Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

2021-24

ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

To help make Dorset and Wiltshire a safer place to live, work or visit, we need to ensure that all our efforts and resources are focused on having the right people, in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills and equipment to prevent and to respond to emergencies when they happen.

To help guide our thinking, and to keep ahead of an everchanging world, we regularly review both our external operating environment, as well as carrying out an internal analysis of where our Service needs to be.

Our Strategic Assessment of Risk supports the development and review of our Community Safety Plan and organisational strategies. This is then translated into on the ground action at department, station and team level through our Service Delivery Plan, which is underpinned by a comprehensive performance framework.

This strategy therefore sets out how our Service will improve over the next three to five years to further strengthen our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

We place equality, diversity, and inclusion at the heart of everything we do. We want to ensure that we provide the communities of Dorset and Wiltshire with services that are accessible to everyone.

We are committed to:

- knowing our communities, staff, and volunteers.
- protecting our most vulnerable people.
- taking action to make a difference; and,
- evaluating our performance.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategy is to set out a long-term pathway to deliver against the ambition set out in the Community Safety Plan and the policies agreed by the Authority.

In developing this document, we have considered:

- the problems and critical issues we need to respond to
- the policy objectives set out by the Authority, and
- the priorities and our capacity to achieve them.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

This plan is structured to provide a picture of where we are now, September 2021, and the context for the journey we intend to go on. It outlines what we want to achieve and provides a picture of our intentions over the next three to five years.

Delivery of this strategy will be dynamic and will be overseen by the Director of People, and monitored through the Service Delivery Team, the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and Members through our performance management arrangements.

Strategic focus:

- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment.
- Community knowledge and engagement.
- Effective service delivery.
- Employment conditions, health and wellbeing.
- Recruitment, training and progression.

HMICFRS

This strategy aligns to and informs the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

- KLOE 8: How well do we promote our values and culture?
- KLOE 8.1 - To what extent are our values and behaviours demonstrated at all levels of the organisation?
- KLOE 8.2 - How well do leaders model and maintain the values that we expect of them?
- KLOE 10 – How well do we ensure fairness and diversity?
- KLOE 10.3 – How well do we identify and address potential disproportionality in recruitment, retention and progression?
- KLOE 10.4 – How well do we promote equality and diversity to ensure fair and open opportunities for all?

Strategic position

Strengths:
- Staff networks in place.
- Good standard at station facilities, with a focus on diversity.
- Inclusive approach to workwear / PPE.
- Digital Impact Assessment process.
- Good maternity support arrangements.
- Good health and wellbeing support.
- Flexible working arrangements available to staff.
- Smarter and more flexible working through better use of technology, providing efficiency savings.

Weaknesses:
- Recruitment and retention of on-call workforce, particularly within a limited turnout time in rural areas.
- Diversity of workforce is not reflective of the communities we serve.

Opportunities:
- Community engagement events.
- Reverse mentoring at SLT.

Threats:
- Shrinking organisation with less recruitment opportunities.
- An ageing operational workforce will be a predominant feature of the Service for the foreseeable future.

Strategic challenges

- Strengthen workforce understanding of diversity to further enhance our community engagement activities.
- Further improve the diversity of our workforce.
- Better understanding community perceptions of the Fire and Rescue Service.
- Supporting and mitigating the effects arising from an ageing workforce.
- Ensure those supplying goods and services consider diversity throughout their processes.
- Strengthening the employment offer to attract and retain diverse talent.
- Making best use of smarter working arrangements to attract, recruit and retain talented and diverse staff.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

With a focus on 🌈 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and 🌍 Environmental Sustainability

Where we are now	Where we will be in three years	What we will do
• Improved workplaces, equipment, workwear and working practices to attract and retain under-represented groups. • Conversations with our staff to ensure we have an understanding and supportive working environment where staff to 'be themselves' and give their best at work. • Ensure our staff understand the importance of engaging with our diverse communities so that we continue to deliver great services to them. • High levels of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion E-Learning completion. • Engaging with our communities so that they can tell us how we can deliver our services in the most appropriate way. • Positive attraction campaigns through social media to create a better understanding of the role of a	• A more diverse workforce. • Fresh perspective and diversity of thought from new-eyes - how is it being one of us. • Inclusive and open culture where people can be themselves. • Values and behaviours framework embedded. • More flexible working across all staff groups • High levels of community confidence and engagement supporting our recruitment activities. • A fluid organisational structure that enables us to maximise opportunities to retain a flexible, talented, and diverse workforce. • 'Buddy Scheme' to support those in under-represented groups showing positive recruitment outcomes.	🌈 Strengthen workforce understanding of diversity to further enhance our community engagement activities. 🌈 Continue to create a professional working environment where people can be themselves enabling them to be their best. 🌈 Continue to improve workplaces, equipment, workwear and working practices to attract and retain underrepresented groups and allow our staff to be themselves. 🌈 Review our employment practices to break barriers and ensure alignment with the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) people programme and the new core code of ethics. 🌈 Develop station specific community profiles to better support our community engagement activities. 🌈 Develop Community Engagement events providing two- way communications flow, enabling improvement in the information and services we provide.

firefighter and breakdown any perceived barriers.
- Better understand community perceptions of the Fire and Rescue Service so we can address them.
- Continuing to support apprenticeships.
- Publishing a Gender Pay Gap report and associated action plan.
- Further strengthen our talent management processes to allow all our staff to maximise their potential.
- Improved the equality, diversity and inclusion information on our website.
- Regular communications on key equality, diversity and inclusion issues to create greater understanding.
- New approach to impact assessments aligned to the NFCC.

Where we will be in five years

- Technology enabling flexible employment models.

- Continue our community engagement partnership work with the Police and other agencies.
- Embed our impact assessment process.
- Develop bespoke e-learning for staff tailored to knowledge gaps.
- Review values and behaviours to align to the core code of ethics.
- Embed the core code of ethics into employment lifecycle processes
- Amend our employment practices and contracts to help us attract recruit and retain a more diverse workforce.
- Continue to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion issues are a focus of our leadership development interventions.
- Develop a buddy scheme to ensure under-represented groups have the opportunity to find out more about careers in the Fire and Rescue Service.

Appendices

[The Fire and Rescue Equality Framework](#)

Glossary

CSP	**Community Safety Plan**. Fire and rescue authorities are required to assess risk, determine appropriate strategies, policies and standards of performance, and resource allocation to address it. Together our strategic assessment of risk; the Community Safety Plan and our Service Delivery Plan and associated strategies, set out our approach to integrated risk management.
Community Engagement Forums	**Community Engagement Forums** provide an opportunity for us to better understand the experiences of those within our local communities.
Core Code of Ethics	The **Core Code of Ethics sets** out ethical principles which help us continuously improve our organisational culture and workforce diversity, assisting us in supporting our communities in the best way.
HMICFRS	**Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services**. Independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire & rescue services – in the public interest.
KLOE	**Key Lines of Enquiry**. Identify where we are, where we need to go and the things we need to deliver.
MTFP	**Medium Term Financial Plan.** Puts in place a strategy to guide the Service's financial planning over a five year period to address national and local challenges and deliver the Service's strategic aims as well as meeting community priorities.
NFCC	**National Fire Chiefs Council.** The NFCC is a national committee made up of Chief Fire Officers and helps provide the means of coordinating and achieving national programmes of work.
PPE	**Personal Protective Equipment.**

Strategic Assessment of Risk	To ensure the CSP remains current and reflective of the landscape within which the Service operates, a **Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAR)** is undertaken. The SAR directs the focus of the Service and is the starting point of the corporate planning cycle. It draws on a broad range of information, data, intelligence, risks, and threats to set out the high-level factors that will impact on the Service's operating environment. The SAR is then used to ensure that the priorities within the CSP remain focussed, maximising the impact the organisation has on improving public safety and health and wellbeing