



An internal review into the workplace culture of
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
following the London Fire Brigade Independent
Culture Review



DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE

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Introduction

In November 2022, the [Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade \(LFB\)](#) by Nazir Afzal OBE was published. It found an organisation that was institutionally racist and misogynistic with bullying ingrained in the culture.

In response to this review, and as part of our on-going culture work, the Service commissioned an internal review into its own workplace culture.

This comprised of three stages:

1. A gap analysis/self-assessment against the key themes of the LFB report.
2. A staff survey.
3. Staff focus groups and 1:1 meetings.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the internal review are outlined below:

Purpose

The purpose is to understand how staff feel about working for the Service to identify areas for improvement and areas of strength. The review will act as the voice of how staff are feeling. Any incidents or experiences reported will not be triangulated or challenged.

Objectives

The objectives will focus on:

- The Code of Ethics and how well staff across all levels demonstrate the expected behaviours.
- How effective leadership and decision making is across all levels of the Service.
- How performance and behaviours are managed, including the effectiveness of the bullying, harassment, discipline and grievances processes and procedures.
- How committed staff feel the Service is to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- How supportive the Service is towards Mental health and wellbeing and the impact this has on staff.
- The effectiveness of communications and staff engagement across the Service, at all levels.
- The effectiveness of training, development, and support at all levels of the Service.
- Staff engagement and morale of the workforce and the impact this has on the existing culture.

Outputs

An Internal Review Team will deliver the following outputs:

- Conduct a gap analysis to explore elements of the LFB report to focus on the key themes and identify any gaps we have as a Service to strengthen our culture.
- Conduct a confidential staff survey to provide all staff a mechanism to provide feedback on how it feels working for the Service, which is aligned to the key themes from the LFB report.
- Facilitate focus groups with staff across the Service and key stakeholders to explore the survey results to understand what more we need to do as a Service.
- Provide a confidential reporting email to offer staff the opportunity to share feedback or to request to meet on a 1:1 confidential informal meeting so that we can learn from what more we need to do develop our culture from individual experiences.
- Develop a report with the findings of the all-staff survey, focus groups and 1:1 confidential meetings to identify key trends, themes, and recommendations.

Scope

To support with the gap analysis, this review will be focussing on the nine themes highlighted in the LFB Review.

- Core Code of Ethics
- Leadership
- Performance and Behaviours
- Bullying and Harassment
- Mental Health
- Training, Support and Development
- Culture and Morale
- Comms and Engagement
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

This review will not involve:

- Any matters that are currently subject to a live investigation or a past or current police investigation
- Promotions process
- Pay and conditions
- HR Structure

Timescales

The key timescales for the Internal Review are set out below:

- All staff survey (23 January – 06 February)
- Collate survey results (07 – 20 February)
- Facilitate focus groups (22 February – 19 March)
- Analyse data and develop report (20 March – 22 May)

This review was commissioned in December 2022, prior to the allegations into inappropriate behaviour and misconduct which were broadcast on 31 January 2023. The staff survey had already been released to all staff and it was agreed the Internal Review would continue as planned, to support and feed into the Independent Review.

Team

The team of staff co-ordinating this internal review are:

- Jason Moncrieff (Area Manager Learning & Organisational Development & Culture Review)
- Vikki Shearing (Head of Corporate Support)
- Felicity Williams (Organisational Development Manager)
- Nicola Cook (Senior Systems Analyst)

For the focus groups and 1:1 meetings it was agreed that the Internal Review Team would adopt an impartial role as facilitators to help create an environment for staff to be open and honest when sharing their views and experiences.

It is important to note that using internal members of staff as facilitators raised a few concerns in the staff survey where staff questioned the anonymity of their responses and feedback. This may have also influenced how honest staff felt they could have been with their feedback. This has been considered in the key observations.

Approach

It was important to allow staff the opportunity to provide feedback anonymously to generate the most honest responses. To achieve this the approach for the Internal Review involved:

i) Staff Survey

An all-staff survey consisted of 41 questions which were focussed around the [nine themes](#) listed in the scope identified in the LFB report. Responses have been categorised in this report as follows:

- ‘Strongly agree’ and ‘Agree’ responses are referred to as positive.

- 'Neutral' is where staff were unable to comment one way or another.
- 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree' are referred to as negative.

Each theme also allowed staff to provide further information in an open comments field relating to their response.

Equality Data monitoring questions were included at the end of the survey to record responses by gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation to identify any trends in line with the LFB report. These questions were optional to protect staff anonymity. A summary of the responses is in [Appendix 1](#).

The survey was live for a period of two weeks and 515 staff (38%) responded.

ii) Focus Groups

The Service sought volunteers from staff and key stakeholders to attend focus groups which were programmed by staff group and role. Each focus group was used to explore the themes and staff survey responses for their staff group to identify areas for improvement.

In total 15 focus groups were held with the following groups:

Area and Group Managers	WDS Crew and Watch Managers	Corporate Grade G managers and above (including HoD)	Staff Networks Leads
Station Managers	On-Call Crew and Watch Managers	Corporate Staff Grades E – F	Leadership Consultancy Group
Fire Control (all roles)	WDS Firefighters	Corporate Staff Grades A – D	Representative Bodies

Two focus groups for On-Call Firefighters were advertised, however due to a limited uptake these were cancelled and 1:1 meetings were offered to those who had booked.

The focus groups were not recorded, and rules of engagement were shared with staff involved to provide a safe and confidential environment for staff to share their experiences.

iii) Confidential email group and 1:1 Meetings

All staff were provided with details of a confidential email address where they could contact a member of the Internal Review Team to share their experiences or feedback of working for the Service via email or to request a confidential 1:1 meeting.

Five members of staff across different staff groups requested a confidential 1:1 meeting to support with this review.

Outputs

This internal review includes a series of outcomes and key observations that will feed into the Independent Review to form a single action plan.

This report will focus on the Service wide survey responses and feedback from the focus group and 1:1 meetings. Any significant variation from these responses for any group or demographic are detailed below.

Staff Responses

The majority of staff who took part in the review said they were proud to work for the Service and were keen to share their thoughts on areas for improvement.

Survey Responses

Overall, the survey produced a 68% positive result, with 18% neutral and 14% negative responses from staff across all roles.

In total, 515 members of staff out of 1,348 chose to complete the survey, representing 38% of the Service.

Whilst research shows that 30 - 50% is considered a typical response rate, it is lower than the Service had hoped. This was discussed in the focus groups where some staff felt that the response rate could be due to the perception that the survey was not anonymous and that some staff could be identified by their demographic responses.

The highest response was from Corporate staff with 66%, followed by Fire Control with 59%, Wholetime at 45% and On-Call had the lowest response rate of 17%.

Staff Group	Number of Responses	Headcount	Response Rate	
Wholetime	SM and above	39		
	CM & WM	70		
	Firefighter	72		
	TOTAL	181	400	45%
On-Call	CM & WM	39		
	Firefighter	59		
	TOTAL	98	588	17%
Fire Control	SM CM & WM	11		
	Firefighter	9		
	TOTAL	20	34	59%
Corporate	Grade G and above	47	319	66%

Grade E - F	77
Grade A - D	87
TOTAL	211

The open comments were anonymous and focussed on areas of improvement that were drawn out of discussions with staff in the focus groups.

The week following the launch of the survey the allegations made by ITN were broadcast. The survey results were analysed before and after the media attention and it was found that this had an insignificant impact on the survey results.

i) Responses by Staff Group

The individual staff group responses for each of the themes are largely reflective of the Service wide survey responses where no staff group stands out as being significantly different to the overall survey results.

- Corporate staff responded most positively with 74% of responses in the 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' category.
- On-Call staff responded the least positively with 19% of responses in the 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' category.
- Fire Control staff responded the most neutrally with 25% of all their responses in the neutral category.
- Wholetime staff responses were reflective of the Service wide responses.

ii) Responses by Gender

In total, 94% of staff who completed the survey chose to provide their gender in response to the Equality Monitoring questions.

- Staff that provided their gender as either 'Male' or 'Female' have been consistent with the overall Service wide results of the survey.
- Staff who specified their gender as 'Female' answered most positively with 74% of responses in the 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' category.
- Females responded most positively to the 'I believe the Service cares about my wellbeing' statement (over 80% positive) and 81% of females would recommend working for the Service.
- Staff who specified their gender as 'Other' or 'Not Specified' have been less positive with 33% of responses in the 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' category. This is also the group that answered the most neutrally with 23% of responses being neutral.

iii) Responses by Ethnicity

In total, 94% of staff who completed the survey provided their ethnicity in response to the Equality Monitoring questions. The responses by ethnicity were reflective of the overall survey results.

- Staff who specified their ethnicity as 'White Other' answered most positively with 73% of responses in the 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' category.

- Staff who specified their ethnicity as 'Other' or 'Not Specified' have generally been less positive with their responses with 28% of responses in the 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' category. This is also the group that answered the most neutrally with 24% of all their responses being neutral.

iv) Responses by Sexual Orientation

In total, 92% of staff who completed the survey provided their sexual orientation in response to the Equality Monitoring questions.

- Staff who specified their sexual orientation as 'Heterosexual' and 'Gay or Lesbian' responded most positively with each having 71% of responses in the 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' category.
- Staff who specified their sexual orientation as 'Other' or 'Not Specified' have been less positive with 31% of responses in the 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' category.
- Staff who specified their sexual orientation as 'Not Specified' answered the most neutrally with 24% of all their responses in the neutral category.
- Staff who specified as 'Bisexual' have also responded slightly less positively.

v) Responses by Length of Service

Looking at the overall survey results and results by length of service there is a slight trend of staff feeling less positive the longer they have worked for the Service.

- Most of the respondents (67%) had a length of service of more than five years.
- Staff who specified their length of service as 'Less than 12 Months' were most positive with 74% of responses in the 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' category. This is also the group that answered the most neutrally overall with 20% of all their responses in the neutral category.
- Staff who specified their length of service as 'More than five years' answered the least positively on the survey overall with 15% of responses in the 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' category, however this was still an 85% positive response.

Focus Group Responses

The focus groups were held to learn from the first-hand experiences of staff, not rumours or hearsay. These conversations focussed on their ideas and suggestions for improvement which have been captured to develop the key observations.

In total, 92 members of staff across a variety of roles and staff groups attended the focus groups.

The Focus groups were positively received with staff commenting that they felt included and supported to share their open and honest experiences in a safe and relaxed environment to discuss their ideas for improvement.

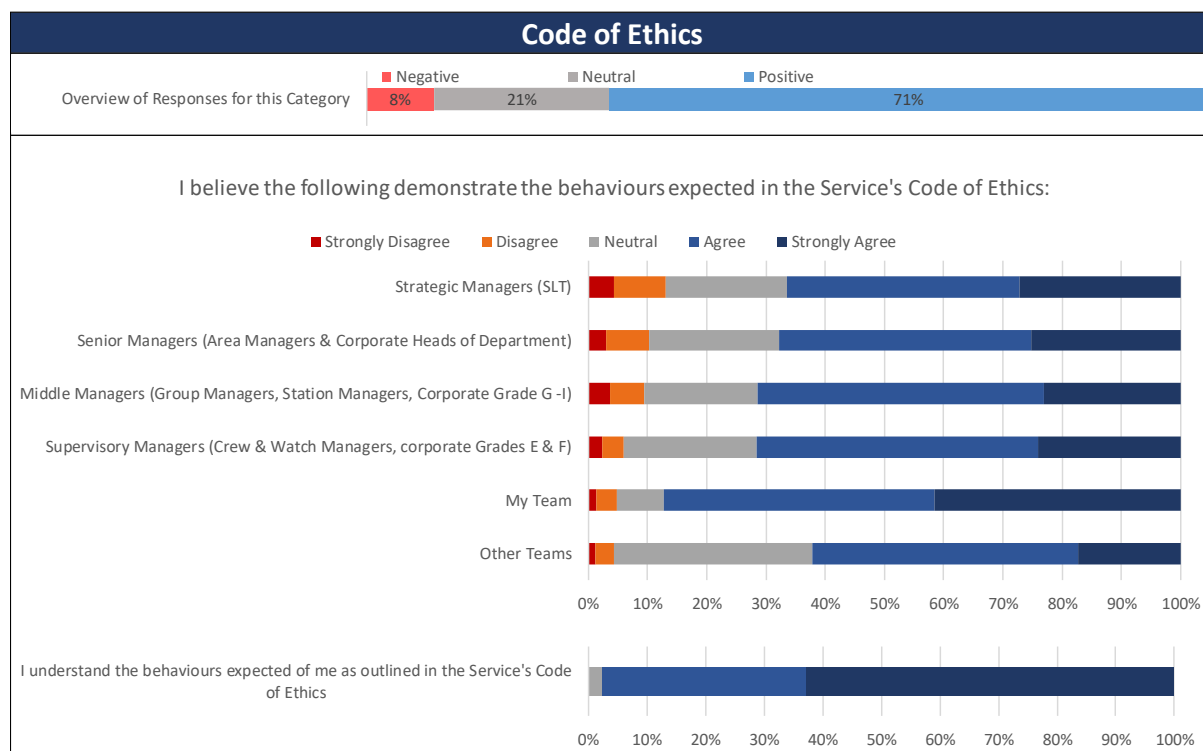
Giving the timing of the focus groups the media interest was acknowledged and staff had the opportunity to discuss how they were feeling and the impact of this.

Analysis by themes

Code of Ethics

Overall, 71% of staff who completed the survey responded positively to how they feel that staff across all levels demonstrate the behaviours expected in the Service’s Code of Ethics. 21% were neutral and 8% responded negatively.

“Everyone I have ever met within the service has always demonstrated very high code of ethics.”



Looking at the individual questions in this theme there is an 87% positive response to how staff feel that the Code of Ethics are demonstrated within their own teams.

There is a 34% neutral response for ‘other teams’ which is the highest neutral response in this theme. This was explored further in focus groups where staff felt they did not have sufficient contact with individuals outside of their immediate teams, or higher up the management structure to be able to comment.

There is also a slight trend that indicates that as you go further up the organisation, there is a less positive response. A historic Question Time session from 2021 was repeatedly used as an example where staff felt some members of SLT did not respond to challenges as positively as they would expect in line with the Code of Ethics.

Whilst 98% of staff have responded positively to understanding the behaviours expected as outlined in the Code of Ethics, this led to some conversations about how the Code of Ethics is felt to be too complex and lengthy. This highlighted a need for

further engagement particularly with On-Call staff and greater consideration for staff with neurodiverse needs.

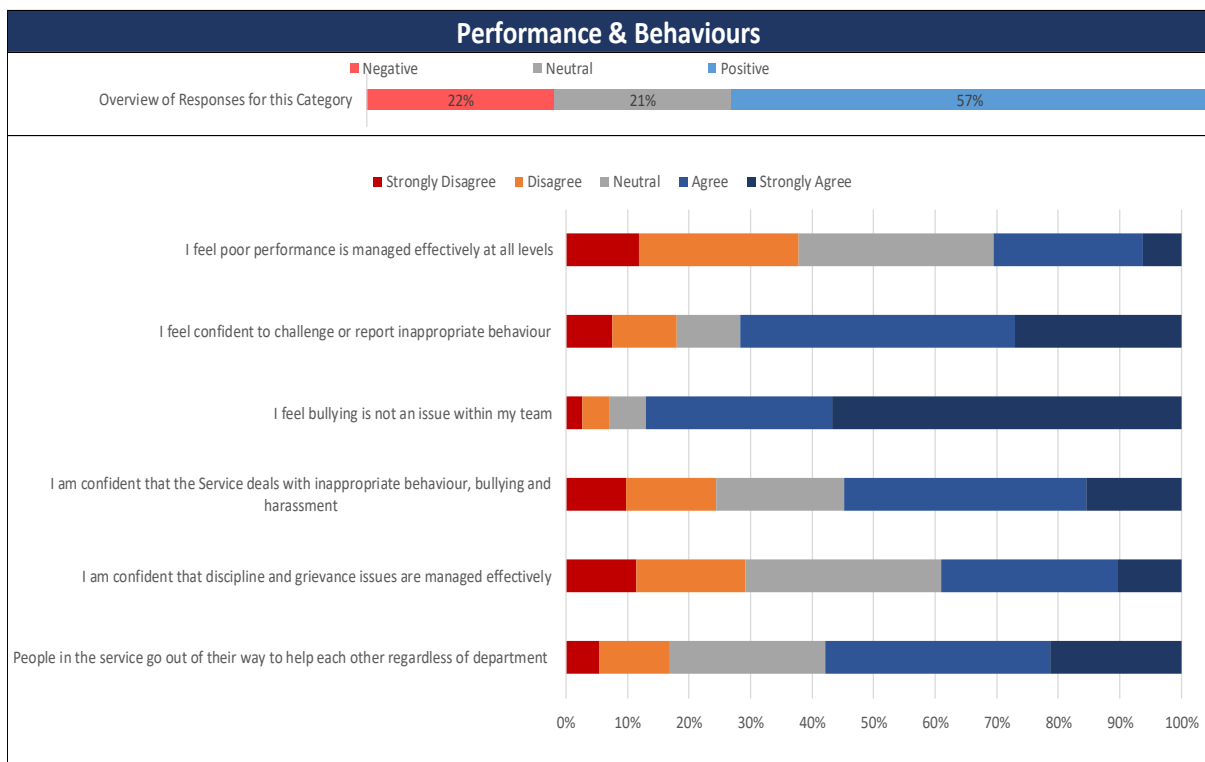
Following the focus groups discussions, staff would like:

- More work to strengthen a culture where staff feel confident to challenge decisions without repercussions.
- To further improve the visibility of leadership roles (Station Manager, Group Manager, Area Manager and SLT) on stations.
- Further opportunities for staff who are not in management roles or in specific roles to work with others outside of their immediate teams.
- The Code of Ethics handbook to be easier to understand considering neurodivergent staff and to be further embedded for all staff groups, particularly On-Call.

Performance and Behaviours

Overall, this theme has received the least positive response from staff who completed the survey with 57% responding positively to how they feel performance and behaviours are managed in the Service. 21% of respondents were neutral and 22% responded negatively to this theme.

“There are individuals that are well known within the service that are an issue, they are seen as rude and obstructive that have been reported to managers that either don’t have the tools to deal with that behaviour or haven’t dealt with it.”



Looking at the individual questions in this theme the least positive response shows that 30% of staff feel that poor performance is managed effectively at all levels, with 32% responding neutral and 38% negative to this question.

This is followed by 39% of staff responding positively to the question 'I am confident that discipline and grievance issues are managed effectively', with 32% neutral and 29% negative responses.

Whilst 87% of staff have responded positively to bullying not being an issue within their teams, there is an indication that bullying and harassment is taking place outside of their teams. This is reflected where 25% feel that the Service needs to improve how it deals with inappropriate behaviour, bullying and harassment.

In contrast, 72% responded positively to the question 'I feel confident to challenge or report inappropriate behaviour'.

When these responses were explored at the focus groups, workloads and capacity of managers were raised as an issue, along with high numbers of temporary promotions and staff moves to manage performance effectively. Staff recognised that training was in place and that HRBP's were also a source of support, but more was needed to equip managers with the skills.

Following the focus groups discussions staff would like:

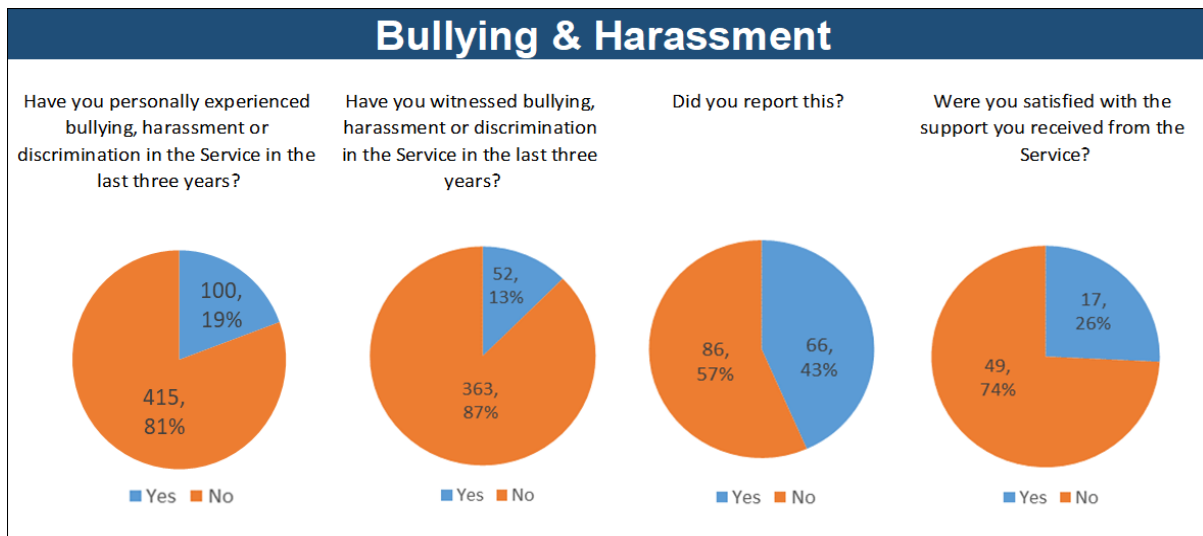
- Investigations to be better resourced so they are managed more efficiently and consistently.
- Less temporary managers and staff moves to allow managers to manage performance and behaviours more consistently and effectively.
- Poor performance and inappropriate behaviours to be managed more effectively at the early stages of employment.
- Procedures to be more robust to ensure performance and behaviours are managed effectively.
- Increased availability of the HRBP role to support managers working outside of office hours.
- Procedures to be more people centred and less process driven to ensure that staff feel supported when going through the process, and once the case is concluded.
- More informal avenues to raise workplace concerns before making a decision of where to go to next.

Bullying and Harassment

81% of staff who completed the survey have not personally experienced bullying, harassment, or discrimination in the Service in the past three years. Of those who did 43% have reported it and 74% were not satisfied with the support received.

“I have never witnessed or been on the receiving end of any bullying or harassment in my 22-year career.”

“There is no support for victims, and it is a lose/lose situation so what is the point in reporting it.”



Looking at the individual questions in this theme the Service wide responses show that 81% have **not** personally experienced bullying, harassment, or discrimination in the Service in the last 3 years, and 87% have **not** witnessed bullying, harassment, or discrimination in the Service in the last three years.

In total, 100 members of staff responded to personally experiencing bullying, harassment, or discrimination, and 52 member of staff witnessed this. Of these 152 members of staff less than half (43%) reported it.

When the reasons for this low level of reporting was explored further both the survey and focus group comments indicated a lack of trust and faith in the process, with comments including that they had previously reported and felt that little notice had been paid with others indicated they did not wish to get involved. Other comments related to male attitudes and the secret handshake club, career suicide and fear of consequences.

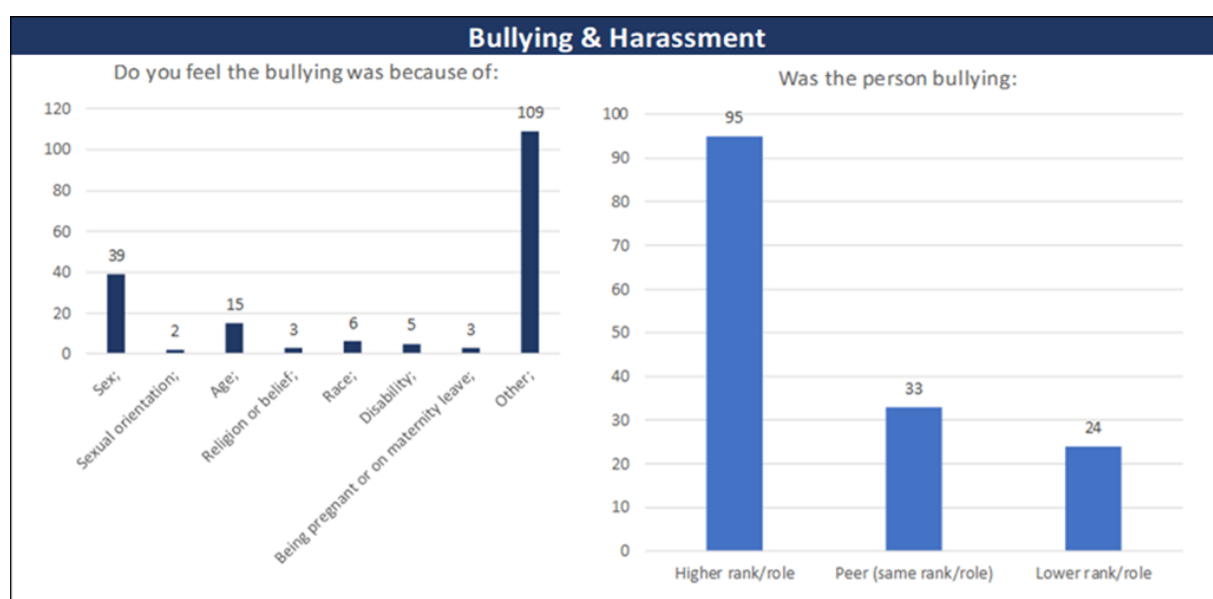
It was acknowledged that some staff chose not to report as no further action was required in cases where the individual had either; reported it themselves, challenged the behaviour there and then, or were asked to not report it to respect the wishes of the individual involved.

Of the staff that did report, 74% were not satisfied with the support they received. This was also discussed in the focus groups and whilst it could be expected that staff who did not receive the desired outcome are more likely to respond negatively there were comments about a perceived lack of support to victims both during the investigation and after the outcome.

Staff also raised concerns regarding potential relationships and social links (including Freemasons) which could also be a possible reason why staff feel performance is not being managed effectively.

There are also frustrations from victims or complainants who do not find out the outcome of their case, in order to comply with employment law and the Data Protection Act.

In response to the LFB report, the survey sought to determine if there were any equality trends associated with bullying, harassment, and discrimination. The results show that most respondents selected 'other' as the cause of bullying, discrimination, or harassment. Whilst it is inconclusive whether equality factors are the main cause, it does highlight there are other or unknown reasons, or that staff may have selected 'other' to protect their anonymity.



These responses also show that the 63% of bullying, discrimination or inappropriate behaviours were primarily by staff of a higher grade/ rank. When this was explored at the focus groups it was discussed this could be due to management of poor performance being perceived as bullying.

The Internal Review Team were also made aware of an example of a breakdown of relationships between On-Call and Wholetime staff at two stations.

Following the focus groups discussions staff would like:

- More transparency relating to how the Service communicates Bullying & Harassment and Disciplinary & Grievance outcomes.
- The Bullying & Harassment procedure to be more people centred.
- More support available to victims or complainants both during and after the case.
- More proactive management of poor performance and training for managers in relation to individuals where behaviours are not being addressed.

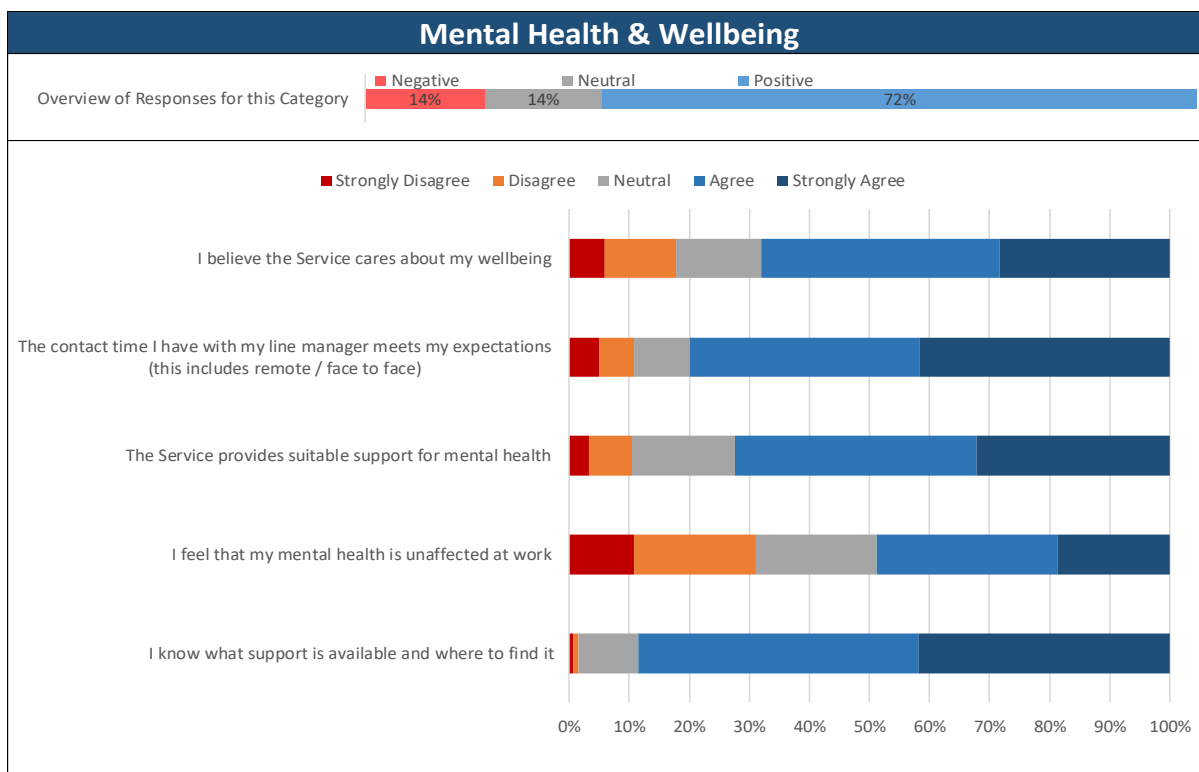
- Improved HRBP availability to support out of hours advice and different working patterns.
- The recruitment, selection and promotions process to consider more of the personal attributes to recruit and promote people better aligned to the Code of Ethics.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Overall, 72% of staff who completed the survey responded positively about mental health and wellbeing within the Service. 14% were neutral and 14% responded negatively to this theme.

“I suffer from mental health issues occasionally and my line manager is fantastic which makes me feel extremely supported at work when these issues arise for me. I never have any worries at all.”

“The workload and expectation of the organisation is insane and needs to be addressed. The service relies too much on goodwill and expect people just to get on with it.”



Looking at the individual questions there is an 89% positive response to ‘I know what support is available and where to find it’.

80% of staff were satisfied with the contact time from their line managers, where corporate staff were notably the most positive group with a 90% positive response.

Whilst the responses were positive there were some comments raised in the focus groups that indicate that there may be inconsistencies with how managers are skilled to support their staff.

There is an encouraging response with regards to the mental health services and support offered with 72% of staff agreeing this is suitable. It is worth noting that 17% responded neutral as in some cases staff have not needed to access any of this support.

80% of females responded positively to the 'I believe the service cares about my wellbeing' compared with 63% of male staff.

The area of concern, which is consistent across all staff groups and roles, is in response to how staff feel their mental health is affected by work with 31% responding negatively, 20% neutral and 49% positive to this question.

When this was explored further in the focus groups there was a particular trend with Station and Group Managers roles responding negatively and acknowledgement of the impact that workloads are having both on mental health and home life. Whilst staff who could work from home were positive about the flexibility, there were concerns about the impact of being in back to back meetings and the pressure of being immediately available. Some staff expressed feelings of isolation and difficulty in building relationships, particularly for new starters.

On-Call staff shared examples of how tasks including e-learning and competencies impacted on their work/home balance and are unachievable for the hours available.

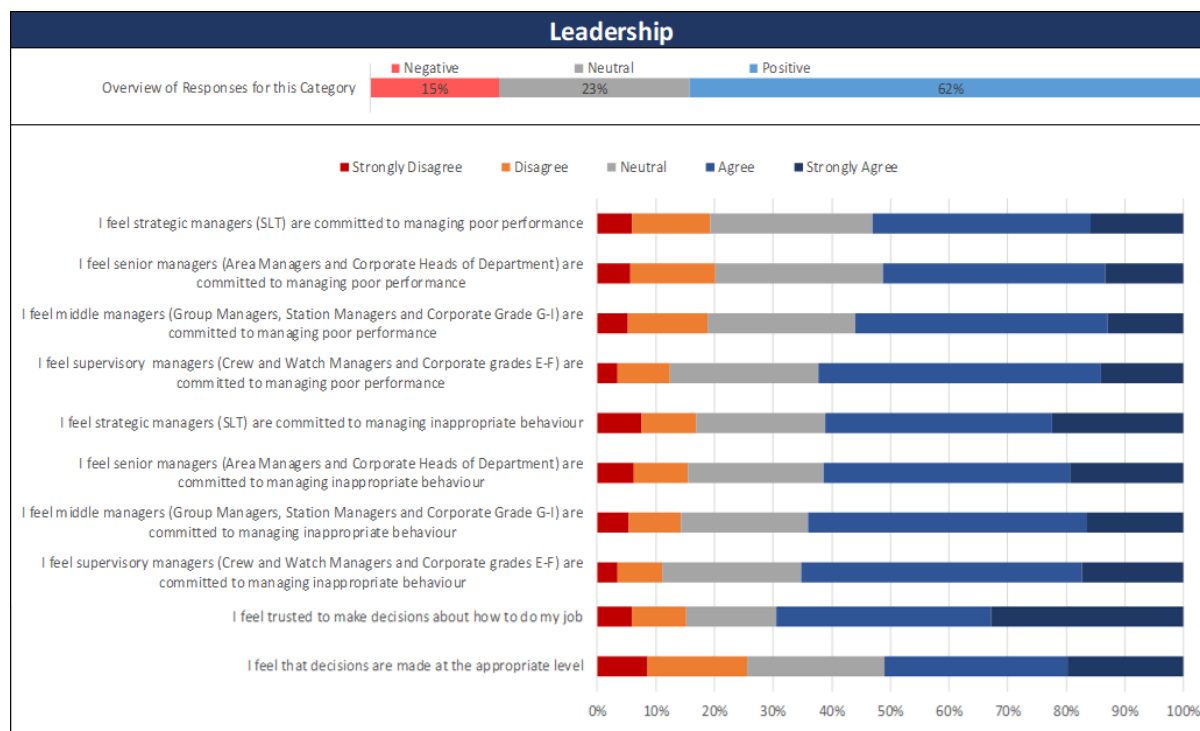
Following the focus groups discussions staff would like:

- Greater clarification on workloads and expectations across all roles and levels.
- A reduction in the number of emails and expectations to respond/work on days off to stay on top of workloads reduced.
- Increased contact for some corporate staff working at home and consideration of increased workloads which are impacting upon their work/life.
- Further support for new starters to form relationships with the introduction of working from home.
- Further support for operational roles and Fire Control staff being exposed to traumatic incidents in implementing a diffusing policy or TRIM after an incident.
- Clarification on the eligibility criteria for Mental Health Services provided by the Fire Fighters Charity.
- The Limited Duties procedure for WDS and On-Call staff to have greater consistency.
- Further support offered to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse.

Leadership

Overall, 62% of staff who completed the survey across all roles responded positively to leadership within the Service. 23% were neutral and 15% responded negatively to this theme.

“Leadership has to be aligned with good leadership practice and the ability to be visible and take people with you on the journey.”



Looking at the individual questions in this theme there is a 69% positive response to how staff feel trusted to make decisions about how to do their job with 23% responding neutral and 8% negative.

There is a 23% neutral response across all the questions in this theme which is the highest neutral response across the survey. This was explored further in focus groups and a similar response to the Code of Ethics questions was found where staff did not feel they had sufficient contact with individuals outside of their immediate teams, or higher up the management structure to be able to comment.

Whilst the responses to how performance and behaviours are managed across all levels is primarily positive with a 51% to 73% positive response. There is a repeated trend that shows that the more senior the role, the more negative the response which could again be due to the fact that staff did not feel they had sufficient contact to comment. The focus groups referenced again, concerns relating to workloads and capacity to manage performance and behaviours effectively, along with high numbers of temporary promotions and staff moves. These issues were also raised as potentially resulting in a reluctance for temporary managers to deal with performance and behaviours as they would soon return to their original role.

The least positive response in this theme is related to how staff feel that decisions are made at the appropriate level, with 26% responding negatively, 23% neutral, and 51% positive. When this was discussed in the focus groups it was felt that the level of trust has slipped as decisions are made without a clear rationale or appropriate consultation.

It was also identified that there is a lack of operational females in leadership roles at middle management levels and above to act as role models and mentors to support other operational females.

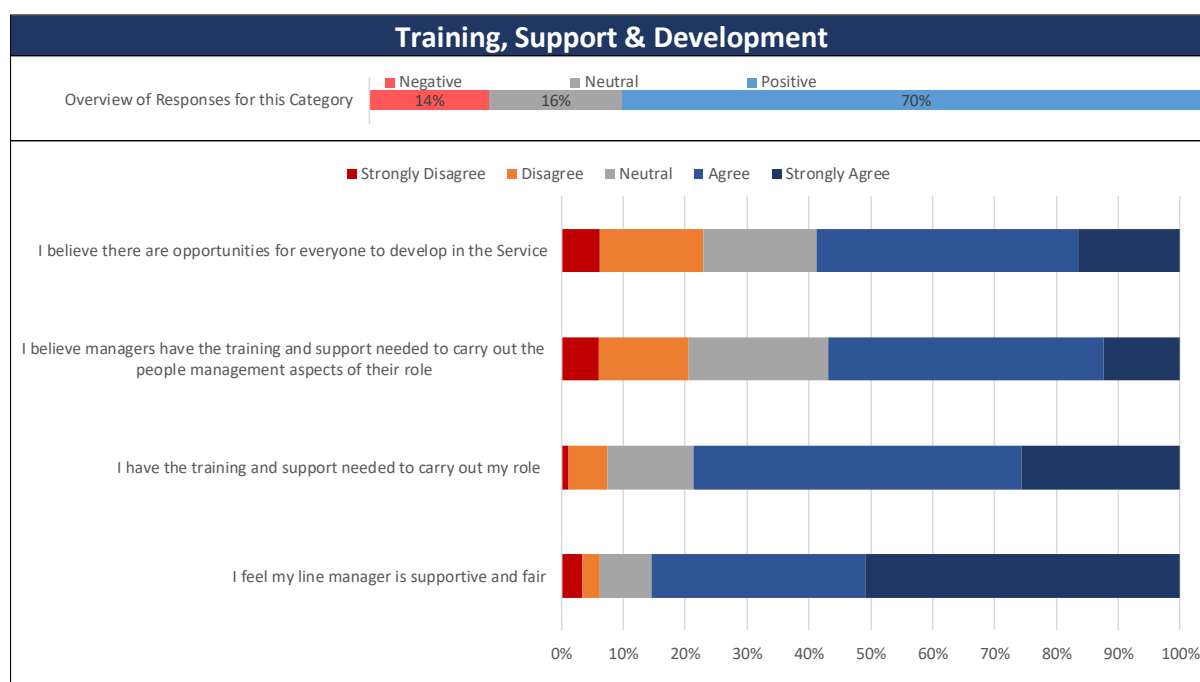
Following the focus groups discussions staff would like:

- Less staff moves and temporary promotions as this has an impact on the consistency of leadership.
- Enhanced support available to temporarily and newly promoted managers.
- More time for Station and Group Managers to be visible and available.
- Improved understanding of how it feels for women leading in an operational environment where they may be the only female.
- Increased number of females in operational management roles as mentors and points of contact for other female operational staff.

Training, Support and Development

Overall, 70% of staff who completed the survey responded positively to the training, support, and development in the Service. 16% were neutral and 14% responded negatively to this theme.

“I feel that development opportunities exist for all, and I like the fact that they need to be self-driven to a certain extent, ensuring commitment and dedication.”



Looking at the individual questions in this theme there is an encouraging response to how staff feel their line managers are supportive and fair, with 86% responding positively, 8% neutral and 6% negative. It is worth noting that 51% of staff strongly agreed and 35% agreed with this statement.

79% of staff responded positively to the question 'I have the training and support needed to carry out my role' where 14% were neutral and 7% negative. Again, of the positive responses 53% agreed and 26% strongly agreed.

Whilst these responses were positive, there were some comments raised in the focus groups that indicate that staff preferred face to face delivery or a coaching and mentoring approach to training. This led to conversations around e-learning, and it was recommended that some of the e-learning packages could benefit from being delivered in a different format to allow for guided discussion and shared learning, particularly those of a sensitive nature, for example mental health.

The 23% negative response to the question regarding opportunities for everyone to develop in the service was explored further in the focus groups. It was highlighted that there are often more limited promotion opportunities for corporate and Fire Control staff once they reach a certain grade which leaves some staff leaving the Service to seek further career progression opportunities.

The leadership and HR courses were recognised as key to supporting managers, but some staff felt that some of these opportunities should not be restricted to a role or grade and focus on future leaders. This included the availability of Bitesized Leaders Forum to a wider range of grades.

Though the promotions process was out of scope for this review, it was repeatedly referred to alongside the recruitment process in the focus groups. Staff felt that the processes needed to focus more on ensuring the right people with the right skills are promoted and recruited to leadership roles to develop and support their staff.

Following the focus groups discussions staff would like:

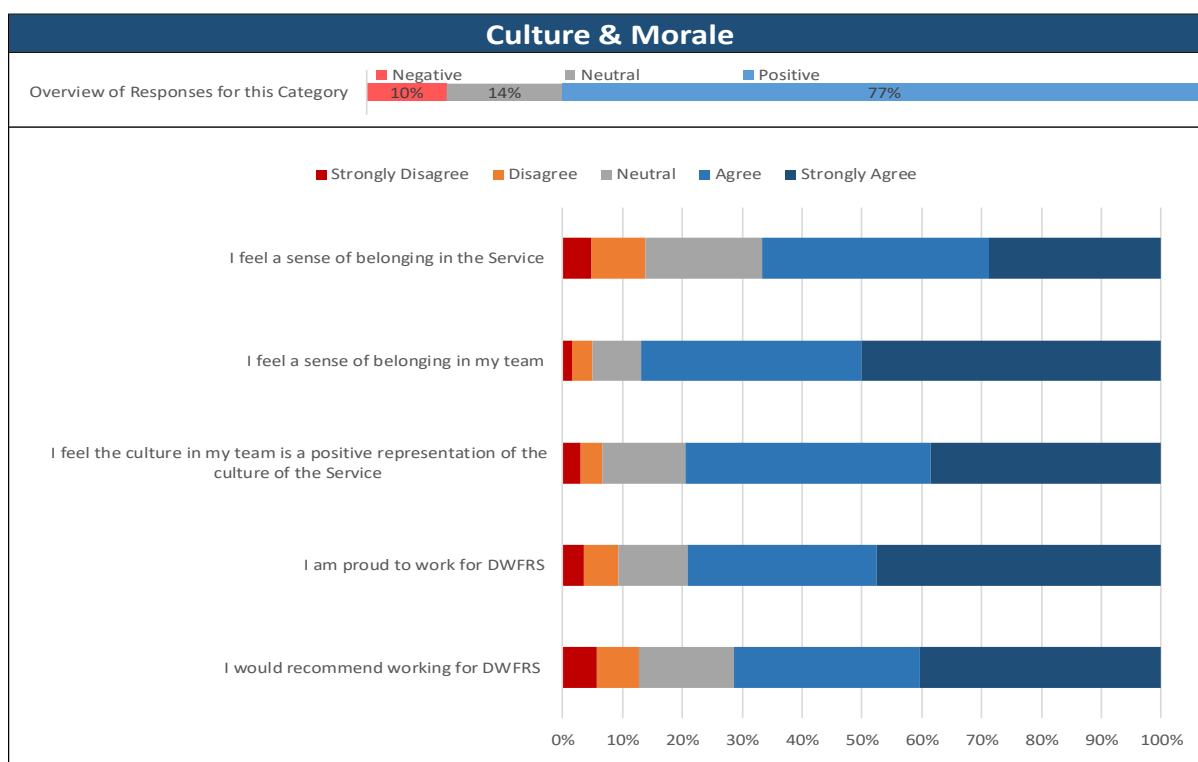
- The leadership development and HR training courses to be made available to more roles to develop future leaders.
- Further improvements to the coaching and support mechanisms including mentoring and learning from one another.
- A review of e-learning packages to consider alternative methods of delivery for some subjects such as mental health.
- Leaders at SM and GM level to be more visible at work locations and have the right skills to support and develop staff.
- More opportunity to develop further when they are at the top of their grade or completed their development folder.
- Further support for managers to understand the processes and systems of different staff groups they manage.

- Better clarity of the role expectations and time commitment for On-Call supervisory managers.
- Further consideration of morals, values, and emotional intelligence as part of the recruitment and selection process.

Culture and Morale

Overall, 77% of staff who completed the survey responding positively about culture and morale within the Service. 14% were neutral and 10% responded negatively to this theme.

“I have worked in the service for a few years and have always been proud to say that I work for a good organisation even when we have a small minority that bring the name of the service into disrepute.”



Looking at the individual questions in this theme there is an 87% positive response to how staff feel a sense of belonging in their teams, with 8% neutral and 5% negative. Of these responses it is encouraging to see that 50% strongly agreed and 37% agreed with this question.

In total, 80% of staff feel proud to work for the Service, with 11% neutral and 9% negative responses. When this was explored further in the focus groups ‘proud’ was the consistent word across all staff groups and roles to describe how staff felt about working for the Service.

In total, 79% of staff feel that their teams are a positive representation of the culture of the Service. This is reflective of how staff have responded throughout the survey

where there is a trend showing that staff responded positively to questions about their own teams.

There was another slight trend that showed females responded more favourably to the question 'I would recommend working for DWFRS' with 81% responding positively compared with the Service wide response of 71%.

Whilst most staff in this review felt proud to work for the Service, they were also asked how the media speculation at the time impacted how they felt about working for the Service. This led to comments of disappointment and shame with some staff feeling embarrassed to wear the uniform in public in the early days of the media attention.

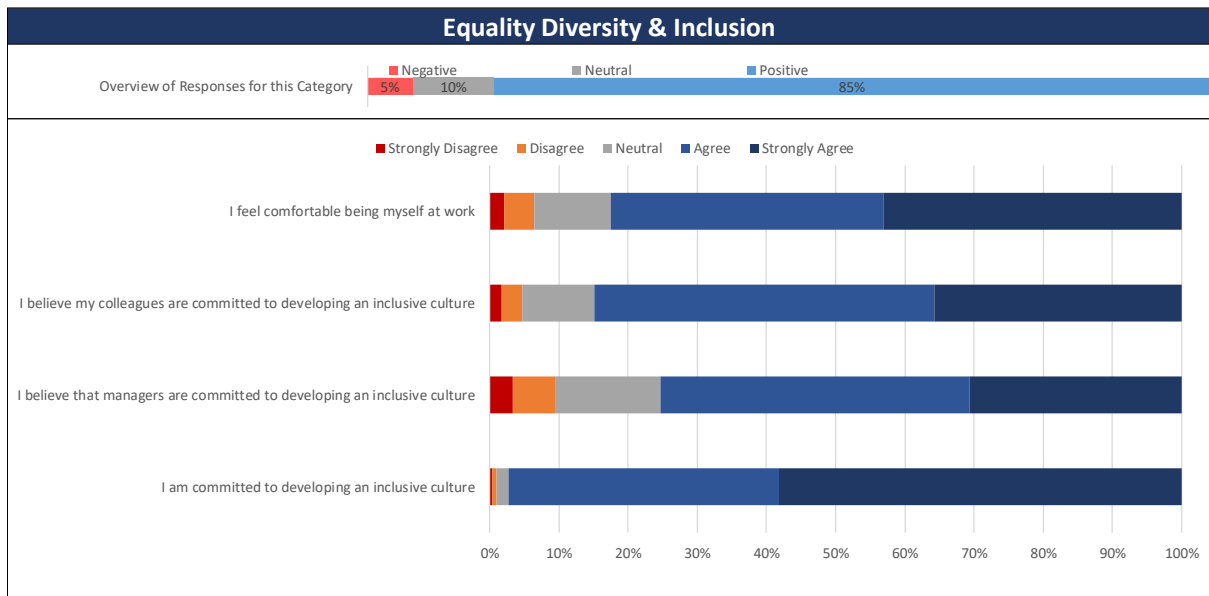
Following the focus groups discussions staff would like:

- Further consideration for how to address the impact of the negative media attention with a focus on partnership working, On-Call employers and future recruitment.
- Further work to develop and strengthen support and relationships for new starters.
- More engagement with operational staff with a particular focus on On-Call staff and Fire Control.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

This was the most positive theme across the entire survey which showed that 85% of staff responded positively in response to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion within the Service. 10% were neutral and 5% responded negatively to this theme.

'As a member of staff who is of mixed ethnicity, I can honestly say since joining the Service, I have never had any issues or treated any differently to anyone else. I maintain joining the Service has been one of the best decisions I have made'



Looking at the individual questions in this theme nearly all respondents feel that they are committed to developing an inclusive culture, with a 97% positive response, 2% neutral and 1% negative. This is the most positive response to a question in the entire survey.

In total, 85% of staff responded positively to the question 'I believe my colleagues are committed to developing an inclusive culture' with 10% responding neutral and 5% negative.

This theme also shows an encouraging response where 82% of staff feel comfortable being themselves at work, with 11% responding neutral and 7% negative.

Whilst 76% of staff responded positively to the question 'I believe that managers are committed to developing an inclusive culture', this was the question with the highest neutral and negative responses in this theme which indicates there is less confidence in commitment from managers.

Whilst the survey responses were positive there were some comments raised in the open comments field of the survey that referred to racism, the existence of unconscious bias, and the view that staff must be a certain fit to succeed in the Service.

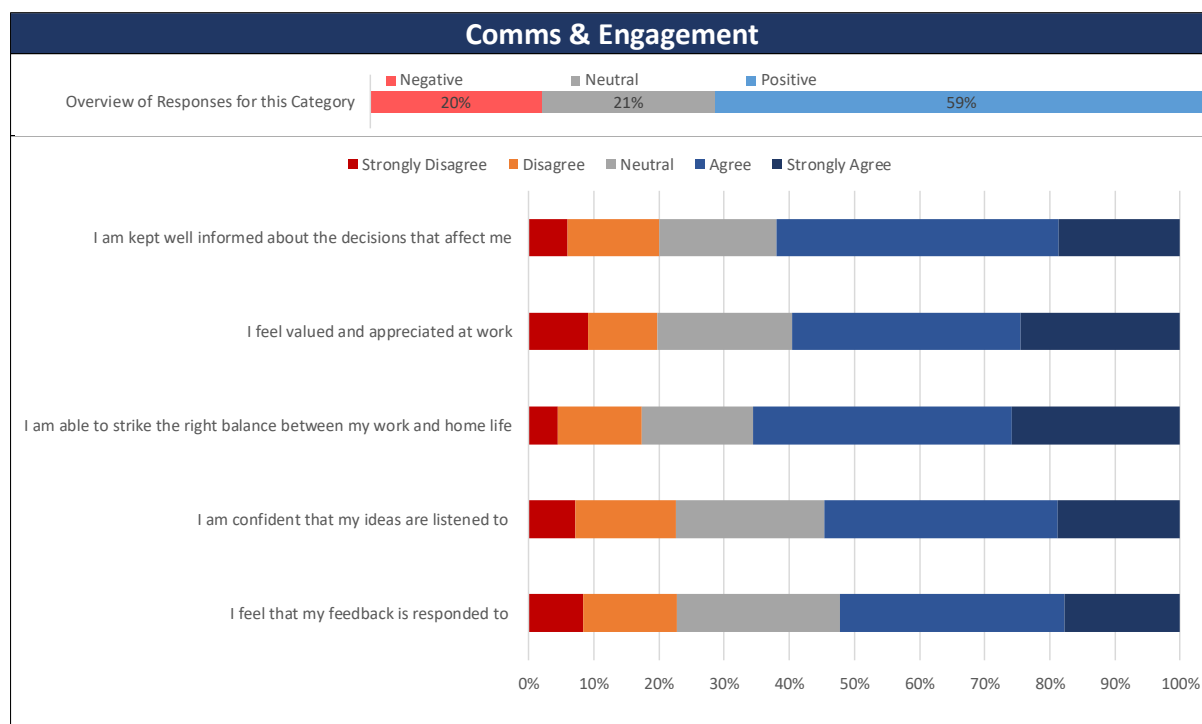
Following the focus groups discussions staff would like:

- The Maternity procedure to be reviewed and benchmarked against other Services.
- More focus on strengthening relationships between different staff groups.
- Some of the Service's procedures to be brought more up to date in terms of EDI.
- A more inclusive promotion process to ensure neurodiversity is fully considered.
- Face to face training as part of the induction for EDI

Comms and Engagement

59% of staff who completed the survey responded positively about comms and engagement in the Service. 21% responded neutral and 20% negative. Whilst this received a 59% positive response this is the second least positive theme across the survey.

“I feel my line manager is willing to listen to my ideas and supports these, but I'm unsure if my ideas would get listened to further up the structure.”



Looking at the individual questions in this theme there is a 66% positive response to how staff feel able to strike the right balance between their work and home life, with 17% responding neutral and 17% negatively.

Corporate staff were the most positive at 73%, and with their responses making up over 40% of all those responding, the focus group discussions confirmed this was due to the smarter and flexible working arrangements and the ability for some staff to work from home. There are two staff groups where this is noticeably different with Station Managers and On-Call Crew and Watch Managers both scoring low on this with 36% and 26% positive responses.

In total, 62% of staff responded positively to the question ‘I am kept well informed about the decisions that affect me, with 18% neutral and 20% negative.

The least positive response in this theme is how staff feel their feedback is responded to and how confident they feel that their ideas are listened to. This was a particular trend with On-Call staff where it was felt there needed to be a different approach.

Following the focus groups discussions staff would like:

- To be able to challenge decisions or suggestions without a defensive response.
- To further improve the visibility of management for station staff.
- Improved information about how to contact key services and people.
- Consultation and communications to be further strengthened and tailored in particular for On-Call staff.
- To see visible change when feedback is submitted.

Conclusion

This review was commissioned in response to the London Fire Brigade Culture Report in December 2022. This presented an opportunity for the Service to engage with its workforce to review the existing workplace culture against the themes highlighted in the LFB report.

Over a two-month period, the internal review provided a platform for staff to share their views on how they feel working for the Service via a staff survey, and the team personally met with nearly 100 members of staff to listen to their personal experiences in either a focus group or 1:1 capacity.

It was encouraging to hear from so many passionate members of staff from across the Service who spoke openly and honestly about how the workplace culture can be further strengthened.

This internal review has found that overall, the Service has a positive and inclusive workplace and does not suggest that there is a widespread culture of misogyny, or racism as identified in the LFB report. Furthermore, it was found that most staff felt proud to work for the Service.

However, the review has found that the Service has areas to strengthen. The feedback gathered raised some concerns in relation to how some poor performance and behaviours are managed. There were also concerns highlighted around whether staff feel listened to and how the Service responds to their feedback. Related to these areas for improvement are issues around capacity of managers and the training and support provided to support them to be able to carry out their role effectively.

Whilst most staff who took part in the review have not witnessed or experienced bullying and harassment, it is evident that some work is required to further build trust and confidence to encourage staff to report concerns.

When looking at the equality data provided there was a low degree of variance to the overall survey responses from any particular group of staff or demographic. However, it must be noted that where staff selected 'other' as their response, they were less positive. This suggests that there is a lack of confidence in the anonymity of the survey.

There is a strong desire from staff for the Service to strengthen some aspects of the support arrangements, and to be more transparent around the outcomes of discipline processes as well as reducing the time it takes to complete investigations.

This review has been welcomed from staff commenting that it is ‘*a step in the right direction*’ provided that action is taken. In acknowledging this, the Service is keen to listen to what staff are saying, and this report will feed into the Independent Review to address areas for improvement in a single action plan, which will be overseen by the Culture Development Committee.

Key Observations

This Report outlines 40 observations that will need to be considered as part of the Independent Review so that a single action plan is created. [Appendix 2](#) of this report sets out what is currently in place against these observations, as well as detailing the work that is needed to be strengthened.

Outcome 1 – Leaders have positive relationships, are visible, effective, and trusted in line with the code of ethics	
1	Explore ways for leaders at Station Manager and above to be more visible to support and develop teams.
2	Review our organisational development and engagement programme to recognise the needs of all staff groups, including engagement days and internal / external staff surveys.
3	Review the effectiveness of consultation and communications mechanisms to ensure staff have access to the information they need, are involved, and feedback is considered and responded to.
4	Consider how we can tailor the development needs for different roles, specifically from Firefighter to Crew Manager, and Watch Manager to Station Manager.
5	Consider additional support to managers who manage different staff groups.
6	Review investment in leadership development programmes to ensure this is available to all levels of staff.
7	Review mentoring and coaching schemes to share leadership and cross organisational learning.
8	Review talent management and succession planning to identify and support all staff.
9	Continue HR training workshops and review availability of HR advice for a 24/7 service.
10	Consider how to manage expectations of the role for On-Call supervisory managers as part of the promotions process.
11	Consider the appropriateness of e-learning for delivering key training and awareness courses.
12	Review training approach for On-Call staff and the hours expected to fulfil expectations.

Outcome 2 – The inclusive culture is strengthened	
13	Review the Code of Ethics handbook and the support available for managers to communicate and engage with their teams. Ensure neurodiversity is considered and different staff needs accounted for.
14	Develop an approach to raise awareness about neurodiversity and provide support.

15	Ensure positive relationships between different staff groups.
16	Review the Corporate Induction Day to include EDI training.
17	Review support available for females to progress in operational roles.
18	Encourage wider open seats and reverse mentoring for staff.

Outcome 3 – Staff have the confidence to recognise and deal with inappropriate behaviour

19	Develop resources and training accessible for all staff to support with recognising inappropriate behaviours and having difficult conversations.
20	Encourage line managers to have regular conversations about performance and behaviour with their staff where required.
21	Consider alternative routes for informally raising inappropriate behaviour and seeking advice and signposting to support.

Outcome 4 – Staff have the confidence to report and raise concerns knowing that these will be dealt with consistently, robustly and in a timely manner

22	Review the Bullying & Harassment procedure to ensure it is written from a person-centred perspective.
23	Improve the transparency around outcomes for Discipline & Grievance and Bullying & Harassment cases and how these are communicated to those involved.
24	Review the support available to staff who report and are involved in Bullying & Harassment issues both during the case and after the outcome.
25	Review training and support in place for managers to improve confidence in dealing with Bullying and Harassment issues.
26	Consider ways of reducing temporary promotions especially within teams to allow effective performance management.
27	Review and improve understanding of the Probation and Managing Performance procedures and how they support and complement one another so that managers are confidently and competently able to address poor performance.
28	Review the approach to investigations and the resources available to ensure these are carried out consistently with credibility in a timely manner.
29	Ensure that effective evaluation is recorded and implemented to identify lessons learned from Discipline & Grievance and Bullying & Harassment cases.

Outcome 5 – The Service attracts and retains staff in line with the code of ethics

30	Review recruitment and selection process to consider how it can include morals, values, and emotional intelligence.
31	Review opportunities for corporate staff promotion and career grade development.
32	Review Maternity procedure and benchmark against other Services.
33	Consider how to develop and strengthen support and relationships for new starters.

34	Improve the timeliness of Exit Interviews to ensure data is analysed and outcomes acted upon.
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Outcome 6 – Staff have an effective work life balance	
35	Review workloads and capacity of middle managers with a focus on Station Managers.
36	Review and evaluate the uptake and effectiveness of mental health provisions to all staff to identify any trends and improve practice (including domestic violence & abuse and those needing safeguarding).
37	Review flexible and smarter working arrangements to ensure that staff have regular contact, feel supported and have manageable workloads.
38	Provide clarity for On-Call staff undertaking administrative tasks with regards to pay and expectations.
39	Ensure all teams consider the impact of work on On-Call staff and tailor the approach where required.
40	Consider the consistency of the Limited Duties procedure across staff groups.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank every member of staff who contributed to the internal review by either completing the staff survey, attending a focus group, or requesting an informal 1:1 meeting to share their experience of working for the Service.

It was pleasing to be able to meet with so many staff who were so passionate and took the time to volunteer to share their story and feedback during one of the most testing times for the Service.

We were overwhelmed by the passion and enthusiasm of staff and hope that this report voices their feedback and concerns to address the areas of improvement, and recommendations to strengthen and develop an inclusive workplace culture.

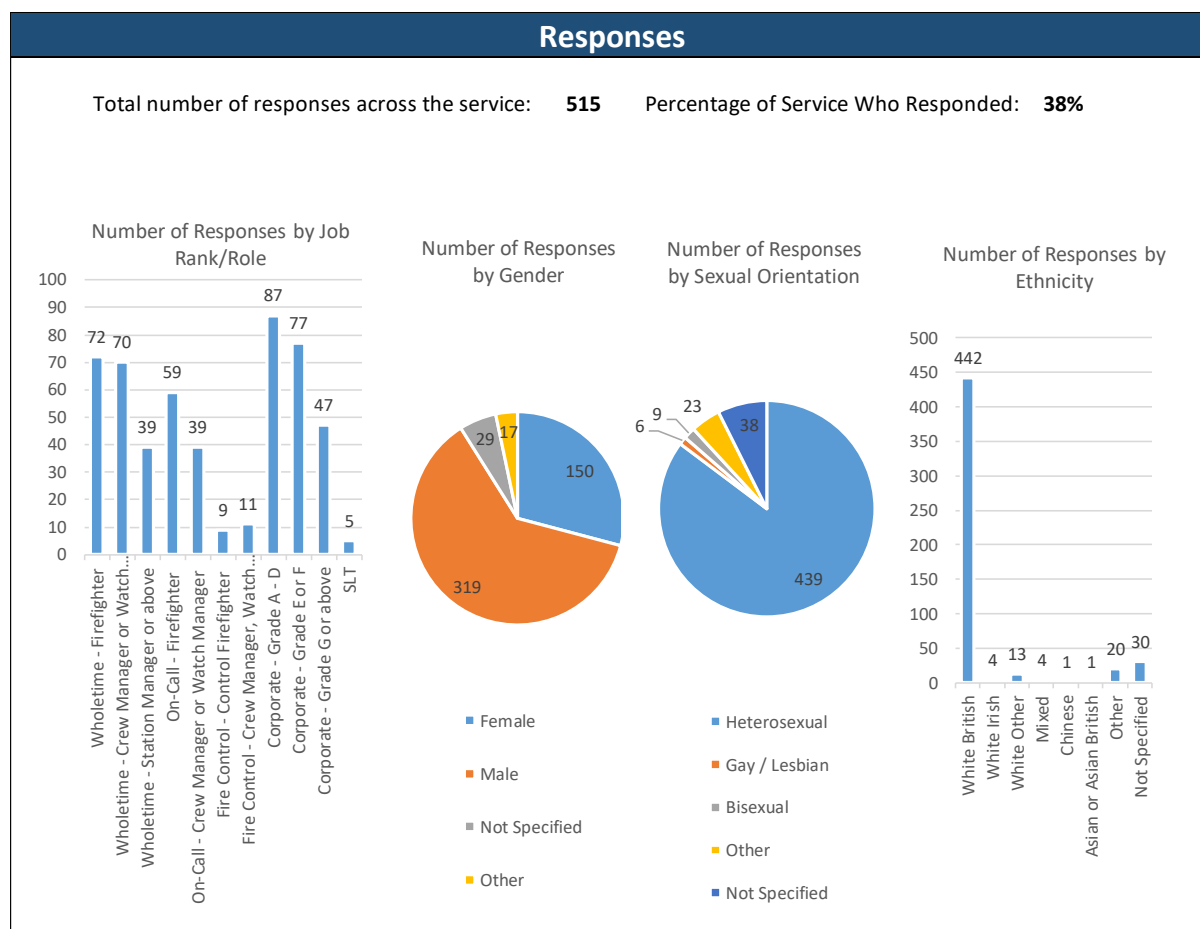
Appendices

- 1 [EDI Responses](#)
- 2 [Internal Review Observation and Action](#)

Background Papers

[London Fire Brigade Independent Culture Review \(2022\)](#)

Appendix 1 – EDI responses



Of the staff who completed the survey, and completed the EDI monitoring questions most specified as:

- 319 Male (62% of respondents)
- 439 Heterosexual (85% of respondents)
- 442 White British (86% of respondents)

This is reflective of the representation of the workforce (as of 2nd March 2023):

- 1,084 Male (80% of employees)
- 1,137 Heterosexual (84% of employees)
- 1,233 White British (91% of employees)

Appendix 2 - Internal Review Observation and Action

Outcome	Observation	What are we doing?	What more needs to be done?	Lead
<p>O1 – Leaders have positive relationships, are visible, effective, and trusted in line with the Code of Ethics</p>	<p>1. Explore ways for leaders at Station Manager and above to be more visible to support and develop teams.</p>	<p>A key benefit of the Community Safety restructure is to provide Station Managers with clarity on Service priorities and expectations. This approach will further enable these roles to increase visibility within their stations to support their stations/watches.</p> <p>The meetings and briefings procedure provides a clear structure and approach to ensure monthly meetings are held and staff updated on key issues.</p> <p>Targeted Question Times are held on staff group basis for more relevant content to promote engagement.</p> <p>SLT members engage with staff through a programme of visits, face to face discussions at Managers Briefing Days, as well as through visibility in their own Directorates via meetings, informal catch ups, site visits and presence at station and Service exercises.</p> <p>The Service Delivery Team meet monthly to discuss key issues. Directors attend SDT on a quarterly basis to take part in the quarterly performance overview, where support is provided, and successes celebrated. Members of SLT attend key Service meetings - for example, H&S Committee, ED&I committee, Rota group sessions as well undertaking their role as SLT champions for the various Staff Network meetings. SLT also attend retirement functions, pass out parades, open days, and charity events. The CFO also provides regular video updates to staff.</p>	<p>We recognise that visibility is integral to good leadership and SLT want to support all our managers to be more visible in their workplaces. Introducing the Community Safety/Response restructure was in part to support Area Management Team visibility.</p> <p>Station Managers will provide information on when they are available at different stations/locations. This support will be reinforced by informal workplace visits and attendance at exercises by SLT.</p> <p>We will clearly communicate our approach so that all staff are aware of how SLT and Senior managers will ensure they are visible to staff.</p>	<p>AC/JM/JL /VS</p>

	<p>2. Review our organisational development and engagement programme to recognise the needs for all staff groups, including engagement days and surveys.</p>	<p>Targeted Question Times are held on staff group basis for more relevant content.</p> <p>Bitesize leader’s forum is designed around organisational needs so that leaders are updated on and discuss key issues. These sessions are complemented by Manager engagement/briefing days.</p> <p>Managers are expected to share content of these engagement events with their teams to ensure broader understanding and awareness is cascaded throughout the organisation.</p>	<p>We know that the Service conducts a lot of communications and engagement activities, but we need to establish what staff feel is needed, what is not already being provided, and better appreciate the purpose of these engagements.</p> <p>We will also determine an approach to checking in with staff and monitoring staff engagement through a more consistent and regular survey.</p> <p>Our Leadership Development Programme is under review to ensure our approach is fit for purpose.</p>	<p>JL/VS</p>
	<p>3. Review the effectiveness of consultation and communications mechanisms to ensure staff have access to the information they need, are involved and feedback is considered and responded to.</p>	<p>The project management framework provides comms and stakeholder tools to support managers to identify the various stakeholders and their needs as part of project work. This ensures that the right people are informed or consulted with at the appropriate time. In respect of feedback on new or amended procedures the procedures database includes a consultation function that all staff can access and feedback on.</p> <p>Meetings with representative bodies take place each quarter so that consultation matters can be raised by both parties for discussion.</p> <p>Consultation on organisational changes are communicated through rep bodies prior to staff briefings and the circulation of the consultation document. Organisational changes required arising out of financial pressures will often need to happen promptly resulting in consultation timescales following legal timeframes, but representative bodies, managers and affected staff will be consulted with. There are other consultation mechanisms that are used by the Service, such as OED, staff suggestions, savings requests, project communication plans and staff surveys.</p>	<p>We understand that staff feel that they are not always consulted or engaged with in all decisions and clearly this is not always possible, but we do want to ensure our approach to comms and engagement is consistent across all projects, so that staff are aware of when they can be involved and how.</p> <p>We will look to reintroduce briefings at the start of shift. We also want to ensure that feedback is provided to all those responded to explain the rationale for decision making.</p>	<p>JL/VS</p>

	<p>4. Consider how we can tailor the development needs for different roles, specifically from Firefighter to Crew Manager, and Watch Manager to Station Manager.</p>	<p>Development Pathways and Development Programmes are in place for staff at specific levels of the organisation.</p> <p>Leadership Development Programmes are also in place and are tailored to staff grades.</p>	<p>This is important and an area that we know we want to improve. We will be developing expectation/how to guides for CM/WM/SM & GM. These will be role specific and will clearly identify the key elements and priorities of the role. We will adopt a common theme across all documents, and they will be made available on Connect.</p> <p>We will be introducing a role induction at this level and refreshing our existing Leadership Development Programme.</p>	AC/DL
	<p>5. Consider additional support to Managers who manage different staff groups.</p>	<p>Line managers should be the first port of call to ensure they provide guidance and support to any managers in this position.</p> <p>HRBPs are also in place to provide guidance and advice to Managers who manage different staff groups, particularly where there may be different terms and conditions and processes/practices that managers need familiarisation on.</p>	<p>We will look to ensure this aspect is covered within the role induction process so that managers understand any differences in the management of different staff groups. We will also look at whether it would be beneficial to develop training or user guides for managers regarding any databases or systems used by different staff groups.</p>	CS/SP
	<p>6. Review investment in leadership development programmes to ensure this is available to all levels of staff.</p>	<p>It has been recognised that there is a need to continue to invest in Leadership Development. Leadership Development Programmes will continue to run but at a lesser frequency.</p> <p>There are lots of examples in all staff groups where individuals have progressed through the organisation. These individuals have worked hard on their progression and have grasped opportunities for personal development. In many cases they have used leadership development resources and support to assist with their progression.</p>	<p>We are reviewing the format of the Leadership Development Programme to ensure matters arising out of the cultural review are picked up and actioned.</p>	JL/JP/FW

	<p>7. Review mentoring and coaching schemes to share leadership and cross organisational learning.</p>	<p>Coaching and mentoring procedures are in place to support staff development.</p> <p>Informal 'buddy' arrangements have been used as part of the WDS recruitment and corporate induction processes.</p> <p>The 1:1 process enables the creation of personal development plans with coaching and mentoring opportunities available. Open seats at key meetings are available to promote and support wider organisational understanding.</p> <p>A number of our staff are undertaking apprenticeships in a wide variety of roles, and this is being promoted more across the organisation.</p>	<p>We will strengthen our 'buddy' approach for WDS recruitment as part of the positive action programme of work.</p> <p>For other staff groups we have engaged with managers for their suggestions as to how we can further support the progression of our staff.</p>	<p>JL/AC</p>
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	<p>8. Review talent management and succession planning to identify and support all staff.</p>	<p>Our staff and their development are important to us. We have 1:1 reviews in place and these should act as the starting point for talent management discussions. Individuals can access Development Pathways appropriate to their role/grade level.</p> <p>Department Succession Plans are in place and include a number of tools to assist Managers in analysing the capabilities of individuals within their teams. This will help frame conversations that will take place during 1:1 review. The tools used are the nine-box grid which looks at the performance/potential of staff and the Service talent tool which looks at whether staff need Improvement, Nurturing or Development. The subsequent 1:1 review discussion, enables action plans to be agreed and set in place. For uniformed staff, the 1:1 review process is the gateway to the promotion process and enables a discussion about potential and future progress to take place with actions set in place. The Service have a range of development support to assist our talented staff to progress, this includes development pathways, leadership programmes, e learning, coaching, and mentoring as well as attending key meetings in an 'open seat'. Apprenticeships are also in place to support staff wishing to develop.</p> <p>To complement this, the Learning Hub provides a 'one stop shop' of information in support of personal and professional development.</p>	<p>A range of processes are in place but there appears to be a need to ensure staff are more aware of these opportunities. In support of this we will ensure we have regular communications, sharing and celebrating success stories and people achievements to inspire other staff to consider these development activities.</p>	<p>JL/CS</p>
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	<p>9. Continue HR training workshops and review availability of HR advice for a 24/7 service.</p>	<p>HRBPs and other HR Managers have previously provided training on HR issues, primarily as part of the Leadership Development Programme but also in response to new initiatives. We are currently reviewing our approach to Leadership Development, and it is likely to again include HR related modules that will need to be arranged.</p>	<p>We are reviewing the contents of our Leadership Development Programme and want to pick up any recommendations from the cultural reviews as part of this.</p> <p>In relation to 24/7 HR advice, the HRBPS work flexibly to ensure they provide the required support. We will look whether there is a need for more formal out of hours arrangements or whether greater manager training will address this concern.</p>	<p>CS/SP</p>
	<p>10. Consider how to manage expectations of the role for On-Call supervisory managers as part of the promotions process.</p>	<p>As referenced above, an expectations document is being produced which will help provide guidance.</p>	<p>In addition to the role expectations, we are looking at a role induction process for new on-call supervisory managers.</p>	<p>CS/DL</p>
	<p>11. Consider the appropriateness of e-learning for delivering key training and awareness courses.</p>	<p>We undertake a blended approach to learning, where E Learning can provide value as pre-course input or it can provide flexible development input at a time a location to support the learner. The Learning Hub provides a 'one stop' repository of development resources that individuals can access.</p>	<p>We appreciate that e-learning is not always the best approach to learning and some topics are best delivered face to face. Therefore, we will review our E Learning arrangements to identify, with key stakeholders, those more appropriately delivered in a face-to-face format. We are also reviewing our Leadership Development which will need to be mindful of future our cultural development activities. This work will also consider the most appropriate way by which these learning, development and awareness interventions should be delivered to maximise effectiveness and optimise learning.</p>	<p>JL/MB</p>

	R12. Review training approach for on-call staff and the hours expected to fulfil expectations.	Firefighter Development Programmes are under review with the objective to streamline the content. The review will also look at what could be provided in face-to-face format and what could be delivered more flexibly to assist with work/life balance. Development schools are also in place to support operational staff.	We will commission a piece of work through the service improvement team to further explore training to risk profiles rather than just training everyone for everything. This will also enable the training packages being developed as part of NOG to be better targeted for effective delivery.	AC/DL
O2 – The inclusive culture is strengthened	13. Review the Code of Ethics handbook and the support available for managers to communicate and engage with their teams. Ensure neurodiversity is considered and different staff needs accounted for.	A Code of Ethics handbook has been developed which explains each of the ethical principles along with an explanation of why we have a code of ethics. Much of the content is based on the guidance issued by the NFCC. The HMICFRS staff survey and Internal Review showed that staff were aware of and understood the Code of Ethics.	We have done a lot of work to embed the Code of Ethics and acknowledge that we can do some more. We are in the process of developing an E Learning solution that guides the individual through the Code of Ethics. We will also look at the accessibility support that is available through Microsoft to better support staff's understanding and to provide this as a tool for Managers to use with staff. We will ensure that the neurodiversity network is consulted in the development of this work.	JL
	14. Develop an approach to raise awareness about neurodiversity and provide support.	A neurodiversity network is in place and this group will assist in raising awareness and understanding and input into change across the organisation to support inclusivity.	We are really pleased to have introduced our new neurodiversity network. This network can provide regular features and updates to raise awareness and improve understanding as standard agenda items on the culture committee. The network is currently working on an inclusion passport (to better capture how individuals can be supported to learn, etc) and will provide input into the design of the new website, as well as how social media could be improved to be more inclusive. A CONNECT page is being developed along with a handbook to aid understanding across the Service.	JM/SK/V R

	15. Ensure positive relationships between different staff groups.	Several teams have taken part in 'Meet the Teams' communication campaigns. SDT share best practice to support this. Cross working between different departments and teams occurs through manager engagement days/bitesize leaders and at key meetings (H&S, EDI) as well as staff network meetings. Project working groups ensure that relevant stakeholders work together. Some teams organise cross department sessions which are designed to create better understanding of the various roles that different teams do.	Whilst we feel that this is an area that is improving, we are also supportive of ways in which this can be strengthened. Any issues need to be raised with Department Managers so that appropriate solutions can be set in place. Managers need to encourage working on station, shadowing corporate teams and coordinate attendance at workplaces to promote inter departmental contact. We are introducing a requirement for non-station based operational staff to provide cover at stations on a monthly basis. By virtue of this relationships will be improved across different depts. We will also work with the Cultural Development Committee and Leadership Consultancy Group to gather other ideas to enhance working relationships.	AC/JL/JM /VS
	16. Review the Corporate Induction Day to include EDI training.	The Corporate Induction Day already includes input on EDI. Equality, diversity and inclusion is also a focus of the CFO input at the start of the induction day. We appreciate however that the input on these sessions is limited, but it is supplemented with a wide range of EDI input through E Learning, station visits, awareness sessions and workshops on various topics. There is also information on CONNECT, our website and the Learning Hub	The EDI team are collaborating closely with other teams, particularly Learning and Organisational Development and Communication and Engagement to look at a programme of EDI awareness raising and education. It is the intention to develop a number of short, impactful toolkits for staff to use to spark a conversation.	JL/CS
	17. Review support available for females to progress in operational roles.	Six operational females have taken part in the 'Our Time' programme. Whilst this is a beneficial programme its limitations are that the programme is designed for those already in a supervisory position. Coaching and mentoring support is available to staff.	We think it would be beneficial to discuss this topic with the operational women's group to scope out what support they believe will assist; this would then enable us to develop a tailored approach. We are looking at providing helpful progression tools to support alongside mentoring and coaching. Initial thoughts include external coaching support and development workbooks.	JL/JG

	18. Encourage wider open seats and reverse mentoring for staff.	<p>Open seats are available at all key meetings, attendance at these is encouraged to support personal and professional development. Staff who have attended find the open seat a useful means of seeing the variety of discussion areas in the Service. Staff are also able to attend Fire and Rescue Authority meetings.</p> <p>Similarly all staff can request to attend a reverse mentoring session to share their experiences of working in the Service with SLT.</p>	Whilst this is available, and there have been a few articles in the weekly update, we need to do more to remind staff of the availability and the benefit of open seats and reverse mentoring. We would also like to encourage others at all levels of the Service to consider the approach to reverse mentoring in their areas.	AC/JL/JM /VS
O3 – Staff have the confidence to recognise and deal with inappropriate behaviour	19. Develop resources and training accessible for all staff to support with recognising inappropriate behaviours and having difficult conversations.	<p>The HR modules which were previously part of the Leadership Development Programme included training in this area. This will need to be picked up in our refreshed approach to Leadership Development.</p> <p>On the ground support continues to be available from HRBPs.</p> <p>The Bitesize Leaders sessions that took place in 2022 were focussed on creating psychological safety and dealing with inappropriate behaviours. The content was also used in the Manager Engagement sessions as a powerful reminder of the importance of being an 'upstander'.</p> <p>As part of the on-going EDI development work, dealing with inappropriate behaviours will be an area that the toolkits will focus on.</p>	We acknowledge that this is a key focus for the Service and are in the process of developing more resources for managers to utilise. This will include bystander/upstander awareness.	JL/CS

	R20. Encourage line managers to have regular conversations about performance and behaviour with their staff where required.	Our meetings and briefings procedure sets out the importance of team meetings and regular catch ups. Indeed the 1:1 review process was designed so that it could be used as a mechanism to support and help frame the discussions at monthly meetings and this is highlighted on HMTD. The 1:1 review process is supported with detailed guidance notes for line managers to utilise as well as further information and support on CONNECT.	The number of annual 1:1's are monitored. It may be of benefit that once in place, the Area Leadership Team or the Standards and Assurance Team undertake an audit to ensure regular 1:1's happen. The EDI toolkits, once developed will also ensure that there are supporting tools in place to help facilitate conversations about behaviours.	AC/JL
	21. Consider alternative routes for informally raising inappropriate behaviour and seeking advice and signposting to support.	The workplace concerns poster which is displayed at every workplace provides and details of the range of avenues of support. It also includes QR codes to the relevant procedures which provides further information and signposting. The workplace concerns poster is also available on CONNECT. Our whistleblowing arrangements also include an option for staff to go outside of the Service and contact South West Audit Partnership or the Monitoring Officer.	We continue to be committed to improving the ways in which our staff can come forward with concerns. We will be launching an independent and anonymous reporting line for staff to utilise. We are working on making our reporting procedures (whistleblowing, bullying and harassment and complaints) as well as staff suggestions available on a dedicated SharePoint site to enable ease of reporting which will seek to provide an informal route as well as support and guidance to the relevant formal route where necessary. This will also enable individuals to choose the relevant person who they would wish to raise their concern with. This is also planned to be launched in September.	JL/CS/SP
O4 – Staff have the confidence to report and raise concerns knowing that	22. Review the bullying and harassment procedure to ensure its written from a person-centred perspective.	The procedure includes suggestions of how individuals can approach any concerns they face and signposts the individuals to a number of support mechanisms (HRBP, Trade Union, Staff Network).	We will review the procedure and seek feedback from relevant stakeholders. We are also looking to introduce Speak Up Guardians who can provide support in this area.	JL/CS/CS h

these will be dealt with consistently, robustly and in a timely manner	23. Improve the transparency around outcomes for discipline & grievance and bullying and harassment cases and how these are communicated to those involved.	<p>Outcomes of investigations are not currently made public to staff. Individuals who have raised the concerns are advised when the case has been concluded and whether any managerial action has been taken.</p> <p>For several years we have published our grievance, discipline and bullying and harassment on CONNECT. This shows the number of cases, the reason, and the outcome. This information is anonymous.</p>	<p>This is an area of huge frustration to us, as there is a need to balance right to privacy (for individual) against right to know.</p> <p>The terms of reference of our Independent Review request that the report include recommendations as to whether outcomes can be publicised. Similarly, one of the recommendations of the HMICFRS report into the values and culture of fire and rescue services is for the NFCC to create a barred list of those who have been dismissed for gross misconduct.</p> <p>We continue to press for national progress in this area through the Home Office, HMICFRS and NFCC.</p>	CS/SP
	24. Review the support available to staff who report and are involved in bullying and harassment issues both during the case and after the outcome.	<p>The bullying and harassment procedure includes tools, such as the STOP method to provide an individual with ideas as to how to address issues. The procedures also signpost to areas of support, including counselling.</p> <p>Our staff networks have been asked for any suggestions of how the procedure can be further improved.</p> <p>All parties involved in bullying and harassment cases are advised of counselling support available. The individual's line manager and HRBP can also be points of contact along with the individual's trade union.</p>	<p>The terms of reference of our Independent Review request that the report include recommendations as to how our procedures could be improved. In this way all relevant procedures will be quality checked by the Independent Review team and any recommendations set in place.</p> <p>We will review the procedure to ensure individuals know how to confidentially access support.</p> <p>We will also ensure that once such cases are concluded the entire process is evaluated and individuals asked for feedback to support continuous improvement.</p>	CS/SP
	25. Review training and support in place for managers to improve confidence in dealing with bullying and harassment issues.	<p>The HR modules which were part of the Leadership Development Programme included training in this area. On the ground support continues to be available from HRBPs. A number of Bitesize Leaders sessions have focused on this. Our 'not on my watch' sessions have also provided an opportunity for open and honest conversations to take place regarding this.</p>	<p>We want our managers to feel confident in dealing with these issues. We will review the leadership modules to ensure they provide appropriate support.</p> <p>As part of our cultural development, we will develop other leadership support to further support managers to deal with bullying and harassment issues. This will include input on upstander/bystander awareness.</p>	CS/SP

	<p>26. Consider ways of reducing temporary promotions especially within teams to allow effective performance management.</p>	<p>Establishment levels are monitored but there will always be situations where temporary gaps due to sickness/vacancies will need to be covered. We also support several staff secondments to aid an individual's personal and professional development. Whilst we are keen to encourage these opportunities, there is an impact.</p>	<p>We know this is a frustration for staff and are aware of the knock-on effect of temporary promotions. However, we know we will always need to have temporary promotions in an operational service.</p> <p>What we need to ensure is that those in temporary roles are equipped and supported to effectively manage performance.</p>	<p>AC/JL</p>
	<p>27. Review and improve understanding of the Probation and Managing Performance procedures and how they support and complement one another so that managers are confidently and competently able to address poor performance.</p>	<p>The probation procedure enables performance to be managed at the outset of employment. The HRBP is available to provide support in this process.</p> <p>The managing performance procedure provides an ability to manage minor performance issues using a HR43. Completion of HR43s issued locally are not monitored and therefore require monitoring by local management. The HR modules which were part of the Leadership Development Programme included training in this area. On the ground support is also available from HRBPs</p>	<p>We will review the procedures to ensure they provide appropriate support.</p> <p>We will review the Leadership Development modules to ensure they also provide appropriate support. As part of our cultural development, we will look at what other leadership initiatives could be provided to further support Managers to deal with performance matters.</p> <p>The improved visibility and accessibility of managers following the structural changes will also support this.</p>	<p>CS/SP</p>

	<p>28. Review the approach to investigations and the resources available to ensure these are carried out consistently with credibility in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Those undertaking disciplinary investigations have received appropriate training and a competency framework is in place to ensure continuous professional development.</p> <p>There have been capacity issues and the Community Safety restructure is seeking to provide focussed capacity to enable investigations to be a priority. For complex cases we often use professionally qualified external investigators.</p> <p>We are also looking at strengthening the support provided to those managing discipline and grievance matters.</p>	<p>We know that there are frustrations with the length of time investigations take and the concerns about consistency and we want to invest in this area, in terms of capacity and support. The restructure of community safety will support this through the introduction of a small team to support investigations once trained. We will continue to use corporate staff for investigations and external investigators. We will also consider using former staff to support investigations to improve capacity.</p> <p>We will also look at how we can address capacity issues for those managing discipline and bullying and harassment cases.</p>	CS/SP
	<p>29. Ensure that effective evaluation is recorded and implemented to identify lessons learned from Discipline & Grievance and Bullying & Harassment cases.</p>	<p>A case review is held after every discipline to identify lessons learnt. In addition to this, a six-monthly case conference is held whereby those involved in investigations and panel hearings have an opportunity to feed in their learning. Others are also invited to attend to ensure broader organisational learning.</p> <p>A competence framework is in place that ensures those involved in discipline and grievance matters maintain competence levels.</p>	<p>Our organisation needs to learn from these cases and a business case to identify further resources to better support the team is underway. This will ensure that lessons learnt from processes are swiftly implemented</p>	CS/SP

O5 – The Service attracts and retains staff in line with the Code of Ethics	30. Review recruitment and selection process to consider how it can include morals, values, and emotional intelligence.	The recruitment information on our website includes a self-assessment against our Code of Ethics. Interview questions include questions with regards to equality matters.	<p>We will ensure that behaviours, values, and 'soft' skills such as emotional intelligence continue to be assessed. We will also consider using how personality profiling tools can be used for key roles as part of the recruitment session.</p> <p>Those applying for operational roles are made aware that they will be always assessed throughout the various selection stages.</p> <p>The Service undertakes DBS checks and can undertake enhanced DBS checks for specific roles. Standard checks will enable the Service to be assured that those joining the Service possess the appropriate ethical principles.</p> <p>We will also ensure that any issues identified during probation are robustly managed.</p>	CS/JD
	31. Review opportunities for corporate staff promotion and career grade development.	<p>Heads of Department/Area Managers complete department successions plans to assist them in looking at their team structures to ensure they have the resources required to carry out their current and future work. In doing this managers can consider the approach they feel supports their needs. This has resulted in the introduction of career grades (e.g., in ICT and Estates).</p> <p>A department risk regarding corporate progression has driven a need to review the corporate pay structure. A project is underway through South West Councils. Coupled with this is a need to ensure that corporate staff are aware of the various development provisions in place.</p> <p>We have also recently advertised some roles that could be 'corporate' or 'operational' as a means of providing wider opportunities and in support of talent management.</p>	<p>A high number of corporate staff have benefitted from promotions, secondments and moves across the organisation. In addition to this several corporate staff are undertaking apprenticeships to support their professional development.</p> <p>We will continue to look for opportunities where roles could be undertaken by either 'corporate' or 'operational' staff, subject to operational rota needs.</p> <p>We will seek to implement the outcomes of the corporate pay structure review when this is complete.</p>	CS/MB/J D/SP

	32. Review maternity procedure and benchmark against other services.	To support our female staff, we reviewed the maternity procedure in 2020. Following this the Service introduced a 13 week return to work programme for operational staff. This provided time for them to improve fitness levels as well as complete other refamiliarisation matters. Maternity pay is better than NJC arrangements.	Whilst our arrangements have been reviewed and are favourable in comparison to NJC and some other organisations, this is still a frequently raised issue. We will revisit maternity pay as we do appreciate that this is a positive recruitment and retention tool and an attractive benefit at recruitment.	CS/SP
	33. Consider how to develop and strengthen support and relationships for new starters.	New starters should be supported by their line manager through the induction process. Many new starters are also 'buddied' up with a colleague so that they are supported through their first few months of employment.	A new starters group was set up to support staff who joined the organisation during COVID, and we think it would be helpful to reinvigorated this to provide support to new staff, and, in particular, for those roles still working remotely.	JL/AC/JM /VS
	34. Improve the timeliness of Exit interviews to ensure data is analysed and outcomes acted upon.	As soon as an individual submits their resignation documentation an exit interview should be arranged by their line manager. Exit interview data is analysed for trends and when trends are identified they are discussed at workforce planning. By way of example several On-Call staff were leaving with less than two years' service. This was considered by the On-Call working group and changes to the On-Call recruitment process were made. Similarly, the Firefighter Development Programmes are being reviewed to ensure staff do not feel overwhelmed whilst in development.	Whilst the automation of this process formed part of the HRMiS project, changes have already taken place so that the Exit Interview process can be undertaken promptly as we see this as a key area to improve.	CS

O6 – Staff have an effective work life balance	35. Review workloads and capacity of middle managers with a focus on Station Managers.	<p>A review of SM workloads has been undertaken by Area Manager Darren Langdown.</p> <p>From a more service wide level perspective work life balance is an area that should be raised and discussed in regular 1:1 reviews between line managers and their teams.</p>	<p>We know that many of our staff go above and beyond the expectations of their role and we are aware of some of the pinch points which is detrimental to individuals' wellbeing. A key driver for the Community Safety restructure was to review SM workloads, so those managing stations could focus on supporting teams and maintaining availability, whilst a separate team focuses on other functions.</p> <p>We will monitor workload management for all staff through regular staff engagement surveys.</p>	AC/DL
	36. Review and evaluate the uptake and effectiveness of mental health provisions to all staff to identify any trends and improve practice (including domestic violence & abuse and those needing safeguarding).	<p>It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of such mechanisms as these supporting processes are confidential and are often utilised through self-referral.</p> <p>We do however receive high level statistics which assist with trend analysis.</p>	<p>We will revisit the Management Information report provided by our counselling providers to ensure trend analysis, whilst maintaining confidentiality, identifies any improvements to our offering.</p> <p>We need to improve data/trend reporting from peer supporters. Alongside this we will ensure we continue to promote these services to ensure staff awareness and are confident that staff understand how such services can be accessed.</p> <p>We are also looking at how our mental health provision can be enhanced.</p>	CS/VR
	37. Review flexible and smarter working arrangements to ensure that staff have regular contact, feel supported and have manageable workloads.	<p>Surveys conducted in 2020 and 2021 demonstrate the positive feeling of staff who can maintain their work life balance with more flexible working arrangements.</p> <p>Managers have been given training on supporting remote teams and guidance on expectations of face-to-face contact.</p> <p>The Strategic Leadership Team made a commitment in January 2023 to review how staff are feeling about flexible working arrangements to ensure differing needs are acknowledged and addressed.</p>	<p>This will form part of the assurance audit identified above, to ensure that staff are being appropriately supported.</p>	VS/CS

	38. Provide clarity for On-Call staff undertaking administrative tasks with regards to pay and expectations.	A review of On-Call pay has been undertaken by Area Manager Darren Langdown so that clarity and support is provided to staff.	The 'Area Leadership Team' created by the restructure will monitor arrangements and ensure there is clarity on expectations.	AC/DL
	39. Ensure all teams consider the impact of work on On-Call staff and tailor the approach where required.	The impact assessment process includes an on-call assessment. When new ways of working are being developed this is done in consultation with representative bodies. Processes have been amended for on-call staff (e.g., promotion process) so their needs are accommodated.	<p>We are mindful that it is increasingly difficult for our On-Call staff to keep on top of changes that impact them, and we want to make sure that any new ways of working consider these challenges.</p> <p>In addition to the On-Call impact assessment we will ensure that any significant or impactful organisational change affecting the on call is discussed by the on-call steering group so that stakeholder views are fully considered.</p> <p>Now that Gartan is embedded, we will be commencing a project to ensure that our training arrangements are fully aligned to the risks that are faced. This may result in a review of the number of competencies On-Call staff must maintain alongside the workload associated with this.</p>	AC/DL
	40. Consider the consistency of the Limited Duties procedure across staff groups.	The limited duties procedure is consistent across all staff groups whereby if a full return to work is not achievable within a three-month time frame, individuals are not permitted to commence limited duties. There is an ability for the individual/line manager to request an exception to this process where there is a clear rationale and the limited duties undertaken are effective.	We will evaluate the procedure and numbers to identify where improvements can be made but we do still want to ensure there is a case-by-case exception to the process, to support differences in roles and individual circumstances.	CS/VR