

HMICFRS Inspection Update for GFRS

GFRS's round two, tranche two, HMICFRS interviews ended on the 18th November after eight weeks of inspection.

Initial feedback was given to CFO Mark Preece, the Principal Officer team and Cllr Dave Norman in the form of a hot debrief on 1st December 2021.

Publication of final reports for all FRS's in tranche two (including GFRS) will be published in Spring 2022. GFRS will receive a draft report in advance of the final publication date.

State of Fire and Rescue – The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2021

Published on the 15/12/2021.

Link: [State of Fire and Rescue – The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2021 \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/state-of-fire-and-rescue-the-annual-assessment-of-fire-and-rescue-services-in-england-2021)

The twelve FRS's in tranche one have had their round two inspection reports published this week (15/12/2021). This does not include GFRS but when read it gives a flavour of the national FRS picture from tranche one round two.

The report identifies the following from the first 12 Services inspected during round two:

Headlines:

1. Progress has been made in some areas – encouraging to see many services that had received 'causes of concern' in the first round of inspection have taken steps to improve and act on recommendations.
2. More change is urgently required - services have failed to act sufficiently in 'areas of improvement'.
3. National recommendations need to be brought in faster.
4. The speed of national reform has dropped.
5. Insufficient action to develop prospective future CFO's.
6. Services are making good progress on protection.
7. Services need to do more on prevention.
8. Inconsistent funding and governance arrangements persist.
9. Some services don't allocate resources appropriately.
10. Many services rely on dual contracts and overtime, which can create inefficiencies.
11. Good intentions to promote equality, diversity and inclusion aren't always successful.

Effectiveness:

- a. Most services are prioritising protection work
- b. Too many services aren't taking enough action on prevention.
- c. Building risk review work is on track.
- d. Levels of prevention activity are declining and targeting is poor.
- e. Services are not doing enough to evaluate their prevention activities.
- f. Safeguarding awareness has improved.
- g. Protection action is being taken to tackle fire setting behaviour.
- h. Services are well prepared to respond to routine incidents.
- i. More needs to be done to improve the on-call crewing model.
- j. Services are well prepared to respond to major and multi-agency incidents.
- k. Cross-border training is still below pre-pandemic levels.
- l. Services disseminate what they have learned widely.
- m. There is still an inconsistent approach to identifying and mitigating risk.
- n. Data used by services to build risk profiles varies too much.

- o. Some services need to improve how they collect and disseminate risk information.

Efficiency:

- a. Services are mitigating financial risk.
- b. Services are making use of new ways of working.
- c. More needs to be done to make sure workforces are productive.
- d. Resources aren't always aligned to risk.
- e. Many services can't fully cope – services need to make sure that they can make the changes required to enable them to operate more efficiently and effectively.
- f. Services need to better manage the use of dual contracts and overtime.
- g. All services collaborate with local organisations and authorities to some extent, but evaluation is limited.
- h. Fleet and estate strategies should be aligned to IRMP's.
- i. Control room continuity plans need regular testing.

People:

- a. Values are better understood and demonstrated.
- b. Health and safety and wellbeing provision are prioritised.
- c. Good intention to promote equality, diversity and inclusion generally haven't resulted in tangible improvements, and many services don't clearly define what they are working towards.
- d. Equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives must not be carried out in isolation.
- e. Workforces don't always represent the communities they serve.
- f. Lack of workforce planning.
- g. Not enough is being done to plan for future leaders

National recommendations

The report states - HMICFRS national recommendations need to be brought in faster.

'We have made national recommendations:

- the Home Office should precisely determine the role of fire and rescue services, to remove any ambiguity;
- the sector should remove unjustifiable variation, including in how they define risk;
- the sector should review and reform how effectively pay and conditions are determined;
- the Home Office should invest chief fire officers with operational independence, whether through primary legislation or in some other manner; there should be a code of ethics; and
- the Home Office should ensure that the sector has sufficient capacity and capability to bring about change'