

# Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22

## Effectiveness, efficiency and people

An inspection of Nottinghamshire 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 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in January 2019, 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 Nottinghamshire 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>Requires improvement</b>
Understanding fires and other risks	 Good	Requires improvement
Preventing fires and other risks	 Good	Requires improvement
Protecting the public through fire regulation	 Good	Good
Responding to fires and other emergencies	 Good	Requires improvement
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	 Good	Good

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 <b>Efficiency</b>	 <b>Good</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Making best use of resources	 Good	Requires improvement
Future affordability	 Good	Requires improvement

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 <b>People</b>	 <b>Good</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Promoting the right values and culture	 Good	Requires improvement
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 to revisit Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, and I am grateful for the positive and constructive way that the service engaged with our inspection.

I am pleased with the performance of the service in keeping people safe and secure from fires and other risks. For example, risk information is updated promptly and accurately to make sure that the latest information is available to operational crews.

The service has clearly used the last report appropriately and worked hard on the areas for improvement. We found it had improved in almost all areas since the round one inspection.

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

The service has a well-resourced prevention department that carries out a mix of referral and data-led visits to target those most at risk from fire. It then uses an evaluated method to understand the level of risk to the individual. Other organisations the service works with have been trained to use this method to ensure a consistent approach. This cohesive approach has resulted in many more people being reached compared with our first inspection.

In round one of our inspections, we gave the service an area for improvement to introduce a robust performance management framework. During this inspection, we found that the service had put one in place. This was evident across almost all areas of the service. The framework provides several levels for reporting, and ensures oversight is maintained and activities that are missing targets can be recorded and addressed before a problem arises.

We found the service had put processes in place to ensure that firefighters always have up-to-date risk information for Nottinghamshire, which it shares with neighbouring fire and rescue services when needed. The inspection team still have problems with using some of the [mobile data terminals](#) to access the information, but we recognise the service has a plan in place to address this.

Another round one area for improvement was to develop a wellbeing strategy. We were pleased to see this had been done, and that the service had this and other wellbeing provisions in place. During our inspection, we found that staff weren't always aware of these. So the service should ensure that all staff understand the wellbeing provisions available to them.

Overall, I commend Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service on the clear improvements it has made since our last inspection. And I encourage the service to keep the momentum going with the positive changes it has made so far.



**Roy Wilsher**

HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

# Service in numbers



## Response

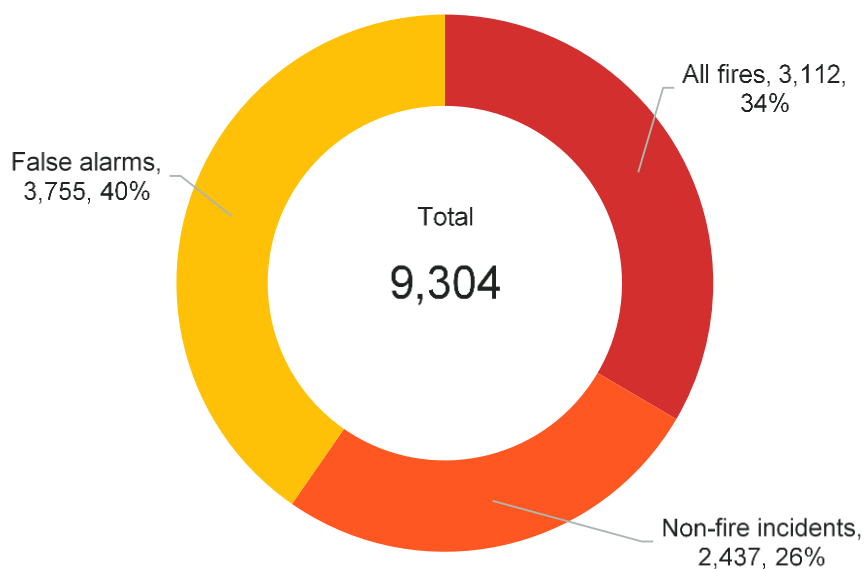
	Nottinghamshire	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population Year ending 30 June 2021	7.95	9.36
Home fire safety checks carried out by fire and rescue service per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	5.51	4.47
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises Year ending 31 March 2021	1.35	1.70
Average availability of pumps Year ending 31 March 2021	N/A	86.4%



## Cost

Firefighter cost per person Year ending 31 March 2021	£22.72	£23.73
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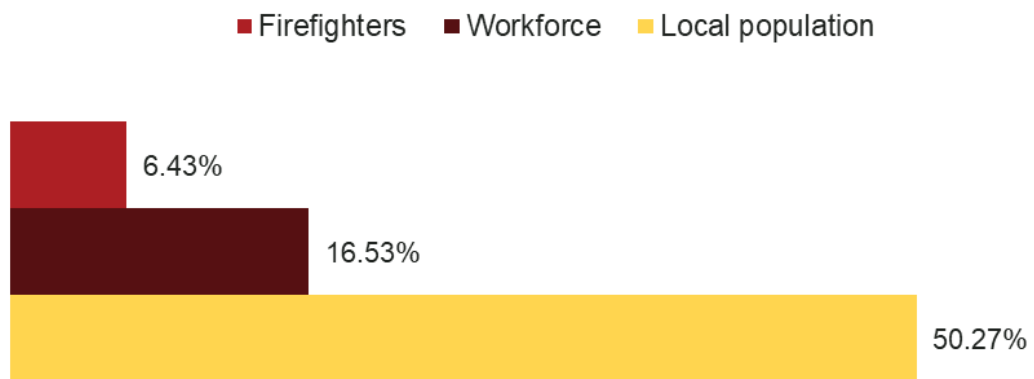
### Incidents attended in the year to 30 June 2021



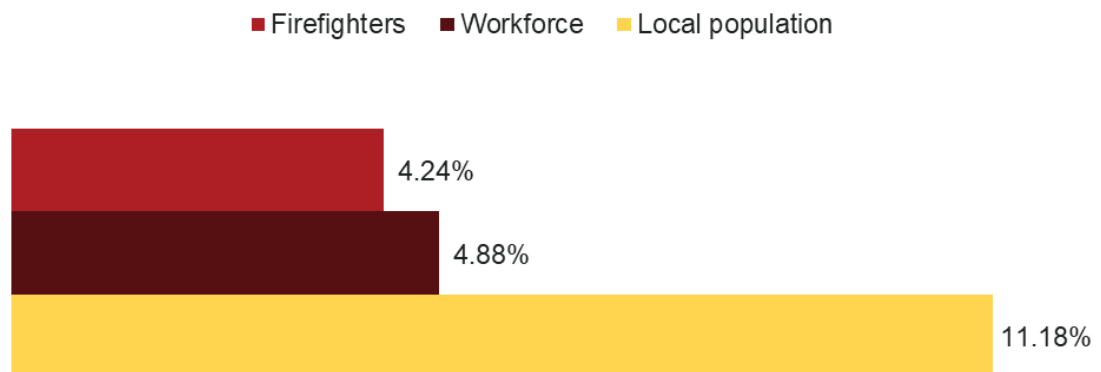


Five-year change in total workforce 2016 to 2021	-10.65%	-1.60%
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	0.57	0.62
Percentage of firefighters who are wholetime Year ending 31 March 2021	62.3%	64.4%

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



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



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



# Effectiveness



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



**Good**

## Summary

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

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We are pleased with the progress that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has made in terms of its effectiveness.

Although its current [integrated risk management plan \(IRMP\)](#) is limited in how it drives the activities that the service should carry out, we were pleased to see at the time of our inspection that the service was working to develop the new community risk management plan (CRMP) published in April. The CRMP clearly sets out how the service will carry out prevention, protection and response activities to make Nottinghamshire safer.

The service displays good levels of partnership working, especially around prevention and ensuring a common approach. This means that those most at risk from fire can be identified and given further support.

The service has revised its risk-based inspection programme to target the highest-risk buildings. This has been revised using data rather than assumption, to form a more accurate understanding.

In our round one inspection we gave the service an area for improvement to monitor incident commanders and provide feedback following an incident. We found that the service now had a process to record operational learning and share this throughout the organisation.

## Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



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

Nottinghamshire 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 identifies risk effectively**

The service has assessed an appropriate range of risks and threats after a thorough integrated risk management planning process. When assessing risk, it considers relevant information collected from a broad range of internal and external sources and data sets. This includes information on health, social care and past incidents. Sources include the Office for National Statistics and organisations that provide data on public safety.

When appropriate, the service consults and communicates with the communities it serves. The service uses an external company to carry out consultations on its behalf. This involves providing members of the public with all the relevant information, including those who have pre-registered an interest in this area. A group representing people with hearing impairments has also been approached.

The service also consults with staff and representative bodies, such as trade unions.

### **The IRMP should better reflect the service's activity**

During our round one inspection, an area for improvement was that the service should use its IRMP to keep the public safe and secure from the risks identified. We found that the IRMP was limited in how it identified the risks to the public and carried out activity to mitigate these. However, we recognise that the service has addressed this with its new CRMP, which was due to be published shortly after our inspection.

The service should make sure that the departmental plans are driving prevention, protection and response activity effectively. And that they remain aligned with the integrated risk management planning process.

### **The service has robust methods to gather and share risk information**

The service routinely collects and updates the information it holds about the people, places and threats it has identified as being at greatest risk. It has processes in place to make sure that high-risk buildings are reviewed promptly. The information is then quality assured internally, before being added to the [mobile data terminals](#) on fire engines.

In our round one inspection, we gave an area for improvement that the service should make sure firefighters have access to relevant and up-to-date risk information. During our latest inspection, we were encouraged to find during visits to stations that risk information was accurate, complete and up to date. This information is readily available for the service's prevention, protection and response staff to access, which helps the service identify, reduce and mitigate risk effectively.

The service uses a single database for holding prevention, protection and risk information. When departments collect information, staff can highlight whether it should be shared with colleagues in other departments. This ensures a joined-up approach to public safety. The service also has a process in place to promptly share risk information with operational crews.

Where appropriate, risk information is passed on to other organisations and can be updated outside normal business hours. The service works well with other organisations, such as the local authority, to share relevant risk information. This means that there is a common approach to understanding local risks.

### **The service updates risk information effectively following operational activity**

The service records and communicates risk information effectively. It also routinely updates risk assessments and uses feedback from local and national operational activity to inform its planning assumptions. For example, the service issues an operational assurance bulletin when there is new risk information. This is sent to all staff, who must then confirm that they have read it.

### **The service has reacted proactively to learning following the Grenfell Tower tragedy**

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

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has reacted positively and proactively to learning from this tragedy. The service was on track to have assessed the risk of each high-rise building in its area by the end of 2021.

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

## Preventing fires and other risks



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

Nottinghamshire 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.

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 make sure that its prevention plans align with the CRMP**

We found the service had effective departmental plans, which were driving prevention activity. However, the service must make sure that these align with the CRMP it produces for the public.

The service works well with other relevant organisations on prevention, and it passes on relevant information when required. The service uses information to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between its prevention, protection and response functions. The service uses a variety of prevention activity methods between teams and with other organisations it works with. Following a serious fire, the service will carry out community reassurance and engagement activity using operational crews, and proactively carries out data and intelligence community engagement (DICE) activity for proactive, data-led communications with communities.

### **The service reacted proactively to the pandemic**

We considered how the service had adapted its prevention work during our COVID-19-specific inspection in October 2020. At that time, we found it had adapted its public prevention work appropriately. Since then, we were encouraged to find that the service continued to work with other organisations to provide continuous training in using its internal risk assessment to establish those most at risk. Operational crews have also restarted prevention activity and are meeting their monthly targets.

## **The service is effective at targeting those most at risk**

Prevention activity is clearly prioritised, using a risk-based approach towards people most at risk from fire and other emergencies. It has created a method for risk assessment to use during [safe and well visits](#). This is referred to as CHARLIE and considers:

- care and support needs/cooking;
- hoarding and mental health issues;
- alcohol and medication;
- reduced mobility;
- living alone;
- inappropriate smoking;
- elderly people, aged 65+; and
- previous incidents.

Scores are then given, which helps the service understand people's vulnerability and risk. To encourage a common approach, the service also trains other organisations it works with on using this method.

The service takes account of a broad range of information and data to target its prevention activity at [vulnerable](#) individuals and groups. The service, including fire station crews, carries out an appropriate mix of safe and well visits. These are referred to by other organisations and those the service has identified using data-led intelligence.

The service provides a range of interventions that it adapts to the level of risk in its communities. Its district prevention officers work with the community, and a dedicated persons at risk team (within the prevention department) can provide a higher level of intervention if required. The service is proactive in using operational crews to provide further engagement with the community.

## **Staff are confident in making safe and well visits**

During our inspection, staff including operational crews told us they had the right skills and confidence to make safe and well visits. These checks cover an appropriate range of hazards that can put vulnerable people at greater risk from fire and other emergencies. We found operational and prevention staff were confident and competent in carrying out safe and well visits, and escalating when further intervention was needed.

## **The service proactively safeguards vulnerable people**

Staff we interviewed told us about occasions when they had identified [safeguarding](#) problems. They told us they felt confident and trained to act appropriately and promptly. Although we found that staff had limited knowledge of the types of safeguarding problems they may encounter, they were all confident in escalating or signposting when they felt a situation needed it.

## **The service works well with other organisations**

The service works with a wide range of other organisations, such as the local NHS Trust and local authorities, to prevent fires and other emergencies. The service is also a member of other prevention-focused groups, including water safety and the [safety advisory group](#). On the HMICFRS staff survey (278 respondents), we found 37 percent thought the service was extremely effective at multi-agency working and 43 percent thought the service was very effective.

We found good evidence that the service routinely referred people at greatest risk to other organisations that may be better able to meet their needs. These organisations include the safeguarding adults board (the statutory forum for agreeing how services, other organisations and the community work together to safeguard adults at risk of harm and abuse), local authority falls team and social services. Arrangements are in place to receive referrals from other organisations, such as health, police and the local authority. The service acts appropriately on the referrals it receives.

The service routinely exchanges information with other public sector organisations about people and groups at greatest risk. It uses the information to challenge planning assumptions and target prevention activity.

## **The service has effective processes to tackle 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 service has access to a fire-setting counsellor, to whom it refers individuals identified during post-fire checks or safe and well visits. We were encouraged to see the service was proactive in targeting schools, when appropriate, following spikes in deliberate fires.

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

In our round one inspection, we gave the service an area for improvement to evaluate prevention work. In early 2021, the service commissioned Nottingham Trent University to carry out a full evaluation of safe and well visits. The university reviewed the costs and benefits of safe and well visits, and the value of using an internal risk assessment in identifying those most at risk of death or serious injury from fire.

The university outlined recommendations for improvement. One of these was that the service should quality assure CHARLIE assessments carried out by organisations it works with. The service has done this by comparing each partner risk assessment score with its own and investigating large variations.

The service should also consider evaluating its relationships with other organisations to fully understand the benefits to the public and the service.

## Protecting the public through fire regulation



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

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

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

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should assure itself that its risk-based inspection programme 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 current IRMP doesn't drive the protection plans**

We found the service had effective departmental plans that were driving protection activity. However, the service must ensure these align to the CRMP it produces for the public.

Staff throughout the service are involved in protection activity. We found that operational crews were included in assessing risks around new buildings in their area, which improved their understanding of that risk. They are also trained to spot hazards during their day-to-day duties.

Information is then used to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between the service's protection, prevention and response functions. This means resources are properly aligned to risk. In our round one inspection, we gave an area for improvement that the service should use its specialist resources better to implement its risk-based inspection programme. We found the protection team was adequately resourced. And the service has adopted national guidance to help use its risk-based inspection programme to align resources with risk.

#### **The service effectively aligns activity with risk**

The service's risk-based inspection programme is focused on the service's highest-risk buildings. Since our round one inspection, the service has updated its risk-based inspection programme. Previously, it was focused on the risks relating to a fire happening when people are sleeping and unfamiliar with the layout of the building, such as the location of fire escapes. It now uses more relevant data to better understand which buildings are the highest risk and target them more effectively.



The audits we reviewed were completed in the timescales the service had set itself. Service leaders decided to train operational [watch](#) and crew managers to carry out appropriate level audits to allow more premises to be inspected. We recognise that the service is aware this means it will not meet its audit target. But in the longer term, it will be able to carry out more activity. The service should ensure that normal activity resumes when the training is complete.

### **The service has effectively identified and audited cladded buildings**

The service has identified and completed audits at all high-rise buildings using cladding similar to that installed on Grenfell Tower. Information gathered during these audits is made available to response teams and control operators. This helps them react more effectively in an emergency.

During our inspection, the service was on track to visit all the high-rise, high-risk buildings it had identified in its service area by the end of 2021.

### **The service carries out consistent and robust audits**

We reviewed a range of audits of different premises throughout 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 is effective at quality assurance**

Quality assurance of protection activity is proportionate. The service has adopted national best practice for quality assurance.

The service has good evaluation tools in place to measure the effectiveness of its activity. The service should collect equality data during protection activity to ensure all groups in its communities get appropriate access to the protection services that meet their needs.

### **The service isn't always consistent with enforcement activity**

We were disappointed to find that the service didn't consistently use its full range of enforcement powers. It also has a limited appetite to prosecute those who don't comply with fire safety regulations.

We found protection staff were adequately trained. But the lack of enforcement activity means they haven't been able to build the confidence needed to carry out prosecutions.

In the year to 31 March 2021, the service issued 1 alteration notice, 54 informal notifications, 6 enforcement notices and 3 prohibition notices, and carried out no prosecutions.

### **The service's protection team is adequately resourced**

The service currently has enough qualified protection staff to meet the requirements of its risk-based inspection programme. All staff in the protection team are trained to an appropriate level, including legal training. The service is also training operational managers, and three members of staff are completing fire engineer training. This helps Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue provide the range of audit and enforcement activity needed, both now and in the future.

Staff get the right training and work to appropriate accreditation.

### **The service works well with other organisations to share information on risk**

The service works closely with other enforcement organisations to regulate fire safety and routinely exchanges risk information with them. The service has dedicated staff that are part of a joint audit inspection team. The team's purpose is to work alongside the local authority to carry out joint audits of high-rise premises. This ensures a joint understanding of risk. Other examples we saw included sharing information on standards of care and working with police to establish concerns – such as modern slavery.

### **The service has good completion rates for building consultations**

The service reacts to the majority of building consultations on time, so consistently meets its statutory responsibility to comment on fire safety arrangements at new and altered buildings. The service works to national guidance, which is 15 working days to react to building consultations. This information is reported to the service delivery, evaluation and assurance group to ensure the deadline is met.

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

The service communicates well with local businesses and other organisations to promote compliance with fire safety legislation. It has a dedicated business engagement team. During our inspection, we saw examples of the service routinely contacting premises with targeted fire safety information. This included schools and care homes.

### **The service is proactive in monitoring and reducing unwanted fire signals**

The service employs a business engagement team. It works with local businesses and educates them to reduce the numbers of unwanted fire signals. We recognise that the service is proactive in tackling unwanted fire signals. The service should continue to monitor these to ensure they continue to reduce, and if the numbers do increase, investigate any cause to understand the reasons for this and take appropriate action.

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.

## Responding to fires and other emergencies



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

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

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

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should ensure that, when responding to a 999 call, mobile data terminals are reliable to allow staff to access risk information.

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

#### **Response standards and availability**

We found the service had effective departmental plans that were driving response activity. However, the service must ensure these align with its CRMP.

#### **The service consistently meets its response standard**

There are no national response standards of performance for the public. But the service has set out its own response standards in its CRMP. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue aims to respond to all incidents within an average of eight minutes, from [mobilising](#) a fire engine to attending an incident. The service consistently meets its standards.

However, Home Office data shows that in the year to 31 March 2021, the service's average response time to [primary fires](#) was 9 minutes and 38 seconds. This is slower than the average England response time for predominantly urban services, at 7 minutes and 26 seconds.

#### **The service has good availability for wholetime and on call**

To support its response plans, the service aimed to have 85 percent on-call availability of fire engines and 99 percent of wholetime availability in 2020/21. The service consistently meets this standard and the actual availability for on call is 88.8 percent.

## **Incident commanders are trained to the appropriate level**

The service has trained incident commanders who are assessed regularly and properly. During our inspection, we found all incident commanders were trained to the appropriate level, including some that were upskilled to the level above. This helps the service safely and effectively manage the full range of incidents that it could face, from small and routine to complex multi-agency incidents.

As part of our inspection, we interviewed incident commanders from throughout the service. The ones we spoke to were 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 \(JESIP\)](#).

## **Control room staff should be included in Nottinghamshire activities**

After our last inspection, the service merged its control room with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service. We found that service-applicable training was provided, and control room staff were included in training events. But they often weren't involved in the planning stages of exercises or in-service procedures such as debriefing or support following a traumatic incident in Nottinghamshire's service area.

## **Control room staff are well prepared to provide fire survival guidance**

The control room staff we interviewed were confident they could provide fire survival guidance to many callers simultaneously. This was identified as learning for fire services after the Grenfell Tower fire.

The service has a tri-service arrangement with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. This means that if either service has large volumes of calls, the other can take any overflow. Leicestershire can also view the service mobilising system and act on Nottinghamshire's behalf if required.

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

## **The service has accurate up-to-date risk information, but this isn't always available to firefighters**

We sampled a range of risk information at [wholetime](#) and on-call stations. We viewed high-risk and high-rise premises information, as well other risks according to that station area. We consistently found information was complete, relevant and up to date.

However, staff told us that mobile data terminals were sometimes unreliable, so it wasn't always possible to access risk information. The service is providing secondary devices to address this. But these must be available at all stations, with staff properly trained to use them.

The risk information includes what is in place for firefighters responding to incidents at high-risk, high-rise buildings, and what information the [fire control](#) room holds.

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

### **The service is good at monitoring and sharing operational learning**

As part of the inspection, we reviewed a range of emergency incidents and training events. These included domestic and commercial fires and rescues.

We are pleased to see the service routinely follows its policies to assure itself that staff command incidents in line with operational guidance. Internal risk information is updated with the information received.

The service has established a culture of continual learning and improvement. During incidents, learning is included on a debrief form and considered at the operational learning board. If relevant, this information is then shared via operational assurance bulletins. We saw evidence of this learning shared throughout the organisation. Staff must confirm on the training system that they have read the bulletin.

We were encouraged to see the service was contributing towards, and acting on, learning from other fire and rescue services or operational learning gathered from other emergency service organisations.

The service has a process in place to track receipt and actions relating to [national operational learning](#) and joint operational learning. This information is reported to the operational learning board before being circulated. We saw examples of this on service operational assurance bulletins at stations.

### **The service is good at keeping the public informed about incidents**

The service has good systems in place to inform the public about continuing incidents and help keep them safe during and after incidents. The service uses social media platforms well, providing frequent updates and safety advice. It also uses its website to keep the public informed about large-scale incidents and safety campaigns.

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



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

Nottinghamshire 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 has effective plans in place for major or multi-agency incidents**

The service has 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 integrated risk management planning. For example, COVID-19 and environmental impacts are both considered as potential risks to the service.

It is also familiar with the significant risks that neighbouring fire and rescue services could face, that it might reasonably be asked to respond to in an emergency. During our inspection, we found that firefighters had full access to risk information from the tri-service areas (Derbyshire and Leicestershire) and up to 10 kilometres into neighbouring service areas bordering Nottinghamshire.

## **The service is well prepared to respond to major and multi-agency incidents**

We reviewed the arrangements the service had in place to respond to different major incidents, including high-rise incidents and large-scale incidents caused by severe weather.

The service has good plans in place, which staff understand. For example, the service has a clear exercise plan which includes high-rise, marauding terrorist attack (MTA) and other large-scale incidents. The service has committed to make sure that at least a quarter of all training exercises are over-border or multi-agency. Staff we spoke to felt they were adequately trained and prepared to respond to these incidents. The service also has its own specialist MTA team in place.

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

The service supports other fire and rescue services responding to emergency incidents. For example, it is in a tri-service agreement with Derbyshire and Leicestershire, as well as working together with the control rooms. We saw other areas of interoperability, such as buying the same type of breathing apparatus. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is intraoperable with these services and can form part of a multi-agency response.

The service has successfully deployed to other services and has used national assets. We heard about examples of the service accessing tactical advisers and all members of staff we spoke to understood the arrangements for requesting national assets.

## **The service has an adequate exercise plan in place**

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 provide support or request help from neighbouring services. We were encouraged to see that feedback from these exercises informed risk information and service plans. The staff survey results showed that 30 percent of respondents thought the service was extremely effective at cross-border working, and 42 percent thought it was very effective.

As with routine incidents, any learning from exercises is gathered and sent to staff via operational assurance bulletins. We saw examples of this including a shopping centre multi-storey car park exercise.

### **The service is familiar with JESIP**

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

The service could provide us with strong evidence that it consistently follows these principles. This includes staff training led by the lead [national inter-agency liaison officer](#). JESIP also forms part of incident monitoring so the service can ensure staff are working in line with it.

### **The service is a valued member of the local resilience forum**

The service has good arrangements in place to respond to emergencies with other organisations that make up the Nottinghamshire [local resilience forum](#). These arrangements include positively contributing at a strategic and tactical level. The service is a member of the finance, communications, partner assistance and recovery group cells.

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

Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the service has shared its actions with other local resilience forum members. This included the results of high-rise exercises.

### **The service is proactive in keeping up to date with learning from other services and organisations**

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

# 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. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

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Since our round one inspection, we have seen Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service use its budget and resources more efficiently.

The change of shift pattern at two stations and the control room merger with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service has helped Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to make savings without affecting the service it provides to the public.

The service has shown repeated examples of its willingness to collaborate. The control room merger is one example, and another is the move to joint headquarters with Nottinghamshire Police. The service shares other buildings with Nottinghamshire Police and the East Midlands Ambulance Service.

Since our last inspection, the service has better managed its reserve fund and has created a transformation fund, which has allowed for modernisation in areas such as digital technology, collaboration and performance management.

The service should evaluate these partnerships to fully understand the benefits to itself and the public.

## Making best use of resources



### Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Nottinghamshire 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 £46.5m. This is a 2.8 percent increase from the previous financial year.

#### Area for improvement

The service should make sure 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 has robust plans in place

We have found that the current IRMP is limited in terms of how it identifies the risks to the public and drives activity to mitigate these. However, the service has effective departmental plans that are driving activity. We recognise the service has addressed this in the new IRMP, which was due to be published shortly after our inspection. The service's financial and workforce plans reflect, and are consistent with, the priorities identified in the departmental plans. This includes allocating staff to prevention, protection and response. The service must make sure its financial and workforce plans reflect the risks and priorities identified in the new IRMP.

Plans are built on sound scenarios. They help to make sure the service is sustainable and are underpinned by financial controls that reduce the risk of misusing public money. The service has robust plans to ensure its finances are monitored and remain on track. It uses finance workshops to monitor budgets and analyse spending and savings. This means it can anticipate if any areas will differ from the set budgets.

The service has made savings through changing shift patterns without compromising minimum levels of fire cover. Savings were also made through sharing a control room with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service. These savings have helped the service to secure a balanced budget. The service should continue to review its spending, to help ensure long-term financial sustainability without an over-reliance on [reserves](#).

## **The service has measures in place for a productive workforce**

We were pleased to see that the service's arrangements for managing performance clearly linked resource use to the service's most important and long-term aims. In our last inspection, we gave the service an area for improvement that it should put in place a clear performance management framework that directly supports the objectives identified in the IRMP.

We were pleased to find the service had implemented a performance management framework that applies to all areas of the organisation. Performance indicators and targets are reported to the service delivery, evaluation and assurance group. These are then escalated to the programme and performance board where necessary. Plus, each station has a plan that includes targets that are also reported to this group. This provides the service with oversight of what activities are being done and where.

We saw this in practice during our inspection. For example, each station has a safe and well target on its station plan. Safe and well activity is then reported back through the performance management system to help the service understand if it is meeting targets and where it needs to improve.

The service is working to make sure the workforce's time is as productive as possible. This includes introducing new ways of working. For example, operational crews routinely carry out protection, prevention and risk work alongside their operational duties.

## **The service proactively seeks opportunities to work with others**

We were pleased to see the service met its statutory duty to collaborate, and routinely considered opportunities to work with other emergency responders. The service is due to move into joint headquarters with Nottinghamshire Police in 2022, and both services already share operational buildings. We also saw evidence of collaboration with the police around fuel supplies, a drone and a welfare unit. During the pandemic, the service supported the ambulance service with transporting non-COVID-19 patients.

Collaborative work is aligned with the priorities in the service's current IRMP. For example, sharing premises with police and ambulance. We are satisfied that the service monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and results of its collaborations. But its reviews and evaluation are limited in scope and aren't used to learn or change decisions. We have seen evidence of evaluation of the control room merger with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service. However, this is largely focused on financial results and hasn't considered other benefits or risks that have occurred as a result of the merger.

## **The service has good business continuity plans**

We were encouraged to see the improvements the service had made since the last inspection. The service has good continuity arrangements in place for areas where threats and risks are considered high, including industrial action. These threats and risks are regularly reviewed and tested, so that staff are aware of the arrangements and their associated responsibilities.

We found the service had clear business continuity plans in place. And we saw evidence that these had been tested proactively (industrial action business continuity testing) and reactively during the pandemic and the fuel shortage in 2021.

The joint control tests its fallback arrangements once a month. This ensures business continuity if control equipment fails. The service also has the capability to transfer all calls and incidents to Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. Plus, the service has firefighter resilience contracts to provide cover during industrial action.

### **The service is making savings while maintaining operational performance**

There are regular reviews to consider all the service's expenditure, including its non-pay costs. This scrutiny means the service gets value for money. For example, it has renegotiated its contracted services for estates maintenance. The service now receives better value for money from its new contractor. External auditors also give assurance that the service is providing value for money.

The service has made savings and maintained operational performance by realigning operational resources. A result has been fewer fire engines. It has also made savings by changing two stations from [wholetime](#) crewing to day crewing (with on call at night). This increases the on-call capacity.

The service has used its additional protection funding from the Government following the Grenfell Tower tragedy to train central staff to a higher level. Crew and [watch](#) managers are also being trained to make lower-level business safety checks.

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



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

Nottinghamshire 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 plans to address future financial challenges**

The service understands future financial challenges, with plans to mitigate its main financial risks. The previous area for improvement has been met. The service has sufficiently robust and affordable plans in place, which consider the medium-term financial challenges. For example, the service has considered the effect of increased costs of pensions. The fire authority also maintains oversight on upcoming priorities, risks, and challenges. By doing this, the service is held to account externally as well as through its own monitoring measures.

The service's assumptions are relatively robust, realistic and prudent. They also take account of the wider external environment and some scenario planning for future spending reductions. The service considers different scenarios when setting its budget. It has also anticipated risks that may arise from areas such as council tax, business rates, government funding and inflation.

We were pleased to see that the service had identified savings and investment opportunities to improve the service to the public or generate further savings. The service has accrued savings during the pandemic, which has allowed it to increase reserves. It has also set aside a reserve to fund major change. So far, this fund has been used in areas such as digital technology, collaboration and performance management.

## **The service has reviewed and improved its use of reserves**

The service has a sensible and sustainable plan for using its reserves. In 2019, the service reviewed its reserves and recognised that extra monitoring would be required. So it has now put in place annual reviews of the reserve balances.

## **The service uses fleet and estates plans to drive activity**

The service's estate and fleet plans are detailed in content and objective for the future. The estate plan sets out the broad principles for managing the estate, the main projects to be completed and the funding arrangements.

The service's estates department uses a ten-year forward maintenance register for forward planning. Asset registers are now held electronically, with users able to log checks and faults with assets through an automated system. The service has made savings by contracting maintenance services. Plans also include arrangements for business continuity and reducing environmental impact.

The fleet plan considers operational availability, resilience, value for money and sustainability. It includes details of the service's awareness of Nottingham City Council's target of zero emissions by 2028, and the service's intention to ensure light vehicles based in the city are electric (or other zero-emission power) by then.

The service should review the plans in line with the new CRMP so it can properly assess the effect on any changes in estate and fleet provision, or future innovation, have on risk.

### **The service considers future impact when making changes**

The service considers how changes in technology and future innovation may affect risk. It has a digital strategy covering the period 2019–2022. This document sets out the service’s principles for digital development and the aim of user-friendly, agile and flexible systems.

The service recognises that technology can improve all areas of the organisation. For example, communications, access to data for better performance, more efficiency by integrating systems, and flexible working.

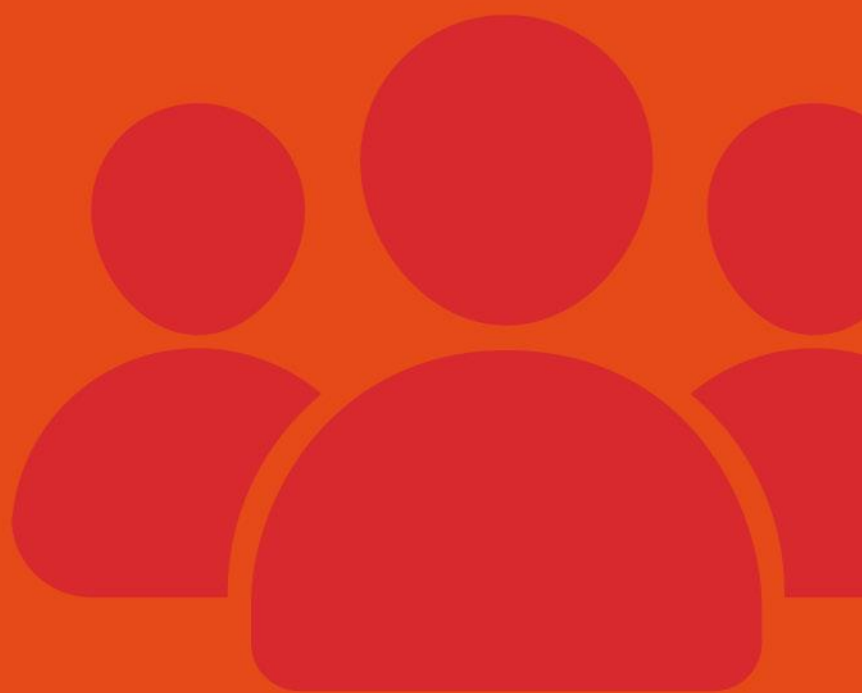
It has put in place the capacity and capability needed to achieve sustainable change. And it routinely seeks opportunities to work with others to improve efficiency and provide better services in the future.

Environmental aspects are now considered fundamental elements of building design. Also fundamental are risk and collaboration aspects that may, for example, determine what training facilities are put in new buildings. This includes high-rise building training and where the new buildings will be located to provide the best service to the community. New buildings the service commissions are designed to be energy efficient.

### **Income-generation activity is limited**

The service considers options for generating extra income, but its track record in securing it is limited. It charges for some non-emergency incidents, which provides a small income. But at the time of our inspection, the service didn’t have any other income generation.

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

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We were pleased to find that the service's values and behaviours were understood and demonstrated by staff at all levels. During the inspection, we were told the senior leaders modelled the service values. We also found the service was working to implement the core code of ethics.

We found the service had a robust workforce plan, which included training needs and leaver profiles. By working to this, the service can assure itself it maintains oversight of skills gaps and potential staffing shortfalls.

The service recruitment processes were found to be open and fair, with a diverse selection panel to support individuals applying, and for the workforce to be representative of the demographic of Nottinghamshire. The service has also implemented staff network groups to support those already in post.

All staff we spoke to during the inspection process had a conversation or performance review with their line manager at least once a year. We also found the service had provided learning to help staff understand how their individual objectives link to service objectives.

Overall, we were pleased to see the service improving in all areas of people.



## Promoting the right values and culture



### Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Nottinghamshire 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.

#### Area for improvement

The service should assure itself that staff understand how to get wellbeing support.

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

### Values are demonstrated throughout the organisation

The service has well-defined values that are understood by staff. Behaviours that reflect service values are shown at all levels of the organisation. The service has a new behavioural framework, which has been communicated throughout the organisation. Ninety-eight percent of staff who completed our survey stated they were aware of service values. We heard evidence that staff at all levels of the organisation understood and displayed service values. Staff described a supportive, welcoming and communicative culture. We are encouraged by the cultural improvements the service has made. Work is in hand to implement the new national [Core Code of Ethics](#).

During our inspection, we were told that senior leaders acted as role models and that they consistently demonstrated the service values and had become far more visible and open to communication. The staff survey results showed that 79 percent (215 of 273) of respondents agreed or tended to agree that senior leaders consistently modelled and maintained service values.

There is a positive working culture throughout the service, with staff engaged in decisions that affect them. We found engagement was maintained among staff, with managers keeping everyone informed of strategic direction and areas such as positive action. Staff also told us two-way discussions were encouraged. Ninety-four percent (256 of 273) of staff survey respondents agreed or tended to agree that they felt colleagues consistently modelled and maintained service values.

## **Wellbeing support processes aren't always applied consistently**

The service has some wellbeing provisions in place to support the mental and physical health of staff. This includes:

- a detailed wellbeing plan, which was identified as an area for improvement in our round one inspection;
- access to the employee assistance programme; and
- in-service occupational health support, which includes access for physical fitness support.

The service could do more to engage with its workforce and understand what else staff require to support their individual needs. In our staff survey, 96 percent of respondents (267 of 278) agreed or tended to agree that they were able to access services to support their mental wellbeing.

However, during our inspection we found that staff had limited knowledge of the wellbeing strategy and the activity it drives. Staff also told us the process for support following traumatic incidents wasn't always consistently applied for operational and control staff. While speaking to staff, we heard examples where they felt post-incident welfare support hadn't been given promptly. As a result, staff have limited confidence in the processes available.

## **The service has effective health and safety policies**

The service has effective and well-understood health and safety policies and procedures in place. It has ways to ensure that staff understand health and safety policies and processes. These include performance reporting, station audit reports and training input. The service also produces a bi-monthly operational assurance bulletin via the service-learning system, which is mandatory for completion and verified on training records.

These policies and procedures are readily available and effectively promoted to all staff. In our staff survey, 99 percent of respondents (274 of 278) agreed or tended to agree that they understood the policies and procedures the service has to make sure they can work safely. Both staff and representative bodies have confidence in the service's approach to health and safety.

In our previous inspection, we gave the service an area for improvement that the service should put appropriate mechanisms in place that help closer monitor hours worked by staff on dual contracts. Although the service has ways to monitor this, we found that this process wasn't widely understood among staff. The service should ensure that it continues to embed these processes and monitor the information to fully understand the hours staff work.

The service should ensure that lone working procedures are reliable, and staff fully understand them.

## The service is good at managing absence

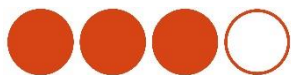
As part of our inspection, we reviewed some case files to consider how the service managed and supported staff through absence including sickness, parental and special leave.

We found there were 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.

During our inspection, we found that the service had a good system for recording and monitoring staff absence. And there is good support within the teams to assist managers with absence queries.

Overall, the service has seen a 35.5 percent decrease in staff absences over the 12 months between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

## Getting the right people with the right skills



### Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Nottinghamshire 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.

### Workforce planning means the service has the required skills and capabilities

The service has good workforce planning in place. This means skills and capabilities align with what is needed to effectively implement the IRMP. The service has a workforce plan that sets out requirements for leavers profiles, promotions and department requirements. The service passes this information to the strategic leadership team, to highlight staffing and skill gaps.

The workforce plan includes retirement, staff turnover and succession planning. The service also includes the requirements of department managers in the workforce plan, which may cover restructures and provides resilience to the organisation. Covering these potential factors means the service maintains good oversight of the organisation's needs.

Ninety percent of our staff survey respondents (250 of 278) agreed or tended to agree that they could access the training they needed to be effective in their role. The service's training plans make sure it can maintain competence and capability effectively. For example, during our inspection we spoke to staff from various departments who all told us they had access to training appropriate to their role. We also saw some evidence of staff receiving extra training to develop additional skills beyond those required for their role.

The service monitors staff competence by ensuring all skills training and maintenance are logged on each person's training system promptly. By keeping the training and competence system up to date the service can monitor and understand staff skills and competence. During our inspection we found the training records were accurate and up to date, and staff were competent in their roles.

We checked more than 100 records for staff training and found 99 percent were accurate and up to date. The service has a training recording system that allows staff to easily create reports. This means service leaders can establish gaps in workforce capabilities and resilience, and can make sound and financially sustainable decisions about current and future needs.

### **The service has a culture of continuous improvement**

A culture of continuous improvement is promoted throughout the service and staff are encouraged to learn and develop. For example, during our inspection we saw evidence of a good learning culture. Operational and support staff told us they were encouraged to access training, including courses, such as the future leaders programme. We were pleased to see that the service had a range of resources. These include internal and external training, and a range of e-learning packages.

## **Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity**



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

Nottinghamshire 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.

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 seeking feedback from staff**

The service uses an external company to carry out staff surveys and we also heard examples of leaders asking staff for regular feedback. This included areas such as the trial of a new on-call contract where leaders sought the opinions and concerns of staff before making changes.

The actions to address matters raised have been positively received by staff. In our staff survey, 75 percent of respondents (208 of 278) agreed or tended to agree they were confident their ideas or suggestions would be listened to. And 71 percent of respondents (196 of 278) agreed or tended to agree that they were confident in the ways for providing feedback to all levels. Trade unions and staff associations report that the service engages well with them.

### **Staff have confidence in the grievance processes**

Staff have a good understanding of what bullying, harassment and discrimination are, and how they negatively affect colleagues and the organisation.

In this inspection, 7.2 percent (20 out of 278) of staff survey respondents told us they had been subject to bullying or harassment over the past 12 months. Of these staff, only 9 reported it either formally or informally and of the 11 that didn't report it, more than half stated it was because they felt nothing would happen. A further 20 people, or 7.2 percent, reported feeling discriminated against in the past 12 months.

Most staff survey respondents are confident in the service's approach to tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination, grievances, and disciplinary matters. The service works with its network groups to support, establish and react to problems. It also trains its managers in identifying and addressing workforce concerns.

During our inspection, staff told us they were confident in reporting problems to line managers and that they would take the appropriate action. We also heard that staff were comfortable challenging colleagues on inappropriate behaviour. The service has made sure all staff are trained and clear on what steps they should take if they encounter inappropriate behaviour and has ensured that staff feel they can approach leaders with issues or concerns.

### **The service has an open and fair recruitment process**

There is an open, fair and honest recruitment process for staff or those wishing to work for the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. It has an effective system to understand and remove the risk of disproportionality in recruitment processes.

The service uses a community advisory group, which includes people from ethnic minority backgrounds, to form part of its recruitment panels. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue uses this group to support candidates and to try to make sure that the panel is representative of the community it serves.

The service has put considerable effort into developing its recruitment processes so they are fair and understood by applicants. The service holds open days at stations to:

- promote the firefighter role;
- increase understanding among potential applicants; and
- work with the community it serves.

The recruitment policies are comprehensive and cover opportunities in all roles. Recruitment opportunities are advertised externally, which has encouraged applicants from diverse backgrounds, including into middle and senior management roles.

The service has increased the positive action it takes to recruit a more diverse workforce. Staff are included in this and provided with training such as equality, diversity and inclusivity training, diversity for managers, trans-awareness and [unconscious bias](#) training. The service is improving diversity. For example, it supports events such as Pride. It also seeks the views of those within staff network groups. The workforce is supportive of this. The service knows it needs to do more to increase workforce diversity, especially in middle and senior management. Plans to address this are in place. This includes the service carrying out a gender pay gap audit every three years. It has recognised from this information the need to develop female staff to more senior roles.

### **The service has improved its approach to equality, diversity and inclusivity**

The service has developed several ways to communicate with staff on equality, diversity and inclusion. This includes methods to build all-staff awareness and targeted communication to establish matters that affect different staff groups, including to remove disproportionality.

Our staff survey results showed that 79 percent (219 of 278) of respondents agreed or tended to agree that they felt they were given the same opportunities to develop as other staff in their service.

The service has improved its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. It is also making sure it can offer the right services to its communities and support staff with [protected characteristics](#). For example, since our last inspection the service has set up women, LGBTQ+ and ethnic minority background staff network groups. The service should ensure it uses these groups to have input on policies or changes that may affect the workforce.

The service has an effective process in place for assessing equality impact and taking action. It could do more to improve organisational learning, by examining the effect of the specific actions taken in response to the impact assessment.

## Managing performance and developing leaders



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

Nottinghamshire 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.

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

#### **Staff receive regular performance reviews**

There is a good performance management system in place, which allows the service to effectively develop and assess the individual performance of all staff. For example, the service has provided training to all staff to explain how their individual objectives fit into service objectives and drives the integrated risk management planning process.

During our inspection, we found the service had high completion rates of personal development reviews. It has a process to determine if staff aren't competent in risk-critical skills, which also supports them in achieving the required area of competence. Our staff survey showed that 92 percent of respondents had received a personal development review within the past 12 months. All of the staff we spoke to told us they had received training to understand how their individual priorities linked to service priorities. This is also captured within their performance reviews.

Through our staff survey, 96 percent of respondents (267 of 278) reported that they had discussions about their performance with their manager at least once a year. Each staff member has individual goals and objectives, and regular assessments of performance.

#### **Fair processes are in place for promotion**

The service has effective succession planning processes in place, which allows it to manage the career pathways of its staff well, including into roles requiring specialist skills.

It has put considerable effort into developing its promotion and progression processes so that they are fair and understood by staff. The service carries out a full review after each process. Plus, the service also sends surveys to candidates to understand any problems, gain feedback and record lessons to be learnt. The promotion and progression policies are comprehensive and cover opportunities in all roles.

Selection processes are managed consistently. During our inspection, we reviewed several processes and found that the service had conducted them consistently and was able to provide rationale for final decisions.

The service was able to establish where appointments had been based on local management needs or individual needs. It could provide rationale for these decisions and was clear in the need to balance organisational needs against personal needs. We found those that were part of the panel had received adequate training and that temporary promotions are used appropriately to fill short-term resourcing gaps.

**The service should ensure all staff understand the process for establishing high potential**

The service has effective succession planning processes in place, which allows it to support staff to take on leadership roles. There are some talent-management schemes in place to develop leaders and identify high-potential staff.

The service has a promotion gateway process and aspiring leaders programme in place. However, we found some staff still felt there wasn't a clear process for talent management or identifying high potential. This has resulted in some inconsistency when identifying individuals for progression and undermines staff perception of fairness in the process.



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