

Community Safety Strategy

2017/18 – 2019/20
(Version 3 – revised 2019)



Where are we now

Since the comprehensive spending review in 2010 and the reduction in central government funding, the Service has undergone significant change. The transformation strategy in relation to community safety (CS) resulted in the reduction of personnel in the central CS team which was mitigated by a change in the operational shift system to create more delivery capacity. This enabled an increase in delivery of home fire safety checks (HFSC) from 9,768 in March 2011 to 20,528 in March 2016, contributing in a reduction of accidental dwelling fires (ADF) from 276 to 229 and ADF related injuries from 36 to 17 respectively.

Although we have reduced ADFs and related injuries, ADF deaths have not reduced at the same rate and we need to do more to prevent people from dying. Analysis of those who have died in ADFs has identified common health related factors which put them at greater risk, such as mental health issues, smoking, drinking and loneliness and isolation, which must be addressed and combined with fire safety advice to reduce deaths in the home further. This led to the introduction of Safe and Wellbeing Visits (SWV) in 2016 which, through an agreed health and wellbeing assessment and referral process to the relevant partner agency provides additional professional support to reduce the risk from ADFs. When benchmarking our Service nationally using data from the Fire Statistics Monitor: England, April 2015 to March 2016, it shows County Durham and Darlington (CDD) to be one of the highest performing Services in the country for delivery of HFSC/SWV and number of ADFs compared to number of dwellings in the Service area, but in the bottom quartile for ADF deaths per 100,000 population.

Year-end performance for 2017/18 when compared to the previous year saw an increase in accidental dwelling fires (ADF) from 213 to 240, while during the same period achieved a reduction in ADF related deaths from 2 to 0 and a reduction in ADF related injuries from 24 to 20. Although the Service target for Safe and Wellbeing Visits remained at 18,000, delivery increased from 18,932 in March 2017 to 19,555 in March 2018 with improved targeting into vulnerable places or to vulnerable people from 75.9% to 82.3%.

Regarding primary and secondary fires there has been good long-term success over the past 10 years with a 50% reduction in both incident types, however this reduction has slowed in recent years. The Fire Statistics Monitor 2015 to 2016 notes an increase nationally, but the data also shows CDDFRS as being in the bottom quartile when compared to other FRSs for primary and secondary fires, similar performance is reflected across the North East. The demographics for CDD provide specific challenges for the Service as we have areas with some of the highest levels of social deprivation in the country and in some areas, fire is being used as a weapon of choice for criminal activity. Much of the work to address arson is delivered in partnership with the police, local authority and other agencies, however as public-sector resources reduce we need to ensure this work continues to reduce demand on the Service and reduce the risk and impact on our local communities. Deliberate primary and secondary fires during 2017/18 increased by 19% and 32% respectively when compared to the previous year.

We recognise the importance of working with young people and the value of providing education and training to reduce risk in the community and invest in their future. The Service has a well-established programme of school visits and safety carousel delivered bi-annually to educate children in a range of risks including fire, road and water safety. We have also recently consulted through our IRMP to expand our Young Firefighter Association and Cadet (YFAC) schemes, which following a positive response from the public, has led to YFACs being established at nine of our fifteen fire stations.

There are many drivers to continue developing and delivering our community safety strategy, examples include:



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- To reduce community risk which aligns with our Service vision to have the Safest People, Safest Places;
- Reducing operational demand on the Service and thereby reducing risk to our firefighters;
- Improving efficiency and effectiveness through collaboration and partnership working;
- Delivering on our statutory duties; (Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998);
- Providing value for money to the community of County Durham and Darlington.



Where do we want to be

Although we have many areas of good performance we must not become complacent, the clear aim of this strategy is to continue driving down risk, reducing demand on the Service and making our communities safer in all areas including fire safety, road safety and water safety. In recent years the number of ADF deaths are in low single figures (recognising 2017/18 achieved zero ADF deaths) they are disproportionately high compared to the low number of ADFs. Also, deliberate primary and secondary fires are high when compared to other FRS's across the country, using operational capacity and damaging our community. Therefore, the reduction of deaths in the home and arson in our community must become the focus of this strategy. It is hoped that the new Community Risk Management structure which has been reviewed to better align resources to risk and meet demand will assist in addressing these issues.

To achieve this, we must continue to evolve the way we work and be more innovative in finding solutions to problems. We need to ensure that data and business intelligence is at the core of our strategy and driving the decisions we make, this will help to ensure our resources are better targeted and more effective. We also know from experience that the solution to many of our risks lies in a multi-agency approach but to enhance this work with reducing resources, we need to ensure information and intelligence is shared appropriately and our resources are coordinated to maximise impact and effect. Addressing our ageing population and health related issues are key to reducing risk in the home and working with young people is important to reduce a broad range of risks, both today and for the long-term investment in our communities.

The community safety strategy can be summarised into five main work streams which are outlined below and covered in the following sections of this document. Each year specific projects will be aligned to the delivery of this strategy and this document will complement the suite of strategies supporting the Service's vision and integrated risk management plan (IRMP).



How do we get there?

Below we have set out five key areas of focus to deliver the Community Safety Strategy.

Reduce fire deaths and injuries in the home

Why are we doing it?

Although we have a statutory duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, primarily the Service is here for the protection of the community and this includes delivering education and interventions to prevent deaths and injuries in the home. Collaborating with key partners is essential to be more effective and efficient in the delivery of this work and improve the wellbeing of members of the community. The conducting of safe and wellbeing visits by fire service personnel provides vital access into homes in the community to ensuring that optimum advice and support can be offered, and relevant referrals made to partner organisations to ensure people receive the support they need to make them safer in their homes.

How are we going to deliver it?

- The Service will utilise data from various sources as part of community risk management to direct education and focus resources to the highest risk areas in the community. We will further develop the use of business intelligence to target resources down to individual household level recognising that not all people at risk will live in targeted ward areas. Having more information about the household in advance of a visit will also allow for a brief intervention, bespoke for the individual, to maximise the support that can be offered.
- Safe and wellbeing visits (SWV) provide a more comprehensive approach to home safety and support the NHS making every contact count principle. We will continue to develop them to ensure we address the full range of risks and reduce deaths and injuries in the home. Two independent evaluations have been conducted on our SWVs, one by DCC overview and scrutiny committee and another by Teesside University, the findings of these will be used to improve the process and ensure that we provide an effective, quality service to the community.
- Mental health has been identified as a prevalent health factor in dwelling fire fatalities, therefore we will specifically increase knowledge and understanding of mental health conditions and links to appropriate partnerships recognising its significance in relation to dwelling fire fatalities and injuries.
- There will be occasions where Service personnel will encounter safeguarding issues during their work in the community and at attendance at operational incidents. The Service will ensure that all personnel receive appropriate training and guidance in safeguarding as well as ensuring its policy and procedure are current to fortify the ability to support the most vulnerable members of the community. Furthermore, information and guidance will be made available to members of the community to allow appropriate signposting of services and intervention, where necessary, to be readily available to all.
- We will continue to research and trial new equipment and technology to mitigate fire risk in the home and trial innovative methods of delivery to be more effective in our services.

How will we measure success?

Performance indicators will be used to statistically monitor direction of travel; however, we will also evaluate the success of the referral process and respond to feedback through the quality assurance of SWVs.



Arson reduction

Why are we doing it?

The immediate and wider economic cost of arson to the community can be significant. To mitigate the effects to the community of arson it is important for the Service to focus on proactive work to reduce the number of deliberate primary and secondary fires. This will also reduce the demand on operational crews releasing capacity to focus on more prevention work. The North East in general, and within the Service area specifically, have a higher than the national average number of reported deliberate fires. The service is committed to drive down the number of incidents of fire working with key partners including the police and local authority. To ensure that the service can act efficiently and effectively, resources need to be tailored to the potential risks within the community and delivered in a professional, timely manner. Reducing deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour will help to improve public reassurance and build stronger communities. Where necessary joint investigative work will help to ensure that perpetrators of fire crime are taken through the criminal and/or restorative justice route as appropriate.

How are we going to deliver it?

- To enable resources and campaigns to be targeted appropriately, sufficient detailed data will be made available to district teams to allow a problem-solving approach to be adopted to tackle key areas and themes.
- The community risk management team will work with district teams to resource and support national and local campaigns as appropriate and will work with the communications team to use a range of traditional and social media to ensure arson reduction messages are aimed at the relevant audience.
- We recognise the impact of arson varies significantly depending on the location within the Service area. Therefore, resources will be allocated and focussed according to risk throughout the Service area and where there is a greater need to maximise the positive impact of initiatives.
- When delivering education and awareness campaigns innovative methods will be explored, using social media and on-line videos for example, and the additional utilisation of retained duty system personnel and young fire-fighters will help to increase the capacity to deliver education to local people by local people.
- Additional training and education will be delivered to personnel to allow them to have an increased knowledge and understanding with respect to arson prevention work. We will also use intelligence gained through fire investigation and information sharing with our partners to improve our delivery and prosecute perpetrators of fire crime where necessary.

How will we measure success?

Evaluation of activities will continue to allow the service to learn the most effective methods of delivery and to share good practice. Furthermore, less effective campaigns can be analysed to ensure that resources used in the future are more successful. Following local problem solving and targeted campaigns a reduction of deliberate primary and secondary fires should be observed in our KPIs.



Working in partnership

Why are we doing it?

There is a statutory duty for the fire and rescue service to work in partnership with key organisations; however, the Service also realises that to reduce the full range of risks and improve the wellbeing of members of the community efficiently and effectively it is essential to work collaboratively. Also, to make the community safer it is vital to continue to support and influence partnership work in addition to our statutory responsibility; namely road traffic collision reduction and water safety preventative work. Supporting the work of partners will help to reduce the wider community risks thus reducing impact and demand on fire service resources. Partnership initiatives can give opportunities for multi-agency grant funding which will be explored as appropriate which will support further innovation, increase capacity and make our community safer.

How are we going to deliver it?

- We will maintain our position in key partnerships, particularly those linked to crime reduction/public safety, public health and road and water safety.
- Partners will be determined based on current and emerging risk profiles. The partnership register will be refreshed to ensure that it is current and our involvement with all partnerships is reviewed and remains effective. Where necessary partnerships may be discontinued to allow capacity to join new collaborations.
- We will continue to develop our processes for information and data sharing to ensure that all agencies have access to a wider perspective of local issues and operational activity, this will enable multi-agency problem solving groups to be used to manage time limited projects and local issues recognising that a multi-agency approach will be most effective.
- We will continue to improve our process for referrals both to and from the Service and deliver fire safety awareness training to relevant partners, for example care workers to ensure that they are equipped to identify those at most risk from fire and know how to request support and assistance from fire service personnel.
- Opportunities for innovation and new partnerships will be explored to ensure that community prevention work is cost effective while providing a quality service for the community. To this end, we will explore the potential of expanding the current use and scope of the (tri-agency) community safety responders.
- We also recognise that there are high number of vulnerable members of the community residing in rented accommodation. Therefore, we will expand our links and relationships with private landlord associations and other forums to ensure the best support and guidance can be offered to both owners and tenants. Further work will take place with social housing groups to expand the current memo of understanding between housing providers and the fire service to ensure that members of the community who are vulnerable to fire can be identified and support offered.

How will we measure success?

Reducing operational demand on Service resources, which will be measured through KPIs. Increased number of partner agency front line staff trained in fire safety awareness resulting in more relevant referrals to the FRS to allow better targeting of resources to vulnerable people. Increased number of partnership agreements / memos of understanding where appropriate. Evaluations will be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of partnerships and collaborative working.



Young people engagement

Why are we doing it?

It is important to improve the positive engagement with younger people which will help to build relationships and provide benefit to the community. Younger people have a great ability to influence the future citizenship within the community and fire and rescue service staff are great role models for them. Working with young people will help to develop their practical skills and qualifications with the aim of improving their opportunities for employment. This will also help to support the Service's workforce reform programme by attracting new potential candidates into a career in the fire and rescue service. Young firefighters and cadets have proven to be excellent ambassadors for the fire and rescue service and have added valuable capacity at high profile events such as station open days. Working within the community, young people will be able to influence their peers and help to increase awareness of a range risks and reduce the instance of arson and anti-social behaviour.

How are we going to deliver it?

- We will continue and expand the central support and governance of existing young firefighters and cadet schemes to ensure sustainability on a long-term basis. This will provide a standardised approach to all schemes whilst allowing local flexibility and management.
- While we will continue to encourage local fund raising, core funding will be mainstreamed to allow for the purchase and maintenance of equipment and uniform to provide support and a professional standard to the young fire-fighters and cadet schemes.
- We will introduce qualifications and awards into the schemes, such as BTEC level 2 – fire and rescue services in the community, ASDAN award and Duke of Edinburgh's Award for example will help to develop young fire-fighters and cadets whilst giving them transferable qualifications and enhancing their employment opportunities.
- We will ensure there continues to be development opportunities as young people progress through the young firefighter and cadet schemes and these will include supporting young people with development plans to enhance their career path and opportunity for recruitment into the Service through apprentice schemes or directly into the whole-time/on-call duty systems.
- Further work will take place to improve the voice young people have in influencing the direction of the Service whilst ensuring that the strategic direction of the Service remains current and relevant to the needs of younger people in the community. This will be achieved by setting up a young persons' forum.
- Furthermore, the use of young firefighters and cadets in relation to community engagement will be enhanced and where possible young people will be used as part of community safety campaigns and school education visits.
- As well as young firefighters and cadets, other innovative initiatives will be explored to engage with younger people as appropriate, for example the running of diversionary or reward programmes. Existing engagement with younger people through the children's safety carousel and school visits will remain a high priority for the service.

How will we measure success?

Young firefighters and cadet schemes will have increased support provided centrally with standardised governance arrangements. Qualifications and awards will be made available for young people to enrol onto and we will see an increase in the number of young people gaining qualifications. A communication network will be established for the sharing of good practice and ideas and to allow young people to influence the future direction of the service. We will see an increase in the number of young people young firefighters and cadets that move through the schemes and into apprentice schemes or whole-time/retained duty system employment within the Service.



Business intelligence and data analysis

Why are we doing it?

Business intelligence is a set of processes, applications and technologies that allow raw data to be transformed into meaningful and useful information that can be consumed. This allows and supports more effective decisions to be made at all levels and can underpin all Service strategies by providing much more effective and accurate insight. As the Service becomes leaner we need to be smarter with the resources we have available and we must ensure that we allocate those resources in a way to maximise value. We also want to continue improving in areas where we are already performing well, and we want to make sure that decisions are based upon facts and experience. By developing and embedding the use of business intelligence and data analysis we will be more effective and efficient.

How are we going to deliver it?

- Our approach will be to broaden and embed the use of intelligence and data into the culture of how we do things, ensuring it is at the heart of all our strategies and decision making. This approach will be applied across the whole organisation, allowing greater access to information and insight which in turn will allow greater alignment of decisions to support the Service's vision.
- We will also look to standardise methods of information dissemination and presentation to improve the way we work, utilising technologies to simplify the presentation, analysis and access and to make this common across different systems and platforms. This will involve the exploration of new technologies and tools as well as the development of existing ones such as our Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and analytical tool sets.
- Business intelligence and data will allow us to shape our approach to risk management to not only be much more focused, but efficient too by allowing our resources to be more accurately targeted to risk for both community and business safety. It will allow us to have greater insight into which areas of the community are most at risk and why and it will allow us to identify vulnerable groups and how we can tailor our education and advice to maximise engagement with the community. This will also allow our personnel to be well informed and best placed to provide that advice and support. We will continue to develop our tools which identify areas of risk and we will supplement this by identifying high risk people and properties, while developing existing and new tools to assist personnel in accessing and understanding the information.
- We will also look to develop new methods to identify the types of risks faced by businesses and we will use this to help target and prioritise our business safety strategy and inspection process.
- Our approach will also be to broaden our acquisition of data and we want to make sure our systems capture appropriate data sets, such as spatial and address data. Again, this will allow our personnel to be best placed to understand the needs of the community by understanding where incidents occur and who is at risk. We will also aim to supplement it with data from key partners and other national sources. This will complement our data by enriching it, allowing additional insight to be gained and to identify people who have multiple interactions with us or our partners.

How will we measure success?

By embedding business intelligence and data analysis within the service this will increase the success of decision making and reduce operational demand on the Service, which will be measured through KPIs. By developing existing and new information sharing protocols with partners and encouraging collaboration we will be able to increase the amount and types of data we use and share.



Measuring Progress

In addition to the specific measure under each of the five key areas of focus in this strategy, we will monitor progress in the following ways:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)**
 - We will develop a suite of appropriate Key Performance Indicators to help measure the progress of this strategy.
- **Reporting Progress**
 - Scrutiny of progress against the strategy will be undertaken by the Service Programme and Performance Board (PPB) who will receive regular reports from Area Manager, Community Risk Management.
- **Measuring Perceptions/ Sense Checking**
 - We will regularly ask for feedback from our operational staff and the community safety team, to inform us of our progress with this strategy. Their opinions and suggestions will be used to measure and influence improvement.
- **Keeping it current**
 - We will provide a progress report and update the plan annually to ensure it remains current.



Priority Activities

Each of the key improvement objectives are underpinned by priority activities and prioritised over the next 3 years.

Reduce fire deaths and injuries in the home

1 = 2017/18

- Further develop the safe and wellbeing visit process taking into consideration the recommendations from the two independent reviews;
- Revise and update the current adult and child safeguarding policy and procedures;
- Roll out training to all personnel in relation to safeguarding;
- Refresh the current area based risk tool;
- Revise the current quality assurance process for SWVs.

2 = 2018/19

- Establish a time limited group to examine the cause of the increase in ADFs during 2017/18 and recommend measures to address this;
- Implement the new SWVs quality assurance process and use the findings to improve delivery;
- Further develop the SWV process taking into consideration the recommendations from the independent review by Teesside University;
- Research and trial new equipment and technology to improve home safety;
- Implement a new risk tool to identify vulnerable properties to complement the existing area risk tool using lifestyle data;
- Increase our interaction with private landlords and increase the number of social landlords who have signed the MOU.

3 = 2019/20

- Explore opportunities to increase knowledge and understanding within the Service around mental health conditions and partner organisations who can provide additional support;
- Evaluate Safe and Wellbeing visits and our partnership referral process.
- Research and trial new equipment and technology to improve home safety;
- Increase our interaction with private landlords and increase the number of social landlords who have signed the MOU.



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Arson reduction

1 = 2017/18

- Conduct additional joint police and fire training in relation to arson investigation and problem solving;
- Enhance data and resources available to district teams to deliver local arson reduction campaigns, this will be prioritised into areas with the greatest demand;
- Work with the Service communications team, district teams and partner organisations to improve arson reduction media and messages to the local communities.

2 = 2018/19

- Ensure the new Community Risk Management structure is established and working effectively;
- Enhance data and resources available to district teams to deliver local arson reduction campaigns, this will be prioritised into areas with the greatest demand;
- Work with the Service communications team, district teams and partner organisations to improve arson reduction media and messages to the local communities.
- Review effectiveness of arson reduction activities across the districts;
- Review effectiveness of arson reduction activities across other FRS areas and implement good practise within the Service.

3 = 2019/20

- Enhance data and resources available to district teams to deliver local arson reduction campaigns, this will be prioritised into areas with the greatest demand;
- Establish closer links with the education sector across the Service area to address the issues of deliberate fire setting.

Working in partnership

1 = 2017/18

- Implement recommendations in relation to partnership arrangements from the two independent reviews of Safe and Wellbeing Visits;
- Conduct a study to consider the development and expansion of the role and use of CSRs within the service area;
- Explore further opportunities to maximise the benefits from our partnership arrangements with the NHS and Public Health.

2 = 2018/19

- Consider the recommendations in relation to partnership arrangements from the internal audit conducted by Durham County Council;
- Continue to consider the development and expansion of the role and use of CSRs when opportunities arise within the service area;
- Explore further opportunities to maximise the benefits from our partnership arrangements with the NHS and Public Health.



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- Ensure appropriate information sharing protocols are in place to support information and data sharing with partners.

3 = 2019/20

- Collaborate with Public Health and Teesside University to produce and publish several academic journals focused on Safe and Wellbeing Visits.

Young people engagement

1 = 2017/18

- Complete the delivery of the young firefighters and cadets support action plan which includes increased central support and governance arrangements;
- Introduce and utilise a young persons' forum;
- Mainstream equipment and uniform budget for young firefighters and cadets.

2 = 2018/19

- Introduce opportunities for young firefighters and cadets to gain qualifications and awards;
- Explore alternative ways of engaging with young people in the community;
- Ensure young firefighters and cadets schemes have continuous development opportunities available throughout the duration of the schemes.

3 = 2019/20

- Implement and deliver the 'Duke of Edinburgh Award' into fire cadet schemes across the Service

Business intelligence and data analysis

1 = 2017/18

- Develop our systems to make sure standardised methods are in place to capture address and spatial data including unique property reference numbers;
- Develop reporting and GIS tools to aggregate data from multiple systems to identify people/or properties at risk;
- To develop new tools to make data and information more accessible wherever our personnel are working.

2 = 2018/19

- Further develop reporting and GIS tools to aggregate data from multiple systems to identify people/or properties at risk;



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- To develop new tools to make data and information more accessible wherever our personnel are working;
- Review information sharing protocols and processes for sharing data with partners;
- Develop a person focussed fire risk prediction tool;
- Provide additional training and support to districts to ensure the use of risk identification tools are maximised;
- Audit business systems data to improve quality and accuracy and review processes for data input.

3 = 2019/20

- Explore other external data sources which can be incorporated into our data sets to improve our risk targeting process;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of risk prediction tools against actual data;
- Continue the audit of business systems data to improve quality and accuracy and review processes for data input.

