



**NORTH YORKSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

HMICFRS

**Inspection Report 2023–25
Briefing**

July 2025

Progress. People. Community.



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Executive Summary

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and the Strategic Leadership Team commenced in role after the spring 2022 inspection took place. Therefore, the 2024/25 inspection is the first Service inspection under their tenure.

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (NYFRS) has undertaken a significant transformation between the 2021/22 and 2024/25 inspections, following the latest independent inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

NYFRS has moved from a service with two "Inadequate" ratings and multiple causes of concern to one achieving six "Good" ratings and five "Adequate" outcomes, which represents one of the most rapid and substantial improvements nationally; within one inspection period.

The Service is now meeting its statutory duties with confidence and is increasingly recognised as a partner of choice, delivering community focused risk reduction initiatives.

Main Report

Inspection Results and Performance Trajectory

In 2021/22, NYFRS was rated "Inadequate" in both Efficiency and People, with significant concerns raised regarding strategic planning, financial sustainability and workforce capability. Across the eleven inspection questions, only two were rated as "Good," with the rest falling into "Requires Improvement" or lower.

As of the 2023/25 inspection, HMICFRS expanded their previous four-tier system of judgements to five, with adequate being added as a new grade between 'Requires Improvement' and 'Good'. *"A reduction in grade, particularly from good to adequate, doesn't necessarily mean that there has been a reduction in performance."* [North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service commended for improvements made - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)

The 24/25 report was published in June 2025 following visits in December 2024 and January 2025, with NYFRS now graded "Good" in six areas:

- Understanding fires and other risks
- Preventing fires and other risks
- Responding to fires and other emergencies
- Making best use of resources
- Getting the right people with the right skills
- Managing performance and developing leaders



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The remaining five areas received the new "Adequate" rating:

- Protecting the public through fire regulation
- Responding to major and multi-agency incidents
- Future affordability
- Promoting the right values and culture
- Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

No causes of concern were identified.

The number of improvement areas dropped from 24 to seven. It is important to reflect the 24 areas for improvement issued in 21/22 were fully resolved and the HMI has issued 7 new ones, aligned to the areas assessed as adequate, all of which had already been prioritised by the Service.

In total, the Service has improved in nine of the eleven inspection areas, achieving a net uplift of 15 grading bands; a remarkable achievement within a single inspection cycle and challenging financial climate.

Strategic Leadership and Cultural Transformation

The transformation began with a deliberate focus on leadership. In 2021/22, 42% of management roles were filled through temporary promotions and staff lacked confidence in promotion fairness. Alongside this there was no strategic workforce plan and leadership development was deemed to require improvement for support staff. By 2023/25, the creation of a Workforce Planning Board and introduction of structured leadership pathways have significantly improved our leadership capability, experience and support, across all management and leadership positions.

Further, the Service's temporary management roles have reduced to circa 11% and over 180 staff have participated in leadership development, which is a huge investment into current and future leaders. To enhance this, promotion processes are now co-designed, with Trade Unions, staff and partner agencies, which has resulted in staff reporting increased trust in fairness and transparency.

For cultural transformation, NYFRS have embedded the national Core Code of Ethics (CCoE) and the CFO's collaboration with the University of Huddersfield, to introduce a research-led behavioural change toolkit, has kick started improved ethical leadership and values-driven management.

This framework has been designed by Service staff, for Service staff, to deliver the changes they wanted to see in the behaviours of colleagues and leaders, which is unique in its approach. Staff now report feeling more supported, heard and empowered as the service is described by HMICFRS as having a leadership team that *"embraces change"* and *"models inclusive, ethical leadership."*



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In recognition of this approach and the positive impact it can have, another Fire and Rescue Service has approached the CFO to adopt this model. This has enabled a further multi-agency partnership with the University of Huddersfield (which includes further academic funding for NYFRS) to improve well-being, enhance public trust and establish national best practices for cultural transformation.

Risk Understanding and Community Risk Modelling

During the 2021/22 inspection, HMICFRS found NYFRS lacked an up-to-date Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and lacked contemporary data to drive strategic decisions. The risk information was deemed to be outdated and engagement with the public on the risks in their communities had been minimal. This changed with the introduction of the 2022 Risk and Resource Model (RRM), which is the name the Service gave to its IRMP. However, the current RRM was being prepared for consultation at the time of inspection and HMICFRS would not take this in to account, as it had not been publicly consulted, nor published by the Authority.

In the latest inspection they assessed the RRM, noting the Service had introduced a robust Community Risk Profile and subsequent RRM. This was informed by data from ONS, local authorities, NHS and Home Office sources. These tools ensure that risk mitigation is both intelligence-led and community-informed and have been further improved in the new IRMP, due for consultation later this year, which will meet the new national naming convention of Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

The Service's operational response modelling and new digital transformation software ensures appliance coverage aligns with risk and demand. Fire station performance indicators now align with district-level risk profiles. This has resulted in a more equitable distribution of prevention, protection and response activity across both urban and rural communities. Officers have been trained to use local risk data to influence daily planning decisions.

Prevention: Targeted and Inclusive

In 2021/22, fire prevention activity was volume-driven, lacking prioritisation and consistency and Safe and Well visits were not triaged, leading to staff feeling unclear on follow-up expectations.

In 2023/24, the Service's prevention strategy is closely aligned with the risks outlined in its Risk Reduction Model (RRM), using data to identify vulnerable individuals and assess risks within the community. The strategy addresses key hazards focusing on fire, road traffic collisions and water-related incidents.

The introduction of the digital Safelincs system for booking home fire safety visits has enhanced efficiency by categorising referrals, based on associated risk levels, ensuring a more targeted approach.

Staff report increased confidence in delivering safeguarding interventions, supported by a dedicated Safeguarding Manager. The Service has also expanded its education and engagement offer to the public, including for water safety education reaching 1,900 individuals in 141 sessions, which was reported as 'Promising Practice' by



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HMICFRS. Multilingual and inclusive materials have extended the Service's reach into underrepresented communities.

The service demonstrates strong collaboration both internally and with external partners in its prevention efforts, ensuring relevant information is shared effectively when needed. It uses this intelligence to refine its planning assumptions and coordinate activities across its prevention, protection and response functions.

Protection (Business Fire Safety): Professionalised and Proportionate

In 2021/22, the protection function lacked out-of-hours coverage and some staff were underqualified to inspect high risk premises, with only 2 enforcement notices being issued. In 2023/24, NYFRS issued 6 enforcement notices, 7 prohibitions and completed two prosecutions. 99.9% of building consultations and 100% of licensing consultations were responded to within statutory time limits. Staff qualifications now align with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) competency standards.

The Service now audits 3.3 premises per 100 known premises (up from 2.7), exceeding the national average. Our High-risk audit schedule exceeded the annual target (134 vs.125).

NYFRS always aims to work constructively with businesses to improve fire safety in public buildings. Where breaches in legislation are serious or attempts to remedy them are not being made, the Service will take enforcement action including prosecuting responsible people.

Efficiency and Financial Resilience

In 2021/22, NYFRS was criticised for lacking financial sustainability, with no fleet or ICT plans and a perceived inefficient use of shared services. In 2023/25, the service operates a "save to invest and improve" model, using internal savings and new income to fund modernisation. An estates strategy and capital investment plan are now in place, supporting long-term sustainability.

A dynamic fire cover tool allows for improved real-time resource deployment. Non-attendance at false alarms rose to 40.8% (from 28.4%), surpassing the national average, freeing capacity for critical incidents, training and prevention and protection work with those most at risk. On-call availability has stabilised through the On-Call Futures programme, supported by localised recruitment campaigns and a new substantive On-call Station Manager.

Public Confidence and Statutory Compliance

The improvements implemented since 2022 mean NYFRS is now meeting its statutory duties, whilst assessing and mitigating foreseeable risk via the CRP and RRM. The Service promotes fire safety through targeted education and inclusive prevention activity, whilst responding to emergencies with improved attendance times – the most improved in the England Detailed analysis of fires attended and



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response times by fire and rescue services, England, April 2023 to March 2024 - GOV.UK : Home Office detailed analysis of fires attended and response times by fire and rescue services, England, April 2023 to March 2024 Fig 8.1 (published September 2024).

NYFRS works closely with the Local Resilience Forum to plan for major incidents, ensuring coordinated and effective responses. The Service also shares intelligence and leads partnership interventions (e.g. Public Safety Officer programme). *“The service has good evaluation tools in place to measure how effective its activity is and to make sure all sections of its communities get appropriate access to the prevention services that meet their needs.”*

Summary

NYFRS has undergone a significant transformation; from a service previously facing significant challenges to one that now exemplifies excellence in leadership, prevention, risk management and community engagement. With no areas rated below "Adequate" or causes of concern and marked improvements in both culture and capability. The results are testament to the dedication, professionalism and resilience of its people. Despite operating in a challenging environment, the Service has delivered real and measurable progress.

This progress is underpinned by a strong and ongoing commitment to employee well-being, cultural transformation, increased diversity and the proactive implementation of recommendations from the HMICFRS report.

Next Steps

The CFO and SLT know there is more to do and work is already underway to improve the areas rated 'adequate.' The Service will continue to build on this momentum and opportunities as part of the Combined Authority. This will ensure it remains a forward-thinking, inclusive and high-performing service, dedicated to continuous improvement that benefits both its workforce and the communities it serves.

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