



Annex A

1. Changes since the last version

Current version 2.0 - based on feedback obtained through stakeholder engagement and consultation, the document has been updated and reissued.

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2. Index

1. [Document changes](#)
2. [Index](#)
3. [Purpose and scope](#)
4. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
5. [Our Vision](#)
6. [Our Aim](#)
7. [The Challenge](#)
8. [Our Values](#)
9. [Our Principles](#)
10. [Our People Priorities](#)
11. [Measuring Success](#)
12. [People Strategy Framework](#)
13. [Key area one – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)
14. [Key area two - Employee Engagement](#)
15. [Key area three - Organisational Development and Resourcing](#)
16. [Key area four - Training, Learning and Development](#)
17. [Key area five - Health and Wellbeing](#)
18. [Consultation/publication/communication](#)
19. [Impact Assessments](#)

3. Purpose and scope

The People Strategy 2020-2025 sets out a framework for engaging and developing employees of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (the Service), to enable the cultural changes which will help the Service to better deliver its vision and strategic priorities, while ensuring behaviours, values and standards are adhered to.

The framework outlines five key areas;

- Equality Diversity and Inclusion
- Employee Engagement



Annex A

- Organisational Development and Resourcing
- Training, Learning and Development
- Health and Wellbeing

Each key area has objectives that support the overarching strategy which are further expanded in this document.

Over the next five years the Service will become more flexible, diverse and integrated with partners, investigating opportunities for employees to broaden skill-sets, ensuring where possible, they have opportunities, choice and pathways for promotion and development.

The Service's People Strategy is intended to be flexible in order to address how we can most effectively respond to our current and future needs.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (the Authority) – endorsing and supporting the strategy, and employees, to ensure the Service works to improve public safety, strengthen collaboration, drive transformation and enhance effectiveness, as laid out in the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025.

The Strategic Management Board (SMB) - has corporate responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the strategy.

Managers - responsible for embracing the strategy. Supporting employees and setting the example, in line with the ethos of the strategy. Supporting the drive to change the organisational culture, as the Service strives to achieve the vision, values, and strategic objectives.

All employees – the successful implementation of the People Strategy depends on the buy-in and energetic support of everyone concerned, collectively upholding the expected values, behaviours and objectives of the Service.

5. Our Vision

Our vision is to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel. The strategy will support work to achieve the vision through its aim and priorities, and enable the Service to capture the commitment and professionalism of all employees.

6. Our Aim

Our aim is to optimise the contribution and wellbeing of all employees, from existing employees, newly recruited and those leaving the Service.



Annex A

7. The Challenge

The Public Safety Plan 2020-2025 identifies and translates the internal and external factors which present risks and challenges for the workforce into the future.

The Corporate Plan 2020-2025 illustrates how the Service will meet the challenges faced, and the commitment to delivering consistent improvement; taking a fresh look at how services are delivered in line with those identified risks and opportunities.

The global Covid-19 pandemic is already affecting the size and shape of the economy locally, as well as nationally; the way in which public services are delivered; and, the way in which people work. As yet, the longer-term effects of this are not fully understood but we envisage that some of these impacts are likely to have permanent effects, where the Service will need to adapt in order to ensure the safety, wellbeing and productivity of our staff as well as the safety and wellbeing of the public that we serve.

In addition to presenting new risks, changes to our operating environment may also present new opportunities, such as the potential for larger working age populations in our local towns and villages during the working week as, employers and employees favour remote working technologies instead of commuting to sites in large urban centres. Such trends could increase the pool of people from different backgrounds who might consider working for us on a part-time and / or flexible basis. They will also help inform the design of our employment propositions and recruitment strategies.

Internally other risks and challenges may emerge over the course of this strategy. The following foreseeable risks have been considered;

- Any change in employee legislation
- Any change in strategic direction, or change in Member direction and/or changing priorities
- Engaging and inspiring our employees to buy into the strategy and deliver in light of other conflicting priorities, pressures and expectations, planned or unplanned
- Existing and future budgetary restraints, affecting employee availability and workforce capacity
- Remaining focussed to deliver the priorities of the strategy over the course of the five years and potentially beyond

8. Our Values



Annex A

Underpinning everything the Service does is a set of values, which are aspirational for all employees where they engage with others; be it with the public, partner agencies or colleagues.

These values embrace:

- Service to the Community
- People
- Diversity
- Improvement

Our core values cover a range of topics. Those specifically relevant to this strategy are:

- Working with all groups to target and reduce risk and pro-actively seek opportunities to collaborate with our partners
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect, challenging any prejudice or discrimination and respecting people's right to privacy and protecting any personal information we hold
- Placing value on diversity within the Service and the communities we serve
- Creating opportunities to develop and learn, encourage innovation and creativity, working honestly to develop trust and striving for excellence in all that we do
- Accepting responsibility and accountability for performance and actions, being answerable to those we serve

9. Our Principles

Our principles will be supported through the delivery of the strategy, in particular:

- Ensuring that all employees are aware of the vision, values and behaviours expected within the workplace
- Improving performance through building the skills of a diverse workforce that reflect the community
- Ensuring employees have an understanding of how the Service operates, in order to be as effective as possible within their role
- Ensuring employees recognise and work to the People Strategy, regularly reviewing how their work contributes and supports it, and evidencing this in their annual appraisal

10. Our People Priorities

Over the next five years the Service aims to:



Annex A

- Create and maintain a sustainable workforce which enables the Service to take appropriate action to:
 - Recruit, develop and retain a highly talented workforce
 - Monitor and address, where identified, future and occupational skill shortages
 - Promote career opportunities, and showcase the organisation as a quality employer
 - Identify, develop and motivate talent
- Ensure our employment offer is inclusive, and embraces flexibility, to support improved diversity representation across the Service
- Continue development and roll-out of more flexible and innovative employment and apprenticeship opportunities
- Ensure the training strategy and priorities meet the future needs of the Public Safety and Corporate plans 2020-2025
- Continue developing cultural values and behaviours which makes the Service a great place to work for everyone
- Celebrate success and seek to recognise outstanding employee contributions in innovative ways, through our reward and recognition practices
- Continue to explore ways of supporting and enhancing health and wellbeing of employees as their life circumstances change

11. Measuring Success

The success of the People Strategy will be measured by a variety of key performance indicators, including however not limited to:

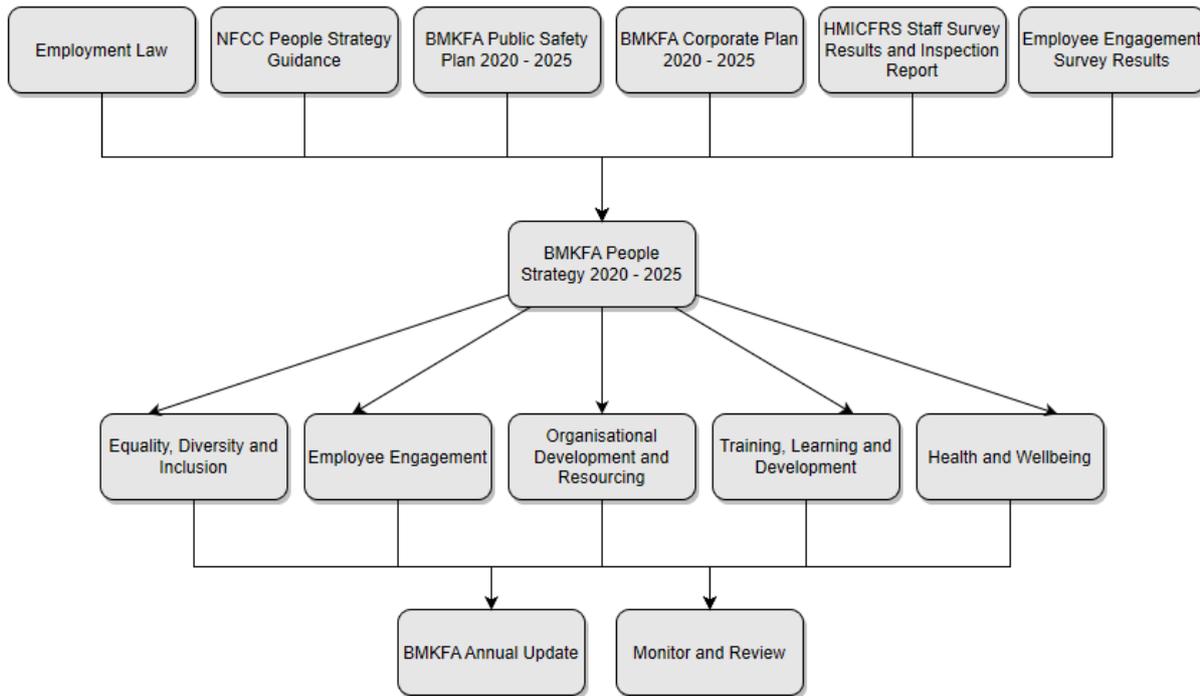
- Employee turnover and retention
- Number of new apprentice starters and retention for full apprenticeship period and onwards
- Appraisal performance
- Career progression
- Recruitment campaign diversity information
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data
- Equal pay audit outcomes
- Occupational Health and Employee Assistance information
- Training information
- Employee engagement survey participation and response
- HMICFRS results and HMICFRS employee survey results
- Customer satisfaction survey responses
- Health and Safety statistics
- Absence levels



Annex A

12. People Strategy Framework

The following visual representation reflects the origins and outcomes of the People Strategy Framework. The outcomes highlight the five key areas which support the overarching strategy.



13. Key area one – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Service is fully committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. The Service recognises that fairness and inclusion is fundamental to everything it does, to achieve its vision of making Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live work and travel.

The Service believes a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the local population will create a stronger, more enriched and well-informed organisation, able to meet the expectations of a modern Fire & Rescue Service. This is a key aspect of the People Strategy. The Service’s objective is to embed equality and diversity into everything it does internally and externally.

The Service continues to build a representative workforce with the appropriate skills, experience and leadership qualities to deliver a range of services to the community, that embraces change and delivers activities to reduce harm and make communities safer and healthier.

The Service recently signed the national Armed Forces Covenant and promise to actively support the armed forces community. It acknowledges that we recognise the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families



Annex A

can bring to our Service. It also indicates that we will, through our business dealings, work to ensure they are treated with fairness and respect within both the local community and wider society, and help remove any disadvantages they may encounter in their day-to-day lives. The Covenant formally recognises our commitment to supporting both the physical and mental wellbeing of this often-unrecognised part of our community and will endeavour to support those who have served, those who are currently serving, and all those connected with the Armed Forces.

The Service pledge to continue to increase the representation of currently under-represented groups at all levels, with a focus on inclusion to build our culture and reputation as a place that attracts, develops, retains and fully engages all the diverse talent across our Service.

The Service aims to achieve this by actively participating in positive action initiatives, which will encourage individuals from under-represented groups to apply for a role within the Fire & Rescue sector. As a long term initiative the Service will explore how inclusion pathways can provide opportunities in attracting future talent from under-represented groups from schools, colleges, and universities.

Our EDI Objectives 2020 - 2025

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020 to 2025 are set out against elements of the Authority's core values: Diversity; Service to the Community; Improvement, People:

- Diversity - Our culture will engage and value diversity and difference, to enhance our service to the public
- Service to the community - We will provide a more diverse range of services to better protect the communities we serve
- Improvement - Our employment offer will be inclusive and embrace flexibility to support improved diversity representation across the Service
- People - We aim to be an employer of choice, attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing staff from diverse backgrounds, to reflect the communities we serve

14. Key area two - Employee Engagement

Effective employee engagement seeks to gain everyone's commitment to help create and maintain a thriving culture to achieve our vision and strategic objectives.

The Service aims to establish and maintain an environment where the workforce has the information required to undertake roles effectively and efficiently, through appropriate communication channels.



Annex A

The Service seeks to ensure effective working relationships with employees, trades unions and employee representatives.

An employee engagement project has been initiated, and a working group established to help deliver the following objectives over the next five years:

- Create a framework which, when embedded, can be utilised for all future employee culture engagement
- Implement biennial Culture Surveys aligned with HMICFRS employee surveys, which provide consistency and data, enabling direct comparison and the ability to track progress on changes to culture and attitude to employee engagement
- Compare analytical comparisons between employee surveys year on year, with a view to increasing response rates and seeing a positive impact on the organisational effectiveness profile
- Identify and prioritise common themes and issues generated from feedback, and communicate these across the Service (with regard to identified key themes of the previous employee engagement opportunities)
- Work with managers to develop plans to help identify methods for resolving issues, implement suggestions and good practice, and positively enhance employee culture and attitudes towards engagement
- Enable employees to identify steps they can take, individually or as a team, to help address progress, or action any suggestions for improvement received during the engagement sessions
- Compile and make available/accessible plans for progress, improvements, enhancements, developments etc. resulting from employee feedback/suggestion
- Ensure updates and information are available on activity/action taking place so employees see the extent of work that has, is or will be undertaken as a result of their engagement to date
- Provide an area of the Service's website where employees and members of the public can view examples of positive work being undertaken that relates to feedback

15. Key area three - Organisational Development and Resourcing

Effective workforce planning is essential to achieving the Service's goal of a diverse and representative workforce, which can deliver its priorities. In line with the commitment to adopt the principles of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Staff Training and Development guidance, the Service continues to



Annex A

utilise the National Firefighter Selection Tests together with the use of Development Centres to assist in identifying potential future leaders.

To support this the Service will continue to develop selection processes that complement National Guidance and ensure employees, once selected are given the opportunities to develop competencies required within their role. The Service's strategy for career development and succession planning will include:

- Senior Management development, selection and identification
- Developing and implementation of pan-organisational succession planning
- Undertaking regular systematic and rigorous strategic workforce planning and review, horizon scanning for likely future external and internal challenges
- Developing our recruitment strategy to support improved diversity representation across the Service
- Establishing a programme for attraction, engagement and retention of high performing employees and new starters into the Service
- Supporting the Armed Forces Covenant within our recruitment strategy, including;
 - Career Transition Partnership (CTP) on establishing a tailored employment pathway for veterans / service leavers
 - Supporting the employment of Armed Forces spouses and partners, and advertising job opportunities through armed forces friendly recruitment agencies and charities
 - Recognising relevant military qualifications in our recruitment/application processes
- Constant evaluation of the apprenticeship models, for both operational and support employees
- A revised performance and development process
- Clear established processes that support employee development

16. Key area four - Training, Learning and Development

The training and education of employees will be fundamental in meeting the future challenges of the Fire and Rescue sector. This is why the Service is committed to providing high quality learning outcomes for all employees, in both operational and support roles.

Workforce planning is a key element of succession planning in all areas, to ensure the Service has the right people with the right skills in place.

For operational employees, this will mean training to meet the risks that are reasonably foreseeable for their roles, ensuring this training uses national best practice and standards.



Annex A

For support service employees, this will be providing training in the skills needed now and in the future.

All training, learning and development within the Service will be aligned to the principles as detailed within Service policy, the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018, [NFCC Leadership Framework](#) and [Core Learning Pathways](#).

The quality of training, learning and development will be maintained by:

- Robust quality assurance of training courses and development programmes
- Developing training products that respond to, and meet new demands and challenges placed upon the Service
- A blended learning approach using formal and informal interventions, using a range of delivery and assessment methods to support a variety of learning styles and work life balances
- Making effective use of technology to train and maintain competence such as e-learning and command simulation
- Effective performance management through use of the appraisal process aligned to organisational and individual objectives
- Coaching and mentoring employees
- Making efficient and effective use of local and regional training resources, aligned to national specifications and standards

17. Key area five - Employee Health and Wellbeing

The Service strives to ensure that all employees are provided with an environment and opportunities that encourage and enable them to lead healthy lives and make choices that support their wellbeing. It is essential for workplaces to become environments that support employees, striking a healthy work life balance, and where possible taking opportunities in supporting more flexible working arrangements.

A programme of activities to deliver improved health and wellbeing awareness and processes for employees is being developed in line with the [Blue Light Wellbeing Framework](#). The framework represents an up-to-date and ambitious standard for the Service to self-assess against, so that subsequent strategy and interventions are based on evidence of need, and also what is proven to improve outcomes.

The Service's Wellbeing Strategy sits under the People Strategy and underpins the work of the Wellbeing Group. The ethos behind the Wellbeing Strategy is 'Start Well, Work Well, Age Well' encompassing the different stages that an employee will pass through, and the services available to support this lifecycle.



Annex A

18. Consultation/publication/communication

Development of this strategy is supported by engagement with:

- People and Organisational Development Directorate
- Joint Consultation Forum
- Leadership Group
- All employees

Key stakeholders of the People Strategy Framework, including;

- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group
- Employee Engagement Working Group
- Head of Human Resources
- Organisational Development Manager
- Head of Operational Training and Assurance
- Wellbeing Group

Following approval by the Fire Authority, the People Strategy is published on the Service’s Intranet with a public facing version published on the external website.

19. Impact Assessments

A) The Equality impact table

Assessment of impact table

Does the activity have the potential to impact differently on individuals in different groups? To complete the table ✓ the likely impact. If an EIA action plan is necessary, this can be downloaded from the Intranet.

Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement. Assessment of impacts on groups in *italics* is not a legal requirement, however it will help to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.

Protected characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	If negative, why and how could this be lessened (<i>use action plan if necessary</i>)
Individuals of different ages	✓			
Disabled individuals	✓			
Individuals transitioning from one gender to another	✓			
Individuals who are married or in civil partnerships	✓			



Annex A

Pregnant individuals and new parents	✓			
Individuals of different race	✓			
Individuals of different religions or beliefs	✓			
Individuals gender identity	✓			
Individuals sexual orientation	✓			
<i>Individuals living in different family circumstances</i>	✓			
<i>Individuals in different social circumstances</i>	✓			
<i>Different employee groups</i>	✓			
<i>Other</i>	✓			

B) Data Protection Impact Assessment Screening Questions

No personally identifiable information is contained within the overarching People Strategy 2020 - 2025. Data Protection Impact Assessments exist for each key area of the strategy, these will be revised and updated where required.