Fire & Rescue Service
Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Contents

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 East Sussex 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

	East Sussex	England
Perceived effectiveness of service Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)	87%	86%

Response

	East Sussex	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 December 2018	11.2	10.4
Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	13.1	10.4
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises 12 months to 31 March 2018	1.8	3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 31 December 2018

Total Non-fire incidents 31%

Total Fires 22%

Total
9,384

Total False Alarms 47%
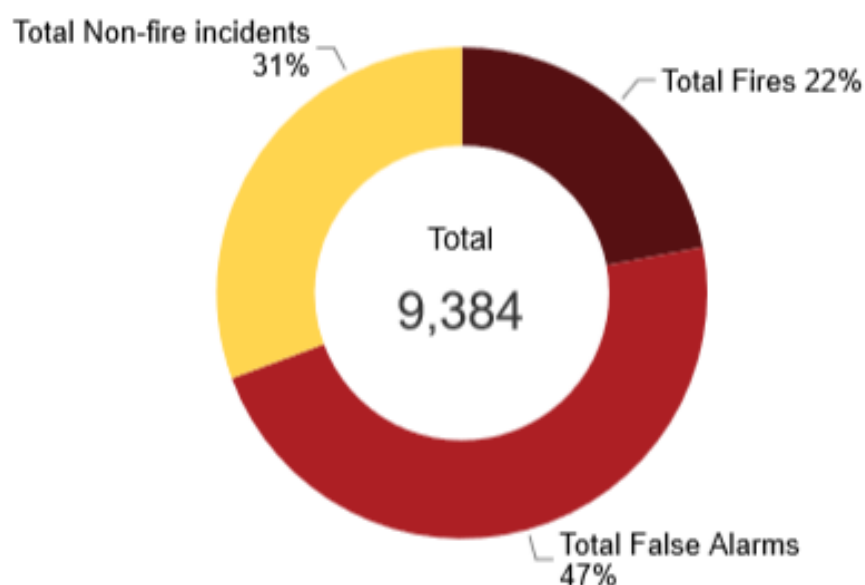
£ Cost

	East Sussex	England
Firefighter cost per person per year 12 months to 31 March 2018	£22.17	£22.38

Workforce

	East Sussex	England
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population As at 31 March 2018	0.7	0.6
Five-year change in workforce As at 31 March 2013 compared with 31 March 2018	-8%	-14%
Percentage of wholetime firefighters As at 31 March 2018	64%	70%

Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population
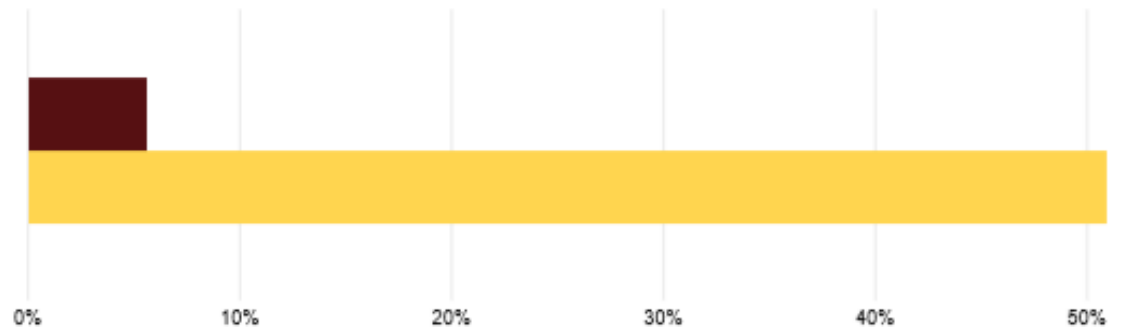
Percentage of black, Asian and minority ethnic firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● BAME Firefighters ● BAME residential population
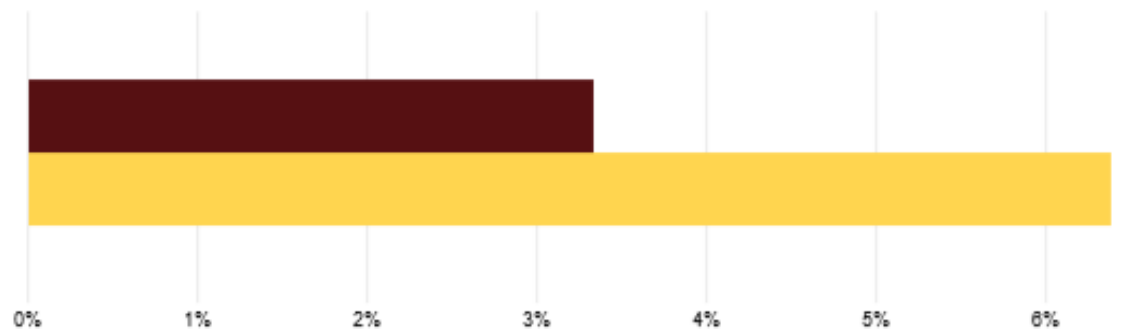
Please refer to annex A for full details on data used.

Overview

Effectiveness	●●○○	**Requires improvement**
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	●●○○	Requires improvement
Preventing fires and other risks	●●○○	Requires improvement
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

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

Overall summary of inspection findings

We are satisfied with some aspects of the performance of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. But there are several areas where the service needs to make improvements.

It requires improvement to the effectiveness of the service it provides. The service requires improvement to:

- its understanding of the risk of fire and other emergencies;
- the way it prevents fires and other risks; and
- how it protects the public through fire regulation.

But it is good at responding to fires and other emergencies. And the service is good at responding to national risks.

The service is good at using its resources efficiently and has realistic and robust financial plans in place. And the service is good at making its services affordable now and in future.

The way East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service looks after its people requires improvement. We judged it to require improvement in:

- promoting the right values and culture;
- getting the right people with the right skills;
- managing performance and developing leaders; and
- ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Overall, we would like to see improvements in the year ahead.

Effectiveness

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

Requires improvement

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. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness requires improvement.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service understands local risks well. It communicates risk to the public through its integrated risk management plan (IRMP). It has used feedback from the public to inform changes to its ways of working. And it considers emerging and future risk.

The service needs to train its operational staff in site-specific risk information (SSRI). It also needs to make sure that firefighters have accurate, up-to-date risk information at all times. Currently, information held on mobile data terminals (MDTs) isn't reliable and doesn't always match paper records.

The service needs to improve its approach to preventing fires and other risks. It should make sure that staff complete home safety visits promptly.

The service needs to improve the ways in which it protects the public through fire regulation. While it updates its risk-based inspection programme (RBIP) every month, it needs to be clear how many high-risk premises it has, and should target them consistently. It also needs to inspect premises within set timescales.

The service works well with other enforcement agencies in relation to fire safety, and works proactively with other organisations to promote fire safety compliance. The service could do more to reduce the number of fire false alarms it attends, as these are a burden on its resources.

The service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies, but it struggles to have as many fire engines available as it needs. It should also make sure that its systems hold accurate information about the availability of fire engines at all times.

The service is good at responding to national risks and has several resources that it can deploy, either locally or nationally, in times of need.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies

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Requires improvement

Areas for improvement
- The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.
- The service should ensure it shares risk information consistently across the service.

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

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has a good understanding of its local risks. It communicates risk to the public through its IRMP. It uses information such as age, welfare and health-related data to identify households that are at greater risk of fire. It reviews this information annually to keep it updated.

The service's plans are informed by the views of a wide range of organisations and people. The service effectively consulted with members of the public while producing its last IRMP in 2017, gaining 588 formal responses to this consultation through roadshows and social media. The IRMP contained a commitment to engage with the public about response standards, which it did in 2018. The service's resulting changes included the addition of call handling in its response times, and support for a variable response based on local station duty type (depending on whether the station is wholetime/day crew or on call).

The service talks to, and works with, communities that are hard to reach. The assistant chief officer attends an interfaith group that includes people of different ethnicities. In 2018, the service consulted the public about the development of its Be Your Own Hero campaign, which focused on reducing accidental dwelling fires at home. In the year to 31 December 2018, the service attended 525 accidental dwelling fires.

The service gives good consideration to emerging and future risk. It is an active member of the Sussex local resilience forum (LRF). A member of staff from the service who sits on the LRF links risks that the LRF identifies (such as flooding and severe weather) through to the service's risk register. The IRMP also includes the impact of some future risks, including population growth through 20,000 extra homes in East Sussex.

Having an effective risk management plan

All fire and rescue services must have an IRMP based on their assessment of risk. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's IRMP makes a series of commitments to:

- deliver high-performing services;
- develop a multi-skilled, safe and valued workforce;
- educate communities; and
- make effective use of resource (for example, premises and fleet).

The service acknowledges that it isn't clear how its IRMP links to its operational work. The IRMP doesn't clearly detail how it influences the service's prevention, protection and response activity. However, the service does give greater detail of its activity through several operational strategies and plans that are linked to the IRMP.

For example, the IRMP commits to having operational firefighters carry out fire safety inspections of buildings where appropriate. And the service's community safety strategy commits to training its operational crews with level 1 fire safety audits. The service has already started to implement this training.

The service also produces an annual assessment of risk, and aligns its resources against this. We are pleased to see the service using extensive data to improve its risk modelling approach. This will stand the service in good stead for its future work.

Maintaining risk information

SSRI gives firefighters information about buildings and hazards (such as chemicals) that may be present at sites. As of February 2019, the service had identified 2,550 risk sites. But at the time of our inspection, the service couldn't give details of how many visits to these sites it had completed. But more recent data shows, as at 31 March 2019, that there were 2,557 risk sites and that between 1 January 2019 and 31 March 2019 the service had completed 222 SSRI visits.

The service categorises risk across five categories from level 1 (high risk) to level 4b (very low risk). The service is meant to visit high-risk premises annually, and to visit or provide updates about low-risk premises every four years. Wholetime and on-call staff update SSRI for their station area. Across the operational staff we spoke to, there was a lack of training in SSRI.

The firefighters we interviewed have little confidence in the SSRI the service holds on MDTs. Moreover, SSRI kept on paper at stations didn't always match the information on MDTs. One record we sampled showed four identified hazards on the MDT and ten on the paper version. The service acknowledges that it needs to improve the quality of its risk information. It is taking steps to do this.

The service uses core briefs to inform operational staff of risk-critical issues. Staff have to sign these briefs to acknowledge that they have read them. The service doesn't communicate risk effectively across prevention, protection and response functions. But the service has developed new forums and training to improve communications across these functions.

Preventing fires and other risks

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Requires improvement

Areas for improvement
- The service should ensure it carries out home safety visits in a timely manner.
- 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

The service has a safer communities strategy, which covers the period 2018–2021. It explains and guides the service's approach to keeping safe those who are at greatest risk of fire.

As part of the strategy, the service carries out home safety and safe and well visits. (In some services, these are also known as home fire safety checks or home safe visits.) These visits include fire safety activities such as identifying and reducing fire risks, fitting fire alarms, as well as welfare-related activities, such as advice on how to avoid slips, trips and falls.

The service isn't targeting home safety visits as effectively as it could towards those who are at greatest risk of fire. A central team receives and categorises referrals. Operational crews carry out a home safety visit to lower risk referrals. A specialist team carries out a more in-depth safe and well visit to higher risk referrals. However, the process for assessing risk is based on individual judgment rather than staff applying a systematic process.

According to Home Office data, the number of safe and well visits that the service has paid to elderly people and people with disabilities has reduced in the year ending 31 March 2018 when compared with the previous year. In the year to 31 March 2017, the service carried out 67.4 percent of all safe and well visits to elderly people, and 54.3 percent to people with a disability. At the time of inspection, data shows that in the year to 31 March 2018, these figures fell to 21.5 percent and 9.3 percent, respectively. Average England figures for the same period were 54.1 percent and 24.7 percent, respectively. However, the service has since found this data to be incorrect. The corrected data shows in the year ending 31 March 2018, 61.7

percent of all safe and well visits were to elderly people, and 49.4 percent to people with a disability.

The service doesn't complete visits quickly enough. Staff weren't aware of set timescales for completing visits. Operational staff told us that the service's focus was on achieving station targets, rather than concentrating on the people most at risk. There was no evidence of quality assurance checks on home safety or safe and well visits. The service should make sure it offers its home safety visits to the people at greatest risk of fire.

In its strategy, the service committed to carry out 12,000 home safety/safe and well visits. The service hasn't met this target. In the year to 31 March 2018, it completed 11,019 home safety/safe and well checks. However, this is an increase from 9,240 over the same time period in 2017. This equates to 13.1 safe and well checks per 1,000 population, which is more than the average rate in England of 10.4.

Promoting community safety

The service works well with partners to reduce fires and other risks. We recognise the wide range of prevention work the service does, and the partnerships it has formed in order to do this. Recently, the service appointed an inclusion manager to improve its understanding of the needs of diverse communities and its work with them.

The service has information-sharing arrangements with some doctors' surgeries. This helps the service identify vulnerable patients who would benefit from safe and well checks to reduce risks in their homes. The High Weald Lewes Havens Clinical Commissioning Group has evaluated this scheme.

The service's chief fire officer leads nationally on drowning prevention. A water and road safety adviser promotes water safety. An example of the service's water safety work is the Water Savvy, Water Safe! education package, which it has developed to educate children about staying safe near water.

Safety in Action events encourage children to recognise hazards and take action to keep themselves and others safe. The service co-ordinates this, working with emergency services and partner organisations that include the NHS and Southern Rail.

The service also has a dedicated fire education team. Its Firewise educational programme targets children who show fire-setting behaviour. Advisers work with them and educate them about the dangers and impact of fire.

The Be Your Own Hero campaign is a good example of the service's targeted safety messaging. The service also targets safety messages through social media, videos and its public website.

The service has a comprehensive safeguarding policy in place. Central staff and operational crews are well trained and confident in making appropriate safeguarding referrals.

The service promotes national campaigns centrally through its communications team. But local crews don't always co-ordinate their activity to support national campaigns. The service should make sure all its operational stations support central campaigns.

Road safety

The service is an active partner of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and contributes to its road safety plan. The service's road and water safety co-ordinator provides the Safe Drive Stay Alive initiative in partnership with other emergency services. According to data provided by the service, over the past four years, it has brought this initiative to more than 11,000 students. The initiative aims to reduce road casualties by educating teenagers about road safety.

The service also carries out several activities to encourage safer motorcycle riding. The Biker Down campaign educates bikers about what to do if they see or come across an accident. New rider awareness courses give further information and advice to those who have recently started to ride motorcycles. The service advertises the dates of these monthly courses on its website.

Protecting the public through fire regulation

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Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure that its risk-based inspection programme targets its highest-risk premises.
- The service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of fire false alarms (termed 'unwanted signals').
- The service should ensure it has effective arrangements for providing specialist protection advice out of hours.

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in 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.

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

The service has a risk-based inspection programme (RBIP). It identifies high-risk premises using historical data and fire service emergency cover toolkit codes such as care homes and hospitals. The service refreshes the RBIP every month, adding new premises that are due for inspection.

The RBIP doesn't target high-risk premises effectively. Every month, the service identifies premises for inspection. But if, for some reason, the service doesn't carry out an inspection that month, rather than keeping the premises on the list to be inspected the following month, it prioritises new premises instead. As a result, it may not be auditing uninspected premises within set timescales.

The service can't accurately identify how many high-risk premises it has. This means it can't assure itself that all high-risk premises are inspected, or that it has targeted its resources appropriately. As at 31 December 2018, the service had identified 52 high-risk premises. But between 1 July and 31 December 2018, it stated that it had carried out 294 high-risk visits. The service puts this discrepancy down to reactive inspection work following incidents. At the same time, the service recognises that it needs to improve its data systems. It is investing accordingly.

As at December 2018, the service had 14 dedicated competent fire inspection officers, with none in development. This means that the service has no staff in training to fill any potential gaps in inspection officer roles in the future. But more recent data (as at 31 March 2019) shows the service has three staff in development who are dedicated to protection. At the time of the inspection, the service couldn't guarantee 24-hour cover for business safety problems.

The overall number of audits in the year to 31 March 2018 has increased to 499, compared with 299 the previous year. This equates to 1.8 fire safety audits per 100 known premises in the year to 31 March 2018, which is below the England rate of 3.1 over the same period. We welcome the work that the service is doing to upskill operational crews so that they can carry out business safety inspections. Once this becomes common practice across the organisation, the service will have more staff who can carry out low-risk inspections.

The service acknowledges that quality assurance checks of audits need to improve. In the year to 31 March 2018, 75 percent of audits were found to be satisfactory. This compares with the England rate of 68 percent. The service needs to assure itself that it is targeting the right premises.

Generally, the service responds to statutory building regulation consultation within set timescales. Between 1 April and 31 December 2018, the service received 526 consultations. It responded to 88.6 percent of those within the required timeframes. However, more recent data shows a slight increase: between 1 January and 31 March 2019, the service received 183 consultations and responded to 95.6 percent of them within the required timeframes.

Enforcement

The service uses a full range of enforcement options. A manager is dedicated to overseeing fire safety investigations.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service issued 117 informal notifications, seven enforcement notices, 17 prohibition notices, one alteration notice and brought two prosecutions. In March 2018, the service successfully prosecuted St Michael's Hospice (Hastings and Rother). The prosecution resulted in a £250,000 fine in relation to offences under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The service works well with other enforcement agencies in relation to fire safety, for example, by carrying out joint visits with care and immigration services. The service also has an agreement in place with Sussex Police to work together to enforce fire safety legislation.

Working with others

The service is taking proactive steps to work with others to promote fire safety compliance. It promotes business safety information through its website, and holds seminars for business owners.

The service works with local authority partners, such as Brighton and Hove Council, to promote the use of sprinklers. It has introduced primary authority schemes with partners including Eastbourne Hospitality Association and the Independent Schools' Bursars Association. These schemes advise businesses about meeting fire regulation requirements.

The service has acknowledged that it needs to do more to reduce the burden of false alarms on its resources. Also, the service hasn't reviewed its policy on unwanted fire signals since 2015. In the year to 31 December 2018, 47.3 percent of all incidents that the service attended were fire false alarms. This is higher than the England average of 40.1 percent.

Responding to fires and other emergencies

Good

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service 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 improve the availability of its on-call fire engines to respond to incidents.
- The service should ensure firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.

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 uses historical data and information from its annual assessment of risk to determine response standards. The service is reviewing how it uses response resources for the upcoming IRMP as part of its operational response review.

The service uses a mix of wholetime and on-call staff to crew fire engines. Between April and December 2018, the monthly average for fire engine availability ranged from 72.2 percent in December 2018 to 80.4 percent in April 2018. In December 2018, the service stated that the optimum number of fire engines between 5.00pm and 6.00pm is 33. In December 2018, the service achieved an average of 21.2 fire engines at that time.

The service has identified a minimum of 13 strategically located stations that it aims to always have available. Service figures from January to March 2019 show that the service is effectively achieving this aim.

The service has 12 on-call stations. In December 2018, nine stations were available, on average, less than 50 percent of the time. Some of these stations were available for much less than 50 percent of the time. For example, in December 2018, one on-call fire engine was available 15.5 percent of the time. Because of this challenge, control operators mobilise two fire engines to make sure the service responds effectively.

The service recognises its difficulties in maintaining on-call availability of fire engines. It has on-call support officers in place to manage on-call resources in a given area, with the aim of improving availability. It is also reviewing fire cover through its operational response review.

Response

The service has consulted the public on its current response standards. It has committed to the first wholetime fire engine being at an incident within 10 minutes for 70 percent of the time, and the first on-call fire engine being at an incident within 15 minutes for 70 percent of the time. Between 1 April and 31 December 2018, the service met these targets. The service seeks to have 14 fire engines available during the day, and eight at night when there is less demand.

The Home Office collects and publishes data on response times by measuring the time between a call being made and the first fire engine arriving at a scene. This measuring gives consistent data across all 45 services. However, services measure their own response times in a range of different ways.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service's average response time to primary fires was 8 minutes 22 seconds. This is the fastest service in the significantly rural service category, but is an increase from 8 minutes 3 seconds in the year to 31 March 2016.

Control operators can dispatch fire engines effectively. In the year to 31 December 2018, the service attended 11.2 incidents per 1,000 population. The England rate was 10.4 over the same period.

Operators use their discretion to send more or fewer fire engines to an incident if necessary. However, the computer system that the service uses to manage data about crew availability isn't linked to the mobilising system. Control operators have to manually update information about fire engine availability on the mobilising system. If they didn't do this, the system could show fire engines as available when the service doesn't have enough crew to respond. The service should make sure its systems give accurate information about fire engine availability at all times.

During our inspection, staff were able to access risk, vehicle and chemical data on MDTs. However, the staff we spoke to told us that the information held on MDTs wasn't always reliable. They said that some risk information held on the MDTs lacks quality and isn't accurate. Also, MDTs don't give firefighters cross-border risk information. As part of our inspection, we carried out a survey of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service staff to gather their views of their service (see Annex A for more details). Of the 88 firefighters and specialist support staff who responded to our survey, only 39.8 percent agreed that the service is fully interoperable with neighbouring fire and rescue services and 12.5 percent did not know.

The service has made good progress to make sure that operational practice is in line with national operational guidance (NOG). It has a clear plan in place to be sure of the continued implementation of NOG.

Command

We interviewed wholetime and on-call commanders at different levels, and found a good level of understanding of command principles that reflected NOG.

Commanders felt prepared and trained to deal with a range of incidents. The control operators we spoke to were confident in adjusting resource if required, based on incident type and risk. But incident commanders didn't consistently understand the use of operational discretion. And some commanders felt the organisation wouldn't support them if they used it.

The service assesses its commanders every two years. A senior officer is mobilised to any incident to support incident commanders with identified development needs. In this way, the service gives appropriate support to command development.

Keeping the public informed

The service communicates incident information well to the public. It does this through its communications team, which also supports its campaigns. The communications team supports commanders at incidents by giving relevant information to the public.

The service uses social media and its website to promote safety messages and share information. Some fire stations have their own Twitter accounts. The service gives social media training to those who manage the accounts. We saw examples of the service promoting station activity and on-call recruitment through social media.

Operational crews can identify safeguarding concerns. The service has a dedicated safeguarding member of staff. The workforce can report concerns to them.

Operators in fire control showed a clear understanding of fire survival guidance. However, there is a lack of awareness about arrangements for dealing with non-English speakers. The service should make sure that its operators are aware of procedures for communicating with non-English speakers.

Evaluating operational performance

The service has good processes in place to evaluate and improve operational practice.

At stations, the service uses post-incident briefings (known as [hot debriefs](#)). This process was well established across the stations we visited. The service uses post-incident report forms to record any learning. The operational assurance group reviews the forms.

The service's debrief process varies depending on the size and complexity of incidents. Formal debriefs are triggered by matters relating to fires and firefighting, as well as effecting rescue, operational discretion, hazardous material or incidents of significance.

The service uses an active monitoring system to gather information about training, operational assurance and debriefs. This enables the service to identify emerging themes or trends. The operational assurance group monitors any actions or learning.

The service provides good examples of shared learning, both internally and externally. For example, medical staff who attend road traffic collisions sometimes tend to patients while kneeling in glass. The service shared this learning so that greater consideration is given to medical staff and glass management at road traffic collisions.

The service publishes significant learning through core briefs or the intranet. We were particularly impressed with the service's publication Assurance in Action. This shares information about operational incidents and the learnings taken from them.

The service leads a regional operational assurance group with Kent, West Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire fire and rescue services. Through this group, all members share learning from operational practice across neighbouring regions.

The service doesn't routinely mobilise an assurance officer to attend incidents and assess staff, although it mobilises a tactical adviser to attend larger incidents. It also mobilises a more senior officer to incidents to support incident commanders in development.

Responding to national risks

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Good

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service 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 firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information including cross-border risks.
- The service should ensure it is well-prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to a terrorist-related incident and that its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.

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.

Preparedness

The service has several resources that it can deploy locally or nationally in times of need. This includes a marauding terrorist attack (MTA) team composed of staff from East and West Sussex.

Control operators and incident commanders were clear about how to ask for, and mobilise, national assets. The service has plans for control of major accident and hazards (COMAH) sites in East Sussex. It shares these plans with LRF partner organisations and through Resilience Direct, a national web-based platform that emergency responders use to share information securely. The service carries out exercises with neighbouring services at high-risk sites, such as Dungeness nuclear power station in Kent.

Of the 88 responses from firefighters and specialist support staff to our survey, only 43.2 percent agreed their service had undertaken enough training to respond effectively to major non-fire incidents. Eight percent said they didn't know, and 48.9 percent disagreed. The service should make sure that firefighters can maintain the skills they need to be competent when responding to major non-fire incidents. This includes using national resilience assets such as high-volume pumps.

Working with other services

The service has good exercise plans in place, and carries out exercises at high-risk sites. However, some staff we spoke to would like more exercises. Of the 88 firefighters and specialist support staff who responded to our staff survey, 65.9 percent felt that the service didn't train regularly with other services and 15.9 percent didn't know.

Control and operational staff told us that they didn't have access to cross-border risk information. This lack of information could increase the risks to operational staff who respond to cross-border incidents.

The service has several mutual aid agreements in place, including a joint fire control function with West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (although this agreement is due to end in 2020). The service has contingency plans in place for its control room.

Working with other agencies

The service is an active partner in the Sussex Resilience Forum and East Sussex Resilience and Emergencies Partnership. It has clear plans in place for COMAH sites in both East and West Sussex.

The service is involved in the live and tactical co-ordination of exercises. To this end, it works with other agencies, such as ambulance services and police forces. The service also shares learning from major incidents. For example, shared joint learning took place after the unidentified gas cloud incident at Birling Gap in 2017.

The service offers a response to MTAs and has an MTA team made up of staff from East and West Sussex.

However, some staff we spoke to, who were not members of the specialist response team, couldn't recall any recent MTA training.

Recently, commanders had received Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles training, with the aim of enabling emergency services to work more effectively together. The service organises quarterly borough exercises, which involve other emergency services.

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. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has realistic and robust financial plans. We were pleased to find that the service has a programme management office, which tracks project progression and benefit realisation. The service has good collaboration arrangements in place. Senior leaders review the service's collaboration framework.

The service uses its estates well, generating savings by sharing them with a police force and a local council. It also makes savings through its work with Surrey and West Sussex fire and rescue services, and by sharing occupational health services with Surrey and Sussex police forces.

The service has assessed and is monitoring the risks involved in its current fire control arrangement with West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The arrangement is due to end in 2020.

The service has good business continuity plans in place. This means it can continue to give the public an emergency response even in extraordinary circumstances.

The service is good at making the fire and rescue service affordable, both now and in the future. It has a good track record of seeking to improve value for money, for example through joint procurement and contracting out its IT provision.

The service has robust plans in place for its reserves. They include a continued commitment to sharing its premises with other services. In the near future, the service plans to invest considerably in IT and estates, as well as in innovation. It should also continue to pursue new income streams.

The service needs to make some of its systems more efficient and is investing accordingly. The service should make sure staff understand the logic for setting some of its targets to manage individual staff performance better.

Making best use of resources

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Good

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is good at making best use of resources. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to ensure that it allocates its resources appropriately and prioritises activities that address the risks identified in its integrated risk management plan.

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 has realistic and robust financial plans in place. They largely reflect the priorities that the service has identified in its IRMP. These plans are subject to informed challenge through external scrutiny.

A rise in council tax has contributed to the service's budget increase by £0.9m from 2018/19 to £39m in 2019/20. In its five-year medium-term financial plan (MTFP), the service forecasts a range of funding scenarios and risks over the plan's lifetime. These include increased firefighter pension costs.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has financial contingencies in place. They are funded through reserves and revenue budget. The service has assessed and is monitoring the risks involved in West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's intention to leave the shared control arrangement in 2020.

The service maintains good availability of fire engines to respond to emergencies. It uses risk assessments and maps to inform its resourcing. Despite meeting targets for response times, the service is struggling to recruit and retain enough on-call firefighters. As at 31 March 2014, the service had 231 full-time employed (FTE) on-call staff. This figure fell to 196 FTE by the same period in 2018. The service recognises that this situation can't continue. It is already starting to address this through its operational response review, which includes examining options for the future of its on-call service.

The service lacks capacity in areas such as fire control and prevention functions. For example, in fire control, the service has been increasing staff overtime to cover shortfalls. The service is already developing a more flexible approach in order to maintain sufficient staffing at its control centre.

According to service figures, it has 253 home safety/[safe and well visit](#) referrals that it has yet to make as of April 2019. The service is paying firefighters to complete visits on their days off.

Productivity and ways of working

The service has clear plans to improve efficiency through major change programmes. For example, the services estates strategy, which covers the period 2018–2025, aims to reduce the cost of premises by between 15 and 25 percent over the term of the plan. The service intends to do this by redeveloping or relocating premises.

We are encouraged to find a programme management office in place, which tracks project progression and benefit realisation. The service uses forums so that staff can give their input about change programmes. The service undertakes workplace presentations to communicate change. But some staff told us the service was making too many changes, and that they don't always understand the benefits of certain ones. The service should ensure staff understand its communication of progress and the outcomes of change programmes.

Some of the service's systems aren't efficient. It relies on several paper-based systems, including for recording safe and well visits and updating SSRI. (Staff fill in the forms manually and send them to a team that then loads the information onto computer systems.) The service has recognised this and has a clear set of plans in its IT and capital investment programmes to improve its systems.

The service has set several performance targets through its revised performance framework. The service needs to do more to ensure that staff understand the reasons targets have been set and to improve how it manages individual performance. The service has acknowledged this and has invested in new business and information systems to make sure staff are productive and using their time efficiently to meet IRMP priorities.

Collaboration

The service has taken proactive steps to discharge its statutory duty to collaborate with other blue-light services. It has a collaboration framework in place, which monitors collaboration arrangements and benefits. Senior leaders review this framework.

The service shares its estates, including its headquarters, with Sussex Police. According to data provided by the service, this sharing generates an annual revenue saving of £150,000. The service also shares Newhaven Community Fire Station, which houses local council and police staff. There is wider collaboration beyond shared premises.

In May 2014, the service established a shared fire control with West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, with anticipated annual savings of £474,000. These savings haven't been made due to delays in implementing a [mobilisation](#) system.

The service collaborates with partners through the Sussex Resilience Forum. It offers occupational health services in collaboration with Surrey and Sussex police forces. And it works with Surrey and West Sussex fire and rescue services on shared recruitment and initial training courses for wholetime staff.

Continuity arrangements

The service has good business continuity plans in place. These plans cover matters such as fire control, IT and loss of staff. They enable the service to maintain an emergency response to the public when faced with extraordinary events, such as extreme weather.

The service tests its plans annually and through no notice exercises. Recently, the service carried out tests such as evacuation procedures for fire control, where operators moved to a back-up control room at another location. This tested the service's ability to respond to an incident if it loses use of its main control room.

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

Good

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's budget for 2019/20 is £39m. This is part-funded by an increase in council tax of 2.9 percent and modest savings of £0.4m. The MTFP recognises funding uncertainty and key financial risks beyond 2019/20. The most adverse scenario identified is a £3.7m budget gap by 2023/24. This is based on a 7.5 percent central funding reduction.

The service has a good record of achieving savings. According to its IRMP, since 2010/11, the service will have made more than £8m of savings by the end of 2018/19. Some of these savings have been achieved by reducing operational posts. As at 31 March 2011, the service had 869 FTE staff. Over the same period in 2018, it had 724 FTE staff.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the firefighter cost per head of population was £22.17. This compares with the England rate of £22.38 over the same time.

The service continues to review non-pay costs to make sure it is improving value for money. For example, it has contracted out its IT provision to an external company. It has saved £190,000 in insurance costs by joining the Fire & Rescue Indemnity Company. It has strategies to drive efficiencies in areas such as fleet. It also carries out joint procurement. And as part of a national personal protective equipment collaboration led by Kent Fire and Rescue Service, the service will make annual savings of £90,000 in 2020–21.

Innovation

The service has earmarked £9m for investment in IT development over five years, with the aim of creating a more efficient and mobile workforce. One example of this is the replacement of inefficient paper systems (such as the one used for recording fire protection audits) with mobile tablets.

The service's estates strategy details its investment of £13.8m in redeveloping or relocating its premises. This includes a £4.2m investment in upgrading existing stations to a consistent standard (for example, by ensuring improved workflow to prevent risk of contamination and providing flexible office accommodation).

The service has set £0.8m aside from its service improvement and efficiency reserve to fund innovation. Some of this money has been used by the service to support the development of its resource planning software to generate efficiencies. The service should continue to make sure that it supports innovation, to drive efficiencies and new ways of working.

Future investment and working with others

The service has a reserves strategy with good plans in place for its reserves.

In the year to March 2018, the service had around £17.9m in earmarked reserves, around £3.1m in general reserves and £500,000 in provisions.

Reserves are expected to reduce to £2.66m by March 2023 to finance major transformation projects. This includes partial funding of a £28 million investment in estate and fleet over the next five years. The service also shows continued commitment to sharing premises with other services.

The service is investing earmarked reserves of £9m in IT, with a view to offering more efficient and effective ways of working through improved technology. As part of this investment, the service has given staff laptops and mobile phones to enable them to work more flexibly.

The service has an efficiency strategy that focuses on developing new income streams. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service received £1.5 million from West Sussex County Council towards the operation of the Sussex control room. The service also has primary authority schemes in place with partners such as Eastbourne Hospitality Association.

The service has no plans to identify additional new income streams in 2019/20. It should continue to develop and pursue new income streams so that it can benefit from them soon.

People
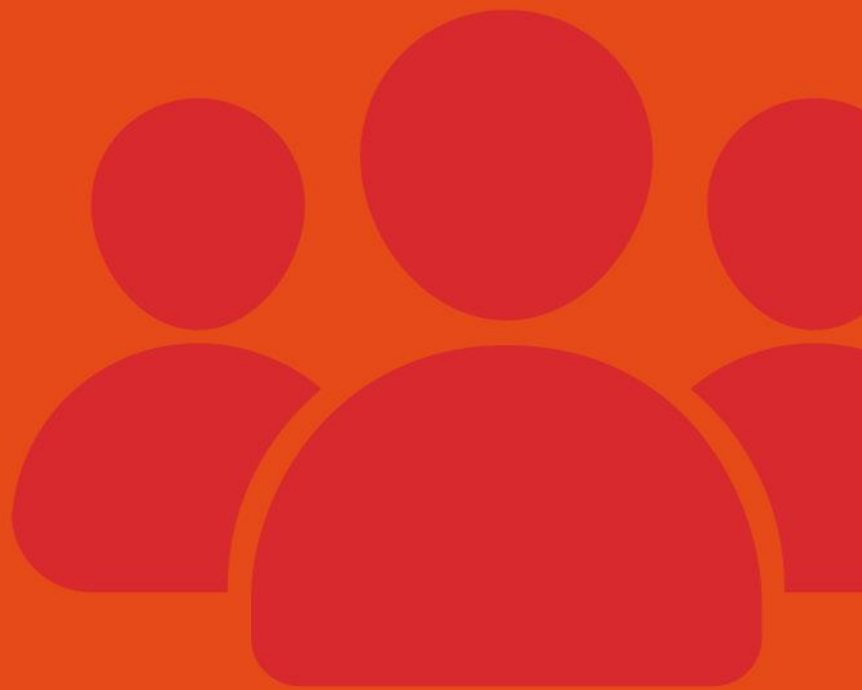
How well does the service look after its people?

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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, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at looking after its people.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement in promoting the right values and culture.

The service could do more to promote its core values, so that staff understand them and make them common practice. We were disappointed to come across examples of behaviour that doesn't reflect the service's core values.

The service should manage individual performance in a robust and consistent way, so that every staff member has meaningful workplace conversations about performance and career aspirations.

Most staff we spoke to were positive about the wellbeing support that the service offers, although some mentioned delays in accessing occupational health support.

Staff are confident about the service's health and safety arrangements, although the service needs to promptly address some gaps in its health and safety compliance.

A considerable number of East Sussex's firefighters have secondary contracts or secondary employment outside the service. The service should assure itself that they are well rested and safe to work.

The service has a workforce planning group, but no workforce plan. It needs to develop one so that it is clear about its long-term workforce needs.

The service should also make sure that its training is consistent in areas such as home safety visits and grievance management.

The service requires improvement in ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. It needs to act on staff feedback promptly, and address concerns that staff have about giving feedback in the workplace. The service should also make sure that all staff know how to report confidential issues.

The service has yet to assure itself of the fairness and consistency of grievance outcomes, and that it learns from any informal grievance-related trends.

The service needs to ensure activities aimed at diversifying the workforce are effective. The service has a fair promotion and selection process, and is developing a talent management programme.

Promoting the right values and culture

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement
- The service should make sure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated by all staff.
- The service should have effective means to monitor the working hours of its staff.

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 offers a range of wellbeing support. This includes trauma risk management, which helps prevent secondary post-traumatic stress disorder following traumatic incidents. Most staff we spoke to were positive about the wellbeing services that are available. Our staff survey showed that out of 154 respondents, 83.1 percent felt that their personal safety and welfare were taken seriously.

The service offers occupational health services through a collaborative arrangement with Surrey and Sussex police forces, and Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. This arrangement offers medical support, fitness advice, physiotherapy and psychological support.

Some staff we spoke to told us of delays in accessing occupational health support. The service is monitoring these new arrangements as they become common practice within the organisation.

Health and safety

The service has identified gaps in its health and safety compliance. This includes such things as not having noise assessments for the cumulative running of equipment and fire engines. The service should make sure it promptly carries out its plans to address identified health and safety gaps.

The service has an overtime and working allowances policy in place. But a review of this policy was overdue. Some staff we spoke to were not clear on how overtime was monitored. As at March 2018, 83 wholetime firefighters (23.2 percent) had secondary contracts within the service. This means they were on-call and wholetime firefighters. Fifty-three wholetime firefighters (14.8 percent) had registered secondary employment outside the service. More recent data available since inspection shows a slight increase. As at 31 March 2019, 87 wholetime firefighters had a secondary contract within the service, and 72 had registered secondary employment outside the service. The service has some locally agreed arrangements to monitor the hours worked by operational staff.

The service encourages staff to report health and safety issues. Of the 154 respondents to our staff survey, 87.0 percent agreed that they were encouraged to report near misses/accidents/dangerous occurrences.

Culture and values

The service has refreshed its set of core values, which are 'Proud, Accountable, Integrity, Respect'.

These values set out the behaviour the service expects of staff when carrying out their work. Senior leaders look to promote values through visits to stations and offices. Some staff told us that they would like to see the senior leaders visiting stations more often.

The service doesn't consistently promote or display its core values. We were told that there has been little activity to make sure that values are understood and become common practice. We were also disappointed to find the use of some gender stereotypical language and attitudes that do not reflect service core values.

Of the 154 respondents to our staff survey, 18.2 percent reported feeling bullied or harassed and 20.1 percent reported feeling discriminated against at work in the last 12 months.

However, we also found clear examples of senior managers taking appropriate action when behaviour hasn't met expected standards.

Getting the right people with the right skills

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Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
>
> - The service should develop a workforce plan that takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities it needs to carry out its integrated risk management plan.

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

Workforce planning

The service's IRMP, covering the period 2017–2020, identifies human resource planning as a priority. But even though the service undertakes pockets of workforce planning activity, there is no strategic workforce plan in place. This means that the service can't assure itself of its long-term workforce needs. The service acknowledged that it still has work to do in identifying critical roles and succession planning.

Some operational managers told us they were still spending time covering shortfalls in crewing. Recently, the service introduced support managers with the aim of improving on-call availability. The service should make sure it evaluates the effectiveness of these managers, so that it can benefit accordingly.

The service has committed to developing a five-year strategic workforce plan through its organisational development business plan for 2019/20. It has established a workforce planning group to identify gaps and improve its response to changes in personnel. For example, the group is planning wholetime recruitment for the latter part of 2020.

The service's training department is linked to the workforce planning group. The training department has a two-year training plan in place to make sure that staff have access to the training they need to be competent in their roles. But we were told that staff training in the use of new IT systems, for example, isn't considered part of future training needs.

Learning and improvement

The service has a corporate training and development prospectus for 2019/20. This outlines the training available to operational staff. The prospectus lists career and development pathways for operational staff, but not support staff. Of the 154 respondents to our staff survey, 61.7 percent were satisfied with their current level of learning and development (from both operational and support roles). Only 47.4 percent felt that they were given the same opportunities to develop as other staff.

The service has a training department with a dedicated learning and development team. This team offers training in critical competencies, such as breathing apparatus and incident command. Some courses are externally accredited through Skills for Justice, which gives assurance of the training being offered. The service collaborates with Surrey and West Sussex fire and rescue services in training new recruits, which reduces costs.

The service has an electronic system for recording essential firefighter skills (such as using breathing apparatus and responding to road traffic collisions). Managers understood the system and were competent in using it, although some users said it was slow and time consuming.

When we visited stations, we were pleased to find that training and competency records were up to date. Operational staff are well trained and showed good knowledge of incident command, breathing apparatus and use of MDTs. But training in areas such as home safety visits and grievance management isn't consistent.

Stations work to a two-year station-based training and assessment programme. Station managers complete end-of-month performance returns to show how the station is performing against targets in areas such as the number of home safety visits completed. These are linked to the station inspection programme. In this way, the service can identify trends and put remedial action in place.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it takes timely action in response to feedback or concerns from its staff.

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

The service doesn't act on feedback from staff in a timely manner. In June 2018, the service carried out a staff survey. It published the results of the survey and formed staff focus groups to look at emerging themes, but the staff we spoke to couldn't identify any action or changes that had been implemented. At the time of our inspection, the service had yet to publish an action plan.

We spoke to staff who lacked confidence in feedback processes as they felt their views wouldn't be listened to. Of the 154 respondents to our staff survey, only 48.1 percent felt they could challenge ideas without detriment to how they would be treated. Only 39.0 percent were confident that their ideas or suggestions would be listened to.

The service uses other methods to seek staff feedback. These include station visits by the management. Senior leaders talk to several staff groups and representative bodies. An example is the involvement of staff in focus groups to gather feedback about uniforms and new fire engines.

The service has several methods for reporting confidential issues. Most (but not all) staff we spoke to are aware of the procedures that are in place to report issues. The service should make sure that all staff know how to report confidential issues.

In the year ending 31 March 2018, the service received only a small number of formal grievances. We reviewed these case files and found that some weren't progressed within set timescales. The service has no oversight of grievances that it resolves informally, and managers aren't trained in managing grievances. As a result, the service can't assure itself of the fairness and consistency of outcomes, or learn from any trends that occur.

Diversity

We found that the service doesn't fully reflect the community it serves. As at 31 March 2018, 3.3 percent of firefighters were from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, compared with a resident population of 6.4 percent. Over the same timeframe, 5.6 percent of firefighters were female.

The service actively supports community events such as Brighton and Hove Pride. It uses positive action and positively promotes female role models in recruitment campaigns. The service should assure itself that its activities are effective in creating a more diverse workforce.

Within the service, internal groups (such as equalities and gender inclusion groups) support diversity and inclusion. But we found little evidence of equality and inclusion training among the staff we spoke to.

Managing performance and developing leaders

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has mechanisms in place to manage and develop talent within the organisation.

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 sets clear targets for stations, such as the number of [home fire safety checks](#) to be completed. Senior managers monitor key performance indicators for the service, such as workforce sickness levels.

The service doesn't manage individual performance in a robust or consistent way. The service states that as part of its performance appraisal system staff should complete a performance appraisal review (PAR) annually. These reviews set out agreed individual objectives that link to service objectives. The service couldn't supply figures for the number of PARs completed. As the PARs take place locally, the service can't assure itself that every member of staff has a meaningful conversation about performance.

Staff told us that the PARs held little value. We were disappointed to be told by operational staff that PARs are merely seen as a way of getting additional continuing professional development payments.

The PARs that we sampled lacked clear objectives or feedback for staff, and they aren't reviewed or revisited. As a result, managers are missing chances to have meaningful conversations about performance, welfare and career aspirations. The service should make sure that every staff member has a meaningful PAR, with objectives that clearly link to service objectives and targets.

The service acknowledges that its PAR process needs to improve. It is taking positive steps to redesign this process.

Developing leaders

The service has no process to develop high-potential staff within the organisation. The service acknowledges this and is developing a talent management framework.

The service has a fair promotion and selection process, based on an appropriate test of individual potential. An appointments panel assesses successful candidates' suitability for vacancies, based on the skills that are needed for the job. The service uses a weekly core brief to communicate development opportunities to all staff. However, some non-operational staff still felt promotion opportunities were limited.

The service uses direct entry to bring expertise in from outside the fire sector. Direct entry is also used for internal staff. This allows individuals with the right skills and potential to apply for senior positions.

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 public perception survey;
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 45 fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England.

Where we collected data directly from 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. This was primarily through our Technical Advisory Group, which brings together representatives from the fire sector and the Home Office to support the inspection's design and development, including data collection.

We give services several opportunities to validate the data we collect to make sure the evidence presented is accurate. For instance, we asked all services to:

- check the data they submitted to us via an online application;
- check the final data used in each service report; and
- correct any errors they identified.

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

Methodology

Use of data in the reports and to form judgments

The data we cite in this report and use to form our judgments is the information that was available at the time of inspection. Due to the nature of data collection, there are often gaps between the timeframe the data covers, when it was collected, and when it becomes available to use.

If more recent data became available after inspection, showing a different trend or context, we have referred to this in the report. However, it was not used to form our judgments.

In a small number of cases, data available at the time of the inspection was later found to be incorrect. For example, a service might have identified an error in its original data return. When this is the case, we have corrected the data and used the more reliable data in the report.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use ONS mid-2017 population estimates. At the time of inspection this was the most recent data available.

2018 survey of public perception of the fire and rescue service

We commissioned BMG to survey attitudes towards FRSs in June and July 2018. This consisted of 17,976 surveys across 44 local FRS 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 face-to-face 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 in each service area was small, varying between 400 and 446 individuals. So any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

Survey findings are available on BMG's website.

Staff survey

We conducted a staff survey open to all members of FRS workforces across England. We received 3,083 responses between 8 March and 9 August 2019 from across the 15 Tranche 3 services.

We view the staff survey as an important tool in understanding the views of staff who we may not have spoken to, for a variety of reasons, during fieldwork.

However, you should consider several points when interpreting the findings from the staff survey.

The results are not representative of the opinions and attitudes of a service's whole workforce. The survey was self-selecting, and the response rate ranged from 7 percent to 40 percent of a service's workforce. So any findings should be considered alongside the service's overall response rate, which is cited in the report.

To protect respondents' anonymity and allow completion on shared devices, it was not possible to limit responses to one per person. So it is possible that a single person could have completed the survey more than once.

Each service was provided with a unique access code to try to make sure that only those currently working in a service could complete the survey. However, it is possible that the survey and access code could have been shared and completed by people other than its intended respondents.

We have provided percentages when presenting the staff survey findings throughout the report. When a service has a low number of responses (less than 100), these figures should be treated with additional caution. Percentages may sum to more than 100 percent due to rounding.

Due to the limitations set out above, the results from the staff survey should only be used to provide an indicative measure of service performance.

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 2018 survey of public perceptions of the FRS:

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 January 2018 to 31 December 2019.

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

- There are seven 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 worksheet 'Data' provides the raw data for the two main data tables (from 2009/10). The 'Incidents chart - front page', 'Chart 1' and 'Chart 2' worksheets provide the data for the corresponding charts in the statistical commentary. The 'FRS geographical categories' worksheet shows how FRAs are categorised.

- 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 services to upload to the IRS. Totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers).

- We took data for Service in Numbers from the August 2019 incident publication. So, figures may not directly match more recent publications due to data updates.

Home fire safety checks per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, 'Home Fire Safety Checks carried out by fire and rescue services and partners, by fire and rescue authority' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Each FRS figure is based on the number of checks it carried out. It 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 FRSs before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

- 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 services can't supply these figures.

- The checks included in a home fire safety check can vary between services. You should consider this when making direct comparisons between services.

- Home fire safety checks may also be referred to as home fire risk checks or safe and well visits by services.

- After inspection, East Sussex FRS resubmitted data on its total number of home fire safety checks and the number of checks targeted at the elderly and disabled in the year to 31 March 2018. The latest data changes the percentage of checks that were targeted at the elderly (from 54.1 percent to 54.9 percent) and disabled (from 24.7 percent to 25.4 percent) in England. However, as noted above, in all reports we have used the original figures that were available at the time of inspection.

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 services carried out in known premises. According to the Home Office's 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 FRSs 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 used 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.

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 FRSs 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. This figure is calculated by dividing the BAME residential population by the total population.
- We calculate female residential population data from ONS mid-2017 population estimates.
- The percentage of BAME firefighters does not include those who opted not to disclose their ethnic origin. There are large variations between services in the number of firefighters who did not state their ethnic origin.

- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire FRSs 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. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is a combined FRA.

Metropolitan FRA

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