

## **SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

Meeting	<b>FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
Meeting Date	<b>20 NOVEMBER 2023</b>
Report of	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
Report Sponsor(s)	<b>ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/ DIRECTOR OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT</b>
Subject	<b>SERVICE IMPROVEMENT BOARD UPDATE</b>

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides a summary of the items raised and discussed at the Service Improvement Board in Quarter 2 2023/24.

One meeting was held during this period on 27 September 2023. The Service Improvement Board provides a strategic and critical role as a guardian of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) Service Improvement Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Members are recommended to:-

- a) To note the contents of the report and provide further scrutiny and support to enable continuous service improvement.

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### **CONTENTS**

Main Report

Appendix A – His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Areas for Improvement progress report

## BACKGROUND

1. The Service Improvement Board is an internal meeting that monitors progress of objectives that sit on the SYFR Service Improvement Plan. These objectives are generated from various local, regional and national events and reports that have influence in the activities at SYFR. The Service Improvement Board has committed to provide quarterly updates to the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA).
2. The Board also have a delegated budget to support the delivery of the Service Improvement Plan objectives.
3. The work of the Service Improvement Board has significantly increased since it was established. An evaluation of the Service Improvement Board has been conducted and it has been agreed that the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Areas for Improvement will be reported to every board meeting. However, other service improvement work streams, will take a themed and/ or risk based approach, and therefore not reported at every meeting.
4. HMICFRS inspection report for SYFR (published January 2023) identified 20 Areas for Improvement (AFIs). All of these AFIs were determined to be high priority. The Board received and scrutinised reports for the AFIs identified in the SYFR inspection reports. We are aware that HMICFRS will expect to see progress against these AFIs. Further information for the AFIs can be found in Appendix A. Members may note that some of the deadlines for the completion of AFIs are imminent but that the 'progress complete' measure is showing a low percentage. The deadlines and percentage completions will be reviewed in full at the next Service Improvement Board, with a view to understanding what further action needs to be taken to achieve, or at least make good progress towards, the AFIs prior to the next HMICFRS inspection.
5. The Board also received a report on the Fire Standards. Board members noted the quality assurance work being undertaken by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) for the Preparedness and Resilience and Protection Fire Standards. The Service recently hosted a meeting from the Chair of the Fire Standards Board and her team. They gained useful insights into how England's fire and rescue services operate, the challenges we face and how the implementation of the Fire Standards has benefitted the services we provide to our communities and to our staff. We have received a thank you letter that mentioned how impressed the team were with our commitment to delivering the Fire Standards.
6. The Board also discussed that it would be too onerous to review all the Fire Standards at every Service Improvement Board as well as all the AFIs. Therefore a proposal for a Fire Standards assurance group is being discussed where the process for Fire Standards will be agreed and set in place.
7. The Board reviewed a report into all the funding bids that have been approved from the Service Improvement Fund.
8. The Board also received two new funding bids:
  - i. The Culture Programme - initial funding. Part of the funding is for investigations, which the department has seen increase. Some of the funding will cover the costs of conducting Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on all staff.

This amount may change as NFCC has recommended enhanced DBS checks for certain roles. Board members approved the bid request.

- ii. The Culture Programme – People Partner Role. This role will enable the People function to deal with the increased volume of casework whilst continuing to provide an efficient and effective service to all staff. It will hopefully allow all the People Partners to work more proactively rather than having to be reactive much of the time. Board Members approved the bid request.
9. Board members received a closedown report for the AFI regarding National Operational Guidance (NOG). There was a decision to close this AFI. Post Implementation Reviews have been booked at 6 months and 12 months as due diligence to ensure NOG has been embedded and handover and business as usual (BAU) is implemented.
10. The Board received an update on the recommendations from the Manchester Arena Inquiry. It was noted that we will be required to provide regular progress updates to the NFCC. Our partners, such as the Local Resilience Forum (LRF), own some actions, and we will do what we can to follow up and provide updates on these ones.
11. A Specialisms Review Programme highlight report was received by the Board. It was confirmed that the Specialisms Review Programme will submit approvals to Community Risk Management Board but will update Service Improvement and Service Delivery Board at regular intervals.
12. The Service Improvement Risk Register was scrutinised by the Board. All the risks, along with the control measures/ mitigating actions have been reviewed. The register is up to date and will continue to be reviewed at future meetings. Currently there are not any high risks on the risk register. Medium risks are:
  - i. Lack of capacity to ensure that recommendations are actioned could result in the Service not continuously improving.
  - ii. Lack of available information to evidence the sub-diagnostic questions could result in SYFR not providing the necessary evidence and further scrutiny during the inspection visit.
  - iii. Lack of finance to ensure that recommendations are actioned could result in the Service not continuously improving.
  - iv. SYFR have not conducted a full review against the HMICFRS inspection framework since Spring / Summer 2021. This could result in SYFR having not improved across all diagnostic areas, as well as being unprepared for any inspection. This could result in a poor inspection outcome.
  - v. Service Improvement Fund - Without additional funds, the Service Improvement Board will not be able to approve and allocate resources to service improvement activities, as per their delegated authority. This could in turn affect the rapid and sustainable improvements as set out in the Service Improvement Plan.
  - vi. Lack of accurate data returns to HMICFRS could result in SYFR performance appearing to be weaker than it actually is.

## Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS Inspection Updates

### HMI Thematic Review of Culture

13. The Inspectorate will be visiting a selection of 10 Services in England to complete a thematic review of culture. The inspection methodology has now been developed. There will be a proof of concept inspection in one Service in October, followed by three inspections in November, three in December and three in January. SYFR has not been selected as one of these Services.
14. The thematic report is planned to be released in June 2024 and will include sector wide actions and recommendations, rather than Service specific actions and recommendations.
15. SYFR is expected to report progress against the recommendations in the HMICFRS culture and values report to HMICFRS. The second of these progress updates to HMICFRS was reported at the end of September 2023. Fire and Rescue Authority members received a culture update at the October 2023 meeting.

### Next HMICFRS inspection

16. The next HMICFRS inspection of SYFR will commence on 9 December 2024, when we will be requested to complete a document review, staff survey and self-assessment. The fieldwork will be from week commencing 10 February 2025.
17. The next inspection is likely to focus in particular on efficiency and productivity, looking at areas like station shift patterns and work routines. Culture is also likely to come under scrutiny.

### Round three inspection reports

18. Six inspection reports from Round three of inspections have now been published. SYFR have reviewed these reports for benchmarking purposes, although it is too early to identify sector trends. The reports are available on the [HMICFRS publications web page](#).
19. The next State of Fire and Rescue report is due to be published in Spring 2024.

### Progress against recommendations

20. HMICFRS routinely monitors progress against the recommendations that they make to fire and rescue services in their inspection reports. In the future, the progress Services have made against recommendations issued to them in their individual inspection reports will be published on HMICFRS website. The website will show the recommendations and whether or not they have been completed by the Service or remain open. Please note that the recommendations made in the Values and Culture spotlight report, published earlier this year, will not be included in this update though will be included in future updates. The status of recommendations is currently updated twice yearly, in September and March.
21. SYFR hosted a visit by our Service Liaison Lead (SLL) Andy Groom in October 2023. Along with the Director for People and Culture and the Director for Finance and Procurement, Andy spoke to a number of staff who are responsible for implementing our AFIs. These included Occupational Health, Community Risk Management

Planning and Business Fire Safety. Andy also met with Councillor Ball as part of his visit. We are hoping to host further SLL visits prior to our inspection in 2025.

#### HMICFRS events

22. There is a HMICFRS Service Liaison Officer briefing on 18 October which the Service Improvement Officer and the Service Improvement Manager are due to attend.
23. There is a HMICFRS Chief and Chairs briefing on 1 November which the CFO and Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority are due to attend.

#### CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

#### CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

- [HMICFRS Inspection Framework e.g. Diagnostic area and/ or diagnostic questions](#)
- [SYFR Inspection report Areas for Improvement \(AFIs\)](#)
- [Fit for the Future Improvement Objectives](#)
- [Professional Standards for Fire & Rescue Services in England](#)
- [SYFR Service Plan 2023-24 Priorities](#)
- [SYFR Community Risk Management Plan 2021-24](#)

This report monitors progress against the areas for improvement outlined in the HMICFRS inspections reports. The Service Improvement Plan supports delivery against the HMICFRS inspection framework.

The Service Improvement Board also monitors progress against the Fire Standards and Fit for the Future.

The improvement actions support the delivery of the SYFR Service Plan priorities and the CRMP

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- Yes
- No

SYFR will work closely with fire and rescue services and other organisations to continuously benchmark against the recommendations and inspection criteria.

#### CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

24. SYFR need to ensure they have the capacity and capability to implement any recommendations in the SYFR inspection report and continuously improve. There also needs to be the capacity to ensure all the inspection work is completed.

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

Yes

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

No

N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

If required, an equality impact assessment has will be completed for the agreed recommendations

## HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

Yes

No

N/A

If required, a health and safety risk assessment will be completed for the agreed recommendations.

## SCHEME OF DELEGATION

25. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision \*is required / \*has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power  Yes  
 No

## IMPLICATIONS

26. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below:., Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents		
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