

Monday, 4 December 2023

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Performance

Purpose of report: For members to consider and comment on the services performance and report on the outcomes from the most recent Inspection carried out by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Introduction:

1. HMICFRS carried out their third full Inspection of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). The Inspection took place over seven weeks from the middle of March through to the end of April with the hot de-brief taking place on May 15. The service received the final report which was published on the 13 September 2023. This was the Inspectors third assessment of the service's effectiveness and efficiency and how well we look after our people. The full report can be found at Appendix 1.
2. The Inspectorate have made changes to their grading. There are no longer separate grades for the three pillars of effectiveness, efficiency and people. The Inspectorate have also expanded their previous four-tier system of graded judgements to five with the introduction of the grading 'Adequate'. The grading system is now as follows:
 - Inadequate
 - Requires Improvement
 - Adequate
 - Good
 - Outstanding
3. The Inspectors have confirmed within the report that the changes to the grading system mean it isn't possible to make direct comparisons between grades awarded in this round of fire and rescue service inspections with those from previous years.
4. Within the HMICFRS Inspectors observations, feedback states that they are grateful for the positive and constructive way in which the service engaged with their inspection staff. The Inspector also highlighted the cultural improvements that were evident to the Inspectorate when visiting the service. The service was

graded good in culture. The Inspectorate recognised that the service faced challenges over the recent years and that there is a clear commitment from staff and service leaders to improve. The Inspectors did also state that whilst some improvements had been made since the last inspection other areas had deteriorated or remain unchanged.

5. The service was given a Cause of Concern in relation to the service's Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). Immediate action has been taken to address this Cause of Concern and an action plan was developed and shared with HMICFRS on the 11 October 2023. Initial feedback from our Service Liaison Lead (SLL) was positive, stating that the plan has the appropriate actions required to address the concern raised and the associated recommendations. The service will be revisited early next year to inspect the progress of the Cause of Concern. The action plan has been published and is attached at Appendix 2.
6. The report found that out of the eleven diagnostics one has been graded as good, three areas have been graded as adequate and seven areas graded as requires improvement. A table showing the gradings is included at Appendix 3. Twenty-four Areas for Improvement (AFI) have been identified and these have been brought together into the Inspection Improvement Plan (IIP). This is a working document, and the first iteration has been included at Appendix 4.
7. The Health and Safety department has implemented a new initiative to promote reports of near misses in the service. As a result, reports of near misses significantly increased and therefore HMICFRS has stated that this is Innovative Practice.
8. Alongside the HMICFRS report a performance report is presented in Appendix 5. The provides an update across Q1 and Q2 2023/4. Indicators are grouped into four areas: Customer Outcomes, Operational Efficiency, Demand and Supply/Finance, and Enablers. Historical information on the key performance indicators is provided in the *Additional Performance Information* section at the end of the report. As agreed with the Select Committee this is being provided on a six-monthly basis.

Inspection Outcomes and Improvement Plan

9. **Cause of Concern** – The service can't assure itself that its RBIP prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.
10. **Recommendation 1:** Review its RBIP to make sure it identifies its highest risk premises and meets its own targets.
11. **Recommendation 2:** Make sure all its staff are aware of the expectations on them in the management of the RBIP.

12. We have carried out a thorough review and developed an Action Plan to address the findings and recommendations from the HMICFRS.
13. Our previous RBIP used a detailed planning model to group buildings into categories. We reviewed the data and developed a new RBIP using a refreshed methodology, to ensure all buildings are identified accurately.
14. We also reviewed the delivery of our Fire Safety Inspection Programme to ensure it aligns with our new RBIP. Buildings are now classified into very high, high, medium, and low risk. This will enable the Fire Safety team to focus on the very high and high-risk buildings while still addressing medium and low-risk properties where required. Relevant key performance indicators (KPI) will be used to monitor delivery.
15. Our planning model and Fire Safety work has been tested and has been externally peer reviewed by other fire and rescue services to ensure the process is robust.
16. Our Fire Safety Managers will oversee the Fire Safety Inspection Programme, focusing on very high and high-risk buildings. All staff will be reminded of how we deliver Fire Safety across Surrey and how they can have an impact on our continuous improvement process.
17. Our internal audit process with Surrey County Council and external peer reviews, initiated by the service, will continue to offer assurance of our RBIP.
18. We are confident that this new approach will result in a robust Fire Safety Inspection programme. HMICFRS will continue to monitor our progress towards its recommendations and have made arrangements to carry out an Inspection Revisit early Spring that will solely focus on the Cause of Concern.

Inspection Improvement Plan

19. The IIP has been developed through a series of workshops that has included members of Service Leadership Team (SLT) and managers who attend our Leaders Forum. This is the first iteration of an on-going working document. Our SLO is visiting the Service in November and will be reviewing the IIP to ensure it addresses the specific concerns raised within the AFIs.
20. As part of our external scrutiny process, we have also been in discussion with our National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) HMICFRS Implementation Liaison Manager who stated that they are committed to working with the service to address the requirements noted in the recommendations, comments and identified AFIs. They will be providing tailored NFCC support and services within their network that could add value to our IIP. They have already provided us with a report designed to signpost NFCC products to assist in the support of our IIP and aims to offer connection to services that have demonstrated good practice in the areas highlighted as areas for improvement.

21. Please see below a summary of the main findings from the report and related AFIs. Please note the IIP is attached at Appendix 4, and this includes initial actions that are and will be taken forward to address the AFIs.
22. All AFIs are listed under the relevant diagnostic questions and as stated above, the actions to address these are detailed in the IIP at Appendix 4.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies

23. Main findings:
 - The service continues to work with communities, partners and local councils to identify risk.
 - The service has an effective Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
 - The service could improve the way it gathers, maintains and shares risk information.
 - The service uses understanding from operation activity to inform its future planning.
24. **Area for improvement 1:** The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up to date risk information.
25. **Area for improvement 2:** The service should make sure operational staff are familiar with all the risk sites in their local area, so they are better prepared to fight fires and carry out rescues safely.

Preventing fires and others risk

26. Main findings
 - The services delivery of services strategy identifies its key risks.
 - Plans and some activities target those most at risk, but Information and Communication Technology systems, staff understanding, and their implementation need to improve.
 - Staff understand vulnerability and have the confidence to respond to safeguarding concerns.
 - The service is working with others to reduce risk.
 - The service is tackling fire setting behaviour.
 - The service should quality assure and evaluate all of the prevention activity it delivers.
27. **Area for improvement 3:** The service should make sure that its prevention plan targets people most at risk and that the level of activity is proportionate to reduce that risk.
28. **Area for improvement 4:** The service should evaluate its Safe and Well Visits activity, so it understands its effectiveness and how to improve the visits.

29. **Area for improvement 5:** The service should make sure it quality assures its prevention activity, so staff carry out Safe and Well Visits to an appropriate standard.

Protecting the public through fire regulation

30. Main findings

- The service has a Delivery of Services strategy, but this doesn't always inform protection activities.
- The service can't assure itself that its risk-based inspection programme prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk – as referenced in the Cause of Concern.
- The service needs to assure itself that audits are being carried out to a consistent standard with the required level of detail.
- The service does not adequately quality assure the protection work it undertakes, and there is no quality assurance policy or guidance for protection activity.
- The service could do more to enforce fire safety legislation.
- The service needs to make sure it can consistently and effectively deal with fire safety.
- The service is adapting to new legislation.
- The service works effectively with partners and other agencies.
- The service has improved its response to building and licensing consultations.
- The service works well with businesses to mitigate risk.
- The service has introduced measures to reduce unwanted fire signals.

31. **Area for improvement 6:** The service should ensure it has an effective quality assurance process, so staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.

32. **Area for improvement 7:** The service should make sure it has effective arrangements to provide specialist protection advice out of hours.

Responding to fires and other emergencies

33. Main findings

- Response standards and availability:
 - Response standards are being met.
 - Availability is low but service targets within the CRMP are being met.
- The service has effective incident commanders.
- All control staff need to be regularly involved in training, exercise and debrief activities.

- Risk information isn't sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date.
- The service needs to improve how it records, evaluates and shares learning from its operational performance.
- The service should implement national operational guidance promptly.
- The service is good at keeping the public informed.

34. **Area for improvement 8:** The service should ensure it has an effective system for learning from operational incidents.

35. **Area for improvement 9:** The service should make sure it has the appropriate resources in place to fully deliver its plan with regard to adoption and implementation of National Operational Guidance (NOG) in a timely manner.

Responding to major and multi-agency incidents

36. Main findings

- The service identifies and shares risks with neighbouring services, partners and other organisations.
- The service needs to do more to prepare and train for incidents, such as in tall buildings (see Area for Improvement 10 and 12).
- The service works with other fire services, locally and nationally.
- Cross-border exercising has improved in the service.
- Understanding the application of Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) could be improved across the service.
- The service is an integral part of the Surrey Local Resilience Forum (LRF).
- The service makes use of national learning.

37. **Area for improvement 10:** The service should make sure it is well prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to major incidents. It should make sure its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.

38. **Area for improvement 11:** 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.

39. **Area for improvement 12:** The service should make sure it has an effective method for sharing multiple fire survival guidance information with multiple callers and has a dedicated communication link in place.

Making best use of resources

40. Main findings

- The service's financial plans support its objectives, but it needs to be better at allocating resources.
- The service should assure itself that its workforce is as productive as possible.

- The service collaborates with others but needs to evaluate its benefits adequately.
 - The service has effective, well-tested business continuity arrangements.
 - The service needs to continue to focus on how it is providing value for money.
41. **Area for improvement 13:** The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection and response activities. This should reflect, and be consistent with, the risks and priorities set out in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
42. **Area for improvement 14:** The service should have effective measures in place to assure itself that its workforce is productive and that its time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the priorities in its CRMP.
43. **Area for improvement 15:** The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits of any collaboration activity.

Making the Fire and Rescue Service affordable now and in the future

44. Main findings
- The service needs to improve how it demonstrates value for money.
 - The service has clear arrangements for the use of reserves.
 - The service needs to improve its fleet and estate plans.
 - The service is taking steps to transform but needs to do more to improve efficiency.
 - Securing external funding and income generation isn't a priority for the service.
45. **Area for improvement 16:** 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.
46. **Area for improvement 17:** The service needs to make sure it regularly reviews and evaluates its fleet and estate strategies to make the most of potential efficiencies.

Promoting the right values and culture

47. Main findings
- There is an improving culture, with positive behaviours and values understood and demonstrated.
 - There is effective workforce well-being provision.
 - There is effective health and safety management, but some areas could be improved.
 - Absence is managed well.

48. **Area for improvement 18:** The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure staff don't work excessive hours.

Getting the right people with the right skills

49. Main findings

- The service's workforce planning is effective.
- The service should make sure it has the appropriate mix of workforce skills and capabilities in all areas.
- The service is improving its learning and development provision.

50. **Area for improvement 19:** The service should ensure operational officers use its competence recording system and e-learning platform effectively.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

51. Main findings

- The service has improved the way it seeks and acts on staff feedback and challenge.
- The service needs to do more to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- The service needs to do more to address disproportionality in recruitment and retention.
- The service needs to prioritise its approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

52. **Area for improvement 20:** The service should ensure that all staff understand the benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion and their role in promoting it.

53. **Area for improvement 21:** The service should identify and overcome barriers to equal opportunity so that its workforce better represents its community. This includes making sure staff understand the value of positive action and having a diverse workforce. The service should also improve the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographic and needs.

Managing performance and developing leaders

54. Main findings

- The service isn't always consistently managing individuals' performance.
- The service has fair promotion and progression processes.
- The service needs to continue to improve diversity among its future leaders.
- The service is improving the way it develops future leaders.

55. **Area for improvement 22:** The service should improve the way staff understand and apply the performance development review process.

56. **Area for improvement 23:** The service should assure itself it has an effective way in place for succession planning including senior leadership roles.
57. **Area for improvement 24:** The service should put in place a system to actively manage staff careers, with the aim of diversifying the pool of current and future leaders.

Performance Update

58. The performance report for Quarter 2 2023/24 shown in Appendix 5 highlights that 12 of the 26 KPIs with targets set are green, 6 are amber and 8 are red. The 12 green indicators highlight a continued focus on:

- Vulnerable Communities – High percentage of Safe and Well Visits (SAWV) to vulnerable people.
- Well trained staff to respond to the needs of our communities – 100% of core competencies in date and low levels of days lost to injury.
- Responding to Emergencies – High performance from 999 call taking, appliance availability, through to responding to incidents.

Additional narrative for red RAG KPIs

59. Number of Safe and Well Visits completed or submitted for audit

Our approach to domestic SAWVs focuses on targeting vulnerable people, 85% of our SAWVs are provided to vulnerable people (70% target). The total numbers of SAWVs are below national averages, however they have improved significantly since the previous year (nearly 900 more than the same time a year ago) and we have targeted plans in place to increase their number. This also forms part of the draft HMICFRS IIP.

60. Increase in website visits for information and advice for residents and businesses

The communications team are now using the monthly data dashboard. Each month we share information on our performance on our social media channels to encourage residents and business owners to book in Safe and Well Visits. In Q4 we will be building a mailing list as part of the CRMP development which we hope will encourage further engagement with the SFRS website.

61. Number of Business Safety Audits completed

Audit numbers are linked to the number of trained and competent staff. With recruitment over the last few years, the numbers of competent staff (18-24 month training period before competence) has increased, hence the increasing audit numbers. This trend is expected to continue. Further refinement will come through the HMICFRS IIP.

62. Operational Premises Surveys and Tactical Consideration Records completed

These records are classified according to risk (high, medium and low) with each individual premises having their own timeline in respect to reviewing the information held. The delivery of these reviews are based on these timelines and are spread over a calendar year. Delivery of premises reviews will vary quarter to quarter with some months having considerably more than others.

63. % of staff hired from underrepresented groups

Our aim is to have a diverse workforce representing the communities we serve. Recruitment processes are being reviewed and continuous engagement with underrepresented groups is taking place to encourage applications from these groups.

Positive action activities have taken place at fire stations over the last two months to encourage women into the service. For example, the Fire Fit initiative has been cascaded to other fire stations. Fire Fit sessions support candidates who are interested in understanding more about the service, the demands of the role and those going through the recruitment and selection process. The sessions give practical, hands-on experience of what it's like to be a firefighter. They also offer guidance to help individuals achieve their fitness goals.

64. Days lost to sickness absence – 12 month rolling year

Following a review of the Attendance Management Policy, the service has a more robust approach to absence management, supported by appropriate training and a restructure of management. For example, the introduction of a new case support process to assist managers and ensure consistency. This has resulted in improved accountability and scrutiny of sickness absence and increased the use of absence management policies. We have also reviewed how we work with the Occupational Health collaborative partners to improve how the service conducts Ill-Health Retirements (IHR). This is starting to reduce the amount of time people are waiting for IHR outcomes.

Along with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, we are developing a business case to introduce additional health support with a not-for-profit organisation. This will mean staff can access support quicker than would be the case through the NHS. This is proving successful in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Conclusions:

65. HMICFRS inspected the service from the end of March through to the end of April 2023. The Hot Debrief took place on the 19 May 2023. SFRS has developed an IIP based on the outcomes from the Inspection. A meeting is in place with the HMICFRS SLL on the 22 November 2023 to review the IIP and ensure the IIP addresses the specific concerns highlighted within the report.
66. The Service has a positive working relationship with the HMICFRS SLL and meets monthly. These meetings give the service the opportunity to ensure the actions within the IIP will meet the required outcomes and to ensure the service is learning from good practice that has been identified across all Fire and Rescue Services by HMICFRS.
67. SFRS has had considerable change over the last year taking forward our cultural journey which has taken significant resources to deliver. The service is also delivering on the recommendations that have been made through both the HMICFRS Values and Culture Spotlight Report and the outcomes from reports such as the London Fire Brigade (LFB) Independent Culture Review. The progress with culture has been reflected within the report by the HMICFRS.
68. We are continuing to review our performance approach. This included refreshing our performance management framework to incorporate the outcomes from the HMICFRS Inspection Report and new corporate priorities around performance.

Recommendations:

69. For this report to be noted by the Select Committee.

Next steps:

The IIP is a working improvement plan and therefore will be updated on a regular basis. Progress will be provided to Select Committee Members on a six-monthly basis.

Report contact

Dan Quin, Chief Fire Officer, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service

Contact details

Email: Dan.Quin@surreycc.gov.uk

Tel: 07989 160117

Sources/background papers:

Appendices:

- **Appendix 1** – HMICFRS Surrey Fire and Rescue Service 2023-25 Report: [Surrey Fire and Rescue Service 2023-2025 - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/reports/surrey-fire-and-rescue-service-2023-2025/)
- **Appendix 2** – Cause of Concern Action Plan
- **Appendix 3** - Table showing the inspection gradings
- **Appendix 4** – Inspection Improvement Plan
- **Appendix 5** – Q2 2023 performance report

Appendix 3 - table showing the gradings against the 11 diagnostics.

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
	Promoting values and culture	Understanding fire and risk	Preventing fire and risk	
		Future affordability	Public safety through fire regulation	
		Right people, right skills	Responding to fires and emergencies	
			Responding to major incidents	
			Best uses of resources	
			Promoting fairness and diversity	
			Managing performance and developing leaders	

This page is intentionally left blank