

Emergency Services News Briefing

June 2022



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Introduction

In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications in the sector, with particular focus on the latest reports from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act.

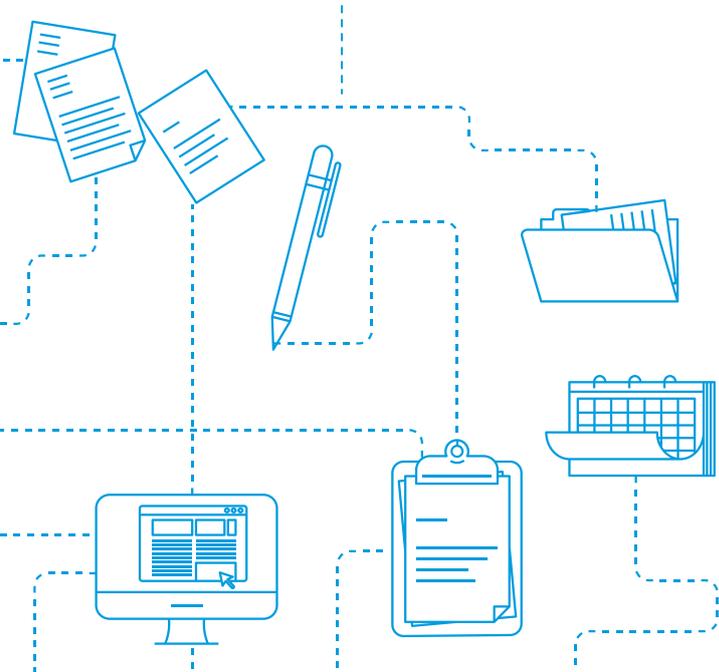
In relation to fire, we look at proposals set out by the Home Office to introduce a 'system-wide reform that will strengthen fire and rescue services in England.'

We also highlight our latest report on an analysis of secure remote working and operational resilience audits.



A few questions for audit committees to consider on the articles covered within this publication.

- Have you been briefed on these issues and whether management have considered the impacts on your organisation(s), and how it affects the risk profile(s)?
- Are you receiving (where relevant) timely, second or third line assurance on the items contained within this briefing
- Does this duplicate any other assurance you are receiving?
- Are there any assurance gaps highlighted by this briefing?





Police

State of Policing

The HMICFRS has published its annual assessment of policing in England and Wales 2021.

The annual assessment provides an overview of the findings of inspections, which were carried out between 1 April and 30 November 2021, including a summary of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections. HMICFRS also sets out the full list of its inspections and other work. The results of individual inspections enable an assessment of the performance of individual forces, or a more general assessment of performance in specific aspects of policing. In his final annual report after nearly a decade in post, Sir Thomas Winsor, the Chief Inspector of Constabulary, described how demand on the police has changed very significantly, for example:

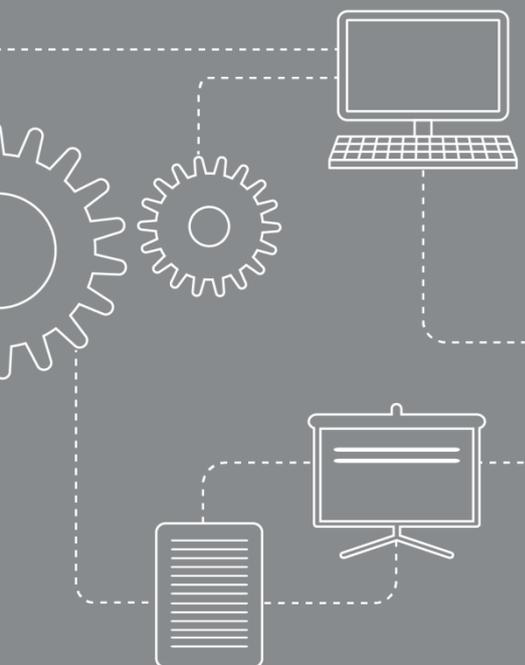
- online crime is now the most prevalent type of crime and online fraud has increased, 'eclipsing all other crimes in volume';
- total demand and public expectations cannot be met without sufficient funding and the public must decide how much threat, harm and risk they are prepared to tolerate; and
- the rapid advancement of technology has provided opportunities for both criminals and the police, but the police have sometimes struggled to keep pace.

In his report, the Chief Inspector also draws attention to:

- the causes of crime and low detection rates;
- the need for proactive as well as reactive policing to protect vulnerable people;
- the state of the system of local police accountability and the sometimes 'brittle and fragile relationships between chief constables and police and crime commissioners', and the need for trust and confidence in a special constitutional relationship which the public needs to work;
- the successes and potential of the National Crime Agency, and its ability, with sufficient investment, to do a great deal more to disrupt or break sophisticated criminal networks; and
- the need for significant investment in police technology.

The Chief Inspector stated the 'fragile architecture of the 43-force model, born in 1962, is not fit for purpose.' Sir Thomas also reiterated his proposal for a network code, which would dissolve the barriers preventing policing and law enforcement from 'operating as a single system and secure fair, reliable and sustainable decisions on regional and nation-wide problems.

[Read more](#)





Boost for public safety as bill receives Royal Assent

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill received Royal Assent and became an Act of Parliament on 28 April 2022. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022 equips the police with the powers and tools they need to combat crime and create safer communities. The Act builds on the government's Beating Crime Plan to reduce crime, better protect victims and make the country safer. It has already seen the recruitment of more than 13,500 of the 20,000 extra police officers promised by March 2023.

[Read more](#)

Impact of the pandemic on the Criminal Justice System

In January 2021, HMICFRS, HM Inspectorate of Probation, HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and HM Inspectorate of Prisons conducted inspections of its respective agencies' responses to coronavirus and published '[Impact of the pandemic on the Criminal Justice System](#)'.

The progress report provides an update to the original report and is based on combined inspection findings during 2021. The structure follows the flow of work through the Criminal Justice System (CJS) from policing to prisons. It sets out findings from inspections, 'as well as cross-cutting themes, and highlights the successes of the CJS, but also the challenges that it has faced and still faces.'

[Read more](#)

National Stop and Search learning report

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has published its latest report on National Stop and Search. This report brings together evidence from the IOPC work, stakeholder engagement and published research to highlight concerns about transparency, legitimacy, scrutiny, and disproportionality that must be considered and addressed by the police service and others. This report aims to support change and improvement in policing practice to help increase public confidence.

[Read more](#)

An inspection of the service provided to victims of crime

HMICFRS has published a report assessing the quality of the service provided to victims of crime by the British Transport Police (BTP). The investigation reviewed the service provided by the BTP for each of the six components of the victim service assessment:

- call handling;
- deployment of resources;
- crime recording;
- screening and allocation;
- investigation; and
- outcomes.

HMICFRS has worked collaboratively with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland to produce a single report that covers BTP's whole jurisdiction across England, Wales and Scotland.

[Read more](#)

The Police Uplift Programme

The National Audit Office (NAO) has published a report examining whether the Home Office is well placed to deliver value for money from the programme. It covers the:

- aims of the programme;
- management of the programme and progress against its objectives; and
- challenges in maximising the impact from the programme.

The NAO notes that it is too early to assess whether the additional officers are delivering the government's aims to improving public safety and reducing crime, as they will 'need time to become fully effective in their roles.' Furthermore, improvements in wider criminal justice outcomes depend on many more factors than the number of police officers. This paper looks at how far the recruiting process has progressed so far, as well as how the Home Office intends to show the impact of the extra officers in the future.

[Read more](#)



Police Covenant update

The Home Office has published a policy document which provides a summary of latest activity on the Police Covenant and the progress made so far. The Police Covenant Oversight Board outlined that a number of workstreams have been progressed and finished. Key activity over the past year includes:

- pre-deployment mental health care incorporated into all providers of the Police Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF)
- over 30 police forces attended a three-day workshop led by the National Police Wellbeing Service, where the clinical team provided extensive advice and support for occupational health teams; and
- ‘the addition of new workstream priorities: to develop a support model for those who leave policing and to progress NHS engagement.’

[Read more](#)

Extra £150m to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour

The Home Office has launched round four of the Safer Streets Fund as part of the government's commitment to reduce crime and promote public safety. As a result, £150m is available over the next three financial years for police and crime commissioners and local authorities across England and Wales, as well as certain civil society organisations. The Safer Streets Programme provides funding to areas most affected by crime and anti-social behaviour and will allow local authorities, civil society organisations and police and crime commissioners to bid for up to £500,000 per year for each project.

[Read more](#)

Observations on the third generation of force management statements

A force management statement (FMS) is a self-assessment that chief constables (and London equivalents) prepare and submit to HMICFRS each year.

HMICFRS has published the observations of the FMS steering group on the third round of FMSs following statements that were submitted by police forces. The steering group is made up of HMICFRS, the National Police Chiefs Council, the College of Policing, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the Home Office, and other parties interested in the development of FMSs.

The summary observations note:

- FMSs continue to improve and focus on national policing issues; and
- police forces understand demand better but need to improve understanding of workforce capabilities.

[Read more](#)

‘Whole-system’ approach to tackling violent crime is working

The Home Office has announced a further £130m to strengthen efforts in tackling serious violence. Violence Reduction Units and ‘hotspot policing initiatives’ have avoided 49,000 violent offences across England and Wales. The government's funding package includes:

- a further £64m for Violence Reduction Units, supporting the existing 18 and enabling two new units to be established in Cleveland and Humberside;
- an additional £30m into the ‘Grip’ police enforcement programme; and
- supporting the implementation of the new Serious Violence Duty and Serious Violence Reduction Orders, being brought into law as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

[Read more](#)

Police and Fire

Evaluation of remote inspection methods

HMICFRS has published its report on the evaluation of remote inspection methods required during the coronavirus pandemic. Key findings include:

- interviews, remote case file reviews, staff surveys, self-assessment, team debriefs and meeting observations were all effective remote inspection methods. Large focus groups, on the other hand, were more difficult to conduct remotely than small focus groups. HMICFRS noted that all methods of remote inspections relied on effective IT capabilities;
- working remotely had a mixed response on staff wellbeing, with some employees adjusting well and others finding it more challenging. Challenges included integrating home and work life and the intensity of working online all day without pauses; and
- the findings of the review have also prompted more permanent changes to HMICFRS' inspection process, including the use of remote inspection technologies when suitable. HMICFRS now employs a combination of on-site and remote inspection techniques.

[Read more](#)

Local Government and Emergency Services VAT Webinar

We are pleased to announce our next VAT and tax webinar for local authorities and emergency services is taking place on 16 June 2022.

Our webinars aim to help officers gain up-to-date and bite-size insights on VAT and tax issues affecting their organisations.

This webinar will be an excellent opportunity for you to hear and raise questions on sector related VAT issues within a trusted forum. As well as hearing about technical updates, our sector specialists will be on hand to provide feedback on recent developments.

In our session, topical sector updates will include mutual trading status of subsidiaries and our top tax queries from FY21/22:

- recent case law and legislative changes affecting the sector;
- HMRC VAT policy changes including sector activity;
- sector activity;
- VAT saving opportunities; and
- questions and answers.

To register for the webinar, please [click here](#).

If you have any questions relating to the webinar, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please also feel free to forward this invitation to your colleagues or to officers in other authorities.

Secure remote working and operational resilience in a hybrid world

As the coronavirus pandemic took hold, organisations quickly moved their workforces to their homes. The speed at which organisations had to adapt was remarkable, and we know that some were better placed than others to move successfully. With the shift to homeworking, the risk landscape changed and organisations were exposed to greater and more complex threats.

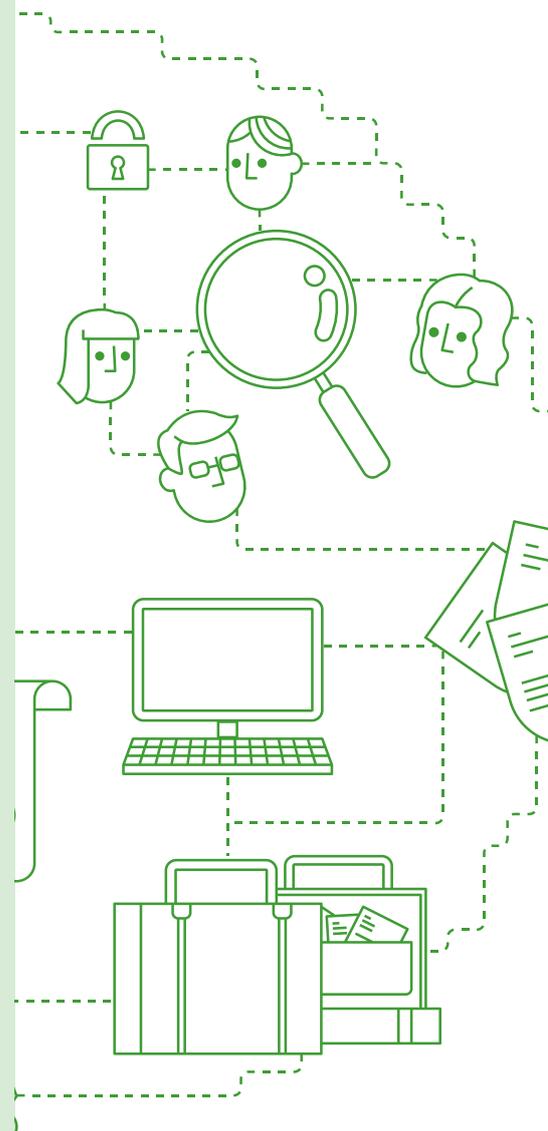
Across the diverse sectors we work in, we have undertaken secure remote working and operational resilience audits, assessing how management have implemented and managed controls to enable remote working. Through reviewing and assessing IT infrastructure and remote working processes, we have provided assurance over the design of key controls and adherence to them in respect of governance over business-critical data while working remotely, whilst also ensuring adequate capacity is available to meet the needs of the business.

From our reviews, we have seen several key outcomes emerge, highlighted from where we have agreed management actions.

Overview of key internal audit review outcomes

- Only 12 per cent of businesses could take substantial assurance that the controls in place to ensure secure remote working are operating effectively to manage risks. This illustrates there is significant room for many businesses to improve and strengthen the IT control environment to ensure data security, manage cyber-crime threats and enhance IT operational effectiveness.
- In those areas where we agreed management actions, 80 per cent of the controls in place were deemed to be ineffective in terms of design.
- Given the spike in phishing and ransomware attacks, there is perhaps now more than ever, a need to ensure a comprehensive incident response plan is in place, to guide the organisation's response, should an attack occur.

Access our report on the [RSM website](#).



The ESG Risk Landscape

The Global Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) has published a [collection of Global Knowledge briefs](#) providing information and analysis on changes to the dynamic environmental, social and governance (ESG) risk landscape. Collectively, they provide practical information to help internal auditors anticipate and prepare for new reporting regulations, position internal audit functions to provide high-quality services related to ESG and offer direction on identifying ESG risks within organisations.

ESG Appetite

ESG is becoming increasingly important, both for us as individuals and for organisations. We are seeing investors, employees, customers and business partners demanding that organisations act responsibly and ethically.

As internal auditors we are in a unique position to help an organisation start to understand what its approach or 'appetite' is to ESG, and how the organisation is starting on its ESG journey around developing and embedding an ESG culture.

RSM has an audit approach which is designed to look at your external commitment and communication in relation to ESG matters and compares it to the views held by senior management and an organisations largest stakeholder group — its employees.

How an ESG Appetite review can benefit you.

- Understand what actions have been undertaken to date as part of your ESG journey.
- Understand what matters to your employees and how they view the organisation's ESG related activities and programmes.
- Demonstrate commitment to corporate responsibility and continuous improvement.

Next steps

Speak to your usual internal audit contact about having an 'ESG appetite review' built into your internal audit plan, or request the review as an additional piece of work. The appetite review is delivered by your Internal Audit team, with support from an ESG subject matter expert.

Discuss with your internal audit contact as to whether an ESG maturity assessment may benefit you more. This falls outside of the internal audit plan, but may be more appropriate for where you are on your ESG journey

ESG maturity assessment

Building on ESG Appetite, a more in-depth ESG maturity assessment can be undertaken. RSM's full maturity assessment places an organisation in one of four stages in its ESG journey: Awareness; Defining and Reporting; Managing; and Maturity.

For a copy of our briefing papers, please get in touch with your usual RSM contact.



Public sector sustainability reporting consultation

The International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSASB) has launched a consultation aimed at producing a global set of standards for sustainability reporting by government bodies. 'The aims of this public consultation process are to evaluate the demand from stakeholders for such guidance, as well as the degree of support for the IPSASB's involvement in the process.' The consultation is seeking views on what topics should be prioritised and whether IPSASB is the right organisation to develop the guidance.

The consultation closes on 9 September 2022.

[Read more](#)

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee effectiveness tool

Audit and Risk Assurance Committees (ARACs) play a crucial role in supporting the effective governance of central government departments, their agencies and arm's length bodies.

The NAO's effectiveness tool is a comprehensive way for ARACs in central government to assess their effectiveness on a regular basis.

[Read more](#)



The Real Economy: Cyber Security

In The Real Economy's latest topical survey, we have revisited the topic of cyber security. Encouragingly, the middle market is acting against the accelerating threat. Since the 2021 survey, our panel of over 400 business leaders experienced a 7 per cent increase in successful cyber-attacks. It's not surprising to see such an increase with cyber criminals constantly innovating and adapting their strategies to include increasingly sophisticated attacks. In our report we note the top things to consider over the next 12 months including, governance, frameworks, threat modelling, penetration testing, phishing and whaling exercises and incident response.

Whilst the report follows on from our survey with middle market business leaders, there are areas raised in this report which provide useful insight for police and fire and rescue services.

[Access our report on the RSM website](#)

Fire

Data management fire standard consultation

The Data Management Fire Standard has been developed with expert input from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Digital and Data Programme, NFCC Leads for Data, Apollo Gerolymbos and Andy Hopkinson, Government Digital Services and colleagues, with data expertise from a wide range of fire and rescue services. This consultation focuses on fire and rescue services delivering excellence to our communities by maximising the value of good quality and reliable data.

The consultation closed on 27 April 2022; the responses will be considered and the 'Fire Standard will undergo a quality assurance process before the final Fire Standard is proposed to the Fire Standards Board for approval.'

[Read more](#)

Fire Standard is launched

The Fire Standards Board (FSB) has announced the launch of the tenth professional Fire Standard; Fire Investigation. The Standard focuses on ensuring fire and rescue services (FRS) deliver effective, efficient and valid fire investigations into the origin, cause and development of fire. An anticipated outcome of the Standard is that services will have a competent and resilient capability to undertake fire investigations, adhering to relevant legislation, guidance and codes of practice. By identifying risk and reporting product safety issues, the Fire Standard is expected 'to improve the safety and wellbeing of members of the public (FRS communities) and FRS employees.' The Standard also contains other anticipated benefits.

[Read more](#)





Reforming fire and rescue services

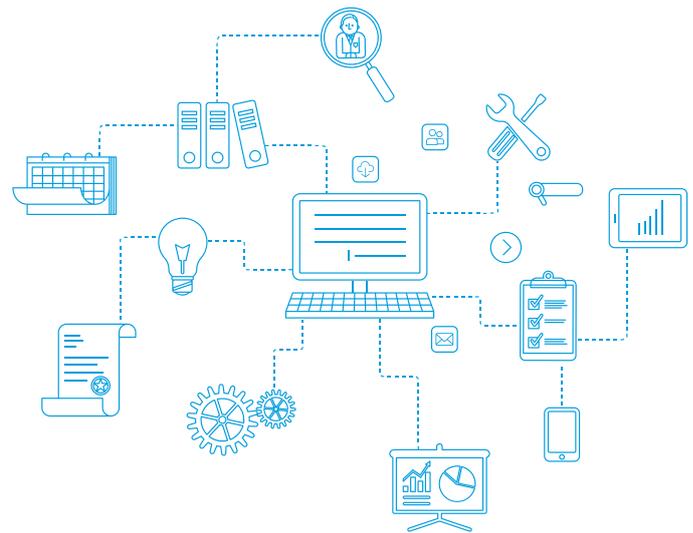
The Home Office has launched a consultation seeking views on proposals to introduce a 'system-wide reform that will strengthen fire and rescue services in England.' The changes announced include the commencement of the Fire Safety Act 2021 which will make sure all blocks of flats are properly assessed for fire safety risks. The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 was also announced which implements eight recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report and will help ensure people feel safe in their homes.

At the centre of the White Paper are plans to deliver:

- increased public safety: by improving the professionalism of the fire and rescue service through modern workforce practices and potentially establishing a College of Fire and Rescue;
- improved accountability: through the proposals to transfer fire governance to a single elected individual, overseeing delivery by operationally independent Chief Fire Officers; and
- better engagement with the public: through the 10-week consultation the government will listen to the views of the public and stakeholders, after which it will finalise its reform programme.

The consultation closes on 26 July 2022

[Read more](#)



The Fire Risk Assessment Prioritisation Tool

The government has launched its risk prioritisation tool, which has been set up to encourage building owners to review fire risk assessments (FRAs) on their most dangerous buildings. The new tool comes in after the Fire Safety Act said it will now force building owners to consider the external walls and balconies in periodic fire risk assessments. Prior to this, the focus was on the internal walls of a block and the external fell out of scope.

The Fire Risk Assessment Prioritisation Tool takes responsible persons through a series of specific questions, which are each carefully scored to assist them to determine the priority of their buildings for the purpose of reviewing their fire risk assessments. The tool does this by allocating each building to one of five priority tiers.

[Read more](#)



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