

Jonathan Dyson  
Chief Fire Officer  
North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

cc. Zoë Metcalfe  
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

19 April 2023

Dear Jonathan,

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REVISIT**

Between March and May 2022, we inspected North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and identified causes of concern. We shared the causes of concern with you and made the following recommendations:

### **Cause of concern**

The service doesn't have in place robust processes to ensure transformation activities provide efficiency and effectiveness.

### **Recommendation**

By September 2022, the service should put in place plans that are designed to:

- detail in its medium-term financial plan the efficiencies that its transformation plans will bring for the service;
- make sure that its processes for working with other organisations are effective, provide value for money and benefits for the public, and don't negatively affect the service; and
- monitor, review and evaluate its collaboration activities, such as enabling services, to make sure they achieve best value for money and are beneficial for both the service and the public.

## **Cause of concern**

The service doesn't have in place adequate workforce planning processes. This means that areas such as safety-critical training, succession planning, absence and work-time management don't support its current and future [integrated risk management plan](#).

## **Recommendation**

By September 2022, the service should have put plans in place that are designed to:

- review its current workforce, succession, and training planning to make sure these are provided efficiently and effectively;
- review and develop its current absence management policy and process;
- develop a policy and process to manage the working time of its staff;
- make sure that data and processes are in place to regularly assess and manage the capacity and capability of all staff groups; and
- carry out a skills gap analysis to make sure all staff have the skills and training they need to perform their roles.

You submitted an action plan setting out how you would address the areas of concern and the recommendations.

Between 30 January and 1 February 2023, we revisited to review progress against the action plan and the arrangements for overseeing it. During the revisit we interviewed staff who were responsible for implementing your action plan. On 9 February 2023, we shared our initial findings with both you and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Zoë Metcalfe.

This letter provides an update on our findings.

## **Governance**

We found appropriate and robust governance arrangements in place to monitor progress on your action plan. A dedicated programme manager oversees it. Progress is regularly reported at tactical and strategic leadership meetings. The risk assurance board now meets monthly instead of quarterly to support progress and provide a cross-organisation view.

## **Action plan**

The service has an action plan covering the causes of concern. Senior officers are responsible for different elements, specific actions are allocated and there are deadlines. The plan includes updates on actions. The service shared its response to the findings of the inspection report and the action it was taking with the public at the police, fire and crime commissioner's public accountability meeting on 26 January 2023.

## **Progress against the causes of concern**

### **The service doesn't have in place robust processes to ensure transformation activities provide efficiency and effectiveness**

The latest iteration of the service's medium-term financial plan shows a balanced budget that incorporates the efficiencies and savings to be generated from the [Risk and Resource Model](#). The service has formally established a steering group to oversee collaboration activities and developed performance frameworks, specifically in relation to the [enableNY programme](#). The service told us processes to monitor and evaluate services provided by enableNY will be in place by the end of this current financial year.

We recognise that this work can't be measured for at least 6 to 12 months, but it is a positive step in the right direction. We will be interested to see the evaluation and what the service does in response to its findings.

### **The service doesn't have in place adequate workforce planning processes**

The service is developing data and processes to support the management of staff capacity and capability. It has made good progress in developing stronger processes and systems, including the provision of reliable workforce data. It has also carried out a skills gap analysis and managers now have access to reports providing numbers, capability and locations of all staff. The service is continuing to review its workforce to ensure all staff have the skills and training they need as further changes take place. The number of temporary posts is being addressed, with some permanent appointments made within the senior leadership team. A phased approach is being taken due to the number of staff movements required.

The service has reviewed its absence management policy and procedure, and is currently consulting on this with trade unions. It is also reviewing policies and reports on how many hours staff work.

As a result of all this activity, the service expects that a comprehensive workforce plan, alongside a retirement profile, and recruitment and promotion plans will be in place by April 2023.

## **Conclusion**

The revisit team was pleased to see the service had started to make headway on both causes of concern. We recognise the service has invested time and resources to develop its improvement plans and establish robust monitoring and governance arrangements. We are satisfied with its current progress and look forward to seeing a comprehensive workforce plan in place by April 2023. Regarding the service's plans to demonstrate that collaboration activities, such as enabling services, represent value for money and are beneficial for both the service and the public, we also look forward to seeing these come to fruition.

The action plan is comprehensive and the service has made good progress against it. However, at the time of our revisit it was too soon to see how effective the action plan will be in fully addressing the causes of concern and if the improvements are sustainable. Additionally, it isn't yet known if there will be any resistance to the Risk and Resource Model and how this might affect implementation of the plan and related efficiencies.

In September 2023, we will return to North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to make sure you have made satisfactory progress with your action plan and the service provided 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 & Rescue Services