



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

UPDATE ON THE SERVICE RESPONSE TO HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES INSPECTION

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 24 January 2020

Purpose of Report:

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

Recommendations:

That Members endorse the progress made against the agreed action plan.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Fire Authority in July 2019, Members were presented with the report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following the recent inspection of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS).
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Fire Authority in September 2019, Members were presented with an action plan detailing the 'areas for improvement' which had been highlighted by HMICFRS, and capturing the actions to address these areas.
- 1.3 It was agreed that Fire Authority scrutiny would be conducted through the committee structure with regular progress reports being presented to Members.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Each of the 25 areas for improvement within the report has been allocated to a lead officer, with clear milestones and expected outcomes. Of the 25 areas, eight were aligned to the Human Resources Committee for scrutiny. These were set out in detail in the HR Update report presented to Members at the last meeting on 18 October 2019.
- 2.2 Since this meeting, a number of actions have been progressed or plans put in place to address and improve some of the areas for improvement identified. An officer from NFRS who had previously been seconded to the HMICFRS inspection team has recently returned to the Service and has been able to offer greater insight and depth of information relating to the areas for improvement, and the wider HMICFRS inspection process.
- 2.3 This knowledge and understanding has enabled a review of the 'areas for improvement' to establish the narrative detail which underpins each area and, therefore, has allowed the Service to refine the actions being taken to improve these areas of performance and to review timescales for delivery to reflect implementation and assurance.
- 2.4 The updated action plan is presented as an appendix to this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the information contained in this report does not relate to a change in policy or procedure.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The report sets out the actions which have been put in place to address those areas of improvement identified by the HMICFRS in its recent inspection.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report, however discussions with Nottinghamshire Police continue in relation to their experience of HMIC inspections and how NFRS can learn from that in preparation for future inspections.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members endorse the progress made against the agreed action plan.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

HMICFRS Areas for Improvement (AFI)



	Areas for Improvement	Timescales	Responsible PO	Committee	Commentary
Promoting the right values and culture					
17	The Service should put appropriate mechanisms in place to enable closer monitoring of hours worked by staff.	September 2020 (revised)	Craig Parkin	Human Resources	<p>The issues that HMICFRS highlighted were mainly associated with dual contractors i.e. whole-time firefighters who also provide support to on-call stations and the lack of overview of the hours they are working across both roles without sufficient rest periods.</p> <p>Actions: Whilst guidance on rest breaks are set out within the Guidance on the Working Time Regulations, this places the responsibility on the supervisory officer and individual themselves to identify whether they are sufficiently rested and fit to make themselves available for duty. There is no mechanism in place to track hours worked.</p> <p>An action was therefore required to establish a monitoring mechanism that could be put in place to record both whole-time and on-call working hours, and could be monitored on a regular basis. Additionally, to implement a formal welfare meeting on an annual basis, to include a wellbeing questionnaire, to identify any underlying fatigue or health issues.</p> <p>It was also identified that the welfare meeting should be extended to all employees undertaking secondary employment, additional to their NFRS roles, that might lead to fatigue or underlying health issues. Therefore, that the actions undertaken should extend to this group of employees.</p> <p>January 2020 update: A report was considered and recommendations agreed by EDT/SLT in November. This recommended action in respect of hours worked by dual contractors and wellbeing reviews for both dual contractors and those undertaking secondary employment:</p>

				<p>(i) Action 1: development of a weekly timesheet for dual contractors by April 2020 which will be reviewed locally and by the On-Call team. This action will be overseen by the Head of Response;</p> <p>(ii) Action 2: an annual welfare review meeting for dual contractors and those undertaking secondary employment via an i-Trent workflow from April (based on commencement date) which will be undertaken by line managers and will include a health and stress questionnaire. This action will be overseen by the Head of People and OD.</p> <p>On this basis, the milestone date for delivering against this AFI will be 1 April 2020.</p> <p>Assurance will be provided after six months through a report to SLT in September 2020.</p>	
18	The Service should develop a wellbeing strategy and a system to improve understanding of health, safety and wellbeing trends.	December 2020 (revised)	Craig Parkin	Human Resources	<p>The HMI report found that the Service doesn't have a health and wellbeing strategy. It also doesn't consistently evaluate the effectiveness of its wellbeing measures.</p> <p>Actions: The Service has established Occupational Health and employee support mechanisms in place, however these are contained within different policies and need to be integrated into a single strategy and include the ways in which the effectiveness of the strategy can be evaluated.</p> <p>Additionally, to improve understanding of health and wellbeing trends, analysis needs to be undertaken of data relating to sickness absence and recurring health, wellbeing or fitness issues identified by the Occupational Health & Fitness Manager.</p>

				<p>January 2020 update: Action 1: Develop a Wellbeing Strategy. The Strategy has been drafted and was presented at SLT on 16 December. A report will bring this forward to the Authority at a future meeting. The strategy will then be published and promoted across a number of mediums (newsletter, Informative, social media sites). A programme of OH site visits will be scheduled throughout 2020 to promote the strategy and the support available through OH provision.</p> <p>Assurance: evaluation of OH/Wellbeing provision through statistical analysis, through qualitative questionnaires and through the employee survey. This is reported quarterly to the Human Resources Committee as part of the HR Update report and will also be reported through the Health, Safety & Welfare Committee (HS&WC).</p> <p>Action 2: the Occupational Health & Fitness Manager will provide an update report to the HS&WC on a quarterly basis, which will analyse sickness and wellbeing trends. This has been included as a standard agenda item for the next HS&W committee.</p> <p>Assurance will be provided through the HS&W committee.</p>	
19	The Service should ensure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation.	July 2020 (revised)	Craig Parkin	Human Resources	<p>The HMI report stated that the Service promotes its values to improve behaviour. But some staff reported behaviour not in line with Service values. The 2018 staff survey showed that 15 percent of staff had witnessed workplace conversations in the previous 12 months that had included inappropriate or discriminatory language.</p> <p>This was supported by our own survey: of the 216 respondents, 15 percent reported feeling bullied or harassed and 14 percent reported feeling discriminated against at work in the previous 12 months.</p>

					<p>Actions: The promotion of the Service’s core values will continue throughout 2020 through the use of posters raising awareness, thematic promotion of each core value on a quarterly basis and use of the values toolkit to encourage each team to consider its own performance and areas of improvement against the four core values (One Team, Professional, Respect and Openness to Change).</p> <p>A review of the harassment process will be undertaken to ensure it remains fit for purpose, that there is confidence in the process, and examples of employee experience will be actively sought so that they can be addressed as part of a formal review.</p>
					<p>January 2020 update: Action 1: Thematic promotion of core values will commence in January 2020, focusing initially on the theme of One Team.</p> <p>Action 2: The Harassment Policy and Procedure has been reviewed, including an overview from an independent equalities consultant, and will be subject to consultation with the representative bodies in January. The amended policy will be published and promoted in February 2020.</p> <p>Action 3: A forum for discussion of harassment and bullying issues has been scheduled for 22 January 2020. This will be facilitated by an external equalities consultant, and will include representatives from a cross section of the Service, including trade union representatives, to seek to establish employee experience and identify steps to promote a workplace culture where inappropriate language and behaviour is recognised as unacceptable and will be challenged. The consultant will report into SLT on the outcomes from the forum and an action plan agreed.</p> <p>Action 4: A Behavioural Competency Framework will be introduced, alongside the development of a new PDR process, which will set out expectations of positive behaviours, including Value and Respect for</p>

		<p>Others. This will be launched in April 2020.</p> <p>Assurance:</p> <p>(i) The bi-annual employee survey, which will be launched in May 2020, will seek feedback on employee experience of harassment, discriminatory and inappropriate language/behaviour in the workplace and will result in an independent analysis and review from an independent consultancy</p> <p>(ii) the action plan arising from the discussion forum will be monitored by SLT (iii) an overview will be taken of harassment issues raised during 2020 and reported through the Equalities Steering Group.</p>
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Getting the right people with the right skills

20	The Service should develop a training plan that clearly aligns and supports its workforce plan.	September 2020 (revised)	Craig Parkin	Human Resources	<p>The HMI identified the need for the Service to align training plans with the workforce plan. Specifically, that the Service should ensure that staff are clear on the training requirements in all training areas (particularly in non-operational competencies) and that the Service should ensure it has a professional development plan for non-operational staff.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p>The Workforce Plan 2019-21 identifies key skill gaps and training requirements at departmental level aligned to delivery of corporate plan objectives. Generic skills gaps i.e. for ICT training will be addressed at a corporate level, whilst specialist skills will be addressed through departmental actions, supported by the Training Manager. Leadership training is established within Development Programmes for Supervisory and Middle Managers and is aligned to succession planning.</p> <p>A rolling three-year operational training programme has been</p>
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					<p>developed based on planning assumptions within the workforce plan (19-21). However, the Service needs to integrate its operational training planner with wider aspects of workforce development and training.</p> <p>January 2020 update: Action 1: each department has established their departmental training needs for 2020-21 as part of the budget setting process. Specific training to meet these requirements will be undertaken during 2020.</p> <p>Action 2: a survey has been undertaken to identify ICT skills gaps and an action plan will be implemented to address issues raised. An ICT Training Plan will be implemented from April 2020.</p> <p>Action 3: A review has been undertaken of current leadership development programmes and a revised Middle Management programme will be introduced from April 2020. Participants will include those recently promoted to Station Manager role, and those identified as having potential for progression.</p> <p>Action 4: A Supervisory Development Programme has been scheduled to provide development for newly promoted Crew and Watch Managers following a selection process in May 2020.</p> <p>Action 5: the new PDR process identifies training and development requirements for all staff – including non operational employees – and individual training plans will be developed as an outcome from the PDR interview.</p> <p>Action 6: work to be undertaken to align the operational training planner with wider aspects of workforce development and training. This will be part of the work undertaken on developing a training plan for 2021-22.</p> <p>Assurance: (i) delivery of the ICT Training plan (ii) feedback from</p>
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					participants undertaking development programmes (iii) feedback from the employee survey 2020 (iv) outcomes from PDR meetings.
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Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

22	The Service should improve communication around positive action through all levels of the organisation.	March 2021 (revised)	Craig Parkin	Human Resources	<p>The HMI report found that the Service requires improvement at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. But the Service should improve how it educates staff about positive action, as some staff who we spoke to failed to understand the benefits of positive action.</p> <p>The inspection highlighted concern that some male staff perceive that the selection tests for female firefighters applying to join the Service are made easier. This isn't the case. If the Service is to meet the equality and diversity commitments in its IRMP, its culture needs to change and its communication about positive action needs to improve.</p> <p>Action: The Service needs to be more proactive in engaging with its workforce about why and how it undertakes positive action measures to help dispel concerns that it undermines the fairness of the selection process, particularly during whole-time recruitment campaigns. This is about raising awareness and improving communication and engagement with staff.</p> <p>January 2020 update: Action 1: A Joint Statement on Positive Action has been drafted and consultation has taken place with the representative bodies. Subject to final agreement, this will be published in February 2020 and promoted via internal communications channels.</p> <p>Action 2: Planning for whole-time recruitment in 2021 will include implementation of a positive action programme which will commence during late summer 2020. The aim will be to hold these at stations and involve station personnel in supporting the events.</p> <p>Action 3: Prior to commencement of positive action, a briefing will be</p>
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					<p>issued to fully explain what actions are being taken and what we hope to achieve. The will include a question and answer section to address concerns raised in the report.</p> <p>Assurance: (i) agreement of a Joint Statement on positive action (ii) briefing sent out prior to commencement of a future whole-time recruitment process (iii) feedback from employees engaged in positive action and as part of a project closure report.</p>
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Managing performance and developing leaders

23	The Service should ensure individual performance targets clearly support objectives within the IRMP.	September 2020 (revised)	Craig Parkin	Human Resources	<p>The HMI report found that there isn't sufficient management of individual performance at Nottinghamshire FRS. The Service has a personal development review (PDR) process and sets performance and development targets, but these don't link to the organisational objectives in its IRMP. Staff we spoke to commented on the lack of clear targets.</p> <p>Staff told us the Service's PDRs lacked corporate oversight and quality assurance, and one-to-one meetings with managers are inconsistent. Some staff who have a PDR found the process useful, but others see it as no more than a tick-box exercise. The Service offers training in how to use the PDR system, but it is only for managers and isn't compulsory.</p> <p>The Service needs to make sure that individuals are set clear performance targets. This will drive continuous improvement.</p> <p>Action: A full review of the PDR process has been undertaken to ensure that individual performance targets are aligned to corporate objectives.</p> <p>Feedback showed that the current process is too complicated and so this has been simplified and now links to the employee record via the i-Trent HR system. Training will be rolled to ensure that people understand the new process.</p> <p>A new Performance Policy has been published which sets out the</p>
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					<p>aims of the process, including guidance on holding regular 1-1 meetings.</p> <p>January 2020 update: Action 1: a new Performance and Development Policy has been published and will be promoted as part of the launch of the new PDR process.</p> <p>Action 2: training for users of the new i-Trent PDR process has been scheduled between January and March 2020.</p> <p>Action 3: New PDR scheme to be launched in April 2020.</p> <p>Assurance: a review to take place at the end of the PDR process in September 2020 to evaluate and seek feedback on the new approach. A target of 90% of PDRs to have been completed by September 2020.</p>
24	The Service should improve staff awareness and understanding of promotion and selection process.	May 2020 (revised)	Craig Parkin	Human Resources	<p>The HMI reported that the Service should consider communications around the promotion process to promote transparency and understanding</p> <p>Action Progression to higher level operational roles is undertaken annually and the process applied is set out in the Progression Procedure. Further clarity needs to be provided to prospective candidates to ensure that they understand the process better and are clear about the selection criteria.</p>
					<p>January 2020 update: Action 1: the Progression Procedure has been revised and published and provides additional information about the way that the selection process works to ensure clarity around the process.</p> <p>Action 2: Candidate briefings will be undertaken prior to promotion processes. These were undertaken for the recent Station Manager</p>

					<p>process and are scheduled for the Crew and Watch Manager process which will take place in May. This allows prospective candidates to seek clarity and ask questions about the process.</p> <p>Action 3: Candidate packs will contain full information about the process and will be issued at the time that the selection process is advertised.</p> <p>Assurance: feedback sessions take place with all candidates after the process and they will be asked about their experience of the process; evaluation of the process to take a place on completion of each promotion process and lessons learned applied for the next process.</p>
25	The Service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.	April 2021 (revised)	Craig Parkin	Human Resources	<p>The HMI reported that the Service has limited processes to develop high-potential staff towards senior leadership roles. For instance, its aspiring leaders programme is aimed only at non-managers who want to become managers.</p> <p>Action The Service has a leadership development programme that is accessible to employees who have promoted into a higher role, or have shown potential in the promotion process to be promoted to a higher role. The Service operates an informal process for identifying and encouraging those with high potential for leadership roles, but does not currently have a high-potential scheme to pro-actively progress individuals through a talent management process from an early stage in their career.</p> <p>January 2020 update: Action 1: a review to be undertaken to identify options, benefits and dis-benefits of introducing a high-potential talent management scheme by SLT. A report has been drafted and will be considered in January 2020.</p> <p>Action 2: To develop a process by which individuals are identified and selected.</p>

					<p>Action 3: To develop a programme for high potential employees.</p> <p>Assurance: feedback from participants; success through the formal promotion selection process.</p>
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