



**Norfolk Fire
and Rescue Service**
www.norfolkfireservice.gov.uk

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-26



Norfolk County Council

Contents.

Overview: Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) priorities Values, culture and ethic	03
Priority 1 Increase the diversity of our workforce, so we better reflect the local population	06
Priority 2 Ensure that people who represent a minority in their team are supported and valued	09
Priority 3 Develop our capability on EDI - our knowledge and professional curiosity - and ensure our physical infrastructure can support our increasing diversity	11
Priority 4 Target our prevention and protection activities to address identified risks for our diverse communities.	13
Priority 5 Implement the findings of our 850 equality impact assessments of policies and procedures, to guide inclusive decision-making across our workforce	16
Our workforce diversity figures	18
Document control	19

Overview.

- 1.1** This is our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy for Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS). It sets out how we are embedding EDI across NFRS.
- 1.2** All our strategies have a key role to play to embed equality – this EDI strategy gives you a summary and signposts you to the relevant strategy:
 - People Strategy
 - Planning and Performance Strategy
 - Fleet and Equipment Strategy
 - ICT and Procurement Strategies
 - Capital and Estate Strategy
 - Prevention and Protection Strategy
 - Response Strategy
- 1.3** Our NFRS Vision and Mission Statement outlines our mission to make Norfolk a safer place by delivering on our vision through four approaches.

Our mission is to make Norfolk a safer place through:

PREVENTING
fires and other
emergencies

PROTECTING
people, buildings and
the environment

RESPONDING
to fires and other emergencies
when they arise

We will deliver our vision by...



Having a service that remains relevant, capable and agile to Protect Norfolk as best as it can.



Supporting our communities to reduce risk by educating and advising them.



Responding to incidents, ensuring we have the best people, equipment and technology to be able to do this.



Investing in our greatest asset - our workforce - to ensure they are engaged, supported and connected

Our EDI priorities.

2.1 Our **Community Risk Management Plan** publishes our EDI priorities. This strategy gives you more information about why each of these priorities is important; what we have done so far and the actions we will undertake over the next three years 2023-2026.

These are:

- 1 Increase the diversity of our workforce, so that we better reflect the local population
- 2 Ensure that people who represent a minority in their team are supported and valued.
- 3 Develop our capability on EDI - our knowledge and professional curiosity - and ensure that our physical infrastructure can support our increasing diversity
- 4 Target our prevention and protection activities to address identified risks for our diverse communities.
- 5 Implement the findings of our 850 equality impact assessments of our policies and procedures, to guide inclusive decision-making across our workforce.



Values, culture, and ethics.

- 3.1 We are **committed** to building positive workplace culture, and we won't tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. Our well-established cultural framework defines how we work together. The core code of ethics defines how we deliver our service.
- 3.2 All fire and rescue services have a responsibility to address the recommendations in the [Values and culture in fire and rescue services report](#) by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and to learn the lessons of the [Independent Culture Review London Fire Brigade report](#) and related reports into other services and the Metropolitan Police.
- 3.3 **You can find out more in our People Strategy 2023-2026.**



Priority 1.

Increase the diversity of our workforce, so we better reflect the local population.

Why this is important?

We want to reflect the community we serve. Compared to other fire and rescue services, our workforce diversity is low – but it is steadily improving as a result of our [award winning](#) positive action recruitment campaigns.

What we've done so far

1. We have put in place and are delivering a high-quality **People Strategy** which enables our workforce to be supported in their roles. We aim to have a Fire and Rescue service which is professional, high performing and continues to attract, value and care for our dedicated people.
2. Our People strategy is informed through workforce planning, Employee Survey findings, His Majesty's Inspection of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services survey findings and reports, Norfolk Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) people programme and our response to the recent challenges that we have faced together as a service. You can find out more in our **People Strategy 2023-2026**.
3. As part of this work, we have undertaken Local Government Chronicle [award nominated](#) research to understand why our workforce diversity is low.



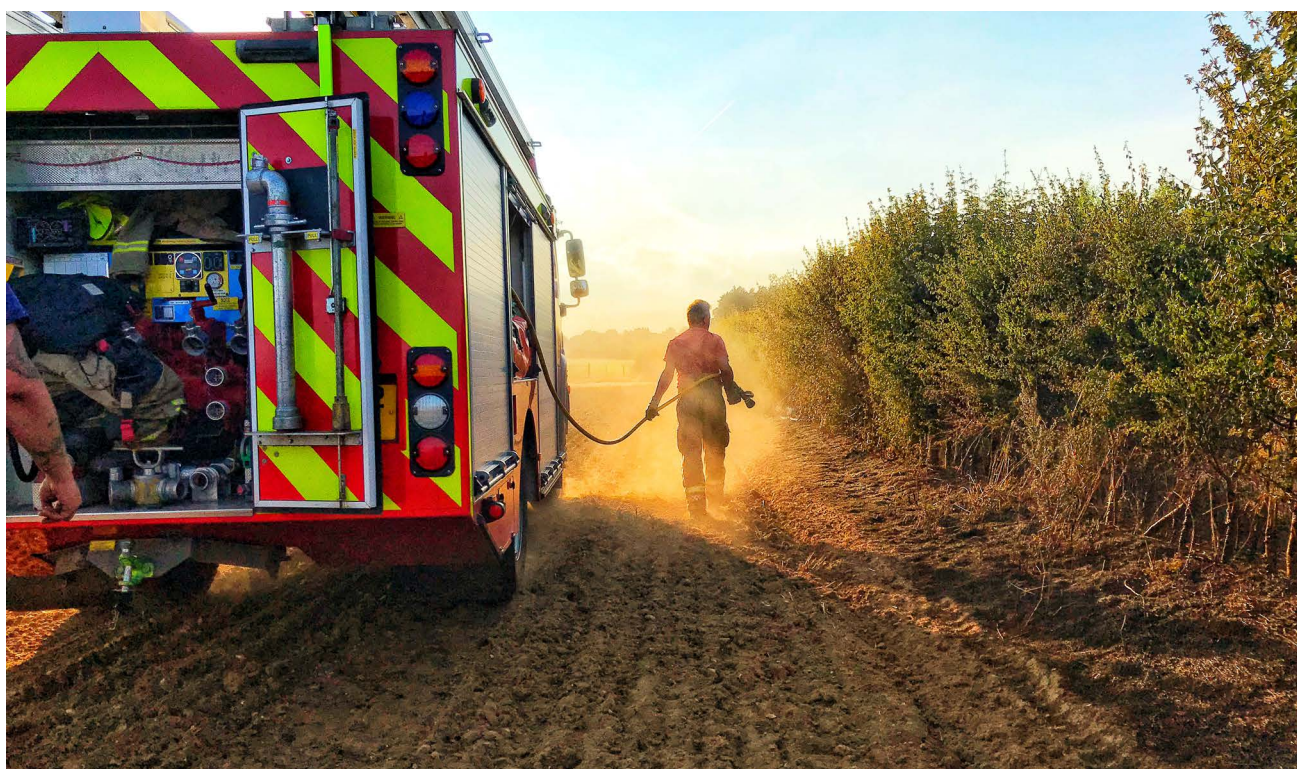
4. This has highlighted a range of factors which indicates that in Norfolk there is a very **small pool** of potential female and ethnic minority candidates who consider a career in fire and rescue.

For example:

- Many women in Norfolk see fire and rescue as a ‘job for a man’ and are not aware of the different career roles available.
- There is a higher-than-average number of older and disabled people in Norfolk (around a quarter of the population).
- Norfolk’s largest ethnic minority groups are our Portuguese population and our Eastern European population. However, our Portuguese and Eastern European residents may not consider careers in fire and rescue because in many European and Eastern European countries, fire fighting is a volunteer role, and on-call work may not be a viable option.

5. This research indicates the scale of the challenge ahead. Achieving a diverse workforce will require cultural change across the population over many years. We have written to the Minister for Fire inviting more national engagement in this work.

6. Our action plan explains how we plan to increase the pool of diverse candidates seeking work in fire and rescue.



Actions for 2023-2026.

Action	Measure	Lead	Deadline
Implement a campaign to encourage the highest possible number of staff to record their protected characteristics within our HR system (called myOracle.)	% staff reporting protected characteristics	Engagement and EDI officer and Head of Capability with support from HR Adviser	1 September 2023
Deliver our new workforce plan, set out in our People Strategy for 2023-2026. The recruitment plan, which supports the workforce plan, covers actions to increase workforce diversity and promote effective onboarding, to address barriers to recruitment identified by 212 seldom-heard residents.	Plan delivered in accordance with agreed timescales.	Head of People	31 March 2026
Use social media to directly engage with our ethnic minority groups to share information about recruitment opportunities.	% increase workforce diversity	Head of People	31 March 2026
Work with social media influencers from diverse backgrounds in Norfolk to promote recruitment opportunities and tackle stereotypes in population that deter people from diverse backgrounds from a career in Fire and Rescue.	% increase workforce diversity	Head of People	31 March 2025
Develop our marketing materials to ensure the images we display on our building walls and in digital media include images of women and people from diverse backgrounds to create a sense of welcome and inclusion.	% increase workforce diversity	Head of People	Ongoing
Continue to explore flexible working opportunities for staff in watch-based roles, where this is achievable.	% increase workforce diversity	Head of People	31 March 2026

You can find out more in our **People Strategy for 2023 to 2026**.

Priority 2.

Ensure people who represent a minority in their team are supported and valued.

Why this is important?

Our literature review of global research into the psychology of fire fighters highlights that if someone represents a 'minority' in their team, this creates a higher cognitive load.

We want to ensure that staff who represent a minority in their team – for example, because they have a mental health issue; are a woman; are neurodivergent, or because of their ethnic background; are fully supported at work.

Our staff often work in challenging circumstances, which can impact mental health. The past 18 months have been particularly challenging for all of us in Norfolk Fire and Rescue, following the death of three of our colleagues.

Our achievements so far

1. We have established a **sector-leading** suicide prevention and wellbeing programme, drawing in specialists from across the UK. You can read more about it in our People Strategy 2023 to 2026.
2. We have reviewed our senior structure and invested in new posts to lead our people, culture and ethics programme. We are regularly engaging staff and continually reviewing our feedback mechanisms to ensure our people can raise concerns in a protected way.
3. All candidates for senior level posts in our service are now interviewed by an independent diversity panel of experts on race, disability and sexual orientation.



Actions for 2023-2026.

Action	Measure	Lead	Deadline
Deliver our wellbeing and suicide prevention programme, set out in our People Strategy 2023-2026, working with national and local partners.	Delivered in accordance with agreed timescales.	Head of People	31 March 2024
<p>Introduce a new Personal Development Plan (PDP) appraisal objective for all managers for 2023-2024, to engage our whole service in developing positive culture: Staff can pick one of the two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service wants to embed a positive, supportive culture where mental health discussions at work are normalised. Over the next year, I will work with my team to do one simple thing to help to achieve this. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service wants to embed a positive, supportive culture where bullying, harassment or discrimination is never tolerated. Over the next year, I will work with my team to do one simple thing to help to achieve this. 	90% adoption rate achieved	Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Scott Norman)	30 June 2023
Publish a revised Dyslexia and Associated Conditions Policy, and guidance for managers, to better reflect the needs of staff in fire and rescue, and to address delays within the national Access to Work process.	Policy and guidance published	Senior Advisor Access and Inclusion in consultation with Senior HR Consultant	31 March 2024
Join the national Women in Fire network and utilise the resources available to support women in our organisation.	Satisfaction/ Feedback by women	Director of NFRS	31 March 2024

You can find out more in our **People Strategy for 2023 to 2026**.

Priority 3.

Develop our capability on EDI - our knowledge and professional curiosity - and ensure our physical infrastructure can support our increasing diversity

Why this is important?

To develop our capability on EDI, we must equip staff with the right information and learning to enable them to make good decisions at work.

There are many demands on managers' time, so it is vital to ensure that learning is high quality and genuinely makes a difference – with an explicit focus on the role each staff member has to play in building positive workplace culture.

Our workplace environments, such as overnight, changing and toilet facilities, must be able to provide an environment that meets everyone's needs. Our estate portfolio requires investment, to ensure it can accommodate the increasing gender diversity of our workforce.

The kit and equipment we provide must meet people's needs.

Our achievements so far

- 1.** We've trained 80 managers and staff in the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Equality and Diversity Course for Managers and Anti-Racism training. This includes refresher training on equality impact assessments for our Senior Leadership Team and Service Development Forum in 2023.
- 2.** We know our training on the Public Sector Equality Duty is having an impact because monitoring data shows that 100% of all decision reports are supported by an equality impact assessment.
- 3.** We have completed an access audit of our property portfolio (46 fire stations and the training centre). Premises have been assessed against over 70 criteria informed by the Equality Act 2010 and Building Regulations (Part M). This is informing a capital investment programme across our establishment.

Actions for 2023-2026.

Action	Measure	Lead	Deadline
Review the mandatory EDI e-learning offer to create a new focus on team culture to equip staff to build positive workplace cultures and contribute to a service where bullying and harassment is never tolerated.	New E-learning launched %workforce participation rates	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	31 March 2024
Deliver annual equality impact assessment refresher training for managers.	100% SLT and SFD members received annual EqIA refresher training	Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	31 March 2026
Implement findings of access audit of NFRS property. Work to provide equitable provision of facilities for men and women and improvement in working environment for all.	Year 1, 2 and 3 of programme delivered in accordance with agreed timescales.	Head of Capability	31 March 2026
Improve our systems for collecting and reporting data on workforce demographics.	Completion of mapping for data systems and processes	Workforce planning manager	31 March 2024

You can find out more in our **People, Estates and Response strategies for 2023 to 2026.**



Priority 4.

Target our Prevention and Protection activities to address identified risks for our diverse communities.

Why this is important?

Our Local Government Chronicle [Award nominated](#) research with 212 residents from diverse backgrounds highlighted that some of our communities face risks in relation to fire, water and road safety.

Norfolk, like many areas of the UK, is home to a growing diverse population. People newly arrived in Norfolk from abroad – especially those whose first language is not English - are particularly vulnerable to the risk of fire. This is because they may not know how to raise the alarm and may not understand UK fire safety practices.

What we've done so far

1. In 2022, the **Asian Fire Service Association** awarded us 'partnership of the year' for our innovative work to create free ESOL training for people newly arrived in Norfolk from abroad.
2. One of our Black African communities has tragically suffered several water and traffic collision fatalities over past years. In 2023 we successfully supported this community to win **£5,000 lottery funding**, to deliver a project to increase community resilience and safety. We are working with the community to improve access to community safety advice.
3. Our community engagement continues to be **sector leading**. In 2022 we engaged with **45 Black women; 42 blind residents; 52 D/deaf residents** and 45 residents with **learning disabilities**, to continue to understand barriers to services.
4. We now collect data on the ethnicity of vulnerable people referred to our service, so that we can monitor whether the ethnicity of referrals is in line with the ethnic diversity of our local population.
5. We are maintaining our relationship with many of the people we engage with, who kindly contributed to consultation exercises, to support their knowledge of fire and rescue as a career.
6. Excellent feedback has been received from blind and partially sighted residents in Norfolk about our 'live incident update' resource.

7. We publish a sector-leading analysis of how people's protected characteristics may increase vulnerability to risk, in our [CRMP equality impact assessment](#).
8. We have worked with our Traveller site management team to enhance fire safety mitigations, introduce CCTV to deter fly tipping and review tenancy agreements, to strengthen fire safety mitigations.
9. We work with our Unauthorised Encampments team, to ensure that homeless Gypsies and Travellers by the roadside are given information about fire safety and wildfire prevention.



Actions for 2023-2026.

Action	Measure	Lead	Deadline
Monitor fire safety of vulnerable populations, including asylum seekers housed in hotels, by performing regular building risk assessments, education, and prevention measures.	Number of individuals reached	Head of Prevention and Protection	Ongoing
Promote road and water safety through education and risk reduction efforts targeting vulnerable individuals and communities. This includes delivery of our Asian Fire Service Association Award-Winning free ESOL Fire Safety training for people newly arrived in Norfolk and reaching out to diverse communities via social media to share safety information.	Number and rate of incidents	Head of Prevention and Protection	31 March 2024
Work with our Black African community which has experienced a high level of water and traffic fatalities, to support families with good knowledge of community safety.	Application to lottery funding submitted Young person's group established Engagement with community safety team	Head of Prevention and Protection supported by Welfare Consultant	31 March 2025
Identify and target vulnerable individuals and communities in partnership with others, developing prevention and protection strategies	75% ethnicity recorded of home fire safety checks referrals	Head of Prevention and Protection	Ongoing
Work with our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller unauthorised encampment team to ensure that adults visited by the team are informed of fire safety and how to prevent wildfires.	100% UEs visited receive fire safety information	Stronger Communities Manager	31 March 2026

You can find out more in our **Prevention and Protection Strategy for 2023 to 2026.**

Priority 5.

Implement the findings of our 850 equality impact assessments of policies and procedures, to guide inclusive decision-making across our workforce

Why this is important?

Our policies and procedures guide our decision-making as a service.

We have undertaken equality impact assessments of our policies and procedures, to ensure we take every opportunity to promote equality and inclusion.

In HMICFRS report [Values and culture in fire and rescue services report](#), chief fire officers must ensure equality impact assessments are fit for purpose (**recommendation 27**).

What we've done so far

1. We are exceeding the requirements of HMICFRS recommendation 27. We have equality impact assessed 850 policies and procedures.
2. We identified hundreds of issues— for example, the importance of recognising life stages such as pregnancy, parenting and menopause - policies are now being updated to address these issues and to be accessible for all.
3. We have published **Guidance for Managers – Creating and Updating NFRS Procedures** to gain a consistent approach to reviewing, creation and approval of documents.



Actions for 2023-2026.

Action	Measure	Lead	Deadline
Publish latest findings of EqlAs on our new NFRS - Policies & Procedures - Home (sharepoint.com) site - so that all managers can easily access.	Published	Head of EDI	1 August 2023
Continue to work with NFRS managers to address the findings of equality impact assessments.	100% completion – all EqlAs recorded on system	Senior Officer, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	31 March 2026

You can find out more in our **People Strategy for 2023 to 2026**.



Our workforce diversity figures.

Of our total workforce of 868 people (this includes whole-time, on-call, fire control and support staff), 9.2% (80) are women (compared to 18.6% women in the UK fire and rescue sector as a whole).

There are similarly low numbers of staff from ethnic minority groups and who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning or non-binary (LGBTQ+).

You can find out more about fire and rescue workforce statistics on the [Home Office website](#).

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