

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 10TH JULY 2024
REPORT OF: HEAD OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
AUTHOR: GM AARON COLLIS

SUBJECT: HMICFRS 2023 INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

Purpose of Report

1. To update the board on progress towards the actions and areas for improvement (AFIs) identified in the Service's Action Plan following the 2023 HMICFRS inspection report.

Recommended: That

- [1] the evidence towards the action plan is noted and agreed for presentation to the Authority's Performance and Overview Committee.

Background

2. The current Action Plan from the 2023 HMICFRS inspection was agreed at the Performance and Overview Committee in November 2023. This is included as Appendix 1 and details the progress being made in resolving each of these AFIs.

Information

3. It is proposed that in Autumn 2024, Service Improvement will complete a more detailed audit of progress against the action plan using the HMICFRS judgment criteria. This will be completed by the Organisational Performance Manager, assisted by other colleagues who have undertaken HMICFRS's secondee inspector training. The outcomes of this audit will be presented to the board in Quarter 4.

Financial Implications

4. None.

Legal Implications

5. None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

6. None.

Environmental Implications

7. None.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – HMICFRS Action Plan

HMICFRS Round 3 Inspection Action Plan

	Area for Improvement	Owner	Status
	The service should make sure it gathers and records relevant and up-to-date risk information to help protect firefighters, the public and property during an emergency.	AM Tony O'Dwyer	Open
1.1	Actions Required	Progress and Evidence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the monthly SSRI performance report to ensure Station Managers have the necessary information to ensure completion of re-inspections with planned timescales. • Undertake a detailed review of Op/Plan/15 Site Specific Risk Information to ensure this document provides sufficient guidance and oversight for the risk information process. • Review how the risk footprint process is conducted to ensure consistency between sites in different areas. • Review the quality assurance framework. • Introducing a more robust quality assurance/peer review process. • Reviewing the risk scoring and reinspection programme (and consider returning to 1,3 and 5-year inspection frequencies). • Review how the service quality assures the contents of over the border risk information. 	<p>Service Delivery have implemented improved performance management processes which more effectively track and ensure re-inspections are completed on schedule. The Q4 performance report confirms that 98% of sites have been inspected on schedule in this performance year.</p> <p>Benchmarking of other FRSs, and their assessment by HMICFRS in this area, has indicated a significant disproportionality in the number of sites which we completed an SSRI for (this being much higher than comparative services). A more detailed assessment of our portfolio has identified further inconsistencies in the risk profile across different station and unitary areas. To address this the Organisational Intelligence Team is currently developing a new model which uses similar principles to the Risk Based Inspection Programme in order to provide a quantitative and consistent methodology of identifying sites which is not subject to local interpretation of risk. Once this is completed a comparison with the current site portfolio will take place.</p> <p>The training and assurance framework requires further review, particularly now that the SSRI Training Officer has left the Service. The ongoing review of the middle</p>	

		<p>management structure is best considering how we provide this capacity.</p> <p>Work is still required in conjunction with IT to review the structure and format of the SSRI records within FireCore with an intention to improve standardisation across the Service. This work will require ongoing development support from Police IT.</p>
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	Area for Improvement	Owner	Status
	The service should make sure it allocates enough resources to meet its prevention strategy.	AM Steve McCormick	Open
1.2	Actions	Progress and Evidence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Service Improvement Review of the Prevention department. • Implement the review outcomes and new structure within Prevention and recruit to all vacant posts. • Review our Safe & Well target for the 2024/25 year in accordance with changes to the structure and introduction of new data sources to improve the targeting methodology. 	<p>The Prevention department review is due for implementation in July 2024; this will provide the resourcing needed to meet our prevention strategy moving forward.</p> <p>Additionally in the 2023/24 performance year the service has exceeded its target of 25,000 Safe and Well visits, with 92% of these being within our definition of heightened risk addressed.</p>	

	Area for Improvement	Owner	Status
	The service should make sure it has an effective system for learning from operational incidents.	AM Tony O'Dwyer	Open
1.4	<p style="text-align: center;">Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the structure and allocation of roles within OPA to improve ownership of the operational learning which is currently spread across several different posts. • Review the SI and Policy documents associated with debriefing, specifically ensuring that the requirement criteria for a structured debrief remains suitable and proportionate. • Improve the methodology used to record, track and monitor improvements and actions identified through the Operational Learning Group. • Review the format, facilitation and methodology used to conduct structured debriefs. • Improve the way in which the outcomes of structured debriefs are communicated across the Service. • Ensure operational learning has a more strategic approach to governance and oversight. • Improve the involvement of North West Fire Control in operational debriefing. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress and Evidence</p> <p>Structured Debriefs and the Operational Learning Bulletin have continued to be shared with staff via PDR Pro.</p> <p>A review of the Operational Learning Group (OLG) process flow has been completed, considering national guidance and the need for operational learning to also influence a strategic level of organisational learning. This has resulted in proposals for the establishment of an organisational learning board to be chaired by the ACFO.</p> <p>An internal analysis by OPA and the SPOA debriefs have continued to highlight that Ops Debriefs are routinely not being completed at incidents where they are required by the policy.</p> <p>Consideration is currently being given to technical solutions/IT applications which could improve our recording and management of actions identified through debriefs and operational learning. Discussions with a number of providers are underway.</p>	

	Area for Improvement	Owner	Status
	The service should make sure it has an effective method for sharing multiple fire survival guidance information with multiple callers and that it has a dedicated communication link in place.	AM Tony O'Dwyer	Open
1.5	Actions	Progress and Evidence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource and implement an electronic solution to be used by North West Fire Control (NWFC) to communicate the location and status of callers in an immediate building evacuation scenario. Test and exercise the application of the electronic solution to provide assurance it can be used successfully. In conjunction with the Command Support Vehicle project consider which teams will specialise in the IBE process in the future to best support the resolution of incidents. 	<p>The Service's existing "Immediate Building Evacuation" procedure continues to be tested and exercised regularly by the specialist teams at Alsager and Congleton.</p> <p>Regular meetings with regional partners are ongoing to discuss a collaborative approach to resolving this AFI (which was issued to multiple services for the same issue).</p> <p>An electronic FSG template used by Merseyside FRS has been further refined by the services who use North West Fire Control. A final template is to be agreed imminently following the Mobilising Sub-Committee which took place on 25th April. The IT connection between NWFC and CFRS infrastructure, which is required to electronically communicate the fire survival guidance information, is now in place. The teams at Alsager and Congleton are receiving further training on this improved digital solution with an expected go-live date of Q3 2024.</p>	

	Area for Improvement	Owner	Status
	The service should assure itself it has adequate resources available for future industrial action.	AM Tony O'Dwyer	Open
2.1	Actions	Progress and Evidence	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider implementing the 'Operational Resilience Team' contracts which were proposed for internal staff earlier in 2023. Consider re-commencing recruitment of resilience Firefighters and implement a process to train and retain these staff on an ongoing basis. 	<p>No further progress has been made in implementing the resilience team contracts for internal staff owing to the Minimum Service Level (MSL) legislation being passed by parliament in February 2024.</p> <p>This legislation provides the power for the authority to require 73% of "business as usual" workforce to remain on duty in the event of industrial action as a means of maintaining critical services. The application of this legislation is currently being considered in detail and staff are working closely with Home Office colleagues to further develop our approach to its use.</p> <p>Once the MSL application is understood in more detail, the service is planning to run a major Crisis Management Team exercise later in 2024 which will simulate an extended period of industrial action.</p> <p>Further consideration still needs to be given to other ways of improving our resilience levels, should a change in UK political leadership later this year result in the legislation being repealed by a new government.</p>	