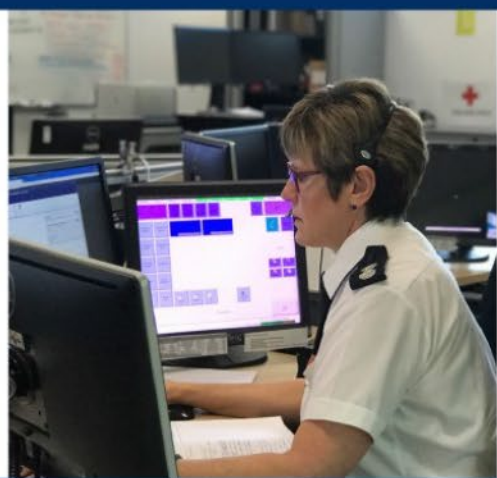




Emergency Response and Resilience Strategy 2021 - 2024



County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service

Safest People, Safest Places

1. Foreward

Welcome to the Emergency Response and Resilience Strategy for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS).

Our Service, governed by the County Durham and Darlington Combined Fire Authority (CFA), is responsible for making sure that all our communities in County Durham and Darlington are protected as far as possible from the risks we face. As well as fire emergencies we are here to respond to many types of incidents such as water and animal rescues, flooding and road traffic collisions. Our protection and prevention work forms the foundation of what we do to minimise risk and together with our vital emergency response function we maintain services which are effective and resilient.

Our vision is to have the safest people and safest places and we will strive to achieve this by delivering a professional, innovative and effective FRS with our communities at the heart of everything we do.

To ensure we are accountable to you, we produce a series of documents which set out our plans for the future. Our Community Risk Profile (CRP) and Station Plans set out the risks we face. Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) shows how we allocate our resources to tackle those risks and our Service Strategies show you the detail of how we will manage the challenges that our various Sections face.

You can find all our Service Plan documents on our website using the link below:

<https://www.ddfire.gov.uk/service-plans>

Every year we ensure that our services can be delivered within the budget we are set. Since 2010 we have had our government funding reduced and we expect to continue to face a very challenging financial climate in light of the current economic conditions, Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on the amount of income we can raise through Council Tax. The next three years are therefore likely to require further innovation and changes to the way we operate, and the Emergency Response and Resilience Strategy will help us to achieve this.

Our core strength is our people who are proud to work for an organisation connected closely with its communities and who are genuinely committed to changing and saving people's lives. We cannot provide our services without support from our excellent staff, and we would like to thank them for their continued hard work and dedication. Our partner organisations and neighbouring FRSs also deserve great credit for supporting and collaborating with us in the work that we do.

2. Where are we now

The role of a fire and rescue service has significantly changed to involve a much broader range of activities than that of simply responding to emergency incidents. County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) has been at the forefront of these changes with the most recent transformation programme seeing the introduction of more efficient Emergency Response staffing models and the transitioning of workloads to the Emergency Response staff on fire stations and Command and Control.

Over recent years influential national reports such as State of Fire report, Facing the Future by Sir Ken Knight and the Adrian Thomas review have increased scrutiny on fire and rescue services, with the change of governmental departments, the move under the Home Office and the subsequent Fire Reform Programme the service recognises that continuous improvement is essential. This Emergency Response strategy has been created to help balance the impact of these external drivers while still ensuring the service can meet the demands identified through its community risk management process.

By driving forward new ways of working and striving for excellence CDDFRS has seen improvements over the last 10 years across a range of key performance areas such as:



However there are still some areas where operational activity needs further focus and action. These include deliberate fire setting, further reducing the number of primary fires (in relation to properties and vehicles) and limiting the impact of secondary fires (in particular at key times such as Easter and Summer periods) in conjunction with the Business Fire Safety, Community Safety and Arson Reduction Strategies.

3. Emergency Response Strategy 2017-20



Following the conclusion of the ER strategy 2017-20, the service has moved forward its emergency response capability in many ways to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose. Key areas of progress include:

- Trial and implementation of a revised operational staffing and fire appliance disposition model: This included positioning the second whole-time fire appliance from Durham to Spennymoor, the introduction of a targeted response vehicle at Durham and transformation from day crewing plus at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe fire stations to day crewing. The result of this has improved response to accidental dwelling fires and road traffic collisions as well as realising efficiencies.
- Emergency medical response: Funding from the clinical commissioning group has supported sustained emergency medical response in key areas of demand. This has also enhanced the role of on-call personnel in these areas.
- On-call support: Further support for the on-call duty system has taken place using consultation and forums as well as the provision of a support officer.
- Work supporting the emergency services network nationally has enabled the provision of connected appliances within the service giving personnel at operational incidents and operating in the field the ability to connect to secure data services within CDDFRS. This has also supported the development of the national replacement for the current emergency communications system.
- Command and control provision was evaluated across the north east region and as a result of this, opportunities for collaboration were recommended which will be explored further moving forward.

4. These values are known in our organisation as the PIE values and describe the ethos of CDDFRS

PROFESSIONAL



INNOVATIVE



EFFECTIVE



Our commitment to you is that we will always aim to be the best fire and rescue service in the UK. In order to achieve this there are certain behaviours that we expect from our staff. How well our staff are demonstrating these behaviours as part of their day to day job is assessed within our bespoke appraisal system.

The range of these behaviours falls into four areas known as the 4Cs:



How We Approach Challenges

We will approach challenges with flexibility, enthusiasm and motivation, passion, determination and resilience.

How We Conduct Ourselves

How we will conduct ourselves in a manner that is honest, trustworthy, reliable, accountable, consistent and respectful.

How We Collaborate

We will be approachable, supportive, encouraging and inclusive and value development when collaborating.

How We Drive Change Across the Organisation to Make a Difference

We will drive change by being creative, resourceful, courageous, original, clear and focused.

5. Where do we want to be



The Services' strategic priorities are detailed in our Community Risk Management Plan [CRMP] which explains CDDFRS' vision of "Safest People, Safest Places" and how we plan to achieve this. The Emergency Response and Resilience Strategy is part of the suite of documents which support the delivery of the CRMP and explain the interventions which will take place to support the achievement of CDDFRS' vision and ensure the Service develops staff with the right professionalism and skills who demonstrate our cultural values and behaviours.

The CRMP is derived from the Community Risk Profile which is a risk analysis of not only local but national hazards combined with the most likely reasonable worst case scenario in terms of likelihood. This then identifies the key areas of risk mitigation within CDDFRS which is then subsequently addressed via the CRMP, The Emergency Response Strategy and locally via station plans which drive prevention and preparedness activity on a station by station basis.

The Government's fire reform agenda set a clear direction of travel to ensure services are efficient, accountable, transparent and reflective of the diverse communities they serve. This is underpinned by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) regime and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England that sets out the overall strategic direction for fire and rescue authorities.

We expect the Authority to continue to face a very challenging financial climate going forward, as further cuts to government funding are made. This is exacerbated by restrictions on the amount of income we can raise through council tax and predictions of significant pressures on spending. As well as this, the unexpected nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has seen the Service make significant changes in the way we operate in order to keep our staff safe whilst continuing to deliver services to our communities. The next three years are therefore likely to require further innovation and changes to the way we operate and deliver our services and the ER Strategy will help us achieve this.

CDDFRS has a history of adapting and dealing well with adversity throughout this prolonged period of austerity. Putting our staff at the heart of everything we do and developing and maintaining a positive organisational culture will help to ensure that we continue to be successful, despite these many challenges. We are committed to delivering a professional, innovative and effective FRS, as we continue to work towards our vision of "safest people, safest places".

The purpose of the ER plan is to provide a set of guiding principles for CDDFRS personnel to adopt supporting decision making and the allocation of resources in order to accomplish key objectives. The combined CRP, CRMP, ER Strategy and Station plans provide a roadmap that defines the actions staff within CDDFRS should take, and the things they should prioritise to achieve desired goals.

6. CDDFRS Strategic Emergency Response and Resilience Framework



The above flow diagram illustrates the relationship and hierarchy of key strategic documents within CDDFRS and identifies how initial community risk analysis via the CRP informs the CRMP which is supported in turn by a series of strategies (the ER Strategy being one of these) and then more local station based activity driven by the respective station plans forms a cyclic model for risk mitigation.

Fire and Rescue services are assessed annually under Section 28B of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 via HMICFRS inspections and reported to the Secretary of State, results are captured globally in the national State of Fire and Rescue –The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2019 and locally as specific organisation reports. The inspection concentrates on efficiency, effectiveness and people, and supports the driving of improvements in these three main areas both in individual fire and rescue services and the sector nationally.

7. Key Principles

In order to support the delivery of this strategy we have adopted underpinning principles, some of which have been devised both locally and from national guidance. These are as follows:

- The Emergency Response section is responsible for ensuring that the Service has sufficient and proportionate emergency response arrangements available to respond to and manage a wide range of risks and threats, delivered through a range of local, regional and national delivery models.
- The following legislation and guidance set out the expectations of the Home Office in delivering our services to the public:
 - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
 - Fire and Rescue Framework 2018
 - Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
 - Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005
 - Civil Contingencies Act 2004
 - National Fire Chiefs Council [NFCC] Position statements
- Our culture plays an integral part in enabling the Service to achieve its vision of 'Safest People, Safest Places'. Through the key objectives set within the ER Strategy, we aim to support the creation of a positive, inclusive culture that encourages innovation and continuous improvement. Culture is at the heart of everything we do, and we understand that the actions we take and the decisions we make through the ER Strategy form part of our cultural journey. We believe achieving the right culture will enable us to give the best services to our communities and be the best Fire and Rescue service in the UK.
- Our Emergency Response strategy has been designed to translate the framework of expectations laid out in the relevant legislation, guidance documents and national reports into appropriate action as well as taking cognisance of CDDFRS CRP, CRMP and the three pillars of the HMICFRS agenda efficiency, effectiveness and people. These in turn will be delivered via a series of local station plans.
- We also need to constantly review our approach to providing and deploying resources to ensure they remain flexible and where possible, seek to improve our response capabilities to deal with the wide range of foreseeable emergencies and risks faced by the service in an ever evolving landscape. Thus, mitigating demand and risk.
- We will continue to prioritise this statutory requirement, ensuring that our firefighters are provided with the best training, facilities, appliances and equipment to ensure they remain as effective and efficient as possible while remaining focussed on their health, safety and wellbeing.
- This ER strategy will take due cognisance of the Protection and Prevention Strategies.



ER will focus on four key areas to achieve its aim:

- 1) Emergency Response and Resilience Compliance
- 2) Operational Readiness & National Resilience
- 3) On-call
- 4) Collaboration

8. Emergency Response and Resilience Compliance

The Emergency Response section is responsible for ensuring that the service has sufficient and proportionate Emergency Response arrangements that are available to always respond to and effectively manage a wide range of risks and threats, delivered through a range of local, regional and national delivery models.

In addition to the statutory requirements the Emergency Response section will continue to maintain efficient and effective response capabilities proportionate to the local and national risks and demand in line with the CDDFRS CRP and CRMP. Where appropriate the service will develop delivery models and partnership arrangements through Fire Service Act 2004 section 13 - 16 agreements and consider other collaborative opportunities e.g. sharing specialist appliances and capabilities, risk information with neighbouring fire and rescue services.

CDDFRS continue to respond to a wide range of incidents, with the prominence of multi-agency working very high on all service agendas. CDDFRS very rarely attend incidents in isolation and work closely with the other blue light services, managing incidents in a very effective way. There is a requirement to continually improve working relationships and response arrangements with category 1 and 2 responders and the vehicle to do this is the Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

Focusing on key FRS risks the Emergency Response section will work closely with other sections and groups to ensure that responders have the correct appliances, equipment, PPE, information, instruction and training to deal with the wide range of foreseeable incidents. This will be achieved by ensuring that we are committed to other key service strategies where cross over exists. i.e. Community Safety, Business Fire Safety, Arson Reduction, Workforce Development and Assets strategies etc. We are also committed to learning from incidents and exercises with a view to making future improvements based on the learning outcomes identified.

Emergency Response are keen to align policies and procedures to national programmes e.g. National Operational Guidance Programme (NOGP) and Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). We recognise the benefits of these and will continue to provide feedback that will influence national procedures through the use of the Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) as a vehicle to facilitate this.

We will optimise our Emergency Response capabilities by;

- Continuing to play a leading role in the LRF, working with key partners at all levels to help identify, plan, train against and respond to risks both locally, regionally and nationally.
- Ensuring we identify the requirement for and maintain specialist capabilities and roles linked to the Service areas foreseeable risks e.g. water and animal rescue, working at height, environmental protection.
- Actively promoting and supporting national resilience policies and procedures that improve regional and national deployments.
- Working with partners to embed the JESIP approach to managing incidents.
- Further embed NOGP within the service.
- Following professional standards for fire and rescue services.

9. Operational Readiness

Current and future readiness

As part of the ER strategy the service will maintain personnel with appropriate skill sets and resources to allow an effective response to a range of incident types as informed by the Community Risk Plan. This includes emergency fire appliance driving, specialist fire appliance provision, water rescue and rescue from height capability as well as supporting national emergency response. It will support the CRMP with innovative delivery models and focus on the localised delivery of actions included within station plans. It will also support refreshed iterations of the CRP and modelling of future CRMP options via an annual refresh.

Workforce planning will be a key element of operational readiness ensuring that there are sufficient personnel of the right skills to maintain emergency response and that succession planning and training are early considerations.

Business Continuity

The current provision of personnel trained to provide resilience cover in times of industrial action and other circumstances for example during a significant loss of personnel during a pandemic, will be continued to ensure that the service can maintain its statutory duty to respond to emergencies.

To provide assurance that current business disruption plans are valid and appropriate the service will ensure that each plan is reviewed annually and live tested at intervals of not more than three years. The impact of COVID-19 will cause and influence actions for the fire service and its partners now and in the future. ER seeks continue to respond to the crisis and to prepare for future demands and challenges in the years to come. A review of arrangements will help to inform future business disruption planning where appropriate.

CDDFRS have an operational degradation plan to ensure appropriate emergency response cover can be maintained during high periods of operational activity or business disruption events. This is calculated on the assumption that the service will be able to simultaneously manage two incidents involving five fire engines or one incident involving ten fire engines.

Training and exercising

To ensure that the service can respond efficiently and effectively to major and significant incidents, there will be a range of tactical exercises and joint training, where possible with other fire and rescue services and key partners, planned throughout the period of this strategy. Key areas of training will be determined by due consideration of the national risk register, local community risks, station plans and both national and local operational learning.

Command and Control

Further exploration of collaborative opportunities will take place in line with recommendations of the regional collaboration board 2019. Furthermore, innovative staffing and resilience models will be explored and trialled. This will ensure our ability to manage emergency calls and dispatch resources accordingly.

National Resilience

CDDFRS has statutory duties as outlined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007, in relation to National Resilience assets, to ensure they are being satisfactorily discharged.

The National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) visit CDDFRS to undertake an assurance process to ensure we, as hosts for National Resilience assets, achieve and maintain an effective operational capability to respond to national and major emergencies.

NRAT have adopted six key areas of assessment for their assurance programme:

1. Policy and Procedure
2. Establishment
3. Maintenance of skills
4. Operational assurance
5. Equipment maintenance and service
6. The practical assessment

CDDFRS aims to maintain compliance with the six key areas of assessment and meet its legislative obligations in the following areas:

- High Volume Pumping (HVP)
- Mass Decontamination (MD)
- Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM)
- Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA)
- Flood Response

ER will achieve the following objectives to ensure CDDFRS meets its obligations to National Resilience and the communities we serve:

- To ensure that the necessary skills and attributes are being maintained in order to deploy National Resilience assets effectively.
- To ensure that organisational structures are in place within CDDFRS to meet the published criteria for effective National Resilience assets; response to national level incident.
- To identify and confirm that the National Resilience capability equipment is being maintained and that defects are managed in accordance within the terms and conditions of use.

10. On-Call Duty System

The service will conduct a fundamental review of the current on-call model and develop innovative new ways of working to ensure that they continue to play a fundamental part in the delivery of service's strategic priorities. This will link into the respective station plans.

Due to the diverse geographical landscape of the county, on-call appliances already provide an efficient and effective provision of Emergency Response cover right across the service area and our on-call staff are held in high esteem by both the service and the community. Recognised nationally the on-call is a unique and complex duty system where challenges differ from one service to another, often influenced by several factors and where 'one size fits all' model does not always work.

There are some key challenges and the on-call recruitment, retention and availability project is one of the key areas of the Emergency Response strategy.

The service recognises that sharing learning and best practise is essential and will continue to work on national on-call projects and incorporate relevant key work streams developed by the CFOA on-call National Working Group as well as the overarching themes recognised by the Home Office of Branding, Workforce Recruitment & Development.

We will develop and enhance the role of our on-call by:

- Developing enhanced flexible staffing models to improve on-call availability and utilisation.
- Conducting a review of the current on-call engagement and communication processes such as the on-call liaison group and on-call satisfaction survey.
- Seeking to provide dedicated on-call liaison and support.
- Establishing individual task and finish groups to explore defined work streams and have progress managed via the on-call liaison group.
- Exploring opportunities to engage with local businesses to encourage their support and reward their corporate social responsibilities.
- Exploring new ways technology can assist with availability and mobilisation.
- Seeking national good practice and adopting this where appropriate.
- Carrying out a full review of the on-call financing procedures.
- Fully reviewing and updating the on-call employment handbook as required.



11. Collaboration

Working with other fire and rescue services

CDDFRS is part of the North East region of fire services which includes: Cleveland Fire Brigade, Tyne & Wear FRS and Northumberland FRS. This provides a natural choice to focus on collaboration, although all FRS are considered an opportunity for collaboration and will also be subject to consideration. CDDFRS will support working groups across the regional fire service area to enable collaborative working.

Section 13 and 16 of the Fire Services Act 2004

This places an obligation on fire and rescue services to group together, where practicable, to provide mutual assistance in the execution of their functions. CDDFRS has contractual arrangements in place with its neighbouring services in terms of reinforcement schemes to ensure serious emergencies are attended in an efficient and effective manner.

Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) mutual aid

The FDO role exists across all four regional fire and rescue services and within the role there are a number of specialist functions, such as:

- Hazardous Materials Environmental Protection Officer (HMEPO)
- Fire Investigation
- Water Incident Manager
- National Interagency Liaison Officer (NILO)

Further exploration will take place with the NE regional FRS to identify opportunities to share/ mutually support specialist FDO and principal officer roles across the four fire and rescue services.

Specialist Appliances

There are several specialist appliances duplicated across the Services, arial ladder platforms, command and control, welfare vehicles, environmental protection units. The opportunity exists to improve efficiency in terms of sharing specialist vehicles, how the vehicles respond, the crewing arrangements in place and the procurement strategy for replacement.

Command and Control Working Group

Following on from a collaboration review of command and control provision within the NE FRS in 2019, CDDFRS will support a regional working group(s) to enable delivery of efficiencies and collaboration in respect of command and control delivery.

Collaboration with other partners

Further opportunities to expand on existing collaborations with other agencies and partners such as the North east Ambulance Service [NEAS], Durham Constabulary and the local authority will be explored as part of this strategy.

12. Governance & Measuring Progress

We will monitor progress of the improvement strategy in the following ways:

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- We will utilise appropriate Key Performance Indicators to help measure the progress of this strategy.

Reporting Progress

- Scrutiny of progress against the strategy will be undertaken by the Performance Board (PB) who will receive regular reports from Area Manager, Emergency Response who is the strategic lead for this area.

Measuring Perceptions/ Sense Checking

- We will regularly ask for feedback from our operational staff to inform us of our progress with the Emergency Response strategy. Their opinions and suggestions will be used to measure and influence improvement.

Keeping it current

- We will provide a progress report and update the plan annually to keep it fresh and line with emerging national issues.



