



The report from the latest inspection of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) was released on 27 July 2022.

The Inspection is broken-down into three pillars: Effectiveness (50%), Efficiency (25%) and People (25%). In total across the 11 areas which make up the three pillars of the inspection, NFRS was graded as good in 8 of them, with 3 requiring improvement. NFRS have been awarded 'Good' ratings for performance in Effectiveness and Efficiency. The Service has been rated as 'requires improvement' in the People pillar.

You can find our report plus the other services from tranche 2 of inspections here <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/publications/>

The latest report from the HMI specifies that the service has made significant progress since our last inspection within the pillar of Effectiveness – that's how we respond to risk, prevent fires, and protect the public through regulation. In this category, the inspectorate moved our grading from 'requires improvement' to 'Good'. The inspectorate also moved our grading from 'requires improvement' to 'Good' under the pillar of Efficiency, how we use our resources and make financial plans.

In the People pillar which looks at values and culture, the inspectorate specified that the Service still 'requires improvement' in this area, and have issued NFRS with one Cause of Concern, detailed as follows:

### **Cause of concern**

The service hasn't made enough progress since the last inspection to improve Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI).

### **Recommendations**

By 31 August 2022, the service should develop an action plan to:

- engage with its staff to develop clear EDI objectives and training to increase awareness of EDI and its importance across the organisation, including understanding and addressing the impact positive action is having on staff;
- make sure it has robust processes in place to undertake equality impact assessments and review any actions agreed as a result;
- make improvements to the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographic and needs; and
- support staff and managers to confidently challenge and manage inappropriate behaviour

**Below we detail our action plan to specifically address this cause of concern – it should be noted that this is part of a wider comprehensive EDI action plan the Service has in place in response to the feedback received from HMICFRS which includes a complete review of our Culture and People Strategy.**

## Cause Of Concern CoC) action plan:

Ref:	HMICFRS CoC Requirement	Deliverables	Due date
HMI 03.3.1	Engage with its staff to develop clear EDI objectives and training to increase awareness of EDI and its importance across the organisation, including understanding and addressing the impact positive action is having on staff.	Carry out a staff EDI survey and Training Needs Analysis (TNA) (conducted by independent third-party) to gather awareness of the current understanding of EDI throughout the organisation and the awareness and views of positive action to identify and agree EDI objectives.	August 2022
		To engage and contract a third-party EDI provider to deliver face-to-face training to all staff on areas recommended within the EDI Survey and Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and HMICFRS Cause of concern.	December 2022
		To have coordinated the delivery of face-to-face training to all staff on areas recommended within the EDI Survey, Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and HMICFRS Cause of concern.	January 2024
		Recruit and embed a network of 'allies' from across all staff areas to instigate a series of Staff engagement sessions to assist the organisation in developing its awareness of EDI and cultural issues, the impact positive action is having on staff and to support staff and managers.	April 2023
		Recruit and prepare a specialist EDI recruitment team from station-based staff to deliver Firefighter Positive action recruitment activity.	November 2022
		Develop and implement a revised communications plan to increase service wide understanding of positive action and Firefighter entry standards, ensuring this information is accessible on the internal and external website to prevent misunderstanding that we are lowering entry standards	January 2023

Ref:	Details	Deliverables	Due date
HMI 03.3.2	Make sure it has robust processes in place to undertake equality impact assessments and review any actions agreed as a result.	Review the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) process within policy A1 and develop a new process for completion and monitoring based on National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) best practice.	October 2022
		Ensure all Policy owners/writers have attended EQIA training and ensure a programme of training for future policy owners/writers is in place.	February 2023
		All Department leads to review EQIAs related to their own policies and adjust policies in line with any requirements of the new EQIA.	December 2023
Ref:	Details	Deliverables	Due date
HMI 03.3.3	Make improvements to the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographic and needs.	Launch the 'safe to say' programme encouraging individuals to input their own equality data on our current HR system in a safe and uncompromising environment.	January 2023
		To embed a process to monitor the Self-Service portal to ensure all personnel have provided the required details and follow up with line managers where this is not the case. Provide a Quarterly update of completion to the Establishment board.	January 2023
		Implementation of a new HR system to ensure a more accurate capture of personal details and improve reporting on Protected Characteristics	July 2023
		To review recruitment and new starter packs to ensure they include the 'safe to say' message and all new starters complete personal details in Self Service portal as part of recruitment/induction process	January 2023

Ref:	Details	Deliverables	Due date
HMI 03.3.4	Support staff and managers to confidently challenge inappropriate behaviour	Recruit a network of 'allies' from all staff areas to begin a series of Staff engagement sessions to assist the organisation in developing its awareness of EDI and cultural issues and to support staff and managers.	August 2023
		Implement a process for registering all low-level staffing complaints, disciplines, and grievances. The process to include a tracking system and HR / admin support to ensure compliance with policy.	April 2023
		To provide an improved system of support for managers to deal consistently with Workforce concerns in a timely manner and to secure confidence in the process.	August 2023
		Develop and embed an EDI comms plan to include regular published comms around appropriate workplace language and the impacts on those who suffer from inappropriate language within the organisation. This action to include informing all staff of their responsibilities within the code of conduct and related HR/disciplinary policies.	March 2023
		Develop and introduce a quarterly lessons learnt document, publishing anonymised inappropriate behaviour dealt with by the organisation to educate staff and also build confidence that the service is tackling the behaviour appropriately.	May 2023
		Introduce an advice-line with supporting structure to assist and advise staff in challenging/dealing with inappropriate behaviour.	April 2023
		Review and introduce a new structure and communication plan for the Whistle-blower/confidential reporting policy and process to achieve greater staff awareness of this safe space.	January 2023