



Have your say...

Community Risk Management Plan 2023 - 2026
Our 2023 - 2024 Consultation



Safest People, Safest Places



County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority

Introduction

Making sure County Durham and Darlington have the safest people and safest places is a way of life for us. We run safety campaigns to inform you of dangers and how to avoid them. We visit you at home to give you advice and check you have a working smoke alarm, and we will check out local businesses to help them achieve the required fire safety standards. Every emergency call matters to us and every incident is responded to with the highest level of care and professionalism.

We have dealt with significant challenges over recent years, including those brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and funding concerns and we have responded by adapting and innovating to ensure that we are always there for you when you need us. We will continue to do this in the years ahead.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service is part of your community so getting your views is a vital part of helping us to be the best Fire and Rescue Service. This guide sets out what our plans are over the next 12 months and we are very keen to hear from you. Find out how to take part in this year's consultation at the end of this document.



Steve Helps
Chief Fire Officer
(CFO)



Councillor John Shuttleworth
Chair, Combined Fire Authority
(CFA)



Why Consult?

If you have ever had to call 999 you will know that your Fire and Rescue Service attend many types of incidents, as well as fighting fires. Much of what we do is focussed around preventing incidents occurring in the first place and we are really committed to expanding this work. We continually assess what risks our communities face and then put plans in place about how we use our resources to manage and respond to those risks effectively.

As an organisation rooted in the communities we serve it is important to us to take into account what you think about the impact of any changes we are planning.

Every year we produce a strategic plan covering a three year period which helps us to deliver our vision of Safest People, Safest Places. As part of this we assess all the foreseeable risks in our area and publish what we call a Community Risk Management Plan which outlines how we direct our resources to manage and mitigate those risks. We review this plan every year to ensure that we are up to date.

You can read the full CRMP on our website at:

www.ddfire.gov.uk/service-plans



Our Service Area



Our Performance in 2021-2022

The number of calls we received last year was

18,007

We have the fastest response times for a predominantly rural service



There were

208

accidental dwelling fires, the second lowest rate in England

The total number of injuries from accidental house fires was

22



We completed

2120

Business Fire Safety Audits, over three times higher than the England average

3,324

Deliberate fires were started, the third worst rate in the UK

We completed

18,843

Home Fire Safety Visits, almost twice the England average



We had

176

fires in non-domestic properties, the third lowest rate in England

We had

1435

special services incidents which included attending road traffic collisions



Our Achievements

In our most recent His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection we achieved Good in all three categories of effectiveness, efficiency and people.



We won Fire and Rescue Service of the year at the Public Sector Transformation Awards in 2022



We have an award winning apprenticeship programme



We are leading the way in Firefighters' safety with a state of the art decontamination facility



Our Finances

It is essential that our finances are sustainable so that we have the resources we need to do our vital work, now and in the future. This is particularly challenging due to the financial pressures that we currently face.

Every year we produce a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which reflects the money we receive from central government and business rates as well as the contribution you make through your Council Tax.

Our MTFP shows the amounts we receive and spend. We have a shortfall in funding of £1m in 2023/24 which will be covered by our reserves, then we have a shortfall of £1.142m in 2024/25 rising to £1.637m in 2026/27. In order to balance our finances we are consulting on changes to the way we respond to emergencies as explained in our Community Risk Management Plan.



Last year's consultation results

Last year we asked you a question about our response standards.

WE ASKED...

Do you agree with our proposal to introduce the following new response standards?

- Attend Accidental Dwelling Fires within 8 minutes on 70% of occasions
 - Attend Non-Domestic Fires within 9 minutes on 70% of occasions
 - Attend Road Traffic Collisions within 10 minutes on 70% of occasions

YOU SAID:

65% SAID YES ✓ **35% SAID NO ✗**



We Said, We Did

After asking for your comments on our overall approach and on getting your feedback about our CRMP and response to our questions, here's what we did in 2022-2023:

We Said

We Did

Implement and evaluate the way we deliver HFSVs.

- Renamed Safe and Wellbeing Visits to Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) in line with national guidance.
- Introduced an online self-help tool for members of the community which helps them to identify risks in the home.
- Offered higher risk members of the community a visit by one of our teams.
- Aligned our approach with the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) Person-Centred Framework.
- Introduced a new risk identification model to identify high risk households as part of the NFCC Definition of Risk project.

Implement the outcome following the review of the Service's attendance standards

- Implemented the new standards from April 2022 and have measured our response times against them since this time.

Evaluate the benefits of our continued investment in Fire Safety within the built environment.

- Continued to invest in staff training to ensure we comply with the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators.
- Continued to work with businesses to help them in their compliance with legislation and taken enforcement action where necessary.

Implement the outcomes of the review of the crewing arrangements of TRVs if the trials prove successful.

- Covid- 19 meant that trialling the use of our new Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) was delayed. However, we have now been able to introduce them and gather data about their use and recognise the benefits when TRVs are correctly staffed, located and deployed. We will continue to explore the flexible use of TRVs based on risk and demand.

Implement any changes suggested through collaboration projects undertaken with local FRS and key partners.

- We have access to the Cleveland Fire Brigade command vehicle which has been used at incidents.
- Re-established the Police and Fire Collaboration Board; Attend the North East Regional JESIP meeting.
- Share Service premises at Darlington Fire Station and Sedgefield Fire Station with North East Ambulance Service (NEAS).
- Share administrative support with Cleveland Fire Brigade for the maintenance of duties associated with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- Work 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.



Question 1 - Emergency Response

Crewing of our fire engines

Currently, and for a number of years, the majority of our wholetime fire engines have been crewed by 4 firefighters. Throughout the Covid pandemic all of our fire engines were crewed by 4 firefighters. Our proposal is to introduce this crewing arrangement to the remaining 5 appliances which are currently crewed with 5 firefighters.

In reaching this proposal we have considered the following:

We are proud of being one of the fastest FRS to respond to an emergency, and have been recognised by HMICFRS as the fastest predominantly rural FRS in England. This proposal protects this position by maintaining the same number of fire engines within our Emergency Response function enabling us to respond quickly when required.

We are one of the most productive FRS in England, we know that our proactive prevention and protection work, of which the vast majority is delivered by front line crews who staff our fire engines, saves lives and keeps our communities safe. HMICFRS recognise that CDDFRS deliver almost two times the England average for Home Fire Safety Checks and almost 4 times the England average for Fire Safety audits. This proposal ensures we protect the current number of fire engines available to undertake proactive prevention and protection work.

Since 2019 the majority of our fire engines have operated with 4 firefighters with no compromise to our safety record.

Many FRS elsewhere in the country safely operate with 4 firefighters crewing fire engines. For example our immediate neighbouring FRS within the North East all crew appliances with 4 firefighters.

This proposal will save £750,000 in order to meet the identified budget deficiencies contained within the MTFP. This is achieved through the careful management of vacancies when they arise.

Alternative options we have considered, required to save the £1 million budget deficit, would impact on the number of fire engines we have available, or the staffing arrangements with less fire engines being available for immediate deployment.



We propose to crew all of our Wholetime fire engines with 4 firefighters. **Do you agree with this proposal?**



Question 2 - Protection

Business Fire Safety

We propose to review the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) for business premises to ensure our proactive protection and enforcement activities are aligned to identified risks, to maintain the reduction of non-domestic fires and ensure the continued safety, from fire, of employees and visitors to these premises.

Following HMICFRS inspections across the fire sector it has been highlighted there should be a national risk model for defining what are high-risk premises for the purposes of fire protection.

Through Phase 2 of NFCC's Definition of Risk project there will be a new model developed into the likelihood, consequence and risk of non-domestic fires. This work will support a national approach to fire safety and support fire and rescue service's RBIP.

These products will be supported by a risk assessment methodology to facilitate consistent application of the strategic framework to risk management planning.

Therefore, it is timely that we review our current model against this proposed national methodology. This will enable us to ensure we are focusing our resources on activities where they will have the greatest impact on reducing risk and vulnerability within their local communities.

By reviewing our current approach we will ensure we are delivering an evidence based and consistent approach to determining 'level of risk' that also provides a national benchmarking capability.



We propose to review the Risk Based Inspection Programme for business premises to ensure our proactive protection and enforcement activities are aligned to identified risks, to maintain the reduction of non-domestic fires and ensure the continued safety, from fire, of employees and visitors to these premises.

Do you agree with this proposal?



How Do I Get In Touch?

You can also make general comments about our CRMP in our online survey.

We want to hear from you whatever your view of the Service and always welcome your comments. There are many ways you can share your views with us.

Fill in our online survey:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CRMP23-24/>



For more information please visit:

www.ddfire.gov.uk



If you have any difficulties completing our online survey you can call us on 0345 305 8383 or write to us for a paper copy at:

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Check out our social media feeds:



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