



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

Item 22/10

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	9 February 2022
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	State of Fire and Rescue 2021
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For consideration and to note
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This paper provides an overview of the key findings from the annual assessment of fire and rescue services in England, which is the third of such reports from Sir Thomas Winsor, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services.
RISK ASSESSMENT	Failure to learn from the findings may lead to adverse impacts on the Service and the Authority's high reputational standing.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	None for the purposes of this report
RECOMMENDATIONS	Members are asked to: 1. Note the State of Fire and Rescue 2021 report.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	State of Fire and Rescue 2021. The annual assessment of fire and rescue services in England.

	<p>Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) 2022.</p> <p><a href="https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/state-of-fire-and-rescue-2021-single-page-format.pdf">https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/state-of-fire-and-rescue-2021-single-page-format.pdf</a></p>
APPENDICES	None for the purposes of this report
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Sir Thomas Winsor, Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services for England, has published the third of his annual reports to the Secretary of State under section 28B of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
- 1.2 The State of Fire and Rescue 2021 provides an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of fire and rescue services in England and is based on the inspections carried out between February and August 2021.
- 1.3 Due to the onset of the COVID-19, there was a delay in commencing the second round of inspections, which was originally due to commence in March 2020. Therefore, the State of Fire and Rescue 2021 is informed by the findings from the Tranche 1 inspections, where 13 fire and rescue services were inspected through virtual arrangements.
- 1.4 Within the report, Sir Thomas has taken the opportunity to reflect on the overall progress made within the sector since July 2017, when the inspectorate's remit was extended to include inspections of England's fire and rescue services.
- 1.5 The second round of inspections of all 44 fire and rescue services will continue into 2022, where the remaining services will be inspected. Full findings from these inspections will be available in the State of Fire and Rescue 2022 report, due towards the end of the year.

## 2. Inspection methodology

- 2.1 The second-round inspections have been designed to follow, substantially, the same approach as the first round. This is to assess the improvements services are making in respect of the three pillars of inspection, namely:
  - How **effective** is the service in keeping people safe from fire and other risks?
  - How **efficient** is the service at keeping people safe from fire and other risks?
  - How well does the service look after its **people**?
- 2.2 Each pillar is supported by a number of supporting diagnostic key lines of enquiry.
- 2.3 Following their inspection each fire and rescue service receives a graded judgement for each of these pillars and the supporting diagnostic questions. These judgements may range between outstanding; good; requires improvement and inadequate.

### **3. Highlights arising from the State of Fire and Rescue 2021 report**

- 3.1 Sir Thomas commends the hard work of fire service personnel in supporting their communities, particularly during the COVID-19. He highlights how the sector is well prepared when responding to both routine and major incidents.
- 3.2 The report advises that a focus on fire protection has been intensified alongside the national response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (Phase 1). With many fire and rescue services doing more to prioritise this area, which was criticised heavily during the first round of inspections.
- 3.3 However, he criticised services who are not taking enough action within prevention, despite the inspectorate highlighting a range of improvement areas within their first round of inspections.
- 3.4 Most services inspected were seen to be promoting positive cultures, with staff wellbeing, health and safety being prioritised; but he raises the lack of representation of both women and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds as an obstacle for modernisation.
- 3.5 The Chief Inspector made six recommendations for national reform of the sector within his first State of Fire and Rescue report in 2019, namely:
  - i. The Home Office should determine the role of fire and rescue services, to remove any ambiguity.
  - ii. The sector should remove any unjustifiable variation, including in how they define risk.
  - iii. The sector should review, and reform how effectively pay, and conditions are determined.
  - iv. The Home Office should invest chief fire officers with operational independence, whether through primary legislation or in some other manner.
  - v. There should be a code of ethics.
  - vi. The Home Office should ensure that the sector has sufficient capacity and capability to bring about change.
- 3.6 These were re-emphasised with revised completion dates in the 2020 report, due to the impacts of the COVID-19.
- 3.7 In the 2021 report Sir Thomas notes that no additional national recommendations will be set, citing the importance of the sector to act on the initial six recommendations, which were focused on fundamental reform.

- 3.8 He confirms that although two recommendations have been delivered, four are still to be implemented. These include giving chief fire officers operational independence, establishing a programme that will improve consistency in relation to risk and response standards, reviewing the machinery determining terms and conditions and the Home Office determining the role of the fire and rescue service and firefighters.

Sir Thomas acknowledges that some encouraging progress has been made across the fire and rescue sector, however, highlights that more change is required.

#### **4. Service Inspection**

- 4.1 As Members will be aware the Service had its first inspection in Autumn 2018.
- 4.2 Pleasingly the Service was graded as 'Good' against all three pillars: making it one of the higher performing fire and rescue services in England.
- 4.3 Since this time the Service has aligned its planning, performance reporting and assurance arrangements to the HMICFRS methodology, making inspection part of business as usual.
- 4.4 Furthermore, as reported to the Authority in December 2021, continuous improvement has been undertaken to strengthen the recommended improvement areas highlighted within the first report.
- 4.5 The Service's second inspection is due to commence 28 February 2022, this will include providing documents and data, reality testing, specific staff and partner interviews and focus group sessions.
- 4.6 Following this, it is anticipated that the Service's inspection report will be published towards the end of 2022.

#### **5. Summary and key points**

- 5.1 Sir Thomas Winsor, Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services for England, has published his third annual State of Fire and Rescue report to the Secretary of State under section 28B of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
- 5.2 Due to the COVID-19 the second round of inspections was delayed, therefore the State of Fire and Rescue 2021 has been informed by the findings from the 13 services inspected as part of Tranche 1 inspections.
- 5.3 Sir Thomas commends the sector for its community support, particularly through the pandemic, but highlights that, whilst improvement has been made, further reform is still required.