

Fire & Rescue Service

Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service



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About this inspection

This is the first time that HMICFRS has inspected fire and rescue services across England. Our focus is on the service they provide to the public, and the way they use the resources available. The inspection assesses how effectively and efficiently Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service prevents, protects the public against and responds to fires and other emergencies. We also assess how well it looks after the people who work for the service.

In carrying out our inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England, we answer three main questions:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

This report sets out our inspection findings. After taking all the evidence into account, we apply a graded judgment for each of the three questions.

What inspection judgments mean

Our categories of graded judgment are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Good is our 'expected' graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards.

If the service exceeds what we expect for good, we will judge it as **outstanding**.

If we find shortcomings in the service, we will judge it as **requires improvement**.

If we find serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, we will judge it as **inadequate**.

Service in numbers



Public perceptions

Tyne and Wear

England

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

89%

86%



Response

Tyne and Wear

England

Incidents attended per 1,000 population
12 months to 30 September 2018

15.2

10.5

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

23.1

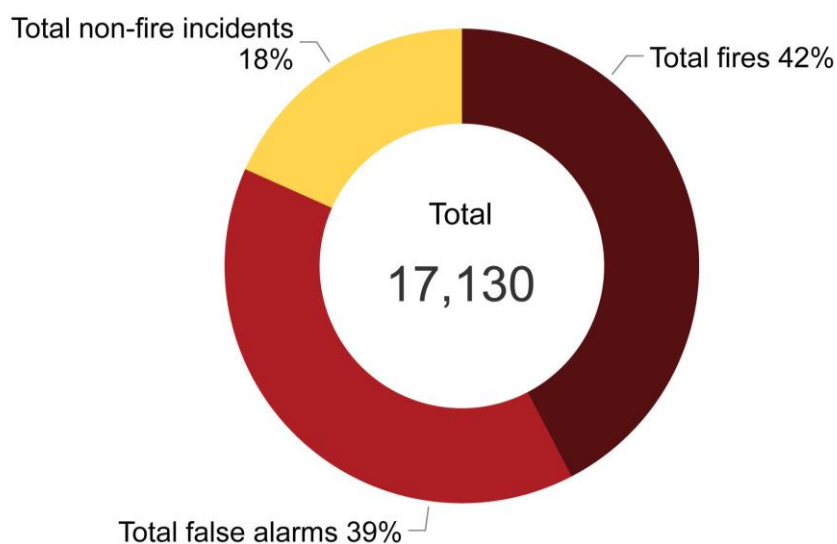
10.4

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

6.4

3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 30 September 2018





Cost

Tyne and Wear

England

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

£27.60

£22.38



Workforce

Tyne and Wear

England

Number of firefighters per 1,000 population
As at 31 March 2018

0.5

0.6

Five-year change in workforce
As at 31 March 2013 compared with 31 March 2018

-22%

-14%

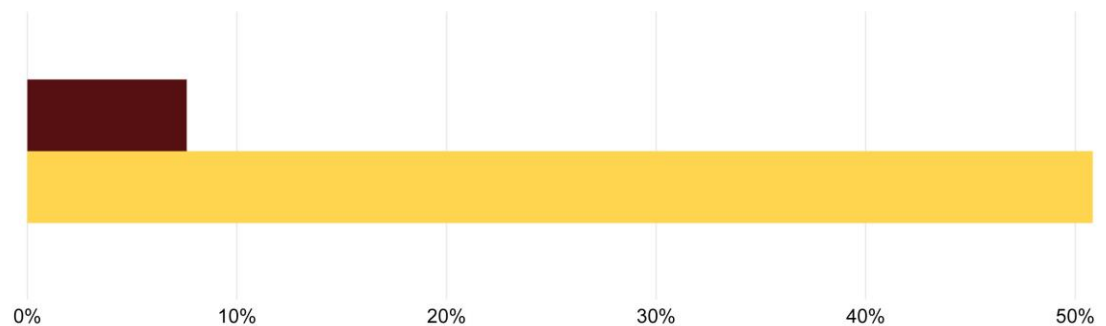
Percentage of wholetime firefighters
As at 31 March 2018

94%

70%

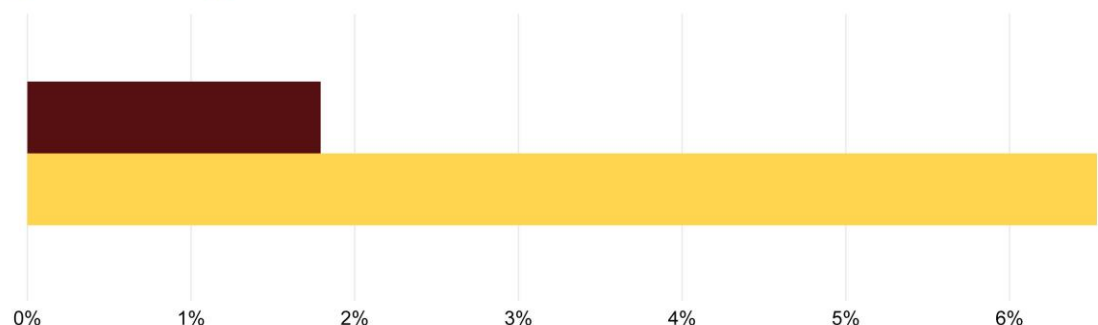
Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● 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



Requires improvement

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

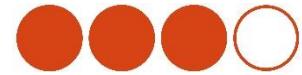
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future



Requires improvement

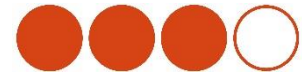


People



Good

Promoting the right values and culture



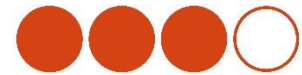
Good

Getting the right people with the right skills



Requires improvement

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Good

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Overall summary of inspection findings

We are pleased with the performance of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) in keeping people safe and secure. But it needs to improve in some areas to give a consistently good service.

We judged that it is an effective service. It is good at:

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

But the service requires improvement to its prevention work.

It provides an efficient service and is good at using its resources. But it requires improvement at providing an affordable service.

Tyne and Wear FRS is good at looking after its people. It is good at promoting the right values and culture and at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. But it requires improvement at getting the right people with the right skills and at managing performance and developing leaders.

Overall, we commend Tyne and Wear FRS 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

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. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

The service understands local and community risk. It has consulted widely on its [integrated risk management plan](#) (IRMP) and its priorities. It communicates risk information well to its staff. However, plans we sampled for site-specific inspections lack vital information.

The service protects the public through fire regulation effectively. It manages its inspection programme well and uses its full range of enforcement powers. It carries out joint inspections with other agencies, and is proactive with local businesses to support fire safety awareness and compliance.

The service's response to fires is good, with one of the fastest response times in the country. Its use of targeted response vehicles (TRVs) is an effective use of resources. However, it needs to make sure it learns well from incidents, and that all commanders are properly trained to lead incidents.

The service is a partner in the [local resilience forum](#) (LRF) and routinely tests its response plans.

The service needs to be better at preventing fires. It needs to make sure its [safe and well visits](#) target those most at risk. And it needs to better evaluate its prevention work so it fully understands the benefits of this work and whether it is successful.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Good

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service 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 service should ensure it gathers and records relevant and accurate premises 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 service's performance in this area.

Understanding local and community risk

The service has a good understanding of its local and community risk. Its strategic community safety plan incorporates its four-year IRMP.

The service's community risk profile draws on a range of data sources. This profile enables the service to understand the diverse nature of its community, and to identify, prioritise and plan for current and future risk. The service uses computer modelling in a range of ways, such as reviewing how it responds to incidents, choosing the best location for a fire station and planning how to best respond to a large-scale incident.

The service looks ahead to understand how community risk and demand may change: for example, by reviewing predicted growth and development in the area. The service has good knowledge of the major incident risks in its community risk register, and manages this register on the LRF's behalf.

The service knows its communities well and consults them. Recently, the service received more than 3,100 responses to a consultation survey, and acted on the feedback to shape its final proposals. The service's community advocates speak several languages, helping them to connect with diverse and hard-to-reach communities.

In 2018, the service reviewed its IRMP to take account of both changes within the organisation and outside factors. This included embedding lessons from significant incidents that had taken place in other parts of the country and making sure its IRMP complied with revisions the government made to the [Fire and Rescue National Framework](#) for England.

To fulfil its IRMP priorities, the service has a number of business plans. This ensures the service's work is aligned to its IRMP and that it is providing what it has promised the public.

Having an effective risk management plan

As well as its IRMP, the service has three core strategies:

- A community safety strategy.
- An organisational development strategy.
- A medium-term financial strategy.

These link to the service's IRMP objectives and state specific outcomes to be achieved.

The service has invested time to make sure its staff are aware of the service's priorities. For example, it has run staff workshops to help each staff member understand their own role in meeting organisational objectives. Each department has a 'plan on a page'. This is a quick guide to a department's aims and how they relate to the service's strategic objectives. We found that, while staff in central departments have a good knowledge and understanding of their aims, staff working in fire stations aren't as clear about how their role supports the service's plan.

Maintaining risk information

The service shares risk information in several ways, from giving out handover briefs to orally briefing teams at the start of shifts. The service also emails staff about risk-critical information. However, we couldn't be sure from the records we saw whether staff had read those emails.

Firefighters access risk information on the [mobile data terminals](#) (MDTs) in fire engines. We observed firefighters do this quickly and effectively, and they could explain to us how the information would help them handle an incident.

Staff share risk information well between themselves. For example, when staff carry out [home fire safety checks](#) (HFSCs), they add identified risks (such as hoarding) to the information held on MDTs.

The service gathers information about certain buildings which may pose a risk. This includes identifying what potential risks may be and creating response plans as required. However, plans we sampled lacked vital information such as the use of the building and the description of hazards, and the process for approving both new and reviewed plans wasn't effective.

The service has systems in place for managing temporary risks. It plans for both annual events (such as the Great North Run and Sunderland Airshow) and one-off events (such as pop concerts). For such risks, the service produces plans for crews to use in the event of an emergency.

Officers use safety advisory groups to exchange information with other emergency services.

Preventing fires and other risks



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should make sure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk of fire.
- The service should make sure staff carry out prevention work competently, including appropriate record keeping.
- The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.

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

Prevention strategy

The service aims to prevent fires in the home, reduce risk and save lives. Home fire safety checks (HFSCs) are a main component of the service's safety strategy.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 26,134 HFSCs. Visits involved fitting working smoke alarms, and advising on social welfare and health prevention, as well as slips, trips and falls, identifying potential fire risks and taking action to reduce fire risks.

In the past ten years, the service has seen a reduction of 57 percent in the number of dwelling fires. This compares with a reduction of 25 percent nationally.

The service uses several data sources, including [Exeter data](#), to identify people who are at greater risk of fire at home. Crews use a prioritised list of addresses to carry out HFSCs. The service aims for 80 percent of all visits to stem from this approach.

The service also receives HFSC referrals from partner organisations. However, the referrals received contain no information about potential risk. As a result, the service can't assess risk and prioritise resources accurately. The service could also look at prioritising its HFSCs according to those at high risk.

We also found that HFSC files often lacked detail, didn't accurately record identified risks and didn't state the advice given or actions taken. Sometimes, it wasn't clear whether the correct follow-up action had been taken. The service should look at improving this, as well as ensuring quality assurance. As is common with most services, we found evaluation was limited. The service should enhance its evaluations of its prevention activities to make sure it is meeting the service's stated aims.

Promoting community safety

The service works with its partner organisations on a range of prevention activities. One example is the SafetyWorks! centre, where every year approximately 14,000 young people and vulnerable adults learn safety and life skills. We found the centre was last fully evaluated in 2010. While there is a strategic intent to support this initiative, its future strategy is unclear. The service should make sure it has a plan to put the centre to best use. It also needs to be clearer about partner organisations' future commitment.

In 2012, the service and several partner organisations (local authorities, social housing providers and housing associations) launched a domestic sprinkler partnership. The aim was to protect people deemed to be at high risk of a fire at home. To date, more than 1,200 sprinklers have been installed. In 2017, an independent evaluation reported that this project had potentially saved lives and prevented serious fire injuries.

The service's water safety work includes taking part in the national 'Be Water Aware' campaign. The service also launched the 'throw bag' campaign. Supported by RNLI, this campaign trains staff in pubs on Newcastle's quayside to use lifesaving throw bags. Since its launch in July 2018, the campaign has resulted in several rescues and has potentially saved lives.

We found that operational staff have a good knowledge of [safeguarding](#) practices. Staff we spoke to have completed annual online training, and were confident about identifying [vulnerable people](#) and making safeguarding referrals.

The service has high levels of deliberate fires attended. In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, the number of deliberate fires attended by the service was 5,605. This is one of the highest levels in the country per 1,000 population.

The service uses data to understand where arson has, and is likely to, occur. It produces campaigns and works with the local authority and police to identify deliberate fire setting trends. Reports are produced and shared with partners in relation to deliberate fire setting activity. We saw examples of arson reduction activity such as [watches](#) patrolling arson hotspots. Fire crews report to the council possible items which may attract arson, such as derelict buildings and cars. These are then removed or boarded up before they are set alight. Recent changes to schools' education packages have also been made to give arson reduction messages to Years 6–8 children.

Road safety

The service's community safety strategy cites the importance of road safety campaigns. However, the service doesn't prioritise road safety, but rather carries out these activities in an ad hoc way. The service told us it has chosen to prioritise the prevention of life-risk incidents, so most of its central prevention resources are focused on home safety.

As a result, the service's road safety work lacks central vision and co-ordination. It focuses on engagement after incidents rather than education. The service needs to satisfy itself as to the quality and effectiveness of its road safety work.

That said, in the 12 months to 31 March 2018, the service attended 325 road traffic collisions (RTCs). This is a reduction of 6 percent compared with the previous year and the lowest number of RTC incidents the service has attended since the Home Office started recording these figures in 2009.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Good

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in buildings and, when necessary, require building owners to comply with fire safety legislation. Each service decides how many assessments it does each year. But it must have a locally determined, risk-based inspection programme for enforcing the legislation.

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

Risk-based approach

The service has a risk-based inspection programme, which it reviews annually. It also has the ability to deal with fire safety concerns day and night.

The service's database lists 31,100 premises. Of these, the service inspects around 2,000 buildings annually. Currently, these buildings are inspected between every six months and three years.

In between formal inspections, crews visit premises to check whether basic fire safety measures are in place. This is a good use of resources, allowing inspectors to focus on highest-risk inspections.

Crews also carry out approximately 2,500 operational health checks annually to see whether basic fire precautions are in place in buildings deemed to be of lower risk.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 6 fire safety audits per 100 known premises (which equates to 1,976 audits). This is higher than the England rate of 3 (per 100 known premises) over the same period. In the same period, the service audited 38 percent of the 460 high-risk premises it had identified.

The service manages building consultations well. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, it received 511 building regulation consultations and responded to 438 (85.7 percent) within the required time frame.

Four times a year, the service runs development days, which include staff from neighbouring fire and rescue services. It also reviews case files four times a year for quality assurance purposes.

The department is keen to learn and improve. After a fire involving an 'escape room' overseas, the service identified and inspected similar properties in its area. This led to a prohibition for a fire safety breach.

The service also gathers feedback on its protection work. In the year to March 2018, the service received 137 completed surveys from the premises it had inspected. Of those, 97 percent agreed that an audit had helped make their premises safer.

Enforcement

The service wants businesses to be fire safety-compliant. If necessary, it enforces compliance and prosecutes non-complying businesses.

The service uses the full range of its enforcement powers. In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, it issued 635 informal notifications (the lowest level of action) and brought two prosecutions (the highest level of enforcement). Both prosecutions were successful.

Inspectors receive three days' legal training each year, so staff are able to prosecute cases if considered necessary. A full case review follows any prosecution to identify potential learning. The service produces and shares case studies with departmental staff, the wider officer group and partner organisations.

The service works well with other agencies to carry out joint enforcement (for example, with Trading Standards and the local authority) and to share risk information.

Working with others

The service is working hard to reduce false alarms. Between 8.00am and 8.00pm daily, control room staff use their discretion to decide whether to send a crew in response to a call from a building with an automatic fire alarm. We noted that control room staff more readily challenged calls that were alerted by automatic fire alarms.

In the year to 30 September 2018, 39 percent of incidents that the service attended were false alarms. This compared with a rate of 40 percent throughout England.

Over a ten-year period, the number of false alarms the service attended decreased by 33 percent (from 9,388 in the year ending 31 March 2007 to 6,315 in the year ending 31 March 2017). However, this incident type is now increasing. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service attended 6,730 false alarms.

The service has eight [primary authority schemes](#). These schemes seek to provide businesses with consistent regulation advice. The schemes are managed by a dedicated member of staff.

Since the Grenfell Tower fire, the service has conducted 190 audits of local high-rise buildings and hospitals. Prevention staff carried out HFSCs in more than 12,000 flats. The service also made compliance checks on high-rise buildings and advised residents on fire safety.

The service is working on a pilot with the Health and Safety Executive to enable regional regulatory bodies to better share information and intelligence about premises and flag up any areas of concern. We look forward to seeing the outcome of this work.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure that operational commanders are appropriately trained to perform this role effectively.
- The service should assure itself that it has the appropriate procedures in place to record key incident ground decisions and that this process is well understood by staff.
- The service should ensure it has an effective system to gather and share operational learning.

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

Managing assets and resources

The service understands its response profile well. It has reviewed its fire cover model – namely, the number of firefighters it has on duty at different times – several times in recent years. It did this most recently in 2017 alongside a review of its IRMP. The service's use of computer modelling allows it to calculate response times so it can best meet risk and demand.

The service shares a [fire control](#) system with Northumberland FRS. This has improved some areas of joint working and the two control rooms can answer each other's calls if necessary or if the other site is unavailable.

Fire control receives and responds to 999 calls. The service has performance targets for call handling and reviews performance as well as quality. Since 2015, call handling times for [primary fires](#) have improved annually. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service's average call handling time for primary fires was 71 seconds.

Control operators can change the number of fire engines and firefighters attending an incident based on the information they receive. Fire engines also have GPS tracking, which allows control to dispatch the most appropriate response.

All but one of the service's fire stations are [wholetime](#) – namely, they have a full-time firefighter presence. The service is having difficulties ensuring appropriate availability of its sole on-call station. This is mainly because there aren't always enough firefighters available to appropriately crew the fire engine. Service data reported in

2018 that the fire engine at this station was unavailable for 62 percent of the year. During this time, fire engines from other stations, or from the neighbouring fire service, attended most incidents in this area. This situation was not receiving sufficient senior management attention.

The service has invested in its operational fleet, and in equipment, to meet the needs of its IRMP. It is equipped to deal with both local and national incidents.

Operational staff were complimentary about the service's investments, and spoke well about the service's training centre.

Response

The service has 24 fire engines, based from 17 fire stations. Of these stations, 16 are staffed wholetime. The service also has two further fire engines, based at its training centre, that can be used to support operational incidents if required.

In the year to 30 September 2018, the service attended 15.2 incidents per 1,000 population, compared with the England rate of 10.5.

The service has reduced the number of firefighters who ride on a fire engine. It has also reviewed the number and type of response it gives to different incidents.

The service has one of the fastest response times to primary fires, compared with other services operating in mainly urban areas. In the year to 31 March 2018, the average response time to primary fires was 6 minutes and 49 seconds. In 2019, the service will introduce a formal response standard.

The service is innovative in meeting predicted risk and demand. Its use of TRVs is an effective use of resources.

By March 2021, the service aims to adopt all areas of [national operational guidance](#) (NOG). NOG is already in practice for command and breathing apparatus.

Staff are good at using MDTs to access risk information. However, despite this, staff told us MDTs are proving frustrating to use. We heard that messages often disappear from the screen, and messages passed to crews via MDTs don't always cover incidents accurately.

We found that the service only uses formal decision logging at larger incidents when the command unit is present. While the service has guidance in sending messages via radio, staff appeared unaware of this. Firefighters were confident about identifying safeguarding issues and knew how to report concerns.

Command

Training for commanders was inconsistent at all levels across the organisation. For example, managers' training records – stating whether they are competent to command – either weren't completed or were inaccurate. Also, some supervisory level commanders hadn't completed revalidation assessments within the stated time frame. The service should make sure commanders have the training they need, and are competent to safely and effectively command operational incidents.

Keeping the public informed

The service informs the public about incidents partly through its website, but mostly through social media channels. Fire control staff we spoke to could show us what training they had received and they were also confident about what procedures to follow.

Evaluating operational performance

The service has a debrief process to gather feedback after an exercise or incident. We are satisfied that staff understood this process. The service records learning from its debriefs on its assurance database. But the service hasn't used this to effectively communicate or promote learning with staff. Neither operational staff nor fire control staff could give examples of any learning that had been shared after incidents or exercises.

The service seeks to learn from significant incidents that occur in other services. For example, it reviewed its procedures in light of the Manchester Arena attack. This resulted in the service enhancing its capabilities through additional equipment to be better prepared for such an incident.

The service shares its learning within the fire sector through the [national operational learning](#) process. It does the same with other emergency services through the joint operational learning process. This process is well managed.

Responding to national risks



Good

All fire and rescue services must be able to respond effectively to multi-agency and cross-border incidents. This means working with other fire and rescue services (known as intraoperability) and emergency services (known as interoperability).

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

Preparedness

The service is prepared for a range of potential incidents. It has plans to maintain fire cover at certain main locations, and it can support large or specialist incidents in other counties. It has helped at wildfires, building collapses, explosions and large-scale flooding in other parts of the country.

The service has tactical plans to help the command team at larger incidents. However, these plans aren't tailored to the incident and so the service should make sure these plans are easy to use.

On behalf of the local resilience forum (LRF), the service creates and manages plans for [Control of Major Accident Hazards \(COMAH\) sites](#) in Northumbria. It also trains partner organisations and co-ordinates exercise plans for these sites.

Fire control staff are confident asking for support through the [national co-ordination centre](#).

Working with other services

The service has agreements in place with two neighbouring fire and rescue services to support each other if necessary.

However, according to our staff survey, which we carried out as part of our inspection to get the views of FRS staff on their service, 52 percent of the 122 firefighters or specialist support staff who responded said the service doesn't regularly train or hold exercises with neighbouring fire and rescue services. Please see Annex A for more details.

Recently, the service uploaded risk information about premises in a neighbouring fire service to its MDTs. While this is welcome, staff had not been informed of the development. The service should make sure staff who may need risk information are aware of and able to access it.

Working with other agencies

The service is a lead partner within Northumbria's LRF and considered by one partner agency to be the driving force. It takes the lead for COMAH preparedness, including co-ordinating visits and exercises.

The service is involved in training partner organisations and offers its training centre and command suite for training and exercising.

The service has taken part in, and hosted, several large-scale, multi-agency exercises. These included a simulated plane crash and a simulated terrorist attack at a shopping centre. Debrief reports helped the service learn from these exercises.

Tyne and Wear FRS has an operational marauding terrorist firearms attack (MTFA) capability. Firefighters from three fire stations have been trained to be able to attend a MTFA incident. The service has carried out a number of exercises to test this capability. However, at the time of our inspection, the voluntary participation of firefighters was withdrawn pending trade union pay negotiations. In response, the service formed a resilience team of officers to provide this capability. While some testing of arrangements had taken place, we found this was limited. The service should assure itself of the resilience of its current MTFA arrangement.

Efficiency



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



Good

Summary

An efficient fire and rescue service will manage its budget and spend money properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to its risk. It should try to keep costs down without compromising public safety. Future budgets should be based on robust and realistic assumptions. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

Tyne and Wear FRS is good at making the best of its resources. But it needs to improve how it makes itself affordable, both now and in the future. Crucially, the service needs to have financial plans approved by the [fire authority](#) to meet anticipated budget shortfalls over the next three years. It also needs to evaluate the changes it intends to make about how it is organised.

The service has a good track record in reducing spending. Its medium-term plans are based on prudent assumptions, but it now needs to plan to meet future budget cuts.

The service has already made difficult decisions about its workforce. Since 2010, the service has reduced its full time equivalent (FTE) total firefighters by 31 percent and support staff (FTE) by 38 percent.

Despite these large reductions, the service remains productive, although the service would benefit from performance management and quality assurance in some areas.

The service intends to pursue opportunities for further collaboration. It has already co-located with the police service at some fire stations. The service also has business continuity plans in place. While it reviews these plans, it also needs to test them.

Making best use of resources



Good

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service is good at making best use of resources. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has a testing and exercise programme for its business continuity arrangements.

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

How plans support objectives

The service has a good grasp of the financial challenges it faces. In recent years, it has shown a good track record in reducing its spending to match available funding. It reduced its annual spending from £59.4m in 2010/11 to £48.1m by 2018/19. This was done partly through structural changes and introducing new ways of working. Two years ago, the service carried out a comprehensive organisational management review which ultimately saved £1.6m.

We consider the service's medium-term financial plan to be sound. It makes prudent assumptions about future income and expenditure.

The service has introduced new shift systems and reduced the number of firefighters who crew fire engines. Since 31 March 2010, it has reduced operational firefighter FTE numbers from 880 to 611, a reduction of 31 percent. The service has worked hard to reduce back office costs. Since 31 March 2010, support staff FTE numbers have been reduced from 284 to 177, a reduction of 38 percent.

Due to budget reductions, the service froze recruitment of firefighter roles between 2010 and 2018. Staff work overtime to fill operational staffing gaps. In the nine months to 31 December 2018, overtime costs for [wholetime staff](#) were £549,300. This is a reduction from £931,400 in the previous financial year. The service plans to further monitor this spending.

Although the service has reduced the number of people in positions of temporary promotion, this figure remains high. As at 31 December 2018, 61 staff were on temporary promotion. This is a reduction compared with 31 March 2017, when the number was 141.

In the year to 31 March 2018, the cost of a firefighter per head of the population was £27.60. This compares with the England rate of £22.38 over the same period. Many factors influence this cost, such as the higher proportion of wholetime staff in a metropolitan service such as Tyne and Wear.

Despite staffing reductions, the service remains on course to meet its IRMP priorities. It also remains productive, demonstrated in the year to 31 March 2018 when it carried out a higher rate of HFSCs and fire safety audits than the England rate.

Productivity and ways of working

The service has thoroughly reviewed how it works. It has made important structural changes to its workforce model to make it more efficient. We saw a range of flexible working arrangements designed to improve efficiency and effectiveness. We are impressed by the way the service encourages non-uniformed staff to switch to uniformed roles, which allows it to make the best use of its employees.

The service has become more commercially aware, and is now generating income when other organisations use its assets. It has significantly increased its rental income and full recharging – two measures which add to the revenue budget.

We found good evidence of the service working with others to achieve more with less. For example, it used some joint funding from partner organisations to fund the installation of domestic sprinklers which are intended for properties deemed to be at highest risk of fire.

Collaboration

The service wants to collaborate further as a way of improving efficiency and cutting the costs of providing services in its medium-term financial plan.

The service actively explores collaborative opportunities. It is part of a joint strategic collaboration committee to promote closer work with the police and other partner agencies. It also has a dedicated IRMP collaboration working group.

We saw several examples of joint working arrangements, as well as examples of the service working with partner agencies. The service is also exploring opportunities to collaborate with neighbouring fire services in a bid to share resources and work more closely together.

The service evaluates its collaborative arrangements both through case studies and, periodically, reports to senior management meetings.

While we saw some good examples of the service working more closely with partner agencies, we believe it has yet to realise the full potential benefits of collaboration.

Continuity arrangements

The service has business continuity plans in place covering foreseeable interruptions. Departmental plans are aligned to risk registers. The administering of plans is well managed, and the plans we saw had been reviewed by their due date. But we found little evidence that the service tests its plans regularly. This means it can't be confident that its arrangements are robust enough to deal with service interruptions. The service should make sure it has a regular testing programme for its continuity plans, particularly for high-risk areas.

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



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to secure an affordable way of managing the risk of fire and other risks, now and in the future.

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

Improving value for money

We noted a gap between expenditure and income every year in the service's current medium-term financial plan. This shortfall is due to rise to £3.6m by 2021/22.

The service did plan to save more than £3m by 2021/22. However, in February 2019, the fire and rescue authority declined to approve the service's plans in full. It agreed only to a short-term proposal achieving savings of £680,000 in 2019/20, rising to £710,000 by 2021/22.

The proposed savings of £680,000 won't be enough to meet the anticipated shortfall of £841,000.

With no further agreed savings plans in place, the service's future financial outlook is uncertain. In 2020/21, the expected gap will reach almost £1m. The only way to balance the budget will be to use money held in [reserves](#), which is not sustainable. Moreover, by 2021/22, the service's total reserves are expected to have fallen by more than half, from £28.4m in 2018/19 to £10.95m by 2021/22. Of this amount, £7m is earmarked for specific expenditure. The service can't keep overspending and relying on reserves. This position is unsustainable.

Because the current IRMP proposals haven't been approved in full, it is still unclear whether the service can make the necessary future savings.

The risk is that, even if its original savings proposals are resubmitted and approved, there will be insufficient time to fully implement them and make the necessary savings. Relying on reserves will also leave the service with limited funds to draw on, invest or use in future.

The service has decided to sell three sites that are surplus to requirement. These sales are expected to generate more than £1.5m, which the service can then reinvest. But it needs to make further savings to meet predicted budget shortfalls.

Innovation

The service has made several important changes across the organisation to meet the needs of its IRMP and reduce its budget. These changes include adapting its model for operations. We particularly welcome the service's innovative use of TRVs, which makes a fire engine available at times of high demand. We see this as a good use of resources.

The service has a good record of investing in new operational technology and equipment. For example, both fire control and its mobile command unit can view live feeds from Newcastle city centre's CCTV cameras. This can help the service to gather operational information, which we see as a good use of technology. Staff we spoke to were complimentary about this investment.

The service needs to evaluate key areas of its change programme. It should do this to monitor the programme's effectiveness, and to evaluate any harmful or adverse consequences that have arisen.

Future investment and working with others

Previously, the service held a specific reserve, which it set aside for 'transformation and reform'. In 2018/19, the reserve stood at £5.5m. The service plans to draw on this reserve each year, so that by 2021/22 it will only be £450,000. The service has no plans to replenish this fund, so it isn't clear how the service intends to invest in change and innovation in future.

It sees collaboration as an important way to improve efficiency and reduce costs, and make savings as the medium-term financial plan requires.

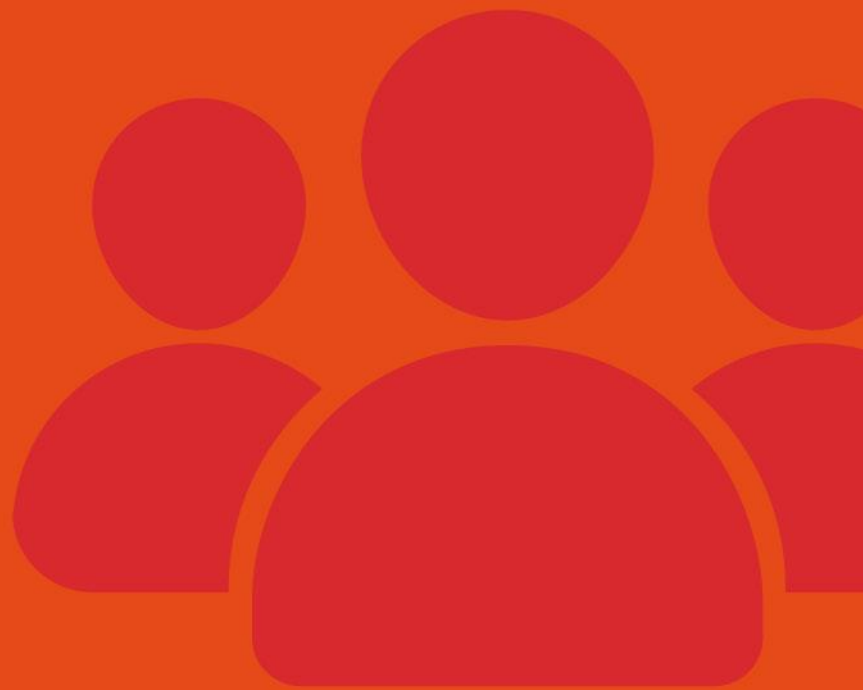
In 2015/16 and 2016/17, the service secured £930,000 of transformation funding. It has used this money on building works that have enabled Northumbria Police to co-locate at five fire stations. These co-located bases are now well established.

The service has benefited modestly from closer working relationships with the police. Sharing premises has generated some income. But the service has done little to increase integration or interoperability, which might have resulted in greater financial efficiencies and resilience.

In 2015, the service established an arm's-length trading company, in the form of a social enterprise offering training and compliance services. However, this company has a complex structure and has yet to produce any measurable benefits (other than a small income from the use of service facilities).

We found the service had been ambitious about the profit forecasts for its trading company. These assumptions were added to future budget plans. This put the service in the position where further savings had to be realised.

People



How well does the service look after its people?



Good

Summary

A fire and rescue service that looks after its people should be able to provide an effective service to its community. It should offer a range of services to make its communities safer. This will include developing and maintaining a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. The service's leaders should be positive role models, and this should be reflected in the behaviour of the workforce. Overall, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service is good at looking after its people.

The service takes staff wellbeing seriously and works hard to promote a positive culture. It also takes a positive approach to promoting equality and diversity. Its health provision is good, and the work of its trauma support team is highly regarded. Staff are trained in health and safety.

Most staff praise the service's culture, leadership and values. Staff are also aware of the Leadership Bond, an initiative that defines the leadership's nine core behaviours. Communications with senior officers are good.

We found that staff were able to move roles within the service. This broadens their career opportunities and diversifies the workforce.

We recognise the investment the service has made in its training provision. Most staff feel they have had the right training for their roles. The service responds to staff feedback. It also manages grievances well. The service is committed to increasing staff diversity and staff groups feel supported. That said, we found the service needs to address the following problems:

- It needs to carry out positive action in a more effective way.
- It has no system for identifying and supporting high-potential and aspiring leaders.
- Its appraisal process is considered to be unsuitable.
- Its promotion process needs to be clearer so that staff have confidence in it.

Promoting the right values and culture



Good

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

Workforce wellbeing

The service values workforce wellbeing. It offers in-house occupational health provision, with dedicated staff including occupational health nurses. Operational staff have medical health checks every three years and staff we spoke to were complimentary about this provision.

The service has fitness facilities within its stations and is increasing the number of watch-based fitness instructors. Operational staff have six-monthly fitness assessments.

The service has an established trauma support team that also supports other fire services after large incidents if necessary. The team offers a range of support, including non-work-related problems which are having a negative effect on staff wellbeing. Staff we spoke to were very complimentary about this team's support.

Health and safety

The work the service has done to improve health, safety and welfare has been externally recognised with awards from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

The service works to a publicly available health and safety statement, which is supported by a range of policies that we reviewed during the course of our inspection.

The health and safety team audits all departments. It prioritises higher-risk departments, such as training and technical services.

The service investigates accidents and [near misses](#), and shares findings and recommendations in its health and safety bulletins. It also records accidents and near misses in a database, and uses this system to track action plans that are drawn up after a health and safety event.

Health and safety performance data and statistics are monitored through the health, safety and welfare committee.

Culture and values

During our inspection, staff expressed great passion for their role. They told us how proud they were to serve their communities, that the service had a positive culture, with a good leadership, and that it is a good place to work. However, of the 192 respondents to our staff survey, 17 percent reported feeling bullied or harassed in the past 12 months, while 18 percent reported feeling discriminated against at work. This is not consistent with our other fieldwork inspection findings. There are limitations to the staff survey which should be considered alongside the findings. We explain these in Annex A.

The service has a set of stated values. These are included within the IRMP and published on the service's intranet. We found staff at all levels know about these values. However, staff in central departments appear to have embraced them more fully than staff based at fire stations.

The service's Leadership Bond was launched in 2018. It is intended to translate the service's values into action. Devised after consultation with employees, the bond makes clear what values and behaviours the service expects for a positive culture to exist at work. Overall, we found staff awareness of the bond to be good.

Staff we spoke to felt the leadership team had become more visible, approachable and honest. They also felt the chief fire officer had led and encouraged this change.

Staff told us that senior officers communicate with them regularly – for example, through blogs and the chief fire officer's bulletins. Senior officers visit stations and the chief fire officer has 'rider days' when he works with an operational crew for a full shift. Staff we spoke to during our inspection praised the service's communications and contact. However, only 54 percent of the 192 respondents to our staff survey said they felt they could challenge ideas without feeling that it might affect how they were treated subsequently; and only 53 percent felt confident that their ideas or suggestions would be listened to.

Representative bodies we spoke to were positive about the service and felt they had had good relationships with both the service and its senior management.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should make sure staff are appropriately trained in safety-critical skills.
- The service should make sure it has a system to record and monitor operational staff competence which is accurate, and that staff and managers use its competence recording system effectively.

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

Workforce planning

The service needs to do more to plan its workforce although it has significantly reduced the number of staff it employs to meet budget efficiencies. The service froze the recruitment of firefighters from 2010 to 2018.

As at 31 March 2018, there has been a 22 percent reduction in the workforce FTE, compared with the same time period five years ago.

In recent years, the service has had several operational vacancies. Managing operational staffing is a continual challenge for fire control staff who manage this centrally. It is their role to make sure each station has the correct skills available so it can respond appropriately to incidents.

The service fills gaps by having staff swap shifts and work overtime. Staff described this way of covering shortages as effective, but we note that it added to the workload of both watch supervisors and fire control.

A number of people hold positions of temporary promotion within the service. During our inspection, we noted that some supervisory managers have held temporary positions for several years and that the majority of its group managers are in temporary positions. The service also has 17 operational station managers staffing a rota that only has 10 places. This is not efficient or effective.

The service knows when staff are likely to retire and factors this into its workforce planning. The human resources and finance departments meet regularly to financially review workforce planning. The service monitors use of overtime to fill staffing gaps, which have reduced in recent years. This reduction is partly due to the introduction of the shift swapping mentioned previously.

For the first time in eight years, the service has recruited trainee firefighters. In 2018, it recruited 24 trainees and it plans to recruit more in 2019.

The service has a process in place for promoting staff from support roles to management roles. This is called 'the green book to grey book' process. In 2006, the service broadened its approach to promotion, so that support (or 'green book') staff could apply for some uniformed management roles if they had the right skills. Previously, those roles had been reserved for staff with a firefighting background (so-called 'grey book' staff).

All staff who apply for promotion in this way have the same assessment and interview process. To date, the service has appointed 12 staff members to management roles. We see this as a good way of increasing opportunities for staff from non-operational backgrounds.

Learning and improvement

The service has invested considerably in operational training facilities. Training days are held at a well-equipped training centre. Staff spoke highly about the training facilities, as well as the training they had received. They told us they felt training now focuses more on support and development, and that the 'fear factor' – relating to the formal assessments and harsh feedback of previous years – has gone.

Of the 192 respondents to our staff survey, 81 percent agreed that they had received enough training to do what is asked of them; 71 percent of respondents were satisfied with their level of learning and development.

Clear links exist between central and local training. All stations receive a quarterly central training plan which details the training that must be completed during that period. Beyond this, the watch supervisor can devise training to meet the needs of the team.

We found a well-planned and resourced exercise programme, designed to provide realistic operational scenario training. This involves around 25 exercises per year. Staff must participate in these exercises at least every six months.

Corporate staff felt they had good access to training. Staff in departments such as prevention and protection felt the training they were given was very good. Staff also complimented other forms of training they had received – for example, on management skills and health and safety.

Fire control staff showed they have completed vital training. However, since taking on a wider operational staffing role, their time available for training was more limited.

During our inspection, we looked at training records. We noted that the service couldn't always confirm quickly and efficiently whether staff had had safety-critical training. We found that several records were missing, which the service said was due to a technical issue between two databases. This meant that the service couldn't vouch for the accuracy of its main training recording system. This is something the service needs to resolve.

We found some staff who may lead an operational incident either hadn't had initial training to do so or hadn't completed revalidation assessments. There was also no stated need for them to maintain competence between assessments. Several emergency response drivers hadn't had any such assessments.

We did sample the keeping of competence records. Some were incomplete, short of detail and/or filled in inaccurately. We found that the quality assurance process for these records was ineffective.

There is a clear lack of performance management and oversight in this area. The service should make sure that all staff receive the appropriate training and are supported in their competence development. The service should also make sure its performance system monitors, and gives management information about, the completion of safety-critical training.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Good

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service is good at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- To make its workforce more representative, the service should ensure diversity, inclusion and positive action are well understood and embedded across the whole organisation.

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

Seeking and acting on staff feedback

The service uses a variety of ways to gain staff feedback, including an annual staff survey. Staff learn about the survey results through a 'you said, we did' process. The service has made changes as a result of this process. For example, it has revamped and relaunched its staff appraisal process, and senior leaders are becoming more visible and communicating better.

The service holds 'listening events' where senior leaders visit fire stations. While there was some scepticism about these events, staff viewed them positively overall.

The service manages its grievance process well. All managers are trained in the grievance process as part of their 'lifecycle' training. The service receives few formal grievances from staff. Managers tend to deal with problems, and the service tries to deal with problems locally where possible. Staff we spoke to had confidence in the grievance process. However, the service's policy is that a senior manager is appointed to hear first-stage (the lowest level) grievances. The service should consider whether this is a good use of its resources or whether it could be delegated to a lower level.

The service uses departmental debriefs to gain feedback on certain work, including projects. The operational assurance team identifies what has worked well and what needs to be improved. The service uses this process to review a range of

projects, including the implementation of new data protection practices and a prevention campaign.

We spoke to several trade unions during the inspection who described their good working relationship with the service. They felt they are kept informed whenever the service is proposing any changes or considering new practices, and that they have always had the chance to respond.

Diversity

The service's organisational development strategy outlines its commitment to diversity. Its work has been externally recognised. It is rated as a Stonewall Top 100 Employer, and achieved fourth place at the Inclusive Top 50 UK Employers Awards. In 2013 and 2016, it achieved the highest rating of 'Excellence' in the fire service equality framework audit. However, like most fire services, the service has some way to go to increase the diversity of its workforce.

As at 31 March 2018, 7.6 percent of firefighters were female, and 1.8 percent of firefighters were from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background. This compares with a BAME residential population of 6.5 percent.

The service has four staff network groups: BME, LGBT+, Gender and Disability. Staff feel that the senior leadership supports these groups, which actively help to promote equality and diversity throughout the service. Group members felt consulted on important issues and empowered to raise problems if necessary.

We are confident that the service understands the diversity of its communities and the value of a diverse workforce. However, recently, the service has recruited wholetime firefighters for the first time in eight years. The service acknowledges that its positive action activity, for this recruitment, was rushed and limited. This was a missed opportunity to attract diverse candidates to join the service. It could do more in terms of positive action around its recruitment processes. In doing so, the service must ensure it tackles any perception that certain groups have an unfair advantage.

The 'green book to grey book' process has opened up opportunities for corporate staff. Such an approach is unusual across fire and rescue services, but it has increased diversity among supervisors and middle management.

BAME staff we interviewed spoke positively about the service's progress in embracing equality and diversity. They felt the service has improved in recent years and that they are treated fairly and equally.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.
- The service should improve transparency in its promotion process to promote trust and confidence.

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

Managing performance

The service has an annual staff appraisal process. Staff we spoke to expressed mixed views about its value. Most staff we spoke to felt it was just a 'tick box' exercise, with a focus on course requests. We found the process doesn't offer meaningful feedback or performance recognition.

The service has improved its appraisal process, which relates to the Leadership Bond and aligns personal objectives with corporate priorities. But the service doesn't expect to introduce this process to the whole workforce until at least April 2020.

In the meantime, the service can't be confident that it is managing its staff as effectively and productively as possible. While it puts the new process into practice, the service should make sure it has effective ways to provide formal recognition and feedback on staff performance.

At department level, we found some examples of the service offering performance and feedback for role-specific skills. Fire control offers feedback in vital work areas, such as call handling. Protection staff also have their work reviewed, receiving feedback regularly throughout the year.

Leaders aren't overseeing operational staff training records effectively enough, at either a corporate and local level. This is an important way of giving staff regular feedback and development support, so the service should improve its monitoring of performance in this area.

Developing leaders

The service has no system in place to identify, develop and support high-potential staff, so they can become senior leaders in the future. It may want to consider one.

Recently, the service launched its Leadership Bond. This emphasises the importance of effective leadership in meeting service objectives and enabling the service to be as good as it wants to be. We look forward to seeing how the bond helps develop organisational leadership.

The service has a development programme – called ‘Engage’ – for all levels of management. Developed in-house, the six-day programme involves learning and assignments about leadership and management. Staff gave us mixed feedback about this training. While corporate staff were complimentary, operational staff told us they felt they had done similar training before.

Some staff we interviewed didn’t have confidence in the operational promotion process. The main reasons for this was the way roles were allocated after the process, and a perceived lack of feedback.

There was also a view that staff deemed ineligible for permanent promotion would then be used in a temporary role, sometimes for years. We spoke to staff in temporary positions who said they didn’t always feel supported. Some felt vulnerable due to the uncertainty of their temporary positions. The service knows about some of these concerns and has produced a guidance document which clarifies how the promotion process works and how the service will give feedback in 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);
- public perception survey;
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 45 fire and rescue services in England.

Where we collected data directly from fire and rescue services (FRS), 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 the FRS Technical Advisory Group, which brings together representatives from FRSs and the Home Office to support the inspection's design and development, including data collection. We gave services several opportunities to validate the data they gave us and to ensure the accuracy of the evidence presented. For instance:

- We asked all services to check the data they submitted to us via an online application.
- We asked all services to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified.

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

Methodology

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use [ONS mid-2017 population estimates](#). This is the most recent data available at the time of inspection.

BMG survey of public perception of the fire and rescue service

We commissioned BMG to survey attitudes towards fire and rescue services in June and July 2018. This consisted of 17,976 surveys across 44 local fire and rescue service 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 via face-to-face interviews 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 was small, varying between 400 and 446 individuals in each service area. 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 2,905 responses between 1 October 2018 and 15 February 2019 from across 16 FRSs during this period in Tranche 2.

The staff survey is 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 8 percent to 31 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 multiple times. It is also possible that the survey 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.

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 public perceptions survey:

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 October 2017 to 31 September 2018.

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 FRSs to upload to the IRS. Totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers).
- We took data for Service in numbers from the February 2019 incident publication. So figures may not directly match more recent publications due to data updates.
- Before 2017/18, Hampshire FRS did not record medical co-responding incidents in the IRS. It is currently undertaking a project to upload this data for 2017/18 and 2018/19. This was not completed in time for publication on 14 February 2019.

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's figure is based on the number of checks it carried out and 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 & Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire 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 FRAs 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 FRSs.

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 FRSs carried out in known premises. According to the Home Office 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 & Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire 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 / retained.

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 & Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire 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.
- 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 & Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire 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. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service is a metropolitan 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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