



## Our reference

19 February 2007

Chief Fire Officer  
Fire and Rescue Authorities  
(except Kent and Medway, and Merseyside)

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Dear Colleague

## Fire and rescue service assessment for 2006/07

Please find attached to this email your authority's fire and rescue service assessment summary for 2006/07, along with a preliminary fire and rescue performance framework scorecard.

As you will be aware, the fire and rescue service assessment uses the following two elements to describe performance:

1. An operational assessment of service delivery
2. Performance information

You will find a score for your authority for each of these elements, along with the overall service assessment score, on the attached summary. **This information is under embargo until 00.01hrs Thursday 22 February 2007.** At this time the service assessment summaries, along with the preliminary scorecard will be available at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/fire](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/fire). The preliminary scorecard will remain on our website until Thursday 5 April when it will be updated to include your direction travel and use of resources assessments.


Please ensure that the embargo is respected and anything you issue has the same reporting restriction.

The service assessment scores will also be available to the media under embargo on Tuesday 20 February.

If you have any queries regarding your service assessment please email them to [j-malthus@audit-commission.gov.uk](mailto:j-malthus@audit-commission.gov.uk).

You are of course welcome to contact me for all other enquiries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Swain', with a horizontal line drawn underneath.

Jonathan Swain  
*Head of Local Government Delivery*

Cc     Performance framework contacts  
         Relationship Manager  
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# **Fire and Rescue Operational Assessment of Service Delivery**

**West Midlands Fire & Rescue  
Authority**

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## Executive Summary

1. In the Fire & Rescue Performance Framework for 2006/07 published in July 2006, the Audit Commission outlines how performance management in the fire and rescue service will be assessed. This written feedback arises from an operational assessment of service delivery review carried out as outlined in chapter six of the Performance Framework. It gives the results from our review of the West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority. We used the methodology published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in the Operational Assessment of Service Delivery toolkit in July 2006.
2. Our on-site work took place in November 2006 by a team of staff seconded from Fire and Rescue Authorities. We received a self assessment from the Fire Authority which sign-posted evidence to support the five key lines of enquiry outlined in the toolkit. The teams reviewed the self assessment including the sampling of evidence on site and then made a judgement as to whether the self assessment score should be upheld or whether an alternative judgement should be recommended. The judgements we have made are based on the evidence we saw before and during our visit, and on any further information supplied to us by the Fire Authority during our discussions with them in the course of preparing this report.
3. Operational Assessment of Service Delivery is an operational assessment, at the service level, of how well the Authority is planning, organising and delivering its operational services. It does not give an opinion on how well the fire service is being run corporately.
4. In their self-assessment, the FRA rated itself as performing well. As a consequence of the review, the overall judgement remains unchanged but there have been changes to the FRA self assessment scores in one of the KLOEs.

The FRA is rated by this assessment as **performing well**.

5. West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) has implemented wide ranging and fundamental changes to the way it delivers services over the last three years. This has resulted in a focused approach to community safety and the funding of a number of effective initiatives. The Service performs well across all key areas with particular strengths in Risk Analysis, the use of Information Technology, and the communication of information about the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Performance management and human resource management are not yet fully in place, but the Service has well developed plans to improve these. The Service evaluates what it does, but needs to improve feedback mechanisms to ensure such work achieves the intended outcome. The Service is aware of its achievements, but can be overly self critical at times. Overall, the Service is performing well and meets the needs of its diverse community.

## The Assessment process

6. Before the site visit, the review team reviewed the FRAs self-assessment and other FRA information such as the FRAs Integrated Risk Management Plan and Best Value Performance Plan. The team spent a day together sharing their views on the self-assessment, finalising the details of the visit and agreeing how to follow the lines of enquiry on-site.
7. The review team customised their approach to the on-site fieldwork, and their subsequent requests for evidence, based upon the performance levels indicated in the FRAs self assessment. They used a range of techniques to verify their findings including the use of standard diagnostics and question sets where appropriate.
8. The review team spent four days on site with the FRA. During this time, they;
  - a. conducted interviews and focus groups with service delivery personnel and the senior management team
  - b. visited a number of wholetime and retained fire stations
  - c. reviewed a substantial number of documents and other evidence provided by the FRA
  - d. spoke to partners and other stakeholders
9. The review team based their on-site work around evidence of the current levels of performance outlined in the Operational Assessment of Service Delivery Toolkit. These are described as follows;

Level of achievement	Description
1	Failure to meet level 2 criteria.
2	Level 2 performance represents a minimum requirement, and will need to be in place before the FRA can be considered for level 3.
3	To achieve level 3 performance, FRAs must have all arrangements described at level 2 in place. The arrangements should be embedded and operating effectively with clear outcomes representing a more demanding test than for level 2. The FRA should also have the majority of level 3 performance criteria in place or, where there are gaps, have made substantial progress towards meeting them.
4	An FRA that is performing strongly will need to demonstrate that it meets all of the criteria for level 2 and level 3, and that its arrangements are embedded and have a clear impact on outcomes. In addition to fully meeting level 2 and 3 criteria, evidence to support achievement of level 4 needs to demonstrate innovation or notable practice which delivers tangible results and can be shared with other authorities.

## Overview of the “Key themes” and “observations”

10. Prior to on-site activity, a detailed review of the self assessment document, context statement and additional background information available from DCLG and publicly on the Service's website was carried out. The local Health and Safety Executive liaison officer, the regional Business Change Manager and the Audit Commission Relationship Manager were consulted in order to establish an external view on developments relevant to their areas of interest. The review was carried out with team members responsible for specific KLOEs, with pairing of KLOEs as appropriate. During the pre-site meeting, the review team identified a number of areas requiring further investigation.
11. Initial review of the self assessment documentation indicated a wide range of innovation and major changes to the mechanisms for service delivery. These included changes to shift systems, mobilising of resources, work routines and the redirection of resources to preventative work. The self assessment also highlighted a number of areas where progress appeared less complete which formed one focus for the review team.
12. Performance management, including the setting of team and individual objectives, Individual Performance and Development Reviews (IPDR) and other elements of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) have been rolled out across the majority of the service. There are clear timescales to complete the process in the remaining specialist functions. There is good use of regional resources in support of Assessment and Development Centres (ADC) but the links to individual development are less well established.
13. The pre site work in Risk Analysis focused on how WMFS were assessing, analysing and managing risk. Their self assessment presented some evidence of a widespread review and improvement of Risk Analysis using risk information tools other than FSEC to identify local risk information. This is also used to present risk information to staff. There is strength in the work of the Integrated Risk Management and data statistician teams in managing risk information. The Service has recognised the danger of working in silos and is addressing this by re-focusing the links between the department and the end users of data. The development of a new data sharing software package was observed by the review team and considered to be a useful communication tool across the Service. .
14. In Prevention and Protection, pre-site work focused on the themes of partnership working, preparedness for the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO), Community Safety initiatives and fire investigation. The self assessment presented evidence of engagement and a joined up approach to the provision of services. There was evidence of strong performance particularly in the work of the Youth Services, Arson Task Force and Community Safety Officers. There was also evidence of a significant commitment to the prevention agenda with a major reallocation of resources to address community safety.
15. Review of the Operational Preparedness self assessment identified partnership working, the Training Readiness and Community Safety (TRACS) system as some of the areas to pursue. During the visit, the team found that WMFS are working in partnership with a wide number of agencies, and that TRACS is proving an effective method of managing operational, training and preventative activities.

16. Initial review of Call Management and Incident Support showed that WMFS had assessed itself as performing adequately in this area. Evidence gathered during the teams visit supported a review of this scoring and indicated WMFS was performing better than it thought with good audit and review processes and well developed dynamic mobilising systems.
17. Pre-site analysis of the Emergency Response self assessment identified health and safety monitoring at incidents, the viability of CCTV on front line appliances and Active Intervention Monitoring as some of the areas for the review team to pursue. The assessment confirmed that health and safety monitoring at incidents is having a positive effect and the provision of CCTV on front line appliances is proving an effective deterrent of attacks on firefighters. However, the team found that while Active Intervention Monitoring is happening, it is not properly supporting the competence of operational staff because no recorded outcomes are fed into either personal development plans or the debrief process.



## Key Lines of Enquiry – Strengths & Areas for Improvement

18. The Operational Assessment of Service Delivery looks at the five main areas of service delivery. These are called “key lines of enquiry” (KLOE) and are organised under the headings of risk analysis, prevention and protection, operational preparedness, call management and incident support, and emergency response. Each KLOE is examined and scored against the HS (G) 65 format of policy, organising, planning and implementation, monitoring (performance) and audit and review. This acts as a control loop and ensures that each KLOE stands alone, and is considered in a rounded manner both by the FRA and the DCLG review team.
19. While on-site with the FRA, the review teams examined a broad range of evidence in order to verify the FRAs self assessment score or to make alterations accordingly. In writing up their findings, the review team focused on identified strengths and areas for improvement in order for the FRA to further recognise what they are doing well, or not so well. Where areas of notable practice or innovation have been identified and attract a “performing strongly” score in one key area or more, these have been highlighted in bold throughout the document.
20. West Midlands FRA is performing at the following levels in relation to the five service delivery KLOEs;

KLOE	Judgement
Risk Analysis	Performing well
Prevention and Protection	Performing well
Operational Preparedness	Performing well
Call Management and Incident Support	Performing well
Emergency Response	Performing well

## *Risk Analysis*

21. West Midlands Fire Service, (WMFS), scored itself as performing well in Risk Analysis with four key areas out of five being scored this way. There was sufficient evidence to support this view and the scores were upheld in the key areas of policy, organising, monitoring performance, and audit and review. The review team found additional evidence of effective planning and implementation which led the team to increase the score in this key area from performing adequately to performing well. This has no impact on the overall KLOE score which remains unchanged as performing well

## *Strengths and areas of notable practice*

22. WMFS has a clear overarching policy for risk analysis incorporating a wide range of data gathering tools. The Service has developed an award winning IT support system to facilitate access to essential risk information. This is disseminated across the Service and information can be accessed by all users. Overall, the collection and dissemination of risk information is managed well. It is a continuously improving area with high importance placed on the maintenance of data quality. WMFS has built a reliable and empirical data set and uses this to support and develop the IRMP and FRA decision making processes. The system is flexible and able to support requests for additional information from managers. Information requested is provided very quickly and is used to support local initiatives designed to enhance use of local resources and risk reduction strategies.
23. Resources within WMFS are allocated and reviewed against risk information. An example of this is the review of the aerial fleet which led to a calculated reduction in provision and relocation of resources to areas where they would be of most benefit. At the same time, callout procedures were altered to ensure that the aerial appliances were only mobilised when required. This has reduced unnecessary appliance movements and the consequential associated risk.
24. Performance indicators are well monitored and reviewed in order to inform planning objectives. These are communicated throughout the organisation, from strategic to service delivery staff, in the form of Direct Action Plans. These plans ensure that teams and individuals responsible for their implementation are aware of their objectives, and that WMFS can organise their resources in the most effective way.
25. Training is provided for IRM data gathering staff who use a wide variety of tools. Training follows the identification of training needs within the department and ongoing support and development of staff is also provided to staff tasked with these responsibilities.
26. The use of a variety of risk gathering tools to drill down into local risks is seen as a key strength within WMFS. Robust data gathering systems were developed internally and use empirical census and operational data to map risk. Various additional overlays facilitate specific risk information gathering in order to target the most vulnerable areas and people. This has resulted in specific allocation of resources to meet local need.

## *Areas for improvement*

27. Through interviews, the team observed that communication between the Integrated Risk Management department, data teams and service delivery staff was ineffective at times. WMFS acknowledge that there is the potential for staff to work in isolated

pockets of knowledge and information, and have implemented a consolidation of data sharing processes to address this. This is a new arrangement and cannot yet be assessed for success.

28. There is currently no formal training in place for watch based staff in the use of IT-based risk data tools. WMFS benefits from professionally trained staff within specific departments, and there is a clear management expectation that systems will be used locally so that they can be translated it into local initiatives. While there is good access and availability of data to staff, there is a perceived lack of support for service delivery staff new to this area of work

## Prevention and Protection

29. WMFS scored itself as performing well in Prevention and Protection with three key areas out of five being scored this way. There was sufficient evidence to support the allocated scores in policy, organising and planning and implementation. In the key area of audit and review the allocated score of adequate performance was upheld. The review team found additional evidence of effective monitoring in place which led the team to increase the score in this key area from performing adequately to performing well. This has no impact on the overall KLOE score which has been upheld as performing well.

## Strengths and areas of notable practice

30. **The advice and guidance package *Keeping Your Business in Business* is an excellent and comprehensive resource developed by WMFS to communicate information about the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) to ensure continuity of their work.** It contains useful fire safety and risk information in an understandable format. The success of this package has led to the development of a similar guide for schools *Keeping Your School in Business* which is soon to be released.
31. WMFS demonstrate an innovative approach to improving safety in a vulnerable group of their community by developing a role that directly links with the Birmingham Institute for the Deaf. The officer has forged strong links with the community, and WMFS have embarked on a significant and targeted programme of Community Safety initiatives including Home Fire Risk Checks (HFRCs).
32. WMFS is well represented on the Birmingham City Council. A WMFS officer is placed on the Council in order to build effective partnerships and make representations concerning Fire Service related issues. This ensures that WMFS is strongly represented and involved in key decisions that may impact on the Service. This is clearly informing future planning and community safety initiatives. The post is entirely funded by the City Council.
33. Community Fire Safety (CFS) work is managed well overall and at all levels of the Service. There is a clear CFS strategy with strong member endorsement. The Community Safety Team is managed and performing well through a variety of intervention, liaison and community safety initiatives. Focused work is conducted by local community groups, community liaison officers and operational firefighters. Work is targeted to the most vulnerable areas of the seven boroughs using empirical and operational risk information provided from a range of data gathering tools.
34. Work with Youth Services in the West Midlands is strong and effective. Links built with young people, via initiatives such as the Handsworth Community Fire Safety Centre, are delivering clear outcomes and are having a positive affect on children from a wide range of ages and backgrounds. WMFS see their work with young people as an opportunity to affect the wider community through links with parents and carers. The centre is used for other community training and meetings and brings various members of the community into contact with WMFS who may not otherwise be reached.
35. Work to reduce road traffic collisions (RTCs) in WMFS is developing across the Service. Attention is focused through risk data gathering and information exchange with partners. A good RTC initiative is the *Your Choice: On The Road* courses which are targeted at year nine pupils, the age group statistically most likely to be involved

in RTC and car crime. The courses deliver hard hitting messages, and are supported by a highly motivated team in partnership with West Midlands Police, West Midlands Casualty Reduction Partnership and RoSPA. Evidence provided from course evaluations indicated that this is an effective activity for communicating and influencing behaviour amongst a vulnerable and impressionable group.

36. The work of Community Advocates and Business Liaison Officers is producing positive results in the community and allowing WMFS to direct its resources to where they can be most effective. Communication between Borough Commanders and their Community Safety (CS) staff ensures that local risk and community issues are addressed and targets set through the Direct Action Plan are achievable.
37. In the key area of monitoring performance, WMFS scored itself as adequate, but the review team found additional evidence of effective monitoring of Prevention and Protection activity. For example, the use of the Training Readiness and Community Safety (TRACS) system enables effective monitoring and measuring performance of community risk reduction activity in terms of the number of projects conducted and the staff hours involved. It is readily accessible and allows up to date planning and monitoring so that local initiatives can be programmed effectively. As a result of this, the score in this key area is increased from adequate performance to performing well.

#### *Areas for improvement*

38. Some elements of IPDS are yet to be rolled out to uniformed and non-uniformed technical Fire Safety staff. This has a negative impact on the attraction and retention of suitable staff to carry out the enforcing, licensing, and inspection work of Fire Safety (FS).
39. Currently no statutory FS inspection work is undertaken by operational staff at stations, and some staff showed a lack of base level knowledge about this area of important work. Pilot projects are proposed and a large amount of work has gone in to the development of a risk-based site inspection programme which should link operational information with FS inspections. As this work is not embedded, it is not possible to evaluate outcomes at this stage.
40. The Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) shows some anomalies on how premises are weighted for visits, with some visited premises being pushed too quickly back to the top of the programme. This creates unnecessary work and uses a significant amount of managerial time inappropriately.

## *Operational Preparedness*

41. WMFS scored itself as performing well in Operational Preparedness with four key areas out of five being scored this way. The review team found sufficient evidence to support this view in all key areas. There have been no changes to scores in key areas, and the overall KLOE score is upheld as performing well.

### *Strengths and areas of notable practice*

42. WMFS has undertaken a detailed review of duty systems and shift times for all operational personnel. This has resulted in radical changes to crewing arrangements and the freeing up of significant daily resources in order to carry out CFS work in the community. The OSCAR shift has recently been changed to a single shift from 11:00 to 23:00 hours, and the Flexible Duty System (FDS) is also under examination. There is an effective and ongoing process for reviewing these systems.
43. TRACS is used to manage a maximum of 15 appliances as strategic reserve to undertake training and preventative activities. Part of the TRACS system ensures that risk critical learning and development is carried out effectively across the Service. This has had a positive effect on learning and development in the three targeted areas of breathing apparatus, trauma care and road traffic collision.
44. Where station based trainers carry out continuation sessions, they are monitored by Training Centre staff who carry out quality assurance to ensure standardised learning and development. New contracts are in place for such trainers.
45. The review team consulted with many agencies that work in partnership with WMFS and it was clear that the service is always well represented at a variety of forums. Examples include the Health Protection Agency (HPA) which has an Early Alerting System agreement with WMFS that informs them of all incidents involving hazardous materials that may affect the public. The HPA also consult with the Service Hazardous Materials officer during an incident. WMFS provide the HPA with details of all hazardous materials incidents they attend within West Midlands and this information forms part of the national chemical monitoring system.
46. The review team found many examples of effective learning and development initiatives. There is clear evidence of regular tabletop and practical multi-agency exercises with all blue light services, the Environment Agency and the Health Protection Agency. The exercises involve a variety of sites and scenarios including COMAH sites, high-risk locations and specific themes such as terrorist attacks. WMFS have a partnership agreement with Birmingham Airport for hot fire training and have developed a group of firefighter trainers to carry out this training for all operational staff.
47. Following a review of risk critical knowledge of firefighters in development in such areas as breathing apparatus and RTC procedures, firefighters are now assessed centrally in these areas nine months after completion of phase one learning and development. This has had a positive effect and higher standards are now achieved in these areas.

48. The number of near miss reports was historically far less than accident reports. As a result of consultation with station based staff, near miss reporting was modified to allow staff to report such events anonymously by telephone, email or a link on the intranet. While the improved reporting arrangements have resulted in a greater number of near miss incidents, it means that the Service is in a better position to intervene in circumstances that may lead to accidents.
49. There are well developed links between review of Health and Safety and the learning and development arrangements for the Service. One example resulted from the annual analysis of accident records which identified a need to increase manual handling training. Learning and development was focused in this area which resulted in a reduction of accidents arising from lifting by 35 per cent
50. WMFS operate a six group rota. Each command group meet every six weeks to carry out planned operational learning and development with the staff they will interact with at incidents. By ringfencing such development opportunities, the Service has enhanced the operational effectiveness of these management groups.

#### *Areas for improvement*

51. During implementation of the revised shift systems there has been considerable movement of operational staff around the Service to maintain appliance availability. There was a need to temporarily move appliance drivers around due to an imbalance of provision between stations, and it became clear that the rules detailing the numbers of staff on a watch and their specialist skills were not supporting the environment in which the service was operating. One outcome of this was the excessive proportion of shifts for which some personnel were required to drive appliances to the detriment of their overall competence.
52. The team found no evidence of a formal method of ensuring that learning outcomes from post incident debriefs from other services or agencies form part of the review of operational policies or are linked to learning and development strategies.



## *Call Management and Incident Support*

53. West Midlands Fire Service scored itself as performing adequately in Call Management and Incident Support, with three key areas out of five being scored this way. The review team found sufficient evidence to support this score in the area of audit and review, but felt that the FRA had been overly harsh in the key areas of monitoring, and planning and implementation and that there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate arrangements were embedded and operating effectively with clear outcomes in these areas. The scores were therefore increased from performing adequately to performing well. This has an impact on the overall KLOE score which has been increased from performing adequately to performing well.

### *Strengths and areas of notable practice*

54. **Use of the internally developed software system TRACS supports dynamic strategic mobilising and ensures that levels of availability are matched to operational need at any given time.** This supports the response to the review mentioned above and ensures WMFS have the capacity to meet operational, training and CFS workloads.
55. Control staff are involved in internal 'hot' debriefs and take a full part in both formal and structured debriefs when appropriate. **Following the debrief of a particularly large incident, control developed a policy called Sectorisation. Any incident involving four pumps or more results in a specific control team being allocated to deal solely with that incident. This group of three staff take responsibility for all elements of the incident and WMFS are successfully able to demonstrate improvements in performance as a result.** WMFS has capacity to deal with two incidents in this way at the same time, with other resources available to deal with the remaining mobilising workload.
56. There are strong fallback arrangements with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service with WFRS able to identify and mobilise appropriate WMFS attendances via a number of means including land line telephones, regional radio arrangements and fallback mobile phones on appliances. Arrangements are tested and used periodically.
57. Learning and development arrangements for control staff are good. There are detailed development plans and records for new control staff entrants, and access to regional Assessment and Development Centres (ADC) for promotion. WMFS have also adapted the service wide supervisory manager development programme to meet the needs of control staff. Staff in development have access to generic units of supervisory development alongside personnel from the rest of the service, with additional modules specific to call management responsibilities.
58. Staff are supported with ongoing development opportunities. WMFS offers financial support for externally provided courses and qualifications where considered suitable. Access is offered to relevant training via the global training process. A number of staff have secured posts in other functions of the service either permanently or on long term secondment.
59. There is evidence of strong performance and a significant reduction of malicious calls sustained over three years. This is supported by clear policies on the prosecution of offenders.
60. WMFS quality assurance process explicitly includes analysis of the call management function during external quality assurance.



61. There was evidence of an ongoing range of regional exercises for both new dimension and other civil contingency responsibilities. Debriefs from these have highlighted a range of issues to be improved.
62. Detailed records exist of regular Health and Safety (H&S) audits together with strong welfare and occupational health support for staff. This includes referral for support such as physiotherapy in order to avoid the need for sickness absence. The Service also operates a critical incident debrief policy.

### *Areas for improvement*

63. Although an appraisal scheme is operating, the full implementation of an individual appraisal system has been delayed by the need to develop the supervisory manager development programme. IPDR will not now be fully in place before late 2007. Current consultation on job descriptions ahead of the rank to role process within control is another part of IPDS yet to be implemented.
64. There was evidence that three yearly review of mobilising standing orders is not effective. Separate routine notices and policies are used within control to manage day to day matters and may differ from those available to the service as a whole. In addition the periodic review of standing orders was found to be ineffective. One overarching document had been reviewed in September 2006, but supporting orders to which that document referred contained out of date and incorrect information.
65. Staff that were unsuccessful at the Initial Test of Potential (ITOP) in early 2006 and therefore did not reach the full ADC were informed that their development issues would be addressed via IPDR. Implementation of IPDR has been delayed and will not now happen before the next round of ITOPS takes place in the New Year. As a result, some staff feel disenfranchised and denied development opportunities.
66. Lower staffing levels within Warwickshire FRS control mean that handling the level of calls received by WMFS may be problematic during the operation of fallback arrangements. It was unclear whether any review of this potential difficulty had been initiated.

## *Emergency Response*

67. WMFS scored itself as performing well in Emergency Response with three key areas out of five being scored this way. The review team found sufficient evidence to support this view in all key areas. There has been no score variance and the overall KLOE score is upheld as performing well.

## *Strengths and areas of notable practice*

68. Health and Safety arrangements at incidents are well managed. A team from the Health and Safety department attend all incidents of four pumps and above during normal working hours to monitor general health and safety. This has resulted in the issue of additional equipment and has identified several findings of a minor nature, which have been published in the monthly Health and Safety newsletter. This is in addition to normal operational monitoring and is intended to allow procedures and equipment to be seen in action by specialist advisers.
69. WMFS have installed CCTV in a number of front line appliances at key stations that were experiencing an increasingly high incidence of violence against firefighters. There has been a significant reduction in such incidents in the station areas where CCTV is now fitted. .
70. As part of the process of supporting Flexible Duty Officers (FDO) in development, a mentoring officer is mobilised to incidents they attend. The mentoring officer provides feedback to the individual on their performance. This recognises supportive development when FDOs are new in their role, is in addition to incident monitoring, and allows verification of competence. New managers are shown with an X on the rota to indicate the need to mobilise support.
71. WMFS conduct post incident survey benchmarking as members of the Fire Service Consultation Association. The results of the survey have proved beneficial in allowing the Service to compare itself with others within their family group, and consider changes to their policies and procedures where necessary.
72. WMFRA has effective arrangements for the provision of portable toilets on the incident ground and 'boarding up' by contract specialist companies. They have arrangements for a managed system of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and a service level agreement for the service and maintenance of Breathing Apparatus Sets. As part of its commitment to improving the service provided to the community, WMFS has also entered into partnership with the Red Cross to provide Fire Victim Support to affected persons in the immediate aftermath of a domestic incident.
73. WMFS have gained accreditation and are registered as authorised accident repairers for their own vehicles and other FRAs, carrying out this work for both Staffordshire and Warwickshire. To synchronise appliance maintenance with recent operational shift changes, a new contract with Fire Service workshop staff is in the process of negotiation. WMFS workshops conduct quality assurance by sending questionnaires to station managers and watches in order to gauge effectiveness and amend their practices where necessary.

## *Areas for improvement*

74. WMFS have an agreed standard that the maximum number of appliances unavailable for normal response will not exceed 15. The team found evidence that this standard can be breached during the first TRACS timeslot in each day from

08:00 to 11:00 in the morning. During this period additional appliances can be removed from operational availability resulting in a potential total of 18 off the run.

75. WMFS have been undertaking Active Intervention Monitoring (AIM) for many years. Operational staff at each level acknowledge the potential benefits of such a scheme. However, the current system is not supporting the competence of operational staff who generally see the process as oppressive and with no demonstrable outcomes. The team found no evidence of learning outcomes from AIM being effectively followed through to conclusion.
76. WMFS have a clear policy for incident and exercise debriefs and although debriefs are well embedded in the service and routinely carried out at the vast majority of incidents, there is clear evidence that not all personnel or partners involved in the incident are offered the opportunity to contribute to the debrief. This includes fire service personnel particularly at station level and staff from other services such as Environment Agency and Highways Agency.

## Scoring matrix and judgement descriptions

Each FRA determines, through its self assessment, what it proposes to be an appropriate score for each key area of enquiry and each key line of enquiry. Key areas of enquiry are scored first and then combined to reach an overall score for the KLOE. The five KLOEs are then combined to reach an overall score for the self assessment reflecting the levels of achievement in the table below. The principles regarding scoring can be found on page 15 of the Operational Assessment of Service Delivery Toolkit.

Score	Description	Judgement
1	Below minimum requirements	Inadequate performance
2	At only minimum requirements	Adequate performance
3	Consistently above minimum requirements	Performing well
4	Well above minimum requirements	Performing strongly

The review team examined the evidence provided by the FRA in support of their scores. Scores that have been varied by the review team are highlighted in the table on the next page.

## FRA Self Assessment and Reviewed Scores

		FRA self assessment		Review	
KLOE Theme	Area	Area score	Overall theme score	Area score	Overall theme score
Risk Analysis	Policy	3	3	3	3
	Organising	3		3	
	Planning and Implementation	2		3	
	Monitoring (Performance)	3		3	
	Audit & Review	3		3	
Prevention & Protection	Policy	3	3	3	3
	Organising	3		3	
	Planning and Implementation	3		3	
	Monitoring (Performance)	2		3	
	Audit & Review	2		2	
Operational Preparedness	Policy	3	3	3	3
	Organising	3		3	
	Planning and Implementation	3		3	
	Monitoring (Performance)	3		3	
	Audit & Review	2		2	
Call Management and Incident Support	Policy	3	2	3	3
	Organising	3		3	
	Planning and Implementation	2		3	
	Monitoring (Performance)	2		3	
	Audit & Review	2		2	
Emergency Response	Policy	3	3	3	3
	Organising	3		3	
	Planning and Implementation	3		3	
	Monitoring (Performance)	2		2	
	Audit & Review	2		2	
Overall Operational Assessment of Service Delivery score =		3		3	

## West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

### Fire Service Assessments

#### How West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority delivers its fire services

The service assessment is scored on the following scale:

- 1 = Inadequate performance – below minimum requirements
- 2 = Adequate performance – only at minimum requirements
- 3 = Performing well – consistently above minimum requirements
- 4 = Performing strongly – well above minimum requirements

<b>Service assessment</b>	<b>2006</b>
The Authority's performance, as assessed by the Audit Commission, in providing its fire and rescue services.	<b>3</b>

The service assessment is constructed from two elements:

- performance information
- operational assessment of service delivery (OASD)

<b>Service assessment elements</b>	<b>2006</b>
Fire and rescue performance information	<b>3</b>
The OASD provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)	<b>3</b>

Link to comparison web tool/spreadsheet

#### Fire performance information

Performance on specified performance indicators (PIs) is assessed as above, between or below two levels (thresholds) to make three performance groupings:

- above the upper threshold = comparatively high performance
- between the thresholds
- below the lower threshold = comparatively low performance

The number of PIs in each performance grouping determines the score for the performance information element. For detailed information view the service assessment framework technical guide for CPA 2006 on the Audit Commission website ([www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)).

## Performance indicators

PI	Description	Performance
F1	Primary fires per 10,000 population	above the upper threshold
F4	Injuries arising from accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population	
F7	Number of deliberate primary fires (including vehicles) per 10,000 population	
F2	Accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 dwellings	Between the thresholds
F3	Deaths arising from accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population	
F6	False alarms caused by automatic fire detection attended per 1,000 non-domestic properties	
F5	Percentage of accidental dwelling fires confined to room of origin	Below the lower threshold

## Fire and rescue operational assessment of service delivery

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority scored 3 (performing well) in the CLG's OASD.

The OASD looks at fire prevention and emergency responses to fires, accidents, rescues, major incidents, terrorism and environmental threats. It covers the following areas:

- risk analysis
- prevention and protection
- operational preparedness
- call management and incident support
- emergency response

The following summary has been provided by CLG to support its assessment:

West Midlands Fire Service has implemented wide ranging and fundamental changes to the way it delivers services over the last three years. This has resulted in a focused approach to community safety and the funding of a number of effective initiatives. The Service performs well across all areas of service delivery with particular strengths in the use of information technology and its prevention and protection activity. Community fire safety work is managed well at all levels and the Service's recent communication with businesses about the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is a particular strength. Performance management and human resource management are not yet fully in place, but the Service has well developed plans to improve these. The Service evaluates what it does, but would benefit from improving feedback mechanisms to ensure that its work achieves the intended outcome. Overall the Service is performing well and meets the needs of its diverse community. It is aware of its achievements but can be overly self critical at times.

Further details of this assessment can be found in the CLG's website.

Please visit the Audit Commission website ([www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)) for the full version of this scorecard.

## West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

### Fire and Rescue Performance Framework 2006/07

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for Fire and Rescue Authorities was introduced in 2005 when each Authority was given a corporate assessment rating of either excellent, good, fair, weak or poor. Inspectors looked at issues like staff training, budget management and the way the service works within the community to make it safer and prevent fires from happening in the first place.

Now additional elements have been introduced to give an overall assessment of services:

- What progress the Authority made in the last year
- How the Authority manages its finances and provides value for money
- A Fire Service assessment focusing on outcomes that include an operational assessment of service delivery (OASD), which has been carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).

Fire Service assessment scores are published in February 2007. The Audit Commission will publish all other performance elements in April 2007 showing the overall assessment as well as the three component scores.

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Service assessment	2006
The overall service assessment is the Authority's performance in delivering the Fire and Rescue Service and is constructed from two elements: performance indicators (PIs) and the OASD.	3

### Fire and Rescue CPA 2005

#### How West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority performed in 2005

CPA 2005	2005
We assessed the Authority on the way it was run and the delivery of its services. Our corporate assessment did not give an opinion on how well the Fire and Rescue Service responded to emergency incidents. The assessment provided a baseline measurement that helps Fire and Rescue Authorities focus on improvement. Fire and Rescue CPA 2005 was scored on the scale Poor/Weak/Fair/Good/Excellent.	good

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