



**Suffolk Fire and Rescue  
Service**

# Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service 2019 HMICFRS inspection Action plan

## 2020 – 2021

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# **Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service 2019 HMICFRS inspection report and action plan**

Our inspection results.

In the summer of 2019, HMICFRS inspected our Service to assess how effective and efficient we are in our activities to prevent, protect the public against and respond to fires and other emergencies. They also assessed us on how well we look after the people who work for us.

The three areas can be summarised as:

- How effective are we at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- How efficient are we at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- How well do we look after our people?

There are four possible outcomes in the judgement criteria:

- Outstanding
- Good (this is where the HMICFRS expect every service to be)
- Requires Improvement
- Inadequate (serious or critical failings in policy, practice or performance).

We have been judged as 'Good' in all three key areas

Each of the three key areas has a number of supporting questions for the inspectors to look at. There are 11 in total and each one is also given a judgement score. We have been judged as 'Good' in 8 of these and 'Requires Improvement' in 3.

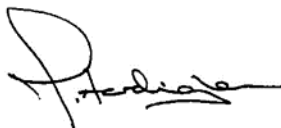
## **Message from Chief Fire Officer Mark Hardingham**

The 'Good' rating we have been given is pleasing and positive for our first inspection. This is down to the hard work and dedication of all our staff and I'm extremely proud to be their, and Suffolk's, Chief Fire Officer.

The inspection has reported a balance between what we do well and what we need to do better, much of which is already in hand and some of which will be new work.

I'm especially pleased that the work we have all been doing on leadership, culture, values, equality and inclusion has been recognised.

We will never stop working to ensure we provide a good and professional fire and rescue service to Suffolk's communities whenever they need us.



Mark Hardingham  
Chief Fire Officer



## Our actions and what we are doing about them

### 1. Effectiveness. Rated – Good ●●●○

How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?

#### 1.1. How well does the FRS understand the risk of fire and other emergencies? Rated - Good

Area for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Actions already taken	Further actions planned
The service should ensure that all operational staff are familiar with their local risk sites.	Familiarisation visits and updating of identified high risk sites are currently undertaken. The services integrated risk management plan assesses local risk and the allocation of resources to mitigate identified risk.	We will introduce a structured recording system for familiarisation visits for local risk sites to ensure all staff are familiar with their local risk sites. We will ensure the recording system is included within our current station audit arrangements.

#### 1.2. How effective is the FRS at preventing fires and other risks? Rated – Requires Improvement

Area for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Actions already taken	Further actions planned
The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to target prevention work at people most at risk and increase the number of home fire safety checks it carries out. It should also ensure that all prevention activities are monitored and quality assured.	Home fire safety checks are prioritised to target people most at risk and the number of home fire safety checks undertaken has increased recently. Station based personnel are engaged in programmes to undertake more targeted home fire safety checks and other prevention activities.	Further targeting of resources for prevention activity will be undertaken. There will be greater use of station-based personnel to offer increased prevention resource and assist in increasing the number of home fire safety checks completed. Prevention activities will be evaluated, quality assured, and the Prevention department plan updated to reflect these changes.
The service should better evaluate its prevention work, so it understands all the benefits more clearly.	More targeted prevention activities have been introduced in accordance with the station risk profile information.	Further evaluation of local operational activity will be compared against prevention activity to establish the benefits more clearly. These will be regularly evaluated to establish their effectiveness.

**1.3. How effective is the FRS at protecting the public through the regulation of fire safety? Rated – Requires Improvement**

Area for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Actions already taken	Further actions planned
The service should assure itself that its risk-based inspection programme prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk. It should also include appropriate monitoring and evaluation.	The risk-based inspection programme, including the targeted Impact days, assist in prioritising the higher risk premises to reduce the overall risk.	Further evaluation of the risk-based inspection programme will be undertaken to ensure it effectively prioritises the identified highest risks and there is sufficient resource to reduce this risk, including monitoring and evaluation. We will continue to engage with regional and national forums to ensure we adhere to identified best practice and continuity within our monitoring and evaluation.
The service should assure itself that its use of enforcement powers prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk	We will evaluate the use of our enforcement powers to prioritise the highest risk premises.	Further prioritise departmental training to ensure we have appropriate, proportionate and consistent enforcement activity. The Protection department plan will be updated to reflect these changes.

**1.4. How effective is the FRS at responding to fires and other emergencies? Rated – Good**

No headline areas for improvement identified within the HMICFRS report

**1.5. How effective is the FRS at responding to national risks? Rated – Good**

Area for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Actions already taken	Further actions planned
The service should ensure its operational staff have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information. This should include cross-border risk information	High risk information is available to all staff at stations and during operational incidents.	All relevant risk information and cross border information will be reviewed to ensure it is current and up-to-date. All crews will be given good access to this information.
The service should make sure it participates in a programme of cross-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.	Cross-border exercises are conducted, but not always recorded and learning shared.	A more structured approach to cross-border exercises and sharing of information will be introduced. The Risk and Resilience department plan will be updated to reflect these changes.

## 2. Efficiency. Rated Good

**How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?**

### 2.1. How well does the FRS use resources to manage risk? Rated – Good

Area for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Actions already taken	Further actions planned
The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection and response activities. This should be linked to risks and priorities set out in its new integrated risk management plan.	The current integrated risk management plan covers the period from 2019/22 and evaluates risk against resources to reduce identified risk.	Further evaluation of resources and the rationale of allocation will be undertaken, including any restructure or further resources identified. The IRMP includes the proposal to review RTC and specialist rescue capacity based on risk, demand and technology improvements. This will be further evaluated and audited within the annual Statement of Assurance.
The service should make sure its arrangements for managing performance ensure its workforce use their time in line with the priorities in its integrated risk management plan	We have reviewed and amended our resource and structure within our Fire IT department and our project management arrangements	We will further develop the management of data and information to assist in managing performance to ensure we work in the most effective and efficient manner in line with our integrated risk management plan. This will include the data information available to assist with high risk sites and home fire safety checks.

### 2.2. How well is the FRS securing an affordable way of managing the risk of fire and other risks now and in the future? Rated – Good

Area for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Actions already taken	Further actions planned
The service should ensure it has sufficiently robust plans in place which fully consider the medium-term financial challenges beyond 2020 so it can prepare to secure the right level of savings	Revenue budgets are set annually by the Fire Authority and are part of the Council's medium-term financial plan. Our integrated risk management plan is a 3-year plan reviewed annually. The means to address financial changes, both increases	Revenue, capital and reserves financial management will continue through the Council and its plans for medium-term financial management. The Service has a rolling 10-year Capital plan which covers; property, equipment, fleet, IT and projects. The

	and reductions in funding, are developed alongside our IRMP and associated consultation.	capital plan informs annual capital bids to SCC Strategic Capital Board. The Capital Plan is reviewed regularly and will be evaluated and reported to the Fire Strategy Group. The revenue budget for 2020/21 includes a proposal for an additional £500,000 funding for SFRS to meet new and existing demand pressures into the medium term.
The service needs to ensure it makes the best use of technology to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.	We have developed and launched a new staff smartphone app to improve communication. Our drone collaboration also supports both firefighter safety and an enhanced response to incidents for the public. We have introduced new battery-operated rescue equipment and cold-cut extinguishing technology on our front-line appliances. We have replaced our personal protective equipment for all operational staff.	We will replace our command support vehicles and include enhanced communication equipment and fireground IT facilities. We are reviewing and upgrading our combined fire control equipment and are involved in the national emergency services network upgrading. We will continue to update our IT systems, to make them more efficient and effective. We will increase the testing and accuracy of our data capture systems and continue with our closer working between fire IT system and the county council's systems to improve efficiency and reduce any duplication. The Fire IT department plan will be amended to reflect these changes.

### 3. People Rated – Good

How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

#### 3.1. How well does the FRS promote its values and culture? Rated – Good

Area for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Actions already taken	Further actions planned
The service should ensure that it has effective arrangements in place to support staff following a traumatic incident	Our staff support includes occupational health visits, physiotherapy and counselling services. We have signed MIND's Blue Light Time to Change pledge. Mental health first aiders from across Suffolk	We will continue to raise awareness of mental health in the workplace, so staff will feel more comfortable about asking for support if they require it. We will evaluate and progress our plans to improve and enhanced the

	County Council are available to offer support to staff. We have reviewed and enhanced our staff support arrangements following traumatic incidents.	existing trauma risk management processes currently in place following traumatic incidents. The Health Safety and Wellbeing department plan will be amended to reflect these changes.
The service should ensure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation	The service's staff engagement group has developed ASPIRE 4 FIRE to assist in clearly demonstrating our values and behaviours and is displayed at all our fire service sites. The senior team has also visited all stations and departments and discuss these and other issues. ASPIRE 4 FIRE is being embedded in other processes such as PDR, recruitment, progression and development.	The service is introducing further training for all managers, as a way of building on the work it has done to embed our values. The training will give all managers the knowledge and skills to express an inclusive leadership approach, in line with Service values. We acknowledge the launch of ASPIRE 4 FIRE is an important step and we need to continually reinforce our vision and values.

### 3.2. How well trained and skilled are FRS staff? Rated – Good

No headline areas for improvement identified within the HMICFRS report

### 3.3. How well does the FRS ensure fairness and diversity? Rated – Good

Area for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Actions already taken	Further actions planned
The service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures for all staff	In 2019 we instigated a review into our grievance procedure. The review group comprised of staff, representative bodies, HR manager and FRS officers and involved EDI groups.	We will use the findings from this review to assure ourselves we have effective grievance procedures in place for all staff and any identified improvements will be implemented. All outcomes should be consistent and fair, with any trends investigated and actioned.
The service should improve the understanding of positive action and the benefits of having a diverse workforce, amongst staff	We carried out equality, diversity and inclusion training across the service in 2019. There is a 4-year EDI plan which involves forming EDI groups, staff networks and expanding our community group engagement. We have embedded EDI within our	We are planning further training for 2020/21 focusing on the benefits of having a diverse workforce and the use of positive action. Our recruitment plan will include further taster days, staff involvement throughout and psychometric testing. The Learning and Development department plan will be

	recruitment and leadership development.	amended to reflect this work.
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### 3.4. How well does the FRS develop leadership and capability? Rated – Requires Improvement

Area for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Actions already taken	Further actions planned
The service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open, transparent and fair	The process of selecting, developing and promoting staff has recently been consulted and reviewed. The guidance for this process has been amended and updated to reflect these findings.	The procedures the service uses for the selection, development and promotion of staff will be subject to an external review and any outcomes and recommendations will be implemented.
The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders	The development and support of staff is currently reviewed as part of the annual training needs assessment and through the SCC PDR process.	Implementation of PDR's for all staff will be introduced to assist in identifying both development of staff and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders. We will initiate a review, the focus of which will include development and progression, talent management and succession planning. The Learning and Development department plan will be amended to reflect these changes