



# **WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

## **A Strategy for Supporting and Developing Members**



## Supporting and Developing Members at West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

### 1. Aims and Objectives

#### **Vision:**

All Members are effectively developed and supported to enable them to carry out their role on West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority to their full potential to support the delivery of good governance and assist the Fire Service in making West Midlands safer.

Effective leadership and clearly defined roles and responsibilities are crucial for organisations to work well. Members who are appropriately skilled and developed are better equipped to carry out their role, which in turn leads to role satisfaction and improved organisational performance.

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that all Members of West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA) are provided with appropriate support and development opportunities to enable them to carry out their various roles effectively.

The strategy will:-

- Ensure that all Members receive appropriate induction to the Fire Authority.
- Ensure that Lead Members and committee Chairs receive an appropriately tailored induction and the necessary support in their role.
- Encourage all Members to identify their own learning needs and individual learning styles and develop appropriate solutions.
- Enable the identification of Member training and development needs and opportunities for learning.
- Ensure that a learning and development plan is produced annually, that contributes to the Authority's core values, priorities and objectives and takes into account national priorities.
- Ensure that access to training and development activities is in line with the Authority's Equality and Diversity Strategy.
- Ensure that value for money is achieved from all Member training and development activities by ensuring that the delivery method is cost effective and the benefits are evaluated.

## **2. Member Development Working Group**

To ensure that Members are fully engaged with and able to influence the learning and development process, a cross-party Member Development Working Group has been established.

The Group is an open forum where Members and officers aim to establish, and continue to improve, a comprehensive and robust training and development process; ensure that Member development becomes part of mainstream organisational development activities and that the development of Members contributes to the Authority achieving its core values, priorities and objectives. The Group will report regularly to the Authority.

## **3. Induction**

The Authority will hold an annual induction event for new Members. This event will also act as an annual update for existing Members. The event will cover the following issues:-

- An overview of the Authority's roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue National Framework.
- The management structure and governance arrangements of the Authority, including the responsibilities of Members in their respective roles.
- The culture of a uniformed organisation.
- Financial management arrangements, including setting the precept.
- How the Fire Service operates in relation to prevention and protection strategies in respect of responding to incidents.
- Partnership working arrangements.
- Corporate Risk.
- The inspection framework that the Authority is subjected to and its Key Performance Indicators.
- Current issues facing the Fire Service.
- Support and development of Members.
- Ethical standards and the role of the Standards Committee.
- Members' allowances scheme.
- Member visits to fire stations.

The event will be delivered by the Chief Fire Officer and other principal officers, the Clerk, the Treasurer, and the Monitoring Officer.

In addition to this induction, committee Chairs and Lead Members will receive a tailored induction and support relative to their specific role.

The induction event will be reviewed annually by the MDWG to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of Members and its content remains relevant to the work of the Authority and the Service's core values, priorities and objectives.

#### **4. Members' Handbook**

Members will be issued with a Handbook providing essential information about West Midlands Fire Service and further detailed information on the subjects covered in the induction. The Handbook will be kept under review by the MDWG and updated as necessary. The Handbook will contain the following documents:-

1. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004  
National Frameworks 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/08  
The Combination Scheme  
Strategic Aims and Corporate Objectives  
Codes, Protocols and Policies
2. Authority Membership and Schedule of Meetings
3. Committee Constitution and Membership
4. Standards Committee Procedures
5. West Midlands Regional Management Board
6. West Midlands Regional Control Centre  
Local Authority Controlled Company
7. Officers of the Authority and Scheme of Delegation to Officers
8. Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business
9. Standing Orders Relating to Contracts
10. Financial Regulations Standing Orders
11. Definitions of Exempt Information  
Local Government Act 1972 - Schedule 12a

12. West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service – General Information
13. Members' Information
14. Code of Conduct and Related Documents
15. Member Role Descriptions and Member Development Strategy
16. Glossary of Commonly-Used Acronyms

## **5. The Personal Development Review (PDR) Programme**

All Members will be expected to participate in a Personal Development Review (PDR) programme.

**Stage 1** - In July of each year (i.e. following the Authority's annual meeting, which normally takes place in June) Members will be expected to attend a one to one meeting with their Group Leader (an independent advisor will be commissioned to conduct PDR meetings for Group Leaders themselves) to discuss their personal development objectives and identify any training requirements for the forthcoming (municipal) year. *(See form attached at Appendix 1)*

As part of the PDR process, Members will also be asked to look at their own individual learning styles to ensure that training and development activities can be delivered in a way that compliments their identified learning style.

PDR meetings will be **confidential**. The Clerk will however require feedback on the training and development needs identified to enable a suitable programme of events (i.e. a Training and Development Plan) to be developed that will meet Members' needs and that can be delivered in a way that compliments their learning styles. The relevant forms (appended) identify which pages should be returned to the Clerk and which pages you should keep.

**Stage 2** - In April of each year, Members will be asked to look back on their performance and achievements over the year (i.e. since their Stage 1 PDR meeting) and review the progress they have made on the Personal Action Plan. *(See form attached at Appendix 2)*

This will be a paper exercise only; but members should discuss their progress with their Group Leader (which can be by way of a further one to one meeting if the member prefers) and provide him/her with a copy of the review form. Members will need to alert the Clerk to any additional training and development needs that have been identified.

## **6. Member Training and Development Plan**

The PDR process will inform the development of a programme of training and development events to meet the needs of all Members, which may include:-

- internal training (e.g. through the Policy Planning Forum);
- external conferences and seminars;
- external training courses.

Additional events may also be included in the plan that the Chief Fire Officer/Corporate Board/Clerk/Group Leaders feel are relevant to Members in meeting the overall aims and objectives of the Fire Service.

The plan will be approved by the MDWG in July of each year. The MDWG will keep the plan under review to ensure that it continues to be relevant, keeping in mind national developments and/or policy changes.

Access to training and development activities shall be in-line with the Authority's Equality and Diversity Strategy. Activities delivered internally will be scheduled at a time to suit the majority of Members. Where possible, special arrangements will be made to accommodate special requirements.

For training and development opportunities that have a cost implication, Members will be asked to identify how the activity will help them carry out their role, meet their personal development plan objectives and meet the Authority's objectives to ensure that value for money is achieved. The Director of Human Resources, in consultation with the relevant Group Leader will consider requests within three working days.

## **7. Evaluation**

Members will be asked to evaluate each training and development activity they undertake to ensure that it has met both their needs and the needs of the Authority in terms of value for money. (*See form at Appendix 3*) Members will also be requested to share the knowledge acquired by providing a short briefing to the Policy Planning Forum.

## **8. Duties and Responsibilities of Members**

For training and development to be effective, Members must be willing to take part and embrace the process. Encouragement and support will be offered to Members to ensure that they reap the benefits of the whole Member development programme/vision. However, Members themselves need to demonstrate commitment to the following principles/responsibilities to ensure its success:-

- All training is offered for Members' benefit and for the benefit of the Authority/Fire Service and its customers.
- All training is non-party political and party political disagreements or disputes will be left behind for the duration of the training.
- All new Members are expected to take part in the induction programme.
- All existing Members are also expected to take part in the annual induction programme, which also serves as an annual update.
- All Members are expected to attend a PDR meeting and complete a Personal Development Plan each year which will require them to review their performance and identify their training and development needs.
- Once a Member has signed up for a course, they are expected to attend and remain for the duration of the event (unless an emergency arises) as failure to do so may result in the Authority incurring unnecessary expenditure.
- At all times during any training event, each participant has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, this includes switching off mobile phones.
- It is Member's responsibility to ensure that any special requirements are communicated to the training provider.
- Members have a responsibility to help us monitor and evaluate the training provided and must therefore complete a training evaluation form at the end of any course they attend. Members are expected to be honest and as constructive as possible so that any necessary changes can be made.





**West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority**

**STAGE 1**  
**Personal Development Review (PDR) Questionnaire**

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to the development and support of its members. The Personal Development Review is designed to enable members to get to grips with their role on the Fire Authority enabling the Authority to meet its corporate priorities:

- Communities and Partnerships
- Response
- People
- Value for Money

This questionnaire asks you to consider your achievements over the past 12 months, what you hope to achieve in the next 12 months and what training and development needs you may have to help you to meet your objectives.

One of the aims of the PDR process is to encourage discussion. The meeting should be a two way process which encourages debate and discussion.

Name:.....

Constituent Authority:.....

Date of Stage 1 PDR Meeting:.....

Stage 1 PDR Meeting Conducted by:.....



1. Skills Set Analysis

1.1 Please identify your current level of knowledge/skill below:-

| <b>Knowledge and Skills</b>   | <b>No Training Required</b> | <b>Some Training Required</b> | <b>Full Training Required</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| WMFRA structures and services   |                             |                               |                               |
| “The Plan” and WMFRA’s corporate priorities                                   |                             |                               |                               |
| Governance arrangements, including your accountabilities and responsibilities |                             |                               |                               |
| The budgetary process   |                             |                               |                               |
| Your role within the community  |                             |                               |                               |
| The Ethical Framework   |                             |                               |                               |
| Equality & Diversity in the Fire Service                                      |                             |                               |                               |



1.2 It is recognised that members will already have transferable skills in relation to time management, communications and ICT. However, if you feel you require additional training or support in these, or any other areas not listed above, please identify in the space below:-

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

1.3 Any other issues you wish to bring to the attention of the Clerk:-

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

***RETURN TO CLERK***



**2. Personal Action Plan for the Forthcoming Year**

2.1 What are you aiming to achieve over the next 12 months in respect of your role on the Fire Authority? Consider what support you require in order to help you achieve your objectives and fulfil your responsibilities e.g. training, information or support from officers, giving consideration to your learning style.

| Agreed objective | Desired performance outcome | Timescale |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
|                  |                             |           |
|                  |                             |           |
|                  |                             |           |
|                  |                             |           |

Signed (Councillor): ..... Signed (Group Leader): .....

Date: .....

**RETAIN FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS**



**3. Training and Development Plan**

Training and development requirements to support my personal objectives.

Consider what support you require in order to help you achieve your personal objectives e.g. training, information or support from officers, giving consideration to your learning style.

| Development Need | Timescale |
|------------------|-----------|
|                  |           |
|                  |           |
|                  |           |
|                  |           |

Signed (Councillor): .....Signed (Group Leader):.....

Date: .....

**RETURN TO CLERK**



**West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority**

**STAGE 2**  
**Personal Development Review (PDR) Questionnaire**

Name:..... Constituent Authority:.....

Group Leader:..... Date of PDR Meeting:.....

1. Review of Personal Action Plan Objectives (refer to STAGE 1 form)

| Agreed objective | Progress and resultant performance improvement<br>(Consider what has helped or hindered) | Action<br>(e.g. complete or roll fwd) |
|------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
|                  |  |                                       |
|                  |  |                                       |
|                  |  |                                       |
|                  |  |                                       |

**RETAIN FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS**



West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

Training Evaluation Questionnaire

Name:.....

Constituent Authority:.....

Stage 1 PDR Meeting Conducted by:.....

Training Course/Conference/Seminar Attended:.....

Date of training course/conference/seminar:.....

Training Provider:.....

1. Did the course meet your training and development objectives as identified in your Personal Action Plan?

|     |          |          |    |
|-----|----------|----------|----|
| Yes | Somewhat | A little | No |
|-----|----------|----------|----|

2. Main Learning Points:.....  
.....  
.....

3. Any further comments: :.....  
.....  
.....

**RETURN TO CLERK**