

# Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22

## Effectiveness, efficiency and people

An inspection of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service



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# About this inspection

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This inspection is from our third round of inspections of fire and rescue services in England. We first inspected Hampshire and Isle of Wight as separate services in July 2018. We published separate reports with our findings in December 2018 on each service's effectiveness and efficiency and how they looked after their people. Our second inspection, in autumn 2020, considered how Hampshire and Isle of Wight fire and rescue services were responding to the pandemic as one service. This inspection now considers the merged service's effectiveness, efficiency and how it treats its people as a combined service for the first time.

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In this round of 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 Hampshire and Isle of Wight 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.


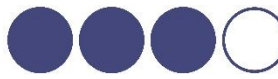





If the service exceeds what we expect for good, we will judge it as outstanding.





If we find shortcomings in the service, we will judge it as requires improvement.







If there are serious, critical or systemic failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, then consideration will be given to a graded judgment of inadequate.

# Overview

“This inspection” refers to our findings from the 2022 inspection of the merged service and “2018/19” refers to our previous inspection of the individual services.

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

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

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

### HM Inspector's summary

This is our first full inspection of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service as a combined authority. We first inspected Hampshire and Isle of Wight as separate services in July 2018, publishing separate reports on each service's effectiveness, efficiency and how it looks after its people in December 2018. Both services produced action plans in response to the areas we identified for improvement.

The two services worked jointly before they merged into a combined service in April 2021. Our second inspection, published in January 2021, considered how Hampshire and Isle of Wight were responding to the pandemic as one. This inspection

considers for the first time, as a combined service Hampshire and Isle of Wight's effectiveness, efficiency and how it treats its people.

I am satisfied with some aspects of the performance of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure from fires and other risks, but more work still needs to be done in some areas we identified for improvement in our 2018 inspections. For example:

- the service isn't meeting targets for its risk-based inspection programme (RBIP);
- prevention activity isn't always evaluated;
- the service still doesn't have an effective process to share learning from operational activity;
- individual performance and productivity aren't consistently managed.

My principal findings from our assessments of the service over the past year are as follows:

- [On-call](#) availability remains a significant challenge and the service isn't consistently maintaining good levels of available fire engines.
- In our separate 2018 inspections of both Hampshire and Isle of Wight, we issued a [cause of concern](#) to both services that they weren't doing enough to be an inclusive employer. We recognise the work the service has done to integrate equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into processes such as recruitment and promotion. Staff also reported an improving culture. A clear set of values and behaviours has been introduced, although these values and behaviours aren't always demonstrated by staff at all levels. Given the progress made, we consider enough action has been taken to close the cause of concern. However, the service needs to continue its work to improve EDI.
- The service is good at identifying those people who are most at risk from fire and other emergencies. The timescales for when the service will respond to [safe and well visits](#) aren't always met. This means those who are most at risk aren't always seen in the time the service has set itself.
- The service still hasn't done enough to put an effective system in place to share learning from operational activity. The debrief process isn't effectively managed, and learning isn't always recorded and shared with staff.

Overall, the service has shown clear intent to address the problems identified during our previous inspections with some improvement in how it looks after its people. However, more work is required to improve the efficiency of the service and some areas for improvement identified in our 2018 inspections remain. We will continue to review progress.



**Matt Parr**  
HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

# Service in numbers



## Response

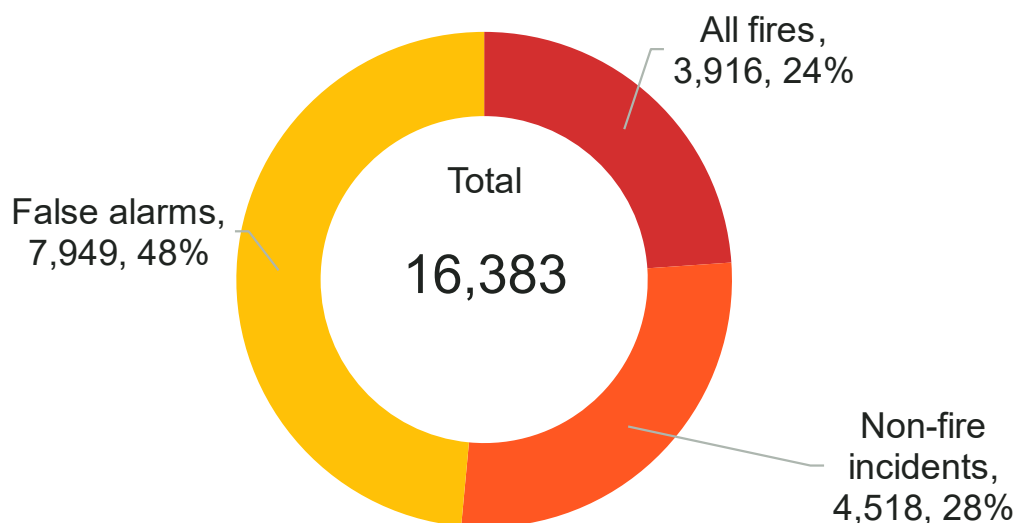
|  | Hampshire & Isle of Wight | England |
|--|---------------------------|---------|
| Incidents attended per 1,000 population<br>Year ending 31 December 2021  | 8.20                      | 9.82    |
| Home fire safety checks carried out by<br>fire and rescue service per 1,000<br>population<br>Year ending 31 March 2021 | 3.85                      | 4.47    |
| Fire safety audits per 100 known<br>premises<br>Year ending 31 March 2021  | 0.40                      | 1.70    |
| Average availability of pumps<br>Year ending 31 March 2021   | N/A                       | 86.4%   |



## Cost

|  |        |        |
|--|--------|--------|
| Firefighter cost per person<br>Year ending 31 March 2021 | £19.91 | £25.02 |
|--|--------|--------|

### Incidents attended in the year to 31 December 2021





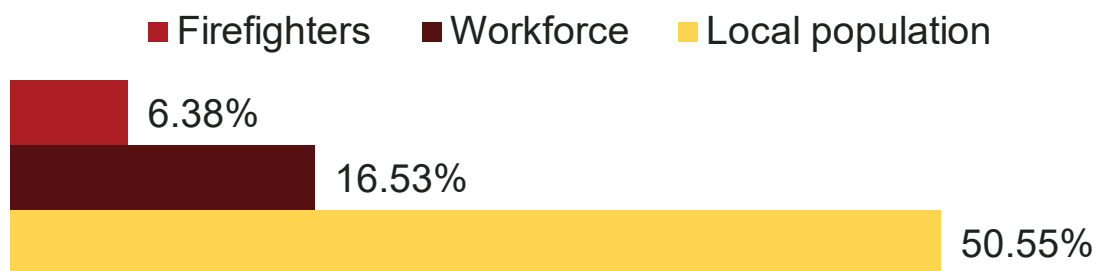
## Workforce

Hampshire &  
Isle of Wight

England

|   |         |        |
|---|---------|--------|
| Five-year change in total workforce<br>2016 to 2021                       | -10.40% | -1.60% |
| Number of firefighters per 1,000 population<br>Year ending 31 March 2021  | 0.72    | 0.62   |
| Percentage of firefighters who are wholetime<br>Year ending 31 March 2021 | 48.0%   | 64.4%  |

### Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are female as at 31 March 2021



### Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are from ethnic minority backgrounds as at 31 March 2021



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?



**Good**

## 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, it should respond promptly with the right skills and equipment to deal with the incident effectively. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

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Since our inspections of Hampshire and Isle of Wight as separate services in 2018, the combined Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service has progressed in some areas but not in others. A service action plan has addressed most but not all areas for improvement we identified in each service during our first inspections.

The service has published its safety plan for 2020–25. This gives a comprehensive overview of risks and priorities. The service also sets itself targets, but not all of these are being met. This includes the numbers of fire engines available to respond to emergencies.

The service is good at identifying those most at risk of fire and other emergencies. In our first inspections we identified a need for both Hampshire and Isle of Wight to evaluate their prevention activity to understand what works best. This still isn't being done routinely for all prevention work.

The service has focused resources on inspecting high-risk, high-rise premises. [Primary authority](#) work is impressive, and we have identified this as promising practice. The number of protection staff has increased but there aren't enough qualified inspectors to meet the requirements of its RBIP. More work needs to be done to reduce false alarms.

The service has more work to do to improve how learning from operational activity is collected and shared and to consistently manage this process. It also needs to make sure risk-critical information is read and understood by all operational staff.

## Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



### Good (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Good)

Hampshire and Isle of Wight 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 gathers and records relevant and up-to-date risk information.

#### Area for improvement

The service should ensure that all risk and safety-critical information has been read and understood by staff.

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

The service has assessed an appropriate range of risks and threats after a thorough integrated risk management planning process to develop its [integrated risk management plan \(IRMP\)](#) 2020–25. This is called the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service safety plan. When assessing risk, it has considered relevant information collected from a broad range of internal and external sources and datasets. This includes social, financial and health data as well as information from external organisations.

When appropriate, the service has consulted and undertaken constructive dialogue with communities and others such as district councils and other emergency services to both understand the risk and explain how it intends to mitigate it. This has led to improvements such as increasing the number of service staff and resources it uses to respond to cardiac arrests.

The service has identified hard-to-reach communities to consult with which include the elderly, family carers and people with disabilities.

### **The service has a clear and effective safety plan**

After assessing relevant risks, the service has recorded its findings in an easily understood safety plan. This plan describes how prevention, protection and response activity will be resourced to reduce the risks and threats the community faces, both now and in the future. But we found parts of this plan, such as some areas of response, aren't being well implemented.

The safety plan sets out five main priorities for the service:

- Our communities
- Our people
- Public value
- High performance
- Learning and improving.

The service regularly monitors performance and publishes a report every six months detailing performance against safety plan priorities. Performance is also reported to Hampshire and Isle of Wight [Fire and Rescue Authority](#).

### **There has been some improvement in the process to assess premises risk**

The service routinely collects and updates the information it has about the people, places and threats it has identified as being at greatest risk. This includes tall buildings that the service has identified as high-risk, such as those with combustible cladding, and sites that manage substances that could have significant fire and environmental impact. These are called [Control of Major Accident Hazards \(COMAH\) sites](#).

During our inspections in 2018, we identified an area for improvement in both Hampshire and Isle of Wight that they both should ensure they gather and record relevant and up-to-date risk information.

We were encouraged to find that the service has improved its approach to assess site-specific risk information, which is now managed through a dedicated risk management team. However, some of the site-specific risk information records we reviewed weren't carried out within the time frames set by the service. This included premises identified as high-risk.

While the service has made some progress in addressing issues identified in our 2018 inspections, the area for improvement remains.

## **The service needs to ensure its staff read and understand risk-critical information**

Risk information is readily available for the service's prevention, protection and response staff, which helps it identify, reduce and mitigate risk effectively. For example, alerts are used on the [mobile data terminals \(MDTs\)](#) carried on fire engines, to tell crews about new risk information or changes to existing information. Protection and prevention staff can create and update MDT alerts through [fire control](#) when relevant risk information needs to be shared. Where appropriate, risk information is passed on to other organisations such as local authorities and enforcement partners.

Risk and safety critical information is also sent out by email or by routine notices. We found examples where staff weren't aware of the most recent risk information. There are also no robust processes to ensure staff have read and understood this information. The service needs to put a system in place to ensure that risk information has been read and understood by its staff.

## **Recording and sharing of learning from incidents is still inconsistent**

We found some evidence that the service learns from and acts on feedback from either local or national operational activity. For example, the service increases the number of fire engines it sends when there is a risk of arson or hoarding. The service continually updates the risk data it receives from internal or external sources.

We found the process to learn from operational incidents is inconsistently applied. As a result the service is missing the opportunity to refine its operational procedures.

## **There has been a good response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry**

During this round of inspections, we sampled how each fire and rescue service has responded to the recommendations and learning from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service has responded positively to learning from this tragedy and has made good progress with its Grenfell action plan. The service had assessed the risk of each high-rise building in its service area by the end of 2021.

It has carried out fire safety audits and collected and passed relevant risk information to its prevention, protection and response teams about buildings identified as high-risk and all high-rise buildings that have cladding similar to the cladding installed on Grenfell Tower. The service has also increased the number of fire engines it would send to high-rise buildings identified with similar cladding to that on Grenfell Tower.

## Preventing fires and other risks



### **Good (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Good)**

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service is good 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, and with the police and ambulance services. They should provide [intelligence](#) and risk information with these other organisations when they identify vulnerability or exploitation.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should make sure its quality assurance and evaluates 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.

#### **Safety plan risks are aligned with the prevention plan**

The service's prevention strategy is clearly linked to the risks identified in its safety plan. This includes making people safer in their own homes by identifying individual vulnerabilities, like those who are more likely to fall, and wider risks such as fuel poverty.

The service's teams work well together and with other relevant organisations on prevention, and the service shares relevant information when needed. Information is used to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between the service's prevention, protection and response functions. For example, if a safe and well visit identifies risks such as hoarding or arson then alerts are created to inform operational crews.

#### **The effect of the pandemic on prevention work has been well managed**

We considered how the service had adapted its prevention work during our COVID-19-specific inspection in October 2020. At that time, we found it had adapted its public prevention work appropriately.

The prevention team continued with face-to-face, high-risk safe and well visits during lower-risk periods and used phone [risk assessments](#) during lockdown periods. Since then, we are encouraged to find that prevention work, including safe and well visits by operational crews and volunteers, is increasingly taking place in person.

### **The service is good at identifying those most at risk from fire**

In 2019 the service evaluated safe and well to improve its approach to these visits. We found the service is good at identifying those most at risk from fire and other emergencies and has recently developed a new way of targeting its safe and well visits to areas based on risk. It uses a person-centred approach, assessing individual, behavioural and environmental factors, to determine the level of risk to a person. The service also prioritises safe and well visits where threat of arson or hoarding exists.

Community safety officers (CSOs) carry out safe and well visits for those deemed at highest risk. Medium to low-risk safe and well visits are passed to fire station crews and volunteers to complete.

The service has a well-resourced prevention team. However, we were surprised to be told during our inspection that 303 safe and well visits were overdue. The service is putting plans in place to deal with the backlog.

We also found a lack of awareness and monitoring of performance targets, such as number of safe and well visits to complete every month, especially at stations. The service should ensure any measures it puts in place to monitor safe and well performance is understood by staff.

The system to manage safe and well is paper-based, making the process slow and inefficient. Stations we visited weren't managing their safe and well work in a consistent way. The service is aware of this and is implementing an electronic safe and well form.

When we spoke to staff at fire stations, most operational staff we spoke to had little knowledge of timescales to complete safe and well visits based on the level of risk. The service should take timely action to address this.

### **Quality checks of safe and well visits need improvement**

Most, but not all, staff we spoke to told us they have the right skills and confidence to make safe and well visits. Operational staff complete online safe and well learning and assessment annually. CSOs get additional training in areas such as [safeguarding](#). These visits cover an appropriate range of hazards that can put [vulnerable people](#) at greater risk from fire and other emergencies.

The safe and well files we reviewed as part of our inspection were completed to a good standard. But we found a lack of a formal process that routinely checks the

quality of safe and well work. This means that the service can't assure itself that safe and well visits are being completed to a consistent standard. Opportunities for learning that could improve service to the public are being missed.

Some of the staff we interviewed were aware of the lack of formal quality assurance of safe and well work and told us that plans were being put in place to address this which includes a role dedicated to prevention quality assurance and evaluation.

### **There is a good response to safeguarding concerns**

Staff we interviewed told us about occasions when they had identified safeguarding problems. They told us they feel confident and trained to act appropriately and promptly.

All staff we spoke to, including on-call firefighters, had a clear understanding of the safeguarding process and what action to take. Guidance is also available through their MDTs. The service is also well represented at Hampshire and Isle of Wight safeguarding children's and adults' boards.

### **The service collaborates well with other organisations**

The service works with a wide range of other organisations such as South Central Ambulance Service and housing providers to prevent fires and other emergencies. The service also uses volunteers to carry out a range of prevention work. At the time of our inspection the service told us they had 106 volunteers.

We found good evidence that it routinely refers people at greatest risk to other organisations which may be better able to meet their needs. These organisations include social care providers and safeguarding boards. Arrangements are in place to receive referrals from others such as [multi-agency risk assessment conferences](#), which deal with [high-risk domestic abuse](#) cases. The service acts appropriately on the referrals it receives. For example, high-risk referrals are allocated to one of the service's dedicated CSOs.

The service routinely exchanges information with other public sector organisations about people and groups at greatest risk. It uses the information to challenge planning assumptions and target prevention activity. Data-sharing arrangements are in place with other organisations such as police and local authorities to share relevant information about vulnerable individuals.

### **The service works effectively to deal with 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. It is encouraging to find that the service attended fewer deliberate fires than the England average. For the year ending 31 December 2021, the service attended 72.2 deliberate fires per 100,000 population compared to the England rate of 117.5 per 100,000 population.



The service runs arson prevention workshops in secondary schools. The FireWise programme works one-to-one with young people who have been involved in setting fires. Service evaluation of the programme shows that, at the date of evaluation, young people who attended FireWise hadn't set further fires.

We were pleased to find a fire investigation team in place that supports tackling arson and the prosecution of arsonists. The team has a seconded police officer and two staff who work with juveniles and adult arsonists. The team also runs a successful course with the prison service to reduce reoffending and trains other fire and rescue services in their approach to tackling fire-setting behaviour and supporting the prosecution of arsonists.

### **The service doesn't know if all its prevention work is effective**

We found the service doesn't routinely evaluate how effective all of its activity is or make sure all its communities get equal access to prevention activity that meets their needs.

The service does evaluate its work with young people and fire setters to measure success. However, it doesn't routinely evaluate other prevention activity, such as safe and well visits, to improve what it does. We also found little quality assurance of safe and well visits undertaken by operational staff. As a result, the service is still missing opportunities to improve what it provides the public.

### **The service does impressive work with young people**

The service has a clear focus on working with young people. At the time of our inspection, there were five fire cadets schemes in place, mainly staffed by volunteers. A dedicated education team works with schools to educate pupils on fire and other safety issues.

The service has run The Prince's Trust programme – focusing on 16 to 25-year-olds not in education, employment or training – for 20 years. It told us that over 69 percent of those attending the programme went into employment, education or volunteering, with 97 percent saying they had learned new skills and behaviours.

We found that most work with young people has been subject to evaluation. For example, The Prince's Trust programme is self-assessed annually against the education inspection framework. The service told us this has resulted in its Prince's Trust programme being graded as outstanding against this framework for the last three years.

## Protecting the public through fire regulation



### **Requires improvement (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Requires improvement)**

Hampshire and Isle of Wight 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.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should make sure it meets the targets it sets for its risk-based inspection programme.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should make sure it has an effective quality assurance process, so staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should make sure it effectively addresses the burden of false alarms.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should assure itself that its use of enforcement powers prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.

### **Promising practice: The service is growing its primary authority work with businesses and organisations**

The service has continued to grow its primary authority scheme. This allows businesses and organisations with premises in more than one fire authority area to receive fire safety advice from a single fire service. Since we inspected in 2018 the service has increased the number of primary authority schemes from 30 to 51. Examples of the benefits to business have been published on the National Fire Chiefs Council's website. The service was highly commended for its primary authority work at the annual Regulatory Excellence Awards in 2021.

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 safety plan is clearly linked to the risk-based inspection programme**

The service's protection strategy is clearly linked to the risk it has identified in its safety plan.

Staff across the service are involved in this activity, with information effectively exchanged as needed. For example, on the same day a prohibition notice was issued on a premises by fire safety officers, an alert was created on the [mobilising](#) system to inform operational crews and emails sent to alert other relevant departments. Information is then used to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between the service's protection, prevention and response functions. This means resources are properly aligned to risk.

### **The service adapted protection work well during the pandemic**

We considered how the service had adapted its protection activity during our COVID-19-specific inspection in October 2020. At that time, we found it had adapted its protection work well. Since then, we are encouraged to find that the service has fully returned to face-to-face inspections and has continued using the short audit process where appropriate.

### **All identified high-rise buildings have been inspected**

Audits have been carried out at all high-rise buildings the service has identified as using cladding that is 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.

The service identified a total of 273 high-rise premises in its area. We were pleased to find that the service had visited all of them by the end of 2021.

## **Risk-based inspection plan targets aren't being met**

The service's RBIP is focused on the service's highest-risk buildings. The service uses a scoring system, based on national and local data, to determine the risk level of a building.

We were disappointed to find that the service isn't consistently auditing the buildings it has targeted in the timescales it has set. From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, the service identified 1,980 premises as highest risk. This includes buildings such as care homes, high-rises and hospitals. Only 1,321 of these highest-risk buildings were audited. Most staff told us that RBIP targets weren't being met due to a lack of qualified staff. Some protection staff we spoke to weren't clear on what performance targets were in place for the number of audits they should be completing, or if they were being met.

We also reviewed several audit files for the service's highest risk premises. We were told that these premises should be audited every 12 months. Worryingly, some of the records we viewed showed the time between a premises' previous and most recent audit exceeded seven years. The service needs to do more to ensure it meets the targets set for its RBIP.

## **The quality of audits is inconsistent**

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

We were disappointed to find not all the audits we reviewed were completed in a consistent, systematic way, or in line with the service's policies. The audit files we reviewed included post-incident inspections. Some files were missing vital information such as whether a prohibition notice had been served.

## **Quality assurance of audits is ineffective**

Quality assurance of protection activity is limited. Some staff told us that there was no quality assurance framework. This was reflected in the files we reviewed as part of our inspection. Out of 18 records we sampled, only 5 had evidence of any quality check being done. The service should take steps to put an effective quality assurance framework in place.

The service doesn't have good evaluation tools in place to measure its effectiveness or to make sure all sections of its communities get equal access to protection services that meet their needs.

## **Levels of enforcement activity are falling**

The service doesn't use its full range of enforcement powers consistently. We found limited activity to prosecute those who don't comply with fire safety regulations. For example, data shows that the service only decided to prosecute twice between 2018/19 and 2020/21.

In the year to 31 March 2019, Hampshire and Isle of Wight issued a combined total of 94 informal notifications, 2 enforcement notices, 16 prohibition notices and 16 alteration notices. However, in the year to 31 March 2021, Hampshire and Isle of Wight issued a combined total of 15 informal notices, 8 enforcement notices, 0 alteration notices and 2 prohibition notices, and undertook 2 prosecutions. The pandemic may explain some of the difference.

However, some staff we spoke to during our inspection told us that lack of qualified staff was one of the reasons for the lack of enforcement activity. The service should ensure it makes more use of its enforcement powers to both safeguard the public and reduce risk.

The service offers access to 24/7 fire safety advice to meet a range of dangerous conditions out of hours.

## **The service shows a continued commitment to improve resources for protection**

It is encouraging to see the service has increased the number of protection staff. As at 31 March 2022, there were 34 protection staff compared to 32 staff as at 31 March 2019.

However, the number of staff who are fully qualified to undertake the range of protection auditing and enforcement activity has fallen. As at 31 March 2022, 12 protection staff were fully qualified, compared to 29 staff as at 31 March 2019. Most staff told us that RBIP targets weren't being met due to a lack of qualified staff. We found a small number of audit files we inspected weren't completed by staff with the appropriate level of qualification.

The service is aware of this issue. As at 31 March 2022 there were 22 protection staff working towards the appropriate accreditation. The service's external training provider also has a lack of capacity to train the protection staff it needs, though the service has a plan in place to address this.

## **The service works well with other enforcement partners**

The service works closely with other enforcement agencies to regulate fire safety and routinely exchanges risk information with them. For example, the service works with the Care Quality Commission to hold joint fire safety training events. The service also works closely with local authorities, especially in relation to high-rise buildings. We were told that in some cases the service will make direct contact about fire safety matters with those who are applying for licences to assist licensing partners.

## **The response to statutory consultation could be further improved**

The service could make further improvement on the time it takes to respond to building consultations to meet its responsibility to comment on fire safety arrangements at new and altered buildings. In the year ending 31 March 2022, the service received requests for 1,876 building consultations and responded to 1,795 (95.7 percent) within the time frame set. For the same period, 760 licensing consultations were received and 673 (88.6 percent) were responded to on time.

## **The service enjoys a high level of support and engagement with business**

The service engages with local businesses and other organisations to promote compliance with fire safety legislation. Comprehensive information for businesses is provided on the service website. Monthly online webinars are held on fire safety and compliance with legislation.

We are encouraged to see the service has continued to grow its [primary authority scheme](#). This allows businesses and organisations with premises in more than one fire authority area to receive fire safety advice from a single fire service. The service recovers the full cost of this service from the businesses it supports.

When we first inspected both Hampshire and Isle of Wight as separate services in 2018, there were 30 of these schemes in place. Primary authority staff told us this has now grown to 51 schemes.

Members of the primary authority team are working as part of a national programme to help other fire and rescue services set up their own schemes.

## **More work needs to be done to reduce unwanted fire signals**

Only limited action is being taken to reduce the number of unwanted fire signals. Most staff we spoke to couldn't identify specific work taking place. Some told us that little had changed since our last inspection and it was unclear who was responsible for reducing unwanted fire signals.

In the year to 31 March 2021, the service received 33,550 emergency calls. Of these, 16.3 percent (5,474) were automatic fire alarm calls (AFAs). The service attended 66.1 percent (3,620) of these AFA requests.

In the year to 31 March 2022, the service received 33,981 emergency calls. Of these, 18.8 percent (6,372) were AFAs. The service attended 68.2 percent (4,343) of AFA requests in 2021/22.

This means that fire engines may be unavailable to respond to genuine incidents because they are attending false alarms. It also creates a risk to the public if more fire engines travel at high speed on roads to respond to these incidents. The service should put an effective plan in place that reduces the number of false alarms.

Fire control operators follow national practice in relation to challenging and filtering attendance at AFAs. However, the service acknowledges that it still attends commercial premises during the day if the cause of the alarm is unknown and has plans in place to address this.

## Responding to fires and other emergencies



### Good (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Good)

Hampshire and Isle of Wight 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 in their area.

#### Area 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.

#### Area for improvement

The service should make sure it puts in place and delivers its plan to adopt national operational guidance.

#### Area for improvement

The service should make sure it participates in a programme of cross-border exercises, with learning from them obtained and shared.

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

### The service isn't meeting all the standards it has set itself

The service's response strategy isn't always clearly linked to all the risks identified in its safety plan. For example, the service isn't maintaining the availability of its fire engines, especially on-call. Its resourcing model also isn't meeting the standards it has set itself and target response times published in the safety plan aren't being met.

Despite this, we found that the service has taken action to address some safety plan risks. For example, it has moved two additional appliances to the Isle of Wight to improve resilience in responding to larger incidents. The service has also increased its response to high-rise buildings.

### **Attendance times are faster than average but the service doesn't always meet the standards it sets itself**

There are no national response standards of performance for the public. But the service has set out its own response standards, excluding call handling time. As at 31 March 2022, these were:

- a fire engine in attendance in Hampshire within 8 minutes, 80 percent of the time where there is risk to life or property (critical response);
- a fire engine in attendance in Isle of Wight within 10 minutes, 80 percent of the time where there is risk to life or property (critical response);
- a fire engine in attendance in Hampshire and Isle of Wight within 15 minutes, 100 percent of the time where there is no apparent threat to life (non-critical response); and
- all other incidents requiring a response will be attended within 60 minutes, 100 percent of the time.

The service doesn't always meet these standards. In the year to 31 March 2022, service performance data shows that the 8-minute response time set for [critical incidents](#) in Hampshire was only met 63.4 percent of the time. The Isle of Wight 10-minute critical response target was met 72.9 percent of the time. Non-critical and other incidents were attended 93.7 percent and 100 percent respectively within the target time. The service safety plan commits to reviewing these standards.

As a result of the combination the Home Office has reclassified the combined service as significantly rural. Hampshire was previously classified as significantly urban and Isle of Wight significantly rural.

Home Office data now shows that in the year to 31 December 2021, the service's response time to [primary fires](#) was 9 minutes and 19 seconds which is faster than the average for significantly rural services.

### **On-call availability remains a significant challenge**

It is disappointing to find the service isn't consistently maintaining good levels of available fire engines. For the year ending 31 March 2022 overall fire engine availability for the service was 69.0 percent. Wholtime fire engines maintained 89.3 percent availability and on-call fire engines only maintained 62.4 percent availability.



The service is aware of the problems it is facing with fire engine availability, especially for its on-call stations. It intends to address this through its on-call ways of working project. The service is also planning to change the way it mobilises resources to incidents based on the number of firefighters available rather than number of fire engines.

In our first inspections in 2018, when they were separate services, Hampshire planned to respond to incidents using vehicles and number of firefighters better suited to the situation. This included the use of smaller first response vehicles crewed by two firefighters. Isle of Wight was sending the same number of firefighters to every incident irrespective of how urgent the incident was.

During our inspection we found elements of the flexible response model, such as using first response vehicles, weren't in place. The Isle of Wight is still responding with the same number of firefighters to all incidents. We also found that operational equipment and response to incidents isn't the same on the Isle of Wight as they are in Hampshire. The service is aware of this and is taking a phased approach in order to align operational equipment.

The service has 84 fire engines available. It told us that it needs a minimum of 52 available fire engines to maintain business as usual; 45 in Hampshire and 7 on the Isle of Wight. When faced with reduced levels of available fire engines, the service manages fire cover through a degradation plan.

During our inspection fire control staff told us there are times when they are managing fire cover through this plan at a level of 40 or less available fire engines.

### **Slow progress in implementing national operational guidance**

Service progress has been slow in applying national operational guidance to its policies and procedures. We were told some of the reasons for this was slow implementation of national operational guidance procedures into training for operational staff. Work to align national operational guidance and procedures across other services which are part of the Networked Fire Services Partnership had also slowed progress.

The service has put in place dedicated resources to progress its plans to implement national operational guidance.

### **Incident commanders are well trained**

The service has trained incident commanders who are assessed regularly and properly. As of 31 March 2022, all of the 440 incident commanders the service requires were accredited. This helps the service 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 throughout the service. The incident commanders 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 \(JESIP\)](#).

### **Control staff should be more involved in service exercises**

We are disappointed to find that the service's control staff aren't always included in the service's command, training, exercise, debrief and assurance activity. Some control staff had taken part in a high-rise exercise in October 2021, however, most staff we spoke to told us they have had little or no involvement in service exercises. The service should ensure that where appropriate control staff are routinely involved in service exercises.

### **Control staff are well positioned to handle multiple fire survival calls**

The service's partnership with both Devon and Somerset and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services means these services can take emergency calls and mobilise each other's resources if necessary. The control room staff we interviewed are confident they could provide fire survival guidance to many callers simultaneously. This was identified as learning for fire services after the Grenfell Tower fire.

Control has good systems in place including a dedicated communications link between control and the staff on the ground at an incident, to exchange real-time risk information with incident commanders, other responding partners, such as police and ambulance services, and other supporting fire and rescue services. Some control staff we spoke to told us they would like to undertake more exercising to test these procedures. Maintaining good situational awareness helps the service communicate effectively with the public, providing them with accurate and tailored advice.

### **Operational staff can easily access risk information**

We sampled a range of risk information including what is in place for firefighters responding to incidents at high-risk, high-rise buildings and what information is held by fire control. This also included information about temporary risks.

Most of the information we reviewed was up to date and detailed. It could be easily accessed and understood by staff. Encouragingly, it had been completed with input from the service's prevention, protection and response functions when appropriate.

Operational staff can access the same risk information as control through their MDTs, although we were surprised to find that not all MDTs in fire engines had access to car crash rescue data.

Alerts on the MDT are used to highlight specific risks or changes in risk. Risk information is also sent out by email or through routine notices, although we found a robust process wasn't in place to ensure staff read and understand them.

### **Cross-border exercise plans could be improved**

The service doesn't have a cross-border exercise programme or central oversight of what cross-border exercising is taking place. Instead, it is left to local operational managers to arrange these exercises.

Some staff we spoke to told us that few exercises were held with neighbouring services. Of the respondents to our survey, 81 percent (148 out of 183) told us they hadn't participated in training with neighbouring services in the last 12 months. And 25 percent of respondents (46 out of 183) didn't think the service was fully intraoperable with neighbouring services.

In the year to 31 March 2022 the service held 20 exercises with neighbouring services, compared to 59 exercises in the previous year. The service should ensure it participates in and maintains a programme of cross-border exercises.

### **Processes to evaluate and share operational learning require significant improvement**

The service doesn't always act on learning it has, or should have, identified from incidents. This could mean it isn't routinely improving its service to the public.

For example, the service has developed a learning tool which staff can use to feed back any lessons they identify to a central team. However, it is left to individuals to determine what is learning and whether it should be submitted. This approach isn't working.

We also reviewed a range of emergency incidents and training events which included fires in high-rise buildings and a care home. It was worrying to find that out of the 11 emergency files we reviewed, 10 had no formal learning recorded. One file contained some significant feedback from an incident. However, there was no record of this being identified as formal learning or being shared. The service has acknowledged that the debrief process needs to be improved.

The service does contribute to and act on learning from other fire and rescue services or operational learning gathered from other emergency service partners. This learning is collected and shared through the organisation by the service's operational assurance team.

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 communicates effectively with the public about incidents

The service has good systems in place to inform the public about ongoing incidents and help keep them safe during and after incidents. The service has a dedicated communications team and incidents and updates are relayed to the public through social media and the service website. We spoke to partners who told us that the service's communications team provided support on public safety messages including the promotion and importance of COVID-19 vaccinations.

## Responding to major and multi-agency incidents



### Good (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Good)

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service is good 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).

#### Area for improvement

The service should put in place a programme of multi-agency exercises so its procedures for responding are well tested and understood.

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. These risks are listed in both local and national risk registers as part of its safety plan. For example, the service has plans to deal with wide-area flooding and pandemic flu.

It is also familiar with the significant risks that could be faced by neighbouring fire and rescue services that it might reasonably be asked to respond to in an emergency, including responding to [COMAH sites](#).

Firefighters have access to risk information from neighbouring services. The service has the same mobilising system as Dorset and Wiltshire and Devon and Somerset services and has access to their risk information. Other neighbouring services share risk information 10 km from their border through the [Resilience Direct](#) website. However, not all staff we spoke to were aware of how they would access this

information. The service should ensure that operational staff are aware of how they can access cross-border risk information.

### **Good arrangements are in place for major incident response**

We reviewed the arrangements the service has in place to respond to different major incidents, including wide-area flooding and high-risk COMAH sites. The service has good arrangements in place, which are well understood by staff. For example, the service's medical response function provided good support in responding to the pandemic.

The service has specially trained staff to respond to marauding terrorist attacks incidents. It has also rolled out the most up-to-date marauding terrorist attack training to all non-specialist responding staff.

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

The service supports other fire and rescue services responding to emergency incidents. For example, as part of the partnership it has with Dorset and Wiltshire and Devon and Somerset, the service can mobilise resources to incidents in the areas covered by these services. There are arrangements in place and it is intraoperable with these services to form part of a multi-agency response.

The service understands how it deploys to other services if needed. The service holds various [national resilience assets](#) including high-volume pumps. There is a clear understanding of how to request and use national assets.

### **The service should do more training exercises with other agencies**

Some operational staff we spoke to during our inspection told us they didn't take part in enough training exercises with other agencies. This was also reflected in our staff survey. Of those who responded, 62 percent (114 out of 183) said they hadn't taken part in training with other agencies over the past 12 months. Figures from the service show that 2 national resilience exercises took place in the year ending 31 March 2022 compared to 17 in the previous year. Multi-agency exercising also reduced. In the year ending 31 March 2022 there were 3 exercises, compared to 31 exercises in the previous year.

### **Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles are well established**

The incident commanders we interviewed had been trained in and were familiar with JESIP.

The service could provide us with strong evidence that it consistently follows these principles. This includes clear understanding of JESIP principles for all levels of command qualifications and training for [local resilience forum \(LRF\)](#) partners that covers JESIP principles.

## **The service works well with and supports other partners**

The service has good arrangements in place to respond to emergencies with other partners that make up the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum. These arrangements include multi-agency response plans to COMAH sites and flooding.

The service is a valued partner and active member of the LRF. It is represented at all levels, with the chief fire officer being deputy chair. The LRF arranges regular training events, such as tabletop exercises with other members of the LRF which the service is part of. Learning is then used to develop planning assumptions about responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

The service supports South Central Ambulance Service through its medical response and co-responding activity. Service figures show there were 5,522 requests for medical response received by the service in 2021/22.

We were impressed to find that when South Central Ambulance Service declared a critical incident on 6 April 2022, the service provided additional support by driving ambulances, responding to cardiac arrests and giving extra assistance from its co-responding resources. The service used some of its fire stations as COVID-19 vaccination clinics. This included a mass vaccination centre at Basingstoke Fire Station which gave over 150,000 vaccinations.

## **The service keeps up to date with national learning**

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

# 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 \(IRMP\)](#). 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 results for the public. Plans should be based on robust and realistic assumptions about income and costs. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency requires improvement.

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Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency at keeping people safe and secure hasn't improved as we would have expected since our 2018 inspections.

The service has the skills it needs to manage change and has demonstrated this by successfully bringing Hampshire and Isle of Wight together into a combined fire and rescue service. There is a good level of scrutiny applied to the service's finances and it has some plans in place to meet future financial challenges.

But we are disappointed to find resources aren't effectively managed across core functions. This means some targets and performance standards aren't being met. Fire engines aren't always being used efficiently or effectively, with some being maintained but not used. Although there are clear processes to monitor performance, the service needs to do more to improve how it manages performance to ensure staff are productive.

We were pleased to find the service collaborates extensively with others and evaluates the benefits, especially in how it shares its estates and provides medical response to support the ambulance service. The service is good at generating income from its collaborative work for example, by sharing its premises it generates £1.4m of income. There are clear plans in place to continue to develop the sharing of service buildings with others.



## Making best use of resources



### **Requires improvement (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Good)**

Hampshire and Isle of Wight 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 them with the services' risks and statutory responsibilities. Services should make best possible use of resources to achieve the best results for the public.

The service's budget for 2022/23 is £87.45m. This is an increase of 7.86 percent from the 2021/22 budget.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection, and response activities. This should reflect, and be consistent with, the risks and priorities set out in its integrated risk management plan.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should make sure there is a testing programme for its business continuity plans, particularly in high-risk areas of service.

#### **Area 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 integrated risk management plan.

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

### **Resources aren't effectively allocated to meet safety plan commitments**

The service's safety plan 2020–25 has established clear priorities and actions. Financial plans and investment are linked to the objectives in the safety plan. This is supported by an operations strategic plan which outlines budget allocation and delivery aims of prevention, protection and response functions. Safety plan activities are monitored through an evaluation tracker and annual assurance programme.

We were disappointed to find that resources aren't being effectively allocated to support safety plan priorities and objectives. The service isn't always meeting the targets it has set. Most prevention, protection and operational staff we spoke to told us this is due to lack of resources.

The service states that it needs 52 fire engines available to maintain current levels of fire cover. However, some staff told us that the service sometimes operates with fewer available fire engines. This is because it doesn't have enough staff, or staff with the right skills, available to crew them all.

The service has 84 operational fire engines in its fleet, some of which are being maintained but not used. This isn't an efficient or effective use of resources. The service should ensure that it allocates resources effectively to meet the priorities and targets it has set in its safety plan. This includes the capacity to vary the level of its response to incidents based on risk.

### **Service financial plans are built on sound scenarios**

We were pleased to find service financial plans are built on sound scenarios. They help make sure the service is sustainable and are underpinned by financial controls that reduce the risk of misusing public money. There is satisfactory budget management and external audit arrangements in place. Department heads are involved in the budget-setting process to give them greater understanding of their finances.

### **Management of performance needs to improve**

We were encouraged to find the service uses a range of performance dashboards and indicators to report on performance at senior and executive management level through several boards and an overarching service performance and assurance group. Data analysts establish performance trends for the board to examine further. For example, this work identified a trend of safe and well visits taking more than 28 days to complete. This was found to be because of an issue with recording and data quality.

Despite the monitoring of performance, we found there was insufficient management of performance across the service's core functions. There is also limited awareness among operational staff about data available, such as community heat maps, to direct station activity towards areas of highest risk.

We were disappointed to find some operational staff we spoke to couldn't identify station-based activity goals other than safe and well targets. Some protection staff we spoke to weren't aware of performance targets or how performance was managed. We were told the service had recently changed its protection structure to operate out of five geographic protection hubs, but these aren't being managed in a consistent way. The service needs to do more to ensure its workforce time is productive and that performance expectations are clearly communicated and managed.

The service has identified the contribution it will make towards the national productivity target (using an extra 3 percent of national [wholetime firefighter](#) capacity to carry out additional prevention and protection work). At the time of inspection, the service hadn't implemented this change because it was waiting for the National Fire Chiefs Council to provide more information about the detail and methodology to support it.

But the service has taken some steps to improve workforce productivity. This includes considering new ways of working. For example, it has increased its use of online meetings to reduce unnecessary travel.

We were surprised to find the service is still reliant on several paper-based systems which are inefficient and don't support productive working. This includes both safe and well and collection of site-specific risk information. The service is aware of this and has plans in place to replace these with digital systems.

The service had to adapt its working practices because of the pandemic. Those changes are still part of its day-to-day activity. For example, hybrid working for staff has continued. The service has made this more efficient by developing an app so staff can book desks when working out of service premises.

### **There is extensive and effective collaboration with others**

We are pleased to see the service meets its statutory duty to collaborate, and routinely considers opportunities to collaborate with other emergency responders. Collaborative work is aligned to the priorities in the service's safety plan. For example:

- shared premises with other agencies such as police and health;
- shared control room functions through the Networked Fire Services Partnership with Devon and Somerset and Dorset and Wiltshire;
- shared cost of providing support functions such as administration and finance through a shared service partnership with other agencies including Hampshire County Council and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary;
- providing fleet maintenance to other fire and rescue services; and
- working with health services to provide a response to medical incidents.

The service comprehensively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and results of its collaborations. For example, by sharing its premises it generates over £1.4m of income.

### **Continuity arrangements need more regular testing**

The service has good continuity arrangements in place for areas where threats and risks are considered high. This includes plans for pandemic flu and industrial action.

Not all plans are regularly reviewed and tested. For example, regular testing takes place with Network Fire Service partners' control rooms to take each other's calls. However, physical evacuation of the control room is not regularly tested. This means that staff aren't fully aware of the arrangements and their associated responsibilities. The service should put plans in place to regularly test business continuity arrangements.

### **The service has a track record of making savings**

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. For example, the service told us that it wasn't getting value for money from its external provider of facilities management and so brought this back in-house.

The service has made savings and efficiencies. For example, the service told us that from 2016/17 to 2019/20 it had made savings of £11m. This was achieved mainly by redesigning how the service operated. This leaves relatively modest savings of £1.4m needing to be achieved over 2022/23 and 2023/24.

The service is taking steps to make sure important areas, including estates and procurement, are well placed to achieve efficiency gains through sound financial management and best working practices. Procurement activity is done through its shared services partnership. Procurement frameworks such as the Crown Commercial Service framework are used as a primary route for procurement and where possible used collaboratively with others to achieve greater efficiencies.

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



#### **Good (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Good)**

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service is good at making the service 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 they should invest in better services for the public.

### **Promising practice: The service promotes efficient working and generates income through flexible use of its buildings**

The service uses its buildings flexibly to promote more efficient working and generate income. The service already shares 34 buildings with other services such as police, health, coastguard, Border Force and the ambulance service. The service safety plan continues future commitment to maximising buildings use and generate income with plans to develop three new fire stations including a new fire station which is to be built as a multi-agency hub.

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 a good awareness and understanding of future financial challenges**

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 put contingencies in place to cover high rates of inflation. Financial risks such as this are recorded and monitored through the service's corporate risk register.

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. This includes council tax precept flexibility which has led to an increase of £5 (7.2 percent) for a Band D property in 2022/23. It will generate an additional £2.75m. Modest budget deficits of less than £1m are then forecast, which will be met from reserves if needed.

The service has identified savings and investment opportunities to improve the service to the public or generate further savings. It aims to make £1.4m worth of savings in the first 2 years of its medium-term financial plan. At the time of our inspection, we were told that £300,000 of these savings had been identified. The service should ensure it identifies all the savings it needs to meet savings requirements.

### **Flexible plans are in place for the use of reserves**

The service has a sensible and sustainable plan for using its reserves. The service makes a £6m annual contribution to reserves to support future investment in areas such as IT. The service told us that this approach means it doesn't have to rely on underspends to undertake work such as fleet investment. In addition, the reserves provide resilience against any changes in funding and could give short-term financial support to any areas affected.

## **The current fleet isn't being used efficiently or effectively**

The service's estate and fleet strategies have clear links to the safety plan. Both strategies seek to exploit opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness. For example, as part of the service's programme of investment, it is redeveloping Redbridge Fire Station to include more space to lease to other agencies such as the police. This generates income for the service.

During our inspection we found that some of the buildings we visited weren't in good condition. We were disappointed to find that not all locations had suitable facilities for females.

The service is committed to upgrading all estate assets, so they are all the same standard following the merging of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Services. It told us it has spent £3m in 2 years upgrading its premises, with a significant amount of this work taking place on the Isle of Wight buildings.

The service has a fleet strategy in place that looks to improve efficiency in some areas. This includes maintaining the fleet of other fire and rescue services, which generates income.

But we found the service isn't always using some of the fire engines it has. The service should consider how it intends to use its fleet in both an efficient and effective way to meet the risks and objectives identified in its safety plan.

## **Change is effectively managed**

The service has put in place the capacity and capability needed to achieve sustainable transformation, and it routinely seeks opportunities to work with others to improve efficiency and provide better services in the future. The service has successfully managed the merging of Hampshire and Isle of Wight into a single authority. This is an impressive achievement especially considering this work took place during the pandemic.

The service actively considers how changes in technology and future innovation may affect risk. For example, the service has invested in a new centralised system to record the competencies of all its staff in the same place to make it easier to monitor such things as training records. It also seeks to exploit opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness presented by changes in technology.

The service had identified that various elements of its technology were being procured and managed by separate departments. The 'One ICT' programme brought all systems together under central management of the service's ICT team to improve efficiency.

The service is aware of several inefficient paper-based systems, such as recording of safe and well visits, and is investing in electronic solutions to improve their efficiency.

## **The service is good at generating additional income**

The service actively considers and exploits opportunities for generating extra income. It generates over £1.4m in revenue through the shared use of its premises.

The service told us that feed-in payments from electricity produced by solar panels installed by the service generates £100,000 per annum. Other work such as providing fleet maintenance to other fire and rescue services also brings in additional income. Where appropriate, it has secured external funding to invest in improvements to the service provided to the public. This includes £396,000 to support its work to meet the requirements arising from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 recommendations.

We were pleased to find the service has made significant improvements in relation to its trading company 3SFire. This is now a community interest company that follows the Grant Thornton model for fire service trading companies. 3SFire's performance is reviewed regularly to ensure it provides value for money and meets legislative requirements. This also makes sure that 3SFire's trading activity doesn't conflict with the public service duties of the service.

3SFire staff spoke about the challenges the pandemic posed to their trading activity. Despite returning a limited surplus from its trading activities in 2020/21, there are clear plans in place to increase trading activity.

# People





# How well does the service look after its people?



## Requires improvement

### 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 are part of everything the service does and its staff understand their role in promoting it. Overall, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at looking after its people.

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We are encouraged to find progress in some areas since our inspections of both Hampshire and Isle of Wight in 2018, but there is still more work to do to improve how Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service looks after its people.

We are pleased to see the service has introduced a clear set of values and behaviours which it has communicated to staff. Some staff told us about an improving culture. But these values and behaviours aren't always demonstrated by staff at all levels. Senior leaders need to be more visible.

We found EDI is well promoted in the service and is accepted and understood by everyone with regard to the promotion, recruitment and personal development reviews of staff. The service is clearly committed to recruiting a more diverse workforce and needs to continue its work to understand and improve workforce diversity in order to attract more people from different ethnic minority backgrounds. We were disappointed to find not all staff understood the benefits of a diverse workforce. The service also needs to improve how it assesses the impact of its activity on different groups of people.

Staff have good access to learning and development opportunities. And there is a clear system in place for staff to maintain critical operational skills. Organisational oversight of workforce competencies, including specialist roles, is limited and the service needs to improve its succession planning to manage staff turnover. We found that many staff, especially operational, have no record of having a personal development review in the last 12 months.

## Promoting the right values and culture



### **Requires improvement (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Requires improvement)**

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement 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 promoted effectively, and staff should have access to a range of well-being support that can be tailored to their individual needs.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should ensure its expected values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation and that managers actively promote these standards.

#### **Area for improvement**

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

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure working hours aren't exceeded.

### **Promising practice: Personal support passports help individuals to easily share any adjustments they may need**

The service applies reasonable adjustments through the use of personal support passports. This means staff with health, learning, disability, or other requirements are able to easily share any adjustments they require without the need for the individual to make multiple requests.

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

### **There have been some improvements in the culture within the service**

The service has well-defined values that are understood by most staff. Of those who responded to our survey, 93 percent (267 out of 286) were aware of the service values. We were pleased to be told by some staff that they had seen a positive improvement in the culture of the service since our last inspections. It is encouraging to find that service values and behaviours are included as part of the services promotion and recruitment processes. The new national [Core Code of Ethics](#) has been used to inform the values and behaviour of the service.

But it was disappointing to find that the culture of the organisation doesn't always align with its values. For example, of those who responded to our survey, 61 percent (164 out of 267) didn't think senior leaders model service values. Some staff we spoke to told us that senior leaders weren't visible and that there was a disconnect between senior managers and staff.

We were also told about behaviour that didn't meet the standards expected, including use of inappropriate language and discriminatory behaviour. The service acknowledges that there is more work to do to ensure service values and behaviours are consistently demonstrated across all areas of the organisation.

While the service has made some progress, the area for improvement identified in Hampshire in 2018 remains. The service should ensure its expected values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation and that managers actively promote these standards.

### **There is good support for staff mental and physical health**

The service has well understood and effective well-being policies in place that are available to staff. A significant range of well-being support is available to support both physical and mental health. For example:

- trained mental health first aiders;
- employee assistance programme; and
- advisory and counselling support following traumatic incidents.

There are good provisions in place to promote staff well-being. Of those who responded to our survey, 90 percent (258 out of 286) told us they feel able to access services to support their mental well-being. In addition, 93 percent (266 out of 286) were confident that well-being support would be offered post-incident if appropriate.

We were also impressed with the use of personal support passports. These are used as a discreet way for staff with health, learning, disability, or other requirements to easily share any adjustments they require.

### **The service has sufficient health and safety provisions in place**

The service has effective and well understood health and safety policies and procedures in place. For example, staff who work alone, such as CSOs and hydrant inspectors, have an electronic lone worker safety device that is monitored by an external company.

These policies and procedures are readily available and effectively promoted to all staff. Of those who responded to our survey, 86 percent (245 out of 286) felt their personal safety is treated seriously at work. Both staff and representative bodies have confidence in the health and safety approach taken by the service.

### **There is insufficient monitoring of working hours**

We found that staff who want to undertake secondary employment must obtain permission from the service. It was worrying to find that the service doesn't collect data or monitor staff who have secondary employment or dual contracts to make sure they comply with the secondary employment policy and don't work excessive hours.

The service needs to take action to ensure that it effectively records and monitors the working hours of those staff who undertake secondary employment.

### **There are clear processes to manage absence**

As part of our inspection, we reviewed some case files to consider how the service manages and supports staff through absence including sickness, parental and special leave.

We found there are clear processes in place to manage absences for all staff. There is clear guidance for managers. Absence cases we reviewed were managed well and in accordance with policy.

Absence management training is part of all new supervisory managers' training. Existing managers are expected to access online absence management training. It was surprising to be told by some supervisory managers we spoke to during our inspection there was no formal absence management training in place. The service should ensure that all its supervisory managers are aware of and complete this training.

## Getting the right people with the right skills



### Good (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Good)

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service is good at getting the right people with the right skills.

Fire and rescue services should have a workforce plan in place that is linked to their [integrated risk management plans \(IRMPs\)](#), sets out their current and future skills requirements and addresses capability gaps. They should supplement this with a culture of continuous improvement that includes appropriate learning and development throughout the service.

#### Area for improvement

The service should review its succession planning to make sure that it has effective arrangements in place to manage staff turnover while continuing to provide its core service to the public.

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

#### There is a structured process for staff to maintain operational competencies

Most staff told us that they could access the training they need to be effective in their role. The service's Maintenance of Competence framework ensures operational staff can maintain competence and capability effectively. Station training plans are in place to maintain these competencies through online or workplace assessments.

The service has recently updated its IT system that monitors staff competence by recording it on a single system. At the time of our inspection there were problems with this system, resulting in inaccurate training records. The service is taking action to resolve the issue.

The training files we inspected showed that critical competencies such as breathing apparatus were in date. We were pleased to find that all of the service's incident commanders were trained and assessed.

Managers are responsible for ensuring staff are maintaining their competency. We found that competencies required by specialist roles, such as protection, and [urban search and rescue](#) staff weren't recorded on the competency system but were kept locally in different departments. The service has a plan in place to record these on the central competency system.

The service should ensure it can regularly update its understanding of all staff skills and risk-critical capabilities. This will mean that it will be able to better determine gaps in workforce capabilities and resilience and can make sound and financially sustainable decisions about current and future needs.

### **Future skills and capability planning needs to improve**

Since our last inspection the service has established a People and Organisational Development directorate. A resource management team does some workforce planning relating to operational appointments and promotions.

But the service needs to do more to improve how it considers its future needs and succession planning. During our inspection we were disappointed to find a lack of succession planning across some core functions of the service.

For example, some protection staff told us this was one of the reasons that had led to a shortage of Level 4 Diploma-qualified staff. We found there weren't enough available operational staff, especially on-call, to crew fire engines to meet response targets set in the safety plan. Some staff we spoke to told us that the process to recruit on-call firefighters was too slow. The service told us that one of the reasons for this is courses such as breathing apparatus can only be run when there are enough recruits to train together.

### **There is good access to resources that support learning and development**

A culture of continuous improvements is promoted throughout the service and staff are encouraged to learn and develop. Of those who responded to our survey, 85 percent (242 out of 286) said that they have had a development conversation with their manager at least once in the last 12 months.

We are pleased to see that the service has a range of resources in place. During the pandemic the service maintained staff access to learning and development by hosting more remote learning sessions. This included webinars and online coaching and mentoring.

Most staff told us that they can access a range of learning and development resources. These include online training packages and access to resources from external learning providers. This allows them to do their job effectively.

## Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



### **Requires improvement (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Requires improvement)**

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement 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 equality, diversity and inclusion are firmly understood and demonstrated throughout the organisation. This includes successfully taking steps to remove inequality and making progress to improve fairness, diversity and inclusion at all levels of the service. It should proactively seek and respond to feedback from staff and make sure any action taken is meaningful.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should make sure staff understand the value of positive action and having a more diverse workforce.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should make improvements to the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographic and needs.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should make sure it has robust processes in place to undertake equality impact assessments and review any actions agreed as a result.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should make sure that all staff understand the benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion and their role in promoting it.

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 continue work to improve staff confidence in raising concerns**

In our first inspections in 2018, we identified an area for improvement in Hampshire that the service should assure itself that staff are confident in using available ways of providing feedback. We are encouraged to find the service has developed several ways to work with staff on issues and decisions that affect them.

For example, there are four active staff network groups which give feedback directly to senior managers about any issues or ideas. We were encouraged to find an independent reporting tool 'Say So' had recently been introduced. The service also published through its communication portal 'You said, we did' action taken as a result of its well-being survey. This included a move to hybrid working after 67 percent of staff responding to the survey requested this.

But some staff we spoke to weren't confident in processes to raise concerns. Of those who responded to our survey, 58 percent (167 out of 286) didn't feel confident in feedback systems to all levels. And 52 percent (148 out of 286) felt they couldn't challenge ideas without detriment to how they are treated. The service should ensure it continues to build confidence in feedback systems to improve communications between staff and senior managers.

## **Further work is needed to improve understanding of bullying, harassment and discrimination**

The service should improve staff understanding of bullying, harassment and discrimination, including their duty to eliminate them. In our staff survey, 20 percent (56 out of 286) of respondents told us they had been subject to bullying or harassment and 23 percent (65 out of 286) to discrimination over the past 12 months. During our inspection a few staff told us of discriminatory behaviour including homophobic abuse and use of racist language.

Although the service has clear policies and procedures in place, staff have limited confidence in its ability to deal effectively with cases of bullying, harassment and discrimination, grievances and discipline. For example, our staff survey shows that 48 percent (27 out of 56) of respondents who said they had been harassed or bullied didn't report it, the main reason being that they thought nothing would happen.

The service monitors complaints and grievances through its People and Organisational Development board. This data is used to establish trends and is passed on to managers for action. However, the service needs to do more to improve its understanding of bullying, harassment and discrimination and support staff to build confidence to report such behaviour.



## **Work needs to continue to understand and improve workforce diversity**

There is an open, fair and honest recruitment process for staff or those wishing to work for the fire and rescue service. The service has an effective system to understand and remove the risk of disproportionality in recruitment processes.

The service has put considerable effort into developing its recruitment processes so that they are fair and understood by potential applicants. The recruitment policies are comprehensive and cover opportunities in all roles.

We were pleased to find the service uses [positive action](#) in its recruitment campaigns to target underrepresented groups. Some staff told us that the service goes out to communities, including at mosques and other places of worship, rather than inviting them to fire stations to encourage people to join the service. Recruitment work to increase applicants from underrepresented groups takes place through 'Have a go' days and targeting of sports clubs and other events.

Figures supplied by the service from the last three wholetime recruitment campaigns show some increase in the percentage of applicants who are female or are from underrepresented groups. The percentage of total applicants who are female rose from 12 percent in the first campaign in 2019 to 14 percent in the third campaign in 2022. The percentage of applicants identifying as being from a minority ethnic group rose from 9 percent in the first campaign in 2019 to 11 per cent in the third campaign in 2022.

While there has been some progress to improve ethnic and gender diversity of people applying to join the service, there is more work to do to understand and increase staff diversity.

The service couldn't provide data on the proportion of the workforce in the Isle of Wight that were from an ethnic minority background. Data for Hampshire shows that in the year ending March 2021, of the wholetime firefighters who stated their ethnicity, only 1.4 percent (8 out of 573) identified as being from an ethnic minority background. For on-call firefighters this reduced to 0.7 percent (4 out of 568). In addition, 11.1 percent of all staff didn't state their ethnicity, compared to a rate of 9.0 percent across England.

Not all staff understand the benefits of positive action and a more diverse workforce. We spoke to some staff who felt that females were treated more favourably when it comes to fitness requirements and that having more female firefighters isn't of benefit as the role is all about strength. The service needs to do more to ensure its staff understand the benefits of a more diverse workforce.

## **There has been some improvement in equality, diversity and inclusion**

In our 2018 inspections we issued a cause of concern for both Hampshire and Isle of Wight that the services did not do enough to be an inclusive employer.

We are encouraged to find the service has made some improvements in its approach to EDI and is making sure it can offer the right services to its communities and support staff with [protected characteristics](#). Some staff we spoke to felt there was an improving EDI culture.

We were pleased to find the service has ensured EDI is accepted and understood by everyone with regard to its promotions, recruitment and individual [performance and development review \(PDR\)](#) processes. Also, the service told us that it had changed its personal protective equipment supplier to offer a greater range of sizes, including personal protective equipment designed specifically for females.

However, actions to improve EDI across the organisation could have been taken more quickly. EDI training takes place for staff on joining the service. EDI training is also made available for all staff online. However not all staff we spoke to are completing this training.

At the time of our inspection there were only two staff in the EDI team and several vacancies which the service is struggling to fill. The service told us these vacancies combined with the effect of the pandemic have caused delays in some of its EDI work.

During our inspection we saw and were told by some staff that not all stations had suitable facilities for females. The service is aware of this and is undertaking a programme of investment in its estate.

While there are still improvements to be made, we are satisfied that the service has made enough progress for this cause of concern to be discharged. However, the service should continue its work on improving EDI.

## **Assessing equality impact of service activity needs improving**

The service has a People Impact Assessment process in place to assess equality impact. As part of our inspection, we inspected several People Impact Assessment files. We found they weren't completed to a consistent standard, and actions resulting from them weren't subject to a robust monitoring and review process. The service acknowledges that the process needs to improve and is taking action to do so.

## Managing performance and developing leaders



### **Requires improvement (2018: Hampshire and Isle of Wight both Requires improvement)**

Hampshire and Isle of Wight 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 staff and improving diversity into leadership roles.

#### **Area for improvement**

The service should ensure it has an effective system in place to manage staff development, performance and productivity.

#### **Area for improvement**

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

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

### **There is inconsistent management of individual performance**

We were encouraged to find that the service has a clear PDR policy and process in place for performance and development. This sets out activity that needs to be undertaken and timescales for completion of PDRs.

It is disappointing to find this process isn't always followed. Not all staff we spoke to have had a PDR. Some staff also told us they felt PDRs held limited value.

As at 31 March 2022, only 53 percent of wholetime firefighters and 31 percent of on-call firefighters had recorded PDRs. PDR completion records for control and support staff were 63 and 89 percent respectively. This means not all staff have recorded specific and individual objectives or have had their performance assessed in the past year.

The service acknowledges that completion and recording of PDRs is an issue and has plans in place to address it. The service should ensure it has an effective system in place to manage staff development, performance, and productivity.

### **Promotion processes are consistent and fair**

The service has put considerable effort into developing its promotion and progression processes so they are fair and understood by staff. The promotion and progression policies are comprehensive and cover opportunities in all roles.

The service has centralised the promotion process to give greater consistency and fairness. During our inspection we reviewed a range of promotion files. We were encouraged to find they were well managed.

But of the respondents to our survey, 62 percent (176 out of 286) disagreed that the promotion process was fair. The service needs to communicate detail of the promotion process to staff to build trust and understanding in the process.

The service doesn't have strong succession planning processes in place to allow it to effectively manage the career pathways of its staff, including roles requiring specialist skills.

Selection processes are managed consistently by the service's resource management team. Temporary promotions and overtime are used to fill short-term resourcing gaps. However, we found some temporary promotions have been in place for a long time. The service told us the length of temporary promotions has been affected by on-call staff not taking the exams they need to move from a temporary to substantive position and is continuing its work to reduce the number of temporary promotions.

### **There has been some improvement in developing leadership and high-potential staff**

In our previous inspections, we identified that both Hampshire and Isle of Wight should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

We are encouraged to find access to management training and some talent management schemes were in place to develop specific staff, including reverse mentoring and an emerging talent pool. Staff who are placed in the emerging talent pool are given bespoke development activities to undertake. When the activities are completed, they are then added to the talent pool and eligible for promotion.

However, not all staff we spoke to were aware of, or understood how to access, talent management provisions. The service should ensure it clearly communicates what is in place to develop and support high-potential staff and how to access it.

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