

Fire & Rescue Service

Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service



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About this inspection

This is the first time that HMICFRS has inspected fire and rescue services across England. Our focus is on the service they provide to the public, and the way they use the resources available. The inspection assesses how effectively and efficiently Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service prevents, protects the public against and responds to fires and other emergencies. We also assess how well it looks after the people who work for the service.

In carrying out our inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England, we answer three main questions:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

This report sets out our inspection findings. After taking all the evidence into account, we apply a graded judgment for each of the three questions.

What inspection judgments mean

Our categories of graded judgment are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Good is our 'expected' graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards.

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

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

If we find serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, we will judge it as **inadequate**.

Service in numbers



Public perceptions

Hampshire

England

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

86%

86%



Response

Hampshire

England

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

8.0

10.2

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

2.7

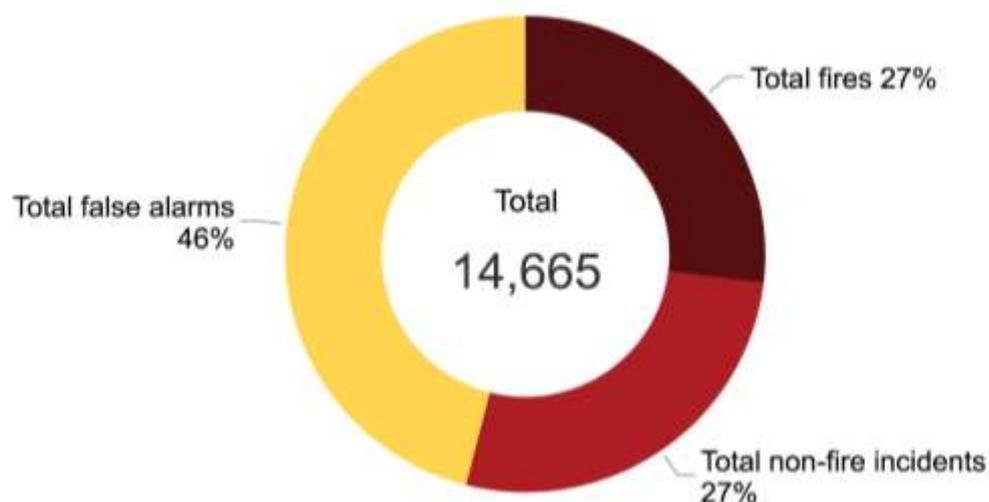
10.4

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

0.4

3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 31 March 2018





Cost

Hampshire

England

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

£20.77

£22.38



Workforce

Hampshire

England

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

0.6

0.6

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

-9%

-14%

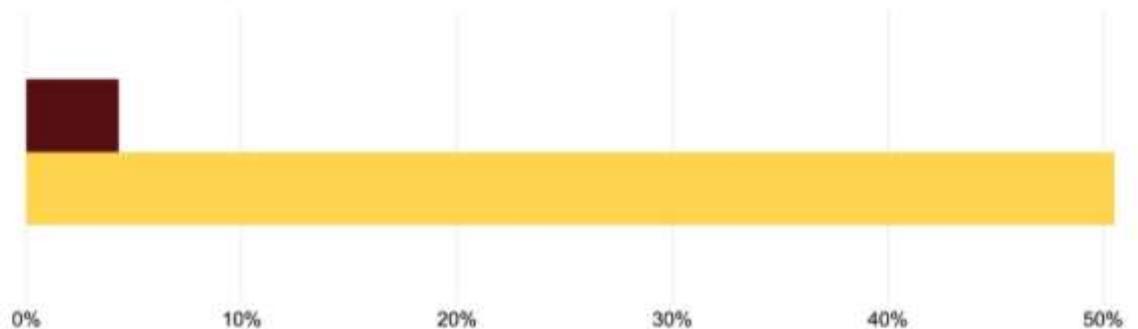
Percentage of wholetime firefighters
As at 31 March 2018

58%

70%

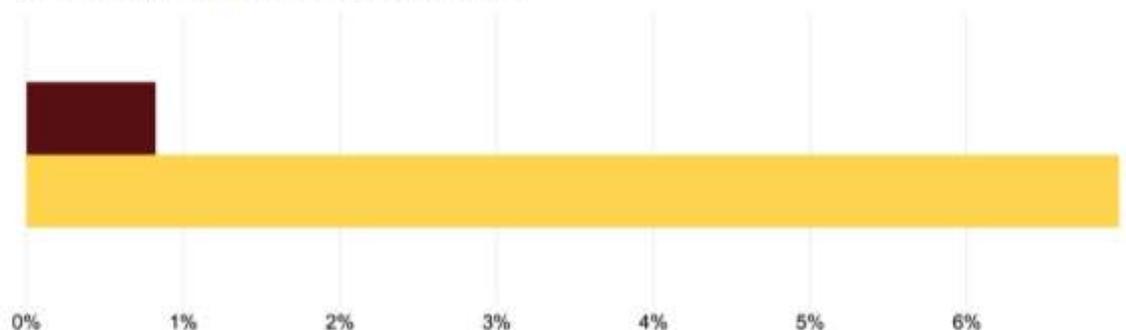
Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population



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

● BAME firefighters ● BAME residential population



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

Overview

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



People



Requires improvement

Promoting the right values and culture



Requires improvement

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Overall summary of inspection findings

We are satisfied with most aspects of the performance of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure. But it needs to improve how it looks after its people, to give a consistently good service.

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

- understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies;
- preventing fires and other risks;
- responding to fires and other emergencies; and
- responding to national risks.

But the service should improve how it protects the public with fire regulation.

It provides an efficient service. We found it makes good use of its resources, and its service is affordable.

The service needs to improve the way it looks after its people. In particular, we are concerned about the way it ensures fairness and promotes diversity. It also needs to improve the way it promotes the right values and culture, and how it manages performance and develops leaders. It is, however, good at getting the right people with the right skills.

We are encouraged by the positive aspects we have identified. We look forward to seeing a more consistent performance over the coming year.

Effectiveness



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



Good

Summary

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

The service understands risk well. It assesses risk based on a range of data. Its plan to manage risk guides its activities and how it intends to operate in the future. But information about risk is not always up to date. The service must tackle this so that firefighters are fully informed.

The service is focusing on the quality of its prevention work rather than quantity. We found examples of good partnership working. But it should assess the benefits of this approach. It needs to understand why, in the 12 months to 31 March 2018, the number of home safety checks per 1,000 population was low when compared to many other services.

According to data provided by the service, there has been a reduction in staffing for protection activity. The number of protection inspections have been consistently falling since the year ending 31 March 2011, workloads have increased and there are backlogs. We are concerned that, despite this, some staff are being made available for commercial activities. The service needs to have a clear plan for how to protect the public and make sure it can achieve this.

The service is good at managing its resources. It aims to provide better value for money by having smaller, more flexible teams to crew fire appliances. It trains its staff well and this includes the use of new technology. However, despite a small decrease in the 12 months to 31 March 2017, response times to [primary fires](#) have been increasing since 2008 and the service should address this.

The service communicates well with the public. It is good at working with its partner organisations and is well-prepared to respond to national risks. To help them to respond to calls and manage incidents more effectively, the service is in a partnership with two other fire and rescue services. It also works closely with the ambulance service.

The service is good at commanding incidents. It trains its staff well and provides specialist support at incidents when needed. It has good procedures to debrief incidents and identify learning – including from other services and partner organisations – but it needs to make sure that these procedures are used at all incidents.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Good

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

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it gathers and records relevant and up-to-date risk information.

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

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

Understanding local and community risk

Hampshire FRS communicates well with its communities and the organisations it works with to develop a risk profile for the county. For example, by working well with the NHS, Hampshire Constabulary and local councils, Hampshire FRS is aware of residents who might be [vulnerable](#). This includes residents who might trip and fall, potential victims of crime, and those at risk from fire and other emergencies in their homes. The profile also helps the service develop road safety campaigns and rescue plans in the event of severe flooding.

Hampshire FRS has a good communication and media team. This team uses various methods to inform the public and seek their views on important issues. This includes social media, TV, radio and other methods. For example, the service told us about the success of a public consultation programme to help it to assess fire and other risks in communities. During this consultation, according to data supplied by the service, 450 people attended public meetings, 2,000 questionnaires were completed, and 30,000 people visited Hampshire FRS's website.

We found that the service analyses data carefully, to support the development of its risk profile. It gathers information through three work streams: emerging risks, such as the learning from the Grenfell Tower disaster; global risks; other publicly available consumer data; and information gathered during routine activities, such as premises which it has visited to offer fire safety advice. Hampshire FRS uses information to make sure its activities focus on those who are most at risk from fire and other emergencies. For example, the service has developed a programme of enhanced home fire checks called 'safe and well'. The check is done in the home of a vulnerable person and focuses on their wellbeing in their own home.

Hampshire FRS also has an important role in the local resilience forum (LRF). The LRF is a statutory body which brings together emergency services and other organisations which are responsible for crisis management and disaster recovery, such as local councils. The forum helps Hampshire FRS to make sure that these organisations (which include local businesses and the voluntary sector) have a common understanding of fire and other risks.

Having an effective risk management plan

Fire and rescue services must produce an [integrated risk management plan](#) (IRMP). The plan should include an assessment of all risks to life, and other harm in the community. It is designed to make fire and rescue services more responsive to local needs. We found a clear link between Hampshire FRS's IRMP and its operational activity. For example, the plan helps the service to design safety campaigns such as water safety in the summer, and road safety.

It was also clear to us that Hampshire FRS's IRMP sets out the service's overall direction and future challenges. These include maintaining levels of emergency response and community safety services while faced with financial constraints. Hampshire FRS is using its IRMP as the basis of its change programme: the service delivery redesign programme (SDRP). A main theme of the SDRP is to develop a more flexible response to emergencies using smaller, more versatile vehicles, and smaller teams of firefighters. The IRMP is also being used to develop Hampshire FRS's prevention services to vulnerable people. This includes the service's decision to broaden the purpose of visits to people's homes to include checks on the occupants' wellbeing as well as fire safety advice. This development is in response to the increasing number of older people living in the county.

Maintaining risk information

The service has a policy for identifying and recording risk information and making it available to staff. Risk information is designed to make firefighters aware of hazards they may face when attending incidents. However, we found examples of risk information being out of date because scheduled visits to update the information had not been completed. This means that incident commanders and firefighters might not have all relevant information when responding to emergencies, which might limit their effectiveness.

We found the process for gathering risk information to be inconsistent. In some areas, notably Rushmoor, firefighters routinely visit high-risk premises as part of a co-ordinated programme to familiarise themselves and gather information about risks.

In other areas, particularly those served by retained firefighters (on-call personnel who are not employed full time by the service), knowledge of, and access to, information about known risks was far less assured. Some of the premises where the risk information is out of date are considered high-risk by the service; this includes some heritage sites, such as churches and listed buildings.

Hampshire FRS's vehicles are equipped with [mobile data terminals](#) (MDTs). These are a good way of providing frontline fire crews with risk information. The data available to firefighters includes risk relating to high-risk buildings and hazardous materials transported in vehicles. MDTs also provide access to policies and procedures. This information is also available to staff at Hampshire FRS's [fire control](#) in case the MDT system fails.

Frontline staff told us they are not certain who is responsible for programming inspections so that the risk information can be updated. They don't know whether it's the responsibility of a central headquarters team, or locally based group managers (senior supervisors responsible for geographical areas). They feel that the confusion is contributing to delays in the risk information being updated.

Hampshire FRS is not in a position to provide up-to-date risk information to frontline firefighters. This is an area where we expect the service to improve quickly. This will be examined in future inspections.

Preventing fires and other risks



Good

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

Areas for improvement

- The service should understand why it completes proportionately fewer home fire safety checks than other services.
- The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk.
- The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.

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

Prevention strategy

The [fire and rescue national framework](#) for England requires fire and rescue authorities to make suitable provision for fire prevention and protection activities. The number of home safety checks has decreased in the 12 months to 31 March 2018, when compared to the previous year. The number of checks per 1,000 population in the 12 months to March 2018 is also well below the England rate.

The service's IRMP identifies people over the age of 65 as being the main risk group in the county. In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, 66 percent of all home visits were to the over-65 age group. This is an increase from 58 percent in the previous 12 months. However, this is due to a decrease in the overall number of visits carried out. The actual number of home safety checks to the over-65 age group has decreased from 3,643 visits in the 12 months to 31 March 2017, to 3,305 visits in the 12 months to 31 March 2018.

Hampshire FRS has changed its approach to prevention work. It has removed its performance targets from community safety prevention work, choosing to focus on quality over quantity. At the time of our inspection we found the service had done little to evaluate if this new approach was effective.

The service has several specialist prevention officers. These officers allocate standard visits to staff and volunteers, and take responsibility for the more complex visits themselves. However, the approach to allocating these visits across Hampshire is not consistent, and there is a wide variation in the time taken to complete the visits. Although formal training exists for staff there is no clear quality assurance process. We found some good practice in areas where prevention officers work closely with social care workers. Social workers make frequent requests for Hampshire FRS staff to visit residents who they think are vulnerable. There are also occasions when Hampshire FRS and council staff make joint visits.

Hampshire FRS provides the opportunity for members of the public to make a referral for a safe and well check online. If they do not meet the criteria for a visit, there is the option to receive safety advice online via the 'Safe and Sound' home safety tool.

Promoting community safety

The service promotes community safety well. Hampshire FRS seeks to promote the fire service as a health asset. It has extended its visits to vulnerable people to include general health and wellbeing as well as advice to prevent falls in the home.

Local clinical commissioning groups contracted the service to design a programme called 'safety through education and exercise for resilience' (STEER). It promotes wellbeing in communities on behalf of the NHS, focusing on mobility, social intervention and safety in the home among the elderly. We found another good example of joint working with the NHS in Rushmoor, where FRS staff share premises with a community care team. The co-location of staff and resources has led to a greater shared understanding of community risk. It has also provided opportunities for better information sharing and joint work to support vulnerable people.

The service prioritises campaigns that support specific community safety initiatives based on risk. It has done this since 2015. This includes, for example, road safety programmes in collision hotspots, and seasonal water-safety campaigns. The service has yet to assess whether this new approach benefits the people who take part.

The service has identified that there has been an increase in the number of deliberate fires. It has introduced a programme to reduce the risk of arson. This involves joint networking with other organisations to support people who start fires deliberately. The work includes the rehabilitation of young offenders in prison. Hampshire FRS has also established a joint arson task force with Hampshire Constabulary to do fire investigations. The service informed us that the numbers of detections and prosecutions for arson offences in Hampshire is greater than elsewhere in England.

Hampshire FRS has a good understanding of its [safeguarding](#) responsibilities. Staff are trained to identify people in the community who are vulnerable. They know how to act to safeguard vulnerable people at incidents. A specialist lead officer responsible for safeguarding makes sure that policies and procedures are kept up to date and that staff receive the appropriate training. Staff in the fire control centre play an important role in identifying vulnerable people when contact is first made with the service. We also found that staff know how to report their concerns to social care and other organisations if they think that people need help.

Road safety

Hampshire County Council takes primary responsibility for road safety and casualty reduction in the county. Hampshire FRS plays a significant role in the 'safe drive stay alive' programme, alongside partner organisations. Firefighters bring their experiences of road deaths and serious collisions to a hard-hitting education programme aimed at changing the behaviour of young drivers and their passengers.

Hampshire FRS's communications team has developed several images that promote road safety. These are displayed on fire and rescue vehicles and have been made widely available for use by other organisations involved in road safety.

The service is also working with other emergency services and the Ordnance Survey. This includes looking at different ways to record and predict where accidents might happen, and to put measures in place to reduce casualties.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme.
- The service should assure itself that its commitment to the trading arm does not conflict with its main protection responsibilities or its public service duties.

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in buildings and, where necessary, require building owners to comply with fire safety legislation. Each service decides how many assessments it does each year. But it must have a locally-determined, risk-based inspection programme for enforcing the legislation.

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

Risk-based approach

According to data supplied by the service, Hampshire FRS allocates fewer staff to fire protection duties than in previous years. The number of inspections has been in steady decline since 2010. More positively, the number of high-risk premises that have been visited has increased markedly. In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, Hampshire FRS identified 853 premises as high risk. Of these, 39 percent were audited as part of the risk-based inspection programme within the same time period. The service told us that following the Grenfell Tower fire, it identified and completed over 270 inspections of high-rise premises, working with local authority colleagues to provide advice and support to residents.

According to data provided by the service, it currently has 12 protection officers distributed across the county. These officers are trained and qualified to national standards. However, at times they struggle to balance the demands on their time. Other than inspecting high-risk premises, and their statutory obligations to respond to councils about planning applications, their work is mainly reactive. This means that they will respond to concerns which members of the public raise about fire safety, but more routine visits are limited. We reviewed several case files relating to inspection visits to premises. This showed that several premises scheduled to be audited were overdue for a visit. Hampshire FRS aims to visit high-risk venues every 12 months and medium-risk venues every two years. We found one file that was four years out of date.

In the context of the workload pressures faced by frontline staff and the backlogs in the risk-based inspection programme, we are concerned that at the same time some staff are being made available for commercial activities. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority has set up a business that operates from its service's headquarters. This is overseen by members of the [fire authority](#) who constitute the board of directors. The business provides services to the commercial sector, including: event security business safety training; consultancy; and fire safety risk assessment advice. The business contracts Hampshire FRS staff to provide commercial services for a set period. The service recovers the full cost of these staff. However, we are concerned that the current supply of staff to the business is affecting the inspection programme, which is a primary responsibility of the service.

We are also concerned this arrangement has the potential to create a conflict of interest. Hampshire FRS staff, working on behalf of the business, provide fire safety advice in premises which may later be subject to inspection audits. If the fire safety advice was found to be defective or inadequate, this would create a position where Hampshire FRS was criticising work completed by its own members of staff. Staff completing these audits might find it difficult to remain objective in such circumstances or reluctant to make criticisms.

Hampshire FRS has an action plan to improve performance and is reviewing its risk-based inspection programme, but at time of inspection it was not clear to us how far this has progressed. The service should ensure that its inspection programme is properly resourced in line with its stated aims.

Enforcement

In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, 68 percent of premises inspected for protection purposes were found to be unsatisfactory. Overall, the number of enforcement actions has notably reduced from 25 in the 12 months to 31 March 2016 to one in the 12 months to 31 March 2018. However, there has been an increase in the number of prohibition notices issued during the same period (increasing from 13 to 24). The service believes that this is a sign that it is focusing on the premises that cause the highest risk to the public.

The service works well with other organisations to share information on risk. It works with local authority building control, trading standards and housing teams to support enforcement activity.

Working with others

The service is good at working with others to promote regulatory fire safety requirements. The service handles 30 primary authority schemes (PAS). These allow businesses and organisations with premises in more than one fire authority area to receive fire safety advice from a single fire service. We spoke to several business representatives who benefit from Hampshire FRS's PAS. They were complimentary about the service provided.

The service jointly funds a protection officer to work with Hampshire County Council. This results in more effective sharing of information between Hampshire FRS and the county council. It has led to safety improvements in the council's building stock including the retro-fitting of water sprinkler systems in residential and educational buildings.

Hampshire FRS is less effective at reducing the number of unwanted fire signals (false alarms from fire alarms and detection systems). The number of incidents which the service attended that were false alarms because of apparatus has increased in the 12 months to 31 March 2018, when compared to the same period in 2015. These can place unjustified demands on fire services. Hampshire FRS's protection officers work closely with businesses to identify causes and offer solutions, one notable example being the reduction in calls from Southampton General Hospital.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good

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

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.

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

Managing assets and resources

The service is good at managing its assets and resources. Since 2016, Hampshire FRS has changed how it responds to emergencies. This means that the number of firefighters sent to incidents, and the type of vehicle they travel in, are better suited to the situation. Hampshire FRS's fleet includes first response vehicles, and intermediate and enhanced fire appliances. All of these can be crewed by differing numbers of personnel.

The smaller first response vehicles can be crewed by two firefighters. This means they can respond quickly to an emergency and start to bring it under control. They can gather information and request additional resources should they be needed. The service has given clear guidelines and training for staff to help them to respond to incidents effectively. However, some firefighters we spoke to raised concerns about the limitations of only having two firefighters on a first response vehicle.

Retained firefighters are more positive about the proposal to crew a fire appliance with a minimum of two personnel. At stations where retained firefighters work, there are occasions when it can be difficult to assemble larger crews because of staff availability. The new arrangements mean that firefighters can be deployed in pairs, supported by staff from other fire stations if the circumstances require it.

Firefighter training includes the use of new technology. For example, firefighters have been trained in the use of modern thermal imaging cameras and ultra-high pressure lances. This has helped Hampshire FRS develop a concept of operations known as 'scan, attack, ventilate and enter' (SAVE).

Hampshire FRS has good procedures to understand how changes in staffing levels affect how well it can respond to incidents. This includes the day-to-day fluctuations as well as the more predictable variations in staffing levels. All of these can affect the availability of resources and its response capability. The procedures are known as a degradation plan. This, along with the application of professional knowledge, makes sure that there are sufficient resources available to respond to incidents.

Hampshire FRS carefully monitors the time it takes to attend incidents. Since 2008, data shows that there had been a gradual increase in average attendance times to primary fires, peaking in the 12 months to 31 March 2016 at nine minutes 20 seconds. In the 12 months to 31 March 2017, the average attendance time to a primary fire was nine minutes four seconds.

The service has set itself an ambitious target to attend critical incidents within eight minutes on 80 percent of occasions. The service classes critical incidents as incidents that endanger people or property, such as building fires or road traffic collisions. Data from the service shows that the current performance is 65 percent and the service expects this to increase to 77 percent by 2020. The service should continue its work to improve its attendance time to incidents.

Response

The service is currently amending its policies to reflect [national operational guidance](#). It has already completed a significant amount of this work. This includes new procedures for the use of breathing apparatus and the command of incidents. It knows which areas need updating, and has a plan in place to achieve this.

The service's flexible crewing arrangements mean that it can send the appropriate response based on the type of incident. The initial response also depends on the level of risk the incident presents. All incidents are attended by a pre-determined number of appliances including:

- incidents involving high-rise property;
- when people are reported missing or trapped;
- if hazardous materials are present; and
- rescue from water or at height.

Staff in fire control can use their discretion and alter the level of attendance if the information received justifies it.

Hampshire FRS also works closely with Dorset and Wiltshire FRS, and Devon and Somerset FRS. The services have formed a partnership known as the Network Fire Services Partnership (NFSP). This aims to provide effective joint working across the services. As part of NFSP arrangements, the three fire and rescue services can receive and manage emergency calls in any of their areas. This ensures that fire control staff handle emergency calls in the shortest time possible. And the partnership allows the nearest appliance from any service to be [mobilised](#) to incidents. All three services can provide immediate support in the event of a major incident or a large volume of calls arising from an exceptional weather event (such as flooding).

During our inspection, we saw how well these arrangements worked. A large incident on the Isle of Wight was managed by Hampshire fire control, together with operators located in Dorset and Wiltshire fire control. Hampshire FRS control room also co-ordinated the arrangements for resources to be sent to the Isle of Wight. These arrangements and processes were well-practiced and multi-layered. This resulted in no loss of service to the public of Hampshire or the Isle of Wight.

The service assists the ambulance service with medical emergencies in remote areas of the county. Retained firefighters also operate a system, known as co-responding, to assist the ambulance service. This means that firefighters respond to certain types of medical emergencies and provide care to patients before paramedics arrive at the scene. These arrangements have been working well since 2004. According to data provided by the service, in 2017, the service also attended 1,200 incidents to help paramedics gain access to premises when there were concerns about the wellbeing of the occupant.

Command

The service is good at commanding incidents. Its training follows national guidance. This sets out the skills and experience expected of commanders at four levels, based on the seriousness and size of each incident. Incident commanders have access to relevant policies and procedures using the MDTs and aides-memoire.

The service provides up-to-date training material. It does regular incident command assessments of its staff at all levels. It has recently introduced a state-of-the-art computerised training simulator. This gives incident commanders access to realistic training scenarios to test their skills.

Experienced advisors are mobilised to support those in command at incidents. These advisors assist with decision-making and provide technical knowledge to the incident commander.

Keeping the public informed

The service communicates well with the public. It uses its website and social media to provide accurate and up-to-date information about incidents. The communications team is available at all times and has access to the incident system. The team informs the public about any significant events. This includes large fires, road traffic collisions which cause travel disruption, and other incidents of interest.

The service's communications team works with press and media officers from Hampshire Constabulary. This helps them to provide joint messages about public safety. They use social media to tell local people about incidents as they happen.

Evaluating operational performance

Hampshire FRS has procedures to de-brief incidents. This means it can examine results, identify areas of good practice and find out if it could have done things better. Staff know that larger incidents trigger these procedures. The service shares findings with staff through a number of channels including an e-learning portal, the service's intranet and internal circulars which are known as 'routine notices'. However, we found that not all firefighters understand how to contribute to these procedures. We also found that debriefing for the lower-level or smaller incidents did not always identify formal learning outcomes to be shared across the service. This is an area where the service needs to improve.

The service exchanges learning with other emergency services and with its neighbouring fire and rescue services. This is particularly the case if an incident has involved more than one fire and rescue service. Hampshire FRS has hosted several events to share organisational learning with the fire service community. It proactively seeks to learn from the experiences of incidents elsewhere in the country.

Responding to national risks



Good

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

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

Preparedness

The service has some significant responsibilities as part of its role in the LRF. It contributes to several tried-and-tested plans with other organisations to address national and local risks. These include: major incidents involving the transport network; pandemic flu; large-scale flooding; or other weather-related events. Hampshire FRS has procedures in place to request support from neighbouring fire and rescue services, local authorities and the military if incidents require specialist support.

Several premises in the county are high risk. These include 14 [sites](#) that are designated by the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (COMAH) 2015 according to data provided by the service. The service has agreed and tested out plans with all relevant organisations to manage incidents on these sites.

Working with other services

Hampshire FRS is bordered by Dorset and Wiltshire FRS, Royal Berkshire FRS, Surrey FRS and West Sussex FRS. It also supports the Isle of Wight FRS. The service works hard to ensure that it can properly support neighbouring services. The NFSP and a programme of cross-border exercises with these fire services, together with sharing risk information, means that firefighters feel confident in responding to emergencies in other counties and in providing valued support.

Working with other agencies

The service has plans in place to manage incidents that involve a response from other organisations. The LRF has developed a common understanding of incident command known as the 'emergency response arrangements for incident response'. The forum refers to the national and community risk registers to test and exercise a joint response to the main risks in the area. Hampshire FRS takes part frequently in multi-agency exercises.

Hampshire FRS's incident command training ensures that all officers are qualified to the standard set out in the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles](#) (JESIP). The service is well prepared to respond to incidents as part of a multi-agency response.

Hampshire FRS also contributes to the national mobilisation of firefighters in the event of major incidents. [Wholetime](#) and retained firefighters are made available to the fire and rescue service [national co-ordination centre](#) should the need arise.

Hampshire FRS can mobilise its specialist capabilities and resources to support any national emergency. These include:

- high volume pumps;
- [urban search and rescue](#) teams;
- mass decontamination experts;
- water rescue capabilities; and
- firefighters who are trained to work with the police and ambulance teams in the event of terrorist attacks.

Efficiency



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



Good

Summary

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

The service manages its budgets well. It has been able to make the necessary savings in recent years. It has made realistic plans based on sensible, if slightly cautious, financial predictions. Some of the savings that still need to be made rely on having a more flexible and cost-efficient workforce model. Use of the service's [reserves](#) supports change projects. The service should review whether these funds are sufficient to support all the major projects it has planned.

The service should make better use of the data available which shows how efficient it is or not, compared with other fire services. There are several areas where the service could improve. In addition, there may be better ways to support the change programme and reduce the cost of its support functions.

The service is good at collaborating. It assesses whether these arrangements are working well and makes changes when necessary.

Hampshire FRS makes sure it can recover from unexpected events that might affect its services. It has plans in place and tests these regularly. However, it should extend these plans to cover a wider range of threats and risks, particularly at individual fire stations.

Making best use of resources



Good

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

How plans support objectives

The service has developed its objectives in line with its IRMP. These include identifying existing and potential risks to its communities and assessing the effectiveness of the current preventative and response arrangements.

Hampshire FRS manages its budgets well. The chief finance officer and his accountants have extensive experience in the public sector. The service has achieved the savings required by recent government spending reviews. Deficits to the budget are clearly set out over forthcoming years.

The service takes a cautious approach to setting its budget. Hampshire FRS makes sensible assumptions about pressures such as inflation, pay awards and costs of supplies. There is scope to go further in modelling a range of future scenarios and to consider implications of different levels of business rates and changes in council tax precept.

Savings requirements are clearly identified in the medium-term financial plan. Of the £10m savings needed, £6m have been identified. The remaining savings are linked to the SDRP which includes a more flexible and efficient crewing model.

The service uses priority-based budgeting. This allocates funds according to the service's priorities: across the areas of prevention, protection and response. The service may wish to consider its allocation to its protection activity in light of the concerns we have raised.

Hampshire FRS allocates funds to a transformation reserve to assist its change programmes. These reserves will also be used for forthcoming major projects such as the potential proposal to create a new combined fire authority with Isle of Wight FRS. The proposed combination is currently the subject of public consultation. The strategic change manager is leading this work.

Productivity and ways of working

It is good that the SDRP includes plans to introduce a more flexible and cost-efficient workforce model. The model is currently being tested out, with smaller crews responding to some incidents in vehicles specially adapted for the purpose. These trials are due to finish at the end of 2018.

We consider that Hampshire FRS should make better use of comparative data with other fire services. This would help it make sure its costs and services represent value for money. Another aspect to consider is response times. As experienced elsewhere in England, average response times to primary fires in Hampshire have been

increasing over the past 20 years. In the 12 months to 31 March 2017, the average response time to a primary fire in Hampshire was nine minutes four seconds, indicating that the service may not be achieving its targeted response times (within eight minutes to a critical incident on 80 percent of occasions).

We also believe there is scope for Hampshire FRS to reduce some of its non-operational costs. Several staff are currently removed from frontline duties to manage projects linked to the SDRP. This means that their day-to-day responsibilities are allocated to staff who are temporarily promoted, and several firefighters have been recruited on temporary contracts. Some of these abstractions from frontline duties are for a long time. This is causing uncertainty in the workforce and restricting promotion opportunities for some staff. The service should review how it uses staff to support the SDRP.

Collaboration

The service has collaboration arrangements in place with other emergency services, the NHS, local authorities and the voluntary sector. It is seen as a partner of choice for the other emergency services. In many places – for example at Rushmoor – paramedics, police officers and other public sector workers share premises owned by Hampshire FRS. As well as this leading to better working relationships, it is a good source of income for the service.

The service has an established track record of collaboration. This includes a fleet-maintenance programme shared with other fire and rescue services, and a shared back office function partnership with Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire County Council.

The benefits of these collaborations are monitored carefully, and adjustments made when necessary. For example, the service has recently taken ICT services back in-house, as it identified that the current provider was no longer cost effective.

Continuity arrangements

Hampshire FRS takes business continuity seriously. It makes sure it can recover from unforeseen events affecting its services. This important area is the responsibility of chief officers.

Senior officers lead several exercises and tests to check that the service's business continuity plans work effectively. For example, if the fire control centre lost power supply, the service has made checks to see how well 999 calls can be handled in neighbouring fire services. Evacuation plans have also been tested at Hampshire FRS's headquarters and joint exercises are held with other organisations as part of the LRF arrangements to assess business recovery in times of crisis.

We saw how Hampshire FRS managed to maintain its levels of service during snowfalls earlier this year and recovered well from ICT failures because effective plans were in place.

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



Good

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

Improving value for money

The service is good at making savings and investing into new areas of business to secure its future. In the first government spending review period, Hampshire FRS far exceeded its savings requirement. It plans to assign £5m annually to support its investment programme. This aims to improve facilities in the service's 52 buildings, 51 of which are fire stations, and introduce modern technology across the service.

Joint working with other fire services and commercial partners reduces Hampshire FRS's operating costs and, in some areas, generates income. For example, the service told us that it receives in excess of £1m annually from other public sector services that base their staff in Hampshire FRS buildings.

Hampshire FRS also allocates funds to a transformation reserve to encourage improvements and make efficiencies. This has funded the recruitment of change professionals with proven track records in bringing efficiencies to the public sector. It also helps fund the service's SDRP. It is too early to assess the extent to which the planned efficiencies will be realised. However, it is ambitious in that the service is introducing more flexible resourcing and aims to make sustainable service improvements at reduced cost.

The service intends to make use of Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy [benchmarking](#) practices. Joint services are in place with Hampshire County Council, including financial services, procurement and contract management.

Innovation

Hampshire FRS is committed to making changes and improvements to improve services and save money. It is digitalising its services, and already provides frontline staff with MDTs to assess risks at incidents. Its plans to introduce a more modern fleet of vehicles, and to deploy firefighters in a more flexible way are innovative and reflect well on the service's ambitions.

Although plans are far-reaching, we heard from staff that the replacement of some ICT applications led to loss of data. The service should review whether this is the case and should make sure the benefits of new ways of working do not negatively affect existing systems.

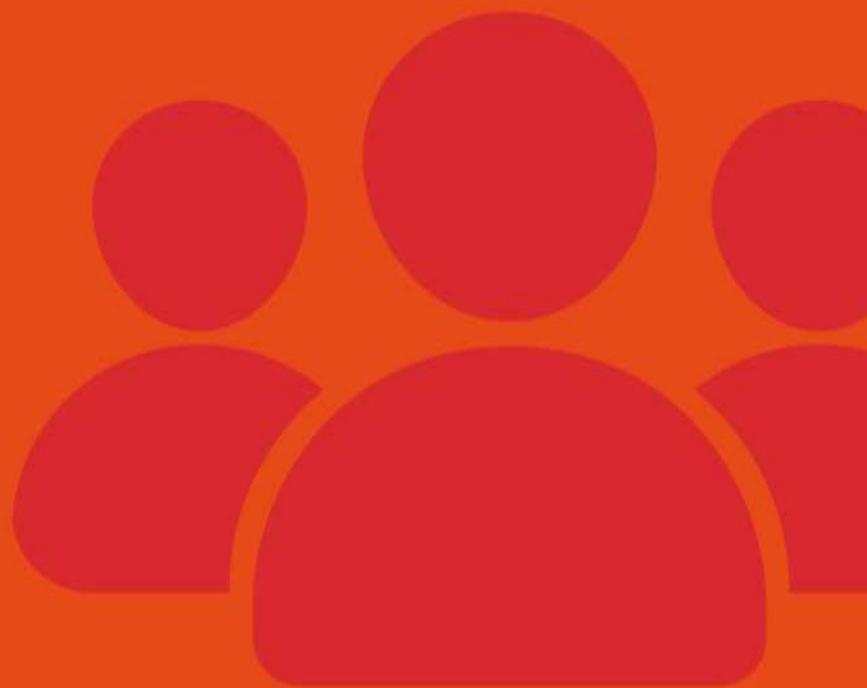
Close working with other organisations, both within and outside the fire service, demonstrates good business sense. The service has been able to generate income from its extensive estate and the sale of its services.

Future investment and working with others

Hampshire FRS has been at the forefront of the 'one public estate' concept. It has already brought together some emergency services into joint use premises. Hampshire FRS and the Isle of Wight FRS are also considering a potential proposal to create a new combined fire authority. This is to make the services more efficient and provide other business benefits. The plans are currently the subject of public consultation.

The service already supports the ambulance service by responding to some medical incidents. Staff have been trained so that they have the necessary skills for this. The two organisations are currently discussing whether to extend this further.

People



How well does the service look after its people?



Requires improvement

Summary

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

The service does not do enough to promote the right values and culture. Some staff we interviewed talked about a culture of bullying and domineering behaviour from managers. It was not clear how widespread or current these problems were. It would be beneficial to introduce a formal set of expected values and behaviour.

The diversity and inclusion team is doing some excellent work. It aims to make the service more representative of the community by recruiting and retaining minority members of staff. Its work needs to be supported more by the chief officer team so that it extends to the whole organisation. The service has an Inclusion and Diversity strategy and planned work streams and activity, but it has work to do to develop this area further to ensure that the recruitment, retention, development and progression of staff is open and fair to all. It should take immediate steps to improve its standards as this is a cause of concern.

The service has a good intranet site. However, its communication with its staff is limited. Many members of staff do not think that their views will be listened to. It is important that the service addresses concerns raised in the staff surveys. The service provides good wellbeing support but could improve how it manages sickness.

The service understands the skills of its workforce. It trains its staff well and plans to get the right people in the right places. It needs to develop its culture of learning and improvement. It should also make more use of the wider skills of its retained firefighters. There are concerns about the promotion process, which staff feel needs to be more open and fair. The service also needs to review how it uses temporary promotions as this is causing some problems.

We found that the service could do more to develop its future leaders. It does not assess staff performance properly. The service needs to make sure that processes to identify learning and development are consistent. It should also bring in a programme to identify and provide development opportunities for its gifted and talented staff.

Promoting the right values and culture



Requires improvement

Areas 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.
- The service should assure itself that staff understand and have confidence in the service's grievance and absence management policies.

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

Workforce wellbeing

The service has an established [trauma risk management](#) (TRiM) programme to support staff who have had experiences that have affected them physically or emotionally. Staff spoke positively of this programme. They feel they have easy access to it and it offers a practical means of support to those who need it.

Support networks are also in place for staff who suffer from stress, anxiety or depression. Trained mental health first aiders are available to support colleagues at various locations. These individuals spoke passionately of their responsibilities and frontline staff value their support. It is encouraging that staff can speak openly about mental health without fear of stigma.

Health and safety

Hampshire FRS promotes health and safety with its staff. According to data provided by the service there has been an increase in the number of reported 'near miss' events. These are occasions when firefighters have had experiences which could have compromised their personal safety, but no harm actually happened. This is a positive development as it indicates frontline staff have the confidence to report their concerns.

The service's procedures and policies relating to staff grievances and managing staff sickness are not fully effective. We heard that supervisors are not trained to manage these functions effectively, that grievances take too long to resolve and that staff on sick leave are not given appropriate support. Staff are also concerned about whether the county council's shared HR services can manage fire and rescue cases properly. They are not confident that the occupational health unit fully understands the needs of the fire and rescue service.

Culture and values

Hampshire FRS's senior officers told us that they have chosen not to formalise or publish a set of values or behaviours. They prefer to recognise that everyone is different, and that individuals and teams should abide by their own standards. We are not convinced that this approach is working, but recognise that it takes time to embed a relatively new approach.

We found examples of:

- gender-exclusive language;
- some staff telling us about a culture of bullying;
- reports of domineering behaviour by managers; and
- inconsistencies in promotion processes.

Some female firefighters told us they feel undervalued, partly because of language which they considered divisive which they didn't consider was tackled sufficiently by senior managers.

Several retained firefighters also stated that they felt undervalued by the service. They told us that wholetime colleagues often comment about their levels of competence and abilities, even though they are all trained to the same level.

Staff told us they have experienced management styles that they considered to be both domineering behaviour and that could lead to a culture of bullying. We also found irregularities in promotion processes. In many of the organisations we inspect, promotion processes are cross-referenced to organisational values. In Hampshire FRS, the person who decides what capabilities will be assessed is the person in charge of selection. Staff lack confidence in the fairness of these processes. The service told us work is underway to improve promotion processes based on staff feedback.

There can be no guarantee that these concerns would be addressed even if chief officers defined the values and behaviours expected of the workforce. However, having an agreed set of standards would be a useful benchmark for members of staff to consider how best to conduct themselves. We recognise the recently appointed senior team's intention to refocus the organisational culture in the coming months and look forward to this work coming to fruition. It would also help senior leaders to role-model the standards of behaviour they expect.

We discuss our concern again in the section 'Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity' and we detail steps the service needs to take.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

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

Workforce planning

Hampshire FRS has mapped out the skills of its workforce and how this plan will be affected by events such as retirements and resignations. The resource management group, chaired by a lead HR professional, oversees this planning and meets frequently. This ensures that the skills and capability of the service are maintained.

We found risk-critical training to be up to date. Accurate records are kept, and the skills and competencies of staff are available for everyone to view. This is important, for example, when fire control staff decide what resources to send to an incident.

On a day-to-day basis, Hampshire FRS maintains a minimum level of four firefighters for each fire engine that's crewed by wholetime staff. If there is a shortfall in available staff, vacant positions are filled from the 'bank'. The bank is a facility for firefighters who are willing to be called in when they are on a day off. Staff reported that there are times when some of the specialist appliances are not available because the bank staff did not have the necessary skills to operate them.

Hampshire FRS's training academy provides some opportunity for retained firefighters to complete training at weekends. However, some retained staff feel that these training requirements are too much of a burden alongside their primary employment commitments and family life. It was also clear to us that the service does not recognise and make use of the skills which these firefighters have acquired as part of their full time employment. These skills may be of use to Hampshire FRS. For example, some firefighters have nationally recognised chainsaw qualifications as part of their work in forestry. It would be a positive step for the service to gather information about all the skills that people in its workforce have.

Learning and improvement

Hampshire FRS maintains the skills and competencies required of operational firefighters. However, it needs to do more to develop a culture of learning and improvement in the service.

The training academy provides positive opportunities for learning. Instructors are allocated to specific fire stations to ensure that skills are up to date. This includes training on road traffic collisions, rescues from a height, and animal rescue, for example. However, the opportunities to address personal development and 'softer skills' are less clear. Some managers – notably at Redbridge fire station – take it on themselves to provide mentoring and coaching support for their staff. This is commendable. While the service informed us there is a structured programme of individual development across the service we found its use inconsistent across the service. This issue is especially the case for non-operational staff. There is no structured programme of individual development for non-operational staff.

We found that the use of annual staff appraisals is inconsistent. In some cases they are not completed at all and in others they are described as meaningless. This means that the service is overlooking a valuable opportunity to identify learning and development needs. Non-operational staff in particular told us that their development opportunities were limited.

Hampshire FRS has identified that communication with, and support of, retained firefighters could be improved. Staff feel that the introduction of support officers to enhance lines of communication is a positive step, as it provides an opportunity to assess their developmental needs.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement

Cause of concern

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service doesn't do enough to be an inclusive employer. We found signs of low morale in the workforce. People have little confidence that they will be treated fairly or that senior leaders have their best interests at heart.

Recommendations

By 30 June 2019, the service should:

- embed a programme to ensure that inclusion, fairness, equalities and professional development are priorities for the service;
- ensure that its recruitment activities are open and accessible to all of Hampshire's communities;
- treat employees according to their needs so they feel valued;
- ensure that each person's potential can be developed so they can perform to their very best;
- ensure that the chief officer team leads the programme, actively promoting the values of the organisation; and
- ensure that everyone knows how they contribute to the values.

Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself that staff are confident using its feedback mechanisms, so these help the service gather valuable information. It should put in place an action plan to address the concerns raised by staff in the recent staff surveys.

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

Seeking and acting on staff feedback

The service is poor at communicating with its staff. Staff report a culture that does not welcome feedback. We particularly heard that middle managers do not like being challenged.

We recognise as positive practice that the service undertakes staff surveys. It carried out a cultural survey earlier this year. However, less than half the workforce responded, although this is an increase from the previous survey. This suggests that the service could be doing more to communicate with its workforce. More worrying is the fact that many staff told us the service has not yet addressed the matters raised in the 2016 staff survey. This was a reason given for the lack of interest in the recent survey. Hampshire FRS needs to understand why so few respondents take part in staff surveys. It also needs to demonstrate a commitment to positive change by acting on the matters raised.

By contrast, despite some staff telling us they were reluctant to use the service's intranet site as the information was hard to find and not user-friendly, inspectors found it easy to use with relevant and current information. This includes information about staff wellbeing and access to services, chief officer blogs and service updates with current news and important developments.

Hampshire FRS's chief officers have a policy of visiting staff at fire stations on a regular scheduled programme. The frontline workforce welcomes this. However, they feel that when they raise something that matters with senior leaders they should be given more of a guaranteed response.

Diversity

More work needs to be done to make the workforce more representative. As at 31 March 2018, less than 1 percent of firefighters were from a black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) background. Minority population groups form 7 percent of Hampshire's communities.

Hampshire FRS's diversity and inclusion team has established several support groups. These form part of a network to address the interests of:

- women in the workplace ('fire inspire');
- lesbian and gay interests ('fire out');
- staff from ethnic minority backgrounds;
- disability groups ('fire able'); and
- religion, ethnicity and cultural heritage ('fireReach').

The diversity and inclusion team and volunteer staff work hard to make the workforce more representative of Hampshire's communities. We saw several examples of this including:

- innovative use of social media to launch 'have a go' campaigns to boost recruitment;
- innovative joint working with disability groups to place employees into non-operational posts; and
- outreach work at Southampton Pride to promote Hampshire FRS as a career.

However, although one of the service's priorities is to make the workforce more representative, it needs to do more to make this a reality. Too much currently rests with the small diversity and inclusion team and its volunteer networks. We do not feel that the recruitment, retention and progression of minority members of staff is being given strong direction or support from the chief officer team.

We spoke with female firefighters who expressed dissatisfaction with some of Hampshire FRS's facilities. In some fire stations, dormitories (for rest periods) are for use by both men and women and there are no designated female shower facilities. We were told that some personal protective equipment is 'one size fits all' (for example water rescue clothing), which makes things difficult for smaller women. Female firefighters also explained how uniform trousers are only designed for men. The service informed us that it has plans in place to buy additional sizes of water rescue clothing and its new fire kit it is rolling out is gender specific and fully fitted to each individual.

Although female uniform is a challenge for the fire service nationally, firefighters we spoke to felt that Hampshire FRS should do more to support their need for better uniform.

We are particularly concerned at the proportion of staff recorded as leaving the service during the year ending 31 March 2018. The majority of these are firefighters. At present the service is unable to identify why people are leaving the service in such numbers. The service believes that the high number of recorded leavers may be due to the service's use of fixed term contracts. However, it is not clear if the service fully understands why people are leaving the service in such high numbers. The service needs to research this, and take action to address the findings.

The service should have a diversity strategy to ensure that the recruitment, retention, development and progression of staff is open to all on a fair and equitable basis. The service has much work to do to be an employer of choice when judged by contemporary standards. This is a cause of concern. The service needs to take immediate steps to meet these standards. The momentum needs to come from the top of the organisation and everyone should play a part in making this happen.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has an effective system in place to manage staff development, performance, promotion and productivity.
- The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.
- The service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open, transparent and fair, including its position on the use and length of temporary promotions.

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

Managing performance

Staff performance reviews do not meet the standards that we would expect of a fire and rescue service. Some staff told us that personal development interviews were available with their managers, but there was no evidence of a structured programme of performance appraisals.

The absence of an effective performance review process linked to an individual's development is a significant shortcoming. Despite the process being refreshed in 2017, it is seen as being over-complicated and of little value. Its application is inconsistent, and the process is not embraced by the workforce. We were also concerned to find that some managers – for whatever reason – choose not to lead change programmes.

Performance development reviews are designed to stretch people in their current position, identify talent and set people onto career pathways, but this is not currently effective. Attempts to revive an effective process in Hampshire FRS have failed. As an immediate priority, the service should implement a reliable procedure. This is an area we will examine carefully in subsequent inspections.

Developing leaders

Hampshire FRS needs to set out its workforce requirements for the future. All its staff should have access to career development and progression opportunities that support Hampshire FRS achieving its ambitions. However, career progression and succession planning are not a strength of the organisation.

Staff consistently reported significant concerns about the lack of an open and transparent promotion process. They told us that the promotion process is unfair and lacked openness, rather than being a genuine attempt to identify the talent of the future. We found no formal guidance about the operational competencies required for someone seeking promotion. This means that managers are 'signing off' applicants as being ready for promotion, without reference to any criteria or standard. Staff told us they were uncertain whether the next promotion process – the first for more than five years – was going to offer fair and open opportunities for all. The service has told us it has plans at an advanced stage to improve promotion processes which it should implement and embed as soon as possible to make sure it offers fair opportunity for everyone.

The number of individuals who have been temporarily promoted for long periods is causing problems. This is something the service needs to address. The situation leaves these individuals uncertain whether they will have to revert to their former position at some point, and it has blocked development opportunities for other members of staff. It has created a shortage of firefighters on the front line which the service has filled using its retained firefighters on short-term contracts. These individuals are keen to become full time employees and gave up their full time jobs to work with Hampshire FRS. Although the service is clear they offered these contracts without any guarantee of permanent employment at the end of their short-term contract, it does not appear this message has been heard consistently across the service.

Hampshire FRS has a 'pathway to promotion' process known as P2P. Operational staff do not view this positively though. For example, people temporarily promoted into positions have been told they will not be considered competent for substantive promotion positions as part of P2P. This has created a feeling of uncertainty and mistrust of senior managers by the workforce. P2P is also disliked by retained firefighters. They are required by the service to meet the same safety critical operational assurance processes as full time firefighters and so they do not feel have sufficient study time and their access to practical experience may be limited. The service should review this situation and introduce a programme that will identify and provide development opportunities for its gifted and talented staff.

Annex A – About the data

Data in this report is from a range of sources, including:

- Home Office;
- Office for National Statistics (ONS);
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA);
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 45 fire and rescue services in England.

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

We use different data periods to represent trends more accurately.

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

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

We set out the source of Service in numbers data below.

Methodology

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use [ONS mid-2017 population estimates](#). This is the most recent data available at the time of inspection.

BMG survey of public perception of the fire and rescue service

We commissioned BMG to survey attitudes towards fire and rescue services in June and July 2018. This consisted of 17,976 interviews across 44 local fire and rescue service areas. This survey didn't include the Isles of Scilly, due to its small population. Most interviews were conducted online, with online research panels.

However, a minority of the interviews (757) were conducted via face-to-face interviews with trained interviewers in respondents' homes. A small number of respondents were also interviewed online via postal invitations to the survey. These face-to-face interviews were specifically targeted at groups traditionally under-represented on online panels, and so ensure that survey respondents are as representative as possible of the total adult population of England. The sampling method used isn't a statistical random sample. The sample size was small, varying between 400 and 446 individuals in each service area. So any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

[Survey findings are available on BMG's website.](#)

Service in numbers

A dash in this graphic indicates that a service couldn't give data to us or the Home Office.

Perceived effectiveness of service

We took this data from the following question of the public perceptions survey:

How confident are you, if at all, that the fire and rescue service in your local area provides an effective service overall?

The figure provided is a sum of respondents who stated they were either 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'. Respondents could have also stated 'not very confident', 'not at all confident' or 'don't know'. The percentage of 'don't know' responses varied between services (ranging from 5 percent to 14 percent).

Due to its small residential population, we didn't include the Isles of Scilly in the survey.

Incidents attended per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Incidents attended by fire and rescue services in England, by incident type and fire and rescue authority](#)' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

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

- There are six worksheets in this file. The 'FIRE0102' worksheet shows the number of incidents attended by type of incident and [fire and rescue authority](#) (FRA) for each financial year. The 'FIRE0102 Quarterly' worksheet shows the number of incidents attended by type of incident and FRA for each quarter. The worksheets 'Data fires', 'Data fire false alarms' and 'Data non-fire incidents' provide the raw data for the two main data tables. The 'Figure 3.3' worksheet provides the data for the corresponding chart in the statistical commentary.
- Fire data, covering all incidents that FRSs attend, is collected by the Incident Recording System (IRS). For several reasons some records take longer than others for FRSs to upload to the IRS. So totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers).
- We took data for Service in numbers from the August 2018 incident publication. So figures may not directly match more recent publications due to data updates.

Home fire risk checks per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Home fire risk checks carried out by fire and rescue authorities and partners, by fire and rescue authority](#)' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Each FRS's figure is based on the number of checks it carried out and doesn't include checks carried out by partners.

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

- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.
- The England total hours figures for 'Number of Fire Risk Checks carried out by FRS' include imputed figures to ensure a robust national figure. These imputed figures are: '2016/17 – Staffordshire'.
- Figures for 'Fire Risk Checks carried out by Elderly (65+)', 'Fire Risk Checks carried out by Disabled' and 'Number of Fire Risk Checks carried out by Partners' don't include imputed figures because a lot of FRAs can't supply these figures.

Home fire risk checks may also be referred to as Home Fire Safety Checks by FRSs.

Fire safety audits per 100 known premises

Fire protection refers to FRSs' statutory role in ensuring public safety in the wider built environment. It involves auditing and, where necessary, enforcing regulatory compliance, primarily but not exclusively in respect of the provisions of the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005 \(FSO\)](#). The number of safety audits in Service in numbers refers to the number of audits FRSs carried out in known premises.

According to the Home Office definition, “premises known to FRAs are the FRA’s knowledge, as far as possible, of all relevant premises; for the enforcing authority to establish a risk profile for premises in its area. These refer to all premises except single private dwellings”.

We took this from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Fire safety audits carried out by fire and rescue services, by fire and rescue authority](#)' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

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

- Berkshire FRS didn't provide figures for premises known between 2014/15 and 2017/18.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.
- Several FRAs report 'Premises known to FRAs' as estimates based on historical data.

Firefighter cost per person per year

We took the data to calculate firefighter cost per person per year from the annual financial data returns that individual FRSs complete and submit to CIPFA, and [ONS mid-2017 population estimates](#).

You should consider this data alongside the proportion of firefighters who are wholetime and on-call / retained.

Number of firefighters per 1,000 population, five-year change in workforce and percentage of wholetime firefighters

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Total staff numbers \(full-time equivalent\) by role and by fire and rescue authority](#)' as at 31 March 2018.

Table 1102a: Total staff numbers (FTE) by role and fire authority – Wholetime Firefighters and table 1102b: Total staff numbers (FTE) by role and fire authority – Retained Duty System are used to produce the total number of firefighters.

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

- We calculate these figures using full-time equivalent (FTE) numbers. FTE is a metric that describes a workload unit. One FTE is equivalent to one full-time worker. But one FTE may also be made up of two or more part-time workers whose calculated hours equal that of a full-time worker. This differs from headcount, which is the actual number of the working population regardless if employees work full or part-time.
- Some totals may not aggregate due to rounding.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

Percentage of female firefighters and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) firefighters

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Staff headcount by gender, fire and rescue authority and role](#)' and '[Staff headcount by ethnicity, fire and rescue authority and role](#)' as at 31 March 2018.

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

- We calculate BAME residential population data from ONS 2011 census data.
- We calculate female residential population data from ONS mid-2017 population estimates.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

Annex B – Fire and rescue authority governance

These are the different models of fire and rescue authority (FRA) governance in England. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service is a combined FRA.

Metropolitan FRA

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

Combined FRA

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

County FRA

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

Unitary authorities

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

London

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

Mayoral Combined Authority

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

Police, fire and crime commissioner FRA

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

Isles of Scilly

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

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