



Community Risk Profile

2025 - 2029



County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service



Foreword

Welcome to the Community Risk Profile for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

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

Our vision is to have the safest people and safest places and we will always strive to achieve this by delivering a professional, innovative and effective fire and rescue service, and by placing 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. The Community Risk Profile together with our Station Plans sets out the risks we face. Our Community Risk Management Plan 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 departments face.

You can find all our [Service Plan documents](#) on our website.

Every year we ensure that our services can be delivered within the budget we are set. Funding challenges and rising costs mean that we expect to face a very difficult financial climate in light of the current economic conditions, and restrictions on the amount of income we can raise through Council Tax.

The next four years are therefore likely to require further innovation and changes to the way we operate, and this Community Risk Profile will help us to achieve this. Our core strength is our people who are proud to work for an organisation connected closely with its communities and who are genuinely committed to changing and saving people's lives. We cannot provide our services without support from our excellent staff, and we thank them for their continued hard work and dedication. Our partner organisations and neighbouring FRSs also deserve great credit for supporting and collaborating with us in the work that we do.

We are proud that our communities are safer than ever from the risks of fires within the home and collisions on our roads and we recognise the vital part that the people of County Durham and Darlington play in making their own areas great places to live, work, study and visit. We thank all our communities for their engagement with us and for their contribution to having the safest people and the safest places.

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Introduction

The [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) requires that every fire and rescue authority must assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect their communities, whether they are local, cross border, multiauthority or national in nature. These risks can be anything from large and small fires to flooding or terrorist attacks.

Risk is constantly evolving within our communities. Climate change, developments in technology, changes in human behaviour and many other factors can all influence the impact of hazardous events on our communities. There are elements of national, regional and local risks throughout the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) area, with a broad range of consequences for the people who live, work, study and visit here. It is therefore essential that our risks are identified using robust data and analysed using an effective methodology. This Community Risk Profile (CRP) draws on data and business intelligence from a range of sources, including the National and Community Risk Registers, information from our partners and our own operational incident data to create the risk profile. Our approach ensures that the plans we put in place to mitigate our risks are fully informed.

As a fire and rescue service (FRS) we have had to adapt how we work to respond to the budget pressures that we face. It is essential that we understand both the people and the risks to enable us to direct our resources correctly.

Where necessary, we will adjust our existing provision or build new capacity to ensure we have the right resources in place to provide the best possible services to our communities. As we strive to become more efficient and effective, we will examine opportunities for effective collaboration and partnership working, as some of the risks to our communities are complex and require mitigating action from a range of key stakeholders. The relative position of the CRP within the Service risk management planning cycle is illustrated below:



The risk scenarios described within our CRP may apply to all members of our communities; those who live, work and study within County Durham and Darlington, those who visit and travel through the Service area, and depending on the nature of

emergency incidents the risks faced by our firefighters and other emergency responders.

About our area

The Service area covers the two Unitary Authorities of County Durham and Darlington and a geographic area of 939 square miles with a population of approximately 642,744 people (LG Inform, 2023¹). Within the Service area there are approximately 319,096 households and around 27,870 business premises (Ordnance Survey Addressbase 2025²). The area contains a cathedral City, a range of large and medium industrial towns, along with large rural areas and is categorised by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as being predominantly rural. The majority of people live in the urban areas but a significant percentage (approximately 9% live in the widespread rural villages and hamlets.

The county has a mixture of mining, farming and heavy railway heritage, with the latter especially noteworthy in the southeast of the county, in Darlington and Shildon. In the centre of the city of Durham, Durham Castle and Cathedral are UNESCO designated World Heritage Sites and throughout the service area there are many Grade 1 and 2 listed buildings reflecting our rich cultural heritage.

The area has a good range of transport links, with the A1(M) and A19 corridors providing effective road transport and the East Coast Main Line enabling rail travel through the county. Teesside International Airport provides air travel to domestic and overseas destinations and the coastline to the east of the service area includes a port which receives a significant gross annual cargo.

Due to our rural communities covering a significant geographical proportion of the Service area, isolation can be an issue which increases the risk of being vulnerable.

There are persistent income and health inequalities throughout our communities within the Service area, with levels of deprivation being significantly higher, and life expectancy lower, than national averages. Loneliness and isolation may also have a significant impact on both physical and mental health, and both the County Durham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Darlington Borough Profile describe that hoarding and excessive alcohol/substance misuse increase can have a negative impact on the wellbeing of individuals.

CDDFRS delivers its core prevention, protection and response functions within the Service area from 15 strategically placed fire stations, with 26 fire appliances during the day, and 24 through the night. The Service borders 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.

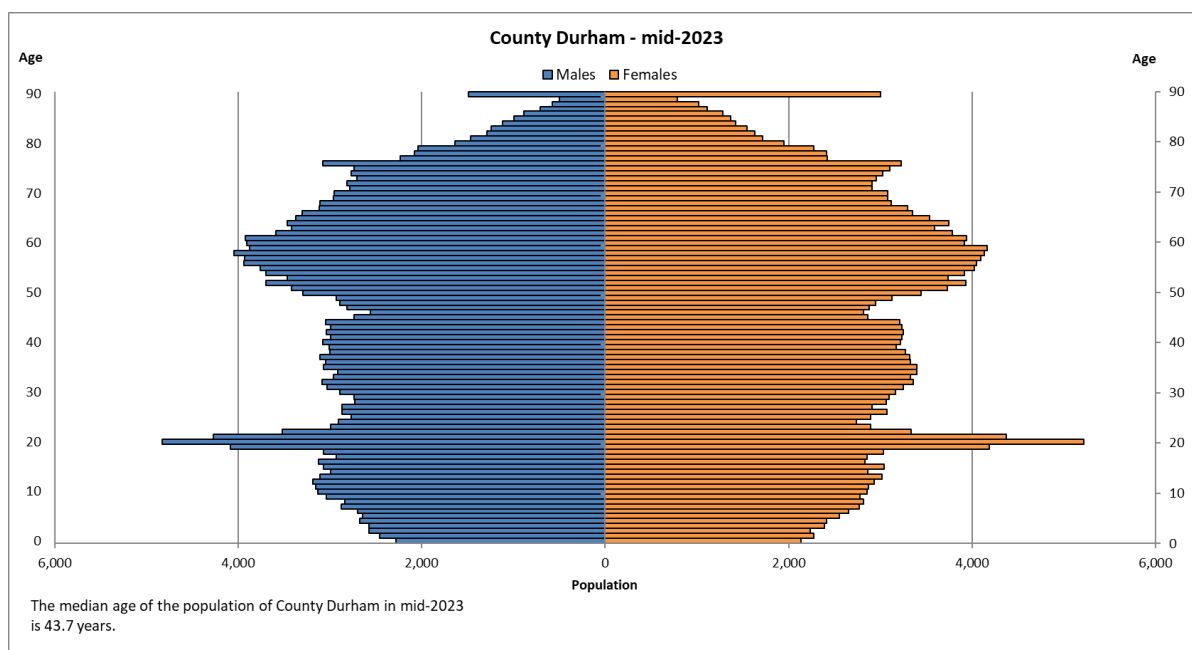
About our Communities

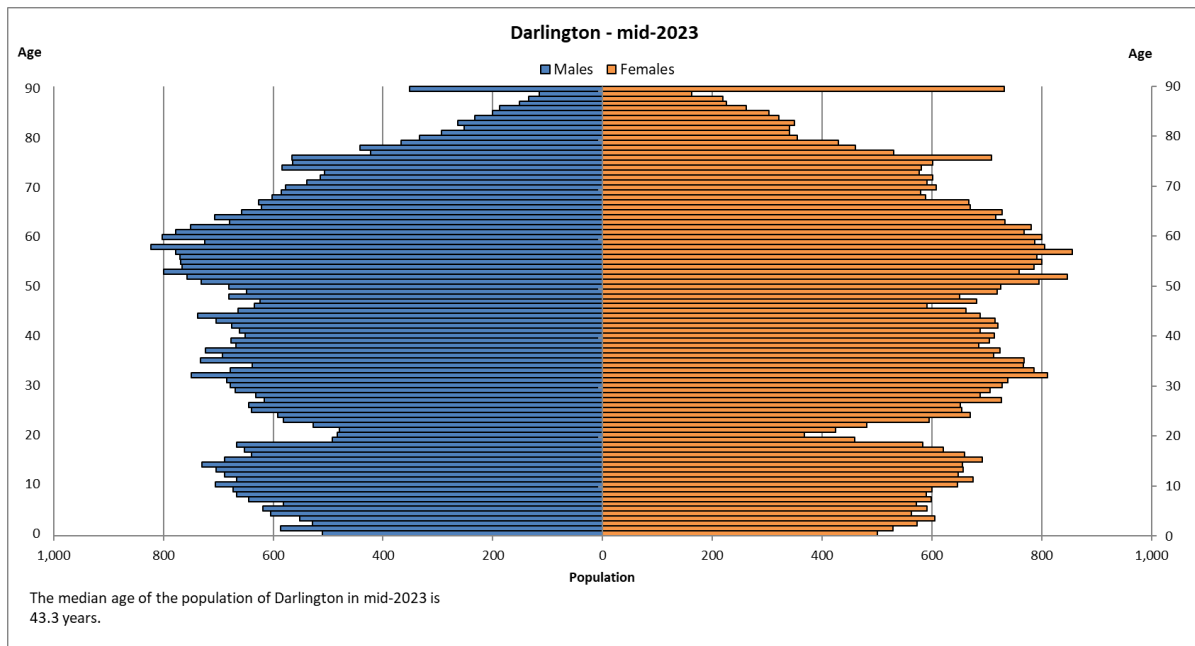
Population and gender

The latest mid-year population estimates are shown below:

Unitary Authority	Male population	Female population	Population
County Durham	259,564	272,618	532,182
Darlington	54,068	56,494	110,562
Total	313,632	329,112	642,744

The population of our Service area can be seen in the graphs below where it is also broken down by age and gender (Office for National Statistics, 2023³).





The population pyramids shown above for both County Durham and Darlington illustrates how many dependents there are within each Local Authority. There are generally two groups of dependents; young dependents (aged below 15) and elderly dependents (aged over 65). The shape of each population pyramid indicates the growing number of dependents within each local authority.

Age Groups

The table below provides a detailed comparison of age group distributions among the populations of County Durham, Darlington and England as a whole. It also highlights the percentage differences in each age category between each local authority and England, offering insight into how demographic patterns in the local authorities differ from national trends. Compared to the national average for England, both County Durham and Darlington have a greater proportion of residents aged 65 and over living in these areas. The data provided in the below tables was sourced from LG Inform¹.

Age	Darlington population	Durham Population	England Population	Darlington difference from England	Durham difference from England
0 to 15	17.95%	16.51%	18.46%	-0.51%	-1.94%
16 to 64	61.06%	61.78%	62.85%	-1.79%	-1.07%
65+	21.00%	21.70%	18.69%	2.31%	3.01%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		

A more detailed age group distribution can be seen below for the populations of County Durham, Darlington and England.

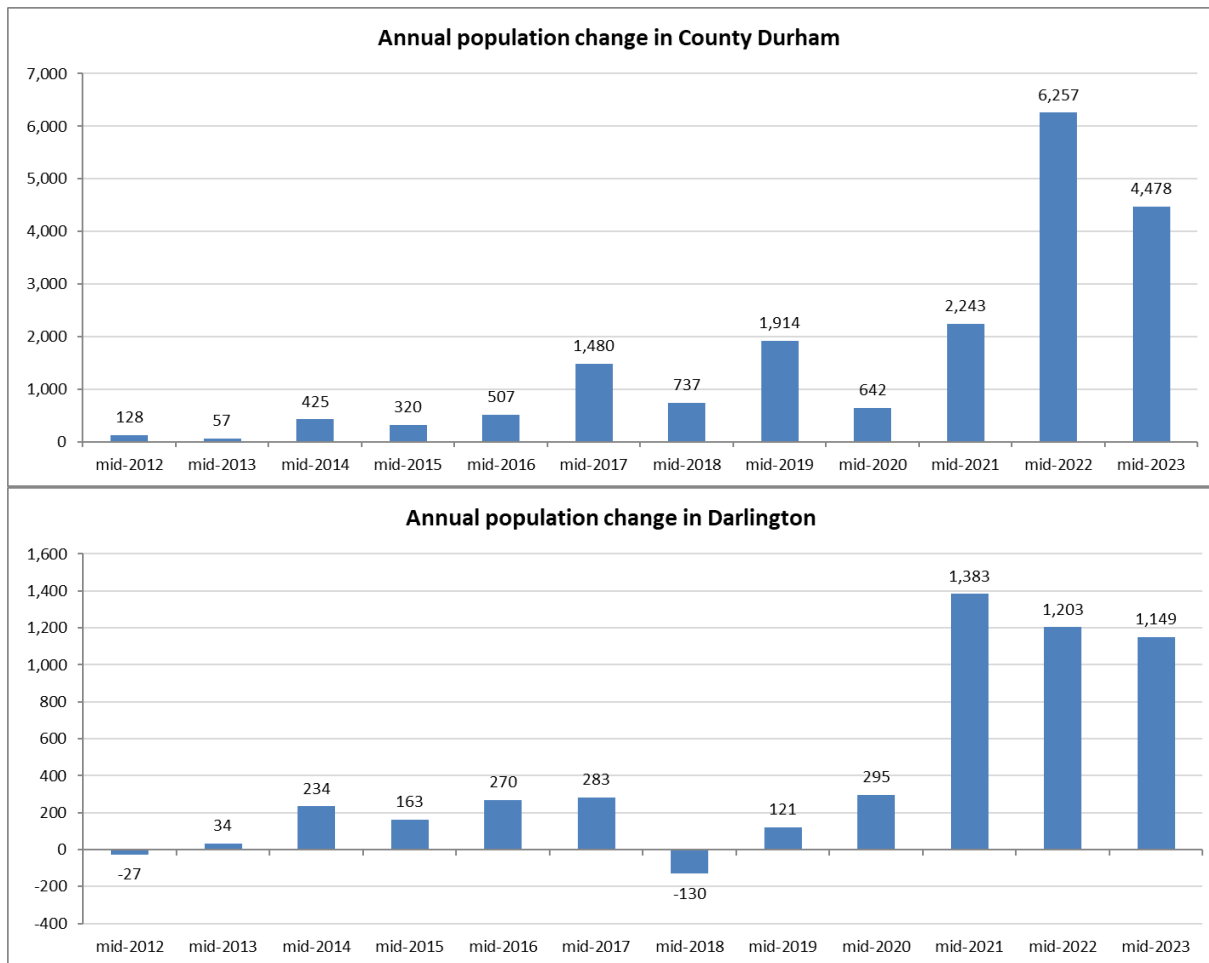
Age	Darlington population	Durham Population	England Population	Darlington difference from England	Durham difference from England
0 to 4	5.02%	4.51%	5.31%	-0.29%	-0.80%
5 to 9	5.55%	5.20%	5.80%	-0.25%	-0.61%
10 to 14	6.13%	5.66%	6.12%	0.01%	-0.46%
15 to 19	5.56%	6.06%	5.90%	-0.34%	0.16%
20 to 24	4.70%	6.97%	5.99%	-1.29%	0.98%
25 to 29	5.99%	5.45%	6.55%	-0.56%	-1.10%
30 to 34	6.56%	5.90%	6.96%	-0.39%	-1.06%
35 to 39	6.41%	5.96%	6.85%	-0.44%	-0.89%
40 to 44	6.29%	5.88%	6.56%	-0.27%	-0.68%
45 to 49	5.93%	5.37%	5.95%	-0.02%	-0.58%
50 to 54	6.92%	6.83%	6.60%	0.31%	0.22%
55 to 59	7.15%	7.52%	6.70%	0.45%	0.82%
60 to 64	6.80%	7.00%	6.02%	0.78%	0.99%
65 to 69	5.72%	6.06%	5.00%	0.72%	1.06%
70 to 74	5.14%	5.43%	4.49%	0.65%	0.94%
75 to 79	4.60%	4.81%	4.14%	0.47%	0.67%
80 to 84	2.78%	2.82%	2.56%	0.23%	0.26%
85 to 89	1.77%	1.73%	1.60%	0.17%	0.13%
90+	0.98%	0.85%	0.90%	0.08%	-0.06%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		

Current population and future projections

Population density is the concentration of individuals within a species in a specific geographic locale. Population density data can be used to quantify demographic information and to assess relationships with ecosystems, human health, and infrastructure.

Unitary Authority	Area (square km)	Population (Using 2020 mid-year estimates)	Current population density (per square km)
County Durham	2,226	532,182	239.08
Darlington	197	110,562	561.23
Total	2,423	642,744	265.27

The population within the County Durham and Darlington Service area for 2023 is currently estimated to be 642,744 people. The below graphs highlight that within both County Durham and Darlington there has been a notable increase in people living in the areas year on year since 2021.



Crime

Crime rates can be an indicator of risk within communities, as it may be linked to deprivation and is certainly linked to arson.

The total level of recorded crime throughout the communities of County Durham and Darlington for year ending March 2025 stands at 92.5 crimes (excluding fraud) per 1000 people.

This is lower than the North East regional crime rate of 99.5, but greater than the national England crime rate of 86.1.

The reported rates of violence against a person (which includes homicide, violence both with and without injury, stalking and harassment and death or serious injury caused by unlawful driving) are at a higher rate in County Durham and Darlington than in England rate but lower than the North East rate. Both robbery and theft offences are less than the North East and England rates, while criminal damage and arson is significantly higher across the North East compared to the national England rate.

Public order offences in Durham and Darlington are lower than the North East rate yet higher than the national England rate, while drug offences in County Durham and Darlington are lower than the North East and national England rates.

Rates of offence per 1,000 population are shown in this table below:

Area Name	Durham and Darlington	North East	England
Population figures (mid-2023) rounded to 100	642,700	2,711,400	57,690,300
Household figures (mid-2021) rounded to 100	283,700	1,175,700	23,436,200
Violence against the person	34.5	35.8	31.5
Homicide	0.0	0.0	0.0
Death or serious injury - unlawful driving	0.0	0.0	0.0
Violence with injury	8.1	10.3	8.5
Violence without injury	14.7	13.8	13.3
Stalking and harassment	11.6	11.6	9.7
Sexual offences	3.7	4.0	3.4
Robbery	0.4	0.8	1.3
Theft offences	26.7	30.8	29.1
Burglary	5.0	5.2	4.1
Residential burglary	3.4	3.7	2.8
Residential burglary (households)	7.6	8.5	6.9
Non-residential burglary	1.6	1.6	1.3
Vehicle offences	4.2	5.0	5.8
Theft from the person	0.2	0.5	2.4
Bicycle theft	0.5	0.7	0.9
Shoplifting	11.3	12.5	8.7
All other theft offences	5.6	6.8	7.1
Criminal damage and arson	13.7	12.3	7.4
Drug offences	2.3	3.3	3.3
Possession of weapons offences	0.8	1.0	0.9
Public order offences	7.3	8.6	7.1
Miscellaneous crimes against society	3.2	3.0	2.0
Total recorded crime (excluding fraud)	92.5	99.5	86.1

(Office for National Statistics, 2025⁴)

Health

Health outcomes are a powerful factor in helping us to determine risk within our communities. We know that if people are vulnerable then they are more at risk of being involved in an incident. We use data from the NHS Fingertips Profiles [Public health profiles - OHID \(2019\)](#) to help us determine the health profile of our Service area and

this in turn helps us with targeting our prevention work and knowing who to provide more in-depth support to. The following health indicators help us to build this picture.

Dementia and Alzheimer's disease

People diagnosed with Dementia and Alzheimer's disease often have symptoms that may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. These changes are often small to start with, but for someone with dementia they have become severe enough to affect daily life, including behaviour and mood changes.

Dementia mainly affects people over the age of 65 (one in 14 people in this age group have dementia), and the likelihood of developing dementia increases significantly with age. As population ageing continues to accelerate within all our communities, the number of people living with dementia is set to rise sharply in the decades to come. The estimated dementia diagnosis rate is the percentage of people living with dementia who have received a formal diagnosis. The estimated Dementia Diagnosis rate for people aged 65 nationally for England is 62.2% ([NHS UK data, 2022](#)).

Durham

- The estimated Dementia diagnosis rate for people aged 65 and over for the for Durham is 70.4%.

Darlington

- The estimated Dementia diagnosis rate for people aged 65 and over for the for Darlington is 65.2%.

The above data was sourced from [LG inform](#).

Local Authority Health Profiles

The Local Authority Health Profiles provide an overview of health for each local authority in England. They pull together existing information in one place and contain data on a range of indicators for local populations, highlighting issues that can affect health in each locality. The Local Authority Health Profiles with their key indicators for both County Durham and Darlington are shown below:

Durham and Darlington Profiles

Life expectancy and causes of death

- The life expectancy at birth (for males) in Durham is 77.4 years which is the same as the North East regional value of 77.4 years. In comparison, Darlington is 77.6 years. Both values are lower than the national England value of 79.3 years.
- The life expectancy at birth (for females) in Durham is 81.5 years which is the same as the North East regional value of 81.5 years. In comparison, Darlington is 81.1 years. Both values are lower than the national England value of 83.2 years.
- There were 2,129 under 75 deaths from all causes in Durham, representing a value of 413.5 per 100,000 population. There were 437 under 75 deaths from

all causes in Darlington representing a value of 424.1 per 100,000 population. The North East regional value is 415.9 and the national England value is 341.6. (2023 data).

- There were 461 under 75 deaths from all cardiovascular diseases in Durham, representing a value of 88 per 100,000 population. There were 97 under 75 deaths from all cardiovascular diseases in Darlington, representing a value of 93.4. The North East regional value is 88.2 and the national England rate is 77.4 (2023 data).
- There were 747 under 75 deaths from cancer in Durham, representing a value of 142.7 per 100,000 population. In Darlington there were 135 deaths from cancer, resulting in a value of 129.0. The North East regional rate is 136.9, and the national England rate is 120.8 (2023 data).
- There were 223 suicides in Durham, representing a value of 16.4 per 100,000 population. In Darlington there were 56 suicides, representing a value of 19.6. Both local rates are higher than the North East regional value of 13.8 and significantly higher than the national England rate of 10.7 (2021 – 2023 data).

(Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023⁵)

Injuries and ill health

- There were 209 killed and seriously injured casualties on County Durham's roads, representing a value of 74.9 per 100,00 population. In Darlington there were 38 killed and seriously injured casualties on Darlington's roads, representing a value of 72.3 per 100,000 population. The North East regional value is 76.7 and the national England value is 91.9 (2023 data).
- There were 450 emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm in Durham, representing a value of 85.3 per 100,000 population. In Darlington there were 130 emergency hospital admissions representing a value of 121.0. The North East regional value is 191.3 and the national England value is 117.0 (2023 - 2024 data).
- There were 610 hip fractures in people aged 65 and over living in Durham, representing a value of 556 per 100,000. In Darlington there were 120 hip fractures in people aged 65 and over, representing a value of 519 per 100,000. The North East regional value is 608 and the national England value is 547 (2023-2024 data).
- The estimated diabetes diagnosis rate in Durham is 86.1% which is higher than the North East regional value of 82.5% and worse than the national England value of 78%. The diabetes diagnosis rate in Darlington is 85.9% (2018 data)

(Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023⁶)

Behavioural risk factors

These include alcohol consumption, smoking, being classified as overweight or obese and being physically active. In all of these factors the area demonstrated worse outcomes than for the England average.

- There were 3,433 admission episodes for alcohol related conditions in Durham, representing a value of 630 per 100,000 population. In Darlington, there were 703 admission episodes for alcohol related conditions, representing a value of 621 per 100,000 per population. The North East regional value is 737 and the national England value is 504 (2023/24 data).
- The percentage of adults (aged 18 and over) physically activity in Durham is 64.3%, in Darlington the percentage is 62.2%. The percentage of physically active adults in the North East 64.5% and the national England percentage is 67.4% (2023 - 2024 data).
- The percentage of adults (aged 18+ years) classified as overweight or obese in Durham is 70.1%, in Darlington the percentage is 71.9%. The North East regional value is 70.4% and the national England value is 64.5% (2023-2024 data).

(Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023⁷)

Child health

- There were 162 under 18s conceptions in Durham, representing a value of 19.8 per 1,000 population. In Darlington there were 31 under 18s conceptions, representing a value of 17.1. The North East regional value is 19.8 and worse than the national England value of 13.1 (2021 data).
- There were 544 individuals who smoked at their time of delivery in Durham, representing a value of 12.0%. In Darlington there were 106 individuals who smoked at their time of delivery, representing a value of 10.6%. The North East regional value is 10.2% and the national England value is 7.4% (2023 - 2024 data).
- There were 60 infant deaths, representing a value of 4.4 per 1,000 population in Durham. In Darlington there were 11 infant deaths, representing a value of 3.5. The North East regional value is 4. and the national England value is 4.1 (2021 - 2023 data).
- The prevalence of Year 6 obesity (including severe obesity) of 1,355 individuals in Durham represents a value of 24.3%. In Darlington there were 245 individuals, representing a value of 20.7%. The North East regional value is 24.5% and the national England value is 22.1% (2023-2024 data).

(Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023⁸)

Health inequalities

- The Index of Mass Deprivation (IMD 2019) score in Durham is 26.8, in Darlington the score is 25.7, while the England value is 21.7.
- The smoking prevalence in adults in Durham in routine and manual occupations (aged 18 to 64) is 21.6%, in Darlington this value is 9.5%. The North East regional value is 18.0% and the national England value of 19.5% (2023 data).
- Inequality in life expectancy at birth (for males) in Durham has a value of 10.2 years. In Darlington this value is 15.7 compared to 13.4 for the North East and 10.5 for England (2021-2023 data).

- Inequality in life expectancy at birth (for females) in Durham has a value of 8.8 years. In Darlington this value is 10.3 compared to 10.8 for the North East and 8.3 for England (2021-2023 data).

(Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023⁹)

Wider determinants of health

- There were 25,349 children in relative low-income families (under 16s) in Durham, representing a value of 28.8%. In Darlington there were 5,564 children living in relative low-income families, representing a value of 28.0%. The North East regional value is 28.4% %, and the national England value is 22.1% (2023-2024 data).
- The percentage of people in employment is 74.2%, in Darlington the percentage is 80.4%. The North East regional value is 71.3% and the national England percentage is 75.7% (2023-2024 data).
- There were 830 hospital admissions for violence (including sexual violence) in Durham, representing a value of 55.6 per 100,000 population. In Darlington there were 165 admissions representing a value of 53.4. Both figures are better than the North East regional value is 159.7 and the national England value is 170.5 (2021/22– 2023/24 data).

(Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023¹⁰)

Health protection

- The value for the Winter Mortality index in Durham in 90 per 100,000 population, representing a value of 18.1%. In Darlington there were 70 per 100,000 population, representing a value of 18.1%. The North East regional value is 7.2% and the national England value is 8.1% (Data available from August 2021 to July 2022).

(Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2022¹¹)

Supporting information

- In Durham there were 99,629 of the population aged under 18, representing a value of 18.7%, in Darlington there were 22,411, representing a value of 20.3%. In the North East the regional value is 19.7% and in England the value is 20.8% (2023 data).
- In Durham there were 115,500 of the population aged 65+, representing a value of 21.5%. In Darlington there were 23,214, representing a value of 21.0%. In the North East the regional value is 20.8%, and in England the value is 18.7% (2023 data).
- There were 6,200 of the population who were from ethnic minorities, representing a value of 1.5%, which is in the second lowest quintile for the North East region where the value is 4.2% and the lowest quintile for England where the value is 13.6% (2016 data).

(Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2022¹²)

Smoking

Smoking is a significant contributory factor in the health of people in County Durham and Darlington, and can be a risk factor that we need to take into account as it can contribute to fire deaths

- Durham has 11.7% of adults who smoke, in Darlington this value is 7.9%. In comparison the North East rate is 11% and the England rate of 11.6% (2023 data).
- 2,683 people died from smoking attributable causes in Durham, which is 277.8 people per 100,000. In Darlington 491 people died from smoking attributable causes, which is 243.5 people per 100,000. The North East value is 270.5 and the England value is 202.2 (2017-2019 data).
- 6,034 people were admitted to hospital for smoking attributable causes in Durham, a rate of 1,800 per 100,000. In Darlington 1,008 people were admitted to hospital for smoking attributable causes, a rate of 1,507 per 100,000. The North East value is 2,050 and the England value is 1,398 (2019-2020 data).

(Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2023¹³)

Council tax base

Council Tax is a charge, decided locally, which contributes towards the provision of local services. It applies to all non-business properties although some may be exempt depending on the circumstances. Band D council tax is the tax payable on a Band D dwelling occupied as a main residence by two adults, before any changes due to discounts, premiums, exemptions or council tax benefit. This definition is widely regarded as a benchmark when comparing council tax levels in different areas or over time.

The Council Tax base is the number of Band D equivalent dwellings in a local authority area. To calculate the tax base for an area, the number of dwellings in each council tax band is adjusted to take account of any discounts, premiums, and exemptions. The resulting figure for each band is then multiplied by its proportion relative to Band D (from 6/9 for Band A to 18/9 for Band H) and the total across all eight bands is calculated. An authority's tax base is taken into account when it calculates its council tax.

The tables below show that the CDDFRS area has a high percentage of Band A properties compared to the England average (LG Inform, 2023¹).

County Durham Council Tax

Council Tax Band	County Durham Council tax base	Average England Council Tax Base
Band A	56.7%	23.8%
Band B	14.3%	19.5%
Band C	12.7%	21.9%
Band D	9.2%	15.6%
Band E	4.5%	9.8%
Band F	1.7%	5.2%
Band G	0.9%	3.5%
Band H	0.1%	0.6%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Darlington Council Tax

Council Tax Band	Darlington Council tax Base	Average England Council Tax Base
Band A	43.3%	23.8%
Band B	20.8%	19.5%
Band C	14.5%	21.9%
Band D	11.0%	15.6%
Band E	6.6%	9.8%
Band F	2.6%	5.2%
Band G	1.3%	3.5%
Band H	0.1%	0.6%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Languages spoken and proficiency

Language is an important defining characteristic of people's identity. The understanding of the main languages used throughout the communities of County Durham and Darlington enables the Service to target and deliver prevention and protection related communications to meet the needs of local communities.

Languages spoken

The main languages spoken throughout the communities of County Durham and Darlington are shown below:

Language Grouping	County Durham Languages	Darlington Languages
English (English or Welsh in Wales)	98.12%	95.79%
Other European language (EU)	0.74%	2.36%
East Asian language	0.45%	0.22%
South Asian language	0.20%	0.83%
Arabic	0.12%	0.18%

Language Grouping	County Durham Languages	Darlington Languages
Spanish	0.08%	0.08%
West or Central Asian language	0.05%	0.21%
French	0.04%	0.03%
Turkish	0.03%	0.04%
Portuguese	0.03%	0.08%
Sign language	0.03%	0.03%
Russian	0.03%	0.07%
African language	0.03%	0.05%
Other European language (non EU)	0.02%	0.02%
Welsh or Cymraeg (in England only)	0.01%	0.00%
Other European language (EU and non-EU)	0.01%	0.00%
Other UK language	0.00%	0.00%
Other language	0.00%	0.00%
Oceanic or Australian language	0.00%	0.01%
Caribbean Creole	0.00%	0.00%
Other European language (non-national)	0.00%	0.00%
North or South American language	0.00%	0.00%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%

Language proficiency

The table below illustrates the English language proficiency of residents in County Durham and Darlington for whom English is not their first language.

Language Proficiency	Darlington	County Durham	Darlington	County Durham
	Number	Number	%	%
Can speak English very well	1,807	4,760	41.0	49.8
Can speak English well	1,690	3,296	38.4	34.5
Cannot speak English well	785	1,243	17.8	13.0
Cannot speak English	120	264	2.7	2.8

(Office for National Statistics, 2021¹⁴)

Ethnicity

There are 18 ethnic groups recommended for use by the government when asking for someone's ethnicity. These are grouped into five ethnic groups, each with an option where people can write in their ethnicity using their own words. The [recommended ethnic groups](#) are:

Recommended ethnic groups	
White	English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
	Irish
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller
	Roma
	Any other White background
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups White	White and Black Caribbean
	White and Black African
	White and Asian
	Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background
Asian or Asian British	Indian
	Pakistani
	Bangladeshi
	Chinese
	Any other Asian background
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	African
Recommended ethnic groups	
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	Caribbean
	Any other Black, African or Caribbean background
Other ethnic group	Arab
	Any other ethnic group

The composition of County Durham and Darlington by ethnic group is shown in the table below:

Ethnic Group	Durham (Number)	%	Darlington (Number)	%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	300	0.1	759	0.7
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	2,838	0.5	308	0.3
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	2,148	0.4	1,086	1.0
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	730	0.1	195	0.2

Ethnic Group	Durham (Number)	%	Darlington (Number)	%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	1,818	0.3	618	0.6
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	1,202	0.2	456	0.4
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	284	0.1	135	0.1
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	254	-	110	0.1
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	1,962	0.4	516	0.5
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	914	0.2	198	0.2
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	906	0.2	384	0.4
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1,167	0.2	374	0.3
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	494,638	94.7	97,320	90.3
White: Irish	1,384	0.3	342	0.3
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	798	0.2	434	0.4
White: Roma	157	-	104	0.1
White: Other White	8,494	1.6	3,525	3.3
Other ethnic group: Arab	825	0.2	329	0.3
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	1,248	0.2	603	0.6

(Office for National Statistics, 2021¹⁵)

Religion or belief

The religion or belief of the combined population of both County Durham and Darlington is shown below:

Religion or Belief	Darlington	County Durham	Darlington	County Durham
	Number	Number	%	%
No religion	42,780	201,688	39.7	38.6
Christian	56,194	285,167	52.1	54.6
Buddhist	344	1,290	0.3	0.2
Hindu	453	990	0.4	0.2
Jewish	36	286	0.0	0.1
Muslim	1,849	2,922	1.7	0.6
Sikh	443	839	0.4	0.2
Other religion	404	2,198	0.4	0.4
Not answered	5,296	26,687	4.9	5.1

(Office for National Statistics, 2021¹⁶)

Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD). It follows an established framework in broadly defining deprivation to encompass a wide range of an individual's living conditions.

There are 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England with an average population of 1,500 people per area. These LSOAs are ranked from the most deprived area to the least.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation is based on 39 separate indicators, organised across seven distinct domains of deprivation which are combined and weighted to calculate the Index of Multiple Deprivation. of deprivation relative to that of other areas.

Indices of deprivation 2019

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 is the most up to date dataset and combines information from the seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. The domains are combined using the following weights:

1. Income Deprivation (22.5%);
2. Employment Deprivation (22.5%);
3. Education, Skills and Training Deprivation (13.5%);

4. Health Deprivation and Disability (13.5%);
5. Crime (9.3%);
6. Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%);
7. Living Environment Deprivation (9.3%).

The weights have been derived from consideration of the academic literature on poverty and deprivation, as well as consideration of the levels of robustness of the indicators. The Indices of Deprivation are used to:

- Compare small areas across different local authorities;
- Identify the most deprived small areas;
- Explore the domains (or types) of deprivation;
- Illustrate changes in relative deprivation between consecutive iterations of the IMD;
- Quantify how deprived a small area is and identify deprived communities.

Out of the 317 Local Authorities in England Durham ranks 70th in the league table of the most deprived and Darlington is 49th where 1 is the worst and 317 is the least (The English Indices of Deprivation 2019¹⁷).

The service area has 51 Lower Layer Super Output Areas in the 10% most deprived decile. 39 are in County Durham and 12 in Darlington (Office for National Statistics, 2021¹⁸).

The Office for National Statistics (2023¹⁹) data shows an employment rate for Durham of 74.5% of people aged 16-64 being in employment, whereas Darlington has a rate of 81.2%, which compares to a national average of 76%.

Average gross weekly earnings (by residence) for County Durham is £556, for Darlington it is £559, which compares to £619 nationally (Office for National Statistics, 2024²⁰).

Lower wages and higher rates of economic activity this contributes to risk factors and impacts on living healthier lives.

Local authority plans

Local plans are the frameworks for development and future regeneration for locations to improve the lives of existing and future residents and are developed Local Authorities to meet the differing needs of communities. Local Plans, which are reviewed every five years, are developed to promote the quality of life, provide jobs for a flexible and skilled workforce, protect and enhance the environment, and support the towns and villages of County Durham and Darlington.

County Durham Local Plan

The County Durham Plan provides the policy framework for the county up to 2035 to support the development of a thriving economy and sets out how many new homes

and jobs need to be created and where they will go. Future travel and infrastructure needs are also described with measures to protect the heritage of the built and natural environment, landscapes and habitats. It was adopted in 2020.

The Plan plays a key role in shaping the physical environment which can have a significant impact on health and well-being by making it possible for people to make healthier lifestyle choices. Many people in County Durham today live in different social circumstances and experience avoidable differences in health, well-being and length of life. Creating a fairer society is fundamental to improving the health of the whole population and ensuring a fairer distribution of good health.

The County Durham Plan is seeking to achieve a successful and sustainable future in which all of our residents have the opportunity to access good housing and employment in an environment which delivers a healthy and fulfilled lifestyle.

Within County Durham there are plans in place to develop 24,852 new homes of mixed type, size and tenure over the period 2016 to 2035. Significant housing developments in Durham include Sniperley Park and Sherburn Road with more information on the future. Further information on future housing developments within County Durham and each station area can be located in the County Durham Plan.

The employment land availability describes the total amount of land reserved for industrial and business use awaiting development with up to 300 hectares planned for future businesses. The most significant business developments will occur at Forrest Park (Newton Aycliffe), Jade Park (East Durham), Meadowfield Industrial Estate, Integra 61 (land south of Bowburn Road), and Ingenium Park.

[You can read the full County Durham Local Plan by clicking here.](#)

Darlington local plan

The Darlington Local Plan was adopted in February 2022 and is a framework for growth and aims to ensure that Darlington becomes an even more sustainable location in which people increasingly choose to live, work and visit. Not only does it help to deliver the economic strategy through providing new housing to meet local needs; it supports the needs of our current and future workforce; and delivers other new developments with provision of key infrastructure.

The Darlington Local Plan aims to help deliver an economic strategy through providing new housing to meet local needs; and supports the needs of our current and future workforce

The Darlington Borough Local Plan describes a housing requirement of 422 net additional dwellings each year over the period of the plan to 2036. This will result in a significant growth to the population of Darlington with a total net minimum requirement in excess of 8,400 dwellings, with strategic expansion in the Skertingham area to the north east of Darlington, and other significant developments in Lingfield Point, Faverdale, Hurworth, Great Burden, Coniscliffe Park and Branksome. Further information on the proposed housing requirements and development of Darlington up to 2036 can be found in the Darlington Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 (adopted in 2022).

It is proposed that there will be up to 172 hectares of land allocations for employment land within Darlington in the period up to 2036. The most significant business development will occur and Greater Faverdale.

[You can read the full Darlington Local Plan by clicking here.](#)

National, regional and local risks

The National Risk Register (NRR)

The NRR provides information on the most significant risks that could occur in the next two years, and which could have a wide range of impacts on the UK. The NRR also sets out what the UK government, devolved administrations and other partners are doing about them. This document is particularly useful to local emergency planners, resilience professionals and businesses, helping them to make decisions about which risks to plan for and what the consequences of these risks are likely to be.

It also contains information and advice for the public. It is important that individuals and households are aware of the risks that could affect them, and what actions they can take to prepare for and respond to these risks.

The NRR describes that no risk assessment will ever be able to identify and assess every possible risk – unforeseeable risks can emerge, or previously identified risks can materialise in novel or surprising ways. The NRR is not a prediction of the risks that will materialise in the next two years, but it does help to ensure that the UK has the right systems and resilience practices in place to manage risks both proactively and when they arise.

There are 63 risks included on the NRR Index. The categories in which these risks fall under include:

- Terrorism
- Geographic and diplomatic
- Accidents and system failures
- Human, animal and plant disease
- Societal
- Conflict and instability

Risks in the NRR are represented as 'reasonable worst-case scenarios'. This means that they represent the worst plausible manifestation of that particular risk (once highly unlikely variations have been discounted). All the risks are assessed in terms of likelihood and impact and then plotted onto a risk matrix. Further information on specific risks and to the risk matrix can be found on page 16 in the [National Risk Register 2025](#).

National long-term trends

The Government's assessment of risks is based on a continuous cycle of learning lessons from real events, drawing on new scientific or technical evidence and improving the way in which the likelihood and potential impacts of risks are calculated. Chronic Risks are those which pose a continuous challenge, and which are monitored.

Below is a selection taken from the NRR:

Climate change

The UK has on average been 1.24°C warmer than average temperatures recorded between 1961-1990, with all ten of the warmest years in the UK in a series from 1884 having occurred in the 21st Century (GOV.UK, 2025²¹). Temperatures are predicted to warm further by mid-century, even under an ambitious decarbonisation scenario.

The impact of climate change on the intensity and frequency of some climate and weather extreme events is already being observed globally, and these impacts will worsen in the future. Climate change adaptation is a priority for government, exemplified by the UK being one of the first nations in the world to enshrine climate adaptation into law within the Climate Change Act. Climate change can also contribute to longer-term changes to water availability, as well as permanent and irreversible changes such as sea-level rise and alterations to habitats and growing conditions

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

AMR arises when organisms that cause infection evolve in ways to survive treatment. Although resistance occurs naturally, the use of antimicrobials in humans, animal agriculture, plants and crops, alongside unintentional exposure, including through environmental contamination and food, is rapidly accelerating the pace at which it develops and spreads. Each year AMR is estimated to cause almost 1.3 million deaths globally, and 7,600 deaths in the UK. The impacts of leaving AMR unchecked are wide-ranging and extremely costly in financial terms, but also in terms of global health, our ability to undertake modern medicine, food sustainability and security, environmental wellbeing, and socio-economic development. The UK's 5-year national action plan (NAP) sets out how the government plans to tackle AMR within and beyond our own borders. The NAP focuses on 3 key ways of tackling AMR including: reducing the need for, and unintentional exposure to, antimicrobials; optimising the use of existing antimicrobials; and investing in innovation, supply and access within human, animal and environmental settings

Serious and Organised Crime

Serious and organised crime, which featured in the 2020 NRR, is now being defined as a chronic risk and therefore removed from this iteration of the NRR. Serious and organised crime is defined as individuals planning, coordinating and committing serious offences whether individually, in groups, and/or as part of transnational networks. Organised criminals threaten the UK's economic security, costing the UK at least £37 billion every year, with nearly all serious and organised crime underpinned

by illicit finance. Serious and organised crime persistently erodes the resilience of the UK's economy and communities, impacting on citizens, public services, businesses, institutions, national reputation and infrastructure.

The National Assessment Centre, which is the National Crime Agency's centre for assessed intelligence reporting, publishes an annual National Strategic Assessment that outlines a comprehensive understanding of the serious and organised crime threat to the UK, drawn from all-source intelligence from domestic and international partners

Artificial Intelligence

AI systems and their capabilities present many opportunities, from expediting progress in pharmaceuticals to other applications right across the economy and society, which the Foundation Models Taskforce aims to accelerate. However, alongside the opportunities, there are a range of potential risks and there is uncertainty about its transformative impact. As the government set out in the Integrated Review Refresh, many of our areas of strategic advantage also bring with them some degree of vulnerability, including AI. That is why the UK Government has committed to hosting the first global summit on AI Safety which will bring together key countries, leading tech companies and researchers to agree safety measures to evaluate and monitor risks from AI.

The National AI Strategy, published in 2021, outlines steps for how the UK will begin its transition to an AI-enabled economy, the role of research and development in AI growth and the governance structures that will be required.

Community Risk Register

Community Risk Registers (CRRs) consider the likelihood and potential impact of a range of hazards occurring in specific areas of England and Wales. They are approved and published by Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) which have been established under the Civil Contingencies Act. They include representatives from local emergency services, and public, private and voluntary organisations. In order to produce the Community Risk Registers, LRFs use a combination of their own judgement about each risk, as well as guidance provided by central government drawn from the National Risk Assessment (NRA).

[The County Durham and Darlington Community Risk Register](#) provides information on emergencies that could happen within the Service area, together with an assessment of how likely they are to happen and the impacts if they do. The CRR also provides information for the communities of County Durham and Darlington on what to do in an emergency and guidance on recovery.

The CRR is based on the NRA and is centred around a range of data including historic, scientific and expert analysis to assess the risks to the UK as a whole. Using this information, relevant local risks are identified, and additional risks are incorporated. This process involves looking at a range of data, including incidents that have occurred, local knowledge and expert guidance.

The risks described in the CRR are as follows:

- **Human disease**

An influenza type pandemic remains the highest assessed natural hazard which could have a significant impact on our communities. The emergence of new infectious diseases – such as SARS and COVID 19 - is unpredictable as they can spread quickly and erratically between geographic areas. Each pandemic is different and the nature of the virus, where and the time of year it will emerge, and its impacts cannot be known in advance.

- **Flooding**

Severe weather and flooding can occur at any time of the year and can be a risk to national security, human welfare and critical infrastructure. Damage to essential services, particularly to critical infrastructure could make our communities more vulnerable to other risks, and some flooding may have significant impacts on industry, agriculture and our local economy.

- **Failure of the essential services**

The failure of essential utility services can have a large impact on communities, for example failure of the electricity network can affect a wide range of essential services with disruption to telecommunications, transport services, healthcare provision, water supplies, the internet and schools. A national blackout has never happened, but in recent years severe weather and storms have caused significant damage to the electricity distribution overhead line network, resulting in the long duration loss of power to many communities

- **Cyber attack and online fraud**

Cyber space has become central to our economy and our society. Increasing our reliance on cyber space brings new opportunities but also new threats. While cyber space fosters open markets and open societies, this very openness can also make us more vulnerable to criminals, hackers, foreign intelligence services who want to harm us by compromising or damaging our critical data and systems. Worldwide interconnectivity and digitalisation are transforming how individuals, businesses and local authorities live and operate with a wide scale shift of services and capabilities online.

- **Terrorism and malicious attack.**

The Government's counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST is an integrated approach based on four main work streams, each with a clear objective to try and stop terrorist attacks occurring or, when they do, to mitigate their impact.

- **Adverse weather**

The weather in County Durham and Darlington is varied and dynamic. Weather patterns around the Pennines in West Durham can bring torrential rain and extremely severe snow and ice (the highest road in the County is the A66 trans-Pennine route at Bowes Moor)

- **Wildfire**

Wildfire has become more frequent and widespread due to the prolonged dry and hot summers periods. Wildfires can start naturally from sunlight or lightning, but most are caused by human actions such as arson, careless campfires, improperly discarded cigarettes, unsafe burning of debris, or misuse of matches and fireworks. County Durham is predominantly rural, comprising of large areas of grassed areas and peatland. There is an increasing risk of fires occurring within these locations, especially due to drier and hotter weather conditions

- **Animal disease**

In County Durham and Darlington, an outbreak of animal disease could have significant consequences for local agriculture, public health, and the broader community. Farms and rural businesses may face disruption, while restrictions could affect food supply chains and livelihoods. There is also the risk of certain diseases crossing over to people, which would place additional pressure on local health services. However, with improved surveillance and response measures, the region is better equipped to manage and minimise the impact of such events, protecting both the rural economy and residents of County Durham and Darlington.

Risk scenarios

To assess the foreseeable fire and rescue related risks within the Service area, the Community Risk Profile identifies and describes the risks within our communities, and the consequences that could arise from the hazards and cause harm to individuals. Risks are assessed and prioritised accordingly through their position on the Service community risk profile rating matrix.

The risk scenarios within the Community Risk Profile are based on the range of incidents attended over the three-year reporting period, from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, and are based on the following risk themes:

- Fires;
- Rescues;
- Transport;
- Weather;
- Societal.

The categories of different types of fires are aligned to the Home Office Fire Statistics Definitions and rescue related risks are based on the historical range of incidents

attended by the Service over the three-year reporting period. Transport risks are focussed on the modes of transport throughout the Service area, and while there are many weather related risks that could impact on the communities of County Durham and Darlington, the risk with the greatest likelihood is that of flooding. Other societal risks are based on miscellaneous scenarios that the Service has attended within the reporting period or has the potential to attend.

Further information on the methodology is described within appendix one, with an example of how the likelihood and impact of the risk scenarios are scored. Likelihood is based on the assessment of how many times an incident occurred within the previous three years to provide a percentage prediction of future probability within the next year, while the impact of each scenario is assessed against five dimensions of community harm (Human Welfare, Behavioural, Community Economic Impact, Essential Social Services and the Environmental impact). Where appropriate, national level impact scales which are based on the population of the United Kingdom), such as population, economic impact and environmental impact are used proportionately to reflect the demographic and geographic size of the Service area.

Where appropriate, the degree of confidence in each risk assessment is described. High frequency scenarios are usually assessed with a high degree of confidence as their impact can be assessed with a significant level of data and intelligence, while the risk scenarios that occur rarely are assessed with low to moderate confidence due to the limited understanding of the full range of impacts within the assessment.

Although all the risks described within the National and LRF Community Risk Registers, and the CDDFRS Community Risk Profile are generally distinct and time limited events, there is the possibility of some risks occurring simultaneously. Some risks can be linked together in their causes and impacts, while some others are compounded where the impact of one risk magnifies the impact of another.

Linked risks are simultaneous or near simultaneous risks that share a common cause or are caused by another risk. At the national level an example of linked risks are severe storms and gales that would increase the likelihood of fluvial flooding, while drought and heatwave can happen together. Within the CDDFRS Community Risk Profile an example of linked risks would be a non-residential building fire causing both an industrial fire and a hazardous materials incident.

Compound risks are those where the occurrence of one risk makes another significantly more impactful, however, they do not share a common cause. At the national level an example of compound risks would be low temperatures and heavy snow increasing the impact of fuel shortage. Within the CDDFRS Community Risk Profile an example of compound risks would be the chronic nature of scenarios such as road vehicle or secondary fires impacting on the disruption to resources to attend other emergency incidents.

Primary fires are a category of fire that are generally more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property. Primary fires are defined as fires that cause damage by fire, heat and/or smoke and meet at least one of the following conditions:

- Any fire that occurred in a (non-derelict) building, vehicle or (some) outdoor structures;

- Any fires involving fatalities, casualties or rescues;
- Any fire attended by five or more pumping appliances.

Primary fires are split into four sub-categories:

- Dwelling fires;
- Other building fires;
- Road vehicle fires;
- Other outdoor fires.

For a detailed description of our methodology please see the appendices to this document.

R1 Dwelling fires

Dwelling fires are a category of primary fires and are fires in properties that are a place of residence, i.e., places occupied by households such as houses and flats, excluding hotels/hostels and residential institutions. Dwellings also include non-permanent structures used solely as a dwelling, such as houseboats and caravans.

The following tables show information regarding dwelling fires in the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025.

Causes of dwelling fires in the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025 is shown below:

Causes of dwelling fires	Number of dwelling fires	Percentage of activity
Accidental	557	73.97%
Deliberate (other property)	100	13.28%
Deliberate (unknown owner)	30	3.98%
Deliberate (own property)	48	6.37%
Not known	18	2.39%
Total	753	100.00%

The distribution of dwelling fires throughout the Service area (of all accidental, deliberate, and unknown causes, 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025 as shown below:

Station Area	Number of dwelling Fires	Percentage of total dwelling fires
Darlington	122	16.2%
Peterlee	108	14.34%
High Handenhold	84	11.16%
Durham	82	10.89%
Bishop Auckland	81	10.76%
Consett	57	7.57%
Spennymoor	55	7.3%
Newton Aycliffe	41	5.44%
Seaham	39	5.18%
Crook	36	4.78%
Wheatley Hill	19	2.52%
Barnard Castle	11	1.46%
Stanhope	9	1.20%
Sedgefield	7	0.93%
Middleton-in-Teesdale	2	0.27%
Total	753	100.00%

Further assessment of this risk shows the building types and locations within buildings where dwelling fires have started:

Type of dwelling	Number of dwelling fires	Percentage
House - single occupancy	562	76.63%
Bungalow - single occupancy	63	8.37%
Purpose Built Flat/Maisonette - multiple occupancy	59	7.84%
Self-contained Sheltered Housing	29	3.85%
caravan/mobile home (permanent dwelling)	19	2.52%
Converted Flat/Maisonette - multiple occupancy	14	1.86%
House in multiple occupation (HMO)	5	0.66%
House in multiple occupation (HMO)	2	0.27%
Total	753	100.00%

Fires can start within a number of different locations within each dwelling, with the most frequent locations being kitchens, bedrooms and living rooms, as shown below:

Locations of where fires start within dwellings	Number of dwelling fires	Percentage of activity
Kitchen	306	40.64%
Living room	110	14.61%
Bedroom	90	11.95%
External fittings	36	4.78%
Other	34	4.52%
External Structures	31	4.12%
Corridor/Hall	29	3.85%
Roof Space	20	2.66%
Bathroom/Toilet	17	2.26%
Utility Room	14	1.86%
Garage	12	1.59%
Stairs	9	1.2%
Other locations (conservatories, stairs, chimney etc)	45	5.97%
Total	753	100%

Assessment of how fires have started during the reporting period shows that dwelling fires primarily start with structural internal fixtures and fittings, such as curtains, carpets, free standing items of furniture or lampshades), with people cooking food using oil or fat being the second most frequent item first ignited. The other broad range of items first ignited includes bedding, upholstered furniture, external roof material, mattresses etc.

Item first ignited in dwelling fires	Number of fires	Percentage of activity
Foam, rubber, plastic - Plastic - raw material only	87	11.55%
Food - Cooking oil or fat	68	9.03%
Structural/Fixtures/Fittings - Internal - Wiring insulation	53	7.04%
Structural/Fixtures/Fittings - Internal - Internal fittings	48	6.37%
Food - Other	47	6.24%
Structural/Fixtures/Fittings - External - External fittings	38	5.05%
Clothing/Textiles - Clothing	36	4.78%
Furniture/Furnishings - Upholstered furniture	34	4.52%
Clothing/Textiles - Other textiles	31	4.12
All Other sources (inc paper, clothing, rubbish, foam, wood, furniture, food, vegetation, explosives)	296	39.3%
Not known	15	1.99%
Total	753	100%

The most frequent sources of ignition of dwelling fires are cooking appliances, electrical wiring, cables and plugs, and fire spread from a secondary fire. Dwelling fires where smoking related materials are the source of ignition account for 55 of the total number of incidents. See details below:

Source of ignition	Number of incidents	Percentage of activity
Cooking appliance	251	33.33%
Electricity supply	95	12.62%
Naked flame	67	8.9%
Smoking related	55	7.3%
Fuel/Chemical related	52	6.91%
Matches and candles	49	6.51%
Other domestic style appliance	48	6.37%
Spread from secondary fire	39	5.18%
Heating equipment	31	4.12%
All other sources of ignition	66	8.76%
Total	753	100.00%

Analysis of operational incident data shows that there is a variation in the frequency of dwelling fires throughout the year, with more occurring during the months of March (10.89%) and January (9.16%), in comparison to September (6.24%) The variation of the monthly frequency of dwelling fires is shown below:

Month of the year	Number of dwelling fires	Percentage of activity
March	82	10.89%
January	69	9.16%
August	67	8.9%
May	66	8.76%

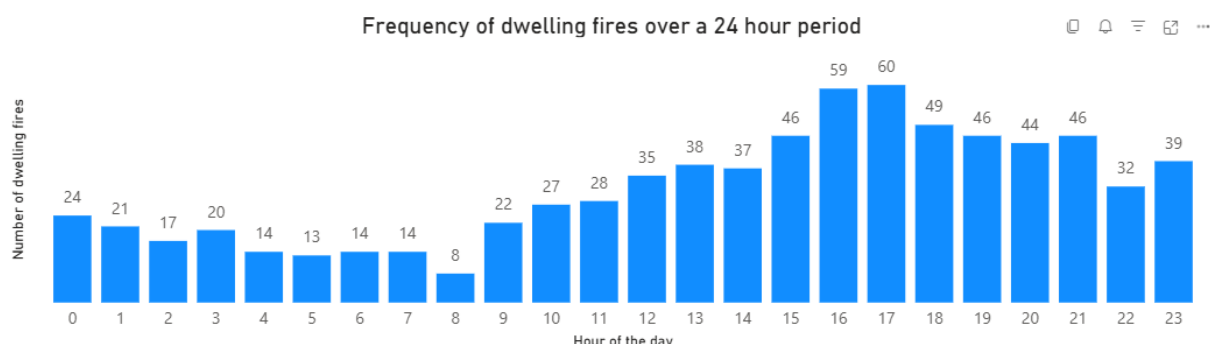
Month of the year	Number of dwelling fires	Percentage of activity
July	65	8.63%
April	64	8.5%
October	64	8.5%
June	63	8.37%
November	58	7.7%
December	58	7.7%
February	50	6.64%
September	47	6.24%
Total	753	100%

Furthermore, the frequency of dwelling fires, with the variation of when dwelling fires occur on which days of the week is shown below:

Day of the week	Number of dwelling fires	Percentage of activity
Friday	114	15.14%
Saturday	114	15.14%
Thursday	111	14.74%
Monday	106	14.08%
Tuesday	105	13.94%
Wednesday	104	13.81%
Sunday	99	13.15%
Total	753	100%

Times of day

The graph below shows the number of dwelling fires in the reporting period of 2022-2025 and the times of day in which they occurred. This illustrates that most fires occur between the hours of 3pm and 9pm, with a decline in the number of fires between 1am and 8am.



Dwelling fire fatalities and casualties

Fire related fatalities are, in general, those that would not have otherwise occurred had there not been a fire (i.e., 'no fire = no death'). This includes any fire casualty which is the direct result of injuries caused by a fire incident. Even if the fatal casualty dies subsequently, any fatality whose cause is attributed to a fire is included.

Of the dwelling fires that occurred during the reporting period, 81.67% did not involve any victims (615 people), while the remaining 18.33% (138 people) resulted in an occupier of the dwelling experiencing injuries.

Further analysis of dwelling fire data for the reporting period indicates that 83% of the persons involved did not need to be evacuated from the dwelling, while the remaining 17% needed to be evacuated by Service personnel.

The distribution of dwelling fires (of all causes) is broadly consistent with previous years. Over the previous three-year reporting period (2020/21 – 2022/23) to the current three-year reporting period (2022/23 – 2024/25), there has been an overall reduction of dwelling fires from 780 to 753 (a reduction of 3.5%). The station ranking of the frequency of dwelling fires has changed with Peterlee now the busiest station, followed by Darlington and Durham.

This specific risk is not described in the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) or the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

A significant fire on all floors of a dwelling, with extensive fire and smoke damage. The structural integrity of staircases and ceilings within the dwelling may become compromised due to the increased temperatures, and the provision of domestic utilities (gas, electric, water and telecommunications) would also become compromised. The internal fire loading and the ventilation could influence the development of flashover or backdraft conditions within the dwelling, presenting an increased level of risk to residents and firefighters.

This scenario could result in residents sustaining injuries (smoke inhalation, major burns or musculoskeletal) from their intended escape from their property, or during their rescue by fire service personnel. It could also lead to the loss of life to one or more of the occupants present in the dwelling at the time of the fire. There may be additional hazards to firefighters, and the injuries sustained by operational crews could range from minor burns or musculoskeletal injuries to more serious injuries from falling masonry or other structural elements.

This scenario could also lead to the involvement of partner agencies and the local authority or third sector to provide temporary accommodation. The injuries sustained at a dwelling fire could lead to a longer-term significant impact on the health and social care provision and the time involved to support subsequent investigations, or inquests, would be significant. The impact on the environment would result from the burnt products of combustion being released into the atmosphere.

Risk assessment for dwelling fires

2022/23	252
2023/24	256
2024/25	245
Three-year total	753
Three-year average	251
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	5
Risk Assessment Impact Score	5

Risk Matrix

Impact	5									
	4									
	3									
	2									
	1									
		1	2	3	4	5				
		Likelihood								

Confidence

Due to the number of dwelling fires during the reporting period, the dwelling fire risk is assessed with a high degree of confidence, where very few areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of dwelling fires.

Operational incident data reported through the Incident Reporting System illustrates a decline throughout County Durham and Darlington in the number of dwelling fires over the previous ten years. There were 245 dwelling fires during 2024/25 in comparison to 297 dwelling fires in 2014/15, representing a reduction of 17.5% in the ten-year period.

R2 Other residential building fires

Other residential building fires are a classification of primary fires and include institutional properties such as hostels for homeless people, hotels and B&Bs, nursing/care homes, student halls of residence, children's homes, towing caravans on site and other holiday residence (cottage or flat etc).

Other residential building fires can be accidental or deliberate in their cause (none were recorded as being of an unknown cause). In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 30 other residential building fires, with their causes shown below:

Other residential building fire causes	Number of other residential building fires	Percentage of activity
Accidental	19	63.33%
Deliberate - others property	5	16.67%
Deliberate - own property	4	13.33%
Deliberate – unknown owner	1	3.33%
Not known	1	3.33%
Total	30	100%

The other residential building fires are not widespread throughout the Service area, with the station areas where these fires occurred is shown below:

Station area	Number of other residential building fires	Percentage of activity
Durham	10	33.33%
High Handenhold	4	13.33%
Consett	3	10%
Darlington	3	10%
Peterlee	3	10%
Bishop Auckland	2	6.67%
Newton Aycliffe	2	6.67%
Crook	1	3.33%
Sedgefield	1	3.33%
Wheatley hill	1	3.33%
Total	30	100%

Further assessment of the types of properties involved in other residential building fires indicate the following distribution of premises fires:

Types of properties	Number of other residential building fires	Percentage of activity
Nursing/care home	11	36.67%
Student hall of residence	5	16.67%
Retirement/elderly	4	13.33%
Children's	3	10%
Hotel/motel	3	10%
Hostel (e.g. for homeless people)	1	3.33%
Other holiday residence (cottage, flat, chalet)	1	3.33%
Other Residential Home	1	3.33%
Sheltered Housing – not self contained	1	3.33%
Total	30	100%

The majority of the fires in other residential buildings start in bedrooms (30%), kitchens (26.67%) bathroom/toilets (10%) and laundry (10%)

Fire start location	Distribution of locations where fires started	Percentage of activity
Bedroom	9	30%
Kitchen	8	26.67%
Bathroom/Toilet	3	10%
Laundry room	3	10%
Bedsitting room	1	3.33%
Common room/Staff room/Day room	1	3.33%
Conservatory	1	3.33%
External Structures	1	3.33%
Meeting room	1	3.33%
Not known	1	3.33%
Utility Room	1	3.33%
Total	30	100.0%

Although some fires in other residential buildings have resulted in a loss of life, incidents that result in the loss of life are rare. Examples of fires in other residential buildings include small fires in care home laundry rooms, such as fires that have started in driers, fires that have started in other defective kitchen appliances such as cookers or microwaves and small electrical fires in wiring or lift motor rooms.

The risk of fires in other residential buildings such as hostels for homeless people, hotels and B&Bs, nursing/care homes, student halls of residence is influenced by the inclusion of major fires within the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#). Due to the number of fires in other residential buildings, this risk is assessed with a moderate degree of confidence, where some areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty creating uncertainty bounds of up to +1 or -1 in the overall impact score.

The service has a statutory duty to enforce the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 within our area and to reduce the risks of fire causing death, serious injury and property-related loss in the community. The service fulfils this duty through the delivery of fire safety audits in premises where the Fire Safety Order applies.

CDDFRS data shows that although the Service delivers a significant number of fire safety audits in relation to other fire and rescue services and is above the five-year reported average for this activity, the proportion of all fire safety audits that result in an unsatisfactory outcome is below both the Service and England five-year average.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

Based on historical data and professional judgement, the reasonable worst-case scenarios for a fire in other residential buildings would be a fire in the laundry or kitchen area of a nursing or care home that would cause significant fire and smoke damage. This scenario would lead to a fatality and would require the evacuation of multiple residents, some of whom may suffer major injuries and may experience smoke inhalation, leading to hospital admission.

Based on the location of the fire, the amount of potential fire loading and the internal conditions for firefighters (which may include the environment for flashover and/or

backdraft conditions) operational crews may take a significant amount of time to extinguish the fire and complete the subsequent fire investigation. There could be an impact on local social care if residents needed to be rehomed and the time taken for the return to normal operation of the care/nursing home.

Risk assessment for other residential building fires

2022/23	16
2023/24	7
2024/25	7
Three-year total	30
Three-year average	10
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	3
Risk Assessment Impact Score	3

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the number of other residential building fires during the reporting period, the risk is assessed with a moderate degree of confidence.

Changes in the risk landscape of other residential building fires.

The Service's risk-based inspection program continues to ensure a high level of fire safety compliance in building covered by the RRO. New legislation is being considered which may further strengthen the fire safety arrangements in certain premises which are defined as high risk residential, this may cover established and future building within County Durham and Darlington, through a joint approach to safety regulation.

R3 Other non-residential building fires

Other non-residential building fires are a broad classification of primary fires and include fires in properties such as offices, shops, factories, warehouses, restaurants, public buildings, religious buildings.

The majority of premises within this scenario are covered by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 which means that a responsible person must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and make sure that people can safely escape if there is a fire. The Combined Fire Authority has responsibility for enforcing the Fire Safety Order in relation to this and in doing so will offer advice and support to businesses, audit their fire risk assessments and take enforcement action whenever necessary to ensure the safety of the public.

Although the Combined Fire Authority are not responsible for enforcing the Fire Safety Order in Crown premises, the prisons in the Service area have been included in this scenario due to their associated level of risk and demand. In County Durham there are four prisons - HM Prison Frankland, HM Prison Durham, HM Prison Low Newton and HM Prison Deerbolt near Barnard Castle.

Non-residential building fires can be either accidental or deliberate in their cause. In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 508 other non-domestic building fires, with their causes shown below:

Other non-residential building fire causes	Number of other non-residential building fires	Percentage of activity
Accidental	242	43.68%
Deliberate - others property	204	36.82%
Deliberate - unknown owner	47	8.48%
Not known	39	7.04%
Deliberate - own property	22	3.97%
Total	554	100%

The distribution of other non-residential building fires (of all accidental, deliberate, and unknown causes) is shown below:

Station area	Number of other non-residential building fires	Percentage of activity
Durham	93	16.79%
Peterlee	72	13%
Barnard Castle	71	12.82%
Darlington	58	10.47%
High Handenhold	51	9.21%
Bishop Auckland	42	7.58%
Consett	38	6.86%
Spennymoor	28	5.05%
Seaham	26	4.69%
Crook	23	4.15%

Station area	Number of other non-residential building fires	Percentage of activity
Newton Aycliffe	20	3.61%
Sedgefield	13	2.35%
Wheatley Hill	11	1.99%
Stanhope	6	1.08%
Middleton-in-Tees	2	0.36%
Total	554	100%

Examples of fires in other non-residential buildings include a small fire in a charity dispatch centre supplying food, furniture, clothes and help to a national charity, detached garages containing cars completely destroyed by fire, sheds and garages, and fires in storage warehouses. Fires in prisons are usually deliberate, involving small amounts of paper or bedding with the majority of fire and smoke damage being limited to the item first ignited or the room of origin.

The risk of fires in other non-residential buildings such as offices, shops, factories, warehouses, restaurants, public buildings, religious buildings is influenced by the inclusion of major fires within the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#). Based on the distribution of fires in other non-residential buildings at the locations throughout the Service area, this risk is considered to be present in all station areas, to varying degrees. Due to the number of fires in other non-residential buildings, this risk is assessed with a moderate degree of confidence, where some areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty creating uncertainty bounds of up to +1 or -1 in the overall impact score.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

Based on historical data and professional judgement, the reasonable worst-case scenarios for a fire in a factory or storage facility/warehouse. The fire would require several appliances and a significant period of time to extinguish and could have an impact on local travel and a harmful impact on the environment due to the composition of material involved. The potential loss of employment would have a negative impact on the local economy in the time taken for the business/warehouse to return to normal operation, and minor injuries may be experienced by employees or the public.

Risk assessment for other non-residential building fires

2022/23	198
2023/24	151
2024/25	205
Three-year total	554
Three-year average	185
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	5
Risk Assessment Impact Score	4

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					●
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the number of other non-residential building fires during the reporting period, the risk is assessed with a high degree of confidence.

Changes in the risk landscape of other non-residential building fires

The services risk-based inspection program continues to ensure a high level of fire safety compliance in building covered by the RRO. Operational crews gather risk information to ensure occupants and crews remain safe and the emergency services can effectively respond to incidents requiring an intervention.

R4 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/HGVs etc. This category of fires does not include aircraft, boats or trains, which are categorised as other outdoor fires.

Road vehicle fires can either be accidental or deliberate in their cause. In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 1,334 road vehicle fires, with their causes shown below:

Cause of road vehicle fires	Number of road vehicle fires	Percentage of activity
Deliberate - others property	601	42.84%
Accidental	407	29.01%
Deliberate - unknown owner	348	24.8%
Not known	24	1.71%
Deliberate - own property	23	1.64%
Total	1,403	100%

The distribution of road vehicle fires throughout the Service area in the three-year reporting period is shown below, with 46.9% of the total road vehicle fires occurring in the three station areas (Peterlee, Bishop Auckland and Darlington). In comparison, only 2.29% of the road vehicle fires occurred in the three station areas towards the

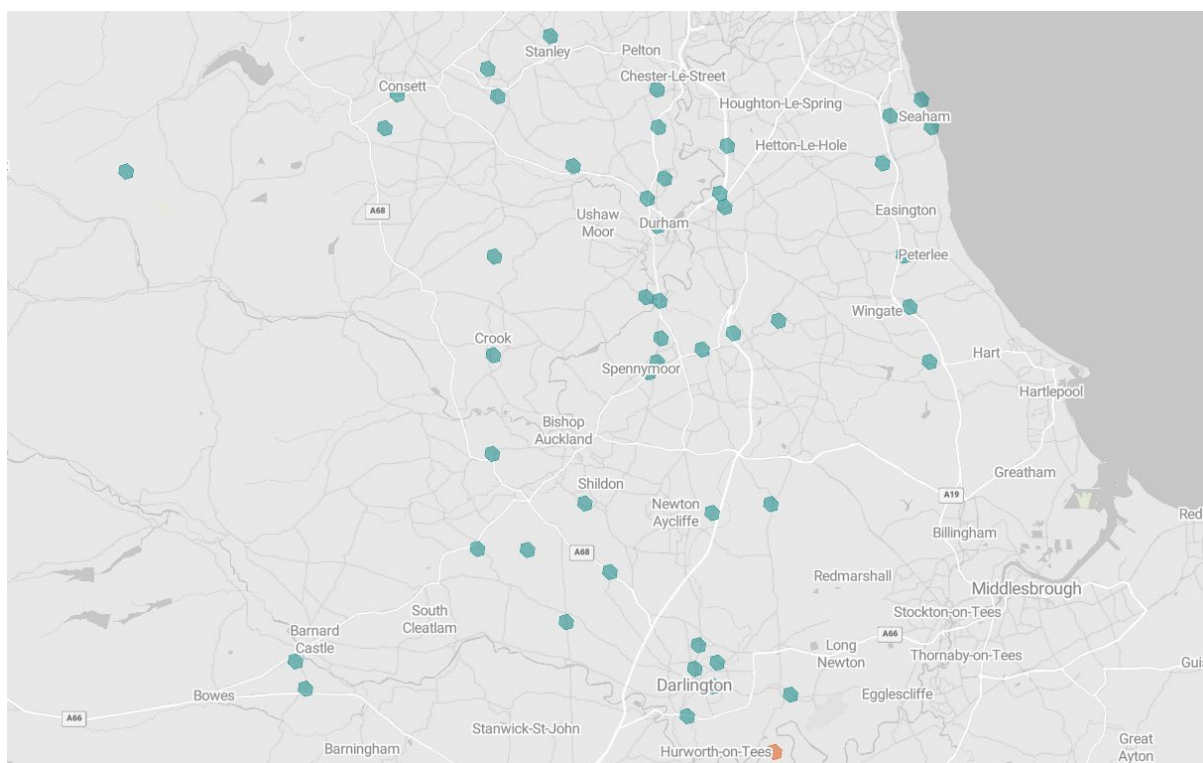
West of the Service area (Barnard Castle, Stanhope and Middleton-in-Teesdale), as shown below:

Station area	Number of road vehicle fires	Percentage of activity
Peterlee	376	26.8%
Bishop Auckland	144	10.26%
Darlington	138	9.84%
Durham	116	8.27%
High Handenhold	116	8.27%
Wheatley Hill	87	6.2%
Newton Aycliffe	83	5.92%
Spennymoor	83	5.92%
Consett	82	5.84%
Seaham	76	5.42%
Crook	46	3.28%
Sedgefield	24	1.71%
Barnard Castle	16	1.14%
Stanhope	12	0.86%
Middleton-in-Tees	4	0.29%
Total	1,403	100%

Accidental road vehicle fires account for a total of 29% of the Service total for all road vehicle fires, and their distribution throughout the Service area is shown below:

Station area	Number of accidental road vehicle fires	Percentage of activity
Darlington	57	14%
Durham	55	13.51%
Bishop Auckland	44	10.81%
Peterlee	42	10.32%
High Handenhold	38	9.34%
Newton Aycliffe	33	8.11%
Consett	32	7.86%
Spennymoor	31	7.62%
Seaham	18	4.42%
Barnard Castle	13	3.19%
Crook	13	3.19%
Wheatley Hill	12	2.95%
Sedgefield	10	2.46%
Stanhope	7	1.72%
Middleton-in-Tees	2	0.49%
Total	407	100%

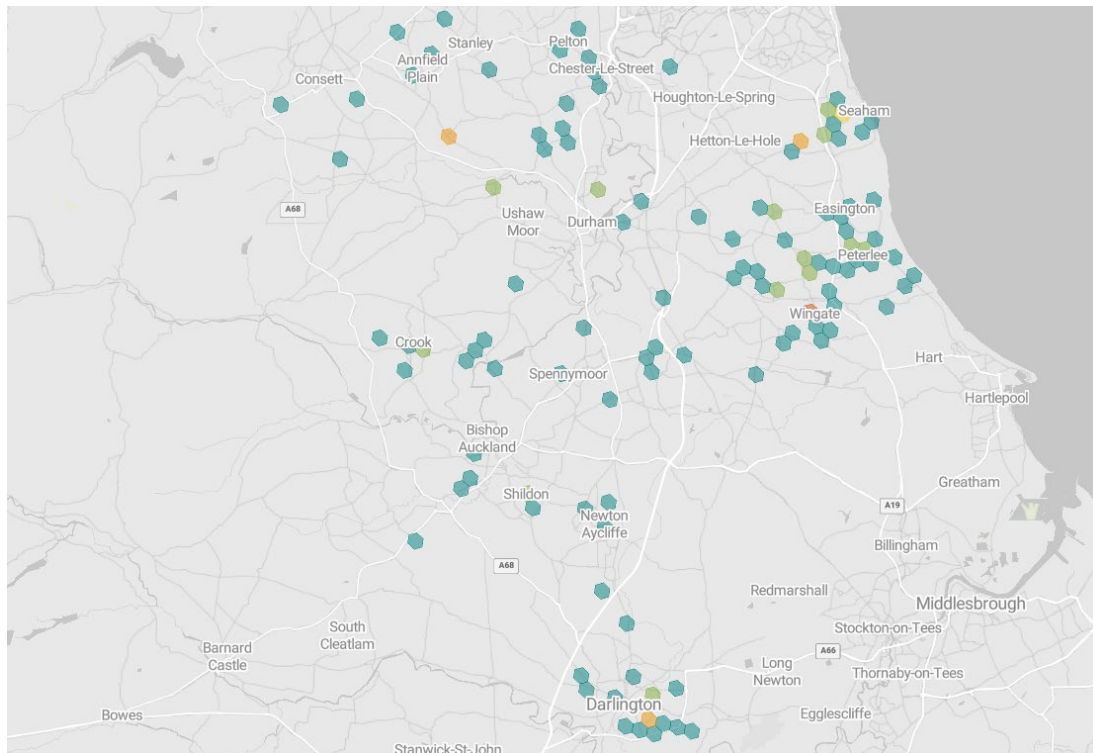
The locations of accidental road vehicle fires are shown below:



Deliberate road vehicle fires account for a total of 69.28% of the Service total for all road vehicle fires, and their distribution throughout the Service area is shown below:

Station area	Number of deliberate road Vehicle fires	Percentage of activity
Peterlee	331	34.05%
Bishop Auckland	99	10.19%
Darlington	80	8.23%
High Handenhold	76	7.82%
Wheatley Hill	74	7.61%
Durham	57	5.86%
Consett	50	5.14%
Newton Aycliffe	50	5.14%
Seaham	50	5.14%
Spennymoor	50	5.14%
Crook	33	3.4%
Sedgefield	13	1.34%
Stanhope	5	0.51%
Barnard Castle	2	0.51%
Middleton-in-Tees	2	0.51%
Total	972	100%

The locations of deliberate road vehicle fires are shown below:



Although the majority of road vehicle fires are single cars, vans or motorcycles, there are many other types of road vehicle fires, as shown below:

Type of road vehicle	Number of road vehicle fires	Percentage of activity
Car	884	63.01%
Van	164	11.69%
Motorcycle	129	9.19%
Multiple vehicles	45	3.21%
Agricultural	35	2.49%
Other	35	2.49%
Towing caravan elsewhere (not on tow)	25	1.78%
Lorry/HGV	24	1.71%
Caravan unspecified	17	1.21%
Trailer unit (not attached to tractor)	13	
Motor Home	12	0.93%
Bus/Coach	7	0.50%
Minibus	6	0.43%
Bicycle	3	0.21%
Caravan on tow	3	0.21%
Tanker	1	0.07%
Total	1,403	100%

Analysis of the data available through the incident reporting system illustrates that road vehicle fires start in various locations, as shown below:

Origin of fire	Number of road vehicle fires	Percentage of activity
Engine	596	42.48%
Driver/passenger area	381	27.16%
Not known	116	8.27%
Other	76	5.42%
Fuel tank	73	5.2%
Other inside/cargo area	62	4.42%
Wheels/brakes	53	3.78%
Boot	46	3.28%
Total	1,403	100%

The extent of damage caused by road vehicle fires can range from involving the whole vehicle to minor external damage, as shown below:

Extent of fire damage	Number of times damage occurred	Percentage of activity
Whole vehicle	800	57.02%
Engine compartment	330	23.52%
Driver/passenger compartment	176	12.54%
Separate luggage compartment	43	3.06%
Wheels/tyres/brakes/axles/bearings	41	2.92%
Fuel tank	11	0.78%
Roof/roof rack (exterior to vehicle)	2	0.14%
Total	1,403	100%

This specific risk is not described in the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) or the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

Based on the historical data from the three-year reporting period, and professional judgement, the reasonable worst-case scenario for road vehicle fires would be a fire that involved multiple vehicles and required the attendance of several appliances to successfully extinguish it. This scenario would occur in a location with difficult access and limited water supplies and could take a significant time to extinguish. The fire could also have an impact on local transport routes due to closed roadways and impact on the local environment and the prosperity of affected locations.

Risk assessment for road vehicle fires

2022/23	414
2023/24	483
2024/25	506
Three-year total	1,403
Three-year average	468
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	5
Risk Assessment Impact Score	4

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					●
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the number of road vehicle fires during the reporting period, the road vehicle fire risk is assessed with a high degree of confidence, where very few areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of road vehicle fires

CDDFRS continues to monitor the technical advances in road vehicles, the introduction of alternative fuel types and approaches to refuelling along with the construction and materials used in the manufacturing of road vehicle components, continue to have an impact on the required response from the Fire and Rescue Service when an intervention is required. New firefighting techniques, skills and technology is being explored to ensure the Fire and Rescue Service can safely and effectively meet its statutory responsibilities.

R5 Secondary fires

Secondary fires are generally outdoor fires, not involving people or property. These include refuse fires, grassland fires and fires in derelict buildings or vehicles, unless these fires involve casualties or rescues, or five or more pumping appliances attend, in which case they become primary fires.

Secondary fires can be accidental or deliberate (or not known), and in the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 8427 secondary fires, with their causes shown below:

Secondary fire causes	Number of secondary fires	Percentage of activity
Deliberate - unknown owner	3581	42.49%
Deliberate - others property	3512	41.68%
Deliberate - own property	666	7.9%
Accidental	415	4.92%
Not known	253	3%
Total	8427	100%

There is a significant variation in the distribution of secondary fires throughout the Service area. The three stations (Peterlee, Darlington and High Handenhold) account for 45.04% of the total secondary fires, while the three stations towards the West of the Service area account for only 0.75% of the activity for this incident type.

The distribution of secondary fires throughout the Service area during the three-year reporting period is shown below:

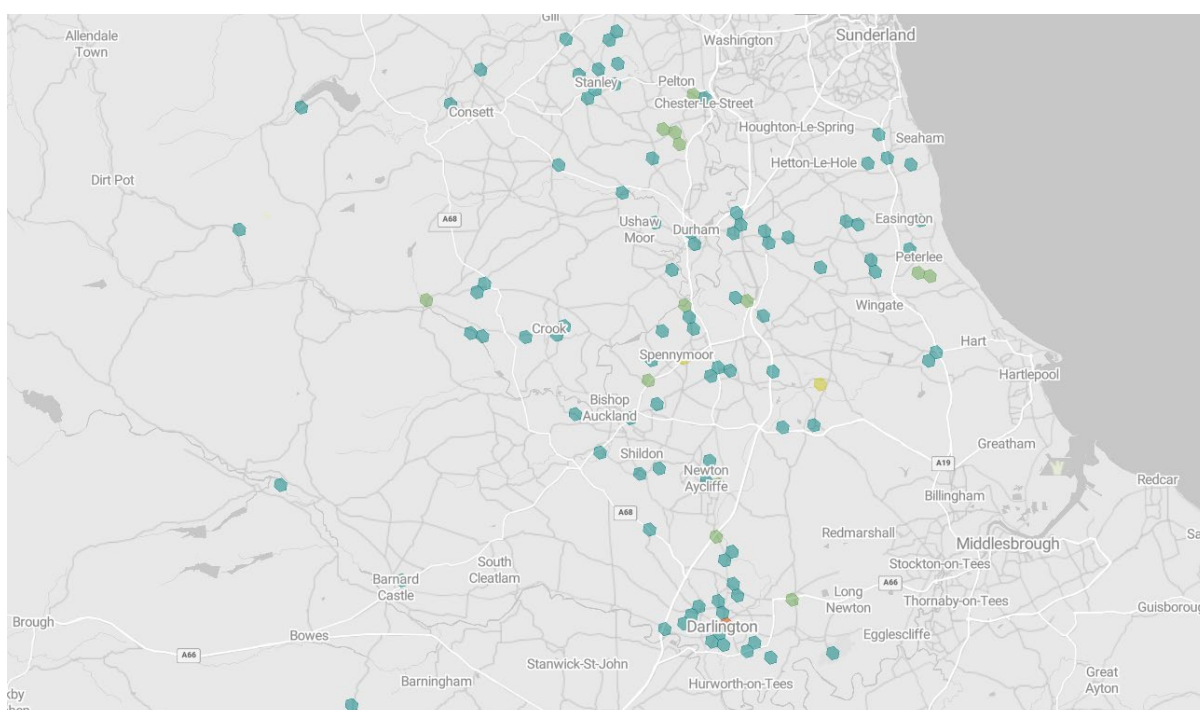
Station area	Number of secondary fires	Percentage of activity
Peterlee	1527	18.12%
Darlington	1222	14.5%
High Handenhold	1047	12.42%
Bishop Auckland	786	9.33%
Durham	736	8.73%
Seaham	673	7.99%
Spennymoor	569	6.75%
Consett	566	6.72%
Wheatley Hill	467	5.54%
Newton Aycliffe	364	4.32%
Crook	320	3.8%
Sedgefield	87	1.03%
Stanhope	30	0.36%
Barnard Castle	24	0.28%
Middleton-in-Tees	9	0.11%
Total	8427	100%

Accidental secondary fires account for a total of 4.93% of the Service total for all secondary fires, and their distribution throughout the Service area is shown below:

Station area	Number of accidental secondary fires	Percentage of activity
Darlington	74	17.83%
High Handenhold	48	11.57%
Durham	43	10.36%
Peterlee	43	10.36%
Bishop Auckland	36	8.67%
Consett	34	8.19%

Station area	Number of accidental secondary fires	Percentage of activity
Spennymoor	32	7.71%
Newton Aycliffe	29	6.99%
Seaham	27	6.51%
Crook	16	3.86%
Sedgefield	9	2.17%
Wheatley Hill	9	2.17%
Stanhope	6	1.45%
Barnard Castle	5	1%
Middleton-in-Tees	4	0.96%
Total	415	100%

The location of accidental secondary fires throughout the Service area is shown below:

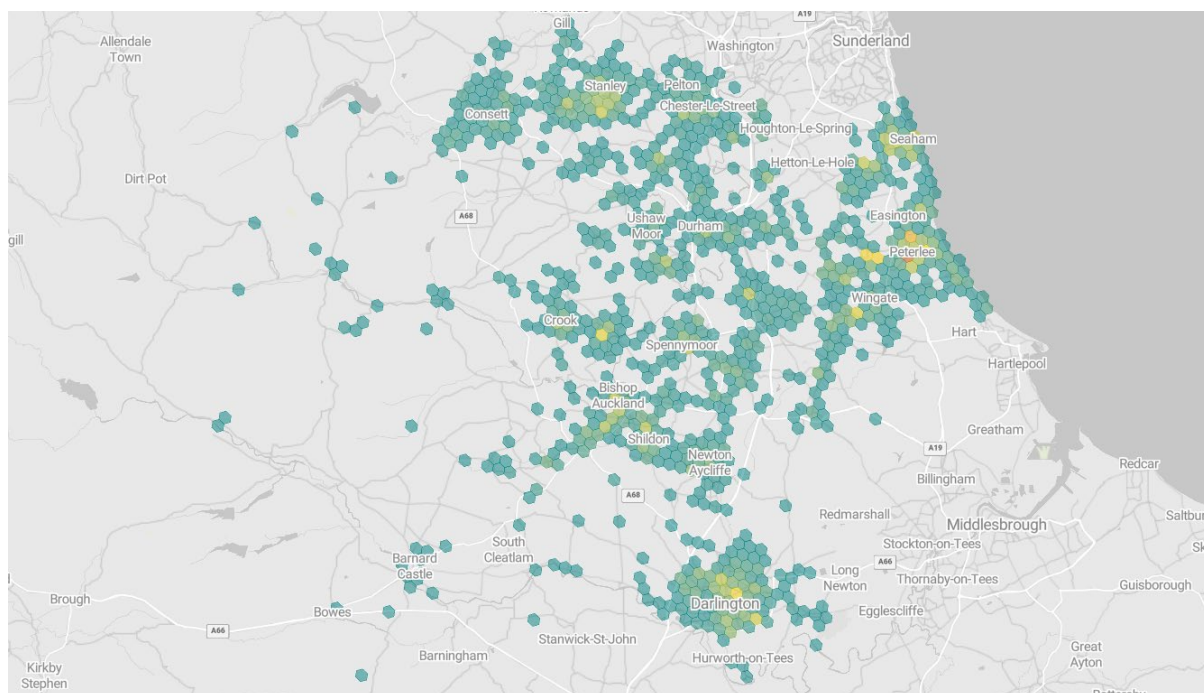


Deliberate secondary fires account for a total of 92% of the Service total for all secondary fires, and their distribution throughout the Service area is shown below:

Station area	Number of deliberate secondary fires	Percentage of activity
Peterlee	1473	18.99%
Darlington	1117	14.4%
High Handenhold	945	12.19%
Bishop Auckland	742	9.57%
Durham	663	8.55%
Seaham	618	7.97%
Spennymoor	525	6.77%
Consett	494	6.37%
Wheatley Hill	447	5.76%

Station area	Number of deliberate secondary fires	Percentage of activity
Crook	333	4.29%
Newton Aycliffe	284	3.66%
Sedgefield	73	0.94%
Stanhope	22	0.28%
Barnard Castle	17	0.22%
Middleton-in-Tees	2	0.03%
Total	7755	100%

The location of deliberate secondary fires throughout the Service area is shown below:



Unknown cause secondary fires account for a total of 2.99% of the Service total for all secondary fires, and their distribution throughout the Service area is shown below:

Station area	Number of unknown cause secondary fires	Percentage of activity
High Handenhold	51	20.24%
Consett	38	15.08%
Darlington	30	11.90%
Durham	29	11.51%
Seaham	28	11.11%
Crook	15	5.95%
Spennymoor	12	4.76%
Peterlee	11	4.37%
Wheatley Hill	11	4.37%
Bishop Auckland	8	3.17%
Newton Aycliffe	7	3.17%
Sedgefield	5	2.78%

Station area	Number of unknown cause secondary fires	Percentage of activity
Middleton-in-Tees	3	1.19%
Barnard Castle	2	0.79%
Stanhope	2	0.79%
Total	252	100%

The locations and type of materials involved in secondary fires is wide ranging, however, the most frequent secondary fires involve loose refuse (including garden refuse) (42.3%), scrub land (14.67%), tree scrub (8.5%), small refuse/rubbish/recycling containers (excluding wheelie bins) (7.39%) and grassland, pasture, grazing etc (6.03%). Other types of material involved in secondary fires are shown below:

Locations of secondary fires	Number of secondary fires	Percentage of activity
Loose refuse (incl in garden)	3563	42.31%
Scrub land	1234	14.65%
Tree scrub (includes single trees not in garden)	716	8.5%
Small refuse/rubbish/recycle container (excluding wheelie bin)	623	7.4%
Grassland, pasture, grazing etc	508	6.03%
Wheelie Bin	419	4.98%
Wasteland	126	1.5%
Straw/stubble burning	115	1.37%
Fence	102	1.21%
Hedge	101	1.2%
Large refuse/rubbish container (eg skip)	99	1.18%
Private/Domestic garden/allotment (vegetation not equipment/building)	85	1.01%
Refuse/rubbish tip	81	0.96%
Heathland or moorland	64	0.76%
Other outdoor items including roadside furniture	64	0.76%
Roadside vegetation	56	0.66%
Playground or Recreation area	48	0.57%
Cycle path/public footpath/bridleway	45	0.53%
Park	43	0.51%
	34	0.4%
Other outdoor location	31	0.37%
Total	8422	100%

This specific risk is not described in the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) or the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

Several concurrent secondary fires or a spate of deliberate fire setting across the county and Borough of Darlington. The cumulative duration of time needed to extinguish the fires would impact on the availability of appliances and require standby appliances to provide fire cover, leading to a reliance on support from neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services to maintain fire cover. There will also be an impact on the resource availability to deliver prevention and protection activities.

Risk assessment for secondary fires

2022/23	3713
2023/24	2217
2024/25	2492
Three-year total	8422
Three-year average	2807
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	5
Risk Assessment Impact Score	4

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the number of secondary fires during the reporting period, the secondary fire risk is assessed with a high degree of confidence, where very few areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of secondary fires

CDDFRS continues to work with key partners to reduce the opportunity of secondary fires, using regulatory powers and education.

R6 Void and Derelict Buildings

Our Service area has a number of empty buildings, known as void buildings, which have become more derelict as the time goes on without action being taken on their future. The reasons to explain why they are empty can be complex but can be as a result of an owner discontinuing use of a building, going out of business and not being able to sell or secure it, planning difficulties, neglect or economic crime.

When a building is standing empty there are various risks associated with it and if a building is left unsecure, unmanaged and accessible this presents a significant challenge.

Buildings can be damaged and become dangerous if utilities and service infrastructure are stolen; the threat of arson increases; and building collapse becomes more likely. In some situations, people may enter buildings or occupy them and this can become especially hazardous if the building becomes involved in a fire, and for responding personnel as well.

We calculate the number of properties which are void or derelict based on the answers to questions in our incident recording system which are completed by our crews using their professional judgment as to whether the property is unoccupied at the time of the incident.

Reasonable worst case scenario

A fire in a derelict building which requires the attendance of several pumping appliances over an extended period of time. Due to the nature of the material involved in the fire, there may also be an adverse environmental impact from the products of combustion and contamination of the local area and/or equipment. Often these buildings have been unoccupied and unsecure for a considerable time and are in a state of disrepair which poses various risks for attending crews. In this scenario there have been reports of persons entering the empty building and a fatality is therefore possible.

Risk Assessment

2022/23	84
2023/24	55
2024/25	66
Three-year total	205
Three-year average	68
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	4
Risk Assessment Impact Score	4

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4				●	
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the low frequency of fires in void or derelict buildings, this risk is assessed with only a limited degree of confidence as some areas of the assessment are affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of void and empty buildings

CDDFRS continues to work with key partners to reduce the opportunity of fires in void and derelict buildings.

R7 Wildfires

Wildfires, wildland fires or rural fires are unplanned, unwanted, and uncontrolled fires in an area of combustible vegetation starting in rural or urban areas. Wildfires are a specific incident type, which requires specific knowledge and understanding to address the difficulties and dangers inherent in its management. Such fires are different to our outdoor secondary fires.

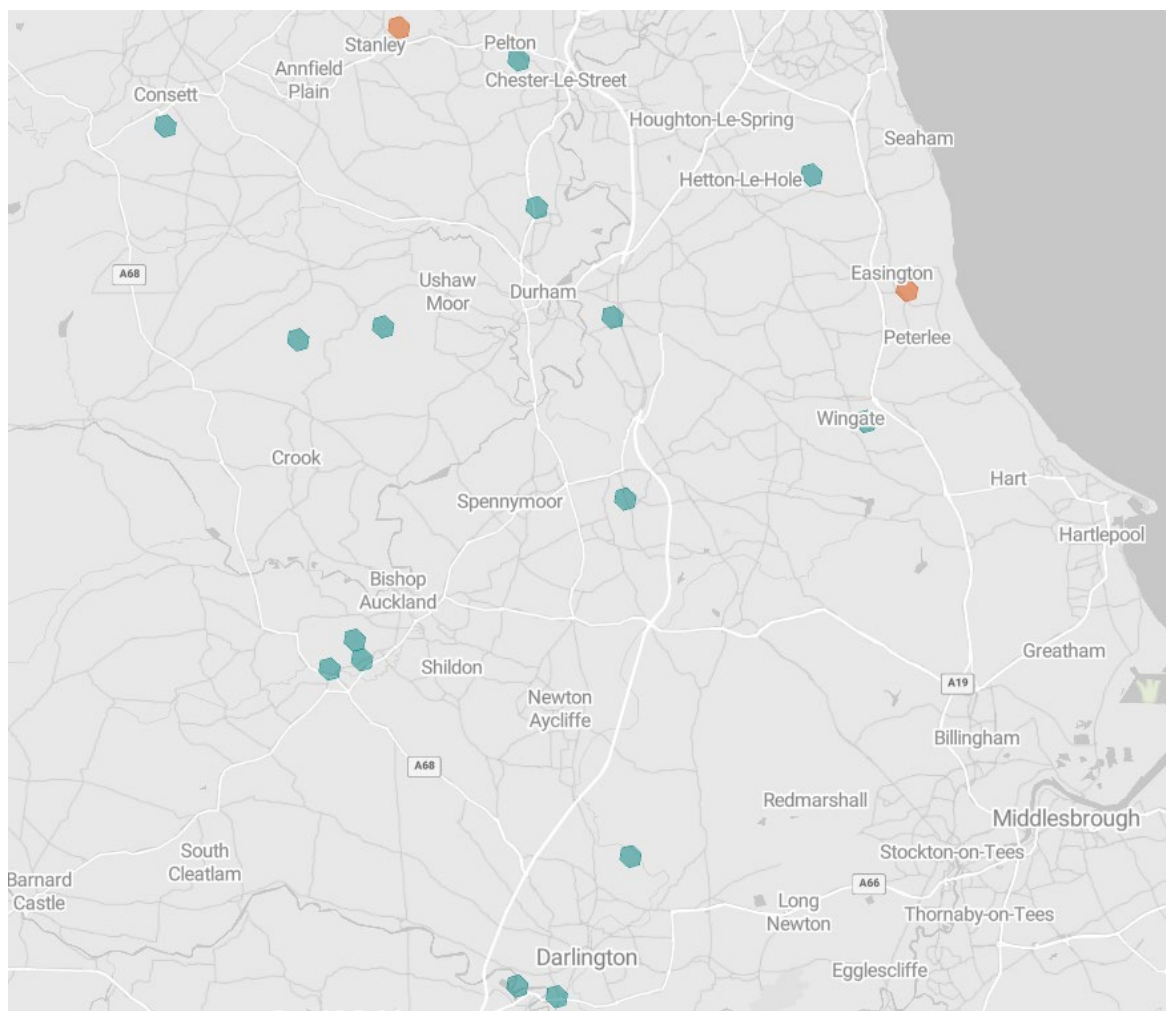
Within this scenario, a wildfire is defined as any uncontrolled vegetation fire where a decision or action is needed about its suppression. A wildfire will meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Involves a geographical area of at least one hectare (10,000 square metres);
- Has a sustained flame length of more than 1.5 metres;
- Requires a committed resource of at least four fire and rescue service appliances/resources;
- Requires resources to be committed for at least six hours;
- Presents a serious threat to life, environment, property and infrastructure.

The level of wildfire risk is not evenly spread across the UK; it varies considerably between seasons and between different regions of the UK. The key factors influencing wildfire risk are the prevailing weather conditions, vegetation types and the local topography. The west of the Service area is predominantly rural, consisting of open moorland and wooded river valleys, and is sparsely populated. Middle-in-Teesdale, Barnard Castle and Stanhope fire stations cover a large outlying area of small villages and communities. These remote rural areas comprise of the vegetation and

environment that could support the development of a wildfire in the appropriate atmospheric conditions.

The locations of wildfires in the Service area during the reporting period are shown below and described in the table below:



Historically the UK has experienced periodic severe wildfire seasons. These seasons have tended to coincide with extended periods of warm and dry weather and have sometimes been accompanied by high winds. The risk of wildfires is also affected by the size, condition, and dryness of the fuel. Increased rainfall before warm, dry periods can cause rapid vegetation growth that can increase the risk of wildfires when the vegetation later dries. These are the conditions that provide the ideal environment for the development and spread of large and destructive wildfires.

In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 20 wildfires.

Although the west of the Service area is predominantly rural, wildfires that meet the Home Office definition described previously can occur within any station area, as shown below:

Station area	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	% of Total	Total
Peterlee	2	2	0	20%	4
Bishop Auckland	2	0	1	15%	3
Darlington	2	0	1	15%	3
High Handenhold	3	0	0	15%	3
Durham	2	0	0	10%	2
Barnard Castle	1	0	0	5%	1
Consett	1	0	0	5%	1
Crook	0	1	0	5%	1
Seaham	1	0	0	5%	1
Spennymoor	1	0	0	5%	1
Wheatley Hill	0	0	0	0	0
Stanhope	0	0	0	0	0
Sedgefield	0	0	0	0	0
Newton Aycliffe	0	0	0	0	0
Middleton-in-Teesdale	0	0	0	0	0
Total	15	3	2	100%	20

Major fires, of which wildfires are a risk variation, are included within the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#), where climate change is described as leading to changes in the rainfall pattern that affects the UK and the increased likelihood of longer and drier summers leading to a risk of drought and more frequent and larger wildfires. The national major fire risk describes a national scenario of a sustained and widespread wildfire close to major infrastructure or at an urban/rural interface with varying degrees of intensity and 'burn back' for a period of up to seven days, potentially impacting tourism and the environment.

Although there have been other significant wildfires in other parts of the UK, where crews from CDDFRS have assisted the operational response to extinguish the fire, the frequency of wildfires within the service area is low.

The Met Office provides a [Fire Severity Index for England and Wales](#), with information on the potential severity of wildfires. The Met Office's Fire Severity Index (FSI) is an assessment of how severe a fire could become if one were to start, however, it is not an assessment of the risk of wildfires occurring. The FSI shows the current day's fire severity and a forecast of likely fire severity over the coming five days. The index values are from 1 to 5, which represents an increasing degree of fire severity as follows:

- FSI level 1 = low fire severity;
- FSI level 2 = moderate fire severity;
- FSI level 3 = high fire severity;
- FSI level 4 = very high fire severity;

- FSI level 5 = exceptional fire severity.

The risk of wildfires can be found on page 14 within the [County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register](#).

Reasonable worst-case scenario

The reasonable worst-case scenario for a wildfire incident in the Service area would be a protracted large fire over multiple days in a rural area with difficult access and limited water supplies. This scenario would require numerous Service and other resources to extinguish the fire, with the use of tactical advisors and appliances to support the management strategy to extinguish the fire. The wildfire would cause a significant impact on the availability of resources and have a negative impact on the local environment. It is unlikely that either any members of the public or firefighters would receive significant injuries, and only minor harms would be experienced due to the arduous conditions experienced.

Risk assessment for wildfires

2022/23	15
2023/24	3
2024/25	2
Three-year total	20
Three-year average	7
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	3
Risk Assessment Impact Score	2

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2			●		
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the low frequency of wildfires, this risk is assessed with only a limited degree of confidence as some areas of the assessment are affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of wildfires

The comparison of the assessment of this risk during the current and previous reporting periods shows no change in the level of risk, however, nationally, the risk of wildfires is expected to increase due to the warmer winters and hotter summers

associated with the climate changes described within the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#).

This risk is only considered present in the station areas that have had a wildfire that has met the specific National Operational Guidance definition for this incident type, as shown above. Although the stations to the west of the Service area have not had fires that have met this specific definition, professional judgement also influences the inclusion of this risk in the Middleton-in-Teesdale and Barnard Castle station areas.

R8 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. The River Wear, Gaunless, Browney, Tees and the River Skerne run through many of the station areas with many natural and man-made features creating hazards for individuals entering moving water.

The prevalence of incidents where rescues from water are completed is shown below, with most incidents in Durham, Bishop Auckland and Darlington requiring the rescue of persons in rivers or other moving water, or bankside where they may be partly in or out of the water. Incidents at Durham, Stanhope and Middleton-in-Teesdale have all involved persons on the roof of their vehicle that is surrounded by moving water and who need to be rescued.

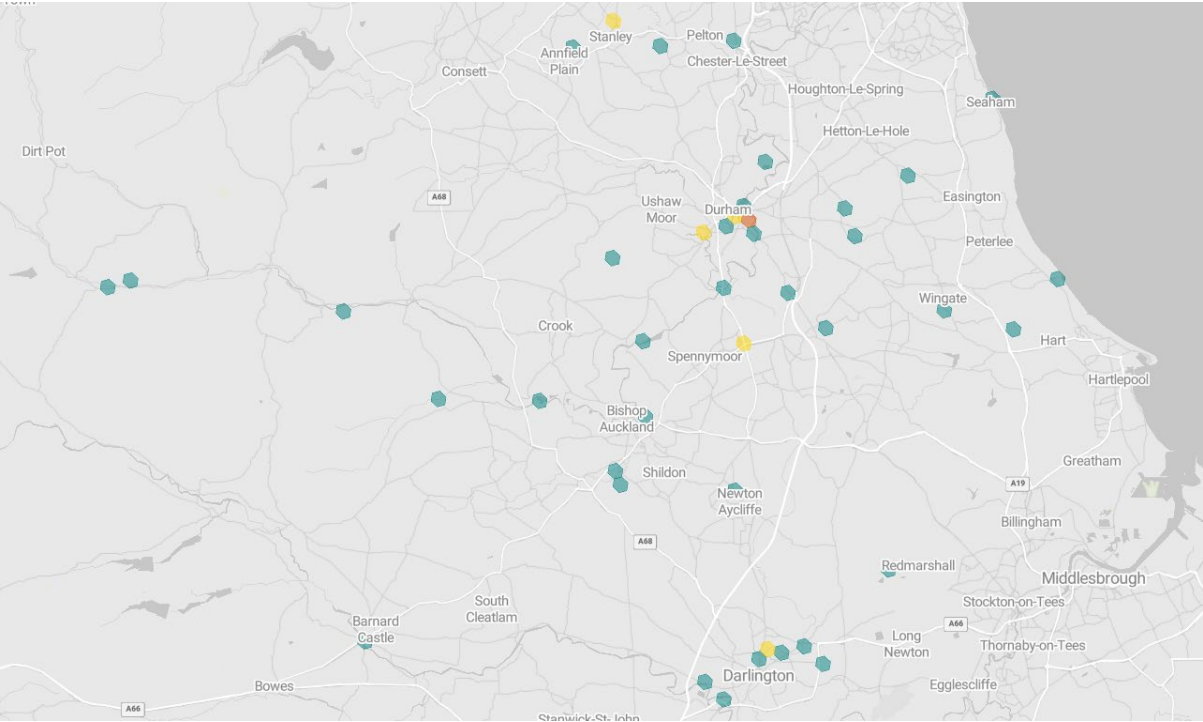
In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 39 rescues from water as shown in the table below:

Station area	Number of rescues from water	Percentage of activity
Durham	10	37.04%
Darlington	6	22.22%
Bishop Auckland	3	11.11%
Spennymoor	2	7.41%
Barnard Castle	1	3.7%
Consett	1	3.7%
Peterlee	1	3.7%
Seaham	1	3.7%
Wheatley Hill	1	3.7%
Stanhope	1	3.7%
Total	27	100%

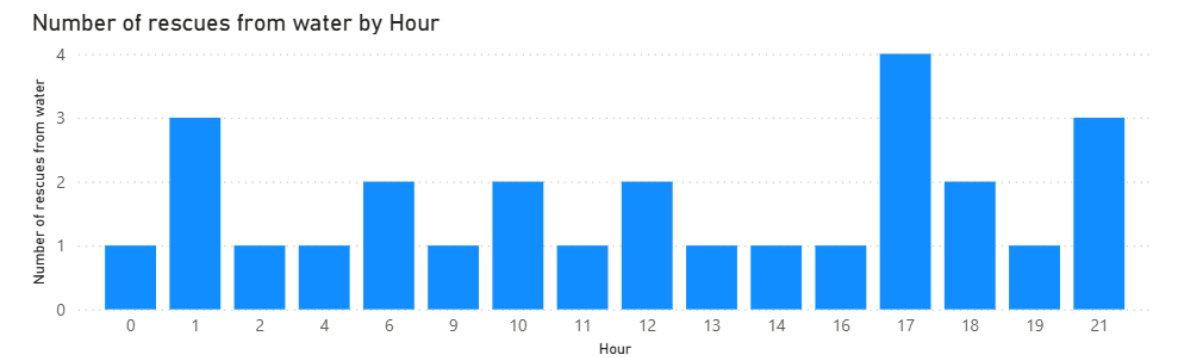
The types of rescues from water during the reporting period are shown below:

Type of rescues from water	Number of incidents	Percentage of activity
Rescue or evacuation from water	19	70.37%
Animal assistance incident	8	29.63%
Total	27	100%

The locations of the rescues from water during the reporting period are shown below:



Our data shows that more water rescues take place on a Tuesday than on other days of the week. The graph below shows the number of rescues by hour of the day and highlights that most take place at mid afternoon.



Reasonable worst-case scenario

An incident where an individual entered the water for social activities and was unable to recover themselves from the water. The incident would occur in a remote location with difficult access and could result in the loss of life to a member of the public. This scenario would require the attendance of specialist resources to carry out time critical safe and effective rescues.

Risk assessment for rescues from water

2022/23	13
2023/24	10
2024/25	4
Three-year total	27
Three-year average	9
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	3
Risk Assessment Impact Score	3

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3			●		
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the low frequency of rescues from water, this risk is assessed with only a limited degree of confidence as some areas of the assessment are affected by uncertainty. Rescues from water are infrequent, and their impact is also low across several of the impact indicators.

Changes in the risk landscape of rescues from water.

The comparison of the assessment of this risk during the current and previous reporting periods shows no change in the level of risk.

R9 Rescues from height

Height related scenarios describe any work activity where there is a possibility that a fall from a distance that is liable to cause an injury could occur at any place, either at, or below ground level. This includes work above ground/floor level and areas where falls could occur from an edge or through an opening or fragile surface or falls from ground level into an opening in a floor or a hole in the ground. Height related scenarios can occur in a broad range of environments, including above and below ground level, industrial sites, buildings and dwellings (including buildings under construction), open structures and natural environments (such as steep ground, rock faces, excavations or sink holes).

The geographic area of the Service includes the coastline to the east, and fells and dales in the rural areas to the west, which both present a broad range of scenarios where people may become stranded and require to be rescued from an unsafe height related environment.

In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 130 rescues from height. The prevalence of rescues from height in the Service area is shown below:

Station area	Number of rescues from height	Percentage
Darlington	31	23.85%
Peterlee	18	13.85%
Durham	17	13.08%
Consett	12	9.23%
Spennymoor	10	7.69%
Bishop Auckland	9	6.92%
Newton Aycliffe	8	6.15%
Seaham	8	6.15%
Wheatley Hill	5	3.85%
High Handenhold	4	3.08%
Crook	3	2.31%
Barnard Castle	2	1.59%
Middleton-in-Tees	1	0.77%
Sedgefield	1	0.77%
Stanhope	1	0.77%
Total	130	100%

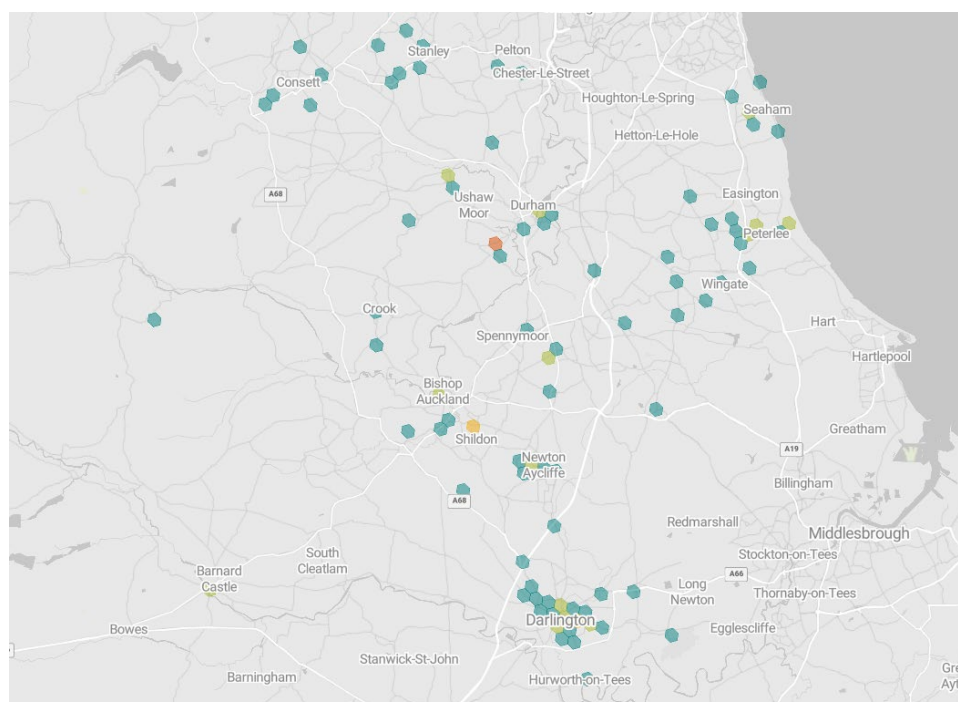
The service has three levels of working at height response. All emergency response staff are trained to the minimum of level one safe working at height techniques using work restraint, fall arrest and life lining. Staff at Durham and Consett are trained to level two to enable personnel to provide a limited first strike capability for the purposes of firefighter and casualty stabilisation and recovery, walking wounded recovery and casualty stabilisation. This equipment can also be used for confined space work. Staff at Newton Aycliffe and Seaham are trained to level three, with more advanced rope access equipment and advanced training to enable personnel to provide a full technical rescue including the capability of self-lowering/raising level three operators

and casualty, extra equipment to assist cliff and confined space rescues. Further assistance is also available from Cleveland Fire Brigade, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and Tees & Wear Search and Mountain Rescue in the event of the CDDFRS level three team being unavailable or additional support is required for a larger or more complex incident.

The types of rescues from height during the reporting period are shown below:

Type of rescue from height	Number of incidents	Percentage
From height e.g. pylon crane, roof or ledge.	70	58.46%
Domestic e.g. Cat, Dog, Rodents, Horse, Bird, etc	27	20.77%
Service not required	8	6.15%
Other	7	5.38%
Wild e.g. Horse, Deer, Wildfowl, Game, Aquatic, Exotic, etc	5	3.85%
Threat of/attempted suicide	4	3.08%
Livestock e.g. Horse, Cow, Sheep, Goat, Pig, Poultry, Fish, Exotic (Llama/Ostrich), Deer etc	1	0.77%
Make vehicle safe	1	0.77%
Other advice	1	0.77%
Total	130	100%

As shown below, the locations of the height related incidents are widespread, with some occurring near the coastline and others in the towns and villages across the service area. The stations in the west of the county, Sedgefield, Middleton-in-Teesdale and Stanhope experience very few height related incidents.



Reasonable worst-case scenario

An incident where a member of the public came into difficulty and required to be rescued from a ledge, embankment, or a crag/cliff. The member of the public may have sustained minor injuries and would require medical assistance at the scene of the rescue which may be time critical due to limited daylight or the nature of any injuries. The incident would be resolved by staff with more advanced rope access equipment and advanced training.

Risk assessment for rescues from height

2022/23	45
2023/42	37
2024/25	48
Three-year total	130
Three-year average	43
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	4
Risk Assessment Impact Score	2

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2				●	
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the low frequency of rescues from height, this risk is assessed with only a limited degree of confidence as some areas of the assessment are affected by uncertainty. Rescues from height are infrequent, and their impact is also low across several of the impact indicators.

Changes in the risk landscape of rescues from height.

The comparison of the assessment of this risk during the current and previous reporting periods shows no change in the level of risk.

R10 Road traffic collisions

Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) are the non-fire incidents that require the attendance of the Service for collisions involving large and small vehicles road vehicles, including motorbikes. RTCs are the most frequently attended non-fire incident by fire and rescue services. The Service has a statutory duty from Section 8 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to rescue people and protect them from serious harm in the event of road traffic collisions within their area.

The Service covers an area of 939 m2 with a high number of B, C, and unclassified roads towards the west, with A class roads linking the main towns in County Durham and Darlington. The A1(M) motorway runs through the Service area and passes through Darlington, Newton Aycliffe, Sedgefield, Spennymoor, Durham and High Handenhold station areas. The A68 runs from Darlington, west through Bishop Auckland and towards the Consett station area, while the A19 runs between the Seaham and Peterlee station areas, parallel to the east coast.

In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 950 road traffic collisions as detailed in the table below:

Station area	Number of RTCs	Percentage of activity
Darlington	129	13.58%
Consett	114	12%
Durham	106	11.16%
High Handenhold	103	10.84%
Bishop Auckland	95	10%
Peterlee	89	9.37%
Newton Aycliffe	79	8.32%
Spennymoor	52	5.47%
Barnard Castle	38	4%
Seaham	37	3.89%
Sedgefield	33	3.47%
Stanhope	28	2.95%
Crook	26	2.74%
Wheatley Hill	16	1.68%
Middleton-in-Tees	5	0.53%
Total	950	100%

Data supplied by the [Traffic Accident Data Unit](#) and available through the [North East England Road User Casualty Dashboard](#) describes the following key themes within the reporting period:

- The number of slight and serious injuries from RTCs are decreasing for all road users, the number of fatalities is showing a slight decrease over the three-year reporting period;
- Of all road users the greatest number of fatalities were to car occupants, pedestrians and motorcyclists;

- The most serious injuries occurred to car occupants, pedestrians, motorcyclists and pedal cyclists;
- Most fatalities occur in the 21–30 age group, slight injuries are in the 31-40 age group, while most serious injuries occur in both 21-30 and 41-50 age group.

The range of activities carried out by operational crews can vary depending on the extent of the collision and the nature of the injuries sustained to the driver and passenger(s).

The range of activities carried out by crews at RTCs during the reporting period is shown below:

Activity at RTCS attended	Frequency of activities	Percentage of activity
Make vehicle safe	323	34%
Extrication of person/s	177	18.63%
Make scene safe	155	16.32%
Medical assistance only	80	8.42%
Release of person/s	76	8%
Stand by no action	68	7.16%
Wash down road	41	4.32%
Advice only	19	2%
Other	11	1.16%
Total	950	100%

The types of RTCs attended during the reporting period involved the following obstructions and/or other road vehicles:

Road vehicles involved in RTCs	Number of incidents	Percentage of activity
Car	592	62.32%
Multiple Vehicles	231	24.32%
Van	39	4.11%
Motorcycle	25	2.63%
Lorry/HGV	24	0.95%
House – single occupancy	9	0.84%
Bus/coach	8	0.74%
Highway/road surface/pavement	7	0.53%
Bicycle	5	0.32%
Other	3	0.21%
Agriculture	2	0.11%
Caravan on tow	1	0.11%
Community centre/village or parish hall	1	0.11%
Motor home	1	0.11%
Other public buildings	1	0.11%
Total	950	100%

When assessing the locations of the RTCs where fatalities, severe and slight injuries occur, the [Fire Statistics Definitions](#) published by the Home Office are used for clarity over the extent of injuries, where

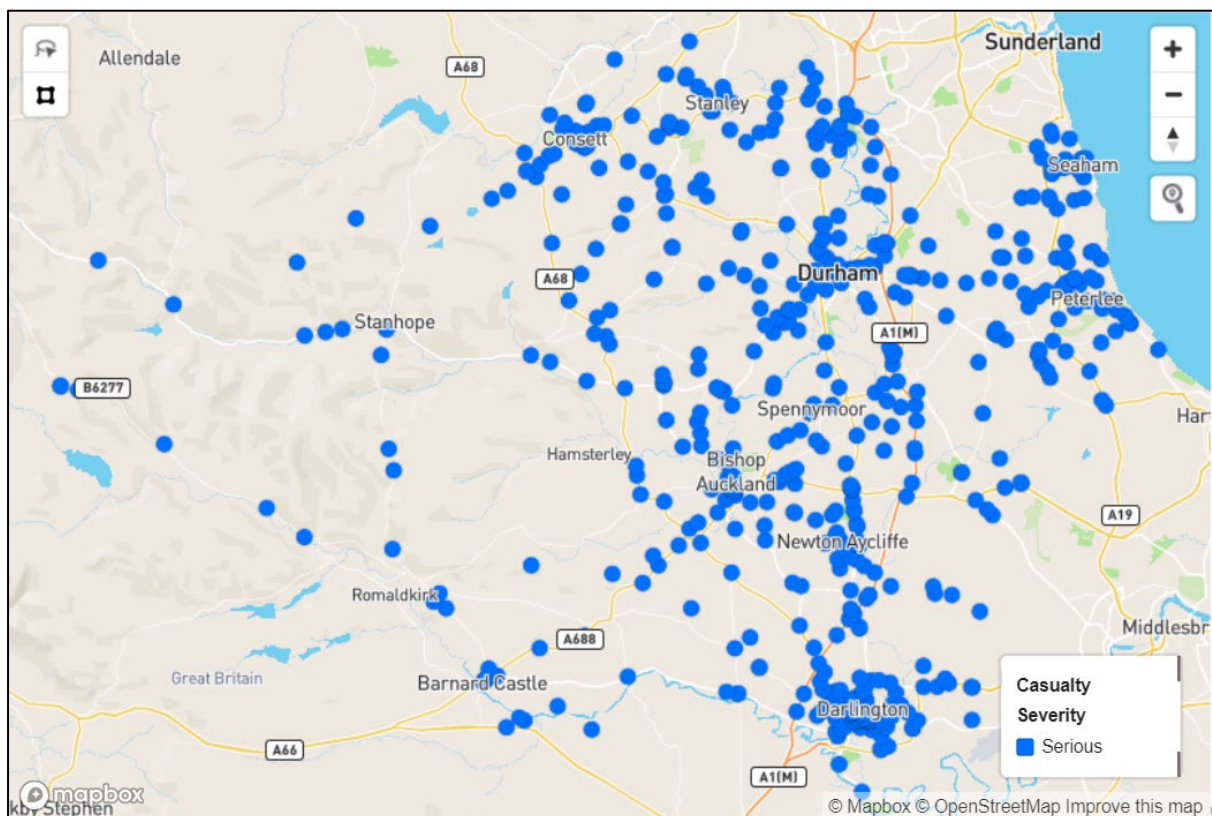
- Fatal can be as a direct or indirect result of an RTC;
- Hospital severe – at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient;
- Hospital slight – attending hospital as an outpatient (not a precautionary check).

Fatal RTCs

The majority of fatal RTCs occur on the A class roads in the north of the Service area, around Consett and High Handenhold stations (A693), with other fatalities occurring on the road connecting Darlington, Bishop Auckland (A68), Spennymoor and Durham (A167). The locations of fatal RTC incidents are shown below:

RTCs with severe injuries

Most RTCs that result in serious injuries occur centrally within the Service area, between the A68 from Darlington to Consett and the A1(M) from Darlington to Chester-Le-Street, with less serious injuries from RTCs in the east and west.

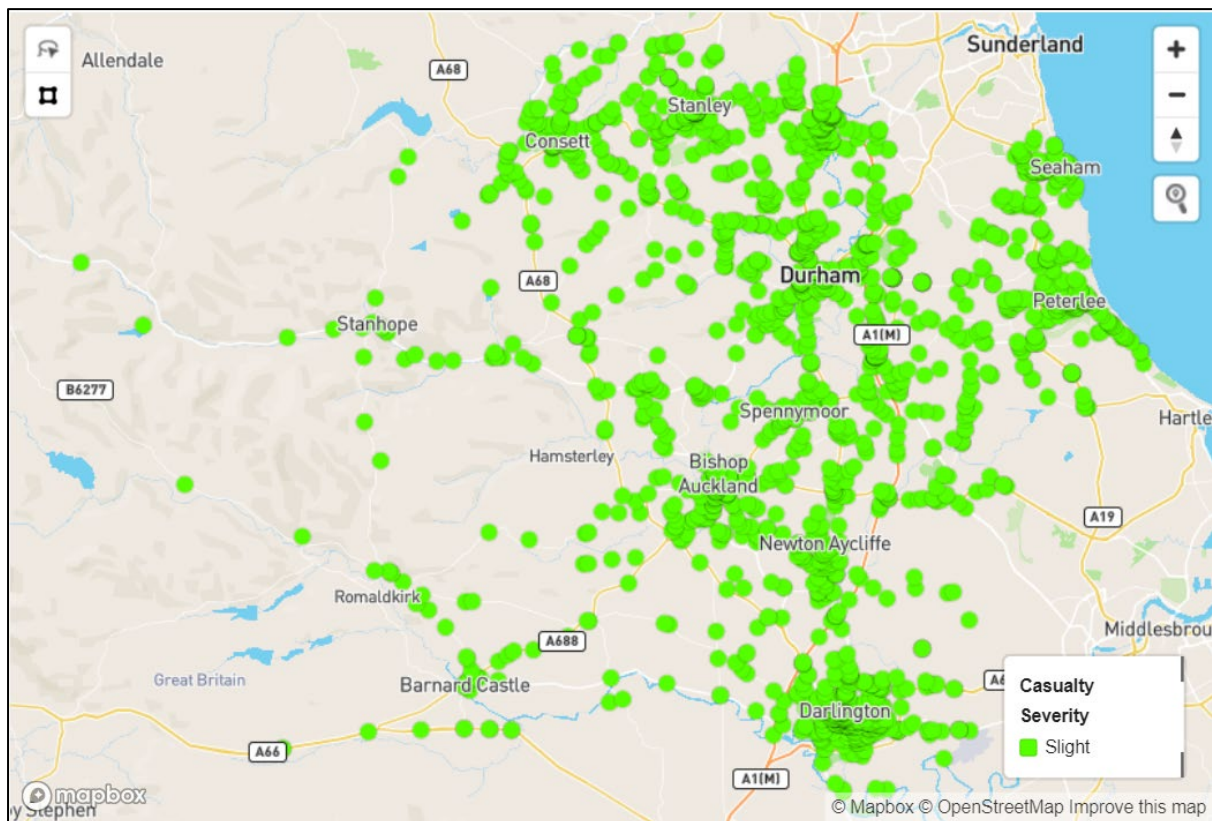


Major transport accidents, including transport by road, are included within the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) however a major road traffic accident would generally involve a vehicle carrying high-consequences dangerous goods. Most RTCs are unlikely to warrant a co-ordinated national level response and would be managed by local authorities and emergency services. The risk of road traffic accidents is included within the [County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register](#)

within adverse weather. Based on the distribution of RTCs at all the locations throughout the Service area, this risk is considered to be present in all station areas, to varying degrees.

RTCs with minor injuries

RTCs that result in slight injuries are more widespread throughout the Service area, with concentrated locations around the more densely populated station areas of Darlington, Bishop Auckland, Newton Aycliffe, Spennymoor, Durham, Consett, High Handenhold, Peterlee and Seaham.



Reasonable worst-case scenario

A collision involving multiple vehicles in one of the busiest locations, which required the extrication of multiple fatalities and casualties, with varying degrees of injury.

The location of the RTC would impact significantly on subsequent movement of traffic around the local area. This scenario could present difficult access for multiple emergency services due to the impact of the RTC on the road network and the time to complete any extrications would be protracted. Due to the potential leakage of vehicle fluids following an RTC in this scenario, there may be a negative impact on the environment and an extended period of time to resolve the incident may also negatively impact on the local economy.

Risk assessment for road traffic collisions

2022/23	297
2023/24	332
2024/25	321
Three-year total	950
Three-year average	317
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	5
Risk Assessment Impact Score	3

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					●
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the number of road traffic collisions during the reporting period, the RTC risk is assessed with a high degree of confidence, where very few areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of road traffic collisions

Advances in the technology of road vehicles, which include fuel types, construction and autonomous vehicles continues to challenge the skills, equipment and operational activities of the Fire and Rescue Service. CDDFRS monitors advancements in road vehicles, to ensure when required the actions of our crews is safe and effective.

R11 Rail incidents

Rail incidents form part of the transport group of risks present within our communities as the East Coast main line runs through the Service area. There are other local railway lines, including the Tees Valley line and the Durham Coast Line, that present a risk of an adverse safety event requiring the attendance of fire and rescue resources.

Train stations are located at the following locations within the Service area:

Station area	Train station	Rail line
Durham	Durham	East Coast Main Line
Darlington	Darlington	East Coast Main & Tees Valley Lines
High Handenhold	Chester-Le-Street	East Coast Main Line
Bishop Auckland	Bishop Auckland	Tees Valley Line
Seaham	Seaham	Durham Coast Line
Newton Aycliffe	Newton Aycliffe	Tees Valley Line
Bishop Auckland	Shildon	Tees Valley Line
Darlington	Dinsdale	Tees Valley Line
Darlington	North Road	Tees Valley Line
Newton Aycliffe	Heighington	Tees Valley Line
Darlington	Teesside Airport	Tees Valley Line
Peterlee	Horden	Durham Coast Line

Although railway fires and accidents that require the attendance of the Service are rare, incidents have occurred in train stations and on the lines of the rail network. Some of the risks associated with railway incidents include moving trains, difficult access and egress, fuel and power systems, hazardous materials and carriage construction and contents. All railway accidents, including fires and rescues, are investigated by the Railway Accident Investigation Branch with all reports available at: [Rail Accident Investigation Branch reports](#).

Modern safety regimes have made large scale transport accidents very rare. However, there have been some major rail incidents where some of the consequences have included: fatalities with physical and /or psychological casualties, disruption to essential services, particularly transport, damage to property and infrastructure, possible environmental contamination, possible evacuation and shelter of local residents or employees.

Major transport accidents, including transport by rail, is included within the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) where they are described as having a low frequency due to substantial infrastructure improvements and the introduction of automatic braking systems for trains, the roll-out of train protection warning systems, improvements in the management of lineside assets, and improvements to safety management systems. National train incidents and derailments have occurred that have resulted in fatalities and injuries to passengers (for example in Aberdeenshire, 2020 three fatalities and six casualties). Some collisions have occurred between vehicles and moving trains at level crossings.

All rail transport sector operators are required to have plans that cover a range of possible incidents, including those most likely to create wider impacts. These plans include introducing diversions where possible, based on safety and operational requirements.

The risk of rail transport incidents is not included within the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

A rail incident would be a minor derailment with minor injuries. The accumulation of smoke within a carriage would require the train to be stopped at a station, or another accessible location, to allow for the fire to be extinguished. Limited access, other moving trains, fuel and overhead power lines would all present hazards to fire and rescue personnel and the closure of a local rail line could impact on the local economy if trains were unable to run for any significant period of time.

Risk assessment for rail incidents

2022/23	1
2023/24	1
2024/25	3
Three-year total	5
Three-year average	2
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	2
Risk Assessment Impact Score	2

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the low frequency of rail related incidents, this risk is assessed with only a limited degree of confidence as some areas of the assessment are affected by uncertainty. Rail incidents are infrequent, and their impact is also low across several of the impact indicators.

Changes in the risk landscape of rail incidents.

The comparison of the assessment of this risk during the current and previous reporting periods shows no change in the level of risk.

This risk is only considered present in the station areas where the East Coast Main Line passes through or where other railway stations are located.

R12 Aircraft incidents

Incidents involving aircraft have the potential for catastrophic consequences, however, the number of worldwide air traffic fatalities has diminished significantly given the volume of passenger air traffic (4.5 billion scheduled passengers in 2019 – pre Covid-19 pandemic). Air travel is statistically the safest form of transport and the majority of aircraft incidents relate to smaller aircraft such as microlights and gliders.

Within the service area Teesside International Airport is located on the outskirts of Darlington, near the village of Middleton St George. This airport allows flights for the public transport of passengers, freight and for flying instruction. There are also other smaller category airfields located at Fishburn, Durham (Wheatley Hill) and Peterlee (Shotton). Fishburn airfield is an unlicensed grass flying strip close to the town of Sedgefield, Wheatley Hill is a small microlight club and airfield, and Shotton is primarily a parachuting site.

Teesside International Airport is a firefighting category six airport, with the maximum length of aircraft that can land between 28m and up to but not including 39m, and a maximum fuselage width of 5m. Aircraft incidents that occur within the airport boundary are the responsibility of the airport firefighting crews, while incidents that occur outside the airport boundary are the responsibility of the local authority fire and rescue service. The airport rescue and firefighting services will also respond to off-airport incidents that fall within 1000m from the edge of the runway threshold. If a special request has been made by the local authority, then dependent on circumstances, major foam tenders may be dispatched.

The lengths of the runways at the airfields within the service area is shown below:

Airport/airfield	Station area	Runway length
Teesside International Airport	Darlington	2,291 m
Fishburn	Sedgefield	790m
Shotton	Peterlee	304 m and 237 m (2 runways)
Wheatley Hill	Wheatley Hill	540 m

Aviation accidents have caused the significant loss of life and have been major incidents in other locations, however, aircraft incidents in the service area historically

only involve light aircraft, microlights or paragliders, and often only require limited action and result in minor injuries to pilots and/or passenger(s). Most aircraft and aviation related incidents are good intent false alarms, caused by a small of fumes or aviation fuel in the cockpit of the aircraft where a safe landing occurs with no actions by operational crews on arrival at the incident.

The [Air Accidents Investigation Branch](#) investigates civil aircraft accidents and serious incidents within the United Kingdom.

Modern safety regimes have made large scale transport accidents very rare. However, there have been some major rail incidents where some of the consequences have included: fatalities with physical and /or psychological casualties, disruption to essential services, particularly transport, damage to property and infrastructure, possible environmental contamination, possible evacuation and shelter of local residents or employees.

Major transport accidents, including transport by air, included within the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#), where they are described as having a low frequency. The last major air accident in the UK was the Kegworth accident in 1989, when a Boeing 737 crashed close to the M1 motorway resulting in 47 fatalities. Commercially operated helicopters have also been involved in accidents and following the crash of a privately-operated jet during an air display at Shoreham, West Sussex in 2015, which resulted in 11 fatalities, the Civil Aviation Authority conducted a [Review of UK civil flying display and special event governance](#), which led to the 2018 independent report on UK civil flying display and special event governance.

All air transport sector operators are required to have plans that cover a range of possible incidents, including those most likely to create wider impacts. These plans include introducing diversions where possible, based on safety and operational requirements.

The risk of aircraft incidents is not included within the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

A small aircraft with multiple persons on board which was forced to attempt to land off the airfield.

The incident would require the extrication of pilot and passenger with minor injuries only. This scenario could also cause minor disruption to traffic and local transport routes.

Risk assessment for aircraft incidents

2022/23	10
2023/24	3
2024/25	5
Three-year total	18
Three-year average	6
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	3
Risk Assessment Impact Score	2

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

This risk is only considered present in the station areas where there are airports or airfields. Due to the low frequency of aircraft related incidents, this risk is assessed with only a limited degree of confidence as some areas of the assessment are affected by uncertainty. Aircraft incidents are infrequent, and their impact is also low across several of the impact indicators.

Changes in the risk landscape of aircraft incidents

The comparison of the assessment of this risk during the current and previous reporting periods shows no change in the level of risk.

This risk is only considered present in the station areas where there are airports or airfields.

Station Area	Number of aircraft incidents (three year reporting period))	Percentage of activity
Darlington	14	77.78%
Sedgefield	3	16.67%
Wheatley Hill	1	5.56%
Total	18	100%

R13 Maritime incidents

Incidents involving vessels in the marine and inland waterway environment are not commonplace for fire and rescue personnel; they can be complex to deal with, ranging from incidents involving small vessels to large sea-going vessels, and can include military vessels. The Service area includes 17 km of coastline in the Seaham and Peterlee station areas.

Vessels within Seaham harbour are the statutory responsibility of the Authority, while if a casualty vessel situated is outside the area of statutory responsibility (i.e., offshore) it must be recognised, as it may come into the harbour and become a statutory responsibility of the Authority.

A fire on a vessel is a hazard because of the way vessels are constructed, with difficult access and egress and the possibility of fire spreading beyond the compartment involved through conduction via metal bulkheads and air handling machinery. Some of the hazards associated with a maritime related incidents include restricted access and egress, ineffective communications, fire and thermal radiation, flashover, backdraft and uncontrolled ventilation.

The [Marine Accident Investigation Branch](#) investigates marine accidents involving UK vessels worldwide and all vessels in UK territorial waters.

Modern safety regimes have made large scale transport accidents very rare. However, there have been some major rail incidents where some of the consequences have included: fatalities with physical and/or psychological casualties, disruption to essential services, particularly transport, damage to property and infrastructure, possible environmental contamination, possible evacuation and shelter of local residents or employees.

Seaham Harbour handles ships of up to 8,000 tonnes, with a maximum beam of 17m, length up to 120m and draft up to 6.7m. With 900m of quay frontage, the port facility can receive, store and distribute a broad range of commodities. It has 30,406 square metres (approximately 7.5 acres) of covered warehousing, and 6,000 square metres of purpose-built segregated open storage.

There is a risk of a vessel's crew member becoming injured or unwell in a restricted space on board a vessel in the harbour. This may require specialist rescue teams to access, stabilise and extract. Certain areas of the vessel are classed as confined space and would require breathing apparatus to access.

Major transport accidents, including transport by sea, are included within the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#), where they are described as having a low frequency. The last major accident on a UK-flagged ship at sea happened in March 1987, when the Herald of Free Enterprise capsized shortly after leaving Zeebrugge en route to Dover. There were 193 fatalities. On inland waterways, the collision between the Marchioness and the Bowbelle in August 1989 resulted in 51 fatalities.

All maritime sector operators are required to have plans that cover a range of possible incidents, including those most likely to create wider impacts. These plans include introducing diversions where possible, based on safety and operational requirements.

HM Coastguard has created a mass rescue operations framework to assist with identifying suitable landing points during the evacuation of vessels, this is called Operation Waypoint. The use of Seaham harbour has been assessed as unsuitable compared to landing casualties in the Rivers Tees or Tyne however it remains operationally viable should it be required with a vessel close to Seaham.

The risk of maritime incidents is not included within the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

A fire on board a vessel either in a container or any other part of the ship that required the operation of the ship's on board firefighting systems. The fire would require crews to access the vessel and carry out firefighting operations to resolve the incident and mitigate further fire and smoke damage.

Risk assessment for maritime incidents

2022/23	0
2023/24	0
2024/25	0
Three-year total	0
Three-year average	0
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	1
Risk Assessment Impact Score	2

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2	●				
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

This risk is only considered present in the station areas that have a coastline in the East of the Service area (Seaham and Peterlee). Due to no operational maritime incidents, this risk is assessed with only a limited degree of confidence as some areas of the assessment are affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of maritime incidents

The comparison of the assessment of this risk during the current and previous reporting periods shows no change in the level of risk.

R14 Flooding

The risk of flooding within the Service area is described within both the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) and the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register. Wide area flooding may occur from a range of different circumstances and may be fluvial (in close proximity to rivers), surface water (following exceptional heavy periods of rainfall when the local environment can't transport the water away fast enough) and coastal (where high tides, storm surges and offshore waves from low pressure weather systems lead to coastal flooding).

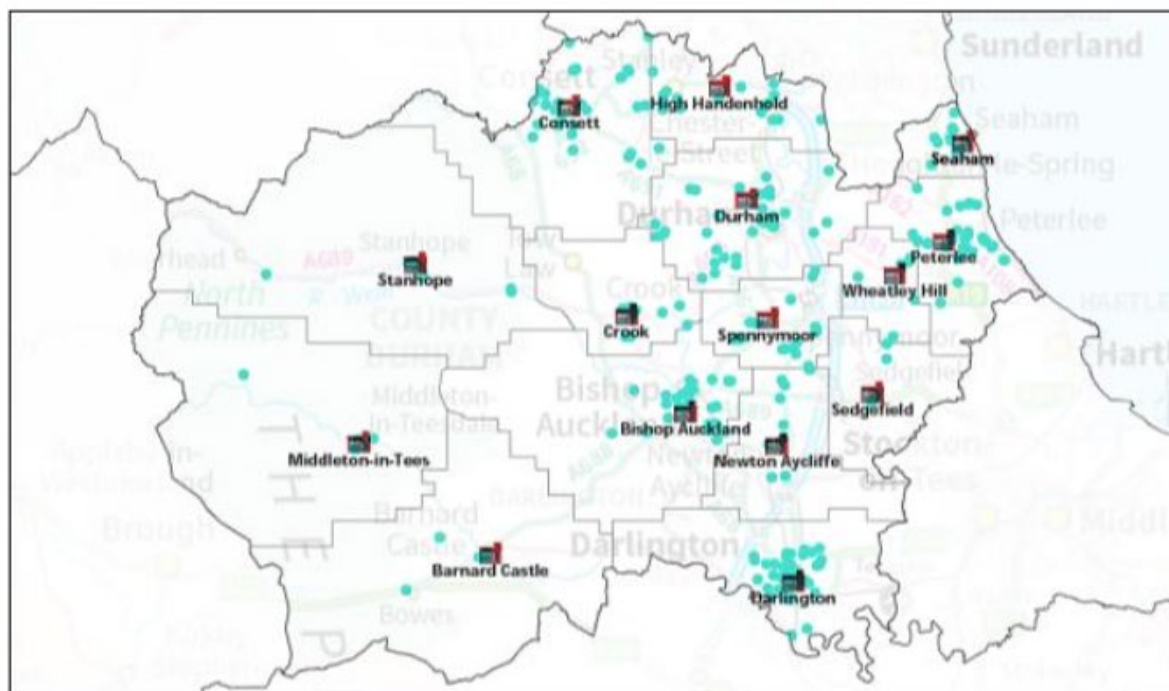
Wide area flooding is rare, and a variation to this risk is the occurrence of relatively minor incidents involving domestic water supplies where advice is given, or where the incident is made safe by isolating water supplies, or where appliance pumps are used to remove water from properties.

In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 305 flooding incidents. The distribution of flooding incidents throughout the Service area is shown below:

Station area	Number of flooding incidents	Percentage of activity
Darlington	55	18.03%
Durham	42	13.77%
High Handenhold	40	13.11%
Peterlee	30	9.84%
Consett	23	7.54%
Bishop Auckland	21	6.89%
Spennymoor	21	6.89%
Newton Aycliffe	20	6.56%
Crook	19	6.32%
Sedgefield	12	3.93%
Seaham	7	2.3%
Wheatley Hill	6	1.97%
Stanhope	5	1.64%
Barnard Castle	4	1.31%
Total	305	100%

Examples of flooding incidents that have occurred in the Service area during the reporting period include domestic flooding caused by burst or damaged water pipes, roads being blocked due to heaving rainfall and adverse weather conditions and flash surface water flooding from spate conditions.

The locations of flooding incidents throughout the Service area are shown below:



The majority of flooding related incidents involve houses of single occupancy (58.03%), bungalow - single occupancy (7.87%) dwellings up to three storeys (5.57%), nursing/care (3.93%) and Highway/road surface/pavement (2.95%).

The distribution of flooding property types is shown below:

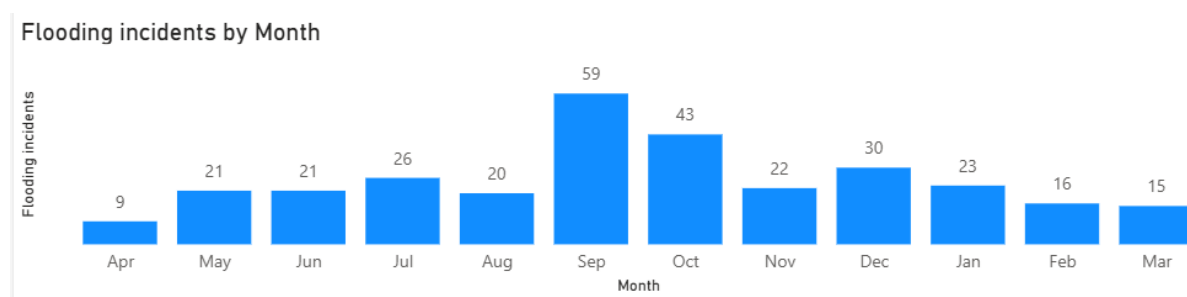
Flooding property types	Number of flooding incidents	Percentage of activity
House - single occupancy	177	58.03%
Bungalow - single occupancy	24	7.87%
Up to 3 storeys	17	5.57%
Nursing/Care	12	3.93%
Highway/road surface/pavement	9	2.95%
Up to 2 storeys	7	2.3%
Pub/wine bar/bar	6	1.97%
Self-contained Sheltered Housing	6	1.97%
3 or more storeys	5	1.64%
Infant/primary school	5	1.64%
Single shop	4	1.31%
Other	33	10.82%
Total	305	100%

Most flooding incidents require minor interventions such as making an incident safe by isolating domestic water supplies (58.03%), pumping water from the incident (15.08%) and providing advice only (19.67%).

The actions carried out at flooding incidents throughout the service area are shown below:

Actions	Number of flooding incidents	Percentage of activity
Make safe	177	58.03%
Advice only	60	19.67%
Pumping out	46	15.08%
Other	17	5.57%
Stand by no action	5	1.64%
Total	305	100%

Incident reporting system data illustrates that the frequency of flooding incidents is not uniform throughout a yearly period. The frequency of flooding incidents throughout the reporting year is shown below:



Evacuation of persons

Data over the reporting period shows the frequency that persons are evacuated from premises without the assistance of fire and rescue personnel. On only one occasion during the three-year reporting period was an individual evacuated with the assistance of fire and rescue personnel due to flash flooding and damage to newly built accommodation.

The risks of fluvial, coastal and surface water flooding are all included within the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) and the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

A number of houses within a local community that became isolated due to flooding from exceptional heavy rainfall, with rivers and drainage systems already at their capacity to remove water. The excessive floodwater would require people to be evacuated from their homes, with local roads being impassable and the short-term loss of power, utilities and communications until the rainfall and floodwater had receded.

Risk assessment for flooding incidents

2022/23	86
2023/24	138
2024/25	81
Three-year total	305
Three-year average	102
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	5
Risk Assessment Impact Score	3

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Smaller low level domestic flooding incidents occur frequently, and their impacts are well understood. The wide area flooding aspect of this risk occurs much less frequently, however accurate predictions and modelling on areas that are likely to be susceptible to flooding are made by Flood Forecasting Centres. These centres are partnerships between the Met Office and the Environmental Agency, and they bring together expertise on flood monitoring, forecasting and warnings.

Further information on flooding is available:

- [County Durham flood risk information](#)
- [Darlington flood risk information](#)

Therefore we have a moderate degree of confidence as some areas of the assessment are affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of flooding incidents

The risk of flooding is described within both the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) and the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register. [The UK's Climate Change Risk Assessment](#) highlighted that more intense rainfall, more extreme weather and wetter winters are projected to increase the threat of damage and disruption as a result of all types of flooding. Climate change, extreme weather and flooding are all detailed in the National Risk Register long term trends, where sea levels are described as increasing by 3 mm each year around the UK coastline, increasing the flooding risk to buildings close to the shoreline.

Although the national risk around all aspects of wide area flooding (fluvial, surface water and coastal) is predicted to increase in future years due to climate change, the impact of domestic flooding is considered to remain constant.

R15 Industrial incidents and fires

Although the County Durham and Darlington rich industrial heritage associated with both lead and coal mining, steelworks and the railways industry has diminished, it has been replaced by many modern and diverse businesses based on manufacturing processes, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, and retail. Industrial accidents can take a wide variety of forms and their impacts vary considerably in both scale and nature. In some cases, these accidents will have very limited impacts beyond the immediate area and can be dealt with locally. Others can have cascading effects that will have a wider impact.

This category of risk includes fires and explosions where the consequences may include fatalities with physical and /or psychological casualties, disruption to essential services, particularly transport, damage to property and infrastructure, economic impact, the introduction of exclusion zones, decontamination of affected persons, possible environmental contamination and the possible evacuation and shelter of local residents or employees.

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. Site owners and operators are required to take necessary measures to prevent accidents involving dangerous substances and processes, with the legislation covering activities including the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations and the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Industrial accidents and fires may be accidental or deliberate in their cause. In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 39 industrial accidents and fires, with their causes shown below:

Causes of industrial accidents	Number of industrial accidents	Percentage of activity
Accidental	36	75%
Special Service incident	9	18.75%
Deliberate - others property	2	4.17%
Not known	1	2.08%
Total	48	100%

Industrial related incidents include those incidents in manufacturing factories and premises where engineering, assembly, and production is the primary activity. All of the industrial accidents attended in the three-year reporting period were covered by the Regulatory Reform Order (2005). The distribution of industrial related fires for the reporting period is shown below:

Station area	Number of industrial fires	Percentage of activity
Bishop Auckland	9	18.75%
Newton Aycliffe	8	16.67%
Peterlee	8	16.67%
Darlington	7	14.58%
Consett	5	10.42%
High Handenhold	4	8.33%
Crook	2	4.17%
Spennymoor	2	4.17%
Durham	1	2.08%
Sedgefield	1	2.08%
Wheatley Hill	1	2.08%
Total	48	100%

The causes of the industrial fires in the Service area during the reporting period are shown below:

Causes of industrial fires	Number of industrial fires	Percentage of activity
Overheating, unknown cause	11	22.9%
Special Service incidents	9	18.75%
Accumulation of flammable material	5	10.42%
Fault in equipment or appliance	5	10.42%
Faulty fuel supply - electricity	5	10.42%
Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)	4	8.33%
Heat source and combustibles brought together deliberately	2	4.17%
Negligent use of equipment or appliance (heat source)	2	4.17%
Other	2	4.17%
Cooking – chip pan/deep fat fryer	1	2.08%
Faulty fuel supply - electricity	1	2.08%
Vehicle crash or collision	1	2.08%
Total	48	100%

Examples of industrial incidents and fires include a fire in a shredded tyre extraction system, a large quantity of plastic pellets well alight and a large well-developed fires in wood processing sites.

The risk of an industrial accident is included within the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) and the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

A large fire at one of the factories within the Service area which caused significant fire and smoke damage and ceased the production or processes with a resultant impact

on employees and the local economy. The fire would require the prolonged attendance of resources to extinguish, would involve partner agencies and would have a detrimental impact on the local environment.

Risk assessment for industrial fires

2022/23	15
2023/24	20
2024/25	13
Three-year total	48
Three-year average	16
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	3
Risk Assessment Impact Score	4

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4			●		
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence:

Industrial accidents and fires are infrequent in their occurrence and the broad range of processes conducted at a variety of diverse sites informs a moderate level of confidence in the assessment of this risk as some areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of industrial fires

The frequency of industrial accidents and fires has remained statistically similar. The impact of the incidents that did occur was also similar to previous years and the overall risk rating for industrial incidents and fires is similar to the previous year.

R16 Hazardous Materials

The Service must make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies, including the events or situations that cause serious harm to the environment (including the life and health of plants and animals). The use of hazardous materials in manufacturing and industrial processes throughout the Service area presents the risk of an emergency incident that would have a negative impact on the environment. Hazardous materials are also frequently transported through the Service area by the road and rail networks.

Incidents that may involve hazardous materials occur at chemical or industrial sites, farms in rural locations where pesticides and other chemicals are used, waste sites or water treatment works.

In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 100 hazardous material incidents. The distribution of hazardous material incidents throughout the Service area is shown below:

Station area	Number of Incidents	Percentage of activity
Bishop Auckland	21	21%
Darlington	16	16%
Peterlee	12	12%
Durham	11	11%
Spennymoor	11	11%
High Handenhold	9	9%
Newton Aycliffe	8	8%
Consett	3	3%
Crook	3	3%
Seaham	3	3%
Middleton-in-Tees	1	1%
Sedgefield	1	1%
Wheatley Hill	1	1%
Total	100	100%

The majority of hazardous material incidents relate to domestic related supplies within dwellings. Other hazardous materials incidents include the leakage of chemicals from road vehicles, suspicious/white powder sent to both dwellings and non-residential premises and unlabelled chemical containers left by roadways or in grassland.

Locations of hazardous materials incidents

Locations of hazardous material incidents	Number of Incidents	Percentage of activity
Dwelling	80	80%
Non Residential	13	13%
Other outdoors (including land)	3	3%
Outdoor equipment and machinery	2	2%
Other Residential	1	1%
Outdoor structures	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Reasonable worst-case scenario

An incident within an industrial premises that, because of the release of substances such causes consequences to the local environment such as a domestic or commercial premises or the transportation network. These incident types will require personnel skilled in the detection and management of hazardous materials from within the fire sector and beyond. Small number of people affected unknown release

Risk assessment: Hazardous material incidents

2022/23	41
2023/24	33
2024/25	26
Three-year total	100
Three-year average	33
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	4
Risk Assessment Impact Score	3

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Based on the frequency and locations of previous hazardous materials incidents, this risk is considered as being present at nearly all the station areas and this risk is assessed with moderate confidence.

Changes in the risk landscape of hazardous materials incidents

We continue to observe a decline in the services attendance at hazardous material incidents.

R17 Waste and recycling sites

Fires in waste and recycling sites may occur at waste sites that are permitted or licensed by environmental agencies, that have an exemption from the relevant environmental agency, and at waste sites that operate illegally.

Many waste sites are managed by professional operators, which strictly adhere to regulations and good practice in controlling hazards on site. However, other sites are managed badly or are illegal and have little regard for regulations or health and safety. Hazards at illegal sites may present an even greater risk to the public and firefighters, as there may not be enough information on the content of the waste stored on site, or good operating practices may not be followed.

Fire is an ongoing risk at most sites in the waste and recycling industry due to the readily combustible nature of waste. Aside from the obvious harm that fires can cause to staff and facilities, a fire that involves waste carries additional dangers both to human health and the environment, as it may produce toxic pollutants.

Licensed recycling centres are located throughout the service area at:

- Morrison Busty Industrial Estate Annfield Plain (Consett);
- Coxhoe Quarry Coxhoe (Spennymoor);
- A689 adjacent to Sherburn Stone Quarry, Frosterley (Stanhope);
- Heighington Lane, Heighington (Newton Aycliffe);
- B6313 Chester-Le-Street to Craghead, Hett Hills (High Handenhold);
- B1283 Sunderland Road Horden (Peterlee);
- Highways Depot off B6277 Middleton-in-Teesdale (Middleton-in-Teesdale);
- Potterhouse Lane (Pity Me) (Durham);
- Romanway Industrial Estate, Romanway (Bishop Auckland);
- Strangford Road (Seaham);
- Stainton Grove Industrial Estate Stainton Grove (Barnard Castle);
- Thornley Crossings Industrial Estate Thornley (Wheatley Hill);
- Tudhoe Industrial Estate, Tudhoe (Spennymoor);
- Mewburn Road Darlington (Darlington).

Fires involving the unlicensed transfer of waste material could occur at any location in the Service area, and their frequency may be under-reported by the nature of the material involved and the recording of these incidents as either secondary fires or controlled burning.

Some of the hazards associated with fires in waste and recycling sites include:

- Hidden or rapid fire growth;
- Pressurised containers, aerosols and gas cylinders;

- Hazardous materials, including biological hazards;
- Running or pooling fuel fires.

Major fires, covering many variations of this incident type are included in the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#), however the specific risk of fires in waste and recycling sites is not included within the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register.

Station Area	Number of waste and recycling site Incidents	Percentage of activity
High Handenhold	1	100%
Total	1	100.0%

Reasonable worst-case scenario

A large deep-seated fire in a recycling centre involving compacted material with difficult access and limited water supplies. The fire may cause environmental pollution into the local water courses and atmosphere for up to two weeks with local unrest and political impact beyond the duration of time to extinguish the fire.

Risk assessment for waste and recycling sites

2022/23	0
2023/24	1
2024/25	0
Three-year total	1
Three-year average	0.3
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	1
Risk Assessment Impact Score	4

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4	●				
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the low frequency of waste and recycling site incidents, this risk is assessed with only a limited degree of confidence as some areas of the assessment are affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of fires in waste and recycling sites

The comparison of the assessment of this risk during the current and previous reporting periods shows a reduction in the frequency of this incident type, however, based on the data over the three-year reporting period, the overall level of risk remains the same.

This risk is only considered present in the station areas that have licensed waste and recycling centres described above, i.e., all station areas within the Service area with the exception of Crook and Sedgefield.

R18 Animal related incidents

Animal related incidents can present a broad range of risks direct to individuals and members of the public may put themselves at risk in their attempts to rescue animals in distress. Injuries can occur from bites, cuts or scratches from animals, slips and falls associated with rescuing animals from inaccessible locations (such as water or height) or from zoonotic diseases, which are diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans.

Throughout the rural communities of the Service area, the animal related incidents generally involve farm animals and livestock, whereas the incidents in the urban conurbations involve smaller domesticated animals such as dogs and cats.

Examples of incidents

Examples of the animal related incidents that have occurred in the Service area throughout the reporting period include horses trapped in fencing or barbed wire, birds trapped at height in netting around buildings and dogs trapped in storm drains or a mineshaft. The risks associated with each animal related incident can vary significantly and will depend on the size of the animal, the working environment and the degree of stress and anxiety displayed by either the animal, owners or members of the public attempting to conduct a rescue before the arrival of the service.

In the three-year reporting period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, the Service attended 162 animal related incidents.

The distribution and type of these incidents throughout the Service area is shown in the two tables below:

Type of animal rescue	Number of incidents	Percentage of activity
Domesticated animals (cats, dogs, horses, birds)	96	59.62%
Livestock (hoses, cows, sheep, pigs, poultry)	36	22.22%
Domestic e.g. cat, dog, horse, bird	15	9.26
Wild animals (horses, deer, wildfowl)	15	9.26%
Total	162	100%

The distribution of animal related incidents throughout the service area is shown below:

Station area	Total Number of Incidents	Percentage of activity
Darlington	45	27.72%
Durham	19	11.73%
Bishop Auckland	18	11.11%
High Handenhold	16	9.88%
Peterlee	16	9.88%
Consett	11	6.79%
Newton Aycliffe	10	6.17%
Spennymoor	7	4.32%
Stanhope	5	3.09%
Barnard Castle	4	2.47%
Crook	4	2.47%
Wheatley Hill	4	2.47%
Seaham	2	1.23%
Middelton in tees	1	0.62%
Total	162	100%

Most animal related rescues occur from domestic properties and involve domesticated animals, while livestock and other wild animal rescues occur amongst grassland, scrubland or near rivers, as shown below:

Location of animal rescues	Total Number of Incidents	Percentage of activity
House - single occupancy	49	30.25%
Grassland, pasture, grazing etc	12	7.41%
Animal harm outdoors	9	5.56%
Fence	7	4.32%%
Car	5	3.09%
Lake/pond/reservoir	5	3.09%
River/canal	5	3.09%

Location of animal rescues	Total Number of Incidents	Percentage of activity
Tree scrub (includes single trees not in garden)	5	3.09%
Cycle path/public footpath/bridleway	4	2.47%
Mines and quarries - excluding buildings above ground	4	2.47%
Other	4	2.47%
Other outdoor location	4	2.47%
Private/domestic garden/allotment (veg not equipment/building)	4	2.47%
Wasteland	4	2.47%
Woodland/forest/broadleaf/hardwood	4	2.47%
Woodland/forest - conifers/softwood	4	2.47%
all other locations	33	20.37%
Total	162	100%

Animal related incidents in the context described within this reasonable worst-case scenario are not included within the National or Community Risk Registers.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

A horse becomes stuck in some mud in a difficult to access location and requires specialist equipment to affect the rescue.

Risk assessment for animal related incidents

2022/23	66
2023/24	55
2024/25	41
Three-year total	162
Three-year average	54
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	4
Risk Assessment Impact Score	1

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Although there is a variation in the frequency and type of animal related incidents throughout the Service area, this risk is present in all station areas. Due to the number of animal related incidents during the reporting period, the risk is assessed with a high degree of confidence, where very few areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty.

Changes in the risk landscape of animal related incidents

CDDFRS prevention and educational messages consider the risk to livestock and domestic animals. Examples include awareness of walking on frozen water or attempting to recuse dogs which have fell into water or frozen water. In addition to the impact on livestock and domestic pets during festive periods when fireworks are used.

R19 Buildings of heritage and sites of special interest

Throughout the Service area there are many historic buildings which are designated as being of significant importance due to their architecture and presence of artifacts and objects which are valued for reasons beyond their mere utility. These buildings are designated by [Historic England](#) and their listing signifies a building's special architecture and historic interest and brings it under the consideration of the planning system so that it can be preserved for future generations.

Buildings with special architectural and historic interest are recommended for listing to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) based on the principles of selection for listed buildings [principles of selection for listed buildings](#).

Listed buildings are graded to show their relative importance:

- Grade I buildings are those of exceptional interest;
- Grade II are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them.
- Grade II* are particularly important buildings of more than special interest;

The main criteria used in selecting buildings to be listed are:

- Architectural interest: all buildings which are nationally important for the interest of their architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship; also, important examples of particular building types and techniques, and significant plan forms;
- Historic interest: this includes buildings which illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history• close historical association with nationally important buildings or events;
- Group value, especially where buildings comprise an important architectural or historic unity or are a fine example of planning (such as squares, terraces and model villages).

Buildings of heritage and sites of special interest within County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

	Grade one	Grade two	Grade two*
Total	111	3644	198

Durham also has a World Heritage site with Durham Cathedral and Castle, which was inscribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1986.

Some of the hazards associated with fires in buildings and special interest may include:

- Lack of compartmentation which can cause fires to spread to additional rooms. Fire spread may also occur between properties where shared roof spaces or voids exist;
- Non-compliant materials used in construction, period furnishings and wall coverings which are more likely to be flammable. Flammable insulation which may allow hidden fire spread;
- Access may be limited with some roadways or entrance restrictions affecting entry to an incident;
- Unconventional layouts of buildings may be complicated, with hidden access points or sections of properties that have been blocked off or obscured.

Buildings of heritage and special interest can be more vulnerable to fire due to their age, construction or contents. Effective liaison with the owners/operators of such buildings can ensure they comply with fire safety legislation to minimise the risk of fire incidents and operational risk information informs tactical plans that aim to quickly extinguish and fires and preserve these important buildings and their valuable contents.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

A large fire that involved the building fabric and contents of a grade one or grade two listed building within the service area. This scenario would include financial loss due to fire and smoke damage to the building and objects of both cultural and social importance. During both the development and closing stages of a fire, a tactical priority would be to ensure the effective salvage of the building contents. Local employment may be impacted due to the detrimental impact on any affected employees and a significant period of time would be needed to restore the building to the original condition. Due to the effective management of fire safety arrangements, it is likely the impact on human welfare would be minimal.

Risk assessment for fires in buildings of heritage and special interest

2022/23	2
2023/24	2
2024/25	4
Three-year total	8
Three-year average	2.7
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	1
Risk Assessment Impact Score	3

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4					
	3	●				
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Due to the number and locations of Grade One and Two listed buildings throughout the Service area, this risk is considered to be present in all station areas. Due to the number of attended fires in buildings of heritage and special interest during the reporting period, the risk is assessed with a low degree of confidence.

Changes in the risk landscape for fires in buildings of heritage and special interest

The Service fire safety audit schedule for high-risk premises, and the maintenance of operational risk information and incident plans ensure the low frequency of fires in buildings of heritage and special interest, however, significant fires may occur. On 15 April 2019, just before 18:20 CEST, a fire broke out beneath the roof of Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral in Paris. By the time the structure fire was extinguished, the building's spire had collapsed and most of its roof had been destroyed and its upper walls were severely damaged. Extensive damage to the interior was prevented by its stone vaulted ceiling, which largely contained the burning roof as it collapsed. Many works of art and religious relics were moved to safety early in the emergency, but others suffered smoke damage, and some of the exterior art was damaged or destroyed.

R20 Marauding terrorist/malicious attacks

The current threat to the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) from terrorism is Substantial (since February 2022), indicating that an attack is likely. The threat level for the UK from international terrorism is set by the [Joint Terrorism Analysis](#)

[Centre](#) (JTAC). MI5 is responsible for setting the threat levels from Irish and other domestic terrorism both in Northern Ireland and in Great Britain. In reaching a judgement on the appropriate threat level in any given circumstance, several factors are considered, including available intelligence, terrorist capability, terrorist intentions and timescale.

In July 2019 changes were made to the terrorism threat level system, to reflect the threat posed by all forms of terrorism, irrespective of ideology. There is now a single national threat level describing the threat to the UK, which includes Islamist, Northern Ireland, left-wing and right-wing terrorism.

Date	National Threat Level
9 February 2022	Substantial
15 November 2021	Severe
4 February 2021	Substantial
3 November 2020	Severe
4 November 2019	Substantial
23 July 2019	Severe

Further information on how threat levels are decided, and the history of threat level changes prior to July 2019 are available from the [MI5 Security Service](#) website.

Risk scenarios are natural occurring events and are measured by the product of the likelihood and consequences of hazardous events, whereas threats are the malicious intent and capacity to cause loss of life or create adverse consequences to human welfare (including property and the supply of essential services and commodities), the environment or security. The inclusion of this threat within the Service Community Risk profile is informed by the presence of this scenario within both the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#), the Community Risk Register and the content of the County Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP).

Of the terrorist threats facing the UK, Islamist terrorism remains the most significant, however, this is considered to be lower than at its peak in 2017, owing to a suppression of the UK threat. However, this suppression may only be temporary as the threat is volatile and the scale and pace of the threat could change at short notice. While the threat of right wing terrorism is lesser in scale, the CTLP describes this threat as still growing. This threat is predominantly driven by lone actors who adopt a range of right wing extremist ideologies and who believe in the use of violence to further that ideology.

Further information on marauding terrorism/malicious attacks can be found at these links:

- [Guidance on marauding terrorist attacks](#)
- [National Counter Terrorism Security Office](#)
- [Protecting crowded places from terrorism](#)

This threat is also assessed through the analysis of the County Durham and Darlington Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) which aims to develop a joint understanding of the local threats, vulnerabilities and risks relating to terrorism and extremism. The CTLP is used to identify emerging issues, information gaps and makes

recommendations for partnership activity to be actioned through CONTEST (Counter-terrorism strategy) delivery plans.

Although there have been no marauding terrorist or malicious attacks within the Service area, information available from the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) and the regional Counter Terrorism team advises that the threat remains plausible, and it would be most likely to occur in the most densely populated areas (Durham and/or Darlington). In the absence of a historical range of incidents to inform the assessment of this scenario, and the broad range of attack methodologies used by threat actors, both the impact and likelihood are assessed with a moderate level of confidence.

These scenarios also cover terrorist activity carried out using explosives, low sophistication devices and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons by international and domestic groups or individuals. Examples of these incidents would be large scale chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear attack, attacks on infrastructure, attacks on crowded places or attacks on transport.

Reasonable worst-case scenario

Based on intelligence from the regional Counter Terrorism team and professional judgement, the reasonable worst-case scenario would be a marauding, simultaneous or near simultaneous firearms attacks in a crowded urban area. This would result in a significant number of fatalities and casualties with gunshot, blast and other injuries. Further injuries may occur as an indirect result of people trying to leave the scene. There are also likely to be psychological casualties which either present immediately or at a later date. Other impacts could include disruption to local and regional transport services as a consequence of attacks at transport hubs, or disruption to schooling, short term excessive demands on hospitals and the short-term local evacuation from affected communities.

Risk assessment for marauding terrorist/malicious attacks

2022/23	0
2023/24	0
2024/25	0
Three-year total	0
Three-year average	0
Risk Assessment Likelihood Score	1
Risk Assessment Impact Score	5

Risk Matrix

Impact	5	●				
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Confidence

Given CDDFRS has not attended a marauding terrorist/malicious attacks during the reporting period, the risk is assessed with a low degree of confidence.

Changes in the risk landscape of marauding terrorist/malicious attacks

CDDFRS work with key stakeholders and monitor the National Joint Strategic Threat Assessment and implement internal changes in line with service policies to reflect changes in the national threat levels.

R21 Battery Energy

This risk encompasses a range of risks involving new energy technologies, predominantly involving lithium-ion battery energy storage. The principal risks are electric vehicles (EV), Personal Light Electric Vehicles (PLEV), and battery energy storage systems (BESS). BESS covers both domestic battery energy storage which is more prevalent and large-scale sites typically linked to solar production.

EV car fires cause a significant challenge for Fire and rescue services. The most prominent concern is the risk of fire, particularly due to thermal runaway in lithium-ion batteries. This can lead to:

- Rapid fire escalation
- Toxic smoke release
- Explosions when water contacts battery cells

A major fire occurred in a five-storey car park at London Luton Airport, in October 2023, involving over 1,350 vehicles. While the fire originated in a diesel-powered car, the incident highlights the vulnerability of multi-storey car parks to rapid fire spread and structural collapse.

While there is no confirmed case of an EV fire causing a major incident in a UK multi-storey car park to date, the risk is actively being studied. With the increase in the use of EV and some models now being some years old it is realistic to assess the risk of an EV fire in an enclosed car park as a RWCS.

PLEVs pose fire risks due to lithium-ion batteries which can undergo thermal runaway, leading to fires, explosions, and toxic gas release when damaged, overcharged, or misused. Factors contributing to these fires include using incompatible or modified chargers, damaged or counterfeit batteries, and charging in confined spaces. The fires are difficult to extinguish, spread rapidly, and pose significant health and safety hazards to people and property.

The Reasonable Worst Case Scenario (RWCS) for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) fire or incident typically involves a thermal runaway event that escalates into a large-scale fire or explosion, potentially affecting multiple battery modules or containers. This can also be present with multiple vehicles charging in an enclosed car park within a residential building.

As a result it is reasonable to infer the likely RWCS characteristics by examining closely related scenarios involving onshore major hazard (COMAH) sites, which include facilities that store or handle flammable and explosive substances—similar in risk profile to large-scale lithium-ion BESS installations. Fires can burn for days and Lithium-ion fires are difficult to extinguish and may reignite. It is becoming more likely that multiple vehicles will be charging simultaneously within an enclosed car park attached to or under a residential building.

Infrastructure & Environmental Impacts are likely to involve:

- **Structural damage:** Building collapse and fire/smoke damage within a 3 km radius.
- **Transport disruption:** Local Road and rail closures.
- **Environmental contamination:** Long-term (5+ years) contamination of air, land, and possibly water. Air quality and carbon release are significantly impacted.
- **Economic cost:** Hundreds of millions of pounds in damages, lost assets, and emergency response (EIS, 2025²²)

Risk assessment for battery energy

This is a new risk from 2025, and historical data is not currently available due to specific recording characteristics of IRS. The new version of IRS is due to be released in 2026 and will incorporate battery power as a specific field, which will enable better analysis moving forward. Therefore, a fully qualitative assessment has been undertaken to determine the risk level.

Risk Matrix

Impact	5					
	4		●			
	3					
	2					
	1					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

Emerging Risks

Adverse Weather

In recent years the UK has experienced some extreme storms which caused loss of life, considerable damage to property and the environment, and loss of power to thousands of homes. In the North East on 26 and 27 November 2021 Storm Arwen resulted in a red warning being issued by the Met Office due to severe winds and snow.

In 2022 the UK also experienced extreme heat events which contributed to an upturn in secondary fires and affected infrastructure such as transport.

We capture the effects of severe weather in some of our existing risks such as flooding and wildfires and climate change means we can expect to see an increase in such events in the future as we become more susceptible to summer drought, and autumn/winter storms.

The impact of storms with accompanying strong winds or snow can be very disruptive, especially in our rural communities. It can also impact on our response times. Where storms lead to felled trees and power lines our firefighters can be called to assist other agencies in the aftermath. This is a risk we are monitoring closely and will add in the future if the data supports this.

Cyber Events

As more of our functions across public and private services come to rely on Information and Communications Technology it is vital that we plan for potential disruption from cyber events. They could come in the form of criminal or state sponsored cyber attacks, loss of power, or system failures. The Service will work in collaboration with key stakeholders to ensure that cyber events are monitored and planned for, with a focus on making such events part of business continuity planning and testing.

Hydrogen as a clean energy source

The transition towards cleaner energy is an immediate priority as the government seek to achieve net zero. Hydrogen is one of a handful of low carbon solutions which can help the UK achieve its emissions reductions targets for Carbon Budget 6 and net zero by 2050 as well as provide greater domestic energy security. Hydrogen blending refers to the blending of low carbon hydrogen with other gases (primarily natural gas) (NG) in pre-existing gas network infrastructure and appliances. Unlike NG, hydrogen exhibits distinct detonation characteristics including a broader explosion range, lower minimum ignition energy, higher flame velocity, flame temperature and greater diffusivity. Not only is hydrogen proposed as a clean energy source to replace NG it is also being developed as an energy source within the motor industry, where it shares the same risks albeit more dynamically. We will keep this risk monitored as part of the horizon scanning continuous assessment of community risk.

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Risk Rating Matrix

Based on the risk methodology used for the data over the three-year reporting period, the risk scenarios that have the potential to impact on the communities of county Durham and Darlington are presented in the risk rating matrix below:

Impact	5	R20				R1
	4	R17	R21	R15	R6	R3, R4, R5
	3	R19		R2, R8	R16	R10, R14
	2	R13	R11	R7, R12	R9	
	1				R18	
		1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood						

Community Risk Profile Link to Station Plans

We produce a Station Plan for each of our Fire Station areas to assist personnel in their planning, training and responding.

The starting point for each Station Plan is to apply the Service methodology using the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#), County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register, Service data and this CRP. A local assessment is then used to identify the likelihood of risk for the station area.

Station Plans focus on those risks which are deemed to be very high or high and this allows crews to adjust how they train and plan accordingly.

Appendix one: CDDFRS Community Risk Profile 2023/24

Risk methodology

The assessment of risk within our Community Risk Profile is designed to be a strategic risk assessment tool and is therefore pragmatically selective. It is not intended to capture every risk that the Service could face, but instead focusses on scenarios that are representative of the wider risk landscape and which informs our understanding of the common consequences that the Service could face as a result of the identified scenarios.

The County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service risk methodology used to assess the risk scenarios within this Community Risk Profile is derived from the methodology used to identify, assess and manage the risks and threats at the national level which inform the [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#).

Risk identification: the Reasonable Worst-Case Scenario

The risk landscape is constantly evolving with emerging scenarios presenting new challenges in addition to long standing scenarios that have been prevalent throughout the communities of County Durham and Darlington for many years.

The scenarios described within our Community Risk Profile represent the current, most frequently attended range of incidents, and new scenarios to inform future iterations of the risk profile may be identified through:

- The inclusion of new risks within the National Risk Register of the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register;
- New research, analysis and/or data;
- Lessons learned from National Operational Learning (NOL) or Joint Organisational Learning (JOL).

For the purposes of contingency planning and the assessment of wider consequences, all risks are described as a challenging, yet plausible manifestation of a potential incident and based on appropriate relevant data and intelligence. The use of the reasonable worst-case scenario for each risk ensures that our Community Risk Profile doesn't compare the best-case scenario for some risks and the worst-case scenario for others.

Some risks within our Community Risk Profile are discrete in nature and have clearly defined impacts (such as an accidental dwelling fire or a road traffic collision). Other risks can be 'chronic' in nature, meaning that the impacts of such risks are cumulative rather than occurring in discrete events. An example of a chronic risk would be the prevalence of arson and deliberate fires throughout our communities.

Impact assessment

When a reasonable worst-case scenario has been identified, the likelihood and impacts of the scenario are then assessed. To ensure the consistent assessment and statistical rigour, all scenarios are assessed against the same set of impact criteria.

Where appropriate, national level impact scales, such as population, economic impact and environmental impact are used proportionately to reflect the demographic and geographical size of the Service area.

Each impact indicator is allocated an impact score from zero to five based on the scope, scale and duration of the harm that the reasonable worst-case scenario could foreseeably cause. Within our community risk profile methodology, there are five dimensions or 'harm' which contribute to the overall impact score, with some of these factors being comprised of multiple indicators of harm, as shown below:

Impact dimension	Impact indicator
1. Human welfare	Fatalities Injuries Evacuation and shelter requirements
2. Behavioural	Changes to individuals' behaviour and public outrage
3. Economic impact	Economic cost including working hours lost
4. Essential social services	Transport Gas Electric Water Communications Healthcare Emergency services
5. Environment	Damage to the environment

Each of the five impact dimensions is considered and assessed to form part of the total impact score, and to ensure that scores that have a more catastrophic impact within a given reasonable worst-case scenario are drawn out, the dimension scores are weighted. Dimension scores between zero and three remain unweighted, however a score of four is doubled (to eight) and a score of five is tripled (to fifteen). To calculate the total impact score, the sum of the weighted scores is divided by the sum of the weights. The resultant value between one and five is rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

The total impact score is determined using the following process:

- The highest individual indicator score is used to determine each dimension's highest score;
- Weighting is determined by the highest score for each dimension. Scores between zero and three remain unweighted. A score of four is doubled and a score of five is tripled;
- The weighted score is calculated by multiplying the weighted Highest Impact Dimension Score by the weighting figure;
- To calculate the overall impact score for a reasonable worst-case scenario, the sum of the weighted scores is divided by the sum of the weights;
- The overall impact score is rounded to the nearest whole number (between one and five) to enable the impact to be plotted on the risk rating matrix.

Example:

Impact Dimension	Impact Indicator	Impact Score (0-5)	Highest Impact Dimension Score	Weighting	Weighted Score
Human Welfare	Fatalities	3	4	2	8
	Injuries	4			
	Evacuation to temporary accommodation	0			
Behavioural	Public Perception	5	5	3	15
Economic Impact	Economic Cost	5	5	3	15
Essential Social Services	Transport	4	5	3	15
	Gas	0			
	Electric	0			
	Water	0			
	Telecommunications	2			
	Healthcare	2			
	Emergency Services	5			
Environment	Environmental Damage	0	0	0	0
			Totals	11	53
			Total Impact Score (53/11=4.8 rounded to 5)	5	

Likelihood assessment

The likelihood timescale is considered to be the annual likelihood of the reasonable worst-case scenario occurring, and it is calculated by drawing from historical precedent, statistical models, forecasts and professional judgement. Similar to impact scoring, overall risk likelihood is scored on a one to five scale.

The precision of likelihood assessments will vary, and for some risk scenarios, historical data lends itself to a high degree of confidence in the overall risk assessment, while for other risks, limited data and knowledge gaps necessitate greater reliance on expert judgement.

The overall risk likelihood is scored on a one to five scale using a numerical estimate. By definition (a challenging, yet plausible manifestation of the risk), the reasonable worst-case scenario has a relatively low likelihood, so in order to enable comparison of risk scenarios, the likelihood scale is logarithmic. The likelihood scale used for the

risk scenarios within the CDDFRS Community Risk Profile is shown below:

Likelihood score	All risks: likelihood of an event (annual probability assessed over a three-year period)
1	Less than 0.2%
2	Between 0.2% and 1%
3	Between 1% and 5%
4	Between 5% and 25%
5	More than 25%

Confidence

Uncertainty is an inherent part of analysis and should be clearly acknowledged to identify weaknesses in an evidence base and provide a more detailed picture of the risk landscape. The inclusion of a confidence in the risk assessment process helps to avoid making decisions on the basis of false confidence and uncertainty.

Confidence	Description
Low	Several areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty creating uncertainty bounds of at least +2 or -2 in the overall likelihood or impact score.
Moderate	Some areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty creating uncertainty bounds of up to +1 or -1 in the overall likelihood or impact score.
High	Very few areas of the assessment are significantly affected by uncertainty. The overall matrix position is considered to be accurate.

Visualising risk assessment

When the overall impact and likelihood scores have been calculated for each risk, they can be plotted on a five any five-risk rating matrix. The matrix can then be used to further subdivide risks into red, amber, yellow and green risks in order to assess whether specific planning is likely to be required (red risks) or whether the consequences can be planned for in a more generic way (amber, yellow and green). Confidence levels can then be added to the matrix to give the upper and lower limits of the boundaries of uncertainty in the manifestation of the RWCS. In the example below, there is a moderate confidence in the impact assessment (shown by the +1/-1 vertical arrow range), and moderate confidence in the likelihood assessment (shown by the +1/-1 horizontal arrow range). This means that the RWCS could have an impact anywhere between two and four, and a likelihood anywhere between one and three. High levels of uncertainty indicate that further research or analysis should be completed to better inform the understanding of the risk on the communities of County Durham and Darlington. This principle is presented below:

Significant: less likely risks	High impact risks	Specific planning likely to be requested to supplement generic planning
Evidenced based judgement	Specific or Generic approach	
	Limited	Moderate impact risks
Generic planning for common consequences		

The risk rating matrix can then be subdivided into red, amber, yellow and green risks in order to assess whether specific planning is likely to be required (red risks) or whether the consequences can be planned for in a more generic way.

Appendix two: Community Risk Profile impact scales

For the assessment of the reasonable worst case risk scenarios described within our community risk profile, the impact scales described below have been used to ensure consistency to the risk assessment process.

Impact Dimension	Human Welfare
Fatalities	Number of fatalities
5	Multiple fatalities (10 or more)
4	More than 5 and less than 10 fatalities
3	Two or more and less than 5 fatalities
2	Single fatality
1	No fatalities
Casualties	Number of casualties
5	Large number of casualties presenting at/transported to hospital with clinical conditions (more than 8)
4	Casualties presenting at/transported to hospital with clinical conditions (more than 2 and less than 8)
3	Slight injuries (more than 4 and less than 6)/small number of casualties presenting at hospital with clinical conditions (1 or 2)
2	Slight injuries (more than 2 and less than 4)
1	Small number of slight injuries (1 or 2)
Evacuation	
5	A significant number of people evacuated for greater than 3 days.
4	More than 50 people evacuated for greater than 3 days.
3	More than 50 people evacuated for up to 3 days.
2	More than 50 people evacuated for up to 1 day
1	Less than 50 people evacuated for up to 1 day
Impact Dimension	Behavioural
Public perception	
5	Social conflict or lack of confidence in public services with longer term consequences
4	High levels of anxiety and concern leading to sustained changes in routine with significant impact
3	Moderate anxiety and concern leading to short term change in routine with varying consequences
2	Local short-term anxiety and change in routine, largely one-off, localised and temporary
1	Minor anxiety but no change in behaviour, insignificant impact on a small group.

Impact Dimension	Community Economic Impact
Economic impact	
5	More than £1,000,000
4	More than £100,000 but less than £1,000,000
3	More than £10,000 but less than £100,000
2	More than £1,000 but less than £10,000
1	Less than or equal to £1000
Impact Dimension	Essential Social Services
Transport	Disruption
5	Greater than 2 days
4	1 day to 2 days
3	12 hours to 24 hours
2	1 hour to 12 hours
1	Up to 1 hour
Gas	Loss of supply
5	Greater than 2 days
4	1 day to 2 days
3	12 hours to 24 hours
2	1 hour to 12 hours
1	Up to 1 hour
Electric	Loss of supply
5	Greater than 2 days
4	1 day to 2 days
3	12 hours to 24 hours
2	1 hour to 12 hours
1	Up to 1 hour
Water	Loss of supply
5	Greater than 2 days
4	1 day to 2 days
3	12 hours to 24 hours
2	1 hour to 12 hours
1	Up to 1 hour
Communication	Loss of supply
5	Greater than 2 days
4	1 day to 2 days
3	12 hours to 24 hours
2	1 hour to 12 hours

1	Up to 1 hour
Healthcare	Non availability of drugs and medical services
5	Greater than 2 days
4	1 day to 2 days
3	12 hours to 24 hours
2	1 hour to 12 hours
1	Up to 1 hour
Emergency services	Disruption to emergency services
5	Greater than 2 days
4	1 day to 2 days
3	12 hours to 24 hours
2	1 hour to 12 hours
1	Up to 1 hour
Impact Dimension	Environmental Impact
Environment	Environmental damage or contamination
5	Damage to/contamination of a building/location for up to one month
4	Damage to/contamination of a building/location for up to one week
3	Damage to/contamination of a building/location for up to 24 hours
2	Damage to/contamination of a building/location for up to 12 hours
1	Damage to/contamination of a building/location for up to 2 hours

Appendix three: Community Risk Profile definitions and terminology

The definitions used in this Community Risk Profile are derived from various sources, including, The National Security Risk Assessment, HM Government [National Risk Register \(2025\)](#) [Lexicon of UK Civil Protection Terminology](#) (version 2.1.1) and the [Health and Safety Executive](#). For the identification of community risk throughout the fire and rescue sector, the Service has adopted the National Fire Chiefs Council definition of risk and other key terms, as described below. Other definitions of risk, such as absolute, relative and comparative are defined by the National review of Community Risk methodology across the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

- Absolute risk: The likelihood of an individual experiencing an incident;
- Benefit: Improvement to something valued, such as health, well-being, wealth, property, or the environment,
- Cause: The reason why an event happens. Includes immediate and underlying causes.
- Community risk: The risk of unwanted events that might occur in the community, which the fire and rescue service aims to reduce. Includes fires, road traffic accidents and other incidents that the fire and rescue service might respond to.
- Community risk register: A register communicating the assessment of risks within a Local Resilience Area which is developed and published as a basis for informing local communities and directing civil protection workstreams.
- Comparative risk: The likelihood of an incident happening in the population;
- Confidence: The degree of uncertainty in the assessment of risk that provides a detailed picture of the risk landscape. Confidence can be expressed as low, moderate or high.
- Consequences: The outcome of an event. Specifically, the severity or extent of harm caused by an event. Outcomes resulting from the occurrence of a particular hazard or threat, measured in terms of the numbers of lives lost, people injured, the scale of damage to property and the disruption to essential services and commodities.
- Demand: The pattern of emergency calls for fire and rescue service assistance.
- Emergency: An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in the Service area, or the environment.
- Event: An occurrence or a change of a set of circumstances.
- Frequency: The number of events per unit of time.
- Foreseeable: Risks that are foreseeable (but not classed as 'reasonably foreseeable') are those that happen very rarely and may include major disasters such as plane crashes, train collisions or major explosions. It may be foreseeable that such incidents could happen, but historical precedent,

statistical analysis and professional judgement indicate these are exceptionally rare events.

- Harm: Unwanted impact (such as loss, damage or injury) on something valued, such as health, well-being, wealth, property or the environment.
- Hazard: A potential source of harm.
- Hazardous event: a potential event that can cause harm.
- Impact: The scale of the consequences of a hazard, threat or emergency expressed in terms of a reduction in human welfare, damage to the environment and loss of security
- Incident: An event requiring fire and rescue service assistance.
- Likelihood: The chance of something happening. Likelihood may be described by the probability, frequency or uncertainty of events. The annual likelihood of the reasonable worst-case scenario occurring, and it is calculated by drawing from historical precedent, statistical models, forecasts and professional judgement. The chance of something happening, whether defined, measured or estimated objectively or subjectively, or in terms of general descriptors (such as rare, unlikely, almost certain), frequencies or mathematical probabilities.
- Opportunity: A potential source of benefit.
- Planning assumptions: Descriptions of the types and scales of consequences for which organisations should be prepared to respond. These will be informed by the risk assessment process.
- Reasonably foreseeable: A reasonably foreseeable risk is one that, if realised, could result in injury or damage, and which could have been predicted by a reasonable person with the necessary skills and knowledge. Reasonably foreseeable fire and rescue related risks are those that happen regularly including primary and secondary fires, rescues, transport related incidents, hazardous materials related incidents and some terrorist related activities. It is also reasonably foreseeable that some emergencies may happen at the same time and that some of them will be protracted in their nature.
- Reasonable worst-case scenario: The challenging, yet plausible manifestation of a potential incident and based on appropriate relevant data and intelligence.
- Relative risk: The likelihood of an incident for different demographics;
- Reporting period: For the assessment of the risk scenarios within the community risk profile, data for the three years from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025 is used as the reporting period.
- Risk analysis: The process of characterising risks, including determining the risk level where appropriate.
- Risk: A combination of the likelihood and consequences of hazardous events.
- Risk assessment: A structured and auditable process of identifying potentially significant events, assessing their likelihood and impacts, and then combining these to provide an overall assessment of risk, as a basis for further decisions and action.
- Risk management: All activities and structures directed towards the effective assessment and management of risks and their potential adverse impacts.
- Risk rating matrix: Table showing the likelihood and potential impact of events or situations, in order to ascertain the risk.
- Threat: Intent and capacity to cause loss of life or create adverse consequences to human welfare (including property and the supply of essential services and commodities), the environment or security.
- Uncertainty: Lack of knowledge about an event, its consequence, or likelihood.

- Variation: A variation of a reasonable worst-case scenario describes an alternative, challenging but plausible incident of a similar theme.
- Vulnerability: The susceptibility of a risk group to harm from a hazard.

Further definitions, descriptions of terminology and abbreviations used in risk assessment processes and civil the protection landscape are located in the [Lexicon of UK Civil Protection Terminology](#) and the [NFCC glossary of risk-related terms](#).

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