

# Member Development Strategy 2024-26



**Cheshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service  
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**Cheshire Fire Authority  
Member Development Strategy  
2024- 2026**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Member Development Strategy provides the framework for future Member training and development and an effective Member Induction Programme.

The Strategy aims to make a contribution to achieving the Service's Vision and the key aims and organisational objectives of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). Members are an integral part of the progress made towards achieving the Service's Vision and it is important to ensure that Members are equipped with the skills required to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

The Strategy will continue to focus on continuous development and improvement with consideration given to review the provision in light of the impact of changes to the Authority's membership.

## **2. Aims of the Strategy**

The overall aim of the Strategy is to ensure that all Members have access to and undertake adequate training and development to better enable them to: fulfil their roles and responsibilities as Fire Authority Members; and engage with and have an impact within their communities.

**Key aims of the Strategy include:**

- **Provision of a clear framework for the training and development of Members based upon their individual needs and the needs of the Authority as a whole;**
- **Ensuring Members have the skills and knowledge necessary to meet their needs to fulfil their roles and are fully aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities;**
- **Supporting the continued training and development of Members;**
- **Ensuring a consistent approach to Member training and development.**

The Strategy confirms the Authority's commitment to learning and development for Members and sets out some of the main activities that will be undertaken to support Member development.

Fire Authority Members also have a responsibility to commit to undertaking training and development activities identified which will enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

## **3. Key Objectives**

The purpose of this Strategy is to ensure that all Members are trained and developed to fulfil their roles on the Fire Authority and ensure that the following objectives are met:

- **Identify and prioritise Members Training and Development Needs through Personal Development Reviews;**
- **Review and refresh the Members Personal Development Review process to ensure that it remains effective for both experienced Members and new Members;**

- **Provision of an Annual Member Training and Development Programme that is in line with priorities identified and within available resources;**
- **Delivery of a comprehensive and effective Induction process for new Members;**
- **Ensure that Members have the opportunity to develop specific skills in line with particular Member Champion roles; and**
- **Ensure that there is an emphasis on continuous development and improvement for Members to align with any changes to the roles and responsibilities of the Fire Authority.**

The following actions will be undertaken to assist in the implementation of the key objectives in the Strategy:

### **3.1 Members Personal Development Plans (PDP)**

All Fire Authority Members will complete an annual Personal Development Plan. This will be carried out within the Personal Development Review process.

Development needs that are identified will be prioritised and key themes that are identified will be fed into the annual Member Training and Development Programme.

### **3.2 Review of Members Personal Development Review (PDR) Process**

A review and refresh of the process will be completed each year to ensure that the process remains effective for both experienced Members and new Members of the Authority.

### **3.3 Delivery of Member Development Programme**

Members appointed to the Authority will already undertake Member Development Programmes within their own local authority. However, as a Member of the Authority, Members must undertake specific learning and development in connection with their roles on the Authority.

- **Member Training and Development Programme** – This will be drawn up based on inputs from several sources. These will include: formal learning needs analysis; Members' own Personal Development Plans; suggestions from officers/Members; budget and CRMP proposals; new legislation; central Government and local initiatives; partnership working; and other external influences. All training and development activities provided for Members will be consistent with, and support, the Authority's main priorities. The programme will be kept under review to ensure that it aligns with any specific development needs required to support the implementation of any changes introduced by the Government.
- **Members Planning Days** – The Authority holds a number of planning days each year which align with the corporate CRMP planning process to engage

with Members about the future direction of the Service and update Members on matters impacting the Service.

- **Monitoring** - Progress against the Strategy will be monitored by the Member Training and Development Group on a quarterly basis. The Group will also review the Member Training and Development Programme annually to ensure that it remains in line with the Authority's main priorities. Regular monitoring of the Programme will help to ensure that the changing needs of Authority Members are reflected in the Programme. The Member Training and Development Group will also ensure that activities, when proposed, meet Members' needs and are scheduled and delivered appropriately and effectively.

### **3.4 Delivery of Member Induction Programme**

The Authority is committed to ensuring that all new Members are supported when they join the Authority through an effective induction process.

The induction process will include an Induction Programme for new Members which will be supported by the provision of a generic information pack. Feedback from new Members who have completed the Induction Programme has been very positive and the Programme is reviewed and, where necessary, revised on an annual basis to ensure it remains effective and appropriate.

- **Members Induction Programme** – This consists of a programme of sessions to provide an overview of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Fire Authority. Core modules for new Members such as Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity will also be included throughout the year to ensure that new Members are clear on their roles and responsibilities as Fire Authority Members in these key areas.
- **Members Information Pack** – This provides sufficient information for Members new to fire and rescue responsibilities to begin their role. It will include key contact details, information on the terms of reference and constitution for all the Authority's meetings, calendar of meetings, together with details of the various forms/declarations which Members are required to complete.
- **Buddy System** – the officer/Member Buddy system provides an alignment of elected Members to members of the Service Leadership Team (SLT), to provide information and support on a range of Service, policy and organisational issues. Officer buddies are available to Members for the purpose of developing their overall knowledge of fire and rescue. Where possible, buddies will provide answers to questions and queries themselves or do so after consulting colleagues.
- **Member Induction Handbook** – The Handbook gives Members a basic overview of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and Cheshire Fire Authority. It is updated annually to ensure the information that Members receive is up-to-date; accurate and relevant when they start their tenure with the Fire Authority.

### **3.5 Role of Member Champions**

One of the key outcomes of the delivery of the Member Development Strategy should be that Members possess the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

Members have been appointed to Member Champion roles which have been well established and valued. It is important that Members who are appointed to these roles have the opportunity to develop specific skills in line with these roles and are provided with the support required to maximise their impact within their individual Member Champion remit. The skills involved within each role are identified through the Member Champion role profiles which were developed by the Member Champion and lead senior officer and reviewed annually. Opportunities to develop these skills will be factored into Members individual Personal Development Reviews.

The Member Champion arrangements are reviewed by the Authority on an annual basis to ensure that they still support the Authority's overarching role in the changing environment in which the Authority operates.

### **3.6 Continuous Development**

#### **Review and Evaluation of Programmes**

Member development activities need to meet the requirements of both Members and the Authority. Constant evaluation and review of the programmes offered should ensure that these requirements are being met. The Authority needs to ensure that value for money is obtained and the benefits/impacts for Members, the Authority and the community can be measured.

There are a number of processes in place to ensure that the programmes offered are reviewed and evaluated which include:

- Each Member will be asked to complete an evaluation form in relation to the training and development that has been undertaken. These forms will be collated and monitored by Democratic Services and a synopsis of the feedback will be presented to the Member Training and Development Group as a regular agenda item. Copies are also provided for relevant officers to help inform future training and development requirements.
- The Personal Development Review process provides Members with the opportunity to reflect on how the training they have received has impacted upon them and their performance. Where relevant, comments can be fed back to the Member Training and Development Group. The Leadership Development Advisor provides a summary of outcomes from the Personal Development Reviews to the Member Training and Development Group.
- The Member Training and Development group receive quarterly reports on the delivery of the Member Training and Development Programme and the implementation of the Member Development Strategy which enables them to monitor and review progress.

A Member satisfaction survey is carried out annually to provide more in-depth feedback on the service provided to Authority Members. The results should inform future development.

#### **4. Role of Member Training and Development Group**

The Member Training and Development Group is responsible for advising the Fire Authority on the development, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy and also ensuring that the Programme is developed in line with the Strategy.

This cross-party group comprises of five Members and one independent (non-elected) member and reports directly to the Authority on matters relating to Member training and development. The Group presents an annual report to the Authority in respect of Member training and development activities.

#### **5. Implementation and Review of the Strategy**

A report on all appropriate aspects of the Member Development Strategy and Programme will be presented to and considered by the Member Training and Development Group on an annual basis. The Group will consider the effectiveness of all aspects of the implementation of the Member Development Strategy, its requirements and the need for any modifications. Any revisions which are required will be made following this review and reported to the Fire Authority.

An implementation plan for the Strategy has been developed and is attached as Appendix 1. The progress of the implementation plan will be monitored by the Member Training and Development Group.

The Member Development Strategy will be reviewed every two years by the Member Training and Development Group and will be approved by the Fire Authority.

#### **6. Outcomes**

The successful implementation of the Strategy, should lead to the following key outcomes being achieved:

- Highly motivated, trained and developed Members;
- Members possessing the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities for the Authority;
- Equality of opportunity in the delivery of training and development.

Outcomes will be measured through the evaluation and monitoring of both the Strategy and Programme. Members training records and Personal Development Plans will also assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the Member Development Strategy.

## Appendix 1

### Member Development – Implementation Plan

The implementation plan is produced, managed and co-ordinated by the Democratic Services team and will be monitored quarterly by the Member Training and Development Group.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officers</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
1. Identify and prioritise Members Training and Development Needs	1.1 Complete Annual Personal Development Reviews and Development Plans for all Members	Human Resources/ Democratic Services	Dec 24/25
	1.2 Complete an initial Personal Development Review and check personal development plans for newly elected Members as part of the induction programme	Human Resources/ Democratic Services	Jul –Aug 24/25
	1.3 Carry out Training Needs Analysis based on outcomes of Personal Development Reviews and Members Personal Development Plans and develop a programme for delivery of needs based on priorities.	Human Resources/ Democratic Services	Oct 24/25
2. Review and refresh the Members Personal Development Review process to ensure that it remains effective for both experienced Members and new Members	2.1 Carry out a review of the current Personal Development Review process to ensure that it remains effective for experienced and new Members.	People and Development/ Democratic Services	Apr 24/25
3. Provision of an Annual Member Development Programme that is in line with priorities identified and within available resources.	3.1 Develop Annual Member Development Programme which complements the training needs identified	Democratic Services Manager/Member Training and Development Group (MTDG)	June 24/25
	3.2 Review the annual programme to ensure that it aligns with any future changes introduced by the Government.	Democratic Services Manager MTDG	Ongoing
	3.2 Produce a quarterly monitoring report on the delivery of the programme for submission to the Member Training and Development Group	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	2024-25 2025-26 Jul Oct Dec Apr



<b>Objective</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officers</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
4. Delivery of a comprehensive and effective Induction process for new Members	4.1 Provision of Induction Programme for New Members	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	Jun 24 Jun 25
	4.2 Provision of Information Pack for New Members (on appointment to Fire Authority)	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	Jun 24 Jun 25
	4.3 Annually review the Member/Officer Buddy System to ensure it remains effective	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG	Oct 24 Oct 25
5. Member Champions	5.1 Review current roles and maximise opportunities for Member Champions to access support networks and development opportunities in line with their specific remit	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MDTG	Dec 24 Dec 25
6. Continuous Development	6.1 Produce quarterly monitoring reports in respect of the Strategy's implementation plan for Member Training and Development Group	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	2024-25 2025-6 Jul Oct Dec Apr
	6.2 Present an annual report on Member Development activities to the Fire Authority	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG	Jul 24 Jul 25
	6.3 Carry out an annual review of Member Development Strategy	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG	Oct 24 Oct 25
	6.4 Carry out a Member satisfaction survey to provide more in-depth feedback on the service provided to Fire Authority Members and inform future development	Democratic Services/ Communications MTDG	Apr 24 Apr 25