



**AVON**  
FIRE & RESCUE

[www.avonfire.gov.uk](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk)



## People Services Strategy

1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025

**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**
















Firefighter Control recruits meeting 'Buddy' the USAR dog at Hicks Gate Fire Station



# Contents

	<b>Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>A new operating model</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Context</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Insight</b>	<b>11</b>
	<b>Collaborative working</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Great people</b>	<b>14</b>
	<b>Innovation</b>	<b>16</b>
	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>20</b>

Avon Fire & Rescue Service is committed to ensuring our documents are accessible to all members of the community. If you have difficulty reading this document because English is not your first language and you would like a translation, please contact:

Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality Team, Avon Fire & Rescue Service,  
Police & Fire Headquarters, PO Box 37, Valley Road, Bristol, BS20 8JJ.

**Telephone:** 0117 926 2061

**Email:** [DICE@avonfire.gov.uk](mailto:DICE@avonfire.gov.uk)

# Foreword



**Richard Welch,**  
Assistant Chief Fire  
Officer, Avon Fire &  
Rescue Service

I am delighted to introduce our new People Services Strategy, which closely aligns with, and supports the delivery of our Service Plan 2024-28, also to be published in April 2024.

In recognition of the importance of uniting those teams responsible for our people, we have created a People Services Department. This enables us to provide insight and expertise across all our decision making, work better together and encourage innovation to support our people to be the best they can be.

With a new People Services Department and strategy in place we can commit to ensuring our approach is people-led, gathering insight from our staff, we will ensure we find the time and space to work together so that everybody can flourish, irrespective of their job title or grade.

Delivering this strategy together, will allow us to attract and retain diverse talent through ensuring we bring together the insight and expertise to deliver excellent training, safety and wellbeing support, collaborative working opportunities. The People Services performance dashboard will allow us to clearly measure success under each of the strategy's themes of insight, collaborative working, great people and innovation. Our commitment to people-led delivery will be underpinned by staff feedback from our touchpoint surveys as well as engaging staff when developing new projects.

This strategy will be delivered within a one-year timeframe, focused on the successful integration of the new operating model and its associated themes within People Services. By April 2025, we will be well positioned to formulate and execute a more comprehensive, long-term strategy.

I look forward to heading up the People Services Department and providing the training, tools and support so that our staff can flourish and be the best they can be.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Welch'.

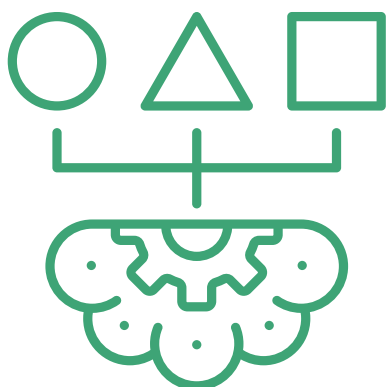
**ACFO Richard Welch**

2024



*Assistant Chief Fire Richard Welch*

# A new operating model



In-Service teams, dedicated to nurturing our employees' growth and well-being, united in August 2023 to introduce a new operational framework. This initiative brings together these crucial teams under the umbrella of 'People Services'. The People Services Department is comprised of:

- Learning & Development (L&D)
- Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality (DICE)
- Human Resources (HR)
- Health & Safety (H&S)

With additional support from:

- Resource Planning
- Corporate Communications
- Service Transformation

Our dedicated people are at the heart of every endeavour undertaken by our Service to ensure the safety of our community. They provide services enabling us to fulfil our mission of 'Making our communities safer', with a focus on 'identifying and reducing risks and improving the quality of life for our local people'. People Services are committed to equipping our staff with the necessary insights, and tools to successfully achieve their objectives in a dynamic environment.

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is not just a matter of principle. We recognise the vital importance of embracing diversity in all areas of work, including our recruitment and retention practices so we benefit from a broader range of perspectives, increased creativity, improved problem-solving capabilities, and a stronger connection with our diverse communities.

The strategy's four themes of insight, collaborative working, great people and innovation draw inspiration from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) strategy for 'Making communities safer' (Appendix B). The HMICFRS document outlines key themes titled:

- Being more proactive
- Driving sustainable improvement
- Focusing on outcomes
- Promoting smarter systems

In the coming year, People Services will be focusing on four interrelated and equally important themes: insight, collaborative working, great people and innovation.

By collecting and using robust data, we aim to ensure that we possess the necessary insights to drive tangible, impactful change, empowering our staff to proactively plan for the future.

### **Insight**

Promoting collaborative working so that People Services can share and analyse data and insight. This unified approach ensures that everyone operates from the same informational foundation Resulting in a clear and comprehensive road map for prioritising projects, policies and necessary process improvements.

### **Collaborative Working**

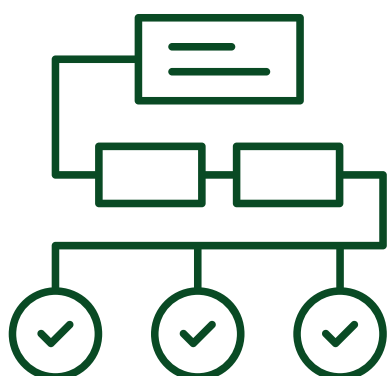
Equipping our exceptional staff with the tools and training they need so they feel empowered to dedicate themselves to achieve our desired outcomes.

### **Great People**

Exploring new technology or ways of working, systems or approaches through research to promote smarter ways to deliver our services.

### **Innovation**

# Context



The teams within People Services have been diligently working towards transformative change for some time. Over the past year, they have been crafting policies, strategies and programmes to empower our people, enabling them to provide the highest quality service to the public, including:

## **Be the best you can be**

Document launched in June 2023 promoting leadership at every level of the organisation with an expectation that everyone, no matter where they work, their rank or their role, has a responsibility for leading themselves in line with our

values, to help us be the best we can be.

The document sets out what is expected from every member of AF&RS staff and aims to bring together the guiding principles, frameworks and tools including our Values, Ethics and Behaviour Framework, the Core Code of Ethics and the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Leadership Framework to support us with this.

## **Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion, and Equality (DICE) strategy 2023 - 2026**

Launched in April 2023 outlining the Service's commitment to DICE and aligning our values with the NFCC's Core Code of Ethics.

Dignity and Respect policy and toolkit

Launched in March 2023, a policy and toolkit that provides staff and managers with support, guidance and procedures to deal with unwanted and/or inappropriate behaviour with the goal to promote a safe, harmonious and inclusive workplace.

## **Supporting Attendance policy and toolkit**

Launched in September 2023, a policy which promotes a positive attendance culture, helping our staff maintain good attendance and being clear about the conversations to take place and the process to be followed if attendance is a cause for concern. Includes information about sources of support as well as practical issues such as sick pay and annual leave.

## **Speak Up, confidential reporting mechanism**

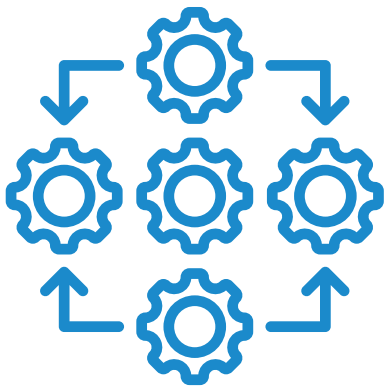
In August 2023, we launched a new independent and confidential reporting line, providing a safe space for staff to raise concerns if they consider that something is not right within the workplace.

Under the umbrella of the People Services Department, the mission is unwavering, with an acknowledgement that a continuous quest for improvement is imperative. The ever-evolving landscape of technology and new ways of working presents new opportunities, encouraging us to explore more efficient means of gathering and sharing insights, enhancing collaboration, developing tools and training for staff, and conducting innovative research.





# Methodology



This strategy will outline the following themes of insight, collaborative working, great people and innovation and our commitments set against these. We will use Objectives and Key Results (OKR's) to define and track objectives and measurable results. The objectives outline what can be achieved, the key results describe the desired outcome (each indicated in Appendix A - OKR Table). Whilst the objective is set with OKR's the Key Result (KR) can be amended to respond to our changing environment and perhaps amend the way in which we achieve our objectives. We have therefore only outlined a few KR coming in the first quarter

with an awareness that some may evolve over the course of the year.

Please note the OKR system encouraged us to choose a few well considered stretch objectives and so each team under the People Services Department has no more than four.



# Insight



Focusing our attention on our staff, we are committed to acquiring the insights necessary for meaningful change. Our approach prioritises placing 'people' at the core of our efforts, wherein we will compile a unified dashboard to share across the People Services Department. This initiative is aimed at fostering alignment and enhancing our understanding of the challenges and opportunities ahead.

This data will provide valuable insights for shaping the recruitment strategies, addressing behavioural and cultural concerns, refining training programmes, implementing wellbeing initiatives, and career development opportunities.

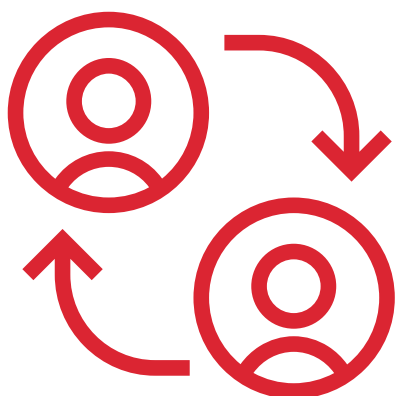
## **Commitments:**

To consistently gather, report and respond to the touchpoint survey twice a year, commencing from October 30, 2023, with the next survey scheduled for release in April 2024

To develop innovative metrics to improve insight to key HR data trends and themes, resulting in a quarterly report to be shared with stakeholders and leaders by September 2024, to facilitate conversations and drive tangible change.



# Collaborative working



Pillar two of this strategy is about how to foster better collaborative working. This requires a shared plan, an ability to overcome any perceived barriers to joined up training or joint working opportunities. This can be achieved by:

- Building trust across the People Services Department so that they can collectively build and share insight, measure success, support and challenge each other.
- Openly sharing data and insight so that everybody is working to the same information.
- Developing a planning cycle so all stakeholders have clarity on what to expect and opportunities to collaborate

over the coming year (full explanation of our goal setting framework can be found in the section relating to methodology).

- Creating opportunities for people across the Service to connect on a personal level, to build trust and joint working.
- Building collaborative opportunities with organisations that represent our diverse communities; enhancing crisis preparedness and response hinges on the paramount significance of collaboration.

## **Commitments:**

We will establish a quarterly planning cycle for Objectives and Key Results (OKR's) and insight dashboard by April 2024.

Working in collaboration with Risk Reduction we will establish three formal partnerships with community organisations with the core aim of gaining insight, increasing our engagement, reducing risk and increasing the diversity of job applications by December 2024.

We will establish a community engagement panel to increase opportunities to engage with our diverse communities by October 2024.

We will bring the Service together by hosting three service wide events, two in house conferences and we will host and co-ordinate the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) conference and awards in November 2024.



# Great people



Our people are at the heart of Avon Fire & Rescue Service and are central to achieving the organisation's goals as well as the aspirations set out in this strategy.

The world of work is transforming which has led to shifting expectations from the employers which differs across our staff groups of wholetime, on-call, control and corporate staff. This means that we need to respond by taking this opportunity to re-evaluate our approach to learning and development; providing up to date toolkits and training, coaching and mentoring, and career progression; developing our people and raising professional standards.

It's critical that our staff feel safe and feel able to raise concerns at the earliest stage though several reporting mechanisms already in place such as via line managers, HR or DICE team, through our Dignity and Respect Toolkit or via our external confidential reporting line.

Finally, we will continue to challenge ourselves on diversity and inclusion. Increasing diversity is crucial to our success because we cannot deliver effectively if we do not represent and/or actively gather insight/work collaboratively with the communities we serve.

## **Commitments:**

Educated by the HMICFRS recommendations and information obtained through the staff touchpoint survey, we will develop and deliver appropriate DICE training to support cultural change and embed the NFCC Core Code of Ethics to all staff at AF&RS by April 2025.

We will deliver operational training to the required professional and legal standards; all training will be aligned to National Operational Guidance (NATOG) and Fire Standards by April 2025.

We will deliver organisational leadership development to all of our leaders in line with our development pathways by April 2025.

All Learning and Development departments will comply with their associated Fire Standards by April 2025.

We will review and update the Health and Safety Policy. Including producing a supporting toolkit of guidance, templates and relevant documentation by April 2025.

We will formulate and implement a Health & Safety Management system by September 2024.

We will review, update and publish all HR policies and toolkits by June 2024 so that our staff have the resources they need and feel empowered to achieve our desired outcomes and foster a great work environment.

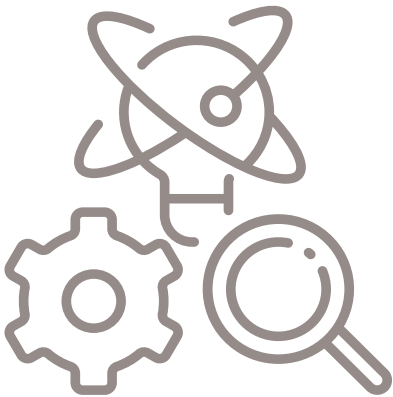


We will identify where and how HR can proactively add value and help to build local capability through development of regular communication channels with managers and stakeholders to share key messages, work collaboratively and re-position HR as enablers and advisors through the Business Partnering model ensuring 100% of our leaders have been offered support and development with their people management and employee relations practices by April 2025.



We will develop and publish revised Fitness and Wellbeing policies, in line with NFCC recommendations, best practice and Service objectives by June 2024 to support all of our great people to thrive at work.

# Innovation



The rapid pace of technological and new systems innovation is profoundly changing the world in which we live and affecting the people we serve. In order to deliver the highest quality people services we need to ensure we research and embrace innovation.

Within this framework, we will also empower our employees to engage in creative solutions, technology and initiatives and cultivate a culture of experimentation where it is accepted that we will sometimes fail, and that we learn from those setbacks.

We will explore ways in which we can further use technology to better connect our staff across all sites, investing in training and support.

We will focus on techniques in how we use the data to deliver individualised solutions, rather than a one size fits all approach.

We will research new methods of working to drive innovation and improvement. The first is where we will implement a Service Design approach to developing new people-based products or services, placing people at the centre of what we do and engaging them in the design phase. The approach will allow us to pause and reflect on the problem a bit more, to focus on the who, what and why. Allowing time to research the current behaviour and discover what's going on with the current situation, define the problem, develop and review ideas and deliver the solution.

## **Commitments:**

We will implement Service Design, people-led approach with any new or rejuvenated 'people centred' services by July 2024

# Conclusion



We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to our workforce and our communities to foster insight, collaborative working, empower our great people, and harness a culture of continuous innovation. These four pillars form the bedrock of People Services' success and progress.

The themes within the People Services Strategy allow for dynamic and evolving plans that will adapt to meet the organisations changing needs and challenges, enabling the organisation to thrive in a rapidly changing environment.





# Appendix A

## Objective and Key Results Table

This table provides a list of the objectives and some in date order.

Objective	Completion date	Responsibility	Theme
We will establish a quarterly planning cycle for Objectives and Key Results (OKR's) and insight dashboard	April 2024	Corporate Communications	Collaborative working
To consistently gather, report and respond to the touchpoint survey twice a year, commencing from October 30, 2023, with the next survey scheduled for release in April 2024 with the results available in May 2024 (Key Result)	May 2024	Corporate Communications	Insight
We will review, update and publish all HR policies and toolkits by June 2024 so that our staff have the resources they need and feel empowered to achieve our desired outcomes and foster a great work environment.	June 2024	HR	Great People
We will develop and publish revised Fitness and Wellbeing policies, in line with NFCC recommendations, best practice and Service objectives by June 2024 to support all of our great people to thrive at work	June 2024	HR	Great People
We will implement Service Design, people-led approach with any new or rejuvenated 'people centred' services	June 2024	Corporate Communications	Innovation
To develop innovative metrics to improve insight to key HR data trends and themes, resulting in a quarterly report to be shared with stakeholders and leaders by September 2024, to facilitate conversations and drive tangible change.	September 2024	HR	Insight

Objective	Completion date	Responsibility	Theme
We will formulate and implement a Health & Safety Management system	September 2024	H&S	
We will establish a community engagement panel to increase opportunities to engage with our diverse	October 2024	DICE	Collaborative working
Working in collaboration with Risk Reduction and Human Resources, we will establish three formal partnerships with community organisations with the core aim of gaining insight, increasing our engagement, reducing risk and increasing the diversity of job applications	December 2024	DICE	Collaborative working
We will bring the Service together by hosting three service wide events, two in house conferences and we will host and co-ordinate the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) conference and awards in November 2024.	November 2024	Corporate Communications	Collaborative working
Educated by the HMICFRS recommendations and information obtained through the staff touchpoint survey, work with Human Resources and Learning & Development teams to develop and deliver appropriate DICE training to support cultural change and embed the NFCC Core Code of Ethics to all staff at AF&RS	April 2025	DICE	Great People

## Appendix A Continued

Objective	Completion date	Responsibility	Theme
We will deliver operational training to the required professional and legal standards; all training will be aligned to National Operational Guidance (NATOG) and Fire Standards	April 2025	L&D	Great People
We will deliver organisational leadership development to all of our leaders in line with our development pathways	April 2025	L&D	Great People
All Learning and Development departments will comply with their associated Fire Standards	April 2025	L&D	Great People
We will review and update the Health and Safety Policy. Including producing a supporting toolkit of guidance, templates and relevant documentation	April 2025	H&S	Great People
We will identify where and how HR can proactively add value and help to build local capability through development of regular communication channels with managers and stakeholders to share key messages, work collaboratively and re-position HR as enablers and advisors through the Business Partnering model ensuring 100% of our leaders have been offered support and development with their people management and employee relations practices	April 2025	HR	Great People

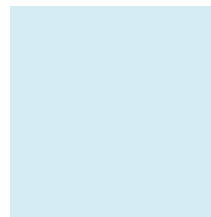


# Appendix B

## Our Strategy



**Making communities safer**



Produced by  
**the Corporate Communication department**

Avon Fire & Rescue Service,  
Police & Fire Headquarters, PO Box 37, Valley Road, Bristol, BS20 8JJ

**Tel:** 0117 926 2061 **Fax:** 0117 925 0980

[www.avonfire.gov.uk](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk)



@AvonFireRescue



AvonFireRescue