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Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services

Chief fire officers
Chairs of fire and rescue authorities
Police, fire and crime commissioners
Police and crime commissioners
Lead fire authority members
Locally elected mayors
Other FRS interested parties

28 February 2019

Dear Colleague

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE INSPECTIONS UPDATE

Thank you to tranche 2 services for their co-operation during the inspection process. We are currently analysing the evidence and drafting the service reports, which we will share with services in late-April for fact checking. These reports - alongside a national summary report – will be published in early summer. This letter provides an update on other aspects of the fire and rescue service (FRS) inspection programme.

Tranche three fieldwork

2. The inspection timetable for tranche three is now finalised and dates are set out in the table at Annex A. I would like to thank service liaison officers (SLO) for co-ordinating the document and data returns and for working with us to identify the most appropriate inspection dates for services. We have worked to accommodate preferences as far as possible. Please contact your respective chief of staff (COS) in the first instance if you have any questions about the timing for tranche three activity.

Strategic briefing

3. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you about strategic briefings. The strategic briefing is where the chief fire officer and their team sets out to their HMI and supporting team how their service operates and the challenges it faces, future plans, areas of good practice and areas identified as requiring improvement. The briefing should take place around two weeks in advance of the fieldwork week, last no more than three hours and be based on the service's self-assessment. Each service's SLL will provide additional guidance on how to prepare for the strategic briefing.

4. For services in tranche 3, your SLL will liaise with your SLO to arrange a date for the strategic briefing. The table at Annex A sets out the proposed date when your respective HMI is available. We will provide the key lines of enquiry to be discussed during the strategic briefing two weeks before the strategic briefing.

Hot debrief

5. Following feedback from our staff after the first tranche of inspections, we made changes to our inspection timetable and moved the hot debrief to take place the week after fieldwork. We believe this change has worked well for both our staff and for services. I have therefore decided to keep the timetable in the same format for tranche three. As a brief reminder, we use the hot debrief to provide an early summary of our findings to the chief fire officer and chair of the authority (or equivalent). Your SLL will liaise with your SLO to find a suitable time to hold the hot debrief for your inspection.

Staff survey

6. We are in the process of finalising the results of the HMICFRS staff survey results for tranche 1 and tranche 2 services. We will share these with services in a way that ensures the anonymity of respondents is protected. The staff survey for tranche 3 will be circulated to tranche 3 services for completion w/c 4 March 2019. We would be very grateful for any help you can provide in promoting the staff survey, as the higher the response rate, the more useful the results will be to you.

Power BI

7. We are pleased to let you know that Microsoft introduced the functionality to export Power Bi dashboards to PowerPoint or PDF (with your selected filters applied) last week. This means that you can download a copy of the report with a service selected from the dropdown menus. Follow the link here for instructions on how to do this.

8. We are aware that many of you have wanted to have a printable version of the dashboards and we hope that this new functionality will be beneficial to you. However, we would also like to make sure that you are fully aware of the limitations associated with this. Our dashboards are **live**. If we have a significant update in data we will make sure we tell you, but the risk of turning the dashboards into a static document is that you will miss these changes. Therefore, we encourage you to still use the dashboards as a live online document where possible, and to think about how you can get the best out of this on inspection. We are happy to help you explore some of the functionality described above, so please get in touch with the analyst team at FRSInspectionData@hmicfrs.gov.uk if you would like some help.

Power BI additional licences

9. Earlier this month, we wrote to services as we have now secured an additional Power BI licence for each service. If you haven't already requested the additional login, you can do this by emailing FRSInspectionData@hmicfrs.gov.uk with an email address for a secondary PowerBI SPOC. This person will be provided with details of a new PowerBI login and password.

Conference commitments

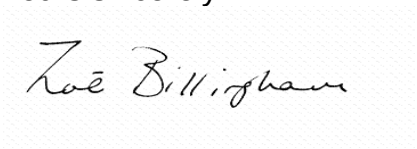
10. Thank you to all those who provided feedback following our recent chiefs and chairs conference in London. Feedback was extremely positive, with everyone who responded saying they would like us to arrange similar events in the future. We received some useful suggestions for how the agenda could be improved, including facilitating more in-depth discussions on emerging themes and notable practice. We will arrange a follow-up conference in September.

10. During the conference we outlined our early thinking about how we could inspect corporate governance and our intention to monitor how services are responding to inspection. Work to develop both these aspects continues. I will provide a further update in due course and look forward to getting your views on these proposals as they go out for consultation.

11. If you require any further information about the inspection programme then please do not hesitate to contact either me or Laura Gibb via (LauraAlice.Gibb@hmicfrs.gov.uk) or her successor Alex Hill from 4 March via (alex.hill31@homeoffice.gov.uk).

Thank you again for your continued support of our inspection programme.

Yours sincerely



Zoë Billingham
HM Inspector of Constabulary
HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services

Annex A

FRS	Discovery	Strategic briefing (proposed)*	Fieldwork	Hot debrief (proposed)
North Yorkshire (NYF)	11/12 &15/16 Apr	15 May	w/c 3 Jun	w/c 10 Jun
Gloucestershire (GLF)	w/c 8 Apr	14 or 16 May	w/c 3 Jun	w/c 10 Jun
West Yorkshire (WYF)	w/c 1 Apr	30 May	w/c 10 Jun	w/c 17 Jun
East Sussex (ESF)	w/c 22 Apr	29, 30 or 31 May	w/c 10 Jun	w/c 17 Jun
Cumbria (CUF)	w/c 22 Apr	29 May	w/c 17 Jun	w/c 24 Jun
Derbyshire (DRF)	w/c 22 Apr	4 or 6 June	w/c 17 Jun	w/c 24 Jun
Devon and Somerset (DSF)	w/c 29 Apr	11 June	w/c 24 Jun	w/c 1 Jul
Buckinghamshire (BUF)	w/c 29 Apr	10 or 12 June	w/c 24 Jun	w/c 1 Jul
Suffolk (SKF)	w/c 6 May	26 June	w/c 1 Jul	w/c 8 Jul
Essex (EXF)	w/c 29 Apr	24 June	w/c 1 Jul	w/c 8 Jul
Cleveland (CLF)	w/c 13 May	19 June	w/c 8 Jul	w/c 15 Jul
South Yorkshire (SYF)	w/c 22 Apr	14 May	w/c 15 Jul	w/c 22 Jul
Durham and Darlington (DDF)	w/c 13 May	27 June	w/c 15 Jul	w/c 22 Jul
Staffordshire (SFF)	w/c 3 June	9, 10 or 11 July	w/c 22 Jul	w/c 29 Jul
London (LOF)	w/c 6 and 27 May	8, 9 or 10 July	w/c 22 Jul (two weeks)	w/c 5th Aug

* Note strategic briefing dates for Northern region are still to be confirmed. SLL will liaise with SLO once HMI availability is known.