



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

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This is HMICFRS's second full assessment of fire and rescue services. This assessment examines the service's effectiveness, efficiency and how well it looks after its people. It is designed to give the public information about how their local fire and rescue service is performing in several important areas, in a way that is comparable with other services across England.



The extent to which the service is effective at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks **requires improvement**.



The extent to which the service is efficient at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks **requires improvement**.



The extent to which the service looks after its people is **inadequate**.





Wendy Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services

HMI summary

It was a pleasure to revisit Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, and I am grateful for the positive and constructive way that the service engaged with our inspection.

I have concerns about the performance of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure from fires and other risks. In particular, I have serious concerns about the way it promotes its values and culture, and how it is improving the understanding of the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and removing barriers to EDI. In view of these findings, I have been in regular contact with the chief fire officer, as I do not underestimate how much improvement is needed.

We were disappointed to see that the service hasn't made the progress we expected since our 2019 inspection. For example:

- targeting safety visits to the most [vulnerable](#) isn't done efficiently;
- plans to introduce national operational guidance have been delayed;
- the service's objectives are still not clearly linked to its budget plans;
- there is a lack of development support for newly promoted managers; and
- the service still doesn't have a process to support the development of high-potential staff.

My principal findings from our assessments of the service over the past year are as follows:

The service hasn't done enough to have its values and associated behaviours accepted and understood by everyone, or to promote a positive workplace culture. There is a lack of senior leadership visibility. Staff haven't been involved in developing a clear vision of the service's future culture, or in the plans to introduce this. Previous efforts to instil the values and associated behaviours haven't been successful. Staff described unacceptable behaviours, inconsistent with the service's values. There were limited examples of staff being confident to challenge and manage inappropriate behaviour.

Progress to improve the understanding of the importance of EDI and removing barriers to EDI has been too slow. There is no clear plan for improvement. Actions taken so far lack planning and effective co-ordination. Slow progress is causing staff frustration and some staff don't understand the need for improvement. Staff who carry out the equality impact assessments are not properly trained, and there is a lack of effective governance and oversight for the assessments.

The service has invested time and effort to address problems identified during our previous inspection. But this work hasn't been focused or co-ordinated, and staff haven't been effectively involved. Some

improvements have been made, but overall the service has deteriorated since 2019.

I have asked the service to produce a plan setting out how it will address the causes of concern we identified. We will revisit the service in the autumn to review progress against this plan.



Effectiveness

How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure?

Last updated 27/07/2022



Requires improvement

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness requires improvement.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service required improvement in its 2018/19 assessment.

We saw improvements in some areas since our 2019 inspection, but other areas have deteriorated. Overall, the service hasn't made enough progress.

The service should make clearer links between, and explain better, how its risk assessment informs its risk management plans and objectives.

It still hasn't developed a process to make sure its [home fire safety checks](#) can be easily prioritised to those at the highest risk. It is also still not evaluating all of its prevention activity, so it can't assess how well its actions work, and which of them are most effective.

Fire safety audits are completed to a consistent standard. But the feedback the service gives to building owners needs improvement. It also needs to do more to assure the quality of its protection work.

Work to address the Grenfell Inquiry findings has made some progress, but more is needed. The service particularly needs to improve how it shares casualty information from fire survival guidance calls.

There has been some progress in learning lessons from emergency incidents and exercises, but more work is needed. Sharing the results of these lessons and making improvements based on them needs better oversight and management.

Positively, we found the service had maintained improved staffing levels in the protection team, and there is a clear plan to inspect the highest-risk buildings. There is evidence of the service collaborating with other organisations to identify and reduce risk. Fire engine availability is good and has improved since the last inspection. Information about the risks that firefighters face is up to date and easy to access. There was good knowledge of command procedures for incidents involving multiple emergency services and authorities.

[View the five questions for effectiveness](#)



Efficiency

How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure?

Last updated 27/07/2022



Requires improvement

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency requires improvement.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service required improvement in its 2018/19 assessment.

There has been limited progress since the last inspection.

The service's budget, financial and staffing plans aren't clearly aligned to its IRMP, nor do they support its objectives. Its performance management arrangements need improvement. They should also show a clear link between the use of resources and achieving the service's objectives.

The service still needs more capacity to plan for and manage future change.

Some new controls and scrutiny have been introduced. But we found the service needs to take a more systematic approach to achieving value for money.

There isn't a current IT plan to link future provision to the service's plans and objectives. [Mobilising](#) systems need more robust and resilient support. We also saw that a lack of personnel system integration is hampering workforce efficiency.

The service needs a better understanding of its future financial challenges. This will allow it to make sure it has enough long-term funding and that its future plans are affordable.

[View the two questions for efficiency](#)



People

How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

Last updated 27/07/2022



Inadequate

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service is inadequate at looking after its people.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service required improvement in its 2018/19 assessment.

Overall, it is disappointing to see that since the last inspection the service has deteriorated in the way it looks after its people. Much more work is needed, quickly, and with clear vision and leadership.

There has been limited progress on improving the service's culture.

We found worrying pockets of unacceptable behaviour among staff and management. These are having a

negative effect on the wider culture of the service.

A significant number of staff feel some senior leaders don't model and maintain the service's values. There is a lack of senior-leader visibility. Staff told us communication with them is seen as one-way and ineffective.

Progress to address bullying, harassment and discrimination has been slow. We found staff have little belief in grievance and bullying, harassment and discrimination procedures. Staff and management have limited confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

Efforts to improve EDI lack a clear vision and are not effectively co-ordinated. Equality impact assessments and actions don't have effective governance or oversight.

Some promotion procedures have been updated, following consultation with staff. But the service needs to do more to make sure the new procedures are seen as fair and inclusive by all staff. It should also assure itself that they support increasing workplace diversity.

High workloads are affecting staff wellbeing. We found there was no plan to address this.







There has been some progress on workforce planning. But the service needs to do more to develop a comprehensive plan which is linked to the [integrated risk management plan \(IRMP\)](#).

Positively, the service has made some improvements to its approach to staff appraisals. It has appointed an EDI manager, which is an encouraging step towards improving EDI in the service. The number of temporarily promoted staff has also decreased.

[View the four questions for people](#)

Key facts – 2020/2021



<p>SERVICE AREA</p> 	<p>1,024 square miles</p>	
<p>POPULATION</p> 	<p>0.64m people</p>	<p>↑ 4% local 5 yr change</p>
<p>WORKFORCE</p> 	<p>47% wholetime firefighters</p>	<p>53% on-call firefighters</p>
<p>ASSETS</p> 	<p>0.57 per 1000 population local</p>	<p>0.56 national level</p>
	<p>↑ 1% local 5 yr change</p>	<p>↓ 5% national 5 yr change</p>
<p>INCIDENTS</p> 	<p>21 stations</p>	<p>33 fire engines</p>
	<p>2.0 fire incidents per 1000 population local</p>	<p>2.7 national</p>
	<p>3.2 non-fire incidents per 1000 population local</p>	<p>2.7 national</p>
<p>2.7 fire false alarms per 1000 population local</p>	<p>3.8 national</p>	
<p>COST</p> 	<p>£18.64 firefighter cost per person per year</p>	<p>£25.22 firefighter cost per person per year (national)</p>

Judgment criteria

> [Read the judgment criteria](#)

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23 Stephenson Street

Birmingham

B2 4BH

✉ contacthmicfrs@hmicfrs.gov.uk