

Sent by email:

Dan Quin
Chief Fire Officer
Surrey Fire and Rescue Service

12 April 2024

Dear Dan,

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service revisit

Between March and May 2023, we inspected Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. During our inspection, we identified a [cause of concern](#). On 13 September 2023, we issued the cause of concern and made the following recommendations:

Cause of concern

The service can't assure itself that its risk-based inspection programme prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.

Recommendations

Within 28 days, the service should provide an action plan that shows how it will:

- review its risk-based inspection programme to make sure it identifies its highest-risk premises and meets its own targets; and
- make sure all its staff are aware of the expectations on them in the management of the risk-based inspection programme.

On 11 October 2023, you submitted an action plan setting out how you would address the areas of concern and our recommendations.

Between 19 and 22 February 2024, we carried out a revisit to review your progress against the action plan. During the revisit we interviewed staff who were responsible for developing this plan, including you as chief fire officer. We also interviewed managers and staff with responsibility for protection, together with colleagues from their teams. On 26 February 2024, we shared our initial findings with you. This letter provides an update on our findings.

Governance

We found appropriate and robust governance arrangements in place to monitor progress of your action plan.

For example, the area commander protection role is now a single role, rather than being carried out in conjunction with the area commander prevention role. The area commander protection role now has strategic oversight of, and responsibility for, the plan. It provides regular updates to the service leadership team and you as chief fire officer. You also update Surrey County Council and the corporate leadership team on the progress made.

Action plan

The service has an action plan that covers the cause of concern. The inspection improvement plan identifies senior responsible officers, deadlines and people assigned to each task. The plan includes updates on the progress of actions made against each cause of concern and the associated recommendations.

Most of the actions set out in the plan are now complete. The service hasn't yet carried out the six-monthly quality assurance review. But it has set a target date for completion and has clear expectations of what should have been achieved by then.

Progress against cause of concern

The service has made good progress against its action plan, supported by senior leadership.

During our last inspection in 2023, we found that the service identified and selected risks for inspection inconsistently.

During our revisit in 2024, we found complete commitment from the service to address the recommendations through, for example, the investment and reallocation of resources.

We found the service had fully reviewed the risk-based inspection programme (RBIP) and redefined risk in line with [National Fire Chiefs Council](#) methodology. As a result, the service is clearly prioritising risk-related activity and has a realistic and achievable plan in place to manage the RBIP.

We found the service had a comprehensive plan to communicate these changes across the organisation. For example, it provides training on the updated RBIP to raise staff awareness and understanding. This makes sure that expectations placed on all staff are clear.

We found that the service was supporting staff at various levels to gain experience and to achieve the qualifications needed to become fully competent in carrying out inspections on their own.

We found contingency plans to make sure the RBIP will continue to run smoothly and effectively in the future. This includes training operational staff so they can move into the protection team as and when required to maintain activity.

It was also clear that there is an ongoing internal monitoring and review process to make sure the RBIP, and its management, remain effective.

Conclusion

We were pleased to see the significant steps the service had taken in response to the cause of concern we issued.

We are pleased that the service has improved its RBIP and the way in which it is managed.

We recognise the considerable work that the service has carried out to support these improvements. As a result, we now consider this cause of concern to be discharged.

We will continue to monitor the service's progress as part of our next scheduled inspection of the service.

This letter will be published on our website.

Yours sincerely,



Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

His Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services