



Our People

Being the Best Handbook



County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service

Introduction

Stuart Errington

Chief Fire Officer

Our plans and strategies help to define us and to start the story, but they do not tell the whole story of who we are and what we do. They do not define those at the heart of our organisation – Our People.

Our aim is simple: to be the best fire and rescue service in the UK. I hope this handbook can help us understand how we all have a role to play in making that happen.

Being the Best in a nutshell, brings together what we are about as an organisation and how we should go about our day-to-day business as members of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service. It defines our organisational culture and sets out what is important to us as a service and is a mechanism for bringing to life the Service's vision and values which is underpinned by The Code of Ethics.

This handbook should be a reference point for everything you do, your first port of call for any difficult decision you must make or even if you want to stop and reality check you are heading in the right direction at work.

I want all members of our workforce to understand, buy in to and ultimately deliver Being the Best because it is through this approach and with our people, I firmly believe, we will be the best fire and rescue service in the UK.



Our Aspiration

'Being the Best'



The aspiration of the Service is quite simply to be the best fire and rescue service in the UK, and to support you the Service's commitment is to provide the best:

- Equipment
- Vehicles
- Buildings
- PPE
- Training and development

Our Vision

**Our Vision is simple, we want to have the
'Safest People, Safest Places.'**

Our core strength in achieving this is through our people, who are proud to work for an organisation connected closely with its communities and who are genuinely committed to changing and saving people's lives.





“ The culture at CDDFRS is evolving rapidly through our innovative work with Durham University Business School who help us measure key aspects of our culture and make effective change. Changes in leadership styles have seen a shift in how we do things and I’ve seen people flourishing positively taking responsibility for their own actions and adopting a more innovative approach to the work that we all do. The people who work in our organisation are our best asset and it is those who will make us the best FRS in the UK. ”

Katherine Metcalfe

Head of People and Organisational Development

Our Priorities and Values

Our Priorities

We aim to manage risks and ensure that our resources are allocated in the best way to reduce the number of emergency incidents and the associated risk of injury or death in the local area.

To help us achieve our vision of 'Safest People, Safest Places' the Authority has the following priorities.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

We will plan and prepare for emergencies and provide a professional and effective response at all times.

BUSINESS FIRE SAFETY

We will provide professional advice and assurance to support business development and ensure public safety.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

We will engage and educate people to improve their safety and wellbeing.

VALUE FOR MONEY

We will deliver an efficient fire and rescue service through effective use of public money and be accountable to the public.

WORKING TOGETHER

We will work closely with our partners to improve public safety.

OUR PEOPLE, OUR WAY

We will support and develop our staff and ensure our values are at the centre of everything we do.

Our Values



PROFESSIONAL



INNOVATIVE



EFFECTIVE



PIE represents the Service's values and describes the service our customers should expect from all employees.

These values are our identity and should help us to distinguish ourselves from other Fire and Rescue Services.

Our Ethics

The Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services in England sets out ethical principles which helps the Service to continuously improve the organisational culture and workforce diversity and assists in supporting our community in the best way.

All employees of the Service, are expected to follow the Code of Ethics and consistently demonstrate the ethical behaviours

The five ethical principles in the Code of Ethics are:

- Putting our communities first – we put the interests of the public, the community, and the service users first.
- Integrity – we act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.
- Dignity and Respect – we treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.
- Leadership – we are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion – we continually recognise and promote the value of EDI, both within the FRS and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote quality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.



Our Behaviours

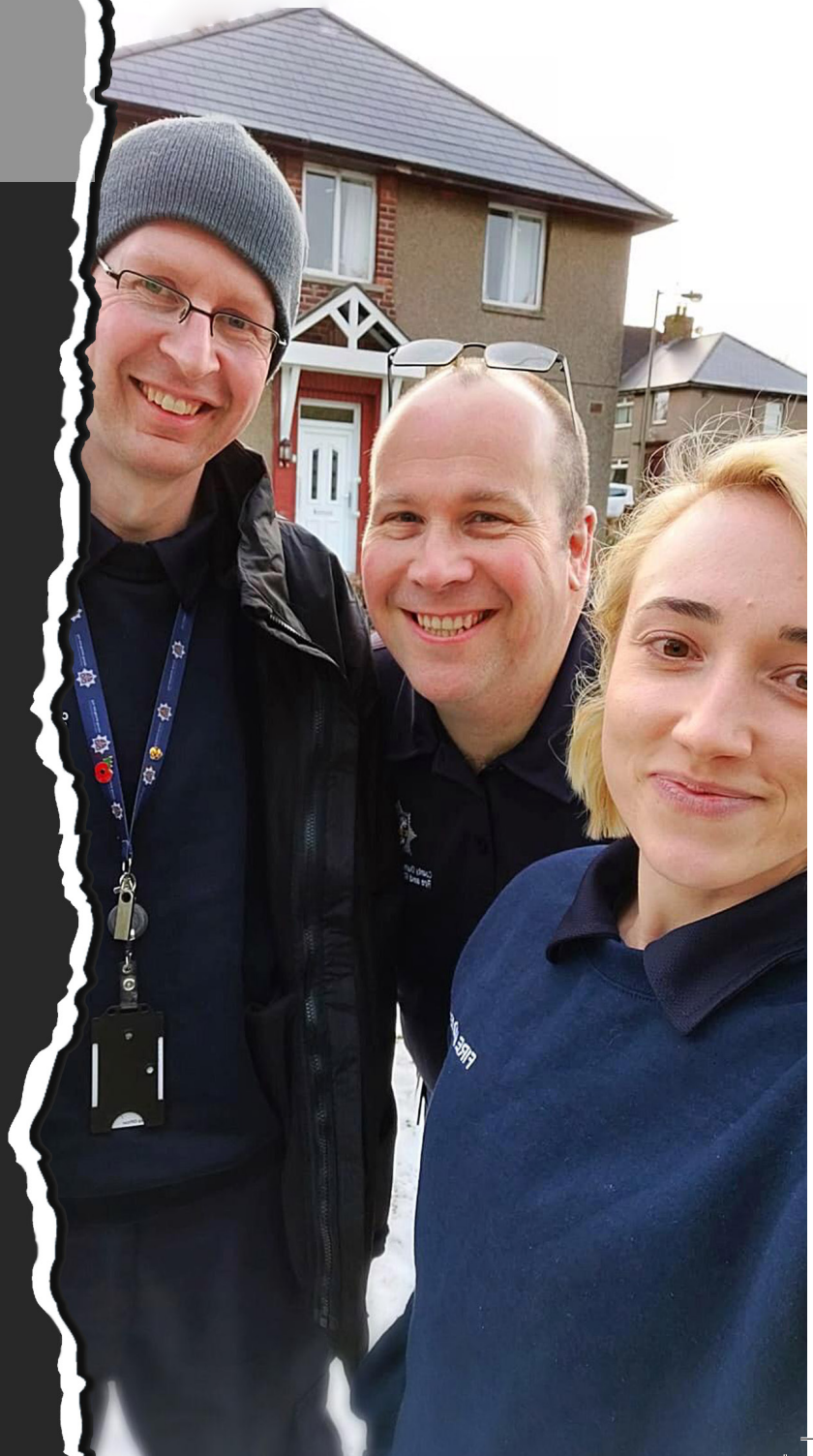
To Be the Best FRS in the UK there are certain behaviours we are all expected to demonstrate at work.

Our behaviours were developed by our people as the things which meant the most to them.

These behaviours are threaded through all of our people related processes from recruitment to performance and career development.

The range of these behaviours falls into four areas, known as the 4Cs

- **CHALLENGE**
Approach challenge with flexibility, enthusiasm, motivation, passion, determination and resilience.
- **CONDUCT**
Conduct ourselves in a manner that is honest, trustworthy, reliable, accountable, consistent and respectful.
- **COLLABORATE**
Collaborate with others by being approachable, supportive, encouraging and inclusive, and value development when collaborating.
- **CHANGE**
Drive change across the organisation to make a difference by being creative, resourceful, courageous, original, clear and focused.





“ We get the privilege of helping people nearly every day of our careers working for CDDFRS. At incidents, through contact with the public, undertaking community safety and business fire safety work. When I go home having helped someone, I feel proud to work for CDDFRS. It's the best job in the world. ”

Natalie Havid

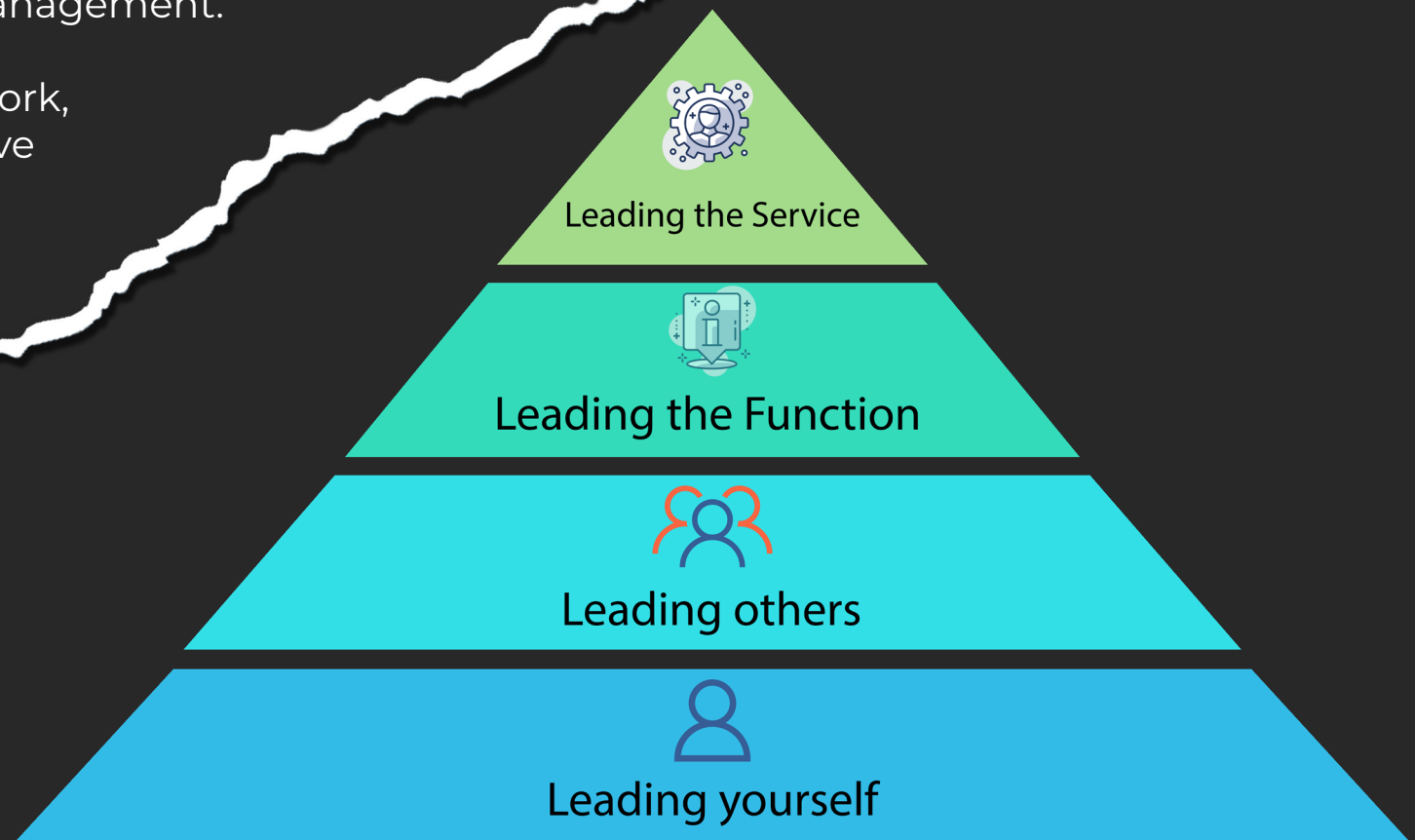
Firefighter Apprentice & On Call Firefighter

Leadership Framework

The Service has a Leadership Framework in place which enables leadership and development for all staff, irrespective of discipline, role or function.

The framework and leadership behaviours are incorporated into a range of people processes within the Service including recruitment processes, appraisals, career planning discussions and performance management.

Behind each layer of the framework, are a range of examples of positive behaviours.



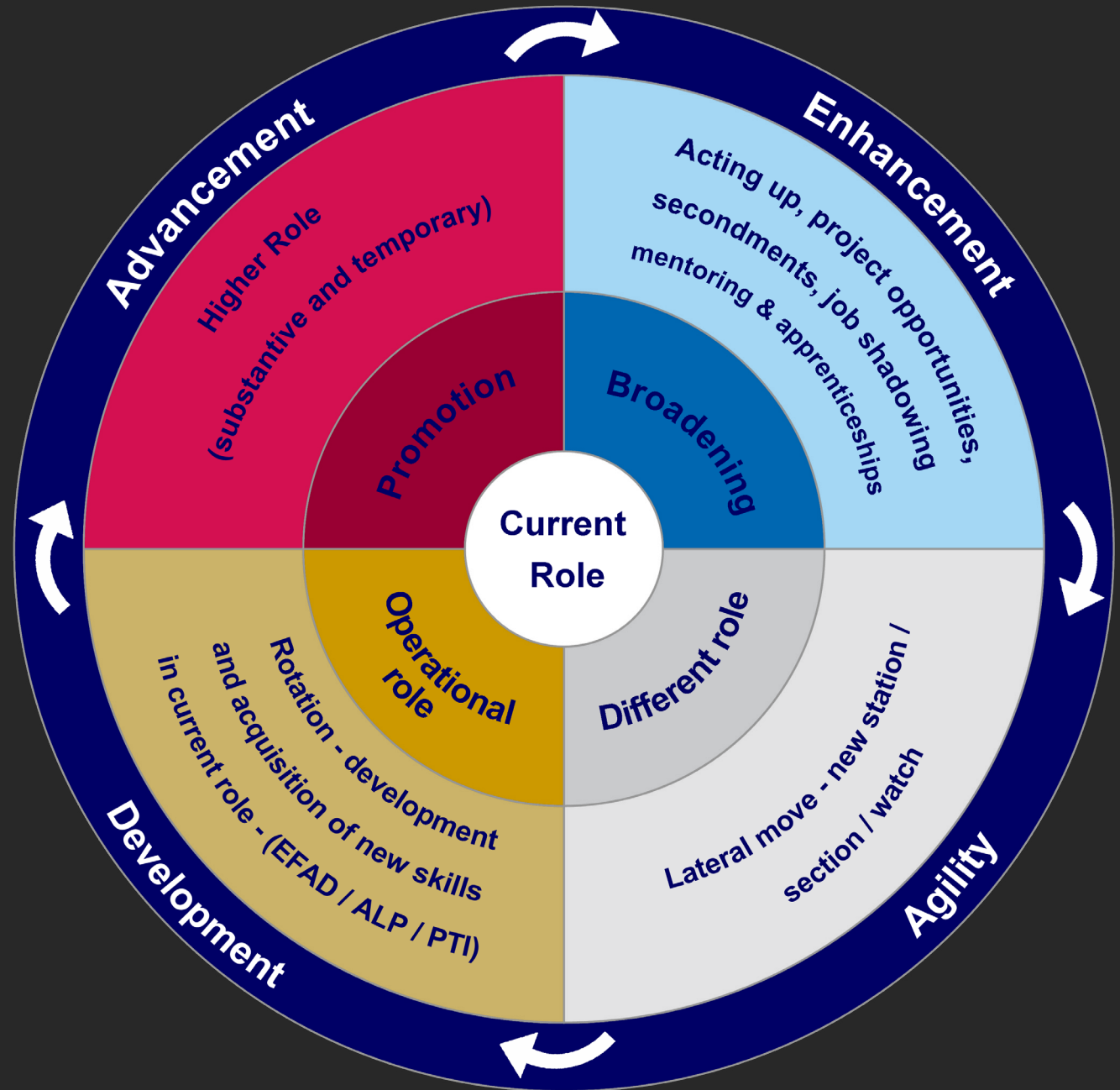
Career Progression

We recognise our people are our greatest asset.

Having the right career progression processes in place is vital to enable us to attract and retain talented people.

We aspire to offer the best training and development to our people so they can be the best they can be.

Opportunities to develop exist both vertically and horizontally for all staff groups whether its through formal qualifications, on the job skills training, apprenticeships, secondments or through informal mentoring arrangements.



The background of the entire page is a collage of various images related to fire services. It includes firefighters in full gear battling fires, working at control rooms with multiple computer monitors, and interacting with the community. A prominent white graphic resembling a torn piece of paper is placed over the center-right of the page, containing a portrait of Mark Henderson. The overall theme is professional development and career progression within a fire service.

“ As a corporate member of staff, I always felt my opportunities for development were limited. My manager nominated me for succession planning through my annual appraisal as they felt I had additional skills which could be used elsewhere in the Service. Through this process I was offered mentoring, additional qualifications and plenty opportunities for further development outside of the scope of my role. This enabled me to transition from a community based role to Health and Safety role, a subject which I am passionate about and truly believe I can make a difference. ”

Mark Henderson
Health and Safety Officer

Health and Safety Officer

Support for you

We know life is not always straight forward and at times our people will need support from us. The Service offers individuals a range of support which includes:

- Access to Physiotherapy services
- Access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which includes a counselling service and other therapeutic interventions
- Occupational Health advice and support
- Support from the Service's Dignity at Work Advisors and Mental Health First Aiders
- Wellbeing Assessments including regular Health Surveillance checks
- Access to on site gyms
- Trauma Support Team



“ A few years ago I was really struggling with my mental health. I was depressed, withdrawn and unhappy. It had a huge effect my home and work life, but I didn't fully understand what was wrong with me. Talking to my work colleagues and line managers really helped rationalise and normalise my feelings. With the support of the service I started a 7 month counselling process and was further supported by occupational health. I am now able to use my experience through being an active member of the Trauma Support Team and Mental Health Committee to support other colleagues who may be suffering in silence and not knowing what to do or how to deal with it. ”

Dan McManus

Watch Manager





Work Life Balance

We also acknowledge that achieving good work life balance is important.

With this in mind the Service offer:

- **Enhanced maternity and paternity leave**
- **A range of leave options**
- **A range of working patterns**
- **A range of flexible working procedures**
- **Flexible retirement options and support to those thinking about retirement**
- **Hybrid working arrangements**



Our expectation of you



Strive to be the best you can be

Thank you

*For helping protect the communities of
County Durham and Darlington*



County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service

