

Working Paper No 6

A review of Integrated Risk Management Plans in Fire and Rescue Services

Stage 1



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Contents

Introduction, background and context.....	2
Literature Review	2
Objectives.....	3
Methodology and methods	5
Stage 1. Accessibility and Public Reporting.....	6
Stage 2. Protection and Prevention.....	6
Findings and Discussion.....	7
Stage 1. Accessibility and Public Reporting.....	7
Stage 2. Protection and Prevention.....	9
Conclusion.....	12
References.....	14
Appendices.....	15
Appendix 1. Emergency Services Working Papers	15

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Introduction, background and context

The production, implementation and maintenance of up-to-date Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) has been a mandatory requirement for all Fire and Rescue Authorities and Services in the UK since they were introduced by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The publication of IRMPs is intended to reassure the public that Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) are aware of all of the risks to people and property in their areas and that appropriate action is being taken to protect the public, prevent and mitigate harm and expedite response to incidents. FRS will be aware that the government's most recent National Fire and Rescue Framework for England (Home Office 2018) assumes that IRMPs are both publically available and adequate to underpin or inform strategic decision-making as well as operational service delivery.

Despite this fundamental and strategic role in public protection and service delivery, the research team became aware during the initial stages of this project that neither the government, nor the service is currently systematically reviewing the content, currency nor fitness for purpose of the existing IRMPs.

As part of their new service inspections, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Police and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) are reviewing whether the activities and services provided by FRS are based on risks identified in the IRMPs, and that their activities and services reflect the risks identified in their IRMPs (HMICFRS 2018). The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) are currently undertaking (with Nottingham Trent University) a national review of Community Risk Methodology underpinning IRMPs. However, as far as we are aware, there are currently no proposals by the Home Office, or HMICFRS or NFCC to systematically investigate the adequacy of current IRMPs to establish whether they are fit for purpose, and follow the best available practice. In addition, FRSs have recently been criticised for failure to evaluate their prevention activities and to establish the effects/benefits they are having to the public (HMICFRS 2018).

The principal objective of the current research project is therefore to start to review Integrated Risk Management Plans in FRS. Although we would strongly support a more comprehensive study, we do not have the resources, at this time, to complete a *comprehensive* assessment of all IRMPs, nor do we currently have the resources to investigate every part of the IRMPs.

The research team are therefore undertaking a review of specific aspects of IRMPs, and for practical reasons have had to base this on a sample of FRS.

Literature Review

The production of up-to-date Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP) is a mandatory requirement for all Fire and Rescue Authorities and Services in the UK since they were introduced by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The 2004 Act brought a significant change in emphasis from protection of property, buildings and premises to protection of people and communities as well as property, buildings and premises and this was to be underpinned and applied in the development and maintenance of IRMPs. The aim of IRMPs (ODPM 2003) is to bring about improved community safety, and to make more productive use of FRSs' resources by:

- reducing the incidence of fires;
- reducing loss of life in fires and accidents;
- reducing the number and severity of injuries occurring in fires and other emergencies;
- safeguarding the environment and protecting the national heritage; and
- providing communities with value for money.

The IRMP process requires fire authorities to determine resource levels, both human and capital, in relation to the pattern of risk to the public and the configuration of services (Fitzgerald 2005). These plans are set out locally for each fire authority area and inform preventative strategies and emergency response based on the fire authority’s assessment of the risks to their community (DCLG 2008a). The IRMP should integrate all aspects of service delivery, including fire cover and fire safety and aim to lead to improved community safety and result in more productive use of fire service resources (ODPM 2003).

In Wales, the IRMP process has been known as the Improvement and Well-being Plan (previously Risk Reduction Planning), whereas in Scotland the process was called Integrated Risk Management (IRM), although the word ‘plan’ or ‘planning’ tends to follow the acronym IRM. Despite this common genesis, some FRS choose not to use this phrase and often call them ‘safety plans’. For instance, London Fire Brigade’s IRMP is known as the London Safety Plan.

Objectives

The requirement to produce IRMPs was reflected in the first National Framework for FRS in 2004 (ODPM 2004) and has been reconfirmed in the four subsequent national frameworks (ODPM 2006; DCLG 2008b; DCLG 2012; Home Office 2018). According to the latest framework, the 2018 Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, each plan must meet the requirements, which are reproduced in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Requirements - Integrated Risk Management Plans (Home Office 2018)

IRMP requirements
Reflect up to date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the authority;
Demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities , through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources;
Outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;
Set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat;
Cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework;
Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community , its workforce and representative bodies and partners; and
Be easily accessible and publicly available.

As the first phase of this research, the research team decided to investigate three of these aspects of IRMPs:

- whether the published IRMPs **cover at least a three year time period**;
- whether the plans are **easily accessible and available to the public**; and
- whether the parts of the plan relating to **protection and prevention** are best used to prevent fires and other incidents.

The research team wanted to explore these areas for a number of reasons. Firstly, the team attempted to establish whether all FRS in England statutorily comply with the requirement to publish their IRMPs on their websites. The publication of IRMPs was intended to reassure the public that FRS are aware of all of the risks to people and property in their areas and that appropriate action is being taken to protect the public, prevent and mitigate harm to the public and respond to incidents.

Secondly, the team looked at the minimum three year time span of the published IRMPs to investigate whether all FRS update their IRMPs to assess current and future risks to local communities in the long term.

Finally, the research team explored the parts of IRMPs relating to prevention and protection to assess their fit for purpose. Numerous but ad hoc evidence from studies of FRS and other public services (NAO 2015; Ferry and Murphy 2015; PAC 2016; Murphy and Greenhalgh 2018) strongly suggest that these might have been deprioritised as a result of financial constraints and this has subsequently been supported by the recently published inspection reports, which indicate clear inadequacies in these areas (HMICFRS 2018).

As part of the new external inspections, HMICFRS are reviewing whether the activities provided by FRS are based on risks identified in the IRMPs and whether FRSs shift resources when the pattern of risk changes. This is the first time HMICFRS has inspected FRS across England. In the first tranche, HMICFRS inspected 14 services between September and December 2018. However, at the time the study commenced (early September 2018), HMICFRS had neither commenced nor completed tranche 1 of their first national inspection programme. HMICFRS published all 14 inspection reports along with summary of findings of the first tranche on 20th December 2018 (HMICFRS). The second tranche of inspections is currently underway.

The inspection methodology was built upon or was based on three areas of assessment described as three 'pillars' by HMICFRS. Each inspection assesses how *effective* and how *efficient* the service is and also assesses how well each service *looks after the people who work there*.

The inspectorates 'effectiveness' pillar consists of five areas which include;

- understanding risk,
- preventing fires,
- protection through regulation,
- responding to fires and other emergencies, and
- preparing to respond to national incidents.

Protection work is clearly a major area of interest for the HMICFRS' inspections since it is a statutory requirement. Yet according to the HMICFRS' summary report, protection work is too often under-resourced and not always as effective as it should be. One of the reasons behind it might be budget restrictions, which negatively affect recruitment, training and retaining staff with the specialist skills

and expertise who carry out protection work. This is reflected in the 42% reduction in the number of fire safety audits being carried out annually over the last seven years.

Another concern, in HMICFRS' view, was the use of enforcement powers. FRS tend to engage with businesses, which is an important part of the protection work that services do. However, they appear not to use their legal powers as much as they should, when more efficient and effective use of enforcement powers would appear to be necessary to keep the public safe.

A further area of interest are **prevention activities**, which are also statutory obligations. According to the HMICFRS' report, FRS should make sure all staff carrying out prevention work can provide a full range of prevention advice as part of the support to the community they serve. They consider dedicated or specialist prevention teams as being more competent than operational crews when carrying out prevention activities. Furthermore, they consider all FRS need to evaluate their prevention work to determine the effect they are having on community.

FRSs are also criticised for failure to evaluate their protection and prevention activities and to establish the effects or benefits these activities are having on the public (HMICFRS 2018). Although HMICFRS report this as a widespread inadequacy, a recent paper by Taylor et al. (2019) demonstrates how Merseyside Fire and Rescue authorities' attempting to measure, the *effectiveness* of fire prevention, one of the three pillars of HMICFRS' inspections.

Using data from FRSs, NHS and UK national statistics, their approach *inter alia*, focused on assessing four areas:

- the overall effectiveness of FRS provision;
- fire incidents, injuries and facilities compared to spend per head;
- the effectiveness of fire prevention strategies; and
- the effectiveness of the targeting of fire prevention.

They were able to show clear positive patterns or trends in three of the four areas (overall effectiveness, per capita spend and the effectiveness of targeting). The only area they were not able to ascertain a clear trend or pattern was in the assessment of fire prevention strategies. This is however hugely encouraging and demonstrates that clear evaluation of protection and prevention is at least possible and practical.

As a consequence for the current study, the research team decided to explore protection and prevention activities published in FRS' IRMPs, to examine

- whether they were fit for purpose and
- whether they reflected other evidence suggesting disproportionate dis-investment in protection and prevention activities.

Methodology and Methods

This first part of the research was essentially exploratory and research was undertaken through document analysis.

Prior to undertaking this search, the team initially identified formal requirements from the official guidance available for producing IRMPs. The research team then searched both websites and electronic documents and examined the accessibility and adequacy of IRMPs for English FRS. As previously stated, all FRS in the UK are statutorily required to produce IRMPs and make them available

to the public since they were introduced by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The requirement to produce IRMPs is also reflected in the National Framework for FRS. According to the latest framework (Home Office 2018), each plan must meet the requirements set out in Table 1 above.

Stage 1. Accessibility and Public Reporting

The first stage of the project involved analysis of all IRMPs from English FRSs, with the exception of the Isle of Wight FRS and Isles of Scilly FRS (43 FRS out of 45). It included London, metropolitan, combined and county authorities. The Isle of Wight FRS and Isles of Scilly FRS were excluded from the analysis due to size of their operational area and their relationships with Hampshire FRS and Cornwall FRS respectively. This stage therefore involved examining 43 IRMPs against two requirements from the National Framework:

- The ease of access and availability to the public, and
- Whether the IRMPs cover a minimum three-year time span.

The key focus for the initial data collection was on the public accessibility of the IRMPs. This was completed through a manual search of FRSs' websites. Once the accessibility of each service's IRMP has been identified, the analysis focused on the reporting period.

The questions which were being examined were as follows:

- Is the IRMP publically available on the FRS website?
- Is it a standalone document or does it incorporate the IRMP?
- Is the IRMP easily accessible?
- Does the IRMP cover at least three year time span?
- Is the latest reporting period available?

The data collection of IRMPs was conducted in October 2018. At the time the study commenced (September 2018), HMICFRS had neither commenced nor completed the first 14 inspections of tranche 1 of their first national inspection programme. HMICFRS carried out their inspections in late 2018 and published all 14 inspection reports along with summary of findings of the first tranche on 20th December 2018.

Stage 2. Protection and Prevention

Once the data collection of IRMPs was completed, the second part of the project investigated another mandatory requirement from the National Framework, namely protection and prevention activities.

This part of the project used a sample of 6 FRS. The sample consisted of 2 county, 2 combined, and 2 metropolitan authorities which were selected from 6 different regions in England (North East; North West; Yorkshire & Humberside; East and West Midlands, and the South West). The selection was only influenced by one other factor; namely that London was excluded because of its size and because it is a unique in terms of an English study.

The second stage involved an in-depth document analysis of protection and prevention activities from the IRMPs of the 6 FRSs. The document analysis was conducted to establish whether FRSs demonstrate how prevention and protection activities are best used to prevent fires and other incidents, using publicly available information. The aim of this stage was to examine whether the provided information about the activities was fit for purpose and reflected current good practice.

Findings and Discussion

Stage 1. Accessibility and Public Reporting

The purpose of the first stage of this research was to examine IRMPs in terms of the ease of access and availability to the public, and a reporting period of minimum three years. These requirements from the National Framework generated five further questions:

- a. Is the IRMP publically available on the FRS website?
- b. Is it a standalone document or does it incorporate the IRMP?
- c. Is the IRMP easily accessible?
- d. Does the IRMP cover at least three-year time span?
- e. Is the latest reporting period available?

The results of the analysis for 43 FRSs, conducted in October 2018, are presented in Table 2 below. Each question is illustrated in a separate column in Table 2 (a, b, c, d, and e). The results are then briefly discussed in the following section.

Table 2: Summary of website analysis

FRS	a. IRMP produced	b. Integrated or standalone	c. Ease of access	d. Minimum three-year time span	e. Latest reporting period
FRS1	Yes	Integrated	Yes	No (2017)	No
FRS2	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2015 – 2018)	Yes
FRS3	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2020)	Yes
FRS4	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2020)	Yes
FRS5	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2020)	Yes
FRS6	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2018 – 2021)	Yes
FRS7	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2015 – 2020)	Yes
FRS8	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2016 – 2020)	Yes
FRS9	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2022)	Yes
FRS10	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2018 – 2022)	Yes
FRS11	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2015 – 2020)	Yes
FRS12	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2020)	Yes
FRS13	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2016 – 2020)	Yes
FRS14	Yes	Integrated	No	No (2018)	Yes
FRS15	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2015 – 2019)	Yes
FRS16	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2014 – 2018)	Yes
FRS17	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2018/19 – 2020/21)	Yes
FRS18	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2018 – 2021)	Yes
FRS19	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2016/17 - 2020/21)	Yes
FRS20	Yes	Standalone	Yes	No (2018 – 2019)	Yes
FRS21	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2022)	Yes
FRS22	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2015 – 2019)	Yes
FRS23	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2020)	Yes
FRS24	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2016 – 2020)	Yes
FRS25	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2021)	Yes
FRS26	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2016 – 2020)	Yes
FRS27	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2014 – 2019)	Yes

FRS28	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2014 – 2020)	Yes
FRS29	Yes	Integrated	No	Yes (2015 – 2020)	Yes
FRS30	Yes	Standalone	No	Yes (2017 – 2020)	Yes
FRS31	No	-	-	-	-
FRS32	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2018 – 2021)	Yes
FRS33	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2022)	Yes
FRS34	Yes	Standalone	No	Yes (2016 – 2025)	Yes
FRS35	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2018 – 2022)	Yes
FRS36	Yes	Standalone	No	Yes (2017 – 2021)	Yes
FRS37	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2016 – 2020)	Yes
FRS38	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2014 – 2018)	Yes
FRS39	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2016 – 2020)	Yes
FRS40	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2015 – 2018)	Yes
FRS41	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2016 – 2020)	Yes
FRS42	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2020)	Yes
FRS43	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2020)	Yes

a. Is the IRMP publically available on the FRS website?

The initial analysis established 42 FRSs out of 43 provided an IRMP document on their websites. One (FRS 31) did not provide an IRMP for the latest reporting period. Instead, the service provided a consultation on the content of the IRMP for the 2019-2022 period.

b. Is it a standalone document or does it incorporate the IRMP?

Out of the 42 FRSs who provided their IRMPs, 30 provided standalone documents, whereas 12 FRSs provided IRMPs that are part of other documents. Publication of IRMPs within other reports might partially be explained by the fact that there is no template or standard format for IRMPs. Therefore, some services publish their IRMPs as part of other planning documents.

50% of metropolitan FRSs, 35% of combined FRS and just over 8% of county FRSs provided their IRMPs as part of other documents. Interestingly, larger services tend to provide IRMPs that are integrated within other documents, whilst small services tend to publish their IRMPs as standalone reports.

c. Is the IRMP easily accessible?

37 IRMPs were discoverable through the search function on FRSs' websites (key word search: either *IRMP* or *Integrated Risk Management Plan*), whilst 5 others required a manual search for reports and publications, within the respective FRSs' websites. This result may be explained by the fact that FRS tend to use other names instead of IRMPs. FRSs often call them 'safety plans' or 'service plans', making it more difficult to find them on the websites when searching for an IRMP.

d. Does the IRMP cover at least a three-year time span?

In terms of the reporting period, 39 IRMPs met statutory requirement of at least a three year time span. FRSs tend to publish their IRMPs for 3, 4 and 5 year time.

However, 3 FRS provided IRMPs that do not cover minimum three year reporting period, with two of them covering only one year. It is difficult to explain this result, but it might be related to the fact that

services are also required to review and revise their IRMPs as often as it is necessary. Therefore, some FRSs might produce their IRMPs on an annual basis.

e. Is the latest reporting period available?

Whilst 41 FRSs published their IRMPs for the latest reporting period (2018), one service provided an IRMP for the 2017 reporting period as their latest iteration.

The overall conclusion from stage 1 of the research was that FRS clearly acknowledge the importance of the IRMP to service delivery and, in practice acknowledge the need for its regular review and public reporting of its contents. IRMPs remain a fundamental part of the service delivery process of the FRS in the UK in both theory and practice.

Stage 2. Protection and Prevention

The second part of the project focused on the analysis of the 6 IRMPs (2 county; 2 combined and 2 metropolitan services). Each service reported on a variety of activities that they considered appropriate for their areas in their IRMPs. The IRMPs were analysed in terms of protection and prevention activities.

The activities reported could essentially be differentiated into two categories. The first could be interpreted as being expressions of aims, objectives and/or outcomes, for the service. These by their nature tended to be medium or long term in perspective. The second was identification of various ‘actions’. These by their nature tended to be more short term in focus. Some FRSs provided only protection and prevention aims, objectives and outcomes, whereas others focused on detailed activities or actions underpinning the aims, objectives and outcomes, while most had a mixture of both.

What distinguishes the two categories is their timescales and the intended results. Aims and objectives tend to be long-term and be outcome orientated, whereas actions tended to be short-term and be input or output focused.

The main ‘aims, objectives and outcomes’, and the intended ‘actions’ are presented as headings in the respective tables (Table 4, 5, 6 and 7). All of them have been taken directly from the protection and prevention sections of the sample of 6 IRMPs.

Table 3 below illustrates the summary of website analysis from stage one for the sample of 6 FRSs.

Table 3: Summary of website analysis of 6 IRMPs

FRS	IRMP produced	Integrated or standalone	Ease of access	Minimum three-year time span	Latest reporting period
FRS4	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2017 – 2020)	Yes
FRS6	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2018 – 2021)	Yes
FRS10	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2018 – 2022)	Yes
FRS17	Yes	Integrated	Yes	Yes (2018/19 – 2020/21)	Yes
FRS37	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2016 – 2020)	Yes
FRS41	Yes	Standalone	Yes	Yes (2016 – 2020)	Yes

It is worth reiterating that the second stage of analysis is only based on the publicly available IRMPs. In other words, it excluded other sources of information (internal reports or non-publicly available parts of the FRS websites and/or intranets). These were not available to the research team.

Protection activity

Is protection activity fit for purpose and does it reflect current good practice?

Table 4: Protection – Aims, objectives and outcomes

FRS	Safeguarding the culture, heritage and environmental assets	Risk-based approach	Environment - water pollution	Environment - flooding	Environment - air quality	Flu pandemic	Total number of protection aims for each FRS
FRS4	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	5/6
FRS6							0/6
FRS10	✓			✓			2/6
FRS17							0/6
FRS37	✓						1/6
FRS41	✓		✓				2/6

In terms of the protection aims, objectives and outcomes (Table 4), most of the FRSs tend to engage in safeguarding the culture, heritage and environmental assets (4 FRSs out of 6). Under the environment category, three services claim that their aim is to further safeguard against water pollution, flooding and poor air quality. It is also clear from this table that other aims are less critical for some FRSs. For instance, each service should have a risk-based inspection programme (HMICFRS, 2018) but only one service indicated that their protection approach is risk-based.

Two services did not provide any long-term aims, objectives and outcomes, one service provided only one. The majority had two or less long-term objectives in terms of protection. In this small sample, the services on average provided less than two aims, objectives and outcomes.

Table 5: Protection - Actions

FRS	Working with businesses to help them thrive	Assessing high risk buildings	Securing legislative compliance (enforcement action)	Carrying out fire safety audits	Sprinkler systems encouragement	Business Continuity Planning	Total number of protection actions for each FRS
FRS4	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	5/6
FRS6	✓	✓	✓				3/6
FRS10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/6
FRS17	✓		✓	✓			3/6
FRS37	✓		✓				2/6
FRS41	✓	✓			✓	✓	4/6

With regard to their protection activities (Table 5), the services tend to report a number of actions. All services for instance indicated that they work with businesses to help them thrive. 5 out of 6 services use their enforcement action to statutorily comply with the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. 4 out of 6 services declared they assess high risk buildings. However, the most surprising aspect of the data is that only 2 services reported that they conduct fire safety audits, which examine premises and relevant documents to ascertain how the premises are being managed.

On average, a service provided between three and four protection activities. However, what stands out in the table is the relative diversity in the total number of actions undertaken by the FRSs. FRS10 provided all 6 protection actions in their IRMP, whereas FRS37 included only 2 of them.

However on the basis of this sample, there appears to be no great difference in the spread of prevention activities provided by the different types of services, namely county, combined and metropolitan authorities.

Prevention activity

Is prevention activity fit for purpose and does it reflect current good practice?

Table 6: Prevention - Aims

FRS	Reducing the number of people killed or injured in dwelling fires	Arson reduction	Reducing anti-social behaviour	Tackling the root causes of inequality	Total number of prevention aims for each FRS
FRS4		✓			1/4
FRS6	✓	✓			2/4
FRS10			✓		1/4
FRS17	✓	✓			2/4
FRS37	✓		✓	✓	3/4
FRS41			✓		1/4

In terms of prevention activities (Table 6), only 3 out of 6 FRSs state in their IRMPs that their aim is to reduce the number of people killed or injured in household fires. Similarly, 3 services declare that they aim to reduce arson incidents and anti-social behaviour. Only one service claims that it aims to tackle the root causes of inequality.

FRS37 included the highest number of aims in their IRMPs, whereas FRS4, FRS10 and FRS41 provided only one aim or objective. On average, a service provided between one and two prevention aims, objectives and outcomes.

Table 7: Prevention - Actions

FRS	Carrying out home fire safety checks	Working in partnership	Providing fire safety education	Improving road safety	Engaging with young people	Business intelligence and data analysis	Free smoke alarms	Total number of prevention actions for each FRS
FRS4	✓		✓	✓	✓			4/7
FRS6	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		5/7
FRS10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	6/7
FRS17		✓			✓	✓		3/7
FRS37	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			5/7
FRS41	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	5/7

With regard to prevention actions (Table 7), FRSs appeared to engage widely with communities, young people in particular, through providing fire safety education and improving road safety. A large

proportion of services also claim they carry out home fire safety checks and 4 services declare that they work in partnerships with other sectors.

What is striking from the Table 7 is the number of actions in which FRS17 are involved in. They are only involved in three actions, which are not primary in terms of preventing people from fire (working in partnership, engaging with young people, and business intelligence and data analysis). All other services perform primary prevention actions (carrying out home fire safety checks, providing fire safety education and improving road safety).

On average, the services reported providing between 4 and 5 prevention activities in their IRMP.

Table 8 illustrates the summary of the analysis of the second stage. Three services (FRS4, FRS10 and FRS41) provided 12 or more protection and prevention activities in their IRMPs. (50%, 63% and 63% respectively) The other three services (FRS6, FRS17 and FRS37) provided less than 12 activities (46%, 42% and 33% respectively). The results also suggest that IRMPs tend to include protection and prevention actions, rather than aims, objectives and outcomes.

The results do not however show any apparent differentiation across either authority types (county, combined or metropolitan), or across different regions.

Table 8: Summary of the analysis of the second stage

FRS	Total number of protection aims for each FRS	Total number of protection actions for each FRS	Total number of prevention aims for each FRS	Total number of prevention actions for each FRS	Total aims and actions
FRS4	5	5	1	4	15/24
FRS6	0	3	2	5	10/24
FRS10	2	6	1	6	15/24
FRS17	0	3	2	3	8/24
FRS37	1	2	3	5	11/24
FRS41	2	4	1	5	12/24

Conclusion

Our analysis shows that IRMPs remain a fundamental and significant part of modern FRS service delivery in both theory and practice.

The results from the first stage of our analysis show that almost all FRSs in England statutorily comply with the requirement to provide easily accessible IRMPs on their websites either as standalone or integrated documents and generally for a minimum three-year time span. Although there are some examples of FRSs that do not meet these requirements. The current research supports the view that FRS acknowledge the importance of the IRMP to service delivery and, in practice also acknowledge the need for its regular review and for the public reporting of its contents.

According to these findings, we can assume that most of the FRSs are aware of the risks to people and property in their areas in the long term. Despite these encouraging results/assumptions, there may be a minority of FRSs that do not provide the documents that assess current and future risks to their local communities and we would expect these to be identified in the ongoing inspection programme by HMICFRS.

The findings also suggest that English FRS provide IRMPs that vary and possibly vary significantly. FRSs tend to use a variety of reporting periods (from 1 to 9 years) and they also use different names to call their IRMPs. These differences in the information might be explained by the fact that there is an absence of existing national guidance on templates or standard formats for IRMPs. The only source of information apparently available to FRSs is the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the latest National Framework 2018 (Home Office 2018).

There are clearly variations in IRMP reporting; and the question that this suggests is – are these variations warranted by situation and circumstance, or are they unwarranted. If they are unwarranted, then how significant are these unwarranted variations and how can they be reduced?

In stage 2, the research team explored the parts of IRMPs relating to **prevention and protection**. In this stage, it was found that FRSs provide varied levels of detail on prevention and protection activities in their IRMPs. In general terms, this supports both HMICFRS findings (2018), and the earlier studies that suggest that data and information provided by FRSs needs to improve (Murphy and Greenhalgh 2013, 2018; NAO 2015; PAC 2016; Home Office 2018).

This research also confirms that protection and prevention activities do not command sufficient priority for some FRSs in the way that they should do. This correlates with underinvestment in these activities recently reported by HMICFRS (2018).

Finally, however, it is important to re-emphasise that the second stage of our analysis is based on the activities identified in the IRMPs of 6 FRSs. Clearly this does not capture a complete national picture of how FRSs are performing. It does however add to evidence previously available (and supports calls by NFCC and others), for a systematic and comprehensive assessment of all IRMPs. There has been no systematic and comprehensive assessment of IRMPs since they were introduced in 2004. Such a study would review their adequacy, establish whether they are fit for purpose, identify good practice and provide the evidence upon which a national benchmarking tool could be built.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Emergency Services Working Papers

This working paper is part of other working papers published by Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, which address the issues of service delivery, policy development and public assurance of Fire and Rescue Services.

Working papers to date comprise:

Murphy, P., 2017. Working Paper 1. *The implications of the Crime and Policing Act 2017 for fire and rescue services*. Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University.

Murphy, P., Glennon, R. and Lakoma, K., 2018. *Working paper no 2. Fire and Rescue National Framework for England: Government (Home Office) consultation*. Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University.

Murphy, P., Glennon, R., Lakoma, K. and Spencer, T., 2018. *Working paper no 3. Proposed fire and rescue service inspection programme and framework 2018/19: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services consultation response*. Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University.

Murphy, P., Lakoma, K., Glennon, R. and Spencer, T., 2018. *Working paper no 4. Protocol on Central Government intervention action for fire and rescue authorities. Annex A: of the 'Fire and Rescue National Framework for England' Government (Home Office) consultation*. Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University.

Murphy, P., Lakoma, K. and Glennon, R., 2018. *Working paper no 5. A 'model' national framework for fire and rescue services in England*. Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University.

These are all available on the Fire Sector Federation's intranet and on the Nottingham Trent University's Institutional Repository (IREP) website (<http://irep.ntu.ac.uk/>).