



Meeting	Strategic Board	Agenda Item No.	13
Meeting Date	15 June 2021		
Report Authors:	Colette Black, Director of People Services		
Presented By	Colette Black, Director of People Services		
Subject	NFCC Code of Ethics		
Type of Report:	Decision		

RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC), Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) have worked in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Sector to create and launch a Code of Ethics. It is recommended that the Core Code is adopted by all Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) in England. The Code of Ethics sits alongside Fire Standard FSC-ETH01.

To achieve adoption of the code, agreement is sought on the following recommendations:

- 1. Adopt the Core Code** - We will engage with stakeholders, including our representative bodies, with a view to adopting the Core Code. (Core Code attached as appendix A). We will also work towards adopting the recommendations in the associated Fire Standard. (Fire Standard recommendations attached as appendix B).
- 2. Gap Analysis** - We will use the Core Code to undertake a gap analysis with regard to existing behavioural frameworks, values, and cultural approaches. This is to ensure that the principles within the Core Code are evident and incorporated within all existing as well as new associated documentation.
- 3. Planning** – As part of the People Strategy Actions, we will draft a plan which outlines how we will embed the principles of the Core Code in all that we do. This will include training and support.
- 4. Launch** – We will work with stakeholders to launch the Core Code and the five principles which are contained within.
- 5. Designate a senior leader** – The Core Code requires us to designate a senior leader with responsibility for promoting the Code and ensuring that all those who work for or on behalf of the FRS to know and understand what is expected of them. It is recommended that this is the Director of People Services who has responsibility for people, values and culture.

BACKGROUND

On 18 May 2021, the NFCC launched a Core Code of Ethics (Core Code). The launch document confirms that the Core Code:

'...is designed to guide all Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) employees in their day-to-day conduct, providing professional standards of practice and behaviour to carry out business honestly and with integrity and to underpin organisational culture. It provides the expectations for how employees should behave in any given situation, to assist with decision-making.

Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and FRSs will strive to conduct all our activities efficiently, to the highest ethical standards and in compliance with legal obligations.'

Suzanne McCarthy, Chair of the Fire Standards Board (FSB) states that:

"The Code of Ethics Fire Standard adds to the suite of professional Fire Standards now well underway which are being designed to help drive service improvement. They will also form the basis of future inspection judgements arrived at by the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services in England.

The development of this standard was a priority for the Board as it recognised that ensuring the application of ethical principles across services was imperative and critical to achieving a more positive working environment and greater professionalism by those who work for, and on behalf of, the services."

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

We believe that there are several steps to take in order to become compliant with the new Fire Standard. These are reflected in the recommendations above.

Our very next steps are to:

Month	Action
June 2021	Seek agreement to recommendations (above) from SLT and the Strategic Board
	Designate a senior leader to plan implementation of Code
	Engage with stakeholders including representative bodies
	Conduct gap analysis between our current state and the Core Code
July 2021	Draft a plan to address any identified gap between our current state and the Core Code
	Continue with stakeholder engagement
August 2021	Revert to SLT with a proposed plan to address any gap plus plans to launch and embed the Code
September 2021	Provide Strategic Board with an update on progress of adopting the code
December 2021	Core Code launched and work to embed in all that we do begun.

BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

Adoption of the Core Code of Ethics is an additional control measure for risk SRR150019:

‘There is a risk that due to the absence of a positive and supportive culture the Service fails to provide a safe and inclusive culture which ensures the well-being of staff and contributes to attracting a diverse workforce.’

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with adopting the Core Code. Any activities necessary as part of launching the Code will be incorporated in to the People Strategy Action Plan and will be undertaken within budget.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Is this decision anticipated to have an impact on any of the following protected groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

<i>Race</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Religion or belief</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Sex</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Gender reassignment</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Pregnancy & maternity</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Disability</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Marriage and Civil Partnership</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	<i>No</i>		

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

This is a new Fire Standard which we have an obligation to adopt. It is important that we engage with our workforce and representatives on the way in which it is adopted. Our plan will include engagement with our representative bodies in phase 5 of ‘working well together’.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no health and safety implications.

Appendix A – Code of Ethics

[Core Code of Ethics | NFCC CPO \(ukfrs.com\)](https://www.ukfrs.com/core-code-of-ethics)

Appendix B – Fire Standard recommendations

[Code of Ethics | Fire Standards Board](#)

A fire and rescue service must:

1. Adopt and embed the Core Code to demonstrate that the service is fully committed and compliant at both an individual and corporate level.
2. Ensure the attitudes, professional behaviours and conduct described within the core code are reflected in its decision-making, policies, procedures, processes, and associated guidance that govern how the service manages and supports its workforce.
3. Provide training and support to all those who work for, or on behalf of, a service to achieve their understanding of the Core Code and an appreciation of their responsibilities in adhering to it.
4. Not detract from the Core Code.

Those who lead services and those who work for, or on behalf of, the service must:

5. Understand, respect, and follow the principles of the Core Code and demonstrate this by their commitment to it and their responsibility for upholding it.
6. Conduct themselves in accordance with the Core Code.

Those responsible for the governance of fire and rescue services, whilst complying with their own ethical codes must:

7. hold the Chief Fire Officer to account for the implementation of the Core Code at a local level;
8. play a proactive role in challenging behaviour inconsistent with the Core Code; and
9. ensure strategies, policies and performance measures are in place to promote and embed a positive and inclusive culture.

A fire and rescue service should:

10. Designate a senior leader who is responsible for promoting the Core Code throughout the service and ensuring that all those who work for, or on behalf of, the service understand its contents and what is expected of them.