



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 6 December 2023

**Report title:** His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Action Plan

**Lead Member:** Cllr Simon Rouse, Chairman

**Report sponsor:** Interim Chief Fire Officer, Mick Osborne

**Author and contact:** Anne-Marie Carter, Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO – [Acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:Acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk)

**Action:** Noting

## **Recommendations:**

That the Authority note the BFRS HMICFRS 2023 Action Plan (Appendix 1)

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## **Executive summary:**

In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue service. They assess and report on the efficiency, effectiveness and people of the 44 fire and rescue services in England.

HMICFRS published the BFRS Round 3/2023-2025 report on 19 October 2023. The report can be found here: [BFRS 2023-2025 - HMICFRS](#)

This report sets out HMICFRS inspection findings for Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service following the inspection during May and June 2023.

The latest report for this Service identifies three causes of concern, accompanied by 10 recommendations, and 26 areas for improvement. The report was noted at the Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting on 24 October 2023.

## **Cause of Concern**

The Service was issued with two causes of concern that continue from Round 2 and one new cause of concern, relating to Protection.

- 1) The first cause of concern from round three relates to Prevention activity.  
The report states:  
Some improvements in prevention have been made since our last inspection. The service has revised its prevention strategy, and this is giving its prevention and response teams better direction. But the service is still not adequately identifying and prioritising those most at risk from fire.

Within 28 days, the Service should review its action plan to make sure that:

- It has an effective system to define the levels of risk in the community;
- Its systems and processes for dealing with referrals from individuals and partner agencies effectively manage and prioritise those referrals with the highest identified risk.

2) The second cause of concern from round three relates to Protection activity.

The report states:

The service hasn't done enough since our last inspection to address its areas for improvement and provide clear direction to make sure that its teams can prioritise work according to risk.

Within 28 days, the Service should provide an action plan that:

- clearly defines its risk-based inspection programme, within a revised protection strategy, which is aligned to its next public safety plan;
- makes sure its increased number of staff complete a proportionate amount of activity to reduce risk and work to effective targets;
- assures the system to record fire safety activity is robust and well supported to enable prioritisation of highest risk;
- makes sure it has an effective quality assurance process so that staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.

3) The third cause of concern relates to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The report states:

The service hasn't made enough progress since our last inspection to improve equality, diversity and inclusion. The service has done enough to complete one of our recommendations by reviewing its equality impact assessment process. But the other recommendations still require action to be taken or completed.

Within 28 days, the Service should review its action plan, detailing how it will:

- give greater priority to how it increases awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation;
- make sure that it has appropriate ways to engage with and seek feedback from all staff, including those from under-represented groups;
- make improvements to the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographics and needs;
- be more ambitious in its efforts to attract a more diverse workforce that better reflects the community it serves.

As per requirements set out in the report covering letter to the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer on 17 October 2023, a copy of the action plan detailing how the Service will address the recommendations must be submitted to HMICFRS within 28 days of the report. Therefore, at its extraordinary meeting held on 24 October 2023 the Authority resolved that the Interim CFO be delegated to prepare and publish an Action Plan on behalf of the Authority in consultation with the Chairman and the Vice Chairman. It also resolved that the Overview and Audit Committee be delegated the monitoring of progress of delivery against the Action Plan.

Although much of the work to address the causes of concern is included in other plans including the Prevention Improvement plan and the Equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives for 2020-2025 the Service has built a new HMICFRS Action plan. (Appendix 1).

Following a review of the previous action plan, we have taken the following actions for the Round 3 action plan including:

- 1) The plan has prioritised the actions needed to meet the recommendations.
- 2) The associated actions are clear, measurable and achievable.
- 3) The plan has been built with feedback from Chairman, Vice Chairman, NFCC and other partners.

The action plan will be managed as part of the Portfolio Management Office (PMO), with regular reporting through internal governance structures. As stated in the recommendation at the Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting on 24 October 2023, the Authority will be kept informed of progress in delivering against the HMICFRS Action Plan via regular reporting to both the Overview and Audit Committee and full Authority. These updates will include progress on the recommendations, impact on KPI's and progress on Areas for Improvement.

A copy of the action plan was sent to HMICFRS within 28 days of the report publication; on the 15 November 2023.

The Service continues to have ongoing dialogue with HMICFRS at both a strategic and tactical level to ensure our progress is in line with their expectations.

In a letter received on 21 November 2023 (Appendix 2), HMICFRS informed the Service that it will now be entering the supportive Engage process. The Engage process provides additional scrutiny and support from the Inspectorate.

The focus of the engage phase is to assist the Service in finding ways to improve and resolve the identified causes of concern and provide a better service for the public, a process we are fully committed to.

The Service is already working hard to address the issues raised in its recent inspection and welcomes the support of HMICFRS in assisting with our improvement journey.

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**Financial implications:**

The prioritisation of improvements to address the specific recommendations raised within the causes of concern may introduce additional financial implications, either through reprioritisation of other projects, or through new workstreams.

Consideration will be given to ensure associated costs, both direct and indirect, are fully understood and managed effectively.

**Risk management:**

There remains reputational corporate risks to the organisation. The Service continues to take steps to mitigate this through having extensive internal and external audits of a number of areas of the Service, in addition to the HMICFRS inspections. The internal audit plan for 23/24 can be found here: [Internal Audit Report – Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Internal](#)

**Legal implications:**

The current Fire and Rescue Service National Framework issued under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, to which the Authority must have regard when carrying out its functions, states as follows at paragraph 7.5:

‘Fire and rescue authorities must give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS and – if recommendations are made – prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan detailing how the recommendations are being actioned. If the fire and rescue authority does not propose to undertake any action as a result of a recommendation, reasons for this should be given.’

It continues: ‘When forming an action plan, the fire and rescue authority could seek advice and support from other organisations, for example, the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Local Government Association’.

**Privacy and security implications:**

No privacy or security implications have been identified that are directly associated with this report or its appendices.

The report and its appendices are not protectively marked.

**Duty to collaborate:**

Each fire and rescue service is inspected individually. However, the latest report includes findings relating to the Service’s ability to collaborate effectively with partners. The report states: “We were pleased to see the service meets its statutory duty to collaborate. It continues to consider opportunities to collaborate with other emergency responders.”

**Health and safety implications:**

The HMICFRS report states:

- The service provides good well-being provisions to its workforce, but work-related stress is not being fully addressed
- The service has a positive health and safety culture

The areas for improvement relating to working hours and secondary contracts will feed into the health, safety and wellbeing group.

### **Environmental implications:**

The HMICFRS report states:

“The service didn’t identify all the potential climate impacts and mitigation measures required in its 2020–2025 public safety plan. This is what it calls its integrated risk management plan. It has now recognised that it needs a different range of equipment to be ready to respond to this risk both now and in the future.”

### **Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:**

The Service has been judged as ‘requires improvement’ in the area relating to ensuring fairness and promoting diversity, along with a cause of concern and four recommendations relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. All the findings from the HMICFRS round three inspection report have been fully considered and prioritised to ensure continual improvement is established and maintained.

The Authority’s equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives 2020-2025 – year 3 progress was presented to the Fire Authority on 14 June 2023.

### **Consultation and communication:**

Specific areas identified for Service improvement are being captured in relevant plans and will be reported on in line with the recommendations.

### **Next steps -**

- Report published on BFRS website

### **Background papers:**

HMICFRS BFRS Home Page: [Buckinghamshire - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/buckinghamshire-fire-and-rescue-service/)

16 February 2022 – Fire Authority: Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Inspection Report 2021

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/02/fa-item-10-16022022.pdf/>

16 March 2022 – Overview and Audit Committee: Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) –Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Improvement Plan Update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/03/oa-item-14-160322.pdf/>

20 January 2023 - State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022

[State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022 - HMICFRS](#)

24 October 2023 – Extraordinary Fire Authority: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Inspection Report 2023

[bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/10/extraordinary-fire-authority-meeting-24-october-2023-item-9-hmicfrs-inspection-report.pdf/](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/10/extraordinary-fire-authority-meeting-24-october-2023-item-9-hmicfrs-inspection-report.pdf/)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	BFRS HMICFRS 2023 Action Plan	N/A
2	Letter from HMI Roy Wilsher Bucks Engage	N/A



**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**

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

Overview &  
Audit  
Committee

**Fire Authority Member scrutiny**

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

Strategic  
Management  
Board

**BFRS Strategic ownership and governance of the HMICFRS action plan**

Performance  
Monitoring  
Board

**Oversight and review of all action plans**

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.

Directorate  
Teams

**Implementation of specific actions**

# 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

**External Scrutiny:** NFCC

**Lead Member:** Cllr Simon Rouse



# 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRS guidance note written and published</li> <li>• PRS is live across all channels</li> <li>• All staff understand the PRS methodology</li> </ul>	<b>On track</b>
1.1.2	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) developed and reported to support Risk Stratification guidance.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	January 2024	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KPI's in place</li> <li>• Management control processes in place.</li> <li>• All referrals are dealt with in line with PRS guidance thresholds</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>

# 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All referrals are in line with delivery expectations associated with the descriptors for levels of risk as per the Prevention Risk Stratification Guidance</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New route available for the public to complete a person-centred self-assessment of fire risk</li> <li>All OHFSC are handled with the relevant treatment and timescales</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referral processing guidance note written and published</li> <li>Guidance note utilised to support training</li> </ul>	On track
1.2.4	Update PRMS to reflect Risk Stratification guidance.	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	December 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All agreed requirements have been developed, testing by all relevant users and live</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff have received appropriate training</li> </ul>	Not started

## 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer review from NFCC sector advisors</li> <li>Appropriate level of stakeholder engagement in developing revised strategy</li> <li>Scrutiny and acceptance of revised strategy by Fire Authority Members 6th December</li> </ul>	On track
2.1.2	Introduce risk-based interventions programme to underpin revised strategy.	Group Commander Protection	September 2023	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk-based inspection methodology identified and clearly articulated</li> <li>Based on methodology, identify planned audit schedule for very high / high risk premise types</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence-led approach to management of protection resources</li> <li>Extensive internal / external consultation</li> <li>Due consideration to integration / alignment with Prevention and Response strategies</li> </ul>	Not started

# 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	<p>Embed the revised Protection strategy and Risk-Based Interventions Programme (RBIP) guidance.</p> <p>As directed within the revised strategy, teams will now be focussing on planned and demand-led activity on high risk / low compliance property types .</p>	Group Commander Protection	November 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good stakeholder engagement when developing the strategy and RBIP guidance and during transition</li> <li>• Direction and performance management to ensure a smooth transition in terms of ways of working</li> <li>• KPI's monitored to assure embeddedness</li> <li>• Very high/High risk premises schedule delivered</li> </ul>	On track
2.2.2	<p>Introduce new Protection KPI's captured at team and person level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planned audit numbers against RBIP.</li> <li>- Monitor audit outcomes (compliance) against audit numbers to assure that the RBIP is targeting the right premises.</li> </ul>	Group Commander Protection	November 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KPI's presented to Performance Monitoring Board quarterly</li> <li>• 1000 audits annually</li> <li>• Proportionate number of audits resulting in non-satisfactory outcomes</li> </ul>	On track
2.2.3	<p>Introduce four apprentice Business Safety Advisor roles utilising Protection grant funding to support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enable more qualified Protection staff to focus on high risk / low compliance</li> </ul>	Group Commander Protection	November 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New roles resulting in greater levels of co-ordinated and targeted support to local businesses</li> <li>• Less time spent by qualified officers doing low risk activity.</li> </ul>	On track

**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 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified very-high risk and high risk audits are provided to teams</li> </ul>	<b>On track</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training input received by relevant Protection staff</li> <li>Consistency monitored by Station Commanders</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
2.3.3	PRMS system – make provision for standard Protection outcome letters to improve efficiency and consistency.	Group Commander Protection	January 2024	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard letters available for use</li> <li>Training provided as appropriate to support implementation</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
2.3.4	Review provision of admin support to Protection teams to ensure efficiency.	Head of Protection, Assurance & Development	December 2023	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative requirements identified</li> <li>Qualified Protection staff enabled to focus more time on planned activity</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>

# 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(QA) process documented, consulted and agreed through governance</li> <li>Relevant staff are trained on the QA process</li> <li>QA activity recorded and reported</li> </ul>	<b>On track</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published revised procedures and guidance</li> <li>Training / input (as required) delivered to Protection staff</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>

# 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated staff member in place/ recruited</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDI online training has a completion rate of 90%+ supported by regular reporting, to ensure managers can follow up on non-completion</li> <li>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</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All relevant staff have completed 360 feedback including the manager appraisal session and workbook</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service delivery area plans include EDI related data and actions</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff understand what each value means for/to them and can share how it supports the communities we serve</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A representative from these groups is included in the development of procedures before consultation.</li> <li>Increased staff engagement and inclusion</li> </ul>	Not started

# 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff aware of Speak Up facility</li> <li>Ongoing process in place to review take up/usage</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Extra Chair" take up is 50%</li> <li>A summary of internal governance meetings is published on the intranet within 2 weeks of the meeting taking place</li> </ul>	On track
3.2.3	Explore further options to establish staff networks for underrepresented groups, including exploring options to join with external networks (other FRS's and national networks).	Area Commander Response & Resilience	November 2023	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established networks which feed into the EDI group.</li> <li>Increase in the number of staff networks from underrepresented groups. (internal or external).</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain completion rate at 70+ percent</li> <li>Increase "the Service will take action from the survey" score</li> <li>Instigate action where the outcomes/scores are low</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased visibility of issues being raised and the Service's lessons learnt through regular reporting internally and externally on activity</li> <li>Additional activity to reduce reoccurrence of themes as and when identified</li> </ul>	Not started
3.2.6	Ensure all line managers have regular structured contact with all their staff.	Organisational Development Manager	April 2024	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development pathway programme includes training/ education on being a people manager.</li> <li>Increased percentage of staff who have a 121 every month</li> </ul>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A continuous increase of equality data being inputted</li> <li>Increased messaging about the benefits of a diverse workforce and the reasons for declaration</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase of equality data</li> <li>Staff know how to enter their equality data</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to identify areas of the service that require additional support/training</li> <li>Better understanding of the diversity of the workforce through ongoing data tracking</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the availability of data which will allow the organisation to make more informed decisions that will have a positive impact</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>

# 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of premises facilities</li> <li>Programme in place to improve identified gaps</li> <li>Welfare facilities in place at incidents</li> <li>Adequate facilities in place for all protected characteristics</li> </ul>	<b>On track</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual programme in place including at least six "Have a Go" events held for underrepresented groups per year</li> <li>A clear plan in place to deliver and maintain positive action.</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment processes are adapted.</li> <li>Increased uptake from underrepresented applicants.</li> <li>Data collected from applicants will be used to inform process changes</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant and up-to-date data which can be used to inform recruitment actions</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement/recruitment activities such as career fairs are prioritised to those that meet our target audiences</li> <li>More applications from diverse/underrepresented applicants</li> </ul>	<b>Not started</b>

**Sent by email:**

[mosborne@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:mosborne@bucksfire.gov.uk)

Mick Osborne  
Chief Fire Officer  
Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue

21 November 2023

Dear Mick,

**INVITATION TO THE FIRE PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT GROUP**

Further to our recent conversation, I confirm that I have recently been considering concerns that I have with Buckinghamshire Fire Service's approach to several aspects of performance, specifically in prevention, protection and promoting fairness and diversity.

HMICFRS has introduced a fire monitoring process which has two phases – scan and engage. The scan phase uses data and information from a range of sources to flag poor or deteriorating performance and identify potential areas of concern. All services are at the 'scan' phase. If a cause of concern is identified in a service, HMIs consider progress made against the cause of concern, using the following key tests.

- (a) Does the service recognise the cause of concern and understand the implications?
- (b) What is the prospect that the service will succeed in managing, mitigating or eradicating the cause of concern (taking into account capacity and capability)?
- (c) Is the cause of concern likely to be short-lived or enduring?
- (d) The need for public protection to be attained by the service becoming more efficient and effective above the stated cause of concern;
- (e) Public confidence in the service; and
- (f) The public law requirement of fairness.



I applied these tests to the causes of concern (which I have outlined below) and following discussion at the internal HMICFRS Monitoring Group on 14 November 2023 with HM Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, my fellow HMIs and other HMICFRS staff, HM Chief Inspector has decided that Buckinghamshire Fire Service should now be moved to the 'engage' phase.

All services who are 'engaged' with HMICFRS are discussed at the Fire Performance Oversight Group (FPOG), chaired by Andy Cooke. Its members consist of the regional HMIs, HMICFRS's chief operating officer, senior HMICFRS analysts and representatives from the Home Office, LGA and NFCC. The focus of the engage phase is to assist the service in finding ways to improve and resolve the identified cause(s) of concern, where they have not been successful in doing so independently. At this stage, services are asked to carry out a comprehensive analysis and develop an improvement plan to set out how the cause of concern will be addressed.

The causes of concern for Buckinghamshire Fire Service are set out below:

- (i) Some improvements in prevention have been made since our last inspection. The service has revised its prevention strategy, and this is giving its prevention and response teams better direction. But the service is still not adequately identifying and prioritising those most at risk from fire.
- (ii) The service hasn't done enough since our last inspection to address its areas for improvement and provide clear direction to make sure that its teams can prioritise work according to risk.
- (iii) The service hasn't made enough progress since our last inspection to improve equality, diversity and inclusion. The service has done enough to complete one of our recommendations by reviewing its equality impact assessment process. But the other recommendations still require action to be taken or completed.

These are concerns that are facing the service. The lack of improvement, and in some cases, deterioration in performance, mean that there is work to be done to assure HMICFRS that appropriate leadership and governance arrangements are in place to drive the necessary activity, ensuring timely and sustainable improvement.

I would therefore like to invite you to attend a meeting of FPOG where you will be able to update the group on plans to improve the service's performance. HMICFRS's Monitoring Team will be in touch to confirm either 7 February 2024 or 5 March 2024 in London. Attendance in person is preferred.

I am sure that you and members of the service will work hard to address the issues raised in our recent inspection and I am committed to providing you and your service with support to assist with that work.

I will be monitoring the service closely over the coming months and will re-apply the key tests in due course. I will of course invite you to make representations to help inform any

future decision that I may make with a view to de-escalating the service to the scan phase of the monitoring process, when the causes of concern described in this letter have been addressed. I look forward to seeing you at the FPOG meeting.

If you would like to discuss this letter, or if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. My team will be in touch with members of the Buckinghamshire Fire Service to discuss our programme of engagement and to agree milestones for improvement. I will be writing to Simon Rouse in similar terms to ensure we can collaboratively support improvements in the service.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RW', written over a light grey grid background.

**Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM**

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

His Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services