HMICFRS

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

Fire & Rescue Service

Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of North Yorkshire 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 North Yorkshire 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

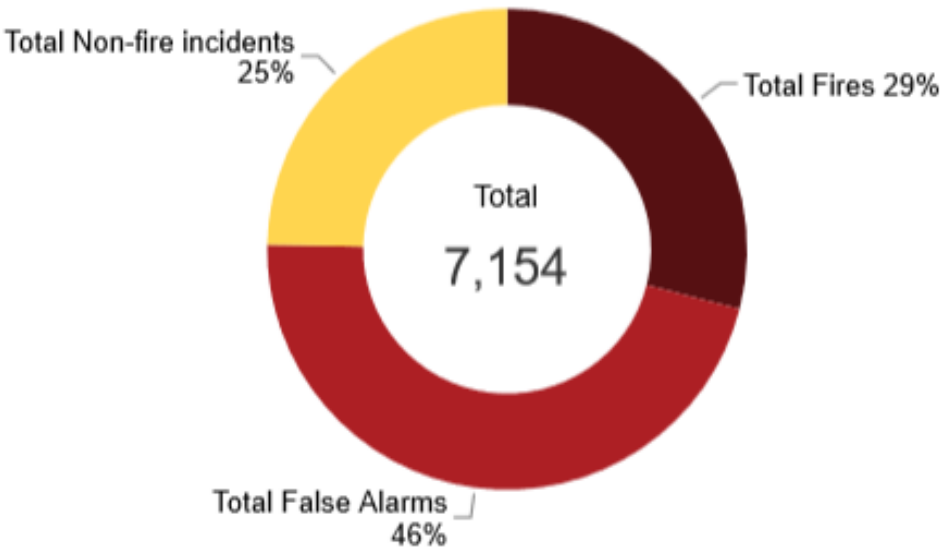
Public perceptions

	North Yorkshire	England
Perceived effectiveness of service Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)	87%	86%

Response

	North Yorkshire	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 December 2018	8.7	10.4
Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	3.6	10.4
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises 12 months to 31 March 2018	4.0	3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 31 December 2018



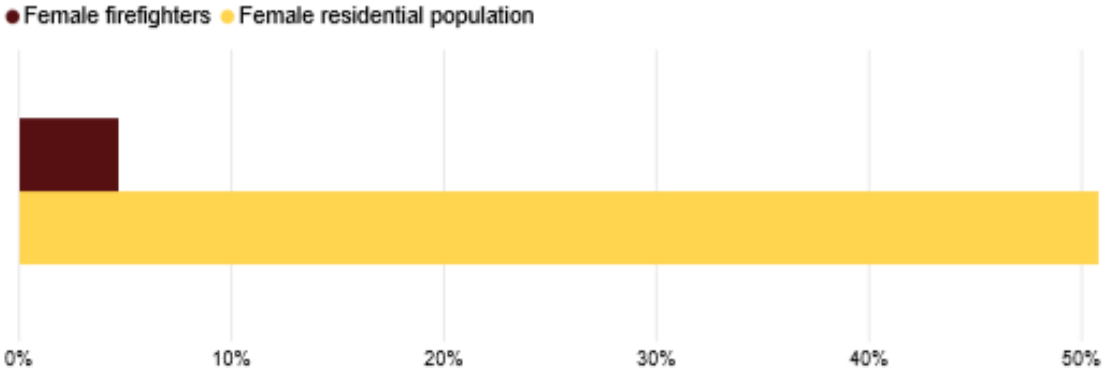
Cost

	North Yorkshire	England
Firefighter cost per person per year 12 months to 31 March 2018	£21.28	£22.38

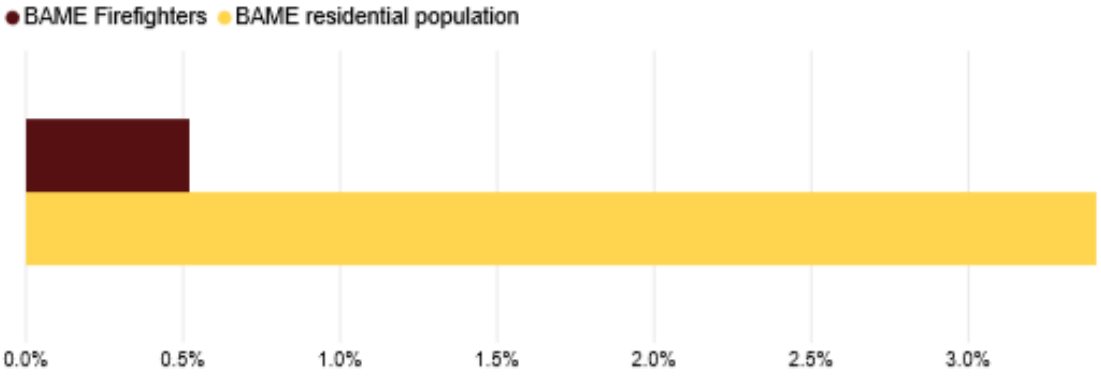
Workforce

	North Yorkshire	England
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population As at 31 March 2018	0.7	0.6
Five-year change in workforce As at 31 March 2013 compared with 31 March 2018	-11%	-14%
Percentage of wholetime firefighters As at 31 March 2018	49%	70%

Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

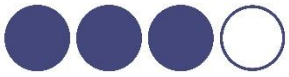
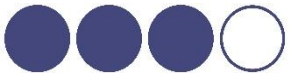
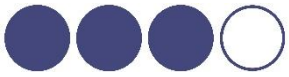


Percentage of black, Asian and minority ethnic firefighters as at 31 March 2018



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

Overview

Effectiveness	 **Good**
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	Good
Getting the right people with the right skills	Good
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Requires improvement
Managing performance and developing leaders	Requires improvement

Overall summary of inspection findings

We are satisfied with some aspects of the performance of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. But there are some areas where the service needs to make improvements.

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at providing an effective service to the public. It is good at:

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

But its understanding of the risk of fire and other emergencies requires improvement. And the service requires improvement to the way it prevents fires and other risks.

The service's efficiency requires improvement. Specifically, it requires improvement to how it uses resources and to the way it makes its services affordable.

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at looking after its people. It is good at:

- promoting the right values and culture; and
- getting the right people with the right skills.

But it requires improvement to how it:

- manages performance and develops leaders; and
- ensures fairness and promotes diversity.

Overall, we would like to see improvements 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. North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

However, the service's use of data to profile risk is very limited – it relies mainly on historical incident data to identify and model future demand and response requirements.

Not all site-specific risk sites are visited within the service's own time limits. There is also a lack of standardisation in the way staff identify, categorise and record risk information. This leads to inconsistency between the information stored centrally and the information available on fire engines.

The service has a sensible prevention strategy to reduce the likelihood of emergency incidents, death and injuries. Prevention activity is organised at local level. It is based on local knowledge, partner input and incident monitoring (rather than data analysis). However, the service doesn't prioritise prevention work in areas with significantly longer attendance times.

The service works well with several organisations (including the police, health organisations and the county council) to deliver its prevention and protection activity. It records interactions but doesn't evaluate the effectiveness of its work.

The service has a good system to ensure that its fire protection risk-based audit programme is aligned with its enforcement plan. However, the information in the system (which is used to determine the inspection process) is inconsistent. This is a concern because it generates reinspection frequencies and is used for an audit trail.

The service has a high rate of fire safety audits. Although the volume of audits is high, the number of high-risk premises being audited is low.

The service has a balanced approach to fire safety enforcement that intends to ensure public safety while minimising the burden on businesses.

The service does not publish a standard response time, so the public doesn't know what level of service to expect. Response times have increased since 2010.

The service has good risk and response plans. It is well prepared to attend incidents at heritage and high-risk premises. The service also has effective systems to gather learning from larger incidents.

There are effective processes in place to make sure that staff are aware of any risk-critical information, such as changes to procedures or safety alerts.

The service works and trains regularly with neighbouring services, but training and exercise plans are on an ad hoc informal basis.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its integrated risk management plan is informed by a comprehensive understanding of current and future risk. It should use a wide range of data to build the risk profile and use operational data to test that it is up-to-date.
- The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information, including risk information about temporary events.

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

The service's use of data is limited. It does not use a sufficiently wide range (of data) to produce an accurate, clear risk profile.

The service reviewed its fire cover in 2015. It produced its integrated risk management plan (IRMP) 2016/17–2020/21 from the review, which is known locally as its 'community safety plan'.

The review used five years of incident data, which included approximately 35,000 incidents, to inform its fire modelling. It also considered other information such as housing estate plans, census information and national statistics. It didn't include indices or deprivation data. In our view, it focused on the impact of removing resources rather than accurately profiling risk and effectively allocating resources to response, prevention and protection.

The service ran a staff and public consultation as part of the review. It generated 1,125 responses and 70 attendees at events. Several meetings were held with local MPs, council leaders and other key stakeholders. Representative bodies submitted feedback following meetings with officers and visits to every fire station.

The service revised its response arrangements as a result of the consultation, implementing a smaller vehicle – a tactical response vehicle (TRV) – at six fire stations. TRVs are crewed by three firefighters (rather than the usual four).

The TRVs were withdrawn from service for rigorous safety testing in April 2018 and replaced by a standard fire engine (with four firefighters). They are now being reintroduced, although none were being used at the time of our inspection.

On 15 November 2018, governance of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service passed from North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority to the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC). The PFCC requested a review of the previous IRMP when they took over. The review was underway at the time of our inspection.

Having an effective risk management plan

We found that the service has an effective risk management plan with regard to response arrangements. The 2015 fire cover review influenced its operational response levels and crewing, replacing some larger fire engines with TRVs and fewer firefighters in line with its risk assessment. However, we were unable to identify how the review determined other risk reduction activities – for example, prevention and protection work – particularly in areas that will have a longer response time, such as rural parts of the county.

The service produces and publishes an annual document on its website that gives each station area a risk score. The risk score is calculated by:

- giving every incident type a weighting; and
- multiplying the incident's score by the number of incidents that have occurred over the previous rolling five-year period.

Weightings are based on the type of incident. For example, road traffic collisions and building fires or rescues are given the highest weighting while incidents such as chimney fires or false alarm calls are given much lower scores.

The final risk scores correlate with the service's fire station and engine locations, and the crewing systems in use at those locations. For example, areas like York that have the highest number of incidents have full-time fire crews; those with a lower number of incidents have other crewing systems, such as day-crewed or on-call stations.

This risk scoring is an effective way to see if the service has the right amount of response resources available (against its own risk assessment). However, it is based on historical incidents – which means that it does not accurately predict future demand or changes to risk. Nor does it account for any prevention and protection work that needs to be done. Between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2018, the service attended 16 fatal fires. Only six fatalities were within the top 5 'riskiest' station areas.

The service should be open to considering other data sources to more accurately profile risk at a household level.

Maintaining risk information

The service has a planned programme of work to make sure that wholetime crews regularly visit and inspect premises that pose the greatest risk to firefighters and the public. The service has five categories of risk site that specify review frequency:

Risk	Review frequency
Very high	Every 1 year
High	Every 2 years
Medium	Every 3 years
Low	Every 5 years
Very low	Every 10 years

Risk site visits are part of district and station plans. Local managers allocate visits to each shift, depending on the risk level and visit frequency. These sites are also used for realistic training scenarios. (Sites that aren't visited are familiarised by a file review and table top exercise.)

This format ensures that every risk site in a station area gets an annual visit. Each shift visits all sites on a four-year rolling programme. Fire crews visit them to familiarise themselves with the site's risks and check that the information the service holds is accurate.

The service stores risk site information centrally. During an incident, firefighters can retrieve all the details about a site's risk via a computer terminal (on each engine). Fire crews told us they hadn't had any training on how to identify and categorise risk level and that it was subjective. This could lead to inconsistency in the risk classification. The process needs to be standardised across the service to ensure consistency.

Crews from wholetime stations also carry out visits to newly identified risk sites. The initial information they gather is quality assured by the local station manager before being added to the central database. The database generates a risk score that determines a site's risk level and revisit frequency. We found that some staff then alter the risk score to increase the frequency of visits. Altering risk scores could have an adverse effect on any operational tactics in the event of an incident. It also means that the two databases storing risk information have conflicting risk scores. (The service saves information on its risk database and then duplicates the risk rating onto CFRMIS, a computer software system, which is where staff can alter the risk score and visit frequency.)

We found that the local interpretation of when to visit sites can also lead to risk sites not being visited in the service's own prescribed time limits. For example, we found a site that had not been reviewed for nearly two years even though it was down for an annual review.

The service's risk information is comprehensive and easy to understand. However, when we conducted sampling of the information on fire engines and in the central database, we found various sites that did not have up-to-date risk information. This is a risk to firefighter safety. Data supplied by the service during fieldwork indicated that approximately 20 percent of sites are out of review date on a rolling basis.

Due to time constraints, the staff at on-call stations are only expected to carry out four site visits per year. Most but not all stations met this target. Some staff at on-call stations told us they hadn't visited a risk site for some years. We expect such a fundamental part of operational firefighting to have more stringent oversight, standardisation and monitoring of compliance.

The service also generates short-term risk information for crews to cover risks identified by partner agencies such as the local police force and from its protection, prevention and response activity. Fire control staff update the mobilising system and place tags on addresses where there could be or are known vulnerability issues, such as oxygen (O2) use, hoarding and referrals to social services.

The service makes response plans to support temporary events – for example, the Tour de Yorkshire cycling race – which they communicate to staff by physical handover from the relevant manager or via email. The quality of the plans we saw was good. However, the way crews access them is not standardised.

The service has effective means to ensure that staff are aware of any new risk-critical information. It has several systems to inform its staff about risk information including:

- face-to-face handovers between watches;
- briefings at the start of shifts and drill sessions; and
- handover sheets.

The service also circulates risk information via a safety bulletin. All operational staff must confirm that they have received and understood any new risk information, and sign to confirm their understanding. We inspected some recording sheets that are kept at each fire station and they were all up to date.

Preventing fires and other risks

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to target prevention work at people most at risk.
- The service should better evaluate its prevention work, so it understands all the benefits more clearly.
- The service should ensure staff understand how to safeguard vulnerable people and how to correctly make safeguarding referrals.

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

Prevention strategy

We found that the service has a sensible prevention strategy.

The strategy aims to reduce:

- the likelihood of emergency incidents; and
- the number of deaths and injuries caused by fires, road traffic collisions and other emergency situations.

The service organises its prevention activity at local level. Activity is based on local risk, incident trends and other local factors such as demographics. Data doesn't direct activity but is used to support local decisions about risk. It helps determine the type and frequency of activity undertaken by local crews and community safety staff.

The service's strategy covers statutory and non-statutory areas under three headings. They are:

1. home fire safety
2. road safety
3. other risks.

Each district has its own prevention and protection work plan – a district action plan – that is created in line with local risk and priorities. The district action plan informs bespoke fire station action plans that say what prevention, protection and response-based work needs to be done by each station to reduce the local risks. This work is not based on robust data analysis – local knowledge, partner input and incident monitoring formulate the local plans.

We saw how the district action plans direct local activity and link to national and seasonal campaigns. The plans provide a degree of corporate direction while allowing for local flexibility, engagement and risk-based activity. For example, the city of York

has a high number of water-related fatalities compared with other districts. Local flexibility allows the staff in York to prioritise this risk as part of its prevention activity.

We found that the service undertakes a mix of home fire safety checks and 'safe and well' visits. Fire safety checks are focused on reducing harm from fire and checking a property has working smoke alarms. This is referred to as 'Part A'. Safe and well visits cover the same topics as home fire safety checks but are expanded to look at wider issues such as slip and trip risks, health factors, loneliness and winter warmth. This is referred to as 'Part B'.

Most safe and well visits are conducted by specialist prevention staff, although the service is trialling whether some trained station-based staff could also do them. Station staff told us they didn't feel confident asking wider health-related questions and preferred giving fire-related safety advice. This situation means that on occasion operational staff complete Part A of the visit and then pass Part B (covering wider health issues) to specialist prevention staff.

We were also told that the reluctance to complete Part B by all staff is due to ongoing industrial disputes, as well as a lack of training and confidence.

The service offers its home fire safety checks to all members of the community. It uses a risk assessment at the point of referral to determine the urgency and timescales for completion. Partners can make direct referrals for home visits using the same risk assessment.

Until recently, the service had ambitious timescales for very high and high-risk people being referred. These timescales were not being monitored for completion and the oversight of performance (in relation to visit completion) was not effectively managed. The service is unable to tell if a visit has been completed within time and does not have oversight on the number of outstanding referrals.

If the service is committed to meeting the expectations it sets out to the public for initial visits and follow-up work, it must manage the process and produce performance information to ensure that it meets its own targets.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 2,956 safe and well checks/home fire safety checks. This equates to 3.6 safe and well checks per 1,000 population, which is below the England rate of 10.4.

During this period, the service targeted 64.4 percent of these checks at households occupied by an elderly person. This is higher than the England rate of 54.1 percent.

Promoting community safety

The service works with several organisations on prevention. Partners at a strategic level include North Yorkshire Police, health organisations, North Yorkshire County Council and the City of York Council. We found good examples of local partnership working within a multi-agency problem-solving hub. The hub is an open forum for fire service staff and other organisations to identify vulnerable people or groups and develop interventions to help them stay safe.

The service works to reduce fire-setting behaviour through the community safety hubs partnership work. It engages with schoolchildren at key stages 1 and 2, and works with young people individually through its 'fire setters' programme. This programme allows young people who have been identified as being at risk of fire-setting behaviours to be referred for educational intervention by a trained member of staff. According to data supplied by the service after fieldwork, they currently deal with approximately 40–50 referrals per year through this programme. However, this work is not evaluated to see if it is effective.

The service also runs short-term youth engagement courses – also known as 'local intervention fire education (LIFE)' – and fire cadet schemes.

There are areas of North Yorkshire that have significantly longer attendance times than others, for example, in rural villages. The service does not carry out any enhanced levels of activity to mitigate the longer response times with increased prevention work. Most prevention work is done by wholetime crews (typically based in urban stations) – so by default they are more focused on urban than rural communities. Community safety staff carry out visits to rural locations, but this is not prioritised. Staff at on-call stations do home fire safety check visits after incidents have occurred but do not have a well-managed programme of work in this area.

The service carries out local engagement, attending public and community events.

The service is not doing any work to evaluate the impact of its prevention work. However, partners told us they appreciated the fire service's input into wider community safety initiatives such as the one to prevent drowning.

Although it was clear to us that staff are willing to identify safeguarding issues and make appropriate referrals, the lack of consistent training and in-depth understanding in this area is a concern. We heard many staff saying they would refer people directly to the police. In some circumstances, a lack of understanding and confidence leads to staff being overly cautious and unable to identify the difference between safeguarding and vulnerability.

The service has a safeguarding officer in place to filter and refer staff concerns, but this facility is only available during office hours. The service's duty manager is the out-of-hours safeguarding contact, but duty managers do not receive any enhanced level of training in this area.

Road safety

The service is an integral member of the York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership. It supports activities to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the county's roads. This is primarily through the '95 Alive' campaign, which started in 2004, aimed at reducing casualties and collisions year on year. Its safety work includes education, speed traps and traffic monitoring.

Each district produces an effective road safety action plan. Plans are based on local risks and trends. They pull together incident data from the 95 Alive group, national police road safety campaigns, and national fire service road safety campaigns. The data is used to help plan the campaigns each district will deliver to reduce road

deaths and injuries. For example, in Richmond, the road safety focus was on ageing drivers, seat belts and motorcyclists.

Each district has quarterly meetings to consider and evaluate the effectiveness of campaigns. While this is positive, it is limited to monitoring statistical reductions rather than assessing behavioural changes and the impact of activity.

Community safety officers produce briefing packs for operational crews to use. These include road safety messages, presentations, information and guides to social media messages.

Protecting the public through fire regulation

Good

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at protecting the public through fire regulation. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to review its current IT systems to be able to manage its fire protection data more effectively.
- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme.
- The service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms.

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

The service has a good system to ensure that it carries out its audit programme in line with its enforcement plan. (Audits look for compliance – when they find poor compliance, the service's enforcement plans either make sure that work is done or there is a prosecution.) The service has aligned protection resources to each of its four districts. Each district has a station manager who co-ordinates protection activity within the local area.

Specialist staff concentrate on higher-risk audits. They are supported by operational crews who audit lower-risk premises as part of each station's action plan.

Operational watch managers conduct short audits following a three-year thematic audit strategy. The service specifies a premises type – for example, the theme during our inspection was 'premises with sleeping risks'. Every six months, the theme changes to cover six identified themes over the three years.

The themes are based on the national picture and local incidents, as well as the analysis of:

- Home Office fire and casualty statistics;
- enforcement notices;
- complaints; and
- fires by incident type.

These include houses of multiple occupation (HMOs), hotels and licensed premises. Vulnerable people who may pose a sleeping risk is a big target area for the service.

Audits are quality assured through the district station manager. They observe audits and review case files for each watch manager (who is conducting the audit).

The service uses a computer software system called 'CFRMIS' (community fire risk information management system) to determine its inspection process. We found inconsistency in the information held on the system. This is concerning. Because the system is used to generate re-inspection frequencies and workloads, inaccurate, delayed or missing information could adversely affect the risk profiling for future audits and re-inspections. The system also provides an audit trail. The service should ensure that the information held on the system is complete and accurate.

Previously, the service conducted a range of audits to cover low, medium and high-risk premises. However, earlier this year, the strategy changed to focus audits on very high and high-risk premises.

Business safety station managers determine the local action plan in each district. They work alongside the group and station managers to determine the number of audits that can be completed in line with local capacity.

We found that the service has a higher national rate of inspections: four audits per 100 known premises compared with the England rate of three. This may be explained by operational crews conducting audits, which is not common across services. That said, while the volume of inspections is high, the number of high-risk premises being audited is low. The service told us this was due to operational crews targeting low and medium-risk premises, which equated to 90 percent of completed audits. The introduction of the three-year thematic audit programme will address the balance between low and high-risk premises being audited.

As at 1 April 2018, the service has identified 5,359 high-risk premises. However, it only audited 4.7 percent of these premises between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018.

The service is not meeting its own targets for response to building consultations. The service received 694 building regulation consultations in the 9 months to 31 December 2018. Of these, 71.3 percent were responded to within the required time frame. Although this is an improvement on the previous year, recent data that

was not available at the time of inspection shows that there has been a slight improvement with the service responding to 76.8 percent of building regulation consultations within the required time frame in the year to 31 March 2019.

The service told us the reason it didn't meet the targets was due to using a different method for calculating when the consultation should have been responded to. The service deemed it to be 15 calendar days from receipt rather than 15 working days, which is the required standard.

Because operational staff receive training in fire protection, they can deal with any lower-level fire safety concerns or questions. We found that the service does not always have a competent senior manager available on duty to offer advice or deal with higher-level protection issues outside normal office hours. The service should consider whether its current arrangements provide effective protection for people where dangerous conditions are found outside office hours.

Enforcement

When a prosecution is considered, the service conducts the public interest test with a senior manager to determine whether it should be sought. The service has access to specialist legal advice through North Yorkshire County Council.

The service is prepared and willing to take enforcement action. Protection staff meet every three months to discuss best practice and share knowledge. They receive tailored training, including by external experts.

The service's approach strikes a balance between ensuring public safety and minimising the burden on businesses. We were given an example of how the service worked with a premises in the county where fire safety deficiencies were found following a fire. The service worked with the responsible person to take corrective action and create a case study, rather than taking formal action. This resulted in the service attending several forums to talk about fire safety management in sheltered housing schemes.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service issued:

- 563 informal notifications;
- 20 enforcement notices;
- 4 prohibition notices; and
- carried out 5 prosecutions.

It did not issue any alteration notices.

Working with others

The service's protection team works with North Yorkshire Police and shares information following audits to help identify and address properties that are being used for modern-day slavery or are involved in serious and organised crime. We found that the service also works with the Environment Agency, local authorities' environmental health teams and building control to share information and promote fire protection.

Protection activity includes raising awareness with businesses locally of fire risk, as well as working with partners to identify vulnerable premises to ensure that they are regulated to the correct standards. Events are held with York City Council where the service gives advice to businesses and building owners. The service also works with landlords and attends events to give education and support. The service's website provides information on business safety. It shows contact details should further advice be needed, or if someone wishes to make a fire safety complaint.

The service has also held workshops with environmental health officers to raise their awareness of fire safety issues and help them identify concerns and make a referral (should they identify concerns while on their inspections).

While there is activity to reduce the burden of false fire alarm activations and subsequent fire engine response, more is needed. The number of false alarms has been steadily decreasing, in part thanks to the service's current approach (to identify repeat offenders and highlight them for follow-up work). We are pleased to see this progress. However, the system doesn't seem to be applied consistently across all the teams able to address false alarms. This is an area that can still be improved.

Responding to fires and other emergencies

Good

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service 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 has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.
- The service should publish its expected response standards to enable the public to compare expected performance against actual performance.

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

One of the biggest challenges facing the service is managing its operational response across a large yet diversely populated area. The service has some large towns and the city of York, as well as very lightly populated areas.

When we conducted the inspection, the service had 46 fire engines spread across 38 fire stations.

In the year to 31 December 2018, the service attended 8.7 incidents per 1,000 population. This compares with the England rate of 10.4 over the same period.

The service does not have a published response standard that it has agreed with the public through consultation. Therefore, the public do not know what level of service to expect.

The service has set out its requirements for the number of fire engines it needs to have available. It has a maximum (46 fire engines), optimum (38–45), minimum (32–37) and critical (>32) fire cover model. Fire control and managers making the cover moves (to best maintain the cover) use these bandings when they allocate resources each day. Any predicted shortfalls are mitigated by using the operational staffing reserve or on-call firefighters working a variable hours' contract. Short-term cover comes from moving full-time or day crew staff who are at stations above the minimum staffing level for that shift.

In the 9 months to 31 December 2018, the average monthly fire engine availability ranged from 86.1 percent to 91.7 percent. More recent data that was not available at the time of inspection shows that, for the year ending 31 March 2019, the service had an average fire engine availability rate of 91.7 percent.

We found the service regularly suffers from staff shortages at some on-call fire stations, resulting in fire engines being unavailable to respond to incidents. To reduce this, fire control and the on-duty group manager will move staff between stations to achieve the best level of fire engine availability. Priority is given to the stations it considers most important (because of their location in relation to other stations being unavailable, the risk profile or other operational factors). Staff are regularly taken from full-time stations and moved to other stations to cover. Although this maximises the number of fire engines available, it is not an efficient system.

The computer system for recording on-call staff availability does not link to the mobilising system. This means that any short-term crewing changes are managed by fire control staff, who are required to make the crewing change, update a spreadsheet, and then manually alter the mobilising system.

The service must ensure that its availability systems are more user friendly and accurately link to the fire control mobilising system.

Response

As mentioned previously, the service does not have a published response standard. However, the Home Office collects and publishes data on response times by measuring the time between a call being made and the first fire engine arriving at the scene. This provides consistent data across all 45 services. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service's average response time to primary fires was 11 minutes and 13 seconds. This is an increase from 10 minutes and 10 seconds in the year ending 31 March 2010. The service's average response time is higher than the average for other predominantly rural services.

North Yorkshire is in the process of adopting the new national operational guidance (NOG). It has completed a strategic gap analysis to identify necessary changes to its current policy and procedures.

The service is part of a regional NOG implementation group that helps fire services in the region work together to produce documents, divide tasks and reduce their individual workloads.

Incident command training is based on the updated NOG, but the relevant procedures and policy have not been updated to include the new guidance. Despite the service temporarily allocating a manager to oversee the NOG process, progress is slow and there are no clear timescales or priority for full adoption.

The fire control mobilising system automatically calculates the quickest fire engine. It also tells the control operator how many fire engines are required for each incident type. Control staff are confident to use their discretion and mobilise extra or alternative fire engines if they feel it is required. They also have a fall-back arrangement with Cornwall FRS to take any calls if the control function is busy or out of action for any reason.

All fire engines have a computer onboard – a mobile data terminal (MDT) – that enables staff at incidents to access information on buildings, maps, operational procedures, hazardous materials and vehicle safety. Staff we sampled during our inspection were able to use the MDTs effectively and show us the information we requested. However, we found that some MDTs were faulty and had not been working properly. The service is aware of this issue and is in the process or replacing all the old terminals for newer models.

Command

Operational commanders must be assessed every two years with a skill update every 12 months. Although staff are assessed regularly, we found a number had not completed the annual incident command refresher training.

We found supervisory managers were confident to command incidents, but some were not clear on recent changes to procedures aligned to NOG – for example, how to use decision control processes or apply operational discretion and tactical modes.

Middle managers were confident and knowledgeable in the command requirements at more complex incidents. They were assessed within set time frames and undertook a comprehensive skills maintenance training programme (in relation to incident command).

Senior managers undertake multi-agency gold incident command (MAGIC) training but do not have any formal fire service incident command qualification for their level.

Keeping the public informed

Control staff send social media messages daily and when incidents occur. The service's website provides incident details, also updated daily.

The service encourages all middle managers to have social media accounts to engage with the public. During larger incidents, the service works with the local resilience forum (LRF) to co-ordinate any public communication.

Control staff have sound processes to be able to deal with a non-English speaking caller. They are confident and practised to be able to give a range of fire survival guidance to callers where required.

It is clear that control staff – similar to operational staff – are willing to identify people whom they feel may have a safeguarding issue. However, the lack of consistent training in this area may lead to inconsistency in the referral approach.

Evaluating operational performance

We found the service has an effective formal debriefing system in place for larger incidents.

Every incident of three or more fire engines is debriefed. Findings are recorded and shared. Every incident that requires six or more fire engines triggers a formal incident debrief.

All learning and good practice are recorded on an action plan and presented to the risk management subgroup after a structured debrief. The subgroup then allocates and oversees any actions. While fire control staff are aware of the process, they aren't routinely included as debrief participants.

Hot debriefs capture lower-level learning from smaller, more routine incidents and training events. They aren't formally recorded unless the commander instigates the electronic debrief process. The service has an assurance team responsible for ensuring that lower-level learning is captured and monitored for trends that need to be more widely communicated. Staff told us they didn't feel that the assurance function was capturing learning as effectively as it could.

Although staff were not able to recite changes following debriefs, we saw evidence that showed how formal debriefs can highlight development needs – identifying what action needs to be taken, who will be responsible and when it has to be done. For example, a recent incident highlighted the need to refresh the crews in cylinder procedures. The action was allocated to the district station managers and signed off as completed, creating an audit trail of identified development being actioned.

The service uses learning from national incidents such as the Manchester Arena attack and Grenfell Tower fire. Staff view them as case studies as part of their e-learning training programme. However, the service has not shared any of its own learning nationally.

Responding to national risks

Good

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to national risks. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should arrange a programme of over-the-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.
- The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information. This should include site-specific and cross-border risk information.
- The service should ensure it is well-prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to a community risk identified by the local resilience forum, including a marauding terrorist attack, and that its procedures for responding to terrorist-related incidents are understood by all staff and are well tested.

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

Control staff and senior commanders are confident to request and mobilise national assets for large-scale emergencies. The service has mutual aid agreements so that it can call on the resources of neighbouring fire and rescue services in times of need.

Senior managers attend MAGIC training. They maintain their competency by taking part in regular exercises based on high-risk incident types and venues as part of the LRF. The service also has a range of staff with specialist skills – for example, national incident liaison officers who work with police and ambulance commanders at complex and high-risk incidents.

The service has specialist equipment to provide a local and national response to more serious incidents, including a mass decontamination unit, two high-volume pumps and a boat team.

The service has supported other fire services to deal with major incidents – for example, the summer wildfires of 2018. It has also used national assets to deal with its own large-scale incidents such as the 2015 Boxing Day floods.

We found that the service has good risk and response plans. It is well prepared to attend incidents that occur at heritage and high-risk premises.

Working with other services

North Yorkshire FRS staff take part in training exercises with neighbouring services at risk sites. However, we found they are ad hoc and informally organised, rather than part of a co-ordinated programme.

As part of our inspection, we carried out a survey of service staff to get their views of their service (please see Annex A for more details). Of the 56 firefighters or specialist support staff to respond to our staff survey, 55.4 percent stated that the service has not regularly trained or exercised with neighbouring fire and rescue services in the last 12 months.

Fire crews are confident to access the MDTs to view other fire services' risk information (which is available to a maximum of 10 km outside the North Yorkshire border). However, we found that this information is not always up to date. The service needs to work with neighbouring services to ensure that all available information is current. We also became aware of some incompatibility issues with equipment. For example, handheld radios do not work when crews go into West Yorkshire. The service is aware of this issue and is purchasing compatible new radios.

Working with other agencies

The service is a principal member of the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum. This means that it participates in exercises based on local risks and learning from national incidents. For example, a multi-agency exercise simulating a terror attack was held recently in Scarborough.

The service is not funded to have its own team of firefighters trained to deal with terrorist-related attacks, although it has an arrangement that a neighbouring service will provide this support if required. We found that control staff did not fully understand the correct process to follow (in the event of a terrorist-related attack). The service must ensure that staff can request this resource quickly and effectively if required.

Staff within the service did not have a clear understanding of what to do at a terrorist-related incident. Some have had training. Others have not and didn't feel prepared to attend an incident of this type. This included staff within the control room.

Understanding of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles was good at middle and senior-manager level. However, supervisory commanders did not have such a clear understanding of the requirements or procedures for working as part of a multi-agency response to an incident. Each station plan includes a requirement for the crews to participate in multi-agency exercises as part of its training regime.

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. North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency requires improvement.

The service's medium-term financial plan (MTFP) predicted a £2.5m annual shortfall, which it will reduce with savings (in place at time of writing) and measures to reduce capital spending. In the interim, it will rely on reserves – £3.2m to be drawn over three years – which is not a sustainable use of resources.

The service makes good use of mobile technology and shows innovation in its move to cloud-based technology. However, it faces a great challenge to modernise IT at the same time as overcoming its budget deficit.

The service is included in North Yorkshire County Council's maintenance and procurement contracts but could collaborate more with other services to increase efficiency. It is hoped that last year's transfer of governance from the fire authority to the police, fire and crime commissioner (PFCC) will increase the opportunity for joint ventures and introduce more efficient ways of working.

Two projects – Transform 2020 and Enable North Yorkshire – should help the service modernise its services and realise savings. In particular, opportunities to share estate with the police and other organisations mitigate concerns over the state of some of the service's building stock.

Making best use of resources

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should clearly outline the expected savings from its transformation plans will bring by the end of 2019. These should be entered in the medium-term financial plan with a view to balancing the budget.
- The service should scope collaboration opportunities with other fire services with a view to being more efficient and balancing its budget.
- The service needs to monitor, review and evaluate its current collaboration activities to ensure full benefits realisation.
- Business continuity plans need to be tested and further embedded to ensure all staff are aware of the procedures.

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 found that the community safety plan 2016/17–2020/21 is based on sound business planning assumptions. It brings together the service's main strategic policies and makes a clear link between the risks identified in the IRMP and the service's activity to mitigate them. Each of the service's four districts (Hambleton and Richmondshire, Scarborough and Ryedale, Craven and Harrogate, and City of York and Selby) have annual plans that set out schedules of activity in support of the community safety plan.

We reviewed fire station plans as part of our inspection. These plans capture all staff activity, which helps local managers track outputs and provide station-by-station comparisons.

While this is positive, the service does not routinely monitor performance data at senior leadership level. There has been a conscious move away from setting binary targets to using quality-based performance indicators, which are managed at local level. We advise the service to monitor outputs at corporate level to ensure a consistent approach.

The service's MTFP 2018/19 to 2022/23 was predicting a £2.5m annual shortfall. This figure has been revised down to £1m as emergency savings plans have been put in place.

In the interim, £3.2m has been made available from the service's reserves (to be drawn down at a rate of £1.3m in 2018/19, £1.3m in 2019/20 and £0.9m in 2020/21). This sum represents about 10 percent of the service's available funding and half its reserves. This is not a sustainable use of reserves. The service should have

adjusted its services in line with available finances when these deficits were first identified in the MTFP.

In the year to March 2018, the service had around £4m in earmarked reserves and £4.2m in general reserves.

Productivity and ways of working

It is apparent that the difficulties the service faced when introducing TRVs have had an adverse impact on its budget.

TRVs use three rather than four firefighters and so are cheaper to run. While they were introduced in 2017 as planned, the outgoing fire and rescue authority reversed its decision in 2018.

Plans to reintroduce the TRVs were put on hold while discussions took place with the Fire Brigades Union and the workforce over safety concerns. At the point of inspection, we were told by the service that they will be re-introduced later in the year.

The service uses different shift patterns to ensure that the availability of fire crews is aligned to community risks. The service relies as much on on-call firefighters as it does on full-time employees to provide cover. Over 300 of each are employed or retained for firefighting duties.

Where demand is greatest, and risks assessed as being higher, the service ensures that full-time – so called wholetime – firefighters are available on a permanent basis. This includes stations at Scarborough and Harrogate. At other stations – for example, Malton, Northallerton and Whitby – full-time firefighters are available during the day and are on a short 'recall to duty' out of hours. Elsewhere, on-call fire engines are available alongside full-time fire engines. In more rural locations, there is a greater dependency on on-call firefighters, and volunteers are used to respond to incidents in two areas.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the firefighter cost per head of population was £21.28. This compares to the England rate of £22.38.

The computer system for recording on-call staff availability does not link to the mobilising system. This means that any short-term crewing changes are managed by fire control staff who are required to make the change, update a spreadsheet and then manually alter the mobilising system. This system is time-consuming and not efficient.

Collaboration

Although we found evidence of collaboration, the service could do more to collaborate with other fire and rescue services.

One example of effective joint working is the development of a joint transport and logistics hub with North Yorkshire Police at Thirsk. Economies of scale have realised cashable savings and the introduction of digital fleet management systems has led to process improvements.

Elsewhere, the service hosts North Yorkshire Police personnel in Bedale and Ripon fire stations. Organisations including Yorkshire Ambulance Service and the Blood Transfusion Service also work out of other fire sites.

The service also generates income by renting premises.

In relation to other services, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is included in North Yorkshire County Council's premises maintenance and procurement contracts. It benefits from regional and national frameworks to purchase fire service equipment. For example, replacement MDTs have been supplied to both North Yorkshire and Dorset and Wiltshire FRSs as part of the same contract.

The transfer of governance from the fire authority to the PCC to form the new PFCC at the end of 2018 has brought a new impetus to joint ventures and more efficient ways of working.

The service is now part of a change programme – known as 'Transform 2020' – that has been established in North Yorkshire Police for some time. It aims to encourage closer working between the police and the fire service. Firm plans to share headquarters and support services (also known as 'enabling services') have been agreed. The service told us it anticipates that these measures will release annual savings of between £0.4m and £0.5m, with a further £200,000 saving from 2021/22 by sharing an HQ building. Although this is positive, we were surprised there isn't more collaboration planned between the service and other fire services in the region. For example, they could share call handling centres, training and other facilities.

Collaboration in North Yorkshire is limited. As such, there has not been any evaluation to assess its effectiveness.

Continuity arrangements

The service has continuity plans at service and station level. These include managing the consequences of a power failure in the fire control centre. The service has fall-back arrangements in place with Cornwall FRS. We saw evidence that the fall-back arrangement is routinely tested and exercised.

Other plans include how to manage unforeseen events such as flooding or power loss in fire stations.

The service tests its service-wide business continuity plans periodically. However, knowledge of procedures and responsibilities was less well known among frontline staff than we would expect.

The service would benefit from creating a structured schedule to test business continuity in line with the risks it faces. This should include a full range of exercises, both planned and on a 'no notice' basis. Local managers need to take greater ownership of risks. Business continuity responsibilities must become an important part of their role.

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

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should re-evaluate its estate programme to maximise utilisation of its premises.

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 recognise that difficulties with the TRV programme have contributed to an annual budget deficit of £2.5m from a £35m forecasted annual budget. Early estimates that suggested savings of up to £1.4m could be realised annually from the TRV programme.

In response to financial pressures, the service and the PFCC have put emergency measures in place to address the shortfall and reduce the deficit from an excess of £2.5m down to approximately £1.1m per year.

The PFCC commissioned an external review that has made several recommendations, including creating a finance working group through which frontline staff can contribute ideas about how to make efficiencies.

Savings have been made, including £0.2m from reducing senior management positions and senior officer salaries. A senior management review, which involved a series of challenge panels to identify savings in each of the service's main business areas, saved £0.3m. The service and the PFCC have also put urgent measures in place to reduce capital spending. The programme has been scaled down to £14m from a projected expenditure of £22.7m between 2018/19 and 2023/24. This is predominantly to reduce the level of public sector borrowing because they deemed the level of repayment and debt interest unaffordable.

Innovation

The service needs to modernise its IT at the same time as overcoming a budgetary deficit.

There are some exceptions. The service has made more progress than others to exploit the use of mobile technology. Frontline staff use tablets to access databases – for example, to record prevention activities. Although we found that some staff still prefer to record routine activity on paper, most make good use of the devices. The service should consider how best to further promote the use of digital technology.

Additionally, the service has a programme in place to move its main operating systems to cloud-based technology. The core hardware infrastructure replacement programme is funded to £0.6m capital cost. It will replace the current server infrastructure to reduce capital expenditure, support agile working and ensure that operating systems remain up to date.

Future investment and working with others

The Transform 2020 programme and a project to combine North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and North Yorkshire Police's enabling services – 'Enable North Yorkshire' – should modernise current services and realise savings.

Enable North Yorkshire seeks to combine support services for both (fire rescue and police) services in a single business directorate. It will:

- rationalise the current workforce; and
- introduce new systems to automate transactional support services.

A managing director was appointed to the project during our inspection. The indicative savings are unknown at present but will form an important element of the MTFP.

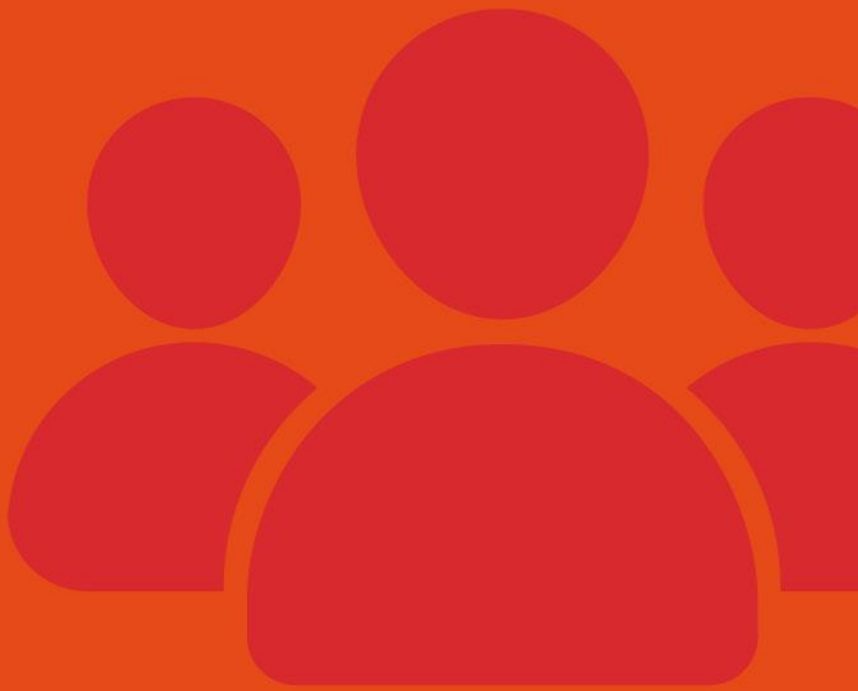
Transform 2020 and Enable North Yorkshire reflect the transformational change to human resources, technology and infrastructure we expect to find in modern public services. Importantly, they will enable the service to sustain services within its budget. The scale of savings the service must achieve suggest that non-pay efficiencies alone will be insufficient. It is likely that savings to the pay budget will be necessary. Enable North Yorkshire and the TRV programme are on a firm footing and have the wherewithal to realise those savings.

The change programme (Transform 2020) includes a phased schedule of improvements, aimed in particular at shaping greater collaboration between the police and the fire and rescue service. This provides an opportunity to boost North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's capital programme.

Pressures on the revenue and capital budgets leave us concerned about the future of the service's building stock, much of which is already in a dilapidated state (it is estimated that there is a back-maintenance deficit of £3.2m). Several fire stations are underutilised to the point that the service needs to consider whether they are economically viable. We recognise the challenges that North Yorkshire's geography presents to the fire service. However, several of the service's 38 fire stations had crews that were deployed less than once a week.

Transform 2020 includes a commitment to 'one public estate', a programme co-ordinated by HM Government to make better use of public sector assets. Opportunities to share estate with the police and other organisations provides an opportunity to improve the building infrastructure.

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

The service takes workforce wellbeing seriously and has effective support systems to improve staff mental and physical wellbeing. It has a positive and proactive health and safety culture, and carries out regular safety inspections.

The service's values focus on delivering service to the public. Staff, on the whole, embrace them. However, it isn't clear how the values benefit the organisation by promoting diversity and equality or encouraging positive change.

The service's workforce strategy states the importance of development opportunities for all. In reality, it is operational and technical areas that get most attention. Support staff get less. Personal development reviews (PDRs) are an important element of the service's strategy. Yet completion and quality are seen as largely dependent on line managers and viewed by some staff as a 'tick box' exercise.

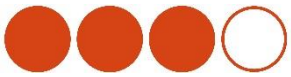
The service manages effectively the performance of response staff against risk-critical skills, but it doesn't have as effective a performance management process to maintain its competency training framework. Capacity and financial resources are affecting its ability to effectively plan and develop staff for specialist functions. There are also a number of staff in temporary positions, roles which should have been filled on a permanent basis. Additionally, we didn't find processes to identify and develop staff with the potential to be senior leaders.

There are historical tensions in the service. Nevertheless, it seems a place where staff feel able to give feedback to their senior managers. A recent staff survey highlighted several areas for improvement.

There was a worrying lack of understanding about the benefits of diversity in the workplace from some staff and middle managers. The service does not have a diverse workforce. At 31 March 2018, 4.7 percent of firefighters were female, and 0.5 percent were from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background, compared with a BAME population of 3.4 percent. There is a drive to recruit more women but not the same focus on BAME people.

Women in the service struggle to get standard issue uniform. Despite efforts to make it available, many stated they still buy their own because of availability and fit.

Promoting the right values and culture



Good

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at promoting the right values and culture. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should make sure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated by all staff.

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 takes health and wellbeing seriously and has effective support systems to improve its staff's mental and physical wellbeing. Staff can access a well-advertised 24-hour confidential helpline and website for counselling or advice. Staff gave us positive examples of this service.

Staff also have access to an employee assistance programme called 'PAM assist'. The service also promotes the MIND Blue Light Programme for supporting mental health.

The service also provides physical health monitoring and fitness testing via occupational health. The occupational health team is made up of an occupational health nurse and physiotherapist. Because of the large geographical area of North Yorkshire, this small team is primarily only able to deliver reactive rather than proactive health campaigns.

After traumatic incidents, fire control contacts crews to signpost staff to specialist wellbeing support. Staff who had used this support were very positive about the service they had received.

Health and safety

There is a positive and proactive health and safety culture in the service. Staff are encouraged to report accidents and near misses via an online system. Safety events are investigated appropriately, and trends are monitored to inform improvements. Accident outcomes are reported to the service risk management group and learning is communicated to staff via email and a health and safety bulletin. Less serious events are communicated via the service's monthly update publication.

All stations undergo a regular health and safety inspection that is carried out in conjunction with station staff or the representative bodies' nominated person.

Culture and values

The service has a set of seven values, which focus on how it will deliver its service to the public. These values are:

- Professional
- Respect
- Openness
- Trust
- Excellence
- Competence
- Teamwork

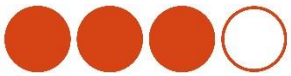
It was clear to us that staff want to deliver the best service they can to the public – and these values reinforce that opinion. What was not clear is how these values drive behavioural change to increase understanding of diversity, promote equality and create organisational change.

The service has historically had a culture of top-down management. We were told that this had stifled staff engagement and trust between staff groups. The service has recognised some of these challenges and is working to create a more harmonious working relationship across the organisation. Engagement between senior managers, staff and representative bodies is seen to be improving.

Staff told us that communication with senior leaders has improved. The new chief fire officer appointment was viewed as a positive step towards building a more open and inclusive atmosphere.

We found a male-orientated culture and language being used at station level – for example, male-orientated language and terminology, and lots of references to 'firemen' and working with the 'lads'.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at getting the right people with the right skills. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its workforce plan encompass all roles, including non-operational roles.

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

Workforce planning

The service has a workforce strategy that covers the period from 2017 to 2021. The strategy sets out how the service aims to train, develop and maintain the competence of staff at all levels across the organisation. The strategy includes the need to provide development opportunities for all roles, but mainly focuses on operational or technical areas such as fire protection and prevention. Support staff are developed on a bespoke basis dependent on their area of expertise and the needs of their role.

The strategy has four aims to cover competence in its:

- intervention (response);
- technical fire safety (protection);
- community safety (prevention); and
- provision of legal compliance and governance.

It also sets out the service's vision for an inclusive workforce linked to its values (PROTECT).

The strategy clearly sets out the link between the need for PDRs and bespoke development plans. There was no evidence to show that this link is being made consistently across the service.

The strategy also outlines the need for a sustainable workforce with workforce planning, recruitment and retention as priorities. We found that capacity and financial resources are limiting the service's ability to effectively plan for and develop staff to take up positions in specialist functions such as protection.

The workforce strategy aligns with the service's IRMP. It specifically reinforces and prioritises the need for response staff to acquire and maintain competence against nine operational areas. Competency is planned and assured as part of the training and development strategy and staff's operational licence.

On-call firefighters get a clear development path at point of entry, with training and assessments aligned to National Occupational Standards. The service's training programme is designed to accommodate the needs of on-call staff. Course availability is managed in a flexible manner and includes weekend courses. Some on-call firefighters on the development plan told us they found it difficult to achieve competency because they are limited by time constraints, a complex system and frequent assessments against the same skills.

The service has a promotions process, but staff told us they didn't always feel it was clear. Some staff had been in temporary positions for some time and, although performing well, were not offered their roles on a permanent basis. The service told us that this was due to uncertainty over future funding levels. Staff also felt that changes to temporary managerial positions affected a function's overall performance. As at 31 December 2018, 37 employees were temporarily promoted.

Learning and improvement

The service manages the performance of its response staff against risk-critical skills effectively. But it does not have such an effective performance management process for the ongoing maintenance of the competency training framework. We saw several training records that showed staff had not completed all their required theoretical training on Learnpro, an e-learning system.

Training for operational staff in risk-critical and other technical skills, such as breathing apparatus, fire behaviour, driving and water rescue, are co-ordinated centrally. These are subject to an additional layer of monitoring called 'a ticket to ride', or 'operational licence'. To maintain the operational licence, staff are trained and assessed at regular intervals – those who do not meet the requirements are removed from operational duties. This training is recorded centrally on a system called 'FireWatch'. The training manager accesses a report from FireWatch to plan how many courses need to be available to satisfy training needs.

Ongoing competency is achieved by station-based training activity against a set framework of practical and theoretical training. The systems for recording this training are not effective and there is a lack of ongoing monitoring or oversight. We found staff with training that had not been completed or recorded.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the service should ensure diversity and inclusion are well-understood and become important values of the service, led by chief officers.
- The service needs to improve its arrangements for uniform and facilities for female members of staff.

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

We found that staff feel able to feed back and challenge their managers through face-to-face meetings, during visits from the senior leadership team and in staff surveys.

An external company conducted a staff survey in 2018. In total, 45 percent of staff responded. The survey highlighted several areas for improvement including:

- a lack of transparency from senior management;
- staff not feeling valued;
- frustration with the PDR process; and
- scepticism that the survey results would be acted on.

During the inspection, we saw posters that highlighted the findings and it was clear that the senior team are trying to act. However, the service was unable to show us a clear action plan with timescales and priorities to address the concerns raised.

The service currently has good engagement with all the representative bodies. However, this hasn't always been the case and there are some historical tensions still evident in the workforce. This tension affects the service's ability to implement change – for example, the full adoption of safe and well checks or some specialist non-contractual skills at stations.

The service receives few formal staff grievances. Those it does receive are handled appropriately, in line with service policy and good practice. All managers receive training on grievance resolution as part of their development in role. This helps the service ensure that processes are applied fairly and consistently.

Of the 90 respondents to our staff survey, 18.2 percent reported feeling bullied or harassed and 17.2 percent feeling discriminated against at work in the past 12 months.

Diversity

The service is planning positive action events to attract more female staff as part of its recruitment. It is enthusiastic to turn plans into reality, but no events have happened yet. However, it does not have the same emphasis on attracting candidates from BAME groups. As at 31 March 2018, 4.7 percent of firefighters were female, and 0.5 percent of firefighters were from a BAME background compared with a BAME residential population of 3.4 percent.

Staff support and engagement networks are limited. A lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender network is in place, but there is nothing for other staff groups. The service is missing the opportunity to harness ideas from under-represented groups that will help identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity.

We were concerned to hear of a widespread lack of understanding of the benefits of, and need for, workforce diversity. This was attributed, among others, to fairly senior managers – that is, those who would typically be classed 'middle management'. We did, however, hear good examples of staff challenging unacceptable behaviour and feeling supported to do so.

Female staff told us they do not always have the right facilities, such as for showering and changing, available to them. Specific uniform for female firefighters was also highlighted as an ongoing concern, with some staff buying their own work clothes because the uniform is not suitable or easily available.

Staff told us that the service had recently set up an arrangement with North Yorkshire Police to supply female uniform. However, female members of staff have still been required to buy their own uniform because standard issue uniform is not easily available. The service has now set up a female uniform working group to look at such concerns.

While it was clear that the new senior team is committed to promoting diversity, the absence of a structured corporate plan is likely to hinder its efforts.

Managing performance and developing leaders

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

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

Managing performance

The service has a performance-monitoring process in place to monitor completion of PDRs. Data supplied by the service showed that the highest completion rate in the PDR process was among wholetime operational staff, control staff and on-call staff. However, staff who were not in operational roles had a significantly lower rate of PDR completion.

The completion rate does not tell the whole picture. We heard from many staff that PDRs can vary greatly in quality. Many did not feel they had any real value for their ongoing development. This is a concern because the service's workforce plan highlights the importance of PDRs in its overall staff development strategy.

Staff told us that PDR completion and quality were dependent on the competence and motivation of their line manager. Some staff said that the PDR was a 'tick box' exercise and only useful for staff seeking promotion. This affects the motivation of staff who have limited career development opportunities within their role. This issue was highlighted in the recent staff survey.

Developing leaders

Although the workforce strategy clearly articulates the requirement for leadership development, we found no process in place to identify and develop staff with high potential to be senior leaders of the future. There was evidence of some staff being given development opportunities through secondment and temporary promotions, but this was limited and not clearly structured, organised or planned.

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 public perception survey;
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 45 fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England.

Where we collected data directly from 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. This was primarily through our Technical Advisory Group, which brings together representatives from the fire sector and the Home Office to support the inspection's design and development, including data collection.

We give services several opportunities to validate the data we collect to make sure the evidence presented is accurate. For instance, we asked all services to:

- check the data they submitted to us via an online application;
- check the final data used in each service report; and
- correct any errors they identified.

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

Methodology

Use of data in the reports and to form judgments

The data we cite in this report and use to form our judgments is the information that was available at the time of inspection. Due to the nature of data collection, there are often gaps between the timeframe the data covers, when it was collected, and when it becomes available to use.

If more recent data became available after inspection, showing a different trend or context, we have referred to this in the report. However, it was not used to form our judgments.

In a small number of cases, data available at the time of the inspection was later found to be incorrect. For example, a service might have identified an error in its original data return. When this is the case, we have corrected the data and used the more reliable data in the report.

Population

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

2018 survey of public perception of the fire and rescue service

We commissioned BMG to survey attitudes towards FRSs in June and July 2018. This consisted of 17,976 surveys across 44 local FRS 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 face-to-face 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 in each service area was small, varying between 400 and 446 individuals. 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 3,083 responses between 8 March and 9 August 2019 from across the 15 Tranche 3 services.

We view the staff survey as 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 7 percent to 40 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 more than once.

Each service was provided with a unique access code to try to make sure that only those currently working in a service could complete the survey. However, it is possible that the survey and access code 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. Percentages may sum to more than 100 percent due to rounding.

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 2018 survey of public perceptions of the FRS:

> 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 January 2018 to 31 December 2019.

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 services to upload to the IRS. Totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers).
- We took data for Service in Numbers from the August 2019 incident publication. So, figures may not directly match more recent publications due to data updates.

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 figure is based on the number of checks it carried out. It 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 FRSs 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 services 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 services.
- After inspection, East Sussex FRS resubmitted data on its total number of home fire safety checks and the number of checks targeted at the elderly and disabled in the year to 31 March 2018. The latest data changes the percentage of checks that were targeted at the elderly (from 54.1 percent to 54.9 percent) and disabled (from 24.7 percent to 25.4 percent) in England. However, as noted above, in all reports we have used the original figures that were available at the time of inspection.

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 services carried out in known premises. According to the Home Office's 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 FRSs 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.

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 FRSs 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. This figure is calculated by dividing the BAME residential population by the total population.
- 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 and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire FRSs 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. North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service is a police, fire and crime commissioner 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.

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