

EMERGENCY SERVICES NEWS BRIEFING

March 2021

In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications affecting the sector, with particular focus on the progress made on the police recruitment campaign and how fire and rescue services have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Police

Police supported with 6,620 extra officers and funding

The Home Office has announced it is strengthening police forces with 6,620 additional officers as well as resources to cut crime and keep communities safe. The latest figures indicate the progress that has been made between the launch of the police recruitment campaign up to the end of December 2020, which means that the government's campaign to recruit 20,000 extra officers over the next three years 'remains ahead of schedule, having exceeded the target to recruit 6,000 officers by March.'

The recruitment drive is at the centre of the government's commitment to support the police with additional resources in the effort to reduce crime. The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, has also announced a further £20m to help crack down on 'neighbourhood crimes' like burglary, robbery, theft and vehicle crime. This funding forms the second round of the 'Safer Streets fund', which launched in January 2020 and will be open to police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and local authorities and go towards 'local-crime cutting interventions in residential areas.'

[Read more](#)

An inspection of the effectiveness of the Regional Organised Crime Units

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has published a report following its inspection into how effectively and efficiently the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) deal with threats from serious and organised crime. HMICFRS found that there had been 'substantial progress' in some areas particularly that of cyber-crime and undercover policing, which have received specific funding.

HMICFRS also notes that whilst there was evidence of some good work, there were inconsistencies across England and Wales in the 'resourcing, leadership and operation of ROCUs.'

HMICFRS has set out several recommendations to further improve the effectiveness of the ROCU network including that the Home Office should consider what regulatory changes should be made to enable the National Crime Agency 'to formally task ROCUs.' It is also proposed that the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), lead for serious and organised crime, 'design a national function' that can ensure ROCUs operate in a 'co-ordinated and consistent way.'

[Read more](#)

Police grants in England and Wales: 2021 to 2022

The Home Office has published the final allocations of grants to PCCs in England and Wales for 2021/22. Policing will receive up to £15.8bn to build back safer communities and cut crime, an increase of £636m from the previous year. The funding package includes additional funding to PCCs to drive the recruitment of 20,000 extra officers and also for national priorities, including police technology.

[Read more](#)

Police to receive £60m to support Covid-19 response

The Home Secretary has announced that £58m will be made available to help pay for costs incurred by police due to the pandemic, including overtime and making police stations 'Covid-secure.'

Forces will also receive a share of a further £2m to support them to assist with 'further increased presence and enforcement of regulations' at airports and ports, to ensure travellers are complying with the latest border health measures.

[Read more](#)

Home Office evidence to the Police Remuneration Review Body

The Home Office has submitted evidence to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) for the 2021/22 pay round. The Police Remuneration Review Body must consider evidence from a variety of sources when giving advice on pay, including the Home Office.

Following its proposal to continue 'pay uplifts at a value of £250 or the National Living Wage (NLW) increase', the Home Office has asked the PRRB to provide recommendations on the implementation of this uplift and the number of officers this will be applicable to.

[Read more](#)



APCC business plan 2020/22

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) has published its business plan setting out its priorities and what it expects to deliver over the next two years. The APCC sets out its plans for delivering excellence in policing, delivering safer communities, providing a national voice for PCCs, victims and the public and developing their organisation.

[Read more](#)

Fire

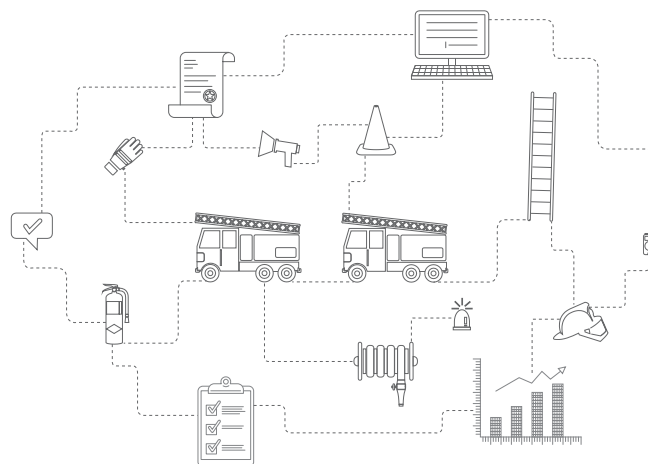
The fire and rescue service's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020

HMICFRS has published a report following its inspection on how each of the 45 fire and rescue services in England responded to challenges faced during the pandemic. Overall, HMICFRS found that the fire and rescue service responded 'very well.' Services maintained their ability to respond to fires, and many provided pandemic-specific support outside their statutory duties. This included driving ambulances and delivering essential items to the most vulnerable as well as personal protective equipment to those in healthcare. However, some fire services were unable to maximise this support due to outdated and restrictive working practices within the sector. This caused delays to how some fire and rescue services provided support.

The report found that an agreement put in place between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), the fire and rescue service National Employers and the Fire Brigades Union 'became more of a hindrance than a help for some services.'

HMICFRS has also published 44 individual national service letters giving detailed findings and focus areas for improvement for each fire and rescue service.

[Read more](#)



Analysis of non-fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services

The Home Office has published statistics on incidents and fires attended by fire and rescue services and fire-related fatalities and casualties from those fires between April 2019 and March 2020. Key statistics include:

- there were 171,959 non-fire incidents, an increase of 6 per cent from the previous year;
- non-fire incidents accounted for 31 per cent of the total incidents attended by fire and rescue services; and
- there were 7,459 non-fire false alarms, an increase of 3 per cent from the previous year.

[Read more](#)

Managing risks in a changing environment

We have analysed the risk registers of 16 FRSs, examining 264 individual risks in total. We have categorised each risk by key theme to understand those areas of greatest concern. In doing so, services should be mindful of not just the risks highlighted but also those opportunities for development and service enhancement.

Our latest review identifies some persistent challenges, together with some new and emerging risk areas, particularly in relation to IT and the external environment.

Please do get in touch with your RSM contact to receive a copy of our paper.



Further information

Daniel Harris

National Head of Emergency Services and Local Government

T +44 (0)7792 948 767

E daniel.harris@rsmuk.com

rsmuk.com

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