



*PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT*
**FUNCTIONAL PLAN
ACTION TRACKER 2025/26**

Our Purpose:
HERE TO SERVE. HERE TO PROTECT.
HERE TO KEEP YOU SAFE.

Action Plan 2025/26

KEY DELIVERABLES	ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE EXPECTED OUTCOMES	CONTRIBUTION TO PURPOSE/AIMS Responsible Officer	PROGRESS	Does this contribute to CRMP or HMICFRS actions (please state which)?	TARGET DATE	BOARD REPORT DATE	BRAG STATUS
<p>6.1 Ensure the Service remains a career of choice for ALL staff by exploring options for improving reward packages and undertaking a review into our job evaluation process.</p>	<p>Ensure the Service remains a career of choice for ALL staff by:</p> <p>(a) Undertaking an external review of the Service's job evaluation process for senior roles.</p> <p>(b) Implement a process to undertake job evaluation on a rolling basis across all posts.</p> <p>(C) Introduce a rewards platform as part of an enhanced reward and recognition offer.</p>	<p>HR Services & Recruitment Manager</p> <p>HR Services & Recruitment Manager</p> <p>HR Adviser OH & Wellbeing</p>	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>(a) The external review of senior job roles has been completed by external supplier. This showed that the internal software currently utilised for all internal graded roles (up to G19) continues to be effective. All senior green book roles graded above G19 have had a fully pay review undertaken and have been benchmarked against comparable roles. Any necessary changes have been implemented for 2025/26. The Pay Policy will be updated as part of its annual review to reflect roles above G19 will be pay reviewed using at regular intervals.</p> <p>(b) Data collation continues to support the move to a rolling job evaluation process across all roles graded 1-19.</p> <p>(c) SLT have agreed to implement a rewards platform on a trial basis. This</p>		<p>March 2026</p>		

			<p>offers an employee benefits platform providing benefits such as discount schemes and Cycle to Work salary sacrifice schemes at no direct cost to the employer other than some input from officers in reviewing and approving requests. The Procurement team are currently finalising the contractual elements with a view to launching during Quarter 3.</p> <p>Q2 Update</p> <p>(a) The updated Pay Policy will be presented to Members for approval at the Policy & Resources committee on the 11th December 2025.</p> <p>(b) Work continues on data collation and analysis as part of this action.</p> <p>(c) The procurement departmental are continuing discussions with the supplier of the employee benefits platform, with a view to completing and launching the platform in Quarter</p> <p>Q3 Update</p> <p>A. Pay Policy was approved at Policy & Resources committee.</p> <p>ACTION COMPLETE</p> <p>B. Work continues on the collation of this data and</p>				
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			analysis will be completed within the plan's timeframes.				
			C. Work continued to complete the procurement of the employee benefits platform. Due to some complications the launch is now planned for quarter				
6.2 Put in place new measures and arrangements to enhance the employee induction process and improve the early employment experience so the Service can be confident of building positive relationships with new starters.	<p>Improve the employee induction process by:</p> <p>(a) Utilising best practice implement a revised employee induction process.</p>	HR Adviser – HR Services & Recruitment	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>(a) A review of internal processes has been undertaken with some potential improvements identified in Qtr 1.</p> <p>A review of sector wide best practice will be completed in Qt 2.</p> <p>Recent new starters will also be surveyed in Qtr 2 to ascertain their experience of induction across different depts. This feedback will be evaluated and considered when putting together revised proposals for induction. The revised proposals will be submitted to People Board for approval when complete.</p> <p>Q2 Update</p> <p>(a) A draft induction programme has been developed and trialled with new joiners. Feedback has been received</p>	<p>Getting the right people with the right skills.</p> <p>Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.</p> <p>Managing performance and developing leaders.</p>	March 2026		

			<p>and will be incorporated into the development of the wider induction process.</p> <p>Q3 Update</p> <p>(a) Feedback through a survey of recent new starters has been collated. This data along with the previous collation of information will be incorporated into the wider development of the induction process.</p>				
6.3 Maintain robust background checks for current and future employees in line with HMICFRS recommendations to safeguard staff and communities.	<p>Ensure that staff are protected from those who may present a safeguarding or other risk by:</p> <p>(a) Requiring that all staff undertake security vetting at the level appropriate to their role in accordance with HMICFRS recommendations</p> <p>(b) Implementing a process to undertake regular checks of existing staff</p> <p>(c) Deliver safer recruitment training for managers involved in recruitment.</p>	HR Services & Recruitment Manager	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>(a) SI 0818 Security Vetting has been reviewed and updated to reflect necessary changes including amended requirements for completion of Non-Police Personnel Vetting (NPPV) check as part of working alongside police in the JCC</p> <p>All new joiners must complete the Baseline Personal Security Standard (BPSS) which includes a DBS check before starting employment. People and Organisational Development officers continue to work with existing staff and line manager to ensure the correct DBS check has been undertaken which is based on the activity being completed by the postholder.</p>	Getting the right people with the right skills.	March 2026		

			<p>As part of this review any staff who have not been adding to the DBS update service (which allow regular checks) are now retaking check which will allow facilitate regular checks in line with safer recruitment guidance (which recommends re-checking at least every 3 years).</p> <p>(b) All POD staff involved in interview panels (all panels must have a POD representative) have undertaken safer recruitment training.</p> <p>Q2 Update</p> <p>(a) Progress continues to be made ensure all staff have undertaken security vetting at the correct level.</p> <p>(b) All staff who are required to undertake a DBS at standard level or above sign up to the DBS update service which allows the Authority to undertake regular checks in line with safer recruitment guidance (which recommends re-checking at least every 3 years).</p> <p>(c) Refresher training will be arranged every 3 years for staff and ad hoc courses will be facilitated to ensure new members of staff joining POD receive the training.</p>				
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			<p>ACTION COMPLETE.</p> <p>Q3 Update</p> <p>(a) Progress continues to be made to ensure all staff have undertaken security vetting at the correct level.</p> <p>(b) The process to utilise the Updates Service to sign up members of staff is embedded and is now part of the on-going management of vetting checks.</p> <p>ACTION COMPLETE</p>				
6.4 Introduce inclusive recruitment and development pathways at all leadership levels for all roles improving knowledge and access to opportunities.	<p>Reduce the barriers to development and promotion opportunities in the Service faced by all including those from minority and disadvantaged groups and those facing socio-economic disadvantage by:</p> <p>(a) Further development of the High Potential Programme.</p> <p>(b) An expansion of the Reverse Mentoring programme.</p> <p>(c) An expansion of coaching and mentoring capacity.</p>	<p>Workforce Planning & OD Manager</p> <p>Workforce Planning & OD Manager</p> <p>Workforce Planning & OD Manager</p> <p>Workforce Planning & OD Manager/ HR</p>	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>(a) Following a review of the High Potential Programme pilot a revised approach has been agreed through SLT and policy approved by Authority.</p> <p>The new approach addresses feedback received on clarity of access to development and ensuring progress on the programme is effectively monitored and evaluated.</p> <p>HPP will be relaunched in Qtr 2 with clear all staff comms on nomination criteria.</p> <p>(b) The Service has developed guidance on reverse mentoring and contacted all SLT members to review</p>	<p>Managing performance and developing leaders.</p> <p>Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.</p>	March 2026		

	<p>(d) Utilising diverse interview panels where appropriate.</p> <p>(e) Undertake further positive action involving underrepresented groups through coaching and mentoring, leadership development and skills development workshops.</p>	<p>Services & Recruitment Manager</p> <p>Workforce Planning & OD Manager</p>	<p>current mentoring participation.</p> <p>All staff comms through the Hot News staff magazine in Qtr 2 will provide wider organisational awareness and seek expressions of interest for participants.</p> <p>(c) Coaching provision has been reviewed, with greater structure and contracting now in place. CPD sessions and training to ensure coaches maintain their skill set are scheduled through the year.</p> <p>(d) Selection processes at appropriate levels in Qtr 1 have included diverse and external make up.</p> <p>(e) With selection processes taking place through Qtr 1, communications and engagement with staff has focused on coaching and interview skills.</p> <p>Qtr 2 will see focussed engagement with staff networks as part of the relaunch of HPP and wider development communications.</p>				
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Q2 Update

- (a) HPP has been relaunched, and progress of participants will continue to be monitored

- (b) Reverse mentoring has been expanded, and the results and feedback will be collated and considered as part of further development of the services coaching and mentoring offer

- (c) Coaching & Mentoring capacity has been expanded, supported by staff resources in POD. The results and feedback will be collated and considered as part of further development of the services coaching and mentoring offer.

- (d) The utilisation of diverse panel where appropriate forms part of the Authority's procedures for recruitment and selection processes.
ACTION COMPLETE.

- (e) Engagement has taken place with Networks as part of the relaunch of HPP as part of wider positive action activity. Further work under the wider development support provisions will be prioritised in Quarters 3 and 4.

Q3 Update

- (a) Relunched HPP, progress being monitored.
ACTION COMPLETE

 - (b) Reverse (Upward) Mentoring has been expanded, progress being monitored.
ACTION COMPLETE

 - (c) Coaching provision has been expanded, clear structure and contracting now in place. Mentoring is being updated using similar consistent approach and will be further developed in Qtr 4 and into 2026/27. This will be captured in the POD FDP for 2026/27.

 - (d) The utilisation of diverse panels where appropriate, forms part of the Authority's procedures for recruitment and selection processes. Also supported through Blue Light Collaboration Group.
ACTION COMPLETE.

 - (e) Significant work has taken place building on that from Qtr 1 & Qtr 2. Activity untaken is outlined below and will now form part of our business-as-usual approach:
ACTION COMPLETE
- Delivery to all networks on HPP / Coaching & Mentoring

			<p>(connections with Armed Services as result).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with Armed Forces allowing HPP delegates attendance at Northern Exposure exercise. • Interview workshops for FF recruitment process to underrepresented groups. • MFRS provided support to local Women in the Fire Service event. • Under-represented groups involved in Upward Mentoring. • Engaged with networks on psychological contracting / protected space for mentoring. • EQ mentoring programme with Uni Liverpool – specifically aimed at providing employability skills to under-represented groups. • HPP participants developing HR skills through work with Managers to better understand EIA process. • Engaged with LCR and support wider region mentoring partnership. 				

<p>6.5 Structure and develop a process for recording health data; to help with informing the Service about what health and wellbeing issues our people are facing. This will better inform our health and wellbeing promotions and identify any changes and/or new initiatives that the Service can embrace to improve staff health.</p>	<p>Improve the effectiveness of health and wellbeing promotions and interventions by:</p> <p>(a) Conducting an annual survey to collect staff health data to better understand the health and wellbeing issues faced by staff.</p>	<p>Occupational Health Manager</p>	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>(a) A process to collate more detailed data from Occupational Health appointments is underway to expand our knowledge about usage of services to enable more targeted support.</p> <p>The Medical team have been allocated data collation sheets, to which they will record all health-related matters that arise in all medical appointments. These are being collated by the administration team weekly and will produce an end of year report for us to get a wider picture of the health-related issues coming through the medical team.</p> <p>Q2 Update</p> <p>(a) The collation of data continues to build a richer picture of the type of support being requested and the different services being used. This work will contribute to the ongoing work related to the NFCC Health & Wellbeing Framework.</p> <p>Q3 Update</p> <p>(a) An annual report will be provided at year end of the type of support being requested and the different services being used. This work</p>	<p>Promoting the right values and culture.</p> <p>Managing performance and developing leaders.</p>	<p>March 2026</p>		
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			will contribute to the ongoing work related to the NFCC Health & Wellbeing Framework.				
6.6 Update the capability process to ensure that employees fully understand their responsibilities, and the help and guidance available to support this.	<p>Reduce the impact of stress on staff in the capability process by:</p> <p>(a) Amending and updating the Capability process to improve its effectiveness.</p> <p>(b) Delivering refresher training to capability hearing managers.</p>	HR Adviser Occupational Health & Wellbeing	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>(a) As part of the action plan to implement the HMI Misconduct Report recommendation the Service has engaged an external employment law firm to undertake an independent review of several policies including the Capability Policy to ensure continued alignment with best practice and legal requirement.</p> <p>Alongside this an internal review is underway to consider procedural steps</p>	Promoting the right values and culture Managing performance and developing leaders.	March 2026		

			<p>which could be streamlined. This will be further progressed in Qtr 2.</p> <p>(b) Refresher training will be rolled out once the policy review is complete.</p> <p>Q2 Update</p> <p>(a) The Kings Counsel led review is ongoing with planned completion in quarter 3. The internal review work is complete and includes a streamlined capability process. A review of sickness absence and capability data has been completed to complement the business case for streamlined processes. Implementation remains planned for quarter 3 following formal consultation with rep bodies.</p> <p>(b) Refresher training will be rolled out once the policy review is complete.</p> <p>Q3 Update</p> <p>(a) The Kings Counsel led review report is due. Internal review work is complete and includes a streamlined capability process. A review of sickness absence and capability data has been completed to</p>				
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			<p>complement the business case for streamlined processes. Implementation will take place in Qtr 4 following formal consultation with rep bodies.</p> <p>(b) Refresher training will be rolled out once the policy review is complete.</p>				
6.7 Put in place a rolling 3-year Strategic Workforce Plan to inform recruitment decisions and support other strategic planning processes.	<p>Ensure workplace planning arrangements are effective and sustainable by:</p> <p>(a) Putting in place a rolling 3-year Strategic Workforce Plan to inform recruitment decisions and support other strategic planning processes.</p> <p>(b) Refining departmental succession planning to enhance the value of the data obtained to drive future decision making.</p>	Workforce Planning & OD Manager	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>(a) The existing workforce plan is being reviewed and updated to become a rolling 3-year plan. This will be completed in Qtr 2.</p> <p>(b) The plan will take account of the data provided from the 2025 succession planning process which includes a refreshed template which gather further detail surrounding skills, qualifications alongside the leadership levels data introduced in 2024.</p> <p>Q2 Update</p>	Managing performance and developing leaders.	March 2026		

			<p>(a) The Strategic Workforce Plan has been completed, scrutinised by the Workforce Planning Group and approved the Strategic Leadership Team. The document is live and will regularly be updated. ACTION COMPLETE.</p> <p>(b) The Succession planning process has been reviewed and all documentation updated to reflect the changes. 2025 Succession planning data has been incorporated into the Strategic Workforce Plan. ACTION COMPLETE.</p>				
6.8 Explore the options and scope for the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of HR and other organisational functions.	<p>Maximise the advantages from advances in information technology to improve the effectiveness and productivity of the POD function by:</p> <p>(a) Exploring the options and scope for the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) across POD functions including recruitment.</p>	POD Application Support & Data Manager	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>(a) POD have engaged with several suppliers to explore the potential of utilising AI tools to support hiring manager during the recruitment process. The focus will initially be on large volume recruitment processes (such as Firefighter recruitment). Officer aim to make a recommendation to Strategic Leadership Team and complete the Application Gateway process in Qtr 2.</p>	Getting the right people with the right skills.	March 2026		

Q2 Update

(a) Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) approved the pilot of an artificial intelligence application to support recruitment processes. The application was implemented following completion of the Authority's internal Application Gateway process.

Firefighter recruitment launched on 17th September with the campaign running for 10 days. The service received over 1500 applications all of which have been utilised as part of a pilot of the shortlisting tool. All candidates were made aware of the pilot and manual shortlisting was completed as normal alongside the AI software. The final decision as to whether a candidate progressed was made by the Hiring Managers from within POD.

The data will now be reviewed and fed back to SLT to consider the next steps for continued use of AI to improve effectiveness and improve efficiency.

Q3 Update

(a) The initial review of data from firefighter recruitment demonstrated that AI may be able to significantly improve efficiency whilst retaining existing protections and ensuring all decisions continue to be made by a human hiring manager. Further high-volume

			recruitment processes due in Qtr 4 will be used as part of the pilot to gain additional data on the use of AI and will form part of the overall evaluation.				
6.9 Undertake annual reviews of discipline and grievance cases across EDI measures and take action to address emerging issues or concerns.	<p>Put in place a process for sharing learning from misconduct cases that have been resolved whilst preserving confidentiality by:</p> <p>(a) Publishing annual reports on the outcome of grievance and discipline cases including an assessment of any disproportionality against protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act and detailing</p> <p>Trends and learning outcomes to reduce the risk of repeat behaviours, improve transparency and trust.</p> <p>(b) The annual report will be shared with the Authority, staff, and third parties including other FRS</p>	Consultation Manager	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>(a) As part of the action plan to implement the HMI Misconduct Report recommendation the Service has engaged an external employment law firm to undertake an independent review of several policies including the conduct and capability policy to ensure continued alignment with best practice and legal requirements.</p> <p>Alongside this an internal review is underway to consider procedural steps which could be streamlined. This will be further progressed in Qtr 2.</p> <p>(b) Once this work has been completed in Q2, the annual</p>	<p>Managing performance and developing leaders.</p> <p>Promoting the right values and culture.</p> <p>Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.</p>	March 2026		

			<p>report on discipline and grievance will be published.</p> <p>Q2 Update</p> <p>(a) The Kings Counsel review will be completed in quarter 3 after which the annual report will be produced.</p> <p>(b) As above.</p> <p>Q3 Update</p> <p>(a) Data has been collected by Professional Standards of discipline and grievance cases across the protected characteristics of race and gender, and the report will be completed in Q4 following the receipt of the QC recommendations on key POD Policies including Conduct and Grievance arrangements.</p> <p>(b) As above.</p>				
6.10 Implement as appropriate recommendations from the HMICFRS Thematic Review into Misconduct Handling	<p>Reduce instances of misconduct and provide enhanced support to those involved in the misconduct process by:</p> <p>(a) Adopting the recommendations (as appropriate) of the HMICFRS</p>	Consultation Manager	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>The HMICFRS recommendations regarding misconduct have been incorporated into the Culture Plan. Progress in relation to Q1 targets is reported to the</p>	<p>Promoting the right values and culture.</p> <p>Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.</p>	March 2026		

	thematic review on the handling of misconduct.		<p>Culture and Inclusion & People Board regularly.</p> <p>Good progress has been made. Significant outstanding actions relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• External legal review of misconduct policy and procedure.• Publication of annual report of evaluation of discipline and grievance cases for disproportionate outcomes.• Counselling review of disciplinary cases• Production of video promoting the use of the Safecall confidential reporting line. <p>Q2 Update</p> <p>(a) Work continues against the actions outlined in the HMICFRS thematic report. As of the end of Quarter 2, 12 of the 15 actions are complete with the remaining 3 in</p>				
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			<p>Q3 Update</p> <p>(a) Work continues against the actions outlined in the HMI thematic and the internal action plan. As of the end of Quarter 3, 12 of the 15 actions are complete with the remaining 3 in progress.</p>				
6.11 Encourage all staff to provide their EDI data so the Service can better analyse any adverse impacts based upon protected characteristics.	<p>Increase the effectiveness and relevance of EDI focused interventions by collecting the demographic profile of all staff by:</p> <p>(a) Undertaking regular communications to enhance EDI data collection rates.</p>	EDI Manager	<p>Q1 Update</p> <p>(a) We have conducted a request for staff EDI data in Q1. There is still a reluctance amongst some staff to disclose their status in relation to some protected characteristics, although this reflects a national trend.</p> <p>(b) In Q2 consideration will be given to other potential avenues for collecting this data.</p> <p>Q2 Update</p> <p>(a) In September the Equality and Human Rights commission published resources aimed at helping blue light services collect and analyse workplace equality data. The information published is being reviewed and service approaches will be adapted to reflect best practice. Further</p>	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.	March 2026		

			<p>communications will take place following this.</p> <p>Q3 Update</p> <p>a) Further communications will take place in Qtr 4 following the approach suggested by the EHRC in its guidance “Collecting and analysing equality data in the uniformed services” as we continue to encourage staff to provide their data.</p>				
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Staff Survey 2024 Action Plan
 Do you have any updates on the actions contained in the Staff Survey 2024 Action Plan, please report below:

BRAG Descriptor				
Action completed	Action is unlikely to be delivered within the current functional delivery plan	Action may not be delivered by the designated deadline within the functional plan	Action will be delivered by the designated deadline within the functional plan	Action not yet started

Action Area	Activity	Q3 update	Action Owner	Outcomes
Staff Survey outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate results of 2024 survey to staff through SLT who then can take any appropriate action Feedback to staff via Hot News and the portal Conduct further research into areas of the staff 	<p>POD Staff Survey action areas are contained in the People Plan and outcomes reported through Scrutiny committee and People Board.</p>	<p>All SLT All SLT via S&P All SLT All SLT All SLT All SLT with Legal and Dem Services as required All SLT via S&P S&P All SLT</p>	<p>Action will be taken to address areas for improvement and positives arising from the survey will be strengthened. Improved response rates in the 2026 survey. Improved results in 2026 for lower scoring areas in 2024.</p>

	<p>survey with a negative score of 20% or more and feed the findings into the engagement strategy and communications plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn from other departments and implement any necessary changes• Initial resulting actions:• Consider staff survey results/feedback in all planning and reviewing processes• Increase awareness and staff engagement with members of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority in response to staff survey results/feedback• Use themed pulse surveys to explore specific areas• Increase the promotion of the survey to increase the level of response in 2026 – consider launch event• Consider alternative methods of gathering			
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	feedback about staff engagement			
Staff Engagement and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional leaders will discuss the findings of the survey with their staff through normal meeting and engagement channels, to gather more details about the areas of the survey that achieved the lowest scores (the “lowlights”) and those that gained the highest results (the “highlights”) to learn from good practice and implement change where required. 		All SLT	It is expected that engaging in this way through normal channels, but about specific staff survey outcomes, will be a sustainable way of maintaining the staff survey conversation and improving outcomes as a result.
Organisational learning and shared good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where good examples of engagement (on an individual, team or Service level) are identified, ensure these are written up and communicated to all to ensure the spread of good practice. A review of the governance of organisational learning is already contained within the 2025/26 Service Delivery Plan. 		All SLT S&P with SLT	All staff will benefit from good practice as it is identified and shared within the Service.

Recognition and Reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing work within the People Plan will support recognition and rewards approaches that will have a positive impact on engagement. 		POD with SLT	Existing planned work will have a benefit in relation to staff engagement.
Learning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing work within the People Plan will support learning and development approaches that will have a positive impact on engagement. 		POD with SLT	Existing planned work will have a benefit in relation to staff engagement.

STATUS SUMMARY – 30.09.25	
Total Number of Workstreams	11 (100%)
Action completed	1 (10%)
Action is unlikely to be delivered within the current functional delivery plan	0 (0%)
Action may not be delivered by the designated deadline within the functional plan	0 (0%)
Action will be delivered by the designated deadline within the functional plan	10 (90%)
Action not yet started	0 (0%)