

Fire & Rescue Service

Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service



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About this inspection

This is the first time that HMICFRS has inspected fire and rescue services across England. Our focus is on the service they provide to the public, and the way they use the resources available. The inspection assesses how effectively and efficiently Norfolk 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**.

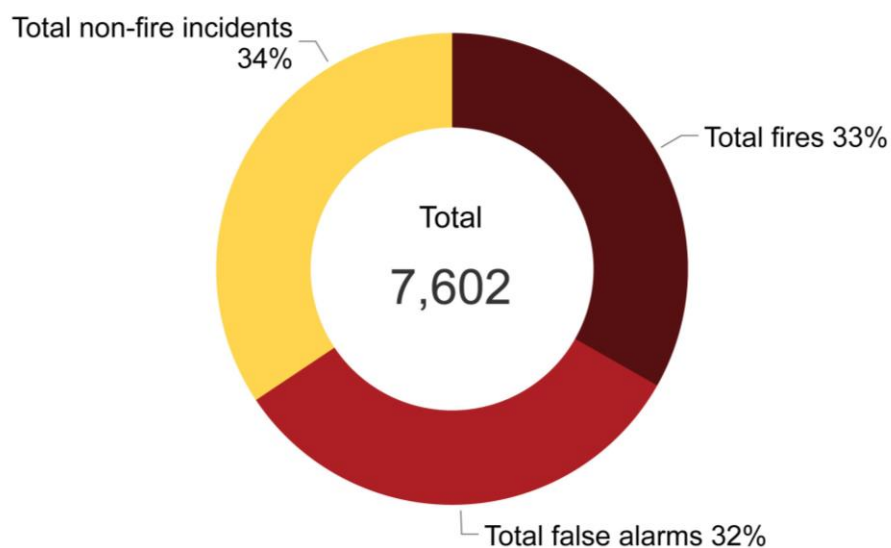
If we find serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, we will judge it as **inadequate**.

Service in numbers

 Public perceptions	Norfolk	England
Perceived effectiveness of service Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)	85%	86%

 Response	Norfolk	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 September 2018	8.5	10.5
Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	4.2	10.4
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises 12 months to 31 March 2018	2.9	3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 30 September 2018





Cost

Norfolk

England

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

£19.28

£22.38



Workforce

Norfolk

England

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

0.8

0.6

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

-4%

-14%

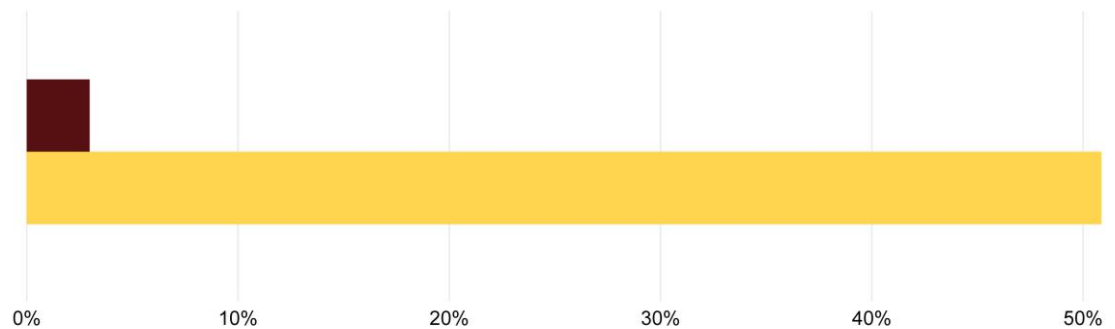
Percentage of wholetime firefighters
As at 31 March 2018

38%

70%

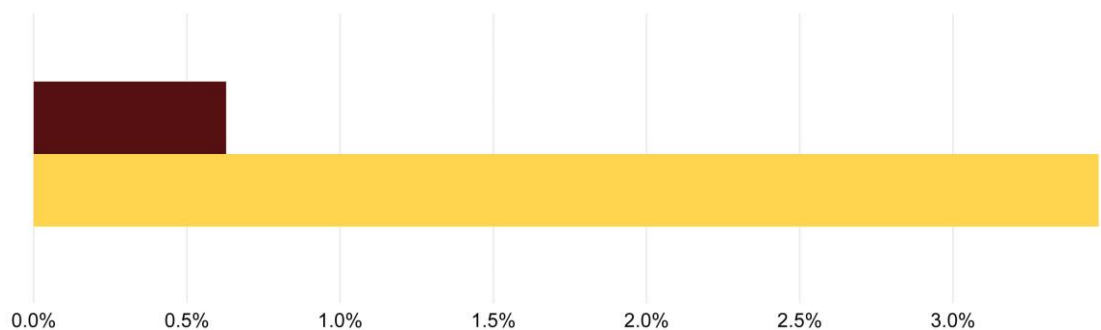
Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● 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	 Requires improvement
Making best use of resources	 Requires improvement
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	 Good



People



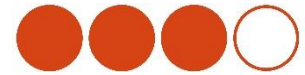
Requires improvement

Promoting the right values and culture



Requires improvement

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Overall summary of inspection findings

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

Norfolk FRS requires improvement at providing an effective service. It requires improvement at:

- understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies;
- preventing fires and other risks; and
- protecting the public through fire regulation.

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

It requires improvement to its efficiency. It is good at making its services affordable but it requires improvement in how it uses resources.

The service requires improvement in how it looks after its people. Though it is good at getting the right people with the right skills, it requires improvement at:

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

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. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness requires improvement.

Norfolk FRS requires improvement to the way it understands the risk of fire and other emergencies. It engages with the public but does not use what it finds out to improve its understanding of risk. Crews visit high-risk sites and collect data they can use during incidents.

The service requires improvement to the way it prevents fires and other risks. It has a backlog of [home fire risk checks](#) to do. We were pleased to see it is making progress with a plan to reduce this. It communicates well with the public. It prioritises [safeguarding](#), but staff knowledge of safeguarding is patchy. The service is active in reducing casualties on the county's roads.

The service requires improvement to how it protects the public through fire regulation. Its rate of fire safety audits is in line with the rest of England. It is not responding fast enough to requests for building control consultations. This is because its protection department hasn't enough capacity. The service approaches enforcement in a supportive way. Not all staff understand its policy to work with premises that have a lot of unwanted fire signals.

Norfolk FRS is good in the way it responds to fires and other emergencies. The service is keen to improve its on-call availability. It uses dynamic [mobilisation](#) to send the quickest resources to incidents, but it isn't always achieving its response targets. [Fire control](#) staff give fire survival guidance to callers effectively.

The service is good at responding to national risks. During a major incident, staff know how to get hold of national resources and additional resources from neighbouring services. Norfolk FRS works well with its neighbours for a cross-border response, but staff find it hard to access cross-border risk information. It does a variety of exercises with other agencies to test different scenarios. It is generally well prepared for terrorist incidents.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should improve how it uses information from its engagement with the local community to build up a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area.
- The service should ensure that its integrated risk management plan is informed by a comprehensive understanding of current and future risk. A wide range of data should be used to build the risk profile and operational data should be used to test that it is up to date.

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

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

Understanding local and community risk

The service makes effective use of social media and its website to engage with the public. But we saw no evidence of it using this engagement to help it build up a comprehensive risk profile.

The service consulted with the public during the planning stages of its current (2016–20) [integrated risk management plan](#) (IRMP). People could respond online, by email, on social media, by telephone and in writing. It received approximately 600 responses. As a result of public feedback, proposals were amended, including:

- simplifying the service's vision;
- reducing the level of savings made; and
- not changing the staffing arrangement at two of its stations from 24/7 to 12/7.

The service used a narrow range of information to define risk profile within its 2016–20 IRMP. This included:

- [Mosaic data](#) (a computer database providing information on households for a given postcode);
- incident data (including fires and road traffic collisions); and
- home fire risk checks carried out.

The service considers how it will address emerging and future risks in defining its strategic challenges:

- financial pressures;
- geographical coverage;
- climate change;
- an increasing and ageing population;
- the changing role of the fire and rescue service;
- firefighter safety; and
- collaborative working.

The service's previous IRMP, 2014–17, included "a detailed analysis of the existing and potential risks to the community in Norfolk, and an evaluation of the service's effectiveness in dealing with them". But the service chose not to review and update that information for its 2016–20 IRMP. So its current IRMP is based on dated information. This means the service cannot be sure that it fully understands current and future risks. And it cannot be sure it is allocating resources appropriately to manage those risks. The service is aware of this and is planning for its next IRMP. It is assessing a wide range of data, information and modelling to ensure that the future plan draws on a comprehensive understanding of current, emerging and future risk. The service will consult with the public on the proposals within its new IRMP later in 2019.

Having an effective risk management plan

The service's 2016–20 IRMP sets out its strategic vision that "in 2020, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service will be at the heart of community protection for Norfolk".

The service shows how the vision will be delivered through prevention, protection and response activity.

The service considers what impact threats and hazards identified in the National Risk Register have in Norfolk. It makes links to the local risk register too. The service plays a leading role in the Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF).

Maintaining risk information

The service has a programme of visits to high-risk sites. It gave us data that showed it held risk files for a total of 603 sites at the time of inspection. Fire crews familiarise themselves with these sites and collect site-specific risk information (SSRI). Norfolk FRS calls these 'risk logs'. Crews add this information to a database. They can access it via [mobile data terminals](#) during an incident. In on-call areas, the [on-call staff](#) make familiarisation visits, but operational support officers take responsibility for collecting and updating the SSRI. We found SSRI information to be up to date and subject to regular review. Crews also carry out exercises at their high-risk sites.

We saw evidence of the improvements that new provision of operational risk information system (PORIS) software will bring. It will make it easier for crews to record risk information and it will help them work out the risk scores of premises more accurately. It is due to be launched in mid-2019.

The service communicates information for temporary events to operational crews effectively. An example of this is for Cromer Show. The station manager attends a council-led safety advisory group and then emails response plans to operational crews.

The service has an effective system to communicate general risk information. We saw it passed on using a variety of methods. These included:

- face-to-face handovers between [watches](#);
- briefings at the start of shifts and drill sessions; and
- the use of station printer and flash messages.

The service also circulates risk information in health and safety bulletins.

Preventing fires and other risks



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk. This should include proportionate and timely activity to reduce risk.
- The service should ensure that staff have a good understanding of how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people.
- The service should better evaluate its prevention work, so it understands all the benefits more clearly.

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

Prevention strategy

As at 31 March 2018, the risk checks in the service included:

- ensuring working smoke alarms are fitted;
- identifying potential fire risks;
- taking action to reduce fire risks; and
- giving advice on slips, trips and falls.

The service's 2018–20 community safety strategy sets out plans to expand these risk checks. They will include:

- stopping smoking;
- wellbeing;
- crime and scam prevention; and
- security.

This is due for implementation in mid-2019. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 4.2 home fire risk checks per 1,000 population.

The service finds people who need home fire risk checks through a variety of sources. These include referrals from partners, self-referrals and responses to leaflet drops by operational crews. The service makes some effort to identify those most at risk, but this effort is inconsistent and ineffective. All requests for a home fire risk check are added to a list without any prioritisation. So someone who is more at risk may have to wait longer than someone who has a lower risk.

Also, the service does not appear to effectively monitor whether home fire risk checks are being targeted to high-risk groups. For example, the service couldn't say how many households including people with disabilities received a home fire risk check in the year ending 31 March 2018.

The service has a considerable backlog of home fire risk checks awaiting completion, especially in rural areas. Some have been on a waiting list for several months.

The service has an action plan to reduce the backlog in a targeted way, starting with the most at risk. We saw good progress against this action plan. It reduced the backlog by almost 50 percent between our discovery activity in December 2018 and fieldwork in February 2019.

On-call staff have not in the past carried out home fire risk checks. Some on-call stations are now piloting their involvement. We look forward to seeing how this progresses.

The service has evaluated some of its prevention activity and identified its impact. It acknowledges there is more it can do to ensure that it evaluates all prevention activity consistently. Norfolk County Council's libraries department is developing a service evaluation tool. Norfolk FRS is considering adopting and adapting this to evaluate its prevention work.

Promoting community safety

The service makes effective use of social media to raise awareness and campaign to prevent fires and promote community safety. A dedicated digital media officer, supported by Norfolk County Council's communications team, delivers a communication strategy. This is linked to national campaigns and local prevention activities. The service created and introduced the #TestItTuesday weekly reminder to test smoke alarms. Many other FRSs now use this too. The service targets its communications to ensure that it meets the needs of the community. Its website has accessibility tools including translations, a 'read page aloud' option and a text size increaser.

The service is very successful at engaging with children and young people through initiatives such as crucial crew and The Prince's Trust. Crucial crew is a multi-agency event aimed at children aged 10 and 11. It covers topics such as fire safety, water safety, road safety, internet safety and bullying. The service works with the College of East Anglia to deliver The Prince's Trust TEAM programme. TEAM is for young people aged 16 to 25 who are not in employment, education or training. It covers areas such as teamwork, leadership, communication and safety.

The service work closely with partners such as the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, the Inland Waterways Association and Broads Beat to deliver targeted water safety awareness training.

Safeguarding is a clear priority for the service at a strategic level. Senior leaders sit on local safeguarding boards. But safeguarding is not well understood across the service. Staff have not received any recent training on how to identify vulnerabilities. We found staff's knowledge of safeguarding to be inconsistent. Many of them told us that they would "rely on common sense" to make referrals. The service has acknowledged that it needs to make more referrals. This would be in line with its safeguarding referral policy.

Fire and police community safety teams work in the same space. This closer working helps them to reduce arson. One of their initiatives aims to reduce arson on farms. The service also works closely with other departments within Norfolk County Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council on initiatives to reduce arson. Staff told inspectors that they had been doing less to reduce arson in recent years. They felt that this was because of more limited capacity within the department and within partner organisations. The service gives advice on preventing arson during fire safety inspections and visits to collect SSRI.

The police and other partner agencies refer to the service young people who have been involved in fire-setting behaviour. Community safety advisers and a small number of firefighter volunteers make fire-setter visits to these young people.

Road safety

One of Norfolk FRS's road safety partners said, "The service is a very active member of the Norfolk road casualty reduction partnership."

The partnership involves the police, Norfolk County Council and other organisations as well as Norfolk FRS. It targets four priority groups:

- vulnerable road users including cyclists and scooter riders;
- older drivers;
- motorcyclists; and
- young drivers.

Initiatives include community events, school presentations and child car seat fitting.

Partners confirmed that the service played a key role in supporting the Norfolk police and crime commissioner's road safety campaign, #Impact. This educational programme, delivered with Norfolk Constabulary and the East of England Ambulance Service, is aimed at young drivers. It includes the use of virtual reality goggles to highlight some of the dangers faced on the roads. And it encourages those taking part to sign a 'young driver's pledge'.

The service has evaluated its road safety campaigns. It asked previous attendees of #Impact events what they remembered from the event and how their behaviour had changed. The service showed us data suggesting that over 60 percent of 157 respondents said that their behaviour as a driver or a passenger had changed as a result of attending the event.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme. This should include its arrangements for providing specialist protection advice out of hours.
- The service should ensure that staff work with local businesses and large organisations to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations.
- The service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms.

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

All fire and rescue services must promote fire safety, which includes fire protection. So they should assess fire risks in buildings and, when necessary, force landlords and owners to comply with fire safety legislation. It is up to each fire and rescue service to decide how many assessments it carries out each year. But each must have a locally determined, risk-based inspection programme (RBIP). And each must have a management strategy for enforcing the regulations: the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#) (RR(FS)O).

Norfolk FRS has an RBIP and enforcement plan. It uses these to prioritise its activities based on risk. It uses a narrow set of data to define high risk. The service's main priority is premises with a sleeping risk. A property is said to have a sleeping risk if multiple people sleep there. Examples are care homes, hotels, hostels and flats above commercial premises. The service introduced a new protection strategy for 2018/19 in late 2018. This widened its definition of high risk in line with the community fire risk management information system definition. And it now includes buildings with aluminium composite material cladding. The service should ensure that this definition of high risk is included in its RBIP. In its new protection strategy, the service has committed to auditing all its 50 known high-risk premises every year. In the year to 31 December 2018, the service audited ten high-risk premises.

The service uses a mix of short and long audits. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service completed 293 full audits and 383 short audits. This equates to 2.9 fire safety audits per 100 known premises, compared with the England rate of 3.0 over the same period. Of the 676 fire safety audits the service carried out in the year to 31 March 2018, the fire safety inspectors deemed 88.5 percent of premises satisfactory. To ensure consistency and provide quality assurance, inspectors carry out peer audits of other inspectors' cases.

The service is failing to meet its target of responding to building control consultations within 15 working days. In the year ending 31 March 2018, it responded to building control consultations within the required time 89 percent of the time. This delay is due to limited capacity within the protection department. This department's lack of capacity means that reactive work (such as building consultations and responding to fire safety concerns and complaints) takes priority over its planned activity. This potentially delays the inspection of high-risk premises.

The protection department has recently promoted non-specialist staff into middle-manager positions. This, coupled with the department's structure, means that the service has a limited number of experienced staff qualified to give out-of-hours enforcement support. Existing specialist staff can meet this out-of-hours need but are stretched. The service has acknowledged that it needs to increase capacity and resilience.

Specialist staff are generally well trained. They have either completed or are working towards a [Level 4 Diploma in Fire Safety](#). The service has support from regional

partners to assist with complex cases. Operational staff who carry out low-level audits have received basic hazard spotting training.

Enforcement

The service's preferred option is to take a supportive approach, based on informal action, to fire safety legislation compliance. When necessary, it is prepared to take [enforcement action](#).

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service issued:

- 63 informal notices;
- four enforcement notices (under Article 30 of RR(FS)O);
- three [prohibition notices](#) (under [Article 31 of RR\(FS\)O](#)); and
- one prosecution (under Article 32 of RR(FS)O).

The service has well-trained staff who carry out regular continuing professional development. This includes enforcement scenario planning. The service has support from a fire safety barrister and the county council's legal services department.

The service works closely with other agencies to enforce fire regulations. Its partners include local authorities, housing departments, environmental health and trading standards. They carry out joint visits and enforcement action and share risk information. We saw evidence of a recent joint visit to a restaurant by the service, police and environmental health. As a result, environmental health served a prohibition notice on the restaurant. We also saw evidence of a joint investigation with trading standards into fake cigarettes.

Working with others

The service has a call-challenge and non-attendance policy to automatic fire alarms (AFAs) in line with national guidance. In the year ending 31 December 2018, the service received 2,050 unique calls for assistance from AFAs. It did not attend 908 (44 percent) of these. It will, of course, attend if it receives confirmation of a fire.

In addition, the service has a policy to work with those premises that generate the most false alarms. This is to reduce call-outs. The policy is not well understood and so it is not consistently applied. Limited capacity within the protection department also means that the service does not prioritise this work. Data suggests that the number of false alarms has remained relatively stable since 2015/16. The service uses its website to share information with businesses about fire safety and fire safety regulations. The service had a stand at the Norfolk county show. This was the only example we saw of direct engagement with businesses apart from inspections and audits within the last year. The service acknowledges it could do more to engage informally with businesses, but it is limited by protection team capacity.

The service would benefit from evaluating its protection and enforcement activity. This would ensure that it has a significant impact on keeping people safe and secure from fire. It would also promote continuous improvement that would translate into better service to the public.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.

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's response strategy aims to provide a proportionate response to the risk identified through the NRF and the community risk register. It sets out to contribute to its IRMP vision to "be at the heart of community protection for Norfolk".

The response strategy provides a clear rationale for maintaining sufficient capacity to:

- carry out firefighting and water removal;
- perform rescues;
- deal with hazardous material and environmental protection incidents; and
- respond to acts of terrorism.

Resources are located around the county based on the service's ten-minute travel time zones. This is to ensure it has enough resources to meet its emergency response standards, detailed below.

The service has a sufficient range of equipment and trained personnel to implement this strategy. This includes specialist equipment and personnel to respond to:

- flooding and water rescues;
- large animal rescues;
- heavy transport incidents; and
- rescues from height.

The service has an on-call availability system that allows staff to update availability via an app on their mobile phones. This gives accurate and up-to-date information on appliance availability. On-call staff told us how easy and effective they find this system.

The service reported on-call availability of 84 percent against its target of 90 percent for 2017/18. Between April 2018 and December 2018, the overall average monthly pump availability ranged from between 82 percent and 87 percent. Evidence collected during inspection suggested that on-call availability during the day fluctuates and is generally lower. The service acknowledges that it has work to do to improve on-call availability during the day. It is implementing measures to enable these improvements.

Fire control staff allocate resources to incidents based on pre-determined attendances (PDAs). Staff can use their professional judgment to increase or decrease PDAs based on information received from callers. We saw evidence of this during inspection.

The service uses dynamic mobilising. The mobilising system identifies the quickest resource available to send to incidents using the automatic vehicle location system. The system also includes data on previous response times for on-call staff to ensure that the quickest resource is mobilised. The average crew turnout time for a [primary fire](#) has improved from 2 minutes 22 seconds in the year ending 31 March 2016 to 2 minutes 2 seconds in the same timeframe in 2018.

The service belongs to the East Coast control room consortium with Lincolnshire, Hertfordshire and Humberside FRSs. The aim of the consortium is to jointly procure a new mobilising system to improve resilience and capacity within all four control rooms. Other members of the consortium have experienced problems with implementation of the new software. This has delayed its implementation within Norfolk.

Fire control is soon due to move into the Norfolk Constabulary control room to form a joint police and fire communication and control room. The aim is to further improve interoperability.

Response

The service has carried out a gap analysis against [national operational guidance](#) (NOG). It is part of a regional NOG group that plans to fully adopt NOG across the region by 2020. We saw that firefighters have good knowledge, understanding and practical application of breathing apparatus procedures in line with NOG.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service's average response time to primary fires was 10 minutes 14 seconds. However, the service also has time-based emergency response standards set out in its IRMP. It aims to respond to:

- fires where life may be at risk within 10 minutes 80 percent of the time; and
- other emergencies where life may be at risk within 13 minutes 80 percent of the time.

The service reported that between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, it achieved its ten-minute target for fires where life may be at risk 69.3 percent of the time. So it is not currently achieving its target in this area. For other emergencies where life may be at risk, the service achieved its target of responding within 13 minutes 85.2 percent of the time.

We visited a range of operational fire stations during our inspection. The staff in these stations worked a mix of [wholetime](#), on-call and day-crewed duty systems. The service has a standard training plan. It trains staff and maintains their competencies against this. Staff are well trained, well equipped and knowledgeable. They showed a good understanding of the high-risk sites in their station areas. They could access SSRI in a timely manner, using mobile data terminals on fire engines.

Fire control staff make effective use of flash messages to update crews about changes to risk information. The service can also make live changes on the mobilising system to ensure that information is up to date.

Command

Incident commanders, at all levels, can command fire service assets assertively, effectively and safely. We saw evidence of detailed knowledge of NOG along with effective decision making, using the decision control process. As part of our inspection, we carried out a survey of staff to get their views of their service (refer to annex A for more details). Of the 107 firefighters who responded, 95 percent agreed that the last incident they attended was commanded assertively, effectively and safely.

Incident commanders use the service's support materials effectively. These materials include:

- command support packs;
- checklists;
- analytical risk assessments;
- key decision records; and
- message logs.

The service has an effective system to ensure that incident commanders maintain their command competence. As well as regular refresher training, incident commanders at all levels complete a two-yearly, written and practical, operational safety critical assessment.

Incident commanders told us they had the support of senior leaders to use [operational discretion](#) and depart from guidance when appropriate. We got 71 responses to our survey of staff at the rank of crew manager or above. Of these, 82 percent were confident that they would be supported by the service if they used unauthorised tactics, or used tactics in a novel way.

Keeping the public informed

The service makes good use of the live incident feed on its website to communicate information about incidents to the public. This is updated every ten minutes with a summary of the incident and resources in attendance. The service also provides additional information, including safety messages from incidents, using social media. This is provided 24 hours a day by a digital media officer, fire control and Norfolk County Council's press team.

The service has a robust referral process so that it can refer on urgent safeguarding issues identified at incidents. It does this via fire control. But, as detailed above, staff knowledge and understanding of vulnerability are inconsistent.

Inspectors found that fire control staff can communicate fire survival guidance to the public effectively. This is in line with national guidance and tailored to specific premises, based on risk. The service tests and updates these procedures with regular training and exercises.

Evaluating operational performance

We found an inconsistent approach to debriefing incidents and sharing learning from them.

We saw evidence that crews carry out [hot debriefs](#) immediately after incidents. Most crews knew they could submit learning to the Ops Assurance team using an OP25 form. But we found evidence that this is not always done. When learning had been submitted to the Ops Assurance team, we saw examples of it being acted on. For example, the service changed procedures or equipment.

We saw evidence that small numbers of structured debriefs take place. Many operational and fire control staff suggested that these were infrequent and that all the relevant people were invited.

Many staff couldn't recall the last time that learning from incidents had been shared across the organisation. They were unclear how this would be done. Of the 134 firefighters or specialist support staff who responded to our staff survey, around one quarter were not confident that the service listens to their feedback about operational incidents. Despite this, over three-quarters felt that the service takes action as a result of operational learning. We did see an example of an operational bulletin recently issued. It highlighted a concern about the use of safety jets at incidents.

The service has an effective incident-monitoring process. A member of the Ops Assurance team is mobilised to incidents as a 'critical friend'. Similar monitoring also takes place if a more senior officer attends but does not take over command of the incident.

The service maintains a database to evaluate operational learning from regional and national incidents. The service risk-rates incidents. It then develops an action plan to make any changes necessary to its internal operational procedures.

Responding to national risks



Good

Norfolk 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 its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information. This should include cross-border risk information.
- The service should arrange a programme of over-the-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.
- 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 good arrangements to supplement resources in the event of a major incident or other extraordinary need including flood. The service has well-developed response plans for different areas of water in the event of floods. These include arrangements for mobilisation of multi-agency resources and national assets. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of what would constitute a major incident. They understand their responsibilities and how to request additional resources, including national assets, when required.

The service has well-established response plans for high-risk premises, including upper and lower-tier [control of major accident hazards sites](#).

Working with other services

The service has mutual aid arrangements with its neighbouring services to support an effective cross-border operational response. But we saw evidence that cross-border exercises were infrequent. When a cross-border exercise had taken place, we saw evidence of the effective sharing of learning between services. This resulted in both services updating their procedures.

Staff were unable to consistently access cross-border risk information on mobile data terminals. They were unsure what information was available to them, or how it could be accessed at an incident or for training purposes. It was unclear to inspectors whether this was because information was not consistently available or whether staff were not familiar with how to access it.

Working with other agencies

The deputy chief fire officer chairs the NRF and other officers play active roles. This has resulted in effective working with multi-agency partners. It also ensures that the service plays a leading role in the planning and organising of joint training and exercises.

We saw evidence of a variety of multi-agency exercises taking place during 2018. These included rail crash, air crash, flooding and coastal pollution exercises. They were run as both table-top and physical exercises. They have also tested the setting up and running of strategic and tactical co-ordination groups that deal with both emergency and recovery phases of incidents. Further exercises are planned for 2019 and 2020.

2018 also saw multi-agency response plans tested in response to live incidents. These were consequences of the cold weather during the 'beast from the east' and then the dry summer.

Incident commanders demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of [Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles](#).

The service is well prepared to provide a specialist response to a terrorist attack. It has done several exercises and trained fire control, [urban search and rescue](#) staff and [national inter-agency liaison officers](#). The knowledge and understanding of this type of incident among staff who would carry out non-specialist roles are inconsistent. Inspectors found some firefighters to have good knowledge, but others are unclear of their role at such incidents. The service acknowledged this and confirmed that new guidance covering non-specialist roles will be issued within the next few months. We found that fire control staff are well prepared to deal with calls to this type of incident. But they do not provide any safety advice to callers reporting such incidents – for example, 'Run, Hide, Tell'.

Efficiency



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



Requires improvement

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. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency requires improvement.

For the last four years, the service has not based its annual financial planning on risk and demand. Instead, it uses its previous budget with changes for inflation. Norfolk County Council reviews and challenges its plans regularly. This also lets the public scrutinise its plans. Although the service has cut costs recently, this has come at the expense of resilience and capacity. For instance, it lacks capacity in some departments.

More positively, the service uses various working patterns effectively. This means it can match resource to risk effectively. It collaborates in and out of the fire sector. This saves costs and improves capacity and resilience. It also strengthens links with the organisations it works with. And it helps with information sharing. The service's continuity arrangements are effective.

Norfolk FRS is also good at making its service affordable now and in future. The service knows about the financial climate. It understands financial risks and mitigates their effects. It will meet its savings targets for 2018/19.

It spends its capital in ways that save money. It invests in technology that will improve the service it gives to the public. But we saw some dated computer systems that may increase staff workload. The council holds the service's [reserves](#). The reserves strategy is sound. The service has a commercial trading arm that invests its profits in community projects. It made a profit of £22,000 last year. But the service could explore more external funding opportunities.

Making best use of resources



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure that resources are appropriately allocated to support the activity set out in its integrated risk management plan.
- The service should ensure that it makes best use of the resources available to it, including from elsewhere within Norfolk County Council, to increase resilience and capacity.

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 not shown a clear rationale for allocation of resources to prevention, protection and response. It tried a [zero-based budget](#) approach some years ago using demand projections but did not continue with this. It now has a largely incremental approach to financial planning. It has a three-year medium-term financial plan in place. But it bases its budgets on those of the previous year with minor inflationary changes. So the service does not focus on risk and demand in its financial planning.

There is evidence of an imbalance in capacity across the service. Prevention and protection show signs of a lack of capacity. On-call staff have limited involvement in prevention activity such as home fire risk checks. The service should ensure that resources are appropriately allocated to deliver against all elements of its IRMP.

Norfolk County Council leads the service's financial planning process and monitors and reviews it regularly. The council's communities and environmental services committee challenges the service's finances and performance. It also provides robust public scrutiny. The service has an annual budget of £28.243 million.

As at 31 March 2018, the service had 53 operational fire engines, located at 42 stations across the county. It concentrates resources in the north and the east. These are coastal areas, where it can't rely on the support of neighbouring services. This ensures that the service has enough resources in these areas.

Productivity and ways of working

The service has made reductions in its back office. As at 31 March 2010, there were 134 full time equivalent (FTE) support staff. As at 31 March 2018, there were 72 FTE support staff. This has led to a reduction in cost. But it has also reduced capacity and resilience. We saw some single points of failure during inspection. The service has acted to address these. It is aware that there is more it can do. It should ensure

that it makes best use of the resources available to it, including from elsewhere within Norfolk County Council. This will increase resilience and capacity.

The service makes good use of a variety of working patterns to match resources to risk. There is a mix of wholetime, day-crewed and on-call firefighters. As at 31 March 2018, the service had three [wholetime fire stations](#), 34 retained fire stations and five mixed fire stations. The service also makes effective use of 'tidal crewing' in Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn. Rather than resourcing two stations in each location, resources are split each shift to cover a wider area and reduce attendance times. This is more efficient and needs fewer staff than standalone stations would.

Collaboration

The service is exploiting several opportunities to collaborate within and beyond the fire sector. The most notable of these is the joint fire and police headquarters. Fire control will relocate to the Norfolk Constabulary control room within the next few months. This co-location is forecast to save £100,000 in 2018/19.

The service will continue to be part of the East Coast control room consortium with Lincolnshire, Hertfordshire and Humberside FRSs. The aim is set up a new mobilising system that will improve capacity and resilience.

The service shares nine of its 42 community fire stations with partners including Norfolk Constabulary, the East of England Ambulance Service, HM Coast Guard, the youth offending team, Norfolk Lowlands Search and Rescue and the Environment Agency.

The service has co-located staff within early help hubs. Staff provide support on subjects like hoarding interventions, restorative justice, modern slavery, and [fire safety enforcement](#) and advice.

The service is part of the emergency services collaboration board. The board monitors and evaluates the benefits of collaboration. This year it will evaluate projects about forced entry and about drones.

Continuity arrangements

The service has effective business continuity arrangements for fire control and its wider information technology (IT) infrastructure. It has a secondary fire control facility. Staff train for and exercise the fall-back arrangements on a regular basis. Fire control's business continuity and resilience will be further improved once the East Coast control room consortium transfers to the new mobilising system.

We saw evidence of regular testing. And there were recent 'real' activations of the continuity plans for fire control and the IT system because of a small fire.

The service has effective disaster recovery and back-up arrangements for its IT systems.

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



Good

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is good at making itself affordable now and in the future. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it makes the best use of available technology to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency.

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

Improving value for money

The service has a good understanding of the financial climate in which it operates. It understands the financial risks that it is facing. And it is mitigating their effects. An example of this is that it factored in arrangements to cover the additional costs of fire service pension employer contributions in its 2019/20 budget.

In the year ending 31 March 2018, the firefighter cost per head of population was £19.28. This compares with the England rate of £22.38 over the same period. Many factors influence this cost, for example the ratio of wholetime to [retained staff](#). This is in part influenced by the rurality of the service.

The service has a medium-term financial plan for the period to 2020. This is based on sound assumptions. The service delivered savings of £110,000 in 2017/18 through:

- changes to its operational support structure;
- redeployment of some wholetime staff; and
- reducing the operational training budget.

Further savings of £490,000 are forecast for 2018/19 through estates collaboration. The service doesn't need to make any further savings within this period.

The service has a forecast overspend of approximately £0.6 million in 2018/19. This is mainly due to one-off costs including the increased demands over the summer. In the past, this overspend would have been covered by a 'spate reserve'. But the county council has taken this reserve back into the wider budget. So the overspend will be covered from underspends elsewhere within the communities and environmental services department.

A service level agreement is in place for fleet servicing by Norfolk County Council communities and environmental services fleet support. This is an efficient arrangement for servicing the whole of the department's fleet. The service is transferring its fleet servicing to Norse Group Ltd, which is wholly owned by Norfolk

County Council. The service expects further improvements and efficiencies as a result. But it is as yet unclear what the scale of these efficiencies will be.

The service is making effective use of capital expenditure. For example, it is making savings in revenue spending through fleet replacement to avoid leasing charges. Purchasing also lets the service determine the exact specification of vehicles.

The service plans to continue and expand its estates-sharing collaborations. It is a key partner in the one public estate programme. It is looking to further share and consolidate the estate across the public sector in Norfolk.

Innovation

The service has a considerable fleet replacement programme and investment in new technology of £5.2 million planned over the next three years. This is in line with its IRMP. It includes:

- 13 traditional fire engines;
- five light-weight alternative vehicles;
- one aerial ladder platform; and
- replacement mobile data terminals for its fire engines.

The service feels the procurement arrangements are flexible enough to meet the needs of a new IRMP.

The service has invested in technology such as incident command simulation software and virtual reality road safety equipment. It has also invested in a drone and a new mobile command centre. These support both firefighter safety and an enhanced response to incidents for the public. But we did see evidence of manual systems and dated computer systems that were increasing the workload of staff. The service should ensure that it fully explores and exploits changes in technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

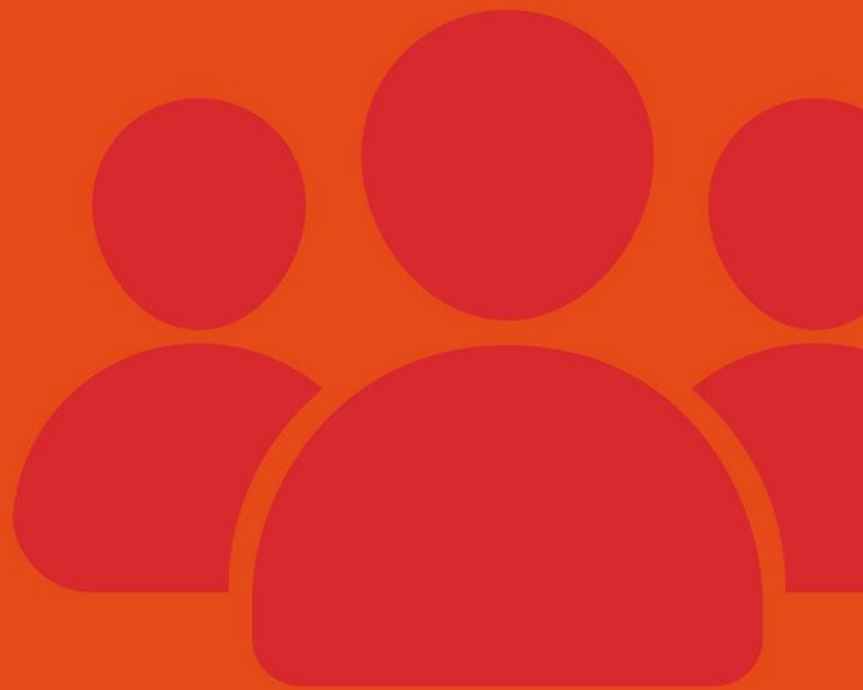
Future investment and working with others

The service has a sound reserves strategy. Reserves are held by the county council. They are clearly earmarked for the service and made available to it as and when required.

Norfolk Safety Community Interest Company (CIC) is a commercial trading arm of Norfolk FRS. It employs four of its own staff and uses other service staff on secondary contracts. It provides standard and bespoke training packages including fire safety, health and safety, risk assessment and first aid. It made a profit of £22,000 in the year to 31 March 2018. As a CIC, it reinvests all profits into community interest projects like youth engagement and fire safety activities for [vulnerable people](#).

The service has had limited success in securing external funding. It has obtained funding from the Rotary Club for smoke alarms. And it generates some income from communication masts on its buildings. The service should ensure it takes full advantage of opportunities to secure external funding. This will allow it to generate income to improve services and increase efficiency.

People



How well does the service look after its people?



Requires improvement

Summary

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

The service requires improvement at promoting values and culture. It prioritises workforce wellbeing and supports staff wellbeing in various ways. But not all staff know about the wellbeing support. The service is addressing this.

Staff record accidents and [near misses](#) as a matter of course. The service shares data with managers. The county council monitors it.

The service is subject to the county council's values, but these are not well understood by fire service staff. It now has a new cultural framework. It should ensure its workforce understands it.

Norfolk FRS is good at getting the right people with the right skills. The service understands that its workforce is ageing. It recruits and trains to avoid skill gaps. It is working to recruit more on-call firefighters.

The service trains staff robustly in risk-critical areas. It monitors training and competencies so it can identify gaps easily. And it quality assures its records.

The service requires improvement in ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Some staff do not trust the anonymity of the service's feedback system. So the service may miss out on feedback.

The service is aware that its workforce doesn't reflect the diversity of its community. It is working to overcome barriers to recruiting people from under-represented groups.

Norfolk FRS requires improvement at managing performance and developing leaders.

Its appraisal process is linked to the county council's. Most uniformed staff have had appraisals recently. Rates are lower among support staff. By improving this rate, the service will ensure support staff have clear objectives.

The service has a two-stage promotion process. The human resources department administers the first stage. The second is a local interview. Candidates told us they felt the first stage was fair. They told us they felt the second stage was not open and clear.

The service does not have a talent management programme to help it discover potential leaders. But it has a plan for one.

Promoting the right values and culture



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation.
- The service should assure itself that staff understand and have confidence in the purpose and integrity of health, safety and wellbeing policies.

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 wellbeing of staff is a priority for the service. It has a wellbeing board that is chaired by the deputy chief fire officer. The service had 15 wellbeing champions at the time of inspection. It is actively recruiting more volunteers to raise awareness of wellbeing and wellbeing support across the service.

The service provides a variety of wellbeing support to staff. This includes externally provided occupational health and physiotherapy services. It also provides a counselling and support line.

The service has an effective [trauma risk management](#) process to support staff after a traumatic incident.

We have heard from staff who have used these services. They found them effective in supporting both mental and physical wellbeing.

But many staff were unaware of the wellbeing support available to them. And they didn't know how to access it. The service was aware of this because it did a wellbeing survey in 2018. It has a plan to address it. The service should ensure that staff understand and have confidence in its wellbeing support and that they know how to access it.

The service signed the Mind Blue Light Time to Change Pledge in October 2018. It hopes this will further raise awareness of mental health in the workplace. It hopes it will make staff feel more comfortable asking for support when they need it.

The service carries out annual fitness testing of operational staff. It has a dedicated physical training instructor to help staff as they improve their physical fitness.

Health and safety

The service has a clear health and safety policy. It sets out its purpose and scope, along with a statement of intent from the chief fire officer. It clearly defines the responsibilities of staff at all levels to promote health and safety.

The service has a well-understood 'safety event' recording and investigation process for all accidents and near misses. It shares statistical data with managers across the organisation. The county council also scrutinises and monitors this data. We had 195 responses to our staff survey, equating to 23 percent of the service workforce. Of these, 90 percent reported that they were satisfied that their personal safety and welfare are treated seriously at work. Some 98 percent know how to report accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences, and 95 percent stated that they are encouraged to report all accidents, near misses or dangerous occurrences.

The service tells staff about health and safety information using regular bulletins. We saw evidence of these during inspection and staff are aware of the areas highlighted in most recent bulletins.

Culture and values

Norfolk County Council has recently simplified and relaunched its values. These are to:

- take accountability;
- make strategy happen;
- be evidence based;
- be business like; and
- be collaborative.

These values are applicable to all council departments, including the fire service. But we found that these values are neither well accepted nor understood among fire service staff. They do not feel that they are relevant and, as such, there is a lack of acceptance and buy-in.

Some on-call staff expressed concern that they did not feel valued. They felt that some officers did not see them as equal to wholetime firefighters. We also heard examples of inequalities between non-operational staff and their operational colleagues. There was evidence of isolated examples of staff not acting in accordance with accepted behaviours, which was perceived to be bullying. Of the 195 respondents to our staff survey, 17 percent reported feeling bullied or harassed. And 15 percent reported feeling discriminated against at work in the last 12 months. There are limitations to the staff survey which should be considered alongside the findings. We explain these in Annex A.

The service has recently launched a new cultural framework. It should use this to ensure that all staff clearly understand its values and act in accordance with them.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is good at getting the right people with the right skills. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its workforce plan takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities to carry out the 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 understands its workforce profile. It has an ageing workforce. There are some operational staff reaching retirement age over the next few years. Human resources staff work with districts and stations to keep track of projected retirement dates and transfers. This ensures that they have a pool of people available when required. The service has been proactively recruiting and scheduling assessment development centres (ADCs) before projected retirements. It also does risk-critical training in advance to avoid any resource and skills gaps as individuals leave.

During inspection we saw evidence of gaps in capability and resilience in specialist roles such as protection. The service should ensure that its proactive approach to succession planning takes full account of specialist skills and knowledge requirements.

Norfolk County Council has effective processes to fill vacancies for senior fire service officers. When it found out that the current chief fire officer would be retiring, it acted quickly. It got specialist advice and support from another fire and rescue service, agreed the selection process and advertised within a few weeks.

As at 31 March 2018, 62 percent of FTE firefighters were on-call firefighters. The service faces similar challenges to many other fire and rescue services in recruiting and retaining on-call firefighters. It is aware of this problem and is undertaking a range of activities to address it. These have included a social media campaign, devised by the service's in-house digital media officer. It also uses blogs written by on-call staff to explain what the life of an on-call firefighter entails. This campaign has been very successful in generating awareness of the role of on-call firefighters. We look forward to seeing if this leads to increased recruitment. The service is also supporting work nationally in this area. Two of the role models in the Home Office on-call national awareness campaign come from Norfolk FRS.

The service makes effective use of its performance management tool, 'live view'. The tool acts as a dashboard for performance. Managers have a tailored view for their specific location. So they can monitor the performance of the teams they are responsible for against their key performance indicators. We saw an example of this being used to ensure that risk file reviews were up to date.

Learning and improvement

Risk-critical training is a clear priority for the service. We found that staff are well trained in risk-critical areas. We saw evidence of regular, robust training and assessments for incident command and breathing apparatus in particular.

We observed firefighters testing equipment, including breathing apparatus. It was very positive to see that they carried this out confidently and effectively.

The service trains to an annual plan. It uses a basic spreadsheet system to record and monitor training and competencies. A traffic light system allows supervisory officers to identify any gaps in competence. We sampled the core competencies of firefighters from across the service and found them to be generally up to date. We also saw evidence that line managers sample and quality assure the records. This also happens during station audits.

The service records training and maintenance of competence in a similar way within fire control against a comprehensive training plan.

We sampled records and spoke to staff about training. We found evidence of a lack of training in areas such as safeguarding and equality, diversity and inclusion. The service should ensure that all staff receive appropriate training in these areas.

Protection staff receive comprehensive training, qualifications and continuing professional development. Opportunities for training and development for other support staff are more limited. Some staff suggest that they cannot access even basic IT courses, even if it is a requirement of their role. The service should ensure that it provides appropriate training and development opportunities to all support staff.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures.
- The service should assure itself that staff are confident using its feedback mechanisms.
- To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the service should ensure diversity and inclusion are well understood and become important values of the service.

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 has a generally positive and productive relationship with representative bodies and staff associations. These organisations engage regularly with senior leaders.

The deputy chief fire officer has made a series of visits to meet and talk to staff since being appointed in May 2018. These visits have been well received. Staff see them as a good way to discuss problems and provide feedback and challenge. But staff feel that other senior leaders are far less visible and do not engage with them. The service plans to introduce a programme of visits by all members of the senior team. So staff will get more opportunities to engage with them.

Following feedback from the staff survey, the service introduced a 'sounding board' and 'rumour mill' to the staff intranet in April 2018. These allow staff to ask questions and provide feedback anonymously, and to get responses from senior leaders and managers. While this appears to be an effective way to improve engagement, staff do not feel that it is effective. Some staff suggested that they don't trust that it is anonymous and so are not confident in using it. Others stated that they have raised issues and never received a response.

The service updates staff using various newsletters and bulletins including business information sheets and operational bulletins. Of the 195 respondents to our staff survey, 82 percent felt there were opportunities to feed their ideas upwards in the service. But only 55 percent were confident that their ideas would be listened to. Also, only 56 percent felt they could challenge ideas without any detriment to the way they would be treated afterwards.

The service should assure itself that staff are confident using its feedback mechanisms. Feedback helps the service to gather valuable information and improve engagement between staff and senior leaders.

The service has a procedure to resolve staff grievances. It encourages staff to resolve workforce concerns locally and informally. There is no requirement to record these informal grievances. So there is neither organisational oversight nor quality assurance. The service is not aware of how many informal grievances are raised, nor of any common themes. It also cannot assure itself that outcomes are consistent and fair. While formal grievances are recorded, the number being raised was very low between the years ending 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2018.

During our inspection, staff raised concerns about the grievance procedure. Most staff we spoke to said that they would not feel confident in raising a grievance. They felt that raising a grievance would be held against them and may damage their future career prospects. They preferred not to 'put their head above the parapet'. Some staff told us about bullying, harassment and discrimination in our staff survey. Those who did not report incidents to the service stated that they felt nothing would happen, had concerns about being labelled a troublemaker and were worried about potential victimisation and a lack of confidentiality.

The service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures for all staff. It should identify and implement ways to improve staff confidence in the grievance process. It should ensure that it monitors and reviews both formal and informal grievances. Then it can learn from them and make improvements.

Diversity

The service's workforce does not fully reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. As at 31 March 2018, 0.6 percent of firefighters were from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background. This compares with a BAME residential population of 3.5 percent. Only 3.0 percent of firefighters were female.

The service is fully aware of this situation. It is acting to overcome some of the barriers to recruiting under-represented groups.

There was a focus on positive action during a recent wholetime recruitment campaign. The service ran information events and have-a-go sessions for under-represented groups. This had a positive impact on the number of women applying and being successful. The service has not yet been as successful attracting other under-represented groups. It should continue to work to recruit a more diverse workforce.

During inspection we found a lack of understanding of positive action among staff. Some stated that it had meant 'a lowering of standards'. And some didn't fully appreciate the benefits of having a more representative workforce. The service should improve the understanding of positive action and the benefits of having a diverse workforce among its staff.

The service works hard and has been successful in recruiting young people from diverse backgrounds onto its youth programmes. These include cadets and the programme it runs with The Prince's Trust. The service sees the youth programmes as a stepping stone to recruitment in the future.

The service has established a new inclusion group. We look forward to seeing how this group helps to support the service on its 'cultural journey'. And we look forward to seeing improvements in equality, diversity and inclusion.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

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

Managing performance

We saw evidence of effective performance management within fire control. This includes regular reviews of call handling times as part of monthly one-to-ones and quarterly performance reviews.

The service has a performance development (appraisal) process aligned to Norfolk County Council's model. During individual appraisals, staff set personal and specific objectives. Completion rates for appraisals among uniformed staff, including fire control, wholetime and on-call, are good. They stand at 95 percent, 94 percent and 96 percent respectively as at 31 March 2018.

Many support staff we spoke to during inspection had not had an appraisal recently. Data suggests that completion rates for appraisals among support staff were only 54 percent as at 31 March 2018. Support staff also felt that their opportunities for development were very limited in comparison to those available to their uniformed colleagues.

According to our staff survey, 72 percent of the 195 respondents were satisfied with their current level of learning and development. But only 57 percent felt that they were given the same opportunities to develop as other staff in the service.

The service should ensure it uses its performance development (appraisal) process consistently to give all staff clear, personal and specific objectives.

Developing leaders

The service is making good use of an apprenticeship scheme to provide leadership development to staff.

The service has a two-stage process for promotion.

The first stage is an ADC. This is administered and quality assured centrally by the human resources department. We reviewed the completed records from recent processes. They appeared consistently open and fair, with the highest scoring candidates being successful. The service offers feedback to all candidates following the process. Both successful and unsuccessful candidates told us that they felt this was an open and fair process. They felt that feedback allowed them to 'prepare better for next time'.

The second stage of the process, open to anyone successful at the ADC, is an interview for specific roles. The interview stage is administered locally, at stations or in districts. There is no standard format and the human resources department doesn't carry out any standardisation or quality assurance. The service doesn't routinely keep records of interviews, so we couldn't review them during our inspection. Staff told us that they did not feel that this part of the process was open and clear. They felt that 'the goalposts kept moving'. The service should improve the interview stage of its selection process to ensure that it is consistent, fair, open and clear.

The service does not currently have a process to identify and develop high-potential staff. There is a plan for a talent management process with Norfolk County Council. The service should ensure that this plan progresses.

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

Where we collected data directly from fire and rescue services (FRS), 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 the FRS Technical Advisory Group, which brings together representatives from FRSs and the Home Office to support the inspection's design and development, including data collection. We gave services several opportunities to validate the data they gave us and to ensure the accuracy of the evidence presented. For instance:

- We asked all services to check the data they submitted to us via an online application.
- We asked all services to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified.

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

Methodology

Population

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

BMG survey of public perception of the fire and rescue service

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

However, a minority of the interviews (757) were conducted via face-to-face interviews with trained interviewers in respondents' homes. A small number of respondents were also interviewed online via postal invitations to the survey.

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

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

Staff survey

We conducted a staff survey open to all members of FRS workforces across England. We received 2,905 responses between 1 October 2018 and 15 February 2019 from across 16 FRSs during this period in Tranche 2.

The staff survey is 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 8 percent to 31 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 multiple times. It is also possible that the survey 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.

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 public perceptions survey:

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

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

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

Incidents attended per 1,000 population

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

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 FRSs to upload to the IRS. Totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers).
- We took data for Service in numbers from the February 2019 incident publication. So figures may not directly match more recent publications due to data updates.
- Before 2017/18, Hampshire FRS did not record medical co-responding incidents in the IRS. It is currently undertaking a project to upload this data for 2017/18 and 2018/19. This was not completed in time for publication on 14 February 2019.

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

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

- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset & Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire 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 FRAs 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 FRSs.

Fire safety audits per 100 known premises

Fire protection refers to FRSs' statutory role in ensuring public safety in the wider built environment. It involves auditing and, where necessary, enforcing regulatory compliance, primarily but not exclusively in respect of the provisions of the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005 \(FSO\)](#). The number of safety audits in Service in numbers refers to the number of audits FRSs carried out in known premises. According to the Home Office definition, "premises known to FRAs are the FRA's knowledge, as far as possible, of all relevant premises; for the enforcing authority to establish a risk profile for premises in its area. These refer to all premises except single private dwellings".

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

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

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

Firefighter cost per person per year

We took the data 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 / retained.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annex B – Fire and rescue authority governance

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

Metropolitan FRA

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

Combined FRA

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

County FRA

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

Unitary authorities

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

London

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

Mayoral Combined Authority

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

Police, fire and crime commissioner FRA

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

Isles of Scilly

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

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