

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

Consultation response on behalf of Humberside Fire Authority

Delivery of Core Functions

- We are heavily promoting the value of sharing intelligence and risk data with partner organisations and other emergency responders. A mandatory requirement for all public services to share (appropriate) data would stimulate this activity, particularly within a data hub environment.
- Requirements to build new capability to meet all foreseeable risks, which in practice may not be statutory activities, may cause an additional funding strain.

Inspection, Accountability and Assurance

- This section meets our current understanding and expectations of statutory obligations arising from the Policing and Crime Act 2017, Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and Local Authority Transparency Code 2015.
- The government's intentions with regard to the role of HMICFRS, NFCC and LGA are within our expectations.

Governance

- There is no descriptive reference to other governance models such as a Combined Fire Authority made up of locally elected council members.

Achieving Value for Money

This element largely meets our expectations and understanding of requirements and reflects our current practices and arrangements, in particular our unqualified external audit opinion on value for money, the Prudential Minimum General Reserve (PMGR) that is approved each year based upon a risk assessment, our transparency information and our relationship with the HFR Solutions CIC.

Workforce

We support a strategy based upon the NFCC People Strategy.

Firefighter Fitness Principles

We support the Firefighter Fitness Principles but suggest that the complexities require further consideration through the NJC. Whilst supporting the principle of enabling firefighters who are unable to maintain fitness levels in employment, a number of factors are not clear in the Framework. Including:

- In practical terms any redeployment opportunity, following consideration and/or application of all reasonable adjustment, may not be possible in role dependent upon the individual personal circumstances.
- Where an individual is redeployed, not within a firefighter role, and following a reasonable period of protection the pay and other conditions of employment would change to reflect the substantive role.
- Where an individual, without underlying medical issues relevant to maintaining fitness, cannot be redeployed, due to a lack of suitable opportunities the Framework suggests an FRA initiated early retirement should be considered, from the age of 55, when presumably, the individual would not be prevented from other forms of meaningful employment outside of the FRS. This would incur significant strain costs on the FRA.
- There is no consideration that capability based termination of contract may be appropriate within the Framework.

Diverse Workforce

We suggest that the requirement to improve the diversity of the workforce to 'ensure' it represents the community it serves is not practically achievable, however it is practical and achievable to increase/raise our profile in our local communities with a view to attracting more diverse candidates to apply and become employed.

National Resilience

- Greater clarity is required regarding the expected role of Fire and Rescue Service personnel when responding to terrorist attacks.
- Outcomes of NJC pay negotiations, relating to the broadening of the firefighter role maps, or broadening of the work required of firefighters, including new areas of work such as EMR and MTFA, may result in an additional burden on funding. MTFA firefighter response is currently provided on a voluntary basis, without additional payment, within Humberside FRS.

Intervention Protocol

This element meets our expectations and understanding.

Other Comments

The wording within the framework could be more inclusively written i.e. Use of 'Principal Fire Officer' then in small print 'or those with comparable responsibilities to those roles'.