

# Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22

## Effectiveness, efficiency and people

An inspection of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service



# Contents

About this inspection	1
Overview	2
Service in numbers	5
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>7</b>
<hr/>	
How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?	8
Summary	8
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	9
Preventing fires and other risks	11
Protecting the public through fire regulation	14
Responding to fires and other emergencies	17
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	19
<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>22</b>
<hr/>	
How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?	23
Summary	23
Making best use of resources	24
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	26
<b>People</b>	<b>28</b>
<hr/>	
How well does the service look after its people?	29

# About this inspection

---

This is our third inspection of fire and rescue services in England. We first inspected Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service in July 2018, publishing a report with our findings in December 2018 on the service's effectiveness and efficiency and how it looks after its people. Our second inspection, in autumn 2020, considered how the service was responding to the pandemic. This inspection considers for a second time the service's effectiveness, efficiency and people.

---

In this round of inspections of all 44 fire and rescue services in England, we answer three main questions:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

This report sets out our inspection findings for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

## What inspection judgments mean

Our categories of graded judgment are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Good is our expected graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant [national operational guidance](#) or standards.

If the service exceeds what we expect for good, we will judge it as outstanding.





## HM Inspector's summary

It was a pleasure to revisit Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, and I am grateful for the positive and constructive way that the service engaged with our inspection.

I congratulate Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service on its excellent performance in keeping people safe and secure from fires and other risks.

We were pleased to see that the service has made progress since our 2018 inspection.

These are the findings I consider most important from our assessments of the service over the past year.

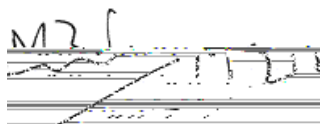
The service has improved consultation with the public and internal and external interested parties about its community risk management plan (also known as an [integrated risk management plan](#)).

The service has made some progress in making sure it allocates enough resources to its prioritised, risk-based inspection programme. However, it is too early to see how effective the programme will be. I look forward to seeing how this develops when the new team structure is fully in place.

Overall, the service has developed a good understanding of its future financial challenges. It has also identified savings and investment opportunities to improve its service to the public.

Since our last inspection, the service has developed a talent management process. Staff are starting to realise the benefits of this.

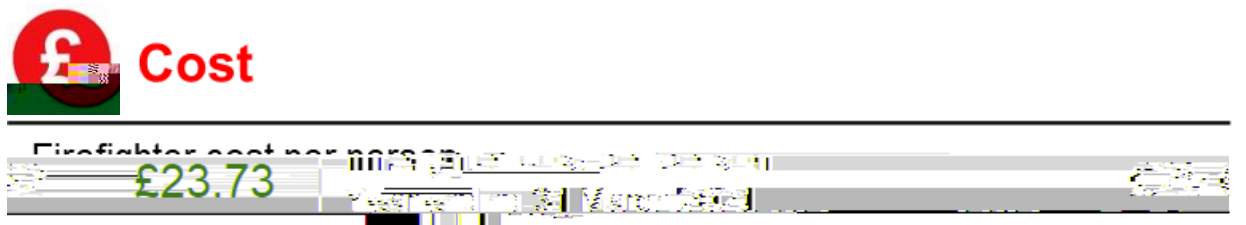
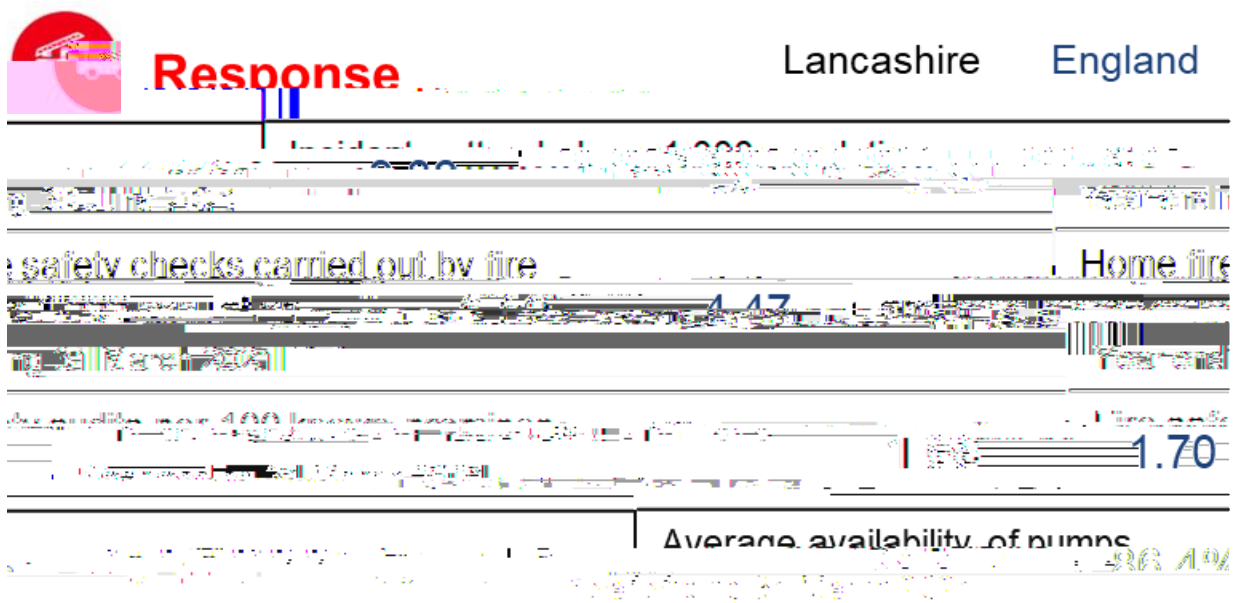
The service has made good progress in most areas since our last inspection. We look forward to seeing the results of further improvements at our next inspection.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Parr', is written over a set of horizontal lines. The signature is somewhat stylized and overlaps the lines.

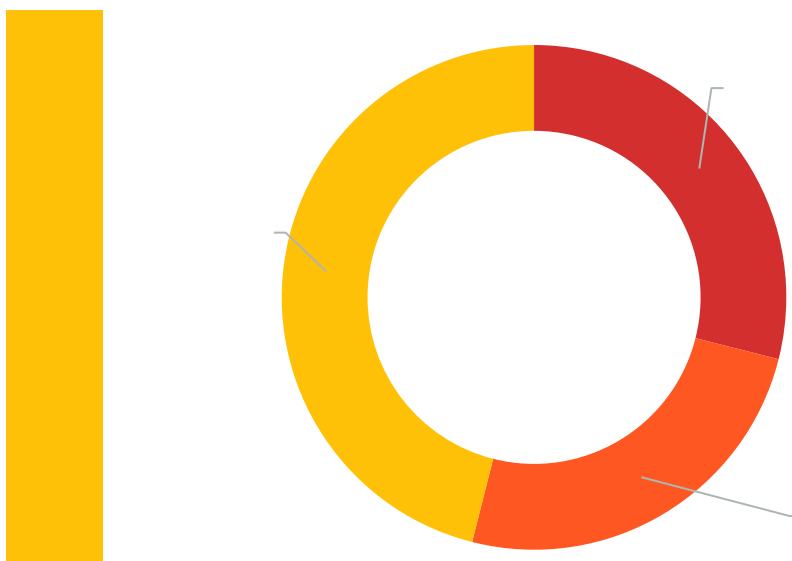
**Matt Parr**

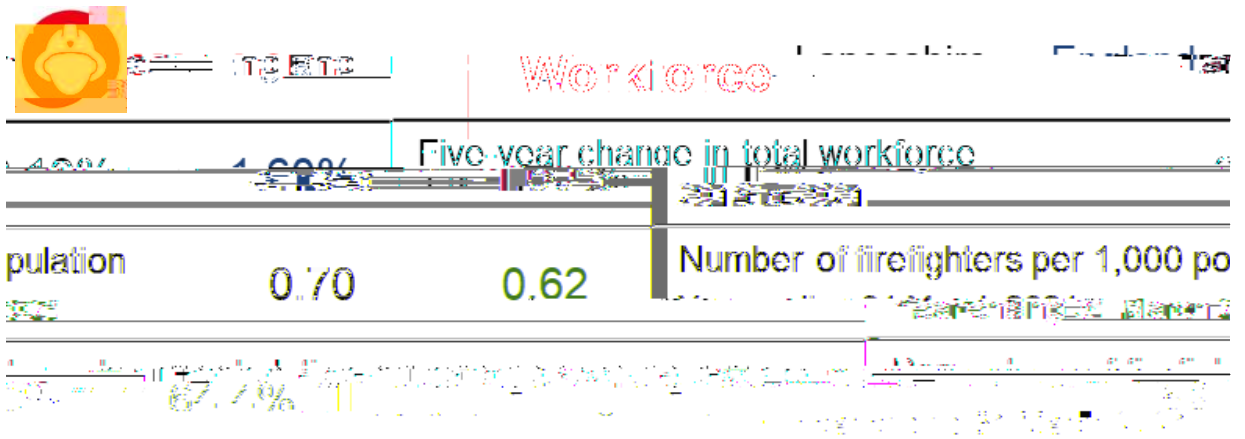
HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

# Service in numbers

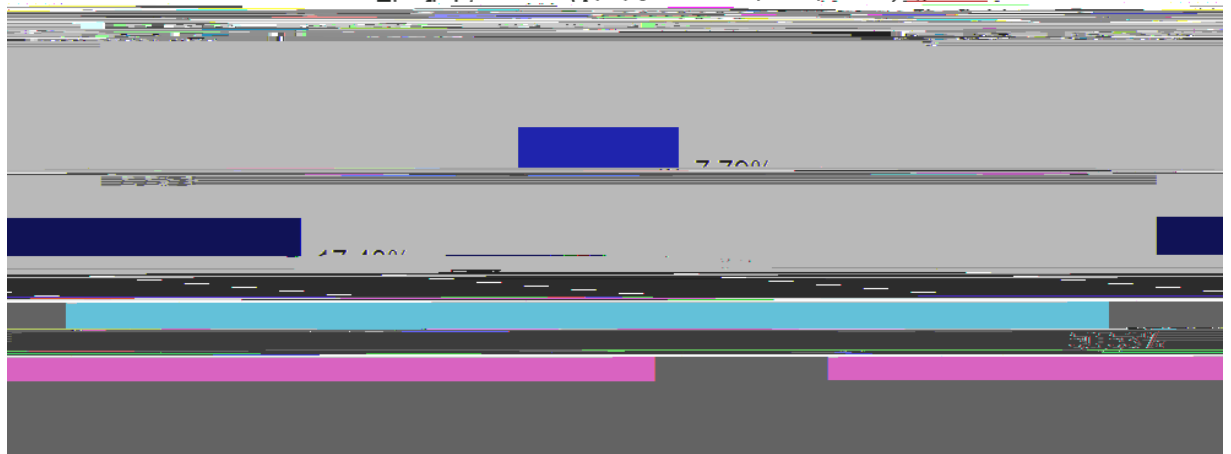


## Incidents attended in the year to 30 June 2021

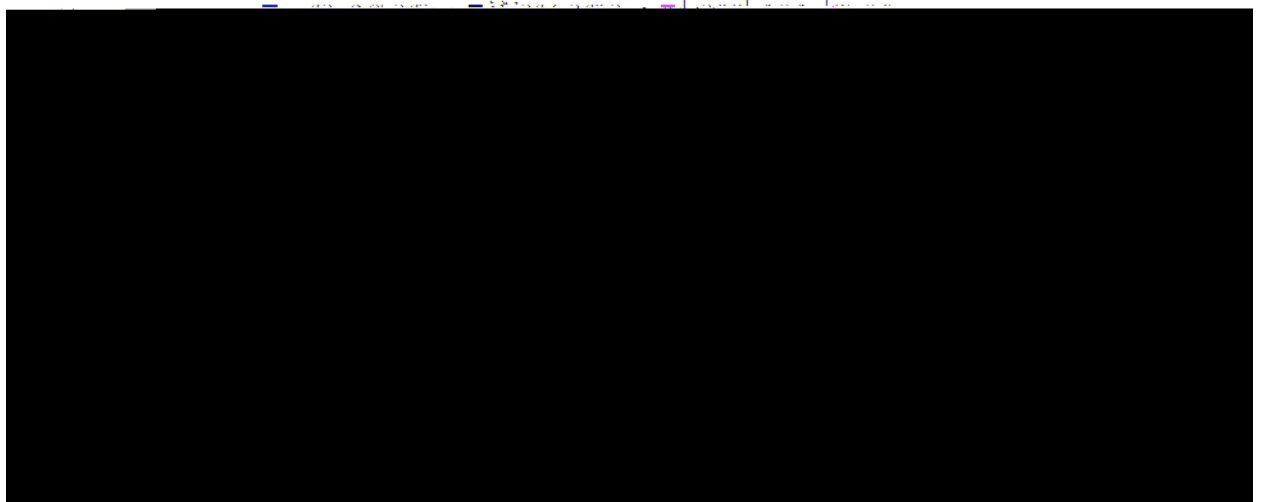




**Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are female as at 31 March 2021**



**Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are from ethnic minority backgrounds as at 31 March 2021**



For more information on data and analysis throughout this report, please view the [‘About the data’ section of our website](#).



# Effectiveness



# How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?



## Good

### Summary

---

An effective fire and rescue service will identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks its community faces. It should target its fire prevention and protection activities to those who are at greatest risk from fire and make sure fire safety legislation is being enforced. And when the public calls for help, it should respond promptly with the right skills and equipment to deal with the incident effectively. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

---

We are pleased with the progress that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service has made in effectiveness.

Since our first visit in 2018, the service has improved the way it consults internal and external interested parties and the public on its community risk management plan (CRMP), formerly known as an [integrated risk management plan](#).

We were pleased to find that the service had agreed a new unwanted fire signal policy with the [fire authority](#) since our last inspection, but at the time of this inspection it hadn't been implemented. We look forward to seeing the effect this has on false alarms.

The service has also made some progress in making sure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised, risk-based inspection programme. However, at the time of this inspection, it hadn't yet recruited staff for all of the roles, so it was too early to see how effective this structure will be.

## Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies

### **Good (2018: Good)**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is good at understanding risk.

Each fire and rescue service should identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks that could affect its communities. Arrangements should be put in place through the service's prevention, protection and response capabilities to prevent or mitigate these risks for the public.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance 402179307a731.43 file of ris

### **The service has worked with the local community to build a comprehensive profile of risk**

The service has assessed an appropriate range of risks and threats after a thorough integrated risk management planning process. When assessing risk, it has cotintdings below. T

Lancashire Fire Authority monitors the service's performance and progress. It measures these against the priorities outlined in the service's CRMP.

### **The service gathers, maintains and shares a good range of risk information**

The service routinely collects and updates the information it has about the people, places, and threats it has identified as being at greatest risk.

The service's processes and systems include:

- gathering information during familiarisation visits to high-risk premises;
- working with building owners to put measures in place to reduce fire risks;
- working with organisations and businesses to identify short-term risks in the county, for example at sporting events and festivals; and
- recording risk information about [vulnerable](#) members of the community, including hoarders, to support its response in the event of an incident.

This information is readily available for the service's prevention, protection and response staff, which helps it to identify, reduce and mitigate risk effectively. Staff can access the information in a range of ways, including through [mobile data terminals](#) on fire engines, by email, and through the online learning system.

Where appropriate, the service exchanges risk information with other fire and rescue services and organisations such as the police, healthcare providers and local authorities.

### **Feedback from operational activity informs the service's understanding of risk**

The service records and communicates risk information effectively. It also routinely updates risk assessments and uses feedback from local and national operational activity to inform its planning assumptions.

Since our last inspection, the service has created a new [hot debrief](#) app that can be used on tablets. This has increased the number of debriefs being completed. It has also improved operational learning. The service uses its debriefing process to identify learning that may contribute to [national operational learning](#). For example, it worked with a local housing authority to understand the risks of composite fence panels and how a fire could spread from them. This information was then shared nationally.

### **The service has responded positively to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry**

During this round of inspections, we sampled how each fire and rescue service has responded to the recommendations and learning from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service has responded positively and proactively to learning from this tragedy. At the time of this inspections, the service was on track to assess the risk of each high-rise building in its service area by the end of 2021.

It has carried out a fire safety audit and collected and passed relevant risk information to its prevention, protection and response teams about buildings identified as high risk



**The service has adapted its prevention approach because of the pandemic**

We considered









undertook one prosecution.

It completed 16 prosecutions in the past 5 years, from 2016/17 to 2020/21.

### **The service has recently increased its protection resources**

Our 2018 inspection included an area for improvement for the service to make sure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised risk-based inspection programme. The service has made some progress on this. It has reviewed its structure within the protection team but, although there has been a recent increase in protection staff and funding, it is too early to see how effective this will be. At the time of this inspection, the protection department restructure had yet to be completed. As a result, this is still an area of improvement for the service.

In 2020/21 the service was still responding to a large percentage of false alarms. The service has now agreed a policy that will be in place from April 2022. The new policy should mean greater consistency with its neighbouring fire services in responding to false alarms.

## **Responding to fires and other emergencies**

### **Good (2018: Good)**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies.

Fire and rescue services must be able to respond to a range of incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies in their area.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

### **The service links its response resources to identified risks**

The service has reviewed its response plan. The plan is linked to the risks identified in its new CRMP. Its fire engines and response staff, as well as its working patterns, are designed and located to help the service to respond flexibly to fires and other emergencies with the appropriate resources. The service is about to complete an emergency fire cover review, which may3 (r)159 Tdbr r





We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

### **The service is prepared for major and multi-agency incidents**

The service has effectively anticipated and considered the reasonably foreseeable risks and threats it may face. These risks are listed in both local and national risk registers as part of its integrated risk management planning. For example, it has made plans to deal with large-scale flooding and wildfire incidents.

It is also familiar with the significant risks that could be faced by neighbouring fire and rescue services that it might reasonably be asked to respond to in an emergency. The North West Fire Regional Working Group collaborates to share information and prepare exercises. For example, exercises have been planned for marauding terrorist attacks (MTAs) and high-rise incidents in Greater Manchester.

Firefighters have access to risk information from neighbouring services. And operational staff have access to risk information for areas up to 10 kilometres into neighbouring FRSs.

### **The service has conducted limited multi-agency exercises**

The pandemic has affected the number of multi-agency exercises the service has been involved in. But even with the pandemic taken into consideration, the service has completed fewer exercises than the national average.

### **The service can effectively respond to major and multi-agency incidents**

We reviewed the arrangements the service had in place to respond to different major incidents, including MTAs.

The service has good arrangements, which are well understood by staff. For example, fire control staff are familiar with what to do when a major incident is declared. They also know how to request [national resilience assets](#). In the event of a major incident, a tactical advisor will be assigned to support fire control and to liaise between fire control and the scene of the incident.

The incident commanders we spoke to were confident in their ability to manage multi-agency incidents and work with other emergency organisations.

### **The service works well with other fire services**

The service supports other fire and rescue services responding to emergency incidents. For example, it has a drone that was used to help at an incident at Heathrow Airport. It is intraoperable with these services and can form part of a multi-agency response.

The service has successfully deployed to other services and has used national assets such as the service's [urban search and rescue](#) team, which supported Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service to rescue someone stuck at height on an industrial chimney. Learning from this incident included working with helicopters and extended reach capabilities.

## **Cross-border exercising takes place**

The service has a cross-border exercise plan with neighbouring fire and rescue services so that they can work together effectively to keep the public safe.

These exercises are generally organised either by staff at fire stations located near the county's border or by the regional training working group. But completion of this plan has been affected by the pandemic.

The plan includes the risks of major events at which the service could foreseeably give support or request assistance from neighbouring services. We were encouraged to see that feedback from these exercises was used to inform risk information and service plans.

## **Incident commanders have a good understanding of JESIP**

The incident commanders we interviewed had been trained in, and were familiar with, JESIP. Commanders were familiar with, and had access to, aids to explain the joint decision-making model. JESIP training also forms part of the commanders' twice-yearly command assessment.

## **The service works well with other organisations**

The service has good arrangements in place to respond to emergencies with other partner organisations that make up the LRF. These arrangements include working with other organisations to prepare multi-agency response plans for high-risk sites.

The service is a valued partner and is represented in the LRF's strategic and tactical co-ordinating groups and sub-groups. Its response to the pandemic has strengthened its relationship and reputation within the LRF. During the initial stages of the pandemic, the service co-ordinated PPE, and it has vaccinated more people than any other fire and rescue service.

## **The service keeps up to date with national learning**

The service keeps itself up to date with national operational learning updates from other fire services and joint operational learning from other blue light partners, such as the police service and ambulance trusts. This learning is used to inform planning assumptions that have been made with other organisations.

The service's commitment to national operational learning is further shown by its chief fire officer's role as one of the vice-chairs of the [National Fire Chiefs Council \(NFCC\)](#). Other Lancashire fire officers also lead on NFCC programmes of work, such as road safety, and working patterns.





# How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?



## Good

### Summary

---

An efficient fire and rescue service will manage its budget and use its resources properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to the risks and priorities identified in its [integrated risk management plan](#). It should try to achieve value for money and keep costs down without compromising public safety. It should make the best possible use of its resources to achieve better results for the public. Plans should be based on robust and realistic assumptions about income and costs. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

---

Since our last inspection, the service has focused on increasing the number of staff in its most important areas of work, to improve performance. It has also introduced more efficient ways of working.

The service has arrangements for managing performance and productivity. It has clear performance indicators and targets that link to the CRMP. These show how it is making the best use of its resources and achieving its priorities.

The service is doing more work with other emergency services and aims to save money through this approach. Since our last inspection, its oversight of this collaborative work has improved, but it needs to make sure it evaluates how effective and efficient it is.

The service has created a new digitalisation team, with the aim of improving efficiency and increasing its use of data to inform decisions. The team will also help it to comply with national requirements such as General Data Protection Regulation.

Although the service had continuity plans in place, our inspection highlighted that they needed reviewing, and that regular testing wasn't being carried out. The service was aware of this, and was in the process of increasing resources in this area.

## Making best use of resources



### Good (2018: Good)

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making best use of its resources.

Fire and rescue services should manage their resources properly and appropriately, aligning them with the services' risks and statutory responsibilities. Services should make best possible use of resources to achieve the best results for the public.

The service reported its budget for 2021/22 as £58.5m, a 2 percent increase from the previous financial year.

#### Areas for improvement

The service should make sure there is a testing programme for its business continuity plans, particularly in high-risk areas of service.

The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

### The service has enough resources to achieve the objectives in its CRMP

The service's financial and workforce plans, including allocating staff to prevention, protection and response, reflect and are consistent with the risks and priorities identified in the CRMP. The service has allocated more resources to its protection department and, at the time of inspection, had started a review of its emergency cover, including its fire stations, fire engines and duty systems.

Plans are built on sound scenarios. They help make sure the service is lasting and are underpinned by financial controls that reduce the risk of misusing public money. The executive board and the [fire authority](#) have oversight of the service's budget, to make sure public money is being used appropriately.

### The service is improving productivity and ways of working

We are pleased to see that the service's arrangements for managing performance clearly link resource use to the CRMP and the service's most important and long-term aims. The CRMP is supported by an annual plan. The plan has several important performance measures, which are monitored quarterly through management meetings. Station and department plans align to the new CRMP, and most staff were aware of their station or department's recent performance figures.

The service is taking steps to make sure the workforce's time is as productive as possible. This includes implementing new ways of working. For example, the service uses an app that monitors availability of firefighters and fire engines in



## Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future



### **Good (2018: Good)**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making the service affordable now and in the future.

Fire and rescue services should continuously look for ways to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. This includes transforming how they work and improving their value for money. Services should have robust spending plans that reflect future financial challenges and efficiency opportunities, and they should invest in better services for the public.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

### **The service understands its future financial challenges**

The service has a sound understanding of future financial challenges. It plans to mitigate its significant financial risks. The underpinning assumptions are relatively robust, realistic and prudent, and take account of the wider external environment and some scenario planning for future spending reductions. The service plans for the possible future effect of changes in areas such as government funding, business rates, pension costs and pay, which could lead to less money being available.

Although the service has a good track record of generating savings, at the time of inspection it had limited plans showing how the service would make savings or generate further income in the future.

### **The service has a clear plan for its reserves**

The service has a sensible and long-term plan for using its [reserves](#). It plans to use them to cover shortfalls in the revenue budget and to fund the purchase of large assets such as an all-terrain vehicle and a Stinger fire engine.

### **Fleet and estates plans aren't yet aligned to the new CRMP**

The service's estate and fleet plans haven't been reviewed since the new CRMP was approved. However, the service does have plans to review them alongside the results of the emergency fire cover review, to make sure the review's recommendations are implemented.

The service has recently upgraded its training centre. This links to its CRMP and to its objective of supporting staff by prioritising their training and development so that they can fulfil their roles.

### **The service invests in technology to support change and improve efficiency**

The service actively considers how changes in technology and future innovation may affect risk. The service has developed several apps that are available to firefighters on their tablets. These apps have improved the efficiency and productivity of fire crews.

The service has also created a new digital team, which seeks to use new technology on mobile devices to further increase efficiency and to increase its use of data to inform decisions. For example, it has introduced a new performance management dashboard.

Since the pandemic, the service has been using technology to support staff to work at the most appropriate location, whether that is at home or at the fire service.

### **The service takes advantage of opportunities to secure external funding**

The service actively considers opportunities for generating extra income. Where appropriate, it has secured external funding to invest in improvements to the service provided to the public. For example, the service has secured government funding linked to the response to the Grenfell Tower fire. It used this funding to support the protection department and to purchase equipment such as smoke hoods and thermal imaging cameras. It has used funding to recover costs for items such as protective equipment, staff costs and IT equipment that arose during the pandemic.

# People

# How well does the service look after its people?

## Good

### Summary

---

A well-led and well-governed service that is supported, professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. The service's leaders







Overall, the service has seen a small increase in short-term staff absences over the 12 months between 2019/20 and 2020/21 (1.64 days lost per [wholetime](#) worker compared 1.17 days). However, long-term absence fell significantly during the same period.

service's policies. We reviewed competency records that showed that most staff were up to date with their main skills.

### **The service supports staff with learning and development**

A culture of continuous improvements is promoted throughout the service and staff are encouraged to learn and develop. For example, the service has invested in breathing apparatus training and facilities at the training centre.

Most staff told us that they could access a range of learning and development resources. Overall, 84 percent of staff (207 of 246) who responded to our survey said they were satisfied with the level of learning and development that was available. This allows them to do their job effectively. A lot of the learning is provided online. Staff can cover topics such as [safeguarding](#), and equality and diversity.

## **Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity**

### **Good (2018: Good)**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is good at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Creating a more representative workforce will provide huge benefits for fire and rescue services. This includes greater access to talent and different ways of thinking, and improved understanding of and engagement with their local communities. Each service should make sure equality, diversity and inclusion are firmly understood and demonstrated throughout the organisation. This includes successfully taking steps to remove inequality and making progress to improve fairness, diversity and inclusion at all levels of the service. It should proactively seek and respond to feedback from staff and make sure any action taken is meaningful.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

### **The service works with staff on matters that affect them**

The service has developed several ways to engage with staff on issues and decisions that affect them. This includes methods to build all-staff awareness of fairness and diversity, as well as targeted engagement to identify matters that affect different staff groups. The service sends out routine bulletins and publishes news on the intranet, as well as running a programme of in-person visits and virtual dial-ins.

The service has various staff networks in place, including:

- the LGBTQ+ group;
- the race and religion group;
- the women and families group;

Representative bodies and staff associations reported that the service engaged with them well and meaningfully.

The service carries out its own staff survey twice a year, and questions staff on several topics to canvas their views, for example gathering feedback after some sessions on wellbeing were held for all staff. During this inspection, staff told us they were happy with the ways they could give feedback. Many referred to the virtual 'shout out' noticeboard where they could post questions that were then discussed and answered.

### **The service is good at tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination**

Staff have a good understanding of what bullying, harassment and discrimination are, and their negative effect on colleagues and the organisation.

In this inspection, 8 percent of respondents (19 out of 246) told us they had been subject to harassment and 13 percent (32 out of 246) to discrimination over the past 12 months.

Most staff survey respondents are confident in the service's approach to tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination, grievances and disciplinary matters. The service's bullying and harassment procedure was developed in consultation with the representative bodies, staff networks and the equality steering group. The equality and inclusion policy also explains different types of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying, and gives examples of these behaviours.

Investigations and disciplinaries are dealt with by managers who have been trained in grievance procedures. They are supported by the human resources department. The numbers of disciplinaries and grievances are reported regularly to senior managers, who review them.

### **The service acts positively to improve diversity within recruitment**

There is an open, fair and honest recruitment process for staff or those wishing to work for the fire and rescue service. Recruitment opportunities are advertised both internally and externally, which has encouraged applicants from diverse backgrounds, including into middle and senior management roles.

The service has put considerable effort into developing its recruitment processes so that they are fair and understood by potential applicants. It runs several positive action events, such as 'have a go' day, as well as social media campaigns. It also works face to face with representatives from the community.

The service is working to remove the risk of disproportionality in recruitment processes. For example, it is providing

11 percent of applicants identified as LGBTQ+.

The service has made some improvements in increasing staff diversity at all levels of the organisation. In 2020/21, of the whole workforce 3.4 percent are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is similar to the levels of 5 years ago. However, 17.5 percent are women, which is a 4.1 percentage point improvement on 5 years ago.

### **The service has a good approach to equality, diversity and inclusion**

The service has a good approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, and is making sure it can offer the right services to its communities and support staff with protected characteristics. The service's chief fire officer is chair of the equality and inclusion steering group, which is supported by the staff networks. The networks promote activity in the service, raise awareness, and support staff and the service to test new ideas and activities.

The service identifies diversity and inclusion as a priority in its CRMP. It trains all staff on equality, diversity and inclusion.

Although the service has a process in place to assess equality impact through equality impact assessments (EQIA), the effect on each protected characteristic isn't properly assessed or acted on. We found that not all EQIAs were completed and that the process lacks quality assurance. The service is aware of this. In 2021, it trained managers on EQIAs.

## **Managing performance and developing leaders**

Each staff member has individual goals and objectives, and regular assessments of performance. Staff feel confident in the performance and development arrangements that are in place.

July 2022 | © HMICFRS 2022

[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs)