

# People Strategy

# 2020-2022

Enabling all our staff to make a difference every day



HEREFORD & WORCESTER  
**HWFR**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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## 2 Foreword

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The People Strategy is a statement of our intent to support and develop every member of our workforce throughout their employment with HWFRS. It is a key pillar of the Saving More Lives vision, which is about improving the lives of everyone in the community, building on our success and securing our future as a Service that makes even more of difference every day.

We are fully committed to making HWFRS a great place to work. We want to help our workforce to become more resilient and diverse, develop their skills and maximise their wellbeing at work. We also recognise that the way we lead, manage and behave is fundamental to how people view the Service, so we want to reiterate our values throughout this strategy. I see this as an essential prerequisite to demonstrating our commitment to fairness, equality, respect and continuous improvement.

I am keen to ensure that actions arising from this strategy are well communicated across the Service and I will be encouraging staff feedback and review throughout. I will also keep everyone abreast of developments from time to time through the Service Bulletin.



**Nathan Travis**

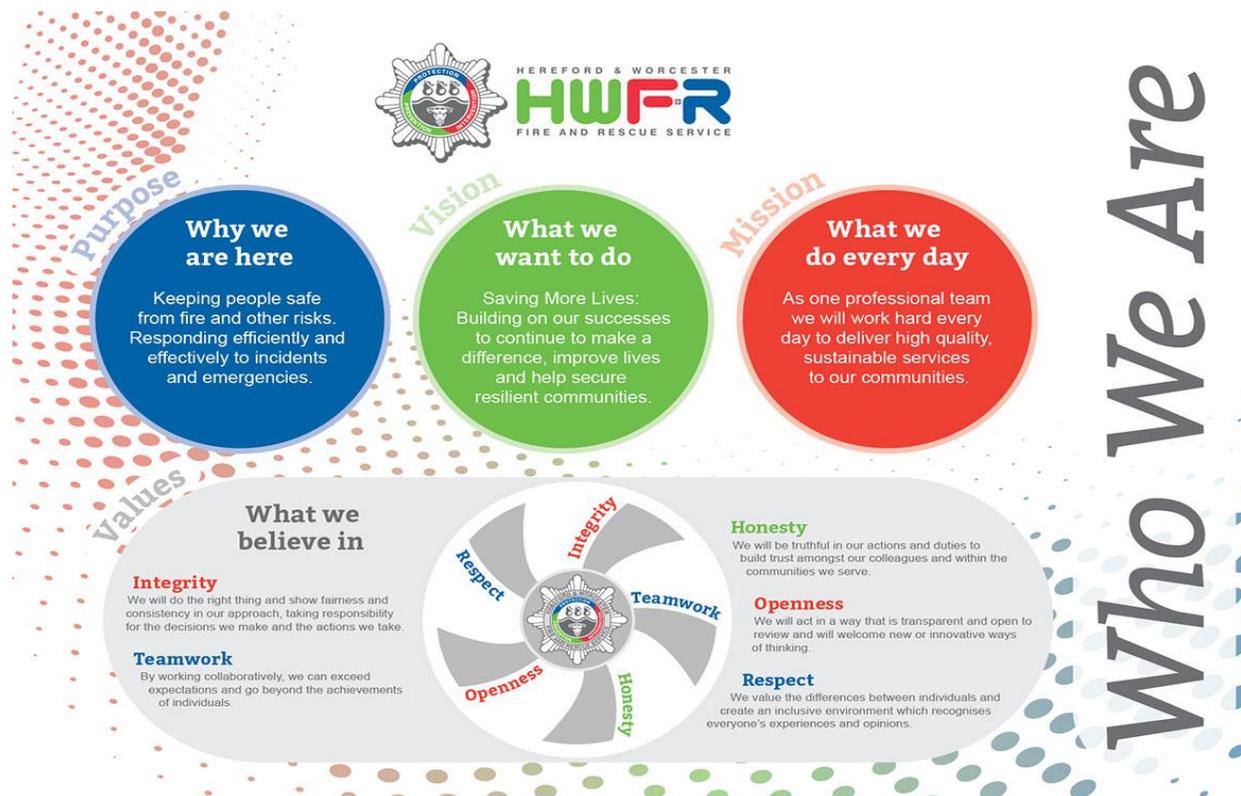
Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive

# 3 Introduction

## 3.1 PURPOSE

This strategy sets out how we will support and value our workforce as we continue on our transformational journey beyond 2020, looking forward to 2022. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) recognises that our workforce is our most valuable asset and is crucial to achieving our Core Purpose of **keeping people safe from fire and other risks** and our overall vision: **Saving More Lives** and making a difference every day.

The strategy is guided by our Service **values** set out in our **Ethical Framework and Code of Conduct** and reflects our aims of maintaining the highest standards of fairness and respect across our workforce, as represented in the following diagram.



# 3 Introduction

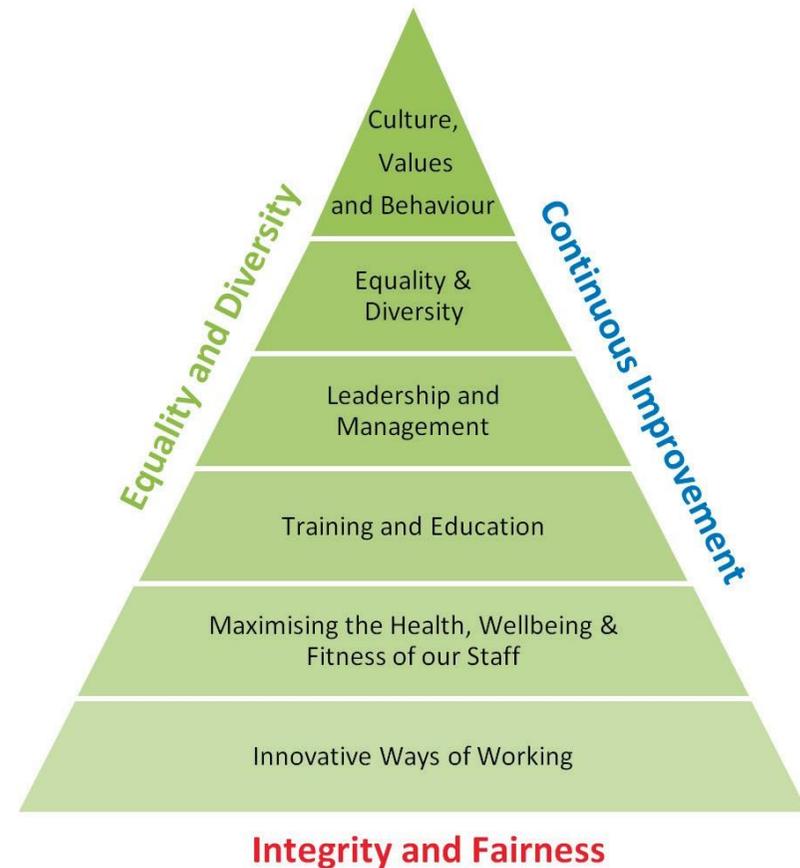
## 3.2 STRATEGIC AIM

HWFRS recognises the role of the fire and rescue service is changing, having achieved substantial reductions in the number and impact of fires through our high quality firefighting and prevention services. We also recognise our increasing involvement in supporting partners in their health and wellbeing activities. We want to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills and training to carry out the right job, at the right time. We also want to have a workforce that represents our diverse communities.

Our strategic aim is to ensure we develop and maintain a well-skilled, diverse workforce able to deliver sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue, prevention and support services, both as a Service and with our partners in the community. Ultimately, we want to enable our workforce to make even more of a difference every day and save even more lives.

## 3.3 APPROACH

Our approach is guided by three overarching aims: a commitment to equality and diversity, a drive for continuous improvement, and an ethos of integrity and fairness. To support this, we will use a set of clear principles and targets as a framework and reference point for the continuous development of our people across the Service and by which we will be able to measure our progress. The key components of the People Strategy are set out in the diagram opposite.



## 4 Principles

The approach HWFRS takes in the development of its workforce will be governed by a set of guiding principles. These principles will permeate all aspects of decision making, helping to add focus and direction to our strategic aim of developing and

maintaining a well-skilled, diverse workforce who are able to deliver sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue, prevention and support services.

1	<b>Alignment to business strategy</b>	The strategy will be aligned with HWFRS's overarching business strategies, and will demonstrate the Service's commitment to all of our staff.
2	<b>Focused on our people</b>	Our policies, procedures and instructions will be people-focused and will provide easy to access and easy to use services based on individual needs and business requirements.
3	<b>Safety of our staff</b>	Safety will continue to be at the heart of all that we do.
4	<b>Ways of working</b>	We will deliver flexible solutions that are correctly positioned to support our increasingly mobile workforce, whilst being agile enough to adapt to future changes in business requirements and working practices.
5	<b>Learning organisation</b>	We will focus on organisational learning that seeks to embed lessons learnt and use that learning to appropriately challenge and improve underlying principles or processes.
6	<b>Best practice</b>	We will take advantage of identified best practice wherever practical and continually seek to provide the best service for our workforce.
7	<b>Equality and diversity</b>	We will actively promote equality across our workforce and through our services in the community, and will increase the diversity of our workforce through positive action programmes to ensure we reflect the communities we serve.
8	<b>Health, wellbeing &amp; fitness</b>	We will undertake specific actions to support the health, wellbeing and fitness of our staff.
9	<b>Working with accredited representatives</b>	Good working relationships with local representatives of our recognised unions are essential. We will seek to build good communication and trust in order to seek early resolution on any issues and work together to develop our organisation.
10	<b>Collaboration</b>	We will actively support working and sharing information with our partners, and will develop our relationships with partner organisations to promote services that will both add value to HWFRS and provide cost efficiencies.
11	<b>Management information</b>	We will use clean, accurate data and information to inform and support decision making, business planning and other management functions.
12	<b>Sustainability</b>	The strategy will be managed and reviewed to ensure it continues to deliver a cost-effective and sustainable service.

# 4 Our Commitments

Our People Strategy creates a framework for further development; it is a living document that will change and adapt as we move forward in delivering on our commitments. Six key commitments have been identified to help ensure the strategy delivers its aim of developing and maintaining a well-skilled, diverse workforce able to deliver sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue, prevention and support services.

Each commitment has a summary statement of intent followed by a number of targets. These targets will become key priorities and actions in our Strategic Implementation Programme for the People Strategy.

The six commitments are shown in the following diagram.



# 5.1 Commitment 1

## CULTURE, VALUES & BEHAVIOUR

HWFRS is committed to promoting a culture that values and encourages the contribution of everyone in the organisation. This is supported by a determination to be recognised as an employer of choice, as an organisation that welcomes diversity and challenge, and with a working environment that encourages innovation and does not tolerate inappropriate behaviour.

We recognise that transforming how we work is crucial to ensuring we have an adaptable and flexible Service that can respond to changes in circumstances, including the resources available and the skills needed. To support this, our culture, values and behaviours will all be guided by the overall aim of ensuring we have the right people, with the right skills and training to carry out the right job, at the right time so that our workforce can make even more of a difference every day and save even more lives.

Our values guide all members of staff in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. They help us to maintain high standards in acting fairly, in ensuring dignity and respect in the workplace and when working in communities, in recognising individual contribution and in working towards eliminating discrimination.

We know the best organisations are those that work together, encourage contributions and constructive challenges from everyone in the organisation, share responsibility for successes and learn together from mistakes. The People Strategy will build on this by developing an open and transparent learning culture that promotes fairness and trust, appreciating that different people bring different perspectives, ideas and knowledge, and which together adds a valuable strength and resilience to the organisation.

### We will:

- Ensure our policies and practices are open and transparent
- Develop a 'learning culture' that promotes fairness and trust
- Recognise difference and diversity as a strength to be developed
- Encourage feedback, challenge, innovation and problem solving across all levels of the organisation
- Encourage individuality and challenge inappropriate behaviour



### Targets

- To implement practical ways of capturing and acting on feedback and good ideas from all members of staff
- Organisational Development and Challenge Group to act as a critical friend for organisational policies and procedure
- Recruitment campaigns to actively promote HWFRS as an employer of choice that offers flexibility and fair conditions of service
- To identify actions to remove perceived barriers to entry and ensure our workforce represents the diversity of our communities

## 5.2 Commitment 2

### EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

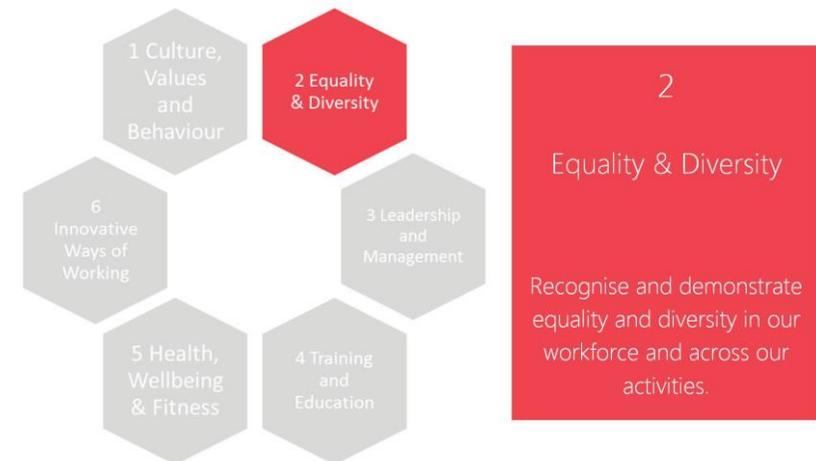
The aim of developing an open and transparent learning culture that promotes fairness and trust is supported by our commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in our workforce and in our services to the community. In terms of leadership and organisational development, this means encouraging a culture that supports equal treatment, equal opportunity, inclusion and transparency at all levels. It also means ensuring we have a workforce that represents the diversity of the community. Our service delivery and community risk activities will also aim to ensure that prevention, protection and response services target the most vulnerable people and the greatest risks.

To ensure all members of our workforce are treated fairly and respectfully, we will promote a culture that recognises the rights of individuals at work to be supported regardless of their particular traits including their gender, sexuality, mental health state and beliefs. This includes developing a working environment where staff can be confident in declaring disability or sexuality without the fear of discrimination or prejudice. Instances of unfairness, bullying and other discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated and will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Help and support for those experiencing, or at risk of, prejudice and discrimination will be given high priority.

Training provision will continue to emphasise the importance of demonstrating equality and diversity in all our activities, and will include training that helps members of staff in identifying and understanding the diversity of needs and differences within our communities. Equality and diversity data collection and monitoring will help demonstrate the Service's direction of travel towards a more diverse and representative workforce at all levels.

#### We will:

- Ensure our staff are treated fairly and promote inclusion
- Promote HWFRS as an employer of choice offering a rewarding professional career in a supportive working environment
- Not tolerate bullying or other unfairness in the workplace and will support staff that report bullying and investigate cases quickly and fairly
- Train our staff so they understand the needs and differences of our communities



#### Targets

- To embed our values throughout the Service
- To establish Equality & Diversity and Positive Action plans undertaking positive action programmes to improve our workforce diversity
- To embed people-centred impact assessments to help drive improvements in services
- Regular data monitoring, collection and analysis
- Organisational Development and Challenge Group to act as a critical friend for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion

## 5.3 Commitment 3

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

HWFRS recognises that the changing nature and scope of the modern fire and rescue service requires transformational leadership with a flexible blend of skills and experience to drive continuous improvement in standards and performance. It needs outstanding leaders who have the ability to manage and motivate effectively in uncertain times and unpredictable situations. For example, new risks and responsibilities, a growing emphasis on accountability and good governance, and more diverse communities with increasing expectations all present new and varied challenges. Managing this continually changing environment will require leaders who can demonstrate an ethical, honest and compassionate approach that can engender and maintain staff and public support and trust at all times.

To ensure the Service attracts and develops the best people who can maximise their contribution and potential now and in the future, this strategy will support all aspects of leadership and management development from recruitment, through continuous improvement to succession planning. Embedding this approach at all levels in the organisation will also result in a working culture where people feel motivated, are equipped to perform highly, and have shared aspirations for the Service.

The development of outstanding leadership skills, knowledge and capacity across all levels, including current and potential future leaders, will be supported by development that helps to unlock their potential. This will include areas such as coaching, mentoring, succession planning, staff development programmes, e-learning / blended learning, and joint training with others.

#### We will:

- Encourage and promote effective leadership and management at all levels
- Attract and develop the best people through recruitment, secondment, fast-tracking and continuous development programmes
- Develop leaders who lead by example and can take responsibility and be held accountable for continuous improvement in service delivery



#### Targets

- To develop policies and standards aligned with national fire and rescue leadership strategy
- To provide ongoing professional development opportunities to enhance managerial and leadership capabilities
- To embed a Leadership and Development Framework that supports the whole workforce
- To establish succession planning

## 5.3 Commitment 3

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### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

#### We will (continued):

- Develop visible and accessible leaders who can promote compassion and accountability, engender support and trust, and focus on improved community outcomes
- Ensure leaders and managers communicate effectively across the Service and with partners and local communities
- Ensure leaders and managers are able to demonstrate resilience in responding to high pressure and complex situations

## 5.4 Commitment 4

### TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The training and education of our staff will be fundamental in meeting the future challenges of the fire and rescue sector. This is why we are committed to providing high quality learning outcomes for all of our staff, in both operational and support departments. For our operational staff, this will mean training to meet the risks that are reasonably foreseeable for their roles and ensuring this training uses national best practice and standards. For our support staff, this will be providing training in the skills we need now and in the future, particularly to meet the challenge of transformational change in the fire and rescue sector.

We know that to facilitate training effectively, there cannot be a single method of delivery. We will provide training and education for our staff in multiple formats that allow the best experience and outcome for the individual or team. We understand that removing staff from the workplace is not always the best method of providing training, so we will aim to use multiple tools to provide local training including peripatetic instructors and e-learning packages. This way, when we do need to take staff out of their workplace for centralised training, it will be worthwhile and provide the maximum benefit.

Our operational training will be focussed on assuring and improving the safety of our firefighting staff. We will not stop seeking to learn from local and national incidents to improve the skills which keep our staff as safe as possible while they respond to the needs of our communities. By seeking to providing class leading operational training, we will develop our staff to excel in all areas of operations so they can provide the best possible service when they respond.

#### We will:

- Provide training that supports organisational transformation
- Facilitate effective learning across the organisation
- Deliver training that contributes to firefighter safety
- Provide high quality skills and training for our support staff
- Develop excellence in operations



#### Targets

- To provide a Training Delivery Framework that supports the whole workforce
- To embed the National Operational Guidance in our training
- To utilise e-learning and other innovations to ensure removing staff from the workplace temporarily is for high quality training

## 5.5 Commitment 5

### MAXIMISING THE HEALTH, WELLBEING & FITNESS OF OUR STAFF

HWFRS recognises that people are its most valuable asset, and is committed to not only supporting their professional development but also their physical and mental health and wellbeing. This strategy will support the creation of health, wellbeing and fitness programmes to support our workforce. It will include ensuring firefighter safety is maintained through continually learning from operational incidents to help reduce accidents and physical injury and reported stress, including work-related post-traumatic stress disorder. Fitness programmes will promote healthy lifestyles and help to reduce the incidence of musculo-skeletal and cardiac-related issues.

We will continue to provide managers with training on how to identify and reduce stress in the workplace, including training to support people through change. We will also maintain our full commitment to encouraging more open conversation about mental health issues, promoting support.

We also recognise that all members of the workforce have lives outside the Service and we are committed to ensuring there is a fair work/life balance. This is important to overall health and wellbeing for the whole workforce and the Service will continue to look at ways of promoting this; for example by supporting family friendly processes, flexible work patterns and education on healthy lifestyle choices.

#### We will:

- Promote physical and mental health and wellbeing for all staff
- Ensure everyone understands their role in maintaining a healthy and safe working environment to help protect themselves, their colleagues and the public we serve
- Upskill all staff in recognising early signs of stress and post trauma as well as initiating early and appropriate interventions (e.g. access to the Critical Incident Support Team, Mediation and Listening Ear and the Time to Change Programme)
- Encourage healthy lifestyles and increase access to fitness programmes to help support mental and physical wellbeing



#### Targets

- To reduce the number of accidents and injuries in the workplace, and learn from all incidents
- To reduce the number of days lost through sickness absence and support effective return to work
- To conduct sickness and wellbeing surveys to help identify causes and trends
- Lower rates of staff turnover

## 5.6 Commitment 6

### INNOVATIVE WAYS OF WORKING

HWFRS recognises that providing a high quality fire and rescue service in the current time of changing needs and demands, and in the light of future uncertainties, requires an ability to adapt to change. It requires ways of working that are more responsive, flexible and adaptable to the changing needs and demands, and a workforce with the skills, capabilities and commitment to deliver our high quality services. How we deliver our services, treat our employees and interact with our partners and communities has a strong bearing on our good reputation and how we are perceived as an employer.

We want to be seen as an employer of choice. The People Strategy will support this by seeking to attract the best people through continuous improvement in recruitment and selection. It will seek to reward and recognise high performance and will support people to achieve their potential. It will create more flexible and adaptive working practices to make it more family friendly and to help attract job applications from those currently under-represented in our workforce. We will also ensure transparency and clarity in areas such as pay and conditions of service at all levels of the organisation.

#### We will:

- Attract, recruit and retain committed people who are proud to work in an organisation that values its people
- Be passionate about celebrating high performance and maintaining our great reputation
- Ensure our workforce has the skills and abilities to respond effectively to changing needs and demands
- Set clear objectives and accountabilities to help focus on priorities
- Work with representative bodies to ensure any changes are introduced effectively
- Continue to learn from our experiences



#### Targets

- To develop a HR Delivery Plan to support the People Strategy
- Develop and publish transparent policies and procedures accessible to all
- Monitor data and survey results to inform future Service activities
- Respond to ideas and suggestions from critical friend groups in developing policies, procedures and working practices

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters  
Hindlip Park  
Worcester  
WR3 8SP  
0345 122 4454

[info@hwfire.org.uk](mailto:info@hwfire.org.uk)

[www.hwfire.org.uk](http://www.hwfire.org.uk)



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