

**HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE
& RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

SUMMARY

1. On 19 December 2017, HMICFRS opened a public consultation for the proposed Fire and Rescue Service inspection programme and framework. Once approved the Service's response to the consultation will be submitted before the deadline of 19 February 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That Members approve the Service's consultation response to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

BACKGROUND

3. On 19 December 2017 HMICFRS opened a public consultation for the proposed Fire and Rescue Service inspection programme and framework.
4. The consultation pack (attached at Appendix 1) includes details of HMICFRS's proposed approach for 2018/19, and asks for views as to whether the right areas of fire and rescue services activity have been covered. The pack also includes the proposed inspection methodology, based around the three core assessment areas which have been allocated as Executive owned workstreams:
 - a. *How effective is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?*
The effectiveness of the operational service we provide to the public including prevention, protection, resilience and response owned by the DCFO;
 - b. *How efficient is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?*
How well we provide value for money, allocate resources to match risk, and collaborate with the police and ambulance services owned by the Executive Director of Service Support/S.151 Officer;
 - c. *How well does the FRS look after its people?*
How well we promote our values and culture, train our staff, ensure they have the necessary skills, ensure fairness and diversity for the workforce and develop leadership and service capability owned by the CFO.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

5. HMICFRS are specifically seeking responses to seven questions, which are contextually embedded within the consultation document:
 - a. ***What do you think of the proposed approach to FRS inspection that HMICFRS proposes to conduct in 2018/19? How could this be improved?***
We welcome the proposed approach and the detail within the inspection process during 2018/19 as it further supports the service's objectives to be

transparent, accessible and support independent scrutiny of us. HFRS feel it could be improved in the following ways:

- On-line reporting for self-assessments similar to the school improvement planning approach taken by OFSTED;
- On-line data reporting and bench marking linked to a secure area within fire.uk website;
- Continual review to ensure that data collection is meaningful and comparable.

b. Do you agree that an integrated inspection of fire and rescue services' effectiveness and efficiency, and how they look after their people, is better than separate thematic inspections?

- The burden of three separate thematic inspections has been considerable for the police service and an integrated approach would be supported for fire inspections. The resources required to facilitate separate inspections for organisations with considerably less resources would be a cause for concern; an awareness of the potential thematic inspection demand would also be useful.

c. Are there any other areas of fire and rescue services' activity that should be included in the integrated inspections?

- Specific collaboration with Police, Ambulance and Fire;
- 'Fire as a Health asset';
- Organisational innovation, learning and improvement.

d. Does the draft inspection methodology include the right questions to gather evidence for a rounded assessment of fire and rescue services? How could this be improved?

The draft inspection methodology supports a broad examination of all elements of fire service delivery and support; HFRS feels that it could be improved in the following ways:

- The diagnostic and sub diagnostic questions cover the key areas of work within the service; transparency and early communication of the indicator question set so services can understand the detail required would be beneficial at this early stage of the inspection process;
- On-line reporting and rating of diagnostic, sub diagnostic and indicator questions.

e. How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take full account of the circumstances of fire and rescue services and of risks to public safety?

- An examination of the response and public safety customer journey and the internal customer journey to highlight effectiveness, efficiency and personal experiences.

f. What, if any, new or emerging problems for fire and rescue services should HMICFRS take into account in its inspections?

- Mental health support provision;
- Effect of industrial relations and previous disputes;
- Recognition of the different governance structures used for delivering fire and rescue services.

g. What else should HMICFRS consider doing to make its fire and rescue service assessments as fair as they can be?

- Annually published timetable for requests for data and documents;
- Early relationship forming with Service leads and HMI;
- Family group collaboration and best practice sharing;

- Recognition of developing sector professional standards and national best practice via NFCC.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPATIBILITY

6. The Service's response is compatible with Strategic Plan 2018-21, Corporate objectives:
 - Supporting independent scrutiny and audit of everything we do;
 - Be transparent and accessible.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCES/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

7. There are no financial, resource or value for money issues at this time.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8. Section 28A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 states that any inspection programme and framework requires the approval of the Home Secretary before the inspectors act in accordance with it. The Home Secretary may, at any time, require HMICFRS to carry out an inspection of a fire and rescue authority in England. Such a requirement may limit the inspection to a particular matter. HMICFRS may also carry out an inspection of a fire and rescue authority in England even though that inspection has not been set out in an inspection programme and has not been required by the Home Secretary. Before doing so, the chief inspector must consult the Home Secretary.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS

9. There are no current equality impact or HR implications at this time.

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

10. There are no corporate risk management issues currently.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11. There are no Health and Safety implications at this time.

COMMUNICATION ACTIONS ARISING

12. If approved the methodology and Service's response will be shared widely internally to engage a positive and proactive approach to this fundamental change of inspection focus.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION AND/OR COLLABORATION

13. Members have been briefed at the recent Training Day on 15 January 2018; GAS Committee members were consulted at the 29 January 2018 meeting with the Corporate Management Team briefed on 3 January 2018. This is a public consultation and all staff have been encouraged to comment on the proposals via the weekly Siren newsletter.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS

14. Proposed fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework 2018/19 Annex A - HMICFRS Fire and rescue service inspection methodology

RECOMMENDATIONS RESTATED

15. That Members approve the Service's consultation response to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

C BLACKSELL

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