

Fire & Rescue Service

Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service



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About this inspection

This is the first time that HMICFRS has inspected fire and rescue services across England. Our focus is on the service they provide to the public, and the way they use the resources available. The inspection assesses how effectively and efficiently West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service prevents, protects the public against and responds to fires and other emergencies. We also assess how well it looks after the people who work for the service.

In carrying out our inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England, we answer three main questions:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

This report sets out our inspection findings. After taking all the evidence into account, we apply a graded judgment for each of the three questions.

What inspection judgments mean

Our categories of graded judgment are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Good is our 'expected' graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards.

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

If we find shortcomings in the service, we will judge it as **requires improvement**.

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

Service in numbers



Public perceptions

West Sussex

England

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

85%

86%



Response

West Sussex

England

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

11.0

10.5

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

7.8

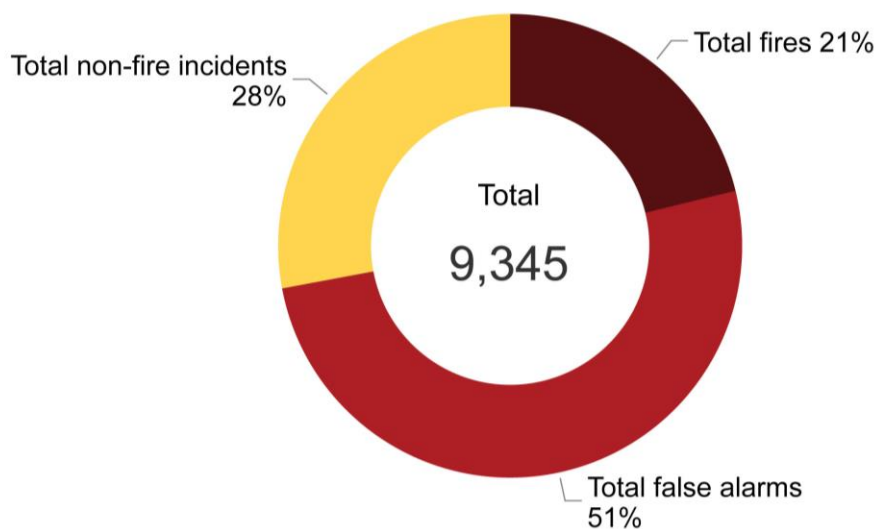
10.4

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

2.1

3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 30 September 2018





Cost

West Sussex

England

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

£21.98

£22.38



Workforce

West Sussex

England

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

0.6

0.6

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

-19%

-14%

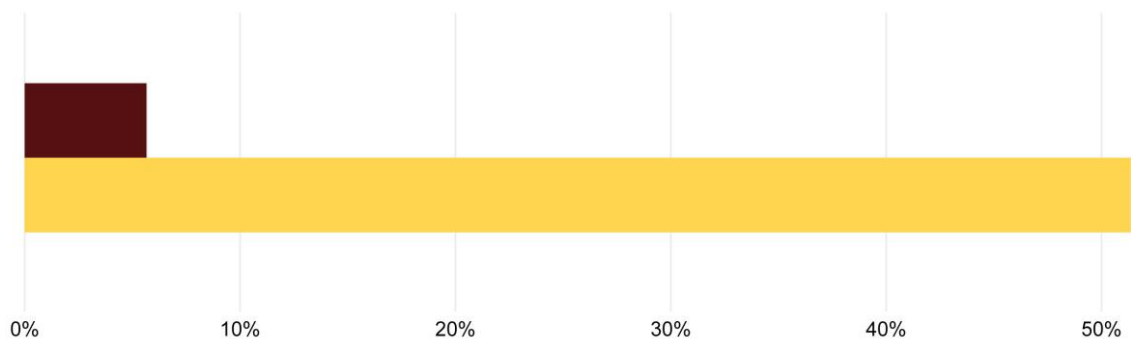
Percentage of wholetime firefighters
As at 31 March 2018

62%

70%

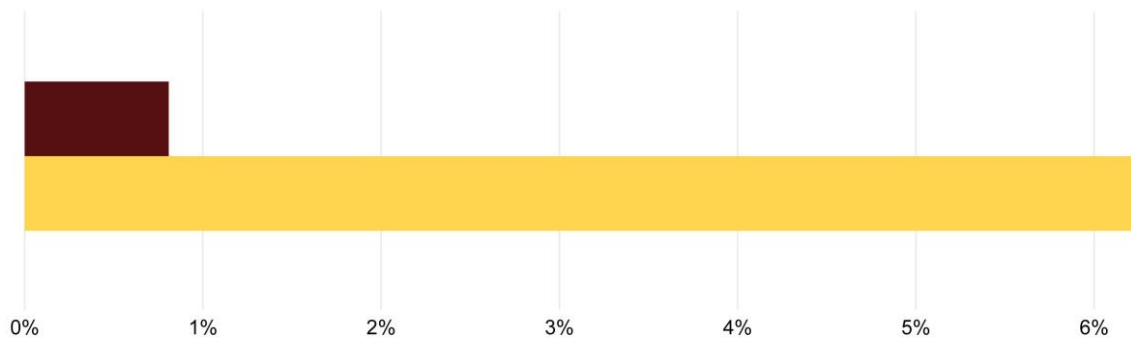
Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population














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

● BAME firefighters ● BAME residential population



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

Overview

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



People



Inadequate

Promoting the right values and culture



Requires improvement

Getting the right people with the right skills



Requires improvement

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Inadequate

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Overall summary of inspection findings

We have concerns about the performance of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) in keeping people safe and secure. In particular, we have serious concerns about how it looks after its people. In view of these findings, we have been in regular contact with the chief fire officer, as we do not underestimate how much improvement is needed.

The service requires improvement in the way it keeps people safe and secure. It requires improvement in how it:

- understands the risk of fire and other emergencies;
- prevents fires and other risks;
- responds to fires and other emergencies; and
- responds to national risks.

And it is inadequate in the way it protects the public through fire regulation.

We judged the service to require improvement in its efficiency. It requires improvement in the way it uses resources and in the affordability of its service.

It is inadequate in the way it looks after its people. It requires improvement in the way it:

- promotes the right values and culture;
- gets the right people with the right skills; and
- manages performance and develops leaders.

It is inadequate in the way it ensures fairness and promotes diversity.

Overall, there are improvements we expect the service to make. We will be monitoring progress.

Effectiveness



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



Requires improvement

Summary

An effective fire and rescue service will identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks its community faces. It will target its fire prevention and protection activities to those who are at greatest risk from fire. It will make sure businesses comply with fire safety legislation. When the public calls for help, the fire and rescue service should respond promptly with the right skills and equipment to deal with the incident effectively. West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness requires improvement.

The service draws on a range of information to have a good understanding of the local risks facing its communities. It publishes information about its performance on its website. It considers future risk in its [integrated risk management plan](#) (IRMP) which runs to 2022. And it uses a risk assessment tool – the Provision of Operational Risk Information System (PORIS) – to determine how often to visit premises, although staff don't use this consistently.

We have several areas of concern about West Sussex FRS's effectiveness. It doesn't have a clear approach to prevention and isn't referring people to local services quickly enough. We have significant concerns about how it is protecting the public through the regulation of fire safety. Its risk-based inspection programme doesn't identify the highest-risk premises, and the computer system it uses isn't robust enough and often loses data. Because of this, the service can't show, for example, whether it is meeting its building consultation targets.

In its response to fires and emergencies, the service isn't making the best use of resources. It hasn't met its response standards since 2014/15. Its fire engine availability is low and it is struggling to recruit and retain sufficient [on-call firefighters](#). It hasn't produced a clear plan for aligning its procedures to national guidance, its management of information after an incident is often poor and it has had little success in reducing the high number of false alarms it receives. Finally, its cross-border exercising is limited and inconsistent.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.

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

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

Understanding local and community risk

The service has a good understanding of the local risks in its communities. It achieves this by considering a wide range of information, including health, demographic and historical incident data. It also uses national indices of deprivation to target residents who are hard to reach. From these, it produces a critical-risk fire map. This highlights areas of very high, high, medium and low risk in the county. It reviews this modelling each year to make sure it remains up to date. Other risks such as flooding and road usage are also considered. The service bases its response model on this risk analysis. However, it doesn't always translate changes in risk into appropriate changes in the services it provides.

The service publishes information such as response standards and on-call engine availability on its website. This allows the public to see how it is performing. It uses social media to communicate incident information and promote recruitment events.

The service produces profiles for each of its fire stations. These show community risks, historic calls attended by the station and performance data. But it doesn't use these profiles to drive activity at these stations. The service could be missing opportunities to target its activity to risk in the community.

Service personnel have an established role within the Sussex Resilience Forum. For example, the deputy chief fire officer chairs the executive delivery group and operational managers attend the risk and emergency response groups. The service is named in several community risk registers, including the emergency response and recovery plan.

The service considers future foreseeable risk in its IRMP. This looks at the impact of housing developments over the next 15 years, and its area's ageing population, for example.

Having an effective risk management plan

Each [fire and rescue authority](#) must produce an IRMP. The service should consult the public when it writes this plan. The plan should provide an up-to-date picture of the risks within the county. It should also say how the service will manage these risks through its prevention, protection and response activities. The plan should cover at least three years.

The current IRMP runs from 2018 to 2022. It was published following consultation with the communities of West Sussex and received 205 formal responses. The plan explains the service's approach to understanding risk, and includes links to national and local risk registers. The service uses population data to help it identify where the most [vulnerable](#) are located and where response activities will be most needed.

The IRMP is clear enough for the public to understand. It sets five objectives for the service. These are to:

- reduce the number of emergency incidents and their consequences through the continuous improvement of its prevention, protection and response activities;
- as part of West Sussex County Council, work with local communities, districts and boroughs to keep West Sussex safe;
- collaborate with other emergency services and local and national partners to improve the service to the public;
- develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse; and
- provide customer-centred value-for-money services.

The plan also explains the challenges the service faces. These include the limited availability of on-call staff and resources not always matching demand. It also describes some of the actions the service is taking to deal with these problems. For example, it is promoting its on-call recruitment and reviewing operational resources. This plan appears to be in line with the [Fire and Rescue National Framework](#) for England.

Maintaining risk information

The service uses [wholetime staff](#) to collect and update site-specific risk information for premises and temporary events. A central team then makes this available on [mobile data terminals](#), which are computers on every fire engine.

The service uses a risk assessment tool called PORIS to understand risk and determine how often to revisit premises. This risk assessment measures the impact of fire against six factors. They include firefighter safety, and economic and heritage risk. The service revisits high-risk premises every year and low-risk premises every three years. It couldn't show that its staff apply this risk assessment method appropriately and consistently, however. This means it may not always be prioritising high-risk premises.

We also found the service was unable to meet the demands of its revisit programme. Targets for the completion of risk visits didn't align with demand and we found little evidence of performance management to make sure visits were completed on time. As a result, a large number of the risk information cards we checked were out of date. Completed risk records were subject to little assurance. This means the service is missing chances to improve the standard of its risk information. It communicates general information about risk across the whole organisation using health and safety bulletins, flash messages and shift handovers.

Preventing fires and other risks



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure staff understand how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people.

Cause of concern

Prevention activity doesn't always align with risks identified in the IRMP. Home fire safety checks aren't being done in a timely manner and there is a large backlog of high-risk cases.

Recommendations

- The service should ensure it targets its home fire safety check activity at people most at risk.
- The service should ensure it carries out home fire safety checks in a timely manner.

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

Prevention strategy

The service doesn't have a clear prevention strategy, although its IRMP outlines its strategic approach to prevention. We found that its prevention activity doesn't always align with the risk the IRMP has identified. The service now offers [safe and well visits](#) to its most vulnerable residents. As at 31 March 2019, the service states that prevention visits include ensuring that working smoke alarms are fitted, identifying potential fire risks, acting to reduce those risks, and giving advice on social welfare and avoiding slips, trips and falls. However, operational staff were still conducting [home fire safety checks](#) and not providing documented advice on social welfare or slips, trips and falls and signposting to other organisations. In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 6,647 home fire safety checks, equating to 7.8 per 1,000 population. Of these, 1,568 were to those registered as disabled and 5,073 to the elderly. At the time of our inspection, the service told us that it hadn't completed over 400 high-risk home fire safety checks assigned to fire stations.

The information system the service uses to support prevention activities is not effective and doesn't support the range of activities delivered during safe and well visits. We saw prevention specialists trialling new software while operational crews continued to complete their home fire safety check process by paper. This means the service can't accurately check progress against its home fire safety check programme.

Specialist teams deliver educational programmes such as FireBreak and a cadet scheme, which aim to reduce risk of fire setting by engaging with young people. The service seeks feedback from those who attend these programmes. Little external evaluation takes place that might assist the delivery or prioritisation of such activities.

Promoting community safety

The service works closely with other departments in the council and external organisations to promote community safety. For example, Careline supports elderly people living independently in their homes. Details are then shared with the fire service so it can carry out prevention visits.

The service runs FireWise, an educational programme that targets children who show fire-setting behaviour. It created this programme in collaboration with East Sussex FRS and an external company. Social workers and youth services refer children to the programme. West Sussex FRS also runs FireBreak, a week-long programme that encourages positive role modelling for young adults. The service works with schools and youth advisers to deliver courses tailored to the needs of pupils.

Staff in specialist teams are well trained to identify and support vulnerable people. But we found that training for operational crews on identifying the full range of vulnerability was limited. What was available was also not mandatory. Operational crews can access [safeguarding](#) information, and access to the service's safeguarding lead is available through [fire control](#). The service should assure itself that all staff have up-to-date safeguarding knowledge and are able to recognise vulnerability.

The service has a volunteer section that supports prevention activities such as Safe Drive Stay Alive. This group also undertakes follow-ups for safe and well visits.

The service could develop this group more, and increase its capacity to do prevention work.

Road safety

The service's IRMP contains details of road traffic collisions, including the number of people killed on the roads. The service is part of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership in which East Sussex and West Sussex county councils, the police and FRSs work together on road safety. The service uses dedicated prevention teams and volunteers to run its Safe Drive Stay Alive programme targeting 16 to 18-year-olds, in collaboration with the police, the NHS and the ambulance service. The service told us that, since 2006, it has provided this programme to about 100,000 students. An external company recently evaluated this work, although at the time of the inspection it had yet to report. We also saw examples of local fire stations promoting road safety messages with visual scenes, highlighting the dangers of drinking and driving at Christmas.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Inadequate

Area for improvement

- The service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms (termed 'unwanted fire signals').

Cause of concern

West Sussex FRS doesn't have a clear strategy for using its risk-based inspection programme to identify the highest risk premises. The database it uses to manage premises information is unreliable and not always accurate. The service can't carry out the number of audits of high-risk premises that it commits to as part of its programme.

Recommendations

- The service should ensure that its risk-based inspection programme targets it highest risk premises.
- The service should ensure that effective and robust systems are in place to manage its protection activities.
- The service should ensure it conducts the number and frequency of high-risk premises audits that it sets out in its inspection programme.

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

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

Risk-based approach

The service doesn't have a clear protection strategy, although its IRMP sets out its strategic approach to protection. The service isn't confident its risk-based inspection programme is identifying the highest-risk premises. The computer system it uses to manage its protection work is making this job harder, which the service acknowledges. Staff who use the system told us it doesn't provide consistent reporting and often loses data. This means protection managers can't prioritise their work based on accurate information. The service should make sure its IT system supports better risk profiling and its protection activities are resourced to meet the risks the IRMP has identified.

A business fire safety team of trained specialists carries out protection activities. But the service doesn't prioritise regulatory activities enough and the team is under-resourced. Again, the service has identified this problem and has acknowledged its prevention activity doesn't align with the risks its IRMP has identified.

The service identifies highest-risk premises using a range of criteria. They include historical incident data and [fire service emergency cover toolkit](#) codes, such as sleeping accommodation and care homes. As at 31 December 2018, the service has identified 2,624 high-risk premises, which it is committed to visiting every three years. It has been unable to provide an accurate figure for the number of high-risk audits it carried out in the year to 31 December 2018, however. In its IRMP, it acknowledges it isn't undertaking enough high-risk audits to meet the demands of its risk-based inspection programme.

The service told us it meets 100 percent of its building consultation target. However, it was unable to supply evidence of this because of the limitations of its computer system.

Enforcement

We have concerns about the quality of the data submitted to the Home Office on protection and fire safety audits. The data the service provided showed that, in the year to 31 March 2018, its audits had a notably higher rate of satisfactory outcomes than the England average. The service should assure itself that it is directing protection resources at the highest-risk premises.

We saw examples of joint [enforcement action](#) with other organisations, such as the county council's housing department. In these cases, the fire service and the housing department support each other and agree which will be the lead agency. In the year ending 31 March 2018, the service issued eight enforcement notices, six prohibition notices, one prosecution and no alteration notices. Duty fire safety officers can serve these at any time. The service successfully prosecuted one business in 2017 that had

failed to comply with its legal duties under a fire safety order. It uses the council's legal services to support its work in this field.

Working with others

The service doesn't manage any [primary authority schemes](#), but does work with local businesses to improve their awareness of their responsibilities under current fire safety legislation. The service engages with businesses through seminars. We also saw examples of how it monitors call rates each month and sends letters to those with the highest level of false alarms. Since the year ending 30 September 2011, the number of false alarms attended has remained relatively stable, at around 4,600 each year. In the year ending 30 September 2018, false alarm incidents made up 51 percent of all incidents attended, which is higher than the England average of 40 percent over the same period. The service should make sure it has a clear approach to reducing the impact of these false alarms.

We were informed about the service's work with Trading Standards to reduce the risk to the public from fireworks on Bonfire Night. Other organisations told us the service was a good organisation to work with, although the capacity of its prevention team was limiting opportunities to do more joint work.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has an effective system to use learning from operational response to improve its command and control.
- The service should ensure the availability of its on-call fire engines is aligned to the risks identified in its IRMP.
- The service should ensure it has an effective system to maintain the competencies of all incident commanders.

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

As at 31 March 2018, the service had one [wholetime fire station](#), 14 retained fire stations, and nine mixed fire stations.

The service uses a mixture of staffing models to provide its operational response. These include wholetime and on-call staff. It also uses a crewing optimisation group to move resources around the county to help support areas where the availability of fire engines is low.

The service acknowledges its resources aren't always available when they are needed. Demand for fire engines is greater during the day and less at night, whatever the day of the week. But the service has most of its fire engines available during the night and fewest during the day. This is not the best use of its resources. The service has also seen an increase in its response times. In the year to 31 March 2014, its average response time to [primary fires](#) was 9 minutes and 9 seconds. In the year to March 2018, its average response time to primary fires had increased to 9 minutes and 48 seconds. Staff and fire engines are moved across the service to cover shortfalls. There is an agreed procedure for taking this action through fire control and the service duty manager.

The service also operates a separate technical rescue unit. This provides specialist rescue capabilities, including line rescue, confined space and large animal rescue. This team doesn't attend fires or deliver prevention work. The service should make sure it uses the team effectively to support the service's wider operational workforce.

Response

In the year to 30 September 2018, the service attended 10.96 incidents per 1,000 population. This compares to the England rate of 10.47 over the same period.

The service aligns its response model to those areas identified in its critical risk fire maps. Areas of very high risk will have a quicker response time than lower-risk areas. The service refreshes these maps every year, but acknowledges it rarely adjusts its response model to reflect any changes that occur.

The service publishes response standards and performance against these standards on its website. These standards were agreed in 2008. They include a commitment to attend the most [critical incidents](#) with the first fire engine in 8 minutes and the second in 11 minutes 89 percent of the time. The service hasn't met this standard since 2014/15. It has also reduced the number of operational fire engines it uses. As at 31 March 2009, it had 46 operational fire engines, which was reduced to 35 as at 31 March 2018.

The service meets its commitments on wholetime fire engine availability, but its on-call engines are rarely all available. Between April 2018 and December 2018, the overall average monthly pump availability ranged from 65 percent to 70 percent. However, in some cases, individual pump availability is far lower. The situation is worse during the day. The IRMP acknowledges this problem and the service is actively promoting the on-call role and recruiting in its communities.

The service has aligned some of its procedures to [national operational guidance](#), but its progress has been limited. It has not produced a clear plan about how it might adopt the full guidance. Staff described an over-reliance on Learning Pool, the service's e-learning platform, to deliver changes in operational procedure.

The service also completes a range of documentation as part of a command and control system. These include risk assessments, and the message and decision logs completed at operational incidents. But we found that management of this information after an incident has been poor. Documents haven't always been returned and few reviews have been done that might help improve operational practice and staff competence.

Command

The service has an established framework to develop those who are new to the command role. This includes command courses that the training team runs, and external courses for more senior commanders. Operational commanders showed a mixed level of understanding of national models such as the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles](#) (JESIP) and the incident command decision control process. We found that, while these skills were tested at the assessment stage, commanders have rarely had the chance to practise them because of a lack of incidents or joint exercises.

Generally, those required to command incidents felt competent, but they told us they would like to practise their skills more often. Maintenance of command training at all levels lacked structure and oversight. The service should make sure its incident commanders have opportunities to maintain these core skills.

The levels of command at operational incidents are proportionate based on risk. We found that control operators were confident about adjusting resources when necessary.

Keeping the public informed

The service shares information with the public via its communications team. It does this through its website and social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. It uses these to promote safety messages, including on the dangers of drink driving. It also uses them to promote service recruitment events. Fire stations have their own Twitter accounts to allow them to communicate with their local community. But we found that little training has taken place to make sure operational staff use social media in line with the service's expectations.

Fire control operators can access fire survival guidance and were confident they could provide the public with this guidance in an emergency. But the guidance could be more comprehensive. It could also cover a wider range of incidents than it currently does.

The service provides safeguarding information to frontline crews. Concerns about vulnerable people can be raised immediately through fire control.

Evaluating operational performance

We found that [hot debriefs](#), which operational crews carry out immediately after an incident, were well established. An electronic feedback form allows crews to share feedback more widely and a central team collects and monitors this information. After large or more significant incidents, this team makes sure formal debriefs take place. We saw examples of incident debriefs involving other organisations, including the police and Network Rail. Learning from this debrief process was evident. But we saw few examples of this being used to change operational practice. We also found that not all operational staff understood the benefits of the process. The service has acknowledged the process is new and is still being established.

The service undertakes limited assurance of its operational staff through its tactical advisers. These officers are sent to incidents to review the performance of incident commanders at operational incidents. But we found this process being applied inconsistently, which meant the benefits for operational officers and the service was limited.

The service has a point of contact for [national operational learning](#). We saw examples of where this information had been shared with staff.

Responding to national risks



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure that, where possible, LRF exercises include operational staff at all levels to improve interoperability and competence.
- The service should ensure operational staff have good access to cross-border risk information.
- The service should arrange a programme of over-the-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.

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

Staff in the control room and operational commanders were clear about how to [mobilise](#) and request national assets when needed. The service has a high-volume pump and the means to make it available at times of need, although we found that operational staff weren't always confident in using it. We were told by firefighters that they didn't have many opportunities to maintain such additional skills.

The service has arrangements in place to increase its resources at times of increased demand. These include cross-border arrangements. But we found that recommendations arising from a recent major incident, which involved using national assets, haven't yet been tested.

Working with other services

The service has arrangements to support operational response. Those with Hampshire FRS mean the quickest engine is sent to a fire, whichever county the fire is in. Cross-border exercising was limited and inconsistent, however. There is no structured exercise programme that could make cross-border work between West Sussex FRS and other services more effective. As part of our inspection, we carried out a survey of staff to get their views of their service (refer to Annex A for more details). The results showed that, of the 67 firefighters and specialist support staff who responded, 1 percent agreed that the service regularly trains and exercises with neighbouring FRSs, while 75 percent disagreed and 24 percent didn't know.

Staff receive risk information when they work across borders. But we found it wasn't always available and we came across examples of information that was out of date. This could increase the risk operational staff face when responding to incidents, as they don't have access to current risk information.

Working with other agencies

The service told us about a major incident that occurred in March 2018. Water shortages across the county drew a co-ordinated response from a range of agencies, co-ordinated by the Sussex Resilience Forum. We found established arrangements for senior officers to exercise with other agencies for major events. These include exercising and testing emergency plans at sites like Gatwick Airport. Other operational staff do such tests far less often. Joint exercises between West Sussex FRS and agencies such as the police and ambulance service are limited and applied inconsistently.

The service has a dedicated team that responds to marauding terrorist firearms incidents. It comprises operational staff from the workforce that can be called on if an incident occurs. We were given examples of recent occasions when this team was mobilised and made available.

Efficiency



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



Requires improvement

Summary

An efficient fire and rescue service will manage its budget and spend money properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to its risk. It should try to keep costs down without compromising public safety. Future budgets should be based on robust and realistic assumptions. West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency requires improvement.

The service has a good understanding of its financial position and its financial plans are based on sound assumptions. It also has a track record of achieving savings, saving several million pounds since 2011/12 by reducing its workforce and the number of fire engines it runs, and through closer integration with the local county council.

However, the service needs to do more to make the best use of its resources. In particular, it needs to improve how it allocates its resources to align more closely with the priorities outlined in its IRMP. It should also do more to monitor and review the benefits and outcomes of collaboration with other agencies and services.

While we recognise the savings the service has made, it has failed to invest these savings into ways to make itself more effective and efficient. It still relies on a computer system that hinders its protection and prevention work, and still does too much work on paper. It could also make better use of risk information to drive its activities. The service has failed to take advantage of the county council's transformation [reserve](#) to bring about the changes it needs.

Making best use of resources



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to ensure it allocates its resources appropriately and prioritises activities that address the risks identified in its IRMP.
- The service should have effective measures to ensure staff are productive and using their time efficiently to deliver the priorities in the IRMP.
- The service should ensure there is effective monitoring, review and evaluation of the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration.

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 is clear about the financial challenges it faces. They include realigning resource to risk, improving the number of on-call firefighters and managing a changing workforce. The service has set up four strategic boards to monitor progress on these and other issues and deliver its objectives.

The service's plans are built on sound financial assumptions and largely reflect the priorities contained in its IRMP. It has business development plans for each area, and its financial and workforce plans are aligned. It has allocated resources to prevention, protection and response, and a staff control group provides strategic oversight. But we found the service can't always match resources appropriately to risk. Examples include the difficulties it has experienced in maintaining the number of on-call firefighters and providing the number of fire engines it has committed to in its IRMP.

The service told us it made £7m in savings between 2011/12 and 2016/17. It has done this by reducing its workforce and the number of fire engines. It has also reduced administration and support costs through its integration with the county council. But we found that the service hasn't invested these savings in technology that would allow it to use its resources more efficiently. An example of this is the computer system it uses to manage prevention and protection work. Staff explained the various problems they had encountered with this system, including inaccurate reporting and loss of data. This has led to additional systems being introduced by both teams as they try to manage the inefficiencies the IT system has created.

We found the service has also been cutting costs by collaborating with other fire services to procure operational equipment. But we came across little evidence of regular evaluation or reviews of collaborative arrangements.

Productivity and ways of working

As at 31 March 2018, the service had 606 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. Over the same time period, 61.7 percent of its FTE firefighters were wholetime. The service uses a range of working models to support the delivery of its services. This includes uniformed and non-uniformed staff working flexible shift patterns. In the year to 31 March 2018, the firefighter cost per head of population was £21.98. This compares to the England rate of £22.38 over the same time period. However, many factors influence this cost – for example, the ratio of wholetime to [retained staff](#), which is in part influenced by the rurality of the service.

We found that the service doesn't co-ordinate the activity of its staff well enough to maximise productivity. It doesn't have strategies in place that would allow it to take a clear, collaborative approach to delivering prevention, protection and response activities. Performance management has also been limited, which has done little to assure the service that staff are prioritising their activity. As a result, it can't deliver all the objectives set out within its IRMP.

The service has recently introduced business development plans for all stations, and work activity is now monitored monthly. But we found that these plans didn't drive localised risk-delivery work and are not used to prioritise activity. Station profiles clearly communicate the risks in station areas. But we found the profiles were rarely used to understand community needs and drive activity at a station level. The service should make sure it uses its risk information to drive activity and monitor this through a robust performance management framework.

The service has introduced a customer centred value for money delivery board. The board's aim is to support better links between the community and service on delivery. But the board is still in the early stages. The service surveys the public after fire incidents and prevention activities. While this is welcome, we saw few examples of how these surveys have improved ways of working or the delivery of services.

Collaboration

The service's integration with West Sussex County Council has created benefits for both organisations. For example, the deputy chief fire officer is also the head of Trading Standards, and the service and Trading Standards work together to improve outcomes for West Sussex communities. This includes carrying out joint enforcement work. The service has also drawn on the capacity and expertise of the council's IT department. This work is still at an early stage, so the full benefits are yet to be realised.

The service is part of the 3Fs partnership with Surrey and East Sussex FRSs. The benefits of this work include joint recruitment and initial training courses for wholetime staff. But these benefits are limited. Because the service doesn't regularly evaluate the benefits of its collaboration, it can't always show exactly what activities it is benefitting from the most.

Continuity arrangements

The service uses West Sussex County Council's resilience and emergencies team to support its resilience arrangements. This team works with the service to advise and test its business continuity plans. The IT service for West Sussex FRS is outsourced. These continuity arrangements are tested regularly. But we found that the IT provider doesn't offer support out of hours for the service's mobilising system. Instead, this is provided by the service's in-house electronic services team. The service should make sure it maintains adequate resilience arrangements to mobilise fire engines at all times.

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



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should do more to identify areas where innovation, including the use of technology, can help it improve productivity and develop capacity.

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

West Sussex FRS's budget for 2018/19 is £25.3m. This doesn't include support services that the council provides, such as human resources, payroll and IT. The council doesn't allocate these costs at a service level, so the full cost of these services is unclear. However, we saw examples of how the council reviews how it commissions services to make sure they provide value for money. The service told us it has a history of achieving budget reductions and has saved £7m since the financial year 2011/12. Long-term planning is more difficult, owing to a level of uncertainty about the service's future funding as part of the county council. But we found the service's financial assumptions about the near future are realistic and prudent.

West Sussex and East Sussex FRSs received £3.6m in transformational funding in 2013 to merge their control rooms. West Sussex FRS is withdrawing from this agreement in 2020 and looking for a new provider for its mobilising function. Until the new arrangements can be established, the cost to the county council will be £15,000 from October 2018, rising to £30,000 in April 2019. The service has told us the new mobilising control arrangements, which it intends to have in place by early 2020, will save money over the medium term.

The service's customer centred value for money delivery board oversees and is responsible for reducing costs – for example, through procurement. But it was acknowledged this is still at an early stage and the benefits are limited. An early example was its procurement of new thermal image cameras.

Innovation

The service's approach to risk-based response standards is an example of where it has tried to work innovatively. But we came across few other examples of the service delivering or improving services to the public through innovative work. It uses SharePoint to manage and share information. But we found that its operational staff weren't properly trained to use it. This limits the potential benefits. For many of its activities, including prevention and gathering risk information, the service still relies on completing paper forms. This limits effectiveness and efficiency. The service should do more to identify areas where innovation and the use of technology can make its work more productive.

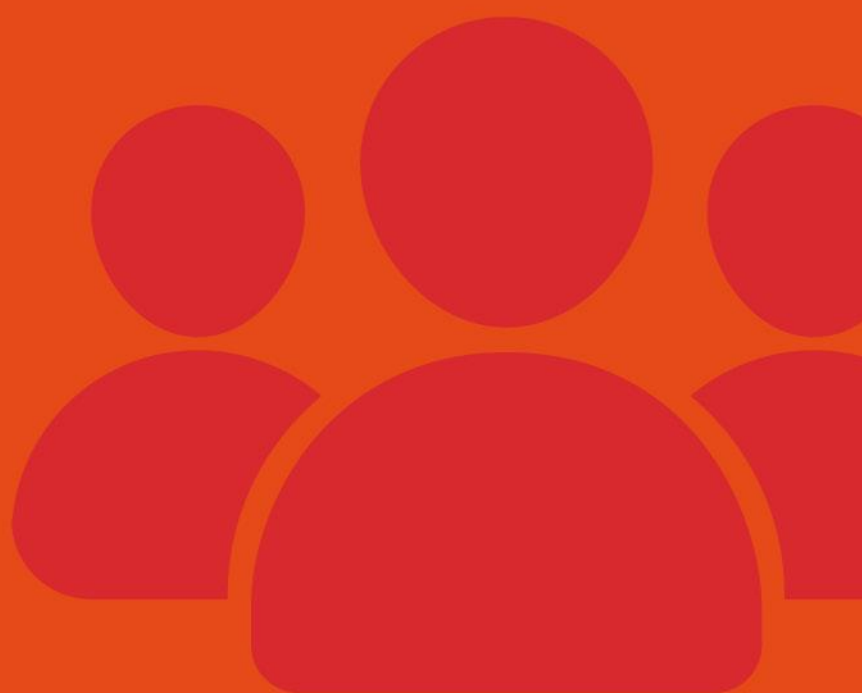
Future investment and working with others

The service can access the county council's transformation reserve. At the time of the inspection, £7m was available. But we didn't come across many examples of the service using this fund to invest in areas that would increase its efficiency and capacity. For example, its prevention and protection computer system has seen a lack of investment, which is limiting the efficiency of the service's delivery to the public. It has used the capacity and expertise in the county council's IT department to upgrade its office-based systems. It hopes to introduce tablets for mobile work during 2019.

The service is part of the One Public Estate project. This has highlighted seven service sites suitable for future development. This service believes this arrangement should help to improve and future-proof its estate. The site at Horsham is an example where plans have been submitted to locate an improved multi-agency hub and training facility.

The service pays staff overtime to generate income by providing courses and other services through the county council. It offers courses in fire safety and fire extinguisher training to businesses. Any income from these goes to the fire service's budget. The service told us these generate an income of around £200,000 a year. This doesn't meet the current target for income generation, which has historically been set at £341,000.

People



How well does the service look after its people?



Inadequate

Summary

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

We have several fundamental concerns about how well the service manages people. It has adopted the county council's values, but most staff don't understand or follow them. We also found examples where staff weren't acting in line with these values, including reports of bullying. Despite receiving feedback to the contrary, the service has so far failed to launch an anti-bullying campaign. Senior leaders need to do more to promote the service's values and make sure they become part of the organisation, as well as act appropriately on feedback from staff.

The service isn't doing enough to ensure fairness and diversity. There is little engagement with staff groups, particularly with those from minority groups. The service isn't doing enough to improve the experiences of women and people with disabilities, and must do more to understand and remove barriers for under-represented groups. We also saw little promotion of equality and inclusion in the workforce. Staff weren't clear what training was in place or if it was mandatory.

Although the service has a health and safety framework, we saw out-of-date risk assessments. It has a grievance process, but we saw little monitoring of outcomes. And while it is positive that the service offers a range of wellbeing support, this isn't co-ordinated, so staff may not be getting the full support they need.

The service's performance management process isn't rigorous enough. Uniformed staff have little faith in annual appraisals, seeing them as tick-box exercises.

Links between staff appraisals and the service's wider aims and goals aren't clear. The service also lacks a process to identify high-potential future leaders.

That said, the service's training offer is good – in particular, for new firefighters. But more could be done to help established firefighters maintain their skills.

Promoting the right values and culture



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has a robust system in place to review and update its risk assessments, and that recommendations from workplace accidents are actioned in a timely manner.
- The service should have appropriate means to monitor the working hours of its staff.

Cause of concern

West Sussex FRS's staff sometimes act in ways that go against its core values. This is leading to bullying in the workplace.

Recommendations

- The service should clearly and effectively communicate its core values to staff. This should include acceptable behaviour statements.
- The service should ensure that staff act in line with its values and are trained to identify and deal with non-compliance.

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

Workforce wellbeing

The range of wellbeing measures in place include an occupational health team and a trauma aftercare team. These provide psychological support after operational incidents occur. Of the 76 respondents to our staff survey, 74 percent agreed that they were satisfied their personal safety and welfare was treated seriously at work. But we found the teams work independently of each other. This could lead to the wellbeing needs of staff being missed. These teams should work more closely to make sure staff needs are fully understood.

Operational managers are the gateway to welfare services for frontline staff. But we found these managers have received little training to support staff. The service has identified this as a problem. It plans to introduce the Mind Blue Light programme for its staff in 2019.

Health and safety

The service has a dedicated health and safety team, and operational managers are well trained. Safety messages are sent to staff to raise awareness of health and safety issues. And in the staff survey, of the 76 respondents, 87 percent agreed that they were encouraged to report all accidents, [near misses](#) and dangerous occurrences. However, we found several operational risk assessments were out of date and action wasn't always taken within a reasonable time after workplace accidents.

In the year to 31 March 2018, 31.1 percent of wholetime firefighters had external secondary employment and 21.1 percent of wholetime firefighters had secondary employment within the service. The service doesn't monitor this closely enough to make sure staff are well rested and safe to work.

Culture and values

West Sussex County Council has five core values. These are: proud to be customer-centred (we put the customer central to everything we do); listen and act upon (we listen to each other and act on what we say); honest and realistic (we are honest and realistic about what we can achieve); trust and support (we trust and support each other); and genuinely valued (we feel our contribution is genuinely valued).

We found that West Sussex FRS staff don't always act in line with these values. In some cases, staff have been bullied, and several such cases were shared with us during our inspection. In our staff survey, of the 76 respondents, 29 percent said they had been bullied and or harassed in the last 12 months. There are limitations to the staff survey which should be considered alongside the findings. We explain these in Annex A.

In 2017, West Sussex FRS conducted a stress survey that also highlighted bullying as a concern for staff. The recommendations arising from this included conducting a bullying awareness campaign. But when we inspected the service in late 2018, work on this campaign had yet to start.

We found some evidence of senior leaders promoting the service's core values, but it appeared to be limited and has done little to establish these values across the workforce. Staff also described a lack of visible leadership on the part of middle managers. The service should assure itself that its full management team is modelling and promoting its values.

The service communicates with staff through a weekly newsletter. Information is available on the internet, including welfare promotion. Managers hold seminars at which senior leaders engage directly with frontline managers. The service has invested in new noticeboards at every station that can display a range of standard information. This includes performance data, wellbeing notices and service updates.

Staff told us they feel the values are the council's rather than the service's, and they weren't engaged when they were developed. Senior leaders in the service need to do more to communicate the values to staff. They should make sure these values form the basis of how staff behave towards each other in the workplace.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its workforce plan takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities it needs to carry out its IRMP.

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

Workforce planning

The service describes its workforce challenges in its IRMP. They include losing 36 percent of its operational workforce through retirement over the next four years. It published a people and culture strategy in 2018 that describes its long-term workforce aims. We found that links exist between the service's medium-term financial plan and its workforce plan.

The service has formed a staff control group that oversees staffing requirements. It meets every two weeks to consider staff moves, training requirements and planning for future workforce needs. The service has acknowledged its problem with retaining on-call personnel. It is now recruiting operational staff to manage staffing shortfalls. New firefighters have been recruited over the last two years and the service intends to recruit more in 2019.

The service told us that over 50 percent of its middle and senior management may retire by 2022. While this is included within its people and culture strategy, a process to develop future leaders is still in the planning stages. It isn't clear to us how the service intends to overcome this loss of experience and expertise.

The service uses an electronic crewing system, FireWatch, to support operational resource management. It uses a central crewing team to identify shortfalls and make staffing moves. But we found staff on stations are still spending time trying to fill crewing gaps. Staff told us they were using online messaging services to communicate with firefighters to help deal with local staff shortages. The service's provision for managing crewing, including the use of the central crewing office, isn't as efficient as it should be. We also found that FireWatch didn't support longer-term planning for on-call staff. This has also made it difficult to deal with the crewing shortfalls.

Learning and improvement

The service has a dedicated and well-resourced training, development and assurance team. This trains new and on-call recruits and delivers courses for road traffic collision and incident command. It also provides competency assessments for incident commanders and those wearing breathing apparatus (BA). The service also uses external providers to carry out training it can't provide in-house. This includes management training and specialist operational skills training, such as rope and large animal rescue. The service has created a learning prospectus that shows the development available to each operational role in the service. It isn't available for non-uniformed staff, however.

Staff told us that the initial operational training delivered by their training centre is good, but that the service could do more to help them maintain their skills. For example, staff told us they would like to practise using BA more often, as the opportunity to do so at real incidents is decreasing. And, of the 76 respondents to our staff survey, only 51 percent agreed that they had received sufficient training to enable them to do what is asked of them. We also found that the maintenance training for Level 2 incident commanders wasn't structured or prioritised enough.

The service uses FireWatch to record its staff training and we found it was generally well used. The service provides much of its learning content through Learning Pool. This electronic system contains learning packages on a range of subjects, including safety notices, new equipment and procedures. Staff sign off the packages when they complete them, which the service monitors. However, staff said the service relied too much on this system, including when it used Learning Pool to align its procedures to national operational guidance incident command. Users also told us the system was word-heavy and hard to understand. The service should make sure the learning it offers meets the needs of its staff.

The service conducts annual station audits. These cover a range of subjects and are agreed by senior managers responsible for the service's operational staff and resources. Managers told us the audits gave them a good insight into operational staff's competencies. But we found few examples of the service using the outcomes of these audits to inform operational learning and improvement.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Inadequate

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure all staff are appropriately equipped for their role.

Cause of concern

West Sussex FRS doesn't engage with or seek feedback from staff to understand their needs. We found this to especially be the case with some under-represented groups. When staff raise issues and concerns, the service doesn't respond quickly enough.

Recommendations

- The service should ensure that it effectively engages with its staff, including minority groups.
- The service should improve communications between staff and senior managers, so concerns are responded to in a timely and appropriate way.

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

Seeking and acting on staff feedback

The service doesn't engage and seek feedback from staff to enable it to understand their needs. The county council undertook a staff survey in 2017. This didn't include on-call staff and little action has been taken in response to the feedback. Of the 76 respondents to our staff survey, only 26 percent agreed that they were confident their ideas and suggestions will be listened to.

West Sussex FRS undertook a stress survey in 2017, which 33 percent of its staff completed. The recommendations from this survey included the need to launch a bullying awareness campaign and better engage with minority focus groups. We found this work was still at an early stage, and the work on bullying hadn't yet started. The service has established ways to engage with staff representative bodies but has done little to improve the experiences of the diverse groups within its workforce. For example, it doesn't provide a suitable range of workwear for women. This has been raised by staff as a problem, but the service hasn't acted quickly enough to resolve it. Staff with disabilities such as dyslexia told us they had difficulties with the way the service relied on Learning Pool to deliver training. During our inspection, we also met staff who told us they had been bullied because of their gender or race.

In our staff survey, of the 76 who responded, 33 percent felt they had been discriminated against at work in the last 12 months.

The service has a formal grievance process. Monitoring of informal grievances has been inconsistent, however. As a result, the service doesn't know enough about staff concerns to identify trends or recurring concerns that would inform organisational learning. Training for managers to deal with grievances has been inconsistent. The service recognises this and plans to improve manager training. But this hadn't started at the time of our inspection. We found that, since the year ending 31 March 2018, the number of formal grievances has been low. But grievances relating to bullying and harassment have been made for several years.

Diversity

As at 31 March 2018, 11.8 percent of the workforce were female (81 women). This is a reduction since 31 March 2009, when 13.7 percent of the workforce were female (132 women). As at 31 March 2018, 5.7 percent of the service's firefighters were female.

As at 31 March 2018, 0.7 percent of the workforce identified as black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME). This is a reduction from 2.8 percent as at 31 March 2014. As at 31 March 2018, 0.8 percent of the service's firefighters were from a BAME background. This compares with a BAME residential population of 6.2 percent.

We also found the service didn't prioritise equality and inclusion training enough.

Recent recruitment campaigns for operational staff have seen some success in broadening the diversity of the workforce. But we saw little co-ordinated effort on the part of the service to understand and remove the barriers facing all under-represented groups. If it is to meet the commitments it has made in its IRMP, the service will need to understand what barriers exist to entry and make sure the workplace is inclusive of everyone.

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's performance management process isn't rigorous enough. We found few examples of staff objectives being linked to local or service objectives. This means that staff don't always know which work is most important or when they have been successful.

All staff are expected to complete an appraisal every 12 months. The service uses the county council's performance process rather than a bespoke one. Completion rates are high. As at 31 March 2018, the completion rate was 91 percent for wholetime firefighters and 82 percent for non-uniformed staff.

Non-uniformed staff told us they found the appraisals useful, whereas we found that uniformed staff didn't find the same value in the process. The on-call workforce complete group rather than individual appraisals. This could limit managers' ability to discuss individual performance or welfare issues. Staff can request an individual appraisal if they wish. Uniformed staff told us the council's appraisal process wasn't relevant to them and they saw it as a tick-box exercise. We found that service-specific targets for staff weren't linked to their appraisals or regularly reviewed. The service should make sure clear links exist between appraisals and performance targets or service aims.

The service hasn't given operational managers the training they need to conduct meaningful appraisals. As a result, they do them inconsistently. We did find that non-uniformed managers had access to appraisal training through the county council, but this hasn't been prioritised sufficiently for uniformed managers. The service should make sure all managers are trained to carry out meaningful appraisals.

Developing leaders

The service publishes promotion processes on its internet site. This explains how staff can access the process and what to expect. Staff generally found this information useful. We found that the service has followed the guidance it gives for these processes, although the connection between selection and appointment to role was not clear.

The service doesn't have a process to attract and develop staff with high potential to be senior leaders in future. It has a value-centred leadership programme that offers leadership development for uniformed and support managers. But it does little to develop senior leaders and relies on external providers.

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. West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is a unitary authority.

Metropolitan FRA

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

Combined FRA

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

County FRA

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

Unitary authorities

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

London

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

Mayoral Combined Authority

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

Police, fire and crime commissioner FRA

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

Isles of Scilly

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

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