



Safest People, Safest Places

## **Local Government Act 1972**

**A Meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington will be held in the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on Monday 21 October 2024 at 10.00 am to consider the following business:-**

### **PART A**

1. Declarations of interest, if any  
*If Members are aware of a private or personal conflict of interest in relation to any items on the Agenda, this should be disclosed at this stage or when the conflict of interest arises during consideration of an item in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members*
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2024 (Pages 3 - 6)
3. Current Correspondence - Report of Director of Emergency Response (Pages 7 - 16)
4. Notes of the Performance Committee held on 5 September 2024 - Report of the Chair of the Performance Committee (Pages 17 - 30)
5. Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 26 September 2024 - Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee (Pages 31 - 34)
6. Notes of the Human Resources Committee held on 27 September 2024 - Report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee (Pages 35 - 36)
7. Fire Standards Progress Report - Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Pages 37 - 40)
8. Community Safety and Arson Reduction Member Champion Update - Report of the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Member Champion (Pages 41 - 50)
9. Building Fire Safety Member Champion Update - Report of the Building Fire Safety Member Champion (Pages 51 - 58)

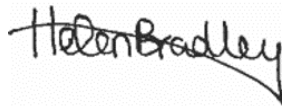
10. Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Phase 2 Report - Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Pages 59 - 76)
11. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgent to warrant consideration
12. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

Part B

**Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)**

13. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

**PURSUANT** to the provisions of the above named Act, **I HEREBY SUMMON YOU** to attend the said meeting



Helen Bradley  
Clerk to the Combined Fire Authority  
for County Durham and Darlington

County Hall  
Durham  
DH1 5UL

**TO: The Members of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington**

**Durham County Councillors:**

Councillors J Shuttleworth, C Martin, J Atkinson, A Batey, R Bell, J Cairns, I Cochrane, C Hampson, N Jones, B Kellett, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Marshall, I McLean, E Peeke, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, K Shaw and S Zair

**Darlington Borough Councillors:**

Councillors A Anderson, G Lee, D Ray and M Snedker

Minutes of **the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington held at Fire and Rescue HQ, Durham on 16 September 2024 at 10.00 am.**

### **Present:**

#### **Durham County Councillors:**

Councillors J Atkinson, A Batey, R Bell, J Cairns, T Duffy, C Hampson, N Jones, R Manchester, C Martin, I McLean, E Peeke, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, K Shaw and J Shuttleworth.

#### **Darlington Borough Councillors:**

Councillors A Anderson, G Lee and M Snedker

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Cochrane, C Marshall, J Quinn, D Ray and S Zair.

### **Independent Persons:**

-

The Chair advised that meetings have taken place with newly elected MPs, Liz Twist, Alan Strickland and Luke Akehurst where future funding for the sector was discussed.

### **A1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **A2 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (for copy see file of minutes).

### **A3 Current Correspondence**

The Authority received an update from the Director of Community Risk Management in relation to current correspondence received from government and other bodies relevant to the Authority and the status of each (for copy see file of minutes).

### **A4 Member Champions**

The Authority received a report of the Chair of the Director of People and Organisational Development which provided details of the CFA Member Champions for each area of the service and their officer contact.

### **Resolved:**

Members **approved** the list of Member Champions.

## **A5 Statement of Assurance**

The Authority received a report from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer providing members with the 2023-24 Statement of Assurance for approval prior to publication.

Members **approved** the 2023-24 Statement of Assurance.

## **A6 Annual Report**

The Authority received a report from the Chief Fire Officer providing members with the 2023-24 Annual Report.

Cllr Batey commented that the report is user friendly and reads well. Cllr Batey asked if the contact details for the Fire Authority could be added to the document.

Cllr Cairns agreed that the Annual Report is very clear and concise but contact details for specific services within the organisation would be useful.

**ACTION:** Contact details for the Fire Authority and CDDFRS services to be added to the Annual Report.

Members **noted** the 2023-24 Annual Report.

## **A7 Retained Duty System**

The Authority received a report from the Retained Duty System Member Champion providing members with update and insight into the business areas and performance of the Retained Duty System within County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

Cllr Bell queried if there is any flexibility to change the 11-hour rest period in accordance with number of incidents attended. S Helps explained that a conversation is taking place with staff and management regarding the opportunity to introduce an element of flexibility with the aim of maximising the availability of fire appliances.

Members **noted** the report.

## **A8 Standards of Behaviour: The Handling of Misconduct in the Fire and Rescue Services**

The Authority received a report from the Director of People and Organisational Development informing members of the outcomes of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services report.

Cllr Atkinson stressed that careful consideration should be given to the content of the report and that as a Combined Fire Authority should be accountable.

Cllr Batey welcomed the recommendations of the report but shared concerns about the cost implications involved.

Cllr Lee raised concerns regarding a recent investigation and queried the current processes that are in place within the organisation for dealing with allegations of misconduct. Cllr Batey expressed discomfort regarding investigations being discussed at a public meeting.

Cllr Bell noted he was happy with the content of report but did not agree with endorsing all national recommendations, some of which may not be relevant to County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

**Resolved:**

- (a) Members **noted** and **commented** on the content of the report and proposed actions.
- (b) Members **agreed** with proposed monitoring arrangements through the HR Committee

**A9 Any Other Business**

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

The Chair confirmed that there was no other business.

**A10 Exclusion to the Public**

**Resolved:**

That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Part 1 of the schedule 12A of the said Act.

**PART B**

**B11 Any Other Business**

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

Cllr Duffy raised concerns regarding the potential increase of paraffin heaters being purchased for the winter and the fire safety risks they pose and queried if the service were doing anything in this regard.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer highlighted the ongoing partnership winter planning work that the service was involved with, in both local authority areas, which included unsafe heating and the promotion of safer methods of heating such as oil filled radiators. Education campaigns were also planned for social media.

**CLOSE OF MEETING**

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**Current Correspondence: September – October 2024**

No	Release Date	Subject	Summary	Action CFA Report	Action CFA Response	Action Info
1	15/9/24	Letter from Minister Johnson	Letter regarding Government's plans for strikes (Minimum Service Levels)  Appendix A			X
2	2/10/24	Letter from Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP	Letter regarding Fire and Rescue Services Remediation following Grenfell Report  Appendix B			X
3	7/10/24	Funding Letter sent to Jim McMahon MP and The Rt Hon Darren Jones MP	Letter regarding Funding sent from Chair and CFO  Appendix C			X

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Home Office

Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP  
Minister of State for Policing, Fire  
and Crime Prevention

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home](http://www.gov.uk/home)

**Cllr Frank Biederman**  
Chair, Fire Services Management Committee

**Cllr Nick Chard**  
Chair, National Employers

**Mark Hardingham**  
Chair, National Fire Chiefs Council

**Via Email Only**

15<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Frank, Nick and Mark

I am writing to update you on the Government's plans for the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 ("the 2023 Act"). The 2023 Act enables minimum service levels (MSL) to be applied to specified services by regulations within these sectors during strike action. This Government believes that the 2023 Act unduly restricts the right to strike and undermines good industrial relations. As you will remember, the introduction of the 2023 Act was met with widespread condemnation from employers and trade unions alike, with many employers across different sectors pointing to its unworkability and impact on employers' and trade unions' abilities to negotiate and come to resolution on disputes.

As you are aware, our 'Plan to Make Work Pay' pledged to repeal the Act to give trade unions the freedom to organise, represent and negotiate on behalf of their workers. We believe this will help to usher in a new era of partnership that sees trade unions, employers and Government working constructively together in co-operation and through negotiation. Our agenda to Make Work Pay is an important part of our plan for growth and to raise living standards for everyone, everywhere - by boosting productivity, boosting incomes and levelling the playing field so that employers who do right by their workers are no longer undercut in a race to the bottom.

We have begun preparations to repeal the 2023 Act as part of the forthcoming Employment Rights Bill. Amendments made by the 2023 Act to the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 ("the 1992 Act") would accordingly be reversed and any minimum service regulations would lapse once the Employment Rights Bill has Royal Assent. We are committed to ensuring that this legislation will be introduced in Parliament within the first 100 days of this Government.

Although the ability of employers to give work notices will legally continue until the 2023 Act is formally repealed and amendments to the 1992 Act are accordingly reversed, in this



interim period we strongly encourage fire and rescue authorities to seek alternative mechanisms for dispute resolution, including voluntary agreements, rather than imposing minimum service levels on your workforce. We encourage you to engage in negotiation and discussion with trade unions, ensuring industrial relations are based around good faith negotiation and bargaining.

I also want to make clear that, following the High Court ruling in August 2023 which upheld the judicial review challenge on the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses (Amendment) Regulations 2022, employment businesses are prohibited from providing agency workers to cover the duties normally performed by a worker of an organisation who is taking part in a strike or other industrial action. In light of the High Court ruling, it is not necessary to repeal these regulations; however, the Government will formally update Parliament on the position in due course.

We will be in touch in due course to confirm once the new Employment Rights Bill has come into force and the 2023 Act has formally been repealed. In the meantime, we seek your cooperation in supporting good industrial relations.

I would be grateful if you could cascade this letter to all fire and rescue authorities in England. I am also copying this letter to Councillor Nick Chard, Chair of the National Employers, and to Mark Hardingham, Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Yours Sincerely,

Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP

Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention



# Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP**

*Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for  
Housing, Communities and Local Government*  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

2 October 2024

Dear Fire and Rescue Authority Chairs,

The publication of the final Grenfell Tower Inquiry report is a significant milestone. Seven years on from Grenfell, it is unacceptable that so many people are still living in buildings with unsafe cladding. Everyone deserves to live in a safe home, and I know that you care as passionately about this as I do. This new government is determined to redouble efforts to make buildings safe. This will require a collective effort, with all parts of government working together with regulators and partners. Fire and rescue services have an invaluable contribution to make to this work.

### **Fire and rescue services and remediation**

I am grateful for all that you have done and continue to do to make sure buildings in your area are safe. I am writing today to ask for your support in accelerating action to end the building safety crisis. All regulators have a vital role to play in increasing the pace of remediation and I would like you to work together to coordinate activity to make sure your capacity is used to best effect.

It is critical that people know they are safe in their homes, particularly so when their buildings are awaiting or undergoing remediation. I know that fire and rescue services already closely monitor high-risk residential buildings, including those which are subject to interim measures and currently undergoing remediation. Where remediation is not progressing quickly enough, I would like all partners to work together closely to agree the regulator best placed in each building to act to drive permanent remediation solutions and how best to ensure the safety of buildings undergoing remediation.

### **Metro mayors and local remediation acceleration plans**

I recently wrote to all metro mayors in England asking them to work with regulators in support of local remediation acceleration plans. The aim of these plans will be to increase the pace of remediation in each mayor's area, and mayors will be expected to bring regulators together to coordinate activity. These plans will require the support of all regulators to be successful, and I am also writing to council leaders and the Building Safety Regulator, to lay out my proposals and ask for their support.

### **Overcoming challenges**

Ending the building safety crisis will be a shared endeavour requiring the combined efforts of central and local government, regulators, and other partners. When I convened regulators to meet in the aftermath of the Dagenham fire, I heard of the challenges that you face – I am determined to address them, including providing additional funding to support this work.

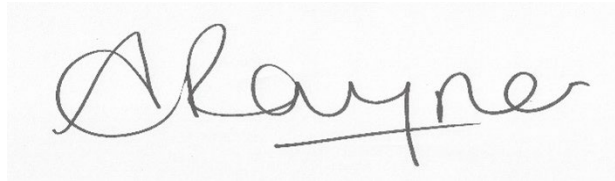
### **Next steps**

The success of local remediation acceleration plans will depend on all partners working together. Mayors will need your support to deliver these plans, and I encourage you to work collaboratively with them and reach out to begin discussions about how you can support them to deliver the local remediation acceleration plan.

The department is here to support you, and I would encourage you to engage with your combined authority, representative bodies and my officials to discuss any challenges you face and how they can be addressed.

I have copied this letter to the Home Secretary, Chief Fire Officers, the Chief Inspector at HMICFRS, and the Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Rayner', is centered on a light-colored rectangular background. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the 'r'.

**RT HON ANGELA RAYNER MP**

Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government



Clerk,  
County Durham and Darlington  
Combined Fire Authority,  
County Hall,  
Durham DH1 5UL

## Safest People, Safest Places

This matter is being dealt with by: Cllr John Shuttleworth  
Ext: 5555  
Date: 7 October 2024

Jim McMahon OBE MP – Minister of State (Minister for Local Government and English Devolution)  
[jim.mcmahon.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:jim.mcmahon.mp@parliament.uk)

The Rt Hon Darren Jones MP - Chief Secretary to the Treasury  
[darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk)

by Email

Dear Minister of State and Chief Secretary to the Treasury

### Fire Funding for 2025/26

We are writing to you today to make the case for a fair funding settlement for the Fire and Rescue Service and to ask for your help to avoid the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) having to make further cuts to frontline services that will increase the risk to the communities in County Durham and Darlington.

Following challenging budget settlements for fire over a number of years, the service has reduced staffing, collaborated with others where appropriate, invested in technology, removed waste and duplication, restructured every department and reduced spend. To mitigate the funding shortfall for 2023-24 and balance the budget, the CFA, following consultation, agreed to reduce the operational establishment, resulting in less firefighters available to serve our communities.

Appropriate funding for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) continues to be an issue as we have lost in the region of £10M in government funding over the last thirteen years, when inflation is taken into account.

The demographics within County Durham and Darlington mean that almost 80% of properties in our Service area are in council tax band A or B, and with Council tax representing 67% of CDDFRS funding we are disproportionately impacted by the council tax referendum limit. This together with high levels of deprivation means many residents are either exempt or qualify for discounts to their council tax bills.

Notwithstanding the fact that CDDFRS is a productive, efficient and well-run service with a track record of delivering change against a reducing budget, without additional financial support from government it is inevitable that further reductions to the operational establishment will be necessary, directly leading to a reduction in fire cover which increases the risk to our communities.

CDDFRS is efficient and effective; the HMICFRS report from Jan 2023 highlights that the service is graded as good across all 3 pillars with 10 out of the 11 diagnostics viewed as good. Our operational staff are highly productive delivering significantly more fire safety audits and Home Fire Safety Visits compared to the English average.

Furthermore, our fire appliances operational activity is above the English average and when we are required to attend an incident, for example to a fire within a home, we respond faster than the English average and faster than any other predominantly rural FRS in England.

To maintain this position, we require funding increases in the Local Government Finance Settlement, otherwise the result will be a reduction in frontline wholetime and on-call firefighters with the removal of fire engines and a resultant degradation in service. This will increase response times, increase risk and reduce the level of vitally important prevention and building safety inspection work such as achieving the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower phase 2 public enquiry.

In addition, over recent years, the Service has played a key role in supporting national resilience for either fire specific issues or multi-agency response to extreme weather events and without sufficient funding this will not be possible going forward.

We are therefore asking that as a minimum grant funding is maintained in real terms, with all grants made to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) added to baseline funding and uplifted by inflation.

The sector believes there should be no referendum principles, but if limits must be in place, FRAs should be able to increase Council Tax by the greater of £5 or 3% for band D properties without the need for a prohibitively expensive referendum.

Finally, we believe additional funding should be provided to support much needed capital investment in all FRAs and this should be distributed proportionately rather than through a time consuming and costly bidding process.

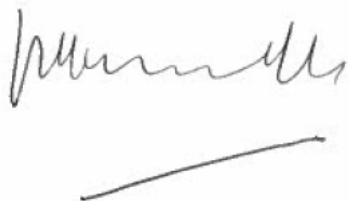
Capital funding for investment in buildings, new technology, environmentally friendly vehicles and collaboration is essential and since being removed in 2014-2015, CDDFRS funding is approximately £1.3M per year less due to this change. Consequently, to fund items such as fire engines, estates improvements and the essential ICT systems we need to run our control room operations, we are forced to borrow money which in turn is impacted by the increase in interest rates. Furthermore, CDDFRS hold the lowest level of financial reserves of any Combined Fire Authority therefore the ability to use our limited reserves to support capital investment is not an option.

We hope that the information set out above illustrates our concerns and as always, we warmly extend an offer for you and your officials to visit staff within CDDFRS to discuss matters further.

Thank you for your continued support.

We are copying this letter to The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, as well as to Members of Parliament for County Durham and Darlington.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr John Shuttleworth

**Chair of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority**



Steve Helps

**Chief Fire Officer  
County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Service**

Cc The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Members of Parliament for County Durham and Darlington

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County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**21 October 2024**

**Notes of the Performance Committee held on 5 September 2024**

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## **Report of the Chair of Performance Committee**

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**Members Present:** Cllr R Manchester in the Chair  
Cllr E Peeke, Cllr K Rooney, Cllr S Quinn

**Apologies received:** Cllr J Quinn, Cllr S Zair and Cllr A Anderson

### **Purpose of the report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Performance Committee held on Thursday 5 September 2024.

### **Performance Report Quarter 1 2024/25**

2. The committee was updated on the operational and corporate indicators for quarter one of 2024/25 which showed 58% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 60% of the strategic PIs either maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.

A copy of the report is attached at appendix A.

The committee **noted** and **commented** on the report.

### **Letters of Appreciation**

3. The committee considered letters of appreciation that had been submitted to the service. In total 7 letters had been received for the quarter four period.

The committee **noted** the report.

### **National Performance Presentation**

4. The committee received a benchmarking presentation on the National incident types for the year ending December 2023. FRSs attended 592,996 incidents in the year which was a 5.6% decrease compared with the previous year. Of these incidents 142,276 were fires which was a 22% decrease compared with the previous year.

The committee **noted** the report.

### **PART B**

#### **Formal Complaints**

5. A total of 6 formal complaints had been received by the service in the reporting period. One complaint had been upheld, two partially upheld but no complaints had been forwarded to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The committee **noted** the report.

#### **Recommendation**

6. Members are requested to **note** the report.

County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Authority**



## **Safest People, Safest Places**

### **Performance Committee**

**5 September 2024**

### **Performance Report – Quarter One 2024/25**

### **Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. This report presents a summary of organisational performance at the end of the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

#### **Background**

2. Both operational and corporate performance is monitored and managed internally via the monthly Performance Board and Service Leadership Team (SLT) forums. Members of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) consider performance on a quarterly basis at meetings of the Performance Committee and the full CFA.
3. A comprehensive suite of performance indicators (PIs) is employed to measure both operational and corporate performance. Targets are set on an annual basis against SMART criteria and take account of longer-term trends and the potential for spikes in performance.
4. This robust approach to performance management enables action to be taken at an early stage if performance is not meeting expectations and provides assurance that resources are being directed towards the areas of greatest risk.
5. In addition to setting a target level for relevant PIs, the Service also employs a system of tolerance limit triggers that allow under or over performance to be highlighted to the Performance Board when the PI goes beyond set tolerances, which vary depending on the indicator. Each PI has a total of four tolerance limit triggers, two each for both under and over performance.
6. Performance is presented from two perspectives, by comparison against the annual target levels, and by comparison with performance at the same point last year.

## Overview of performance across all indicator categories

7. An overview across both operational and corporate key PIs at the end of quarter one for 2024/25 shows 58% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 60% of the strategic PIs either maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.
8. The following sections of the report present details of specific operational and corporate indicators. An explanatory narrative is provided for each PI group along with information about how performance compares to the annual target and the previous year.

## Prevention

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q1 2024/25 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 01 – Deaths Arising from Accidental Fires in Dwellings	Down	2	0	n/a	2	0%
PI 03 – Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	51	61	16.4%	57	10.5%
PI 04 – Injuries Arising from Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	6	3	-100%	4	-50%
PI 05 – Total Secondary Fires	Down	579	987	41.3%	900	35.7%
PI 07 – Number of Home Fire Safety Visits	Up	4660	4500	3.6%	4734	-1.6%
PI 42 – Proportion of Home Fire Safety Visits to High-Risk People/Properties	Up	99%	80%	23.8%	98.7%	0.3%

**PI01** – There were two fire deaths in quarter one, with the spike in deaths arising from accidental fires in dwellings (ADFs) continuing into 2024/25. On 21 May 2024 a male died at a house fire in Murton and on 9 June 2024 a male died at a house fire in Darlington. Both incidents are believed to have been caused by a cigarette. Presentations on both fatalities have been delivered to the full CFA. Learning reviews have been conducted for both fatalities. A strategic problem-solving event was conducted by SLT in July with several actions including the addition of over 2,000 properties to the Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) targeting list due to the residents having similar vulnerability factors as recent fire deaths.

A presentation highlighting the increase in fire fatalities with a focus on partnership working have been delivered to strategic groups across Durham and Darlington with the focus on the following key areas:

- Opportunities for data sharing;
- Referrals of vulnerable people;
- Delivery of 'Eyes Wide Open' training to frontline partner staff.

**PI03** – There has been 51 ADFs which is ten under the target of 61. Kitchen fires continue to be an area of focus for our targeted Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) with 50% of all incidents in quarter one recorded as starting in this room. Lone occupiers and lone parent account for 46% of all incidents.

As stated in PI01, the service has been engaging with many partners and delivering 'Eyes Wide Open' training to partners across Durham and Darlington. Engagement has been very positive with the Hospital Discharge Teams with the expectation of referrals of vulnerable residents as they are returned to their homes following a stay in hospital.

See Appendix A, chart 1 for number of ADFs by room of origin and chart 2 for number of ADFs by occupier type.

**PI04** – There have been six injuries in quarter one, which resulted in the casualties attending hospital. April saw the highest number of incidents with four injuries, followed by two in May, and none reported in June.

April was marked by several serious incidents, starting with a fire on the 9th in Darlington, where a 29-year-old female suffered severe burns and was found unconscious due to smoke inhalation. She was rescued by fire service personnel and placed in an induced coma at the hospital. Another significant fire occurred on the 14th in Darlington, involving two occupants in their 30's who were overcome by smoke. Both sustained slight injuries and were hospitalised. The fire, which started in the kitchen, caused widespread smoke damage. Finally, on the 17th of April, an elderly woman in Leadgate suffered slight injuries after returning to a fire that began when she accidentally turned on a hob with an air fryer placed on top of it.

In May, two further injuries were reported. On the 3rd, a fire in Crook resulted in slight smoke inhalation injuries to a 61-year-old male who discovered the fire in his front bedroom. The fire caused extensive damage due to internal doors being left open. On the 5th of May, a fire in Murton led to a 44-year-old male suffering from breathing difficulties. He was suspected to be under the influence of alcohol at the time and was subsequently hospitalised with slight injuries from smoke inhalation.

Common themes in these incidents include fires originating in the kitchen or from unattended cooking appliances. In several cases, victims returned to the fire or attempted firefighting, resulting in additional exposure to smoke and toxic fumes. The incidents underline the importance of kitchen safety, especially regarding the use of appliances which is a key area covered in HFSVs.

**PI05** – The positive performance seen in 2023/24 has continued into quarter one with performance at 579 incidents which is 41.3% better than the target of 987 and improved performance by 35.7% compared to the previous year.

Rubbish/ refuse is still the top fuel source with 57% of all secondary fires, with 33% being vegetation related. 92% of all secondary fires were deliberately set. Emergency Response crews and the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team continue to work with partners to reduce these incidents. During the quarter, Emergency Response crews have delivered 2,093 deliberate fire reduction activities.

Durham and Darlington are part of the Government Anti-Social Behaviour Trailblazer and funding has been received to increase high visibility patrols in hotspot areas. The Service is using this funding for the Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV) to patrol hotspot areas for deliberate secondary fires.

See Appendix A, chart 3 for secondary fires by motive and chart 4 for secondary fires by property type.

**PI07** – At the end of quarter one, 4,660 HFSVs have been delivered which is above the target of 4,500. This high number of visits is above the fire sector average and should continue to make the residents of County Durham and Darlington safer from fire.

**PI42** – Alongside the delivery of high numbers of HFSV, these continue to be focused on vulnerable residents with the indicator performing above the Community Risk Management Plan target of 80%. The ‘Eyes Wide Open’ programme and national risk methodology will support us to continue targeting the most vulnerable in our communities.

## Protection

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q1 2024/25 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 10a – Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Premises	Down	35	29	-20.7%	21	-66.7%
PI 14 – False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment	Down	157	172	8.7%	172	8.7%
PI 17 – Number of Fire Safety Audits	Up	472	507	-6.9%	444	6.3%

**PI10a** – There has been 35 incidents during quarter one, which is six over the target of 29 and 14 more compared to the performance in the previous year. This poor performance has been influenced by 11 fires in prisons, compared to three fires in the same period in the previous year. 10 of these 11 fires were set deliberately. Overall, two incidents were at HMP Frankland, four at HMP Durham and five at HMP Deerbolt. The Service do not have legislative responsibility for fire safety in prisons although we continue to work with these establishments with the aim to reduce fires in these premises, as presented at the last full CFA meeting.

The other incidents were in a variety of premises types including six incidents in retail premises and five in education premises. The Business Fire Safety Team conduct post fire reviews of incidents in premises enforced under the Fire Safety Order by the Service and combined with our high levels of fire safety audits aims to improve the performance of this indicator.

**PI14** – The positive direction of travel from 2023/24 has continued into quarter one, with 157 incidents which is 8.7% under the target of 172. This is also 8.7% improved performance compared to the same period in the previous year.

69.1% of all incidents are in four premises types, namely education (25.8%), residential homes (17.4%), retail (13.6%) and industrial manufacturing (12.3%). Mailshots have been sent to education premises and residential homes this quarter. 45.2% of all incidents were linked to system faults and 30.3% were caused by human intervention.

During the quarter there were 267 calls to Fire Control for automatic fire alarms which the Service did not attend.

**PI17** – Performance of this indicator is slightly under target with 472 completed audits against a target of 507, although performance is 6.3% better than the same period in the previous year. The central team are slightly under their full establishment hence the slight under performance against target. During July, an external applicant who is qualified to Level 4 certificate will be starting in the central team which will improve capacity once they are inducted.

Positively 37.7% of audits have been unsatisfactory showing that the Service is targeting the correct premises and making a real difference to improving fire safety across County Durham and the Borough of Darlington.

## Response

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q1 2024/25 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
Total Emergency Calls Received	N/A	3744	N/A	N/A	4785	21.8%
Total Incidents	N/A	1762	N/A	N/A	2153	18.2%
Total Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	78	N/A	N/A	76	-2.6%
PI 02 – Total Primary Fires	Down	282	254	-11.0%	275	-2.5%
PI 06a – Dwelling Fires Attended within 8 Minutes	Up	70.0%	70%	0%	65.5%	6.9%
PI 06b – Non-Domestic Fires Attended within 9 Minutes	Up	55.6%	70%	-20.6%	64.7%	-14.1%
PI 06c – Road Traffic Collisions Attended within 10 Minutes	Up	76.0%	70%	8.6%	72.2%	5.3%
PI 16a Availability of on call appliances - 1st pump	Up	73.0	75	-2.7%	69.2	5.5%

See Appendix A, chart 5 for total incidents.

**PI02** – There have been 282 primary fires which is 11% over the target of 254, and 2.5% more incidents compared to the previous year's performance.

56% of all primary fires are set deliberately and the Service continue to work with Firestoppers to raise awareness and try and gather intelligence on the perpetrators. Some valuable intel was recently received and shared with Durham Constabulary. As many of these incidents are linked to crime, work continues through the multi-agency Arson Suppression Group to identify ways to reduce deliberate fire incidents. There are currently two live Police Operations linked to OCGs (Organised Crime Groups) who use fire as a weapon to target others. The Service is linked and actively working with police to mitigate the risks and reduce the associated incidents.

52% (147) of primary fires are vehicle fires with the majority (71%) of these being set deliberately. Peterlee station area continues to be the highest across the Service area for vehicle fires. This type of incident is difficult to prevent, though the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team continue to work with Police colleagues to target offenders. Retirements in the central team have resulted in a reduced capacity, however a new Arson Reduction and Safety Campaigns Manager will be starting in July and will be able to provide more focus on deliberate primary fires.

See Appendix A, chart 6 for primary fires by motive and chart 7 for primary fires by type.

### **PI06a, PI06b and PI06c**

Two out of the three response standards have achieved their performance 70% target in quarter one.

PI06a – Response time performance when attending ADF's within 8 minutes on 70% of occasions is 70%, matching its target.

PI06b – Response time performance when attending non-domestic fires within 9 minutes on 70% of occasions is only 55.6%, 14.4 under its target.

PI06c – Response time performance when attending road traffic collisions attended within 10 minutes on 70% of occasions is 76%, 6 over its target.

Each failure for any response standard is individually reviewed and analysis shows that extended travel distances are the main reasons for failing response times. Divisional Managers continue to work with Watch Managers through the monthly performance reporting process to scrutinise and improve performance.

**PI16a** – Performance in quarter one was 73% against its target of 75%. This has deliberately been set as a challenging target by the service, with 75% not being achieved for over four years, with the aim to motivate staff and the RDS Liaison roles to increase performance. This performance is 5.5% improved compared to the same period last year.

During the quarter, RDS 'true availability' (RDS staff only) was 70.1% in May. The proactive utilisation of day duty, FDOs and surplus operational personnel including the use of the TRV and SRU has increased availability by an additional 2.9%, to its 73% performance.

Notable availability of RDS staff only is 97.3% at Middleton in Teesdale, 90.9% at Stanhope, 82.8% at Crook and 82.2% at Wheatley Hill.



## Health and Safety

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q1 2024/25 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 69 – Number of Accidents to Personnel	Down	3	2	-50%	1	-200%
PI 72 – Number of Vehicle Accidents classified as CDDFRS Driver’s fault	Down	0	5	100%	6	100%

**PI69** – During quarter one, there were three accidents which is one over the target of two. All accidents were minor in nature. In April a firefighter sustained a very minor cut to their hand during rapid extrication of a casualty at a road traffic collision and a Vehicle Technician sustained a minor graze to their forehead from an air tool that slipped during use. During June, a Fire Cadet sustained minor bruising to their arm during hose drills. All accidents have been investigated to identify any learning points.

**PI72** – Positively there have been no vehicle accidents classified as CDDFRS Driver’s fault during quarter one. Last year there were 20 accidents in total for the year for this indicator and the Health and Safety Team have been working with Driver Training to stress the importance of vigilance during slow speed manoeuvres, where the majority of vehicle accidents occurred.

## Recommendations

9. Members are requested to:
  - a. **Note** the content of the report;
  - b. **Comment** on the reported performance.

Keith Carruthers, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Ext. 5564

**Appendix A**

Chart 1 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Room of Origin

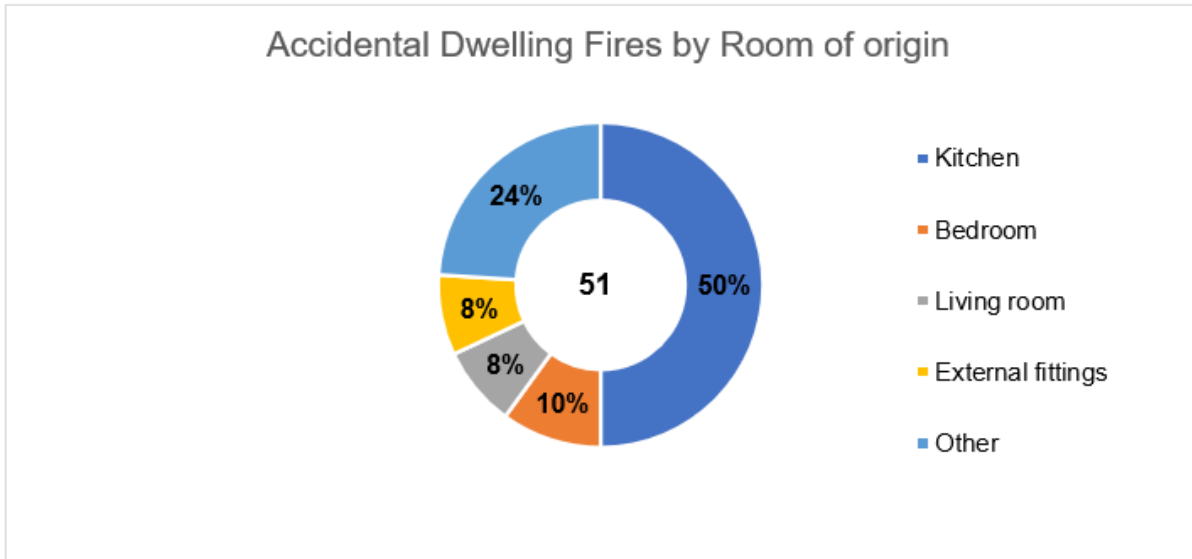


Chart 2 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Occupier Type

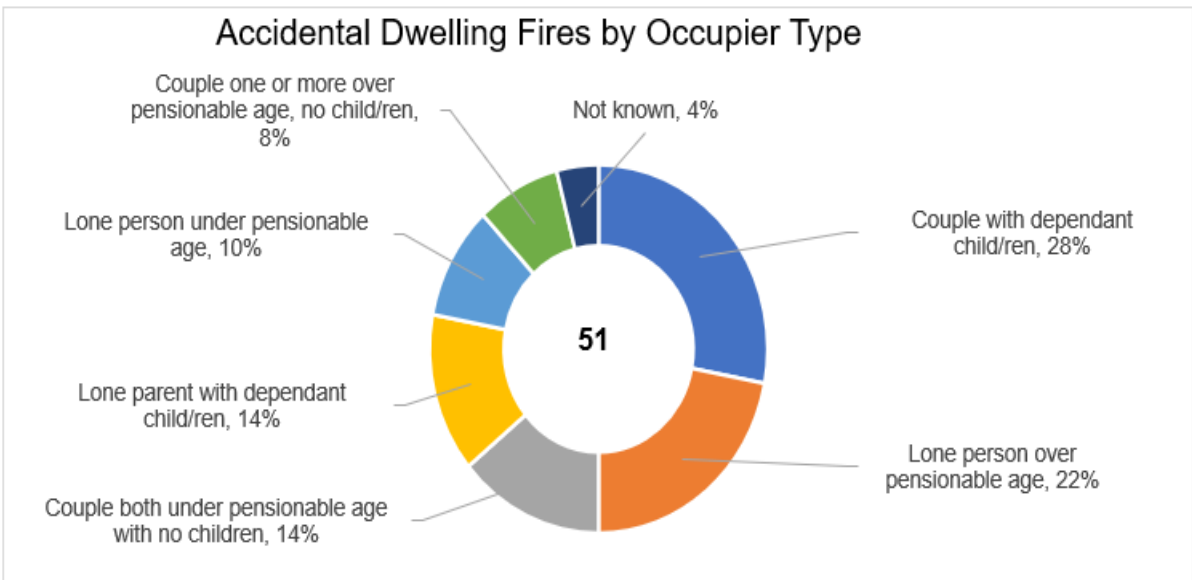


Chart 3 – Secondary Fires by Motive

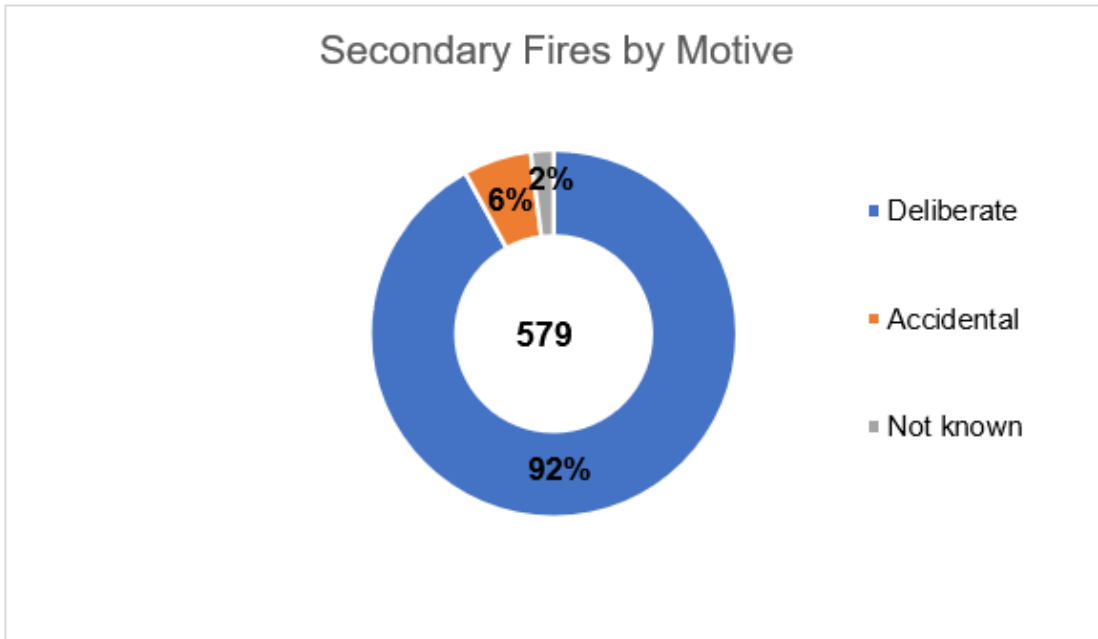


Chart 4 – Secondary Fires by Property Type

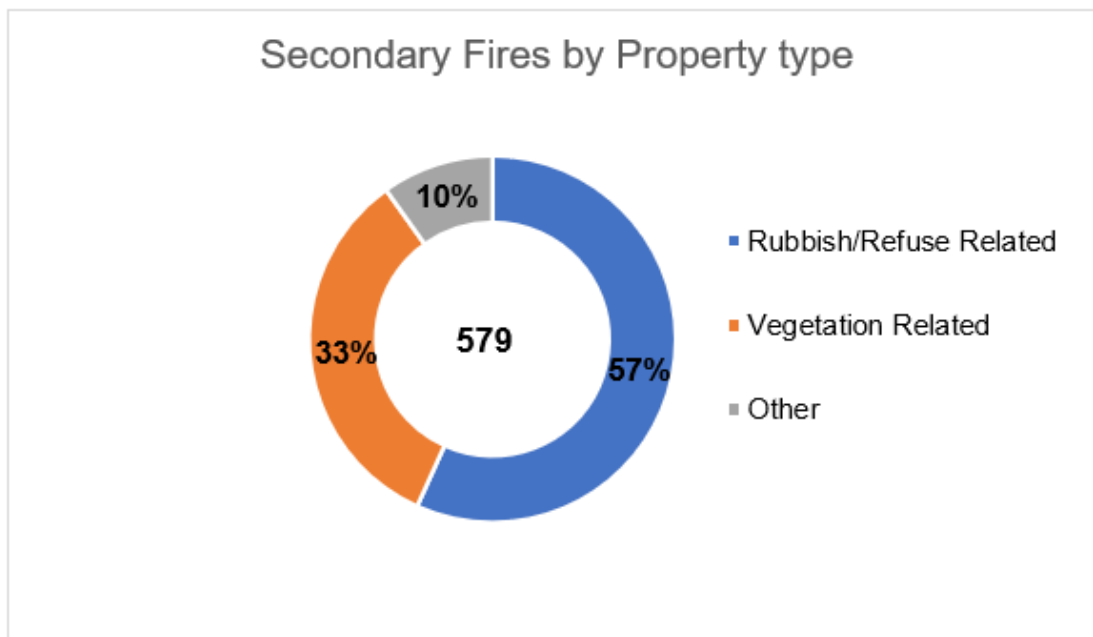


Chart 5 - Total Incidents

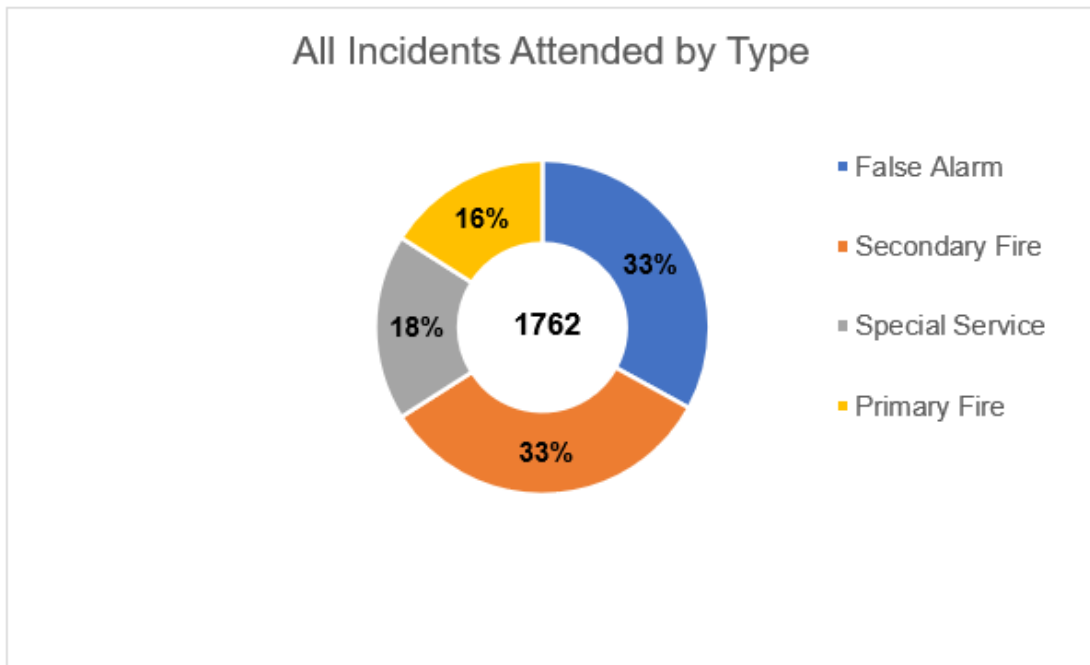


Chart 6 - Primary Fires by Motive

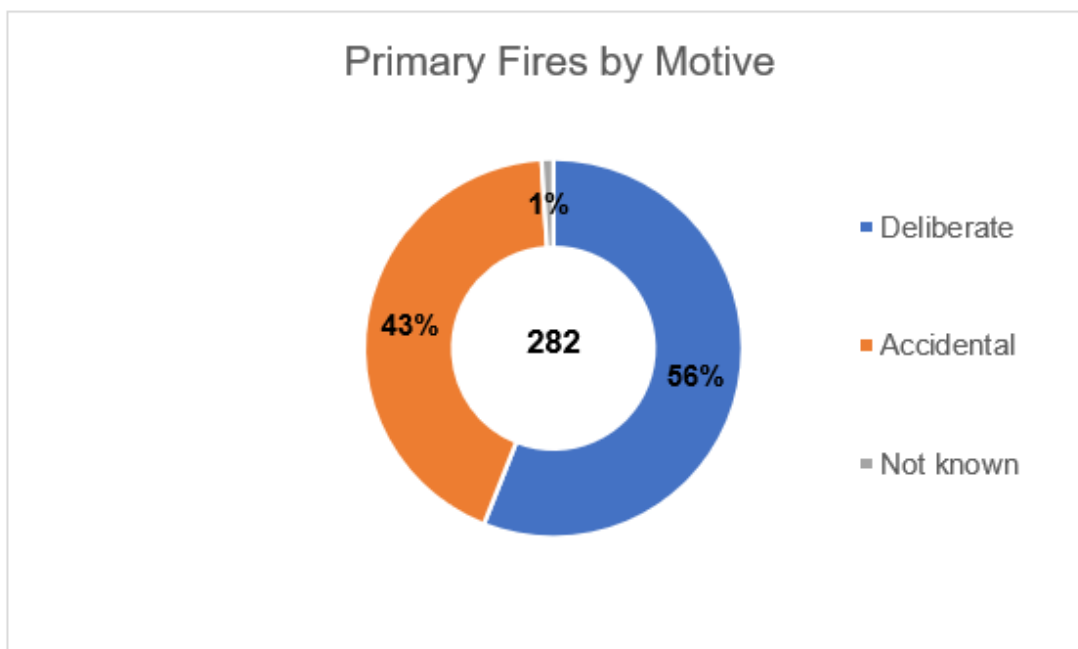
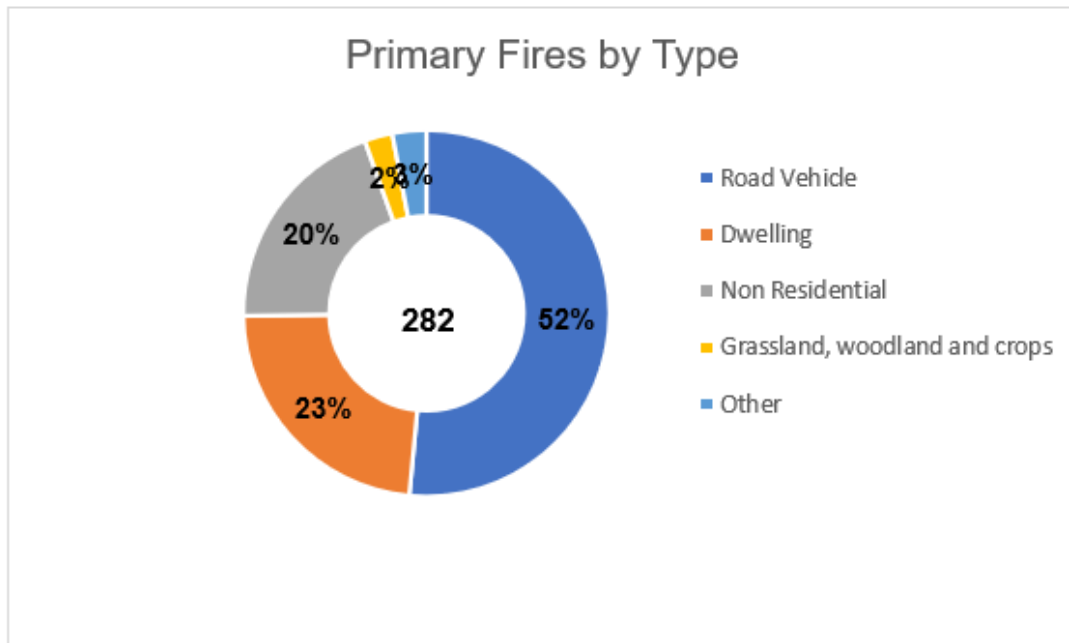


Chart 7 – Primary Fires by Type



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County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Authority**



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**21 October 2024**

**Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 26 September 2024**

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**Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee**

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**Members Present:** Cllr R Bell in the Chair  
Cllrs J Cairns and Cllr A Anderson

**Purpose of the report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 26 September 2024

**Annual Internal Audit Opinion and Report 2023/24**

2. Members were updated on the work carried out by Internal Audit and providing assurance on the effectiveness of the Combined Fire Authority's control environment, risk management and corporate governance arrangements in place.

**Annual Review of the System of Internal Audit 2023/24**

3. Members were presented with a report summarising the Annual Review of the system of internal audit and were asked to consider the findings and conclusions of the 2023/24 review.

## **Fraud and Corruption Annual Report 2023/24**

4. Members were presented with the results and work being undertaken within the Authority in seeking to identify, control and prevent fraud and corruption.

## **Internal Audit Progress Report 2023/24**

5. Members were updated on work undertaken by Internal Audit between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.

## **Auditors Progress Report 2023/24**

6. Members were updated on progress measures to tackle the backlog in local audit. Members were advised that the backstop date for the 2023/24 accounts is now the 28 February 2025 with work commencing on the audits in November 2024. R Bell requested that work begins on the audits as soon as possible.

## **Action to Tackle the Local Audit Backlog in England – Letter from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**

7. Members were presented with a letter that has been issued from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, recognising there is an issue with the completion of local audits and the decisive action that is being taken to tackle the backlog.

## **Revenue and Capital Outturn for the Year Ended 31 March 2024.**

8. Members were provided with information on the 2023/24 revenue and capital outturn compared with the original budget. Members were informed that total net revenue expenditure was in line with the original budget of £32.1M and the capital expenditure was £1.592M below budget mainly due to a delay in the replacement of vehicles, plant and equipment.

## **Annual Governance Statement**

9. Members were provided with the details of the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement.
10. Members **approved** the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement.



**Short Term Investments and Long-Term Borrowing – Period to 31 March 20234  
(Quarter 4)**

11. Members received an update on the performance of the Authority's short-term investments and long-term loans for the period ended 31 March 2024.

**Short Term Investments and Long-Term Borrowing – Period to 30 June 2024  
(Quarter 1)**

12. Members received an update on the performance of the Authority's short-term investments and long-term loans for the period ended 30 June 2024.

**Internal Audit Outstanding Actions**

13. Members were presented with an update on the outstanding audit recommendations.

**Recommendation**

14. Members are requested to **note** the report.

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County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



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**21 October 2024**

**Notes of the Human Resources Committee held on 27 September 2024**

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**Report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee**

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**Members Present:** Cllr S Zair in the Chair  
Cllrs A Batey, and Cllr G Lee

**Purpose of the report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Human Resources Committee held on 27 September 2024

**Sickness Absence Performance Report Quarter One 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024**

2. K Metcalfe introduced the report which provided an update on sickness absence performance for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024.

The committee **noted** the report.

**Health and Safety Report Quarter One 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024**

3. Members received a summary of the Service's health and safety performance for the end of the first quarter of the 2024/25 reporting period.

Members **noted** the report.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update**

4. Members received an update the on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work ongoing within the service including PRIDE events participation, progress and challenges of the current EDI strategy and the role of the EDI Group.

The Committee **noted** the report.

## **Additional Healthcare Benefit**

5. Members were provided an update on the implementation of the trial of an additional workforce healthcare benefit, through Benenden Health.

The Committee **noted** the report.

## **Standards of Behavior: The Handling of Misconduct in the Fire and Rescue Service**

6. K Metcalfe presented Members with the outcomes of the internal review of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services practices against the recommendations made in HMICFRS Standards of Behaviour: The Handling of Misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services report.

Members were briefed regarding the HMICFRS Handling of Misconduct Improvement Plan which sets out 15 recommendations.

The Committee **noted** the report.

## **PART B**

### **Employee Relations Update**

7. Members were provided with details of informal and formal complaints received by the Service from its workforce as well as the instigation of any disciplinary action for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024.

The Committee **noted** the report.

### **Recommendation**

8. Members are requested to **note** the report.

County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Authority**



**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Combined Fire Authority**

**21 October 2024**

### **Fire Standards Progress Report**

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#### **Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

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##### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the National Fire Standards and alignment of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) against the approved standards.

##### **Background**

2. Fire Standards are a National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) product that were introduced in February 2021 by the Fire Standards Board. The Fire Standards are a critical part of setting out how fire and rescue services operate. They are designed to bring consistency to the sector to support the delivery of our legislative requirements.
3. The NFCC has released an implementation tool alongside the publication of each standard. Each implementation tool has a set of criteria with tasks to action and/or measure compliance against.
4. Although the Fire Standards are not legally binding, they represent sector best practices. As such, they serve as a benchmark for the standards that the Service is expected to uphold.
5. Fire Standards should not be seen as silo documents as their relationships produce positive synergies needed to achieve improvements. Separately and together, they help drive improved quality of service to support the safety, health, and wellbeing of communities.

## **Published Standards`**

6. To date there are 19 fire standards that have been approved and published, each with individual desired outcomes.
7. The recent publication of the Internal Governance and Assurance, Digital and Cyber and Procurement and Commercial Fire Standards are designed to drive continuous improvement. These standards aim to enhance internal governance structures, ensure the secure and effective use of technology and promote best practices in procurement.
8. The Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standard focuses on ensuring that fire and rescue services (FRSs) have internal governance structures and business planning processes which enable senior leaders to maintain comprehensive oversight of internal activities, assuring them that the service is operating effectively.
9. The Digital and Cyber Fire Standard sets out a series of recommendations and procedures that will help services deliver excellence to the public by using information and communications technology (ICT) safely, effectively and efficiently.
10. The Procurement and Commercial Fire Standard sets out the importance of procurement and commercial best practice within FRSs. Implementation of this Standard will help to ensure that contracts and relationships with suppliers realise value for money (VFM) and result in delivery of high-quality public goods and services.

## **Governance**

11. Services are expected to work towards achieving the Standard's stated outcome through reflection and self-assessment and by avoiding simply treating Standards as a tick box compliance exercise.
12. The Continuous Improvement Team support departmental leads to ensure the effective interpretation of fire standards, conducting thorough gap analyses and developing effective action plans. This collaborative approach helps to embed a culture of continuous improvement.

## **CDDFRS Current Position**

13. Relevant departments are using the implementation tools to conduct gap analyses relating to compliance, to evidence work achieved and work yet to be completed. In many cases much of what each Standard's outcome requires is already being achieved.
14. The two leadership fire standards (Leading the Service and Leading and Developing People) are two of the largest standards and are more cross-cutting, impacting and relevant to a wider range of teams across the Service's directorates. SLT have conducted an initial gap analysis of Leading the Service and further work is being undertaken to ensure a rigorous gap analysis is completed.

15. The table below highlights the areas where progress has been made and identifies those standards which are still undergoing analysis or updates.

<b>Gap Analysis Fully Implemented</b>	<b>Gap Analysis Previously Implemented and Review Ongoing</b>	<b>Gap Analysis Underway</b>	<b>Gap Analysis not yet Completed <i>Recently Published</i></b>
Code of Ethics	Communication & Engagement	Data Management	Digital & Cyber
Emergency Response Driving	CRMP	Fire Control	Internal Governance & Assurance
Operational Learning	Emergency Preparedness & Resilience	Leading the Service	Procurement & Commercial
Operational Competence	Fire Investigation	Leading & Developing People	
Operational Preparedness	Prevention	Safeguarding	
	Protection		

16. Preliminary assessments show that CDDFRS is largely in compliance with the Fire Standards. Although there are a few areas needing further development, no significant high-risk issues have been identified.

### **Recommendations**

17. Members are requested to:

- a. **Note** the contents of this report.

Keith Carruthers, Deputy Chief Fire Officer 0191 375 5564

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County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**21st October 2024**

**Community Safety and Arson Reduction**

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## **Report of the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Member Champion**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) with a strategic update on the community safety and arson reduction initiatives within the Community Risk Management (CRM) directorate of the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS).
- 1.2. This report highlights key activities, including Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs), community engagement campaigns, and the Fire Cadet program. It aims to inform the CFA about progress made in enhancing community safety, reducing fire risks, and fostering collaboration with local partners, while also outlining future strategic directions to strengthen community safety initiatives across the Service area.

### **2. Introduction**

- 2.1. Community safety and arson reduction are integral functions within the CRM directorate, which also encompasses other critical areas, including Business Fire Safety, Continuous Improvement and Assurance, Transport and Assets. Together, these teams work collaboratively to ensure a comprehensive approach to reducing risks, improving safety, and enhancing operational efficiency across the service.
- 2.2. The Community Safety and Arson Reduction team are responsible for delivering proactive initiatives aimed at reducing fire risk, promoting safety, and preventing arson-related incidents across the Service area. Their responsibilities include

conducting HFSVs, where they provide advice, install smoke alarms, and assess fire risks in homes, particularly for vulnerable individuals. They also engage with schools, businesses, and community groups to raise awareness of fire prevention and safety. Additionally, the teams focus on reducing deliberate fires through targeted interventions, working closely with partners such as the Police and Local Authorities.

- 2.3. More recently, there has been some significant staffing changes across various roles at all levels within CRM and the Community Safety and Arson Reduction team due to retirements, resignations, promotion and secondment.
- 2.4. The Service used the opportunity presented by these changes to restructure the Community Safety and Arson Reduction team with recent appointments, including a new Arson Reduction and Campaigns Manager and a Young Persons Education Coordinator. A copy of the new structure within CRM is detailed within Appendix A.
- 2.5. As part of this report, I would like to extend my gratitude to members of CRM who have either left or transitioned to other areas of the organisation. Their dedication to community safety and arson reduction across the Service area has been greatly appreciated.

### 3. Home Fire Safety

- 3.1. The Service remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering high-quality HFSVs and providing tailored safety advice to our communities. These efforts are pivotal in mitigating risks and reducing harm caused by accidental dwelling fires (ADF). In alignment with the National Fire Chiefs Council’s (NFCC) Person-Centred Approach and informed by local trend analysis, the Service continually refines its HFSV targeting strategy to address both national and locally identified risks effectively.
- 3.2. For the 2023/24 period, the Service set a target of delivering 18,000 HFSVs. Through sustained effort and dedication, this goal was exceeded, completing a total of 18,412 visits. Notably, 98.2% of these visits were conducted at targeted premises, far surpassing the Community Risk Management Plan's objective, which commits to ensuring that at least 80% of HFSVs be directed toward targeted households.
- 3.3. Over the course of the year, the Service made a total of 624 referrals to partner agencies. These referrals encompassed a range of specific needs and were made to ensure that individuals received the appropriate support and interventions beyond fire safety. The types and quantities of these referrals are detailed within Table. 1, reflecting the collaborative efforts between the Service and its partners in addressing broader community risks.

Referral Type	No. of referrals
Slips Trips and Falls Referrals- D & D	141
Winter Warmth/Managing Money Better- Durham	33

Dementia Referrals- D & D	57
Smoking Referrals- Durham	55
Alcohol Referrals- Durham	6
Loneliness and Isolation Referrals- Durham	68
Winter Warm Referrals- Darlington	40
Loneliness and Isolation Referrals- Darlington	37
Smoking Referrals- Darlington	20
Alcohol Referrals- Darlington	2
Sensory Loss Smoke Alarm Referrals- Durham and Darlington	165

Table. 1 – Referral types and numbers made by CDDFRS to partner agencies 2023/24.

- 3.4. In return, the Service received 1,474 referrals from partner agencies, generated when agency representatives identified individuals at risk of fire. These individuals would benefit from a HFSV. This reciprocal partnership approach underscores the importance of multi-agency collaboration in safeguarding vulnerable individuals and ensuring that they receive targeted fire safety interventions tailored to their specific circumstances.
- 3.5. As part of our ongoing commitment to strengthening collaborative efforts, the Service continues to actively promote the "Eyes Wide Open" programme. This initiative encourages partner agencies to identify and refer vulnerable individuals who may be at an increased risk of fire. In line with this, the Service has recently launched a project to digitise the "Eyes Wide Open" training. By transitioning to a digital format, the training becomes more accessible to our partners, enhancing their ability to identify vulnerable individuals and improving the overall referral process. This innovation is anticipated to result in increased participation from partner agencies and more comprehensive protection for those most at risk.
- 3.6. During the same reporting period, the Service responded to 199 accidental dwelling fires (ADFs), matching the previous year's total. This figure represents the lowest annual number of recorded incidents to date. However, despite the stable number of incidents, there was a slight increase in the number of injuries resulting from ADFs, with 11 individuals sustaining injuries compared to seven in the previous year. This increase highlights the ongoing need to focus on both prevention and education to further reduce the impact of such incidents on our communities.
- 3.7. Although the number of ADFs remains low unfortunately there were seven fire fatalities which represents a significant increase from one in 2022/23.
- 3.8. A serious fire review process was established and conducted for each of the incidents which prompted several actions due to the trends identified. Each review scrutinised the response in detail, the lifestyle, environmental and person-centred vulnerability factors to establish how further prevention activities can be improved. CDDFRS referred two incidents which resulted in 3 fatalities to the Adult Safeguarding Boards, where a wider partnership review takes place into the circumstances leading up to the incidents.

- 3.9. As a result of the identified vulnerabilities and cross cutting similarities we have a Safer Homes Protocol signed by all partners of the Safe Durham Partnership. We have developed additional links with a wide range of agencies and groups to deliver Eyes Wide Open Training. We have developed a new relationship with hospital discharge teams and strengthened and improved our referral pathways. The range of actions are all centred around identifying those members of the community at risk of fire and putting in place appropriate risk reduction and mitigation measures.

#### 4. Service Campaign Schedule

- 4.1. The Service's Campaign Schedule is strategically designed to address four key areas throughout the year: Easter, Water Safety, Bonfire Night, and Road Safety (Fig. 1). Each of these campaigns is crafted to address specific seasonal risks and community safety concerns, ensuring that the Service provides timely and relevant safety advice to the relevant stakeholders.



Fig. 1 – The Service's Campaign Schedule four key areas.

- 4.2. To maintain consistency across the entire Service area, bespoke resources are developed for each campaign. These resources, including educational materials, social media content, and community engagement tools, are distributed to ensure that key safety messages reach all sectors of the population effectively. The campaigns are further reinforced by collaboration with local partners, including schools, community groups, and emergency services, to broaden the impact of the messaging.
- 4.3. In preparation for the Bonfire Night campaign, the delivery plan has been updated and circulated to all partners which have been asked to provide any updates by 12 noon on Friday, 4th October. Once all necessary revisions are made, the plan will be finalised, and all actions will be carried out where required to ensure the success of the campaign.
- 4.4. Following the conclusion of each campaign, an evaluation is conducted. The Community Safety and Arson Reduction team are currently working on improving this evaluation process by extending it to all stakeholders. Internal teams and external partners are invited to provide feedback on the campaign's effectiveness and areas for improvement. This feedback loop is essential in refining future campaigns, ensuring that they continue to meet the needs of the community and evolve in response to emerging safety challenges. By

consistently evaluating our campaigns the service can work to continuously improve the interactions we have with our communities and increase our effectiveness.

## 5. Fire Cadets

- 5.1. Fire cadets represent a dynamic youth program designed to engage and educate young individuals in the principles of fire safety, community service, and leadership. Aimed primarily at young people aged between 12 and 18 years, the fire cadet program provides participants with a unique opportunity to learn about the firefighting profession.
- 5.2. CDDFRS has five operating Fire Cadet schemes located in Stanhope, Consett, Durham, Spennymoor and Peterlee. Each scheme accommodates a maximum of 15 Fire Cadets, who are led by two Unit Leaders and assisted by Firefighter Instructors for drills and training exercises. Recently, Adult Volunteers have been added to these schemes to assist with administration and provide support to Fire Cadets with physical, learning, or emotional needs.
- 5.3. Through a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical training, fire cadets gain insight into fire prevention, emergency response techniques, and the importance of teamwork and discipline. The program fosters a strong sense of community spirit, encouraging cadets to participate in local initiatives, safety awareness campaigns, and volunteer activities that benefit their neighbourhoods.
- 5.4. Fire cadets also engage in a range of exciting activities, including hands-on training in fire safety, first aid, and basic firefighting skills. They learn about the various roles within the fire service and may even have opportunities to assist with community events, showcasing their commitment to public safety.
- 5.5. Additionally, the fire cadet experience cultivates essential life skills such as leadership, communication, and problem-solving. By working alongside fire service professionals, cadets not only develop a respect for public safety but also build confidence and personal responsibility. Ultimately, the fire cadet program serves as a stepping stone for young individuals interested in pursuing a career in emergency services while making a positive impact in their communities.
- 5.6. The current disposition of the Fire Cadet schemes is:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>Spaces</b>
Consett	15	0
Stanhope	7	8
Durham	15	0
Spennymoor	11	4
Peterlee	9	6

Table. 2 – The current establishments for the Fire Cadet schemes in CDDFRS.

- 5.7. There was a recent review of the personal protective equipment (PPE), uniforms, and associated costs for the Fire Cadet schemes undertaken. This review

prompted the decision to update the existing fire kit, gloves, which has been completed. Additionally, a new uniform will be issued to all cadets and volunteers going forward to ensure consistency among participants. The uniform will also be simplified to enhance flexibility and inclusivity for all Fire Cadets, regardless of gender or physical ability.

## 6. Arson and Deliberate Fire Reduction

- 6.1. Introduced in 2023/24 as a key control measure to reduce the number of deliberate secondary fires, the Deliberate Fire Reduction Model aims to ensure that appropriate solutions are applied to address the specific challenges being faced.
- 6.2. The Deliberate Fire Reduction Model operates through a cyclical process of continuous monitoring, identifying and profiling problems, and developing targeted action plans to address identified issues. After implementation, the effectiveness of the plan is reviewed, with adjustments made as necessary. If the issue persists or escalates, it is referred to the Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group for further intervention (Fig. 2).

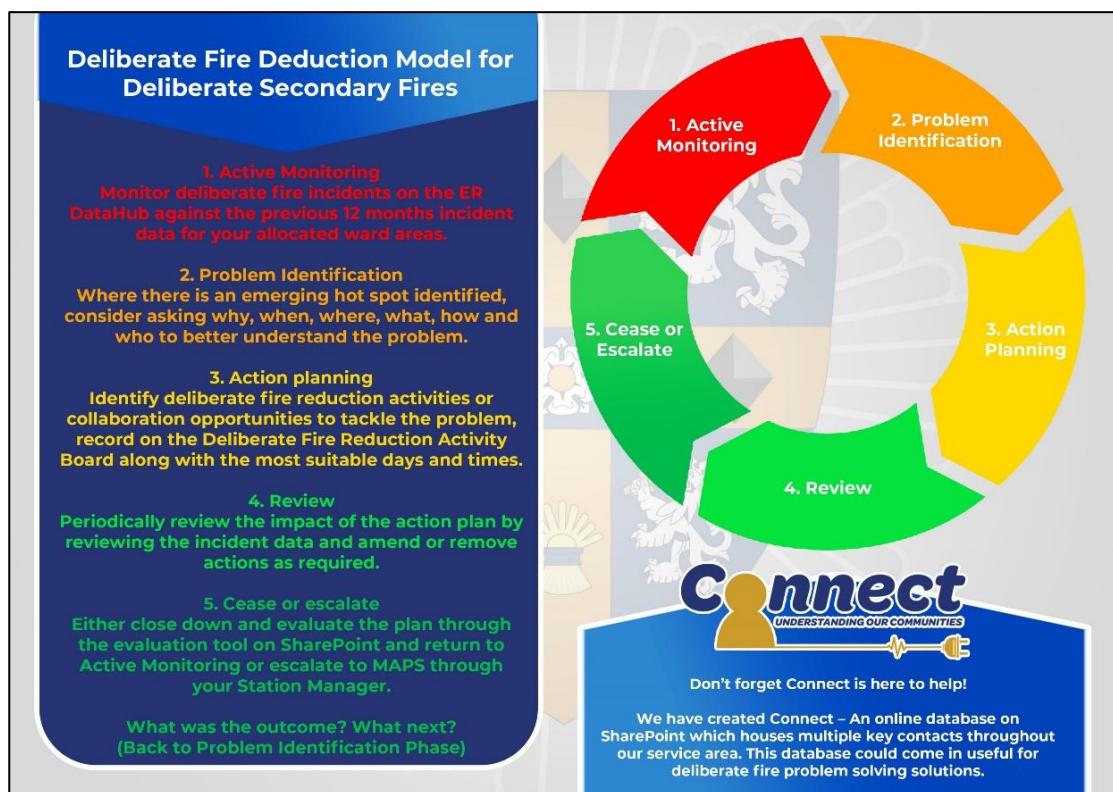


Fig. 2 – The Service's Deliberate Fire Reduction Boards.

- 6.3. In 2023/24, the Service introduced a new performance indicator, PI 09c, specifically focused on deliberate fire reduction activities. This initiative is supported by a comprehensive framework that includes 19 distinct activities (Appendix B), each designed to target and reduce fire-related incidents. By working in conjunction with the Deliberate Fire Reduction Model, the program enhances the Service's ability to address fire risks effectively and efficiently.

- 6.4. For the 2023/24 reporting period, the Performance Board set an ambitious annual target of 7,376 deliberate fire reduction activities. These activities were carefully profiled across fire stations and strategically distributed to align with the frequency of deliberate secondary fires. This approach ensures that resources are allocated optimally and allows the Service to respond proactively to fluctuations in fire activity throughout the year. By the end of the period, the Service had conducted 9,414 deliberate fire reduction activities, exceeding the target by 2,038.
- 6.5. During the same period, deliberate secondary fires totalled 2,041, a significant reduction against both the target of 2,415 and the previous year's figure of 3,381. However, while the efforts to reduce secondary fires were highly successful, deliberate primary fires saw a slight increase, with 563 incidents recorded against a target of 480 and a previous year's performance of 499. These results highlight both the successes and challenges faced by the Service, underscoring the importance of ongoing adjustments and strategic planning to address all categories of fire-related incidents effectively.

## **7. Fire Setting Interventions**

- 7.1. The Developing Resilience course, delivered by CDDFRS is a pioneering initiative aimed at strengthening individual and community resilience. The course equips participants with essential skills to manage adversity, stress, and challenges, fostering empowerment and self-reliance. Through practical tools and strategies, it builds both mental and emotional resilience, helping individuals better navigate personal and professional difficulties.
- 7.2. This initiative is run in close collaboration with Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Joy Allen, whose support has been instrumental in its success. Funded through the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Trailblazer Fund, the course is designed to address community safety by empowering participants to overcome challenges and make positive life changes. The most recent course was visited by representatives from the Home Office policy team during a visit hosted by the PCC.
- 7.3. Since its inception, there have been five cohorts, held in April 2023, November 2023, March 2024, June 2024, and September 2024, each with resounding success. The course has received national recognition from the NFCC for its innovative approach and its impact on reducing community risk and addressing the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour.
- 7.4. By targeting individuals most at risk of social isolation, unemployment, or negative influences, the program plays a crucial role in improving participants' lives and contributing to broader community well-being. The NFCC's recognition underscores its importance as a model for resilience-building initiatives, with collaboration from key stakeholders ensuring that the program continues to deliver long-term benefits for community safety.

- 7.5. CDDFRS has recently collaborated with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service to train members of its Community Safety and Arson Reduction team as instructors for the Firesetter's Integrated Education Programme (Fire-P).
- 7.6. The Fire-P programme is specifically designed for individuals aged 18 or over who have been convicted of offences related to deliberate fire-setting. The program consists of eight structured sessions, which can be delivered either one-on-one or in group settings. Its primary goal is to prevent reoffending by educating participants about the risks, dangers, and wide-reaching consequences of deliberately setting fires. Through these sessions, individuals gain an understanding of the harmful effects of fire-setting on both people and property. The programme is academically accredited by the University of Portsmouth, adding a rigorous and credible dimension to the education provided.
- 7.7. CDDFRS is initially working in partnership with prisons to introduce this program as an educational course for inmates who display a fire-setting nature. In the future, the Service plans to expand its delivery by collaborating with probation services, with the long-term aim of incorporating Fire-P into the framework of restorative justice for offenders. This initiative seeks to provide those convicted of fire-setting offences with the opportunity to understand and take responsibility for their actions, ultimately helping to reduce recidivism and support rehabilitation.

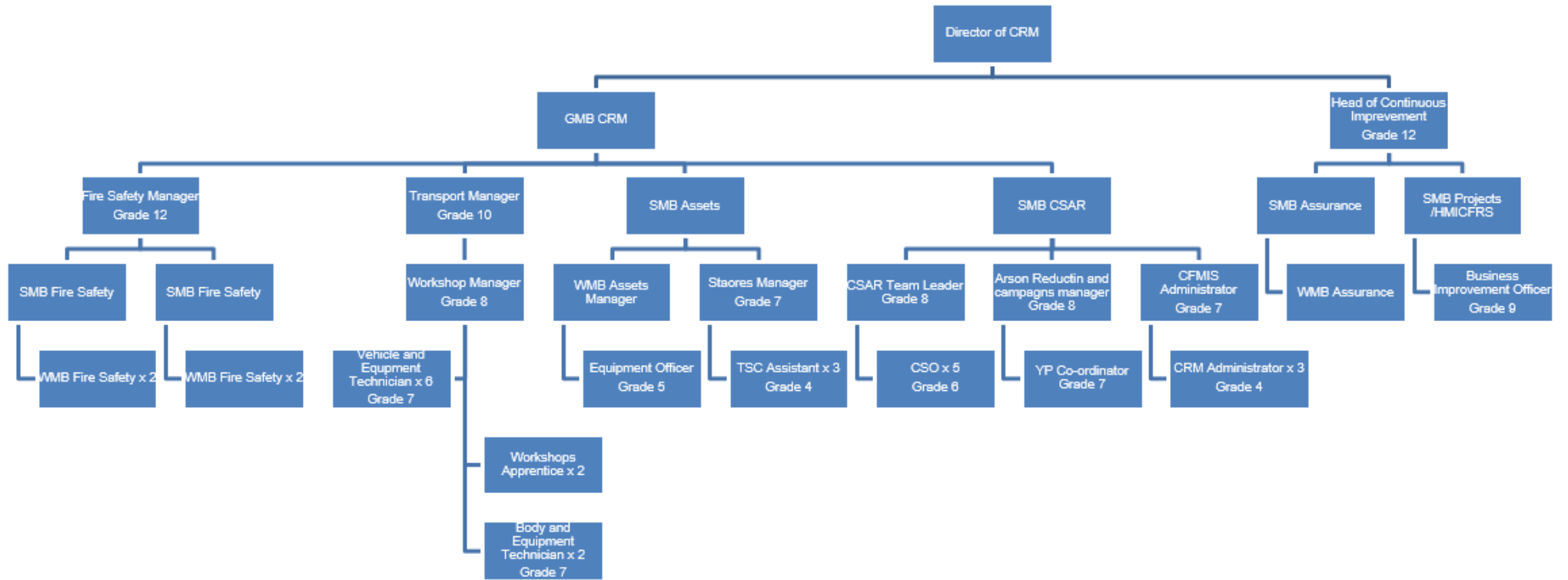
## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1. Members are requested to:
  - Note the contents of this report.
  - Receive further reports as appropriate.

Ben Cairns, Director Community Risk Management (0191 375 5553).



Strucutre chart for CRM



Deliberate Fire Reduction Activities

Primary School - Bonfire/Firework Safety
Primary Sch - Bonfire/Firework (Virtual)
Primary Sch – Arson Reduction Education
Primary Sch – Arson Reduction (Virtual)
Secondary School-Bonfire/Firework Safety
Secondary Sch-Bonfire/Firework (Virtual)
Secondary Sch– Arson Reduction Education
Secondary Sch– Arson Reduction (Virtual)
Attending MAPs
Environmental Visual Audits
Fly tipping referrals
Blue routes
Dark Nights Initiative
Op Mathis
Empty Building Risk Assessments
Intelligence Reporting
Seasonal Campaigns (Arson)
Abandoned vehicle referrals (Op Valdis)
Other Arson Reduction Visit / Talk

County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**21 October 2024**

**Business Fire Safety Member Champion Report**

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## **Report of the Business Fire Safety Member Champion**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) with a strategic update on the business fire safety initiatives across the Service area. This report aims to highlight key activities, priorities, and outcomes in areas such as risk-based inspections, enforcement, public engagement, and partnership efforts with businesses. It seeks to inform the CFA on progress made in enhancing fire safety standards and mitigating risks, while also outlining future strategic directions to strengthen fire safety compliance and collaboration within the business community.

### **2. Background**

2.1. The Business Fire Safety (BFS) Team within County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) plays a critical role in safeguarding the commercial sector by ensuring compliance with fire safety legislation and reducing fire risks in non-domestic premises. The team is responsible for conducting fire safety inspections, providing guidance to businesses, and enforcing fire safety regulations to protect life, property, and the local economy.

2.2. Operating within a diverse landscape that includes both urban and rural environments, the team faces the challenge of balancing the needs of a wide range of businesses, from small enterprises to large industrial complexes. The Service remains committed to a risk-based approach, prioritising inspections and interventions based on the assessed fire risk of premises across the region.

2.3. A key challenge faced by CDDFRS, as with many other Fire and Rescue Services, is the retention of skilled staff within the BFS team. Due to the competitive salaries and benefits offered by the private sector, CDDFRS have previously experienced staff turnover as team members are attracted to roles in

private fire safety consultancy and related industries. This ongoing issue highlights the importance of effective succession planning, staff development, and the creation of attractive career pathways to retain talent and maintain a high standard of fire safety service delivery.

- 2.4. Findings from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have been addressed, with significant improvements in key areas of fire safety delivery. The Service has implemented a more targeted, risk-based approach to fire safety activities and enhanced forward planning processes. These changes have not only increased the overall effectiveness of the Service but have also strengthened the team’s capacity for succession planning, ensuring career progression and development opportunities for all members of the Fire Safety Team.

### 3. Risk Based Inspection Programme and Fire Safety Audits

- 3.1. The Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) directs the delivery of fire safety audits (FSAs) by both operational crews and the BFS team to mitigate fire risks within the business community.
- 3.2. As part of the Community Risk Management Plan 2023/24, the Service updated the RBIP to ensure that all high-risk premises are adequately covered, and that the frequency of inspections reflects the level of risk. Performance Indicator (PI) 17 tracks the number of inspections completed by the BFS team and audits by the operational crews. The BFS team is responsible for inspecting very high, high, and medium-risk complex premises, while operational crews handle very low-risk, low-risk, and some medium-risk premises.
- 3.3. This approach aligns with the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators, which has been in effect since 1 April 2022. The table below details the FSA performance for the 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 periods.

<b>Fire Safety Audits/ Inspections</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Total Number of FSAs	2,120	1,928	1,715
Satisfactory Audits	1,517 (71.6%)	1,283 (66.5%)	957 (55.8%)
Unsatisfactory Audits	603 (28.4%)	645 (33.5%)	758 (44.2%)

- 3.4. Although the numbers have decreased slightly over the three years, due to the issues previously identified with retention of skilled staff, it is positive to see the increasing percentage of audits that have been unsatisfactory, showing that the Service is targeting the correct premises and making a real difference to improving fire safety across County Durham and the Borough of Darlington.
- 3.5. During our inspection by HMICFRS in 2022, they identified that the Service delivers almost four times the England average for FSA per 100 known premises.

#### 4. Enforcement and Prosecutions

- 4.1. Enforcement activity conducted by the BFS team has increased in response to a rise in unsatisfactory inspection outcomes and in alignment with national directives following the Grenfell Tower tragedy. This escalation in enforcement reflects a heightened commitment to ensuring compliance and addressing fire safety deficiencies effectively.
- 4.2. To ensure that the appropriate level of enforcement is applied at each stage of the inspection process, the Service has implemented measures to address situations where a Duty Holder does not fully engage with the required actions.
- 4.3. A Duty Holder is an individual or organisation responsible for ensuring compliance with fire safety regulations within a premises. This approach helps to ensure that each step in the enforcement process is appropriately addressed and executed.
- 4.4. The following table provides an overview of enforcement activities conducted during the 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 periods, illustrating the Service's efforts to manage and respond to fire safety compliance issues.

	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
<b>Enforcement</b>	3	6	11
<b>Prohibition</b>	3	8	25

- 4.5. The Service has enhanced its enforcement approach, leading to a noticeable increase in enforcement activities and Prohibition Notices (PNs). Enforcement options available to the BFS Officer range from requiring time-limited corrective actions to restricting access to certain areas of a premises.
- 4.6. Most PNs are issued due to inadequate fire separation between commercial and sleeping areas, which must meet 60-minute fire protection standards. PNs arise from various sources, including concerns from operational crews, partner agencies, service complaints, or during planned inspections.
- 4.7. The BFS Officer assesses each situation to avoid issuing a PN, exploring all options to resolve the issue. A PN is prepared and reviewed with a senior officer before being served.
- 4.8. Examples of PNs include restricting rooms in hotels or shops due to safety concerns, and in extreme cases, such as closing a hotel in Darlington after a complaint about a blocked exit. An inspection revealed critical compartmentation issues, leading to a PN and the immediate closure of the hotel for safety reasons. The hotel was vacated and reopened gradually after necessary improvements were made.

## 5. Public Complaints / Information or Guidance relating to Fire Safety

- 5.1. A portion of the BFS teams activities involves addressing fire safety complaints and responding to requests for information or guidance. Complaints typically come from members of the public who are concerned about fire safety issues in their workplaces or publicly accessible premises. The Service is committed to addressing these complaints promptly, with a target to respond to all complaints within 24 hours.
- 5.2. Requests for information or guidance are made by individuals seeking support on fire safety matters. While the Service aims to provide valuable assistance, it is important to maintain a clear boundary by offering guidance rather than taking on the role of a Fire Risk Assessor or Architect. The following table outlines the team's activity in handling complaints and providing guidance during the 2023/24 period.

2023/24 Activity	Job Count	Hours
Complaints	46	81.5hrs

## 6. Building and Licensing Consultations

- 6.1. Consultations related to Building Regulations and Licensing are integral to the Service's statutory duties and are tracked as performance indicators. Building Regulations consultations are expected to be completed within 15 days, while Licensing consultations have a target of 28 days. Only staff with a Fire Safety Level 4 Diploma are authorised to carry out these consultations.
- 6.2. The review process for submissions can vary significantly in duration. Simple renovations may require only an hour to review, while more complex projects can take over a week. This process often includes early planning meetings, which may occur years in advance of the actual project and involves thorough consultation and scrutiny of submitted plans.
- 6.3. These consultations are crucial for ensuring that new premises meet fire safety standards from the outset. The following table details the central team's activities in these areas for the 2023/24 period.

Consultation	Job Count	Hours
Building Regulations Consultations	480	744
Other Consultations (Licencing etc)	197	180

## **7. Unwanted Fire Signals**

- 7.1. During the 2022/23 period, the Service observed a notable increase in unwanted fire signals (UwFS) compared to previous years. This occurred despite the implementation of a cost recovery process, where the BFS team invoiced premises a total of £98,245.30, since its introduction for incurring three or more chargeable callouts within a rolling 12-month period.
- 7.2. In response to this issue, the Service revised its approach to handling calls from Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) in non-residential premises, effective from 2 October 2023. This revised approach has led to a reduction in incident responses, resulting in several key benefits:
  - Increased availability of fire appliances to respond to life risk incidents.
  - Reduced road risk for both the public and staff due to fewer emergency response journeys.
  - More time available for risk-critical training.
  - Enhanced opportunities for community safety and arson reduction activities.
  - Increased time for BFS activities.
  - Greater availability for operational crews to gather statutory risk-critical operational information.
  - A decrease in the Service's environmental impact by minimising blue light journeys.

## **8. Post Fire Management**

- 8.1. An essential responsibility of the BFS Team is the investigation and follow-up of all non-domestic primary fires. This thorough scrutiny allows BFS Officers to determine whether a fire resulted from breaches of the Fire Safety Order (FSO). If such omissions are identified, appropriate enforcement actions are taken.
- 8.2. This proactive approach not only addresses potential FSO violations but also contributes to safer premises overall. Even when a fire or its consequences are not directly linked to FSO non-compliance, the Service ensures that fire safety advice is provided and that adherence to the FSO is reinforced on every occasion.

## **9. Business Engagement**

- 9.1. To support and engage with businesses in ensuring compliance with fire safety legislation, the BFS team has developed a comprehensive Communication and Engagement Strategy. This strategy includes participation in all national NFCC campaigns, utilising their toolkits and communication channels, and collaborating with the Service's Communication Team.
- 9.2. The fire safety landscape has undergone significant changes following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, with the introduction of new legislation and updated fire safety practices. The Service has proactively communicated these changes to businesses through regular website updates, outlining the impact of the new legislation and emphasising the responsibilities of premises owners to report

changes and faults to the Service. This information is crucial for informing operational planning.

- 9.3. As part of the Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP), the Service conducts audits and inspections of circa 2,000 premises annually. This direct interaction with business owners and Responsible Persons forms a core part of the Service's engagement approach, enabling face-to-face advice and guidance on fire safety matters.
- 9.4. Additionally, in partnership with Vital Fire Solutions, the central team has organised engagement seminars for local businesses to educate them about fire safety legislation requirements.

## **10. Training and succession planning**

- 10.1. To provide additional resilience to the central business fire safety team and proactively succession plan a programme of upskilling and training has been offered to interested staff. Development and investment to upskill competent level 3 fire safety qualified staff in achieving the level 4 fire safety certificate has been provided to staff wishing to enhance their knowledge and understanding.
- 10.2. Staff that have successfully attained the level 4 certification are then seconded into the central business fire safety team as short-term secondments to practice their newly acquired qualification and receive coaching from the central team. Once they have been internally verified by the central team they can go onto inspect high risk premises in line with the competency framework.
- 10.3. To date there are 22 additional staff with the level 4 certificate which provides resilience and prepares staff for potential opportunities as they arise. It also means that CDDFRS has an enhanced level of fire safety qualified staff within our operational workforce who can provide advice and identify fire safety concerns when interacting with the business community.

## **11. Summary**

- 11.1. This report provides a strategic overview of the BFS Team's initiatives across the Service area, focusing on key activities and outcomes in risk-based inspections, enforcement, public engagement, and business partnerships. It aims to update the Combined Fire Authority on progress in enhancing fire safety standards and mitigating risks, while also outlining future strategic directions to improve fire safety compliance and collaboration within the business community.
- 11.2. The BFS Team within CDDFRS is instrumental in safeguarding the commercial sector by ensuring compliance with fire safety legislation, conducting inspections, providing guidance, and enforcing regulations to protect life and property. Despite its critical role, the team faces challenges, notably the retention of skilled staff due to competitive private sector salaries and benefits. It is expected the Service's specific BFS succession plans will provide resilience for skillsets moving forward.



11.3. Key initiatives include the Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP), which directs both operational crews and the central BFS Team in mitigating fire risks. Enforcement activities have increased in response to rising unsatisfactory audit outcomes and national directives post-Grenfell Tower. Additionally, the Service has implemented a Communication and Engagement Strategy to better support and engage businesses in maintaining fire safety compliance.

## **12. Recommendations**

12.1. Members are requested to:

- Note the contents of this report.
- Receive further reports as appropriate.

Ben Cairns, Director Community Risk Management (0191 375 5553).

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County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**21 October 2024**

**Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report**

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**Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to provide Members with a summary of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase Two report, published on 4 September 2024.

#### **Background**

2. The Inquiry was established to examine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the fire at Grenfell Tower on the night of 14 June 2017. Phase 1 focused on the factual narrative of the events on the night of 14 June 2017. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry's final hearings took place in November 2022.
3. Phase 2 examines the causes of the fire, including how Grenfell Tower came to be in a condition which allowed the fire to spread in the way identified by Phase 1.

#### **Key Findings of the Report**

4. The key findings summarised by organisation are below.

#### **Government**

5. The report finds that Government had missed multiple opportunities to identify and take action to address the risks of combustible cladding and insulation. As late as 2016, Government was aware of the risks but failed to address them.

6. In 2001, a large-scale test of a system incorporating aluminium composite material (ACM) panels was undertaken. Government failed to publish the results or warn the construction industry of the risks posed by these materials.
7. The statutory guidance for the Building Regulations 2010 concerning fire safety, Approved Document B (ADB), is described as “vague and ill-considered”, perpetuated “erroneous assumption[s]”, and the official responsible for the regulations was not given “adequate oversight.” Many in the industry misunderstood the content and purpose of ADB, and the inquiry found that it was not uncommon for construction professionals to conflate compliance with ADB with compliance with the Building Regulations.
8. The report found that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG, now MHCLG) did not treat the coroner's recommendations following Lakanal House “with a sense of urgency” and that civil servants “did not explain clearly to the Secretary of State (SoS) what steps were required to comply with them”. The report found that “the department displayed a complacent and at times defensive attitude to matters affecting fire safety” and “disregarded” fire safety in favour of a deregulatory agenda.
9. It was also during this post-Lakanal deregulatory period that “Government determinedly resisted calls from across the fire sector to regulate fire risk assessors and to amend the Fire Safety Order (FSO) to make it clear that it applied to the exterior walls of buildings containing more than one set of domestic premises”.
10. Government officials unacceptably influenced the outcome of Sir Ken Knight’s report on issues arising from the Lakanal House fire in 2009 regarding changes to the FSO and competence. This was due to the presumption that Government’s deregulation agenda meant such changes would not be approved, and resources were insufficient to support more legislation. As a result, no proposals for reform were put forward to Ministers.
11. At a 2009 Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA, now NFCC) enforcement working group meeting, it was noted that “although the department recognised that many would welcome a nationally recognised accreditation scheme for fire risk assessors, it was not something that Government intended to develop”.
12. In response to a consultation on the Fire Safety in Purpose-Built Blocks of Flats guide, CFOA stated “that not to include advice on the evacuation of disabled people was a fundamental error”. Despite this view, the drafting group did not commission research or examine ways of helping those unable to escape unaided. The CFOA response was “either considered and rejected or simply ignored”.

### **Building Research Establishment (BRE)**

13. The report found that the privatisation of BRE limited the scope of advice on fire safety matters. On occasions, it deliberately curtailed investigations before any proper conclusion had been reached.

14. BRE recognised as early as 1991 following the Knowsley Heights fire “that small-scale testing”, which provided the basis for the national standard, “did not enable a proper assessment” for how an external wall system would react to fire. However, BRE did not draw this fact to Government’s attention. The report also found that BRE failed to draw attention to the way ACM panels with unmodified polyethylene cores “behaved and the dangers they presented” following its large-scale test in 2001.
15. The Inquiry found BRE’s reports into three major fires (Knowsley Heights [1991], Garnock Court [1999] and the Edge [2005]), were “far from comprehensive” and that every report “failed to identify or assess important contributory factors”. This resulted in giving DCLG the false impression that “the regulations and guidance were working effectively”.
16. Weakness in the way BRE carried out tests and in its record keeping allowed it to be manipulated by “unscrupulous product manufacturers”. It found that senior BRE staff gave advice to customers, such as Kingspan and Celotex, on “the best way to satisfy the criteria for a system to be considered safe”. The accommodation (in some cases) of existing customers was at the “expense of maintaining the rigour of its processes and considerations of public safety”.

### **Product Manufacturers**

17. The report is clear that safety in the built environment depends on knowing how products and materials will react to fire. A significant reason for Grenfell Tower being clad in combustible materials was due to “systematic dishonesty” by those who made and sold rain-screen cladding and insulation products with “deliberate and sustained strategies to manipulate the testing processes, misrepresent test data and mislead the market”.
18. These strategies were successful because certification bodies “failed to ensure that the statements in their product certificates were accurate and based on test evidence”. The body with oversight of the certification bodies also failed to “apply proper standards of monitoring and supervision”.

### Arconic:

19. From 2005 until after the Grenfell Tower fire, “Arconic deliberately concealed from the market the true extent of the danger” of its Reynobond 55 PE rainscreen product in cassette form “particularly on high-rise buildings”. This was “not an oversight” but a “deliberate strategy” to continue selling the product in the UK “based on a statement about its fire performance that it knew to be false”.
20. From early 2005, Arconic had been in possession of test data showing the cassette product “reacted to fire in a very dangerous way” and could not be classified in accordance with European Standards.
21. Despite knowledge of the danger of the product in cassette form and concerns in the construction industry around ACM, Arconic “was determined to exploit

what it saw as weak regulatory regimes” to sell the product. After cladding fires in Dubai in 2012 and 2013, they did not withdraw the product in favour of a new fire-resistant version.

Celotex:

22. In an attempt to break into the market of insulation suitable for high-rise buildings, Celotex embarked on a “dishonest scheme to mislead its customers and the wider market.” Celotex deliberately tested its RS5000 insulation product in 2014 “with the complicity of the BRE” in a manner to ensure it passed. It then obtained a BRE test result that omitted the use of magnesium oxide boards in the testing, rendering the report “materially incomplete and misleading”.
23. Celotex marketed the product, referring to the successful test, as acceptable for use in buildings above 18 metres. They also put (in small print) that the system test used does not test or classify individual products. From 2011, it was sold and marketed as having Class 0 fire performance though this was “false and misleading”.

Kingspan:

24. From 2005 until after the inquiry began, Kingspan “knowingly created a false market in insulation for use on buildings over 18 metres”. Kingspan knew its K15 product could not be sold as suitable for use in external walls of buildings over 18 metres in height.
25. Kingspan relied upon results of a single 2005 test on a system whose components were not representative of a typical external wall. It continued to rely on the test despite changing the composition of the product in 2006. Kingspan held its own concerns on the new composition’s fire performance, which tested disastrously, but did not withdraw the product.
26. Kingspan concealed from the British Board of Agrément (BBA) that the product they were selling differed from the 2005 test product. The BBA certificate contained three fire performance statements which were untrue and used a form of words suggested by Kingspan and drawn from the company's marketing literature. The re-issued 2013 certificate contained a false implication that the product was of limited combustibility.
27. Kingspan also obtained a Local Authority Building Control (LABC) certificate in 2009 containing false statements. It used the LABC certificate to “mask or distract from” the absence of supporting test evidence.
28. When Kingspan returned to testing on systems containing K15, they did not use the product which was currently on the market yet used those results to support the sale for use on buildings over 18 metres until October 2020.

## **Regulatory Bodies and Compliance**

29. The report is clear that all of the “certification bodies that provided assurance to the market of the quality and characteristics of the products [used on and in Grenfell Tower] failed to ensure that the statements in the certificates they issued were accurate and based on appropriate and relevant test evidence.” A recurring theme throughout the report is the fundamental incompatibility and inability of Government to reconcile rigorous independent examination in the best interests of the public with the delivery of a commercial service.

### British Board of Agrément

30. The BBA, responsible for product compliance with legislation, awarded certificates of compliance to insulation products used in Grenfell Tower, and the report finds that it was neither “independent nor rigorous”. This is attributed to an “ingrained willingness to accommodate customers instead of insisting on high standards”, along with “inadequate levels of competence” among its staff.
31. The BBA’s certificates of compliance were found to contain false information and were allowed to be dictated by the manufacturers themselves. In some cases, the BBA did not even assess or test products before issuing certificates.

### Local Authority Building Control

32. LABC is responsible for verifying the compliance of construction products with the Building Regulations. The Inquiry found that it failed “to take basic steps” to ensure its compliance certificates were accurate, that it failed to properly scrutinise products, that its staff were not competent to undertake their roles, and that it was “vulnerable to manipulation”.

### National House Building Council (NHBC)

33. NHBC provided building control services to a large proportion of the construction industry. Evidence found that NHBC was “nervous” about the use of Celotex insulation in high-rise buildings, and even consulted FRSs on the issue. The report describes NHBC as “unwilling to upset its own customers”, however, and that building control bodies “preferred to co-operate with applicants...rather than enforce the Building Regulations rigorously.”

### United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)

34. UKAS is appointed by the Government to assess and accredit organisations that provide services including certification, testing, and inspection. UKAS “relied too much on the candour and co-operation of the organisations being assessed and too much was left to trust.”

## **The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) Council and the Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)**

35. The Inquiry found that RBKC and the TMO, jointly responsible for Grenfell Tower's fire safety management, showed "persistent indifference" to safety requirements. Residents of the tower repeatedly raised dissatisfaction with their treatment by the TMO, argued the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower (which fitted the building with combustible cladding) was mismanaged by the TMO, and that by the time of the fire relationships between the organisation and Grenfell Tower's residents "had deteriorated to the point at which they could be described as hostile."
36. The TMO's Chief Executive "consistently failed" to draw attention to the London Fire Brigade's (LFB) concerns about the tower's failure to comply with the FSO, either to the TMO board or RBKC.
37. Despite a 2009 recommendation from an independent fire safety consultant, no fire strategy had been approved by the TMO or RBKC at the time of the fire. The TMO's only fire assessor was not subject to "any formal selection or recruitment process." The report notes that LFB raised concerns about the assessor's competence, which were subsequently ignored.
38. Fire risks identified in the tower were not remedied suitably or efficiently. The "TMO had developed a huge backlog of remedial work", information about vulnerable occupants was not collected, and senior management even reduced the importance attached to certain fire safety works. The TMO did not value fire safety and the demands of managing it were seen "as an inconvenience".
39. Grenfell Tower's fire protection systems did not work effectively and were in some instances not present at all. The TMO "failed to specify the correct fire safety standard" when ordering fire protection measures despite a 2015 Enforcement Notice from LFB on the same failure in another property in the TMO's portfolio.
40. In 2010, a fire had broken out in the lobby of Grenfell Tower but was quickly extinguished by LFB. The TMO's post-fire report, provided to the TMO board on 17 June 2010, is described by the Inquiry to have "grossly understated the extent to which smoke had spread within the tower and was seriously misleading." The spread of smoke in this fire led LFB to issue a 2014 deficiency notice to the TMO for its failure to maintain the smoke ventilation system. The system was only replaced in 2016.
41. RBKC did not have an effective emergency plan for the displacement of a large number of people, of which fire is only one hazard which might necessitate the evacuation. This is "a serious criticism of a local authority responsible for resilience".



## **London Fire Brigade**

42. The report is critical of LFB's senior leadership, noting that the "Lakanal House fire in July 2009 should have alerted the LFB to the shortcomings in its ability to fight fires in high-rise buildings... Those shortcomings could have been made good if LFB had been more effectively managed and led."
43. The Inquiry pointed to complacency and overconfidence in bodies set up to review and report on necessary changes, but monitoring did not occur to ensure changes had been fully implemented. This resulted in growing knowledge about the dangers presented by the increasing use of combustible materials not being reflected in operational policies and procedures.
44. It finds that LFB did not provide sufficient guidance or training for control room operators dealing with many concurrent calls, fire survival guidance refresher training, nor training for firefighters in dealing with uncontrolled external wall fires.
45. LFB's policies for firefighting in high-rise buildings were found not to reflect national guidance at the time, and a "well known problem" with communication equipment, which did not adequately function inside the tower, was not addressed.
46. The report also notes several instances of LFB advice that went ignored by the TMO, which "failed to give sufficient weight to the advice of the LFB". One example shows that, in 2014, LFB requested for a premises information box to be installed, which was denied by the TMO's fire assessor, and another relates to the deficiency notice given by LFB in 2016 as relating to the lack of self-closing doors.

## **Conclusions**

47. The Inquiry found that multiple opportunities were missed by Government to highlight the risks of combustible cladding to the wider industry. Testing information was not shared and recommendations from the Lakanal House coroner were not implemented. Government's deregulation agenda combined with the culture within DCLG made addressing concerns and achieving positive change extremely difficult. To remedy this, the Inquiry has called on Government to combine and streamline its various workstreams to have one department reporting to one SoS responsible for fire safety.
48. Understanding of ADB and how to meet the Building Regulations is poor across the industry, and revisions are required to make it fit for purpose and to clarify that complying with ADB does not necessarily guarantee compliance with the Building Regulations.
49. LFB comes under criticism for not responding effectively to learning from the Lakanal House fire and other incidents and for the inadequacy of training for control rooms and incident commanders. The Inquiry recommends that

HMICFRS inspect LFB to assess whether the improvements made since the Phase 1 report was published have been implemented satisfactorily.

50. Recommendations for improvement for FRSs mainly revolve around communications and the use of radios, however, the Inquiry also calls on Government to expedite the establishment of a College of Fire and Rescue. The Inquiry's envisaged role for the College goes beyond that outlined in the White Paper, recommending access to physical premises with a role for providing training as well as monitoring standards and research.
51. Much greater importance has been placed on the importance of fire engineering as a discipline. Several recommendations call for new steps of the building safety regime to be carried out by fire engineers and call on Government and the wider industry to formalise and increase the number of people entering the profession and improve knowledge across the sector, particularly for senior FRS staff, through new CPD courses.
52. Almost all of those involved in the design, build and sign-off of the Grenfell Tower refurbishment come under heavy criticism for immoral business practices and the "merry-go-round of buck-passing" famously stated by Richard Millett KC during the Inquiry. To address this, the Inquiry calls on Government to establish a new Construction Regulator and Chief Construction Adviser to oversee the industry, new licensing and accreditation schemes for professionals in the design and build process, and a fundamental review of the Building Control model including the role of commercial incentives. It does, however, note that a single regulator may not "solve the problem because the system will still depend on the effectiveness of the conformity assessment bodies and the limited oversight of UKAS."
53. The Inquiry criticises the support provided to Grenfell Tower survivors and other local community members affected by the fire and calls on the Government to reform the Civil Contingencies Act and on local authorities and other Category 1 responders to improve preparedness, response and recovery activities, including improvements to training, guidance and procedures.

## **Next Steps**

54. There are 58 recommendations in the final report shown in Appendix A.
55. Although there are no high-rise residential buildings in the Service area, all recommendations are being reviewed to identify opportunities for improvement. An action plan will be produced including engagement with NFCC and it be monitored through the Operational Assurance Group.
56. Appendix A lists the 58 Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 recommendations as they appear in the final report.

## **Recommendations**

57. Members are requested to:
- a. **Note** the contents of the report.

Keith Carruthers, Deputy Chief Fire Officer 0191 375 5564

## **Appendix A – Recommendations**

This appendix lists the 58 Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 recommendations as they appear in the final report.

### **Regulation**

**We recommend** that the government draw together under a single regulator all the functions relating to the construction industry to which we have referred.

**We recommend** that the definition of a higher-risk building for the purposes of the Building Safety Act be reviewed urgently.

### **Government**

**We recommend** that the government bring responsibility for the functions relating to fire safety currently exercised by MHCLG, the Home Office and the Department for Business and Trade into one department under a single Secretary of State.

### **Chief Construction Adviser**

**We recommend** that the Secretary of State appoint a Chief Construction Adviser with a sufficient budget and staff to provide advice on all matters affecting the construction industry, including:

- monitoring all aspects of the department's work relating to the Building Regulations and statutory guidance;
- providing advice to the Secretary of State on request; and
- bringing to the attention of the Secretary of State any matters affecting the Building Regulations and statutory guidance or matters affecting the construction industry more generally of which the government should be aware.

### **Legislation and Guidance**

Approved Document B must then be kept under continuous review, together with the other Approved Documents, and amended annually or promptly whenever developments in materials or building methods make that desirable. It should be drafted conservatively to ensure, as far as possible, that compliance with it will provide a high degree of confidence that on completion of the work the building will comply with the Building Regulations. **We therefore recommend** that the statutory guidance generally, and Approved Document B in particular, be reviewed accordingly and a revised version published as soon as possible.

It is understandable that those who turn to the guidance for advice about how to comply with the Building Regulations should be tempted to treat it as if it were definitive, but that is a danger that the Secretary of State needs to recognise and guard against. **We therefore recommend** that a revised version of the guidance contain a clear warning in each section that the legal requirements are contained in the Building Regulations and that compliance with the guidance will not necessarily result in compliance with them.

ADB proceeds on the assumption that effective compartmentation renders a stay put strategy an appropriate response to a fire in a flat in a high-rise residential building. New materials and methods of construction and the practice of overcladding existing buildings make the existence of effective compartmentation a questionable assumption and **we recommend** that it be reconsidered when Approved Document B is revised.

A stay put strategy in response to a compartment fire will be acceptable only if there is negligible risk of fire escaping into and spreading through the external wall. Calculating the likely rate of fire spread and the time required for evacuation, including the evacuation of those with physical or mental impairments, are matters for a qualified fire engineer. We do not think that it would be helpful to attempt to include in Approved Document B an indication of what would be acceptable because each building is different, but **we recommend** that the guidance draw attention to the need to make a calculation of that kind.

**We recommend** that, as far as possible, membership of bodies advising on changes to the statutory guidance should include representatives of the academic community as well as those with practical experience of the industry (including fire engineers) chosen for their experience and skill and should extend beyond those who have served on similar bodies in the past.

### **Fire Safety Strategy**

**We recommend** that it be made a statutory requirement that a fire safety strategy produced by a registered fire engineer (see below) to be submitted with building control applications (at Gateway 2) for the construction or refurbishment of any higher-risk building and for it to be reviewed and re-submitted at the stage of completion (Gateway 3). Such a strategy must take into account the needs of vulnerable people, including the additional time they may require to leave the building or reach a place of safety within it and any additional facilities necessary to ensure their safety.

### **Fire Performance Tests**

As is apparent from the experiments conducted by Professor Bisby and Professor Torero for Phase 2 of our investigations, the factors that affect the way in which fire spreads over ventilated rainscreen external wall systems are complex and understanding them is an evolving science. Intuitive judgements are often wrong because a small change in the system can have a significant effect on the outcome. It follows that assessing whether an external wall system can support a particular evacuation strategy is difficult because the necessary information is not always available. **We therefore recommend** that steps be taken in conjunction with the professional and academic community to develop new test methods that will provide the information needed for such assessments to be carried out reliably.

In the light of Professor Torero's evidence we think that BS 9414 will encourage people who are not trained fire engineers to think that they can safely assess the performance of a proposed external wall system by extrapolation from information obtained from tests on one or more different systems. For the reasons given by

Professor Torero we think that BS 9414 should be approached with caution and **we recommend** that the government make it clear that it should not be used as a substitute for an assessment by a suitably qualified fire engineer.

### **Certification of Products and Certification of Test Data**

**We recommend** that the construction regulator should be responsible for assessing the conformity of construction products with the requirements of legislation, statutory guidance and industry standards and issuing certificates as appropriate.

In our view clarity is required to avoid those who rely on certificates of conformity being misled. **We therefore recommend:**

- that copies of all test results supporting any certificate issued by the construction regulator be included in the certificate;
- that manufacturers be required to provide the construction regulator with the full testing history of the product or material to which the certificate relates and inform the regulator of any material circumstances that may affect its performance; and
- manufacturers be required by law to provide on request copies of all test results that support claims about fire performance made for their products.

### **Fire Engineers**

**We recommend** that the profession of fire engineer be recognised and protected by law and that an independent body be established to regulate the profession, define the standards required for membership, maintain a register of members and regulate their conduct.

In order to speed up the creation of a body of professional fire engineers **we also recommend** that the government take urgent steps to increase the number of places on high-quality masters level courses in fire engineering accredited by the professional regulator.

**We recommend** that the government convene a group of practitioner and academic fire engineers and such other professionals as it thinks fit to produce an authoritative statement of the knowledge and skills to be expected of a competent fire engineer.

**We also recommend** that the government, working in collaboration with industry and professional bodies, encourage the development of courses in the principles of fire engineering for construction professionals and members of the fire and rescue services as part of their continuing professional development.

### **Architects**

We recognise that both the Architects Registration Board and the Royal Institute of British Architects have taken steps since the Grenfell Tower fire to improve the education and training of architects. **We recommend** that they should review the changes already made to ensure they are sufficient in the light of our findings.

**We also recommend** that it be made a statutory requirement that an application for building control approval in relation to the construction or refurbishment of a higher-risk building (Gateway 2) be supported by a statement from a senior manager of the principal designer under the Building Safety Act 2022 that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that on completion the building as designed will be as safe as is required by the Building Regulations.

### **Contractors**

**We recommend** that a licensing scheme operated by the construction regulator be introduced for principal contractors wishing to undertake the construction or refurbishment of higher-risk buildings and that it be a legal requirement that any application for building control approval for the construction or refurbishment of a higher-risk building (Gateway 2) be supported by a personal undertaking from a director or senior manager of the principal contractor to take all reasonable care to ensure that on completion and handover the building is as safe as is required by the Building Regulations.

### **Building Control**

**We recommend** that the government appoint an independent panel to consider whether it is in the public interest for building control functions to be performed by those who have a commercial interest in the process.

**We recommend** that the same panel consider whether all building control functions should be performed by a national authority.

### **A Construction Library**

Those who design buildings, particularly higher-risk and complex buildings, would benefit from having access to a body of information, such as data from tests on products and materials, reports on serious fires and academic papers. In Chapter 112 we have referred to the Cladding Materials Library set up by the University of Queensland, which could form the basis of a valuable source of information for designers of buildings in general. **We recommend** that the construction regulator sponsor the development of a similar library, perhaps as part of a joint project with the University of Queensland, to provide a continuing resource for designers.

### **Response to Recommendations**

**We recommend** that it be made a legal requirement for the government to maintain a publicly accessible record of recommendations made by select committees, coroners and public inquiries together with a description of the steps taken in response. If the government decides not to accept a recommendation, it should record its reasons for doing so. Scrutiny of its actions should be a matter for Parliament, to which it should be required to report annually.

## **Fire Risk Assessors**

**We recommend** that the government establish a system of mandatory accreditation to certify the competence of fire risk assessors by setting standards for qualification and continuing professional development and such other measures as may be considered necessary or desirable. We think it necessary for an accreditation system to be mandatory in order to ensure the competence of all those who offer their services as fire risk assessors.

## **Fire Control Switches in Lifts**

We are not in a position to determine whether greater standardisation of fire control switches and keys is required. **We therefore recommend** that the government seeks urgent advice from the Building Safety Regulator and the National Fire Chiefs Council on the nature and scale of the problem and the appropriate response to it.

## **Pipeline Isolation Valves**

Pipeline isolation valves are a critical part of the gas distribution network because they are intended to enable the supply of gas to be shut off quickly in an emergency. At the time of the fire at Grenfell Tower the valves could not be operated because they had been covered over in the course of hard landscaping. There was evidence that it was a common problem in the industry for pipeline isolation valves to be lost in that way. In our view that poses an unacceptable risk to health and safety and could have significant consequences. **We therefore recommend** that every gas transporter be required by law to check the accessibility of each such valve on its system at least once every three years and to report the results of that inspection to the Health and Safety Executive as part of its gas safety case review.

## **A College of Fire and Rescue**

We welcome the government's ambition to create an independent College of Fire and Rescue expressed in the white paper *Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service* and **we therefore recommend** that the government establish such a college immediately with sufficient resources to provide the following services nationally:

- practical training at all levels supplementary to that provided by individual fire and rescue services;
- education in the form of lectures and seminars on different aspects of the work of the fire and rescue services in order to share experience and promote good practice;
- research into matters that may affect the work of the fire and rescue services, including major fires;
- the development of equipment, policies and procedures suitable for ensuring the effectiveness of fire and rescue services nationally and the safety of firefighters and the public;
- setting and maintaining national standards of managerial competence for senior managers, including control room managers, and providing management training for, and regular assessment of, senior ranks by reference to such standards.



Although it is for the government to decide how the college should be constituted, **we recommend** that it should have a permanent staff of sufficient size to manage its operations and develop its functions in response to the demands of fire and rescue services nationally and the requirements of the board. The college will need access to permanent facilities, including facilities for practical training and education.

### **The Control Room**

**We recommend** that His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services ("the Inspectorate") inspect the LFB as soon as reasonably possible to assess and report on:

- the extent to which the control room is now integrated into the organisation;
- the effectiveness of the arrangements for identifying the training needs of control room staff, delivering effective training and recording its outcomes;
- the effectiveness of the control room generally;
- the ability of the control room to handle a large number of concurrent requests for advice and assistance from people directly affected by fires or other emergencies; and
- the quality and effectiveness of the arrangements for communication between the control room and the incident commander.

### **Incident Commanders**

**We recommend** that as soon as reasonably possible the Inspectorate inspect the LFB to examine and report on the arrangements it has in place for assessing the training of incident commanders at all levels and their continuing competence, whether by a process of revalidation or otherwise.

### **Operational Planning**

**We recommend** that as soon as reasonably practicable the Inspectorate inspect the LFB to examine and report on its arrangements for collecting, storing and distributing information in accordance with section 7(2)(d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, and in particular its arrangements for identifying high-risk residential buildings and collecting, storing and distributing information relating to them.

### **Implementing Change**

**We recommend** that the LFB establish effective standing arrangements for collecting, considering and effectively implementing lessons learned from previous incidents, inquests and investigations. Those arrangements should be as simple as possible, flexible and of a kind that will ensure that any appropriate changes in practice or procedure are implemented speedily.

### **Communications**

**We recommend** that fire and rescue services that continue to use low power intrinsically safe radios as part of breathing apparatus consider reserving them only

for situations in which there is a real risk of igniting flammable gases and generally using radios of higher power, particularly in high-rise buildings.

There is strong evidence that in general digital radios are more effective than analogue radios. **We therefore recommend** that all fire and rescue services give consideration to providing all firefighters with digital radios.

**We recommend** that firefighters be trained to respond appropriately to the loss of communications and to understand how to restore them.

### **Water**

On the night of the Grenfell Tower fire firefighters were unable to distinguish between different types of hydrant. That is a clear indication of a need for better training and **we therefore recommend** that basic training on the structure and operation of the water supply system, including the different types of hydrants in use and their functions, be given to all firefighters. Training should also be given on effective measures to increase water flow and pressure when necessary.

**We recommend** that all fire and rescue services establish and periodically review an agreed protocol with the statutory water undertakers in their areas to enable effective communication between them in relation to the supply of water for firefighting purposes.

**We recommend** that the British Standards Institution amend BS 750 to include a description of the circumstances under which the flow coefficient to which it refers in paragraph 10.2 is to be measured.

### **Deployment of Firefighters**

**We recommend** that National Fire Chiefs Council consider whether, and if so in what circumstances, firefighters should be discouraged from departing from their instructions on their own initiative and provide appropriate training in how to respond to a situation of that kind.

### **The Civil Contingencies Act 2004**

The government's powers in sections 5 and 7 of the Act to intervene in response to an emergency are far-reaching but they do not enable it to intervene promptly or decisively when a Category 1 responder is failing to rise to the challenge. **We therefore recommend** that the Act be reviewed and consideration be given to granting a designated Secretary of State the power to carry out the functions of a Category 1 responder in its place for a limited period of time.

The response of local voluntary organisations to the disaster demonstrated their capacity to act as valuable partners in responding to an emergency. Regulation 23 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 requires a Category 1 responder to have regard when making its plans to the activities of relevant voluntary organisations. **We therefore recommend** that the regulation be amended to require Category 1 responders to establish and maintain partnerships

with the voluntary, community and faith organisations in the areas in which they are responsible for preparing for and responding to emergencies.

### **Guidance**

The current guidance on preparing for emergencies is contained in several documents, all of which are unduly long and in some respects out of date. **We recommend** that the guidance be revised, reduced in length and consolidated in one document which lays greater emphasis on the need for those leading the response to consider the requirements for recovery, the need to identify vulnerable people, the importance of identifying and ensuring co-operation with voluntary, community and faith groups and is consistent with the Equality Act 2010.

**We also recommend** that regard for humanitarian considerations be expressly recognised by making it the ninth principle of effective response and recovery.

### **London Local Authority Gold Arrangements**

Events demonstrated that there is a need for a clearer understanding of the nature of the London Gold arrangements, in particular in situations in which a single borough is affected. **We therefore recommend** that the guidance on the operation of those arrangements be revised and that existing and newly appointed chief executives be given regular training to ensure they are familiar with its principles.

### **Local Resilience Forums**

**We recommend** that local resilience forums adopt national standards to ensure effective training, preparation and planning for emergencies and adopt independent auditing schemes to identify deficiencies and secure compliance.

**We also recommend** that a mechanism be introduced for independently verifying the frequency and quality of training provided by local authorities and other Category 1 responders.

### **Local Authorities**

**We recommend** that local authorities train all their employees, including chief executives, to regard resilience as an integral part of their responsibilities.

RBKC had no effective means of collecting and recording information about those who had been displaced from the tower and surrounding buildings, including those who were missing. Compiling reliable information of that kind is difficult and the challenges likely to be faced by local authority Category 1 responders will vary according to the nature of the emergency. **We recommend** that all local authorities devise methods of obtaining and recording information of that kind, if possible in electronic form, and practise putting them into operation under a variety of different circumstances.

Any local authority is likely to have difficulty finding temporary accommodation for a very large number of displaced persons but the need to do so should be recognised and contingency plans drawn up. **We recommend** that all local authorities make

such arrangements as are reasonably practicable for enabling them to place people in temporary accommodation at short notice and in ways that meet their personal, religious and cultural requirements. Such arrangements should, as far as possible, involve local providers of social housing.

**We recommend** that all local authorities include in their contingency plans arrangements for providing immediate financial assistance to people affected by an emergency.

**We also recommend** that as part of their planning for emergencies local authorities give detailed consideration to the availability of key workers and the role they are expected to play so that suitable contingency arrangements can be made to ensure, as far as possible, continuity of support.

**We recommend** that as part of their emergency planning local authorities make effective arrangements for continuing communication with those who need assistance using the most suitable technology and a range of languages appropriate to the area.

**We recommend** that all local authorities include in their plans for responding to emergencies arrangements for providing information to the public by whatever combination of modern methods of communication are likely to be most effective for the areas for which they are responsible.

In future, to avoid confusion, wasted effort and frustration **we also recommend** that what in the past has been called by the police a “casualty bureau” be described in a way that makes it clear that it does not provide information to the public about people affected by the emergency.

### **Vulnerable People**

**We recommend** that further consideration be given to the recommendations made in the Phase 1 report in the light of our findings in this report.

**We also recommend** that the advice contained in paragraph 79.11 of the LGA (*Fire Safety in Purpose-Built Blocks of Flats*) Guide be reconsidered.