



**GREATER
MANCHESTER**
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Volunteer Strategy

2022 - 2025

1. Introduction

We recognise the invaluable time, skills, experience and additional capacity our volunteers contribute to Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS), and the benefits that our volunteers gain from choosing to give their time freely to support GMFRS and its communities.

Volunteering in GMFRS has grown spontaneously over the years creating a reactive response to requests for support from colleagues, partners and our communities. This approach has led to an array of eclectic volunteering roles and activities and recruitment of high numbers of volunteers, but with low levels of participation and activity. This strategy will refocus our Volunteer Programme to support our modern Fire Service and ensure we provide public value when investing in our volunteers and volunteer supported activities.

The development of this strategy included consideration of the six priorities of the Greater Manchester Fire Plan (2021-25), the Prevention Strategy and feedback from colleagues across the organisation to identify where there is a 'need' for volunteer support. Volunteers were engaged to provide feedback to help us understand their motivation, interests, capacity and barriers to participating in volunteering opportunities.

This Volunteer Strategy aims to support all six Priorities of the Fire Plan for Greater Manchester (2021 -25):

1. Provide a fast, safe and effective response
2. Help people reduce the risks of fire and other emergencies
3. Help protect the built environment
4. Use resources sustainably to deliver the most value
5. Develop a culture of excellence, equality, and inclusivity
6. Integrate our services in every locality, with those of partner agencies

We will create a Volunteer Programme that meets the needs of GMFRS and provides meaningful and purposeful opportunities that are accessible and inclusive



The delivery of the volunteering programme will initially focus on developing volunteer support in seven key areas, before expanding more widely:

1. Community and Business Engagement Volunteers, to support our corporate and area campaigns and locality plans, through joint working with key strategic partners and the engagement of all our communities across Greater Manchester
2. HFSA targeted activity
3. Prevention Education – BTSC support, Cadets, Prince's Trust
4. Operational Training support – live casualties for realistic scenarios
5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity function for volunteers to support delivery of our EDI Strategy
6. Community Response Volunteers – the ability to flex to meet evolving needs and increase our resilience
7. Integration of specially trained volunteers in to the Wellbeing and Occupational Health offer to assist signposting to support channels

Our strong brand already attracts volunteer interest, but we aim to offer a range of opportunities for people to volunteer, to retain our volunteers and to inspire their commitment and participation, and to help deliver our objectives to keep our communities safe from fire and other emergencies and support our partners.

This will be achieved through creating volunteering opportunities that are meaningful and purposeful, with differing requirement levels of engagement, skills, and abilities.

It is important that our volunteering opportunities are accessible and adaptable, and we aspire to ensuring that our volunteers reflect the communities we support and work. In and our EDI approach will help us achieve this.

2. Our Volunteer Offer

This Volunteer Strategy aims to develop a volunteering programme that focuses on:

- Raising awareness and appreciation of the benefits of volunteers and volunteering
- Increasing our organisational skills and capacity through improved recruitment, training, investment, and engagement of active volunteers, ensuring marginalised and diverse communities are engaged and represented
- Creating volunteering opportunities to engage a widely diverse group of individuals who are representative of our communities
- Reducing accidental fires and associated injuries and deaths through business engagement and supporting generation of targeted Home Fire Safety Assessment (HFSA) referrals and promotion of fire safety messages
- Supporting the Prevention Education offer, recruiting and training volunteers for the Bury Training and Safety Centre, Prince's Trust and Cadet schemes
- Supporting GMFRS community engagement events and campaigns including Road, Water and Wildfire Safety
- Supporting operational training through live casualty volunteers to create a realistic training environment
- Providing additional support and signposting to the GMFRS Wellbeing and Occupational Health channels through specially recruited and trained volunteers
- Develop the ability to support wider GMCA needs and respond to unplanned significant events and environmental impacts which may require increased capacity or wider volunteer skills
- Working with key strategic partners and the engagement of all our communities across Greater Manchester to support locality plans and the wider Greater Manchester Strategy, 'Our People, Our Place'.



3. Our Approach

We will use policies, processes and guidance for the governance of volunteers and the GMFRS Volunteer Programme



GMFRS and GMCA Policies, Guidance and Processes will ensure that expectations and responsibilities are clear and that there is consistency and clarity for the recruitment, training, management and support of volunteers, including reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, uniform and appearance and values and behaviours.

We will ensure our Volunteering and EDI packages offer enhanced professional and personal growth



Our volunteering programme will offer opportunities that will be meaningful, purposeful, accessible, and inclusive.

Volunteering is always a choice and must be mutually beneficial to our volunteers and GMFRS. We will achieve this by creating roles that are attractive and inspiring, paying particular attention to seeking opportunities for marginalised, and diverse communities. This will ensure we attract active, engaged and committed volunteers from across our communities, bringing wider skills and experience and increasing our capacity to support the delivery of our organisational objectives.

Our primary volunteer roles and activities will be focussed on organisational 'need,' and prioritised to support our Boroughs and other functions to deliver against the Fire Plan six Priorities, within the capacity of the volunteer function and cadre.

We will use feedback and information from surveys and consultations with our Crews, non-operational colleagues, and our volunteers to develop roles and activities where volunteer support is needed and will add public value.

We will invest in our volunteers, through training and development opportunities



We will provide access to our learning opportunities to our volunteers for their personal development. This will enhance their own skills and ensure they are appropriately trained and skilled to undertake the volunteering roles and activities they are recruited for and are requested to support.

All volunteers will be required to undertake mandatory corporate training, core volunteer training and role specific training as part of their recruitment and Volunteer Agreement.

Training will include our organisational Values (Excellence, Honesty, Inclusivity, Respect, Professionalism), HFSA awareness and generation, Fire Safety In The Home, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Information Governance.

This will be achieved by enabling volunteer access to our Learning and Management Systems and wider organisation information on our Intranet and through other opportunities.

Working with our Training Function and Talent and Recruitment Team, we will offer wider guidance and development opportunities to our volunteers who aspire to become a Firefighter or join us in other paid roles.

We will promote the benefits of volunteers and volunteering



Through our Manchester fire Website, social media and partnerships we will promote volunteer recruitment opportunities and raise awareness of the contribution our volunteers make to the delivery of our Fire Plan and the significant support given freely by volunteers to help keep our communities safe.

Information about volunteer roles and activities, what volunteer support is available and the responsibilities of the volunteer and requester will be provided on a dedicated Volunteer Support page.

We will celebrate and recognise the contribution and value of our volunteers



Recognition is an important component of volunteer retention. When volunteers feel appreciated and important, they feel more connected to our organisation, are committed and continue their involvement at a higher level and will remain retained for longer.

Our volunteering and development opportunities will form part of our recognition for volunteers. We will also create a culture and programme of volunteer recognition, linking in to the staff recognition programme and encouraging and enabling those who request volunteer support to say, 'Thank You', directly and through wider organisational recognition events to celebrate success.

We will evaluate the impact of our Volunteer Programme



The socio-economic value of volunteering is difficult to measure, but it is clear that volunteering is a benefit to the organisation, its communities and the volunteer. No matter what kind of volunteer support they provide, our volunteers contribute in invaluable ways.

To ensure that our Volunteer Programme continues to be desirable to GMFRS and offers public value, we will evaluate the impact of volunteering and the benefits to GMFRS in relation to the financial and organisational investment using quantifiable and qualitative measures.

Our evaluation will include continual assessment of the 'need' for volunteers to identify change in requirements, trends and insight. We will analyse hours, number and types of activities supported and how successful we are at engaging our

volunteers to ensure they represent our communities and remain active. We will also seek satisfaction feedback from those that volunteers support and evaluate volunteer satisfaction to ensure volunteers feel welcome, supported and valued.

We will evidence the success of the GMFRS Volunteer Programme



The successful delivery of the Volunteer Programme will result in:

1. Policy, guidance and procedures to ensure roles, responsibilities and expectations are clear for volunteers and those they support and guidance to respond if things go wrong
2. Accessible and inclusive Volunteering opportunities that attract support for the delivery of prevention, protection and response objectives from people representative of our communities
3. Positive feedback from Partner agencies we support through contribution our volunteering activities
4. An efficient recruitment, induction and training process that enables maximum recruitment and flexibility to meet changing needs
5. Accessing Volunteers and 'how' Volunteers can provide support is clearly publicised
6. Our volunteers will be trained and informed, including ongoing mandatory training and role specific training
7. Volunteers feel welcome and appreciated and are recognised for their contribution through annual events, certification and other opportunities

What we do:

Provide a fast, safe, and effective response	Help people reduce the risks of fires and other emergencies	Help protect the built environment
Use resources sustainably and deliver the most value	Develop a culture of excellence, equality, and inclusivity	Integrate our services in every locality with those of partner agencies

How we do it:

We will create a Volunteer Programme that meets the needs of GMFRS and provides meaningful and purposeful opportunities that are accessible and inclusive	We will use policies, processes and guidance for the governance of volunteers and the GMFRS Volunteer Programme
We will ensure our Volunteering and EDI packages offer enhanced professional and personal growth	We will invest in our volunteers, through training and development opportunities
We will promote the benefits of volunteers and volunteering	We will celebrate and recognise the contribution and value of our volunteers
We will evaluate the impact of our Volunteer Programme	We will evidence the success of the GMFRS Volunteer Programme

Underpinned by our values:

Excellence	Respect	Professionalism in our role	Inclusive	Honesty
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