

## Fire and Rescue Service Inspection consultation – Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service response

Consultation Question	
What do you think of the proposed approach to FRS inspection that HMICFRS proposes to conduct in 2018/19? How could this be improved?	<p>The approach seems to be very thorough with a mix of data analysis, observation, consideration of documents, meetings, interviews and focus groups. It seems to be a good approach for the first round of Fire and rescue Service inspections.</p> <p>Having the Judgement Criteria made available to the FRS at the earliest stage to maximise the preparation time available.</p>
Do you agree that an integrated inspection of fire and rescue services' effectiveness and efficiency, and how they look after their people, is better than separate thematic inspections?	We believe that the suggested approach is the best one for the FRA and HMICFRS in the first instance, as it will result in HMICFRS acquiring a wide range of rounded knowledge about FRSs. This is considered to be important prior to undertaking any thematic inspections that might be warranted in the future.
Are there any other areas of fire and rescue services' activity that should be included in the integrated inspections?	None suggested.
Does the draft inspection methodology (annex A) include the right questions to gather evidence for a rounded assessment of fire and rescue services? How could this be improved?	<p>Core question 1 includes reference to safe and secure. It is not clear what "secure" means in a FRS context and how it would differ from "safe"</p> <p>1.1.4 – As there are not necessarily "common standards" currently (each FRS focusing on local risk), is this question included to be relevant at a time when the Professional Standards Body is active, or does this question refer to something else (if the latter could this question be explained in more detail?).</p> <p>1.1.5 – Similarly to above, what organisations are included in the "common understanding" that is referred to? Is it fire and rescue Authorities, or other partner organisations, or something else?</p> <p>1.2.1 – words are missing off the end of the question.</p> <p>1.3.3 and 1.4.2. - these questions appear on the surface to be the same and perhaps need more information in each to create a distinction.</p> <p>1.4.1 this question suggests that attendance times and responses to incidents must be based on risk and vulnerability. This would not be the case in all FRS for a number of</p>

	<p>reasons. Is the question referring to the initial response (eg speed of response), or is it referring to actions that crews might take once in attendance depending on what they know about the vulnerability of residents (for example)?</p> <p>2.14 – what “national requirements” is this question referring to?</p> <p>2.1.6, 2.1.7, 2.2.8 – do these questions contain duplication?</p> <p>2.2.9 – words missing off the end of the question.</p>
<p>How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take full account of the circumstances of fire and rescue services and of risks to public safety?</p>	<p>Rather than asking for documents by name (eg Annual Plan), consider asking for documents by what is contained within them (eg an annual action plan for delivering IRMP objectives) as different FRS have different names for these documents.</p> <p>Consider that there are differences in the ways in which FRAs collect and analyse data and that what might appear on the surface to be the same information might involve a differing definition or different interpretation of guidance. Caution would need to be exercised when drawing broad comparisons about performance from data.</p> <p>When asking questions during fieldwork, discovery and reality testing it might be helpful to avoid questions that might appear to be too academic, focusing instead on the relevance of the subject area for the staff being interviewed and the outcomes they want to achieve in. For example, a question asking about the methodology for targeting prevention work might be appropriate for headquarters staff developing the strategy, whilst asking fire crews what they know about the people in their station area and how they decide who to visit, may elicit better responses.</p> <p>Evidence gathering from FRA Partners / wider stakeholders.</p>
<p>What, if any, new or emerging problems for fire and rescue services should HMICFRS take into account in its inspections?</p>	<p>The emerging picture of governance changes (PCC, Mayor, Fire and Rescue Authority) and the implications of the potential for future changes should be considered.</p> <p>Succession planning to consider future demands and challenges over the medium and long term. This may be included in the People sub-diagnostics though the wording suggests a focus on the immediate and short term future.</p> <p>Acknowledge rapidly changing external factors impacting upon FRS normal business eg Waste &amp; Recycling Fires, Grenfell, loss of experience due to retirement profiles, loss of capacity, challenges in managing budgets over the long term due to short notice given in relation to government funding for FRSs.</p>

What else should HMICFRS consider doing to make its fire and rescue service assessments as fair as they can be?

Be wary of drawing broad conclusions from data (see above) and the potential for inadvertently setting national performance standards as a result. The definitions for the data requested by HMICFRS need to be very specific with little room for differences of interpretation. Assurance of a fair consistency being applied across all inspections is key.

Be conscious of the implications of the differences between fire and rescue services, be that the differences caused by governance arrangements, geography, funding, demographics, crime, health related matters, risk etc.

Acknowledge limitations in NFCC being unfunded eg compared to NPCC and College of Policing.

Acknowledge the differences that arise from a unionised workforce (unlike Police)