

# PFCC and FRS Inspection response record

Version:

<b>FRS</b>	Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service
<b>Police Fire and Crime Commissioner</b>	Ben Adams
<b>Chief Fire Officer</b>	Rob Barber
<b>Title of inspection</b>	<a href="#">Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22 – Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service</a>
<b>Date of HMIC Publication</b>	27/07/2022
<b>Inspectorate</b>	 <p>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire &amp; Rescue Services</p>
<b>Summary of inspection</b>	<p>The service is good at how it identifies risks in its communities and puts appropriate measures in place to mitigate those risks. And it is good at how it identifies those people in its communities who are most at risk from fire and works with its partners to good effect to reduce this risk. The service also has good financial management and collaboration arrangements in place. But there are some behaviours in the service which are not in line with the service's values which is having a detrimental effect on staff. And the service isn't sufficiently prioritising work to improve inclusion and diversity.</p> <p>Response standards and the availability of its fire engines have got worse and the service isn't sure it has identified all its high-risk premises. The service also doesn't use its workforce in the most efficient way to make sure that work is appropriately directed to the risks and priorities identified in the integrated risk management plan (IRMP).</p> <p>Overall, while there are some good aspects of the performance of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, there are a number of areas where performance has declined since the last inspection and I expect to see progress made against these. We will continue to monitor progress through our usual monitoring arrangements.</p>
<b>Grade</b>	Good and Requires Improvement
<b>Recommendations</b>	
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<p><b><u>Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Preventing fires and other risks</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Protecting the public through fire regulation</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Responding to fires and other emergencies</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Making best use of resources</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future</u></b></p>

Promoting the right values and culture  
Getting the right people with the right skills  
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity  
Managing performance and developing leaders

## Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's initial response

The Staffordshire Commissioner's Office has welcomed this report His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), which builds on the previous two inspections and confirms that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) continues to be good at keeping people safe and secure.

Staffordshire FRS was found to be good at providing an effective service to the public, including understanding risk and preventing fires and other risks, responding to other emergencies and national risks. SFRS requires improvement in protecting the public through fire regulation, and there has been some deterioration in the timeliness of the service's response to fires.

The Inspectors rated Staffordshire FRS 'Good' at getting the right people with the right skills, managing performance and developing leaders as well as how they look after the health, safety and wellbeing of their staff.

HMICFRS found the service to have good financial management arrangements in place so it can understand how it spends its money and it has good plans in place for future reductions in its funding. It collaborates well with the police which means it can be more efficient in the way it uses its fleet and buildings. However, the FRS requires improvement in the technology it uses to help staff to do their jobs effectively and use its workforce in the most productive way.

Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue and Crime, Ben Adams said: 'This HMICFRS report identifies areas for improvement which are fully supported in the priorities within my Fire & Rescue Plan. I am committed to supporting the FRS in making the improvements necessary to ensure Staffordshire FRS is a flexible and responsive service fit for tomorrow, able to protect people and places and help people most at risk stay safe.'

Overall, while there are some good aspects of the performance of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, there are a number of areas where performance has declined since the last inspection and I expect to see progress made against these. We will continue to monitor progress through our usual monitoring arrangements.

## Chief Fire Officer response

The inspection focused on our effectiveness, efficiency and our people. It looked at how effective and efficient we are at keeping people safe from fire and other risks and how well we look after our people.

The report acknowledged that we are 'Good' at being effective in understanding and preventing fires and other risks and responding to major and multi-agency incidents. Inspectors said we are 'Good' at identifying people in our communities who are most at risk from fire and we work with our partners to reduce this risk. The inspection also noted how we have responded positively and proactively to learning from the Grenfell Tower tragedy and have improved the safety of residents in Staffordshire who live in high-rise buildings through our community sprinkler scheme.

HMICFRS rated us 'Good' in how we make the service affordable now and in the future. We continuously look for ways to improve our effectiveness and efficiency and in doing so we need to make sure that we make best use of new technologies to transform the way we provide our services.

The Inspectors rated us 'Good' at getting the right people with the right skills, managing performance and developing leaders as well as how we look after the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.

However, there were a number of areas in which HMICFRS rated us as 'Requires Improvement'. These include, protecting the public through fire regulation, responding to fire and other emergencies, making the best use of resources, promoting the right values and culture, ensuring fairness, and promoting diversity.

Naturally, we are disappointed in some of the ratings we have received in the report and I would like to reassure you that I take these concerns very seriously and work is already well underway to address these areas. For example, we have identified that the difficulties we have faced in recruiting on-call firefighters has resulted in our availability not being as high as we would want it to be. We are focussing on promoting our recruitment campaign in our communities as a priority. We are also looking to make our response standards publicly available.

The significant change in our workforce numbers is predominantly due to support staff moving over to Staffordshire Police as part of collaboration. We have put new policies in place to address the issues around overtime that were highlighted in the report.

We take concerns around unacceptable behaviour very seriously and this is something we have been addressing by encouraging anyone with concerns to come forward to us and report any matters of concern. We have also adopted a more robust approach to dealing with instances of inappropriate behaviours.

We are committed to improving diversity within our workforce and have recently appointed a dedicated Positive Action co-ordinator to support us in this area, something that we are also focussing on in our recruitment campaign.

It is fair to say that the fire and rescue sector as a whole has been subject to growing criticism from the Inspectorate during this round of inspections. Whilst the Inspectorate identified some encouraging improvements and acknowledged that the sector generally continues to be well prepared to respond to both routine and major incidents, it has said that far more needs to be done across the sector as a whole to reduce risks to public safety.

The Inspectorate has issued six new causes of concern to other services, relating to fire prevention, culture and values and, and fairness and diversity. Whilst we are in a fortunate position, having not received any causes of concern, it is important that we reflect and learn from the experience of other services, taking the opportunity to help us identify and make improvements, in order to make things better for our employees and our local communities.

I would like to formally acknowledge everyone who contributed to this inspection. Our staff took time out of already busy schedules to take part in the inspection and the Inspectors complimented us on the positive and constructive way everyone engaged with them during the inspection process.

I have established a new performance management regime within the executive team and I scrutinise all areas of performance monthly through this new forum. I will be monitoring our performance and responses to the areas identified in the report as 'Requiring Improvement', but I know our staff are continuing to work hard to help us make these changes and I thank them for their ongoing commitment and dedication to the organisation.

As the report highlighted, we already have the right people with the right skills in the right jobs to enable us to address these areas. With that, I am confident we will be able to achieve these results, which I know will have a positive impact on the way we continue to work together to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Staffordshire.

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### **Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's overall comments**

Staffordshire Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime Commissioner said, "With regard to the areas for improvement highlighted in the report, I am satisfied that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has the necessary plans in place to make the required improvements and I will continue to monitor progress.

"As Commissioner I will continue hold the Chief Fire Officer to account, through the existing governance arrangements and public performance meetings. I am confident that FARS will continue to work hard to consistently improve and deliver the best possible service to the communities of Staffordshire."