



# Human Resources Strategy 2016-2020



West Yorkshire  
Fire & Rescue Service

**Making West Yorkshire Safer**  
[www.westyorksfire.gov.uk](http://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk)





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# Introduction

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Having considered our approach to delivering best value for money, the actions that we have taken, and the plans that we have in place for the future, we believe that our Human Resources Strategy helps to ensure that the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (WYFRA) continues to deliver value for money for the council tax payers of the county.

We believe that our strategy demonstrates that:

- We have a robust approach to making decisions on how we use our resources to achieve our strategic objectives;
- The Authority has effective performance management and scrutiny functions in place which have identified areas for improvement, and which have, in turn, informed our HR Strategy, and
- We have a good understanding of the costs and outcomes of delivering our services, with future plans in place for further improvements.

The HR Strategy has been formulated to fully support the Authority's corporate aims and values, which are outlined below:

## **Our aim: The future we seek to create**

We want to:-

Provide an excellent fire and rescue service working in partnership to reduce death, injury, economic loss and contribute to community well-being.

- **Top Performance**  
Become a modern, forward thinking and influential organisation in the local community and the top performing fire service nationally;
- **Effectiveness**  
Demonstrate effectiveness in relation to fire prevention, protection and rescue work and inspire public confidence;
- **Collective Responsibility**  
Develop a culture in which staff and the public can take pride and in which shared values underpin policy and behaviour;
- **Diversity**  
Ensure diversity within the Service fully reflects the communities served across West Yorkshire.

## **Our Priorities:** **What the organisation is here to do**

### **Deliver a proactive community safety programme**

We will:

- Ensure the authority's statutory fire protection duties are discharged efficiently and effectively in order to reduce the risk of fire and the effects of fire should it occur
- Work with partners to reduce the risk of fires, road traffic incidents, other emergencies and enhance community well-being

### **Deliver a professional and resilient emergency response service**

We will:

- Work with blue-light partners and other agencies to provide a safe and effective emergency response
- Ensure emergency response is dynamic and resilient reflecting changes to the level of risk and demand
- Continuously improve our emergency response by learning from ours and others experiences

### **Provide a safe skilled workforce that serves the needs of a diverse community**

We will:

- Promote the health, safety and well-being of all employees
- Provide training and development to maintain a skilled and flexible workforce
- Create an environment that enables our staff to develop and embrace organisational and cultural change

### **Provide effective and ethical governance and achieve value for money**

We will:

- Provide buildings, vehicles, equipment and technology that is fit for purpose to maximise organisational effectiveness
- Provide effective systems of control, performance and assurance to ensure the service operates efficiently
- Demonstrate transparent and accountable decision making throughout the organisation
- Identify and implement strategic change to reflect the economic environment



The overall aim of this strategy is therefore:

‘To enable the Authority and its employees to exceed expectations in achieving corporate and service aims and objectives by recruiting, developing and retaining skilled and motivated people through effective people management and development, leading to a high performance culture.’

Key to this is the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, cohesive HR strategy which is directly aligned, and inextricably linked to the organisational aims and Service Plan.

We will strive to create a workforce who have the training, support and tools to do their job and that is:

- Service and community focussed
- Committed to our organisational values
- Skilled and willing to learn
- Motivated and valued
- Representative of the communities they serve

The eight core activity areas to be addressed through progressive people management practices are:

1. Employee engagement and well-being
2. Diversity
3. Recruitment and selection
4. Occupational health and safety
5. Learning, training and development
6. Employee and industrial relations
7. Human Resource information systems
8. Management of leavers

All of these activities will be undertaken having regard to relevant Authority policies and relevant legislation.

## Key Principles

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The retention of skilled and motivated employees can only be achieved through the successful implementation of all core activity areas within this Strategy. Moreover, the Strategy is underpinned by a number of key principles:

- the impact of good people management is cumulative; the more practices which are applied - and the more effective the manner in which they are applied - the better the result
  - the 'how' of people management (doing it right) is as important as the 'what' (doing the right thing)
  - providing our staff with a healthy and safe workplace is essential for them to feel safe and secure and deliver to their potential
  - recognition of the vital importance of continuous improvement in the performance of our workforce
  - team and partnership working, both within the Authority and with partner organisations, are crucial
  - competent managers at all levels are vital to the effective management and development of our workforce
  - managers will be provided with training and other support, leading to improved management performance
- the retention of skilled and motivated employees can only be achieved through the successful implementation of all core activity areas within this Strategy
  - effective partnership working with our trade unions will underpin all people management activities





# Accountability

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The implementation of this Strategy will be the responsibility of:

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive through the Chief Employment Services Officer

Assistant Chief Officers, Directors and all Area Managers/Executive Officers

The Strategy will, additionally, require the support and co-operation of managers and supervisors at all levels within the Authority.





# Core Activity Areas

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## 1. **Employee Engagement and Well-being**

- the creation of a modern, empowered, flexible and resilient organisation which will deliver continuous improvement, underpinned by a core “single organisation” culture which also recognises the value of diversity where a different approach is justified. The development of a workforce who are engaged, happy, healthy and feel valued and “looked after”, leading to a more positive, motivated, committed and productive workforce. Staff engagement is seen in the ways that people behave, think and act. Influencing these things in a positive way will increase the level of engagement that staff have at work.

We will achieve this by:

1.1 Reinforcing the Authority’s culture of employees being trusted, respected and empowered to exceed expectations, whilst working to a common purpose and goals; encouraging leadership, good practice and innovation at all levels within the Authority.

1.2 Exploring existing organisational values and their adoption by staff and developing future desired organisational values and behaviours that describe the type of organisation we want to be?

1.3 Assessing current levels of staff engagement through the deployment of a systematic

staff survey and using focus groups to validate results and develop action plans to further improve engagement levels.

1.4 Promoting the development of leadership and performance management skills which will enable strategy and plans to be transformed into action and measurable service improvement.

1.5 Developing organisational structures and job design to support effective and flexible service delivery and enable the Authority to take advantage of new opportunities.

1.6 Encouraging employees to become engaged in decision-making within their districts and departments through consultations about service planning and delivery.

1.7 Promoting a fair employment agenda and introducing policies and practices which actively support the management of change in partnership with our workforce, trade unions and other organisations.

1.8 Attaining and maintaining Investors in People accreditation for the whole organisation.

1.9 Continuing to refine systems of workforce and succession planning to ensure that the required number and calibre of

employees are available in the medium to long term, particularly bearing in mind the requirement to work longer and the climate of diminishing budgets.

- 1.10 Developing a strategic workforce plan which combines workforce change, technology, demographics and turnover.

**2. Diversity** - The mainstreaming of diversity into all people management and operational practices to ensure our workplace environment, and our service delivery is inclusive. The Authority recognises the importance of diversity of thought and that this will lead to improved service delivery and employee welfare, particularly during periods of change.

We will achieve this by:

- 2.1 Collecting employee-related equalities data, monitoring trends and sharing such information with Members, managers, trade unions and employees.
- 2.2 Maintaining and developing anti-discrimination policies and practices; introducing programmes which promote equality of opportunity, with a particular emphasis on awareness raising and training
- 2.3 Setting and communicating standards of behaviour, based on treating people with respect and dignity, supporting the Authority's core values.

- 2.4 Protecting employees from discrimination and abuse in the course of carrying out their duties.

- 2.5 Scrutinising new and ongoing operational projects to ensure they are fair and equitable and legally compliant (Equality Analysis).

- 2.6 Offering varying solutions which are tailored to the needs of individuals both internal and external to the organisation, where relevant and reasonable.

- 2.7 Guiding, coaching and empowering managers and supervisors across the organisation in relation to supporting staff with particular reference to equality and employment law.

**3. Recruitment and Selection** - the development and retention of a workforce which has the commitment and skills to deliver the Authority's services; a reduced fear of change as a result of improved communication and effective redeployment and retraining opportunities being made available.

We will achieve this by:

- 3.1 Improving recruitment advertising methods to ensure that job vacancies are open to all our communities within West Yorkshire and beyond.

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| <p>3.2 Constantly reviewing recruitment and selection policies and practices with a particular emphasis on clarity, fairness and equality of opportunity.</p> <p>3.3 Improving our selection processes, including more fully reflecting key job competencies and values.</p> <p>3.4 Implementing effective redeployment arrangements to ensure that all employees facing redundancy or loss of employment (for other than disciplinary reasons) are offered suitable alternative employment, wherever possible, underpinned by suitable retraining opportunities.</p> <p>3.5 Developing strategies that take account of the increasing normal retirement age.</p> <p>3.6 Maximising retention of key staff by effective design and deployment of human resource practices to make WYFRA an employer of choice.</p> | <p>4.2 Encouraging the reporting and investigation of all accidents, near misses and violence, so lessons are learned and controls put in place to prevent a re-occurrence and to maintain our policy of zero tolerance to violence against staff.</p> <p>4.3 Employing a systematic approach to the identification, assessment of workplace hazards and taking all reasonable action to remove or reduce risks within the context of the Authority's legal and moral responsibilities to employees and service users.</p> <p>4.4 Providing a pro-active occupational health service committed to identifying and addressing industrial injuries, stress and other causes of sickness absence, as well as promoting healthy living.</p> <p>4.5 Providing managers with a framework to manage sickness absence which strikes a balance between organisational need and supporting staff.</p> <p>4.6 Supporting managers to assist employees to return to work through rehabilitation arrangements, and to minimise ill health retirements through various measures, including redeployment.</p> |
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#### 4. Occupational Health and Safety -

the creation of a safer and healthier workforce; reduced accidents and sickness absence; fewer ill health retirements; fewer litigation claims and improved services, and to reduce sickness absence.

We will achieve this by:

- 4.1 Creating a healthier, safer, and more productive working environment.



## 5. Learning, Training and Development

- the creation of a performance-driven, skilled and flexible workforce with an emphasis on team and partnership working, competency and safety, coupled with a focus on the customer.

We will achieve this by:

- 5.1 Assisting the Authority to become a 'Learning Organisation', underpinned by a philosophy of lifelong learning.
- 5.2 Systematically analysing all employees' training needs on a regular basis, having regard both to current and future skill requirements, leading to each employee having a regularly reviewed, individual development plan; individual continuous professional development will be encouraged.
- 5.3 Developing corporate, departmental and district training programmes, which balance corporate and service priorities, within available funding.
- 5.4 Prioritising command and management training and development, particularly in relation to change management and leadership skills.
- 5.5 Providing all new employees, and those who move within the service, with an effective induction programme which

recognises individual, team, service, and area-wide dimensions of their employment with the Authority.

- 5.6 Anticipating and addressing new priority skills needs, for example in relation to community consultation, project management, partnership working and diversity.
- 5.7 Identifying the costs and 'added value' of all learning, training and development activities.
- 5.8 Ensure everyone is trained and competent to do the job they do, even if they are in a temporary position, and undertake periodical audits to give assurance.

## 6. Employee and Industrial Relations

- the creation of a more informed, committed and confident workforce which feels valued and trusted, with fewer individual and collective grievances, a workforce comprising of employees who are aware of their role within the Authority and whose workplace activities have focus and direction to achieve organisational objectives.

We will achieve this by:

- 6.1 Pro-actively consulting employees and trade union representatives at an early stage about proposed work-related changes.

- 6.2 Developing and implementing an Employee Communications Strategy in a systematic and robust manner leading to effective, timely and relevant two-way employee communications with direct briefings for employees by senior managers on major service and corporate issues.
  - 6.3 Formally seeking employees' views from time to time through surveys and focus groups, with a commitment to being open about publishing the results and taking action in relation to the findings.
  - 6.4 Providing trade union representatives with reasonable time off and other support facilities to enable them to play a positive part in developing and maintaining effective employee relations in a spirit of partnership.
  - 6.5 Supporting formal and informal trade union consultation and negotiation arrangements at a corporate level and within districts.
  - 6.6 Promoting performance appraisal mechanisms which directly link individual employee performance with the achievement of service and corporate aims and objectives and also enable work performance to be assessed against clear standards.
  - 6.7 Clearly stating the high standards of conduct and integrity required of all employees, including keeping under review an employee code of conduct, underpinned by whistleblowing and anti-fraud and corruption measures; maintaining public confidence in the Authority.
  - 6.8 Maintaining procedures for addressing disciplinary, grievance, unsatisfactory work performance, redundancy, sickness, harassment and discrimination issues in a fair and equitable manner.
  - 6.9 Continuing to administer the available pension schemes and providing appropriate advice to staff.
- ## 7. Human Resource Information Systems
- Systems** - the collection and analysis of employee and workforce data required by the Authority and relevant external organisations to support effective and well-informed people management practices, leading to measurable improvements in workforce performance.
- We will achieve this by:
- 7.1 Maintaining accurate and up-to-date manual and computerised personnel files and other employee records, including contract of employment documentation, always having regard to issues of confidentiality.



7.2 Collecting and inputting data to the computerised information system for payroll, personnel, health and safety, diversity and training purposes.

7.3 Analysing operational and strategic workforce data, and collecting and analysing data for statutory and other external workforce surveys; producing regular reports for managers at all levels.

**8. Management of Leavers** - the creation of an environment where employees leave the Authority's employment in a manner which is appropriate to each individual's circumstances, and where the interests of the Authority are safeguarded, particularly having regard to employment legislation.

We will achieve this by:

8.1 Managing any cases of redundancy in a professional and sensitive manner.

8.2 Managing applications for early retirement in a manner which balances the wishes of individual employees, as far as possible, with the service needs, always having regard to the potential financial impact of early retirement upon the Authority.

8.3 Collecting and analysing data in relation to leavers to identify trends and to enable excessive turnover rates to be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

8.4 Providing all leavers with an opportunity to comment upon relevant matters via an exit questionnaire, supported by exit interviews where considered necessary.

8.5 Providing access to timely and relevant pre-retirement events, advice and other support.



# Performance Management Framework

A Performance Management Framework for the Employment Services department will underpin the operation of this Strategy. A key feature of the Framework is a set of performance data (targets and actuals) which will lead to a planned level of performance which equates to the department being seen as a centre of excellence.

Management Board scrutiny of the management information contained within the framework will be a key feature of the operation of the strategy.

## Links to Business Strategy

## Review

This Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains fully relevant to the Authority.

Business Strategy	Human Resource Priorities
<b>Top performance and effectiveness</b>	<p>Implementation of robust performance management system.</p> <p>Commitment to staff development through training policy.</p>
<b>Collective responsibility</b>	<p>Congruence between values of organisation and values of potential recruits tested at selection stage.</p> <p>Develop change agents.</p> <p>Annual staff survey to confirm staff commitment and to influence future policies. Generate 'buy-in'.</p>
<b>Diversity</b>	<p>Open and transparent recruitment and selection policy.</p> <p>Diversity training for managers.</p> <p>Policy impact assessments.</p>



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