

Emergency Services News Briefing

June 2021



In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications affecting the sector. Inspections have been a key area with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) publishing two reports: one on policing in the pandemic; and another on the Annual Assessment of fire and rescue services. We also draw your attention to our review of police strategic risk registers, which identifies some persistent challenges, together with some new and emerging risk areas.

Police

Police officer uplift, quarterly update to March 2021

The Home Office's latest statistics show government is 44 per cent of the way towards meeting its ambition of hiring 20,000 additional police officers by 2023. As of 31 March 2021, every one of the 43 police forces in England and Wales has hit or surpassed its first-year recruitment target since the launch of the Police Uplift Programme in September 2019.

More women (45,996) are now employed as police officers in forces across England and Wales than ever before. Since April 2020, 42 per cent (5,037) of the new recruits have identified as female. The number of Black, Asian and other ethnic minority officers is also now at its highest point on record, with 10,218 officers from these communities employed in forces across England and Wales.

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Queen's speech

In the Queen's Speech it was noted that a new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will increase sentences for the most serious and violent offenders and ensure the timely administration of justice.

[Read more](#)

Policing in the pandemic

HMICFRS has published a report following its inspection of the police response to the pandemic between March and November 2020. HMICFRS found that during the first lockdown the demand on policing changed. There were fewer reports of some crimes such as theft and robbery, and an increased need to support the work of other frontline services as well as enforcing lockdown restrictions. This change meant forces utilised their resources differently. For example, some forces were able to clear backlogs of outstanding arrest warrants.

The inspection found that police forces introduced new ways of working during the pandemic that could provide future benefits to policing, such as incorporating video conferencing technology in order to continue working with local safeguarding services.

HMICFRS has made several recommendations to police forces, including that forces must immediately ensure they are following self-isolation guidance when staff come into contact with someone with coronavirus symptoms and within six months, forces must assess the sustainability of any temporary measures made during the pandemic that change the way they work.

The inspectorate has also published a [separate report](#) about how police custody services in England and Wales have operated during the pandemic.

[Read more](#)

Policing inspection programme and framework 2020/21

HMICFRS has published its policing inspection programme and framework for the year 2020/21. HMICFRS's plans were kept under regular review throughout 2020/21 and were revised when necessary to ensure that they:

- reflected the unprecedented circumstances caused by coronavirus; and
- promoted improvements in 'keeping people safe and reducing crime and disorder, without imposing unnecessary demands on forces.'

Following the original consultation for policing inspection in 2020/21 published in March 2020, HMICFRS had suspended considerable inspection activity following the lockdown restrictions in March 2020. A revised consultation was launched in July 2020 followed by the finalised policing inspection programme and framework being published in March 2021.

Types of inspections detailed by HMICFRS as part of its framework includes PEEL assessments, national thematic inspections, inspections of national agencies and non-Home Office forces and joint inspections.

[Read more](#)

Managing risks in a changing environment

RSM's latest review of strategic risk registers identifies some persistent challenges, together with some new and emerging risk areas, particularly in relation to demand management, workforce planning and responding to the pandemic.

We have analysed 31 strategic risk registers, examining 461 individual risks in total. Our analysis is made up of risk registers from police forces, offices of the police and crime commissioner (OPCC) and police, fire and crime commissioners (PFCC).

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

Value for money profiles

The latest value for money (VfM) profiles are available, to view comparative data on a number of policing activities. Available on the HMICFRS website, the latest VfM profiles enable individuals to explore the performance and spending of police forces.

[Read more](#)

Disproportionate use of police powers

HMICFRS has warned that police risk losing the trust of the communities they serve after the latest inspection on the disproportionate use of powers. In its report, HMICFRS said that despite having more data on the use of force and stop and search, police forces are still unable to explain why these powers are used disproportionately based on ethnicity. HMICFRS also notes that 'over 35 years on from the introduction of stop and search legislation, no force fully understands the impact of the use of these powers.'

HMICFRS also called for police forces to analyse their data and either explain, with evidence, the reasons for disproportionality in stop and search and use of force or take clear action to address it.

[Read more](#)

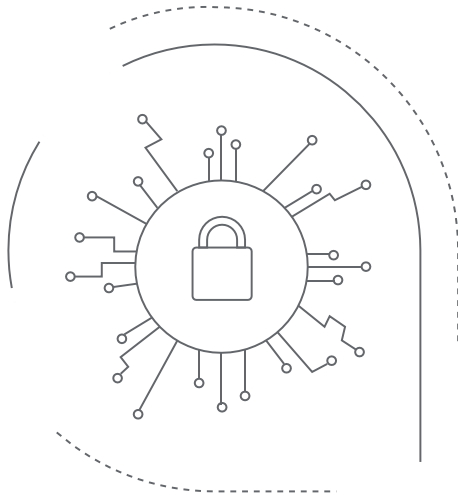
Independent investigations outcomes

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has published outcome reports for 2018/19 and 2019/20 and cover the IOPC's first two full years in operation. Over those two years:

- the IOPC carried out 1,435 investigations, 48 per cent of which examined the conduct of at least one individual and 16 per cent included at least one person under criminal caution;
- the IOPC investigated 1,504 people in relation to their conduct and 58 per cent were either found to have 'a case to answer or faced other action, such as unsatisfactory performance proceedings'; and
- 181 of the 311 cases were proven as misconduct.

[Read more](#)

Police and Fire



Cyber crime is on the rise - how can you protect your business?

As part of the 'Real Economy' initiative, we have recently launched [our latest report on cyber security](#). The past 12 months has seen the cyber crime threat amplified by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic; cyber criminals have utilised the impact of the pandemic on businesses to target workforces that are distracted by the operational chaos and fear around the uncertainty of the health and economic crisis.

Cyber crime is on the rise, and the coronavirus pandemic has offered a ripe opportunity for cyber criminals to capitalise on the chaos. As more police and fire services embrace digital transformation, they need to act to protect themselves from a growing number of increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks. The report provides information on how to break the cybercrime kill chain with insights from RSM's risk assurance experts.

Home Secretary to strengthen Police and Crime Commissioner role

Following a review led by the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will be 'more accountable to the communities they serve.' The review will ensure the public have 'transparent, democratically elected, local leaders' who are equipped to bring down crime and deliver the safer communities the public deserve. The two-part review, announced in July 2020, delivers on a manifesto commitment to strengthen the accountability of PCCs and expand their role.

The review concluded there was strong support for the government's 'ambition to increase the accountability of fire and rescue services by having a directly elected official take on governance of the services.' As a result, the Home Office will consult publicly on whether to mandate the transfer of fire and rescue authority functions to PCCs in England. This will form part of a Fire Reform White Paper, to launch later this year.

The review's recommendations were outlined to Parliament via a [written ministerial statement](#).

[Read more](#)

Timeliness of local auditor reporting on local government

The NAO has published a report on the timeliness of local auditor reporting on local government in England, setting out how the majority of local authorities, police and fire bodies failed to achieve reporting and audit deadlines despite a four-month extension in recognition of the pandemic.

[Read more](#)

Fire

The annual assessment of fire and rescue services

HMICFRS has published its report following inspections on the 45 fire and rescue services in England, to provide an overall view of the state of the fire and rescue sector. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, Sir Thomas Winsor, found that:

- fire services rose to the challenge of the pandemic, with many fire and rescue staff taking on additional activities;
- changes to improve fire and building safety in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire are necessary and welcome; and
- progress has been made on introducing a code of ethics to address toxic working cultures found in a small number of fire services.

There are no new recommendations, new dates have been set for the six recommendations already in place from the previous year and these dates take account of the impact on progress due to the pandemic.

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The Fire Safety Act 2021

The Fire Safety Act 2021 (FSA 2021) received Royal Assent on 29 April. The FSA 2021 is part of a series of changes to fire and building safety the government is making following the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. This now means that building owners or managers in multi-occupied residential buildings must include an assessment of risk related to fire and take precautions to reduce the risk of fire spreading in respect of these parts of the relevant premises. As a result, fire and rescue authorities have the relevant enforcement powers to hold owners or managers to account.

[Read more](#)

Core Code of Ethics for fire and rescue services

A new Core Code of Ethics for fire and rescue services (FRSs) has been launched by the Local Government Association (LGA), the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), which pledges to be at the heart of everything employees do and ensures communities get the best possible support. The Core Code has been developed in response to Sir Tom Winsor's recommendation in the State of Fire report 2019 and in consultation with the sector. The Core Code is designed to help employees of the FRS act in the best way towards each other and while serving the public. It will sit alongside the Code of Ethics Fire Standard developed by the Fire Standards Board.

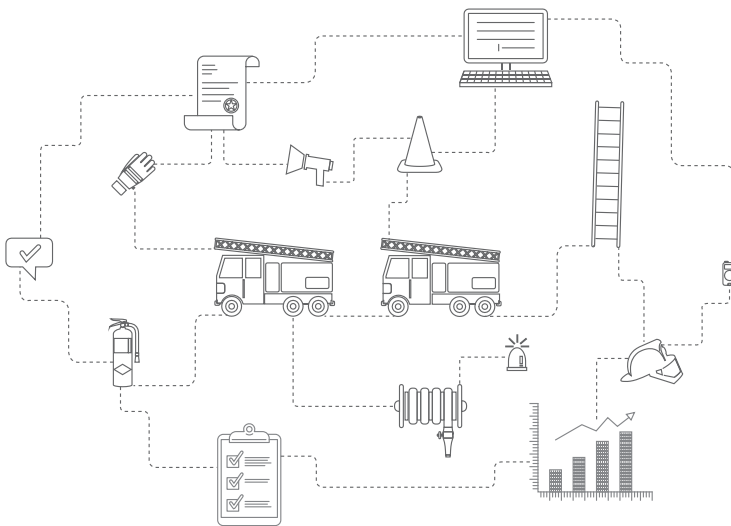
The Core Code sets out five ethical principles, based on the Seven Principles of Public Life, which provide a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging in appropriate behaviour. These include:

- putting communities first;
- integrity;
- dignity and respect;
- leadership; and
- equality, diversity and inclusion.

These ethical principles will help to improve organisational culture and workforce diversity of FRSs, ensuring that communities are supported in the best way.

As a 'Core' Code, it recognises there will be differing governance arrangements and is flexible enough to be adapted by every service, where any local values, behaviours and governance models can be added. The Core Code is supported with the [accompanying guidance document](#) which demonstrates the actions that an FRS should ensure at an individual, management, and strategic level to aid interpretation, support and implementation to embed the Core Code of Ethics effectively.

[Read more](#)



Fire and rescue incident statistics

The Home Office has published statistics on fire and rescue incidents in England in the year to December 2020. Key statistics include:

- FRSs attended:
 - 528,601 incidents, a decrease from 557,073 in the previous year;
 - 14,344 medical incidents, a 25 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (19,122);
 - 24,575 road traffic collisions and 14,913 flooding incidents; and
 - 755 fires in 'purpose-built high-rise (10+ storeys) flats.
- of all incidents attended by FRSs (528,601), fires accounted for 29 per cent (153,278), fire false alarms accounted for 42 per cent (220,432) and non-fire incidents accounted for 29 per cent (154,891).

[Read more](#)

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