



COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

22 FEBRUARY 2019

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE INSPECTIONS 2018/2019

REPORT OF AREA MANAGER TRAINING, ASSETS AND ASSURANCE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide members with a summary of the findings from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) tranche one inspections and an update on the next steps in the inspection process.

BACKGROUND

2. In December 2018, HMICFRS published the individual outcome reports for the fourteen fire and rescue services (FRS) inspected within tranche one and a consolidated summary of findings report.
3. Each inspection assesses how effective and efficient the service is, how it protects the public against fires and other emergencies and how it responds to the same. HMICFRS also assesses how well each service looks after its people.
4. In carrying out the inspections, evidence is sought to answer three main questions:
 - a. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 - b. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 - c. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

TRANCHE ONE RESULTS

5. Effectiveness pillar judgement for each FRS:

Grade	Number of FRS
Outstanding	0
Good	10
Requires improvement	4
Inadequate	0

6. Efficiency pillar judgement for each FRS:

Grade	Number of FRS
Outstanding	0
Good	8
Requires improvement	5
Inadequate	1

7. People pillar judgement for each FRS:

Grade	Number of FRS
Outstanding	0
Good	3
Requires improvement	10
Inadequate	1

Summary of the Effectiveness Pillar Judgements

Understanding risk to keep the public and firefighters safe

8. Most services are considered to have a good understanding of local risk through identifying where vulnerable people live and where high-risk premises are located.
9. From the FRS inspected there were significant variations in the quality, quantity and timelines associated with information published in IRMPs. Some services were advised to improve the way they model and predict risk, and how they explain these risks to the public.
10. Some services were advised to manage the provision of risk information more effectively. This was in response to finding delays in making risk information available to crews and some Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) that didn't always work.

Preventing fires and other emergencies

11. Although there has been a national reduction in the number of home fire safety checks (Safe and Wellbeing Visits in CDDFRS) delivered from April 2017 to March 2018 (590,198 to 576,040), HMICFRS highlighted evidence to indicate that prevention work is targeted towards the people who need it most.
12. Some FRS evaluate the benefit of their prevention work, but this doesn't occur across the whole sector. All services are advised to evaluate prevention activities to establish the effect they are having.
13. Dedicated staff are more confident and competent at delivering prevention activities for the most vulnerable than operational crews.

Protection through the regulation of fire safety

14. HMICFRS note that some protection teams describe themselves as under resourced and are not given a sufficiently large share of the service's resource to do their work. Some services plan their risk-based activity programme on staff availability rather than the actual level of risk posed to the public.

15. HMICFRS commended the engagement with businesses to promote fire safety but advised that services need to keep up the skills and competence required to use the full range of enforcement powers.

Responding to fires and other emergencies

16. In general, the response to fires and other emergencies was commended by HMICFRS and received good gradings. The variation in response times was highlighted but acknowledged that this was dependant on the decisions of individual fire and rescue authorities based on geography, demography and risk.
17. Most services are in the process of adopting national operational guidance and HMICFRS commended on the provision of equipment, appliances and training to improve operational activity and maintain the safety of operational crews.
18. Most services were commended for their training of incident commanders who demonstrated a good level of knowledge about what to do when commanding an incident and explained an understanding of national operational guidance and the concept of 'operational discretion'.
19. Fire and rescue services don't collect consistent data about appliance availability and there are variations in availability between services. The limited availability of 'on-call' appliances was consistent across many services inspected in tranche one.
20. The effectiveness of learning varies considerably between services. Good services share learning across the whole organisation and those that require improvement limit the learning opportunities to only the personnel who were directly involved in incidents.

Responding to national risks

21. All FRS were considered well practiced and prepared for responding to national risks such as flooding or terrorist attacks. Partner agencies (Police and Ambulance Services) were very positive about the role FRS play in testing and exercising contingency plans for large scale incidents.
22. HMICFRS noted that almost all services described the difficulties of working through austerity. This was evident in the reduction in some protection activities, and to a lesser degree, some prevention activities. HMICFRS identified some disproportionate funding between response and protection teams.
23. HMICFRS are currently working with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the fire sector to create more accurate reporting on financial data. The hope is to complete this work by September 2019.

Summary of the Efficiency Pillar Judgements

Allocation of resources towards risk

24. HMICFRS noted that good performing FRS make sound use of all their people and allocate work so that staff can work across response, prevention and protection activities.

Securing an affordable future

25. All services were advised to use financial reserves to invest in the things that will help them be more efficient in the future and they should ensure that reserves are being used appropriately to help modernise the way people work to help protect the public.
26. Many services described the barriers to workforce modernisation being the complex negotiating machinery and the strength of the Fire Brigades' Union to protect its members' terms and conditions.
27. Services should make more use of available technology to improve the efficiency of workstreams and improve the safety of their community.
28. The delivery of statutory duties should take priority over activities to generate extra income through external funding and income generation opportunities.

Summary of the People Pillar Judgements

Values and culture

29. Very few services were identified as having a positive culture. In services that were identified as being good in this area, staff described that leaders were visible role models of the values and behaviours expected of the service. Some staff described that they lacked confidence in grievance procedures and raising concerns about how they are treated.

Training and skills

30. Most staff were considered to be appropriately trained in risk critical safety skills and use a combination of practical training and e-learning to help their workforces learn.
31. Many services were advised to improve their workforce planning arrangements to address their retirement profiles, lack of recruitment and their aging workforces.

Fairness and diversity

32. Too few FRS are good at promoting fairness and diversity with fewer than half of the services inspected having set up staff networks.
33. Services were advised to tackle fundamental cultural problems to ensure that newly recruited individuals from under represented groups thrive within services.

Leadership and capability

34. Most services need to improve on how they identify and support talent to become future leaders and many staff described that they feel that performance management systems have little or no value. Most FRS should improve the way they explain their promotion process to staff.

Identifying and developing talent

35. Only a small number of services have processes in place for identifying and developing staff with high potential to become future leaders. A small number of services have looked outside the fire and rescue sector to bring in talented people at senior management level who will bring diversity of thought and experience.

Requirements to respond to cause for concern and areas for improvement

36. Fire and rescue authorities must give due regard to reports and recommendations made by the HMICFRS. If a cause for concern is raised, an action plan should be produced and sent to the HMICFRS within 56 days of the report publication date. This plan should be regularly updated.
37. If an area for improvement is identified an action plan does not need to be sent to HMICFRS but it is encouraged as good practice.

NEXT STEPS

38. Tranche two results will be shared with respective services late April 2019 and are scheduled for wider publication June 2019.
39. The next data request has been received by all FRS with additional requests for information on availability of appliances, the totality of protection work undertaken and the use of temporary promotions and overtime.
40. The schedule for tranche three FRS, which includes our Service is outlined below.

Activity	Scheduled Month
Data Request	Jan 2019
Self-assessment submission deadline	1 April 2019
Discovery week	TBC (April – June 2019)
Strategic briefing	2-weeks prior to inspection
Fieldwork (inspection week)	pTBC (May-July 2019)
Hot debrief	1-week after fieldwork
Pre-publication checks – draft reports	October 2019
Publication	December 2019

41. A detailed gap analysis of the findings from tranche one and our current position has taken place by members of the Assurance Team and this will be used to mitigate any weaknesses identified from the tranche one results in preparation for our inspection.
42. Current work is underway to finalise our position statement and self-assessments in preparation for submission in April 2019.

Recommendation

43. Members are requested to:
 - a. **note** the contents of the report.