

LGA Peer Challenge Action Plan – April 2023 (updated March 2024)

Ref	Recommendation	Response/Commentary	Expected Delivery Date	Update March 2024
1.1	Review the FRS legislative framework in support of modernisation and the delivery of statutory responsibilities. Peers understand the Department of Home Affairs has committed to allocating drafting time and the appropriate resources to modernise fire legislation from 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRS and DHA officers have agreed a set of Policy Principles covering the modernisation of FRS legislation. Once approved, the DHA will seek public consultation. 	Q2 2025	<p><i>At Risk</i></p> <p>Draft policy principles agreed, finalising stakeholder consultation questions</p>
1.2	A number of senior leadership team posts within the FRS, including that of the Chief Fire Officer, are currently held on an interim basis which has created some uncertainty about the future direction of the service. The peer team would encourage the Department of Home Affairs and FRS to work towards creating greater stability within the FRS's senior leadership team as soon as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DHA has advertised the Chief Fire Officer's role and interviews are due to be held on Friday 28th April. Once the outcome of the CFO's post is resolved, an internal FRS recruitment process will commence to fill any vacant posts and re-instate a permanent management structure across the organisation. 	<p>July 2023</p> <p>November 2023 SLT and SDT vacancies will be filled</p>	<p><i>Complete</i></p> <p>Organisational structure will be re-established in January 2024</p>

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1.3	<p>The FRS should review the approach to scrutiny and assurance of the service. The FRS should consider how the performance framework can be strengthened to include smarter, more outcome focussed indicators, standards and targets which are more closely aligned both to the Strategic Plan and emerging FRS Risk Management Plan. This will support greater managerial and political oversight, enhanced accountability and improved service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministerial quarterly reports were revised in 2022/23, work is now underway to make these reports more KPI driven – COMPLETE Integrated Risk Management Plan Incident Analysis work has been commissioned and will help inform future performance reporting and KPI's 	<p>November 2023</p> <p>June 2024</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Awaiting outcome of the IRMP data project</p>
1.4	<p>The FRS should review and refresh the FRS's risk register and align this to the wider department's risk register. It is important to undertake this update as a priority and then to agree a regular future cycle for reviewing and updating the register. The FRS should also set out clear governance arrangements for monitoring the risk register.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety Officer has returned to their substantive role and is tasked with updating and maintaining the FRS's risk register. 	<p>May 2023</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Update – The FRS Risk Register is reviewed monthly by the Political Member and CFO</p>

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1.5	<p>The scheme of delegation for the FRS was unclear to the peer team and as such the FRS should consider how they can build greater clarity and understanding for all involved. There should be a clear and well defined 'scheme of delegation' which considers the decision-making powers of the Minister, Lead Member, Chief Executive, Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and senior officers. This will help ensure greater organisational clarity in relation to ownership and accountability for decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial discussions have taken place between the CFO and CEO (DHA) to establish a formal scheme of delegation similar to the FRS framework in England. The CFO will prepare an options paper in conjunction with the CEO for the departments consideration. 	<p>July 2023 Sept 2024</p>	<p>At risk</p> <p>Resourcing issues, no further progress</p> <p>Discussion around aligning a future scheme of delegation with the new Fire Service Act</p>
1.6	<p>The FRS should, as a priority, develop a Risk Management Plan that reflects and responds to all foreseeable risk, with agreed timescales for development and delivery. The FRS needs to both resource and maintain a relentless drive and commitment to this work. This plan should be informed by the FRS's strategic priorities and Island plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreseeable risk data gathering project is underway involving data supplied from several government departments. (national risks) An analytical analysis of the Island's fire cover has been commissioned with a UK provider and will report back later in the year. (approx. 12 weeks) This work will help inform the IRMP and determine future resourcing requirements. 	<p>Provide a further update September 2024</p>	<p>At Risk</p> <p>Draft report issued, FRS now validating datasets</p>

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1.7	<p>A formal 'blue light' forum should be established to discuss all matters related to joint working and collaboration. This will strengthen work already taking place to explore wider collaboration such as opportunities for co-location including the feasibility of developing a 'Blue Light Hub.' Given the small Island context and budget pressures, the peer team believe that this type of collaborative working is vital.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An initial Chief Officer meeting has taken place between the 3 blue light services following the appointment of a new Chief Constable. A more formal meeting schedule is in the process of being established. • FRS already provide several services to the Constabulary and Isle of Man Ambulance Service as part of our existing collaboration work. 	<p>May 2023 Then ongoing</p>	<p><i>Complete</i></p> <p>Update - Small Island Chiefs forum re-established, agreement to share middle office functions and establish a peer review model</p> <p>Local Blue Light Chiefs Officers meet on a regular basis</p>

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1.8	<p>Review arrangements in place to deal with significant/major incidents. This should include revisions to the FRS's strategic, tactical and operational command rota. These revisions should ensure appropriate levels of command are in place to deal with major incidents, and that the capability exists to service a strategic coordinating group alongside a multi-agency tactical group whilst dealing with the operational demands of an incident. The service also needs to work with the Emergency Service Joint Control room (ESJCR) management team to ensure that the capacity and resilience of the ESJCR is sufficient to mobilise, coordinate and control a large, protracted, multiagency incident.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial discussions have taken place with senior officers to discuss changes to on-call rota. Alternative rosters are being worked up for consideration before engaging with the wider officer group, this will see the re-introduction of a principal officer (gold) rota which was removed during a period of austerity. The new structure will comply with National Operational Guidance. The FRS will continue to support the ESJCR management team and DHA through the ESJCR Strategic Group and look for innovative solutions to reduce demand on existing resources. 	<p>April 2025 (subject to funding)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>6 month trial of Principal Officer rota, commencing April.</p> <p>Business case being prepared for additional staff resource to support Incident Command structure on a permanent basis.</p> <p>Project to identify non-emergency demand going through the ESJCR is underway</p>

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1.9	<p>Undertake a Workforce Review to ensure you have the right people, in the right place with the right skills. The review should consider workloads. It was clear that in certain areas of the organisation staff were overstretched. The review should consider if it can identify additional resource or release capacity to ease the burden on those individuals. This review should include a fundamental review of the on call and wholetime on call duty systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analytical analysis of the Island’s fire cover will help inform future staffing models around the island, in line with risk and demand. An on-call questionnaire around modernising contractual on-call hours is currently out for consultation with local reps. It is hoped that the questionnaire will go out in April to all on-call staff. Expressions of interest have been requested from wholetime staff to establish a working group to review on-call hours for wholetime staff. A review of shared services is recommended within this report to try and identify and free up capacity for operational staff. A review of internal job descriptions will be undertaken in the coming months to identify what functions could be delivered by other means. 	Ongoing piece of work	<p>At Risk Validating draft datasets</p> <p>Completed Flexible contracts available to all on-call staff</p> <p>A series of adjustments to the whole time on-call model are being implemented</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Senior Officer JD’s completed, no further progress</p>

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1.10	As part of the proposed Workforce Review take steps to strengthen approaches to staff communication and engagement. Processes should be in place which recognise the value of staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service has recently engaged all female firefighters to seek a view on creating a separate female firefighter forum. Staff reported that the current internal communication channels were working. An offer has been made to revisit this within the next 6 months. • Two working groups are being established to discuss changes to on-call hours and create future policy on a co-design basis. • The service is considering an awards event to recognise staff later in the year and pass out parades for on-call staff. 	Ongoing piece of work	<p>The FRS has enrolled as a member of Woman in Fire and UK Fire PRIDE</p> <p><i>Established</i></p> <p>On-call pass out presentation completed in November 2023</p> <p>Staff recognition event completed November 2023</p> <p>An annual awards celebration will take place in May 2024</p>

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1.11	<p>A draft Safeguarding Policy is under development. The FRS should finalise this at pace and continue to engage all stakeholders in its implementation. Peers would also recommend that the background checks in place, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks, are reviewed to ensure they reflect the role undertaken by all staff across the service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some minor changes have been requested to the draft safeguarding policy. Work is underway to review the required level of DBS checks for FRS staff following recommendations made in several UK culture reports. 	May 2024	<p>At risk - Staff absences within the Prevention Team</p> <p>Ongoing Considering the legal determination</p>
1.12	<p>Work alongside ICT Shared Services to agree the direction that digital investment will take over the next four to five years to support the FRS Strategic Plan. This should include investment in data and digital solutions which facilitate the production of real time, accurate data collation and analysis to underpin future business cases, management of risk, inform decision making and improve service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service is working with GTS to create a new Incident Reporting System that will sit on a new software solution. Once tested this software solution will be extended across all FRS record keeping. Work is underway with BCS to establish the FRS's software and hardware requirements for the ESJCR CAD replacement project. This project is likely to set the ICT direction of travel for the FRS over the next 2 to 3 years. A formal ICT strategy meeting is to be scheduled with GTS in the near future. 	Update July 2024	<p>At Risk Protection Team to trial new software before rolling out across the service</p> <p>At Risk Awaiting business case from Communication Division</p> <p>At Risk due to lack of resource</p>

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1.13	<p>Review the Shared Service arrangements applicable to the FRS to ensure they are fit for purpose and are providing an effective service. The review should explore how the FRS requirements are met and how any barriers, real or perceived, can be addressed. The FRS should, as a minimum, adopt service level agreements (with relevant Shared Services) which set out agreed ways of working and timescales for achievement in order to strengthen accountability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FRS is awaiting the findings of the OHR review before reviewing OHR shared services. • The department has informed the FRS of future changes to the capital and procurement processes around fleet shared services. Any future changes will need to be reflected in an updated SLA. The FRS awaits a further update. • All existing SLA's to be reviewed. 	Unknown	<p><i>At Risk</i> Business case unsuccessful OHR advisory provision still insufficient for FRS requirements</p> <p><i>No update</i> currently sits with DHA</p> <p><i>No progress</i> due to lack of resource and awaiting Departments decision on shared services</p>

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1.14	Promote and strengthen Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for the workforce. Utilise insight to inform the approach including staff engagement, networks, data collection and equality analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two officers have recently returned from a national EDI fire conference and are planning the next round of EDI staff input. • Changes to the recruitment application process have been approved to improve EDI data gathering and recruitment profiling. • Work continues around modernising T&C's and developing staff related policy which recognises greater diversity within the FRS. • The FRS values and behaviours are being reviewed and updated and the service intends to introduce the National Fire Chief Council's - Code of Ethics. <p>Note – Culture work within the FRS will be an on-going piece of work</p>	Changes to recruitment material before the next recruitment cycle (TBC)	<p>Complete Changes made to recruitment material</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>At Risk Lack of dedicated staffing resource</p> <p>At Risk Draft V&B will be circulated shortly for staff comment</p>

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1.15	<p>The FRS should work alongside colleagues within the Department of Home Affairs to develop a long-term estates strategy which aims to ensure the provision of accommodation that matches the requirements of a modern-day FRS and aspirations for the future. The development of the strategy should consider opportunities to collaborate with partners, particularly the other emergency services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department has engaged BCS to create a bluelight strategy that will include regional locations and greater collaboration between blue light services. • A FRS requirements list is being finalised with BCS for a Douglas bluelight hub. • A tri-service requirements workshop is scheduled to take place late April and will identify commonality across the 3 blue light services. 		<p><i>At Risk</i> Project requires a fulltime PM to provide strategic leadership</p> <p><i>Complete</i></p> <p><i>Complete</i></p>