

Emergency Services News Briefing

November 2021



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In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications affecting the sector including a new Protection Fire Standard and ensuring communities feel safe.

Police

Police response to violence against women and girls

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has published a report setting out its findings from inspections carried out on how effectively the police respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG) offences. HMICFRS notes that the police had made vast improvements in the response to VAWG over the last decade, including better identification of repeat victims and improved safeguarding measures. But it also found several areas where the police need to improve, with HMICFRS noting 'grave' concerns about the number of VAWG cases closed without charge, and major gaps in the data recorded on VAWG offences.

While HMICFRS has made several recommendations for immediate improvements to police practices, it concluded that the police cannot tackle VAWG alone. It said the whole system, including policing, health and education, must take a fundamentally new approach. HMICFRS also note that the government should consider legislating to create a new statutory duty for all partner agencies to work together to protect women and girls, similar to the existing framework for child protection .

[Read more](#)

Forces given funding boost to increase roll out of Hotspot Policing

The Home Office has announced that 18 police forces will receive a share of £4.12m to increase Hotspot Policing in towns and cities blighted by violent crime. The additional £4.12m will bring the total funding given to those 18 forces to tackle serious violence to £28.6m in 2021. The investment in Hotspot Policing follows the government's Beating Crime Plan to reduce crime, protect victims and make the country safer.

[Read more](#)

Police and local authorities given extra funding for safer streets

The Home Office has announced a £23.5m fund which will be shared amongst police forces and local authorities across England and Wales to make public spaces safer as part of the government's Safer Streets Fund.

[Read more](#)

Questions for committee's consideration

In light of recent high profile national events and the HMICFRS review, how has the Force responded? What action has been taken? What action is planned?

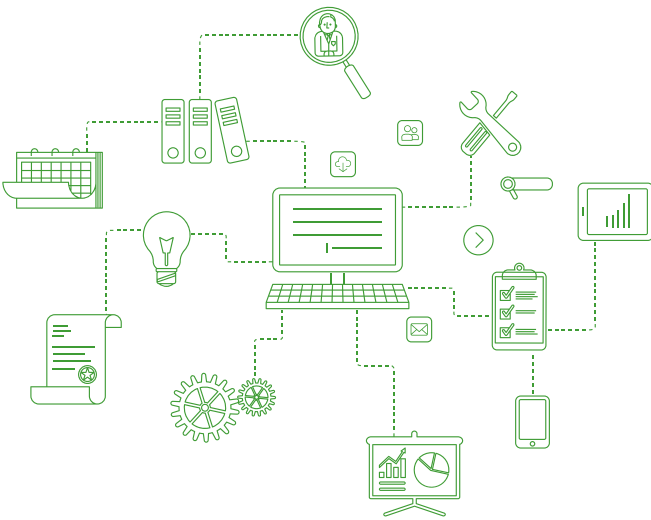
Is the AC aware of the recommendations and do you have assurance on the progress made to date and any gaps in assurance?



Autumn Budget

In delivering his Autumn Budget the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, announced a fund of £540m to recruit the final 8,000 police officers to reach the government's commitment of recruiting 20,000 new officers by 2023. To ensure swift access to justice for victims, the budget provides almost £650m additional funding by 2024/25 to manage the increased number of offenders being brought to justice by these officers .

[Read more](#)



Questions for committee's consideration

Do you know your Force allocation and if your Force has recruited to the respective target?

Do you have assurance the Force processes in relation to recruitment, onboarding, equipment and training are efficient and effective?

Firearms licensing

The Home Office has published new guidance on firearms licensing which will require any applicant to provide details of their medical history to the police. Applicants for a firearms licence may also be subjected to social media checks and officers will be able to interview their friends or family, or any other relevant individuals .

[Read more](#)

Questions for committee's consideration

Has your Force updated its procedures and how are you getting assurance that Firearms licensing arrangements are robust?



Police and Fire

Cyber and information security

The National Audit Office (NAO) has published a guide to support audit committees to work through the complexity of cyber security. The NAO notes that audit committees should be scrutinising cyber security arrangements. To support this, the NAO's guide complements government advice by setting out high-level questions and issues for audit committees to consider. Audit committees should gain the appropriate assurance for the critical management and control of cyber security and information risk .

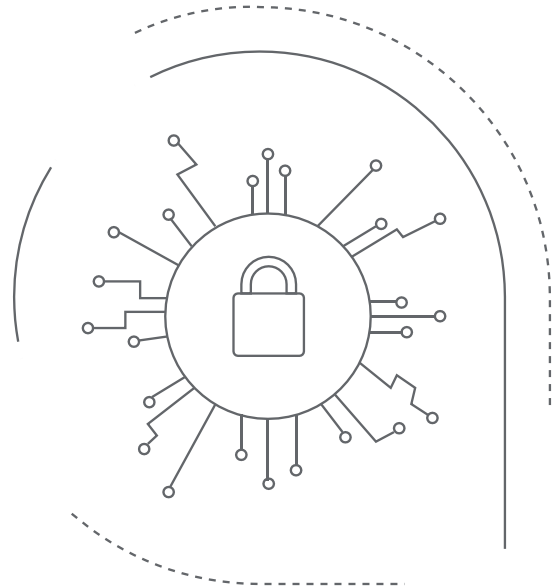
The guide provides a checklist of questions and issues covering:

- the overall approach to cyber security and risk management;
- capability needed to manage cyber security; and
- specific aspects, such as information risk management, engagement and training, asset management, architecture and configuration, vulnerability management, identity and access management, data security, logging and monitoring and incident management.

Questions include:

1. 'Has the organisation implemented a formal regime or structured approach to cyber security which guides its activities and expenditure?';
2. 'How has management decided what level of risk it will tolerate and how it will manage that risk?';
3. 'Does the organisation understand if its risk profile and appetite has changed due to coronavirus?'; and
4. 'Has the organisation identified and deployed the capability it needs in this area?.'

[Read more](#)



Questions for committee's consideration

Has the AC received recent assurance and do they get ongoing assurance in relation to cyber and information security?



ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance)

ESG is poised to be the defining business matter of the decade. With investors, employees, customers and business partners all demanding responsible business activity, organisations cannot ignore how important sustainable and ethical business now is globally.

In a survey conducted by RSM, over 400 middle market business leaders shared how they interact with ESG issues. 56 per cent of businesses are familiar with the concept of ESG. Commissioners, Forces and Fire Authorities need to pay attention to these important pillars of ESG, as being proactive on the social and governance considerations offers great value to organisations. Whilst the survey was aimed at middle market businesses, ESG is becoming an increasingly significant topic across all organisations and businesses whether that is the corporate, public and not for profit sectors.

Read our findings on [The Real Economy hub](#).

RSM's new Associate Director leading on ESG matters



Paul Callum Associate Director – Risk Advisory
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Former senior Police officer, Paul is a highly trained detective (with 30 years Policing experience) and critical incident manager with specialist knowledge of complex investigations into organised crime, business human rights and modern slavery, safeguarding and protective security. Paul provided risk management advice to businesses, on a range of subject matters, with a particular focus on the range of societal risks now being experienced by organisations and how responsible business principles can be applied to make for a more sustainable business, no matter what size or sector. Paul's approach to looks beyond compliance and he is well placed to assist our Police and Fire clients. RSM have recently launched an ESG maturity assessment, and we can provide more details on request.



Fire

Protection Fire Standard

The Fire Standards Board has published the Protection Fire Standard which aims to bring a consistent national approach by fire and rescue services to deliver effective and efficient fire protection activities within their local communities. The desired outcome of the Protection Fire Standard is that it will enable a fire and rescue service to improve the safety of the built environment and wellbeing of its community, complying with its statutory responsibilities. It aims to enable a fire and rescue service to target its resources, using data and intelligence to proactively plan, respond and adapt to the changing needs of its community. Additionally, the Standard aims to evoke a learning and sharing culture among fire and rescue services, to improve and innovate Fire Protection activities and work collaboratively with other regulators, partners and stakeholders.

Alongside the publication of the Protection Fire Standard is the launch of a Fire Standards Implementation Tool. The tool has been designed to support services in assessing how well they meet the Standard and will enable them to build an action plan to resolve areas where there may be gaps.

The Fire Standards Board has also launched a [consultation](#) on the Fire Standard for Fire Investigation. This further Fire Standard will accompany the other eight Fire Standards currently in place. The consultation closes on 6 December 2021 .

[Read more](#)

Questions for committee's consideration

Is the committee assured that the Service is working to implement the requirements of the new standard?

Has your Service / Authority responded to the consultation?

National co-ordination and advisory framework

The revised national coordination and advisory framework (NCAF) for the fire service in England has been reviewed and published. It reflects a number of changes including:

- changes to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Chair;
- changes to the Home Office department responsible for Fire Resilience;
- learning from national scale incidents from recent years;
- coronavirus learning; and
- role of the National Strategic Advisory Team (NSAT).

[Read more](#)



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