

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on Monday 17 July 2023

## His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Update

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### Executive Summary

This report provides an update on His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) activity.

Additionally, it provides information regarding Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS) planning arrangements, ongoing preparations for HMICFRS inspection, the inspection process, and the expected timeframe for Round 3 inspection.

### Recommendation(s)

Planning Committee are requested to note and endorse the update.

### Values and culture in fire and rescue services

On 30 March 2023 HMICFRS published a spotlight report, which focuses on the values and culture of all 44 fire and rescue services in England. Since the start of inspections in 2018, HMICFRS have reported that they have repeatedly found evidence of poor values, culture and behaviour, including bullying, harassment and discrimination in many services. This led to recommendation that the sector should have a code of ethics, which was introduced in 2021.

The spotlight report is the first time HMICFRS have looked in such depth at the cumulative issue of values and culture across all services. Their findings were based on evidence collected through fire and rescue service inspections since 2018. They particularly focused on issues that have been seen in more than half (at least 26) of services and are having a detrimental impact across the sector. These included:

- bullying, harassment, and discrimination;
- lack of fairness and diversity; and
- reporting and handling of concerns, including allegations of misconduct.

The report examined what is working well, what needs to change and the barriers to making improvements. HMICFRS found that while some services have made improvements since their first round of inspections in respect of values and culture, many need to do more.

The report contains 35 recommendations, which are aimed at chief fire officers, chief constables, and national bodies and a request to implement the relevant recommendations by the stated deadline(s). Fire and rescue authorities were also asked to note that fire and rescue services were required to update HMICFRS on how the recommendations are being actioned. LFRS has provided HMICFRS with an update

on the implementation of the recommendations, including a short self-assessment narrative per recommendation. HMICFRS will monitor these recommendations closely.

### **Positive Practice Portal**

The National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Positive Practice Portal launched on 10 May 2023. The Positive Practice Portal will share case studies and examples of positive practice captured by HMICFRS, enabling fire and rescue services to learn from each other and improve their services for the benefit of the public.

The Positive Practice Portal provides details about interventions, which have been developed to address a particular need, concern or organisational change and recognised by HMICFRS as innovative or promising practice. These practices cover areas such as organisational culture.

### **HMICFRS Spring Data Collection**

In accordance with timescales LFRS submitted the Spring Data Collection in June 2023.

### **Round 3 Overview**

In the next round of inspections, 'Round 3', HMICFRS will continue to inspect how effective and efficient Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) are at carrying out their principal functions of fire safety, firefighting, and responding to road traffic collisions and other emergencies, whilst taking a more in depth, robust, look at certain aspects.

As we updated in the previous report, HMICFRS have moved away from a tranche system to a more rolling approach. It is anticipated that this will ensure that publication of the reports is sooner after the inspection has concluded, which will enable FRSs to be able to react to feedback in a timelier way.

As previously reported, there are now five gradings with the new judgment of 'adequate'. Whilst it is not set in stone, indications suggest that where a service has an identified 'area for improvement', it has the potential to move a 'good' grade to 'adequate'.

Round 3 started in February 2023 and inspection activity is now underway for the first 12 services in the programme. Over a two-year period they will inspect all 44 FRSs in England, using a similar methodology to the Round 2 inspections.

Whilst it is still not certain, our planning assumptions remain that Lancashire will likely be inspected either late 2023 or early 2024 (the first 15 FRSs on the list have been given inspection dates up to September, and we are 28<sup>th</sup> on the list.) The running order may be subject to change, which could be due to reasons including changes in performance or risk. Services affected by this will be informed of any planned changes at the earliest opportunity.

The newly formed Organisational Assurance Team within the Service Improvement Department will track progress from our previous inspection, monitor national themes and prepare LFRS for our round 3 inspection. Area Manager Tom Powell (Head of Service Improvement) is LFRS Service Liaison Officer.

**Business risk**

The inspection will monitor LFRS's direction of travel since 2022, it could cause reputational damage if it is perceived that we have not made reasonable progress.

**Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

None

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

None

**Data Protection (GDPR)**

None

**HR implications**

None

**Financial implications**

None

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985****List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/a