



WEDNESDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2023

**SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF FIRE AND
RESCUE SERVICES 2021 INSPECTION REPORT**

Purpose of report: To provide the committee with an update on Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) progress on the recommendations made by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 2021 Inspection Report.

Introductions

- 1 In spring 2021, SFRS went through their second full HMICFRS inspection. The report, published on the 15 December 2021, showed a positive direction of travel for the service, with significant improvements having been made and both causes for concern removed. However, the service recognises that there are areas that require improvement, and these are captured within the Inspection Improvement Plan below (Annex 2). A table also showing the grading comparison between the inspection held in 2018 and this inspection is shown in Annex 1.
- 2 We were notified by HMICFRS on 28 November 2022 that the third round of inspections will commence in February 2023. The service will be issued with a document request and a self-assessment template on 6 February 2023, followed by inspection fieldwork being carried out from the 27 March 2023. For this round of inspections, HMICFRS have added an additional grading of Adequate. This means that the 2023 inspections will consist of the following grades:
 - Inadequate
 - Requires Improvement
 - Adequate
 - Good
 - Outstanding.

The introduction of Adequate has the risk of reducing the Good gradings we reached in the second inspection, and/or undervaluing the amount of effort the

service has made to move from Requires Improvement. The overall gradings assessing the three pillars of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People have also been removed. Instead, individual gradings for the 11 inspection areas within the same three pillars will be considered as stand-alone assessments.

- 3 The currently planned third inspection is due to commence sooner than the service were expecting and there is a chance it will be impacted upon by the likely industrial action, which has been recognised by HMICFRS. The Fire Brigade's Union (FBU) national ballot is ending on 30 January 2023. The service is in regular contact with our HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead and will be informed of any date changes as soon as they have been agreed by HMICFRS. In the meantime, we will continue preparations for the next inspection.
- 4 To date we have carried out a gap analysis exercise between our current activities and the inspection judgement criteria with the Service Leadership Team (SLT). The aim of this session was to ensure that we are prioritising our activities effectively. The service is also working with the Internal Audit Team who will be carrying out an independent review on the updated Inspection Improvement plan to provide a view on whether the assessment of progress is correct. This will determine progress against the Inspection Improvement Plan solely focusing on the areas identified for improvement in the previous HMICFRS report.
- 5 The Inspection Improvement Plan maps out progress within the three pillars and 11 inspection areas focused on by the HMICFRS during the inspection. These are:
 1. How **effective** is the service at keeping people safe and secure
 2. How **efficient** is the service at keeping people safe and secure
 3. How well does the service look after its **people**.

This plan is a working document and is provided to HMICFRS on a regular basis. Annex 2 provides the most recent version of the plan.

An overview of the Inspection Improvement Plan can be found in the following section.

6. Effectiveness

6.1 How effective is the Fire and Rescue Service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?

6.2 Area for improvement – The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up to date risk information.

Update:

Our premises risk information has been updated and communicated to those who need it, not limited to firefighters. Our premises risk information is also now accessible to neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, via a shared database. Updates will be ongoing as part of business-as-usual activities.

Following a comprehensive tender process, we have awarded a contract for a new fit-for-purpose risk database that will coordinate all SFRS data, visits, and prevention and protection activity. This is awaiting sign off and return from the successful supplier. Implementation is on target to start early 2023.

6.3 Area for improvement – The service should evaluate its Prevention work, so it understands what works.

Update:

The Brunel University London Assurance Report has been received and development of a Service Evaluation Framework is underway.

Liaising with colleagues in Kent Fire and Rescue Service, we are looking to adopt a similar evaluation methodology using an APEASE (Acceptability, Practicability, Effectiveness, Affordability, Side-effects, and Equity) framework and a COM-B model that explores customer's **C**apabilities, **O**pportunities and **M**otivations for carrying out some fire safety **B**ehaviours.

Where assessment of proposed or existing aspects of interventions is required the APEASE criteria can be used to structure this process. We are also working with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) colleagues to develop an overarching evaluation framework for prevention interventions. This is due to be finalised spring 2023.

6.4 Area for improvement – The service should make sure it has an effective quality assurance process, so staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.

Update:

Operational staff have been upskilled to carry out auditing activities to ensure both home and business Safe and Well visits are of a high quality. Once the Service Evaluation Framework is in place quality assurance will be carried out by the local Fire Station management team. This team will consist of competent officers from the central Prevention and Protection teams as well as the Station Commander. This approach will ensure that the visits are being conducted to a high standard, meet all SFRS and partners objectives and are standardised across the county.

6.5 Area for improvement – The service should make sure it has an effective system for learning from operational incidents.

Update:

A review of operational assurance has been carried out and the policy updated to reflect the outcomes. This will lead to more information being gathered by incident commanders so that any areas for development and any areas of good practice are based on increased pieces of evidence. A process has been put in place for monitoring, assuring and sharing of information. Learning has been added to the e-learning system and shared with Learning and Development to inform future training. The governance process has also been reviewed. Outcomes from operational learning are now routinely discussed and shared with Learning and Development at the Operational Policy and Assurance Working Group.

6.6 Area for improvement – The service should make sure it understands what it needs to do to adopt national operational guidance (NOG), including joint and national learning, and put in place a plan to do so.

Update:

In collaboration with the 3 Fire and Rescue Services (3Fs - Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex), the existing plan for delivery of NOG has been reviewed and governance agreed. The review has led to an increased focus on the training and budgetary requirements to ensure NOG can be incorporated as efficiently as possible.

Service-wide communication and learning has improved, and e-learning continues to be monitored with regular reporting in place. Activity is overseen by the 3Fs Collaboration Board.

Following review timeframes for the adoption of NOG have been extended to facilitate the need for impact analysis, training packages, etc across the 3Fs. NOG implementation is to be agreed amongst the 3Fs.

6.7 Area for improvement – The service should make sure it participates in a programme of cross-border exercises, with learning from them captured and shared.

Update:

The service is currently scoping an Operational Exercise programme to include training and exercising activity and communication. A Training and Exercising group will provide continuous oversight and assurance over activity.

An Operational Exercise Framework is now in place supported by a tracker to record all operational exercises carried out across the service, including cross-border and multi-agency exercises. The framework is to be reviewed and further developed to ensure full alignment with all supporting documentation.

In the longer-term the service is looking to develop a fully automated system. This will capture activity from the exercise planning through to debrief and learning outcomes with a direct link into Learning and Development via the Operational Policy and Assurance Working Group.

6.8 Area for improvement – The service should make sure it is well-prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to major incidents, and its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.

The service should make sure it is well-prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to a terrorist incident, and its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.

Update:

The operational exercise programme has been reviewed and will now include multi-agency exercises. A recording system is in place to capture learning from these exercises. There is an online platform where we share our information and learn from the experiences of others and ensuring we learn from national best practice. We have a team of National Interagency Liaison Officers (NILO) and participate in daily information sharing. The service is also linked to the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and attend monthly meetings. The Chief Fire Officer will be chairing the LRF Executive Committee.

The service is ensuring all staff refresh Marauding Terrorist Attack training. Following the publication of the Manchester Arena Inquiry SFRS is working with LRF partners to ensure recommendations are considered and improvements identified.

7. Efficiency

7.1 How efficient is the Fire and Rescue Service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?

7.2 Area for improvement – The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews, and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.

Update:

The tri-service joint fire collaboration (Joint Fire Control (JFC) continues to evaluate benefits and outcomes. A suite of performance measures is in place and monitored through the governance arrangements.

Staffing evaluation is an ongoing activity and a review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the JFC ways of working has taken place. Recommendations have been identified for implementation and benchmarking performance is in place. Setting the longer-term strategy to agree how we evaluate the benefits and

outcomes of the tri-service joint fire collaboration has been delayed but agreed by all parties to develop in 2023.

The recommendations from the review included a review of the notice period of staff to be included within the Recruitment and Retention Project to allow for better planning and resilience. A full review of the recruitment strategy has taken place and is now fully implemented. There has also been the introduction of an additional Learning and Development training post to provide more resilience and increase training outcomes in JFC.

The 4 Fire and Rescue Services (4F - Surrey, Kent, West Sussex and East Sussex) partnership continues to align ways of working that are supported by the mobilising arrangements across the tri-service joint fire collaboration.

Work is underway to deliver (specify, procure and implement) replacement Breathing Apparatus equipment across the 4F and is scheduled for completion at the end of 2024.

A collaborative team has also been established to determine requirements for Incident Command Units across the 4F partnership to enable interoperability and cross-border working. Scoping is in progress.

7.3 Area for improvement – The service should have effective measures in place to assure itself that its workforce is productive and that their time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the priorities in the CRMP (the Making Surrey Safer Plan).

Update:

The service changed how performance targets are calculated to targets being set against a criterion that considers all tasks needing to be undertaken so productivity levels are clear, and targets are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).

District and Borough Plans are published so that our communities can see how the service responds to local risk through community resilience activity. This is reported through a suite of performance indicators, alongside the outward looking plans. Team Plans are published internally and reported on a quarterly basis. The priorities within the District, Borough and Team Plans are set against the priorities in the Making Surrey Safer Plan.

A workshop is scheduled to take place in January 2023 to review these targets and performance indicators and consider lessons learned which will then be incorporated in 2023/24 plans.

We have now published our annually updated Community Risk Profile. This identifies how our areas of focus are based around our community risks, responding to the needs of those most vulnerable in our communities and the risk environment i.e., from water, the built environment etc. Outcomes of the review will be included in District and Borough plans, targets and the next Community Risk Management Plan.

The service is also part of the NFCC Productivity and Efficiency Group which is developing practices and processes for consistency and benchmarking.

7.4 Area for improvement – The service must ensure scenario plans for future spending reductions are subject to rigorous analysis and challenge, including the impact on services to the public.

Update:

Work continues with Finance and Procurement colleagues to establish both financial and value-for-money benchmarking.

In collaboration with the NFCC Fire Finance Network (FFN), Corporate Finance are working to determine how best to compare different Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Corporate Procurement are developing a training package for SFRS budget holders, to improve user knowledge on benchmarking and reporting systems with training to take place in by April 2023.

A contracts register is now in place and Contract Managers have been renewed and allocated to all live contracts. Contact was made with Cheshire FRS, who were identified as a good practice example in financial scenario planning and information has been shared.

A Business Planning Cycle inclusive of key financial and budget monitoring milestones through a performance year has now been published as part of the revised Service Governance Framework.

Internal collaboration is successfully providing procurement opportunities and benefits, for example the procurement of fleet for other services. This approach to considering 'Twin Track' options is now embedded as part of the five-year medium term financial strategy processes.

8. People

8.1 How well does the Fire and Rescue service look after its people?

8.2 Areas for improvement – The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop, and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

The service should put in place a system to actively manage staff careers, with the aim of diversifying the pool of future and current leaders.

The service should assure itself it has an effective way in place for succession planning including senior leadership roles.

The service should improve all staff understanding and application of the performance development review process.

Update:

A Talent Management Framework has been developed through engagement with staff and is now in place. Talent management includes, but is not limited to, career pathways, succession planning, performance conversations and coaching and mentoring. Some of these have been completed and others are in progress. Next steps are to embed staff knowledge on talent management via face-to-face visits to all teams within the service using a Roadshow approach and newsletter snippets to start early in the new year.

We are continuing to develop the talent management learning and development offer taking account of in-house options and also linking in with the Surrey County Council (SCC) Academy which is in early development.

Career pathways have been developed across most areas of the service and activity continues to complete the final few.

Work is being carried out to identify core skills for each rank/role across the organisation, to include both role specific skills and wider 'soft skills' needed for our leaders e.g. People Management, Health and Safety, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. These will become pre-requisites for individuals wanting to go for promotion.

An assessment tool is being developed to assist managers to identify critical roles across their functions.

Next steps will be to develop the learning offer further and embed the Core Code of Ethics (CCoE) across all areas of our work. We will also be focusing on the introduction of the NFCC maturity models; a tool which can be used to assess current practice against a range of different areas and drives consistency across services in becoming a leading practice organisation.

8.3 Areas for improvement – The service should assure itself that senior managers are visible and model service values through their behaviours.

The service should make sure it takes timely action in response to feedback or concerns from its staff.

Update:

The SLT weekly engagement visits are well established and are positively received by staff across the service. Feedback responding to themes that have been raised is published monthly in the SFRS Staff Newsletter.

The monthly Leaders Forum (formerly Chief Fire Officer's (CFO) Middle Managers meeting) and the Virtual Mess Table events provide additional opportunities for feedback or concerns to be addressed. The service has also put in a place 'empty chair' at SLT meetings which is an opportunity for staff (on a first come first served basis) to attend both the Change and Assurance SLT meetings and participate in the conversations.

The relationship with Trade Unions has improved. The service meets with Trade Unions both formally and informally and as a result joint communications have been sent to staff with a commitment from the service and the Trade Unions to commit to the NFCC CCoE.

The service commissioned a review of its culture in early 2021 through an independent organisation 31Ten. The outcomes were communicated both corporately and internally to all staff. A review of the Culture Change programme recently completed at the end of December 2022, again carried out by 31Ten. This review has provided a benchmark against the previous assessment of the service culture. The assessment has also considered the recent London Fire Brigade (LFB) Independent Culture Review recommendations and alignment of these with our own culture delivery plan.

8.4 Area for improvement – The service should ensure operational officers use its competence recording system and e-learning platform effectively.

Update:

There is a system in place for operational officers to affectively use e-learning and recording their competence. A review is scheduled to take place in the New Year and will explore linking up the e-learning platform with the recording platform to align systems.

8.5 Area for improvement – The service should make sure that all staff understand the benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and their role in promoting it.

Update:

A new Diversity and Inclusion Lead is in post and will focus on improving EDI across the Service, which will include the implementation of the outputs of the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) audit and the relevant findings from the LFB Independent Culture Review.

Work has commenced on the development of a standalone EDI strategy for sign off early 2023. Following engagement and approval of the strategy an action plan will also be developed. Work has started to develop governance structures for EDI ensuring a central oversight across the entire Service.

The EDI partner will also focus on building a programme of holistic EDI learning and development training for all staff. This will underpin the Talent Management framework and support the delivery of the staff networks through 2023-24.

The EDI section of the SFRS online induction is being reviewed and further work is being undertaken with SCC to develop a more holistic induction package for the future.

Fire Station-based targets for EDI are now in place as part of the Performance Management Framework encouraging staff to engage further with the communities they serve.

As previously mentioned, SFRS has committed to adhere to the CCoE which has been published by the NFCC. Using the CCoE Fire Standard implementation tool work continues to develop an e-learning module for all staff and ensure that the CCoE is fully embedded across the service, its processes and procedures.

8.6 Further service improvement

It has been recognised within our last HMICFRS Inspection Report that the service has improved its approach to investigating and recording grievances. This was an 'area of improvement' in the 2018 full inspection report. Whilst this has improved the report acknowledged that the service could do more to improve staff understanding of bullying, harassment and discrimination, including their responsibility for eliminating it. In response to this the service has continued to improve within this area by taking forward the following activities:

- The service will not tolerate bullying and harassment and has made this clear in its communications. The service has been working closely with its Trade Union partners to communicate and embed the Fire and Rescue sector CCoE.
- A Service Employee Relations Partner is now in place and positive feedback relating to guidance and support has been received, demonstrating the benefits of this appointment. All staff continue to be encouraged to report instances of bullying and harassment, through several options made available to them. These instances will be thoroughly investigated at the earliest opportunity and the relevant actions will be taken forward.
- In addition, there is a formal process to deal with Harassment and Bullying by members of the public towards staff.

- Information has been put into the SFRS Staff Newsletter to remind staff of the details of the SCC whistleblowing service. Additionally, the service along with SCC is looking at options to provide staff with an independent reporting line provided by an external company.
- Reminders are being placed in the SFRS Staff Newsletter of the expectations for all staff to align to the services CCoE and the importance of this.
- The Fairness and Respect (previously Ending Bullying and Harassment) policy has been revised to provide guidance to managers on how to have open conversations with their teams where sensitive issues are raised.
- Training has been developed and 'soundbites' are being delivered across the service. This is to develop and ensure that there is a consistent management approach to the Employee Relations processes. Some soundbites have been delivered this year and a programme of sessions is being developed for 2023. A part of these sessions is to assess the individuals' knowledge in these areas. Feedback in relation to these sessions has been positive. Attendance numbers are monitored.

Since these improvements have been put in place the London Fire Brigade (LFB) Culture Report has been published. Whilst the recommendations are specific to the culture within LFB we are aligning these with all current activity regarding culture and our inspection improvement plan. As an immediate response we have carried out the following:

- Internal Staff Messaging via video from the CFO to advise that the service have a zero tolerance towards bullying and harassment and remind staff of how they can report any instances.
- External Messaging via Twitter and SCC Surrey News to advise that the service will be taking the opportunity to study the LFB culture report and recommendations to assist with our own culture improvement and EDI journey.
- Seeking to outsource investigations to ensure independence.

9. Conclusions

9.1 The Inspection Improvement Plan is included below (Annex 2) and addresses all areas for improvement highlighted by the last report. This is shared with HMICFRS on a regular basis.

Additionally, areas of the Service that were graded as 'Good' during the last inspection are being closely monitored and have been captured within the judgement criteria activity to ensure they remain 'good'.

The service is also creating an overarching Improvement Plan that encompasses not only the areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS, but will also incorporate findings and objectives from several papers including:

- Fit for the Future (created by NFCC, the National Employers (England) and the Local Government Association)
- Value for Money Framework
- Fire Standards Gap Analysis
- State of Fire and Rescue Annual Assessment of FRSs (by HMICFRS)
- LFB Independent Culture Review.

This improvement plan will be shared with HMICFRS during our next inspection and progress will be monitored within our current governance structure.

10. Recommendations:

10.1 The Select Committee are informed of the changes to the grading structure for HMICFRS Inspections and acknowledges that this may mean that some 2021 inspection gradings may move to Adequate (From Good or Requires Improvement), despite the efforts made by the service to improve performance and services to the communities of Surrey.

10.2 The Select Committee continues to monitor progress on a six-monthly basis.

Next steps:

The service will provide updates to the Committee.

Report contact

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Sources/background papers

Annex 1 – Grading comparison between 2018 and 2021 inspection reports

Annex 2 – SFRS Inspection Improvement Plan December 2021

HMICRS 2021 SFRS Inspection Report 15 December 2021 can be found [here](#)

[Making Surrey Safer – Our Plan 2020 – 2024](#)

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