

HMICFRS Areas For Improvement Progress Report

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Executive Summary

This report details the Service's progress towards improvement identified by the HMICFRS Areas For Improvement progress.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report

3 Background

Following the June 2024 inspection the HMICFRS the service was graded in 11 areas and identified 30 Areas for Improvement (AFI).

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	Preventing fires and other risks	Protecting the public through fire regulation	Making best use of resources
		Responding to fires and other emergencies	Making the FRS affordable now and in the future	
		Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	Promoting the right values and culture	
			Getting the right people with the right skills	
			Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	
			Managing performance and developing leaders	

Service improvement is monitoring the progress of all 30 of His Majesty's Inspectorate Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) AFIs within the action plan.

This report presents the Service's progress towards HMICFRS Areas For Improvement action plan towards, as recorded within the AFI Planner and (Risks Assumptions Issues Dependencies and Opportunities) RAIDO log.

Link to the [HMICFRS 2024 Report](#)

4 HMICFRS Areas for Improvement (AFI) - Monitoring November 2025

HMICFRS Inspection Outcomes and Progress

Effectiveness (How effective is the Service at keeping people safe and secure)

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	Preventing fires and other emergencies	Protecting the public through fire regulation	Responding to fires and other emergencies	Responding to national risks
Good	Adequate	Requires Improvement	Adequate	Adequate

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
Preventing fires and other emergencies								
AFI 1	Evaluate Prevention	The service should evaluate its prevention activity, so it understands what is most effective.	AM Service Delivery		36%	9/25	30/04/2026	SMT approved Civica app nearing completion; testing, training, and rollout planned with dashboards. Workforce planning risk full evaluation and timely delivery.
AFI 2	Quality Assure Safe and Well visits	The service should make sure it quality assures its prevention activity, so staff carry out safe and well visits to an appropriate standard.	AM Service Delivery		14%	3/22	30/09/2026	(Quality Assurance) QA Process for (Home Fire safety Visit) established; training starts after Civica app launch. Limited staff capacity will reduce visits to accommodate QA activity, challenging implementation.
Protecting the public through fire regulation								
AFI 3	Monitor Enforcement	The service should regularly monitor and check compliance with prohibition and enforcement notices that have been served	AM Service Delivery		89%	8/9	30/06/2025	Civica testing has successfully enabled enhanced reporting and identification of new performance indicators. Current leadership vacancies and limited backfilling present resilience challenges, causing this AFI to be overdue.
AFI 4	Unwanted Fire Signals	The service should make sure it effectively addresses the burden of false alarms.	AM Service Delivery		55%	16/29	31/03/2026	The revised process has significantly reduced UWFS. Operational Risk and P&P jointly oversee delivery; increased P&P capacity is essential. Remaining AFI actions transferred to Ops for reassessment.

AFI 5	Quality Assure Protection Audits	The service should make sure it has an effective quality assurance process, so staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.	AM Service Delivery		41%	9/22	31/07/2025	QA processes are fully defined and progressing toward integration. Interim backfills mitigate skill gaps; however, capacity constraints persist, posing risks to audit scheduling and overall QA delivery.
Responding to fires and other emergencies								
AFI 6	Operational Incident Learning	The service should make sure it has an effective system for learning from operational incidents.	AM Operations and		0%	0/11	30/06/2026	Assurance mapping system has been created, this AFI will form part of the pilot to ensure that all three lines of defence are recorded against. Will commence in June with the start of the new role within the ops team
Responding to fires and other emergencies								
AFI 7	Fire Survival Guidance	The service should make sure its method of sharing fire survival guidance information with multiple callers is understood by staff and is well tested.	AM Operations and		17%	1/6	28/11/2026	Mandatory Unblur and FSG training is being developed for all relevant staff. Policy work underway to ensure fire control participation in training and debrief exercises."
AFI 8	Marauding Terrorist Attack	The service should make sure it is well prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to a terrorist incident, and its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.	AM Operations and Risk		0%	0/3	18/06/2026	Progress on multi-agency MTA preparedness through national exercises. Resilience framework adopted. Next steps focus on assurance, embedding learning, and aligning plans with forthcoming LRF guidance.

Efficiency (How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure)

Making best use of resources	Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future
Inadequate	Requires Improvement

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
Making best use of resources								
AFI 9	Reduce non pay costs	The service should make sure that it is taking steps to reduce non-pay costs and can show how it is achieving value for money.	Head of Finance		0%	0/2	Not started	This workstream has been divided into two tasks focused on non-pay costs to ensure value for money. Ownership has transitioned to from Resources Finance, and milestones will be reviewed with a revised completion date set in the next reporting period.
AFI 10	Business Continuity	The service should make sure it has appropriate business continuity arrangements in place, regularly review the arrangements and test them to make sure they take account of all foreseeable threats and risks	AM Operations and Risk		0%	0/11	31/12/2025	Action plan has been redesigned August 2025 following preparatory work by GM Ops
AFI 11	Evaluation of Collaboration	The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.	AM Transformation and Collaboration		40%	8/20	31/03/2027	Evaluation framework and policy developed. Documents currently within consultation process, current partnerships under review.

Making the FRS affordable now and in the future								
AFI 12	Governance and Selection of Projects	The service should have a clear internal structure with appropriate governance arrangements to make sure the selection, design and delivery of projects are well managed, represent value for money and provide the intended outcomes.	Deputy Chief Fire Officer		36%	4/11	01/04/2026	Project Management Office (PMO) Framework and implementation plan approved and being implemented. PMO model to be used for Strategic Planning Q3 2025
AFI 13	Workforce Productivity	The service needs to assure itself that it is making the most of opportunities to improve workforce productivity and develop future capacity through use of innovation, including the use of technology."	AM Service Delivery		11%	1/9	01/04/2026	WT FF productivity is a 2025/26 objective. Draft plan targets 3% improvement aligned to Service efficiency strategy. Interim data collection underway pending dashboard and PowerApp enhancements.
AFI 14	Skills to manage change	The service should make sure it has the right skills and capacity to successfully manage change across the organisation.	Deputy Chief Fire Officer		0%	0/7	01/04/2026	PMO implementation progressing with maturity and capacity reviews completed. Phase 2 to include resource management. Project capability enhanced via bespoke IPM training; first cohort completed, next scheduled Q1 2026.
AFI 15	Estates management linked to CRMP	The service should make sure its estates management programmes are linked to its community risk management plan, and that it understands the impact future changes to those programmes may have on its service to the public	Head of Resources		0%	0/1	31/03/2026	Final drafts of Estates, Fleet, and Equipment strategies due by March 2026 for governance. Equipment strategy adopts CRMP-aligned approach, ensuring consistency across resource planning frameworks.

People (How well does the Service look after its people?)





Promoting the right values and culture	Getting the right people with the right skills	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Managing performance and developing leaders
Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
People								
AFI 16	Staff demonstrates values	The service should make sure all staff understand and demonstrate its values.	Chief Fire Officer		44%	8/18	31/03/2026	Cultural Transformation Programme launched June 2025, integrating the Cultural Action Plan. Survey deferred to 2026. Governance strengthened through SMT decisions, workshops, and comms strategy to embed professional standards and reporting.
AFI 17	Senior staff values	The service should assure itself that senior managers are visible and demonstrate	Chief Fire Officer		44%	4/9	31/03/2026	Timelines for the staff survey are now confirmed for early 2026, with the Executive Team supporting this timing to allow Cultural Transformation actions to embed. Evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and defined milestones will be central to measuring programme success.
AFI 18	Mental and physical health	The service should make sure staff have access to services to support both their mental and physical health.	Head of Human Resources		82%	7/9	31/12/2025	Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager recruitment is being progressed as a priority. Provision of fitness equipment has been delivered to stations and is to be reviewed at the end of the year
AFI 19	Monitor working hours	The service should proactively monitor working hours (including overtime) to improve staff well-being	Head of Human Resource		0%	0/4	No completion date available	On-call leave rules established and trialled. Monitoring system delayed pending BI and FSR inputs. Final implementation awaits union agreement and confirmed development timelines from ICT, expected early next year.
AFI 20	Managing Health and Safety	The service should assure itself that its arrangements for managing health and safety are effective	AM Operations and Risk		0%	0/9	20/11/2026	Audit completed with minor improvements identified. Key actions include creating a central Health & Safety policy and developing a dedicated intranet page to consolidate guidance, reporting processes and leadership expectations.

Getting the right people with the right skills								
AFI 21	Workforce Planning	The service should make sure its workforce plan takes full account of the skills and capabilities it needs to implement its community risk management plan.	AM Operations and Risk		0%	0/3	No completion date available	Awaiting revised action plan for the completion of this AFI.
AFI 22	Succession Planning	The service should review its succession planning to make sure that it has effective arrangements in place to manage staff turnover while continuing to provide its core service to the public.	Head of Human Resources		0%	0/3	31/12/2026	HR is developing a strategic workforce plan to address future requirements, enhance talent acquisition and retention, and improve efficiency. Succession planning supported through regular reviews and risk assessments.
AFI 23	Staff Training	The service should assure itself that all staff receive the right training for their role.	AM Operations and		0%	0/12	12/01/2028	Facilities review progressing with staged upgrades aligned to TNA and CRMP. Procurement, surveys and governance underway.
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity								
AFI 24	Anti Bullying and Harassment	The service should review how effective its policy on bullying, harassment, and discrimination is in reducing unacceptable behaviour towards its staff.	Head of Human Resources		21%	3/14	31/07/2026	EDI and culture progress achieved through national collaboration, recruitment initiatives, and NFCC pilot training. Ongoing focus on comparative analysis, micro-learning, and stakeholder engagement to embed inclusive practices.
AFI 25	Diverse workforce	The service should identify and overcome barriers to equal opportunity, so its workforce better represents its community, including making sure staff understand the value of positive action and having a diverse workforce.	Head of Human Resources and		0%	0/9	30/06/2026	Recruitment Action Group advancing process improvements and data capture. Analysis of needs and PA campaigns informs targeting. Uniformed recruitment trial underway; outreach strategies and multi-agency youth event under consideration.
AFI 26	Equality Impact Assessments	The service should make sure it has robust processes in place to carry out equality impact assessments and review its policies and procedures to make sure those staff with a protected characteristic aren't disproportionately affected.	Head of Human Resources and Administration		0%	0/9	30/04/2026	EQIA process strengthened through EDI-led reviews and training. QA options under consideration, including external support and EDISG oversight, to ensure compliance and embed equality standards across PMO.

AFI 27	Collect Equality Data	The service should improve the way it collects equality data so it can better understand its workforce's demographics and needs.	Head of Human Resource		67%	6/9	31/12/2025	Data monitoring and benchmarking strengthened through PFNTS comparison and enhanced reporting. Recruitment data frequency improved; EDI review underway. CPI analysis shows progress in reducing incomplete data fields.
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity								
AFI 28	Performance Development	The service should improve all-staff understanding and application of the performance development review process.	Head of Human Resource		80%	4/5	31/12/2025	IPDR completions up 48.6%, overdue self-assessments down 27%. Targeted training and support continue. Feedback informs process improvements; full report pending data collation.
AFI 29	Fair Promotions	The service should make sure its processes for the selection, development and promotion of staff are open and fair, and it should do more to make sure staff have confidence in promotion and selection processes.	Head of Human Resources		64%	7/11	31/12/2025	New SM promotion process trialled; training gaps addressed through rollout to HR assistants and Development Officer. Evaluation underway; feedback will inform policy amendments post-review with HR leadership.
AFI 30	High Potential Staff	The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.	Head of Human Resource		90%	18/20	31/12/2025	Internal QA process finalised and under review for implementation. Leadership programme QA pending confirmation. Support for IPDR completions continues; data correlation and system development priorities under management review.

Colour-Coding Key

Colour	Status Category	Meaning / Action
 Red – Not Started	Action not yet initiated.	Awaiting action plan or allocation of lead.
 Amber – In Progress	Work underway.	On track but further milestones outstanding.
 Yellow – Complete – Pending Assurance	All actions delivered.	Awaiting internal or external validation.
 Green – Complete – Assured	AFI fully completed.	Evidenced and assured by governance.

5 Workstreams and Progress Summary

To deliver the HMICFRS Areas for Improvement (AFIs), the Service has prioritised key enabling workstreams. These workstreams address cross-cutting risks and dependencies identified through RAIDO analysis and Improvement Board reviews.

1. Digital and Data Systems

- Purpose: Enhance ICT capability and data accuracy to support AFI delivery.
- AFIs Impacted: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 19, 27, 30
- Progress:
 - Civica app nearing completion; testing and rollout planned alongside dashboards.
 - Recruitment for ICT and PowerApps developer roles underway.
 - Interim data collection methods in place pending dashboard improvements.
- Next Steps: Complete Civica rollout, embed QA processes, and prioritise dashboard development.

2. Workforce Planning and Capacity

- Purpose: Ensure sufficient skills and resilience to deliver improvement actions.
- AFIs Impacted: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 14, 21, 22, 25, 28
- Progress:
 - Strategic workforce plan in development, including succession planning and skills gap analysis.
 - Recruitment processes active for key roles; PMO and Business Continuity capacity strengthened.
 - Cultural Transformation Programme launched June 2025.
- Next Steps: Finalise workforce plan, embed PMO governance, and deliver project management training cohorts.

3. Organisational Assurance and Evaluation

- Purpose: Strengthen governance and evaluation to support quality improvement.
- AFIs Impacted: 1, 2, 5, 11, 12
- Progress:
 - Evaluation framework and policy drafted; consultation underway.
 - PMO framework approved and being implemented for strategic planning.
 - QA processes for prevention and protection activities defined and partially embedded.
- Next Steps: Complete assurance framework rollout and integrate evaluation into governance reporting.

6 Conclusions

All HMICFRS Areas for Improvement (AFIs) have been fully integrated into the Service Improvement framework, ensuring they remain a priority across the organisation.

Progress against each AFI is actively tracked and reviewed through the Improvement Board, which provides oversight and governance. Risks associated with delivery are continuously monitored, with mitigation plans in place to maintain momentum and address emerging challenges. This structured approach demonstrates the Service's commitment to sustained improvement and compliance with HMICFRS expectations.

7 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9 HMICFRS Areas For Improvement, Cause of Concern, External Audit Recommendations

This report is directly related to the HMICFRS Area For Improvement and Misconduct recommendations.

10 Communications

Communication impacts arising from this report will be managed through the HMICFRS communications strategy

11 Environmental

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report or relevant UN Sustainability Goals.

12 ICT

The ICT impacts have been highlighted in the report and the Risk Management document regarding digital, data and ICT systems support. This is being managed through the Programme Board.

13 Appendix

There are no appendices attached to this report.

25 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.