



Protecting local  
communities

**Information Note**

**Proposed Wholetime  
Duty System 2024**

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide information to all operational staff, on the proposed new Wholetime Duty System.

1.2 One of the Proposals within the CRMP 2022-2026, states:

*SSC38.1: Use the outcomes from the independent resource review to develop options for improving our emergency response cover to meet current and future risks and demands.*

1.3 As part of the 2018-2022 Community Integrated Risk Management Plan, the existing whole time duty system was reviewed, and a proposal presented to ELT in 2021 (subsequently accepted). Consultation and negotiation were undertaken with the Representative Body; however, the proposal was rejected, predominantly due to the shift length time for day shifts and night shifts being 12 hours each.

1.4 In 2023, a review of the current Wholetime Duty System has been conducted by the Senior Head of Operations.

1.5 The context of any future changes is to ensure that the Brigade's duty system supports efficient and effective delivery of the CRMP 2022/2026.

1.6 Design principles set applicable to the Wholetime Duty System, include:

- Legally compliant.
- Flexible, efficient, and effective use of staff, appliances, and equipment.
- Improvements in the use of operational response assets.
- Aligns to the CRMP, Strategic Goals, Outcomes and Service Plans.
- Enables the efficient and effective delivery of the required services and functions.
- Provides delivery assurance and enables development of sustainable appropriate levels of confidence and trust.
- Maintains assurance and manages risk.

1.7 To ensure the most efficient use of resources, all proposals will comply with relevant employment legislation and national terms and conditions of service.

- 1.8 The arrangements under the proposed system include:
- Maintain the 2-2-4 Duty System, incorporating day and night shifts.
  - Shift length times:
    - Day shift: 08:00hrs – 18:00hrs
    - Night shift: 18:00hrs – 08:00hrs
  - Removal of annualised hours.
  - Removal of Blue and Grey standby shifts.
  - Reversion of one leave unit (block of 4 shifts) to be allowed to be taken as time off as individual shifts, subject to staffing exigencies.
  - Management and oversight of Watch staffing to be undertaken by Watch Managers.
  - Measurement of productivity against key metrics defined by CFB.
  - Run the proposed shift system as a pilot for 12 months.
- 1.9 This proposal is subject to consultation between the Brigade (ELT) and the recognised Representative Body (FBU).
- 1.10 An indicative implementation for the proposed duty system is the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2024, however this is subject to consultation and negotiation between ELT and the FBU.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Strategic Lead on the 2019 duty system project was the Assistant Chief Fire Officer Director of Community Protection. The Project Lead was Area Manager (Senior Head of Response) leading a Duty System Review Team (DSRT).
- 2.2 The Duty Systems in use across the UK Fire Service were researched by the DSRT. These included the following:
- 3 X 8 Hour shift system
  - Self-Rostering day duty system
  - Day Crewing Plus duty system
  - 2 Watch Nucleus duty system working 7x 12 hours days
  - 5 Watch duty system working a 2-2-6 pattern
  - 5 Watch duty system working a 2-2-4 pattern
  - 4 Watch duty system working a 2-2-4 pattern without annualised hours
  - 4 Watch duty system working a 1-1-1-5 pattern
  - Continental Shift System
- 2.3 The approach taken was:
- Baseline Review of current position
  - Research on the current duty systems used by 44 of the 52 UK FRS's
  - Analysis of the NFCC Working patterns Project
  - Duty System Options
- 2.4 Consideration of the efficiency and effectiveness of each system was considered, along with associated risks, benefits, cost, and implications.
- 2.5 In October 2019 the DSRT distributed a survey to all staff working on the current duty system to gauge general perceptions of those who work, manage, and administer the system. Responses were received from 23 out of the 32 watches, three departments and four Flexi Duty Officers. These responses were considered as part of the review.
- 2.6 In 2021, CFB's Executive Leadership Team approved the proposal. The options were carefully considered, balanced against efficiency, effectiveness, and economy.
- 2.7 Consultation and negotiation was undertaken with the Representative Body in 2021, however the proposal was rejected, primarily due to the proposed introduction of 12 hours shifts.

- 2.8 As part of the CRMP Delivery Plan (SSC38), the Senior Head of Operations has reviewed the 2021 proposal and considered alternative options, based on similar principles and arrangements within the 2021 proposal.

### **3. Methodology for the new proposal**

- 3.1 The Senior Head of Operations, as part of the Configuration Review, gathered information on both the current Wholetime Duty System and considered an alternative viable model.
- 3.2 As part of an impact analysis, the approach taken included a review and assessment of both the current and proposed systems against the NFCC Working Patterns and the six pillars of the Toolkit. The six pillars include:
- Competency
  - Efficiency & Effectiveness
  - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
  - Safety
  - Wellbeing
  - Community Impact
- 3.3 Consideration of the efficiency and effectiveness of each system was considered, along with associated risks, benefits, cost and implications.
- 3.4 All financial data, information on staffing and performance was validated by the respective (responsible) departmental functions.

#### **4. Drivers for Change**

- 4.1 Analysis of the current duty system in 2019 identified several drivers for change. These drivers still exist in 2023, with the added requirement to increase and evidence firefighter productivity and capacity:
- Improve staffing challenges due to staff reaching their annualised target early.
  - Minimise periods of time when appliances are off the run, or under crewed.
  - Remove differences between the contracted hours worked/unused by each individual.
  - Current shift changeover is during peak demand time.
  - The impact of 11 short notice 'Grey Shifts' on staff.
  - To provide flexibility for short notice absences.
  - Reduce the cost of additional hours to cover staff shortages.
  - To improve productivity.
  - To measure productivity.

#### **5. Productivity**

- 5.1 In early 2023, following Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) indications to use the £5 precept for 2023/2024, the Home Office contacted all FRSs requesting they produce an Efficiency Plan, aligning to the national productivity and efficiency targets for 2021/22 -2024/2025. This included the proposals to create 2% non-pay efficiencies and increase productivity by 3%, over the prescribed period.
- 5.2 In April 2023, all FRSs were contacted and sent a firefighter utilisation survey by the Home Office with a requirement for all FRSs to report quarterly on Firefighter productivity against defined metrics, demonstrating productivity increase.
- 5.3 Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) for the previous eighteen months, has been recording all operational activities using a Productivity and Capacity (P&C) database, which was highlighted by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as good practice.
- 5.4 The Home Office survey requested productivity evidence against the key metrics of:
- Prevention activities (Safer Home Visits)
  - Protection activities (Fire Safety Audits, Operational Intelligence Visits)
  - Response activities (incidents)
  - Training (practical, station specific, cross service, multi-agency, e learning)
  - Other (including fitness, administration duties, routines, rest periods)

## 6. Proposed New Duty System

6.1 The Proposal is to:

**Implement a 2-2-4 Duty system, incorporating with 10-hour day shifts and 14-hour night shifts, without annualised hours, for Wholetime Fire Stations.**

6.2 The proposed system arrangements include:

- The rota system will be as shown below:

|                       | Day  | Day  | Night | Night | Rota | Rota | Rota | Rota |
|-----------------------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Current hours</b>  | 10.5 | 10.5 | 13.5  | 13.5  | Off  | Off  | Off  | Off  |
| <b>Proposed hours</b> | 10   | 10   | 14    | 14    | Off  | Off  | Off  | Off  |

- The system will be implemented as a pilot for 12 months, to ascertain productivity against the key metrics of:
  - Safer Home Visits completion
  - Community engagement
  - Operational Intelligence visits
  - Risk familiarisation visits
  - Training (productivity will naturally rise due to greater opportunities for training)
- Shift length times include:
  - Day shift: 0800hrs – 1800hrs
  - Night shift: 1800hrs - 0800hrs
- Reversion of one leave unit (block of 4 shifts) to be allowed to be taken as time off as individual shifts, subject to staffing exigencies.
- On duty staff over the optimum staffing level who are not taking up a rider position would be incorporated into a Resilience Pool, the size of which will vary from shift to shift depending on sickness absence, training, leave etc. The Resilience Pool will be deployed to perform statutory and functional duties.
- Management and oversight of Watch staffing to be undertaken by Watch Managers.

### 6.3 ***Proposed Duty System - Working Principles***

- 6.3.1 This duty system would be a revision to our current duty system and would still involve operational crews working a 4-watch system on a working pattern of two-day shifts, followed by two-night shifts and 4 rota days.
- 6.3.2 Annualised hours would be removed with attendance accounted for, on a shift basis.
- 6.3.3 This system is similar to the current system in place at CFB, only with the removal of grey and blue stand by shifts, resulting in those personnel that are not on leave or absent due to sickness, being on duty, providing operational cover, attending training events or performing Prevention and Protection activities.
- 6.3.4 Staff would be rostered to work between 181 and 184 shifts subject to how their shifts fall throughout the year, a median average of 182.5 shifts.
- 6.3.5 All personnel would be allocated 5 structured leave units spread throughout the year, consisting of 8 tour blocks. Including rota days, this allows two sets of 20-days off (8 duty shifts leave) and 3 sets of 12-days off (4 duty shifts leave), equating to 32-days leave each year (after 5 years' service).
- 6.3.6 Four 'floating shifts' will be allocated to allow staff to take individual shifts off work, subject to approval from the line manager and the staffing exigencies at the time.
- 6.3.7 Staff will continue to book unfit for duty at least 1 hour before the start of the shift.
- 6.3.8 On duty staff over the optimum staffing level, who are not taking up a rider position would be incorporated into a Resilience Pool, the size of which will vary from shift to shift, depending on sickness absence, training, leave etc.



#### 6.4 ***Proposed Duty System - Resilience Pool***

6.4.1 The Resilience Pool will be used when staffing is over establishment and will operate on the basis that employees will undertake the duties appropriate to their role and be deployed to meet the requirements of the fire and rescue authority's Community Risk Management Plan.

6.4.2 During periods of high operational demand, the Resilience Pool will be deployed to enhance our response resources and perform statutory and functional duties.

6.4.3 Examples of duties include:

- Staffing Emergency Response Assets:
  - Small Fire Units
  - On-Call Fire Stations
  - Water Rescue
  - Line Rescue
- Undertaking Protection activities:
  - Fire Safety Audits
  - Specific, and During Performance Inspections
  - Seasonal campaigns
- Undertaking Prevention activities:
  - Safer Homes Visits, including generation
  - Schools Education
  - Community Talks/Events/Station visits
  - Arson Reduction activities
  - Seasonal campaigns
- Learning and Development:
  - APD completion
  - Training Events
- Supporting recruitment events and point of entry tests

**7. Local Agreement 14: Disturbance Allowance**

- 7.1 This Local Agreement introduced a Disturbance Allowance as a single composite payment to reimburse staff when working at a location other than their normal place of work.
- 7.2 An addendum was made to Local Agreement 14 which defined working at a Station other than the normal place of work for a duration of less than a single shift and the associated reimbursement.
- 7.3 The Disturbance Allowance will be re-negotiated as part of the Duty System Proposal.

**8. Pilot - Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 8.1 The proposed duty system will be run as a pilot for 12-months.
- 8.2 Firefighter productivity will be measured using the Productivity and Capacity database.
- 8.3 A review and evaluation of the new duty system will take place at the conclusion of 12-months, to assess whether productivity against the new start and finish times has improved, against the metrics of Prevention and Response, set alongside the new start/ finish times. Factors considered as part of the review will include the operational environment and the impact this may have had on productivity.

**9. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

- 9.1 This policy has been assessed in accordance with the Brigade's Equality Impact Assessment Procedure.
- 9.2 Equality, diversity, and inclusion is a key issue when considering changes to shift patterns. One of the barriers to the recruitment of some sections of the community is the work patterns expected by Cleveland Fire Brigade.
- 9.3 Cleveland Fire Brigade has a flexible working policy and recognises the importance of helping staff to maintain an effective balance between work and home life. All requests for flexible working will be carefully considered on an individual basis.