



Promoting improvements
in policing and fire & rescue
services to make everyone safer

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Matt Parr CB
HM Inspector of Constabulary
HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services

By email:

Jason Thelwell
Chief Fire Officer
Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

12 January 2022

Dear Jason,

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS – CAUSE OF CONCERN

We inspected Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in May and June 2021. In our letter of 6 August 2021, we sent you the following cause of concern identified during the inspection and our recommendation:

Prevention activity is not a sufficiently high priority for the service, and it is not adequately identifying and prioritising those most at risk from fire.

By 30 September 2021, the service should have the following plans in place:

- an effective system to define the levels of risk in the community;
- a revised prevention strategy that clearly prioritises the people most at risk of fire and other emergencies, giving focus and direction to specialist teams; and
- a review of systems and processes for dealing with referrals from individuals and partner agencies, to make sure that they are managed effectively and that referrals with highest identified risk are prioritised.

2. You kindly submitted an action plan to HMICFRS on 29 September 2021. This included a prevention improvement plan setting out how you would address the cause of concern stated above and our recommendations.

3. On 29 September and 19 November 2021, we received updates on the action plan. We explained that while we didn't expect to see all the remedial work completed, we were looking for evidence of progress. Thank you for continuing to provide further updates.

Governance

4. Your service has shown a strong commitment to carry out its action plan. You have put in place appropriate governance structures to oversee the plan's completion. This includes a prevention improvement plan that states when actions are to be completed.
5. You have presented the plan to the fire authority for ongoing oversight and scrutiny and have a plan to support its continual development. Progress against the plan is monitored at weekly and monthly meetings.

Action plan

6. The prevention improvement plan identifies 60 areas for improvement and uses a dashboard to monitor progress. It identifies the person responsible for each area and details any problems that emerge. Additionally, the service has assessed each area to see what resources are needed to achieve the improvement needed and the effect it will have.
7. The service still needs to make some immediate changes to the way its fire and wellness referrals are processed to make sure it prioritises and mitigates the risks identified in its public safety plan.
8. We are pleased to see the service is planning to use peer support through the National Fire Chiefs Council to further support this work. We recognise the value of this and encourage the service to do this as soon as possible.

Results to date

9. The service has in place some resources and appropriate governance structures to carry out the commitments in the action plan. Some work on these commitments has already started.
10. We would like to see continued progress against the plan. The service needs to make sure that it continues to support the implementation of its commitments and communicates them effectively throughout the service and to the public.
11. We will continue to monitor progress to make sure the service provided to the public of Buckinghamshire has improved. This may include a further visit in spring 2022.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MP', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Matt Parr CB

HM Inspector of Constabulary
HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services