

# Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22

## Effectiveness, efficiency and people

An inspection of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service



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# About this inspection

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This is our third inspection of fire and rescue services across England. We first inspected Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service in January 2019, publishing a report with our findings in June 2019 on the service's effectiveness and efficiency and how it looks after its people. Our second inspection, in autumn 2020, considered how the service was responding to the pandemic. This inspection considers for a second time the service's effectiveness, efficiency and people.

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In this round of our inspections of all 44 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 for Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

## 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.

# Overview

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 <b>Effectiveness</b>	 <b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Understanding fires and other risks	 Good	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Protecting the public through fire regulation	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	 Good	Good
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 <b>Efficiency</b>	 <b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Making best use of resources	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Future affordability	 Good	Good

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 <b>People</b>	 <b>Good</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Promoting the right values and culture	 Good	Requires improvement
Getting the right people with the right skills	 Good	Requires improvement
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	 Good	Inadequate
Managing performance and developing leaders	 Requires improvement	Requires improvement

## HMI summary

It was a pleasure to re-visit Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. I am grateful for the positive and constructive way that the service engaged with our inspection. I want to thank the service for working with us by accommodating the virtual approach of this inspection. These inspections would normally be conducted using a hybrid approach but inspecting against the backdrop of the pandemic meant we had to inspect virtually. I also want to recognise the disruption caused by the pandemic. This has been considered in our findings.

I am satisfied with some aspects of the performance of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

The service is good at looking after its staff, at understanding fire and other risks, and at responding to fires and other emergencies. It is also good at promoting its values throughout the organisation. However, the service has received a cause of concern for how it responds to, and trains staff for marauding terrorist attacks (MTAs).

The service has responded to the recommendations and learning from phase one of the Grenfell Tower fire inquiry. It has also used its experience of the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic to inform its new strategy.

That said, there are several areas where the service needs to make improvements.

The service requires improvement in its effectiveness at keeping people safe. Specifically, it requires improvement at preventing fires and other risks; protecting the public through fire regulation; and responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

I note that the Manchester Arena Inquiry was taking place at the time of our inspection. The service's staff have confidence in the new leadership team. The service now needs to make sure it is prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to any future terrorist incident.

In terms of efficiency, the service needs to improve in making best use of its money. It is already good at making its service affordable in future.

I am pleased at how much progress the service has made in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Now the service should make sure that all senior leaders model and maintain its values. It should also launch a process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

Overall, I look forward to seeing improvements in the year ahead.



**Andy Cooke**

HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

# Service in numbers



## Response

Greater  
Manchester

England

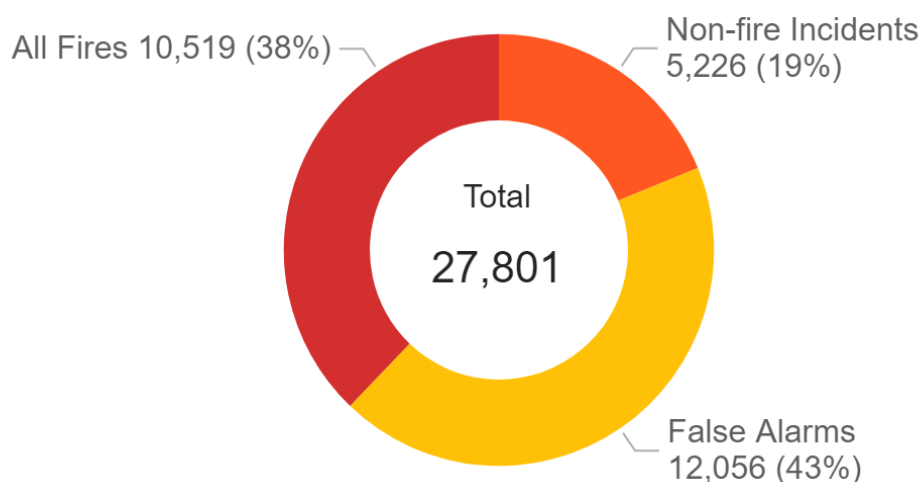
Incidents attended per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	9.76	9.16
Home fire safety checks carried out by fire and rescue service per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	2.93	4.47
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises Year ending 31 March 2020	1.26	2.55
Average availability of pumps Year ending 31 March 2020	96.25%	83.07%



## Cost

Firefighter cost per person per year Year ending 31 March 2020	£25.06	£23.82
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### Incidents attended in the year to 31 March 2021

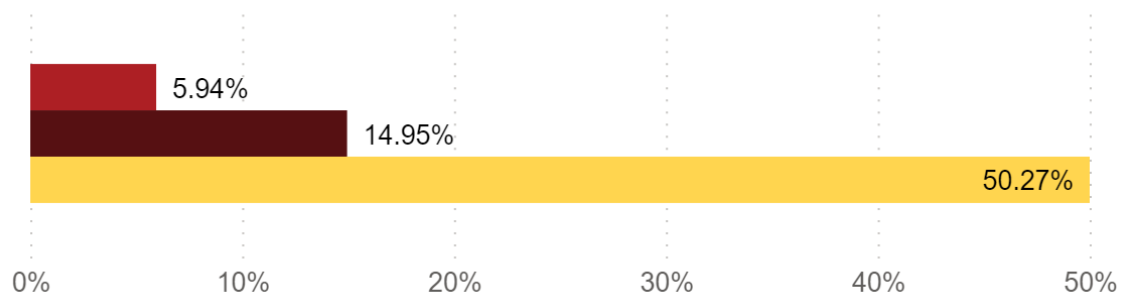




Five-year change in total workforce 2015 to 2020	-17.03%	-5.30%
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2020	0.49	0.63
Percentage of firefighters who are wholetime Year ending 31 March 2020	99.71%	65.10%

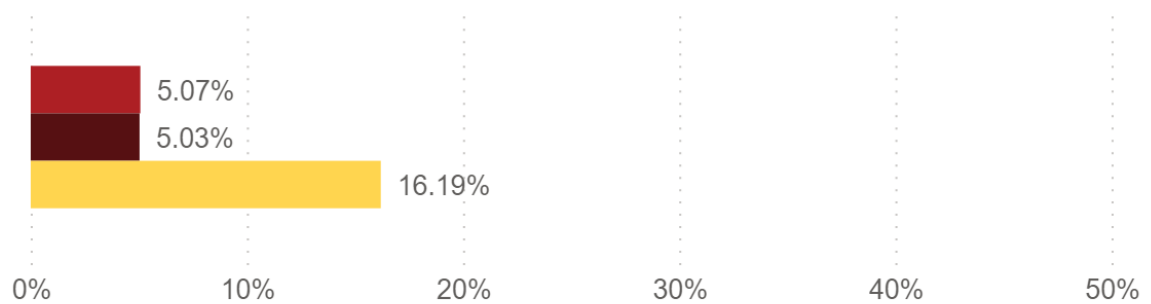
**Percentage population, firefighters and workforce who are female as at 31 March 2020**

Female ● Firefighters ● Workforce ● Local population



**Percentage of population, firefighters, and workforce who are Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) as at 31 March 2020**

BAME ● Firefighters ● Workforce ● Local population



For more information on data and analysis throughout this report, please view the [‘About the data’ section of our website](#).



# Effectiveness



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



## Requires improvement

### Summary

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

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Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement in terms of its effectiveness. It is good at understanding fires and other risks, and at responding to fires and other emergencies. But it needs to improve its prevention and protection work, and its response to major and multi-agency incidents.

The service is good at identifying risk in its communities. It has launched its new [Fire Plan](#), which is based on a comprehensive risk assessment. The service drew on a wide range of information for the plan, but it could have conducted wider consultations.

The service is good at communicating risk information to its response staff. And since our last inspection it has improved how it communicates with them, including through the use of an app.

The service is aware that it needs to improve its collection of risk assessments at incidents, and its recording of risk information.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service has responded to the recommendations and learning from phase one of the Grenfell Tower fire inquiry. It has also adapted its approach to public prevention work from the early stages of the pandemic and it is using what it has learned to shape its new strategy. It should target its prevention work at those who are most at risk of fire.

The service has new teams that are focusing on the built environment and high-rise properties. The service has more to do in terms of protecting the public through fire regulation. Moreover, its risk-based inspection programme needs to be achievable.

The service has assured itself that staff are competent in safety-critical areas. It needs to make sure that formal debriefs are carried out in line with its own policy, and it needs to address concerns about the sustainability of its marauding terrorist attack (MTA) capability.

The service works well with other organisations, including to regulate fire safety. Its use of national learning is excellent.

## Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



### Good (2019: Good)

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is good at understanding risk.

Each fire and rescue service should identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks that could affect its communities. Arrangements should be put in place through the service's prevention, protection and response capabilities to prevent or mitigate these risks for the public.

#### Area for improvement

The service should ensure it records relevant and up-to-date risk information to help protect firefighters, the public and property during an emergency.

#### Innovative practice

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service has developed an app to display operational flashcards on both [mobile data terminals](#) and officers' mobile phones. This allows instant access to standard operating procedures.

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

### The service is good at identifying risk in the communities it serves

The service has assessed an appropriate range of risks and threats after a thorough [integrated risk management planning \(IRMP\)](#) process. The IRMP is referred to as the service's [Fire Plan](#). When assessing risk, it has considered relevant information collected from a broad range of internal and external sources and data sets including incident and societal data. For example, it has considered environmental data such as flooding and areas of moorland which are at risk of wildfires. The service has worked with housing associations and other organisations to understand the risk of high-rise residential buildings in Greater Manchester.

### **The service could have consulted more widely**

The service has undertaken only limited consultation on its plan and had only limited meaningful dialogue with communities and others, such as Community Safety Partnerships, to both understand the risk and explain how it intends to mitigate it.

### **The service has an effective integrated risk management plan**

After assessing relevant risks, the service has recorded its findings in an easily understood Fire Plan. This plan describes how prevention, protection and response activity is to be effectively resourced to mitigate or reduce the risks and threats the community faces, both now and in the future. For example, the service is working with partner organisations on prevention. It is continuing to focus on the built environment. And it plans to recruit a further 350 apprentice firefighters.

The service supports its Fire Plan with an annual delivery plan. Fire stations within Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service use this to prioritise their local community activities.

The service produces a quarterly report to show performance and progress against key indicators. The service has aligned these to the priorities in its Fire Plan.

### **The service gathers and communicates risk information well with response staff**

The service routinely collects and updates risk information about people, places and threats it has identified as being the highest risk. It has established processes and systems to gather and make site-specific risk information readily available to response staff. This enables them to identify, reduce and mitigate risk effectively.

Since our last inspection, the service has improved how information is communicated to response staff. It does this via a range of media, including mobile data terminals on fire engines (which are updated daily), as well as information broadcasts and emails. Recently, the service has invested in new technology to display risk information via an app. This is available to firefighters and officers.

### **The service doesn't routinely collect risk assessments at incidents**

In our previous inspection, we raised an area for improvement reviewing and recording risk assessments and decisions made at incidents in line with national guidance. This information is used to brief other commanders and firefighters arriving at incidents. We are disappointed to see little progress has been made on this area for improvement. During our latest inspection, we were told this information isn't routinely collected.

### **The service could improve its recording and sharing of this information**

The service recognises that it could improve its process for recording risk information. We sampled a range of risk information. Most of the samples had incorrect dates. When we sampled visit records, we found that four out of five high-rise records had the incorrect review date. This means that, potentially, revisits could be missed. It also means that firefighters may not have the most up-to-date information in the case of an emergency.

Where appropriate, the service exchanges risk information with other organisations (such as the police, health partners and local authorities). However, the service could improve the way it shares information with its prevention, protection and response functions.

### **The service could improve the way it gathers information and learns from operational incidents**

The service gathers and communicates risk information effectively. It also routinely updates risk assessments and uses feedback from local and national operational activity to challenge its planning assumptions. The service's use of national learning is excellent. It could do more to learn from local incidents.

### **The service has used learning from the Grenfell Tower inquiry to reduce risk**

During this round of inspections, we sampled how each fire and rescue service has responded to the recommendations and learning from phase one of the Grenfell Tower fire inquiry.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service has responded to learning from this tragedy. The service has produced an action plan which details how it intends to implement the recommendations from the inquiry. It has identified 626 high-rise buildings, and is on track to have assessed the risk of each high-rise building in its service area by the end of 2021. The team has also organised ten exercises at high-rise premises. However, we were disappointed to find evidence of the team working independently and not involving its prevention function.

## **Preventing fires and other risks**



### **Requires improvement (2019: Requires improvement)**

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at preventing fires and other risks.

Fire and rescue services must promote fire safety, including giving fire safety advice. To identify people at greatest risk from fire, services should work closely with other organisations in the public and voluntary sector, as well as with the police and ambulance services. They should provide intelligence and risk information with these other organisations when they identify vulnerability or exploitation.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk, including those from hard-to-reach groups.
- The service should evaluate its prevention activity so it understands what works.

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

### **The service is developing a new prevention strategy**

The service has made limited progress since our last inspection. The current prevention strategy isn't aligned with the risks in its Fire Plan.

Prevention work generally happens in isolation, and we found little evidence of relevant information being provided to the protection and response functions. For example, staff told us that a [home fire safety check](#) takes place following a fire. But from the records we sampled, we didn't find any evidence of these checks. We also found that the service had carried out limited prevention activities at high-rise premises.

As a result, [vulnerable people](#) and others may not be getting the support they need.

However, we found evidence that the service is developing a new prevention strategy. The strategy and priorities will be aligned. This work is based on the [National Fire Chiefs Council](#)'s person-centred approach to prevention. However, it was too early for us to see the benefits of this work.

### **COVID-19 has had a positive impact on the future of prevention**

In November 2020, during our COVID-19 specific inspection, we considered how the service had adapted its prevention work. At that time, we found that it had adapted its public prevention work. Since then, we are encouraged to find that the service has used the learning from this to shape its new strategy.

During the first stage of the pandemic, the service contacted people on the vulnerable persons register to carry out [safe and well visits](#) over the telephone. The service is benefiting from the relationships it developed with other organisations as a result of the work it carried out during the first stage of the pandemic.

### **The service needs to target its most vulnerable people for home fire safety visits**

In our previous inspection, we identified an area for improvement where the service should target its prevention work at the most at risk. We are disappointed to find that the service still doesn't have a clear, risk-based approach that enables it to direct prevention activity towards the people most at risk from fire and other emergencies. The service is reviewing the staff it has and how best to use them to give home fire safety advice to all. It is also looking to prioritise physical home fire safety assessments for those who are most at risk.

The service uses only limited information and data to target its prevention activity. Most safe and well visits are from partner referrals. The service needs to do more work with other organisations to improve the quality of referrals it receives, to make sure the referrals are focused on those who are most at risk.

## **Staff aren't confident in carrying out safe and well visits**

Staff told us that they carry out safe and well visits and home fire risk checks. These checks cover a range of hazards that can put vulnerable people at greater risk from fire and other emergencies. However, some staff expressed concern over the quality and quantity of the prevention activities. We also found that firefighters hadn't completed much prevention activity. Staff told us that they aren't very confident about answering health-related questions during safe and well visits, but are more confident with the home fire safety checks.

## **The service is effective at responding to safeguarding concerns**

In our previous inspection, we identified an area for improvement around [safeguarding](#). The service has since made significant progress. It has trained staff and they gave us good evidence of occasions when they had taken action to safeguard vulnerable people. They told us they feel confident and trained to act appropriately and promptly. The service has created a dedicated safeguarding role. This is part of the ongoing national work around safeguarding.

## **The service needs to improve the quality of partner referrals**

The service has more than 100 partnerships in place to prevent fires and other emergencies. For example, it has partnerships with Trafford Housing Trust, Jigsaw Homes Stockport and Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust. Referral rates from the partnerships to the service are high. However, following a pilot programme in which partner organisations entered 300 referrals into the new online referral form, the service acknowledges that it needs to focus on quality rather than quantity. It is working with partner organisations to communicate the new prevention arrangements, and to train them so that they can make suitable referrals.

During the first stage of the pandemic, the service contacted partner organisations asking them to refer only those people who were most at risk. However, the service didn't give a way of scoring people to make its staff aware of what exactly made a person high risk. During the first stage of the pandemic, the service did try to contact everyone on its vulnerable persons register to deliver safe and well visits by telephone.

## **The service acts to tackle fire-setting behaviour**

The service has a range of suitable and effective interventions to target and educate people of different ages who show signs of fire-setting behaviour. They include campaigns such as the [FireSmart](#) programme, in which the service works directly with young fire setters. The service also participates in joint campaigns with Greater Manchester Police on anti-social behaviour.

When appropriate, it routinely shares information with other partners. The service then gives the information to the police to support the prosecution of arsonists.



## The service doesn't routinely evaluate its prevention activity

We found limited evidence of the service evaluating the effectiveness of its activity. There was also limited evidence of the service making sure that all communities get equal access to the prevention activity they need.

There was evidence of the service having done some ad hoc evaluation with residents who were living in high-rise, high-risk buildings. The service also did some evaluation of the telephone safe and wells it made during the first stage of the pandemic, and its winter safety campaign.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service has developed an evaluation framework. Its intention is to make sure it isn't missing opportunities to improve its services to the public.

## Protecting the public through fire regulation



### Requires improvement (2019: Requires improvement)

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at protecting the public through fire regulation.

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in certain 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.

#### Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme.
- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to respond effectively and in time to statutory building control consultations.

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

## The service doesn't have a protection strategy linked to its service plan

At the time of our inspection, the service had no current protection strategy. It had decided to delay this until the national fire standards for protection were published. This was due to happen shortly after our inspection. However, the service's Fire Plan and annual delivery plan do have activities aligned to protection. The service has also created working groups to look at the different aspects of protection. (For example, it is looking at supporting businesses and ensuring the quality of the service it offers.)



Generally, protection activity happens in isolation rather than throughout the whole service. The service's protection, prevention and response functions don't routinely share information.

### **The service has increased its protection resources**

Our 2018 inspection included an area for improvement for the service to ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised, risk-based inspection programme.

We are pleased to see that the service has added 18 staff to its protection department since our last inspection. However, the team is still under-established with 17 vacancies yet to be filled. Currently, the protection department doesn't have enough staff to achieve the current risk-based inspection programme. Also, it is unsure how many staff will be needed for the new one; this depends on how many buildings it will identify as high risk.

We look forward to understanding the effect of the new strategy and structure once it is fully in place.

### **The service needs to improve its response times to building consultations**

The service doesn't always respond to building consultations on time, so doesn't consistently meet its statutory responsibility to comment on fire safety arrangements at new and altered buildings. As part of a review of protection, the service has prioritised statutory consultations. During our inspection, we collated data and found that the service had improved the time taken to complete consultations within the first few months of 2021.

### **The service aligns protection activity to risk**

The service's risk-based inspection programme is the same as it was during our previous inspection. It is focused on its highest-risk buildings. Recently, the service reviewed its risk-based inspection programme to make sure it can keep up with the increasing number of high-rise buildings being built in Greater Manchester. However, this project has been slowed down due to a delay in introducing the IT system that is needed to support it. We were told that this was due to competing priorities within the IT department. We found that the service doesn't record all fire safety audits in line with the policy and timescales it has set for itself.

### **The service has proactively carried out fire safety audits at high-rise buildings**

Since our last inspection, the service has created the Built Environment Project. Its aim is to ensure that it is compliant and prepared, alongside other agencies, for the considerable transformation that is taking place within the Greater Manchester built environment.

Audits have been carried out at all high-rise buildings the service has identified with cladding similar to the cladding installed on Grenfell Tower. Information gathered during these audits is made available to response teams and control operators, enabling them to respond more effectively in an emergency.

It is on track to visit all the high-rise, high-risk buildings it has identified in its service area by the end of 2021.

### **The fire safety audits sampled were completed to a high standard**

We reviewed a range of audits carried out at different premises across the service. This included audits as part of the service's risk-based inspection programme, after fires at premises where fire safety legislation applied, where enforcement action had been taken and at high-rise, high-risk buildings.

The audits we reviewed were completed to a high standard, in a consistent, systematic way, and in line with the service's policies.

Relevant information from the audits is made available to operational and [fire control](#) teams.

Since our last inspection, the service has improved the protection activity it carries out at regulated premises following fires. It now completes and records a full audit.

### **Quality assurance for fire safety audits is inconsistent**

Since our last inspection, the service has put additional resources into performance and assurance of its protection activity. However, we reviewed a range of files and were disappointed to find no examples of quality assurance. The service recognises that quality assurance has been inconsistent, especially during the first stage of the pandemic. It plans to introduce a new assurance process alongside the new strategy.

### **The service uses its enforcement powers well**

The service consistently uses its full range of enforcement powers and, when appropriate, prosecutes those who fail to comply with fire safety regulations. From the files we sampled, we saw that the service supports building owners. However, where necessary, it will enforce its full range of powers.

In the year to 31 March 2020, the service issued no alteration notices, 82 enforcement and 97 prohibition notices. While it hasn't undertaken any prosecutions during this time, it has completed 24 prosecutions since 2016/17.

### **The service works closely with other agencies to regulate fire safety**

The service works closely with other enforcement agencies to regulate fire safety and routinely exchanges risk information with them. Effective partnerships include:

- local authority housing and food standards officers;
- the Environment Agency; and
- the high-rise team working closely with the combined authority.

The service works well with businesses to promote compliance with fire safety legislation.

Since our last inspection, the service has developed a business engagement and communication plan for 2020/21. The service proactively engages with local businesses and other organisations to promote compliance with fire safety legislation.

For example, the service's website features information for businesses about fire safety legislation, risk assessments and compliance. The service has given regular seminars and workshops for different sectors and organisations, such as housing associations.

### **Unwanted fire signals have reduced**

In our previous inspection, we identified an area for improvement in how the service addresses unwanted fire signals. Since then, the service has published its new policy for tackling unwanted fire signals. An effective risk-based approach is now in place to manage the high number of unwanted fire signals. During our inspection, we saw evidence of a 25 percent reduction in those type of incidents, and a 40 percent reduction in [mobilisations](#). We are encouraged to see the service gets fewer calls because of this work. Fewer unwanted calls means that fire engines are available to respond to a genuine incident should one occur rather than responding to a false one. It also reduces the risk to the public if fewer fire engines travel at high speed on the roads.

## **Responding to fires and other emergencies**



### **Good (2019: Good)**

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies.

Fire and rescue services must be able to respond to a range of incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies within their areas.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- The service should assure itself that risk assessments are accurately recorded and passed to oncoming crews.
- The service should ensure it has an effective system for learning from operational incidents.

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

### **The service aligns resources to the risks identified in its integrated risk management plan**

The Fire Plan and annual delivery plan both contain activities that are aligned to the service's response function. Also, the service's work in 2019 on the Fire Cover Review looked at the number and location of fire engines and stations in relation to risk. The service has reviewed the types of incidents it attends, and the number of fire engines it needs for them. This has resulted in an increased attendance to high-rise incidents.

## **The service is achieving its target for the time taken to respond to life-risk incidents**

There are no national response standards of performance for the public. The service has redefined its response standards this year. However, we are disappointed that the service isn't disseminating this information to the public.

## **The overall availability of fire engines supports the service's response standard**

The service sets thresholds for the number of appliances (fire engines) needed to meet its response standard. Overall, availability for the year to 31 March 2021 was 99.4 percent. This is an improvement on the previous year's figure of 96.3 percent.

## **Staff have a good understanding of how to command incidents safely**

The service has trained incident commanders who are assessed regularly and properly. This enables it to safely, assertively and effectively manage the whole range of incidents that it could face – from small and routine ones to complex multi-agency incidents.

As part of our inspection, we interviewed incident commanders from across the service. The senior staff we interviewed are familiar with risk assessing, decision making and recording information at incidents in line with national best practice, as well as the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles \(JESIP\)](#). There was evidence that station-level staff are less familiar with JESIP. Most staff were confident in the use of [operational discretion](#). They know when to use their professional judgement in an unforeseen situation at an incident and that the service will support their decisions.

## **Fire control has some involvement with the service's command, exercise, debrief and assurance activity**

There is evidence that North West Fire Control staff are involved in the service's command, training, exercise, debrief and assurance activity. The service may wish to increase the scope of this activity.

Fire control also has its own staff training programme. This is aligned to national competencies.

## **Fire control can give fire survival guidance to multiple callers**

The fire control room staff we interviewed are confident that they could provide fire survival guidance to many callers simultaneously. This was identified as learning for all fire services after the Grenfell Tower fire. We also learnt that fire control has arrangements in place to communicate with other control rooms, and for calls to be diverted, if the need arises.

Fire control has good systems in place to exchange real-time risk information with incident commanders, other responding partners and supporting fire and rescue services. Maintaining good situational awareness enables the service to communicate effectively with the public, providing them with accurate and tailored advice.

### **Staff can easily access risk information**

We sampled a range of risk information associated with a small number of properties involving long and short-term risks, including what is in place for firefighters responding to incidents at high-risk, high-rise buildings.

Most of the information we reviewed was up to date and detailed. Staff told us that it could be easily accessed and understood.

### **The service should improve the way it evaluates operational performance**

We reviewed the records for a range of emergency incidents that should have resulted in a debrief. We found that the service isn't always carrying out debriefs in line with its policy, as we would expect.

We also found that the service isn't following up actions. For example, we learned of a major incident where lack of any follow-up action had several consequences. Operational staff could only recall limited examples of debriefs taking place. In addition, firefighters don't always have access to the formal debriefs that have happened. This will prevent operational staff from continually learning from operational incidents.

The service should assure itself that its debrief process is effective, and that staff can access and understand any learning from operational debriefs.

### **The service uses national operational guidance to inform its policies**

We are pleased to see the service routinely reviews its policies to assure itself that staff command incidents in line with operational guidance. The service has implemented all the [national operational guidance](#) elements that have been issued to date. It has also created a programme to keep abreast of any changes.

### **The service keeps the public informed about ongoing incidents effectively**

The service has good systems in place to inform the public about ongoing incidents and help keep them safe during and after incidents. For example, the service has access to media support 24 hours a day. A media liaison officer is available to support the incident commander if needed. The service uses social media and its website effectively to communicate directly to the public about incidents.

### **The service works well with other fire services**

The service supports other fire and rescue services that are responding to emergency incidents. The service also has effective mutual aid arrangements with its neighbours. It regularly sends and receives help from neighbouring services (for example, during the Saddleworth and Winter Hill moorland fires of summer 2018 and 2020). In addition, the service has an agreement in place for cross-border exercising and training with its neighbouring fire services. Risk information from neighbouring services is available to crews who are attending cross-border incidents.

## Responding to major and multi-agency incidents



### Requires improvement (2019: Requires improvement)

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

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).

#### Cause of concern

Greater Manchester FRS should have its own marauding terrorist attack (MTA) response that is both resilient, timely and cost effective.

The service should ensure it is properly prepared as part of a multi-agency response to terrorist incidents. This includes the provision of a timely response to ensure public safety. Response procedures must be understood by all staff and properly exercised and tested. This should not come at the cost of wider fire cover for the public.

By the end of October 2021, the service should have a sustainable plan to maintain its response to MTA incidents. This should include meaningful training and exercising for all staff who would be expected to respond to a MTA incident.

#### Area for improvement

The service should ensure it is well-prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to an incident and all relevant staff know how to apply Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).

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

### The service is well prepared for major and multi-agency incidents

The service has effectively anticipated and considered the reasonably foreseeable risks and threats it may face, but we have some concerns around the resilience of its marauding terrorist attack (MTA). These risks are listed in both local and national risk registers as part of its strategic assessment 2021. They include severe weather and flooding risks. The service has effective means of declaring a major incident, and of responding to such incidents. Since our last inspection, the service has funded a full-time member of staff to work in the [local resilience forum](#). They are responsible for learning and training through all partner organisations.



## **The service has arrangements in place to respond to major and multi-agency incidents**

We reviewed the arrangements the service has in place to respond to different major incidents, including [control of major accident hazard \(COMAH\) sites](#) and other high-risk sites.

The service has arrangements in place, which are well understood by staff. For example, staff understand the use of major incident action cards. Also, there was evidence of the service carrying out recent training and exercising for high-rise and MTA incidents with the local resilience forum.

North West Fire Control can mobilise additional and/or specialist fire engines or specialist skilled staff if needed, both regionally and nationally.

## **The service must improve the resilience of its response to MTAs**

While Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service does have its own specialist MTA response, we have concerns about its sustainability. The agreement in place is short term, and at the time of our inspection it was due to run out. The service has made repeated attempts to resolve this issue locally.

We are also concerned that the training of non-specialist firefighters for MTAs has been suspended. This could affect how firefighters work alongside other blue light responders. If they aren't following the same procedures, public safety could be compromised.

## **The service has a structured cross-border exercise programme**

The service has a cross-border exercise plan with neighbouring fire and rescue services so that they can work together effectively to keep the public safe. The plan includes the risks of major events at which the service could foreseeably provide support or request assistance from neighbouring services. We were encouraged to see that feedback from these exercises is used to inform risk information and service plans. Following the Grenfell Tower fire, the service has organised ten high-rise exercises that have involved other blue light partners and neighbouring fire services.

## **Incident commanders have been trained on JESIP**

Most of the incident commanders we interviewed had been trained in and were familiar with JESIP. During our inspection, we found that crew and [watch](#) managers were less familiar with JESIP than more senior officers. This is despite the fact that crew and watch managers have completed online learning.

## **The service is an active member of the GMRF**

The service has good arrangements in place to respond to emergencies with other partners that make up the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum (GMRF). These arrangements include plans for control of COMAH sites, and an employee from the service working in the resilience forum to lead training and exercising.

## **The service shares national learning**

The service keeps itself up to date with joint operational learning updates from other fire services and [national operational learning](#) from other blue light partners, such as the police and ambulance trusts. This learning is used to inform planning assumptions that have been made with other partners.

The service has shared some learning at a national level. For example, incidents such as the fire in 2019 at The Cube student accommodation in Bolton, and some incidents involving electricity pylons, were both used as national learning.

The service has a process in place to share any learning from national and joint operational learning through dedicated single points of contact. These staff share any learning with the workforce through bulletins and emails.

In 2020, the service created a built environment team. This team made an action plan that contains the main findings and recommendations from the following:

- the Grenfell Tower Inquiry;
- the fire at The Cube;
- guidance issued by the National Fire Chiefs Council about buildings that fail in fire;
- London Fire Brigade's Grenfell Tower Fire Preliminary Report; and
- the Greater Manchester High Rise Residents Survey.



# Efficiency



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



## Requires improvement

### Summary

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An efficient fire and rescue service will manage its budget and use its resources properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to the risks and priorities identified in its [integrated risk management plan](#). It should try to achieve value for money and keep costs down without compromising public safety. It should make the best possible use of its resources to achieve better outcomes for the public. Plans should be based on robust and realistic assumptions about income and costs. Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency requires improvement.

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Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement in terms of its efficiency. It needs to improve how it makes best use of resources, but it is good at future affordability.

The service plans well financially. Its plans help to make sure that the service is sustainable.

The service could do more to make sure its workforce is productive, including increasing the number of staff in its protection department; it still doesn't have the number of staff it needs in this department to carry out its risk-based inspection programme. Also, the service still relies on overtime to meet staff shortages and has one of the highest overtime spends. However, this situation is better than it was during our last inspection and the service does have recruitment plans for existing vacancies.

The service has shared its [fire control](#) function with Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire fire and rescue services since 2014, but it has yet to evaluate collaboration activities.

The service has a sound understanding of future financial challenges. We are pleased to see that it has made significant savings through its Programme for Change. It has also secured a range of external funding, including a COVID-19-related grant. It is addressing concerns about the management of its fleet. It now needs to continue to prioritise its ICT infrastructure, which is ineffective. It also needs to be more confident in its ability to make future changes to its ICT system.

## Making best use of resources



### Requires improvement (2019: Requires improvement)

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at making best use of its resources.

Fire and rescue services should manage their resources properly and appropriately, aligning those resources to meet the services' risks and statutory responsibilities. They should make best possible use of their resources to achieve better outcomes for the public.

#### Areas for improvement

- The service should have effective measures in place to assure itself that its workforce is productive and that their time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the priorities in the IRMP.
- The service should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.
- The service should assure itself that its IT systems are resilient, reliable, 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.

#### The service's current financial plans support its objectives

Since our last inspection, the service's Programme for Change has led to savings of £5.8m so far, with a further £1.4m to come. The service has now replaced the programme with a service improvement plan. This is consistent with the new Fire Plan and supports its operational plans.

The Fire Plan has clear links to other supporting strategies, such as those for estates and IT, and the medium-term financial plan. The link with other areas of work such as protection, prevention and response is less clear, as they have no current strategies.

Since our last inspection, the service has allocated staff and funding to protection. It has also invested in training. Fire control is staffed to meet demand, and contingency arrangements are in place to address any shortfalls.

The service had intended to save money by reducing the number of fire engines and crew. It has now delayed doing this until after 2022. This is because it has received £4.7m additional precept funding (the amount people pay through their council tax for fire and rescue services).

The service plans well financially. The plans help to make sure that the service is sustainable. Financial controls underpin the plans and reduce the risk of misuse of public money.

### **The service should continue to prioritise its IT systems, which are ineffective**

During our inspection, we found that the service has invested in IT hardware (such as audio-visual equipment and second [mobile data terminals](#)). But staff consistently told us that IT has hampered their ability to work efficiently, and delayed changes they are trying to make within their departments. The service is seeking to make a range of improvements, many of which are awaiting IT systems so that the changes can be implemented. These include changes to the prevention triaging system, the risk information system, the accident recording system, as well as the service's risk-based inspection programme and its intranet.

The service should assure itself that the combined authority can complete these projects against other competing priorities.

### **The service could use [wholetime firefighters](#) more productively**

The service has an effective system in place to monitor performance. Managers have regular access to performance data. (Among other things, they can monitor which core competencies are due to expire, and they can view the key performance indicators that are relevant to a role.) The service has a structured process for reviewing and reporting on performance at all levels.

However, it could do more to make sure its workforce is productive. We were told that the service sets targets that aren't challenging. For example, firefighters are supposed to make at least one fire prevention visit a day per fire engine. Staff told us they could do more.

During our previous inspection, we found that the service relies too much on overtime and has a significant number of vacancies. The service still relies on overtime to maintain fire cover, but the situation has improved. It has plans to recruit the firefighters it needs.

As previously mentioned, both above and in our previous report, the service still doesn't have the number of staff it needs within its protection department to carry out its risk-based inspection programme.

### **The service could do more to record and evaluate collaboration activities**

The service could do more to consider and participate in collaborative activities with others. The service has several shared fire stations and it plans to look at more as part of its new estates strategy.

Since 2014, the service has shared its fire control function with Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire fire and rescue services. The service doesn't routinely record and evaluate collaboration activities. Doing so would allow it to see the benefits or savings it is making.

### **The service has business continuity plans in place**

The service has business continuity plans in place in the event of industrial action by operational staff. The plans focus on maintaining critical functions. Recently, the

service reviewed these plans and is making sure it has enough trained staff to maintain these functions.

The service has business continuity plans in place at North West Fire Control. However, we found that the service hasn't tested a full evacuation to the secondary control room.

### **The service has sound financial managements processes in place**

There are regular reviews to consider all the service's expenditure, including its non-pay costs. And this scrutiny makes sure the service gets value for money. The chief fire officer has weekly meetings with the deputy mayor and presents reports every six weeks.

Savings and efficiencies made have had no disproportionate impact on operational performance and the service to the public.

The service is taking steps to make sure important areas, including estates, fleet and procurement, are well placed to achieve efficiency gains through sound financial management and best working practices. For example, the service compares IT purchases against other pre-negotiated rates that have been through a tender process, to ensure value for money. The service uses the [National Fire Chiefs Council](#) framework when buying vehicles.

## **Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future**



### **Good (2019: Good)**

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is good at making itself affordable now and in the future.

Fire and rescue services should continuously look for ways to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. This includes transforming how they work and improving their value for money. Services should have robust spending plans that reflect future financial challenges and efficiency opportunities and should invest in better services for the public.

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

### **The service has effective financial plans**

The service has a sound understanding of future financial challenges. It plans to mitigate its main or significant financial risks. For example, the service has considered the impact of increased costs of pensions and the comprehensive spending review.

The underpinning assumptions are relatively robust, realistic and prudent, and take account of the wider external environment and some scenario planning for future spending reductions. These include a potential reduction in business and council rates.

We are pleased to see that the service has identified savings and investment opportunities to improve the service to the public or generate further savings. For example, the service has made savings of approximately £5.8m from its Programme for Change, with a further £1.4m to come. The service is considering opportunities for further non-pay savings and is using them to balance the budget.

### **The service has access to reserves**

As of March 2021, the mayor holds [reserves](#) totalling £48m. The service reviews reserves regularly. Most of the £48m is earmarked for non-fire purposes.

There are reserves which are specifically identified for Fire. The service reports on these as part of the formal budget setting process each year.

### **The service needs to review its fleet strategy**

The service has a comprehensive fleet strategy. The service is due to review it in order to reflect the new Fire Plan. The service recognises that it hasn't managed the fleet as well as it might have. It is addressing these concerns.

We were told that the current service estate is in a poor state. We were also told that the service has rewritten the new estates strategy, and that it has agreed substantial funding for investment in a prioritised list of premises.

### **The service must have the capability and capacity to make future technical changes**

The service actively considers how changes in technology and future innovation may affect risk. For example, the service has been trialling a high-reach fire engine to address the risk of the increased number of high-rise properties. It also seeks to exploit opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness presented by changes in technology. For example, the service has new audio-visual equipment at fire stations and plans to install a second demountable mobile data terminal in each fire engine. The service is an early adopter of the Emergency Services Network. It already has a system connection and has allocated funding for the project.

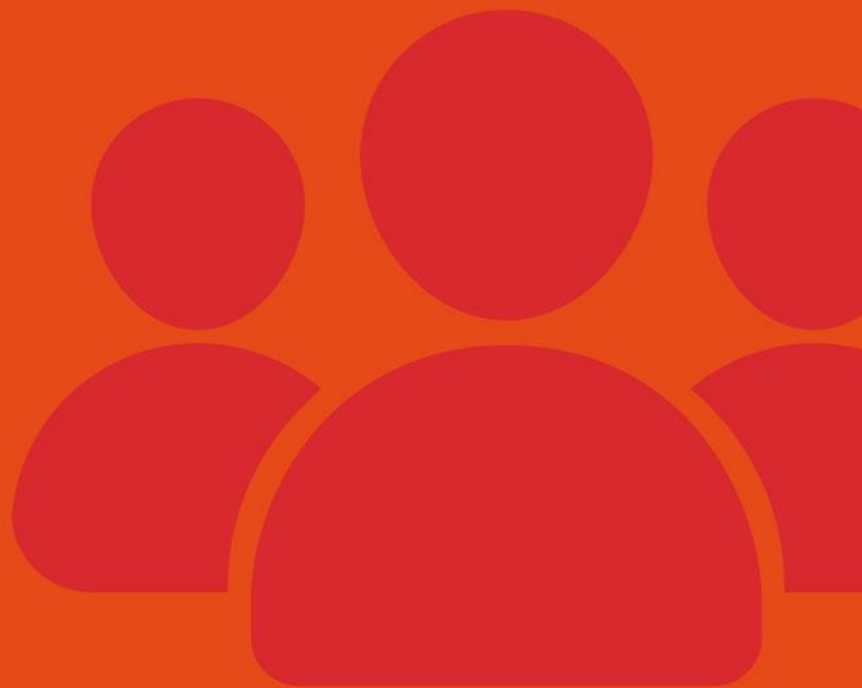
As previously mentioned, we found that many changes within the service were being delayed by IT infrastructure. The service should assure itself that it, and the combined authority, have the capability and capacity to make future change.

### **The service takes advantage of opportunities to secure external funding and generate income**

The service actively considers and exploits opportunities for generating extra income. Currently, it generates income from the sharing of estates. Recently, the service invested in new training facilities which have the potential to generate further significant income.

Where appropriate, it has secured external funding to invest in improvements to the service provided to the public. For example, the service has received a COVID-19-related grant, an additional protection uplift grant, and funds from the Building Risk Review Programme.

# People



# How well does the service look after its people?



**Good**

## Summary

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A well-led fire and rescue service develops and maintains a workforce that is supported, professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. The service's leaders should be positive role models, and this should be reflected in the behaviour of staff at all levels. All staff should feel supported and be given opportunities to develop. Equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded in everything the service does and its staff understand their role in promoting it. Overall, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is good at looking after its people.

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Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is good at looking after its staff. It has improved its promotion of the right values and culture. And it has made progress in getting the right people with the right skills. Since our last inspection, it has particularly improved in ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. The service now needs to improve how it manages performance and develops its leaders.

We are pleased to see how much progress the service has made in communicating its values and behaviours. Senior and middle managers are more visibly acting as role models. Staff have expressed confidence in the new leadership team. The service now has more to do in making sure all senior leaders consistently model and maintain its values.

The service continues to have effective health and safety policies and procedures. Most respondents to our staff survey felt their personal welfare is treated seriously at work.

In our previous inspection, we identified a cause for concern about monitoring of staff competence. The service has made much progress in this respect. For instance, it now produces quarterly reports showing competence levels. At the time of our inspection, all staff were assessed to be competent to fulfil their role.

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the service adapted the ways in which it offers learning and development.



We are pleased that the service has responded to our previous cause for concern about EDI. The service is aware that its promotional processes have changed very little since our last inspection. However, it is making progress and we look forward to seeing the results of this work in future inspections.

The service needs to make sure it manages performance and development consistently for all staff. We note that it has yet to put in place a talent management process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

## Promoting the right values and culture



### Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is good at promoting the right values and culture.

Fire and rescue services should have positive and inclusive cultures, modelled by the behaviours of their senior leaders. Health and safety should be effectively promoted, and staff should have access to a range of wellbeing support that can be tailored to their individual needs.

#### Area for improvement

The service should assure itself that senior managers demonstrate service values through their behaviours.

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

### The service has effectively communicated its values and behaviours to all staff

We were pleased to see how much progress the service has made in communicating its values and behaviours throughout the workforce. In 2018, we highlighted this as an area for improvement. The service has worked with staff to develop its new values and behaviour framework. It now has well-defined values, that staff understand. When we carried out a staff survey, 95.77 percent (294 out of 307) of respondents said they are aware of the service's statement of values.

In our previous inspection, we identified an area for improvement where the service should assure itself that senior and middle managers visibly act as role models. Since that inspection, the service's senior leaders have regularly talked to and worked with staff. Staff told us they appreciated the two-way communication that has taken place.

During our latest inspection, we learned that some senior leaders demonstrate the service's behaviours. Of the respondents to our staff survey, 65 percent said that senior leaders consistently model and maintain the service's values.

## **The service has good wellbeing provisions in place**

The service continues to have well understood and effective wellbeing policies in place that are available to staff. A significant range of wellbeing support is available to support both physical and mental health, including occupational health services and [trauma risk management](#) practitioners.

During our inspection, staff told us that they had positive experiences of the current wellbeing support. Ninety-two percent of respondents to our staff survey (285 of 307) told us that they have had a conversation about their health and wellbeing with their manager.

The service has recruited a fitness adviser to implement a new fitness policy. There will be an annual fitness assessment throughout the service.

## **Staff understand and have confidence in health and safety policies**

The service continues to have effective and well-understood health and safety policies and procedures in place. They are readily available and effectively promoted to all staff.

Our survey showed that 92 percent (283 of 307) of respondents feel their personal safety and welfare is treated seriously at work. Additionally, representative bodies agree that the service manages the health and safety of its staff well. Both staff and representative bodies have confidence in the service's approach to health and safety.

The service gives health and safety training to all staff as part of their induction. However, there is limited evidence of regular refresher training.

## **The service has good absence management processes that staff understand**

We reviewed some case files to consider how the service manages and supports staff through absence including sickness, parental and special leave.

We found clear processes in place to manage absences for all staff. There are toolkits and guidance for managers, who were confident in the process. The service manages absences well and in accordance with policy.

## **Getting the right people with the right skills**



### **Good (2019: Requires improvement)**

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is good at getting the right people with the right skills.

Fire and rescue services should have workforce plans in place that are linked to their [integrated risk management plans](#), set out their current and future skills requirements, and address capability gaps. This should be supplemented by a culture of continuous improvement that includes appropriate learning and development across the service.

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

### **Workforce planning ensures that the required skills and capabilities are available**

The FRS has good workforce planning in place. This makes sure skills and capabilities align with what is needed to effectively deliver the IRMP.

In our previous inspection, we identified a cause for concern about controls in place to monitor the competence of staff. We are pleased to see how much progress the service has made. Most staff told us that they could access the training they need to be effective in their role. The service's training plans make sure they can maintain competence and capability effectively. The service has introduced a competence recording system. Also, the training department does an annual training analysis to understand what it needs to do.

The training department or external suppliers now assess core skills. The service monitors staff competence with quarterly reports showing competence levels. At the time of our inspection, all staff were assessed to be competent to fulfil their role.

It regularly updates its understanding of staff's skills and risk-critical safety capabilities. The service completes an annual Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to identify the training needs of the service. This approach means the service can identify gaps in workforce capabilities and resilience and can make sound and financially sustainable decisions about current and future needs.

### **The service has improved its approach to learning and improvement**

A culture of continuous improvements is promoted across the service where staff are encouraged to undertake learning and development. The new competence system enables staff to access all learning in one place. The system displays completion rates and outstanding learning.

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the service adapted the ways in which it offers learning and development to include virtual platforms. However, some staff felt that this wasn't always the best way to learn and that it was hard to train together virtually as a [watch](#).

62 percent (191 out of 307) of respondents to the staff survey carried out as part of this inspection told us that they were able to access a range of learning and development resources. This allows them to undertake their role effectively.

However, feedback from some staff during our inspection indicates that development opportunities aren't consistent throughout all staff groups. For example, non-operational staff don't have access to as much structured learning as their operational colleagues.

## Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



### Good (2019: Inadequate)

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is good at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Creating a more representative workforce will provide huge benefits for fire and rescue services. This includes greater access to talent and different ways of thinking, and improved understanding of and engagement with their local communities. Each service should make sure that equality, diversity and inclusion are firmly embedded and understood across the organisation. This includes successfully taking steps to remove inequality and making progress to improve fairness, diversity and inclusion at all levels within the service. It should proactively seek and respond to feedback from staff and make sure any action taken is meaningful.

#### Innovative practice

The service has introduced a Freedom to Speak Guardian – an initiative used by the NHS – for staff to have an informal way to give feedback to the service.

#### Areas for improvement

- The service should review how effective its policy on bullying, harassment and discrimination is in reducing unacceptable behaviour towards its staff.
- The service should improve staff understanding of the purpose and benefits of positive action.

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

### The service prioritises EDI and has made good progress

We are pleased to see that the service has responded to the cause of concern identified in our 2018 inspection.

The service has improved its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and is making sure it can offer the right services to its communities and support staff with a protected characteristic(s). For example, the service has written a new strategy and action plan and has appointed a dedicated EDI lead to progress them. The service has made education and training available to all staff through its online learning system.

Representatives from all parts of the service attend the Equality Steering Group. The group meets regularly to review the service's action plan and monitor progress. It has developed several ways to promote EDI among staff, including having EDI noticeboards and champions at fire stations.

It has developed several ways to engage with staff on EDI. This includes methods to build all staff awareness, as well as targeted engagement to identify issues that affect different staff groups, including to remove disproportionality. Four staff networks work with the steering groups on specific themes. They are:

- GM Women's Success and Support Network;
- Dis-Ability Network;
- RISE Staff Network; and
- Rainbow Network.

The service has also appointed a Freedom to Speak guardian. This is an initiative that the NHS uses, and is another way for staff to give feedback to the service in a more informal way. The initiative was launched in April 2020. To date, staff have raised five concerns through it.

The service has an effective process in place for assessing equality impact and taking action.

The service carries out positive action initiatives (such as taster days) to promote roles throughout the service. However, the workforce doesn't always understand the purpose of the initiatives. Staff would benefit from understanding what positive action is as part of their EDI training.

### **The promotion process requires some improvement**

The service is aware that its promotional processes have changed very little since our last inspection. However, it has initiated a review of the promotion process. And it has formed a working group. In August 2021 it had set out a timeline to implement an improved process. We look forward to seeing the results of this work in future inspections.

We reviewed three recent promotion processes for different operational roles. We found that assessment centres were open and fair. The service keeps a record of how staff perform at the centres and shares this information with them. Staff from human resources support the process and give independent scrutiny. However, as part of our inspection we learned that staff weren't always clear about what they needed to do; this was because the process keeps changing and wasn't consistent. According to our staff survey results, only 51 percent of staff said the promotion process in the service is fair.

### **The service needs to review its bullying, harassment and discrimination policy**

The service could go further to improve staff understanding of bullying, harassment and discrimination, including their responsibilities for eliminating it. The service hasn't updated its bullying and harassment policy for ten years. Through our staff survey, 12 percent of staff told us they had been subject to bullying or harassment, and 17 percent to discrimination over the past 12 months. Of these staff, only two (13 percent) thought their concerns had been properly dealt with.

Staff have limited confidence in the service's ability to deal effectively with cases of bullying, harassment and discrimination, grievances and discipline. We were told that grievance cases often take a long time to be resolved, and that staff aren't told the outcomes of different stages of the process.

## Managing performance and developing leaders



### Requires improvement (2019: Requires improvement)

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at managing performance and developing leaders.

Fire and rescue services should have robust and meaningful performance management arrangements in place for their staff. All staff should be supported to meet their potential and there should be a focus on developing high-potential staff and improving diversity in leadership roles.

#### Areas for improvement

- The service should improve all staff understanding and application of the performance development review process.
- 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.

### **The service should ensure that it manages performance and development consistently for all staff**

Our previous inspection recommended that the service should ensure it has an effective system in place to manage staff development, performance and productivity. The service has since introduced a new process for performance and development. However, not all staff have had their performance assessed in the last year. Twenty-one percent (65 of 307) of respondents to our staff survey said that they hadn't had a personal development review or appraisal in the last 12 months. According to data submitted by the service, completion rates of annual appraisals for non-operational staff are lower (at 33 percent) than those of [wholetime](#) staff (88 percent).

The staff survey showed that 63 percent (103 out of 257) of respondents said they find the performance development review useful.

## **The service needs to invest more in developing leaders**

In our previous inspection, we identified an area for improvement: the service should put in place a talent management process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders. We are disappointed to find that the service hasn't progressed this recommendation.

The service still doesn't have a specific talent management process. However, we were told that it has completed a review of talent management and that although the review has taken longer than anticipated, there is now a plan in place for a related policy and procedure.

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