

Fire & Rescue Service

Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Avon 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 Avon 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

Avon

England

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

83%

86%



Response

Avon

England

Incidents attended per 1,000 population
12 months to 31 March 2018

10.4

10.2

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

7.4

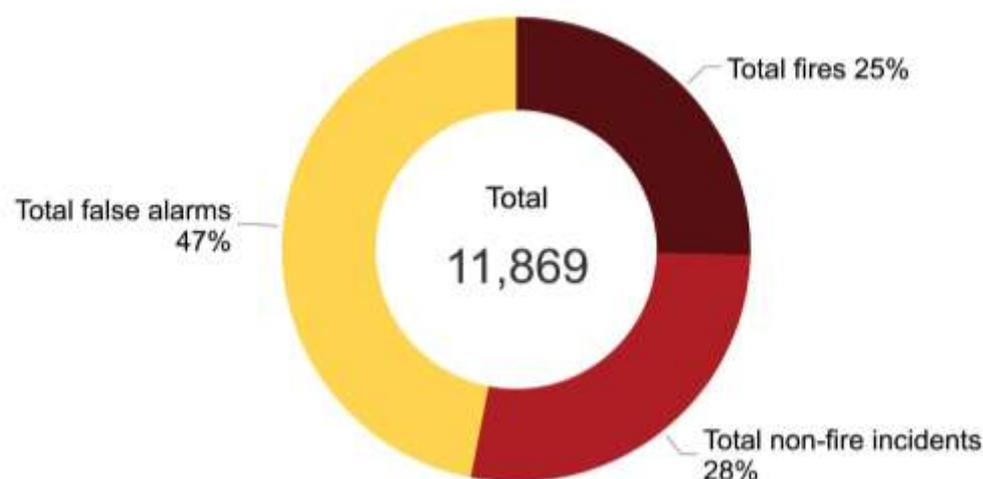
10.4

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

1.5

3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 31 March 2018





Cost

Avon

England

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

£21.35

£22.38



Workforce

Avon

England

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

0.6

0.6

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

-13%

-14%

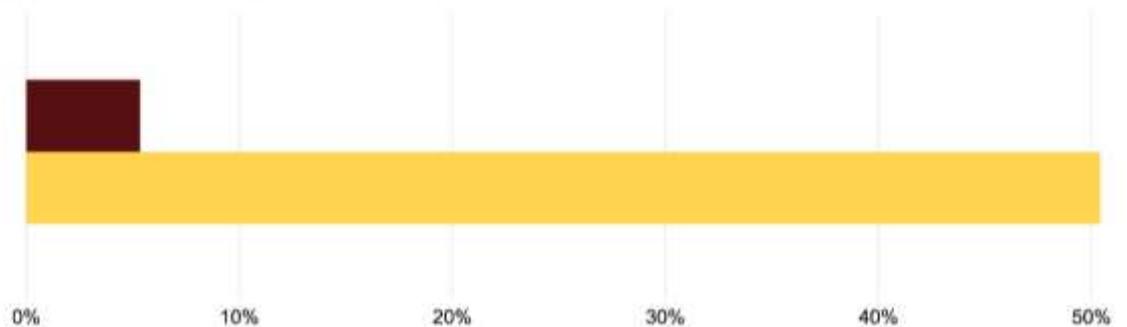
Percentage of wholetime firefighters
As at 31 March 2018

77%

70%

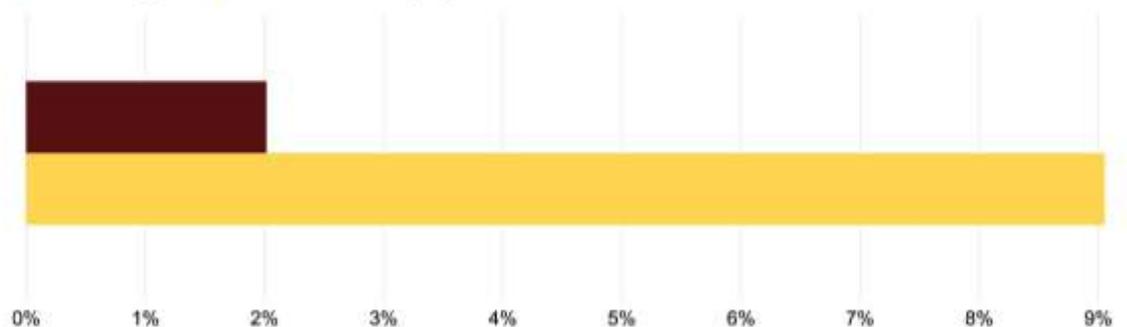
Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population



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

● BAME firefighters ● BAME residential population



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

Overview

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



People



Inadequate

Promoting the right values and culture



Inadequate

Getting the right people with the right skills



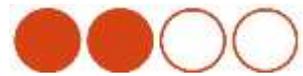
Good

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Inadequate

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Overall summary of inspection findings

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

The service needs to improve its effectiveness at keeping people safe from fires and other emergencies. The way it uses fire regulation to protect the public is inadequate. It needs to improve its prevention activity and the way it responds to emergencies. But it is good at understanding risk and at responding to national risks.

The service is inadequate in the way it looks after its people. It does not do enough to:

- promote the right values and culture; and
- ensure fairness and promote diversity.

It also needs to improve the way it manages performance and develops leaders. But it is good at getting the right people with the right skills.

The service should improve its efficiency by making better use of its resources. But it is good at providing an affordable service.

Overall, there are improvements we expect the service to make. We do not underestimate the difficulties that the service has experienced since the publication of the independent statutory inspection report in July 2017. The senior management team has made clear to us its determination and commitment to change the culture, behaviours and effectiveness of the organisation. We will be monitoring progress.

Effectiveness



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



Requires improvement

Summary

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

Avon FRS is good at understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies. But it is unstructured in the way it asks the community about local risk. The current [integrated risk management plan](#) has good information about the context in which the service operates. But it does not have enough information about [vulnerable people](#). The service gathers risk information, has a system for updating it and an established process for sharing it.

The service needs to improve the way it prevents fires and other risks. It aims to provide [home fire safety checks](#) based on risk. The service takes referrals for home fire safety checks from other organisations and these are subject to an assessment of vulnerability. The service provides good community safety information to the public. Not all staff properly understand [safeguarding](#), particularly frontline staff. The service contributes to road safety planning in Avon. But road safety work is not co-ordinated.

The service needs to be better at protecting the public through fire regulation. The service acknowledges it has not met the requirements of its risk-based inspection programme. Avon FRS enforces fire regulations and prosecutes successfully. Its enforcement model is good. It is keen to work with other organisations and we saw examples of effective joint working. But it does only limited work with businesses to reduce unwanted fire signals.

The service needs to improve how it responds to fires and other emergencies. The service has a plan for introducing [national operational guidance](#). But there has been limited implementation of this guidance. Control room staff work effectively and efficiently. But crews could not show effective use of [mobile data terminals](#) to view risk information. This could put them at increased risk. The service consistently meets the standards of its crewing policy for wholetime fire engines.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Good

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

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure that staff are aware of the procedures for gathering and disseminating risk information about temporary events that are held within the service area, ensuring that the information is relevant and up to date.

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

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

Understanding local and community risk

The service asks the public about its integrated risk management plan (IRMP) in a limited way. The public can give the service feedback through its website in some areas, such as compliments or complaints, but there is nothing specific to the IRMP. It is unclear how the service talks with communities to better understand local risk.

The service is currently developing and designing a new IRMP that it will publish on 1 April 2019. It has completed a new strategic assessment to inform the IRMP. This assessment gives more understanding, considering the political, economic, social, technological and organisational changes in the business environment.

The service uses statistical analysis to inform prevention activity. Staff at fire stations have access to this information and can use it to target community safety activity.

The IRMP refers to the Avon and Somerset [local resilience forum](#) community risk register. We found an example where the service responded to a community risk by enhancing its capabilities for dealing with large-scale fuel fires.

Having an effective risk management plan

The current IRMP covers the four years until 2020. It will be replaced in April 2019 by the IRMP that is currently in development. The plan gives good information on the national and local context in which the service operates. It refers to strategic plans for housing and transport growth in the region. But there is no data or information about the community profile and vulnerable groups within the IRMP. This means that the service does not understand community risk well enough to allocate resources appropriately.

The plan includes a range of proposals to make the savings needed during the term of the IRMP. These are linked to prevention, protection and response activity. Other savings proposals include plans to reconfigure some response capabilities and to move staff to support functions.

Maintaining risk information

Operational crews gather risk information about premises in their local areas. The information is stored on a database, which tells the crews when a revisit is due. All operational crews across the service can access this information using mobile data terminals and portable laptops.

Avon FRS shares risk information about operational activity and learning across the organisation. It is a well-established process that requires staff to sign to confirm that they have read the information.

We found that risk information for temporary events, for example large festivals, was not readily available. Before an event, station managers email local crews and the control room about any risks. But this process would only benefit local crews and not those attending from other stations across the service.

Preventing fires and other risks



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk.
- The service should ensure staff understand how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people.

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's prevention strategy aims to provide home fire safety checks based on risk. It first identifies those people in the community who are most vulnerable from fire. The level of vulnerability will determine the type of visit. Level one visits are lower risk and conducted by operational crews. Level two and three are higher risk and conducted by community safety advisers and by staff from partner organisations who have more specialist skills.

The service has access to external data and uses it to direct resources for home fire safety checks. Operational staff can also use this data to direct their own prevention activity within the station area. Staff did not demonstrate to us that they understand this process. The service completes some home fire safety checks without any assessment of risk or vulnerability.

We found some inconsistency with the performance management of home fire safety checks. Avon FRS has removed targets for the number of home fire safety checks that crews need to complete. The service now focuses more on the quality of the visit and the time spent with the individual. But we found that some station managers had set local targets while others had not, which was contrary to the strategic direction of the service.

The service works in partnerships with other organisations, who can refer people to the service for a home fire safety check. The service does assess these partnership referrals according to the individual's risk and vulnerability. Members of the public can also book a home fire safety check through the service's website for either themselves or someone else. But when making a referral there is no facility to input information explaining the level of risk or why the individual is vulnerable. So public referrals are not necessarily targeted to the most vulnerable people.

Promoting community safety

The service's website clearly displays information on community safety. The range of information is good and is easy to navigate.

We found that staff's knowledge and level of understanding of safeguarding, and how to make a referral, is poor and inconsistent across the service. This is particularly evident among operational crews, both [wholetime](#) and [on-call](#). Many of them could not describe when a safeguarding referral should be made.

The service's prevention team works with public health, West of England Road Safety Partnership, safeguarding boards and police. The success of these partnerships is variable. The service is not clear about what outcomes it wants to achieve from these partnerships.

The service works with the charity Search and Rescue Assistance in Disaster (SARAID). It has also supported the training of community resilience teams (CRT). CRT members receive training from all three emergency services. They support the service in a range of ways when needed. Operational crews support this partnership and spoke highly of its benefits. The Avon CRT has initiated harbour patrols during the night, which have prevented four people from drowning.

Road safety

The service, through its IRMP, contributes to the joint local transport plan (road safety). The plan aims to save lives and reduce the effect of road traffic collisions on the emergency services. But, the service does not target road safety in a co-ordinated manner, rather, its activity is more sporadic.

The service's website does provide a wide range of information covering all aspects of road safety. It has links to other organisations who can give further information.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Inadequate

Areas for improvement

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

Cause of concern

Avon FRS isn't doing enough to keep the public safe through regulation of fire safety. Its risk-based inspection programme is entirely reactive, as its inspection department doesn't have enough staff.

Recommendations

- By 31 March 2019, the service should make sure it has allocated enough resources to a risk-based inspection programme. This allocation must be informed by local risk and enable the service to fulfil its statutory obligations relating to technical fire safety.

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in buildings and, where 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

We found that the service's protection team does not have sufficient resources to conduct the risk-based inspection programme.

There was a drop in the number of staff who were competent to carry out protection activities (fire safety short audit, fire safety audit, serve an enforcement notice and service a prohibition notice) from 12 (FTE) as at 31 March 2017 to 9.5 (FTE) as at 31 March 2018.

The service responds to fire safety concerns and complaints as well as post-fire incident audits. But through lack of capacity it has failed to meet the statutory building regulation consultation deadlines. And it has failed to meet the requirements of its risk-based inspection programme. The service acknowledges this and has recorded it on its corporate risk register.

The service has assessed those premises that have a sleeping risk, for example, hotels, as being the highest risk. But the service is not managing this risk with enough speed or priority. Protection activity operates on a reactive rather than proactive basis. Those premises that the service has identified as high risk are not audited within the timescale it has set.

Data provided by the service shows that there are 9,317 premises categorised as high risk (according to the service's own definition). Of these, 115 were audited in the 12 months to 31 March 2018.

Fire and rescue services must be consulted for building regulations approval. Services must return building regulation consultations within 28 days. But the protection department has a three-month backlog of consultations. So, the service cannot effectively consult on these matters in line with its responsibility.

Crews can get advice from the protection team should they discover fire safety issues while at an incident or visiting commercial premises. Currently, operational crews have limited fire safety training and do not conduct fire safety audits. In future, operational crews will conduct low-level audits as part of the wider fire safety inspection programme.

The protection department has an effective quality assurance process to ensure protection officers' audits are consistent. Each officer conducts an internal peer review as part of the assurance process. The protection manager then does a further quality assurance review, if needed, and gives feedback.

Enforcement

Avon FRS is experienced in taking enforcement action against those who fail to comply with the fire safety regulations. The service has had some successful prosecutions. The service works well with other organisations to share information on risk and take joint action when appropriate. They have done some joint training with approved inspectors to establish a greater understanding of each other's role. This has led to better information sharing and effective working relationships.

The service has a good enforcement model. Before taking any action, it checks the potential case will pass the legal and public interest test. The service publishes outcomes from fire safety prosecutions on its website.

Working with others

We found evidence of effective joint working with other organisations to understand risk and to share risk information. The service trains local authority approved inspectors on certain technical aspects of fire engineering. For example, the importance of travel distance and building engineering.

The service has an appetite to work with organisations and has some involvement with local organisations and agencies, for example, local housing associations. The service is involved in a [primary authority scheme](#) for a student letting agency. However, the protection team does not have enough staff or resources to collaborate effectively with such organisations, and the service does not fully benefit from such schemes.

The service has an unwanted fire signal policy which defines how it will reduce unwanted fire signals, but it doesn't follow industry best practice. Avon FRS responds to a higher-than-average proportion of false alarms from unwanted fire signals. In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, 47 percent of incidents attended by Avon FRS were false alarms compared with 40 percent across England as a whole. It does limited work with other organisations to reduce this burden. The service does have a plan to reduce the number of unwanted fire signals it attends, but it has yet to implement it. We would expect the service to work with building owners and managers to reduce this activity.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it understands what it needs to do to adopt national operational guidance, including joint and national learning. It should then put in place a plan to do so.
- The service should ensure its staff can access risk information competently.
- The service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.

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 has based its response standard on population densities. Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare have a higher population and so have higher response standards. These are classified as category one areas. The rest of the service area is either category two or three.

The service has other response standards for when the incident is in a building where the initial call type is a fire. In a category one area, the first fire engine should arrive within eight minutes in 85 percent of incidents. The other categories and areas require a fire engine within ten minutes in 90 percent of incidents (category two) and 15 minutes in 95 percent of incidents (category three). For life-threatening special-service calls, for example road traffic collisions, the response standard is that a fire engine should get there in 15 minutes in 95 percent of incidents.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2018 all three performance targets were met:

- category one incidents, the first fire engine arrived within eight minutes at 91 percent of incidents;
- category two, within ten minutes at 98 percent of incidents; and
- category three, within 15 minutes at 97 percent of incidents.

However, in April and May 2018 the service did not meet its performance standards in categories two and three.

A team in the service headquarters manages annual leave, training and short-term postings for operational staff. This ensures that wholetime fire engines are consistently crewed in accordance with the service's crewing policy. Control room staff have the capability to resolve any short-term crewing deficiencies to ensure enough fire engines are always available.

All operational staff follow a maintenance of competence programme to ensure they maintain the skills needed to perform their role. The service centrally monitors competence levels and produces a monthly report. On-call and wholetime staff are positive about the training they receive. This includes the practical sessions at the Avonmouth training facility.

Response

National operational guidance is a programme that intends to provide a standard set of operational guidance for FRSs across the UK. The service has introduced a process to manage the implementation of national operational guidance over the next two years. But it does not indicate in what order it will introduce this guidance. We saw limited evidence that the service had implemented any national operational guidance to date.

The incident command national operational guidance has some common phrases. The term '[operational discretion](#)' may be used when managing incidents. The understanding of this term among incident commanders in Avon FRS is inconsistent. On occasions it was confused with the term 'critical decision', which is

a specific phrase used within Avon. Staff gave conflicting examples of each and could not describe the differences between the two terms. This has the potential to cause confusion across the service and when operating with other fire and rescue services.

Control room staff have the appropriate training and skills to perform their role. They have ready access to guidance notes and aide-memoires on the mobilising system when handling emergency calls. During our visits, we saw staff handling calls and mobilising the appropriate resources efficiently and effectively. Control room staff add risk information into the mobilising system, for example, oxygen stored at domestic premises. Crews responding to incidents can access this information.

Operational crews can access risk information about premises from mobile data terminals in fire engines. During our inspection, staff were consistently unable to show us how to use the mobile data terminals effectively to retrieve premises risk information. This has the potential to have an adverse effect on public and firefighter safety.

Command

The service trains and assesses its commanders in line with nationally agreed standards. Incident commanders feel well trained and are assessed regularly using simulated incidents. At incidents, they use a range of support materials including check lists and aide-memoires. Commanders use risk cards that contain information about specific risks. This information is available on the mobile data terminals.

Keeping the public informed

The service has good processes in place to share information with the public and partner organisations using social media and the website. The service's communications team gives more detailed incident information to the public, such as safety critical messages and road closures. Middle managers have also received in-house training so that they can update the media about incidents.

Control room staff are trained to advise members of the public who are involved in a house fire and cannot escape. They have access to guidance notes to ensure they give consistent information to the public.

Evaluating operational performance

We consistently found evidence that operational staff are not fully aware of the service's operational debrief process. Local [hot debriefs](#) (namely debriefs shortly after the incident) occur routinely. But staff do not complete the relevant documentation. As a result, the service does not always share learning across the organisation.

Following a more complex incident, the service states that it undertakes a more structured debrief. Again, we found that staff are not clear as to when to conduct these.

The service has developed a new electronic system to record learning from incidents and is implementing it service wide. The new process will replace the current paper-based system. It should provide greater opportunity for shared learning and improvements across the service.

Responding to national risks



Good

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

The service hosts a wide range of [national resilience assets](#). Each day the control room tells the national resilience fire control centre which of these is available.

The service has an effective training programme to ensure that its [urban search and rescue](#) (USAR) team maintains its competence and capability.

Avon FRS has arrangements for a major failure of the control room. The service has a secondary control room available for immediate use if the main control room cannot be used.

The service has site-specific emergency plans for its highest-risk premises. They are all linked to a testing and exercising programme. The service conducts exercises in the Severn Tunnel every quarter. This makes sure all operational crews know the risks associated with this site.

Working with other services

The service has signed agreements with its neighbouring services for [mutual assistance](#) and mobilises resources when asked. Avon FRS hosts a wide range of national resilience assets. These include a high-volume pump, water rescue, marauding terrorist attack (MTA) capability and USAR. The service can deploy these nationally using a mixture of on-call and wholtime firefighters. The service has a range of specialist advisers who can support other services.

Working with other agencies

Avon FRS is an active participant in its local resilience forum. Other members hold it in high regard. The service helps plan events and participates in joint operations.

The service is well prepared to respond to an incident in the Severn Tunnel. The Severn Tunnel contingency planning group co-ordinates and plans site-specific exercises. The service maintains some specialist equipment specifically for use in the event of an emergency in the tunnel.

The service is well prepared to respond to an MTA. Control room staff are aware of and understand their role in the event of an incident. The MTA team is well prepared to respond to an MTA both locally and nationally. We found evidence that Avon FRS has done joint training exercises with other agencies.

Efficiency



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



Requires improvement

Summary

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

The service must improve the way it uses resources. Its medium-term financial plan (MTFP) does not link to its IRMP. It describes proposals for savings but does not identify those savings. The service explores ways to improve productivity, but we also saw inefficient processes. Avon FRS uses flexible working practices, which has improved staff retention. But the service's system for deploying commanders to an incident is inefficient. We found some inefficiencies in staffing. The service's plans to address some of these are at an early stage.

We saw examples of Avon FRS's collaborations with other organisations. Some have improved efficiency. Others appear to only benefit the other party. The service is drawing up a strategy to ensure all its collaborations are mutually beneficial.

The service tests its IT continuity arrangements. But the arrangements for the control room are not underpinned by a business continuity plan. The service does not have a programme to test it.

Avon FRS is good at making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future. It has reduced the size of its staff to make savings of more than £14m since 2010. It is reviewing its management structure and its procurement and transport processes. It collaborated with a neighbouring service in procurement, realising savings of £50,000. The service acknowledges it needs to invest in technology. It already uses technology to collect and share information and is working to extend this to other work areas.

Avon FRS invests for the future. It used its [reserves](#) to put together a team to draw up its new IRMP. It plans to modernise three fire stations using funds from the sale of its former headquarters. It would like to collaborate with other community service providers on this project. It has also collaborated with the local authority and with a neighbouring service in a training centre.

The service has no trading arm but uses its property to generate income.

Making best use of resources



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to ensure that its medium-term financial plan is linked to its integrated risk management plan.
- The service should design a business continuity plan for its control room to support the current emergency procedures.
- The service should assure itself that the way it deploys supervisors to operational incidents is cost-effective.

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

How plans support objectives

The service has an IRMP in place until 2020. It details how the service intends to operate during this period. The service has an MTFP covering the same period. The plan's principles are:

1. All spending will be reviewed to ensure it is aligned with identified need and represents value for money.
2. Efforts will be made to make the most of external sources of funding.
3. Existing resources will be re-aligned to meet objectives in the IRMP.
4. The MTFP will provide a framework for the annual revenue budget.
5. The management of risk is a key corporate objective and central to the development of the medium-term financial strategy.

There is no clear link between what has been described in the IRMP and the MTFP. The MTFP details current and future savings but there is no clear reference to the IRMP and it is not possible to easily identify the savings that will be made from some of the proposals.

Budget holders are allocated additional funding as earmarked reserves. To use these reserves, budget holders must submit a business case to the senior management team for approval.

Productivity and ways of working

The service has introduced a more effective way of deploying one of its specialist assets. In April 2017 the service moved its USAR team to Hicks Gate fire station and at the same time changed the crewing model. Prior to this, the USAR team didn't respond to any other type of incident. The team was only available for technical rescues, either locally or nationally. The service has reduced the number of operational staff by changing the crewing model of the USAR team. The team's primary role now is to respond to any incident as well as USAR incidents when requested.

We also found examples of inefficient processes. At the start of every shift, each fire station sends information about crewing levels to the control room by fax rather than using electronic systems. There are duplicate recording systems for breathing apparatus sets and vehicle testing. Staff must complete an entry in a log book as well as the station diary. Although we understand the need for these processes, this is a duplication of effort. The service should consider a more efficient process for recording information.

The service has shown its flexibility by introducing flexible working patterns for individuals. This has resulted in the retention of knowledgeable and experienced staff in the service.

As at 31 March 2018 the service has approximately 174 supervisors (watch and crew manager or equivalent FTE) trained as level one commanders. The level of the supervisory manager may vary but all commanders are trained to the same standard for level one command. Despite this, we found that the service still chooses to deploy an additional commander and an additional fire engine to incidents depending on the supervisory level of the commander. This is an unnecessary and inefficient use of resources. It could also lead to confusion about who is ultimately in charge of commanding the incident.

We found that the service has two levels of watch manager (a watch is the name for a team attached to a station). These are an A and B grade, with the watch manager B attracting a higher level of pay. The service may wish to review whether it needs to have two levels of watch manager across the service. We acknowledge that plans to address this are in their infancy.

We also noted that certain support staff roles are not consistent with staffing models across the sector. Given that the service still needs to make ongoing efficiency savings, the service may wish to review all back-office and support functions to improve efficiency and meet its budget.

Collaboration

The [Investing for the Future](#) savings programme identified that the sale of the service's headquarters in Bristol would result in a significant capital receipt and revenue savings. In 2014, the service launched a programme aimed at making annual savings of £4.5m. As part of this, the service moved into Avon and Somerset Constabulary headquarters in 2017. This has led to a closer working relationship with the police.

We found that the service collaborates with other organisations. Examples include responding to members of the public who have fallen behind closed doors, or helping with searches for missing people. We found that the service values collaboration, but consider that it should evaluate the effect that this has on the organisation's primary duties.

The South West Emergency Services' Collaboration Forum is the principal forum for the service to explore collaboration. One of its projects is the data analytics project, which seeks to use and share partner information. It is too early to identify any benefits from this project. But we are interested to see the outcomes of this programme.

The service wants to collaborate even more. It is working on a plan to ensure that collaboration is mutually beneficial and not simply the transfer of demand from one organisation to another.

Continuity arrangements

The service has business continuity plans for aspects of its IT function. But the arrangements for the control room are not underpinned by a business continuity plan. The control room has a fall-back facility. A neighbouring service will answer emergency calls while the service activates its secondary control room. There is no programme of testing and exercising scheduled.

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

Avon Fire and Rescue Service has made savings of over £14m since 2010. It mainly achieved this by reducing operational and support staff posts. The service has shut three fire stations: Speedwell, Brislington and Keynsham. As at 31 March 2018, Avon FRS had 486 (FTE) wholetime fire fighters, 143 (FTE) on-call fire fighters and 122 (FTE) support staff.

The [independent statutory inspection](#) report that was published in July 2017 recommended a review of the management structures and framework for procurement and transport processes. This is a significant piece of work. It should allow the service to achieve value for money through more robust procurement and contract management.

We saw evidence of effective collaboration through a joint procurement project with Gloucestershire FRS. Both services have collaborated to obtain new breathing apparatus sets. As a result, Avon FRS has achieved savings of £50,000.

Innovation

The service recognises it needs more innovation and investment in technology to move towards digitalisation.

It has developed a web-based tool to collect feedback from operational incidents. This tool is more accessible and easier to use than earlier paper forms. The new tool allows the service to gather and analyse learning from operational incidents. This learning will inform future training and shared learning across the organisation.

The service uses portable laptops that have various functions. Frontline crews can use them to amend risk information during premises risk visits. And staff use them during home fire safety checks. The information on the laptops automatically uploads to a central database. Other systems draw on the information in this database.

The service is designing a new application to gather and share information from home fire safety checks. This should improve the effectiveness of home fire safety checks.

Future investment and working with others

The reserves policy sets out the need for reserves. It describes how the service manages reserves. A working balance of 3.5 percent of the general reserves budget is considered necessary to cover fluctuations in assumptions such as pay inflation and council tax receipts. The service reviews its reserves on an annual basis to ensure there is flexibility in the way reserves are allocated.

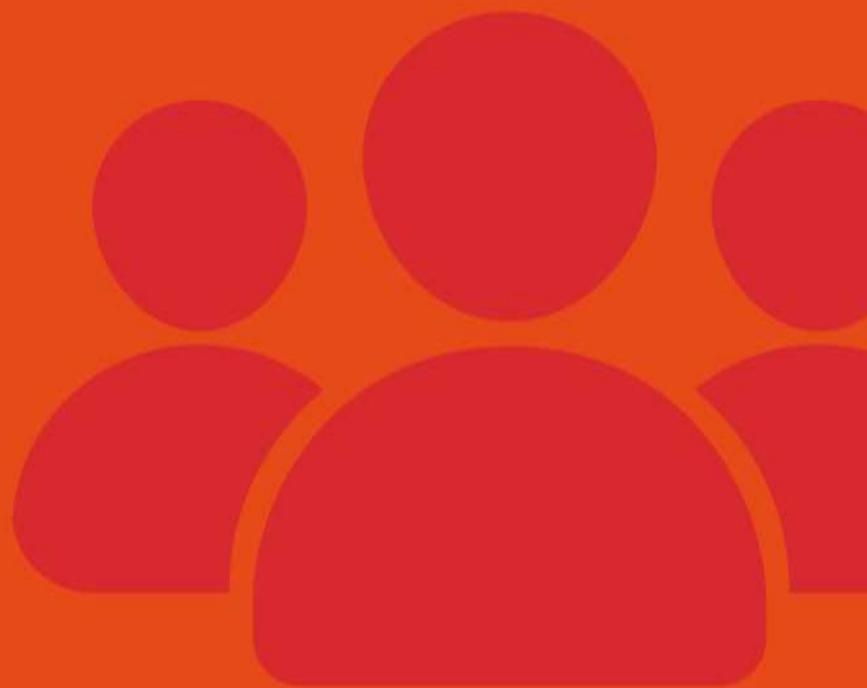
Following the independent statutory inspection, the service used its reserves to create a team to manage the improvement programme. It also created a dedicated team, funded from reserves, to design and develop the new IRMP.

The service has identified three fire stations – Avonmouth, Bath and Weston-super-Mare – which need modernisation. They have a combined maintenance back-log of £580,000. The projected maintenance costs to keep them fit for purpose are at least £1.2m. The service will re-invest money from the sale of its former headquarters to improve these three stations, through either refurbishment or rebuilding. The service would like to collaborate on this project with community partners, for example the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

The service has made a conscious decision not to pursue a trading arm. It generates additional income from property, for example, the rental of space for telephone masts and equipment. It also has solar panels on fire authority property.

The service is committed to a 25-year private finance initiative scheme for a joint training centre in Avonmouth. This is a collaboration with Gloucestershire County Council and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority. The training centre has a wide range of training facilities. Staff use it regularly and consider it highly beneficial.

People



How well does the service look after its people?



Inadequate

Summary

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

Avon FRS is inadequate in the way it promotes the right values and culture. It does not give appropriate support to staff after a traumatic incident. We found that the service's leadership is trying to engage with staff. But staff told us about inappropriate behaviour and insensitive language and they said they did not have a voice in the service. We saw limited evidence that staff are aware of the service's mission, vision and values. The service is developing a framework describing appropriate behaviours.

The service is good at getting the right people with the right skills. It shows good workforce planning. The service keeps records about staff with second jobs. But it does not review these records to help avoid any conflicts of interest. It monitors and records firefighter competency effectively. Managers use this system to plan training. Avon FRS shares information from debriefs and ensures staff read this.

The service is inadequate at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. Some staff feel that they had access to leaders. Others do not. The service has good relationships with representative bodies. Staff trust the service's confidential reporting line, but not all of them know how to access it. Some staff considered the service's response to their grievances to be unethical. Staff told us that they had been humiliated by their peers and made to feel excluded if they spoke up about problems.

The service's diversity does not match that of its communities. We found evidence that staff do not understand diversity. The service does not have support networks in place for staff from minority groups. However, the service is trying to recruit more staff from

diverse backgrounds. Data supplied by the service shows that after the most recent campaign, there were successful candidates who were female and some who were from black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds.

Avon FRS requires improvement at managing performance and developing leaders. All staff can access its personal development review process, but some staff do not feel the process is effective. The service does not have a process to identify potential leaders. Staff consider the promotion process to be inconsistent and not easy to understand. The service acknowledges that it must improve staff development and told us about its plans to do this.

Promoting the right values and culture



Inadequate

Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself that its senior and middle managers visibly act as role models and consistently show commitment to service values through their behaviours.

Cause of concern

Avon FRS isn't looking after the wellbeing and mental health of its staff effectively. It hasn't clearly communicated to staff the new values and how to demonstrate these values in the workplace.

Recommendations

By 30 June 2019, the service should assure itself that:

- it communicates the revised values to staff effectively, ensuring that they understand and can demonstrate the new values; and
- its policy, procedures and support for mental health and wellbeing are well-understood and effective.

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 significant evidence that the service is not giving appropriate support to staff who have attended a traumatic incident. There were several occasions throughout our inspection when staff became visibly upset when sharing their experiences with us.

Staff said that they feel the service doesn't fully understand the welfare needs of the organisation. We found little evidence of training for staff and managers to help them identify when a colleague needs mental health or wellbeing support. Such support might be needed after illness or trauma, both job and non-job related. But we did hear about an occasion when the senior management team contacted a staff member in need and offered support.

The service provides a counselling service through a private organisation and supports the Mind Blue Light mental health programme. Staff can either self-refer or be referred by someone else. We spoke to several staff members who were unaware of the support available to them or how to access it.

The service has trained some staff as mental health champions. These champions support staff who may be experiencing some mental health difficulties. The service plans to implement a [trauma risk management](#) (TRiM) process. This is recognised as an effective method of supporting staff following traumatic incidents.

Health and safety

The service has a health, safety and welfare policy. But the policy gives no detail on how the service will manage and monitor the wellbeing of its workforce. The service has a clear structure for health and safety, including the provision of training. We found the training records for health and safety were not always accurate. Some staff training records were out of date.

The service has fitness advisers attached to stations. Their role is to assess staff fitness levels and support individuals with fitness plans as needed. Co-ordination and support across the service is provided by a lead station fitness adviser.

Culture and values

The new chief fire officer and his management team are making a clear effort to be more visible across the organisation. Staff told us that they feel the organisation is changing. They feel the behaviours of the senior management team reflect this change. They describe middle managers as engaging more with staff. The service has established a staff engagement network. It has a senior officer as part of its membership.

The service recently commissioned a cultural review. The senior managers made a conscious decision to see the results at the same time as the staff. Staff view this as a very positive approach. They see it as a clear demonstration of the service's values.

The results of the cultural review were consistent with our findings. Staff described recent examples of inappropriate behaviour and the use of language that was insensitive about gender and ethnicity. As mentioned earlier, we had several occasions during our inspection interviews where staff became visibly upset when sharing their experiences of the service. We found that there were common themes, such as staff feeling undervalued. Staff told us they feel they do not have a voice within the service.

The service's mission, vision and values were revised earlier this year. Staff are positive about the review process and feel that they have been consulted. But staff have limited understanding of the mission, vision and values of the organisation and how they translate into workplace behaviours. Throughout our visits to stations across the service, only a few locations displayed the newly created mission, vision and values. Equally, there was limited information on the service's website.

The service intends to develop a behavioural framework which will describe the appropriate behaviours for staff. We look forward to seeing the new framework and how it will underpin the mission, vision and values. We are interested to see how it will help to achieve cultural change across the service.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

Avon 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 should put in place a credible succession plan, for the whole organisation.

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 a limited process in place for succession planning. It gives a broad range of updates on issues such as establishment levels, sickness and retirement levels. It is forecast 18 months in advance. This allows the service to plan recruitment campaigns and address any future vacancies. But the human resources function is not included in the succession planning process. So, it cannot contribute to succession planning across the whole organisation.

The distribution of staff across the prevention, protection and response functions is not proportionate to the current risks. The protection team, which is under resourced, is likely to suffer from further shortages soon as staff begin to retire. We saw no evidence of succession planning to give the protection team the resources to achieve the service's risk-based inspection programme.

The service has an effective process within the control room to address any immediate crewing shortfalls. A dedicated unit manages all other crewing deployments. It plans and arranges crewing levels in relation to staff commitments, training and leave. Despite this, on-call staff expressed frustration that the service did not deploy them to fill gaps at [wholetime stations](#).

The service understands its operational needs and has the right mix of skills. At the start of every shift operational staff are allocated a specific role according to their skill set.

The service keeps records of staff who have a second job. A process is in place for staff who wish to apply for a secondary job. The service does not have a regular review process in place to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.

Learning and improvement

The service uses an e-learning system that offers a broad range of courses. These include operational courses, personal development courses and leadership and management courses. The system is available to all staff in the service. For flexibility, staff can access it remotely.

We found that staff are positive and proud of the training they receive. They feel it gives them the appropriate skills to perform their role. But they do not think that e-learning is always the best training method.

The service has an effective system for monitoring and recording firefighter competency, the specific skills they need to be a good firefighter. The maintenance of skills training (MOST) system has a red, amber and green status indicator, which is linked to the date when a competence is due to expire. This allows managers to plan training events according to the competence expiry date and ensure staff remain competent. The MOST system is used across both the wholetime and on-call duty systems. Staff view it as positive. The senior management team monitors the recording of training on MOST each month.

The service has a well-established process for sharing the outcomes following any local or national debriefs. The service publishes, and emails to all staff, fire alerts and service delivery memos, which provide risk-critical information. Staff electronically record that they have read the document.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Inadequate

Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures. It should ensure that it monitors and reviews grievance outcomes. This should extend to implementing a system that allows the central recording of the outcomes of less serious grievances.

Cause of concern

We acknowledge Avon FRS has recently carried out a cultural review and has a plan in place to improve its organisational culture. But it should act immediately to change staff behaviours. It should also make sure all staff understand equality, diversity and inclusion principles and that this a routine part of behaviour across the whole organisation.

Recommendations

By 31 March 2019, the service should:

- implement the improvements identified from the cultural review;
- make more staff support networks available; and
- train all staff in equality, diversity and inclusion.

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

Seeking and acting on staff feedback

The senior management team informed us of their ongoing commitment to visit all staff and locations across the service. But we found mixed opinions about whether the senior leaders are visible to staff. Some staff stated that they had never had a visit from senior management. Conversely, staff based at service headquarters feel that they have greater access to the senior management team.

We found some examples where management had listened to staff feedback and made local improvements. The service established a staff engagement network. It was part of the improvement programme responding to the report on the independent statutory inspection of the service. It has now been established independently as part of the internal communication process between staff and senior management.

We look forward to seeing how this group contributes to, and supports the organisation with, its cultural change programme.

The service has a good relationship with staff representative bodies. It offers them opportunities to raise and resolve concerns and consults on matters that may affect its members. As part of the internal improvement programme the service has established working groups and project boards. Representative bodies participate in these groups.

The service has a confidential reporting line and staff trust this facility. Despite this, some staff are not clear about how to access the confidential reporting line. The information was not easy to access on the service's intranet.

The service has a grievance procedure with clearly defined timescales for action. Some staff, particularly women, feel that the service didn't respond appropriately to their grievance and they consider the outcome to be unfair and unethical.

The service encourages managers to resolve low-level grievances locally and informally, so that they do not get worse. But we found that there is no formal process to record the resolutions and outcomes. This prevents the service from identifying trends that could be used to support cultural change.

Diversity

The service is endeavouring to make the organisation more representative of the communities that it serves. But it has had limited success to date. The service has established a diversity, inclusion, cohesion and equality improvement board. It has an independent chair and supports the service with its cultural improvement plan.

The service has also introduced a new recruitment campaign called 'yes YOU can'. This campaign has specific information for under-represented groups and is well publicised on the service's website. Data supplied by the service shows that after the most recent campaign, there were successful candidates who were female and some who were from black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds. The website includes a promotional video with a diverse range of firefighters sharing their experiences of working in the service.

Throughout our inspection we found evidence that staff do not understand diversity. And they don't reflect an understanding of diversity in their workplace behaviour. For example, operational staff referred to firefighter roles using gender specific terms, for example, 'fireman' rather than 'firefighter'.

We were also approached by an unprecedented number of staff who asked to speak privately and in confidence about how they were being treated and their experiences within the service. Again, there were common themes. These include being undervalued, humiliated by their peers and being excluded if they spoke out about a problem on the watch. We heard about some concerning examples where female staff had been inappropriately treated.

The service does not have any network groups for BAME or female staff. These would allow them to discuss issues and share their experiences with their peers or senior management in a safe environment.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open, transparent and fair. All promotion panels should have appropriate human resources support.
- 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 personal development review (PDR) process. It is an online tool and all staff can access it. After a recent review, the service has improved the process. For example, it added a six-month review and the facility to update the PDR throughout the year.

We established that the completion of PDRs across the service is good and that senior management monitor this each month.

Operational staff have mixed views about the PDR process. They feel that it is only relevant should an individual want promotion. Support staff do not consider the PDR process to be effective. They feel that they are not treated the same as operational staff as it is difficult to determine what development is required for their roles.

Developing leaders

The service does not have a process to identify talented individuals who could be future leaders. Managers do not use the PDR process effectively to identify and develop potential candidates for future promotion. While this applies to all staff, support staff feel that there are limited routes for career progression within the organisation.

We found that staff regard the promotion process as inconsistent and not clear and open. We found inconsistencies in the composition of appointment panels for promotion. In most cases they do not include a member of the human resources team. This added to the perception that the process is not fair. This has not helped the service address equality and diversity in the promotion of its staff.

The service acknowledges the need to make fundamental changes to staff development. It aims to introduce development opportunities for all staff across the organisation. A talent management framework could help the organisation to identify and develop staff with high potential.

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);
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 45 fire and rescue services in England.

Where we use published Home Office data, we use the period to 31 March. We selected this period to be consistent across data sets. Some data sets are published annually, others quarterly. [The most recent data tables are available online.](#)

We use different data periods to represent trends more accurately.

Where we collected data directly from fire and rescue services (FRSs), we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with services and with other interested parties such as the Home Office. We gave services several opportunities to validate the data they gave us, to ensure the accuracy of the evidence presented. For instance:

- We checked and queried data that services submitted if notably different from other services or internally inconsistent.
- We asked all services to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified. Data that services submitted to the Home Office in relation to prevention, protection and workforce figures was published in November 2018. This data was updated after reports had been checked by services, so we haven't validated it further.

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 interviews 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.](#)

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 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- There are six 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 worksheets 'Data fires', 'Data fire false alarms' and 'Data non-fire incidents' provide the raw data for the two main data tables. The 'Figure 3.3' worksheet provides the data for the corresponding chart in the statistical commentary.
- 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. So totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers).
- We took data for Service in numbers from the August 2018 incident publication. So figures may not directly match more recent publications due to data updates.

Home fire risk checks per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Home fire risk checks carried out by fire and rescue authorities 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 and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.
- The England total hours figures for 'Number of Fire Risk Checks carried out by FRS' include imputed figures to ensure a robust national figure. These imputed figures are: '2016/17 – Staffordshire'.
- 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.

Home fire risk checks may also be referred to as Home Fire Safety Checks 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 and 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 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 and 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.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and 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. Avon Fire and Rescue Service is a combined FRA.

Metropolitan FRA

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

Combined FRA

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

County FRA

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

Unitary authorities

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

London

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

Mayoral Combined Authority

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

Police, fire and crime commissioner FRA

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

Isles of Scilly

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

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