

People Strategy

2010 - 2013

***A Strategy for People Management and Development in the North
Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service***

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Introduction

This People Strategy sets out our approach to ensure that the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (NYFRS) has the right number of skilled people in the right place and at the right time to ensure delivery of first class customer focused services and drive down risk to life and property within our communities. It has been developed to set out our approach to continuous improvement in respect of the resourcing, leadership, development, performance, and reward of our people in accordance with the needs of the Service and its communities across North Yorkshire and the City of York.

One of our key purposes is to help build a safer society and sustainable community by working in partnership with others to promote community well being, whilst reducing death and injury, damage to property and damage to the environment from fire and other emergencies. The ability to attract and retain high quality employees is a critical success factor for us. The Service's People Strategy is intended to be flexible in order to addresses how we can most effectively respond to our current and future needs.

Our strong commitment to health and safety management is underpinned by best practice guidance such as that produced by the Health & Safety Executive and via legislative requirements. We are continuously seeking ways of improving the health and safety of our staff and communities and this should be regarded as a 'golden thread' which operates across the Service from the training and development provided, to the delivery of services.

This Strategy encompasses the following key objectives which are further expanded in this document:

- ❖ **Resourcing the Service**
- ❖ **Developing Leadership skills**
- ❖ **Developing Workforce Skills**
- ❖ **Reward and Recognition**
- ❖ **Conduct and Values**

These strategic objectives support the Service with the achievement of its priorities by ensuring that we:-

- ❖ Meet current and future Service needs by recruiting the right number of people with the right skills, knowledge and attitude at the right time, into the right job so that services are delivered efficiently and cost effectively;
- ❖ Have specific regard to staff safety and the risk critical nature of emergency response, including the means by which the Service is prepared in carrying out its role in a culture of 'risk awareness' rather than 'risk aversion'
- ❖ Maintain a competent, motivated, flexible and well-led workforce that is representative of the communities it serves and which promotes equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure that people are treated according to their needs;
- ❖ Enable the continuous improvement of the Service's leadership skills and capacity at all levels of the organisation, recognising the importance of North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service as a community leader and achieving a culture of continuous improvement in organisational, team and individuals performance;

- ❖ Recognise the contribution of all our employees by facilitating the development and deployment of employees to reach their full potential in order to improve services;
- ❖ Achieve effective outcomes from our investment in people, including the efficient and effective targeting, deployment and management of human resources and expertise in driving up performance, delivering value-for-money services and meeting community expectations;
- ❖ Support and maintain our culture as an outward facing community focussed Service, continue to develop collaborative methods of working and effective partnerships and promote the Fire & Rescue Service as an employer and partner of choice;

The delivery of our people Strategy is also about positioning the Service as an Employer of Choice and ensuring that we can continue to deliver high quality public services, at low cost, whilst creating an organisational culture of empowerment, continuous improvement and support.

If we are to continue to support improvement in the Fire & Rescue Service, deliver our objectives and reflect the needs of our communities, we need to identify and deliver people management outcomes to enable delivery of Service's vision.

The NYFRA recognises that this People Strategy must be delivered with the resources which are realistically foreseeable and available. Change needs to improve the efficiency and productivity of the service and effective reward strategy needs to be both affordable and achievable, matched by improvements in service delivery and commitment by all our people to operate within our Service Values, behaviours and codes of conduct.

Accordingly, this People Strategy takes a broad perspective and is designed to enable this Service to maximise the capacity and performance of our workforce in supporting the delivery of the Service's priorities and objectives.

The Strategy is designed to encompass all employees within the NYFRA. It aims to embed the FRS Core Values and our commitment to diversity and equality in our Service. It is intended to be realistic; spanning a three year period, subject to review annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The People Strategy encompasses the following strategic objectives to support the Service.

Resourcing the Service

The Service is dependant upon the quality, commitment and creativity of its people. Recruiting and retaining quality people with the right skills is crucial to achieving the Authorities objectives and ensuring the agility needed in delivering high quality and cost effective services to our communities. Our workforce planning processes (incorporating forecasting, recruitment, induction, development and retention) are therefore vital in achieving this objective. This includes periodic review and reshaping of aspects of the Service including duty systems to maintain this flexibility. It also includes optimising the use of new technology to improve flexible working outcomes that support service delivery, safe working practices and work-life balance.

Resourcing the Service is also about recognising the need to understand workforce trends for the future to enable practical resourcing decisions to take place as early as practicable, as well as ensuring that our recruitment approach is the most accessible, streamlined and effective that it can be, without compromising safe employment standards and the integrity of the Service.

Development and retention of our existing employees is an equally significant part of the strategic objective of Resourcing the Service. We are committed to ensuring a highly skilled and sustainable workforce.

Finally, recognising we operate within a context of partnership and finite resources, it is important to reflect that resourcing the Service is equally about delivering services in partnership where appropriate, and aligning shared capacity against priorities.

In order to support this strategic objective we will:-

- ❖ Support an organisational culture that identifies, develops and retains talent and aligns this to modern approaches to resourcing the Service;
- ❖ Improve the ability of our people to be flexible, adaptable and agile in response to changing priorities and circumstances;
- ❖ Achieve equality, support diversity and ensure these principles are embedded within Service policy development, and employment practice;
- ❖ Continuously improve workforce planning techniques and tools to manage short, medium and longer term Service requirements at an early stage, ensuring that relevant information is used to accurately forecast staff numbers and recruitment needs;
- ❖ Utilise workforce remodelling to consider alternative means of delivering the same level of provision with a reduced employee base;
- ❖ Streamlining, modernising and e-enabling recruitment processes to create efficiencies and further improve turnaround times from advert to appointment;
- ❖ Further improving Induction, to ensure we get new people working effectively as quickly as possible;
- ❖ Developing talent pools, or candidate banks, for generic roles, such as Crew Manager etc and manage this effectively to meet service needs;

- ❖ Reviewing mechanisms for retention of employees, including reward approaches; aligning organisational development, workforce skills development and resourcing approaches to ensure high staff retention;
- ❖ Ensure the Fire & Rescue Service values and behaviours as well as skills, knowledge and ability are the means by which candidates are assessed and selected;
- ❖ Ensure best practice employment standards throughout recruitment and selection including the use of equality impact assessments across working practices and policy development, and using positive action where necessary to support access to recruitment;
- ❖ Support collaborative procedures for recruitment and progression arrangements to ensure effectiveness and evaluate the impact.

Developing Leadership & Command

As a community leader the Fire & Rescue Service has a dual responsibility for identifying, listening and responding to the needs of our communities as well as forging a vision for North Yorkshire and the City of York and moving forward. This role is underpinned by effective leadership provided not only by our managers and staff but also by elected members and a range of partnerships. Having such a key leadership role for the community, the Service is fully committed to ensuring that leadership skills and capacity are developed and enhanced at all levels of the organisation, from our Fire Authority Members to front-line

employees who often equally have a leadership role to perform as role models and advocates.

Many organisations have introduced competency frameworks to identify what skills or competencies are needed by leaders to achieve the organisation's objectives. The Fire & Rescue Services core values and behaviours provides an effective framework across all aspects of people management and, in particular, emphasises and supports the need to deliver and lead excellence.

The FRS behaviours framework will be further aligned and integrated into all leadership development activities by:-

- ❖ The continued application of succession planning and further embedding this into the organisation, so that the leadership talent is identified and supported at all levels;
- ❖ Effectively utilise best practice quality standards in people and health & safety leadership and management to drive continuous organisational improvement;
- ❖ A renewed approach to leadership development – to further develop the core leadership skills and behaviours we need to sustain ourselves as a successful organisation which focuses on the community, empowers employees and manages performance;
- ❖ Review of opportunities for shared leadership development with other public sector and partner organisations;
- ❖ Greater emphasis on the differences between leadership and management and recognising and selecting upon this basis for key leadership roles through effective use of assessment centres;
- ❖ Further improving management development in enhancing the technical skills required for people to effectively perform a managerial role, complemented by behavioural development to ensure alignment with the Services' leadership expectations;
- ❖ Maximising the range of learning opportunities internally as well as across sectors to foster improved leadership skills and abilities;
- ❖ Continuously improving performance coaching and mentoring opportunities to support the development and sustainability of effective leadership at all levels.
- ❖ Supporting elected members to ensure that they have the knowledge and understanding of fire and rescue issues to enable them to be effective in their role.

Developing Workforce Skills

The Service is committed to investing in training and development and prides itself on being a 'learning organisation' and an Investor in people. As part of this People Strategy we have recognised the importance of developing our workforce and succession planning. We have also stressed the importance of targeted investment in training and development and linking personal and workforce development plans to the Service's strategic objectives. This is imperative if we are to make the most of our finite resources and ensure that skills and

competence are aligned to safe working practices in order to reduce risk to our staff and communities, given the highly risk critical environment our staff must operate in when responding to emergencies.

In a context where we are required to continuously improve our performance we must invest to succeed. Working smarter requires us all to learn new skills – whether these are IT skills to operate effectively in a modern world or operational skills to address our key priorities as a Fire & Rescue Service. Through continuous development we are able to increase the capacity and capability of our workforce. An important characteristic of a learning organisation is its ability to reflect and learn from an experience and share this learning with others. We are committed to further improving in this respect by:-

- ❖ Ensuring that training and development addresses organisational, team and individual skills requirements. Recognising achievement of competence, for example through attainment of vocational or other appropriate qualifications or standards;
- ❖ Ensuring that risk critical and health and safety training and development needs are prioritised with an appropriate emphasis on incident command;
- ❖ Further improving the co-ordination and alignment of training and development to strategic objectives and improved organisational performance;
- ❖ Ensuring best practice is followed in the implementation of the NYFRA Workforce Development Strategy;
- ❖ Continuing to develop our approach to professional and accredited training and development, with an increased emphasis on the Fire & Rescue Service behavioural and competency based frameworks and increasing the access to material for people to learn new skills; (e-learning etc);
- ❖ Encourage individuals to continuously develop themselves and provide support and development for those whose performance falls below the required standards;
- ❖ Promoting and facilitating cross sector or organisation learning opportunities and work shadowing development opportunities to improve skills transfer and increase organisational efficiency and capacity;
- ❖ Further embedding equality and diversity related training and development into the organisation, including accessibility to learning opportunities;
- ❖ Maintaining a commitment to appropriate quality management systems.

Reward and Recognition

Reward is about more than simply pay and the Authorities approach to reward and recognition is an important part of our approach in achieving strategic objectives and performance outcomes.

Appropriately targeted reward and recognition helps reinforce a positive culture and high performance Service and in this respect, the following principles apply:-

- ❖ Reward strategies support the objectives, improvement priorities, values and delivery of our services;

- ❖ Reward outcomes and achievements are gained by applying behaviours consistent with the objectives and values of the Service;
- ❖ Ensure that reward and recognition processes are integrated with the other themes of the People Strategy, our HR and Service policies and best practice pay and reward strategies;
- ❖ Facilitate the achievement of equity, fairness and consistency across the Service in respect of reward;
- ❖ Encourage personal and career development through opportunities for continuous development and managed progression;
- ❖ Remain competitive so that the Service can attract and retain high calibre employees;
- ❖ Be linked to affordability;
- ❖ Ensure that reward and recognition considers total reward for employees for example, the psychological contract, work/life balance, personal development, health and wellbeing which supports a high performance, highly skilled and flexible workforce
- ❖ Continue to support the use of best practice frameworks for employment terms and conditions which assist local flexibility to meet local needs.

Conduct and Values

Our communities and we as a Service rightfully have high expectations of ourselves in terms of conduct and values. The Service's values are underpinned by a number of performance frameworks and policy. Our values based objectives mean that:

- ❖ We value service to the community by working with a wide range of groups to reduce risk, treating people fairly and with respect, striving for excellence and being answerable to those we serve;
- ❖ We value our employees by practicing and promoting fairness and respect; recognition of merit; honesty, integrity and trust; personal development; co-operative and inclusive working;

- ❖ We value diversity in the Service and in the community by treating people fairly and promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression; providing different solutions for different needs and expectations; challenging prejudice and discrimination;
- ❖ We value continuous improvement throughout the Service by accepting responsibility for our performance; being open minded and considering criticism thoughtfully; learning from our experiences and consulting others;
- ❖ We expect the highest standards of personal conduct which are set out in our staff code of conduct, behavioural and ethical codes, performance management framework and disciplinary processes;
- ❖ We will ensure that all staff receive a personal development and performance review at least annually to identify high performance; individuals development needs; performance improvement needs;

Governance, Evaluation and Review of the People Strategy

The objectives contained within the people Strategy will be embedded within action plans which have targets and clear resource implications identified and will be delivered in accordance with the Service's business management framework.

This strategy is intended to be a dynamic 'living' document and will develop in accordance with the Services needs.

Measures of success, throughout the lifetime of the People Strategy, will include:-

- ❖ Maintenance of appropriate governance arrangements to ensure delivery of the Strategy;
- ❖ Recognition of effective people management and development approaches by external review as appropriate;
- ❖ Retention of relevant external recognition awards;
- ❖ Sustaining and improving upon employee survey results;
- ❖ Low rates of staff turnover;

- ❖ Low rates of staff absence;
- ❖ Low rates of accidents and injuries