



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

People & Development

Professional Standards Exits from the Service Policy

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Date Written	August 2017
Date of last review	June 2022
Date of next review	August 2025
EIA Completed	June 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of Humberside Fire and Rescue Service's (HFRS) key corporate aims is to "Make the best use of the resources we have". This includes our employees throughout the entire time they stay with us and is equally important at the point employees leave the Service. Advice, support and guidance is available to all leavers and to those responsible for the management of leavers. The purpose of the exit process is to gather information from employees leaving the organisation to inform and influence future recruitment and retention of employees. The information will be kept confidential and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. This policy does not form part of any employee's Contract of Employment hence may be amended at any time.

Core Code of Ethics

HFRS has adopted the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. The Service is committed to the ethical principles of the Code and strives to apply them in all we do, therefore, those principles are reflected in this Policy.

National Guidance

Any National Guidance which has been adopted by HFRS, will be reflected in this Policy.

2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

HFRS has a legal responsibility under the [Equality Act 2010](#), and a commitment, to ensure it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly in any of its functions and services or in its treatment of staff, in relation to race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, gender reassignment or marriage and civil partnership. It also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, employees and service user.

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

It is Service policy to ensure that anyone leaving receives the following:

- An efficient and sensitive process that is administered consistently and transparently in accordance with legislation and good practice.
- Prompt and timely advice on entitlements and/or benefits.
- Prompt notice of any payments due, including any stoppages or recovery that may have to be made for any monies owed to the Service.
- An opportunity to comment on their working environment and employment whilst employed by HFRS.
- Awareness of the procedure for returning HFRS property in their possession.
- Any future support and contact available.
- Any recognition for their service as appropriate.

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- A reference for future employment, if requested ([Appendix B & C: Guidance on Giving and Obtaining Employment References](#)).

It is also expected that anyone leaving the Service:

- Should give the normal contractual period of notice.
- Will return any Service property in their possession as required
- Will not continue to use the rights and privileges given to employees once they have left.
- Will maintain confidentiality and fidelity to the Service and continue to treat any confidential information which they may have dealt with sensitively.
- Will comply with any restrictions on future activity as detailed in their contract of employment.

The Service also has a duty to:

- Maintain employment records for such time after the employee has left, in line with Service retention policy.
- Make prompt payment of any monies due to the employee.
- Recover any such monies due to the Service from final salaries, or by a separate recovery process.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Equality Impact Assessment](#)
- Legal References
 - [UK GDPR](#)
 - [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- National Guidance
There is no specific National Guidance relevant to this policy.
- [Exit Feedback Form](#)

5. EXIT FEEDBACK FORMS AND MEETINGS

An opportunity to provide feedback about their employment should be offered in all situations where an employee is to leave the Service, other than dismissal under the Disciplinary or Performance & Capability Procedures.

As soon as an employee's resignation or notification of leaving is received by the Human Resources (HR) team, the exit process will commence. All employees of HFRS will be invited to provide feedback via an electronic form.

The following process will apply:

- On receipt of an employee's resignation or notification of leaving, the HR team will send an electronic [Exit Feedback Form](#) to the individual via email

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and invite them to complete it. This allows the individual to provide feedback freely, without any perceived challenges of being uncomfortable if providing negative feedback in the presence of their manager or other HFRS employee.

- Alternatively, if the individual would like to meet with their manager or alternative suitable person to complete the process and feedback, they should request this via the HR Team who will arrange for the relevant person to conduct the meeting.
- If a face-to-face meeting is preferred, the employee may wish to complete some, or all of their answers on the Exit Feedback Form before the meeting. Alternatively, this can be done during the meeting.
- Completion of the Exit Feedback Form is optional, if the employee does not wish to provide feedback they are not compelled to do so.
- If an exit meeting is to take place, it is important that it is properly planned and structured for it to be fully effective. When preparing to conduct an exit meeting, reference should be made to the Guidance Notes for Conducting Exit Meetings ([Appendix A](#)).
- The employee may be accompanied by a work colleague or union representative if they would find this helpful, and the meeting should take place in private and without interruption.
- The manager should ensure that any feedback or actions agreed at the meeting are recorded on the Exit Feedback Form and followed up. The original Exit Feedback Form and any additional notes from the exit meeting should be sent to HR. If the employee has requested a copy of the feedback form, the manager should ensure that a copy is given to them.
- Any issues on the returned Exit Feedback Forms that are identified by the HR team as requiring immediate attention will be forwarded through to the Human Resource Service Partner (HRSP) for identification of any action that may need to be taken.

6. RETURN OF ACCOUNTABLE SERVICE PROPERTY

All employees will have a responsibility to return any HFRS property in their possession before leaving. This includes, but is not restricted to, access and identity cards, keys, clothing, mobile phones, pagers, alerters, personal computers, all information assets (such as documents, files, memory sticks, CDs etc). Employees who are not able to account for property previously issued and not returned, or who return property in a poor or damaged condition may have compensatory deductions made from any final payments due.

Where possible, prior to the final working day, the line manager will check that all HFRS property has been returned or accounted for. Information relating to the specific items which uniformed employees must return, and the procedure for doing so, will be provided at the designated location.

**If you require any further guidance in relation to this policy,
please contact Human Resources**

APPENDIX A: GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CONDUCTING EXIT MEETINGS

Planning the meeting

For an Exit Meeting to be effective it is important for it to be properly planned and structured, therefore you should ensure you know about the individual, the role etc. and plan the supplementary questions you will ask.

When an employee has resigned, they may feel that their employment needs and aspirations have not been met by the Service. The meeting should be used to explore those factors that have contributed to the decision to leave. The Exit Feedback Form should be used as a basic framework, but additional questions may be introduced as necessary to discuss the issues that have influenced the individual's decision to leave the organisation. Exit Feedback Forms can also be used to gather valuable information when an employee is leaving for other reasons, such as retirement or the end of a temporary contract.

It is important to choose the right environment, free from interruptions and where the discussion cannot be overheard, to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. You will need to be prepared to encourage a constructive exchange and provide the employee with a safe, confidential space to express their views. It is important that the employee feels you are genuinely interested and prepared to take some action if that is appropriate and possible.

Remember that the meeting is a two-way process and it may be appropriate to deal with emerging issues; it is possible that in some cases the individual may wish to reconsider their decision to leave the organisation. Any such cases must be referred back to HR for consideration in the first instance as there is no obligation to allow an individual to rescind their resignation and it may not be feasible for the Service to agree to accept the withdrawal of a resignation.

Holding the meeting

You should welcome the individual and put them at ease by explaining the purpose of the meeting and reassuring them of the confidentiality of the process. Establish rapport and use the skills utilised for other types of face-to-face situations (e.g. recruitment interviews or appraisals). You should adopt a role of asking, listening and reflecting.

'Open' questions will encourage the member of staff to talk freely and you should try to establish their views and opinions. Their responses to your open questions will give you clues as to what further questions you may be able to ask to obtain valuable feedback. It can be useful to ask for examples in order to validate the information given.

Don't forget to thank the individual for attending the meeting.

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After the meeting

Send the completed Exit Feedback Form and any other notes of the meeting to HR via email.

If any actions were agreed with the interviewee, be sure they are carried out as quickly as possible afterwards, consulting with the appropriate people e.g. HR or Heads of Function and inform the individual of actions taken if appropriate.

APPENDIX B: GUIDANCE ON GIVING OR OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT REFERENCES

Purpose of this Guidance Note

To provide guidance to those who may need to give or obtain employment references.

What is an Employment Reference?

Employment references are used to collect information from a previous employer to check on different aspects of a candidate, e.g., employment history, experience, attendance record, timekeeping, overall performance, etc. They can be in written format or given/received via telephone.

All reference requests relating to employment at HFRS MUST be forwarded onto HR in the first instance and will be responded to on behalf of the organisation by the HR Team, based only upon factual employment information. Possible pitfalls of providing a reference:

Vicarious liability

Unless it is specifically stated that the Service is providing a reference on a personal basis (usually called a 'character reference'), HFRS is liable for what is said. It is therefore absolutely essential that everything stated is based on facts, which can be backed up with documented evidence if challenged.

Overall impression

When writing references, there is a duty of care to the reference and to the receiving party to ensure that references are 'true, accurate and fair' and do not 'give an unfair or misleading impression overall'.

Penalties

Defamation – if any false statement damages the reputation of the subject.

Negligence – if the author of the reference fails to take reasonable care in giving the reference or in obtaining the information on which it is based.

UK General Data Protection Regulation (retained from EU Regulation 2016/679 EU) (UK GDPR)

All references issued by HFRS must be compliant with the above legislation.

Checklist for providing an employment reference

A request for a reference may take two forms, either a personal or an employer reference.

- A personal reference (see character reference) normally requests character information from a close colleague or friend of the individual.
- A request for an employer reference should be addressed to the HR Department.
- Upon receipt of a request for an employer reference, the HR Department will gather information and complete the “Reference Request Letter”. ([Appendix C](#))

If the request is for a former employee, it is advisable to contact them to check that the reference request is legitimate.

Character Reference

If an employee wishes to provide a character reference for a colleague or former employee, they should make it clear that they are doing so purely in the capacity of a personal acquaintance or friend and not in their capacity as an employee of the Service.

HFRS letterhead, email address, mobiles or landlines should not be used for the provision of a character reference as this may imply that it constitutes an employer reference. Should an employee be found to have used HFRS property for the purposes of a character reference, this may result in the Disciplinary Procedure being invoked.

Telephone references

Telephone references are as legally binding as written ones and have been used as evidence in Employment Tribunals.

Make notes of what was said in case this is challenged at a later date. The notes, detailing date, person spoken to, etc. should be forwarded to the HR Team.

Disclaimer

A disclaimer should be included in the reference making it clear that, while the information provided is accurate to the best of the Service’s knowledge, the Service cannot accept any liability for any decisions based upon it.

APPENDIX C: REFERENCE REQUEST LETTER TEMPLATE

The person dealing with this matter is: [Name]
Tel: 01482 567
E-Mail: HR@humbersidefire.gov.uk

Service Headquarters
Summergroves Way
Kingston Upon Hull HU4 7BB
www.humbersidefire.gov.uk

Our Ref: HR / [Name]

Date: [/ /]

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Reference Request for [Name]

Dear [Name]

Further to your recent enquiry regarding the above-named person, our records show the following information:

Date of Commencement:

Date of Leaving:

Position Held:

We regret we are unable to supply you with any information other than as detailed above but would point out that this is attributable to organisational practice and should not be taken to mean that we do not consider them to be a suitable employee.

The above information is given in good faith. No responsibility can be accepted for any errors, omission or inaccuracies in the information.

We trust this information meets with your requirements, however, should you require any further information please contact Human Resources.

Yours sincerely

[Name]

Human Resources