

Wendy Williams CBE

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Chief Fire Officer Jon Pryce
Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue

29 June 2021

Dear Jon,

HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AND RESCUE INSPECTION - FOLLOW UP

Thank you for hosting the HMICFRS inspection team during our recent inspection. I know you were provided with initial feedback on 7 June 2021.

2. During the debrief, we shared our initial findings from the inspection fieldwork. The team described how the service has effective procedures in place for dealing with major and multi - agency incidents.
3. The inspection team also outlined areas where we felt improvement was needed. Following consideration of the evidence we collected I am writing to outline a cause of concern in relation to how Hereford & Worcester FRS keeps the public safe through prevention activity.
4. We found that the service does not have a clear prevention strategy that identifies and prioritises those most at risk from fire. The service is making very limited use of risk modelling information to ensure prevention activity is targeted at the most vulnerable. We were concerned that prevention activity is not a sufficiently high priority for the service, and it has limited productivity when compared to other similar Fire & Rescue Services. There is limited capacity in the prevention team to deal with referrals, post fire prevention activity and campaigns. There is currently a backlog

of referrals for the prevention team to complete and at the time of the inspection operational crews were doing very limited prevention activity. As was found in the round one inspection in 2018, there is also limited evaluation of prevention activity to assess its impact.

Cause of concern

Prevention activity is not a sufficiently high priority for the service, and it is not adequately identifying those most at risk from fire.

Recommendation(s):

By 31 August 2021, the service should have plans in place for:

- An effective system to define the levels of risk in the community.
- The development and delivery of a prevention strategy that prioritises the people most at risk of fire and ensures that work to reduce risk is proportionate.
- The review of systems and processes for dealing with referrals from partner agencies. This is to make sure they are managed effectively, and the backlog of safe and well visits is reduced and resourced in accordance with risk.

5. As a result of these concerns, I should be grateful if you would provide an action plan that sets out how you intend to address the issues we identified, by 31 August 2021. I have asked the inspection team to revisit your service in the Autumn to review the progress being made against your plan in relation to the above areas. Your service liaison lead, Andy Groom, will be in touch to discuss arrangements for the revisit.

6. I understand this will be a challenging time for you and the service and I would be happy for you to meet with the team if you require further clarification. I am copying this letter to the Chair of Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority, Cllr Kit Taylor.

Yours Sincerely,



Wendy Williams CBE

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