

Supplemental Agenda

Fire Services Management Committee

Friday 7 July 2023

11.00 am

Hybrid Meeting - Beecham Room, 18 Smith Square and Online

Item	Page
3. Culture in the Fire & Rescue Service - next steps	1 - 10
5. Efficiency and Productivity	11 - 16
CFO Phil Shillito, Humberside FRS and Emma Lawrence, Home Office to attend	
Confidential item	
13. Fire Reform White Paper response	17 - 22

Update on LGA work on culture in the fire and rescue service

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

This update report outlines progress on the actions and next steps discussed at the FSMC in May.

LGA Plan Theme: Other service specific support

Recommendations

That FSMC notes progress on agreed actions

Contact details

Contact officer: Rebecca Johnson

Position: Adviser

Phone no: 07887568807

Email: rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk

Update on LGA work on culture in the fire and rescue service

Background

1. At the [last FSMC meeting in May](#) a series of actions and next steps for the LGA's work around culture in the fire and rescue service were agreed.
2. These covered:
 - The LGA's engagement with key stakeholders on the issue, including the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the Home Office, and the unions, as it was recognised such engagement would be important in ensuring work on this issue would be effective going forwards.
 - The LGA's response to HMICFRS's spotlight review with input from across the Association.
 - A free, one-day conference for members looking at their governance and leadership role in equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), alongside their employer role.
 - Refresh and renew the membership and remit of the EDI Champions Network.
 - Look at the wider programme of governance and leadership training for leaders in the service, especially scrutiny of senior officers in this area.
 - Engage with the NFCC on the development of their action plan.
 - Engage with the Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) once its next steps are identified, including potentially reviewing its social media guidance.
 - Prepare media lines to respond to any inquiries the LGA may receive around fire service culture.
 - Consider the relevant employment law and related legal framework in which fire authorities act, including in relation to watches.
 - Continue to engage with the Home Office on sector-led support and wider issues around culture seeking funding to support a sector-led improvement offer on these issues.
 - Sharing lessons learned from services that have experienced issues
3. This report updates Members on progress on these next steps.

Updates on key activities

LGA Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service Conference

4. A free, in person conference focused on culture in the Fire and Rescue Service for members was held on 27 June 2023 and was attended by 29 Members from 16 different Fire and Rescue Authorities.
5. The objective for the day was to explore Member's governance and leadership role in EDI, alongside their employer role. The session was chaired by Cllr Jane Hugo as FSMC Equalities Advocate with Cllr Rebecca Knox, Cllr Greg Brackenridge and Cllr Nick Chard also contributing to the agenda. A copy of the programme is included in **Appendix A**.
6. Feedback from the event was positive, with 62 per cent of attendees that completed feedback (21 out of the 29 attendees) saying they were 'very satisfied' with the event. The sessions which over 70 per cent of attendees found 'very useful' were:
 - Voices from around the sector – experiences, reflections, and way forward (Unison, FBU (Women's section and LGBT+ section) and Afsa)
 - Leading cultural change (Police Service of Northern Ireland, Kent FRS and Lancashire FRS)
 - Exploring Fire and Rescue Authority Members Role (Cllr Knox, Cllr Brackenridge and Cllr Lud Ramsey from Derbyshire)
7. Attendees reported that hearing about good practice from other Authorities and seeing what has been done elsewhere was particularly useful, as well hearing directly about staff's experiences. Gaining a better understanding of the leadership role of Members in driving change and the importance of questioning skills were also highlighted. Attendees also reflected that there is still much that needs to be done to improve culture and EDI in the sector.
8. Feedback also offered suggestions for future training and events, including training for Members around how to be an effective EDI champion, building confidence and questioning skills, as well as engaging BAME communities. These suggestions will be built into the work programme for the EDI Champions Network for the next year.
9. We will also use the ideas shared at the event to help with the creation of a checklist to support members.

HMICFRS's spotlight review recommendations

10. In May Andy Cooke, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services wrote to Cllr Frank Biederman drawing attention to the spotlight report and its recommendations. The letter asked the LGA to provide an update on progress with Recommendation 2 in the spotlight report:
- **Recommendation 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.
11. Officers from Policy and Workforce met to discuss relevant recommendations and how to respond. We have asked HMICFRS for a further meeting to explore the relevant recommendations and seek clarity on the expectations being placed on both the LGA and the National Employers and how best to report and provide progress updates.
12. We are also seeking a meeting with the NFCC given this is a joint recommendation.

Inclusive Fire Service Group

13. The separate workforce report on the Committee's agenda at paragraphs 17-19 sets out the outcomes from the Inclusive Fire Service Group's meeting on 20 June. At the meeting the organisations represented on the IFSG reaffirmed their commitment to strategies for improvement the group had previously developed and agreed that the breadth of membership of the Group meant it was well-placed to work together as a group and with other organisations more widely to ensure there wasn't a fragmented approach in the sector which could continue to hold back progress. The IFSG is looking to meet again this month.

Sector led support

14. In June LGA officers met with Home Office officials to further discuss the bid for funding to pilot a sector-led improvement offer for FRAs with a focus on 'people' and culture.
15. Home Office has not as yet committed to funding for this but are keen to explore whether the Association of Police Crime Commissioners (APCC) would support

the bid. Initial conversations are underway between the LGA and APCC on this point.

Further updates on activities

Agreed next steps	Action taken	Timeframe for completion
Engagement with the NFCC, HMICFRS, the Home Office, and the Unions was a key principle of making sure that work on this issue would be effective going forwards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LGA is engaging with key partners and stakeholders through a number of different forums. 	Ongoing
Respond to HMICFRS's spotlight review with input from across the LGA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with HMICFRS to discuss recommendations. Meet with NFCC to discuss Recommendation 2. 	By 1 st October 2023
A free, one-day conference for members looking at their governance and leadership role in EDI, alongside their employer role. This is planned for the 27 June 2023. The programme would be worked on jointly with the Workforce team and with input from the Equalities Advocate. It would be a mix between discussion and practical training sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event held on 27 June 2023. Build suggestions for content into the work programme for the EDI Champions Network for the next year. Develop checklist to support members drawing on ideas shared at the event. 	Complete
Refresh and renew the membership and remit of the EDI Champions Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSMC Chair to write to FRAs which are not represented and encourage a named Member to join the network. 	July 2023
Look at the wider programme of governance and leadership training for leaders in the service, especially scrutiny of senior officers in this area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with LGA Leadership Essentials Programme. 	Ongoing
Engage with the NFCC on the development of their action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meeting is being organised with the NFCC for later in the summer. 	Ongoing

Engage with the IFSG once its next steps are identified as well as on potentially reviewing its social media guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Employers leading on this work. 	
Prepare media lines to respond to any inquiries the LGA may receive around fire service culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lines agreed by Lead Members. 	Complete
Consider the relevant employment law and related legal framework in which fire authorities act, including in relation to watches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers will explore this issue further with colleagues supporting the National Employers to inform the next stage of work in this area. 	Report back to FSMC in October
Continue to engage with the Home Office on sector-led support and wider issues around culture seeking funding to support a sector-led improvement offer on these issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting held with Home Office on 13 June to discuss bid. Discussions are ongoing with the APCC to explore their input. 	Ongoing
Sharing lessons learned from services that have experienced issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRSs were invited to speak at culture conference on 27 June. Build in to workplan for EDI Champions Network. 	Ongoing

Implications for Wales

16. Fire and rescue related policy is a devolved matter and much of the Committee's work will focus on changes for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, with the Welsh Local Government Association leading on lobbying for Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Financial Implications

17. None

Equalities implications

18. HMICFRS's spotlight report highlights a number of EDI issues for the sector. Including the lack of diversity within the workforce, a lack of data on diversity, a lack of targeted activity, poor understanding of positive action and training on EDI issues etc.



Next steps

19. Officers to continue with actions and activities identified and report back to FSMC in October.

Appendix A

LGA Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service conference Programme

Tuesday 27 June 2023, 10.30am – 3.30pm at Bevin Hall Smith Square, London

Programme:

Registration from 10am

10.30am-10.35am: Welcome and introduction

Cllr Jane Hugo, LGA Fire Services Management Committee Diversity Champion and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (chair)

10.35am-11.00am: Culture in the Fire Service: where are we now

- Assistant HMI Shantha Dickinson, HMICFRS

Questions and discussion (10 mins)

11.00am-11.30am: Panel session: Voices from around the sector – experiences, reflections and way forward

- Pat Carberry, LGBT+ National Secretary, Fire Brigades Union
- Robyn Richardson, National Women's Committee Secretary, Fire Brigades Union
- Mike Short, Head of Local Government, Unison
- Jagtar Singh OBE, Asian Firefighters Service Association (Afsa)

Questions and discussion (15 mins)

11.35am-12.20pm: Leading cultural change

- Julie Howell, Strategic Lead, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion at Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Ann Millington, Chief executive of Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Cllr Nick Chard, Member of Kent Fire and Rescue Service and LGA Fire Services Management Committee
- Tom Powell, Area Manager and Liz Sandiford, Assistant Director HR, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority

Questions and discussion (15 mins)

12.20pm – 1.00pm: Lunch

1.00pm-1.55pm: Exploring Fire and Rescue Authority Members Role

- Cllr Rebecca Knox, LGA Fire Services Management Committee and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service and
- Cllr Greg Brackenridge, LGA Fire Services Management Committee and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service
- Cllr Ludwig Ramsey, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority *Questions and discussion*

1.55pm -2.05pm: Break

2.05pm -2.35pm: Overview of employment law

- Philip Bundy Senior Adviser – Employment Law, LGA

Questions

2.35pm-3.05pm: Managing the Media

- Nick Price-Thompson, Head of Communications at Royal Borough of Kensington, and Chelsea Council

Questions

3.05pm-3.30pm: Reflection and discussion – led by Cllr Hugo

Productivity and Efficiency

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

This report provides an update on work of the Fire Productivity and Efficiency Forum.

LGA Plan Theme: Championing climate change and local environments

Recommendation(s)

That Members of the Fire Services Management Committee:

Note information in this report about ongoing work on improving productivity and efficiency of fire and rescue services in England.

Actively promote and discuss the importance of the fire productivity and efficiency agenda with their local Fire and Rescue Authority

Contact details

Contact officer: CFO Phil Shillito

Email: pshillito@humbersidfire.gov.uk

Fire Productivity and Efficiency

Background

1. As part of Spending Review 2021, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and LGA have committed the fire and rescue service sector (“the sector”) in England to increasing the productivity of wholetime firefighters by 3 per cent, and to increasing the efficiency of fire and rescue services by 2 per cent. These targets relate to the three-year Spending Review period (2022/23-2024/25), at the end of which HM Treasury will be expecting to see evidence of fire and rescue services’ progress on these targets.
2. In January 2022, the NFCC and Home Office set up the Fire Productivity and Efficiency Forum. When the Forum’s work commenced, there was no agreed benchmark or metric for measuring fire productivity and efficiency, and so the Forum’s work has largely focused on addressing the lack of evidence and data around fire productivity and efficiency. The Forum has done this by commissioning external work on a fire productivity metric, analysing fire productivity and efficiency plans, and launching a firefighter utilisation survey. Short summaries of these workstreams are explained below.

Fire Productivity metric

3. The Forum commissioned an external consultancy (Cambridge Econometrics) to consider and produce a metric for measuring fire and rescue service productivity. The metric was presented to the forum last year. It compared Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) inputs with quantifiable outputs, with some consideration of the quality of these outputs (outcomes). The metric showed FRS productivity falling between 2010/11 and 2014/15, before rising to a peak in 2016/17. Productivity then remained relatively stable until a large fall in 2020/21 caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.
4. The underlying model for the metric is now owned by the Home Office, who are assessing next steps. Work is ongoing to update the metric for 2021/22, and to consider how it could be improved.

Fire productivity and efficiency plans

5. Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) are already required to produce annual efficiency plans under the National Framework requirements. Earlier this year, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire wrote to services with a specific request that all standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities draft and publish 2023/24 productivity and efficiency plans. By the deadline of 31 March 2023, 29 out of 30 standalone FRAs in

England had completed this task,¹ alongside mayoral FRAs in London and Greater Manchester). One county FRA (Cornwall) also submitted their plan to the Home Office.

6. Analysis of the plans shows that between 2022/23-2024/25, at national level, FRAs are forecast to make average savings of 5.6 per cent per annum (£97m) against non-payroll budgets of £1.7bn (total over the three years). The FRA with highest forecast savings expects to save £4.6m or 22 per cent against their non-payroll budget over the three-year SR period. The two FRAs with lowest forecast efficiencies (and below the national 2 per cent target) forecast £2.5m or 1 per cent, and £0.75m or 1.9 per cent of savings, respectively.
7. There are important caveats around how accurate the numbers and forecasts may be:
 - First, many of the Productivity and Efficiency (P&E) Plans were drafted prior to settling of the grey book pay awards. This means many FRAs will have underestimated the final cost of the pay awards and will need to deliver bigger cost savings than already reported in the P&E Plans, or make greater use of reserves.
 - Second, discussions with fire finance departments have highlighted that the data provided is based on inconsistent interpretations of how services should be accounting for efficiency savings, as well as what should be included as an efficiency saving. We will be looking to improve the survey for next time in order to reduce inconsistencies in the data return.
8. Services are forecasting they will be making highest savings in relation to direct employee costs (33 per cent), supplies and services (25 per cent) and other costs (17 per cent). Our reading of the P&E plans and discussions with fire finance departments suggests that in most cases, direct employee savings can result from reductions in the use of overtime or vacancies not being filled. Savings in the 'other' category mainly relate to unidentified savings which will need to be made to balance the FRA budget in future years.
9. Some interesting examples relating to efficiency and productivity gains relate to how services match their resource to risk. For example, West Midlands say that their 'risk based crewing' model has produced annual efficiencies of c. £2.5m while overall appliance availability has also increased. Another example is Lancashire, where the service forecasts that implementation of their latest crewing review will result in a

¹ The only standalone FRA plan that is pending submission is Cumbria's. They have been afforded more time to draft their plan given other priority work around their recent governance transfer.

budget saving of around £400,000, whilst at the same time increasing overall wholetime firefighter numbers by eight.

10. The plans have also highlighted a broad range of interesting examples of fire and rescue collaboration with other blue light services, including supporting ambulance with bariatric complex patient rescue, supporting ambulance and police with gaining entry, missing persons search, joint fleet maintenance, and the sharing of estates.
11. FRAs will be asked to draft and publish P&E plans again in 2024/25. The Home Office will refine the guidance and efficiency template provided to FRAs as part of this exercise, to ensure that the data provided is built on shared understanding of what kinds of efficiencies services are expected to report, and how. The Home Office will also consider if the ask to draft and publish P&E plans should be extended to all types of FRAs, instead of just standalones.

Firefighter utilisation survey

12. The Firefighter Utilisation Survey has been developed and launched collaboratively between the Home Office, NFCC and HMICFRS. The survey runs through 2023/24, with roughly quarterly snapshots planned for its duration. All fire and rescue services have been asked to participate. Results from the first snapshot, which was live from 6 April to 2 June, are now being analysed.
13. The survey asks services to provide data on how wholetime firefighters split their time between different activities at different times of the day. Data from this survey will allow us to better understand:
 - The level of capacity that services are operating at,
 - The activities completed by wholetime firefighters at different times of day,
 - Data availability in FRSs, and how this can be improved, and
 - When used in conjunction with quality metrics, the productivity of FRSs at a national level over time, supporting a HOAI productivity tool.
14. The survey was designed and launched as part of a truly collaborative effort between the NFCC, the Home Office and HMICFRS. One of the key objectives in the survey design was to avoid duplication of data requests to fire and rescue services, and the three organisations achieved this objective successfully through regular engagement and data sharing.
15. As next steps, the Home Office will be leading the analysis of survey results and HMICFRS intend to incorporate analysis of the results into their FRS Digital Analysis Packs (PowerBI), which are available to all fire and rescue services and the NFCC. This

data will allow services to assess and monitor changes in their own capacity over time, and can be used to support strategic decision making on risk-based resourcing, as well as to inform local level productivity plans. HMICFRS may also make use of the data to inform inspections. We are currently aiming for the next quarterly round of the survey to be launched in August.

16. Early analysis of the results indicates that night shifts are less productive than day shifts. On average, just over 25per cent of the time on day shifts is classed as non-productive time (this category covers rest and meal breaks, as well as any time that cannot be allocated to a productive activity). Non-productive time makes up just over 85 per cent of the late-night shift (midnight to the start of the day shift).
17. Lower overall productivity overnight shifts can be explained to some extent by firefighter terms and conditions, which mean that overnight shifts need to include periods of rest. Firefighters are also not able to conduct prevention visits to people's homes at anti-social hours. We expect that in the case of some FRSs, lack of data has led to respondents classifying the shift time as non-productive.
18. A large amount of firefighter time across both day and night shifts is not spent on operational activity (this activity is approximately 7 per cent of day shift time). Initial results show that in the day shift, the largest activity areas are typically training (26 per cent of time), station routines (11 per cent) and prevention/protection activity (11 per cent).
19. Further analysis is being completed to look at the impacts of shift patterns and duty systems on productivity. It is expected that longer day shifts may lead to higher productivity and that the start time of the day shift (i.e. starting at 7.30am over 9am) matters for firefighter productivity, as there is limited activity that is being completed in the early morning section of night shifts.
20. The survey currently just looks at quantifying FRS outputs. It cannot account for the quality of these outputs. For example, spending longer on an activity could be interpreted as a positive for productivity as quality may be higher, or a negative as the activity may be inefficient. Further work needs to be completed to ensure we are capturing quality and FRS outcomes, as well as outputs, to ensure any conclusions on productivity are correct.

Proposal

21. The next Spending Review provides an opportunity for the NFCC and LGA to present the case on the level of funding that fire and rescue services require from central

government. As part of this process, HM Treasury will expect to see evidence of progress against the productivity and efficiency targets that were agreed for the fire and rescue sector at Spending Review 21. It will be important to show that services have been able to deliver balanced budgets not only because of increases in council tax precept or reliance on reserves, but by making decisions that drive forward the productivity and efficiency agenda, for example in operations, back-office functions or procurement. In light of the Chancellor's recent announcement of an ambitious public sector productivity review, we expect that HM Treasury may want to see the sector setting further improvement targets for itself as part of the next Spending Review.

22. We would like to ask Members of the Fire Services Management Committee to actively promote and discuss the importance of the fire productivity and efficiency agenda with their local Fire and Rescue Authority. While the overall driver for this work has been the Spending Review, there is value in this work to services at local level too. Collating and monitoring local level data can support strategic decisions about how to best resource to risk, guide improvements in performance, and result into better value for money. It is therefore in everyone's interests that individual services support the national productivity and efficiency agenda and that services understand the benefits that meaningful engagement with the agenda can also bring to themselves.

Next steps

23. The Fire Productivity and Efficiency Forum meets quarterly, with the next meeting being scheduled for 26 July. The agenda includes discussion on Round 1 results of the Firefighter Utilisation Survey.
24. The Home Office is aiming for the next quarterly round of the Firefighter Utilisation Survey to be open from August. HMICFRS have plans to share analysis of the Round 1 results as part of their FRS Digital Analysis Packs (PowerBI).

Document is Restricted

