HMICFRS

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

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

An inspection of Kent Fire & 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 Kent Fire & 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

	Kent	England
Perceived effectiveness of service Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)	89%	86%

🚒 Response

	Kent	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 September 2018	12.0	10.5
Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	8.7	10.4
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises 12 months to 31 March 2018	3.2	3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 30 September 2018

Total fires 20%

Total
21,944

Total false alarms 23%

Total non-fire incidents 56%
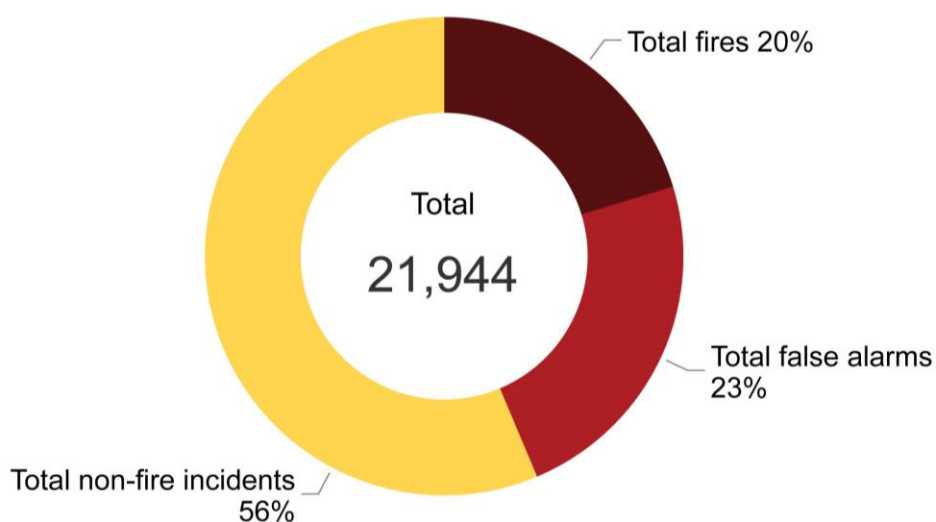
£ Cost

	Kent	England
Firefighter cost per person per year 12 months to 31 March 2018	£20.57	£22.38

Workforce

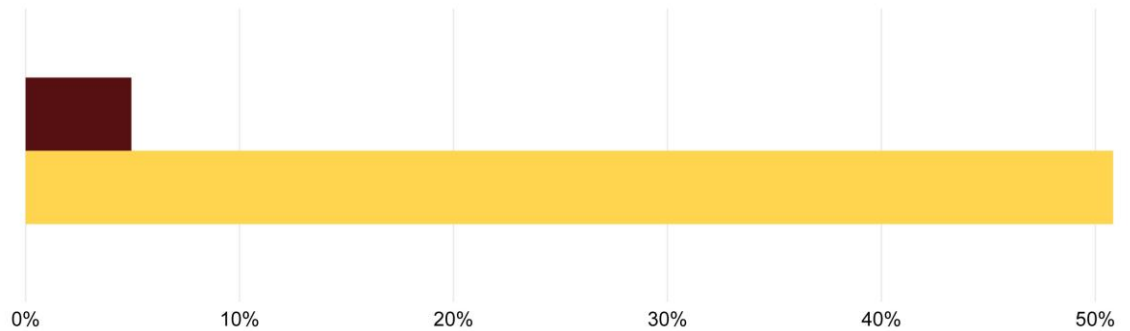|	Kent	England
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population As at 31 March 2018	0.6	0.6
Five-year change in workforce As at 31 March 2013 compared with 31 March 2018	-14%	-14%
Percentage of wholetime firefighters As at 31 March 2018	60%	70%

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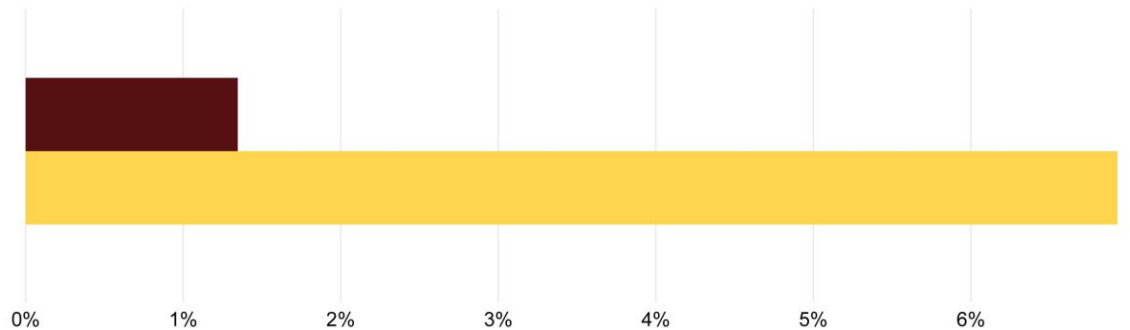
Please refer to annex A for full details on data used.

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 — Good
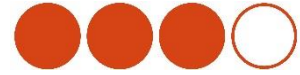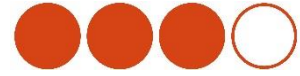
	Rating
Promoting the right values and culture	Good
Getting the right people with the right skills	Requires improvement
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Good
Managing performance and developing leaders	Good
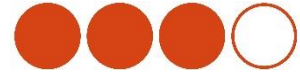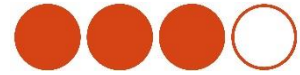
Overall summary of inspection findings

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

Kent FRS is good at providing an effective service. 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 it requires improvement to the way it protects the public through fire regulation.

We judge the efficiency of its service to be good. It is good at making the best use of resources and at providing an affordable service.

It is good in the way that it looks after its people. It is good at:

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

But the service requires improvement to the way it gets the right people with the right skills.

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

Effectiveness

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

●●●○

Good

Summary

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

Kent FRS has a good understanding of risks to the public. It monitors a wide range of data, and regularly reviews this to keep it up to date. It uses and contributes to the Kent growth and infrastructure framework, which helps it to understand current and future risks.

The service communicates well with the public, including hard-to-reach groups. It does good prevention work and tries to target the most vulnerable people. But it could do more to give stations detailed information about vulnerability.

Kent FRS's average response time to primary fires is good and is in line with other significantly rural services. It also has a very low failure to mobilise rate. That said, the service should focus on ensuring that it is meeting its response standard of attending 80 percent of life-threatening incidents within 10 minutes. It is currently achieving this 73 percent of the time.

Work is underway to recruit more on-call staff. A recruitment drive has been launched and the service is looking at different ways to boost numbers, including giving an enhanced rate of pay for providing daytime cover. Kent FRS has trained some crews to enable them to attend incidents with just three staff if required.

By this summer the service should have replaced its current mobile data terminals (MDTs). Due to a lack of confidence in MDT reliability, some fire crews carry paper copies of risk information, not all of which is up to date.

The service is failing to meet its targets for protection work such as audits and building control consultations. It needs to increase the productivity of its protection team to improve this.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies

●●●○

Good

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

Areas for improvement

- The service should review its risk profiles to identify the number of fire engines it requires to meet anticipated operational need.

- 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

Kent FRS uses a wide range of data to help it understand risk. It has a safety and wellbeing plan, which is embedded into its corporate planning process. This meets the requirements set out in the [Fire and Rescue National Framework](#) for England, and is supported by thorough risk profiles for each fire station.

The communication team targets its messages using data from the business intelligence team. There is an engagement officer to improve the service's relationship with people from under-represented groups, including Gypsy and Traveller, Nepalese, Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Roma/Eastern European and LGBTQ communities. There are regular diversity events and meetings, and the service records and learns from feedback.

Kent County Council's growth and infrastructure framework 2011–2031 helps the service to understand current, emerging or future changes in fire and other risks, including changes that may affect fire station locations. The service has generated a risk map and uses health data to identify older people in its population, who it considers to be higher risk. It uses [MOSAIC consumer classification data](#), incident and census data to identify deprived and higher-risk areas. It regularly reviews this data to keep it up to date.

In 2012 and 2015, Kent FRS reviewed its provision based on activity (the number of incidents it attends), risk (including types of buildings, for example factories, power stations and ferry ports, flooding risk, road and other risks) and isolation (distance from fire stations). It has changed the location of some fire stations, such as in Ramsgate.

Partner agencies, such as the police and NHS, told us the service shares data effectively. However, the service told us that it has difficulty in getting data from them, and the NHS and police confirmed this, citing restrictions on sharing data. The service also works with councils, but could do more to use these joint initiatives to gather information to help reach the most vulnerable people.

Following dwelling fires, an officer visits the premises, reviews quality of service provided to the public and gathers incident learning, using this to create a risk profile for the household involved. The service uses parish volunteers to identify community risk and engage with groups, such as new migrants, who may not respond to traditional communication.

Having an effective risk management plan

Kent FRS's customer and corporate plan 2018–2022 explains how it identifies fire and rescue risks, both by itself and in collaboration with other agencies. It also sets out how its prevention, protection and response activities are linked. The plan is in line with the requirements of the National Framework.

The Kent Resilience Forum has a register setting out significant risks to the area, including permanent threats such as fire and flooding, and shorter-term ones, such as a loss of infrastructure, public events in the area, and the impact of Brexit. This helps all the local agencies to prepare a co-ordinated response. As an active member of the Kent Resilience Forum, the service uses information from the risk register to inform its planning, and adds risks to the register to keep other agencies informed.

There is a mismatch between the number of routinely available fire engines and the number the service states it needs. It aims to have 50 available at all times but it reports having an average of 34 by day. The service is redeveloping its risk assessment process. It currently uses software to help it model and measure the impact of changes to its provision. For example, the software can show the potential impact of factors such as the location of fire stations, the speed of fire engines, a change in duty systems, or the closure of a motorway junction. The modelling is currently based on a static snapshot. But in future, the system will be based on constantly updated information, and will be able to consider seasonal changes to demand that might affect which stations are most in demand, such as increased traffic during school holidays.

Maintaining risk information

Firefighters make regular visits to gather risk information and keep plans up to date. This has been demonstrated by the number of [7(2)(d)](#) visits the service completes. As at 31 December 2018, the service had 317 sites it determined needed a 7(2)(d) visit and between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018 it had visited over 40 percent of them. Its control room has a good system in place for updating information, including for temporary risks, such as buildings with defective sprinkler systems, and temporary events, like music concerts.

Firefighters access risk information using computers on fire engines called mobile data terminals (MDTs). Most staff can confidently access and use MDTs, but the technology is unreliable. Some fire crews carry paper copies of risk information, some of which we found to be out of date. The service recognises this issue and, to compensate, it has provided on-site risk information packs to all medium and higher-risk premises. The service plans to replace the MDTs by summer 2019.

The service communicates general risk information through bulletins, briefings and videoconferences. Information is passed on effectively during briefings at the start of shifts and through handover books at fire stations, which contain information including missing equipment and vulnerable person referrals.

Teams from prevention, protection and response meet every month to share risk information.

Preventing fires and other risks

Good

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

Prevention strategy

Kent FRS has a clear prevention strategy, which is linked to its customer and corporate plan. It prioritises the most vulnerable people, using referrals from other agencies, and visits are carried out by a specialist team. This team has additional training and equipment, and does specialist prevention work, such as installing equipment to prevent fires. Visits also include identifying and reducing fire risks, advice on social welfare and health, and advice on slips, trips and falls.

Station-based staff target over-70s, using [Exeter data](#) (according to the service's data, Kent has 200,000 such households). However, the service does not give stations sufficient information to prioritise visits. It identifies streets for crews to visit, and when crews find people at greater risk of fire they can refer them to the home safety team. There is no follow-up if crews cannot access homes after three separate attempts; this may leave some high-risk people vulnerable to fire.

Firefighters also conduct 'hot-strike' visits following an accidental dwelling fire, visiting all nearby premises and providing fire safety advice.

The service evaluates its prevention activity well. It commissioned the Kent Public Health Observatory to evaluate the impact of its safe and well visits, based on data from the service and the NHS, and it is making improvements based on the findings. In 2016, the service commissioned the National Social Marketing Centre to evaluate its schools-education programme.

Promoting community safety

Kent FRS delivers wide-ranging community safety activities. A central team provides programmes focused on water safety, school visits, arson awareness and fire-setting. It co-ordinates its prevention activity with Kent Police, and stations receive toolkits supporting each campaign.

Some initiatives involve working with a large number of partner organisations. For example, two staff work in the Margate Task Force alongside over 30 agencies. This aims to tackle arson, theft, drug use, organised crime and human trafficking in the town.

There is a dedicated team of three running the fire-setter scheme. According to data provided by the service, this team engaged with 334 people during 2017/18. Schools, police, youth offending teams, parents and social services make referrals. The service follows up fire-setter intervention using letters and visits, but it acknowledges it is difficult to evaluate the scheme. It has not been running for long enough to see any reduction in arson incidents that could be directly attributed to its work. It can also be difficult to track the progress of individuals, as they move away or disengage.

There are some good local water safety initiatives, such as training community flood wardens, and we saw an innovative campaign, 'Got ducked, fell in'. This placed rubber ducks and posters at river rescue hotspots, and beer mats in nearby pubs, to remind people to think before entering water after drinking or taking drugs. The service developed this with the RNLI.

Staff understand how to identify and safeguard vulnerable people. We saw good evidence of this, including a case of cuckooing being identified during a routine visit. The service uses community volunteers to help communicate its safety messages to diverse communities.

The service shares prevention information with partners via secure email.

Road safety

Kent FRS takes a leading role in trying to reduce deaths and injuries on the road in Kent. It chairs the Kent & Medway Road Safety Casualty Reduction Partnership, which involves councils, Highways England and the police. A senior Kent FRS manager leads on road safety nationally. The service also chairs the Road Safety Delivery Group, which includes fire, police and Kent & Medway councils.

Since April 2016, the service has run an innovative road safety experience. This is a centre where service staff, along with police and ambulance staff, run supervised interactive sessions for 14 to 25-year-olds. Between the project's launch and February 2019, the service has reported that it has had 10,500 visitors. The service delivers 'Licence to Kill', aimed at young drivers and passengers, and has expanded to educate adult drivers from external organisations, such as taxi firms. The service has employed an external company to review the centre's effectiveness.

The service developed a motorcycle safety programme, Biker Down, ten years ago and this has now been rolled out nationally. It has subsequently developed other biker safety programmes with IAM Roadsmart and the management of Brands Hatch race circuit.

Protecting the public through fire regulation

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Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should assure itself that its enforcement plan prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.
>
> - The service should assure itself that it allocates enough resources to meet its own targets for responding to building control consultations.

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

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

Risk-based approach

Kent FRS has a risk-based inspection programme, which aims to audit all high-risk business premises over a seven-year period. It uses Fire Service Emergency Cover modelling software, Experian data and historic audit data to highlight high-risk premises, aligned to National Fire Chiefs Council categories. It prioritises houses in multiple occupancy and sheltered housing, as it considers them particularly high risk.

However, the service is failing to meet its high-risk audit targets. In the year to 31 December 2018, the service audited 8.5 percent (885 audits) of its high-risk premises. This equates to just over half of the service's target to audit 1,600 high-risk premises per year. This puts the public at risk of using premises that don't meet fire regulations, and means that operational staff do not have access to the risk information that should be gathered during routine inspections.

Neither is the service meeting its targets for responding to building control consultations. It aims to respond to 98 percent in 21 days, but it achieved only 89 percent between April 2018 and December 2018. The service's management explains this is a resourcing issue that has recently been addressed, and predicts it will be on-target by April 2019.

There is a 24/7 rota of trained staff to respond to dangerous conditions and issue prohibition notices. The service aims to respond to fire safety complaints and concerns within 24 hours; it currently does so on 98 percent of occasions. However, where there is a risk to life it mobilises an officer and alerts the duty fire safety manager immediately.

The service has a systematic and robust fire safety audit process. Inspectors peer-review each other's audits, and fire safety managers quality-assure all inspectors. All protection staff are trained to level four fire safety diploma. Station-based staff do not conduct fire protection audits, but they could nevertheless describe how to identify and address fire safety issues.

Overall, the service has a well-structured team in place to conduct its risk-based inspection programme, but it needs to increase productivity to meet its targets.

Enforcement

Kent FRS achieves a good balance between working with businesses to promote compliance and taking enforcement action. The protection files we reviewed were logical and systematic.

In the year ending 31 March 2018, the service issued 232 informal notifications, 77 enforcement notices and 12 prohibitions notices. There were no alteration notices or prosecutions. However, we saw examples of successful prosecution cases in previous years. Currently, one prosecution is underway, with another two likely to follow. We saw the service's enforcement tracker, which lists premises inspected with details of any follow-up activity, and found the service has access to appropriate legal advice.

Working with others

Kent FRS works effectively with partner agencies to protect the community. It takes joint action over houses of multiple occupation with the police, local authority and immigration services, shares data with housing officers and the Care Quality Commission, and has joint visit agreements. The service shares premises with Border Force and carries out joint visits with them.

Responding to fires and other emergencies

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Good

Kent Fire & 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 staff know how to command fire service assets assertively, effectively and safely at 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

As at 31 March 2018, the service had 14 wholetime fire stations, 34 on-call fire stations and 9 mixed fire stations, and 75 fire engines. It had specialist vehicles and equipment to deal with a broad range of incident types. Wholetime and on-call staff are trained to the same level at a central training centre.

However, it is failing to achieve its targets for the number of available fire engines. Between April 2018 and December 2018, the overall average monthly pump availability ranged from 41 percent to 47 percent. According to its fire cover review, it needs 50 engines by day and night, but between April 2018 and the end of February 2019 it averaged 34 by day and 51 at night. That said, the service states this is sufficient to enable it to meet its planning assumptions of dealing with two simultaneous incidents, each with up to ten fire engines.

Of note is that the service manages the availability of fire engines dynamically and uses wholetime and day-duty staff to provide cover. It operates an operational resilience team of 15 firefighters, who are posted around the service to keep key wholetime and on-call fire engines available. The service failed to mobilise a response on only two occasions between April to December 2018; this is comparable to most other services.

Work is underway to improve numbers of on-call staff and the service has recently launched a recruitment campaign. New things are being tried to improve staff numbers, including paying an enhanced rate to on-call staff for providing daytime cover. Numbers are low due to recent changes to conditions of service for these staff. For example, the service introduced part-time workers' rights to improve conditions of service for on-call staff. An unintended consequence of this was the reduction in number of hours individuals could cover, which adversely affected overall availability of stations.

Response

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service's average response time to primary fires was 9 minutes 36 seconds. This is one of the quickest of all other significantly rural services. The service has a response standard target to reach all life-threatening calls in 10 minutes on 80 percent of occasions. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service achieved this in 73 percent of cases. These response standards do not include call-handling time; in the year ending 31 March 2018, the average call-handling time was 1 minute 24 seconds.

To overcome availability gaps, incident commanders have received specialist training in attending with a crew of three, where they would normally have four.

The service has an effective plan for reviewing its policies against national operational guidance. There are good systems in place to mobilise predetermined attendances to incidents, based on national incident types. It collaborates with other services, for example, providing medical response to urgent calls received by the ambulance service where Kent FRS has the nearest available resource with the required skills.

The service is attending more medical calls on behalf of the ambulance service, increasing from 2,653 in the year to 30 September 2017 to 6,499 over the same time period in 2018. Staff are trained to be able to deal with serious conditions such as heart attacks. The service helps the police or ambulance service to gain entry to properties where there are concerns over the welfare of occupants. And it helps search for missing people, providing personnel on the ground and drones in the air, and using its thermal imaging equipment. None of this additional work has prevented the service attending its core business of fire and rescue incidents.

There is a range of systems for recording incident information and reporting it back, including standard messages, incident risk assessments and decision logs. Fire control staff add incident information to turnout slips and MDTs, including temporary faults with sprinkler systems and road closures. As mentioned above, however, the MDTs have limited functionality but they are being replaced during 2019. They show hydrant locations and site risk information, and can plot smoke/hazard plumes onto maps, but they have no vehicle crash data, and some of the mapping data they do have is out of date.

The service works with other agencies to improve its response. Fire control staff now work in the police control room, which allows them access to some systems, for example county-wide CCTV.

Command

During our inspection, we found that fire control staff were trained and encouraged to alter the number of fire engines sent to incidents depending on information gathered from callers. Most staff felt the service would support them if they used operational discretion at an incident rather than simply following standard procedures. A number of incident commanders understood this important principle, but we found some did not.

Responses to high-rise incidents were reviewed after the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The service carried out exercises to test high-rise procedures and fire control's ability to give advice to many different callers from the same building. Most wholetime and on-call staff are confident in using breathing apparatus, and understand operational risk. We saw evidence of comprehensive training for all levels of incident commanders. However, some commanders did not have a good enough understanding of tactical modes, which are part of national guidance about which approach to take in tackling an incident – for example, entering a burning building, or fighting the fire from outside.

Keeping the public informed

A communications officer is on duty 24/7, using a range of channels, including social media and the service's website, to keep the public informed. Fire control staff alert the duty press officer when incidents take place. The public can subscribe to email updates for longer-running incidents. After a fire in Margate in September 2018, volunteers dropped supporting leaflets in affected areas and the service released YouTube videos. The service also has public-facing news release archives, which contain all releases since 2014.

Fire control staff are confident in offering fire survival guidance to the public. The control room also keeps all callers on the line for as long as possible after mobilising, to gather information and offer advice and support.

Evaluating operational performance

Kent FRS introduced a new strategy for evaluating its operations in January 2018. This explains how good practice, areas for improvement and operational learning should be disseminated. This includes debriefs and incident monitoring; all incidents have small debriefs, usually before leaving the incident location, and information is uploaded onto the operational assurance site.

There is a formal debrief process for more significant incidents, and for those in which operational discretion has been used. The service recently improved this procedure by broadening the scope of incidents that have formal debriefs. All staff can see significant debriefs, using a database that tracks any recent changes, for example to procedures or equipment. Officers attend incidents to monitor and evaluate performance.

The service publishes debrief reports and, where appropriate, produces case studies. It requires stations to acknowledge receipt of any safety-critical information from debriefs. It also responds to staff feedback; we saw examples from operational assurance in which staff suggestions had led the service to purchase equipment or change its policies.

Where appropriate, the service shares its development plans via national operational learning. We saw an example from a multi-agency incident in which the service shared lessons it learned from a communication problem. We also saw how the service learned from national incidents; for example, following a firefighter fatality in another service, Kent FRS evaluated how it would have dealt with that incident scenario.

The operational assurance team keeps an eye out for coroner's and other reports relating to firefighter fatalities or investigations into the handling of incidents by other fire services. The team uses the lessons learned to advise on improvements across the service.

Responding to national risks

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Good

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

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should ensure operational staff have good 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

Kent FRS can support national incidents and gave us examples of having done so, for example during widespread grass fires in summer 2018. The service's local arrangements meet requirements within the national co-ordination and advisory framework. The service's partners reported that it is a proactive and valued member of the Kent Resilience Forum.

We saw clear arrangements for responding to incidents in the Channel Tunnel. The service regularly exercises with French, Belgian and Dutch emergency services to prepare its response for incidents in the English Channel. The service has comprehensive plans for high-risk sites. It shares these plans with local resilience forum partners and via Resilience Direct, a national platform used by emergency responders for sharing information.

We found incident command assessments use realistic scenarios based on high-risk local sites, such as Bluewater shopping centre.

Working with other services

We saw evidence of Kent working with other fire services through its involvement with the East Coast Flooding Group, which exercises across the east coast of England. The service's three-yearly training and exercise planner includes exercises with neighbouring services. We found examples of stations training with neighbouring services in the Dartford Crossing and Channel Tunnel.

However, the service has no cross-border risk information available to crews via MDTs; this is passed verbally from fire control. This presents a risk; we found it common for services' mapping and risk information on MDTs to extend 10 km beyond service borders, so crews can plan en route to risk sites over the border. Neighbouring site risks are available via the Resilience Direct site, which only managers can access.

Working with other agencies

The Kent Resilience Forum annual planner sets out multi-agency training, exercises, debriefs and seminars, including exercises at a nuclear power station, airport and Dartford Crossing, as well as planning for the impact of Brexit. The service takes part in all those exercises. It has also developed an exercise planner for events up to 2022. Fire control is involved in exercises and is invited to subsequent debriefs. Officers have an exercise rota to ensure they each attend a range of incident types and locations.

Incident commanders demonstrated knowledge and understanding of how to deal with a multi-agency response, and the service has appropriate specialist equipment to respond to large-scale national incidents. Commanders felt confident in managing a range of incident types, including terrorist incidents.

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. Kent Fire & Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

Overall, the service is good at making the most of its resources. It matches its resources to relevant risks, and has made savings by reducing staff numbers when risks have reduced in some areas. It has worked hard to address the lack of on-call staff.

Leaders are prepared to make changes to improve the efficiency of the service, even when those changes are challenging. There are policies in place to promote flexible working. The service has invested in innovative technology, to help it respond to fires more safely and efficiently.

It works well with the police, ambulance service and Border Force. It shares stations with the police, and supports the ambulance service in attending incidents. But it could do more to evaluate whether these initiatives are good value for money.

The service has a joint procurement agreement in place with other services. It has led large national procurements for personal protective equipment (PPE), and is leading on workwear, specialist PPE, and training. It could do more to attract external funding and generate income. For example, the service doesn't charge for its primary authority schemes, which help businesses to meet fire regulations.

Making best use of resources

Good

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

Areas for improvement
- The service should ensure there is effective monitoring, review and evaluation of the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration.

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

How plans support objectives

Kent FRS's plans meet financial requirements. The service's financial planning addresses the risks set out in the customer and corporate plan. It has also matched resources to the risks identified in its safety and wellbeing plan. As the risk had reduced in some areas, the service has subsequently reduced the number of full-time equivalent staff from 1,896 in 2007 to 1,422 in 2018, following reviews of its fire cover provision.

The service has worked hard to address the reduction in on-call staff, increasing payment for providing daytime cover, moving staff around to plug gaps and enabling crews to ride fire engines with three staff. However, the service is still struggling to provide the necessary number of fire engines.

Productivity and ways of working

Kent FRS's leaders are prepared to make changes to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the service. They are not afraid to implement potentially challenging changes, such as closing ten fire stations since 2007, replacing the watch structure with a flexible working system and replacing the retained duty system with a contractually-based on-call system.

The service has policies in place to enable staff to work more flexibly. The flexible rostering system enables stations to manage their own work patterns, providing the necessary skills are available. That system includes two compulsory training days per month.

Since 2014, the service has changed its day-crewed system to a flexible rostering pattern, reducing staff per station from 14 to 12. In 2017, the service finished rolling this out across all wholetime stations, which allowed it to reduce its total number of staff. It also operates a 'fifth watch' which moves around stations as needed.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the firefighter cost per head of population was £20.57; this compares to the England rate over the same timescale of £22.38. However, many factors influence this cost, for example the ratio of wholetime to retained staff which is in part influenced by the rurality of the service.

Collaboration

The service collaborates with a range of partners, including the police, ambulance service and Border Force. It shares seven stations with the police and 11 with the ambulance service. The service control moved to the joint fire and police control centre at Kent Police HQ in 2012 and uses the police's mobilising system. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service carried out 28 joint exercises or training.

The service is working with Kent Police in eight areas, including gaining entry to premises, sharing equipment such as boats and operating drones to aid searches for missing persons. The service carries out joint training with the police and works with them on vehicle maintenance. It peer-reviews Kent Police's health and safety work.

There are 26 on-call stations supporting the ambulance service in attending emergency medical response incidents. The service does not recover costs from the ambulance service for this; it argues that this benefits the public and helps attract and retain on-call staff in otherwise low-activity stations.

Despite an enthusiastic approach to collaboration, and positive examples of working closely with other emergency services, the service does not consistently monitor, review and evaluate these initiatives to work out whether they are delivering value for money. We found examples where the service could be doing more to recover costs for services and facilities it provides to other organisations.

Continuity arrangements

Fire control has business continuity arrangements, which it tests regularly with the police control room. It has a secondary control room and back-up mobilising system.

The service has comprehensive business continuity plans to ensure it can deliver critical services during times of disruption. It developed these as part of a regional framework agreement involving nine fire services. These plans will be renewed in 2020. It reviewed its business continuity arrangements during 2017, including no-notice exercises, testing loss of premises and ICT.

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

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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

We are satisfied that the service has a thorough understanding of the financial climate in which it operates. Its annual budget for 2018/19 is £69.8m, and its plans for using reserves demonstrate this is sustainable. General reserves for 2017/18 were just over £4m, which is approximately 7 percent of the service's net expenditure. According to information provided by the service, it plans to reduce this to 5 percent in 2019. Earmarked reserves in 2017/18 were just below £29m, but £23m is for projects such as large upgrades to ICT, estate and mobile data.

There are clear plans setting out how the service would make further savings if necessary, starting from minor changes and working up to major cuts.

The service has a joint procurement agreement with other services, which it has used to buy uniforms and equipment, such as casualty smoke-hoods. However, the service could make better use of benchmarking or comparative information to make sure it is getting value for money.

Innovation

Kent FRS has invested in innovative firefighting technology to help it deal with incidents and respond to local risks. Every fire engine is equipped to begin fighting fires without the crew needing to enter the building until reinforcements arrive. The service's fire engine pumps can be used without an operator. The service uses these technologies to free up a crewmember to carry out other tasks.

It has introduced enhanced training for on-call staff, enabling them to respond with three staff when necessary. Wholetime station staff independently self-roster; they manage their crewing locally. This has enabled the service to reduce wholetime staff, including reducing the number of watch managers from four to one per station.

Future investment and working with others

The service plans to bring together information from three databases from prevention and protection into one, making information more easily accessible. It will also replace on-call staff pagers with a mobile phone application; this will save money and potentially improve coverage in areas where pagers do not work.

A project is underway to replace and upgrade existing radios with models that have a longer range. By summer 2019, the service plans to have two new MDTs fitted to each fire engine, one of which is removable for use by commanders. They will contain crash data to assist rescues from vehicles, improving service to the public. This project will cost £1.47m between 2017 and 2020 and will improve the reliability of risk information for operational staff.

The service aims to improve the security and reliability of its IT systems by moving to a cloud-based system. The full network of laptops and computers will be improved in 2019.

The service could do more to exploit external funding and income-generating opportunities. It evaluates benefits to its customers from joint working, and if a particular initiative contributes to the service's strategic principles and is affordable, the service carries the cost. It does not charge for primary authority schemes in which the service advises businesses, for example hotel chains, to help improve their fire safety. While it does not have a trading arm, it has a contractual arrangement with Eurotunnel to provide 48 firefighters to give 24/7 cover, albeit not at cost recovery.

The service uses its risk register to prioritise how it conducts its internal audits, with the biggest risks audited first. It is managing most main risks well.

People
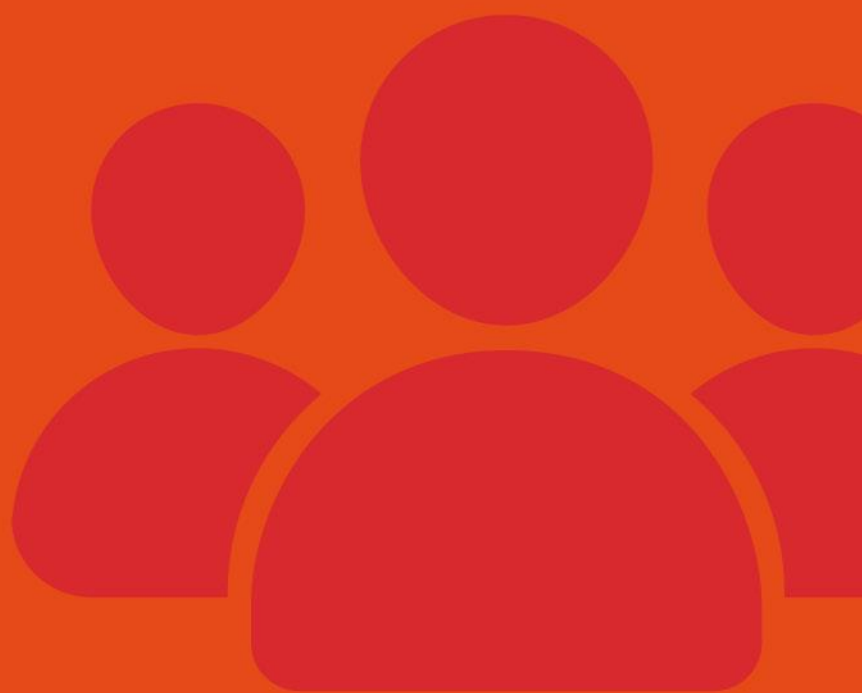
How well does the service look after its people?

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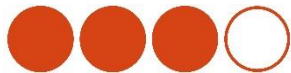
Good

Summary

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

The service offers excellent staff wellbeing support. Staff recognise that it is a priority, and know what is available to them. Those who need it receive welfare debriefs, which include continuing support. The service has a well-established approach to health and safety, including:

- out-of-hours support for work-related and personal issues; and
- regular training.

Leaders demonstrate and model the service's expected behaviours. They encourage staff to get in touch with them directly. Staff across the service told us that there is a culture of trust and empowerment.

The service gives training, and makes sure its staff maintain and develop their skills. It monitors gaps in its capability in order to fill them as quickly as possible. It has a good system for recording training provided centrally, such as breathing apparatus and driving. However, there is an inconsistent approach to recording station-based training.

The service's workforce doesn't reflect wider society. Some 1.3 percent of its firefighters are from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background, compared to 6.9 percent of Kent residents. Only 4.9 percent of its firefighters are female. However, data from the service shows 48 percent of its staff from group manager or equivalent upwards are female (including the chief executive).

The service has a new, paperless appraisal system, which consists of one-to-one meetings. This has many benefits, but some staff don't yet fully understand it. The service needs to give more guidance in order to make sure it is run consistently.

Promoting the right values and culture

Good

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

Workforce wellbeing

Kent FRS has good processes for responding to and monitoring staff wellbeing for personal and work issues. Staff understand the provision, and recognise that welfare is a service priority. There are regular wellbeing messages on the intranet, and the service has appointed 30 wellbeing champions, who have volunteered to have training in supporting colleagues. These champions are highly regarded by the workforce. There is also a support portal, which is an online system that all staff can access for advice and support. Leaders talk about these issues in videoconferences. Wellbeing is part of staff appraisals, and all staff carry wellbeing cards with details of 24/7 support.

Staff who have attended critical incidents receive a welfare debrief, called 'defusing', which includes follow-up contact and ongoing support. Other staff can request this, too, and those involved in emergency medical response receive additional support. The service told us that six staff currently have carers' contracts to help them with carer responsibilities and improve work–life balance.

The service trains managers to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress. However, some managers told us that further training would be beneficial.

Health and safety

We found the service has an established health, safety and wellbeing culture. All staff have relevant training, including manual handling. The service is accredited by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), and IOSH qualifications are mandatory for some roles. Staff are encouraged to report health and safety issues. As part of our inspection we completed a staff survey to which 448 Kent FRS staff responded, which equates to 31 percent of the workforce (please see Annex A for more details). Of the 448 respondents, 98 percent agreed that they know how to report all accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences and 94 percent agreed that they are encouraged to do so.

The service investigates, reports on and analyses all accidents and near-misses, in order to learn from any mistakes. There are six station managers who undertake these investigations. They are trained by the Health and Safety Executive and Kent Police, and they work on joint investigations with union representatives.

There is a dedicated health and safety team to support all off-site training risk assessments. Staff recognise the benefits of this. Members of the team are involved from the early stages of research and development of new equipment. They attend incidents and exercises and offer 24/7 advice.

Culture and values

We are aware Kent FRS has been through a period of significant cultural and organisational change. It has moved from being a traditional fire service and has evolved into a more public-facing service. Leaders model the service's expected behaviours. Staff told us they were encouraged to have direct contact with senior leaders.

We found them business-like and supportive of staff. They have a strong emphasis on coaching as a management style and provide coaches to other agencies. We found the service does not have a statement of values, which it justified as staff told them they did not want this – they wanted lived positive behaviour. There is a published 'Promise' to each other which reinforces this.

Its behavioural framework, which is being adopted nationally, sets out expected behaviours at different levels across the service. We found these evidenced across the service. The service is willing to tackle tough issues, such as bullying, and promotes a zero-tolerance attitude. However, there is still some work needed to ensure this message is embedded. Of the 448 responses received from Kent FRS to our staff survey, 23 percent reported feeling bullied or harassed, and 15 percent reported feeling discriminated against at work in the previous 12 months. This is not consistent with our other fieldwork inspection findings. There are limitations to the staff survey which should be considered alongside the findings. We explain these in Annex A.

Staff across the service described and demonstrated a culture of trust and empowerment. For example, appraisals are paperless, taking place as monthly one-to-one meetings. We saw a copy of a letter, sent by the Chief to all operational staff, assuring them of support for using operational discretion.

Kent FRS has implemented an 'open chair' at senior leadership meetings that staff at all levels are invited to attend and contribute to. A senior manager takes time before meetings to discuss and explain any agenda items that the 'guest' is unsure of.

Getting the right people with the right skills

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Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should ensure it has a system to record and monitor operational staff competence which is accurate and accessible.

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

Workforce planning

Kent FRS provides enough courses to meet anticipated demand and sets out training requirements in a workforce plan. This means staff can maintain their core skills and progress, meeting the needs of the service.

An establishment group meets every two months to look at workforce gaps. These meetings inform recruitment campaigns and promotion processes, and staff eligible for promotion can be quickly moved into post.

We saw evidence of effective succession planning during our inspection. Two members of staff had submitted their notice of retirement, and their replacements were already in place for a handover period.

There are monthly performance management reports, which are accessible across the whole service. Using graphs for clarity, these provide information such as the number of safe and well visits and sickness absence, giving the figures for service, group and station level. They show how this year compares to previous years.

The service has difficulty in attracting non-uniformed staff into some of its senior roles, partly due to its proximity to London. It has introduced a pay premium to help it attract talented individuals, with some recent successes.

Learning and improvement

Kent FRS has an effective central recording system for training such as breathing apparatus and driving. This flags up when staff need to attend refresher courses. Such centrally-taught core skills are well maintained, tracked and supported by the training team. The service has a three-year training planner for staff, and wholetime crews have compulsory training days. Operational staff told us that centrally-delivered training was of a high standard. Of the 448 responses received from Kent FRS to our staff survey, 78 percent of respondents agreed that they had received sufficient training to enable them to do what is asked of them.

The service needs to do more, however, to make sure that the workforce has the right skills and capabilities. There is an inconsistent approach to recording station-based training. The previous system was abandoned, as it was cumbersome and inefficient, but since then most stations have developed their own methods for recording training. Some of these are adequate, but they are not consistent. The service acknowledges that it doesn't monitor station-based training closely enough.

In each station there is now a station leader, which is a new role. The station leader oversees training in stations, releasing supervisory managers to take part in drills. When new station leaders are appointed, managers review their skills, to tailor their training for their new role. We saw good, comprehensive examples of this.

The service encourages staff to develop their skills. Staff are encouraged to develop personal development logs for any professional memberships/qualifications they have. It supports those who wish to pursue higher education and other qualifications with bursaries. The service has reported that between April 2018 and the time of inspection, 6 support staff and 11 operational staff have received these.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

Good

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

Kent FRS identifies and resolves workforce concerns. Firefighters gave us examples of the service identifying local concerns – allegations of bullying, for example – and dealing with them promptly.

We saw examples of new equipment and working practices that had been adopted following suggestions by staff. For example, firefighters now receive personal-issue water bottles, which they suggested following an increase in grass fires in summer 2017. The aim is to save money and protect the environment by reducing the use of bottled water.

The service does not conduct any service-wide staff survey, and we were told there was little response when they had tried to do so in the past. Instead, it uses small thematic surveys, sets up staff forums, holds regular videoconferences, sends interactive monthly updates from the chief, and has manager visits. Senior managers are always available for face-to-face discussions.

The communications department monitors internal communications to ensure staff have received risk-critical messages and updates. Staff can set up individual alerts to update them about activity in the online staff suggestion forum.

The service's grievance procedure follows ACAS guidelines and has been in place for five years. It has realistic and achievable timescales. There is a very low level of formal grievances, all of which were dealt with appropriately. Managers are trained to deal with informal grievances and the service uses mediators to help deal with informal cases. However, the service has no oversight of informal grievances. It is therefore unable to ensure that informal outcomes are being applied fairly and consistently, and the organisation is unsighted on trends that may occur.

We found the service has good working relationships with unions, which has allowed it to deliver a programme of significant change without industrial action.

Diversity

In terms of diversity, Kent FRS's workforce does not reflect its wider society. As at 31 March 2018, 1.3 percent of its firefighters were from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background. This compares with a BAME residential population of 6.9 percent.

The service is trying to increase the diversity of its wholetime firefighters, with some recent success in 2017. The service's multicultural volunteers engage with diverse communities, for example through meetings with representatives from Gypsy and Traveller communities, and attendance at Pride events.

It has also made efforts to address gender imbalances. The service reports that, as at 31 March 2018, 4.9 percent of firefighters were female. But data from the services shows 48 percent of staff from group manager or equivalent upwards are female, and the chief is also a woman. The service runs positive action days and taster sessions aimed at women and people from BAME communities, and it is appointing an engagement officer to develop a recruitment strategy and engagement plan. The female staff we spoke to told us that the service supported them with appropriate uniforms, and dedicated changing and welfare facilities.

We saw improved dignity and welfare provisions on newer stations, for example, the replacement of open dormitories with separate bedrooms, and separate changing, toilet and shower facilities. We were shown a plan to improve all the service's facilities over a two-year programme.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is well-embedded across the service's policies and procedures, although clearly there is a long way to go until it has a more representative workforce. Every project proposal starts with a people impact assessment, which considers nine protected characteristics. All staff have training in equality and diversity and sign up to an equality, diversity and inclusion 'promise' on joining the service, which sets out how colleagues are expected to behave as employees of Kent FRS. The staff we spoke to were all on board with this.

Managing performance and developing leaders

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Good

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

Managing performance

Kent FRS's new paperless appraisal process is based on trust and empowerment, and it has many benefits. However, some staff do not yet fully understand it, and we found that they were approaching it inconsistently. The service needs to ensure that all staff understand the new process; some staff told us that they would like more guidance on this.

Appraisals consist of a one-to-one meeting, which is followed up with a wellbeing action plan if necessary and a new process for identifying when people are ready for promotion, and talent-spotting future leaders. The service gives managers clear guidance on supporting talent, and they use a grid system to evaluate performance. This is a good process, not only for those seeking promotion, but for all working at Kent Fire & Rescue Service.

All staff sign up to the service's expected behaviours. These reinforce personal responsibility for learning. Staff are expected to seek opportunities to grow and develop their skills. Of the 448 responses received from Kent FRS to our staff survey, 75 percent of respondents agreed that they were satisfied with their current level of learning and development.

Developing leaders

The service has a framework for identifying, supporting and developing high-potential future leaders, but managers don't always understand it. At the time of inspection, its talent process was implemented down to watch manager and not yet in place for support staff.

We found the promotion process fair and transparent. The application process has been shortened to an expression of interest, and interviews are based around the published expected behaviours. Staff who have been through the promotion process say they received honest feedback. Staff must complete a 'licence to recruit' if they are to sit on recruitment or promotion panels, which includes unconscious bias training delivered by external recruitment specialists.

We saw good examples of the service providing staff with temporary development opportunities following unsuccessful attempts at promotion. This helps candidates to gain experience.

Annex A – About the data

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

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

Where we collected data directly from fire and rescue services (FRS), we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with services and with other interested parties such as the Home Office. This was primarily through the FRS Technical Advisory Group, which brings together representatives from FRSs and the Home Office to support the inspection's design and development, including data collection. We gave services several opportunities to validate the data they gave us and to ensure the accuracy of the evidence presented. For instance:

- We asked all services to check the data they submitted to us via an online application.
- We asked all services to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified.

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

Methodology

Population

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

BMG survey of public perception of the fire and rescue service

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

However, a minority of the interviews (757) were conducted via face-to-face interviews with trained interviewers in respondents' homes. A small number of respondents were also interviewed online via postal invitations to the survey.

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

Survey findings are available on BMG's website.

Staff survey

We conducted a staff survey open to all members of FRS workforces across England. We received 2,905 responses between 1 October 2018 and 15 February 2019 from across 16 FRSs during this period in Tranche 2.

The staff survey is an important tool in understanding the views of staff who we may not have spoken to, for a variety of reasons, during fieldwork.

However, you should consider several points when interpreting the findings from the staff survey.

The results are not representative of the opinions and attitudes of a service's whole workforce. The survey was self-selecting, and the response rate ranged from 8 percent to 31 percent of a service's workforce. So any findings should be considered alongside the service's overall response rate, which is cited in the report.

To protect respondents' anonymity and allow completion on shared devices, it was not possible to limit responses to one per person. So it is possible that a single person could have completed the survey multiple times. It is also possible that the survey could have been shared and completed by people other than its intended respondents.

We have provided percentages when presenting the staff survey findings throughout the report. When a service has a low number of responses (less than 100), these figures should be treated with additional caution.

Due to the limitations set out above, the results from the staff survey should only be used to provide an indicative measure of service performance.

Service in numbers

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

Perceived effectiveness of service

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

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

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

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

Incidents attended per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, 'Incidents attended by fire and rescue services in England, by incident type and fire and rescue authority' for the period from 1 October 2017 to 31 September 2018.

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

- There are seven worksheets in this file. The 'FIRE0102' worksheet shows the number of incidents attended by type of incident and fire and rescue authority (FRA) for each financial year. The 'FIRE0102 Quarterly' worksheet shows the number of incidents attended by type of incident and FRA for each quarter. The worksheet 'Data' provides the raw data for the two main data tables (from 2009/10). The 'Incidents chart - front page', 'Chart 1' and 'Chart 2' worksheets provide the data for the corresponding charts in the statistical commentary. The 'FRS geographical categories' worksheet shows how FRAs are categorised.

- Fire data, covering all incidents that FRSs attend, is collected by the Incident Recording System (IRS). For several reasons some records take longer than others for FRSs to upload to the IRS. Totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers).

- We took data for Service in numbers from the February 2019 incident publication. So figures may not directly match more recent publications due to data updates.

- Before 2017/18, Hampshire FRS did not record medical co-responding incidents in the IRS. It is currently undertaking a project to upload this data for 2017/18 and 2018/19. This was not completed in time for publication on 14 February 2019.

Home fire safety checks per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, 'Home Fire Safety Checks carried out by fire and rescue services and partners, by fire and rescue authority' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

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

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

- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset & Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

- Figures for 'Fire Risk Checks carried out by Elderly (65+)', 'Fire Risk Checks carried out by Disabled' and 'Number of Fire Risk Checks carried out by Partners' don't include imputed figures because a lot of FRAs can't supply these figures.

- The checks included in a home fire safety check can vary between services. You should consider this when making direct comparisons between services.

Home fire safety checks may also be referred to as home fire risk checks or safe and well visits by FRSs.

Fire safety audits per 100 known premises

Fire protection refers to FRSs' statutory role in ensuring public safety in the wider built environment. It involves auditing and, where necessary, enforcing regulatory compliance, primarily but not exclusively in respect of the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO). The number of safety audits in Service in numbers refers to the number of audits FRSs carried out in known premises. According to the Home Office definition, "premises known to FRAs are the FRA's knowledge, as far as possible, of all relevant premises; for the enforcing authority to establish a risk profile for premises in its area. These refer to all premises except single private dwellings".

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

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

- Berkshire FRS didn't provide figures for premises known between 2014/15 and 2017/18.

- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset & Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

- Several FRAs report 'Premises known to FRAs' as estimates based on historical data.

Firefighter cost per person per year

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- We calculate BAME residential population data from ONS 2011 census data.
- We calculate female residential population data from ONS mid-2017 population estimates.
- The percentage of BAME firefighters does not include those who opted not to disclose their ethnic origin. There are large variations between services in the number of firefighters who did not state their ethnic origin.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset & Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

Annex B – Fire and rescue authority governance

These are the different models of fire and rescue authority (FRA) governance in England. Kent Fire & 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 consitutent 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.