

# Fire & Rescue Service

## Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service



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# About this inspection

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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 Shropshire 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.

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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

Shropshire

England

**Perceived effectiveness of service**  
Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)

89%

86%



## Response

Shropshire

England

**Incidents attended per 1,000 population**  
12 months to 30 September 2018

8.0

10.5

**Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population**  
12 months to 31 March 2018

8.5

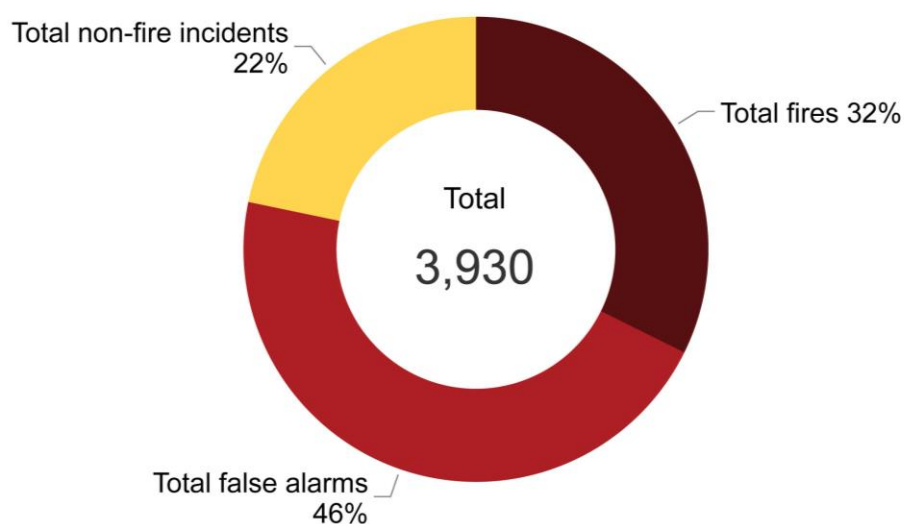
10.4

**Fire safety audits per 100 known premises**  
12 months to 31 March 2018

3.1

3.0

### Incidents attended in the 12 months to 30 September 2018





## Cost

Shropshire

England

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

£23.69

£22.38



## Workforce

Shropshire

England

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

1.0

0.6

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

8%

-14%

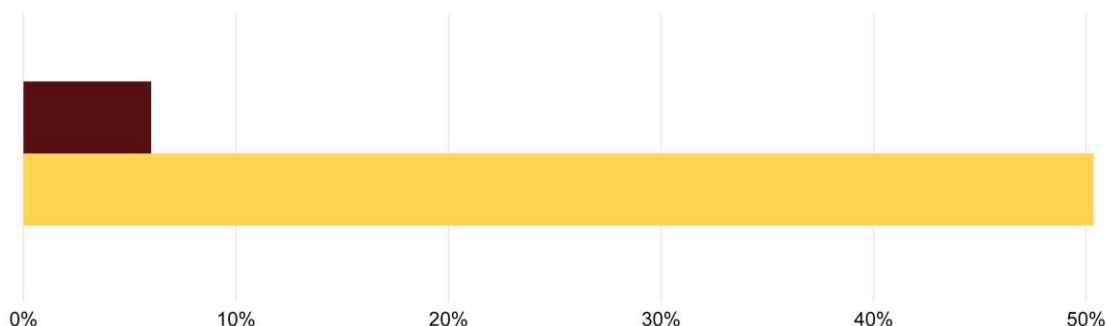
**Percentage of wholetime firefighters**  
As at 31 March 2018

34%

70%

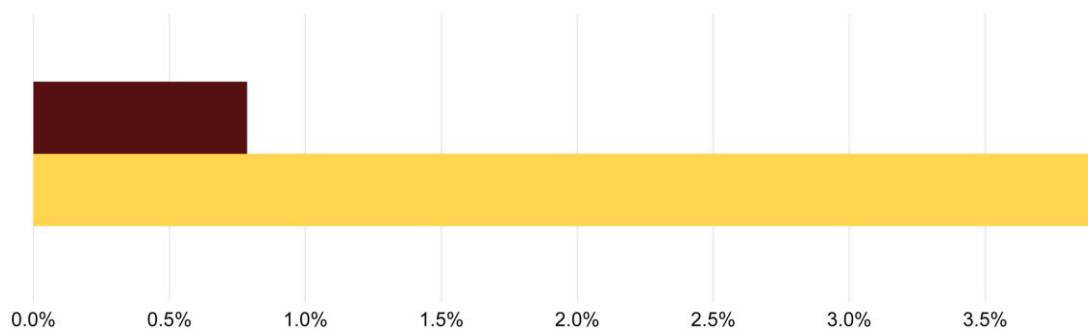
**Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018**

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population














**Percentage of black, Asian and minority ethnic firefighters as at 31 March 2018**

● BAME firefighters ● BAME residential population



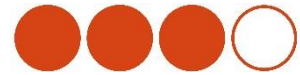
Please refer to annex A for full details on data used.

# Overview

 <b>Effectiveness</b>	 <b>Good</b>
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	 Good
Preventing fires and other risks	 Good
Protecting the public through fire regulation	 Requires improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	 Good
Responding to national risks	 Good
 <b>Efficiency</b>	 <b>Good</b>
Making best use of resources	 Good
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	 Good



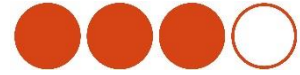
## People



**Good**

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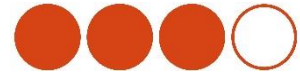
Promoting the right values and culture



Good

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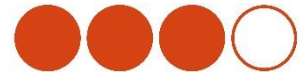
Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

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Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Good

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Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

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## Overall summary of inspection findings

We are pleased with the performance of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure. But it needs to improve in some areas to give a consistently good service.

It provides an effective service and is good at:

- understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies;
- preventing fires;
- responding to emergencies; and
- responding to national risks.

But the service needs to do better at protecting the public through fire regulation.

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service provides an efficient service. It is good at:

- making use of its resources; and
- providing an affordable service now and in future.

The service is good at looking after its people. It promotes the right values and culture. It gets the right people with the right skills. And it ensures fairness and promotes diversity. But the service should improve how it manages performance.

Overall, we commend Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service for its performance. This provides a good foundation for improvement in the year ahead.



# 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 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. Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

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Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has systems and plans to keep people safe and secure from fire and other risks. The five-year service plan (called the [integrated risk management plan](#) or IRMP) draws on data from many sources – both from within the service and from other agencies – to create a picture of risks in the community. The service could go further in talking to the community to improve this picture. The service plan is available to the public and is used to decide how to reduce risk and keep the community safe. Fire engines and crews are in the right places to work effectively. The service is good at responding to emergencies and has made changes that have improved the way it works. These include buying extra-large fire engines to respond better to fires in rural areas, using flexible crewing and setting up a flexible [on-call](#) support team.

The service works hard on prevention and works closely with other agencies, including local councils. Staff know why prevention is important. This work is aimed at those who are most at risk from fire. The service also carries out community safety work. It could use social media better in this area to get its messages to the public.

We found that there are not enough protection officers to carry out the risk-based inspections that are currently planned. The service is taking steps to tackle this problem.

The service can respond effectively to national risks. It should stage more cross-border exercises and share the lessons learned afterwards. We believe that the alliance with the neighbouring service in Hereford and Worcester will benefit both services.

## Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



### Good

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

#### Areas for improvement

- The service needs to improve how it engages with the local community to build up a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area.

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

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has a clear understanding of community risk and is good at using data to help it make decisions about appropriate levels of prevention, protection and response to the public.

The service tells the public about its work by producing an integrated risk management plan (IRMP). The current IRMP, for 2015–2020, is published on the service's website. The public are consulted during [fire authority](#) meetings, published minutes and via the website. An annual plan informs the public about priorities and measures the service's performance against objectives.

Numbers, locations and target response times for fire engines are directly linked to risks identified using a software tool. The service regularly reviews how engines and stations are distributed. For example, larger engines have been sited to respond to particular local risks. The public are told about any changes.

Fire stations are located and staffed according to the level of risk. A map of the county showing historical data on fires, casualties and population information helps to categorise areas into low to high risk. Response standards to life risk fires are decided based on the known level of risk in an area. As at 1 April 2018, the service's response standard was to arrive at an emergency incident within 15 minutes on 89 percent of occasions. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service arrived at emergency incidents within 15 minutes on 86.6 percent of occasions.

The service uses incident data with emerging information from protection and prevention work and national themes to identify emerging risks and future changes.

We saw evidence that the service works with a broad range of organisations to understand and reduce community risk. It uses a range of data to support this work, for example:

- [Mosaic consumer classification data](#);
- [Exeter health data](#);
- incident data (aligning resource to demand); and
- adult social care data.

Information is shared with local authorities and partner agencies so services are focused on people who are most vulnerable to the risk of fire and other emergencies. The service also shares road safety risk data through working with the West Mercia Safer Roads Partnership.

### **Having an effective risk management plan**

The service's IRMP is known as the service plan and covers the period 2015–2020. It uses priorities for fire and rescue services that are set out in a [national framework](#) document. Risk is assessed using information on people and buildings, and commercial, environmental and historical information. External specialists have been used to analyse areas such as a fire cover review and changes to shift systems.

The service plan sets priorities for prevention, protection and response work. It highlights significant risks in Shropshire (such as hospitals and [heritage buildings](#)) and other risks such as flooding and road safety, and says what is being done to reduce these risks.

The service focuses extensive prevention work on people who are at the highest risk of harm from fire and other emergencies. This work supports Shropshire and Wrekin fire authority's vision of 'putting Shropshire's safety first'.

Incident numbers and response standards are measured to check progress against the IRMP. Savings can be identified while still responding effectively to the risks identified in the IRMP. Measurements are reported to the fire authority and are publicly available. Each internal department has a risk register compiled from internal audits. These are used to inform and update the corporate risk register.

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is part of the West Mercia [local resilience forum](#). The service uses risk information from other local emergency responders to inform its own priorities for planning and exercising.

## Maintaining risk information

There is an effective process in place to gather, record and view site-specific risk information. Staff are trained to spot buildings where people may be at a greater risk from fire and other emergencies. These could be commercial premises with sleeping accommodation or elderly people living alone. Details are recorded and shared with colleagues. The service has recently improved its risk management system and there is a common standard between teams. A short report called an 'Ops Flash' shares operational information with staff. Staff must confirm that they have read and understood each report via an electronic portal. We observed that key information is also exchanged during a handover period at change of shift.

## Preventing fires and other risks



### Good

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at preventing fires and other risks. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

#### Areas for improvement

- The service is not using external communication mechanisms to full advantage. Better use of social media will help promote campaigns and share safety messages.
- The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.

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

### Prevention strategy

We found that the service undertakes a broad range of prevention work. Its strategy focuses on reducing numbers of accidental house fires. Dedicated staff draw on extensive data to focus on households where people may be at a higher risk from fire and other emergencies.

Both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin councils refer [vulnerable people](#), such as those at risk from falls or who are hoarding. A central team manages and allocates referrals. The service has a three-tier 'hot-strike' system for following up in a specific area after a fire:

- tier 1: a post-incident leaflet drop;
- tier 2: a visit and offer of [safe and well check](#); and
- tier 3: a targeted visit following a fire fatality in an area.

Staff receive specialist training to enable them to conduct effective safe and well visits, also known as [home fire safety checks](#). As at 31 March 2018, the service's prevention visits include: advice on social welfare, ensuring working smoke alarms are fitted, advice on slips, trips and falls, identifying potential fire risks and taking action to reduce fire risks. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 8.5 home fire safety checks per 1,000 population.

The service works closely with other agencies to make sure that most checks focus on those most at risk. Firefighters who see an additional risk can make referrals to other agencies. An example described was someone at higher risk of falling due to age or living conditions. In the year to 31 March 2018, 83.3 percent of home fire safety checks were targeted towards the elderly (those over 65). However, the service was unable to provide the number of safe and well checks which were targeted at other vulnerable groups.

We found that all staff know why prevention work is important. The service carries out various campaigns and initiatives, driven by a central team. However, the service cannot consider the effectiveness of these campaigns as evaluation is limited to performance against the target to reduce accidental dwelling fires.

### **Promoting community safety**

Prevention work includes community events, school education programmes and national campaigns in line with [National Fire Chiefs Council](#) guidance. Referrals from other agencies are prioritised using a scoring system. The central team deals with high-priority referrals. Station-based staff are expected to raise concerns such as social isolation, falls, lifestyle and winter warmth. Crews refer cases to the central team using a locally-developed assessment form so that the right agencies are contacted.

The service supports a youth quiz conducted at local schools. An early intervention scheme called iLearn aims to help young people who may be interested in fire and setting fires. Working on referrals from police, families and the education service, iLearn conducts one-to-one visits with young people up to the age of 15. The service has produced a short film involving police and ambulance called 'It's too late now' which highlights the dangers and impact of fires.

Members of the prevention team develop local initiatives such as iLearn and water safety. We found that work is carried out with a wide range of other organisations, including sheltered accommodation providers, victims of domestic violence and Age Concern.

The service delivers water safety training through schools education packages. It has worked with a local charity to deliver water safety advice and throw-line training to volunteers such as door staff. The service has worked with the National Fire Chiefs Council and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to support national campaigns and made educational video clips, such as warning of the hazards around water and the dangers of texting while driving.

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service holds a prevention partnership register. This is reviewed annually to ensure that each partnership continues to contribute towards the services strategy for a safer Shropshire. Partners spoke positively about the service's involvement in joint prevention work. We were told that the service attends appropriate meetings, meets work deadlines and actively engages in discussions. In developing safe and well checks, the service led on making sure that other partners were asking the right questions.

We found that firefighters understood [safeguarding](#). They are aware of the reporting system the service has put in place. They gave us good examples of occasions when they had identified safeguarding concerns.

### Road safety

Through the safer roads partnership, the service supports West Mercia Police's road safety strategy. Staff take part in road safety demonstrations during national and local campaigns and attend annual Bikefest events to promote bike safety. Schools education packages include some road safety awareness. Work to reduce the impact of road traffic collisions is largely in support of campaigns led by other agencies. The service uses its limited capacity to prioritise other prevention work.

## 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.
- The service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms (termed 'unwanted fire signals').
- The service should assure itself that its arrangements for providing specialist protection advice out of hours are effective.

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**

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service can show that it takes a broad approach to addressing protection risk, fulfilling its statutory and discretionary duties.

Protection inspection officers are well trained. But we found there are not enough officers to complete the service's risk-based inspection programme to its planned timescale. However, in the year to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 3.1 fire safety audits per 100 known premises (which equates to 451 audits). This is higher than the England rate of 3.0 over the same period. Of the 451 fire safety audits the service carried out in the year to 31 March 2018, 76 percent were satisfactory.

Protection staff work with many other partners, local authorities and local businesses. This delivers a programme that meets legal requirements, improves public safety and reduces the risk of arson-related incidents. Staff gave several examples where this approach had improved outcomes for members of the public.

Operational crews no longer carry out low-level protection audits as the service has recognised that they need more training. When a significant risk to the public is identified, a manager can approve enforcement work quickly, using a recall system introduced by the service. We found that 24-hour protection expertise is not guaranteed, but the strategic alliance with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service should address this.

The service does not have a formal definition of 'high risk'. This means that the public may not understand what a high-risk building is, and that the service's activities may not capture them all. For example, proactive work is focused at properties with a known sleeping risk and where incident data and intelligence tells them that risk may be higher.

The service is not clear about which properties should be part of its risk-based inspection programme.

Other areas of protection work, such as complaints, building regulations and licensing, have a higher priority. Risk is assessed from data collected during visits and from known sleeping risks such as hospitals and sheltered accommodation. In the year to 31 December 2018, the service audited 101 of the 463 high-risk premises it had identified. At this rate, the service is unlikely to visit all known premises currently categorised as high risk within three years.

There is no formal quality assurance of audits. After reviewing a sample of files, we were satisfied that the service's inspection officers are carrying out all audits consistently and are acting in line with policies. In the nine months to 31 December 2018, the service responded to 81 percent of building regulation consultations within the required timeframes. Responding to these consultations may be a factor why the service's risk-based audit programme is behind schedule.



## Enforcement

The service uses a management model to decide when to take [enforcement action](#). This ensures that action is taken consistently, and in all circumstances where premises are deemed a risk to life due to fire safety issues.

The number of enforcement notices issued is low. Over three years to 31 March 2018 the service has issued 18 prohibition notices, four enforcement notices, one successful prosecution, and no alteration notices following fire safety audits. In line with the [Regulators' Code](#), the service works with businesses to support compliance rather than using their legal powers to prosecute. While engaging with business is an important part of the protection work services do, it should not come at the expense of using enforcement powers when they are necessary to keep the public safe. Another factor behind the service's low number of prosecutions is the significant resource needed to bring a prosecution with the service only having finite capacity to complete the totality of its protection work. Again, while we recognise these resourcing concerns, this should not be a reason to avoid taking action where it is considered necessary.

## Working with others

We found that the service has effective partnerships in place to share information and intelligence. Partners include police, immigration, local authorities, the probation service, trading standards and environmental health. As a result, resources are used to identify targets and areas of risk. The service shows a clear commitment to engaging with and developing partnerships such as the multi-agency targeted enforcement strategy. Staff conduct joint inspections with other agencies. This ensures public safety by formalising shared enforcement activities.

The service works with local businesses to achieve fire safety compliance. Business education seminars are run for sectors such as care homes, pubs and holiday lets. The protection team runs at least eight of these each year to support audit compliance and reduce risk by raising awareness. The service has helped to set up a 'better business for all' forum with Shropshire council. This will give businesses a single point of contact for fire safety.

No clear system is in place for dealing with automatic fire alarms, which mistakenly report a fire when no fire has broken out. Data highlights that the number of false alarms attended has remained relatively stable between the year ending 30 September 2010 to the year ending 30 September 2018. In the year ending 30 September 2018, 46 percent of incidents attended were false alarms. This compares to the England average of 40 percent over the same period. Some work is carried out to identify patterns, but it is not prioritised. We found that control room staff do not fully understand the call challenge process.

Fire engines are often committed to answering unnecessary calls because the service's approach to managing automatic fire alarms is not successfully reducing the pressure on emergency resources.

## Responding to fires and other emergencies



### Good

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

#### Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it understands what it needs to do to adopt national operational guidance, including joint and national learning. It should then put in place a clear plan to do so.
- The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.

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

### Managing assets and resources

We found that the service's response strategy is based on a thorough assessment of community risk. Response standards are based on risk to life using the [fire service emergency cover](#) modelling software.

The service has time-based emergency response standards. They aim to ensure at least one fire engine arrives at any high-risk fire emergency within 10 minutes, any medium-risk fire emergency within 15 minutes and any low risk within 20 minutes. In addition, there is an overall service response target of one fire engine arriving within 15 minutes to any emergency incident 89 percent of the time. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service met that target 86.6 percent of the time.

The service reviews its IRMP against data annually. The annual plan compares performance against targets. More resources are located to areas where data suggests there is a higher risk of fire. Target attendance times are longer for lower risk incidents.

Most firefighters in Shropshire work an on-call system. As at 31 March 2018, on-call staff represented 66 percent of the FTE firefighters. This means that they respond to incidents from their home or workplace. Firefighters are supported by an electronic rota system which enables managers to ensure staff can respond when needed.

The service has implemented a range of duty systems which are matched to the predominant risk rating of the surrounding areas. This ensures that it meets attendance times but does not have more crews and fire engines available than needed.

A flexible team can be sent where they are needed day-by-day to give flexible cover and resilience across the service in the event of a shortfall. This team also supports local prevention work and training activities.

As at 31 March 2018, the service had one [wholetime fire station](#), 19 retained fire stations and three mixed fire stations. There were 28 operational fire engines.

To make sure it has enough resources in rural areas, the service has introduced extra-large fire engines for some on-call stations. These have a larger water tank and extra seating but can be crewed by the same number of staff as a standard engine. Between April 2018 and December 2018, the overall average monthly engine availability ranged from 96 percent to 98 percent.

The service can provide assistance to neighbouring services. However, we found that firefighters had limited access to risk information to support them. For example, [mobile data terminals](#) do not provide access to cross-border risk information.

## Response

The service has an action plan in place to implement [national operational guidance](#). We found evidence that some operational staff did not know enough about this. The service is part of a regional group looking at better ways of joint working using national operational guidance. However, the group is still in its early stages.

The service uses a system called SEED for [mobilising](#) fire engines. This system is backed up by two other fire and rescue services. We found that control room staff responsible for mobilising did not have instant access to the on-call staff rota system, which relies on manual updating.

In the year to 30 September 2018, the service attended 8.0 incidents per 1,000 population. This compares to the England rate of 10.5 over the same period. In the year to 31 March 2018 the service's average response time to [primary fires](#) was 10 minutes 16 seconds.

We visited a number of fire stations during our inspection. We found firefighters who are well trained, well equipped and knowledgeable about the risks on their patch. Firefighters across these sites demonstrated how they access risk information using onboard tablet computers, known as mobile data terminals (MDTs).

We found the MDTs were unreliable on some occasions, but the service is in the process of an upgrade which will include the updated risk management system software.

## Command

Operational staff across the service were able to demonstrate a good understanding of how to command and control incidents. The service is in the process of adopting national operational guidance for incident command.

A central team provides incident command training and assessment. However, we found that some competency records were out of date. In most cases, this was a recording error. However, the service must ensure that risk-critical records such as

these are updated expediently. Incident commanders can take command roles at service exercises.

Incident commanders told us that they understand they have the support of the service's senior leaders to override operational policy and use their [discretion](#) if they feel it is right to do so. Some commanders gave us examples of when they had done this. We found a no-blame culture that shares the outcomes of any learning.

### **Keeping the public informed**

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has systems in place to communicate with the public during and after fires and other incidents.

Basic incident information is regularly updated on its public website. The service uses a central social media platform to reach other groups. We found use of social media by fire stations was inconsistent. Some staff wanted extra help to create effective social media posts.

### **Evaluating operational performance**

We found that [hot debriefs](#) are consistently carried out after incidents. All staff were aware of the mechanisms for sharing learning. But some staff were unaware of the triggers for more formal structured debriefs.

The service has a good system in place for debrief and monitoring operational incidents. We found that control room staff ensure that a debrief form is automatically triggered for any incident where a level 2 (tactical) commander is required. The electronic system requires that everyone involved completes relevant sections before returning it to a central team. The team then collates information which is used to identify trends. Any learning is shared with staff through various mechanisms depending on severity.

The service uses the information collected to evaluate whether response levels are right for the level of risk. It uses feedback from incidents to make improvements to operational performance.

The service has introduced a 'nearest officer mobilising' policy. This is so the best level of command is in place at all times, and ensures a prompt quality assurance role for lower level commanders at operational incidents.

We found that formal structured debriefs still use a paper-based system for larger multi-agency incidents. This system may be less effective when auditing to ensure learning has been recorded and shared appropriately. The service can demonstrate learning from other services. For example, following the Grenfell Tower fire in London, all stations were involved in exercises simulating high-rise fires.

## Responding to national risks



### Good

Shropshire 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 arrange a programme of over-the-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.
- The service should ensure operational staff have good access to cross-border risk information.

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

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has a boat team, high-volume pump and flood tactical advisers. These staff and resources can help teams elsewhere in the service or as part of a national response to an event of extraordinary need, such as a flood. The service shares the inter-agency liaison officer function with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

The service is an active member of the local resilience forum. Commanders take part in quarterly exercises with partners in support of the Shropshire tactical co-ordination group. Learning is shared, and response capability is tested through multi-agency exercises. The service works with these partners to develop site-specific risk and response plans to high-risk premises and locations. Plans are shared via Resilience Direct, a national web-based platform for category 1 and 2 emergency responders.

During inspection we found that some level 1 incident commanders could not articulate their actions in the event of a major incident. The service should ensure that operational commanders at all levels are confident in recognising and declaring a major incident.

We found that the [fire control](#) function can be passed over to two other services (Hereford & Worcester and Cleveland) in the event of extraordinary need. This could be an unusually high volume of calls or a system failure.

## **Working with other services**

We found that the service can give mutual aid to neighbouring services at busy times. One example was supporting Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service for the Winter Hill wildfires in summer 2018.

The service shares fire investigation and intelligence vetted officers with neighbouring services. Level 3 and 4 commanders take part in incident command exercises to ensure capability can be shared across the region. Some of these exercises have a multi-agency response and involve neighbouring fire and rescue services.

The service carries out training and exercising with neighbouring services, but only in southern parts of the county. This approach should be consistent across all borders.

Operational crews have limited access to cross-border risk information. We found that information is available on some internal systems, but not on the mobile data terminals that crews use en route to an incident.

The service is preparing to enter a strategic alliance with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. It is anticipated that this will benefit both services, enabling them to share assets and resources when required.

## **Working with other agencies**

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service chairs the local resilience forum risk assessment sub group. The service shares its HQ with emergency planning staff from the local council, offering the opportunity to share information. These staff are invited to join in training exercises across the service.

The service undertakes joint exercising with local resilience forum partners. There are monthly tactical command multi-agency exercises. These are focused on joint risk sites and give opportunities to share learning. This ensures all agencies have a robust response capability.

The service has trained strategic and tactical commanders to respond to a terrorist incident. We found that these commanders have a good understanding of how they would respond to such an event. However, some operational commanders told us they did not feel confident to recognise and declare a major incident.

Strategic and tactical-level incident commanders have a good understanding of the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles](#). This assures effective joint working between blue light services at that level. However, this was less evident at operational command level. Senior managers exercise command skills by taking part in local resilience forum exercises as part of strategic and tactical response groups.

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

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The service is managing its people and resources efficiently. All parts of the service are working to targets based on the central service plan. The service uses data to create a dashboard that shows how well it is doing in meeting its targets. The service keeps spending under control. There are robust plans for managing the money it is given to keep people safe from fire and other risks. These plans are tested against possible future financial risks. Savings are made that allow money to be spent on projects to keep the service fit for the future, such as the plan to redevelop Telford Central fire station.

Serving a rural area, two-thirds of Shropshire's firefighting strength comes from staff who don't work full-time as firefighters. These on-call staff are vital. The service is right to be working on plans to make sure these jobs continue to attract good recruits. This is part of the planning needed to reduce as far as possible any risks which would make it more difficult for the service to do its job efficiently.

To make sure that it is ready to cope with major problems that could make it hard to keep working, the service could improve how it runs exercises to test the way the control room works.

Shropshire is working well with its neighbours to keep costs down, for example by buying equipment together to get a better price. The planned alliance with Hereford and Worcester should help to make the service more efficient.



## Making best use of resources



### Good

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

#### Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has good business continuity arrangements in place that take account of all foreseeable threats and risks.

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 a thorough integrated risk management plan (IRMP). This is known as the service plan and covers 2015–2020. We found that the service has an effective system to evaluate its performance against the targets and priorities in the IRMP.

The service has departmental plans which feed into the service plan. These include property, ICT, communications, response, fleet and protection. We found that each departmental plan has annual performance targets. These feed into the service plan and focus on departmental targets, priorities and performance against objectives as well as areas for improvement.

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has developed a data warehouse system to store a wide range of performance data. Performance dashboards drawn from the data are used to ensure that the service is meeting operational performance targets for areas such as on-call availability, command and control system (SEED) and operational response.

We saw that the service is actively managing corporate risk at both departmental and organisational level. Both departmental and strategic managers are responsible for raising and reporting any issues that might prevent the service from meeting the commitments to the public stated in its plan.

The service has a medium-term financial plan. We found planning assumptions to be reasonable. The plan considers a variety of funding streams outside its control, such as central government grants and nationally set pay awards. It also considers the effect of varying levels of council tax.

The service uses data on incidents and other activity to determine budget allocation for prevention, protection and response resources. The finance team provides guidance and advice to departmental managers to support budget monitoring.

We found that the service is good at resourcing prevention and response activities. However, protection activity is not given the same priority. This means the service's risk-based inspection programme has fallen behind.

## **Productivity and ways of working**

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service describes itself as an on-call service with a wholetime core. On-call staff made up just under 52.6 percent of the total workforce headcount as at 31 March 2018. The service has invested in making the on-call role attractive and sustainable. Full-time support officers give back-up to on-call teams. This has ensured the service maintains the promised levels of fire cover and resilience to the public.

The service has exceptionally high on-call availability levels. It has set up an on-call sustainability project to address the problem of maintaining this for the future. For example, the service has introduced a smartphone app that lets on-call staff access an electronic availability system. Staff told us that they have found this much easier to use than previous systems which relied on computer access. This system has improved the service's ability to monitor vehicle availability through real-time updates. However, we found that the command and control system is not compatible and relies on manual updating.

We found that the service has a tailored selection process and a modular training system for on-call staff. However, on-call staff who want to transfer into [wholetime roles](#) must still go through the same recruitment process as members of the public.

We were pleased that the service has reviewed its wholetime staff duty system. It introduced a flexible crewing model designed to maintain response standards with the minimum number of firefighters on duty. This is planned to save £450,000 by 2021.

## **Collaboration**

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service collaborates with other agencies to promote fire safety compliance. It shares information and carries out joint initiatives such as seminars with local authority building control. The protection team works with a multi-agency targeted enforcement team on action days to improve public safety.

The service's prevention team shares information and data with other agencies. Partners can make referrals to the service when risks are identified.

The service has a joint [framework agreement](#) with neighbouring services for buying fire engines to save on costs. The service also works with a neighbouring service to identify common efficiencies, for example by [benchmarking](#) budgets.

A quarterly audit performance management committee meeting provides details about achievements, milestones and budgets. Projects are co-ordinated through the transformation board and scrutinised monthly.

We found that the service is in the early stages of an ambitious strategic alliance with the neighbouring Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. This offers

opportunities for improved resilience and greater efficiency. However, it is not yet clear how quickly the expected financial savings will be realised.

### **Continuity arrangements**

The service has a disaster recovery system in place for information technology (IT). IT continuity exercises are carried out, but there is no specific or set frequency.

We found that there is an inconsistent approach to business continuity testing in the control room. The control room does not have a set programme of business continuity testing and exercising. Staff were unable to give us examples of learning from the last exercise. However, we were pleased to see that there is a daily check on the 999 call back-up system.

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



### **Good**

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

### **Improving value for money**

The service has an overall budget of £21.3m. We found evidence of sound scenario planning to challenge future financial assumptions. We are satisfied that there is sound budget control and management of funds. Purchases are scrutinised to justify, and keep control of, expenditure. The service is audited both internally and externally.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the firefighter cost per head of population was £23.69. This compares to the England rate of £22.38 for the same time period. However, many factors influence this cost, for example the ratio of wholetime to [retained](#) staff in a rural county.

The service has achieved savings of £3m since 2012 by redistributing workstreams and introducing a flexible crewing system. Some savings were achieved earlier than anticipated. The service is using these savings to fund capital programmes and reduce future borrowing.

The service has a transformation board that meets regularly to oversee and scrutinise projects and collaborative initiatives. It also seeks to identify more efficient ways of working. Transformation projects include on-call sustainability, extra-large fire engines and IT systems. We found evidence of joint procurement and use of established tenders to provide value for public money. However, we found no benchmarking information was available.

The service looks to the wider external environment when making financial assumptions. An example is bespoke specification of fire engines and equipment to meet individual community area needs.

## **Innovation**

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is continuing to make savings to invest for future innovation. Projects include the redevelopment of Telford Central fire station and training centre.

The service has projects in place to improve IT infrastructure. These include upgrading data terminals for fire engines, accessible crewing rota systems and an improved risk information management system. It has also introduced better admin support systems.

There are several ICT champions who ensure that opportunities presented by changes in technology are considered. We saw examples of new technology in use. However, we found that staff are hampered by a shortage of IT workstations at on-call stations.

We found the fleet and estates strategies to be reasonable. They include resource life expectancy and maintenance requirements. Fleet maintenance is provided in house and through some working with West Mercia Police.

## **Future investment and working with others**

The service has ambitious plans in place to reduce capital [reserves](#) to minimum acceptable levels over the medium term. The main capital project will be a rebuild of Telford Central fire station and training centre. We found other initiatives to upgrade older stations and minimise borrowing. The service considers the wider environment of collaboration and future needs when looking to upgrade estates.

As previously noted, the service has introduced extra-large fire engines. This initiative means fewer fire engines can maintain the same level of response to emergency calls. However, the response strategy has not been revised to reflect this.

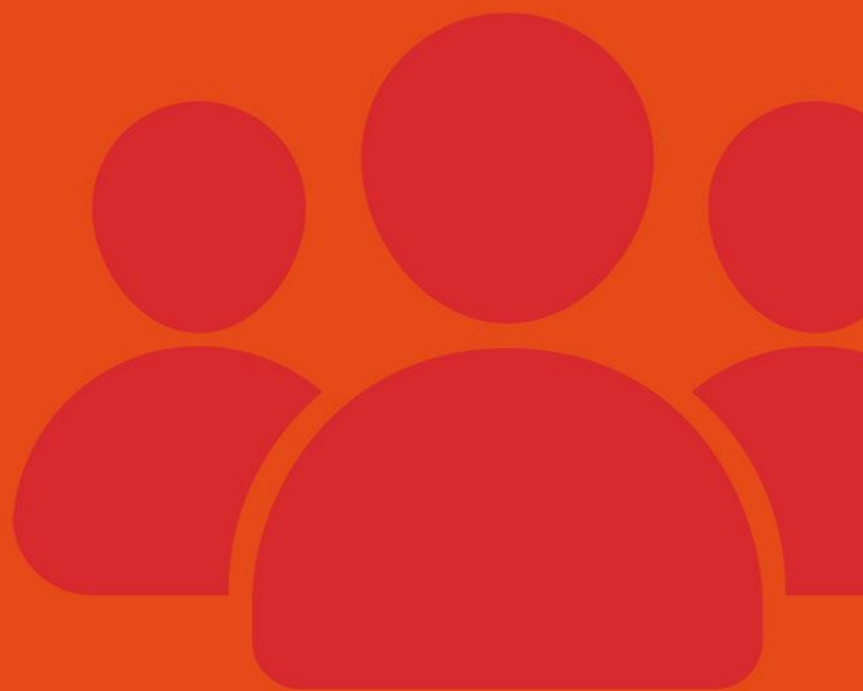
We found a save rather than borrow approach to capital spending. The service has made a conscious decision to place any budget underspend into financial reserves. These additional funds are earmarked to reduce the impact of future borrowing costs on revenue expenditure.

The service has agreed key areas that will improve efficiency as part of its strategic alliance with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. The three main collaboration projects are:

- ICT;
- sharing integrated risk management planning; and
- shared fire control.

Strategic alliance planning started in 2018, and we very much look forward to seeing the benefits of this collaboration.

# People



## How well does the service look after its people?



**Good**

### Summary

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

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We found that staff enjoy working for Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. They feel valued and know what is expected of them. They believe that their health and safety are treated seriously by the service. Staff trust the people who are leading them. In turn, senior managers listen to their staff. They regularly visit stations and have shown that they will make changes to the way the service works when problems are raised. The low number of grievances made by staff reflects the service's open and fair culture.

Staff are well trained. The service invests in training so that staff have the skills they need for their jobs. The service also works to make sure that it has people with the right skills to take on more senior roles as opportunities emerge. However, we found that some commanders do not immediately get the extra training they need for them to take charge of more complex incidents.

Staff believe that the right people are chosen when promotions are offered. But the service has no formal process for picking out staff with the potential to become leaders in the future. Opportunities for support staff are limited. There is no process for on-call staff to achieve promotion to management roles beyond their own stations.

The workforce doesn't fully reflect the diversity of the community it serves. More could be done to explain to staff why positive action to attract more people from under-represented groups in society is a good thing.

## Promoting the right values and culture



### Good

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at promoting the right values and culture. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

#### Areas for improvement

- The service should consider monitoring secondary contracts to ensure working hours are not exceeded.

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

### Workforce wellbeing

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has a range of welfare services for staff. These include Mind for better mental health, counselling, employee assistance schemes and occupational health. Services are accessed via a health and wellbeing page on the internal website or directly with the human resources department.

Staff spoke highly of the support in place for mental and physical health. As part of our inspection, we carried out a survey of FRS staff to get their views of the service (please see Annex A for more details). Of 115 respondents (18 percent of the workforce), 98 percent agree that they are satisfied that their personal safety and welfare is treated seriously at work. Many gave examples of the type of support received. Some staff were not aware of the new [trauma risk management \(TRiM\)](#) system that has been introduced to ensure wellbeing after traumatic incidents. The service needs to promote this further so that all staff understand the benefits and how to access support.

The service has recently increased fitness standards for firefighters in line with national guidance. They recognise this may have an impact on some staff groups so have purchased fitness equipment for some stations to help members of staff build fitness levels if needed.

The service has a notable dyslexia programme in place to support staff in the workplace. Staff praised the scheme and how it had helped improve their performance at work.

We found that the service does not monitor working hours of wholetime staff on secondary contracts to ensure that working hours are not exceeded. Staff told us that rest periods are left to their own discretion. This means that the service cannot be assured of the welfare of its staff across the service.

Of the 115 respondents to our staff survey, 11 reported feeling bullied or harassed in the past 12 months, and 13 reported feeling discriminated against in the same time period. There are limitations to the staff survey which should be considered alongside the findings. We explain these in Annex A.

## **Health and safety**

The service's health and safety policy is a statement of intent to maintain current legal obligations and staff welfare. It is displayed at all premises, but we found that copies at some stations were out of date.

The service is part of a regional health and safety group and their health and safety manager leads on regional investigations.

We found that staff are well trained and that there are systems in place to monitor and audit health and safety compliance. For example, we found that station premises are audited annually and a health and safety report is published. Our staff survey found that 98 percent of the 115 respondents know how to report all accidents, [near misses](#) or dangerous occurrences, and 98 percent of respondents agree that they are encouraged to do so.

We found that sickness absence is monitored on an HR data dashboard. The dashboard is used to monitor attendance management, modified duties and return to work. The service can identify and understand emerging trends. For example, it has found that the main causes of sickness absence are mental health and musculo-skeletal injuries. Recognition that mental health absence was a priority enabled the service to introduce the TRiM system.

## **Culture and values**

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service values – improvement, people, diversity, community – are integral to service plans and staff behaviours. We found that staff at all levels of the organisation were welcoming and motivated, demonstrating positive values and behaviours.

Staff feel valued and they think that their leaders are approachable and responsive. Our staff survey found that 90.4 percent of 115 respondents agree that there are opportunities for them to feed their views upwards in the service. There is a positive culture throughout. Staff trust their senior leaders. Leaders regularly visit stations and departments. Staff tell us that these visits are positive and interactive. We found that staff thought leaders demonstrated the values of the organisation. The chief fire officer speaks highly of his staff and the culture of the service. In the staff survey, 97 percent of 115 respondents agree that they are treated with dignity and respect at work.

The service fosters good working relationships with representative bodies. Staff are confident to raise issues with line managers and are proud of the positive approach the service has to making things better.

We spoke to a variety of the service's partners during the inspection. They all said that dealings with the service are positive and engaging.



## Getting the right people with the right skills



### Good

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

#### Areas for improvement

- We found that newly promoted level 3 commanders do not receive sufficient training before joining the command function at that level. This is a potential vulnerability for the organisation.
- The service should ensure it has a system to record and monitor control staff competence which is accurate and accessible. This should include training plans and quality assurance.

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

### Workforce planning

Workforce planning is part of the overarching people strategy of the service. Departmental managers meet monthly to discuss workforce and succession planning. The forum advises on recruitment, skills gaps and retirement profile. This is an effective way of ensuring continuity of service to the public is maintained wherever possible.

The service uses external sources to provide specialist training. These include prevention and protection skills. There is a clear development programme and supporting structure in place for protection staff. However, we found that managers need to think more carefully about the time needed to achieve qualifications. For example, it can take many months for a new member of protection staff to be qualified and ready to undertake fire safety audits. This can leave a skills gap which could result in the risk-based inspection plan audits falling further behind.

The service has a high level of availability of on-call firefighters. Between April 2018 and December 2018, the overall average monthly engine availability ranged from 96 percent to 98 percent. The service has achieved this by working with on-call firefighters to ensure their working conditions support the commitment they make to the public. On-call staff are supported by a small central team that provides cover where needed and carries out routine tasks to support local managers.

The service has many wholetime firefighters who also have on-call contracts. This has contributed to the sense of unity we saw between these sections of the workforce. It is also seen as important in maintaining skill levels of on-call staff.

## Learning and improvement

We found that the culture of learning and improvement in the service is strong. Staff spoke highly of the positive and supportive environment at the training centre in Telford.

Operational staff are well trained. The service offers additional training for on-call staff if needed. Stations where staff hold specialist skills also receive additional training. This ensures operational competencies are maintained effectively.

Response staff are trained in line with national standards. Staff across the service develop management skills through the Institute of Leadership & Management. Protection inspection officers study for an accredited certificate or [diploma in fire safety](#).

The service has a database to record and monitor training and operational events. A second database provides online learning tools. We sampled the main competencies of firefighters across the service and found some were out of date. The service is in the process of moving to a single system to improve efficiency. However, we found that systems to monitor the performance and competence of control room staff were not consistent with the rest of the operational workforce.

The service has a central training calendar for large-scale exercises involving several fire engines and crews. These follow themes but focus on core competencies to support learning and improvement. Training exercises involve both on-call and wholetime crews and are supported by central teams and commanders.

We saw good evidence that the training team adds learning points from operational debrief and monitoring into exercise programmes to ensure continuous improvement. Staff gave us several examples where learning had been shared. Our staff survey found 89.6 percent of the 115 respondents agree that they receive sufficient training to do their job.

We found that commanders who are newly promoted at group manager level do not immediately receive the additional training for them to take charge of larger and more complex incidents. This is an area of potential vulnerability for the service.

## Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



### Good

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

#### Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure that all staff understand positive action and why it is necessary.
- The service needs to assure itself that it has appropriate mechanisms to engage with and seek feedback from all staff, including those from under-represented groups. This will enable it to better understand staff needs.

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

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has a programme for senior leaders to visit all stations and departments at least once a year. Staff told us that these visits were both positive and interactive. We found during our interviews that leaders are generally aware of the issues and concerns of their workforce.

The service seeks feedback from staff via employee surveys and a staff suggestion scheme. On-call managers attend regular meetings with the central management team. We found that workshops had been held to explore negative feedback following the last staff survey. We saw a detailed action plan to address the issues raised.

We found that the service communicates with staff in various ways. These include a service newsletter, chief officer bulletins and officer briefings. We saw that all suggestions submitted through the suggestion portal had received feedback from the service. The service hosts focus groups to address specific topics.

We found that the service has formed good working relationships with staff representative bodies. Representatives are invited to all decision-making meetings and are consulted on changes which affect the workforce.

The service has a low number of formal grievances in the year to 31 March 2018, which reflects the open and fair culture we found. However, the service has no view of those grievances which are being resolved informally at the lowest appropriate level. It is therefore not able to assure the fairness and consistency of informal outcomes or identify trends to support organisational learning.

We found that the service does not have any employee voice groups to support and engage under-represented staff such as women, those from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. We found that many staff did not understand positive action, or the need for support groups.

## Diversity

We found that the service's workforce does not fully reflect the communities it serves. Senior leaders are aware of this problem and are giving it an appropriately high profile within management teams.

As at 31 March 2018, 0.8 percent of firefighters were from a BAME background. This compares with a BAME residential population of 3.9 percent. And 6 percent of firefighters were female.

It is positive to note that the service has provided unconscious bias training to all managers who are involved in recruitment. The service has taken some positive action to encourage members of under-represented groups to apply for jobs.

The service examined where candidates from under-represented groups were unsuccessful during the last recruitment process and as a result they have initiated a fire 'boot camp' to assist with the job-related physical tests.

The service has a flexible working policy in place. This is actively promoted in job adverts and as part of the recruitment process. We found a fully embedded dyslexia and reasonable adjustments programme in place. Staff spoke highly of the positive impact this has had.

## Managing performance and developing leaders



### Requires improvement

#### Areas for improvement

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

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

## **Managing performance**

The service carries out annual performance appraisals. We found that this system was not mandatory and therefore completion numbers are low across the service. Some on-call staff told us that they didn't see the value of performance appraisals due to the nature of their role. The service has told us that a new appraisal system is being introduced in early 2019. We look forward to seeing how this has embedded during our next inspection.

Development opportunities are available for staff who wish to pursue operational leadership roles. The service ensures that commanders have the skills they need to manage performance through the Institute of Leadership & Management. We were encouraged to find that lower level managers are provided with bespoke training which includes discipline, managing difficult conversations and mental health awareness.

We found that there are no opportunities for on-call staff to progress into middle-management roles. However, we found that staff thought promotion processes were fair and transparent and had been improved following feedback.

Our staff survey found that 88.7 percent of the 115 respondents agree that they are satisfied with their current level of learning and development. Staff told us that there were limited development pathways for non-uniformed staff. Some staff had left due to lack of opportunity.

## **Developing leaders**

The service does not have a system in place to identify, develop or support staff with high potential to become senior leaders. Instead, the service relies on people putting themselves forward for promotion. We did find evidence that managers encourage staff to seek promotion, but this was informal and not consistent.

Staff trust the promotion process. They are confident that the service promotes the people who perform best. We were encouraged to find that following feedback the service had improved the transparency of how final appointments are made from a pool of successful candidates.

The service has a good promotion and development process in place for uniformed staff. However, we found that there are fewer opportunities for on-call and non-uniformed staff.

The service has introduced additional training for new managers. This includes awareness on prevention, protection and managerial skills such as having difficult conversations.

## 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. Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is a combined FRA.

### Metropolitan FRA

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