West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Authority

Minutes

People and Culture Committee

Date: 2 October 2026

Time: 10:30

Venue: FSHQ

Present:

Cllr Bruce (in the chair), Cllrs Booth (as sub for Cllr Hardie), Dresser, Garvani, Patel, Rontree, Seary (as sub for Cllr Smith), Thewlis and Walker

Apologies:

Cllrs Hardie, Smith

11. Minutes of meeting held on 3 July 2026

Resolved
That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 3 July 2026 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

12. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

13. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

14. Admission of the public

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the public and press.

15. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

16. Training Centre Growth

The Director of People and Culture provided a report to request approval of an increase in the WYFRS Training Centre establishment to enable a 7 day working model.

Members challenged the report author to confirm how many Crew Managers are currently in post and whether non staff costs have been included in the projected costs.

Resolved
That the increase of the Training Centre Establishment by 8 Crew Manager posts is approved

17. Organisational Growth

The Director of People and Culture provided a report to give an overview of organisational growth requirements across WYFRS and to request Members to approve an increase to the operational establishment from 939 to 949.

Members challenged the report author to confirm which posts are new to the Service.

Resolved
That the increase to operational establishment to 949 is approved.

18. People and Culture Activity Report

The Director of People and Culture submitted a report which advised Members of the key HR metrics, including establishment strength, sickness absence data and high-level discipline and grievance figures.

Members sought clarification on sickness classifications relating to mental health and bereavement. They welcomed confirmation that staff can apply for special leave following bereavement and were advised that sickness absence coding follows the National Health Service Electronic Staff Record (NHS ESR).

Members noted the sickness absence rate and were informed that the People Directorate undertake forensic analysis of sickness absence data, which is in line with the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) enabling like-for-like comparisons with other Fire and Rescue Services. Members were asked to note that the percentage figure represents sickness days lost and is driven by a small proportion of long-term sickness cases, for which individual support is provided.

Members discussed the number of discipline cases in quarter 1 and were informed this figure is consistent with year-on-year data. Members welcomed the Service's commitment to reducing discipline and grievance cases and were advised that a fast track process has been introduced to speed up risk assessments, whilst remaining in line with ACAS rules.

Finally, Members challenged the report author to explain the use of the “not known“ category, which is a historical issue relating to data carried forward from the previous reporting tool.

Resolved
That the report be noted

19. Spotlight Ons

The Director of People and Culture provided a report to update Members on the work of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (EDI) team. This included a spotlight on the Employee Networks and Inclusive Practice and a spotlight on the Positive Action and Community Outreach and Engagement activities which took place during the period June to September 2026.

Members noted the reports positively and discussed the necessity to fund these events.

Resolved
That the report be noted

20. Accident Analysis Annual Report

The Director of People and Culture presented a report providing the Annual Accident Analysis Data for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Members sought clarification regarding the benchmarking of accident figures and were informed that the accident data is submitted to regional and national groups and that the Service is line with other Fire and Rescue Services working in a similar environment.

Resolved
That the report be noted.

21. Effectiveness of inclusion Practices

The Director of People and Culture presented a report to provide Members with an overview of the impact of inclusive practices on productivity.

Members discussed an unverified, unconfirmed rumour that WYFRS uses positive discrimination in its recruitment processes but agreed that underrepresented groups should be encouraged to apply to join the Service. Members were advised that positive action is a legal requirement under Sections 158 and 159 of the Equality Act and that the Service applies these provisions fairly and objectively. The statistics demonstrate that some groups are underrepresented but that applicants from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply and the Service has a duty to help everyone reach their potential through preparation workshops. The Executive Leadership Team

declined to comment on hearsay but confirmed that recruitment standards are never lowered and all appointments are made on merit, following a well-designed rigorous assessment process.

Resolved
That the report be noted.

22. Staff Sickness Absence Targets

The Director of People and Culture provided a report to update Members on the WYFRS approach to sickness absence monitoring.

Members challenged the report author to confirm that there are known issues with the use of the Bradford Factor, and were advised that it is used as a supportive management tool to back the Service's people centred approach

Resolved
That the report be noted.

23. Local Pension Board Annual Report

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report which invited Members to review and ratify the Local Pension Board Annual Report 2025/26.

Resolved
That the report be noted, and it be confirmed the Local Pension Board had acted within its Terms of Reference and in accordance with good governance principles during the 2025/26 municipal year.

24. Quarterly Update on the People and Culture Strategy and Delivery Plan 2025 - 2028

The Director of People and Culture presented an update on the People Strategy 2025 – 2028.

Members were advised after being shortlisted in 2 categories at the recent 2026 Yorkshire Excellence in HR Awards Ceremony, WYFRS won the Public Sector Team of the Year award.

Chair