

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	19 FEBRUARY 2024
Report of	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Report Sponsor(s)	DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE & CULTURE
Subject	PEOPLE AND CULTURE BOARD UPDATE Q3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the items raised and discussed at the People and Culture Board in Quarter 3 2023/24. One meeting was held during this period on 13 December 2023.

The People and Culture Board provides a strategic and critical role as a guardian of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) People Strategy, in safeguarding and promoting a positive culture and ensuring a modern, sustainable and healthy working environment for our staff and volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of the report and provide further scrutiny and support to enable continuing effective management of people issues.

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Main Report

BACKGROUND

1. The People and Culture Board is an internal meeting that monitors progress of the SYFR People Strategy, culture change and the health and wellbeing of all our employees. The SYFR People Strategy is aligned to the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) national Culture Action Plan and also determines and oversees delivery of requirements at a local level. The People and Culture Board has committed to provide quarterly updates to the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA).
2. SYFR's People and Culture Board meets quarterly to monthly to monitor progress of the Service's People Strategy and to scrutinise information from the four SYFR committees that report to the Board:
 - Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Committee
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee
 - Workforce Planning Committee
 - Workforce Development Committee

DECEMBER MEETING UPDATE

3. The Board received written and verbal reports from the above committees in Quarter Three (Q3), which are summarised below.
4. (a) HSW Committee:

Face Fit Testing Team is now to incorporate Breathing Apparatus in addition to Sundstrom face masks within its testing programme. As a consequence, the team has been expanded, additional training provided, procedures agreed and audited and a schedule of re-testing for operational personnel commenced thus providing reassurance around both the quality and attainment of optimum levels of respiratory protection.

The changes to Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) training provision previously presented to committee are now being implemented. IOSH will now be delivered through an online portal with students able to log on in their own time to access study material and complete the final assessment.

Asbestos medicals will remain a priority throughout 2024 for the 704 operational personnel. This will mean all operational personnel will be required to have a spirometry, BP and BMI with the clinical team, followed by a chest examination and clinical history with the Brigade Medical Officer.

Since the launch of the pre-hab physio service in July 2023, 35 people have accessed the Service and a total of 65 sessions have been completed. The most common requirement is for support around knee, shoulder, ankle and back injury.

The Occupational Health and Wellbeing team will shortly be beginning a joint piece of work with the support of procurement colleagues with a view to expanding the current counselling provision. It is hoped that we will be able to work with providers in all four districts meaning services will be accessible at a local level.

Committee members were informed of the newly launched suicide crisis line hosted by The Firefighters Charity that is available to all fire and rescue personnel. The line offers 24 hour support and can assist with the setup of ongoing counselling should it be requested.

A health promotion campaign planner has been developed that will include monthly webinars facilitated by The Firefighter's Charity providing information and awareness on a number of wellbeing topics. The first webinar was held in October and covered the theme of Burnout. Future sessions will include menopause awareness, managing stress, personal resilience, sleep and health and mindfulness.

(b) EDI Committee:

The committee were provided a verbal update on EDI activity in Q3:

- Confirmation of move to new EDI training provider and commencement of evaluation of impact
- Lots of positive action activities taking place in the community
- Guidance documents are being produced
- Comms will be going out to get more staff involved in positive action work
- Drafted positive action timeline of activities for 2024
- Working on a couple of policies relating to staff groups
- Working on the EDI calendar of events for 2024

(c) Workforce Planning Committee:

The retirement rules have been updated and new retirement profiling was available showing some higher levels of potential retirements in the next few years.

A proposal for transfers-in in 2024 was recommended by the committee. This would be a combination of rank and firefighters (FFs) to a total of 12 (as many rank as possible and then the remainder to be FFs). This can be accommodated within the current establishment levels. The board agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting to consider this proposal in more depth.

The committee discussed issues surrounding the migration policy from on-call to wholetime. It was agreed this would be looked at in more detail at the next board meeting.

A discussion took place on the use of the re-engagement policy for operational staff and the management of this. This will also be looked at in more detail at the next board meeting.

(d) Workforce Development Committee:

A written report to the board had not been available and would be provided before the next board meeting. A brief verbal overview was provided.

5. Casework (grievances and discipline) statistics and trends and occupational health metrics were presented and discussed. The high level of casework was noted and discussed and reflected cultural development issues. It was noted that training to conduct investigations would be provided to new managers in 2024 and refresher workshops for managers already trained.

6. The Board discussed the small number of issues of dispute with the representative bodies that were being actively worked through.
7. No new risks had been escalated to or identified by the board. Current corporate risks relevant to the board were discussed and mitigating actions updated.
8. The Board noted the update on actions being taken and planned in relation to culture under the new Culture Programme. The staff Culture Survey was complete and the Service was now in the action planning phase. A toolkit for managers was being produced to assist them with action planning.
9. Programmes and projects:
 - a. On Call Programme – the board received post-implementation reviews for three elements of the programme and these were all accepted.
 - b. FF Maintenance of Competence (MOC) Project – the board received a closedown report for this element of the wider MOC Programme and this was accepted.
10. Communications – the board agreed that the culture communications for 2024 would focus on inclusion and staff groups.
11. White Paper – the board noted the government’s recent response to the White Paper consultation and agreed to look at proposed changes in more detail at the next board meeting.
12. People Strategy – the board noted that the final draft would be going to the FRA in January 2024 for approval.

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

- [HMICFRS Inspection Framework e.g. Diagnostic area and/ or diagnostic questions](#)
- [SYFR Inspection report Areas for Improvement \(AFIs\)](#)
- [Fit for the Future Improvement Objectives](#)
- [Professional Standards for Fire & Rescue Services in England](#)
- [SYFR Service Plan 2023-24 Priorities](#)
- [SYFR Community Risk Management Plan 2021-24](#)

The People and Culture Board oversees and scrutinises work that contributes to all of the above

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- Yes
- No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

SYFR will work closely with fire and rescue services and other organisations to continuously benchmark against the recommendations and inspection criteria.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

- 13. SYFR need to ensure they have the capacity and capability to implement any recommendations in the SYFR inspection report and continuously improve. There also needs to be the capacity to ensure all the inspection work is completed.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

- No
- N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EqIA is not required/is outstanding:

EqIA's are completed for the different aspects of work, when required, that is overseen by the board.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- Yes
- No
- N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

Risk assessments are completed, when required, for the different aspects of work that is overseen by the board.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

14. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision *is required / *has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power Yes
 No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power.

IMPLICATIONS

15. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below:., Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents		
N/A		
Report Author:	Name:	Sue Kelsey, Director of People & Culture
	e-mail:	skelsey@syfire.gov.uk
	Tel no:	0114 2532214