



**NORTH YORKSHIRE**  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

# **NYFRS Response to the HMICFRS Inspection on Effectiveness, Efficiency and People 2021/22**

**Published 20 January 2023**

**Public Accountability Meeting - January 2023**

# Summary



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- Whilst this is a very disappointing outcome from the inspection, I welcome the report and the challenge and scrutiny from HMICFRS.
- The Inspection which was conducted between March and May 2022, came at a time of significant transition for our service.
- We are very aware about what needs to improve and I am confident that we'll deliver the HMICFRS improvement plans.
- We are absolutely committed to making significant progress over the next two years. We have already begun much of this work in the 8 months since inspection.
- We have been implementing improvements since June 2022 and we will welcome HMICFRS back into service at the end of January for a revisit.
- The report is not a reflection of the hard work and dedication that our staff show, every day, to keeping our communities safe, and feeling safe.
- Much of what the Inspectors have focused on relates to service-level policies and practices and we are committed to making the improvements required before our next inspection.

# Introduction and background



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- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) are the independent inspectorate for fire and rescue services in England.
- This was our third inspection and the second time the inspectorate has considered our effectiveness, efficiency and how we look after our people.
- The inspections give a rounded assessment of every FRS, including an assessment of:
  1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks
  2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks
  3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people



# Graded judgments

Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) are assessed and given graded judgments.

The categories of graded judgment are:

- Outstanding – The FRS substantially exceeded the characteristics of good performance;
- Good – The FRS has substantially demonstrated all the characteristics of good performance;
- Requires improvement – The FRS has demonstrated few, if any, of the characteristics of good performance.
- Inadequate – There are causes for concern and recommendations have been made to the FRS to address them.

# Area for Improvement and Cause for Concern



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- Within the report the inspectorate will identify areas which fall short of the expected standard and issue a highlighted Area for improvement (AFI)
- If the identified area is serious, critical or systemic the inspectorate may issue a cause of concern.
- A cause of concern will always be accompanied by one or more recommendations and HMICFRS will regularly review fire and rescue services' progress in alleviating or eradicating a cause of concern.
- If a service is not responding to a cause of concern or if it is not succeeding in mitigating the issue it will be moved into the Engage phase of monitoring.



# Our performance

The final report has judged the Service as:

- Effectiveness requires improvement
- Efficiency inadequate
- People inadequate

We have been issued two causes of concern and the inspectorate identified one area of promising practice.

## **Causes of concern**

- To make sure we have the right workforce skills and capabilities we need, and;
- To have robust processes to ensure transformation activities provide efficiency and effectiveness

# Promising practice



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- The inspectorate have identified a promising practice in relation to our Public safety officers (PSOs)
- The PSO scheme is a pilot being carried out in partnership with North Yorkshire Police and Yorkshire Ambulance Service
- PSOs help reduce vulnerability by promoting fire safety and health and well-being, as well as helping to address local anti-social behaviour concerns.
- The inspectorate stated that “overall gross potential savings made by PSO activities are estimated to be around £509,000 per year.” and;
- “The social value analysis estimates that for every £1 invested, there is a return of £4.50 in social benefits”

# Inspection- graded judgments



Question	2021/22
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Understanding fires and other risks	Requires improvement
Preventing fires and other risks	Good
Protecting the public through fire regulation	Requires improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	Requires improvement
Responding to major and multi agency incidents	Good
<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Making best use of resources	Inadequate
Future affordability	Requires improvement
<b>People</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Promoting the right values and culture	Requires improvement
Getting the right people with the right skills	Inadequate
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Requires improvement
Managing performance and developing leaders	Requires improvement



# Report findings **Effectiveness**



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## Understanding risk

- Much of this section of the report focuses on how our IRMP directs our activity
- The inspectors assessed our performance based upon the last IRMP and we are confident that our work on our new Community Risk Profile and the Risk and Resource Model will mitigate many of the issues identified within the report
- The inspectors recognised that “The service has improved how it gathers and shares risk information

## Prevention

- This is a key priority for both the service and the Commissioner
- We are pleased that the inspectors recognised our commitment to keeping our communities safe, and feeling safe

- They said that “we work well with others to prevent fires and other emergencies” but we need to improve the way in which we evaluate and quality assure our activity”

## Protection

- The risk based inspection program (RBIP) is the primary focus for inspectors in this section
- The report identified that we need to ensure that we audit all high and very high risk properties
- We are committed to ensuring that all identified high and very high-risk properties are audited as part of our RBIP
- We have already invested in more specialist roles following the inspection and in line with the commitments set out within the Fire and Rescue Plan

# Report findings **Effectiveness**



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## Response

- The inspection does not physically assess how we respond to incidents but focuses on the policies, practice and procedures surrounding our response
- We accept the areas we need to improve but this is not a reflection on our committed and dedicated firefighters
- inspectors have recognised that “Staff have a good understanding of how to command incidents safely”
- The report states “that we respond flexibly but our response availability is a challenge.” and it is critical that we have not set any response standards
- It also states that “we do not always have the minimum number of fire engines available”

## Major and multi-agency incidents

- The report states that we have “some arrangements in place to respond to major and multi-agency incidents” and we “work well with other fire and rescue services”. But;
- “We need to improve the way in which we carry out cross-border exercises” and “we need to make sure staff can access risk information for neighbouring services”
- Positively, our staff demonstrated a good understanding of joint working principles and the service is an active member of the local resilience forum

# Actions and Look Forward Effectiveness



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- We have increased the number of personnel in the Protection department to prioritise this work. Further resources will be aligned to this area as the RRM plans are realised
- A review of our Fire Cover Model has begun, using our Community Risk Profile to ensure we have the right resources in the right places at the right time
- We are analysing data against the Speed, Strength and Safety of our response to create performance measures that are meaningful to the public
- Fire Watch has been upgraded, facilitating the trial of an availability app, which will make it easier for on-call staff to tell us when they are available
- We have reinvigorated and strengthened our over the boarder exercise programme, which was disrupted during COVID, to ensure we work effectively with our neighbouring FRS' when needed

# Report findings **Efficiency**



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## **Making best use of resources**

- Cause of concern - the service doesn't have in place robust processes to ensure transformation activities provide efficiency and effectiveness
- The inspectors reflected “that the services financial position is precarious” and; “we need to improve how we manage and evaluate all our collaboration activities”
- However, they did state that “we are taking steps to improve productivity and manage performance” and “The service is developing its business continuity policy”
- We were criticised within the report for not having a fleet strategy or plan but we were commended for investing in technology and working with others to support change and improve efficiency
- The inspectors also stated that “The service makes best use of external funding”

## **Future affordability**

- The inspectors reported that “The service has a sound understanding of future financial challenges. But its ability to mitigate its main or significant financial risks is limited”

# Actions and Look Forward **Efficiency**



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- The service has now implemented an established Programme Management framework to deliver its transformation programme, ensuring that it will deliver the anticipated outcomes and achieve value for money
- The service has now signed off its fleet strategy, which has been developed jointly with North Yorkshire Police. The fleet service is planning to make investments in its technology to allow it to provide a better service; for example, it is currently developing a business case for the introduction of telematics which will allow it to improve its performance monitoring.

# Report findings **People**



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## Values and Culture

- Disappointingly, inspectors stated that “Service values aren’t consistently demonstrated at all levels” and that “senior managers need to be more visible and demonstrate service values through their behaviours”
- They also commented that we “should have processes in place to make sure staff don’t work excessive hours”
- They were also critical of our “absence management processes and systems”
- But, they did acknowledge that we “have effective support systems to improve its staff’s mental and physical well-being”

## Right people, right skills

- Cause of concern- The service doesn't have in place adequate workforce planning processes
- The inspectors also raised the impact of having a “high number of staff in temporary promotion roles” and the need for us to address this
- They also stated that “we should make sure we have an effective, accurate and accessible system for recording and monitoring all staff training”
- They commented that learning and development needs to improve but acknowledge that the service recognises this and plans to make improvements

# Report findings **People**



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## Fairness and Diversity

- The inspectors said that “we need to improve how we seek and act on staff feedback”. And;
- “We should make improvements in the way we collect equality data to better understand our workforce and their needs”
- We also need to review our approach to tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination
- However they did state that “we have made some progress in relation to EDI but we need to improve our use of equality impact assessments”

## Managing performance and developing leaders

The report states that we “should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop, and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.” and;

“The service should make sure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open and fair”

We need to ensure that the focus is for all staff groups including career-progression for our enabling functions

# Actions and Look Forward **People**



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- The service has implemented a new core code of ethics which aligns to national guidelines. These ethics run through everything we do as a FRS and are becoming embedded in our day to day practices
- FireWatch has been upgraded which is the tool we will use to monitor the time our staff work to better support their welfare
- The FireWatch upgrade will also help us monitor the training of our staff more easily, ensuring we have the right staff, in the right places, with the right skills
- The absence management process has been redesigned and is currently going through a period of consultation before it is trialled
- We are part way through our promotions programme, which will bring added stability to the service. A permanent SLT has now been appointed and a Group Manager process is just about to be advertised
- A new Leadership Programme is being developed, which is supported through a recently launched Coaching and Mentoring Programme. This will align to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Leadership Framework



# Assurance, Scrutiny and Next Steps



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- The Cause of Concern is being addressed through a dedicated action plan
- The progress against this action plan is monitored through our governance groups of Tactical Leadership Team, Strategic Leadership Team and Executive Board. Any exceptions are specifically highlighted and discussed
- The Cause of Concern and all HMICFRS areas for improvement are also tracked through the Risk and Assurance Board, where detailed scrutiny is placed against each of the associated actions. This Board now sits monthly as opposed to quarterly to ensure oversight at a greater pace
- An additional meeting is being established to separate out the task and tactical elements
- We will welcome HMICFRS back in to service on 30 January 2023 to revisit the causes of concern. They will then publish a letter informing us of our progress
- We expect the next full inspection to be in Autumn 2024 and we are confident that we will have made significant and sustained improvements at that time