West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Update

Human Resources Committee

Date: 19 January 2024

Submitted By: Chief Employment Services Officer

Agenda Item:

06

Purpose	To inform Members of work undertaken to ensure compliance with the recent amendment to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions).
Recommendations	Members note the content of the report.
Summary	This report informs Members of our current DBS status for all roles within the Service.

Local Government (Access to information) Act 1972

Exemption Category: None

Contact Officer:

Rachel McArdle, Head of HR
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Background papers open to inspection: None

Annexes: None

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1   Introduction

1.1   As of Thursday 6th July, Fire & Rescue Authorities are now listed as an exception in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 following a case made by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

1.2   The amendment to the Act will mean that Fire & Rescue Services (FRS's) will now be required to perform a minimum of Standard disclosure and barring Service (DBS) checks for all representatives of their service.

1.3   In addition to the legislative change, three safeguarding guidance documents have been developed in the following areas:

- Safeguarding Guidance for Children, Young People and Adults

- Managing Allegations

- Positive Disclosure Risk Assessments

The documents can be found here: guidance documents

1.4   The current levels of DBS checks are as follows:

- **Basic** DBS check – details any unspent convictions

- **Standard** DBS check – details spent and unspent convictions

- **Enhanced** DBS check – like Standard but details more information. In addition to conviction, auctions and reprimands, an Enhanced DBS check will also show information held by local police forces.

- **Enhanced with Barred List(s)** DBS check – same as enhanced but and if the role is eligible, an employer can request that one or both DBS Barred Lists are checked.

Currently we are charged £9.95 admin fee per check. Plus, the cost of the check (basic and standard £18, enhanced £38).

1.5   Prior to the legislative change, Firefighters were asked to undertake a basic check which is the lowest level check and reveals unspent convictions only.

1.6   From 6 July 2023 we have been undertaking Standard checks on all new starters as a minimum and appropriate enhanced checks on the roles which are eligible.   Line managers of postholders who meet the criteria for enhanced checks should also be subject to an enhanced check themselves.

2   Implications for WYFRS

2.1   **New Employees**

Previously, applications for a basic check for new employees could be done online by the individual themselves and the results were then shared with the organisation and the individual was reimbursed for the cost. This was a relatively simple and quick process.

All new prospective employees for WYFRS are now required to undergo a minimum of a standard DBS check and individuals cannot apply for these themselves as they must be sent to the DBS through a registered body.

WYFRS is not currently a registered body, so we bear the cost of the standard DBS (£18) and also the cost charged by the registered body, approximately £9.95 per application.

We have applied to become a registered body and in doing so have had to satisfy the following:

- submit more than 100 eligible DBS check applications per year (full checks not including ongoing Update Service checks)

- comply with the DBS code of practice

- pay the appropriate fees in relation to applications for DBS checks, as well as registration of the organisation and counter signatories. Registration costs £300, with a £5 cost for each counter signatory to be registered.

2.2   **Level of Checks for Firefighters**

The minimum level of check for Firefighters is Standard. However, the NFCC Strategic Safeguarding Lead and Head of Safeguarding has advised as follows:

1) if Firefighters undertake safe and well checks, and most importantly, access and use vulnerability data as part of this process, then they are eligible for an Enhanced check.

2) If Firefighters have the potential to be First Aiders, i.e., if they are first on the scene at an RTC), prior to Ambulance colleagues, then again, this fits within the eligibility for an Enhanced check.

Given this advice we now request an enhanced check for all newly recruited Firefighters and will do so for our currently employed Firefighters.

All Crew Managers and Watch Managers will also be subject to an enhanced check as the same principles apply to that of the Firefighter role. All Station Managers/Assistant District Commanders will also be subject to an enhanced check as they line manage those carrying out the activity outlined above which is a DBS requirement**.**

2.3   **Current Employees**

As stated previously, for all new employees we now request a Standard DBS check as a minimum.

Those posts that previously qualified for an enhanced check will continue to do so, as will the managers of these postholders, along with Operational employees as referred to above.

The revised guidance does not specifically state that all current employees must undertake a further DBS check at Standard where they were previously eligible for Basic, however, the below is an extract from a recent letter from the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire:

'Another key HMICFRS recommendation was that appropriate DBS check requests were submitted for existing staff, new staff and volunteers. I would strongly encourage you to use the eligibility, guidance and workshops to support your work towards this recommendation and I understand that HMICFRS have already started monitoring progress against their recommendations.'

The decision has been taken to undertake new DBS checks at the requisite level for all current employees to ensure compliance. There are implications in relation to direct cost and time in dealing with positive disclosures as well as potential resistance to this from some employees and/or representative bodies.

2.4	**Implementation plan for re-checking existing employees**

We will prioritise checks using the date their previous DBS check was undertaken (the least recent first) alongside prioritising re-checking operational staff. This is because this is where the risk is the highest as we are moving from Basic to Enhanced. For enhanced checks, there will be a rolling programme over 3 years/36 months to update them again once they pass the 3-year mark.

For employees who successfully move into new posts requiring a higher level of check, this will be done as part of the transition process.

2.5	**Resource requirements for re-checking existing staff**

The process for standard/enhanced DBS checking is more resource intensive than the basic checking process. For every employee, it involves checking and recording original documents (passport, driving licence and birth certificate) and checking and verifying the information provided on the form by the employee prior to it being sent off.

There will also be administrative tasks on the receipt of the DBS check – this will need to be checked and recorded onto our HR system (Access). Any positive disclosures will need to be escalated to senior HR Managers and a risk assessment will be undertaken.

The 3-year rolling re-checking programme for all operational colleagues alone (approx. 900) will be resource intensive so we would like to build capacity in the HR team by adding an additional full-time HR Administrator who will be primarily responsible for undertaking the re-checking process for current employees, as detailed in the Human Resources Activity Report.

3 DBS Check eligibility by Post

3.1	The tables below detail firstly all posts that are now subject to a Standard DBS and secondly all posts that require an Enhanced DBS check.

Standard DBS		
Post Title	**Area**	**Person to review if required**
All Fire and Rescue Service employees other than those identified for enhanced checks as	All	Head of HR (HoHR)

per the below.		
Fire Prevention Trainer	Fire Safety	Central Fire Prevention Manager with HoHR

Enhanced DBS			
Post Title	**Area**	**Rationale for Check**	**Person to review if required**
Firefighters, Crew Managers, Watch Managers	Service Delivery	Using vulnerability data/first responder	Area Manager, Service Delivery with HoHR
Station Managers	Service Delivery	Manager of those carrying out eligible activity as above	Area Manager, Service Delivery with HoHR
Youth Intervention Trainers	Fire Safety	Teaching Children (up to age 25) unsupervised –	Central Fire Prevention Manager with HoHR
Fire Prevention Officer	Fire Safety	Regulated Activity – children and adults barred list	Central Fire Prevention Manager with HoHR
Anyone involved in Fire Setter training/Interventions/ Young Firefighter Schemes	Fire Safety	Teaching Children unsupervised – children's barred list	Central Fire Prevention Manager with HoHR
All Fire Prevention managers including District Prevention Managers	Fire Safety	Manger of those carrying out activity as outlined above	Central Fire Prevention Manager with HoHR

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4 Risks associated with the change

4.1 It should be noted that if challenged about the level of DBS we have decided to use for Firefighters we are legally responsible for making sure the job role is eligible and there may be a cost in defending this decision in court.

There is a risk of not moving to enhanced for Firefighters when our regional FRS do check at this level, as there is the potential for attracting those who may not be able to apply where the enhanced is in place due to their criminal record.

4.2 **Costs**

The initial cost of rechecking the whole workforce will be circa £34,000 for operational staff (enhanced) and £6,000 for those who require a standard check. Total cost £40,000 circa spread across 3 financial years = £13,354 per annum

5 Communicating the change with our workforce

- We have had discussions with Rep Bodies about the above changes and they have not raised any concerns.
- We ran several weeks of drop in sessions for managers to explain the changes and provide an opportunity for questions.
- We have shared a communication with all our current employees about the changes

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The appointment of a HR administrator, and the cost of implementing the DBS checks outlined in the report have been included as revenue bids for inclusion in the 2024/25 revenue budget.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The Monitoring Officer has considered this report and is satisfied it is presented in compliance with the Authority's Constitution.

8 Human Resource and Diversity Implications

8.1 There are HR implications that arise from this report in that there is an increased possibility that we cannot continue a current employee's employment because of a serious criminal conviction detailed in a higher-level DBS check that did not have to be included previously (because it is spent). Employees have been assured that we will make risk based proportionate and pragmatic decisions around these positive disclosures based on the relevance of the crime in relation to the job that the individual undertakes. It is also increasingly possible that we will have to withdraw a job offer if a higher-level DBS check is not passed which could cause recruitment issues.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

Are the recommendations within this report subject to Equality Impact Assessment as outlined in the EIA guidance? (EIA guidance and form 2020 form.docx (westyorksfire.gov.uk)	No

Date EIA Completed	DD/MM/YY
Date EIA Approved	DD/MM/YY

The EIA is available on request from the report author or from diversity.inclusion@westyorksfire.gov.uk

10 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Implications

10.1 There could be wellbeing implications arising from this report if current staff have concerns what a higher-level check will disclose. For the very small number of people where this has been a concern, we have agreed to expedite their DBS check. This provides reassurance for the individual as well as the Service. Compliance with the legislative change is imperative for safer recruitment decisions to be made which increases our colleagues and the public's health and safety.

11 Environmental Implications

11.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

12 Your Fire and Rescue Service Priorities

12.1 This report links with the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25 strategic priority below;

- Promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of all our people.

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HR Activity Report

Human Resources Committee

Date: 19 January 2024

Agenda Item:

07

Submitted By: Chief Employment Services Officer

Purpose	To inform Members of HR activity to the end of September 2023, incorporating data for Quarter 2 (July – September 2023)
Recommendations	1. That Members note the content of the report. 2. That Members approve the increase in establishment detailed in section 8
Summary	This report informs Members of key data relating to the functional areas within the Employment Services directorate.

Local Government (Access to information) Act 1972

Exemption Category:

None

Contact Officer:

Rachel McArdle, Head of HR
rachel.mcardle@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Background papers open to inspection: None

Annexes:

None

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1 STAFF PROFILE (EMPLOYEE HEADCOUNT) – as of 27 October 2023.

1.1 Wholetime

Ethnicity	Q1 (Apr 23- Jun 23)	Q2 (Jul 23- Sep 23)
Total	**926**	**912**
Any other Black / African / Caribbean Background	1	1
Any other Ethnic Group	6	6
Any other Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background	4	4
Any Other White	11	11
Asian or Asian British	16	16
Black or Black British	3	3
Chinese	2	2
Indian	1	1
Irish	1	1
Mixed	11	11
Not Declared	47	47
Pakistani	1	1
Prefer not to specify	8	7
White and Asian	1	1
White and Black African	1	1
White and Black Caribbean	5	5
White British	82	91
White British or Irish	716	703

1.2   Control

Ethnicity	Q1 (Apr 23- Jun 23)	Q2 (Jul 23- Sep 23)
Total	**48**	**48**
Mixed	1	1
Not Declared	1	1
White and Asian	1	1
White British	8	10
White British or Irish	37	35

1.3   On-Call

Ethnicity	Q1 (Apr 23- Jun 23)	Q2 (Jul 23- Sep 23)
Total	**152**	**154**
Any Other White	2	2
Asian or Asian British	1	1
Chinese	1	1
Not Declared	2	2
Prefer not to specify	0	1
White and Asian	1	1
White and Black Caribbean	1	1
White British	11	13
White British or Irish	133	132

1.4   Green Book

Ethnicity	Q1 (Apr 23- Jun 23)	Q2 (Jul 23- Sep 23)
Total	**300**	**298**
African	1	2
Any other Asian Background	1	2
Any other Black / African / Caribbean Background	1	1
Any other Ethnic Group	1	2
Any Other White	4	3
Asian or Asian British	12	11
Bangladeshi	0	1
Indian	2	2
Mixed	0	1
Not Declared	2	2
Pakistani	1	1
Prefer not to specify	3	3
White and Asian	1	1
White and Black Caribbean	2	2
White British	70	71
White British or Irish	199	193

1.5 The above figures include Career Breaks, Maternity & Secondments.

Q1 (Apr 23 - Jun 23)

	Wholetime	Control	On-Call	Green Book
All	879	48	152	300
Excluding career breaks, secondments, maternity leave.	873	47	147	295

Q2 (Jul 23- Sep 23)

	Wholetime	Control	On-Call	Green Book
All	874	48	154	298
Excluding career breaks, secondments, maternity leave.	872	47	148	293

2 Sickness Absence

SICKNESS ABSENCE - WORKING DAYS LOST PER EMPLOYEE
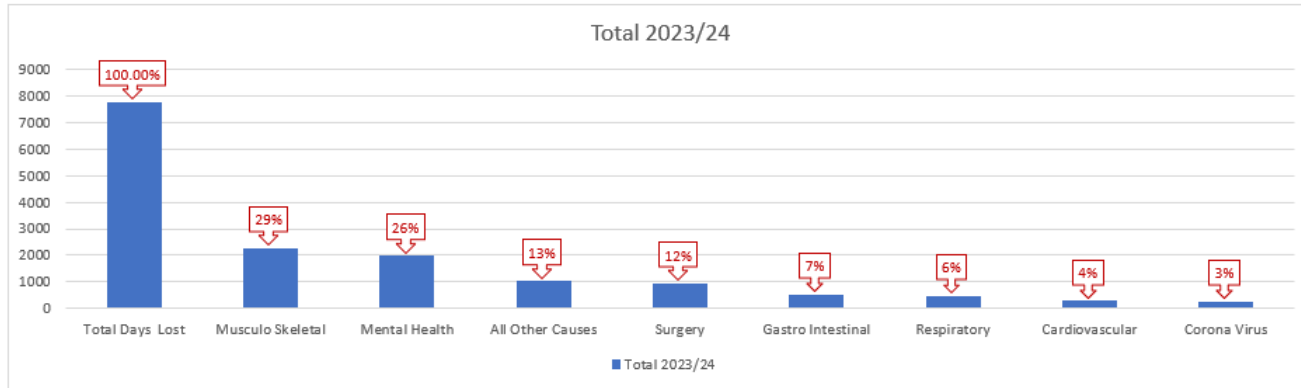October 2022 - September 2023 PER MONTH

	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
Ops Response	0.99	0.97	1.08	0.96	0.88	0.90	0.78	0.92	0.92	1.10	1.03	0.86
Ops Support	0.84	0.58	0.35	0.70	0.41	0.44	0.29	0.26	0.62	0.79	0.15	0.38
Prev & Prot	1.47	0.70	0.79	0.09	0.11	0.72	0.43	1.08	0.49	0.53	0.59	0.39
Legal & Gov	2.59	2.74	2.32	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.64	1.79	0.21	0.20
Service Support	0.94	0.84	0.79	0.58	0.47	0.39	0.35	0.50	0.64	0.91	1.16	0.79
Emp Services	0.05	0.63	0.26	0.19	0.27	1.04	0.60	0.55	0.66	0.27	0.00	0.27
Finance	0.06	0.12	0.06	0.88	0.56	2.80	1.20	1.33	0.07	0.88	2.06	0.00
Corporate Comms	0.77	1.45	1.32	0.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.42	1.21
FSHQ	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	0.97	0.94	0.98	0.83	0.74	0.82	0.68	0.83	0.83	1.01	0.96	0.78
Target	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60
Previous Year Total (2020/21)	1.05	0.95	1.28	1.50	0.91	1.07	0.86	0.73	0.75	0.87	0.82	0.72

GREEN - ON TARGET OR BELOW
AMBER - WITHIN 10% OF TARGET
RED - OVER 10% OF TARGET

These figures include absence due to Covid19 and Self Isolating per employee.
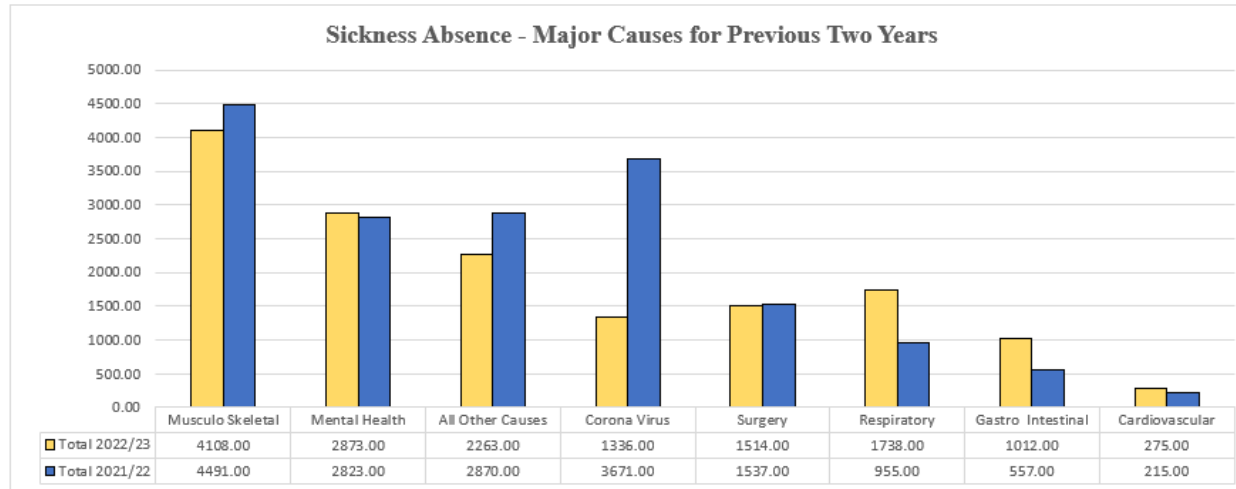
SICKNESS ABSENCE - MAJOR CAUSES FOR CURRENT YEAR 2023/24 (Financial Years)

	Total Days Lost	Musculo Skeletal	Mental Health	All Other Causes	Surgery	Gastro Intestinal	Respiratory	Cardiovascular	Corona Virus
Total 2023/24	7778.0	2269.0	1990.0	1034.0	936.0	531.0	475.0	283.0	260.0
Percentage	100.00%	29%	26%	13%	12%	7%	6%	4%	3%

SICKNESS ABSENCE - MAJOR CAUSES FOR APRIL 2021 to MARCH 2023 (Financial Years)

	Total Days Lost	Musculo Skeletal	Mental Health	All Other Causes	Corona Virus	Surgery	Respiratory	Gastro Intestinal	Cardiovascular
Total 2022/23	15119.00	4108.00	2873.00	2263.00	1336.00	1514.00	1738.00	1012.00	275.00
Total 2021/22	17119.00	4491.00	2823.00	2870.00	3671.00	1537.00	955.00	557.00	215.00
Total	32238.00	8599.00	5696.00	5133.00	5007.00	3051.00	2693.00	1569.00	490.00
Percentage	100.00%	26.67%	17.67%	15.92%	15.53%	9.46%	8.35%	4.87%	1.52%

Sickness Absence - Major Causes for Previous Two Years

	Musculo Skeletal	Mental Health	All Other Causes	Corona Virus	Surgery	Respiratory	Gastro Intestinal	Cardiovascular
Total 2022/23	4108.00	2873.00	2263.00	1336.00	1514.00	1738.00	1012.00	275.00
Total 2021/22	4491.00	2823.00	2870.00	3671.00	1537.00	955.00	557.00	215.00

3   ESTABLISHMENT AND STRENGTH 1 APRIL 2018 to 31 OCTOBER 2023
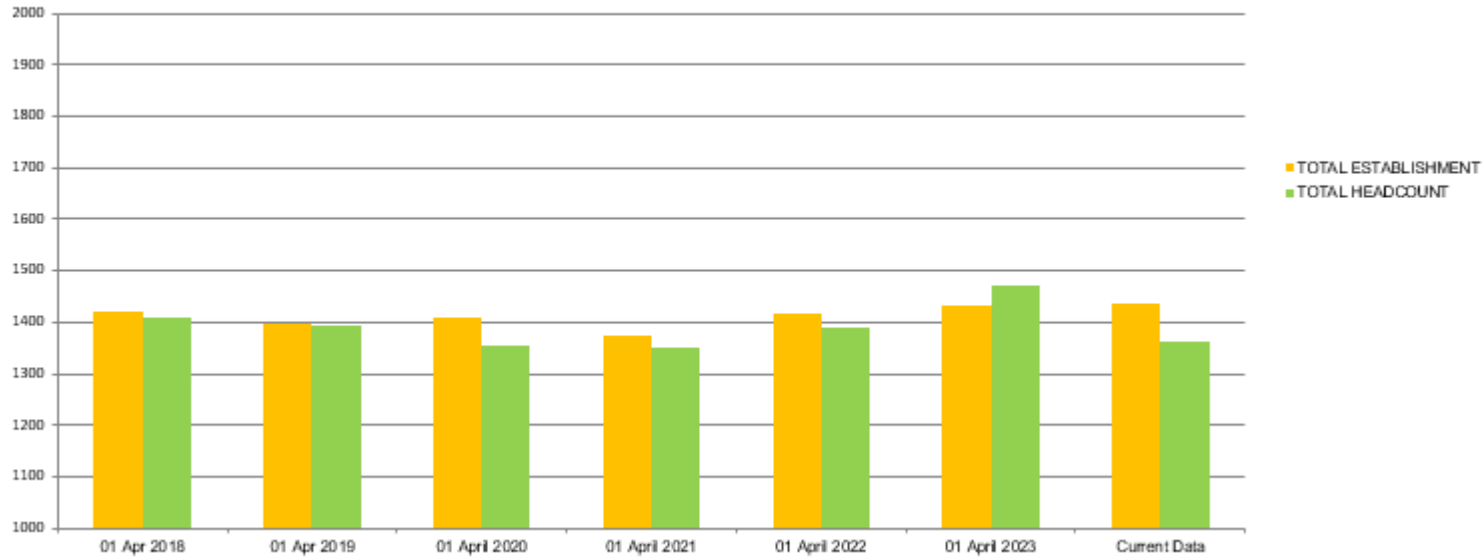
Summary Figures – Establishment and Strength

	TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT	TOTAL HEADCOUNT	WHOLETIME ESTABLISHMENT	WHOLETIME HEADCOUNT	RETAINED ESTABLISHMENT	ON CLL POSITIONS COVERED*	CONTROL ESTABLISHMENT	CONTROL HEADCOUNT	GREEN BOOK ESTABLISHMENT	GREEN BOOK HEADCOUNT
01 Apr 2018	1420	1408	963	959	120	87	43	47	294	315
01 Apr 2019	1396	1394	927	951	120	82	44	48	305	313
01 April 2020	1408	1355	930	914	120	87	44	46	314	308
01 April 2021	1375	1351	900	895	120	96	44	51	311	309
01 April 2022	1418	1390	934	917	120	96	44	50	320	327
01 April 2023	1433	1471	941	943	120	82	44	51	328	316
Current Data	1437	1361	941	926	120	80	44	48	332	307
Reductions to date	-17	47	22	33	0	7	-1	-1	-38	8

* Retained strength shown as number of positions covered not people employed (this includes posts that will be covered by Trainees)

Summary Figures - Employee FTE data - Current Date

	Current Headcount	Current Employee FTE
Wholetime	926	908.50
Control	48	45.06
On Call	151	80.36
Green Book	307	275.18

Graphical Representation of Establishment and Strength

Gender Profile – Wholetime Firefighters:

	Female	Male	Prefer Own Term	% Female	Total Staff
Jun-21	57	855		6.3%	912
Sep-21	61	846		6.7%	907
Dec-21	62	850		6.8%	912
Mar-22	67	849		7.3%	916
Jun-22	67	844		7.4%	911
Dec-22	71	851	1	7.7%	923
Feb-23	72	866	1	7.7%	939
May-23	76	866	1	8.1%	943
Sep-23	82	849	1	8.8%	932

4   HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE 1 APRIL 2023 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Lost time up to 3 days

Actual performance 2023/24	Target 2023/24
10	24

Lost time over 3 days

Actual performance 2023/24	Target 2023/24
17	22

RIDDOR Major injury/disease

Actual performance 2023/24	Target 2023/24
1	No target set

5   OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 1 JULY 2023 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Ref No.	KPI	Target	Quarter 1ST July 2023 – 30th Sept. 2023	YTD 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024	Target achieved for present quarter
1	Management referral to appointment date (3 weeks)	90%	83%	77%	NO
2	AMA report to management within 48hr	90%	100	100	Yes
3	No. of Did Not Attends (DNA's) or cancellation <48 hr notice*		0 Nurse 0 AMA	0 0	
4	No. of physiotherapy referrals		46	81	
5	No. of counselling referrals		10	25	
6	No. of management referrals		6	13	
7	No. of health screenings		72	110	
8	No. of self-referrals		6	11	
9	No of AMA consultations		209	397	

Please note the health screenings now include the Asbestos medicals.

6 DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE CASES.

6.1 Discipline

01/07/2023	30/09/2023	Total Completed		Current Live Cases	Time to Complete if Outside of Target, Examples.
	Total in Period	In Target [within 60 days	Out of Target [over 60 days]		
Green Book	1	1	0	0	
On Call	0	0	0	0	
Wholetime	12	9	1	2	Delays in the process due to sickness, annual leave and availability.
Total	13	10	1	2	Delays due to availability of witnesses, employees, union reps, annual leave etc.

6.2   Grievances

01/07/2023	30/09/23				
		Total Completed		Current Live Cases	Average / Time to Complete
	Total Received in Period	In Target [under 30 days].	Out of Target [Over 30 days].		
Control	0	0	0	0	
Green Book	1	1	0	0	
Wholetime	3	3	0	0	
Total	4	4	0	0	

7 RECRUITMENT STATISTICS

External Recruitment by Directorate 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023

Directorate	Total Received	Total Complete in Period	Total Complete Within Target	Total Complete Outside Target	Live cases	Average time to complete (Days)	Vacancies not appointed to
Finance & Procurement	4	1	0	1	0	89	3
Service Delivery	4	0	0	0	3	0	1
Corporate Services	2	2	2	0	0	46	0
Employment Services	2	2	2	0	0	33	0
Service Support	5	5	5	0	0	43	0

Target Timescale
Green < 84 Days
Red > 84 Days

Internal Only Recruitment by Directorate 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023

Directorate	Total Received	Total Complete in Period	Total Complete Within Target	Total Complete Outside Target	Lives cases	Average time to complete (Days)	Vacancies not appointed to
Finance & Procurement							
Service Delivery	5	2	2	0	1	26	2
Corporate Services							
Employment Services							
Service Support	8	5	2	3	2	41	1

Target Timescale
Green <30 Days
Red > 30 Days

8   **Increase in establishment.**

8.1   Permanent green book roles:

HR Administrator - to support the re-checking of disclosure and barring required due to change in law (rehabilitation of offenders FRS exception), Human Resources, Grade 3 (£25,979 to £26,873)

Sickness Absence Review

Human Resources Committee

Date: 19 January 2024

Submitted By: Chief Employment Services Officer

Agenda Item:

08

Purpose

This report sets out details of sickness absence levels across the organisation from April 2018 to present.

Recommendations

That the report be noted

Summary

The Service has experienced a very significant rise in sickness absence since 2018. The report sets out the data and seeks to examine reasons for absence and its increase.

Local Government (Access to information) Act 1972

Exemption Category: None

Contact Officer: Ian Brandwood, Chief Employment Services Officer

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Background papers open to inspection: CIPD Health and wellbeing at work report (2023)

Health and wellbeing at work | CIPD

Annexes: Annex A – Absence Levels

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1 Introduction

1.1 Following a debate at Full Authority in December, members expressed concern about the continued high levels of sickness absence within the organisation and asked that HR Committee subject this matter to further scrutiny.

1.2 The Service has experienced a very significant rise in sickness absence since 2018. The report sets out the data and seeks to examine reasons for absence and its increase.

2 Information

2.1 In common with most organisations, WYFRS has seen a significant rise in sickness absence levels over the last few years. The Annex to this report sets out details from April 2018 to present.

2.2 The organisation was of course significantly affected by the Covid Pandemic, and even at the time of lockdown, our staff continued to work despite the inherent dangers and the increased risk of them contracting the disease. For that, they deserve great credit. (For information, the three lockdown periods ran from March to May 2020, November - December 2020 and from January until March 2021). Between February 2020 and March 2021, the organisation lost 8,900 days due to Covid and related absence.

2.3 As the direct impact of Covid started to decline post April 2021, absence levels have remained stubbornly high. A comparison between the 2018-19 financial year and 2022-23 show that sickness absence increased by almost 60% to 15,442 days. Even excluding the direct impact of Covid, sickness levels still rose by 45% over that period. The Annex shows the top 10 reasons for absence in each of the financial years. Ignoring Covid, Musculoskeletal injuries are consistently the highest cause of absence in the organisation.

2.4 There have been very significant increases in other causes of absence. Most notable is perhaps days lost to surgery/operations which has increased tenfold since 2018, from 150 days lost to 1,618. This is possibly explained by treatment delays caused by Covid and the increase in NHS waiting lists. Cough, Colds and Flu and Sickness and Diarrhoea have all shown increases.

2.5 The increase in sickness absence is being seen across society. The 23rd annual CIPD Health and wellbeing at work report (2023), shows the highest sickness absence rate for over a decade. They go on to comment:
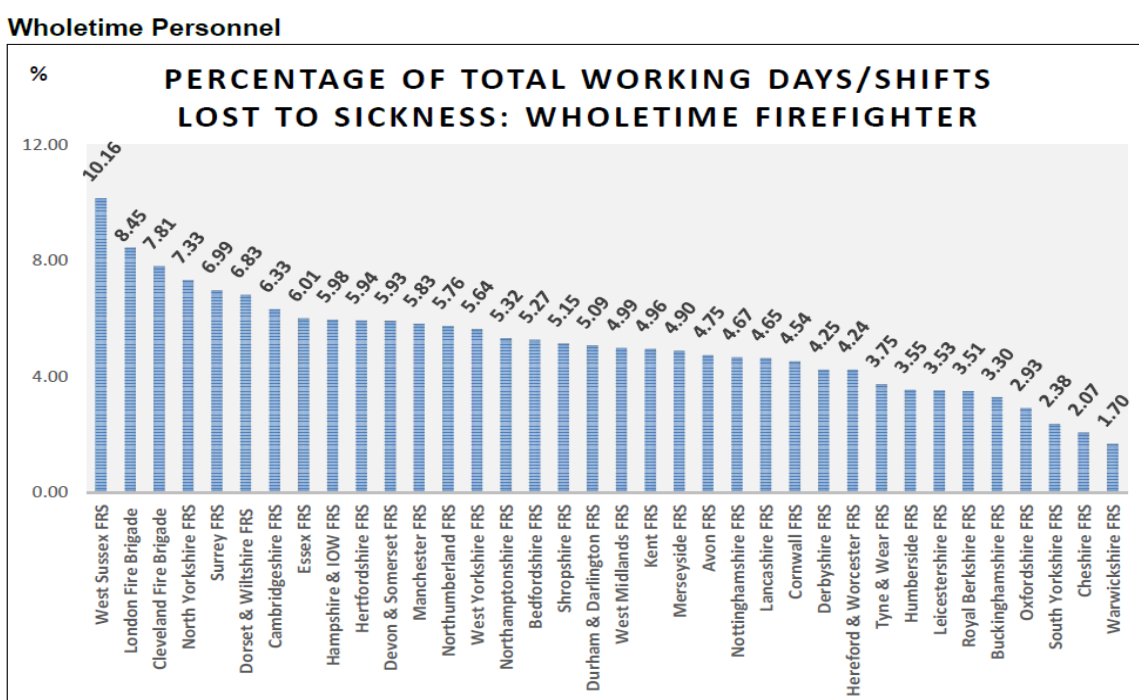
"The average rate of employee absence now stands at 7.8 days per employee per year, a considerable increase since we last reported this from data collected before the pandemic in October/November 2019 (5.8 days per employee). With people professionals responding in over 900 organisations covering 6.5 million employees, the survey data represent an authoritative insight on workplace health.

This begs the question, why? Are people becoming more unwell, or are organisations not managing sickness absence as effectively?

There are likely to be many factors having an impact on absence levels, and there is also the wider context to bear in mind. It has been a challenging few years for many individuals and organisations that have impacted on some employees' health and wellbeing. We always knew the pandemic would have a long tail in terms of mental wellbeing for some, and the uncertainty and disruption during the pandemic has continued with further events including economic turbulence, a cost-of-living crisis, and war.

The causes of absence are similar to previous years. Minor illness is most commonly responsible for short-term absence while mental ill-health, musculoskeletal injuries, acute medical conditions, and stress are the most common causes of long-term absence."

2.6 Compared to other Fire and Rescue Services, West Yorkshires level of attendance remains slightly above average. The data below represents the period April to September 2023.

Wholetime Personnel

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WORKING DAYS/SHIFTS LOST TO SICKNESS: WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTER

2.7 There is a need to exercise caution when comparing with other services. There is some inconsistency in the way services interpret and record absence data.

3   Financial Implications

3.1 It is extremely difficult to quantify the cost of sickness absence. What can be said with certainty is that the higher levels of absence have impacted detrimentally on overtime and detached duty costs.

4   Legal Implications

4.1 The Monitoring Officer has considered this report and is satisfied it is presented in compliance with the Authority's Constitution.

5 Human Resource and Diversity Implications

5.1 The management of attendance remains a significant priority for managers across the service. The service has in place a robust attendance management policy which seeks to strike an appropriate balance between offering support to those employees that need it, whilst at the same time managing performance and capability effectively.

5.2 There are also some very particular factors that may be impacting on attendance in the fire service. Throughout a very significant period of the pandemic, employees were allowed to cancel planned leave and to carry that leave forward for up to two years. In addition, 2 additional bank holidays were granted in September 22 and May 23 to mark the Queen's passing and the King's coronation. This combination of events placed enormous pressure on the service's ability to facilitate leave for its operational workforce. That could of course have impacted on attendance levels.

5.3 The remainder of the implications are contained within the report.

6 Equality Impact Assessment

Are the recommendations within this report subject to Equality Impact Assessment as outlined in the EIA guidance? (EIA guidance and form 2020 form.docx (westyorksfire.gov.uk)	~~Yes~~ / No
Date EIA Completed	DD/MM/YY
Date EIA Approved	DD/MM/YY

The EIA is available on request from the report author or from diversity.inclusion@westyorksfire.gov.uk

7 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Implications

7.1 The service offers a range of interventions to support the health and well-being of staff. These include:

- Employee Assistance Program
- In-House Occupational Health Team
- Free flu Jabs
- Free access to physiotherapy services
- Free access to specialist trauma services
- Disability assessment and support
- Access to specialist rehabilitation services through the fire fighters charity.
- Contributions to private health care in limited circumstances – This involves a detailed assessment by the Head of Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing and the relevant senior manager to establish whether there is a business case for supporting such an intervention.

8 Environmental Implications

8.1 None arising from this report.

9 Your Fire and Rescue Service Priorities

9.1 This report links with the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25 strategic priorities below:

- Improve the safety and effectiveness of our firefighters.
- Promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of all our people.
- Achieve a more inclusive workforce, which reflects the diverse communities we serve.
- Plan and deploy our resources based on risk.

10 Conclusions

10.1 The indications are that sickness absence is starting to decrease slightly within the current financial year. However, it is likely that future workforce planning will have to account for a higher level of absence as the new norm compared to pre-covid levels.

10.2 The report attempts to explain some of the reasons for the higher levels of absence. One could also speculate that in the light of Covid, staff are more likely to refrain from work with cough and cold symptoms.

10.3 As our operational workforce planning develops to take account of the increased absences and as the access to leave improves, it is expected that absence levels will fall.

Absence Levels 2018 -2024

Days Lost	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Grey	7,935	9,796	11,831	15,553	11,987	7,613
Green	1,808	2,707	2,338	3,921	3,455	2,388
Total Days Lost	9,743	12,503	14,169	19,474	15,442	10,001
Total Days Lost Exc Covid	9,743	9,423	8,347	14,254	14,178	9,692
Grey	81%	78%	83%	80%	78%	76%
Green	19%	22%	17%	20%	22%	24%

Reasons For Absence

	2018-19			2019-20			2020-21			2021-22			2022-23			2023-24
1	Muscular Skeletal	3,702.42	1	Muscular Skeletal	3,554.00	1	Self Isolation	3,733.18	1	Corona Virus	3,726.95	1	Muscular Skeletal	2,578.00	1	Muscular Skeletal	1,860.00
2	Personal - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	1,554.00	2	Self Isolation	2,780.95	2	Corona Virus	2,088.60	2	Muscular Skeletal	2,633.25	2	Personal - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	2,114.50	2	Personal - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	1,805.50
3	Cancer	1,037.00	3	Personal - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	1,532.79	3	Personal - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	1,931.00	3	Personal - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	2,616.86	3	Surgery / Operation	1,618.00	3	Surgery / Operation	1,234.00
4	Work - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	879.00	4	Surgery / Operation	706.00	4	Muscular Skeletal	1,780.00	4	Surgery / Operation	1,699.00	4	Corona Virus	1,263.80	4	Cough / Cold / Flu	648.50
5	Gastrointestinal	632.16	5	Gastrointestinal	543.91	5	Surgery / Operation	911.00	5	Self Isolation	1,492.71	5	Cough / Cold / Flu	1,240.50	5	Work - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	603.00
6	Respiratory	566.59	6	Cough / Cold / Flu	484.00	6	Back Problems	644.95	6	Back Problems	1,018.63	6	Chest and Respiratory Problems	861.50	6	Back Problems	577.00
7	Neurological	223.88	7	Work - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	361.00	7	Work - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	539.00	7	Fracture	802.00	7	Back Problems	767.00	7	Personal - Did not disclose.	479.35
8	Cardiovascular	162.00	8	Respiratory	326.00	8	Fracture	388.00	8	Joint Disorder	788.00	8	Personal - Did not disclose.	680.00	8	Sickness & Diarrhoea	353.00
9	Surgery / Operation	150.95	9	Corona Virus	299.00	9	Cough / Cold / Flu	331.00	9	Work - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	781.00	9	Sickness & Diarrhoea	596.50	9	Fracture	344.00
10	Reproductive	148.81	10	Cancer	209.00	10	Joint Disorder	199.00	10	Cough / Cold / Flu	681.00	10	Work - Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Mental Health	590.00	10	Corona Virus	309.00

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023 - 2028 Update

Human Resources Committee

Date: 19 January 2024

Agenda Item:
09

Submitted By: Chief Employment Services Officer

Purpose	To advise authority members of progress on the Diversity and Inclusion strategy.
Recommendations	That Members note the report
Summary	The Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategy was approved by Members at the Human Resources Committee held on 20 January 2023. Since then, we have taken steps to progress the proposed action plan. This report will provide a draft action plan and report on progress so far.

Local Government (Access to information) Act 1972

Exemption Category: None

Contact Officer: Gill Cockburn, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Gillian.Cockburn@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Background papers open to inspection: None

Annexes: Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Action Plan 2023 – 2028

Making West Yorkshire Safer
www.westyorksfire.gov.uk

1 Introduction

1.1 The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2023 – 2028) was approved by members at the January 2023 Committee. The strategy was written using a values-based approach to progressing, embedding and measuring Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) at West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) using the behaviour led model of the organisational values.

1.2 The Strategy is designed to:

- Be structured to fit our organisational priorities and include all districts, departments and teams in a collaborative approach.

- Embed Diversity and Inclusion as standard practice into all areas of WYFRS processes, policy, and strategy, in accordance with the Core Code of Ethics and in particular the principles of Dignity and Respect and Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

- Provide a unified approach to the positive implementation of Diversity and Inclusion principles and actions, with staff investment and understanding of our goals.

- Be a time measured framework using actions that are SMART and for which responsibility is clearly identified and shared.

1.3 Following approval of the strategy and framework, development of an action plan with defined roles, responsibilities and deadlines began. The actions from this relate to departmental and district action plans. The action plan will be shared with and monitored by Diversity and Inclusion Board (DIB) with 6 monthly updates to HR Committee going forward.

2 Information

2.1 Since the August update of the Strategy the following actions have been delivered:

- A proposed draft action plan is in progress and attached to this report along with current progress. Please see the Action Plan for details.

- Evaluation of the Quality Assurance Self-Assessment for D&I questions has been analysed and cross referenced with the strategy actions.

- Departments have been asked to identify gaps and scope areas where support and training is required and have met with the Diversity Project Officer to identify actions and training needs.

3 Financial Implications

3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report

4 Legal Implications

4.1 The Monitoring Officer has considered this report and is satisfied it is presented in compliance with the Authority's Constitution

5 Human Resource and Diversity Implications

5.1 There are no Human Resource and Diversity Implications arising from this report

6 Equality Impact Assessment

Are the recommendations within this report subject to Equality Impact Assessment as outlined in the EIA guidance? (EIA guidance and form 2020 form.docx (westyorksfire.gov.uk)	No
Date EIA Completed	N/A
Date EIA Approved	N/A

7 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Implications

7.1 There are no Health, Safety and Wellbeing Implications arising from this report

8 Environmental Implications

8.1 There are no Environmental Implications arising from this report

9 Your Fire and Rescue Service Priorities

9.1 This report links with the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25 strategic priorities below;

- Promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of all our people.
- Encourage a learning environment in which we support, develop, and enable all our people to be at their best.
- Provide ethical governance and value for money.
- Work in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way.
- Achieve a more inclusive workforce, which reflects the diverse communities we serve.
- Continuously improve using digital and data platforms to innovate and work smarter.

10 Conclusions

10.1 The speed of progress is within expectation and will continue to move forward as planned.

West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service

'OneTeam'

Diversity and Inclusion

Action Plan 2023-2028

Actions to be delivered to meet the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028

Communication: how we share the D&I message and embrace our workforce diversity.

Objective: Promote WYFRS, internally and externally, as a diverse and inclusive employer by delivering appropriate and positive communications. To role model and celebrate colleagues and communities and share this with all audiences. To ensure we are using appropriate terminology and inclusive language across all departments and teams.

Aim C1: Ensure our messages are appropriate, easy to understand and inclusive.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Devise and introduce a screening tool that determines if communications are positively or adversely impacting on inclusivity.	• Establish an impact screening process for internal and external communications which is effective, efficient and is easily managed. • Monitor usage of the screening tool and report on impacts.	D&I team / Comms		Oct 23: New head of comms and D&I team have met to agree on strategy moving forward. D&I team are looking to introduce a mini-EIA screen / checklist for use with all comms campaigns and messaging.

2

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Develop guidance for Districts on how to monitor their external messaging to ensure D&I is considered.	• Establish an impact screening process for external communications and social media posts. • Monitor the screening progress and report on impacts.	D&I team / Comms / DCs and ADCs		Nov 23: the comms strategy for Districts to be reviewed following appointment of new Comms lead and team members. A review of community engagement principles and responsibilities is underway, connected to Core Code of Ethics "Putting our Customers First".
Develop guidance on inclusive language and terminology to support dignity and respect.	• Staff networks to take discussion to their members via their email distribution list and at meetings. • All staff network members should be given the opportunity to feedback on their preferences for differing terminology. • Report on which terminology causes offense or makes people feel uncomfortable.	D&I Team / Comms / Staff Networks		20/03/2023: Inclusive Language report published and delivered at DIB. 20/04/2023: Prompt sheets and questions sent to each network to add to agendas. 27/06/2023: Feedback received from FireDAW, LGBTQ+U, MAGNet, FireGIN. Chased FireREACH.

3

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Rreview and draft a proposed glossary of acceptable terms that staff members should use. • Include the reasons why some language is unacceptable to help staff understand why we won't be using it.			
Provide templates and guidance for staff that ensure accessibility of content.	• Support Comms and ICT in sourcing a provider to design and deliver organisational templates that can be used alongside guidance. • Design and deliver guidance that supports staff in producing accessible Word documents, Excel workbooks,	D&I Team / ACT project team / Comms / ICT		Ongoing: Responsibility of the templates to be agreed. Steering group established to oversee resourcing, design, cost and delivery of templates. June 2023: guidance documents, accessibility policy and helpful resources are available to all staff on the ACT website. April – July 2023: Training delivery on how to create accessible Word documents

4

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	PowerPoint presentations and emails.			delivered in-house, at face to face interactive sessions. Oct 2023: Agreement confirmed with Phoenix to design, supply and upload organisational templates. Budget from finance.
Develop Plain English guidelines and promote the use throughout all teams	• Creation of guidelines, or sharing of external guidelines from the Plain English Campaign.	Comms / D&I		Oct 23: ACT toolkit includes links to external guidance on Plain English.
Organisational review of the use of acronyms and how they are used and promoted.	• Collation of organisational acronyms and meanings. • Review of acronyms and creation of final list. • Publish and promote acceptable acronyms.	Comms / D&I		Oct 23: Accessibility training sessions and guidance documents outline the importance of putting acronyms in full the first time it is used in a document.

5

Aim C2: Celebrate our diverse workforce and the communities in which we work.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Devise a process which ensures Corporate Comms and staff have access to an annual (financial year) calendar of important national dates in the D&I calendar.	• Design an interactive calendar that highlights key national dates and dates of our D&I events and campaigns. • Assign responsibility to a team member to monitor key. dates, publicise and update on an annual basis. • Staff networks to take lead in delivering events and campaigns that fall under their remit.	D&I Team / Comms / Staff networks		Feb 2023: Calendar created in Excel and shared on D&I website. Comms publicised the calendar and signposted staff. Oct 23: D&I calendar shared with new comms lead for integration into a wider comms calendar.
Create an annual plan template for delivery of organisational events to be led by a steering group of staff network chairs and members.	• Agree key events for annual celebration and event planning. • Map diary and assign dates for steering groups to convene and meet.	Staff network chair forum / D&I		

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Create an event template / toolkit for use by steering groups and staff networks.			
Continue to develop the internal D&I awards into an annual, high profile event recognising staff contributions.	• Comms and D&I team to agree on a time line and annual date for the Awards. • Scope feasibility of developing staff recognition awards broader than just D&I. • Create an annual plan and event template for use each year. • Promote awards and encourage nominations from all districts and teams.	Comms / D&I		
Deliver a monthly staff network update profiling the work being carried out and highlight our workplace role models.	• Create a Comms template for monthly updates to be completed by the staff network chairs forum.	Staff networks / D&I / Comms		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Create a role model template including question prompts, suggested content and approach staff who are happy to share their journey. • Encourage contributions from staff members to share their stories and successes			

Aim C3: Be a gender inclusive organisation.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Deliver a programme of gender inclusion webinars and workshops that will educate staff on terminology of evolving gender identities.	• Identify suitable Training Provider and scope costing, availability, methods of delivery.	D&I / Training / L&D		Sept 23: Contact made with Gendered Intelligence and Ellie Lowther, but neither suitable. Oct 23: Contact made with Che Barnes – awaiting training proposal.

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
				Dec 23: Training programme under agreement. Delivery of 5 webinars and 5 workshops to be delivered by May 2024. Management Team workshop booked for 25/03/2023.
Incorporate gender free language into our external and internal messaging.	• Promote the use of pronouns on email signatures and encourage sharing of pronouns in introductions and meetings. • Produce guidance on gender diversity and terminology for use by all staff.	Comms / D&I		May 23: LGBTQ+U paper to Management Team on use of pronouns in the service. July 23: Pronouns added to email signature template.
Review of all policy and procedure to ensure inclusion of gender identities.	• Review policies to identify where gender specific pronouns / language is used. • Identify policies which have specific actions designed for binary genders and work to	All staff		

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	remove bias or include actions for trans or non-binary staff. • Amend policies with relevant and updated terminology to reflect our commitment to gender inclusion.			
Assess property facilities to ensure gender inclusion.	• Ensure a process is in place that includes Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures are carried out for each new build. • Create a template of requirements for consideration at the point of new build or refurbishment that align with current best practice.	Property / D&I / FireGIN		Work has been delivered with Property Services to create an updated design guide, which supports the inclusion of appropriate facilities. This action is around ongoing developments and refurbishment priorities

10

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Review the building policies to ensure inclusion of D&I facilities.			

Teamwork: how we work together to create a positive and inclusive organisation.

Objective: To continue our commitment to improving the diversity of our workforce, both operational and support staff, through positive action, onboarding and policy development.

Aim T1: Work together as one team to promote and encourage opportunities to hear all employee voices.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Ensure a direct link between staff network chairs and members of Management Board (MB).	• Provide a bi-annual update to MB, to be delivered by a member of the staff network chair forum. • Continue staff network updates as ongoing agenda item at the Diversity and Inclusion Board.	MB / staff network chairs / D&I		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Build on the champion role held by each MB member; define roles and responsibilities, establish a formal process for consultation (as below) and agree on how action will be taken forward and in which forums.			
Devise a robust consultation process which incorporates staff network members and underrepresented staff.	• Review the EIA process to formalise the staff network consultation part of the process. • Agree time availability for reviewers of EIAs to allow time for completion. • Devise a formal process to include staff networks in the policy review and consultation process.	D&I / staff networks		Sept 23: EIA review process moved to a Teams Channel for easier review and monitoring.

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Create a process to measure the impact of diverse staff involvement in decision making.				
Implement reverse mentoring to enable senior colleagues to connect with people from underrepresented groups. To hear and understand issues from their perspective and to identify solutions.	• Research the use of reverse mentoring and how to successfully implement it. • Create a reverse mentoring programme and conduct a pilot scheme for first year. • Review the pilot scheme and make amendments before introducing an annual programme.	L&D team / D&I / Management Team		Nov 23: Met with Rachel O'Connor from Leeds university to explore best practice principles for reverse mentoring. Rachel shared documents and guidance for further exploration.

13

Aim T2: Work together as one team to deliver positive action (PA).

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Write and deliver a Positive Action Strategy and Guidance that incorporates the new processes and initiatives.	• Draft a PA strategy to encompass all processes and initiatives delivered since the introduction of PA officer. • Consult with all key stakeholders and develop the strategy further. • Agree, publish and promote PA strategy and guidance.	PA Officer / D&I team / HR / Comms		Aug 23: Draft PA strategy shared with D&I team for review. Sept 23: Secondment into PA officer role started and will review the strategy.
Deliver Positive Action training for staff to improve awareness and understanding.	• Include a proposal for PA training in the 24/25 training bid requests. • Incorporate PA training into the new staff induction and trainee recruits. • Increase visibility of PA officer across the whole service through visits, talks, training and Let's Talk sessions.	PA Officer / D&I team / HR / Comms		Sept 23: Training bid submitted. Nov 23: Progression of new initiatives and engagements in progress with secondment to the role.

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Work with comms and use promotional tools to promote understanding of PA to the wider workforce. Publish successes and the impacts.			
Analyse and report on barriers to progression and retention of underrepresented staff.	• Review the promotion equality data to identify any trends or areas of concern. • Review exit equality data to identify any trends or areas of concern. • Review exam and assessment equality data to identify any trends or areas of concern. • Deliver opportunities for staff consultation via focus group or survey. • Form a plan of action to address any barriers to the	PA Officer / D&I team / HR		Nov 23: Leavers data analysed for D&I trends. Will be incorporated into a report for Diversity and Inclusion Board. Dec 23: EIAs in progress for development packs to ensure no adverse impacts affecting progression. Dec 23: PA officer to work with L&D team to analyse NVQ and exam results in relation to equality data.

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	progression and retention of underrepresented groups.			
Review HR processes to include Positive Action initiatives in progression and retention.	• Positive action measures to be identified and trialled.	PA Officer / D&I team / HR / DCs		Dec 2023: Development packs will include demonstrable knowledge of neurodiversity in the workplace, EIAs and importance of D&I principles.

Aim T3: Connect our people with services, systems and colleagues at the earliest opportunity.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Review the onboarding process to ensure: • D&I induction is thorough. • Equality data is recorded and retained. • Quickscan is completed. • Reasonable Adjustment plan completed. • Neurodiversity tools demonstrated.	• Collate feedback from recent new starters about their induction experience. • Review and update the D&I staff induction for new starters. • Ensure a process is in place to transfer equality data shared at application to Access HR.	HR / D&I / Training team		Mar 23: All new recruits offered opportunity to complete Quickscan before starting course (this highlighted a number of staff needing further diagnosis and support which could be put in place during training course). Oct 23: HR confirmed that equality data from new recruits will be transferred to AccessHR following appointment.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
• Access to Work application highlighted.	• Provide the opportunity for all new starters to complete Quickscan before they start their role. • Enhance the process to ensure Reasonable Adjustments and Access to Work applications are discussed upon appointment of a new role. • Incorporate an introduction to TextHelp and MindGenius as part of the ICT induction and make the guides available at induction. • Establish a route to carry out all of the above actions with trainee recruits and new grey book starters.			

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Aim T4: To put workforce diversity at the heart of everything we do

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Devise a process which supports inclusion of D&I principles in all departmental strategy or roadmaps.	• Assess all department and district actions via the SIAT self assessment process. • Deliver necessary training to improve knowledge of key D&I principles. • Provide consultation and support for departments and district to identity inclusion of D&I principles. • Provide examples of good practice happening across the service and move all areas toward embedding similar practices.			April 23: Project and timeline initiated to review the outcomes from the D&I self-assessment and identify gaps. Support districts and departments in identifying ways of improving their D&I requirements. Dec 23: 12 departments and districts have had review meetings. Training gaps identified and actions agreed.
Create a toolkit to support the promotion of embedding and measuring D&I outcomes	• Provide examples and case studies of good practice happening already.			

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Align Inclusive Employers standard levels with HMICFRS expectations and the LGA Equality Framework and provide guidance on this. • Provide a template / checklist of bronze, silver and gold levels of good practice fo departments to work towards. • Monitor and evaluate annually through the SIAT self assessment process			
Report on positive outcomes to all staff and highlight areas of improvement.	• Produce an annual report publishing results of self assessment, celebrate areas of good practice and list actions for the coming year.			

19

Integrity: how we treat people and challenge inequality.

Objective: Demonstrate our commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty by eliminating discrimination, fostering good relations and advancing equality of opportunity through analysis of our provision and taking a zero-tolerance approach to inappropriate or unacceptable conduct.

Aim I1: Make sure that we treat everyone with dignity and respect, calling out and tackling behaviour which falls short.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Deliver manager training on the Dignity Respect and Integrity Policy and the skills they need to implement it.	• Using data from the SIAT self assessment, review the staff understanding of the policy and how departments use it. • Establish the gaps in knowledge and ask managers what they would like to see in the training. • Design and deliver bespoke internal training.	D&I team / HR / SIAT		Oct 23: Submitted training bid for 24/25, however approval not received at this time.

20

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Deliver Dignity and Respect training to teams and crews.		Training Team / D&I / HR		Oct 23: Submitted training bid for 24/25, however approval not received at this time.
Publish policy / guidance externally for attention of contractors, visitors and community.	• Adapt current internal policy to make it relevant for external partners and agencies. • Establish a process to ensure partners and agencies working with us are sent the policy and guidance at point of contracted start of collaboration.	D&I / Corporate Services / Procurement		
Contracts to include agreement from providers that they will acknowledge and abide by Policy.	• Review procurement policies to include reference and link to the Policy and highlight their responsibilities against it.	D&I / Corporate Services / Procurement		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Establish a process that seeks written agreement from partners.			
Introduce anonymous reporting tool for staff which provides feedback on the improvements we need to make to improve culture and staff welfare	• Research and procure a suitable 3rd party organisation who will deliver a tool that allows staff to submit anonymous or confidential issues. Ensure reporting is delivered to Senior Managers. • Pilot 3rd party for 1 year and evaluate effectiveness. Consult with staff and decide on longer term procurement.	D&I / MB		Oct 2022: Say So appointed to deliver 1 year pilot delivery of their anonymous reporting tool. Oct 22 – June 23: Comms promoted the service and Say So inductions delivered to staff by the Say So team. Oct 2023: Following review, a 3-year contract has been agreed with Say So.

22

Aim I2: Be proactive, transparent and fair.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Continue to analyse and report on the gender pay gap and support further pay gap reporting in accordance with guidance from government and best practice.	- Produce annual gender pay gap reporting in accordance with requirements. - Report Pay Gap report to HR committee and Diversity & Inclusion Board. - Monitor Government guidance for changes to the regulations.	D&I / HR / L&D		Gender pay gap report completed and published annually, including figures reported on the Government Pay Gap Portal. Current Gender Pay Gap Report is nearing completion and will be shared with HR Committee and Diversity & Inclusion Board in early 2024.
Continue to analyse and report on Equality Data Monitoring.	Establish if we are able to report on pay gaps by protected characteristics.	D&I / Payroll / Finance		

23

Aim I3: Get to know and understand our communities.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Update Community Engagement (CE) Strategy, connected to refreshed Community Risk Management Strategy.	• Identify current programmes and projects in place (including community links) • Identify best practice already being delivered, review and share.			Significant work has been delivered to identify current projects and programmes of CE already in place at a local level. Collation and assessment of work continues and key actions and activities which are proven successful will be shared where relevant/appropriate.
Improve mechanisms for tracking community engagement, outcomes and satisfaction by protected characteristic.	• Establish people resources, projects and overall responsibility for Community Engagement and plan strategy for delivery and monitoring.			
Elevate our interaction with communities and attend a diverse mix of community events.	• Formalise our attendance at Community events, including Pride, Carnival and			

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	community days in the campaign calendar. • Continue to expand our attendance at careers events and open days. • Create a toolkit / delivery pack for attendance at events.			

Aim I4: Make sure we act ethically and in a way which promotes equality of access for the diverse workforce.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Streamline and continue to use Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) methodology to ensure processes, procedures and changes do not adversely impact on underrepresented staff.	• Review current EIA process to ensure fit for purpose. • Aim to streamline the EIA process using power apps / forms.	D&I / ICT		Sept 23: Initial meetings with ICT carried out and EIA PowerApp added to ICT workstream. Dec 23: L&D meeting led to EIA being added as a task to the Station Manager Development Pack.

25

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Incorporate EIA learning in the development progress for operational staff.			
Use EIA findings to improve policies and practices and measure the effectiveness of the outcomes.	• Use Power App to allow closer monitoring of actions outstanding and completed. • Automatic reminders will alert EIA owners to complete tasks and actions. • Provide quarterly report on how EIA is impacting on outcomes and delivery of D&I principles. To be reported at Diversity and Inclusion Board.	D&I / ICT / all staff		

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Learning: how we improve knowledge and embed new skills.

Objective: To develop a 'OneTeam' approach that encourages allyship and accountability. To improve learning, awareness and celebration of Diversity and Inclusion through providing a training programme, events and campaigns that educate staff, provide tools and dispel misconceptions.

Aim L1: Help our people learn and understand more about the diversity within and beyond our organisation.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Develop, organise and oversee an overarching programme of learning on diversity and inclusion for all staff and managers.	• Analyse equality data, staff feedback and consult with staff networks to identify gaps in skills and knowledge in relation to D&I. • Submit relevant training bid requirements by September deadline. • Deliver a plan of training, identify providers, scope dates with Training Admin and provisionally book in accordance with	D&I / L&D / Training team		April 23: Diversity for Everyone dates planned and published for 23/24. April 23: Accessibility training delivered in house, dates planned for April to December and promoted. May 23: D&I e-learning licences renewed for 3 years and reallocated to relevant staff. Sept 23: Training bids submitted for 24/25. Dec 23: E-learning reissued to all staff for mandatory completion.

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	organisational calendar and events calendar.			Oct 23: Provider agreed for Age Awareness training. Dates booked and published in Access HR. All to be delivered in January. Dec 23: Provider agreed for Gender Diversity training. Dates booked for Feb/Mar and Apr. 5 workshops to be delivered to Management Team, HR and district staff along side webinars for all staff.
Drive completion of Diversity for Everyone roll out and additional content for managers.	• Plan training dates and venues in advance for the full financial year. • Closely monitor attendance and hold a list of staff who have yet to complete the course. • Ensure managers know it is their responsibility to ensure	D&I / Training Admin / all managers		April 23: Diversity for Everyone dates planned and published for 23/24. April 23: List of non-attendees circulate to managers. Recruit sessions delivered in June and Nov 2023 and planned for Feb 24. June 23: Added session details and how to book to D&I induction slides.

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	staff have completed the training. • Ensure the course is included in the induction process for all new staff. • Deliver the course for all new recruits during training.			
Ensure attendance at training and events covers all staff, watches and teams.	• Ensure 5 sessions of each course are planned; 1 for each watch and support staff and 1 for on-call staff. • Devise guidelines for booking on D&I training.	D&I / Training Admin		

Aim L2: Increase the knowledge and understanding of D&I within the workforce.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
D&I team to visit stations and watches to increase awareness	• Devise a calendar / rota of visits for all D&I team	D&I / DCs		Oct 23: PA officer has begun a series of station visits and is increasing awareness

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
of the work, projects and initiatives conducted by the team.	members to cover every station and watch.			of our PA initiatives and checking understanding.
Implement D&I champions in all areas of work and provide specific D&I qualification and training.	• Define the role of champions and formalise. • Assign a time allocation for champion work. • Identify staff who want to have a champion role and complete a training needs analysis. • Provide internal, bespoke training for the champions network. • Identify suitable qualification and submit a bid for funding.	D&I / L&D / Training team		
Staff network quarterly newsletters to teams and stations.	• Establish timeline and template.	Staff networks / D&I / Comms		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Rotate production of newsletter amongst staff networks.			
Bi-annual staff network roadshows to visit stations and watches to increase staff engagement and awareness.	• Establish timeline and book in advance co-ordinating with station diaries. • Rotate responsibility of planning the roadshow amongst the staff networks.	Staff Networks / Districts		

Aim L3: Help everyone to understand the diverse communities within WY and act to fulfil our duties.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Create and deliver an effective monitoring process which uses equality data effectively.	• Review current process and identify gaps. • Assign actions to fill gaps and improve monitoring process.	D&I / HR / ICT		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Analyse equality data of our communities and use this to inform engagement activities.	• Review available sources of community data. • Cross reference available data to create a profile of community diversity. • Create external consultation process.	D&I / Comms / PA officer / Service delivery		
Provide specific awareness training and guidance on the diversity of our communities, including risk issues to be aware of and cultural / religious knowledge.	• Using community equality data, plan priorities for training delivery and create a timeline. • Research training providers. • Produce guidance or toolkit for staff when working with communities.	D&I / PA officer / Service delivery		
Engage with WYP and YAS to identify cross working opportunities in community working groups, such as	• Contact YAS and WYP to discuss community partnership working.	D&I / PA officer / Service delivery		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
interfaith and share resource and community knowledge / access to community contacts.				

Aim L4: Provide tools to help our people learn more, understand more and do more to promote D&I.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Develop toolkit and guidance library to support staff on all aspects of D&I.	• Review and refresh the current toolkits and guidance available. • Establish required toolkits through consultation with districts and departments. • Produce / source toolkits and publish in specified area on website. • Produce and maintain a resources library using material from partner	D&I		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	agencies (such as Inclusive Employers).			
Publish available webinar learning and monitor attendance, assess the impact of the learning.	• Circulate Inclusive Employer Webinar calendars to managers. • Review available webinars from partnering agencies and promote to staff networks for sharing.	D&I		
Review the D&I e-learning modules and ensure they are engaging and fit for purpose.	• Review content of both e-learning modules before renewal of licence in 2025. • Scope feasibility of delivery of bespoke e-learning modules authored by WYFRS.	D&I / Multimedia / Comms		Sept 23: E-learning licences refreshed for 3 years. Dec 23: Both e-learning modules reissued to all staff for completion.
Create a library of Skillbooster courses and monitor engagement.	• Review modules currently available and completion data.	D&I / Multimedia		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Identify managers / team members who require training and allocate modules accordingly.	• Review all available and new courses and categorise for publishing on virtual college. • Raise awareness of modules available. • Raise awareness of availability of training videos for use in own training delivery.			
Implement D&I essential skills as part of the leadership and promotion programme.		L&D		

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Responsibility: how we share accountability for D&I and measure success.

Objective: To elevate Diversity and Inclusion in the decision-making process and increase visibility of the D&I priorities across the leadership team, managers and staff. To demonstrate the commitment to D&I externally and internally and the value we place on being a diverse organisation.

Aim R1: Hold the senior team and fire authority to account for decisions made, championing diversity and inclusion always.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Introduce a bi-annual meeting between Management Board, D&I Team and staff network chairs.	• Plan in advance and add to agenda. • Rotate staff network chairs to attend.	D&I / MB / Staff Network chairs		
Provide regular updates on progress of the D&I work to the HR Committee Chair and DIB Authority member.	• Report updates on the One Team strategy to the HR Committee on a 6 monthly basis. • Continue to include DIB Authority Member at meetings	D&I / DIB Chair		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	and provide a 6 monthly update report.			
Improve mechanisms to ensure completion of consultation and EIA is carried out for organisational decisions.	• Review the Project Management process and seek feedback from users. • Add staff networks to the consultation procedure and forms.	D&I / Corporate Services / HR		

Aim R2: Harness the knowledge and experiences of our diverse workforce.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Staff network chairs to be formally consulted on key decisions that affect the workforce.	• Formalise the internal consultation process to incorporate staff network feedback mechanisms.	D&I / Corporate Services / HR		
Role model and celebrate our diverse workforce and the impact of effective inclusion through	• Continue to develop D&I or staff awards.	D&I / Comms / HR		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Corporate Comms, reward and recognition.	• Include monthly role model story in internal comms.			
Use data from the anonymous reporting tool, acknowledge the difficulties and implement actions to address.	• Analyse themes and trends in reports. • Report on outcomes to DIB and add as a regular agenda item.	MB / DIB / D&I		
Improve transparency of how we address and target issues that affect the wider workforce.	• Review consultation process to ensure inclusion of relevant groups. • Promote consultation process.	D&I / Comms / Corporate Services		

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Aim R3: Evaluate our commitments and actions against external measures to continually challenge and push us forward.

Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
Complete Inclusion Standard (IS) every 2 years and promote outcome, successes and areas for improvement.	• Convene a steering group of key stakeholders to work on IS submission. • Submit draft to Management Team and Diversity Inclusion Board before formal submission. • Agree content, answers and examples with steering group and consult with staff networks. • Add actions from the findings to ongoing action plan for D&I.	D&I / staff Network / All Staff		Sept 23: Decision was taken to defer to upgrading IS accreditation to March 24.
Elevate our Inclusion Standard award from bronze to Silver by 2028.	• Enter IS in March 2024, 2026 and 2028 with the aim to	D&I / DIB		

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	improve our rating at the 2028 result.			
Elevate our Disability Confident rating to 'Leader' by 2028.	• Review the requirements for 'leader' status and create a plan for delivery. • Identify and share knowledge with partnering organisations who have achieved 'leader'. • Identify assessor and submit evidence.	D&I / HR		
Achieve 'Outstanding' for our D&I offer within the HMICFRS inspection by 2028.	• Elevate the work of the D&I team and demonstrate work being undertaken across the organisation. • Consult with FRSs who have achieved outstanding for their D&I offer and map to work we are carrying out.	D&I / All staff		Dec 23: EDI and EIA desktop review and interview scheduled for Jan and Feb 2024.

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Priority	Actions	Responsibility	Deadline	Progress
	• Identify gaps in our offer and devise plan to address.			

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Asian Fire Service Association Conference (AFSA) 2023

Human Resources Committee

Date: 19 January 2024

Agenda Item: **10**

Submitted By: Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Purpose	To report on the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) Winter Conference 2023 hosted by WYFRS.
Recommendations	Members note the report
Summary	The Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) holds an annual Winter Conference which is well attended by colleagues in all FRSs across the country. We were asked to host the 2023 conference in West Yorkshire and showcase our commitment to Diversity and Inclusion. This report gives an overview of the conference, including feedback.

Local Government (Access to information) Act 1972

Exemption Category:	None
Contact Officer:	Gill Cockburn, Diversity and Inclusion Manager
	gillian.cockburn@westyorksfire.gov.uk
Background papers open to inspection:	None
Annexes:	None

Making West Yorkshire Safer
www.westyorksfire.gov.uk

1   Introduction

1.1   AFSA are a well-established staff network which has grown into an influential organisation. Approximately 40 FRSs are corporate members of AFSA who provide consultation, resources and events.

1.2   AFSA provide two national conferences per year, one in the summer and one in the winter. The Winter conference is a 2-day event which includes an awards night and dinner. Attendance at the conferences is high with around 250 attendees from all FRSs present.

1.3   The focus of the work delivered by AFSA is diversity, inclusion and leadership. They are known for engaging influential speakers, on a variety of topics, and giving them a platform to influence and share good practice.

2   Information

2.1   Following the 2021 winter conference in Merseyside, WYFRS were approached to host the 2023 AFSA conference in West Yorkshire to which we agreed. A planning group was formed and meetings commenced in February 2023.

2.2   The Royal Armouries in Leeds was agreed as the venue and we carried out site visits to ensure accessibility and suitability. We worked with an agent to find local hotels and car parking facilities.

2.3   We suggested a number of local speakers and AFSA approached them for availability. We agreed a theme for the conference: 'Motivating a Movement and Understanding Your Influence' and suggested a number of topics with a West Yorkshire Focus.

2.4   Deputy Chief, Dave Walton, chaired the 2-day conference and Laura Boocock, Anthony Devine, Georgina Ralph and Farooq Latif introduced the speakers.

2.5   Approximately 40 staff, both operational and support, attended over the 2 days and the awards night. We were joined by a number of councillors from the Fire Authority, including the Chair on the first day.

2.6   The topics and speakers delivered were as follows:

- Opening addresses from Harjit Singh (chair of AFSA) and John Roberts (CFO).

- Alison Lowe, WY Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime delivered a talk entitled 'No-one is one thing; we are really complex as people' and gave an insight into her own lived experience and the impact it has had on her career.

- Richard Close, Chief Superintendent for West Yorkshire Police delivered a presentation focussed on 'Police are the public and the public are the police: valuing difference in 2023'.

- Motorola representatives delivered a talk on the future of the Control Room and the new technologies that are transforming practices in emergency services.

- Leeds based Black Solicitors delivered a session on employment law implications and how to address discrimination.

- Fatima Khan-Shah, West Yorkshire regional Combined Authority Inclusivity Champion, gave an insightful look into her role and how she delivers change.

- Leeds based Getaway Girls gave a talk on the work they do to support local girls and women, followed by a performance from one of their inspirational teenagers.

- Neil Basu joined us over Zoom to provide a talk on his experiences in the Met Police and his former role as head of Counter Terrorism Policing for the UK.

- Jit Chauhan gave an emotional insight into his alcohol addiction and how this affected him as a South Asian man.

- Roy Wilsher attended in his capacity as HM inspector of Constabulary and HM Inspector of FRSs and spoke about values and culture in the fire service, professionalism, and governance.

- The last session was delivered by Marie Chapman from Happily Eva After on 'Purpose; Truly Understanding it's Power and Importance within Individual and Organisational Excellence'.

2.7   A workshop was available each day covering topics such as: accessibility, bullying and harassment, employment vetting, LGBT staff networks and cultural reviews.

2.8   The awards night was a celebration of individual and team commitment to D&I where Laura Boocock, Calderdale District Officer, won the award for Equality Role model of the year. Nominees from WYFRS included Georgina Ralph, Joanne Goode and Joy Thomas.

2.9   Feedback from the conference was excellent and comments included:

- The local angle & young people were very much appreciated.

- Delegates enjoyed the networking and made valuable links with colleagues for collaboration and sharing of best practice.

- Delegates enjoyed the personal stories from the speakers & took away lots of ideas.

- Workshops very informative though could have been longer.

- The venue was accessible & spacious.

- The lived experiences led to additional learning which could be taken back to the workplace.

3   Financial Implications

3.1   WYFRS paid a hosting fee which gave us 30 places at the conference, however approximately 40 staff attended over the 2 days and Awards night. No additional costs were incurred except for accommodation for a number of key staff, and parking costs.

4   Legal Implications

4.1   The Monitoring Officer has considered this report and is satisfied it is presented in compliance with the Authority's Constitution

5   Human Resource and Diversity Implications

5.1   None identified

6   Equality Impact Assessment

Are the recommendations within this report subject to Equality Impact Assessment as outlined in the EIA guidance? ([EIA guidance and form 2020 form.docx (westyorksfire.gov.uk)](http://westyorksfire.gov.uk))	No
Date EIA Completed	N/A
Date EIA Approved	N/A

7   Health, Safety and Wellbeing Implications

7.1   None identified

8   Environmental Implications

8.1   None identified

9   Your Fire and Rescue Service Priorities

9.1   This report links with the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25 strategic priorities below;

- Promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of all our people.
- Encourage a learning environment in which we support, develop, and enable all our people to be at their best.
- Provide ethical governance and value for money.
- Collaborate with partners to improve all of our services.
- Work in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way.
- Achieve a more inclusive workforce, which reflects the diverse communities we serve.

10   Conclusions

10.1   The 2-day conference went well and put a spotlight on the excellent work being delivered in WYFRS and its communities. Hosting the conference has led to new contacts with neighbouring FRS staff, local community groups and showcased our commitment to driving diversity and inclusion as a priority.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE YORKSHIRE & HUMBER EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION HELD VIRTUALLY ON THURSDAY 14 September 2023

Present:

Metropolitan Districts

Cllr Jane Nightingale   Doncaster MBC (Chair)
Cllr Silvia Dacre   Calderdale MBC
Cllr Paul Davies   Kirklees Council
Cllr Tariq Hussain   Bradford MDC,
Cllr Robin Franklin   Barnsley MBC

In Attendance

Angela Cotton   Doncaster CC
Claire Matson   Leeds CC
Kay Crabtree   North Yorkshire Council
Jill Bardsley   Calderdale
Michael Potter   Barnsley MBC
Victoria Leach   North East Lincs
Amy Leech   Rotherham MBC
Elyse Senior-Wadsworth   Sheffield CC
Anne Lloyd   Bradford MDC
Leanne Dudhill   North Lincs
Justine Hall   Wakefield MDC
Kate Harley   Hull CC
Martin Williams   YHEA
Julie Brookes   YHEA

Employers Secretary

Steve Walmsley (YHEA),

1. Introductions and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of
Cllr Harness – North East Lincs, Cllr Waltham - North Lincs, Cllr John Briggs - Humberside Fire and Rescue, Cllr Debra Couper

2. Notes of the Last Meeting

Notes agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Matters arising are included on the agenda.

4. Issues Arising from the July RJC Meeting

Notes of the meeting were issued in draft for a review.

Migrant Workers - Issues with migrant workers within Adult Social Care and granting of visa's was raised. Unions feel that staff are not being treated as they should. They feel this is a third party issue but asked that Local Authorities use power of contract to ensure staff are treated fairly. Steve spoke to regional ADASS regarding this who stated they were aware of the issues and that work is ongoing on a national code of practice. Feedback on this will be given to Trade Unions.

Regional Climate Change Pledge – Unions want all LA's to sign up to the pledge. Steve spoke to Regional Policy Unit who support the Leader Board regarding this. It was felt that the was an individual Local Authority decision.

Unisons Anti Racism Charter – most Local Authorities have policies and procedures in place to cover this. However, if individual Authorities choose to sign up that is a decision for them to make.

Outsourcing/TUPE – HR Directors will need look at this individually as all issues and circumstances are different. Unions have raised general issues, but specific issues need to be raised to be more specific.

5.. SLA with Wakefield MDC

SLA with Wakefield for finance and IT is being reviewed and a draft document will be issued for consideration.

6. Update on the 2023/24 Pay Round

Unison held a national disaggregated ballot for strike action which secured. a yes vote but not the 50% needed. Unite held a disaggregated ballot which secured a yes vote and the 50% turnout but in only sixteen employers. GMB waited until September to issue their ballot.

Unison has no mandate for strike action, Unite only have a mandate in sixteen employers.

A full Tarade Union meeting will be held on19th September to discuss a way forward. If a deal is agreed, it will be notified to Local Authorities immediately via LGE.

7. Recruitment and Retention Task Group.

A meeting of the task group will be held on 14 September. A presentation will be given by LGA on the National Recruitment Campaign. Issues will be circulated after the meeting.

8. Handover Arrangements with new Regional Director

Handover arrangements are in place. Still waiting for IT to be sorted but hopefully this will be completed in time.

9. Any Other Urgent Business

Equal pay is a complex issue and Unions are focusing on this. LGA are looking

at what is happening nationally. This is probably a good time for Local Authorities to take stock of anything that could be an issue. In Fife, the legal case was lost due to record keeping. London Councils are doing desktop reviews A task and finish group could also be a consideration to access and mitigate risk.

10. Close of Meeting

Cllr Jane Nightingale (Chair) thanked Steve for all his hard work in the region