

<p>By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes.</p>	<p>LFRS has Safecall as an anonymous reporting line. A publicity campaign has been delivered to ensure that all members of staff are aware of the different ways in which they can raise a concern.</p>
<p>By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review the support available for those who have raised concerns and take any action needed to make sure these provisions are suitable.</p>	<p>A review has been completed: Where individuals raise concerns, several sources can be involved including: HR Business Partners, Line Managers, Safety, Health &amp; Environment (SHE), Occupational Health. All these will sign post, as appropriate, to support: Employee Assistance Programme (available to all members of staff offering face to face counselling and support on a range of matters), TRiM (a trauma-focused peer support system designed to help people who have experienced a traumatic event), Fire Fighters Charity offering a range of support options, Peer Support network raising awareness of mental health problems and challenging mental health stigma. In addition, there are a range of resources paper based and electronic offering mental health support, Wellbeing Support dogs and health and wellbeing workshops, "Resilient Me" (a tool to develop emotional resilience and prevent mental health issues).</p>
<p>By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should assure themselves that updates on how concerns are being handled are shared with those who have raised them. The updates should be given in an accessible way that encourages trust and confidence in the service response.</p>	<p>Regular feedback is provided to the Executive Board on the progress of investigations, any risks, who provide scrutiny and challenge.</p>

<p>By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure they provide accessible information for all staff and members of the public on how they can raise concerns and access confidential support (including through external agencies).</p>	<p>Information is readily available and publicised to members of staff on how they can raise concerns and access confidential support. All HR reporting policies have been updated to include a step-by-step guide at the front of the document.</p> <p>An accessible mechanism is in place whereby members of the public can make complaints or raise concerns via the Service website which allows for external agencies, members of the public and journalists to raise concerns.</p>
<p>Chief fire officers should also make sure accessible information is provided on how concerns and allegations will be investigated in a way that ensures confidentiality and is independent of the alleged perpetrator.</p>	<p>Information is currently within the policies in relation to how matters will be investigated. However, these have now been supplemented with the development of step-by-step guides. Investigations are always carried out independent of the perpetrator and every attempt is made to preserve confidentiality.</p>
<p>By 1 January 2024, chief fire officers should immediately review their current background checks arrangements and make sure that suitable and sufficient background checks are in place to safeguard their staff and communities they serve; and</p>	<p>A review has been undertaken. The Service applies the safer recruitment standards in terms of ensuring recruitment is robust: members of staff involved in recruitment are trained in safer recruitment, all external candidates are required to supply two references (one should be the current employer), recruitment panels will explore gaps in employment history, Right to Work in the UK checks are undertaken, candidates are rejected where there are concerns. Full Security checks are applied to all Flexi officers.</p>
<p>Make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing, new staff and volunteers according to their roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board</p>	<p>Enhanced DBS checks are applied to employees and volunteers where the individual undertakes regulated activity. Basic checks were being applied to current staff and all new firefighters, community safety officers, business fire safety officers, others in an operational role and specific designated officers. Since changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, standard checks are now being applied which should be completed by January 2024.</p>

<p>By 1 September 2023, chief constables should make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services.</p>	<p>A process has been agreed with Lancashire Constabulary to share information specifically under the Common Law Police Disclosure guidance.</p>
<p>By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle misconduct and safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes. These should include requirements to: Conduct and complete investigations, whether or not the staff member under investigation</p>	<p>Further information on the standard is awaited. However, currently: investigations would be completed even where an employee leaves the Service. All members of staff who undertake investigations are required to attend training, the neutrality of investigation panels is considered as part of the appointment process and the diversity of panels is maintained where possible - female investigators are utilised regularly.</p>
<p>With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct.</p>	<p>The HMICFRS has already been notified of any allegations. Arrangements have been put in place that any future cases will be notified to HMICFRS.</p>
<p>By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations.</p>	<p>All parties are supported during ongoing investigations. The Executive Board are updated regularly on employees of concern and the Service has developed a policy and comprehensive arrangements where an employee is at risk. The role of the welfare officer within the disciplinary investigation process has been updated and communicated so they are aware of their roles and responsibilities.</p>
<p>By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should have plans in place to ensure they meet the Fire Standards Board's leading the service standard and its leading and developing people standard</p>	<p>Representatives from the Service have attended sessions, delivered by the NFCC, on the new standards. Communication within the Service, in terms of the new standards, has been developed to raise awareness and a gap analysis has been produced and plans are being developed to meet the new standard.</p>

<p>By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all senior leaders and managers (assistant chief fire officer equivalent and above) in service.</p>	<p>A full 360-degree feedback process is in place for those in a leadership role utilising "Headlight". Further to changes in staffing this is currently being implemented.</p>
<p>By 1 September 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports.</p>	<p>All those in a leadership role have had a 360-feedback utilising "Headlight". The feedback is against the Service values and has been more recently updated to include the Code of Ethics and the leadership standards. Additionally, all those on a supervisory and middle manager development programme have a 360 as part of their development programme. All members of staff also have access to a coach so they can be supported where areas of development are identified.</p>
<p>By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should seek regular feedback from staff about values, culture, fairness and diversity, with due regard to the leading and developing people standard. They should show how they act on this feedback.</p>	<p>The Service receives feedback on all these areas in several different ways. The Service undertakes an independent staff survey which looks at these areas and where changes are made these are fed back to staff via its Routine Bulletin. The Service's intranet Engine House has a shout up facility where members of staff can ask questions and receive answers. The Service receives feedback back from staff via its Employee Voice Groups which are representative of members of staff and comprise people of a protected characteristic. These groups also feed into the Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Steering Group (EDISG) which is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer. Feedback is fed into Human Resources, Safety, Health &amp; Environment and Senior Managers who all undertake face to face engagement visits on station.</p>
<p>By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should put plans in place to monitor, including through the gathering and analysis of staff feedback, Watch and team cultures and provide prompt remedial action for any issues they identify.</p>	<p>The Safety Health and Environment Department currently conduct Workplace Wellbeing Toolbox Talks, which cover how to have productive conversations. They also undertake Wellbeing Wednesdays where members of staff have an opportunity to raise issues. Group TRiMs and Team meetings are also conducted on station which are an opportunity to raise issues. The next staff survey is planned for September 2023, and this will create an opportunity to reflect on any other improvements which could be made.</p>

<p>By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their equality impact assessments are fit for purpose and, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality impact assessment toolkit.</p>	<p>The Service has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process which meets the NFCC standard and is aligned to the NFCC EIA tool kit. Members of staff have attended EIA training. A system of undertaking EIA and monitoring EIA's is established.</p>
<p>By 1 June 2023, chief Fire officers should review how they gather and use equality and diversity data to improve their understanding of their staff demographics, including applying and meeting the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality, diversity, and inclusion data tool kit</p>	<p>A review of how equality and diversity data is gathered and used has been undertaken. Demographic profile data is currently collated and reported to the Fire Authority via the EDI Annual Report and quarterly via the Performance Committee. The Service complies with NFCC equality, diversity, and inclusion data tool in terms of its reporting of data, but further work is required in terms of the reporting of those who access training. Having said that, training for operational staff is specified per role, rank and station, so access to training is consistently applied to all operational members of staff regardless of protected characteristic. Support members of staff have access to training identified through the appraisal process.</p>
<p>By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should, as a priority, specify in succession plans how they intend to improve diversity across all levels of the service. This should include offering increased direct-entry opportunities.</p>	<p>The Service is actively involved in positive action to attract a diversity of candidates to apply for job roles within the fire service. The Employee Voice Groups develop plans each year to identify ways in which the Service can contribute to promoting equality of opportunities. These groups have influenced improvements in maternity and paternity pay, uniform changes, access and improvements in welfare facilities and influenced changes to accommodation. The Service has developed a talent pool aimed at attracting a broader range of candidates to try supervisory and middle manager opportunities. Some of the essential training requirements have been moved into the development pathway, so training requirements are not a barrier to progression. Members of staff are encouraged to attend events run by Women in the Fire Service and the Asian Fire Service Association where they have access to development, but also mentoring and access to peers in leadership roles. Functional promotion pathways have been developed in Protection and Training. A talent mapping tool has been introduced</p>

	<p>allowing for those in a leadership role to identify potential. The Service is currently working with UCLan to develop a direct entry route for graduates studying for the Fire and Leadership degree. Some posts have been developed as Green Book posts allowing a broader range of candidates expressing an interest.</p>
<p>By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should develop plans to promote progression paths for existing staff in non-operational roles and put plans in place to reduce any inequalities of opportunity</p>	<p>The Service has reviewed several of its organisational structures within non-operational departments to create structures with more tiers, allowing more opportunities for career progression. Career Grades have been created within some Departments allowing for career progression through a broader grading structure. As qualifications are obtained and skills are acquired the individual progresses. Development Pathways have been developed within some Departments. HR policies developed are subject to equality impact assessment, so the impact on Grey and Green Book members of staff are fully understood which has resulted in the harmonisation of some arrangements e.g. the length of time off for maternity leave.</p>
<p>With immediate effect, chief fire officers should review their implementation of the Core Code of Ethics and make sure it is being applied across their services.</p>	<p>The Service has reviewed its implementation of the Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics is implemented in the Service's Annual Service Plan, key policies, and job descriptions. The Code of Ethics has been built into the Service's firefighter apprenticeship programme and the staff induction. Some development sessions have already been delivered on stations and these are continuing. The Service's key communication channels have been updated to include the Code of Ethics. Feedback from the Fire Standards Board in relation to the Service's approach has been well received.</p>