

EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

Overview Details			
Function /Department	POD	Date Of analysis	July 2026
Title and overview of what is being assessed / considered	Updates to Coaching and Mentoring Policy	Review Date	July 2028
Who will be affected by this activity? (Please tick) All Staff		Staff ☒	Public ☐
Author of Equality Impact Analysis	Joanne Woods	Equality Analysis quality assured by (Member of the POD team)	

The purpose of undertaking an equality impact analysis and assessment is to understand the potential and/or actual impact that a service or policy may have on protected groups within the Equality Act (2010). The protected groups are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and / or belief
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic disadvantage (Although not one of the 9 protected groups MFRA recognise that Socio-economic disadvantage affects many deprived communities within Merseyside.)

People who are protected from discrimination on the basis of any of these characteristics are described in this document as belonging to one or other “protected group”. In addition, equality analysis can be applied to groups of people not afforded protection by the Equality Act, but who often face disadvantage and stigma in life in general and when trying to access services & employment opportunities. Such groups include homeless people, sex workers, people who misuse drugs and other groups who experience socio economic disadvantage & others. This template has been developed following consultation with staff and other external stakeholders including reference to the National Fire Chiefs

Councils (NFCC) [equality impact assessment toolkit](#) as well as the [Maturity Models and Workforce Good Practice Frameworks](#) developed by the NFCC which MFRS will use to underpin EIAs as wider work on improvement.

Impact Analysis		
1	What evidence have you used to think about any potential impact on particular groups? (Please highlight any evidence that you have considered to help you address what the potential impact may be) Example evidence: • ONS Census data • Regional or local demographic information • MFRS reports & data • NFCC Reports/Guidance • Home office/Local government Reports • Risk Assessments • Staff survey results • Research / epidemiology studies • Updates to legislation • Engagement records or analysis <u>NFCC Equality of Access documents</u> – We encourage you to click on the following link to access a series of ‘equality of access documents’, developed by the National Fire Service Council (NFCC) & reference the data and information highlighted. Some aspects of these documents will help you provide information, awareness, and data to support: • Integrated Risk Management Plans • Service delivery strategies	2026 EIA CM background research This Equality Impact Assessment evaluates the updated Coaching & Mentoring Policy (2026) against the protected characteristics defined within the Equality Act 2010, ensuring the policy promotes inclusion, fairness and equitable access for all staff. The updated policy introduces: • A centrally governed Coaching & Mentoring framework • Mandatory mentoring expectations for all managers (minimum 2 mentees annually) and attendance to Mentoring CPD • Structured coaching programmes including CPD, Action Learning Sets, supervision and Coaching Practice Hubs • Expansion and formalisation of reverse and reciprocal mentoring • Formal contracting and quality assurance processes • External Collaborations to support development These changes aim to move MFRS from informal and discretionary provision to a consistent and accessible development model. To inform the development and continuous improvement of Coaching and Mentoring within Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MFRS), a comprehensive programme of research and evaluation has been undertaken. This has included an internal review of coaching and mentoring activity, participation levels, and programme outcomes to better understand current reach, impact, and areas for enhancement. In parallel,

- Positive action and recruitment plans
- Workforce improvement plans
- Community engagement activities
- and, will prompt conversations within the workplace.

Each document provides a significant amount of data and information, including research undertaken and risk-based evidence, and then goes into some ideas for actions which Services can use based on the information and their individual circumstances

environmental scanning across Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) and the wider public sector has been conducted to identify emerging trends, innovative approaches, and recognised best practice in talent development, leadership, and employee support.

The research has also considered collaborative models and partnership approaches, including learning from coaching and mentoring initiatives across the Blue Light Sector and the University of Liverpool EQ Plus Mentoring Partnership. These external insights have provided valuable evidence of how cross-organisational learning, partnership working, and inclusive development opportunities can strengthen the effectiveness and accessibility of coaching and mentoring provision.

Evidence gathering has been further strengthened through the ongoing evaluation of the mentoring programme, which will continue until mid-2026, alongside feedback from accredited coaching cohorts and continuing professional development (CPD) evaluations. This has enabled MFRS to assess the quality, consistency, and longer-term impact of both coaching and mentoring interventions, while identifying opportunities to enhance practitioner capability and participant experience.

Staff engagement activities, including focus groups, participant feedback, and wider workforce consultation, have provided qualitative insights into employee experiences, development needs, and perceptions of accessibility and value. These findings have been complemented by consideration of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Equality of Access resources, ensuring that coaching and mentoring arrangements are inclusive, equitable, and aligned with sector-wide guidance on removing barriers to development opportunities.

As an active champion within the NFCC Coaching and Mentoring Collaboration, MFRS has also contributed to work to refresh and strengthen the national Coaching and Mentoring Portal. This involvement provides access to wider sector learning and supports alignment with national best practice standards. Collectively, these research activities have been undertaken in the context of MFRS People Plan priorities and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) objectives, ensuring that future coaching

and mentoring provision directly supports organisational ambitions, workforce development, leadership capability, inclusion, and service improvement outcomes.

Internal Evaluation Findings

Internal evaluation and staff engagement activity demonstrate that coaching and mentoring are valued development interventions that support confidence, self-awareness, leadership capability, career progression and employee wellbeing. Participants consistently highlighted the benefits of having access to reflective space, impartial support and constructive challenge, with many reporting increased confidence, improved decision-making and stronger connections to organisational values and opportunities. Coaching and mentoring were also recognised as important contributors to psychological safety, helping employees navigate change, promotion, transition and professional development in a supportive environment.

The review found that, prior to 2024, coaching and mentoring activity within MFRS was largely informal and reliant on personal networks, local management practices and individual initiative. Whilst this enabled valuable developmental relationships, it resulted in inconsistencies in access, visibility and experience across the organisation. Opportunities were not always clearly communicated, participation was difficult to monitor and the overall impact could not be systematically evaluated. There was recognition that informal arrangements may unintentionally disadvantage employees who have less access to professional networks or organisational connections, creating potential inequalities in development opportunities.

Feedback highlighted a clear organisational appetite for a more structured and accessible coaching and mentoring offer. Employees identified particular value in formal mentoring to support leadership development, operational command responsibilities, promotion processes and career progression. Mentoring was viewed as an effective mechanism for sharing organisational knowledge, building confidence and improving

understanding of career pathways, while also strengthening belonging through access to role models, networks and experiences from across the Service.

The evaluation also identified practical barriers to participation, particularly for operational colleagues. Shift patterns, operational commitments and availability of coaches and mentors can limit opportunities to engage in development activities. These findings reinforce the need for flexible delivery approaches, protected development time and sufficient coaching and mentoring capacity to ensure equitable access across all employee groups.

Feedback from coaching cohorts demonstrated a strong commitment to professional practice, continuous improvement and inclusive coaching approaches. Coaches reported increased confidence in facilitating developmental conversations and identified growing demand for support relating to wellbeing, inclusion, confidence and career development. Ongoing CPD, peer learning and supervision were recognised as essential to maintaining quality, consistency and ethical practice.

Several findings highlighted the importance of coaching and mentoring in supporting MFRS's equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging ambitions. Participants reported feeling more connected, recognised and supported through developmental relationships. There was also strong support for expanding reverse and reciprocal mentoring approaches, enabling senior leaders and managers to better understand the lived experiences and perspectives of colleagues from different backgrounds. Such approaches were seen as valuable mechanisms for strengthening inclusive leadership, challenging assumptions, increasing understanding and ensuring diverse voices influence organisational learning and decision-making.

In response to these findings, MFRS has committed to developing a structured, accessible and evidence-based coaching and mentoring framework, supported by governance, accredited development pathways, quality assurance and robust evaluation processes. By 2027, the ambition is to establish a mature programme that

		can demonstrate measurable impact on employee experience, inclusion, leadership capability, career progression, retention and organisational performance. Looking beyond programme implementation, MFRS's longer-term ambition is to embed coaching and mentoring throughout all leadership and management development pathways. Over time, participation in coaching and mentoring will become an expected and mandatory component of leadership development, from aspiring and first-line managers through to strategic leaders. This will help create a coaching-based culture that promotes inclusive leadership, continuous learning, succession planning and talent development, whilst strengthening equity of opportunity and fostering a greater sense of belonging across the organisation. Overall, the evidence demonstrates that coaching and mentoring are important enablers of MFRS's People Plan, Equality Objectives and cultural ambitions. A structured, inclusive and well-evaluated approach has the potential to strengthen leadership capability, employee engagement, wellbeing, progression and retention, while ensuring all employees have equitable access to development opportunities and feel supported to achieve their potential. Continued investment in accessibility, quality and evaluation will be essential to maximising these benefits and supporting delivery of the People Plan, Equality Objectives and wider organisational ambitions. Environmental Scanning Findings Environmental scanning across the Fire and Rescue Service sector, Blue Light organisations and the wider public sector identified a growing recognition that coaching and mentoring are key mechanisms for creating more inclusive workplaces, improving equity of opportunity and strengthening employees' sense of belonging. Rather than being viewed solely as leadership development tools, coaching and mentoring are increasingly being used to support culture change, enable diverse talent to flourish and
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remove barriers to progression. This aligns closely with the NFCC's national focus on culture, inclusion and leadership development.

A significant finding was the importance of equitable access. Across the sector, there is increasing awareness that development opportunities have not always been experienced equally by all employee groups. Best practice organisations are therefore actively designing coaching and mentoring programmes that are accessible, transparent and inclusive, ensuring opportunities are available across all roles, grades, locations and protected characteristics. National resources emphasise the role of coaching and mentoring in supporting fairness, creating opportunities for underrepresented groups and helping services build more diverse leadership pipelines.

A key finding is the move towards greater sector-wide collaboration and cross-organisational mentoring. Many services are expanding access beyond internal matches to enable employees to benefit from independent perspectives, broader professional networks and reduced concerns around hierarchy or confidentiality. The NFCC Coaching and Mentoring Portal and public sector coaching pools demonstrate how collaborative models increase choice, improve access to experienced coaches and mentors, and support knowledge sharing across organisational boundaries.

The research also highlighted the value of cross-organisational and collaborative mentoring in fostering belonging and broadening perspectives. Access to coaches and mentors from outside an individual's immediate team, department or organisation can create psychologically safe development relationships, reduce perceived barriers associated with hierarchy and provide exposure to a wider range of experiences and career pathways. Sector-wide coaching and mentoring networks are increasingly viewed as a means of building professional communities, strengthening inclusion and creating supportive networks for individuals who may otherwise feel isolated within their workplace.

Another important theme was the increasing use of coaching, mentoring and sponsorship to address underrepresentation and support career progression. Evidence from across the public sector suggests that structured developmental relationships can improve confidence, visibility, career readiness and organisational engagement,

particularly for groups who may experience systemic barriers to advancement. Organisations are therefore placing greater emphasis on targeted mentoring, sponsorship and talent initiatives as part of broader inclusion and workforce equality strategies.

The scan further identified that inclusive coaching and mentoring programmes are most effective when supported by appropriately trained and professionally accredited coaches and mentors. Best practice organisations are investing in capability development that includes cultural awareness, inclusive leadership, psychological safety and ethical practice, ensuring developmental conversations create environments in which individuals feel valued, respected and able to be their authentic selves. The wider public sector is increasingly adopting blended development approaches, combining coaching, mentoring, sponsorship, peer networks, action learning and leadership development programmes. Evidence suggests that these integrated approaches are particularly effective in supporting career development, change leadership, resilience, wellbeing and organisational performance. Collaborative public sector coaching pools and leadership programmes demonstrate the value of creating developmental ecosystems rather than relying on single interventions.

Finally, leading organisations are increasingly evaluating coaching and mentoring not only through participation measures but also through their contribution to inclusion, employee experience and organisational culture. Measures such as confidence, belonging, engagement, retention, leadership diversity and perceptions of fairness are becoming important indicators of programme success. This reflects a shift towards understanding coaching and mentoring as strategic enablers of positive culture, inclusive leadership and organisational performance, rather than simply development interventions.

Taken together, the environmental scanning demonstrates that high-performing organisations are using coaching and mentoring to create more inclusive cultures where all employees have equitable access to development, feel a stronger sense of belonging, and are supported to achieve their potential. These findings provide a strong

evidence base for strengthening MFRS's coaching and mentoring approach as a key contributor to its People Plan, Culture ambitions, Equality Objectives and commitment to becoming an employer where everyone can belong, develop and thrive.

Whilst the available evidence provides a strong foundation for assessing potential impacts, additional research would strengthen future Equality Impact Assessment reviews and support ongoing evaluation of the framework. Areas for further research include:

- Analysis of coaching and mentoring participation by protected characteristic, role type, grade, directorate and working pattern to identify any disparities in access, uptake or outcomes.
- Workforce demographic analysis, using MFRS workforce data alongside local population and labour market data, to assess whether development opportunities are reaching underrepresented groups.
- Future staff survey analysis to understand employee perceptions of access to development, progression opportunities, inclusion and belonging.
- Further targeted engagement with employee networks, representative groups and staff from protected characteristic groups to understand potential barriers and enablers to participation.
- Review of promotion, progression and talent management data to determine whether coaching and mentoring contribute to improved career outcomes across different employee groups.
- Analysis of operational versus support staff participation to better understand the impact of shift systems, availability and capacity barriers.

		- Benchmarking against other Fire and Rescue Services and public sector organisations to identify emerging good practice in inclusive coaching, mentoring and sponsorship. - Ongoing review of NFCC Equality of Access resources, People Programme guidance and relevant Home Office and sector-wide culture reports to ensure continued alignment with national best practice. uat.nfcc.org.uk, internationaljournal.com, nfcc.org.uk Overall, the current evidence suggests that the proposed Coaching and Mentoring Framework is expected to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity, inclusion and belonging. Continued monitoring, workforce analysis and engagement with protected and underrepresented groups will be essential to ensure these benefits are realised consistently across the organisation and that any unintended barriers are identified and addressed.	
2	Do you have all the evidence you need in order to make an informed decisions about the potential impact? (Please tick)	Yes ☒ If you feel that you have enough evidence, then you will not need to undertake any engagement activity	No ☐ If you feel that you do not have enough evidence to make an informed decision then you will need to undertake engagement activity with the staff or members of the public as applicable

3	What engagement is taking place or has already been undertaken to understand any potential impact on staff or members of the public? Examples include: <u>Public</u> • Interviews • Focus groups • Public Forums • Complaints, comments, compliments <u>Staff</u> • Staff events / workshop • Existing staff meetings / committees • Staff Networks • Representative Bodies • Annual Staff Survey questions	At the outset of the Coaching and Mentoring review, it was recognised that access to development opportunities should be equitable, inclusive and reflective of the diverse needs of our workforce. The review has therefore focused on understanding existing barriers to participation and identifying opportunities to strengthen coaching and mentoring provision for all staff, whilst ensuring alignment with the Service's commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and organisational development. A range of engagement activities have been undertaken as part of the internal review. These have included staff surveys, interviews and discussions with participants, mentors, managers, senior leaders and key stakeholders. Feedback has been gathered through existing staff meetings, development forums and representative groups to understand current experiences of coaching and mentoring, perceived benefits, barriers to access and areas for improvement. Particular attention has been given to understanding the experiences of staff from underrepresented groups, those with caring responsibilities, neurodiverse colleagues and operational employees who may face additional challenges in accessing development opportunities. Focus groups have also been conducted to explore survey findings in greater depth and obtain qualitative insights into staff experiences. In addition, engagement has taken place with staff networks to ensure a broad range of perspectives are considered and to identify any potential equality, diversity and inclusion implications associated with future coaching and mentoring activity. Feedback has also been sought from staff who have not previously accessed coaching or mentoring opportunities in order to better understand barriers to participation and ensure future provision meets the needs of a wider range of employees. This approach helps to minimise the risk of bias by ensuring that views are captured from both participants and non-participants. Alongside internal engagement, extensive external scanning and collaboration have been undertaken to inform the development of our approach. This has included engagement with national and regional coaching and mentoring networks, Fire and Rescue Services, emergency service partners and other public sector organisations to
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identify emerging best practice and opportunities for collaborative working. Discussions with blue light sector partners have highlighted the benefits of coordinated coaching and mentoring initiatives, enabling organisations to share expertise, increase the diversity of mentors and coaches available, and provide broader development opportunities for staff.

The Service is actively exploring opportunities to work collaboratively with regional employers and the Blue Light Collaboration to support wider coaching and mentoring initiatives. This includes engagement through National Fire Chiefs Council networks, Fire and Rescue Services and the North West Employers forum. Such partnerships provided opportunities for reciprocal mentoring arrangements, cross-organisational coaching relationships, the sharing of trained coaches and mentors, and collaborative development activity. These approaches have the potential to increase access to development opportunities, broaden professional networks, support talent development and expose participants to a wider range of experiences, perspectives and leadership role models than could be achieved through internal arrangements alone.

External scanning has also included reviewing coaching and mentoring practices across Fire and Rescue Services, local authorities, NHS organisations, policing partners and recognised leadership development frameworks. The review identified examples of best practice including formal mentoring schemes, reverse mentoring, peer coaching networks, digital mentoring platforms and targeted development initiatives designed to support equality, diversity and inclusion objectives. Findings from these organisations have been used to benchmark current arrangements and inform future development of the Service's coaching and mentoring offer. As part of the Service's commitment to widening opportunities and strengthening community impact, a pilot partnership has been established with the University of Liverpool through the Equality Plus Mentoring Scheme. This initiative provides reciprocal mentoring opportunities between Service managers and students from underrepresented backgrounds, supporting students to develop their confidence, networks and employability skills as they prepare to enter the workforce. The programme also provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the wide range of

careers, professions and services available within Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, helping to challenge the common perception that the organisation's role is limited to firefighting. Through engagement with students, the Service is able to showcase the breadth of opportunities available across operational, support, specialist and leadership roles, encouraging a more diverse range of individuals to consider careers within the organisation and the wider public sector. In return, participating managers benefit from exposure to current academic research, emerging thinking and contemporary practices being applied within higher education environments. The partnership provides valuable insight into the experiences and aspirations of diverse communities while helping to remove barriers to employment and career progression. This collaborative approach aligns with the Service's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and demonstrates a practical contribution to improving employment outcomes, social mobility and community engagement across the communities we serve.

Feedback gathered through staff engagement has directly informed the development of the Coaching and Mentoring Framework. This includes increasing flexibility in how coaching and mentoring relationships are accessed, strengthening guidance and support for coaches, mentors and participants, improving communication and promotion of available opportunities, and exploring a wider range of delivery methods including virtual and blended approaches. Consideration is also being given to the development of accessible learning resources and supporting materials to accommodate different learning styles, working patterns and personal circumstances. These measures aim to improve accessibility and remove unnecessary barriers to participation.

Feedback received through engagement activities has highlighted the importance of flexibility, clear communication, protected development time and effective matching of coaches, mentors and participants. The review has also identified the value of collaborative approaches that allow staff to learn from colleagues outside their

		immediate teams, professions and organisations, helping to build leadership capability, increase organisational resilience and support a culture of continuous learning and development. Whilst the primary impact of coaching and mentoring is on employees, the anticipated benefits extend beyond the workforce. Developing leadership capability, enhancing employee wellbeing, supporting career development and improving organisational performance contribute to better service delivery and, ultimately, improved outcomes for the communities we serve. Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and consultation will continue following implementation. Equality monitoring data will be reviewed regularly to understand participation across protected characteristic groups and identify any disproportionality in access, uptake, outcomes or progression opportunities. Participant feedback, programme outcomes and learning from regional and national partnerships will be used to continually evaluate and improve the Coaching and Mentoring Framework, ensuring it remains accessible, inclusive and effective for all staff and aligned with organisational priorities and best practice.	
4	Will there be an impact against the protected groups as described in the Equality Act (2010)? Summarise what impact there may be against each of the protected groups. Embed or provide a hyperlink to any rrts or electronic files to which you are referring. Please remember when considering any possible impacts, these may be positive or negative and that there may be different impacts for our own staff when compared to those possible impacts on members of the community. Please detail clearly if the impacts are for staff or the wider community.	What is the actual or potential impact on age? The programme is expected to have a positive impact for staff across all age groups. The age range and level of experience of participants, coaches and mentors involved in the pilot has been broad and this is expected to continue. The inclusion of reverse mentoring opportunities has enabled a reciprocal exchange of knowledge and experience between more experienced and less experienced employees, promoting learning and development regardless of age. The programmes are being designed to support individual development needs and learning preferences, allowing participants to access blended learning opportunities and progress at a pace that suits them. This helps reduce potential age-related barriers to learning and engagement. Eligibility	Not applicable ☐

	It is also important to note that there may not be an impact on some of the protected groups if this should be the case please tick the not applicable box. If there is no impact, please state that there is no impact.	and selection criteria will continue to be reviewed to ensure there is no age-related bias and that opportunities remain accessible to employees at all career stages. The Upward Mentoring Pilot is expected to have a positive impact on staff of all ages by creating opportunities for learning and knowledge exchange between employees at different stages of their careers. Upward mentoring enables less experienced employees to share contemporary perspectives with more senior colleagues whilst also developing their own leadership, communication and mentoring skills. The programme is accessible to employees regardless of age and supports professional development across the workforce Participants will discuss any individual learning or accessibility needs with the OD Team representative at the outset of the programme. Where potential barriers are identified, additional support will be sought through the People and Organisational Development (POD) team to ensure equitable access and participation	
		What is the actual or potential impact on disability? The programme is expected to have an overall positive impact for staff with disabilities, including those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, long-term health conditions and neurodiverse conditions. Coaching and mentoring provide flexible, personalised development opportunities that place the learner at the centre of the learning experience, supporting a wide range of learning styles, communication preferences and individual needs. Neurodiversity considerations are embedded within the programme design, and reasonable adjustments will be implemented where required. These will be assessed at the outset. Learning materials and resources will be made available in accessible formats, including digital options, to support equitable participation. The planned introduction of blended learning will further enhance accessibility by enabling participants to engage with learning activities at their own pace and through methods that best suit their	Not applicable ☐

		needs and preferences. A variety of learning and development activities will be offered to ensure a broad range of needs can be accommodated, reducing potential disability-related barriers to participation. Upward Mentoring has the potential for a positive impact on disabled employees, including neurodiverse staff, by providing a psychologically safe environment to share experiences and raise awareness of barriers that may affect them within the workplace. Flexible scheduling, accessible learning materials and reasonable adjustments can be implemented where required to support participation. There is potential for leaders to gain greater understanding of disability-related challenges, contributing to a more inclusive workplace culture Participants will discuss any specific requirements or potential barriers with their OD Representatives at the outset of the programme. Where additional support is required, OD Representatives will work with the People and Organisational Development (POD) team to identify and implement appropriate adjustments.	
		What is the actual or potential impact on gender reassignment? The Coaching and Mentoring Policy is expected to have a positive impact for staff who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment. The policy is founded on principles of inclusion, accessibility and person-centred development, providing open access to coaching and mentoring opportunities for all staff through appraisal, development and talent processes. The policy specifically aims to encourage participation from underrepresented groups and support positive action initiatives, helping to ensure equitable access to development opportunities regardless of gender identity. The upward mentoring pilot is expected to have a positive impact by providing employees who are transgender or who have undergone gender reassignment with an opportunity to share perspectives and experiences directly with senior colleagues in a confidential and supportive environment.	Not applicable ☑

		This may help improve understanding, awareness and inclusive leadership practices across the organisation. Participation is voluntary and based on individual choice. The coaching and mentoring framework focuses on individual development needs, career aspirations and personal growth, with participants matched to coaches and mentors based on need, preference and availability. This flexible approach has the potential to provide tailored support for individuals who may be navigating personal or professional challenges associated with gender reassignment, helping to build confidence, resilience, career development and a sense of belonging within the organisation. The policy also includes clear confidentiality arrangements within coaching and mentoring relationships, creating a supportive environment where individuals can discuss development needs openly and safely. This may be particularly beneficial for staff who are transitioning or who wish to discuss workplace experiences in confidence. At present, no adverse impacts have been identified. Access to coaching and mentoring is available to all staff, and the programme will continue to be monitored and evaluated to ensure opportunities remain inclusive, fair and accessible to employees regardless of gender identity or reassignment status	
		What is the actual or potential impact on marriage and civil partnership? Whilst the policy is not expected to have a direct impact based on marriage or civil partnership status, there is a potential indirect impact for employees with caring responsibilities and for those working different duty systems, including operational shift patterns. The timing and scheduling of coaching, mentoring and development activities could create barriers to participation where staff have family commitments, caring responsibilities or limited availability due to shift arrangements. To mitigate this risk, the Service will seek to ensure that access to opportunities is flexible and inclusive, with scheduling, delivery methods and eligibility arrangements designed to accommodate a range of working patterns and personal circumstances.	Not applicable ☐

		Where possible, blended and flexible learning approaches will be utilised to ensure that participation is not inadvertently restricted or favoured based on marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities or duty system commitments. We will outline in the SI arrangements for Service Coaches and Mentors to be recompensed. To support time taken to undertake these activities outside of their normal role, in line with existing policy for the Attractions Team. This will help support equitable access to development opportunities for all staff.	
		What is the actual or potential impact on pregnancy and maternity? The Coaching and Mentoring Policy is expected to have an overall positive impact for staff who are pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from maternity leave. The programme is designed to support individual development needs and provide flexible access to learning and development opportunities. Recognising that pregnancy and maternity can affect an individual's ability to participate in development activities at particular times, clear guidance will be provided for participants who wish to defer their involvement in the programme and re-engage at a later stage. Experience from the initial pilot demonstrated that some pregnant employees chose to defer participation due to their individual circumstances. Feedback from the pilot has informed programme improvements, including greater flexibility in how development opportunities are accessed. Participants who are on maternity leave may choose to engage with aspects of the programme through Keeping in Touch (KIT) days where appropriate, and can access e-learning and other development resources at a pace that suits their circumstances. This helps to ensure that pregnancy or maternity leave does not unnecessarily limit access to development opportunities.	Not applicable ☒
		What is the actual or potential impact on race? The Coaching and Mentoring Policy is expected to have an overall positive impact for staff from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, particularly those from	Not applicable ☐

underrepresented groups. The policy promotes inclusive and accessible development opportunities for all employees and supports positive action initiatives that encourage participation from groups that may be underrepresented within the organisation. Coaching and mentoring provide opportunities for personal and professional development, increased confidence, career progression and greater organisational awareness.

A key strength of the programme is that coaches and mentors are drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds, including individuals from underrepresented ethnic groups. This provides visible role models within the organisation, helping to demonstrate the policy in practice through lived experience. The presence of diverse coaches and mentors can also help participants feel represented, supported and empowered in their career development. In addition, the programme supports the Service's wider positive action strategy by creating opportunities for employees from underrepresented groups to develop networks, share experiences and access tailored support where appropriate.

The Upward Mentoring Polit is expected to have a significant positive impact on race equality by creating opportunities for employees from ethnically diverse and underrepresented groups to share their lived experiences directly with senior leaders. This can improve cultural awareness, challenge assumptions and support more inclusive decision-making. Upward mentors may also act as positive role models, contributing to wider positive action objectives and encouraging participation from underrepresented groups.

Coaching and mentoring relationships are based on individual needs, aspirations and development goals, with matching arrangements designed to take account of preferences and circumstances where possible. This personalised approach can help address barriers that may disproportionately affect some ethnic minority staff and support greater inclusion, engagement and progression across the workforce. The programme will continue to be monitored and evaluated to

		ensure opportunities remain fair, inclusive and accessible to all employees regardless of race, ethnicity or nationality.	
		What is the actual or potential impact on religion and / or belief? Both the Coaching and Mentoring Policy and the Upward Mentoring Pilot are expected to have a positive impact on staff of all religions, faiths and beliefs, including those with no religious belief. The Upward Mentoring Pilot has the potential to create additional positive impacts by providing a structured opportunity for employees to share lived experiences and increase senior leaders' understanding of issues that affect them within the workplace. This may include experiences relating to faith, religious observance, belief systems or cultural practices. The programme aims to provide a psychologically safe listening space where mentors can raise awareness of issues that may otherwise be less visible to decision-makers, helping to improve understanding, challenge assumptions and support more inclusive leadership behaviours. There is also potential for positive organisational benefits through increased awareness of the needs of employees from different faith backgrounds. This may support consideration of issues such as religious observance, workplace facilities, scheduling of meetings and training, and other factors that can affect inclusion and employee experience. The reciprocal nature of upward mentoring enables senior leaders to gain insight into diverse perspectives while mentors develop confidence, leadership and communication skills. No direct negative impacts have been identified. However, there is a potential indirect impact if programme activities, mentoring sessions or development events are scheduled without consideration of religious observance, prayer requirements or key religious festivals. This risk will be mitigated through flexible scheduling arrangements, discussion between participants and organisers, and consideration of individual circumstances to ensure equitable access to development opportunities	Not applicable ☐

		What is the actual or potential impact on sex (gender)? The Upward Mentoring Pilot has the potential to further enhance this positive impact by creating opportunities for employees to share their lived experiences directly with senior leaders within a psychologically safe and supportive environment. This may be particularly valuable for women and other groups that may be underrepresented in certain roles or leadership levels across the Service. Through these mentoring relationships, senior leaders can gain greater insight into the experiences, challenges and barriers that individuals may encounter, enabling more informed decision-making and supporting the development of an inclusive workplace culture. 63% of participants are female in the current pilot. 100% of those Mentoring SLT colleagues are female. The programme also provides opportunities for participants to develop leadership, communication and mentoring skills, increasing confidence and supporting career development. The inclusion of mentors and coaches from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences helps provide visible role models and demonstrates the organisation's commitment to creating equitable development opportunities for all employees. No direct negative impacts have been identified. However, there is a potential indirect impact if development activities, mentoring sessions or programme commitments are scheduled in ways that do not adequately consider caring responsibilities, flexible working arrangements or operational duty systems. As women continue to undertake a disproportionate share of caring responsibilities nationally, this could affect participation for some employees. To mitigate this risk, the programme will utilise flexible scheduling arrangements, blended learning approaches where appropriate, and participant-led planning to ensure equitable access to development opportunities.	Not applicable ☐
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		What is the actual or potential impact on sexual orientation? The Upward Mentoring Pilot provides a unique opportunity for employees to share their lived experiences directly with senior leaders in a psychologically safe and confidential environment. This may enable lesbian, gay and bisexual staff to raise awareness of issues affecting them in the workplace, discuss barriers they may have experienced, and contribute to improving organisational understanding of sexual orientation and inclusion. Through these conversations, senior leaders can gain valuable insight into the experiences of LGBTQ+ employees, helping to inform decision-making and promote a more inclusive workplace culture. The programme also has the potential to increase visibility and representation of diverse perspectives across the organisation. By creating opportunities for open dialogue and reciprocal learning, the Upward Mentoring Pilot can help challenge stereotypes, strengthen allyship and foster greater understanding between colleagues from different backgrounds and experiences. Participants themselves may also benefit through enhanced confidence, leadership capability, communication skills and professional development opportunities. No direct negative impacts have been identified. However, as with all development initiatives, there is a potential indirect impact if participants do not feel comfortable sharing personal experiences or if programme activities are not delivered in a sufficiently inclusive manner. This risk will be mitigated through mentor training, confidentiality agreements, clear expectations of respectful behaviours, and the creation of psychologically safe environments for discussion and learning. CPD has been implemented to set expectations and share tools for achieving the above.	Not applicable ☐
		What is the actual or potential impact on Socio-economic disadvantage? Both the Coaching and Mentoring Policy and the Upward Mentoring Pilot are expected to have a positive impact on employees from a range of socio-economic backgrounds by providing equitable access to development	Not applicable ☐

opportunities, leadership exposure, networking and professional growth regardless of grade, role, educational background or personal circumstances. The programmes are designed to be open and inclusive, enabling employees who may not traditionally have access to informal development networks or senior leadership visibility to participate in meaningful learning and development opportunities.

The Upward Mentoring Pilot, in particular, has the potential to increase social mobility and inclusion within the organisation by enabling employees from diverse backgrounds to share their experiences directly with senior leaders. This can help improve understanding of how socio-economic factors may influence career progression, access to opportunities, confidence, workplace experiences and perceptions of belonging. The programme provides participants with opportunities to develop leadership, communication and mentoring skills, whilst also building professional networks that may support future career development.

There is, however, a potential indirect negative impact where employees are required to undertake mentoring responsibilities outside of their existing role requirements, shift patterns or working hours. Staff in lower-paid roles or those with additional financial, caring or travel commitments may be disproportionately affected if participation creates an expectation of unpaid additional time or effort. Similarly, employees working operational duty systems may find it more challenging to participate than colleagues working standard office hours.

To mitigate this risk, the Service will scope and consider options for appropriately recognising or recompensing coaches and mentors who support the programme beyond their normal role requirements, contracted hours or established shift patterns. The Service will also seek to ensure that participation is supported during working time wherever possible, and that scheduling arrangements are flexible and inclusive of different duty systems, working patterns and personal circumstances. This will help ensure that employees are not disadvantaged from participating due to financial considerations, caring responsibilities or working arrangements.

		Impact: Positive impact through increased access to development opportunities, networking, visibility and leadership growth for employees from all socio-economic backgrounds. Potential indirect impacts relating to additional time commitments, financial considerations and differing shift systems will be mitigated through flexible programme delivery and consideration of appropriate recognition or recompense for participants undertaking responsibilities beyond their normal role requirements. No anticipated negative impact on members of the community.	
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ACTION PLAN

What actions need to be taken in order to mitigate the impacts identified in sections 3,4 and 5?				
Impact	Action Required	Integrated existing work (yes/no) outline	Target Date	Responsibility
Age	The Service will continue to review eligibility, selection and matching arrangements to ensure there is no age-related bias within the programme. Opportunities will be promoted as suitable for employees at all career stages, recognising the value of reciprocal learning between individuals with different levels of experience. Flexible and blended learning approaches will be maintained to accommodate varying learning preferences and support access across all age groups.	The original pool was made up of: 20 white males, 20 white females and 2 ethnic minority males. Centrally establish and record who has accessed coaching and mentoring and consider the equality and diversity data to ensure proportionate access. All managers are trained as mentors.	Ongoing	Jo Woods
Disability -	Participants will be encouraged to discuss any accessibility requirements or potential barriers at the outset of their involvement. Reasonable adjustments will be made where required, including the provision of accessible resources, alternative formats and flexible delivery methods. The Service will continue to embed neurodiversity considerations within programme design and ensure that support is available through POD where additional needs are identified.	Yes	Ongoing	Jo Woods
Pregnancy and Maternity -	Clear guidance will be provided regarding deferral, pausing and re-entry to programmes for employees who are pregnant, on maternity leave or returning from maternity leave. Flexible learning opportunities, virtual participation and, where appropriate, engagement through	Yes.	Ongoing	Jo Woods

	Keeping in Touch (KIT) days will be available to reduce barriers to participation. The timing of development activities will continue to take account of childcare and parenting responsibilities wherever practicable			
Race	The Service will continue to encourage participation from underrepresented ethnic groups and support positive action initiatives where appropriate. A diverse pool of coaches, mentors and upward mentors will be promoted to provide visible role models and increase representation. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will help identify whether any groups experience barriers to participation or progression within the programme.	Yes	Ongoing	Jo Woods Sara Fielding
Gender reassignment	The programme will maintain clear confidentiality arrangements and promote psychologically safe environments to enable participants to engage openly and confidently. Coaches, mentors and participants will be expected to demonstrate inclusive behaviours and maintain respect for individual identities and experiences. Consideration will be given to participant preferences during matching arrangements where appropriate.	Yes	Ongoing	Jo Woods
Marriage and civil partnership	The Service will seek to ensure that programme scheduling, eligibility criteria and participation requirements do not inadvertently disadvantage employees because of family circumstances, relationship status or caring commitments. Flexible participation arrangements will be utilised wherever possible to support employees working different duty systems and those balancing work with caring responsibilities.	Look to implement recompense policy similar to that of the attractions team as part of the policy submission.	Ongoing	Jo Woods
Religion and / or belief	Programme activities will, where possible, be scheduled with consideration for religious observance, prayer requirements and significant religious festivals.	Yes	Ongoing	Jo Woods

	Participants will be encouraged to discuss any requirements that may affect their participation to enable reasonable arrangements to be made. The programme will continue to promote a culture of respect for different faiths, beliefs and worldviews.			
Sex (gender)	Participation and outcomes will be monitored to identify any unintended barriers affecting employees of any gender. The Service will seek to ensure that development opportunities remain accessible across all roles, grades and duty systems. Flexible scheduling arrangements will be utilised to reduce any potential disadvantage arising from caring responsibilities or working patterns.	Yes	Ongoing	Jo Woods
Sexual orientation	Confidentiality, psychological safety and respectful behaviours will be central to programme delivery. Participants will be supported to share experiences voluntarily and in a manner that is comfortable for them. Inclusive language, mentor development and clear expectations of professional conduct will help create an environment in which all employees feel valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation.	Yes	Ongoing	Jo Woods
Carers	As above and below	Yes	Ongoing	Jo Woods
Other	"	Yes	Ongoing	Jo Woods
Socio economic factors	The Service will seek to minimise any barriers associated with financial circumstances, grade, location or working arrangements. Participation will be supported during work time wherever possible, and blended delivery methods will be utilised to reduce travel and time commitments. In recognition of the additional contribution made by some coaches and mentors, particularly those participating outside of their normal role requirements, shift patterns or working arrangements, the Service will scope options for appropriate recognition or recompense to ensure that	Look to implement recompense policy similar to that of the attractions team as part of the policy submission.	Ongoing	Jo Woods

	individuals are not financially disadvantaged through their participation			
How will these actions be monitored and where will the outcomes be reported? The effectiveness of the mitigation actions will be monitored through a combination of programme evaluation, participant feedback, equality monitoring and ongoing governance arrangements. Monitoring will help ensure that the Coaching and Mentoring Policy and Upward Mentoring Pilot continue to provide equitable access and do not create unintended barriers for any protected group. Participation and Representation Monitoring Participation data will be reviewed periodically to assess whether employees from different protected groups are accessing coaching, mentoring and upward mentoring opportunities proportionately. Where demographic information is available, trends relating to age, disability, race, sex and other protected characteristics will be analysed to identify any underrepresentation or barriers to participation. Any emerging issues will inform future programme improvements. Participant Feedback and Evaluation Structured feedback will be collected from mentors, mentees, coaches and coachees throughout and at the conclusion of their involvement. Feedback will specifically seek views on accessibility, inclusivity, psychological safety, any barriers experienced and the effectiveness of support arrangements. This will help identify whether any protected groups are experiencing actual or perceived disadvantages. Monitoring of Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility Requirements The POD Team will monitor requests for reasonable adjustments, flexible participation arrangements and accessibility support. Trends and recurring themes will be reviewed to ensure adjustments are effective and to identify opportunities for improving programme design and delivery. Review of Duty System and Attendance Data Attendance and engagement levels will be reviewed across different staff groups, departments and duty systems to ensure that employees working operational shifts, flexible arrangements or part-time hours are not disproportionately disadvantaged. Particular consideration will be given to identifying barriers affecting employees with caring responsibilities, those on maternity leave and employees observing religious commitments. Governance and Reporting Programme outcomes, participation levels and evaluation findings will be reported through existing governance arrangements, including the POD function and relevant strategic governance groups such as People Board. This will provide oversight of equality impacts and ensure that any required actions are identified and implemented in a timely manner. Policy Review and Continuous Improvement				

Findings from equality monitoring, participant feedback and programme evaluations will be incorporated into regular reviews of the Coaching and Mentoring Policy and any pilot activities. This continuous improvement approach will enable the Service to respond proactively to emerging issues, strengthen inclusive practices and ensure the programmes continue to support the aims of the People Plan and Cultural Action Plan

Completed by (Please print name /Designation)	Jo Woods Organisational Development & Change Advisor	Signature Date	
Quality Assured by (Please print name /Designation)	Vicky Campbell	Signature Date	21/07/26

Name of responsible SLT member (Please print name /Designation)	Nick Mernock	Signature Date	16/09/26
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Bibliography and Guidance documents

This bibliography provides details of all the documents and reports included within this EIA or the EIA guidance. The bibliography will also include Hyperlinks to other useful documents, reports, data, and webinars on our portal page or links direct to the websites which you may find helpful when completing your EIA. **Please note, that this is a live document, do not use an old copy of this form to complete a new EIA. Please ensure that you download a new copy from the portal, as the bibliography and links will be updated regularly to ensure you have access to the most recent data, articles and training.**

Documents referenced and hyperlinked within the form

National Fire Chiefs Councils (NFCC) [equality impact assessment template](#)

National Fire Chiefs Councils (NFCC) [Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit](#)

National Fire Chiefs Councils (NFCC) [Maturity Models and Workforce Good Practice Frameworks](#)

This document provides insight into the NFCC Maturity model and provides guidance on the following areas:

- Leadership Development
- Recruitment
- Learning Organisation
- Blended Learning
- Performance Management
- Employee Recognition
- Talent Management
- EDI
- Well Being
- HR Analytics

Equality Diversity & Inclusion Resource Library

The ED&I resources Library is located on the ED&I portal page and provides a suite of documents (detailed below) from a wide variety of sources, they may be internally produced reports or guidance, toolkits or data produced by the NFCC or partners. A list of the documents can be found below or you can access the complete library [here](#).

Disability related support including:

- [AFSA - Lets talk workplace disability](#)

Gender Related Resources including:



- [Fast Facts for patients – Menopause](#)

Pregnancy and Maternity Related Resources

Religion and Belief related resources including:

- [AFSA – 2021 Workforce Religion and belief Toolkit](#)

Sexual Orientation Related Resources

[AFSA Workforce Positive Action Toolkit](#)

[Dementia Friendly Emergency Services Guidance](#)

[NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment](#) which includes:

- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Actions for the Vulnerable Rehoused Homeless
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for Black Communities
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for Neurodiversity
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for LGBT Communities
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for People from Asian Communities
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for the Roma Communities
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for People Living with Dementia
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for People Living in Rural Communities
- NFCC Equality of Access to Services and Employment for Emerging Migrant Communities
- NFCC Community Risk – CRMP Equality Impact Assessment

These can also be found on the [NFCC website](#)

NFCC Toolkits

The NFCC have also created a number of toolkits to provide help and guidance these can be found here on the [NFCC website](#) or via the links below in the ED&I Resource Library

The toolkits currently available include:

- [Collecting and Disseminating of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data Toolkit](#)
- [Gender Diversity Toolkit](#)

- [Neurodiversity Toolkit](#)
- [Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit](#)
- [Staff Networks Toolkit](#)

Webinars

[NFCC Lunch and Learns](#) which include

- Neurodiversity
- Trans Visibility in FRS
- Racial Equality
- Bite Size techniques to avoid burnout
- Being part of the LGBT Community

Other useful Links and documents

[ED&I Annual Report](#) this report included our Staffing data, Gender and BAME Pay Gap analysis and recent reporting against our 5 Equality Objectives

[Diversity Events Calendar](#) the diversity calendar is helpful to understand what key dates are taking place throughout the year to assist with community engagement

[Knowing our Communities Data](#) this is a suite of documents, which provides data within each of the local Authorities, by different protected groups which include Age, Disability, Religion and Ethnicity.

Service Instruction 0877 Resources to support managers and staff to implement the Equality & Diversity Policy

- [Appendix 1 - Disability in the workplace information for staff and managers](#)
- [Appendix 2 - Reasonable Adjustments Support for staff & managers in the workplace](#)
- [Appendix 3 - Access to Work Support for staff and managers in the workplace](#)
- [Appendix 4 - Supporting people with Dyslexia in the workplace](#)
- [Appendix 5 - Supporting Staff during the Menopause](#)
- [Appendix 6 - Guidance for supporting employees returning from maternity; breastfeeding in the workplace Operational Firefighters](#)
- [Appendix 7 - Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender \(LGBT\) staff in the Workplace](#)
- [Appendix 8 - Supporting Transgender staff in the Workplace](#)
- [Appendix 9 - Neurodiversity in the workplace](#)