

00104 Mr. Matt Wrack
General Secretary
FBU
Bradley House
68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames
KT 27AE

15 December 2021

Dear Colleague,

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN ENGLAND – STATE OF FIRE AND RESCUE 2021

I enclose a copy of my State of Fire and Rescue report for 2021. It was laid before Parliament today. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 created a statutory obligation for HM Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services to do this every year.

2. Part 1 provides my assessment of the state of fire and rescue in England. Part 2 provides an overview of the findings from the inspection activity we carried out between February and August 2021. Part 3 sets out the full list of our fire and rescue reports and other work. Electronic copies of the report are available at <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/publications/>.

3. Of the 13 services we inspected, many have done more to prioritise fire protection; this was an area we criticised heavily in our first round of inspections. In many respects the sector is well prepared when it comes to responding to routine and major emergency incidents. In addition, most of the services we inspected are better at promoting a positive professional culture. But while progress has been made in some areas, more change is urgently required. Too many services are not taking enough action on prevention. In many cases, we found a disconnection between the content of public-facing service plans and what is actually being done by public-facing staff.

4. My assessment this year contains the following principal themes: the case for national reform remains necessary; there is insufficient action to develop prospective chief fire officers; inconsistent funding and governance arrangements persist; and some services do not allocate resources appropriately.

5. If you have any observations about the work we are doing, or suggestions as to how we might improve it, I shall be glad to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Thomas Winsor WS MCI Arb
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services