

Fire & Rescue Service

Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19

An inspection of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service



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About this inspection

This is the first time that HMICFRS has inspected fire and rescue services across England. Our focus is on the service they provide to the public, and the way they use the resources available. The inspection assesses how effectively and efficiently Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service prevents, protects the public against and responds to fires and other emergencies. We also assess how well it looks after the people who work for the service.

In carrying out our inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England, we answer three main questions:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

This report sets out our inspection findings. After taking all the evidence into account, we apply a graded judgment for each of the three questions.

Our categories of graded judgment are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

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

If the service exceeds what we expect for good, we will judge it as **outstanding**.

If we find shortcomings in the service, we will judge it as **requires improvement**.

If we find serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, we will judge it as **inadequate**.

Service in numbers



Public perceptions

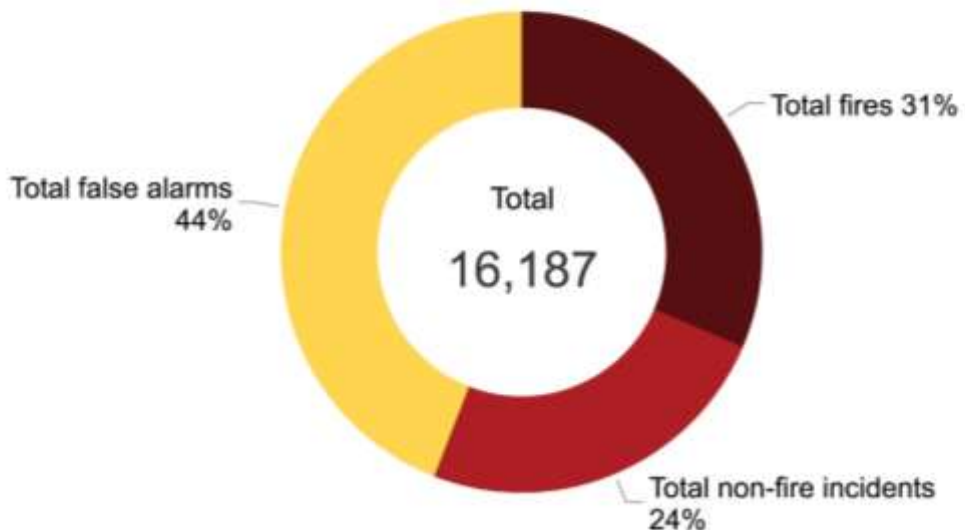
	Lancashire	England
Perceived effectiveness of service Public perceptions survey (June/July 2018)	89%	86%



Response

	Lancashire	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	10.9	10.2
Home fire risk checks carried out by FRS per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2018	8.0	10.4
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises 12 months to 31 March 2018	8.2	3.0

Incidents attended in the 12 months to 31 March 2018





Cost

	Lancashire	England
Firefighter cost per person per year 12 months to 31 March 2018	£22.08	£22.38

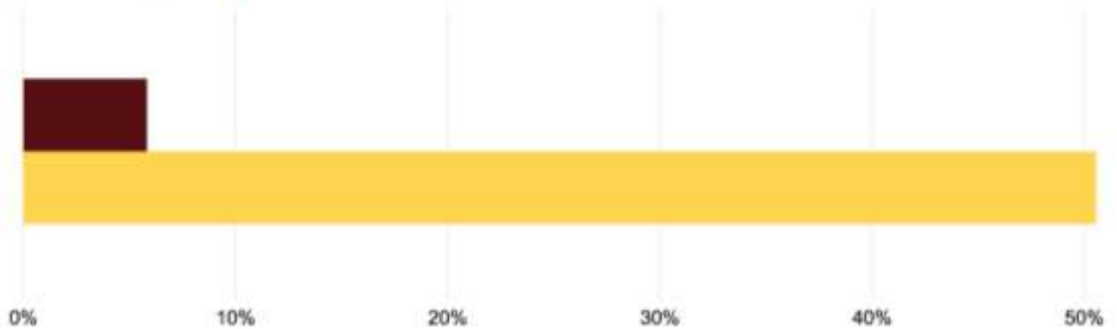


Workforce

	Lancashire	England
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population As at 31 March 2018	0.6	0.6
Five-year change in workforce As at 31 March 2013 compared with 31 March 2018	-19%	-14%
Percentage of wholetime firefighters As at 31 March 2018	70%	70%

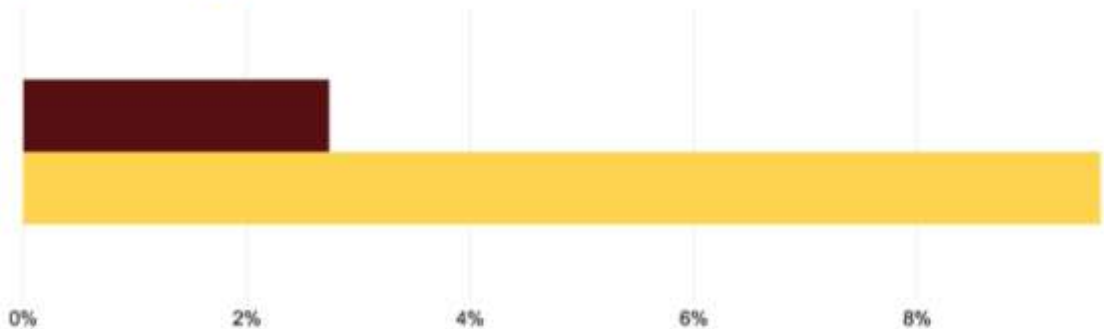
Percentage of female firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● Female firefighters ● Female residential population




Percentage of black, Asian and minority ethnic firefighters as at 31 March 2018

● BAME firefighters ● BAME residential population



Please refer to annex A for full details on data used.

Overview

 Effectiveness	 Good
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	 Good
Preventing fires and other risks	 Good
Protecting the public through fire regulation	 Good
Responding to fires and other emergencies	 Good
Responding to national risks	 Good
 Efficiency	 Good
Making best use of resources	 Good
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	 Good



People



Good

Promoting the right values and culture



Outstanding

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Good

Managing performance and developing leaders



Good

Overall summary of inspection findings

We are very pleased with the performance of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure, and in particular with how it looks after its people.

We were particularly impressed by the way the service promotes the right values and culture and were pleased to grade it 'outstanding' in this area. It is also good at:

- getting the right people with the right skills;
- ensuring fairness and promoting diversity; and
- managing performance and developing leaders.

It provides an effective service. We saw that it is good in its:

- understanding of risk;
- prevention activities;
- use of fire regulation to protect the public;
- response to fires and emergencies locally; and
- response to national risks.

It provides an efficient and affordable service by making good use of its resources.

Overall, we commend Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service for its performance. We are confident it is well equipped for this to continue.

Effectiveness



How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?



Good

Summary

An effective fire and rescue service will identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks its community faces. It will target its fire prevention and protection activities to those who are at greatest risk from fire. It will make sure businesses comply with fire safety legislation. When the public calls for help, the fire and rescue service should respond promptly with the right skills and equipment to deal with the incident effectively. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

The service is good at understanding the risks of fire and other emergencies. It has an up-to-date and accurate database of the risks in its area.

It has invested in a new style of water tower fire engine which can put out fires more rapidly, using a smaller team of firefighters, in a way which is safer for both the firefighters and the public.

It is good at responding to fires and other emergencies. Firefighters who attend emergencies can find information about any known risks at the scene of the emergency by using the rugged computer terminals which are installed on each fire engine.

It debriefs firefighters after incidents, records any new information on its database, and informs its staff what the service has learned from the debrief.

The service is good at preventing fires, and it undertakes a broad range of prevention work on fire, road, and water safety. It targets its prevention work towards members of the public who are at the highest risk. It works closely with the police, ambulance service and local authorities to exchange information about [vulnerable people](#), so that it can help to protect them.

It works closely with local authorities and businesses to prevent arson. It provides education information about arson to police recruits and serving detectives.

Since the Grenfell Tower fire, the service has inspected high-rise buildings in Lancashire and also in neighbouring fire and rescue service areas.

It is well prepared to respond to national risks, and has taken part in a range of exercises with the police and ambulance services to prepare for terrorist attacks. It works well with its neighbouring fire and rescue services (FRSs), and shares a control centre with three other FRSs.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Good

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Understanding local and community risk

We found that the service uses a range of historical, current and predictive data sources to build a clear understanding of community risk. Every year, the service updates a strategic assessment of risk register. It makes this available to the public on its website. This data directly influences the level of response, prevention and protection services which Lancashire FRS provides to the public.

Lancashire FRS consults the public on these services through its [integrated risk management plan \(IRMP\)](#). The plan covers a rolling five-year period (currently 2017–22). In its annual service plan, Lancashire FRS informs the public about any significant changes which it intends to make during this period, and consults the public about the changes.

The number, location and target response times for fire engines are directly linked to risk. The service reviews the distribution of fire engines and stations every three years. It informs the public about the outcome of these reviews.

The service combines historical data on fires, casualties and population information to produce a 'heat map' of the county. This categorises each area from low to very high risk. The service assigns a target response time for the first two fire engines to attend a fire, depending on the risk category of the area, and for the first fire engine to attend an incident where there is no fire, but where life is in danger, such as a road traffic accident. The service staffs each fire station according to the target response time.

We saw evidence that the service works with a broad range of other organisations to understand community risk, and is using a range of data to inform its prevention and protection work. For example, the service is using:

- [Mosaic](#) consumer classification data;
- projected older population data;
- projecting adult needs and services data; and
- NHS data relating to older people.

The service also has arrangements to share information with local authorities to target its services towards people who are the most vulnerable, and at risk. The service accesses shared road safety risk information through its involvement in the Lancashire road safety partnership.

Having an effective risk management plan

The service's IRMP gives an overview of the risks set out in its strategic assessment of risk report. This includes information from the community risk register. Lancashire FRS publishes an annual service plan, which informs the public what the service has said it will provide in its IRMP.

The IRMP provides the direction for the service's prevention, protection and response work.

The service focuses its prevention work on those members of the public who are the most vulnerable, and at the highest risk. The work aims to help people 'start life safe, live life safe, age safe and be safe on Lancashire's roads'.

Protection work focuses on inspecting only the very highest-risk properties, while working closely with local authority and primary authority scheme partners. The service also helps businesses to comply with fire safety legislation, and to reduce arson.

The IRMP sets out both the financial risks the service has managed in the past, and the problems that it faces in the future.

The service measures the progress of the IRMP through a range of performance indicators, which cover:

- prevention and protection work;
- response standards;
- value for money; and
- communication with its staff.

The fire authority reports and monitors these indicators, and makes the information publicly available.

Maintaining risk information

We found that firefighters who are responding to emergencies at high-risk premises can access relevant information about risks quickly. The information is available on the rugged computers which are permanently installed on each fire engine. This helps firefighters to resolve emergency incidents effectively.

More detailed plans are also available for the very highest-risk premises; for example, sites in the county which are covered by major accident hazard regulations. The service communicates these plans to [local resilience forum](#) partners to make sure that they understand the risks thoroughly.

Response, prevention and protection staff can quickly add risk-critical information to the computers which are on board the fire engines. However, we noted that some of this information is out of date.

The service has a robust system for debriefing firefighters after significant incidents, and for informing all members of the service what has been learned. However, there was less evidence that the service is learning from [hot debriefs](#), which it usually carries out after smaller incidents.

The service tells all its staff about the outcomes of operational learning. It does this through a comprehensive safety, health and environment report. It tells staff about time-critical learning through an e-learning portal which all firefighters look at regularly.

Preventing fires and other risks



Good

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Prevention strategy

We found that the service undertakes a broad range of prevention work and its strategy is linked to risk in line with statutory guidelines. The service has dedicated community safety advisors who focus solely on fire prevention.

Protection staff and firefighters also carry out prevention work. The service has recently introduced a post-incident activity log on its intranet. Staff update this log after every incident, to ensure that the appropriate prevention work and partner referrals are taking place.

We found that the service has moved from carrying out a large number of traditional [home fire safety checks](#) to working more closely with partners to concentrate on the most vulnerable people. However, the service should check that this way of working continues to fulfil its commitment to concentrate its prevention work on those areas it has identified in its emergency cover review as being of very high risk.

The service carries out a large number of campaigns and initiatives. However, we were unable to consider the effectiveness of these campaigns as the service had only carried out limited evaluations. Nationally, the service is an influential member of the [National Fire Chiefs Council \(NFCC\)](#) road safety working group, and leads the regional fire and rescue service collaborative work in this area.

Promoting community safety

We found that staff at all levels of the service talk to partners such as the police and local authorities.

The [multi-agency safeguarding hubs](#) at Preston and Chorley are good examples. These allow the service to meet local authority, police, health services and other partners regularly, face to face. They share real-time information about emerging cases of vulnerability, and co-ordinate intervention work, [safeguarding](#) those people who are most at risk.

The service provides extended home fire prevention visits, and makes effective use of technology to make referrals to partners. The service has a prevention campaign calendar which ensures that it co-ordinates local work with national events to maximise impact. We saw good evidence of the service tailoring campaigns to local needs, such the 'take a dip' water safety project.

We saw evidence of the service being involved, and playing an influential role, with local authority partners. For example, the service is a member of the Blackburn with Darwen strategic tension monitoring group. This has resulted in it tailoring prevention campaigns towards people who are at greatest risk from fires.

The service takes a leading role with partners to reduce arson. It works closely with Lancashire Constabulary, and shares fire trends data, incidents of suspected arson, as well as early statements from fire investigation officers to support enquiries and prosecutions. It provides arson education information to support training courses for police recruits and serving detectives. It assesses derelict buildings and schools to see if they are vulnerable to arson attacks, and provides counselling for those who have an unhealthy interest in fire.

Road safety

The service prioritises road safety work. This is one of the four strategic priorities in its prevention strategy, alongside the life stages of start safe, live safe and age safe.

The service is a member of the Lancashire road safety partnership where it works with partners including the Highways Agency, police, ambulance and the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

The service provides bespoke road safety education packages to primary schools, secondary schools, sixth form colleges and further education colleges using firefighters and also dedicated prevention staff.

The service has piloted tyre safety checks for the NFCC and undertakes targeted campaigns linked to local risks. For example, we saw evidence of campaigns linked to young drivers in Blackburn and older drivers in Blackpool where different trends had been identified.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Good

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is good at protecting the public through fire regulation. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme.

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in buildings and, where necessary, require building owners to comply with fire safety legislation. Each service decides how many assessments it does each year. But it must have a locally determined, risk-based inspection programme for enforcing the legislation.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Risk-based approach

We found that the service has a risk-based inspection programme in place which targets planned inspections only at the highest-risk premises. The service uses a risk scoring matrix to identify these premises, and plans to audit each one over the next three years.

Across a sample of audits we reviewed at the Blackpool and Lancaster protection hubs, we were satisfied that the service's inspecting officers are carrying out audits consistently, and are acting in line with their policies.

However, we found that the service is not on schedule to meet the targets it has set itself to complete a cycle of inspections at these highest-risk premises. It is prioritising other areas of protection work ahead of its risk-based inspection programme.

We also noted that the protection department of the service is not as well supported with IT as the prevention and response departments. Inspecting officers rely on paper-based systems which work, but which are cumbersome. This means they have less time to undertake public inspections.

Enforcement

We found that the service has invested in the skills required to take prosecutions where necessary, following the enforcement logic model which the service has in place. Over three years, to the 12 months to 31 March 2018, the service issued 416 enforcement notices and made 31 prosecutions as a result of fire safety audits.

The protection inspecting officers are well trained. The service has an appropriate mix of suitably skilled senior managers continuously on call to ensure that a manager can approve enforcement work and put it in place with a minimum delay. This ensures that if the service identifies any significant risk to the public, it can act on it quickly.

Working with others

We found evidence of effective joint working with partners. For example, the service is working with the local authority housing standards department in Preston to tackle problems in a substantial number of houses in multiple occupation. It is working as part of a multi-agency licensing team in Blackpool to undertake joint inspections.

Additionally, after the Grenfell Tower fire, the service has inspected high-rise premises not only in Lancashire, but also in support of neighbouring services.

The service has a policy in place for dealing with automatic fire alarms which mistakenly report a fire when no fire has broken out. It follows best practice principles. Business safety advisors attached to each protection hub work proactively with the owners of premises where the automatic alarms report a large number of non-existent fires. We noted an example of successes at Lancaster University where data supplied by the service shows a reduction in false alarms by over 60 percent as a result of joint working.

However, we also noted that the service has not taken advantage of the call-challenging protocols which the other fire and rescue services that share the North-West [Fire Control](#) centre use. This means that Lancashire FRS may attend more false alarm calls than it needs to.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Managing assets and resources

We found that the service's response strategy is based on a robust assessment of community risk.

The service has time-based emergency response standards for the first two fire engines to attend life-critical fires, and for the first fire engine to attend incidents where fire has not broken out, but where life is at risk. The service reviews these standards every three years as part of its review of emergency cover. If the service fails to meet any of these standards, it automatically reports this to the fire authority.

The emergency response standards separate the county into 941 geographical areas. The service then calculates the risk of fire in each as being: very high, high, medium or low risk. Target attendance times are shortest for very high-risk and longest for low-risk incidents.

The service has implemented a broad range of duty systems, matched to the predominant risk rating of the surrounding areas. This has ensured that it consistently meets attendance times, but does not have more crews and fire engines on call than needed.

At the time of this inspection the service was consistently meeting all its response standards except for the time taken for the first fire engine to attend incidents where life was in danger, but where fire had not broken out. The service has reported this to the fire authority with a comprehensive analysis and an action plan to resolve the problem. We also noted that although the service was meeting all its other response standards, it was not meeting the call-handling element of the response standard (target of 90 seconds).

Response

We found that most of the service's operational policy is aligned with [national operational guidance](#). The service leads the North-West region operational guidance group and has a project team in place to ensure that the remainder of policies are aligned within the next year.

We saw effective practice in North-West Fire Control, which handles emergency calls for Lancashire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester and Cheshire fire and rescue services. When North-West Fire Control receives a call about a life-critical emergency which is close to the borders of these four services, it sends the nearest fire engine to the incident, irrespective of which FRS area the incident is in.

We visited 11 operational fire stations during our inspection. We found firefighters who are well trained, well equipped and knowledgeable about the high-risk sites in their station areas. Firefighters across these sites demonstrated how they can access detailed risk information by using the rugged computer terminals on fire engines in a timely manner. This included risk sites which are in neighbouring FRS areas, and which they could reasonably be expected to respond to.

Firefighters were able to provide us with good examples of occasions when they had identified safeguarding problems and provided support by following the arrangements the service has put in place.

Incident commanders across these sites assured us that they understand that they have the support of the service's senior leaders to override operational guidance and use their discretion if this is appropriate. Incident commanders not only gave us examples of when they had done this, but also gave us evidence that staff had been commended for acting in this way. We saw signs of a 'no blame' culture that shares the outcomes of any learning.

Command

The service has appropriately trained incident commanders who undertake realistic refresher training to maintain this important skill.

Incident commanders also maintain their skills by attending operational incidents and taking command roles at service exercises. Many of these have a multi-agency response and involve neighbouring fire and rescue services.

Incident commanders at all levels have a good understanding of the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles](#) (JESIP) which assure effective joint working between blue light services. Senior managers have exercised their command skills by taking part in local resilience forum exercises as part of strategic and tactical response groups.

The service is taking good advantage of technology. It has issued incident commanders at middle manager level with computer tablets. This allows them to access a variety of systems and databases which help them to manage and resolve emergency incidents. This includes the ability to look at real-time video footage from the service's drone, even if the commanders are not at the incident itself.

Keeping the public informed

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service communicates well with the public during and after operational incidents.

The service puts easily accessible information about significant and ongoing incidents on its public website. The service updates this regularly. Additionally, it uses a range of social media platforms to reach separate groups. We found it noteworthy that the service had gained approximately 10,000 extra Twitter followers because of a major fire which was burning on Winter Hill moor while we were inspecting the service.

The service is a member of the local resilience warning and informing group. It has a dedicated media team which attends significant incidents and takes part in operational debriefs.

Evaluating operational performance

We found consistent evidence that the service has rigorous systems in place to evaluate and learn from operational incidents and exercises. This has allowed it to make operational improvements.

We reviewed six large incidents which had been flagged in the shared North-West Fire Control as having significant opportunities for learning. Lancashire FRS had fully debriefed firefighters after each incident, had disseminated operational learning across the service, and the service had made improvements as a result.

The service has no numerical trigger for carrying out operational debriefs but we noted that the service has undertaken 140 thorough operational debriefs in the 12 months before our inspection.

The service publishes significant outcomes from debriefs in a comprehensive safety health and environment report. This quarterly report covers common emerging themes, safety critical information and the significant operational learning that emerges from debriefs. Furthermore, we noted the good practice of placing safety critical debrief information on the e-learning platform which all operational staff use. This ensures that the service communicates time-critical learning to its staff immediately.

The staff across the sites we visited understand how the evaluation system works and could give examples of learning that had emerged.

We also saw evidence that the service has shared case studies of operational learning with neighbouring services and has made information available through the national joint operational learning platforms. Additionally, we saw that the service organises and takes part in the debriefs of incidents and exercises involving the local resilience forum.

We did not see the same strength of evidence for gathering and sharing feedback from the less formal debriefs that take place after routine incidents. However, we did note that the service has developed and is currently trialling an app so that it can gather feedback more easily from these more routine and informal debriefs.

Responding to national risks



Good

All fire and rescue services must be able to respond effectively to multi-agency and cross-border incidents. This means working with other fire and rescue services (known as intraoperability) and emergency services (known as interoperability).

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Preparedness

The service has well-prepared arrangements in place to supplement its resources if an extraordinary incident occurs within the county.

It has established and exercised arrangements to activate two strategic holding areas, one to the north and one to the south of the county. These allow the service to receive and park a large number of fire engines from other services and partners. It can then co-ordinate the [mobilisation](#) of the fire engines, and deploy them into the county should the service need them.

The service has site-specific plans in place for its highest-risk premises. These plans are shared with local resilience partners and are available on ResilienceDirect, a national web-based platform which emergency responders can use to share risk information.

Working with other services

The service has mutual aid agreements in place with its neighbouring fire and rescue services. Lancashire FRS regularly deploys its own fire engines into neighbouring areas, and also receives help from neighbouring FRSs. The service hosts an [urban search and rescue](#) unit at Chorley as part of the [national co-ordination and advisory framework \(NCAF\)](#). This unit is available for deployment nationwide. The service has also voluntarily declared its drone available for deployment as part of the same arrangements.

The service used NCAF arrangements to ask for an additional 18 fire engines to support the major incident at Winter Hill moor which was taking place while we were inspecting the service. NCAF said that it considered that how the service managed these fire engines could be used as best practice for other services to follow. We were encouraged to see that the service had implemented learning from similar requests to NCAF during previous incidents. The service had improved command, control and welfare arrangements for the other FRSs which were helping it.

Working with other agencies

The service is an active member of the Lancashire local resilience forum and chairs its hazardous material and training development subgroups.

The service takes an active part in a rolling exercise programme hosted by the county's high-risk sites which are registered under the control of major accident hazard regulations. Each site hosts a rolling programme of exercises. Multi-agency partners and neighbouring fire and rescue services are invited to attend these exercises.

Through these arrangements we saw that the service has taken part in a range of multi-agency exercises. These have included preparation for different types of terrorist attacks at transport hubs and crowded public places. The service is also an active member of a regional national incident liaison group which it attends to share information and joint learning with police and ambulance partners.

Efficiency



How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?



Good

Summary

An efficient fire and rescue service will manage its budget and spend money properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to its risk. It should try to keep costs down without compromising public safety. Future budgets should be based on robust and realistic assumptions. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

The service is good at making the best use of its resources. It is good at making the service affordable, now and in the future.

The service thoroughly understands the financial climate it operates in. It is sufficiently flexible to deal with any future financial problems. It has a strong record of making savings and has saved £18 million since 2011. The frontline savings which it has made have not significantly affected emergency cover. It has outsourced some services where this provides better value. The service uses technology to reduce costs and provide a better service. It has invested in a new style of fire engine. The sophisticated equipment on this vehicle should enable a smaller team of firefighters to put out fires more quickly, in a way which is safer for both firefighters and the public.

The service provides good value for money in its collaboration with Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Cumbria fire and rescue services at the North-West Fire Control centre in Warrington.

The service has a detailed workforce development plan. It has started to recruit wholtime firefighters for the first time in eight years. The plan aims to make sure the service will have enough staff to cover all possible emergencies.

The service has continuity plans in place, so that it can provide an uninterrupted service to the public, if extraordinary events were to affect the service's resources.

Making best use of resources



Good

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making best use of resources. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should assure itself that it makes the most of collaboration opportunities and that they are value for money.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

How plans support objectives

The plans which are in place to provide an emergency service, as required by the Fire and Rescue Services Act, are based on robust risk management processes. We found a clear link between the risk which has been identified in the service's IRMP and the steps the service has taken to minimise their effect on the public.

The plans in place to provide fire cover are reviewed on a three-yearly cycle. The plans include the location and number of fire stations, fire engines, staff and associated duty systems. We are encouraged to note that the service has made significant changes following the outcomes of past reviews. It has, for example, introduced more efficient duty systems.

The arrangements the service has made to provide prevention and protection services, to minimise the likelihood of fires breaking out, have also been kept under review. As a result, the distribution of resources assigned to these activities is linked to risk.

We are satisfied that this cyclical review of resources assigned to response, prevention and protection has enabled the service continuously to return a balanced budget.

To support this requirement the service has a medium-term financial plan. It takes account of a variety of funding streams outside its control, such as central government grants and nationally set pay awards. It also considers the effect of varying levels of council tax. The plan relies on spending a substantial amount of the service's reserves. Therefore, it is essential that the service continues to refresh the planning and review arrangements in place, and acts on them in good time, as it has done in the past, so that the service continues to be sustainable beyond the medium term.

The service has worked with and reinvested in its on-call [retained](#) firefighters to address a downturn in their availability. It has achieved this by providing enhanced terms and conditions as well as investing in additional support in the form of wholetime support officers for retained staff. This has ensured that the service has maintained the levels of fire cover and resilience it has said that it will provide to the public.

Productivity and ways of working

It was positive to note that the service has undertaken a capacity review covering response staff across its duty systems. It has identified areas where staff can be more productive but has yet to implement any improvements. We encourage Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service to undertake this exercise across the remainder of the service.

Although we found a highly motivated workforce, we did not find that productivity is a clear priority. There is a legacy of staff concentrating on working towards achieving targets. The chief officer's ambition is for the staff to provide the highest quality service to the public rather than to be driven by quantity. However, Lancashire FRS should ensure this does not lead to any dilution of the services it provides.

For example, we found that firefighters are not clear whether they are now being encouraged to return to a target-driven culture, particularly in relation to their fire prevention role. We also found evidence that specialist prevention staff could plan their time more productively. And finally, we found protection inspection officers are behind schedule in undertaking the number of risk-based inspections the service aspires to make.

However, we found positive evidence that in some areas the service has changed its ways of working to improve productivity. It has introduced local training hubs at Burnley and Blackburn to maintain essential skills such as dealing with road traffic accidents. This has minimised the unproductive time which staff spend travelling to the Chorley training centre.

We were also encouraged to see that the service has not only made substantial savings over recent years but has innovatively reinvested some of those savings in frontline services. For example, after widespread flooding, it has provided suitable water rescue equipment. It has also invested in a new style of water tower fire engine, the first in the country. Firefighters can use the long extendable boom on top of the fire engine to break holes in walls and roofs, reach fires, and pump water directly onto the source of the fire without putting themselves in danger. The engine can put out fires in traditionally high-risk commercial premises in a way which is safer for both firefighters and the public. When the service sends this fire engine to incidents, fewer firefighters will be needed, and they will spend less time at incidents. The service has also invested in technology to support incident commanders.

Collaboration

The service has recognised in its corporate risk register that it may be missing opportunities to collaborate.

Until now, the service has followed a decision-making model to ensure that any collaboration opportunities are aligned to the service's values. We found that most of the collaboration work which it does provides more value for money for partners than for the service itself.

The service carries out emergency medical break-ins on behalf of the North-West Ambulance Service (NWAS). It has recently completed an emergency first responder trial with NWAS. Progress of that trial is on hold pending the outcome of ongoing national negotiations. The service shares fire stations with the NWAS at Preston, Lancaster and Darwen.

The service has identified Lancashire Constabulary as the partner which can provide the greatest number of opportunities for collaboration. It has established a strategic collaboration board with the police and agreed a work plan of overlapping interests to consider. The most advanced area is the deployment of firefighters to help police search for high-risk vulnerable missing persons. The service also shares its drone when doing this work. The police have paid for part of the cost of the drone.

The example of collaboration we identified as providing best value for public money was the North-West Fire Control centre in Warrington. The service has collaborated with Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Cumbria fire and rescue services to share an emergency call-handling facility.

Continuity arrangements

The service has satisfactory business continuity plans in place to mitigate the expected negative effect of a range of extraordinary events. These plans cover actions which the service would take if extraordinary events happened, and these events affected both physical and human resources. The service has tested these plans with the aim of ensuring that it can provide an uninterrupted emergency service to the public.

Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future



Good

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Improving value for money

We are satisfied that the service has a thorough understanding of the financial climate in which it operates. It has shown that it has the flexibility to change to meet future financial problems. We are satisfied that the important financial decisions it has made are linked to risk.

We were reassured that the service has a strong record of making financial savings. It has saved £18 million since 2011.

We were encouraged to note that the service has made savings on back-office functions as well as from the front line. It is also noteworthy that those savings which the service has made from the front line have had no significant negative effect on the standards of emergency cover.

We found good evidence of the service improving value for money for the public where it can. For example, the personal protective clothing which the service provides for its firefighters has been procured from a North-West Fire Services collaboration framework. This has saved the service around 30 percent compared with accessing other nationally available frameworks.

Innovation

We saw convincing evidence that Lancashire FRS is being proactive in harnessing technology to provide a more efficient service for the public.

The service is experimenting with the use of apps. It is now testing a debrief app to collect feedback from routine incidents where it would not be best value to undertake a full debrief. This will ensure that the service is gathering all available learning at a time when emergency calls continue to decrease in line with national trends.

The intranet-based post-incident activity log aims to join up the information the service holds in a variety of databases across its response, prevention and protection departments. This will ensure that frontline staff have a single point to view all the information which the service holds on locations or buildings where firefighters have attended an incident. It aims to provide an easily accessible assurance that necessary post-incident work, including onward referrals to partners, has been completed.

The service can demonstrate that it is leading the fire sector in the use of drones. It has worked closely with the Civil Aviation Authority to ensure that it has the right safe systems in place to maximise the benefits of its drone. The drone gives incident commanders a fast and complete overhead view of the area where a fire is burning, or where an incident is happening. This has not previously been possible. Additionally, the service is using the drone to help Lancashire Constabulary to search for highly vulnerable missing persons.

Future investment and working with others

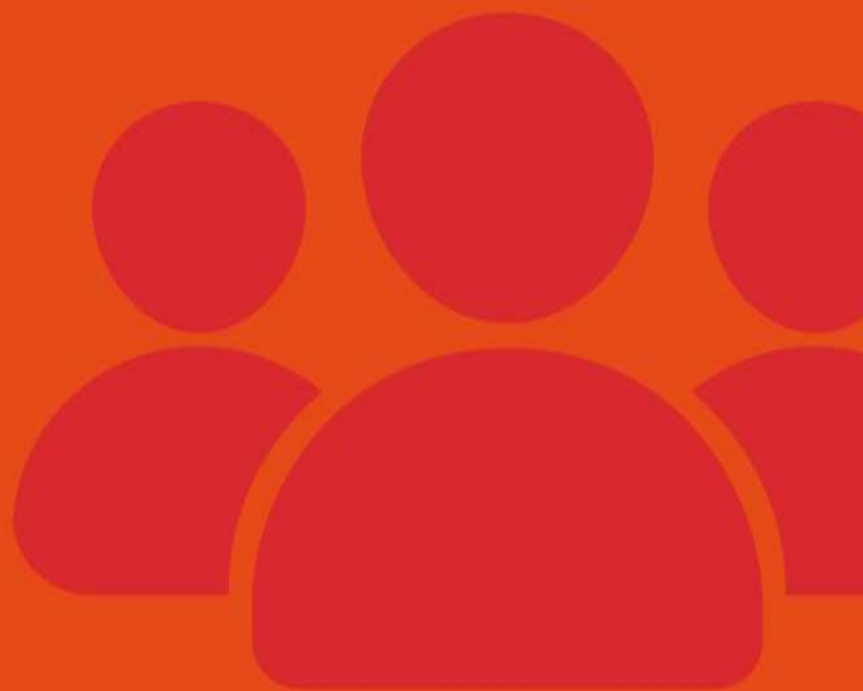
The service has plans in place to spend capital reserves down to minimum acceptable levels over the medium term. The two main capital projects will be the relocation or refurbishment of the current headquarters at Fulwood and the service's largest fire station at Preston. The service has been prudent in not going ahead with these projects during the recent uncertain financial climate. We would encourage the service to explore fully the best value opportunities for collaboration before it proceeds with these significant projects.

We have previously noted the example from the service's fleet strategy where it has used reserves to invest in a new type of water tower fire engine, the first in the country, which is expected to not only improve the response capability, but also need fewer firefighters and take less time to deal with higher risk fires.

The service has invested in a broad range of duty systems, which staff have accepted as business as usual, and which provide the service with the flexibility to match the appropriate resource to risk. This approach should allow the service options for change in the future if it has to make further financial savings.

We noted that the service has shared back-office functions where this is better value than providing the same service alone. For example, it has outsourced fleet maintenance and pension services to Lancashire County Council and payroll to Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

People



How well does the service look after its people?



Good

Summary

A fire and rescue service that looks after its people should be able to provide an effective service to its community. It should offer a range of services to make its communities safer. This will include developing and maintaining a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. The service's leaders should be positive role models, and this should be reflected in the behaviour of the workforce. Overall, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is good at looking after its people.

The service's senior leaders understand that the health and wellbeing of its staff are vital if Lancashire FRS is to provide a resilient service to the public. Lancashire FRS provides a wide range of support services, including help for problems which are not connected to work, but which can affect people's performance at work.

However, the staff do not fully understand the recent change from debriefing whole teams after events to supporting staff individually. The service has a clear health and safety policy, staff are well trained, and the service provides health and safety training for staff in specialist roles.

Promoting the right values and culture



Outstanding

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Workforce wellbeing

We found that senior leaders consider the wellbeing of staff as integral to providing a resilient service to the public. Staff are generally aware of how to access the wellbeing provisions the service offers. The service provides clear signposting on its intranet.

Staff shared positive examples of how they have improved their performance at work because of support which the service had given them. It was also encouraging to see that Lancashire FRS has provided a broad range of support services under the umbrella of its health and wellbeing framework. This includes support for non-work-related problems which can affect performance in the workplace.

However, we did note that staff do not fully understand the recent change from debriefing whole teams after critical events, to supporting staff individually.

Health and safety

The service has a clear health and safety policy in place. Staff at all levels are suitably trained, and the service provides additional health and safety training for specialist roles. The service has robust structures in place to scrutinise and quality-assure that staff comply with their health and safety obligations.

We found evidence of a culture which is impressively open towards learning from mistakes. Furthermore, we were encouraged to note that the service clearly does not treat health and safety as a stand-alone item, but sees it as an integral part of all services provided for the public.

Culture and values

The service's values of 'service, trust, respect, integrity, valued and empowered' are clearly linked to the vision of making Lancashire safer. The chief officer is adamant that they are only words unless members of the public explicitly experience them, and unless they are demonstrated by the way that staff interact with one other.

The service communicates its values clearly by a variety of methods, and its values form part of individual staff appraisals. Each value has also been broken down with practical examples of what it should look like for staff and managers.

We spoke to a variety of the service's partners and they unanimously described their interactions with the service in ways that reflected these values. We were impressed to find that the staff we spoke to across the service were, without exception, welcoming, motivated and positive. Senior leaders are fully aware of the benefits of

this culture to the public. They recognise that it has been the most important enabler of the changes the service has made over the past decade.

Firefighters trust their senior leaders; the leaders are visible to all staff and there is a clear sense of shared purpose between senior and middle managers. The service recognises that this positive culture has not happened by accident but has been a joint effort by staff, staff representative bodies and all levels of management. We are therefore concerned that the service appears to be interacting with different staff representative bodies in different ways.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Workforce planning

The service has a detailed workforce development plan in place. It provides a clear view of the expected staff leaver profile over the medium term. The service is aware of what specialist, command, and managerial skills it will lose over this time. As a result, the service has started to recruit new wholetime firefighters for the first time in eight years. Lancashire FRS realises that it will need to train these recruits for a period of time before they can become effective firefighters. In consequence, the service has planned to have, for short periods, more firefighters than it needs. This will ensure that it has enough staff to cover all possible contingencies.

Strong supporting structures are in place to enable new staff to acquire, develop and maintain necessary skills to carry out their roles. We found clearly defined learning and bespoke development paths which staff can follow in response, prevention and protection. There are opportunities for staff to demonstrate their competence at the next level before they are promoted.

The service has a high level of availability of on-call firefighters. This has been achieved through working with the on-call firefighters to ensure that their terms and conditions match the commitment which they provide to the public. The service has many wholetime firefighters who also have on-call contracts. This has contributed to the strong sense of unity we saw between these sections of the workforce and is seen as an important factor in maintaining suitably high skill levels of the on-call staff.

An effective, centralised system is in place to plan for longer-term staffing gaps on fire engines. However, we noted that wholetime supervisory managers are spending an unproductive amount of time covering short notice-gaps because the IT systems they use to do this work run too slowly.

Learning and improvement

We saw a robust culture of learning and improvement across all sections of the service. We were assured that the service trains response, prevention, protection and support staff to an appropriate level.

Response staff are trained in line with national operational guidance and are accredited against Skills for Justice criteria. Those pursuing progression to command roles complete appropriate Institution of Fire Engineer qualifications and develop management skills through the Institute of Leadership and Management. Protection inspection officers study for an accredited certificate or [diploma in fire safety](#). The service helps its senior managers, and supports staff to take degree-level qualifications where these are appropriate for their roles.

Competency of firefighters, directly linked to their availability to crew fire engines, is effectively managed and monitored through an electronic database. We sampled the main competencies of firefighters from across the service and found them to be up to date. However, we found that local records of non-core competencies were inconsistently completed and we did not find clear plans in place to fill these gaps.

The service has a centralised training calendar that follows monthly themes. This ensures that any realistic training that is planned will not affect on-call staff too negatively. On-call staff have a two-hour training period, once a week, to maintain their skills.

We saw good examples of on-call staff attending exercises planned and organised by their wholetime colleagues. The service has also listened to staff concerns about the unproductive time which they were taking to travel to the training centre at Chorley. As a result, it has introduced training hubs at Blackburn and Burnley.

We saw good evidence of learning from operational work being shared across the organisation through case studies which are hosted on the e-learning platform. This complements the information distributed through a quarterly safety, health and environment report. The service is also encouraging learning and improvement through seconding two different [watch](#) managers to its operational assurance team on a rolling six-month programme.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Good

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Seeking and acting on staff feedback

We found that senior leaders are aware of workforce concerns, seek regular feedback and try to resolve concerns.

We found during our interviews with heads of departments that they are generally aware of the problems that staff had brought to the inspection team's attention during the week we spent in the service.

The service carries out a staff survey and we were given evidence of the things which the service has done because of the feedback from the survey, such as changes to on-call staffs terms and conditions.

The chief officer team is visible to the whole service and undertakes an annual programme of visits to all workplaces and is sometimes accompanied by the chair of the fire authority. The chief officer team uses newsletters, an occasional blog and social media to communicate with staff. The service's annual report is communicated by video.

The service has a low level of grievances which reflects the open and fair culture we found. However, the service has no view of those problems which are being resolved informally at the lowest appropriate level which would allow them to support any further necessary cultural change.

The service has been proactive in gathering feedback from under-represented staff and has set up employee voice groups to represent women and families, Asian firefighters and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) staff. We were encouraged that members of these groups feel that senior managers genuinely listen to the problems they raise and facilitate rather than lead their meetings. They expressed a welcome view that staff from under-represented groups no longer feel under any pressure to blend into any form of stereotype, wherever they might work across the service.

Diversity

We found that the service's workforce does not fully reflect the communities it serves. Senior leaders are aware of this problem, and it has an appropriately high profile within the service. The fire authority has appointed an equality, diversity and inclusion champion, and the chief officer chairs an equality, diversity and inclusion group.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2018, only 5.8 percent of firefighters were female and 2.7 percent of firefighters were from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. Some 9.6 percent of the population of Lancashire are reported to be from BAME backgrounds.

It is positive to note that the service has provided unconscious bias training to all managers who are involved in recruitment, and it has taken some positive action to encourage members of under-represented groups to apply for jobs in the service.

This work has seen some early returns. The recruitment drive for [wholetime](#) firefighters immediately before our inspection resulted in 72 offers of employment. This group included women and recruits from a BAME background. The recruitment process also led to offers of employment to a number of people who identified as LGBT and those who declared a disability. The service should continue to improve the imbalance in the make-up of its workforce.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Good

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is good at managing performance and developing leaders. But we found the following area in which it needs to improve:

Areas for improvement

- The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Managing performance

The service has an appraisal system in place. Managers are required to carry out appraisals of their staff twice per year. The appraisal incorporates the service's values and directs line managers towards agreeing individual aims, expectations and development needs. However, we found that it is only really valued by those who use it as a path to access development courses.

Good development opportunities are in place for staff who wish to pursue leadership roles. The service ensures managers are provided with the technical knowledge to manage performance through the Institute of Leadership and Management. Additionally, if it is appropriate, staff can access further education courses through an educational development fund. Senior leaders are provided with further development through an appropriate external body.

We were encouraged to find that the service had trained some managers in the skill of conducting difficult conversations, and that the service has started to build appraisal-related training into leadership events.

Developing leaders

The service does not have a system in place to identify or fast-track members of staff who have high potential. Instead, the service relies on people putting themselves forward for promotion. We did find evidence that middle managers encourage staff to seek promotion, but this was informal.

Staff trust the promotion process that is in place, and are confident that the service promotes the people who perform best. However, we did find that there was a lack of understanding of how the service makes the final appointments of staff from the pool of successful candidates.

The service provides clear promotion paths, leadership development and continuous personal development opportunities for those uniformed members of staff who are seeking advancement at all levels of the service. However, staff feel there is a lack of proactive development opportunities or engagement with those members of staff who are neither new to the service nor seeking promotion. Similarly, the service does not provide the same clear development paths for non-uniformed staff.

Annex A – About the data

Data in this report is from a range of sources, including:

- Home Office;
- Office for National Statistics (ONS);
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA);
- our inspection fieldwork; and
- data we collected directly from all 45 fire and rescue services in England.

Where we use published Home Office data, we use the period to 31 March. We selected this period to be consistent across data sets. Some data sets are published annually, others quarterly. [The most recent data tables are available online.](#)

We use different data periods to represent trends more accurately.

Where we collected data directly from fire and rescue services (FRSs), we took reasonable steps to agree the design of the data collection with services and with other interested parties such as the Home Office. We gave services several opportunities to validate the data they gave us, to ensure the accuracy of the evidence presented. For instance:

- We checked and queried data that services submitted if notably different from other services or internally inconsistent.
- We asked all services to check the final data used in the report and correct any errors identified. Data that services submitted to the Home Office in relation to prevention, protection and workforce figures was published in November 2018. This data was updated after reports had been checked by services, so we haven't validated it further.

We set out the source of Service in numbers data below.

Methodology

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator in our calculations, unless otherwise noted, we use [ONS mid-2017 population estimates](#). This is the most recent data available at the time of inspection.

BMG survey of public perception of the fire and rescue service

We commissioned BMG to survey attitudes towards fire and rescue services in June and July 2018. This consisted of 17,976 interviews across 44 local fire and rescue service areas. This survey didn't include the Isles of Scilly, due to its small population. Most interviews were conducted online, with online research panels.

However, a minority of the interviews (757) were conducted via face-to-face interviews with trained interviewers in respondents' homes. A small number of respondents were also interviewed online via postal invitations to the survey. These face-to-face interviews were specifically targeted at groups traditionally under-represented on online panels, and so ensure that survey respondents are as representative as possible of the total adult population of England. The sampling method used isn't a statistical random sample. The sample size was small, varying between 400 and 446 individuals in each service area. So any results provided are only an indication of satisfaction rather than an absolute.

[Survey findings are available on BMG's website.](#)

Service in numbers

A dash in this graphic indicates that a service couldn't give data to us or the Home Office.

Perceived effectiveness of service

We took this data from the following question of the public perceptions survey:

How confident are you, if at all, that the fire and rescue service in your local area provides an effective service overall?

The figure provided is a sum of respondents who stated they were either 'very confident' or 'fairly confident'. Respondents could have also stated 'not very confident', 'not at all confident' or 'don't know'. The percentage of 'don't know' responses varied between services (ranging from 5 percent to 14 percent).

Due to its small residential population, we didn't include the Isles of Scilly in the survey.

Incidents attended per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Incidents attended by fire and rescue services in England, by incident type and fire and rescue authority](#)' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- There are six worksheets in this file. The 'FIRE0102' worksheet shows the number of incidents attended by type of incident and fire and rescue authority (FRA) for each financial year. The 'FIRE0102 Quarterly' worksheet shows the number of incidents attended by type of incident and FRA for each quarter. The worksheets 'Data fires', 'Data fire false alarms' and 'Data non-fire incidents' provide the raw data for the two main data tables. The 'Figure 3.3' worksheet provides the data for the corresponding chart in the statistical commentary.
- Fire data, covering all incidents that FRSs attend, is collected by the Incident Recording System (IRS). For several reasons some records take longer than others for FRSs to upload to the IRS. So totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers).
- We took data for Service in numbers from the August 2018 incident publication. So figures may not directly match more recent publications due to data updates.

Home fire risk checks per 1,000 population

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Home fire risk checks carried out by fire and rescue authorities and partners, by fire and rescue authority](#)' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Each FRS's figure is based on the number of checks it carried out and doesn't include checks carried out by partners.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.
- The England total hours figures for 'Number of Fire Risk Checks carried out by FRS' include imputed figures to ensure a robust national figure. These imputed figures are: '2016/17 – Staffordshire'.
- Figures for 'Fire Risk Checks carried out by Elderly (65+)', 'Fire Risk Checks carried out by Disabled' and 'Number of Fire Risk Checks carried out by Partners' don't include imputed figures because a lot of FRAs can't supply these figures.

Home fire risk checks may also be referred to as Home Fire Safety Checks by FRSs.

Fire safety audits per 100 known premises

Fire protection refers to FRSs' statutory role in ensuring public safety in the wider built environment. It involves auditing and, where necessary, enforcing regulatory compliance, primarily but not exclusively in respect of the provisions of the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005 \(FSO\)](#). The number of safety audits in Service in numbers refers to the number of audits FRSs carried out in known premises.

According to the Home Office definition, “premises known to FRAs are the FRA’s knowledge, as far as possible, of all relevant premises; for the enforcing authority to establish a risk profile for premises in its area. These refer to all premises except single private dwellings”.

We took this from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Fire safety audits carried out by fire and rescue services, by fire and rescue authority](#)' for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- Berkshire FRS didn't provide figures for premises known between 2014/15 and 2017/18.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.
- Several FRAs report 'Premises known to FRAs' as estimates based on historical data.

Firefighter cost per person per year

We took the data to calculate firefighter cost per person per year from the annual financial data returns that individual FRSs complete and submit to CIPFA, and [ONS mid-2017 population estimates](#).

You should consider this data alongside the proportion of firefighters who are wholetime and on-call / retained.

Number of firefighters per 1,000 population, five-year change in workforce and percentage of wholetime firefighters

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Total staff numbers \(full-time equivalent\) by role and by fire and rescue authority](#)' as at 31 March 2018.

Table 1102a: Total staff numbers (FTE) by role and fire authority – Wholetime Firefighters and table 1102b: Total staff numbers (FTE) by role and fire authority – Retained Duty System are used to produce the total number of firefighters.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- We calculate these figures using full-time equivalent (FTE) numbers. FTE is a metric that describes a workload unit. One FTE is equivalent to one full-time worker. But one FTE may also be made up of two or more part-time workers whose calculated hours equal that of a full-time worker. This differs from headcount, which is the actual number of the working population regardless if employees work full or part-time.
- Some totals may not aggregate due to rounding.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

Percentage of female firefighters and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) firefighters

We took this data from the Home Office fire statistics, '[Staff headcount by gender, fire and rescue authority and role](#)' and '[Staff headcount by ethnicity, fire and rescue authority and role](#)' as at 31 March 2018.

Please consider the following points when interpreting outcomes from this data.

- We calculate BAME residential population data from ONS 2011 census data.
- We calculate female residential population data from ONS mid-2017 population estimates.
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS merged to form Dorset and Wiltshire FRS on 1 April 2016. All data for Dorset and Wiltshire before 1 April 2016 is excluded from this report.

Annex B – Fire and rescue authority governance

These are the different models of [fire and rescue authority](#) (FRA) governance in England. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is a combined FRA.

Metropolitan FRA

The FRA covers a metropolitan (large urban) area. Each is governed by locally elected councillors appointed from the constituent councils in that area.

Combined FRA

The FRA covers more than one local authority area. Each is governed by locally elected councillors appointed from the constituent councils in that area.

County FRA

Some county councils are defined as FRAs, with responsibility for fire and rescue service provision in their area.

Unitary authorities

These combine the usually separate council powers and functions for non-metropolitan counties and non-metropolitan districts. In such counties, a separate fire authority runs the fire services. This is made up of councillors from the county council and unitary councils.

London

Day-to-day control of London's fire and rescue service is the responsibility of the London fire commissioner, accountable to the Mayor. A Greater London Authority committee and the Deputy Mayor for Fire scrutinise the commissioner's work. The Mayor may arrange for the Deputy Mayor to exercise his fire and rescue functions.

Mayoral Combined Authority

Only in Greater Manchester. The Combined Authority is responsible for fire and rescue functions but with those functions exercised by the elected Mayor. A fire and rescue committee supports the Mayor in exercising non-strategic fire and rescue functions. This committee is made up of members from the constituent councils.

Police, fire and crime commissioner FRA

The police, fire and rescue commissioner is solely responsible for the service provision of fire & rescue and police functions.

Isles of Scilly

The Council of the Isles of Scilly is the FRA for the Isles of Scilly.

