



**Wednesday,
23 June 2021
1.00 pm**

**Meeting of
Staffing Committee
Sadler Road
Winsford**

Contact Officer:
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Democratic Services

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Cheshire Fire Authority

Notes for Members of the Public

Attendance at Meetings

The Cheshire Fire Authority welcomes and encourages members of the public to be at its meetings and Committees. You are requested to remain quiet whilst the meeting is taking place and to enter and leave the meeting room as quickly and quietly as possible.

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If you feel there might be particular problems with access to the building or car parking please contact the Reception Desk at Sadler Road Winsford Tel (01606) 868700.

Questions by Electors

An elector in the Fire Service area can ask the Chair of the Authority a question if it is sent to the Monitoring Officer at Fire Service HQ to arrive at least five clear working days before the meeting. The contact officer named on the front of the Agenda will be happy to advise you on this procedure.

Access to Information

Copies of the Agenda will be available at the meeting. A copy can also be obtained from the contact officer named on the front of the Agenda. Alternatively, individual reports are available on the Authority's website (www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

The Agenda is usually divided into two parts. Members of the public are allowed to stay for the first part. When the Authority is ready to deal with the second part you will be asked to leave the meeting room, because the business to be discussed will be of a confidential nature, for example, dealing with individual people and contracts.

This agenda is available in large print, Braille, audio CD or in community languages upon request by contacting; Telephone: 01606868414 or email: equalities@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Recording of Meetings

The Authority audio records its meetings. Please contact Democratic Services for a copy of the recording via DemocraticServices@cheshirefire.gov.uk. The recordings are not kept indefinitely. Currently, the meetings are also broadcasted using Vimeo and the details can be found on the website of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Fire Evacuation

If the Fire Alarm sounds you should make your way to the nearest exit as quickly as possible and leave the building. Please follow any instructions from staff about evacuation routes.



MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 23 JUNE 2021

Time : 1.00 pm

Lecture Theatre - Fire Service HQ, Winsford, Cheshire

AGENDA

Part 1 - Business to be discussed in public

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1A Record of Meeting

Members are reminded that this meeting will be audio-recorded. It will also be broadcast via Vimeo.

1B Apologies for Absence

1C Declaration of Members' Interests

Members are reminded that the Members' Code of Conduct requires the disclosure of Statutory Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Non-Statutory Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interests.

1D Minutes of the Staffing Committee

To approve the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 22nd March 2021.

(Pages 1 - 2)

2 Re-employment and Pension Abatement Policy

(Pages 3 - 14)

3 Agile Working Policy

(Pages 15 - 36)

4 Service Management Team Update and Action Plan

(Pages 37 - 52)

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE held on Monday, 22 March 2021 at Remote Meeting - Via Skype at 12.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Bob Rudd (Chair), Stef Nelson, Michael Beanland, Mike Biggin, Karen Mundry, Stuart Parker and Peter Wheeler

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Record of Meeting

The meeting was held using Skype and in accordance with the Remote Meeting Rules. The Director of Governance and Commissioning confirmed how participants were connected to the meeting and how it would be broadcast. He also mentioned how the meeting would be monitored throughout.

Members were reminded that this meeting would be audio recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

C Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interest.

D Minutes of the Staffing Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 16th November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 SERVICE MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURAL REVIEW - ACTION PLAN

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Transformation which provided an update on the Service Management Team Structural Review. The report included an Implementation Plan (and supplementary Transition Plan).

RESOLVED: That

[1] The Service Management Team Review Implementation Plan (and supplementary Transition Plan) be noted.

[2] A six monthly update be presented to Staffing Committee.

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CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 23 JUNE 2021
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION
AUTHOR: SENIOR HR BUSINESS PARTNER

SUBJECT: RE-EMPLOYMENT AND PENSION ABATEMENT POLICY

Purpose of Report

1. To allow Members to consider an amended Re-employment and Pension Abatement Policy.

Recommended: That

- [1] the report be considered and the revised Re-employment and Pension Abatement Policy be approved.

Background

2. The 'Re-employment and Pension Abatement Policy' was last reviewed in September 2019 when a report was considered by the Staffing Committee. In the light of experience and following informal discussions with Members a revised Policy had been prepared.

Information

3. The current policy requires decisions on the re-employment of retired officers to be made by the Staffing Committee unless the individual is applying for an On Call Firefighter position, in which case the re-employment can be approved by the Director of Transformation and the Head of Service Delivery.
4. The revisions to the Policy remove this requirement and enable the re-employment of retired officers into new roles without Member approval. However any such re-employment would be on the basis that the following criteria have been met:-
 - An open recruitment process has been undertaken
 - The individual is the best candidate at the end of the recruitment exercise
 - The individual would accept all terms of re-employment, including abatement if applicable

- The individual has had the required break in service
 - The individual is not a Principal Officer (either a Brigade Manager or an Area Manager)
5. In order to ensure that the above criteria are met, it will be necessary to review and update recruitment processes. This would ensure that issues relating to Protected Pension Age (PPA) and Abatement are flagged, and that individuals understand their responsibilities and liabilities.
 6. The revised policy has one clear exception to the requirement for an open recruitment process, where:-
 - Retired wholetime or on call operational staff are seeking re-employment to an on call role at the same rank
 7. In addition the policy also enables the Service, subject to approval from the relevant Brigade Manager and the Director of Transformation, to re-employ a retired officer without an open recruitment process in other limited circumstances, these being:-
 - Where an individual is required to complete a project, or a specific task and is engaged on a temporary basis of less than two years
 - Where an individual is required for operational effectiveness
 - Where an individual has critical skills and/or core knowledge that is not widely available and is engaged on a temporary basis of less than two years
 8. This version of the policy also makes it explicitly clear that the Service will not consider the re-employment of anyone who has previously been made redundant by the Service.
 9. The revised policy does not propose any changes to the breaks in service that operational officers will be required to have in order to avoid any PPA issues, and will require anyone to whom PPA may apply to provide the Authority with written confirmation that they have taken tax advice before an offer of re-employment is confirmed.
 10. Further the revised policy re-iterates the current requirement for abatement to apply in all cases except where Members agree that this need not be applied.

Financial Implications

11. If pension abatement is not applied, the Authority will be required to pay an amount equal to the amount which should be abated into the pension fund.

Legal Implications

12. The rules on abatement are contained in Rule K4 of the FPS 1992 and Part 9 Rule 3 of the NFPS, as amended by the Firefighters Pension Scheme(Amendment) (No.2) (England) Order 2013.
13. Each Fire Authority should have a policy on abatement and how they will apply this to their employees.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. Re-employment of retired officers is unlikely to assist the Service's aim to increase the diversity of its workforce.

Environmental Implications

15. There are none.

**CONTACT: DONNA LINTON, GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PLANNING
MANAGER
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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

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1203 RE-EMPLOYMENT & PENSION ABATEMENT POLICY (ALL STAFF)

This policy outlines Cheshire Fire Authority's (CFA) position on re-employment and abatement of pension following the re-employment of members of the Fire-fighters Pension Scheme 1992 (FPS), New Fire-fighters Pension Scheme 2006 (NFPS) or Local Government Pension Scheme 1997 (LGPS).

OWNER	Human Resources
LAST REVIEW	June 2021
REVIEW DUE DATE	Controlled by Corp Docs
VERSION CONTROL	3.2

OTHER (CROSS) REFERENCES:

Fire-fighters Pension Scheme 1992 (FPS); Fire-fighters Pension Scheme 2015 (FPS 2015); New Fire-fighters Pension Scheme 2006 (NFPS) [Part 9, Rule 3]; The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Amendment) (No 2) (England) Order 2013; FPS – SI 2013/1392; NFPS – SI 2013/1393; Local Government Pension Scheme 1997 (LGPS) (as amended) and Fire and Rescue National Framework for England May 2018

CONTENTS

PART 1 POLICY SECTION

Section	Title	<u>Page</u>
1	Introduction	2
2	Scope	2
3	Roles and Responsibilities	2
4	Principles	2
5	Re-employment of Principal Officers	3
6	Re-employment following redundancy	4
7	Protected Pension Age	4
8	Break in Service	5
9	Inter-Service Abatement	5
10	Review of Policy	5

PART 2 GUIDANCE SECTION

Frequently Asked Questions	6-7
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PART 1 – POLICY SECTION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy outlines Cheshire Fire Authority's (CFA) position in respect of re-employment and the abatement of pension following the re-employment of members of the Fire-fighters Pension Scheme 1992 (FPS), Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015, New Fire-fighters Pension Scheme 2006 (NFPS) or Local Government Pension Scheme 1997 (LGPS) or staff who have been made redundant.
- 2.1 Abatement is when the Authority reduces or stops an employee's pension if that individual is re-employed in any capacity after retiring. The general abatement rule is that on re-employment the salary paid for the new employment added to the pension in payment cannot be more than the member's salary at the point they retired.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to both uniformed employees (employed under Gold/Grey Book conditions of service) who are members of either the FPS, FPS 2015 or the NFPS and non-uniformed support staff (employed under Green Book conditions of service) who are members of the LGPS.

3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 **The Director of Transformation** has overall responsibility for keeping the provisions within this policy in line with employment/pension legislation and best practice.
- 3.2 **Line managers, the Human Resources (HR) Department and Trade Union Representatives** are responsible for providing advice and guidance to employees on the application of this policy.
- 3.3 **Employees** should make themselves aware of its content and ensure that all aspects are adhered to and to ensure the effectiveness of this policy.
- 3.4 **Employees** considering re-employment are responsible for obtaining their own independent advice on the tax and other financial implications of re-employment. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service will not accept liability for tax or other financial charges incurred by individuals.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 CFA policy on **re-employment** is as follows:

Re-employment can take place provided that:

- An open recruitment exercise has taken place;
and
- The applicant is the best candidate at the end of the recruitment exercise;
and
- The candidate accepts all terms of employment, e.g. abatement of pension;
and
- The candidate has had the required break in service;
and
- The post is not an Area Manager or Brigade Manager (or equivalent level)

Exceptions

4.2 An open recruitment exercise is not necessary in the following circumstance:

- Retired wholetime and/or on call firefighters, crew managers and watch managers can take up an on-call position at the same level, i.e. as a firefighter, crew manager, or watch manager.

4.3 In addition, an open recruitment exercise may not be necessary in the following limited circumstances:

- An individual is required to complete a project, or a specific task and is engaged on a temporary basis of less than two years
- Where an individual is required for operational effectiveness
- Where an individual has critical skills and/or core knowledge that is not widely available and is engaged on a temporary basis of less than two years

In all of the above exceptions, any such appointment must be approved by the relevant Brigade Manager and Director of Transformation.

Abatement

4.4 CFA policy on **abatement** is as follows:

- The pension of any FPS or NFPS member re-employed into any role will be abated in whole or in part to ensure that the annual rate of pay in the new role plus the annual rate of pension does not exceed the annual rate of pay received immediately prior to retirement.
- Abatement will be applied in all cases, as if it does not occur there will be a cost to the Service.

The rules on abatement do not apply to members of the LGPS or the FPS 2015.

A decision not to abate can only be taken by Members, in cases where exceptional circumstances may apply

5. RE-EMPLOYMENT OF PRINCIPAL FIRE OFFICERS

- 5.1 The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (May 2018) states that fire and rescue authorities **must not** re-appoint principal fire officers (Brigade or Area Managers) after retirement to their previous, or a similar, post save for in exceptional circumstances when such a decision is necessary in the interests of public safety. Any such appointment must be transparent, justifiable and time limited. All principal fire officer posts must be open to competition nationally.
- 5.2 The Fire and Rescue National Framework also states that any decision to re-appoint a principal fire officer, as described in paragraph 5.1 above, should be subject to agreement by a public vote of the fire and rescue authority, or a publicised decision by the appropriate elected representative of the fire and rescue authority. The reason why the re-appointment was necessary in the interests of public safety, and alternative approaches were deemed not appropriate, must be published.
- 5.3 A principal fire officer's pension will be abated following re-employment until they cease to be employed by a fire and rescue authority.

6. RE-EMPLOYMENT FOLLOWING REDUNDANCY

- 6.1 Employees who have been made redundant by Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service will not be re-employed.

7. PROTECTED PENSION AGE (PPA)

- 7.1 Employees who are members of the FPS who are able to retire between 50 and before 55 years of age are able to do so because they have a "Protected Pension Age". Re-employment under certain conditions can result in them losing protections afforded to them under the "Protected Pension Age" rules and may result in them incurring a tax liability on pension. Employees must ensure that they have taken advice from an appropriate person e.g. tax advisor as Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) will not accept liability for tax charges incurred by individuals who have lost their "Protected Pension Age" status.
- 7.2 Where a member has two roles and is in the "Protected Pension Age" category, they must retire from the On Call role before or at the same time as the Wholetime role. Failure to do so will result in the loss of their protections under the "Protected Pension Age" status.
- 7.3 The re-employment of someone subject to PPA can only take place if the necessary break in Service has taken place (if in doubt a longer break will be insisted upon).

- 7.4 In addition to the required break in Service, CFRS will require any member of the FPS who has a "Protected Pension Age" to confirm in writing that they have received tax advice, before any offer of employment is confirmed.

8. BREAK IN SERVICE

- 8.1 Re-employment may be on a temporary or permanent basis and a formal break in service will be required:

For members of the FPS or NFPS who have retired between the age of 50 and 55 and have a Protected Pension Age a break in service of **at least six months** is required if re-employed into a firefighting role.

For members of the FPS or NFPS who have retired between the age of 50 and 55 and have a Protected Pension Age a break in service of **at least one month** is required for re-employment to a materially different post, such as a support staff role.

- 8.2 For all other cases of re-employment after retirement, a break of one complete calendar week (Sunday to Saturday inclusive) will be required.
- 8.3 An employee who has received a redundancy payment from an organisation listed on the Redundancy Payments Modification Order (RPMO) will be required to have a break in service of 4 weeks before re-employment.
- 8.4 Breaks in service cannot be taken as paid leave.

9. TERMS & CONDITIONS UPON RE-EMPLOYMENT

- 9.1 Staff who are re-employed by the Service will be employed under the relevant NJC terms and conditions for the role they are appointed to, including automatic enrolment into the relevant Pension Scheme, unless they opt out.

10. INTER-SERVICE ABATEMENTS

- 10.1 Staff who have retired from other Fire & Rescue Authorities and who are subsequently employed by CFRS will be required to confirm that they have made their previous Pension Scheme employer aware of their new employment.
- 10.2 Employees retiring from CFRS but recommencing employment with a different "scheme employer" (i.e. another Local Authority) should be aware that abatement rules may vary depending on the scheme employers own specific policy, and they should consult their new employer directly. The Service will seek to apply abatement where this is feasible.

PART 2 – GUIDANCE SECTION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What are the requirements for re-employment?

A: The re-employment of any employee following retirement will normally only be possible after an open and competitive recruitment and selection process and appointments will be made on merit.

In some exceptional circumstances, where approved by the relevant Brigade Manager and the Director of Transformation, re-employment can take place without an open recruitment process.

Q: Is a formal break in Service required before re-employment?

A: Yes. Support staff are required to have a formal break in service of one complete calendar week (Sunday to Saturday inclusive) before they can be re-employed. An employee who has received a redundancy payment from another Authority will be required to have a break in service of four weeks before re-employment.

Uniformed staff are required to have a formal break in service of one complete calendar week (Sunday to Saturday inclusive). Different rules apply to anyone with a Protected Pension Age as outlined in the Policy. These breaks cannot be taken as paid leave.

Q: Will employees receive a new contract of employment on re-employment?

A: Yes, both support and uniformed staff will receive a new contract of employment on re-employment into the service.

Q: What is the criteria for abatement of pension on re-employment for uniformed employees?

A: Abatement will only be considered on re-employment where the annual rate of pay on re-employment plus the annual rate of pension payable exceeds the annual rate of pay received in the previous role, immediately prior to retirement.

Where this is the case, the annual pension will be reduced by the amount by which the pension received and pay in the new post exceeds the pay received in the previous role.

Q: Whose responsibility is it to check the implications regarding 'Protected Pension Age' for re-employment of an employee who retires between 50 and 55 years of age?

A: Employees who are members of the FPS who are able to retire between 50 and before 55 years of age are able to do so because they have a "Protected Pension Age". Re-employment under certain conditions can result in them losing protections afforded to them under the "Protected Pension Age" rules and may result in them incurring a tax liability on pension. Employees must ensure that they have taken advice from an appropriate person e.g. tax advisor as Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) will not accept liability for tax charges incurred by individuals who have lost their "Protected Pension Age" status.

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 23 JUNE 2021
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION
AUTHOR: ANDREA HARVEY

SUBJECT: AGILE WORKING POLICY

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides Members with an overview of the Agile Working Policy that has been developed in anticipation of the Government lifting the current working from home restrictions. This policy has been developed in direct response to the feedback and lessons learned from how staff have worked during the Pandemic.

Recommended: That

[1] Members note the policy and endorse the new way of working.

Background

2. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Government issued a mandate that required staff to work from home if they were able to perform their work duties remotely. This impacted on a large majority of Fire staff roles and some operational managers.
3. In response to this the Service developed a Homeworking Guidance document to ensure the implications of working from home during the Pandemic period were considered and understood by staff. It also ensured that appropriate actions were taken to facilitate productive, safe and secure working from home. The Homeworking Guidance document is attached at to this report as Appendix A.
4. During summer 2020 the Service commissioned a survey which solicited views from staff about issues relating to their wellbeing and level of engagement during the Pandemic. The results of the survey highlighted that many of the staff that were working from home would like to continue with a similar arrangement once restrictions were lifted.
5. In anticipation of the country returning to a more normal state and in response to staff feedback, a new policy enabling staff to request a working from home arrangement has been developed. This is attached at *Appendix B*.

Information

6. In developing the Agile Working Policy a number of principles have been incorporated. The purpose of these principles is to ensure that the Service is able to retain a level of control and ensure that all working from home arrangements remain flexible and do not constitute a permanent change to an individual's terms and conditions of employment.
7. The key principles within the Policy include the following:
 - No working from home arrangement is permanent. All arrangements will remain temporary in nature and following an initial trial period, will be kept under review.
 - Staff will not be permitted to work from home for their full contracted hours. They will need to attend their normal work base for at least one day per week.
 - All requests require approval and are be subject to an assessment regarding the role, proposed working environment, connectivity, safety, security and equipment requirements.
 - All requests are subject to an agreement regarding how and how often the individual and the line manager will communicate and connect.
 - All agile working arrangements will be flexible and staff will be expected to prioritise the needs of the business and be prepared to return to the office as and when required to attend face to face meetings etc.
 - Whilst working from home staff will not be permitted to carry out caring duties for young children and/or for vulnerable/elderly adults.
8. The policy proposes that the Service will provide the necessary technology to facilitate a working from home arrangement. All equipment however, will remain the property of the Service and will be returned upon resignation/retirement from the organisation.
9. Office furniture will be provided by the individual and this will be subject to scrutiny as part of the agile working application. The policy does, however, give provision for supporting the purchase of furniture in either exceptional or hardship cases.

Financial Implications

10. During the lockdown the HMRC relaxed some of the rules associated with allowances and homeworking. This enabled CFRS to provide all staff working from home with a monthly allowance of £26 to cover additional heating, lighting

and electricity without it being classified by HMRC as a taxable benefit. We understand that this exemption will not continue beyond lockdown and all allowances relating to homeworking will become taxable.

11. With this in mind, and on the basis that all future agile working is voluntary coupled with the likelihood of savings in respect of commuting to and from work, the new policy does not provide an allowance for additional expenses incurred as a result of working from home.

Legal Implications

12. All employees (subject to eligibility) have the right to request a permanent flexible working arrangement such as reduced hours, compressed hours, term time working etc. Employers are required to follow the relevant employment legislation and the ACAS code in response to requests to make permanent contractual changes to working arrangements. This policy sits outside of this framework and is intended to be a standalone policy that is intended to facilitate non-contractual agile working arrangements.

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. An Equality Impact Assessment has been developed and no discriminatory elements have been identified within the policy. This is largely because decisions around agile working will revolve primarily around the suitability of the role for homeworking. It is likely however that because a high proportion of fire staff roles are occupied by females, that there will be more females than males working from home within CFRS.

Environmental Implications

14. An increase in homeworking will reduce commuter journeys by the Service's employees. It will also alter the way that offices are utilised. Both of these changes should, ultimately, lead to a reduction in emissions associated with the Service's activities.

**CONTACT: DONNA LINTON, CLEMONDS HEY, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804**

BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

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COVID-19

Working From Home Interim Guidance

September 2020



Make a Difference

Introduction

1. During the COVID-19 pandemic the Service has facilitated working from home arrangements for many staff where practicable. It is likely that this will continue in the short term for some staff. However based on the recent survey results, it is expected that in the future the Service will see an increase in the number of staff interested in having a flexible working arrangement to work from home.
2. As part of the Service's commitment to providing family friendly and flexible working arrangements, the Service has commissioned work to develop a set of parameters and procedures around home working that, once approved, will be incorporated into the Flexible Working Policy.
3. This will enable staff to request the ability to periodically work from home. Staff will not however be permitted to work all of their contracted hours from home or from their work place.
4. In the interim, this guidance document has been produced to provide clarity and information to staff who are currently working from home on a temporary basis due to the pandemic. It outlines the approach that is being adopted by the Service to ensure that staff are able to continue to work from home safely with the necessary equipment and support.

Definitions

5. There are many definitions relating to staff working from home and depending on the type of arrangement agreed, there are potential tax implications and expenses for both the individual and the organisation.
6. To qualify under the HMRC definition of homeworking arrangements, the following two tests have to be met:
 - there must be agreed arrangements between the employer and the employee
 - the employee must work at home regularly under those arrangements
7. HMRC accept an employee is a homeworker if working at home is regular and frequent, or follows a pattern, such as working at home for two days of every week. In the example of an employee working two days a week at home, HMRC will still consider it to be 'regular', even if the employee varies the days which they work at home each week.
8. For purposes of the current and temporary arrangements that are in place for staff to work from home, a "homeworker" is an employee that is authorised by the Head of Department to regularly perform some or all of their employment duties at home. Their permanent place of work however remains unchanged under their current contract of employment.
9. Informal working at home which is not by arrangement or prior agreement with the Head of Department does not qualify under the definition of homeworking.

For example taking work home in the evenings or logging on to emails or doing eLearning from home.

10. Home working consists of working at home rather than at the normal place of work and typically requires the use of IT systems and telephones to perform work and to remain in contact with managers and employee.
11. Not all jobs are suitable for home working, however any job may be considered on its own merits.

Expectations for Staff Working from Home

12. Staff should be able to demonstrate they can:
 - Work independently and on their own initiative;
 - Self-motivate;
 - Complete work and projects within set deadlines;
 - Manage workload effectively;
 - Cope well when working at home;
 - Work safely and keep all documentation and equipment secure;
 - Maintain contact with their manager and all affected by their work.
 - Keep their manager informed on a regular basis of their whereabouts and work activities.
 - Remain contactable during normal office hours
 - Only work outside of normal office hours with the agreement of their manager

Expectation of Managers of Staff Working from Home

13. Managers of staff working from home must:
 - Establish that the home workplace is suitable and the work can be completed satisfactorily and without frequent direct supervision.
 - Agree and document clear work objectives with measurable outputs.
 - Determine how work will be monitored, produced and delivered and agree working hours and patterns, contact times and availability.
 - Put in place arrangements so they are aware of the homeworker's whereabouts and work activities at all times. (e.g. through accessing the homeworkers outlook diary)
 - Maintain regular 1-1's and ensure that the homeworker is kept informed of matters that affect them or their work.
 - Ensure homeworkers have comparable contact, appraisal, access to learning and development and team events as other employees.

- Ensure that home working arrangements do not have an adverse affect on any particular group of employees neither should a refusal to agree home working disadvantage any particular group.
- Take into account any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary in the case of a disabled employee.

Health & Safety, Security

14. Working from home will require staff to carry out a [DSE risk assessment](#), which will be recorded and reviewed on a regular basis, depending on the resultant risk.
15. It is the member of staff's responsibility to rectify any flaws in the home workplace highlighted by the assessment e.g. ventilation, temperature, lighting, space and floor area. The Service is responsible for supplying IT equipment and furniture.
16. Once the home workplace has been assessed and passed as suitable, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to keep it that way and take reasonable care of their health and safety.
17. The Service retains the right to check the home work area if deemed necessary for Health, Safety, and information security purposes. The need for such inspections will depend on the nature of the work undertaken and in the event that a home check is required, a minimum of one working day's notice will be provided.

Caring Responsibilities and Working From Home

18. When working from home there is an expectation that staff will continue to fulfil their roles in line with their contracted hours. However, the Service is mindful of the challenges that the COVID pandemic has created for staff who have had to work from home whilst having to manage caring responsibilities for either young dependants or elderly relatives.
19. Where a member of staff is working from home and encounters a conflict between caring responsibilities and work commitments, they should alert their line managers in order to discuss and agree the most appropriate arrangements in line with existing policy. i.e. Parental Leave Policy; Special Leave Policy; Flexi Time Policy; Annual Leave Policy;
20. Having considered the policy options, if any concessions are required, these will be considered on a case by case basis by management in an attempt to work towards a suitable solution.

Working Time

21. Where the agreed working pattern allows for flexibility, both the manager and employee should monitor hours to ensure that they are not excessive. It is important that working patterns and hours are not detrimental to the employee's health, and comply with the Working Time Regulations.

Insurance

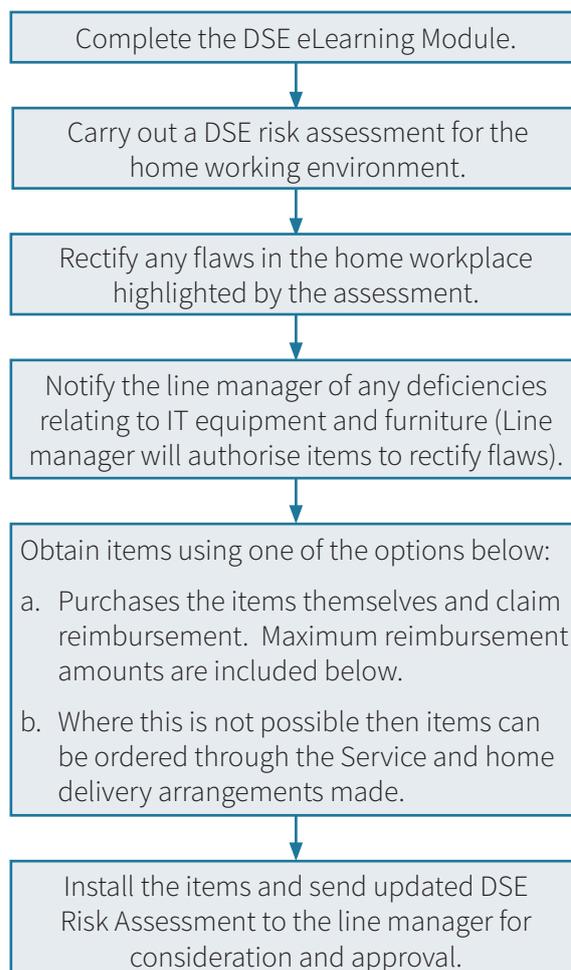
22. The Service's existing insurance policies (both public and employer's liability) will continue to operate and cover employees but staff working from home are also advised to check their insurance documents to ensure that working from home is covered.

Security of Service systems and information

23. Staff working from home must ensure that information and equipment are kept securely. In particular private and confidential material must be kept in secure storage at all times, which is lockable. Line managers must be satisfied that all reasonable precautions are taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with the Services ICT policy. (add link)
24. Staff must also be mindful of confidentiality when engaging in meetings from home to ensure that sensitive information cannot be overheard by third parties.

Procedure

25. If you are working from home you are required to:



Reimbursement for IT equipment, furniture and mileage

26. Staff working from home will be provided with a suitable computer (laptop, desktop or tablet) and associated equipment in line with the requirements of the DSE Risk Assessment. No equipment will be provided unless the DSE Risk Assessment has been satisfactorily completed. remains property of the service
27. All IT Equipment and furniture will be provided by, and remain the property of the Service. Staff can source their own furniture, tax free, from the list below and be reimbursed up to the maximum amounts as follows:
 - Chair - £100
 - Desk - £170
 - Laptop riser - £40
 - Footrest - £30
 - Document holder - £15
 - Lockable cabinet/drawer(s) - £50
28. The items purchased must be fit for purpose and must meet the standards and specification detailed in the DSE Risk Assessment. Arrangements must be made to ensure all electrical items are brought into the office to be PAT tested each year.
29. Reimbursements will be subject to proof of purchase, submission of an invoice and/or VAT receipt and will be passed to the line manager before the payment can be approved. Reimbursement must be claimed within three months of purchase.
30. Where the need to purchase home office equipment and work at home is as a result of the coronavirus outbreak during the financial year 2020/21, HMRC have put in place interim arrangements so that reimbursement will not be subject to tax.
31. This tax exemption on reimbursement of homeworking equipment will only apply to items purchased by the employee before the end of the 2020/21 tax year. Unless there is further provision forthcoming from HMRC before the end of the financial year, all reimbursement for items purchased after 6 April 2021 will be taxable and individuals will be subject to a P11D.
32. Staff with an agreed working from home arrangement are not eligible to claim excess mileage for journeys from home to their normal workplace and back. The normal mileage rates and rules apply and staff will only be reimbursed for business mileage.

Reimbursement for additional costs incurred

33. In accordance with HMRC guidance, the Service may pay towards additional costs incurred by homeworkers, such as heating, lighting, metered water etc. The maximum amount that is exempt from tax and NI is £26 per month for monthly paid employees.

34. During the COVID-19 pandemic, on the basis that some staff had to work from home because their offices were closed or because they were required to self-isolate, HMRC accept that these staff fall under the definition of homeworkers and are eligible for the allowance, albeit on a temporary basis.
35. The Service will pay authorised homeworkers a monthly tax free allowance of up to £26 to cover additional costs incurred from home-based working. This is subject to approval of the line manager and where applicable can be backdated to 6 April 2020.
36. Informal working at home which is not by arrangement does not attract reimbursement for additional costs.



Our Core Values



Be Inclusive

By acting fairly, with integrity, respect and without prejudice.



Do the Right Thing

By holding each other to account for ensuring high standards of professionalism in everything we do.



Act with Compassion

By being understanding and offering help to each other and to our communities with warmth, patience and kindness.



Make a Difference

By making an impact in our organisation and in our communities in whatever ways we can, for as many people as we can.

(CorpDocs Number) AGILE WORKING POLICY

The following policy sets out Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service’s policy and processes in relation to Agile Working. This policy is available to eligible Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) operational and support staff, part time, full time and fixed term employees.

OWNER	HR Advisor – Policy, Human Resources
CREATED ON	April 2021
REVIEW DUE DATE	April 2024
VERSION CONTROL	1.0

OTHER (CROSS) REFERENCES:

[Flexible Working Hours Policy](#); [Parental Leave Policy](#); [Paternity Leave Policy](#); [Maternity Leave Policy](#); [Adoption Policy](#); [Special Leave Policy](#); [Annual Leave Policy](#); [ACAS Statutory Code of Practice](#); [Job Share Scheme](#);

CONTENTS

PART 1 POLICY SECTION

Section	Title	<u>Page</u>
1	Introduction and Aims of Policy	2
1.1	Definition of Agile Working	2
2	Agile Working Principles	2
3	Responsibilities	3
4	Agile Working Eligibility	5
5	Consideration of Agile Working Requests	5
6	Agile Working Request Procedure	6
7	Provision of Equipment	6
8	Financial Implications	7
9	Health & Safety	7
10	IT and Information Security	7

PART 2 PROCEDURE SECTION

1	Procedure 1 – Application for Agile Working	
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PART 3 GUIDANCE SECTION

<u>FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS</u>	9-10
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Agile Working Request Form

PART 1 - POLICY SECTION

1. INTRODUCTION

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Service recognised the numerous benefits that were gained from homeworking for both the organisation and staff, leading to a cultural shift in the way we view the requirement for staff to be physically in work whilst carrying out their roles. This policy, which replaces the interim homeworking guidance, is intended to set out the parameters for any member of staff who wishes to request an agile working from home arrangement on conclusion of the pandemic lockdown restrictions.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) recognises that enabling staff to work in an agile way, having the option of undertaking their roles from a different location to their normal working base, can continue to be beneficial to both the individual and the organisation.

This policy sets out the agile working provisions available to eligible Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) operational, support, part time, full time and fixed term employees.

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to:

- Explain eligibility criteria in relation to agile working.
- Explain the implications of agile working for employees.
- Provide clear guidance and outline responsibilities in relation to agile working.
- Ensure that managers are aware of their responsibilities to employees covered by this policy.

1.1 Definition of Agile Working

- 1.2 The Service defines agile working as where there is an agreement in place between an individual and their manager to carry out the duties of their role either from an alternative CFRS location or from the employee's home.
- 1.3 Agile working cannot be carried out in a public venue or at the premises or home of any other organisation, family member or third party.
- 1.4 Informal working at home which is not by arrangement or prior agreement does not qualify under the definition of agile working.

2. Agile Working Principles

- 2.1 Agile working can be requested by any member of staff who has successfully completed a probation period and/or period of initial training.
- 2.2 All requests require approval of the respective Head of Department and will be considered based on the individual's ability to perform the duties associated with their role effectively and efficiently from home or another CFRS location.
- 2.3 It is acknowledged that not all jobs are suitable for agile working and for those which are suitable, employees may prefer to remain in the workplace. Therefore any arrangements for working from home should be voluntary on the part of the

employee, and at the discretion of the Service. The key to success is mutual understanding and trust, leading towards mutual benefit.

- 2.4 To promote flexibility and to ensure that agile working remains beneficial for both the individual and the organisation, all agile working arrangements will be subject to regular review and will not constitute a permanent change to an individual's contract of employment.
- 2.5 There is no automatic right or entitlement to agile working and the Service reserves the right to refuse requests at its discretion, according to the needs of the business, and no right of appeal in relation to agile working under this policy is provided.
- 2.6 Staff will not be permitted to work all of their contracted hours from home or from an alternative location. This is because the Service believes that all CFRS roles, in order to be carried out effectively, require an element of face to face contact with colleagues, customers or partners, as well as some proportion of time spent attending their main work base in person. All staff who have an agreed agile working arrangement will therefore be required to work a minimum of one day per week at their normal place of work.
- 2.7 All agile working arrangements will be subject to an initial trial period of up to 3 months, and will be subject to annual reviews thereafter.
- 2.8 The reviews should be used an opportunity to review the working patterns and to consider any variations to the agreement. As agile working arrangements do not constitute a permanent arrangement or a change to an individual's contract of employment, the agreement can be withdrawn by either the service or the individual at any time with a minimum of one weeks' notice.
- 2.9 Once an agile working arrangement is approved there is an expectation that the employee will still exhibit flexibility and make themselves available to attend the normal work base for events, meetings and activities that are pertinent to their roles.
- 2.10 The Service's existing insurance policies (both public and employer's liability) will continue to operate and cover employees but agile workers who are working from home are also advised to check their insurance documents to ensure that working from home is covered.
- 2.11 Nothing in this policy is intended to alter the contractual requirement for all CFRS staff to work from any of it's locations within Cheshire, as required.

3. Responsibilities

Employees who are permitted to work as an agile worker must be able to demonstrate they can:

- Work independently, on their own initiative and self-motivate;
- Manage their workload effectively, completing work and projects within the required deadlines;
- Cope well when away from their normal office/location;
- Work safely and keep all documentation and equipment secure;
- Maintain contact with their manager and all affected by their work;
- Keep their manager informed on a regular basis of their whereabouts and work activities;

- Remain contactable during normal office hours;
- Only work outside of normal business hours with the agreement of their manager
- Understand that business need will have to take priority over any agile working arrangement
- Due to the temporary nature of agile working arrangements, participate in an annual review of their specific arrangement and acknowledge that depending on the changing needs of the organisation, the ability to undertake agile working is at the discretion of the Service and may need to change over time or cease.

Staff should not have sole responsibility for the supervision of children who are primary school age or younger (11 years old and younger) or for the care of elderly/vulnerable relatives when scheduled to work from home. Where a member of staff is working from home and encounters a conflict between caring responsibilities and work commitments, they should alert their line manager in order to discuss and agree the most appropriate arrangements in line with existing policy. i.e. Parental Leave Policy; Special Leave Policy; Flexi Time Policy; Annual Leave Policy.

Line Managers of staff undertaking agile working must:

- Ensure that the necessary forms have been completed and discuss the implications and expectations with staff prior to any agreement being put in place.
- Establish that the proposed workplace is suitable and the work can be completed satisfactorily and without frequent direct supervision;
- Agree and document clear work objectives with measurable outputs;
- Determine how work will be monitored, produced and delivered and agree working hours and patterns, contact times and availability;
- Undertake annual reviews (or sooner if there are performance concerns) of agile working arrangements for each member of their team and discuss with staff how/if agile working arrangements may need to change or cease;
- Put in place arrangements so they are aware of the agile worker's whereabouts and work activities at all times; (e.g. through accessing the agile workers outlook diary)
- Maintain regular 1-1's and ensure that the agile worker is kept informed of matters that affect them or their work, and that personal wellbeing is discussed.
- Ensure agile workers have comparable contact, appraisal, access to learning and development, and team events as other employees;
- Ensure that agile working arrangements do not have an adverse affect on any particular group of employees;
- Take into account any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary in the case of a disabled employee;

Heads of Department must

- Ensure that the required discussions have been undertaken between the line manager and individual prior to approval of the agile working arrangement
- Consider the wider implications of approving the agile working application on the wider department and discuss any issues/concerns with the manager prior to approval

- Ensure that all agile working arrangements are reviewed at the appropriate intervals.

The Human Resources team are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the Service, and will provide advice and guidance on its interpretation.

4. Agile Working Eligibility

4.1 To submit an agile working request, an employee has to meet certain criteria. They must:

- be an employee of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service;
- have demonstrated that they can carry out their role to the required standard
- have passed their probationary period (if applicable to the role)

5. Consideration of Agile Working requests

5.1 All requests for an agile working arrangement will need to be considered by the relevant manager, who will consider whether the request is compatible with the role being undertaken. All requests will require final approval from the relevant Head of Department.

5.2 Key factors that will be considered in determining whether an agile working request is suitable include:

- the level of face-to-face / in person interaction or communication required with customers / colleagues / other contacts.
- the requirement and frequency of the individual to attend meetings in person
- the ability to access IT systems / files remotely
- the requirement to use equipment / tools which are on site
- the need to undertake activity simultaneously as part of a team
- the degree to which work activity is generated by on site attendance

5.3 In addition the following personal factors will be considered when reaching a decision on an agile working request:-

- if requesting the ability to work from home, whether the individuals' home working environment is suitable and fit for purpose
- whether there are any current, formal performance concerns
- whether there any health/wellbeing issues which might arise if the request is granted such as social isolation.

5.4 The Service will ensure that requests are dealt with promptly and fairly, however it is recognised that each case will be considered on its merits. For example two roles which may appear similar may have different requirements due to department-specific factors.

5.5 During the discussion about an agile worker request, if the employee's preferred pattern of agile working cannot be accommodated, then the manager should consider and offer alternative arrangements, where this is feasible for the role and department.

- 5.6 There is no right of appeal against a decision on an agile working request, however managers are encouraged to discuss their reasons for refusing a request so that the individual understands why their request has not been granted.

6. Agile Working Request Procedure

- 6.1 The procedure to request agile working is intended to be as informal and as simple as possible.
- 6.2 The actions required when an individual wishes to request an agile working arrangement are:-
- Individual submits an agile working request form (ensuring that DSE / Health & Safety Risk Assessment have been carried out)
 - The manager meets with the individual to discuss their request
 - The manager reviews the request and if supported, discusses with Head of Department who will determine whether to provide final approval.
 - The manager will inform the individual whether or not their request has been granted with explanation where declined.

7. Provision of Equipment

7.1 IT Equipment

The Service will provide approved agile workers with the necessary IT equipment in order to be able to carry out their roles remotely, this equipment will remain the property of the Service and should be returned if the individual leaves. Examples of equipment that can be provided are:

- Laptop
- Laptop Riser
- Document Holder
- Speaker

7.2 Office Furniture

All agile workers will be required to evidence and confirm that they have a suitable desk, office chair, footrest (where required) and lockable cabinets or drawers to function away from the workplace.

This confirmation will be sought via the undertaking of a DSE/risk assessment of the proposed workspace to evidence that the proposed furniture to be used for agile working presents no health and safety hazards.

Where a DSE assessment flags up a risk the agile worker will be required to purchase office furniture at their own costs that fulfils the requirements of the DSE/risk assessment.

In extenuating circumstances or in instances where the purchase of furniture will result in hardship, the Service will consider the purchase of office furniture to facilitate the agile working arrangement. Purchase of office furniture will be subject to a buy-back arrangement through the payroll in instalments over an

agreed period.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 It is considered that working from home is mutually beneficial and that the costs and benefits of working from home will cancel each other out. Consequently as this is a voluntary arrangement, a working from home allowance will not be paid.
- 8.2 Due to agile working being an individual choice, any agile worker undertaking their role from home will not be eligible, under current HMRC rules, to claim tax relief for working from home.
- 8.3 Staff with an agile working arrangement involving working from home are not eligible to claim excess mileage for journeys from home to their normal workplace and back. The normal mileage rates and rules apply and staff will only be reimbursed for business mileage.

9. Health & Safety

- 9.1 Agile working from home will require staff to carry out a DSE/Working from Home Health, Safety and Wellbeing risk assessment, which will be recorded and reviewed on a regular basis, depending on the resultant risk.
- 9.2 It is the member of staff's responsibility to rectify any flaws in the home workplace highlighted by the assessment e.g. ventilation, temperature, lighting, space and floor area. The Service is responsible for supplying IT equipment.
- 9.3 Once the proposed home workplace has been assessed and passed as suitable, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to keep it that way and take reasonable care of their health and safety.
- 9.4 The Service retains the right to check the home work area if deemed necessary for Health, Safety, and information security purposes. The need for such inspections will depend on the nature of the work undertaken and in the event that a home check is required, a minimum of one working day's notice will be provided. If such a check is refused then the agile working arrangement will be reviewed and may need to cease, or may be refused if it is a new request.

10. IT and Information Security

- 10.1 Agile workers must ensure that information and equipment are kept securely. In particular, when not in use private and confidential material must be kept in secure storage at all times, which is lockable. Line managers must be satisfied that all reasonable precautions are taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with the Services ICT policy.
- 10.2 Agile workers must also be mindful of confidentiality when engaging in meetings / telephone calls from home or other locations to ensure that sensitive information cannot be overheard by third parties.

PART 2 - PROCEDURE SECTION

Procedure 1 Application for Agile Working–

	Process/Action	Responsibility
1	<p>Employee completes Agile Working Request Form and forwards to their Line Manager.</p> <p>The following details must be included on the application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the date the request was made • confirmation of the reasons why agile working is being applied for • specification of agile working pattern applied for including days, and details of location that is being requested • the impact the change would have on the individual's role and wider section / department / station • DSE / Health & Safety risk assessment of agile working location • Consideration of any additional equipment required • proposed start date <p>It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure submission of a completed form otherwise the application will be returned</p>	Employee
2	Line Manager receives form and considers the request based on the information on the form. In some cases it may be necessary to verify information about the proposed workplace i.e. via home visit.	Line Manager
3	Meeting held between manager and employee to discuss the agile working request.	Line Manager
4	The Line Manager follows up the meeting with the HOD and discusses the application. The HOD considers and determines whether or not approval should be provided.	Line Manager / HOD
5	The Line Manager reviews the arrangement after the initial 3 month trial period, and annually thereafter.	Line Manager

PART 3 - GUIDANCE SECTION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PART 3 - GUIDANCE SECTION	
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	
Q:	Is an employee entitled to have their agile working request approved?
A:	Whilst the Service encourages agile working requests from eligible staff, there will be no obligation on the Service to approve it. Whilst reasonable consideration will be given to all requests they will be balanced against the needs of the business, and the suitability of the proposed agile working location.
Q:	What should the employee consider as part of their agile working request?
A:	As part of their application, employees should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether agile working fits with the requirements of their role • the impact the change will have on the rest of the team and the provision of the service • how the impact might be dealt with • be willing to consider alternative agile working proposals • the suitability of their home environment • the equipment/furniture that they currently have or may need to purchase • how their will maintain communication with their team and manager
Q:	What considerations should managers give to an agile working request?
A:	Managers should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the level of face-to-face / in person interaction or communication required with customers / colleagues / other contacts. - the requirement and frequency of the individual to attend meetings in person - the ability to access IT systems / files remotely - the requirement to use equipment / tools which are on site - the need to undertake activity simultaneously as part of a team - the degree to which work activity is generated by on site attendance <p>In addition they should also consider personal factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - whether the individuals' home working environment is suitable and fit for purpose - whether there are any current, formal performance concerns - whether there any health/wellbeing issues which might arise if the request is granted such as social isolation.
Q:	Will the request constitute a permanent change to Terms and Conditions of Employment?
A:	All agile working requests are deemed to be temporary, subject to annual review, and can be withdrawn at any point by either party. Therefore an agile working request being granted will not result in any permanent change to the individual's employment contract.

Q:	Can an employee request a agile working arrangement on a temporary basis?
A:	Yes, but it will still need to be considered in the normal way. All requests which are agreed are subject to a 3 month trial period and annual review.
Q:	Can an employee appeal against a decision to refuse their agile working request?
A:	No, there is no right of appeal against a decision to refuse an agile working request.
Q:	As a new member of staff can I request agile working straight away?
A:	Before submitting an agile working request you will be required to complete any probationary period for your, and successfully complete any initial training to ensure you are able to undertake your role to the required standard without direct supervision.
Q:	Will I be provided with the necessary equipment to work from home?
A:	The Service will provide staff who approved agile workers with the necessary IT equipment, but the individual will be responsible for providing/purchasing any required office furniture.

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 23 JUNE 2021
REPORT OF: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AUTHOR: ANDREA HARVEY

SUBJECT: SERVICE MAMAGEMENT TEAM REVIEW
UPDATE AND ACTION PLAN

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides Members with an update on progress regarding the actions associated with the independent Service Management Team (SMT) review that was presented to, and approved by, the Fire Authority on 9 December 2020.

Recommended: That

- [1] Members review the progress made against the actions contained within the plan.

Background

2. An independent review of the SMT structure was commissioned in July 2020 and was carried out by RealWorldHR Limited. The review team was charged with assessing a key question: is the Service Management Team structure fit for purpose and sustainable? The review took into account national benchmarking, a study of the Service's retirement profile, a review of the pensions landscape and a data gathering exercise that involved interviewing every member of the current SMT.
3. The review came to a number of conclusions and highlighted some risks with the potential impact of retirements due to the age profile of SMT, capacity pressures in some areas, and the need to further embed the Blue Light Collaboration arrangements.
4. Emphasis was also placed on the need to put focus around workforce reform and identified two posts within the current SMT structure that could be released over time and generate savings.

Information

5. The review presented a number of recommendations which revolved around the following:

- Establishing the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer and removing one of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer posts.
 - Increasing the contractual hours of the Section 151 Officer post.
 - Redefining the role of the Director of Transformation to focus on short term workforce reform and value for money reviews.
 - Reassigning responsibilities associated with the Director of Transformation role to the joint HR team to realise the savings associated with the longer-term collaboration arrangements.
 - Generating savings through the release of the post of Head of Prevention in 2021 and the release of the post of Director of Transformation in 2023.
6. The recommendations have been incorporated into a high level action plan attached at Appendix A. This is accompanied by a more detailed plan in respect of the proposed phasing out of the Director of Transformation role at Appendix B. It is intended that these action plans will provide the audit trail for the implementation of the SMT review with an expected delivery date of July 2023.
7. To ensure the appropriate level of scrutiny is afforded to the progress and delivery of the SMT review, it has been agreed that progress reports will be provided to members of the Staffing Committee on a quarterly basis.

Financial Implications

8. As previously outlined the delivery of the SMT review will provide savings of approximately £160,000 by 2023/24.

Legal Implications

9. The actions associated with the Review will see some changes that involve legal issues. Wherever this is the case suitable legal and HR advice will be sought and relied upon..

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. To ensure the Service was in compliance with its own policies and aspiration to be an inclusive employer, the recruitment of the DCFO post was subject to both internal and external advertising. This resulted in the appointment of an external candidate.

Environmental Implications

11. None

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

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Cheshire

Fire & Rescue Service

Appendix A to Item 4
Staffing Committee
23 June 2021

Page 41



SMT REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN : 2020 - 2023

INTRODUCTION

Following the commissioning of an independent review of the Service Management Team Structure in July 2020, a decision was made by the Fire Authority to progress a number of recommendations. This action plan outlines how the recommendations will be implemented and is based for the most part on a “task and finish” approach with an expected completion date of 2023.

Once the objectives contained within this plan have been actioned with new processes in place, the following benefits will be realised.

- 1. Additional strategic capacity and resilience at Principal Officer and SMT level and improved succession planning.**
- 2. Reduction in the risk associated with an ageing workforce through more proactive effective retirement support and planning for senior and middle managers.**
- 3. Generation of savings through further embedding of the blue light collaboration arrangements within HR and the redefining and removal of the Head of Prevention and Director of Transformation posts.**
- 4. Creation of more efficient and effective working through the alignment of workforce planning, cultural reform and a series of functional value for money reviews**

It is intended that this Action Plan will be updated and presented to Members of the Staffing Committee for monitoring and review every six months.



Cheshire
Fire & Rescue Service

OBJECTIVE 1

Create Additional Strategic Capacity and Resilience for Principal Officers and SMT and improve Succession Planning

Action	Associated Tasks	Timescale	Action Owner	Progress Update
Introduce role of DCFO on 80% gearing of CFO salary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create Job Description, Person Specification and Recruitment Pack 	December 2020	Director of Transformation	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake Recruitment Process and identify appropriate candidate. 	By end January 2021	CFO	Complete DCFO to commence April 2021
Ensure planning, performance and policy is driven at senior level without direct and regular input from CFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realign accountability for Operational Policy & Assurance, Protection and Organisational Performance to new DCFO role. 	December 2020	Director of Transformation	Complete
Release capacity for Director of Governance and Commissioning to improve ability to fulfil Monitoring Officer role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassign internal contract management of Blue Light Collaboration to reinforce priority level to DCFO role. 	April 2021	Director of Governance and Commissioning	Complete
Disestablish one post of ACFO and recruit to post following retirement of current postholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create Job Description, Person Specification and Recruitment Pack 	December 2020	Director of Transformation	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake Recruitment Process and identify appropriate candidate. 	By end March 2021	Director of Transformation CFO	Complete Paul Binyon appointed from Royal Berkshire – Start Date 17/5/21
Creation of additional capacity within the treasury function to deliver the Capital Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree increase in budgeted hours for Section 151 Officer to allow postholder to work up to 2.5 days per week. 	April 2021	Director of Governance & Commissioning	Complete

OBJECTIVE 2

Reduce the risk associated with an ageing workforce through more proactive retirement support and planning for senior and middle managers

Action	Associated Tasks	Timescale	Action Owner	Progress Update
Understand the risks associated with Middle and Senior Mgt retirement profile to anticipate, plan for, and minimise the impact of turnover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production and evaluation of workforce planning reports outlining predicted turnover and retirement profiles at GM level and above. 	Twice Yearly for CFO review	Head of People Services GM Performance	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Succession Planning meetings set up between Principal Officers Brigade Managers and Head of People Services to identify and discuss risks and actions 	Twice Yearly	Head of People Services	Currently informal meetings and discussions take place between CFO and Director of Transformation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review contracts of employment for Principal Officer to increase notice period for all future recruits at this level. 	Immediate following Staffing Committee Approval	Head of People Services	Proposal to extend notice period from 3 months to 6 months to be discussed at Staffing Committee June 2021.
Increase awareness and understanding of pensions tax charges and implications for retirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of workshops for Station Managers and above on pension tax charges 	March 2021	Pension Scheme Manager	Complete - Workshop Delivered December 2020 to 50 delegates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 121 meetings offered to Group Managers and above within 3 years of potential retirement. 	July 2021	Pension Scheme Manager	Commenced February 2021
Provide more effective retirement support as part of the "Steps" talent management framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a "Step Away" pre-retirement programme to provide support around financial planning, employability skills etc. 	Q4 2021/22	Head of People Services	

OBJECTIVE 3

Generate Savings through the further embedding of the Blue Light Collaboration Arrangements within HR and the Redefining and Removal of two SMT posts.

Action	Associated Tasks	Timescale	Action Owner	Progress Update
Identify elements of the transformation portfolio that can be undertaken by the joint people services function to ensure CFRS realises the benefits associated with further integration and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the work areas and responsibilities that CFRS wishes to maintain control over. 	By March 2021	Director of Transformation CFO	Complete
Develop a formal plan to transition identified work areas/responsibilities to the joint people services team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present draft transition plan to Head of Joint HR Service outlining incremental approach and indicative timescales 	March 2021	Director of Transformation	Draft transition plan completed and shared with Head of People Services (See Appendix B)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review capacity and resourcing associated with the transfer of responsibility from the transformation portfolio to the joint people services function. 	July 2021	Head of People Services	
Transform HR service provision through the incremental transfer of elected workstreams from Transformation to the Joint People service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise Plan and agree transition and implementation timetable 	September 2021 – July 2023	CFO Head of People Services Director of Transformation	
Release the post of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue notice of redundancy to 	May 2023	CFO	

Director of Transformation	Director of Transformation			
Action	Associated Tasks	Timescale	Action Owner	Progress Update
Release the post of Head of Prevention and incorporate the Prevention function elsewhere in the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue notice of redundancy to Head of Prevention 	January 2021	ACFO Head of People Services	Complete Last date of service 26 March 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combine Head of Protection and Head of Prevention roles and reissue post holder with revised job description 	April 2021	Head of People Services	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree scope and terms of reference for VFM review within the Prevention function 	February 2022	Head of Protection & Prevention DCFO Director of Transformation	

OBJECTIVE 4

Creation of more efficient and effective working through the alignment of workforce planning, cultural reform and a series of functional value for money reviews

Action	Associated Tasks	Timescale	Action Owner	Progress Update
Realign and refocus Director of Transformation role to delivery of transformative workforce reform projects and VFM reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop VFM approach for review by SMT 	July 2021	Director of Transformation CFO	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree scope and timetable of VFM reviews and workforce reform projects 	January 2022	Director of Transformation CFO	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree Terms of Reference and undertake a VFM review of the Communications function 	January 2022	Director of Transformation	Timescales will depend on recruitment to Head of Joint Comms post.
Oversee development of coaching and mentoring toolkit and reverse mentoring programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current culture and policies relating to coaching and mentoring within the Service Develop new process to encourage culture of learning 	By Q4 2021/22	Director of Transformation Head of People Services	In progress – proposals to be reviewed by SMT in June 2021 and incorporated as a project on the NW HR Development Forum
Lead on workforce reform programme to strengthen culture and development new ways of working following HMICFRS inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key themes and develop plan and programme of work to strengthen culture 	TBD based on publication of HMICFRS results	Director of Transformation	
Develop policies and ways of working based on staff feedback and lessons learned from the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement new working from home protocols 	May 2021	Director of Transformation Head of People Services	Complete – Agile Working Policy to be implemented June 2021



Draft Plan to Redefine Role of Director of Transformation and to transition identified work areas/responsibilities from the Transformation Portfolio to the Joint People Service function or to other roles within SMT.

Action	Associated Tasks	Timescale	Action Owner	Progress Update
Identify which aspects of the Director of Transformation role will transfer across to the Joint People Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Job Description and identify key workstreams and areas of responsibility Consider appetite of the service to retain aspects of the role within the direct control of fire Identify which elements should transfer to the Joint People service 	March 2021	Director of Transformation	Initial Review complete and 8 key areas of work identified.
Area of Work	Associated Tasks/Responsibilities	Proposed Timeline for Transfer	Proposed Portfolio Owner	Comment/Update
Industrial Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair of JCNP – FBU/FOA 	March 2022	Head of People Services	Suggest NB shadows for 3 months from January 2022 for FBU/FOA JCNP before taking over as Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair of JCNP - Unison 	July 2021	Senior HR BP	
Pensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pension Scheme Manager 	April 2022	DCFO	IDRP to move across to ACFO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pension Boards 	April 2022	DCFO	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assurance and Compliance 	Immediate	Joint People Service	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> XPS Contract Management 	Immediate	“	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McCloud Remedy Case 	Ongoing	“	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TPR Surveys 	April 2022	“	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pension Board Report 	Immediate		

Area of Work	Associated Tasks/Responsibilities	Proposed Timeline for Transfer	Proposed Portfolio Owner	Comment/Update
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair of Mental Health Steering Group Attendance Mgt Forum and oversight of OHU contract 	<p>May 2023</p> <p>July 2021</p>	<p>ACFO</p> <p>ACFO Head of People Services</p>	ACFO will become senior sponsor for Mental Health within Fire.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage day to day Mental Health Portfolio Line Manager for Mental Health Advisor Delivery of Mental Health Strategy Budget Holder Events and Publications Fire Authority Updates 	<p>June 2023</p>	<p>Head of People Services</p>	
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage day to day EDI Portfolio Line Manager for EDI Advisor Delivery of EDI Strategy Positive Action in Recruitment Gender Pay Gap Reporting Events/Prides/Publications Fire Authority Updates Stonewall Submission 	<p>TBD</p> <p>TBD March 2022</p>	<p>DCFO</p> <p>Joint People Service Joint People Service</p>	This area will be considered as part of the transformation, value for money and workforce reform work
Staff Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair of Core Values Steering Group Bi-Annual Staff Survey Line Manager for Policy & Transformation Officer 	<p>April 2022</p> <p>May 2023 May 2023</p>	<p>Head of Service Delivery ACFO ACFO</p>	With dotted line to CFO for IRMP and political liaison

Area of Work	Associated Tasks/Responsibilities	Proposed Timeline for Transfer	Proposed Portfolio Owner	Comment/Update
Talent Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career/Development Mentoring for SM and above – newly promoted • Promotion Boards – Design, Qs and guidance documentation. Panel Member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Station Managers - Group Managers - Area Managers - Brigade Managers • High Potential Development Scheme • Leadership Development Programmes 	2022 Promotion Boards Autumn 2021 2022 Autumn 2021	Members of SMT Head of People Services Head of People Services Head of People Services	After 2021 no further involvement in development and design. Panel Member only as required for GM and above Panel Member as required No further direct involvement in design or delivery
	Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplines, Grievance and Dignity at Work • Appraisals Oversight • Review of Joint People Service Delivery & Performance • Pensions Provider Contract • Payroll Provider Contract • OHU Provider Contract 	Immediate Autumn 2021 April 2021 Immediate Immediate July 2021	Head of People Services + SMT Head of People Services DCFO within BLC remit Head of People Services ACFO

Area of Work	Associated Tasks/Responsibilities	Proposed Timeline for Transfer	Proposed Portfolio Owner	Comment/Update
SMT Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFO Appraisal 	June 2023	Head of People Services	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPOC for Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alert Proof Read - Events/Star Awards 	TBD	ACFO	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NFCC HR Forum & Consultations 	June 2023	Head of People Services	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMT Monthly meetings 	April 2023	Head of People Services	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Pay Policy Statement 	April 2023	ACFO	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Signatory for DBS 	April 2023	ACFO	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Holder – Corporate Training Budget 	January 2022	Head of People Services	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at NW Regional HR Meeting 	January 2023	Head of People Services	

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