



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

15 February 2023

Community Risk Management Plan 2023-2026

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of the report

1. To update members with details of the 2023-2026 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), the proposals contained within the plan and the public consultation on it.

Background

2. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework. The Framework sets out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities who must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their duties.
3. Members will note that the old name of Integrated Risk Management Plan, which is still referenced in the legislation, has been replaced with the title Community Risk Management Plan to align with the National Fire Chiefs Council's Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) Fire Standard.
4. The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework document places a responsibility on all fire and rescue authorities to produce and consult on their CRMP. These documents direct fire and rescue authorities to:
 - be accountable to communities for the service they provide;
 - identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;
 - make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and the response to fire and rescue related incidents;
 - develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse;

- collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide.
5. Specifically, the National Framework states that we have a **statutory responsibility** to include a number of areas within the CRMP. These duties are summarised below:
- Reflect up-to-date risk analyses of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the authority;
 - Demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities;
 - Outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;
 - Set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRO) 2005;
 - Cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as is necessary;
 - Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners; and
 - Be easily accessible and publicly available.
6. The Service's CRMP is a three-year strategic plan. This is reviewed annually to assess the effectiveness of existing arrangements. Following this review an annual CRMP Action Plan is developed.

CRMP Content

7. The CRMP contains profile information regarding the Service area, performance, data governance arrangements and how the Service identifies, manages and responds to risk in County Durham and Darlington.
8. Linking directly to the Community Risk Profile and Station Plans, the CRMP sets out the key risks found and what proactive and reactive measures will be in place relating to each identified risk.
9. Each of the main Strategies (Community Safety; Business Fire Safety and Fire Investigation; Emergency Response; Workforce Development; Collaboration, Estates and ICT) and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is directly referenced with regard to how they are affected by risk.
10. We have included an overview of what we introduced following last year's consultation together with the proposed options for Year 1, 2 and 3 of the 2023-2026 CRMP period.
11. In 2022-2023 we consulted on and delivered the following:

| We asked | You said | We did |
|--|----------|---|
| <p>Do you agree with our proposal to introduce the following new response standards?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Accidental Dwelling Fires within 8 minutes on 70% of occasions • Attend Non-Domestic Fires within 9 minutes on 70% of occasions • Attend Road Traffic Collisions within 10 minutes on 70% of occasions | Yes | We implemented the new standards from April 2022 and have measured our response times against them since this time. |

11.1 In 2022/23, the following options were also considered:

- Implement the outcomes of the review of the crewing arrangements of TRVs if the trials proves successful.
- Implement any changes suggested through collaboration projects undertaken with local Fire and Rescue Service and key partners.

11.2 Implement and evaluate the way we deliver Safe and Well Being Visits (now called Home Fire Safety Visits).

Home fire safety visits (HFSVs) are the cornerstone of our prevention work to prevent fire, fire fatalities and serious injuries in the home, which is where the majority of fire fatalities occur.

HFSVs have previously only been done in-person, however during the Covid-19 pandemic telephone ‘visits’ were introduced to continue the education of our community. Review of these has identified opportunities for a self-help tool for members of the community. Using a recently developed online tool, through a partnership between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Fire Kills and Safelincs, an online ‘Home Fire Safety Check tool’ is now live on our website. This easy-to-follow home fire safety check will take members of the public through their home one room at a time using simple questions to help identify fire risks. The tool will offer tips and advice on the steps members of the public can take to reduce those risks and they will receive a personalised fire safety action plan to help keep them and their household safe from fire. Higher risk members of the community will be offered a visit by one of our teams.

We have reviewed and adapted our HFSV approach to align with the NFCC Person-Centred Framework which aims to mitigate and reduce fire risk whilst trying to change some of the riskier behaviours that may affect or increase

exposure to increased fire risk. By being person centred the following characteristics are emphasised in our approach:

- affording people dignity, respect and compassion
- offering coordinated support with partners
- offering personalised support
- being enabling towards independent living.

The NFCC Definition of Risk project, aims to deliver the UK Fire and Rescue Service a risk framework with an approach that supports the consistent identification, understanding and assessment of risk. This project has delivered a new risk stratification model to identify those households at highest risk of:

- Having an accidental dwelling fire
- Being a casualty in an accidental dwelling fire, or
- Being killed in an accidental dwelling fire

The Service have aligned our targeting of HFSVs to this new risk stratification model with the aim of further reducing accidental dwelling fires and associated deaths or injuries.

Our recent inspection by HMICFRS which analysed this enhanced approach to targeting recognised that our activity is “clearly prioritised using a risk-based approach towards people most at risk from fire and other emergencies.” Our level of HFSVs completed per 1,000 population, remains much higher than the England rate (7.6 home fire safety visits per 1,000 population compared to the England rate of 4.5). This activity continues to lead to strong performance for ADFs and associated injuries when compared year to year and benchmarked against other areas.

The number of accidental dwelling fires and associated casualties in our area continues to reduce through our proactive prevention work whereby we attend over 18,000 households per year (in years unaffected by Covid-19) to conduct home fire safety visits (HFSVs). In 2021/22 we had our lowest ever number of accidental dwelling fires and despite high levels of deprivation across our area, which traditionally correlates to high levels of fires, the latest national figures for accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population, highlight CDDFRS as the second-best performing FRS in England.

11.3 Implement the outcome following the review of the Service’s attendance standards

We implemented the new standards from April 2022 and have measured our response times against them since this time.

11.4 **Evaluate the benefits of our continued investment in Fire Safety within the built environment.**

We have continued to invest in staff training to ensure we comply with the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators. From 1 April to 31 December 2022, 20 further members of operational staff have become qualified to Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety. This now gives us a total of 66 operational staff either qualified to Level 3 Certificate or Level 4 Certificate in Fire Safety.

We have continued to work with businesses to help them in their compliance with legislation and have taken enforcement action to ensure that people who work in and visit premises across County Durham and Darlington remain safe.

We carried out 2,120 fire safety audits between April 2021 and March 2022, 85% of which were completed by our operational crews. In 2022/23 we are again on target to deliver over 2,000 fire safety audits. These figures are more than three times the England rate for fire safety audits per 100 known premises. This productivity has been highlighted by HMICFRS in their recent inspection that they were “impressed with the service’s productivity rates” noting the high rate of FSAs – 6.1 per 100 known premises compared to the average England FRS rate of 1.7.

Through the active targeting of our Risk Based Inspection Programme, we have seen an increase in the number of unsatisfactory audits and enforcement action taken. Between 1 April to 31 December 2022, 33% of all fire safety audits were unsatisfactory, which provides assurance that we are inspecting the right premises and making safety improvements.

Staff have also undertaken a great deal of engagement work with businesses, including online seminars. In addition, we continue to reply to high numbers of business regulation consultations licensing applications.

Our investment continues to result in decreasing numbers of fires within premises regulated by the Fire Safety Order. We have had no reported fire fatalities in business premises since 2013 and 79 casualties in the last 10 years. Despite our challenging demographics, the latest national figures for non-domestic fires per 100,000 population, highlight CDDFRS as the third-best performing FRS in England.

11.5 **Implementing the outcomes of the review of the crewing arrangements of TRVs if the trials prove successful.**

Covid- 19 meant that trialling the use of our new TRVs was delayed. However, we have now been able to introduce them and gather data about their use. We recognise that locating and deploying TRVs help to maximise the availability of front line fire appliances, ensure appropriate resources are deployed based on risk and assist in the overall productivity of proactive prevention and protection

activities. We will continue to explore the flexible use of TRVs based on risk and demand.

11.6 Implement any changes suggested through collaboration projects undertaken with local FRS and key partners.

We have access to the Cleveland Fire Brigade command vehicle which has been used at incidents.

The Police and Fire Collaboration Board has been re-established.

We are key attendees of the North East Regional JESIP meeting.

We share service premises at Darlington Fire Station with North East Ambulance Service (NEAS).

Following the modernisation of Sedgfield station we now have shared facilities with NEAS on site.

We now have shared administrative support with Cleveland Fire Brigade for maintenance of duties associated with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

We are working with colleagues in neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, the Local Authority, Police and Academics to reduce the opportunity and consequences of deliberate fires and antisocial behaviour

12. Medium Term Financial Plan

The Service faces the ongoing challenge of balancing our resources against the risks we face. We are under considerable financial pressures including a shortfall in council tax and business rates receipts due to the Covid19 pandemic together with cost pressures arising from rapidly increasing inflation which is resulting in demands for higher pay awards. The financial pressures faced by the Service are compounded by uncertainty surrounding the level of government funding from 2024/25 onwards.

Our 2023/24 currently faces a shortfall which means it will be necessary to draw down a further £0.571m from our already limited reserves, in the absence of making any changes to the service.

The options we have implemented from our previous CRMP have meant that we have saved in excess of £750,000. However the cost pressures we now face, with particular regard to inflation related cost and the pay demands on firefighters' salaries, mean that the only realistic options available will involve the introduction of changes to the way in which we provide our 999 service to the public.

These options are outlined in paragraph 13.

13. Our Options

The Service has a series of proposals to consider over the next three years:

In 2023/24 the following options will be considered:

- Review the proposal to crew all of our Wholetime fire engines with four firefighters.
- Review the Risk Based Inspection Programme
- Monitor and review the Service's response standards.
- Evaluate the staffing arrangements and application of Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs).
- Evaluate the changes through collaboration projects with local FRS and key partners.

In 2024/25 the following options will be considered:

- Monitor the crewing of Wholetime fire engines.
- Implement the findings following the review of the Risk Based Inspection Programme.
- Monitor the staffing arrangements and application of TRVs.
- Continue to explore opportunities and monitor changes introduced through collaboration projects.

In 2025/26 the following options will be considered:

- Review the newly implemented Service Risk-Based Inspection Programme
- Evaluate the changes through collaboration projects with local FRS and key partners

Consultation

14. The consultation on the 2023/24 proposals will begin on 16 February 2023 and will run for 12 weeks. In order to ensure that a wide range of views can be gathered the Governance and Communications Teams will lead on disseminating a consultation document containing the specific questions regarding the future plans of the Service. The consultation questions are set out at paragraph 16 of this report.
15. This will include making the CRMP available on the CDDFRS website; organising community events to discuss the plan with the public; liaising with politicians and other local community leaders to disseminate the consultation document and using social media to promote it. We will attend public meetings organised through the Local Authorities. There will be an online survey that people can complete and a paper booklet to support this.

Consultation Questions

16. At the Strategic Planning Days on 23 May 2022 and 10 October 2022 the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) considered the range of options which could be

put to the public. Based on the feedback from this day and the Service analysis it is suggested the following questions be put to the public:

Q1. We propose to crew all of our Wholetime fire engines with four firefighters. Do you agree with this proposal?

Q2. We propose to review the Risk Based Inspection Programme for business premises to ensure our proactive protection and enforcement activities are aligned to identified risks, to maintain the reduction of non-domestic fires and ensure the continued safety, from fire, of employees and visitors to these premises.

Do you agree with this proposal?

Q3. Do you have any overall comments about our Community Risk Management Plan and approach to allocating our resources?

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- a) **Note** the 2023-2026 CRMP summary provided.
- b) **Approve** the questions to put to the public in the Consultation Document as shown at paragraph 16 of this report.