

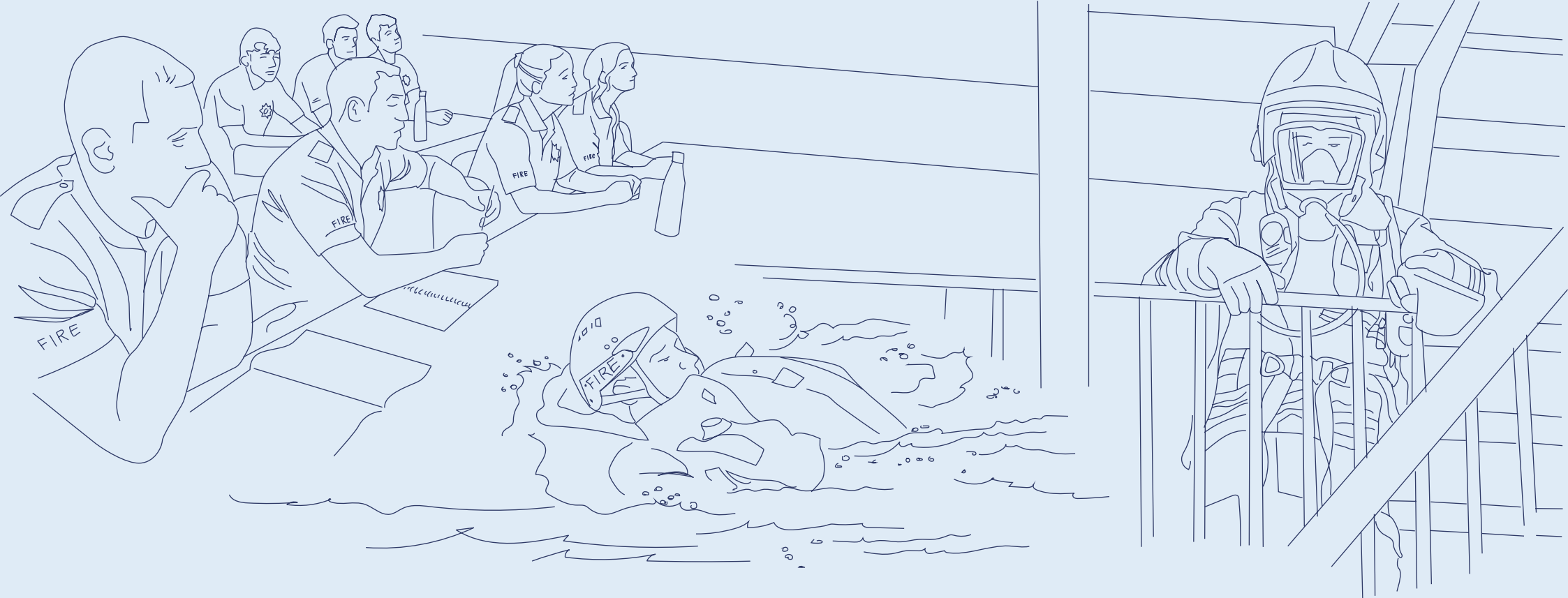


West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service

People and Culture Strategy and Delivery Plan

2025-2028





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Foreword

I am delighted to introduce our three-year People and Culture Strategy, which sets out how we will continue to strengthen, support and invest in our colleagues who are the heartbeat of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Our people are our greatest asset, and this strategy reflects our commitment to creating an environment where everyone can thrive, contribute, learn and feel valued. What matters most to me is that the people impact is front and centre of everything we do.



Sonia Pawson
Director of People & Culture

Over the next three years, we will focus on the areas that matter most to our people and the communities we serve. Through five pillars – we will build a Service that is equipped for the future, aligned to our values and behaviours and driven by a thirst for learning and continuous improvement.

Both ambitious and practical, this strategy recognises the challenges ahead whilst setting a clear roadmap to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills, supported in the right way. Together we will continue to shape a Service where people are empowered and our impact across West Yorkshire grows even stronger.

“
I look forward to working with you all
as we make this strategy real.”

Sonia Pawson
Director of People and Culture

Population
2.4 million

Size of area
783² miles

Providing
emergency
cover
24/7

People working
for WYFRS
1,502



Strategy

We are proud to employ 1500 well-trained, diverse and dedicated employees who work every day to promote safety and wellbeing and reduce risk of fire and other emergencies across all communities in West Yorkshire.

Our people are central to prioritising a people first mindset through ethical and professional leadership. As one of the country's leading Fire and Rescue Services, we are committed to supporting, developing and investing in our employees so they can reach their potential whilst delivering service excellence. This People and Culture Strategy provides the strategic framework that aligns with our people priorities and the Service's wider aspirations. Sitting alongside our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)/My FRS it ensures we have the right people with the necessary skills, values and behaviours in the right roles, at the right time.

Building on the success of our 2024-2025 12-month People Plan, this three-year Strategy sets the direction for how we will continue to strengthen and prepare our organisation to be ready for the future. It outlines the priority areas that will enable us to attract, develop, and retain a workforce that is resilient, healthy, safe, skilled, flexible and reflective of the communities we serve - supporting our ambition to make West Yorkshire safer.

Our work is wide ranging with a primary focus on protection, prevention, response and resilience. This Strategy will guide us on how we set our people up for success, how we support, challenge and motivate them, and how we will continue to build a positive, high-performing culture. In line with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) People, Culture and Leadership Strategic Plan, it is shaped around the following five pillars – these will ensure that people are at the heart of everything we do, we are evidence based, and we use data and technology enablers to inform our decision making:

**Putting people are at the heart
of everything we do**



Our five pillars

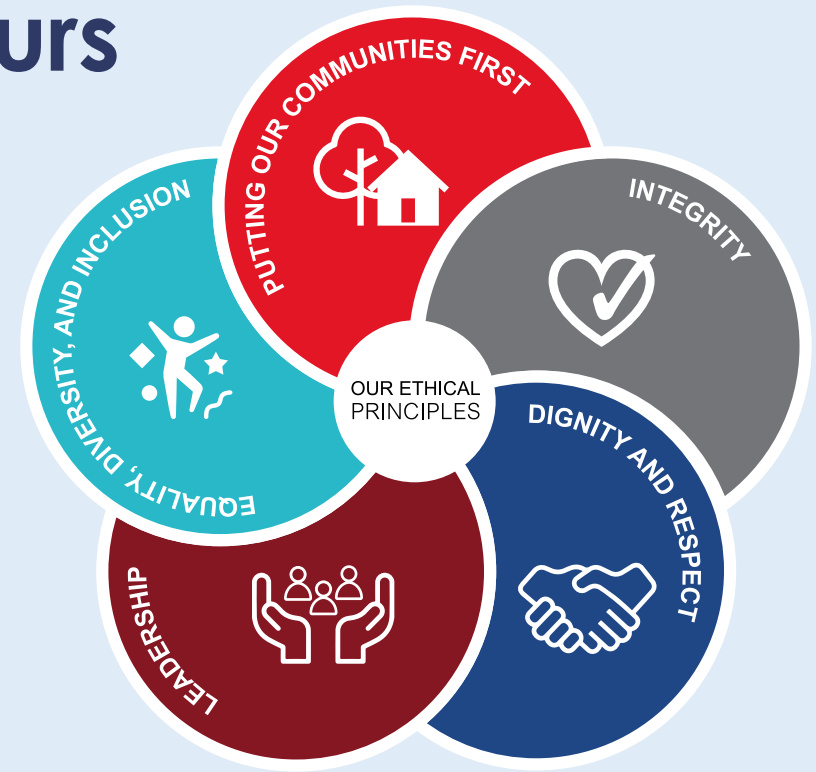
Values, Ethics and Behaviours

We are committed to serving our community in a way that reflects our values. These values guide how we behave every day and are brought to life through the Core Code of Ethics.

The Core Code of Ethics sets out five ethical principles, based on the Seven Principles of Public Life. Together with the supporting guidance, they help us promote positive behaviour and challenge behaviour that falls short of our standards.



Our Behaviours Framework provides a clear, consistent and measurable set of standards that foster a culture of accountability, integrity and continuous improvement. The framework ensures everyone knows what good behaviour looks and feels like.



“
West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service and the organisations we represent, are all fully supportive of the five ethical principles as set out in this Core Code.”

Organisational Priorities



National Strategies

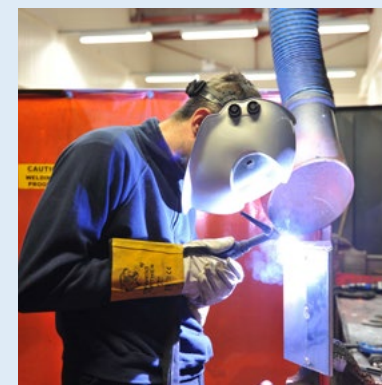
Our WYFRS People and Culture Strategy is aligned to the NFCC People, Culture and Leadership (PCL) Strategic Plan 2025-2028.

This aims to support UKFRS to:

- Build on strengths, embed progress already made, and address organisational culture issues which are problematic.
- Achieve professional Fire Standards and ensure compliance with UK legislative requirements.
- Become an 'Employer of Choice' for prospective applicants.
- Better reflect the diversity of communities they serve.
- Become a place where everyone has an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential in their FRS career, and have a great experience of work.

The PCL Annual Delivery Plan for 2025/2026 is shaped around four pillars:

- People
- Leadership and Organisational Development
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Health and Wellbeing



“
The plan brings together national guidance, practical products and shared standards.”

What have we achieved?

In 2024-2025, we developed a 12-month People Plan focused on the immediate and pressing priorities. We identified four pillars:



We worked across team boundaries, collaborated in every corner of the Service and listened to feedback in the delivery of 46 commitments. We have a lot to be proud of including:

- A modern, skills-based Wholetime Firefighter selection process.
- New fair, open and transparent development and promotion processes.
- Completion of the revised Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking requirements for all employees.
- A one-stop-shop of employee help and support on FireHub.
- An innovative COM-B pilot on behavioural safety for low-speed manoeuvres.
- A new equality impact assessment (EIA) Power App.
- Strong positive action and work with communities.
- An enhanced maternity and adoption pay provision.
- Commitment to reducing sickness absence through our supporting good attendance project.
- A behaviour framework with the NFCC Core Code of Ethics at the heart – this will be embedded into the whole employee lifecycle, including performance reviews, training and governance.
- A revised award and recognition policy and annual celebration.

12 Month People Plan
2024-25



The **12-month People Plan** has been an important springboard, helping us move closer towards our desired culture values and creating a healthier, more inclusive and agile learning culture. This Strategy builds on that progress and sets the direction for what we will achieve next. Delivery will be prioritised within available resources, ensuring investment is focused where it delivers the greatest benefit for our people and communities.

What will this strategy achieve?

We recognise we are operating in an ever-changing world; the nature of emergencies is changing and we need to be agile and organisationally prepared in our response.

Our workforce is becoming more diverse, but we acknowledge there is more to do. We will continue to use positive action to support our recruitment strategy - across On-Call, Wholetime Firefighters, Service Delivery and Enabling team roles. We will develop flexible recruitment pathways into specialist departments such as Protection to address future workforce gaps.

We recognise that recruiting and retaining colleagues with specialist skills is becoming increasingly competitive. We will actively promote the strengths of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service as an employer of choice, including our brand, the availability of hybrid and flexible working arrangements and our comprehensive total reward offer. We will continue to identify opportunities to attract and develop skilled people through apprenticeships and other routes.

People are our most valuable asset. Supporting their health, safety and wellbeing is essential to ensuring they bring the best version of themselves to work, which has a positive impact on the service we provide. Recent survey feedback shows we are getting a lot of this right, but we are committed to doing more. Through this Strategy period we will enhance our approach to

physical and mental health, strengthen psychological safety, and continue to promote an environment where everyone feels safe, supported and able to thrive.

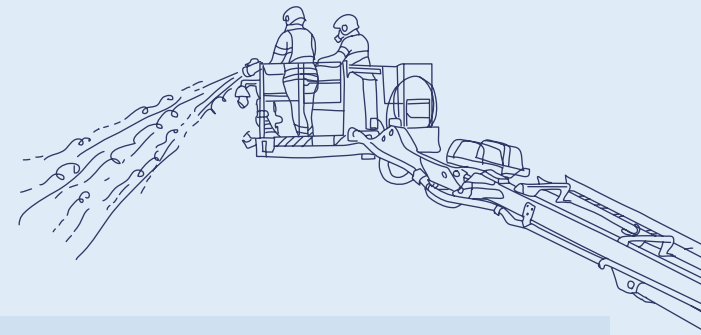
We also understand the role of our leaders and managers is changing and will continue to evolve. Whilst we have already made progress, there is further work to do to equip them with the skills and confidence to lead and manage effectively, support their teams and drive high expectations and professional standards across the Service.

Our recent cultural research shows WYFRS is a friendly, accepting and supportive place to work. We are proud of this, but we are not complacent. We will continue to embed the NFCC Core Code of Ethics and our WYFRS Behaviours Framework, working closely with all stakeholder groups to ensure proactive consultation and meaningful engagement. Importantly, our people will be informed, involved and help us to co-create future plans.

We also want to make it easier for people to do their jobs. There is more we can do to embrace digital innovation and emerging technologies including process automation.



Delivery Plan



How are we going to do it? Our 2028 Vision.

This strategy is composed around five people and culture pillars, each with its own set of priorities and strategic success measures.

- Our workforce will more closely reflect the communities we serve.
- Our people will know they are respected, safe, included and heard.
- Our health, safety and wellbeing provision will set the standard for the UK Fire & Rescue sector.
- We will create a safe, healthy, and resilient workforce capable of delivering high quality fire and rescue services, while promoting a culture of wellbeing, inclusion, and continuous improvement.
- Our managers and leaders will feel confident, capable and supported in their continued professional development.
- People systems and platforms will be easy to use, intuitive and interoperable.
- People information will be accurate, accessible and visible in real time.
- People will be confident that complaints and misconduct are handled fairly, promptly and consistently.
- People will feel valued, supported and recognised.
- People will be proud to work for WYFRS.

We will achieve this by adopting the following principles:

- Empowering people by setting clear expectations, trusting people to deliver and ensuring accountability.
- Dealing with poor performance quickly, honestly, consistently, with dignity and a solutions-focused mindset.
- Making things easy to use and accessible.
- Capturing and using consistent data.
- Being evidence-based and shaping decision making using qualitative and quantitative data.
- Managing change in a planned, transparent and compassionate way.
- Taking a people-centric approach to everything, we do – this means listening, collaborating, seeking feedback and proactively engaging.
- Giving our managers the tools and skills to be able to both manage and support their teams.

Delivery of this Strategy will be overseen through existing Service governance arrangements. Progress against objectives will be monitored regularly by the People and Culture Directorate, transparently reported and scrutinised through senior leadership and Authority governance.

Pillar 1

People and Resourcing



Our Commitment

West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service is committed to transforming the employee experience through meaningful engagement, inclusive practices, and digital innovation.

We will continue to listen to our workforce, act on feedback, and involve employees in shaping our plans and decisions. Our approach is grounded in fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement - ensuring that every colleague feels supported, valued, and empowered to thrive. We will continue embedding the Core Code of Ethics and HMICFRS recommendations into all people practices, fostering a culture of belonging and high performance. Through robust workforce planning, we will build resilience, retain critical skills and support those leaving us with dignity and care.

Our recruitment and retention efforts will focus on attracting diverse talent, modernising systems and processes, and celebrating the contributions of our people. This transformation will be underpinned by digital tools that enhance communication, streamline processes, and improve access to resources.

“
Our approach is grounded in fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement.”

This pillar is designed around three priorities:



Pillar 1

People and Resourcing



Priority 1

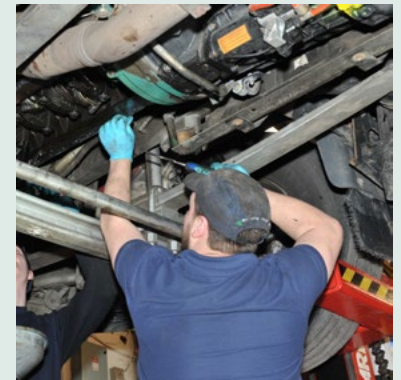
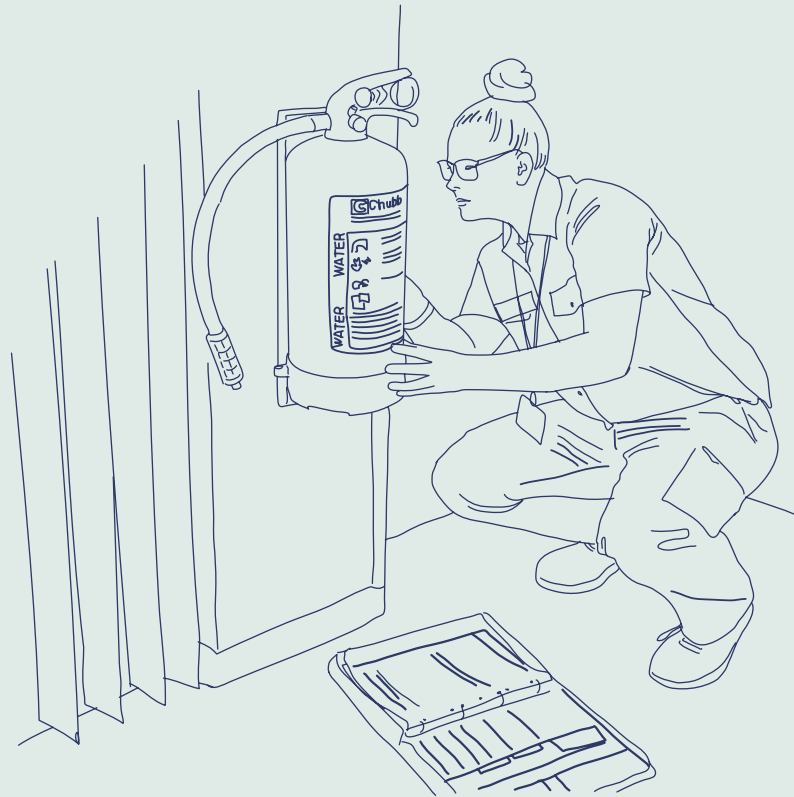
Employee experience

We will enhance employee experience through active engagement, improved responsiveness and meaningful involvement in planning and decision making.

We will continually develop our approach to employee communication, ensuring accessible, timely and inclusive engagement for all roles and duty systems.

We will nurture a culture where individuals perform at their best and own their development/career because they feel a sense of belonging, are treated fairly and understand the behaviours and standards expected of them. This includes every colleague actively demonstrating and promoting the NFCC Core Code of Ethics, adhering to Professional Fire Standards, and consistently role-modelling WYFRS Behaviours in all aspects of their work. It means leading by example through integrity, respect, and accountability, ensuring that our actions reflect the highest professional standards. Colleagues should embrace innovative and flexible approaches to working, adapting methods and practices to

meet the evolving needs of our communities while maintaining safety, inclusivity, and service excellence. By doing so, we create an environment where collaboration, trust, and continuous improvement thrive, ultimately delivering the best outcomes for the communities we serve.



Pillar 1

People and Resourcing



Priority 2

Workforce Planning and Retirement

We will maximise workforce capacity, resilience, and potential through strategic analysis, accurate forecasting and proactive succession planning.

Our plans will consider the challenges of our ageing workforce and uncertain pensions landscape, ensuring the inevitable loss of key skills, knowledge, and experience does not undermine future performance or responsiveness.

We will use workforce intelligence/data insights to identify:

- Strength deficiencies.
- Emerging attribute/capability deficiencies.
- Leadership, skills and experience risks.

Working collaboratively across the People and Culture Directorate and wider Service we will ensure our people have the right skills, in the right roles, at the right time.

We are committed to providing a well-managed transition for retiring colleagues – recognising service, supporting their future plans and capturing corporate memory and valuable learning.

Priority 3

Attraction, Retention and Recognition

We aim to employ the right people with the right skills, values and behaviours in the right jobs; supported by transparent, objective, fair, valid and reliable selection processes. This will be underpinned by a culture of continuous improvement where employees are encouraged to learn and develop new skills throughout their careers in order to deliver our services to the community.

Our award and recognition approach will remain flexible and transparent, ensuring we celebrate contributions of people at every level of the organisation.

“
We aim to employ the right people with the right skills, values and behaviours in the right jobs.”



Pillar 1

People and Resourcing



Year One Objectives:

- Complete a full review and consolidation of people-related policies to ensure alignment with the NFCC Code of Ethics and HMICFRS recommendations by December 2026.
- Review internal recruitment and promotion processes to ensure they are inclusive, modern, fit-for-purpose and remain legislatively compliant by September 2026.
- Enhance positive action interventions, including delivery of rolling recruitment for Wholetime and On-Call Firefighters by June 2026.
- Create engaging and supportive induction experiences to build positive relationships with new starters from day one by December 2026.
- Embed a professional standards lead role to ensure consistency, fairness and appropriateness when advising on misconduct or grievance cases by March 2026.
- Further champion and embed the Awards and Recognition policy, celebrating the achievements of our people by October 2026 (when we will hold our second Awards Ceremony).
- Expand the strategic workforce plan to include green book and on-call duty systems and enhanced succession planning by July 2026.
- Undertake an Employment Rights Bill readiness audit and develop our WYFRS employment law reform implementation plan by February 2026.
- Define a set of People and Culture Directorate Key Performance Indicators by April 2026.
- Deliver the Supporting Good Attendance Project (phase two) by December 2026.



Pillar 1

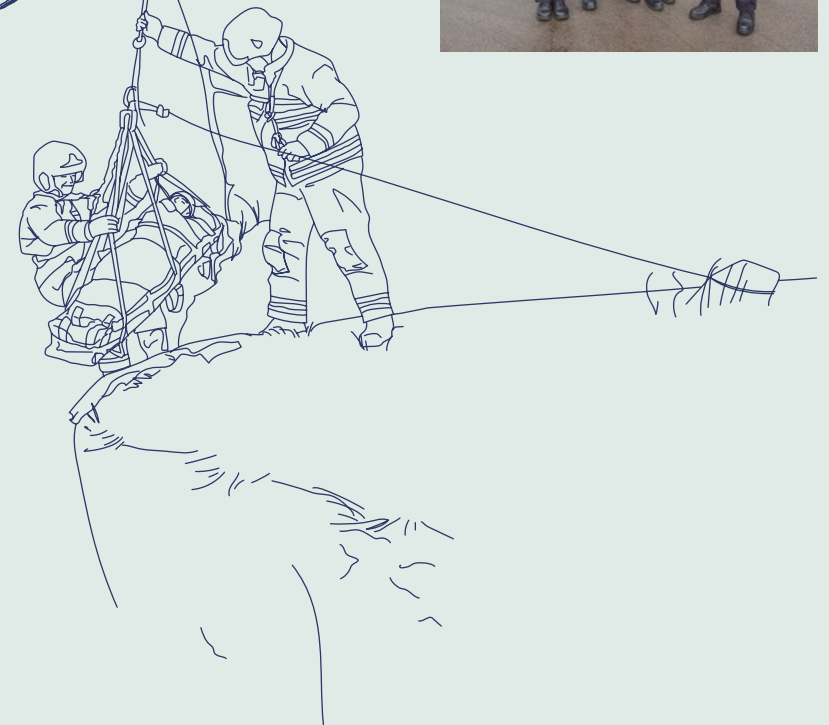
People and Resourcing



How we will measure success:

- ✔ Year-on-year improvement in employee surveys for engagement, feeling valued and organisational support.
- ✔ Year-on-year improvement in workforce diversity metrics, with progress tracked.
- ✔ Key performance indicators met.
- ✔ KPI and data used to improve management reporting.
- ✔ Reduction in average time to resolve grievances and concerns, measured quarterly.
- ✔ Improved promotion and recruitment process outcomes, including reduced time to hire and improved satisfaction.
- ✔ Reduction in specialist skills gaps identified through workforce planning.
- ✔ Improved availability metrics for operational duty systems.
- ✔ Increase in the number of colleagues nominated for awards and recognition.
- ✔ Reduced sickness absence.

“
When people invest
their careers with us,
we in turn invest
time, resources and
money into them.”



Pillar 2

High-performing, Inclusive Culture



Our Commitment

Our Service is more diverse than at any time in our history. We commit to building a capable, culturally aware and inclusive fire service that values diversity of thought, background and experience. We recognise that drawing on a broad range of perspectives strengthens decision making, teamwork under pressure, risk understanding and ultimately the safety of the communities we serve. Our focus is on creating a respectful, psychologically safe environment where all members contribute to high performance.

We are determined to continue building an inclusive environment where everyone understands how they contribute to their team and the organisation and has clear goals and expectations that enable them to perform at their best. We believe that inclusion, clarity and accountability are essential to high performance and to delivering on our WYFRS purpose.

We will continue to champion WYFRS as a great employer, especially in places where our voices are not loud enough. We will meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), making sure we consider people with protected characteristics in all we do. We will work to increase representation across all areas of our workforce.

Our inclusion work is not an add-on; it is a golden thread running through everything we do. We are unapologetic about our high standards and remain curious and active about how we might be able to do things differently to remove barriers. This pillar outlines our approach to continuing our inclusion journey, focusing our efforts on developing a resilient, supportive, and inclusive workplace for everyone, across both operational and enabling roles. Aligned with national frameworks, our legal obligations, sector best practice and using data to underpin our approach, this pillar is designed around four priorities:

“

We are determined to continue building an inclusive environment where everyone understands how they contribute to their team and the organisation and has clear goals and expectations that enable them to perform at their best. ”



This pillar is designed around four priorities:



Pillar 2

High-performing, Inclusive Culture



Priority 1

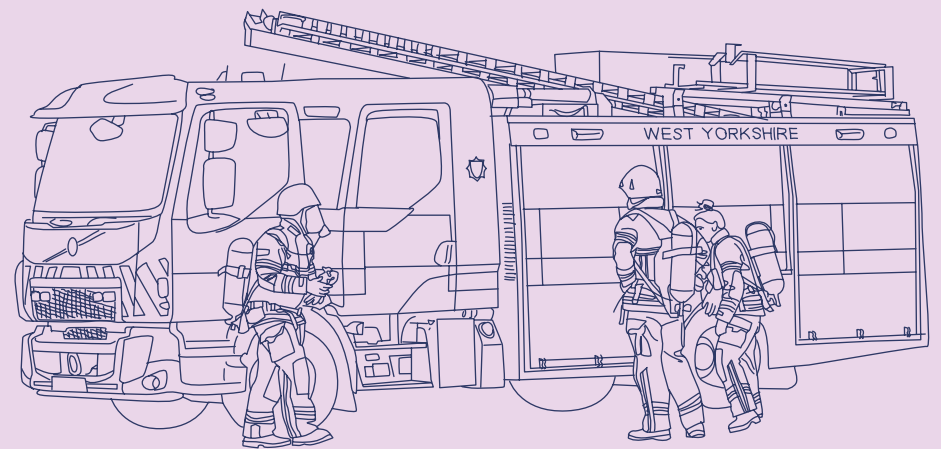
Ethical and Professional Leadership

We will develop inclusive leaders who create psychologically safe environments, set clear expectations, role model the NFCC Core Code of Ethics and WYFRS Behaviours and weave wellbeing into the fabric of the organisation. Leaders will act as enablers, identifying and removing physical, environmental, procedural, and attitudinal barriers so people can perform at their best. Our human-centred approach to inclusion is focused on practical support and reasonable adjustments to support all colleagues reach their potential. Leaders will be equipped through mandatory training, lived experience learning, and reciprocal mentoring to confidently challenge inappropriate behaviour, address performance issues fairly, and hold themselves and others accountable.

Priority 2

Values and Behaviours Embedded Across the Service

Our values and behaviours will guide how we work, how decisions are made, and how outcomes are achieved. Being actively inclusive is a clear expectation for everyone and is embedded into performance management, behaviour and leadership frameworks. The NFCC Core Code of Ethics and WYFRS Behaviours Framework provide clarity on what good looks like, reinforce shared responsibility for inclusion, and ensure high standards of conduct and performance are applied consistently across the Service.



Pillar 2

High-performing, Inclusive Culture



Priority 3

Fair and Equitable People Practices

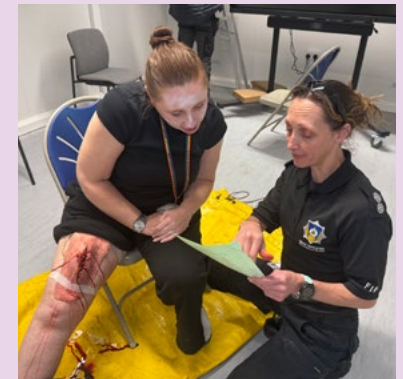
We will deliver fair, transparent, and legally compliant people practices that support high performance and inclusion. This includes a person-centred approach to performance that clearly links individual objectives to team and organisational goals, alongside a consistent and supportive approach to managing poor performance and holding people to account. We will use equality impact assessments, workforce data, and positive action initiatives to remove barriers, improve progression for underrepresented groups, and ensure equitable access to opportunities, while meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.



Priority 4

Everyday Inclusion and Belonging

We will foster a workplace where people feel valued, listened to, and confident to speak up. Inclusion will be experienced through everyday behaviours, active bystander approaches, and practical adjustments that enable people to thrive. Employee networks will be empowered as key stakeholders in consultation and decision-making, ensuring workforce voices influence change. Our commitment to belonging and respect will be reinforced through continued accreditation and external assurance, demonstrating that inclusion is central to how we operate and who we are. We are proud of our active membership and accreditation and aim to increase our Silver Inclusive Employers status to Gold. We are Disability Confident, support work to reduce Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) through membership of White Ribbon and ensure people who have served get a fair chance as signatories of the Armed Services Covenant. We are dedicated to supporting mental health at work, through our signatory of the Mindful Employer Charter.



Pillar 2

High-performing, Inclusive Culture



Our Year One Objectives:

- ➔ In line with the social model of disability, establish an organisation-wide approach to reasonable adjustments, including a standard adjustments framework and access to specialist expertise for more complex cases by September 2026.
- ➔ Deliver an inclusion data campaign to raise awareness and understanding amongst our workforce about why we collect protected characteristic data and what the organisation uses it for. Increase the numbers of colleagues who share their protected characteristics data with us by April 2026.
- ➔ Empower employee networks as formal stakeholders in consultation and decision-making with clear links to governance and leadership via a new Organisational Preparedness Shadow Board to ensure workforce voices shape outcomes by April 2026.
- ➔ Fully embed the behaviours framework across the organisation, ensuring behaviours guide everyday decision making and are applied consistently across the end-to-end employee lifecycle by December 2026.
- ➔ Implement a person-centred performance approach that clearly links individual objectives to team and organisational goals with clear expectations and regular performance conversations across the Service by December 2026.
- ➔ Introduce a consistent, fair and supportive approach to managing poor performance, ensuring high standards are maintained while reasonable adjustments are applied appropriately by September 2026.
- ➔ Strengthen equitable people practices through positive action initiatives, inclusive recruitment and promotion and consistent use of Equality Impact Assessments by September 2026.
- ➔ Deliver employee engagement and culture surveys by May 2026.
- ➔ Launch a new jobs board to advertise all vacancies by September 2026.
- ➔ Support efforts to reduce Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) - outlining our statement of intent by June 2026.



Pillar 2

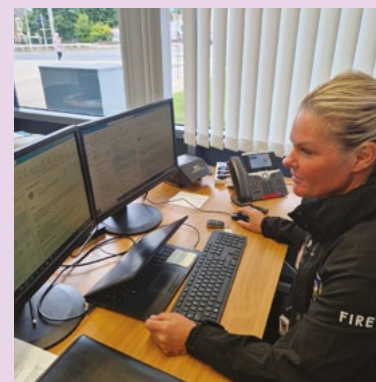
High-performing, Inclusive Culture



How We Will Measure Success:

- ✓ Improved employee survey scores relating to inclusion, belonging and feeling valued, alongside increased survey response rates.
- ✓ 100% of managers complete social model of disability training.
- ✓ Increased completion and quality of regular performance conversations, evidenced through system data.
- ✓ Values and behaviours referenced consistently in performance reviews.
- ✓ Improved perception of consistent standards being applied across teams and roles evidenced in Culture Survey outcomes.
- ✓ We will be able to evidence the integration of active inclusion into strategic planning and projects through tracking impactful Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) which identify and remove barriers.
- ✓ Improved manager confidence in addressing unfairness, evidenced through survey feedback and reduced escalation of issues.
- ✓ Increased attendance and participation in lived experience events, celebrations and awareness sessions.
- ✓ Our employee profile continues to be more diverse at all levels, especially in management and leadership roles with a stronger, more diverse talent pipeline for the future.
- ✓ Increased disclosure rates for protected characteristics, reflecting improved trust and confidence.
- ✓ Reduced time taken to agree and implement reasonable adjustments.

“Diversity and inclusion are central to WYFRS core values.”



Pillar 3

Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Resilience



Our Commitment

Our Service is built on an unwavering commitment to protecting and serving our communities. This starts with prioritising the health, safety, and wellbeing of our people, ensuring they are equipped, supported, and empowered to deliver exceptional service. By safeguarding our workforce, we create the foundation for resilience, professionalism, and trust - enabling us to meet the diverse risks and needs of the communities we serve.

This pillar outlines our vision and approach to creating a resilient, supportive, and safe working environment for all our people, both operational and enabling. It also focuses on psychological safety from a health, wellbeing and risk perspective, complementing the cultural and behavioural focus set out in Pillar 2.

Fire and rescue work is inherently demanding, both physically and mentally. Our teams face complex challenges, high-risk situations, and evolving public expectations. In response, we must ensure that our people are not only protected from harm but also empowered to thrive. This strategy sets out how we will achieve this, through proactive risk management, developing a culture of care and accountability, and a holistic approach to wellbeing.

Aligned with national frameworks, legal obligations, and sector best practice, there are four priorities in this pillar:

“WYFRS is dedicated to promoting and maintaining the physical and mental wellbeing of all our people, ensuring that our workforce remains healthy, safe, and fit for work.”



There are four priorities in this pillar:



Pillar 3

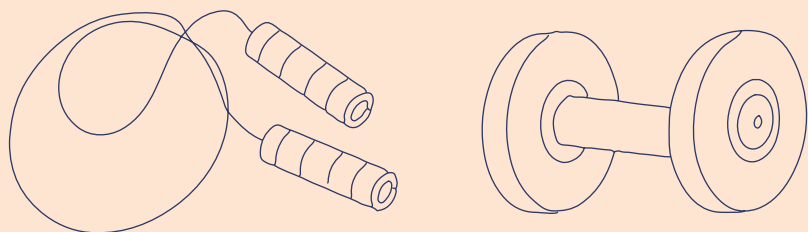
Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Resilience



Priority 1

Culture of safety and continuous improvement

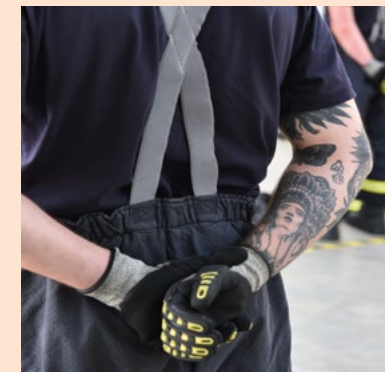
Senior leaders will role model health and safety in all they do, setting the standard for others to achieve. The organisation accepts that human error is inevitable and will continue to promote a just culture, balancing accountability with learning, focusing on improving systems and processes rather than assigning blame, on our journey to becoming a high reliability organisation. We accept the principle of local rationality; the principle that decisions made by our people are rational from their perspective at the time they are made. We will all be accountable for our actions and supported to learn from our mistakes. Legal compliance is the absolute minimum; however, we will always strive for higher standards.



Priority 2

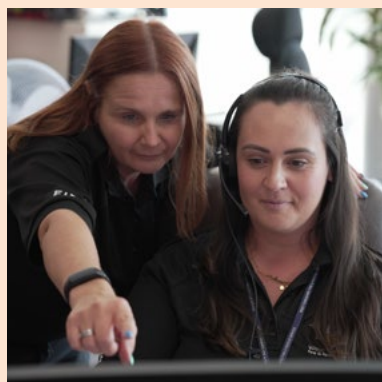
Mental and physical health & wellbeing across all roles

Through a programme of workstreams, workplace visits, campaigns and initiatives, we will continue to support our people to at least maintain, but ideally improve, their fitness, physical and mental health and wellbeing through their career lifecycle.



Pillar 3

Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Resilience



Priority 3

Psychologically safe workplace

This will be achieved by the People and Culture Directorate, leaders and managers working more closely together and placing people at the heart of its decision making, making sure our people feel valued, listened to, empowered and psychologically safe at work. Our people should be confident that they can speak up and will not be ignored, humiliated or blamed.

Priority 4

Equip managers and teams with the tools to manage health, safety and wellbeing effectively

Looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of our people is part of a manager's responsibilities. We will continue to deliver a wide range of training and support to ensure managers have the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to have sensitive and difficult conversations. Recognising wellbeing is a shared responsibility, we will continue in our work to empower our people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

“WYFRS fosters a psychologically safe, inclusive, and supportive workplace. This is driven by our People & Culture Strategy, which aims to create a culture where staff feel safe to speak up and report concerns without fear of retribution.”

Pillar 3

Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Resilience



Year One Objectives:

- ➔ Undertake a review of the Occupational Health Unit and produce a policies and procedures manual by April 2026.
- ➔ Deliver the recommendations for the Management of Occupational Road Risk (MoRR) external audit review by December 2026.
- ➔ Review and update the Authority's Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) by September 2026.
- ➔ Increase the Watch Based Fitness Advisor cohort and introduce a process of continuous development by September 2026.
- ➔ Implement the recommendations from the trauma review by June 2026.
- ➔ Develop a comprehensive suicide prevention and postvention plan by September 2026.

How we will measure success:

- ✔ Employees feel valued, supported and connected to a people-centred culture, reporting increased levels through engagement surveys and qualitative feedback.
- ✔ Wellbeing embedded in strategic decision-making.
- ✔ Wellbeing considerations will be clearly visible in organisational strategies and plans.
- ✔ Increased manager confidence and capability in supporting health, safety and wellbeing evidenced through 360 degree feedback and wellbeing related employee survey indicators.
- ✔ Increased participation in wellbeing, health, safety and fitness initiatives year-on-year.



Pillar 4

Skilled, Ambitious and Professional People



Our Commitment

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service invest heavily in our people to ensure we have the right people, in the right roles, with the right skills at the right time. Through high-quality learning, leadership development and clear standards, we will equip our people with the knowledge and skills to deliver our work brilliantly - now and in the future.

We are committed to building a resilient, inclusive and high-performing organisation underpinned by a strong learning culture and a clear focus on professional excellence. The four priorities in this pillar support the delivery of our desired culture and reflect our determination to continuously improve how we develop our people.

We are invested in a whole career learning journey - this recognises that learning at WYFRS begins before day one and continues throughout employment. We will ensure that everyone who joins us understands our expectations, feels welcomed, and quickly develops a sense of belonging. Throughout their career, colleagues will have access to opportunities that build capability in their current role and support progression where appropriate.

We will continue to invest in a broad range of development approaches, including apprenticeships, accredited qualifications, coaching, mentoring, and targeted development programmes. These will support both operational and enabling roles, ensuring professional growth is accessible across the whole workforce.

This pillar is designed around four priorities:



There are four priorities in this pillar:



Pillar 4

Skilled, Ambitious and Professional People



Priority 1

Emerging Talent, Apprenticeships, and Skills

Our approach to developing emerging talent and professional competence is underpinned with clear standards, robust assessment and consistent evaluation of knowledge, skills and behaviours. In 2026 we will commence delivery of the Firefighter Apprenticeship for our Wholetime intake whilst continuing to support On Call colleagues through the Firefighting Diploma/NVQ.

We will review our skills and professional development offer, increasing the breadth of accredited learning opportunities available. This will support colleagues to gain value-adding, work-related qualifications that support both organisational capability and individual career development.

We are committed to identifying and developing talent across operational and enabling roles. Through a comprehensive talent development offer we will build knowledge and skills alongside enhancing behaviours, and support progression for colleagues with the aspiration to take the next career step.

For business critical roles we will work with senior leaders to identify succession opportunities and develop career pathways to support organisational preparedness. Expectations will be clear and transparent through continued embedding of the NFCC Core Code of Ethics, the NFCC Leadership Framework and our WYFRS Behaviours Framework.



Pillar 4

Skilled, Ambitious and Professional People



Priority 2

Manager and leadership development

We are connected to the work of the NFCC to fine-tune the leadership framework and fire standard which provides opportunity to influence on a national level, and to share our learning and progress made. Our major focus is on developing managers who are supportive, transparent, enabling and performance focused. We will deliver a comprehensive programme of manager and leadership development.

This will include the development and delivery of a bespoke 360-degree assessment tool aligned to the Fire Standards, our Behaviours Framework and NFCC Leadership Framework. Clear expectations will be set for all managers to deliver regular 1-to-1s, team meetings and ongoing development conversations which sit alongside a meaningful appraisal. Learning from our review of operational promotions portfolio will inform a strengthened portfolio approach to developing current and future managers.

“
WYFRS focus on developing managers who are supportive, transparent, enabling and performance focused.”



Pillar 4

Skilled, Ambitious and Professional People

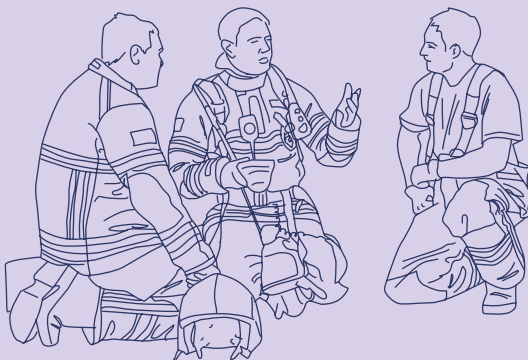


Priority 3

A coaching and mentoring culture

We will embed a coaching and mentoring culture that supports continuous development, confidence, and capability. Through our links with the NFCC Coaching Network, we will grow internal coaching capacity through training and, where appropriate, formal qualifications.

We will also strengthen mentoring opportunities by connecting locally and nationally with partners and people within and beyond the Fire and Rescue Service sector, increasing access to experienced mentors who can support development at all career stages.

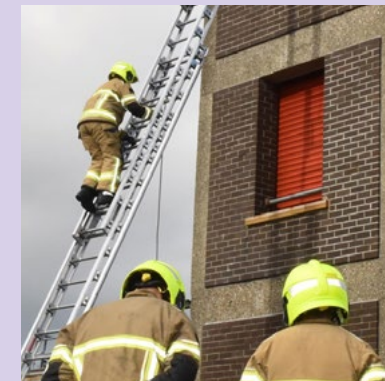


Priority 4

Embedding a learning culture through continuous improvement

We will ensure colleagues have access to a wide range of learning opportunities, including formal training, events, eLearning, and curated self-directed learning. We will review and modernise our learning offer, making greater use of technology and flexible delivery methods.

Robust evaluation will be embedded across our learning programmes to assess impact, demonstrate value, and inform continuous improvement. Insight from evaluation will be shared and acted upon to ensure learning investment delivers meaningful outcomes for individuals and the Service.



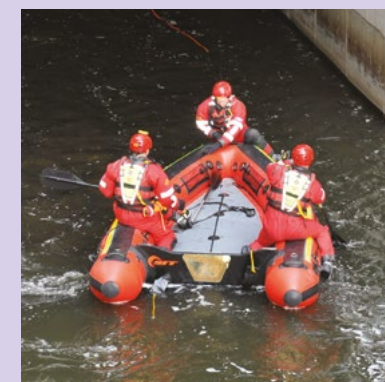
Pillar 4

Skilled, Ambitious and Professional People



Year One Objectives:

- ➔ Delivery of our first Firefighter Apprenticeship course to our new intake of Firefighters, our first as an accredited Apprenticeship Training Provider as we transition away from the NVQ for Wholetime by August 2026.
- ➔ Delivery of improvements in assessment and verification maintaining our high standards whilst reducing workload for candidates, assessors, and quality assurance colleagues; we will deploy these refreshed standards consistently across all qualifications, promotions packs and other assessments by September 2026.
- ➔ We will launch our Behaviours Framework, embedding within our recruitment, development, talent and performance management systems and integrating into our expectations for all colleagues and managers by April 2026.
- ➔ Review our programme of learning and development to identify gaps and add additional content to supplement our offer through in-house delivery, online learning, self-development materials, and curated content by September 2026.
- ➔ We will begin our talent development programme, identifying and nurturing people with talent who meet our high standards. We will also work with leaders to identify talent pipeline gaps and implement a programme of succession planning connected to our organisational preparedness programme by December 2026.
- ➔ We will continue our development of managers and leaders, developing and launching our bespoke WYFRS Way 360°, embedding the leadership Fire Standard, NFCC Leadership Framework and our Behaviours Framework by December 2026.
- ➔ We will use data and insights to inform our programme of manager and leader development workshops, providing training for managers to implement our expectations for managers around 1-to-1s, performance, wellbeing and development, team meetings and value-adding appraisals by June 2026.



Pillar 4

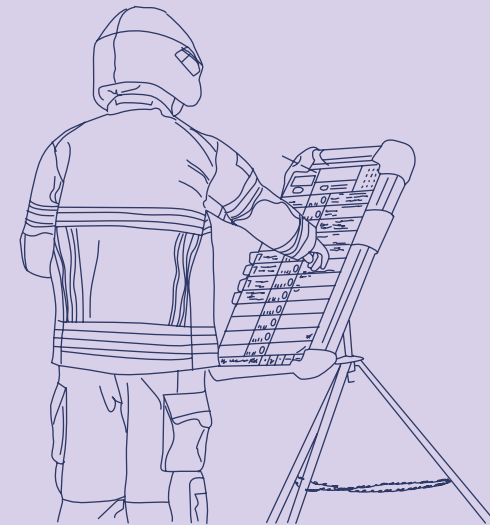
Skilled, Ambitious and Professional People



How We Will Measure Success:

- ✓ We will gather and share data and evidence of the outputs and outcomes from the work delivered. We will use thorough evaluation to track value added from our programmes.
- ✓ A sustained increase in the proportion of substantive role holders across operational and enabling functions with reduced reliance on temporary promotions.
- ✓ Improved learner feedback post-programme.
- ✓ Improved employee engagement and culture survey feedback shows increased confidence in managers' ability.
- ✓ Employees report increased clarity about career pathways, access to development opportunities and confidence that WYFRS invests in their professional growth.
- ✓ Evidence of a strong learning culture demonstrated through increased uptake of development opportunities, completion rates for development conversations/ appraisals, and improvements informed by evaluation data.

“Improved employee engagement and culture survey feedback shows increased confidence in managers' ability.”



Pillar 5

Digital Transformation of People-Related Activity



Our Commitment

We are committed to transforming our people services through digital innovation to enhance efficiency, accessibility, and user experience. Building on the foundations delivered in the 12-Month People Plan, we are investing in modern systems and technologies. These advancements will empower our teams with real-time data, streamline operations, and support evidence-based decision-making. We are embedding digital transformation into every stage of the employee journey, ensuring our people have the right tools, skills, and support to thrive. This commitment reflects our ambition to build a resilient, inclusive, and high-performing Fire and Rescue Service that puts people at the heart of everything we do.

This pillar is an enabler to the ways we deliver people related activities through the investment in improved systems, digital infrastructure and smarter ways of working.



This pillar enables people activities through improved systems and smarter working



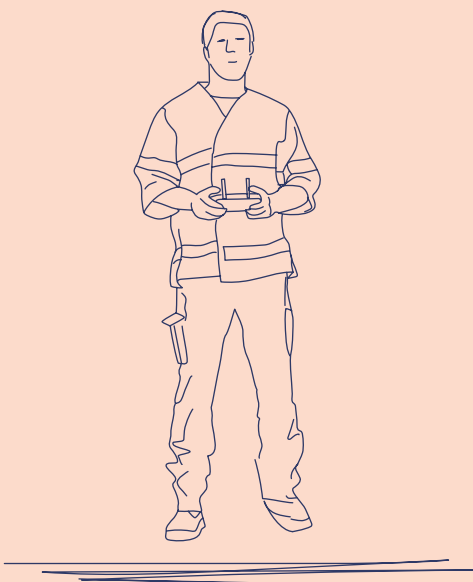
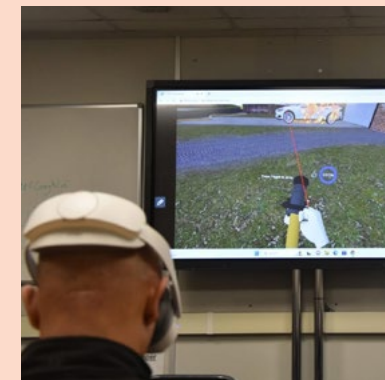
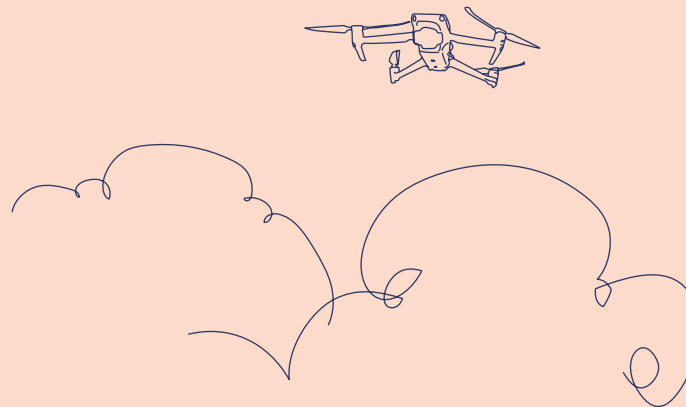
Pillar 5

Digital Transformation of People-Related Activity



Year One Objectives:

- ➔ Ensure our Firefighters' Pension Schemes successfully connect to the Pensions Dashboards ecosystem by December 2025.
- ➔ Introduce a Sickness and Absence live dashboard by April 2026.
- ➔ Automate our Workforce Plan to a live dashboard by December 2026.
- ➔ Improve the visibility and accessibility of people and culture policies, procedures and guidance documents, utilising Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve user experience, reduce duplication and integrate new technologies by December 2026.
- ➔ Deliver the year one commitments of the People Digital Programme (to scope and procure new HR and rostering systems) by December 2026.
- ➔ Review how we can further use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotic automation to reduce inefficiencies and deliver modern people services by September 2026.



“
We are constantly improving and updating our digital infrastructure to adapt to changing requirements and integrate the latest technological innovations.”

Pillar 5

Digital Transformation of People-Related Activity



How we will measure success:

- ✔ Success in our digital transformation of people services will be measured through defined key performance indicators (KPIs) and user engagement/satisfaction metrics.
- ✔ Workforce analytics will be central to evaluating the strategic impact of our changes, as we work towards transitioning all People and Resourcing data into a single source of truth. Live dashboards for sickness and absence, workforce planning, and pensions integration will provide real-time visibility and support data-driven decision-making. We will assess improvements in policy accessibility and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled user support, through stakeholder engagement.
- ✔ Building on the consultation undertaken by the Supporting Good Attendance Project and the Employee Survey, we will track People and Culture Directorate perception, workstream improvements and overall employee experience as we work to reduce duplication and streamline processes and supporting guidance.
- ✔ We will monitor cultural and leadership development through feedback loops, quality surveys, and measure against our new Behaviours Framework. Our success will be defined not only by technological adoption but by the tangible improvements in how our people experience, contribute to, and thrive within West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service.





West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service