

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>DSFRA/24/36</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>DEVON &amp; SOMERSET FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>31 OCTOBER 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>HMICFRS ACTION PLAN UPDATE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Chief Fire Officer</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i><b>That the committee notes the content of the paper.</b></i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>On 27th July 2022, His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published the Devon &amp; Somerset Fire &amp; Rescue Service (DSFRS) 2022 inspection report. The inspection report identified one Cause of Concern and 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs).</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 Fire and Rescue Authority in March 2024. The key highlights are that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All actions under the Cause of Concern have now been marked as completed. The recommendation for closure was approved by the Executive Board on 19/03/2024. 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.</li> <li>• Three areas for improvement are currently marked as ‘In Progress – Off Track’. This is due to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The recruitment policy is now out for consultation. It is expected that the new policy will be published by 30/11/2024.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Considered within the Action Plan where appropriate.
<b>EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS</b>	Considered within the Action Plan where appropriate.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	None.
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	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).
- 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 Cause of Concern, Areas for Improvement and national recommendations since the last update to Fire and Rescue Authority.

## **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; and

- 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 the Executive Board on 19/03/2024.
- 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.
- 3.4. HMICFRS will assess the Service's progress during their inspection this year to inform their decision about discharging the Cause of Concern.

#### 4. **AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- 4.1. Table 1 below lists the Areas for Improvement which have been marked as 'Closed'.

**Table 1:**

Reference	Description	Status
HMI-1.1-202202	IRMP Mitigating Risk	Closed
HMI-1.2-202204	Safeguarding Training	Closed
HMI-1.3-202205	QA Audits and FSCs	Closed
HMI-2.2-202206a	Fleet Strategy	Closed
HMI-2.2-202206b	Estates Strategy	Closed
HMI-2.2-202207b	Response - Technology and Innovation	Closed
HMI-3.3-202211	Grievance Procedures	Closed
HMI-3.3-202212	Positive Action	Closed

- 4.2. Table 2 overleaf lists the Areas for Improvement which are 'In Progress'.

**Table 2:**

Reference	Description	Target Completion	Status
HMI-1.2-202203	Prevention Activity	31/10/2024	In Progress – On Track
HMI-2.2-202207a	Prevention and Protection - Technology and Innovation	30/04/2025	In Progress – On Track
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	31/12/2024	In Progress – On Track
HMI-3.4-202214	PDR Process	30/11/2024	In Progress – On Track
HMI-3.4-202215	High Potential Staff	TBC	Paused

## 5. **VALUES AND CULTURE RECOMMENDATIONS (PUBLISHED MARCH 2023)**

- 5.1. Table 3 below lists the recommendations from the HMICFRS values and culture report which have been marked as 'Closed'.

**Table 3:**

Reference	Description	Status
REC01	Background checks	Closed
REC03	Support for individuals raising concerns	Closed
REC04	Handling of raised concerns	Closed
REC05	How to raise concerns (staff and public)	Closed
REC17	Allegations of staff gross misconduct	Closed

Reference	Description	Status
REC18	Support during ongoing investigations	Closed
REC20	Fire Standards	Closed
REC21	360 Feedback (ACFO and above)	Closed
REC22	360 Feedback (all managers)	Closed
REC23	Feedback from staff	Closed
REC24	Monitoring and Evaluating Feedback	Closed
REC26	Management and Leadership Training	Closed
REC27	Equality Impact Assessments	Closed
REC28	Equality and Diversity Data	Closed
REC33	Progression of non-operational staff	Closed
REC34	Core Code of Ethics (VC)	Closed

5.2. Table 4 below lists the values and culture recommendations which are 'In Progress'.

**Table 4:**

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	31/12/2024	In Progress – On Track

**6. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR RECOMMENDATIONS (PUBLISHED AUGUST 2024)**

6.1. Table 5 below lists the recommendations made in the HMICFRS report on standards of behaviour and the handling of misconduct which have been marked as 'Closed'.

**Table 5:**

Reference	Description	Status
REC02	Probationary Policy	Closed
REC12	Welfare Support	Closed

6.2. Table 6 below lists the standards of behaviour recommendations which are 'In Progress'.

**Table 6:**

Reference	Description	Target Completion	Status
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 7 below outlines three Areas for Improvement from the HMICFRS inspection report which are currently marked as ‘In Progress – Off Track’.

**Table 7:**

Ref	Improvement Area
HMI-3.1-202208	Secondary Contracts
HMI-3.2-202210	Temporary Promotions
HMI-3.4-202213	Selection and Promotions Process
<b>Description</b>	
<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>	
<b>Factors impacting delivery</b>	
<p>The recruitment policy is now out for consultation. The consultation period will end on 13/11/2024.</p>	

**GAVIN ELLIS**  
**Chief Fire Officer**