

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Director of Legal & Governance, Graham Britten
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
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Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Louise Harrison

To: Members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

2 September 2024

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
AND PUBLIC

Please note the content of
Page 2 of this Agenda Pack

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at an **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held in **THE PARALYMPIC ROOM, THE GATEWAY OFFICES, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY, BUCKS, HP19 8FF** on **11 SEPTEMBER 2024** at **11 AM** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

Graham Britten
Director of Legal and Governance

Health and Safety:

There will be limited facilities for members of the public to observe the meeting in person. A recording of the meeting will be available after the meeting.

Chairman: Councillor Rouse

Councillors: Adoh, Bagge, Bailey, Banks, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Exon, Hall, Hussain OBE, Khan, Lambert, McLean, O'Neill, Stuchbury, Sullivan and Walsh



MAKING YOU SAFER



To observe the meeting as a member of the Press and Public

The Authority supports the principles of openness and transparency. To enable members of the press and public to see or hear the meeting this meeting will be recorded. Please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxl3vIiv7bh1Q>

The Authority also allows the use of social networking websites and blogging to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens.

Adjournment and Rights to Speak – Public

The Authority may adjourn a Meeting to hear a member of the public on a particular agenda item. The proposal to adjourn must be moved by a Member, seconded and agreed by a majority of the Members present and voting.

A request to speak on a specified agenda item should be submitted by email to gbritten@bucksfire.gov.uk by 4pm on the Monday prior to the meeting. Please state if you would like the Director of Legal and Governance to read out the statement on your behalf, or if you would like to be sent a 'teams' meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

If the meeting is then adjourned, prior to inviting a member of the public to speak, the Chairman should advise that they:

- (a) speak for no more than four minutes,
- (b) should only speak once unless the Chairman agrees otherwise.

The Chairman should resume the Meeting as soon as possible, with the agreement of the other Members present. Adjournments do not form part of the Meeting.

Rights to Speak - Members

A Member of the constituent Councils who is not a Member of the Authority may attend Meetings of the Authority or its Committees to make a statement on behalf of the Member's constituents in the case of any item under discussion which directly affects the Member's division, with the prior consent of the Chairman of the Meeting which will not be unreasonably withheld. The Member's statement will not last longer than four minutes. Such attendance will be facilitated if requests are made to enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk at least two clear working days before the meeting. Statements can be read out on behalf of the Member by the Director of Legal and Governance, or the Member may request a 'team's meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

Petitions

Any Member of the constituent Councils, a District Council, or Parish Council, falling within the Fire Authority area may Petition the Fire Authority.

The substance of a petition presented at a Meeting of the Authority shall be summarised, in not more than four minutes, by the Member of the Council who presents it (as above). If the petition does not refer to a matter before the Authority, it shall be referred without debate to the appropriate Committee.

Questions

Members of the Authority, or its constituent councils, District, or Parish Councils may submit written questions prior to the Meeting to allow their full and proper consideration. Such questions shall be received by the Monitoring Officer to the Authority, *in writing*, at least two clear working days before the day of the Meeting of the Authority or the Committee.

COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To appoint the Authority's Standing Committees and Lead Members.
2. To determine the following issues after considering recommendations from the Executive Committee, or in the case of 2(a) below, only, after considering recommendations from the Overview and Audit Committee:
 - (a) variations to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
 - (b) the medium-term financial plans including:
 - (i) the Revenue Budget;
 - (ii) the Capital Programme;
 - (iii) the level of borrowing under the Local Government Act 2003 in accordance with the Prudential Code produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy; and
 - (c) a Precept and all decisions legally required to set a balanced budget each financial year;
 - (d) the Prudential Indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code;
 - (e) the Treasury Strategy;
 - (f) the Scheme of Members' Allowances;
 - (g) the Integrated Risk Management Plan and Action Plan;
 - (h) the Annual Report.
 - (i) the Capital Strategy
3. To determine the Code of Conduct for Members on recommendation from the Overview and Audit Committee.
4. To determine all other matters reserved by law or otherwise, whether delegated to a committee or not.
5. To determine the terms of appointment or dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, and deputy to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or equivalent.
6. To approve the Authority's statutory pay policy statement.

AGENDA

Item No:

1. Apologies

2. Disclosure of Interests

Members to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in any matter being considered which are not entered onto the Authority's Register, and officers to disclose any interests they may have in any contract to be considered.

3. Chairman's Announcements

To receive the Chairman's announcements (if any).

4. Petitions

To receive petitions under Standing Order SOA6.

5. Questions

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

6. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023-2025 Update

To consider item 6
(Pages 7 - 26)

7. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - Values and Culture Update

To consider item 7
(Pages 27 - 40)

8. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - Standards of Behaviour

To consider item 8
(Pages 41 - 48)

9. Safety of Lithium-Ion Batteries in E-Bikes and E-Scooters Campaign

To follow

10. Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 9 October 2024 at 11 am at The Oculus, The Gateway Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 8FF

If you have any enquiries about this agenda please contact: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) – Tel: (01296) 744633 email: knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

ROLE DESCRIPTION

LEAD MEMBERS

1. To take a lead role in providing support and constructive challenge to senior officers in the development of strategies and plans and contributing towards the strategic direction of the Authority, within the Authority's overall policy objectives.
2. To act as a 'sounding board' for senior officers on issues within the portfolio, and be supportive in dealing with any problems at a strategic level.
3. To review, in conjunction with senior officers, the service within the portfolio.
4. To keep abreast of related developments and policies at national, regional and local level.
5. To take the lead in reporting to the Authority, one of its committees, or panels on issues within the portfolio.
6. To attend the Overview and Audit Committee, at its request, in connection with any issues associated with the portfolio which is the subject of scrutiny.
7. To act as a spokesperson for the Authority on issues within the portfolio.
8. To represent the Authority on bodies, at events and at conferences related to the portfolio, as appointed by the Executive Committee and to feedback to the Authority any issues of relevance / importance.

(Approved 8 June 2007)



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Extraordinary Fire Authority, 11 September 2024

Report title: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023-2025 Update

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse, Chairman

Report sponsor: Chief Fire Officer, Louise Harrison

Author and contact: Anne-Marie Carter, Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO – acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Noting

Recommendations:

That the HMICFRS 2023-2025 update be noted

Executive summary:

In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue services. 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 the 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.

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

On 21 November 2023, 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.

Action Plan

The HMICFRS action plan focuses on the 3 Causes of Concern. As at July 2024 the Service has made the following progress against the HMICFRS action plan:

	Prevention	Protection	EDI
Complete	7	10	11
In Progress/On Track	-	1	8
Risk to progress	-	1	2
Not due to be started	-	-	-

The detailed HMICFRS action plan update can be seen in Appendix 1

Key Progress to highlight is:

Prevention

- KPI's in place and being monitored regularly
- Further system and process enhancements completed
- Preparedness and Improvement audits in progress across stations.

Protection

- Team development includes:
 - New Policy and Enforcement Officer started on 01 July
 - Third Business Fire Safety Apprentice started
 - Business Fire Safety Advisors training will be complete by end of Q2
- Progress against the Risk Based inspection programme is on track, with 80% of very high risk completed.

EDI

- People and Culture Officer now in place with a key focus on EDI training, staff networks, EDI on station
- Bystander training being finalised and dates agreed
- Culture Board set up, initial meeting took place 12 July, proposal presented to support set up of staff networks

Revisit

HMICFRS revisited the Service, week commencing 20 May 2024, after identifying causes of concern relating to prevention, protection, and equality, diversity and inclusion to review the progress made against their recommendations.

On the 30 July 2024 HMICFRS published its Revisit findings (Appendix 2). The findings include:

- **Governance:** Appropriate and robust governance arrangements are in place to monitor progress of our action plan
- **Prevention:** The service has made good progress against the remaining recommendations associated with the cause of concern. It has improved the way it identifies and prioritises those most at risk of fire and other emergencies.
- **Protection:** The service has made progress in improving how its teams prioritise risk. It has used support from the National Fire Chiefs Council and other fire and rescue services to help it review its ways of working
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion:** The service has made good progress to improve the way it promotes equality, diversity and inclusion. Working closely with Buckinghamshire Council, it has reviewed its action plan and used this external expertise to scrutinise its activity.
- **Overall:** Despite good progress being made, there is still more work to do. While the action plan is comprehensive, we can't yet determine how effective the plan will be in making sure it provides a better service to the public.

A further revisit is scheduled for 23 September 2024

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 remain 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 24/25 can be found here: [Internal Audit plan](#)

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.

Background papers:

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

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/>

28 April 2023 - Extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting: Values and Culture in fire and rescue services

[2bmkfa-extraordinary-meeting-28-april-2023-item-8-values-and-culture-in-fire-and-rescue-services.pdf \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/04/28/bmkfa-extraordinary-meeting-28-april-2023-item-8-values-and-culture-in-fire-and-rescue-services.pdf)

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/

6 December 2023 – Fire Authority: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Action Plan

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/11/fire-authority-meeting-6-december-2023-item-15-hmicfrs-action-plan.pdf/>

8 February 2024 – Executive Committee: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Update

bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2024/01/executive-committee-meeting-8-february-2024-item-12-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-and-rescue-services-hmicfrs-buckinghamshire-fire-and-rescue-service-bfrs-2023-update.pdf/

13 March 2024 – Overview and Audit Committee: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2024/02/overview-and-audit-committee-13-march-2024-item-9-hmicfrs-bfrs-2023-2025-update.pdf/>

09 May 2024 - State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023

[State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023 - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk)

12 June 2024 - Fire Authority: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023-2025 Update

[Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 12/06/2024 11:00 \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.bucksfire.gov.uk)

30 July 2024 – HMICFRS Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: Causes of concern revisit letter

[Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: Causes of concern revisit letter - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk)

01 August 2024 - HMICFRS Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

[Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	HMICFRS Round 3 Action plan July 2024	N/A
2	Revisit Letter	N/A

Area	Ref	Action	Strategic Owner	Responsible Officer	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success and Impact measures	Commentary - July 24	Progress RAG End of July 24	
It has an effective system to define the levels of risk in the community										
Prevention	1.1.1	Implement the Prevention Risk Stratification (PRS) process based on the NFCC guidance	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	Nov-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRS guidance note written and published • PRS is live across all channels • All staff understand the PRS methodology 	Ongoing monitoring in place. Preparedness and Improvement (Prevention) audits commenced with eight audits already carried out as of 31 July. The SC who is leading on this is going to be providing information on the outcomes and themes following this round of visits.	Complete	
	1.1.2	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) developed and reported to support Risk Stratification guidance	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	Jan-24	Mar-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPI's in place • Management control processes in place. • All referrals are dealt with in line with PRS guidance thresholds 	Currently KPIs are being manually retrieved and presented. We are continually working on how improvements can be made to automate this and a working group with key stakeholders has been assembled to discuss and seek a solution. There has been an impact this month on progress due to capacity within departments.	Complete	
	It's systems and processes for dealing with referrals from individuals and partner agencies effectively manage and prioritise those referrals with the highest identified risk									
	1.2.1	Ensure all current referrals are processed and up to date	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	Jun-23	Nov-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals from partner agencies are being processed in line with Service expectations. • No referral backlog. 	Continues to remain as BAU with ongoing monitoring now in place.	Complete	
	1.2.2	Launch Online Home Fire Safety Check form (OHFSC) developed to complement the Person-Centred Framework	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	Nov-23	Feb-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	145 interactions through the OHFSC as of 29 July are being reported.	Complete	
	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	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Administrative Support Manager	Nov-23	Feb-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral processing guidance note written and published • Guidance note utilised to support training 	Document and Process now in place. Update has being made in July to flow chart to now include clarification on contacting original referee.	Complete	
	1.2.4	Update PRMS to reflect Risk Stratification guidance	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	Nov-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All agreed requirements have been developed, testing by all relevant users and live. • All referrals are in line with delivery expectations associated with the descriptors for levels of risk as per the Risk Stratification Guidance 	This is being closely monitored with minimal issues being identified and rectified. Expected to close down development actions already requested by end of July. Some additional areas which require attention on how KPI information is recorded and reported have been identified and a working group with key stakeholders has been assembled to discuss and seek a solution. Additionally scoping request to build API to link to OHFSC.	Complete	

	1.2.5	Ensure all appropriate staff are adequately trained on the referral process and understand the methodology.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Prevention & Resilience	Jan-24	Mar-24	•All staff have received appropriate training.	Ongoing monitoring in place. Preparedness and Improvement (Prevention) audits commenced with eight audits already carried out as of 31 July. The SC who is leading on this is going to be providing information on the outcomes and themes following this round of visits.	Complete
Clearly define its risk-based inspection programme, within a revised protection strategy, which is aligned to its next public safety plan									7
	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 focusing resource on highest risk premises types.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Head of Protection, Assurance & Development	Nov-23	Dec-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Internal Publication 	Protection strategy has been reviewed and updated with input from NFCC. The strategy was presented to the Fire Authority on 16 December 2023 (https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/11/fire-authority-meeting-6-december-2023-item-12-protection-strategy-2023-2025.pdf/)	Complete
	2.1.2	Introduce risk-based interventions programme to underpin revised strategy	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Protection	Nov-23	Dec-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk-based inspection methodology identified and clearly articulated • Based on methodology, identify planned audit schedule for very high / high risk premise types • Internal Publication 	The RBIP has been through its initial iteration working in partnership with the Data Team. This was introduced to the Protection team and they offered feedback about improving the RBIP data. This was worked upon and another meeting was held in June between the Protection and data teams to demonstrate the revised RBIP taking into account the guidance document recommendations from the NFCC. This new data will be migrated over to as the Protection team finish off the very high risks on the initial RBIP. The information for the new RBIP data has been fully discussed with the Protection team so that they fully understand the process and the data. This methodology has also been shared with our FRS colleagues in the south East who have yet to come up with a process to meet the NFCCs guidance document. The new data reflects the suggested risks as the NFCC see them and have taken into account some of our more extreme SSRI high risks.	Complete
	2.1.3	Ensure the Protection strategy 2025-30 is embedded and fully aligned with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Head of Protection, Assurance & Development	Feb-24	Oct-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-led approach to management of protection resources • Extensive internal / external consultation • Due consideration to integration / alignment with Prevention and Response strategies 	New strategy being built into CRMP to ensure alignment. Currently in draft ahead of public consultation. Engagement already undertaken with NFCC and peer review from Derbyshire FRS. Public consultation due to start 08 July.	On track
Make sure its increased number of staff complete a proportionate amount of activity to reduce risk and work to effective targets									
	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	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Protection	Nov-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	The RBIP has been embedded in with the Protection team and each of the team is able to see the RBIP database and pick from this based on the level of risk identified within the database. The Protection officers have also challenged the data where appropriate to improve upon it and given their views about how to devise the new RBIP. The team have been aiming to concentrate upon doing audits and are aware of this whilst at the same time having to deal with complaints and consultations though the team are improving on their risk based approach to complaints and consultations that will further free up potential audit time.	Complete

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.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Protection	Nov-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KPI's presented to Performance Monitoring Board quarterly 1000 audits annually Proportionate number of audits resulting in non-satisfactory outcomes 	The non-satisfactory outcomes of audits remains at a high level broadly above KPI. The audit numbers have always been a stretch target and June is lower than previous months and upon inquiries of the SC there have been a few officers on annual leave and some undertaking training as well as the start of the summer annual period. There has been a push to increase the numbers in July and already previous to the end of the month there is an increase upon the numbers recorded in June. Monitoring of audit numbers continues but it should be acknowledged that over 75% of the very highs have been completed within the last 9 months and approximately 40% of the highs which is within the three year expectation for these.	Complete
2.2.3	Introduce three apprentice Business Safety Advisor roles utilising Protection grant funding to support - Enable more qualified Protection staff to focus on high risk / low compliance	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Protection	Nov-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Our third apprentice starts on 1 august to get us up to a full complement using the grant funding. We also have three advisors one of whom is using grant funding. The advisors are just going through their assignments in order to get to a Level 3 in Fire Safety at which point they can start to take over complaints in 'simple' premises and also deal with fire safety inquiries. this will free up the inspecting officers to focus more fully on the audit numbers. The advisors and the apprentices have been working through the new approach to business engagement to further support local businesses in improving their fire safety.	Complete
Assures the system to record fire safety activity is robust and well supported to enable prioritisation of highest risk								
2.3.1	Ensure schedule for planned audits is easily accessible to staff who require it	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Protection	Nov-23	Dec-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified very-high risk and high risk audits are provided to teams 	See the point above about how the protection have been fully engaged in the development of the revise RBIP. All officers fully understand the highs and very highs and have been picking from the RBIP as they complete their pre-planned audits. This is reflected in the percentage of very highs and highs that have been completed so far since the initial RBIP was adopted in October. When we move across to the revised RBIP the protection team will be fully involved and will have had a say in the way that it has been developed. The revised RBIP reflects the current draft guidance as devised by the NFCC and has been shared with our FRS colleagues.	Complete
2.3.2	Premises Risk Management System (PRMS) – training input to ensure standardisation / consistency in data input and extraction	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Protection	Dec-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training input received by relevant Protection staff Consistency monitored by Station Commanders 	The Protection team as a whole continue to work with PRMS to improve upon our understanding of the system and is being monitored by the SCs and the GC in the way that it is being used. There is a PRMS group who from all the offices that meets to ensure that there continues to be consistency in the way that the system is being used.	Complete
2.3.3	PRMS system – make provision for standard Protection outcome letters to improve efficiency and consistency	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Protection	Jan-24	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard letters available for use Training provided as appropriate to support implementation 	We continue to use a third party consultant to develop and improve our standard letters and get them on the system. We have also started to make use of the new Policy enforcement and Training Officer to assist with the turn around of these and also consult with our legal advisor over the content of the letters.	Complete
2.3.4	Review provision of admin support to Protection teams to ensure efficiency	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Head of Protection, Assurance & Development	Dec-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative requirements identified Qualified Protection staff enabled to focus more time on planned activity 	Protection managers and admin team leader have identified a number of areas / tasks requiring additional support. Additional provision has been allocated for a 12 month period, with anticipated system improvements to take place during that time. Interviews are taking place for this role and we await the outcomes.	Complete
Makes sure it has an effective quality assurance process so that staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard								

2.4	2.4.1	Introduce a Protection Quality Assurance (QA) process	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Protection	Oct-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (QA) process documented, consulted and agreed through governance • Relevant staff are trained on the QA process • QA activity recorded and reported 	We are presently reviewing the QA procedure and continue to work through the process. there will be a reminder this month about ensuring the next round of QA is undertaken.	Complete
	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	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Group Commander Protection	Dec-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published revised procedures and guidance • Training / input (as required) delivered to Protection staff 	The new policy Enforcement and Training officer started on 1st July 2024. This has allowed us to concentrate to the development of policies and procedures. We have sought existing procedures from other services to ensure that our new documents will be fit for purpose and reflect the current thinking and legislation. the new post's priorities is documents and already consultation is being undertaken with the team with new draft documents.	Risk to progress
Give greater priority to how it increases awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation									
3.1	3.1.1	Develop a role to include dedicated EDI support to ensure the delivery of EDI objectives	Director of Finance & Assets	Head of Human Resources	Jan-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dedicated staff member in place/ recruited 	As part of his induction and embedding into the Service, the new People and Culture Officer is visiting stations on a weekly basis, he is also meeting with stakeholders from across the service. He is working on the HMICFRS actions and EDI plan. Attendance at National conferences (AFSA and NFCC Culture) and virtual workshops (Equality Impact assessments and Dignity at work) has meant he has contacts from other services and networks.	Complete
	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	Director of Finance & Assets	Station Commander HR Projects	Nov-23	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review undertaken of EDI training to assess effectiveness, reach and options • 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. 	As part of his induction and embedding into the Service, the new People and Culture Officer is visiting stations on a weekly basis, he is also meeting with stakeholders from across the service. He is working on the HMICFRS actions and EDI plan. Attendance at National conferences (AFSA and NFCC Culture) and virtual workshops (Equality Impact assessments and Dignity at work) has meant he has contacts from other services and networks.	Complete
	3.1.3	Rollout 360 feedback process to all middle managers, which includes a section on how they promote EDI	Director of Finance & Assets	Organisational Development Manager	Dec-23	Dec-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All relevant staff have completed 360 feedback including the manager appraisal session and workbook and the outcomes feed into development plans and appraisal process. 	All middle and senior managers have been enrolled onto and completed 360 feedback including the manager appraisal session and workbook and the outcomes feed into development plans and appraisal process. 360 feedback has been embedded as business as usual via the Talent Management discussion of the appraisal and when 'Potential to move to next level' is selected and signed off by your line manager, those are then invited to complete a 360. It isn't mandatory but is encouraged as part of the development journey and wider staff development pathway. E,D&I and "my role" specific section added to appraisal process 2024/25.	Complete
	3.1.4	Utilise EDI data to better inform station plans to facilitate targeted community engagement activity adding specific action(s) related to EDI	Director of Finance & Assets	Station Commander HR Projects	Jan-24	Mar-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery area plans include EDI related data and actions 	This action is now BAU, station commanders are responsible for using the added data, and benchmarking reports to inform activity. This is being monitored by the territorial Group Commanders. Examples of work are Eid in the Park, 17 June (High Wycombe) African Diaspora, 6 July (Broughton), MK Pride 14 September, Black History Month (Broughton) October 19	Complete
	3.1.5	Review and relaunch of our values/code of ethics to support a positive workplace culture	Director of Finance & Assets	Station Commander HR Projects	Jan-24	Oct-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff understand what each value means for/to them and can share how it supports the communities we serve 	Project Initiation document presented to June Business Transformation Board, visualisation visits on station being planned time for events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •August: Group Meeting on Teams •August/September: Station Meetings •September/October: Installation Logistics. Organisational Development to launch new Leadership and Behaviour Framework, this is aligned to our Promise, Values and Behaviours, and will form part of all future development centres and performance and development packs.	On track

3.1.6	Work with our staff networks to gain their input, to develop policies, projects and initiatives.	Director of Finance & Assets	Head of Human Resources	Jul-24	Dec-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A representative from these groups is included in the development of procedures before consultation. Increased staff engagement and inclusion 	<p>First Culture Board took place on 12 July, the initial proposal for how staff networks will work in BFRS was presented and is now being communicated across the service led by the People & Culture Officer.</p> <p>Culture Board ToR to be signed off at next Culture Board meeting - 9 August. Links to 3.2.3.</p> <p>We now have consistent representation on national staff networks inc AFSA South East Region, Black and LGBT networks</p> <p>People & Culture Officer is collaborating with other Fire Services, SCAS and Police networks to identify points of learning including supporting staff chairs/co chairs/allowing attendance to grow confidence once chairs are identified.</p> <p>First staff network planned for September/October with members from a diverse range of employees already being engaged with to develop networks based on their need. This action is set to be completed in October when the staff networks are established and reporting back into the Culture Board</p>	On track
Make sure that it has appropriate ways to engage with and seek feedback from all staff, including those from under-represented groups								
3.2.1	Launch and review "Speak Up" campaign	Director of Finance & Assets	HR Advisory & Development Manager	Oct-23	Feb-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff aware of Speak Up facility Ongoing process in place to review take up/usage 	Confidential reporting line in place and all employees have been made aware of the services available. Since launch in May, three calls have been made to the service.	Complete
3.2.2	Develop mechanisms to reduce the mystery of the Service's governance processes	Director of Finance & Assets	Head of Technology, Transformation & PMO	Nov-23	Jan-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "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 	Extra Chair take up to be monitored on a quarterly basis. Template agreed and to be used across BTB and PMB	Complete
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)	Director of Finance & Assets	Head of Human Resources	Nov-23	Jun-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established networks which feed into the Culture Board Increase in the number of staff networks from underrepresented groups. (internal or external). 	<p>First Culture Board took place on 12 July, the initial proposal for how staff networks will work in BFRS was presented and is now being communicated across the service led by the People & Culture Officer.</p> <p>Culture Board ToR to be signed off at next Culture Board meeting - 9 August. Links to 3.1.6.</p> <p>We now have consistent representation on national staff networks inc AFSA South East Region, Black and LGBT networks</p> <p>People & Culture Officer is collaborating with other Fire Services, SCAS and Police networks to identify points of learning including supporting staff chairs/co chairs/allowing attendance to grow confidence once chairs are identified.</p> <p>First staff network planned for September/October with members from a diverse range of employees already being engaged with to develop networks based on their need. This action is set to be completed in October when the staff networks are established and reporting back into the Culture Board</p>	Risk to progress
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.	Director of Finance & Assets	Head of Technology, Transformation & PMO	Nov-23	Aug-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain completion rate at 70+ percent Increase "the Service will take action from the survey" score Instigate action where the outcomes/scores are low 	<p>The overall completion rate was 72.5%.</p> <p>The question: 'The information from this survey will be used constructively by the Service increased by 13.24%.</p> <p>Team sessions with support from the supplier continue. An update will be provided to the Culture Board on the themes coming out of these sessions.</p> <p>We are reviewing how we use could use a pulse survey to see how the changes from this action plan have been embedded with staff.</p>	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	Director of Finance & Assets	HR Advisory & Development Manager	Jan-24	Mar-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	Case management update provided to SMB on a quarterly basis. 24/25 Q1 update to be presented to 20 August SMB.	Complete
3.2.6	Ensure all line managers have regular structured contact with all their staff	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Organisational Development Manager	Apr-24	Mar-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leadership and management programme includes training/ education on being a people manager. Increased percentage of staff who have a 121 every month 	Leadership and Management Development Pathway includes People Manager training. Supervisory and Middle Manager Acquisition Programmes also includes People Manager Input, including training on effective appraisals. Increase number of appraisal completion for 2023/24. Staff survey results indicates positive and regular interaction between staff and line management. From having a temporary WC role in service for the past 18 months, that has been providing coaching and mentoring to staff on station, it has become clear that the coaching and mentoring required of existing managers, isn't in the operational skills and knowledge, but in the people management / talent management / performance management - a support staff member can provide this coaching and mentoring. The growth bid submitted as part of the MTFP for 2025/26 supports this.	On track
Make improvements to the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographics and needs								
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.	Director of Finance & Assets	Head of Human Resources	Jan-24	Jul-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A continuous increase of equality data being inputted. Increased messaging about the benefits of a diverse workforce and the reasons for declaration. 	People and Culture Officer and Senior Data Analyst meeting 23 July to review data for presentation to August PMB, review of gaps in data taking place and how we can encourage employees to close them	Complete
3.3.2	To review recruitment and promotion processes to ensure they include and promote the importance of staff providing their equality data.	Director of Finance & Assets	Head of Human Resources	Feb-24	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of equality data. Staff know how to enter their equality data. 	Costs for the onboarding module have been received and are being reviewed.	Complete
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.	Director of Finance & Assets	Head of Human Resources	Apr-24	Jun-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to identify areas of the service that require additional support/training. Better understanding of the diversity of the workforce through ongoing data tracking. 	Latest data to be presented to Culture Board on a regular basis and staff networks once they are set up in September	Complete
3.3.4	A quarterly review of equality data by the Culture Board to ensure we have an understanding of the workforce demographics and needs. Appropriate action taken where necessary.	Director of Finance & Assets	Head of Human Resources	Apr-24	Jun-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the availability of data which will allow the organisation to make more informed decisions that will have a positive impact. 	As above, all of these actions link - 3.3.1 - 3.3.4	Complete
Be more ambitious in its efforts to attract a more diverse workforce that better reflects the community it serves								

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.	Director of Finance & Assets	Director of Finance & Assets	Nov-23	Mar-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	Property Forum meeting due to meet 2 September 2024- Ongoing review of premises facilities, meeting booked 5 August with Director of Finance and Assets, Property Manager, People and Culture Officer to report back EDI feedback from completed EDI station visits for consideration. New Helmet bags being rolled out, which provide a better ability to keep PPE separate and prevent spread of contaminants while also providing a facility to store personal hygiene/welfare equipment as providing all operational women a personal pack to store their own products in, Taken delivery of the extra equipment for welfare at incidents which consist of shelters for rest areas and tents/barriers to help protect dignity. Currently working on a toilet option that will deliver the option of toilet facilities at 100% of our incidents.	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.	Director of Finance & Assets	Station Commander HR Projects	Dec-23	Nov-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Increased uptake from underrepresented applicants. 	A positive action programme will be presented to a future (October) Culture Board, the programme will be split into three parts, 1) On going positive engagement/action being conducted by stations at Service Delivery Areas 2) Centrally managed HR/Marcomms Positive Action work to be carried out leading up to recruitment 3) Positive Action programmes to run concurrently during a recruitment campaign to support candidates from under represented groups	On track
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.	Director of Finance & Assets	Station Commander HR Projects	Jan-24	Jun-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment processes are adapted. Increased uptake from underrepresented applicants. Data collected from applicants will be used to inform process changes. 	The completed review was presented to Joint Consultation Forum in July, a paper is being prepared for presenting to Business Transformation Board (5 September) and September Strategic Management Board. This will consider the relevance of each process, highlight potential barriers whilst also considering the anticipated risks, with control measures recommended to mitigate as far as reasonably practicable	Risk to progress
3.4.4	Identify and report on areas of underrepresentation within the Service, identifying groups we would benefit from attracting across all levels,	Director of Finance & Assets	HR Operations Manager	Jan-24	Oct-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant and up-to-date data which can be used to inform recruitment actions 	Recruitment information within iTrent is being reviewed and cleansed as on-going process in order for the reports to be reflected correctly. The support roles within iTrent are being revised to ensure that any vacant roles are being recruited to and any that are not required, are being delimited within the system, so that they will no longer show on reports that are being run. There are no plans for wholetime recruitment in 2024. On call recruitment - 11 are due to start in August, we continue to monitor protected characteristics of applicants and successful candidates. Targeted have a go days are planned to support under represented groups.	On track
3.4.5	Ensure recruitment resources are utilised to ensure more applications from diverse/underrepresented people from our local communities.	Director of Finance & Assets	HR Operations Manager	Jan-24	Oct-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement/recruitment activities such as career fairs are prioritised to those that meet our target audiences More applications from diverse/underrepresented applicants 	We continue to review the requests we receive making decisions on attendance based on the information we have on demographics, the capacity to attend and the recruitment campaigns that are open or due to open later in the year. All requests are logged on a spreadsheet and the reasons for attendance or non attendance. Work is still ongoing with stakeholders across the service on our approach to attendance at small, medium and large events.	On track

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Sent by email:

Louise Harrison
Chief Fire Officer
Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

30 July 2024

Dear Louise,

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service revisit

Between May and June 2023, we inspected Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. During our inspection, we identified that the [causes of concern](#) relating to prevention and equality, diversity and inclusion issued after our inspection in 2021 had not been fully addressed. We also identified a new cause of concern about the service's protection activity. On 19 October 2023, we issued the causes of concern and made the following recommendations:

Prevention cause of concern

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.

Recommendations

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; and
- its systems and processes for dealing with referrals from individuals and partner agencies effectively manage and prioritise those referrals with the highest identified risk.

Protection cause of concern

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.

Recommendations

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.

Equality, diversity and inclusion cause of concern

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.

Recommendations

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; and
- be more ambitious in its efforts to attract a more diverse workforce that better reflects the community it serves.

On 15 November 2023, you submitted an action plan setting out how you would address the causes of concern and our recommendations.

Between 20 and 24 May 2024, we carried out a revisit to review progress against the action plan. During the revisit, we interviewed staff who were responsible for developing this plan, including you as chief fire officer. We also interviewed managers and staff with responsibility for prevention, protection and equality, diversity and inclusion, together with colleagues from their teams. On 31 May 2024, we shared our initial findings with you. This letter provides an update on our findings.

Governance

We found appropriate and robust governance arrangements in place to monitor progress of your action plan. You, as chief fire officer, chair the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) strategic improvement board meetings, which have been held regularly since December 2023. This board provides strategic oversight and scrutiny of the action plan and the service's progress. Partner organisations such as the [National Fire Chiefs Council](#), Buckinghamshire Council, HMICFRS and representative bodies attend these meetings.

You also introduced the HMICFRS tactical board in early 2024 to make sure departmental managers are monitoring progress. This board also meets regularly and is chaired by the deputy chief fire officer.

Action plan

The service has an action plan that covers all the causes of concern. The plan identifies senior responsible officers, deadlines and people assigned to each task. It includes updates on the progress of actions made against each cause of concern and the associated recommendations. The service is also considering its progress against the areas for improvement we identified in our last inspection. It should continue to do this to make sure improvements are not made in isolation and are inclusive of the wider service.

The service now has a dashboard that shows how many of its actions have been completed, are in progress or are at risk. This helps it to focus on what actions need attention. It also means the service can provide accurate progress reports at the HMICFRS strategic and tactical improvement board meetings.

Progress against the causes of concern

Prevention

The service has made good progress against the remaining recommendations associated with the cause of concern. It has improved the way it identifies and prioritises those most at risk of fire and other emergencies.

The service has developed and published its risk stratification methodology. This means all referrals for home fire safety visits can be scored against a risk criterion and then prioritised for completion within set timescales.

It has updated and thoroughly tested its system for managing referrals and home fire safety visits using this risk methodology. It now makes sure referrals are quickly triaged, added to the system and prioritised for a visit by staff. Referrals are now prioritised on a highest-risk basis rather than on a first-come, first-served basis.

The service has given in-person training and guidance documents to staff who are involved in the administration process for home fire safety referrals. It plans to roll this out to all firefighters and staff involved with processing referrals.

The service has developed a dashboard to monitor the number of referrals it has received and triaged, how many still require action and how many home fire safety visits are waiting to happen. During our revisit, the service was able to identify the number of homes waiting for a visit and how long they had been waiting. It has significantly reduced the number of cases in its backlog.

The service is developing key performance indicators to help it effectively manage these changes and the impact they will have on its performance and on the public. We look forward to seeing the outcome of these changes and the service's performance updates.

Protection

The service has made progress in improving how its teams prioritise risk. It has used support from the National Fire Chiefs Council and other fire and rescue services to help it review its ways of working.

The service has reviewed its protection strategy and developed a risk-based intervention methodology. This should help the service to make sure its teams are prioritising fire safety audits for high-risk buildings.

It has increased its target for fire safety audits completed each month. Since September 2023, the service has considerably increased the number of audits it has made each month. The service has identified and made a list of very high-risk premises that should be prioritised for annual audit, which it has made available to protection staff.

The service has trained protection staff on its recording system to make sure data input is consistent. It has also identified and introduced the need for additional administrative support so that staff have more time to carry out audits.

The service has formalised its quality assurance procedures and has completed the first round of quality assurance recording for protection staff.

It is developing performance indicators, which will help it to make sure it continually targets high-risk premises. The service also has plans to automate some processes to create consistency and further increase productivity.

The service needs to do more to make sure this new approach, developed through its strategy and quality assurance guidance, is fully understood by all staff. It should consider whether further updates to its systems are needed to make sure its record keeping is accurate.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The service has made good progress to improve the way it promotes equality, diversity and inclusion. Working closely with Buckinghamshire Council, it has reviewed its action plan and used this external expertise to scrutinise its activity.

The service has worked with staff to review and redefine its values. It has asked staff to develop their own personal goals, keeping in mind the service's redefined values.

It sought funding so that it could recruit a people and culture officer and a director of human resources and organisational development. These two roles will help the service to focus on its work on equality, diversity and inclusion and make sure it is co-ordinated across the service's departments.

The service has included an equality, diversity and inclusion objective into personal development reviews for all staff. This should help the service to continually raise awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion topics, both locally and organisationally.

It has carried out a positive action recruitment campaign. This has helped the service to increase the number of applications from women and people from an ethnic minority background.

The service has ambitious plans to further promote equality, diversity and inclusion. We look forward to seeing this promising work continue.

Conclusion

We were pleased to see the significant steps the service has taken in response to the causes of concern we issued. Despite good progress being made, there is still more work to do. While the action plan is comprehensive, we can't yet determine how effective the plan will be in making sure it provides a better service to the public.

We will continue to monitor the service's progress through regular contact and attendance at its improvement boards. And we will carry out an in-person visit to examine the outcome of the changes the service has made. We will assess whether Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has made satisfactory progress with its action plan and if the service it provides to the public has improved.

This letter will be published on our website.

Yours sincerely,



Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Extraordinary Fire Authority, 11 September 2024

Report title: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Values and Culture Update

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse, Chairman

Report sponsor: Chief Fire Officer, Louise Harrison

Author and contact: Anne-Marie Carter, Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO – acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Noting

Recommendations:

That the HMICFRS Values & Culture update be noted

Executive summary:

On Thursday 30 March 2023 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published 'Values and culture in fire and rescue services'. The report has 9 themes supported by 35 recommendations and all Fire and Rescue Services, alongside the government and national fire bodies are urged to implement them as a matter of urgency.

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) welcomed the report and the recommendations within it.

The Service and Authority continues to take the culture of our service extremely seriously and we want to make sure all our staff and the public we serve are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Following the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade Culture by Nazir Afzal OBE in November 2022 and subsequent news articles into allegations at South Wales and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services, the service reviewed what is in place for employees and what actions need to be taken. This was presented for noting on 22 March 2023.

Previous actions, including the previously presented Exploring our Culture paper, were reviewed against the subsequent HMICFRS Values and Culture report to ensure there were clear priorities. These were reviewed by an independent EDI specialist from Bucks Council and subsequently consolidated into one overarching EDI Plan.

Of the 35 recommendations, 20 were owned by the Chief Fire Officer. The Chief Fire Officer has reviewed all recommendations and is assured that the service has the appropriate processes and measures in place.

The final recommendations update provided to HMICFRS can be found in Appendix 1.

The Service continues to review other Service's reports published and feed any recommendations into our annual planning process.

Financial implications:

The prioritisation of improvements to address the specific recommendations raised 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 remain 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 24/25 can be found here: [Internal Audit plan](#)

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 2023-2025 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:

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

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.

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-services/)

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/>

28 April 2023 - Extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting: Values and Culture in fire and rescue services

bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/04/bmkfa-extraordinary-meeting-28-april-2023-item-8-values-and-culture-in-fire-and-rescue-services.pdf/

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/

6 December 2023 – Fire Authority: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Action Plan

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/11/fire-authority-meeting-6-december-2023-item-15-hmicfrs-action-plan.pdf/>

8 February 2024 – Executive Committee: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Update

bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2024/01/executive-committee-meeting-8-february-2024-item-12-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-and-rescue-services-hmicfrs-buckinghamshire-fire-and-rescue-service-bfrs-2023-update.pdf/

13 March 2024 – Overview and Audit Committee: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2024/02/overview-and-audit-committee-13-march-2024-item-9-hmicfrs-bfrs-2023-2025-update.pdf/>

09 May 2024 - State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023

[State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023 - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/state-of-fire-and-rescue-the-annual-assessment-of-fire-and-rescue-services-in-england-2023-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-rescue-services/)

12 June 2024 - Fire Authority: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023-2025 Update

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 12/06/2024 11:00 \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2024/06/2024-11-00-public-pack-agenda-document-for-buckinghamshire-milton-keynes-fire-authority-12-06-2024-11-00.pdf/)

30 July 2024 – HMICFRS Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: Causes of concern revisit letter

[Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: Causes of concern revisit letter - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/causes-of-concern-revisit-letter-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-rescue-services/)

01 August 2024 - HMICFRS Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

[Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)
(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	HMICFRS Values and Culture Recommendation final report	N/A

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HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '24 Update (Final Update provided to HMICFRS)
Raising concerns					
1	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes.	BFRS	01-Oct-23	Complete	<p>We have had a Whistleblowing line in place for a number of years, which is run by an external organisation. However, we recognise we need to do more to give staff the confidence to speak up. We are now working with several service providers to introduce a dedicated confidential reporting line. This will be supported by a strong marketing 'Speak up' campaign to highlight this to BFRS staff.</p> <p>Our current confidential Whistleblowing line will be rebranded and promoted through the 'Speak up' campaign, to ensure a single number for staff to report concerns.</p> <p>Speak up Campaign went live at the start of November 2023</p>
2	By 1 October 2023, National Employers, the Local Government Association and the National Fire Chiefs Council should review any current independent arrangements whereby staff can raise concerns outside their FRS. They should then ensure that all FRS staff have access to an independent reporting line that can be used as a confidential way to raise concerns outside their own FRS.	National Employers, LGA, NFCC	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
3	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review the support available for those who have raised concerns and take any action needed to make sure these provisions are suitable.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	<p>We have a range of support in place for those that raise concerns inc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welfare Officer - Occupational Health - Allocating a point of contact that's not part of the investigation <p>We will continue to review what our staff and public have available to them, ensuring it works for them. Our processes will document the support available.</p>
4	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should assure themselves that updates on how concerns are being handled are shared with those who have raised them. The updates should be given in an accessible way that encourages trust and confidence in the service response. Consideration should be given to creating a professional standards function to handle conduct concerns in service (or from an external service) to have oversight of cases, to make sure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way and to act as a point of contact for all staff involved.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	<p>The Service has in place processes that ensure updates are provided to those that have raised concerns, inc face to face meetings/different locations or in writing.</p> <p>We are reviewing different options of how a professional standards function could work at BFRS including. Options include collaboration with other Services or external suppliers.</p> <p>All grievances and disciplines are reviewed the Deputy Chief Fire officer on a fortnightly basis to ensure they are conducted in a fair and transparent way.</p>
5	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure they provide accessible information for all staff and members of the public on how they can raise concerns and access confidential support (including through external agencies). Chief fire officers should also make sure accessible information is provided on how concerns and allegations will be investigated in a way that ensures confidentiality and is independent of the alleged perpetrator.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	<p>We have a whistleblowing procedure in place and are working on a campaign to encourage staff to speak up.</p> <p>We will review our procedure to ensure they are written in an accessible way, easy for staff and public to understand.</p> <p>The public can raise concerns via a number of channels all documented on our website. We have a complaints procedure in place.</p> <p>Both compliments and complaints are part of our performance measures that are reported on quarterly. These actions will support recommendation 31</p>

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '24 Update (Final Update provided to HMICFRS)
Background checks					
6	By 1 January 2024, the Home Office, working with the Ministry of Justice, should make sure that the Government incorporates fire and rescue authority employees within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 so that they are eligible for the appropriate DBS checks.	Home Office	01-Jan-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
7	By 1 May 2024, the Home Office, working with the fire and rescue sector, should make sure that the Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations 2002, or a similar appropriate legislatively enabled solution, makes detailed provisions for fire and rescue services.	Home Office	01-May-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
8	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and underpinning guidance. It should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly state the requirements for background checks undertaken by services; • clarify the minimum requirements (including levels of DBS checks) for all roles, particularly roles where staff have access to vulnerable members of the public; • define the standards required to embed a culture across fire and rescue services that empowers all members of staff and local communities to report concerns; and • be subject to review following any legislative change 	Fire Standards Board	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
9	By 1 January 2024, chief fire officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immediately review their current background checks arrangements, and make sure that suitable and sufficient background checks are in place to safeguard their staff and communities they serve; and • make sure that appropriate DBS check requests have been submitted for all existing, new staff, and volunteers, according to their roles as identified by the Fire Standards Board. 	BFRS	01-Jan-24	Complete	<p>Since 2016 we have completed DBS checks on all relevant staff including all frontline staff. In 2019 we increased our vetting and moved to the annual 'Enhanced with barred list' DBS. We believe this is leading practice in the way Fire & Rescue Services should vet their staff, and have lobbied the Home Office to make it mandatory for Fire and Rescue services. We welcome the focus on this from HMICFRS.</p> <p>We also carry out other background and vetting checks including</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Right to work in the UK b. References <p>Some roles require external agencies to carry out further security clearance checks. For example, NILO, Prevent panel, CTLP Liaison, National Security Vetting</p> <p>DBS Procedure has been reviewed and consulted on. Legislation that came into force July 2023, means the procedure will published and communicated before a further review. All Fire Service employees need a minimum of a standard DBS; all roles have been reviewed for DBS levels against the new legislation. DBS across all staff is now implemented.</p>
10	By 1 September 2023, chief constables should make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services.	Police	01-Sep-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '24 Update (Final Update provided to HMICFRS)
Misconduct handling					
11	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle staff disclosures, complaints and grievances	Fire Standards Board	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
12	By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling.	BFRS	01-Mar-24	Complete	<p>On the 9th February 2024, the following 3 standards have been revised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leading the Service - Leading and Developing People - Safeguarding <p>The Service has reviewed the revised standard and updated our gap analysis. We are also working with the NFCC Implementation team to support the review and any further work needed.</p> <p>We continue to provide investigation training to staff and have invested in Case management refresher training for 23/24.</p> <p>Investigation training took place during September '23. Hearing manager training was delivered to the Senior Management team in June 2023 and Group/Station Commanders and equivalent during Q3.</p> <p>We are liaising with other services to explore a shared PSD to promote improved consistency, clarity and impartiality through independent investigations.</p> <p>Following the release of the WFRS report we have carried out a SWOT analysis to ensure all our policies are fit for purpose and up to date</p>
13	By 1 December 2023, the Fire Standards Board, in liaison with the National Fire Chiefs Council, should review the existing relevant standard(s) and supporting guidance to clearly state how services should handle misconduct and safeguarding-related allegations and outcomes. These should include requirements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct and complete investigations, whether or not the staff member under investigation leaves; • consider whether the incident requires immediate dismissal; • provide training for staff who are carrying out investigations; and • ensure the diversity/neutrality of the investigation panel/person. 	Fire Standards Board	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
14	By 1 March 2024, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that they have implemented the standard on misconduct allegations and outcomes handling.	BFRS	01-Mar-24	Complete	<p>On the 9th February 2024, the following 3 standards have been revised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leading the Service - Leading and Developing People - Safeguarding <p>The Service has reviewed the revised standard and updated our gap analysis. We are also working with the NFCC Implementation team to support the review and any further work needed.</p> <p>We continue to provide investigation training to staff and have invested in Case management refresher training for 23/24.</p> <p>Investigation training took place during September '23. Hearing manager training was delivered to the Senior Management team in June 2023 and Group/Station Commanders and equivalent during Q3.</p> <p>We are liaising with other services to explore a shared PSD to promote improved consistency, clarity and impartiality through independent investigations.</p> <p>Following the release of the WFRS report we have carried out a SWOT analysis to ensure all our policies are fit for purpose and up to date</p>

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '24 Update (Final Update provided to HMICFRS)
15	By 1 October 2023, the Home Office should work with the National Fire Chiefs Council and fire and rescue service employers to make sure there is a process to handle misconduct allegations against chief fire officers. The Home Office should immediately notify HMICFRS of any allegations and outcomes that it is aware of	Home Office	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
16	By 1 October 2023, the National Fire Chiefs Council should develop and manage a national barred list that holds details of staff who have been dismissed for gross misconduct (including staff who have already left services). It should ensure that this list is referred to in all appointment processes to prevent those who are barred from rejoining another service. After the College of Fire and Rescue has been established (see recommendation 25), it should take responsibility for managing the list.	NFCC	01-Oct-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
17	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in FRSs; • are of a serious nature; or • relate to assistant chief fire officers or those at equivalent or higher grades. 	BFRS	Immediate	Complete	We will comply with this requirement with immediate effect in providing disclosures in line with the non-identifiable case histories provided previously to HMICFRS. We are seeking clarification from HMICFRS on any more detailed reporting it requires, to enable us to ensure that we are also compliant with our GDPR obligations
18	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should provide assurances to HMICFRS that all parties are supported in relation to ongoing investigations.	BFRS	01-Aug-23	Complete	We have a range of support in place for those that raise concerns inc <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welfare Officer - Occupational Health - Allocating a point of contact that's not part of the investigation But we will continue to review what our staff have available to them and if it works for them and ensure our processes document the support available. Our processes will be shared with HMICFRS in our round 3 inspection Investigation training is taking place during September. Hearing manager training was delivered to the Senior Management team in June 2023. Work is in progress to deliver this to Group/Station Commanders and
19	By 1 July 2023, the Home Office should examine whether any appeal processes for fire and rescue misconduct cases are appropriate.	Home Office	01-Jul-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
Leadership					
20	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should have plans in place to ensure they meet the Fire Standards Board's leading the service standard and its leading and developing people standard.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	The 2 standards were released at the end of Jan '23. An initial gap analysis for leading the Service and Leading & developing people has been completed. The standards are feeding into our BFRS staff development pathway project, this is at project mandate phase with a plan being built
21	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all senior leaders and managers (assistant chief fire officer equivalent and above) in service.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	We have reviewed the suppliers sourced by NFCC and have aligned our 360 to the Leadership framework. We are training our Organisational development team to deliver the 360 feedback. The 360 feedback process is now in place.
22	By 1 September 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports	BFRS	01-Sep-23	Complete	We have reviewed the suppliers sourced by NFCC and have aligned our 360 to the Leadership framework. We are training our Organisational development team to deliver the 360 feedback. The 360 feedback process is now in place.

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '24 Update (Final Update provided to HMICFRS)
23	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should seek regular feedback from staff about values, culture, fairness and diversity, with due regard to the leading and developing people standard. They should show how they act on this feedback.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	<p>We have completed Bi-Annual staff surveys since 2017 with response rates of over 65% allowing staff to raise their feedback on a broad range of topics anonymously. BMKFA provided funding for this survey to move to annually from 2023/24.</p> <p>Our staff participated in the HMICFRS round 3 inspection, we will review the outcomes when the report is released later in the year.</p> <p>Our next staff survey will take place in April 2024.</p>
24	By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should put plans in place to monitor, including through the gathering and analysis of staff feedback, watch and team cultures and provide prompt remedial action for any issues they identify.	BFRS	01-Oct-23	Complete	<p>This is linked to recommendation 23.</p> <p>Alongside moving to annual staff survey, the following measures form part of our Quarterly Performance reports presented to members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % Staff turnover - % Absence - Welfare and Support - Employee engagement - Grievance and disciplines processed - Employee Assistance Programme contact - Appraisal completion - Mandatory training

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '24 Update (Final Update provided to HMICFRS)
Management and leadership training and development					
25	By 1 January 2025, the Government should establish a College of Fire and Rescue, as proposed by the White Paper Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service. There should be no further delay to its implementation.	Government	01-Jan-25	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
26	By 1 October 2023, as a precursor to the development of the College of Fire and Rescue, chief fire officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council should work with the Home Office to consider how they can improve the training and support they offer to staff in management and leadership development. This should include authority members in respect of their assurance leadership roles and should ensure that opportunities are offered fairly across all staff groups.	NFCC	01-Oct-23	Complete	<p>Two key workstreams being developed as part of the Development and Assessment Pathway Project are a Behavioural and Values Framework and a Leadership and Management Development Pathway. The Behavioural and Values framework aims to provide a consistent set of behaviours across BFRS when undertaking recruitment, assessment, and development. The framework is made up of our Values, the NFCC Leadership Framework and the NFCC Code of Ethics – all translated into defined expected behaviours at different levels across the service.</p> <p>The Behavioural and Values Framework will form how BFRS assess and ensure that we identify, develop, and promote the best possible talent in a fair and inclusive way and embedded into our Development Centres and Selection Processes. We will do this by providing consistency for all, removing barriers, and ensuring compliance against employment legislation and good practice.</p> <p>The behavioural and values framework will also feed into our Appraisal process supporting the objective setting and PDP.</p> <p>As detailed in the 2 recommendations for 360 feedback, this is being rolled out to staff as part of the pathway project. The 360 is designed around the NFCC leadership framework.</p> <p>Alongside the 360 feedback the Strategic Management Team are also completing Clarity 4D to help us develop how we interact with each other and our teams.</p> <p>The Leadership and Management Development Pathway sets out our approach to leadership and management development for all staff at different levels across the service. It contains mandatory and complementary learning and development required at each level. This will bring consistency across roles and ensures we are developing the workforce to the highest professional standards possible.</p> <p>The Behavioural and Values Framework and the Leadership and Management Development Pathway are inclusive of all staff and will form the foundation of our talent management processes moving forward. These include; development centres, appraisals, succession planning and personal development</p>
27	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their equality impact assessments are fit for purpose and, as a minimum, meet the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality impact assessment toolkit.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	A thorough review of the existing Equality Impact Assessments took place in 2022 which led to the update of the template and supporting guidance. A e-learning package was created and face to face support available across the service. This remains a key focus when items are presented at our governance meetings.
28	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should review how they gather and use equality and diversity data to improve their understanding of their staff demographics, including applying and meeting the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council equality, diversity and inclusion data toolkit.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	<p>While we've always been able to capture equality and diversity data in our systems, we acknowledged that the level of data in our HR system was low. We have completed a campaign to increase awareness of the importance of completing the information and encouraging our staff to update their protected characteristics.</p> <p>We report on our Workforce EDI data annually to the FA. This work will support recommendation 29</p>
29	By 1 December 2023, the Home Office should publish greater detail on the protected characteristic data it collects about FRS staff, including joiners and leavers, by rank and role.	Home Office	01-Dec-23	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation
30	By 30 December 2024, the Home Office should align the data it collects on protected characteristics with the Office for National Statistics harmonised standard and publish this data.	Home Office	30-Dec-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '24 Update (Final Update provided to HMICFRS)
31	By 1 December 2024, the Home Office should collect and publish experimental statistics on public complaints and conduct matters in relation to FRS staff, similar to that which it currently publishes on police forces in England and Wales.	Home Office	01-Dec-24	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation

HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Due Date	Status	April '24 Update (Final Update provided to HMICFRS)
Improving diversity					
32	By 1 June 2023, chief fire officers should, as a priority, specify in succession plans how they intend to improve diversity across all levels of the service. This should include offering increased direct-entry opportunities.	BFRS	01-Jun-23	Complete	<p>A key aim of our workforce resourcing and development strategy is regular systematic and rigorous strategic workforce and succession planning processes, which incorporate current Public Safety Plan requirements and horizon scanning of likely future external and internal challenges. Outcomes from these processes are subsequently translated into timely interventions and development programmes to ensure the Authority continues to meet workforce capacity requirements and build resilience.</p> <p>In addition, it provides opportunity to refresh the workforce through the identification of people; internal and where required external to fill identified key positions.</p> <p>An increase in positive action activities are being utilised to encourage those from an under-represented staff groups to apply for promotion and development and continue the conversation on what the barriers may be for them to do this.</p> <p>The appointments Board is being reviewed and processes updated to ensure that any vacancy (internally or externally) is EIA and reviewed against positive action policies.</p> <p>Workshops were held with Members to look at succession for the CFO and DCFO roles, an external agency was engaged to facilitate the CFO process. The role was advertised for Operational and Non Operational applicants. SMT and Staff engagement with applicants was part of the process to ensure the most diverse candidate was sourced. Approval for the appointment was given by Members. The SMT structure is due to be reviewed in 2024/2025.</p>
33	By 1 August 2023, chief fire officers should develop plans to promote progression paths for existing staff in non-operational roles and put plans in place to reduce any inequalities of opportunity	BFRS	01-Aug-23	Complete	<p>In 20/21 we restructured SMT to meet the needs of the service and broaden the views at the table.</p> <p>The NFCC Executive Leadership Programme is open to all Senior managers, two SMT members have recently completed the programme and one has just started. We have developed a Leadership and Management development programme, based on the NFCC leadership framework, that has been delivered via face-to-face training to all managers across the service, Supervisory or above.</p> <p>The next phase of this is the BFRS Staff development pathway project that will cover all staff. this is at project mandate phase with a plan being built</p>
The Core Code of Ethics					
34	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should review their implementation of the Core Code of Ethics and make sure it is being applied across their services.	BFRS	Immediate	Complete	<p>Our Values have been in place since 2011 and are embedded in our Service. The NFCC Core Code of Ethics was released in 2021 The final document complements and supports our own vision and values, which forms part of everything we do.</p> <p>In March 2023, we reviewed our Code of conduct and chose to add in the Code of Ethics alongside our values.</p> <p>Our People strategy update to October 2023 Fire Authority recommends our approach to reviewing our Values in line with the Core Code of Ethics and the timetable to do so</p>
The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England					
35	By the end of this Parliament, the Government should consider the findings and recommendations in this report when refreshing the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England	Government	End of this parliament	Not owned by BFRS	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Extraordinary Fire Authority, 11 September 2024

Report title: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Standards of Behaviour

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse, Chairman

Report sponsor: Chief Fire Officer, Louise Harrison

Author and contact: Anne-Marie Carter, Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO – acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

- 1) That the Fire Authority should accept the recommendations allocated to the Chief Fire Officer in full.
- 2) That the Fire Authority should accept the recommendations allocated to the Fire and Rescue Authority in full.
- 3) That the Service will fully engage and support the delivery of the remaining Recommendations.

Executive summary:

On 1 August 2024 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published 'Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services'. The report has 4 themes supported by 15 recommendations and the HMICFRS's view is that the findings and recommendations in this report can provide practical steps that services can take to bring about the lasting change fire and rescue service staff and the public deserve.

Of the 15 recommendations, all are owned by the Chief Fire Officer with 2 also joint owned with the Fire Authority. Work has already started on a number of these recommendations

An Action plan has been developed including success criteria, progress will be reviewed via the HMICFRS Improvement Board and presented to the Fire Authority on a regular basis.

The Action plan can be found in Appendix 1

Financial implications:

The prioritisation of improvements to address the specific recommendations raised within the report 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 remain 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 24/25 can be found here: [Internal Audit plan](#)

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 2023-2025 inspection 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 Service’s 2023-2025 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.

Environmental implications:

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

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

In the Service’s 2023-2025 HMICFRS report, 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.

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.

Background papers:

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

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/>

28 April 2023 - Extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting: Values and Culture in fire and rescue services

bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/04/bmkfa-extraordinary-meeting-28-april-2023-item-8-values-and-culture-in-fire-and-rescue-services.pdf/

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/

6 December 2023 – Fire Authority: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Action Plan

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/11/fire-authority-meeting-6-december-2023-item-15-hmicfrs-action-plan.pdf/>

8 February 2024 – Executive Committee: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Update

bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2024/01/executive-committee-meeting-8-february-2024-item-12-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-and-rescue-services-hmicfrs-buckinghamshire-fire-and-rescue-service-bfrs-2023-update.pdf/

13 March 2024 – Overview and Audit Committee: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2024/02/overview-and-audit-committee-13-march-2024-item-9-hmicfrs-bfrs-2023-2025-update.pdf/>

09 May 2024 - State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023

[State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023 - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/state-of-fire-and-rescue-the-annual-assessment-of-fire-and-rescue-services-in-england-2023-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-rescue-services/)

12 June 2024 - Fire Authority: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023-2025 Update

[Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 12/06/2024 11:00 \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/agenda-document-for-buckinghamshire-milton-keynes-fire-authority-12-06-2024-11-00)

30 July 2024 – HMICFRS Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: Causes of concern revisit letter

[Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: Causes of concern revisit letter - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/buckinghamshire-fire-and-rescue-service-causes-of-concern-revisit-letter-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-rescue-services/)

01 August 2024 - HMICFRS Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

[Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/standards-of-behaviour-the-handling-of-misconduct-in-fire-and-rescue-services-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-rescue-services/)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	HMICFRS Standards of behaviour Action Plan	N/A

HMICFRS Standards of behaviour
The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

No.	Recommendation	Strategic Owner	Responsible officer	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success & Impact measures	August '24 Progress	Status
The culture in fire and rescue services								
1	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should, as a priority, make sure their staff are aware of, and follow the Core Code of Ethics. Services should build the code into all relevant policies and practices.	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In progress	31-Dec-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All policies & procedure reviewed and updated Promise, values and behaviours visible across our facilities Promise, values and behaviours visible across our policies and procedures 	Our Values had been in place since 2011 and were embedded in the Service. The NFCC Core Code of Ethics was released in 2021. The final document complements and supported our own vision and values, which formed part of everything we do. In March 2023, we reviewed our Code of Conduct and chose to add in the Code of Ethics alongside our values. Our new Promise, Values and Behaviours were developed and launched on 1 April 2024, our Code of Conduct was reviewed to include them and approved at June 2024 Fire Authority. Implementation on our Promise, Values and Behaviours continues to ensure they are embedded across the Service - for example in our appraisals, recruitment processes, behavioural and management framework, communications, station visualisation, updated on our external website,	On Track
2	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should make sure a policy for probationary staff is in place. This policy should make clear that services can immediately dismiss probationers who fail to meet the required standards of behaviour set out in the Core Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics fire standard	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In progress	01-Feb-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probationary Periods Procedure reviewed & updated Probations tracked and any lessons learnt captured 	We have a probationary procedure in place, it sets out the review periods, extensions, termination, support and process to be followed. It is due to be reviewed and consulted on in quarter 3/4. It will align to the Core Code of Ethics and Code of Ethics Fire Standards	On Track
3a	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should make sure their workforce plans allow staff to be moved from a wholetime watch to a different watch or station, within their contractual requirements, proactively and reactively as required.	Director of HR & OD	OD Manager	In progress	01-May-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointments board Terms of Reference reviewed & updated Promotion procedure to include the ability to move staff. KPI's in place to track the number of staff that move watch/station. 	We have a Management of Transfers of Operational Employees procedure in place. This states: "All operational employees within Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (the Service) are contracted to serve at any location within the Service area and the Service will continue to place its resources at the locations it deems suitable to support effective Service delivery. " it sets out the procedure to be followed when operational employees voluntarily wish to transfer from one location to another, or for organisational efficiency there is a need to compulsorily transfer operational employees from one location to another either on a permanent or temporary basis. This would be within the same role, however may be a transfer from one duty system to another. In addition the aim of the appointments board is to ensure the promotional appointments of operational employees are fair, consistent, transparent and based on organisational and individual needs. The decisions made by the Appointments Boards will ensure the necessary resources are in place to support the high standard of Service delivered to the communities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.	On Track
3b	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should also make sure firefighters who are promoted are posted to a different watch or station, including when the promotion is temporary for two months or more. If this isn't possible, chief fire officers should show how the risks of reinforcing a negative culture have been addressed.	Director of HR & OD	OD Manager	30-Sep-24	01-May-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointments board Terms of Reference reviewed & updated Promotion procedure to include the ability to move staff. KPI's in place to track the number of staff that move watch/station. 	An Appointments Board is in place - the aim of which is to ensure all promotional appointments of operational employees are fair, consistent, transparent and based on organisational and individual needs ie ensuring that the necessary resources are in place to support maintaining operational resourcing requirements. Additionally, Organisational Development monitor temporary appointments to ensure access to opportunity and transparency of the selection process. The recruitment and selection process is currently being reviewed to align with the Staff Development Pathway and all appointment process will be reviewed by DPOD on arrival.	On Track

HMICFRS Standards of behaviour
The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

No.	Recommendation	Strategic Owner	Responsible officer	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success & Impact measures	August '24 Progress	Status
The extent to which services are identifying misconduct								
4	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should make sure their services create or have access to a dedicated professional standards function to oversee the investigation of concerns raised within a service or from an external source. This should oversee cases to make sure they are investigated in a fair and transparent way, manage complex cases directly and act as a point of contact for all staff involved.	Legal & Governance Director	Legal & Governance Director	01-Dec-24	01-Feb-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of policy and procedure Implement Professional Standards Function inc panel Introduce an independent investigator role Introduce and track relevant KPI's 	Professional Standards Growth Bid	Not due to be started
5	By 1 November 2024, chief fire officers should make sure all staff understand how to raise a concern and use grievance and whistle-blowing processes. Chief fire officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make sure staff know how services will handle responses and maintain confidentiality and anonymity; and explain how staff can access services' whistle-blowing capability and the difference between whistle-blowing and other processes for raising concerns. 	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In Progress	01-Nov-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce and track relevant KPI's inc staff feedback/ usage Share learnings regularly Review Culture Survey results 	Our new external and independent whistleblowing and speak up line has been in place since May 2024. Our updated whistleblowing procedure have subsequently been reviewed and are in consultation until 31st August and will be approved via governance procedures. Communications are critical to success and increasing confidence - posters are now at all of our stations and premises, intranet articles, letter / poster have been delivered to all employees at their home address, regular updates at Joint Consultation Forum.	On Track
6	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should make sure a programme of training is in place for all supervisors and managers on how to manage staff performance and welfare and how to raise an issue. It should be supported by relevant policies and procedures. Training should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff welfare and absence management; the process for managing individual staff performance, addressing poor performance and potential misconduct issues; how to handle difficult conversations and resolve issues informally, if appropriate, when a concern is identified; and clarifying the role of HR services in helping managers to deal with staff concerns and misconduct issues. Chief fire officers should make sure all managers and supervisors attend the training programme.	Director of HR & OD	OD Manager	In Progress	01-Feb-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Taining in place Welfare training in place KPI in place to track training completion Relevant Procedures updated Director of HR & OD in place People & Culture Officer role in place 	The acquisition training provided to new and existing supervisory managers, via their leadership and management development programme includes the following mandatory training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * IOSH * NFCC Supervisory Leadership Development Programme * BFRS Supervisory Manager Acquisition Programme - which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguarding - Human Resources - Welfare - Absence Management - Role of HR / Itrent * E,D & I * Performance Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appraisals - 360 Feedback * Resource Management / Fire Service Rota The content of these programmes are continually reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose. In addition, to support the require coaching and mentoring of staff in the people management areas, a growth bid has be submitted to substantiate a current temporay role within OD to deliver this.	On Track

HMICFRS Standards of behaviour
The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

No.	Recommendation	Strategic Owner	Responsible officer	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success & Impact measures	August '24 Progress	Status
The effectiveness of misconduct processes								
7a	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should make sure the policies and processes for misconduct are consistent for all staff and are fairly applied within their respective conditions of employment.	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-Sep-24	01-Feb-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of policy and procedured Professional Standards Function (inc panel) in place Independent investigator role in place Introduce and track relevant KPI's 	Our Discipline procedure is in place, and was approved by Business Transformation Board in April 2021. It was reissued in September 2023 following amendments to the investigation and suspension sections. It includes an agreed outcomes section. It is applicable to all employees. All related policies and procedures as well as a gap analysis of relevent policies will be reviewed in conjunction with the introduction of an independent investigation function.	Not due to be started
7b	By 1 August 2025, the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services and the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council, should make misconduct processes consistent for all staff irrespective of the terms and conditions of their employment.	N/A	N/A	N/A	01-Aug-25	N/A	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation	N/A
8	By 1 November 2024, chief fire officers should make sure all allegations of misconduct are handled in a consistent way and staff have confidence in misconduct processes. Chief fire officers should carry out a full review of the processes, from initial identification of a misconduct issue through to the resolution or outcome. This should include a review of how services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor and manage investigations; maintain accurate records; and adhere to required timescales. 	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In Progress	01-Nov-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented review completed Timescales for changes captured and fed into relevant delivery teams 	All allegations are handled as per our procedures, the Employee relations team lead by the HR Advisory and Development Manager ensures consistency of application, that timescales are adhered to and accurate records are kept. The details of cases are stored in a confidential part of the electronic employees record, access is limited.	On Track
9	By 1 August 2025, chief fire officers should introduce a case management system if they don't already have one. The case management system should allow data to be produced that will help them to better understand and oversee misconduct cases in their services.	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-Sep-24	31-Dec-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce Case Management System Regular Performance Reports in place 	A case management spreadsheet is in place, it is held by the Human Resources (HR) Advisory and Development Manager and reviewed regularly with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer. Safecall our Whistleblowing and Speak up line includes an electronic case management system and has been in place since May 2024, it is reviewed on a regular basis. Access is limited to those detailed in the procedure and the HR Advisory and Development Manager. All related policies and procedures as well as a gap analysis of relevent policies will be reviewed in conjunction with the introduction of an independent investigation function.	Not due to be started
10	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should make sure their services have enough capacity to carry out their misconduct investigations. They should consider using external investigators or a similar independent resource to support the process if required.	Legal & Governance Director	Legal & Governance Director	30-Sep-24	02-Jan-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Standards Function (inc panel) in place Independent investigator role in place 	Professional Standards Growth Bid	Not due to be started
11	By 1 May 2025, chief fire officers should review the training their services provide for supervisors and managers who investigate misconduct issues at all levels. Chief fire officers should make sure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all staff who carry out investigations receive adequate training to carry out the task; a programme of refresher training and ongoing support is available so that staff can maintain a level of competence; and it is clear how services' HR provision, staff associations and any trade union representative or fellow employee will support the investigation process. 	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In progress	01-May-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Standards Function (inc panel) in place Independent investigator role in place Training in place for new staff Refresher training in place for staff and Members KPI's to track training completion in place Roles and responsibilities documented in Misconduct procedure 	Disciplinary Training was carried out as part of the Training needs analysis. South East Employers carried out Hearing Manager Training with Senior Management Team in June 2023, Station Commanders and equivalent in October and December 2023. The HR Advisory and Development Manager supports all managers who carry Disciplines, to ensure consistency of application.	On Track

HMICFRS Standards of behaviour
The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

No.	Recommendation	Strategic Owner	Responsible officer	Start Date	Deadline (End of)	Success & Impact measures	August '24 Progress	Status
12	With immediate effect, chief fire officers should make sure all staff are aware of the welfare support, including occupational health support, that is available to staff involved in misconduct processes. Chief fire officers should encourage all staff involved in misconduct processes to access this support, whether they are an alleged perpetrator, complainant, witness, investigator or decision-maker. Welfare personnel should be independent of the investigation and have been appropriately trained for this role	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	In progress	Now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare training in place • All staff taking on Welfare role completed training • KPI in place to track and understand staff feedback 	All employees are made aware of the welfare support in place for them, a Welfare Officer is in place, allocated point of contact who is not part of the investigation, Occupational Health services can be accessed via the Employee Relations Team, Mental Wellbeing Support Officers are in place across the Service, The Firefighters charity information is shared regularly, Employee Assistance Provider details are communicated - via poster, regular intranet articles, form part of disciplinary letter templates,	On Track
13a	By 1 November 2024, fire and rescue authorities and chief fire officers should consider varying the approach to hearing appeals so that appeals for complex or serious cases are heard by a panel rather than one person.	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-09-24	01-Nov-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Standards Function (inc panel) in place 	The current Discipline procedure details the Service approach to appeals and who carries them out. Senior Managers are supported by the HR Advisory and Development Manager for consistency. The approach to appeals will be considered when the Discipline procedures are reviewed and consulted upon. External legal support is sourced for complex and serious cases.	On Track
13b	By 1 February 2025, fire and rescue authorities and chief fire officers should make sure all service managers and members of fire and rescue authorities who hear appeals receive appropriate training. Chief fire officers should make sure services have a consistent approach to hearing appeals.	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-Sep-24	01-Feb-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in place for new staff and Members • Refresher training in place for staff and Members • KPI's to track training completion in place • Professional Standards Function (inc panel) in place 	Disciplinary Training was carried out as part of the Training needs analysis. South East Employers carried out Hearing Manager Training with Senior Management Team in June 2023, Station Commanders and equivalent in October and December 2023. The HR Advisory and Development Manager supports all managers who carry Disciplines.	Not due to be started
Understanding misconduct and sharing lessons learned								
14	By 1 November 2025, chief fire officers should implement a process that makes sure they can oversee and scrutinise their services' performance relating to misconduct issues. This process should provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a strategic overview of performance and analysis of trends, including disproportionality; • regular reporting of issues, outcomes and trends to the fire and rescue authority; and • identification of learning outcomes and how they will be shared with fire and rescue service staff, to prevent repeat behaviours 	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-Sep-24	31-Mar-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Performance Reports (inc learnings) in place for both FA and staff 	A case management report was presented to Strategic Management Board (SMB) in April 2024 covering 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024, A report was presented to SMB on 20 August 2024, for quarter 1 of 2024. A report is planned for Fire Authority covering the period 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025, it will include a strategic overview, regular reporting process, of issues, outcomes and trends and learning outcomes. Grievance and Disciplinary information forms part of the quarterly performance reports, these are presented to Performance Monitoring Board, SMB and Members	Not due to be started
15a	By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should put in place a process for sharing learning from misconduct cases that have been resolved while preserving the confidentiality of all parties involved. Any learning should feed into the national system, when established.	Director of HR & OD	Head of HR	30-Sep-24	01-Feb-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Performance Reports (inc learnings) in place for both FA and staff 	All outcomes are logged by the HR Advisory and Development Manager, they are used to update procedures and processes. Learning is shared at the Heads of Service meetings, to ensure confidentiality and due to small numbers, they are not shared more widely at present, learning will be shared more widely as appropriate	Not due to be started
15b	By 1 May 2025, the National Fire Chiefs Council should establish a system for sharing learning from more serious cases of misconduct with fire and rescue service staff. The information shared should preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of all parties involved. The College of Fire and Rescue, once it is established, should take responsibility for maintaining this system.	N/A	N/A	N/A	01-May-25	N/A	BMKFA and BFRS will fully engage and support the delivery of this recommendation	N/A



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Extraordinary Fire Authority, 11 September 2024

Report title: Safety of Lithium-Ion Batteries in E-Bikes and E-Scooters Campaign

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse

Report sponsor: Mick Osborne – Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Chief Operating Officer

Author and contact: Mick Osborne – Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Chief Operating Officer

Action: Approval

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

1. The Safety of Electric-Powered Micromobility Vehicles and Lithium Batteries Bill proposed by Electrical Safety First intended to ensure greater safety in the use and disposal lithium-ion batteries, which would hopefully have the effect of ensuring greater safety for both members of the public and Firefighters when attending such incidents, be supported.
2. The position that any measures which have the potential to increase awareness, the safety of all along with protecting the environment is something Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority actively supports, be endorsed.
3. The position that the Authority would like to see regulation and legislation to go further in respect of influencing building regulations for example and appreciates that the National Fire Chiefs Council is engaging with government departments to this end on behalf of UK fire and rescue services, be endorsed.

Executive summary:

Fires caused by lithium-ion batteries in e-scooters and e-bikes have multiplied fourfold since 2020, resulting in deaths, hospitalisations, homelessness, and financial losses. Since 2020, it is reported that over 190 people have been injured, and at least 13 lives have been lost due to this concerning trend. The UK is now facing a projection of nearly one e-bike or e-scooter fire per day this year, a significant leap from just over one per week in 2020.

Electrical Safety First, a UK Charity dedicated to reducing the deaths and injuries caused by electricity is promoting 'The Safety of Electric-Powered Micromobility

Vehicles and Lithium Batteries Bill', see Appendix 1 and seeking support for their campaign.

Many national organisations are already supporting the bill, including the National Fire Chiefs Council, many Fire and Rescue Services, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, and the Royal Society for Public Health.

The bill covers:

- **Clause 1: Safety Assurance** - This clause mandates a third-party safety assessment, conducted by a government-approved body, for all e-bikes, e-scooters, and their lithium-ion batteries before they enter the UK market. This process mirrors safety measures in place for other high-risk products like fireworks and heavy machinery.
- **Clause 2: Responsible Disposal** - This clause requires the Government to make regulations ensuring the safe disposal of lithium batteries once their lifecycle ends.
- **Clause 3: Comprehensive Fire Safety** - This clause assigns the Government the responsibility of comprehensively addressing fire-related concerns. **This involves enhancing safe usage, charging, and storage practices for these devices.** It includes setting standards for conversion kits and charging systems and considering a temporary ban on the sale of universal chargers that heighten fire risks.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications associated with this paper

Risk management:

No risks arise to the delivery of the Authority's functions from the recommendations.

Legal implications:

None arising from the recommendations.

Privacy and security implications:

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

Duty to collaborate:

There are no opportunities to collaborate directly from this report. However other Fire & Rescue Authorities and partners do support this Bill.

Health and safety implications:

There are no direct Health and Safety implications arising from this report or its appendices.

Environmental implications:

There are no Environmental implications arising directly from this report or its appendices.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

There are no specific Equality, diversity and inclusion implications arising from this report or appendices.

Consultation and communication:

This report will be circulated throughout the organisation for information and awareness.

Background papers:

None

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	The Safety of Electric-Powered Micromobility Vehicles and Lithium Batteries Bill	N/A
2	Supporting Organisations	N/A

The Safety of Electric-Powered Micromobility Vehicles and Lithium Batteries Bill

A Bill to make provisions regarding the safety of electric-powered micromobility vehicles and of lithium batteries; to give duties to the Secretary of State regarding those matters; and for connected purposes.

1. The safety of electric-powered micromobility vehicles and secondary lithium-ion batteries used to power such vehicles

(1) No person shall after 31st August 2025 place on the UK market any electric-powered micromobility vehicle or a secondary lithium-ion battery used to power such vehicles unless –

(a) conformity assessment procedures have been carried out by a conformity assessment body ('CAB') authorised by the Secretary of State to carry out such assessments; and

(b) the manufacturer has drawn up the technical documentation and declaration of conformity; and

(c) the electric-powered micromobility vehicle and the battery used to power such vehicles bear the CE or UKCA mark to demonstrate conformity with designated or harmonised standards.

(2) The Secretary of State must within 6 months of the passing of this Act publish a list of CABs recognised as being able to carry out conformity assessment procedures pursuant to subsection (1).

(3) Where in the opinion of a CAB, a product covered by this Act has successfully met the essential safety requirements of applicable regulations, it shall issue a certificate of conformity to the manufacturer.

(4) Where a certificate of conformity has been issued pursuant to subsection (3) a manufacturer must display a CE or a UKCA mark on any product covered by this Act before it is placed on the UK market.

(5) No person shall display a CE or a UKCA mark on any product covered by this Act unless a certificate of conformity has been issued for the product given in accordance with this Act.

2. Disposal of Secondary Lithium-ion Batteries

(1) The Secretary of State must, within 6 months of the passing of this Act, make regulations regarding the safe disposal of lithium batteries.

(2) The regulations made pursuant to subsection (1) may include a requirement for sellers of such batteries to:

(a) Display a prominent warning about the dangers of improper disposal of lithium batteries not in accordance with those regulations; and

(b) Attach as part of the sale

(i) Information regarding the cell chemistry of lithium batteries and;

(ii) information regarding the safe disposal of such batteries.

3. Duties of the Secretary of State

(1) (1) The Secretary of State must, within 12 months of the passing of this Act, make regulations

(a) Specifying safety standards for micromobility vehicle conversion kits and associated components; and

(b) Requiring that all micromobility vehicles have either

(i) a non-proprietary charging system with a communications protocol;
or

(ii) a proprietary charging system with a matched charger

and such regulations may include details of the means by which those standards will be enforced and the penalties for failing to comply with those standards.

(2) The Secretary of State must within 6 months of the passing of this Act consult such persons as he considers have an interest in this matter on whether to implement an interim measure which prohibits the sale of universal chargers for electric-powered micromobility vehicles until such time as the regulations detailed in (1) (a) or (1) (b) come into force.

4. Offences

Any person who fails to comply with the terms of this Act commits an offence.

5. Interpretation

In this Act, the following terms have the following meanings:

- 'Electric-powered micromobility' means electric scooters or electric bicycles powered by secondary lithium-ion batteries, as defined in the Department of Transport 2020 publication 'Future of Transport Regulatory Review Moving Britain Ahead Call for Evidence'.
- 'A lithium battery' is a non-rechargeable battery with lithium as an anode.
- 'A secondary lithium-ion battery' is a type of rechargeable battery in which the main reaction is the transport and intercalation of lithium ions into the cathode and anode respectively as defined in the BEIS Research Paper No 2020/037 entitled 'Domestic Battery Energy Storage Systems A Review of Safety Risks'.
- 'A proprietary charging system' comprises of a manufacturer specified plug and socket system designed only to operate in combination with each other.

- 'A non-proprietary charging system' comprises of a non-manufacturer specified plug and socket system consisting of a standardised plug and socket and a communications protocol.
- 'A communications protocol' is a set of formal rules describing how to transmit or exchange data.
- 'A CE marking' means a mark consisting of the symbol "CE" set out in the form specified by the Secretary of State in regulations made pursuant to this Act.
- A 'UKCA' marking is a UK Conformity Assessed marking displayed in the form specified by the Secretary of State in regulations made pursuant to this Act.
- A conversion kit is the electrical drive train, battery and charging system, that is fitted to a regular pedal bicycle to convert it to an electric bike.

6. Regulations

(1) The Secretary of State must, within six months of the passing of this Act, make regulations specifying:

- (a) Any amendments to the definition of the term 'electric-powered micromobility' that, in the Secretary of State's opinion, are necessary.
- (b) The penalties that shall apply to breaches of this Act.

(2) Regulations under this Act shall be made by statutory instrument pursuant to the negative resolution procedure.

7. Extent, Commencement, and Short Title

(1) This Act extends to the whole of the UK, subject to resolutions being passed by

- (a) The Scottish Parliament;
- (b) Senedd Cymru;
- (c) The Northern Ireland Assembly

applying it to their respective countries.

(2) This Act comes into force on the day on which it is passed.

(3) This Act may be cited as the Safety of Electric-Powered Micromobility and Lithium Batteries Act 2023."

