Academic Literature Review of Direct Entry into the UK Fire and Rescue Service

Findings from project work commissioned by the National Fire Chiefs Council, completed by Nottingham Trent University

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Executive Summary

The National Fire Chiefs Council commissioned a literature review to provide an evidence base to inform the development of an options appraisal paper in their consideration of the development of a direct entry (DE) route to strategic leadership roles with the UK Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). This report summarises the methods, review, findings and summary of the academic and grey literature relating to the consideration of developing a centrally coordinated DE pathway.

The literature review has drawn predominantly from critical occupations such as policing, health, military and other risk-based occupations. It has drawn from research from both within the UK and international contexts. The review includes relevant topic areas such as the review of current DE pathways within the UK FRS, the DE pathways in other risk-critical occupations such as policing, nursing and midwifery. Findings from summarising the review suggest the following areas should be considered in the scoping of the possible:

- Talent Management
- Cultural and Credibility Gaps
- Motivation
- Standards, Ethical Leadership and Management of High-Risk Occupations (Critical Incident Management)
- Definitions of Success

Recommendations have then been developed from this literature base in order to inform the next stages of consideration. These are displayed at the end of the report and also below, for references purposes. We commend this report to you to help inform the scope and range of those considerations.

Recommendations

Eleven recommendations have been developed from the literature review to inform the next stages of consideration by the National Fire Chiefs Council. These are as follows:

1) The UK Fire and Rescue Service and National Fire Chiefs Council should continue to develop their coordinated, shared talent management framework with their people management approach.

2) The UK Fire and Rescue Service and National Fire Chiefs Council should implement a quality assured ecology of multiple pathways to strategic leadership to pipeline talent into the senior management of the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

3) The National Fire Chiefs Council should consider this report, and the outputs of other relevant documents, practitioner research, and policy reviews, and consider further the development of a Direct Entry pathway.

4) Consultations involving key stakeholders should take place to address any concerns for, and highlight the benefits of, DE to ensure that opposition of a DE programme is not allowed to permeate through the wider fire service culture, in order to properly support DE candidates and avoid the detrimental effects on them such opposition could have.

5) Any DE pathway should be designed, advertised and recruited to attract a broad range of deep diversity within the future leadership roles of the UK FRS.

6) Leadership programmes running now and into the future should consider and facilitate a transformational leadership style and also identity entrepreneurship in accordance with the most productive way to facilitate diverse teams.

7) Alongside a DE programme, the FRS should look to implement shared leadership initiatives, drawing from social identity theory and transformative leadership theory, to improve DE leader-followership relations and to avoid devaluation of leadership positions from junior ranking fire service personnel.

8) The wider FRS sector should consider the balance needed during DE training between integration into existing work culture and room to express knowledge and culture from previous workplaces for DE candidates.

9) There needs to be central NFCC coordination of the development, implementation and delivery of any DE pathway between the key stakeholder groups.

10) Full reviews of criteria and values of successful teams should be completed and updated by NFCC, individual FRSs and other stakeholder groups to ensure systematic bias towards less diverse teams with more well-recognised approaches not rewarded more than teams with a diverse approach.

11) The DE candidates should have additional support build in for them to access both within their service and also through any national coordinated delivery of content (or a UK Higher Education university provider).

12) The sector wide implementation and coordination should be done with an extensive and well-resourced change management approach to prevent failure and fracture points as outlined in the reviewed evidence.

Project Context and Main Concepts

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Leadership Project has developed a work stream initiation document to scope the relevant thinking around the introduction of a DE pathway. The Project Board have commissioned a literature review to inform the next steps in their consideration of the programme direction. Specifically, they wanted the literature review to provide an evidence base to inform the development of an options appraisal paper. The literature review includes a full review of both the academic and the grey literature. It excludes a policy review.

The literature has included topic areas relevant to DE in the UK FRS. Topics include talent management, cultural barriers and change, progression trajectories, alignment to national standards, likely impacts on ethical leadership, likely impacts on cultural acceptance, likely impacts on leadership and management, likely impacts on team working, likely impacts on social and demographic characteristics, likely impacts on ethics, codes and behaviours. The literature review has drawn predominantly from critical occupations such as policing, health, military and other risk-based occupations. It has drawn from research from both within the UK and international contexts.

Documents and evidence consulted ahead of the search to scope and frame the literature review:

- Extracts from the HMICFRS publications (provided by Leadership Project Team)
- NFCC Leadership Project Documentation
- Work Stream Initiation for DE Pathway
- Multi-tier Entry: Improving Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainability in the UK FRS Leadership Base
- NFCC Leadership Project: Briefing Paper

Talent Management

The main concept within the literature review aside from DE, is talent management. This can be defined as the strategic management of the supply and flow of talented individuals into an organisation or sector, where the management of this talent as a strategic resource is coordinated through distinct and separate strategic human resource management decisions and practices (King and Vaiman, 2019). Crucially, the strategic nature of the talent management approach recognises the talent flow in the context of the systems and structures, economic, political, regulatory, technological, and cultural context of the sector in question and their resulting ability to attract, engage, and retain talented employees. In this sense, the HR tools and approaches are applied within the management of talent, within different entry and support processes into and through pathways of career progression through a sector. Talent management at the macro level would consider the views and forces of politics and regulators. The UK FRS has been at the heart of significant pressure from both of these over the past two years, either through the introduction of HMICFRS, or the alterations to the local governance structures on English FRSs (Andrews, Ashworth and Meier, 2014) which is outlined in the introduction section of this report.

Following the review of the literature on Talent Management, the main principles were mapped against the current NFCC Leadership programme and the existing defined workstreams for Talent Management. These have experienced rapid development in order to ensure that a multi-pathway approach exists. This mapping was to ensure the current literature review complemented the existing direction of current policy and strategy. The outcomes of that mapping were supportive of the current activity and strategy within the NFCC Leadership programme. This is also supported by the findings of Leggat, Liang and Howard (2020) who concluded in Australia that "sector-wide strategic talent management may provide greater benefits than individual organisational talent management in public sector organisations". Kravariti and Johnston (2020) highlighted that effective implementation could have significant benefits for the public sector to support and manage their context of increasingly complex socio-economic and policy problems, the changing labour markets, demographic trends and political landscape and the increasing move to digital. Having implemented this approach the NFCC are following advice from a range of international evidence to develop the public sector workforce (Poocharoen, and Lee, 2013). In this context the NFCC is already implementing current thinking and approaches which have an evidence-base.

Direct Entry and Fast Track Pathways

In the context of DE into the UK FRS, skilled and suitable candidates identified from areas outside of the fire service would need sufficient training necessary to integrate their existing qualities with the attributes required to take up leadership positions within the FRS. Identifying and training potential candidates in this manner is a method of talent management often referred to as a 'direct entry' (DE) programme. It should be clarified that acknowledgement of a pool of skilled talent external to an organisation does not necessitate that internal talent is inefficient or absent. Instead, it would be more beneficial to interpret external talent as *different* rather than necessarily *better* (Smith, 2015). Identifying high-potential candidates already within the FRS and putting them into a training programme that would look to accelerate their progress to a leadership position is another method of talent management to consider. This method is often referred to as a 'fast-track' (FT) programme.

List of Acronyms

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
DE	Direct Entry
ELP	Executive Leadership Programme
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
GEN	Graduate entry Nursing
HPDS	High Potential Development Scheme
HPLP	High Potential Leadership Programme
FT	Fast-Track
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council

Glossary

Direct Entry	Entry into an organisation, after training, at a senior level above that of ordinary entry level

Fast-Track	Rapid progression of a promotional ladder within an organisation as a result of specific training
Social Identity Theory	A theory of intergroup conflict based on perceived induvial-group identities (Turner and Oaks, 1986).
Talent Management	The strategic management of the supply and flow of talented individuals into an organisation or sector, where the management of this talent as a strategic resource is coordinated through distinct and separate strategic human resource management decisions and practices (King and Vaiman, 2019)
Transformational Leadership	A transformational leader is someone able to motivate and improve the morale of their followers through awareness of follower developmental needs, their sense of identities, and through projection of a collective, or organisational, identify (Odumeru and Ifenyi, 2013)

This report summarises the findings across the literature, the practices currently used in these contexts and the main points for consideration.

Methodology and Approach

In order to identify and gain insight into the relevant topic areas surrounding the consideration of a DE pathway for the UK FRS, an extensive literature review was completed by a review team (academic and researcher) from Nottingham Trent University. The literature review was conducted following a common approach to literature searching and reviewing. This was done by entering a developed set of keywords into academic databases and scholar search functions, which aim to gather types of relevant articles such as systematic literature reviews, rapid reviews, academic articles, pre-prints, and other academic literature on relevant topics to DE. Each search return was reviewed and evaluated by an academic or researcher who then included the article in the review based on the relevance to the topics considered. These were detailed and stored between the review team and the findings developed from the common threads between these documents. The findings are presented in the report below for consideration of the development of a DE pathway by the National Fire Chiefs Council. Recommendations were developed from the findings and are grouped and summarised at the end of the report.

The key search terms included:

"fire, emergency, military, police, service, health" and "direct entry, fast track, multi tier entry"

"leadership, equity, equality, diversity, cultural acceptance, organisational acceptance, experience" (excluding, "emergency department," "ED," "treatment")

"fire, emergency, military, police, service, health, talent management"

"talent management" and "direct entry"

"evaluation" and "direct entry"

"risk occupations" and "direct entry"

"critical incident management leadership"

"leadership" and "high risk occupations"

There was a sequential search of the grey literature. The top ten (using ranking criteria of circulation and if present the impact factor) of the professional journals for fire, health/nursing/midwifery, police, military, and pre-hospital emergency care. The search term "direct entry" was used to search the content of each of these journals. The yield was then reviewed and included if deemed relevant in the literature review. The academic databases and the learning centres of the professions detailed above were searched for relevant evaluation reports on the introduction of DE pathways.

The two authors then integrated their initial knowledge from the literature, combined their findings to produce a master set of findings and collaboratively authored the report.

Introduction

In January 2020, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, Sir Thomas Winsor, published his first annual HMICFRS 'State of Fire and Rescue' assessment report for the year 2019 (Winsor, 2020). While the report highlighted some of the FRS's strengths, such as its dedication to serve its communities, its response to emergency incidents, and its admirable perception from a public viewpoint, the review also highlighted some areas deemed in need of reform. One such area is that of talent management. Sir Thomas makes reference to a lack of talent management across services and describes how some staff see talent assessment measures (e.g. appraisals) as unimportant. Of particular interest to this review, the report indicates that the current pattern of promotion that often sees a Deputy Fire Officer step into an open Chief Fire Officer position may be failing to add diversity of both skills and thought in leadership positions. It is acknowledged that deputies are likely good candidates for promotion to such positions, however looking to candidates from other services or sectors could help to add such diversity. Improved diversity, it is proposed, could have potential implications for the level of success for future operations, particularly as responsibilities for the FRS broaden. The need to implement better mechanisms for support and development of staff is suggested to be urgent.

Similar calls can be seen when reviewing the literature in other professions. For example, the literature focussing on nursing outlined two main drivers for the development of their DE pathway across different countries. This can be summarised through the paper by Bombard, Chapman, Doyle, Wright, Shippee-Rice and Kasik (2020) who reviewed the Clinical Nurse Lead and different models to reach that position. They identified a sense of urgency to create new approaches to nursing education and nursing practice models due to a forecasted shortage of nursing, or in some cases a need to change models of care which need more roles within the profession (such as outlined by Narchi, Silva, Gualda, Bastos, 2010 in the profession of midwifery in Brazil), and a second driver to use the DE pathway to improve patient care through innovation and new approaches. The drivers for the introduction of a policing DE included the need for a change in policing leadership approaches, and the need to influence policing culture (Hoggett, Redford, Toher and White, 2019), a lack of diversity and underrepresentation of BAME communities and a desire to attract the highest possible calibre personnel (Winsor 2012a), as well as significant pressure from political will (Smith, 2016).

Talent management programmes are already in place within the FRS or have been utilised in the past. Starting in 2008, the NFCC Executive Leadership Programme (ELP) aims to provide a training programme to develop leaders to manage ongoing and future challenges within the FRS at an executive management (e.g. Chief Fire Officer) level (Blacksell, 2019). The ELP is run through a postgraduate certificate-level course, overseen by Warwick Business School, based around five modules ('Exploring the Golden Threads', 'Thinking about Leadership', 'Leadership in the UK Public Sector', 'Leading Strategic Change', and 'Leading in 21st Century Fire Service') that follow the 'golden threads' of diversity, political acuity and self-awareness (NFCC Fire Central Programme Office, 2020). The programme is now in its 14th year and will be looking to start induction of a new cohort in February 2021, with the intention of having all five modules completed by November 2021 (NFCC, 2020).

Another example, the UK FRS began piloting the High Potential Leadership Programme

(HPLP) in 2009, looking to build leadership capacity in line with the FRS Equality and Diversity strategy (2008-2018) by training high-potential candidates to accommodate middle/strategic management positions. The initial pilot programme offered a FT opportunity for existing operational staff (including retained) at Firefighter and Crew Manager levels, with roughly 30 places available across 13 services. Eligibility criteria required entrants to be at Firefighter or Crew Manager levels, or, if still in development, to have demonstrated suitable competence, with previous background experience and qualifications (vocational or academic) taken into consideration, although not strictly necessary. A FT programme for non-operational staff and DE programme for those outside of the FRS were due to begin piloting the year after, in 2010 (Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority, 2009). Relying on this style of talent management alone, however, would limit potential enrolment to only internal candidates.

A similar approach recently taken by Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (2020) combines aspects of DE and FT into a single talent management programme. Referred to as the High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS), the programme looked to bring in candidates from outside of the FRS, who had achieved a minimum 2:1 university bachelor's degree, with the intention of rapidly progressing them through a bespoke development plan, from their initial role of Firefighter to Crew Manager to Watch Manager to Station Manager, within seven years of induction. The deadline for application to the HPDS ended in September 2020. Again, relying on this style of talent management alone has its limitations, such as limiting enrolment to only external candidates. What's more, not all external candidates are necessarily educated to university graduate level (Smith, 2016), meaning this scheme could miss out on highly experienced and skilled potential candidates, on the basis of educational attainment.

Although these additional pathways add to the ways in which talent management can be managed through the organisation, and they provide ways in which to respond to the external factors on the sector, they are limited to recognising and progressing talent from within the organisation, more than they can effect change to identify and secure talent from outside the organisation/occupation, an important factor (as outlined in the Policing FTDE evaluation). The internal pool of talent is an important place to develop lots of different pathways for progression. However, this should be complimented by additional pathways for progression external to the organisation too. Good practice is seen as having different pathways for progression that recognise and account for many different forms of career pathway, educational attainment, levels of strategic experience and breadth of experiences across different sectors. It is this ecology of different pathways through the profession (such as the recent developments in nursing, see here for a representation of talent management ecology: https://www.nhsemployers.org/-/media/Employers/Publications/Workforce-Supply/NurseSupplyInfographic-2019.pdf) which facilitates the identification and diversity of talent within a sector.

Given the frequent referral to diversity as a driving factor within the report, this shall now be explored before the main findings of the review. Diversity has been increasingly valued for what it can bring, other than role modelling for those individuals inside or outside the leadership roles, to encourage the progression of others. The value that has been celebrated increasingly in practice and in the academic literature is that of diverse teams, increasing the diversity of skills, approaches, thinking and leadership preferences. This can be seen in the change of focus in academic publications over the years to why diversity within a leadership team can benefit the whole organisation in a range of ways. This is also reflected in the grey

literature and the FRS specific literature. The Bain report and other reports over the past 15 years have called for diversity to establish a service which reflected the diversity across the communities they serve.

The above arguments were built on equality of opportunity, through equity of access. These arguments are still relevant and legitimate, but the richness and breadth of the argument has expanded with the academic findings to further detail the benefit of diverse teams beyond representation. Diversity in leadership teams, and in all teams within an organisation, has tangible benefits due to the corresponding increase in diversity of skill set, approach and interactional style. Consideration of diversity within teams does not simply relate to protected characteristics such as ethnicity, but includes gender (not simply sex), age, nation of birth, career path, industry background and educational background (Lorenzo, Voigt, Tsusaka, Krentz, and Abouzahr, 2018). The concept of surface and deep diversity within teams is an important distinction. Surface diversity is that which is typically seen from observation, deep diversity is variety of skill set and approach (Wang, Cheng, Chen and Leung, 2019). The ability of the leader to see and recognise all kinds of diversity and individuals within a diverse team is also necessary for the team to function well (Homan and Greer, 2013), as is the leader's preference to use transformational leadership to recognise and facilitate the diverse range of skills and perspectives (Kearney and Gebert, 2009) and trust (de Jong, Gillespie, Williamson, and Gill, 2020). This is the kind of team composition and leadership, of different skill sets, different approaches, different backgrounds that Direct Entry could be instrumental in facilitating.

Following on from this area of research, transformational leadership in diverse teams needs to be alongside a sense of team collective identification (Shelma and Wegge 2018). The paper cites that "leaders can assume the role of *identity entrepreneurs* who craft a shared sense of 'we' and 'us' (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001; Reicher et al., 2005). Such leaders who actively engage in identity entrepreneurship define the boundaries of the group and shape the meaning of being a group member (Reicher et al., 2005). Leaders' crafting of shared identity has direct implications, not only to their own standing within the team, but also to team members' motivation and engagement (Steffens et al., 2014a)" (Shelma and Wegge, 2018, page 17). The authors go on to state practical ways to achieve this are the use of developing narratives of the team's common history (for example: we in the FRS, or we as citizens of our county), also developing norms and ideas that define the group. These are important to support the leadership to shape the team identity. However, the authors argue that "although leaders are theoretically equipped with the potential of forming a collective group identity, not all leaders are equally able to do so" (Shelma and Wegge, 2018, page 17). This is important to consider in the existing leadership training and pathways currently maturing ahead of any DE pathway, and also current senior leadership teams in post. Encouraging transformational leadership and the skills and tools to manage diverse, high performing senior teams is something current strategic leaders will need to be continuously developed for.

The recruitment of a more diverse workforce typically focusses on the recruitment of a more diverse ethnicity or gender (Colgan, Creegan, McKearney, and Wright, 2007; Andrews and Ashworth, 2018; MacDonald, 2019). The implications of a strong collective identity to the role of a Firefighter on the behaviour of those employees who are diverse have been argued to increase the behaviour of subversion in order to gain acceptance where male behaviours are imitated, in order to become accepted into groups and to maintain their role within those

groups (Brunsden, Hill and Maguire, 2014; Archer, 1999), as well as the occupational injury rates which have been argued to be greater in cultures with higher levels of males and masculinity (Stergiou-Kita, et al., 2015). The FRS within the UK continues to move away from a more hierarchical culture and continues to develop the organisational style of operating (Bain, 2002; Winsor, 2020). These changes mean individuals occupy roles increasing in complexity and responsibility and need to be attracted and promoted based on a more diverse skill set, and DE could form part of this answer.

This is not without caution, however. Recent literature (see Solal and Snellman, 2020). has begun to provide evidence that more diverse teams are continually overlooked and not as valued or deemed as successful as white, male teams in white male dominated organisations. This is due to pattern matching, where those that are familiar to ourselves and those around us are rewarded more. This can happen unconsciously and without intention. The team that is more diverse and can produce innovative, new approaches, does not meet the performance criteria as they are not producing traditional behaviours. This means that unless any success criteria are suitably drafted and created, the diverse team will either not be rewarded as much as they do not fulfil the criteria as much as those in less diverse teams (with a more restricted, traditionally accepted approach), or the diverse team will adapt to fit the model of the more traditional, less diverse teams. In either situation, unless the organisation and sector are cognisant and actively design the chances of this happening out for their systems and structures, both the individuals and the organisation will not achieve the strategic objective of more diverse thought and approach. In these situations, the HMICFRS have a responsibility to acknowledge and support this in their own methodologies of inspecting. It may also offer an explanation for the findings of candidates identifying as BAME not progressing through the Policing FTDE as outlined in the evaluation (Campbell and Colover, 2020).

Sector-level support and guidance could help inform and mitigate against expectations of diversity do not negatively influence the diversity within leadership teams. There is some evidence that gender role expectations shape interactions and performance of the group (Chatman et al., 2008; van Dijk et al., 2018) and evidence that diverse teams should be able to make better decisions than less diverse groups after discussing and sharing "the richness and variety in knowledge, information, and perspectives present in their group" (van Dijk and Marloes, 2018, page 8; van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Diverse groups are as prone to relying on biases and heuristics such as gender role expectations rather than the individual contribution of each member. Therefore, careful criteria development and monitoring of these issues enables tracking and diagnosis. Within policing, studies to monitor these aspects have identified the changed perceptions when 'outsiders' use their authority and approach differently when in positions of power, as has been seen in female police leaders (Silvestri, Tong, and Brown, 2013).

Despite the multitude of DE programmes that have had application within the UK FRS, there is (perhaps presumably given the contemporaneity of some programmes, but surprisingly given the relatively long-term establishment of others) little-to-no academic or grey literature examining their effectiveness. Furthermore, there was a lack of academic literature evaluating the use of similar programmes internationally. As a result, it is necessary to consult the literature from critical occupations such as policing, health, military and other risk-based occupations, from which it is possible to draw comparisons to the UK FRS.

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Learning from Relevant Occupations

The literature from critical occupations such as policing, health, military and other risk-based occupations provided some further areas to inform the literature review and findings within the review. Military facing literature did not offer too much of relevance as the officer training, structures and culture surrounding these are so different to public sector organisations.

Police

In March 2012, the final reports on the Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions were published containing recommendations for long-term reforms within the Police Service. The reports, Part 2 volumes 1 and 2, were commissioned by the Home Secretary and authored by Sir Thomas Winsor, advised by Sir Edward Crew QPM DL and Professor Richard Disney (Winsor, 2012a; 2012b) and concluded upon the recommendations started in Part 1 (Winsor, 2011). Throughout the Part 2 volume 1 report (Winsor, 2012a) chapters focussing on entry routes and promotion, Winsor repeatedly states that merit should be the ultimate deciding factor in regard to entry into and advancement within the Police Service, advising that DE programmes should look to as broad and deep a pool of talent available when searching for candidates in order to maximise the services offered by the police to the public. Suitable candidates should demonstrate the necessary competencies for their positions while also displaying exceptional skills and expertise not ordinarily found within the police service. It was encouraged that candidates from all employment sectors be considered for all DE roles with the exception of Police Chief Constable which Winsor argued, due to the high profile and immediate nature of the role, would demand a candidate with prior policing experience. As such, Winsor suggested that searches for DE candidates for Police Chief Constable look to overseas police forces, although acknowledged that he did not expect this to become a common method of recruitment at this level.

Two years after the final Winsor report was published, in April 2014 the College of Policing began recruitment for a Superintendent DE programme in England and Wales, the first of its kind for the Service at this level, offering 20 positions across seven police forces (College of Policing, 2014). Recruitment was aimed at senior management from outside of policing and training, provided by the College of Policing, was expected to last 18 months with an emphasis on shadowing existing police officers at various levels alongside ongoing work-based assessment, a research project assignment, and concluding with a final knowledge examination before sign-off and graduation (College of Policing, 2015a). DE was also made available at Inspector level through a similar programme to that of the Superintendent DE. Again aimed at experienced management from outside of the service, with training from the College of Policing, the Inspector DE programme lasted slightly longer, at 24 months, but graduates would also receive a postgraduate-level certificate accredited by Teesside University upon successful completion following work-based assessments, supervision evaluating operational competence, an action research project, and knowledge-based examination (College of Policing, 2018). A fast track to Inspector programme for serving Constables was also established to provide an opportunity to high- potential, ambitious Constables to advance through the service, undergoing two years training at sergeant level (College of Policing, 2015b).

Response to DE, in particular within the police, has not always been positive. Initial concerns are described in the Winsor (2012a) report, with the Association of Chief Police Officers

(ACPO) opposing what is saw as a Trenchard-style management entry scheme over issues such as reduced opportunities for existing officers, a lack of objective evidence for the efficacy of DE, the possibility of heightened risk to both operational integrity and human life, as well as claiming that the use of DE programmes in other sectors was exaggerated. The ACPO argued instead for better opportunities for existing officers in terms of internal training and external experiences. Concerns over lack of evidence for DE efficacy and reduction in opportunities for existing officers were echoed by the Police Superintendents' Association. There was also opposition from local police authorities with Kent Police expressing that the disadvantages of DE would be greater than the benefits, Dorset Police raising issues with regard to experience, credibility and competence, and Hertfordshire Constabulary stating that DE could cause a culture and credibility rift with regard to new entrants and existing staff. The concerns around experience, credibility and competence were raised also by the Police Federation of England and Wales and the Chief Police Officers Staff Association. The response from the National Association of Retired Police Officers was also oppositional, citing retention difficulties.

Despite this opposition, the report also demonstrated there was advocacy for DE. Specifically, from the Association of Police Authorities, the Association of Police Authority Chief Executives, the Metropolitan Police Service, and the National Black Police Association. Support came on the basis of beliefs that DE would help the police service stay in touch with modern talent management practices thereby improving recruitment and increasing diversity. It was often the case, however, that such support came with caveats such as the use of DE only under specific circumstances of need for external skills within the service, or where the entrants must gain or have previously gained police officer experience. Sir Thomas, himself, was also an advocate for DE, making a number of recommendations for its introduction and subsequent use (see recommendations 19-26, Winsor, 2012a) and, as mentioned earlier, DE programmes were implemented from 2014. From this it seems apparent that, from the outset, DE has been a complex and divisive issue amongst policing organisations. As summarised by Smith (2015), such divisive rhetoric is unnecessary, and the use of a less provocative narrative would be more beneficial to stakeholders on either side of the debate. Clearly, there are numerous challenges that accompany the implementation of DE.

We can look to the literature to explore these challenges and evaluate the effectiveness of these programmes for policing. A study by Smith (2016) focussed on the experiences of the 9 people that made up the first cohort of candidates on the DE Superintendent programme. The study consisted, primarily, on analysis of candidate responses during 90-minute, one-to-one, semi-structured interviews between October 2014 to May 2015, a relatively short time through the 18-month training period. Interviews were also conducted with then Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, and then president of the ACPO, Sir Hugh Orde.

From the transcripts, five themes were identified. The first, *history, motivation and context*, was based around the analysis that the 9 candidates had all had success in and took pride in their previous careers; all candidates had different backgrounds and therefore less prone to 'group think' (a phenomenon that was alluded to be widespread throughout the police service by the National Policing Improvement Agency in their response during consultation around DE in the police, as highlighted in the Winsor, 2012a, report); all, despite the differences in background, had strong desires to be involved in the betterment of public services. The second theme, *reflections on selection*, was based on the candidates' perceptions that their

differences were not appreciated by some existing members of the service who held preconceptions about how candidates should fit in with the existing culture. The third theme, *induction*, focussed on the deliberation from some candidates as to whether or not the training period was too long. Mixed levels of patience were shown from the candidates to the necessity of all aspects of the training, with some more critical of the relevance of the training content to the jobs they were being brought in to work, while others held more trust in the process. Some candidates also expressed the sense of a change in persona, away from that of their former civilian selves. This shift was built upon in the fourth theme, *credibility, culture and leadership perspectives*, with candidates expressing a sense of assimilation into the police service, and themselves beginning to question whether this may impact their ability to bring in different ideas and perspectives. The theme was also built around the perception of a strong lack of support for the DE programme from existing members of the police service, making specific reference to an incident in which existing service members shared negative views of the DE programme with the candidates:

> *"We met some Assistant Chief Constables and Deputy Chief Constables in the bar last night – and two of them said they wouldn't recruit a direct entrant to their force and wouldn't promote a direct entrant – and they didn't know a single ACPO person who would promote a direct entrant." (transcript from interview with direct entry candidate – Smith, 2016, p321).*

These remarks echoed the oppositional views held by ACPO towards DE before its implementation (as expressed in during their consultation around DE, highlighted in the Winsor, 2012a, report), so it may not be unexpected to see that opinions had not changed so early into the DE programme process. Smith (2016) rightly points out, however, how unhelpful and potentially damaging such comments could be to candidates and how the comments may be representative of a wider issue around culture in the police service. The final theme, the strategic perspective, was based around analysis of the interviews with Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe and Sir Hugh Orde. Again, it may not be unexpected that their views mirrored those of the organisations that they represented at the time (the Metropolitan Police Service and ACPO, respectively – Winsor, 2012a). These interviews further demonstrated the divisive views around the DE scheme. Importantly, Smith (2016) praised the candidates for displaying experience, leadership skills, self-awareness, emotional intelligence and high levels of motivation, but expressed concern that support for candidates from DE stakeholders may be superficial. Thus, demonstrating how divisive views towards DE may influence a culture of exclusion from existing police service personnel, which could become particularly problematic for DE outcomes if those personnel are directly involved with the programme.

A more recent study by Hoggett, Redford, Toher and White (2019) shows that impressions of the DE scheme amongst police service personnel have not necessarily improved as the programme has progressed through the years. Their study used a mixed methods approach to examine the perceptions of the DE programme from the perspective of existing officers, ranking from Constable to Chief Inspector. Analysing data from the national survey of police officers commissioned by the Constable Central Committee of the Police Federation of England and Wales, Hogget et al. found that only 4% of male officers, 3.9% of female officers, 3.9% of Constables and 4.1% of sergeants to Chief Inspectors indicated that they thought that DE was a 'good' or 'very good' idea. These findings spoke quite emphatically to a lack of support for DE, however the researches also used thematic analysis to provide additional

insight. Four key themes around DE were identified. The first, experience, highlighted concerns amongst existing police officers that senior police officers who entered the service through DE would not have the necessary experience and understanding of policing nuances to deliver competent leadership. The second theme, decision making, followed on from the first, highlighting concerns that poor decision making due to a lack of experience would lead to wider detrimental outcomes for personnel and the public, particularly with regard to 'frontline' decision making. The third theme, earning rank, again draws from concerns over experience, such that having senior officers with less perceived experience than their followerships would create a perception that the senior officers had not earned their place and may lead to a perceived devaluation of rank. The fourth theme, credibility, respect and trust, draws from all three previous themes by highlighting concerns that if junior officers begin to devalue the leadership of senior officers then the service would lose a sense of order, working against the notion of developing a clear direction which was one of the drivers for the initial implementation of the DE programme.

The concerns identified here add further support for those previously raised in the Winsor (2012a) report and Smith (2016) study. For additional context, Hogget et al. identified themes surrounding existing senior officers (those who had reached their positions through more 'traditional' circumstances). The four themes identified through this analysis are particularly pertinent, as they help to understand the reasoning behind the aforementioned concerns. The four themes on existing leadership were (again) experience, understanding frontline issues, forgetting what it is like to be a police officer and (re)earning credibility, respect and trust. The main context of these themes revolved around similar perceptions as the themes for DE leaders, except where DE leaders were perceived to have never gained the experience to make competent decisions thereby devaluing their credibility, existing leaders were perceived to have forgotten or lost touch with this experience leading to similar issues with credibility. Indeed, previous studies had highlighted the importance of experience of 'frontline' level police work as a highly considered attribute of police leadership by junior officers (Rowe, 2006).

Earlier this year, the College of Policing (Campbell and Colover, 2020) released their most comprehensive review of DE since its implementation (https://recruit.college.police.uk/Officer/leadership-programmes/Pages/Fast-Track.aspx), with an evaluation spanning from 2014 for the Superintendent programme (2016 for the Inspector programme) to June 2019. The evaluation consisted of analysis of over 100 interviews and over 400 survey responses from programme members (former candidates), line managers, Chief Constables and one Chief Officer. The findings were mostly positive with regard to the DE programme's success. One particular benefit included members' preparedness for their positions, both from a personal perspective and line manager/Chief Constable point of view, which was backed up by comparable levels of support to non-DE positions. The programme had been successful in bringing in new talent, demonstrated by numerous promotions amongst DE entrants. There had been an increase of diversity with roughly one-third of entrants coming from private sector backgrounds, and almost double the proportion of women on all programmes compared to national representation, although this increase did not necessarily apply to BAME entrants. Programme members had a positive influence on policing culture, changing negative preconceptions, improving morale and commitment while encouraging more open narrative between ranks. Furthermore, the review commends the members' use of existing skills and knowledge. The programme was not without its challenges, with support for candidates and for the projects long-term aims, recruitment, and

tailoring of taught material highlighted as areas in need of continued development. Overall, though, the report demonstrates an encouraging example of a beneficial DE scheme that other sectors or services such as the FRS could look to for example.

One differentiating aspect to note is that within the policing context, the literature highlights the political pressure as a driver for policing to develop their DE pathways, mainly due to the Winsor (2012) report. The NFCC have differing motivations for nationally coordinating their multi-pathways to development and progression. Through the commissioning of this literature review and the aims of the Leadership programme, it is evident that the main drivers originate internally and are aligned to sector development, although there is also political pressure to consider DE pathways, the NFCC talent management work has already been under development for some time, highlighting the value of multiple pathways for progression.

Nursing/Midwifery

In the field of nursing, DE programmes often take a different approach to those outlined in policing. Graduate entry nursing (GEN) sometimes referred to as 'second degree' entry, typically requires candidates to hold an undergraduate degree in an unrelated field before completing a post-graduate course, usually with a shorter duration than traditional nursing training programmes (Stacey et al., 2014). GEN programmes have been in place in the USA since 1971, brought in as a reaction to a shortage in nursing staff, and have since become more widely used internationally (Neil, 2011). There is an expectation made on GEN students to make use of the skills and experiences acquired during their first degrees to meet the accelerated demands of the course (Penprase & Koczara, 2009). These expectations are supported, generally speaking, with studies finding accelerated nursing students demonstrating higher grade point averages and comparable career development to standard entry nurses (Youssef & Goodrich, 1996; Aktan Bareford, Bliss, Connolly, DeYoung, Lancellotti Sullivan and Tracey, 2009). GEN programmes are generally more rigorous than traditional nursing programmes, yet their students excel in licensure examination scores and clinical courses and are desirable candidates due to their high levels of motivation and independence (Penprase & Koczara, 2009). As well as possessing these desirable attributes, a study by Shatto, Meyer and Delicath (2016) found strong retention rates of DE nurses with leadership aspirations at 82.4% retained at 12 months after graduation from the programme. These rates were higher than previous studies exploring nursing retention (41-69% retention – Kovner et al., 2007; Casey et al., 2004) and much higher than a comparison to similar generational findings from other sectors (17% retention rate – Andrews, 2013).

Moore, Kelley, Schmidt, Miller and Reynolds (2011) investigated the motivations behind GEN candidates' decisions to move into nursing careers. The authors conducted three semi-structured, one-to-one interviews with candidates of a GEN master's programme from a university in the USA. Of the 14 candidates interviewed, when asked about what first drew them to nursing, five indicated a long-term aspirations to become nurses, with the other nine candidates indicating more recent aspirations inspired by exposure to nursing through experience in a different health-related field (four candidates), realisations during undergraduate studies that nursing fit their desired career aspirations (three candidates), and realisations that nursing was more aligned with their personal life goals (two candidates). When asked more specifically about the attraction to nursing, through analysis of the candidates' transcripts, two themes emerged. The first being that all participants expressed an attraction to the daily workday opportunities to provide a service that provides help and

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care. The second theme revolved around the ample amount of career and personal growth opportunities that could be attained through nursing. Another question asked by Moore et al. looked into the candidates' experiences of starting a second career through the GEN programme. It emerged from this question from that candidates mostly felt they had not fully established themselves in their previous careers, having not had much experience and/or having started the GEN programme not long after graduating from their undergraduate degrees. This finding is unlikely to be typical of DE candidates as described earlier with regard to policing (e.g. Smith, 2016), or what would be expected from candidates for leadership positions within the FRS who would undoubtedly demonstrate a wealth of experience and skills associated with their previous careers in order to be deemed suitable. Despite this lack of establishment in their previous careers, the candidates from Moore et al. (2011) acknowledged that their first degrees and/or careers had both helped to broaden their world views and improve their communications skills.

Whilst some of these nursing schemes were entry level and therefore have limited read across with a senior level DE scheme, some were higher level, but not senior level. The relevance of contrasting with the policing context to highlight what is unique to policing and what is not unique was deemed useful.

There is limited consideration of Direct Entry in the military within the academic and grey literature. Most career transitions covered in the literature associated with the military focusses on the transition out of the armed forces and into civilian roles and organisations. There are a number of ex-forces personal employed in leadership roles in the UK fire sector, but as the academic literature available was limited, it is recommended that exploratory work in to learning from the military schemes will be carried out separately to this report, by the NFCC DE working group.

Themes from the Literature

In addition to the material covered so far which directly relates to DE and the existing provision, three further findings developed from the review and theming of the literature. These will now be explored.

Culture and Credibility Gaps

The experience and competence of DE graduates are consistently raised as points of contention throughout the literature on policing (e.g. Winsor, 2012a; Smith, 2016; Hogget et al., 2019), which has seen consistent opposition to DE maintained from before its implementation up to present day. There are genuine concerns that DE programmes could not sufficiently equip candidates with the experiences equivalent to those earned through years of policing, particularly with regard to the 'frontline', and that this lack of experience could have a negative impact on leadership credibility due to incompetent decision making that could have detrimental consequences for both personnel and the public (Winsor, 2012a; Hogget et al., 2019). A sense of mistrust is created towards leaders who are seen to have not 'served their time' with work at street-level (Rowe, 2006). While these concerns for personnel and public safety may come from a well-meaning place, they could be potentially damaging to DE

candidates if allowed to permeate too strongly into the programme (Smith, 2016). However, when less than 5% of officers think that DE is a 'good' or 'very good' idea (Hogget et al., 2019), it seems apparent that concerns around DE are already widespread through policing culture. This can also be seen in the discussions around clinical health pathways of DE (Chhugani, 2013; Lipley, 2002; Stevens, 2010).

The suggestion of a strong, rigid policing culture is drawn attention to within the Winsor (2012a) report, describing an unchallengeable sense of how things should be, such as entry only at Police Constable level. A change in culture, away from views like this, was recognised as both a driver for DE and a prerequisite for the programme's success in order to avoid an environment conducive to failure (Winsor, 2011; 2012a). This change seems to have failed to take place, as negative opinions from existing personnel towards the DE scheme have remained prominent since its implementation and throughout (Smith, 2016; Hogget et al., 2019), although there are signs that this is improving (Campbell and Colover, 2020). These personnel opinions echo the initial concerns raised by policing associations such as the ACPO (Winsor, 2012a), further highlighting an element of group think within the service culture.

DE candidates are experienced in other fields, have leaderships skills, and show high levels of self-awareness, emotional intelligence and motivation (Smith, 2016). They have all the attributes to provide good police leadership, as set out by the College of Policing (2015a), yet concerns around their performance seem widespread. However, negative opinions regarding experience and competency are not exclusively held towards direct entrants. As demonstrated by Hogget et al. (2019), existing police leadership can come under scrutiny if those leaders are perceived to be out of touch with general police experience. Hogget et al. attempt to use a social identity theory approach to explain why these negative perceptions persist, describing how leadership attributes should not overshadow leader-followership dynamics and that a sense of alikeness would empower harmonious motivations between senior and junior officers. It is important, therefore, to create a sense of shared experience between junior and senior officers. Steinheider and Wuestevald (2008) demonstrate how shared leadership, defined as sharing decision-making between personnel that would ordinarily be defined by hierarchical relationships, could lead to improved leader-followership relationships and communication, and higher followership empowerment.

Concerns over DE in policing may have been shown to be largely unfounded (Campbell and Colover, 2020). However, this does not necessarily prevent similar concerns arising amongst FRS stakeholders, particularly around culture, which has been shown to have potentially detrimental effects to DE outcomes (e.g. Smith, 2016). Questions over culture within the FRS have been raised in the State of Fire and Rescue report (Winsor, 2020). Some fire services are described as having a toxic and exclusive culture, it may be the case that direct entrants to the FRS would face similar challenges of opposition as those from policing in this area. The FRS could consider taking a social identity theory approach (e.g. Hogget et al., 2019; Steinheider & Wuestevald, 2008) to overcome such potential opposition. However, the challenge comes in ensuring that any attempts to assimilate direct entrants into existing culture to create a sense of shared experience do not go too far in removing the differences between direct entrants and existing personnel that would facilitate the drivers of adding diversity to and positively influencing culture within the FRS (e.g. Smith, 2016). It seems necessary for the FRS to attempt to remove as much toxicity from the existing culture as possible before implementation of a DE programme, in order to avoid the damaging consequences for

candidates.

Motivation

Throughout the literature, direct entrants into all areas of the public sector have demonstrated benevolent motivations behind their career changes. This is manifested as a strong desire to work in the public sector, often with the intention of utilising their existing skills for the benefit of their new service and the wider community (Moore et al., 2011; Smith, 2016). In this sense, direct entrants' motivations fall in-line with public service motivation theory, that their actions are based on altruistic desires around the betterment of public well-being (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008). Remuneration was not a motivating factor for direct entrants (Smith, 2016). Direct entrants' motives are also aligned with those of existing public service personnel, including volunteer and full-time Firefighters (Thompson & Bono, 1993; McLennan & Birch, 2008). High motivation in DE candidates is often accompanied by other desirable attributes (Penprase & Koczara, 2009). Retention of DE personnel is higher than demographically comparable personnel in other sectors, and in some cases higher than retention rates of 'traditional' entry public service personnel (Shatto et al., 2016). In light of this, it is apparent that the motivation of DE candidates should not be a cause for concern when considering the implementation of a DE programme. Instead, it should be considered encouraging that evidence suggests motivations are in line with drivers for DE.

The motivation of ex-military personnel when joining other professions is also reviewed in light of changing professions and joining another profession at a more senior level. This is represented globally, but particularly in the military context of the West (see Watts, Lawrence, Schaub, Lea, Hasenstaub, Slivka, Smith and Kirsh, 2016 for a review of the key challenges). The motivations of ex-military personnel to serve are similar to the motivations of those individuals coming from non-public sector and non-high risk occupation backgrounds. Namely, these motivations are to help provide or improve service to the public, in this way they their motivations are aligned, providing insight for recruitment messaging.

Standards, Ethical Leadership and Management of High Risk Occupations

The literature review is clear through the other occupations that occupational pathways should be aligned to professional occupational standards and this should be reviewed regularly in its lifetime (see King, 2019 for example). In turn, there is a clear link between ethical leadership and safer working in a high-risk environment (Freiwald, 2015). Ethical leadership is not simply about a moral compass, but about the ability to identify, proactively model and enforce moral norms to followerships, even when followers transgress (Houwelingen, van Dijke, and Cremer, 2015). It requires leaders to have the ability to construe matters on a higher level of morality than an apprehension of personal moral integrity or taking the path of least resistance when an ethical transgression has occurred. Ethical leadership can be defined as a way of leading explicitly guided by morality and fairness, role clarification leadership, and power-sharing leadership. This in turn engenders supervisory trust, alongside the person-organisation fit (Grobler, and Holtzhausen, 2018).

The role of senior leaders as incident managers in high risk contexts has been considered in the literature, not in the context of DE, but in a wider context. The assumption has been made that there is training provision for Gold Commanders and Incident Command which takes

account of, and uses, this literature base and so it will not be covered in this literature review. This includes the challenges of highly experienced incident commanders managing relatively inexperienced teams in novel contexts (arguably more likely to yield injury or accident – Heldal and Antonsen, 2014) as well as understanding the dynamic of DE as senior/Gold Incident Commanders on Principal Officer rotas.

The job of a Firefighter comes with exposure to occupational hazards and sources of stress. Talent management may impact the severity of this exposure: beyond some of the more obvious 'in-field' stressors, other occupational stressors can contribute to a poor working environment, with 'perceived labour-management conflict' shown to be a strong correlator of job dissatisfaction and affecting organisational effectiveness (Beaton and Murphy, 1993). Leadership is shown to play an important role in maintaining satisfaction and work-related stress in FRS employees (Hill, Sundin and Winder, 2020; Brunsden, Hill and Maguire, 2014; Angelo and Chambel, 2013) and other professions (DeWitt, Canny, Nitzberg, Choudri, and Porter, 2016). This is important to keep in mind when considering leadership training programmes for the FRS.

Having reviewed the literature and summarised the key findings, the authors went through a process of using that literature to develop suggested areas of definitions of success for the key stakeholder groups if a DE pathway were to be developed. This should be used to scope and inform the next stages of the consideration process. These suggested definitions of success will now be detailed followed by the recommendations and a summary of the process and report.

Defining Success

The suggested definitions of success have been split in to three different sections. Those aimed primarily at the UK FRS sector or the NFCC, those aimed primarily at the organisational level of individual FRSs, and those aimed at any future DE course.

UK Fire and Rescue Service sector and the National Fire Chiefs Council

a) This literature review gives merit to the NFCC to continue to develop and scope their consideration of a DE pathway into the management of the UK FRS Sector. The success of this should broadly be defined through the diversity of leadership, diversity of organisational culture, and the progression and retention of those individuals who experience the DE route. These maybe different from the strategic objectives defined in b and c below.

b) If DE is established and coordinated across the UK FRS, the NFCC should develop clear strategic objectives of what this hopes to achieve. These should be designed and detailed to a level to enable the long-term monitoring of the impacts of a DE pathway, particularly in the context of the other pathways already present, and those to be developed, in the UK FRS. The strategic objectives should detail the desired impact on the culture and diversity of thought present in the UK FRS over the next fifteen years and beyond to see how that change has influenced senior leadership of the fire service.

c) These strategic objectives and detailed impacts should be developed by the NFCC but shared with their inspectorate who have also facilitated some of the consideration to develop the DE pathway. The inspectorate should design a schedule of work to independently consider the long-term monitoring of the culture and diversity of fire leadership present in the UK FRS over the next fifteen years and beyond.

d) The current integration and strength of national thought leadership of qualifications and gateways for career progression needs coordination between the national structures. It is apparent from the evaluation of the police DE pathway that a clear leading national body on the development and broad content of the DE pathway, and national coordination, oversight and brand management/credibility, is key to the success of the pathway. The NFCC should continue its clear role in this activity, leading and coordinating key stakeholder groups to further design the strategy and lead the collaboration between relevant partners for the development, delivery, quality assurance and evaluation of the DE pathway should it be taken forward. This should be completed with consultation from devolved administrations and sector representative bodies.

e) The branding and recruitment strategies to the DE pathway needs a considered approach and coordination across the sector. Learning from national and international contexts within the public sector should be reviewed and considered, developing an approach that cultivates a reputation for the UK FRS as an employer of choice for experienced talent.

f) The context of sector implementation and coordination should be done with an extensive and well resourced change management approach, as evidenced by learning from the NHS where unclear definitions, conflicting principles, problematic measures; exclusive focus, sustainability; and lack of necessary infrastructure, culture and data are some of the challenges identified in the implementation of wider talent management activities such as DE (Powell, Duberley, Exworthy, Macfarlane and Moss, 2013). This could be completed collaboratively across the sector using cross-functional teams (Piercy, Phillips and Lewis, 2013).

Organisational Level of Individual Fire and Rescue Services

g) Success at organisation level should be that the DE pathway adds diversity of thought and culture to the leadership teams. This should be evaluated and managed separately to wider HR and career progression activities, as per the philosophy of talent management, but DE pathway evaluation should also be evaluated alongside the other pathways of career progression. This implicitly requires all participating UK FRSs on any DE scheme to develop a talent management approach within their HR approach if they have not already. Progression and impact statistics as well as retention statistics should form a basis of that evaluation and tracking approach.

h) Each participating FRS should consider their strategic objectives with the introduction of the DE pathway and define their success criteria from that. The regional context (for example collaboration arrangements, governance models and existing talent pipeline) might shape the needs and objectives of individual services. For example, the strategic objectives of a met might differ from a predominantly rural FRS, the strategic objectives of an FRS who have experienced a higher level of principal officer churn might differ from those who have a long serving senior leadership team. These differences should influence the strategic objectives each organisation needs to specify for themselves from any DE pathway.

Defining Success for the Direct Entry Course

i) In start-up, the successful collaboration of a course would be defined as all key stakeholder groups being assured of the process, quality assurance and fit for purpose of the course.

j) Key stakeholder groups collaborating in the development of a course would have a clear decision-making and collaboration arrangement with the NFCC having a key coordinating role.

k) As the course progresses to running, success would initially be predicated on recruitment, retention, employee course engagement, completion and substantive appointment.

l) As the course recruits the second cohort, a full evaluation of the first cohort should have taken place.

m) With each new intake, shorter more targeted cohort cycle evaluations should take place.

n) Every three years the course should be reviewed to ensure up to date content and delivery in relation to the systems and structures, economic, political, regulatory, technological, and cultural context of the sector.

o) Quality assurance of the course should be held by a UK university for quality assurance and credibility of the course as perceived internally by the fire sector and externally by the potential candidates.

Recommendations

We have summarised the recommendations that are contained throughout the document here in one place. The recommendations are as follows:

1) The UK Fire and Rescue Service and National Fire Chiefs Council should continue to develop their coordinated, shared talent management framework with their people management approach.

2) The UK Fire and Rescue Service and National Fire Chiefs Council should implement a quality assured ecology of multiple pathways to strategic leadership to pipeline talent into the senior management of the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

3) The National Fire Chiefs Council should consider this report, and the outputs of other relevant documents, practitioner research, and policy reviews, and consider further the development of a Direct Entry pathway.

4) Consultations involving key stakeholders should take place to address any concerns for, and highlight the benefits of, DE to ensure that opposition of a DE programme is not allowed to permeate through the wider fire service culture, in order to properly support DE candidates and avoid the detrimental effects on them such opposition could have.

5) Any DE pathway should be designed, advertised and recruited to attract a broad range of deep diversity within the future leadership roles of the UK FRS.

6) Leadership programmes running now and into the future should consider and facilitate a transformational leadership style and also identity entrepreneurship in accordance with the most productive way to facilitate diverse teams.

7) Alongside a DE programme, the FRS should look to implement shared leadership initiatives, drawing from social identity theory and transformative leadership theory, to improve DE leader-followership relations and to avoid devaluation of leadership positions from junior ranking fire service personnel.

8) The wider FRS sector should consider the balance needed during DE training

between integration into existing work culture and room to express knowledge and culture from previous workplaces for DE candidates.

9) There needs to be central NFCC coordination of the development, implementation and delivery of any DE pathway between the key stakeholder groups.

10) Full reviews of criteria and values of successful teams should be completed and updated by NFCC, individual FRSs and other stakeholder groups to ensure systematic bias towards less diverse teams with more well-recognised approaches not rewarded more than teams with a diverse approach.

11) The DE candidates should have additional support build in for them to access both within their service and also through any national coordinated delivery of content (or a UK Higher Education university provider).

12) The sector wide implementation and coordination should be done with an extensive and well-resourced change management approach to prevent failure and fracture points as outlined in the reviewed evidence.

Summary

The literature review and the recommendations has provided insights of previous learning of similar pathways into professions which the NFCC should consider when developing their DE route. The recommendations should be reviewed and adopted by the key stakeholder groups including the NFCC, representative bodies, the Institute of Fire Engineers and UK Higher Education Universities. The recommendations were developed from the literature review focussing on national and international papers relevant to DE pathways within the UK FRS. DE pathways in other risk-critical occupations such as policing, nursing and midwifery were reviewed, and the main findings include:

- Talent Management
- Cultural and Credibility Gaps
- Motivation
- Standards, Ethical Leadership and Management of High-Risk Occupations (Critical Incident Management)
- Definitions of Success

Recommendations have then been developed from this literature base in order to inform the next stages of consideration. We commend this report to you to help inform the scope and range of those considerations.

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