

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority

Date: 8 February 2023

Subject: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – 2022 Inspection outcome for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service

Report by: The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Author: Callum Faint, The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

For: Information Only

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to share with the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) the outcome of the latest inspection carried out by HMICFRS in the summer of 2022.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the Authority notes the HMICFRS inspection report and outcomes, along with the significant improvements and developments that the Service has achieved.

Executive Summary

3. As part of the regular inspection programme of HMICFRS, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service was inspected in the summer of 2022.
4. On 20 January 2023 HMICFRS published its findings of the inspection publicly.
5. The inspection findings are judged against set criteria and then graded. In the last full inspection in 2018 Leicestershire was graded as “good” in four areas and “requires improvement” in seven areas.
6. The publication of the 2022 inspection results has shown significant improvement across the board and sees Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service move to “good” in nine areas and “requires improvement” in only two areas, these being;
 - a. Making the best use of resources
 - b. Preventing fires and other emergencies

7. When compared nationally this outcome places Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service very well and above the average scorings of England.

Background

8. In 2018 His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary was granted further powers to also incorporate the inspection of Fire and Rescue Services. With this wider remit the Inspectorate name was changed to His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services or HMICFRS for short.
9. HMICFRS began inspecting all Fire and Rescue Services in England from that point onwards. This provided an independent and consistent inspection of Services across England which is subsequently published publicly and shared with the Home Office and Home Secretary.
10. The inspection regime is set external to the sector (with consultation from the sector) and delivered by independent inspectors on a two yearly basis. Inspectors look at a total of 11 areas across the Service and give a grading of their findings at one of four levels - inadequate, requires improvement, good or outstanding.
11. The first full inspection of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service took place in December 2018 and its findings were published in June 2019. This judged that four areas were "good" and seven "required improvement" (A link to the full report can be found in the background papers section).
12. Following this inspection, a full and comprehensive action plan was constructed to improve the Service's performance and to evidence this journey for the community, CFA, Service and HMICFRS. Performance and progress against the plan has been regularly reported to the Corporate Governance Committee.
13. In the Autumn of 2020 the Service received its second inspection by HMICFRS. Due to the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic the inspection regime was changed for this round of inspections and focused solely on the Service's response to the pandemic. It did not make judgement grading's in this round of inspections. A link to the outcome of this inspection can also be found in the background papers section.
14. In the summer of 2022 HMICFRS conducted its third inspection of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service and published the inspection outcome on 20 January 2023.
15. HMICFRS conducts its inspection in tranches, effectively splitting the inspections into three waves. Leicestershire was one of the last Services to be inspected in the final tranche. This enabled the Service to get a full appreciation of all Services across the country and their current levels of performance. This can be viewed on [HMICFRS \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk)

16. The third round of inspection results across England has seen a significant number of Services being downgraded and/or issued with “cause for concerns”. It has also seen two Fire and Rescue Services enter the “Engage” process due to significant concerns from Inspectors; this provides additional support and measures for Services to immediately address inadequate areas of business.

2022 Inspection outcome for LFRS

17. The 2022 inspection took place over an eight-week period and over 150 members of staff were either interviewed or spoke with the HMICFRS inspectors.
18. In addition to this over 200 policies, procedure and evidence documents were submitted to HMICFRS for review.
19. On 20 January 2023 HMICFRS published the outcome of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services inspection, along with another 14 Services in tranche three.
20. It is very pleasing to report that HMICFRS has seen significant areas of improvement across the entire Service and has judged LFRS to be “good” in nine areas and “requires improvement” in only two areas.
21. A link to the full report is included in the background paper section and also included as Appendix 1 to this report.
22. The outcome is a dramatic improvement and testament to the hard work and effort of every member of the Service over the preceding years to improve the service provided to the community.
23. Clearly, officers will take the positive outcomes and comments as good recognition of the work that has been achieved but will also look at the areas identified for further improvement. Work is already underway to refresh the action plan, which will be a lot smaller than before, and really allow the Service to focus and embed a number of actions and initiatives. As before progress will be reported to the Corporate Governance Committee.

Report Implications/Impact

24. Legal (including crime and disorder)

There are no direct legal implications from this report. The HMICFRS outcome is a good and positive indicator that the Service is meeting its statutory requirements well.

25. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The HMICFRS outcome is a good and positive indicator that the Service is meeting its financial requirements well.

26. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

The HMICFRS outcome is a good and positive indicator that the Service is meeting its risks well in most areas. The action plan will address the number of outstanding Home Safety Checks

27. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

Not applicable

28. Environmental

Not applicable

29. Impact upon “Our Plan” Objectives

The HMICFRS outcome demonstrates that the Service is working well towards all aspects of “Our Plan”

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service 2021/22 Effectiveness, efficiency and people

Background Papers

HMICFRS 2018 inspection for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
[Leicestershire - HMICFRS \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/2018/leicestershire/)

HMICFRS 2020 Covid-19 Inspection – Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
[COVID-19 inspection: Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service - HMICFRS \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/2020/covid-19/leicestershire/)

HMICFRS 2022 inspection for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
[Leicestershire - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\) – Home \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/)

Officers to Contact

Callum Faint,
Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
callum.faint@leics-fire.gov.uk
0116 2105555

This page is intentionally left blank