

**For Publication**

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
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Item No. 12**

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**REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**SUBJECT: HMICFRS INSPECTION UPDATE**

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Background Papers: None

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Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL	✓	FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	✓
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New	CORE BRIEF	

*Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.*

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) of the outcomes of the inspection process in 2018 conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

## RECOMMENDATION

That the FRA acknowledges the content of this paper and:

1. Acknowledges the findings of the HMICFRS into Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, and
2. Commits to supporting initiatives that provide a response to any recommendations to benefit further improvement across the Service.

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### 1. Background

- 1.1 In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of the 45 Fire and Rescue Services in England. Between December 2017 and February 2018 HMICFRS ran a public consultation on its proposed methodology for inspection of Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), which Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) responded to with the FRA support. The framework is based on the core measures of effectiveness, efficiency and workforce.
- 1.2 Three tranches of inspection will take place through 2018-19, after each tranche there will be a reporting process. BFRS were selected to be inspected in the first tranche in summer 2018.

### 2. Evidence gathering

- 2.1 As stated within 1.1, there are three core measures that are reported on; effectiveness, efficiency and workforce. Within each of these core measures are a series of diagnostics; five within effectiveness, two within efficiency and four within workforce.
- 2.2 The report is developed by the inspection team through a range of evidential gathering, which we are informed can contain up to 1,500 different evidence items. All evidence is triangulated to ensure that there is validity in the reporting.

2.3 The evidence areas have included; data submissions, document submission, discovery visits, fieldwork visits, focus groups, direct observations, individual interviews, written self-assessment submissions, strategic briefing, staff surveys and a reporting line (direct to HMICFRS). These have been detailed in previous papers.

2.4 It has been assessed that 1,200 hours (150 days, or 30 weeks) have been committed to supporting this inspection process.

### 3. Graded Judgements

3.1 The HMICFRS releases the reports for the first 14 FRSs at the same date; 20 December 2018. These will be made available to the public via their website and FRA Members can find further detail here:  
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/>

3.2 Attached to this paper is a copy of the HMICFRS report for your consideration.

3.3 The table 1 (below) provides a summary of the graded judgements against the core measures and diagnostics; note that each diagnostic has been graded and each core measure has a summative judgement. There is no overall FRS judgement.

3.4 Good is an expected graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on having policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards.

3.5 If the Service exceeds expectation it will be judged as Outstanding.

3.6 If there are shortcomings identified it will be judged as Requires Improvement.

3.7 Where serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance are identified, a judgement of Inadequate will be given.

3.8 BFRS has been judged as **Good** for our overall effectiveness. This is important as it reinforces the position that we are effectively keeping the public of Bedfordshire safe.

<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	Requires improvement
Protecting the public through fire regulation	Requires improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	Good
Responding to national risks	Good
<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Making best use of resources	Requires improvement
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	Requires improvement
<b>People</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Promoting the right values and culture	Requires improvement
Getting the right people with the right skills	Good
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Requires improvement
Managing performance and developing leaders	Requires improvement

Table 1: summary of the graded judgements

#### 4. Areas for Improvement

4.1 HMICFRS provide areas for improvement and areas of concern within their reporting. BFRS received no areas of concern across all areas of the inspection.

4.2 In total, 23 areas for improvement have been identified. The report contains areas that have been raised within the hot debrief from inspectors immediately after the fieldwork week which has enabled the Service to make progress on some areas already.

4.3 The areas for improvement are listed below:

##### **4.3.1 How effective is the Service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?**

###### **Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies**

1. The Service needs to improve how it engages with the local community to build up a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area.

###### **Preventing fires and other risks**

2. The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk.
3. The service should ensure staff carry out prevention work competently. This includes understanding how home fire safety checks help keep people safe. The service should ensure staff understand how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people.
4. The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.

###### **Protecting the public through fire regulation**

5. The Service should ensure that it makes the best use of its specialist resources in implementing its risk-based inspection programme.

6. The Service should assure itself that its enforcement plan prioritises the highest risks and includes a proportionate level of activity to reduce risk. It should also include appropriate monitoring and evaluation.
7. The Service should assure itself that its operational staff carry out fire safety audits competently.

#### **Responding to fires and other emergencies**

8. The Service should ensure that staff know how to command fire service assets assertively, effectively and safely at incidents.
9. The Service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.

#### **Responding to national risks**

10. The Service should ensure that it understands national and cross-border risks and is well prepared to meet such risks.
11. The Service should ensure operational staff have a good access to cross-border risk information.
12. The Service should arrange a programme of over the border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.

### **4.3.2 How efficient is the Service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?**

#### **Making best use of resources**

13. The Service should ensure it is making best use of the transformational reserve to improve how the service works.
14. The Service should ensure the workforce's time is being used efficiently and effectively. This relates specifically to the use of wholetime and fire control resources, and the potential use of on-call staff in the strategic reserve system.
15. The Service should ensure that it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any initiatives. This should include collaboration.

### **Making the fire and rescue Service affordable now and in the future**

16. The Service needs to secure an affordable way of managing the risk of fire and other risks now and in the future. Its future budget gap is increasing, but it has no plans to address and reduce it other than to use reserves. This is not sustainable.
17. The Service needs to make better use of technology to improve bureaucratic frontline working practices that rely on paper-based processes.

### **4.3.3 How well does the Service look after its people?**

#### **Promoting the right values and culture**

18. The Service should ensure that its values and behaviours statements are understood and demonstrated at all levels within the organisation.

#### **Getting the right people with the right skills**

19. The Service should assure itself that its requirement for competent on-call staff who join as wholetime to complete a probationary training course is value for money and the best use of resources.

#### **Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity**

20. 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, led by chief officers.
21. The Service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures.

#### **Managing performance and developing leaders**

22. The Service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high potential staff and aspiring leaders.
23. The Service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is are open, transparent and fair.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The debrief with inspectors following fieldwork week provided opportunity to consider areas for improvement from their initial findings. From this feedback, consideration was given to priorities and those considered more significant have already been commenced.

5.2 Now that the report has been released, consideration will be given to ensuring progress is maintained on areas where we are reported as performing well and to developing the areas for improvement.

To do this we will:

5.2.1 Develop a plan of action that captures the current Service position against each area for improvement and consider appropriate actions and timescales for the delivery;

5.2.2 Rate the actions based on organisational risk to ensure that improvement is appropriately prioritised and achievable within business as usual;

5.2.3 Functional Heads will be responsible to ensuring suitable progress is maintained and evidenced and that outcomes are delivered;

5.2.4 Corporate Management Team (CMT) will monitor the progress; and

5.2.5 Maintain an effective relationship with our HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead (SLL) to continue to demonstrate our commitment toward improvement in relation to their highlighted areas and to other areas of Service performance where this adds further value.

5.3 Our evidence that has been collated and used to support this inspection process will be reviewed, categorised and maintained for future processes.

5.4 In concluding, it is important to recognise the involvement of every member of staff within our Service that has in some way affected the outcomes of the HMICFRS report. In total, 21% of staff directly met with the inspectors and many others have been involved in supporting data and document submissions, planning visits and writing reports.

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