



Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service



People Strategy 2016-2020



**Putting Shropshire's
Safety First**

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1. Introduction

Our strength is our people and they are our Service. This strategy deals with what our people do now and towards 2020 and aims to prepare and support them in putting Shropshire's safety first.

2. Purpose

The People Strategy provides a framework to support the aims and objectives of the Service by providing the **right people** in the **right place** at the **right time** with the **right skills** across the Service.

We aim to support the creation and maintenance of a dignified, stimulating working environment where staff are valued and encouraged to maximise their contribution to the effectiveness of the Service.

3. How the People Strategy Fits

Where practicable Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority supports the achievement of national strategies applicable to the Fire and Rescue Service whilst balancing this with a focus on providing a Service that puts Shropshire's safety first. To that end the following strategies and frameworks have informed the development of our People Strategy:

- Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority Service Plan 2015-2020
- Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority Single Equality Scheme
- Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Training Needs Analysis
- 'Enabling Closer Working' consultation and response documents
- Making the Difference Needed - CFOA Strategic Direction 2015-2019
- West Midlands Regional HR Strategy 2014-17
- Regional Chief Fire Officers Collaborative working undertaking
- National Framework Document 2012 (as amended)

This strategy doesn't stand alone and other plans are derived from, or informed by, it including the:

- Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Employee Engagement Plan
- Annual Human Resources and Development department Team Plan
- Annual Training and Assurance department Team Plan
- Service Development department Team Plan
- Information, Communication and Technology Strategy 2015-2020

4. Vision

Our mission, 'Putting Shropshire's Safety First' can only be achieved with the appropriate numbers of motivated and skilled staff.

5. Objectives

The objectives of the People Strategy are to support the organisation in the achievement of its objectives by ensuring SFRS:

1. Creates and maintains a workforce that is committed and able to achieve our mission.
2. Supports employee improvement processes to enable staff to undertake diverse and changing roles.
3. Selects and retains a diverse workforce to reflect the community we serve.

6. Drivers for Change

Demand

Traditional demand is declining. The number of incidents has decreased nationally and locally over the last 10 years to less than two-thirds of what they were. At the same time the amount of prevention and partnership activity we are engaged with has increased, with more work in schools, communities and business education than ever before.

There are close links with health and social care agencies as those that are vulnerable can often be clients of more than one agency for example, older people living alone. Such groups are more likely to have need of interventions from both Health and Fire and Rescue services, especially in bad weather. Links like these show us where our dedicated staff can focus efforts in future to increase prevention activities making Shropshire even safer and at the same time reduce the demand on the health sector, improving the quality of life for the people that we serve.

Funding

Public sector austerity has had a huge impact on the Service. Our budget has decreased significantly since 2010. We were proactive in meeting the challenge of diminishing financial resources and our 4 year Public Value programme put us in a stable financial position from which to plan for the expected further reductions over the period to 2020.

We haven't recruited new full-time firefighters since 2009 and we have reduced the size of our workforce through the natural retirement profile. In 2012 we also began a Service Transformation Programme which aims to invest in the short term, to save in the long term making us more productive and efficient. This required foresight and funding and the Fire Authority supported the initiative with a number of projects that are ongoing, including upgrading technical infrastructure and investing in new technology to maximise our productivity.

Ways of working

Declining incident levels and reductions in staffing numbers to meet financial constraints have led us to look again at where our risk comes from and how we can best respond. As a result our 5 year Service Plan (2015-2020) includes a number of transformative projects that consider the duty systems we use for our full time firefighters; the role, function and ways of working in Fire Control as well as the introduction of new technologies and consideration of how to best use our buildings.

Our ICT Strategy falls out of the 5 year Service Plan and explains how we intend to link the use of technology with transformation and ways of working including the reduction in manual processes, increasing the links between systems and data and improving ease of use and user satisfaction.

7. Our Core Values

Through the definition of our Core Values, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority sets out what is expected of employees.

Service to the Community

We value **service to the community** by

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

People

We value **all our employees'** by practicing and promoting

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal Development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

Diversity

- We value **diversity** in the service and the community by
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

Improvement

- We value **improvement** at all levels of the service by
- Accepting responsibility for our performance
- Being open-minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

8. Our People Capacity

The 'Human Resources and Development' and 'Training and Assurance' teams consist of appropriately qualified staff.

HR and Development advice is provided by CIPD (or equivalent) qualified staff. All staff working in Training and Assurance are appropriately trained and qualified in their fields e.g. we have trained instructors and qualified assessors in Training and Development.

The Service Development team complement the work of the other people-focused teams through their work developing improvements and supporting the management of change across the organisation.

Each team has an allocated budget which is monitored by SMT with overall scrutiny provided by the Strategy and Resources Committee of the Fire Authority.

We out-source our Occupational Health and Fitness Assessment services and each of these contracts is let to qualified and experienced professionals.

Where appropriate, teams work with their colleagues across the region and with other agencies to support training to meet defined need and the sharing of facilities and experiences.

9. The Strategy

The Strategy is divided into 6 **key areas** and each has defined targets and activities which support the achievement of our organisational aims and objectives.

People Strategy Key Areas:

1. Developing leadership capacity
2. Organisation development and engagement
3. Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce
4. Resourcing our Service
5. Reward and recognition
6. Health and wellbeing

More detailed planning and activities to support the achievement of our organisational strategy can be found in the Human Resources and Development and Training and Assurance team annual plans.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

All departmental plans are monitored by SMT through exception reporting.

An annual report on the People Strategy will be considered by the Standards and Human Resources Committee.

The People Strategy is available to all staff and will be published on the Portal and on our website at www.shropshirefire.gov.uk. There will be ongoing consultation with the Representative Bodies regarding the implementation of specific elements of the Strategy through the annual plans.

Measuring effectiveness:

We will know our strategy has been effective if we find:

- Overall staff engagement shown through the staff survey is good against benchmarks and continues to improve
- Operational response and performance targets are met
- Evidence of well-managed change programmes collected via feedback and engagement surveys
- Sickness absence levels, including stress related absence, is low compared to benchmark organisations
- Our staff perform well in open recruitment processes

11. High Level Objectives and Actions

11a. Develop leadership capacity

High level objectives:

- We will support the development of staff within the organisation to ensure operational and non-operational leadership capacity is in place to manage the organisation in the future
- We will support the improvement of political and managerial leadership through attracting and developing our senior managers and Members of the Fire Authority
- We will support appropriate regional training collaboration at all levels of leadership



	Actions
i.	Continue and refresh internal leadership development programmes as necessary
ii.	Contribute to the development of operational and non-operational leadership programmes regionally and nationally
iii.	Produce a Member training needs analysis and target high priority need
iv.	Produce an organisational training needs analysis and target interventions to mitigate risk in a cost effective way
v.	Implement and review the workforce and succession planning process

11b. Organisation development and engagement

High level objectives:

- We will support the development of our organisation to improve productivity and manage performance
- We will support the collaboration and appropriate partnerships with other Services/agencies
- We will work to maintain effective employment relations with our employees and representative bodies
- We will engage with staff to ascertain and improve levels of satisfaction and motivation



	Action
i.	Produce an organisational training needs analysis and target interventions to mitigate risk in a cost effective way
ii.	Ensure effective Occupational Health arrangements are in place to support a reduction in absence
iii.	Participate in and encourage, Trade Union consultation both formally and informally
iv.	Ensure cross-team Business Continuity plans in place
v.	Implement regular staff engagement surveys and support the achievement of resulting action plans
vi.	Implement the communications strategy and monitor its effectiveness
vii.	Work effectively, drawing on external support as required to maximise productivity

11c. Develop the skills and capacity of the workforce

High level objectives:

- Work with managers to raise performance and skills across all functions
- Work towards providing the most appropriate blend of practical, classroom based, and remote learning opportunities
- Deliver operational training in a manner that supports all duty systems.
- Provide robust measurement, monitoring and quality assurance of operational capability
- Exploit Commercial Opportunities.
- Develop commonality and share resources with key partners
- Digitalise and streamline all Training & Development data reporting systems & processes



	Actions
i.	Make efficient and effective use of local and regional training resources.
ii.	Standardise approaches to the delivery of training and development across the region including common course content
iii.	Look for opportunities in all areas of training delivery to exploit commercial prospects.
iv.	Develop specialist areas in conjunction with regional partners.
v.	Develop our Telford site with consideration of the current and future provision of regional facilities.
vi.	Design and deliver quality operational training and development programmes to enable competent effective response to emergency incidents that meets the demands of both Retained and Whole-time Duty Systems
vii.	Produce an organisational training needs analysis and target interventions to mitigate risk in a cost effective way
viii.	Develop and implement an accurate and robust method of recording, monitoring and reporting on operational training
ix.	Support and monitor the IPDR process across the organisation
x.	Develop the potential of Resourcelink and other software to digitalise and streamline People reporting and processes
xi.	Enhance Critical Operational Training with Operational Licences 'tickets to Ride'

11d. Resourcing our Fire and Rescue Service

High level objectives:

- We will work to build a diverse workforce
- We will work with managers to ensure effective recruitment, retention and progression
- We will deliver effective workforce planning
- We will encourage opportunities for Flexible working



	Actions
i.	Provide timely positive action events to encourage under-represented groups to consider a career with SFRS
ii.	Look for opportunities to support the employment and development of apprentices
iii.	Develop workforce and succession plans for current staff
iv.	Review vacancy management to support the development of flexible working opportunities
v.	Look for opportunities to support the employment and development of new graduates
vi.	Use proven modern recruitment methods e.g. on-line application methods and candidate screening
vii.	Implement the highest standards of personnel security vetting through clearly communicated requirements and checks

11e. Reward and Recognition

High level objectives:

- We will support the development of national pay arrangement which recognise the contribution of all employees
- We will support, with any local flexibilities, the development of an effective employment package
- We will support and monitor effective Performance management
- We will clearly communicate our 'benefits' offering



	Actions
i.	Create a comprehensive 'benefits' offering and refresh it every 2 years
ii.	Research and recommend the provision of appropriate additional employee benefits which offer value for money for the Authority
iii.	Participate in regional and national forums to influence future pay negotiations
iv.	Celebrate success and seek to recognise outstanding employee contributions in innovative ways
v.	Support and monitor the IPDR process across the organisation to ensure quality and consistency
vi.	Provide planned training to meet identified need through the IPDR process
vii.	Seek suggestions for improvements in all areas of the Service

11f. Health and Wellbeing

High level objectives:

- Develop a Health and Wellbeing action plan to improve the health and wellbeing of our staff, including our responsibilities under the 'Time to Change' campaign
- De-stigmatise issues surrounding mental health illnesses
- Use all of our data sources including reasons for sickness and our Staff Survey to design interventions to improve the health and wellbeing of our staff
- Ensure our staff are able to access appropriate care which will enable them to return to their duties at the earliest opportunity
- Support managers with training initiatives to strengthen people management practice



	Actions
i.	Develop a Health and Wellbeing Plan to include actions to support the 'Time to Change' pledge
ii.	Encourage staff to seize formal and informal development opportunities
iii.	Create and communicate our 'Benefits' offering
iv.	Research and cost the introduction of an employee Assistance Programme
v.	Review the Management Development programmes to ensure appropriate material is discussed with new managers
vi.	Use absence and occupational health statistics to inform policy and planning
vii.	Support and monitor supervision and IPDR processes across the organisation