



Promoting improvements
in policing and fire & rescue
services to make everyone safer

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Sir Thomas Winsor ws
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and
Rescue Services

Chief fire officers
Chairs of fire authorities
Police, fire and crime commissioners
Police and crime commissioners
Lead fire authority members
Locally elected mayors
Other FRS interested parties

26 February 2021

Dear Colleagues,

FIRE AND RESCUE INSPECTIONS 2019 - NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This letter concerns the new dates for implementation of the inspectorate's national recommendations in respect of the fire and rescue sector, and the monitoring of progress against them.

2. To date, we have made six national recommendations which we believe are necessary to bring improvements to the fire and rescue sector. These recommendations are listed at Annex A.
3. While encouraging progress has been made in relation to some of these recommendations, in others, work is still in its infancy or hasn't begun. I know COVID-19 has had an effect on some of this work, diverting resources to other priorities.
4. In some cases, original completion dates have now passed. I've consulted with each of the organisations named in the recommendations to obtain their views on the new proposed completion dates. These new dates have now been established and are listed in the annex. These dates will also be included in State of Fire and Rescue 2020 which will be published next month.
5. While I would prefer to establish by agreement dates for the recommendations against which the Home Office has responsibility, I appreciate they are being included in a bigger reform programme. I hope an announcement on this programme – and its implementation plan – will be made as soon as possible.
6. The findings from our recent COVID-19 inspections reinforce my view that these recommendations are still necessary. National and local reform continues, but further direction and work is necessary. During the pandemic, we have seen the restrictions with which chief fire officers and services are faced.
7. I have asked the named organisations to keep the inspectorate informed of progress.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Thomas Winsor WS
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services

Annex A – new completion dates for HMICFRS’ national recommendations

Recommendation	Original completion date	Proposed new completion date
<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>As soon as is practicable, the Home Office, the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Local Government Association, in consultation with the Fire Standards Board and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, should establish a programme of work that will result in consistency in the four priority areas: 1. identifying and determining risk as part of the IRMP process; 2. identifying and measuring emergency response standards and approaches; 3. defining what are high-risk premises for the purposes of fire protection; and 4. setting an expectation for how frequently high-risk premises, and parts of those premises, should be audited for compliance with fire safety legislation.</p> <p>There should be completion or significant progress in the priority areas specified above towards a common set of definitions and standards for fire and rescue services to adopt and apply as soon as reasonably practicable.</p>	December 2020	December 2021
<p>Recommendation 2:</p> <p>As part of the next Spending Review, the Home Office, in consultation with the fire and rescue sector, should address the deficit in the fire sector’s national capacity and capability to support change.</p>	Next spending review	Complete
<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>The Home Office, in consultation with the fire and rescue sector, should review and with precision determine the roles of: (a) fire and rescue services; and (b) those who work in them</p>	June 2020	Awaiting fire reform implementation plan from Home Office
<p>Recommendation 4:</p> <p>The Home Office, the Local Government Association, the National Fire Chiefs Council and trade unions should consider whether the current pay negotiation machinery requires fundamental reform. If so, this should include the need for an independent pay review body and the future of the ‘grey book’.</p>	June 2020	June 2021

Recommendation	Original completion date	Proposed new completion date
<p>Recommendation 5:</p> <p>The Home Office should consider the case for legislating to give chief fire officers operational independence. In the meantime, it should issue clear guidance, possibly through an amendment to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, on the demarcation between those responsible for governance and operational decision making by the chief fire officer.</p>	September 2020	Awaiting fire reform implementation plan from Home Office
<p>Recommendation 6:</p> <p>The National Fire Chiefs Council, with the Local Government Association, should produce a code of ethics for fire and rescue services. The code should be adopted by every service in England and considered as part of each employee's progression and annual performance appraisal.</p>	December 2020	March 2021