

**HMI Matt Parr CB**

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary  
His Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Jason Thelwell  
Chief Fire Officer  
Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

Councillor Simon Rouse  
Chair of Fire Authority

24 February 2023

Dear Jason,

## **Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service revisit**

During May and June 2021, we inspected Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. During the inspection we identified areas of concern with respect to prevention and promoting fairness and diversity. We shared these causes of concern with you and made the following recommendations:

### **Recommendation**

By 30 September 2021, the service should have the following 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 giving focus and direction to specialist teams; and
- a review of systems and processes for dealing with referrals making sure that those with highest identified risk are prioritised.

## **Recommendation**

By 31 January 2022, the service should:

- give greater priority to how it increases awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion;
- make sure it has appropriate ways to engage with and seek feedback from all staff;
- make improvements to the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographics and needs;
- ensure it has robust processes in place to undertake equality impact assessments; and
- be more ambitious in its efforts to attract a more diverse workforce which better reflects the community it serves.

In March 2022, you submitted an action plan setting out how you intended to address the areas of concern and the recommendations.

During November 2022, we received further updates from you on the action plan. We didn't expect to see all the remedial work completed but were looking for evidence of progress.

## **Governance**

The service has clearly shown a commitment and willingness to address these causes of concern. You have put in place appropriate governance arrangements to monitor progress against the plan. You have provided evidence of progress within your action plan and the minutes of the internal strategic meeting and fire authority meeting.

## **Action plan**

The service has detailed action plans covering our causes of concern. The action plans are the responsibility of a designated person, with deadlines and assigned tasks. The service records completed actions and updates on tasks still to be addressed. You have also allocated additional resources to the prevention team to support the implementation of your plans.

## Progress against the causes of concern

We were pleased to see that the service had put in place some resources and appropriate governance structures for the commitments in the prevention action plan. Some of the actions had been completed, including the review and development of the prevention strategy. During our revisit, we found staff in specialist teams understood the service's priorities set by the revised strategy. Some station-based staff also showed an understanding of them.

We were also pleased to see that the service had put in place additional resources and governance structures for the commitments in the equality, diversity and inclusion action plan. During our revisit, staff described a positive change in the way the service was raising awareness of and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. Staff surveys are conducted annually, and staff were positive about the actions being taken as a result. The service provided evidence of a revised equality impact assessment process and the equality, diversity and inclusion working group described its involvement in it.

However, we would like to see the service continue its progress implementing the action plans and communicate outcomes effectively to all its staff and the public. It still needs to improve its systems and processes to ensure those identified as being most at risk are prioritised and visited quickly.

We will continue to monitor the progress made and revisit the service in spring 2023 as part of our scheduled inspection programme. We will assess further evidence that the causes of concern have been addressed and the service provided to the public of Buckinghamshire has improved.

This letter will be published on our website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Parr', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**HMI Matt Parr CB**

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