



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

---

**Meeting and date:** Extraordinary Fire Authority, 28 April 2023

**Report title:** Values and Culture in fire and rescue services

**Lead Member:** Councillor Simon Rouse

**Report sponsor:** Jason Thelwell, Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

**Author and contact:** Anne-Marie Carter, Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO, [acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk)

**Action:** Decision

**Recommendations:**

- 1) That the Fire Authority should accept the recommendations allocated to the Chief Fire Officer in full
  - 2) That the Service will fully engage and support the delivery of the remaining recommendations
  - 3) That the Fire Authority support a risk being escalated to the Corporate risk register – Poor Culture
- 

**Executive summary:**

On Thursday 30 March 2023 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published 'Values and culture in fire and rescue services'. The report has 9 themes supported by 35 recommendations and all Fire and Rescue Services alongside, the government and national fire bodies are urged to implement them as a matter of urgency.

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) welcome the report and the recommendations within it.

BFRS has always taken the culture of our service extremely seriously. Our Values have been in place since 2011 and we want to make sure all our staff and the public we serve are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Of the 35 recommendations, 19 are owned the Chief Fire Officer. Work has already started on a number of these recommendations and progress can be found in Appendix 1. Following the feedback regarding the various streams of work and plans, including the previously presented Exploring our Culture paper, these recommendations will now feed into a larger people plan driven by the BFRS people strategy.

**Financial implications:** Any costs associated with this will come from established budgets, or where this is not possible growth bids will be submitted for work that is not covered. Any training required will be taken through the Training Strategy Group who review any training needs identified and prioritise these within the allocated budget.

**Risk management:** The risk of not accepting these recommendations and the actions associated with this has been added to the Human Resources Risk Register and, subject to recommendation 3, this this will be escalated to the Corporate Risk Register.

If the Service does not review the measures in place, employee wellbeing is impacted affecting recruitment, employee morale, retention, and future improvements to working practices.

**Legal implications:** Legal inputs are sought and provided as and when required in respect of all the strands within the recommendations.

**Privacy and security implications:** Previous employee relation cases have been reviewed, the details of these are limited to the Hearing Manager, investigator and the Employee Relations team. Any future cases will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially. Any learning from investigations, informal and formal management interventions and case hearings will be fed into procedures and guidance notes and communicated to all employees; Neither individual cases or employees will be identified.

Freedom of Information requests are processed adhering to confidentiality and data protection guidelines.

**Duty to collaborate:** South East Employers and the Addressing Inequalities Group made up of five Fire and Rescue Services were sent the Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Procedures for feedback. Feedback was incorporated into the final documents. Each service's approach to the Culture actions undertaken are discussed at the six-weekly meetings, so that learning is shared.

Two members of the Service attended the National Fire Chiefs Council Culture event on 27 and 28 March, learns from the event have been brought back to the service and will be incorporated into our processes.

**Health and safety implications:** Employee Health and Wellbeing is a key area of the People Strategy. The Human Resources Team support managers and employees across the service – for example Employee Assistance Procedure, Welfare Officer, Occupational Health, Mental Wellbeing Support Officers, a range of procedures on absence management, code of conduct, whistleblowing, grievances, conduct and capability.

**Environmental implications:** There are no Environmental impacts.

**Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:** The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group meet every month, they discuss issues of concern with stakeholders from across the service. BFRS Culture is a standing agenda item.

The EDI group continue to work on the EDI objectives, the progress on these can be found in the People strategy – year 2 update.

Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for each recommendation as appropriate.

**Consultation and communication:** There will be continued engagement with staff and the public regarding the Culture they experience whilst working for or engaging with BFRS. The People strategy will continue to be reviewed annually with the output shared with members.

**Background papers:**

HMICFRS Values and Culture in fire and rescue services Report

[Values and culture in fire and rescue services - HMICFRS – Home \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

HMICFRS Values and Culture report terms of reference:

[Terms of reference: Spotlight report on values and culture in fire and rescue services](#)

22 March November 2023 - Overview and Audit Committee: Exploring our Culture

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/03/executive-committee-22-march-2023-item-9-exploring-our-culture-report.pdf/>

Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade:

[Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade \(london-fire.gov.uk\)](https://london-fire.gov.uk)

FRS Culture News Articles:

[South Wales Fire Service faces independent review into abusive behaviour by firefighters | ITV News](#)

[Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service has 'taken steps to improve culture' - BBC News](#)

BFRS People Strategy 2020-2025 – Year 2 update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/09/fa-item-14-121022.pdf/>

His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report 2020/21

[Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22 – BFRS - HMICFRS](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
Appendix 1	Values and Culture in the fire and rescue services recommendations and update	