

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	PC/24/11
MEETING	PEOPLE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	18 OCTOBER 2024
SUBJECT OF REPORT	HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY & FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) ACTION PLAN UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the Committee reviews progress in delivery of the action plan.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>On 27th July 2022, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published the DSFRS 2022 inspection report. The inspection report identified one Cause of Concern and 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs). Of these AFIs, eight have been linked to the People Committee.</p> <p>Since the inspection report, two national thematic reports have been published by HMICFRS. The first, published on 31 March 2023, examined the values and culture in fire and rescue services. The second, published on 01 August 2024, examined standards of behaviour and the handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services.</p> <p>A new approach has been implemented for all remaining Areas for Improvement (AFIs) from the 2021/22 inspection report and national recommendation from HMICFRS. This approach aligns the actions from each improvement area with the relevant Fire Standards criteria. This will provide continued assurance of the outcomes over time.</p> <p>This report outlines the progress that has been made against the HMICFRS Areas for Improvement and national recommendations since the last update to the committee in July 2024. The key highlights are that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three areas for improvement are currently marked as 'In Progress – Off Track'. This is due to the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The recruitment policy has been dependent on the People Strategy, current recruitment controls and the Safeguarding strategy (due to DBS and Safer Recruitment). It is expected that this will be out for consultation by the 31/10/2024. A further update will be provided by the People Services Team at the committee meeting.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Considered within the Action Plan where appropriate.

EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	Considered within the Action Plan where appropriate.
APPENDICES	A. HMI People Committee Update
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. On 27th July 2022 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published the DSFRS 2022 inspection report. The inspection report identified one Cause of Concern and 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs). Of these AFIs, eight have been linked to the People Committee.
- 1.2. On 31 March 2023, HMICFRS published a report into the values and culture in fire and rescue services. The report contained 35 recommendations, 1 specific for the police, 14 which required action at a national level and 20 which were specific for fire and rescue services
- 1.3. 01 August 2024 HMICFRS published a report into standards of behaviour and the handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services. The report contained 15 recommendations to chief fire officers, fire and rescue authorities and others.
- 1.4. This report outlines the progress that has been made against the HMICFRS Areas for Improvement and national recommendations since the last update to the committee.

2. ALIGNMENT TO FIRE STANDARDS

- 2.1. The Fire Standards Board oversees the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England. These are presented in a series of approved 'Fire Standards', developed in consultation with stakeholders from services across the country.
- 2.2. Each Fire Standard contains a number of criteria which services 'must', 'should' or 'may' implement in order to provide assurance against the required standard.
- 2.3. A new approach has been implemented for all remaining Areas for Improvement (AFIs) from the 2021/22 inspection report, recommendations from the HMICFRS report into values and culture and recommendations from the HMICFRS report into standards of behaviour. This approach aligns the actions from each improvement area with the relevant Fire Standards criteria.
- 2.4. This will support an assurance-based approach to the monitoring of actions, ensuring the Service has continued assurance of outcomes over time, rather than just a compliance assessment at the time of closure.

3. CAUSE OF CONCERN ACTION COMPLETION STATUS

- 3.1. The Cause of Concern is as follows:

The service has shown a clear intent from the executive board to improve the culture of the service. However, more needs to be done throughout the organisation. We have found evidence of poor behaviours that are not in line with service values. Some staff didn't have the confidence to report these issues. By 31st August 2022, the service should develop an action plan to:

- Make sure that its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation.

- Make sure that staff are trained and supported to identify and challenge inappropriate behaviour when identified and that they have clear mechanisms in place to raise their concerns.

3.2. All actions under the cause of concern have now been marked as completed. The recommendation for closure was approved by Executive Board on 19 March 2024.

3.3. The Cause of Concern has now been transitioned into Service business as usual. Progress on improving organisational culture will continue to be an area of focus

4. **AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN COMPLETION STATUS**

4.1. Areas for Improvement closed prior to this report: 2 (of 8)

4.2. Table 1 below lists the open Areas for Improvement linked to the People Committee and their individual status.

Table 1:

Reference	Description	Target Completion	Status
HMI-3.1-202208	Secondary Contracts	30/09/2024	In Progress – Off Track
HMI-3.2-202210	Temporary Promotions		
HMI-3.4-202213	Selection and Promotions Process		
HMI-3.2-202209	Workforce Planning	30/09/2024 31/12/2024	In Progress – On Track
HMI-3.4-202214	PDR Process	30/04/2024 30/06/2024 30/11/2024	In Progress – On Track
HMI-3.4-202215	High Potential Staff	TBC	Paused

5. **VALUES AND CULTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1. Values and Culture Recommendations closed prior to this report: 16 (of 20)

5.2. HMICFRS required services to provide a final update on the status and progress against each of the culture recommendations by Tuesday 19/03/2024. The recommendations outlined in table 2 below have remained marked as 'In Progress'.

Table 2:

Reference	Description	Target Completion	Status
REC09	Background checks	30/11/2024	In Progress – On Track
REC12	Staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling standard		
REC14	Misconduct allegations standard		
REC32	Diversity in succession planning	01/01/2024 31/12/2024	In Progress – On Track

6. **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1. Table 3 below lists the recommendations made in the HMICFRS report on standards of behaviour and the handling of misconduct and their individual status.

Table 3:

Reference	Description	Target Completion	Status
REC02	Probationary Policy	01/02/2025	Closed
REC12	Welfare Support	31/08/2024	Closed
REC01	Code of Ethics (SB)	TBC	Not Started
REC03	Watch Movements	TBC	Not Started
REC04	Professional Standards	31/01/2025	In Progress – On Track
REC05	Raising a Concern	TBC	Not Started
REC06	Training for Managers	31/01/2025	In Progress – On Track
REC07	Misconduct Policies	31/10/2024	In Progress – On Track

REC08	Allegations of Misconduct		
REC09	Case Management	31/05/2025	In Progress – On Track
REC10	Misconduct Investigations	TBC	Not Started
REC11	Misconduct Investigation Training		
REC13b	Appeals Training		
REC13a	Appeals Process	01/11/2024	In Progress – On Track
REC14	Performance Against Misconduct Issues	TBC	Not Started
REC15	Learning from Misconduct	31/01/2025	In Progress – On Track

7. AREAS WHICH ARE 'OFF-TRACK'

7.1 Table 4 overleaf outlines three areas for improvement which are currently marked as 'In Progress – Off Track'.

Table 4:

Ref	Improvement Area
HMI-3.1-202208	Secondary Contracts
HMI-3.2-202210	Temporary Promotions
HMI-3.4-202213	Selection and Promotions Process
Description	
<p>The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure working hours are not exceeded.</p> <p>The service should address the high number of staff in temporary promotion positions.</p> <p>The service should make sure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open and fair, and that feedback is available to staff.</p>	
Factors impacting delivery	
<p>The recruitment policy has been dependent on the People Strategy, current recruitment controls and the Safeguarding strategy (due to DBS and Safer Recruitment). It is expected that this will be out for consultation by the 31/10/2024.</p> <p><i>A further update will be provided by the People Services Team at the committee meeting.</i></p>	

8. **ACTION DEADLINE EXTENSIONS**

The tables below outline three areas which have had a deadline extension since the last report to the People Committee.

Ref	Improvement Area
HMI-3.2-202209	Workforce Planning
REC32	Diversity in succession planning
Reason for deadline extension	
<p>Strategic workforce planning meetings continue on a two monthly basis. Key short term and medium-term actions are ongoing. However, longer term planning is required and a strategic work force plan is being drafted. Further information is required from the completion of the fire cover review (to be concluded by end of October). Completion date revised to allow for appropriate information to be collated.</p>	

Ref	Improvement Area
HMI-3.4-202214	PDR Process
Reason for deadline extension	
Testing has now been completed. The target completion date for this AFI has been moved to align with the 'go live' date for the PPD module.	

GAVIN ELLIS
Chief Fire Officer