



Classification	Official		
Meeting	Service Leadership Team	Agenda no.	6b
	Performance and Resources		13
Meeting Date	11th July 2023		
	27th July 2023		
Report Authors	Sarah Ramos, Interim Head of Employment Policy & Practice		
Presented By	Colette Black, Director of People Services		
Subject	Working Well Together Quarter 1 2023-24 Update		
Type of Report	Information		
PFCC Action Point No.		For Publication	Yes

RECOMMENDATION(S)

None. This report is for information only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A quarterly report is produced for the Service Leadership Team (SLT) to provide a snapshot of the engagement and consultation with the recognised trade union representatives since the launch of this way of working. This report covers Quarter 1 2023-2024.

This report provides an update on the headline topics from the policy schedule, any failures to agree, ops committee meetings and other associated activity where there has been the biggest change since the previous report.

Overall, during Q1 2023-2024 a total of 10 People and Operational policies were agreed.

BACKGROUND

Our current approach was created as the output of workshops that we held with each of the representative bodies. It is intended to complement our formal mechanism – the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (JNCC). The schedule of consultation involves seeking acceptable solutions to problems through a genuine exchange of views and information.

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

1. Policies & Guidance Published and implementation activity during Q1 2023-2024:

Consulted upon in Phase 15 and launched in Q1 2023-24, the **Abatement Policy** was updated following the release of the guidance document from the Local Government Association. The rules of the FPS 1992 and FPS 2006 explain that abatement applies where a member begins to draw their pension and remains employed or is re-employed/re-engaged either by a FRS or, in the case of interservice abatement, by another public sector body. The updated policy for Essex PFCC FRA, takes into account the new guidance, in particular on matters such as;

- What counts as employment that may trigger abatement;
- What pay figures are used to compare pay in the 'old' job and the 'new' job;
- How and when inflation increases are to be applied;
- How abatement applies if a person has or had more than one role.

Consulted upon in Phase 15, the implementation of a minimum of **Basic DBS** checks to be undertaken by all Fire and Rescue Authority employees and those who represent our service (including volunteers), was agreed by all Representative Bodies. Changes to the Rehabilitation of Offender's Act 1974 (Exceptions) has since been approved by the House of Lords and legislative change effective from 6th July 2023. Further local Consultation on the roll out plan for ECFRS will be undertaken in Phase 17.

Consulted upon in Phase 15 and launched in Q1 2023-2024, the **Operational Assurance Station Audits Policy** was re-formatted, with terminology and references updated. An appeals process was also added.

Policies agreed and to be published on the intranet:

Consulted upon during Phase 14, the [Special Leave Policy](#) was a pre-existing policy reviewed to update terminology and to include reference to the following: parental bereavement leave, jury service (loss of earning process) and clearer guidance on sporting leave. The policy was uploaded to the Intranet on 26th June 2023.

2. In consultation: Phase 16 (15 May 23 - 23 June 23):

The current phase has the following in consultation with the recognised trade union bodies:

The **Annual Leave Policy** was last reviewed in Phase 1 and was due for a period review. Given the complexities of this policy it was agreed that we would run consultation over two phases (Phase 15 and 16). However, due to a period of long-term absence by the lead People Partner and HR moving into Business Continuity during Phase 16, it has been agreed with the Representing Bodies that consultation on this policy would extend into Phase 17. The proposed changes have recently been updated to include:

- Broadening the scope to include Time Off in Lieu.
- Officers taking leave at the same time.
- Notice periods to book and cancel leave.
- On Call non programmed leave.

The **Incident Command Assessment Policy** is being updated and includes proposals to improve terminology, make changes to the scoring criteria and levels of Incident Command qualifications and add in an Appendix on budgeted FTE.

The **Surveillance Policy** and Procedure is new to ECFRS and is led by Information Governance. The Policy outlines what an employee must do in relation to surveillance, why and how, whilst the Procedure details the surveillance management procedures including handling access requests for surveillance footage.

3. Outstanding Items from Previous Phases

A new **Domestic Abuse Guidance** document and toolkit has been developed to include a referral mechanism and awareness of support. This will align directly to safeguarding procedures. Although this has been agreed with the recognised trade union bodies this has been submitted to the Safeguarding Board for final sign off and is due to be amended following their feedback before it is published and launched.

Core Skills Assurance Program (CSAP) Policy – a policy setting out the requirements to ensure the standards of Core Skill are at the level required by the Service. Although the consultation in Phase 13 had been progressing well, this policy has been delayed due to Service lead being unwell. This Policy is scheduled to be carried forward to Phase 17.

Transfer Policy – following the agreement reached at the extraordinary JNCC meeting in January 2023, the old policy was used for the last time at the Transfer Board on the 5th June 2023 and the new Transfer Policy is due to be launched by the end of July 2023.

4. Failure to Agree Update

Following consultation during Phase 12, there was one remaining point which was not agreed in the **Expenses Policy** which related to subsistence. Specifically, this referred to the HMRC requirement for receipts to be submitted when reimbursing subsistence claims. We anticipate this being resolved prior to the next JNCC.

5. Ops Policy Committee (OPC):

An Ops Policy Committee Meeting was held on the 10 April 2023, operational policies consulted upon during Q1 2023-2024 were:

- Pipeline Plan
- Tidal Surge Plan

National Operational Guidance:

- Hazardous materials (3)
- Utilities & Fuel (2)

Operational Policies consulted upon in Phase 16:

No Ops Policies.

National Operational Guidance:

Search, Rescue and Casualty Care (3)
Industry (6)

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

We have a shared vision and are clear about our Service aspirations, representative body priorities nationally and locally, delivery of priorities within the Fire and Rescue Plan (which are reflected in the annual plan), staff survey and HMICFRS feedback. We have a shared understanding of different perspectives, agreement on amendments to plans if needed and/or appropriate.

LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

As set out in the Fire and Rescue Plan

- Promoting a positive culture in the workplace
- Be transparent, open, and accessible
- Make best use of our resources

As well as the following Service Values

- Value the contribution of all
- Always professional
- Work as one team

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications associated with this paper.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No legal implications associated with this paper.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

No staffing implications associated with this paper.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The actions being taken will not have a disproportionate impact on individuals with protected characteristics (as defined within the Equality Act 2010), when compared to all other individuals and will not disadvantage people with protected characteristics.

Race	Y/N	Religion or belief	Y/N
Sex	Y/N	Gender reassignment	Y/N
Age	Y/N	Pregnancy & maternity	Y/N
Disability	Y/N	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Y/N
Sexual orientation	Y/N		

This Working Well Together update does not have any direct impact on protected groups as defined within the Equality Act. However, each individual policy has a full People Impact Assessment which demonstrates consideration of all impacts arising from the policy.

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

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

No health and safety implications associated with this paper.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This piece of work is helping to strengthen the working relationships between the Service and Trade Unions. We are committed to working in the spirit of the 2007 NJC Joint Protocol for good industrial relations and the structure agreed is in line with those principles.

FUTURE PLANS

We are committed to continuing to work together to develop and deliver policies that support our strategy.

Planned steps for continued improvement:

There is a commitment to ensure the consultation phases are manageable for all parties and pre-planning going forward will include an assessment of the size of consultation with in depth consultation requirements being scheduled across two phases where it is anticipated that more time is required.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES

N/A.