



21 January 2022

**SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REPORT ON HER MAJESTY'S
INSPECTORATE OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES INSPECTION REPORT
2021/22**

Purpose of report: To update the committee on the outcomes of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services 2021 Inspection Report and the service's response.

Introduction:

1. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carried out the first inspection of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) in 2018.
 - 1.1 This inspection rated the service as 'requires improvement' with two causes of concern, that SFRS:
 - Did not have a robust and sustainable system to support its operational response model
 - The service does not use its resources efficiently to manage risk or its financial and physical resources effectively to keep people safe.
 - 1.2 This Inspection also provide a graded judgement of 'Inadequate' within the Efficiency Pillar relating to making best use of resources
- 2 In response to the report the service created a new integrated risk management plan, the Making Surrey Safer Plan (MSSP) which was approved by Council in September 2019. The 2019 revisit from HMICFRS noted 'significant progress' had been made since the first full inspection in 2018. Phase 1 of the planned changes to the service were implemented in April 2020 and Phase 2 in January 2021. The change programme has continued since and throughout the period.
- 3 HMICFRS also carried out a COVID-19 Inspection of the service in September 2020. This inspection was not graded but looked at the way the service responded and reacted to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in the first three

months. The inspection outcome was positive, recognising the good work of the service during the first stages of the pandemic. The report also identified and enabled the service to continuously improve the way they respond to and recover from the pandemic. The COVID-19 HMICFRS report can be found on the website [here](#).

- 4 As a result of the impacts of COVID-19, and so that we could take into consideration any changing governance proposed by the anticipated Home Office review of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the delivery of the MSSP was extended by an additional year from 2020-2023 to 2024. This extension ensures all outcomes in the plan can be delivered.
- 5 In Spring 2021, SFRS went through their second full HMICFRS inspection. The report, published on the 15 December 2021, shows a positive direction of travel for the service, with significant improvements having been made and both causes for concern removed. The report found that out of the 11 subcategories, 6 have seen improvement, which includes the previous grading of inadequate within efficiency moving to requires improvement and an additional five of which have been graded 'good'. A table showing the grading comparisons between the inspection held in 2018 and this inspection is at Annex 1.
- 6 HMICFRS found the Making Surrey Safer Plan to be an effective, well researched risk management plan which is supported by externally scrutinised data. Matt Parr, Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services stated that "It was very heartening to see the progress made by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. It is in much better shape – more effective and efficient at keeping people safe from fire. On balance, it is also improving how well it looks after its people".
- 7 Listed below are the two causes of concern from the 2018 inspection report and HMICFRS's findings on the actions taken by the service in response.

7.1 The service does not have a robust and sustainable system to support its operational response model

- *Put in place a response plan based on a thorough assessment of risk to the community.*
- *Ensure it has appropriate resources (people and equipment) available to respond to risk in line with the (Integrated Risk Management Plan) IRMP.*
- *Understand and actively manage the resources and capabilities available for deployment.*

- *Tell the people of Surrey what benefits they will get from its service provision and ways of working in the operational response model.*

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“In this inspection we found that the service had met those recommendations.

The service’s plan for responding to fires and other emergencies is linked to the first three risks identified in its IRMP, the Making Surrey Safer Plan (MSSP).

It reviewed where its stations, fire engines and response staff were located as part of integrated risk management planning. It also reviewed the crewing models it used to make sure appropriate numbers of staff were available when needed.

Communication resources have now increased and the service has good systems in place to inform the public about incidents and help keep them safe during and after incidents. The team now has enough staff to keep the public informed about continuous incidents, or wider problems, on a 24/7 basis”.

7.2 The service does not use its resources efficiently to manage risk or its financial and physical resources effectively to keep people safe.

- *Ensure that the resourcing model meets risk demand sustainably.*
- *Ensure that workforce model supports the operational model to manage risk efficiently and sustainably.*
- *Ensure that we use the available budget prudently to support our risk management activities.*

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“We are encouraged to see the improvements the service has made since the last inspection. The service’s financial and workforce plans, including allocating staff to prevention, protection and response teams, reflect and are consistent with the risks and priorities identified in the MSSP.

Plans are built on sound scenarios. They help make sure the service’s work is lasting, and they are underpinned by financial controls that reduce the risk of misusing public money. The MSSP marks a new way for the service to approach its risk planning and use of resources, and is subject to continuous review. The data used to inform the plans has been

scrutinised and agreed by a third party. There are clear links between the MSSP and the prevention, protection and responses strategies. This has been a significant change for how the service and its staff work”.

- 8 At the point of inspection, the service was one year into its four-year improvement journey with many planned outcomes yet to be delivered. This is reflected in the overall grading of the service as ‘requires improvement’. HMICFRS recognise that transformational change takes time but that the service has taken positive steps since its last inspection. They also acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 on delivery plans.
- 9 An Inspection Improvement Plan is being developed in response to the 2021 report. This will be provided to HMICFRS and monitored on a regular basis.
- 10 The service is pleased with the positive response from HMICFRS to the MSSP.

“We were particularly impressed with how the service identified risk in the community and approached the development of its new IRMP, called the Making Surrey Safer Plan (MSSP). In isolation this part of understanding risk would have been judged as at least good. The judgment of requires improvement reflects the work that still needs to be done within operational risk information”.

An overview of the inspection report is provided in the following section.

11 Effectiveness

- 11.1 We are encouraged to see the improvements the service has made in effectiveness since the last inspection.

Improvements in how the service assesses and plans for risk have been clearly demonstrated, with the MSSP being described as an ‘effective’ risk management plan which is supported by externally scrutinised data. An increase in resource in the communications team has had a positive impact with improved communications to the public to “inform them about incidents and help keep them safe during and after”.

Clear progress has been seen in the service’s delivery of prevention and protection activities, both areas having moved to ‘good’.

HMICFRS also highlighted improvements in how SFRS works with others to reduce the number of fires and other risks.

11.2 Area for improvement

- *Ensuring firefighters have good access to relevant and up to date risk information*

A robust action and improvement plan was in place before the inspection ended to improve how the service manages data prior to the report being published. The plan includes commissioning a new risk database to ensure that systems are joined up and efficient, evaluating current process to ensure that all risk data is up to date and communicated to those who need it. The service is also working closely with district and borough councils and other partners to support risk understanding and engagement with the public.

Note: At the time of writing this report, all of the accessible risk premises identified to the HMICFRS as out of date, have now been inspected.

11.3 Area for improvement

- *The service should evaluate its Prevention work, so it understands what works.*

The service is working with Brunel University London to investigate how its prevention work can be evaluated to better understand how effective these activities are and to help drive continuous improvements.

11.4 Area for improvement

- *The service should make sure it has an effective quality assurance process, so staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.*

Operational staff are being upskilled to carry out auditing activities to ensure home and business fire safety visits are of a high quality. These audits will be subject to a quality assurance check by the local station management team. The team will consist of competent officers from the central Prevention and Protection teams as well as the Station Commander. This will ensure that the visits are being conducted to a high standard, meet all SFRS and partners objectives and to ensure a standardisation across the County.

11.5 Area for improvement

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

The service is reviewing current activity with the Local Resilience Forum and Surrey County Council (SCC) Emergency Planning Team and will build on these links. The service is also developing an operational

Exercise Framework, linked to the operational alignment project detailed below, with bordering fire and rescue service partners.

11.6 Area for improvement

- *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 addition to developing and implementing a programme of operational exercises (The Exercise Framework), SFRS is leading a tri-service project to align operational policy and procedure with the National Operational Guidance (NOG). This is a Fire and Rescue Service Standards requirement and something that HMICFRS measure the Service against.

12. Efficiency

12.1 In the last report HMICFRS identified Efficiency as a cause for concern. The service has addressed this concern through the MSSP which targets its resources at areas of highest risk. HMICFRS also noted that the service's current financial and workforce plans reflects and is consistent with the risks and priorities set out in the MSSP.

12.2 Area for improvement

- *The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews, and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.*

The service is working with partners to establish a joint approach to the evaluation of collaborative activities, this includes partners/projects such as:

- Joint Fire Control, having been joined by East Sussex FRS in November 2021,
- The 4F partnership group (Surrey, East and West Sussex and Kent FRSs), and
- The Community Protection Group.

The joint approach will incorporate lessons learned from the Local Resilience Forum COVID-19 pandemic response reviews/evaluations and the Value for Money framework. It is recognised that evaluations of success or improvement

need to be reflective of more than a financial assessment of efficiencies/savings and aligned to outcomes.

12.3 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 IRMP (the Making Surrey Safer Plan).*

The earlier mentioned work with Brunel University London will support the development of a suite of reviewed and revised Key Performance Indicators, reflective of both quantitative and qualitative measures. Coupled with the outputs of the current Performance Rapid Improvement Event and Borough/Team Planning processes, will improve the monitoring of service, team, and individual productivity against realistic expectations.

The service is also part of the National Fire Chiefs Council Productivity and Efficiency Group, which is developing practices and processes for consistency and benchmarking.

12.4 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.*

Building upon the HMICFRSs recognition of financial management improvements and that “underpinning assumptions are relatively robust, realistic and prudent, and take account of the wider external environment for the duration of the current MSSP”, work has started with finance colleagues to improve financial benchmarking, in regards procurement, value for money and scenario planning.

The service has developed and will soon be publishing a Business Planning Cycle that aligns all key planning processes, to ensure that the outputs of performance reviews, investments, etc. are available to inform future service plans.

The service is also engaging with the Greener Futures team(s) to explore the related grant opportunities, in regards fleet and property improvements.

13. People

- 13.1 The service is pleased to see significant improvements in this area, with 'promoting the right values and culture' and 'getting the right people' both moving to good.

The service is improving the way it seeks and acts on staff feedback and is using a variety of mechanisms to gather views from staff which include: Service Leadership Team weekly meetings with staff teams, Virtual Mess Tables, regular middle manager meetings and the service newsletter. Feedback is also sought through individual projects. This feedback is then brought together to agree changes that can be taken forward and an overview is provided in the service newsletter to keep staff informed and updated.

HMICFRS acknowledges that the journey the service has been on has been challenging for relationships between senior leaders and operational staff, but that the service is trying new ways to improve discussion and feedback, in addition to creating a cultural change programme.

In regards staff wellbeing, the HMICFRS said: "There are good provisions in place to promote staff wellbeing. This includes closer monitoring of staff overtime, which we highlighted in the last inspection as an area for improvement. Following the introduction of new staffing arrangements, there is less reliance on overtime to maintain fire engine availability".

There was also recognition that the service is investigating and reporting on their grievance processes more robustly. A new grievance policy has been published since the last inspection and informal and formal end results are being recorded.

13.2 Area 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 is currently undertaking work that looks at talent management and promotional processes to ensure that they are fair and consistent. It is also ensuring that there is a good system of workforce planning in place which results in the skills and capabilities required of the workforce being aligned to the service's MSSP. Additionally, that there is a robust recruitment strategy which is informed by accurate data and supports current and future planning.

13.3 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.*

The Service Leadership Team make weekly visits to different workplaces/teams to collate feedback, that feedback is then reported back centrally, and key themes are answered quarterly in their newsletter. In addition, new monthly staff engagement sessions have been introduced as part of the service's Culture Change Programme to answer questions and keep staff as up to date as possible. Virtual Mess Tables have been introduced allowing staff to speak to their leadership team about key topics of importance to them.

13.4 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.*

Further work needs to be done to improve workforce diversity in the service and that all staff are taking an active role in promoting an inclusive culture. Steps being taken include:

- Neurodiversity awareness training for managers.
- Do It Profiler- A neurodiversity screening tool for all neurodiverse conditions.
- Inclusion Passport and Reasonable Adjustment Guidance- Introduction of a passport for staff to use as they move around the organisation explaining any difficulties they experience or could experience in the workplace and provide the ability to discuss verbally or written the support they require.
- Promoting opportunities at Surrey Fire and Rescue to our communities through outreach work in Faith Groups, Women's Groups, Sports outreach, schools and colleges.
- Establishment of staff networks for Neurodiversity, Fairness and Respect and Gender. Additionally, staff have been asked which networks and groups they would like to see established next.

- Carrying out an audit on EDI work in January 2022 to understand which parts of our EDI work are going well and which could be better as well as how we can improve this stream of work.
- Carrying out People Impact Assessment (PIA) training and e-learning for staff so they are able to identify where there may be adverse impact on those who have a protected characteristic directly or indirectly in the work/projects they carry out.
- Implement wider EDI training for the whole workforce. Create and implement inclusive language guidance for staff to promote more inclusive language in the workplace.
- Ongoing development of our mentoring scheme and exploration as to how we can collaborate more with our partners in this.
- Ongoing recognition and celebration of diversity calendar events throughout the year.

13.5 Area for improvement

- *The service “needs to do more to understand and address bullying and harassment.”*

SFRS recognises that everyone has a part to play in understanding and addressing bullying and harassment, it is not tolerated within the workplace. The service have established a Fairness and Respect Network which is addressing key themes and training in relation to this is taking place in addition to the Cultural Change Programme launched this year.

All staff are encouraged to report instances of bullying and harassment, which will be thoroughly investigated, including, where necessary, the use of investigators from other SCC teams and/or commissioned independent organisations.

Further work will be undertaken to raise awareness of the mechanisms by which staff can raise concerns and the best route to take to do so.

14. Conclusions:

- 14.1 The service is pleased that the report recognises the progress that has been made. An updated Inspection Improvement Plan is being created and will address all areas for improvement highlighted by this most recent report. In addition, the service will be creating a programme of continuous improvement

to ensure that the areas rated as good will remain or improve. The service will continue to share progress of this action plan with HMICFRS on a regular basis.

- 14.2 Findings from the State of Fire and Rescue Report, standards from the Fire Standards Board and improvement opportunities identified in the Value for Money framework will also be incorporated into the plan.
- 14.3 Avon Fire and Rescue Services had similar outcomes to SFRS within the first Inspection and Annex 2 provides an overview of the outcomes they have received from their full Inspection in 2021.
- 14.4 The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) still have an active Trade Dispute, in operation since the end of 2019. The content of which relates broadly to the changes made in line with the MSSP. The service continues to make effort with the FBU to resolve the dispute. In regards the fire and rescue sector context HMICFRS quote within the State of Fire and Rescue Service Report 2021 – “We were also told that many firefighters are often conflicted in their choices; dissenting from union positions takes courage. The influence of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) is considerable in some services. Sometimes, it goes too far and is contrary to services’ values and behaviours, and to the public interest.”

14.5 State of Fire and Rescue Service 2021 Report

The State of Fire Service 2021 report has now been published. It is worth noting when considering SFRSs inspection report, that eleven new causes of concern from the thirteen services inspected between February and August 2021 (Tranche 1) were issued. Seven of these relate to effectiveness and four relate to people.

Recommendations:

- a) That the Committee notes the progress made by SFRS over the last two years.
- b) The Select Committee continues to monitor progress.

Next steps:

- a) Identify future actions and dates.
- b) The service will provide updates to the Committee.

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Sources/background papers:

1. Annex 1 – Grading comparison between 2018 and 2021 inspection reports
2. Annex 2 - Avon Fire and Rescue Service
3. HMICRS 2021 Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Inspection Report 15
December 2021 can be found [here](#)
4. [Making Surrey Safer – Our Plan 2020 – 2024](#)