



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

23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham B2 4BH

Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM
His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue
Services

Sent by email:

Chief fire officers of England

19 July 2023

Dear colleague,

Thematic inspection on the handling of misconduct

On 13 July 2023, the Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS to undertake a thematic inspection of the handling of [misconduct](#) in fire and rescue services in England. This commission builds on the findings in our [spotlight report on culture and values in the fire service](#) published in March 2023 and other high-profile reports of unacceptable behaviour.

We have published the [terms of reference](#) for this inspection. They include:

- the extent to which services are identifying and investigating misconduct;
- the effectiveness of misconduct processes and how consistently they are applied;
- how confident fire and rescue service staff are in raising concerns and in misconduct processes; and
- the role of fire and rescue authorities and other organisations in handling misconduct.

To support the inspection, we will request data from all 44 fire and rescue services through our regular autumn data collection. As part of our evidence gathering, we will also issue a staff survey to all 44 services.

Services that would have received a staff survey for their scheduled inspection between September 2023 and January 2024 will receive it in September 2023 to avoid overlap. We will write to you to confirm this.

We will also inspect a sample of fire and rescue services to understand the handling of misconduct more thoroughly. The ten we have selected will make sure we gather evidence from a range of services, large and small, rural and urban. They will also cover the different governance models that operate throughout England and have been selected to avoid overlap with scheduled service inspections.

As this is a thematic inspection, the evidence will be used to inform our understanding of the handling of misconduct in general. We won't be publishing reports on individual services or making graded judgments.

I will write to the services we will inspect shortly, setting out our timetable and the documents and data we will require.

We will publish our report in June 2024.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RW', written in a cursive style.

HMI Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM

His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services