

HMICFRS Standards of behaviour
The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

No.	Recommendation	Strategic Owner	Responsible officer	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success & Impact measures	August '24 Progress	Status
The culture in fire and rescue services								
1	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should, as a priority, make sure their staff are aware of, and follow the Core Code of Ethics. Services should build the code into all relevant policies and practices.	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In progress	31-Dec-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All policies & procedure reviewed and updated Promise, values and behaviours visible across our facilities Promise, values and behaviours visible across our policies and procedures 	Our Values had been in place since 2011 and were embedded in the Service. The NFCC Core Code of Ethics was released in 2021. The final document complements and supported our own vision and values, which formed part of everything we do. In March 2023, we reviewed our Code of Conduct and chose to add in the Code of Ethics alongside our values. Our new Promise, Values and Behaviours were developed and launched on 1 April 2024, our Code of Conduct was reviewed to include them and approved at June 2024 Fire Authority. Implementation on our Promise, Values and Behaviours continues to ensure they are embedded across the Service - for example in our appraisals, recruitment processes, behavioural and management framework, communications, station visualisation, updated on our external website,	On Track
2	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should make sure a policy for probationary staff is in place. This policy should make clear that services can immediately dismiss probationers who fail to meet the required standards of behaviour set out in the Core Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics fire standard	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In progress	01-Feb-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probationary Periods Procedure reviewed & updated Probations tracked and any lessons learnt captured 	We have a probationary procedure in place, it sets out the review periods, extensions, termination, support and process to be followed. It is due to be reviewed and consulted on in quarter 3/4. It will align to the Core Code of Ethics and Code of Ethics Fire Standards	On Track
3a	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should make sure their workforce plans allow staff to be moved from a wholetime watch to a different watch or station, within their contractual requirements, proactively and reactively as required.	Director of HR & OD	OD Manager	In progress	01-May-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointments board Terms of Reference reviewed & updated Promotion procedure to include the ability to move staff. KPI's in place to track the number of staff that move watch/station. 	We have a Management of Transfers of Operational Employees procedure in place. This states: "All operational employees within Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (the Service) are contracted to serve at any location within the Service area and the Service will continue to place its resources at the locations it deems suitable to support effective Service delivery. " it sets out the procedure to be followed when operational employees voluntarily wish to transfer from one location to another, or for organisational efficiency there is a need to compulsorily transfer operational employees from one location to another either on a permanent or temporary basis. This would be within the same role, however may be a transfer from one duty system to another. In addition the aim of the appointments board is to ensure the promotional appointments of operational employees are fair, consistent, transparent and based on organisational and individual needs. The decisions made by the Appointments Boards will ensure the necessary resources are in place to support the high standard of Service delivered to the communities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.	On Track
3b	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should also make sure firefighters who are promoted are posted to a different watch or station, including when the promotion is temporary for two months or more. If this isn't possible, chief fire officers should show how the risks of reinforcing a negative culture have been addressed.	Director of HR & OD	OD Manager	30-Sep-24	01-May-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointments board Terms of Reference reviewed & updated Promotion procedure to include the ability to move staff. KPI's in place to track the number of staff that move watch/station. 	An Appointments Board is in place - the aim of which is to ensure all promotional appointments of operational employees are fair, consistent, transparent and based on organisational and individual needs ie ensuring that the necessary resources are in place to support maintaining operational resourcing requirements. Additionally, Organisational Development monitor temporary appointments to ensure access to opportunity and transparency of the selection process. The recruitment and selection process is currently being reviewed to align with the Staff Development Pathway and all appointment process will be reviewed by DPOD on arrival.	On Track

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The extent to which services are identifying misconduct								
4	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should make sure their services create or have access to a dedicated professional standards function to oversee the investigation of concerns raised within a service or from an external source. This should oversee cases to make sure they are investigated in a fair and transparent way, manage complex cases directly and act as a point of contact for all staff involved.	Legal & Governance Director	Legal & Governance Director	01-Dec-24	01-Feb-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of policy and procedure Implement Professional Standards Function inc panel Introduce an independent investigator role Introduce and track relevant KPI's 	Professional Standards Growth Bid	Not due to be started
5	By 1 November 2024, chief fire officers should make sure all staff understand how to raise a concern and use grievance and whistle-blowing processes. Chief fire officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make sure staff know how services will handle responses and maintain confidentiality and anonymity; and explain how staff can access services' whistle-blowing capability and the difference between whistle-blowing and other processes for raising concerns. 	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In Progress	01-Nov-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce and track relevant KPI's inc staff feedback/ usage Share learnings regularly Review Culture Survey results 	Our new external and independent whistleblowing and speak up line has been in place since May 2024. Our updated whistleblowing procedure have subsequently been reviewed and are in consultation until 31st August and will be approved via governance procedures. Communications are critical to success and increasing confidence - posters are now at all of our stations and premises, intranet articles, letter / poster have been delivered to all employees at their home address, regular updates at Joint Consultation Forum.	On Track
6	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should make sure a programme of training is in place for all supervisors and managers on how to manage staff performance and welfare and how to raise an issue. It should be supported by relevant policies and procedures. Training should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff welfare and absence management; the process for managing individual staff performance, addressing poor performance and potential misconduct issues; how to handle difficult conversations and resolve issues informally, if appropriate, when a concern is identified; and clarifying the role of HR services in helping managers to deal with staff concerns and misconduct issues. Chief fire officers should make sure all managers and supervisors attend the training programme.	Director of HR & OD	OD Manager	In Progress	01-Feb-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Taining in place Welfare training in place KPI in place to track training completion Relevant Procedures updated Director of HR & OD in place People & Culture Officer role in place 	The acquisition training provided to new and existing supervisory managers, via their leadership and management development programme includes the following mandatory training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * IOSH * NFCC Supervisory Leadership Development Programme * BFRS Supervisory Manager Acquisition Programme - which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguarding - Human Resources - Welfare - Absence Management - Role of HR / Itrent * E,D & I * Performance Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appraisals - 360 Feedback * Resource Management / Fire Service Rota The content of these programmes are continually reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose. In addition, to support the require coaching and mentoring of staff in the people management areas, a growth bid has be submitted to substantiate a current temporay role within OD to deliver this.	On Track

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The effectiveness of misconduct processes								
7a	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should make sure the policies and processes for misconduct are consistent for all staff and are fairly applied within their respective conditions of employment.	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-Sep-24	01-Feb-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of policy and procedured Professional Standards Function (inc panel) in place Independent investigator role in place Introduce and track relevant KPI's 	Our Discipline procedure is in place, and was approved by Business Transformation Board in April 2021. It was reissued in September 2023 following amendments to the investigation and suspension sections. It includes an agreed outcomes section. It is applicable to all employees. All related policies and procedures as well as a gap analysis of relevent policies will be reviewed in conjunction with the introduction of an independent investigation function.	Not due to be started
7b	By 1 August 2025, the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services and the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council, should make misconduct processes consistent for all staff irrespective of the terms and conditions of their employment.	N/A	N/A	N/A	01-Aug-25	N/A	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation	N/A
8	By 1 November 2024, chief fire officers should make sure all allegations of misconduct are handled in a consistent way and staff have confidence in misconduct processes. Chief fire officers should carry out a full review of the processes, from initial identification of a misconduct issue through to the resolution or outcome. This should include a review of how services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor and manage investigations; maintain accurate records; and adhere to required timescales. 	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In Progress	01-Nov-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented review completed Timescales for changes captured and fed into relevant delivery teams 	All allegations are handled as per our procedures, the Employee relations team lead by the HR Advisory and Development Manager ensures consistency of application, that timescales are adhered to and accurate records are kept. The details of cases are stored in a confidential part of the electronic employees record, access is limited.	On Track
9	By 1 August 2025, chief fire officers should introduce a case management system if they don't already have one. The case management system should allow data to be produced that will help them to better understand and oversee misconduct cases in their services.	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-Sep-24	31-Dec-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce Case Management System Regular Performance Reports in place 	A case management spreadsheet is in place, it is held by the Human Resources (HR) Advisory and Development Manager and reviewed regularly with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer. Safecall our Whistleblowing and Speak up line includes an electronic case management system and has been in place since May 2024, it is reviewed on a regular basis. Access is limited to those detailed in the procedure and the HR Advisory and Development Manager. All related policies and procedures as well as a gap analysis of relevent policies will be reviewed in conjunction with the introduction of an independent investigation function.	Not due to be started
10	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should make sure their services have enough capacity to carry out their misconduct investigations. They should consider using external investigators or a similar independent resource to support the process if required.	Legal & Governance Director	Legal & Governance Director	30-Sep-24	02-Jan-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Standards Function (inc panel) in place Independent investigator role in place 	Professional Standards Growth Bid	Not due to be started
11	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should review the training their services provide for supervisors and managers who investigate misconduct issues at all levels. Chief fire officers should make sure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all staff who carry out investigations receive adequate training to carry out the task; a programme of refresher training and ongoing support is available so that staff can maintain a level of competence; and it is clear how services' HR provision, staff associations and any trade union representative or fellow employee will support the investigation process. 	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In progress	01-May-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Standards Function (inc panel) in place Independent investigator role in place Training in place for new staff Refresher training in place for staff and Members KPI's to track training completion in place Roles and responsibilities documented in Misconduct procedure 	Disciplinary Training was carried out as part of the Training needs analysis. South East Employers carried out Hearing Manager Training with Senior Management Team in June 2023, Station Commanders and equivalent in October and December 2023. The HR Advisory and Development Manager supports all managers who carry Disciplines, to ensure consistency of application.	On Track

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12	<p>With immediate effect, chief fire officers should make sure all staff are aware of the welfare support, including occupational health support, that is available to staff involved in misconduct processes.</p> <p>Chief fire officers should encourage all staff involved in misconduct processes to access this support, whether they are an alleged perpetrator, complainant, witness, investigator or decision-maker.</p> <p>Welfare personnel should be independent of the investigation and have been appropriately trained for this role</p>	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In progress	Now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare training in place • All staff taking on Welfare role completed training • KPI in place to track and understand staff feedback 	<p>All employees are made aware of the welfare support in place for them, a Welfare Officer is in place, allocated point of contact who is not part of the investigation, Occupational Health services can be accessed via the Employee Relations Team, Mental Wellbeing Support Officers are in place across the Service, The Firefighters charity information is shared regularly, Employee Assistance Provider details are communicated - via poster, regular intranet articles, form part of disciplinary letter templates,</p>	On Track
13a	<p>By 1 November 2024, fire and rescue authorities and chief fire officers should consider varying the approach to hearing appeals so that appeals for complex or serious cases are heard by a panel rather than one person.</p>	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-09-24	01-Nov-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Standards Function (inc panel) in place 	<p>The current Discipline procedure details the Service approach to appeals and who carries them out. Senior Managers are supported by the HR Advisory and Development Manager for consistency. The approach to appeals will be considered when the Discipline procedures are reviewed and consulted upon. External legal support is sourced for complex and serious cases.</p>	On Track
13b	<p>By 1 February 2025, fire and rescue authorities and chief fire officers should make sure all service managers and members of fire and rescue authorities who hear appeals receive appropriate training.</p> <p>Chief fire officers should make sure services have a consistent approach to hearing appeals.</p>	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-Sep-24	01-Feb-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in place for new staff and Members • Refresher training in place for staff and Members • KPI's to track training completion in place • Professional Standards Function (inc panel) in place 	<p>Disciplinary Training was carried out as part of the Training needs analysis. South East Employers carried out Hearing Manager Training with Senior Management Team in June 2023, Station Commanders and equivalent in October and December 2023. The HR Advisory and Development Manager supports all managers who carry Disciplines.</p>	Not due to be started
Understanding misconduct and sharing lessons learned								
14	<p>By 1 November 2025, chief fire officers should implement a process that makes sure they can oversee and scrutinise their services' performance relating to misconduct issues. This process should provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a strategic overview of performance and analysis of trends, including disproportionality; • regular reporting of issues, outcomes and trends to the fire and rescue authority; and • identification of learning outcomes and how they will be shared with fire and rescue service staff, to prevent repeat behaviours 	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-Sep-24	31-Mar-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Performance Reports (inc learnings) in place for both FA and staff 	<p>A case management report was presented to Strategic Management Board (SMB) in April 2024 covering 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024, A report was presented to SMB on 20 August 2024, for quarter 1 of 2024. A report is planned for Fire Authority covering the period 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025, it will include a strategic overview, regular reporting process, of issues, outcomes and trends and learning outcomes. Grievance and Disciplinary information forms part of the quarterly performance reports, these are presented to Performance Monitoring Board, SMB and Members</p>	Not due to be started
15a	<p>By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should put in place a process for sharing learning from misconduct cases that have been resolved while preserving the confidentiality of all parties involved. Any learning should feed into the national system, when established.</p>	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-Sep-24	01-Feb-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Performance Reports (inc learnings) in place for both FA and staff 	<p>All outcomes are logged by the HR Advisory and Development Manager, they are used to update procedures and processes. Learning is shared at the Heads of Service meetings, to ensure confidentiality and due to small numbers, they are not shared more widely at present, learning will be shared more widely as appropriate</p>	Not due to be started
15b	<p>By 1 May 2025, the National Fire Chiefs Council should establish a system for sharing learning from more serious cases of misconduct with fire and rescue service staff. The information shared should preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of all parties involved.</p> <p>The College of Fire and Rescue, once it is established, should take responsibility for maintaining this system.</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	01-May-25	N/A	<p>BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation</p>	N/A