

# OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Ref.	Recommendation	Action	Priority H/M/L	Officer Resp.	Delivery Date	RAG Status	Progress & Issues Report
P.1	BMKFRS should continue to develop and resource effective internal processes through which matters arising from significant external and internal events are captured, communicated and effectively managed through to a conclusion that is acceptable to the service. This should include (for example) processes for undertaking gap analysis, communicating findings to operational staff and informing resultant training delivery.	<p><b>Agree:</b> Operational Assurance Group (OAG), once established, will provide the governance for ensuring these processes are in place and implemented.</p> <p>Create a standardised approach toward the undertaking of any gap analysis resulting from both external and internal events.</p> <p>Identified shortcomings from a training, learning and development perspective to be presented at Training Strategy Group (TSG) meetings, in order to inform decision making.</p> <p>Recruit individuals for vacant positions within the re-structured Operational Assurance Team (WC and 2 x CC)</p> <p>The reintroduction of the Operational Assurance monthly reports, to highlight to staff areas of notable best practice or requiring improvement.</p>	H	JP	Feb 2017		<p><b>Issue:</b> Currently information relating to significant external and internal events comes in through a variety of means and to various people with the potential for information to be missed. Consideration should be given as to how best to streamline this perhaps making the OAT the recipient for all such information and the OAG to oversee the resultant process.</p> <p>WC and 1 x CC appointed commencing the 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2017. Following the offer of the final vacant CC post being declined by the identified individuals there are options to fill this vacancy - either to go external or consideration could be given to appointing a second WC and utilising the post to support the Area Trainer role.</p>
P.2	In support of recommendation 1, BMKFRS should develop the use of an active monitoring system to act as a smart, service-wide tool. This system should incorporate a user-friendly database that is capable of providing auditable records and is easily accessible to all staff.	<p><b>Agree:</b> The H&amp;S e-Safety system will provide the active monitoring system which can follow the suggested Ops Assurance model and provide a robust audit trail from inception to completion. The system will be accessible to all staff through a web based portal. Building of appropriate question sets to commence in January 2017.</p> <p>The development process to be supported by Ops Assurance representative viewing the Greater Manchester FRS system, this may well be made available to us at no cost if required.</p>	H	AC\KC	Jan 2018		BFRS has developed a new Internal Assurance Model. This model began its introduction into the Service prior to the visit by OAL. OAL found that the model was starting to being used and has the potential to deliver excellent assurance benefits. The development of e-Safety will compliment this new model and the delivery of its aspirations.
P.3	BMKFRS should consider re-establishing an effective Operational Assurance forum, with the necessary direction and authority to assist in the formal management and progression of issues arising, through to meaningful resolution.	<p><b>Agree:</b> Operational Assurance Group to be established, meeting regularly at agreed intervals and attended by appropriate representatives. This group will report directly to the Performance Management Board (PMB).</p>	H	JP	Feb 2017		<p><b>Progress:</b> Appropriate representatives identified for inclusion by Stuart Gowanlock. It has also been identified where the OAG will sit within the governance structure.</p>

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5.4	<b>Key Findings: Policy and Guidance</b>						
5.4.1.	It is recommended that the Operational Assurance model is clearly published and communicated, that roles and responsibilities are clearly identified and finally, that understanding is confirmed.	<b>Agree:</b> The intention is to write a new Operational Assurance procedure which, once published, a range of established methods will be considered to determine how best to ensure the content of the document has been understood by staff. Options available include creating a 'HEAT' package or face to face input conducted locally and captured within training records.	M	SW	Dec 2017		
5.7	<b>Key Findings: Operational Briefing and Handover</b>						
5.7.1	OAL recommend that BMKFRS gives consideration to revising or replacing the 'OTHERS' methodology, to ensure the procedure includes the following points. Any revised handover methodology should be adopted for training BMKFRS staff at the FSC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situation</li> <li>• Hazards identified</li> <li>• Objectives</li> <li>• Plan to meet the objectives</li> <li>• Resources present and requested</li> <li>• Incident command structure</li> <li>• Tactical mode(s) in use</li> </ul>	<b>Disagree:</b> It is generally accepted that 'OTHERS' is well embedded and recognised at all command levels.  The change indicated to SHOPRIT offers limited benefit and will have a training and embedding implication for BFRS. Outcomes from Ops Alignment may require this approach to be reviewed.  However, the strengthening of the understanding and use of the 'OTHERS' methodology, will to be delivered to FDO officers at training days and cascaded to operational staff.	L	OAT	Dec 2017		
6.2	<b>Assurance Model: External Inputs</b>						
6.2.1	BMKFRS should review the processes currently employed to capture, scrutinise, manage and communicate matters arising from external inputs. This should include consideration of the service's current process for undertaking gap analysis of these external reports in order to manage identified risks to conclusion or acceptance on the service risk register.	<b>Agree:</b> This particular recommendation is aligned to ref P1 and therefore will be subject to the same proposed actions.	H	JP	Feb 2017		
6.4	<b>External Assurance Model: Issue Resolution</b>						
6.4.2	BMKFRS should consider re-establishing an effective Assurance Forum with the necessary direction and authority to manage and progress OA issues arising through to meaningful resolution and involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The application of a recognised and accountable health and safety process linked directly to OA, which includes suitable</li> </ul>	<b>Agree:</b> Operational Assurance Group (OAG), once established will provide the governance for ensuring these processes are in place and implemented. One of the invited members onto the OAG will be the H&S Manager.  Identified shortcomings from a training, learning	H  M	JP  SW	Feb 2017  April 2017		

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	arrangements to manage these elements. b) The progression of issues to inform the service Risk Register, Training Needs Analysis (TNA), Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), etc.	and development perspective to be presented at Training Strategy Group (TSG) meetings, in order to inform decision making.					
6.4.3	BMKFRS should ensure the process of OA is adequately supported by an effective, user-friendly Information Technology (IT) system that incorporates an intelligent and auditable database.	<b>Agree:</b> e-Safety will, in the first instance, be piloted in order to determine its appropriateness. It has the ability to be managed locally (H&S staff can administer the system in order to improve the functionality following feedback once the system is trialled). As a system, it has resilience as it is 'hosted' by the manufacturing company with a full support system available to users.	H	AC\KC	Jan 2018		
<b>6.5</b>	<b>External Assurance Model: Debriefing Activities</b>						
6.5.1	BMKFRS should review and re-energise its debriefing process. This should be promoted to the operational staff as a key element of continuous service improvement. Any review undertaken should consider: (i) Addressing current poor practises to ensure the onus for initiating a timely debrief sits firmly with incident commander. (ii) Continuing efforts to simplify the existing processes. (iii) Producing regular outcome reports to inform staff, promote inclusion and demonstrate the value of the process. (iv) Ensuring non-compliance is identified and valued contribution recognised and rewarded.	<b>Agree:</b> A positive feature of the e-Safety is that completed debrief forms can be attached to the specific subject, created within the system, thereby allowing all pertinent information to be captured in a single place.  Debrief training to be provided to Operational Assurance team members - this will be captured in the department training needs analysis	M  M	KC\OAT  KC	Oct 2017  April 2017		<b>Issue:</b> BFRS have only has one person trained in the operational debrief process, so this would need to be rectified in due course.
<b>6.7</b>	<b>External Assurance Model: Maintenance of Operational Skills</b>						
6.7.1	BMKFRS should seek to place greater emphasis on the individuals' responsibility for completion and maintenance of their own skill-set.	<b>Agree:</b> There is a collective responsibility amongst all operational staff to ensure their professional competencies are effectively maintained. Therefore this subject is to be a matter of discussion during an individual's appraisal, which is then documented and subsequently monitored by their respective line manager.	M	SW	Oct 2017		<b>Issue:</b> It has generally been customary for a supervisory manager to be responsible for recording the maintenance of skills for a number of staff on their watch. However, due to the increasingly flexible approach to working within BFRS, individuals undertaking competency training are not always aligned to their own watch. Therefore, whilst having one person responsible for data input can be time effective, it nonetheless distances an individual from their own training records and recognising their own development needs. Timely access to computers, in order to complete these records has previously been cited as a barrier.
6.7.2	BMKFRS should consider incentivising the process through making the completion of Maintenance of Skills (i.e. competence), a prerequisite for being able to access the bank working system.	<b>Agree:</b> To be reviewed by both Service Delivery and Service Transformation. Outcome to be captured within a revised procedure note for the Bank system.	M	JP\PH	Oct 2017		

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<b>7.1</b>	<b>Acquisition Training and Assessment</b>						
7.1.1	BMKFRS should give consideration to making the qualification acquisition process more attractive to its prospective candidates.	<b>Agree:</b> Service Delivery and Service Transformation to review application of the 'Bank' system, so to ensure this doesn't become a determining factor toward discouraging staff to obtain professional qualifications in the future.	L	JP\PH	Jan 2018		
<b>7.3</b>	<b>Staff Opinion</b>						
7.3.1	BMKFRS should explore a joint enterprise with neighbouring FRS in order to share facilities and provisions at FSC. Such a joint enterprise should seek to explore: a) Economic savings by combining appraisal assessment with other FRS. b) Potential renegotiation of the service level agreement between FSC and BMKFRS. c) Greater flexibility in the provision of larger scale scenarios with the consequent strengthening of the functional role competences. d) Opportunities to include risk critical functions such as Operational Support Units and Incident Command Units. e) Shared operational awareness between FRS. f) Shared operational awareness between all emergency services and other first responders. (this will have the added benefit of meeting JESIP exercising requirements). g) A strengthening of inter-service working and coordinated operational procedures.	<b>Agree:</b> Much of what has been highlighted in respect of this particular recommendation has already been incorporated within the operational training specifications that will be subject to a full tendering process.  The training specifications have been shared with the other Thames Valley FRS and it is expected that further collaboration opportunities will increasingly become apparent as we progress through the Ops Alignment process.	H	SW	April 2017		
<b>7.4</b>	<b>Management of FSC Outcome Reports</b>						
7.4.1	BMKFRS should review its processes for monitoring staff during their development phase. In particular the service should consider strengthening its feedback process to include organisational awareness of an individual's performance through to completion of any related development needs and/or associated development plans.	<b>Agree:</b> Further investigation required, however initial indications are this is most likely relevant to On Call staff, who perhaps experience the greatest difficulty in both creating and completing development plans. To re-issue development plan forms to managers, as well as set up monitoring system to record when plans are issued and completed.	M	AP	Oct 2017		
<b>7.8</b>	<b>QA of Station Based Training</b>						
7.8.1	BMKFRS should review (and potentially reduce) the quota of 288 QA assessments (summative sampling) per year to a more achievable figure.	<b>Agree:</b> The intention is to establish a closer working relationship with H&S in order to ensure the QA processes/procedures take into account both safety events/near misses.	M	SG	June 2017		

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		A review of the current number of Quality Assurance audits to be undertaken, to make certain the figure for the training year 2017\18 is more realistic, in terms of what can be reasonably attained, without undermining performance standards.	M	SG	April 2017		
7.8.2	It is recommended that BMKFRS consider extending the QA role in line with the service's 'blended approach'. This may include offering the Vocational Assessor qualification to wholetime and On Call personnel and allowing them to undertake lower tier QA processes (interim sampling).	<b>Agree:</b> Further investigation/ consideration required. The intention is to explore the option of selecting appropriately skilled, qualified and quality assured Associate Instructors who in turn would QA principally On Call station instructors in support of the Area Trainers.	L	SG	Jan 2018		
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Operational Exercising: Obtaining Evidence</b>						
8.1.1	BMKFRS should review the provision of operational exercising in order to provide increased opportunity for commanders to: a) Practice command decision making b) Practice logistical controls c) Practice operational procedures etc. at larger, developing and more complex scenarios.	<b>Agree:</b> The provision for operational exercising has been incorporated into the training specification documentation, with a new agreement needing to be in place by April 2017.  The re-establishment of the operational exercising programme.	H  M	SW  KC\OAT	April 2017  Sept 2017		
<b>9.2</b>	<b>Risk Management: Analytical Risk Assessment</b>						
9.2.1	It is recommended that risk management packs be placed in line of sight of the risk entry points, so as to allow other first responders the opportunity to view their content and respond accordingly.	<b>Disagree:</b> From an operational perspective the consensus of option is that the DRA and ARA risk information is both appropriately placed clearly identified on the incident ground.	n\a	n\a	n\a		
<b>9.3</b>	<b>Risk Management: Site Specific Risk Assessment</b>						
9.3.1	BMKFRS should consider reviewing its internal communication processes to ensure the effective communication of SSRA information between wholetime and On Call crews.	<b>Disagree:</b> Operational risk information can be easily accessed through the MDTs, located within all front-line appliances.	n\a	n\a	n\a		
<b>10.1</b>	<b>Active Monitoring: Locating Key Documents</b>						
10.1.1	BMKFRS should develop the use of an active monitoring system to act as a smart, service-wide tool. This system should incorporate a user-friendly database that is capable of providing auditable records and is easily accessible to all staff. It should allow the rapid location and filtering of key information for any user. This	<b>Agree:</b> e-Safety will provide the auditable records which can be accessed by all staff. Users will be able to extract such information and includes a 'search' filter and 'report' facility. Part of the support package provides 25 hours of report writing per year by the manufacturer which can be utilised	H	AC\KC	Jan 2018		

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	issue is further covered in Section 12: 'Internal Communications'.	for more complex requirements.					
<b>10.2</b>	<b>Active Monitoring: Allocation of Action Plans</b>						
10.2.1	That any system used for this purpose should operate independently of any individual in the service and each issue should remain 'live' on the system until resolved or accepted on the risk register.	<b>Agree:</b> It is anticipated that e-Safety will meet these requirements. An identified issue will remain 'live' in the system until such time all actions have been completed. It is at this point when it can be closed off, although will remain accessible within the system for information and evidential purposes.	M	SW\KC	Jan 2018		
<b>10.3</b>	<b>Active Monitoring: Reporting by Exception</b>						
10.3.1	It is recommended that BMKFRS extend this form of monitoring to include training events; with the consequent benefits to organisational learning and that these reports are included for staff review (commensurate to suitable anonymity measures).	<b>Agree:</b> Independent assessors routinely observe and record the performance of operational staff during validation exercises. The introduction of an active monitoring system to include training events will be explored further.	M	KC\AP	Jun 2017		
<b>10.4</b>	<b>Active Monitoring: Staff Access</b>						
10.4.1	Include a provision within the AMS to provide feedback on concluded issues and in particular to the source of the initially identified issue.	<b>Agree:</b> e-Safety has the facility to allow all staff to access the system via a web based portal. It enables feedback to be 'attached' to the original issue, even after the issue is concluded.	M	AC\KC	Jan 2018		
<b>10.5</b>	<b>Active Monitoring: Role of the Monitoring Officer</b>						
10.5.1	Provide formal training and/or guidance for Monitoring Officers to ensure a uniform approach to monitoring and to clarify the operational standards required from all staff.	<b>Agree:</b> To be delivered to existing FDS Officers during the monthly training events, by members of the OAT.	M	KC	June 2017		<b>Issue:</b> An established process needs to be development in order to ensure those staff new to the FDS rota are given sufficient opportunity to both acquire and consolidate the skills of a monitoring officer.
10.5.2	Moving forward, the new active monitoring form should directly correspond with the WM7 NOS.	<b>Agree:</b> This has been provisionally created, although will need to be reviewed, so it can be incorporated into the e-Safety system and aligned to our Thames Valley partners.	M	KC	June 2017		
10.5.3	Active monitoring should be expanded to the training events taking place at FSC to ensure the service is effectively capturing and progressing all available learning opportunities.	<b>Agree:</b> Further investigation to be undertaken, in order to develop an agreed approach.  Potential for L2 and L3 officers to perform monitoring at FSC during validation exercises. Any involvement from both OFRS and RBFRS may	L  L	SG\AP\KC  SG\AP\KC	Oct 2017  Oct 2017		

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		assist with regard to achieving a consistent approach toward incident monitoring, across the whole of the Thames Valley area.					
<b>11</b>	<b>National Operational Guidance for Incident Command</b>						
11.1.1	BMKFRS should ensure all staff have awareness and understanding of the functional roles within NOGIC, and that this is tested.	<p><b>Neither Agree or Disagree:</b> The strong belief is that BFRS is already complying with NOGIC. However, this will be subject to further internal investigation with resultant findings being acted upon appropriately.</p> <p>There is opportunity to provide further information to staff through FDO training days and HEAT packages.</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>OAT</p> <p>OAT</p>	<p>Jan 2018</p> <p>Jan 2018</p>		
11.1.2	Station and watch commanders should be provided clear guidance on the standards of NOGIC specific knowledge expected from its commanders and crews.	<b>Agree:</b> Whilst it is recognised the understanding of NOGIC is relatively comprehensive amongst staff. The option of providing a more detailed narrative of the responsibilities associated with particular command roles will be explored.	L	KC\OAT	Jan 2018		
11.1.3	Station and Watch Commanders and their crews should be provided opportunity under assessable and/or developmental conditions to exercise the acquired skills and underpinning knowledge set out in NOGIC.	<p><b>Disagree:</b> The incident command competencies of all supervisory commanders are independently assessed and scrutinised during validation exercises.</p> <p>The feasibility around this being extended to involve Station Commanders is to be explored further.</p>	<p>n\ a</p> <p>L</p>	<p>n\ a</p> <p>KC\AP</p>	<p>n\ a</p> <p>Jan 2018</p>		
<b>12</b>	<b>Internal Communications</b>						
12.1.1	Review the functionality 'I Drive' as it appears the system does not meet with service expectations with regard to ease of use.	<b>Agree:</b> The longer term solution in respect of the overall document management strategy will be reviewed independently and therefore will no longer form part of this particular improvement plan.	L	JP	April 2018		
12.1.2	Review the content of the service's Intranet to ensure key information is easily accessible by staff, which should include a more logical hyperlink process.	<b>Agree:</b> See above comments.	L	JP	April 2018		
12.1.3	Review the methods employed for communicating and validating the passage of important messages to operational staff at fire stations. Any review should also consider the communication of key information between wholetime and On Call staff.	<b>Agree:</b> See above comments	L	JP	April 2018		

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Officer(s) Responsible	
Initials:	Name:
JP	AC Parsons
PH	AC Holland
SW	GC Wells
KC	SC Carmichael
AC	Ali Chart
AP	SC Pennick
SC	SC Grosse
OAT	Ops Assurance Team