

## POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL REPORT

Meeting Date	Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Report Title	Updates on Inspection, Risk and Resource Model Implementation and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Information should be accessible for all. If you require this information in a different language or format, please contact the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner at [info@northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk](mailto:info@northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk).

### 1. Purpose of this report

1.1. To provide an update on:

- progress against the recommendations of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), following the inspection report published Jan 2023.
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity, including the third-party review of the Service.
- implementation of the Risk and Resource Model.

### 2. HMICFRS Progress Update

2.1 North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (NYFRS) was inspected by HMICFRS in April 2022 and received the full findings of that inspection in January 2023.

2.2 The Service received:

- two pillar areas (Efficiency and People) graded 'inadequate;'
- one pillar area (Effectiveness) graded 'requires improvement;'
- two causes of concern (with 8 recommendations);
- 24 Areas for Improvement (AFIs) across the three pillars.

#### 2.3. Causes of Concern progress against recommendations

2.4. Considerable progress has been made to address the eight recommendations and associated actions linked to the two Causes of Concern. HMICFRS revisited the Service during the week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and spoke to each of the Senior Responsible Owners (SROs) of the actions relating to the Causes of Concern and conducted a focus group with operational and support staff managers. The final meeting was held remotely with the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September. A revisit debrief was held with members of the Strategic Leadership Team and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on 13<sup>th</sup> September, wherein initial feedback was positive.

**2.5.** The inspection staff thanked the Service for the open and transparent approach provided. NYFRS await the formal letter detailing the outcome of the revisit from His Majesty's Inspector Michelle Skeer.

## **2.6. Areas For Improvement (AFIs) and Culture and Values Recommendations**

**2.7.** 24 AFI's were identified within the full inspection report. These are all on track for completion.

**2.8.** The 19 recommendations in the national HMICFRS Values and Culture Report are in progress and are being prioritised further. NYFRS has focussed upon the two causes of concern and the revisit. This is consistent with other Services given the amount of work required to resolve some of the Culture and Values recommendations. Eight recommendations are outstanding and being prioritised, with the focus of work shifting to these areas within the HMICFRS specific monthly meetings.

## **2.9. Autumn Data Collection and Thematic Inspection**

**2.10.** In July 2023, HMICFRS announced they would be undertaking a thematic Inspection into the handling of misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs). Ten FRSs were also selected to be physically inspected; however, NYFRS is not one of these. The terms of reference for this inspection include:

- The extent to which services are identifying and investigating misconduct;
- The effectiveness of misconduct processes and how consistently they are applied;
- how confident fire and rescue service staff are in raising concerns and in misconduct processes and the role of fire and rescue authorities and other organisations in handling misconduct How confident fire and rescue service staff are in raising concerns and in misconduct processes and;
- the role of fire and rescue authorities and other organisations in handling misconduct.

**2.11.** To support their overall thematic inspection, NYFRS will send HMICFRS requested data as part of the regular autumn data collection and a staff survey will also be issued. Whilst NYFRS is not one of the ten selected for full inspection, the Service will review policies and procedures in line with the inspection terms of reference, to ensure best practice and continuous improvement.

## **2.12. Introduction of an Independent Reporting Line**

**2.13.** NYFRS has completed the procurement process for an independent reporting line, purchasing Fire and Rescue Service *'Speak Up'* powered by Crimestoppers. The line will go live on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2023. This is within the deadline set out in the recommendations of the national HMICFRS Values and Culture Report published in March 2023.

**2.14.** The independent reporting line will give staff another avenue to report misconduct in the workplace anonymously, alongside further work and engagement to provide confidence to all staff that allegations will be investigated and dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner.

## **2.15. Misconduct handling**

**2.16.** Investigation, Discipline and Grievance training for Middle Managers is being sourced through ACAS and EnableNY to provide in-depth training to managers, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to resolutely undertake appropriate interventions. This training is planned for quarter four of this financial year.

### 3. Risk and Resource Model (RRM) Update

3.1. The RRM will run to (end of) 2025 with the proposed changes taking place in three stages.

- Stage one: removal of the wholetime fire engine from Huntington, transitioning it to an On-call station.
- Stage two: change the second fire engine (known as a Tactical Response Vehicle) at Harrogate to the same type as the first fire engine, namely a B type fire engine (full equipment and normal crewing levels). This will be crewed when emergency incident demand on the Service is at its greatest.
- Stage three: same change to the second fire engine at Scarborough Fire Station as Harrogate (as outlined in stage two above) after a review of the Harrogate implementation.

#### 3.2. Huntington

3.3. NYFRS has undertaken and fulfilled extensive consultation with the workforce at Huntington and their representative bodies. Through the consultation, NYFRS offered wholetime staff the opportunity to select a preferred option for their relocation, minimising personal impact wherever possible. The wholetime staff relocation will be completed by the end of November 2023.

3.4. NYFRS has undertaken a targeted approach to prevention activities in the Huntington area and NYFRS is working with On-call staff to improve resilience. This has included information on the On-call service and how to apply being delivered to over 20,000 domestic properties within a 3-mile radius of the station. This has already seen two new starters begin their journey of becoming On-call firefighters at Huntington.

#### 3.5. Harrogate

3.6. Work on the second stage of the RRM (Risk and Resource Model) has begun and NYFRS (North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service) is working closely with staff and other stakeholders, to ensure it is implemented responsibly. Once the engagement and consultation with representative bodies is complete, formal staff consultation will commence, prior to changes being implemented.

3.7. NYFRS aim for the change to commence around April 2024.

#### 3.8. Response Principles

3.9. Work to introduce response principles based on speed, strength and safety has been completed. Interactive dashboards now enable NYFRS to monitor performance and the Assurance Department scrutinises these at the monthly Service Delivery Performance Group.

3.10. The next stage of developing response standards is underway. NYFRS is working with an external data modelling company to further understand resourcing to risk, with a vision of delivering individual station area response times, aligning to the risk in each area.

#### 3.11. Craven Water Rescue

3.12. The water rescue provision is being increased in the Craven area with the introduction of a specialist water rescue unit based at Skipton Fire Station (which has good On-call availability) by upskilling and equipping existing On-call firefighters. Specialist water rescue equipment has been sourced and a new suitable training venue has been engaged. Staff will complete this training by the end of the year.

3.13. Once the training is complete this specialist water rescue capability (equipment, training, and staff) will be available to attend emergency calls. The effectiveness of this will be reported through the Service Delivery Performance Group.

#### **3.14. Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA)**

3.15. The AFA policy of reducing NYFRS response to automatic fire alarms at lower risk premises through the day has been implemented. Protection teams have undertaken county wide engagement with business stakeholders to inform them of the change and to provide support and advice about keeping their property, staff and the public safe.

3.15. There have been no challenges or issues reported from the change, enabling valuable time to be reallocated to training, community safety and prevention activities. NYFRS is continuing to provide support and education to business and will continue to monitor the impact of the change.

## **4. Equality and Diversity and Inclusion Update**

### **4.1. Estates**

4.2. In 2020 NYFRS commenced work to adapt and upgrade the estate. Funding was allocated in 2021 2022/2023 to update current welfare provision with new accessible, gender neutral showers and toilet pods. Significant progress has been made, only three stations require outstanding work. – Richmond, Acomb and Tadcaster.

4.3. The work is nearing completion at Richmond with the contractors moving on to Acomb within the next month. This should be completed by the end of the year. Tadcaster will aim for completion in early 2024, and all works are due be completed within the allocated timeline.

### **4.5. Equality and Diversity Delivery Plan**

4.6. The CFO (Chief Fire Officer) has implemented a revised Strategic and Tactical EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) and Culture Boards, to drive progress. These will give direction to leaders across the Service to move things forward in line with the EDI Strategy.

### **4.7. Equality Impact Assessments and Staff Networks**

4.8. A review of Equality Impact Assessments and Staff Network Leads has been undertaken by the Talent and Diversity Coordinator with several recommendations being presented to the Strategic Leadership Team in October for improvement, consistency, best practice, and national benchmarking, in all areas of our EDI work. This is due for completion by March 2024. Governance of the staff networks will be through the Tactical and Strategic EDI Boards.

### **4.9. Framework for Change Project**

4.10. The CFO is collaborating with Huddersfield University, via a formal collaboration agreement, on a project to develop a research-informed toolkit and framework for co-developed organisational change within NYFRS. This will enable staff to be part of the change, develop the culture NYFRS want for a better service and ensure everyone feels valued.

4.11. The project will progress through three distinct phases to develop the toolkit and framework for change, accommodating the specific needs and experiences of the Service.

4.12. The first phase will review and foster stakeholder buy-in, ensuring that the toolkit's elements, such as recommendations for further change and codes of conduct, are tailored to NYFRSs (North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service) individual context. Work has now begun with the University to

plan virtual staff engagement sessions, so staff can gain an understanding of the project. Working groups and focus groups will then be set up from this moving forward.

4.13. The second phase will build upon previous research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Scottish Government, to develop an innovative co-development workshop process for generating recommendations for change. NYFRS will refine this process to align with the emergency services context. NYFRS will conduct a series of 18 workshops, organised into six cohorts. Informed by insights from the first phase, in these workshops NYFRS employees will co-design a framework for change and behavioural charter.

4.14. The final phase of the project will focus on dissemination. This stage involves implementing the toolkit and framework within the organisation and exploring opportunities for broader adoption and usage. The project will help NYFRS to embed research-informed change processes, foster a strategic relationship between the University and the Service, and commercialise the research into a consultancy-based toolkit applicable to other emergency services.

#### **4.15. Core Code of Ethics (CCoE)**

4.16. After the initial implementation phase of the Core Code of Ethics NYFRS moved into the embedding phase in July 2023. A working group is in place to ensure CCoE is at the heart of everything NYFRS do as an organisation to ensure NYFRS can provide the best service to communities. This is forming part of their policy and procedure review, setting the stall on how the Service will, look, feel and be in the future. Work is ongoing to develop workshops for staff to fully understand the CCoE and a new e-learning package is in development for new starters and current staff members to complete to ensure ongoing knowledge and understanding.

4.17. An Internal Ethics Board is being developed to provide a platform for all ethical issues to be raised and discussed appropriately.

## **5. Office and Commissioner Activity**

5.1. The Chief Fire Officer and I are united in our focus. We are driving forward necessary improvements, so that we build a more inclusive working culture. I expect North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to be an employer of choice with a clear people focus that develops leadership, integrity, and inclusivity, and I will be monitoring the progress that is fundamental to this aim, as part of my scrutiny and the delivery of my Fire and Rescue Plan.

5.2. Since my tenure, North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service is transforming and modernising, to become an exemplary Service. For example, through the community risk profile the Service now properly understands the likelihood and severity of fires, road traffic collisions, water related incidents, and other emergencies and the root causes of risk which result from age, deprivation, and other factors. This informed the development of the Risk and Resource Model, which looked at the way North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service would seek to deploy its people, equipment, and resources, based on the most extensive study ever undertaken of community risk assessment across North Yorkshire and York. Following consultation with the public, I made the decision in September 2022 to implement the Risk and Resource Model that will continue to keep the public safe whilst enabling increased prevention and protection work across communities, permanent investment into prevention and protection teams and improve the availability of On-call fire engines in rural areas.

5.3. My activity is aimed at robustly scrutinising and driving assurance on behalf of the public to ensure that North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service continue their journey to being exemplary.

5.4. In relation to HMICFRS inspection activity (including RRM implementation and EDI), I have;

- Convened immediate Online Public Meetings (OPM), live-streamed and accessible to all, following receipt of the full inspection report on 26 January 2023. During this meeting I held the Chief Fire officer robustly to account in respect of the findings of concern and areas for improvement identified by the Inspectorate.
- My office has developed a close working relationship with HMI colleagues.
- I have restructured my office to bring greater focus to Delivery & Assurance and to Public Confidence. Following which, the Office has adopted its first-ever Delivery Plan, which was presented to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in early 2023 and published on my website in September 2023. This document sets out what we do to deliver the Police & Crime Plan, Fire and Rescue Plan and the VAWG (Violence Against Women & Girls) Strategy-
- I launched a new Assurance Framework ensuring that we continually monitor and assess delivery of outcomes against the priorities in my Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan. This underpins the Delivery Plan of the OPFCC and clearly sets out how I will hold the services to account for delivery.
- I have refreshed the terms of reference for my live streamed Online Public Meetings. They now include a standing agenda item for the Chief Fire Officer to report on progress against the HMICFRS improvement plan in a public forum. These inspection-focussed updates have been presented at my Fire and Rescue OPMs (Online Public Meetings) since June and additionally demonstrate how the Service is responding to the 35 recommendations set out in the national HMICFRS Values and Culture Report. This means that I publicly seek assurance that positive progress is being made.
- Scrutiny work does not stop at these meetings it continues in every Executive Board, HMICFRS Improvement Board, Risk and Assurance Board, EDI Strategic Board, Independent Audit Committee, and other frequent interactions my team and I have with Chief Officers. I expect to receive assurance that the Service is on track with their plans. My team and I continue to seek evidence of transformation in all areas for improvement.
- I have refreshed my Executive Board and published a new Terms of Reference and Agenda for this. This now includes a standing agenda item relating to HMI improvement plans. At every Executive Board I require assurance from the Chief Fire Officer that this work is on track. This has included obtaining specific assurance of progress against the causes of concern, specifically that the Recruitment and Workforce Plan had been written, submitted to HMICFRS and was in the process of being reality-tested and challenged.
- I will shortly relaunch a public trust and confidence survey which invites the public to complete a set of questions to gauge trust and confidence in fire and rescue services across York and North Yorkshire.
- The complaints function within my office has been expanded to a full Customer Service Team who independently manage complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction against North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, ensuring an impartial and fair review of matters raised.
- In September, the Chief and I pledged NYFRS's commitment to the Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy. The Charter includes placing the public interest above own reputation, approaching forms of public scrutiny including inquest with openness and transparency, and recognising that the Service is accountable and open to challenge. It

formalises the Service's commitment to transparency and acting in the public interest, aligning to the Service's values and the National Core Code of Ethics, which set out the expected approach of every employee of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

- I have commenced a programme of in person visits with crews at our On-call fire stations, to complete before the end of my tenure, listening to what is going well and where improvements are needed. The feedback to date has been consolidated and sent to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer to consider as part of the On-call Futures Project.

5.5. I would like to remind Panel Members of the approach I have taken to accountability, governance and oversight has proven itself to be effective in the public interest. Notwithstanding understandable political criticism after the HMI report into NYFRS in 2022. Following this full inspection there were significant improvements, under my governance and the direction of the Chief Fire Officer. In January 2023, HMI formally acknowledged the huge strides that the Service has achieved ([North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service: Causes of concern revisit letter - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](#)).

5.6. These improvements include;

- My appointment of an inspirational Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer who have in turn built a new Strategic Leadership Team. I am confident that together, we will continue to lead the Service into a strong and sustainable future, focused on the safety of our communities and valuing our people.
- We have worked closely with the Inspectorate since their visit to demonstrate that every penny of the public's money has been applied wisely, and that financial planning is sound.
- As Commissioner I know that the Service has been underfunded for a generation and I have negotiated hard and been successful with central government for precept flexibility for our Fire Service and I will continue to make the case for fairer funding. I am proactively seeking precept flexibility from central government for 2024/25.
- The Chief and I implemented a rigorous ongoing programme of improvement following the full inspection in 2022. The Chief also put into place immediate plans following this to address the two causes of concern raised. HMICFRS reviewed these at the end of January 2023, I was pleased that His Majesty's Inspectorate recognised the dedicated work that North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service has undertaken, at pace, to make improvements in relation to the causes of concern. I await the outcomes of the recent inspection revisit in September with optimism that it will reflect the hard work and improvements made by the Service.
- Prevention work will be further strengthened by investment in 2023 with an increase in roles which tackle the root causes of danger to communities and deliver targeted activities to help stop emergencies from happening. This is absolutely in line with the priorities in my Fire and Rescue Plan.

5.7. I will continue to hold to account and support both services to make the improvements needed for the residents of North Yorkshire and York, so that they become exemplary.