



CFOA
Chief Fire Officers
Association



Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service Operational Assessment

Fire Peer Challenge

February 2014

Report

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1. Introduction, context and purpose

Introduction

This report captures the outcomes and presents the key findings from the Local Government Association (LGA)'s Fire Peer Challenge at Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) in February 2014.

The report provides detailed information on the key focus areas of:

- Leadership & Corporate Capacity
- Community Risk Management – an intelligence led approach
- Call Management and Incident Support – assessing the effectiveness of the governance and operational and incident support activities
- Learning and Development – how this supports priorities

It also provides overview information on the other key areas of assessment (KAA) in the Operational Assessment (OpA):

- Prevention
- Protection
- Response
- Health and Safety

Under the 'leadership' section, it explores three strategic questions:

- How well are outcomes for local citizens being achieved?
- How effective is the leadership and governance?
- How effective is the organisational capacity to meet current requirements and future needs?

IWFRS asked the team to also look at the way it works in partnership with other organisations and other services within the Council. In order to do this effectively, the team included an officer from outside the Fire and Rescue Sector with experience of working in partnership. Feedback on this is given throughout the report under the different OpA KAA headings as appropriate.

Fire peer challenge is part of the approach to sector-led improvement. It is a key component of the LGA's 'Taking the Lead' offer: www.local.gov.uk/taking-the-lead

The Fire Peer Challenge took place in February 2014 and consisted of a range of activity including interviews, observations and focus groups. The peer team met with a broad cross-section of elected members, officers, staff, frontline fire fighters, partners and other stakeholders.

The evidence and feedback gathered was assimilated into broad themes and a discussion of the findings was delivered to the Service's senior managers at the end of the challenge.

The team appreciates the welcome and hospitality provided by the service and would like to thank everybody that they met during the process for their time and contributions, openness and honesty.

Context and purpose

The OpA self assessment process is designed to:

- form a structured and consistent basis to drive continuous improvement within the Fire and Rescue Service, and
- provide elected members on fire authorities and chief officers with information that allows them to challenge their operational service delivery to ensure it is efficient, effective and robust.

In addition to undertaking OpA self-assessment, the sector-led peer challenge process is part of the LGA's approach to self-regulation and improvement which aims to help councils and FRAs strengthen local accountability and revolutionise the way they evaluate and improve services. Peer Challenge is a voluntary process that is managed by and delivered for the sector. It is a mechanism to provide fire authorities and chief officers with information that allows them to challenge their operational service delivery to ensure it is efficient, effective and robust. It is not a form of sector led inspection

IWFRS is a County Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA), part of the Isle of Wight Council. Being on an island, the Service has to have a higher degree of resilience than a mainland Service because there is a significant time delay for neighbouring Services to come to its assistance. This has meant that with shrinking budgets, IWFRS have had an approach of multi-tasking; senior officers are very knowledgeable and experienced in a number of different areas and have multiple responsibilities. It is a Service that relies mostly on retained fire fighters, with only one whole-time station and one day-crewed station. Other cover is provided through a flexible crewing model and RDS personnel at all stations.

Peer Challenge Team

Fire peer challenges are managed and delivered by the sector for the sector. Peers are at the heart of the peer challenge process. They help services with their improvement and learning by providing a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge.

The peer challenge offers an external assessment of an organisation's own judgement of itself against the OpA framework, by critical friends. The assessment is a reflection of the evidence presented to the peer team, through reading the documentary evidence submitted in advance, and the interviews and focus groups when on site. The team was:

Lead peer:	Alex Bennett, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service
Member peer:	Colin Mann, Caerphilly Council
Officer peer:	Garry Collins, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
Officer peer:	Deborah Brown, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service
Officer peer:	Michaela Pinchard, Doncaster Council

Challenge Manager: Becca Singh, Local Government Association

The team appreciates the welcome and hospitality provided by the Service and would like to thank everybody that they met during the process for their time and contributions.

Summary of key issues:

1. Improvement journey: IWFRS has been on a significant improvement journey. The peer team saw a professional, valued and effective Service with multi-skilled officers, provided with excellent equipment and good training options.
2. Partnership working: IWFRS has maximised the benefits of the island culture, making the most of networks and contacts to ensure that it is a key partner, particularly around community safety and road safety. There are many examples of excellent partnership working, and some of these are included in 'Examples of Notable Practice'.
3. Flexible training delivery: The flexibility of the training and development department is notable. The wide-range of specialist equipment required to make the Service as self-sufficient as possible presents training challenges, especially with a largely Retained Duty System (RDS) Service. Although training is flexible, care must be taken in order to ensure that RDS officers are as well-equipped as necessary to deal with the variety of risks they may need to address.
4. Embedding a performance management culture: This includes aligning systems and processes and looking to maximise capacity. There are several examples of where IWFRS is let down by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems (for example Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS), payroll, lack of 24-hour ICT support, recording retained availability, monitoring training attendance). Performance management has not yet developed into the culture of the organisations. Station and department plans do not yet link directly to personal development plans and overall Service plans or Corporate Plans.
5. Physical fitness: Lack of regular fitness monitoring across the workforce (Wholetime and RDS) staff is a concern particularly with an active workforce.
6. Capacity: IWFRS has gone a long way to ensure its staff are multi-skilled and flexible. It needs to ensure that its capacity is maximised based on needs and availabilities.
7. Resilience: There are questions over the future resilience of the Service due to future financial pressures. In an increasingly constrained financial situation, there may be significant opportunities and benefits to be explored through collaboration, co-operation and partnership. This includes with other emergency services and other FRSSs.

2. Key areas of focus

Leadership

Outcomes for local citizens being achieved

Strengths

- Community Confidence (locality)
- Service modernisation
- On-going partnerships
- Control call handling project

1. Community Confidence: IWFRS maximises the benefits of being an island community by using knowledge of people to create good partnerships. Partners and stakeholders have confidence in IWFRS to deliver, whether that is responding to emergencies or prevention work. Staff have pride and enthusiasm for helping the community
2. Service modernisation: IWFRS delivers high quality prevention work that is well regarded. It achieves more than expected from a small service with small teams, although there are some questions about the on-going capacity of these teams. The council has been innovative by bringing the Road Safety Team into the FRS. It has looked at data to identify risks, and targeted work where risks are highest (Road Traffic Collisions - RTCs). More work will need to be done to continue this work as the organisation is already very lean and may struggle to continue to meet its increasing demands. Building on the steps already taken, diversifying the work of fire fighters and increasing specialist community safety officers will only improve the prevention and protection work that is already started.
3. On-going partnerships: There are several examples of partnerships delivering results with direct outcomes for citizens. The Emergency Response Team has a very good relationship with local partners and is able to mobilise relevant people quickly when needed. This was amply demonstrated when the peer team was on site with severe weather warnings in operation on the Island. The Community Watch Group has delivered many examples of improved outcomes for individuals in need. See 'Notable Practice' section for more detail on the Community Watch Group.
4. Control call handling project: The move to Surrey FRS to deliver Control Room services has resulted in an efficient service that also delivers value for money. There is the flexibility to open up a Critical Incident room on the island as necessary (although this has not yet been fully established), and officers in Surrey are keen to ensure that there is a high level of expertise about incidents and locations on the island. It demonstrates that off-island links, collaboration and support can still provide a service that is island-focused and produce outcomes for the citizens on the island.

Areas to explore

- Evaluation of activity
 - Further risk needs
 - Future of Control contract
1. Evaluation of activity: There is considerable work happening across the service, particularly in the areas of Prevention and Protection. These service areas are very small and there is some doubt as to the sustainability of both functions without further support. Although both areas have delivered successful outcomes, to date, systematic evaluation is necessary in order to more clearly demonstrate the value of the breadth of the work currently undertaken. This will help the Council to allocate resources as needed into the service. The peer team recommends working together with partners to establish a simple but effective evaluation system that will support the service's need for more resource in these areas.
 2. Further risk needs: ensure that risk analysis continues to drive the priorities for future work, internally and externally, for example, rolling out the trauma training to RDS fire fighters.
 3. Control contract: The Control contract with Surrey has been successful in its current form (see 'Call Management and Incident Support'). This demonstrates the success of working with other FRSS. IWFRS can learn from this process for future collaborative arrangements. The team recommend that IWFRS is open to all possibilities with future collaborations, including the Control contract.

Leadership and governance

Strengths

- Staff, members, partners all have a high level of confidence in the strong Service leadership team
 - There are positive industrial relations with all unions, despite current national industrial action by the FBU
 - New administration is willing to communicate with all partners and look at all options for future
1. Managerial leadership: Staff, members, and partners all have a high level of confidence in the strong Service leadership team. The officer leadership is well known and respected inside and outside the Service. The CFO is not afraid to recognise where the Service has come from, and be honest about where the organisation is in order to move forward. The CFO, with the Corporate Management Team (CMT) behind him, has had significant impact on the organisation and there is now greater clarity on where the Service needs to focus its efforts for long term improvement and development.
 2. Industrial relations: There are positive industrial relations with all unions, despite the current national industrial action. Politicians are willing to talk to the unions, and work with them on various groups etc.

- There is an all-party governance working group that looks at issues which are common to all elected members regardless of group affiliation. This includes constitutional issues and things which affect the way that members are able to perform their duties.
3. Political leadership: The political leadership is encouraging partnership working and open to co-operation. The new administration is willing to communicate with all partners and look at all options to make progress for the future. There is a determination not to compromise on fire safety. The organisation is looking to be inclusive with politicians in the administration clear that they are outward looking and willing to work with anyone to gain advantage for the island. This includes an Independent council working with a Conservative MP, including taking all-party delegations to Whitehall meetings.
 4. Political / managerial relations: There are good relationships between the cabinet member and the CFO. They meet regularly and keep each other up to date. This is seen as very positive. Members are confident that the Service is well managed.
 5. Partnership working: The CFO demonstrates the commitment to partnership working by chairing a number of strategic groups on the island, regionally and nationally. This includes the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). Other Principal Officers (POs) are also involved with strategic groups on an island or regional basis. As a result, the FRS is leading the island approach and fully integrated in the regional approach to the Prevention agenda. This includes educating and informing partners and sharing information and expertise across different disciplines. Despite being a small Service, IWFRS is leading the way or ensuring that it is fully involved in a number of areas. The CSP terms of reference join strategic partners together, led by the Fire Service. Positive outcomes include the Life Course delivered as a commissioned function within the wider community prevention strategy.
 6. Advantages of a small service: There is close team working because of it being a small service. This enables prompt changes to be delivered across the service and specific functions. Examples of this include additional investment in RTC cutting equipment to increase RTC capacity on appliances, introduction of up-skilling for Firefighters in Trauma care, plus ongoing investment in operational vehicles.

Areas to explore

- Improved member involvement would be of benefit.
 - Improved performance management linked to people issues would be beneficial (golden thread)
 - The Service should promote its work and market itself more effectively
1. There would be considerable benefit in ensuring that all councillors are aware of fire and rescue issues. As a County FRA all councillors have a responsibility towards the Fire and Rescue Service, and therefore more meaningful involvement would be useful. This would increase the councillor understanding of the variety of challenges that the

Service faces, and help to ensure that political decisions about the future of the Service are based on risks and needs. A clear induction process on Fire and Rescue and member seminars on fire safety issues may be two ways of helping to improve member awareness and involvement.

2. It would be useful for the Council to establish a series of 'task and finish' groups to address individual issues that the Service faces. This would help to improve member engagement with FRS issues. The peer challenge report could provide a focus for a 'task and finish' multi-party group, as could an exploration of potential partnership options
3. There does not appear to be a performance management culture. Although there are appraisals (Performance Development Records - PDRs) and objectives, these do not clearly link to the vision of the organisation. There is no apparent golden thread from the Council objectives via FRS priorities down to frontline staff. Station plans are generic with high level detail of vision and profile of risk. However, they lack measurable local objectives and hard data to support what will be done locally.
4. IWFRS has significant examples of good practice and working methods. More publicity or marketing of this would ensure that the wider work of the FRS is better understood by members, partners and (in particular) the general public.

Organisational capacity to meet current requirements and future needs

Strengths

- There is good partnership working, and the Service is actively exploring opportunities for greater collaboration
 - Officers are skilled in a variety of specialisms
 - There is a 'can do' attitude throughout the Service
 - There is a high level of autonomy at station level
1. There is good partnership working, and the Service is actively exploring opportunities for greater collaboration. As a small service, this is likely to be the most effective way of meeting its objectives and continuing to achieve good outcomes for citizens.
 2. There is a 'can do' attitude throughout the Service and officers are skilled in a variety of specialisms. This is partly due to the longevity of officers in service, but also a consequence of being a small county service. Senior officers have often had experience of different disciplines and bring this into their decision-making processes and planning. See 'Examples of Notable Practice' for more on this.
 3. There is a sense across the Service that it is making good use of its limited resources. This is particularly in relation to the number of personnel available. There is a high level of autonomy at station level. This increases the sense of empowerment at different levels of management and improves trust and commitment across the organisation.

4. Dynamic actions are undertaken but consideration is taken to ensure planning is an integral part of the development cycle. For example, delaying the introduction of Community Volunteers until support systems, guidance and policies have been agreed to allow synergy into the existing practices and capacity to be found. This avoided the introduction without clear direction or terms of reference, which could have had a negative impact on the initiative. It also demonstrated an awareness of the often hidden costs involved in an initiative that apparently cuts costs (e.g. the management, supervision and training of volunteers).

Areas to explore

- Potential for partnership to address capacity issues
 - Balancing the capacity of the organisation
 - Although recent improvements have been acknowledged and realised, there are still difficulties with corporate IT systems (e.g. payroll)
 - Resilience in teams
1. In looking at future savings opportunities, IWFRS needs to and is already looking flexibly at all its options. This includes possible collaboration as well as co-location. This could build on the excellent partnership work on the island and the experience of collaborating with both another Council (Children's Services working with Hampshire County Council) and another Service (Fire Control delivered by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service). In order to do this effectively, there may need to be some work to break down the issues associated with data sharing. In addition, the team recommends that IWFRS examines opportunities for co-location (e.g. with the police or ambulance service) across the island. Ensure that all aspects of IWFRS are included in exploring options for the future in order to find the best solution for IWFRS and the citizens of the Isle of Wight.
 2. As an already small service, IWFRS faces the probability of a capacity shortfall in the near future. There is evidence that some staff are already operating over and above their capacity with significant draw on goodwill (for example in the Community Safety and Road Safety Teams). Questions then arise as to the resilience, capacity and sustainability of small teams, for example the Emergency Response and mechanical support teams. Back office cuts appear to be affecting frontline delivery (for example where incompatible ICT systems create work for frontline staff). Capacity is already an issue in some areas, for example Technical Fire Safety (TFS) who are unable to use CFRMIS to generate work programmes as the team would not have the capacity to deliver. At the same time, there is limited evidence that capacity in other areas may be under-utilised. A thorough look at time, capacity, risk, needs and workloads would identify if and where there are any capacity shortfalls currently and how to prevent them in the future.
 3. Council support functions and systems can hinder prompt actions in responding to demand. Recent improvements have been

acknowledged and realised, but there are still difficulties. This has led to questioning whether decisions about corporate functions (e.g. ICT systems) are taking the needs of the FRS into account. For example, the new payroll system has resulted in RDS staff being paid incorrectly (or not being paid), and CFRMIS has not been updated which creates significant delays. This is particularly frustrating for a service with the potential for future capacity problems.

4. There could also be a capacity issue at management level, where Station Managers are balancing a day job and their area of skilled specialism (for example Technical Fire Safety or Fire Investigation). Firstly responding to risk demand, e.g. seasonal activity may increase workloads with inspections, complaints and events. Secondly, skill levels for specialisms need to be maintained, particularly as activity levels are low and responsibility high, such as fatal fire investigations. Both take staff away from their core management function.
5. As well as Station Managers, operational firefighters also have dual roles, taking on specialisms with various appliances. This could result in a capacity problem particularly for RDS staff.

Community Risk Management

Strengths

- The organisation has a clear risk management structure in place
 - Excellent use of local intelligence to inform action on the ground, with positive results
 - Good data sharing between partners at an operational level
 - The organisation has a good understanding of risk that is broader than fire, and this is recognised by partners.
1. The organisation has a clear risk management structure in place The Service has a good inspection structure that identifies risk to ensure critical information is captured. For example, operational crews undertake low level Fire Safety audits and have the opportunity to capture other risk information during these inspections. One recent inspection identified cylinders stored at a shop. The information was shared and updated on the Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs).
 2. There is excellent use of local intelligence and partnerships to inform action on the ground, with positive results. Examples include training Red Cross and Age UK volunteers to carry out Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) when they are visiting people in their homes, partnership with the 'Bobby Scheme', joint inspections with Building Control, and the Responsible Authority Group (FRS, Licencing, Building Control, Environment Agency, and Police). Partners work together with good data sharing at an operational level.
 3. The organisation has a good understanding of risk that is broader than fire, and this is recognised by partners. For example, staff that provide HFSCs (including from different partner organisations) have safeguarding training. This demonstrates IWFRS taking the opportunity to look for other potential problems not just fire safety.

Areas to explore

- The organisation has been identifying and analysing using a range of data sources but this is work in progress and not yet being used to inform priorities
 - Community Risk Management loop is not always complete - effectiveness of station plans
 - Partnership review
1. The organisation has been identifying and analysing risk using a range of data sources but this is work in progress and is not yet being used to inform priorities. Ensure that all risk information is captured during this work, including seasonal demands and training needed at at-risk venues.
 2. The Community Risk Management loop is not always complete. Station plans are not always localised to reflect detailed risk analysis that incorporate training requirements aligned to identified risk premises.
 3. IWFRS is very involved in a lot of partnerships, including at a senior level. Whilst this is notable practice, there may be a capacity issue going forwards. IWFRS could explore with its partners where partnerships overlap and could be strengthened and streamlined.

Training and Development

Strengths

- Consistent positive feedback on training
 - Good quality, flexible training and support
 - Clear planning cycle for training
 - Multi-functional training staff
1. There is consistent positive feedback on training. It is a lean team, but is still able to deliver. There is good quality flexible training and support. Training is delivered at the training centre and also on station.
 2. Training records have been upgraded to PDR advanced and a three-year training cycle has been developed. There is a clear structured planning cycle for training. Training needs are identified from PDRs which are then reviewed to ensure that the Service is staffed with skilled competent workforce. However, there is not a clear link between service plans and objectives and the training cycle.
 3. Like all staff at IWFRS, staff delivering training have multiple skills and roles. Training staff and Station Managers deliver operational exercises and debrief to support the ongoing maintenance of skill levels.

Areas to explore

- Sustainability of training support
- Matching training to local risks

- Course attendance
1. Explore options to ensure the sustainability of training support. With increasing reliance on RDS, and with more Specials, there will be more demand for training, and demand on the training department.
 2. Risks may be different in different locations. Maximise the benefits of on-station training by matching training to local risks
 3. Ensure that course attendance is monitored. This will enable the Service to ensure that all staff are up to date with training. There is a gap in recording of competence. This is largely for operational crews to keep their competency records up to date due to lack of computer access. This is known and there is planning in progress to action.

Call Management and incident support

Strengths

- Call management by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is effective.
 - Contract arrangements delivers value for money
 - Governance arrangements are clear and effective
 - Robust processes in place regarding evaluating effectiveness of call management
 - Surrey Control staff visit IOW and understand island issues
1. Call Management, provided by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, is effective. The contract arrangements deliver value for money (with significant savings already realised) and the governance arrangements are clear and effective.
 2. Robust processes are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of call management.
 3. Surrey Control staff visit the island in order to understand the geography and other island issues. Integration with staff from and understanding of the needs on the Isle of Wight is good, particularly thanks to the fact that some IoW Control Operators were TUPE transferred across to Surrey. Surrey FRS is considering joining Telecare, which could benefit IWFRS and its collaborative partnership approach.

Areas to explore

- IoW future incident support is not yet established
- Minor technical issues still cause frustration amongst control staff and IOW personnel
- Future Control options need to be considered as part of any future options business case
- Lack of corporate 'out of hours' ICT support is a significant issue for offering system support
- Previous staff TUPE issues were a concern

1. Review practical Incident Support arrangements for the island to ensure they follow agreed policy to ensure operational incident resilience, either for an ongoing protracted incident, or depleted resources due to fluctuations in appliance availability. Contingency arrangements determine critical levels when support should be instigated (Black, Amber & Red). Off-Island support or recall arrangements should be requested when appliance availability drops below a certain level. There was evidence of deviation to this policy as dynamic mobilising arrangements are at the discretion of the duty Principal Officer of the day. This may well prove suitable for local dynamic mobilising. However, guidance and decision logs could better support the justification of policy deviations to confirm a consistent approach is applied. This may need to be revisited. The new Incident Support Room for the island is not yet established. This will need to be fully integrated with Surrey Control when commissioned later in 2014
2. There are still some minor technical issues which continue to cause frustration amongst Control staff and IWFRS personnel. Some of these are 'quick wins' which should be sorted as soon as possible in order to minimise the frustration. These were to do with minor IT issues, RDS availability and improved knowledge of the island geography.
3. Ensure that Control (currently contracted to Surrey FRS) is not isolated from any future options business case in order to maximise the opportunities for IWFRS.
4. The lack of corporate 'out of hours' ICT support for IWFRS is a significant issue for offering system support. The FRS needs to improve the understanding corporately (in the Isle of Wight Council) of the responsibilities and needs of supporting a 24 hour emergency response organisation, and ensure that its needs are included in procurement of future corporate business systems and processes.

3. Other areas:

Prevention

Strengths

- Exceptional commitment and enthusiasm from both managers and frontline personnel
- Excellent partnerships at a tactical level and this is reflected in targeted prevention activity
- Fire and Rescue seen as leaders in the community by partners and are extremely community minded
- HFSC programme is targeted at those considered to be most at risk
- CFO is chair of Community Safety Partnership
- Community Watch Group

1. There is exceptional commitment and enthusiasm in the Prevention Teams, from managers and frontline personnel. This was demonstrated by partners' reliance on the FRS, examples of extra time given to solve individuals' problems, the ability and willingness to deliver huge variety of programmes on little time and resource. The passion is shared with partners to ensure safety of individuals and organisations.
2. There are excellent partnerships at tactical level and these are reflected in targeted prevention activity. IWFRS officers are seen as leaders in the community by partners and are extremely community minded. For example, the HFSC programme is targeted at those considered to be most at risk, based on intelligence gathered from a variety of sources, including partnership knowledge. Partners are also trained to deliver HFSCs.
3. There are good partnerships on the ground including some strong road safety partnerships, for example with schools. The relationship between road safety and the police appears strong and benefits prevention activity. Good relationships with police, include successful bids to the Police and Crime Commissioner, and involvement of Isle of Wight councillors in the Hampshire Police and Crime Panel. A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has also been established with IWFRS involvement.
4. The Community Watch Group is an example of an operational partnership that delivers on the ground. This started as an information sharing group, and has expanded into a highly successful network of professionals able to trust and rely on each other. More detail is provided in 'Examples of notable practice'.

Areas to explore

- Strategic direction of prevention
- Lack of systematic evaluation processes

- Reduced resource has had an impact on capacity with a reliance on goodwill
 - Strategic Road Safety Group is in its infancy giving an opportunity to consider the added value (and strategic direction) it can provide
1. There needs to be clear a strategic decision on the importance of Prevention work. This would help to focus where the work should be going, and who and how should be delivering it. It would also enable work to be prioritised or stopped. Currently, the teams are undertaking as much work as possible, with little clear sense of how this fits into wider organisational priorities. Although there is a station plan (for the station where the prevention teams are based), the plan for the prevention teams stem directly from IRMP, and its action plan rather than relating to the station plan.
 2. There is little systematic evaluation due to time pressures. It is important to be able to demonstrate the impact of the Prevention work. There is anecdotal evidence, from staff and partners, that the Prevention work is helping the Service to achieve its objectives; this should be demonstrated and help the department's case to increase resources and relieve the pressure on staff. Without this, the capacity of the team is seriously in question.
 3. The capacity of the prevention teams is in question. Staff go above and beyond to try to ensure individuals are safe, but there has been a loss of skills and expertise. For example, Community Safety has not replaced its school teacher. The schools programme currently continues to be delivered, but there is a sense that future development may be restricted. Some retained crews are delivering prevention work (for instance in schools) for free as there is no money available to pay them to carry out targeted work. .
 4. The strategic Road Safety Group is in its infancy. This gives an opportunity to consider the added value it can provide. It may need some support to focus its work as well as clear strategic direction.

Protection

Strengths

- Fire Safety Audits focused on risk (e.g. sleeping, care homes) delivered by appropriately skilled staff
 - Good information sharing across departments and risk information updated on MDTs
 - Good examples of partnership working – licensing and event planning
1. Fire Safety Audits are focused on risk (e.g. sleeping, care homes). Work is delivered by appropriately skilled staff, with Fire Safety Officers conducting high risk audits and operational staff conducting those which carry lower risk.
 2. There is good information sharing across council departments and risk information is updated on MDTs. Prevention and Protection are

working well together. They meet every two months to share cases and cover joint issues. An example of working together is where there was a flat above a shop. Colleagues from Prevention and Protection worked together to improve the safety of the business downstairs and the home safety of the occupants living upstairs.

3. There are a number of examples of good partnership working, for example with licensing (for capacity of venues) and event planning (for example the Isle of Wight Festival and Bestival). Other examples include work with partners to maximise resources by delivering themed seminars together including a free seminar for hoteliers covering a number of issues. The Service also worked with partners to deliver free training to care home owners following a fire in a care home. This was in conjunction with targeted inspection work.

Areas to explore

- Succession planning – staff capacity, skill levels, and trend outcomes
1. There are significant problems with ICT that result in processes being inefficient. Investment in ICT systems should be done with the involvement of different departments that will use the system in order to ensure whether the financial saving from purchasing one system will result in an overall saving in time and resources. For example, upgrading CFRMIS would increase efficiency and result in significant practical savings for TFS. Currently, TFS is using an older CFRMIS system which does not allow correspondence to be saved within it; the up to date version does. Previous contacts with premises have to be done manually through the County Council's system, referring and checking through people in different departments. The Service could also integrate intelligence across departments, with other departments (for example, Community Safety and Operational Intelligence) able to use the same system.
 2. There is a need to look at succession planning in TFS. Future planning of work (e.g. prosecutions, follow-up on unscheduled work and unwanted fire calls) may be hampered by staff capacity, skill levels, and trend outcomes due to the time needed to both qualify and build up expertise and knowledge in order for qualified fire safety officers to deal with complex fire safety issues.

Response

Strengths

- Operational Risk systems are effective – MDTs, PDR Pro
- Improved equipment in COBRA / new appliances
- Improved staff confidence and empowerment
- Improved trauma care and rescue equipment introduced (wholetime)

1. There has been investment in PDR Pro and PDR advanced. Operational Risk information is updated on MDTs and safety critical information is updated on PDR advanced. This ensures both the service and staff are fully aware of expectations and training needs, giving clear evidence of existing skill levels and any gaps.
2. Cobra has been implemented and delivered across the service. This is supported by skilled instructors.
3. There is a good level of enthusiasm and empowerment felt by staff. This is evident by response delivery to staff at incidents to conclusion. Service staff are willing to stay at an incident to manage it through to a safe conclusion. Staff just get the job done and are willing to be flexible to do that. They are very 'self-sufficient' as part of island culture.
4. There is improved trauma care and advanced rescue equipment, although this has not yet been rolled out beyond wholetime staff.

Areas to explore

- Retained unavailability on a regular basis is a concern
 - Newport crews skills maintenance on special appliances remains a challenge
 - Operational debrief outcomes must be reported back effectively
 - PPE availability / turnaround times is an issue
 - Retained morale – poor standard of some accommodation
1. RDS availability appears to be poor and unpredictable, compounded by a set back from structural changes when migrating RDS staff to wholetime posts. Some of this is related to ICT problems and examples were provided of RDS being available but software not showing them as such. Recruitment has help fill this gap over a 3 year period to get the establishment figures up; however, there are still periods of restricted availability. This could result in a pump not going out with four staff which restricts the availability of resources. Ensure that both hardware and software purchased corporately meets the needs of the RDS.
 2. Maintaining skills on special appliances remains a challenge although it is recognised this risk was reduced through the model for change project.. Maximise the possibilities of flexible training and development.
 3. There is a time lag in bringing operational de-brief outcomes back into the service although there is a clear system in place for this to happen.
 4. PPE availability and turnaround times are an issue, due to 'Total Care' contract constraints.
 5. There are some questions about morale and resilience of the Service largely depending on RDS availability. Continue to monitor the sickness and morale of RDS officers; after structural changes, there have been fewer calls and fewer pumps.
 6. Address needs where possible, for example the roll-out of trauma and RTC training across the FRS

7. The standard of accommodation at Fire Stations across the Island was poor and a clearly set out asset management strategy with Isle of Wight Council colleagues should prioritise the upgrade and or replacement programme. This is hindering the potential benefits to more collaborative working.

Health & Safety

Strengths

- Clear investment in health and safety
 - strategic
 - practitioners
 - regional
 - Policy development to support incident monitoring and debriefing
 - Investment in equipment that supports fire fighter safety
 - External data sharing
1. There is clear investment in health and safety at all levels: strategic, practitioner, and regional. IWFRS managers chair the South Eastern Risk Management and South Eastern Health & Safety Groups. This is a demonstration of the commitment to health and safety issues, and keenness to learn from others to improve health and safety of the Service.
 2. There has been a clear investment in equipment that supports fire fighter safety and in training staff to use appropriately (e.g. Cobra).
 3. External data sharing has improved in order to improve health and safety.

Areas to explore

- Limited evidence of outcomes from the incident monitoring and debrief policy
 - Fitness testing and monitoring of staff
 - Limited capacity with high level of responsibility
1. There is limited evidence of outcomes from the incident monitoring and debrief policy. Although there have been policy developments to support incident monitoring and debriefing, there is a need to ensure that this feeds back into training and development.
 2. A new occupational health provider and system has resulted in a cycle of five year medicals. However, there is no regular fitness testing which is increasingly important with an ageing workforce. This should be examined as a matter of priority.
 3. The Health & Safety team has a limited capacity, at a relatively low level, but has a high level of responsibility. This has implications for future resilience.

4. Examples of Notable Practice

1. **Community Watch Group:** this group is open to any agency that supports vulnerable people in the widest sense. There is a rolling chair, and minutes are recorded and actions taken. It is primarily an information sharing forum, and is an informal group where professional relationships have built up quickly through mutual respect and trust. Information is therefore shared informally as well as formally. Often, one partner delivers a presentation or demonstration to the rest of the group (e.g. IWFRS showing their training video) which increases knowledge within the group, and helps to illustrate training possibilities that could exist for partners. Partners are also trained to (and do) deliver Home Fire Safety Checks. The group gave several examples of improved outcomes for individuals as direct result of this group. This includes organisations changing their practice and individuals' being safer in their homes. Partners are also sharing responsibilities, for example, different partners delivering Age Concern's 'winter boxes' (boxes with targeted contents to help older people during the winter months). It is worth noting that the partnership working is tangible. Even during the focus group, there was no-one dominating the meeting, and a feel that there was a shared responsibility to support those most at risk in the communities on the Isle of Wight.
2. **Road Safety:** excellent work is delivered by the team, who have also trained ops personnel to deliver some of this work. There is a varied programme of work including Bikeability, Safe Drive Stay Alive and the local initiative, Head On. Head On uses reconstruction of real local RTCs and video interviews with relatives and victims to help raise awareness of dangers and increasing the importance of road safety amongst teenagers in particular.
3. **Officers are skilled in a variety of disciplines.** There is a broad spectrum of experience; everyone has lots of hats. As a small service, IWFRS has by necessity ensured that its officers are multi-skilled. Often a senior officer has worked in a variety of disciplines and therefore has a strategic view on how all the different facets of a modern Fire and Rescue Service fit together. As other Services are gradually reducing staff and increasingly asking its staff to multi-task, they could do well to learn from IWFRS.
4. **Prevention work:** The dedication and commitment of the prevention teams was exceptional. In a recent council re-organisation, the Road Safety Team was brought into the Fire and Rescue Service. This is particularly useful given that many of the incidents IWFRS attend are RTCs. There is very little resource and they are under considerable pressure but have a creative and passionate approach to their work. Partners speak very highly of the different projects that the teams deliver, and there is a high degree of mutual trust and respect. The Road Safety Team has started to train operational fire fighters to deliver some of the road safety awareness and training, which increases the take up. Being an island community often means that when there is a serious RTC, a high proportion of the population will

know the victims. IWFRS' prevention teams have used this to increase the impact of the training that they deliver. Schools for all ages are keen to work with the teams, which will increase the numbers of people that feel the impact of the training.

5. Training: There is a high degree of flexibility in the training available to staff. This includes how training programme is developed from PDRs and there is an effective three-year competency training cycle. Investment in Specials has necessitated additional training, which may be hard to sustain, but the Service has committed to providing relevant training to ensure that it can provide a largely self-sufficient service to the Isle of Wight.
6. Collaboration: IWFRS is represented, or is leading several partnerships locally and regionally. They demonstrate the value of sharing expertise amongst Services because they are a small Service with officers who are willing to share their knowledge and expertise and at the same time learn from others. This includes work on operational matters, fire safety, community safety and work with police and councils on wider safety issues.

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