Fire & Rescue Service
Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service

Contents

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 Leicestershire 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

	Leicestershire	England
Perceived effectiveness of service Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)	87%	86%

Response

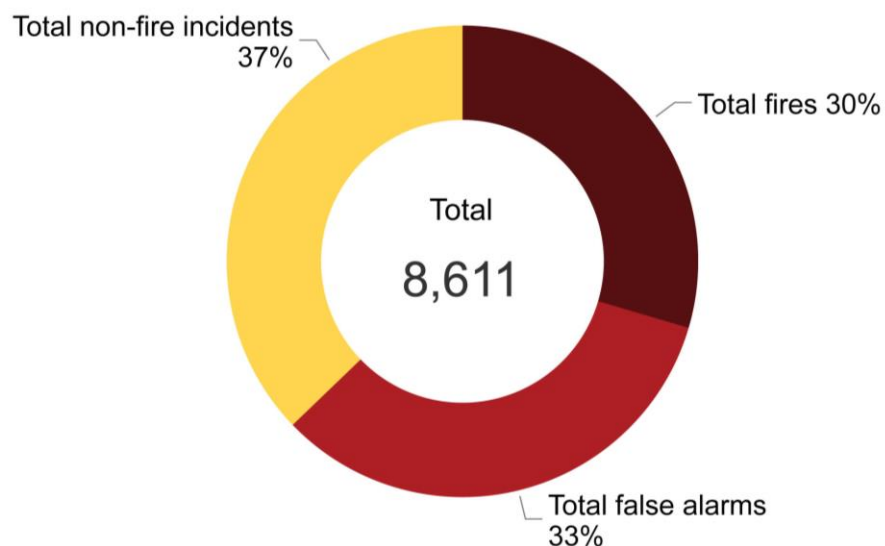|	Leicestershire	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 September 2018	7.9	10.5
Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	7.3	10.4
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises 12 months to 31 March 2018	1.0	3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 30 September 2018

Total non-fire incidents 37%

Total fires 30%

Total
8,611

Total false alarms 33%

£ Cost

	Leicestershire	England
Firefighter cost per person per year 12 months to 31 March 2018	£17.42	£22.38

Workforce

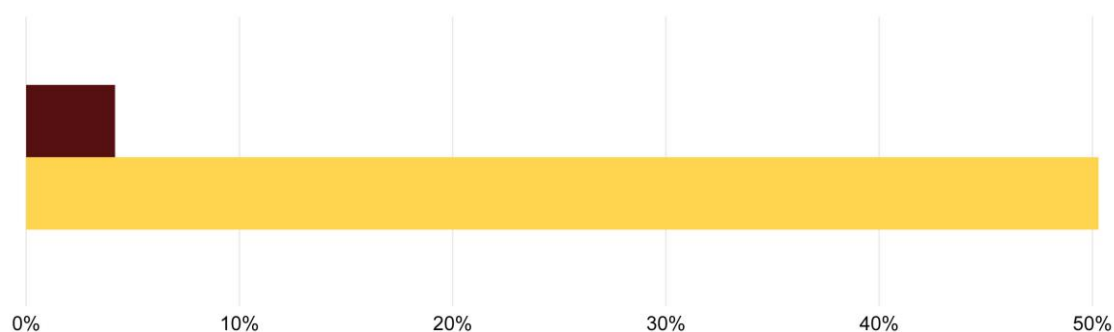|	Leicestershire	England
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population As at 31 March 2018	0.4	0.6
Five-year change in workforce As at 31 March 2013 compared with 31 March 2018	-26%	-14%
Percentage of wholetime firefighters As at 31 March 2018	73%	70%

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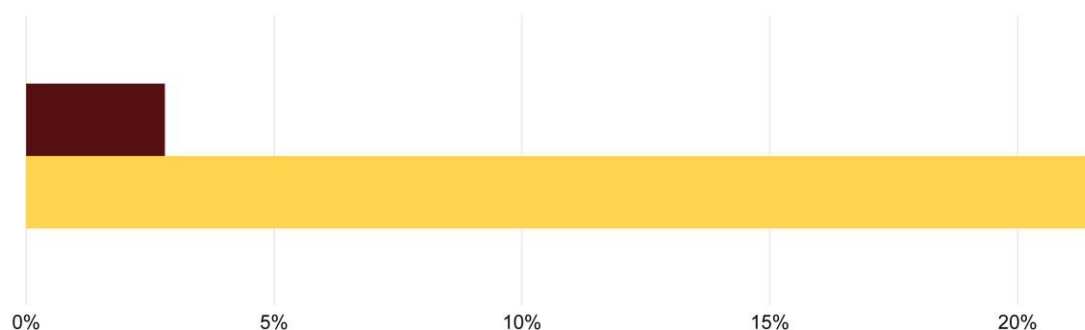
Please refer to annex A for full details on data used.

3

Overview

⚙ **Effectiveness**	●●○○	**Requires improvement**
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	●●●○	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	●●●○	Good
Protecting the public through fire regulation	●●○○	Requires improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	●●○○	Requires improvement
Responding to national risks	●●●○	Good
£ **Efficiency**	●●○○	**Requires improvement**
Making best use of resources	●●○○	Requires improvement
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	●●●○	Good

People   ●●○○ **Requires improvement**

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

Overall summary of inspection findings

We are satisfied with some aspects of the performance of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. But there are several areas where the service needs to make improvements.

Leicestershire FRS's effectiveness at protecting the public requires improvement. We judge it to be good at:

- understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies;

- preventing fires and other risks; and

- responding to national risks.

But it requires improvement at protecting the public through fire regulation and at responding to fires and other emergencies.

The service's efficiency requires improvement, specifically to the way it uses resources. But it is good at providing an affordable service, now and in the future.

It requires improvement to how it looks after its people; in particular, to the way it:

- promotes the right values and culture;

- gets the right people with the right skills;

- ensures fairness and promotes diversity; and

- manages performance and develops leaders.

Overall, we would like to see improvements in the year ahead.

Effectiveness

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

● ● ○ ○

Requires improvement

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. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness requires improvement.

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service has an integrated risk management plan (IRMP). The service has consulted extensively on the initial plan. However, when the service updated its IRMP, it did not consult on it as it did not consider it to be a new plan. The service should have consulted on the updated IRMP.

The service considers foreseeable risks and assesses its capability to manage incidents. It also carries out site visits and assigns risk gradings. But the service needs to assure itself that staff have up-to-date training for carrying out these visits and know what to look out for.

Fire and road safety are priorities in terms of this service's prevention initiatives. The service is the national lead for virtual reality for the National Fire Chiefs Council. However, the service doesn't sufficiently evaluate its prevention activities.

The service isn't on schedule to meet its target for completing a cycle of inspections at highest-risk premises. It has no timescales or targets to meet reactive work. And it lacks a quality assurance process to make sure that fire safety officers' audits are consistent. But we were pleased to see that the service uses its full range of enforcement powers.

The service regularly moves staff to meet demand, to make sure there is adequate cover to respond to incidents. However, the service had one of the highest average call-handling times for primary fires in England.

The service has trained its incident commanders. However, we identified that some commanders hadn't received refresher training or reassessment after initial training.

The service has arrangements to respond to a regional or national incident, and staff carry out 'over border' exercises. However, the service should make sure all staff know what to do in the event of a marauding terrorist attack and receive appropriate training.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies

Good

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

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service has an integrated risk management plan for the years 2016 to 2020. This is called 'Towards 2020'.

The service carried out extensive consultations on this plan. The consultations included staff and communities who would've been affected by proposed changes. In addition, members of the public and employee representative groups completed online surveys and took part in face-to-face reference groups. In October/November 2015 the service received 1,395 formal questionnaire responses. The service published the consultation outcomes.

Following the consultation process, as well as the revised 2015 budget settlement and decisions of the Fire Authority, there was no longer a need to close some fire stations, as had been proposed.

The service recognised that there had been changes since it published 'Towards 2020'. In April 2018 it published 'Our Plan: Corporate and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018–2021'. This plan wasn't consulted on as the service stated that it was simply updating the public on the original 'Towards 2020' plan and combining that with publishing a corporate plan. However, by using the title 'IRMP' for both documents, it is not clear which document the public should consider to be the service's current IRMP.

The service intends to develop and consult on a new IRMP in 2019 for publication in 2020.

The service has a comprehensive community risk model. To create a risk profile, the service uses a range of data. This includes NHS, Experian, Mosaic and Exeter data; the Index of Multiple Deprivation; local authority plans and incident data. The service uses risk modelling to identify areas at greater risk of fire or road traffic incidents. This information is then set against lower super output areas (geographical areas with

approximately 1,500 people living in them, according to Office for National Statistics information) to measure risk in communities.

The service used risk modelling to make sure resources were available in its high-risk areas. As a result, the service increased provision of resources. One example of this is the building of Castle Donington fire station.

Having an effective risk management plan

In its document 'Our Plan: Corporate and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018–2021', the service is clear and open in setting out information about the risks and difficulties that it faces. In the document, the service sets out its priorities and strategies under the following headings: safer communities; response; finance and resources; people; and governance.

The plan refers to risk data, as described above, and the locations of fire stations to meet those risks. The plan also references the organisational risk register (which is available on the service's website) and the community risk register maintained by the local resilience forum (LRF). The IRMP gives a clear link to the service's prevention, protection and response activities, in an easy-to-read format.

In carrying out the above processes, the service has considered the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The service is planning for foreseeable risks and assessing its capability to manage incidents. An example is the control function which is shared across Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire fire and rescue services. All three services mobilise each other's resources and manage peaks in service demand.

Maintaining risk information

The service's risk information policy is based on the Provision of Risk Information System (PORIS). The policy makes sure that the service can gather information about risks to firefighters and meet its duties under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

The service uses a database to manage all risk sites. The database tells crews when a revisit is due and gives a countywide view of all risks. Following a site visit, firefighters assign a site with a risk grading of one to five, with one being low-level risk information (for example, an access code) that is passed to responding fire engines; a grading of four relates to major site risk plans (such as chemical factories), while five is for countywide issues such as flooding. Staff told us they rely on experience to gather information, as they haven't had recent training in fire safety and what to look out for when they get to premises to record risks. Each station has an identified person who is responsible for managing the risk reference. Headquarters staff are also available for advice. The PORIS policy includes procedures for managing temporary risks. We saw that the service has procedures in place to manage differing levels of risk. These involve event risk scores.

All operational crews across the service can access this risk information using mobile data terminals (MDTs) mounted inside fire engines. Fire control operators add short-term risk information to the mobilising systems as soon as prevention, protection or operational staff notify them. Such information might include sprinklers not working in a building, or the presence of a vulnerable person. Some staff told us the MDTs

aren't consistently reliable; there have been reports of them freezing. The service is currently monitoring this situation.

The service has systems in place for the handover of risk-critical information, namely handover sheets, use of its database and verbal updates.

Preventing fires and other risks

⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ◯

Good

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should make sure it appropriately trains staff to undertake prevention activity.
>
> - The service should better evaluate its prevention work, so it has a clearer understanding of the benefits.

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 outlines its prevention strategy within its corporate and integrated risk management plan. But the strategy doesn't set out a clear rationale for the level of activity to prevent fires and other risks; this is detailed in local district plans.

The service creates a risk profile through analysis of NHS, Exeter and Experian data, as well as the Index of Multiple Deprivation and incident data. We saw that the service carries out a broad range of prevention work, with fire prevention and road safety work a priority for keeping communities safe.

The service's business analysts create a home fire safety check visit report for each station. These reports allow firefighters to approach homes to carry out home fire safety checks. District managers determine targets for the number of checks per station, depending on the capacity they determine each station has.

The service accepts referrals for home fire safety checks. Referrals come through other organisations and members of the public onto dedicated pages of its website. Organisations include East Midlands Ambulance Service and the local authority 'first contact' team. The service's administration team uses a risk matrix to prioritise visits. The team then determines whether firefighters or community safety educators should visit. Community safety educators offer a more enhanced visit.

As at 31 March 2018, prevention visits by the service included identifying potential fire risks; acting to reduce fire risks; making sure working smoke alarms were fitted; advising on social welfare, health screenings and health prevention; advice on slips, trips and falls; and other activities such as advising on home security. However, we

found station-based staff carried out basic home fire safety checks which did not include social welfare, health and security aspects.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, the rate of home fire safety checks carried out by the service per 1,000 of the population was 7.3; this compares with the England rate of 10.4 over the same time period. There has been a slight increase in the number of home fire safety checks carried out for the elderly (65+) and the disabled. Elderly visits have increased from 4,104 to 4,743 and disabled visits have increased from 2,071 to 2,299 when comparing the 12 months to 31 March 2017 with the same time period in 2018.

The service told us that it has 12 dedicated community safety educators who focus solely on fire prevention. These educators give fire safety talks to every primary school in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, year 1 and year 5. The educators also work with local organisations, run community activities and carry out high-risk home fire safety visits. The educators carry out more specialised visits where there is a higher vulnerability and need.

We saw evidence of a variety of approaches to preventing fire and promoting community safety. However, the service hasn't evaluated the impact or benefits of this work.

Promoting community safety

The service delivers community safety activities based on priorities determined in the station plans. Station priorities can change following local analysis of operational incidents. For example, some fire stations re-prioritised home fire safety checks to target thatched properties following a fire incident, because of the risks in these types of buildings.

The service's website gives clear and concise information about preventing fires. The website promotes current campaigns and has a section with advice translated into several languages. The service also uses social media to promote fire and other safety-related matters.

Firefighters work with schools in their station area, carrying out fire and road safety work depending on local needs. Firefighters also attend community events and work with other organisations to give community safety messages.

The central team co-ordinates prevention activities, targeting events such as Leicester Caribbean Carnival and Leicester Pride. The team also attends targeted events during Diwali and freshers' week at local universities.

'Fire Beat' is an initiative run by the service. Trained to work with children and young adults, firefighters take bicycles to areas within the community where there has been anti-social behaviour or the starting of deliberate fires. The aim of this initiative is to reduce anti-social behaviour and deliberate fires by engaging with younger people and influencing their behaviours.

The service works well with a range of other organisations. A police officer works with both Leicestershire Police and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service as the main point of contact for arson. Whenever there is a major incident, the officer will

co-ordinate the response and resources for both organisations. The service supports the police in arson prosecutions. District managers work with local partners to jointly tackle issues related to anti-social behaviour. The service also works with schools, parents and community safety partnerships for 'fire care' referrals. The scheme serves as an intervention tool when children display tendencies to fire setting and other anti-social, fire-related behaviour. The service is yet to evaluate this activity. The service has a good understanding of its safeguarding responsibilities. Specialist lead officers are responsible for safeguarding. They keep policies and procedures up to date, and make sure that staff receive training. They also represent the service at safeguarding board meetings.

Staff can recognise vulnerable people and make safeguarding referrals where appropriate. However, several staff told us they would benefit from refresher safeguarding training to increase their confidence.

The service promotes water safety. In June 2018, during National Drowning Prevention Week, it hosted The Big Splash at Bosworth water park. The event was in partnership with The Royal Life Saving Society, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Sea Cadets and Community First Responders.

Although station-based staff carry out a wide range of prevention activity, we found a lack of refresher training in this area.

Road safety

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service carries out a wide variety of road safety activities, often in partnership with other agencies including the police. Audiences include the English Cricket Board, Leicester Tigers rugby team and the British swimming team. The service has created virtual reality packages and films to promote road safety. These have won international awards. It has showcased these at the Emergency Services Show, Road Safety GB and BRAKE, the national road safety charity. The service is the national lead for virtual reality for the National Fire Chiefs Council. A dedicated section of the service's website promotes the 'Virtual Fatal 4', 'Fatal 4' and Biker Down courses, as well as 'FireBike'. The website also features videos and information on road safety.

The service is a member of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Road Safety Partnership, and works with the partnership's other organisations including Leicestershire Police and the local authorities. A priority is to promote the 'Fatal 4' campaign. The service leads on young drivers' education, offering interactive activities at schools, colleges and universities. Local operational teams also work with Leicestershire Police to promote anti-drink-driving campaigns.

As with other aspects of prevention, the service couldn't give evidence about how it was evaluating the effectiveness of its road safety activities. The service should consider evaluation. That way, it will understand which activities are most effective in promoting road safety messages.

Protecting the public through fire regulation

●●○○

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme.

- The service should ensure its staff work with local businesses to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations.

- The service should ensure it has an effective system in place to address repeat false alarms.

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

Every year, the service produces a risk-based inspection programme to determine the highest-risk premises to inspect. The service prioritises high-risk premises such as sleeping risk premises; premises where there has been previous enforcement activity; and premises that have had fire incidents. Examples are care homes, hotels and hostels, and flats above commercial premises. Specialist staff who carry out inspections are qualified in Fire Safety Diploma Level 4. The service has a fire engineer. There is an agreement with regional fire and rescue services if additional support is needed.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, the service carried out 1.0 fire safety audits per 100 known premises, compared with the England rate of 3.0. Over the same period, of the audits the service carried out, 64 percent were satisfactory. We acknowledge that the service had to re-prioritise its workload following the Grenfell Tower fire.

In the 12 months to 31 December 2018, the service audited 366 of the 4,911 high-risk premises it had identified. The service isn't on schedule to meet its target of 520 inspections.

As well as its proactive risk-based programme, the service also carries out reactive work. It responds to reports of fire safety complaints and concerns from other organisations and the public. It also completes statutory building regulation consultations.

The service has no timescales or targets to meet reactive work. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, it received 651 building regulation consultations. Of these, it responded to 580 (89 percent) within the required timeframe.

The service has no quality assurance process to make sure that fire safety officers' audits are consistent. The service needs to consider how it monitors activities carried out by fire safety officers to manage performance.

Station-based operational staff have limited fire safety training and don't conduct fire safety audits. They receive advice from, or refer concerns to, the fire safety department.

Enforcement

We are satisfied the service uses its full range of enforcement powers. The service has issued both formal and informal notices as the enforcing authority under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In the year to 31 March 2018 it issued 37 enforcement notices, 13 prohibition notices, three alteration notices and one successful prosecution. Fire safety officers take enforcement action against those who fail to comply with fire safety regulations.

The service has qualified fire safety officers who are available 24 hours a day to deal with complaints, concerns and enforcement if necessary.

The service works closely with enforcement organisations, including local authority planners, housing and environmental health officers. Formal arrangements are in place to carry out joint visits and agree which organisation will lead enforcement action. For example, the service is working closely with a local authority housing team. During a successful joint visit, the service took responsibility for commercial matters, while the housing team took responsibility for residential matters.

Working with others

The service manages six primary authority schemes. These schemes allow businesses and organisations with premises in more than one fire authority area to receive fire safety advice from a single fire service. These organisations include several large commercial companies. The service should consider how this discretionary work affects its capacity to run its risk-based inspection programme.

The service's website offers good information to businesses. The information is easy to read. It also has links to appropriate legislation and guidance on risk assessments.

The service conducts very few activities to help businesses improve compliance with fire safety legislation through education. Apart from a seminar following the Grenfell Tower fire, the service couldn't give any evidence of taking a proactive approach to educating businesses.

There is a clear procedure for challenging calls to fire alarms, to prevent unnecessary emergency responses. However, the service doesn't have a procedure for follow-up activity with premises where repeat activations occur. District managers receive monthly reports and decide what action to take with premises, but this seems to be locally managed without central co-ordination. This is an area where the service could do further work to make sure it is consistent with its approach to engage with premises and achieve reductions.

Responding to fires and other emergencies

Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should have a clear policy around the deployment of its tactical response vehicles.
>
> - The service should ensure staff know how to command fire service assets assertively, effectively and safely at incidents.
>
> - The service should ensure its mobile data terminals are reliable so that firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.

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

As at 31 March 2018, the service had seven wholetime fire stations, six on-call fire stations and seven fire stations that have both wholetime and on-call staff.

In 2016, for its 'Towards 2020' plan, the service considered the location of fire stations based on risk using IRMP modelling tools, which include:
- ten-minute isochrones (maps showing travel times within a certain radius on a map);
- geographical information systems; and
- automatic vehicle location data to assess response times and locations.

Following analysis using incident data and risk modelling, the service identified that resources were required in the Castle Donington and Lutterworth areas. This resulted in a new fire station at Castle Donington with a day-crewing-plus working pattern, and an increase to day-crewing and on-call at Lutterworth.

The service supports its response activity with a good standard of equipment, including personal protective equipment. Wholetime and on-call staff work well with each other, and on-call staff work extra hours at wholetime fire stations.

The service regularly moves firefighters and equipment if there are gaps (for example, where a fire engine is unavailable). The service's procedure on planned levels of fire engines and crewing availability is out of date. We found fire control operators use their professional judgment to move resources to cover depleted areas within the county.

Between April 2018 and December 2018, the overall monthly average fire engine availability ranged from 75 percent to 80 percent. The average wholetime appliance availability for this period was 99 percent. There are greater variances in on-call appliance availability where the average appliance availability for this period was 60 percent.

The service relies on staff working overtime to cover absences and to keep fire engines available. However, this system relies on the availability of staff who are prepared to work overtime. There is a project to look at the recruitment, retention and availability of on-call staff.

Operational crews who we spoke to could confidently show the use of breathing apparatus and describe what to do during a breathing apparatus emergency.

Response

In the year to 30 September 2018, the service attended 7.9 incidents per 1,000 population. This compared to the England rate of 10.5 over the same period.

The service is working with five fire and rescue services in the East Midlands to implement national guidance. The service recognises that working regionally causes delays in implementation, but also that it benefits from shared knowledge and standardisation. The whole region plans to adopt national operational guidance within three years.

As at 1 April 2018, the service has two response standards. Where there is a life-threatening incident, the service aims to get a fire engine to the incident within ten minutes of it being mobilised at least 95 percent of the time. When an incident isn't life-threatening, the service wants to get a fire engine to the incident within 20 minutes of the fire engine being mobilised 99 percent of the time.

Targets are set to monitor response standards. The service publishes these annually. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 December 2018, the service met these targets by attending 95 percent of life-threatening calls within 10 minutes of the fire engine being mobilised. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service's average response time to primary fires was 10 minutes and 26 seconds.

The service has a tri-service arrangement with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire fire and rescue services. The three services can receive and manage emergency calls in any of their areas. They give immediate support in the event of a major incident or a large volume of calls arising from an exceptional weather event, such as flooding. The mobilising system uses an automatic vehicle location system to locate and deploy the quickest available resource. The service has established predetermined attendances for all incident types. Control operators use discretion to alter this and record their decision. In the year ending 31 March 2018 the average call-handling times for primary fires was two minutes. The service had one of the highest average call-handling times for primary fires in England. The service doesn't monitor call-handling times for control operators, unlike a number of other services.

As at 31 March 2018, the service had 30 operational fire engines. The service invested in five tactical response vehicles to enable it to adapt to the changes in the way it responds to incidents, ensuring a measured and proportionate response. These are smaller vehicles, deployed with two firefighters to most incidents. The vehicles are located at various stations across the county. In one case a tactical response vehicle has been moved to an on-call station to increase availability. We found staff across the service didn't understand how the vehicles affect predetermined attendance or how they were mobilised. The service should clarify, within its procedure on appliance and crewing availability, how these vehicles are mobilised, and communicate this information to all staff.

Operational staff access risk information on MDTs. However, during inspection we saw that the MDTs didn't always work. The service needs to assure itself that staff have access to risk information when responding to incidents.

Command

The service has trained its incident commanders to the national levels of incident command. We found that commanders were aware of the aids that were available to support them. They could describe the risk assessment process and how they would record decisions. The service has an operational assurance monitoring process that assesses the performance of incident commanders at varying levels. However, some managers haven't received refresher training or reassessment after their initial training.

Fire control can increase or decrease the number of fire engines sent to incidents, based on the information it receives and the use of its professional discretion.

We found that staff were still quoting the 'London model' of decision making. The service is yet to introduce the newer joint decision model. While this meant that all staff were working to the same model, the service should consider introducing the newer model. It would aid cross-border and multi-agency working.

Operational staff have a good understanding of operational discretion and we were given examples of when it has been used. Control staff log operational discretion when it has been declared. However, during our inspection we found occasions when operational discretion had been used, but not recorded. The service should make sure all staff, including control operatives, understand the need to record this information.

Keeping the public informed

The service makes good use of social media, and its website, to communicate information about incidents to the public. Control staff update the website with live incident information 24 hours a day. The service gives social media training to station-based staff. Fire stations have their own social media accounts. Additional media training is given to middle managers, so they can update the media about incidents.

The communications team monitors all activity. The service told us that Leicestershire Police led on the communications for the major explosion incident in Hinckley Road in 2018. This meant that all organisations in attendance gave the public a consistent message.

The service has measures in place to safeguard vulnerable people. We saw staff were clear about what circumstances would require a safeguarding referral.

We found a process in the fire control call centre to give lifesaving advice to members of the public during emergency calls. For example, control operators could use scripts to give vital information to callers involved in incidents in high-rise buildings.

Evaluating operational performance

The service has a good debriefing process to learn from operational incidents and exercises. All staff we spoke to said they have a hot debrief at incidents. A station debrief also happens on return to the station if needed. The debrief includes checking staff welfare. The manager carrying out the debrief records significant issues or any learning that needs sharing.

Following a more complex incident, the service carries out a more structured debrief. The process to gather information and arrange the structured debrief is robust. A manager more senior than the incident commander chairs the debrief. We saw examples of learning points for improvement and good practice shared within an email to all attendees, and a posting on the service's intranet for all staff.

We found that some staff access learning through the website, but they aren't clear about when to instigate a structured debrief. The service should make sure all staff access learning from debriefs and know when to instigate a structured debrief.

Of the debriefs we reviewed, two out of three had significant learning points. We identified positive examples of the service contributing to national operational learning (NOL). For example, one debrief determined that thatched buildings should have an extra fire engine in attendance, to help deal with the difficulties posed by these types of buildings. Another showed evidence of gas build-up between walls in a paper mill, which ignited. The service amended its policies and submitted learning to NOL.

Responding to national risks

●●●○

Good

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to national risks. But we found the following areas in which it needs to improve:

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should ensure it is well prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to an incident and staff know how to apply Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles.
>
> - The service should ensure it is well prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to a terrorist-related incident and that its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.

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 has effective arrangements to support the response to a regional or national incident. It has national assets in its urban search and rescue team, and a hazardous detection, identification and monitoring team. It also has specialist national inter-agency liaison officers providing 24/7 cover, to support a response to a terrorist or similar attack.

Fire control operators can update the national resilience fire control centre with any changes to availability, and request support from national assets.

The service has site-specific emergency plans for its highest-risk premises. Planning for control of major accident hazards sites is done in conjunction with LRF organisations.

The service has effective arrangements to support the fire control room at times of high demand. It has arrangements with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire fire and rescue services as part of the tri-service arrangement.

Working with other services

The service has effective agreements with neighbouring fire and rescue services to support each other at incidents. In certain areas, it has also agreed that where a neighbouring fire and rescue service has a quicker fire engine, it should respond. This makes sure the public receives the quickest response.

We found that staff could confidently access cross-border risk information on MDTs in all the areas we tested. Control operators also have access to risk information for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire fire and rescue services through the tri-service mobilising system.

The service has arrangements to carry out cross-border exercises with neighbouring services, although these arrangements were more effective in some areas than others. The service should make sure it conducts cross-border exercises with all its neighbours.

Working with other agencies

The service is an active member of the LRF. The chief fire officer is a member of the LRF board. The assistant chief fire officer chairs the governance and delivery group, and another officer chairs a subgroup. Those involved in the LRF told us that the service plays an active role.

The service has taken part in several exercises in the last 12 months. It has also responded to three major incidents in the last 12 months – a helicopter crash and two explosions. These incidents tested its multi-agency procedures, in terms of the setting up and running of strategic and tactical co-ordination groups, and LRF major incident communication plans.

We identified that not all level one commanders had a good understanding of the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles](#). The service should make sure staff know and understand these principles.

The service has no policy to deal with a marauding terrorist attack. Control staff had action notes on the mobilising system and could follow the actions. However, some operational staff we spoke to would benefit from additional training to ensure all staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities. The service should review its policy to deal with a marauding terrorist attack.

Efficiency

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

Requires improvement

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. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency requires improvement.

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service has made realistic and prudent assumptions about its future revenue and costs. It is aware of its main financial risks and has robust financial plans in place. In recent years the service has made £9m of spending reductions, £6m of which has been made since 2015/16.

That said, the service needs to improve the way it manages its budget and allocates resources. It needs to look at how it allocates resources between prevention, protection and response. And it needs to make sure its activities align with its IRMP.

The service has the capacity and capability it needs to achieve both change and operational performance. But to do so, it needs to keep introducing innovative and different ways of working.

The service needs to make sure it has enough staff for the level of risk its community faces in the long term. It needs to make sure that its workforce's time is being used effectively. It needs to find a way to check workforce performance. The service needs to routinely monitor, review and evaluate its collaboration activity. The service also needs to consider how it resources its protection team, so that it can meet its requirement for its high-risk inspection programme.

The service needs a comprehensive system for assessing and recording business continuity. And we found a general lack of testing around how the service would deal with an event that damaged its main functions.

In terms of future investments, the service has a trading arm; it works with the city and county councils to make savings and meet some staffing needs; and it has built and upgraded fire stations. It also lets some of its premises but needs to recoup some of its rental income.

Making best use of resources

● ● ○ ○

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection and response activities.

- The service should ensure there is effective monitoring, review and evaluation of the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration.

- The service needs to prioritise implementing new business continuity plans and test them as soon as possible.

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 must improve the way it allocates resources. The city council took over the service's budget management at a strategic level in 2015/16. The service is confident that it has robust and realistic financial plans in place to effectively manage its overall financial resources. However, within its overall budget, the service needs to improve how it allocates resources between prevention, protection and response. It needs to make sure that activity is aligned with its IRMP. Local district plans for activity to address the risks identified in the IRMP aren't directly aligned with the budgets that are set at a strategic level. The financial effectiveness of local district plans is therefore unknown.

The service has acted to reduce non-operational costs. However, this action has been limited due to unexpected additional resources being identified following the city council's strategic review in 2015/16. The service identified and made proposals in its 2016–2020 IRMP for some efficiency savings, including the proposed closure of fire stations. Initially, the fire authority agreed for the proposals to be submitted for public consultation. However, the public and the fire authority didn't support the closure of fire stations and the proposals were withdrawn.

Productivity and ways of working

In the year to 31 March 2018, the firefighter cost per head of population was £17.42. This compares to the England rate of £22.38 over the same time period. However, many factors influence this cost (for example, the ratio of wholetime to on-call staff. As at 31 March 2018, the service had 614 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff and at the same time 73.5 percent of FTE firefighters were wholetime.

The service has the capacity and capability it needs to achieve both change and operational performance. However, although it is lean, it needs to continue to introduce innovative and different ways of working to make sure it achieves this. The service has implemented day-crewing, and day-crewing-plus shift systems, at some of its fire stations. The crewing model is based on a minimum of four operational staff for each fire engine, and two for the tactical response vehicle.

Tactical response vehicles were introduced to allow the service to respond to some smaller incidents which don't require a fully equipped four-person fire engine, for example a bin fire. Their use is still part of an ongoing wider trial. We found the vehicle principally used as a support vehicle to a fire engine, instead of being deployed to smaller incidents.

The service relies on firefighters working overtime to maintain its operational response. It also relies on managers spending excessive time planning moves and rescheduling planned training. This is proving to be an inefficient use of resources. The service also relies on on-call staff to cover shortages in wholetime crews at short notice. The service needs to assure itself that it has enough staff for the level of risk its community faces in the long term.

At the time of the inspection, both the service's protection and prevention teams had backlogs of work, and staff didn't have the capacity to complete work by the deadlines required. The service's risk-based inspection programme was under-resourced. The service needs to consider how it appropriately resources its protection team to make sure it can meet its requirement for its high-risk inspection programme.

The service currently relies on staff manually filling in forms when they have completed a 'safe and well' visit or inspected premises. When they return, staff enter these details into a central management information system.

The service accepts that many important operational and administrative systems currently require high levels of staff intervention and could be more efficient. In the 2017/18 budget, a sum of £0.5m was made available for ICT modernisation. This is currently underway, as is the introduction of business intelligence systems to assist in transactional processes. The service needs to be certain it has the capacity to successfully achieve these changes. The service could do more to assure itself that its workforce's time is being used effectively. It currently lacks a way to check workforce productivity.

Collaboration

The service proactively meets its statutory duty to consider emergency service collaboration. The service has a shared fire control function between Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire fire and rescue services. This means each service can mobilise each other's engines. They also share the use of a fire investigation dog with the East Midlands fire and rescue services. In both cases, all costs are shared equally between the organisations and there are benefits to all organisations, linked to the IRMP.

The service has made savings of £150,000 per year from efficiencies in the control room, through changes to working practices and a subsequent reduction in the overall establishment. Further savings are anticipated up to 2019/20.

The service supports a number of local projects and works alongside the police, health and local authorities to prevent fires in areas that have been identified as vulnerable. The service is also involved in the local Road Safety Partnership.

The service doesn't routinely monitor, review and evaluate the benefits and outcomes of its collaboration activity.

Continuity arrangements

The service doesn't have a comprehensive system for assessing and recording business continuity. Current procedures for the testing of business continuity are limited in both scope and regularity. For example, the control room system shared exercises with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire fire and rescue services to address issues with call-handling only. The service has a back-up arrangement with Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, but this hasn't been tested. Also, staff aren't clear what their roles and responsibilities would be. The service has carried out a disaster recovery test on most of its IT systems, resulting in an action plan. But we found a general lack of testing of how the service would deal with an event that damaged its main functions.

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

● ● ● ○

Good

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making itself affordable now and in the future. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself it fully exploits external funding opportunities and options for generating income, in particular that it is recouping costs for use of its premises by other emergency services.

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

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service has made realistic and prudent assumptions about its future revenue and costs. It is aware of its main financial risks and has robust financial plans in place to mitigate them, with advice received from the city council. The service has made savings and avoided any residual future budget gaps. In recent years the service has made £9m of spending reductions, £6m of which has been made since 2015/16.

As at 1 April 2017, the service had £2m as general reserves; this is equivalent to 6.7 percent of its net expenditure.

The service has created a capital fund of £3.8m as a result of prudent decision making, unanticipated additional funding and planned, targeted savings. Earmarked reserves have been used to buy new equipment that was previously leased, allowing leases to expire, releasing further revenue savings to invest back into the capital fund. The strategy until March 2021 is to continue making large purchases using revenue and earmarked reserves. The service recognises this is not sustainable in the longer term, however. A return to borrowing will need to be considered in the future, although this will be done pragmatically.

The service uses the greater procurement capacity of Leicester City Council to make savings when procuring IT. Recently, it bought 120 computers. The service recognises the opportunities that joint procurement offers. It works closely with other local authorities, emergency services and professional bodies to deliver value for money. By using the city council's finance team and Leicestershire County Council's legal service, the service has reduced its senior management team by two posts.

The service has considered several variables to predict future budgets. These include possible changes to funding, as well as austerity, real-term growth, pensions, changes in pay, business rates, and the impact of changes to crewing and duty systems.

Innovation

In 2015 the service procured five tactical response vehicles to respond to road traffic collisions and small fires, and to give a first response in emergencies. The focus was to improve capacity and to be able to crew to a minimum of two, improving availability in rural areas. The service's strategy was to increase capacity and to be able to improve response times. However, the service has yet to evaluate the benefits of introducing these vehicles.

The service has invested in virtual reality to promote road safety. The service regularly displays its virtual reality products at national events.

In recent years Leicestershire FRS has implemented some technical applications. However, due to limited capacity within the IT department, the service is yet to maximise opportunities presented by changes in technology to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

Future investment and working with others

Leicestershire FRS has earmarked reserves to improve transport, premises and equipment. It has allocated £6m to addressing vacant space and upgrading existing premises. It has built a new fire station at Castle Donington and upgraded several others. The service has lease agreements in place with Leicestershire Police and East Midlands Ambulance Service to share some of its premises. However, the service has not received the amount of income from East Midlands Ambulance Service it had anticipated. While Castle Donington was built with the intention of it being shared with the ambulance service, the ambulance service withdrew from this arrangement after it was completed.

The service has sought external funding. It has recouped £311,000 from the Government, a cost incurred at the Hinckley Road explosion.

The service currently has a trading arm, known as Forge Healthcare. This gives occupational health services to both the service and external contracts. Staff are seconded from the service to Forge Healthcare. Time spent is proportioned on activity for fire and non-fire activities. In 2017/18 Forge Healthcare had a turnover of £227,000, of which £76,000 was returned to the fire and rescue service as profit. When asked, the service couldn't substantiate some of the costs allocated to the company. We note that the service is currently reviewing this trading arm, in particular its cost effectiveness and value for money.

People
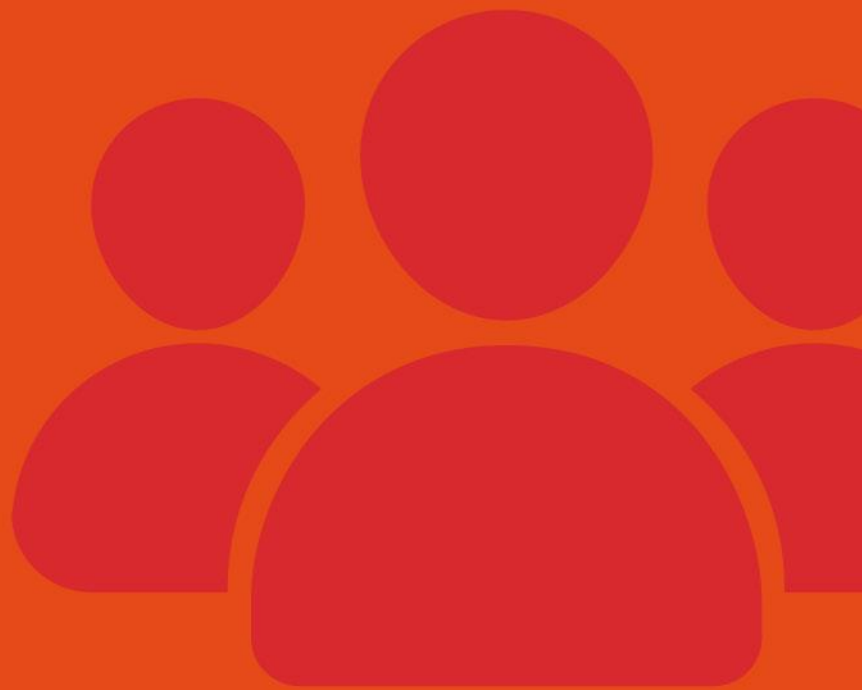
How well does the service look after its people?

Requires improvement

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, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service requires improvement at looking after its people.

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service has no formal process to support staff who have attended a traumatic incident. The service also needs to update its health and safety policy.

The service has had four chief fire officers in the last five years. It has also had several temporary senior managers during the same period. Staff told us that management behaviour has been inconsistent.

The service is currently carrying out a review of its values. But staff weren't aware of this review and had an inconsistent understanding of what the service's values are.

In addition to reviewing its values, the service is reviewing several of its HR policies and procedures. These relate to bullying and harassment, absence, discipline, promotion and recruitment.

The service has a variety of networks and groups to reflect equality and diversity issues. However, the service's workforce doesn't fully reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. Moreover, some staff don't have a good understanding of diversity. During our inspection we heard frequent use of gender-exclusive language.

The service has no central system to record and manage training records. We also saw out-of-date staff training records for health and safety. And the service couldn't show us how it learns from compliments and complaints.

The service's staff lack trust in the grievance process and this needs to be addressed. Several staff said they wouldn't use the grievance procedure because of repercussions in terms of future promotion opportunities.

On that note, staff consistently reported significant concerns about the promotion process. It is believed to be unfair and lacking openness, rather than identifying the talent of the future. The service has told us it is developing a new promotions policy. It also accepts that the current appraisal process is ineffective, and is reviewing it.

Promoting the right values and culture

Requires improvement

> **Areas for improvement**
> - The service should ensure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation.
>
> - The service should ensure staff have access to trauma support and counselling services.
>
> - The service should ensure it has an up-to-date health and safety policy and procedure and that staff understand and follow its health and safety policy and procedure.

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 has an occupational health department that offers health, medical and fitness screenings. Advice is also available on facilitating employees' rehabilitation and return to work. Staff who have used occupational health support are positive about these services.

Last year supervisory staff received mental health first-aid training. This helps them to more effectively recognise staff who may be experiencing mental health issues.

The service doesn't have a formal process to support staff who have attended a traumatic incident. As a result, the service may not identify or support adversely affected staff.

This view was supported by many staff who said that the service should do more to support staff after a traumatic incident.

Health and safety

The service has an established committee to review and monitor health and safety, as well as recommendations from debriefs. However, we found that several actions had not been completed. The service's health and safety policy is out of date and staff training records for health and safety staff were also out of date. Several staff we spoke to couldn't recall the last time they had health and safety training. The service hasn't proactively promoted health and safety with staff. The health and safety team completes audits and monitors risk assessments, but there is a backlog due to limited capacity.

The service has a good system in place for some of its lone workers. Skyguard is a technical warning and protection device used by community safety educators working alone in the community. In an emergency, the system notifies a call centre, which in turn notifies control and emergency services.

Culture and values

In the last five years, the service has had four chief fire officers. It has had several temporary senior managers during the same period. Staff told us that management behaviour, including the way managers treated staff, was inconsistent.

Senior leaders have an annual programme of visits to stations. Some staff were positive about these visits; others said there was still a lack of visibility from leaders. Some staff felt there was a 'them and us' divide, and feedback from leaders was limited.

The main means of communicating to staff across the service is the intranet and the Service Matters weekly bulletin. Staff are aware of Service Matters, but there is no way of ensuring that they read and take in the information. The intranet is, however, easy and clear to use with plain, inclusive language.

The service reviewed its Code of Conduct for Directors, Managers and Employees in May 2018. The service is currently reviewing its values. Staff had an inconsistent understanding of values and weren't aware of the review. In addition, several HR policies and procedures are under review. These relate to bullying and harassment, absence, discipline, promotion and recruitment.

We heard frequent use of gender-exclusive language which tends to suggest a culture that isn't yet fully inclusive.

Several members of staff said they wouldn't use the grievance procedure because of repercussions for future promotion opportunities. While we found no evidence of this, there is a strong perception among staff that this reflects the culture. Many staff we spoke to said the promotion process was unfair and unclear. We discuss this in more detail later in the report.

Getting the right people with the right skills

●●○○

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its electronic system for recording and monitoring operational staff competence is accurate and accessible.

- The service should ensure staff are appropriately trained in safety-critical skills, such as incident command.

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 published its corporate and integrated risk management plan in 2018. Called 'Our Plan: Corporate and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018–2021', it includes an action plan of the main work it is implementing. Staff told us there are several other activities they are carrying out in the next 12 to 18 months. The service needs to consider how work will be prioritised and achieved with the time and people it has available.

The plan also incorporates the new people strategy and workforce plan. The six planning areas in the people strategy are from the National Fire Chiefs Council's national people strategy. The workforce plan lacks detail about how the service will meet its resourcing needs.

The service's 2016–2020 IRMP ('Towards 2020') focused on reducing staff numbers to meet large budget reductions. Measures included:

- reducing the number of operational and support staff;
- reviewing management structure; and
- sharing services with other organisations.

The number of FTE staff in the service peaked as at 31 March 2010 at 913 FTE staff. At the same date in 2018 there were 614 FTE staff in the service.

The service told us that it has reduced several posts within its management structure and that there are quite a few people new in post. The service accepts there is less experience at a senior level, but not a lack of skill. Local authorities carry out some specialist activities (such as treasury and legal). This means the service has access to professional advice and does not need to recruit directly into these roles.

These staff reductions have had an impact. At the time of our inspection several departments had a backlog of work due to limited staff being available. The minimum staffing levels for most fire stations is four. The service has a policy on fire cover resourcing. However, it is not current as it doesn't include all fire stations. The service follows a process to maintain adequate cover. This includes relocating staff to different stations, removing appliance availability and paying overtime. Managers told us they spend a considerable amount of time co-ordinating staff to meet minimum requirements. This has an impact on planned training. There is reliance on paying staff overtime to meet staffing needs.

Learning and improvement

The service has several systems for keeping records about training. They aren't centrally managed. The learning and development team hold some records, while some departments hold their own. For example, safeguarding and equalities training have their own system. The service uses an electronic database to record and monitor some competencies. A 'traffic light' system alerts supervisory officers to any gaps in competence. We sampled the main competencies of firefighters from across the service. We found several to be out of date, and the current system to be inefficient and time-consuming.

Supervisory managers plan and run training for operational staff, and update the system to show competence. They give regular reports to district managers to show competence levels, and training that has yet to be completed.

Level two and level three commanders haven't received training or reassessment following their initial incident command course. The service should put mechanisms in place so that level two commanders and above have the required competencies and training to command incidents.

In addition, operational staff haven't received training in prevention activities or in gathering site-specific risk information. The service is aware of this and plans to give training to all operational staff. Furthermore, equalities and health and safety training was out of date.

The service told us that it is working to improve and enhance training provision, and to become an accredited centre. It knows that it doesn't fully understand the skills and capabilities of the workforce, and plans to improve this. It is confident that operational staff are competent. As part of our inspection, we carried out a survey of FRS staff to get their views of their service (please see annex A for more details). Of the 115 staff who responded to our staff survey (16 percent of the workforce), 70 percent agreed that they had received enough training to enable them to do the things they are asked to do, while 30 percent disagreed. Additionally, 58 percent of respondents agreed that they were satisfied with their current level of learning and development, while 42 percent of respondents weren't.

Most staff have an appropriate understanding of risk-critical information and can carry out safety checks of equipment.

We saw firefighters testing equipment, including breathing apparatus. It was very positive to see that they carried this out confidently and effectively.

On-call and wholetime staff take part in exercises. They have a programme of exercises, some of which are 'over border' with other services and agencies. They take part in a debrief session to enhance their learning.

There was less evidence of learning and improvement in non-operational areas. The service couldn't show us how it learns from compliments and complaints.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

Requires improvement

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure that it has effective grievance procedures. It should identify and implement ways to improve staff confidence in the grievance process.

- To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the service should ensure diversity and inclusion are well-understood and become important values of the service.

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

Service Matters is published weekly on the intranet. The service uses it to communicate important messages to staff.

Senior leaders told us of their commitment to visit all staff and locations across the service. Staff value these visits and feel confident that they can ask questions. But staff consistently said they don't get feedback from questions asked, or they get pre-prepared, political answers. For example, staff have asked for clarification of the use of tactical response vehicles, but haven't had a clear response.

The service commissioned Opinion Research Services to conduct a staff survey in 2016. Some 36 percent of the workforce responded to the survey. The service hasn't been able to show us that it has acted on staff feedback following the survey.

The service has a grievance procedure, which sets out timescales for action. Some staff we spoke to said they don't have confidence in raising problems through the grievance procedure. They lack trust in the process and said there would be negative consequences for them. This could be the reason for the low number of grievances.

In our staff survey, out of the 115 respondents, 21 percent reported feeling bullied or harassed, and 31 percent reported feeling discriminated against at work in the last 12 months. There are limitations to the staff survey which should be considered alongside the findings. We explain these in Annex A.

The service has regular meetings with employee representative bodies. This is the forum for the bodies to raise and resolve concerns about matters that may affect its members. Employee representative bodies said that generally they have a good relationship with management, but there is limited opportunity for negotiation and consultation. They said the service makes decisions in advance, and they want involvement at an earlier stage.

The service has an established staff consultation forum, as well as equality diversity groups and staff networks. Senior leaders, staff representatives and the diversity officer are all members of these groups. The women's network has devised a questionnaire for all female operational and non-operational staff to gather information about what they would like to change or have addressed.

Diversity

The service's workforce doesn't fully reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. As at 31 March 2018, 2.8 percent of firefighters were from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background. This compares with a BAME residential population of 21.6 percent. As at 31 March 2018, 4.2 percent of firefighters were female.

The service has actively worked with diverse groups to promote recruitment. It has attended events during Diwali, as well as Leicester Caribbean Carnival and Leicester Pride.

During the last firefighter recruitment campaign, the service held several 'have a go' days targeting under-represented groups, namely women and those from a BAME background. The service has evaluated these activities and made some changes for the next campaign. The service's website promotes 'have a go' days with more focus on fitness for women, with a view to promoting their recruitment and selection.

Some staff don't have a good understanding of diversity or positive action. Many staff have a perception that white men applying for a job as a firefighter are disadvantaged and excluded. We heard gender-specific terms such as 'firemen' and 'lads' rather than firefighter. Leaders need to do more to challenge these behaviours and attitudes among staff to create an inclusive and diverse workforce.

The service has an equality diversity and inclusion policy, but it lacks detail. Some staff felt that equality impact assessments aren't always meaningful, and that equalities data collated and reported hasn't influenced policies and procedures.

Managing performance and developing leaders

Requires improvement

<div style="background-color: #fdf6e3;">

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it has an effective system in place to manage staff development, performance and productivity.

- The service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open, transparent and fair.

- The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

</div>

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 a paper-based annual appraisal system to monitor performance and development. Data on completed appraisals isn't available as there is no central collation or monitoring. This means the service is overlooking a valuable opportunity to identify organisational learning and development needs.

For operational staff, the appraisal links to continuous professional development payments. Staff applying for promotion need a review and updated continuous professional development plan.

We found an inconsistent approach to appraisals across the workforce. Some staff told us they hadn't had an appraisal in more than 24 months. Some staff said that appraisals were a meaningless 'tick box' exercise; they weren't aware what happened with an appraisal once it was completed. Some non-uniformed staff said that the appraisals don't support their development, and the service lacks development and training opportunities.

The service accepts that the current appraisal process is ineffective, and is reviewing it.

We found performance management to be inconsistent across the service. There are limited performance targets for control room staff. Line managers monitor calls, but there aren't any call-handling targets. We also found that in some departments staff don't have their performance managed. This leads to a backlog of work and a lack of clarity about priorities.

Developing leaders

The service is now developing a new promotions process following issues with how fair and open its previous one was.

Staff consistently reported significant concerns. They said the promotion process was unfair and lacked openness, rather than attempting to identify the talent of the future.

The service has made recent changes, by having members external to the service on some interview panels. However, the lack of a clear agreed procedure will continue to feed the perception of unfairness and bias.

The service doesn't have a formal talent management process, or one that seeks out high-performing or high-potential staff to develop them to become future leaders. The service has invested in leadership management training for senior managers. This is an area it recognises it needs to improve.

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. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is a combined FRA.

Metropolitan FRA

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