



Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2018/19

Updated: April 2021



In March 2018, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) announced their intention to inspect all 45 fire and rescue services in England over the next 18 months. The Service was selected as one of the first 14 services to be inspected.

Over summer 2018, inspectors from HMICFRS carried out their in-depth review of our Service, focusing on how effective and efficient we are and how well we look after our people. Their report was published in December 2018, and this is [the link to the report](#).

Report findings

The inspection considered three main questions:

- How **effective** is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- How **efficient** is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- How well does the fire and rescue service look after its **people**?

The Service was found to be 'good' within the effectiveness area but 'requiring improvement' when considering efficiency and people. The inspection report highlighted a number of areas for improvement and recommended that action be taken to address them. Therefore, the Service has prepared an Improvement Plan which not only focuses on the areas for improvement highlighted in the inspection report. The Improvement Plan is owned by senior managers and is regularly updated and published as progress is made.

The last update was presented to the Fire Authority on 24th February 2021 and the [Improvement Plan](#) was published on the Service website.

This report provides an update of progress in implementing the Improvement Plan up to April 2021 against the identified Areas for Improvement noted in the HMICFRS report. Greyed out sections in the Improvement Plan note actions completed or embedded in the Service's ongoing processes.

Effectiveness – ES1.4

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| Area for Improvement | The Service should ensure staff understand how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people. | | |
| Summary Finding | The Service has extended its home fire safety checks to include questions about vulnerable people. Further training is needed to give staff more confidence in this process. | | |
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| HWFRS Action Proposed | Progress To Date | Q4 2020-2021 | Target Date |
| a. All staff to complete the Safeguarding e-learning package. | All staff have access to the online E-learning package, due be completed by end September 2019. Q1 89% complete, districts to chase those outstanding. | Prevention now has procedures in place to regularly monitor the e-learning package and to follow up on any that are outstanding. | Ongoing |
| b. Human Resources staff should be trained in safer recruiting. | Four recruitment officers have completed principles of safer recruitment training. | | Complete |
| c. Safeguarding training included in L1 Command training. | In the Level 1 incident command assessments, additional questions have been added to confirm understanding of safeguarding. | | Complete |
| d. Continue to work with Operational Crews and how they can report concerns to Community Risk. | Community Risk staff have now visited all Wholetime watches and district teams prior to the roll out of the new safe and well check. 24 visits have been completed and covered Vulnerability, safeguarding and signposting. | | Complete |
| e. Station Skills audits checking all staff are trained to the appropriate level. | As part of the 2020-21 Station Assurance Audit, questions regarding safeguarding are now included and will be reviewed on completion of this process. | | Complete |
| f. Additional training for Managers. | Domestic Abuse training was delivered in September 2019 via Training & Development Centre. 55 staff from across the Service completed this training. An additional 6 sessions were booked for March 2020 for Level 1 Commanders. 3 training sessions have been completed with the rest postponed again due to Covid-19 and Lockdown 3. These will be programmed in when it's safe to do so. The external provider is reluctant to deliver this remotely due to the loss of impact. | The domestic abuse training will be reviewed again in June 2021 due to the lockdown extension. | Jun 21 |
| | Statutory safeguarding training for middle managers and the service lead has commenced. Basic Adults safeguarding training took place on 10th Dec 20 and 25th Jan 21. Children's Safeguarding training and Recognising, Responding and Report Adult Safeguarding training completed. Any other outstanding courses were completed remotely. | | Feb 21 |
| Strategic lead | Assistant Director: Prevention | | |

Effectiveness – ES1.10

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| Area for Improvement | The service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command. | | |
| Summary Finding | The service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies. It has good equipment and training. It is flexible in how it responds to incidents and follows national guidance. However, it should use hot debriefs more often. | | |
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| HWFRS Action Proposed | Progress To Date | Work since last update | Target Date |
| Review policy and make necessary amendments. | The Incident and Exercise Debrief SPI is up to date and current with the last review date 1 September 2019. Following this review only minor amendments were required, notably a revision to reflect the new electronic system and to highlight 'hot debriefing' protocols as recommended by HMICFRS. Ops policy have created a handbook file that includes hot, electronic and formal debrief overviews. | | Complete |
| Incident Command department to cover debriefs on initial course, during the bi-annual health checks and on the technical knowledge packages. | A supplementary debrief question has been added to the list of questions asked following conclusion of an Incident Commander Health check. Incident Command Training Lead has confirmed that he covers all debriefs on the initial incident courses. This will be noted in the course master file. Incident Command Training Lead has confirmed that hot debriefs have been added to Incident Command packages and questions. | | Complete |
| Appropriate debrief carried out' question included in AIM form. | This question is included within the AIM form. Monitoring has identified further information is required in the notes section of the debrief. This is currently being addressed with all monitoring Officers | | Complete |
| Questions on hot debriefs is included in the Practical Skills Audit 20/21 to report on the understanding of Junior Officer's responsibilities for hot debriefs. | This has been requested as part of the Practical Skills Audit for the 2020/21. This process starts in April. | | Complete |
| IRS update. Additional question to be added into Incident Reporting System. | When the new IRS is introduced an additional question asking whether a hot debrief has taken place will be added. This will allow the Service to monitor the number of hot debriefs being carried out. Bulletin item now drafted to raise the awareness of debriefs, including individual responsibilities. This will be circulated following completion of the above work on the IRS. | Awaiting purchase of IRS configuration tool to allow hot debrief questions to be added to incident reports. To be purchased in 2021. | On-going |
| Debriefs to be included in all future promotion workbooks for CC's and WC's. | Actioned | | Complete |
| Strategic lead | Assistant Director: Response | | |

Efficiency- EY1.4

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| Area for Improvement | The Service should assure itself that its workforce is productive. | | |
| Summary Finding | Progress made in the Service’s prevention work is likely to increase workloads in other areas. We found that specialist prevention officers already have a lot of work to do. This is a risk. The Service should review the situation and consider how to deal with this problem. | | |
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| HWFRS Action Proposed | Progress To Date | Q4 2020-2021 | Target Date |
| Implementation of Community Risk Plans 2020/2021: Accidental Dwelling Fires Deliberate Fires Health and Well Being Road Traffic Collisions. | These plans are currently in draft. A Strategic CRMP Workshop took place in January 2019 where a common definition of risk was agreed with Shropshire FRS. The updated plans are drafted and awaiting SMB sign off. Progress against the plans will be reviewed on a quarterly basis once they have gone live. Due to flooding events in February affecting staff availability and the current situation with Covid-19, the sign off of these documents has been delayed. | SMB have approved the need for overarching Prevention and Protection Strategies. These documents will incorporate the previously drafted plans and align with aims identified within the Service’s CRMP 2021-2025 these strategies have been written and are due to go to SMB imminently | May 2021 |
| We want to clear the backlog we have for the specialist prevention officers and allocate sufficient resources to prevention. | As a result of the SMB paper (December 2018) additional budget has been allocated in 2019/2020 to fund additional posts in Community Risk. | | Complete |
| | Two Community Risk Technicians have been appointed and are now in position taking the total number of technicians within the Service to 4. | | Complete |
| | To support the MORSE initiative, an additional Watch Commander and Technician have joined the department. These positions are funded through the PCC budget allocation. | | Complete |
| Periodic review of progress against back log for Technicians | A quarterly report is being developed to review the number of outstanding jobs for the Community Risk Technicians. | This report is now being produced on a quarterly basis and will assist in monitoring workloads now that all technicians have been appointed. It also includes a review of the number of faulty alarms being attended by crews and those attended by crews. | Complete |
| Strategic lead | Assistant Director: Prevention | | |

People – P1.8

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| Area for Improvement | The Service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders. | | |
| Summary Finding | The Service should improve how it manages performance and develops leaders. | | |
| HWFRS Action Proposed | Progress To Date | Q4 2020-2021 | Target Date |
| Ensure specific development actions are being captured as part of the review of the appraisal process/policy. | A bulletin item was published reminding staff that appraisals need to be carried out and the process through which courses can be requested. | | Complete |
| | Appraisals completion has been affected by COVID-19. A bulletin item was published to update staff and an email sent to managers communicating flexibility around completion dates and update them regarding CPD payments. | Reminders continue to be published in the Bulletin on completing appraisals. Overall completion rates are being monitored within HRD. Next steps are to provide evidence of local ownership at a corporate level. | Ongoing |
| Building on the success of the Crew Commanders promotion process create toolkit for promotion/recruitment events. | Toolkit templates for each stage of the promotion process available in HR to support Service Delivery e.g. advert template, candidate guidance, shortlisting matrix, etc. Updates on progress through each promotion process have been provided through regular bulletin items. | | Complete |
| Review promotion policy and recruitment policy to support implementation. | The promotion policy has been approved and is now live. | | Jan 21 |
| | The recruitment policy has been approved by SMB and is now live. | | Jan 21 |
| Implement the NFCC Leadership Framework and the leadership behaviours as assessment criteria for promotion processes. | The NFCC Leadership Framework was used in all the promotional process during 2020 and is now embedded in the Service. | Due to a change in strategic management the Service Learning and Development Plan has been delayed and is now due to go to SMB in Q2 2021-22. | Aug 21 |
| Look into providing coaching and mentoring courses to managers. | Three places on an initial coaching course were offered to ODCG members in collaboration with Shropshire FRS. Consultation on the coaching and mentoring roadmap paper has finished and is with the ODCG group for consideration; this will inform the SMB paper outlining the implementation of coaching and mentoring within the Service. | | Feb 2021 |
| | Virtual training sessions, Coaching Skills for Managers, were held for staff who will coach and mentor the newly appointed Watch Commander 'A's. So far 90 members of staff from throughout the organisation have attended over 10 sessions. The Service is tied into the NFCC coaching and mentoring work stream and when they publish their guides later in the year this will form our coaching plan going forward. | | |
| Continue to have a regular workforce planning meeting. | Workforce Planning Meetings scheduled every 6 weeks and include succession planning. TORs have been agreed. Also communicated to staff via the Service Bulletin (28/08/20). | | Completed |
| Strategic lead | <i>Assistant Director: Prevention</i> | | |