

# Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22

## Effectiveness, efficiency and people

An inspection of Humberside Fire and Rescue Service



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# About this inspection

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This is our third inspection of fire and rescue services in England. We first inspected Humberside Fire and Rescue Service in September 2018, publishing a report with our findings in June 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.

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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 Humberside 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.




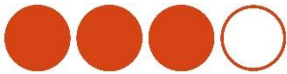
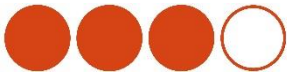

If the service exceeds what we expect for good, we will judge it as outstanding.

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
 <b>Effectiveness</b>	 <b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>
Understanding fires and other risks	 Good	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	 Good	Good
Protecting the public through fire regulation	 Good	Requires improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	 Good	Good
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	 Good	Good
Question	This inspection	2018/19
 <b>Efficiency</b>	 <b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>
Making best use of resources	 Good	Good
Future affordability	 Good	Good

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

## HM Inspector's summary

It was a pleasure for the team to revisit Humberside 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 Humberside Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure from fires and other risks. It created a service improvement plan using the areas for improvement highlighted in our 2018 inspection with the aim of improving the service it provides to the public. It was clear throughout our inspection that this has worked. The service continues to improve in many aspects of its work.

My principal findings from our assessment of the service over the past year are as follows:

### **The service is good at involving the local community in its work**

In our last inspection we gave the service an area for improvement for how it involves the local community in building a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area. During our inspection we found that this had been done effectively, which had led to an extremely good local response to the latest [integrated risk management plan](#). The service also has an effective protection plan that prioritises the highest risk commercial premises in its area.

### **The service has good financial management processes**

The service continues to effectively manage in-year budgets and plans well for the future, highlighting and mitigating against any financial risks in an appropriate way. The service is working well with a range of other organisations to make sure that the service it gives the public is effective. It is also using extra staff capacity, generated through a change in workforce shift patterns, in an effective way.

### **The service is now much better at supporting its workforce**

In our round one inspection, we found that the 'people' pillar required improvement. We were pleased to see that the service has made improvements in this area. Staff understand and are very complimentary about the new wellbeing services offered to them. In addition, the service has set up a training and development matrix for all staff and developed a new performance and development review process. Equality, diversity and inclusion are well understood throughout the service. But while it is encouraging that the service has set up staff feedback mechanisms, it needs to make sure that these are more trusted by the workforce.

Overall, I commend the service on the changes that it has made since our last inspection, and believe it is well placed to make further improvements. We will continue to assess the service's progress through our usual monitoring arrangements.



**Roy Wilsher**

HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

# Service in numbers



## Response

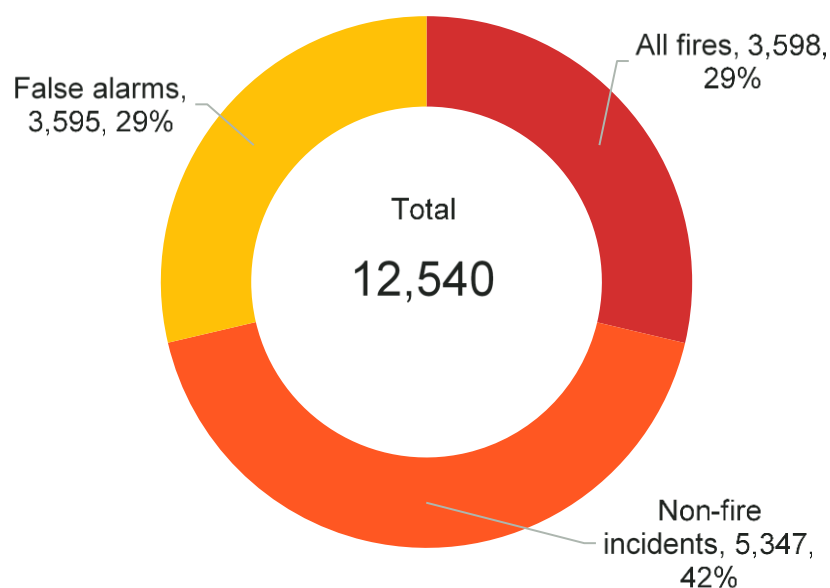
	Humberside	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population Year ending 30 June 2021	13.42	9.36
Home fire safety checks carried out by fire and rescue service per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	5.13	4.47
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises Year ending 31 March 2021	1.86	1.70
Average availability of pumps Year ending 31 March 2021	96.3%	86.4%



## Cost

Firefighter cost per person Year ending 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	£30.73	£23.73
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### Incidents attended in the year to 30 June 2021

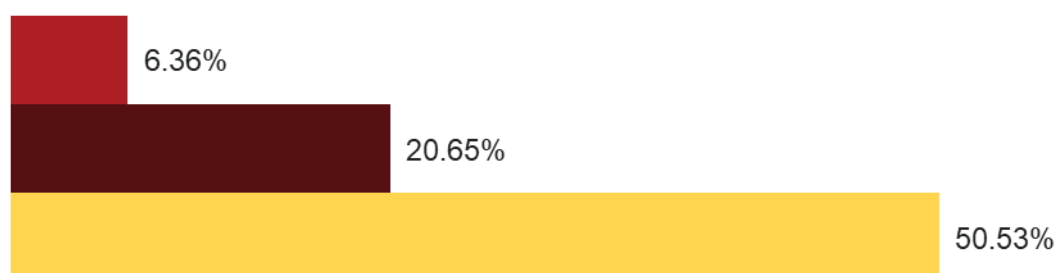




Five-year change in total workforce 2016 to 2021	-0.57%	-1.60%
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	0.84	0.62
Percentage of firefighters who are wholetime Year ending 31 March 2021	55.9%	64.4%

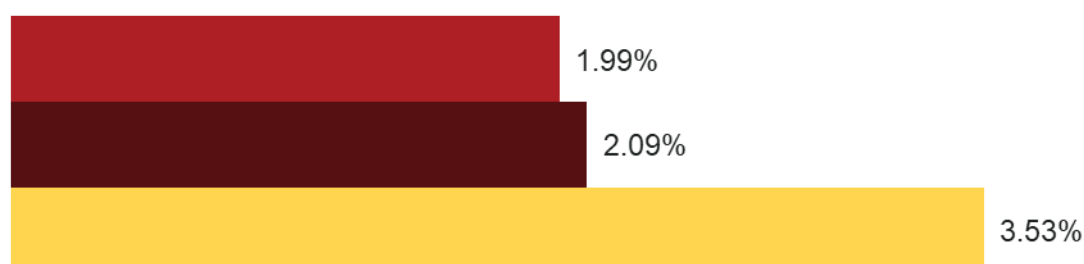
**Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are female as at 31 March 2021**

■ Firefighters ■ Workforce ■ Local population



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

■ Firefighters ■ Workforce ■ Local population



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

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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. Humberside Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

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The service is improving in many of the areas of effectiveness we inspected. The areas for improvement that we highlighted in our 2018 inspection have been satisfactorily addressed.

The service has identified and assessed a range of fire and rescue-related risks that could affect its communities. It has used a range of information and has consulted widely and well to produce a comprehensive [integrated risk management plan \(IRMP\)](#). The information in the plan allows the service to continually review its promise to the public and assess whether its resources are aligned to risk. The plan highlights the most important risks and links seamlessly with the service's prevention, protection and response strategies.

Staff throughout the organisation can easily access the information they need to help prevent or mitigate risks to the public and themselves. Information on risks is regularly kept up to date when staff are carrying out audits, visits and inspections.

The service has used the findings and recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry to assess and mitigate the risk relating to high-rise buildings in its area. The necessary building risk review work has been carried out and all high-rise buildings have been audited. Where necessary, operational plans have been put in place to support the safety of the public and firefighters.

We were pleased to see that the service has improved the way it carries out fire protection work. With more skilled personnel and continuing investment in training operational staff, it is meeting its targets for its risk-based inspection programme.

The service has prioritised its resources in a way that enables it to respond to a wide range of incidents in its area. It trains its staff well in incident command. And it works closely with other fire services and local organisations in a way that supports giving the best possible response to any large scale or multi-agency incident, including when responding across its borders with other services.

## Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



### **Good (2019: Good)**

Humberside 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 risks within its community**

The service has robust arrangements in place to identify an appropriate range of risks and threats after a thorough IRMP planning process. When assessing risk, it has considered relevant information collected from a broad range of internal and external sources and data sets. The service has taken an effective approach to understanding and building its risk profile using data.

We found that the service was using data in an effective way to analyse historical trends. This helps it determine whether certain types of incident are increasing or decreasing.

The service uses robust data from fire fatalities, accidental dwelling fires and risk identified at commercial properties to define the level of community risk. Encouragingly, it regularly updates the data used to assess this risk, to make sure that it is taking appropriate action in the community.

### **The service is good at consulting about its plans**

When appropriate, the service has consulted and undertaken a wide range of constructive dialogue with communities and others such as local health authorities to both understand the risk and explain how it intends to mitigate it.

The service has a Digital Marketing Plan that aims to increase its use of social media platforms to communicate with the public. This use of digital media has enabled the service to increase the number of responses it receives from consultations despite

the pandemic. For the latest consultation on its IRMP, the service received around 1,500 responses, a significant increase compared to previous consultations.

In some cases, this engagement has resulted in a change to the IRMP. For example, following the internal consultation on the IRMP, the service changed the location of its water rescue response team.

The service is continually monitoring the effects of its work on the risk in the area by using interactive dashboards and evaluating interventions. This allows it to analyse results and data to understand where changes may be necessary. Where priorities change due to a change in the risk, the service will move resources to that area to offer support where it is needed.

We found that the service had invested significantly in its website, which as a result is now easier for the public to use. All the content on the site can be made more accessible through cloud-based assistive software. This allows users to customise the content to a form that they find easy to read and understand – in terms of both the layout and the language used.

### **The service has an effective IRMP**

After assessing relevant risks, the service has recorded its findings in an easily understood IRMP. This plan describes how prevention, protection and response activity is to be effectively resourced to mitigate or reduce the risks and threats the community faces, both now and in the future.

The service is using local, regional and national data to assess risk in its area relating to fire and other emergencies. It links its consideration of climate change to scientific assumptions based on global research. And it engages with other local agencies in the [local resilience forum \(LRF\)](#) to help it understand changing risks and monitor these in the community risk register.

The content of the IRMP is clearly linked to the service's strategic plan. It offers full explanation of the end results it expects its activity to lead to and how it plans to measure these.

The service effectively uses its IRMP to review its response standards and assess what resources it needs in all areas of its work to better serve its communities.

### **The service has effective systems in place to gather, maintain and share risk information**

The service routinely collects and updates information about the people, places and threats it has identified as being at greatest risk. This includes firefighters gathering information on risks such as hoarding, oxygen use and airflow mattresses as they carry out [safe and well visits](#). There are also effective arrangements in place for businesses who supply oxygen to residents in Humberside to send updated data to the service every week so that records are continuously updated.

[Wholetime](#) operational crews routinely gather site-specific risk information. There is a process in place to make sure that they make prompt updates to this with the latest

information by using [mobile data terminals](#). The information gathered is quality assured both by the service's management and a specialist central department.

We were surprised to find that [on-call staff](#) do not routinely visit sites in their local area to collect risk information. The service should make sure that it has robust arrangements in place for on-call staff to become familiar with their local risk.

This information is readily available for the service's prevention, protection and response staff, which enables it to identify, reduce and mitigate risk effectively. For example, all risk information is added to the community safety database, which all staff have access to. Mobile data terminals are the main way that information on risk is communicated to operational crews. We were pleased to see that the risk information is made available to crews in a timely and effective manner. But the service should do more to make sure that its mobile data terminals are more reliable.

### **The service is proactive in sharing risk information to make sure there is clear understanding across the organisation**

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.

We found that the service had processes in place to support a common understanding of risk across the organisation. A database is used to record all risk, whether for commercial properties, domestic properties or specific to a person. The data is made available to all personnel, either through the mobile data terminals or the Community Fire Risk Management Information System.

The service has a sophisticated approach to using data and analysis. The performance and data team has built a dynamic dashboard it uses to identify any changing or emerging trends, and makes a presentation to the service once a week on these. This allows the service to adapt accordingly, and use resources appropriate for the risk that is apparent.

### **The service has responded well to 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 fire inquiry.

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service has responded positively and proactively to learning from this tragedy. At the time of our inspection, the service had assessed the risk of each high-rise building in its service area using prevention, protection and response teams and working with building owners, including local authority partners.

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)**

Humberside 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.

### **Innovative practice**

The service has an effective partnership with local health bodies to provide a falls response team. This is a team of people from throughout the organisation who work on an 'on-call' basis. It has a significant impact on the local health situation. The team helps more people live in their homes for longer, reducing demand on local health and care services.

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 prevention plan is clearly linked to its IRMP**

The service's prevention plan is clearly linked to the risks identified in its IRMP. The prevention, protection and enforcement plan clearly prioritises those who are most at risk within the area. Prevention does not take place in isolation: it is a thread running through all of the organisation's work.

The service works well with other organisations on prevention, and it passes on relevant information when needed. Information is used to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between the service's prevention, protection and response functions. For example, as part of Hull City Council's community safety partnership, the service has worked with some of the city's growing ethnic minority communities to raise awareness of fire safety.

### **The pandemic has affected its prevention activities**

We considered how the service had adapted its prevention work during our COVID-19 specific inspection in August 2020. At that time, we found it had adapted its public prevention work appropriately. Since then, we are encouraged to find that the service has continued to adapt well to the evolving situation. The service reacted quickly following requests from other local bodies to help with the local COVID-19 response. And it continued to carry out safe and well visits to the people most at risk in the community.

## **The service effectively targets its prevention activity**

Prevention activity is clearly prioritised using a risk-based approach towards people most at risk from fire and other emergencies. For example, the service has developed a community safety handbook for each station which highlights the risk factors in the area and the 'make every contact count' approach. It provides specialist equipment which can be fitted to a property to make sure that it is safe from fire. And the service has prioritised properties that it would not be possible to reach within its target attendance time frames. These are offered the opportunity of a safe and well visit.

The service provides a range of interventions that it adapts to the level of risk in its communities. It carries out full safe and well visits, making sure that any vulnerabilities found are referred to appropriate authorities. The service follows the [National Fire Chiefs Council](#) community safety calendar to make sure local people are aware of the risks they face in everyday life. And it evaluates its community safety activities to determine whether it is reaching the right people with these.

## **Staff are well trained in carrying out safe and well checks**

Staff, including those on fire stations, told us they have the right skills and confidence to carry out safe and well visits. Checks are carried out by both wholetime and on-call personnel throughout the service. These checks cover an appropriate range of hazards that can put [vulnerable people](#) at greater risk from fire and other emergencies.

## **The service responds well to safeguarding concerns**

Staff we interviewed told us about occasions when they had identified [safeguarding](#) problems. They told us they feel confident and trained to act appropriately and promptly.

We found good evidence of staff understanding how to refer vulnerable people for safeguarding following both safe and well visits and operational incidents.

## **The service works well with other organisations to reduce the number of fires and other emergencies**

The service works with a wide range of other organisations such as the police, local councils, Hull City Tigers Trust, Jobcentre Plus and clinical commissioning groups 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. Arrangements are in place to receive referrals from others such as adult social care, the police, and members of the public. The service acts appropriately on the referrals it receives. It assesses all referrals and considers what the appropriate approach would be in each case.

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 service works with Humberside Police to target [anti-social behaviour](#) and arson.

The service has an effective partnership with local health bodies to provide a falls response team. This is a team of people from throughout the organisation who work on an 'on-call' basis. It has a significant impact on the local health situation. The team helps more people live in their homes for longer, reducing demand on local health and care services.

### **The service proactively addresses 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. The prevention plan sets out how the service will collaborate with the police, local authorities and other organisations to reduce the frequency and impact of arson in Humberside.

When appropriate, it routinely shares information with other partners to support the prosecution of arsonists. Following arson problems in the Gower Park area of Hull, the service worked with the local police to identify the people responsible for these and make appropriate interventions. This resulted in a dramatic reduction in arson cases.

### **The service quality assures and evaluates its prevention activities**

The service has good evaluation tools in place. These tools measure how effective its work is so that it knows what works, and that its communities get prevention activity that meets their needs.

We found that the service was regularly reviewing its plans to determine and revise priorities. It has evaluated the end results of its safe and well visits to establish whether any of the people visited have gone on to experience a fire. Lessons learned from this process have contributed to developing the service's new priorities.

Prevention activities take account of feedback from the public, other organisations, and other parts of the service.

The service has also evaluated some of its partnerships with other organisations to make sure that they are still effective. Feedback is used by the service to inform its planning assumptions and amend future activity, so it is focused on what the community needs and what works.

## **Protecting the public through fire regulation**



### **Good (2019: Requires improvement)**

Humberside 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.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The service should make sure it allocates enough resources to respond effectively and in time to statutory building control consultations.
- The service should assure itself that its use of enforcement powers prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.

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 protection plan is clearly linked to its IRMP**

The service's protection plan 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, station-based staff have been given specific fire safety training, which enables them to carry out fire protection audits at non-complex premises with a high risk of fire. If these highlight a risk that is beyond their level of competency to address, there are systems in place to refer the matter to the protection department for specialist intervention or advice.

Information is in turn 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 risk-based inspection programme aligns activity to risk**

The service's risk-based inspection programme is focused on the service's highest-risk buildings.

We found that the service was using a range of data to make sure it is inspecting the properties that are at highest risk. Specialist protection personnel assess the highest-risk premises, while those at lower risk are assessed by appropriately trained response staff. This allows the service to engage with a larger range of premises.

The audits we reviewed were completed in the timescales the service has set itself.

### **The service has carried out fire safety audits at high-rise buildings, including those with high-risk cladding**

Audits have been carried out at all high-rise buildings within the service area and it has identified those buildings that use cladding that is similar to the cladding installed on Grenfell Tower. Information gathered during these audits is made available to response teams and control operators, enabling them to respond more effectively in an emergency.

At the time of our inspection, the service had assessed the risk of each high-rise building in its service area using prevention, protection and response teams and working with building owners, including local authority partners.

### **The service completes audits to a high standard**

We reviewed a range of audits of different premises across the service. This included audits as part of the service's risk-based inspection programme, 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 carries out proportionate quality assurance of protection activity**

Quality assurance of protection activity takes place in a proportionate way. The service has a QA framework in place and specialist officers do dip sampling of completed audits to make sure the process is being carried out effectively.

Some staff who carry out the lower risk audits told us they lacked confidence in doing this. The service should make sure that its operational crews feel fully supported in carrying out fire protection audits.

The service has good evaluation tools in place to measure the effectiveness of its activity and to make sure all sections of its communities get appropriate access to protection services that meet their needs.

### **The service takes appropriate enforcement and prosecution action**

The service consistently uses its full range of enforcement powers, and when appropriate, prosecutes those who don't comply with fire safety regulations.

It recently carried out a prosecution where people were found to be sleeping in a premises with a lack of fire safety design. This led to a significant fine for the offender, who was also required to pay the service's court costs.

In the year to 31 March 2021, the service issued 6 alteration notices, 65 informal notifications, 8 enforcement notices, 6 prohibition notices and undertook 1 prosecution, which was the only one completed in the last 4 years from 2017 to 2021.

We were disappointed to find that some premises whose use is prohibited had not been revisited in line with policy, due to competing priorities. The service should make sure that the highest-risk premises are revisited in line with its policy.

### **The service has increased the size of its protection team to meet the requirements of its risk-based inspection programme**

The service has enough qualified and accredited protection staff to meet the requirements of the service's risk-based inspection programme. Since the last inspection, where this was highlighted as an area for improvement, the service has effectively employed and trained staff to appropriate levels. This enables the service to provide the range of audit and enforcement activity needed, both now and in the future.

Following the area for improvement issued in the previous inspection, we were pleased to see that there are now enough staff on duty 24 hours a day to deal with any protection issues that may arise out of normal office hours.

### **The service works effectively with other agencies to regulate fire safety**

The service works closely with other enforcement agencies to regulate fire safety and routinely exchanges risk information with them.

It has signed agreements with local housing providers and the local environmental health service. This enables joint inspections to be carried out. If enforcement action is needed, then the most appropriate body will carry this out.

### **The service doesn't always respond to building consultations in time**

The service doesn't always respond to building consultations on time, so doesn't consistently meet its statutory responsibility to comment on fire safety arrangements at new and altered buildings. In the year to 31 March 2021 the service managed to respond to 85.2 percent of building control consultations within their allotted time frame.

### **The service works proactively with local businesses**

The service proactively engages with local businesses and other organisations to encourage compliance with fire safety legislation. This is done mainly through visits to premises and information on the service's website. The protection strategy clearly states that this is the bedrock of how to help businesses improve their fire safety compliance. Crews on fire stations are now trained in visiting businesses during their day-to-day routine, and have clear targets for this. This is helping the service engage with many high-risk premises beyond those that are audited by specialist staff.

### **The service's new unwanted fire signal policy is effective**

An effective risk-based approach is in place to manage the number of unwanted fire signals. In 2019 the service introduced a 'call challenge' approach at first contact, where callers are asked to confirm that the alert is not a known false alarm. It gets significantly fewer calls because of this work. In the year to 31 March 2021 the service received 2,746 automatic fire signals, which is a reduction of 738 compared to the same period the previous year. The service did not send a response to 33.3 percent of all automatic fire signals in the year to 31 March 2021. Fewer unwanted calls mean that fire engines are available to respond to a genuine incident rather than responding to a false one. It also reduces the risk to the public if fewer fire engines travel at high speed on the roads. The service has a robust approach to the premises that produce the most unwanted fire signals. Through charging these, the service has been able to reinvest in its protection department.

## Responding to fires and other emergencies



### Good (2019: Good)

Humberside 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.

#### Areas for improvement

- The service should make sure its mobile data terminals are reliable so that firefighters can readily access up-to-date risk information.
- The service should make sure it has an effective system for learning from 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 has modelled its risk and set its response standard based on this

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 enable the service to respond flexibly to fires and other emergencies with the appropriate resources.

For example, the service has effectively modelled risk to help it decide where to base some of its specialist response functions. This can be seen at the station at Immingham, where the risk relating to domestic fires is lower than the risk relating to commercial fires. For this reason, the service's technical rescue and foam units, which are more relevant to commercial fires, are operated from this station.

### The service is meeting its response standards

There are no national response standards of performance for the public. But the service has set out its own response standards in its IRMP. It has based its response standards on the risk of domestic fire. The standards require that the first fire engine attends within the following time frames:

- high-risk areas – 8 minutes
- medium-risk areas – 12 minutes
- low-risk areas – 20 minutes.

The service consistently meets its standards. Home Office data shows that in the year to 31 March 2021 the service's response time to [primary fires](#) was 8 minutes and 37 seconds. This is faster than the average for predominantly rural services.

## **The availability of fire engines in Humberside is good**

To support its response strategy, the service aims to have 100 percent of wholetime fire engines available on 100 percent of occasions. The service consistently meets this standard. But the service has a high number of on-call stations, which find it more difficult to reach this standard. Data shows that the service is achieving an availability standard for on-call stations on 84.3 percent of occasions against targets of 95 percent first fire engine and 80 percent second fire engine.

## **Incident commanders are well trained**

The service has well trained incident commanders who are assessed regularly and properly. The service makes sure that all its commanders are externally accredited to national standards throughout the levels of the organisation. This enables 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.

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 \(JESIP\)](#).

## **Fire control should be more involved with training and exercising**

We are pleased to see the service's control staff integrated into the service's command, training, and assurance activity.

We are, however, disappointed to find that the service's control staff aren't always included in the service's exercise and debrief activity. The service should make sure that [fire control](#) staff are routinely invited to attend debriefs and exercises.

## **Fire control can provide 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. Any overflow calls can effectively be passed to Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire or Norfolk FRSs and vice versa. Control has good systems in place for exchanging real-time risk information with incident commanders, other supporting fire and rescue services and other organisations participating in the response. The service also has systems which allow both fire control and the command support unit to view and update live documents, such as evacuation plans for high-rise buildings. Maintaining good situational awareness enables the service to communicate effectively with the public, providing people with accurate and tailored advice.

## **Risk information is good and is accessible to all staff**

We sampled a range of risk information associated with several properties (at medium to very high risk) and temporary risk such as large events. The sample included 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. However, it was reported that mobile data terminals on fire engines can be slow and unreliable.

### **The service's evaluation of its operational performance is too narrow**

As part of the inspection, we reviewed a range of emergency incidents and training events. These included domestic fires, large commercial fires and road traffic collisions. While the service has a debrief policy in place and we found examples of effective debriefing, we were surprised at the narrow range of incidents being debriefed.

The service would benefit from reviewing its debriefing policy to make sure that it learns from a broader range of operational incidents.

### **The service could do more to assure itself that all staff understand national operational guidance**

The service should assure itself that all staff understand [national operational guidance](#). For example, we found that some staff were not familiar enough with new guidance for breathing apparatus control or sectorisation within incident command.

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. Relevant learning is routinely noted and can be distributed throughout the service using its learning and competency recording system. Every person in the organisation has access to the system and significant learning events can be placed on the front page. The service also reviews its policies if it is notified of nationally significant events through [national operational learning](#).

### **The service is good at communicating to the public about ongoing incidents**

The service has good systems in place to inform the public about ongoing incidents and help keep them safe during and after incidents. It is encouraging to see that the service can effectively manage its communications to the public depending on the size and complexity of an incident and the message that it needs to convey. It is able to do this both through social media and its website.

## **Responding to major and multi-agency incidents**



### **Good (2019: Good)**

Humberside 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 well prepared for major and multi-agency incidents**

The service has effectively anticipated and considered the reasonably foreseeable risks and threats it may face. These risks are listed in both local and national risk registers as part of its IRMP planning.

We found that the service had plans in place for about 30 upper tier [COMAH \(Control of Major Accident Hazards\) sites](#) and 25 lower tier sites. These form part of broader local arrangements overseen by Humber Emergency Planning Service. The service has also put in place response plans for risks such as flooding and waste fires.

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. These include all risks that fall within 10 kilometres of the borders of its area. Firefighters have access to risk information from neighbouring services, which is available on mobile data terminals.

### **The service can respond well to a major or multi-agency incident**

We reviewed the arrangements the service has in place to respond to different major incidents, including counter terrorism and COMAH incidents. The staff we spoke to felt prepared for most multi-agency incidents. But there was some confusion around expectations for responding to a terrorist attack, although all staff have been trained in this. The service should assure itself that all staff fully understand their responsibilities when responding to such events as a non-specialist responder.

### **The service works well with other fire services**

The service supports other fire and rescue services responding to emergency incidents and is well prepared to do this. For example, the fire control function is part of a four-service collaboration. The service can [mobilise](#) resources in any of the services of Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire or Norfolk, and vice versa. The services regularly test these arrangements by covering for each other during weekly training activity. This makes sure that there is no interruption in service when a partner mobilises another's resources. It is intraoperable with these services and can form part of a multi-agency response.

We found that the service had arrangements in place to monitor national and multi-agency radio channels, and that this is done regularly. There are also arrangements in place to mobilise national assets if required.

### **The service has a cross-border exercise plan**

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. We were encouraged to see that feedback from these exercises is used to inform risk information and service plans.

### **Operational commanders have a good understanding of interoperability principles**

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

The service could provide us with strong evidence that it consistently follows these principles. For example, they are included in the incident command training and subsequent reaccreditation that staff carry out. There are also online learning modules to maintain understanding of JESIP. These are compulsory and completed by incident commanders every year.

### **The service has good arrangements in place to work with partners**

The service has good arrangements in place to respond to emergencies with other partners that make up the Humberside LRF.

The service is a valued partner in the forum. The chief fire officer chairs it, and officers from the service participate in all its groups. Staff are seconded into the LRF on a continual basis, and vice versa.

The service also has a good relationship with the Humber Emergency Planning Service. Here too, staff are regularly seconded from each organisation to the other to support closer links and broader understanding between them.

The service takes part in regular training events with other members of the LRF and uses the learning to develop planning assumptions about responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

### **The service uses national operational learning well**

The service keeps itself up to date with national operational learning updates from other fire services and joint operational learning from other blue light partners, such as the police service and ambulance trusts. This learning is used to inform planning assumptions that have been made with other partners.

# Efficiency



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



**Good**

## Summary

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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. Humberside Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

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Since our last inspection we have found that the service continues to manage its finances well and is improving its overall efficiency.

It is encouraging to see that productivity at the service's fire stations has improved since the last inspection. Staff are using the tools they have been given to make sure that their days are productive and focused on the service's priorities.

The service has a well-established collaborative approach. It is a leader in this regard, with many departments integrated with police colleagues and other partners, both regionally and nationally. These partnerships are effectively monitored through robust governance arrangements. But the service should make sure that its collaborative work is efficient as well as effective.

The service analyses risk well, and this is apparent in its medium-term financial planning. This highlights key risks, and makes assumptions about these to make sure the service makes sound decisions about future funding.

## Making best use of resources



### Good (2019: Good)

Humberside 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 2021/22 is £45.163m. This is a 0.23 percent reduction 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 activity.

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 plans support the objectives in its IRMP

We are encouraged to see the improvements the service has made since the last inspection. The service's financial and workforce plans, including allocating staff to prevention, protection and response, now reflect and are consistent with the risks and priorities identified in the IRMP. For example, the service has increased staff numbers in its fire protection department to make sure it has enough capacity to carry out its risk-based inspection programme, and to provide specialist protection advice out of hours.

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. For example, the service has a comprehensive and effective risk management system in place which is monitored by the [fire authority](#)'s governance and audit scrutiny committee.

### The service has effective ways of working and staff are productive

In our last inspection we gave the service an area for improvement to show how extra capacity created by changing shift patterns has been used to improve public safety. We are pleased to see that the service has developed a performance management framework which clearly links its use of personnel to the IRMP and the service's strategic priorities.

Performance indicators and minimum standards are easily visible through live dashboards. Managers are using these dashboards to effectively prioritise and monitor work for their staff in line with their department plans.

As a result of the shift changes, operational crews are more productive. Each station has a plan that aligns service priorities to local risk with clear minimum standards to reach. The crews are now routinely carrying out work on protection, prevention and gathering risk information alongside their operational duties.

We were pleased to see that there are monthly performance meetings in all departments, where the performance dashboards are reviewed. It was also encouraging to see that the performance team present current risk data to managers every week to help them decide whether resources need to be moved to meet any change in demand.

We found that the service was using its operational personnel effectively by using [wholetime staff](#) to cover shortages at on-call stations. [On-call staff](#) also provide cover for [wholetime stations](#). A more flexible approach to covering shortages has also been adopted within [fire control](#), where there are arrangements for staff to provide cover for other [watches](#) at short notice and then claim time off when capacity allows.

The new shift pattern has significantly reduced the amount of overtime the service is using. This has allowed it to reduce its overtime spend from £603,216 in 2017/18 to £161,390 in 2020/21.

### **The service proactively seeks opportunities to work with partners and other emergency services**

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 collaborates with Humberside Police, local ambulance services, local clinical commissioning groups, and other fire and rescue services. Some examples of the service's collaboration in Humberside are:

- shared estate services with the police;
- shared senior finance posts with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner;
- shared properties with local health services; and
- joint fire control with Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Hertfordshire FRSs.

Collaborative work is aligned with the priorities in the service's current IRMP. For example, the service is exploring vehicle design with North, South and West Yorkshire FRSs. This work aims to design vehicles that enable more effective working between the services when crossing borders to deal with emergency incidents.

We are satisfied that the service monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and results of collaborations. But its reviews and evaluation do not always consider the efficiency benefits gained.

### **The service has effective continuity arrangements**

The service has good continuity arrangements in place for areas where threats and risks are considered high. These threats and risks are regularly reviewed and tested so that staff are aware of the arrangements and their associated responsibilities. For example, fire control tests its continuity arrangements regularly and uses any lessons learned to review and update plans.

The service also carries out continuity testing on a larger scale with the [local resilience forum](#) members. The last major continuity exercise concerned a possible cyber attack on information and communications technology systems. The lessons learned from this have enabled the service to gain certified accreditation from the [National Cyber Security Centre](#) for how it guards against cyber-attacks.

### **The service has sound financial management processes**

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 service has processes in place to make sure that its procurement of contracts achieves value for money. External auditors also give assurances that the service is providing value for money.

The service has made savings and efficiencies, which haven't affected its operational performance and the service it provides to the public. The new shift system introduced by the service continues to generate savings. It has had a positive impact on the service offered to the public. For example, operational crews are now visiting more commercial premises. This enables the service to collect and record risk information, and helps it educate business owners about fire safety.

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. For example, the service uses national and regional procurement frameworks to get the best possible purchasing power, and [benchmarking](#) to show value for money.

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



#### **Good (2019: Good)**

Humberside 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.

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 robust plans to address financial challenges**

The service has a sound understanding of future financial challenges. It plans to mitigate its main or significant financial risks. The service uses a risk matrix to manage financial risks. For example, it has identified that there is a risk pay rises for staff exceed the amount budgeted for these. It has earmarked [reserves](#) to cover this possibility.

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. They include assumptions about pay and pension costs, inflation, and government funding.

We were pleased to see that the service can show a balanced budget over the medium term. It has a track record of identifying savings and avoiding any long-term budget gaps. And it is consistently reporting a year end out-turn very close to the budget allocated.

### **The service has a clear plan for its reserves**

The service has a sensible and sustainable plan for using its reserves. The service has an appropriate level of general reserves. And it has plans to use its reserves to improve its efficiency. For example, it is investing in its estates to improve energy efficiency.

### **The estates and fleet strategies are linked to the IRMP**

The service's estate and fleet strategies have clear links to the IRMP. Through the estate and fleet strategies, the service is considering the impact that its estates and fleet will have on risk and operational effectiveness. Both strategies exploit opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

During the pandemic, staff were able to work more flexibly and as a result the service understood that it could rethink how it uses its buildings. It is in the process of reviewing its estate requirements and intends to share more of its buildings with partner organisations in the future. The service is also taking advantage of up to date green energy technologies.

The fleet strategy highlights the service's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint. The capital programme contains some funding for electric vehicle infrastructure. The service has already started to provide the infrastructure for an electric fleet at Cromwell Road fire station. And it has developed budget estimates for installing this at other 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.

### **The service invests in technology to improve ways of working**

The service actively considers how changes in technology and future innovation may affect risk. It also seeks to exploit opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness presented by changes in technology. For instance, the service is moving to cloud-based IT platforms. The benefits of this include less spending on servers and their running costs. The service has also procured a new IT system that allows on-call firefighters to manage their availability effectively.

Staff told us that they were generally pleased with the IT that was available at fire stations. But we were also told that the network connection at some stations was slow.

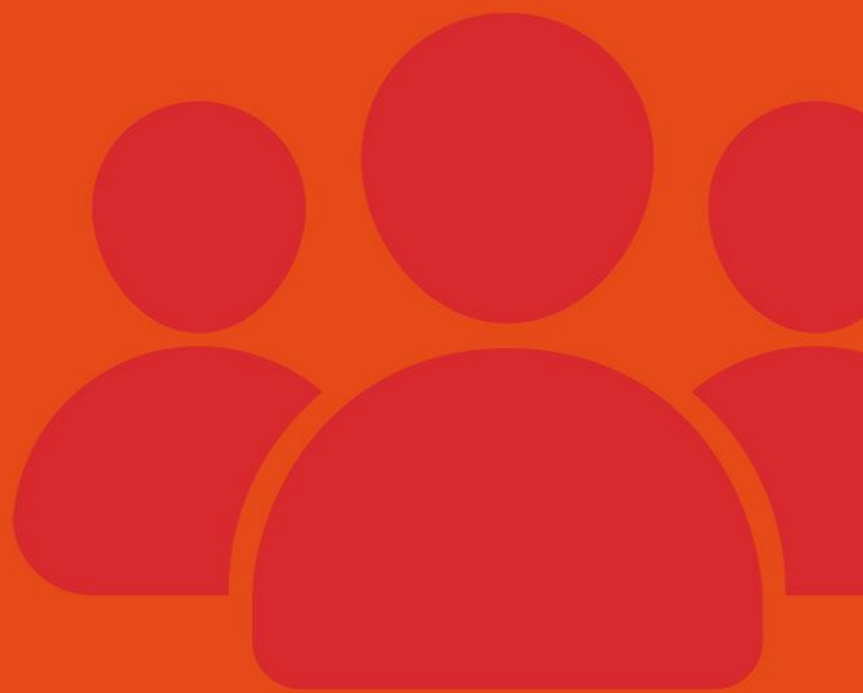
The service has put in place the capacity and capability needed to achieve sustainable transformation, and it routinely seeks opportunities to work with others to improve efficiency and provide better services in the future.

### **The service is effective at generating income and using it appropriately**

The service actively considers and exploits opportunities for generating extra income. For example, the service has generated approximately £3m through HFR Solutions Ltd (CIC), a community interest company (CIC) that the service has links to. The company rents space from the service. And it pays the service to second staff to the company so it can use their specialist skills.

Where appropriate, the service has secured external funding to invest in improvements to the service provided to the public. It provides a 'falls response team' staffed on an on-call basis. This team, funded by local health organisations, provides an immediate response to [vulnerable](#) and elderly residents in the area who experience a fall. It enables these residents to live in their homes for longer, reducing the demand on health and care services.

# People



# How well does the service look after its people?



**Good**

## Summary

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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, Humberside Fire and Rescue Service is good at looking after its people.

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The service has improved in managing its people since our last inspection, with policies and procedures in place that cover all relevant areas.

The service has a positive working culture. Its values are understood and reflected in the behaviour of most staff, although we were told that this is not the case for some senior managers. The service has developed excellent wellbeing services, and staff are broadly positive about this. Staff have access to support for their physical and mental health through the occupational health department.

Since our last inspection, the service has improved its workforce planning. The skills matrix that is now in place makes sure that all staff are aware of the most important competencies that they should have for their role, and what they will need if they progress to more senior roles. The service has a positive view of learning and development, which is noticeable throughout the organisation. It has put a great deal of effort into developing its competency recording system. And we were pleased to see that the service wants to take this further to make sure that it is effective for everyone.

The service has done an exceptional amount of work to engage with its staff. But it needs to do more to develop trust across the organisation, so that staff feel more confident challenging and giving feedback to management. And the service needs to show how it is acting on the feedback and challenge it receives from its workforce.

We found that the service was actively promoting issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). And the workforce supports this approach, which will lead to benefits in the long term. The positive action being carried out across the service is noteworthy.

The service has created a new performance development review system, which includes consideration of staff wellbeing. There has been excellent take up of this. But some staff feel that it is a tick-box exercise and see little benefit in completing the reviews.

## Promoting the right values and culture



### Good (2019: Good)

Humberside 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 wellbeing support that can be tailored to their individual needs.

#### Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself that senior managers are visible and demonstrate service values through their behaviours.
- The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure working hours are not exceeded.

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

### **Staff at all levels understand the culture, behaviours and values of the service, but more needs to be done to model these behaviours**

The service has a clearly defined set of values. It has adopted the [National Fire Chiefs Council Core Code of Ethics](#) and developed a mandatory online learning package for all staff to help embed this throughout the organisation.

Most staff who responded to our staff survey (97.6 percent) told us they were aware of the service's statement of values. In interviews with the inspection team, some staff told us of their concerns about some of the senior managers not always being visible or behaving in ways that align with the service's values. These findings were echoed in our staff survey, where 40.4 percent of respondents reported similar concerns. Responses to the staff survey showed that 47.6 percent of respondents (111 of 233) felt they weren't able to challenge management's ideas without detriment as to how they will be treated afterwards. We found mixed attitudes towards challenging managers, and not all staff felt empowered to do this.

There is generally a positive working culture throughout the service. It has worked hard to try to build an open culture, including commissioning psychometric profiles for management teams. But we were told of pockets of behaviours and ways of working which resulted in [on-call staff](#) not feeling as valued as other groups of staff. The service needs to do more to make sure this problem is addressed.

### **The service has improved its support for its workforce's wellbeing**

The service has a comprehensive wellbeing plan, which is supported by well understood and effective wellbeing policies. This includes easily accessible advice and information on the service's intranet site. Staff we spoke to and who responded to our staff survey reported that they understand and have high confidence in this guidance.

A significant range of wellbeing services are offered to support both physical and mental health (with availability extended to the families of staff where appropriate). Among these are new services from the service's occupational health unit, which are well regarded among staff and easily accessible. This support, which is offered by multiple providers, includes:

- fitness advisors;
- counselling; and
- physiotherapy.

While the support offered by the occupational health unit is good, some staff reported that there were delays in accessing it. The service should review this.

If a significant incident (such as a traumatic road collision) occurs, the service offers a critical stress management process to all staff involved. The service has three co-ordinators and numerous staff trained in defusing and debriefing.

The service has effective governance arrangements in place to monitor the use of wellbeing support. It records anonymised data on this and cross references it with absence data to keep aware of trends.

We found some evidence of wellbeing discussions taking place alongside performance conversations with managers. But in our staff survey, 16 percent of respondents (37 of 233) said they have had no discussion about their health and wellbeing within the past year, and 21.5 percent (50 of 233) only do so once a year. To ensure it continues to provide the right support to its workforce, the service should make sure that wellbeing conversations take place on a regular basis. The service has also initiated a project with Humberside Police and the University of Hull to develop an operational risk assessment that is specific to its [fire control](#) staff.

### **Staff have confidence in health and safety policies and procedures but we found areas that need to be improved**

The service has effective and well understood health and safety policies and procedures in place. All staff (100 percent) that responded to our staff survey said that the service has clear procedures to report all accidents, [near misses](#) and dangerous occurrences, and 97.4 percent said that they are encouraged to report these.

These policies and procedures are readily available and effectively promoted to all staff via both notice boards in buildings and the intranet. Responses to our staff survey showed that 97.4 percent of respondents understand the policies and procedures the service has in place to make sure they can work safely. Both staff and representative bodies have confidence in the health and safety approach taken by the service.

We found that the service was also making sure that staff who fail fitness assessments are fully supported. If this happens, it carries out a full risk assessment in line with the expectations of the firefighter's specific role. It then gives them a fitness plan and monitors their progress with this to make sure that the firefighter gains the fitness required.

The service has policies for staff who have secondary employment, and those who have contracts for both [wholetime firefighter](#) roles and on-call roles (dual contract). A new online system is used to record when staff are working or available for work. But the service doesn't monitor the working hours of staff to make sure they don't work excessive hours, in line with its policy. Managers said that the onus was on individuals to manage their hours. But we found that some staff were working through their rest periods as they felt obliged to be available for incidents.

During our inspection staff shared their concerns about a lack of maintenance culture at on-call stations which also extended to appliances. At one on-call station we found there wasn't adequate separation between clean and dirty firefighting personal protective equipment. The service should review its estates strategy to make sure that it addresses the risk of equipment being contaminated.

### **Absence management within the service is effective**

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. The service uses dashboards throughout its departments to manage absences. The dashboards, accessible through computers, show live data which managers monitor to make sure that they are supporting personnel effectively. Absence information is reviewed at monthly performance meetings with HR colleagues. Anonymised data is cross referenced with data on the use of wellbeing support to ensure effective management and identify any trends.

Overall, the service saw a significant decrease in staff absences over the 12 months between March 2020 and March 2021.

## Getting the right people with the right skills



### **Good (2019: Requires improvement)**

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service is good 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.

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

### **The service could improve its workforce planning**

The service does some workforce planning, and processes and policies relating to this have been introduced since our last inspection. But it doesn't take full account of the skills and capabilities it needs to be able to effectively meet the needs of its IRMP. There has, however, been effective liaison with the finance department to make sure workforce plans align with the available budget. The service uses dashboards to monitor its workforce composition to make sure that the right people are in the right roles with the right skills. Using role-specific training outlines and leadership frameworks, the service has developed a skills matrix for all staff – both uniformed and non-uniformed.

Workforce and succession planning are subject to scrutiny in the form of regular meetings to discuss requirements. Within recruitment, the service considers EDI, including taking positive action where appropriate (this is known within the service as 'positive attraction'). But whole workforce planning seems to be limited, reactive and slow when gaps arise across the organisation. The service could do more to make sure that its workforce planning is more effective.

### **The service monitors the skills and training of its workforce effectively**

Most staff told us that they could access the training they need to be effective in their role. The service has a comprehensive training delivery plan to make sure staff maintain their competences.

The service has invested in upgrading its competency recording system which it uses to monitor staff competency. It regularly updates its understanding of staff's skills and risk-critical safety capabilities by monitoring of this system. The service has also carried out an analysis to help it efficiently offer training to its workforce. This involved working out the minimum amount of operational personnel, with the appropriate skills and competencies, it is likely to need to carry out the work implied by the specific risks it faces. This approach means the service can identify gaps in workforce capabilities

and resilience and can make sound and financially sustainable decisions about current and future needs.

### **The service has a positive learning and improvement culture**

A culture of continuous improvements and developing a supportive learning environment is promoted throughout the service and staff are encouraged to learn and develop. For example, there is a positive culture of using secondments to partner agencies to develop staff. Organisations involved in this approach include the [local resilience forum](#), HFR Solutions Ltd, Humberside Police and clinical commissioning groups.

We reviewed training records for a range of staff and found that the service has accurate methods to record training and core competences. It was encouraging to see that operational and non-operational staff are given equal priority, with all training recorded in the same place. But there were some gaps in training throughout the service. The service should assure itself that all staff are up to date with their training needs. During our visit some on-call staff told us they felt that they do not have the same learning and development opportunities as their wholetime colleagues. The service should make sure that it addresses these concerns.

Most staff told us that they can access a range of learning and development resources. These include online learning modules for most skills, courses offered through the service's training and development centre, and externally accredited incident command courses. This allows staff to do their jobs effectively.

The service monitors and assures training using both a competency recording system and a dashboard. The dashboard can be accessed locally by managers, which enables them to monitor their staff's progress and put training plans in place for individuals in their teams. This holistic approach makes sure the service has an effective overview of its workforce's skills.

### **Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity**



#### **Good (2019: Requires improvement)**

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service is good 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.

### Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself that staff are confident using its feedback mechanisms, so these help the service gather valuable information.
- The service should make sure that it has effective grievance procedures. It should identify and implement ways to improve staff confidence in the grievance process.
- The service should make sure it has robust processes in place to undertake equality impact assessments and review any actions agreed as a result.

### Innovative practice

The service has developed a positive action programme called Rookie Reds, which aims to provide support, training and guidance to people from under-represented groups who are interested in joining the fire and rescue service. This is a ten-week course run before the formal recruitment process, at fire stations, giving a realistic insight into the varied role of a firefighter.

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

### **The service should do more to respond to staff feedback and make sure that staff feel that they can challenge management**

The service has a range of ways to communicate with staff on issues and decisions that affect them.

Each member of staff is given the opportunity to speak to a member of the strategic leadership team, at least once a year. Other opportunities for communication include:

- 'Let's Talk' sessions – open forums for staff held quarterly and chaired by a member of the strategic leadership team;
- a daily tactical briefing session via Microsoft Teams for all staff; and
- a corporate magazine, Siren.

We found that the service was sometimes working with staff representative networks to help build all-staff awareness of fairness and diversity. It proactively engages with some of these groups to identify matters that affect their members, but this is not done consistently.

While the service carries out some evaluation of its communications, staff told us that they do not see change happening because of their feedback. In our staff survey, 51.5 percent of respondents (120 of 233) said they were not confident in the mechanisms for providing feedback to all levels. Some staff told us that their feedback was received defensively by senior managers, and other staff described the 'Let's Talk' sessions as being too big a forum. Representative bodies feel that engagement is rarely or only sometimes meaningful. These bodies and staff associations told us that they would like better engagement from the service.

## **The service needs to do more 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 our staff survey, 15 percent of staff who responded to the survey (35 of 233) told us they had been subject to bullying or harassment in the past year, and 20.6 percent (48 of 233) said they had experienced discrimination over the same period.

In most cases, the source of bullying, harassment or discrimination was described as someone in a management position. And where the inappropriate behaviour had been reported, staff indicated that no action had been taken in most cases. Of those who chose not to report the behaviour, nearly half told us the main reason for this was either because they thought nothing would happen, or due to fear of being victimised or being labelled as a troublemaker.

The service has clear policies and procedures in place and uses a dashboard to gather anonymous data to identify trends and provide oversight and scrutiny of cases. Despite this, staff have limited confidence in the service's resolution processes due to concerns about confidentiality and the length of time it takes to resolve cases. Most managers felt that they were able and supported to manage such issues before they escalate.

## **The service is addressing disproportionality in recruitment and retention**

There is an open, fair and honest recruitment process for staff or those wishing to work for the fire and rescue service. The service has put considerable effort into developing its recruitment processes so that they are fair and understood by potential applicants. The recruitment policies are comprehensive and cover opportunities in all roles. Recruitment opportunities are advertised both internally and externally, which has encouraged applicants from diverse backgrounds, including into middle and senior management roles.

The service has an effective system to understand and remove the risk of disproportionality in recruitment processes. For example, the service has carried out an equality impact assessment of the recruitment process and commissioned an external organisation to review its process for appointing officer roles to remove any potential bias.

It is using staff groups set up for underrepresented groups to help with running recruitment events. It has also changed the language it uses to describe positive action, which is now referred to as 'positive attraction'.

The service has acted positively to improve diversity. For example, The Rookie Reds programme is a ten-week course run at fire stations across the four counties in the service area which prepares prospective applicants from underrepresented groups who want to become firefighters. This course is run before the firefighter recruitment process and is supported by members of staff and representative groups at local stations.

We found that the service had made some improvements in increasing staff diversity at all levels of the organisation. A training course for new joiners was being held at the

time of our inspection. This included 15 percent women and 15 percent staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, while on the previous course 32 percent of participants were women. These figures represent an improvement on previous years. At the end of March 2021, the proportion of the workforce from ethnic minority backgrounds was 2.1 percent. This is a negligible increase of 0.1 percentage points since March 2018.

The proportion of women in the workforce at the end of March 2021 was 20.7 percent. This is above the England average of 18.0 percent, and represents an increase of 2.9 percentage points since March 2018.

### **The service has improved its approach to EDI**

The service has improved its approach to EDI and is making sure it can offer the right services to its communities and support staff with protected characteristics. Staff we spoke to were all knowledgeable about the EDI challenges faced by the service and were very positive about the journey that the service has been on since our last inspection.

The service has set up some staff groups to help it consult effectively with people in its workforce from underrepresented groups. One benefit of these groups has been in consulting on and developing policies and procedures to support staff who are going through the menopause. Where there is a lack of employees from a particular underrepresented group, the service has sought external support. It is working with the Asian Fire Services Association (as a corporate member), using the association's experience to help the service set up representative groups. It also works with Humberside Police to allow FRS staff to benefit from established police staff networks.

We found that the service had accessibility built into both its website and intranet using cloud-based software. This allows users to adapt the screen to their own preferences. This can include (but is not limited to):

- language;
- text size;
- font style;
- line spacing; and
- colours.

The service is taking action to identify and address inequalities in its workplace and the services it supplies to the public. For example, it carried out equality impact assessments for the IRMP and the estates dignity improvement scheme.

However, the equality impact assessment process is not embedded across the service. The service has an equality impact assessment policy, which details its responsibilities and the governance processes in place to monitor and review how this is carried out throughout the service. But some policies and documents we reviewed did not have any assessments associated with them. The service should do more to make sure that all its projects and policies are subject to equality impact assessments.

The dignity improvement scheme is intended to improve the estate across the service to give all staff appropriate facilities, for example in relation to their gender or religion. However, the facilities for women at one of the stations were described to us as

cramped and not suitable. The service should review its scheme, including speaking to staff it affects, and put in any further arrangements required as a result of that review.

## Managing performance and developing leaders



### Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service is good 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 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 is improving the way it manages people'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, managers carry out performance development reviews throughout the service, discussing performance, competency, development and welfare with their staff.

In our staff survey, most staff (93.1 percent) who responded said that they have had regular discussions about performance with their manager and that these discussions were meaningful. But staff we interviewed during our inspection had mixed views about the reviews. Some said that they felt the discussions held no value and expressed concerns that the process was just a tick-box exercise.

The service should do more to assure itself that staff understand the limitations of the process and manage expectations of what can be achieved from it.

### The service is developing processes to make sure that promotion and progression is fair for all staff

The service has put considerable effort into developing its promotion and progression processes so that they are fair and understood by staff. The service has developed a new policy covering these processes. This is evaluated between promotion rounds to make sure that it remains effective.

Selection processes are managed through monthly workforce planning meetings, and temporary promotions are used to fill short-term resourcing gaps. But data given to HMICFRS shows that one temporary promotion has been in place for over four years.

The service has a 'pipeline' process which prepares potential promotion candidates by giving them practical experience before they officially apply for a role. If an applicant is unsuccessful at promotion, they are given an 'amber' level pass which allows them to apply for temporary positions at a higher grade/rank – but they must reapply for a promotion to stay at this level permanently.

This process is sometimes perceived as being unfair and the service needs to do more to explain it to staff throughout the organisation. We also found that there is some confusion about what managers need to do to support personnel through this system, with inconsistent advice given by different managers.

The service's promotion and progression policies are comprehensive and cover opportunities in most roles. But some staff in non-operational roles told us that they felt their routes for progression were more limited than was the case for their operational colleagues.

### **The service needs to do more to develop leadership and high-potential staff at all levels**

The service needs to improve how it actively manages the career pathways of staff, including those with specialist skills and for leadership roles.

It has some talent management schemes in place to develop leaders and high-potential staff. But these are limited to those who are highlighted by managers in their PDR reviews, which means that the schemes aren't always managed openly or fairly. This has resulted in inconsistency and undermines staff perception of fairness in the process.

The service does provide development opportunities to staff, including leadership development and the opportunity to undertake a secondment outside of the organisation.

The service should consider putting in place more formal arrangements to identify and support members of staff to become senior leaders. There is a significant gap in its succession planning.

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