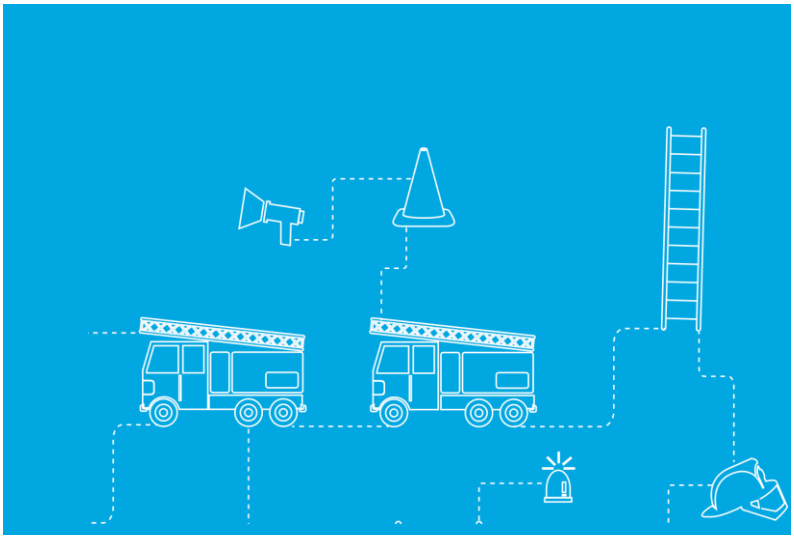
Emergency Services News briefing

December 2020



In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications affecting the sector, with particular focus on the government's efforts to support police forces during the pandemic and the latest Home Office statistics on fire and rescue incidents and fires attended by services.

Almost 6,000 new officers join police forces

Police forces hired almost 6,000 officers in the first year of the government's recruitment drive to sign up an additional 20,000 officers by 2023. The overall provisional headcount of officers in England and Wales is now 134,885, according to Home Office figures to the end of September. This includes 5,824 hired within the first year since the campaign was launched, suggesting that the recruitment drive is on track to meet its first-year target of 6,000 by March 2021.

Read more

Covid-19 enforcement boosted with £60m surge funding

Police forces and local councils will receive an equal share of an additional £60m fund from the government to 'step up their enforcement' of Covid-19 regulations as part of the government's plans to tackle the rise in infections. The funding will allow police to increase patrols in town centres and ensure that people are complying with the restrictions that are in place, particularly in those areas of high-risk. Police forces will also provide more support to local authorities and NHS Test and Trace to enforce self-isolation requirements.

Read more

Income loss recovery scheme for police forces

The Home Office has published guidance for Police and Crime Commissioners on how to access the income loss recovery scheme for lost sales, fees and charges as a result of Covid-19. This 'new one-off income loss scheme' will compensate for irrecoverable and unavoidable losses from sales, fees and charges income generated in the delivery of services in the financial year 2020/21.

Read more

New police covenant to protect officers and staff

Following the consultation outcome on a police covenant for England and Wales, Priti Patel, Home Secretary, has confirmed that a police covenant aimed at boosting protection and support for officers and staff will be created. The consultation, which received responses from police groups and the public, showed that over 90 per cent supported the introduction of a covenant. The police covenant will offer physical protection, help for health and wellbeing and support for officers' families and will require the Home Secretary to report annually on its progress to Parliament.

Read more

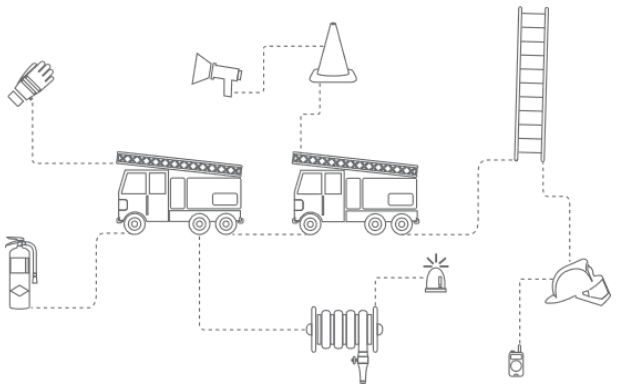
IOPC Impact report 2019/20

The Independent Office for Police Conduct's (IOPC) second annual 'Impact report' shows how its work is making a difference by influencing improvements in policing practice and reducing future risks. The IOPC oversee the police complaints system in England and Wales and aims to improve public confidence in policing by ensuring the police are accountable for their actions and lessons are learnt.

The report sets out the IOPC's impact in four priority areas; police accountability, using learning, working with others, and being an effective organisation. The report highlights that between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, the IOPC:

- dealt with 2,838 valid complaint appeals;
- completed 718 independent investigations, of which 35 per cent of investigations were completed within six months and 79 per cent within 12 months; and
- made 105 formal organisational learning recommendations including those in relation to local police forces, policy or guidance, training for police officers and staff, or legislation, amongst other matters.

Read more



APCC Impact report 2019/20

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners' (APCC) 'Impact report' demonstrates the breadth of work and impact of the Association against its five business priorities:

- funding, efficiency and transformation;
- supporting victims: developing local victims and criminal justice commissioning;
- communicating and engaging;
- sharing knowledge and good practice; and
- delivering a national policy portfolio structure.

Read more

Update on inspection programme

In March 2020, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) suspended all inspection work requiring appreciable contributions from police forces and fire and rescue services, to enable them to focus on the Covid-19 response. HMICFRS resumed inspections in September and has prioritised new inspections of how forces and fire and rescue services are responding to the pandemic, as they continue to face challenges during this difficult period. In addition, HMICFRS has begun work on inspecting the policing of public protests, following a commission from the Home Secretary.

Read more

Fire

Fire and rescue incident statistics

The Home Office has published statistics in fires, casualties, false alarms and non-fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services in England for the year ending June 2020.

Read more

Analysis of fires attended by fire and rescue services

The Home Office has published detailed statistics on fires attended by fire and rescue services across England, and fire-related fatalities and non-fatal casualties in those fires between April 2019 to March 2020.

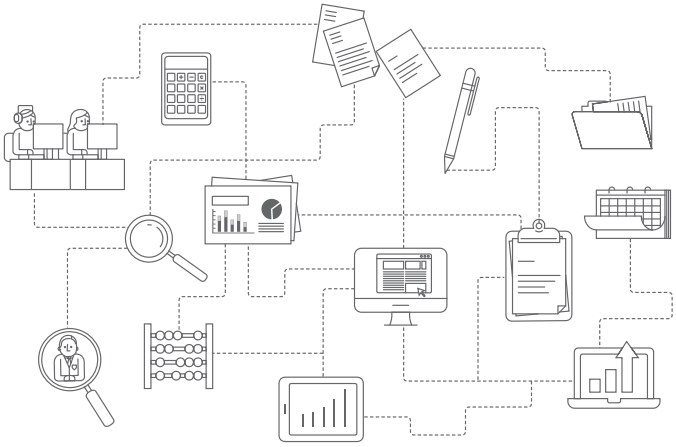
Read more

Other useful publications

Market exploration future policing

The Home Office and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) are undertaking a market assessment of the availability of 'cutting-edge solutions and innovative concepts' in development that will transform UK policing and security over the following 10 to 20 years. The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) are exploring the technological landscape across a wide range of capabilities.

Read more



An inspection of the National Crime Agency's relationship with regional organised crime units

HMICFRS has published a report into the National Crime Agency's (NCA) relationship with the regional organised crime unit (ROCU) network. HMICFRS 'sought to establish how effectively the NCA works with one of its most important partners', the ROCU network, to tackle serious and organised crime. This was an inspection of the National Crime Agency not of the police or the ROCUs.

Read more

Independent review on local authority financial reporting and external audit

This independent review, led by Sir Tony Redmond, considered the effectiveness of external audit and transparency of financial reporting in local authorities. The review also includes 'the functions of police and fire services.'

The final report makes several recommendations in relation to transparency of financial reporting and smaller authorities audit regulation, including establishing a new regulatory body, 'the Office of Local Audit and Regulation', responsible for procurement, contract management, regulation and oversight of local audit. It is recognised that the new body will liaise with the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) regarding its role in setting auditing standards.

Read more

Audit quality review

The FRC has published its annual individual firm and thematic inspections reports, which summarise the results of its inspection activities. FRC also issue 'confidential reports on individual audits reviewed to the relevant audit firms and Audit Committee Chairs.'

Read more

Code of Audit Practice

The National Audit Office's (NAO) revised Code of Audit Practice, which came into effect in April 2020, sets out what local auditors of relevant local public bodies, including local authorities, police forces and fire services, amongst other local bodies, are required to do to fulfil their statutory responsibilities under the 'Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.'

Read more

We hope you find this update a useful source of insight. If you have any queries, please get in touch with your RSM contact and we will be delighted to help.

Further information

Daniel Harris

National Head of Emergency Services and Local Government

M +44 (0)7792 948 767

E daniel.harris@rsmuk.com

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