Bucks Fire & Rescue Service

HMICFRS Action Plan

Building and Delivering a High Performing Fire and Rescue Service

November 2023

Introduction

Between May and June 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) completed their third inspection of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS)

HMICFRS gives a rounded assessment of every FRS, including an assessment of:

- the operational service provided to the public (including prevention, protection and response);
- the efficiency of the service (how well it provides value for money, allocates resources to match risk, and collaborates with other emergency services); and
- how well the service looks after its people (how well it promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for the workforce and develops leadership and service capability).

As part of each inspection cycle, HMICFRS publish an assessment on the performance of every service. This report includes graded judgments for each of the 11 questions.(See next page)

For Round 3, His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Roy Wilsher said:
":I have concerns about the performance of Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks."

"The service has made some improvements since our 2021 inspection, but we were disappointed to see that it hasn't made enough progress in more areas.
"We recognise that it has faced challenges over recent years, including the capacity to change, although there is a clear commitment from staff in the service to improve.
"Given the nature of some of the problems we have identified, we will keep in close contact with the service to monitor its progress in addressing areas for improvement, causes of concern and associated recommendations."

HMICFRS identified three Causes of Concerns, they are:
   1) Preventing Fires and other risks
   - The service is still not adequately identifying and prioritising those most at risk from fire

   2) Protecting the public through fire regulation
   - The service hasn't done enough since our last inspection to address its area for improvement and provide clear direction to make sure its teams can prioritise work according to risk

   3) Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity
   - The service hasn't made enough progress since our last inspection to improve equality, diversity and inclusion

Causes for concern will always be accompanied by one or more recommendations, which FRSs should seek to address.

BFRS has worked together with the NFCC, partners and lead Fire Authority members to develop this action plan which sets out:

- The governance structure and accountabilities to drive forward the required changes

- The priority actions that will be taken in relation to the three areas identified

- The measures that will be used to assess our performance and achievements

We will meet regularly with the HMICFRS as we implement the plan.

Judgements

The inspection assessed how well Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has performed in 11 areas. We received the following graded judgements leading to 3 Causes of concern:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
		Responding to major incidents	Understanding fire and risk	Public safety through fire regulation
			Preventing fire and risk	
			Responding to fires and emergencies	
			Best use of resources	
			Future affordability	
			Promoting values and culture	
			Right people, right skills	
			Promoting fairness and diversity	
			Managing performance and developing leaders	

Governance and Accountabilities

Fire Authority

Fire Authority Scrutiny

Overview & Audit Committee

Fire Authority Member scrutiny

Strategic Management Board

BFRS Strategic ownership and governance of the HMICFRS action plan

Performance Monitoring Board

Oversight and review of all action plans

Directorate Teams

Implementation of specific actions

Progress against the HMICFRS action plan will be monitored and scrutinised through our existing governance processes.

These established committees provide the leadership, scrutiny and challenge that will drive forward change in the 3 key areas, and as such will ensure:
- the identified actions are the right actions that will lead to change
- progress is reviewed objectively and challenged where it falls short
- impact is reviewed and further actions are agreed where required
- outcomes are high quality and have a positive impact on our communities and staff

This level of governance reflects the Service's commitment to achieving the ambitions of the HMICFRS action plan and the importance of getting it right first time to ensure we keep the communities we serve safe from fire and other risks.

Priority 1: Prevention

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service **requires improvement** at preventing fires and other risks.

Outcomes we are seeking to achieve:

Fire and rescue services must promote fire safety, including giving fire safety advice.

To identify people at greatest risk from fire, we should work closely with other organisations in the public and voluntary sectors, and with the police and ambulance services. We should share intelligence and risk information with these other organisations when we identify vulnerability or exploitation.

SMT Sponsor: Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience

Lead Member: Cllr Simon Rouse

External Scrutiny: NFCC

Priority 1: Prevention Action Plan

Recommendation 1: We have an effective system to define the levels of risk in the community.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
1.1.1	Implement the Prevention Risk Stratification (PRS) process based on the NFCC guidance.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	November 2023	April 2024	• PRS guidance note written and published • PRS is live across all channels • All staff understand the PRS methodology	On track
1.1.2	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) developed and reported to support Risk Stratification guidance.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	January 2024	March 2024	• KPI's in place • Management control processes in place. • All referrals are dealt with in line with PRS guidance thresholds	Not started

RAG Key: Red: Little or no progress/at risk **Amber**: Progressing with minor delays **Green**: good progress on track **Blue**: Completed/embedding **White**: Not started

Priority 1: Prevention Action Plan

Recommendation 2: Our systems and processes for dealing with referrals from individuals and partner agencies effectively manage and prioritise those referrals with the highest identified risk.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
1.2.1	Ensure all current referrals are processed and up to date.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	June 2023	November 2023	• All referrals are in line with delivery expectations associated with the descriptors for levels of risk as per the Prevention Risk Stratification Guidance	On track
1.2.2	Launch Online Home Fire Safety Check form (OHFSC) developed to complement the Person-Centred Framework.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	November 2023	February 2024	• New route available for the public to complete a person-centred self-assessment of fire risk • All OHFSC are handled with the relevant treatment and timescales	On track
1.2.3	Introduce a recognised way of recording and processing all prevention referrals directly into the Premises Risk Management System (PRMS) to ensure there is one database recording all prevention engagements as well as activity.	Administrative Support Manager	November 2023	February 2024	• Referral processing guidance note written and published • Guidance note utilised to support training	On track
1.2.4	Update PRMS to reflect Risk Stratification guidance.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	December 2023	April 2024	• All agreed requirements have been developed, testing by all relevant users and live	Not started
1.2.5	Ensure all appropriate staff are adequately trained on the referral process and understand the methodology.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	January 2024	March 2024	• All staff have received appropriate training	Not started

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Priority 2: Protection

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is **inadequate** at protecting the public through fire regulation.

Outcomes we are seeking to achieve:

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in certain buildings and, when necessary, require building owners to comply with fire safety legislation. We decide how many assessments we do each year. But we must have a locally determined, risk-based inspection programme for enforcing the legislation

SMT Sponsor: Head of Protection, Assurance and Development

Lead Member: Cllr Simon Rouse

External Scrutiny: NFCC

Priority 2: Protection Action Plan

Recommendation 1: Clearly define our risk-based inspection programme, within a revised Protection strategy, which is aligned to its next Community Risk Management Plan.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
2.1.1	Review and update current Protection strategy intended to provide clarity on how the Service will conduct its Protection business in line with legislative requirements and focussing resource on highest risk premises types.	Head of Protection, Assurance & Development	September 2023	December 2023	• Peer review from NFCC sector advisors • Appropriate level of stakeholder engagement in developing revised strategy • Scrutiny and acceptance of revised strategy by Fire Authority Members 6th December	**On track**
2.1.2	Introduce risk-based interventions programme to underpin revised strategy.	Group Commander Protection	September 2023	December 2023	• Risk-based inspection methodology identified and clearly articulated • Based on methodology, identify planned audit schedule for very high / high risk premise types	**On track**
2.1.3	Ensure the Protection strategy 2025-30 is embedded and fully aligned with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30.	Head of Protection, Assurance & Development	February 2024	October 2024	• Evidence-led approach to management of protection resources • Extensive internal / external consultation • Due consideration to integration / alignment with Prevention and Response strategies	**Not started**

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Priority 2: Protection Action Plan

Recommendation 2: Make sure our increased number of staff complete a proportionate amount of activity to reduce risk and work to effective targets.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
2.2.1	Embed the revised Protection strategy and Risk-Based Interventions Programme (RBIP) guidance. As directed within the revised strategy, teams will now be focussing on planned and demand-led activity on high risk / low compliance property types .	Group Commander Protection	November 2023	April 2024	• Good stakeholder engagement when developing the strategy and RBIP guidance and during transition • Direction and performance management to ensure a smooth transition in terms of ways of working • KPI's monitored to assure embeddedness • Very high/High risk premises schedule delivered	**On track**

2.2.2	Introduce new Protection KPI's captured at team and person level:
	   - Planned audit numbers against RBIP.
	   - Monitor audit outcomes (compliance) against audit numbers to assure that the RBIP is targeting the right premises.
		Group Commander Protection	November 2023	April 2024	• KPI's presented to Performance Monitoring Board quarterly
					
					 • 1000 audits annually
					
					 • Proportionate number of audits resulting in non-satisfactory outcomes
						On track

2.2.3	Introduce four apprentice Business Safety Advisor roles utilising Protection grant funding to support. - Enable more qualified Protection staff to focus on high risk / low compliance	Group Commander Protection	November 2023	April 2024	• New roles resulting in greater levels of co-ordinated and targeted support to local businesses • Less time spent by qualified officers doing low risk activity.	**On track**

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Priority 2: Protection Action Plan

Recommendation 3: Assures the system to record fire safety activity is robust and well supported to enable prioritisation of highest risk.

Ref	Action	Accountable Lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
2.3.1	Ensure schedule for planned audits is easily accessible to staff who require it.	Group Commander Protection	November 2023	December 2023	• Identified very-high risk and high risk audits are provided to teams	**On track**
2.3.2	Premises Risk Management System (PRMS) – training input to ensure standardisation / consistency in data input and extraction.	Group Commander Protection	December 2023	April 2024	• Training input received by relevant Protection staff • Consistency monitored by Station Commanders	**Not started**
2.3.3	PRMS system – make provision for standard Protection outcome letters to improve efficiency and consistency.	Group Commander Protection	January 2024	April 2024	• Standard letters available for use • Training provided as appropriate to support implementation	**Not started**
2.3.4	Review provision of admin support to Protection teams to ensure efficiency.	Head of Protection, Assurance & Development	December 2023	April 2024	• Administrative requirements identified • Qualified Protection staff enabled to focus more time on planned activity	**Not started**

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Priority 2: Protection Action Plan

Recommendation 4: Make sure we has an effective quality assurance process so that staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
2.4.1	Introduce a Protection Quality Assurance (QA) process.	Group Commander Protection	October 2023	April 2024	• (QA) process documented, consulted and agreed through governance • Relevant staff are trained on the QA process • QA activity recorded and reported	**On track**
2.4.2	Review suite of Protection procedures and guidance to ensure it is aligned with best practice and supports staff in relation to consistent application.	Group Commander Protection	December 2023	April 2024	• Published revised procedures and guidance • Training / input (as required) delivered to Protection staff	**Not started**

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Priority 3: EDI

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service **requires improvement** at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Outcomes we are seeking to achieve:

Creating a more representative workforce gives fire and rescue services huge benefits.

These include greater access to talent and different ways of thinking.

It also helps create a better understanding and supports engagement with local communities. We should make sure staff throughout the organisation firmly understand and show a commitment to EDI. This includes successfully taking steps to remove inequality and making progress to improve fairness, diversity and inclusion at all levels of the service.

We will proactively seek and respond to feedback from staff and make sure any action we take is meaningful.

SMT Sponsor: Head of HR   **Lead Member:** Cllr Shade Adoh

External Scrutiny: Natalie Donhou Morley, Senior Policy and Partnerships Officer (Equalities Specialist)

Priority 3: EDI Action Plan

Recommendation 1: Give greater priority to how we increase awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across the organisation.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
3.1.1	Develop a role to include dedicated EDI support to ensure the delivery of EDI objectives.	Head of HR	October 2023	April 2024	• Dedicated staff member in place/ recruited	**Risk to progress**
3.1.2	Review current EDI training across all levels including management and look at options to implement additional regular, measurable, bitesize session(s) on EDI.	Station Commander HR Projects	November 2023	April 2024	• EDI online training has a completion rate of 90%+ supported by regular reporting, to ensure managers can follow up on non-completion • Staff at all levels can demonstrate a good understanding of EDI and how this needs to be reflected in the way we work and deliver services	**On track**
3.1.3	Rollout 360 feedback process to all middle managers, which includes a section on how they promote EDI.	Organisational Development Manager	December 2023	December 2024	• All relevant staff have completed 360 feedback including the manager appraisal session and workbook	**Not started**
3.1.4	Utilise EDI data to better inform station plans to facilitate targeted community engagement activity adding specific action(s) related to EDI.	Station Commander HR Projects	January 2024	March 2024	• Service delivery area plans include EDI related data and actions	**Not started**
3.1.5	Review and relaunch of our values/code of ethics to support a positive workplace culture.	Station Commander HR Projects	January 2024	October 2024	• All staff understand what each value means for/to them and can share how it supports the communities we serve	**Not started**
3.1.6	Work with our staff networks to gain their input, to develop policies, projects and initiatives.	TBC	July 2024	December 2024	• A representative from these groups is included in the development of procedures before consultation. • Increased staff engagement and inclusion	**Not started**

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Priority 3: EDI Action Plan

Recommendation 2: Make sure that we have appropriate ways to engage with and seek feedback from all staff, including those from under-represented groups.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
3.2.1	Launch and review "Speak Up" campaign.	HR Advisory & Development Manager	October 2023	February 2024	• All staff aware of Speak Up facility • Ongoing process in place to review take up/usage	On track
3.2.2	Develop mechanisms to reduce the mystery of the Service's governance processes.	Head of Technology, Transformation & PMO	November 2023	January 2024	• "Extra Chair" take up is 50% • A summary of internal governance meetings is published on the intranet within 2 weeks of the meeting taking place	On track
3.2.3	Explore further options to establish staff networks for underrepresent groups, including exploring options to join with external networks (other FRS's and national networks).	Area Commander Response & Resilience	November 2023	June 2024	• Established networks which feed into the EDI group. • Increase in the number of staff networks from underrepresented groups. (internal or external).	On track
3.2.4	Move to an annual staff survey supported by embedding the feedback loop. Utilise pulse surveys to support assessment of progress against specific actions.	Head of Technology, Transformation & PMO	November 2023	August 2024	• Maintain completion rate at 70+ percent • Increase "the Service will take action from the survey" score • Instigate action where the outcomes/scores are low	On track
3.2.5	Investigate and implement reporting at senior level on whistleblowing/ Speak Up/ grievance/ disciplines/investigations to monitor, identify and take action on potential themes.	HR Advisory & Development Manager	January 2024	March 2024	• Increased visibility of issues being raised and the Service's lessons learnt through regular reporting internally and externally on activity • Additional activity to reduce reoccurrence of themes as and when identified	Not started
3.2.6	Ensure all line managers have regular structured contact with all their staff.	Organisational Development Manager	April 2024	March 2025	• The development pathway programme includes training/ education on being a people manager. • Increased percentage of staff who have a 121 every month	Not started

Priority 3: EDI Action Plan

Recommendation 3: Make improvements to the way we collect equality data to better understand our workforce demographics and needs.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
3.3.1	Relaunch the Equality Monitoring campaign encouraging individuals to input their own equality data on the HR system in a safe and secure environment, supported by ongoing communications.	Head of Human Resources	January 2024	July 2024	• A continuous increase of equality data being inputted • Increased messaging about the benefits of a diverse workforce and the reasons for declaration	**Not started**
3.3.2	To review recruitment and promotion processes to ensure they include and promote the importance of staff providing their equality data.	Head of Human Resources	February 2024	April 2024	• Increase of equality data • Staff know how to enter their equality data	**Not started**
3.3.3	To embed a process to monitor EDI data completions with a quarterly update to the Leadership team to identify if particular teams require additional support to understand why completion is of benefit.	Head of Human Resources	April 2024	June 2024	• Ability to identify areas of the service that require additional support/training • Better understanding of the diversity of the workforce through ongoing data tracking	**Not started**
3.3.4	A quarterly review of equality data by the EDI group to ensure we have an understanding of the workforce demographics and needs. Appropriate action taken where necessary.	Head of Human Resources	April 2024	June 2024	• Increase in the availability of data which will allow the organisation to make more informed decisions that will have a positive impact	**Not started**

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Priority 3: EDI Action Plan

Recommendation 4: Be more ambitious in our efforts to attract a more diverse workforce that better reflects the community we serve.

Ref	Action	Accountable lead	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Progress RAG
3.4.1	Develop a programme of works to ensure all workplace facilities (both on premises and at incidents) meet the needs of current and future staffing demographics.	Area Commander Response & Resilience	November 2023	March 2025	• Review of premises facilities • Programme in place to improve identified gaps • Welfare facilities in place at incidents • Adequate facilities in place for all protected characteristics	**On track**
3.4.2	Introduce a sustained "Have a Go" operational programme for identified underrepresented groups, including a plan for positive action, offering a range of targeted activities across the county.	Station Commander HR Projects	December 2023	November 2024	• Annual programme in place including at least six "Have a Go" events held for underrepresented groups per year • A clear plan in place to deliver and maintain positive action.	**Not started**
3.4.3	Map out and review recruitment process end to end to understand impact on different underrepresented groups, including the applicants' feedback at various stages of the application.	Station Commander HR Projects	January 2024	June 2024	• Recruitment processes are adapted. • Increased uptake from underrepresented applicants. • Data collected from applicants will be used to inform process changes	**Not started**
3.4.4	Identify and report on areas of underrepresentation within the Service, identifying groups we would benefit from attracting across all levels,	HR Operations Manager	January 2024	October 2024	• Relevant and up-to-date data which can be used to inform recruitment actions	**Not started**
3.4.5	Ensure recruitment resources are utilised to ensure more applications from diverse/underrepresented people from our local communities.	HR Operations Manager	January 2024	October 2024	• Engagement/recruitment activities such as career fairs are prioritised to those that meet our target audiences • More applications from diverse/underrepresented applicants	**Not started**