



County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service

Annual Report

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

A review of our work from the past year

April 2024– March 2025

Chiefs Welcome

Welcome to the Annual Report for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS). Our fantastic staff are always here to keep your community safe, and this is our chance to show you the wealth of work that we do every day and night of the year.

Over the past year, we've accomplished an incredible amount together, from our vital emergency response efforts to our proactive work in prevention and protection across our communities. It's truly been a year of celebration, marking 50 years since the union of Durham and Darlington Fire Services into the organisation we know today.

As we honoured the original recruits of Course S1 from 1974, we proudly welcomed our newest recruits in Course 171. Alongside these milestones, we've celebrated awards recognising both individual achievements and organisational excellence. We have experienced some challenges too, but we constantly strive to learn from them and improve whenever we can. All this is coupled with a highly skilled, and highly motivated workforce which is a credit to our Combined Fire Authority and the communities they serve.

I am extremely proud of our staff for the way in which they carry out their day to day duties with dedication, kindness and professionalism, and keep people, property and the environment safe. A big thank you to them, and also to you, our communities and business owners who work with us to keep everyone safe.

Chief Fire Officer

Steve Helps





Key investments from the Combined Fire Authority (CFA)

Investing in Electric

The Service has made significant strides in sustainability through its capital estates programme. Fire stations including High Handenhold, Consett and Seaham have been fitted with photovoltaic solar panels as part of an 'invest to save' initiative. There is also work being undertaken to improve our electric vehicle charging infrastructure, which has been installed at key strategic locations across the Service area. This has enabled a transition of response officer vehicles to electric which creates fuel cost savings in addition to the reduction of carbon emissions.

Building Upgrades

During the past year, as part of our minor capital improvement programme, Peterlee and Middleton-in-Teesdale Fire Stations have been modernised to enhance staff welfare and optimise procedures for managing contaminated fire kit. Additionally, we have installed more efficient drying rooms and updated the buildings' interiors with modern finishes.

CFA approves latest Community Risk Management Plan

Every year we review how we make sure you are getting the best service we can provide by using the resources we have in place to best effect. The economic climate has had a significant impact on our budget; with increases in the goods and services we buy, the financial impact on unfunded pay awards for our staff, and significantly high energy costs. As part of our governance cycle, we carry out a public consultation with our communities and key stakeholders to seek the views and feedback on our plans and priorities for the forthcoming years.

Before we develop our plans, we carry out a detailed assessment of all the risks we face in County Durham and Darlington. As well as fires in the home and business premises, we plan to respond to road traffic collisions, incidents involving rescues from water or from a height, industrial accidents involving chemical, radioactive or biological substances and of course protecting our historic buildings like Durham Cathedral. We use all the information we gather about risks to inform our Community Risk Management Plan (**CRMP**).

As we develop our CRMP, we consult with members of the public on any specific proposals so that we can fully understand the impact they may have. In our 2024-2027 public consultation we asked you:

1. Do you agree with the Service's approach to keeping you safe?
2. Do you agree with our commitments outlined in the plan?
3. Do you have any comments on our plans for 2024-27?

In February 2024, we opened our CRMP consultation to the public. The consultation was open for 12 weeks and accessible through an online survey. Additionally, engagement with the public took place at Service events, meetings, and street stalls.

We were pleased that the combination of online and face to face consultation resulted in 799 responses to our survey, with over 240 individuals taking time to offer detailed feedback on our plans.

You agreed with the Service's approach to keeping you safe by using our CRMP to regularly review national, regional and local risks, ensuring our fire engines are prepared to respond when, and where they are most needed. You also agreed with our plan to implement the eight commitments outlined in the CRMP.

All plans we produce are reviewed by our CFA, and the final version of the CRMP received approval in June 2024. We remain dedicated to integrating the CRMP into everything we do at CDDFRS.



CFA Membership

Members of the CFA are elected from each of the two constituent local authorities – County Durham and Darlington. The number of members from each local authority is determined by the size of the electoral representation within each local authority. The Fire Authority's political balance is also a reflection of that of the two local authorities.



**Councillor
Paul Sexton – Chair**
Reform UK
Chester-le-Street South



**Councillor
Robert Potts – Vice Chair**
Reform UK
Evenwood



**Councillor
Adrian Schulman**
Reform UK
Crook



**Councillor
Christine Blatchford**
Reform UK
Stanley



**Councillor
Dawn Bellingham**
Reform UK
Horden and
Dene House



**Councillor
David Freeman**
Liberal Democrat
Elvet, Gilesgate and
Shincliffe



**Councillor
Eric Marvin**
Liberal Democrat
Belmont



**Councillor
Gary Hutchinson**
Independant
Bowburn and Coxhoe



**Councillor
Ian Catchpole**
Reform UK
Sedgefield



**Councillor
Jackie Teasdale**
Reform UK
Delves Lane



**Councillor
James Stephenson**
Reform UK
Shildon and
Dene Valley



**Councillor
Jan Blakey**
Independant
Bowburn and Coxhoe



**Councillor
Jasmine Fox**
Reform UK
Lower Teesdale



**Councillor
Joe Quinn**
Reform UK
Ferryhill



**Councillor
Kate Rowland**
Reform UK
Shildon and Dene Valley



**Councillor
Kathryn Rooney**
Liberal Democrat
Consett North



**Councillor
Louise Taylor**
Reform UK
Easington and
Shotton



**Councillor
Richard Bell**
Conservative
Upper Teesdale



**Councillor
Rob Crute**
Labour
Blackhalls and
Hesledens



**Councillor
Scott Woodhouse**
Reform UK
Castle Eden and
Passfield



**Councillor
Stephen Gray**
Reform UK
West Auckland



**Councillor
Andrew Anderson**
Labour
Bank Top and Lascelles



**Councillor
David Ray**
Labour
Bank Top and
Lascelles



**Councillor
Gerald Lee**
Conservative
Heighington and
Coniscliffe



**Councillor
Matthew Snedker**
Green Party
College



The members of the CFA were formally confirmed at the June 2025 CFA meeting following the local elections held by Durham County Council in May 2025.

Review of the Financial Year 2024/25

The CFA's spending is planned and controlled by a rigorous budget and financial management process. The CFA received resources direct from the Government in the form of the Revenue Support Grant, Services Grant, Funding Guarantee and Non-Domestic Rates, with the balance of funding coming from precepts on billing authorities for amounts chargeable to local taxpayers. During 2024/25, the Authority's net revenue expenditure, which was met from the above sources, was £35.450m, while spending on capital projects totalled £1.094m. The CFA's general reserve balance, which represents the sum set aside to meet unforeseen future circumstances, was £1.829m on 31 March 2025. This equates to 5% of the 2025/26 net expenditure budget and is in line with the CFA's policy on reserves to maintain a general reserve of 5% of net expenditure. Financial performance against the approved budget is reported to elected members on a quarterly basis throughout the year.

For further information on the CFA's financial performance visit our website.

Summary of Accounts

The CFA's accounts show how it uses its resources to deliver a fire and rescue service across County Durham and Darlington. The summary accounts provide an overview of where the funds come from, how they are used and the financial position on 31 March 2025. The 2024/25 Statement of Accounts is available on the **Service website.**

Budget Heading	£000
Expenditure	
Employees	29,995
Premises	3,131
Transport	703
Supplies and services	4,503
Contingencies	0
Provisions and write-offs	-38
Capital financing	3,648
Transfers to reserves	1,697
Total Expenditure	43,639
Income	
Government grants	5,282
Other income	2,616
Transfers from reserves	291
Total income	8,189
Net expenditure	35,450
Financed by:	
Government funding	12,542
Local business rates	1,549
Council tax	21,492
Deficit on collection fund	-133
Total funding	35,450

Prevention

Home Fire Safety – Those most at risk in our communities

There are approximately 330,000 domestic properties within County Durham and Darlington, the Service's resources are limited so we must use them as efficiently as possible. Last year we conducted 18,282 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) which is nearly three times more than the average of fire and rescue services in England. Whilst our methodology for how we approached targeting our HFSVs is based on the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidance, we knew we could further improve it.

We have conducted a thorough review and implemented substantial enhancements to our approach for targeting HFSVs to individuals most at risk by introducing a new methodology. Working closely with key partner agencies we have introduced additional datasets linked to fire vulnerability, moving to a person-centred approach and this has significantly enhanced risk identification. We incorporated this into a new interactive live dashboard and map which enables our staff to deliver targeted HFSV efficiently and effectively. Feedback from staff has demonstrated that this approach has been positively received and the benefits are being realised. This approach provides a comprehensive and reliable picture of anticipated risk and ensures those most at risk from fire get our support.





Developing Resilience

Our Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team have delivered their ninth Developing Resilience Programme. The Developing Resilience Programme is a targeted early intervention initiative led by us and funded by Durham Police and Crime Commissioner. The programme is designed to support vulnerable young people to build the skills and confidence needed to navigate life's challenges.

The programme is delivered from our Fire Stations by the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team with support from operational staff and takes six days to complete. During the course of the programme participants work towards the Kings Trust Level 1 Award in Developing Resilience.

Operation Trailblazer

Operation Trailblazer was a pilot scheme, funded by the Home Office, which aims to stamp out antisocial behaviour in our communities by ensuring our Firefighters, Police Officers, Local Authorities and Housing Associations are proactively working together to reduce disorder in our communities.

On-Call Firefighters from High Handenhold Fire Station were busy engaging with our communities at multiple events including Armed Forces Day in Stanley and supporting events in Durham with the Countryside Rangers and Wardens.

Meanwhile, Firefighters from Durham Red Watch joined forces with police officers from Durham Constabulary to install 'crime prevention tools' in Bearpark Woods, Durham. The measures aim to crackdown on antisocial behaviour and motorbikes in the area.

Crew Manager Mark Bryden said: "Our Service and police colleagues have worked together to install the new measures in Bearpark Woods in a bid to deter people from causing antisocial behaviour.

"The joint initiative has seen us work with residents to help tackle the issues, which are having a negative impact on those living and spending time in the area.

"We are pleased that our Service has been able to play our part in helping to make the community a safer place."

Protection

Safest People, Safest Places

Our service has a legal duty to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Our Firefighters and specialist Business Fire Safety Officers work collaboratively to inspect commercial premises, offering advice and guidance to owners and occupiers to help keep our communities safe.

Where necessary, enforcement action is taken to ensure legal compliance and a great example of this occurred in October 2024 following receipt of a fire safety complaint, regarding a house in multiple occupation (HMO) used as student accommodation. The on-duty Business Fire Safety Officer attended and due to the conditions found on the premises, they immediately issued a Prohibition Notice. The service has a Memorandum of Understanding with the local authority regarding the responsibility for HMOs and as such the situation was highlighted to Durham County Council (DCC) licensing department. We worked closely with DCC and supported them to exercise their legislative powers – an example of sharing knowledge and specialist skills to enable an effective partnership with mutual benefits, resulting in a building that now meets the appropriate fire safety standards.

Continuous Professional Development

In September last year, our Business Fire Safety Team hosted a regional fire safety continuous professional development event at Durham Fire Station. The day-long session gave attendees the opportunity to share fire safety best practice, learning and knowledge, particularly in relation to Automatic Fire Detection within the built environment. There were approximately 30 fire safety specialists in attendance from CDDFRS, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Cleveland Fire Brigade and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service.



Household Waste Recycling Centre

Firefighters worked through the night at the Waste Transfer Station, on Whessoe Road in Darlington following a fire which was first reported just after 5am on the 22nd of May 2024.

The fire started within an industrial unit that houses general household waste, in this instance applying water with a hose reel directly on the fire wouldn't be enough to extinguish it. Instead, our crews removed the smouldering waste – of which there was around 120 tonnes – bit by bit using specialist machinery. Once removed from the industrial unit, crews then needed to dampen down the waste and ensure it had stopped smouldering.

It was a lengthy job but a rotating shift of Firefighters worked through the night to get the job done. The fire was finally extinguished around 4pm the following day. In total three fire engines, one Aerial Ladder Platform, a water bowser and around 20 Firefighters worked tirelessly to bring the fire under control.



Prized Motorbikes Saved

The owners of a Shildon motorbike shop which was devastated by fire have hailed our Firefighters as heroes. Five fire engines and our Aerial Ladder Platform were called to the PM Racing Team motorbike shop on Church Street, Shildon just after 10am on Monday the 13th of January 2025.

Firefighters from Bishop Auckland, Newton Aycliffe, Darlington, Durham and Spennymoor spent several hours tackling the blaze and thanks to their efforts, they saved the shop owners beloved Ducati 916sp along with the other classic bikes. Owners Patrizio and Marie Marchetti said: "They are so brave risking their lives.

"The fire was terrifying and we are still in shock, but your Firefighters face this every day and it's amazing to think what bravery courage and strength that takes in a person. You really are heroes. Thank you all so much."





Response

Barn fire on the A1

Fire crews worked tirelessly for over 24 hours to extinguish a barn fire in the Sherburn House area of Durham close to the A1 motorway. The fire was first reported at 8:30am on the 19th of January 2025 and the blaze is believed to have been caused by the natural self-heating of sawdust stored in the barn, which quickly spread to baled hay also kept within the barn.

At the height of the incident, six fire engines and a bulk water carrier were in attendance. Over the course of approximately 29 hours, 11 crews attended the scene.

Firefighters worked in close collaboration with the farm owners, using a combination of firefighting techniques and farm machinery to contain the fire and prevent the fire spreading. Their efforts continued through the evening and into the following day, successfully protecting nearby buildings and livestock.

Fires involving materials such as hay can often present challenging conditions for our crews, but thanks to the teamwork and dedication of all involved, the incident was managed effectively.

Animal Rescue

In March, Firefighters were called to a report of a house fire in Sunderland Bridge village. The first fire crew was on scene within four minutes of the call-out.

After a quick assessment, the crew forced entry into the property and were met with a fire in the home's master bedroom, with the bed well alight.

While Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus tackled the fire, the Watch Manger rescued Harvey, the 10-year-old Beagle, bringing him outside to safety.

Upon investigation, the fire is believed to have been caused by two mirrors reflecting against each other in the sun. This is known as solar convergence and although occurrences are rare, it's important to consider where you place your mirrors and other glass ornaments within your home to reduce the risk of this happening.





Training

Exercise Cerberus

In March 2024, CDDFRS took part in a large-scale, multi-agency Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) exercise held at St. James' Park in Newcastle. The exercise brought together a wide range of partner agencies, including North East Ambulance Service, Northumbria Police, Local Authorities, and several neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services.

Designed to simulate the declaration of an MTA incident during a major sporting event, the scenario tested both specialist and non-specialist responses under realistic and challenging conditions. The joint exercise aimed to enhance coordination, communication, and operational effectiveness between all agencies involved, ensuring that emergency services are fully prepared to protect the public in the event of such a complex and high-risk incident.



Helipad

In July 2024 we unveiled our brand new helicopter training zone at the Service training centre in Bowburn. This is a joint venture between 3t Training Services; the UK's largest energy sector training provider, and Vital Fire Solutions – the Service's trading arm.

The state of the art facility features a helicopter simulator, along with a full-size helideck – allowing us to offer a number of new courses for offshore workers.

This training zone is a fantastic asset to the region, not only through the utilisation of local companies and contractors during the building stage but by also giving a boost to the local economy and has created two part time jobs at VFS.

Chemical Spill Exercise

In July 2024, the Service took part in a multi-agency exercise at a chemical plant in Newton Aycliffe, designed to test the site's External Emergency Plan. The exercise provided an opportunity for CDDFRS and partner agencies to rehearse their roles in managing a significant incident with the potential to impact both the site and the surrounding community.

The key objectives of the exercise included exercising multi-agency command and control arrangements appropriate to an external emergency at the site, to validate communication procedures, including the effective use of JESIP principles, and finally, to ensure all agencies could share information and coordinate actions efficiently.

The exercise was conducted at a Tactical Level, incorporating Tactical Coordination Groups (TCG) to test decision making, joint working, and the ability for multiple agencies to respond effectively in a complex scenario. This ensured that all partners could confidently operate in a coordinated and structured manner during a real emergency.



Our Year in Numbers

Our control room received **16,528** emergency calls

We completed

18,282

Home Fire Safety Visits

Of all primary fires attended by the Service

56.7%

of them were started deliberately

There were

180

accidental dwelling fires

The total number of injuries from accidental house fires was

15

We inspected
Fire Hydrants

6,080

We completed

2,075

Business Fire Safety Audits

We had

1,234

special service incidents which included
attending road traffic collisions

We received

627

false alarms caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment



The
Fire Fighters
Charity

Throughout the year our staff and fire cadets across the Service carry out many different challenges to raise money for the Firefighters Charity including car washes, bucket collections, raffles and tombola's at our Open Days. With the fantastic efforts of our staff Durham and Darlington Firefighters Charity raised an incredible

£55,428

between April 2024 and March 2025.



Course 171

In September, following a rigorous recruitment process, we welcomed 10 new Wholtime Firefighter recruits ready and raring to start their Firefighting journey with a 14-week intensive training programme.

Throughout the weeks, Course 171 underwent demanding physical and theoretical training, learning essential firefighting skills and safety procedures.

In December, they celebrated the culmination of their training with a special pass out parade at the Service training centre in Bowburn. In front of proud families, friends and colleagues, the new Firefighters demonstrated their skills in numerous live drills.

With training complete, the new Firefighters have started their firefighting careers at fire stations where they will serve and protect the communities throughout County Durham and Darlington.

Protecting our Piece of History

We have many buildings of great heritage and importance within County Durham and Darlington, non-more so than Durham Cathedral. In June, Firefighters from Durham and Spennymoor Fire Station carried out a training exercise to ensure they are prepared to save precious artefacts from the historic building in the event of a fire.

Working alongside experts from the Cathedral, crews practiced salvage plans which would see Firefighters protect items either by controlled removal or protection in situ.



Celebrating 50 years

In 2024, CDDFRS marked 50 years since the merger of County Durham and Darlington Fire Services.

On the 1st of April 1948, in the aftermath of the Second World War, a fire service covering County Durham was first established but it wasn't until 1974 when a reorganisation brought Darlington into partnership with their County Durham neighbours that County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service was officially created.

This milestone was not only a celebration of the Service's evolution but also a heartfelt tribute to the people who shaped its legacy. From the very first intake of Firefighters to today's modern crews, the anniversary was a moment to reflect, reconnect, and look ahead.

To mark the milestone year, we planned a host of celebration activities and sought to reunite former Firefighters and staff.



Past control room



*G1 - 1974
reporting for duty*





S1 Intake Reporting For Duty

On April 1st 1974, the fire services of County Durham and Darlington merged into one bigger and better service. That boundary change heralded in a new era and to mark the change, a cohort of 30 trainee firefighters were hand selected to begin their training.

The evening before, the S1 intake reported for duty at Framwellgate Moor Training School, for in those days the intense training saw new recruits live on campus. The recruits took part in a gruelling course lasting 10 weeks before they were posted to Fire Stations around the Service area.

S1 reunite in 2024

While not all 30 would graduate on to become fully-fledged Firefighters, many did, and many of those surviving Firefighters remain firm friends 50 years on.

50th Anniversary Open day

A special open day was organised on the 15th of July for staff past and present to come along, reconnect, share memories and make new ones all whilst celebrating the legacy of CDDFRS.

Control Room

In December, we welcomed some of our former Firefighters and Control staff to have a look around the Control Room at Service Headquarters in Belmont.

Thanks to those former employees that came along and enjoyed a tour of our current control room, chatting to our Chief Fire Officer, while looking through archived footage of days gone by and kindly sharing their own experiences of working for the Service.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Service has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group which meets regularly to review the ongoing work which supports this important strategy. We have representative champions from across the Service covering the nine protected characteristic strands of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief and disability.

In 2024/25 we supported campaigns to raise awareness of events such as SANDS – Baby Loss Week, White Ribbon Day, Dyslexia Awareness Week, International Women's and Men's Days, and attended the Asian Fire Service Association summer conference. We hosted several Bystander Awareness training sessions and, in the year ahead we will continue to review how we can support our staff and members of the community.

In November we partnered with North East social enterprise Teakisi, together, we are on a joint mission to help attract candidates from minoritised communities to apply for roles in our Service and help build on our inclusive workforce policies.



Our Achievements

Certificate of Appreciation

In July we took the time to champion Fire Control Operator, Chloe Diver, who has been recognised with a Certificate of Appreciation after dealing with a harrowing 999 call.

Chloe, from Coxhoe, received a call earlier this year reporting a serious house fire in County Durham. The 27-year-old, who only joined the Control team in November 2023, remained calm and professional while speaking to the distressed caller to get all of the information she needed and to assure them that Firefighters were on their way.

On the 11th of July her actions were recognised with a Certificate of Appreciation which was presented by Chief Fire Officer, Steve Helps.

Chloe, who initially joined the Service as a Finance Apprentice in February 2019, said: "I feel very proud to have received the award having only been in Control for such a short period of time, and it was lovely to receive the award surrounded by my Control and Finance team."

She continued: "It was a particularly difficult call as the caller was in clear distress, but I remained calm and professional and remembered that all my training for this role had prepared me for this.

"I immediately took control of the call and issued fire survival to the caller to ensure they were safe and reassured them that help was on the way.

"I didn't really have time to think about how I felt when the call came in, however, it was reassuring to me that I had my team around me to support me during the call."



Praising Chloe for her professionalism during the challenging incident, Chief Fire Officer, Steve Helps said: "A huge well done to Chloe for the way she was able to handle what was a very distressing call to establish all the details we needed to inform and deploy our crews to the incident.

"Our Control Room Operators play a vital role in our Service and I am delighted to be able to recognise Chloe's part in the amazing work the team does every day."

Long Service Awards

In June, we once again hosted our annual Long Service Awards at Durham Town Hall. This event is about celebrating the achievements of staff in both operational and corporate roles who have given years of unwavering dedication to serving the community. This year we honoured a total of 45 members of staff who were presented with medals marking 20, 30, and 40 years with the fire service. We also honoured our Deputy Chief Executive and Treasurer, Tony Hope, who celebrated an incredible 45 years of service.

Congratulations to all of our staff and thank you for your dedicated service.

UKRO Finalists

In September, CDDFRS Firefighters delivered outstanding performances at both the regional and national levels of the United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO) Extrication Challenge.

The extrication team triumphed at the regional event taking 1st place among ten competing teams before going on to compete against 30 fire and rescue services from across the UK at the National event. The team secured an impressive 6th place in a complex rescue scenario involving two casualties!

A fantastic effort, well done to those who took part.



National Fire Apprenticeship Awards 2024



National Apprenticeship Awards

CDDFRS has received the Apprenticeship Provider Award at the National Fire Apprenticeship Awards 2024 which was part of the NFCC Members Spring Conference in April.

The accolade recognises the outstanding performance and innovative training delivery of our apprenticeship programmes. From training the next generation of Firefighters to developing staff across the Service, our range of apprenticeship schemes help to attract new talent and enable individuals to reach their full potential.

Cheryl Porter, Learning and Development Manager at CDDFRS, said: "Apprenticeships are extremely valuable to the Service, so we are delighted to receive this award."

"It is a testament to the hard work that goes on behind the scenes to run our apprenticeship programmes and the dedication and effort from the apprentices themselves."

Better Health at Work Award

From blood pressure stations to menopause awareness training, Pilates classes to fitness challenges - health and wellbeing is at the forefront of everything we do here at CDDFRS. To help keep our Firefighters and staff happy, healthy and in the best shape possible.

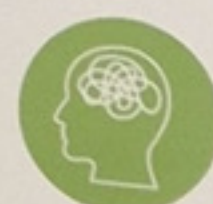
In May, we were thrilled to have been recognised with a Better Health at Work Awards at Maintaining excellence level at a special event in Durham.

For the past 10 years we've received the award annually, largely thanks to the dedicated work of our Health and Fitness Advisor Joe Astbury. Well done Joe and to all those who help him keep our staff fire fit, happy and supported at work.

Better Health at Work Award



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Helping your
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prioritise their
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Employment Edge Award

Congratulations to our Learning and Development Manager Cheryl Porter on winning an Employment Edge Award. Cheryl co-ordinates the delivery of every apprenticeship within the Service and is currently supporting over 50 apprentices through a range of courses from leadership to firefighting. But it's her work with Gateshead College, where she oversees the Level 5 Operations Manager apprenticeship that has seen her receive the top award.

Cheryl was nominated by Gateshead College course trainer and assessor, Helen Smith. In the nomination, Helen hailed Cheryl's 'enthusiasm, dedication and unwavering support towards apprentices'.

She said: "She consistently goes above and beyond.

"She demonstrates respect and appreciation for the diversity of all apprentices, always offering support and maintaining strong connections between the employer, apprentices and her colleagues."

Armed Forces Covenant

In February 2025, our ongoing dedication to supporting the armed forces was once again recognised with an Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award, thanks to the 'outstanding' support we provide to the armed forces community.

Established by the Ministry of Defence, the scheme was designed to acknowledge, publicly thank and honour employers that provide exceptional support to the armed forces community and defence by going above and beyond their pledges, as part of the Armed Forces Covenant.





County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service

Useful Contacts:

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