

HMICFRS STATE OF FIRE AND RESCUE: ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN ENGLAND 2022



REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

For Information

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the State of Fire and Rescue: Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022 Report attached at Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note:

- the contents of the State of Fire and Rescue: Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022 Report attached at Appendix 1
- that the Chief Fire Officer will review the Report and ensure that any new areas for development are captured within the Authority's Internal Operating Plan for 2023/24 onwards
- that, in line with current arrangements, the Chief Fire Officer will continue to provide the Executive Committee with update reports in regard to the next round of Inspection

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As part of its reform agenda, the Government has introduced an independent inspection regime for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England – and the fire and rescue service they oversee. The inspections are delivered by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The Chief Fire and Rescue Inspector and inspectors of fire and rescue authorities in England have powers of inspection given to them by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017.
- 3.2 Under section 28B of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services must report to the Secretary of State on the State of Fire and Rescue Services in England.

4. HMICFRS STATE OF FIRE AND RESCUE: ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN ENGLAND 2020

- 4.1 HMICFRS State of Fire and Rescue: Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022 Report, attached as Appendix 1, has been produced by Andy Cooke QPM DL the current HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services. The report is set out in two main chapters:
- 4.2 Chapter 1 of the Report relates to His Majesty's Chief Inspector's assessment of the state of fire and rescue services in England. Headlines of his assessment are that:
- services and their staff are dedicated to serving the public.
 - reform is still urgently need – four of the six previous recommendations have not been addressed, namely determining the role of the fire and rescue service, removing unjustifiable variation including the definition of risk, reviewing the determination of pay and conditions and investing operational independence in chief fire officers.
 - The Government needs to implement the HMICFRS's national recommendations as a matter of urgency through the implementation of the 'White Paper on Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service'.
 - In many respects, the sector has made progress on national policies, standards and fire safety – examples quoted are 'Fit for the Future' initiative, fire standards, Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022.
 - Inspections have helped services to better serve their communities. Trends from Inspection are that:
 - most services are improving their focus on fire protection
 - fire prevention needs to improve if services are to keep some of society's most vulnerable safe
 - services are generally responding well to emergency incidents
 - the health, safety and wellbeing of staff continue to be a strength for almost all services
 - resources aren't being directed to where they are most needed – resourcing to risk
 - many services need to improve how they promote their values and culture
 - most services should do more to improve equality, diversity and inclusion
 - some services needed targeted support
 - Services face a difficult year with the existing financial and industrial relations issues
 - Inspections continue to be valuable
 - Learning can be taken from the Manchester Arena Inquiry
 - Most services are well-placed to respond to marauding terrorist attacks

4.3 Chapter 2 gives an overview of the Inspection process and the findings from every Tranche 3 inspection. The HMICFRS state that:

- Services aren't always directing their activities to risk.
- General improvements are happening in protection.
- Fire prevention needs to be a higher priority.
- Services continue to respond well to incidents.
- Some Tranche 3 services have become less efficient.
- Most services have a sound understanding of future financial difficulties.
- Many services have capacity problems.
- Some services need to better allocate their resources according to their risk
- Funding and governance arrangements continue to hinder some services.
- Most services have scope to improve their productivity.
- Most services have effective workforce planning in place but have to navigate difficult circumstances.
- Most services prioritise training and skills.
- Some services need to get better at promoting values and culture.
- Some groups of staff are more likely to experience bullying and harassment.
- Services should do more to improve equality, diversity and inclusion.
- More equality data is needed to better understand the challenges the sector faces.
- Progression opportunities for staff are unequal.
- Some staff are engaging with their staff and representative bodies but others could do more.
- Performance management processes needed to be more strategic.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The Chief Fire Officer will review the Report and ensure that any new areas for development are captured within the Authority's Internal Operating Plan for 2023/24 onwards.
- 5.2 In line with current arrangements the Chief Fire Officer will continue to provide the Executive Committee with update reports in regard to the next round of Inspection are clarified.

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