

Fire & Rescue Service

Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Dorset & Wiltshire 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 Dorset & Wiltshire 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

Dorset and Wiltshire England

Perceived effectiveness of service Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)	87%	86%
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Response

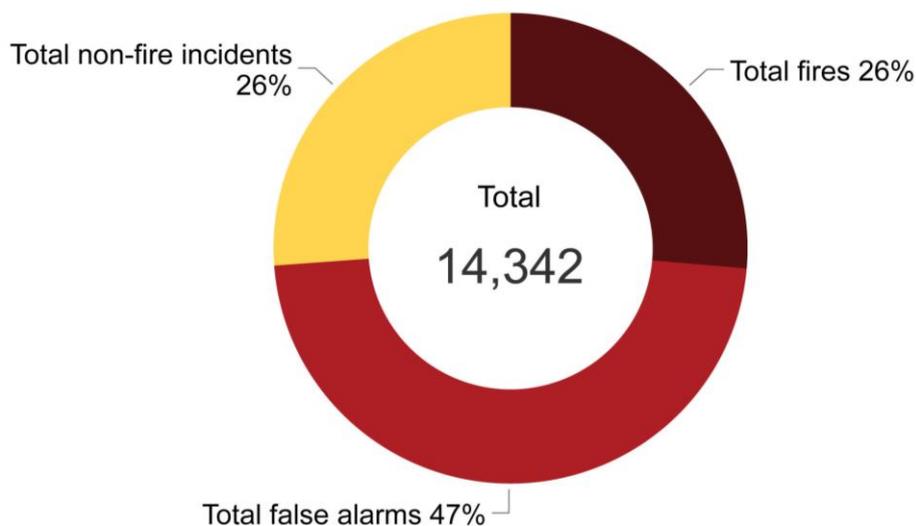
Dorset and Wiltshire England

Incidents attended per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 September 2018	9.6	10.5
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Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	7.9	10.4
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Fire safety audits per 100 known premises 12 months to 31 March 2018	1.3	3.0
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Incidents attended in the 12 months to 30 September 2018





Cost

Dorset and Wiltshire

England

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

£18.82

£22.38



Workforce

Dorset and Wiltshire

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

—

-14%

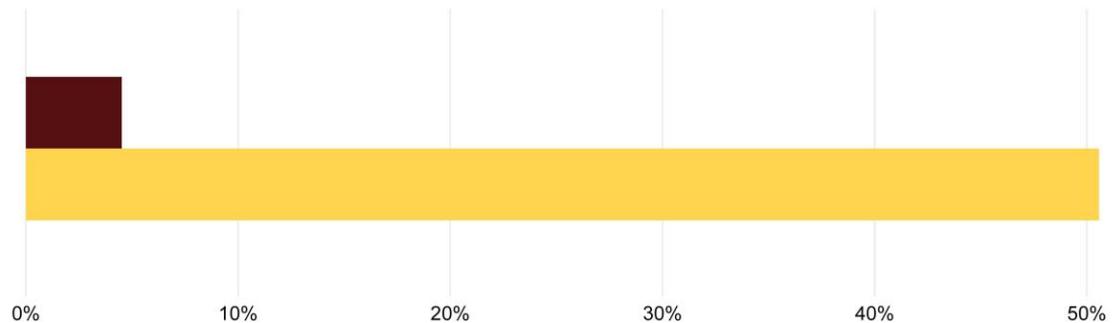
Percentage of wholetime firefighters
As at 31 March 2018

46%

70%

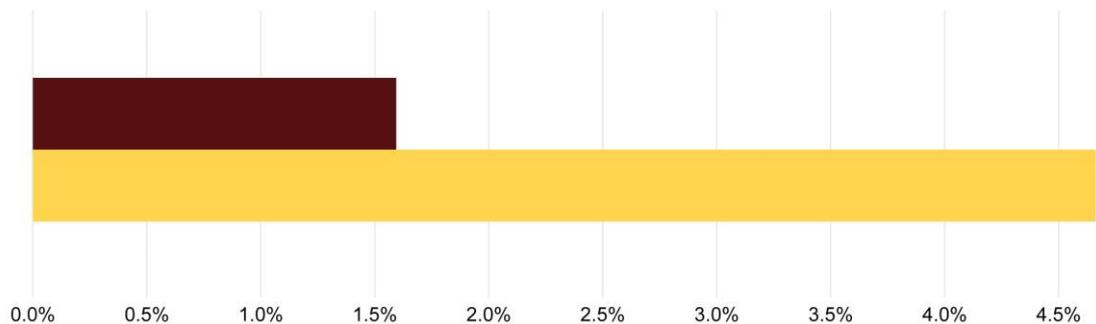
Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population



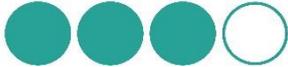
Percentage of black, Asian and minority ethnic firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● BAME firefighters ● BAME residential population



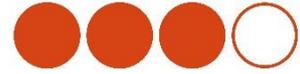
Please refer to annex A for full details on data used.

Overview

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

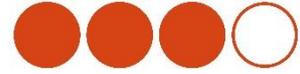


People



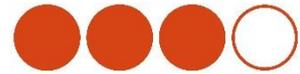
Good

Promoting the right values and culture



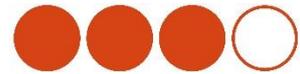
Good

Getting the right people with the right skills



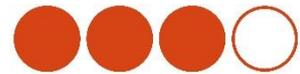
Good

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Good

Managing performance and developing leaders



Good

Overall summary of inspection findings

We are pleased with the performance of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure. But it needs to improve in some areas to give a consistently good service.

The service is good at keeping people safe. It is good at:

- preventing fires and other risks;
- protecting the public through fire regulation;
- responding to emergencies; and
- responding to national risks.

But it requires improvement to how it understands risk.

We found it to be good at providing an efficient service. And it is good at using resources and providing an affordable service.

It is good at looking after its people. We judged it to be good at:

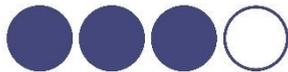
- promoting the right values and culture;
- getting the right people with the right skills;
- ensuring fairness and promoting diversity; and
- managing performance and developing leaders.

Overall, we commend Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service for its performance. This provides a good foundation for improvement in the year ahead.

Effectiveness



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. Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

But the service needs to improve its effectiveness in terms of its understanding of risk. An external organisation has assessed and approved its community safety plan. It uses a software solution to understand its risk profile.

However, the service needs to ensure that:

- it is gathering and recording up-to-date risk information, as at present some of the information is out of date;
- it is communicating risk information more consistently to staff about temporary events, such as festivals; and
- its visits to premises are carried out promptly and not overdue.

The service communicates its safety information to staff well – although we found no mechanism that showed staff had actually read it.

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at preventing fires. In particular the service:

- delivers safety messages to children;
- targets [safe and well visits](#) towards those who are more vulnerable; and
- works well with its partner agencies and other organisations to prevent fires.

It needs to improve its response to fires, however. In particular, it needs to ensure:

- it has enough on-call appliances available and
- it meets its standards on response times, especially in some rural areas.

The service works well with other services. Its joint mobilising function with two neighbouring services, Hampshire and Devon & Somerset, means that all three can operate effectively in each other's service areas. This ensures the fastest possible response.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it gathers and records relevant and up-to-date risk information.
- The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information about temporary events.

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 conducts a strategic assessment of risk. It looks at a range of factors that may affect the organisation, from opportunities and challenges within the fire sector and within the wider public sector. The assessment highlights the strategic, operational and local risks facing the service, and how the service intends to deal with them. As well as using internal data, it considers information from partner agencies and specific plans from the police, health, local authority and [National Fire Chiefs Council](#). The assessment also considers the future development of the road networks around the two counties and the increase in housing stock. The number of homes is expected to increase by 40,000 by 2030. This informs the community safety plan, which the service calls its [integrated risk management plan](#).

An external organisation that specialises in consultations has assessed the service's consultation process that led up to the first combined community safety plan. It judged that the process was in line with best practice. The consultation exercise involved focus groups and online forums, among others. The service did not receive any significant feedback that made it reconsider any of its consultation proposals.

The service has a good understanding of its risk profile. It uses a range of information from outside sources to build the profile. Available at all stations, it draws on a range of datasets: lifestyle, the national land and property gazetteer, and [home fire safety check](#) and incident information. It gives users access to maps that identify the highest levels of risk in any chosen area. The communications team has used local community focus groups to help the service better understand the local risk profile within the service.

The service plays an important role in both the Dorset and Wiltshire [local resilience forums](#). We saw these forums sharing risk information to understand the impact of waste fires, for example. Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service takes part in community safety and health and wellbeing boards. This enables it to gather risk information and share an understanding of local risks and vulnerability.

Having an effective risk management plan

Its community safety plan is in line with the requirements of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework](#) for England. Using the service's strategic assessment of risk, the community safety plan is linked to the local community risk register. The service uses the community safety plan to detail the activities it will undertake to reduce the risks and maximise the opportunities that the strategic assessment of risk has identified. The plan, which is easy for the public to understand, is split into five priorities: making safer and healthier choices; protecting you and the environment from harm; being there when you need us; making every penny count; and supporting and developing our people.

The five priorities demonstrate what the service will do under the headings of prevention, protection, response and resilience, and explains clearly to the public what the outcome will look like. Strategic management of the plan is overseen through the service delivery plan. This ensures that the service delivers on its key priorities. It does this by assessing where the service is now – and what it needs to do – using an approach based on key lines of enquiry.

Maintaining risk information

Firefighters require up-to-date information about complex buildings and those that contain hazards, such as chemicals. This information allows incident commanders to determine priorities. Those might be directing water jets to protect certain parts of a building, or committing firefighters to search specific areas to rescue people more quickly in smoke. They can access site-specific risk information on [mobile data terminals](#) (MDTs) mounted in the fire engines.

Operational staff at full-time stations are responsible for visiting sites and gathering or reviewing site-specific risk information. [On-call staff](#) do not carry out the same range of site visits because their time is limited. But on-call stations are allocated a full-time on-call support officer. In these situations, the on-call support officer makes the visit and reviews site-specific risk information. We were given examples of where on-call staff had visited sites to familiarise themselves and ensure that crews were made aware of any risks at these sites.

The service does not systematically review site-specific risk information. A community fire-risk management information system holds this information. But, when we

examined this system, we came across a number of premises whose risk visits were overdue and had not been reviewed. We also found examples where the site-specific risk information on the MDTs was out of date. As at 31 December 2018, the service had 889 [7\(2\)\(d\)](#) sites; it aims to review all site-specific risk information sites by the review date. In the year ending 31 March 2018, the service carried out 39 visits, but completed only 17 percent of them within the target. Out-of-date risk information could slow down rescue operations and put firefighters and the public at unnecessary risk.

We found that the service communicates risk information inconsistently to operational staff about temporary events, such as large festivals. We were given examples of when information would be emailed to local station managers. But the service could not be certain that operational crews always get this information, or have access to it through the MDTs.

The service has systems to ensure it shares general risk information with all staff. We saw this information being passed on through a variety of methods. They included: face-to-face handovers between [watches](#); briefings at the starts of shifts and drill sessions; and the use of notice boards. While information on safety matters is communicated well, we found no mechanism for staff to record that they had actually read the published information – or which showed the service had checked that the information had been read.

If prevention or protection staff identify any risks when they visit premises, that the occupier is a hoarder for example, they inform [fire control](#). They then add the risk information to the address in the mobilising system immediately. Crews can then see this information if they attend an incident at this address, and understand the risk.

Preventing fires and other risks



Good

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at preventing fires and other risks. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.

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 developed and put into operation an effective prevention strategy. It is clear about where the greatest risk is, and how it will target its prevention activity. The strategy explains the way the service will focus its resources on prevention activities which is linked to its community safety plan.

Safe and well advisers and wholetime operational crews carry out prevention activity in homes. The advisers make more comprehensive visits, called safe and well visits. The service told us that these visits include identifying potential fire risks, taking action to reduce fire risks, ensuring working smoke alarms are fitted, advice on social welfare, health prevention and advice on slips, trips and falls. Operational crews carry out safe and well 'light' visits. Both are designed to keep people safe and help them live healthier lives. If a resident has more complex needs, crews can refer them back to a safe and well adviser for more assessment, or for signposting to another agency. A central team allocates these visits. But operational crews can also target activity in their area using a software tool.

Using locally defined risk factors, the service identifies and concentrates activity on members of the community who may be most vulnerable to fire. The service defines the local risk factors as those people who:

- are over 65;
- have a mobility issue; or
- have some form of dependencies (alcohol, drugs, etc).

This approach is improved by sharing data with other organisations and by cross-referencing with local health and wellbeing boards.

We found that the service targets its safe and well visits at those it has identified as at higher risk, such as people over 85. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 7.9 home fire safety checks per 1,000 population. This represents 11,783 checks. Of these, 66 percent of the home fire safety checks that the service carried out were on the elderly. However, the service has not provided data on how many checks it carried out on those registered as disabled. The service refers to home fire safety checks as safe and well checks.

We found that all referrals made to the service are subject to an assessment against the criteria listed above. Interventions are targeted, using the most appropriate resources. They range from sending standard letters to sending trained safe and well advisers to carry out a full safe and well visit.

Station staff showed a good understanding of how they target prevention activity in their areas, using software to identify the highest levels of risk in their communities.

The service evaluates some of its prevention activities and programmes to try to understand how effective they are. It needs to evaluate this work further and undertake a cost–benefit analysis to obtain a more complete evaluation.

Promoting community safety

The service works well with partner agencies and organisations to prevent fires and keep people safe. It has partnership arrangements with local authorities in Dorset and Wiltshire, including adult social care. It also has local partnerships with clinical commissioning groups and GP surgeries. These arrangements mean that referrals for a safe and well check can be made both ways.

The service led part of a partnership called Safe and Independent Living (SAIL). This involves the fire service, local authorities, police, voluntary organisations, local groups and services, Age UK and local health services. Staff can make referrals through this partnership so that members of the community are directed towards the support they may need.

The SAIL programme provides:

- fitting free smoke detectors and having a home safety check;
- a home energy check and information about grants for insulation;
- benefit checks, to ensure that people are receiving everything they are entitled to;
- debt advice;
- signposting to local social opportunities, such as lunch clubs, exercise classes or learning centres;
- signposting to falls prevention services; and
- support in living a healthier lifestyle.

The scheme is now being extended into Wiltshire, led by Wiltshire Council, and involving a number of voluntary organisations.

Working with the charity SafeWise, the service helps to deliver safety messages to children on a range of subjects, including water safety. This is done at safety centres in Bournemouth and Weymouth. Data from the service shows that 3,204 primary school aged children have visited the two safety centres since April 2018. The service plans to build a new safety centre in the Swindon area. It is working with partner agencies to find the right site.

The service takes an active approach to dealing with fire-setting behaviour. An arson reduction co-ordinator leads a comprehensive arson reduction programme. One of its initiatives is a fire-setting intervention programme that works with children who have demonstrated fire-setting behaviour. The police, probation, education and youth offending teams make referrals to it. A team of trained volunteers works with these youngsters to tackle fire-setting behaviour. The service has supplied data that shows 117 referrals were made between April 2016 and December 2018.

Operational staff and safe and well advisers have all received [safeguarding](#) training. They also have access to an eLearning package that they complete each year. We found that staff had a good understanding of how to identify [vulnerable people](#), and how to make a safeguarding referral, when they need to.

Road safety

The service actively supports and is engaged in campaigns to promote road safety and reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads. The Safe Drive, Stay Alive campaign seeks to teach young people about the dangers and consequences of poor and dangerous driving. Data provided by the service shows that 17,184 people received a road safety message between January and December 2017.

The counties of Dorset and Wiltshire are home to a large proportion of military staff. The service is working with the Ministry of Defence to deliver road safety messages to this group as well, using a video and a bespoke Safe Drive, Stay Alive session. Data provided by the service shows that 2,784 army personnel attended one of these sessions between January and December 2017.

The service website provides a number of links to agencies that promote road safety, like The Honest Truth and [BikeSafe](#). The service allows its premises to be used as teaching locations for these programmes. It has also supported these events with volunteers. It has used its data on incidents to target the age groups most at risk who ride motorbikes in its area.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Good

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

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service's risk-based inspection programme is informed by local risk and it meets the statutory requirements.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 1.3 fire safety audits per 100 known premises (which equates to 1,230 audits). This compares to the England rate of 3.0 over the same period. Of all of these audits, 71 percent were satisfactory.

The service uses data to define high-risk premises. It categorises risk using: [Experian data](#); whether the premises are a sleeping risk; whether the premises are outside the service response time; and historical incident data. The service uses this data to prioritise its activities. It aims to complete assessments of all high-risk premises by April 2020. As at 31 December 2018, the service has identified 1,817 premises as high risk. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service had audited 344 of them. Further to this, data from the service indicates they completed 800 high-risk audits prior to 1 April 2018, but they were unable to clarify the exact date that these audits were carried out.

Specialist fire safety trained staff carry out fire safety audits. We found they conduct fire safety audits consistently. In the first instance, they do a short audit. Staff do a full audit if compliance issues arise. The service has recently put into practice a quality assurance process that aims to ensure protection staff work consistently. It involves quality assurance of the visit, a review of associated paperwork and obtaining feedback from the responsible person at the site they have visited.

The service strikes a balance between reactive and proactive work. As well as the proactive risk-based inspection programme, reactive work includes taking action in response to fire safety complaints, for example. An inspector allocates these to staff. Reactive work is treated as a priority. Anything that may be considered critical to lives must be dealt with in 24 hours. Other matters can be handled within seven days. Protection officers are available day and night, and will respond to fire safety concerns brought to the service's attention.

Enforcement

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service has taken a robust approach to compliance with fire safety legislation. In the year to 31 March 2018, of the 351 unsatisfactory audits, the service issued:

- 96 informal notices;
- 19 prohibition notices (under [Article 31](#));
- 7 enforcement notices (under Article 30 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005); and
- 1 prosecution for offences.

Where the service requires remedial action within premises, it works closely with building managers to make sure that the action deals with any breaches to fire safety rules. If remedial action is not taken, the service will consider enforcement. Before it takes enforcement action, a case conference is held to ensure consistency. It also takes legal advice. One officer in the protection team will oversee all enforcement action to ensure it is consistent and to manage capacity.

The service works with other enforcement agencies to share information on risk and take joint enforcement action where necessary. Members of the protection team collaborate with a number of services, including local authority housing, the council, building control, the Environment Agency and the Care Quality Commission. When we reviewed protection case files, we saw evidence that joint enforcement action had been undertaken with a local authority.

Working with others

The service has a call challenge and non-attendance policy on automatic fire alarms (AFAs). This keeps resources available for prevention and response activity. It guides control operators on the action they need to take to manage unwanted fire signals. When fire control receives AFA calls, it gathers other information to determine whether the alarm is the result of a fire or another cause. If it cannot confirm a fire, depending on the time of day and the type of premises, it may amend attendance. This can result in no attendance at all, a reduced attendance of one fire engine, or the full pre-determined attendance. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service received 5,827 unique calls for assistance from automatic fire alarms. It did not attend 1,719 of these. The service will, of course, attend if it receives confirmation of a fire.

A report is sent to station managers informing them about where an AFA has occurred. They then contact the responsible person at the premises and discuss the reasons for the activation and any measures that can be taken to reduce further calls. If help is needed, the technical fire safety team can be contacted who will then provide it.

The service works with local businesses and large organisations to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations, to improve safety. This is done at seminars. The local chamber of commerce supports the service by advertising these seminars to local businesses. The seminars are run in line with the monthly theme that the National Fire Chiefs Council has published.

The service has eight [primary authority schemes](#). These are partnerships in which fire and rescue services advise businesses on complying with environmental health, trading standards or fire safety regulations through a single point of contact. A primary authority officer manages them centrally within the service and serves as the main point of contact. The service operates these schemes on the basis of a cost recovery model. This ensures the costs associated with the scheme are covered.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good

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

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.
- The service should improve the availability of its on-call fire engines.

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 takes a risk-based approach to responding to incidents and has set pre-determined attendances, aligned to the national incident types. Its networked control arrangements allow it to manage resources effectively and deploy them over the border when needed.

The service has sufficient equipment to respond to incidents that present a risk to personnel, property and the environment. As well as conventional fire appliances, a range of vehicles can deliver specialist responses, such as water rescue, wide area flooding and working at height.

All operational staff follow a maintenance-of-competence programme to maintain the skills they need. On-call and wholetime staff praised the training they have done.

The service uses a software solution to manage fire engine availability. It is directly linked to the control room mobilising system. For example, if on-call firefighters amend their availability, any changes will be automatically updated in the mobilising system. We found this system for managing resources effective.

Despite this, the availability of on-call appliances is still an issue. The overall monthly pump availability in the service between April 2018 and December 2018 ranged from 75.3 percent to 81.7 percent. But the availability of individual pumps is sometimes far lower. For example, in December 2018, nine of the 74 pumps were available less than 50 percent of the time. In the nine months to 31 December 2018, the service failed to mobilise an appliance 130 times. Most of these failures occurred at on-call stations.

The service recognises this problem, and is monitoring appliance availability at its performance and scrutiny meetings. When there is a lack of short-term crewing, it will contact operational staff who have volunteered for this at short notice to attend a station with a shortage. This crewing pool is available to both wholetime and on-call staff. On-call support officers can also be used to support crewing and make more appliances available.

Response

The service's response standards focus on saving life. They are based on the outcomes of research, and on the likelihood of surviving a fire in a premises. The target is that a fire engine will attend all fires at premises with a sleeping risk within 10 minutes, 75 percent of the time; this response time includes call handling, [mobilisation](#) and travel. The service is not meeting this standard. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service achieved this target 71 percent of the time. However, data that the service supplied showed us that the service is meeting its performance standard in more densely populated areas.

When considering overall response times, in the year to 31 March 2018, the service's average response time to [primary fires](#) was 10 minutes and 22 seconds. This was a reduction from 11 minutes 12 seconds in the year ending 31 March 2016 and is broadly similar to the average response time to primary fires for other significantly rural services. But in more rural areas of Dorset, performance has got worse, although in rural Wiltshire it is improving.

The service monitors its response performance through local performance groups. Where variations occur, local managers work to address issues like recruitment, retention and supporting on-call stations. One project now in progress, designed to improve on-call recruitment and retention, is an on-call salary scheme.

The service has been using a clear three-stage plan to put the [national operational guidance](#) programme into practice. It has formed an internal national operational governance board that oversees projects. This agrees any actions that have arisen from the analysis of gaps that the service is completing. The goal is to implement the national operational guidance over the next two years.

Dorset & Wiltshire FRS works closely with Hampshire and Devon & Somerset FRSs. They have formed a partnership known as the Networked Fire Control Services Partnership (NFCSP). This aims to provide effective joint work across the services. As part of the arrangements, the three services can receive and manage emergency calls in any of their areas. This ensures that fire control staff handle emergency calls in the shortest time, as the nearest appliance from any service can be mobilised to deal with incidents. Control staff have the discretion to alter the attendance criteria to incidents. This may mean sending more, fewer, or no appliances to a site, depending on what information the control operator receives.

During our inspection, we saw how these arrangements worked, with fire control operators mobilising neighbouring services' appliances, and with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service control operators mobilising Dorset & Wiltshire appliances.

The service has recently replaced the MDTs in its frontline appliances. These allow crews to access site-specific risk information, operational procedures, hazardous material information and vehicle construction information on their way to, or at, an incident. It has also installed an additional, removable terminal in the rear of the appliance, so that all staff can access information. Staff see the extra MDTs installed in the rear of the crew cab as a benefit. But some expressed frustration at the levels of security needed to access the information held on them. This means it could take them longer to get the information they need.

Early on during our inspection, we discovered that staff were unable to show they could access site-specific risk information competently using the MDTs. We raised this matter with the service and are pleased that the service has acted swiftly. When we returned, we looked again at how staff accessed risk information. They showed they could now access site-specific risk information competently on the MDTs.

Command

Risk-critical training, such as incident command, forms part of an individual's operational licence. Members of staff who do not hold a valid operational licence are removed from operational duties. The service ensures that all commanders attend an incident command refresher every two years. In this way, they remain competent to command incidents. A sample of service training records we saw showed that commanders had been duly assessed within the two-year period.

We found managers to be assertive, confident and knowledgeable to command fire service assets effectively and safely at incidents. We saw evidence of a good understanding of incident command, specifically around the use of [operational discretion](#) and the more fundamental aspects of incident management.

Incident commanders make good use of support materials. These include checklists, command support packs, analytical risk assessments and decision logs.

Keeping the public informed

The service uses its website to inform the public of incidents it has attended. Fire control operators use social media to provide real-time incident information. They also send messages to keep the public safe, for example, by keeping windows closed. Staff have received guidance and training from the communications team to ensure staff know how to use social media correctly. Most stations have a social media account and are encouraged to use it.

We also found that control staff are confident in their ability to access fire survival guidance. They give the right advice to callers who are trapped by fire during incidents. During our visit to the control room, we observed a control operator providing reassurance and support to a member of the public.

Firefighters who we spoke to described the action they would take when dealing with safeguarding concerns. We found them well trained and confident. They explained how they followed the service's referral pathways.

Evaluating operational performance

The service has introduced an operational effectiveness database. This system enables all staff to access and input anything that they believe will improve the organisation or its services. Any learning from an operational debrief should be recorded on this database. Those staff who knew about the operational effectiveness database were positive about it. But we found that their awareness and use of the operational effectiveness database was inconsistent. This means that opportunities for wider learning may be being missed.

During our inspection, operational staff consistently described incidents where local [hot debriefs](#) (done shortly after an incident) had occurred. Staff gave examples of where a more formal debrief had taken place after a larger, protracted incident at a local brewery.

We were given an example of where the debrief process and the operational effectiveness database had resulted in the provision of specialist rescue equipment to support difficult rescue operations.

Operational assurance officers actively monitor incidents after being notified of an incident or when they are asked to carry out operational assurance. They must complete an assurance form, and either send it to a central team or enter it directly onto the operational effectiveness database.

We saw evidence that the service has made information available through the national joint operational learning platforms. We saw also that the service organises and takes part in debriefs of incidents and exercises involving the local resilience forums.

Responding to national risks



Good

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to national risks. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should arrange a programme of cross-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.

All fire and rescue services must be able to respond effectively to multi-agency and cross-border incidents. This means working with other fire and rescue services (known as intraoperability) and emergency services (known as interoperability).

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

Preparedness

The service has arrangements to draw on extra resources should it need them. It has mutual aid arrangements with its neighbouring fire and rescue services and can use this aid when it needs. It can also seek more specialist assets and resources through the [national co-ordination advisory framework](#), such as specialist [urban search and rescue](#) teams. Control staff and operational commanders showed they knew how to request these resources.

The service can support the response to a regional or national incident. It has a high-volume pump, [national inter-agency liaison officers](#) and a wildfire tactical adviser. Fire control staff could show how they recorded the availability of these assets using the national reporting tool.

The service has formed site-specific response plans for high-risk sites, which include a top-tier [Control of Major Accident Hazards \(COMAH\) site](#).

Working with other services

The service has a joint mobilising function with Hampshire and Devon & Somerset FRSs. The control rooms of the NFCSP have the same hardware and software, and can mobilise appliances and officers based on their distance from the incident. This means that the nearest resource is mobilised, ensuring an effective and efficient cross-border response. The control room operators in the partnership all follow the same training programme. As a result, they handle calls and deployments consistently. Because all operational procedures in the three services have been aligned, they can operate effectively and efficiently at incidents within each other's service area.

The services that border Dorset & Wiltshire share risk information. The service uses [Resilience Direct](#) to share the information. The MDTs have risk information from neighbouring services within a 10 km range of the border on them.

Our inspection came across examples of where the service has done exercises with its neighbours within the NFCSP. But the service lacks an effective programme to support training and exercises with services that are not part of the NFCSP. This could make cross-border responses into those service areas less effective.

Working with other agencies

The service has been involved in a number of high-profile incidents, including the Salisbury and Amesbury incidents in 2018. This has seen the service work effectively with a range of partner agencies. These incidents have seen a number of local resilience plans tested in both the Dorset and Wiltshire areas.

The service is an active member of the local resilience forums. The chief fire officer is the vice-chair of the executive group. Other officers are involved in some of the sub-groups. The local resilience forums maintain a training schedule, and the service supports and attends training events where appropriate.

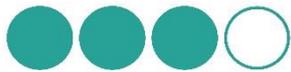
We saw evidence of the service's involvement in joint training and exercising. From April 2018 to December 2018, the service took part in four joint exercises/training with other services. This included both a table-top and a practical exercise at a high-risk COMAH site.

The service is well prepared to be part of a multi-agency response to a community risk. The service has responded to a number of wildfire incidents over the past 12 months, using both its conventional fire engines and those with an off-road capability. Fire control staff could describe what actions to take if notified about a marauding terrorist attack. Action notes on the mobilising systems ensure that action is taken in line with national guidance.

Efficiency



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. Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

The service:

- allocates its resources well, tailoring them to protection, prevention and response activities; if it needs to adjust the allocation, it rebalances them after consulting delivery teams;
- has a clear understanding of the financial climate in which it operates; any changes it makes in financing are measured against risk and are in line with the community safety plan; and
- has put any savings it has made into its [reserves](#).

Combining Dorset and Wiltshire fire and rescue services in 2016 has led to more efficient and productive ways of working. The service has made innovative changes to staff working patterns. The smarter ways of working programme, for example, allows staff to access emails and calendars from wherever they are located. This has cut travel costs and made their work patterns more flexible.

The service has also made savings through:

- collaboration with Hampshire and Devon & Somerset FRSs and
- the one public estate programme, through which it shares 25 of its 60 buildings, mainly with the police and ambulance service.

Other measures of efficiency that the service has put in place are:

- measures to counter cyber threats;
- regular testing of business continuity plans; and
- arrangements put in place should any systems fail in the control room.

The service should focus now on evaluating value-for-money and partnership contributions – which it is working on.

Making best use of resources



Good

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making best use of resources. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration.

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

How plans support objectives

The service conducts a strategic risk assessment and uses this to develop its community safety plan, commonly known as an integrated risk management plan. The community safety plan drives activity, and identifies the resources that are needed and how they will be balanced in line with the objectives.

The service allocates its resources well. It undertakes a [benchmarking](#) exercise and assesses the current position of its plans, and what the desired outcome is. It also evaluates the funding that it has to meet the objectives. We found that the service's approach allows it to allocate its budget and resources to prevention, protection and response activities; this is linked to the outcomes set out in its community safety plan.

The service is proud of the way it supports public health through the resources it allocates to its prevention plans. It takes a broad view of its allocation of resources to support public health. For example, it will respond to alarms in sheltered accommodation, as it recognises they are more likely to involve slips, trips and falls.

If the service identifies over the year that it needs to adjust this allocation, it creates a business case for this, and does a rebalancing exercise after consulting the service delivery teams.

Productivity and ways of working

Since Dorset and Wiltshire combined their fire and rescue services in 2016, they have worked to unite the two separate management systems. This helps to promote more efficient and productive work. Areas within the service that have been combined include operational policies and procedures, training recording systems, pay and conditions, fleet management, performance management, HR and finance management. The service has followed a clear plan to implement this project and knows what systems still need to be harmonised.

The service has taken an innovative approach to the productive use of resources. The information technology strategy sets out clear objectives in five 'roadmaps' covering the period 2016 to 2020. One objective is the introduction of 'smarter ways of working'. This has involved switching to the cloud-based operating platform, which has made the working arrangements of all employees more flexible. Staff have access to existing facilities such as email, calendars and management systems from wherever they are located. The service estimates this has saved it £120,000 a year on travel. New methods of communication allow staff to communicate via an internal social media account and internet telephone conferencing. Staff have welcomed these software solutions. They say they have made the working environment modern, flexible and agile, allowing them to work from anywhere within the service.

Collaboration

The service collaborates with Hampshire and Devon & Somerset FRSs. The three services have a networked mobilising system. This arrangement forms part of the NFCSP. Operational advantages include the mobilisation of the nearest responders, irrespective of county borders, faster responses to emergency calls and greater resilience and business continuity if systems fail.

The service has taken a positive approach to the Local Government Association's programme of 'one public estate'. This encourages the public sector to make efficiencies by sharing estates. The service shares 25 of its 60 buildings with other organisations, mainly with the police, ambulance service, local authority and HM Coastguard. Lyme Regis fire station is shared with Dorset Police and South Western Ambulance Service. Although the service does not earn any money from these arrangements, it saves money by sharing overheads such as maintenance costs, business rates and utilities. Sharing facilities also creates new opportunities for partnership work.

The service has identified that it needs to focus more on evaluating its value-for-money and partnership contributions. We look forward to seeing the outcome of this work.

Continuity arrangements

The service has good security measures to counter cyber threats. It often tests business continuity plans. Contractors give its systems and data centres regular 'health checks'. The service sets up a crisis management team, when it undertakes routine testing of software upgrades, for example. This means plans can be put into place fast if systems fail.

All fire stations and departments have business continuity plans. There are specific incident response plans for severe weather or loss of power to a site, for example.

The service has robust business continuity arrangements for the control room function. If any system fails in the control room, it will automatically cut over to the two other control rooms in the partnership. This guarantees that deployment of appliances to incidents will not be interrupted.

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

Annual savings of £4.5m identified from combining the two fire and rescues services have now been delivered. The service has a good track record of making savings and balancing annual budgets. In previous years, it has transferred surpluses into reserves and earmarked them for future projects.

The 2018/19 budget requirement for the service is £54.5 million. Savings to meet future financial pressures for the remaining years of the medium-term financial plan have been identified as:

- 2018/19 – £0.34m
- 2019/20 – £1.45m
- 2020/21 – £2.09m

In the financial year 2017/18, the service had around £15.6m in earmarked reserves and around £6.7m in general reserves. Some of these savings will be met from general balances and earmarked reserves to support transformation and efficiencies.

The service has a good understanding of the current financial climate in which it operates. In the past, it has shown it has the flexibility to change to meet financial challenges. We saw that the key financial decisions it has made are linked to risk and are in line with its community safety plan.

The service has also identified other savings that it will need to make. It is in the process of developing proposals that will be considered by the fire authority. In the year to 31 March 2018, the firefighter cost per head of population was £18.82. This compares to the England rate of £22.38 over the same time period. However, many factors influence this cost, for example the ratio of wholetime to on-call staff which is in part influenced by the rurality of the service.

Innovation

Dorset & Wiltshire FRS is committed to making more changes to improve services and save money. It has introduced new software solutions and smarter ways of working for staff. It already provides frontline staff with MDTs to assess risks at incidents. It has now also installed a second demountable MDT that crew members seated in the rear of an appliance can use. This means crews can access risk information on the way to incidents more quickly.

As at 31 March 2018, the service had 3 wholetime, 37 on-call, and 10 mixed fire stations and 74 operational fire engines. The fire engines all have the same specification and size but operate in different built environments, such as rural and urban areas. It is looking at whether different sized fire appliances might replace the larger, conventional fire appliances. It has procured an aerial ladder platform (ALP), which is a vehicle for working safely at height. This replacement ALP can reach greater heights than the current vehicle.

Future investment and working with others

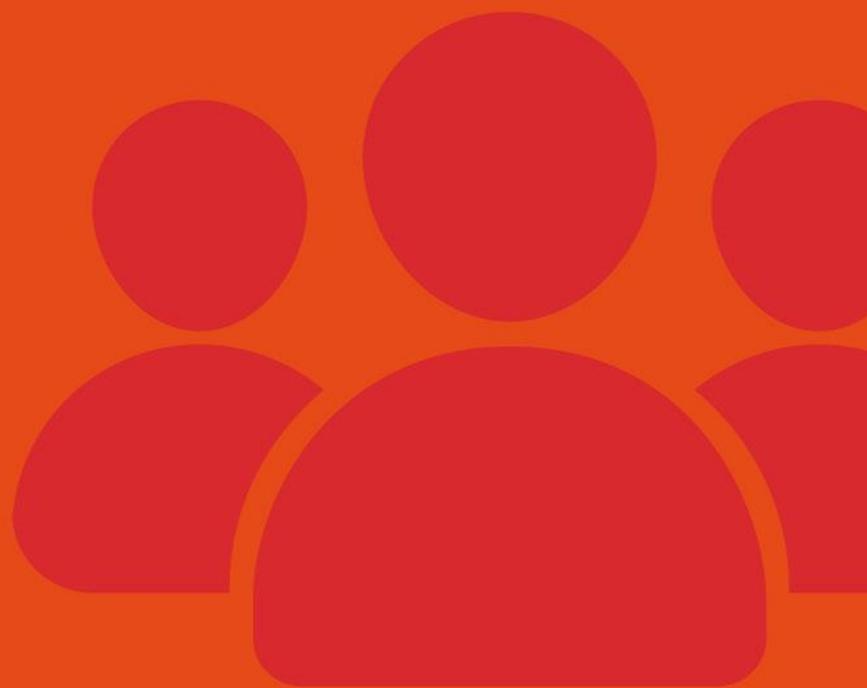
The service works with other organisations and categorises its partnership work arrangements in three main areas:

- blue light partners;
- local government; and
- other partnerships.

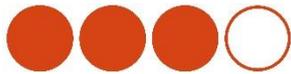
We saw details of a range of partnerships that the service is involved in and examples of where they had delivered positive outcomes for the public. One example concerned partnership work with a local authority. This led to vulnerable residents being targeted for a safe and well check.

The service maintains a corporate risk register. This describes a number of risks to the service, and how it intends to reduce or manage the risk. The register indicates the need to maintain £2.5m (5 percent of budget requirement) in general reserves as a contingency for any unplanned event. Earmarked reserves are included and allocated for matters that often cause financial pressures, such as ill-health retirements and insurance.

People



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, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at looking after its people.

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at looking after its staff and their health and wellbeing, including those who have attended traumatic incidents. It is also good at communicating the service's RESPECT values – responsibility, equality, support, professionalism, excellence, communication and transformation.

The service treats its workforce well and:

- understands its workforce and their skills and capabilities;
- monitors and records the training it delivers; and
- ensures sufficient resilience when crewing shortfalls arise.

The staff are proud of the service, of its work and their own contribution.

Training is good. A special facility, the operational effectiveness database, allows the service to get an overview of all operational activity and feedback. Corporate staff are trained appropriately. The service needs to ensure its staff complete all their mandatory health and safety training.

The grievance policy is well understood by staff, although the service does not always meet the timescales it has set to deal with grievances. It is dealing with this problem by training more staff to handle grievance cases.

The service has a range of support networks that are represented on its equality and diversity committee. The workforce does not yet reflect the diversity of the communities they serve, but a recent campaign, #BeOneOfUs, increased the number of applicants from under-represented communities.

The service is introducing a new leadership programme for supervisors, developed along with the RNLI. It is now being piloted. The aim is to extend it across the service. Another scheme, 'role hopping', allows staff to skip the next role or grade and apply for the one above it.

The service's promotion process is seen as fair, clear and comprehensive.

Promoting the right values and culture



Good

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

Workforce wellbeing

The service has a number of schemes to support staff health and wellbeing. Staff have access to counselling, occupational health, a team of service chaplains and mental health champions. A facility called [Trauma Risk Incident Management \(TRiM\)](#) is designed to help staff who have attended a traumatic incident. It assesses the individual and directs them towards the extra support they need, if required.

Staff showed they understand and are aware of the TRiM process. They told us they felt that the service looks after them well in this area. But we also came across staff who said the process was not consistently applied in the north and south of the service area. The service is aware of this concern and plans to appoint a TRiM co-ordinator.

Staff have to undertake an annual fitness test. Health and fitness advisers run a rolling programme of fitness testing. If a member of staff does not meet the standard, they may be taken off operational duties and put on a fitness plan. Physical training advisers develop fitness improvement plans and station-based physical education instructors support staff who need to get fitter.

Health and safety

The service's health and safety policy statement outlines how it manages health and safety, and it has been accredited to BSI 18001 for its health and safety management practices.

Staff have access to a range of health and safety information on the service's intranet. The service's policies, procedures and safety bulletins are all available and can be found easily using the search facility. Health and safety information is published in a number of formats and sent to individual email addresses. We saw information published on station notice boards. We also saw station staff being briefed about

recently published safety information. According to our staff survey (please see Annex A for more details), to which 334 staff members (equating to 25 percent of the service's workforce) responded, 98 percent of respondents know how to report all accidents, [near misses](#) and dangerous occurrences and 95 percent agree that they are encouraged to do so.

Culture and values

Staff showed an understanding of the service's RESPECT values – responsibility, equality, support, professionalism, excellence, communication and transformation. The service communicates its values in various ways, and the values are clearly displayed around service workplaces, the intranet and on service documentation.

As part of our inspection, we carried out a survey of FRS staff to get their views of their service. Of the 334 respondents in Dorset & Wiltshire FRS, 19 percent reported feeling bullied and harassed and 13 percent reported feeling discriminated against at work in the previous 12 months. There are limitations to the staff survey which should be considered alongside the findings. We explain these in Annex A.

Staff said they saw the strategic leadership team as approachable and professional and spoke highly of them. We were given examples of where the senior leadership team had attended a recent PRIDE community event, and had invited all staff to join. Staff described access to the strategic leadership team as good. Senior leaders engage with staff using a number of forums, ranging from consultation days to leadership forums.

We spoke to a lot of staff across the whole organisation in prevention, protection, response, and to corporate staff. The way they felt about the service impressed us. They were proud of the service and of its work in the community, and spoke highly of their own work to contribute to the service's vision.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

Dorset & Wiltshire 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 ensure it has an effective system for recording and monitoring health and safety training which is accurate and accessible.

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 understands its current workforce, skills and capabilities. An electronic system that supervisory managers and staff can access records and monitors operational staff training. Training centre staff allocate operational staff to the risk-critical courses that they need to attend, to remain competent and available to respond.

The service has a cross-cutting people delivery team. Workforce and succession planning comprise two distinct groups; the strategic workforce planning group which deals with succession planning and the postings group which oversees the postings to stations, attrition and retirements. This means workforce planning is consistent, and that any vacancies are identified and planned for early on.

Training records are subject to performance management. This is to make sure lack of competence in staff does not affect the availability of appliances. Training records are scrutinised at station, group and area level within the service. The community safety delivery group has overall oversight of training and competence levels across the service. A member of this group is responsible for training delivery, so that any issues of competence across the service can be dealt with immediately.

The service has a policy to deal with crewing shortfalls. This provides resilience and allows the service to maintain crewing if there is a shortage due to illness, for example. The service contacts personnel who wish to be available to cover a crewing shortfall by text. The policy contains strict guidance about when this can be applied, and on restrictions concerning the hours that may be worked.

Learning and improvement

During our inspection, we found that risk-critical training, such as breathing apparatus and incident command, was up to date. Records were accurate. But we could not be sure that health and safety training was being completed – manual handling training especially. This means the service cannot be certain its staff are completing mandatory health and safety training. We are aware that the service currently uses three systems to record training and competence. This is a legacy issue, left over from the time before the two services were combined. The service has a plan to resolve how it records competence, and integrate the data on to one system.

Both on-call and wholetime staff told us their training was good and had prepared them for their roles. They felt well trained. Staff have equal access to training, which is the same for wholetime or on-call firefighters. Our staff survey shows that 80 percent of the 334 respondents agree that they have received sufficient training to enable them to do what is asked of them.

The service can tailor its training to meet current and future needs. Station training plans are sent out centrally to all stations. The training planner covers the mandatory quarterly training that staff must complete. The following factors have informed it:

- Emerging risks and threats as identified by the strategic leadership team.
- Operational requirements as set by Response Support.
- Operational and training observations from across the service.
- RESPECT behaviours identified as in need of refreshing across the service.
- Structured feedback, including operational effectiveness.

Officers who respond to larger or more complex incidents take part in ongoing rota group training. Each rota group holds monthly sessions, which officers are required to attend. They cover a range of subjects, such as incident command and learning from national incidents.

The service has designed and developed a system that allows it to see the results of operational activity, staff feedback and operational assurance alongside national learning. The operational effectiveness database captures this information. The service uses it to inform operational procedures, equipment, resourcing and training needs, ensuring the safety of firefighters and reducing risk to the community. All staff have access to the database and can review the progress of any action that has been entered.

Corporate staff are appropriately trained. The service ensures that they get the right skills and training through role-specific development. Corporate-based eLearning is also available to staff, some of which is mandatory. The system sends automated reminders to staff to complete whatever training is required and records when the training has been completed.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Good

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures.

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

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service covers a large area and over half of all firefighters are on-call firefighters (53.5 percent of full-time equivalent firefighters are on-call). This makes it challenging for strategic managers to engage with the workforce, especially those in more rural areas. To address this, the service has put a number of innovative solutions into practice. The chief fire officer publishes regular podcasts, and conference calls are held that all staff can access and dial into. At any meeting, an open seat is always held free for a member of staff to participate. The service also has a staff suggestion scheme and an operational effectiveness database. We were given examples of where senior managers had responded to feedback and resolved local issues.

Despite using these proactive methods to engage staff, we still found that, on occasions across the service, on-call staff were not fully aware of the current position of a project that changed how they would be paid to respond to incidents.

We found that staff were aware of the grievance policy and were confident that grievances would be resolved. When we conducted a review of grievances, we found that the documentation and outcome had all been recorded in line with the service's policy in all cases. However, although few formal grievances were recorded in the year ending 31 March 2018, we noted also that the service did not always meet the allocated timescales to deal with a grievance. The service is taking steps to resolve this problem by increasing the number of trained staff who can support grievance cases.

The service has a range of staff support groups and networks. These include Mind Blue Light, Pride Support Network, Straight Allies and Women in the Fire Service. These groups send a representative to sit on the service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee meetings. These are held regularly and provide all the networks with an opportunity to come together.

The service's relationships with representative bodies are good. Representatives of these bodies spoke positively about their relationship with the service's managers. They said they engage regularly with the strategic leadership team. This is done through the regular quarterly meetings, or informally, when required.

Diversity

The service's workforce does not fully reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. As at 31 March 2018, 4.5 percent of firefighters in Dorset & Wiltshire FRS were female and 1.6 percent of firefighters in Dorset & Wiltshire FRS were from black, Asian, or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds (compared to a BAME population of 4.7 percent in the service area). The service is aware of this disparity. It is taking action to overcome some of the barriers preventing the recruitment of under-represented groups. In the meantime, the service has carried out a survey of every site to ensure that the facilities are gender-friendly. It has also introduced diversity champions to provide a contact point for staff who wish to discuss diversity issues more informally.

The service's most recent recruitment campaign used a positive action programme called #BeOneOfUs. This has increased the number of applicants from under-represented groups. The service is also using community profiling to better understand diversity at station level and better target recruitment activity towards members of the community from a BAME background.

The service has recently created an on-call support officer role. Their role is to provide support to on-call stations within their allocated area. Their remit is broad. It can range from planning training events to providing managerial support to the station management team. Their task is also to support recruitment within the station area and to identify members of the community who may be able to join the service.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Good

Dorset & Wiltshire 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's performance review procedure requires managers to review individual performance each year. As part of the review, line managers agree individual aims and expectations and decide a joint action plan. The service uses an eLearning platform to record meeting notes and action plans. We found that corporate staff understood the review process well but operational staff felt it was more of a tick-box exercise. According to our staff survey, 73 percent of the 334 respondents agreed that they are satisfied with their current level of learning and development.

Development pathways have been created for staff in the service. The pathway provides information on what learning and development staff must, should or could undertake. The pathways are aligned to the roles of staff and are linked to relevant learning packages in the eLearning system.

The service is in the early stages of introducing a new leadership training programme for supervisors. This forms part of its three-year leadership delivery plan. This programme is being developed along with the RNLi and has been jointly designed by staff. Two pilot courses have been run in April and September 2018. The course covers generic corporate leadership training and command training for operational staff. The aim is to extend this across the service. In 2019, the service is

also holding a programme of management courses on issues such as managing performance, sickness management and grievances.

The service has a 90-second target for mobilising appliances to incidents. The fire control room produces weekly reports on whether this target has been met. Fire control operators listen to calls that did not meet the target to find out why, and whether there is a performance or a development need.

Developing leaders

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

The service has introduced a scheme called 'role hopping'. It allows staff to move past, or hop over, the next role or grade and apply for the next one above it. Line managers identify staff who have shown potential and enable them to move to a more challenging or different role – or to the next role above. For example, a watch manager could apply to become a group manager without having been a station manager. Role hopping is available for both operational and corporate staff.

The promotion process for operational and corporate staff is fair and open. The process and the supporting information within the policy are clear and comprehensive. An assessment against the RESPECT framework forms part of the promotion process. The process also allows on-call staff to apply for wholetime positions.

The service acknowledges that the recent process for crew and watch managers could have been handled better, and that it drew much criticism from staff. The main problem was the logistics and administration of the process, due to the high number of applicants; the service was also slow to respond to questions and give feedback to unsuccessful applicants. As a result of this, it commissioned an independent company in October 2018 to review the promotion process. This looked closely at promotion policy, the process and candidate's experience. The company advised the service to build on the existing approach, which it considered pragmatic. But it also concluded that the service had misunderstood and underestimated the impact of the process's logistical and administrative failings on the candidates. The service has taken these recommendations on board as part of its review of the promotion process.

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. Dorset & Wiltshire 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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