



Meeting	Performance and Resources Board	Agenda no.	9
Meeting Date	23 February 2023		
Report Authors:	Donna Bentley, Head of Safeguarding Colette Black, Director of People Services		
Presented By	Colette Black, Director of People Services		
Subject	Safer Together		
Type of Report:	Information		
Action Point No.	n/a	For publication	Yes

RECOMMENDATIONS

None. This report is for information purposes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the publication of the HMICFRS inspection report of the Police Service on 2 November 2022, and the Independent Culture Review of the London Fire Brigade on 28 November 2022, a report was submitted to the ECFRS Service Leadership Team on 13 December 2022 seeking approval for steps to be taken for a self-assessment to ensure that the service continues to live its values of inclusivity, fair, and transparency. The actions agreed as a result of this were:-

1. Safer Recruitment Audit – An audit will be undertaken following recent completion of our normal Safer Recruitment self-assessment.
2. DBS Checks - We will continue with existing recommendations around DBS checks (as agreed by SLT on 9 August 2022).
3. Safe Share – We will adopt the concept of ‘Safe Share’ (see appendix A).
4. Cultural Maturity Model – We will continue with the adoption of the cultural maturity model (as agreed by SLT on 1 November 2022).
5. Mapping – Will undertake a more detailed exercise to map the recommendations from both reports (detailed below) against current practice to identify any lessons we may learn from others.
6. Managing Allegations – a review of grievance cases and allegations made in the last 12 months to ensure that they have been managed appropriately, and, where necessary lessons can be learned. The cases that will be reviewed are those which include reference to bullying, harassment, criminal allegations, racism, misogyny, prejudicial and improper behaviour and misconduct.

The two reports provide valuable opportunities for reflection and learning. The Service prides itself on being a learning organisation which prompted an initial informal ‘check in’ against the recommendations made by HMICFRS for the Police and Nazir Afzal for the London Fire Brigade (LFB).

This report is not intended to be a full response to the HMICFRS and LFB reports but a reflection on initial actions which are underway or are recommended to be undertaken.

BACKGROUND

The Service’s cultural review in 2015 highlighted a culture which included bullying and harassment, and which has no place in our Service. Since the findings of the Lucas report, the Service has worked hard to create a fair, kind and inclusive workplace which is in line with its values. This work will always be ongoing and there is still further work to do. This work is prioritised within the Fire and Rescue Plan, Integrated Risk Management Plan, People Strategy, and Annual Plan and our top 10 priorities.

Formal reporting on r progress against these plans happens through the Portfolio Management Board (PMB), Continuous Improvement Board (CIB) and Service Leadership Team (SLT) meetings. It is appropriately scrutinised through the Performance and Resources Board.

The Service recognises that it will always be working within a framework of wider societal issues.

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

An initial review of both reports prompts immediate reflection about relevant approaches that are already in place such as inclusion-based training and ‘Safer Recruitment’, as well as those that are planned such as a Cultural Maturity review and those that are yet to be fully considered.

Full detail of the ‘Safer Together’ approach is reflected in the Terms of Reference for the work which are attached as appendix B. A precis of work undertaken against each of the 6 elements of Safer Together is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1

1	Safer Recruitment	Audit underway.
2	DBS Checks	Consultation commencing with phase 15 of ‘working well together’.
3	Safe Shares	Launched via Managers Briefing on 16 th January 2023.
	Cultural Maturity Model	Assessment due to be completed by 31 st March 2023.
5	Mapping	Initial mapping complete, further phases of this work to be done.
6	Managing Allegations	Review is underway.

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

This is a potential control measure for strategic risk, SRR150019.

'There is a risk that the Service fails to provide a safe and inclusive culture which ensures the well-being of staff and contributes to attracting a diverse workforce'

LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

This proposal enables a commitment in the Fire and Rescue Plan regarding positive culture.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct financial implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None associated with this report.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

We have considered whether individuals with protected characteristics will be disadvantaged as a consequence of the actions being taken. Due regard has also been given to whether there is impact on people who identify as being part of each of the following protected groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

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

The Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard has been fully considered and incorporated into the proposals outlined in this paper.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None directly associated.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Further consultation and engagement would need to take place before progressing.

FUTURE PLANS

These proposed actions links to ongoing delivery of our People Strategy Action Plan.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES

Appendix A – Sharing Concerns infographic.

Appendix B – Terms of reference

Appendix A – Sharing Concerns (launched 16th January 2023)

Sharing a concern Supporting you to speak up



1 → First Option

Your Line Manager

Your line manager will respond to concerns and offer support in most circumstances. With your agreement they may call in other support to help.

2 → Advice & Support

Further internal options

HR People Business Partner

Safeguarding Team
vulnerable.adults@essex-fire.gov.uk

Occupational Health
mailbox.oh@essex-fire.gov.uk
01376 576011

Dignity at Work Advocates

3 → Safe Share

Internal support - 24/7

Use this to discuss concerns relating to self and/or others.

safe.share@essex-fire.gov.uk
01376 576 487 (24/7)

This can be anonymous.

Safe Share is a central hub that offers support for you, or can gather information about concerns relating to others.

It puts the wishes and feelings of those seeking support and guidance first.

4 → Whistleblowing

Internally **OPFCC**

Pippa Brent-Isherwood
01245 291613
pippa.brent-Isherwood@essex.pnn.police.uk

Independent Charity **Protect**

0203 1172520
whistle@protect-advice.org.uk

Whistleblowing is a further opportunity to raise concerns.

This can be done through the Chief Executive of the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, or through an independent charity, Protect.

Our Whistleblowing Policy gives more information.

 **Helpful policies:** Code of Conduct inc. Code of Ethics, Dignity at Work, Grievance, Wellbeing Matters, Whistleblowing. All policies can be found on the Intranet - HR Policies and Guidance.

Appendix B – Terms of reference

From: Commissioning Director Colette Black
To: Independent Review team Sarah Ramos – Independent HR consultant and an Independent Safeguarding consultant

Background

Two external reports have recently been published:

- An inspection of vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the Police Service (HMICFRS - 2 November 2022) and,
- Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade (Nazir Afzal - 28 November 2022).

We are clear that these reports are not about ECFRS, however, they provide valuable opportunities for reflection and learning that we may be able to use. We are a learning organisation and intend to take these opportunities. Reading these reports has prompted an initial informal 'check in' of our Service against the recommendations made by HMICFRS for the Police and Nazir Afzal for the London Fire Brigade (LFB).

On 13 December 2022, the Service Leadership Team (SLT) approved an initial response to these papers which we are calling 'Safer Together'. Safer Together consists of six initial recommendations which arise from reading the reports.

1	Safer Recruitment – The Metropolitan Police report includes numerous observations regarding recruitment and vetting.	We have completed our Safer Recruitment self-assessment. To provide further assurance that our own Safer Recruitment process (which includes vetting) is good, a safer recruitment audit will now be commissioned.
2	DBS Checks	We will progress and deliver existing recommendations around DBS checks (as agreed by SLT on 9 August 2022).
3	Safe Share - Both reports include observations regarding the ability of colleagues to report concerns	We have several routes for colleagues to express concerns and to seek support. The 'Safe Share' approach (detailed further in appendix A) will be a valuable addition to this suite of options. It is unique in that it is 24/7, can be anonymised and can gather intelligence from a range of sources.
4	Cultural Maturity Model – Both reports include observations regarding the culture and behaviours of the organisations they refer to.	Alongside the existing Core Code of Ethics implementation plan, progress with utilisation of a Cultural Maturity Model as a means of measuring the effect of implementing the Core Code of Ethics and ensuring values and behaviours are incorporated and assessed. The 'One' employee engagement survey

		which closed on 28th November 2022 will offer valuable insight to this.
5	Mapping – There are 23 recommendations in the LFB report and 43 in the police report.	We will map our current practice against these to ensure that we have noticed any insight or learning.
6	Managing Allegations – Both reports include recommendations about ensuring past cases and complaints have been managed well.	We will review grievance cases and allegations made in the last 12 months to ensure that they have been managed appropriately, and, if this is not the case that lessons can be learned. The cases that will be reviewed are those which include reference to bullying, harassment, criminal allegations, racism, misogyny, prejudicial and improper behaviour and misconduct.

Direction and Authority

As commissioning Director, I am appointing you to review those matters within recommendations 5 and 6.

Recommendation 5

An internal working group will review and map current practice against the recommendations. The internal working group will identify any areas of existing good practice, areas that we may learn from or that may require additional focus. Please review and audit the mapping for accuracy and evidence. The intended outcome is that the internal mapping of current practice is independently audited and verified by the independent team.

Recommendation 6

You are asked to review grievance cases and allegations that include reference to bullying, harassment, criminal allegations, racism, misogyny, prejudicial and improper behaviour and misconduct. The intended outcome is a commentary which reflects any areas of good practice and which makes recommendations about areas that we may learn from.

You are at liberty to speak with anyone you consider will support the review and, within the bounds of confidentiality for other parties, to request all documentation and information you consider relevant.

It is possible that as your review progresses further information and/or other relevant factors may be discovered. If this occurs then I would ask that you exercise judgement at the time but, at your earliest convenience, we meet to consider and agree a way forward.

Objectives

Your objective is to submit two reports to me:

- a. In relation to recommendation 5, the report reflects your audit and verification of the internal mapping of current practice

- b. In relation to recommendation 6, the report provides a commentary which reflects any areas of good practice and which makes recommendations about areas that we may learn from.

Specialist Input

This investigation may require specialist input, please request this from me if needed.

Timing and Recommendations

Recommendation 6 - You must submit your review and way forward recommendations to me by 17th March 2023.

Recommendation 5 - You must submit your review and way forward recommendations to me by 1st April 2023.

Recommendation 6 will be presented at the Service Leadership Team meeting on 24th March 2023

Recommendation 5 will be presented at the People Strategy Board on 11th April.

Resources & Management Support

The Assistant Director of HR, Jac Thorold, will support you in this review.

Any changes to these terms of reference (including timeframe) must be fully documented and authorised in writing by the Commissioning Director.