

Emergency Response Strategy

2017/18 – 2019/20 (Reviewed June 2019)



Where are we now.

Over the last 10 years the role of a fire and rescue service has significantly changed to involve a much broader range of activities than that of simply responding to emergency incidents. Combined with increased financial pressures following reductions in the government grant since 2010 County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) has been at the forefront of these changes with the most recent transformation programme seeing the introduction of more efficient Emergency Response staffing models and a reduction and streamlining of back office functions and the subsequent transitioning of these workloads to the Emergency Response staff on fire stations and Command and Control.

Over recent years' influential national reports such as 'Facing the future' by Sir Ken Knight and the Adrian Thomas review have increased scrutiny on fire and rescue services and with the change of governmental departments and the move under the Home Office and subsequent Fire Reform Programme the service recognises that continuous improvement is essential. This Emergency Response strategy has been created to help balance the impact of these external drivers while still ensuring the service can meet the demands identified through its community risk management process.

By driving forward new ways of working and striving for excellence CDDFRS has seen improvements over the last 10 years across a range of key performance areas such as a reduction in the total number of incidents attended, a reduction in accidental dwelling fires and the injuries that occur at these and fires in non-domestic properties but there is still room for improvement and of concern is a lack of similar impact on the number of fatalities that have occurred from accidental dwelling fires over this same period.

Emergency Response staff are a key delivery mechanism of other sections across the service e.g. Community and Business Safety. Over the term of this strategy we will continue to work closely with other sections under the principles of ensuring that we manage demands, where possible create capacity to add value and improve our overall efficiency and effectiveness in delivering the wider organisational goals.

Over the term of this strategy the Emergency Response section will focus on several key areas which will be delivered through 3 Emergency Response annual section plans which will ensure a improved ability to provide a professional, effective and innovative Emergency Response provision to the communities of County Durham & Darlington.

The timely review of this strategy coincides with the clarity on expectations provided by Her Majesty Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Fire & Rescue National Framework for England



Where do we want to be.

The Emergency Response section is responsible for ensuring that the service has sufficient and proportionate Emergency Response arrangements available to respond to and manage a wide range of risks and threats, delivered through a range of local, regional and national delivery models.

The following legislation and guidance sets out the expectations of central government in delivering our services to the public:

- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services
- Fire and Rescue Framework 2018
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Our Emergency Response strategy has been designed to translate the framework of expectations laid out in the relevant legislation, guidance documents and national reports into appropriate action as well as playing a key role in the implementation of the three pillars of the HMICFRS agenda efficiency, effectiveness and people.

We also need to constantly review our approach to providing and deploying resources to ensure they remain flexible and, where possible, seek to improve our response capabilities to deal with the wide range of foreseeable emergencies and risks faced by the service.

Ultimately, however effective our community risk management strategies are, there will always be a need to provide a proportionate and effective Emergency Response to the communities of County Durham and Darlington. We will continue to prioritise this statutory requirement, ensuring that our firefighters are provided with the best training, facilities, appliances and equipment to ensure they remain as effective and efficient as possible while remaining focussed on their health, safety and wellbeing.

The service is classed nationally as a 'Predominantly Rural' Fire and rescue service but its large geographical area covers several demographics groups including areas of industry, concentrated housing and pockets of social deprivation which provides unique challenges to providing a fire and rescue service. Despite these challenges, we aim to be the best fire and rescue service in the country and continually benchmark ourselves against national performance data through the Home Office statistical bulletins.

Two key indicators will provide clear direction of the success of the strategy and these will be closely scrutinised over the next 3 years:

1. RDS availability – 60% of the services' Emergency Response provision is delivered by RDS appliances and staff and so it is essential the service maintains RDS availability to ensure that resources are always available to meet both risk and demand.
2. Incident Response Timings – Although there are no national standards of fire cover the service uses a suite of performance indicators to measure response times of resources to incidents across the service area. These are an essential monitoring tool to help ensure our appliances are deployed to the right incidents and arrive in time to make a difference.



The Emergency Response section will continue to focus 5 areas of focus to help deliver the Emergency Response Strategy which are linked to the strategic priorities of the service.

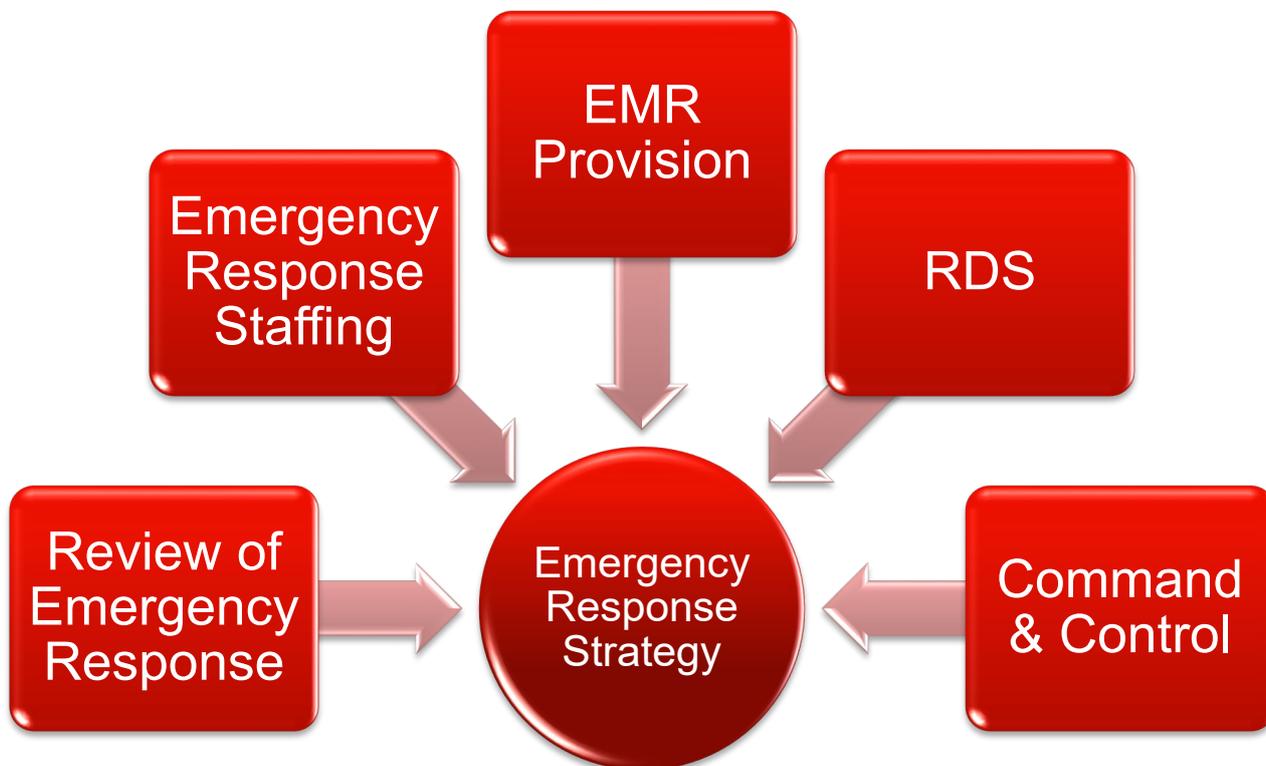


Fig 1 – Emergency Response areas of focus



1: Optimise Emergency Response capabilities to ensure we identify and respond to all foreseeable fire and rescue risks and other community risks and threats

The Emergency Response section is responsible for ensuring that the service has sufficient and proportionate Emergency Response arrangements that are available to always respond to and effectively manage a wide range of risks and threats, delivered through a range of local, regional and national delivery models.

In addition to the statutory requirements the Emergency Response section will continue to maintain efficient and effective response capabilities proportionate to the local and national risks and demand. Where appropriate the service will develop delivery models and partnership arrangements through Fire Service Act 2004 section 13 - 16 agreements and consider other collaborative opportunities e.g. sharing specialist appliances and capabilities with neighbouring fire and rescue services.

CDDFRS continue to respond to a wide range of incidents, with the prominence of multi-agency working very high on all service agendas. CDDFRS very rarely attend incidents in isolation and work closely with the other blue light services, managing incidents in a very effective way. There is a requirement to continually improve working relationships and response arrangements with category 1 and 2 responders and the vehicle to do this is the Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

Focusing on key FRS risks the Emergency Response section will work closely with other sections and groups to ensure that responders have the correct appliances, equipment, PPE, information, instruction and training to deal with the wide range of foreseeable incidents. This will be achieved by ensuring that we are committed to other key service strategies where cross over exists. e.g. Workforce Development strategy, Assets strategy etc. We are also committed to learning from incidents and exercises with a view to making future improvements based on the learning outcomes identified.

Emergency Response are keen to align policies and procedures to national programmes e.g. National Operational Guidance Programme (NOGP) and Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). We recognise the benefits of these and will continue to provide feedback that will influence national procedures through the use of the Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) as a vehicle to facilitate this.

We will optimise our Emergency Response capabilities by;

- Conducting a full review of Emergency Response provision.
- Conducting a full review of all station-based capabilities and competencies to ensure these remain aligned to risk.
- Reviewing the Fire Service Act 2004 section 13 - 16 agreements to ensure sufficient arrangements are in place to provide cross border assistance to neighbouring FRSs i.e. the provision of Emergency Response and specialist appliances.
- Continue to play a leading role in the LRF, working with key partners at all levels to help identify, plan for, train against and respond to risks both locally, regionally and nationally.
- Ensuring we identify the requirement for and maintain specialist capabilities and roles linked to the Service areas foreseeable risks e.g. water and animal rescue, working at height, environmental protection.
- Actively promoting and supporting national resilience policies and procedures that improve regional and national deployments.
- Working with partners to embed the JESIP approach to managing incidents.
- Where appropriate we will work with other areas of the service and partner organisations to introduce joint roles across the service e.g. Community Safety Responders.



2: Enhance operational staffing arrangements to optimise efficiency, effectiveness and capacity for Emergency Response.

As a service, we need to ensure that staffing levels are maintained to ensure appliances are available when required. This includes both firefighting and specialist appliances whether primary or secondary staffed. The service will continue to develop innovative ways of developing flexible staffing arrangements that encourage new ways of working and improved participation and integration of staff.

Emergency Response will undertake a commitment to review Emergency Response policies and procedures to ensure that they are fit for purpose and align to other key areas of work across the service e.g. Workforce Development and Community Risk Management strategies.

The Training section has introduced a comprehensive development and assessment cycle for command training which is fully compliant with the requirements of the National Operational Guidance Incident Command Manual. We will continue to support the develop of this programme in the Service's state of the art command suite where our commanders can be developed and assessed to ensure our Emergency Response remains effective and provides assurance to multi agency partners and the community.

Emergency Response will work in partnership with the Training and Assurance sections to ensure that Flexible Duty Officers (FDOs) receive suitable Continued Professional Development (CPD) to respond appropriately and proportionately to emergency incidents where they are expected to take command, monitor incident commander's performance or provide support and specialist advice.

The service will continue to maintain sufficient and proportionate resilience arrangements to minimise business disruptions and their impact on our Emergency Response capabilities. Business disruption and resilience arrangements will be called off and tested periodically in partnership with the Training section.

We will enhance operational staffing options by;

- Reviewing and exploring a range of duty systems to meet the needs of the Service and provide flexibility for all Emergency Response staff.
- Engaging with appropriate workforce planning arrangements to help identify opportunities for new ways of working within the Emergency Response area such as the apprenticeship programme, on call to whole time transfers, inter service transfers and whole-time trainee programmes.
- Reviewing of policies and procedures relating to FDOs to maximise their efficiency, effectiveness and value to the Service.



3: Review and develop our Emergency Medical Response (EMR) provision.

Following feedback from stakeholders during 2016/17 IRMP Annual Action Plan Consultation the service will continue to look at opportunities to extend the role of firefighters to assist public health services and expand the Emergency Medical Response (EMR) scheme.

During the National Joint Council (NJC) trial period (2016-2017) CDDFRS staff demonstrated on many occasions that EMR makes a real difference to communities and is a proven method of saving lives by delivering vital lifesaving Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

There have also been many additional occasions where medical support administered by crews, such as providing oxygen therapy, has improved the overall chances of survival through the stabilisation of patients prior to the arrival of North East Ambulance Service (NEAS).

Throughout the term of this strategy we will engage fully with our strategic health partners and local authorities to determine the key areas where CDDFRS can make the most significant differences to the community.

All of this will be closely managed along with a review of our own core business activities to determine the level of impact on these areas through increased demand which will include continued monitoring of staff welfare.

We will review and develop Emergency Medical Response (EMR) provision by:

- Working closely with NEAS and key health commissioning groups.
- Engage with national bodies such as the National Joint Council (NJC), National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to help shape the services provision in line with best practise and national guidance.
- Agreeing a demand led delivery model from key stations while seeking funding opportunities to establish and maintain these.
- Engaging with staff and representative bodies to achieve modern working solutions to improve our overall service to the community in this area.
- Ensure training, information and equipment remains suitable and sufficient for the role.



4: On Call Duty System – The service will continue to work with On Call staff, developing innovative new ways of working to ensure that they continue to play a fundamental part in the delivery of service’s strategic priorities.

Influential national reports such as ‘Facing the future’ by Sir Ken Knight and the Adrian Thomas review suggests that an increased reliance on the RDS nationally could create efficiencies for the fire sector.

Due to the diverse geographical landscape of the county, RDS appliances already provide an efficient and effective provision of Emergency Response cover right across the service area and our RDS staff are held in high esteem by both the service and the community. Recognised nationally the RDS is a unique and complex duty system where challenges differ from one service to another, often influenced by several factors and where ‘one size fits all’ model does not always work.

There are some key challenges and the RDS Recruitment, Selection, Support and Retention Project is one of the key projects of the Emergency Response strategy.

It is likely that due to the complexity of the project and perceived influences from the Fire Reform Programme this project will continue through 2017/18, 2018/19 into 2019/20 to support anticipated timeframes for cultural changes across the service.

The service recognises that sharing learning and best practise is essential and will continue to work on national RDS projects and incorporate the 8 key work streams developed by the CFOA RDS National Working Group as well as the overarching themes recognised by the Home Office of Branding, Workforce Recruitment & Development and Traction.

We will develop and enhance the role of our RDS by;

- Developing enhanced flexible arrangements to improve RDS availability and utilisation.
- Conducting a review of the current RDS engagement and communication processes such as the RDS liaison group and RDS satisfaction survey.
- Establishing individual task and finish groups to explore defined work streams and have progress managed via the RDS liaison group.
- Continuing to support and provide feedback to the CFOA RDS National Working Group, RDS Practitioners Group and the NE RDS Regional Group to improve the shared learning opportunities for the RDS.
- Exploring opportunities to engage with local businesses to encourage their support and reward their corporate social responsibilities.
- Carrying out a full review of the RDS financing procedures.
- Fully reviewing and updating the RDS employment handbook.



5: Following a recent strategic review of Command and Control further opportunities exist to optimise efficient and effective working arrangements and possible income generation.

The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) will provide the next generation communication system nationally for the 3 emergency services (police, fire and rescue, and ambulance) and other public safety users. This system will be called the emergency services network (ESN). This network will improve interoperability and effectiveness and will introduce a range of new ways of working which will impact on the Emergency Response staff.

The transfer to ESN will also create a range of cross-sectional work streams and training requirements that will require managing across the length of this strategy. The Emergency Response staff will be required to work closely with the implementation team to ensure a smooth transition takes place.

CDDFRS Command and Control are the gateway to the effective Emergency Response of the service and are fundamental to the successful conclusion to any emergency event.

Performance management of some aspects of the work carried out by Command and Control does exist however the service will always seek continuous improvement in the way they handle calls and mobilise appliances and support the front-line capability at operational incidents. However, Command and Control do far more than receive 999 emergency calls and mobilise appliances.

The new Guardian Command system has been successfully implemented and so the next steps should be to explore the additional capabilities that the section can deliver and how this can improve the overall effectiveness of Command and Control and wider organisation.

Increased back office work streams, particularly staffing, have been introduced and opportunities to manage the amount of additional workload being completed by Command and Control will be reviewed to ensure that the work carried out continues to add maximum value to the achievement of the service's strategic priorities. As well as continuing to support internal sections, the service will now begin to explore opportunities to maximise capacity to collaborate with external organisations such as local blue light services and partner agencies through jointly developed collaboration and/or income generation opportunities.

Improved engagement opportunities with operational crews through improved training and exercising will improve the overall effectiveness of the Incident Command System and effective working with multi agency partners to support the principles of JESIP.

Command and Control managers will be encouraged to develop innovative ways to recruit and retain new staff which would include the use of apprentices and staff being encouraged to participate in the development of new trail blazing standards.

We will optimise efficient and effective working arrangements within command and control to allow us to explore income generation opportunities by:

- Maximising efficiency of key work streams delivered by Command and Control staff.
- Monitoring and reviewing of key performance indicators and milestones by Command and Control managers.
- Exploring opportunities to support other external organisations / partners through either collaboration and/or income generation.
- Developing innovative ways to recruit and retain new staff in line with the organisation's wider recruitment strategy.



Measuring Progress

We will monitor progress of the improvement strategy in the following ways:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)**
 - In the first year 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 Performance and programme Board (PPB) who will receive regular reports from Area Manager, Emergency Response who is the strategic lead for this area.
- **Measuring Perceptions/ Sense Checking**
 - We will regularly ask for feedback from our operational staff to inform us of our progress with the Emergency Response 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 keep it fresh and line with emerging national issues.



How do we get there?

To achieve our vision for Emergency Response, we have identified 5 key improvement objectives:

Each of the Key Improvement Objectives (KIO) are underpinned by Priority Activities and prioritised over the next 3 years.

KIO 1 - Optimise operational response capabilities to ensure we identify and respond to all foreseeable fire and rescue risks and other community risks and threats		
WHY? The Emergency Response section is responsible for ensuring that the service has sufficient and proportionate Emergency Response arrangements that are available to always respond to and effectively manage a wide range of risks and threats, delivered through a range of local, regional and national delivery models.		
Target Year	KIO Ref.	Description
17/18		Conduct a Service wide Emergency Response (ER) cover review to ensure our resources are accurately and correctly allocated to the risks identified across the Service area.
17/18		Conduct a full review of all station-based capabilities and competencies to ensure these remain aligned to risk both locally, regionally and nationally
17/18		Review the Fire Service Act 2004 section 13 - 16 agreements that allows for cross border collaboration at Emergency Response incidents between fire and rescue services
18/19		Implement any changes across the service identified through ER and Capability & Competencies reviews



KIO 2 - Enhance operational staffing arrangements to optimise efficiency, effectiveness and capacity for Emergency Response.		
<p>WHY?</p> <p>As a service, we need to ensure that staffing levels are maintained to ensure appliances are available when required. This includes both firefighting and specialist appliances whether primary or secondary crewed. The service will continue to develop innovative ways of developing flexible staffing arrangements that encourage new ways of working and improved participation and integration of staff.</p>		
Target Year	KIO Ref.	Description
17-20		Review the range of duty systems currently used within the service in line with the outcomes and requirements identified during the ER and Capability & Competencies reviews
17-20		Conduct a review of the policies and procedures related to Flexi Duty Officers (FDO) to help improve effectiveness, professionalism and efficiency.
17-20		Implement the key outcomes of the ER and Capability & Competencies reviews across the service.
17-20		Implement new ways of working in line with areas identified from the outcomes of the Flexi Duty Officer policy review

KIO 3 - Review and develop Emergency Medical Response (EMR) provision.		
<p>WHY?</p> <p>The service will look at opportunities to extend the role of firefighters to assist public health services and expand the Emergency Medical Response (EMR) scheme. Throughout the term of this strategy we will engage fully with our strategic health partners and local authorities to determine the key areas where CDDFRS can make the most significant differences to the community.</p>		
Target Year	KIO Ref.	Description
17-20		Continue to influence and support national initiatives to introduce EMR into the fire service core activities.
17/18		Work with key health partners to agree a demand led delivery model from fire stations while seeking funding opportunities to establish and maintain these.
17/18		Engage with staff and representative bodies to achieve modern working solutions to improve our overall service to the community
17/18		Ensure training, information and equipment remains suitable and sufficient for the role



<p>KIO 4 - Retained Duty System (RDS) – The service will continue to work with its RDS and develop innovative new ways of working to ensure that they continue to play a fundamental part in the delivery of service’s strategic priorities.</p>		
<p>WHY?</p> <p>Due to the diverse geographical landscape of the county, RDS appliances already provide an efficient and effective provision of Emergency Response cover across the service area with over 60% of appliances being crewed by RDS staff.</p>		
Target Year	KIO Ref.	Description
17/18		Conduct a review of the current RDS engagement and communication processes
17/18		Establish individual working groups to explore defined work streams and report back to the RDS liaison group
17-20		Continue to work closely with regional and national groups to maximise shared learning and identify good practise and new ways of working suitable for CDDFRS RDS staff.
17-20		Develop enhanced flexible arrangements to improve RDS availability
17-20		Review and embed the recommendations from the RDS working groups in the key areas
17-20		Exploring opportunities to support local businesses to encourage their support enhance their corporate social responsibilities and look at how the service can reward this
17-20		Fully reviewing and updating the RDS employment handbook



KIO 5 - Following a recent strategic review of Command and Control further opportunities exist to optimise efficient and effective working arrangements and possible income generation		
WHY? As well as continuing to support internal sections, the service will now begin to explore opportunities to maximise capacity to collaborate with external organisations such as local blue light services and partner agencies through jointly developed collaboration and/or income generation opportunities.		
Target Year	KIO Ref.	Description
17/18		Conduct a review of command & Control related key performance indicators to ensure these remain fit for purpose and help improve efficiency and effectiveness within the section.
17/18		Explore collaboration opportunities with Durham Constabulary within the command and control section.
17/18		Engage with key internal stakeholders to raise awareness of ESMCP work streams.
17-20		Explore wider opportunities for collaboration and/or income generation
17-20		Explore a range of recruitment options linking to the organisation’s recruitment strategy
17-20		Support development of the ESN as required.

