

Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) response to inspections of Norfolk Constabulary published by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

Section 55 of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017) requires local policing bodies to respond to recommendations in inspectors reports within 56 days.

Inspection Title:	HMICFRS – Values and culture in fire and rescue services
Published On:	30 March 2023
Publication Types:	Equality and diversity, Ethics and accountability, Fire & rescue services, Integrity and corruption, Spotlight and Thematic Inspection
Police Forces:	Fire and rescue services
Link to Report:	https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/values-and-culture-in-fire-and-rescue-services/

KEY FINDINGS:

This report focuses on the values and culture of all 44 fire and rescue services (FRS) in England and draws on the evidence collected through HMICFRS inspections of FRSs since 2018.

HMICFRS adopted a targeted approach to researching, gathering and analysing evidence. As part of their terms of reference, they considered the following specific themes, which align with their inspection framework:

- values and culture - including bullying, harassment and discrimination
- training and skills
- fairness and diversity
- leadership

Since HMICFRS’ first fire and rescue service inspections in 2018, failure to demonstrate positive values as well as evidence of poor behaviours (such as bullying, harassment and discrimination) and culture have been a recurring theme throughout their reports. While some progress has been made, there is more to be done to improve values and culture in FRSs. The scale and pace of progress must improve.

HMICFRS continued to find that: some services need to get better at promoting positive professional cultures; most services need to do more to improve equality, diversity and inclusion; and progression opportunities for staff aren’t equal, which is hindering the potential for greater diversity of thought in services’ leadership teams.

The Inspectorate were deeply concerned by some of their findings in their Round 2 inspections. For example, staff survey results provided examples of bullying, harassment

and discrimination in all services. This often-included staff behaving towards each other in inappropriate and unacceptable ways. In at least eleven services, HMICFRS found evidence of racism, sexism and homophobia and a culture where staff, including managers, didn't always feel confident to challenge poor behaviour, such as bullying, harassment and discrimination. Many people spoken to told the Inspectorate they felt they couldn't challenge ideas or poor behaviour without detriment and that staff were scared to speak out. HMICFRS also heard that those who did speak out were sometimes victimised. However, this wasn't always the case – some services handled concerns appropriately.

Recommendations:

There were 35 recommendations made by HMICFRS in their report; one of these was directed to forces and Chief Constables across England and Wales, and is detailed below using the same numbering contained within the report itself:

Recommendation 10

By 1 September 2023, Chief Constables should make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services.

CHIEF CONSTABLE RESPONSE TO REPORT AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS:

This spotlight report entitled "Values and culture in fire and rescue services" draws on the evidence collected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) through their inspections of all 44 fire and rescue services in England since 2018.

The report was commissioned by The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire.

Whilst this is a report which focuses on the values and culture of Fire and Rescue services, one of the recommendations that HMICFRS have made was directed to all police forces in England and Wales:

Recommendation 10

"By 1 September 2023, Chief Constables should make sure they are appropriately using their Common Law Police Disclosure powers in circumstances involving employees of fire and rescue services."

Norfolk Constabulary accepts this recommendation. The Constabulary's Common Law Police Disclosure (CLPD) policy is owned by our Information Management Department. We have an established force CLPD process in place. In response to this published recommendation, we have reviewed our procedures, and we are satisfied that our existing CLPD processes are appropriate for employees of the fire and rescue service and that these processes are being robustly applied.

PCC RESPONSE TO REPORT AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS:

I note HMICFRS' recommendation contained within their report titled 'Values and culture in fire and rescue services' and my Chief Constable's positive response to it.

For Office Use Only:

- ✓ Response forwarded to HMICFRS Section 55 Responses
- ✓ Response forwarded to Chief Constable
- ✓ Response forwarded to Police and Crime Panel
- ✓ Response published on the OPCCN website