



Proposed fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework 2025–27

For consultation

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

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses and reports on the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services (FRSs) to make communities safer. We ask the questions we believe the public wish to have answered, and publish our findings, conclusions and recommendations in an accessible form, using our expertise to interpret the evidence.

We provide authoritative information to allow the public to compare the performance of their police force or FRS against others, and to determine whether performance has improved or deteriorated over time.

Our recommendations are designed to bring about improvements in the service provided to the public.

Foreword

All safety-critical, essential public services benefit from the scrutiny of inspection and reporting. Our inspections are valuable for both the public and the fire and rescue sector. Since our first round of inspections in 2018, we have seen evidence of how, in many respects, services have improved. FRS staff have also told us that they have seen changes for the better.

In February 2023, we began our third full cycle of inspections of all FRSs in England, known as our 'Round 3' inspections. This round introduced the following changes.

Characteristics of good

We introduced the 'characteristics of good'. These describe the levels of performance needed for an FRS to achieve a grade of 'good'. They allow us to make consistent assessments across all services. And services can see what they are being graded against.

A new judgment: adequate

We introduced a new judgment of 'adequate', which increased the number of our grading categories from four to five. This allows us to state more precisely where we consider improvement is needed and how to achieve it.

An accelerated reporting process

We introduced an accelerated reporting process. In our inspections, if we identify a serious, critical or systemic shortcoming in a force or service's practice, policy or performance, we will report it as a cause of concern. A [cause of concern](#) will always be accompanied by one or more recommendations. When we discover significant service failures or risks to public safety, we now report our concerns and recommendations earlier. This is called an [accelerated cause of concern](#).

Round 3 inspections

So far in Round 3 we have found:

- Some services have made progress, but aspects of some services' performance are getting worse, and some services are struggling to make improvements.
- Systemic challenges are preventing services from improving.
- Strong and effective senior leadership has led to improvements in a few services, but many service leaders need to take a more strategic approach to making improvements.
- Many services urgently need to improve their values, culture and management of [misconduct](#) issues.
- Services are struggling to maintain an effective [on-call](#) duty system.
- Services are making good progress on the [Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 recommendations](#).
- More services need to improve how consistently they carry out protection work.
- Service leaders aren't always using their resources in a strategic way.
- A lack of diversity and inclusion is affecting public and staff trust in FRSs.
- Staff could be better supported and developed to carry out their jobs effectively.
- Managers often don't consider the well-being and safety of their staff in relation to the monitoring of dual contracts and secondary employment.

To maintain the focus of the fire and rescue sector on the areas we have identified for improvement, we will continue to inspect the effectiveness and efficiency of FRSs and how well they look after their people.

We continue to reflect on improvements we can make to future inspections. And we will continue to consider how we can provide greater focus on areas and trends we identify during inspections. With this in mind, we are reviewing our inspection questions and methodology.

Your response to this consultation will help us continue to focus our inspection work on what matters most to the public. Thank you for your interest in our proposed inspection plans for 2025–27.

Consultation questions

This document provides details of our proposed fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework for 2025–27. We would like your views on whether this programme covers the right areas of FRSs' activities.

In particular, we would be grateful to receive your responses to the following questions:

1. We propose to evaluate how each FRS is affected by its [fire and rescue authority's](#) governance, oversight and scrutiny arrangements. We also propose to examine how the fire and rescue authority supports the FRS to keep the public safe, establish a positive culture and standards of conduct, and look after the health and well-being of its staff. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?
2. Do you agree or disagree that we should assess leadership at all levels of FRSs?
3. We intend to combine the current efficiency questions 2.1 and 2.2 into a single question. This would concentrate on how resources are allocated and used in support of the outcomes required for the [community risk management plan](#). Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?
4. We propose to examine how FRSs work with local communities to make them more resilient. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?
5. Does the draft 'characteristics of good' ([Annex A](#)) include the right questions to gather evidence for a comprehensive assessment of FRSs? How could this be improved?
6. To expand some areas that we currently inspect and/or include new areas for inspection, we would need to reduce or remove some of those currently considered. What do you think we should spend less time on?
7. Is there anything we can do to improve the way we report our findings?
8. Are there any areas that you think we should examine more?

We have included these questions and more detail in '[An overview of our proposed inspection programme for FRSs 2025–27](#)'.

We intend to include more detail in the HMI summary section of our inspection reports about the context the service is operating in. We will also include a leadership section where the HMI can set out the most important findings relating to the service's leadership at all levels.

At the end of this document, we explain how you can give us your views.

Introduction

This document provides details of our proposed inspection programme and framework for all 44 FRSs in England for 2025–27.

In our inspections, we focus on the operational service the FRS provides to the public. We carry out a rounded assessment of every FRS, evaluating its effectiveness and efficiency, and how it looks after its people. This covers:

- the effectiveness of the operational service provided to the public (including prevention, protection and response);
- the efficiency of the service (how well it provides value for money, allocates resources to match risk and collaborates with other emergency services); and
- how well the service looks after its people (how well it promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and makes sure they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for the workforce, leads its people and develops leadership and service capability).

Our assessments are designed to allow the public to see how each FRS is performing, including changes over time and in relation to the performance of other services. The resulting assessments include graded judgments of performance.

We propose that this round of inspection will include elements of fire and rescue governance, including scrutiny.

Before we implement our inspection programme and framework, the Home Secretary needs to approve it (in line with section 28A(2) of the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)).

‘State of Fire and Rescue’ and spotlight reports

HM Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services for England is required to report each year on our inspections. This includes an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the fire and rescue authorities in England (in line with section 28B of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004). In May 2024, we published our fifth assessment, [‘State of fire and rescue: the annual assessment of fire and rescue services in England 2023’](#).

We may also publish spotlight reports that contain a summary of findings or themes that emerge from our inspections if we consider it appropriate. In March 2023, we published our first FRS spotlight report, ['Values and culture in fire and rescue services'](#).

An overview of our proposed inspection programme for FRSs 2025–27

In our next round of inspections, we will continue to inspect how effective and efficient FRSs are at carrying out their principal functions, as laid out in sections 6–9 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004:

- fire safety;
- firefighting; and
- responding to road traffic collisions and other emergencies.

By the time we start our next inspection programme, each fire and rescue service will have had three full inspections. These provide a benchmark against which we can monitor progress. As some questions may have changed between inspection rounds, this means it isn't always possible to make direct comparisons of progress.

We would like to see FRSs make more progress on the areas we identify for improvement. In our next inspection programme we will assess the progress made by FRSs since our previous round of inspections. We will comment on this in the report. We will also increase our focus on leadership at all levels within the fire and rescue service. And we will expand our focus to include how elements of the fire and rescue authority's arrangements affect the service and the context it is operating in.

The [Fire Standards Board](#) has been set up to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional standards for FRSs in England. All fire and rescue authorities must implement approved standards (see '[Fire and rescue national framework for England](#)', paragraph 6.4). When designing inspections, we will take into account these and all other (existing and new) professional standards for FRSs, alongside [national operational guidance](#).

Consultation questions

In summer 2025, our next inspection programme will start; we will inspect all 44 FRSs in England over a two-year period.

In our previous inspection programmes, we didn't routinely include an assessment of governance. For our next inspection programme, we propose to focus more on the robustness of these arrangements in making sure the service is effective and efficient at keeping the public safe from fire and other risks. We will also assess whether these

arrangements create a positive culture, and whether standards of conduct exist to support the health and well-being of its workforce.

Consultation question 1: We propose to evaluate how each FRS is affected by its fire and rescue authority's governance, oversight and scrutiny arrangements. We also propose to examine how the fire and rescue authority supports the FRS to keep the public safe, establish a positive culture and standards of conduct, and look after the health and well-being of its staff. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

We propose to focus more on how well services lead their people. This will cover leaders at all levels of the organisation. We will consider leadership in all areas of our 'characteristics of good'. We will also add a leadership section to our inspection reports after the overall summary. In this section, the HMI will set out the most important findings relating to the service's leadership.

Consultation question 2: Do you agree or disagree that we should assess leadership at all levels of FRSs?

In our Round 3 inspections, efficiency is covered by two questions: making best use of resources (2.1) and making the FRS affordable now and in the future (2.2). To reduce duplication and concentrate more on outcomes for communities and the workforce, we intend to combine these questions.

Consultation question 3: Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to combine the efficiency questions into a single question (to concentrate on how resources are allocated and used in support of the outcomes required for the community risk management plan)?

As part of the [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#), the FRS should assess its local risks and prepare a Community Risk Register. It should actively participate in the [local resilience forum](#), which brings together local authorities, emergency services and other organisations such as the Environment Agency and Health Protection Agency. And the FRS should use risk assessments to develop its plans and support local communities to help make them more resilient.

Consultation question 4: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to examine how FRSs work with local communities to make them more resilient?

We will continue to structure our 'characteristics of good' to focus on three main areas:

- How effective is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- How efficient is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- How well does the FRS look after its people?

These characteristics describe the levels of performance needed for an FRS to achieve a grade of 'good'.

Consultation question 5: Does the draft 'characteristics of good' ([Annex A](#)) include the right questions to gather evidence for a comprehensive assessment of FRSs? How could this be improved?

To avoid increasing the demand our inspections put on services, and to make sure our resources are deployed appropriately and adequately, we must focus on the most important areas. We will need to reduce activity in some areas to maintain this approach.

Consultation question 6: What do you think we should spend less time on during our inspections?

We already intend for the reports issued during our next inspection programme to include more detail about the context in which a service is operating. This could include, for example:

- funding and the different ways services acquire it (such as grants, business rates and council tax);
- the diversity of the local population and the workforce; and
- levels of deprivation.

Consultation question 7: Is there anything we can do to improve the way we report our findings?

Consultation question 8: Are there any areas that you think we should examine more?

Other inspections

We can carry out [thematic inspections](#) (in-depth assessments of themes or issues). These allow us to identify areas of notable practice or specific concerns in FRSs and may result in recommendations that are relevant to the fire and rescue sector as a whole.

The Home Secretary can commission thematic inspections on individual matters outside the approved inspection programme and framework (in line with section 11 of the [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#)). In 2023, the Home Secretary commissioned us to carry out a thematic inspection of the handling of misconduct in FRSs in England; [we published our findings in August 2024](#). In this inspection we were pleased to see the beginnings of some improvement. FRSs have raised awareness of the standards of behaviour they expect and have created strategies and action plans. But pockets of unacceptable behaviour remain and further progress is needed.

When we identify the need for a thematic inspection, we will consult the Home Secretary to alter the approved inspection programme and framework. We will publish any commissions received from the Home Secretary on our website. For example, we are currently considering a thematic inspection on police and fire service cybersecurity, which would assess the police and fire response to increasing areas of cybersecurity risk. The timing of thematic inspections will depend on our funding and capacity and on the current and emerging priorities for FRSs.

We can also publish spotlight reports. These contain a summary of findings or themes that emerge from our inspection programmes, which suggest a national effort is required to make the necessary improvements.

Inspecting governance arrangements

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, created powers to inspect fire and rescue authorities (see section 11 of the latter).

In our first three rounds of inspections of the fire and rescue sector, we focused on the service provided to the public, and not on the accountability and scrutiny structures that affect the FRSs. Following our review of the responses to this consultation, we will consider whether this approach should change.

The Home Secretary may also, at any time, require us to carry out an inspection of an individual fire and rescue authority in England, of all fire and rescue authorities in England, or of all fire and rescue authorities in England of a particular type (in line with section 28A(3) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004).

Our inspection framework

Inspection framework for FRSs

In our inspections, we gather information to inform our assessments using a range of methods, including:

- analysis of documents and data;
- reviews of operational incidents;
- surveys of the public, FRS staff and trade unions;
- interviews;
- focus groups; and
- observations of fire and rescue practice.

Graded judgments

In our Round 3 inspections, we assessed and gave graded judgments for each of the diagnostic questions detailed in our 'characteristics of good'. We intend to continue with this approach, which promotes improvements in fire and rescue, highlighting where an FRS is doing well and where it needs to improve.

Priorities for fire and rescue authorities

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Home Secretary to prepare a '[Fire and rescue national framework for England](#)', setting out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. It may contain guidance to fire and rescue authorities about any of their functions, or any other matter relating to them or their functions (section 21, Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004). Fire and rescue authorities must have regard to this framework in carrying out their functions.

The framework states that each fire and rescue authority must produce a [community risk management plan \(CRMP\)](#). This identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks that could affect its community.

We will consider the content of each fire and rescue authority's CRMP and how this translates into the operational practice of the FRS. The plan will be used as a source of information about the how each FRS assesses risk and vulnerability, the factors it considers relating to public safety and how it uses prevention, protection and response activities to mitigate the risk to communities.

We expect FRSs' improvement plans to be comprehensive, including information from our inspections, and national recommendations such as those following from the Grenfell fire and the Manchester Arena bombing. These plans should be risk-assessed and prioritised.

The 'Fire and rescue national framework' requires fire and rescue authorities to give due regard to our reports and recommendations. If we make recommendations, they must prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan, which details how these are being acted upon.

We publish our findings on our website in different formats that are most appropriate to the content – these may include a traditional report, letters, or public releases of our monitoring portal.

Advisory and reference groups

This inspection programme and framework is being developed with FRSs and authorities. It has been designed to promote improvements across FRSs.

The FRS external reference group includes people with specific skills and experience in the areas that we inspect, such as representatives from FRSs, the [National Fire Chiefs Council](#), the Home Office, the Local Government Association and [police, fire and crime commissioners](#). We continue to use their knowledge and advice to establish a sound methodology for our inspections.

Our FRS technical advisory group considers how to develop appropriate methods of data collection and analysis to support our inspections. The members of the technical advisory group include representatives of the National Fire Chiefs Council co-ordinating committees, the Home Office, representative bodies and FRSs.

Monitoring and assurance

Our monitoring process

HM Inspectors (HMIs) routinely monitor all FRSs to promote improvements in the fire and rescue sector.

There are two stages in our monitoring process: Scan and Engage. Scan is the default phase of monitoring, for which we use a range of data and information to identify potential areas of concern. All services are in Scan by default.

HMCI may place services into Engage when there are causes of concern about their effectiveness or efficiency, or how well they look after their people, that appear to need closer scrutiny. HMCI considers all circumstances when deciding whether a service should be moved into Engage, including our purpose of making communities safer.

Follow-up from previous inspections

In relation to each inspection, each year, we do follow-up work. We carry out follow-up activities throughout the year, including formal revisits. These allow us to monitor the progress that services have made against the recommendations in our reports. We will continue to report on the progress each service has made since the previous inspection.

Our monitoring portal

We use an interactive monitoring portal to record and update the causes of concern, recommendations and [areas for improvement \(AFIs\)](#) we make in our inspection reports in one place. We can extract information from the portal to:

- provide basic management information such as the number of AFIs and causes of concern that we have closed within a particular period;
- respond to queries about recommendations linked to specific subject; and
- publicly report an overview of the status of our recommendations.

At the time of our consultation, the main users of the portal are police forces, which use the portal to record progress on recommendations and AFIs. FRSs don't have access to update their progress on recommendations and AFIs on the portal. Our fire portfolio staff make these updates.

In December 2024, we plan to roll out portal access to FRSs. This will help them to directly record and update their recommendations and AFIs. They will be given further information, training and support before being given access.

How to respond to this consultation

Please [submit your answers to the consultation questions on our website](#), no later than 5pm on 15 September 2024.

If you prefer, you can post responses to the following address:

Chief Operating Officer
HMICFRS, consultation response
8th floor
23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham
B2 4BH

If you have a complaint or comment about our approach to consultation, you can email this to hmicfrsfireteam@hmicfrs.gov.uk.

How we will review consultation responses

HM Chief Inspector will consider respondents' views. And if he decides it is appropriate to do so, he will change the proposed inspection programme and framework. He will then put it to the Home Secretary for approval, in line with section 28A(2) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The final document will be made available on our website.

Please note that we may publish consultation responses, or summaries of them, except where they have been provided in confidence. Please indicate in your response if you don't want it to be published.

Annex A – Fire and rescue service inspection methodology 2025–27

Characteristics of good

1.1 How well does the FRS understand and manage the risk of fire and other emergencies?

- The FRS routinely uses a wide range of data to produce an accurate and clear risk profile and community risk management plan (CRMP). Resources are clearly allocated using evidence-based decision-making, informed by a comprehensive corporate risk register.
- The CRMP identifies and clearly sets out current and future changes in risk, taking account of local community and national risk registers.
- The CRMP clearly establishes how the FRS will manage risk related to the public and monitor the delivery of its objectives for prevention, protection and response activity.
- The FRS has appropriate governance arrangements in place which consider local risk and contribute to setting the priorities in the CRMP. The governance arrangements provide clear accountability to communities for the FRS's service.

1.2 How effective is the FRS at preventing fires and other risks?

- The FRS has developed and implemented a realistic and risk-based prevention strategy which is informed by local risk and complies with statutory requirements. The FRS prevention plan clearly sets out where the greatest risks lie within its area and has a clear rationale for the level of activity to prevent fires and other risks. The FRS uses findings from prevention, protection and response activity to adapt its prevention plan. FRS prevention activity meets community expectations and its core functions are sustained regardless of other discretionary priorities for the FRS.
- The FRS tailors its communications to provide information about fire prevention and to promote community safety. The FRS has a comprehensive understanding of the diverse needs of its communities and makes sure that its engagement and communication is designed to be appropriate and accessible to meet those diverse needs.

- FRS staff are able to recognise the opportunity to prevent fires and other risks and take appropriate action. The FRS works with other FRSs, a wide range of partner organisations and diverse sections of the community to reduce the number of fires and other risks. The FRS evaluates the impact of its prevention activity and uses this to improve its own and partners' approaches.
- Staff understand how to identify vulnerability and take action to safeguard vulnerable people as a result.
- The FRS identifies and targets individuals who display signs of fire-setting behaviour for intervention activity, and routinely shares information with partner organisations to support the prosecution of arsonists.

1.3 How effective is the FRS at protecting the public through the regulation of fire safety?

- The FRS has developed and implemented a fire safety enforcement strategy and risk-based intervention programme which is informed by local risk. The FRS regulatory activities comply with statutory requirements to reduce the risk of fire and activity is aligned with other statutory bodies such as the building safety regulator. The FRS enforcement plan prioritises the highest risks and includes a proportionate level of activity to reduce risk. The FRS carries out a programme of fire safety audits in line with its enforcement plan.
- The FRS carries out systematic, consistent and robust fire safety audits. The FRS assures itself that fire safety audits are being carried out in a systematic, consistent and robust way.
- The FRS uses its enforcement powers in a proportionate way. The FRS regulatory activities keep people safe and secure from the risk of fire.
- The FRS systematically and routinely shares relevant information on fire safety risk with staff who use it to carry out fire safety audits. FRS staff work, and share information with, enforcement partners and take appropriate enforcement action in line with the FRS plan.
- FRS staff engage with local businesses or large organisations and share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations. The FRS has a system to help all local businesses to have easy and timely access to clear guidance on how to comply with fire safety regulations.

1.4 How effective is the FRS at responding to fires and other emergencies?

- The FRS has taken the action required in a timely manner to align with fire standards and national operational guidance, including joint and national learning.
- The FRS has developed a response strategy that is based on a thorough assessment of risk to the community. The FRS has an appropriate range of resources (people and equipment) available to respond to personal, property and environmental risk in line with its risk management plan. The FRS understands and actively manages the resources and capabilities available for deployment.

The FRS is able to handle calls in a timely manner to ensure public safety. The FRS is able to manage the fair deployment (and temporary redeployment) of resources to meet operational need.

- The FRS routinely gathers relevant risk information about people, places and threats. It makes sure that the information it has gathered is accurate and up to date. It has easily accessible systems in place so staff engaged in emergency incidents can access risk information in easily usable formats.
- FRS staff are able to command fire service assets assertively, effectively and safely at incidents. FRS staff make sure the public are protected at incidents.
- The FRS can mobilise sufficient resources to respond to local and cross-border incidents.
- The FRS uses learning from emergencies (local and national) to improve its operational response and to challenge existing policies, processes and procedures.

1.5 How well prepared is the FRS to respond to major and multi-agency incidents?

- The FRS understands national and cross-border risks and has sufficiently assessed reasonably foreseeable local community risks that are likely to require a major or multi-agency response.
- The FRS uses risk assessments to develop plans to respond to major or multi-agency incidents and is supporting local communities to make them more resilient.
- The FRS carries out a joint exercise programme to test arrangements for major and multi-agency incidents. The FRS uses the learning to improve its capabilities and inform local and national developments.
- FRS staff can work with neighbouring FRSs and form part of a multi-agency response in line with [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles](#). The FRS actively participates in its local resilience forum and is well-prepared for, or routinely contributes to, multi-agency debriefs.
- The FRS local arrangements comply with, and support, the requirements within the [national co-ordination and advisory framework](#).
- The FRS is aware of joint organisational and national operational learning. The FRS takes sufficient action to improve the services it provides in line with industry good practice.

2.1 How well does the FRS use resources to manage risk, making sure it is efficient and affordable?

- The FRS has appropriate governance and scrutiny arrangements in place to make sure its performance is meeting objectives and targets, improvement plans are providing the intended outcomes, audit requirements are in place, and financial plans are affordable. Scrutiny activity is well planned and focused on areas of strategic importance.
- Senior officers are constructively held to account for the corporate management and activity of the FRS through effective governance arrangements. A [scheme of delegation](#) clearly sets out responsibilities.
- The FRS's budget and resource allocation is proportionate and supports the activity set out in its CRMP and its strategic priorities. The FRS has allocated enough resources to prevention, protection and response activity. There is a clear rationale for the levels of this activity that is linked to its CRMP. The FRS's workforce model allows it to carry out its core functions effectively and efficiently.
- The FRS understands its likely financial challenges. The FRS's plans are built on sound assumptions, including scenario plans, and mitigate the main financial risks. The FRS has a plan for using its reserves sustainably. The FRS has an affordable workforce model that provides the right skills and capabilities, and is linked to its CRMP and priorities. The FRS's financial plans help it to make sure it can provide a sustained service to the public, can continuously improve, and will result in a balanced budget. The FRS has financial controls and financial risk control systems in place to reduce the risk of inappropriate use of public money.
- The FRS's arrangements for managing its performance make sure the use of its resources is clearly linked to its CRMP and strategic priorities. The FRS has tools and systems in place to collect, interpret and analyse data to improve staff productivity, make sure resources are used efficiently and effectively, and provide value for money.
- The FRS identifies savings and investment opportunities that improve service to the public and/or generate further savings. The FRS can demonstrate that it has consistently achieved savings, including from non-pay costs. It routinely reviews non-pay costs and regularly challenges itself to make sure that it is achieving value for money. The FRS comprehensively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any contract arrangements, collaborations and improvement projects, and can demonstrate that the intended outcomes are achieved.
- The FRS's strategies for its capital programme, estate and fleet are clearly linked to its CRMP. The FRS actively considers how changes in fleet and estate provision and status, and future innovation, may affect risk. The FRS exploits opportunities presented by changes in its fleet and estate to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The FRS can demonstrate that it consistently carries out estate and fleet projects on time and on budget, managing risks appropriately.

- The FRS actively considers how changes in technology and future innovation may affect risk, and it exploits opportunities presented by these to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The FRS can demonstrate a track record of carrying out IT projects on time and on budget, managing risks appropriately.
- The FRS has the capacity and capability it needs to improve its performance, and has the skills needed to achieve sustainable change. The FRS manages change and transformation through effective projects and programmes. The FRS has a clear internal structure with appropriate governance arrangements to make sure progress against projects and programmes is monitored, scrutinised and challenged.

3.1 How effective is the FRS at promoting, embedding, and improving its values and culture, and ensuring the health and well-being of its workforce?

- The FRS's governance arrangements provide oversight and assurance that its people strategies are effective at establishing a positive culture and standards of conduct that support the health and well-being of its workforce.
- The FRS regularly assesses its culture by using and sharing learning to continuously improve. The FRS makes sure that its values, core [code of ethics](#), and acceptable standards of behaviour are understood and demonstrated by all staff. The FRS carries out effective background checks to help prevent unsuitable people from joining or remaining in the service.
- Leaders at all levels are visible, approachable, and open to alternative views. Leaders request, act on and learn from feedback from staff and all representative bodies and staff associations. Feedback processes are trusted, and staff have confidence that their views will be listened to and acted on.
- Staff at all levels have the confidence to challenge unacceptable behaviour and raise concerns and trust the systems that are in place for doing so. The FRS acts appropriately to address unacceptable behaviour, resolve grievances and discipline issues in a consistent and timely manner, adhere to national standards, and support the well-being of all involved.
- The FRS has effective, trusted, and well understood policies and procedures to support and maintain the health, safety, and well-being of its staff. Leaders at all levels prioritise and promote the physical and mental health of all staff, with a strong focus on prevention and early intervention.

3.2 How well trained, skilled and developed are FRS staff?

- The FRS has a good understanding of the skills its workforce needs for its CRMP, now and in the future. The FRS has training and succession plans in place to identify and address gaps in its capabilities, taking account of organisational and wider learning, and regularly reviews these.
- The FRS equips, develops, and supports its staff with the operational and non-operational skills needed to carry out their roles effectively. The FRS has effective systems to develop, monitor, and assure staff competence and capability.

- The FRS has a culture of continuous improvement. It actively manages the career pathways of all staff, both operational and non-operational. It identifies and overcomes any barriers or disproportionality in the provision and accessibility of training and development.

3.3 How well does the FRS ensure fairness and diversity?

- The FRS is taking effective action to attract and recruit talented individuals at all levels with various backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to better reflect the communities it serves, using fair, open, innovative and transparent recruitment processes. It has identified potential barriers to under-represented groups joining the service and is taking action to overcome these.
- The FRS is making good efforts to progress and retain a diverse workforce so that it better reflects its communities at all levels of the organisation. The FRS understands and overcomes potential barriers preventing particular groups from progressing. It creates opportunities for individuals from these groups to develop and progress.
- The FRS promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion across all its staff groups, ensuring all staff understand its importance. The FRS has prioritised equality through strategies, plans, training, facilities and practice, and works with all staff groups to resolve any issues.

3.4 How well does the FRS lead its people?

- The FRS's senior leadership team is effective at engaging staff at all levels and communicating their intention and strategic objectives for the service. Leaders at all levels make sure that staff understand and can demonstrate how they contribute to the delivery of the strategic objectives.
- Leaders at all levels act as role models, promoting a positive culture through their behaviour. They actively encourage inclusive and ethical work environments. Leaders routinely challenge and act upon inappropriate behaviour, and create safe environments where others feel confident to do so.
- The FRS has an open, fair and transparent process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders across all staff groups. The service has identified potential barriers preventing particular groups from accessing the talent schemes and is taking action to overcome these.
- The FRS makes sure that leaders at all levels are equipped, developed, and supported to meet leadership standards, and effectively supports both teams and individuals. All leaders are equipped and have the confidence to manage staff performance and well-being and to resolve poor performance and behaviour, and actively do so.

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