

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Meeting Fire Authority

Date 8 September 2022

Title of Report Core Code of Ethics

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Background Papers Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard:
<https://www.firestandards.org/approved-standards/code-of-ethics/>

Appendices Appendix A – gap analysis
Appendix B – poster
Appendix C – communications plan
Appendix D – National Core Code of Ethics – Training, Learning & Development statement

Implications (please tick ✓ and attach to report)

Any implications affecting this report should be noted within the final paragraphs of the report

CORPORATE RISK		LEGAL	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	✓
FINANCIAL		POLITICAL	
HEALTH & SAFETY		OTHER (please specify)	
HUMAN RESOURCES	✓	CORE BRIEF	

PURPOSE OF REPORT To update the Fire Authority on progress in implementing the national Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard that was developed in partnership with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY This report provides the Fire Authority with an update on work required by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) to implement the Code of Ethics Fire Standard which has been issued and adopted for Employees.

The Core Code of Ethics was introduced on 18 May 2021 and is designed to help employees of Fire and Rescue Services act

in the best way towards each other and while serving the public.

Those who govern fire and rescue services are asked to demonstrate their commitment to the Core Code of Ethics by championing its use.

The gap analysis for the Standard has been carried out by ESFRS using national guidance.

RECOMMENDATION

The Fire Authority is recommended to:

1. note the progress of the Service in implementing the National Code of Ethics;
2. note the move into business-as-usual as set out in section 4; and
3. confirm its commitment to the Code of Ethics.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) has long been committed to ensuring staff have clear guidance on service expectations regarding their behaviour. This includes our values of Proud, Accountable, Integrity and Respect, which underwent a rebrand in 2019 in consultation with staff.
- 1.2 This was further enhanced with the creation, launch and promotion of the Leadership and Behaviour Framework and associated training from January 2021 onwards, and the launch of our Rolling Reviews which aim to strengthen the opportunities for feedback and development between individuals and their managers.
- 1.3 Additionally, our manual notes not only set out policies and processes for dealing with behaviours which fall short of our expectations, but also recognise and reward staff who go above and beyond these expectations.
- 1.4 Appendix B illustrates this in relation to the Standards.
- 1.5 The Fire Standards Board was set up in 2018 to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional Standards for fire and rescue services in England.
- 1.6 The Code of Ethics was issued on 18 May 2021. There are three key documents relevant to the Standard:
 - The Standard
 - The Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services

- Core Code of Ethics Guidance

1.7 It also reminds fire and rescue services of its duties under the following legislation:

- Equality Act
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Local Audit and Accountability Act
- The Accounts and Audits Regulations

This report provides the Fire Authority with an update on work required by the Service to implement the Code of Ethics Fire Standard.

1.8 The Code states:

Public trust and confidence in our FRS rely on us all demonstrating ethical behaviours.

The Core Code sets out these ethical principles and helps us continuously improve our organisational culture and workforce diversity and assists us in supporting our community in the best way. It is effective only when we all consistently demonstrate the ethical behaviours. Everyone in every FRS is expected to follow the Core Code. This includes those working with, or on behalf of, the FRS.

The principles should be embedded within everything that FRSs and their employees do. FRSs will ensure that the principles of this Core Code are represented within policies and processes to ensure they are embedded and at the heart of day-to-day activity

1.9 The Code requires the following Commitments from the Fire Authority and the Service, and from individuals:

Commitment from Fire and Rescue Authority and Service

Our behaviour is central to effectively serving our community. We will ensure the resources, policies and procedures are in place, so our organisation acts in accordance with the Core Code.

Through adhering to the Core Code, we will strive to create a positive, responsible, innovative, open, and challenging working environment in which ability and delivery is valued, encouraged, developed, recognised, and rewarded.

We are committed to continually improving the behaviours within the sector at all levels and ensuring that employees treat each other with humanity, dignity, and respect.

We will always act appropriately to address behaviour which falls below the standards set in the Core Code.

My commitment

As a member of the FRS, I will respect and follow the five principles in the Core Code in my service to the public.

I will promote the principles to my colleagues and challenge inappropriate behaviour that does not meet the five principles.

1.10 It should be noted that the White Paper consultation states:

“We want to increase professionalism by moving from a Fire Standards Board (which sets clear expectations for the sector) to the creation of a College of Fire and Rescue. We want to develop a mandatory 21st century leadership programme for progression to senior roles, set clearer entry requirements for recruitment, and put in place a statutory code of ethics and a fire and rescue service oath.”

2. Gap Analysis – required outcomes

2.1 The Code of Ethics Standard sets an expectation for fire and rescue services to carry out a gap analysis. This has been completed (see Appendix A) and considered the criteria against the headings of:

1. What does ESFRS do?
2. How do we do it?
3. Where is the evidence?
4. What is the Outcome
5. What is the gap?
6. How will we bridge the gap?
7. When will we bridge the gap?
8. Date completed by.

2.2 The gap analysis carried out for the standard includes the following requirements:

- The Fire Authority must hold the Chief Fire Officer to account for the implementation of the Core Code of Ethics at a local level;
- The Fire Authority ensure strategies, policies and performance measures are in place to promote and embed a positive and inclusive culture;
- The Fire Authority play a proactive role in challenging behaviour inconsistent with the Core Code of Ethics.

On this last point, ESFRS has comprehensive policies and procedures in place which are reflected in our Constitution, which includes Employee Relations policy:

<https://esfrs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s1916/ESFRS%20Constitution%20Section%20E1d%20COC%20Member%20Employee%20Relations%202021.pdf>

It also includes the Breach of Code of Conduct policy:

<https://esfrs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s1915/ESFRS%20Constitution%20Section%20E%201%20c%20Breaches%20of%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

2.3 Progress against the gap analysis was monitored by the Assurance, Performance and Governance Group which in January 2022 agreed that any further work should be moved to business as usual, with a report submitted to the Fire Authority later in the year in order to close off the points at 2.2.

3. Work completed

3.1 The following activities have been completed as part of work to close gaps identified in the gap analysis.

Communication and engagement activities include:

- Service Brief articles (e.g. Launch 17 May 2021, Managers Seminar presentations published 17 July 2021, World Values Day 18 October, reminder 6 December 2021)
- Workshop at Managers Seminar 17 July
- Website update <https://www.esfrs.org/about-us/national-standards/>
- Poster – December 2021
- Leadership and Behaviour Framework digital version updated with statement of Code January 2022

3.2 A number of key manual notes updated and approved including:

- Dignity and Respect Policy – this was approved prior to the Code being adopted in ESFRS however the code is referenced in the accompanying online learning package
- Corporate Sponsorship and Advertising Policy Guidance
- Performance Policy
- Probation Policy – Professional Support Staff
- Probation Policy – Uniformed Staff

Additionally, the ESFRS Code of Conduct has been revised, consulted upon and as of 1 August 2022, final amendments are being made before being submitted for sign off.

3.3 The Constitution of the Fire Authority has been updated and now includes references to the Core Code of Ethics. The amended Constitution was approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 9 December 2021.

- 3.4 The Senior Leadership Team approved plans for staff surveys for the period of the People Strategy which will help provide additional evidence about staff understanding and compliance with the Code of Ethics. The 2022 Employee Engagement survey was launched in April.

Questions include:

- I am confident that everyone here is treated with dignity and respect
- I am confident that the colleagues I need to work with act with integrity
- My line manager challenges behaviour that does not demonstrate the ESFRS values or the Leadership and Behavioural Framework

Results are due to be presented to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in September or October by the HR and OD team, however a summary of findings was published in Service Brief at the end of June:

<https://esfrsorg.sharepoint.com/sites/ESFRSIntranet/Service%20Brief/Forms/Newest%20to%20Oldest.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FESFRSIntranet%2FService%20Brief%2F2022%2F2522%20wc%2027%20June%2022%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FESFRSIntranet%2FService%20Brief%2F2022>

- 3.5 A training position statement to ensure the Code of Ethics is embedded throughout training has been produced (see Appendix C).

4 Business as usual

- 4.1 A number of activities which will help further embed the Code of Ethics are now being moved into business-as-usual in the People Directorate including:

- Behaviour Performance indicators reported to HR Strategic Group (Discipline, Grievance, Complaints and Exit Interview trends)
- Staff Code of Conduct/Code of Ethics consultation has been implemented
- Review of the implementation of the Leadership and Behaviour Framework and Rolling Reviews to be completed within Quarter 1 22/23
- Induction review – October 2022
- Development of new ESFRS Beliefs, Values, Motivators & Qualities map
- A new generic Learners information slide has been created for use at the front of all new training PowerPoints, and those being revised. These PowerPoints are the product used for the development of e-learning modules on Learning Pool which means that all new e-learning will include the embedding of the Code of Ethics. A new Learners Charter has been developed that includes a Statement of Commitment from both Learners and Instructors which is due to be implemented imminently.
- Communications campaign with the following aims:
 - Target key messages around service code of ethics and values, applicable to all staff.

- Reduce number of discriminatory incidents across the service by educating and signposting staff on valuing differences.
- Raise awareness and embed dignity/respect and code of ethics across the service.
- Clear messages to ensure that staff know where to seek assistance and help, specifically with regards to complaints and escalation.

This will be launched alongside the new Code of Conduct.

5 Financial implications

- 5.1 Any additional financial requests will be addressed through the business planning/star chamber process.

Appendix A – Gap Analysis (4F template – also being used by Surrey, West Sussex and Kent FRS)

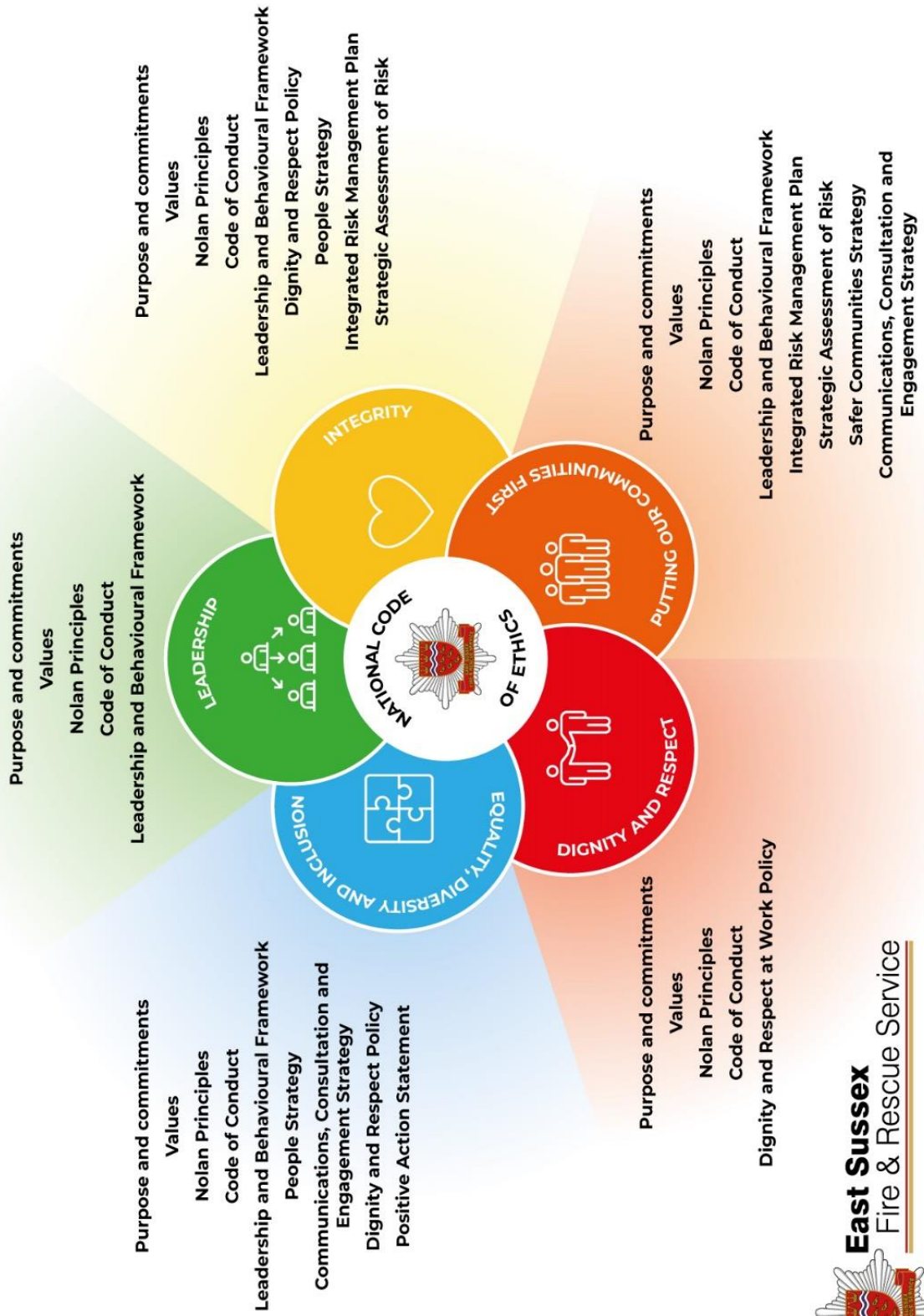
	What is required to meet the standard - MUST DO	What do we do as a Service?	How do we do it?	Where is the evidence?	What is the outcome?	What is the gap?	How will we bridge the gap?	When will we bridge the gap?	Date completed by
1	Adopt and embed the Core Code to demonstrate that the service is fully committed and compliant at both an individual and corporate level.	We have policies and processes which align with the Core Code Performance indicators: Discipline, Grievance, Complaints and Exit Interview trends	See Appendix B	Training records, intranet, induction, staff survey, complaints compliments, evaluation, public engagement, workshop feedback	We are meeting the principles of the core code.	New Staff Code of Conduct to include specific reference to national code	Staff Code of Conduct is being reviewed. This will be supported with a comms plan.	ESFRS Code for staff in consultation process – ready for sign off	Sept 2022 for staff Code for Fire Authority agreed Dec-21
2	Ensure the attitudes, professional behaviours and conduct described within the core code are reflected in its decision-making, policies, procedures, processes, and associated guidance that govern how the service manages and supports its workforce.	Have guidance and check points to embed this, public scrutiny over significant decisions such as IRMP, audits to check us	Manual note on manual notes and consultation process, Project Management Office (PMO) templates, Equality Diversity & Inclusion group, Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process, IRMP consultation process, internal governance and Fire Authority	Papers, EIAs for decisions and policies, HMICFRS, audit reports e.g. customer service	We are meeting the principles of the core code even if it is not explicitly mentioned in all documentation	No gap – reinforcement moved into Business as Usual (BAU)	Documents and guidance will be amended as appropriate when reviewed.	NA	June 2022

			panels. EIA training						
3	Provide training and support to all those who work for, or on behalf of, a service to achieve their understanding of the Core Code of Ethics and an appreciation of their responsibilities in adhering to it.	Training programmes and points of contact for staff on our current policies	LBF, induction, Rolling reviews. EIA training, Dignity and Respect training, Learners Charter	Firewatch reports, training evaluation	Our staff are equipped with the skills they need	No gap – reinforcement moved into BAU	Continue programme of training including but not limited to EDI and LBF, embedding behavioural expectations.	NA	LBF review completed – SLT paper in May 2022
4	Not detract from the Core Code of Ethics.	Carrying out work to align processes and policies	See point 2	Papers, EIAs for decisions and policies, HMICFRS, audit reports e.g. customer service	We remain aligned to code	No gap – reinforcement moved into BAU	Documents and guidance will be amended as appropriate when reviewed.	NA	June 2022
5	All employees understand, respect, and follow the principles of the Core Code of Ethics and demonstrate this by their commitment to it and their	We have policies and processes which align with the Core Code, mandatory training and Core Brief	Examples include communications , LBF, rolling reviews, policies, decision making process, evidence gathering,	Firewatch, intranet, induction, staff survey, complaints, compliments, evaluation, public engagement, LBF and Rolling	Our expectations of staff are clear and they understand them	Moved into BAU Staff survey results due to be confirmed to SLT in Sept/Oct 2022	Reinforcement via new Staff Code of Conduct and associated comms.	NA	June 2022

	responsibility for upholding it.		support and delivery framework (pillars), supervisory managers handbook	review evaluation					
6	The Fire Authority must hold the Chief Fire Officer to account for the implementation of the Core Code of Ethics at a local level.	We have a governance structure in place, alongside other engagement	Reports to Panels/ Fire Authority meetings, briefings as appropriate	Modern Gov and weekly comms	Fire Authority members are briefed on their role	Moved into BAU	Continue to report as BAU.	NA	Sept 2022
7	The Fire Authority play a proactive role in challenging behaviour inconsistent with the Core Code of Ethics	Policies are in place, including the Constitution. This includes the Code of Conduct, Breaches of Code of Conduct and Employee Relations Policy	Code of Conduct, members seminars. Membership on EDI group	Fire Authority papers, Constitution, complaints inc. Members Standards matters	We remain aligned to Code of Ethics		Updated Code of Conduct makes reference to Core Code of Ethics		Code of Conduct approved by FA in Dec-21
8	The Fire Authority ensures strategies, policies and performance measures are in place to promote and embed a positive and inclusive culture.	Fire Authority/panel papers presenting Strategies/ policies/ Performance Indicators (PIs), engagement in EDI group, community engagement etc.	Work in progress to ensure key performance indicators and service measures are confirmed	Service benchmarking (service make up), staff surveys, grievances etc to HR, metrics in strategies which will be reported against, Service Brief examples	We remain aligned to Code of Ethics	Reinforcement via Comms and training moved into BAU Reporting of PIs to continue as BAU	This is now BAU	NA	June 2022

	What is required to meet the standard - SHOULD DO	What do we do as a Service?	How do we do it?	Where is the evidence?	What is the outcome?	What is the gap?	How will we bridge the gap?	When will we bridge the gap?	Date completed by
a	Designate a senior leader who is responsible for promoting the Core Code of Ethics throughout the service and ensuring that all those who work for, or on behalf of, the service understand its contents and what is expected of them.	Assistant Director People Services	HR Strategic Group	As described in this table	We embed the code into the service	As explained in this table	This is now BAU.	As explained in the spreadsheet	As explained in this table

How our key policies and documents fit into the Core Code



Communications plan 2022

This is the current plan but it is expected to develop further.

Trigger	What	Owner	Measurement	Status
New ESFRS Code of Conduct issued	Core Brief article	Lucy Birch	Core Brief returns Number of comments on manual note consultation	Ready for consultation sign off
LBF and Rolling Review review findings	Service Brief article	Lucy Birch/Helen Parsons	Staff engagement in review Views on intranet/ Service Brief	June 2022
Case studies of behaviour – drawn from Code	Service Brief articles	Lucy Birch supported by Victoria Jones (Comms)	Views on intranet/ Service Brief	Dec 2022
Staff survey	Service Brief	Becky Cheng	Participation rates and findings	Following SLT paper in Sept/Oct
Launch of probation policies	Core Brief	Helen Parsons	Core Brief returns Number of comments on manual note	Policy signed off and Core Brief issued June 2022

National Core Code of Ethics – Training, Learning and Development

Position Statement

ESFRS is embedding the 5 ethical principles of the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England) as described by the outline statements which are applied to each of the principles, this being:



The Core Code is about demonstrating responsibility and leadership at all levels and provides a basis from which we can all demonstrate how things should be done to create a positive culture and working environment.

The Training, Learning, Development & Assurance team will do as much as we reasonably can to support the Code so that ESFRS can provide all our people with a stronger foundation from which to develop themselves to be individually 'fit for purpose' for our cultural journey. We are excited to be an intrinsic part of setting clear standards regarding the expected behaviours of all personnel throughout our organisation and as such we will strive to embed the Code of Ethics, and therefore the highest ethical standards, into all our departments business products, and training & learning delivery.

Katie Cornhill
Group Manager
Training, Learning and Development Manager

Because we believe that it is vital to embed this Code of Ethics into everything that every one of us do every day, so that:

1. every member of ESFRS acts in the right way in serving our communities,
2. our workplaces are even better places to work,
3. everyone is helped to display and promote good behaviours, and
4. we can all challenge conduct that is inconsistent with the Core Code

The Training, Learning, Development & Assurance team aim to ensure that:

<p>1. Training course change or set up Procedure</p>	<p>The training course change or set up procedure that has currently been reviewed is being embedded. This procedure will include a need to ensure the Code of Ethics is referenced within all training materials. For example, a generic slide at the beginning of a slide deck, e-learning module, or manual.</p>
<p>2. Leadership and Management Development Framework</p>	<p>Upon the HR team being commissioned, we will support the HR team to develop a specific Code of Ethics training product(s) that can be used on induction, onboarding, direct entry, and for all uniformed and corporate development pathways. We will support this in the normal way. This may become a part of mandatory training for all of our people.</p>
<p>3. New Training and Learning Charter</p>	<p>A new Training and Learning Charter which includes both learner and trainer commitments is close to completion. This charter, which will be the first time ESFRS has had such commitments in writing, will include specific reference to upholding the 5 principles of the Code of Ethics.</p>
<p>4. A Commitment recorded in qualifications portfolios and development folders</p>	<p>Two statements have been drafted relating to 'My Commitments' and 'Our Commitments'. These statements have been incorporated as part of the new Training and Learning Charter and will require both the learner and head of Training, Learning, Development & Assurance to sign for their commitment.</p>
<p>5. New Training and Learning manual</p>	<p>A new Training and Learning umbrella manual note will soon be undergoing its first draft. This manual note will contain several important policies in detail but will also serve as a digital handbook for learners that will briefly identify, and sign post them to further information relating to key policies and frameworks that ESFRS already have in place/have adopted.</p>

	Information related to the Code of Ethics will also be signposted.
6. ESFRS Beliefs, Values, Motivators & Qualities map	Based on Global, National and Sector Values, Beliefs, Motivators and Qualities a Values and Beliefs map that cross maps several sources to ESFRS PAIR values is being drafted. This already includes cross-mapping to the 5 principles of the Code of Ethics. This mapping, which includes 'pre-entry' and 'whilst employed' values and beliefs, will support the acquisition, development and application of the behaviours expected from every person employed by ESFRS.
7. Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance	A new ESFRS Beliefs, Values, Motivators & Qualities map will be used to support the production of a simplified set of criteria that will be incorporated into all assessment and internal quality assurance practice. In relation to incident command, the new simplified set of criteria will be further cross-mapped into the Effective Command Behavioural markers system and technical competencies areas which is already used in ESFRS so that specific assessment and assurance in a command context can be applied.
8. Assessor and Internal Quality Assurance standardisation	ESFRS Assessor and Internal Quality Assurance practices will be the subject of standardisation and development work that will include development of a greater depth of knowledge about the 5 Code of Ethics principles. Standardisation will also include the assessment and assurance of training and learning against the Code of Practice principles to support every one of us developing a good knowledge and adoption.
9. ESFRS Beliefs, Values, Motivators & Qualities map training material	A training module will be developed for the new ESFRS Beliefs, Values, Motivators & Qualities map that is based on Global, National and Sector Values and Beliefs that can be used on induction, onboarding, direct entry, and for all uniformed and corporate development pathways.