

WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY 2023

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Performance

Purpose of report: For Members to consider and comment on the services performance and progress against the Inspection Improvement Plan.

Introduction:

1. In February 2023, it was agreed that Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) would report to the committee on end of year performance (previous year) and progress against the Inspection Improvement Plan, produced in response to previous inspection reports by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). This paper has been developed to support scrutiny by the Communities, Environment and Highways (CEH) Select Committee.
2. The reporting timetable aligns with HMICFRS's expectation of regular scrutiny by the Fire and Rescue Authority and is anticipated to meet the requirements of the Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service White Paper. The service has been advised that the outcomes of the White Paper are expected ahead of the summer recess.
3. HMICFRS have just completed their third full inspection of SFRS. The Inspection took place over a period of seven weeks and the Inspectorate Team spoke to over 140 people including our Portfolio Holder, partners and our staff through desktop activities, focus groups, reality testing, interviews and surveys. The report will be provided to the service in August.
4. The Inspectorate Team fed back that all members of staff who participated in interviews, desktop reviews, workshops, surveys and visits to workplaces, were open, honest and welcoming.
5. The first set of inspections of fire and rescue services in England by HMICFRS took place during 2018 and 2019 reporting on Effectiveness, Efficiency and People. Since 2018, every fire and rescue service has been inspected at least twice.

6. 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.
7. 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.
8. The Chair of the Select Committee has requested that an executive summary of this report is developed to provide a high-level overview of the content of both the Performance Report and the Inspection Improvement Plan. The Executive Summary is provided at Appendix 1.

Performance report April 2022 – March 2023

9. Please see the Performance Report at Appendix 2. As agreed with the Select Committee this will be provided on a six-monthly basis. Please see below further explanation on the key performance indicators (KPIs) that are currently red within the performance plan.

10. Summary of Performance – 2022/23

- The Performance Report at Appendix 2 highlights 12 of the 23 KPIs with targets set in 2022/23 are green, 4 are amber and 7 are red. The 12 green indicators highlight a continued focus on:
 - Vulnerable communities – high percentage of Safe and Well Visits (SAWV) to vulnerable people.
 - Firefighter safety – completion of operation premises surveys increasing understanding of local risk.

- Responding to emergencies – high performance from 999 call taking through to responding to incidents.

11. Additional narrative for red RAG KPIs

11.1 Engagement with schools

The education team, comprising of six Education Officers, provides an age-appropriate safety education programme covering fire, water and road safety to schools from Early Years (Reception) to Key Stage 3 (Year 7). The team also offer a range of activities, such as the Youth Engagement Scheme, which is aimed at young people aged between 13 and 16 years old at risk of exclusion from education.

11.2.1 The service ambition is to reach 100% of schools, a commitment supported by Childrens, Families and Lifelong Learning. In 2022/23 the service successfully engaged with 59% of schools, not including the local interaction from crews at fire stations. With a joint commitment set out during this year for schools to engage with the service, engagement with schools will increase throughout 2023/24.

11.3 Number of SAWV completed or submitted for audit

There was an increase in the number of SAWV completed in 2022/23 with a 26% uplift in the last quarter of the year. The percentage of SAWV to those most vulnerable in our communities also rose by 5% to 86% in 2022/23. The focus remains on targeting those most vulnerable in our communities, these visits are more complex and require more time. The target going forward will use 2022/23 outturn to establish a baseline for future performance, focusing on quality of delivery, targeting those most in need.

11.4 Business Safe and Well Visits (BSAWV)

11.5 A review of the priorities, following an extremely busy summer, resulted in a focused effort on Operational Premises Surveys and SAWV. Risk familiarisation through premises surveys supports firefighter safety and knowledge on local risks, with SAWV directed to those most vulnerable. The service achieved its target for risk premises surveys and as already highlighted, achieved the percentage increase of SAWV to those most vulnerable.

11.6 Though BSAWV remained less of a priority the service continued to undertake visits. Going forward the prioritisation of prevention and protection activity has informed local SMART targets, with the development of local Borough and Station Plans, which help to support local risk targeting and allow fire stations flexibility in delivery.

11.7 Safe and Well Visits and Risk Information Gathering

11.8 The service recognises that there is more it can do to increase productivity and enhance risk information gathering. To support this and the achievement of targets in 2023/24, work is underway with Internal Audit to review processes and data gathering. Alongside this work laptops are being rolled out to fire stations, enabling remote data capture. A review of the 2023/24 KPIs will take place following the outcome from HMICFRS Inspection later in the year.

11.9 Freedom Of Information (FOI) Requests

11.10 There has been an increase in the volume of FOIs associated with an increase in press or social media coverage on the fire and rescue sector. Such coverage creates public interest and, as a result, the public and media may become more inclined to seek transparency and accountability through FOI requests, aimed at obtaining official documents and information. There has also been an increase in requests relating to incidents. Cases are of increasing complexity needing more detailed work sourcing information from across multiple teams within the service. The Business Support Team experienced a period with staff vacancies but is now at establishment with three newly trained Information Access Officers.

11.11 Training and support is being offered to help increase knowledge of the FOI regulations and process which aims to improve the understanding of the requirements and timeliness of responses. The service will continue to publish data to ensure information is accessible to the public.

11.12 Complaints

11.13 The volume and themes of complaints is in line with other FRSs in England, who report receiving 20-30 complaints per year. Metropolitan areas such as London and Manchester receive a far higher amount which is expected considering higher incident numbers/interactions with the public.

A recent increase in the number of complaints in relation to the outcomes of fire safety audits impacted performance towards the end of the reporting period. Responding to such complaints requires input from several teams and careful consideration, which can include technical aspects or regulations.

The services complaints lead has joined a recently formed Complaints Officer Network with representatives from fire and rescue services across the country. The aim of the network is to share best practice and intelligence to support officers to improve complaint handling.

11.14 Days/shifts lost to sickness absence

- 11.15 There is a focus on sickness following a deep dive earlier this year. Long-Term Sickness (LTS) has been steadily increasing for Wholetime, On-Call and Joint Fire Control (JFC) staff over recent years. LTS is the greater proportion of absence for most staffing groups, with stress accounting for the largest proportion of sickness for Wholetime and JFC staffing groups.
- 11.16 The Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Working group have reviewed absence data to inform occupational health and wellbeing activity in 2023/24. The Health and Wellbeing Panels have been reviewed and are now Case Support Meetings, to provide the opportunity to talk not only about sickness/absence, capability and welfare concerns but also wider people processes. There is also a new case support meeting booking system in place. The services focus on people processes saw the first reduction of LTS cases in April 2023, when compared to the previous 12 months.
- 11.17 3-year medical assessments**
- 11.18 The number of 3-yearly medical assessments was impacted by staff who are on LTS leave and/or on Non-Operational Duties (NOD). Approximately 50 members of staff are LTS or NOD, across all staff groups. These staff are still counted in the overall figures but are not available to complete their medicals while they are sick or away from operational duties. Staff retention issues within the occupational health collaboration also impacted performance as fewer appointments were offered. A recent recruitment process has bought the occupational health collaboration team up to establishment.
- 11.19 A review of this KPI will take place to ensure that future performance is based on the percentage of 3-yearly medical assessments completed for eligible staff.

Inspection Improvement Plan update

12. The Inspection Improvement Plan can be found in Appendix 3. This plan includes all of the recommendations for improvement raised by the inspectors in the 2021 full inspection. This will be updated to reflect the outcomes of the 2023 inspection once these are received in August 2023. Inspection Improvement Plans are provided to the inspector on a regular basis.

13. Overview of progress

- 13.1 ***Area for improvement 1 - The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up to date risk information.***

Our premises risk information has been updated and is also now accessible to neighboring Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) via a shared database. We

have awarded a contract for a new fit-for-purpose risk database that will coordinate all our data, visits, and prevention and protection activity.

13.2 Area for improvement 2 - The service should evaluate its Prevention work, so it understands what works.

A Service Evaluation Framework is in draft, and we are working with internal stakeholders to work through the evaluation logic models within the draft.

We continue to work with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and FRS colleagues to develop an overarching evaluation framework for prevention interventions.

13.3 Area for improvement 3 - The service should make sure it has an effective quality assurance process, so staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.

Operational staff have been upskilled to carry out both Domestic SAWV and BSAWV. Once the Service Evaluation Framework is in place, quality assurance will be carried out by the local fire station management team.

The Protection Team have an assurance process that was written in 2022 and has been phased in starting in March with HMICFRS inspection assurance. This will also cover areas including staff qualifications, Continuous Professional Development, office performance, customer feedback and consultation advice.

This will be recorded and monitored by the Group Commander (GC) for Protection who uses it to improve the services we provide and feedback to the Fire Safety Managers.

13.4 Area for improvement 4 - The service should make sure it has an effective system for learning from operational incidents.

A review of operational assurance has been carried out and the policy updated to reflect the outcomes. A process has been put in place for monitoring and sharing of information. Learning has been added to the e-learning system and shared with Learning and Development to inform future training.

13.5 Area for improvement 5 - The service should make sure it understands what it needs to do to adopt national operational guidance, including joint and national learning, and put in place a plan to do so.

In collaboration with the 3Fs (Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex FRSs), the existing plan and timeframes for delivery of National Operational Guidance (NOG) have been reviewed and governance agreed. Service-wide

communication and learning is in place, and e-learning continues to be monitored.

13.6 Area for improvement 6 - The service should make sure it participates in a programme of cross-border exercises, with learning from them captured and shared.

An Operational Exercise programme, to include training and exercising activity and communication, is now in place.

An exercise tracker has been established to record all operational exercises carried out across the service, including cross-border and multi-agency exercises. This is monitored by the Operational Assurance team, with learning shared across the service. This will also incorporate exercises carried out with partners from the Surrey Local Resilience Forum.

13.7 Area for improvement 7 - The service should make sure it is well-prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to major incidents, its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.

The Operational Exercise programme has been reviewed to include multi-agency exercises. A recording system is in place to capture learning from these exercises. There is an online platform where the service shares its information, learns from the experiences of others and ensures it learns from national best practice.

13.8 Area for improvement 8 - 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.

We are ensuring all staff refresh their Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) training. Following the publication of the Manchester Arena Inquiry, we are working with Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners to ensure recommendations are considered and improvements identified.

13.9 Area for improvement 9 - The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews, and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.

The JFC collaboration continues to evaluate benefits and outcomes. A suite of performance measures are in place and monitored through the governance arrangements. Staffing evaluation is an ongoing activity, and a review of the efficiency and effectiveness of JFC ways of working has taken place.

Recommendations have been identified for implementation and benchmarking performance is in place.

13.10 Area for improvement 10 - 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 integrated risk management plan (the Making Surrey Safer Plan).

Our performance targets are now set against a criterion that considers all tasks needing to be undertaken, so that productivity levels are clear, and targets are SMART.

Team Plans are published internally and reported on a quarterly basis. The priorities within the local Borough and Station Plans are set against the priorities in the Making Surrey Safer Plan (The service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)).

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

13.11 Area for improvement 11 - The service must make sure scenario plans for future spending reductions are subject to rigorous analysis and challenge, including the impact on services to the public.

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

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

13.12 Area for improvement 12 - The service should assure itself that senior managers are visible and demonstrate service values through their behaviours.

The Service Leadership Team (SLT) engagement visits are well established and are positively received by staff across the service. The 2022 review of our culture also resulted in an improved score of SLT demonstrating our values and behaviours/Core Code of Ethics.

13.13 Area for improvement 13 - The service should make sure operational officers use its competence recording system and e-learning platform effectively.

An operational competence recording system is in place and in use for officers to effectively use e-learning and record their competence.

13.14 Area for improvement 14 - The service should make sure it takes timely action in response to feedback or concerns from its staff.

Responses to feedback captured via SLT engagement visits are published monthly in the Staff Newsletter.

The monthly Leaders Forum, Virtual Mess Table events and supervisory engagement sessions provide additional opportunities for feedback or concerns to be addressed. The service has also put in place an 'empty chair' at SLT and Leaders Forum meetings which are an opportunity for any member of staff to attend and participate.

13.15 Area for improvement 15 - The service should make sure that all staff understand the benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and their role in promoting it.

An EDI Lead is in post and focusing on improving EDI across the Service, which includes the implementation of the outputs of the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) audit and the relevant findings from the London Fire Brigade Independent Culture Review.

A standalone EDI strategy is in draft and an EDI action plan, to incorporate actions from the AFSA audit, is in progress.

We are also focussed on building a programme of holistic EDI learning and development training for all staff.

13.16 Area for improvement 16 - The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop, and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

We have established a promotions framework and career pathways are being developed across the service.

13.17 Area for improvement 17 - 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.

A Talent Management Framework has been developed which we are currently embedding through engagement. We are working to improve staff knowledge of talent management, via face-to-face visits to all teams, using a Roadshow approach, and Staff Newsletter articles.

13.18 Area for improvement 18 - The service should assure itself it has an effective mechanism in place for succession planning including senior leadership roles.

Identification of critical roles and succession planning is underway. This will include supporting guidance for managers and is being developed through staff engagement. A specific strategic succession plan is in progress.

13.19 Area for improvement 19 - The service should improve all staff understanding and application of the performance development review process.

We are embedding the current process and working to increase the qualitative/quantitative return of performance conversations. Completion of performance conversations was at a record high for the 2022/23 Performance Year with 76% return.

Conclusions:

14. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has had a busy year. During this time there was an extremely busy summer period and the service had to review its performance priorities. Despite this, the service has continued to deliver against key targets to respond to 999 calls and keep our firefighters and communities safe.

15. HMICFRS inspected the service from the end of March through to the end of April 2023. The Hot Debrief took place on 19 May. SFRS will develop an improvement plan based on the outcomes from the inspection. The HMICFRS feedback will also inform the development of the next Community Risk Management Plan, another key area of focus over the coming summer months and beyond.

16. The service continues its cultural improvement journey, including the reviewing of outcomes from recent national cultural reviews; with a focus this month on responding to the HMICFRS Values and Culture Spotlight Report.

Recommendations:

17. It is recommended that the committee note the report.

Next steps:

18. SFRS will be reporting on mid-year performance (current year) and updating on progress against the HMICFRS Inspection improvement plan in December 2023.

Report contact

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Contact details

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Sources/background papers

Performance dashboard – SFRS May 2023

[GOV.UK – Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service](#)

[HMICFRS: Efficiency, Effectiveness, People 2021/22 – Surrey Fire and Rescue](#)

19. This executive summary is provided to provide a high-level overview of the content of both the Performance Report and the Inspection Improvement Plan.

20. Overview of Performance Report

20.1.1 SFRS monitor performance through a quarterly service governance process (Performance Management Framework), with reports discussed by the SLT. A bi-yearly reporting cycle to the corporate leadership team (CLT) takes place every six months. The 2022/23 performance report found in Annex 1 was supplied to CLT for scrutiny in May 2023 and is now provided to the Select Committee for scrutiny.

20.1.2 Within the Performance Report 12 of the 23 KPIs with targets set in 2022/23 are green, 4 are amber and 7 are red. For all of the targets a narrative has been provided to help the understanding of the current situation. The Performance Report, in detail, can be found in Annex 2 however a summary can be found in the main body of the report at section 9.

20.3.1 Performance reporting is broken down into four categories: Customer Outcomes, Operational Efficiency, Demand and Supply/Finance and Enablers. An overview of the 23 KPIs are:

20.4 Customer Outcomes

4 red KPI's, 3 green, 1 target to be set.

20.5 Operational Efficiency

3 green, 1 red, 1 target to be set.

20.6 Demand and Supply/finance

4 green, 3 no target (count only).

3.7 Enablers

3 red, 4 amber, 2 green, 1 target to be set.

20.7 Overview of the Inspection Improvement Report

21.1 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. HMICFRS continue to scrutinise progress against the Inspection Improvement Plan through our Service Liaison Officer and the ongoing inspection regime. The plan will be developed and updated as future inspection outcomes are published.

- 20.2 There are three key pillars focused on by HMICFRS during inspections: Effectiveness, Efficiency and People. The Inspection Improvement Plan in detail can be found in Annex 3 and a summary can be found in the main body of the report at section 12.
- 20.3 Effectiveness** – All actions are either complete or in progress.
- 20.4 Efficiency** – 10e fleet asset management system is off target. All other actions are either complete or in progress.
- 20.5 People** – Reward and recognition - yet to start due to reprioritisation of projects. All other actions are complete or in progress.
- 20.6 The 2023 full inspection has been carried out and the results are expected in August. The Inspection Improvement Plan will be updated to reflect the outcomes.
- 20.7 Conclusion**
- 20.8 The two areas of performance monitoring provide in depth scrutiny of SFRS via the Fire and Rescue Authority (Surrey County Council).

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