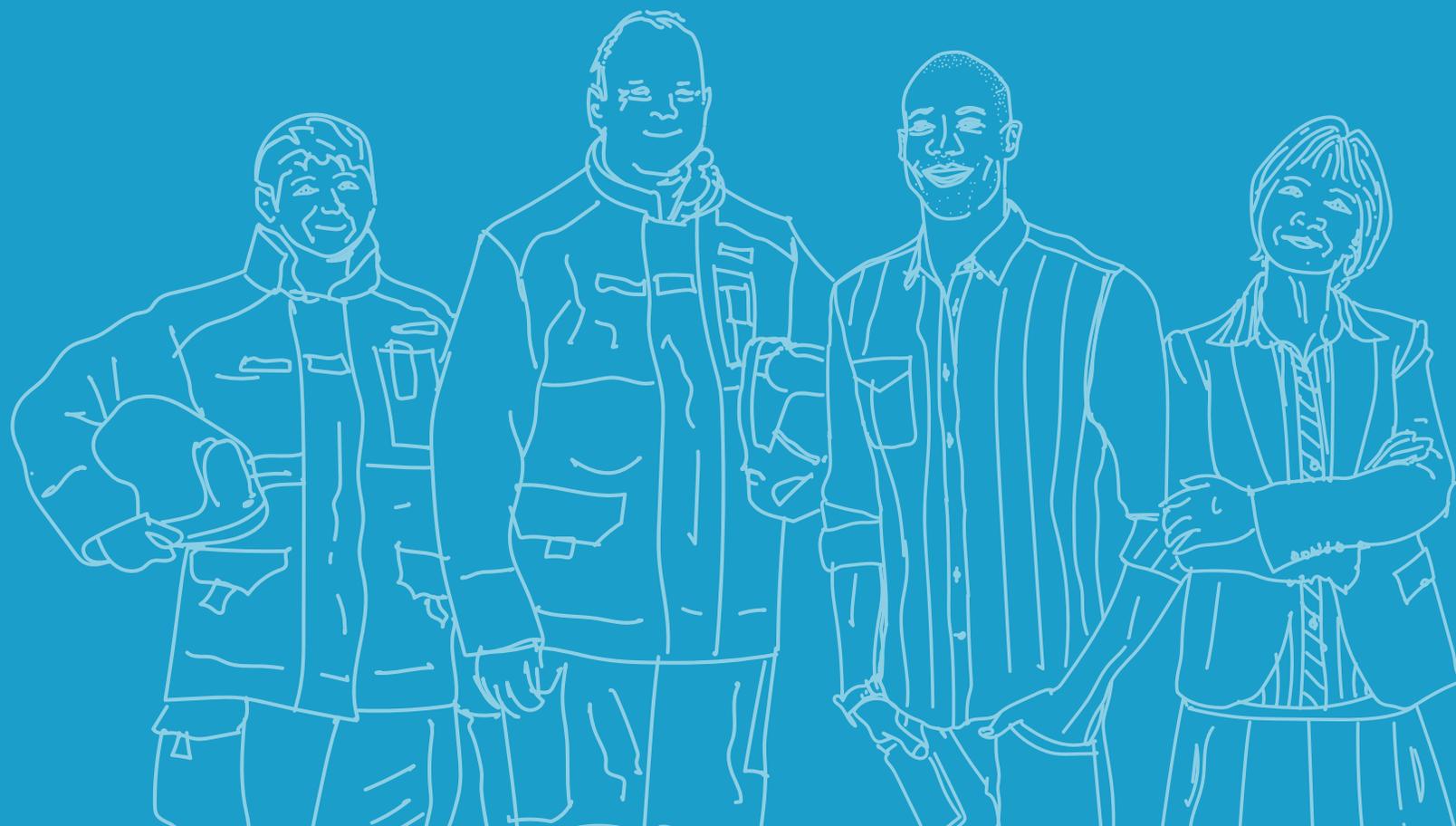




West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service

People Strategy

2021/24





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Introduction

At the heart of our organisation is our people. This People Strategy is designed to ensure West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is at its best today and every day.

There are several significant challenges ahead of us as the organisation evolves to meet the current and upcoming priorities of a strong and effective fire and rescue service. There are changes through any potential Government direction on the future of the fire service or changes in governance structures, climate change, risk profile, finances and demographic changes and we carefully consider how best to respond to the challenges across our communities. We are here to deliver emergency response, prevention, protection and resilience and our people – their ethics, values, skills, knowledge and behaviours – enable us to do so effectively.

“

We are here to deliver prevention, protection and resilience. ”



Our Aim

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority is here to Make West Yorkshire Safer.

Our ambition



Making West Yorkshire Safer

To improve community safety and wellbeing and reduce the risk to life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies



Our People Strategy clearly outlines how we attract, support, develop and enable our people to be at their best throughout their time with us. This strategy helps realise our aims and deliver our organisational purpose.

We are incredibly proud of our people and carefully consider how to enable everyone to be at their best at every opportunity. We do this by outlining what we will do at each stage of the employee 'lifecycle': From attracting people with 'Day One' talent, knowledge and skills to join us; developing, supporting, enabling and deploying our people effectively throughout their careers with us; and, when people leave us, using their wisdom and experience to continue making West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service a great place to work.

“
We are incredibly
proud of our people.”

Our Organisational Priorities



Accountability

The implementation of this Strategy will be the responsibility of:

➔ The Chief Executive / Chief Fire Officer through the Chief Employment Services Officer.

➔ Directors and all Area Managers / Executive Officers.

The Strategy will, additionally, require the support and co-operation of managers and supervisors at all levels within the Service.



Underlying Principles

Our People Strategy provides a strategic framework to support the aims, objectives, priorities and outcomes of the Service by ensuring we continue to have the right people, with the right values, the right skills, doing the right things, in the right place at the right time.

To achieve this, we will:

- Identify, attract, develop and retain high performing people across the Service
- Develop, support and grow leadership potential at all levels.
- Support organisational change initiatives through engaging with our people.
- Keep our staff safe and promote healthy lifestyle choices. Support our people's mental health & wellbeing so they feel valued and able to contribute effectively to the running of the service.
- Enable the development of a high-performance culture in which performance is supported, rewarded, enhanced and managed effectively. Embed ethics, values, behaviours and our positive culture focused on diversity, inclusion, performance, wellbeing and employee engagement. Specifically, our values are:



Communication

We clearly and carefully communicate, in a way everyone understands.



Teamwork

We recognise everyone's strengths and contributions, working effectively as one team.



Integrity

We are trustworthy and ethical in all that we do, always acting with integrity.



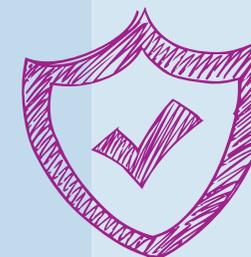
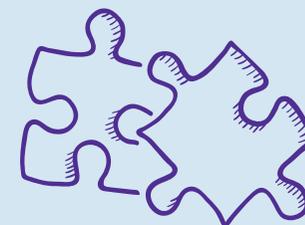
Learning

We learn all the time, we share our experiences and celebrate success.



Responsibility

We are responsible and take ownership of the work we do.



Underlying Principles

- Continue to make West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service a great place to work using people metrics to continuously improve.
- Develop flexible ways of working that respond to the requirements of the service and enable our workforce to balance their work and personal lives well.
- Provide excellent HR, Organisational Development, Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing and Employee Resourcing services to enable effective service delivery
- Ensure we have the 'right people in the right roles' through effective succession planning and talent management initiatives.
- Deliver positive action initiatives to attract and develop talented people from under-represented groups.



“

We ensure that we have the 'right people in the right roles'. ”



Attraction

Our aim, vision, mission and values are recognisable for all to see and easy to understand.

- We strive to be an employer of choice ensuring an attractive total rewards package which includes a commitment to work/life balance, to personal development and health and wellbeing as well as a competitive salary in line with industry standards to attract a high performing, flexible and skilled workforce. We are a Living Wage Foundation Employer, Disability Confident and have recently been awarded bronze in the Inclusive Employers Awards.
- Our Community Engagement and Positive Action Strategies aim to encourage applicants from under-represented groups to better reflect the communities we serve.
- We will provide strategic direction for workforce planning, ensuring we have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time to meet future demands. We will anticipate possible future impacts on our staffing profile and what actions are required to ensure we have sufficiently skilled staff to meet the needs of the service and the community.
- We are inclusive and treat people with dignity, respect and integrity making this a clear expectation for everyone before they consider working for us.

We will achieve this by:

- Improving our recruitment process and selection methods to ensure that job vacancies are accessible to all our communities within West Yorkshire.
- Ensuring that we offer a competitive total rewards / pay package.
- Carry out regular monitoring of the workforce plan and undertake frequent establishment planning meetings with key stakeholders.



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Recruitment

We will ensure that recruitment is agile and responsive to the needs of the organisation. We will remove barriers by having an inclusive recruitment process that takes account of people's individual needs whilst upholding our high standards.

- To ensure the candidate gets the best experience and the process is fair and transparent, we will review and update our processes and utilise a wide range of selection methods such as assessment centres, psychometrics and behavioural interviewing in line with our core values.
- We will ensure that the recruitment medicals are tailored to specific roles and apply national standards consistently. This will minimise risk to the individual and the Service by only passing candidates who are medically fit to perform each role safely and we will identify any reasonable adjustments required to assist them in their role.



We will achieve this by:

- Constantly reviewing recruitment and selection policies and practices with a particular emphasis on clarity, fairness and equality of opportunity.
- Delivering targeted recruitment campaigns to increase the diversity of our workforce and attract people to specialist/hard to recruit posts.
- Developing organisational structures and job design to support effective and flexible service delivery and enable the Service to take advantage of new opportunities.
- Continuing to refine systems of workforce and succession planning to ensure that the required number and calibre of employees are available in the medium to long term, particularly bearing in mind the requirement to work longer and in the climate of diminishing budgets.



“Diversity and inclusion are central to our core values and bring many benefits to our organisation.”

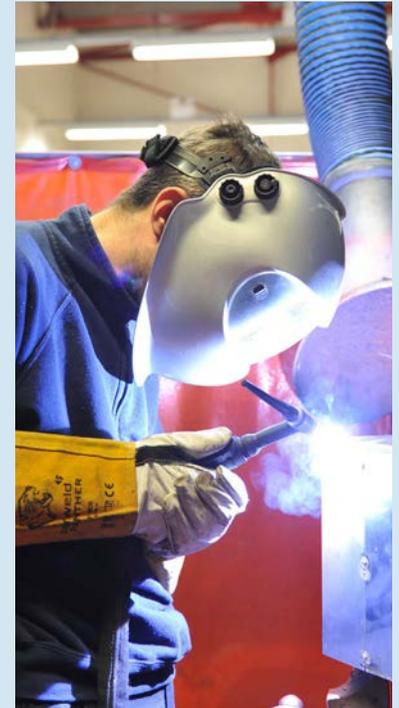
Onboarding

We will enable everyone who joins us to feel a part of our organisation from the moment they engage with our recruitment process and throughout their careers with us.

- To ensure our new employees feel supported and valued we will improve and enhance our onboarding/induction programme by having early and ongoing engagement with them.
- We have trialled and embedded a new buddy system for Firefighters throughout their probationary period. We will look to extend this to other roles across the organisation.
- At the beginning of employment, standards of behaviour and cultural expectations are set through our Corporate Induction Process. Staff are measured against our core values and behaviours from 'hire to retire'.
- To ensure we understand the skills and qualification of our new starters, we collect new employee data and qualifications which we use to harness talent from day one.

We will achieve this by:

- Reinforcing our culture of trust, respect and empowerment to exceed expectations.
- Working to a common purpose and goals; encouraging leadership, good practice and innovation at all levels within the Service.
- All new employees, and people who move within the service, will receive an effective induction programme, which recognises individual, team, service, and area-wide dimensions of their employment with the Service.



Develop & Support

We enable our people to be at their best at work through ongoing job, personal and professional development activities. When people invest their careers with us, we in turn will invest time, resources and money into everyone to enable them to deliver not only their current job/role, but also considering next career steps and how the organisation can support their journey.

- We will ensure our operational staff have the required competencies and confidence to undertake their next role prior to being promoted. This is embedded at the lower ranks and will be implemented up to and including middle manager roles.
- We have a talent management and succession planning strategy that is transparent and open to all. As part of the annual review process, managers assess the talent of their team using a nine-box grid. We also use our talent management processes and women's mentoring programme to develop people from under-represented groups, supporting them to apply for promotion opportunities. We will ensure coaching and mentoring skills are developed at all levels throughout the service.
- Training and education programmes will be available for all our employees to support, develop and enhance them in role.
- We will keep our staff safe by following our well-established health & safety management system with the identification, assessment and control of risk, the development of a framework of policies along with training being at its heart. We will continue to support staff health & fitness through the provision of our in-house occupational health, fitness & wellbeing services.
- We use our annual review process to measure individual performance and to encourage staff to perform at their best. We measure staff by how they meet their set objectives as well as how they demonstrate the core values.
- We will continue to invest in Leadership programmes to ensure we achieve a culture of outstanding, visionary leadership at all levels.
- We encourage all staff to engage with apprenticeships and continuing professional development. Additionally, we will identify and grow internal talent to enable effective succession planning through our talent management approach.



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Develop & Support

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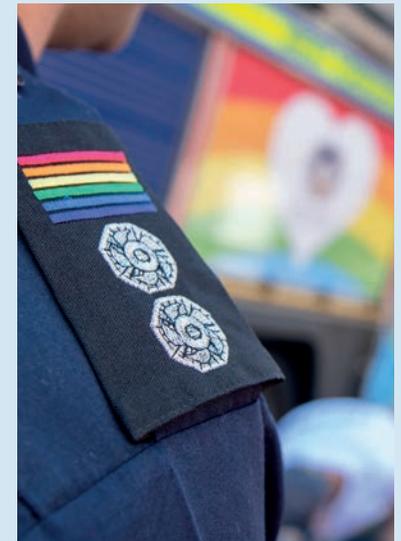
- Encouraging the reporting & investigation of all accidents, near misses and violence, so that lessons are learned, and controls put in place to prevent a re-occurrence and to maintain our policy of zero tolerance to violence against staff.
- Employing a systematic approach to the identification, assessment of workplace hazards and taking all reasonable action to remove or reduce risks within the context of the Service's legal and moral responsibilities to employees and service users.
- Providing a pro-active occupational health service committed to identifying and addressing industrial injuries, stress and other causes of sickness absence, as well as promoting healthy living. This includes a particular focus on mental health and well-being.
- Providing managers with a framework to manage sickness absence which strikes a balance between organisational need and supporting staff.
- Supporting managers to assist employees to return to work through rehabilitation arrangements, and to keep people in work through various measures, including reasonable adjustments and redeployment.
- Systematically analysing all employees' training needs on a regular basis, having regard both to current and future skill requirements, leading to each employee having a regularly reviewed, individual development plan. Individual continuous professional development will be encouraged.
- Anticipating and addressing future skills needs, for example in relation to community consultation, project management, partnership working and diversity.
- Identifying "added value" and costs of all learning, training and development activities.
- Ensuring everyone is trained and competent to do their role and undertake periodical audits to give assurance.



Engage/Recognise

We will continue to move our organisational culture forward through a well led, empowered, flexible and resilient workforce. Our organisation will continue to deliver continuous improvements, underpinned by a “one team” culture which recognises, values and celebrates the contributions of everyone.

- We listen to our people' and assess the level of engagement of our employees through regular surveys, focus groups and workshops, putting in place interventions to continuously improve the level of staff satisfaction and engagement.
 - As an organisation, we recognise that there is a need to work flexibly. We will create and adopt a variety of flexible ways of working including family friendly policies, agile working and a review of working patterns.
 - We will maintain good employee relations by engaging, consulting and negotiating with our recognised trade unions around changes to ways of working, aspiring to work in partnership for the benefit of the organisation and its people.
 - We will use HR analytics to identify trends and levels of engagement, which will help leaders to maximise productivity and enhance the employee experience.
 - We will continue to drive improvement in the way we communicate with staff around key HR issues, obtaining feedback on the Employment Services Directorate to ensure both HR and the workforce achieve a common goal.
- Rewards are considered as a complete package to reflect the different needs of our people. Therefore, alongside an accurate job description with an appropriate salary, the reward package includes a career average pension scheme, a commitment to work life balance, to personal/career development and to health and wellbeing.
 - We are committed to promoting a culture that values the contribution of everyone in the organisation and encourages innovation, challenge and diversity of thought. This is supported by a determination to be recognised as an employer of choice. We will implement and embed our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to ensure we embrace an inclusive organisation culture. We will challenge inappropriate behaviour and ensure our legal and moral obligations are met. Diversity and Inclusion is embedded in all our key policies, processes and practices which fulfils the Service's duties under Equality Act 2010.



Engage/Recognise

We will achieve this by:

- Pro-actively consulting and negotiating with our employees through trade union representatives at an early stage about proposed work-related changes.
- Seeking employees' views through surveys and focus groups, with a commitment to being open about publishing the results and acting in relation to the findings.
- Maintaining and developing anti-discrimination policies and practices; introducing programmes which promote equality of opportunity, with a particular emphasis on awareness raising and training
- Setting and communicating standards of behaviour, based on treating people with dignity, respect and integrity, supporting the Core Code of Ethics and our core values. We protect our employees from discrimination and inappropriate treatment while carrying out their duties
- Scrutinising new and ongoing projects to ensure an Equality Impact Assessment is in place and that they are fair, equitable and legally compliant.
- Guiding, coaching managers and supervisors to feel empowered to effectively support their team and meet the diverse needs of their staff.
- Introducing policies and practices which actively support the management of change in partnership with our people, trade unions and other organisations.



Retention and Beyond

We have a robust workforce plan that identifies what future workplace changes are anticipated that may impact on the staffing profile such as flight risks and leavers. This will help ascertain what actions are required to ensure we retain or have sufficiently skilled people to meet the needs of the service and the community.

- We collect and analyse data, identifying trends on why staff leave, putting mechanisms in place to reduce avoidable exits.
- We recognise the commitment, good conduct and contributions of staff throughout their employment.
- We recognise the benefits and challenges an ageing workforce can bring and will continue to work with stakeholders to develop an Ageing Workforce Strategy.



We will achieve this by:

- Supporting and preparing staff for retirement by offering pre-retirement and post-retirement courses and events, preparing people for life beyond West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- Continuing to administer the available pension schemes and providing appropriate information to staff, whilst responding to and implementing necessary changes to comply with pensions legislation.
- Developing strategies that take account of the increasing normal retirement age.
- Offering all leavers an opportunity to provide detailed feedback on their experience through an exit interview / survey.
- Holding employee recognition events such as long service and good conduct ceremonies and providing plaques and certificates.

“
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