

HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) Inspection 2021/22

Self-assessment template guidance

Every FRS will be asked to complete a self-assessment as part of the inspection process.

The self-assessment poses a number of general questions to give chief officers an opportunity to give the HMI and the inspection team an insight into the FRS. The self-assessment should also provide some general information about service priorities and current challenges. The assessment should be no longer than 1,500 words in total and cover the high-level strategic issues facing your FRS.

We recommend that each FRS uses the self-assessment as the basis for its presentation at the strategic briefing. We may make a subsequent request to address further specific questions in advance of the strategic briefing.

How to complete the self-assessment:

- Please answer every question.
- Please do not exceed the word limit set out in the template.
- Please do not embed any documents; documents to support the self-assessment will have been provided as part of the document request.
- There is no expectation that the FRS should grade themselves against the judgment criteria.
- HMICFRS anticipates that FRS's will share the assessment with their FRA.

Please return the self- assessment to HMICFRSInspectionsAdmin@hmicfrs.gov.uk as part of the document return.

What to include in the self-assessment narrative answer:

- A good self-assessment will highlight the challenges and future plans of the FRS to address any gaps in its provision or performance.
- A good self-assessment will identify areas of strengths as well as areas for improvement and set out the actions being taken to address them.
- A good self-assessment is realistic and sets out the FRS's position using evidence and data to support the assessment.

HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) Inspection 2021/22 – Self-assessment template

- Please do not embed any documents
- Please do not exceed the word count limits (1,500 words)
- Please refer to the guidance document

General FRS self-assessment

Please set out a general FRS self-assessment covering the following points:

- What key changes have there been for your FRS since the round 1 inspection – e.g. governance, funding, staffing?
- What action has the service taken in response to any areas for improvement identified during the last inspection (round 1)?
- What are your FRSs priorities for the coming year?
- What action is the service taking in response to the Covid-19 inspection report?
- Please include any other information that you feel would be useful to the inspectors to provide context for the operation of the FRS and its current performance.

Question	FRS Assessment
<p>What key changes have there been for your FRS since the round 1 inspection – e.g. governance, funding, staffing?</p>	<p>To be read in conjunction with the self-assessment submitted in March 2020.</p> <p>During this most challenging of years MFRS has stepped up to provide extra support to our communities whilst continuing to deliver high quality services and make bold plans for the future.</p> <p>Since our last self-assessment we have:</p> <p>Pandemic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responded nationally/locally to implications of Covid, introducing pandemic-related activities to protect the most vulnerable, whilst adopting safe systems of work and health surveillance arrangements to protect our operational response.

	<p>These safeguards extended to all of our staff and across our workplace e.g. introducing health surveillance (LFT) across all locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided 200+ volunteers to support vaccination (delivering 10,000 vaccinations to date). • Supported ‘Mass’ and ‘Surge’ testing • Trained firefighters to assist NWS as required and coordinating a regional request for support • Supported mortuary management <p>Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued with Prevention work during the pandemic (following NFCC guidance) where risk was high or serious incidents occurred, and provided significant support for partner organisations. • Delivered over 8,000 Safe and Well visits and 250,000 information leaflets • Partnered with Age UK and LAs delivering essential items, Winter Warm and other campaigns • Supported vulnerable young people on Beacon and Prince’s Trust programmes (delivered virtually) • Continued our work with the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), introducing initiatives targeted at children who have experienced domestic abuse. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MFRS is the only FRS to have arson defined as a violent crime within the VRP. • Embedded Safeguarding processes following self-assessment • A MFRS Officer as Vice Chair of the NFCC Safeguarding Committee <p>Whilst most incident types reduced over the year, fatalities increased; all occurring during lockdown. We will use this year’s fatal fires review to better understand the causal factors, particularly those directly attributable to the pandemic.</p> <p>Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced desktop Protection audits; increasing our capacity to inspect
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased the number of Protection Officers • Progressed a significant number of GTI recommendations including implementing a building risk review team, developing a tall buildings database and a process to aid evacuation. We also sit on the NFCC Tall Buildings Working Group <p>Response</p> <p>Delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the station merger at St Helens (2017-20 IRMP) ○ all Hybrid duty system stations (2019-21 IRMP Supplement) ○ a new Analytical Risk Assessment process ○ a new Operational Assurance Handbook ○ a Station Readiness process including AM station visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced risk assessments and guidance for national and local FRS Covid response • Made skeds (stretchers) available on all fire engines in response to the Kerslake Report, MAI and MTA JOPS. • shared significant incident learning nationally - fire in a Lithium-ion battery facility <p>Preparedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced our “Sunday Six” training; informed by our risk methodology (NSRA /CRR) – terrorism*, high rise*, flood, marine*, wildfire and recycling/waste sites (*completed) • Implemented a new command strategy • Continued our risk critical and JESIP command training throughout • Increased our MTA cohort (now 24) to cover GMFRS • Introduced a clinical governance process with NWAS • Introduced body-worn video cameras based on risk and role to enhance safety • Upgraded to Vision5 Command and Control system
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshed Asset Management Plans to reflect the changes to the IRMP • Reached agreement with United Utilities to provide water bowsers in poor water areas <p>People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shown significant improvement in staff engagement (a score of 88%) in our fourth Staff Survey (Nov/Dec 2020); moving us from lowest quartile in 2014 to top quartile in 2020 • Reviewed, updated and relaunched our Promotion Gateway process – to include fast track progression • Increased firefighter numbers in line with IRMP Supplement. • Removed further temporary positions – 90 promotions; all roles • Adopted an Agile Working Policy as part of pandemic response • Introduced a staff Reward and Recognition programme (April) • Embedded Staff Network Chairs in the ED&I Strategic Board • Increased internal staff communications • Launched a new accessible and easily updated website • Established a fully Covid-secure workplace including LFT health surveillance <p>Finance/Organisation-wide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed our new IRMP (out to consultation), building further resources back into the Service, focusing on Risk, Demand and Vulnerability and based on affordability • Identified the reinvestment from our IRMP supplement 2019-21 in our Medium Term Financial Plan • Carried out departmental reviews, improving efficiency (e.g. the deletion of a Director post and Procurement moving under Finance) • Set viable IRMP proposals based on prudent financial planning, despite the one-year Government financial settlement impacting on long term planning.
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<p>What action has the service taken in response to areas for improvement identified during the last inspection (round 1)?</p>	<p>The Service created an action plan containing the key recommendations from the last inspection (plus other areas highlighting where improvements could be made).</p> <p>Since our last self-assessment we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved command assessment and assurance • Improved debrief processes; including online reporting on the intranet Portal and mobile platforms • Embedded three staff networks (BAME, Gender, LGBTQ+) and senior sponsors for ED&I; regularly promoted Service-wide and part of strategic decision making processes • Relunched our FireProud Allies network, reflecting our collaboration with the Police, including ED&I events • Established a cross-border information sharing process on Resilience Direct • Increased staffing in Protection including a fire engineer, an increase in WMs (from 3 to 7) and six trainee Fire Safety Auditors • Trained an additional 12 members of staff to Fire Safety Level 4 • Made significant progress on our work in relation to the GTI • New Protection MIS will be implemented in May • Delivered an organisational Training Needs Analysis process • Delivered Unconscious Bias training to c70 staff and considering the best way to embed this for the future • Delivered face-to-face ED&I training to 50% of staff (progress has been affected by the pandemic) • Developed online ED&I training • Increased opportunities for staff to engage with senior officers via face-to-face visits • Interviewed over 100 staff in the creation of revised Values and leadership message • Agreed the adoption of fast track development within the Gateway Process
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased diversity - BAME firefighters made up 6.9% of our 2020 recruit courses compared with the local BAME population of 5.5% • Embedded our CM development programme • Introduced an automated recruitment sifting process to further safeguard against bias • Automated a further 20 processes including weekly cylinder audits, workplace Covid testing records, apprentice monitoring form and Business Continuity incident report form • Launched our Wellbeing Charter • Engaged an ED&I lead organisation to audit our approach to ED&I (results in April) • The 2020 staff survey shows that over 80% of staff believe bullying and harassment is not tolerated in MFRS and have also not experienced it themselves (improved from under 50% in 2014) • Discipline cases relating to B&H have reduced to zero in 2019-20 from three in 2017-18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ testament to our concerted efforts to improve our organisational culture, educate and listen to our staff
<p>What are your FRSs priorities for the coming year?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our IRMP 2021-24 is out to consultation and the final version will be approved in July 2021. Proposals include building in more capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A further increase in the number of available fire engines based on expansion of the Hybrid duty system ○ Further investment in protection staffing (8 trainees). ○ Increased resilience ○ Improved performance ○ Enhanced specialist capabilities (Including a drone) ○ Creation of specialist teams ○ Improved firefighter safety (creating new training facilities reflective of foreseeable risk)

	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt the same resilient working arrangements in Fire Control as established within the Operational Hybrid duty system • Support partners as they recover from the pandemic • Re-commence face to face Prevention and Protection activities based on NFCC and Government roadmap/guidelines • Continue our response to GTI recommendations – e.g. implementation of evacuation processes and the use of stairwell protection teams • Embed a new MIS for Prevention, Protection and Response (SSRI) • Introduce, with staff, a ‘Leadership Message’ and new Values • Continue Positive Action recruitment (60 firefighter posts) • Extend apprenticeships – all areas • Continue the New Dimension 2 project (NR) • Deliver phase two of the NR website • Continue to respond to the requirements of the national ESMCP programme - including acting as an Assurance Partner
<p>What action is the service taking in response to the Covid-19 inspection report?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Covid Strategic Group continues to meet at least once a week to discuss the effect of the pandemic and take action. The group has been highly effective at delivering organisational actions and continues to be informed by the NFCC, the LRF and Public Health in relation to pandemic matters • The group has reviewed the findings of the report and has carried out a structured debrief after the first wave to identify learning and notable practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have updated BC plans as a result; reflecting revised NFCC guidance ○ A further review will align to the Government roadmap back to a new normal • We have embedded agile working into our policies to sit alongside our flexible working policy (and are doing the same with home working)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have increased the provision of mobile devices and are improving broadband to support agile working throughout our estate
<p>Please include any other information that you feel would be useful to the inspectors to provide context for the operation of the FRS and its current performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have provided significant support to the NFCC and Government during the pandemic. Merseyside's CFO is National Fire Gold and Merseyside Officers have reported national workforce and continuity matters to the Home Office and Fire Minister throughout the period • MFRS officers have also produced national risk assessments and used their national resilience capabilities to secure/distribute lateral flow tests across the sector • MRFS has been the point of contact for all NWS related activity and we have shared all work created in relation to the vaccination roll-out with Cheshire FRS so they could act quickly in response to a request for assistance when setting up a vaccination centre in Chester • Finally, all learning from the national mass testing centres established in Liverpool was shared across the sector