

# Fire & Rescue Service

## Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Cleveland Fire Brigade



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# About this inspection

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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 Cleveland Fire Brigade 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.

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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

Cleveland

England

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

88%

86%



### Response

Cleveland

England

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

14.4

10.4

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

32.4

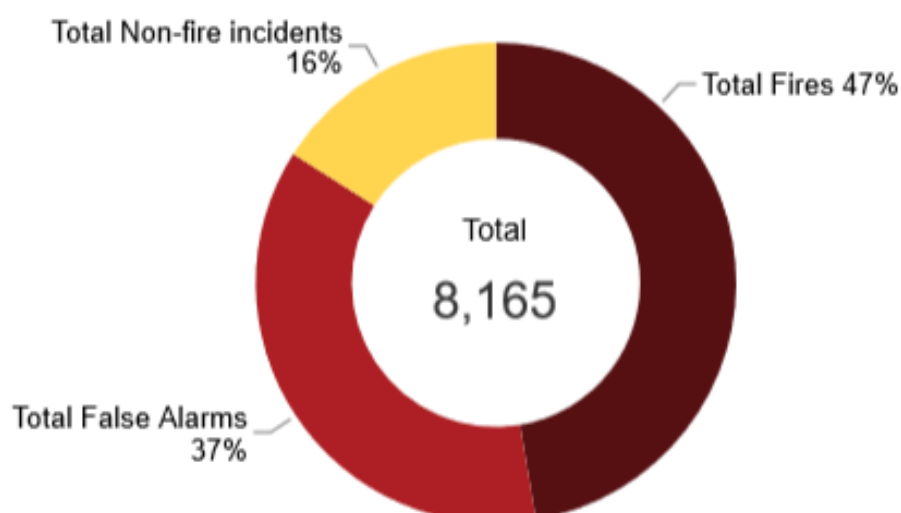
10.4

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

12.1

3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 31 December 2018





## Cost

Cleveland

England

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

£28.07

£22.38



## Workforce

Cleveland

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

-14%

-14%

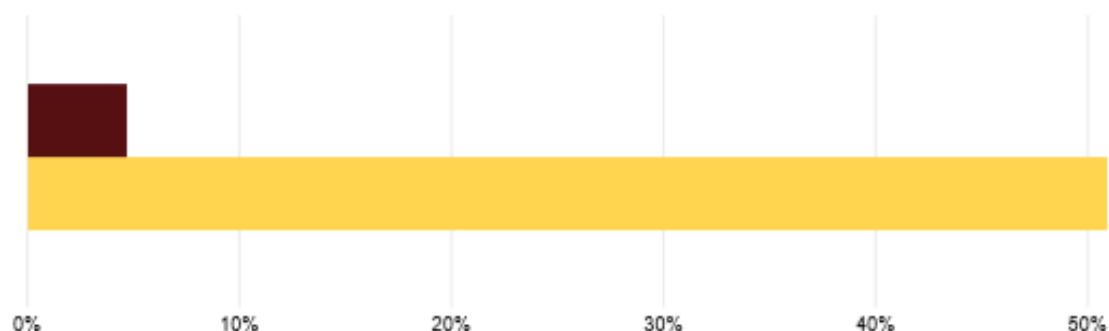
**Percentage of wholetime firefighters**  
As at 31 March 2018

78%

70%

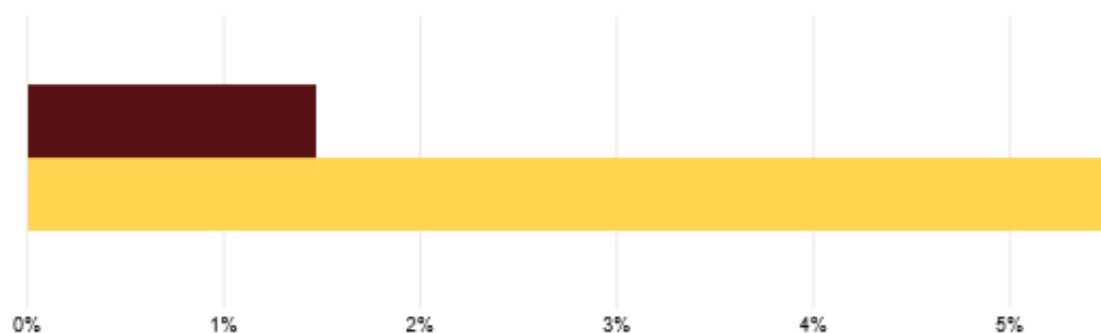
**Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018**

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population



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

● BAME Firefighters ● BAME residential population



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

# Overview



## Effectiveness



**Good**

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Good

Preventing fires and other risks



Good

Protecting the public through fire regulation



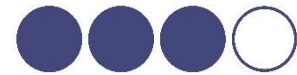
Good

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good

Responding to national risks



Good



## Efficiency



**Good**

Making best use of resources



Good

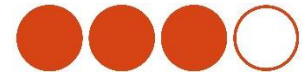
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future



Good



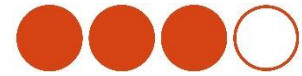
## People



Good

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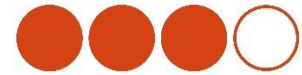
Promoting the right values and culture



Good

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Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

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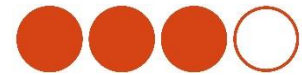
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement

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Managing performance and developing leaders



Good

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## Overall summary of inspection findings

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

Cleveland Fire Brigade is good at providing an effective service to the public. It is good at:

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

The brigade is good in the efficiency of its services. We found it to be good at making the best use of resources. And it is good at making its services affordable now and in future.

Cleveland Fire Brigade is good at looking after its people. It is good at:

- promoting the right values and culture;
- getting the right people with the right skills; and
- managing performance and developing leaders.

But it requires improvement at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Overall, we commend Cleveland Fire Brigade for its performance. This provides a good foundation for improvement in the year ahead.



# Effectiveness



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



**Good**

## Summary

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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. Cleveland Fire Brigade's overall effectiveness is good.

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Cleveland Fire Brigade has a good understanding of the risks to its local area. Its approach is outlined in its four-year plan, which uses a wide range of data to inform its prevention, protection and response activities.

The brigade's prevention strategy covers seven main areas with a high focus on its staff completing [safe and well checks](#). For the year to 31 March 2018, the brigade had a high rate of these checks per 1,000 population, over three times the average rate of fire and rescue services in England. It has carried out analysis to help it understand the main risk factors in its communities. But it doesn't always target its prevention work at the people who are most at risk from fire in the home.

Its approach to enforcement is a supportive one, helping businesses to comply with fire safety regulations. For the year to 31 March 2018, the brigade had a high rate of fire safety audits per 100 known premises. Fire crews and specialist staff completed audits. However, it needs to make premises with the greatest risks a priority in its approach.

The brigade thoroughly assesses risk to the community before developing its response requirements. It has introduced smaller response vehicles and changed staffing arrangements, so its resources are proportionately allocated to risk. Its average response time to [primary fires](#) is faster than other fire and rescue services.

The brigade can show it is ready to respond to both local and national events when needed. But it should improve its training with neighbouring fire and rescue services. It should also make sure its staff are well prepared to respond to high-risk premises in its area.

## Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



### Good

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

#### Areas for improvement

- The brigade should ensure it gathers and records relevant and up-to-date site-specific risk information.

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

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

### Understanding local and community risk

The brigade has a good understanding of local and community risk, which it explains well to the public in its [community integrated risk management plan](#) (CIRMP).

The plan tells the public of the main risks faced in their community. It outlines what current and future resources will be available to meet these risks. It also proposes activity to reduce these risks through prevention, protection and response. And it describes the financial constraints facing the brigade.

The current CIRMP is for the years 2018–22. Before publishing the CIRMP, the brigade ran a three-month consultation with the public, staff, local businesses and partners such as local authorities. It received 446 responses, which were shown to the [fire authority](#) before the plan was approved.

The analysis of risk in the CIRMP is based on the community risk profile of the brigade's area. The brigade made effective use of a broad range of data to produce an accurate and clear risk profile. For example, it used its own local incident data, as well as data covering [safeguarding](#), road safety, indices of multiple deprivation, population profiles, employment, housing, health and data on national incidents. This helps the brigade to proactively identify the different levels of community risk in its area.

The brigade assessed the potential effect on services of emerging and future changes in risk. It worked with local partner organisations and used predictive datasets such as POPPI (Projecting Older People Population Information) to help it do this. For example, it predicts that by 2035 the number of people older than 65 with dementia will increase by 71 percent from 7,000 to 12,000. And by 2032 there will be an estimated 32,000 more homes in its geographic area.

This community risk profile approach to risk has been externally validated by Newcastle University. The brigade uses it to get a clear picture of the areas and households most at risk from fire. It is reviewed and updated each year.

Strategic plans include different scenarios run through [risk modelling](#) software. This risk modelling has prompted the brigade to introduce new response standards and change two fire engines from wholtime to on call.

### **Having an effective risk management plan**

There is a clear link between the CIRMP and the brigade's strategic direction. How resources are allocated to prevention, protection and emergency response can be traced through this plan. In developing the plan, the brigade considered its statutory obligations including the requirements set by the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#).

The brigade also works with its [local resilience forum](#) to make sure the risks from its community risk register are included in its planning. The community risk register provides information on emergencies that could happen within the Cleveland area, together with an assessment of how likely they are to happen and the impacts if they do. The brigade keeps a comprehensive record of its corporate risks, which are considered and discussed regularly by the brigade's executive leadership team.

The brigade develops an annual operating plan based on its CIRMP. This identifies its main strategic priorities for the year and sets out how it plans to measure its effectiveness. The executive leadership team and fire authority scrutinises performance against these priorities.

The brigade's chief fire officer leads the [National Fire Chiefs Council's](#) (NFCC) risk management project for best practice in identifying and assessing risk.

### **Maintaining risk information**

The brigade gathers information about high-risk sites that present risks to firefighters and the public, so they can plan how to respond to incidents. Firefighters access risk information and plans on [mobile data terminals](#) (MDTs) in fire engines.

When we examined the risk information, we came across several sites whose risk visits hadn't been reviewed in line with brigade guidelines. We also found examples of out of date site-specific risk information on MDTs. In some cases, it took longer than three months for updated information to be uploaded on to MDTs. Out of date risk information could put firefighters and the public at unnecessary risk.

The brigade has previously reported the limitations of its arrangements for risk visits. In December 2018, it introduced a new procedure for gathering risk information and making staff aware of it quickly. The brigade is in the process of getting up-to-date risk information for all sites, which we consider to be needed.

We found that the brigade communicates risk information well to operational staff about temporary events, such as large festivals.

The brigade has effective systems in place for communicating general risk information to staff. It uses different methods, such as handovers between [watches](#) and briefings, and 'fire alerts' systems to share health and safety risk-critical and safety information. Staff must sign to acknowledge they have read and understood this information. Its systems are also well designed to share information quickly between prevention, protection and response staff.

## Preventing fires and other risks



### Good

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

#### Areas for improvement

- The brigade should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk.
- The brigade should ensure it quality-assures its prevention work appropriately.

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

### Prevention strategy

Cleveland Fire Brigade has a community safety strategy, which aligns its prevention work with its CIRMP. It also complies with its statutory responsibility to protect the public from the risk of fire. This strategy consists of seven separate plans covering prevention work in the areas of safer homes, safer buildings, safer roads, safer high hazard industries, safer neighbourhoods, national resilience and improved health outcomes.

The brigade has analysed the main risk factors in its communities. Analysis included reviewing fire incidents and national research to identify people at greatest risk of fire, such as lone pensioners, and people who misuse drugs and alcohol. But despite this detailed analysis, we found that the brigade doesn't always target its prevention work at individuals or households most at risk from fire in the home. For example, it told us that it will complete all high-risk partner referrals in six months, which is excessive considering these are people who have been identified by local partners as potentially

being [vulnerable](#) to fire or other risks. Should a member of the public phone requesting a visit, they would be visited within six weeks.

Safe and well visits are well established within the brigade and are completed as a matter of course by specialist prevention staff, [wholetime](#) and [on-call](#) station staff.

These visits include fire safety checks such as identifying and reducing fire risks and fitting fire alarms. They also involve welfare related activities, such as promotion of health advice and how to avoid slips, trips and falls.

The brigade aims to complete more than 18,000 safe and well visits each year. Individual stations and the specialist prevention team are given individual targets. In the year to 31 March 2018, the brigade made 18,315 [home fire safety](#) / safe and well visits. This is 32.4 visits per 1,000 population, more than three times the average rate in England of 10.4. Of these 18,315 visits, 58.7 percent were to households occupied by an elderly person, compared with 54.1 percent for services in England. Households occupied by a person with a registered disability accounted for 18.4 percent of the visits, compared with 24.7 percent for services in England.

The brigade has specialist prevention advocates who are trained to advise people with complex vulnerabilities, such as dementia or drug and alcohol abuse. They work to direct people to local support services to reduce the likelihood of future interventions. The brigade has trained all its operational staff to understand and recognise vulnerable adults and children and to make safeguarding referrals where appropriate. Inspectors found that staff were confident in recognising vulnerabilities and gave good examples of when they had referred to other agencies.

The brigade works effectively with partner organisations who made 3,935 safe and well visits in the year to the end of March 2018. This is higher than the rate per 1,000 population for all English fire and rescue services.

However, we found no monitoring of the quality of either their staff or partners' safe and well checks. The brigade has evaluated its process and procedures for safe and well checks. It was one of seven fire and rescue services to produce the national report on introducing a standard evaluation framework approach to gathering evidence of the effect and effectiveness of safe and well visits. It also informed us of its plans to evaluate all its prevention work.

### **Promoting community safety**

The brigade's communication team is part of the prevention team and promotes safety messages using established communication methods and social media. Campaigns are aligned to national activity by the NFCC and the Government's Fire Kills campaign. The brigade has a campaigns calendar, which is circulated to all stations. We found that central campaigns are well structured and evaluated effectively, but there was an inconsistent approach by stations with no overall evaluation by the brigade.

At the start of 2019, the brigade redesigned its website to make it more user-friendly including translation facility for ten languages.

Districts and stations receive a weekly risk profile of recent fire incidents in their area. These are used by managers to proactively target their prevention work. This work includes activities like community talks in schools and care homes, water safety events and arson prevention. Prevention work is logged on the brigade's 'ident' system to allow managers to monitor whether effective activities are being completed.

The brigade has a commissioned services prevention team funded by partners such as local authorities. This team conducts activities such as the Winter Warmth campaign, youth engagement, National Citizen Service and youth employment initiatives.

A community interest company has also been created. This type of company allows social enterprises to use their profits and assets for the public good. Its profits support a network of community volunteers, which provides extra capacity for prevention work. These volunteers offer activities such as support at prevention events and completing lower priority home fire safety checks.

The brigade works well with partners such as local housing providers to prevent fires and keep people safe. A good example is its involvement in an integrated community safety team at Hartlepool police station, where staff work with other partners such as the council and police. This allows all partners to work together in tackling community safety problems. The brigade also has two community liaison officers whose primary focus is community safety partnerships.

There is also close work with Cleveland Police to investigate fires suspected to have been caused by arson. We were told of successful prosecutions through this work in the last three years. A young persons' fire-setter programme targets children and young people who have an unhealthy fascination with fire. The brigade is national arson lead for the NFCC. It also sits on the Home Office's national anti-social behaviour strategic board, which is producing a good practice arson reduction toolkit.

## **Road safety**

Cleveland's CIRMP identifies road traffic collisions as the greatest risk to life. The brigade is an active member of the Cleveland Strategic Road Safety Partnership whose members include the four local councils, Cleveland Police and organisations such as Road Safety GB. It also has a dedicated road safety officer to promote road safety and drive campaigns.

Partners told us the brigade is proactive in identifying opportunities to improve road safety and is active in several local and national initiatives. A local winter vehicle safety initiative saw a fire station used as the location for vehicle checks and talking to drivers about road safety.

The brigade also presents the road safety roadshow Learn and Live programme to young people aged 15 to 19 years old. The brigade told us that every year it presents over 100 roadshows, sometimes alongside other agencies. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council has commissioned the brigade to provide road safety sessions in 40 primary schools for key stage 1 and 2 pupils.



## Protecting the public through fire regulation



### Good

Cleveland Fire Brigade 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 brigade should ensure its risk-based inspection programme prioritises the highest risks.
- The brigade should ensure it works with smaller businesses to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations.

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 brigade's performance in this area.

#### Risk-based approach

Cleveland Fire Brigade has a risk-based inspection programme and enforcement plan. We found the brigade needs to evaluate its approach so that it makes the highest risk premises a priority. Its definition of high risk comes from algorithms in its Community Fire Risk Management Information System. It is then validated through officers' professional judgment with in-depth knowledge of the local area and associated industrial and commercial buildings.

It has applied this professional judgment to several premises since its risk-based inspection programme began, and as at 31 December 2018, declared it only had ten high risk premises. The brigade hasn't set a target for how many of these premises are audited but looks at the frequency of these audits on an individual property level.

Cleveland's specialist staff carry out fire safety audits that support the risk-based inspection programme. It has adopted the NFCC's short audit process for their fire safety inspectors. This improves productivity and places less of a burden on business premises than the full audit. In the year to 31 March 2018, the brigade audited 1,862 premises, 12.1 per 100 known premises (those the fire safety regulations apply to). This compares with 3.0 audits per 100 known premises for all services in England. In the same period, 12 percent of the 1,862 audits were unsatisfactory compared with an England average of 31.5 percent.



As well as its proactive risk-based inspection programme, the brigade also does reactive work. It replies to statutory consultations such as building regulations, audits businesses after a fire, and responds to fire safety complaints from other organisations and the public. The brigade received 291 building regulation consultations between 1 April and 31 December 2018. Of these, 94.2 percent were finished on time.

We found it positive that the brigade has started to train response managers to do low-risk fire safety audits. These managers complete four audits a month.

## **Enforcement**

The brigade's enforcement policy is based on the Better Business for All agenda and the [Regulators' Code](#). The brigade told us that, where possible, it will work to support businesses to resolve fire safety issues rather than seek enforcement.

It has used a range of enforcement powers, including enforcement notices, prohibition and informal notices. In the year to March 2018, the brigade gave 161 informal notices, three enforcement notices, seven [prohibition notices](#), but no alteration notices or prosecutions. The brigade hasn't prosecuted since 2010/11, but two cases in the past four years were pursued towards prosecution without progressing because of company insolvency. The brigade maintains the prosecution skills of its staff through continuous professional development. Staff with fire safety qualifications are always available to deal with fire safety concerns.

The brigade works well with other enforcement agencies. The brigade attends meetings with regulators at Stockton and Middlesbrough Borough Councils to exchange information about risk, discuss non-compliant businesses and other areas for concern. It also makes joint visits, for example with the police and local authorities, for problems in licensed premises.

## **Working with others**

We were shown evidence of the brigade supporting large organisations such as a local hospital and housing provider to comply with fire safety regulations. The brigade's website has recently been updated to make it easier for business owners to find fire safety advice. Except for this improvement, it didn't have a systematic approach to engagement with smaller businesses.

The brigade introduced a new strategy in October 2017 to reduce the negative effect of attending false alarms (unwanted fire signals) at commercial premises. When an automatic fire alarm is reported it can be questioned rather than responded to straight away. The brigade provided data showing that this approach has reduced the burden of attending false alarms to commercial premises by 20 percent in the year to 31 March 2018. Home Office data shows that in the year to 31 December 2018, the brigade reduced false alarms at all premises by 4.6 percent from the previous year.

The brigade is working on a pilot scheme to better exchange information and concerns about premises with local regulatory bodies. We recognise the benefits this approach could bring and look forward to seeing the outcome of this work.

## Responding to fires and other emergencies



### Good

Cleveland Fire Brigade 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 brigade should ensure it gives relevant information to the public about ongoing incidents to help keep the public safe during and after incidents.
- The brigade should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.

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

### Managing assets and resources

The brigade bases its resource requirements on a thorough assessment of risk to the community. It reviewed its fire cover model in 2017. This was based on the identified risks in its area with two key planning assumptions:

- fire survivability rates and how to reduce loss of life based on extensive research commissioned by West Midlands Fire Service; and
- a thorough assessment of the resources needed for the most serious cases at its many high hazard industrial sites.

This review identified the need for at least 14 fire engines at any time, with an optimum of 18 engines, to meet the identified risk and brigade's first attendance response standard. The brigade has 21 fire engines based at 14 community fire stations. Six of these stations are [wholetime](#), namely resourced day and night, six are on-call stations and two are mixed wholetime/on-call stations. It uses its wholetime and on-call firefighters flexibly to maintain the optimum 18 fire engines. When it falls below this number, it has an action plan for increasing firefighter availability. In 2018, it has only been below the minimum number of 14 fire engines for 15 hours.

In 2018, on-call fire engine availability ranged from 48.9 percent to 91.8 percent. Availability of on-call staff is a national challenge and the brigade told us it is in the final stages of a review aiming to increase availability.

The brigade has invested to make its operational fleet more flexible to meet the needs of its CIRMP. For example, it has introduced small fire units crewed by two firefighters unlike traditional fire engines with a crew of four or five. These units are more effective and efficient in tackling small fires while enabling larger fire engines to remain available for high-risk incidents.

The brigade trains its wholetime and on-call firefighters to the same standard. Operational staff we spoke to confidently demonstrated how to use breathing apparatus. Control staff's training competencies were well managed.

## Response

In the year to 31 December 2018, the brigade attended 14.4 incidents per 1,000 population. The rate for England for the same period was 10.4 incidents.

The Home Office collects and publishes data of the time between a call being made and the first fire engine arriving at the scene. This data shows that for the year to 31 March 2018, the brigade's average response time to primary fires was 6 minutes and 35 seconds. This was an increase from 6 minutes 20 seconds in the year to 31 March 2011 and is the fastest response time of any service.

After public consultation and the 2017 response review, the brigade introduced a new response standard for building fires. This is:

- first fire engine will attend within an average of 7 minutes;
- 90 percent will be attended within 10 minutes by the first fire engine; and
- second fire engine will attend within an average of 10 minutes.

These times are measured from the [mobilisation](#) instruction being sent until the arrival of the fire crew at the scene of the incident. The brigade used computer modelling to calculate response times that could meet the fire authority's expectation of the same standard of emergency response for all its community.

Between 1 April and 31 December 2018, the brigade achieved its response standards. The first fire engine arrived on scene in an average of 4 minutes 48 seconds while the second in 6 minutes 41 seconds.

By March 2021, the brigade aims to adopt all areas of [national operational guidance](#). This guidance covers operational policies, procedures and training for firefighters to deal with incidents effectively and safely. National operational guidance has already been implemented for incident command and use of breathing apparatus.

## Command

The brigade has an effective system for ensuring incident commanders at all levels keep their command skills up to date. As well as regular refresher training, all incident commanders complete an annual operational command assessment. Operational commanders we spoke to showed good knowledge and understanding of how to safely and effectively command operational incidents. We found staff were aware of the incident command pack held on fire engines and understood how it should be used.

As part of our inspection, we surveyed staff to get their views of their service (please see Annex A for more details.) Of the 189 firefighters who responded to our survey, 88.3 percent agreed that 'the last incident I attended where I was not the incident commander was commanded assertively, effectively and safely' which is similar to the England average.

The brigade has analysed crew tasks by incident type to decide how many firefighters and what equipment is needed at incidents. We found that emergency control room staff are good at sending resources to incidents based on this analysis. They also have discretion to alter the attendance criteria to incidents and apply this effectively.

### **Keeping the public informed**

The brigade doesn't routinely keep the public informed of day-to-day incidents that may have the potential to affect them. During major incidents it works with the local resilience forum to communicate with the public through its communications team. Out of hours cover for media and press enquiries is the responsibility of duty officers who have had media training.

Staff were well trained and confident in recognising vulnerable people. They gave good examples of safeguarding referrals to protect vulnerable people.

Control room staff have access to a language line to enable them to communicate more effectively with members of the public who don't speak English. This gives immediate access to an interpreter who can relay information between the caller and the control operator. Control staff were also well trained and confident in giving a range of fire survival guidance to the public.

### **Evaluating operational performance**

The brigade has a good debrief process to gather feedback after an exercise or incident.

We found that conducting [hot debriefs](#) immediately after an incident is common practice. Staff record what they have learned from incidents using an electronic debrief form. Commanders we spoke to use this electronic form for the debrief process. A formal debrief process is triggered by more significant incidents.

The brigade has good processes for learning from debriefs. For example, it has improved its wildfire equipment and command procedures. We also found that risk-critical safety information identified at debriefs was well communicated to staff. Our staff survey showed that 81.1 percent of the 127 firefighters and specialist support staff who responded agreed that they are confident their service takes action as a result of learning from operational incidents. However, staff we interviewed couldn't give us examples of other lessons learned after incidents or exercises. The brigade should consider if it can communicate more effectively or promote this knowledge with staff.

We were pleased to see that the brigade shares what it has learnt with other fire and rescue services as well as other emergency responders. It does this through the so-called [national operational learning](#) process.

It has an effective procedure for dealing with public complaints. Each case is investigated, and numbers of cases are reported to the fire authority.

## Responding to national risks



### Good

Cleveland Fire Brigade is good at responding to national risks. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

#### Areas for improvement

- The brigade should ensure its staff are well prepared to respond to high-risk premises.
- The brigade should ensure that its procedures for responding to terrorist-related incidents are understood by all staff.

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 brigade's performance in this area.

### Preparedness

The brigade is well prepared to deal with a major incident.

The Home Office funds a number of fire and rescue services to keep and maintain equipment in the case of a major incident, some of which are located in Cleveland, for example, a detection, identification and monitoring unit. The brigade has plans in place to allow these assets to be mobilised to other areas. Control staff and operational commanders know how to request other specialist assets and resources, such as [urban search and rescue](#) teams through the [national co-ordination advisory framework](#).

The brigade regularly liaises with local high-risk industry and holds a regular forum. This forum keeps the brigade alert to changing risk at these high-risk sites. It also makes it aware of the resources the organisations can provide on their own and other sites.

The brigade has worked with site owners and partners to develop individual response plans for high-risk sites. At the time of inspection, this included 32 [sites designated high-risk by the Control of Major Accident Hazards \(COMAH\) Regulations 2015](#). The plans we reviewed were of good quality, but we found some supervisory commanders didn't fully understand them.

## Working with other services

The brigade has mutual aid arrangements in place with its two neighbouring fire and rescue services. At a recent major fire incident, it was supported by County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service to provide fire engines to support normal business. It also shares risk information with these neighbouring services through a secure extranet called [Resilience Direct](#) and uploads this on to MDTs.

The brigade shares procedural information with its neighbouring services so that fire crews can effectively work together at incidents. For example, staff are made aware of different breathing apparatus and procedures used. We found, however, that cross-border exercising was infrequent, and many staff said they hadn't participated in any recent exercises. Of the 127 firefighters and specialist support staff who answered our staff survey, only 25.2 percent agreed that the brigade regularly trains or exercises with neighbouring fire and rescue services. The brigade told us it is exploring ways to increase the frequency and effectiveness of cross-border exercises.

## Working with other agencies

The brigade is an active member of the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum. We heard that the brigade is an engaged and supportive member. It helps plan and complete multi-agency exercises and training through a training and exercising group, including at its COMAH sites. However, operational crews weren't often involved in these exercises. The brigade should make sure it involves all operational crews in multi-agency exercises as it will support them to be fully prepared to respond effectively to these types of incidents.

In general, staff showed good knowledge of the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles](#), which ensure that all the emergency services work together effectively. The brigade has a number of trained [national inter-agency liaison officers](#). These staff advise on incidents like a marauding terrorist attack and work with partner agencies when an incident occurs. We did find that some station-based crews weren't sure what action to take at an incident involving a marauding terrorist attack. The brigade should address this to ensure all operational crews are trained to deal with such an incident.

# Efficiency



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



**Good**

## Summary

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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. Cleveland Fire Brigade's overall efficiency is good.

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Cleveland Fire Brigade is good at financial planning. It has a five-year medium-term financial plan in place that is updated annually. The plan is linked to action in its [CIRMP](#). It has made large savings over the past eight years, according to data provided by the brigade.

The brigade has changed its staff working patterns to improve productivity. It has good systems in place to manage this. Better use of technology would make it more productive and efficient.

It has a positive approach to collaboration, meeting its statutory duty. But it should do more to monitor, review and evaluate its collaboration activities. The brigade has business continuity plans in place. It needs to improve its oversight of these plans to make sure all of them are being tested.

The brigade has made good use of external funding including successfully bidding for government funding and generating income from partners for its commissioned services team. It has also set up a successful community interest company, which provides community safety services to the community.



## Making best use of resources



### Good

Cleveland Fire Brigade is good at making best use of resources. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

#### Areas for improvement

- The brigade should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration.
- The brigade should ensure it has good business continuity arrangements in place that take account of all foreseeable threats and risks. It needs to review and test plans thoroughly.

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

#### How plans support objectives

Cleveland Fire Brigade has clear and sound financial plans. It has processes in place for both internal and external audit and scrutiny by the [fire and rescue authority](#). These allow the plans to be challenged.

In the year to 31 March 2018, firefighter cost per head of population was £28.07. This compares with the England rate of £22.38.

It has developed its strategic objectives in line with its CIRMP. These include identifying existing and future risks to its communities and assessing new ways of working for prevention, protection and response activities. We could see the link between the proposals set out in the CIRMP and how the brigade has developed its structure and its prevention, protection and response activities.

Between year to 31 March 2013 and year to 31 March 2018, the brigade's workforce has reduced by 13.6 percent – 105 full time equivalent posts. It has had three organisational reviews since 2011 so that preventative, protective and response activities are suitably allocated. The brigade told us these reviews achieved efficiencies of almost £3m while improving the service to the public. Some of the outcomes of the reviews were:

- staff moved from headquarters to district community hubs to increase public access to community safety services;
- increased front-line resources;
- streamlined support services; and
- fewer management tiers.

The brigade has a five-year medium-term financial plan showing the financial effects of its CIRMP, which is reviewed each year. This plan considers a range of scenarios such as changes in government funding and future pay awards. [Reserves](#) of £0.6m per year for the next three years are being used to balance the budget. However, we are satisfied that the brigade has a good spending plan in place for its reserves, which includes building a more efficient estate. It has plans to allow it to balance its budgets without having to rely on reserves in the future.

The brigade showed that it has been able to make savings. From 2011/12 to 2018/19, external funding fell by around 34 percent, equating to nearly £10.5m. The brigade has managed this reduction through its CIRMP. The brigade's budget for 2019/20 is £26.9m. As part of the brigade's current efficiency plan, it is on track to make £3.44m of savings by the end of 2019/20. Savings will be made by:

- changes to control room arrangements following a review;
- change of crewing for the incident command unit;
- closure of a fire station; and
- more [on-call](#) firefighters and fewer [wholetime firefighters](#).

### **Productivity and ways of working**

In 2017/18, the brigade reviewed the productivity of its firefighters. This is positive and not something we have seen in many other services. This review analysed how long firefighters were spending doing the essential elements of their role such as responding to incidents and training. In doing so this identified the time left for other things, in particular prevention and protection activities.

Each station has annual targets for prevention and protection activities. Targets are monitored and managed through district performance meetings and then quarterly brigade performance meetings. Prevention and protection teams have similar processes for target setting and performance management. We found this performance management process is effective to ensure the correct output is achieved. However, the brigade should do more to assure the quality of its prevention and protection activity.

Since 2012, the brigade has introduced new working patterns for its staff to increase productivity. All were introduced as local agreements after negotiations with trade unions. Staff other than firefighters – known in the sector as 'green book staff' – have transitioned since then to annualised hours providing flexible provision of services. Trainers in its learning and development department have moved from working a five-day week with core hours of 9am to 5pm to seven days a week (including bank holidays) with core hours of 9am to 9pm. This means trainers are available throughout the week. It increases the training courses offered and provides more opportunities for on-call staff to receive training.

As part of the brigade's last CIRMP (covering 2014–18), firefighters and control staff moved to a new duty system. This system allows the brigade to draw on resources when they are needed, so only the appropriate number of firefighters are on duty. Operational staff working in central teams also support this approach and work shifts to support response crews when needed.

With this model, the brigade deploys operational staff flexibly to maintain its optimum number of fire engines. It regularly moves wholetime staff to on-call stations to make more on-call fire engines available. This is a good use of available resources to improve response, but staff told us this approach affects productivity in other areas such as prevention and training. The brigade should ensure it understands any effects of this approach.

During 2016–2018, the brigade made efficiency savings of almost £1m. Savings were made by reducing numbers of wholetime firefighters and increasing on-call firefighters. The modelling showed that this new approach meets the response standards promised to the public outlined in its CIRMP.

## **Collaboration**

The brigade meets its statutory duty to consider emergency service collaboration. It is part of a strategic collaborative development working group with representatives from the police and the ambulance services. It chairs the assets sub group.

Some examples that have come through this group are:

- co-location with Cleveland Police at the newly built Thornaby fire station, who made a capital contribution of £162,000;
- long-term leasing of its old training centre at Grangetown to Cleveland Police, who have refurbished the building at a cost of £950,000;
- sharing its incident command unit and welfare pod (providing welfare facilities at incidents) with Cleveland Police;
- leasing a workshop bay in its technical hub for North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust technicians to maintain or service ambulance vehicles, generating £3,000 per annum; and
- co-location with HM Coastguard Rescue Team at Redcar fire station, generating £2,300 per annum.

In January 2019, the brigade agreed a statement of intent with Cleveland Police to explore ways of collaborating for their back office services.

It also shares premises with NHS staff at Redcar Fire Station and its Middlesbrough Community Hub. The brigade also collaborates with other non-emergency service partners. It helps rehabilitate offenders through community gardening activities at its headquarters site.

A noteworthy example of collaboration is the brigade's involvement in an integrated community safety team based at Hartlepool police station. Representatives from different agencies work together to solve problems that affect their different organisations.

The brigade has a positive approach to collaboration. But we found it doesn't consistently monitor, review and evaluate these initiatives to establish whether they represent value for money.

## Continuity arrangements

The brigade has good business continuity plans. Its framework highlights three types of business continuity plan: corporate (e.g. industrial action), departmental, and individual stations. The plans align with [local resilience forum](#) plans. Business continuity plans are reviewed each year by department heads.

The brigade has business continuity arrangements in place for critical areas such as ICT or loss of [fire control](#). Its fire control function can be passed to two other fire and rescue services with the same [mobilising](#) system, Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire. This would happen in the event of extraordinary need such as a failure of the system or a severe increase in calls volume.

Plans are routinely tested for fire control and ICT, although this wasn't the case for other areas of the brigade. We also found there was limited oversight and quality assurance of the process. The brigade should assure itself that its oversight of continuity planning and testing is effective.

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



### Good

Cleveland Fire Brigade is good at making its services affordable now and in the future. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

#### Areas for improvement

- The brigade needs to ensure it makes the best use of technology to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

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

### Improving value for money

Cleveland Fire Brigade has a good track record of making savings. Its financial planning extends to 2022/23 and includes projections based on a wide range of financial scenarios. These include the effect of future changes in government funding, future pay awards and uncertainty about public sector employers' obligations for recalculated pensions.

The brigade has a good understanding of future financial risks. Funding arrangements differ across services. Some rely on central government funding more than others depending on how much money they generate from local taxation. Cleveland is heavily dependent on central government funding as it has a low council tax base, with 65 percent of properties in band A and B compared with 44 percent nationally. Therefore, just a small percentage change in funding from central government could

have a large effect on the overall budget. Current planning scenarios for 2022/23 give at best a £1.73m budget deficit, and at worst a £3.84m deficit.

Short-term plans, such as revenue underspends and leaving some posts vacant, are in place to meet the immediate shortfall. Longer-term plans are being developed. These plans include a review of back office services, reviewing non-pay budgets, reconfiguring the approach to operational response and a possible council tax precept referendum.

The brigade has a procurement strategy to collaborate when possible. It is part of the north east fire and rescue services' procurement group through which it jointly purchases uniform. It has sound contract management with call-off contracts, break clauses and [benchmarking](#) used to drive savings. The brigade provided us with many examples of savings such £135,000 for building cleaning and building security and £11,000 for its waste contract.

## **Innovation**

The brigade sets out its commitment to innovation through technology in its ICT strategy for 2019–22. This is based on four themes: automation, collaboration, insight and governance. The brigade has an in-house ICT team, which provides internal services and is commissioned to provide some services to other partners.

The brigade has a long-standing technology collaboration arrangement with the University of Hull. It has worked with the university to develop [MDT](#) software and its command and control mobilising system. The brigade made significant savings through this collaboration as it didn't need to tender for a new command and control mobilising system. It expects this collaboration to continue to make future efficiencies. It is the national fire sector lead with the university for MDT development and with a telecommunications company for control room communications development.

We saw a range of work the brigade is undertaking with other fire and rescue services to improve ways of working and be more efficient through the better use of technology. It is working with [NFCC](#) to jointly procure MDTs and is working with six fire and rescue services to procure software for a new on-call availability system, using a framework from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

Though this collaboration and commitment to technology is positive, we found areas where the brigade could improve its effectiveness and efficiency. For example, only 29 percent of [home fire safety visits](#) are recorded using the tablets. Most checks are recorded on paper and manually transferred to computer systems later. And the system tracking the availability of on-call firefighters doesn't automatically update the mobilising system so has to be tracked and input manually.

## **Future investment and working with others**

The brigade's reserve strategy compliments the medium-term financial plan, efficiency plan and asset management plan.

In the year to March 2018, the brigade had around £11.2m in earmarked reserves and around £1.6m in general reserves. Total earmarked reserves are due to diminish to

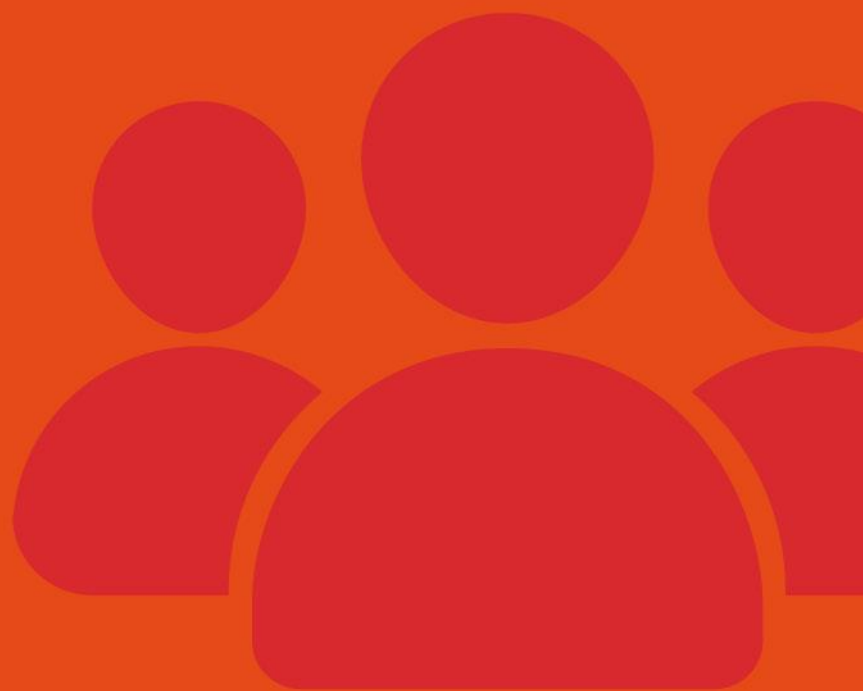
about £3.5m at the end of 2022/23. This is mainly through its asset management plan and supporting the operational change to manage budget reductions.

Reserves, external funding, borrowing and capital receipts are being used by the brigade to ensure its estate meets its anticipated operational needs. By investing in its estate now, especially its older buildings, this should remove maintenance requirements, which if not addressed would result in higher longer-term costs. Government funding of £3.9m was secured in 2012 and £2.8m in 2016 to transform the estate achieving annual efficiencies of £257,000. By 2024/25 it should save £11.5m in estates maintenance and £32.64m from crewing and staffing changes.

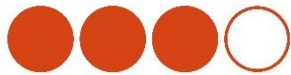
The brigade also generates extra income from leasing space in its estate. For example, the NHS pays £12,000 for accommodation at Redcar fire station. It also sells some of its prevention services, generating over £200,000 worth of business within the first quarter of this financial year alone. This external funding will fund the team for the whole year.

Through a loan from the Fire Authority, the brigade established a community interest company, Cleveland Fire Brigade Risk Management Services, in 2011. The brigade told us this is now a profitable company with about 100 employed staff. Its turnover in the year to 31 March 2019 was almost £4.8m. It provides a wide range of emergency preparedness, response and security services to industry, reducing risk in the brigade's area. It invests its profit into community safety activities including supporting community volunteers. In the year to 31 March 2018, these volunteers undertook 1,400 [safe and well visits](#) and fitted 403 sensory loss smoke alarms. The brigade also receives income from loan payments and market rate recharge for premises, equipment and staff.

# People



# How well does the service look after its people?



**Good**

## Summary

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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, Cleveland Fire Brigade is good at looking after its people.

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Cleveland Fire Brigade offers good wellbeing support for its staff, including after traumatic incidents. Health and safety is taken seriously. All staff have the training they need, and all accidents are investigated. The brigade has a clear set of values and behaviours, which staff at all levels of the organisation understood and could talk about.

The brigade has a clear approach to workforce planning to make sure there are enough staff to cover important roles. Staff told us they were well trained, although the brigade doesn't always make sure staff are up to date with their risk-critical training.

The brigade requires improvement in ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. It has developed an action plan to make its workforce more diverse, but this work is at an early stage. It also has an inconsistent approach to engaging with and obtaining feedback from staff.

It has good arrangements in place to assess and develop individual staff performance and linking this to the organisational values. There is no process to identify and develop staff with high potential to be senior leaders of the future.



## Promoting the right values and culture



### Good

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

#### Workforce wellbeing

The brigade takes the wellbeing of its workforce seriously. It has a comprehensive wellbeing strategy overseen by a health and wellbeing board. It offers staff a wide range of services to support their wellbeing, including counselling, physiotherapy, health and wellbeing advice, health screening and an accelerated medical support service. It also provides support for non-work-related problems that can affect performance in the workplace. Prominent intranet pages give staff further information.

Most staff spoke positively about the brigade's wellbeing provision. We did receive some negative comments from staff such as the occupational health services are only available at the brigade's headquarters, which makes some people reluctant to use the services. The brigade acknowledged its process for monitoring the performance of its Employee Assistance Programme is limited.

The brigade offers support after traumatic incidents through its [trauma risk management](#) system. These arrangements are well supported by staff, but supervisory managers hadn't always been trained to recognise the signs of trauma in their staff and support this process.

The chief fire officer has chaired the [NFCC](#)'s Occupational Health Committee for over ten years. The brigade also leads on sickness absence [benchmarking](#) for the fire sector. We found the brigade effectively monitors staff sickness absence and told us it has an improved record for the average number of days lost to sickness.

#### Health and safety

The brigade has a comprehensive health and safety policy. It aims to improve performance as well as meet all legislative duties and frameworks. It clearly defines the responsibilities of staff at all levels to promote health and safety. Staff are suitably trained, with the brigade providing extra health and safety training for specialist roles.

The health and safety committee reviews relevant performance across the organisation. There is close working with representative bodies and staff are encouraged to report health and safety issues. Of the 189 respondents to our staff survey, 97.9 percent agreed that they knew how to report all accidents, [near misses](#) or dangerous occurrences. The brigade investigates, analyses and reports on all accidents and near misses so that it learns from them.

The brigade has recently upgraded gym facilities at stations. It has employed a full-time qualified health and fitness advisor and has trained volunteer health and fitness champions on stations. Firefighters are subject to an annual fitness test. The brigade has signed the Mind Blue Light pledge and staff have had mental health training.

### **Culture and values**

The brigade has a clear set of values and behaviours. The brigade told us its values framework has been in place for over ten years and is expressed through the acronym 'PRIDE'. Staff recently decided to keep the acronym but adjust the overarching headings. The new framework was launched in November 2018 with 'PRIDE' standing for protect, respect, innovating, doing the right thing – being professional, and engaging with others. We found staff at all levels of the organisation understood and demonstrated these.

Of the 189 respondents to our staff survey, 78.3 percent stated they were treated with dignity and respect. But 27.5 percent had experienced some form of bullying or harassment at work in the last 12 months. And 25.4 percent of respondents felt they had been discriminated against at work. In both these categories, most people felt that the source was someone senior to them.

These survey findings show that at least a quarter of respondents feel they have experienced behaviour inconsistent with the values and behaviours of the brigade. But the staff we spoke to told us that most managers act as role models and are committed to the brigade values through their behaviours.

The chief fire officer has an annual programme of visits to all locations, which staff were positive about. Staff at stations told us there was a lack of visibility from other senior leaders.

### **Getting the right people with the right skills**



#### **Good**

Cleveland Fire Brigade 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 brigade should make sure it has an accurate system to record and monitor operational staff competence, and that staff and managers use it effectively.

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

## Workforce planning

The brigade's workforce plan describes how it is going to ensure that it has the right number of operational staff with the right skills to deliver the [CIRMP](#). A workforce planning group meets regularly to map out the skills of its workforce. This group considers the needs of the CIRMP, the internal operating plan and succession planning to identify future staffing and skill requirements.

The brigade has a robust planning process to identify future training requirements. Future training needs are identified from the workforce plan, heads of service and the appraisal process. The process allows the brigade to identify training requirements for operational, leadership and management skills.

We found strong supporting structures in place to enable new or promoted staff to acquire and develop the skills they need for their roles. The brigade is an approved centre for providing vocational qualifications and is subject to a twice-yearly external audit of their development processes.

We found the brigade's use of annualised hours improved the availability of fire engines. This makes sure the minimum number promised to the public is available. The brigade has recognised that its [on-call](#) availability is falling. In December 2018, the availability of on-call stations in Cleveland varied from 29.5 percent to 87.4 percent. The overall availability (both [wholetime](#) and on-call stations) in December 2018 was 80.8 percent. The brigade told us that, similar to many other fire and rescue services, it has less availability during weekday daytime hours. But it is in the final stages of a review and aims to increase availability.

## Learning and improvement

The brigade has identified various skills as essential for operational staff to carry out their role, such as breathing apparatus, water safety, working at height, road traffic collisions and fire behaviour. It has aligned this risk-critical response training to national standards. Staff receive an initial course then refresher courses at set periods. It provides this training at a central training centre with the staff being assessed against the national standards.

The brigade has several systems for keeping records about training. We were told of plans to centralise this record keeping. Currently, the learning and development team hold some records, while some departments hold their own. During our inspection, we carried out a skills review. The brigade was unable to answer all our questions as the information is held on different systems. It couldn't provide a current picture of all areas of competence. And when we did receive records from the brigade, some staff weren't up to date with their risk-critical training, (for example, a small number of drivers weren't trained as per the brigade's policy).

The brigade revised its on-station training programme and competence monitoring system in January 2019. Positively, its supervisory managers are trained to provide and assess training. However, during our station visits the supervisory managers couldn't show our inspectors that their staff were up to date with all required training. The brigade should identify whether this is a system issue or whether further staff training is needed.

Both on-call and [wholetime staff](#) told us their training was good and had prepared them for their roles. Wholetime and on-call firefighters have the same training. Our staff survey shows that 78.8 percent of the 189 respondents agree that they have received enough training to enable them to do what is asked of them. We observed firefighters confidently and effectively testing equipment, including breathing apparatus.

The brigade has a second database for online learning tools. We found staff were up to date with the required training on this system. It is positive that this is accessible from home computers. On-call staff are given extra payments to do this training outside their normal weekly training sessions.

The brigade has a central exercise calendar. Although regular exercising is planned, we found there hadn't been any exercises involving more than two fire engines since 2018. Staff agreed that involvement in larger exercises was extremely limited.

Corporate staff are appropriately trained. The brigade ensures that they get the right skills and training through role-specific development. Corporate-based eLearning is also available to staff, some of which is mandatory.

## Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



### Requires improvement

#### Areas for improvement

- The brigade should make sure it has appropriate mechanisms to engage with and seek feedback from all staff, including those from under-represented groups.
- To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the brigade should ensure its recruitment activities are open and accessible to all of Cleveland's communities.

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

### Seeking and acting on staff feedback

The brigade has staff communication channels, such as the Fire Wire magazine, and the intranet. While it is good that many of the communication channels are accessible outside work, there is no way to tell whether staff use them. We found the brigade didn't have a co-ordinated approach to internal engagement and communication.

The brigade has an inconsistent approach to getting feedback from its staff. It doesn't survey its staff but is taking steps to address this. We also welcome that it is commissioning a cultural survey. This should help the brigade to focus on those areas where staff have the greatest concerns.

Most staff told us they would be happy to give feedback to managers, including senior leaders. However, most staff indicated they felt actions in response to feedback would be unlikely.

The views expressed in our staff survey support these comments. Of the 189 respondents, 62.4 percent agreed that there were opportunities to feed their views upwards in the brigade. Only 47.1 percent were confident that their views would be listened to, and only 48.1 percent felt able to challenge ideas without being treated differently as a result.

The brigade is taking some steps to improve the situation. At the time of the inspection it had just started a staff suggestion scheme and has recently introduced an operational assurance 'you said, we did' newsletter. Staff were aware of the recent introduction of smoke hoods, featured in the edition circulated before our inspection. Smoke hoods allow the safe rescue of casualties from smoke-filled buildings. This newsletter focuses on operational issues and the brigade should consider whether to widen its coverage to other areas.

We found the brigade has a good relationship with trade unions. It consults trade unions about changes that might affect their members. The Fire Brigades Union and Unison are integral members of many of the brigade's formal meetings.

The brigade has had few formal grievances in the five years to March 2018, but those it does receive are handled appropriately and in line with policy. Most of the staff we spoke to felt confident about raising a concern or grievance, but some staff expressed that they were not worth submitting since very few grievances are upheld.

Managers are encouraged to resolve low-level grievances locally and informally, but there is no oversight of informal outcomes. The brigade is therefore unable to assure the fairness and consistency of informal resolutions or learn from any trends. Staff can access a confidential reporting line, although there have been no reports on it since 2014. The brigade should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures and aim to understand its staff's views.

## **Diversity**

The brigade has an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy. It is overseen by the EDI forum established in January 2018 and chaired by the chair of the [fire authority](#). There are five sub groups: political and professional leadership, inclusive culture, delivering services to diverse communities, positive purchasing power, and recruitment, progression and retention. Each has an action plan for improving EDI across the brigade. Representative bodies and staff volunteers are members of these groups. This type of staff engagement is positive, but we talked to staff who weren't aware of the opportunity to be involved.

The brigade doesn't currently reflect the community it serves. As at 31 March 2018, 4.7 percent of firefighters were women and 1.5 percent of firefighters were from a BAME background. This compares with a BAME residential population of 5.5 percent. We noted that for 37.9 percent of its staff (223) the ethnicity was classified as 'ethnicity not stated'. The brigade told us this is because of an outdated human resources software system with limitations on the quantity of data it can hold. The brigade

needs to address this so it can fully understand its staff profile and meet its public-sector duty.

The brigade has taken very little action to improve the diversity of its workforce. Its first wholetime recruitment campaign for nine years ended during our inspection. We were told there was very little positive action for this campaign. It has developed an action plan to increase workforce diversity, but this work is at an early stage. The brigade should give this its full attention.

The brigade has completed equality impact assessments for all its policies. It has taken some action to support staff retention of under-represented groups. However, it has done little to improve progression of these under-represented groups.

It is good that all staff have had e-learning equality and diversity training. The brigade has also invested in a day's face-to-face EDI training from an external provider. At the time of our inspection, the brigade told us, 78 percent of all staff have completed this training with remaining staff scheduled to complete in the next few months.

## Managing performance and developing leaders



### Good

Cleveland Fire Brigade is good at managing performance and developing leaders. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

#### Areas for improvement

- The brigade 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 brigade's performance in this area.

### Managing performance

The brigade has good arrangements in place to assess and develop the individual performance of all its staff and completion rates are high compared with other services. Every member of staff has an annual performance appraisal with their manager. The appraisal reviews the previous year's performance and sets targets and objectives for the coming year. It is also linked to the brigade's values to make sure they are being followed.

The number of staff who have completed their performance appraisal is monitored by the executive leadership team. As at 31 March 2018, the brigade had 541 full-time equivalent staff. Through the appraisal process, staff can take courses that focus on personal and professional development. Staff we spoke to were positive about the appraisal process, but on-call staff were less likely than wholetime staff to have had an appraisal by their manager.

## **Developing leaders**

Managers complete leadership and management training aligned to nationally recognised qualifications at certificate and diploma levels, approved by the Chartered Management Institute. The brigade has recently developed a mentor training programme with Cleveland Police to give staff the opportunity to be mentored across both organisations.

The appraisal process is used to identify staff that are interested in and suitable for promotion. We found that the promotion process is well documented and open. Staff we spoke to trust the promotion process that is in place and believe it is fair.

The brigade doesn't have a process to identify and develop staff with high potential to be senior leaders of the future.



## 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. Cleveland Fire Brigade is a combined FRA.

### Metropolitan FRA

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

### Combined FRA

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

### County FRA

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

### Unitary authorities

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

### London

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

### Mayoral Combined Authority

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

## **Police, fire and crime commissioner FRA**

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

## **Isles of Scilly**

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

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