

Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22

Effectiveness, efficiency and people

An inspection of Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service



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About this inspection

This inspection is from our third round of inspections of fire and rescue services in England. We first inspected Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service in June 2019. We published a report with our findings in December 2019 on the service's effectiveness and efficiency and how it looks after its people. Our second inspection, in autumn 2020, considered how the service was responding to the pandemic. This inspection considers for a second time the service's effectiveness, efficiency and people.

In this round of inspections of all 44 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 for Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service.

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 there are serious, critical or systemic failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, then consideration will be given to a graded judgment of inadequate.

Overview

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 Effectiveness	 Good	Good
Understanding fires and other risks	 Good	Requires improvement
Preventing fires and other risks	 Good	Good
Protecting the public through fire regulation	 Good	Good
Responding to fires and other emergencies	 Good	Good
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	 Good	Good

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 Efficiency	 Good	Good
Making best use of resources	 Good	Good
Future affordability	 Good	Good

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 People	 Requires improvement	Good
Promoting the right values and culture	 Good	Outstanding
Getting the right people with the right skills	 Requires improvement	Good
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	 Requires improvement	Good
Managing performance and developing leaders	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement

HM Inspector's summary

It was a pleasure to revisit Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and I am grateful for the positive and constructive way that the service engaged with our inspection.

I am pleased with the performance of the service in keeping people safe and secure from fires and other risks. The service has made progress in some areas since our 2019 inspection.

- Risk information has improved and is more reliably available to firefighters.
- New premises are identified for the inspection programme.
- Staff know how to [safeguard vulnerable people](#).

These are the findings I consider most important from our assessment of the service over the past year.

- The service has well-resourced prevention and protection teams. It analyses a wide range of information, and this is used by teams to target risk. Staff work in partnership with other organisations, and this is effective at helping keep people and premises safe and in responding to operational incidents.
- The service has a learning culture and learns from incidents to make improvements. However, it could improve its assurance and evaluation arrangements to help identify further opportunities to become more effective at prevention, protection and incident command.
- The service has longstanding values that are well embedded, and staff feel valued and included at work. Leaders are visible and engage well with staff. However, the service should assure itself that all staff feel able to provide feedback and report any concerns.
- The service has had some success with increasing the diversity of the workforce by recruiting more female firefighters. This approach should be extended to recruiting more people from ethnically diverse backgrounds. The process and benefits of achieving a more diverse workforce should be explained to staff so that everyone understands.
- We identified in 2019 that non-risk-critical training should be more effectively monitored; that promotions processes should be more transparent; and that staff with high potential should be supported to become future leaders. Further work is still required to make improvements in these areas.

Overall, I am satisfied with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service's performance and the improvements it has made since our last inspection. I encourage it to continue with efforts to make improvement in the areas we have highlighted.



Roy Wilsher
HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Service in numbers



Response

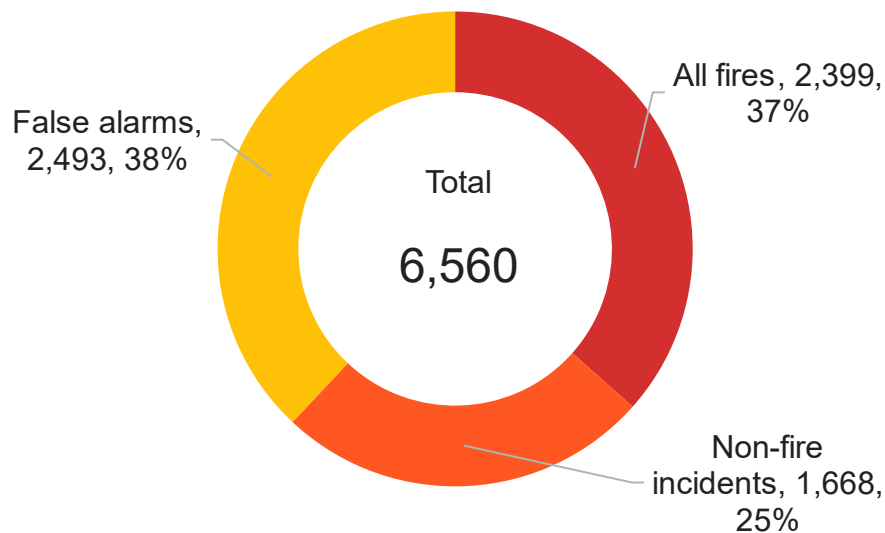
	Derbyshire	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population Year ending 31 December 2021	6.17	9.82
Home fire safety checks carried out by fire and rescue service per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	4.12	4.47
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises Year ending 31 March 2021	2.06	1.70
Average availability of pumps Year ending 31 March 2021	88.0%	86.4%



Cost

Firefighter cost per person Year ending 31 March 2021	£22.04	£25.02
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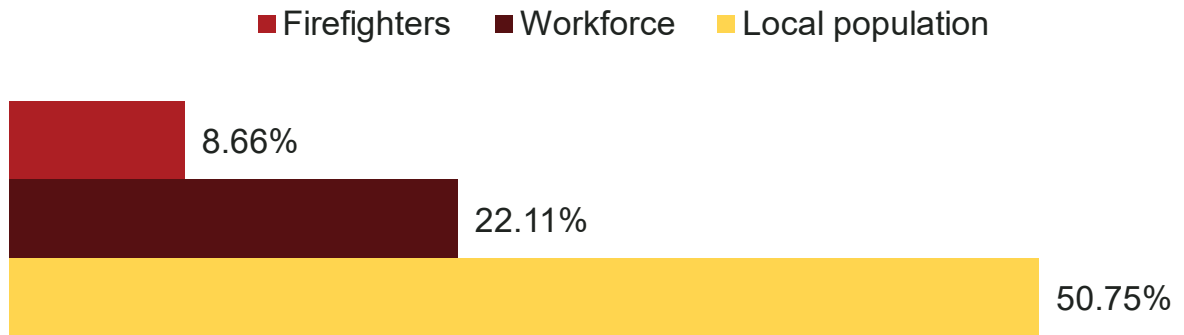
Incidents attended in the year to 31 December 2021



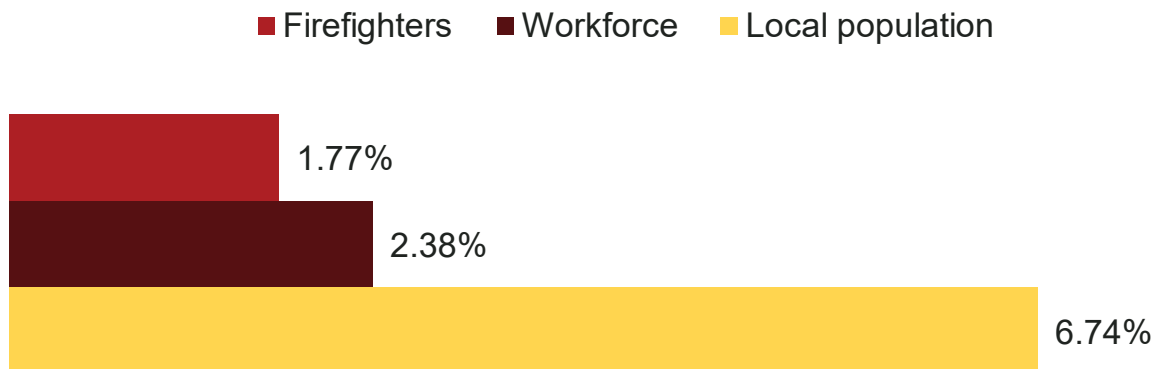


Five-year change in total workforce 2016 to 2021	5.40%	-1.60%
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	0.66	0.62
Percentage of firefighters who are wholetime Year ending 31 March 2021	51.3%	64.4%

Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are female as at 31 March 2021



Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are from ethnic minority backgrounds as at 31 March 2021



For more information on data and analysis throughout this report, please view the [‘About the data’ section of our website](#).

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 should target its fire prevention and protection activities to those who are at greatest risk from fire and make sure fire safety legislation is being enforced. And when the public calls for help, it should respond promptly with the right skills and equipment to deal with the incident effectively. Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

In our last inspection in 2019, we highlighted some areas for improvement. The service has addressed several of these. The service now has good and up-to-date risk information that it makes available to staff. Incident commanders are recording decisions and are trained to command service assets appropriately. The service has a process to include new buildings in the inspection programme, and it makes sure staff know how to [safeguard vulnerable people](#).

The service is meeting its response standard to life-risk incidents, and the availability of fire engines is good. However, the service should review plans for maintaining the availability of on-call fire engines to ensure it can continue to provide an effective response to incidents.

The service analyses a wide range of data and uses this information to prepare departmental plans. Staff know their responsibilities.

It has an effective process in place to learn from operational incidents and make improvements. The service works well with to respond to people and premises at high risk of fire and other emergencies.

The service should make sure it uses the right amounts of resource when testing plans to respond to major incidents. It would also benefit from quality assurance and evaluation in some areas to identify opportunities to make further improvements.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at understanding risk.

Each fire and rescue service should identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks that could affect its communities. Arrangements should be put in place through the service's prevention, protection and response capabilities to prevent or mitigate these risks for the public.

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

The service is good at identifying risk

The service has assessed an appropriate range of risks and threats after a thorough integrated risk management planning process. When assessing risk, it has considered relevant information collected from a broad range of internal and external sources and datasets. For example, two risk review processes analyse data from previous incidents to identify people and homes that are more at risk of fire. Information is shared with prevention, protection and response teams so that activities can be targeted at those at highest risk.

When appropriate, the service has consulted and undertaken constructive dialogue with communities and other groups to both understand the risk and explain how it intends to mitigate it. These groups include the Independent Community Inclusion Board, community leaders, the chamber of commerce, and emergency service partners. The service consults face-to-face at markets and via social media, articles in GP magazines and information available in libraries.

The service should make its strategic priorities clearer

After assessing relevant risks, the service has recorded its findings in an easily understood [integrated risk management plan \(IRMP\)](#), which it calls [Our Plan](#). This describes all the risks the public faces and the service's range of prevention, protection and response activities. Annual action plans identify specific activities that will take place to mitigate risks identified in the IRMP.

However, the service should ensure that action plans clearly prioritise activity and link to priorities in the IRMP. It should also explain clearly to the public what progress has been made against each of the risks in the IRMP.

The service gathers, maintains and shares risk information well

The service routinely collects and updates the information it has about the people, places and threats it has identified as being at greatest risk. It has processes in place to make sure that high-risk buildings are reviewed and information about them is updated and quality assured. This information is then added to [mobile data terminals](#) and electronic tough books on fire engines so it can be easily retrieved by firefighters when needed.

This information is readily available for the service's prevention, protection and response staff, which helps it to identify, reduce and mitigate risk effectively. For example, the service has a process for hazard management alerts so that all staff are aware of risk, such as oxygen cylinders in people's homes. Where appropriate, risk information is passed on to other organisations through an emergency services steering group.

The service has not yet trained operational crews to review premises' risk information. Guidance has been issued to staff and the service should ensure it has been understood.

The service is good at building understanding of risk from operational activity

The service records and communicates risk information effectively. It also routinely updates risk assessments and uses feedback from local and national operational activity to inform its planning assumptions. For example, its operational assurance team reviews operational learning identified in the service's monitoring and auditing process. This learning identified an increase in water rescue incidents and led to increased water rescue training and safety messages for the public.

The service has good risk information following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry

During this round of inspections, we sampled how each fire and rescue service has responded to the recommendations and learning from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service has responded positively and proactively to learning from this tragedy. At the time of our inspection, the service had already assessed the risk of each high-rise building in its service area.

It has carried out a fire safety audit and collected and passed relevant risk information to its prevention, protection and response teams about buildings identified as high risk and all high-rise buildings that have cladding similar to the cladding installed on Grenfell Tower.

Preventing fires and other risks



Good (2019: Good)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at preventing fires and other risks.

Fire and rescue services must promote fire safety, including giving fire safety advice. To identify people at greatest risk from fire, services should work closely with other organisations in the public and voluntary sector, and with the police and ambulance services. They should provide [intelligence](#) and risk information with these other organisations when they identify vulnerability or exploitation.

Area for improvement

The service should develop a clear prevention strategy targeting people most at risk and make sure activity undertaken prioritises people most at risk.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure it quality assures its prevention activity, so staff carry out [safe and well visits](#) to an appropriate standard.

Area for improvement

The service should evaluate its prevention activity so it understands what works.

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

The service prevention strategy should clearly identify who is most at risk

The service's prevention strategy focuses on working with other organisations to identify risk in the community and engage with people to reduce risk. The strategy should be clearer about who is most at risk of fire and how they will be prioritised to make them safer. We were surprised to see that the current strategy does not focus on all work carried out internally such as the substantial number of self-generated safe and well checks, and activities by staff to give a broad range of safety advice.

The service has located prevention, protection and response staff together so that teams can share relevant information when needed. Information is used to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between the service's prevention, protection and response functions. Performance meetings are held to share information about

local risk and what action is being taken to mitigate this. The service should review this new way of working to ensure it is achieving the intended outcomes.

The service has resumed face-to-face safe and well checks since the pandemic

We considered how the service had adapted its prevention work during our COVID-19 specific inspection in October 2020. At that time, we found it was slow to adapt its public prevention work appropriately as face-to-face safe and well checks were stopped. Since then, we are pleased to find that the service has resumed its safe and well visits to support and protect those vulnerable to fire.

The process for targeting safe and well checks should be improved

The service takes account of a broad range of information and data to target its prevention activity, although this should be reviewed to ensure a more person-centred approach. Operational crews are provided with addresses to target with safe and well checks, but people living at these addresses aren't always at higher risk or more vulnerable to fire.

The service is working in partnership with other organisations such as East Midlands Ambulance Service and Derbyshire Police and is able to receive more than 4,000 referrals for safe and well checks per year. We are pleased to see it also refers people to partners for further support where needed.

The service aims to complete safe and well visits within 25 days. It should review this timescale to ensure that people who are at highest risk are prioritised and visited first. The service should also review how it categorises risk in order to help staff prioritise those who are most at risk.

More training is required for operational staff who conduct safe and well visits

Prevention staff carry out safe and well visits to people who are at highest risk and they told us they have the right skills and confidence to carry out these visits.

The service trains new firefighters how to conduct effective safe and well visits but there is no ongoing training programme for operational staff. The service should ensure that training is provided to all staff who carry out safe and well visits.

The service has improved how it responds to safeguarding concerns

Staff we interviewed told us about occasions when they had identified safeguarding problems. We were pleased to hear they feel more confident and trained to act appropriately and promptly since the last inspection. Safeguarding guidance is available on fire engines and safeguarding advice is available out of office hours to support operational staff.

The service works well with partners to respond to risk

The service works with a wide range of other organisations such as adult social care, children's services, health partners, housing teams, and the Derbyshire and Derby Road Safety Partnership to prevent fires and other emergencies.

We found good evidence that it routinely refers people at greatest risk to other organisations which may be better able to meet their needs. These organisations include mental health and social care. Arrangements are in place to receive referrals from several partners, including police, ambulance, Healthy Housing Hub and First Contact. The service acts appropriately on the referrals it receives.

The service routinely exchanges information with other public sector organisations about people and groups at greatest risk. It uses the information to challenge planning assumptions and target prevention activity. For example, the prevention team attends community partnership meetings and safeguarding boards. It was proactive in setting up a vulnerable adult risk management process in response to hoarding risk.

The service conducts reviews following fatal fires and includes partners in this process. Learning is identified and shared where appropriate.

There are effective procedures for tackling fire-setting behaviour

The service has a range of suitable and effective interventions to target and educate people of different ages who show signs of fire-setting behaviour. This includes informing prevention staff and operational crews about fire-setting and working with police community support officers to target interventions and messages about fire-setting in the community. The service has also trained a group of staff to work with fire-setters to change their behaviour.

There is not enough quality assurance or evaluation of prevention work

We found no evidence of quality assurance or review of safe and well checks. The records for completed safe and well checks lack information about risk and vulnerability. The service should make sure its work is making a difference to the people it visits.

We found some evidence that the service evaluates the effectiveness of its prevention activity, but further evaluation is needed. The service sends questionnaires to people who have received a safe and well visit but there is no other evaluation of the programme. Partnership working has not been evaluated.

Staff report on their activities to support safety campaigns but there is little evidence of how this has led to improvement. Without evaluation, the service can't be sure that prevention activity is effective.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Good (2019: Good)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at protecting the public through fire regulation.

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in certain buildings and, when 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.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure it has appropriate plans in place to meet the risk-based inspection programme.

Area for improvement

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

Area for improvement

The service should evaluate its protection activity so it understands what works.

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

The protection plan outlines the service's main risks

The service's protection strategy is clearly linked to the risk it has identified in its IRMP.

Staff across the service are involved in this activity, with information effectively exchanged as needed. For example, [wholetime operational staff](#) carry out fire safety checks at lower-risk premises. The service has also located protection staff in response areas to improve how teams work together and information is shared about risk. Information is then used to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between the service's protection, prevention and response functions. This means resources are properly aligned to risk.

The service adapted its protection activity positively during COVID-19

We considered how the service had adapted its protection activity during our COVID-19 specific inspection in October 2020. At that time, we found it had adapted its protection work well. Since then, we are encouraged to find that protection activity has continued, and wholetime operational staff and specialist protection staff are continuing to carry out face-to-face visits.

Protection resources have increased since the last inspection

The service has increased the number of protection staff to meet the requirements of the service's RBIP. At the time of the inspection three [watch](#) managers were working towards their Level 3 Certificate to become competent in role. The service is confident that when all staff are competent it will help the service to provide the full range of audit and enforcement activity needed.

The service aligns staff training with nationally recognised standards and we were pleased to hear that continuous professional development days are held throughout the year.

Protection activity is focused on the highest-risk buildings

The service has introduced a new RBIP since our last inspection. The inspection programme is updated daily based on a wide range of information, and risk is scored and weighted to ensure it is focused on the service's highest risk buildings. We were pleased to see it also automatically includes new buildings every six weeks, which is an improvement on the previous inspection programme.

During the inspection we found that some premises were included in the inspection programme that should not be, and these are being suspended or removed.

The service has set a target of 77 audits per month to achieve the inspection programme over a 5-year period. During the inspection we found the service had only completed half the target amount so far this year as new protection staff are currently being trained. The service should ensure it has appropriate plans in place to meet the inspection programme.

The service has successfully audited all high-rise buildings

Audits have been carried out at all high-rise buildings with local housing teams, as part of the building risk review programme. Information gathered during these audits is made available to response teams and control operators, enabling them to respond more effectively in an emergency.

Fire safety audits are completed to a good standard

We reviewed a range of audits of different premises across the service. This included audits as part of the service's RBIP, after fires at premises where fire safety legislation applies, where [enforcement action](#) had been taken, and at high-rise, high-risk buildings.

The audits we reviewed were completed to a high standard in a consistent, systematic way, and in line with the service's policies. Relevant information from the audits is made available to operational teams and [control room](#) operators.

The service told us that where it is judged appropriate following a fire in commercial premises, a fire safety audit should be completed within 48 hours. However, not all the sampled post-fire records provided evidence that a visit or audit had taken place.

Fire safety audits are not being quality assured

The service has plans in place to quality assure fire safety audits. However, this assurance programme had not started at the time of the inspection.

Protection activities aren't evaluated

The service doesn't have good evaluation tools in place to measure its effectiveness or to make sure all sections of its communities get equal access to protection services that meet their needs.

Fire safety legislation is effectively enforced

The service consistently uses its full range of enforcement powers, and when appropriate, prosecutes those who don't comply with fire safety regulations. The service has two fire engineers who support more complex audits and enforcement against non-compliant premises.

In the year to 31 March 2021, the service issued 1 alteration notice, 149 informal notifications, 12 enforcement notices, 4 prohibition notices and undertook 3 prosecutions. It completed 15 prosecutions in the 5 years from 2016/17 to 2020/21.

The service will recall a competent officer to duty if there isn't one on the duty rota, or leave a fire engine at premises where conditions are dangerous. The service should consider how effective these arrangements are for providing specialist protection advice out of hours.

The service works closely with partner agencies

The service works closely with other enforcement agencies to regulate fire safety and routinely exchanges risk information with them. Protection staff attend [safety advisory group](#) meetings and conduct joint audits of events. They also conduct joint inspections of commercial premises with local authority housing teams. The service regularly shares information with local housing providers, the NHS and Care Quality Commission.

The service responds to building and licensing consultations on time

The service responded to 98 percent of building consultations within the required time frames in 2020/21, so consistently meets its statutory responsibility to comment on fire safety arrangements at new and altered buildings. It engages with the Derbyshire Building Control Partnership and offers advice on more complex consultations.

The service works well with businesses

The service proactively engages with local businesses and other organisations to promote compliance with fire safety legislation. Business safety advisors visit businesses to offer support and advice. They target higher-risk situations, such as people sleeping above takeaways, or in response to incident trends. The service's website also contains a wide range of information to support businesses.

The service could do more to reduce the number of unwanted fire signals

The service has a procedure in the control room when dealing with automatic fire alarms. When calls originating from automatic fire alarms are received, operators challenge callers and fire engines are not [mobilised](#) automatically. The service will also send letters to responsible persons for repeated calls to automatic fire alarms.

However, the service did not meet its target for attending automatic fire alarms in non-domestic properties in 2021/22. It attended 644 compared to 302 the previous year. The mobilising system does not allow the service to monitor how many calls are being challenged. The service should review how effective it is at reducing unwanted fire signals.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good (2019: Good)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies.

Fire and rescue services must be able to respond to a range of incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies in their area.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure it has an effective process to monitor and assure commanders of operational incidents.

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

The service's response plan is aligned to risk identified in the IRMP

The service's response strategy is linked to the risks identified in its IRMP. Its fire engines and response staff, as well as its working patterns, are designed and located to help the service to respond flexibly to fires and other emergencies with the appropriate resources. Incident commanders can request additional resources to deal with incidents, although the service has not reviewed its pre-determined attendance list of resources to certain incident types for three years. The service should review the pre-determined attendance lists to assure itself that the appropriate number and type of resources are being sent to incidents.

The service meets its response standard to life-risk fire incidents

There are no national response standards of performance for the public. But the service has set out its own response standards in its IRMP. The service standard is to attend life-risk fire incidents within 10 minutes on 80 percent of occasions. Home Office data shows that in the year to March 2022 the service reached 80.1 percent of emergencies within 10 minutes.

The service's average response time to [primary fires](#) in the year to March 2021 was 9 minutes and 32 seconds. This is in line with the average for predominantly rural services.

The service is not meeting its overall availability target

To support its response strategy, the service aims to have 99 percent of wholetime fire engines available on 100 percent of occasions and 82 percent of on-call fire engines available on 100 percent of occasions. The service consistently meets the wholetime standard, although in the year to March 2022 the availability for on-call was below target at 79.1 percent.

The service recognises that some [on-call staff](#) are providing more hours than they are contracted to. The service has a recruitment and retention plan to increase on-call availability. The service should ensure that this is communicated well to staff and is effective at increasing availability.

Staff have a good understanding of how to command incidents safely

The service has trained incident commanders who are assessed every two years. New incident commanders are trained before they can take command at incidents. This helps the service to safely, assertively and effectively manage the whole range of incidents that it could face; from small and routine ones to complex multi-agency incidents. This was an area for improvement identified in our inspection in 2019.

As part of our inspection, we interviewed incident commanders from across the service. The incident commanders we interviewed are familiar with risk assessing, decision-making and recording information at incidents in line with national best practice, as well as the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles \(JESIP\)](#).

The service has recently introduced a new process to keep a central record of decisions made at operational incidents. This was another area for improvement identified in our inspection in 2019. The service should ensure this new process is well known and consistently used.

Fire control can give fire survival guidance to multiple callers

The control room staff we interviewed are confident they could provide fire survival guidance to many callers simultaneously. This was identified as learning for fire services after the Grenfell Tower fire. Fire control has arrangements in place to communicate with other control rooms and for calls to be diverted if the need arises.

Control has good systems in place to exchange real-time risk information with incident commanders, other responding partners and other supporting fire and rescue services. Maintaining good situational awareness helps the service to communicate effectively with the public, providing them with accurate and tailored advice.

The service has improved access to up-to-date risk information

We identified in our last inspection that mobile data terminals were not reliable. We were pleased to see that electronic tough books containing relevant and up-to-date risk information are now on fire engines. We sampled a range of risk information on the service's mobile data terminals and tough books, including what is in place for firefighters responding to incidents at high-risk, high-rise buildings and what information is held by fire control.

The information we reviewed was up to date and detailed. It could be easily accessed and understood by staff. Encouragingly, it had been completed with input from the service's prevention, protection and response functions when appropriate.

Effective operational debriefs are carried out

As part of the inspection, we reviewed a range of emergency incidents and training events. These include fires at commercial premises and incidents where [operational discretion](#) was used.

The service reviewed and updated the operational debrief process and forms in January 2022. This has improved the quality and consistency of debriefs, as before there were some gaps in debrief records. [Hot debriefs](#) held immediately after incidents are not recorded, although all staff can submit a debrief form at any time if learning has been identified. The service routinely follows its policies to assure itself that staff command incidents in line with operational guidance. Internal risk information is updated with the information received. This information is exchanged with other interested partners through an emergency services user group meeting.

During the inspection there was no evidence of debriefing after major incident exercises. The service should ensure debriefs are held so that learning from exercises can be identified and shared with all staff.

The service has responded to learning from incidents to improve its service for the public. Learning is shared through a monthly operational assurance bulletin. Urgent learning is shared through a service action note or a [safety flash](#) which staff must sign to say they have read.

We are encouraged to see the service is contributing towards, and acting on, learning from other fire and rescue services or operational learning gathered from other emergency service partners. This includes learning from a fire in a high-rise building that was shared through the [local resilience forum \(LRF\)](#).

There is no monitoring of incident commanders

While the operational debrief process considers incident command, the service does not have a process in place to monitor and quality assure all incident commanders at incidents. This was stopped during COVID-19 and has not resumed. New incident commanders can be mentored or supervised at incidents, but this is not a formal process. The service should reintroduce the operational assurance of incident command.

Control staff are involved in debrief activity

We are pleased to see the service's control staff integrated into the service's command, training, exercise, debrief and assurance activity. Control staff can submit debrief forms and are invited to attend debrief meetings. The use of virtual team meeting software has helped control staff to attend more often as they can maintain cover in the control room.

There are good arrangements to keep the public informed about incidents

The service has good systems in place to inform the public about ongoing incidents and help keep them safe during and after incidents. Information is posted on social media and the website and sent to the media.

Responding to major and multi-agency incidents



Good (2019: Good)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

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.

The service is prepared for major and multi-agency incidents

The service has effectively anticipated and considered the reasonably foreseeable risks and threats it may face. It has response plans in place for all high-risk premises. These risks are listed in both local and national risk registers as part of its integrated risk management planning.

It is also familiar with the significant risks that could be faced by neighbouring fire and rescue services that it might reasonably be asked to respond to in an emergency. Firefighters have access to risk information from neighbouring services up to 10 km across borders through their mobile data terminals and tough books.

Staff are prepared to respond to major and multi-agency incidents

We reviewed the arrangements the service has in place to respond to different major incidents, including wide-area flooding, moorland fires and a marauding terrorist attack.

The service has good arrangements in place, and these are communicated to staff. In our previous inspection we identified an area for improvement that the service should ensure all staff understand how to respond to a marauding terrorist attack. The service has provided e-learning for this type of incident and most staff knew the procedures.

However, some staff told us they don't feel confident about responding to a major incident such as a marauding terrorist attack or a fire in high-rise building. The service should ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to test and exercise arrangements for dealing with major incidents.

The service works well with other fire services

The service supports other fire and rescue services responding to emergency incidents. For example, the service shares a control room with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and emergency calls can be taken by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. This means that the quickest fire engine to an incident is mobilised first. The service has also purchased the same breathing apparatus sets as neighbouring fire services. It is intraoperable with these services and can form part of a multi-agency response.

Cross-border exercising has not fully resumed since the pandemic

The service has a cross-border exercise plan with neighbouring fire and rescue services so that they can work together effectively to keep the public safe. The plan includes the risks of major events at which the service could foreseeably provide support or request assistance from neighbouring services.

However, exercises have reduced during COVID-19 and some have taken place without the appropriate level of resources to test plans. Only some learning from these exercises is used to inform risk information and service plans.

There is a good understanding of JESIP

The incident commanders we interviewed had been trained in and were familiar with JESIP.

The service could provide us with strong evidence that it consistently follows these principles. This includes staff knowledge and use of the joint decision-making model, and the use of JESIP meetings at incidents to confirm priorities and tactical plans.

The service works well with its partner organisations

The service has good arrangements in place to respond to emergencies with other partners that make up the Derbyshire Local Resilience Forum. These arrangements include multi-agency response plans at high-risk sites.

The service is a valued partner and represented in the LRF's strategic and tactical co-ordinating groups and subgroups. The service takes part in training events with other members of the LRF and uses the learning to develop planning assumptions about responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

National learning is shared with all staff

The service keeps itself up to date with [national operational learning](#) updates from other fire services and joint operational learning from other organisations, such as the police service and ambulance trusts. This learning is used to inform planning assumptions that have been made with other partners. This learning is also shared with staff in a monthly bulletin.

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 use its resources properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to the risks and priorities identified in its [integrated risk management plan \(IRMP\)](#). It should try to achieve value for money and keep costs down without compromising public safety. It should make the best possible use of its resources to achieve better results for the public. Plans should be based on robust and realistic assumptions about income and costs. Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service understands its future financial risk. It has identified that it needs to make savings to avoid a future budget deficit. It is developing a savings plan alongside the production of its next IRMP.

It has a record of making savings and continues to invest in new equipment, fleet and fire stations. Strategies for the use of fleet, ICT and estate support the IRMP.

The service works in collaboration with Derbyshire Constabulary, sharing locations and staff, and would benefit from evaluating this collaborative work to ensure it is achieving the intended benefits and outcomes.

The service would benefit from reviewing current capacity and whether it has the necessary capability to implement future change.

Making best use of resources



Good (2019: Good)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making best use of its resources.

Fire and rescue services should manage their resources properly and appropriately, aligning them with the services' risks and statutory responsibilities. Services should make best possible use of resources to achieve the best results for the public.

The service's budget for 2022/23 is £40.5m. This is a 3 percent increase from the previous financial year.

Area for improvement

The service should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration.

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

The service has enough resources to achieve the objectives in its IRMP

The service's financial plans, including allocating staff to prevention, protection and response, continue to reflect and are consistent with the risks identified in the IRMP. Since our previous inspection the service has recruited extra prevention and protection staff.

The service is predicting a 25 percent reduction in [on-call staff](#), and some are working above their contracted hours. A recruitment and retention strategy with an annual action plan is in place to address this. The service should review this to make sure it is effective.

There has been a high turnover of staff since our last inspection and workforce planning needs to be improved. The service recognises it does not always have the number of staff it has agreed it needs. Some staff we spoke to said that if they are absent there is no one who can do their job effectively, or that their teams do not have the capacity they need. The service should review its capacity to meet the needs of the IRMP.

Plans are built on sound scenarios. They help make sure the service is sustainable and are underpinned by financial controls that reduce the risk of misusing public money. The [fire authority](#) provides overview and scrutiny of the service's budget performance to ensure the appropriate use of public money.

The service is improving productivity and ways of working

We are encouraged to see the improvements the service has made since the last inspection. We are pleased to see that the service's arrangements for managing performance clearly link resource use to the IRMP and service's strategic priorities. A performance framework is in place and performance management meetings are held throughout the service. A performance board reviews performance against the objectives in the IRMP.

The service has identified the contribution it will make towards the national productivity target (using an extra 3 percent of national [wholetime firefighter](#) capacity to carry out additional prevention and protection work). It has calculated its contribution on the basis of its own understanding of its wholetime firefighter capacity. It also takes into account people most at risk from fire and its RBIP in its contribution. The service has increased its target for [safe and well visits](#).

The service is taking steps to make sure the workforce's time is as productive as possible. This includes implementing new ways of working. For example, protection, prevention and response teams have been located together to help with information sharing and joined-up working. The service had to adapt its working practices as a result of the pandemic, and a new policy is now in place to support staff to work flexibly and efficiently.

The [mobilising](#) system used by the [control room](#) to send resources to operational incidents could be more efficient. The service is an active partner with Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services in managing the current contract. There is a tri-service project to purchase a new mobilising system. The service should ensure it has plans to support the efficiency of the control room until a new system is in place.

The service works collaboratively with other partners

We are pleased to see the service meets its statutory duty to collaborate, and routinely considers opportunities to collaborate with other emergency responders. The service has formed a joint control room with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and a joint headquarters and training centre with Derbyshire Constabulary. The service shares some staff with Derbyshire Constabulary, and ambulance and police staff are based in some fire stations. We found that some plans for collaboration with Derbyshire Constabulary have stalled since COVID-19. These include plans for staff well-being projects, mobile working and the green agenda.

We are satisfied that the service monitors and reviews collaboration with Derbyshire Constabulary, although the last review meeting was in April 2021. An evaluation of the shared fire and police headquarters has taken place, however not all anticipated benefits have been achieved. Collaboration reviews and evaluations could be more consistently used to learn from or to reassess earlier decisions.

Continuity arrangements are in place but some need to be tested

The service has good continuity arrangements in place for areas where threats and risks are considered high, although some plans aren't regularly reviewed and tested. This means that staff aren't fully aware of the arrangements and their associated responsibilities. However, we found the service has plans to test control evacuation procedures and industrial action response plans later this year.

The service shows sound financial management

There are regular reviews to consider all the service's expenditure, including its non-pay costs. And this scrutiny makes sure the service gets value for money. For example, the fire authority reviews expenditure on a regular basis.

The service has made savings and efficiencies, which haven't affected its operational performance and the service it provides to the public. For example, the maintenance of light vehicles is now managed by the service, which will result in savings of £100,000 per year.

The service is taking steps to make sure important areas, including estates, fleet and procurement, are well placed to achieve efficiency gains through sound financial management and best working practices. The service monitors the use of fleet and moves fire engines around to make the best use of them. The service uses procurement frameworks, as well as joint contracts with Derbyshire Constabulary.

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



Good (2019: Good)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making the service affordable now and in the future.

Fire and rescue services should continuously look for ways to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. This includes transforming how they work and improving their value for money. Services should have robust spending plans that reflect future financial challenges and efficiency opportunities, and they should invest in better services for the public.

Area for improvement

The service needs to ensure it makes best use of technology to improve its efficiency and effectiveness and make sure staff can use the technology competently.

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

The service understands future financial challenges

The service has a sound understanding of future financial challenges. It plans to mitigate its main or significant financial risks. For example, it has a strategic risk reserve to cover unforeseen cost or funding pressures. This reserve will also be used if there are delays or shortfalls in achieving future savings.

The underpinning assumptions are relatively robust, realistic and prudent, and take account of the wider external environment and some scenario planning for future spending reductions. These include assumptions on pay, inflation and future funding.

There is a balanced budget in 2022/23. The service has identified that it needs to make £1.5m of savings between 2023/24 and 2025/26 to avoid a budget deficit. It has identified areas to review where savings could be made, such as through different ways of working and across estates, fleet and ICT. The service is developing a savings plan alongside its next IRMP.

The service has clear arrangements for the use of reserves

The service has a sensible and sustainable plan for using its [reserves](#), which includes buying new equipment and additional operational training. The service aims for the general reserve to be maintained within 5 percent of the annual budget.

The service makes good use of fleet and estate

The service's estate and fleet strategies have clear links to the IRMP. Both strategies exploit opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The fleet is regularly monitored and reviewed for efficiency. There are 31 hybrid vehicles in use, which supports the environmental plan. The service reviewed the locations of fire stations when producing the current IRMP. The estate has been upgraded with improved facilities at fire stations, and there are plans to rebuild two fire stations.

The strategies are regularly reviewed so that the service can properly assess the impact any changes in estate and fleet provision, or future innovation, have on risk.

Technology could be used more to improve efficiency

The service actively considers how changes in technology and future innovation may affect risk. It is trialling the use of [body-worn video](#) to help record decision-making more easily and has introduced electronic tough books to make information available to operational staff at incidents.

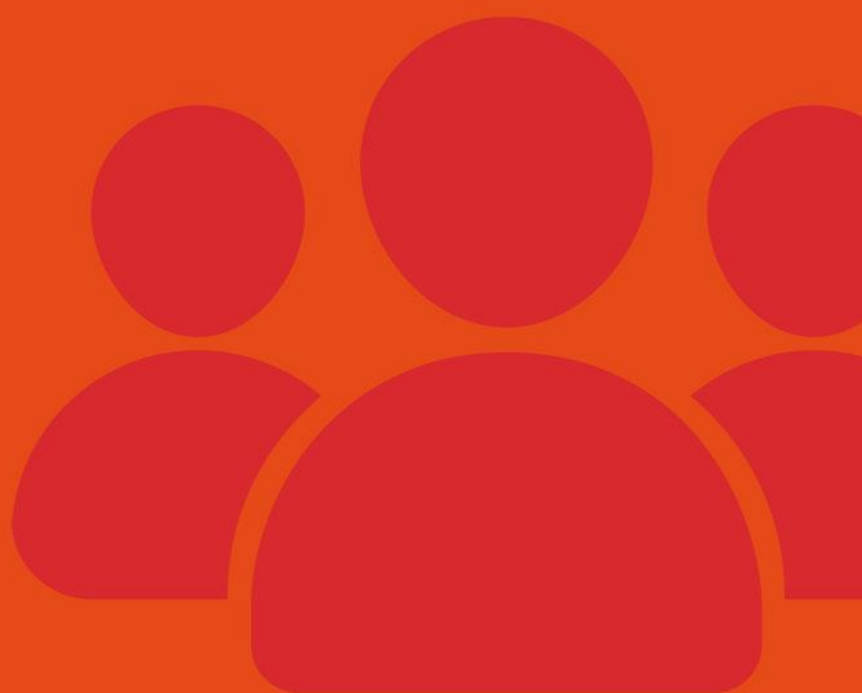
However, the service still uses multiple systems to record staff training. Staff we spoke to felt they would benefit from more training in the use of ICT systems. This was an area for improvement identified in our previous inspection.

The service has a programme management board to monitor projects that seek improvement, although the service should ensure it has the capability to bring about sustainable future change.

The service generates some additional income

The service generates income by charging external organisations rent for using fire stations. It has also sold some estate and reinvested this money into new estate and equipment. The service told us it had previously considered introducing a trading company as a way of generating income but concluded the financial benefits wouldn't justify the resources and commitment needed.

People



How well does the service look after its people?



Requires improvement

Summary

A well-led fire and rescue service develops and maintains a workforce that is supported, professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. The service's leaders should be positive role models, and this should be reflected in the behaviour of staff at all levels. All staff should feel supported and be given opportunities to develop. Equality, diversity and inclusion are part of everything the service does and its staff understand their role in promoting it. Overall, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at looking after its people.

The service continues to have a positive working culture and staff feel valued and included. The behaviours the service expects, and the values it promotes, are understood and displayed by nearly all staff.

There is good provision of health and well-being support, and absence is well managed. Mental health training is available, but the service should consider providing this to all staff. There is a policy for monitoring working hours and rest periods for those on dual contracts, however the service should ensure this is applied consistently.

The service has a positive learning culture, and training opportunities are available to support staff. However, some training provision could be increased, and workforce planning should be more effective.

The service has had some success increasing diversity of its workforce with recruitment campaigns. However, it needs to explain more clearly to staff the process and benefits of a more diverse workforce.

In our last inspection in 2019, we identified that the service needs a transparent promotion process and should identify and support staff with potential to become leaders. More improvement is still required in these areas.

Promoting the right values and culture



Good (2019: Outstanding)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at promoting the right values and culture.

Fire and rescue services should have positive and inclusive cultures, modelled by the behaviours of their senior leaders. Health and safety should be promoted effectively, and staff should have access to a range of well-being support that can be tailored to their individual needs.

Area for improvement

The service should take early action to monitor working hours (including overtime) to improve staff well-being.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure that annual fitness testing takes place consistently across the service.

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

There is a positive culture and service values are well known

The service continues to have well-defined values that are understood by staff. Our staff survey showed 98 percent of respondents (210 out of 214) were aware of the service values. The new national [Core Code of Ethics](#) has been introduced and staff have been trained on how this supplements service values.

Staff we spoke to were consistently proud to work for the service. Senior leaders act as role models and are visible to staff. They communicate well and are open to feedback and challenge.

There is a positive working culture throughout the service, with staff empowered and willing to challenge poor behaviours when they encounter them. However, some staff told us they feel less able to challenge if they are trying for promotion. Of the respondents to our staff survey, 28 percent (60 out of 214) said they disagree, or tend to disagree, that they can challenge ideas without experiencing detrimental treatment afterwards.

Behaviours that reflect service values are shown at all levels of the service, although during inspection we were given a few examples of poor attitude and behaviour that did not align to service values.

Staff have access to services that support their physical and mental health

The service continues to have well understood and effective well-being policies in place that are available to staff. A significant range of well-being support is available to support both physical and mental health. For example, staff can access physiotherapy and counselling. Support is also given to staff who attend traumatic incidents, including [control room](#) staff.

There are good provisions in place to promote staff well-being. This includes a dedicated well-being section on the staff intranet, a health and well-being officer, and champions for mental health. Staff reported they understand and have confidence in the well-being support processes available. Our survey showed that most staff are having regular conversations about well-being with their line manager, and it is included in annual appraisals.

There has been an increase in staff absence due to mental ill-health and the service does not have a specific plan to address this. Mental health training is available but not compulsory to attend. Some line managers we spoke to hadn't received training and would welcome it to help them support their staff.

The health and safety culture within the service is positive

The service has effective and well understood health and safety policies and procedures in place. Staff routinely report accidents and [near misses](#) and these are investigated. The service is taking action to ensure all equipment has a risk assessment.

The service's policies and procedures are readily available and effectively promoted to all staff. Both staff and representative bodies have confidence in the health and safety approach taken by the service. However, we found low compliance with health and safety training. The service should ensure that all staff receive relevant health and safety training for their role.

Working hours and rest periods are not consistently monitored

The service has a monitoring process for staff who have secondary employment or dual contracts to make sure they comply with the secondary employment policy and don't work excessive hours. Despite having a policy in place, [on-call staff](#) told us they are working more than their contracted hours. Staff with dual contracts told us there is no monitoring of their working hours and rest periods. We found line managers are inconsistently reporting on working hours and rest periods. The service should ensure that staff are taking appropriate rest.

The service should review the quality assurance process for fitness testing

The service has a fitness policy and a process in place to test operational fitness. As of March 2021, 62 percent of operational staff had completed an annual fitness test in the previous year.

However, the process to quality-assure annual fitness tests carried out on fire stations should be reviewed, to make sure that staff fitness is being managed fairly across the service.

There is a clear process to manage absence

As part of our inspection, we reviewed some case files to consider how the service manages and supports staff through absence including sickness, parental and special leave.

We found there are clear processes in place to manage absences for all staff. There is clear guidance for managers, who are confident in the process. Absences are managed well and in accordance with policy. However, files held centrally did not record the contact that line managers have with staff who are absent, and some return-to-work interviews exceeded the policy time frame.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Requires improvement (2019: Good)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at getting the right people with the right skills.

Fire and rescue services should have a workforce plan in place that is linked to their [integrated risk management plans \(IRMPs\)](#), sets out their current and future skills requirements and addresses capability gaps. They should supplement this with a culture of continuous improvement that includes appropriate learning and development throughout the service.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure its workforce plan takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities to carry out the integrated risk management plan.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure that there is a consistent method of recording and monitoring all non-safety critical training.

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

Workforce planning arrangements should be more effective

The service does some workforce planning, but it still doesn't take full account of the skills and capabilities it needs to be able to effectively meet the needs of its IRMP. This was an area for improvement identified in our last inspection. We found limited evidence that the service's planning allows it to fully consider workforce skills and overcome any gaps in capability. Positively, additional water rescue training has been given to staff because of an increase in water-related incidents. More staff are also being trained in fire safety to support the protection team.

However, the service doesn't have the full establishment of staff it says it needs and is predicting a 25 percent reduction in on-call staff. There has been a high turnover of staff since our last inspection and most middle managers are new in role. Staff told us they have had difficulty recruiting people to fill vacant posts.

The service recognises it needs to do more to improve how it considers its future needs and succession planning. The corporate risk register records staffing gaps so these can be monitored and reported on. We were told the service plans to improve staff retention and capability through more training and development opportunities.

Although there is a system in place to review workforce capabilities, it could be improved as there is a risk that staff may lack important skills for the future. Staff told us additional skills in change management would be useful.

There is a positive culture for learning and improvement

A culture of continuous improvement is promoted throughout the service and staff are encouraged to learn and develop. Development plans are used to support staff, who can request additional training. Staff told us they feel well trained for carrying out their roles.

We are pleased to see that the service has a range of learning and development resources in place. These include, e-learning resources, training from external providers for mental health awareness, and budgets for managerial courses and qualifications.

Some training provision could be increased to support staff

We reviewed training records and there was high compliance with risk-critical training such as breathing apparatus and incident command. Training instructors visit stations and support risk-critical, station-based training.

Some training is available at weekends to support on-call staff. However, most on-call staff we spoke to would welcome more flexibility with training provision to help them attend out of normal working hours.

Supervisory managers at fire stations conduct training drills and exercises and assure the operational competence of staff. The service should ensure this is being carried out consistently.

The service recognises that training for control staff needs to be improved. It is reviewing resources within control to provide increased training time and better align training to national occupational standards.

Training is available to support line managers in managing their staff, although we found this is not mandatory at all levels. There is no refresh programme for managerial training. Most managers we spoke to would like more training to help them manage staff effectively.

Monitoring of non-risk-critical training needs to be improved

The service uses multiple systems to record all types of training, and these do not align. We identified this as an area for improvement in our previous inspection. A new HR system has been purchased to address this, although this was not in place at the time of the inspection.

During inspection we identified poor compliance with non-risk-critical training. Only 25 percent of on-call staff and 40 percent of [wholetime staff](#) have attended manual handling training. Only 5 percent of middle managers hold a health and safety qualification. Equality in the workplace e-learning has been completed by 115 out of 918 staff.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement (2019: Good)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Creating a more representative workforce will provide huge benefits for fire and rescue services. This includes greater access to talent and different ways of thinking, and improved understanding of and engagement with their local communities. Each service should make sure equality, diversity and inclusion are firmly understood and demonstrated throughout the organisation. This includes successfully taking steps to remove inequality and making progress to improve fairness, diversity and inclusion at all levels of the service. It should proactively seek and respond to feedback from staff and make sure any action taken is meaningful.

Area for improvement

The service should identify and overcome barriers to equal opportunity, so that its workforce better represents its community. This includes making sure staff understand the value of positive action and having a diverse workforce.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure that all staff are trained in equality, diversity and inclusion.

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

The service seeks feedback and challenge

The service has developed several ways to engage with staff on issues and decisions that affect them. This includes a cultural survey and staff engagement forums where staff can ask senior leaders questions. Of the respondents to our staff survey, 71 percent (151 out of 214) agree or tend to agree they are confident in systems to provide feedback to all levels.

An action plan for improvement is produced from the cultural survey results and this is discussed with staff at engagement days. Representative bodies and staff associations reported that the service engages with them well and this is meaningful.

Procedures are in place to tackle bullying, harassment, and discrimination

Staff have a good understanding of what bullying, harassment and discrimination are and their negative effect on colleagues and the organisation.

In this inspection, 18 out of 214 staff survey respondents told us they had been bullied or harassed and 28 had been discriminated against over the past 12 months. Of these, only 7 reported the bullying or harassment and 13 reported the discrimination to the service.

While most staff are confident in the service's approach to tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination, grievances and disciplinary matters, we found some evidence of inappropriate comments towards staff not being challenged by colleagues or management.

Although the service has clear policies and procedures in place, it should ensure that all staff feel confident to report concerns and that any poor behaviour is dealt with appropriately.

The service could do more to increase diversity at all levels of the workforce

The service knows it needs to do more to increase diversity at all levels in the workforce.

It has had success with recruiting more female firefighters through recruitment campaigns. On 31 March 2021, 22.1 percent of the workforce was female. The England average is 17.9 percent.

Disappointingly, there has been slow progress in improving the number of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds. On 31 March 2021, 2.4 percent of the workforce was self-declared as being from ethnic minority backgrounds. The local population is 6.7 percent, and the England average is 5.3 percent.

The service recognises it needs to encourage female applicants and applicants from diverse backgrounds into middle and senior-level positions.

More progress is needed to improve EDI

The service is committed to EDI and has an inclusion strategy with an annual action plan. The inclusion board has been disbanded since our last inspection and progress against the strategy is now managed through a new people performance board. The service should ensure the new board is effective at making progress. Since our last inspection two inclusion officer vacancies arose and there was a delay in recruiting to these posts.

We are pleased that the service collects some diversity data from the community and staff, although this could be more consistent and used more effectively.

Positively, we found staff generally feel a sense of inclusion and belonging at work. There are staff networks in place that support staff and raise awareness of gender, sexuality and race. They also support reservist staff, menopause and well-being.

The service has improved its process to assess equality impact and has trained staff to complete assessments. However, some procedures are not being assessed. For example, recruitment, positive action and promotion procedures don't have current assessments and the service could be missing opportunities to improve equality.

The service makes e-learning training available to staff, covering equality in the workplace and the Equality Act. However, this is not compulsory and as previously mentioned it has not been completed by all staff. There has also been no race awareness training.

During inspection, some staff could not explain what positive action is or give examples of how it is being used to recruit and retain a more diverse workforce. Disappointingly, some staff we spoke to had negative views about the use of positive action.

We found that exit interviews could be used more consistently and effectively by the service to identify whether EDI-related issues have had an impact on staff.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement (2019: Requires improvement)

Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at managing performance and developing leaders.

Fire and rescue services should have robust and meaningful performance management arrangements in place for their staff. All staff should be supported to meet their potential, and there should be a focus on developing staff and improving diversity into leadership roles.

Area for improvement

The service should ensure the selection and promotion process is fair and improve transparency to promote trust and confidence.

Area for improvement

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

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

The service manages individual's performance

There is a good performance management system in place which allows the service to effectively develop and assess the individual performance of all staff. For example, the annual appraisal includes well-being, development and aspirations. We are pleased that firefighters now have an individual appraisal.

Personal development plans are also used to help staff develop in their current role and prepare for future progression.

Through our staff survey, most staff reported that they have regular discussions with their manager and that they were meaningful. Each staff member has individual goals and objectives, and regular assessments of performance. Staff feel confident in the performance and development arrangements that are in place.

However, during inspection we found some staff had not yet had an appraisal for this year and not all staff had one last year. The service should ensure that appraisals are being completed. There is currently no central monitoring of completed appraisals to identify any trends or quality-assure performance discussions.

Promotion and progression processes still need to improve

The service has made some progress to make sure its promotion and progression processes are fair. This was an area for improvement in our last inspection. A promotion planning group has been introduced and HR staff are assigned to promotion processes. Promotion toolkits are available to support recruiting managers and staff who are applying for promotion.

During our inspection we reviewed records of completed promotion processes. This showed that policy is followed where recruiting managers proactively involve HR staff, and the process is fair.

However, some recruiting managers do not involve a neutral party in the process to ensure fairness. We found one promotion process which did not adhere to policy and where there was no record of decision-making. Two processes lacked some evidence of fair decision-making at different stages of the process.

The service should review the process and ensure that the selection of candidates and decision-making is clearly recorded. Most staff we spoke to were not confident that the promotion process was fair and transparent.

The service doesn't have strong succession planning processes in place to allow it to effectively manage the career pathways of its staff, including roles requiring specialist skills.

The service still needs to improve its ability to identify and develop its future leaders and high-potential staff at all levels

The service still needs to improve how it actively manages the career pathways of staff, including those with specialist skills and for leadership roles. There has been some progress in addressing this area for improvement, which we identified in our last inspection.

The service has introduced a career pathway for protection staff, provides career workshops that staff can choose to attend, and operational staff are given a personal development plan when they have been through the promotion process. Leadership training and qualifications are available.

There are limited opportunities for non-operational staff to progress. The service told us about its leadership framework, but staff told us there is no process to identify and support high-potential staff.

The service should consider putting in place more formal arrangements to identify and support members of staff to become senior leaders.

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