volume of workload



- Availability and acceptability of flexible working
- Awareness of occupational health issues and encouragement to invest in themselves and their wellbeing.

We therefore aim to:

- Create a resilient, physically healthy and emotionally balanced Workforce.
- Educate and support our workforce to be proactive in their health and wellbeing encouraging the up-take of Wellbeing Checks to inform healthy lifestyle choices e.g. alcohol, weight reduction and smoking.
- Reduce levels of sickness absence across the Service
- Assess the effects of health on work and work on health
- support our Occupational Health service to become SEQOHS accredited
- Reduce stress and improve mental wellbeing of staff by offering education and training sessions providing knowledge and skills to equip managers and staff to have better awareness to manage and improve their mental health coping strategies e.g. resilience training, sleep management, mindfulness.



THEME 7 – Quality

It is important that managers have access to information and guidance to help them line manage their employees effectively. A number of toolkits will be developed and made easily accessible to line managers on key HR issues including sickness management, capability, flexible working, how to deal with grievances and how to manage organisational change projects successfully. The toolkits will be supported by a “quick reference guide” that will act as an easy reference tool for things like special leave, annual leave and sickness as well as frequently asked questions for each subject matter. An HR Business Partner intranet page will be developed – ensuring that the page can be easily navigated and that the toolkits and guidance documents are easy to find.

Digitisation of People processes across the People Services directorate will be an enabler to quality and ensure the Service has enabling processes for managers to navigate around.

We will use succession planning and workforce planning as a proactive process that works to address talent needs before they exist and which then cultivates internal talent to meet those needs. This incorporates linking workforce planning to business planning to inform future leadership requirements and determining the key roles that will have the greatest impact on the stability, productivity and effectiveness of the organisation.

We will:

Produce accurate, timely, meaningful data and insight to the highest quality to not only meet our statutory reporting obligations but to enable data driven conversations and decisions to take place.

Continuously review and improve our people management policies, processes and experiences and respond to constructive feedback.

Put systems and processes in place to support the succession planning process in order to have a positive organisational impact and to fully enable our managers to make decisions about the numbers, roles, skills and development requirements of the resources required to effectively run their departments.

- Use effective leadership planning to equip the organisation with the essential leadership qualities, knowledge, skills and behaviours required to build effective leadership.
- Provide accurate information around gaps and ensure that future planning decisions are made around robust data.
- Support the recruitment of the right people into the right places with the right skills through provision of gap data, and ensure that succession planning is credible and accurate
- Support departments to be able to develop effective workforce plans to realise their business plans.

PRIORITIES FOR EACH THEME YEARS 1 – 5

Year 1 Activity (2021/22)	Strategic Theme
Develop and implement a continuous approach to positive action for the Service, starting with Firefighter recruitment.	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Create a training suite to accommodate all roles and all stages of the work life cycle to maintain up to date EDI knowledge as well as improve awareness of specific areas identified this training will be rolled out over 2 years	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Use charters to support us in measuring progression. Start with Disability confident in year 1	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Continue work on identifying, understanding and reducing the pay gaps by scrutinising the Gender Pay Gap report and making recommendations.	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Fully embed the revised Leadership & Behavioural Framework and the values.	Leadership
Empower and support managers to deliver transformational services which are sustainable and deliver positive outcomes by providing management & leadership development and toolkits	Leadership
To implement a meaningful staff induction programme that helps colleagues to be role-ready	Talent
To refresh our development offering specifically in relation to upskilling our leaders and managers in corporate processes such as business planning, programme and project management, day to day HR skills and procurement and to fine tune the training and development we give to our staff in relation to developing their skills to be outstanding leaders and managers	Talent
Focus on 'growing our own talent' through the development of the apprenticeship scheme, the development of the career pathways scheme and a Direct Entry Scheme, which will offer a non-traditional route into leadership roles within the Fire & Rescue Service. We will continue to support professional qualifications to support 'growing our own talent'	Talent

Create clear succession plans with departments to demonstrate our commitment to increasing clarity in caeer development.	Talent
Fully embed and implement a revised appraisal process	Talent
Deliver an operational training and competence programme for Firefighter to Watch Manager. This will define, support and assess the competence of our station based and specialist staff.	Training & Education
To develop a clear approach to mandatory training (corporate, management & leadership and operational) for both new and existing staff	Training & Education
Evaluate and invest in our training facilities in order to support the training delivery and competence framework. This will include enhancing facilities at our service training centre specifically improving our provision of realistic structural firefighting training and management of contaminants	Training & Education
To develop an annual corporate training needs analysis process that will have oversight and scrutiny at the HR Strategic Group	Training & Education
Review our benefits and reward approach, offering greater flexibility and choice to suit diverse and changing needs and enable the Service to be agile and competitive in a competing external environment	Engagement
To prepare and undertake a staff survey	Engagement
Occupational Health service to become SEQOHS accredited.	Wellbeing
Review the Wellbeing and stress risk assessment approach for the Organisation	Wellbeing
Explore the implementation of Health and Wellbeing checks available to our staff	Wellbeing
Fine tune our Well-being provision and offering against the Bluelight Wellbeing standards and develop a rolling plan of development and improvement	Wellbeing

Develop a joint Wellbeing approach with Surrey Fire & Rescue and Surrey & Sussex Police forces which specifically links to our organisational needs ie ageing workforce, mental wellbeing, musculo skeletal issues etc	Wellbeing
Undertake an annual review of the Occupational Health provision and the value added from a collaborative approach	Wellbeing
Review and refresh the fitness policy for operational staff to ensure it remains aligned to national guidance.	Wellbeing
To implement an E-Recruitment system that provides a positive experience both for managers and the candidate	Quality
Produce HR dashboards and People data that is accurate, timely and meaningful to meet both our statutory obligations and to enable data driven conversations and decisions.	Quality
To review and improve our people management policies, processes and experiences and digitise people processes where possible	Quality
Firewatch project completion and full implementation	Quality
Fully support and drive the 'people strand' of both the corporate P21 project and the IRMP implementation project	Quality

Year 2 Activity (2022/23 – 2023/24)	Strategic Theme
Improve the integrity of the EDI data held and increase the quantity data shared by obtaining trust from our employees in regards to the use of the data. Data will be used to inform decisions i.e. identifying specific areas for training.	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Establish an external resource group via community groups to aid EDI Group in decision making and provide more diverse representation for protected characteristics in which we have small quantities.	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Continue work on identifying, understanding and reducing the pay gaps by scrutinising the Gender Pay Gap report and making recommendations.	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers through strategic engagement activities	Leadership
To refresh our development offering specifically in relation to upskilling our leaders and managers in corporate processes such as business planning, programme and project management, day to day HR skills and procurement and to fine tune the training and development we give to our staff in relation to developing their skills to be outstanding leaders and managers	Talent
Develop Coaching, Mentoring and Buddying Schemes that utilise the expertise within the Service;	Talent
Focus on 'growing our own talent' through the development of the apprenticeship scheme, the development of the career pathways scheme and a Direct Entry Scheme, which will offer a non-traditional route into leadership roles within the Fire & Rescue Service. We will continue to support professional qualifications to support 'growing our own talent'	Talent
Develop and support managers to develop and implement departmental workforce plans (including critical roles) that will subsequently feed into the Strategic Workforce Plan	Talent
Develop a Direct Entry scheme that is aligned and supportive of the NFCC approach.	Talent

Deliver an operational training and competence programme for our Officers. This will define, support and assess the competence of our commanding officers at Level 2, 3 and 4	Training & Education
Evaluate and invest in our training facilities in order to support the training delivery and competence framework. This will include enhancing facilities at our service training centre specifically improving our provision of realistic structural firefighting training and management of contaminants	Training & Education
To prepare pulse surveys concentrating on specific People themes to inform areas on improvement;	Engagement
Undertake pulse Wellbeing surveys in conjunction with the other pulse surveys to inform areas of improvement	Wellbeing
Develop a joint Wellbeing approach with Surrey Fire & Rescue and Surrey & Sussex Police forces which specifically links to our organisational needs ie ageing workforce, mental wellbeing, musculo skeletal issues etc	Wellbeing
Undertake an annual review of the Occupational Health provision and the value added from a collaborative approach;	Wellbeing
Consider alternative HR delivery models to ensure the Service continues to receive the best possible HR solution to meet its needs	Quality
To review and improve our people management policies, processes and experiences and digitise people processes where possible	Quality
Produce HR dashboards and People data that is accurate, timely and meaningful to meet both our statutory obligations and to enable data driven conversatons and decisions.	Quality
Fully support and drive the 'people strand' of the corporate IRMP implementation project.	Quality

Year 3 Activity (2023/24)	Strategic Theme
Use charters to support us in measuring progression	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Continue work on identifying, understanding and reducing the pay gaps by scrutinising the Gender Pay Gap report and making recommendations.	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Review and refresh EDI Training	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Increase capability to manage and respond to change effectively including new approaches to engagement practices;	Leadership
Focus on 'growing our own talent' through the development of the apprenticeship scheme, the development of the career pathways scheme and a Direct Entry Scheme, which will offer a non-traditional route into leadership roles within the Fire & Rescue Service. We will continue to support professional qualifications to support 'growing our own talent'.	Talent
To refresh our development offering specifically in relation to upskilling our leaders and managers in corporate processes such as business planning, programme and project management, day to day HR skills and procurement and to fine tune the training and development we give to our staff in relation to developing their skills to be outstanding leaders and managers	Talent
Deliver an operational training and competence programme for our Officers. This will define, support and assess the competence of our commanding officers at Level 2, 3 and 4.	Training & Education
Evaluate and invest in our training facilities in order to support the training delivery and competence framework. This will include enhancing facilities at our service training centre specifically improving our provision of realistic structural firefighting training and management of contaminants	Training & Education

Reward and recognise individual and team contributions which support the Services values and ambition through a review of the existing rewards	Engagement
To prepare pulse surveys concentrating on specific People themes to inform areas on improvement;	Engagement
Undertake pulse Wellbeing surveys in conjunction with the other pulse surveys to inform areas of improvement	Wellbeing
Undertake an annual review of the Occupational Health provision and the value added from a collaborative approach	Wellbeing
To review and improve our people management policies, processes and experiences and digitise people processes where possible	Quality
Fully support and drive the 'people strand' of both the corporate P21 project and the IRMP implementation project	Quality

Year 4 Activity (2024/25)	Strategic Theme
Use charters to support us in measuring progression.	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Continue work on identifying, understanding and reducing the pay gaps by scrutinising the Gender Pay Gap report and making recommendations	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Focus on 'growing our own talent' through the development of the apprenticeship scheme, the development of the career pathways scheme and a Direct Entry Scheme, which will offer a non-traditional route into leadership roles within the Fire & Rescue Service. We will continue to support professional qualifications to support 'growing our own talent'.	Talent
Undertake a full strategic review of the training provided and how by the Service	Training & Education
To prepare to undertake a staff survey in 2025/6	Engagement
Undertake pulse Wellbeing surveys in conjunction with the other pulse surveys to inform areas of improvement	Wellbeing
Undertake an annual review of the Occupational Health provision and the value added from a collaborative approach	Wellbeing
To review and improve our people management policies, processes and experiences and digitise people processes where possible	Quality
Fully support and drive the 'people strand' of both the corporate P21 project and the IRMP implementation project	Quality
Develop People Strategy for 2025/6 – 2030/31	Quality



Appendix A - KPIs

Talent & Leadership

- Mandatory training compliance
- Appraisal rates completion and quality of appraisal discussions
- Apprenticeship Levy spend

Engagement

- Pulse checks, annual staff survey and staff engagement scores
- Manager seminars, attendance rates and quality of those seminars
- Retention of Whole Time staff
- Retention of RDS crew
- Employee engagement with the service
- A workforce diversity profile that is representative of the community

Health and Well Being

- 1/4ly health and safety statistics
- Sickness absence rates
- Occupational Health service referrals
- SEQOHS accreditation
- Stress Survey Quality of policy and process
- Vacancy levels
- Turnover
- Time to recruit
- Agency usage and spend
- Employee relations measures such as Employment tribunals, suspensions, disciplinaries

Training

- Number of apprenticeships underway
- Eligible operational staff successfully completing fitness test
- Eligible operational staff in qualification
- The Percentage of Fire Safety Inspectors qualified to Level 4 Diploma Level

- Training to meet the operational requirements of FRS competency: % staff maintaining competency in Breathing Apparatus
- Training to meet the operational requirements of FRS competency: % staff maintaining competency in ICS level 1-3
- Training to meet the operational requirements of FRS competency: % staff maintaining competency in Emergency response Driver Training
- Training to meet the operational requirements of FRS competency: % staff maintaining competency in Wade training (DEFRA requirement)
- Training to meet the operational requirements of FRS competency: % staff maintaining competency in IECR
- The average number of formal CPD hours recorded by each warranted fire safety inspector

Appendix B - Underpinning principles

In order to support the delivery of this strategy we have adopted some underpinning principles, some of which have been devised locally over time and some which are laid out in the national People Strategy. These are as follows:

- We trust our people to make decisions and will give them the skills and knowledge to do this.
- We understand the importance investing in the health and wellbeing of all of our staff.
- We will understand what our people do and will provide them with regular feedback to support and develop them, build confidence and challenge underperformance where necessary.
- We understand the importance of engaging staff in decisions and will listen and involve our people in improving our services and take account of their health and wellbeing.
- As leaders we will lead by example, articulating the behaviours and standards expected of the Service.
- We will continue to strive to be a reflective and inclusive organisation where opportunities, promotion and reward are based on merit.
- We want to be an Employer of Choice.
- Firefighter safety and the safety of everyone that works for us is important to us.
- We will provide clarity on the decision making levels, accountability and processes without unnecessary hierarchy, and empower operational staff to use operational discretion.
- We will focus on clear and consistent communication of key messages using a wide range of engagement methods.
- We will build trust between us all to allow constructive disagreement and challenge to be seen as part of a positive culture.