

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 February 2019

Inspection of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

Recommendation(s)

1. The Committee notes the formal inspection report published on 20 December 2018.
2. The Committee periodically monitors the resultant action plan and related improvements.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 An inspection of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) was undertaken this summer by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). This was the first formal inspection under the newly created Fire and Rescue Inspection Framework published in March 2018 and sees a return to such an inspection regime following the abolition of the previous Fire Service Inspectorate in 2006.
- 1.2 The inspection fieldwork week took place the week commencing 2 July 2018 although a long period of pre and post inspection work took place either side of the fieldwork week by HMICFRS staff. WFRS was one of the first services to be inspected in the first tranche of 14 services for which inspection reports are then published together. Two further tranches now follow until all 45 FRSs in England have been inspected after which the next inspection timetable will be considered.
- 1.3 The inspection considered a wide range of detailed areas drawn into 11 separate diagnostics within three broad inspection pillars, namely:
 - a) How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 - b) How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 - c) How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

The three inspection pillars above are assessed separately and each are graded with one of four judgements:

- i) Outstanding
- ii) Good
- iii) Requires Improvement
- iv) Inadequate

1.4 The 2018 inspection report of WFRS was published formally on 20 December and is attached in full in appendix 1. The report is largely very positive and the graded judgements given against the three pillars and 11 diagnostics are:

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Effectiveness | Good |
| Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies | Good |
| Preventing fires and other risks | Good |
| Protecting the public through fire regulation | Requires improvement |
| Responding to fires and other emergencies | Good |
| Responding to national risks | Good |

| | |
|--|------|
| Efficiency | Good |
| Making best use of resources | Good |
| Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future | Good |

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| People | Requires improvement |
| Promoting the right values and culture | Good |
| Getting the right people with the right skills | Good |
| Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity | Requires improvement |
| Managing performance and developing leaders | Requires improvement |

- 1.5 Attached as appendix 2 is a comparison chart that highlights the graded judgements awarded to WFRS against the three inspection pillars compared to the 13 other FRSs inspected in the first tranche this summer.
- 1.6 Attached at appendix 3 is a summary of the issues referred to within the HMICFRS report as areas for improvement.
- 1.7 In addition to the 14 separate reports, a national overview report has also been published by HMICFRS. This is available here [HMICFRS Summary of Findings](#) and copies have been provided in each of the Group Rooms.

2.0 Next Steps

- 2.1 Whilst the report makes clear a range of areas to which attention needs to be given, the report is positive and complimentary overall in a wide range of areas and the comparison of graded judgements issued to other FRSs in appendix 2 places WFRS comparatively well against others. In particular the inspection focussed heavily on the quality and consistency of the service the public actually receives across all areas of fire prevention, fire protection and emergency response and this was assessed deeply and repeatedly throughout the inspection fieldwork week. Overall approximately 30% of the Service was seen by the inspection team and a wide range of stations and specialist teams visited and assessed.
- 2.2 The overall grade of 'requires improvement' for the people management pillar was expected by WFRS officers and briefings to elected members earlier this year had highlighted this likelihood. This was largely as the Service was conscious that equality and diversity issues would feature heavily in the inspection and that there had previously been insufficient organisational resources available locally to properly improve the traditional workforce profile and to proactively recruit a more diverse workforce as well as to better develop a range of wider personnel management practices. Conversely, the Inspectorate repeatedly praised the overall standard and culture of the WFRS workforce at all levels and locations during the inspection and different elements of people management were graded and commented on positively. Examples were the standard and consistency of operational training within WFRS, and how the Service's leadership has engendered good internal culture, values, and employee relationships which all received positive commentary. Similarly the feedback concerning the local approach to Fire Protection was also anticipated, largely given the limited capacity of the WFRS Protection team and the effect of recent staff shortages.
- 2.3 Since both the end of the inspection itself and the recent receipt of the inspection report WFRS officers have been developing an improvement action plan to address all the areas highlighting a need of improvement as well as ensuring that those areas identified as positive can be maintained and improved further. The action plan will naturally focus most on the three diagnostics scored as "requiring improvement" and which will receive the most immediate organisational attention.

- 2.4 The action plan will identify the resources needed to deliver the plan and to sustain improvements and effective performance into the future. A transformation fund of £1 million has been made available in anticipation of resources being required to support WFRS following the HMICFRS inspection and the majority of this fund remains available. The Chief Fire Officer considers that there is limited organisational capacity particularly in Fire HQ and support functions and that utilising this fund will therefore be essential to deliver the action plan. A number of the improvement areas relate to issues that are solely within the remit and control of WFRS whereas others require support from other senior Council staff in terms of implementing the action plan. This is especially the case in areas of people management such as recruitment outreach resources to promote greater diversity.
- 2.5 The 2018 Fire and Rescue National Framework for England states that Fire and Rescue Authorities must give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS and – if recommendations are made – prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan detailing how the recommendations are being actioned. If an Authority does not propose to undertake any action as a result of a recommendation, reasons for this should be given.
- 2.6 Recently the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee re-established a cross party task & finish group to oversee the development of the next WFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan, improvement actions arising from the HMICFRS inspection and progress with collaboration with West Midlands Fire Service. It is intended that the improvement action plan will be considered by the task & finish group in detail with summary reports being periodically provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee also.
- 2.7 It is currently unclear when the next formal inspection of WFRS will take place or whether the format will be a subsequent full inspection or perhaps one themed against specific areas. An ongoing relationship will be maintained, however, with the Inspectorate both in terms of the submission of quarterly performance data, regular visits to the Service by the HMICFRS Service Liaison Officer, and the sharing of progress updates against the action plan.

Background papers

1. [HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Service Inspection Programme & Framework 2018/19](#)

| | Name | Contact Information |
|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| Report Author | AC Dave Pemberton | davepemberton@warwickshire.gov.uk Tel: 01926 423231 |
| Head of Service | CFO Andy Hickmott | andyhickmott@warwickshire.gov.uk |
| Strategic Director | Monica Fogarty | monicafogarty@warwickshire.gov.uk |
| Portfolio Holder | Cllr Andy Crump | andycrump@warwickshire.gov.uk |

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Cabinet – 22 January 2019

Fire & Rescue Service

Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service



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About this inspection

This is the first time that HMICFRS has inspected fire and rescue services across England. Our focus is on the service they provide to the public, and the way they use the resources available. The inspection assesses how effectively and efficiently Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service prevents, protects the public against and responds to fires and other emergencies. We also assess how well it looks after the people who work for the service.

In carrying out our inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England, we answer three main questions:

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?

This report sets out our inspection findings. After taking all the evidence into account, we apply a graded judgment for each of the three questions.

What inspection judgments mean

Our categories of graded judgment are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Good is our 'expected' graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards.

If the service exceeds what we expect for good, we will judge it as **outstanding**.

If we find shortcomings in the service, we will judge it as **requires improvement**.

If we find serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, we will judge it as **inadequate**.

Service in numbers



Public perceptions

Warwickshire

England

Perceived effectiveness of service
Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)

90%

86%



Response

Warwickshire

England

Incidents attended per 1,000 population
12 months to 31 March 2018

6.2

10.2

Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population
12 months to 31 March 2018

7.2

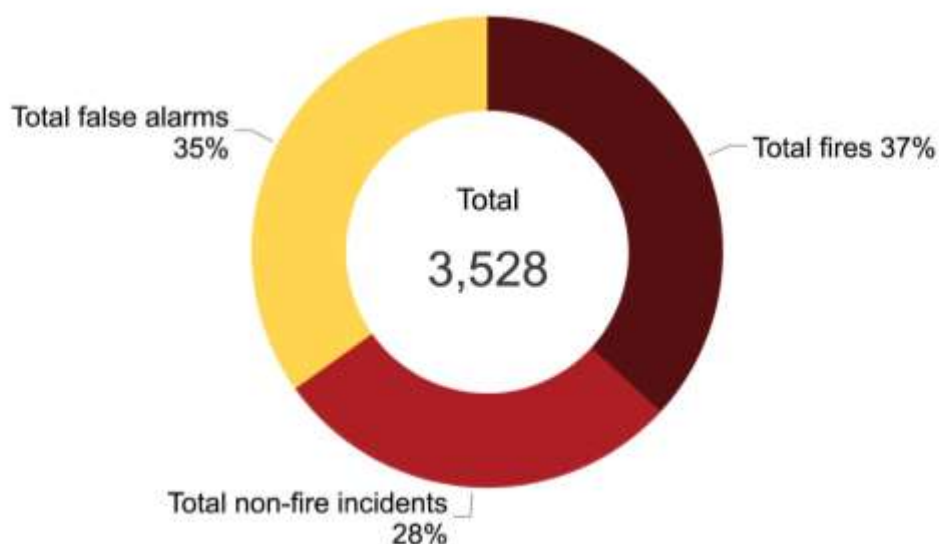
10.4

Fire safety audits per 100 known premises
12 months to 31 March 2018

3.9

3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 31 March 2018





Cost

Warwickshire

England

Firefighter cost per person per year
12 months to 31 March 2018

£23.88

£22.38



Workforce

Warwickshire

England

Number of firefighters per 1,000 population
As at 31 March 2018

0.6

0.6

Five-year change in workforce
As at 31 March 2013 compared with 31 March 2018

-9%

-14%

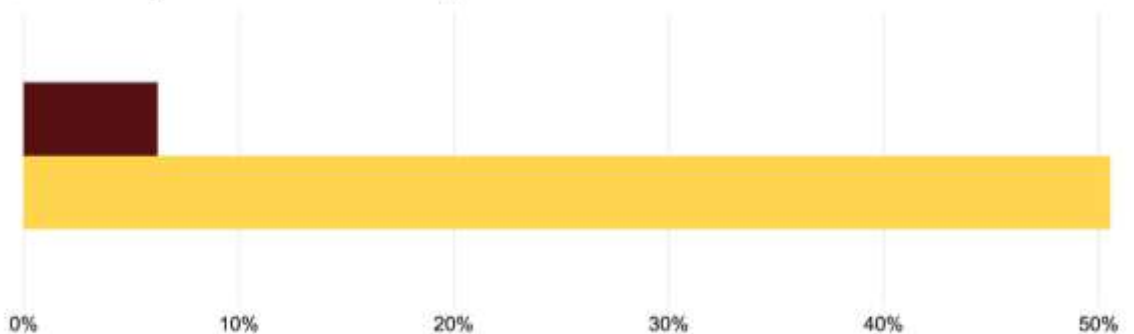
Percentage of wholetime firefighters
As at 31 March 2018

75%

70%

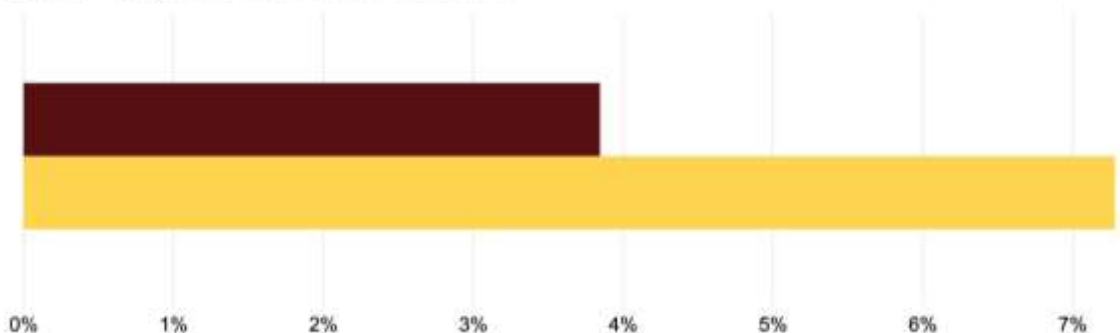
Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population














Percentage of black, Asian and minority ethnic firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● BAME firefighters ● BAME residential population



Please refer to annex A for full details on data used.

Overview

| | |
|--|---|
|  Effectiveness |  Good |
| Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies |  Good |
| Preventing fires and other risks |  Good |
| Protecting the public through fire regulation |  Requires improvement |
| Responding to fires and other emergencies |  Good |
| Responding to national risks |  Good |
|  Efficiency |  Good |
| Making best use of resources |  Good |
| Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future |  Good |



People



Requires improvement

Promoting the right values and culture



Good

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Overall summary of inspection findings

We are satisfied with most aspects of the performance of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). But the service needs to improve how it looks after its people to give a consistently good service.

It is effective at keeping people safe and secure. It is good at:

- understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies;
- preventing fires and other risks;
- responding to fires and other emergencies; and
- responding to national risks.

But the service needs to improve the way it protects the public with fire regulation.

We found the service to be efficient. It uses its resources well and it provides an affordable service.

However, it needs to do better at promoting diversity and ensuring fairness. And it should improve how it manages performance and develops leaders. But it is good at promoting the right values and culture. And it is good at getting the right people with the right skills.

We are encouraged by the positive aspects we have identified. We look forward to seeing more consistent performance over the coming year.

Effectiveness



How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?



Good

Summary

An effective fire and rescue service will identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks its community faces. It will target its fire prevention and protection activities to those who are at greatest risk from fire. It will make sure businesses comply with fire safety legislation. When the public calls for help, the fire and rescue service should respond promptly with the right skills and equipment to deal with the incident effectively. Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

The service has a clear plan for managing risk, based on accurate data from a good range of sources. But it could do more to involve the public in its decision making.

It conducts regular and efficient checks on local businesses to make sure they meet fire regulations. The information from these checks is made available to crews through the mobile computers in fire engines. However, this information is not always up to date due to a lack of staff capacity.

The service has effective strategies to prevent fires and other emergencies. It makes good use of social media, and has appointed an arson officer, who works closely with the police force. But we are concerned that staff do not fully understand how to target prevention work at the people who are most at risk from fires.

Our main area of concern is the service's work on protection, which requires improvement. It hasn't been prosecuting businesses that fail to meet fire regulations, and it hasn't allocated enough resource in this area to enable the team to work in a structured way with other enforcing authorities.

The service is well placed to respond to fires and other emergencies. Staff are confident about how to mobilise in response to different kinds of incidents, and work well together. However, the service needs a better procedure for investigating cases where a fire engine is not dispatched due to a lack of [on-call](#) firefighters arriving at the station. It also needs to improve staff awareness of [safeguarding](#).

The service has clear procedures for managing national risks, and has agreements in place to work with neighbouring services. It should make sure its staff are confident in accessing information about incidents across the county border.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Good

Warwickshire FRS is good at understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to improve how it engages with the local community to build up a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area.
- The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.

All fire and rescue services should identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks. They should also prevent and mitigate these risks.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Understanding local and community risk

The service has an [integrated risk management plan](#) (IRMP) to help it match its resources to the risks it has identified in the county. This is updated every three years. The plan is underpinned by a risk profile, which is based on data about population and risk sites over the three-year period. It helps the service understand what the risks are, identify emerging problems and make recommendations about how to reduce risk.

The risk profile draws on data from a range of sources, including: Warwickshire joint strategic needs assessment; community safety partnership strategic assessments; and the quality of life report 2015 (Warwickshire observatory). The service also uses [Mosaic](#) and [Exeter data](#) to identify those who may be vulnerable to fire incidents through age or illness.

The service works with police and health partners in the [multi-agency safeguarding hub](#) to understand local risk, and to exchange information. They told us the arrangement is working well.

The service recognises that it needs to do more to involve the public in helping it understand risk. Currently, its main area of community engagement is the consultation for the IRMP. The service plans to review the methodology used within the IRMP process, which will provide an opportunity to widen the range of data used and improve the ability to identify hard-to-reach groups. We were told that there are also plans to increase the range of data used for the IRMP, but the service didn't give us any further detail.

The service should do more to make sure employees understand how to use the information about [vulnerable people](#) gathered from Mosaic and Exeter, to target prevention activity better.

Having an effective risk management plan

Warwickshire has a working IRMP for 2017–2020, which is underpinned by data from the risk profile 2016. It sets out the achievements of the service to date, its priorities for the future, and how it plans to manage risk.

The IRMP meets the requirements of the [fire and rescue national framework](#) for England. The service has assessed risks from a wide range of sources and has plans to mitigate them. The IRMP explains how the service plans to maintain day-to-day emergency cover, in the case of both major risks and [local resilience forum](#) (LRF) community risk register issues such as flooding and terrorism. The IRMP is linked to an annual business plan that sets out the priorities for each year.

Members of the LRF told us that the service is valued as a strong partner. Staff from Warwickshire FRS chair several groups and have contributed to the two [‘control of major accident hazard’ site](#) plans in the county.

Maintaining risk information

An important part of maintaining up-to-date risk information is conducting site-specific risk checks. The service inspects businesses, such as factories or shops with sleeping accommodation, to check they meet fire regulations. Warwickshire FRS carries out three different checks in one visit: firefighter safety, business fire safety and fire prevention measures. Its inspectors fill in a simple form and then pass information to relevant departments. This is a good use of resources. It gives the service a detailed picture of each site, and reduces the effect of inspection on businesses.

The team who conduct the checks pass information about any new risks to the operations planning team. They then create a temporary action note that alerts crews to any immediate risks they might face if they are sent to the site. These notes are held on the computer system used to dispatch fire engines.

There are effective processes in place for handing over risk information between shifts. Staff are aware of the local risks within their station area and can access risk information on the mobile computers in fire engines. Firefighters can also use these computers to access information about dealing with hazardous materials, where to cut open different vehicle models, and the locations of hydrants and flood maps. However, the information on the computers is not always up to date, due to a lack of capacity in the operations planning team.

Preventing fires and other risks



Good

Warwickshire FRS is good at preventing fires and other risks. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk.
- The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Prevention strategy

Warwickshire FRS's service delivery strategy 2018–2020 includes a prevention strategy. This sets out various proposed initiatives, including 'home from hospital safe and well', which is a system for risk assessing vulnerable patients' homes prior to them being discharged from hospital, and 'Telecare falls response', for people at risk of injuring themselves by falling at home. We couldn't evaluate these projects, as they have yet to start.

The service uses data from Mosaic and Exeter to identify people most likely to be at risk from fires and who could benefit from support in fire prevention. It also receives referrals from the Warwickshire County Council customer service centre and various partners.

However, we found that operational crews and community safety specialists do not fully understand how to prioritise the most vulnerable people. Rather than using Exeter/Mosaic data to prioritise those who needed help most urgently, crews and community safety staff are simply working through a list of address-enhanced prevention activities. The IRMP states that the service will provide [home fire safety checks](#) to those most at risk, but it isn't clear that this is happening. One problem is a lack of clarity about how many visits the service is aiming to make: staff told us that the overall target within the service delivery strategy 2018–2020 has been reduced to 4,000, although the service's performance indicator remains at 6,000. A further problem is that, again, staff don't fully understand how to use the Exeter/Mosaic data. They work through referrals from the council, rather than proactively prioritise people most at risk.

The focus of home fire safety checks has shifted from purely fire safety to a wider wellbeing agenda, including winter warmth; slips, trips and falls; and even identifying cases of suspected modern slavery, which recent recruits told us is part of their training. However, when we looked at samples of completed home fire safety check documentation, we were concerned to find that it is difficult to follow on the current 'firmstep' system. It wasn't obvious that the risk profiles the service has developed are helping it to target the most vulnerable.

There was little evidence of evaluation of the home fire safety check process, so it is unclear – both to us and to the service itself – whether it is meeting its aims.

Promoting community safety

The service works with partners in the county council, the Youth Justice Service and Warwickshire Police to promote community safety. Together they raise awareness about vulnerable people at risk of fire, and work to tackle arson in higher-risk areas of the county.

Warwickshire FRS regularly uses social media to communicate fire safety messages. For example, it used Twitter to warn the public of the risk of further grass and wildfires during the hot spell in July 2018. The information on its website is sometimes lacking, however. We were concerned to see that people visiting the website to request a home fire safety check must sign in or register first with the county council. The service should evaluate the data about visits to this page, to make sure this process isn't deterring the public.

The service carries out fire safety education work in schools across Warwickshire, targeting key stages one and two. This includes all local authority and faith schools. The service also offers this to all independent schools. It has developed an education programme, Heartshield, to teach children cardio-pulmonary resuscitation techniques and other aspects of healthy living. It provides this jointly with public health professionals from the county council.

One particularly successful element of the service's community safety strategy is the role of its arson reduction officer, who works closely with the local police force. The officer carries out campaigns during holiday periods when there are often more deliberate fires, especially in the north of the county. The officer has also been trained in stage one fire investigation, which allows the fire and police services to work together to gather evidence. We saw evidence of the service working with the police to identify and ultimately convict an arsonist after a spate of deliberate fires.

Road safety

The service carries out a range of road safety work within the county road safety partnership. It runs the Fatal Four programme for year 11 students who may be starting to drive themselves or travelling as passengers in cars with young drivers. And its regular [Biker Down](#) sessions educate motorcyclists about what to do in the event of an accident. These sessions use new technology, such as virtual reality, to simulate the scenes of accidents. The road safety partnership told us that the service's support is valuable, and that it will look to build on this work in future.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme.
- The service should assure itself that its use of enforcement powers prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in buildings and, where necessary, require building owners to comply with fire safety legislation. Each service decides how many assessments it does each year. But it must have a locally determined, risk-based inspection programme for enforcing the legislation.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Risk-based approach

We have considerable concerns about the service's risk-based approach to fire protection, which relates to non-residential properties. It uses the [fire service emergency cover](#) model codes to determine the risk profile of commercial buildings in the county. But managers told us that this data is not always reliable and expressed doubts about the consistency of the scoring system.

The service's protection strategy has only recently been published and staff don't fully understand it. There has been limited evaluation of the enforcement work that the service has done in the past. The new service delivery strategy 2018–2020 doesn't define how success will be measured, other than broad quantitative measures such as the number of fire protection inspections conducted, the number of community safety contacts and the number of fire-related deaths. The service needs to provide more detail about how it plans to evaluate its work.

We are also concerned about the workload of fire safety inspectors. There is a relatively high turnover of staff in this department. In theory, they have a target of three new risk-based inspections per week, and the rest of their time is taken up with reactive work. But workloads aren't managed well enough and we came across some inspectors with case files still open after several years, as well as insufficient capacity in the team to mentor new staff.

In the past the service focused largely on its operational response. However, more recently, the balance has shifted towards prevention and protection. The service has made a significant investment in the prevention team, but the protection team lags

behind due to a high staff turnover. The service needs to make sure it has sufficient resources in place to carry out its principal protection functions before it expands its discretionary activities.

In addition to a small team of specialists, the service also uses operational crews for business fire safety inspections. This is a good use of resources, as it increases the number of premises that are inspected. In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, it carried out protection audits on 513 of the 13,060 known premises (excluding single private dwellings) in the service area (3.9 percent). Operational crews are generally positive about this approach, but told us they needed more focused training in risk assessment.

Enforcement

We found that the service has not been prosecuting businesses that fail to uphold fire safety legislation. The small protection team told us that it tries wherever possible to support businesses. It carries out enforcements and prohibitions but hasn't brought a prosecution for several years. We found examples of prohibition notices that have been in place for several years and are only revisited infrequently.

If the service fails to use its regulatory power, it sends out the wrong message to those that don't take fire safety legislation seriously. Senior managers accept that they don't have the capacity or the experience to mount a prosecution and are considering working with West Midlands FRS to improve this. However, there are currently no clear plans in place.

Another fire and rescue service has recently peer-reviewed the protection team, but the results weren't available at the time of inspection.

Working with others

The service works with several other local authority agencies and these partners are generally positive about its capacity for joint working. For example, it worked with building control and housing partners to review high-rise blocks in Rugby, which had been identified as a risk following the Grenfell Tower fire. Together the agencies did a complete review of fire precautions and put an immediate action plan in place.

The service has also recently joined Warwickshire County Council's trading standards department in a [primary authority scheme](#) with the Midcounties Co-operative. This means it will be the lead fire and rescue service for any of the company's premises throughout the country, making sure there is a standardised approach to fire safety.

However, we were told that structured joint working has become more difficult because of staffing reductions. For example, the service wants to work with other enforcing authorities, such as housing enforcement, building control and environmental health, but lacks the capacity to engage in regular planning meetings. As a result, joint working tends to be informal and reactive.

The service would like to be more focused on supporting business but lacks the staff capacity. It does have some business information on its website, but it has only recently been able to contribute to the 'Better business for all' forum, which is designed for businesses and local regulators to come together to discuss areas to improve and assist each other.

The service should be working with businesses to tackle repeated false alarms, but there was little evidence of this. Watch commanders at headquarters are keeping a manual record all false alarm calls, but overall the approach lacks both clarity and co-ordination.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good

Warwickshire FRS is good at responding to fires and other emergencies. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has an effective policy for the managerial actions to take if a fire engine does not respond to an incident.
- The service should ensure staff understand how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people.

All fire and rescue services must be able to respond effectively to multi-agency and cross-border incidents. This means working with other fire and rescue services (known as intraoperability) and emergency services (known as interoperability).

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Managing assets and resources

The service has a risk-based approach to responding to incidents and has set pre-determined attendances (PDAs) for particular types of incident. Its resources are focused close to population centres and incident hotspots, such as Gaydon for the M40. These are monitored daily by a resourcing officer to maintain cover as effectively as possible. As well as mobilising to the service's own PDAs, control staff showed they could use their professional judgment when they needed to.

The PDAs for incidents in high-rise blocks were amended following the Grenfell Tower fire. The service has carried out exercises to test its procedures in the event of such an incident. These include the service control centre's ability to manage multiple-fire survival guidance. In Grenfell Tower, [fire control](#) had many different people trapped and needed to give them guidance on the phone, as well as inform fire crews of their locations.

A re-tendering process earlier in 2018 awarded a contract to a new supplier for an availability system, which manages the staff booking on and off duty. The old contract ended before the new supplier was ready to take over and a rudimentary interim system was implemented, which added to the workload of both managers and staff.

The most recent staffing changes have freed up enough staff to run the new 12-hour day-duty station at Gaydon to the south of the county, where data provided by the service shows target response times are difficult to achieve.

We found that both [wholetime](#) and on-call duty staff are confident in their knowledge of breathing apparatus and are clear in their understanding of operational risk. They are confident about using the fire engine's mobile computer, although less so when asked to access information about risks outside the county border.

Response

Wholetime and on-call crews work well together and on-call support officers are available to support on-call staff. On-call firefighters provide cover from their home or place of work and must be able to get to the station within 5 minutes on average. There are times when the minimum number of firefighters drops below the accepted limit, or 'availability level'. The service recognises that maintaining on-call availability is difficult, due either to problems recruiting staff, or on-call firefighters' employment taking them outside the five-minute response time.

There is a process in place to make sure a fire engine is always [mobilised](#) by control where necessary. However, when a fire engine can't be dispatched due to a lack of on-call firefighters arriving at the station, there is no procedure to investigate why this has happened. During the inspection, we found several incidents where a first fire engine had failed to mobilise, which meant the service had to send a second.

Responding to availability, the service moves staff or fire engines into on-call stations to cover when necessary.

Warwickshire FRS is following the [national operational guidance](#) programme, which was implemented to make sure the operation of fire and rescue services is consistent across the country. The service is in the process of assessing what it needs to do to comply with this programme.

'Peak demand plus' is a duty system specific to Warwickshire: wholetime firefighters are on the station during the daytime, but on call from home at night. We witnessed a delay because the on-call and wholetime teams at that station did not appear to be fully integrated; the service may want to review this to make sure the response is as quick as possible.

We found a lack of understanding about safeguarding across the service. Staff are aware of it, and many have completed an online training package. But many would benefit from further practical training.

Command

The service has various levels of command, starting with level one commanders who are in charge of fire engines, through to level four strategic commanders who take charge during large-scale major incidents. We tested incident command from level one to level four, and found that staff are confident in their responses.

The service's management team has focused on encouraging managers to be assertive. Staff told us that they are confident the management would support them if they needed to exercise their discretion rather than simply follow normal procedures.

The service has issued watch managers and above with tablets to allow them to carry out incident command monitoring at the scene of an incident. This is recorded and sent through to the incident commander. It is used for professional development, and to identify organisational trends.

Keeping the public informed

The service uses Twitter to inform the public of incidents and gets advice from the county council's communication team on engaging with the press. Because resources are shared, this is not a 24-hour service. Outside office hours, flexi-duty officers are expected to carry out this function. However, LRF partners pointed out that this shared service does make it easier to release multi-agency messages during incidents.

Evaluating operational performance

The service has developed a debriefing process to learn as much from each incident as possible. Crews complete a debrief form, on which they give feedback after an incident. The service's in-house incident-recording system also has an operational learning tab. A member of the operations planning team reviews incident logs each day and can ask the firefighters who attended the incident to fill in a debrief form if they need more information.

When the service needs to make improvements, such as changing procedures, or solving equipment problems, the operations planning team gives actions to named individuals and checks that they have completed them. An operational assurance team evaluates areas where they think there need to be further improvements. It is a thorough process, although the service needs to make sure any findings are disseminated throughout the whole of the organisation, not just those attending specific incidents.

We didn't find any recent examples of the service talking about its best practice with other fire and rescue services. It did proactively share the learning after the Atherstone-on-Stour fire.

Responding to national risks



Good

Warwickshire FRS is good at responding to national risks. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it understands national and cross-border risks and is well prepared to meet such risks.
- The service should ensure it has enough national interagency liaison officers and duty group managers, and that these roles do not conflict with each other at critical times.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Preparedness

The service has [national inter-agency liaison officers](#) (NILOs) who manage national risks and oversee plans such as those for a marauding terrorist firearms attack (MTFA). We found that, although the service does always have one NILO on duty, this is usually a duty group commander performing multiple roles. The service should review this, as it could create delays in responding to NILO requests if that officer is already committed to an incident.

In testing level three and level four for incident command, officers could describe the [national co-ordination advisory framework](#) arrangements in detail. They also described how their national assets had been deployed to flooding and, during our inspection, to a large-scale moorland fire in Lancashire.

The service has a good system in place for site-specific risk checks, including for large sites such as the Kingsbury oil terminal. There is a clear annual plan for re-inspection and finding new risks. Crews showed they understand the risk plans, which are graded to show the severity of risk.

The service can receive and upload risk data from bordering fire and rescue services up to 10km over the county boundary via a system known as Resilience Direct. Staff on both [wholetime](#) and on-call stations we inspected could retrieve data from the mobile computers in their fire engines. But, as we said above, they lack confidence when an incident is over the border (see 'managing assets and resources'). We are satisfied that operational staff understand the system of risk categorisation.

Working with other services

The service has effective agreements with neighbouring fire and rescue services to support each other at incidents. In certain areas, they have also agreed that a neighbouring fire and rescue service should respond where they have a closer fire engine. The service planned to share some control functions with Northamptonshire FRS from June 2018, but this was delayed due to technical difficulties. Currently, the service can answer calls on behalf of Northamptonshire FRS, but can't mobilise resources directly and must pass calls back via landline.

The service has recently announced a collaboration with West Midlands FRS. A feasibility study will examine areas dealing with fire control, training and prevention.

We also saw evidence of recent exercises with Hereford and Worcester FRS.

Working with other agencies

The service is an active member of the LRF. The other agencies involved told us that attendees from the fire and rescue service are at the appropriate level to make decisions.

The service has taken part in recent LRF exercises such as the multi-agency exercise Flying Turpin, involving the Royal Air Force and other partners. The service and the LRF recognise that they need to do more cross-border multi-agency exercising.

The service has policies to deal with an MTFAs and these are currently being reviewed and developed. A sub-group of the LRF has recently formed to identify what further risk planning needs to take place to prepare for MTFAs and other malicious actions.

Efficiency



How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?



Good

Summary

An efficient fire and rescue service will manage its budget and spend money properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to its risk. It should try to keep costs down without compromising public safety. Future budgets should be based on robust and realistic assumptions. Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

The service meets its objectives using planning and collaboration. It has identified areas for improvement – such as response times and prevention work – and has effective strategies to tackle them. Its working relationship with the county council has also improved.

There are some ways in which the service could improve productivity. We have particular concerns about the role of watch manager response commander, which was introduced recently. The responsibilities and duties of this role aren't well defined, and resources aren't being used efficiently as a result.

We were pleased to see evidence of several collaborations with other services, but these projects haven't always been properly evaluated. Future collaborations should be more structured, with evaluation built in from the start.

The service has done good work to make sure it makes the best use of resources and stays financially viable, particularly setting up a partnership with West Midlands FRS. It has good asset management plans. We have some concerns about procurement though, as important contracts have been allowed to lapse without being renewed, and staff told us about technical problems with the service's new fire engines.

Making best use of resources



Good

Warwickshire FRS is good at making best use of resources. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself that it allocates enough resources to protection work.
- The service should assure itself that its workforce is productive. It needs to clarify the role of watch manager, make staff fully aware of what the service expects from this role, and ensure best value from the watch manager role with a standard approach across the service.
- The service should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration.
- The service needs to prioritise implementing new business continuity plans and test them as soon as possible, particularly for fire control.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

How plans support objectives

The service is aware of areas where it has struggled with response times and has a clear objective to tackle this. Some of the failures have been in motorway locations, where access at certain junctions needs the neighbouring service to attend. Others relate to the availability of on-call fire engines, and fire engines having to travel further if the closest isn't available.

In response to these problems, the service carried out a crewing review. This led to the creation of Gaydon 12-hour peak demand fire station, which was achieved by re-distributing existing resources. Data provided by the service shows that it has improved response times in a mostly on-call area, where daytime availability is limited. It has recognised the need to provide capacity for the periods of highest demand for service, by using more wholetime resources.

Data provided by the service shows it has increased its prevention staff by five full-time posts, using one-off funding from the county council. The team will focus on working with the people most at risk from fire. This followed a review by Staffordshire FRS after three fatal fires in the 12 months to 31 March 2018. There are no plans for how to sustain these positions once the funding ends, but the service is confident that

the preventative work staffing model will become self-sustaining. They have a number of future prevention projects under development, including 'Telecare falls response' and 'home from hospital'.

Productivity and ways of working

Warwickshire FRS is a county council fire and rescue service which is supported by a business partner model for ICT, human resources, communication and vehicle maintenance. The service is able to draw on council-wide support functions in these areas.

Service managers told us that the co-ordination between the service and the county council has improved under the current leadership. However, we found a lack of information about human resources. The service uses the county council's system, which doesn't support fire and rescue service staff in accessing up-to-date information such as sickness monitoring and staff-planning figures. This means that managers can't monitor sickness absence or identify patterns in an employee's absence, or trends of absence types.

There are also problems with the new role of watch manager response commanders. Watch commanders were previously in charge of fire engines, but as response commanders they, in theory:

- provide day-time cover;
- undertake managerial duties; and
- respond to incidents in liveried cars.

However, both managers and staff seem unclear about the purpose of this role. We were told that some watch manager response commanders had hardly been used in the last 12 months. This is clearly not an effective use of resources.

The deputy chief fire officer is in charge of managing performance. This involves overseeing the IRMP, business planning process and risk planning. Departments and stations have their own performance plans, which are the responsibility of station managers. The group commanders meet with the station managers every six weeks, and this feeds into the area managers' group and into the brigade command team meetings.

This process is clear to senior leaders but is not well understood throughout the service. We found that accountability for performance in training and prevention is unclear, although the service is working to improve this.

Collaboration

For many years, Warwickshire FRS has collaborated with a range of partners, including the police, other neighbouring fire and rescue services, the NHS and local authorities. It works in partnership with Northamptonshire FRS on fire control, and with Hereford and Worcester FRS on fire engineering support. However, the service hasn't properly evaluated these partnerships, so it was difficult to see what had worked, and what lessons the service has learned.

Recently the service announced a partnership with West Midlands FRS, which will initially look at collaboration in training, prevention and fire control. This is an important element of Warwickshire FRS's plan to make savings and improve services in future. This project has clear documentation, a governance structure and three objectives as part of its initial phase. Both organisations recognise there are important ways that they could work together.

Continuity arrangements

A peer review in 2016 found that the service's business continuity arrangements were vulnerable. In response, it drew up a new policy. At the time of inspection this was only just due to be signed off, and until it is tested we are unable to evaluate it.

There is regular training and testing of equipment at the service's secondary control in Wellesbourne, but it has never been fully tested as a control room. This is an area the service should address.

Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future



Good

Warwickshire FRS is good at making itself affordable now and in the future. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to demonstrate sound financial management of principal non-pay costs. It should improve its contract management and make sure it manages the risks for each contract. It should also use specialist resources available from Warwickshire County Council to make sure contracts are fully managed to get the best results for the service and the public.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Improving value for money

The service has identified that it needs to make savings of £1.5m by 2020. Managers in both the county council and the service are confident that the collaboration with West Midlands FRS and some other smaller savings will be enough to make its financial position tenable by 2020.

The service has a good asset management plan that provides a comprehensive analysis and options concerning the current buildings and vehicles to address risks identified in the IRMP. It has also looked at where it may need to locate stations in future, with options for new sites in Rugby.

The county council plans to improve how it oversees the service's budget management. The financial plan for the service is produced at county council level, and the savings it needs to make are set out in the council's 'one organisation plan 2017–2020'. The county council has taken into account pay, inflation and precept, and the loss of the revenue support grant. We were told that the council had carried out some scenario planning for what will happen post-2020, and assessed the risk.

Procurement in the service is controlled by the service directly, or county council specialists, dependent on the stage and size of the contract. We found limited evidence of effective procurement, contract and risk-control measures. There are some examples of contracts ending before the new ones were in place, because their importance to the service and county council had not been recognised. The most significant example is the staff availability system which allows on-call staff to book on or off duty. The creation of interim and longer-term solutions added to workloads and made the service less effective.

Innovation

The service has bought smaller, lighter fire engines, saving approximately £100,000 per vehicle compared with the larger models. Staff expressed concerns about the build quality and reliability of the new vehicles. We are concerned about the processes and expertise used to bring this vehicle in to the service, as they would be expected to minimise these sorts of problems.

Warwickshire FRS has developed its own in-house incident recording system, FireCrest, to collect data for statutory returns to the Home Office. It was built using a standard operating platform to make sure it was sustainable. Whereas many systems designed in-house prove impossible to maintain once the staff that designed them leave, this system allows operational staff to record what they learned from the incident when they are completing the report. This isn't usually found on an incident recording system, and we consider it a good use of technology.

The service uses a personal electronic tally to record the testing of breathing apparatus. This provides a simple but effective audit trail of the testing regime.

The service has recently reviewed and altered its approach to ICT. As a result the ICT business partner is designing a development plan for the use of ICT in the future. The county council ICT department is currently assisting the service in actively speeding up processes that were paper based or labour intensive through the use of IT.

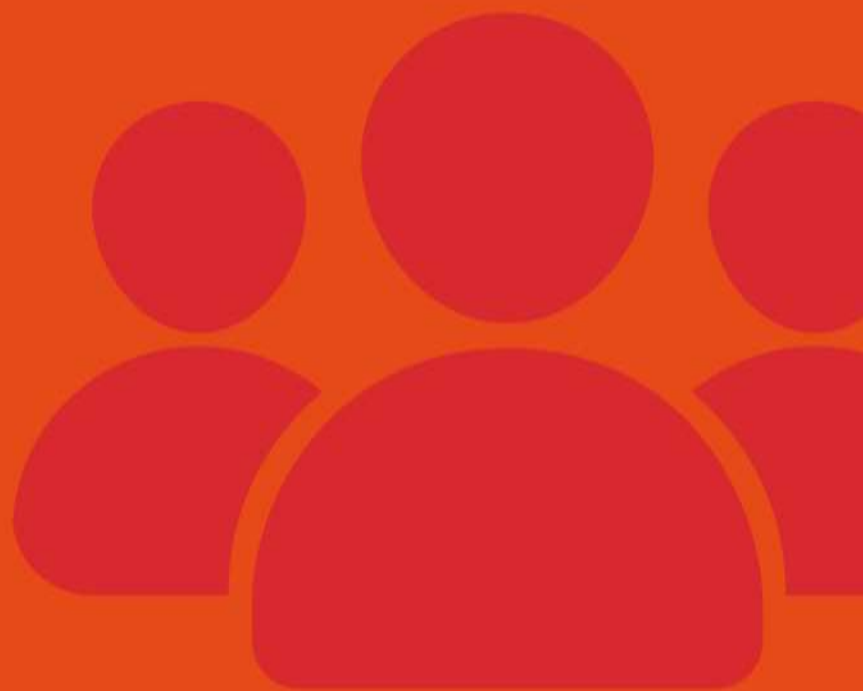
Future investment and working with others

As a council service, Warwickshire FRS does not have its own financial [reserves](#). However, the service does have certain ear-marked council reserves (for example, for ill-health pensions for firefighters). It also retains a small budget, mostly accumulated through under-spends, which allowed the service to pay for overtime when there was a staffing shortfall in 2018.

The service currently trains local industry in-house firefighters on a cost recovery basis. There may be other ways that the service could generate income, but this isn't currently a priority. We would encourage the service to monitor and evaluate the benefits of this activity.

The more recent prevention projects discussed above – 'home from hospital' and 'Telecare falls response' – are aimed at diversifying the service and working in partnership with other county council partners.

People



How well does the service look after its people?



Requires improvement

Summary

A fire and rescue service that looks after its people should be able to provide an effective service to its community. It should offer a range of services to make its communities safer. This will include developing and maintaining a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. The service's leaders should be positive role models, and this should be reflected in the behaviour of the workforce. Overall, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at looking after its people.

The service takes its responsibility for staff wellbeing seriously. It has procedures in place for monitoring and supporting those who are off work sick. The 'one service programme' has improved communication and staff engagement. However, the service needs to engage with support staff as well as operational staff and improve its staff engagement network.

Training for operational roles is generally good, although the central training team should be able to access information about which staff are due for training. The service needs to improve its training for control staff, who lack knowledge about important areas such as breathing apparatus emergency.

The service shows a willingness to learn and improve – for example, it audited all buildings with four floors or more in Warwickshire after the Grenfell Tower fire, and put measures in place as a result. However, it could do more to disseminate the findings of its evaluations throughout the service.

There needs to be a real improvement in equality and diversity from the perspective of ensuring a diverse mix of staff. The service is overwhelmingly white and male. Service staff do not have a good understanding of the importance of diversity, and there is a perception that the service has already done what it can to recruit a more diverse mix of staff. Staff from minority groups told us that they haven't been consulted about what more the service could do in this area, and they do not hold forums such as the equality and diversity group in high regard.

The service also needs to improve the way it manages staff performance. The appraisal system isn't working well, and there is no coaching or mentoring in place to develop future leaders, though we saw examples of limited informal mentoring. As a result there is a lack of clarity around requirements for progression which has led to a widespread perception that career progression depends on 'who you know'.

Promoting the right values and culture



Good

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Workforce wellbeing

The service has a well-developed system for looking after staff wellbeing. Staff across the organisation spoke in very positive terms about the wellbeing provision, and know how to access it.

Occupational health (OH) staff monitor those who have been off for more than a tour of duty via a weekly report. OH staff will call them to see how they are and to find out if there are any reasonable adjustments that could be put in place to support them back to work. There is also a monthly report, which tells HR and OH who is off sick and why. They use this to target their resources. The OH team has also trained managers across the service to develop healthy teams in the workplace.

All operational staff take an annual fitness test, and staff are also tested on [watch](#) by their physical training instructor (PTI). Any that fail are given an improvement programme and re-tested by the service fitness adviser. In the service's own data for the 12 months up to 31 March 2018, the service had a 99 percent pass rate for staff up to station manager and 100 percent from group manager upwards. The service should assess whether the watch-based PTIs face a conflict of interest when staff based on the same watch assess each other.

Health and safety

The service has a health and safety policy, which was last reviewed in February 2018. The policy covers the responsibilities of the service, managers and individuals. It sets out the role of the health, safety and welfare committee, which is chaired by the deputy chief fire officer. The committee reviews performance and health and safety policies across the organisation and staff representatives can review or raise issues. A health and safety practitioners' group supports the health and safety adviser to put in place the agreed changes.

Culture and values

The chief fire officer recently introduced an internal communications initiative called the one service programme (OSP), which aims to improve staff engagement, communication and service culture. Although not all staff we spoke to understand the OSP, it was clear that they had seen a change in the openness of communication and engagement. Staff all spoke highly of the chief and deputy chief fire officer. They told us that they regularly see the principal officers on visits and they feel supported. We heard examples of principal officers writing to staff, supporting them in their use of [operational discretion](#).

Support staff, however, told us in their view that the management's focus is on operational staff. They feel that leaders in the organisation don't listen to them. For example, when they raised issues over new equipment, the roll-out went ahead anyway.

There are other concerns over culture and values. For example, staff members told us that senior leaders brief them in service-wide groups, but their message isn't consistent with that of local managers at stations. The service should make sure briefings to staff are consistent.

The staff engagement network was set up to help the organisation engage with staff. The idea was that anyone could attend and raise issues or ideas. However, it developed into more of a briefing forum, and some staff now feel it is dominated by middle and senior managers. The service has recognised this and intends to reinvigorate the group.

Staff on the on-call duty system feel supported and part of the service. They are positive about the new personal protective equipment the service has just issued. They told us that the service supported them to take the Institution of Fire Engineers exams.

The main means of communicating to staff across the service is the Fire Matters bulletin. Staff are well aware of Fire Matters, but there is a lot of information in each publication, and currently no way of assessing whether staff read it and take it in.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

Warwickshire FRS is good at getting the right people with the right skills. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to assure itself that it trains all staff properly for their roles. It needs to ensure flexible duty officers keep their skills up to date consistently, put in place a training plan for officers and have a consistent method of recording when they have received training (either classroom or at incidents).

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Workforce planning

We found that the training for operational roles from firefighter to watch manager is good. The online records system for training was up to date or had entries to support why someone was not up to date in a certain area. The service should, however, make sure the central training team can access information about which staff are due for training. The central training team doesn't have an up-to-date, service-wide picture of training and exercises.

On-call staff follow an eight-week planner that managers understand and follow. This allows neighbouring stations to combine training, as they are all following the same subjects. On-call staff are given three hours' training a week, which allows for practical and theoretical sessions during the weekly drill night.

Staff told us they would like better facilities for realistic training, as hot-fire training now consists of a container fire unit at Coventry airport. The service is reviewing its approach to training facilities as part of its collaboration with West Midlands FRS.

We identified a lack of training for control staff, operational station managers and above. Control staff have been focusing on learning about the updated command and control system. They lack knowledge about certain important areas, such as breathing apparatus emergency – which is a procedure firefighters use if they become trapped inside a fire – and rely instead on the prompts from the mobilising system. They told us that maintenance of skills for control staff has been minimal.

There is also a lack of consistency in maintaining the competencies for flexible-duty officers, except for incident command training. There is no training plan for officers, and no consistent system of recording when they have received training either in sessions or at incidents. Several managers told us that they themselves decide what training they need.

Training for support staff is recorded on the county council system. The county council provides several online courses for all service staff. This includes management courses like the personal leadership programme, which all levels of management from watch manager upwards have taken.

Learning and improvement

Operational assurance is the process the service uses to test its training procedures in real incidents. The service has developed its capacity in this area. While some of its evaluation methods are still developing, they have real potential.

However, the service needs to focus on disseminating its findings throughout the service. We saw examples where lessons had clearly been learned, but the service had only communicated them to those crews who attended the incident.

The service is managing several large-scale projects as part of its collaboration plans with West Midlands FRS. It is aware that it will struggle to resource the projects with its current capacity and skills. The service needs to make sure its staff have the right skills to manage these projects. Processes for monitoring and evaluating the projects also need to be set up from the outset, so that the service can be clear as to the benefits it expects to gain from each project and how it will measure success.

Several on-call staff told us that the skills they have from outside the service – such as management, HR and training – are under-used. The service should consider the benefits of these skills to determine how they could potentially be used.

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, the service did good work in auditing all buildings with four floors or more in Warwickshire. None were identified as having combustible cladding, but other problems were found that the service acted on in partnership with local building control.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to assure itself that its mechanisms to engage and seek feedback from staff enable it to understand staff needs. It needs to make sure the forums it creates, such as the staff engagement network and the equality and diversity group, are achieving their set purpose, and regularly review their terms of reference.
- The service needs to assure itself that its understanding and appreciation of what diversity means will lead to change. It needs to implement an equality strategy and staff training that are based on national best practice and local engagement.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Seeking and acting on staff feedback

Staff told us that the senior managers have become more visible. In particular, they acknowledge that the chief fire officer and the deputy chief fire officer are approachable and resolve problems quickly.

Staff are aware of the various ways that feedback is passed up through the service. The staff engagement network is seen as more of a technical group, and the service is considering how to reinvigorate it (see the above, 'culture and values' section).

Some staff from minority groups told us they haven't been asked for their ideas on how the service might promote a more diverse workforce. There is an equality, diversity and inclusion group, but it isn't held in high regard by staff. The service should consider how to draw on the ideas and expertise of these staff.

The joint consultative committee includes senior managers as well as representatives of the relevant trade unions. It meets regularly, and its meetings are minuted, with actions allocated. Trade union representatives see this as a positive process, although they told us they would like service managers to engage more fully with the meetings.

The service has carried out several staff surveys, including those issued by the county council. In fact, several staff told us they had 'survey fatigue'. The chief fire officer created the OSP which led to the service's staff-focused survey in 2017. Previously surveys had gone out to all council staff. The OSP used the findings of the 2017 survey to effect change.

We reviewed grievance procedures, and found that they met the timescales the service had set or gave reasons why deadlines hadn't been met.

Diversity

We found that staff do not have a good understanding of diversity. There is a generally held perception that the service has done what it can; if women or people from a black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) background don't want to join, there isn't much more the service can do. It needs to tackle this attitude. It relies on the county council for support within these areas.

The service has taken certain measures to address the situation. It has recognised the need to engage with BAME communities and has recruited a community engagement officer. This person hadn't taken up their post at the time of the inspection.

During the 2017 recruitment campaign, the service arranged taster days in an effort to attract women and BAME candidates. However, more could be done in this area. The service and the county council have worked on this together previously, but difficulties were encountered that need to be overcome. They need to work together effectively to recruit a more diverse mix of staff.

The service has developed a dedicated on-call action support team. This helps potential on-call applicants overcome any obstacles to successful recruitment by devising bespoke training plans. These range from upper-body strength-training programmes to improving handwriting skills. It is run by on-call staff and was positively received by those who had been through the programme.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open, transparent and fair.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Managing performance

The service uses an appraisal system which is used across all county council departments. The system has recently been expanded to include staff behaviours, although staff told us they aren't sure how to complete the expanded section. Most of those we spoke to feel that the appraisal is a paper exercise. Several staff had been sent their appraisal via email and hadn't had a face-to-face meeting with their line manager. Some staff told us they hadn't had an appraisal in over 12 months.

We were informed by the service that poor performance is managed by the appraisal system. However, staff told us that they don't know how to do this. There was little evidence to show how the service identifies staff development needs through the appraisal process. The service should use appraisals more effectively to manage staff performance and development.

Senior leaders told us that, in a relatively small service like this, talent management and succession planning is a challenge. With the number of different duty systems, it can be difficult for staff to move between departments.

There is no formal coaching or mentoring process in place to develop future leaders, but there were examples of limited informal mentoring.

Developing leaders

Service staff have taken part in the county council leadership training programme for managers, known as the personal leadership programme. A number of staff feel the promotion process lacks openness and it is perceived as unfair. The service has had a new promotions policy, which has been in draft since 2017. Many staff told us they feel the promotion process changes each time to allow the preferred management candidates to succeed. The lack of clarity about what the requirements are for progression has caused a widespread perception that the process is dependent on 'who you know'.

The service has made recent changes by including having an independent service member on interview panels. However, the lack of a clear agreed procedure will continue to feed the perception of unfairness and bias. The service should make it a priority to change staff perceptions, by showing that the selection and promotion procedure is fair and open.

Annex A – About the data

Data in this report is from a range of sources, including:

- Home Office;
- Office for National Statistics (ONS);
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA);
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 45 fire and rescue services in England.

Where we use published Home Office data, we use the period to 31 March. We selected this period to be consistent across data sets. Some data sets are published annually, others quarterly. [The most recent data tables are available online.](#)

We use different data periods to represent trends more accurately.

Where we collected data directly from fire and rescue services (FRSs), we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with services and with other interested parties such as the Home Office. We gave services several opportunities to validate the data they gave us, to ensure the accuracy of the evidence presented. For instance:

- We checked and queried data that services submitted if notably different from other services or internally inconsistent.
- We asked all services to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified. Data that services submitted to the Home Office in relation to prevention, protection and workforce figures was published in November 2018. This data was updated after reports had been checked by services, so we haven't validated it further.

We set out the source of Service in numbers data below.

Methodology

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use [ONS mid-2017 population estimates](#). This is the most recent data available at the time of inspection.

BMG survey of public perception of the fire and rescue service

We commissioned BMG to survey attitudes towards fire and rescue services in June and July 2018. This consisted of 17,976 interviews across 44 local fire and rescue service areas. This survey didn't include the Isles of Scilly, due to its small population. Most interviews were conducted online, with online research panels.

However, a minority of the interviews (757) were conducted via face-to-face interviews with trained interviewers in respondents' homes. A small number of respondents were also interviewed online via postal invitations to the survey. These face-to-face interviews were specifically targeted at groups traditionally under-represented on online panels, and so ensure that survey respondents are as representative as possible of the total adult population of England. The sampling method used isn't a statistical random sample. The sample size was small, varying between 400 and 446 individuals in each service area. So any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

[Survey findings are available on BMG's website.](#)

Service in numbers

A dash in this graphic indicates that a service couldn't give data to us or the Home Office.

Perceived effectiveness of service

We took this data from the following question of the public perceptions survey:

How confident are you, if at all, that the fire and rescue service in your local area provides an effective service overall?

The figure provided is a sum of respondents who stated they were either 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'. Respondents could have also stated 'not very confident', 'not at all confident' or 'don't know'. The percentage of 'don't know' responses varied between services (ranging from 5 percent to 14 percent).

Due to its small residential population, we didn't include the Isles of Scilly in the survey.

Incidents attended per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Incidents attended by fire and rescue services in England, by incident type and fire and rescue authority](#)' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- There are six worksheets in this file. The 'FIRE0102' worksheet shows the number of incidents attended by type of incident and fire and rescue authority (FRA) for each financial year. The 'FIRE0102 Quarterly' worksheet shows the number of incidents attended by type of incident and FRA for each quarter. The worksheets 'Data fires', 'Data fire false alarms' and 'Data non-fire incidents' provide the raw data for the two main data tables. The 'Figure 3.3' worksheet provides the data for the corresponding chart in the statistical commentary.
- Fire data, covering all incidents that FRSs attend, is collected by the Incident Recording System (IRS). For several reasons some records take longer than others for FRSs to upload to the IRS. So totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers).
- We took data for Service in numbers from the August 2018 incident publication. So figures may not directly match more recent publications due to data updates.

Home fire risk checks per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Home fire risk checks carried out by fire and rescue authorities and partners, by fire and rescue authority](#)' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Each FRS's figure is based on the number of checks it carried out and doesn't include checks carried out by partners.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.
- The England total hours figures for 'Number of Fire Risk Checks carried out by FRS' include imputed figures to ensure a robust national figure. These imputed figures are: '2016/17 – Staffordshire'.
- Figures for 'Fire Risk Checks carried out by Elderly (65+)', 'Fire Risk Checks carried out by Disabled' and 'Number of Fire Risk Checks carried out by Partners' don't include imputed figures because a lot of FRAs can't supply these figures.

Home fire risk checks may also be referred to as Home Fire Safety Checks by FRSs.

Fire safety audits per 100 known premises

Fire protection refers to FRSs' statutory role in ensuring public safety in the wider built environment. It involves auditing and, where necessary, enforcing regulatory compliance, primarily but not exclusively in respect of the provisions of the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005 \(FSO\)](#). The number of safety audits in Service in numbers refers to the number of audits FRSs carried out in known premises.

According to the Home Office definition, “premises known to FRAs are the FRA’s knowledge, as far as possible, of all relevant premises; for the enforcing authority to establish a risk profile for premises in its area. These refer to all premises except single private dwellings”.

We took this from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Fire safety audits carried out by fire and rescue services, by fire and rescue authority](#)' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- Berkshire FRS didn't provide figures for premises known between 2014/15 and 2017/18.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.
- Several FRAs report 'Premises known to FRAs' as estimates based on historical data.

Firefighter cost per person per year

We took the data to calculate firefighter cost per person per year from the annual financial data returns that individual FRSs complete and submit to CIPFA, and [ONS mid-2017 population estimates](#).

You should consider this data alongside the proportion of firefighters who are wholetime and on-call / retained.

Number of firefighters per 1,000 population, five-year change in workforce and percentage of wholetime firefighters

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Total staff numbers \(full-time equivalent\) by role and by fire and rescue authority](#)' as at 31 March 2018.

Table 1102a: Total staff numbers (FTE) by role and fire authority – Wholetime Firefighters and table 1102b: Total staff numbers (FTE) by role and fire authority – Retained Duty System are used to produce the total number of firefighters.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- We calculate these figures using full-time equivalent (FTE) numbers. FTE is a metric that describes a workload unit. One FTE is equivalent to one full-time worker. But one FTE may also be made up of two or more part-time workers whose calculated hours equal that of a full-time worker. This differs from headcount, which is the actual number of the working population regardless if employees work full or part-time.
- Some totals may not aggregate due to rounding.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

Percentage of female firefighters and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) firefighters

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Staff headcount by gender, fire and rescue authority and role](#)' and '[Staff headcount by ethnicity, fire and rescue authority and role](#)' as at 31 March 2018.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- We calculate BAME residential population data from ONS 2011 census data.
- We calculate female residential population data from ONS mid-2017 population estimates.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

Annex B – Fire and rescue authority governance

These are the different models of fire and rescue authority (FRA) governance in England. Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service is a unitary authority.

Metropolitan FRA

The FRA covers a metropolitan (large urban) area. Each is governed by locally elected councillors appointed from the constituent councils in that area.

Combined FRA

The FRA covers more than one local authority area. Each is governed by locally elected councillors appointed from the constituent councils in that area.

County FRA

Some county councils are defined as FRAs, with responsibility for fire and rescue service provision in their area.

Unitary authorities

These combine the usually separate council powers and functions for non-metropolitan counties and non-metropolitan districts. In such counties, a separate fire authority runs the fire services. This is made up of councillors from the county council and unitary councils.

London

Day-to-day control of London's fire and rescue service is the responsibility of the London fire commissioner, accountable to the Mayor. A Greater London Authority committee and the Deputy Mayor for Fire scrutinise the commissioner's work. The Mayor may arrange for the Deputy Mayor to exercise his fire and rescue functions.

Mayoral Combined Authority

Only in Greater Manchester. The Combined Authority is responsible for fire and rescue functions but with those functions exercised by the elected Mayor. A fire and rescue committee supports the Mayor in exercising non-strategic fire and rescue functions. This committee is made up of members from the constituent councils.

Police, fire and crime commissioner FRA

The police, fire and rescue commissioner is solely responsible for the service provision of fire & rescue and police functions.

Isles of Scilly

The Council of the Isles of Scilly is the FRA for the Isles of Scilly.

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Comparison of Fire & Rescue Services in HMICFRS Tranche 1

| FRS | Governance Model | Effectiveness | Efficiency | People |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Avon | Combined Fire Authority | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Inadequate |
| Bedfordshire | Combined Fire Authority | Good | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement |
| Cambridgeshire | Combined Fire Authority | Good | Good | Good |
| Cheshire | Combined Fire Authority | Good | Good | Requires Improvement |
| Cornwall | County Council | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Good |
| Hampshire | Combined Fire Authority | Good | Good | Requires Improvement |
| Hereford & Worcester | Combined Fire Authority | Good | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement |
| Hertfordshire | County Council | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement |
| Isle of Scilly | County Council | Good | Good | Requires Improvement |
| Isles of Wight | County Council | Good | Good | Requires Improvement |
| Lancashire | Combined Fire Authority | Good | Good | Good |
| Lincolnshire | County Council | Good | Good | Requires Improvement |
| Surrey | County Council | Good | Inadequate | Requires Improvement |
| Warwickshire | County Council | Good | Good | Requires Improvement |

Summary of improvement areas highlighted for WFRS by HMICFRS

- The service needs to improve how it engages with the local community to build up a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area.
- The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.
- The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk.
- The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.
- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme.
- The service should assure itself that its use of enforcement powers prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.
- The service should ensure it has an effective policy for the managerial actions to take if a fire engine does not respond to an incident.
- The service should ensure staff understand how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people.
- The service should ensure it understands national and cross-border risks and is well prepared to meet such risks.
- The service should ensure it has enough national interagency liaison officers and duty group managers, and that these roles do not conflict with each other at critical times.
- The service should assure itself that it allocates enough resources to protection work.
- The service should assure itself that its workforce is productive. It needs to clarify the role of watch manager, make staff fully aware of what the service expects from this role, and ensure best value from the watch manager role with a standard approach across the service.

- The service should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration.
- The service needs to prioritise implementing new business continuity plans and test them as soon as possible, particularly for fire control.
- The service needs to demonstrate sound financial management of principal non-pay costs. It should improve its contract management and make sure it manages the risks for each contract. It should also use specialist resources available from Warwickshire County Council to make sure contracts are fully managed to get the best results for the service and the public.
- The service needs to assure itself that it trains all staff properly for their roles. It needs to ensure flexible duty officers keep their skills up to date consistently, put in place a training plan for officers and have a consistent method of recording when they have received training (either classroom or at incidents).
- The service needs to assure itself that its mechanisms to engage and seek feedback from staff enable it to understand staff needs. It needs to make sure the forums it creates, such as the staff engagement network and the equality and diversity group, are achieving their set purpose, and regularly review their terms of reference.
- The service needs to assure itself that its understanding and appreciation of what diversity means will lead to change. It needs to implement an equality strategy and staff training that are based on national best practice and local engagement.
- The service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open, transparent and fair.