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Productivity & Efficiency

LGA Fire Conference 2024

Update from last year

- Joint working with LGA and NFCC via the P&E forum to assess progress against the SR commitment.

"increasing productivity of whole time firefighters by 3%, and to creating non-pay efficiency savings of 2% each year of this spending review period"

- Expect productivity to continue to be a priority for the public sector and working towards evidencing how we have met the SR commitment.

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Progress

Delivery of several outcomes including;

➢ Analysis of 23/24 P&E plans

➢ Updated and revised templates and guidance for 24/25 plans with County and Unitary fire services now included

➢ Firefighter utilisation analysis

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Analysis of 23/24 P&E plans

➢ Plans received from all standalone FRAs

➢ Reviewed and analysed by HO and NFCC

➢ Identified inconsistencies in how various categories of efficiency were treated

➢ Engagement with FRAs that are part of a County Council or Unitary Authority.

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Quantitative Summary of 23/24 plans: 2022/23-2024/25

Average Efficiency Savings across 3 years against Non-Payroll Budgets

Legend: Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Non-Payroll Budgets — Target
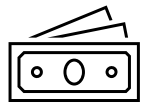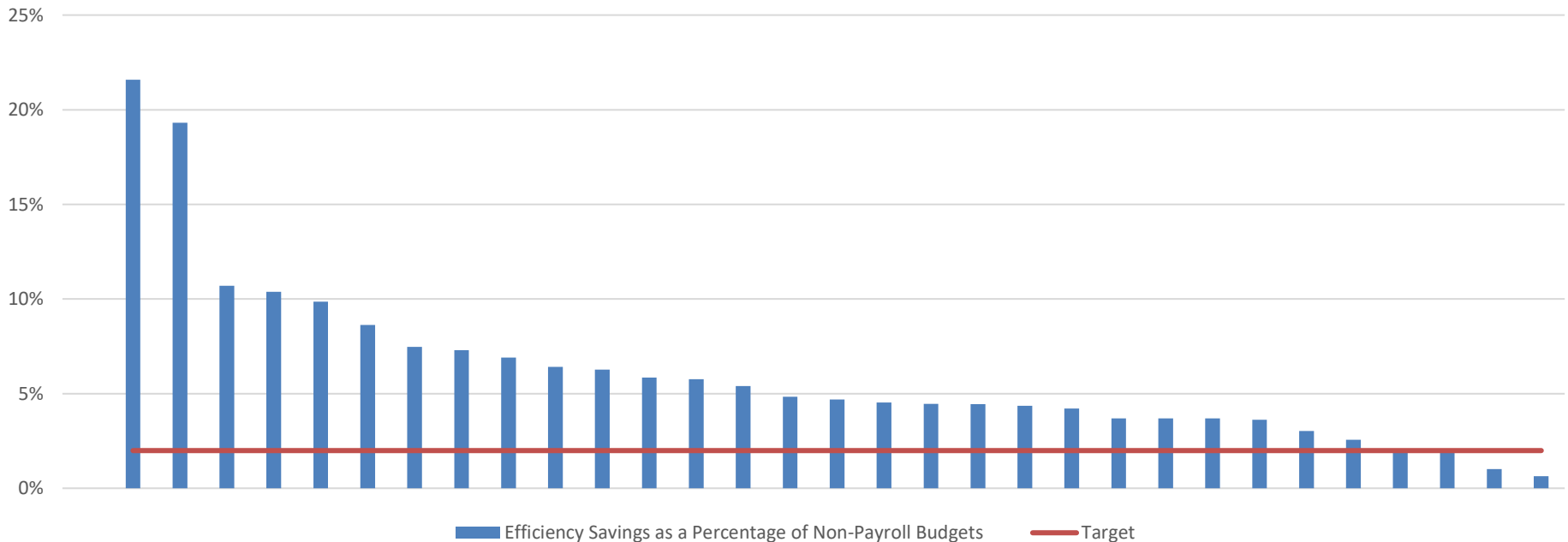
Total non-payroll budget, over 3 years, is £1.7bn

Highest average efficiency savings against non-payroll budgets was 22%, followed by 19%

Lowest average efficiency savings against non-payroll budgets was 1%.

Over 3 years, FRS are making 6% average efficiency savings against a total non-payroll budget of £1.7bn

Efficiency Savings Breakdown: 2022/23-2024/25

Total Efficiency Savings over 3 years	£104m
Direct Employee	£33m
Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)	£3m
Premises	£6m
Transport	£3m
Supplies and Services	£26m
Capital Financing	£16m
Other*	£17m

* Other consists of miscellaneous categories such as income generation, collaboration work, further other reductions not specified, or savings to be identified
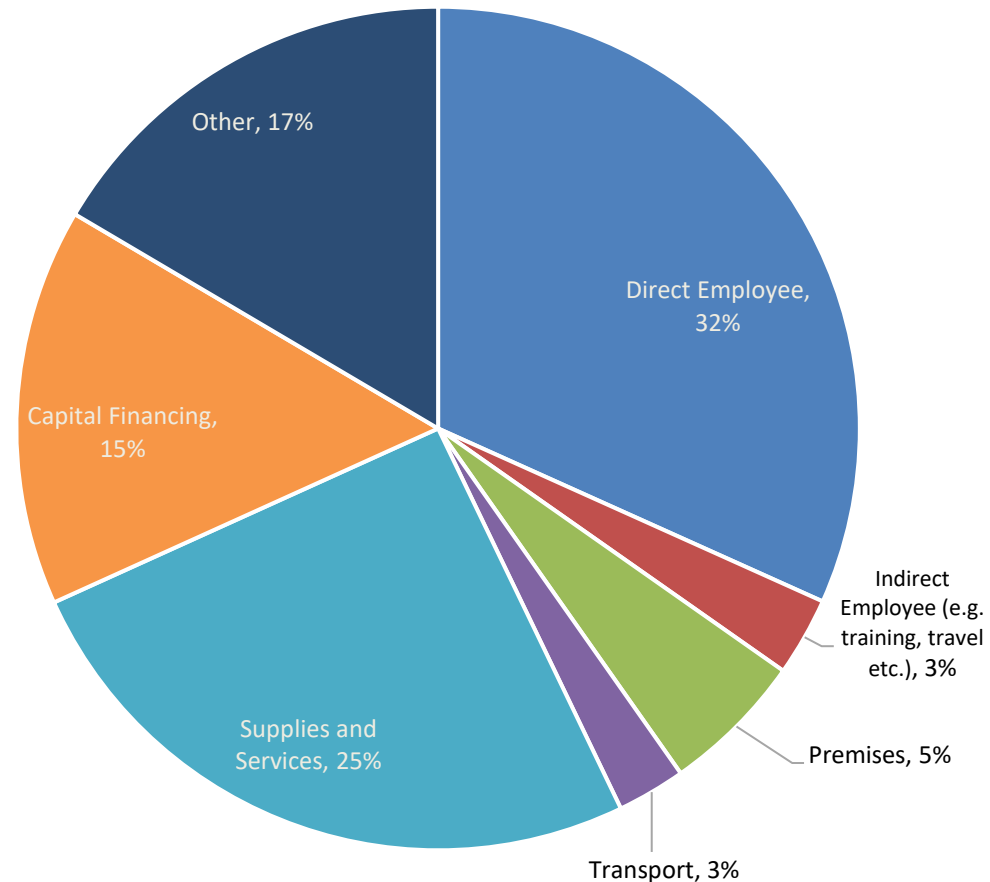
Efficiency Themes
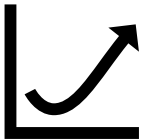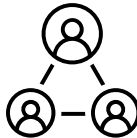
Key Productivity & Efficiency Themes

Collaboration

Transformation

Charging Policies

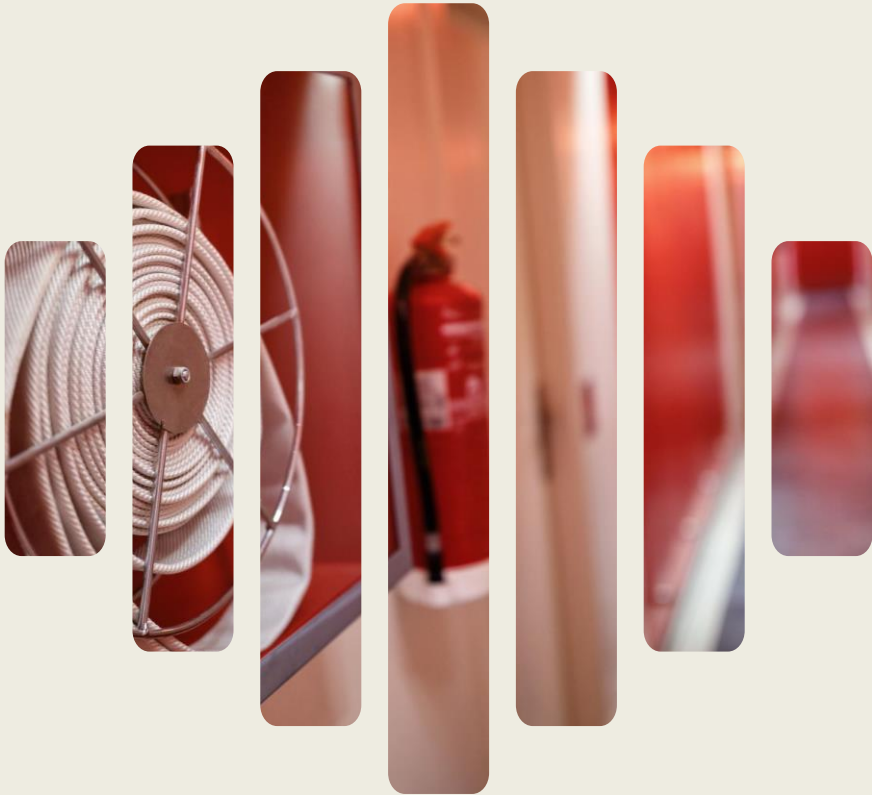Asset Management and Investment in Technology

Resourcing

Procurement

Local Initiatives

Productivity

Collaboration

- **Collaborating with the ambulance and police, e.g.:** Bariatric complex patient rescue, co-responding, gaining entry, searching for missing people, joint fleet maintenance.
- **Joint Control Rooms and call diversions**
- **Alignment of operational equipment to allow joint deployment**
- **Sharing equipment and operational assets**
- **Shared Estates**
- **Shared back office functions**

'Co-responding has added social value of £2.244m'

Transformation, Investment and Asset Management

Digitalisation of the service
- Removal of paper based systems
- Smart screens
- IT based equipment tracking systems
- Digitising fire appliances

Overhaul of operating systems
- Microsoft 365

Environmental Impact
- Electric Vehicles
- Solar Panels and LED lights

Governance Review
- Procedural frameworks

'Aim to reach net zero carbon by 2030 with the current investment in new technology on new appliances'

Procurement

➢ **Wide spread use of national and more localised procurement frameworks**

➢ **Collaboration with other Blue Light Services**

➢ **Some assessment of savings**

FRAs also work closely with other Fire and Rescue Services to share best practice, lessons learnt, documentation and where it provides best value to do so utilise fire sector specific frameworks.

'The services procurement is delivered through the Blue Light Collaboration arrangements in partnership with the local Constabulary, estimated over the last two years, saved in excess of £100k'

Lessons Learned

Common terminology

Shared understanding of agreed targets

Ensure consistency in numbers

Demonstrate impact: Greater level of detail around quantifying or evaluating benefits

Keep it simple and provide all information in one document

Long-term and strategic approach to efficiency planning over reactive short-term gains

Next Steps

➢Reviewing 24/25 plans when they are final (deadline 31 March)

➢Assessment of plans against SR target in preparation for next Spending Review

➢Engage with DLUHC in relation to their requirement for productivity plans for all Local Authorities.

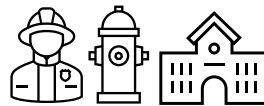# **Productivity Workstream**

LGA Fire Conference 2024

ACO Matt Sutcliffe

Academic Support for the project ?

Defining inputs and outputs for the FRSs

Inputs: labour and operational expenditure

Output: Prevented fire and non-fire damage

Fire responses

Non-fire responses

False alarm responses

Prevention and protection

NFCC
National Fire Chiefs Council

What do we as a workstream mean by productivity and efficiency?

- **Efficiency** - Reducing inputs to deliver the same or better outputs

- **Productivity** - Doing more with the same inputs

- **Capacity** – What we currently do with our staff

Measurement of "more" is hard, especially in public services.

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Firefighter Utilisation Survey: Background

Why did we launch the survey?

- Focus on productivity and efficiency in the fire sector **(2022/23-2024/25 spending review)**
- Limited evidence on productivity, efficiency and understanding of how wholetime firefighter time is spent
- Limited evidence on the productivity of wholetime shift systems
- Goal of building a better understanding of wholetime firefighter activity

Survey progress

- We now have four quarters worth of data (Sep '22, Dec '22, March '23 and June '23)
- We have had good engagement with high response rates and FRSs proactively developing their own data collections
- Supported FRSs by hosting two run through sessions with the first round of responses and bespoke support where required
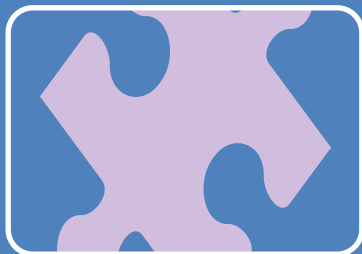
Analysis of returns

- We analysed and quality assured each return, going back to FRSs with clarification questions.
- We are currently cleaning and analysing the data from the most recent survey returns

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HMICFRS

13/03/2024

Firefighter Utilisation Survey: Scope

Scope

The survey only considered wholetime firefighters

It asked FRSs which shift systems they use and which was most common.

FRSs completed station and staff numbers for each of these systems, and completed the survey for the most common shift system only

The survey was split into 3 time periods

1) Day shift (or 7:00 to 19:00)

2) Start of night shift to midnight

3) Midnight to start of day shift

Activity types in the survey

1) Operational activity – Fire, Non-fire, Fire False Alarm (FFA) and standby call-outs

2) Prevention, protection and community safety – Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs), 74ds, audits and any "other activity" the service recorded

3) Training – practical exercises, fitness, e-learning and any other training.

4) Admin – Incident Recording System (IRS) or other

5) Station routines – Equipment checks or crew planning

6) Rest and meal times

7) Other – We tried to group "other" entries into the above wherever possible, but some could not be classified

8) Time not accounted for – Any remaining time on a shift not classified as one of the above

NFCC National Fire Chiefs Council

HMICFRS

HOAI Home Office Analysis and Insight

Key findings: England - Firefighter Utilisation Survey

How does the time change between the day and the night shift?

The time allocation in the day shift and from the start of the night shift to midnight for activities is very similar with the highest proportion of time allocated to training.

More Productive Duty Systems are the ones that have maximised the optimum times to engage with there communities and reduce no productive times. Significant time is allocated to station routines and admin during key engagement time periods.

Other findings:

There is a high level of variation across services in time spent on an activity. However, some of this is attributed to different levels of data availability.

SUBJECT TO FURTHER QUALITY ASSURANCE

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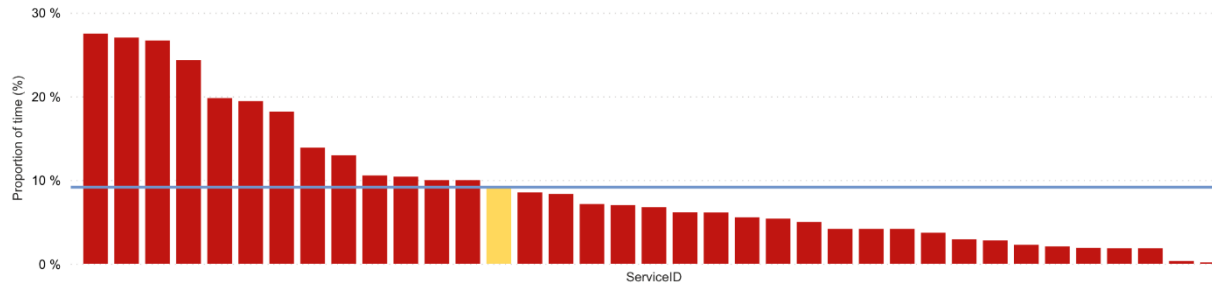
What have we learnt?
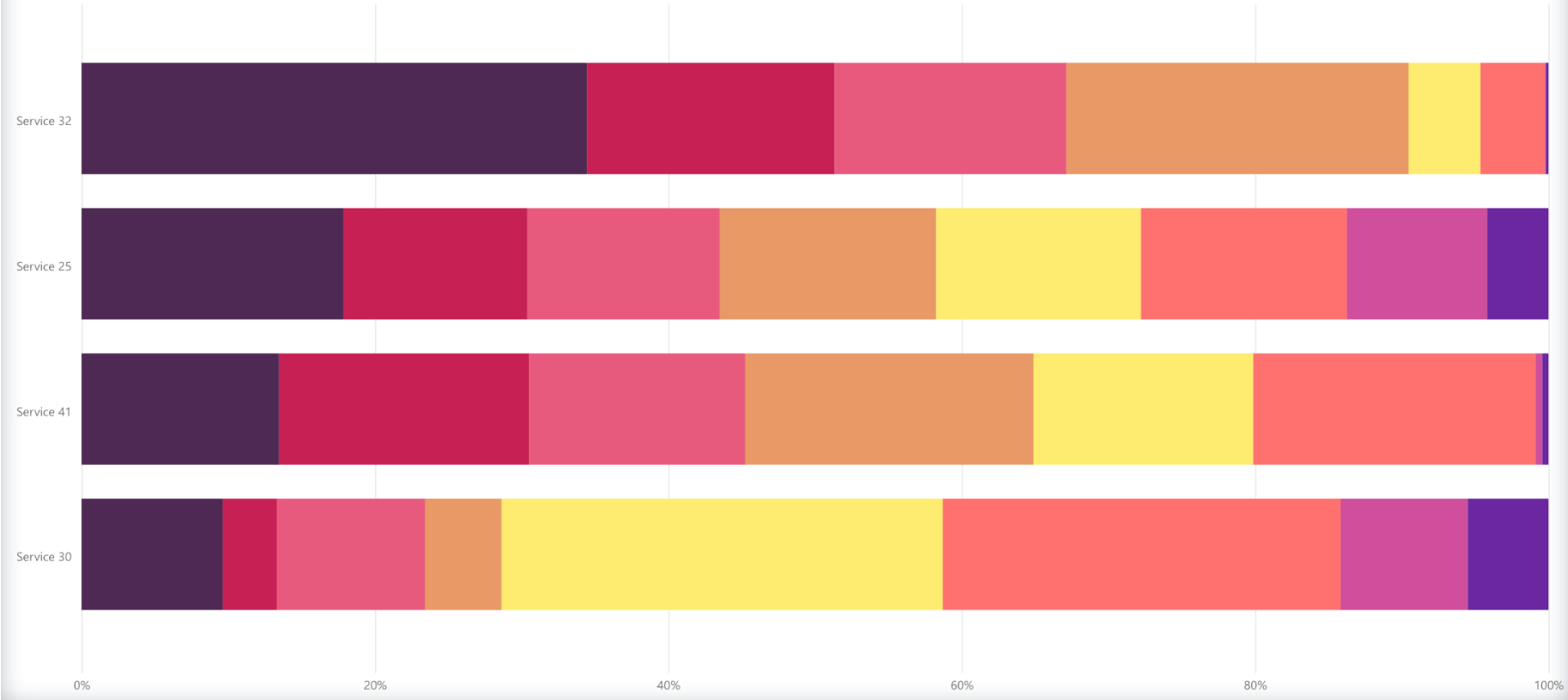
Continued learning

England FRSs: Proportion of time allocated across Day to Admin

England activity group

Admin

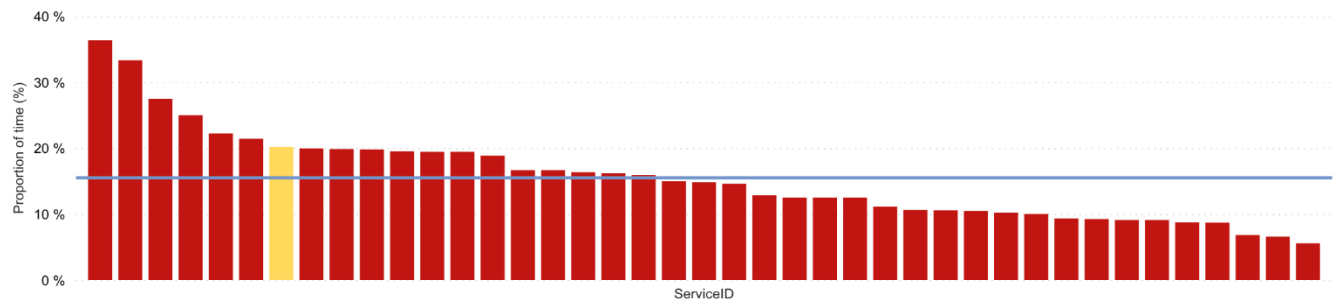Variation across England: firefighter utilisation across Day - Admin

Note: **ONLY USE THIS CHART WHEN YOU HAVE SELECTED EITHER DAY, EVENING, OR NIGHT. THE COMBINATION OF ALL TIME PERIODS IS NOT WORKING.** This chart should be used to compare the selected service the national trend/all others; not to benchmark services against each other. There is a **high level of variation** in the proportion of time spent on an activity group **across England.** Data is only available for activities where at least 10 FRSs reported it. Missingness may be due to activity not being performed by wholetime firefighters or where a service cannot report an activity due to the lack of data.

England FRSs: Proportion of time allocated across Day to Station routines

England activity group

Station routines

Variation across England: firefighter utilisation across Day - Station routines

Further Developments?

Firefighter Utilisation Survey: Future Work

We aim to share the results of the survey in 2024 and use the survey to develop other areas of productivity work.
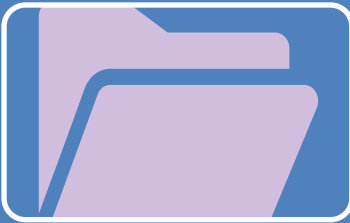
1. Improve the existing productivity metric

We created a metric with Cambridge Econometrics.

We may be improving the methodology and updating the data.

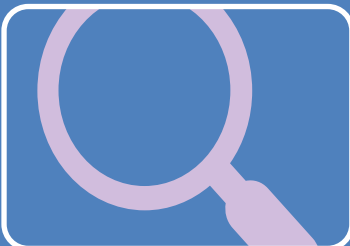We could use the survey returns to update the unit costs where possible.

2. Build evidence for future SR bids

Help us understand changing demography and demand

Help us understand data availability in FRSs and how this can be improved

Useful tool for FRSs to view and adapt own productivity

3. Further consider how we measure the impact of activity

The survey considers capacity not overall productivity - it does not account for the impact of activities.

An FRS could be operating at a higher capacity than another but be less efficient or productive.

We may complete analysis into the value of FRS activity, which could include FRSs completing an evaluation to show they are 3% more productive in an effective way.

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Next Steps ?

Which of the Policing Recommendations could also apply to Fire?

Data

Would there be utility in a centralised data hub to improve **quality** and **consistency** of data?

Technology as a Productivity Multiplier

How does the sector **identify**, **evaluate** and **adopt** new tech? How could the sector adopt a more **united approach** and **reduce duplication**? What kinds of processes could be streamlined with tech?

Model Process

Could the sector **identify** a model process, **adapt** and **share good practice?**

What other measures could be available?

- What is already possible at local level, either with CFO or FRA agreement?

- What are the areas where FRSs would welcome national level steers?

- Interactions with other existing workstreams in fire reform and strategy

- Interactions with other ongoing work within the NFCC

- Challenges and opportunities for implementation

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