

Emergency Services News Briefing

November 2024



Contents

Introduction	3
Police	4
Fire	10
References	15

Introduction

In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications in the sector, such as the Fire Standards Board's new fire standards and the recent focus on tackling antisocial behaviour.



Police

The policing response to antisocial behaviour: police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) spotlight report

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has published a report examining the police response to antisocial behaviour. The report highlights positive practices and collaborative efforts between the police and other organisations to address antisocial behaviour, as well as making recommendations to strengthen the policing response.

The police are using a problem-solving approach to tackle antisocial behaviour and many are dedicating trained resources to this issue, with some forces using technology to encourage reporting. HMICFRS has however identified several issues that could negatively impact on policing efforts. They include challenges around data sharing due to inadequate IT systems and a lack of analytical, dedicated support to understand and address the problems. There was also inconsistent training, poor recording regarding the use of statutory powers, and limited evaluation of outcomes, resulting in varying approaches across and within forces.

Key recommendations and timescales include:

- by 31 December 2024, forces should ensure that 'antisocial behaviour problem-solving plans fully specify the problem, contain sufficient detail, and are effectively supervised.' Forces are also required to evaluate the plans for outcomes in relation to the National Police Chiefs' Council Neighbourhood Policing Outcome and Performance Guidelines;
- by 31 March 2025, forces should review their processes for recording antisocial behaviour, to ensure all incidents and associated crimes are accurately recorded. Forces should review the risk assessment processes for cases of antisocial behaviour to ensure 'risks are properly assessed from initial contact to case closure' and that completed risk assessments are retained in line with guidelines; and
- by 30 September 2025, forces should ensure personnel are trained and equipped to identify and record antisocial behaviour and related crimes when they are reported.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Has your Force provided sufficient training to officers to allow them to discharge their duties?
- Are appropriate systems in place to track, monitor, and identified trends in relation to antisocial behaviour?



Nationwide rollout for neighbourhood policing training

Policing Minister, Dame Diana Johnston, has confirmed the government will support the national rollout of training for neighbourhood policing teams across England and Wales. The Neighbourhood Policing Pathway, currently being piloted in 11 forces, focuses on issues relevant to the neighbourhood police officer or police community support officer (PCSO) role.

The training, provided by the College of Policing (CoP), aims to help forces tackle antisocial behaviour, and covers community engagement and building relationships to gather intelligence and to address local issues. The pilots are anticipated to conclude in March 2025. The training will then be refined and expanded nationwide.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Is your Force equipped to train and roll out training to the neighbourhood policing team / PCSOs?

Autumn Budget

In delivering the Autumn Budget Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, confirmed that Home Office funding would increase to £22.1bn in 2025-26 from £20.3bn in 2023-24. The investment supports prison expansion plans and the continued investment in frontline officers. It will enable the government to begin to meet the manifesto pledge to increase visible neighbourhood policing with 13,000 more neighbourhood officers and PCSOs.

The government has confirmed that police efficiency will be a priority area for reform, featuring in the Spending Review 2025 (Phase 2). In England, HM Treasury will work with the Home Office to improve police efficiency and improve overall productivity. It will include 'ending wasteful contracts' and enable officers to spend more time tackling crime. It is expected to 'form part of a wider police reform package to rebuild confidence in policing.'



Questions for committee's consideration

- Does your Force have in place efficiency and productivity saving plans?
- Has your Force identified and reviewed all contracts in place?



Progress to introduce a national operating model for rape and other serious sexual offences investigations

HMICFRS has published a progress report on introducing the national operating model (NOM) for investigating rape and other serious sexual offences (RASSO). This programme, named operation Soteria, aims to transform how police across England and Wales approach and investigate RASSO cases. Soteria is built on six pillars including implementing an effective suspect-focused investigation, supporting victims, and utilising data, effective analysis, and digital forensics. Since 2021, Soteria has been implemented by 19 early adopter forces. By November 2024, the Home Office expects that all police forces will have adopted Soteria through the NOM.

In May 2023, HMICFRS was commissioned to inspect nine early adopter forces to evaluate their progress. In its report, HMICFRS states that most forces have detailed plans and good governance and leadership structures to implement Soteria. However, project managers and leads need time to ensure the success of this large-scale change programme.

Other findings include:

- some forces appointed a dedicated Soteria project manager to maintain focus and implement important changes quickly. However, this wasn't the case for all forces, especially those that 'don't have robust oversight of plans';
- most forces ensured that Soteria strategic leads had the necessary time and resources, including developing plans to invest in 'support staff, trainers, investigators, analysts, and digital forensics personnel';
- while most forces understood Soteria and its six pillars, some senior leaders did not fully grasp the system-wide benefits of the programme; and
- some forces did not fully understand the extent of RASSO within the local area and dealing with demand is difficult due to a shortage in detectives.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Are there learnings to be taken from the early adopting forces?

New smarter practice published to support force responses to Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse (PPDA)

The CoP in collaboration with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary, have developed two new smarter practices to support the policing response to PPDA. The smarter practices involve activities that have been tested within a police force and then reviewed by the CoP, HMICFRS, and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). The new practices are part of ongoing efforts to respond to the 2020 super complaint by the [Centre for Women's Justice \(CWJ\)](#) and the [Bureau of Investigative Journalism](#).

The smarter practices cover:

- the role of senior oversight officers (SSOs), whereby chief inspector rank officers act as independent senior contacts for victims whose perpetrators are police officers or staff; and
- creating workplace domestic abuse scrutiny panels to review domestic abuse cases involving police personnel, setting direction and identifying good practices.

These initiatives aim to improve trust and support for victims and address the unique challenges in PPDA cases.

Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) comment on report on failures to tackle police-perpetrated domestic abuse

The CWJ has published a [follow up report](#) on police - perpetrated domestic abuse, highlighting ongoing issues since their 2020 super complaint. The APCC's Joint Leads for Victims, Deputy Mayor Sophie Linden and PCC Lisa Townsend, acknowledged the bravery of the women who shared their experiences and commended CWJ for keeping the issue prominent.

They stated, "we are disappointed at the lack of progress but note the commitment from the government to tackling violence against women and girls, and from our partners across national policing to drive up standards. Police and Crime Commissioners will continue to hold chief police officers to account for improving standards to ensure that no level of abuse is tolerated, and that victims get the justice and support they have the right to expect."



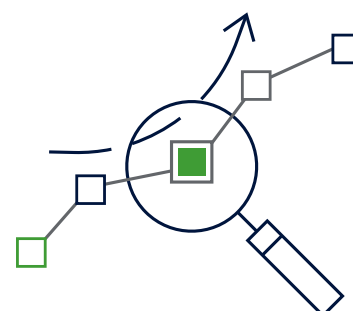
Questions for committee's consideration

- How have improved standards been reported to the Commissioner?



Questions for committee's consideration

- How has your Force implemented and embedded the smarter practices?
- How is the success of the smarter practices reported through your governance structure?



Changes needed to ensure stalking victims get the right response from police

An investigation into a police super-complaint submitted in November 2022 has found that significant changes are needed to improve the policing response to stalking reports. The IOPC, HMICFRS, and the CoP found that while understanding of stalking is improving within forces, cases are often not taken seriously enough, and the quality of investigations is inconsistent. The report highlights several key issues, including:

- victims are being put at risk due to poor risk assessments and safeguarding;
- the laws and guidance are confusing for forces and are inconsistent;
- police lack understanding of the scale and types of stalking in their area;
- resourcing and the quality of investigations are causing some issues; and
- more can be done to share and build on existing good practices.

The report includes 29 recommendations to ensure reports of stalking are consistently taken seriously and victims are better safeguarded. Key recommendations include:

- improving the quality of stalking investigations;
- simplifying the criminal law on stalking;
- making stalking protection orders easier to use; and
- enhancing collaboration between police and support services.

The report recommends that the NPCC publish a progress report in the coming months to outline the changes being made.

Annual deaths during or following police contact

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has published its annual report providing statistics on deaths during or following police contact in England and Wales between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. During 2023/24, in summary there were:

- 32 road traffic fatalities;
- two fatal police shootings and 24 deaths in or following police custody; and
- 68 apparent suicides after custody, and 60 other deaths following police contact, investigated by the IOPC.

The report also includes demographic information, trend data and information about the force or appropriate authority involved.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Has your Force identified strategic leads, smart actions, and timely implementation dates for the recommendations?
- Does your Force monitor and report actions through your governance structure?

Addressing menopause in the workplace

The Police Federation of England and Wales Menopause Survey 2023 provides key insights into the challenges faced by police officers and staff experiencing menopause. The survey received 6,409 responses. Key findings include:

- 83% of respondents find 'menopausal symptoms moderately or extremely problematic at work', up from 76% in 2018;
- tiredness (85%) and sleep disturbances (81%) continue to be the most challenging symptoms;
- recalling detailed information (72%) and working shifts (57%) were two of the top challenges for female officers and staff;
- 65% of respondents believe their job performance is negatively affected by menopausal symptoms; and
- 33% have considered leaving their jobs due to these difficulties, up from 20% in 2018.

Despite some progress since 2018, improvements have been 'slow and inconsistent across all 43 forces.' Flexible working arrangements and temporary role changes are suggested measures to support affected individuals. The findings highlight the need for more inclusive and supportive workplace policies to retain experienced officers and staff.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Have flexible working practices been implemented to support staff?
- Have your workforce policies been reviewed and updated to be more inclusive and supportive?

Fire

Two new Fire Standards

The Fire Standards Board has published the [Digital and Cyber Fire Standard](#) and the [Procurement and Commercial Fire Standard](#), completing the initial suite of Standards. The standards were developed in consultation with the sector and stakeholders and aim to promote continuous improvement and enhance service delivery across England's fire and rescue services (FRSs).

The Digital and Cyber Fire Standard aims to create FRSs that excel in using information and communications technology to deliver effective and efficient services. It will enable FRSs to enhance their prevention, protection, and response services to improve safety. The Procurement and Commercial Fire Standard promotes a comprehensive approach to procurement and commercial activities and aims to ensure value for money and high-quality goods and services.

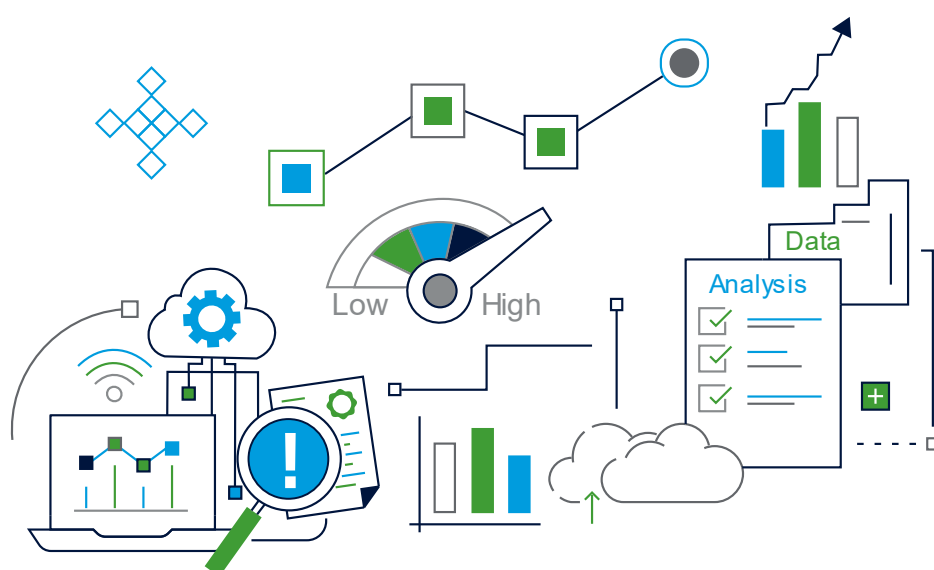


Questions for committee's consideration

- Has your Service identified what is required to meet the new standards?

Culture in fire and rescue services

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has reaffirmed its commitment to the [Core Code of Ethics](#), as well as creating safe, inclusive workplaces free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. In an effort to acknowledge and support colleagues who speak out about their experiences all UK FRSs now have independent reporting lines for confidential reporting, helping to ensure positive and professional work environments. The NFCC has confirmed it will continue to build on the [Culture Action Plan](#), including establishing a new lived experience forum to shape and inform its work, and ensuring the voices of those who have shared their experiences drive improvements.



Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

Between October 2023 and January 2024, HMICFRS carried out an inspection on how misconduct is handled in FRSs in England. The inspection focused on how FRSs are identifying and investigating misconduct and the effectiveness of misconduct processes. Detailed inspections were carried out at 10 FRSs, chosen as a representative sample in terms of location, size, governance structure and performance. The inspection involved reviewing policies, examining case files, and conducting interviews and focus groups with staff. Data from all 44 FRSs in England regarding grievance and discipline cases were also analysed.

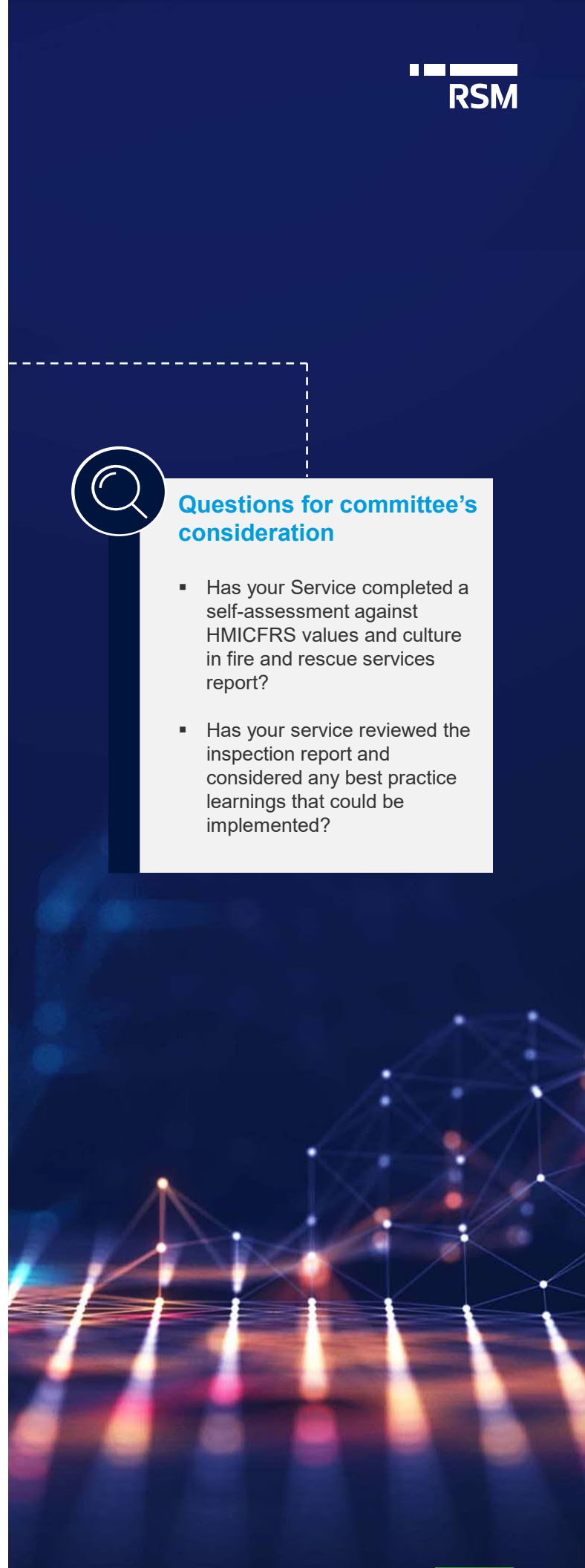
Key points from the inspection report include:

- leaders are prioritising cultural improvements and tackling misconduct, with some staff noticing positive changes, though others find the initiatives superficial;
- awareness of the Core Code of Ethics is high, with mixed results on its impact. Some services see positive effects, while others notice no change;
- better training on the Code and behaviour standards is needed for new recruits. There have been instances of serious misconduct during initial training, and probationary policies sometimes hinder immediate dismissal; and
- poor behaviour often occurs in tightly knit watches, which can become toxic. Negative watch cultures are resistant to change, with engrained poor behaviour and complicity from managers. Rotating staff and posting newly promoted staff to different watches or stations could help address these issues.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Has your Service completed a self-assessment against HMICFRS values and culture in fire and rescue services report?
- Has your service reviewed the inspection report and considered any best practice learnings that could be implemented?



Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report

The government has published the final report of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. In Phase 2 the inquiry examined the course of events that allowed the Grenfell Tower tragedy to occur resulting in the death of 72 people. The report states the Grenfell Tower fire ‘was the culmination of decades of failure by central government and other bodies in positions of responsibility in the construction industry to look carefully into the danger of incorporating combustible materials into the external walls of high-rise residential buildings and to act on the information.’

There were failures in the London Fire Brigade’s response where there had been a ‘chronic lack of effective management and leadership.’ Operational departments and support functions, such as the control room, were not integrated, there were shortcomings in how the brigade was able to deal with the large number of calls and training for handling fire survival calls was not prioritised. In addition, policies did not reflect national guidance and communication equipment did not function properly in the high-rise building largely of reinforced concrete.

The inquiry makes several recommendations to prevent another disaster of this kind and to improve the response when emergencies do occur. The inquiry recommends that the government establish a national College of Fire and Rescue immediately to:

- provide practical training, supplementing training provided by individual FRSs;
- educate through lectures and seminars to share experiences and promote good practices;
- undertake research into issues affecting FRSs, including major fires;
- develop equipment, policies, and procedures to ensure they enable an effective and safe emergency response; and
- setting and maintaining national standards of managerial competence for senior managers, including control room managers, with management training and regular assessments.

The Grenfell Tower refurbishment highlighted the critical need for a comprehensive fire safety strategy. It is recommended that a fire safety strategy, created by a registered fire engineer, be mandatory for building control approval and reviewed upon completion. This strategy must consider the needs of vulnerable individuals and ensure reliable fire performance testing methods for external walls.

NFCC response to Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report

Mark Hardingham, Chair of the NFCC, expressed deep sympathy for the families of the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire, acknowledging their ongoing grief and praised the bravery of firefighters and emergency responders. Mr Hardingham emphasised that FRSs have improved their preparedness for high-rise fires since the Phase 1 report but stressed the need for continued learning and systemic reform.

He commented that it is the responsibility of NFCC “to learn from the issues leading up to the incident, the actions on the night of the fire, what has happened since, and to continue to correct what went wrong. We will focus all our efforts on what we must do better or differently so that we never again see anything like the Grenfell Tower fire. We will carefully consider every recommendation in the report, giving them our full attention.”



Questions for committee’s consideration

- Has your Service identified strategic leads, smart actions, and timely implementation dates for recommendations made in the Grenfell Phase 2 report?
- Does your Service monitor and report actions through your governance structure?

NFCC's Document Transformation Suite

The NFCC's Digital, Data, and Technology Team has launched the Document Transformation Portal, which includes Document Translate and Simply Readable tools. These tools are available to all FRSs and can translate critical safety information into over 75 languages and simplify complex documents for better communication.

Potential use cases for these tools include:

- sharing safety information on events and holidays to ensure public awareness and preparedness;
- supporting Community Risk Management Planning;
- promoting fire safety at businesses, helping prevent incidents and provide intervention;
- targeted information can be provided to higher-risk individuals in their native languages and in easily digestible formats to ensure they understand and can act on the advice; and
- stakeholder engagement can be improved across communities to foster better communication and collaboration.

The tools aim to improve inclusion, engagement, and representation within communities.

NFCC calls for further action to tackle extreme weather events

The NFCC has called for more action to address the impact of extreme weather events, asking the government to 'consult on introducing statutory duties for flooding response and inland water safety in England.' Through the publication of new policy statements, the NFCC has emphasised that any new obligations must be supported by sustained funding.

The NFCC highlighted the growing risk of flooding due to climate change, with the UK Health Security Agency estimating that 6.1 million people were at significant risk, potentially rising to 13.3 million by 2050. Additionally, hotter summers increased water safety risks as more people engaged in water-based activities. In 2022, the hottest summer on record for the UK, recreational activities accounted for 58% of accidental drowning fatalities.



Procurement Act 2023 commencement date

The Cabinet Office [has announced](#) that the Procurement Act 2023 will now commence on 24 February 2025. This is four months from the original go-live date of 28 October 2024. It is to allow time for a new National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) to be produced.

A statement made on 12 September 2024 by Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office, Georgia Gould, read: "I am confident that the extra time to prepare will allow for a more seamless transition, ensuring a smoother and more effective implementation process for both contracting authorities and suppliers."

Procurement webinar

A webinar for public sector organisations was held on 3 July 2024, discussing the impact of the Procurement Act 2023.

[Access a recording of the webinar here.](#)

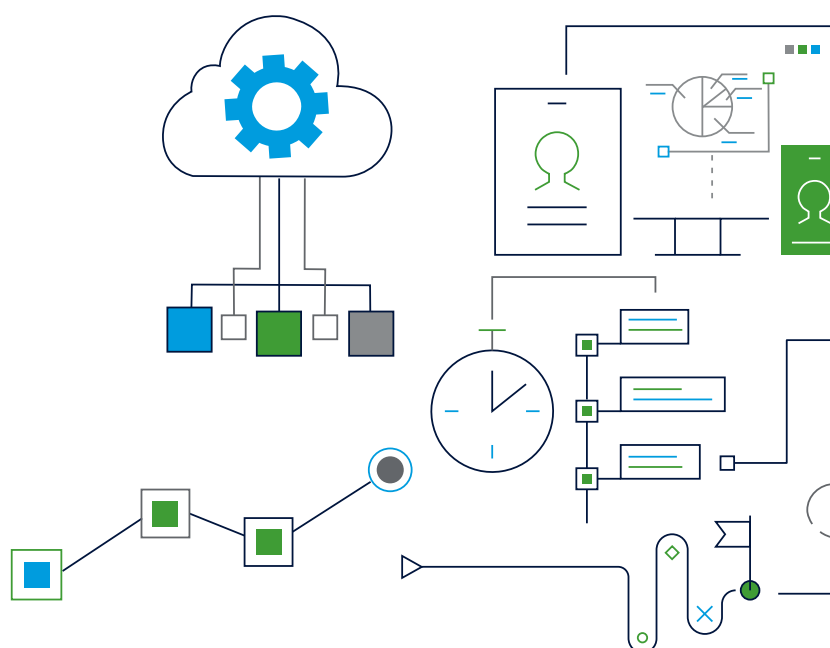


Questions for committee's consideration

Whilst the Act reduces administrative burdens on suppliers and the type of regulations, it also emphasises the importance of robust scrutiny and monitoring to ensure that procurement activities are conducted ethically, transparently and compliantly.

Has your Service considered the following.

- The strengthening of internal controls?
- Review of digital systems?
- Implementation of robust risk management frameworks?



References



[The policing response to antisocial behaviour: police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy \(PEEL\) spotlight report](#)



[Nationwide rollout for neighbourhood policing training](#)



[Autumn Budget](#)



[Progress to introduce a national operating model for rape and other serious sexual offences investigations](#)



[New smarter practice published to support force responses to Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse \(PPDA\)](#)



[Association of Police and Crime Commissioners \(APCC\) comment on report on failures to tackle police-perpetrated domestic abuse](#)



[Annual deaths during or following police contact report - 2023/24](#)



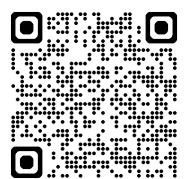
[Changes needed to ensure stalking victims get the right response from police](#)



[Addressing menopause in the workplace](#)



[Two new Fire Standards](#)



[Culture in fire and rescue services](#)



[Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services](#)



[Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report](#)



[NFCC response to Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report](#)



[NFCC's Document Transformation Suite](#)



[NFCC calls for further action to tackle extreme weather events](#)

Further information

Daniel Harris

National Head of Emergency Services and Local Government

T +44 (0)7792 948 767

daniel.harris@rsmuk.com

Consulting Technical

Research and author

technical.consulting@rsmuk.com

rsmuk.com

The UK group of companies and LLPs trading as RSM is a member of the RSM network. RSM is the trading name used by the members of the RSM network. Each member of the RSM network is an independent accounting and consulting firm each of which practises in its own right. The RSM network is not itself a separate legal entity of any description in any jurisdiction. The RSM network is administered by RSM International Limited, a company registered in England and Wales (company number 4040598) whose registered office is at 50 Cannon Street, London EC4N 6JJ. The brand and trademark RSM and other intellectual property rights used by members of the network are owned by RSM International Association, an association governed by article 60 et seq of the Civil Code of Switzerland whose seat is in Zug.

RSM UK Corporate Finance LLP, RSM UK Restructuring Advisory LLP, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP, RSM UK Tax and Advisory Services LLP, RSM UK Audit LLP, RSM UK Consulting LLP, and RSM UK Tax and Accounting Limited are not authorised under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 but we are able in certain circumstances to offer a limited range of investment services because we are licensed by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. We can provide these investment services if they are an incidental part of the professional services we have been engaged to provide. RSM UK Legal LLP is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, reference number 626317, to undertake reserved and non-reserved legal activities. It is not authorised under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 but is able in certain circumstances to offer a limited range of investment services because it is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and may provide investment services if they are an incidental part of the professional services that it has been engaged to provide. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, information contained in this communication may not be comprehensive and recipients should not act upon it without seeking professional advice.

© 2024 RSM UK Group LLP, all rights reserved