

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00.01 ON THURSDAY 20 JUNE 2019



Fire & Rescue Service

Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Merseyside 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 Merseyside 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**.

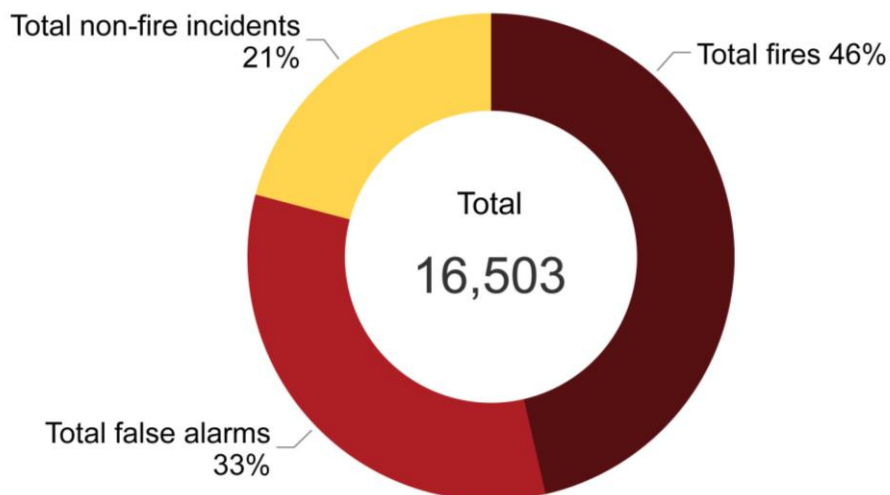
If we find serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, we will judge it as **inadequate**.

Service in numbers

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

 Response	Merseyside	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 September 2018	11.6	10.5
Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	37.1	10.4
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises 12 months to 31 March 2018	3.0	3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 30 September 2018





Cost

Merseyside

England

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

£25.75

£22.38



Workforce

Merseyside

England

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

0.5

0.6

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

-17%

-14%

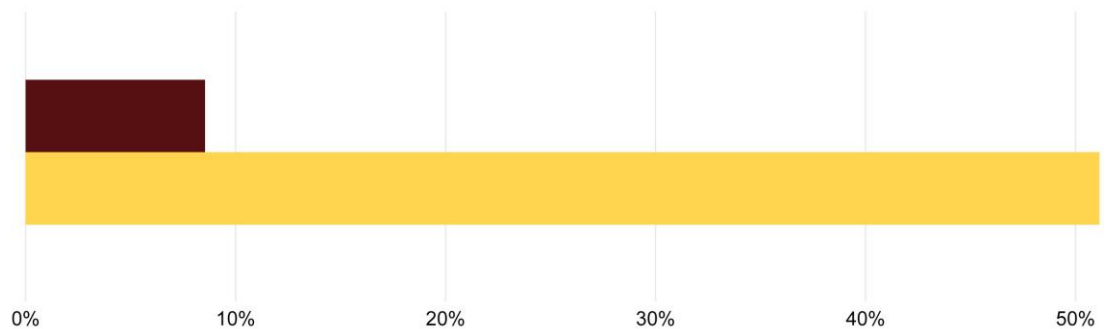
Percentage of wholetime firefighters
As at 31 March 2018

92%

70%

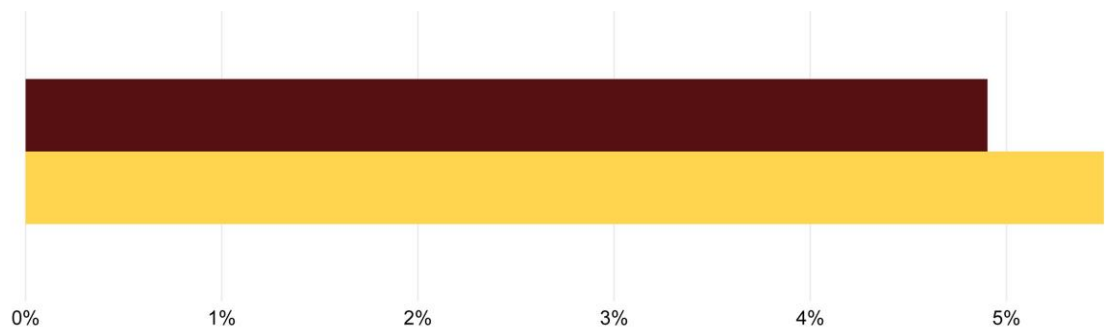
Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population














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

● BAME firefighters ● BAME residential population



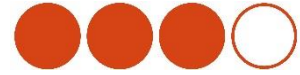
Please refer to annex A for full details on data used.

Overview

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

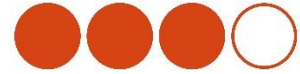


People



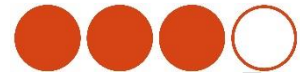
Good

Promoting the right values and culture



Good

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement

Managing performance and developing leaders



Good

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Overall summary of inspection findings

We are very pleased with the performance of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure, and in particular with its effectiveness.

We found it to be outstanding at:

- preventing fires and other risks; and
- responding to national risks.

Merseyside FRS is good at:

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

It is good at providing an efficient service. And it is good at using resources and at making the service affordable now and in future.

The service is good at looking after its people. We judge it to be good at:

- promoting the right values and culture;
- getting the right people with the right skills; and
- managing performance and developing leaders.

But we judge that it requires improvement at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Overall, we commend Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service for its performance. We are confident it is well equipped for this to continue.

Effectiveness

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



Good

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

It understands the risks in its local community. It tells the public about these risks and involves them when making its plans. It uses a range of information to help with this. The service has a response standard of attending the scene of life at risk incidents within ten minutes. Its target is to meet this standard on 90 percent of occasions. Between 1 April and 31 December 2018, it exceeded this target (92.3 percent). Firefighters can access and use relevant information about risk.

The service's work to prevent fires and other risks is very good. According to service data, fire deaths in Merseyside are at their lowest level since records have been kept. The service directs its prevention activity at the areas that most need it. It works with other organisations to prevent risk through different activities. The service involves its firefighters in prevention activity. It is an active member of the local road safety partnership. It also works with other groups to improve road safety.

The service has a new risk-based inspection programme. It has restructured its protection department. But it needs to make sure it has sufficient staff. It works with businesses to help them maintain standards. It takes [enforcement action](#) where necessary.

The service properly trains and equips its firefighters. It has adapted its staffing arrangements to help match demand. It has good systems in place to help staff learn lessons from incidents. It shares learning locally and nationally. But it needs to make sure the command competencies for supervisors are up to date. The joint emergency services control centre is good practice.

The service is a leading member of the [local resilience forum](#). It can get help from other services for major incidents if necessary. It can also send resources to help others. It takes responsibility for managing how services do this nationally.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Good

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

We found that the service has a good understanding of local and community risk. It has informed the public of the main risks they face in its [integrated risk management plan](#) (IRMP). This includes measures it has in place, or intends to introduce, to reduce these risks through prevention, protection and response. The current IRMP covers the period 2017–20. It is easy to understand and clear about the financial constraints facing the service. Prior to consulting on its IRMP proposals, the service engaged with the public to ensure that it understood their priorities. As a result, we found that the efficiencies and changes it proposes reflect the expectations the public expressed during that consultation exercise.

The service takes account of a wide range of information to build its IRMP. It draws from both internal and external sources such as local resilience forum partners, the health sector and local authorities. Additionally, it uses bespoke software to simulate the effect of any changes it proposes to make to the location of its fire stations. It uses census, health, deprivation, predictive population and built environment data from external partner organisations. It takes account of high-risk sites identified through the community risk register, such as the large number of high-rise blocks of flats in Liverpool, potential major accident sites and transport hubs. When appropriate, it has specific emergency plans in place.

It also takes account of the risks on the community risk register (which it manages on behalf of the local resilience forum) that present high levels of demand to the service. These include the involvement of fire in criminal activity, an ageing population and troubled families. The service shares information with local authorities to target those most at risk from fire and other emergencies, and has full access to road safety data through the Merseyside road safety partnership.

To draw its public-facing and internal plans together, the service has developed a broad range of performance indicators that allows it to compare its performance against other similar fire services. This approach is keeping internal departments focused on the aims of the service and enabling the [fire authority](#) to hold it to account for the service it provides to the public.

Having an effective risk management plan

We were pleased to see clear links between the service's IRMP and its functional, departmental and station plans. We examined the service's IRMP and found it to be in line with nationally published guidance.

The service has a response standard of attending 90 percent of life-risk incidents within ten minutes. It consistently meets this standard. It is being innovative in having more fire appliances available during the day, to match the higher levels of operational demand on the service during this time. This approach is also allowing it to maximise the time it can make firefighters available to provide its prevention and protection activities.

The service clearly directs its prevention activity to those individuals who are most at risk from fire, irrespective of where they live. Its prevention activity recognises the correlation between deprivation, crime, and the high levels of deliberate fire setting.

The IRMP commits the service to refreshing its protection activity by 2020. The service is on target to do that, having introduced a revised risk-based inspection programme targeted at its highest-risk premises.

Maintaining risk information

Fire engines are equipped with computer-based risk information that is accessible to firefighters. Firefighters were able to show us they can use this information quickly to assist them in the safe resolution of operational incidents.

Firefighters gather risk information for use at incidents. They also conduct fire safety audits at lower-risk commercial and industrial premises. This allows them to maintain a working knowledge of the risks in their immediate station area. This is helping to address the service's concern that firefighters' practical knowledge is decreasing because of the reduction in fires and other emergencies over the last decade.

We were also pleased to see that the service has a good system in place that allows it to quickly communicate temporary safety-critical risk information across the service such as at one-off sporting events. This ensures that firefighters have up-to-date and relevant information to allow them to successfully deal with operational incidents.

Preventing fires and other risks



Outstanding

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 has deliberately concentrated the majority of its prevention work on its statutory responsibility to protect the public from the risks of fire. It clearly prioritises fire safety in the home and arson reduction. However, it is also engaged in a range of non-statutory prevention activity such as road and water safety.

The service has moved from offering universal home fire safety visits to concentrating on those at the highest risk from fire. We were pleased to note that the rationale for this approach is based on robust research into the causes of fire deaths in Merseyside over the past decade. As a result, together with referrals from partner organisations, it targets individuals based on their age, vulnerability, mobility and whether they live alone. Central to this approach is the use of shared health data. The service has helped to have this data (known as [Exeter data](#)) made available for the use of all fire and rescue services.

We were impressed to note that in the year to 31 March 2018 the service carried out around 52,000 [home fire safety checks](#), equating to 37.1 home fire safety checks per 1,000 population. It targeted just under 31,000 (58.8 percent) of these checks at elderly people and just under 9,000 (16.6 percent) to people declaring a disability.

When firefighters identify additional needs during visits, we saw evidence that they refer individuals to more specially trained staff. This ensures a more in-depth [safe and well visit](#) takes place. These visits include identifying and taking action to reduce potential fire risks, ensuring working smoke alarms are fitted, advice on social welfare, health screening and detection, health prevention and advice on slips, trips and falls.

We found that the service fully involves operational firefighters in its prevention strategy, which is widely understood. It is notable that the service reinforces the importance it places on its strategy by assigning one day a year where all staff, including fire authority members, take part in fire risk checks.

The service seeks feedback, and evaluates and quality assures this activity to ensure that it is contributing to its intended strategy. It now completes fewer checks but these are better targeted.

In the year to 31 March 2018, there were five fire-related deaths in Merseyside (four accidental dwelling fire deaths plus one deliberate action), based on records published by the Home Office. These are at the lowest level since records began.

Promoting community safety

We found that the service is engaging with a range of partner organisations to promote community safety. These organisations told us the service is a valued member of Merseyside's community safety partnership. It takes an active role in taking individual referrals to and from multi-agency safety hubs.

We were encouraged to note that the service is proactive in engaging with under-represented groups in its communities and assuring itself that these groups receive an appropriate service. Most notable is the engagement work with the Muslim community.

We saw evidence of the service promoting water safety in areas where the risk of drowning was significant. The service is also engaging with groups that provide access to vulnerable individuals suffering from Alzheimer's, dementia or who might be at risk of taking their own life. All fire stations in Merseyside are promoted as safe havens, meaning they are advertised as places [vulnerable people](#) may seek refuge in times of need. We spoke to people who gave us first-hand accounts of occasions when vulnerable members of the public had looked for and been given refuge.

The service has a proactive approach to arson reduction. It works closely with Merseyside Police, which has enabled it to contribute to the successful prosecution of many arsonists. The service monitors where deliberate fires are taking place and leads regular multi-agency campaigns that target those areas. These campaigns provide public reassurance, education and target hardening.

The service told us it traditionally receives a high volume of calls and many attacks on staff during the run-up to Bonfire Night. We were impressed by the volume of activity the service had undertaken in the lead-up to Bonfire Night. To reduce the risk to both the public and staff, the service reported that it worked with partner organisations to remove over 50 tonnes of bonfire materials, carried out joint target-hardening visits, regularly drove high-risk routes in fire appliances to increase visibility and deter offenders, and successfully worked with the police to reduce violence to staff.

Road safety

The service is a member of the Merseyside road safety partnership. Partners told us that it is an active and valued member. The partnership co-ordinates road safety activity across the five districts of Merseyside. It uses a mixture of education, engineering and enforcement to improve road safety. The service leads the partnership on innovation. It has introduced virtual reality technology to assist with education campaigns and is currently researching other opportunities.

We noted that the service also engages with a range of local football clubs, schools, further education establishments, youth offending services and The Prince's Trust's schemes. This to provide a variety of road safety education packages targeting young drivers.

There has been a reduction in the total number of injuries recorded on Merseyside's roads in recent years. In the year ending 31 March 2017, the service recorded 529 non-fatal road vehicle casualties. This reduced to 400 in the year ending 31 March 2018.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Good

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is good at protecting the public through fire regulation. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based 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 has made a commitment that by 2020 it will ensure maximum effectiveness in targeting the right level of protection expertise to the right level of risk. We found that the service is on track with that commitment.

The service recognised that it needed to improve the way it chooses properties for inspection. Previously it had been revisiting places that already had a satisfactory standard of fire safety measures. It has now refreshed its risk-based inspection programme. This means it is now targeting premises for inspection in line with its inspection plan. It has ranked, according to risk, every property in Merseyside covered by the relevant fire safety legislation. It has calculated each property's risk by combining data it already holds with external factors such as social, economic and environmental risk factors.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 3.0 fire safety audits per 100 known premises (which equates to 908 audits). This is in line with the England rate. Of these audits, 91 percent were satisfactory. This high level of satisfactory audits supports the service's analysis that it needed to refresh its risk-based inspection programme. In the year to 31 December 2018, the service audited 310 of the 13,299 high-risk premises it had identified.

We examined a number of audits completed at the Wallasey, Bootle and Netherton, and Belle Vale protection hubs. We are satisfied that these are consistent and in line with the service's policy and procedures.

To support this approach, the service has restructured its protection department. We are concerned by the vacancies in this department and the number of experienced staff who have left in recent years. However, we recognise the service has mitigated these problems in several ways: it ensures that managers complete inspections; it is training fire safety auditors to do more-complex work; and it is introducing a firefighter role to provide a career pathway within protection. Consequently, the service is on track to deliver its risk-based inspection plan.

Enforcement

We found that the service has the appropriate skills in place to take enforcement action when necessary. It can respond to complaints in a timely manner. The service has taken enforcement, prohibition and prosecution action across a broad range of properties. These include properties linked to the night-time economy, health care and housing services. When the service takes enforcement action, it publicises the results to encourage wider compliance.

The service engages with a range of businesses to encourage compliance. It aims to use prosecution and prohibition as a last resort. However, we are satisfied that it has good scrutiny arrangements in place, and that it is taking enforcement and prosecution action when necessary. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service issued 1 alteration notice, 37 enforcement notices, 30 prohibition notices and no prosecutions.

Working with others

The service works with a broad range of partner organisations through its protection department. This includes:

- local authority licensing;
- environmental health;
- housing services;
- the clinical care commission; and
- the Environment Agency.

For example, the service worked closely with the Environment Agency to deal with a large fire that had taken place at a waste recycling facility at Liverpool docks. It also works with private landlords, sporting-event providers and representatives of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities.

The service is working hard to reduce the negative impact of attending false alarms at commercial and domestic premises. It actively monitors this type of call and works with businesses to reduce them. If appropriate, it doesn't attend automatic fire alarms when there is no risk to life.

The service clearly demonstrated its commitment to working with other organisations following the Grenfell Tower fire. Liverpool has over 200 high-rise tower blocks and many of them have cladding. Following the disaster, the service's protection department jointly inspected each block with local authority partners. It offered a home fire risk check to every resident. The service has now seconded an experienced officer into Liverpool City Council to support follow-up activity.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good

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

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure staff know how to command fire service assets assertively, effectively and safely at incidents. This should include regular assessment of command competence.

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

Managing assets and resources

The service bases its response standards on a thorough assessment of risk to the community. It has made a commitment to attend 90 percent of all life-risk incidents within ten minutes. We were encouraged to see that it is meeting this standard. To support this, the service ensures it has a fire engine available in ten principal station areas. Home Office data shows that in the year to 31 March 2018 the service's average response time to [primary fires](#) was 7 minutes and 29 seconds, which is slightly faster than the average for other predominantly urban services.

The service has analysed its demand and found that most emergency incidents happen during the day. As a result, it has fewer fire engines immediately available overnight. This doesn't compromise the response standard and maximises staff availability during the day. This is when they can most easily interact with businesses and the public, and maintain essential training skills. Between April 2018 and December 2018, the overall average monthly pump availability ranged from 79 percent to 92 percent.

The service has introduced a variety of duty systems that take account of local demand and risk. These also contribute to the service-wide response standard. They ensure the service is able to respond to large and protracted incidents and to deploy assets to national incidents. We found that the service has the appropriate range of people and equipment to meet the demands of a mainly urban area. However, the chief officer intends to continue to review the efficiency of duty systems in future IRMPs.

Response

The service's operational policy reflects national guidance. But staff have an inconsistent understanding of what recording process they would follow if required to step outside policy. They were also not always sure how to log significant decisions.

We visited the emergency control room on two occasions during our inspection. We found that staff are good at sending resources to incidents based on the individual risk each incident presents. They have discretion and make good use of their ability to alter the attendance criteria to incidents. This may mean sending more, fewer or no appliances.

We visited 11 fire stations during our inspection. We found that firefighters can quickly access risk information about known higher-risk premises using computers fixed in each fire engine. They are also confidently able to access information relating to risk at premises, chemical information, water supplies and vehicle data for use at road traffic collisions. We are satisfied that they can quickly share risk information that may be temporary – such as a building's sprinkler system being temporarily out of operation – within the control room and across the service.

Command

We found that incident commanders at all levels of the organisation have a good understanding of the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles](#) (JESIP). These principles are in place to help incident commanders from the blue light services work well together.

The close working relationship the service has with Merseyside Police and the North West Ambulance Service improves how well these JESIP principles work. The police emergency control room is in the same building as [fire control](#), and the ambulance service is based at five community fire stations. The ambulance service also has its [hazardous area response team](#) based at the service's training and development academy. This has contributed to a close relationship, meaning joint training can happen more easily.

We were disappointed to find that the service isn't meeting its own target of formally assessing the command competence of its supervisory managers every two years. However, it was fully aware of this. It has put robust control measures in place and has allocated resources to address this issue at an appropriate pace. This includes providing more capacity for assessments and carrying out assurance assessments at incidents and training exercises.

Keeping the public informed

The service updates the public about ongoing incidents through its website. It is improving the website to ensure it is making the best use of all available media to communicate with harder-to-reach groups.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and Merseyside Police have a joint command and control centre where the police's force incident manager is based. Local resilience forum and ambulance staff also work from this location. Among other benefits, this gives them immediate face-to-face contact with each other. This means that joint decisions about communicating with the public can happen quickly during emergency incidents.

Firefighters we spoke to provided us with consistent first-hand evidence of occasions when they had dealt with [safeguarding](#) concerns, both at operational incidents and during day-to-day business. We found that they are well trained and confident. They explained to us how they followed the referral pathways the service has in place.

We also found that control staff are confident in their ability to give fire survival advice to callers who are trapped by fire during incidents.

Evaluating operational performance

We found that the service has good systems in place to gather feedback from operational incidents, which help it to make improvements. The service is making good use of technology to track and resolve problems that firefighters raise during debriefs.

The service has no set triggers for formally debriefing incidents. But its operational assurance team reviews all incidents as part of business as usual. In addition, a monitoring officer attends any significant incident and makes sure that it is being commanded appropriately and that debriefs take place.

We saw good evidence that the service gathers operational learning and feeds this back to staff through an operational learning database. When appropriate, it publishes significant incident reports, produces case studies and circulates officers' briefing notes to improve future practice. For example, we were able to review the significant incident report for a large fire that had occurred in a car park at the Kings Dock in Liverpool. This report led to changes in the pre-determined attendance at similar premises. It also led to the creation of more detailed plans for high-volume pumping appliances covering the area of these docks.

We found that the service is contributing to and sharing information from the national arrangements that are in place to share significant risk information. For example, we were able to view information that the service had taken from a national joint operational learning portal that related to the risks the National Grid had raised about illegal jumping off tall structures.

Although we found the debrief process led by the operational assurance team to be robust, we found operational crews took an inconsistent approach to debriefing smaller incidents.

Responding to national risks



Outstanding

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

We found strong evidence that the service can supplement its own resources from neighbouring services during large-scale incidents. For example, during a major multi-storey car park fire in the Kings Dock area of Liverpool on New Year's Eve 2017, the service was supported by 16 appliances from neighbouring services. Senior managers are able to successfully deal with and command a major incident of this nature.

We also found that the service has site and risk-specific multi-agency plans in place for high-risk premises and events. These include:

- transport hubs;
- sports grounds and events; and
- plans for incidents at [premises covered by the control of major accident hazard regulations](#).

The service shares these plans with local resilience forum partners. It uses [Resilience Direct](#), a national web-based platform that emergency responders use, to share information securely.

Working with other services

The service is highly effective at working with other fire services nationally. It acts as the lead authority on behalf of the fire sector for [national resilience assets](#). These are strategically placed in fire services across the country, funded by the Home Office. They provide resilience for national emergencies that could need mass decontamination, or that involve chemical, biological or radiation agents, explosives, wide-scale flooding or terrorist attack.

As the national lead, Merseyside FRS also runs the national resilience fire control. This co-ordinates the availability of these assets and [mobilises](#) them when services request them from anywhere in the country. The service also co-ordinates training for these assets and leads on the management of their long-term capability on behalf of the Home Office. This has created a deep understanding, throughout the service, of the use and capabilities of these assets.

We saw evidence that the service has successfully co-ordinated the mobilisation for remote large-scale incidents. For example, it co-ordinated the attendance of fire engines from 21 services to wildfires that happened in Lancashire and Greater Manchester last year. Additionally, we found evidence that it had mobilised its own assets in support of wide-area flooding that occurred in Cumbria and North Yorkshire in previous years.

We are satisfied the service ensures it is intraoperable with the fire services with which it shares a border. It does this through the comprehensive assurance and debrief systems it has in place that have been detailed above.

We saw that the information the service holds on the risks in surrounding services isn't as accessible as its own risk information. But we noted that, while we were inspecting, the service was upgrading the computers it has on fire engines, where this information will be made available.

Working with other agencies

The service's partner organisations told us that it is a valued and active member of the local resilience forum. It takes the lead for training and exercising, and maintains the community risk register. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service carried out 35 joint exercises or training events. This includes a variety of table-top and live exercises, including for terrorist attacks in built-up areas and incidents at local air and sea transport hubs.

The service can respond to terrorist attacks and work alongside police and ambulance responders in the immediate vicinity of such a threat. The service has its own marauding terrorist firearms attack capability and, at the time of our inspection, also provided it to Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. During our inspection, we saw the benefits of the joint command and control centre the service has developed with Merseyside Police. This building has located police and fire emergency controls alongside the national resilience fire control. It allows emergency planners from the fire, police and ambulance services and the local resilience forum to work in the same space.

These arrangements provide a joined-up approach to emergency planning for known and one-off risks. These have included a major golf tournament and the Giants Festival, which both took place in Merseyside last year. The Giants Festival attracted more than one and a half million people onto the streets of Liverpool.

Efficiency

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



Good

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. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

The service is good at managing its budget. It has made significant savings over the past seven years. It is good at linking the actions it is taking with the risk it has identified. This means it can achieve its aims. It has a good plan for using its reserve money to help with some of the financial difficulties. The service has changed all its shift patterns to help firefighters be more productive. It works well with the other emergency services.

The service is on target to deliver the savings it has shown in its plans. The number of firefighters, support staff, fire engines and fire stations will reduce without negatively affecting the public. It makes sure it gets good value for money from a range of contracts. It also looks to the future to prepare for potential problems. The varied shift patterns will help it provide the cover it needs to keep the public safe. The service is investing in technology to increase efficiency and minimise paper-based systems.

Making best use of resources



Good

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's plans for providing an emergency service, required by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, are robust and come from sound business planning. There is a clear link between the risks listed in the service's IRMP and the actions it is taking through individual departmental plans to minimise their negative effect on the public. We are therefore satisfied that the service can make changes without negatively affecting operational performance.

The service recognises the need for rigorous, inclusive planning to address the ongoing pressures brought about by continuously shrinking budgets. The service has reported that its budget has reduced from £73.6 m in 2010/11 to £59.9m in 2018/19. The service has therefore consulted with the public on what its priorities should be. To meet these priorities, it has published the principles it aims to follow when making financial decisions, alongside the change method it follows when amending its emergency response capability. In the year to 31 March 2018, the firefighter cost per head of population was £25.75. This compares with 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.

The service has shown the financial effect of its IRMP and resulting functional and departmental plans in its medium-term financial plan. It refreshes this every year to cover the following five years. This plan relies on spending most of the service's £25.3m [reserves](#). However, we are satisfied that the service has a good spending plan for its reserves in place. The plan focuses on building a more efficient estate by closing pairs of fire stations and replacing them with single stations at three locations. It also ensures the availability of a minimum number of competent firefighters up to 2025.

We were also encouraged that the service is factoring many of the issues that we identified during our inspection into its planning assumptions. This includes resourcing its protection department and reintroducing the role of crew manager.

Productivity and ways of working

We found that the service has made a consistent commitment to ensuring it provides its services in a productive manner. The changes it has introduced are for the benefit of the public.

The service has introduced various work patterns at its fire stations that it has matched to the operational demand in the surrounding areas. This ensures the service can meet the commitment to respond to all life-critical incidents within ten minutes.

We found that the service has adjusted the start and finish times for operational firefighters, so they are available when demand is highest to respond to emergency incidents. This also maximises the time they have available to interact with the public and businesses. Most firefighters work a 12-hour shift pattern. This is compliant with the national conditions of service for firefighters but allows productivity to be maximised as the service keeps rest periods to a minimum.

The service has robust workforce plans in place to ensure there will be no negative effect on the public from the high number of firefighters who will leave over the next five years. However, we found that the service hasn't been able to keep ahead of similar gaps in its protection department.

Home Office data shows that the service consistently completes a high number of home fire safety checks. In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 37.1 home fire safety checks per 1,000 population. This compares with an England rate across the same period of 10.4. We were pleased to find that firefighters fully support this high level of activity.

The service offers staff the opportunity to sign resilience contracts, which has ensured the service has competent, trained staff to deploy during periods of industrial action.

Collaboration

The service is discharging its legislative duty to collaborate with its other blue light partners. It has strong oversight and working arrangements in place with these partners. These ensure that any collaboration the service undertakes are reviewed, evaluated to ensure they deliver benefits to the public and provide value for the service.

For example, the service reports that it receives income from the ambulance service to base ambulances at six fire stations. Merseyside Police made a capital contribution towards the construction of a joint command and control centre, and now pays an annual service charge. The service also told us that it recoups income from Liverpool City Council as part of a fleet management contract.

The service has entered into collaboration agreements for a variety of activities, such as assisting with wide area searches for missing persons. We were also encouraged to find that the service ensures any collaboration arrangements entered into are appropriately scrutinised so that they don't detract from the service's core duties.

The three emergency services have reviewed and shared information on capabilities that each can call on. They are working on the removal of existing information technology barriers to help with closer working in the future.

Continuity arrangements

The service has good business continuity plans in place. We found staff had a consistent level of understanding of these plans when we visited emergency control, various departments and fire stations. The service is holding planned and no notice exercises internally and with multi-agency partners. This is to ensure it can provide an uninterrupted emergency response for the public when extraordinary events do occur.

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 a strong track record of achieving savings. It presents its financial challenges to the public through its IRMP, and consistently returns a balanced budget.

The service has successfully managed a challenging reduction in funding from £73.6m in 2010/11 to £59.9m in 2018/19. The outcome is that, by the end of the current IRMP, the service is on target to have reduced frontline firefighters from 1,100 to 620; support staff from 425 to 290; fire engines from 42 to 26; and fire stations from 23 to 20.

As at 31 March 2018, the service had 14 [wholetime fire stations](#) and 9 fire stations with mixed duty systems, including 6 stations with wholetime firefighters who also have [on-call](#) contracts. It had 29 operational fire engines.

The service has informed the public that, although it will make £11m efficiency savings in its current IRMP, it is keeping the effect on the front line of its emergency service to a minimum. During the inspection, we found that the service is on track to deliver these efficiencies with just over £9m coming from back office functions.

The service has evaluated and continues to review non-pay costs against those of other services, to ensure it is improving value for money. For example, the service has entered into an agreement to service vehicles on behalf of Liverpool City Council. It has also contracted its information technology and pensions administration functions to an outside company. But it has rejected opportunities to do this with its payroll function, as this wouldn't be good value for money.

The service is looking ahead to take account of financial risks and building these assumptions into its plans. These include changes that may arise from the Government's fair funding review that could see funding redirected to less densely populated areas; changes in the government grant towards unfunded pension schemes; and potential reductions in the amount that can be retained from business rates.

Innovation

The service is working through a plan to streamline its estate of fire stations, which involves closing multiple stations and building a single new station where it is efficient to do so. So far, it has opened a new station at Prescot and is currently working through the statutory consultation and planning requirements to do likewise at St Helens and Saughall Massie. On each occasion, it is inviting other partners to co-locate services. Prescot is a joint police and fire community station.

We found that the service has various inefficient paper-based systems. However, it has invested in a team to develop a range of online applications with the intention of modernising these systems. For example, it plans to replace the paper-based systems it has for recording the results of protection audits, home fire risk checks, safe and well visits, and the risk-critical information it holds on high-risk premises. It is currently fitting tough-book style laptops in its fire engines to support their introduction.

The service has been innovative in introducing fire engines that are available during the day but covered by firefighters with dual on-call contracts overnight. Despite these changes, the service has been able to keep its commitment to respond to 90 percent of life-risk incidents within ten minutes, while it reports having these appliances on a maximum 30-minute delay overnight. This recognises that its primary role is to provide resilience for larger incidents.

Future investment and working with others

To introduce changes to working patterns and duty systems fairly, the service is placing new firefighters at those stations that are available during the day and on a 30-minute delay overnight. This allows existing firefighters to move to more traditional duty systems when this is possible, and if they wish to do so. The chief officer is committed to continuously reviewing duty systems to provide the most efficient service to the public. He plans to carry out a further review as part of the next IRMP process.

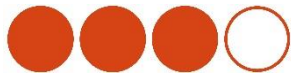
New entrants to the service have contractually committed to providing a marauding terrorist firearms assault and emergency first responder capability. These two areas are currently subject to negotiations nationally. But the service has been innovative in ensuring it will still be able to provide these two capabilities in the future.

People

UNDER EMBARGO



How well does the service look after its people?



Good

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

The service is making excellent provision for the wellbeing of its staff. It has a positive health and safety culture supported by all staff. The service needs to make sure that the whole workforce fully understands and embraces its behavioural values.

The service has a good understanding of its workforce's skills and abilities and an impressive training and recording programme in place for operational staff. It needs to make sure it has good systems in place to record the skills and training of its middle managers and control room staff. The service plans to assess its incident commanders every two years to make sure they are competent to command. It is not up to date with this programme. It has listened to the views of staff and reintroduced the crew manager role.

The service isn't fully representative of the community it serves. Staff from under-represented groups, and those with protected characteristics, do not believe the service is an employer of choice for many people. The service needs to improve this situation. Grievance processes are fair and open. We saw good examples of the service listening to staff and members of the public and making changes.

There is no system in place to identify, develop and fast-track high-potential staff. The service needs to address this. It has a good culture of managing performance across the organisation. Staff don't always view the promotion process as open and fair. However, we found no evidence to support this view.

Promoting the right values and culture



Good

Merseyside 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 ensure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated by all staff.

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

Workforce wellbeing

We found the service has made excellent provisions to ensure staff have access to a broad range of wellbeing provisions. Staff are aware of how to access these services, either directly through the service or confidentially through an independent employee assistance scheme.

For example, the service has trained its supervisory managers in mental health first aid. It has worked with a mental health charity to ensure staff can spot early signs of mental health problems displayed by their colleagues. It supports its staff in staying physically fit and provides voluntary health screening. It also ensures staff with physical injuries have swift access to medical support, and it debriefs staff following [critical incidents](#). During our inspection, staff told us about their positive personal experiences of the range of wellbeing support that is available.

We found it encouraging that the service takes a flexible approach towards individuals who access wellbeing provisions. This may be contributing to the relatively low levels of sickness in the service.

Health and safety

We found that the service has robust health and safety arrangements in place. It has a culture of encouraging staff to report [near miss](#) events. It also works closely with representative bodies to address health and safety concerns. The service is using the health and safety data it collects to improve working practices, and has developed a useful range of performance indicators to allow for the early identification of negative trends.

Culture and values

The service has in place a clear set of behavioural values, which are central to how it recruits, appraises and progresses staff. We found that the extent to which staff accept these values varied widely across the fire stations we visited. Most staff we spoke to, including newer staff recruited using the behavioural values, have fully engaged with them. However, a sizeable minority believe they are of little value.

We were surprised to find a significant number of staff who haven't been able to move on from problems directly linked to former chief officers. We found that there are significant cultural divides among staff. These relate to a variety of issues linked to historical industrial relations and the service's current change agenda. Despite this, we are satisfied that these internal issues are having no effect on the service provided to the public.

The fire and rescue authority appointed a new chief officer shortly before our inspection. We found that staff respect him. He is visible across the organisation and models the behaviours that the service expects. Since taking up the role, he has made changes to the way senior leaders communicate. Staff supported the changes and he is engaging them with his future vision for the service.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

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

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to assure itself that all staff are appropriately trained for their role. It needs to ensure all staff keep their skills up to date and have a consistent method of recording when they have received training.

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 has an excellent understanding of its current workforce skills and capabilities. It is proactively addressing future gaps. For example, the service has identified the high number of operational firefighters who may retire from the service over the coming five years. As a result, it is recruiting enough people to ensure the service doesn't fall below a minimum level of competent firefighters.

The service carries out a comprehensive training needs analysis. This asks various management groups to set future priorities and distribute resources. It identifies organisational gaps caused by legislative changes and IRMP commitments, such as the introduction of new duty systems. It identifies skills gaps arising in teams across its response, prevention and protection functions, which assists with succession planning. It also takes account of individual skills gaps raised through the appraisals system.

The service has listened to feedback from staff and recognised the unintended consequences of removing the crew manager supervisory role. This has led to fewer firefighters putting themselves forward for promotion into [watch](#) manager roles, as most find the skill gap between firefighter and watch manager too large. It has also meant that the service has been unable to release watch managers into protection vacancies.

We found that the service has good arrangements in place to fill short-term staffing gaps on fire engines. It also makes sure it is able to meet the demands of larger incidents through recall to duty agreements and secondary contracts. We saw evidence that the service has successfully tested these arrangements at recent large-scale incidents.

Learning and improvement

The service has developed a good culture of learning and improvement. Response staff follow a training programme that takes full advantage of information technology to keep training materials current. The service gives staff time to complete technical, practical and e-learning training. This ensures that they have the right mix of knowledge and practical skills to keep the public safe when responding to emergency incidents. Staff recognise and respect the investment the service has made in their training.

During our inspection, we sampled training records at the fire stations we visited and found them to be complete and up to date. The service has identified various skills as being essential for a firefighter to carry out their role: breathing apparatus; working at height; confined space; fire behaviour; water safety; and road traffic collisions. It provides this training at a central training centre and the records we reviewed were up to date.

The service assigns four fire engines to its training and development academy most days to support these essential skills. It was positive to note that the service moves staff between stations daily to minimise duplication of essential skills training and ensure firefighters maintain these competencies. However, we did note that the training systems in place for control staff and middle managers aren't of the same high quality as the service provides for firefighters.

We are satisfied that the service provides specialist prevention staff with comprehensive initial training. It then gives them relevant continuous professional development input such as training on safeguarding vulnerable people. The service understands the need to provide entry into its protection function from all levels of the organisation. It provides staff with the relevant academic qualifications to enable them to do inspection roles. Managers have appropriate health and safety qualifications to

match their role. The service also matches the funding for individual development when the additional skills identified through appraisals are relevant to a member of staff's current or potential future role. As part of our inspection, we carried out a survey of staff to get their views of their service (please see Annex A for more details). Over 70 percent of the 92 respondents to our staff survey (equating to 8 percent of the service workforce) agreed that they have received sufficient training to enable them to do what is asked of them.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the service should ensure diversity and inclusion are well-understood and become important values of the service.

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

Seeking and acting on staff feedback

We found staff had raised a broad range of concerns that had been responded to by the management team. For example, the service has changed the way it communicates with staff, altered the focus of operational audits, changed overtime payment to be in line with nationally agreed terms and conditions, changed management structures, simplified the appraisal system, introduced good-quality maternity wear and fire kit for female firefighters, and introduced a crew manager development role.

Staff have been informed of these changes in a range of ways, including principal officer talks, team briefings, regular and independent staff surveys, and a 'suggestions, questions or problems' portal on the service's intranet.

The service has effective grievance procedures that enjoy the confidence of the staff and the trade unions. The service has good relationships with the trade unions and representative bodies, and robust systems for consultation and negotiation are in place.

In its IRMP, the service has publicly committed to improve equality and diversity issues. Consequently, the service has made progress in a number of areas, including engaging with under-represented groups in its communities and monitoring to ensure they aren't disproportionately affected by fire.

Diversity

The service doesn't fully reflect the communities it serves. As at 31 March 2018, only 8.5 percent of its firefighters were female. Also, 4.9 percent of firefighters were from a BAME background, compared with a BAME residential population of 5.5 percent. The service is working hard to improve this as well as to increase the number of staff from under-represented groups. As at 31 March 2018, the service had 1,005 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members. This includes 631 FTE firefighters who are wholetime.

The service runs positive action campaigns to encourage applications from under-represented groups. These include 'have a go days' when potential applicants can familiarise themselves with the range of tests they will take as part of the recruitment process. We also found an area of good practice where the service provides mentoring and support to women who haven't been successful in one recruitment drive, to encourage them to re-apply. These efforts are producing good results. In the most recent recruitment campaign, the service informed us that 26 percent of all successful applicants were female and 7 percent were from a BAME background.

While we did find examples of good practice, we were disappointed to find consistently negative feedback from staff from under-represented groups. They communicated a range of examples to us that illustrate that there is a culture in the service that is less welcoming of staff with certain protected characteristics.

Staff from all groups thought that middle and senior managers could make more effort to respond to their concerns and challenge inappropriate and exclusionary language.

This issue is somewhat supported by the staff survey we conducted, which was open to all the service's workforce. Of the 92 respondents (equating to 8 percent of the workforce) 28 percent reported feeling bullied or harassed at work, and 28 percent reported feeling discriminated against at work, in the last 12 months. In both cases, respondents indicated this was most likely to be by someone more senior than themselves and industrial action was often cited as the reason behind the bullying/harassment. There are limitations to the staff survey which should be considered alongside the findings. We explain these in Annex A.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Good

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is good at managing performance and developing leaders. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

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 has a culture of performance management in place that staff accept and understand. Staff have been involved in setting targets for the areas they work in. Managers hold them to account both individually and collectively (as a team). We found that the service expects and supports managers to hold staff to account for their individual performance.

The service has a behavioural values appraisal system in place. These values have been in place since 2015 and the service uses them during initial recruitment and promotion. Staff told us that they recognise the benefit of having had the same set of values in place for some time, as previously these had changed on a regular basis. The appraisal system is clear and simple to follow. Managers give staff feedback and set clear goals for their performance in role, values, training and development.

This appears to be supported in the responses we received to our staff survey, in which 66 percent of 92 respondents agreed that they are satisfied with their current level of learning and development.

The service has simplified the appraisal system over recent years. An information technology platform supports it and allows the service to scrutinise compliance and share and track issues arising from appraisals across the organisation.

Developing leaders

The service doesn't have a system in place to identify, develop and support high-potential staff. However, it does have strong systems in place to develop leaders both in operational and management roles.

The service develops leaders through the Chartered Management Institute at the service's training and development academy. These programmes provide development for both supervisory and senior management roles. The service also provides matched funding for bespoke development when it is role specific. It works

well with the Fire Brigades' Union to help staff access the learning fund they have made available.

During our inspection, we reviewed the systems the service has in place to appoint leaders. We reviewed promotions that had taken place over the past 12 months at supervisory, middle and senior manager level. The systems the service has in place are fair and open and it has promoted on merit. It provides feedback and development to those who haven't been successful, in conjunction with their line manager. However, we were disappointed that assessors haven't undertaken unconscious bias training. The service recognises this gap and plans to introduce relevant training.

We found that not all staff believe the appointments and promotions system is fair. The view expressed by some staff was that success depended on not being a member of a particular trade union and whether they are prepared to sign a resilience contract. We found no evidence to support this perception, but the service still has work to do to allay these workforce concerns.

Finally, we noted that the service has introduced several apprenticeships and plans to expand its programme so that future firefighters will start their careers this way. We were made aware of staff who had first encountered the service through youth cadet schemes and are now firefighters and leaders at middle manager level.

UNDER EMBROIDERY

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. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is a metropolitan 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.

UNDER EMBARGO

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