HMICFRS

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
and Fire & Rescue Services

Fire & Rescue Service
Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Contents

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 Hertfordshire 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

	Hertfordshire	England
Perceived effectiveness of service Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)	85%	86%

Response

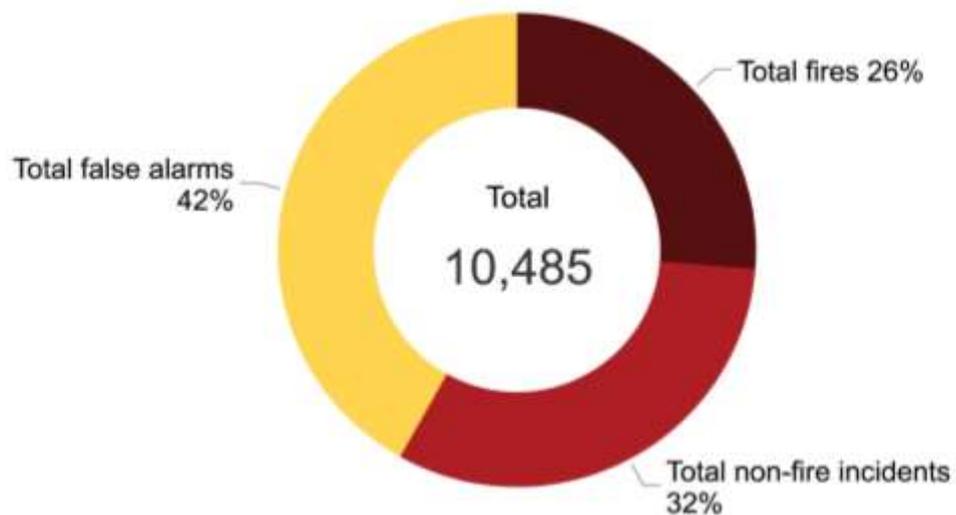|	Hertfordshire	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	8.9	10.2
Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	3.0	10.4
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises 12 months to 31 March 2018	1.0	3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 31 March 2018

Total fires 26%

Total false alarms 42%

Total
10,485

Total non-fire incidents 32%

£ Cost

	Hertfordshire	England
Firefighter cost per person per year 12 months to 31 March 2018	£21.29	£22.38

Workforce

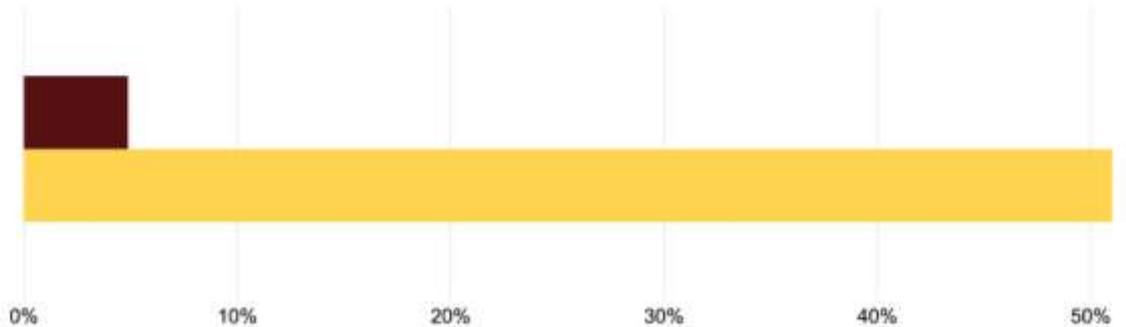|	Hertfordshire	England
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population As at 31 March 2018	0.5	0.6
Five-year change in workforce As at 31 March 2013 compared with 31 March 2018	-9%	-14%
Percentage of wholetime firefighters As at 31 March 2018	74%	70%

Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population

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

● BAME firefighters ● BAME residential population
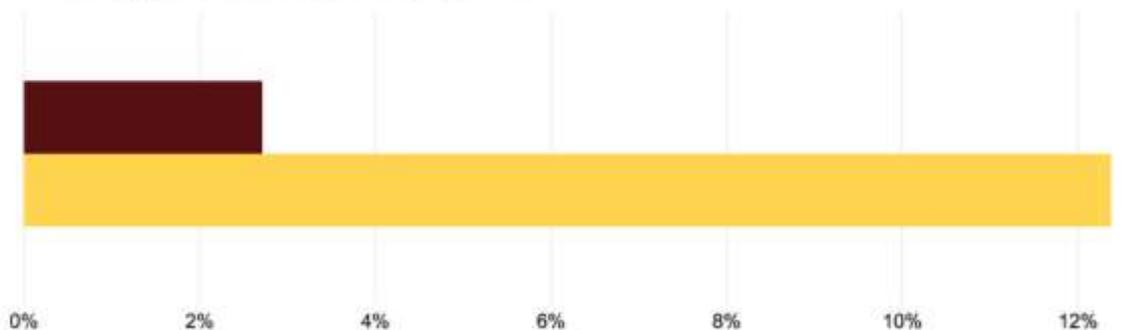
Please refer to annex A for full details on data used.

Overview

⚙ **Effectiveness**	●●○○○	**Requires improvement**
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	●●○○○	Requires improvement
Preventing fires and other risks	●●○○○	Requires improvement
Protecting the public through fire regulation	●●●○	Good
Responding to fires and other emergencies	●●●○	Good
Responding to national risks	●●●○	Good

£ **Efficiency**	●●○○○	**Requires improvement**
Making best use of resources	●●○○○	Requires improvement
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	●●○○	Requires improvement

People   **Requires improvement**

Promoting the right values and culture	Requires improvement
Getting the right people with the right skills	Requires improvement
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Requires improvement
Managing performance and developing leaders	Requires improvement

Overall summary of inspection findings

We are satisfied with some aspects of the performance of Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure. But there are several areas where it needs to make improvements.

The service must improve its effectiveness. More specifically, it should understand better its risk and put in place a new integrated risk management plan (IRMP). There has been a delay because of uncertainty about its future governance model. However, since our inspection we note that the service has proceeded with developing an IRMP. The service should also improve its prevention work.

Positively, we found it was good at:

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

The service needs to be more efficient. It should use its resources better and it should ensure it offers, and continues to offer, an affordable service.

The service needs to do better at looking after its people. It should improve the way it:

- promotes the right values and culture;
- gets the right people with the right skills;
- ensures fairness and promotes diversity; and
- manages performance and develops leaders.

Overall, we would like to see improvements in the year ahead.

Effectiveness

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

Requires improvement

Summary

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

The service does not have an up-to-date integrated risk management plan (IRMP), which is the central planning document that sets out local risks and how the service plans to manage them, and to allocate its resources. All fire and rescue services (FRSs) are required to produce an IRMP which is available to the public. IRMPs must be at least three-year plans which should be regularly reviewed, to make sure the service can properly understand the risks and make sure it is well equipped to respond to those risks and protect the public. Since our inspection we note that the service has proceeded with developing an IRMP.

Leaders in the service and the council are aware they need a new IRMP and have recently put plans in place to address this. However, there have been delays as a result of uncertainty about the future governance model for the service. We remain concerned that, given the importance of this plan in ensuring the effective and efficient provision of fire and rescue services, they are not tackling the situation with sufficient urgency.

Having an out of date IRMP has a knock-on effect on planning and effectiveness right across Hertfordshire FRS. For example, the service has not engaged meaningfully with the public or other local services to understand the current and future risks in Hertfordshire – this engagement would usually happen as part of the IRMP consultation. Much of its planned development work is on hold. Local risk profiles are out of date, and due to problems with technology crews are not always able to access the information they need to keep the public safe.

The service's prevention strategy is about to expire, and it has done some work to target the people most at risk of fire and other emergencies, however this could be improved. Although we found evidence of some innovative work on community safety, campaigns are inconsistent across the county. The service does not adequately evaluate its campaigns, so it is not possible to know what effect they are having.

We found some good work on enforcement, with the service taking a range of measures to make sure that businesses comply with fire regulations. More should be done to tackle false alarms, or 'unwanted fire signals'. The service is generally good at responding to fires and other emergencies across the county. It is also well placed to respond to national incidents.

Due to problems with its software and pagers, the service does not always allocate resources efficiently. Control room staff cannot accurately assess how many on-call staff are available, and so they tend to allocate more resources than they need.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should put in place an effective integrated risk management plan to ensure it keeps the public safe and secure from the risk of fire. This plan should be based on comprehensive use of data and accurate understanding of risk, including consistent use of operational data to test the risk profile.

- The service needs to improve how it engages with the local community to build up a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area.

- The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to 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

All fire and rescue services are required to produce an integrated risk management plan (IRMP). This identifies the current and future risks to local communities and sets out the ways in which the service plans to manage those risks. However, Hertfordshire's IRMP is out of date, having been published in 2014, based on risk information gathered between 2009 and 2013. Therefore, the service is planning services based on information that is in some instances ten years old.

This means that it cannot be sure it understands current and future risks, or that it is allocating resources appropriately to manage those risks. The service is aware of the gravity of this problem – the out of date IRMP appears as the highest risk on the corporate risk register – and yet we remain concerned that it is not tackling the situation with sufficient urgency.

The service had held off preparing a new plan, pending a decision on the future governance of the fire and rescue service. The police and crime commissioner for Hertfordshire had submitted a business case to the Home Office to transfer governance of the fire service. In the summer of 2018, the county council leadership acknowledged that it could no longer continue to delay the proper planning of these services and asked the service to draw up a new IRMP in time for setting the 2019/20 budget. The service plans to present its recommendations to the council by the autumn, with a view to finalising a new IRMP in time to inform the council's financial planning for 2019/20 onwards. This will be a challenging timescale for such an important piece of work, which not only requires comprehensive risk analysis, it also requires sufficient time to properly consult the public of Hertfordshire as well as partner organisations.

Because the service has not kept its risk management planning up to date, it has had a knock-on effect on planning and engagement right across the service. Without this comprehensive understanding of current and future risk, the service can't properly review and update its community protection directorate plan, or its prevention, protection and response strategies, which all expire during 2018.

We did find that the service has taken some limited measures to understand local risk. The senior leadership group (SLG) considers some risk information, such as local context, pattern and causes of emergency incidents. It also works with community safety partnerships – which include the council, the police and health services – to discuss and assess local risks. However, it is unclear how it uses this information to make improvements.

At an individual fire station level, the service has produced station risk profiles, which set out the particular risks in each locality. However again these only include information up to March 2016. They do not include 2017/18 incident data and are limited in scope. They have not yet been shared with FRS managers, so they are not being used to inform decision making or resource allocation.

Partner organisations, such as the local authority and public health, share risk information with the service. This data helps identify people who are particularly at risk from fires. It includes census data, demographics, health and wellbeing information, deprivation indices and district profiles. This data is seven years old but is about to be updated. The service could not show us how it is currently using this information.

The service has commissioned research on accidental fatal fires within homes in Hertfordshire, between 1 January 2000 and 31 March 2017. But it could not show us how the findings from this research have been used in policy and practice.

Having an effective risk management plan

The fact that the IRMP is out of date means that the service does not have a strong basis for making decisions. There has been little progress in assessing current, emerging and future changes in the county-wide risk profile. The 2014–18 IRMP set out 30 different areas in which the service would look at making improvements; currently much of this development is on hold.

The service has access to a broad range of data, including local forecasts in economic growth and infrastructure, but it was not able to show us how this will inform the future IRMP. Although it has specialist geographical information and mapping software, managers lack awareness of its capability.

Another area of concern is the service's attendance standards, which set targets for the response times for fire engines attending emergencies. The service is planning simply to reaffirm its existing standards without review, but these will be based on data that is ten years old. There may have been significant changes to local risks over that time – the service should be reviewing attendance standards based on up-to-date research.

Maintaining risk information

[Wholetime firefighters](#) work with fire safety specialists to gather and understand risk information about individual premises. Information about high-risk premises is recorded on an 'operational risk information management' form. This process improves the quality of risk information collected, increases firefighters' knowledge of risks in their areas and checks that premises visited comply with fire safety standards.

Wholetime firefighters systematically inspect and update the site-specific risk information (SSRI). They check that businesses in their station areas – such as factories, shops or buildings with sleeping accommodation – meet fire regulations, and they make sure they are ready to respond in an emergency. However, we found that not all on-call staff were as familiar with local risks.

The service also has access to basic risk information for sites that are not covered by the SSRI process. It identifies emerging and temporary risks with partners, such as the police, the local authority and trading standards. They prepare temporary local tactical plans and share short-term changes using the mobile computers installed on fire engines. But while the service is good at gathering risk information, it does not have an effective IT system to make this information available to all operational staff.

The service is aware of the community risk register, which sets out main risks in the county, through its leadership of the local resilience forum (LRF). It uses this information with partners to guide and test response planning for major incidents.

Preventing fires and other risks

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Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
>
> - The service should review and update its prevention strategy to take account of risks.
>
> - The service should assure itself it allocates the right resources and does enough of the right type of prevention work.
>
> - 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 service's prevention strategy is derived from the IRMP and has not been updated to take account of current and future risks. Without current county-wide risk information, staff adapt their work based on what they know of locally emerging risks. This means the service cannot be assured it is targeting prevention activity at the areas where it could have the greatest positive effect.

Hertfordshire FRS works well with other county council departments, particularly the public health service. This has had some effect: for example, the service has increased the scope of home fire safety checks and put in place protocols to guide how to handle people who are hoarding possessions in their homes. We found that staff could identify potential vulnerability and safeguarding issues and refer them on to the right organisation to deal with them.

However, it could do more to ensure that prevention work is better targeted at those most at risk of fire and other emergencies. The service offers free home fire safety checks for all and advertises these at local events which are not targeted at particularly vulnerable people. It does assess online applications and prioritise from them people who are likely to be at greater risk. Stations also receive a list of

higher-risk addresses to visit in their area, but they do not prioritise these over other home fire safety checks. The information they are given is often out of date and inaccurate.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, the service conducted 3,512 home fire safety checks. This represents a rate of 3.0 visits per 1,000 population, which is lower than the England rate of 10.4 visits per 1,000 population. The number of checks conducted has also decreased when compared with the same period in 2017. Additionally, in the 12 months to 31 March 2018, a smaller percentage of checks were to people with disabilities when compared with other services. The number of checks on the elderly has had a slight increase in the 12 months to 31 March 2018 when compared to the same time period in 2017.Staff are frustrated that their time is not better spent on helping those most in need.

Promoting community safety

The service works well with the county council, police, probation and trading standards to prevent fire and other emergencies and protect the public. Through the joint protective services team, these organisations work effectively together to tackle arson, fire-setting, domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour and alcohol and drug abuse.

The service shares information with the police about deliberate fires and does targeted street patrols aimed at reducing arson. Firefighters visit local businesses to advise them on how to reduce the risk of fire – for example, safe storage and timely clearance of waste. Community safety staff identify trends in arson-related incidents, and voluntary and staff counsellors support those who have a history of fire-setting. According to evaluation data supplied by the service, 92 percent of those who received counselling in 2016/17 and 85 percent in 2017/18 did not reoffend.

We found evidence of some innovative community safety work. A good example is Boxcleva, which provides boxing training to educate and divert young people from anti-social behaviour including arson. The programme was originally developed by a firefighter in Borehamwood. It was evaluated thoroughly by the Hertfordshire sports partnership and has now secured £420,000 to expand to ten targeted Hertfordshire locations. According to data supplied by the service, Crucial Crew information days will provide 10,395 children in 2018 with fire safety and other essential safety advice. However, the lack of central planning means that the service's campaigns are often inconsistent. For example, individual stations choose how to provide information about corporate community safety, and their methods vary widely across the county.

The service's approach to evaluation of campaigns is inconsistent and could not consistently provide us with evidence to show what effect they have had. This means it is not able to fully understand what works and share good practice.

Road safety

The service is good at road safety prevention activity and is an active member of the road safety partnership. It offers a 'learn to live' session to all sixth form students, and according to data supplied by the service approximately 4,000 students attend every year. The service also delivers the Prince's Trust programme, which includes a road safety day. The service supports the National Fire Chiefs' Council road safety week and there is a 'driving home for Christmas' campaign, which promotes messages around winter driving and tyre safety. Volunteers provide road safety measures for motorcyclists, including Biker Down sessions and assessed rides. An emerging focus is maintaining older drivers' road safety, to support their independence. The service does monitor these campaigns but has inconsistent quality assurance and evaluation.

Protecting the public through fire regulation

Good

Hertfordshire FRS is good at protecting the public through fire regulation. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

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

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

The service is good at risk-based inspection. It uses a risk-based approach to target its enforcement work, which means that its resources are targeted on the areas of highest risk. Specialist fire safety staff carry out audits of complex premises, using the nationally recommended shortened audit process to reduce the burden on business. They carry out full audits of properties where they have found serious breaches of fire regulations in a post-incident inspection. The service has a fire safety enforcement strategy, although this is based on the out-of-date IRMP. It has a proportionate and robust approach to managing safety in public buildings that are considered high risk.

The service systematically and routinely shares relevant information on fire safety risk with staff. Station liaison officers support local stations in undertaking fire safety work on specific types of risks, such as sleeping accommodation. Officers notify control room staff when a building is subject to an enforcement notice, so it appears on the mobile computers installed in fire engines.

Senior leaders set proactive annual priorities for enforcing fire regulations, based on national, regional and local patterns of fires, injuries and/or deaths and enforcement action taken. For example, following the Grenfell Tower fire, the service prioritised auditing and inspecting high-rise properties. It also prioritised residential care and sheltered accommodation, following local significant incidents.

Enforcement

Hertfordshire FRS uses enforcement powers to protect the public. It works with other organisations including the Care Quality Commission, local authority trading standards and licensing to uphold fire regulations and bring prosecutions where necessary.

The service works effectively with businesses to ensure they comply with the law. Where it finds breaches of fire regulations it applies appropriate sanctions and takes enforcement action. It uses a good range of enforcement methods, from informal escalation to enforcement notices, to formal legal proceedings.

Data supplied by the service shows that from 1 April 2018 to the time of inspection, it had undertaken three prosecutions. This compares with only one prosecution in the five years prior to this.

Working with others

The service is good at working in partnership to target local businesses and large organisations in Hertfordshire through the national 'better business for all' initiative. This provides education and support to businesses regarding fire risks and other kinds of compliance. It sends monthly surveys to organisations it has been in contact with, and 90 percent of respondents reported they had a good experience in 2017/18 according to data the service provided.

For large businesses with multiple sites across the county, the service operates primary authority schemes. This means that the service provides the company with a single point of contact in the fire and rescue service – this person can provide advice about all the company's sites nationwide.

The service also works closely with partners such as the police, border force, immigration control and the council to identify and report breaches of legislation, including a case of modern slavery and human trafficking.

It could do more, however, to work with the owners or occupiers of premises in order to reduce the false alarms known as 'unwanted fire signals'. At present, it is responding to too many false alarms. This could mean a delay in responding to a genuine emergency. It has issued information on the subject, and call handlers in the control room do challenge callers. But while the service's policy allows it to charge for unwanted fire signals, it has yet to put this into practice.

Responding to fires and other emergencies

Good

Hertfordshire FRS is good at responding to fires and other emergencies. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it can handle calls in a timely and consistent way to ensure public safety.

- The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.

- The service should ensure it has effective systems in place to reliably understand resource availability, call handling and alerting of on-call resources to respond to incidents.

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 does what it needs to do to protect the public, but it does not review its resourcing policies regularly enough. For example, its stated policy is to have 40 fire engines available at all times. In reality, it is meeting its attendance targets despite the fact that far fewer fire engines are usually available. This calls into question why the policy has not been reviewed and adjusted.

Control room staff use their professional judgment to deal with emerging risks and adjust the pre-planned levels of response where necessary, for example, for incidents of false alarms in buildings that are known to have people sleeping in them. However, due to unreliable software, they are not always able to access accurate information about the number of on-call firefighters available. The pagers that alert on-call staff to respond to incidents are also unreliable. As a result, control room staff often allocate more firefighters to an area than is necessary.

The service has joined an East Coast control room consortium with Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Humberside FRSs. The aim was to jointly procure and install an IT system that would improve the response to emergency calls and the deployment of emergency response resources. However, the original completion date was 2014, and the system is still not fully up and running.

The new system is currently only operating in Hertfordshire, and the service has experienced a number of problems, mainly with the telephone system. It has managed to meet its target response times, but it no longer has a secondary control to fall back to, which is a risk. The other services in the consortium have been advised not to move over to the new system yet.

Response

The service is able to respond effectively to emergencies. In some areas, such as performing rescues and commanding incidents, its policies and procedures already reflect best practice and national operational guidance. It is currently reviewing its procedures in other areas.

National occupational standards are in place to give a consistent level of training and maintenance of competence for operational firefighters.

The health and safety policy addresses national guidance, with targets set and monitoring arrangements in place.

The service does collect local risk information, but it needs to make sure that this is consistently communicated to operational commanders to help effective command at incidents. There are significant problems with the mobile computers installed in fire engines, which means that this is not always the case. The service has systems in place to allow fire control to access risk information, but staff do not always understand how to do this.

Command

Staff in Hertfordshire FRS are effectively trained, assessed and monitored to be able to command emergency incidents assertively and effectively. Incident commanders are assessed annually and are stopped from commanding emergency incidents if they fail.

The service has policies and training for commanding incidents that reflects national operational guidance. It generally makes good use of national operational terminology, which improves communication at the incident through the use of standard messages. However, we were concerned to find an example in which this wasn't the case, and outdated terminology had been used on an incident command control board.

In accordance with national guidance, incident commanders are allowed to use their discretion to override service policy when they deem it is safe and more appropriate to do so. Such decisions should be appropriately recorded and monitored.

The service has an operational debrief process to learn from actions taken at emergency incidents. There are plans to improve the recording arrangements for the of use of operational discretion, as it is currently not always easy to identify and review where an incident commander has used their discretion.

The service has procedures in place to risk assess operational incidents as they unfold. The risk assessment should be signed by the incident commander and reviewed every 30 minutes to support the management of health and safety at an incident. However, a review of FRS records shows these procedures are applied inconsistently.

Keeping the public informed

The service has good policies and training in place to support its staff in dealing with vulnerable people and making safeguarding referrals. We looked at training records and found that staff who need to be competent in safeguarding have received the necessary training.

We found good examples of the service making safeguarding referrals. For example, a crew member identified and referred a victim of domestic abuse to the police and social services following a house fire. In another case, a crew made a safeguarding referral after finding somebody unconscious on the floor of their home, and a social worker was assigned as a result.

The service uses Twitter and Facebook to tell the public about ongoing incidents. It also uses social media to publicise campaign information and monitors the number of retweets to gauge the level of engagement with the public. It co-ordinates with other organisations including the police and local authority to provide consistent information in the event of large, multi-agency incidents.

In debriefs after each incident staff evaluate their communication with the public. They are aware that their work can cause damage to property, and they try to minimise this, for example by closing doors and limiting the level of water damage. Following a fire, firefighters can call the Red Cross fire emergency service support vehicle to support businesses and home owners or call in fire service volunteers to help with salvage and recovery.

The service has a public complaints procedure. There are monitoring arrangements in place for complaints and in respect of what has been done to address them. However not all staff know about this.

Evaluating operational performance

The service operations and training board (SOTB) evaluates operational performance well. Depending on the severity of the incident, the service can choose to conduct an informal debrief, a formal recorded debrief, or a multi-agency debrief. The last two are assessed by central monitoring officers, who report important points to the SOTB.

The SOTB then decides what action should be taken and how to share any findings. For example, after a care home fire, the service provided fire risk training to care agency staff and changed its risk-based inspection programme. Corporate actions are built into a corporate action plan. However, the SOTB does not have an effective process to make sure that the necessary actions are carried out in a timely manner.

The service shares the findings from its debriefs internally, and externally through the national operational learning platform. It also assesses operational learning from the wider sector through the SOTB.

Responding to national risks

●●●○

Good

Hertfordshire FRS is good at responding to national risks. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should ensure it understands national and cross-border risks and is well prepared to meet such risks. It should ensure operational staff and control room operators have access to cross-border risk information.

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

Hertfordshire FRS broadly complies with and supports the national co-ordination and advisory framework. It gives support to major incidents outside the county when required through national planning arrangements and gives regular support to incidents in neighbouring areas. The operations strategy explains how the service responds to major incidents.

The service co-ordinates emergency planning and business continuity arrangements for the council. This is to make sure it can respond to a range of incidents and emergencies, while continuing to provide critical services during times of disruption.

'Hertfordshire resilience' is an emergency planning forum that involves the emergency services, local authorities, government agencies and the voluntary sector to provide an integrated response to emergencies. The forum offers opportunities to jointly assess risks, plan the emergency response, train and exercise together with a view to achieving an improved response. The chief fire officer is the chair of the forum with other senior officers also holding lead roles.

Hertfordshire resilience regularly reviews the community risk register against local information and national guidance. The community risk register is a multi-agency publication that highlights the risks that are most likely to have a significant negative effect, causing disruption to people in specific areas across the county. It assesses sites that are critical to the national infrastructure and the operational risks these sites may pose and puts emergency plans in place to respond.

Working with other services

The service is in a good position to support a national response to a large-scale incident. It has access to specialist equipment and expertise in important areas. High-volume pumps are available to pump higher than normal quantities of water to a fire or away from a flood zone. It has equipment to rescue people from water, and to protect firefighters working in an area where there is a marauding terrorist firearms attack.

Although the service has risk information about some sites in neighbouring FRS areas – to which it may be called to support an emergency response – this is not readily available to control room operators or firefighters.

Working with other agencies

The service works well with other agencies. Its staff understand how they can support the police, local authority, ambulance service and others in emergency response. The organisations train and exercise together to prepare for dealing with incidents that happen over county borders or involve multiple agencies. External partners are invited to multi-agency debriefs. The partners we spoke to told us that they valued the involvement of Hertfordshire FRS.

The service has put in a bid to the county council to redevelop the existing training and development site into a multi-agency emergency services academy, working with the police. The service has national inter-agency liaison officers in place to give advice and support at major incidents.

The service has a clear policy for responding to a marauding terrorist firearms attack. It carries out tests and exercises and has the resources to respond to prolonged incidents having a mix of wholetime and on-call firefighters available. The control room staff are prepared to deal with a multi-agency response, including terrorist attacks. They have regular training and comprehensive briefing materials.

Efficiency

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

Requires improvement

Summary

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

We are concerned to note that, in the absence of an up-to-date IRMP, Hertfordshire FRS cannot be confident that its plans are supporting its objectives. This is just as much the case in terms of the efficiency of the service, as it is of its effectiveness.

The service has not systematically reviewed how it allocates its resources against risks and therefore cannot be confident that it is using resources in the most efficient manner. There is no clear rationale setting out how and why the service divides its resources between prevention, protection or response activities. It cannot fully substantiate why it bases its response resources on needing 40 fire engines to be available at all times, or whether its target attendance times are the right ones. It also doesn't evaluate its projects well enough to understand how each is contributing to achieving overall objectives.

The service collaborates with other organisations, primarily with the police and county council, as outlined elsewhere in the report. However, because of delaying the work on its risk management planning, the development of a number of major projects, including extending existing collaborations, has been put on hold. There is evaluation of joint working, but this is inconsistent.

We are satisfied that the service has plans for what it would do if there were to be an event that damaged its core functions – although not in the event of a cyber-attack.

We are concerned, however, that the service cannot demonstrate that it is providing value for money. The true cost of the service is unclear, as many of its back-office functions are provided directly by the county council and are not shown in the service's budget. The budget allocated to fire and rescue services has been largely protected from the scale of cuts that have affected the rest of the council's services over recent years.

The service's inefficient use of technology is a real hindrance to productivity. Its new IRMP will need to include ambitious plans to make sure these problems are addressed.

Making best use of resources

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection and response activities. This should be linked to risks and priorities set out in an up-to-date integrated risk management plan.

- The service should ensure that its budget and resource allocation, and management of performance and projects, support the activity set out in an up-to-date integrated risk management plan and strategic priorities.

- The service needs to ensure it effectively evaluates benefits and outcomes of its statutory duty to collaborate. Several collaborations with the police are on hold.

- The service should ensure that its testing and review of business continuity events include cyber-attacks on IT systems.

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

We are concerned that, in the absence of an up-to-date IRMP, Hertfordshire FRS cannot be confident that its plans are supporting its objectives. This is just as much the case in terms of the efficiency of the service, as it is of its effectiveness (see previous section).

It is difficult to compare the total cost of Hertfordshire's fire and rescue services with others in the country because the budgeted cost may not accurately reflect the true cost of the service. The cost of many back-office functions – including finance, legal,

ICT and HR – do not feature in the service's budget since they are provided directly by the county council. A nominal cost is assigned to the service as an overhead, but the true cost can't be accurately quantified. However, we are encouraged to note that the reported firefighter cost per person in Hertfordshire is slightly below England as a whole in the 12 months to 31 March 2018. The service has access to the county council's financial reserves to support both capital and revenue spending. There is also a capital programme for one-off projects and investments which the service can bid for.

The service doesn't have a standalone financial plan, it forms the greater part of the community protection directorate of the county council. Its annual budget is set by the council and the service is included in the county council's medium-term financial planning process along with all other council departments. The service monitors day-to-day spending and its SLG reviews spending against the budget. However, funding for the fire and rescue service only makes up around five percent of the council's total budget.

There is no clear rationale setting out how resources are allocated to areas of work, or how each area is contributing to achieving overall objectives. For example, in its fire prevention work, Hertfordshire carried out 3,512 home fire safety checks in the 12 months to 31 March 2018. This represents a rate of 3.0 home fire safety checks per 1,000 population which is lower when compared with the England rate of 10.4 per 1,000 population. Of these home fire safety checks 12.6 percent were specifically target at those registered as disabled and 52.1 percent were target at those who are elderly (65+). The service is unable to show that allocating its prevention resources in this way has led to better outcomes or protected those most vulnerable to risk from fires.

Productivity and ways of working

The service is trialling some flexible shift patterns for responding to emergency calls to make better use of a mix of wholetime and on-call firefighters during periods of highest demand for service. However, this is limited in scope and the service has put the development of more ambitious plans on hold awaiting the new IRMP process. If this planning were more advanced, it is possible that the service would currently be running more efficiently.

The service delivers an effective programme of risk-based inspection of non-domestic buildings. It has effective performance management arrangements in place, focused on the quality, rather than the quantity, of these inspections.

We are concerned about the service's use of technology. Dated and inefficient ICT equipment and systems are currently reducing productivity rather than increasing it. We found this to be a constant source of frustration throughout the organisation. This poor use of technology has a significant effect on the service's ability to give consistent, timely messages to all staff.

Systems do not connect properly between FRS teams. Staff across the service have difficulties in accessing important systems, including the virtual desktop page that gives access to all FRS systems. The service's fire control mobilising software

collaboration project, which aims to improve resilience and reduce back-office and procurement costs, has missed several deadlines due to technological problems.

The service is taking steps to improve its use of ICT including better management of the outsourced IT support contract. It has also invested in extra staff in its own ICT support team and has developed a detailed project plan to address some of the main areas for improvement (it refers to this as its 'digital services roadmap').

However, it has produced this roadmap ahead of developing an overarching ICT strategy to set the vision and direction for the future. Funding for future projects is subject to approval of a capital bid for the 2019/20 financial year and development of a related strategy.

The service has started to show some limited improvements through the ongoing SMART firefighting project, which includes effectiveness and efficiency reviews of FRS operational ways of working and use of equipment. So far this has involved the introduction of some new firefighting equipment and ways of working.

Collaboration

Hertfordshire FRS collaborates with other organisations, particularly the police. There is a police and fire collaboration programme board, made up of senior leaders. In a number of stations blue-light services (fire, ambulance, police) share accommodation. The service has, however, put many additional projects on hold, including those exploring opportunities for closer collaboration with the police.

Further collaboration – such as the development of a multi-agency emergency services training academy – has been delayed pending a decision on the service's governance arrangements.

The service does not always evaluate the benefits and outcomes of partnership working, and its track record for implementing improvement programmes is inconsistent.

Continuity arrangements

The service has a business continuity policy in place that sets out how it would deal with an event that damaged its core functions. It also has a separate business continuity and recovery plan for the control room.

It has recently reviewed its business continuity plans, and work is in progress to update them. The service has plans to test and review business continuity events, although these do not include cyber-attacks on ICT systems.

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

Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
>
> - The service needs to ensure its new integrated risk management plan includes ambitious plans to make resources address priorities, and improvements offer value for money. It needs to improve its understanding of the financial challenges ahead, put in place efficient improvement plans, and reallocate resources to changing priorities or risks.
>
> - The service needs to accelerate its plans to improve ICT so that it makes best use of available technology to support operational effectiveness and efficiency.

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

Hertfordshire FRS needs to do more to improve its value for money.

The county council continues to face some financial challenges and is developing plans to deal with its anticipated future budget gaps. It is developing savings plans to meet a projected budget gap of £28m by 2021/22. The service's share of the council's planned overall savings is relatively modest, at £0.296m for 2018/19 – 2019/20, reducing to £0.216m for 2020/21 – 2021/22.

The plans comprise small, incremental changes to save money, rather than transformational ones. For example: a continued transfer of some roles from uniformed operational terms and conditions to non-uniformed, the latter being lower in cost; the removal of one risk reduction officer post; and ending some software licenses. This may not be enough to significantly improve the service's value for money.

The council has protected the service in recent years, making proportionately smaller cuts to its spending than it has to that of other council departments. This means that, while the council has a good track record in achieving efficiency savings, the service has not needed to explore all opportunities to do so.

Innovation

The service is starting to make some improvements to how it evaluates its community safety work, and these have already paid dividends. For example, it has carried out a joint evaluation with partners of its pilot Boxcleva project, which was used to support a business case with Hertfordshire sports partnership. This helped to secure over £420,000 of external funding to extend the programme.

We are also pleased to see that the service has established a well-developed volunteer scheme. According to data provided by the service, about 90 volunteers throughout the county spend up to 10,000 hours per year doing community safety work. Around 50 percent of all home fire safety checks are carried out by volunteers.

The service plans to invest in building a new headquarters, moving the control room, and redeveloping the Longfield training site. It has put in a bid to the council's capital programme for £12.5m to fund these projects.

More needs to be done to improve the way the service uses ICT. There is a lack of clarity of the full costs of systems and how they are to be funded; systems are bought and then sit unused. For example, the service bought new tablets to be used on fire engines, which would improve firefighters' access to mobile data systems, but these have not yet been distributed. The service also purchased a replacement availability system for on-call staff some years ago, yet despite the significant failings of the current system this has still to be implemented.

We did, however, find that senior officers' ICT equipment is fit for purpose, allowing them to take command during emergencies.

Future investment and working with others

The council's medium-term financial plan recognises the service will need to change its current approach to risk, and attendance times to incidents, if it is to make major savings. This requires a fully integrated risk management approach. It requires the service to understand current and future risks in the county and set the appropriate attendance times and level of response to meet them. This analysis and understanding would then inform the service's decisions on the number of fire stations and appliances required, where they are best located and how they are resourced.

However, the service is not planning to do this: its current plan, set out in a report of 11 July, is to agree to maintain existing attendance standards before any work begins on the IRMP process. This may limit its ability to provide the most effective service and make savings.

The service runs Herts Fire Training, which provides health and safety training to organisations in the public, private and third sectors. It also organises tailored team-building and leadership-development days for various organisations. The service runs this external training on a cost-recovery basis with an annual turnover of circa £120,000. There are plans to create a limited company, which would be a subsidiary of the existing council company Surecare Supplies Ltd, but this work is also on hold pending a decision on the future governance of the service.

People
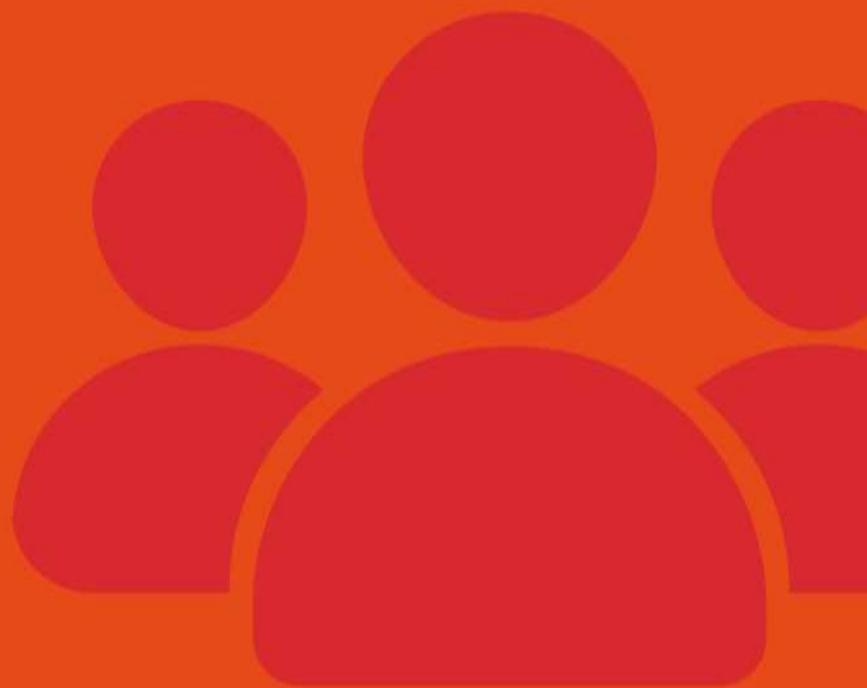
How well does the service look after its people?

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, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at looking after its people.

The service has some policies in place to promote wellbeing, but it doesn't do enough to make sure that staff can access them.

Service leaders could do more to guide the service's culture and values. These are currently set by the council, and many FRS staff are not aware of them. The SLG is developing a 'cultural principles statement', but this is at an early stage.

Staff speak highly of the service's open leadership style. They respect the chief fire officer and the deputy chief fire officer, and believe they are committed to delivering change and improvements but see middle managers as barriers to decision making.

Without an up-to-date IRMP to help determine future risks, the service cannot be sure that it is recruiting the right number of people with the right skills. It currently depends on overtime to make up for staff shortages. According to data provided by the service, the last firefighter induction course began with 21 candidates and finished with only 12. The service has not done enough to find out why, or to address the problem.

The service provides training in all risk-critical skills, but it cannot monitor staff competence effectively due to an inadequate ICT system.

There was inconsistent evidence that the service has responded to staff feedback. As a result, many staff lack confidence in feedback procedures.

As with many other services we inspect, Hertfordshire FRS's workforce is not representative of its community. When looking at the whole workforce, as at 31 March 2018, only 2.8 percent were from black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, compared with 12.4 percent in the service area's residential population. Also, as at 31 March 2018 only 16.1 percent of the workforce were female. These proportions are lower when looking specifically at firefighters. The service does not have a clear policy for the recruitment of a more diverse mix of staff – although this is currently being reviewed. The chief fire officer is a champion for diversity, but not all staff understand the importance of a diverse workforce.

The service could do more to actively manage the career pathways of its employees. The performance review process needs improvement, and many staff felt that promotion processes are neither fair nor open.

Promoting the right values and culture

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement
- The service should assure itself that staff understand and have confidence in the purpose and integrity of health, safety and wellbeing policies.

- The service should ensure its staff understand its values and culture.

- The service should assure itself that all managers are clear about their roles and demonstrate commitment to service values through their behaviours.

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

Workforce wellbeing

The service has policies and support systems in place to promote employees' wellbeing. However, some of these are not generally well understood, and staff are not confident in using them. Staff who have used wellbeing and occupational health support are positive about these services.

The service uses 'Firefit' fitness testing, which broadly reflects national guidance.

There is room for improvement in the way in which the service deals with sickness absence. Its management of sickness absence is limited by the fact that it has no records for on-call staff sickness, and no system to record this information. Neither does it conduct enough trends analysis to understand the more frequent causes of absence and identify workplace resolutions to resolve them.

Health and safety

The service has a comprehensive health and safety policy. We sampled staff records for health and safety and risk-critical skills training and found them to be up to date. The service has a station audit programme which includes health and safety.

The service has a policy for considering requests from employees who wish to work in a second employment that is outside the service. The policy makes it clear that each individual is responsible for ensuring that they comply with the law in regard to drivers' hours. However, it makes no similar provision for the working time directive.

The service provides wellbeing support via e-learning, including the Mind mental health awareness training, and the employee wellbeing support package 'care-well'. Operational debriefs consider fire-ground welfare. Post-incident employee wellbeing is offered through the trauma risk-management process.

Staff would benefit from training to help them recognise the signs and symptoms of mental ill-health.

Culture and values

The fire and rescue service, as part of Hertfordshire County Council, is expected to follow the council's values and behaviours, which are set out in its values statement. However, these values are not widely promoted by the service and as a consequence are not well known or understood by fire service staff. Staff we spoke to tend to see themselves as part of the fire and rescue service rather than county council employees. The SLG has recognised this is a gap and is currently developing a service cultural principles statement with staff, but this is still at an early stage.

The Protect magazine keeps staff up to date. Staff gave us positive feedback about the 'ask Darryl' section on the staff extranet, which is an opportunity for staff to email questions direct to the chief fire officer. They were also positive about 'you said, we did', which shows what the service has done to address main staff concerns. There is also some feedback from directors on the intranet. However, the majority of the workforce in the service cannot access the intranet as they do not have individual email accounts. The service designed the extranet to provide access to information and communication for all employees.

The chief officer team is well-regarded by staff and promotes their commitment to the values by being visible at a range of informal and formal visits to stations. However, staff don't clearly understand the overall senior management structure and the way decisions are taken. They perceive that middle managers, from station commander to area commander, hinder effective communication and decision making. This has led to some unhelpful behaviours such as staff bypassing middle managers and going straight to senior managers to get an issue dealt with. This has meant that some managers don't feel they are either skilled or empowered enough to make decisions.

Staff raised a few concerns about the workplace culture. For example, they felt that the underlying causes of stress in the workplace – a reliance on overtime, and all the technological problems – are not managed effectively. However, they did also tell us that there has been a positive culture shift in the organisation. One said: "everyone seems like they are working together … there is less of a blame culture."

Non-operational staff felt that respect for their roles has improved under the new leadership.

Getting the right people with the right skills

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its workforce plan takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities to carry out the integrated risk management plan.

- The service needs to recruit to fill its establishment vacancies rather than the reliance on overtime to provide its core service. It should assure itself that it understands and can resolve these problems effectively.

- The service should ensure its electronic system for recording and monitoring operational staff competence is accurate and accessible.

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

Workforce planning

We found a number of problems in workforce planning, relating to both performance management and recruitment. A recent report from the shared internal audit service recommended that performance management and monitoring systems in Hertfordshire FRS should be improved.

We found the same. For example, we found problems with the strategic operations and training board, which has responsibility for monitoring operational performance. The board has left many actions open for a long time or closed them without completion. As a result, the service has not introduced the necessary improvements.

The SLG has agreed to develop a performance management framework and implement appropriate monitoring and discussion of performance. It has also agreed to 'tighten up' action logs from performance monitoring meetings.

Recruitment practices also needs to be improved. The service currently does not have a people strategy. Work is in progress to develop one by July 2019, but again, this is held back by the out of date IRMP, which would provide a firm basis for decisions about recruitment. While the council's recruitment policy is used for non-uniformed staff, there is no policy for the recruitment of uniformed staff. The service does have a policy for what the minimum staffing levels can be on a fire engine to safely respond to an emergency.

Data provided by the service show that the last firefighter induction course began with 21 candidates and finished with only 12. The service has not done enough to understand why, or to address the problem. What's more, the service has not attracted enough suitable candidates to fill all firefighter and control room vacancies, leaving it dependent on overtime to access the required number of staff.

The service has not carried out a comprehensive skills audit of all its employees. There are recruitment plans based on forecasts of vacancies due to retirement, but there is no systematic way to identify the skills needed across the whole organisation. Currently, the service has no way of making sure that it has the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time.

The service provides staff training and focuses on risk-critical skills. It carries out theoretical testing and practical assessment and provides both initial and refresher courses (annually for wearing breathing apparatus and for commanding incidents) with clear assessment criteria linked to national frameworks. If risk-critical skills expire, staff are taken off operational response duties. Operational officers who also have specialist skills to maintain in addition to operational command expressed concern about being able to maintain both effectively.

There is clear planning, provision and assessment of operational core training. This is supported by a process for assuring and verifying competence, to give employees NVQs, modern apprenticeships and other nationally accredited courses. The service also carries out corporate and local operational testing and exercising, supported by themed training sessions. There is a four-year rolling programme of station audits to assess all watches, with credit given to high-performing stations.

The service develops its fire safety staff in line with the national business fire safety competency framework, which means they can only give a limited service while they are training. As it has four fire safety staff in development, it currently has a lack of capacity in the risk-based inspection programme. The service has three inspectors who provide out-of-hours cover, however it recognises this could be reviewed.

Learning and improvement

The service provides a good programme of training for operational staff in risk-critical areas. Its accredited training centre provides risk-critical skills training and assessments. It revises training packages to cover improvements within and outside the service – these are broadly in line with national operational guidance. For example, following a recall to a house fire, a training package was developed and shared.

We found that most staff have an appropriate level of understanding of risk-critical information and an ability to undertake safety checks of equipment. Firefighters benefit from realistic training and simulation, including doing breathing apparatus training in live fires at derelict properties across the county. Control room supervisors assess the quality of call handling.

There is also ongoing monitoring and development of staff skills. However, the software system used to record this does not connect with training centre software, and only watch managers can access it. Individual users can't take responsibility for their own learning, which leads to recording delays, duplication of entries and a lack of timely accurate management information for district managers. Practical development sessions are supported by directed reading and e-learning, but we heard mixed views about the quality of some e-learning packages.

Operational improvements and developments are shared throughout the organisation. Officers use the operational debrief 'OPERA' process to monitor what the service has learned from particular incidents. However, the recording database they use is not fit for purpose.

Firefighters receive hazard bulletins which give risk-critical information, and a monthly newsletter goes into more detail about what the organisation has learned from incidents.

There was even less evidence of learning and improvement in non-operations areas. For example, we couldn't see how compliments, complaints, or outcomes from other human resources processes were monitored, to be used as a source of organisational learning.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself that staff are confident using its feedback mechanisms, so these help the service gather valuable information.

- The service needs to improve the diversity of its workforce. It has been slow to set clear leadership and direction in promoting equality and diversity.

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

There is little evidence that the service has made significant changes in response to staff surveys. It carried out surveys in 2013, 2014 and 2016. There have been none since. Staff told us that they had not seen much change as a result of the surveys' findings.

There is a procedure for staff to raise concerns, but many are unaware of what this is. There is a good section on the council intranet, but most staff cannot access it as they do not have individual email accounts. However, staff told us that they had increased confidence to ask questions and give feedback, following positive improvements in organisational culture.

The chief fire officer publishes a monthly message, and staff are encouraged to give feedback using the extranet, as discussed above. Staff told us that they value the annual visits to stations by SLG members. They told us that they feel everyone is pulling in the same direction and that they are seeing an increasing openness to change.

Staff are consulted on service changes and feel the current style is more open and genuine. There are several work groups with staff involvement – in areas such as equality and inclusion, introduction of new fleet, equipment and IT – along with local team, station and district meetings.

The service recognises and holds regular meetings with the Fire Brigades Union. There are some informal discussions with other representative bodies, but no formal structure is in place.

Diversity

As with many other services, Hertfordshire FRS's workforce is not representative of its community. In Hertfordshire the BAME population is 12.4 percent. This compares with 2.7 percent of firefighters as at 31 March 2018. Only 4.9 percent of firefighters were female as at 31 March 2018.

There is no clear direction or policy guiding the recruitment of a more diverse mix of staff. Recent recruitment has not been particularly well targeted at attracting underrepresented groups and little progress has been made to date. However, the service recognises it needs to improve in this area. It has made some recent changes within its planned 2019 firefighter recruitment campaign, to target recruitment to underrepresented groups, and improve candidates' understanding of what to expect. The service is gathering data on equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the current recruitment process, with the aim of making further changes.

The service set up a new equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) board to set the strategic direction, promote and lead on this area in December 2017. This replaced previous arrangements. However, its work is at an early stage of development. Staff are not aware of the board and told us that they did not know who to raise concerns with about equality, diversity and inclusion.

Staff do EDI training, and this was up to date in the records we sampled. However, not all staff understand the senior leadership direction in relation to EDI, nor do they understand the benefits of having a diverse workforce. The staff surveys have not sought feedback on issues around equality and diversity.

The service also set up a new staff inclusion network group (SING) in November 2017. This was to give feedback and undertake some work, for example, positive action for recruitment, across all protected characteristics. However, it is early in its development. The service has access to an external advocacy group made up from members of the community, for consultation and communication purposes, but it does not make full use of this.

The service could improve its arrangements for taking calls from people who do not have English as their first language.

Managing performance and developing leaders

Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should put in place a system to actively manage staff careers.
>
> - The service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open, transparent and fair.

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

Managing performance

The service has an individual performance review process for all employees. All staff have an annual performance review with their line manager. Staff have mixed views on how meaningful these reviews are, with some telling us that they were a tick-box exercise. There is no process in place for the service to make sure the quality of these performance reviews is satisfactory.

Station management teams use the competence recording system to set individual and team development priorities for the station training plan. Competence records for operational employees are monitored by district commanders at the monthly response and resilience meeting – although this is impeded by the inaccuracy of information they are provided with, due to software issues.

Operational debriefs also cover the operational performance of staff.

The only route for non-uniformed staff to have a training needs assessment is through their performance review, which is kept on a paper file, stored locally by their manager. It also links to the award of incremental pay increases. It gives staff access to academic and other learning opportunities.

Developing leaders

The performance review process does not have any capacity to identify high performers, to spot talent or to promote career progression.

We found that existing promotion arrangements for operational employees were often ineffective and inefficient. Not all employees see the process as open and fair. They told us about inconsistent feedback from promotion panel members, a lack of training provision to meet their development needs, and repeated requests for staff to act up and do the work of more senior roles, despite having recently failed an assessment.

Non-uniformed staff have limited chance of career progression in the service.

Hertfordshire FRS is reviewing its approach to career progression, talent and succession planning, through the development of a new people strategy.

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. Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is a unitary authority.

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.