

Creating a culture with the shared vision to meet these needs in a Service resilient for the future.			
Aim			
- To rebuild organisational culture, taking the strong positive identity within the Service, built around strong teams saving lives, re-modelled for a world of changing needs and changing opportunities			
Strategy	To establish two-way communication channels, both horizontally and vertically through the organisation	To create an integrated organisation, where the contribution of all is recognised and valued	
Actions	Communication to be improved through multiple channels, with the means for staff to communicate more directly and more regularly with senior leadership.	Restructure – with integration of HR, People Development and Training Delivery Departments	Re develop non-operational training for the delivery of comprehensive training packages for all employees



Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service Vision:

To deliver the best possible Fire and Rescue Service for the communities of mid and west Wales

(MAWWFRS no date, p. 8)

Communication

“Contemporary views acknowledge communication as the basis of all organisational activities” (Keyton 2014)

For a healthy and productive working environment, we know we need an engaged workforce, who feel empowered and able to express their views in an environment of mutual respect (Paley, 2019 p.169). Communication is a recognised contributor to levels of employee engagement. (CIPD, 2023a).

The MAWWFRS Culture Audit report (Opinion Research Services, 2023) showed that we do not do enough to make sure we communicate with all our staff and that they can communicate with Service leadership - the Cultural Audit found that over half of employees relied upon informal means of communication and hearsay for Service news (Opinion Research Services 2023, p.82).

Keyton (2014) describes how all aspects of communication are transmitters of culture. The culture survey suggests an over reliance on hearsay over clear coherent communication of Service matters. The Survey also tells us that this is not an element of culture that our staff want or value (Opinion Research Services 2023, p.84).

Communication in an organisation is complex, messages carry different significance for all of us depending on our role and position, and to give or receive a message is not enough – we have to take the time to ensure that it is understood, and we have to listen to, and seek to understand the response (Keyton, 2014).

We also need to make sure that communication within and across departments is better, so that we can all work together towards shared goals in a changing

Integration

HR Transformation – which was started in 2020, has not been found to be of benefit to managers. This was referred to specifically in the culture survey (Opinion Research Services, 2023, p. 90).

We have the expertise in the organisation for training and people development – so why aren’t we using those skills to develop our people beyond operational development, so that our support departments are better equipped to deliver?

Learning from past experience, and listening to the feedback from staff, let’s create a new environment to bring our operational development excellence into play, to support our talented HR professionals to really deliver as they want to; modernising our HR function into a people focused centre of excellence.

Organisation re-design is a significant undertaking and a disruptive process, not to be undertaken lightly. However, it is appropriate to consider organisation design when adapting to change (CIPD, 2023b). It is clear that, as an organisation we want to change and modernise some elements of our culture, and operationally we need to adapt to changing risks.

A reimagined ‘Organisational Development, People and Culture Directorate’ would improve focus on ensuring the organisation and people within it have the skills fit for the future and are resilient to change.

Creating a new directorate we can introduce new expertise into the organisation at a high level. We can spread the load so that leaders can best use their expertise, and have the time to devote to listening and working with their teams to deliver the best possible Fire and Rescue Service for the communities of mid and west Wales

Collaboration

As a Service we know that we do better when we work as a team – this is part of the operational way of doing things.

We want to be better at being one team – not divided by whether we wear a uniform or not.

When we learn together, we learn from each other, and find new ways forward - shared learning is how we establish, or re-establish culture (Schein, 2017, p.6).

We can create opportunities for both learning, and networking within the organisation, so that as well as the formal elements of a course, we get to share what’s happening elsewhere in the Service, and get to know our colleagues better. Stronger links create better resilience, and helps us to share resources in future, to meet other challenges. (CIPD, 2019)

We also know that Line Managers need better training to equip them to manage with confidence. Managing people is hard, and expectations today are constantly changing, so the development process is never ending (Mullins 2019, p. 659).

We also know that other HR training is not reaching everyone that it should. (Opinion Research Services, 2023, p. 11)

We will collaboratively develop new training packages, including induction training, to be delivered in a shared learning environment, so that support staff can learn from the experiences of operational staff and vice versa, and we can develop new ways of thinking together.