

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/25/12
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	17 FEBRUARY 2025
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 report be noted.</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).</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>The paper appended to 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 October 2024. The key highlights are that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two areas are currently marked as 'In Progress – Off Track'. This is due to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations 04 and 15 (HMICFRS Standards of Behaviour) will remain open until reporting requirements have been defined and the first meeting held for Part 2 Professional Standards Board (scheduled 12 February).
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Considered within the Action Plan where appropriate.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	Considered within the Action Plan where appropriate.
APPENDICES	None
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).
- 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. CAUSE OF CONCERN ACTION COMPLETION STATUS

- 2.1 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.

- 2.2 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. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 3.1. Table 1 lists the open Areas for Improvement and their individual status.
- 3.2. Total Areas for Improvement closed: 8 (of 16)

Table 1:

Reference	Description	Target Completion	Status
HMI-1.2-202203	Prevention Activity	31/10/2024	Completed
HMI-2.2-202207a	Prevention and Protection - Technology and Innovation	30/04/2025	In Progress – On Track
HMI-3.1-202208	Secondary Contracts	28/02/2025	In Progress – On Track
HMI-3.2-202210	Temporary Promotions		
HMI-3.4-202213	Selection and Promotions Process		
HMI-3.2-202209	Workforce Planning	31/03/2025	In Progress – On Track
HMI-3.4-202214	PDR Process	31/05/2025	In Progress – On Track
HMI-3.4-202215	High Potential Staff	TBC	Paused

- 3.3. HMI-1.2-202203 (Prevention Activity) has now been marked as completed. The closure of this Area for Improvement is subject to review and approval by Professional Standards Board and the Executive Board in February 2025.
4. **VALUES AND CULTURE RECOMMENDATIONS (PUBLISHED MARCH 2023)**
- 4.1. HMICFRS required services to provide a final update on the status and progress against each of the values and culture recommendations by Tuesday 19/03/2024. The recommendations outlined in table 2 below have remained marked as 'In Progress'.
- 4.2. Total recommendations closed: 16 (of 20)

Table 2:

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

4.3. Recommendation 09 (Background Checks), Recommendation 12 (Staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling standard) and Recommendation 14 (Misconduct allegations standard) have now been marked as completed. The closure of these recommendations is subject to review and approval by Professional Standards Board and the Executive Board in February 2025

5. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR RECOMMENDATIONS (PUBLISHED AUGUST 2024)

5.1. Table 3 lists the recommendations made in the HMICFRS report on standards of behaviour and the handling of misconduct and their individual status. The table outlines the deadline set by HMICFRS and also the internal target completion date (TCD) set by the Service.

5.2. Recommendations closed since the last report to the Authority: 1

5.3. Total recommendations closed: 3 (of 16)

5.4. Dates marked with an asterisk (*) indicate that the Service is 'Off Track' for completion of the recommendation by that date.

Table 3:

Reference	Description	Deadline	TCD
REC13a	Appeals Process	01/11/2024	Closed
REC01	Code of Ethics (SB)	01/02/2025*	30/06/2025
REC03	Watch Movements	01/02/2025*	30/04/2025
REC04	Professional Standards	01/02/2025*	01/02/2025*
REC05	Raising a Concern	01/11/2024*	TBC
REC06	Training for Managers	01/02/2025	Completed
REC07	Misconduct Policies	01/05/2024	31/03/2025
REC08	Allegations of Misconduct	01/11/2024*	31/03/2025
REC09	Case Management	01/08/2025	01/08/2025
REC10	Misconduct Investigations	01/05/2025	01/05/2025
REC11	Misconduct Investigation Training	01/05/2025	01/05/2025
REC13b	Appeals Training	01/02/2025	01/02/2025
REC14	Performance Against Misconduct Issues	01/11/2025	01/04/2025
REC15	Learning from Misconduct	01/02/2025*	01/02/2025*

5.5. Recommendation 06 (Training for Managers) has now been marked as completed. The closure of this recommendation is subject to review and approval by Professional Standards Board and the Executive Board in February 2025

6. AREAS WHICH ARE 'OFF-TRACK'

6.1. Table 4 overleaf outlines three Areas for Improvement from the HMICFRS inspection report which are currently marked as 'In Progress – Off Track'.

Table 4:

Reference	Description	Deadline	TCD
REC04	Professional Standards	01/02/2025*	01/02/2025*
REC15	Learning from Misconduct	01/02/2025*	01/02/2025*
Description			
REC04 Professional Standards By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should make sure their services create or have access to a dedicated professional standards function to oversee the investigation of concerns raised within a service or from an external source. This should oversee cases to make sure they are investigated in a fair and transparent way, manage complex cases directly and act as a point of contact for all staff involved.			
REC15 Learning from Misconduct By 1 February 2025, chief fire officers should put in place a process for sharing learning from misconduct cases that have been resolved while preserving the confidentiality of all parties involved. Any learning should feed into the national system, when established.			
Factors Impacting Delivery			
Meeting dates and the initial core group have been agreed for Part 2 Professional Standards Board starting 12 February. This will consider learning from appraisals, grievances, complaints, disciplinary procedures, speak up and competence achievement and maintenance. These recommendations will remain open until reporting requirements have been defined and the first meeting held.			

GAVIN ELLIS
Chief Fire Officer