



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Policy and Strategy Committee

HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES, AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 02 February 2024

Purpose of Report:

To present Members with an update on the Service's response to the 2021 inspection of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

Recommendations:

That Members approve the closure of the area for improvement relating to the provision of well-being support.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Fire Authority in September 2022, Members were presented the report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following the recent inspection of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS).
- 1.2 Accompanying the report, Members were presented with a paper detailing the four 'areas for improvement' (AFIs) that had been highlighted by HMICFRS.
- 1.3 It was agreed that scrutiny and monitoring of progress of these actions would be facilitated through the Fire Authority committee structure, with progress reports being presented to Members.
- 1.4 Of the four AFIs, one was aligned to the Human Resources Committee for scrutiny.
- 1.5 In consultation with the Chair of Human Resources Committee, the meeting scheduled for 26 January 2024 was cancelled due to limited items on the agenda, and reports therefore added to the agenda of Policy and Strategy Committee.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Each of the areas for improvement have been allocated to a lead officer with clear milestones and expected outcomes. Within the Service, progress against these timelines is monitored and reported through the monthly Community Risk Management Plan Assurance Board (CRMPAB), chaired by the Chief Fire Officer.
- 2.2 Since the HMICFRS report was published in July 2022, the Service has undertaken a gap analysis against areas of work that were already being progressed under the current Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). This has assured that work to address the AFIs was either already planned or has now been included in the Service's annual delivery planning.
- 2.3 The AFI delegated to the Human Resources Committee was:
 - AFI 3 – the Service should assure itself that staff understand how to get well-being support.

AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT 3

- 2.4 The Service currently has information about a range of well-being and employee support provisions on the well-being page of the Intranet however, feedback from HMICFRS and the internal staff survey highlighted that some employees were unaware of the support available. The inspection from

HMICFRS also highlighted concerns raised by operational crews that there was a lack of consistency in post-incident support.

2.5 The Human Resources Committee received update reports at its meetings on 13 January 2023 and 23 June 2023 setting out the actions to be taken to address the issues highlighted by HMICFRS.

2.6 The actions taken to address the HMI feedback on well-being support include:

- A review of the post-critical incident support (PIS) process which has resulted in an amended policy clearly setting out roles and responsibilities following a critical incident, specifically in relation to support for employees following the incident. This has clarified the lead role to be undertaken by the Crisis Team in terms of response, structured support sessions and post incident follow-up. Response to critical incidents will be overseen by a PIS Liaison Officer to ensure that appropriate actions have been taken.
- Training has been scheduled for all duty officers in trauma awareness and support in early 2024.
- An external consultancy has been commissioned to offer face-to-face psychological assessments and psychological therapy provision where this is required or recommended by the Occupational Health Team. This is in addition to the provisions of the Employee Assistance Programme which also offers access to confidential counselling.
- The range of well-being support available to employees through the internal Occupational Health Team, Employee Assistance Programme and other channels has been widely promoted through a dedicated well-being site on the intranet, newsletter and MyNet news items. Most recently this has promoted the creation of a Walk and Talk initiative to improve men's mental health and combat loneliness.
- A mental health awareness session was undertaken at a recent middle manager briefing to highlight the role of managers in supporting good mental health and well-being in themselves and their teams. This will form part of mandatory training for future managers.
- The Service has worked with the University of Derby mental health hub to assess its well-being provision against the Mental Health Standards and to improve current provision. This has included the forming of a Mental Health network of employees interested in supporting mental health promotion and acting as a contact point for colleagues and the development of a mental health/well-being toolkit for managers.
- Ongoing commitment to peer support, which provides trained facilitators to support people to process chronic stress and historic trauma. The facilitators are employees themselves and the service is available to all

employees within NFRS, as an alternative option to/before accessing other clinical routes.

- The Service being a signatory and funding partner of the Suicide Prevention Crisis Line developed via the National Fire Chiefs Council and The Firefighters Charity.
- A review of the Well-Being Policy, which sets out the Service commitment to a healthy workforce and the support available to employees.
- A review of relevant policy such as menopause support, maternity and other family friendly provisions
- The Your Care personal health portal launched. This is provided by the benefits provider and provides access to personal health and fitness plans including assessments, well-being tools and self-help advice, and allows employees to set and monitor personal health and fitness goals. This is available as an app so that employees can access it via their mobile phones.

2.7 Evaluation of well-being support will be undertaken through staff surveys, feedback from employee networks and the representative bodies and work to align provision to external standards to ensure that the Service continues to provide a comprehensive and effective well-being package to its employees.

2.8 On the basis of the work undertaken to address the AFI around well-being, it is recommended that this AFI is closed.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Human resources and learning and development implications are set out within the report.

5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities and ethical implications arising from this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental and sustainability implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Local Government Act 1999 places a statutory duty on NFRS to '*secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised*'. The reporting of Service Delivery's performance ensures that the Service is focusing on key objectives as set by the Fire Authority and continuous improvement. This ensures that Members can apply effective scrutiny to be satisfied that statutory obligations are being met.
- 7.2 The Police and Crime Act (2017) Chapter 4 Section 11, outlines that the English inspectors must inspect, and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of, fire and rescue authorities in England.
- 7.3 Employers have a 'duty of care' to their employees. This means they must do all they reasonably can to support the mental health, safety and well-being of their employees.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The provision of effective and wide-ranging well-being support reduces the risk of illness, injury and long-term impact on health. It is recognised that the impact of traumatic reaction is potentially higher in emergency service workers and early intervention and support can alleviate escalation of health problems which could have far-reaching and detrimental impact on physical and mental health.
- 8.2 Absence due to mental health accounts for a high number of working days lost nationally and within NFRS and interventions which support well-being can therefore improve productivity by reducing sickness absence.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

The Service collaborates with a number of external providers to ensure that its well-being provision is effective, particularly where it does not have the internal expertise to offer professional support to its employees, and to extend the range of provision available.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the closure of the area for improvement relating to the provision of well-being support.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER