HM Fire Service Inspectorate

Independent Inspection of the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service

Integrity, Objectivity, and Fairness.

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FOREWORD

The Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) was established (as the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade) in 1973, following a decision to amalgamate the two Brigades that had previously operated within the country. It is a Service with a long, and very distinguished, history. It is a Service that has protected the communities of Northern Ireland through challenging times and with great integrity and honour. The NIFRS is, quite rightly, held in high regard across all sectors and across all communities in Northern Ireland and the staff who serve within it display a genuine pride in their organisation.

As Chief Inspector of HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland, I was honoured to be invited to lead this inspection and it is my pleasure to present this report, which I hope will assist the Service on its journey of continuous improvement.

Every member of the inspection team involved in drafting this report has been impressed by the willingness of those interviewed, to engage and speak openly across a wide range of issues. We have tried our best to reflect their views and opinions and have considered these fully when drafting this report.

Whilst it may appear when reading this report that the inspection team has been critical of some areas of business, I must emphasise that these observations are offered in a constructive manner. It is our desire not to apportion blame or to reflect unnecessarily on the past. Instead we hope that this report will act as a catalyst for improvement where the opportunity to improve exists.

I must also emphasise to all those who read this document that the NIFRS has provided, and continues to provide, a vital and professional service to the communities it serves. We believe that the time is right for the NIFRS to consider the disposition of assets, the training provided to personnel and the nature of the equipment required to match the risks faced today, and in the future, by communities in Northern Ireland. However, the commitment of its workforce is exemplary, and we believe this commitment will be a crucial element in the delivery of change.

The issues identified within this report are not unique to the NIFRS. These issues will indeed be evident in many other Fire and Rescue Services across the UK. Nor are the challenges identified insurmountable. With sound leadership, political support and financial investment I believe that each of the issues highlighted in this report can be fully addressed.

Finally, I must commend the leadership demonstrated by the Department of Health, and the Board of the NIFRS. In identifying, commissioning, and supporting, this independent inspection they have sought to proactively identify opportunities for improvement in a bid to provide the best service possible to the people of Northern Ireland.

Robert D Scott QFSM
HM Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1   His Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland (HMFSI) is a statutory body that operates within, but entirely independent of, the Scottish Government. The Inspectorate exists to provide independent, risk based, and proportionate professional inspection of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). It performs an important role in the overall governance of the SFRS providing assurance to the people of Scotland and Scottish Ministers that the SFRS is working in an efficient and effective manner, meeting its statutory responsibilities and delivering Best Value.

1.2   Northern Ireland does not have its own Fire Service Inspectorate, and whilst HMFSI has no statutory standing or powers in Northern Ireland, there is a long-established professional relationship between HMFSI and the Department of Health (DoH) in Northern Ireland, with HM Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (The Chief Inspector) having been asked to provide advice to DoH on a number of occasions since this relationship was first established. Therefore, in June 2022, following concerns raised around the operation of the NIFRS, the DoH (supported by the Board of NIFRS) recognised the need for independent, experienced, professional scrutiny and commissioned the Chief Inspector to lead a formal inspection of NIFRS.

1.3   This is the final report of the Inspection Team that carried out this work and although the inspection has been commissioned by the DoH, and welcomed by the NIFRS Board, the outcome of the inspection is entirely independent. The Chief Inspector takes sole responsibility for the report, its content and conclusions.

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2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1   Since March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has been an ever present and disruptive element that all organisations have had to contend with. NIFRS is no different; the 30 months prior to this inspection have been extremely challenging with the uncertain and ever-changing demands created by the pandemic. This has required the Service to adopt a reductionist approach, with its key focus being to provide, maintain and deliver an effective emergency service, with limited opportunity for NIFRS to undertake anything more than routine service delivery work.

2.2   In line with all public sector organisations, NIFRS continues to operate within extremely challenging fiscal times; they have experienced a real terms reduction of £14.5 million since 2011/12. The pressure on financial resources, and the expectation that front-line services must be protected, has resulted in reductions in support services, both in terms of personnel numbers and a lack of investment in enabling management information systems (MIS). These 'solutions' have reduced the cost base of NIFRS but are having a significant detrimental impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation. It would appear that whilst these solutions were intended to be interim, they have removed much of the corporate capacity of the organisation such as Strategic Planning, Performance Management and Programme Management. These arrangements have now been in place for an extended period and these 'interim solutions' have now become the norm.

2.3   One of the biggest challenges over the past decade has been a lack of stability of leadership at the Executive level within NIFRS. This instability permeates throughout the Service, for example, at the time of writing this report, 47 of the 94 flexi-duty senior officer roles were being occupied in a temporary capacity. There has also been considerable and continuing instability at a political level, with the Northern Ireland Assembly not sitting for a number of years. As a result there has been limited Ministerial priority and direction setting for NIFRS, something which, in the form of a Framework Document is normal practice across the other nations of the UK. The Board has also experienced instability, when, due to a challenge around appointments, the Board had to operate with 5 Non-Executive Members down for a period of 18 months. This instability, alongside the Covid and financial challenges described above, has created a set of circumstances where uncertainty and disturbance has arisen. This has resulted in significant challenges in the building of key relationships.

2.4   The outcome of this stripping of corporate capacity, the lack of investment in MIS and the number of changes at an Executive level, is that the organisation is challenged in setting a clear strategic direction, identifying priorities, managing risk, and allocating appropriate resources. There doesn't appear to have been a clear methodology applied to deliver these, including an analysis of risk and demand, a working Finance Strategy and a working People Strategy, all underpinned by a clear corporate risk appetite. A risk critical example of this is the failure to prioritise the full alignment with National Operational Guidance (NOG), despite an Internal Audit report identifying the risk and a recovery action plan being agreed.

2.5   Many key strategic planning documents examined are either in draft form or are out of date. There is little or no synergy between them and on occasions they are contradictory or using different terminology and objectives for the same thing. The documents do, however, present some very positive language and the stated aims, although ambitious, are forward thinking and align with the aspirations of a modern Fire and Rescue Service that seeks to remain relevant to the communities it serves.

2.6   More positively, the workforce is extremely loyal to the organisation. The vast majority of staff interviewed demonstrated a very strong association with the 'brand' and possess a genuine pride in their respective and collective roles. The Inspection Team witnessed a clear desire, amongst all staff groups, to always do the right thing for the communities they serve and deliver positive outcomes. Individuals, and teams, frequently go beyond what should reasonably be expected (with a long-hours culture being the norm). In spite of this desire to deliver positive outcomes the current challenges are acutely felt and are having a considerable impact, with many staff expressing frustration at, what they perceived to be, a lack of leadership, poor communications and citing low morale.

2.7   From a front-line service delivery perspective, many personnel are feeling vulnerable. They are concerned at the reduced crewing levels and the quality of training available to develop and maintain their competence. They are feeling frustrated at reduced resources in Fleet, Information Technology (IT), Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Operational Support, where extended lead times are being experienced for what appears to them to be basic and routine requests for support. They are also frustrated at what they see as a lack of leadership and a coherent direction of travel. From a corporate support staff perspective, many people reported that they feel undervalued and under increasing pressure. A 20.8% turnover of corporate staff last year, and indeed within the Human Resources (HR) team a 41.9% turnover, provided a strong indication of this.

2.8   From our engagement during this process we believe there is in place a capable and supportive Sponsor Team and Board. They display a strong commitment to the Service and to working with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). We are also pleased to see some stability returning to the ELT with the vast majority of ELT members now being appointed in a substantive capacity. The Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (CFRO) and his team are well aware of the issues outlined above and are now in the early stages of addressing these. The current ELT have demonstrated without question that they have the skills and professionalism to lead the service on this journey of change. We are also encouraged by the desire shown by all parties to work with the Inspection Team to identify opportunities for improvement.

2.9   The level of improvement required will take time, financial investment and significant political support if they are to be successful. The observations and recommendations within this report should assist the Service in better understanding the main areas of concern, allocating resources to priority areas, and developing a detailed action plan to address the recommendations of the Inspection Team and set NIFRS on a positive journey of improvement.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   A dedicated resource should be tasked with the alignment of NIFRS policy and associated training to National Operational Guidance.

3.2   A Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) should be developed that accurately reflects risk, activity and demand across areas and across times of day. An Emergency Response Model that is aligned, or at least based on this CRMP should be developed.

3.3   Improvement to training systems and potential review of training structures should be introduced to ensure that staff are provided with risk critical training and development opportunities, aligned to a development pathway that resembles those in place across the UK.

3.4   A Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP) should be created that identifies and takes steps to fill vacancies across the organisation in a bid to provide stability (particularly across management cadre).

3.5   Appropriate investment should be made in IT systems that will improve efficiency in relation to support staff functions.

3.6   A clear set of priorities should be issued by Government in the form of a Fire Framework that sets expectations and priorities for the coming years.

3.7   A revised formal corporate planning process should be developed that includes a Strategic Plan (influenced by the CRMP, and aligned to the Fire Framework), Annual Operating Plans, Local Plans, Station Plans etc and an associated Performance Management Framework to measure progress against these plans.

3.8   Projects should be delivered through, or in association with, a programme office and appropriate programme management disciplines applied.

3.9   The definition of roles and responsibilities should be revised and clarified. Relevant training should be provided to ensure management and Board members act within the parameters of their respective roles.

3.10 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) must be a priority for all public services. NIFRS should take steps to review organisational culture to ensure that staff behaviours reflect the corporate values described in its strategic documents.

3.11 The DoH should establish arrangements for the ongoing scrutiny and inspection of the NIFRS by an appropriate, fully independent and operationally competent body.

4 SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

4.1 Terms of Reference (TOR) for this inspection were developed between the DoH and the Chief Inspector (Appendix A). It was agreed that the inspection would aim to provide an independent examination of the challenges facing NIFRS, including:

- A review of relevant policies and standard operating procedures to ensure these are aligned to, or take account of, current NOG.

- NIFRS risk/demand profile, coupled with an analysis of historical activity levels and resourcing (headcount/finance).

- Systems in place for ensuring operational staff attain necessary training and that these are maintained to a specified standard throughout their time in post.

- NIFRS succession planning processes to fulfil future resource demands at all levels.

- Consideration of NIFRS current support staff structures compared with organisations of a similar size and remit.

- Governance arrangements in place between the DoH and NIFRS Board (Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM)/operational framework/Partnership Agreement), between NIFRS Board and the ELT.

- NIFRS progress against NIFRS "People Strategy" outcomes to better understand issues of organisational culture, staff development, wellbeing, diversity and leadership.

- NIFRS infrastructure, estate and equipment; to determine adequate safety levels and fitness for purpose.

- The appropriateness of NIFRS structures for fire safety enforcement, education and advice, compared with services of a similar size.

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5   INSPECTION APPROACH

5.1   The TOR for this inspection were agreed prior to the inspection, which formally commenced on Thursday 30 June 2022. The fieldwork was conducted by a core team of 4 inspectors (Appendix B), comprising of personnel who have experience of leading Fire and Rescue Services at an executive and non-executive level. The core team was supported, where necessary, by other appropriately qualified and experienced professionals.

5.2   The team aimed to carry out inspection work in line with the TOR and triangulate evidence in order to draw valid conclusions upon which to make recommendations for improvement. The team interviewed/met with key personnel, i.e. Board members, DoH officials, ELT members, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members, Heads of Function and officials from the representative bodies. They also reviewed available strategic documentation, performance information and data, as well as observing operational incidents, training exercises and executive level meetings.

5.3   Given the concerns raised around the operation of NIFRS and to ensure robust consideration of the TOR, the Inspection Team recognised the value in engaging as widely and with as many people as possible across the organisation. This approach ensured that the Inspectors accessed the perspectives and experiences of personnel from across the entire Service, thereby building a more detailed understanding of its organisation, departments, functions and most importantly, its people through their lived experiences.

5.4   To facilitate this, the Inspectors engaged with the crews at each of the 67 operational fire stations, the Regional Control Centre (RCC) personnel, the Area and District management teams and the personnel that form the teams across the support functions that enable front-line service delivery. By adopting this approach, a total of 1,088 NIFRS personnel were able to engage with the Inspection Team through the course of the inspection. Table 1 below provides a summary breakdown of the functions/teams engaged.

Table 1

Function	Duty System	Who	No. of Locations
Operational Fire Stations	Wholetime	2 Watches	14
	Day Crewed	1 Watch	4
	On Call	Whole crew	59
	Volunteer	Whole crew	1
Regional Control Centre	N/A	4 Watches	1
		Systems Support	1
		CCMS Project	1
Support Staff	N/A	IT	1
		Facilities & Assets	1
		Fleet, Engineering & Supplies	1
		Finance Team	1
		HR Team	1
		Executive PAs	1
Learning and Development Centre	Day Duty	Instructors	2
	Flexi Duty	Training Managers	
Area Staff	N/A	Management Team	4
District Staff	N/A	Management Team	13

5.5   In each of the engagement sessions, 2 hours were allocated for the visit and the format was a semi-structured discussion, with the Inspectors asking open questions (below) relating to the TOR. Importantly the discussion was allowed to flow, focusing on empowering personnel to share their lived experience and perceptions (and therefore their reality) of working in NIFRS.

5.6   **Discussion Question Topics**
   a General observations of working in NIFRS
   b Operational Equipment
   c Operational Intelligence
   d Operational Assurance
   e Training & Development
   f Community Safety
   g Buildings/Assets
   h Engagement with Senior Managers
   i Communication
   j Organisational Culture
   k Is there anything else you would wish to share?
   l What one thing would you change to improve NIFRS?

5.6.1 Through the course of the engagements, which were very well supported by personnel, common themes/issues emerged and these are summarised in the following paragraphs.

5.6.2 There is a very strong loyalty and commitment from staff towards the organisation and people have a real pride in their identity working for NIFRS. They believe that communities across Northern Ireland respect, value and trust their Fire and Rescue Service.

5.6.3 Many of the people we interviewed expressed a real concern about the lack of staff across all functions to deliver against the day to day ask of the organisation. Personnel feel that due to budgetary pressures and the need to find efficiencies, there has been a continual cuts agenda for some time and that it is always the staffing levels that are impacted first. This results in the organisation having to rely on the goodwill of people to go 'above and beyond' with an over-reliance on the use of overtime to maintain safe crewing levels within operational functions. Operational personnel are also frustrated with the application of the overtime policy in that the amount of overtime any individual can work is restricted. If they reach a threshold then under the working time directive they are unable to do any further pre-arranged overtime, even if they were willing to do so to keep an appliance operationally available. Within the support and enabling functions, staff numbers have decreased in the organisation's desire to 'protect the front-line'. This has resulted in the demand on support services outweighing the capacity to deliver. Consequently, operational personnel feel unsupported and support staff overwhelmed. This is exacerbated by the pay scales of support staff, which are perceived by many to be lower, like for like, when compared with other public sector organisations in Northern Ireland. NIFRS is therefore no longer competitive in the employment market which makes attracting the right calibre of new staff difficult and retaining existing staff challenging. During the course of the inspection, we were told of valuable and skilled staff exiting the organisation to work for another public body in essentially the same role but for significant salary increases.

5.6.4 Across the organisation, staff were routinely challenged and frustrated by what they perceive to be a lack of workforce planning, stating that NIFRS always seems to be reactive rather than proactive. For example, the organisation waits for vacancies to arise, even though it knows they are coming, before commencing a recruitment or promotion process. This lack of planning then creates skill gaps, a loss of continuity and capacity issues due to the fact that recruitment and promotion processes take so long to complete. In some cases we were advised this could take in excess of 12 months from start to finish. During the intervening period, the function or location affected is running short on resource, with the direct impact this has on the ability to deliver against stated workloads. During the vast majority of the engagement sessions, personnel expressed frustration with the format of recruitment and/or promotion processes and they don't believe the 'Personal Qualities and Attributes' (PQA) based approach actually produces the most suitable candidates for the role. This is because they feel that the PQA process leans towards academia rather than practical application and the process doesn't necessarily take account of experience, but relies on the ability of the candidate to 'tell a story' that is not challenged or validated. In addition to the frustration cited around the format of the processes, there were a number of occasions where people stated that they did not have any trust in the integrity of the system, with concerning words like "cronyism" and "nepotism"

being used as descriptors of how processes were run and people selected. Whilst this is very difficult for the Inspection Team to verify, the fact it was raised on a number of occasions, right across the organisation gave sufficient cause for concern.

5.6.5   Staff stated that there are too many temporary promotions in place, which results in an instability across the organisational structure, inconsistency in decision making and a real challenge to developing professional relationships, with personnel changing post every 6 months. Staff were also frustrated about the apparent lack of structure to selecting personnel for temporary promotions, with the only qualifying criteria seeming to be the time in role and their position on a temporary promotion waiting list. Suitability in terms of experience and qualifications, for the actual post, do not appear to be factors considered when people are selected for the temporary promotions. The lack of experience and qualifications is considered to be counterproductive, as the individuals will take time to learn the role and are likely to require considerable support from the people they are there to manage. In addition, just as they get up to speed, they get moved on as the 6 months period has elapsed, and so the whole process begins again. This has been the experience of many functions for a number of years and their reality is, therefore, that it is almost impossible to make progress and move anything forward.

5.6.6   Staff expressed concern around the inconsistency in interpretation of policy and consequently its application. They believe that this is as a result of silo working across the 4 geographic area commands, with it being frequently suggested to the Inspection Team that NIFRS felt like 4 different organisations and sometimes 5 when the disconnect from the HQ function was mentioned. In reality, what staff experience is the same thing being done in 4 different ways, which creates confusion, frustration and at times a strong feeling of inequality. This was corroborated by the Area Command teams. This was not solely specific to the operational sector, as staff from across the support functions have experienced the same thing. Across the Service there is a lack of understanding of the interdependency of functions/areas, combined with a lack of understanding of the very pressing challenges being experienced by NIFRS. Each function therefore tends to operate in isolation, addressing its own needs. Collaborative working, improved engagement and better organisational communication would ensure that interdependencies are identified and understood. With structured planning and prioritisation, appropriate resources could be allocated to better meet the Service and community's needs.

5.6.7   NIFRS presents as an ambitious organisation that is effective at developing ideas and starting projects and programmes of change. This ambition however is hampered through a lack of resources and although many things may be started, they are rarely finished or completed and often sit in a position of flux for years. This creates a sense within staff that the Service is always changing when in fact the reality is, that nothing substantive ever changes. The stated ambitions need to be harnessed to the willingness of the workforce to deliver change, through a robust strategic planning process supported by a properly resourced programme management approach, if real change and improvement is to be delivered.

5.6.8   Most staff commented on, what they perceived as, a lack of leadership across the organisation. Starting at the top and working down through all levels, with people not understanding the strategy, objectives and priorities of the organisation. In addition, a large proportion of personnel identified that the prevalence of temporary posts

contributes to the leadership challenge. They observe that people are not in the role long enough to make any necessary changes and are unable (or unwilling) to make the leadership decisions required. A recurring comment was that many in temporary positions have too much focus on themselves and the next promotion rather than on the organisational need. Staff at all levels recognise that a lack of formal and structured leadership and management training is contributing to this challenge. On a number of occasions across the organisation, staff stated that they had witnessed or were aware of what they consider to be poor behaviours and poor decision making from some senior managers, who should actually be setting an example, however, it was the opinion of the majority that they have in fact done the very opposite. Frustratingly for staff, the organisation and system seems to accept this.

5.6.9   Operational personnel are very concerned with the current Learning & Development (L&D) structure and its supporting processes. They do not believe it is fit for purpose nor delivering against the organisational or individual needs. They are particularly concerned with risk critical training such as Breathing Apparatus (BA) Refresher training not being kept up to date. In addition, a large proportion of personnel expressed concern about the availability of courses and the lack of opportunity to access structured and accredited professional and personal development. Concerns were also frequently raised about the inconsistent delivery of information and material at the Learning and Development Centre (LDC), combined with the quality and credibility of the training instructors. Many station based personnel perceive that some instructors have little or no operational experience and therefore lack depth and credibility. The new LDC at Cookstown was raised frequently by operational personnel. There was a strong support across the organisation about the development in principle, however a considerable number of staff had significant concerns around the location of the facility and associated travel times, as well as how NIFRS was going to staff and operate the facility to its full potential. As training is a specific line of enquiry within the inspection TOR, further comment on training will be provided within that section of the report.

5.6.10   Managers at all levels across the organisation stated that they frequently felt disempowered and having to operate in a system where mistrust and upward decision making was the norm. Managers were equally frustrated by what they perceive to be a lack of desire from the organisation to undertake meaningful capability management, citing a lack of support and guidance when having to have the difficult conversations and make the difficult decisions. This results in challenging situations and circumstances not being dealt with, thereby exacerbating the challenges around workforce planning, resource allocation and subsequent capacity to meet organisational needs and demand.

5.6.11   Without exception, throughout the inspection staff cited the IT system as being extremely problematic, a barrier to progress and essentially unfit for purpose. Staff routinely have difficulty getting logged in to the system and then can be 'kicked off' without warning for no apparent reason. There are multiple standalone systems and the lack of integration means that the same information often has to be keyed multiple times across different platforms, which is not only inefficient, it is also challenging due to the unreliable access to user accounts. Staff are equally frustrated in trying to access IT support with the system requiring a helpdesk request to be logged on the system. For people who cannot access the system, there is no method of requesting support other than getting someone else to log it for them. In these instances, the

helpdesk then liaise with the originator of the request and not the account having the problem which again leads to frustration. Control room staff are equally frustrated as even due to the critical nature of the operating systems within control, they cannot access a 'priority system' should there be a need for IT support. The IT capability is reported on in more detail at section 6.8.21 of the report.

5.6.12   The quality of fire appliances and the operational equipment they carry is well received by operational personnel. Whilst there is a very small number of locations where crews would welcome an updated or newer vehicle, the vast majority of firefighters across Northern Ireland are appreciative of the high standard and good specification of equipment. There were some challenges presented around the turnaround time for cleaning of firefighting personal protective equipment (fire kit) and the quality and suitability of spare fire kit as an interim/emergency measure. However, operational crews were well aware of the emerging evidence around the carcinogenic effects of the products of combustion and supportive of the improving approach being taken by NIFRS to address this issue. They also advised that there is an increasing length of time being taken to access replacement operational equipment. The Fleet, Engineering and Supplies function is reported on in more detail at section 6.8.12 of the report.

5.6.13   Operational personnel across Northern Ireland feel they are delivering effective community fire safety information and advice, including the completion of free Home Fire Safety Visits and talks to primary school children. They would however like access to updated tools such as interactive games for school visits and better quality materials to leave with the community to remind them of the visit. There are varying degrees of activity across different stations and whilst this may sometimes be based on demographics and risk, it is primarily due to the challenging financial situation and the directive from the organisation for crews to focus on the priority areas mentioned above, particularly in the areas served by on-call crews. On-call firefighters play an important role in protecting their communities and there was a clear willingness from the majority of those engaged to deliver more community safety activity through a structured, resourced and financed approach.

5.6.14   During the inspection, the team visited the volunteer crew on Rathlin Island and, in common with the experience of visiting crews on Scottish Islands, they found them to be extremely self-sufficient, resilient and possessing a real pride in the service they provide for their community. The Fire and Rescue Service capability is delivered through a team of trained volunteers who are provided with a full firefighting capability fire appliance and a fire station, which is shared with HM Coastguard and also houses the Coastguard emergency response capability. During the engagement with the Inspection Team, the Rathlin Island crew advised that they felt there had been good investment from NIFRS in developing the island's firefighting capability with recognised and tested operational procedures to support them from Ballycastle and beyond, should the need arise. One area however that they stated they would be keen to explore, given their isolated location, was the emergency medical response (EMR) capability on the island and how the local fire crew could perhaps support and help to deliver this. The crew made it absolutely clear that there was no intention to replace existing medical intervention capabilities but to seek opportunity to support that for the benefit of islanders and visitors to the island alike.

5.6.15   Staff across all functions and areas reported that they considered there was poor communication across the organisation. Most communications are issued electronically, however the challenges with the IT system means that often staff don't receive them or certainly not in a timely manner. Equally, much of the information received by individuals is not necessarily relevant to them and it seems a 'send to all' approach exists with emails. Prior to the global pandemic, there were structured and planned engagement and team meetings where area, district and/or functional personnel could meet to discuss business matters, thereby ensuring continuity of messaging whilst at the same time developing knowledge and understanding as well as developing professional relationships. Frequently staff stated that they would welcome the reintroduction of these events as when people don't know the full narrative, they fill in the blanks with what they believe to be the reality rather than with the actual reality. There is a small and professional communications team in NIFRS. Although their capacity is limited they produce some excellent, internal and external, communications. That said given the observations above, and the demand for contact and engagement with staff and wider stakeholders, consideration should be given to the size and focus of this team.

5.6.16   Across the organisation, staff at all levels stated to the Inspection Team that they felt undervalued, that their goodwill was continually exploited and that morale within the workforce was at an all-time low. Concerningly, staff reported that they felt like they were operating in a culture of mistrust and fear with the organisation always looking for someone to blame, with too many managers who only focused on themselves. An example from the Regional Control Centre (RCC), where a member of the control staff reported 'feeling undervalued by managers and completely detached from the rest of the organisation and considered as an afterthought to anything and everything that NIFRS did'.

5.6.17   RCC staff expressed concern around the workloads associated with operating the Resource Planning Unit (RPU) outside of normal office hours. Due to the overall lack of operational resource, it has been necessary for NIFRS to establish a Headquarters based RPU which oversees the availability of operational personnel and co-ordinates operational staffing on a daily basis, moving resources around to meet operational and organisational need. During office hours, Monday to Friday, this capability is delivered by a dedicated team of 4 personnel, however outwith those hours, the responsibility passes to the duty watch in the RCC to deliver the capability on top of delivering a busy emergency service control function.

5.6.18   The issue of firefighters' Pay & Conditions was raised at almost all engagements. It is recognised by staff that pay is negotiated at a national level through the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (NJC) and as such NIFRS has limited control over agreed pay levels. The issue is of such importance to firefighters, however, that it is appropriate to recognise this within the inspection report as a key influencing factor that is having a direct impact on the wellbeing, motivation and morale of personnel. Outwith the pay level issue, personnel frequently raised the possibility of paying additional responsibility allowances (ARA's) for specialist skills. There was an overwhelming support among station based staff for recognition of emergency fire appliance driving as a specialist skill and for personnel receiving an ARA for undertaking this role. Personnel suggested that this approach would address the current issue of a shortage of drivers by incentivising taking on this additional

skill. It is important to note that emergency fire appliance driving is a core skill in the firefighter's role map and therefore does not attract an ARA. The Inspection Team are in no way advocating that an ARA should be paid for driving and present this for information only.

5.6.19   The challenge around pay is not exclusive to the operational workforce, it applies equally to support staff within the enabling functions, where it was also raised frequently. The current support staff pay scales are no longer attractive to the employment market and as such NIFRS is finding it difficult to attract new people into support roles whilst at the same time finding it difficult to keep staff, particularly when other organisations are paying significantly more for like for like roles.

5.6.20   Table 2 below provides a summary of topics discussed during visits to stations, control, LDC and area/district management teams. This table shows topics that were raised on 60% or more occasions with the full list being available in Appendix C.

Table 2

FIRE STATIONS	
Poor IT systems	99%
Strong commitment of staff and pride in organisation	97%
Firefighter Pay & Conditions	94%
Instability in structures/too many temp positions	91%
Concern at availability of resources/personnel churn	84%
Lack of leadership	84%
Poor training structure	84%
Frustration in recruitment processes	82%
Training course availability – poor	82%
Inconsistency in decision making and/or policy interpretation	81%
Low morale and goodwill eroded, feeling undervalued	79%
MODAS – very poor and unreliable	78%
Engagement with senior managers/Board members – poor	78%
Gartan management policy – poor	76%
Equipment issue and repair/replacement – extended turnaround	76%
Good appliances/operational equipment/PPE	76%
Overall Service wide communications – poor	75%
Experience/credibility/quality of instructors at LDC	73%
Lack of workforce planning	69%
Unrealistic on-call firefighter workloads	69%
Good community safety activity being delivered	69%
Frustration in promotion processes	63%
On-call Project – lack of progress or update	63%
Confusion/frustration with on-call availability contracts	63%

REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRE	
Instability in structures/too many temp positions	100%
Low morale, goodwill eroded and feeling undervalued by managers	100%
Control staff feel detached from the rest of the organisation	100%
Poor training structure for control staff	100%
No formal development pathways or packages across all roles	100%
Concern at availability of resources/personnel turnover	86%
Strong commitment of staff and pride in organisation	86%
RPU workloads are unrealistic and putting significant pressure on already depleted resources	86%
Lack of workforce planning and succession planning	86%
Poor IT systems	86%
Concerns about lack of progress and update on new Command and Control Mobilising System (CCMS)	86%
Inconsistency in decision making/policy interpretation	71%
Lack of leadership	71%
Poor management processes (within control management team)	71%
Continual reliance on overtime to maintain minimum crewing – detrimental impact on personnel	71%
Lack of career/personal development opportunities	71%
Frustration in recruitment processes	71%

AREA AND DISTRICT MANAGEMENT TEAMS	
Instability in structures/too many temp positions	100%
Strong commitment of staff and pride in organisation	100%
Concern at availability of resources/personnel turnover	94%
Lack of leadership	94%
Frustration in promotion processes	94%
Poor IT systems	94%
Inconsistency in decision making and/or policy interpretation	88%
Frustration in recruitment processes	88%
Too much silo working	82%
Lack of workforce planning	82%
Poor training structure	82%
Training course availability – poor	82%
Lack of project/programme management processes	76%
Lack of career/personal development opportunities	76%
Lack of capability management taking place across organisation	76%
On-call system requires review/update	65%
Culture of blame and lack of trust	65%
Managers do not feel empowered	65%

SUPPORT STAFF	
Concern at availability of resources/personnel churn	100%
Lack of strategy, vision or planning	100%
Lack of project/programme management	100%
Strong commitment of staff and pride in organisation	100%
Support staff Pay & Conditions	100%
Low morale and goodwill eroded, feeling undervalued	100%
Instability in structures/too many temp positions	89%
Too much silo working	89%
Lack of workforce planning	89%
Poor IT systems	89%
Overall Service wide communications – poor	89%
Inconsistency in decision making/policy interpretation	78%
Lack of leadership	78%
Business processes overly bureaucratic and too paper based	78%
Culture of blame and lack of trust	78%
Managers do not feel empowered	78%
Lack of capability management taking place across organisation	78%
Need to embrace the digital world and automation	78%
Operational personnel don't always seem to understand support functions needs and challenges	78%
Engagement with Board members – poor	78%
Frustration in recruitment processes	67%
Lack of career/personal development opportunities	67%
Payroll systems – slow to implement pay uplifts and lack of detail on payslip	67%
Working from home/hybrid working – welcomed by staff	67%
Engagement with ELT – poor	67%

5.7 On-call Duty System

5.7.1   Of the 67 fire stations in Northern Ireland, 60 of them are crewed wholly or partly by on-call firefighters. On-call firefighters are personnel living within local communities who carry a pager. When there is a demand for an operational response, the pager is activated, and they are required to respond to the fire station within 5 minutes to crew the fire appliance(s) and attend the emergency call. On-call firefighters generally have a primary employment out with the Fire and Rescue Service so when the demand comes during normal working hours they usually respond from their place of work and outwith those times from their home address. Within Northern Ireland on-call firefighters are required to provide a minimum of 84 hours of availability per week and in some cases, depending on their specific contract of employment, this figure may be higher. In addition to providing operational availability, they are required to attend a training evening at their station for 2 hours each week in addition to 7 further days over the year. For providing this commitment, on-call firefighters are paid a standing retaining fee each week and then paid an hourly rate for all fire calls, training events and other work associated with the role, such as the delivery of community safety activities.

5.7.2   The on-call firefighting system was created in the post-war years and designed around how people lived their lives at that time. The system has served communities incredibly well; however, people are now far more mobile and no longer always live and work in the same location. These changes in lifestyles have not been reflected in the on-call system and have created a challenge to maintain good operational availability. This is due to the on-call service being demand led and there is no way of knowing when a call will be received. At the same time, on-call firefighters must meet the obligations of their primary employment contracts and work where their employers require them to do so, often some distances away from their on-call fire station, essentially rendering them unavailable whilst away. Normally if it was 1 or 2 firefighters this could be absorbed by the remaining crew. Current lifestyles, however, coupled with primary employment requirements, can result in many of the firefighters being away from the local area on a daily basis. Consequently, this can have a direct impact on the availability of the local fire appliance(s). It should be noted that this challenge is not peculiar to NIFRS and the issue of on-call availability is felt by Fire and Rescue Services across the UK.

5.7.3   Data provided to the Inspection Team from NIFRS confirms the challenge around primary employment commitments; however, it also identifies that providing weekend cover is also becoming a challenge. During the inspection, on-call firefighters explained that this was primarily due to the fact that the majority of on-call firefighters had provided their contracted availability through the week and therefore some elected to book off for the weekend with the subsequent impact on appliance availability. For those on-call firefighters remaining who are contracted to provide availability at the weekend, in some cases due to the station crewing profile, there were insufficient numbers purely on a weekend contract to maintain minimum crewing on their own, which in turn impacted on appliance availability.

5.7.4   The data provided is summarised in the tables below, which display the percentage of time on-call appliances have been below minimum crewing for years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 across the working day period of Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1800 hours, the evening and night time periods of Monday to Thursday, 1800 to 0800 hours, the weekend period of Friday to Monday, 1800 to 0800 hours and finally an overall figure across the full year. A full breakdown of each year for each station is provided in Appendix D.

Table 3

Unavailability of Minimum Crew for On Call Appliances – 2019/2020			
Station Type	Mon – Fri 0800 – 1800	Mon – Thu 1800 – 0800	Fri – Mon 1800 – 0800	Overall
1 Pump	26.2%	3.7%	15.5%	14.8%
2 Pump (1st Pump)	9.6%	0.5%	3.5%	4.4%
2 Pump (2nd Pump)	59.9%	11.4%	38.0%	35.7%
Day Crewed (1st Pump)	0%	0.4%	3.0%	1.3%
Day Crewed (2nd Pump)	6.6%	11.3%	40.6%	20.6%

Table 4

Unavailability of Minimum Crew for On Call Appliances – 2020/2021			
Station Type	Mon – Fri 0800 – 1800	Mon – Thu 1800 – 0800	Fri – Mon 1800 – 0800	Overall
1 Pump	21.0%	4.0%	12.9%	12.3%
2 Pump (1st Pump)	8.8%	0.8%	3.4%	4.1%
2 Pump (2nd Pump)	56.0%	13.2%	32.6%	31.5%
Day Crewed (1st Pump)	1.8%	0.7%	2.3%	1.6%
Day Crewed (2nd Pump)	28.1%	12.3%	34.0%	25.0%

Table 5

Unavailability of Minimum Crew for On Call Appliances – 2021/2022			
Station Type	Mon – Fri 0800 – 1800	Mon – Thu 1800 – 0800	Fri – Mon 1800 – 0800	Overall
1 Pump	30.2%	6.2%	18.4%	17.9%
2 Pump (1st Pump)	14.3%	2.7%	7.5%	7.9%
2 Pump (2nd Pump)	63.2%	18.1%	47.1%	42.2%
Day Crewed (1st Pump)	2.8%	0.7%	3.4%	2.3%
Day Crewed (2nd Pump)	30.9%	15.5%	44.9%	30.9%

5.7.5 As previously explained, firefighters' pay and conditions are negotiated at a national level through the NJC. On-call firefighters are paid 10% of the annual salary of a wholetime firefighter with the hourly rate of pay being exactly the same whether wholetime or on-call. The current pay and conditions for on-call firefighters is making it challenging to retain existing personnel and this is also having a detrimental impact on attracting new personnel to the Service, particularly those who can provide good availability and are able to meet the contractual availability needs. This is reflected in the current on-call staffing figures for NIFRS. As of December 2022, the agreed on-call establishment across all locations is 994 personnel with the actual number in post totalling 900 personnel. Of those 900 in post, a total of 133 are currently on long term sick leave (28 days or more), meaning that there are only 767 of the 994 establishment available, i.e. 77% of the on-call workforce. When the staffing levels are combined with the availability challenges of the remaining personnel, it puts significant pressure on the organisation's ability to maintain a functioning and resilient on-call operational capability across Northern Ireland. It should again be noted that this is not just a challenge for Northern Ireland, so much so that the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has established an On-Call Group to consider how to address the issue.

5.7.6 Over the course of the inspection, each of the 60 on-call locations were visited and engaged by a member of the Inspection Team and on every occasion the crews demonstrated a real commitment and desire to deliver an effective emergency service for their respective communities. There were some common themes that emerged specific to the on-call firefighters and these are detailed below:

■ On-call firefighters advised that the organisational expectation and ask of them has become unrealistic and in some cases undeliverable. There is insufficient contact time with the organisation to meet all of the workloads associated with this role. Staff feel that being expected to complete their training, as well other duties, in 2 hours per week at a training night just doesn't work.

■ On-call firefighters feel that their goodwill is exploited and the organisation takes advantage of their desire to provide a service to their respective communities which at times sees them undertake additional work without payment or recompense.

■ On-call firefighters routinely reported feeling like second class citizens when compared to their wholetime colleagues. This included the way they were spoken to and treated when attending training events at the LDC as well as how they were treated on the incident ground when attending operational incidents.

■ On-call firefighters are both confused and frustrated by the number of different contracts in place across all stations. In some cases, at the same station, firefighters can be on 4 different contracts which is difficult to manage and track and causes bad feeling as people are getting paid the same amount of money for delivering different levels of availability.

■ On-call firefighters are frustrated with the operating policy and process for the online availability system (Gartan). There was almost universal support for the system itself, with firefighters understanding the need for the Service to have a 'live' picture of appliance availability. However, inconsistency and an unsympathetic application of the availability policy has created a situation where the system doesn't work when trying to manage availability. On-call staff stated that since the introduction of Gartan in 2014 the actual availability has reduced because firefighters can now book unavailable whenever they want, even if that puts the station below minimum crewing, with no consequence to them individually, so long as they have provided their contracted hours.

- In a number of locations there are on-call firefighters who are dual contract working in a wholetime role for their primary employment but also employed as an on-call firefighter in their local station. Frequently these individuals expressed concern and frustration about the application of the overtime policy and attendance at the 7 safety critical training days for on-call personnel as the Service currently does not permit them to do either.

5.7.7 NIFRS recognises the challenges associated with the on-call service and is attempting to make progress in addressing these. An internal On-call Project has been established. During the course of the inspection, reference to the project was frequently made. Whilst the objectives of the project seem appropriate, the reality is that it is a project with no resource allocated other than a lead officer. The lead officer is committed to delivering change within the on-call sector and has established links with the NFCC and other Services. However, there is a significant capacity issue as they are on their own and also have a function to run on a daily basis. If NIFRS is to deliver the improvements required for the on-call sector then a dedicated and properly resourced project team needs to be established. This team should include people with a current experience of working in an on-call role. In addition, the project itself needs to be commissioned and managed formally through recognised methodologies and overseen at a corporate level.

6 FINDINGS AGAINST TERMS OF REFERENCE

6.1 A review of relevant policies and standard operating procedures to ensure these are aligned to, or take account of, current National Operational Guidance.

6.1.1 National Operational Guidance (NOG) is a resource put in place by the NFCC to gather together and standardise all essential operational guidance for Fire and Rescue Services across the UK. It is produced with the intention of developing and presenting best practice across the Fire and Rescue Sector. Individual services are then expected to adopt, align and implement NOG into their own operational guidance. This is an essential part of keeping firefighters safe as they are asked to operate in inherently dangerous environments at emergency incidents. In January 2021 an Internal Audit Report for NIFRS – Compliance with National Operational Guidance (NOG) was published and provided a 'limited' level of assurance that the Service was compliant with NOG. The Internal Audit team identified significant weaknesses within the governance, risk management and control framework which, if not addressed, could lead to the system objectives not being achieved.

6.1.2 There are 21 areas of NOG, and NIFRS has added 4 additional areas that they have deemed equally relevant – BA, Initial Operational Response, Specialist Operational Response and Covid-19 Operational. This effectively means there are 25 areas of NOG which NIFRS should be aligned to. The limited assurance was provided on the basis that at that time only 3 pieces of NOG had been fully aligned by NIFRS. They also highlight that there is local guidance in place covering all 25 areas, however this has not been through the NIFRS alignment framework and it is not possible therefore to be assured that it does align with national best practice. This is a significant risk to NIFRS.

6.1.3 Internal Audit made 3 recommendations:

1 Action should be taken to ensure alignment with NOG is implemented on a more timely basis. Management should review the internal process and action plan to ensure the practice of reviewing guidance is performed more efficiently and target dates brought forward where possible. Action should be prioritised to those NOG areas that are the most significant risk to NIFRS. BA procedures should be updated and implemented in line with the foundation for BA, 2018 guidance.

2 NIFRS should ensure that compliance with Tactical Actions and Training Specifications are measured and evidenced appropriately. This should be included in reports to the Corporate Management Team with associated strategic highlight reporting to Board/committee level. Compliance across both of these should be mapped to compliance with strategic actions. This should be used to inform operational training.

3 Appropriate measures/mechanisms should be developed within NIFRS to collate and share learning effectively. These measures should align and facilitate the wider sharing with National Operational Learning (NOL) as appropriate.

6.1.4 These recommendations were fully accepted and a project was set up to implement them with the compliance targets as follows – *Baseline of 33% alignment at April 2022 – increase Year 1 to 45% alignment – increase Year 2 alignment to 60% – Year 3 onwards obtain and maintain alignment at 90%*. The team has developed a clear understanding of what is required, creating a coherent operational guidance pathway and mapping out all the actions required to deliver compliance (Table 6 below), and focusing on the risk critical area of BA guidance.

Table 6

Total Strategic Actions	1,944
Total Tactical Actions	5,093
Total Training Specifications	10,184
Total Overall Actions	17,221

6.1.5 Progress is reported through the governance framework, including the Service Delivery Committee, where the last report (May 2022) gave a Red RAG status to the project. The root causes of this have been identified as an under-resourcing of the team, with operational team members withdrawn to undertake front-line duties and the interdependencies with other departments such as training, being difficult to work through because of demands on these departments.

6.1.6 Figure 1 below highlights the challenge of resourcing and progress made towards compliance. The project is half way through year 3 and the compliance levels are reported as being:

- 39% for the Strategic Actions.

- 14% for Tactical Actions.

- 5% for Training Specifications.

6.1.7 This is significantly short of the 90% compliance target for year 3, with progress clearly reducing as resources have been removed from the team.

(Figure 1)
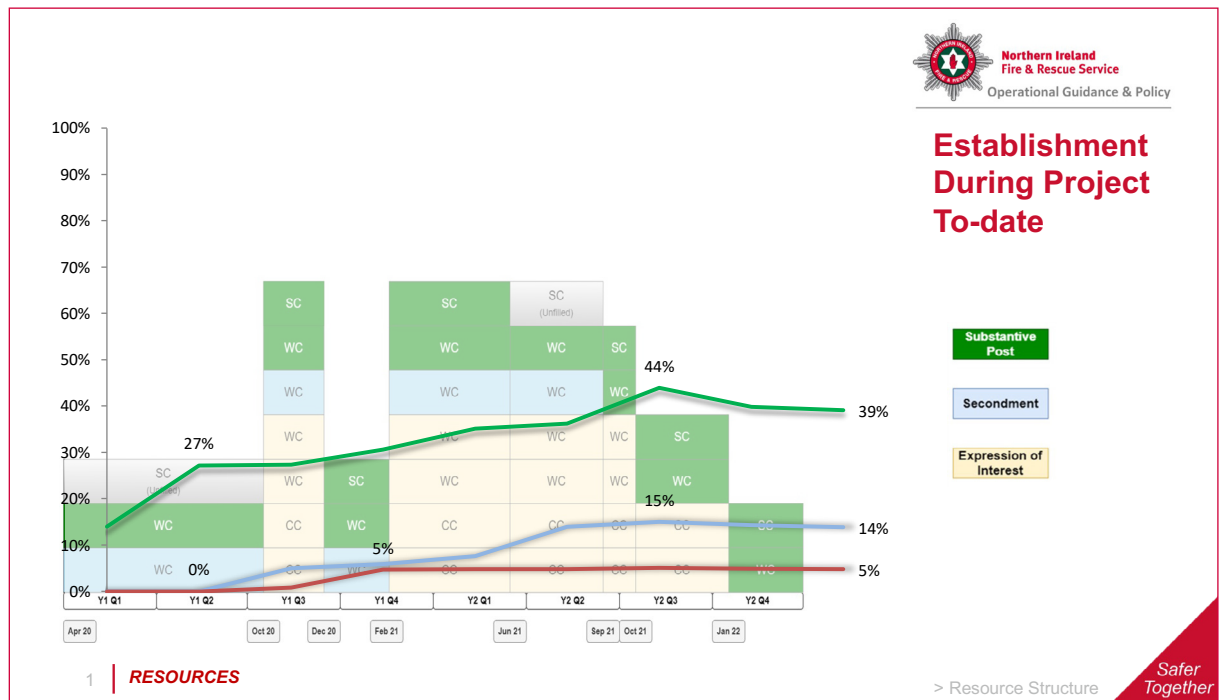
6.1.8   NOG is best practice, firefighters work in inherently dangerous environments and their operational procedures should be aligned to best practice. By failing to ensure this is the case NIFRS is potentially placing its firefighters at unnecessary risk. They must address this as a matter of priority.

6.1.9   Recommendation:
A dedicated resource should be tasked with the alignment of NIFRS policy and associated training to NOG.

6.2   **NIFRS Risk/Demand profile, coupled with an analysis of historical activity levels and resourcing (Headcount/Finance).**

6.2.1   Historically, the locations of fire stations and the number and type of fire appliances they housed was based on prescriptive 'standards of fire cover'. These were issued in the post-war years as part of wider UK national guidelines for Fire Brigades. These standards, which were originally formulated by the Riverdale Committee in 1936 and updated in 1985 by the Joint Committee on Standards of Fire Cover, focused on the protection of property and specified the speed and weight of response that Fire Brigades were required to achieve, based on the type and location of the properties protected.

6.2.2   Following an independent review of the Fire Service (Sir George Bain 2002) and a period of industrial action that same year, the UK Government outlined a programme of reform and modernisation for the UK Fire Service in a white paper which became legislation (in England) in 2004. At that time the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) issued a directive with supporting guidance to all English Fire and Rescue Services to produce an individual IRMP.

6.2.3   The introduction of the IRMP process provided an opportunity for a more nuanced and localised approach to the assessment of risk, with life risk being added to the property risk to produce an overall risk level. Whilst guidance on an IRMP Framework was issued by the ODPM in Fire Service Circular 7/2003, there were no formalised standards produced. It therefore became incumbent on each Fire and Rescue Service to develop the methodologies and response standards that met the needs of their respective communities and aligned with their own operating contexts in order to mitigate and manage the risks identified.

6.2.4   Within the Fire and Rescue Service (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (The Order), there is no statutory duty for NIFRS to produce an IRMP, however, in keeping with the process and sector best practice adopted across the other UK Fire and Rescue Services, NIFRS elected to adopt, and continues to adopt, the IRMP process as per Fire Service Circular 7/2003.

6.2.5   In adopting the IRMP approach, NIFRS allocated resources to the Headquarters based Research and Policy Unit and Operational Risk Planning Team, under the leadership of the Deputy Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (DCFRO). This approach saw the development, consultation and publication of NIFRS's first IRMP in 2004. This was further developed when NIFRS produced and introduced an Emergency Response Standard (ERS) in 2006, utilising the Fire Services Emergency Cover (FSEC) tool which specified a methodology for developing response standards for dwelling fires. NIFRS continued to support the production of IRMPs incorporating the ERS, with annual refreshes until 2008/09.

6.2.6   In 2009, a change in NIFRS leadership brought a change in focus and perspective with regards to the IRMP process and a decision was taken to incorporate the IRMP into the organisation's annual business planning process. This resulted in less investment in IRMP production and consequently some of the staff previously allocated to develop the IRMP were redeployed into other areas of the Service.

6.2.7   In 2012, NIFRS reintroduced the IRMP process and in 2014, work commenced to refresh the ERS. Through discussion with partners, including the representative bodies, it was decided that some additional consideration should be given to the ERS and they were not incorporated into the 2016/2021 IRMP. The 2016/2021 IRMP therefore had to adopt the original ERS, based on the now outdated FSEC dwelling fire methodology.

6.2.8   A second and more detailed version of the new ERS was subsequently developed with partners. Unfortunately, this coincided with the collapse of the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2017 and as a result, NIFRS was unable to take the draft ERS to public consultation, thus it remains in draft and unused to this day.

6.2.9   In 2017, recognising the value and importance of having robust and reliable data to assist with the monitoring, management and reporting of performance, to inform and support key strategic decision making and to inform the production of meaningful IRMPs, NIFRS created a Data Hub capability. The intention was to have a single point of reference for all things data related within the Service, including all the business as usual (BAU) data analysis requirements, in addition to the creation and update of the IRMP.

6.2.10 The NIFRS Business Assurance Manager oversees the operation of the Data Hub; supported by a Data Hub manager, with data analysts and geographical information systems (GIS) officers completing the team. Over the period from 2004 and production of the first NIFRS IRMP, significant corporate memory on guidance, process and methodologies has been developed. Unfortunately, due to a number of staff changes, the only person who has maintained this valuable knowledge and experience is the Business Assurance Manager, who is actively trying to share that with the Data Hub team in order to prevent the creation of a single point of knowledge or single point of failure.

6.2.11 In addition to the previously mentioned commitments, including the IRMP development and maintenance, there is also an expectation and business need for the Data Hub to lead, and/or contribute to, some significant IT and other change projects, for example, the Data Warehousing project. Taking all these demands together, combined with the small size of the Data Hub team, has created a situation where they do not currently have the capacity to deliver everything that is required of them.

6.2.12 Although formally established in 2018, the Data Hub is still developing and requires investment to create the necessary capacity to meet business needs. This investment would enable the team to develop and embed routine data analysis, reporting and dashboard processes. This would help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of all NIFRS activities, creating the capacity to deal with the numerous ad-hoc requests, such as Freedom of Information (FOI), as well as the significant IRMP workload whilst allowing the team to formalise a structure around data capture and analysis to inform and support organisational decision making. The work will also require investment in specialist and bespoke hardware and software solutions for the Data Hub, which have the functionality to interface with the standard NIFRS IT systems.

6.2.13 NIFRS's latest IRMP covered the period 2016-21 and is now out of date with no refresh work having been carried out since it was published in 2016. The ELT therefore, directed in 2021 that a new risk model should be developed, utilising the latest methodologies and best practice techniques in risk modelling and analysis. The outcomes and results of this work would then be used to inform the next iteration of the IRMP, however due to staff changes at a senior level this work stalled. The work was then recommissioned in June 2022 alongside the development of new ERS. The term IRMP was also updated to CRMP to recognise its focus on mitigating risk across the communities of Northern Ireland.

6.2.14 The DCFRO has been appointed as the executive lead and project owner for the CRMP project, with the Business Assurance Manager appointed as the Project Manager. At time of writing this report, the project documentation was in production and will be submitted to the ELT for approval, prior to formal project commencement.

6.2.15 To support this project NIFRS is working with the NFCC Community Risk Programme (CRP). They are sharing their experience and will adopt the developing national guidance on risk and demand analysis being produced by the NFCC CRP workstreams, ensuring that NIFRS is compliant with industry best practice.

6.2.16   NIFRS has access to a significant amount of data, some produced in-house and some imported from other organisations and data sources. This current data, combined with the experience of developing previous IRMPs, should equip the Service with the necessary capability, knowledge and evidence to develop their CRMP. However, it has to be noted that there is a vulnerability with the quality of the internal incident data drawn from the Incident Recording System (IRS) as at present there is no quality assurance process applied to the input and capture of this element and consequently a percentage error factor is applied by the Data Hub team.

6.2.17   In terms of methodology of analysing risk, NIFRS previously used the likelihood (number of incidents) x impact (number of fatalities, casualties and damage) approach to determine a risk metric. This was based on station area output levels which are relatively large geographic areas. The risk metric was then applied to the NIFRS response standard across a 3-point scale, where the areas of highest risk saw the quickest response times applied. Whilst this approach performed the function of analysis of risk, it was an unsophisticated approach and did not get down to the granular level of information that would allow NIFRS and partner agencies to target specific risk, down to street and even property level.

6.2.18   The CRMP will adopt the same likelihood x impact approach; however it will not only use the number of incidents to determine likelihood, it will also include population, social deprivation, property, heritage, infrastructure, geo-demographics and geography data which will produce a far richer and more accurate output. The impact element will consider the historical incident outcomes for similar incidents, including fatalities, casualties, rescues, fire spread and firefighter injury, again producing a far richer picture and more detailed information. This analysis will be run at the lowest possible geographic level, which in Northern Ireland is the small area output level rather than the previous larger station area output level. There are a total of 4,537 small area outputs in Northern Ireland and they are based on population density. The geographic size of the small area outputs can vary greatly, however on average, the size of a small area output is 400 people and 155 households. Adopting this approach will ensure that NIFRS can target risk areas right down to street and property level, with each small area output level being assigned a risk rating. This means NIFRS will be in a position to allocate and target its resources at the areas of greatest need, including the type and location of specialist capabilities.

6.2.19   The work is already underway to develop a new set of emergency response standards for NIFRS. As national (UK) response standards no longer exist, the creation of these standards will be specific to Northern Ireland. It is therefore essential, in order to promote understanding, that NIFRS fully explains to all stakeholders, but especially the communities it serves, the rationale and methodology used when developing the response standards, including how they will interface with the risk analysis methodology to produce an overall assessment of risk and how this will subsequently inform the operational footprint and operational response model.

6.2.20   At present NIFRS does not validate its risk and demand methodology other than through internal governance processes. There would be significant value in developing a partnership with academia to test and prove the methodologies used with the aim of securing credible external validation. In addition to the proving of risk and demand methodologies, there would also be added value in developing a process of independent response modelling through an external party, allowing NIFRS to model

any potential changes to operational footprints and evidence the expected impact of any such changes. The adoption of these suggested approaches would provide a robust assurance to the risk and demand methodologies and subsequent allocation of operational resource.

6.2.21 Whilst operational response will always be a key focus of the Fire and Rescue Service, it is important to recognise that intervention comes in many forms, not just a fire appliance attending a call. For example, the focus on community safety activities across the Fire and Rescue Service sector in the past three decades has driven down risk and consequently the number of fires and emergency calls has significantly reduced. There will always be a need for an operational response capability to deal with emergency incidents and a worst case planning approach will assist in determining this. The next iteration of the NIFRS CRMP would be further enhanced if it can demonstrate the mitigation and control of risk through targeted and directed prevention and protection (P&P) activities just as much as operational response. There is also a possibility that future response options may include something other than the traditional approach to firefighting, and might incorporate new and innovative solutions. Any such change would, of course, have to be subject to a full assessment and scoping on completion of the risk and demand analysis in the CRMP.

6.2.22 Following the publication of the 'current' IRMP in 2016, NIFRS determined that in order to manage and mitigate the identified risk, it required an operational footprint of 67 fire stations housing 139 front-line fire appliances, crewed by 570 wholetime and 994 on-call firefighters. A satellite fire station is also provided at Dunmurry where 1 appliance from Cadogan locates from 0800 to 1700 hours, Monday to Friday to ensure response times in the areas to the South West of Belfast are appropriate during peak travel periods. It should also be noted that the figures quoted above relate only to on-station operational posts and do not include the other uniformed posts e.g. flexi-duty officers or fire safety staff.

6.2.23 In summary, NIFRS does not currently have a working CRMP to inform risk based and evidence led decision making on the allocation of operational resources, organisational priorities and organisational strategy. That said, however, from a risk analysis and response solution perspective, NIFRS has the experience and an established process for developing a CRMP. There is a clear desire within the Data Hub team to utilise the most up to date methodologies and technology in order to measure community risk and then combine that with a suitable and realistic set of response standards to produce an effective operational response model for Northern Ireland. If this ambition is to be realised, an investment is required in the Data Hub team to ensure that the necessary human and technological resources are available to deliver against this important objective.

6.2.24 Areas for Consideration
   i   NIFRS should identify the CRMP Project as a key strategic deliverable for developing the future vision and informing the strategic objectives and priorities of the organisation for the next 5 years and beyond.

   ii The CRMP should adopt a formal project management process and this key strategic project should be embedded within the organisation's overall Programme Management Office.

iii External validation of the risk and demand methodologies adopted to support and inform the development of the next CRMP.

iv A review of the current resource allocation for the CRMP Project and Data Hub to ensure that the correct number of staff with the necessary skills and experience are available to successfully deliver the project.

v The foundation of the CRMP is a robust analysis of the risk and demand, aligned to the risk appetite of the Service and key stakeholders alongside practical considerations such as available budget.

vi The outcome from the CRMP should be used to inform the overall organisational structure, including number, type and location of operational assets, number of operational personnel required to crew the assets, including duty system and the number of support and enabling staff required to maintain and support an effective operational capability.

6.2.25 **Recommendation:**
A Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) should be developed that accurately reflects risk, activity and demand across areas and across times of day. An Emergency Response Model that is aligned, or at least based on, this CRMP should be developed.

6.3 **Systems in place for ensuring operational staff attain necessary training and that these are maintained to a specified standard throughout their time in post.**

6.3.1 Firefighters are required to work in inherently dangerous environments, where it is not always possible to put a 'safe system of work' (SSOW) in place. The Fire and Rescue Service across the UK therefore adopts a 'safe person' approach. An essential part of this is the requirement for firefighters, at all levels, to receive suitable and sufficient L&D. This was an area covered in all station visits and by conducting interviews with staff responsible for the management, development and delivery of the L&D function. All interviewees were open in their contributions and provided relevant information to support their comments. The consistent theme highlighted, at all levels throughout the Service, was that despite there being examples of excellence, firefighters are not systematically receiving suitable and sufficient L&D. It would also be challenging for the Service to evidence the competence of its operational firefighters, officers and control staff, therefore, the Service is operating at considerable risk and could be challenged under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

6.3.2 Data relating to L&D was also examined, however it is difficult to find a central location for accurate data relating to training. Multiple systems are used to record different elements of training. Data within these systems requires intensive manual intervention to provide figures for key areas of competence, such as BA, Incident Command (IC) and driving. The challenge of this is highlighted by the extended period of time, 5 weeks, for Inspectors to be provided with data requests. Without timely and accurate data, it is difficult to see how the ELT and the Board can support the L&D function and be assured that their operational staff are competent (safe) in their roles.

6.3.3 This challenge extends to specialist training such as water rescue and working at height. Training records are held in various locations, for example, initial courses arranged and funded by the LDC are held in the Learning Management System (LMS), whereas Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for some of these specialist

roles are held in Excel spreadsheets by the officer who is the lead for the specialism. It is, therefore, difficult to gather a clear overview of the capability and competence of these specialist roles at the different levels across the Service.

6.3.4   NIFRS does not have a robust training needs analysis (TNA) linked to a SWP which should be based on supporting the Service's strategic aims and objectives. As a result, it does not therefore understand the capability and capacity required to deliver L&D. Almost all those interviewed recognised that NIFRS is finding it a challenge to train and assess its workforce'.

6.3.5   <u>Learning and Development Centre</u>

6.3.6   To cope with the demand, many elements of training have been devolved to Station and District teams, and an 'Arrive to Perform' model has been implemented. The intention is to reduce demand on staff within the Learning and Development Centre (LDC), allowing them to focus on training that only qualified instructors can carry out and to assess/ quality assure the operational competence of personnel. Unfortunately, LDC staff report that some firefighters are not receiving the appropriate pre-attendance training prior to assessment at the LDC. Consequently, basic procedures are having to be covered by LDC staff prior to assessment to bring them up to the required level, negating the intended improvements in the capacity of the LDC. The introduction and application of the 'Arrive to Perform' does not appear to be effective. It is unpopular with station-based personnel, especially on-call, who feel unsupported and that they have neither the time nor resource to cover the pre-attendance training. Many suggested that the ownership of station-based training out in Districts is not effective due to the high number of temporary promotions and individuals not taking responsibility for the quality and quantity of station training. There are also very few supervisory and middle managers who have received any 'train the trainer' input or assessor qualifications.

6.3.7   Insufficient numbers of instructors in LDC makes the delivery of training courses difficult, especially with the additional demand placed on instructor's time with the commencement of the almost 40 new trainees in October 2022 and with another course programmed for early 2023. Instructors feel under severe pressure to continue to deliver scheduled courses with not enough competent instructors to achieve this safely and in line with policies.

6.3.8   The lack of a TNA linked to a SWP notwithstanding, at the time of carrying out our fieldwork, the LDC did not appear to have sufficient instructors to support the training and assessment of the operational workforce. The department was carrying a number of vacancies. We were advised by LDC staff that, even if fully established LDC would still have insufficient capacity to deliver the courses required and was unlikely to reduce the backlog of firefighters who are out of date for safety critical competencies such as BA and Compartment Firefighting (CFF) training. We were also advised that a significant number of on-call staff were on the run despite not having suitable BA or CFF training. In response to these claims we have been assured by management that numbers of staff awaiting BA or CFF reaccreditation is significantly less dramatic than we had initially been led to believe. We were also advised that whilst NIFRS permit on-call staff to ride on fire appliances without BA qualifications, they are not permitted to wear BA for firefighting operations until fully qualified. Despite this helpful reassurance, Inspectors believe that more work is required to ensure that resources within the LDC truly reflect those required to ensure that staff maintain competence in safety critical areas.

6.3.9   A senior member of the LDC staff suggested, and it was confirmed during station engagement sessions, that for many instructors a posting to LDC was not their preferred option on promotion. LDC Watch Commanders (WC) are paid at 'A' rate; this makes those jobs on multi-pump stations, that attract the 'B' rate (a higher rate of pay), more appealing. It is understandable that many request transfers to multi-pump station as soon as they arrive at LDC.

6.3.10   The specialist instructors at LDC undertake external qualifications in BA, CFF and Road Traffic Collision (RTC) at the Fire Service College in Gloucestershire. On completion of these training courses they are required to complete further in-house training and standardisation to understand NIFRS policies, procedures and training exercise set-up. This is essential to ensure the consistent delivery of training to operational staff and to maintain a safe environment in which staff and instructors can operate. It is concerning therefore that several instructors, and their managers, highlighted the sporadic nature of standardisation meetings and that the NIFRS Breathing Apparatus and Compartment Firefighting Training Policy (2020) is not being adhered to. This leaves some instructors feeling vulnerable and they expressed concerns that the Health, Safety and Welfare of both instructors and attending delegates is being put at risk. The policy states the number of competent instructors required to deliver initial CFF courses. Instructors reported that they are regularly delivering courses with insufficient numbers of competent staff. This risk is inferred in the Corporate Risk Register which references the lack of capacity at LDC to deliver beyond statutory training courses i.e. BAFF, CFFT, ICA, RTC and Driving. It is also recorded in the Directorate Risk Register (DRR).

6.3.11   The majority of instructors interviewed displayed a keen desire to improve the image and professionalism of the LDC, but felt the pay issue, turnover of staff, a lack of resources, limited time allocated for planning and the pressure to deliver courses outwith policy, prevented them from achieving this.

6.3.12   Workforce Development

6.3.13   NIFRS does not have a cohesive development pathway for any rank for wholetime, on-call or control staff. NIFRS adopted the principles of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) in 2005; this was an NVQ 'evidence of competence' approach. However, the relevant standards were only developed for firefighters, Crew Commanders (CC) and WC. The NVQ program stopped around 2007/08. NIFRS only ever adopted the firefighter development program.

6.3.14   There hasn't been a recognised development pathway for CC to Brigade Manager for over 10 years. This is reflected in consistent comments from managers who do not feel supported or confident in their role. There is also recognition across the wider workforce that some managers are observed to be struggling because of the lack of development, compounded by the constant turnover of temporary promotions not allowing sufficient time for managers to settle and learn the components of their job. The only requirements, to be deemed competent and receive the competent rate of pay, are for a Personal Development Review (PDR) to be completed, the appropriate level of IC qualification to be attained and to serve one year in post. Whilst management programs, through the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM), are made available, these are seldom completed by operational managers as they are optional.

6.3.15   NIFRS is aware of all the areas mentioned above. There are a number of internal and external reports that have highlighted the issues regarding training and workforce development; however, little progress has been made to date. This presents a significant risk to the organisation and would be difficult to defend in the event of the death or serious injury to a firefighter or member of the public.

6.3.16   Firefighters in Development

6.3.17   Inspectors were advised by those interviewed that Firefighters in Development (FFD) are not receiving sufficient support during their initial three years in NIFRS. The main reason for this is that they are often transferred to different stations/watches in this period, resulting in them having a number of supervisory managers with no one taking overall responsibility for supporting them through their development. This is as a consequence of recently appointed firefighters being on a newer contract (Ops 7 Policy). Transferring longer serving firefighters, on a different contract, against their will, may result in challenge from their representative bodies. A senior manager referred to FFD being 'pushed from pillar to post', with one FFD being moved 13 times in just 3 years. This creates an issue with nobody taking ownership of FFD. Staff therefore often feel that they do not get the support they need and feel let down by the organisation.

6.3.18   The Firefighter Development program has been reviewed and changed as a result of the 'Development to Competent Review' however this is a change in the initial training course delivery. The infrastructure to support the ongoing development and assessment of FFD is not in place. There are insufficient trained assessors and inadequate IT systems to record and monitor progress and as yet the development programs are not accredited. NIFRS is a Skills for Justice Accredited Centre; however, to maintain this accreditation, a clear and robust system will need to be maintained.

6.3.19   Officers In Development

6.3.20   NIFRS has a high percentage of officers, at supervisory, middle and senior positions in the organisation who cannot evidence their technical and managerial skills. Many have not received training in fundamental managerial responsibilities such as absence or performance management. Few are trained in business planning, budgetary management or project management but are expected to deliver key service level projects. Criteria for promotion up to and including Area Commander (AC) roles does not require any academic qualifications such as ILM or Business degrees.

6.3.21   During a conversation with a Station Commander (SC), he stated that he was approaching the end of his development year. When asked what development program he had undergone he responded "nothing". His only assessment is for IC. He advised that moving onto competent pay was based on time in post, not on qualification or experience gained and no evidence was requested. A Group Commander (GC) interviewed by Inspectors also confirmed that the only development and qualifications he had been required to complete throughout his progression over a 4 year period from WC to GC was the ICL level 2 for SC and Level 3 IC on his promotion to GC. Any other development has been self-driven. These are not isolated cases, every officer who was interviewed confirmed they had not been required to complete any development, stating that any development had been driven by the individual.

6.3.22   The Organisational Development (OD) Department advised that they do provide opportunities for ILM Qualifications, however the uptake is disappointingly low due to this not being mandatory. It is difficult to see how NIFRS can effectively manage the Service, let alone deliver transformational and cultural change if its officers (managers) are not formally developed and assessed to ensure they have acquired the knowledge, skills and understanding required for their role.

6.3.23   Regional Control Centre Staff In Development

6.3.24   On joining NIFRS trainee firefighters control (FFC) complete a nine-week initial training course. This was previously delivered by a dedicated control trainer, but due to financial constraints the RCC does not currently have any permanent training staff. The FFC training program is therefore being delivered by competent control staff who have been detached from the control room watches.

6.3.25   Previously, all new trainee FFC entering the Service were registered on the Fire and Rescue Sector Control Operations Level 3 NVQ. On being posted to an operational watch, each trainee FFC was placed on the FFC (Development) rate of pay and allocated an assessor to monitor their progress towards achieving the NVQ award and demonstrating competence. A decision was made by NIFRS management to cease the NVQ process and now FFCs in development do not undertake progression towards an award or recognised qualification as part of their development to competent process. NIFRS development FFCs are not required to participate in the NIFRS FF Development PDR process.

6.3.26   NIFRS Operational Competency Framework March 2020

6.3.27   In common with their officer colleagues RCC managers, as they progress through their careers, do not receive a structured development programme to support them to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding for what are risk critical roles in the delivery of NIFRS. They are effectively left to learn on the job, supported by their peers. Whilst all those interviewed present as capable and professional, some advised Inspectors that they feel vulnerable and, at times, exposed by the Service eg they are not consulted or informed about changes to operational policy, procedures or the implementation of new equipment. They receive an email informing them of the change, which is often with immediate effect. This does not give them adequate time to update action cards or amend appliance attributes. Another example being that when asked about the response of NIFRS to the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) there appeared to be little understanding of how these would relate to control, such as moving from 'stay put' to 'evacuation' or sharing Fire Survival Guidance with other NI blue light services.

6.3.28   On-call

6.3.29   This is covered in section 5.7.

6.3.30   The organisation is well aware of the lack of structured development and support it provides to its staff. In 2020 it carried out a Development to Competent Review, the key findings are listed below, and has initiated a project to deliver a structured workforce development program. However, this project has one officer and a part time specialist allocated to it and only limited progress to the Firefighter Development Programme has been made to date.

6.3.31 <u>Development To Competent Review Findings</u>

- ■ Trainee firefighter paperwork portfolio is out of date.

- ■ There is no handover process or support for development firefighter or their line manager.

- ■ There is no clearly defined programme for NIFRS firefighters in development.

- ■ There is no input on PDR process for trainee firefighters.

- ■ There is no training for line managers on the PDR process.

- ■ There is inconsistency across NIFRS regarding guidance, completion and compliance of the PDR process.

- ■ Standardisation meetings do not take place

- ■ There is no external quality assurance by a suitable external organisation who is approved by the relevant regulatory authorities and/or awarding organisations to undertake standards verification of the PDR system.

- ■ The recent regular movement of postings for wholetime development firefighters for service delivery needs during their development period has the potential to have a negative impact on their development requirements.

- ■ There has been a clear divorce between NIFRS OD Department and the NIFRS LDC since the restructure in 2017 which has resulted in no clear owner for the Development to Competent process.

- ■ There are no up to date trained assessors or verifiers who are supporting firefighters in development.

- ■ There is no quality of procedures for monitoring of trainees, the line managers, trainers, assessors and verifiers of people that are in development.

- ■ There is no guidance, support and continuous development for line managers, trainers, assessors and verifiers, who are supporting people that are in development.

- ■ There are no arrangements for effective monitoring.

- ■ There are no arrangements for the effective maintenance and monitoring of records relating to selection, development and monitoring including assessments and supporting arrangements concerning the verification process.

- ■ There are no systems to ensure that trends and developments identified are fed back to the Fire and Rescue Service planning process.

- ■ NIFRS do not use an external award for development to competence for firefighters.

6.3.32 <u>Breathing Apparatus Competence</u>

6.3.33 NIFRS does not currently comply with NOG with regards to BA procedures and training. It is still operating under Technical Bulletin 1/97 for BA which was superseded in 2010 by Operational Guidance for BA. Wearing BA in a compartment fire is one of the highest risk environments that firefighters operate in; ensuring compliance with the current guidance must be addressed as a priority by NIFRS.

6.3.34   To become a competent BA wearer and BA team leader, FFD complete an initial 10 day BA course. Inspectors were advised that when on-call FFD attend this course, they do not always experience any hot fires nor are they required to use hoses to discharge water on to a fire. This practice could of course create the potential for a firefighter's first BA wear in heat and smoke to be at an operational incident. We were also advised that for on-call firefighters it is not until they have completed the CFF course that they will experience working in a 'hot fire' or the effects of applying water to extinguish a fire in their working environment or receive instruction on the techniques to be used to safely deal with such an incident. The Inspection Team have subsequently been advised that the BA Firefighter (BAFF) course, that forms the final element of the initial BA course, ensures that all firefighters in development are exposed to hot fires. We were also advised that the use of firefighting hose forms part of their initial training and assessment. We are pleased to receive this confirmation which should prevent the situation described above occurring.

6.3.35   Incident Command

6.3.36   Over the years, many judicial reports, instigated as a result of incidents where either members of the public or firefighters have lost their lives, have challenged the competence of Incident Commanders (ICs). This includes the two recent Public Inquiries into the Grenfell Tower and the Manchester Arena tragedies. Consequently, it is essential that NIFRS complies with the current NOG in regards to IC.

6.3.37   NIFRS is not fully compliant with NOG. The current practice is for supervisory level ICs to complete an in-house course and assessment at Level 1. This is conducted at the LDC; however, not all instructors carrying this out have the necessary qualifications and the course is not accredited. Those who pass with a score of 60% or more are reassessed every 3 years (current guidance is every 2 years). Those who score between 50–60% are reassessed yearly and are given a development plan. Those scoring less than 50% are removed from their IC role until they complete a refresher programme and are assessed as competent. For middle and brigade management level ICs, Level 2, 3 & 4 IC courses are fully accredited and delivered, in service, by the Fire Service College.

6.3.38   With information provided through the LMS not fully reliable, it is not possible to be assured that all ICs are appropriately qualified and that their qualification is in date. Inspectors were advised that all substantive ICs were qualified to the correct level and in date. However, there are a significant number of temporary promotions (eg 47 of 94 flexi-duty officers) and the Service recognises that these ICs may not always be qualified to the appropriate level for the role they are covering in a temporary capacity. This is a significant issue and requires to be addressed.

6.3.39   LDC Cookstown

6.3.40   NIFRS is currently investing heavily (circa £44 million) in a new LDC at Cookstown and this has the potential to be an outstanding facility. However, there seems to be a lack of clarity on how the site will be used, resourced and facilitated going forward. This lack of clarity makes forecasting the future running costs difficult. Given the financial challenges being experienced in NIFRS this needs to be resolved as soon as possible.

6.3.41 There is a clear belief on stations that the BA complex at Cookstown is unable to deliver the hot fire training initially suggested and a number of problems/defects with its capability to produce realistic temperatures for training have caused a mistrust among operational crews. Examples provided, such as Fire Investigation training being cancelled because the building cannot withstand sufficient temperatures to demonstrate a compartment fire, have fuelled this perception. We were subsequently advised by members of the ELT that the building was delivering to original design specifications and was never envisaged to perform at CFFT temperatures. The decision to use the facility for fire investigation training was not part of the original design of the building. Given the small number of fire investigators requiring maintenance training, the Service has elected not to carry out this training in this facility. This, and other areas of misperception, draw Inspectors to believe that the Service should consider its current systems for communicating and engaging with staff across stations and departments.

6.3.42 Training instructors are generally from the east of the country and there is a possibility that the extensive travel time, without additional renumeration/conditions will mean the Service will lose experienced instructors. A number of experienced training administrative staff have also advised Inspectors they will not move to the new site. This will further compound the challenges within the training department. The potential loss of instructors and support staff could prevent the site being used to its full capability.

6.3.43 There is a challenge from on-call staff that whilst they have had to travel over an hour to LDC and not received recompense, that now the wholetime duty system are having to travel over an hour to Cookstown, they are going to be paid for this additional time. On face value this could appear divisive and could further support the on-call belief that they receive less favourable treatment. The inspection team noted an update to the NIFRS Travel & Subsistence policy in early 2021 which establishes policy in relation to attendance at training.

6.3.44 NIFRS needs to produce a clear plan to evidence how the facilities at the Cookstown site are going to be utilised to their maximum potential. This needs to include how the site will be used, resourced and facilitated and whether it genuinely has the potential for generating income. The Service has insufficient trainers to deliver training to its own workforce. Income generation may require further investment in additional trainers. Finally, a communications strategy for Cookstown needs to be produced to build confidence within the workforce and to address the challenges and perceptions highlighted above.

6.3.45 Conclusion

6.3.46 NIFRS is aware of all the areas mentioned above. There are a number of internal and external reports that have highlighted the issues regarding training and workforce development. We accept there have been some significant challenges presented in recent years such as stability in leadership, budgetary pressure and the global pandemic. However, it is still fair to say that little progress has been made against many of these areas. This presents a significant risk to the organisation and would be difficult to defend in the event of the death or serious injury to a firefighter or member of the public. A report on training, produced by Internal Audit and issued on 3 February 2020 stated that the assurance for training was limited. The Inspection Team would, in 2022, agree with this statement and found little evidence of meaningful progress.

6.3.47 Recommendation:
Improvement to training systems and potential review of training structures should be introduced to ensure that staff are provided with risk critical training and development opportunities, aligned to a development pathway that resembles those in place across the UK.

6.4 **NIFRS succession planning processes to fulfil future resource demands at all levels.**

6.4.1 Workforce planning is the process of analysing, forecasting and planning workforce supply and demand, assessing gaps, and determining target talent management interventions to ensure that an organisation has the right people – with the right skills in the right places at the right time – to fulfil its mandate and deliver its strategic aims and objectives.

6.4.2 There are 6 phases to workforce planning:

1. Strategic Direction
The last time NIFRS undertook a robust strategic planning exercise, including developing an IRMP (see section 6.2), and produced a corporate plan was in 2016. This covered the period 2017-2021 and was supported by strategic annual business plans. It has not been updated or replaced because of the constraints of the Covid pandemic, the lack of stability within the ELT, and the lack of political direction (The Northern Ireland Assembly was suspended between January 2017 – January 2020 and again following the May 2022 elections. Ministers were in position until 27 October 2022 but without an Executive, new significant policy decisions could not be taken). Without clarity on the Service's future aims and objectives it is difficult to align the workforce needs to achieve them and work through the next 5 phases.

2. Supply Analysis
This requires an understanding of the composition of the current workforce and how it is projected to change over time, due to attrition and other trends. When the last Corporate Plan was produced it was anticipated that it would be delivered by a workforce comprising of:

917 wholetime firefighters
994 on-call firefighters
12 volunteer firefighters
54 control staff
260 support staff

However, these numbers have never been in place due to ongoing financial pressure and the current workforce comprises of

800 wholetime firefighters
893 on-call firefighters
10 volunteer firefighters
58 control staff
208 support staff

A stated priority in addressing the financial pressures is to minimise the impact on front-line service delivery, whilst at the same time protecting the health and safety of firefighters. The impact has been disproportionate on support staff and the other

enabling services such as L&D. The Service has focused on managing its approved budget (a statutory responsibility) as opposed to analysing its workforce's knowledge, skills and experience to meet the organisational aims and objectives and anticipating how these can be supported. This approach has led to reactive decisions being taken which can ultimately have a detrimental impact on the organisation, e.g. terminating the contracts of agency staff in 2021 (see section 6.8.14).

Staff costs are, of course, the largest element of NIFRS budget (circa 85%) and budget reductions inevitably require a reduction in the total number of staff. The other areas where savings can be made; asset and contract rationalisation, streamlining processes and entering into shared service agreements should be considered carefully to ensure opportunities are fully exploited.

3. *Demand Analysis*

This crucial step requires the Service to fully understand current and future workforce requirements. In terms of the current requirements the Service is prioritising front-line service delivery and has established a RPU, which oversees the availability of operational personnel and co-ordinates operational staffing on a daily basis, moving resources around to meet operational and organisational need. During office hours, Monday to Friday, this capability is delivered by a dedicated team of 4 personnel; however, outwith those hours the responsibility passes to the duty watch in the RCC.

In the absence of an IRMP/CRMP underpinning a corporate plan it is not possible to accurately forecast future workforce requirements. Instead, the Service is treading water, operating with a large number of staff in temporary roles, using overtime to meet operational crewing needs and delaying recruitment decisions.

4. *Gap Analysis*

The requirement here is to understand the gaps between workforce supply and demand and to define the top priority gaps with the greatest impact on organisational performance. Whilst there is not a systematic approach in place in order to achieve this the concept is very well understood by the ELT and the Board. The DoH provided additional funding for new trainee firefighters, with 40 commencing their employment with NIFRS at the end of 2022. Following an analysis of the workforce pressures across the Service, agreed to the recruitment of 13 critical posts.

5. *Solution Implementation*

This stage is the implementation of appropriate workforce interventions and activities to close identified workforce gaps and enable the organisation to meet its strategic aims and objectives. Unfortunately, the lack of workforce development (section 6.3.12) and the lived experience of all sections of the workforce, who have highlighted the delays in recruitment and the deficiencies of the temporary promotion practice, indicate that NIFRS needs to improve its workforce interventions and activities, as it moves forward with its strategic planning processes.

6. *Monitoring Progress*

The final stage is to close the feedback loop by monitoring the performance of solutions and their impact on the gaps they were designed to address and to continually improve the solutions to maximise their effectiveness. This is a

key responsibility for the Board and the ELT. They will, however, require the development of a suitable Performance Management Framework to support them in this process.

The need for a SWP and all its component parts, supported by effective MIS, is clearly understood across the senior teams and the Board of NIFRS. They recognise that this is not currently in place and is contributing to the Service being reactive to its resourcing needs. There is a focus on delivering the SWP and the key components are identified in the draft SWP, the progress against the plan is set out in section 6.3.12 of this Report.

6.4.3   Recommendation:
A SWP should be created that identifies and takes steps to fill vacancies across the organisation in a bid to provide stability (particularly across management cadre).

6.5   **Consideration of NIFRS current support staff structures compared with organisations of a similar size and remit.**

6.5.1   In common with all staff groupings, support staff are proud to work for NIFRS and view their roles as providing interesting and meaningful work, helping to keep communities across Northern Ireland safe. However, during the discussion sessions it was evident that there is a growing dissatisfaction amongst support staff, with an overall turnover rate last year of 20.8% (41.9% for staff working in HR) and sickness rates, currently at 8.4%, being strong indicators of this. While recognising that wider pay and conditions issues are significant contributors to the growing dissatisfaction, the majority of senior managers reported that in their professional judgement and experience they have insufficient people with the right skills in their teams to meet the workload demands and that 'workload stress' is a factor and an increasingly long hours culture is developing.

6.5.2   Using the HR and Finance functions as examples, a short benchmarking exercise was conducted against other Fire and Rescue Services in the UK, table 7 below. The guidance provided by professional bodies for public sector organisations in the UK was also considered. CIPFA indicate that the average spend on the Finance function is 1.2% and best in class would be 0.7%. The CIPD indicated that for the HR function the spend would normally be between 2 and 4%.

Table 7

Fire & Rescue Service	Budget, £ nearest million	% Spend HR	% Spend Finance
Northern Ireland	85	1.85	1.56
South Yorkshire	60	3.0	1.35
Scotland	294	1.43	0.87
South Wales	79	2.2	1.17

6.5.3　This would suggest that the spend on these functions in NIFRS is not out of line with other UK Fire and Rescue Services or the expectations of professional bodies. However, as with all benchmarking exercises NIFRS would need to look at the detail behind these figures to understand exactly what is being provided across these functions in other Services. They should also investigate any other examples of best practice and whether or not these practices can be applied in the context of NIFRS.

6.5.4　Another issue faced by staff is the lack of modern IT solutions (section 6.8.21) to provide the management of information required to scrutinise and efficiently operate the Service. They described their frustration with inefficient, paper-based, or spreadsheet type systems that could be easily streamlined using modern HR/Payroll systems thus freeing up capacity and reducing the burden on staff.

6.5.5　The Inspection Team believe that the introduction of systems referred to above, whilst requiring initial financial investment, would result in improved efficiency, reduced reliance on staff working long hours, and may assist NIFRS to attract and retain staff across a range of support services.

**6.5.6　Recommendation:
Appropriate investment should be made in IT systems that will improve efficiency in relation to support staff functions.**

6.6　Governance arrangements in place between the DoH and NIFRS Board and between NIFRS Board and the ELT.

6.6.1　**Governance Arrangements**

6.6.2　Introduction

6.6.3　TOR for the inspection asked for an examination of the governance arrangements in place between the DoH and NIFRS Board and between NIFRS Board and the ELT.

6.6.4　The approach taken was (1) a review of NIFRS key governance documents, Board and Committee minutes and wider reading, for example reviews undertaken elsewhere, governance documents from Fire and Rescue Services elsewhere in the UK or from other Arm's Length Bodies (ALB) in Northern Ireland (Appendix G) and (2) semi-structured interviews with key NIFRS personnel, key staff in the DoH and NIFRS Chair and Board members.

6.6.5　The interviews, and to a lesser extent the document reviews, focused on 4 themes:

- Authority, Delegation and Autonomy
- Accountability
- Board Effectiveness
- Relationships, Trust and Confidence

6.6.6 <u>Interviews And Document Review: Findings And Recommendations</u>

6.6.7 *General Observations*

i A clear theme coming through from the interviews is continued long-term instability being at the root of many of the difficulties in how NIFRS's governance arrangements are and have been functioning.

ii **Internal Audit of Governance** (carried out between September and November 2021) says in this respect: *"Limited assurance is provided on the basis that there is a lack of staffing stability in the organisation, particularly at senior executive level, with a high dependency on staff in posts on a temporary basis, which may also impact upon accountability and longer term decision making. Internal Audit specifically notes that all Directors in NIFRS are currently in interim positions and five members of ELT are also in temporary positions. We consider that this should be resolved as a matter of priority."*

iii This instability has not only affected the CFRO post but equally the ELT which for a prolonged period was made up mainly or wholly of temporarily promoted senior fire officers and interim Directors. This in turn led to positions further down in the organisation also being filled on a temporary rather than substantive basis. This instability was also experienced by the Board when a challenge concerning the appointment of Board members led to the Board operating with 5 Non-Executive members down for a period of 18 months (2018-2020).

iv The NIFRS Board as well as the DoH have needed to respond to the ongoing instability of executive leadership, as well as being mindful of specific legacy issues around governance in the past: the Board by, at times, assuming additional responsibilities in order to provide the stability and leadership that was (seen to be) lacking, and the DoH by increasing and then maintaining very close scrutiny and involvement, with low thresholds of delegated financial authority for the Board. This response, while appropriate in the particular circumstances at the time, has embedded a pattern of working and relationships that does not use the governance arrangements as they are intended, nor to best effect for the organisation.

v Although at present the CFRO post is held on an interim basis, all permanent posts in the ELT are now filled on a substantive basis, giving greater stability of executive leadership than the organisation has had for a long time. This, as well as the fact that the Board welcomed 5 new members in 2020 (which brought it back up to full complement) now creates a good opportunity to review and reset the governance arrangements and how these work in practice.

vi As well as the internal instability within the organisation the lack of stability in the external environment will also need to be acknowledged as having had, and still having, an impact on the organisation, in particular the absence of a functioning government for long periods since 2017.

6.6.8 *Authority, Delegation And Autonomy*

i The authorising environment appears unclear throughout the organisation.

ii Government has not set out priorities and objectives for NIFRS which could provide a clear strategic context in which to develop its Corporate Plan (and Business Plans). The current MSFM does not set priorities and objectives for the Board. The DoH does set annual requirements for the Service which refer to the delivery of

objectives in the Service's Business Plan(s) and sets specific annual objectives in relation to finance, savings, estates management, governance and more general objectives in relation to transformational change and collaboration.

iii   Some interviewees referred to the draft Programme for Government as the strategic ask from government, but it must be noted that the outcomes within it are, necessarily, very high level and that Fire and Rescue Services are not identified as a key priority area.

iv   The absence of a clear strategic ask, priorities and objectives coming from government leaves the NIFRS Board and ELT with a lack of clarity over how government sees the Service contributing to key national outcomes and with little sense of a shared vision of this contribution. This disempowers the Board in discussions with the DoH over resources necessary to maintain the critical aspects of operations and necessary development.

v   Within other parts of the UK, National frameworks are in place which provide the Ministerial view on strategic direction, setting of priorities, expectations and expected outcomes: the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and the Westminster Government (responsible for setting out priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England) each have in place a Fire and Rescue Framework. It is noted that departmental officials had instigated the development of a Fire and Rescue Framework for Northern Ireland in 2017; however this work has not been able to be progressed in the absence of a functioning government.

vi   A Fire Framework for Northern Ireland would provide a closer link for NIFRS to the Programme for Government outcomes, set a clear framework to develop measurable targets for NIFRS that are linked to the Programme for Government and would enable a clear Ministerial statement of strategic direction and priorities which can and should be reviewed periodically.

6.6.9   **Recommendation:**
A clear set of priorities should be issued by Government in the form of a Fire Framework that sets expectations and priorities for the coming years.

6.6.10   **Recommendation:**
A revised formal corporate planning process should be developed that includes a Strategic Plan (influenced by the CRMP, and aligned to the Fire Framework), Annual Operating Plans, Local Plans, Station Plans etc and an associated Performance Management Framework to measure progress against these plans.

6.6.11   The MSFM (from 2017) is based on a model document provided by the Department of Finance (in use across departments and ALB's in Northern Ireland), and governs the relationship between the DoH and the NIFRS Chair and Board and the DoH and the CFRO in his capacity as Accounting Officer (AO) for NIFRS. The arrangements in it are not unique and appear to reflect the general approach that has been taken to the relationship between departments and ALB, in which the DoH maintains a close monitoring role.

6.6.12   In the case of NIFRS that oversight from the DoH has been particularly close in recent years. This may be due in part to historic issues of governance, or more recently perhaps in response to the instability of leadership.

6.6.13   One expression of this is the routine attendance at Board meetings by officials from the DoH's Sponsor Team (i.e. every meeting) rather than occasional attendance, or in the context of a specific request/event. We acknowledge however that such attendance at Board meetings by officials is not uncommon across NI public sector.

6.6.14   Another, more impactful expression is the Delegated Limits of expenditure that have been, and in part still are, particularly low for the NIFRS: until very recently (February 2022) the delegated limit for capital expenditure for NIFRS was £0.25 million – meaning that any capital expenditure above that required approval from the DoH. This has now (February 2022) been increased to £1.5 million, in line with the delegated limit for other Health and Social Care (HSC) bodies, a change much welcomed by the NIFRS Board and ELT. However, the delegated limit for revenue business cases remains at £0.25 million for NIFRS, whereas for all other HSC bodies this is fully delegated. Close oversight and involvement by the DoH in much of NIFRS routine business therefore remains.

6.6.15   Although the relationship between the Board/Chair and the DoH is invariably described as positive, helpful and supportive, there is a sense of frustration among some members of the Board at not being able to exercise their responsibilities fully. Some perceive a lack of confidence on the part of the Board to do so, others clearly view this as a matter in which the Board is inhibited by the current arrangements.

6.6.16   In recent years it has been recognised across departments that a new approach needed to be taken to the sponsorships of ALB's in Northern Ireland which moves away from the MSFM and should be proportionate, reflect the good governance arrangements that are in place in most ALB's and have increased emphasis on delivery of improved outcomes. The Department of Finance work on partnership between government departments and ALB's in 2018-19 published a Code of Good Practice, a Partnership Agreement template and a Guide on Proportionate Autonomy. Unfortunately progress across departments on developing Partnership Agreements with ALB's was interrupted by the Covid pandemic.

6.6.17   Work on developing a partnership agreement between NIFRS and the DoH has been difficult to initiate due to ongoing pressures associated with the global pandemic. However, the DoH and NIFRS have now had initial meetings about the development of a partnership agreement, based on the concept of proportionate autonomy. This work is in its very early stages, but can clearly provide a useful frame of reference for the future development of the relationship between the DoH and NIFRS.

6.6.18   In that context, early consideration of raising (or removing, as for other HSC bodies) the delegated limit for revenue business cases would seem appropriate.

6.6.19   <u>Areas for Consideration</u>

i   That the DoH and NIFRS work together, as a matter of urgency, on developing a partnership agreement which is based on a shared understanding of the proportionate and appropriate degree of autonomy for NIFRS.

ii   That the DoH gives (early) consideration to raising (or removing) the delegated limit for revenue business cases.

6.6.20 A review of the key governance documents (2006 Order, MSFM, Standing Orders, Code of Accountability, Scheme of Delegation) shows the delegation of functions and powers from the Board to the CFRO and from CFRO to ELT members to be incomplete in places and, at times, confusing.

6.6.21 The Standing Orders (2.4.2) state that "The Accounting Officer (CFRO) exercises, on behalf of the Board, those functions of the Board which are not reserved to the Board or delegated to a committee". In 12.3-12.4 it states "The CFRO, as the Board's Accounting Officer, is responsible to the Board and DoH for the entire operation of the organisation. The Board shall approve a Scheme of Delegation which sets out the powers which are delegated to the Accounting Officer by the Board".

6.6.22 The NIFRS Code of Accountability states (section 6; section 11) that the CFRO is directly accountable to the Chair and the non-executive members of the Board for the effective operation of the organisation, for implementing the Board's decisions, and for the maintenance of proper financial stewardship. It goes on to say that 'the Chief Fire Officer should be allowed full scope, within clearly defined delegated powers, for action fulfilling the decisions of the Board.'

6.6.23 There is currently a lack of clarity amongst those interviewed on what matters are reserved to the Board and what powers and functions are delegated to the CFRO/AO. Section 2.5 of the Standing Orders was difficult to understand in this context.

6.6.24 While the Scheme of Delegation does set out which matters/decisions are reserved to the Board, it does not clearly set out which powers the Board has delegated to the CFRO/AO. Instead, it includes various 'schemes of delegation' derived from other governance documents such as the Accountable Officer's Memorandum, the Codes of Conduct and Accountability, Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions, and lists 'delegations' to a range of people, making it difficult to follow.

6.6.25 The Standing Orders also state (2.4.2) that "The Accounting Officer (CFRO) determines which functions he shall perform personally and shall delegate to nominated Officers the remaining functions for which he shall retain accountability to the Board" and that "The Accounting Officer shall prepare a Scheme of Delegation identifying arrangements and who will be responsible for effecting these arrangements through the Executive Leadership Team for approval by the Board."

6.6.26 The Scheme of Delegation sets out Scope and Levels of Delegation (from the AO) to the ELT members. Although this goes some way to setting out what the AO has delegated to members of the ELT, it focuses on specific transactions and compliance responsibilities and does not set out scope of functions that ELT members have delegated responsibility for.

6.6.27 Most of those interviewed (executives as well as non-executives), when asked about delegated authority, invariably spoke about delegated financial authority, with no reference to the other type of decision making and areas of responsibility that may be delegated to make the organisations work effectively.

6.6.28 This may go some way to explaining why ELT members, at times, have felt unsure over their ability to act and make decisions, whilst non-executives may have seen ELT members as not accepting responsibility or seeing things through. This lack of clarity and uncertainty will undoubtedly have been exacerbated by the instability in the staffing of ELT and a preponderance of interim postholders.

6.6.29 <u>Areas for Consideration</u>

i   Review the Scheme of Delegation to clearly set out the powers and functions that are delegated by the Board to the CFRO, which of these the CFRO will perform personally and which he shall further delegate to nominated officers.

ii   Clarify the meaning of Section 2.5 of the NIFRS Standing Orders in respect of what matters are reserved to the Board.

6.6.30 <u>Accountability</u>

6.6.31 The MSFM, Standing Orders and Codes of Conduct and Accountability all contain descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the Board corporately, of individual Board members and of the Chair. As these descriptions vary in what aspects of the role they focus on they are not wholly consistent with one another and there is scope for confusion.

6.6.32 The roles of the Board and the Chair are clearly set out in the NIFRS Code of Accountability (2013), in a way that accords with best practice: the Board is accountable to the DoH for the manner in which it performs its duties (ie the functions in the 2006 Order and 2011 Order) and manages its assets, and for adherence to high standards of public administration. The Chair is responsible for leading the Board and for ensuring that it successfully discharges its overall responsibility for the organisation as a whole. The Chair is accountable to the Minister through the Departmental AO.

6.6.33 The Code then goes on to say that the CFRO is accountable to the Chair and non-executive members of the Board for ensuring that Board decisions are implemented, that the organisation works effectively, in accordance with government policy and public service values and for the maintenance of proper financial stewardship.

6.6.34 The DoH ALB Sponsorship Handbook (April 2018) states as Principle 4: The primary responsibility for the performance of an ALB rests with its Board.

6.6.35 However, confusion might particularly arise from the MSFM (2017) which is based on a model document provided by the Department of Finance. The arrangements in it are not unique and reflect the general approach that has been taken to the relationship between departments and ALBs, in which the DoH maintains a close monitoring role. In the MSFM the emphasis is on the accountability of the AO to the Departmental AO, setting out the accountabilities and responsibilities of the CFRO as AO in some detail, whilst no reference is made of the CFRO's (primary) accountability to the Board, nor the Board's role in holding the CFRO to account.

6.6.36 In doing so, it assigns a number of responsibilities to the AO that are not generally considered to be matters for the AO, but to be matters for the Board (e.g. "to establish, with the approval of the Department, NIFRS's corporate and business plans […]" and "to ensure that timely forecasts and monitoring information on performance and finance are provided to the Department […]"), thereby implying that the CFRO is accountable for these matters to the DoH and not to NIFRS Board.

6.6.37 In the section on 'Advising the Board' (under responsibilities of the Accounting Officer in the MSFM) is included (3.6.4) "Advise the Board on NIFRS's performance compared with its aims and objectives". This raises a question on the nature of the CFRO's accountability to the Board, in particular as neither the MSFM or Standing Orders makes reference to the role of the Board in holding the CFRO to account.

6.6.38 The CFRO has dual accountability: (primary) accountability to the Board for the effective operation of the organisation and implementing Board decisions and (secondary) accountability to the Principal Accounting Officer (Permanent Secretary) in the DoH for the propriety and regularity in the organisation's finances, ensuring that resources are used effectively and efficiently and in compliance with Managing Public Money Northern Ireland and all other relevant guidance. This is not unique and the CFRO, like Chief Executives in other Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB), has to combine his AO responsibilities with his wider responsibilities to the Board. The AO role should complement the Board's accountability and assurance function.

6.6.39 At the same time, the Chair has a parallel accountability to the DoH and the Minister, for ensuring that NIFRS fulfils the aims and objectives set, for strategic leadership and for ensuring probity in the conduct of NIFRS affairs.

6.6.40 Although no specific reference was made in discussions with interviewees to any difficulties or tensions arising from the dual and parallel accountabilities, it is nevertheless important to highlight that dual accountability of the CFRO/AO and the parallel accountability of the Chair require great awareness of all parties of the requirements and responsibilities placed upon them. It is important that the roles are well defined and understood and regularly discussed to avoid tensions and ensure effective relationships and leadership.

6.6.41 Areas for Consideration

i   In governing documents (part of the new suite that start with Partnership Agreement) the dual accountability of the CFRO should be clarified (as CFRO to Board; as AO to DoH AO, and that primary accountability is to the Board.

6.6.42 The CFRO is a member of the NIFRS Board and the Code of Accountability states that the CFRO is accountable to the non-executive members of the Board. However, many of those interviewed reported finding this arrangement confusing. Some questioned how the CFRO could operate both as a member of the Board and be accountable, and were not able to identify any clear benefit from the CFRO being a member of the Board. There was confusion over whether the CFRO counted (or should count) towards a quorum and whether, or on what matters, the CFRO should vote. The Standing Orders are silent on this.

6.6.43 The majority therefore felt that the respective roles and responsibilities of the Board (as non-executives) and the CFRO (as executive leader) would be clearer if the CFRO were not a member of the Board, creating a clear separation between governance and management and also clarifying the position of the CFRO as an employee of the Board.

6.6.44 Areas for Consideration

i   That the reason for, and value of, the CFRO being a member of the NIFRS Board be reviewed by the DoH.

6.6.45 Some non-executives expressed frustration at what was seen as executives, in all levels of the organisation, not accepting responsibility and seeing things through and it being difficult to hold executives to account for delivery. On the other hand, executives reported a lack of clarity over their authority to act (and spend) or at times the clear lack of authority to do so. There appears to be an environment of uncertainty over authority, perhaps created by the ongoing instability in staffing and the number of

people in temporary positions. With the recent substantive appointments to the ELT, this can now start to be addressed.

6.6.46 <u>Effectiveness</u>

6.6.47 The Board has undertaken its own effectiveness review (February 2022), and a number of themes that came out of that review were also mentioned in interviews. A Board-led working group has been established and an action plan is now being developed and progressed.

6.6.48 From that Effectiveness Review and from interviews with executives and non-executives, the following comes through:

- Committee structure should be reviewed, as all have reported concerns that committees are not used to full effect. The feeling is that committees should do more to progress day to day business, so that meetings of the full Board can focus on overarching issues and strategic risk.

- Executives do not think that committees give enough attention to performance of the Service across prevention/protection/response (looking at performance reports 'by exception only'), though non-executives do not, on the whole, agree.

- The review of committees by the Board's working group appears to be driven by where best to deal with the business cases, to allow more time for strategic items/risk discussion at the Board.

- Mention has been made of a Business Committee or a Finance Committee or a Finance and HR Committee (all mostly business case related).

- The Inspection Team also note an apparent gap in relation to the oversight of major projects, their delivery and implementation and impact and interdependencies across the organisation. The introduction of a properly resourced 'programme office' could assist in the establishment and management of an overarching programme of change and report to appropriate committee(s) on these matters.

- **Board papers and Board information needs:** The Board's information needs are not being met adequately: the standard and content of Board papers is often considered not to be sufficient to allow the Board to make well informed decisions, nor to allow appropriate scrutiny of performance or to focus on strategic issues. This is, in part, due to the Board not having articulated its information needs clearly or consistently, but inexperience of ELT members (in relation to the Board's role) also contributes.

- Board papers are too voluminous, with lots of data and information but not enough analysis and comment. Not giving Board members assurance that ELT have thought through the issues and are responding appropriately.

- Papers do not provide non-executives with sufficient confidence that ELT are on top of things. Board members feel that they do not get the full picture from the papers. This contributes to a belief that executives are not sufficiently competent. Non-executives are also not sure they can have complete trust in the information provided – whether there are any risks that they have not been advised on.

- Quality/nature of papers means strategic issues can get missed, focus much too granular. Also Board papers are often provided with insufficient time for proper scrutiny prior to the meeting.

- However, both executives and non-executives acknowledge that the Board is not clear on what it does want/need from the papers, or in terms of information.

- "Volume of papers versus value of conversation is disproportionate".

- **Board meetings, organising of business:** Board agendas are often too long, important items are often at the end, by which time people are tired and/or not focusing as thinking of the next place they need to be. Meetings in this current format take too long. Better use of committees could improve this situation allowing the Board to focus on more strategic issues rather than 'business as usual' matters.

6.6.49 Recommendation:
Projects should be delivered through, or in association with, a programme office and appropriate programme management disciplines applied.

6.6.50 <u>Areas for Consideration</u>

i That the Board continue apace with developing and implementing its action plan from its Board effectiveness review, in particular:

- Review committee structure on the basis of statutory requirement (eg ARAC), key risks, strategic priorities to deliver and make sure there is scrutiny in place that is appropriate for those.

- Board and ELT work together to agree the information needs the Board has and how these can be met in the Board papers, Board paper format (information vs analysis etc), options appraisal (when relevant). Board papers need to flag the issues up clearly, not rely on Board members to dig them out of the detail.

- Organise agenda of Board meetings so as to allow discussion of strategic items to be considered before routine items.

6.6.51 <u>Business Cases/Authority To Spend</u>

6.6.52 Delegated limits for spending have traditionally been low; therefore, many business cases have needed to go to the Board for onward approval by DoH. Board agendas have been too dominated with this, taking up a lot of time and leading the Board to consider quite operational matters, while not having enough time to consider strategic matters.

6.6.53 Delegated limits for capital have now been raised (in line with other HSC bodies, to £1.5 million), which should improve this situation. Revenue however remains limited to £0.25 million (whereas for other HSC bodies this is fully delegated). This position should be reviewed by the DoH, however, even once that is done, internally ELT need to feel empowered to progress matters without unduly referring every decision to the Board.

6.6.54 Business Case Approval Matrix still requires business cases for capital over £1 million to come to the Board (even though the limit for cases needing DoH approval has increased to £1.5 million) – this was approved by the Board after the change in limits in February. This may indicate that there is some hesitation from the Board to give ELT full scope.

6.6.55 Areas for Consideration

    i   As above: that the DoH considers removing or raising the delegated limit in relation to revenue business cases.

6.6.56 Trade Union Representative On The Board

6.6.57 Having a trade union representative on the Board is not unique across arm's length bodies in NI or across the UK. It is seen by some that aspects of what needs to be discussed and decided may present a conflict of interest for a trade union representative. Inspectors were told, for example, that staffing related matters may require the trade union member to declare an interest and recuse themselves.

6.6.58 The 2006 Order itself does not require a trade union member on the Board. It is contained in the MSFM between DoH and NIFRS: (3.5.1) stipulates that *"[…] and 10 non-executive Members (one will have the support of a relevant trade union […] "* and also in the NIFRS Standing Orders (2.2.5): *"[…] , 1 shall be a Trade Union Member certified by a relevant Trade Union or the NI Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions."* Reportedly, this section was included at the direction of the Minister.

6.6.59 The Inspection Team, based on very positive experiences of working in partnership with trade union colleagues during the reform of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, would suggest that this is given detailed consideration and that the benefits and value of trade union representation on the Board are fully explored before arriving at any decisions with regard future representation on the Board.

6.6.60 Board Member Contracted Hours

6.6.61 During discussion with the Inspection Team, some non-executives report spending considerably more time than contracted on NIFRS business. It is acknowledged that this may, in part, be due to the difficult circumstances recently with regard to Covid and HR related matters. Longer serving non-executives refer to times where there were only 5 Board members and again this meant those serving had significant challenge in performing their role within time allocated. Representatives of the DoH described the burden shouldered by the remaining 5 non-executive directors (and the Chair) as 'exorbitant' and were keen to commend them for their efforts.

6.6.62 In a very stable situation it may be possible to do the NIFRS business on the basis of 2 days per month/per week (as contracted). However, in the short to medium term, when the organisation needs to work with the implementation of the recommendations of the inspection, needs to reset its relationship with DoH and develop in a new Partnership Agreement, greater oversight and support from non-executives may be appropriate to ensure the successful transition.

6.6.63 Relationship building and building up knowledge and understanding of the business also take time and are important. This should be recognised in time available and associated remuneration.

6.6.64 Rewarding non-executives more realistically for time spent would recognise the value that they can and do add to NIFRS. However, there is a need to strike a balance – non-executives should not routinely be using any additional time that may be allocated by moving into executive space, so the contracted time should clearly reflect that position.

6.6.65   Induction And Knowledge Of Business

6.6.66   The Covid period has limited some aspects of the induction of the latest intake of Board members (2020) and this period has also limited the opportunities to develop relationships between Board members, or between Board members and ELT members. In the same way it has limited opportunities for new Board members to gain insight into the business through visiting stations etc.

6.6.67   Due to Covid-19, inductions for new Board members joining in 2020 were all online, although it was reportedly very good and covered most aspects. It has however taken longer for new non-executives to fully get up to speed with the business than it would have done under normal circumstances. What all agree has been missing is the ability to build relationships (through face to face interactions, conversations in the sidelines, being in the room together) and through seeing how the organisation actually delivers, what it feels like, how people work within it etc.

6.6.68   The Board's own effectiveness review lists this as an outcome of the review: *"Members need now to be out at stations and seeing for themselves what is being done."*

6.6.69   Some executives declared that they are not confident that non-executives really understand the business and its particular complexities.

6.6.70   Recommendation:
The definition of roles and responsibilities should be revised and clarified. Relevant training should be provided to ensure management and Board members act within the parameters of their respective roles.

6.6.71   Some non-executives think that the ELT do not understand well enough what the role of the Board is and, to a lesser extent, executives think the Board do not understand their role.

6.6.72   There clearly needs to be work done on exploring and agreeing with each other where the respective roles lie, what assurance can be asked for and can be given, what is and what is not appropriate within each role – and where they might come up against boundaries.

6.6.73   On a positive note, the Board clearly demonstrated a desire for the ELT to succeed and to develop positive relationships, so there is a window of opportunity for the relatively inexperienced team to work together and develop appropriate and professional relationships. There is also a feeling among Board members that trust between the DoH and NIFRS is being built up and a hope that the empowerment and accountability can also develop.

6.6.74   Areas for Consideration

   i   That non-executives, particularly those who are new to the role, schedule time to visit stations, training centre, control room to ensure a thorough understanding of the business and the context.

   ii   Maximise the opportunity to spend time together in person – essential for imparting nuanced information and knowledge, building trust and relationships with what is still a relatively new team – new ELT and relatively new Board members (2 more to come).

   iii   Some facilitated sessions/training for non-executives and executives together on this could be helpful, can also in that forum discuss information needs (see above).

6.7 Progress against NIFRS "People Strategy" outcomes to better understand issues of organisational culture, staff development, wellbeing, diversity and leadership.

6.7.1 In 2019/20 NIFRS reflected on a number of existing strategies including the Human Resource Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Equality and Diversity Strategy and the Learning and Development Strategy and decided to update these and draw them together in a single strategy – 'Our People Strategy: 2021-2026'.

"With the intention of delivering the Strategic People Outcome: We will embed a high performing and inclusive culture which promotes, health, safety well-being and personal responsibility and ensures our people are continually developed, supported and motivated to deliver results."

6.7.2 This strategy was supported, via the People & Culture Committee, by the Board to go out to full consultation before final approval. Unfortunately, the global pandemic struck and normal business practices in the Service were severely restricted. As a result, the Strategy was never consulted upon nor was it fully approved by the Board. None the less the draft Strategy asks the question "How will we get there?" which it answers with a 3-year high level delivery plan, covering the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. The People & Culture Directorate (PCD) have used this as the basis of their annual business plan for this 3-year period. This is despite 7 of the 9 most senior managers in the Directorate being unaware of the overarching strategy.

6.7.3 The current structure of PCD is under review and is not at this time fully resourced, often due to slippage of posts to help balance the Service's budget. All managers' report that, even without the vacancies and slippage, in their professional judgement and experience, they do not have sufficient staff to meet their responsibilities and support the Service to the standard they would wish. This is putting significant pressure on staff as they work to provide business as usual and deliver against the Directorate's annual business plan. This pressure is compounded by two other significant issues. Firstly, the lack of investment in MIS and secondly the lack of a programme approach to deliver the People Strategy, which is in effect a major change programme.

6.7.4 During station visits, on more than 65% of occasions, the crews highlighted a lack of workforce planning and expressed frustration at slow recruitment and promotion processes. They understandably ask why, and although the reasons are complex, there is no evidence of a functional SWP. Vacancies within the resourcing team make these processes very challenging to run in a timely fashion. These vacancies represent 2 out of a team of 4, and have been identified as critical posts and approved by the Board to be filled as soon as is practical. However, there will be a lag time of several months to fill these posts and the pressures on this part of the HR function will continue to be felt throughout the organisation, including front-line service delivery.

6.7.5 With capacity stretched, all senior managers within the Directorate and their teams highlighted the poor state of IT and the MIS they are working with. To illustrate this, they explained that to produce a report on sickness levels for the Board takes one person an entire working week. They are currently updating existing PHAROS HR system and PAMS to ensure they remain live whilst moving to a new Finance and HR system within the next 3-4 years. Staff reported that they cannot trust the completeness and robustness of the data transferred. Subsequently, they find themselves having to extract information from both systems, cross check it and

add missing elements from other systems, often paper-based, from across the organisation.

6.7.6   When delivering any significant change programme with many separate projects there is a need for this to be co-ordinated via a 'programme office' approach. This helps to ensure that interdependencies are identified, scarce resources are allocated appropriately and in a timely fashion. Most importantly progress is tracked and any challenges are identified and can be supportively addressed. This approach should apply across the whole organisation. It should sit alongside a robust Performance Management Framework and within the business planning cycle if it is to be effective.

6.7.7   NIFRS has previously set up a programme office and utilised temporary staff, with the right skill-sets to run it. However, these posts have exited as part of a savings programme and a decision to reprioritise resources. Managers advise that programme approach was not embraced by the Service and that the Service is currently working outwith its own business planning cycle. These are common themes across most areas of this report, NIFRS is reactive in its approach to budget pressures and because of the significant instability in leadership over a decade, there has been a constant stop-start-change approach to direction setting.

6.7.8   Importantly however, it must be stressed that the Directorate team are working extremely hard, there is a clear 'long-hours' culture, and they exhibit a high level of professionalism and a pride in working for the communities across Northern Ireland.

6.7.9   Collectively the team(s) needs to be recognised for the progress they have made in delivering against the 3-year high level plan despite the challenges described. The senior team within PCD are very new in post with the Director taking up her role at the start of July 2022, the Head of Human Resources her role 12 months ago and the Head of Organisation Development 3 years ago (although most of that time she has been the Interim Director of PCD).

6.7.10   There is a clear need to refresh the People Strategy and properly prioritise the actions that will flow from this, matching this to the available resources, financial and human, available to them. They must also work with colleagues across the organisation to ensure that everyone buys in to the Strategy and plays an active role in its delivery and intended outcomes. Especially as feedback from the station visits would indicate that there is a 'policy practice gap', with many members of staff believing that all people matters are the responsibility of HR or using the excuse that "HR would not allow me to deal with this issue" to avoid dealing with matters that are within normal line management responsibility.

6.7.11   **Culture**

6.7.12   NIFRS recognises that people are its most important asset and this is supported by a clear set of values; Community, Improvement, Respect and Integrity which it articulates as being 'at the heart of everything it does'. The inspection team witnessed many positive examples of these values being applied across NIFRS; for example, the obvious commitment to community service and the strong work ethic demonstrated by staff to support this goal. However, whilst the terms of reference did not specifically task the inspection team with reviewing the culture of NIFRS, we felt compelled to make comment with regard to some of the language and behaviours displayed during our visits across the service.

6.7.13 Some of the examples set out below may appear, wrongly, to some to be fairly low-level issues, but we would strongly urge the Service to treat this as an indicator that a wider review of culture and behaviours across NIFRS is warranted, to ensure that their values come alive to support all aspects of EDI.

6.7.14 The outdated term 'Fireman' is routinely used by staff at all levels across the organisation, even by female members of staff and in the presence of female firefighters.

6.7.15 On two occasions supervisory officers expressed their opinion to Inspectors that the women did not have the upper body strength to be firefighters and that standards had been lowered to allow women to join the Service. The inspection team found no evidence to support this claim.

6.7.16 There is a clear divide between wholetime and on-call crews (see section 5.7 above) and some extremely derogatory terms were expressed in the description of on-call firefighters.

6.7.17 The majority of staff who commented on the promotion system didn't feel it was fair or fit for purpose. Many feel that there is favouritism in promotion processes. Comments relating to selection criteria being changed to include or exclude individuals were frequently expressed.

6.7.18 Inspectors were told by some staff that NIFRS does not encourage challenge from its staff. Some of those who have held views contradictory to their seniors reported feeling that they have since been treated less favourably. This is apparent in the number of employees who have chosen to make contact with the Inspection Team to meet in their own time and who want their anonymity protected. This type of culture prevents innovation and could prevent the Service improving both its culture and performance.

6.7.19 NIFRS wants to recruit a more diverse workforce fully reflecting the communities of Northern Ireland. It should therefore consider its approach to attraction and recruitment; for example, by conducting more and better targeted positive action events to increase the number of applications from under-represented groups. It will not generate an inclusive culture if new entrants are subsequently found to be incapable of carrying out the duties required of them. Nor is it fair on the new recruits or those already in the Service from under-represented groups as the result can be divisive.

6.7.20 High numbers of staff in temporary positions and lack of development at all levels does not encourage challenge of unacceptable behaviours. EDI training is not compulsory and it is difficult for the small team of EDI specialists to deliver effective training. Some training is being cascaded by SCs but not all officers have delivered the training to operational staff.

6.7.21 **Recommendation:**
EDI must be a priority for all public services. NIFRS should take steps to review organisational culture to ensure that staff behaviours reflect the corporate values described in its strategic documents.

6.8 **NIFRS infrastructure, estate and equipment; to determine adequate safety levels and fitness for purpose**.

6.8.1 <u>Facilities and Assets</u>

6.8.2 The infrastructure and estate requirements of the organisation are serviced through the Facilities and Assets Department, which is based at Service Headquarters, Lisburn.

6.8.3 In 2017 a new Head of Department was appointed and one of their first tasks was to undertake a 'state of the estate' review which identified that there was a lack of structure and governance around the function, with minimal formal contracts in place to support the maintenance and repair of building assets. This situation had developed over a number of years as a result a lack of strategy, planning and investment in the function. Subsequently, NIFRS found itself in a position where it didn't have all of the necessary skilled resource and associated support to effectively deliver the function.

6.8.4 It was also reported by NIFRS that confidence in the processes was impacted. This made delivering the procurement processes required to release the funds to secure the services of external contractors challenging. From NIFRS perspective the time taken to secure funds was significantly extended due to the amount of checking and authorisation required, which directly impacted on the organisation's ability to undertake maintenance and repairs or to invest in upgrading or building new assets. This resulted in a situation where, limited planned preventative maintenance was taking place. As a consequence the condition of assets started to decline. When a fault occurred, there were no formal contracts in place to immediately appoint contractors to repair the issue and therefore things often got progressively worse. All of this was set against the backdrop of a challenging financial position. Inspectors were advised that when the organisation was required to find efficiencies, it was considered easier to do so around the support functions and facilities and assets than on the front-line. This however quickly became a false economy as the lack of maintenance today presented larger problems to be resolved tomorrow, some of which are being actively managed now at the time of writing the report.

6.8.5 The managers and staff within the Facilities and Assets function have worked hard to repair and build relationships and this has delivered some very positive outcomes. As a result of these efforts the services of 3 contractors have been secured, with 2 operating as primary contacts and 1 as a backup where authorisation for up to £0.10 million for maintenance and repair is in place and can be tasked by the organisation. In addition, capital spend approvals for business cases have been delegated to the ELT, up to the value of £1 million and for values between £1 million and £1.5 million, the NIFRS Board is the authorising mechanism.

6.8.6 An estate-wide condition survey was undertaken by NIFRS in 2015 and this reported a backlog of maintenance cost at £7.43 million. A new survey of all NIFRS buildings was undertaken between December 2019 and March 2020 by an independently procured estate surveyor and this returned a backlog maintenance cost at £23.75 million. The increase in figure reflects the lack of capital and revenue investment across the NIFRS estate over a number of years and is evidence of the false economy cited above with today's solution becoming tomorrow's problem. Although the increase in the backlog maintenance cost presented in the 2020 building survey is disappointing, it is not surprising and does allow NIFRS to identify the areas of greatest need and to develop an informed 10-year investment programme in their estate.

6.8.7   NIFRS has a draft Estate Strategy 2021-2026, first developed in December 2020 and then reviewed and updated in November 2021. This document, although ambitious, provides a clear strategy and framework around which the planning and delivery of the organisation's assets and facilities needs can be delivered. Importantly, due to the survey work previously completed in 2020, the organisation now knows the scale of the task and formal adoption of the Estate Strategy through the recognised governance processes would allow the organisation to move forward in this regard as funding allows.

6.8.8   In addition to the draft Estate Strategy document, a draft Facilities and Assets Department Strategic Business Plan 2022-2027 has been developed. This document, like the Estate Strategy, provides a clear articulation on how to progress the Facilities and Assets issues in a prioritised manner. Again, the document has not been formally approved through the internal governance processes but does provide evidence that the Facilities and Assets function understand the ask of them and have a methodology to progress.

6.8.9   Throughout the engagements with staff across the organisation, the issue of estate management was raised regularly, with 2 important areas in particular highlighted. Firstly, the lack of dignified facilities for female firefighters and secondly, the shortage of showering and washing facilities to allow firefighters, particularly at on-call stations, to comply with the Service policy in regard to the carcinogenic effects of the products of combustion. The Inspection Team witnessed buildings that were past their usable life, as well as buildings that will require significant investment in the near future if they are to become fit for purpose. The Inspection Team also visited some first-class facilities such as the new Service Support Centre in Belfast, the fire station in Omagh and the newly refurbished fire station in Larne. There was also evidence across a number of locations of recent upgrades completed, as well as upgrades in progress, to make the facilities on station more suitable for the personnel that occupy the buildings, indicating that there is a willingness within NIFRS to make the improvements required.

6.8.10   As with all functions within the organisation, it is the people with the right skills that deliver the positive outcomes and the Facilities and Assets function is no different. At present the function is under resourced to deliver against the current ask and if the ambitions stated within the draft Estates Strategy document are to be realised, there will need to be an investment in the Facilities and Assets team. The Head of Function provided a position paper on resourcing to the ELT in April 2022 and this remains valid today.

6.8.11   Areas for Consideration

   i   The draft Estate Strategy 2021-2026 and draft Facilities and Assets Strategic Business Plan 2022-2027, should be considered through formal governance. Once agreed, these documents should be embedded into the organisational strategy to inform future priorities which align with and support the overarching strategic objectives.

   ii That the resource allocation for the Facilities and Assets Department is reviewed against the agreed strategy and business plan to ensure that the appropriate level of suitably skilled resources is available to deliver the overarching strategic objectives and organisational needs.

   iii The job descriptions and subsequent salary levels for support staff are reviewed in line with other public service organisations across Northern Ireland.

6.8.12 <u>Fleet, Engineering and Supplies</u>

6.8.13 The Fleet, Engineering and Supplies (FES) department is based at the Service Support Centre in Boucher Crescent, Belfast and has responsibility for the fleet, operational equipment, the store's function and the purchase of operational equipment. To deliver, there is a Head of Function, supported by 3 team managers, 1 for Fleet, 1 for Supplies and 1 for the FES Business Hub with their respective teams working with them to deliver each capability.

6.8.14 Like many other areas of the Service, the FES is working with reduced resources and is challenged on a daily basis to meet routine demand. This was compounded, in 2021, with the decision to remove all agency posts from the Service, this decision reduced the fleet and equipment technician numbers from 15 to 10. As a direct result of this reduction in capacity, all routine servicing of vehicles has been stopped and a 4 stage prioritised fault response system has been introduced to deal with any defects occurring:

- Priority 1 defects are safety-critical and will always get a response.

- Priority 2 defects will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the fleet management team and a decision made on whether to respond depending on the specific need.

- Priorities 3 and 4 are presently not getting a response at all.

6.8.15 During the engagement with the FES team on 27 September 2022, only 16% of the full fleet were in date for annual servicing. A progress update on 24 November 2022 identified that only 4% of the fleet remained within recommended service intervals and the Head of Function predicted that this would reduce to 0% in December 2022.

6.8.16 In addition to routine servicing and to meet its legal requirements, NIFRS undertakes Public Service Vehicle (PSV) and Safety Checks. All vehicles in the fleet are required to receive an annual inspection with all fire appliances and vehicles weighing over 7.5 tonnes also receiving a safety inspection every 13 weeks. During the engagement with the FES team on 27 September 2022, there were 84 vehicles from the NIFRS fleet on the road that are outwith their annual PSV inspection and/or their 13-week safety inspection. A progress update on 24 November 2022 identified that this had increased to 101 vehicles, 27 cars, 11 vans and 57 operational fire appliances overdue their PSV and 6 operational appliances overdue their 13-week safety inspection. This is an unacceptable situation which potentially puts firefighters and members of the public at risk.

6.8.17 In September 2022, the Service was working on a recovery plan and securing additional fleet technician posts, with 2 additional posts having been approved (but were yet to be recruited) and another 2.5 being considered by ELT. Up to the week commencing 14 November 2022 there had been no movement on recruitment; recognising the criticality, the CFRO approved 3 fleet technicians to be recruited from an agency. The first trawl of the agency has not identified any suitable CVs and the Head of Fleet Engineering and Supplies is now working with HR colleagues to advertise across all agencies and not just those on contract in the hope of identifying and securing suitable resources.

6.8.18   As previously described, the lack of resources is impacting on all functions within the wider FES team. The current pay scales for support staff are not considered competitive, so attracting new people (e.g. fleet technicians) is challenging as is retaining existing staff. People who have worked with the Service for a long time are now leaving, advising that they can get a better salary doing the same thing with another organisation.

6.8.19   The Fleet, Engineering and Supplies function does not currently have an agreed Strategic Business Plan or working strategy. The work of the function is being delivered on a best endeavours approach by experienced professionals.

6.8.20   Areas for Consideration

    i   NIFRS should review the resource allocation to the FES function, taking account of known routine demand as well as predicted ad hoc demand. The focus initially must be on qualified vehicle and equipment technicians to ensure NIFRS can be assured that operational appliances and equipment are legally compliant and safe to operate. The review of resources should also extend to the FES Business Hub and Supplies functions to ensure that appropriate personnel with the correct skills are available to progress procurement processes to secure resilient supply lines.

    ii   A Fleet Engineering and Supplies Strategy is developed and approved through the formal governance process of the organisation. It is important that the FES strategy complements and supports the overarching organisational strategy with appropriate links to projects through the Programme Management Office.

    iii   The job descriptions and subsequent salary levels for support staff are reviewed in line with other public service organisations across Northern Ireland.

6.8.21   Information Technology

6.8.22   In 2013/14 it was identified that the Information Technology (IT) network and infrastructure had received insufficient investment and required significant development to meet the growing demands within NIFRS. The decision was made to fully outsource the provision of IT to an external agency, with Business Services Organisation (BSO), an IT provider to the Health and Social Care sector, securing the contract.

6.8.23   Despite a full survey being completed before the contract was awarded, it was discovered when the contract commenced in 2015 that there was some older line of business applications that would be almost impossible for BSO to maintain given that the developers of these applications were either looking to withdraw, or had actually withdrawn, from maintaining them.

6.8.24   BSO provides the systems and networks to NIFRS and provides access to the latest technical knowledge and best practice within the IT sector. The hardware and legacy applications are provided by NIFRS itself. In essence, it isn't a fully outsourced contract and two different organisations have mixed responsibilities for the one system. In summary, it appears that what NIFRS thought they were going to get, isn't actually what is being provided. It is, however, what was specified in the contract.

6.8.25   On commencement of the contract in 2015 the whole NIFRS IT system was out of date and was extremely vulnerable to cyber-attack. It is highly likely any event whatsoever would have resulted in fatal damage to the complete system.

6.8.26   BSO inherited a significant technical debt when taking on the contract and from 2016 to 2018, all IT equipment and systems within NIFRS were completely replaced. Doing so has enabled the organisation to pass a cyber security audit. Whilst the work to date hasn't necessarily improved the end user experience, it has been necessary to build the foundations upon which the next phase of IT development in the organisation can be built.

6.8.27   The poor performance of the IT system to date has been as a result of an initial poor design and limited initial support when responsibility for IT was passed to BSO. There is however good news in that BSO have now invested in specific staff to embed dedicated support within NIFRS and have also updated the external support mechanisms to support the operation of the contract. The original Service Level Agreement (SLA) was not found to be fit for purpose in practice and an updated one has now been created. The Head of IT is confident that it meets the organisational needs of NIFRS and it is currently going through the internal NIFRS governance process.

6.8.28   In addition to improving the support mechanism, the Wide Area Network (WAN) across NIFRS is being replaced which will provide improved connectivity and increased bandwidth across all sites. At the same time, BSO are now rolling out 450 updated thin clients connected to an environment based in BSO data centres on brand new hardware. It is anticipated that the WAN roll out across the organisation will complete in December 2022 with the thin client roll out due to commence in January 2023 and complete in March 2023. The combination of the updated thin client configuration connected through an improved WAN is already showing some very positive results for the 25 pilot users connected to the new system and a vast improvement on connectivity, speed and user experience when compared to the previous system.

6.8.29   An area of concern or potential weakness that continues to exist is the number of standalone and unsupported applications currently in use across the Service. These have essentially been designed and implemented on an ad hoc and needs basis and, whilst they may serve their purpose in the short term, in the longer term it means that multiple applications exist that cannot be integrated. When updating or development of the application is required the original designer is often unavailable and the application becomes obsolete, with the potential to lose valuable data.

6.8.30   At every engagement during the inspection, staff raised the issue of the IT system not being reliable or fit for purpose, citing system access, connectivity and support as being the areas of greatest challenge. It is very likely that the forthcoming changes and upgrades will address the majority of the concerns users currently have. The Head of IT's plan, to issue update newsletters on the ambition, as well as the progress being made, will go a long way to addressing staff concerns.

6.8.31   There is currently no IT strategy document that provides an overview of the vision and ambition of NIFRS with regards the provision and use of IT in today's digital world. It would be advantageous to develop a strategy which will ensure that recognised pathways and processes exist for the future development and procurement of specific applications and IT solutions, thereby considering the wider organisational need, interoperability and integration across the whole Service.

6.8.32 <u>Areas for Consideration</u>

i   An IT Strategy is developed for NIFRS and approved through the formal organisational governance processes. It is important that the IT Strategy is seen as a key enabler for NIFRS and that it complements and supports the overarching organisational strategy with appropriate links to projects through the Programme Management Office. The Strategy should also take account of delivering compliance with the latest cyber security protocols and seek to deliver an integrated IT system and applications.

ii   The existing contract with the BSO for the provision of an IT capability should be reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and meeting the needs of NIFRS. The review of the contract should take cognisance of current live projects and their associated IT needs as well as any project likely to be commissioned soon, essentially futureproofing the contract for the remainder of its life.

iii The Service should consider an evaluation of the recently commenced IT upgrades is commissioned to ensure that the changes will meet the organisational needs now and into the future. The review should be completed and outcomes known before fully committing to and implementing the proposed changes right across the organisation.

6.9   **Appropriateness of NIFRS structures for Fire Safety Enforcement, Education and Advice, compared with services of a similar size.**

6.9.1 The Fire and Rescue Service (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 places specific duties on the Board of NIFRS in relation to Fire Safety and Enforcement. The Inspection Team sought to consider how NIFRS was structured and the appropriateness of systems and process relevant to this responsibility.

6.9.2 <u>Organisation</u>

6.9.3 There is a central HQ-based fire safety enforcement function delivering fire safety policy and procedures with the management of fire safety inspection and consultation work devolved to the Areas. There is a small team based at HQ. The inspecting officers are based in each of the four Area Headquarters and report through the Area line management structure.

6.9.4 There is a GC at each Area HQ with responsibility for P&P. The structure chart for P&P shows an additional 8 supervisory posts at Area HQ level, with 6 of those showing as vacant.

6.9.5 Policy is determined centrally but workloads are allocated locally. NIFRS has a proposal which would introduce a different structural model with a proposed centralised work allocation structure. The progress and future of the project seems uncertain but given the scale of NIFRS, such a change would seem appropriate and should improve consistency of approach.

6.9.6 <u>Establishment</u>

6.9.7 NIFRS declares there to be 23 area based inspecting officers in post at WC level with 3 additional vacancies; 26 is described as being a full team.

6.9.8   The number of inspecting officers is a consequence of a bespoke recruitment system whereby personnel entered the department as CC and benefitted from career advancement to WC within the function. This is associated with a 5-year commitment to remain in the department. This scheme of recruitment was reported as in need of some refresh and ongoing recruitment. On the face of things, this 'uplift' system has benefit in attracting personnel into the fire safety function.

6.9.9   However, the inspecting officers are not dedicated to fire safety enforcement. There is a commitment to provide an allocation of time to prevention work and it is also common for inspecting officers to be pulled away to provide operational availability to maintain appliance crewing (stated to be 4 days per month).

6.9.10 Attracting staff into the fire safety enforcement function, which is a specialist area requiring specialist training, can be a challenge for a Fire and Rescue Service. The uplift scheme that NIFRS has introduced can be seen as a success but to have a system where those specialist staff can then spend 50% of their available time on other work seems inefficient. A lower number of inspecting officers could be expected to deliver a similar output if 100% of their time was spent on their specialist work within NIFRS using other approaches to deliver prevention work.

6.9.11 Having a lower establishment would reduce the difficulty with staff replacement and specialist training provision, although a downside would be a reduced pool of staff with fire safety expertise which might affect further career development.

6.9.12 Workload

6.9.13 Enforcement staff are not issued with inspection targets. The policy is to encourage quality of work rather than quantity of visits. This is a suitable approach.

6.9.14 There has been calculation of the number of inspecting officers required determined by calculation of the workload involved by virtue of the number of relevant premises, the audit frequency of those premises, other inspection work and other commitments.

6.9.15 There are around 64,000 known relevant premises recorded. These are categorised under the FSEC Category system using the premises use groupings but the use is quite unsophisticated with no apparent use made of risk ratings within the purpose use groups. The downside of this is that higher risk premises can receive the same level of attention as lower risk premises though this does depend on how the local allocation works in practice.

6.9.16 There is an audit priority list which informs audit scheduling and priorities. The Service policy is to undertake a fire safety audit at a pre-determined frequency in line with the use of the premises. A Protection Framework (issued in 2022) specifies a 3-year and 5-year reinspection frequency for 'sleeping risk' premises.

6.9.17 The administration of audit work is somewhat of a hybrid system. There has been the issue of technology to individuals to allow home working during Covid restrictions, but it is very much a paper-based system with lifetime paper files maintained. There is a degree of administrative support available to inspecting officers though again there are reported unfilled posts. There has been no strong development of IT systems to assist the function and no document management system other than the paper-based premises files.

6.9.18   One theme raised is the inability to fill vacant posts for admin support and replacement of inspecting officers.

6.9.19   There is a quality control system where managers sign off reports and letters.

6.9.20   Overall the Inspection Team believe that, whilst efficiencies could be achieved and structures improved, the system for ensuring the Board complies with its duties under The Order is fit for purpose.

7 SUMMARY

7.1 As stated in the foreword to this report, the NIFRS provides an invaluable service to the communities it protects. The people who work for the Service display a genuine passion for their individual roles, and a collective pride in the organisation they represent. Whilst we have made a number of recommendations and identified areas for improvement within this report, the challenges identified are in no way insurmountable. With sound leadership, political support, and financial investment, each of the issues highlighted can be fully addressed.

7.2 In commissioning this inspection the DoH and the Board of the NIFRS have taken a positive step on the journey of continuous improvement. We trust this report will assist the Service to move forward in a positive manner. We look forward to following this journey and remain committed to providing support and advice where appropriate to do so.

7.3 We firmly believe that there is value in formal and routine inspection of large organisations by an independent and sector competent body. We would urge the DoH to explore options available to ensure appropriate independent scrutiny continues beyond this inspection process.

7.4 **Recommendation:**
The DoH should establish arrangements for the ongoing scrutiny and inspection of the NIFRS by an appropriate, fully independent and operationally competent body.

Glossary

AC	Area Commander
ALB	Arm's Length Body
AO	Accounting Officer
ARA	Additional Responsibility Allowance
BA	Breathing Apparatus
BAFF	BA Firefighter Course
BAU	Business as Usual
BSO	Business Services Organisation
CC	Crew Commander
CCMS	Command and Control Mobilising System
CFF	Compartment Firefighting
CFRO	Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Professional Development
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRMP	Community Risk Management Plan
CRP	Community Risk Programme
DCFRO	Deputy Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
DoH	Department of Health
DRR	Directorate Risk Register
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
EMR	Emergency Medical Response
ERS	Emergency Response Standard
FES	Fleet, Engineering and Supplies
FFC	Firefighter Control
FFD	Firefighters in Development
FOI	Freedom of Information

Integrity, Objectivity, and Fairness.

FSEC	Fire Services Emergency Cover
GC	Group Commander
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GTI	Grenfell Tower Inquiry
HMFSI	His Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
HSC	Health and Social Care
IC	Incident Command
iCFRO	Interim Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management
IPDS	Integrated Personal Development System
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
IT	Information Technology
L&D	Learning and Development
LDC	Learning and Development Centre
MIS	Management Information System
MSFM	Management Statement and Financial Memorandum
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council
NIFRS	Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
NJC	National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services
NOG	National Operational Guidance
NOL	National Operational Learning
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OD	Organisational Development
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
P&P	Prevention and Protection
PAMS	
PDR	Personal Development Review
PHAROS	

PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PQA	Personal Qualities and Attributes
PSV	Public Service Vehicle
QFSM	Queen's Fire Service Medal
RAG	Red – Amber – Green
RCC	Regional Control Centre
RPU	Resource Planning Unit
RTC	Road Traffic Collision
SC	Station Commander
SFRS	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SLT	Senior Leadership team
SWP	Strategic Workforce Plan
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
TOR	Terms of Reference
WAN	Wide Area Network
WC	Watch Commanders

Integrity, Objectivity, and Fairness.

Appendix A

Terms of Reference – Independent Review of Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service by HM Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Introduction

The Department of Health (DoH) has commissioned HM Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (HMFSI) to lead an independent review of Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS). The Inspectorate status brings great value to such a review and DoH is grateful to Scottish Government for permitting HMFSI to lead this review. The review has been commissioned by the Department of Health at the request of NIFRS Board and the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

Scope of the Review

The review will provide an independent examination of the challenges facing NIFRS and will include:

- NIFRS risk/demand profile, coupled with an analysis of historical activity levels and resourcing (headcount/finance).

- Appropriateness of NIFRS structures for fire safety enforcement, education and advice, compared with services of a similar size.

- Systems in place for ensuring operational staff attain necessary training and that these are maintained to a specified standard throughout their time in post.

- NIFRS succession planning processes to fulfil future resource demands at all levels.

- Consideration of NIFRS current support staff structures compared with organisations of a similar size and remit.

- Governance arrangements in place between the Department and NIFRS Board (MSFM/operational framework/Partnership Agreement), between NIFRS Board and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

- NIFRS progress against NIFRS "People Strategy" outcomes to better understand issues of organisational culture, staff development, wellbeing, diversity and leadership.

- NIFRS infrastructure, estate and equipment; to determine adequate safety levels and fitness for purpose.

- A review of relevant policies and standard operating procedures to ensure these are aligned to, or take account of, current National Operational Guidance.

HMFSI should make recommendations for the consideration of the Permanent Secretary/Minister.

Approach

A small review team of both fire and other appropriate professionals will be commissioned by HM Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to support the Chief Inspector in the review. The team will consist of subject matter experts who have had prior experience of operating within, and/or leading, a UK fire and rescue service. HM Chief Inspector will be responsible for providing an interim (3 month) and a final (6 month) report. Findings of the review will be based on evidence and professional judgement. The review will not be open to influence by any other body or individual.

The review will require engagement with the Department of Health, NIFRS Board, NIFRS CFRO, the recognised Trades Unions, NIFRS ELT and other NIFRS personnel, as the review team deem appropriate, to fully understand the areas of focus and be supportive in nature.

HM Chief Inspector will engage directly with the DoH Director of Public Inquiries and Public Safety (PIPS) and will provide monthly progress updates. Areas of critical concern will be reported immediately. Should issues emerge as part of the review, HMFSI shall raise these with DoH Director of PIPS, so that the ToR can remain flexible, should this be necessary.

The review reports will be provided to DoH Permanent Secretary, as the Departmental Accounting Officer.

Appendix B

NIFRS Team – Biographies of Inspectors

Robert Scott QFSM FIFireE – Chief Inspector

Robert Scott currently serves as His Majesty's Chief Inspector of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, a post he has held since 2021. Robert joined the Fire and Rescue Service in 1989 and rose steadily through the ranks, being appointed as Assistant Chief Officer of Strathclyde Fire and Rescue in 2010. Robert formed part of a small team that led the reform of the Fire and Rescue Service in Scotland and resulted in the creation of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in 2013. Robert served as a Principal Officer/Director within the new national service until his retirement in 2017.

As Chief Inspector Robert serves under a Royal Warrant and operates within independence to provide assurance that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is performing in an efficient and effective manner and in line with the principles of Best Value.

Alasdair Hay CBE QFSM – Lead Inspector

Alasdair served as the first Chief Officer of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the largest Service of its kind in Europe. Alasdair oversaw the reform of fire services in Scotland and served as Chief Officer until his retirement in 2019.

During this period of significant transformation he was the Accountable Officer, personally responsible to the Scottish Parliament for the £300 million budget, an adviser to the NJC and a Director of CFOA/NFCC. However, most importantly, Alasdair had to ensure the continuity of service delivery and was responsible to the Board for ensuring that all the statutory responsibilities of the Fire Authority were met.

Alasdair now serves as a non-executive member of the Board of the Scottish Police Authority and also acts as an operational advisor to the Deputy Mayor of London in relation to fire service matters.

John MacDonald – Inspector

John MacDonald joined the Fire and Rescue Service in 1991 and worked within the Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service for the majority of his career. John has a wealth of operational experience and specific experience in relation to the protection of communities living and working in remote areas. Within the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service John attained the rank of Deputy Assistant Chief Officer and led a small team tasked with developing a picture of risk and activity across the communities of Scotland. His work on the creation of a Community Risk Index Model (CRIM) is considered as an example of best practice and is underpinned by a wide range of data and assured through partnership with academia. This model will be used to identify opportunities to develop the service and ensure resources are used to maximum potential to protect the communities of Scotland.

Marieke Dwarshuis – Inspector

Marieke graduated in Law from Utrecht University in The Netherlands, and her career in Scotland spans nearly 30 years in the public and voluntary sector in a wide range of roles. She was Director of Consumer Focus Scotland, and a member of the senior management team that established the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. She has held positions in the Scottish Government, where amongst other things she worked on Access to Justice issues, and prior to that was Depute Director at Shelter Scotland. She started her career in Scotland at Citizens Advice Scotland.

Marieke has extensive experience as a non-executive director in the public sector. She was a Board member of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for more than eight years, chairing its Transformation and Major Projects Committee for six years and overseeing the transformation from eight previous fire services into one. She was a Board member for Food Standards Scotland for six years, and currently serves on the Board of the Scottish Housing Regulator, NHS24 and the Scottish Legal Aid Board. In a voluntary capacity she has been vice chair of Hillcrest Housing Association, a large social landlord and support services provider in the east of Scotland.

Alex Johnson QFSM – Inspector

Alex joined Derbyshire Fire Service in 1992 as a firefighter. At that time women made up less than 1% of the British Fire Service. Alex progressed through ranks in Derbyshire and moved to South Yorkshire in 2017 as the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, progressing to Deputy Chief in 2018 and becoming the first female Chief Fire Officer for South Yorkshire Fire in January 2020. Alex retired in May 2022 after 30 years' service.

As Chief Fire Officer, Alex took responsibility for the Health, Safety and Welfare of approximately 1000 staff, ensuring they were both competent and confident to carry out their operational and support functions. In South Yorkshire she developed a workforce strategy and the Service received a 'good' rating in People, Efficiency and Effectiveness. As the Lead for the NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion workstream, she has a strong understanding and is passionate about creating an inclusive culture and a diverse workforce. Alex has also been responsible for the organisational and training development portfolio in Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service. She was also a Breathing Apparatus instructor earlier in her career.

Appendix C

Full List of Issues Raised by Stations

FIRE STATIONS	
Poor IT Systems	99%
Strong commitment of staff and pride in organisation	97%
Firefighter Pay & Conditions	94%
Instability in structures/too many temp positions	91%
Concern at availability of resources/personnel churn	84%
Lack of leadership	84%
Poor training structure	84%
Frustration in recruitment processes	82%
Training course availability – poor	82%
Inconsistency in decision making and/or policy interpretation	81%
Low morale & goodwill eroded, feeling undervalued	79%
MODAS – very poor and unreliable	78%
Engagement with senior managers/board members – poor	78%
Gartan management policy – poor	76%
Equipment issue and repair/replacement – extended turnaround	76%
Good appliances/operational equipment/PPE	76%
Overall service wide communications – poor	75%
Experience/credibility/quality of instructors at LDC	73%
Lack of workforce planning	69%
Unrealistic On-Call Firefighter workloads	69%
Good community safety activity being delivered	69%
Frustration in promotion processes	63%
On-Call Project – lack of progress or update	63%
Confusion/frustration with On-Call availability contracts	63%
Lack of career/personal development opportunities	57%
WT/RDS & WT overtime rules/application of policy	54%
Inconsistency in material being delivered	54%
Payroll Systems – slow to implement pay uplifts & lack of detail on payslip	52%
Building/asset condition and/or support – poor	52%
Support EMR but with appropriate policy, procedure, etc.	48%

FIRE STATIONS	
Fire kit – 2nd hand being issued	46%
RDS to WT pathways and competency processes	45%
ATP not working/fit for purpose	45%
LDC Cookstown – concerns around suitability/use	40%
Additional responsibilities payments	39%
Fire kit laundering – extended turnaround	37%
On-Call Firefighter pension buy back confusion/lack of access to support/info	36%
Risk Critical Information inspections being completed	33%
WT/On-Call FF training processes	31%
Ops 7 Policy – movement of FF in Development	30%
Poor training records/process	30%
Specialist capabilities – concerns about location/availability	30%
Appliance/fleet – concerns about replacement programme	24%
Concerns about station location and/or duty systems	24%
Frustration with access to OH services	21%
Operational assurance process available & understood	18%
Area and District meetings adding value	16%
FBU officials – management conflict of interest	13%
Gym facilities – inconsistency in provision	13%
Issue of Queen's Jubilee Medal/LSGC Medal- not received yet	13%
CSU equipment challenges	7%
Beehive – good system	3%

Appendix D

2019-20 Overall On-Call Availability

1 Pump Stations – Overall 2019/20

Station	Appliance	Mon - Fri (08:00 - 18:00)		Mon - Thu (18:00 - 08:00)		Weekend (Fri 18:00 - Mon 08:00)		Overall 2019/20	
		Total Hours:	2640	Total Hours:	2924	Total Hours:	3220	Total Hours:	8784
		Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached
Ballymena	N1102	1630.75	61.77%	545.25	18.65%	1357.00	42.14%	3533.00	40.22%
Kilrea	N1201	142.00	5.38%	6.50	0.22%	44.75	1.39%	193.25	2.20%
Cushendall	N1301	32.00	1.21%	0.50	0.02%	60.75	1.89%	93.25	1.06%
Carnlough	N1401	656.25	24.86%	3.25	0.11%	27.75	0.86%	687.25	7.82%
Glengormley	N3106	1033.00	39.13%	267.25	9.14%	1512.00	46.96%	2812.25	32.02%
Whitehead	N3501	678.75	25.71%	89.00	3.04%	307.50	9.55%	1075.25	12.24%
Lisburn	N4102	1135.50	43.01%	127.50	4.36%	861.50	26.75%	2124.50	24.19%
Crumlin	N4201	962.00	36.44%	315.25	10.78%	1211.75	37.63%	2489.00	28.34%
Lurgan	S1402	249.50	9.45%	58.25	1.99%	263.50	8.18%	571.25	6.50%
Keady	S1501	295.75	11.20%	14.50	0.50%	230.25	7.15%	540.50	6.15%
Dromore	S1601	1489.25	56.41%	50.00	1.71%	279.75	8.69%	1819.00	20.71%
Bangor	S2102	1009.50	38.24%	395.00	13.51%	938.00	29.13%	2342.50	26.67%
Comber	S2201	1389.00	52.61%	219.50	7.51%	905.50	28.12%	2514.00	28.62%
Donaghadee	S2301	499.25	18.91%	165.50	5.66%	525.25	16.31%	1190.00	13.55%

Ballywalter	S2401	782.50	29.64%	4.25	0.15%	52.25	1.62%	839.00	9.55%
Portaferry	S2701	18.75	0.71%	5.00	0.17%	28.50	0.89%	52.25	0.59%
Newry	S3102	1109.25	42.02%	143.50	4.91%	1275.00	39.60%	2527.75	28.78%
Crossmaglen	S3201	154.75	5.86%	2.50	0.09%	210.50	6.54%	367.75	4.19%
Carryduff	S4301	891.75	33.78%	98.75	3.38%	760.75	23.63%	1751.25	19.94%
Crescent Link	W1102	1482.25	56.15%	98.50	3.37%	905.25	28.11%	2486.00	28.30%
Dungiven	W1501	531.50	20.13%	156.75	5.36%	635.25	19.73%	1323.50	15.07%
Dromore	W2201	711.25	26.94%	3.00	0.10%	48.50	1.51%	762.75	8.68%
Fintona	W2401	158.00	5.98%	3.25	0.11%	96.50	3.00%	257.75	2.93%
Newtownstewart	W2501	238.00	9.02%	42.25	1.44%	513.25	15.94%	793.50	9.03%
Pomeroy	W3201	1113.25	42.17%	112.00	3.83%	366.25	11.37%	1591.50	18.12%
Irvinestown	W4201	256.75	9.73%	0.50	0.02%	56.25	1.75%	313.50	3.57%
Belleek	W4301	39.25	1.49%	0.50	0.02%	5.00	0.16%	44.75	0.51%
1 Pump Station – Average Breach		**692.21**		**108.44**		**499.20**		**1299.86**	

2 Pump Stations – Overall 2019/20

Station	Appliance	Mon - Fri (08:00 - 18:00)		Mon - Thu (18:00 - 08:00)		Weekend (Fri 18:00 - Mon 08:00)		Overall 2019/20	
		Total Hours:	2640	Total Hours:	2924	Total Hours:	3220	Total Hours:	8784
		Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached
Larne	N1571	14.75	0.56%	0.50	0.02%	11.25	0.35%	26.50	0.30%
	N1502	875.50	33.16%	44.50	1.52%	399.50	12.41%	1319.50	15.02%
Portstewart	N2201	1109.50	42.03%	31.50	1.08%	330.25	10.26%	1471.25	16.75%
	N2202	2517.25	95.35%	1051.50	35.96%	2390.00	74.22%	5958.75	67.84%
Portrush	N2301	175.75	6.66%	0.25	0.01%	34.75	1.08%	210.75	2.40%
	N2302	1977.00	74.89%	213.25	7.29%	1010.25	31.37%	3200.50	36.44%
Ballymoney	N2401	537.75	20.37%	0.00	0.00%	12.00	0.37%	549.75	6.26%
	N2402	2149.75	81.43%	60.50	2.07%	680.50	21.13%	2890.75	32.91%
Ballycastle	N2501	187.75	7.11%	0.25	0.01%	35.25	1.09%	223.25	2.54%
	N2502	1765.00	66.86%	108.75	3.72%	1260.75	39.15%	3134.50	35.68%
Ballyclare	N3301	153.50	5.81%	7.25	0.25%	36.75	1.14%	197.50	2.25%
	N3302	1600.00	60.61%	118.50	4.05%	1020.75	31.70%	2739.25	31.18%
Banbridge	S1301	32.50	1.23%	1.25	0.04%	20.50	0.64%	54.25	0.62%
	S1302	1034.50	39.19%	90.25	3.09%	588.00	18.26%	1712.75	19.50%
Holywood	S2501	1041.00	39.43%	201.75	6.90%	870.75	27.04%	2113.50	24.06%
	S2502	2566.75	97.23%	2000.00	68.40%	3029.00	94.07%	7595.75	86.47%
Rathfriland	S3301	27.00	1.02%	0.00	0.00%	11.75	0.36%	38.75	0.44%
	S3302	1531.00	57.99%	70.50	2.41%	584.25	18.14%	2185.75	24.88%

Warrenpoint	S3401	212.25	8.04%	12.75	0.44%	157.25	4.88%	382.25	4.35%
	S3402	1885.75	71.43%	325.25	11.12%	1374.50	42.69%	3585.50	40.82%
Newtownhamilton	S3501	1582.75	59.95%	30.75	1.05%	85.75	2.66%	1699.25	19.34%
	S3502	2604.25	98.65%	468.00	16.01%	1378.00	42.80%	4450.25	50.66%
Downpatrick	S4101	95.75	3.63%	12.75	0.44%	169.00	5.25%	277.50	3.16%
	S4102	1839.25	69.67%	413.50	14.14%	1897.00	58.91%	4149.75	47.24%
Kilkeel	S4201	103.00	3.90%	0.50	0.02%	10.00	0.31%	113.50	1.29%
	S4202	1823.25	69.06%	83.75	2.86%	301.50	9.36%	2208.50	25.14%
Newcastle	S4471	7.25	0.27%	0.25	0.01%	7.75	0.24%	15.25	0.17%
	S4402	595.00	22.54%	52.25	1.79%	425.75	13.22%	1073.00	12.22%
Ballynahinch	S4501	39.50	1.50%	0.75	0.03%	35.75	1.11%	76.00	0.87%
	S4502	1424.00	53.94%	226.00	7.73%	966.25	30.01%	2616.25	29.78%
Strabane	W1301	95.75	3.63%	12.25	0.42%	99.00	3.07%	207.00	2.36%
	W1302	1466.25	55.54%	495.50	16.95%	1833.50	56.94%	3795.25	43.21%
Limavady	W1401	233.00	8.83%	38.75	1.33%	531.25	16.50%	803.00	9.14%
	W1402	1952.25	73.95%	812.50	27.79%	2515.75	78.13%	5280.50	60.11%
Castlederg	W2301	133.00	5.04%	2.00	0.07%	100.75	3.13%	235.75	2.68%
	W2302	1938.00	73.41%	507.00	17.34%	1828.75	56.79%	4273.75	48.65%
Cookstown	W3101	212.25	8.04%	3.75	0.13%	31.25	0.97%	247.25	2.81%
	W3102	2008.50	76.08%	295.00	10.09%	1219.75	37.88%	3523.25	40.11%
Maghera	W3301	43.75	1.66%	5.00	0.17%	35.50	1.10%	84.25	0.96%
	W3302	1200.25	45.46%	244.50	8.36%	863.50	26.82%	2308.25	26.28%

Dungannon	W3471	18.00	0.68%	1.00	0.03%	34.50	1.07%	53.50	0.61%
	W3402	1295.25	49.06%	197.00	6.74%	1550.25	48.14%	3042.50	34.64%
Magherafelt	W3571	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	1.00	0.03%	1.00	0.01%
	W3502	388.25	14.71%	31.25	1.07%	464.00	14.41%	883.50	10.06%
Lisnaskea	W4401	30.25	1.15%	4.75	0.16%	61.25	1.90%	96.25	1.10%
	W4402	1029.75	39.01%	92.75	3.17%	1474.50	45.79%	2597.00	29.57%
Clogher	W4501	8.25	0.31%	0.00	0.00%	3.75	0.12%	12.00	0.14%
	W4502	494.00	18.71%	13.50	0.46%	274.25	8.52%	781.75	8.90%
2 Pump Station – 1st Pump Average Breach		**253.93**		**15.33**		**113.63**		**382.89**	
2 Pump Station – 2nd Pump Average Breach		**1581.70**		**333.98**		**1222.09**		**3137.77**	

Day Crewing Stations – Overall 2019/20

Station	Appliance	Mon - Fri (08:00 - 18:00)		Mon - Thu (18:00 - 08:00)		Weekend (Fri 18:00 - Mon 08:00)		Overall 2019/20	
		Total Hours:	2640	Total Hours:	2924	Total Hours:	3220	Total Hours:	8784
		Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached
Coleraine	N2171	0.00	0.00%	4.75	0.16%	46.00	1.43%	50.75	0.58%
	N2102	205.25	7.77%	216.00	7.39%	1247.25	38.73%	1668.50	18.99%
Antrim	N3201	0.00	0.00%	15.75	0.54%	79.25	2.46%	95.00	1.08%
	N3202	207.25	7.85%	548.00	18.74%	1361.50	42.28%	2116.75	24.10%
Carrickfergus	N3401	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	5.75	0.18%	5.75	0.07%
	N3402	85.75	3.25%	34.00	1.16%	160.75	4.99%	280.50	3.19%
Portadown	S1101	0.00	0.00%	25.25	0.86%	182.25	5.66%	207.50	2.36%
	S1102	127.50	4.83%	384.75	13.16%	1869.00	58.04%	2381.25	27.11%
Armagh	S1201	0.00	0.00%	22.25	0.76%	194.50	6.04%	216.75	2.47%
	S1202	187.50	7.10%	531.50	18.18%	1867.00	57.98%	2586.00	29.44%
Newtownards	S2671	0.00	0.00%	12.25	0.42%	14.00	0.43%	26.25	0.30%
	S2602	111.50	4.22%	245.75	8.40%	940.75	29.22%	1298.00	14.78%
Omagh	W2171	0.00	0.00%	18.00	0.62%	238.00	7.39%	256.00	2.91%
	W2102	342.50	12.97%	536.00	18.33%	2045.75	63.53%	2924.25	33.29%
Enniskillen	W4171	0.00	0.00%	1.75	0.06%	22.25	0.69%	24.00	0.27%
	W4102	119.50	4.53%	146.75	5.02%	960.75	29.84%	1227.00	13.97%
DC Station – 1st Pump Average Breach		0.00		12.50		97.75		110.25	
DC Station – 2nd Pump Average Breach		173.34		330.34		1306.59		1810.28	

2020-21 Overall On-Call Availability

1 Pump Stations – Overall 2020/21

Station	Appliance	Mon - Fri (08:00 - 18:00)		Mon - Thu (18:00 - 08:00)		Weekend (Fri 18:00 - Mon 08:00)		Overall 2020/21	
		Total Hours:	2610	Total Hours:	2926	Total Hours:	3224	Total Hours:	8760
		Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached
Ballymena	N1102	924.75	35.43%	223.50	7.64%	403.50	12.52%	1551.75	17.71%
Kilrea	N1201	97.75	3.75%	0.00	0.00%	17.00	0.53%	114.75	1.31%
Cushendall	N1301	135.50	5.19%	3.75	0.13%	42.00	1.30%	181.25	2.07%
Carnlough	N1401	231.25	8.86%	5.75	0.20%	12.25	0.38%	249.25	2.85%
Glengormley	N3106	1143.00	43.79%	541.00	18.49%	1463.25	45.39%	3147.25	35.93%
Whitehead	N3501	587.25	22.50%	102.50	3.50%	415.00	12.87%	1104.75	12.61%
Lisburn	N4102	666.25	25.53%	98.50	3.37%	659.75	20.46%	1424.50	16.26%
Crumlin	N4201	724.00	27.74%	207.25	7.08%	1147.25	35.58%	2078.50	23.73%
Lurgan	S1402	146.75	5.62%	30.75	1.05%	216.50	6.72%	394.00	4.50%
Keady	S1501	370.00	14.18%	19.50	0.67%	291.00	9.03%	680.50	7.77%
Dromore	S1601	933.75	35.78%	19.25	0.66%	73.00	2.26%	1026.00	11.71%
Bangor	S2102	463.50	17.76%	200.25	6.84%	486.50	15.09%	1150.25	13.13%
Comber	S2201	1180.00	45.21%	178.00	6.08%	849.25	26.34%	2207.25	25.20%
Donaghadee	S2301	502.75	19.26%	535.75	18.31%	987.75	30.64%	2026.25	23.13%
Ballywalter	S2401	375.25	14.38%	3.75	0.13%	13.25	0.41%	392.25	4.48%
Portaferry	S2701	14.00	0.54%	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	14.00	0.16%

Newry	S3102	1311.00	50.23%	398.50	13.62%	1502.00	46.59%	3211.50	36.66%
Crossmaglen	S3201	152.50	5.84%	4.75	0.16%	48.75	1.51%	206.00	2.35%
Carryduff	S4301	1825.75	69.95%	220.00	7.52%	887.25	27.52%	2933.00	33.48%
Crescent Link	W1102	664.75	25.47%	41.00	1.40%	448.00	13.90%	1153.75	13.17%
Dungiven	W1501	545.00	20.88%	90.75	3.10%	544.75	16.90%	1180.50	13.48%
Dromore	W2201	634.00	24.29%	1.00	0.03%	21.50	0.67%	656.50	7.49%
Fintona	W2401	9.75	0.37%	0.75	0.03%	15.75	0.49%	26.25	0.30%
Newtownstewart	W2501	71.75	2.75%	8.00	0.27%	106.50	3.30%	186.25	2.13%
Pomeroy	W3201	918.00	35.17%	241.00	8.24%	517.00	16.04%	1676.00	19.13%
Irvinestown	W4201	156.00	5.98%	0.50	0.02%	31.25	0.97%	187.75	2.14%
Belleek	W4301	2.00	0.08%	0.00	0.00%	2.00	0.06%	4.00	0.05%
1 Pump Station – Average Breach		**547.64**		**117.62**		**414.89**		**1080.15**	

2 Pump Stations – Overall 2020/21

Station	Appliance	Mon - Fri (08:00 - 18:00)		Mon - Thu (18:00 - 08:00)		Weekend (Fri 18:00 - Mon 08:00)		Overall 2020/21	
		Total Hours:	2610	Total Hours:	2926	Total Hours:	3224	Total Hours:	8760
		Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached
Larne	N1571	2.00	0.08%	0.00	0.00%	0.25	0.01%	2.25	0.03%
	N1502	383.25	14.68%	33.75	1.15%	162.00	5.02%	579.00	6.61%
Portstewart	N2201	935.25	35.83%	59.50	2.03%	386.25	11.98%	1381.00	15.76%
	N2202	2463.50	94.39%	1378.25	47.10%	2455.00	76.15%	6296.75	71.88%
Portrush	N2301	43.00	1.65%	0.00	0.00%	28.75	0.89%	71.75	0.82%
	N2302	1434.50	54.96%	126.00	4.31%	868.50	26.94%	2429.00	27.73%
Ballymoney	N2401	378.00	14.48%	0.00	0.00%	1.25	0.04%	379.25	4.33%
	N2402	1642.25	62.92%	72.50	2.48%	459.75	14.26%	2174.50	24.82%
Ballycastle	N2501	230.50	8.83%	0.50	0.02%	33.75	1.05%	264.75	3.02%
	N2502	1741.50	66.72%	153.75	5.25%	821.75	25.49%	2717.00	31.02%
Ballyclare	N3301	47.00	1.80%	0.00	0.00%	15.50	0.48%	62.50	0.71%
	N3302	900.00	34.48%	59.25	2.02%	915.00	28.38%	1874.25	21.40%
Banbridge	S1301	15.25	0.58%	0.50	0.02%	45.75	1.42%	61.50	0.70%
	S1302	628.50	24.08%	154.25	5.27%	737.00	22.86%	1519.75	17.35%
Holywood	S2501	1282.75	49.15%	316.00	10.80%	1179.00	36.57%	2777.75	31.71%
	S2502	2592.25	99.32%	2734.75	93.46%	3152.25	97.77%	8479.25	96.80%
Rathfriland	S3301	32.50	1.25%	0.00	0.00%	11.00	0.34%	43.50	0.50%

	S3302	1270.75	48.69%	87.25	2.98%	564.00	17.49%	1922.00	21.94%
Warrenpoint	S3401	381.50	14.62%	13.00	0.44%	149.50	4.64%	544.00	6.21%
	S3402	2232.25	85.53%	551.50	18.85%	1668.50	51.75%	4452.25	50.82%
Newtownhamilton	S3501	1210.25	46.37%	56.50	1.93%	38.50	1.19%	1305.25	14.90%
	S3502	2585.50	99.06%	410.50	14.03%	955.25	29.63%	3951.25	45.11%
Downpatrick	S4101	274.75	10.53%	25.00	0.85%	116.25	3.61%	416.00	4.75%
	S4102	1871.75	71.71%	760.75	26.00%	1882.75	58.40%	4515.25	51.54%
Kilkeel	S4201	76.00	2.91%	0.00	0.00%	1.00	0.03%	77.00	0.88%
	S4202	1218.50	46.69%	51.00	1.74%	96.00	2.98%	1365.50	15.59%
Newcastle	S4471	11.75	0.45%	3.50	0.12%	43.00	1.33%	58.25	0.66%
	S4402	530.50	20.33%	58.25	1.99%	625.00	19.39%	1213.75	13.86%
Ballynahinch	S4501	2.25	0.09%	0.50	0.02%	5.25	0.16%	8.00	0.09%
	S4502	763.25	29.24%	161.50	5.52%	597.75	18.54%	1522.50	17.38%
Strabane	W1301	32.25	1.24%	26.75	0.91%	74.25	2.30%	133.25	1.52%
	W1302	818.00	31.34%	528.25	18.05%	1476.25	45.79%	2822.50	32.22%
Limavady	W1401	232.25	8.90%	16.75	0.57%	365.50	11.34%	614.50	7.01%
	W1402	1953.25	74.84%	1014.00	34.65%	2665.50	82.68%	5632.75	64.30%
Castlederg	W2301	68.50	2.62%	0.00	0.00%	40.25	1.25%	108.75	1.24%
	W2302	1115.00	42.72%	244.75	8.36%	1180.25	36.61%	2540.00	29.00%
Cookstown	W3101	171.25	6.56%	2.75	0.09%	17.00	0.53%	191.00	2.18%
	W3102	1558.75	59.72%	145.50	4.97%	849.25	26.34%	2553.50	29.15%
Maghera	W3301	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	2.50	0.08%	2.50	0.03%
	W3302	252.75	9.68%	19.00	0.65%	134.50	4.17%	406.25	4.64%

Dungannon	W3471	10.50	0.40%	0.00	0.00%	8.00	0.25%	18.50	0.21%
	W3402	1350.00	51.72%	270.00	9.23%	1398.50	43.38%	3018.50	34.46%
Magherafelt	W3571	5.75	0.22%	0.75	0.03%	0.00	0.00%	6.50	0.07%
	W3502	820.50	31.44%	121.25	4.14%	283.50	8.79%	1225.25	13.99%
Lisnaskea	W4401	48.25	1.85%	4.75	0.16%	71.75	2.23%	124.75	1.42%
	W4402	1270.25	48.67%	118.50	4.05%	1204.25	37.35%	2593.00	29.60%
Clogher	W4501	0.25	0.01%	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	0.25	0.00%
	W4502	283.25	10.85%	5.25	0.18%	110.75	3.44%	399.25	4.56%
2 Pump Station – 1st Pump Average Breach		**228.82**		**21.95**		**109.76**		**360.53**	
2 Pump Station – 2nd Pump Average Breach		**1320.00**		**385.82**		**1052.64**		**2758.46**	

Day Crewing Stations – Overall 2020/21

Station	Appliance	Mon - Fri (08:00 - 18:00)		Mon - Thu (18:00 - 08:00)		Weekend (Fri 18:00 - Mon 08:00)		Overall 2020/21	
		Total Hours:	2610	Total Hours:	2926	Total Hours:	3224	Total Hours:	8760
		Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached
Coleraine	N2171	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	47.75	1.48%	47.75	0.55%
	N2102	83.75	3.21%	106.00	3.62%	1066.75	33.09%	1256.50	14.34%
Antrim	N3201	0.00	0.00%	11.75	0.40%	6.00	0.19%	17.75	0.20%
	N3202	36.75	1.41%	145.50	4.97%	501.00	15.54%	683.25	7.80%
* Carrickfergus	N3401	15.75	0.60%	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	15.75	0.18%
	N3402	721.50	27.64%	44.00	1.50%	83.50	2.59%	849.00	9.69%
* Portadown	S1101	207.75	7.96%	87.25	2.98%	300.25	9.31%	595.25	6.80%
	S1102	1508.00	57.78%	779.00	26.62%	1904.50	59.07%	4191.50	47.85%
Armagh	S1201	0.00	0.00%	51.00	1.74%	76.25	2.37%	127.25	1.45%
	S1202	218.25	8.36%	677.00	23.14%	1428.75	44.32%	2324.00	26.53%
^ Newtownards	S2671	21.75	0.83%	4.50	0.15%	14.00	0.43%	40.25	0.46%
	S2602	1239.75	47.50%	423.50	14.47%	1237.25	38.38%	2900.50	33.11%
Omagh	W2171	0.00	0.00%	7.00	0.24%	98.25	3.05%	105.25	1.20%
	W2102	457.50	17.53%	333.50	11.40%	1423.25	44.15%	2214.25	25.28%
* Enniskillen	W4171	138.75	5.32%	11.50	0.39%	46.00	1.43%	196.25	2.24%
	W4102	1602.00	61.38%	376.75	12.88%	1128.00	34.99%	3106.75	35.47%
DC Station – 1st Pump Average Breach		48.00		21.63		73.56		143.19	
DC Station – 2nd Pump Average Breach		733.44		360.66		1096.63		2190.72	

2021-22 Overall On-Call Availability

1 Pump Stations – Overall 2021/22

Station	Appliance	Mon - Fri (08:00 - 18:00)		Mon - Thu (18:00 - 08:00)		Weekend (Fri 18:00 - Mon 08:00)		Overall 2021/22	
		Total Hours:	2610	Total Hours:	2926	Total Hours:	3224	Total Hours:	8760
		Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached
Ballymena	N1102	624.25	23.92%	243.50	8.32%	902.50	27.99%	1770.25	20.21%
Kilrea	N1201	204.00	7.82%	9.75	0.33%	141.00	4.37%	354.75	4.05%
Cushendall	N1301	382.50	14.66%	15.00	0.51%	244.75	7.59%	642.25	7.33%
Carnlough	N1401	272.50	10.44%	5.00	0.17%	25.00	0.78%	302.50	3.45%
Glengormley	N3106	1828.25	70.05%	790.25	27.01%	2038.50	63.23%	4657.00	53.16%
Whitehead	N3501	937.00	35.90%	115.75	3.96%	527.00	16.35%	1579.75	18.03%
Lisburn	N4102	1349.50	51.70%	186.00	6.36%	1068.00	33.13%	2603.50	29.72%
Crumlin	N4201	1231.25	47.17%	630.00	21.53%	1388.50	43.07%	3249.75	37.10%
Lurgan	S1402	148.75	5.70%	75.00	2.56%	395.25	12.26%	619.00	7.07%
Keady	S1501	414.25	15.87%	51.50	1.76%	321.50	9.97%	787.25	8.99%
Dromore	S1601	1587.00	60.80%	83.50	2.85%	707.00	21.93%	2377.50	27.14%
Bangor	S2102	926.25	35.49%	176.25	6.02%	559.00	17.34%	1661.50	18.97%
Comber	S2201	887.25	33.99%	134.25	4.59%	669.75	20.77%	1691.25	19.31%
Donaghadee	S2301	1076.50	41.25%	1092.50	37.34%	1707.25	52.95%	3876.25	44.25%
Ballywalter	S2401	1464.25	56.10%	11.75	0.40%	53.00	1.64%	1529.00	17.45%
Portaferry	S2701	35.00	1.34%	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	35.00	0.40%

Newry	S3102	1280.25	49.05%	445.00	15.21%	875.75	27.16%	2601.00	29.69%
Crossmaglen	S3201	334.25	12.81%	34.25	1.17%	233.25	7.23%	601.75	6.87%
Carryduff	S4301	2068.50	79.25%	449.25	15.35%	1612.75	50.02%	4130.50	47.15%
Crescent Link	W1102/06	726.25	27.83%	42.00	1.44%	444.00	13.77%	1212.25	13.84%
Dungiven	W1501	358.00	13.72%	171.75	5.87%	759.00	23.54%	1288.75	14.71%
Dromore	W2201	1803.25	69.09%	46.00	1.57%	299.25	9.28%	2148.50	24.53%
Fintona	W2401	19.00	0.73%	16.75	0.57%	171.00	5.30%	206.75	2.36%
Newtownstewart	W2501	292.25	11.20%	23.50	0.80%	264.75	8.21%	580.50	6.63%
Pomeroy	W3201	227.50	8.72%	76.75	2.62%	498.00	15.45%	802.25	9.16%
Irvinestown	W4201	614.25	23.53%	9.25	0.32%	127.50	3.95%	751.00	8.57%
Belleek	W4301	189.50	7.26%	3.00	0.10%	1.00	0.03%	193.50	2.21%
1 Pump Station – Average Breach		**788.20**		**182.87**		**593.86**		**1564.94**	

2 Pump Stations – Overall 2021/22

Station	Appliance	Mon - Fri (08:00 - 18:00)		Mon - Thu (18:00 - 08:00)		Weekend (Fri 18:00 - Mon 08:00)		Overall 2021/22	
		Total Hours:	2610	Total Hours:	2926	Total Hours:	3224	Total Hours:	8760
		Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached
Larne	N1571	72.75	2.79%	2.00	0.07%	5.25	0.16%	80.00	0.91%
	N1502	1117.50	42.82%	77.75	2.66%	338.50	10.50%	1533.75	17.51%
Portstewart	N2201	1727.50	66.19%	130.00	4.44%	809.00	25.09%	2666.50	30.44%
	N2202	2599.25	99.59%	1860.00	63.57%	2894.50	89.78%	7353.75	83.95%
Portrush	N2301	73.75	2.83%	1.75	0.06%	44.00	1.36%	119.50	1.36%
	N2302	1747.75	66.96%	201.25	6.88%	1181.00	36.63%	3130.00	35.73%
Ballymoney	N2401	379.75	14.55%	0.25	0.01%	57.25	1.78%	437.25	4.99%
	N2402	1756.50	67.30%	144.75	4.95%	1161.25	36.02%	3062.50	34.96%
Ballycastle	N2501	708.00	27.13%	6.25	0.21%	121.25	3.76%	835.50	9.54%
	N2502	2354.00	90.19%	801.50	27.39%	1872.75	58.09%	5028.25	57.40%
Ballyclare	N3301	167.00	6.40%	0.00	0.00%	59.50	1.85%	226.50	2.59%
	N3302	1573.50	60.29%	84.75	2.90%	1361.50	42.23%	3019.75	34.47%
Banbridge	S1301	49.00	1.88%	1.25	0.04%	85.50	2.65%	135.75	1.55%
	S1302	1250.25	47.90%	223.00	7.62%	1264.25	39.21%	2737.50	31.25%
Holywood	S2501	1367.00	52.38%	1418.00	48.46%	2218.75	68.82%	5003.75	57.12%
	S2502	2610.00	100.00%	2926.00	100.00%	3224.00	100.00%	8760.00	100.00%
Rathfriland	S3301	15.00	0.57%	0.00	0.00%	4.50	0.14%	19.50	0.22%

	S3302	1243.00	47.62%	39.50	1.35%	334.25	10.37%	1616.75	18.46%
Warrenpoint	S3401	528.00	20.23%	67.75	2.32%	302.00	9.37%	897.75	10.25%
	S3402	2413.75	92.48%	943.50	32.25%	2266.50	70.30%	5623.75	64.20%
Newtownhamilton	S3501	1998.25	76.56%	120.25	4.11%	254.75	7.90%	2373.25	27.09%
	S3502	2604.75	99.80%	665.50	22.74%	1992.00	61.79%	5262.25	60.07%
Downpatrick	S4101	159.00	6.09%	43.25	1.48%	256.25	7.95%	458.50	5.23%
	S4102	1630.50	62.47%	700.75	23.95%	1999.00	62.00%	4330.25	49.43%
Kilkeel	S4201	631.00	24.18%	35.00	1.20%	22.25	0.69%	688.25	7.86%
	S4202	2186.50	83.77%	309.25	10.57%	666.25	20.67%	3162.00	36.10%
Newcastle	S4471	86.75	3.32%	5.75	0.20%	103.00	3.19%	195.50	2.23%
	S4402	1198.25	45.91%	205.00	7.01%	1160.50	36.00%	2563.75	29.27%
Ballynahinch	S4501	40.25	1.54%	4.75	0.16%	56.00	1.74%	101.00	1.15%
	S4502	1442.75	55.28%	417.00	14.25%	1431.00	44.39%	3290.75	37.57%
Strabane	W1301	65.50	2.51%	1.00	0.03%	104.00	3.23%	170.50	1.95%
	W1302	1133.50	43.43%	244.00	8.34%	1474.75	45.74%	2852.25	32.56%
Limavady	W1401	152.25	5.83%	39.25	1.34%	607.50	18.84%	799.00	9.12%
	W1402	1924.75	73.75%	1254.25	42.87%	2784.00	86.35%	5963.00	68.07%
Castlederg	W2301	21.75	0.83%	10.50	0.36%	144.00	4.47%	176.25	2.01%
	W2302	1339.75	51.33%	489.75	16.74%	2384.25	73.95%	4213.75	48.10%
Cookstown	W3101	73.50	2.82%	0.50	0.02%	6.00	0.19%	80.00	0.91%
	W3102	1729.00	66.25%	75.25	2.57%	563.25	17.47%	2367.50	27.03%
Maghera	W3301	0.25	0.01%	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	0.25	0.00%
	W3302	439.75	16.85%	58.50	2.00%	297.50	9.23%	795.75	9.08%

Dungannon	W3471	19.50	0.75%	1.00	0.03%	27.00	0.84%	47.50	0.54%
	W3402	1237.75	47.42%	281.50	9.62%	1725.75	53.53%	3245.00	37.04%
Magherafelt	W3571	15.75	0.60%	3.75	0.13%	5.75	0.18%	25.25	0.29%
	W3502	714.25	27.37%	177.50	6.07%	686.75	21.30%	1578.50	18.02%
Lisnaskea	W4401	614.25	23.53%	10.00	0.34%	465.00	14.42%	1089.25	12.43%
	W4402	2282.00	87.43%	349.25	11.94%	2410.25	74.76%	5041.50	57.55%
Clogher	W4501	18.50	0.71%	0.00	0.00%	18.00	0.56%	36.50	0.42%
	W4502	1033.75	39.61%	159.00	5.43%	994.00	30.83%	2186.75	24.96%
2 Pump Station – 1st Pump Average Breach		**374.34**		**79.26**		**240.69**		**694.29**	
2 Pump Station – 2nd Pump Average Breach		**1648.45**		**528.69**		**1519.49**		**3696.63**	

Day Crewing Stations – Overall 2021/22

Station	Appliance	Mon - Fri (08:00 - 18:00)		Mon - Thu (18:00 - 08:00)		Weekend (Fri 18:00 - Mon 08:00)		Overall 2021/22	
		Total Hours:	2610	Total Hours:	2926	Total Hours:	3224	Total Hours:	8760
		Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached	Hrs Breached	% Breached
Coleraine	N2171	0.00	0.00%	3.50	0.12%	66.25	2.05%	69.75	0.80%
	N2102	95.25	3.65%	207.00	7.07%	1476.50	45.80%	1778.75	20.31%
Antrim	N3201	0.00	0.00%	16.50	0.56%	33.50	1.04%	50.00	0.57%
	N3202	132.50	5.08%	384.25	13.13%	1128.00	34.99%	1644.75	18.78%
* Carrickfergus	N3401	30.75	1.18%	4.00	0.14%	8.75	0.27%	43.50	0.50%
	N3402	814.50	31.21%	110.75	3.79%	408.00	12.66%	1333.25	15.22%
* Portadown	S1101	57.50	2.20%	13.50	0.46%	99.25	3.08%	170.25	1.94%
	S1102	1283.00	49.16%	619.00	21.16%	1620.00	50.25%	3522.00	40.21%
Armagh	S1201	0.00	0.00%	69.00	2.36%	115.00	3.57%	184.00	2.10%
	S1202	110.00	4.21%	565.75	19.34%	1482.00	45.97%	2157.75	24.63%
^ Newtownards	S2671	52.25	2.00%	21.00	0.72%	100.25	3.11%	173.50	1.98%
	S2602	1372.75	52.60%	658.00	22.49%	1807.25	56.06%	3838.00	43.81%
Omagh	W2171	0.00	0.00%	31.00	1.06%	277.25	8.60%	308.25	3.52%
	W2102	321.25	12.31%	647.50	22.13%	2102.50	65.21%	3071.25	35.06%
* Enniskillen	W4171	446.50	17.11%	7.25	0.25%	168.25	5.22%	622.00	7.10%
	W4102	2317.50	88.79%	437.25	14.94%	1566.00	48.57%	4320.75	49.32%
DC Station – 1st Pump Average Breach		73.38		20.72		108.56		202.66	
DC Station – 2nd Pump Average Breach		805.84		453.69		1448.78		2708.31	

Integrity, Objectivity, and Fairness.

Appendix E

Bibliography of Evidence Documents

FUNCTION	DOCUMENT	Date
General	NIFRS Organisational Structure (Presentation to Board Meeting)	October 2021
Operational	BSO Report on NIFRS Compliance with National Operational Guidance	2020/2021
	NIFRS NOG Alignment Project Overview Report	September 2021
Governance	Code of Conduct and Code of Accountability for NIFRS Board Members	Unknown
	Department of Health – Arm's Length Bodies Sponsorship Handbook	April 2018
	Department of Health Requirements of NIFRS	2022/2023
	The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006	2006
	The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2011	2011
	Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004	2004
	Fire and Rescue Services Framework for England	May 2018
	Fire (Scotland) Act 2005	2005
	Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2022	2022
	Fire and Rescue Services National Framework (Wales) 2016	2016
	NIFRS Internal Audit Report – Governance	January 2022
	NIFRS Management Statement and Financial Memorandum	July 2017
	Department of Finance – Partnerships between Departments and Arm's Length Bodies Northern Ireland Code of Practice	March 2019
	Northern Ireland Executive Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework	January 2021

	Proportionate Autonomy for Arm's Length Bodies	Unknown
	Public Accounts Committee – Report on NIFRS An Organisational Assessment and Review of Departmental Oversight and Report on Accounts 2011-2012	October 2013
	The Role of Boards (Audit Scotland)	September 2010
	Department of Health – Management Statement and Financial Memorandum for the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority	October 2018
	Onboard – Independent Review into the Circumstances of Board Member Resignations in the RQIA	December 2020
	NIFRS Scheme of Delegation	July 2021
	NIFRS Standing Financial Instructions	July 2021
	NIFRS Standing Orders	July 2021
	NIFRS Business Case Register 2020 to 2022	2020/2022
	NIFRS Business Case Register 2022/2023	2022/2023
	NIFRS Business Case Approval Matrix	February 2022
	NIFRS Board Minutes	26 January 2021
	NIFRS Board Minutes	23 March 2021
	NIFRS Board Minutes	25 May 2021
	NIFRS Board Minutes	9 July 2021
	NIFRS Board Minutes	29 September 2021
	NIFRS Board Minutes	30 November 2021
	NIFRS Board Minutes	22 February 2022
	NIFRS Board Minutes	26 April 2022
	NIFRS Board Minutes	30 August 2022
	NIFRS Board Minutes	6 December 2022

Finance	NIFRS Board Financial Oversight Review	April 2021
	NIFRS Board Briefing (Finance)	April 2022
	NIFRS Budget Analysis Presentation 2022/2023	Unknown
People	NIFRS People Strategy 2021 to 2026 (Draft)	Unknown
	NIFRS Leadership Development Pathway (Draft)	March 2021
ICT	NIFRS IT Strategy 2019 to 2022	March 2019
	NIFRS Service Ideation Report (V4)	Unknown
	Department of Finance Client IT Devices Project Report	September 2021
	NIFRS WAN Business Case	November 2021
Facilities & Assets	NIFRS Facilities and Assets Department Governance Manual	August 2019
	NIFRS Facilities and Assets Resourcing Position Paper	April 2022
	NIFRS Service Delivery Committee Report – Facilities and Assets Project Highlight Report	September 2022
	NIFRS Facilities and Assets Strategic Business Plan 2022 to 2027	June 2022
	NIFRS Facilities and Assets Update for CFRO	August 2022
	NIFRS Facilities and Assets 10 Year Capital Priorities List	May 2022
	NIFRS Facilities and Assets Annex A to 10 Year Capital Plan	May 2022
	NIFRS Facilities and Assets Estates Procurement Performance Returns Report 2021/22	Unknown
	NIFRS Estate Strategy (Draft) 2021 to 2026	November 2021
	Physical Condition Survey Report – NIFRS HQ	December 2019
	NIFRS Corporate Management Team – Facilities and Assets Position Paper on Estate Wide Condition Survey Outputs and Backlog Maintenance	June 2020
	NIFRS Physical Condition Data (All sites)	September 2022

Training	BSO NIFRS Operational Mandatory Training and learning Management Systems Audit Report 2021/2022	Unknown
	NIFRS Year End Corporate Training Report April 20 to March 21	April 2021
	NIFRS Learning and Development Attendance Policy	March 2020
	NIFRS LDC Cookstown – Site Introduction Presentation	Jun 2022
	NFCC National Operational Guidance – Application of Command Skills	October 2022
	NFCC National Operational Guidance – Command Competence	October 2022
	NFCC National Operational Guidance – Principles of Validation and Revalidation	October 2022
	NFCC National Operational Guidance – Quality Assurance	October 2022
	NFCC National Operational Guidance – Minimum Command Hours	October 2022
	NFCC National Operational Guidance – Recording Continual Professional Development	October 2022
	NFCC National Operational Guidance – Recording Training, Development and Assessment	October 2022
	NFCC National Operational Guidance – Command Selection	October 2022
	NFCC National Operational Guidance – Validation of Technical and Procedural Knowledge	October 2022
	NIFRS Development to Competent Review	September 2020
	NIFRS Professional Competence Project Initiation Document	February 2022
	NIFRS Professional Competence Project Update Report	August 2022
	NIFRS Driver Training Strategy 2022 to 2024	Unknown
	NIFRS Emergency Response Driver Training Briefing Note	August 2022
Prevention	NIFRS Strategically Targeted Areas of Risk Guidance for Visits	Unknown
	Community Safety Campaign Calendar 2022	Unknown
	NIFRS People at Risk Strategy 2016 to 2021	Unknown
	NIFRS Prevention Performance Expectations	December 2022
	NIFRS Community Risk Management – Sheltered Dwellings Initiative Principles and Guidance	June 2022

Integrated Risk Management	NIFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan 2016 to 2021	April 2016
	HMFSI Scotland Inspection Report 2007	2007
	NIFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan 2004/05	April 2004
	NIFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan2005/06	April 2005
	NIFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan2006/07	April 2006
	NIFRS Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2007/08 – A Consultation Document	November 2006
	NIFRS Variable Crewing – A Consultation Document July 2006 to October 2006	July 2006
	NIFRS Working Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2022 to 2025	Unknown
	NIFRS CRMP Project Initiation Document	July 2022
	NIFRS CRMP Project Brief	July 2022
	NIFRS Risk Modelling Presentation	2022
	NIFRS On Call Personnel Availability 2019 to 2022	Unknown