



## **COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

**16 JULY 2019**

**HMICFRS FIRE AND RESCUE INSPECTIONS 2018/19**

---

## **REPORT OF AREA MANAGER COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT**

---

### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a summary of the findings from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) tranche two inspections and an update on the next steps in the inspection process.

### **BACKGROUND**

2. In June 2019, HMICFRS published the individual outcome reports for the 16 fire and rescue services inspected within tranche two and a consolidated Summary of Findings report. This builds on the findings from the first tranche of 14 service inspections that were reported on during December 2018.
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:
  1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
  2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
  3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?
5. Services are graded as 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' in the answers to each of these questions. Good is the expected graded judgement for all fire and rescue services and is based on policy, practice and performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria.

### **TRANCHE TWO RESULTS**

6. The number of services achieving the outcome grades for each of the three pillars of the inspection process are presented below:

Inspection Grade	Number of services achieving inspection outcome grades		
	Effectiveness	Efficiency	People
Outstanding	0	0	0
Good	9	9	8
Requires improvement	7	7	7
Inadequate	0	0	1
Total	16	16	16

Table 1 Allocation of grades for services inspected in tranche two

## SUMMARY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS PILLAR JUDGEMENTS

### Understanding risk to keep the public and firefighters safe

7. There were significant variations in content, size and style of Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) as there is no current national guidance to support services. There was little consistency in IRMPs even though plans are in line with the requirements set by the National Framework for England.
8. Services also assess risks in different ways and don't always base their planning on up to date information about risk.
9. Some services use risk modelling tools and computer programmes to gain a better understanding of complex data of what might happen in various scenarios, but the sophistication of methods varies greatly.

### Preventing fires and other emergencies

10. Every service in tranche two has explained the range of prevention activities it provides, covering health and lifestyle but in some services, staff didn't feel equipped to discuss the wide spectrum of issues.
11. Most services provide training on safeguarding responsibilities and, in general, staff felt confident identifying the factors that would make someone at greater risk of a fire in their home. Safeguarding training that was delivered through an online training package was considered to have less of an impact than face to face training.
12. All services were advised to evaluate their prevention activities to focus on the outcomes and the actual safety benefits that follow. In some services resources are being diverted away from preventing arson due to reducing staff numbers.

### Protection through the regulation of fire safety

13. Nationally there has been a gradual reduction in the number of competent staff who are dedicated to protection, and most services inspected didn't have enough qualified inspectors to meet the requirements set in their risk-based inspection programmes.
14. HMICFRS advised that services should use the capacity and skills of operational crews to conduct fire safety audits at lower-risk commercial and industrial premises. This allows crews to maintain their working knowledge of the risks in their immediate station area.

15. HMICFRS identified that there is no national definition for what constitutes high risk which leads to little consistency between services and a wide variance in how frequently services audit these premises, and how they enforce compliance.
16. Local authorities must consult fire and rescue services on planning applications for new buildings and renovations to business premises and developments and HMICFRS considered that most services are responding to this legal duty in a timely manner.

### **Responding to fires and other emergencies**

17. HMICFRS considered that most services have a good understanding of appliance availability, but this can fluctuate considerably for on-call stations. Good services have set up systems to track the availability of their on-call staff which link to the systems that track the availability of their fire appliances.
18. Not all services are clear in their IRMPs about the resources they need to meet the risks they have identified. Good services assess the risks and decide how many fire appliances they need at certain locations, but they vary the numbers during the day and night as risk levels change.
19. Every service should have a published response standard but HMICFRS identified that these vary considerably across England and that it is unacceptable for services to commit to a response time and then consistently fail to meet it.
20. All the services inspected in tranche two had a process in place for debriefing staff after incidents. Many services have a central operational assurance team to analyse information from debriefs and help the organisation to improve. Good services have processes in place that help staff learn from debriefs. These include staff bulletins, new training scenarios and highlighting any improvements that have been made in response to feedback.

### **Responding to national risks**

21. HMICFRS determined that fire and rescue services are valued members of Local Resilience Forums and good practice was identified where risk information for neighbouring services can be accessed by firefighters using their mobile data terminals.
22. HMICFRS emphasise the importance of cross border training and multi-agency exercising at high risk sites to enable each service to practice responding together. Good services have trained all incident commanders, so they have a sound understanding of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP).
23. All the services in tranche two are prepared for dealing with flooding and terrorist incidents but the amount of expertise and training varies within services.

## **SUMMARY OF THE EFFICIENCY PILLAR JUDGEMENTS**

### **Making best use of resources**

24. Nearly all the services inspected in tranche two had managed to make savings but there was a wide variation in the scale of savings that services had been required to make. Most savings had been made through innovation, restructuring and collaboration. HMICFRS also found that some financial data that some services provided to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) wasn't good enough.

25. HMICFRS emphasised that services need to be able to demonstrate that they are allocating enough resources to prevention, protection and response activity. Many inspections have identified that services are under-resourcing their protection and/or prevention teams or have not been able to demonstrate a clear rationale for the levels of activity in these areas.
26. Nearly half of the services inspected use flexible workforce patterns and have altered their crewing models to increase their efficiency. Some services have also reduced and evaluated the number of firefighters needed to crew appliances.

### **Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future**

27. HMICFRS were encouraged to see services looking to the future to assess potential financial risks. These included the Government's Fair Funding Review, changes in government grant towards unfunded pension schemes and potential reductions in the amount that can be retained from business rates. Services that were too reliant on their reserves were considered to be unsustainable while the use of new technology to support effective performance received praise.
28. All the fire and rescue services inspected in tranche two were meeting their statutory duties to consider emergency services collaboration. This included shared estates, equipment and control rooms, joint procurement and work on behalf of police and health services.
29. Every service inspected in tranche two had business continuity plans in place, but many weren't regularly tested and updated. A lack of corporate oversight and understanding at department level was also found amongst the inspected services.

## **SUMMARY OF THE PEOPLE PILLAR JUDGEMENTS**

### **Promoting the right values and culture**

30. More services are effectively promoting their values and culture in tranche two than in tranche one. Most staff who were interviewed were dedicated and proud to work in the fire and rescue service with a strong commitment to improving public safety and protecting their communities. Many services had clear, unambiguous values and statements that were demonstrated by senior leaders that outlined acceptable behaviours.
31. In a number of services HMICFRS found significant pockets where culture was poor. Values weren't well established or understood by staff and there was evidence of inappropriate language, bullying, harassment and discrimination.
32. Almost every service in tranche two has an effective system for supporting the general health and wellbeing of its staff. Most services offer a range of support functions, such as counselling, physiotherapy and medical screening. Most services are focussing on improving the mental health of their staff.
33. Most services have a health and safety culture where they provide regular training for staff and manage adverse safety events effectively.

### **Getting the right people with the right skills**

34. Most services gave the right level of priority to operational and risk critical training but in some services the recording, evidencing and assurance of competence for staff training at stations was not robust. The training and recording of skills for fire control staff and flexible duty officers was considered to be significantly behind operational station-based staff.
35. The majority of services in tranche two showed that they have effective workforce planning processes in place where they monitor the current and future staffing requirements and capabilities, they need to meet the commitments in their IRMP.
36. In some services HMICFRS considered that staff were being kept in temporary promotions for excessive periods of time.

### **Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity**

37. Most services in tranche two are considering workforce diversity when planning and carrying out recruitment campaigns to increase the talent they can access. In some services there is a lack of basic hygiene facilities and showers at some stations, and in other locations some female firefighters have to wear ill-fitting clothing and footwear because workwear designed for women isn't available.
38. Almost all services have formal or informal mechanisms for getting regular feedback from their staff, but it was noted that some services need to do more to increase the trust and confidence of their staff that feedback will be heard and acted upon where appropriate.
39. All services inspected in tranche two have processes in place for dealing with grievances, but the application of these procedures varies greatly. To understand the concerns of staff, services were advised to monitor a range of data, such as trends in grievances and staff feedback to make improvements.

### **Managing performance and developing leaders**

40. HMICFRS recognised that there is no single best approach to performance management but that it should align with the commitments in the service's IRMP and people strategy. Performance management should also revolve around regular and effective feedback on objectives.
41. The majority of services in tranche two couldn't show that they consistently follow due process and comply with their own promotion procedures. Some selection criteria often weren't consistent or clear, processes were run locally with little or no independent scrutiny and policies and procedures were many years out of date and not always followed.
42. HMICFRS also identified that a significant number of senior leaders are expected to retire from the fire and rescue service over the next two years and services are encouraged to invest in talent management to mitigate the effect of this.

## **ANALYSIS OF OUTCOME GRADES FOR TRANCHE ONE AND TRANCHE TWO INSPECTIONS**

43. Effectiveness pillar grades for tranche one and two fire and rescue services:

Inspection Grade	Number of T1 Fire and Rescue Services	Number of T2 Fire and Rescue Services	Combined results of T1 and T2 services
Inadequate	0	0	0
Requires improvement	4	7	11
Good	10	9	19
Outstanding	0	0	0
Total	14	16	30

Table 2 Allocation of Effectiveness outcome grades for tranche one and two services

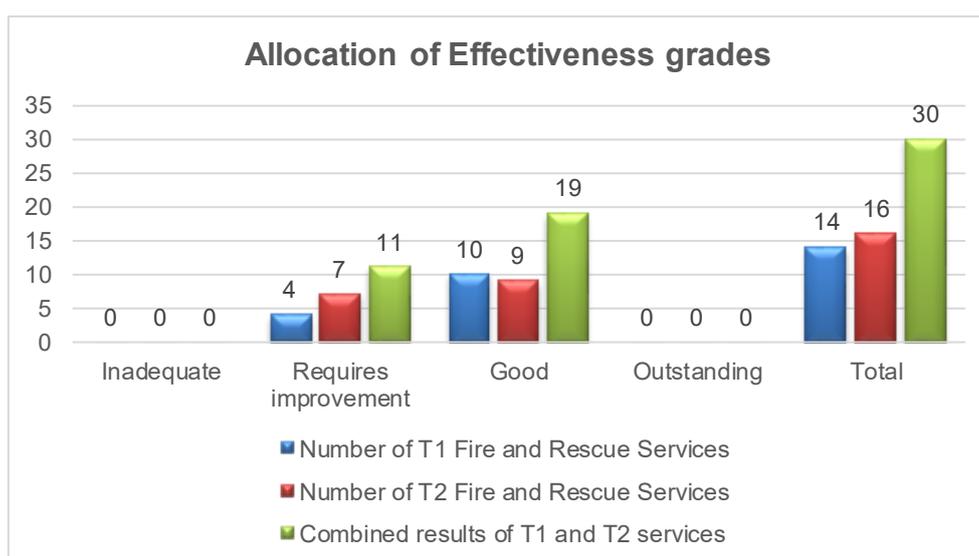


Figure 1 Allocation of Effectiveness outcome grades for tranche one and two services

44. Areas for Improvement (AFIs) and Cause for Concerns (CFCs) are notified to fire and rescue services when practice, policy or performance falls short of expectations or serious/critical shortcomings are identified during their inspections.

45. Examples of AFIs and CFCs for tranche two services for the effectiveness pillar include:

- The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk, including those from hard-to-reach groups (AFI/Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service should ensure staff understand and apply the correct process for safeguarding referrals (AFI/Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service);
- The FRS should have its own MTFAs response that is both resilient and timely (AFI/Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service should ensure its staff work with local businesses to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations (AFI/Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service should ensure it has an effective system in place to address repeat false alarms (AFI/Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service).

46. Efficiency pillar grades for tranche one and two fire and rescue services:

Inspection Grade	Number of T1 Fire and Rescue Services	Number of T2 Fire and Rescue Services	Combined results of T1 and T2 services
Inadequate	1	0	1
Requires improvement	5	7	12
Good	8	9	17
Outstanding	0	0	0
Total	14	16	30

Table 3 Allocation of Efficiency outcome grades for tranche one and two services

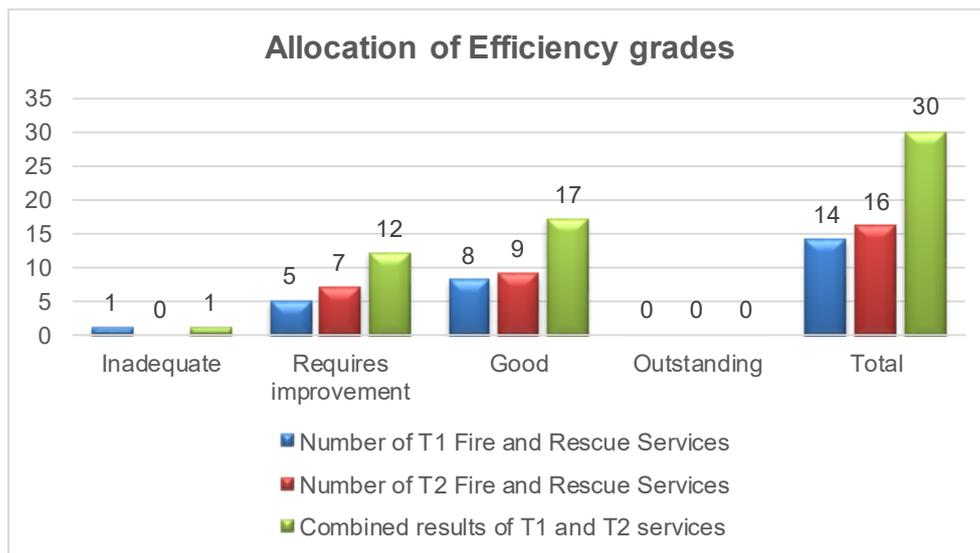


Figure 2 Allocation of Efficiency outcome grades for tranche one and tranche two services

47. Examples of AFIs and CFCs for tranche two services for the efficiency pillar include:

- The service needs to show how extra capacity generated through shift changes has been used to improve public safety (AFI/Humberside Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service should implement a clear performance management framework that directly supports the objectives identified in the IRMP (AFI/Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service should make sure it has a testing programme for all business continuity plans (AFI/Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service needs to accelerate its plans to improve ICT so that it makes best use of available technology to support operational effectiveness and efficiency (AFI/Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service should ensure it has sufficiently robust plans in place which fully consider the medium-term financial challenges beyond 2020 so it can prepare to secure the right level of savings (AFI/Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service should ensure there is effective monitoring, review and evaluation of the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration (AFI/Kent Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service should implement a more robust way of recording prevention and protection information (AFI/Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service).

48. People pillar grades for tranche one and two fire and rescue services:

Inspection Grade	Number of T1 Fire and Rescue Services	Number of T2 Fire and Rescue Services	Combined results of T1 and T2 services
Inadequate	1	1	2
Requires improvement	10	7	17
Good	3	8	11
Outstanding	0	0	0
Total	14	16	30

Table 4 Allocation of People outcome grades for tranche one and two services

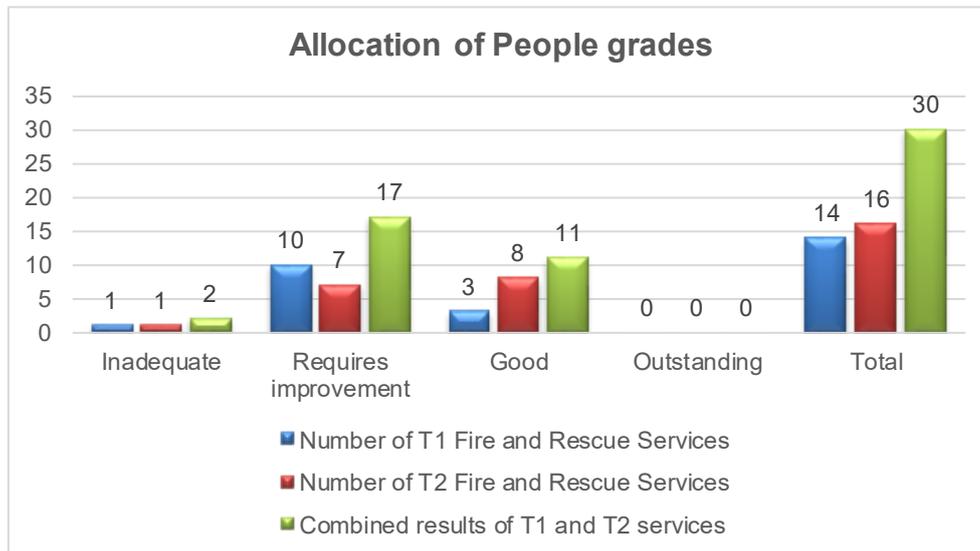


Figure 3 Allocation of People outcome grades for tranche one and two services

49. Examples of CFCs for tranche two services for the people pillar include:

- The FRS doesn't have enough controls in place to monitor the competence of its staff. This is because it has suspended its centralised assessment of incident command and breathing apparatus training (CFC/Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service);
- The FRS has no strategy, visible leadership and limited training on equality, diversity and inclusion. This is affecting watch culture and undermining positives steps to attract new entrants from diverse backgrounds (CFC/Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service);
- The FRS's staff sometimes act in ways that go against its core values. This is leading to bullying in the workplace (CFC/West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service);
- The FRS doesn't engage with or seek feedback from staff to understand their needs. We found this to especially be the case with some under-represented groups. When staff raise issues and concerns, the service doesn't respond quickly enough (CFC/West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service should develop a wellbeing strategy to improve understanding of health, safety and wellbeing trends (AFI/Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service);
- The service should ensure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation (AFI/Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service).

## NEXT STEPS

50. A summary of the inspection key milestones involving CDDFRS are presented below:

Date	Activity
27 June 2019	Strategic brief
15 – 19 July 2019	Inspection fieldwork
24 July 2019	HMICFRS hot debrief
1 August 2019	CDDFRS internal inspection debrief
Summer/Autumn/2019	Consultation on the inspection programme for cycle two. HMICFRS are currently working on the delivery of another full round of inspections of every service instead of moving to a risk-based inspection programme.
Summer/Autumn 2019	Consultation on proposals to deliver corporate governance inspections. These are intended to be used only in exceptional circumstances if significant failings are identified in the effectiveness or efficiency of the service to the public.
October 2019	Outcome reports available to T3 services for pre-publication checks
December 2019	Individual outcome reports published for T3 services
December 2019	State of Fire and Rescue report published by HMICFRS. This annual report will include main themes from all inspections and, if appropriate, sector wide recommendations.
December 2019	FRS inspections 2018/19 Summary of findings from Tranche 3 published
(unknown) 2020	Cycle two of HMICFRS inspections to commence during 2020. Timescales and specific content of the second cycle of inspections is currently unknown.

## RECOMMENDATION

51. Members are requested to **note** the contents of the report.

Robin Turnbull, Area Manager: Community Risk Management, ext: 5632