



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

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**Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM**  
HM Inspector of Constabulary  
HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

**Sent by email:**

Chief Fire Officers  
Chairs of Fire Authorities  
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners  
Lead Fire Authority Members  
Locally elected Mayors  
Other FRS interested parties

12 June 2023

Dear colleague,

## **Fire and Rescue Service Update**

### **Round 3**

I write to inform you on progress of our third round of fire and rescue (FRS) inspections.

Inspection activity is now underway for the first 12 services in the programme. A further update to the inspection schedule for round 3 is set out in **Annex A**. This running order may be subject to change, which could be due to several reasons, including changes in performance or risk. Services affected by this will be informed of any planned changes at the earliest opportunity.

Please contact your Chief of Staff, Mick Mason, [michael.mason1@hmicfrs.gov.uk](mailto:michael.mason1@hmicfrs.gov.uk) or Jo Hayden, [jo.hayden1@hmicfrs.gov.uk](mailto:jo.hayden1@hmicfrs.gov.uk), in the first instance if you wish to discuss it.

### **Gross misconduct information and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

HMCI Cooke previously wrote to all Chief Fire Officers to request that information in relation to allegations of gross misconduct are shared on an ongoing basis with HMIs. This included all allegations of gross misconduct currently under investigation or consideration, along with cases of alleged misconduct and other grievances and complaints where the alleged behaviour of individuals calls into question the culture and values of the organisation.

We have received some queries in relation to this and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and specifically whether this request for ongoing dialogue and

information is subject to a formal notice. It is not, at this stage, and we expect FRS' to comply voluntarily with this request.

Voluntary compliance with a request for disclosure of information or evidence the Inspectorate reasonably requires for the purposes of its statutory inspection functions constitutes processing which is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest (i.e. the Inspectorate's inspection task) under Article 6(1)(e) UK GDPR.

Special category personal data, including in relation to criminal record information (as defined in Articles 9(1) and 10(1) UK GDPR, and section 11(2) of the Data Protection Act 2018), may necessarily fall within the scope of the information or evidence requested by the Inspectorate. Similarly, disclosure of such information, whether voluntarily or under the Notification, will satisfy Article 9(2)(j) UK GDPR or Article 10(1) UK GDPR, read with paragraph 6 of Schedule 1 to the Data Protection Act 2018, because the processing is necessary for the exercise by the Inspectorate of its statutory functions and is in the substantial public interest.

Therefore, the GDPR exemptions relating to personal information do not apply, even in the case of voluntary compliance. Should a FRS be unwilling to comply voluntarily, then His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has indicated that a statutory notice will be issued. We very much hope that will not be necessary.

Information provided in response to this ongoing request should be provided directly to your HMI and will be protected in the same manner as other information provided to the inspectorate.

I hope that this assists with more background to our request, and that you agree that ongoing sharing of information such as this, which goes to the heart of public confidence and the efficiency and effectiveness of FRS' is key to an ongoing and positive relationship between the Inspectorate and Services.

### **Values and culture spotlight report recommendations**

On 31 May, HMCI Andy Cooke wrote to you regarding the recommendations in the spotlight report on values and culture in the fire and rescue service that HMICFRS published on 31 March 2023. Within that letter, HMCI Cooke asked you to please implement the recommendations that are aimed at chief fire officers, by the stated deadlines.

HMCI Cooke also explained that to monitor these recommendations, we will use the existing Huddle spaces that services use for their document returns. These should be familiar to service liaison officers, who have access. A specific folder is available for each service within their Huddle workspace, containing a spreadsheet for the specific monitoring of the recommendations, in lieu of the portal. We ask services to provide updates within these spreadsheets, by the relevant deadlines, to include a self-assessment of whether or not they have met each recommendation, and a short narrative of no more than 300 words

per recommendation, if necessary. Please note that it is inappropriate to provide details of specific misconduct allegations, or any personal or sensitive information within these updates. Please notify your HMI directly of information of this nature. If you have any queries about this process, please get in touch with us via [hmicfrsfireteam@hmicfrs.gov.uk](mailto:hmicfrsfireteam@hmicfrs.gov.uk).

Thank you to those services who have provided updates. However, too many services have not yet submitted an update. As the first official deadline, of 1 June 2023, has now passed I urge every service to please provide us with an update for the relevant recommendations. If you have any concerns about meeting a specific recommendation, please get in touch with your HMI directly.

### **New inspectors of police and fire service and a new Assistant HMI (His Majesty's Inspector)**

I am pleased to advise that, from August 2023, Lee Freeman KPM and Michelle Skeer QPM will both start their dual roles of His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary in England and Wales and His Majesty's Inspectors of Fire and Rescue in England.

Lee and Michelle were selected following a stringent recruitment process, conducted in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspectors are then appointed by His Majesty The King on the advice of the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister.

The Inspectorate also welcomed Shantha Dickinson on 15 May 2023. Deputy Chief Fire Officer Shantha Dickinson joins HMICFRS as an Assistant HMI on a secondment from Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service. She will provide additional support across fire and rescue service inspections, and the wider work of the inspectorate.

Finally, I would also like to advise that HMI Matt Parr will be leaving us at the end of this month. Matt was appointed as HM Inspector of Constabulary in August 2016 and HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services in July 2017 when our remit was extended to include those services. I would like to thank Matt for his support since I joined the inspectorate. Arrangements are currently in progress to transition those services that Matt is responsible for to other HMI's. More on this over the coming month.

Should you need any further information please contact either me or Alex Hill, FRS portfolio director via [alex.hill@hmicfrs.gov.uk](mailto:alex.hill@hmicfrs.gov.uk)

Thank you for your continued support of our inspection programme.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RW', is placed over a light grey dotted rectangular background.

**Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM**  
HM Inspector of Constabulary  
HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services