

# Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2025

## Foreword from the Chair and Chief Fire Officer

Welcome to the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS). This document is the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which we have a statutory responsibility to publish.

Our Service, governed by the County Durham and Darlington Combined Fire Authority (CFA), is responsible for making sure that the communities of County Durham and Darlington are protected as far as reasonably 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 for you 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 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:  
[Service Plans | County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service \(ddfire.gov.uk\)](https://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.

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, in what has been a very challenging year. Our partner organisations and neighbouring FRSs also deserve great credit for supporting and collaborating with us in the work that we do.

We want to hear your views on our plans so if you have any feedback please look out for our annual consultation or if you have any further comments on our documents, you can contact us at [servicehq@ddfire.gov.uk](mailto:servicehq@ddfire.gov.uk)

## **Executive summary**

Our CRMP sets out the strategic plans for the CFA and links closely to our other strategic planning documents. The CRMP explains how we are accountable to our local communities through the CFA and through a wide spectrum of local community groups.

Our CRP, which is reviewed annually, describes the greatest risks and the impact on County Durham and Darlington. The CRMP planning process is informed by the CRP as well as our localised Station Plans. By identifying, assessing and managing existing and emerging risks we can decide how best to mitigate them using the resources we have available. We do this by investing in efficient, effective and innovative prevention and protection activities, while also planning the most effective way to respond.

We produce a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which considers a range of possible financial scenarios in an uncertain future. The Service has plans that balance the budget in the short term, and contingencies for the medium to long term.

Within this CRMP you will find a number of commitments which offer reassurance that our communities will be provided with the best possible FRS within the available funding. We also stress our commitment to playing our part in tackling climate change and the impact this will have on our environment.

Some of the risks which our communities face are extremely complex and require us to work with a range of partner organisations and other FRSs. Working together supports us to deliver more efficient, effective and resilient support services and we commit to collaborating where there is clear benefit.

Ensuring that we have a highly skilled and professional workforce is a key priority for the Service, and our plans include the use of the apprenticeship levy and career progression framework to develop staff. We are seeking to increase diversity in our workforce through a range of innovative methods, as we recognise that we need to have a workforce reflective of our community. Our commitment to our staff is to develop and maintain a positive organisational culture through continuous improvement. This will ensure that we continue to be successful, despite the challenges ahead.

Our plans are developed in consultation with our communities and partner agencies, as well as our staff and their representative bodies. We are committed to listening to your views and will hold a consultation exercise every year on our plans for the immediate future.

## What is a Community Risk Management Plan?

The CFA has a statutory responsibility, under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, to produce an IRMP – which we call the CRMP. The plan must cover a three-year period, be reviewed regularly and outlines how CDDFRS will tackle and mitigate the risks our communities face. The CRMP is informed by our CRP, a document which assesses in detail the risks in our local areas, how likely they are to occur, how extensive the impact might be and takes into account national risks.

As an over-arching plan the CRMP covers all parts of our Service so it references our Service Strategies and other key documents such as our Station Plans. This helps everyone in our organisation to understand risks and how we plan to reduce the impact and respond effectively.

The requirements of a CRMP are set out in the 'Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018', (in which the document is called an IRMP). This states that each Authority must ensure the following five priorities are met:

1. To be accountable to communities for the service they provide;
2. To identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;
3. To make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents;
4. To develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse;
5. To collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide.

You will find details of how we address the above points throughout this document.

The National Framework also says that CRMPs have a statutory responsibility to contain a number of areas including an outline of how we allocate our resources to mitigate risks, and how we manage and enforce the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRO) 2005. If you want to know about our legal duties [you can read the National Framework here.](#)

The CRMP will also show you how we have consulted with you – our communities – on the development of this plan, as well as how we sought the opinions of our staff, representative bodies and partner organisations.

This document covers the period April 2022 to March 2025 and is reviewed on an annual basis making sure our plans are always up to date and reflect changes in local risks, national policies or finances.

## Vision and Values

We want to have the **safest people** and the **safest places**.

To respond effectively to the challenges that we face here at CDDFRS, we need to be clear on our strategic direction. A defined vision, strategic priorities, values and behaviours are key to us doing this.

### Our strategic priorities:

Our overall focus is to identify, assess and manage risks while ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to reduce the number of emergency incidents and the associated risk of injury or death across our Service area.

To help us to achieve our vision, we have six strategic priorities.

You can read more about our priorities at [Our Priorities | County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service \(ddfire.gov.uk\)](https://ddfire.gov.uk/our-priorities)

### Our values:

These values are known in our organisation as the **PIE** values and describe the ethos of CDDFRS. They are Professional, Innovative, and Efficient.

***Our commitment to you is*** that we will always aim to be the best FRS 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, which we call the **4Cs**:

#### How we approach **challenges**

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

#### How we **conduct** ourselves

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

#### How we **collaborate** with others

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.

Our staff work to a Code of Ethics which is aligned to the National Fire Chiefs' Council code.

## Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (now known as HMICFRS) has a remit to inspect all 45 FRSs in England. Every year HMICFRS publishes a review of the sector which you can read at the link below:

[State of Fire and Rescue – The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2020 - HMICFRS \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/state-of-fire-and-rescue-the-annual-assessment-of-fire-and-rescue-services-in-england-2020-hmicfrs)

The HMICFRS assessment examines the Service's effectiveness, efficiency and how well it looks after its people. It is designed to give you information about how your local FRS is performing in these three key areas, in a way that is comparable with other FRSs across England.

We are judged by HMICFRS and given ratings for each pillar:

- Outstanding;
- Good;
- Requires improvement; or
- Inadequate.

Our last inspection report was published on 17 December 2019, and we were rated as good at both providing an effective and efficient service. We were rated as requiring improvement in how well we look after our people and continue to work hard to improve in this area.

In November 2020 HMICFRS inspected the Service to assess our preparation for a pandemic, our ability to respond and how we continued our prevention and protection work. There was no grading for this inspection, but the report produced showed that we continued to deliver our services effectively.

***Our commitment to you is*** to act upon the HMICFRS findings to ensure we continue to provide the best possible FRS we can to the communities of County Durham and Darlington.

### About our Service area

We look after the areas of County Durham and Darlington, which cover approximately 939 square miles with a population of approximately 640,000 people. We protect around 290,000 households and about 18,500 business premises. We have a mixture of rural, urban and coastal areas so our prevention and protection work, as well as our emergency response, has to be tailored to the differing needs of each type of community.

We have 15 fire stations spread across two divisions, north and south. These divisions come with their own unique challenges and risks.

We border five other Fire and Rescue Services (North Yorkshire, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and Cleveland), providing mutual cross-border support to one another if and when required.

## About our communities

We recognise that we can only provide an effective service if we understand the diversity within our area and enable our workforce to meet the needs and concerns of people who live, work, study and visit County Durham and Darlington.

Our CRP highlights the challenges faced by the public relating to deprivation, and health and wellbeing, as well as the make-up of our population in relation to age, gender and ethnicity. Our rural communities cover a significant geographical proportion of the Service area, with some individuals extremely hard to reach and therefore at more risk of being vulnerable.

Health inequalities remain persistent and pervasive, with levels of deprivation being significantly higher and life expectancy here is lower than the national average. We know that living in isolation can have a negative impact on a person's health and wellbeing. We have also witnessed first-hand how poor-quality housing can exacerbate a range of underlying health conditions, from falls and poor mental health to hoarding and excessive alcohol and substance misuse.

The following Health Profile information highlights some of the challenges our communities face:

### **Life Expectancy**

Life expectancy has improved slightly for males (78.5) and females (81.8), but both are still lower than the England average of 79.8 (Males) and 83.4 (Females).

### **Adults**

The number of people aged 65 and over in County Durham and Darlington is 132,389 which is 20.8 % of the population.

### **Dementia**

5317 people were diagnosed with dementia in County Durham and Darlington in 2019. (Public Health England 2021)

### **Physical problems**

On average 23% of people living in County Durham and Darlington report having a long-term musculoskeletal problem, which is higher than the England average of 18.5% (Public Health England 2020)

### **Smoking**

In Durham 17% of adults are smokers, in Darlington this figure is 13.7%. The England average is 13.9%.

### **Children**

Within our area, the level of child poverty is worse than the England average (17%), with 21% of children under 16 years living in low-income households.

### **Indices of Multiple Deprivation**

Durham is 48<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of 151 upper tier Local Authorities, while Darlington is 59<sup>th</sup>.

## What We Do – Prevention

Preventing fires and other dangerous incidents is as important to us as responding to them. We invest significantly in our prevention work which includes going into communities, schools and homes to give fire safety advice, as well as running safety campaigns.

We have a dedicated Community Safety Team to deliver our preventative activities, this work also forms a large part of the day-to-day activities carried out by our firefighter crews. We deliver Safe and Well-being visits (SWVs) which includes installing smoke alarms through to giving in depth advice and materials to support people in our local areas who are at high risk of an accidental fire starting. SWVs allow us to target our resources to support the most vulnerable people in society and we have well established relationships with our partner agencies to encourage referrals of people who are most at risk.

In 2019-20 our hard work was rewarded by the fantastic achievement that we were within the top 5 FRSs for the delivery of SWVs per 1,000 dwellings across the UK (Home Office data). Covid-19 2020-21 was a year unlike no other and has caused an anomaly in our data due to the suspension of certain activities throughout the periods of restrictions.

Prevention also covers our campaigns on things such as road safety, water safety including cold water shock and working in partnership with other agencies to reduce community risk.

The Service faces a longstanding challenge with the setting of deliberate fires towards the East Coast of our area. Nationally, the average number of deliberate primary and secondary fires equates to 74,710 over the last 5 years, whilst our Service has seen 2,605 deliberate primary and secondary fires in 2020-21. We have increased investment in our Arson Reduction Team and engagement with children and young people. Our work includes visiting schools, taking referrals to work with higher risk young people and attending community events.

[You can read more about our Community Safety work here.](#)

We will continue to seek and receive high-risk and safeguarding referrals from partner agencies such as community nurses, social workers, carers and social housing providers that work in our communities on a daily basis and are therefore in a unique position to signpost vulnerable individuals to us.

### Reaching our most vulnerable people

Following consultation with you we are continuing to focus our attention on reaching the most vulnerable members of our communities who are at the greatest risk of having a fire in their home. To do this we use what is known as the **Dwelling Fire Risk Analysis Pyramid** and [you can read more about this in our CRP](#).

We start by looking at different types of data and then assessing people and property in terms of risk levels, with level one being the most vulnerable, and level five the least. This analysis ensures we focus our SWVs in the right areas, to the right people, at the right time.

## **Our successes**

### **Community Safety Successes**

Before the pandemic, in the previous three years, we delivered approximately 19,000 - 20,000 SWVs per year. In 2019-2020 19,317 SWVs took place, 96% of which were completed by our operational crews. In the year to 31 March 2018, the service completed 31 safe and well visits per 1,000 population, over three times the England rate of 10.4.

Our ability to carry out visits was severely affected in 2020-21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We therefore adapted our way of working and used a model of telephone triage to offer advice and with additional safety measures we continued to provide support in the home for the most vulnerable.

Our investment in SWVs (formerly called Home Fire Safety Checks or HFSCs) particularly over recent years has resulted in an overall reduction of house fires (we call these accidental dwelling fires or ADFs). We recognise our activities and investment has saved lives and reduced the devastating impact that fires in the home bring. 2020-21 saw the Service record that we attended 219 ADFs, the lowest in 10 years, where the number was nearer to 300.

As a result of the SWVs carried out, in 2020-21 we made 190 onward lifestyle referrals to our partners, a number which was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

***Our commitment to you is*** that we will reduce the risks to vulnerable people in our communities through our prevention work by operating a mutual referral pathway with partner agencies. We aim to identify and target our resources to support the most vulnerable members of our communities with the highest proportion of our SWVs aimed at these individuals.

***Our commitment to you is*** that at least 80% of all SWVs are targeted towards members of the community who are at the greatest risk from fire, and then ensuring that those residents still deemed to be at high risk will be revisited within a 12-month period.



## What We Do – Protection

### Business Premises

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) states that FRA must make provision for promoting fire safety, including fire prevention. In order to do this, we have a management strategy for providing advice to businesses, conducting fire safety audits and where necessary enforcing compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (we call this the FSO). These inspections are carried out by our central Business Fire Safety Team for higher risk premises and operational crews if the level of risk is medium or low.

Our Business Fire Safety work involves us visiting commercial premises to conduct fire safety audits, which form part of what is known as our Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). We are among the highest performing FRS for the delivery of fire safety audits per 100 business premises, with HMICFRS noting that we undertook 13.6 audits per 100 known premises which is notably higher than the England rate of 3.0.

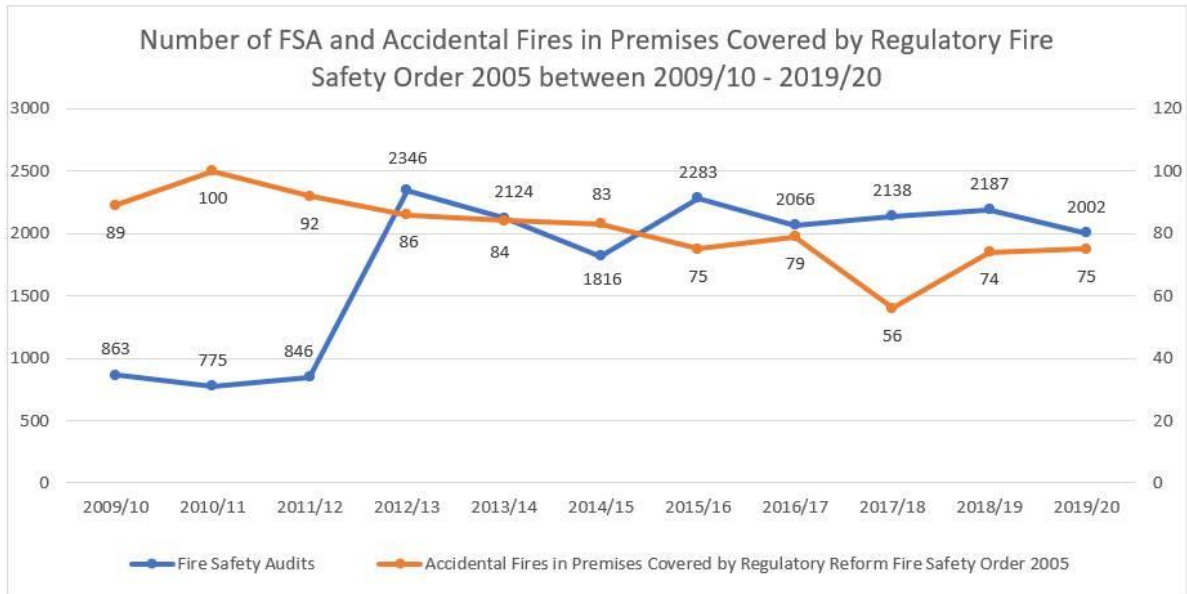
The programme covers large manufacturing companies, student residences, care homes and small businesses such as shops and food outlets. We are also a statutory consultee on building regulations and licensing applications where necessary to ensure buildings comply with legislation and remain safe for occupants. This is a vital tool in keeping you safe. We also have a range of enforcement powers which we use with the aim of keeping occupants safe or to reduce the risk of a fire.

We work with businesses to help them in their compliance with legislation and will take enforcement action to ensure that people who work in and visit premises across County Durham and Darlington remain safe.

When aiming to keep business premises safe from fire, we adopt a cyclical process that we call the *Business Identification Process*. You can [read more about it in our CRP](#).

We carried out 984 fire safety audits between April 2020 and March 2021, 31% of which were completed by our operational crews. Our work was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, but we continue to invest resources to protect businesses and are confident that the inspection programme has returned to pre-pandemic levels. 404 business regulation consultations took place during the same period, while we also reviewed 155 licensing applications.

Our continued investment in Business Fire Safety has paid in dividends for example, in the year to 31 March 2018 we carried out more than four times the England rate for fire safety audits per 100 known premises (State of Fire and Rescue 2019 p 57), resulting in a continued decrease in the number of fires within premises regulated by the FSO by the Fire and Rescue Service.



We have reviewed our RBIP so that we are targeting those premises that are highest risk and training our crews to achieve a Level 3 certificate in Fire Safety so that we comply with the competency framework for fire safety regulators.

Staff have also undertaken a great deal of engagement work with businesses, including online seminars. We have had no reported fire fatalities in business premises since 2013 and only 22 casualties in the last 10 years.

Through the active targeting of our RBIP, we have seen an increase in the number of unsatisfactory audits and enforcement action taken, which provides assurance that we are inspecting the right premises and making safety improvements

***Our commitment to you is that we will identify, inspect and engage with local businesses to ensure the appropriate levels of fire safety measures are in place.***

## **What We Do – Response**

We do all we can to prevent and protect but if something goes wrong, we are always here to respond to you if you need us.

CDDFRS is proud to say that we are one of the fastest services to answer emergency calls and deploy fire appliances, and we are the fastest to respond amongst all predominately rural FRS.

The total number of emergency calls that we received in 2020-21 was 15,420. Deliberate fires accounted for 2,605 of the overall number of incidents in 2020-21. Breaking it down even further, 512 were deliberate primary fires, while 2,093 were deliberate secondary fires. This shows a similar number to the previous year, and we therefore continue to recognise that in the North East the number of deliberate fires is well above the national average, and we are working with our partners across the region to reduce these.

We attended 219 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) during the same period, a figure which is down from a figure of 300 10 years ago. These resulted in one death and 15 injuries that required hospital treatment.

There were 73 fires in commercial premises, which resulted in no injuries requiring hospital treatment.

We responded to 229 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) between April 2020 and March 2021. Of these there were sadly 9 fatalities and 187 incidents resulted in injuries.

The total number of false alarms we received was 2,421. Of this number, 677 were caused by automatic fire alarms within commercial premises, whereas 40 were malicious in nature. We also have a charging policy which aims to reduce the impact of automatic fire alarms on businesses and our Service. During 2020-21 the total number of businesses which met this policy was 535. As a result of this policy, we have seen automatic fire alarms reduce by 12.3 % over a three-year period.

Special Service calls account for 956 incidents in 2020-21, with some of the most frequent incidents involving gaining entry into property, assisting other agencies and flooding.

Although the Service makes every effort to avoid incidents from occurring through its proactive work, we are also realistic in acknowledging that we will always be required to respond to emergency incidents. Where this is necessary, however, we ensure control measures are in place to mitigate the impact on everyone involved.

Through this process, we are committed to evaluating and reviewing all of our work, implementing continuous improvements along the way.

***Our commitment to you is*** that if and when an event does occur, we will be fully prepared to respond in order to mitigate any impact caused.

## **How are we performing?**

Performance is scrutinised across the organisation. The CFA regularly monitors the performance of the organisation through the Performance Committee. The Service has a Performance and Programme Board (PPB) which tracks data across the organisation and provides the same performance reports to the Service Leadership Team (SLT) and Performance Committee, ensuring thorough scrutiny.

You will see our results throughout this document but for more detailed information on our performance over the last three years use the link below:

<https://www.ddfire.gov.uk/performance>

***Our commitment to you is*** that we will track performance using a mix of performance and management indicators, which are set against localised targets. Our measures include Station Plans and corporate indicators – the CFA, SLT and PPB review outcomes and outputs.

## Achievements and Innovation

The Service has implemented a new, state-of-the-art Breathing Apparatus washing facility, with the aim of keeping our firefighters safe, this facility removes the products of combustion from the Breathing Apparatus equipment and is used alongside additional cleaning of firefighting personal protective equipment.

The Service is immensely proud of the fact that it has led the way with a national award-winning Firefighter Apprenticeship Scheme, which was launched in 2017. The Service welcomed its fifth cohort of Apprentices beginning their journey onto the scheme in September 2021.

The scheme itself was named as The Best Apprenticeship Scheme in the UK at the Training Journal Awards. In 2020 the Scheme also won the Accenture Award for Recruitment Excellence of the Year at the National Apprenticeship Awards, an outstanding achievement.

As part of the Service's estates improvement plans a new station has been built at Darlington to ensure modern, fit for purpose facilities are in place for future generations, and completion of our renovated station at Sedgefield will be completed shortly.

The Service continues to invest in its workforce through the Career Progression Framework which develops staff at all levels into effective and supportive leaders.

The Service is a Disability Confident Employer and holds the Better Health at Work Award at Ambassador status, which demonstrates our commitment to the well-being of our workforce. Meanwhile, we are also proud to have signed the Armed Forces Covenant and achieved Gold status. We are also rated by LGBT organisation Stonewall in their UK Workplace Equality Index.

The Service holds an annual Being the Best Awards programme where staff can nominate individuals and teams in order to acknowledge the excellent work carried out on a day-to-day basis. We also have a Reward and Recognition policy in place where staff can also receive a commendation or certificate of appreciation from the Chief Fire Officer for conduct that is over and above the usual expectations of their role.

The Service met the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic head on, and staff undertook a range of additional duties to support local communities and vulnerable people. This included food parcel deliveries, getting PPE to care homes, vaccinating the public at mass vaccination centres and staffing local testing centres.

We are very proud of our staff's fantastic achievements.

***Our commitment to you is*** that we will continue to strive for excellence in everything we do and encourage our staff to achieve through innovation.

## Governance

How are we accountable to our communities for the service we provide?

### Locally

Our CFA consists of 25 elected councillors: 21 from Durham County Council (DCC) and 4 from Darlington Borough Council (DBC). The CFA is the legal body with statutory duties and responsibilities for:

- Ensuring the Service is effective and efficient;
- Setting the strategic direction, policies and procedures of the Service;
- Holding the Chief Fire Officer to account for the effective and efficient running of the Service.

The CFA has a number of subcommittees with delegated powers that look at specific areas such as audit and finance, human resources and performance. CFA Members operate under our Constitution and Code of Corporate Governance, as well as a dedicated Code of Ethics, which is aligned to the new jointly endorsed National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC), Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) Code.

[You can read more about the CFA, how it works and papers from meetings here.](#)

We have representatives on all 14 of the Area Action Partnerships in the Service area who link directly with elected members and community representatives across County Durham. We are a member of the Darlington Partnership, and we also liaise with Parish Councils.

We publish our Annual Governance Statement; Statement of Accounts and our Performance information on our website. Our strategic documents are also available on our website for the public to scrutinise. [You can read more about financial governance here.](#)

Our staff work under a Code of Conduct for Employees which governs the standards we expect and ensures accountability to you. This has been refreshed in 2021 to reflect the introduction of the National Fire Chiefs' Council Code of Ethics [You can read the Code of Conduct, which also forms part of our Constitution, here.](#)

***Our commitment to you is*** that we will provide additional scrutiny in a range of areas, including health and safety, prevention, protection, equality and diversity, and young people through having representatives from the CFA as member champions within specific areas.

## Statement of Assurance

The annual Statement of Assurance provides the necessary accountability and transparency to the people of County Durham and Darlington and is evidence that their FRS continues to deliver under the expectations detailed within both the 'Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018' and our own CRMP process.

It also details the measures taken to assure our communities that the CFA's performance is efficient and effective in relation to finance and governance. It measures operational assurance to demonstrate that our services are delivered in line with our statutory responsibilities and with due regard to the expectations set out in our CRMP, including cross-border, multi-authority and national incident arrangements.

[You can read the annual Statement of Assurance here.](#)

***Our commitment to you is*** to improve our business through the continued scrutiny of the CFA, audit bodies and our consultation process.

## How we identify risk

How do we identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks our areas face?

When determining how we identify risk, we first have to take into account a number of key documents which cover national, regional and local risks. These documents feed into our 'Community Risk Identification Process' which you can see in the infographic on page 22. We talk to our crews on the ground, senior officers, partner agencies and other responder organisations to help us to better understand the risks in our community.

In addition to monitoring national, regional and local risks, our CRP provides an in-depth piece of research and analysis of the incidents we have attended over previous years, and the risk of emergency incidents occurring in the future. This document is refreshed annually.

We have access to a lot of useful data which helps us to know where our risks are and to identify trends and demand. Recent examples of this include the use of a number of datasets associated with elevated risk. This involves profiling geographical areas, businesses, dwellings and individuals by combining data from past incident activity and other demographic data such as age, deprivation and lone households.

The first stage of our risk assessment methodology used within the CRP is to identify incidents that can cause harm to the people, environment and economy within our communities, using various data sources and tools. We also utilise a nationally recognised risk assessment matrix based on a reasonable worst-case scenario, with an assessment of a possible upper and lower range in order to come to definitive scoring.

Understanding national risks, our CRP and Station Plans help us plan our emergency response, and the Service has a Corporate Risk Register that looks at all the risks to our business (service provision and financial). These risks are monitored with



measures put in place to ensure we can fulfil our role as an FRS protecting the communities of County Durham and Darlington. Areas of business are addressed through one of our strategic priorities. The purpose of these priorities is to define a simple practical framework to manage risk, while highlighting how the Service intends to mitigate these risks on an ongoing basis through a detailed action plan.

A comprehensive understanding of risk and demand enables the service to allocate our prevention, protection and emergency response resources appropriately. We then consider how our resources should be allocated according to the risks we have identified.

***Our commitment to you is*** that we will provide an overview of those risks identified and where each risk sits in terms of severity, which in turn will allow us to plan how to utilise our resources in the most effective way to save lives, improve public safety and reduce emergency incidents.

## **Community Risk Identification Process**

### **What are the risks we have identified?**

Our CRP identifies the main risks within County Durham and Darlington and further details of the proactive and reactive measures are contained within our Station Plans.

### **Risk 1 Dwelling Fires**

Every year, we experience fires in people's homes that are devastating for those people involved and can cause injury and death.

#### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Identify those people most at risk/vulnerable
- Conduct SWVs, fit smoke alarms and provide fire-retardant equipment focusing on fire safety messaging which reduces the likelihood of an accidental fire and educate those within the property to reduce the spread of fire within the home if one should occur
- Refer people to other agencies where vulnerability is identified
- Arson reduction and fire setter interventions
- Attend national events to establish best practice
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work in relation to dwelling fires

#### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Attend 70% of all dwelling fires within eight minutes
- Provide advice after the fire and carry out hot strikes
- Utilise support, if required, from Red Cross Fire Victim Support Teams
- Investigate the cause of fires at the appropriate level in partnership with the police
- Where appropriate, submit post-incident safeguarding referrals
- Conduct performance-management processes to identify trends in incidents

## **Risk 2 Other Residential Building Fires**

Other residential building fires are a classification of primary fires and includes institutional properties such as hostels for homeless people, hotels and B&Bs, nursing/care homes and student halls of residence.

### **Proactive measures**

We will

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Use data to understand which premises present the highest risks
- Deal with complaints and enquiries
- Carry out fire safety audits to ensure compliance with the RRO
- Adopt a continuous re-inspection programme based on risk levels
- Use enforcement action where required
- Work with businesses to ensure they keep their premises safe
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work in relation to these types of incidents

### **Reactive measures**

We will

- Investigate the cause of fires at the appropriate level in partnership with the police
- Carry out post-fire audits to offer advice
- Consider enforcement action where necessary
- Deal with complaints
- Charge businesses for Unwanted Fire Alarms
- Work with partners to mitigate the impact of these incidents on the environment
- Ensure we have secured appropriate water supplies, to aid firefighting

## **Risk 3 Other Non-Residential Building Fires**

Every year, we experience fires in places such as offices, factories, and commercially operated residential premises.

### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Use data to understand which premises present the highest risks
- Deal with complaints and enquiries
- Carry out fire safety audits to ensure compliance with the RRO
- Adopt a continuous re-inspection programme based on risk levels
- Use enforcement action where required
- Work with businesses to ensure they keep their premises safe
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work in relation to these types of incidents

### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Attend 70% of all non-domestic property fires within eight minutes
- Investigate the cause of fires at the appropriate level in partnership with the police
- Carry out post-fire audits to offer advice
- Consider enforcement action where necessary
- Deal with complaints
- Charge businesses for Unwanted Fire Alarms



- Work with partners to mitigate the impact of these incidents on the environment
- Ensure we have secured appropriate water supplies, to aid firefighting

#### **Risk 4 Road Vehicle Fires**

Road vehicle fires are a classification of primary fires and are fires in vehicles used for transportation on public roads, such as cars, vans, buses/coaches, motorcycles, lorries and heavy goods vehicles.

#### **Proactive Measures**

We will

- Provide training and equipment for crews
- Use the Service data systems and business intelligence to identify areas where vehicle fires occur
- Provide dedicated arson reduction staff to reduce the number of car fires
- Work in partnership with Durham Police to reduce the prevalence of road vehicle fires

#### **Reactive Measures**

We will

- Investigate the cause of road vehicle fires
- Work with authorities to prosecute those guilty of deliberately setting fire to road vehicles
- Consider the deployment of targeted response vehicles, where appropriate, to reduce the demand on other front-line resources

#### **Risk 5 Other Outdoor Fires**

Other outdoors fires are fires are generally those fires that occur in outdoor structures such as post boxes or telephone boxes, bridges or tunnels.

#### **Proactive Measures**

We will

- Provide training and equipment for crews
- Communicate the impact of other outdoor fires through Service communication channels

#### **Reactive Measures**

We will

- Use the Service data systems to identify hotspot locations of other outdoor fires
- Work in partnership and apply interventions to reduce the prevalence of other outdoor fires

#### **Risk 6 Secondary Fires**

Across the North East and within County Durham and Darlington higher levels of primary and secondary fires occur, the majority of which are as a result of arson. These incident types have a significant community impact, as well as being a drain on the FRS resource that could be deployed elsewhere. Our data indicates the areas of high levels of arson which enables us and our partners to focus our resources effectively.

#### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews

- Provide dedicated arson reduction staff to reduce the number of deliberate fires
- Work with partners to reduce the burden on all agencies
- Work with authorities to prosecute those guilty of arson or deliberate fire-setting
- Develop strategies with key partners and evaluate campaigns, education packages and initiatives
- Utilise data analysis software to highlight hotspot areas
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work in relation to primary and secondary fires

### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Consider the deployment of Targeted Response Vehicles (TRV), where appropriate, to reduce the demand on other front-line resources
- Conduct arson/ environmental audits with partners in areas subject to high operational activity
- Investigate the causes of fires in partnership with the police
- Conduct Service-wide and local performance management measures to help to identify problem areas or trends

### **Risk 7 Wildfires**

Wildfires can quickly escalate and spread across large areas, causing major disruption to life, property and infrastructure.

### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Work with landowners and responsible authorities to reduce the risk of widespread wildfires
- Promote the potential dangers of starting fires in rural locations such as barbeques or campfires
- Train our staff to provide expert advice
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work in relation to wildfires

### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Deploy appropriate resources to contain and extinguish wildfires
- Deploy specialist wildfire personnel and equipment as appropriate
- Request assistance from other agencies and organisations for specialist equipment as required
- Consider mutual aid requests where necessary to assist with large or protracted incidents

### **Risk 8 Rescues from Water**

The rivers, lakes and other areas of open water throughout the Service area present a risk when members of the public enter flowing or static water, get into difficulty and require to be rescued by fire and rescue service personnel.

### **Proactive Measures**

We will

- Provide training and equipment to deal with water related incidents
- Identify the locations of water risks throughout the Service area

- Respond to water related incidents and carry out rescues of people requiring assistance
- Work in partnership to reduce the risk of water related fatalities

### **Reactive Measures**

- Debrief these types of rescues to identify the opportunity for organisational learning to improve service delivery

### **Risk 9 Rescue from Height**

Incidents at heights could occur in many different formats and anywhere across the Service area. The dangerous nature of dealing with such incidents leads to an increased risk of injury to anyone involved.

#### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Work closely with partner agencies such as mountain rescue, coast guard and other FRSs
- Provide a specialist capability to respond to the most challenging rescues
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work in relation to height rescues

#### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Deploy specialist line rescue teams supported by additional fire crews to effect rescues
- Utilise specialist engines such as the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) to assist with rescues
- Work in partnership to assist with the resolution of incidents
- Support other agencies to assist vulnerable persons involved in height incidents

### **Risk 10 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)**

Deaths and serious injuries on the road affect County Durham and Darlington residents each year as well as people from further afield.

#### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Work with our key strategic partners to reduce risk through education
- Utilise local and national data sets on RTC numbers and type
- Train RTC ambassadors to campaign locally
- Attend national and local working groups that share best practice
- Provide crews with the latest technology to meet the modern methods of vehicle construction
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work in relation to RTCs

#### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Attend 75% of life-risk RTCs within 11 minutes
- Respond with appropriate resources to RTCs to effect rescue, mitigate the risk from fire and other related risks, and assist partners in resolving the incident
- Respond to non-life risk RTCs on request to help to make the scene safe

### **Risk 11 Rail Incidents**

Fires and accidents on the transport network not only present an immediate threat to life and property but can also have a long-lasting impact on infrastructure and our communities.

#### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Work with our partners to help to improve safety within the transport industry
- Understand the main rail networks within our area
- Conduct operational exercises at high-risk sites/locations
- Collect information and develop plans on our highest transport risks so that we are prepared to respond
- Conduct regular evaluation of our training in relation to rail incidents we attend

#### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Respond to incidents with sufficient resources to effect rescue, deal with fire and other hazards, and assist with casualties
- Request support of specialist fire and rescue teams such as Urban Search and Rescue where appropriate
- Work in partnership to mitigate the impact of such incidents and facilitate recovery

### **Risk 12 Aircraft Incidents**

Fires and accidents on the transport network not only present an immediate threat to life and property but can also have a long-lasting impact on infrastructure and our communities.

#### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Work with our partners to help to improve safety within the transport industry
- Understand the main flight paths within our area
- Conduct operational exercises at local airports
- Collect information and develop plans on our highest transport risks so that we are prepared to respond
- Conduct regular evaluation of our training in relation to aviation incidents we attend

#### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Respond to incidents with sufficient resources to effect rescue, deal with fire and other hazards, and assist with casualties
- Request support of specialist fire and rescue teams such as Urban Search and Rescue where appropriate
- Work in partnership to mitigate the impact of such incidents and facilitate recovery

### **Risk 13 Sea Vessels**

These incidents refer to fires on board ships or within the harbour area of the coastline within the Service area.

#### **Proactive measures**

We will

- Provide training and equipment for operational crews to respond to an incident involving sea vessels
- Work in partnership to reduce the impact of an incident occurring within Seaham Harbour
- Provide risk information to operational crews on the risks associated with Seaham Harbour

#### **Reactive measures**

We will

- Debrief these types of rescues to identify the opportunity for organisational learning to improve service delivery

### **Risk 14 Flooding**

Widespread flooding can devastate parts of the community and leaves an impression for years beyond an event. We have also seen some tragic drownings in our waterways over the years.

#### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Develop flood plans and provide operational risk information crews
- Work with partners to prepare for flood risk
- Campaign to members of the public to educate them about the dangers posed by bodies of water
- Work closely with the Environment Agency (EA) to share ideas
- Make a specialist water rescue team available to respond locally and nationally
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work in relation to water related incidents

#### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Work with partners to protect and maintain critical infrastructure in times of flooding
- Prioritise and respond to domestic flooding calls and assist if appropriate
- Deploy a specialist water rescue team to perform rescues and evacuation of people affected by flooding
- Work with other agencies to help to protect areas at immediate risk of flooding
- Deploy High Volume Pumps (HVP), where appropriate, to areas most affected

### **Risk 15 Industrial Fires**

There are many industrial premises and estates amongst the villages and towns in the Service area, with a broad range of scenarios that have the potential to have a negative community impact. Examples of industrial related incidents include defective extraction or heating systems that cause fires, plastic packaging factory fires and plant machinery that overheated and caused fire and smoke damage to a large factory.

### **Proactive measures**

We will

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Conduct fire safety audits of premises across the Service area
- Exercise and train with our partners to prepare for a range of eventualities

### **Reactive measures**

We will

- Respond with equipment, appliances and personnel to help to resolve the incident
- Work with partners to resolve the incident and minimise the impact on the environment
- Debrief these types of rescues to identify the opportunity for organisational learning to improve service delivery

### **Risk 16 Hazardous Materials**

Hazardous materials can present a risk to the public from a range of sources including road transport, industrial sites and malicious use by terrorists or organised criminal groups.

### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Work with industry to ensure safe practices
- Conduct fire safety audits of premises across the Service area
- Work with the police to understand the threat from terrorism and organised criminality
- Exercise and train with our partners to prepare for a range of eventualities
- Train a range of tactical advisors to provide expert advice
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work in relation to these types of incidents

### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Respond with specialist equipment and personnel to help to resolve the incident
- Seek specialist advice from national centres where required
- Work with partners to mitigate the impact of hazardous materials on the environment

### **Risk 17 Waste and Recycling Sites**

Fires in waste and recycling sites can have significant impacts on the local environment and can pollute water courses in the area surrounding a fire. Although waste and recycling sites are licensed, some may be unlicensed and linked to the illegal transfer and disposal of waste.

### **Proactive measures**

We will

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Work in partnership to understand which premises present the highest risks
- Work with owners of waste and recycling sites to ensure they keep their premises safe and reduce the impact on the environment

### **Reactive measures**

We will

- Investigate the cause of fires at the appropriate level in partnership with the police
- Work with partners to mitigate the impact of these incidents on the environment
- Ensure we have secured appropriate water supplies, to aid firefighting
- Debrief these types of rescues to identify the opportunity for organisational learning to improve service delivery

### **Risk 18 Animal Incidents**

As a predominantly rural area, we are inevitably called to incidents where animals are in distress.

### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Work with partner agencies to keep animals safe in the service area
- Maintain a specialist animal-rescue capability
- Attend national and regional learning events to share best practice
- Learn from specialist vets in how to deal with different types of animals
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work to reduce the number of animal rescues we attend

### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Respond with specialist animal rescue teams to effect rescue
- Work in partnership with other agencies to help to resolve incidents
- Request other specialist teams and equipment as needed to assist with the incident
- Seek specialist advice where required
- Work with partners to mitigate the impact of disruption to the public from animals on our roads

### **Risk 19 Heritage**

Historic buildings are of considerable economic value, especially to the tourist industry and for their positive impact to their surrounding area and community. Fires in buildings of heritage and special interest can adversely affect the significance, authenticity, and continuing functionality of these premises.

### **Proactive measures**

We will

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Use data to understand which premises present the highest risks
- Carry out fire safety audits to ensure compliance with the RRO
- Work with owners of buildings of heritage and special interest to ensure they keep their premises safe

### **Reactive measures**

We will

- Investigate the cause of fires at the appropriate level in partnership with the police

- Work with partners to mitigate the impact of these incidents on the environment
- Ensure we have secured appropriate water supplies, to aid firefighting
- Debrief these types of rescues to identify the opportunity for organisational learning to improve service delivery

## **Risk 20 Malicious Attacks, Terrorist Incidents**

The UK faces a serious and sustained threat from terrorism.

### **Proactive measures**

We will:

- Provide equipment and training for crews
- Work with the police to understand the threat from terrorism
- Be ready to respond nationally to events outside, and locally to incidents within the Service area
- Learn from similar events of this nature that have occurred both within the UK and internationally
- Train a range of tactical advisors and commanders to provide expert advice
- Conduct regular evaluation of our work in relation to these types of incidents

### **Reactive measures**

We will:

- Respond with appropriately trained and equipped specialist teams to effect rescue and casualty care for victims
- Use fire crews to support the work of specialist teams where appropriate
- Seek specialist advice from national centres where required
- Deploy National Incident Liaison Officers (NILO) to provide a unified approach with key partners
- Ensure measures are in place to support staff welfare post-incident



## Service Strategies

How do we make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue-related incidents?

*Our commitment to you is* that we will demonstrate how our prevention, protection and response activities address the fire and rescue-related risks that have been identified during our CRMP process in greater detail. Our key strategies outline the measures we have in place and actions we intend to take to ensure we are doing everything we can to keep our communities safe. We also have a range of other support strategies which assist in the delivery of our Service, which includes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

### Community Safety Strategy

We are proud of our record on delivering home safety both in terms of the number of SWV our crews and Community Risk Officers undertake and the campaigns we do. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic we have introduced a flexible telephone triage system to identify the people most at risk of ADF and having reviewed the benefits this learning will be applied from now on.

To help us improve even more, our Community Safety Strategy will follow the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Community Risk Programme which will deliver a standardised way to identify, assess and mitigate community risks. By adopting the NFCC 'Person Centred Framework' we will enhance how we target our resources to the most vulnerable people at higher risk in our community as this focuses the advice we give.

[You can read more about the NFCC Community Risk Management Planning Guidance Project here.](#)

We will work with our partner agencies to improve road safety and will use the County Durham and Darlington Road Safety Strategy 2020/23 to provide a delivery framework for this, which includes a strong educational focus. Our officers deliver a range of educational programmes in schools and manage the delivery of Fire Cadet schemes at stations throughout the Service.

Arson has for too long been a significant problem in the North East of England and within County Durham and Darlington, ourselves and our partners need to do more. Arson remains a priority for us and to help improve the picture for our Service area we will continue to collaborate with our partners, such as the Police, Local Authorities and Academics along with encouraging the wider use of their powers as well as promoting the Firestoppers telephone line. We will also take an educational approach by working with specific schools through initiatives such as our Phoenix Fire Champions. [You can read our Arson Reduction Strategy here](#)

For more detailed information, you can [read the full Community Safety Strategy here](#)

## **Business Fire Safety Strategy**

We are fully committed to our statutory obligations to enforce fire safety legislation under the FSO and to implement the recommendations made following the tragic Grenfell Tower fire. To make sure we have a robust, flexible approach our Business Fire Safety (BFS) delivery model will focus on adopting the NFCC Fire Safety Competency Framework so that relevant staff have the formal qualifications (Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety or higher) needed to carry out fire safety audits. We have restructured our BFS team to help us achieve this.

[You can read the NFCC Competency framework here.](#)

We use a risk-based inspection programme which is based on accurate data and business intelligence about premises in our area so that we target our fire safety audits according to risk. We have developed the software to use with existing technology to improve the quality of data at source and trained staff to collect risk information during an audit.

Through collaboration with FRSs in the North East region we will share skills, knowledge, expertise and resources to meet the future demands of our communities as this will help us to achieve best practice.

For more detailed information, [you can read the Business Fire Safety Strategy and the associated action plans here](#)

## **Emergency Response Strategy**

While we do as much as we can to reduce fires and other emergencies, there will always be a need for us to provide a very high standard of emergency response. In the past year we have moved from 5 Districts to 2 Divisions and restructured our operational staff to ensure that our response is as efficient as it can be.

In 2019 we upgraded the cover at Spennymoor Fire Station, moving an appliance there from Durham, to better reflect the needs of the wider Service area using detailed incident and risk data. We supplemented the arrangements at Durham to introduce a permanently crewed TRV to respond to lower risk incidents or provide additional staff at higher risk incidents. We also trialled a different type of shift system in Seaham and Newton Aycliffe which has now become a permanent arrangement.

Our future plans include embedding the National Operational Guidance Programme, implementing a new Fire Hydrant Management System, and gathering further Operational Risk Information.

Much of our Service relies on our highly committed On-Call Firefighters, particularly in our more rural communities. We recognise that recruitment, availability and retention of On-Call staff is an issue locally and is reflected across almost all FRSs in the UK. Within the last twelve months we have introduced two dedicated On-Call Firefighter Liaison Officers who are supporting innovative ways of working, the introduction of new technology and reviewing our staffing models.

[For more detailed information you can read our Emergency Response Strategy here.](#)

## **People Strategy**

We employ approx. 650 highly skilled, professional, and dedicated staff, with the majority of our workforce employed as operational firefighters. We provide a programme of continuous improvement which focuses on training, equality and diversity, engagement and communication as we recognise that the requirements of the FRS are changing. To help us prevent and prepare to respond to all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks, our workforce has developed their skills to respond to a changing risk profile, including extreme weather events such as flooding or wildfire; terrorist incidents; and medical emergencies. The change in our community risk results in the need to ensure that we maintain a workforce that is competent and safe within their respective and diverse roles. Our 2020 Service restructure has enabled us to remain flexible, supportive and efficient as an employer, and FRS.

As an employer, our aim is to develop a diverse workforce and ensure that our PIE values and behavioural framework and the Code of Ethics (see page 5) help us to develop a working environment where everyone can feel engaged, valued and respected, whatever their background.

[For more detailed information you can read our People Strategy and the associated action plans here](#)

## **Estates Strategy**

The primary drivers for the Estates Strategy are derived from operational requirements, matters arising from the CRMP and maintaining prudent and efficient estates management to secure fit for purpose facilities to meet the future needs of the Service.

The location of and resources held at our stations are a result of detailed risk analysis and incident modelling to demonstrate that our stations and appliance locations are representing the best value for money that we can achieve.

In the years leading to the comprehensive spending review the Service invested in an estate's capital improvement reserve. This has funded an ambitious programme of estates improvements in recent years despite the continuing austerity.

Key improvements have been seen in significant parts of the estate being replaced by new buildings or with substantial renovations.

More than 60% of Service estate buildings are now less than 10 years old. This in itself brings new challenges as it is of great importance that these new assets are protected and maintained to ensure they provide long service life.

In order to service the existing estate, there are numerous contracts in place to ensure specialist repairs and maintenance can be undertaken. These will require continued review for best value. The Service now shares more of its estate buildings than ever before with partners from other emergency services, key partners and other agencies who have a similar agenda, aims or values to CDDFRS.

## **ICT Strategy**

In recent years despite the challenging reductions in funding from central government, investment in ICT within the Service has remained strong. Key improvements have been made in resilient infrastructure, software and security systems to protect Service resources and data. In particular, the move to cloud-based technologies has not only improved ways of working for all personnel but significantly improved resilience and allowed access to flexible working for all staff.

The Service is at the forefront of innovation in technology within our sector, embracing forthcoming technologies such as the Emergency Services Network (ESN), being one of the first emergency services in the UK to equip frontline fleet with equipment capable of connecting to this new critical infrastructure network.

The Service makes use of modern tablet technologies to enable greater and productive interactions with the communities we serve. Furthermore, our appliances are equipped with technology that places all critical risk and incident management information at the hands of firefighters at the incident ground.

The Service has increased awareness of the threats to information assets across the workforce and has a rigorous audit regime in place to ensure standards across all aspects of ICT are continually being challenged.

A 10-year capital replacement programme exists to ensure major investments are managed over the medium term. This also ensures that the whole ICT estate can be managed in accordance with emerging technologies to fully exploit current capabilities. Although the ICT strategy is primarily focused on support for delivery of the CRMP, there are of course issues that arise in the technological landscape that require continuous appraisal. This is to ensure that the Service can work with emerging technologies. Examples of this include the view to the future of Telecommunications and the switch off of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). National infrastructure changes such as these will have an impact on how we manage and maintain our technologies and cannot be ignored.

Investment in ICT requires constant review. There is a balance between achieving value for money from the lifetime of an asset to enabling the workforce to make use of ICT and current capabilities to deliver enhanced services or achieve improved productivity.

## **Fleet and Equipment Strategy**

As a fire and rescue service, we own or lease a wide range of assets that include vehicles, equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that support our prevention, protection and training services as well as supporting us to respond effectively to a considerable range of emergency incidents. We aim to provide our staff with the best vehicles, equipment and PPE we can afford.

Our strategy is supported by a 15-year capital replacement programme to ensure major investments are managed over the medium term. As part of this programme, we will support collaboration and the national procurement agenda wherever there is a clear business case to do so. Our internal processes are designed to identify,

develop and evaluate new and innovative vehicle and equipment technologies to continue to improve our effectiveness, value for money and firefighter safety.

Our Technical Services Centre at Bowburn coordinates the maintenance, servicing and testing of all our fleet and equipment to ensure compliance with all associated legislative requirements.

## **How do we collaborate?**

### **Collaboration Strategy**

As a Service we recognise the benefits of collaboration with our partners in our local area and beyond. In County Durham and Darlington, we have several collaborative arrangements in place between our Service and other emergency services.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a duty upon all three emergency services to collaborate in the interests of improved efficiency or effectiveness.

We are co-terminus with Durham Constabulary and work well with other regional FRSs operating together at both a strategic and tactical level.

We frequently review our opportunities for collaboration with a range of regional partners. This ensures we provide cost effective services and helps us to reduce demand and risks within our communities.

This will then ensure a better service is provided, including a reduction in the level of risks and/or demand within our communities to ensure the public are safer while living and working in County Durham and Darlington. This assessment is recorded in our collaboration register.

Our Collaboration Strategy is to identify willing strategic partners who have a compelling common purpose for collaboration to ensure mutual commitment is given towards shared goals. Although we have a duty to collaborate, we will only do so when it provides benefit to your FRS as outlined above.

Durham Constabulary, the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS), Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) and other partners use our state-of-the-art training centre at Bowburn, and we share several of our Service estates' premises with Durham Constabulary and North East Ambulance Service (NEAS).

In Barnard Castle, we have built the only Quad emergency service station in the country, housing Fire, Police, Ambulance and Mountain Rescue personnel. This has provided greater opportunities for emergency service interaction and is a central emergency service point for this rural community.

We use a collaborative approach with our police colleagues for Fire Investigation, implementing the International Standardisation Organisation (ISO)17020 standard. We have formal agreements with our neighbouring FRSs for sharing special appliances and officers and we have formal agreements in place with other FRS Control Rooms to ensure resilience.

We also support national resilience across the UK and host specialist appliances and officers for deployment across the country.

Our Community Safety Responders provide joint cover for CDDFRS, Durham Constabulary and the NEAS at Stanhope, and are an innovative way of responding to emergencies in rural areas.

In the past year we have embarked upon further estates collaboration opportunities, sharing service premises at Darlington Fire Station with NEAS. We are also carrying out modernisation of Sedgefield station which will also involve some shared facilities with NEAS.

In 2021 we have also explored opportunities to share administrative support for maintenance of duties associated with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and this is being done in collaboration with Cleveland Fire Brigade.

We are among leading members of emergency services in assisting the Home Office to deliver new technological solutions for emergency service communications on the ESN.

For more detailed information, see the Collaboration Strategy and the associated register: <https://www.ddfire.gov.uk/service-plans>

## **How do we manage our finances?**

### **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)**

We, along with other public sector organisations, face an uncertain financial future which has been exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure we can balance the budget over the medium term we always plan ahead, taking account of our planned expenditure and future levels of government and local funding.

Our current MTFP covers the period from 2021/22 to 2024/25. In view of the uncertainty surrounding future government funding, our current MTFP includes three models based on a best, mid and worst-case scenario.

The three models are based on varying levels of government funding and were calculated based on the assumption that council tax will increase by 2% in each year. Based on these assumptions, we have a potential shortfall in funding over the period covered by the MTFP ranging from £0.96m (best case) to £2.84m (worst case).

We are currently in the process of preparing the 2022/23 budget and MTFP covering the period 2022/23 to 2025/26 which will be presented to the CFA for final approval in February 2022. Whilst there is considerable uncertainty over future funding due to the impact of Covid-19 on both government funding and council tax receipts, early indications are that to balance the budget over the medium term we will need to identify further savings for implementation should the need arise.

To achieve this, we have undertaken a full review of our emergency response provision and have identified savings options for implementation over the MTFP period.

Following robust analysis of the potential impact of our proposals, we believe that these options will have the least impact on the level of risk within County Durham and Darlington. It is our policy, wherever possible, to trial options in the year prior to implementation to receive feedback from staff and to ensure that they are workable before proceeding to full implementation.

In addition to changes to emergency response, we are considering alternative options including structure changes and further collaboration with the police, neighbouring FRS and other partners.

## **Equality and Diversity**

CDDFRS recognise that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion runs through every aspect of the Service and is of utmost importance in both our outward facing service delivery activities and inward facing responsibilities as an employer.

CDDFRS believe diversity, in all its various forms, is central to our success as an organisation, ensuring a diversity of experience, thought, challenge and understanding. Our efforts to become more diverse and inclusive don't take place in isolation, they are part and parcel of us achieving wider cultural transformation across the whole service supported by our vision, strategic priorities, and organisational strategies. We are ever conscious of the need to ensure that our workforce reflects our local population and undertake positive action to make all reasonable adjustments to our workplaces and roles to ensure that people with cultural, religious or disability requirements are welcomed into our workforce.

Working with our communities and staff, we are developing a better understanding of their needs and identified any potential barriers within our recruitment processes, the working environment and our policies and practice. CDDFRS continue to build strong employee networks to overcome and remove any disadvantage experienced and create an organisation which is institutionally inclusive.

### **Who are our people?**

- We have 310 wholetime firefighters;
- We have 190 On Call firefighters;
- 25 other operational staff, including those based at headquarters and flexible duty officers;
- 25 fire control operators;
- 109 staff are based at our Headquarters, 97 of which are our corporate staff;
- From our overall staff, 22 are apprentices in various roles.

### **Where do they work?**

They are based out of our 15 fire stations (see map), our Service Headquarters in Belmont and a Training Centre and Technical Services Centre located in Bowburn.

### **What resources do we have?**

We have a fleet of 26 front-line fire engines in addition to specialist vehicles and a range of off-road four-wheel drive vehicles to help to deal with those risks identified throughout our CRMP process. These include:

- Aerial Ladder Platform for performing rescues at height;
- A specialist rescue unit for Road Traffic Collisions, building collapse and animal rescue;
- Water rescue boats and flood response units for water-related incidents;
- A High-Volume Pump, foam unit and bulk water carrier to provide water and foam at large incidents;
- Environmental protection units for hazardous material incidents;

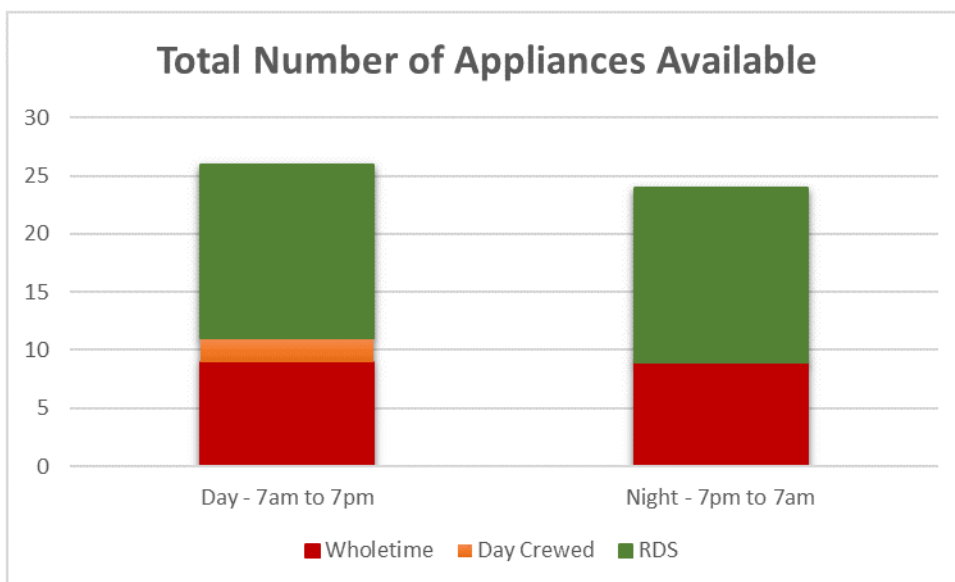


- An incident command vehicle and welfare unit to support large, protracted incidents;
- 4x4 targeted response and wildfire vehicles to provide support to the front line and access hard-to-reach areas;
- A Fire Investigation Dog;
- A specialist team dealing with Marauding Terrorist Attacks (MTAs)

The distribution of our fire stations across the Service area ensures we are able to provide the optimum level of response in those areas deemed to be of greatest risk. Each station is resourced with appliances and specialist equipment that match the levels of risk and demand in that part of our Service area.

## Appliance availability

Our maximum appliance availability from 7am to 7pm is 26 whilst between 7pm and 7am it is 24.



## Degradation plan

Our degradation plan considers a range of local and national events. These include the reasonable planning assumption of responding to two simultaneous incidents of 5 pumps or one large incident of 10 pumps. The degradation plan also provides the strategic location of the number of required appliances for normal business. Management intervention is enacted when the Service reaches a heightened state of appliance availability, this is defined at below 15 appliances.

## Response standards

The Service's response standards have been in place since 2004 and since then much has changed across both County Durham and Darlington, with significant residential and commercial development along with new and improved transportation networks. Similarly, based upon risk, we have relocated some of our fire stations, and changed the way we staff some fire appliances, in addition to operating with less staff and a reducing budget.

Following our consultation in 2021 you asked us to carry out an extensive review of our response standards which has included looking at all our response data and attendance times over a 5-year period.

We are committed to responding to life risk incidents as quickly as possible. The proactive work our teams undertake, such as delivering Safe and Well-Being Visits to the most vulnerable, continues to reduce risk and the number of incidents we attend. However, we continue to see a high level of risk to life as a result of accidental fires within the home and accidents on our roads. Conversely, we see much lower levels of risk to life from fires in non-domestic buildings, recording just two injuries over a 5-year reporting period, this is partly as a result of our engagement with businesses but also due to our risk-based approach to auditing premises.

Therefore, to ensure we remain focused on providing a prompt response to life risk incidents we are therefore proposing changes to the response standards to reflect this, along with streamlining them to provide greater clarity.

### Our current standards are:

**Dwelling fires** – we will attend 70% of dwelling fires in 8 minutes and 90% in 11 minutes

#### 2020/21 Dwelling Fires

8 mins	72.4%
11 mins	92.5%

**Non-domestic property fires** - we will attend 70% of non-domestic property fires in 8 minutes and 90% in 11 minutes

#### 2020/21 Non domestic Property Fires

8 mins	67.3%
11 mins	90.4%

**RTC** – we will attend 75% of RTCs in 11 minutes and 90% in 15 minutes

#### 2020/21 RTCs

11 mins	80.5%
15 mins	94%

## Golden Hour Trauma Intervention

Our response to RTCs is based on the golden hour, getting those injured to definitive care within 1-hour intervention model for trauma care, where extrication is recommended to take place within 15 minutes and no more than 45 minutes after the collision occurring to maximise the chance of casualty survival.

As a result of our review, we recommend that our response standards are simplified, and we will be consulting with the public on this during our consultation period.

### Our Action Plan for the next three years

In our 2021/22 consultation we outlined our plan for the year ahead and asked you to consider the following:

We asked	You said	We did
Should we continue to invest and prioritise Fire Safety activities to ensure the built environment within County Durham and Darlington remains safe for occupants and visitors?	Yes	<p>Due to our targeted risk-based inspection programme, fires in non-domestic premises have reduced by 36% in 2020/21 compared to the previous year.</p> <p>We have increased the number of our staff who hold formal fire safety qualifications which has increased our ability and competency to conduct fire safety audits.</p> <p>We have introduced smoke hoods on all appliances, and these have been successfully used at incidents to rescue people from smoke filled premises.</p> <p>We have begun a tall buildings project to assess how we respond at incidents in all buildings over a certain size.</p> <p>We have offered an apprenticeship role in BFS and are</p>

		<p>training all of our firefighter apprentices in BFS.</p> <p>We have increased staffing in protection and have introduced an out of hours rota to ensure we can take enforcement action at any time 24/7 if required to maintain public safety.</p>
Should we continue to trial the use and various crewing arrangements of Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs)?	Yes	<p>Covid-19 meant that trialling the use of our new TRVs was delayed. We have now been able to introduce them and start gathering data about their use.</p>
Should we identify opportunities for collaboration with local Fire and Rescue Services and key partners?	Yes	<p>We have access to the Cleveland Fire Brigade command vehicle which has been used at incidents.</p> <p>The Police and Fire Collaboration Board has been re-established.</p> <p>We are key attendees of the North East Regional JESIP meeting.</p> <p>We share service premises at Darlington Fire Station with North East Ambulance Service (NEAS). Following the modernisation of Sedgefield station, we will also have some shared facilities with NEAS on site.</p> <p>We have explored opportunities to share administrative support for maintenance of duties associated with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and this is being done in collaboration with Cleveland Fire Brigade.</p> <p>We are working with colleagues in neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, the Local Authority, Police and Academics to reduce the opportunity and consequences of deliberate fires and antisocial behaviour.</p>

In recent years we have faced a difficult financial climate which has required us to continually review the way we deliver our services to you; however, we have continued to protect the resources we have on the front line. The Covid-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had an impact and the economic challenges which lie ahead will continue to make the financial landscape uncertain. If our assumptions are correct about the further reduction in funding that we receive from government and an increase in demand for our services, we will face significant pressures over the next three years.

***Our commitment to you is*** to provide the best possible FRS within the budget that we have available to us which addresses our foreseeable risks.

If our performance is to continue to improve, it is therefore even more important that we:

- Continue to innovate to remove bureaucracy, improve efficiency and find new ways of working to free up capacity;
- Explore all opportunities for collaboration that improve value for money, improve outcomes, reduce risk for our communities and reduce demand on our service;
- Ensure our resources are allocated in the most appropriate way to maximise the impact we can have on the risks that our communities face.

We know that our staff are our greatest asset, and we need to ensure they have the right skills and are available in the right places at the right time to carry out their roles effectively.

***Our commitment to you is*** that we will continually review the way that our staff are deployed in order to provide the most efficient and effective arrangements for the delivery of our services. We will do this while also recognising the particular challenge that recruiting On-Call firefighters presents to us across certain areas of the Service, which is why we will review our recruitment needs and practices to maximise fire engine availability.

While reviewing the emergency response part of our Service is important, we also intend to do so within a wider framework that considers the optimum organisational balance of resources and staffing.

***Our commitment to you is*** that we will regularly review and update the equipment that is provided to our firefighters to ensure they have the most effective tools to do their job. We will continue to consider new technologies and equipment that make our emergency response more effective, efficient and safer for firefighters.

## Consultation

We are constantly striving to make our prevention, protection and response services to you better and we are accountable to you in everything we do. We want to hear from you about how we can improve and shape our activities over the next three years. As we develop our plans, we will consult with you on any specific proposals so that we can fully understand the impact they may have.

The more informed we are by your views, the more able we are to meet your aspirations and deliver positive outcomes for the residents of County Durham and Darlington.

This year we will be consulting both online and out in the community. If you gave any difficulties with internet access let us know by telephone and we can provide you with a paper copy of our survey.

### **Do you agree with this consultation approach?**

During our annual consultation exercise, we aim to consult with a representative sample of the community we serve. This means consulting with as many of the population across County Durham and Darlington as possible. Our aim is to receive as many responses as we can to ensure the sample size is robust, which means we can be confident in the findings of the consultation.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on this year's consultation which means that we can't come out into the community as we normally would. So, we'll be asking for your opinions online this year and if you have difficulty with internet access you can speak to us, or we can provide paper copies of our survey for you on request.

## Our Plans

### **In 2022/23, the following options will be considered:**

- Implement and evaluate the way we deliver SWV.
- Implement the outcome following the review of the Service's attendance standards.
- Evaluate the benefits of our continued investment in Fire Safety within the built environment.
- Implementing the outcomes of the review of the crewing arrangements of TRVs if the trials prove successful.
- Implement any changes suggested through collaboration projects undertaken with local FRS and key partners.

### **In 2023/24 the following options will be considered:**

- Monitor and review the Service's attendance standards.
- Continue to review our approach to Fire Safety within the built environment.
- Evaluate the staffing arrangements and application of TRVs.
- Evaluate the changes through collaboration projects with local FRS and key partners.

## **In 2024/25 the following options will be considered:**

- Monitor our approach to Fire Safety within the built environment.
- Monitor the staffing arrangements and application of TRVs.
- Continue to explore opportunities and monitor the changes we have introduced through collaboration projects with local Fire and Rescue Service and key partners.

## **How do we consult?**

This year's consultation runs from 15 November 2021 to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022. We will be carrying out a brief survey to capture your views and you can also email [governance@ddfired.gov.uk](mailto:governance@ddfired.gov.uk)

This year's survey asks you to answer some key questions and is available to complete:

- On our website;
- On our Twitter feed;
- On our Facebook page;
- During a Safe and Well-being Visit
- At online events and meetings.
- At in person events and meetings

This year we will be consulting over a period of 12 weeks, with the next set of results available in late March 2022. To read about all our plans and to complete our survey please visit [https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/crmp\\_2022-23/](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/crmp_2022-23/)