

CODE OF ETHICS

DESIRED OUTCOME

A fire and rescue service where its members respect and follow the five principles of the Core Code of Ethics (Core Code). This is demonstrated in their service delivery to the public and builds community trust and confidence.

The principles of the Core Code are reflected in decision-making at all levels and are at the heart of day-to-day activity.

All leaders are accountable for the culture of the team, function or service that they have responsibility for, and strive to continuously learn about, monitor and improve this. They display and promote good behaviours and challenge conduct that is inconsistent with the Core Code. This is evidenced by the attitude and conduct of those who lead and all who work for, or on behalf of, the service.

All those who work within or on behalf of a service are accountable for their own behaviour and contribute to a positive working culture.

BUSINESS AREAS

Strategic, Cultural

CAPABILITIES

Ethics, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO MEET THE FIRE STANDARD

A fire and rescue service must:

1. Proactively adopt the Core Code and be able to demonstrate that the service is fully committed to fulfilling it.
2. Demonstrate how the Core Code is embedded into its decision-making, policies, procedures, processes and aligned with its own local values, if applicable.
3. Provide training and support to all those who work for, or on behalf of, a service to ensure they fully understand their responsibilities in upholding the Core Code and what this looks like in practice.



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(next review)

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28 May 2026

4. Put strategies, policies and performance measures in place to promote and embed a positive and inclusive culture.
5. Monitor and measure performance in relation to culture and the Core Code to drive continuous improvement.

Everyone who works for, or on behalf of, the service must:

6. Understand and respect the Core Code and their responsibility to role model this through their behaviour.
7. Actively promote the principles of the Core Code and use mechanisms to safely challenge or raise concerns about behaviours that do not meet them.

Those responsible for governing fire and rescue services must:

8. Hold the Chief Fire Officer to account, ensuring that strategies and policies are consistent with the Core Code.
9. Play a proactive role in challenging and providing support to service leaders, when behaviours fall short of the standards set out in the Core Code.
10. Ensure that investigations and disciplinary procedures involving a Principal Officer are carried out using the most appropriate means.

EXPECTED BENEFITS OF ACHIEVING THE FIRE STANDARD

1. Strengthens ethical and professional behaviour across the service and ensures transparent and consistent ways of working.
2. Fosters an inclusive and respectful working culture.
3. Build greater trust in the service and enhances its reputation.
4. Create a psychologically safe workplace where inappropriate behaviour is challenged and all are held to account for their actions.
5. Improves governance and strengthens leadership at all levels.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OR MANDATORY DUTIES

It is recognised that fire and rescue services must comply with a broad list of legislation to undertake their duties. This Fire Standard reflects only the most appropriate legislation to this topic and should not be regarded as exhaustive. Much of the legislation that relates to this Fire Standard can be found on the webpage that describes [legislation which applies to all Fire Standards.](#)

- [Equality Act](#)
 - [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)
 - [Workers Protection \(Amendment of Equality Act 2010\) Act](#)
- [Local Audit and Accountability Act](#)
- [The Accounts and Audits Regulations](#)
- [Employment Rights Act \(Due to be enacted in 2026\)](#)

LINKED QUALIFICATIONS, ACCREDITATIONS OR FIRE STANDARDS

This Fire Standard and the Core Code underpin all Fire Standards.

Currently there are no specific or linked qualifications and accreditations for this Fire Standard.

GUIDANCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This list is non-exhaustive, and additional sources of guidance may be available beyond those outlined below.

- Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services and associated guidance
- CIPFA Principles of Good Governance
- NFCC Leadership Framework
- NFCC Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour Toolkit
- NFCC Culture Dashboard Methodology
- NFCC People, Culture, and Leadership Strategic Plan
- NFCC Coaching and Mentoring Toolkit
- NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Hub

ADDITIONAL CONTENT

CODE OF ETHICS FIRE STANDARD AND HMICFRS CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD

Below are the HMICFRS Characteristics of Good, from the 2025-27 framework, that relate to the Code of Ethics Fire Standard.

7. How effective is the FRS at promoting, embedding and improving its values and culture, and ensuring the health and well-being of its workforce?

7.1. The FRS's governance arrangements provide oversight and assurance that its people strategies are effective at establishing a positive culture and standards of conduct that support the health and well-being of its workforce.

7.2. The FRS regularly assesses its culture by using and sharing learning to continuously improve. The FRS makes sure that its values and the Code of Ethics are established across the service, and acceptable standards of behaviour are understood and demonstrated by all. The FRS carries out effective background checks to help prevent unsuitable people from joining or remaining in the service.

UPDATES TO THIS STANDARD

28 MAY 2026

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The principles of the Core Code are reflected in decision-making at all levels and are at the heart of day-to-day activity.

All Leaders are accountable for the culture of the team, function or service that they have responsibility for, and strive to continuously learn about, monitor and improve this. They display and promote good behaviours and challenge conduct that is inconsistent with the Core Code. This is evidenced by the attitude and conduct of those who lead and all who work for, or on behalf of, the service.

All those who work within or on behalf of a service are accountable for their own behaviour and contribute to a positive working culture.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO MEET THE FIRE STANDARD

A fire and rescue service must:

- a. **Proactively** adopt the Core Code **and be able to** demonstrate that the service is fully committed **to fulfilling it**
- b. **Demonstrate how the Core Code is embedded** into its decision-making, policies, procedures, processes **and aligned with its own local values, if applicable**
- c. Provide training and support to all those who work for, or on behalf of, a service to **ensure they fully understand their responsibilities in upholding the Core Code and what this looks like in practice**
- d. ~~Not detract from the Core Code.~~
- d. put strategies, policies and performance measures are in place to promote and **embed** a positive and inclusive culture
- e. **Monitor and measure performance in relation to culture and the Core Code to drive continuous improvement**

Everyone who works for, or on behalf of, the service must:

- f. Understand and respect the Core Code **and their responsibility to role model this through their behaviour**
- g. ~~Conduct themselves in accordance with the Core Code.~~
- g. **Actively promote the principles of the Core Code and use mechanisms to safely challenge or raise concerns about behaviours that do not meet them**

Those responsible for **governing** fire and rescue services must:

- h. Hold the Chief Fire Officer to account, **ensuring that strategies and policies are consistent with the Core Code**
- i. Play a proactive role in challenging **and providing support to service leaders, when behaviours fall short of the standards set out in the Core Code**
- j. **ensure that investigations and disciplinary procedures involving a Principal Officer are carried out using the most appropriate means. their own behaviour and contribute to a positive working culture.**

~~A fire and rescue service should:~~

- k. ~~Designate a senior leader who is responsible for promoting the Core Code throughout the service and ensuring that all those who work for, or on behalf of, the service understand its contents and what is expected of them.~~

EXPECTED BENEFITS

- a. ~~Achieves greater consistency in ethical and professional behaviour throughout the service~~
- a. **Strengthens ethical and professional behaviour across the service and ensures transparent and consistent ways of working.**
- b. ~~Generates a more positive working culture, which embraces learning and is transparent and accountable~~
- b. **Fosters an inclusive and respectful working culture**
- c. **Builds greater** trust in the service and **enhances** its reputation
- d. ~~Enables all those who work for, or on behalf of, to challenge inappropriate behaviour and hold others to account for their actions~~
- d. Creates a psychologically safe workplace where inappropriate behaviour is challenged and all are held to account for their actions.
- e. ~~Improves the recruitment and retention of a workforce that is representative of the community it serves~~
- e. Improves governance and **strengthens** leadership **at all levels**

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND MANDATORY DUTIES

- Workers Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act
- Employment Rights Act (Due to be enacted in 2026)

GUIDANCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- NFCC Leadership Framework
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