

HMICFRS report published Thursday 30th March 2023

Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

Last Updated February 2024

Recommendations and IoSFRS Actions

No.	Recommendation	Timeframe	Who	Action required	Progress
1	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.	1 st October 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- Develop and provide a confidential route via a telephone number and communicate to all staff - communicate a reminder to all staff where to find the whistleblowing policy and educate staff when appropriate to use.	Completed
2	National Employers, the Local Government Association and the National Fire Chiefs Council should review any current	1 st October 2023	National Employers, LGA & NFCC	- implement and communicate any national guidance or	Awaiting further information

	independent arrangements whereby staff can raise concerns outside their FRS. They should then ensure that all FRS staff have access to an independent reporting line that can be used as a confidential way to raise concerns outside their own FRS.			good practice that is received via the NFCC, LGA or national employers	Independent reporting lines - NFCC
3	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.	1 st June 2023	CFO & CloS HR team	- Review associated HR polices - Review current and past concerns raised ensuring supported.	Complete
4	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. Consideration should be given to creating a professional standards function to handle conduct concerns in service (or from an external service) to have oversight of cases, to make sure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way and to act as a point of contact for all staff involved.	1 st June 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- Work with CloS HR to review current polices, practice and procedures. - include topic in future management HR training.	Complete
5	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). Chief fire officers should also make sure accessible information is provided on how concerns and allegations will be investigated in a way that	1 st June 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- Review complaints and concerns policy and procedure - Staff signposted to CloS & IoSFRS policies - Manager HR training to be	Complete

	ensures confidentiality and is independent of the alleged perpetrator.			provided including this topic	
	Background Checks				
6	The Home Office, working with the Ministry of Justice, should make sure that the Government incorporates fire and rescue authority employees within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 so that they are eligible for the appropriate DBS checks.	1 st January 2024	Home office & Ministry of Justice	- maintain awareness to NFCC communications and updates regarding this legislation Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (legislation.gov.uk)	Awaiting further information
7	The Home Office, working with the fire and rescue sector, should make sure that the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002, or a similar appropriate legislatively enabled solution, makes detailed provisions for fire and rescue services.	1 st May 2024	Home Office, NFCC, CloS HR	- maintain awareness to NFCC communications and updates regarding this legislation.	Awaiting further information – last website update 06 March 2024 Police Act 1997 (legislation.gov.uk)
8	The Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and underpinning guidance. It should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly state the requirements for background checks undertaken by services; • clarify the minimum requirements (including levels of DBS checks) for all roles, particularly roles where staff have access to vulnerable members of the public; • define the standards required to embed a culture across fire and rescue services that empowers all members of staff and local communities to report concerns; and • be subject to review following any legislative change. 	1 st December 2023	FSB, NFCC	- maintain awareness to NFCC communications and updates regarding this legislation. - work with CloS to review Safeguarding policy and ensure compliant with emerging NFCC guidance Safeguarding - NFCC	Continuing work in progress  Letter to Chiefs - NFCC Safeguarding B

				 NFCC Safeguarding Board achievements a	
9	Chief fire officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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. 	1 st January 2024	CFO, CloS HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review employment and recruitment policy - review current standard of checks - move service to a higher level of check with effect from 1st April 2024 - ensure CloS safeguarding policy updated 	Completed against current guidance and legislation
10	Chief constables should make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services.	1 st September 2023			Seek update from NFCC
	Misconduct Hearing				
11	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 staff disclosures, complaints and grievances.	1 st December 2023	FSB & NFCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maintain awareness and receipt to NFCC communications and updates regarding this legislation. 	 NFCC Safeguarding Board achievements a
12	Chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling.	1 st March 2024	CFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide electronic update to HMICFRS portal site at required deadline 	Work in progress

13	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct and complete investigations, whether or not the staff member under investigation leaves; • consider whether the incident requires immediate dismissal; • provide training for staff who are carrying out investigations; and • ensure the diversity/neutrality of the investigation panel/person. 	1 st December 2023	FSB & NFCC	- maintain awareness and receipt to NFCC communications and updates regarding this legislation / guidance.	 NFCC Safeguarding Board achievements a
14	Chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on misconduct allegations and outcomes handling.	1 st March 2024	CFO	- Provide electronic update to HMICFRS portal site at required deadline	Work in progress
15	The Home Office should work with the National Fire Chiefs Council and fire and rescue service employers to make sure there is a process to handle misconduct allegations against chief fire officers. The Home Office should immediately notify HMICFRS of any allegations and outcomes that it is aware of.	1 st October 2023	Home Office & NFCC	- Review current service status that no outstanding cases	Awaiting confirmation of detail
16	The National Fire Chiefs Council should develop and manage a national barred list that holds details of staff who have been dismissed for gross misconduct (including staff who have already left services). It should ensure that this list is referred to in all appointment processes	1 st October 2023	NFCC	- maintain awareness and receipt to NFCC communications and updates regarding this legislation.	Awaiting confirmation of detail

	to prevent those who are barred from re-joining another service. After the College of Fire and Rescue has been established (see recommendation 25), it should take responsibility for managing the list.				
17	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in FRSs; • are of a serious nature; or • relate to assistant chief fire officers or those at equivalent or higher grades. 	Immediately	CFO	- immediately action recommendation no. 17	Completed
18	Chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations.	1 st August 2023	CFO	- Provide electronic update to HMICFRS portal site at required deadline	Completed
19	The Home Office should examine whether any appeal processes for fire and rescue misconduct cases are appropriate.	1 st July 2023	Home Office	- maintain awareness of HO emails and communication regarding this recommendation.	Awaiting feedback
20	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.	1 st June 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- work with CloS HR to review appropriate policies, procedures and practices. - use NFCC guidance where possible	Complete
21	Chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for	1 st June 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- work with CloS HR to review	Complete

	all senior leaders and managers (assistant chief fire officer equivalent and above) in service.			appropriate policies, procedures and practices. - use NFCC guidance where possible	
22	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.	1 st September 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- work with CloS HR to review appropriate policies, procedures and practices. - use NFCC guidance where possible - 360 degree feedback to be undertaken in March 2024	Complete
23	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.	1 st June 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- work with CloS HR to review appropriate policies, procedures and practices. - use NFCC guidance where possible - CloS working with LGA & South West Councils	Complete
24	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.	1 st October 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- work with CloS HR to review appropriate policies, procedures and practices.	Complete

				- results of last staff survey shared with IoSFRS. - IoSFRS engaged in setting of next staff survey - make time and encourage staff to complete staff survey	
	Management and Leadership Training and Development				
25	The Government should establish a College of Fire and Rescue, as proposed by the White Paper Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service. There should be no further delay to its implementation.	1 st January 2025	Government		Awaiting information
26	As a precursor to the development of the College of Fire and Rescue, chief fire officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council should work with the Home Office to consider how they can improve the training and support they offer to staff in management and leadership development. This should include authority members in respect of their assurance leadership roles and should ensure that opportunities are offered fairly across all staff groups.	1 st October 2023	College of Fire, CFO, NFCC, Home Office & CloS HR	- maintain awareness and receipt to NFCC communications and updates regarding this legislation. - seek opportunities for LGA authority member training	Continuing work in progress
	Diversity Data				
27	Chief fire officers should make sure their equality impact assessments are fit for purpose and, as a minimum, meet the	1 st June 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- Work with CloS HR to review existing EIA's	Complete

	requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality impact assessment toolkit.			- Manager training to include EIA training planned for Jan 24 - use NFCC EIA toolkit and template	
28	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 toolkit.	1 st June 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- Work with CloS HR team to ensure information can be electronically recorded and reported. - Use NFCC guidance and toolkit to ensure consistency	Complete
29	The Home Office should publish greater detail on the protected characteristic data it collects about FRS staff, including joiners and leavers, by rank and role.	1 st December 2023	Home Office	- Support HO where possible with information	Awaiting information
30	The Home Office should align the data it collects on protected characteristics with the Office for National Statistics harmonised standard and publish this data.	30 th December 2024	Home Office	- Support HO where possible with information	Not due yet
31	The Home Office should collect and publish experimental statistics on public complaints and conduct matters in relation to FRS staff, similar to that which it currently publishes on police forces in England and Wales.	1 st December 2024	Home Office	- Support HO where possible with information	Not Due yet
	Improving Diversity				
32	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.	1 st June 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- work with CloS HR to review appropriate policies, procedures and	Complete

				practices and existing data. - provide recruitment 'have a go days' - develop station succession plans	
33	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.	1 st August 2023	CFO & CloS HR	- Coordinated by CloS HR - progression plans completed and forwarded to CloS HR - review current role profiles	Continuing work in progress, complete deadline 31 st March
	The Core Code of Ethics				
34	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.	Immediately	CFO & CloS HR	Immediate action	Completed
	The Fire & Rescue National Framework for England				
35	The Government should consider the findings and recommendations in this report when refreshing the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.	End of this parliament	The Government		Awaiting recommendation outcomes