



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

20 June 2023

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Update

Report of Director of Community Risk Management

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Action Plan resulting from County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and of the appointment of a new Inspector for the Northern region.

Background

2. The HMICFRS inspection of CDDFRS was completed during May, June and July 2022 with the final report published on 20 January 2023.
3. The inspection assessed how effectively and efficiently CDDFRS prevents, protects the public against and responds to fires and other emergencies. It also assessed how well it looks after the people who work for the Service.
4. The table below shows the grades and sub-diagnostic grades that were awarded within this report, including a comparison to the 2019 report:

Pillar/ Sub-diagnostic	2018/19 Grade	2021/22 Grade
EFFECTIVENESS	GOOD	GOOD
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	Requires Improvement	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	Good	Good
Protecting the public through fire regulation	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	Good	Good
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	Good	Good
EFFICIENCY	GOOD	GOOD
Making best use of resources	Good	Good
Making the FRS affordable now and in the future	Good	Good
PEOPLE	REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT	GOOD
Promoting the right values and culture	Good	Good
Getting the right people with the right skills	Good	Good
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Requires Improvement	Good
Managing performance and developing leaders	Requires Improvement	Good

Action Plan

5. An action plan to address all improvement areas identified in the report has been developed. The action plan highlights all the areas formally highlighted in the report as needing improvement and also any text in the report which identifies where the Service is not as good as it could be.
6. In total there are 19 actions across the two pillars of Effectiveness and People, with no actions being identified for Efficiency.
7. The action plan is attached as Appendix A.
8. Periodically, progress against the action plan will be reported to SLT, Performance Committee and the CFA.

His Majesty's Inspector

9. Michelle Skeer QPM has been appointed by His Majesty as an Inspector of Constabulary and Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services. She will take up her role on 1 August 2023 with responsibility for the Northern region.
10. Michelle joins the inspectorate following the recent announcement of her retirement as Chief Constable of Cumbria Police.

Recommendations

11. CFA Members are requested to:
 - a. **note** the contents of this report;
 - b. **receive** further reports as appropriate.

Appendix A – HMICFRS Action Plan

Action No.	HMI No.	AFI	Issue to be addressed	Action	SLT Lead	Lead Officer	Target date
1	1.1	Yes	The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant site-specific risk information.	Implement a quality assurance process for site-specific risk information to ensure the accuracy of the information.	DER	GM ER R&I	Dec-23
2	1.1	No	Risk information is shared across departments, but this should be more structured and staff should be aware of this structured process. Similar commentary also in section 1.2 related to Prevention risk information.	Ensure the Service has a structured approach to sharing risk information between Prevention, Protection and Response that is understood by staff in these departments.	DER	GM ER R&I	Sep-23
3	1.1	No	It wasn't clear how the service ensures the information [urgent risk information] is read and understood by staff on annual leave or returning from absence. The service should consider improving the way it records this.	Implement a process for the signing off of urgent risk information to give assurance to the Service that all staff have read and understood this information	DCRM	SM Assurance	Sep-23
4	1.2	Yes	The service should implement a formal process that routinely checks the quality of home fire safety visits so that it can assure itself staff complete them to a consistent standard.	Implement a formal process to check the quality of home fire safety visits completed by all staff to assure the service that they are completed to a consistent standard.	DCRM	GM CRM	Jun-23
5	1.2	No	We also found that the specialist prevention staff receive regular continuous professional development, but this isn't recorded.	Ensure continuous professional development for the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team is recorded.	DCRM	GM CRM	Apr-23
6	1.2	No	Some staff we spoke to hadn't been provided with the appropriate training in how to carry out school visits.	Ensure staff who are required to carry out school visits receive training to support this delivery.	DCRM	GM CRM	Oct-23
7	1.3	Yes	The service should regularly monitor and check compliance of prohibition notices that have been served.	Design a process to ensure all premises with prohibition notices are regularly monitored and checked to ensure compliance.	DCRM	GM CRM	Apr-23

8	1.3	Yes	The service should ensure that protection staff have and maintain the capacity and skill to use the full range of available enforcement powers, including the ability to prosecute where necessary.	Provide assurance to SLT that protection staff have the capacity and skills to use the full range of enforcement powers including the ability to prosecute.	DCRM	GM CRM	Sep-23
9	1.3	No	The service should assure itself that this current approach [RBIP] is working, and that specialist fire safety staff are focusing on its highest-risk premises.	Review the RBIP to ensure the central fire safety team are focusing on the highest risk premises.	DCRM	GM CRM	Mar-24
10	1.3	No	Specialist fire safety staff haven't received quality assurance reviews.	Implement a formal process to quality assure the central fire safety team.	DCRM	GM CRM	Sep-23
11	1.3	No	Some enforcement guidance documents are out of date.	Review all enforcement guidance documents to ensure they are up to date.	DCRM	GM CRM	Sep-23
12	1.3	No	The service should consider the use of alteration notices where necessary, as several prohibition notices currently in force were served over ten years ago.	Consider the use of alteration notices for premises which have had prohibition notices in force for many years.	DCRM	GM CRM	Mar-24
13	1.4	No	On-call availability can still be improved	Demonstrate an improvement from the current availability of 68% for on-call first pumps by 31/03/2024.	DER	GM ER Delivery	Mar-24
14	1.4	No	The service should test its ability to provide fire survival guidance to many callers simultaneously.	Conduct an exercise to test Control's ability to provide fire survival guidance to many callers simultaneously.	DER	FCM	Jul-23
15	3.3	No	36 percent (31 out of 85) of respondents to our staff survey said they didn't feel confident in the systems to provide feedback at all levels in the service.	Use the next staff survey to identify if staff confidence in this area has improved.	DPOD	PODM	Mar-24
16	3.3	No	We spoke to some staff who still didn't feel comfortable in raising workforce concerns more formally.	Use the next staff survey to identify if staff confidence in this area has improved.	DPOD	PODM	Mar-24

17	3.3	No	Equality impact assessments (EIAs) - more could be done to improve organisational learning, as we found that the information and findings in the impact assessments that may affect staff with protected characteristics weren't shared across the service.	Present the findings of EIAs to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group who will monitor any actions and decide if any further communication of the findings is required.	DER	PODM	Jun-23
18	3.4	No	The service recognises that the promotion process could be further improved. We spoke to staff who didn't understand why the initial application form and assessment development centre's scores, which include an interview and presentation, don't count towards the final stage of the promotion process.	Consider these staff comments and ensure the outcome of any review is communicated to staff.	DPOD	PODM	Jun-23
19	3.4	No	We found some temporary promotions had been in place for a long time. The service should make sure it effectively manages their duration.	Ensure the Workforce Planning Group considers the length of temporary promotions and effectively manages their duration.	DPOD	PODM	Jun-23