

People Strategy End of Year Report 25/26

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Simon Hardiman
Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Germaine Worker, Head of HR and
Administration on 01743 260210.

1 Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the achievements that have been made
against the People Strategy for 2025 – 2028.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the progress on the People Strategy
2025-28.

3 Background

This report sets out the progress Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)
has made in delivering the priorities of the People Strategy 2025–2028. The
strategy provides a clear and ambitious roadmap for developing a modern,
inclusive and high performing workforce - one that is equipped to meet the
evolving needs of our communities and uphold the Service's longstanding
commitment to protecting life, property and the environment across
Shropshire.

Over the past year, SFRS has continued to invest in its people, strengthen
leadership capability and embed a culture where everyone feels valued,
supported and able to contribute their best. The achievements highlighted in
this report demonstrate how the Service is turning strategic intent into
meaningful action: enhancing recruitment and retention, improving learning
and development pathways, advancing equality, diversity and inclusion, and
prioritising the wellbeing and safety of our staff.

These developments reflect the dedication of colleagues across all roles and
stations who have embraced change and worked collaboratively to drive
improvement.

While the Strategy spans a three-year period, the progress captured here
shows clear momentum and a strong foundation for the work still to come. It

also reaffirms the Service's commitment to ensuring that its people - its greatest asset - are supported to thrive now and into the future.

The Strategy is delivered through seven interconnected themes:

- a. Developing leadership capacity
- b. Organisational development and engagement
- c. Resourcing the service
- d. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- e. Health, safety, wellbeing and fitness
- f. Skills, training and education
- g. New ways of working

4 Progress against the existing plans

Developing Leadership Capacity

This area covers two specific areas i.e. Leadership Development and Coaching and Mentoring.

Achievements:

- a) Coaching and Mentoring continues to be a key focus for the Service. 12 individuals are registered on the NFCC Coaching and Mentoring portal and are currently exploring potential coaches/mentors.
- b) There is currently four live mentoring relationship across the Service.
- c) In August 2025, the Service agreed to adopt the NFCC Supervisory Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) as the preferred programme for leadership and management training. There are currently 21 learners on programme and 7 have completed the programme. Evaluation has been positive and learners sight flexibility of learning and welcome the practical application of newly learnt skills.
- d) In August 2025, the Service agreed to adopt the NFCC Middle Leadership Programme (MLP) as the preferred programme for leadership and management training. There are currently 4 learners on programme and 4 have completed the programme. Evaluation has been positive and learners sight flexibility of learning and the opportunity to understand more about political governance and trade union relationships.
- e) A further CMI Level 7 Strategic Leadership and Management programme was delivered in 2025 with a mixture of Group and Station Managers who are aspiring Group Managers.
- f) One AM has been successful in getting a place on the 2026 Executive Leadership Programme cohort.
- g) With reference to the 2024 HMICFRS Standards of Behaviour report – mandatory training continues to be rolled out with excellent take up - performance management lie (57), handling difficult conversations (141), conducting effective workplace investigations (47), Attendance management lite (62) and Discipline and grievance Lite (65).
- h) A number of successful promotion processes have been undertaken including DCFO, ACFO, SM Area Command, WM – Development,

Training, Fire Safety Inspecting Officer – all successfully filled. The new readiness for promotion policy commencing June 2026.

Organisational Development and engagement

This area covers three specific areas i.e. Staff Engagement and Reward and Recognition

Achievements:

- a) Cycle to Work scheme ran from 3/6/25 to 12/7/25. 9 orders were placed with a total spend of £6,981.17 and average spend of £775.69. SFRS saved as well with NIC savings of £1,047.18 A further window is running 2/6/26 to 11/7/26.
- b) Cycle to Work scheme has now been running 7 years. Since the launch of the scheme, the Service has supported 164 orders with a total spend of £128,400. Average spend across the scheme is £782.93. SFRS have saved £17,803.
- c) Since the launch, scheme users have offset 9,228kg of carbon which is the equivalent of 439 mature trees. Scheme users will burn 20,467,200 calories which is the equivalent of 40,211 Big Mac's!! Scheme users will also make savings outside of the scheme of approximately £56,549 in total.
- d) 4 members of staff have been awarded honorariums within the non-uniform section of the workforce to support personal and service areas of development.
- e) Celebration of Success was held on 13 October 2025 – 24 On Call Recruits, 4 Fire Control Recruits, 15 Development Firefighters, 2 Development Fire Control Operators, 3 Employer Award, the High Sheriff's Good Citizen Award, the Telent Charity Shield, the Dave Bishton Challenge Shield and the Stations in Bloom winners.
- f) Medals Ceremony was held on 7 July 2025 to present 18 Operational Medals (20 years), 4 non-operational awards (20 years), 4 operational 30-year clasps, 2 operational 40-year clasps. 2 x CFO Commendations to firefighters who had gone above and beyond the call of duty at incidents.
- g) Achievers Awards were held on 12 May 2025 – 55 members of staff from across the organisation were invited to receive certificates in recognition of training they had completed or going above and beyond their day-to-day role.
- h) Continued to maintain strong relationships and to engage effectively with the Trade Unions re. HMICFRS Culture and Values, Holiday Pay, On Call Leave and MH Screening, Flu Vaccinations, Occupational Health processes, CRMP, Officer Flexi time, Use of Boats during Flood/Spate conditions, Joint Recognition (of Rep Bodies) Agreement, Maternity Policy, Bullying and Harassment, Marauding Terrorist Attack procedures, Telford Project and various employee relations matters, new ways of working, job evaluation and recruitment.
- i) The Service continues to receive high levels of compliments, with 49 being received 24/25 and a further 45 in 25/26.

Resourcing the Service

This area covers three specific areas i.e. Workforce planning, Recruitment and Attraction, Talent Management and Succession Planning and Widening Participation.

Achievements:

- a) Work has started on the development of a new workforce plan. Currently in the software design phase. The process will enable managers by giving them access to accurate, real-time data, clearer forecasting tools, and a structured approach to planning their teams. This will support better decision-making, improve resource allocation, and ensure managers can anticipate and respond to workforce risks more proactively.
- b) The Service has provided secondment opportunities for staff in the NFCC and Local Resilience Forum. There have been a wealth of development and Fixed Term Contract opportunities across the Service - C&C Project, P&P, OD, HR, PMO, Tech Services, Workshops, and across operational roles, including, on-call & wholtime - CM, WM, SM, GM, AM & ACFO.
- c) Supported 2 work experience placements during 2025, the third withdrew from the programme and it was too late to fill the place. A further 3 are planned for 2026.
- d) Continuous feedback has been received and has shaped the simplified IPDR process that is due for launch. Acting on feedback, for those employees not wanting promotion/development, a standard Action Plan and IPDR was issued, whereas those wanting promotion, were still working towards a more detailed action plan and IPDR. To ensure consistency across the Service, Corporate Objectives were launched in April 2025, which were mandatory for all employees, covering communication, promoting inclusive culture, commitment to development.
- e) A further 10 (compared 4 last year) support staff roles have been reviewed through the Job Evaluation Gauge system in 2025 plus a further 2 roles through the SFIA (Skills for the Information Age) Framework where roles have been benchmarked and pay uplifted for support staff in line with market values for the roles.
- f) Continued to support Fire Control resources due to an extension of the C and C project whereby establishment was increased by 2 Firefighters and 3, 12-month FTCs to backfill secondments to the Fire Control project.
- g) As of 31st March 2026, there were 17 live apprenticeships in areas such as Data Analyst, Operational Firefighter, AI Strategy, AI Productivity. The Service continues to spend all levy funds and actively works with local partners to secure funding to continue the offer of apprenticeships.
- h) The Service successfully utilised 11 Firefighters on Fixed Term Contracts to bolster the resilience in the Wholtime establishment.
- i) Full review of Associate Trainers and Training Instructors contracts has been completed resulting in improved work life balance and potential attraction to future vacancies.

- j) Data analysis undertaken to look at high performing individuals from CPG. Two focus groups held to understand what a high potential offering could look like. Outcome of these groups has progressed and are being incorporated into the launch of the revised IPDR process in May 2026

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This area covers two specific areas i.e. EDI and Culture and Values

Achievements:

- a) The Service started the journey on a culture transformation programme which is now moving forward with real momentum, building on the systemic, participatory approach outlined at the start. Through open dialogue, collaborative workshops and targeted leadership development, the organisation has begun to surface the real cultural challenges and co-create a shared vision for the future. The work is designed to *“equip leaders, managers and team members with the capability and confidence to ‘own’ and bring about real change,”* and that is exactly what is happening. Engagement has been strong, leaders are increasingly aligned, and staff are contributing openly and constructively. The programme is already modelling the inclusive, values-driven culture you want to embed, and early signs show improved trust, clearer expectations and a growing sense of shared ownership across the service.
- b) Continuing our work with the expansion of protections from Sexual Harassment in the Employment Rights Act (2025) the Service has reviewed and updated its Anti-Harassment Bullying Policy and created a short briefing document for all employees, implemented training for station manager/equivalent and above and are currently reviewing training requirements for all other employees.
- c) The Voices Groups continue to be a strong method of engaging with our employees and have expanded the group to include ADHD/Autism reps. Some notable areas have been the continued success of the lunch and learns for Menopause, Neurodiversity and the Moving More lunchtime runs. We have created a new Women's Tri Service group and for International Women's Day we ran a Tri-service away day and evening session with activities from each service and guest speakers. We also ran a Make and Bake Sale at HQ for International Women's Day where we raised money for Mental Health Shropshire. The BAME voices representative spoke at the Black Firefighters Conference, where he discussed his experiences throughout his firefighting career.
- d) 45 employees have received the EDI Induction package during 2025, 10 attended the EQIA training and 19 the Dyslexia Awareness training.
- e) Two in Person On-call Positive Action taster sessions have been held across the Service, with 3 virtual sessions also taking place.
- f) Currently supporting 40 live Reasonable Adjustment cases, the majority of these for Dyslexia, some for ADHD and back problems.
- g) We have continued promoting the workplace adjustment passport at all managers meetings, resulting in an increased uptake of this.

- h) The Service are involved in a number of external EDI groups: Telford EDI Group, Telford Employability Group, which has now launched the report with the results of its survey which we helped to create, Telford Interfaith Group, NFCC EDI groups.
- i) Ongoing attendance at events and conference, the AFSA conference, National Dyslexia Conference, Autism Champion Training, Dyslexia Information Day, NFCC Masterclass.
- j) Our work to improve monitoring data for our employees was recognised by the Home Office and received an email following our data submission praising us as one of the best services in the country for our high disclosure rates, this was further to extensive communication with our employees and improving internal systems.
- k) The Service has continued to see positive use of the external Confidential Reporting line provided by 'Say So' fostering a culture of transparency, trust and accountability within the organisation.

Health, Wellbeing and Fitness

Achievements:

- a) The Service have recruited a Health and Wellbeing Officer on FTC to provide a focused and more proactive support for staff wellbeing, creating a healthier, more engaged and resilient workforce.
- b) Continuing to provide the services of Serve and Protect Credit Union where staff can save money for their financial future and be there if they need to borrow throughout their career and beyond. Total savings £21,461 (27 savers). Average savings per member £794. Total of 3 loans outstanding, with a total value of £3,478. The average loan outstanding being £1,159.
- c) VIVUP is our digitalised employee benefits and reward package enabling staff to access discounts and purchase items. Since December 2022, 17 staff have borrowed £19,478.16 over 50 different loans. This is an average loan of £389.56 and an average per person of £1,145.77.
- d) To date 46 people have attended the Suicide Prevention training. 17 have attended Suicide Safety Training and 13 people have attended Suicide Safety Interventions and 103 Suicide First Aid Lite.
- e) 53 people have attended Mental Health (MH) First Aid course, 76 receiving the MH first aid awareness training and additional 62 attending the MH e learning awareness
- f) During 2025, all staff who underwent fitness testing achieved a 'Green' score, with the exception of one individual who recorded an 'Amber' result. The employee in the 'Amber' category was placed on a Fitness Trainer Journey, which is scheduled for completion in Quarter 1 of 2026.

The table below shows the breakdown by quarter:

	Tests conducted	Tests passed (Green score)
Q1	115	115 (100%)
Q2	124	124 (100%)
Q3	100	100 (100%)
Q4	123	122 (99%)
Total	462	461

95% of operational staff were tested, resulting in a 99.8% pass rate for 2025. For the remaining 5% who were not tested, it is likely that factors such as long-term sickness absence or extended periods of leave contributed to non-attendance. The Fitness Advisor will conduct mop-up sessions in Quarter 1 of 2026 to ensure that outstanding assessments are completed. In addition, the Fitness Contract has been extended for a further year.

- g) The continued high reporting of Near Miss incidents (84 in 2025, up from 64 in 2024) demonstrates a strong and improving safety culture, with staff actively identifying and reporting potential hazards, while injuries remain relatively low at 33 in 2025.
- h) The Service's Menopause Champions have continued to receive CPD in their roles ensuring their knowledge is up to date. This has been achieved by attending training and briefing sessions, and both have played an active role in supporting staff across the Service. In addition, we have trained 55 Menopause Awareness for managers sessions with a further 43 booked on.
- i) Continuation of and regular engagement from staff in lunchtime/after work activities including walking/running groups, Telford station also has a paddle court and on is being developed for Shrewsbury.

Skills, Training and Education

This area covers two specific areas i.e. Statutory and Mandatory Role Based Training

Achievements:

- a) Course attendance has continued to improve, with cancellation rates remaining low. This success has been supported by the flexibility of current training arrangements, which cater effectively to both on-call and wholtime staff. In collaboration with Training Instructor Coordinators, the Operational Training and Development Team has maintained sufficient course availability. This has ensured that all personnel are able to sustain the competencies required for both internal standards and external accreditations.
- b) Training instructors with designated lead subject areas have identified suitably qualified external fire and rescue professionals to provide

independent quality assurance across all aspects of the core skills framework. A Memorandum of Understanding is being established to formalise these arrangements, helping to rebuild and strengthen professional working relationships that were previously integral to training and development.

- c) Training instructor co-ordinators have worked efficiently to create a bespoke facilities specification document, this will allow an appointed design team to create, advise and shape the future training facilities at Telford Central.
- d) From July 2026, Incident Command Initial training and recertification will be incorporated into the Training Instructor Core Skills framework. Full integration across all relevant programmes is expected to be achieved by January 2027.
- e) The Training Team has reintroduced a previous Memorandum of Understanding with a neighbouring Fire and Rescue Service. In addition, a Service Level Agreement has been established to provide a robust contingency arrangement. This ensures that, in the event of a total training facility failure, training can continue with minimal disruption, maintaining “business as usual” and safeguarding ongoing operational competence.

New Ways of Working

This area covers two specific areas i.e. Managing Change, Information Systems and Organisational Performance Metrics

Achievements

- a) A full Governance review has been completed where all Committee meetings (S and R, Stds , Audit and Stds, Performance and Scrutiny, Hearings Panel, StAG, BMEP, Personnel Panel, Appeals Committee and Independent Persons) was completed. All Terms of Reference and Role descriptions were reviewed and agreed, and the Member Officer protocol was also reviewed and updated.
- b) The recent restructure of the HR team—introducing a fulltime HR Manager, a People and Culture Manager, and a Health and Wellbeing Officer—has significantly strengthened our capability. These roles have increased capacity, enhanced specialist support, and enabled a more proactive and strategic approach to people management. As a result, the team is better equipped to drive cultural improvement, support staff wellbeing, and deliver a more responsive, consistent, and high-quality HR service across the organisation.
- c) The Service has introduced an internal safeguarding board to strengthen people’s experience by ensuring concerns are addressed early, promoting safer recruitment practices, and creating a consistent, accountable framework that protects staff and the individuals they support while building trust across the organisation.
- d) Establishment of the workforce (CPI 9a) and demographics (CPI9b) continue to be monitored through the Performance and Risk group. The Service are currently working on a set of Corporate Health

Indicators to evaluate and measure the organisations health. These include Leadership PI's linked to leadership programmes, IPDRs, 360 feedback. Culture PIs, measuring staff engagement, employee satisfaction, attendance management, turnover and disciplines and EDI PIs, measuring EDI data, EDI training analysis of workforce demographics. These will be monitored via the services new Performance and Assurance SMT meeting.

- e) Pay negotiations for WT staff, support staff and Brigade managers were agreed and pay awards granted.
- f) Delivery of the **McCloud/Sargeant** and **Matthews** pension remedies has progressed well, with high member engagement and completion of most statements and elections. However, ongoing delays to outstanding statements and payments are largely due to resourcing pressures at West Yorkshire Pension Fund, though improvements are expected. Strong member support has been maintained through enhanced communications, presentations and one-to-one guidance.
- g) All HMICFRS data collections continue to be submitted in a timely efficient manner.

5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The strategy is monitored by the HR department, and the achievements are then reported back through SMT People and Culture and Strategy and Resources Committee via an end of year report.

6 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the progress against the new People Strategy for 2025 – 2028.

7 Capacity

The capacity to undertake all of these areas of work are continually reviewed through the People Management meeting. Where growth is required to support areas of work, reports are submitted to the Senior Management Team for approval.

8 Collaboration / Partnership Working

There are continued opportunities for us to work in collaboration with other Fire Services, educational institutions and other emergency services.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct relationship between the People Strategy and equality and diversity. An [EQIA](#) has been completed on the People Strategy.

10 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

11 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

12 Reputation

The Strategy directly aligns and supports the service priorities.

13 Appendices

No appendices are attached to this report

14 Background Papers

People Strategy 2025 – 2028.