



A Health & Wellbeing Framework

for the Fire Community



Nottingham Trent University

Rowena Hill and Rich Pickford

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NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council



This document presents the framework for health and wellness in the fire community, beginning with an executive summary of the main principles, followed by the vision and aims of the framework, and then offers specific priorities and recommended practices to achieve and maintain health throughout the community.

This framework has been developed for the fire community by colleagues at NTU with support from a project board and subject matter expert group. We wish to thank these groups alongside those who participated in series of development workshops in the spring of 2024.

Executive Summary



This health and wellbeing framework has been produced to support everyone across the fire and rescue community to take the necessary steps to develop and deliver health and wellbeing for themselves and their organisations in the future.

It sets the scene and direction for individuals, services and the wider fire community to build from. This includes commitment from leadership at all levels across all organisations within the fire community.

This framework document is based on the three key positions:

1. Health and wellbeing are the responsibility of everyone in the fire and rescue community across all organisations and levels of influence - this framework is for everyone at all levels and roles.
2. The framework prioritises health over other valued outcomes, ensuring that people have as healthy and flourishing life as they can, not just for their productivity at work, or for the time they are a member of the fire community. A healthy life course will offer productivity at work, but the driver for this framework is health and wellness in the fire community.
3. Investing resources (energy, time, money, structures) in maintaining good health and preventing ill health is significantly preferable (in terms of quality of life, ethics and value, as well as financial spend) than resourcing reactive responses and processes to aid recovery from health and wellbeing events and needs.

This framework has been [built from robust research](#) and engagement across the fire community led by NTU researchers who undertook a series of evidence reviews, a community wide wellbeing survey and engagement process. An assessment of the health and wellbeing gaps at service level has been undertaken in the winter of 2023/24 as part of the development process for this framework. This project has been supported by the NFCC People Programme and Health and Wellbeing Board. It has also been made possible by the engagement of staff and volunteers across the fire community and beyond to inform its development.



The framework is made up of a number of key principles that are described below which are themselves built from key concepts that were developed through the original research and engagement work in 2022 (available in the appendix).

- Supporting your own wellbeing
- The holistic career approach: from new starter into retirement
- Applying our prevention approaches and skills to ourselves
- Making it everything we do
- Creating shared language across the sector

These principles highlight the need for a whole person and system approach to health and wellbeing which creates clear definitions of these terms. They shift the focus to an opt-in health promotion and resilience model which moves away from reactive and deficit models. These principles reinforce the idea that health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility and that we all need to lead this work forward for ourselves, our teams and our communities. Finally the principle highlight that all support needs to be quality assured and developed from strong evidence to be used within the fire community.

A visual model of the frameworks has been developed to provide a reference for this work helping colleagues understand that the key principle reach across our community to our services and individuals, that leadership from us all is crucial and that there are a set of required deliverables needed to ensure this framework is successful.

Following the development of this framework the NFCC will undertake a formal consultation in the spring/summer of 2024. This will be supported by an ongoing programme of work that is identifying and assessing health and wellbeing systems, processes and interventions to provide individuals, services and the wider community with the tools to support the implantation of this framework. This process includes work on data and governance as key delivery outcomes of the framework.

This framework document focusses on psychological, social and physical health. The framework supports the development of a strategic needs assessment, delivery plan, and performance management plan that will be developed from this framework.

Health and Wellbeing Framework Visual Model



Figure 1: Visual model of the health and wellbeing framework

Vision and Mission



The Vision

That our staff and volunteers across the fire community work together to ensure we live in a state of positive physical, psychological and social health and wellbeing in all aspects and times of their lives.

The Mission

The health and wellbeing framework provides a framework for all future health and wellbeing work across the UK fire and rescue community. It ensures that health and wellbeing systems and decisions are evidence-based, inclusive, 'upstream' of issues, preventative and built from a health promotion perspective. That the care of your own and others wellbeing is understood and lived by all in the fire community. That wellbeing resource decisions consider quality assurance, health economics (spending primarily on prevention rather than cure) and have the starting principle of kindness and facilitate good social connections. These important aspects should not only be understood, but "lived" and actioned and we are ready for the challenge that this may require to shift our mindset within the fire community.

The Objectives

To create a fire community that both pre-empts and manages wellbeing for all. To do this, all organisations, staff, and their families, involved in the fire community, act on the resources and responsibilities to prepare for and manage wellbeing issues that occur in and around their workplace and home life. Organisations include all fire and rescue services, the National Fire Chiefs Council, relevant charities (such as the Fire Fighters Charity), representative bodies, and other organisations within the fire community. This framework aims to achieve demonstrable increases in good health and decreases in ill health. These changes should be monitored to evidence the impact of policy changes and other changes in practice that the framework demands. This may also require support to change the way staff engage with wellbeing.

These should include data and analysis of:

- musculoskeletal injury (fire services data returns),
 - increased levels of personal resilience* (annual/biennial national survey),
 - increased levels of psychological and social wellbeing** (annual/biennial national survey),
 - policy design and impact assessments that ensure health and social inequalities are minimized (e.g. removing gender and ethnicity barriers to support, evidenced throughout the wider population, such as wellbeing impact assessments as part of the EAI process),
 - fire community specific designed suicide prevention and postvention support, please visit for support: <https://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/need-help/fire-fighters-charity-crisis-line-landing-page>
- Crisis Line: 0300 373 0896**
- rates of occupational injury to physical and mental health (fire services data returns).

Improving health and wellbeing maximises talent and productivity, aids retention and ensures return of training investment, whilst delivering an engaged workforce and increases public safety. So it is in the interests of all fire and rescue services and organisations to implement this framework.

* Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioural flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands.

** Social wellbeing is the ability to interact with others, express yourself, conduct everyday health habits, and be a part of different communities around you, including communities at work. These build support systems and helps you to stay healthier mentally and physically.

The Principles

This framework aims to provide clear principles and priorities to deliver a positive environment promoting health and wellbeing, to support all our people to be healthy in all domains of their life and throughout it.

The five principles should guide the actions of all across the fire community. This framework does not set out the specific tools, guidance and tasks of the underpinning strategy for delivering, however, a series of initial actions and implementation recommendations are shared in this framework for individuals, services and the wider community to consider. The implementation of this framework is the task of all in the fire and rescue community, with responsibilities for stakeholders to coordinate and take accountability of the implementation of the framework.

- Supporting your own wellbeing
- The holistic career approach: from new starter into retirement
- Applying our prevention approaches and skills to ourselves
- Making it everything we do
- Creating shared language across the sector

Each of these principles is supported by a series of actions directed at individuals, services and organisations and the fire community where relevant.

Whilst linking closely to the second key principle it is clear that everyone needs to take on both leadership and peer support roles to successfully deliver this framework. The role of leaders runs as a linking thread through all the principles to ensure that they are enacted and supported by everyone in the fire community.



The holistic career approach

Providing the support for each individual to have the knowledge and understanding to support their own wellbeing, and for every supervisor to have their default position as supportive, will create an inclusive and supportive environment. This framework will establish how we will achieve this, and how we will discontinue the outdated approach to 'fixing people' in overly medicalised, process orientated, reactive, top-down systems. This supportive and inclusive environment will support our people to live and work to their highest attainable levels of health and wellbeing from when they join our community, throughout their career, and into their retirement.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Fire Fighters Charity will continue to work collaboratively and coherently with services, external partners, key stakeholders, charities, and other bodies, to map the offers of support, so each member of our community understands the typical transition experiences, as outlined in the appendix, throughout their life and where they can find support should they need it to move through these based on the research on career transition points conducted to support this framework by our academic partners.

Organisations across the fire community should find ways to support staff and their families to pay attention to their own different emotional states. They should ensure that they are aware of what their normal feels like, compared to when they might be feeling strained, anxious, sad, upset or burnt out. Or when they find it harder to connect with others, or felt different physically. Clearly signposting where they can go if they need to seek further support to help process and move through it to return to their best health and wellbeing must also be provided.

Actions:

- Within each organisation, supportive guidance should be developed for managers and supervisors to help colleagues throughout their careers within the fire community – for services and organisations and the fire community
- Creation of clear signposting to ensure colleagues know where they can go if they need to seek further support to help process and move through it to return to their best health and wellbeing must also be provided – for services & organisations
- The publication of clear guidance on the key transition experiences and how to manage these across the different role clusters – for the fire community

Supporting your own wellbeing

Supporting the health and wellbeing of yourself and those around you is a key responsibility and a quality for all in the community to aspire to. This framework calls for role-modelling of self-awareness, self-care, and the ability to recognise and talk about your own emotions in order to understand and maintain your own wellbeing. This means that you will recognise if your emotions or feelings change, and when you may need support if you feel differently about any changes in your employment or personal situation, or if you feel differently about your social wellbeing or physical wellbeing. We also need to strive to ensure that leaders and managers are given time to proactively support the wellbeing of those around them.

The personal responsibility to be aware, and take care of, our own personal wellbeing should be operating at all levels in every organisation across the community. This includes everyone engaging in open, strong and supportive leadership with clear boundaries. Having clear boundaries facilitates relationships in all contexts and is an important aspect of experiencing good support. It is the balance between providing supportive leadership or management, whilst respecting the edges of appropriate practice, reflecting the procedural (policies and procedures) and relationship dynamics between the staff member and supervisor.

Key actions

- The key principals of the new health and wellbeing framework need to be developed into a series of engagement and learning resources for staff and volunteers across the UK that highlight the intent, focus and objectives of this new framework – for services & organisations and the fire community
- Key messaging on specific tasks for supporting wellbeing need to be collated and disseminated to support colleagues that speak to the diverse audiences across the fire and rescue community – for services & organisations



Applying our prevention approaches and skills to ourselves

The fire community has demonstrated over the last 15 years that it is knowledgeable about approaches to prevention and talented at reducing harm and protecting safety. We need to pivot those skills to protect ourselves and others by promoting good and preventing poor health and wellbeing through early and effective interventions. This makes economic sense and is morally right. As people are impacted by events or strains, they go through a process of trying to work through things or reacting before they experience mental ill health or negative wellbeing. Through early intervention these processes can be interrupted and reversed through appropriate support.

Actions:

- Strengthen the mandate of the health and wellbeing board and provide strategic leadership to support the fire community to become a leader in health and wellbeing support across the UK – for the fire community
- Ensure everyone is supported to utilise their innate and learned skills developed in roles to enhance health and wellbeing in their workplace and wider organisation - for services & organisations and the fire community

Making it everything we do

The fire community will formally adopt an evidenced, holistic approach to health and wellbeing and will no longer have a separate set of policies. Instead, physical, psychological and social health and wellbeing will be considered as one and will recognise the critical influences of lifestyle, environment and society, not just people factors. National organisations will aim to improve our knowledge and culture surrounding wellbeing, to ensure that everybody at every level is educated and empowered to improve and maintain their own health and wellbeing and those around them.

Actions:

- Formally adopt the whole person and system approach the health know as holistic health – for the fire community
- Commit resource to become a place of expertise in managing our own and our colleague's health to improve the society we serve – for services & organisations and the fire community

Creating shared language across the fire community

This framework should promote and champion a shared health and wellbeing language across the fire community. Key terms need to be understood and shared by all. By establishing a clear definitions and terminology we will be able to communicate more effectively our intentions, ambitions and across our work and policy areas. This requires organisations within the fire community to adopt a holistic wellbeing narrative that integrates mental health alongside other aspects of wellbeing.

Actions:

- Develop, share and promote key terms in an accessible and engaging way to support everyone to engage and move forward – for individuals, services & organisations and the fire community



Implementing the Framework

The key aspects of a new health and wellbeing framework outlined above require a change in the way the individuals, services and the fire community as a whole will work. This framework acknowledges the influence of lifestyles and environmental factors on the fire and rescue community, which have been mapped and reviewed during the development of this framework. It also acknowledges other strategies or workplace commitments within this area, but ensures that health and wellbeing evidence bases are built and used effectively to ensure:

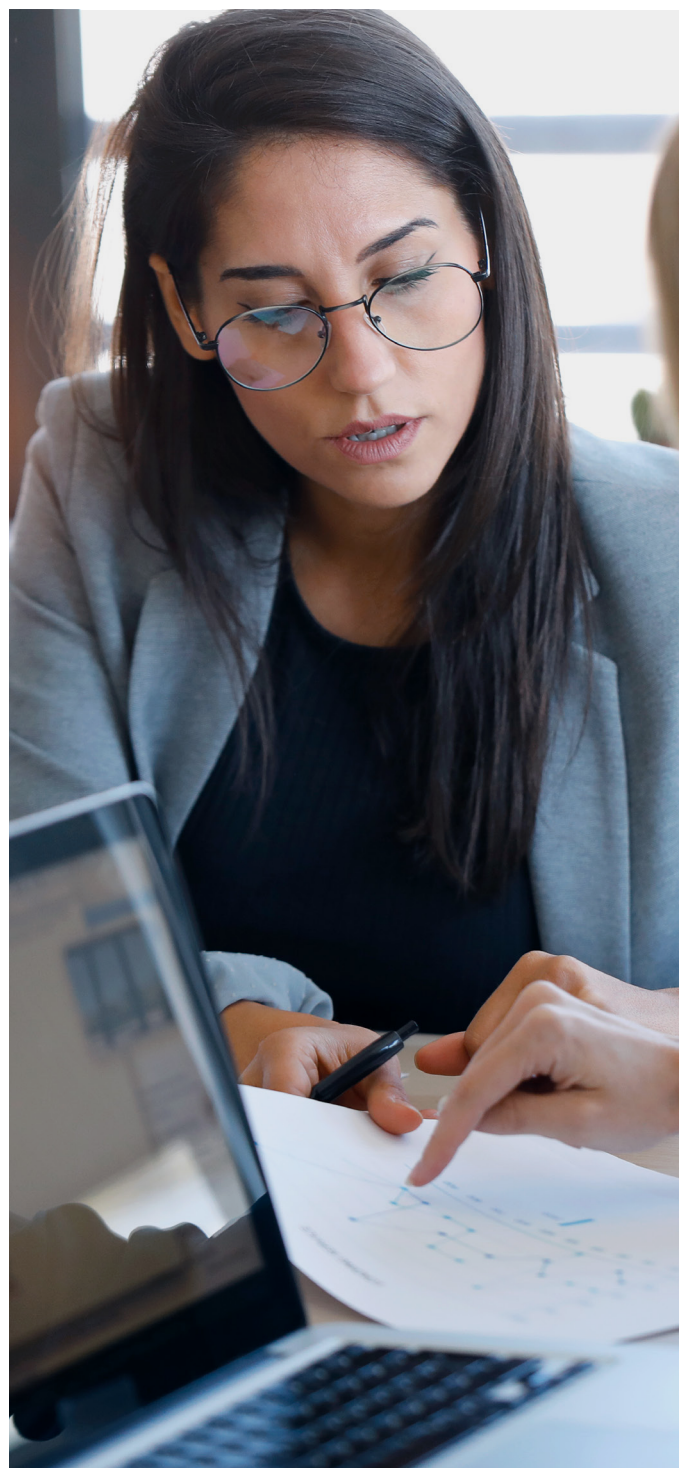
- all activities are evidence-based and evaluated,
- activities and stakeholders are coordinated,
- good and leading practice is identified and shared,
- that health and wellbeing is a key leadership and management priority,
- feedback processes to ensure the framework is kept current and relevant are designed and implemented.

Alongside the requirements outlined above there are two key delivery needs to successfully implement the framework. These have been defined as data and governance which will be explored below. Whilst the framework recognises that there is also a need to consider processes, systems and interventions and the requisite resources for the successful development of the framework these key requirements are critical for the development of the framework.

Data

There is a need to measure key metrics for health and wellbeing at all levels. There are three key aspects of this data focus.

- Firstly a newly established wellbeing and employment trend data programme is required to record and analyse data from all Fire and Rescue Services to create a clear picture of the demographic and health and wellbeing data at an annual basis. This should be undertaken at a minimum every year but preferably every quarter to support analysis of key health and wellbeing needs in each service.



- A set of suggested metrics is shared for reference, secondly building from the NTU health and wellbeing survey there needs to be an individual level health and wellbeing survey conducted at a minimum of every other year (but preferably every year) that tracks key measures of health and wellbeing, this will support the development of robust support and engagement on key metrics of health and wellbeing.
- Thirdly an annual gap analysis process to support Services to understand where the health and wellbeing opportunities and gaps are and to allow them to compare themselves to similar Services and seek support and insights where appropriate.

To do this successfully there also needs to be a fourth key aspect which is an increase in the sharing of data to allow the identification of longer term or changes to national anonymous trends and patterns following:

1. the establishment of robust data sharing protocols,
2. the development of data collection across the data to inform the national framework and priorities/resource allocation.

The data collection will allow local and national understanding of the health and wellbeing of the fire community. Coordinated collection and sharing of health and wellbeing data will create a longitudinal evidence base to inform strategic priorities and highlight where support offers or structures need reviewing.

This will need to be done through regular Service-level reporting of key health and wellbeing data on a quarterly basis that is anonymous and aggregable to produce both Service and UK wide perspectives alongside a biennial fire community health and wellbeing survey, building from the baseline survey conducted by NTU in 2022, to create a robust picture of physical, social and psychological indicators of health and wellbeing for the fire community that can be used to identify trends and adapt the strategy to support health and wellbeing. When matched with the health and wellbeing gap analysis tool individual Service and the NFCC will be able to identify how best to the implementation of health and wellbeing for all.

The reason for this detailed process is to ensure that across the different role clusters and career trajectories the transition points and strain that those in the fire community might come in to contact with are monitored and supported. The data will support evidence informed themes with aligned metrics to monitor performance in achieving the aims and vision of the framework. The role clusters and associated transition points are shared in the appendix of this framework.

Service level demographic data

Number of staff

Number of staff (by role)

Age and EDI profile

Employment status breakdown

Trend data time (as data collection grows) by quarter, by year and by compared to same quarter last year.
Service level demographic data

Absence data

Number of days (total)

Absence types

Absences by role

Absence by type

Absences over population

Absence by age profile

Trend analysis over time (as data collection grows) by quarter, by year and by compared to same quarter last year.

Governance

Work to achieve the identified outcomes will be driven by the NFCC Health and Wellbeing Board who may wish to draw in other elements of the NFCC People Programme and the Fire Fighters Charity. Establishing the oversight and strategic nature of this groups and its relationship to other organisations will ensure that priorities are delivered on through the national coordination of relevant activities across the stakeholders. There will not be a separate fire standard developed for wellbeing as wellbeing should be considered throughout all other activities and policies by design.

Governance structure

Under the governance of the NFCC programme structures, the NFCC Health and Wellbeing Board will refresh its membership aligned to the new framework, inviting key stakeholders and experts from across the health and wellbeing landscape to deliver the framework. This does not preclude the creation of roundtable invited expertise when necessary to deliver specialist advice, challenge, practitioner insight or to quality assure resources.

As per the existing governance structure, the NFCC programme structures will be advised by the NFCC Health and Wellbeing Board of outcomes or outputs which need interweaving across policy and frameworks relating to people issues (e.g. relating to leadership, promotion, training, culture, equity, or resource packages). The NFCC Health and Wellbeing board will have membership from the services, organisations in the fire community, and the Fire Fighters Charity, who are senior enough to be able to steer national framework, with leadership responsibilities for improving health and wellbeing. The NFCC Health and Wellbeing board is already responsible

for identifying existing and emerging trends and patterns of health and wellbeing. It will now include in its duties the ability to prioritise and coordinate health and wellbeing activity at national level and deliver supporting policy and advise on quality assured resources.

Every 12 months the Health and Wellbeing board will produce a health and wellbeing needs assessment. This will be reflective of the current landscape, support offers, data trends and future predictions. This will prioritise plans of work for the tasking groups, roundtables and work plans. The needs identified within the plan will also be taken to other key stakeholder groups for resource or delivery if necessary.

Tasking groups

The NFCC Health and Wellbeing board will establish tasking groups to complete its work, which come from the health and wellbeing needs assessment, that will combine different evidence bases to enable proactive horizon scanning, to plan and prioritise, and to ensure this is coordinated across the fire community and key stakeholders. The tasking groups will also review and adapt evidence-based resources and approaches for services, the Fire Fighters Charity and other organisations. They will also be used to identify areas where activity is needed to fill gaps based on detailed analysis of the annual health and wellbeing survey and gap analysis material. The action plans of the tasking groups will be accountable to the NFCC Health and Wellbeing board; this will include the agreed approach to evaluation and data monitoring.

Membership of these tasking groups should include:

- those responsible for recruiting, training and sustaining fire staff;
- members of the family support groups of the Fire Fighters Charity;
- managers in the fire or aligned relevant sectors;
- those with lived experience of the topic in focus;
- academics;
- practitioner experts from outside the fire community;
- representative bodies; employers;
- Home Office;
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA);
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID);
- representatives of the retired community;
- and staff groups from across the breadth of roles.

Investing to save money and increase quality of life

There are many challenges to demonstrating the effectiveness of health and wellbeing promotion and prevention initiatives. Many costs and benefits are intangible or have unclear budget lines and may also take years to realise or evidence.

The Health and Wellbeing board should work to provide national leadership in estimating them, with the longer-term ambition to develop national aggregated data sets which can be used to inform strategic decisions and coordination of resources in line with leading practice from the Education Endowment Foundation within an education context. However, this should be a longer time frame of three years as the fire community is still challenged by poor wellbeing data maturity, lack of baseline wellbeing data, minimal analytical capability, and the challenge of gaining strategic priority and oversight across the UK cadre of senior leaders due to competing demands.

A dedicated analytical group/body needs to be established to undertake the health economy modelling and leadership to ensure the investment prioritisation argument can be made and secured internally and with external stakeholders (such as the Home Office). This group should be accountable to the Health and Wellbeing board.

Flexibility of approach

Roles within the fire community have challenges unique to them, have broad demographic profiles across the roles, with diverse health and wellbeing needs, different employment models and different access to welfare and healthcare support not only between fire services and organisations, but also the wider acute, community and public health statutory offer in their locality. Health and wellbeing are relevant to all staff and all activities, so national economies of scale and energy can be achieved through a level of national coordination, through investing in ensuring there is access to evidence-bases for common approaches.

Sharing of resources

The NFCC Health and Wellbeing board will be responsible for disseminating the fire related health and wellbeing resources. Dissemination will be tailored in order to recognise the diversity of presentation and communication methods required meet the needs of the broad audience and diverse profiles within the fire community. A knowledge exchange plan will be established to share good and leading practice across the fire community and between organisations. This includes quarterly national workshops to disseminate practice or policy recognised by the Health and Wellbeing board as leading and quality assured, lunch and learn briefings to disseminate new learning, practitioner networks and facilitate learning opportunities.

Summary

By implementing this framework, and updating its associated governance system, which is flexible, inclusive and facilitates two-way feedback.

The framework provides a way to design and action programmes of work, with appropriate quality assurance and evaluation plans to ensure the framework will have demonstrable influence and outcomes within the next five

years. It builds on the evidence based collated to support this framework ensuring that the five key principles of that work are built into the framework and integrates the key concepts of the fire and rescue community health and wellbeing approach which outlines the need for a whole person and system approach to health, creates clear definitions of health and wellbeing, shifts the focus to an opt-in health promotion and resilience model that is everyone's responsibility whilst ensuring support is evidence informed and quality assured.

Health and Wellbeing Framework Visual Model

Key framework principles for successful delivery

- ✔ Supporting your own wellbeing
- ✔ The holistic career approach: from new starter into retirement
- ✔ Applying our prevention approaches and skills to ourselves
- ✔ Making it everything we do
- ✔ Creating shared language across the sector



Figure 2: Visual model of the health and wellbeing framework

Appendix

To further support peoples engagement with the health and wellbeing framework we have shared the visualisations of roles, life events and stressors, the key concepts document that help link this framework with the [prior research work undertaken by NTU and available online](#) and a mapping of the framework against fire related frameworks, models and polices.

Roles, life events and stressor maps

To understand and develop a response to the interconnected world the fire community operates within this framework built on NTU research that mapped the complex network of related factors between an employee's role and life events to help understand and show typical career trajectories over the course of time, plotting out the most typical pathways and pressure points.

The images shared below showcase a whole system, a visual of typical stressors for everyone across society and then a series of typical career visuals for reference.

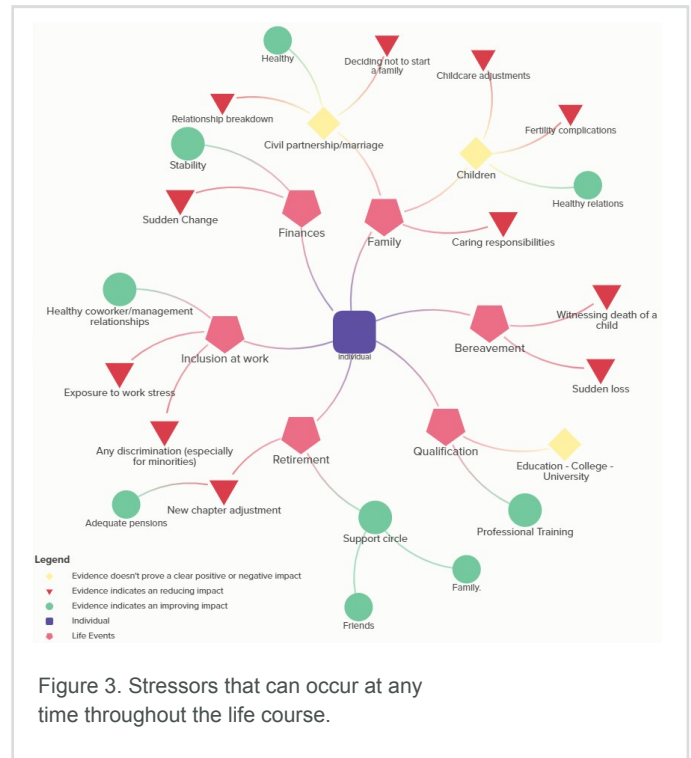
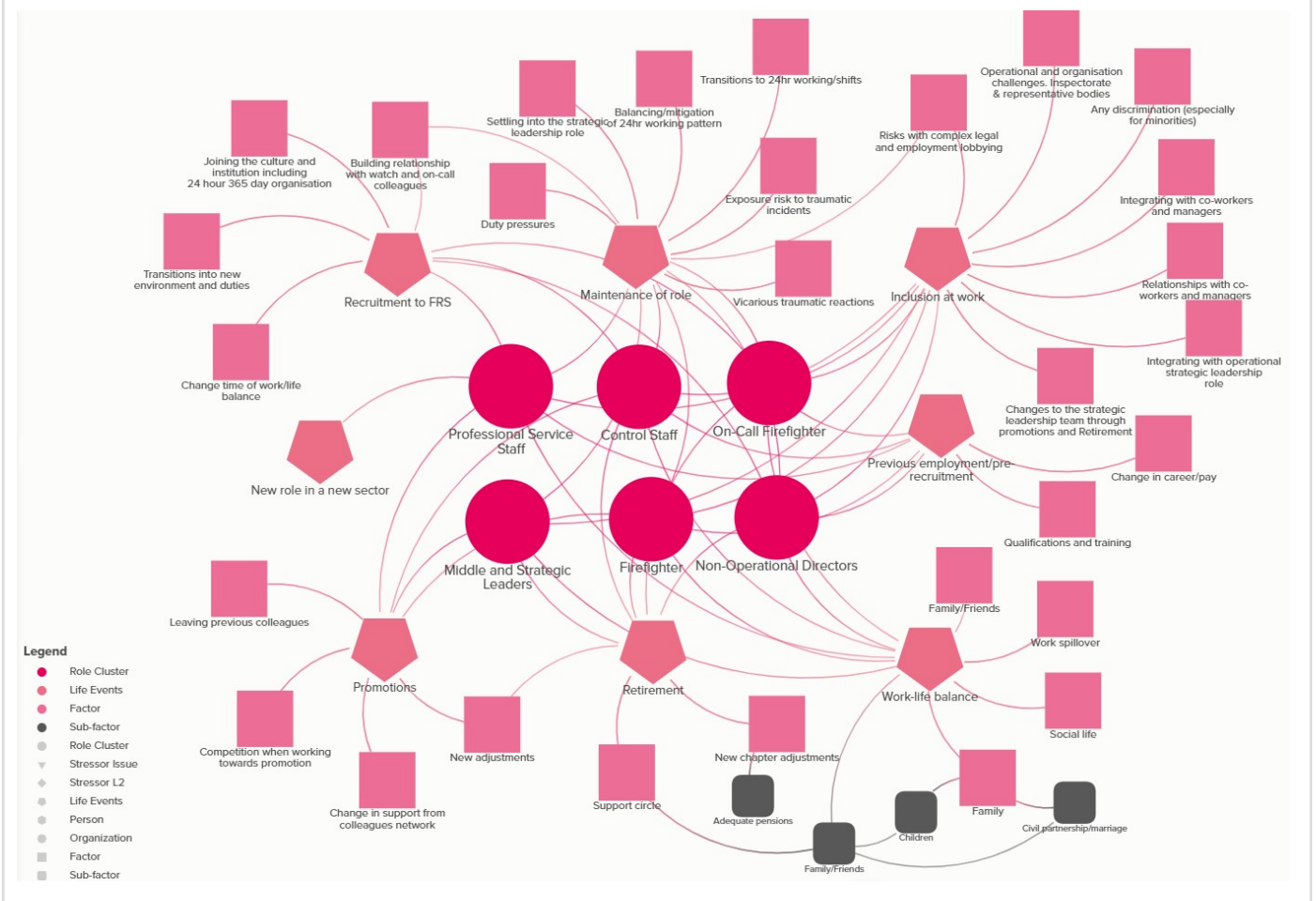


Figure 4. Representation of the complexity between role clusters, life events and factors in the sector



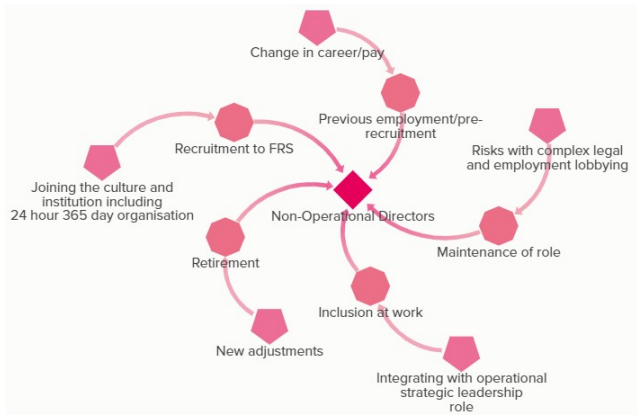


Figure 5. Common transition points experienced by Non-Operational Directors

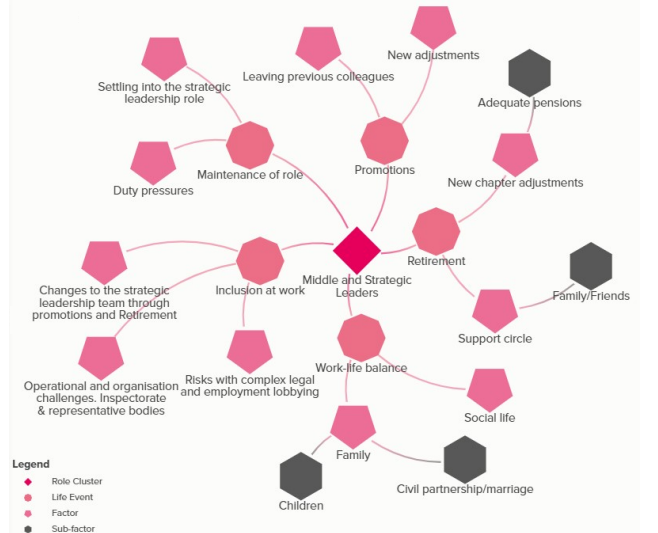


Figure 8. Common transition points experienced by Middle and Senior Leaders

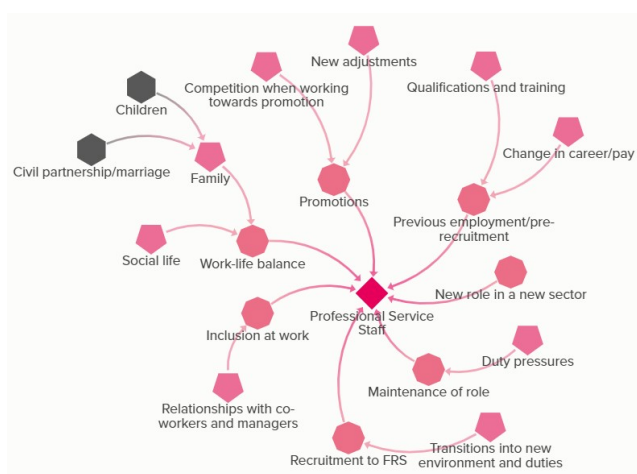


Figure 6. Common transition points experienced by Professional Services Staff

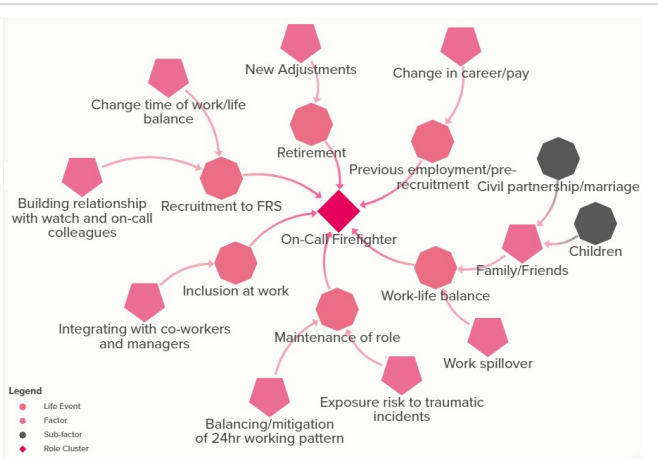


Figure 9. Common transition points experienced by On-Call Firefighters

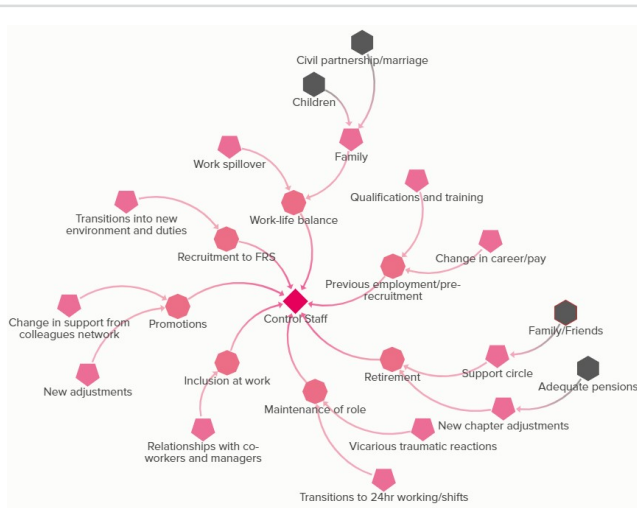


Figure 7. Common transition points experienced by Control Staff

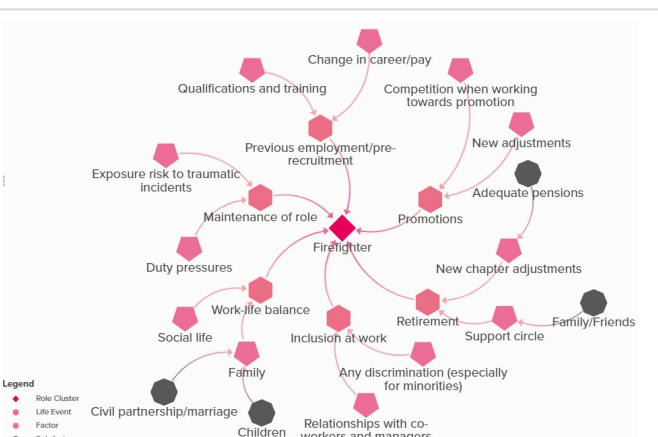


Figure 10. Common transition points experienced by Firefighters.

Summary of Key Concepts within the NFCC Health and Wellbeing Report and Framework

This briefing document introduces you to key and current challenges in the health and wellbeing framework. It gives an overview of these key concepts that the recent NFCC report on Mapping the Health and Wellbeing Across the Firefighting Career and Assessing the Current Demands has built its recommendations on. These were evidenced through the phase one of the project work and have consequently informed the framework. This document lays those key concepts out in a brief summary and overview. Alongside these six key concepts it is clear that leadership and peer support for health and wellbeing runs through each and every concept and should be seen to run across all levels or services, organisations and the fire community.



Figure 11: Key concepts of the health and wellbeing findings.

Key concept 1: Holistic health

There are three parts to understanding what holistic health means in the framework. The first is that psychological and physical health have been consistently evidenced to be connected in many different ways and so wellbeing should include the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of our people. One of the most frequently identified protective factors to maintain good health is through social connectedness. The extent to which an individual feels a sense of belonging and connections with groups of others has been shown to prevent both mental and physical ill health. As such, this should be recognised throughout the policy and practices of the fire community relating to both physical and psychological health and wellbeing and given appropriate priority and sponsorship. It should be an important consideration in the design of health promotion and the development of health and wellbeing approaches, strategies, and the nature of interventions.

The second aspect of holistic health is that the framework is designed to support people from joining the fire community, to transitioning into retirement (or changing sector). Designing support for every stage of the career journey is an important aspect of the framework.

The third aspect of holistic health is acknowledging that people have events at home that impact on their work, and events at work that impact on their home life. Acknowledging that the two (work and home) are interrelated is important in seeing the whole of the individual. Supporting people at all levels and stages within the fire community to have a healthy balanced life, means individuals will have an increased chance of having a healthy engagement with their work as well as a happier life.

Key concept 2: Defining wellbeing and mental health

The most widely used and evidenced definition for mental wellbeing suggests that wellbeing is the “positive aspect of mental health” that promotes personal happiness and good function. It is considered to be part of a spectrum of mental health, with poor mental health and mental illness representing just one end of a spectrum.

Key concept 3: Moving to a focus on health promotion and resilience

Prevention is better than cure and invest in health to save from ill health are phrases that demonstrate how we have moved away from thinking of how people are ‘ill’ and instead we want to try to support good health and prevent ill health. Instead of a traditional reactionary model of illness, treatment, recovery, this approach is a proactive framework to support employees physical, psychological, and social health and wellbeing. It moves the policy, practice and intervention focus from detecting ill health to a framework of interlinked activities designed to promote and support the maintenance of good holistic physical, psychological, and social health, personal resilience and understanding of self. Mental health promotion is aimed at creating a good environment, where the challenges to good mental health can be significantly reduced. To achieve this, it focuses on the positive sides of health (strength and assets), with less attention to deficits and needs. This also recognises the need to provide support for a range of challenges, and not just traumatic exposure. The interventions are still important to provide support, but this needs to support all staff across operational and non-operational roles, professional services staff and through a range of issues such as bereavement; the end of a meaningful relationship; fertility challenges and decisions; financial hardship and organisational strain.

Key concept 4: The responsibility for everyone to understand themselves better.

There is a need through education and role modelling to enable every member of the fire community to understand their own mental and social wellbeing. By providing the language and communication skills to talk about how we are feeling, our emotions, and the impact they are having on us, we can increase self-awareness in individuals across organisations to enable them to state their needs and manage their wellbeing more effectively. This can be done through policy,

support structures and procedure re-design. This is better understanding of how we feel is called emotional literacy, it is the ability to recognise, label, and communicate access to both feelings and relevant support. By being more aware and understanding and labelling how we are feeling, we can better understand, talk, and manage these feelings. This also means that leadership at all levels of the service have a responsibility to help support others, and themselves, to have good mental health and wellbeing.

Key concept 5: Opt-out rather than opt in support

Leading evidence suggests that structures within a health promotion approach should be designed as opt out rather than opt in. This means that they are designed, implemented, and audited on the premise of being applicable and relevant to everyone, until they state otherwise and individuals take personal responsibility to decide to opt-out, rather than needing to request to opt-in).

Key concept 6: A quality assured, mixed ecology of support

The evidence reviewed in the accompanying report is clear that those who are currently needing mental health support within the fire community are dealing with a range of challenges, and therefore a range of support and interventions should be offered. This means that the interventions used to support those with depression, anxiety, acute stress from relationship breakdown, bereavement and traumatic stress should be different in design from each other as they are addressing different challenges. The offer the fire service provides should therefore be quality assured, evidence based and a mixture of support and intervention approaches, to recognise and support these differing challenges.

How does this framework sit within the wider landscape of existing related work?

The team have reviewed the existing frameworks typically known or used by the emergency services. The content of these have been mapped by the team against the framework to ensure these compliment each other and do not compete or conflict. This includes a large section of existing NFCC tools and products.

Compatibility with the Workforce Good Practice Frameworks and Maturity Models

Mapping against the ten maturity models.

Leadership and Development – this is consistently recognised as intertwined with supporting the wellbeing of self and others. The levels within this have been mapped and align with the Framework.

Recruitment – this is highlighted as highly relevant to wellbeing within the Framework and the levels map against the Framework.

Learning Organisation – The levels within this maturity

model have been mapped against the Framework and there is complementary activities and structures throughout.

Blended Learning – although the Framework does not cover this explicitly, the phase 1 report covers the inclusive nature and clear benefits to wellbeing of this approach. The levels have been checked and are complimentary.

Performance Management – the levels of this have been mapped against the Framework and are complimentary.

Employee Recognition – this is intertwined throughout the Framework and is complimentary with the levels on the maturity model, in both implicit and explicit connections.

Talent Management – the mapping between the Framework and the maturity model recognises both implicit and explicit factors which complement each other.

EDI – the Framework and the maturity model have strong complimentary synergies across the two. There are no conflicts.

HR Analytics – the need for this is outlined in the Framework in relation to wellbeing and the recommendations have been cognisant of the maturity model, consequently these are complimentary of one another.

Wellbeing – this warranted a more in depth mapping due to the closeness of the content between these two approaches within the fire community. The Framework and the levels of the maturity model were mapped and found to be complimentary with the Framework. There are no conflicting actions, approaches or positions between the two. There is a lot of shared content between these, and for a service to implement both of these two frameworks would not lead to a conflict. The maturity model for wellbeing is focussed more at a service, group or individual level where as the Framework accommodates the wider fire community, organisations (some of which are not fire and rescue services), groups, individuals and groups who are not employed by the fire and rescue service. Consequently there are differences in framing and implementation tools/approaches, but these are complimentary and do not conflict or compete. This also applies for the wellbeing policy framing that accompanies the wellbeing maturity model.

Mapping Against Existing NFCC Products and Tools

We have also mapped this against wider sector workstreams and have identified some interdependencies with the following work:

- The Fit for Future work – this is aligned to many improvement objectives within this overarching work, both implicitly and explicitly.
- The Cultural Action Plan – this Framework complements the work undertaken within that plan and associated activities across the community. These cannot be delivered

independently, as they are so intertwined, but they also cannot be adequately considered together. Therefore the Framework does not reference this specifically, but it is implicitly dependent throughout.

- The NFCC Leadership Framework – the Framework is aligned to this work and inextricably linked. The Framework shares the approach with the Leadership Framework that leadership can be shown at any level and in all contexts. In this way, the Framework takes the position that all members of the fire community can show leadership and accountability for their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around them (as demonstrated through the Core Learning Pathways).
- Core Code of Ethics – the Framework complements the content of both the Core Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics Fire Standard developed by the Fire Standards Board.
- The NFCC Maturity Models - NFCC Maturity models: the Framework is complemented by the Wellbeing Maturity Model within the NFCC Maturity Models and Workforce Good Practice Framework. The reviewing team have not yet been able to assess the associated self-assessment tool, nor the Fire and Rescue Service Wellbeing Policy.
- The NFCC Interactive Career Pathways – this complements the Framework by giving additional details to the key concept of designing a health and wellbeing offer that is holistic across the fire community and its many roles and career paths.

Compatibility with the Mental Health at Work Commitment

Mapping the framework against the six standards within the commitment had clear compatibility.

1. Prioritise mental health in the workplace by developing and delivering a systematic programme of activity. This standard contains four main actions:

- Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan, drawing from best practice and representing the views of employees across the organisation, specifically exploring feedback from people with mental health problems.
- Demonstrate senior ownership and drive board-level accountability, underpinned by a clear governance structure for reporting.
- Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing using available data.
- Seek feedback from your employees and create clear opportunities to make improvements based on feedback.

2. Proactively ensure work design and organisational culture drive positive mental health outcomes. This standard contains five main actions:

- Provide employees with good physical workplace conditions
- Create opportunities for employees to feed back when work design, culture and conditions are driving poor mental health.
- Address the impact that a range of activities have on employees, including organisational design and redesign, job design, recruitment, working patterns, email, 'always-on' culture, and work-related policies.
- Give permission to have work-life balance and to work flexibly and agile.
- Encourage openness during recruitment and throughout employment so appropriate support can be provided.

3. Promote an open culture around mental health. This standard has three parts:

- Proactively change the way people think and act about mental health by increasing awareness and challenging mental health stigma.
- Empower employees to champion mental health and positively role model in the workplace.
- Encourage open two-way conversations about mental health and highlight the support available at all stages of employment.

4. Increase organisational confidence and capability. This standard has four parts:

- Increase mental health literacy of all staff and provide opportunities for staff to learn about how to manage their own mental health.
- Ensure all staff are suitably prepared and educated to have effective conversations about mental health, and where to signpost for support, including in inductions for all new staff.
- Train your line managers in spotting and supporting all aspects of mental health in the workplace, and include regular refresher training.
- Support managers to think about employee mental health in all aspects of their role including during staff inductions, one-to-one meetings, team meetings and return-to-work meetings.

5. Provide mental health tools and support. This standard has three parts:

- Raise awareness of the resources and tools available, including Mental Health at Work.
- Ensure provision of tailored in-house mental health support and signposting to clinical help, including but not limited to digital support, occupational health, employee assistance

programmes, the NHS.

- Provide targeted support around key contributors of poor mental health, e.g. financial wellbeing.

6. Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting. This standard has two parts:

- Identify and track key measures for internal and external reporting, including through the annual report and accounts.
- Measure organisational activity and impact using robust external frameworks, e.g. the Business in the Community Responsible Business Tracker and Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index.

Conclusion

The NFCC Framework maps on to these commitments well. In some places the commitments are clearly designed for an organisation, rather than a community of organisations (UK Fire and Rescue Services, charities, representative bodies), and therefore are more detailed in their expectation than the Framework can be. Overall, these are compatible for the fire community and complement one another.

Associated Support Offers

We have also reviewed support and resources we know are commonly used in the fire community. More detail of this is also contained in the report from phase one of the work. An indicative list includes:

- The Fire Fighters Charity - <https://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk>
- The Blue Light Card Foundation - <https://www.bluelightcard.co.uk/foundation.php>
- Blue Light Together - <https://www.bluelighttogether.org/home>
- Shout - <https://giveusashout.org/>
- Lifelines Scotland - <https://www.lifelines.scot/>



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