



2023/24

Annual Statement of Assurance

CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

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Accessibility Statement

An accessible version of this report is available on our website.
Visit www.clevelandfire.gov.uk/about/fire-authority/documents-publications/strategic-reports/

If you require this document in an alternative language, large print or Braille, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Foreword

Cleveland's Annual Statement of Assurance provides assurance to our communities that, during 2023/24, Cleveland Fire Authority have conducted business effectively in accordance with proper standards and law and that public money has been properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

As Chief Fire Officer, and Chair of Cleveland Fire Authority, we are satisfied that Cleveland Fire Authority has operated in accordance with the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018.

In line with the requirements of the National Framework, we can provide assurance to the people of Cleveland in regard to the operational, financial and governance arrangements for the year ending 31st March 2024.



Peter Rickard
Chief Fire Officer



David Coupe
Chair of Cleveland
Fire Authority

Introduction

What is a Statement of Assurance?

An Annual Statement of Assurance is a document which sets out our operational, financial and corporate governance to enable our community, Government and partner organisations to make informed assessments of our services governance arrangements. We are required to publish our Annual Statement of Assurance as one of our duties within the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018. This Statement of Assurance sets out the governance arrangements for Cleveland Fire Authority (CFA) in the period of 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

In accordance with guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on Statements of Assurance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, our Statement of Assurance is supported by links to a range of supporting documents, including our Statement of Accounts and Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which are referenced within this document.

Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

We are halfway through delivery of our current CRMP, which is in operation from 2022 to 2026. In our CRMP we identified nine priorities which were developed in consultation with our communities.

1. To develop our approach to risk management to reflect good practice and improve the safety, health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of our communities.

2. To build on our successful approach to helping people stay safe in their homes.

3. To tackle arson and deliberate fires.

4. To ensure our Prevention activities remain efficient, effective and deliver value for money.

5. To enhance our risk-based approach to support businesses to keep their buildings safe in line with the Fire Safety Order 2005.

6. To be better prepared to deal with incidents involving buildings where height can have a serious impact on firefighting and evacuation.

7. To ensure that our Firefighters plan and prepare to respond effectively to operational incidents including those across our borders.

8. To develop options for improving the efficient and effective deployment of our Emergency Response resources to flexibly meet current and future risks and demands.

9. To be 'Better Together' – working in partnership.



To read our full Community Risk Management Plan visit www.clevelandfire.gov.uk/crmp

In pages 13 to 22 of this document, we outline areas of progress and challenge against our nine priorities, to give our communities confidence in the work we are doing to address these areas of risk.

Service Assurance Summaries



Operations

All Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure that the service they provide to the public is delivered in line with their legal responsibilities. These responsibilities are covered in the following Legislation:

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- Serious Violence Duty 2023
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Licensing Act 2003
- The Building Act 2004
- The Policing and Crime Act 2017
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Local Government Act 2000
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Human Rights Act 1998

It is our view that, at the end of 2023/24, all requirements associated with the Brigade's operational matters were fully met.

Supporting Evidence

Services to the Community

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out the statutory responsibilities of all Fire Authorities for providing a Fire and Rescue Service to the public which sufficiently carries out the following core functions:

1. **Provision of information, advice and encouragement on the prevention of fires, restricting the spread of fires in buildings, the means of escape from fires, and prevention of death or injury by fire.**
 - We fulfilled our duties in this area through the successful delivery of our Safer Homes Visits programme, which supports residents to reduce the risk of accidental fires in their home (detailed further on page 14).

Additionally, through our Schools Education Programme and our partnership working arrangements, we worked to prevent deliberate fires and arson (detailed further on page 16).

2. Provision of emergency response to extinguish fire, protect life and property and to respond to road traffic accidents (including ensuring Firefighters are trained to carry out these functions).

- We responded to a range of emergency incidents, including fires, road traffic collisions, flooding and water rescues and hazardous chemical spills (progress against CRMP objectives related to our Emergency Response is detailed further on pages 18 to 21). Our operational staff have the skills and knowledge to enable them to respond effectively to the emergencies they face, as supported by our Training and Assurance frameworks to ensure operational readiness and staff competency.

In line with our duty to enforce the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 our operational staff and Fire Engineering team undertake inspections of industrial, commercial and non-domestic buildings, providing advice and guidance to owners and occupiers to ensure their premises comply with the order and that our communities are safe. Trained staff progress enforcement action where necessary. Premises are inspected based on risk, using our risk methodology which takes into account premise type and potential societal risk of an incident (detailed further on page 17).

National and Local Resilience

Our service is part of the National Resilience Programme, which ensures preparation for, and response to, large scale emergency incidents such as natural disasters and terrorism. On a local level we are an active member of the Cleveland Local Resilience forum, ensuring multi-agency training and response to risks in our area (detailed further on page 20). Our work in this area provides assurance of our adherence to duties under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018.



Fire Standards

Fire Standards identify, develop and maintain professional standards for Fire and Rescue services to achieve. As of 31st March 2024 17 fire standards had officially been published by the Fire Standards Board. Following a detailed gap analysis against each standard we are fully compliant against five standards, partially compliant against six standards and have a remaining six standards undergoing gap analysis ahead of validation through our approved procedures.

Duty to Collaborate

In line with our duty to collaborate under the Police and Crime Act 2017 we explore opportunities to deliver our service more effectively and more efficiently through joint working with other agencies. We frequently collaborate with Cleveland Police, Health and Local Authorities, as well as other Fire and Rescue Services. The introduction of our Partnership Framework, which began development in 2022, has given us the structure to review and evaluate our partnerships, to understand the benefits we receive from them. This is detailed further on page 22.

Mutual Aid

Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to enter into reinforcement schemes, or mutual aid agreements, with other Fire and Rescue Authorities, under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018. We have two long standing Section 13 and 16 mutual aid agreements in place with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services (County Durham and Darlington FRS and North Yorkshire FRS). This is detailed further on page 19. We have robust arrangements in place to ensure that critical risk information is shared securely with neighbouring FRS where required using Resilience Direct.

In 2023 we supported formalisation of a mutual aid agreement involving the stocking of Firefighting Foam, which may be called upon by any signatory in Cleveland in the event of a major incident. We also moved forward with work to refresh our arrangement with Cleveland Police to provide shared use of our Incident Command Unit and Welfare Pod.

Health & Safety

The Health and Safety of our workforce is a priority, with insight into our performance to ensure workforce safety and a positive health and safety culture provided by our established suite of health and safety performance indicators. These indicators allow us to closely monitor health and safety performance in all areas, including vehicle accidents, near misses, personal injuries, fitness testing, sickness and events that are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations).

We report our performance against our Health & Safety Indicators quarterly, with trends identified and used to identify appropriate action to be taken. This includes delivery of staff training. Staff receive a range of training to ensure they can work safely, regardless of the nature of their role. Training provided includes First Aid at Work, IOSH Working and Managing Safely and Manual Handling.

Data Protection and Information Governance

We adhere to the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 by publishing transparency information on our website. Employees are trained in data protection, especially regarding information safeguarding and sharing. We maintain a Freedom of Information (FOI) publication scheme managed by the DDAT Technology Manager and have enhanced our Information Governance Framework. We comply with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, with added security for health and children's data. Our privacy notice explains data collection and usage, and our corporate complaints policy addresses complaints within 28 days. Additionally, we participate in the National Fraud Initiative and enforce anti-fraud, corruption, and whistleblowing arrangements.



Finances

All Fire and Rescue Authorities are responsible for carrying out their business in a way that follows the law and proper standards. They must ensure that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. It is our view that, at the end of 2023/24, all requirements associated with the Brigade's financial management were fully met, as evidenced by the information in our [Draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24](#). This is subject to the conclusion of our annual external audit.

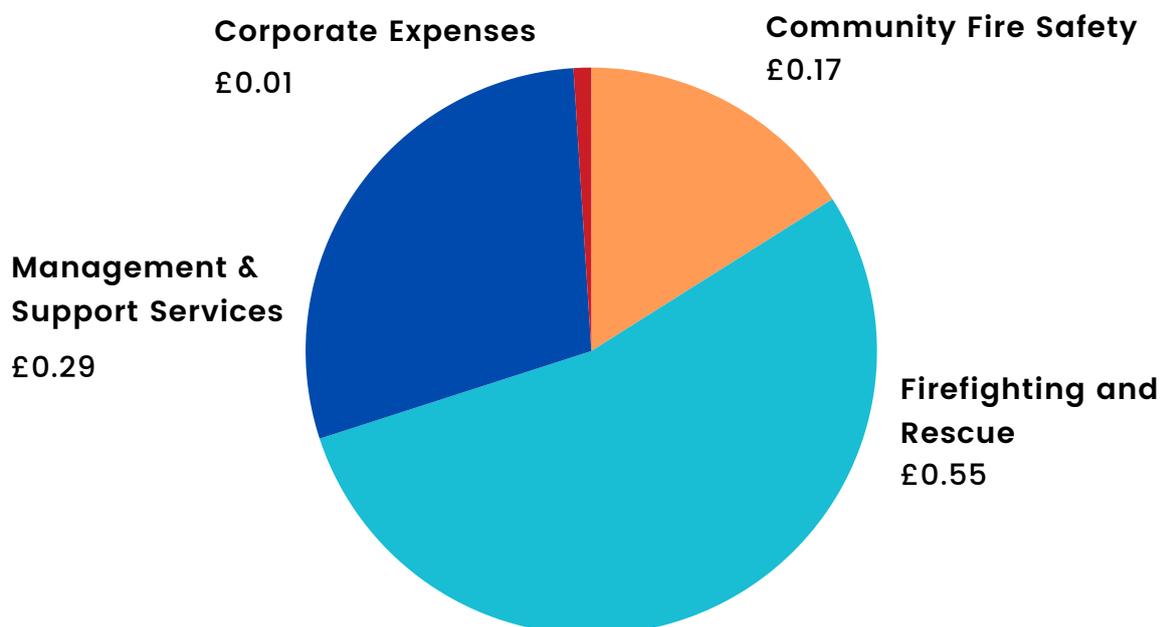
The Draft Statement of Accounts also contains our Annual Governance Statement and details of our Internal Controls.

Supporting Evidence

In addition to our Draft Statement of Accounts, the following published documents provide assurance that we fully meet our duties regarding the financial management of our service.

- [Statement of Accounts 2022/23 \(awaiting external audit certificate\)](#)
- [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24](#)
- [Internal Audit Outturn Report 2023/24](#)
- [Treasury Management Strategy](#)
- [Pay Policy Statement](#)
- [Trade Union Facility Time Reporting](#)
- [What We Spend and How](#)

Where each £1 of our budget is spent





Corporate Governance

All Fire and Rescue Services must carry out their business with high standards of conduct and sound governance. It is our view that, at the end of 2023/24, all requirements associated with Corporate Governance have been fully met.

Supporting Evidence

Cleveland Fire Authority has a statutory duty to provide a Fire and Rescue Service in Cleveland. The Authority consists of 16 elected members split across the the four borough councils of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. Collectively the authority make decisions on key matters such as policy, strategy and budget.

More information about the corporate governance of our service is available on our website, including:

- [Overview of the Cleveland Fire Authority Structure](#)
- [Fire Authority Membership](#)
- [Fire Authority Constitution](#)
- [Ethical Governance Framework](#)
- [Complaints Information](#)



National Framework

All Fire and Rescue Authorities must fully meet the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018). It is our view that, at the end of the 2023/24 financial year, we have fully met all requirements.

Supporting Evidence

[Home Office's annual progress report.](#)

Annual Performance Summary

Emergency Response



12,288
Emergency Calls

00:05:26

Average
Appliance
Response Time



13,769
Appliance
Mobilisations

Prevention and Protection



100%
of Building 7(2)d
Risk Inspections
Completed

46,074

children engaged
through Schools
Education visits



19,683
Safer Homes Visits
Completed

Value for Money



£16.315m
Efficiency Savings
made since 2011/12

-£4.7m (-25%)
Reduction in Government
funding over 10 years

Estimated Cost per
Resident this year

£51.58



Our People

366 Operational
Firefighters
68% of all employees



of our overall
workforce is
Female



of our overall
workforce are from
ethnic groups other
than White British

13.74
Average shifts
lost to sickness



Progress Against Priorities

CRMP Priority 1

To develop our approach to risk management to reflect good practice and improve the safety, health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of our communities.

Managing risks in Cleveland is achieved through proactive prevention, protection (regulation) and emergency response work. Our risk management framework is based on a wealth of intelligence and information from a variety of sources which underpins all our activity and helps us to target our resources to where we are most needed. This includes:

- Targeting our Safer Homes Visits to households with the highest risk, to prevent fires in the home.
- Auditing the highest risk industrial, commercial, and non-domestic premises, through our Risk Based Inspection Programme, such as care homes, shops and our local industry.
- Directing our Schools Education Programme towards schools in areas most at risk of deliberate fire setting.

We carefully identify and manage our risks through our established Risk Management Framework. Through this process we carry out detailed horizon scanning, risk assessment and analysis of our data. The product of this work is our annual Community Risk Profile. This ensures that all decision-making is based on our risks and led by evidence. Through our Directorate and Corporate Risk Registers we have continued to identify and mitigate risks to our service and communities. We publish our Corporate Risk Register on our website, giving the public assurance that we identify our risks and have actions in place to manage them.

Our Business Continuity Plans ensure we are prepared to minimise the impact of any disruption on our ability to deliver an effective service to our community and keep people safe. Disruption may result from staff shortage, loss of premises, technology failure, loss of information, or loss of a key supplier or partner. Our plans have been developed in conjunction with the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum. To assure their effectiveness, there is regular multi agency training and testing.

We also contribute to reducing risks to the safety, health and wellbeing of our community through our Safeguarding arrangements, which are assured externally by the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) every two years. The last inspection, in 2023, resulted in the retention of our "Green" rating, highlighting our excellent approach.

CRMP Priority 2

To build on our successful approach to helping people stay safe in their homes.

We continue to deliver the highest rate of Safer Homes Visits (also known as Home Fire Safety Visits) per 100,000 population anywhere in the country, three times the national average. Using a nationally recognised 'person-centred approach,' the Brigade delivers specific interventions to help safeguard, educate and change unsafe behaviours. These interventions can involve the removal of unsafe items, the provision of risk reduction equipment, and onward referral for additional support from our partners. By improving people's knowledge and changing unsafe behaviours, the Brigade can alter how susceptible people are to risk, reducing the likelihood of an emergency happening and any consequences that may follow.

We have an established process for assuring the quality of our Safer Homes Visits and evaluating their impact. Since our last Annual Statement of Assurance, we have fully embedded our process to seek the views of those who receive a Safer Homes Visit, and we use this feedback to continuously evaluate and improve our service.

Initial feedback from recipients of a Safer Homes Visit in the first 11 months of the quality assurance and evaluation process shows:

100%*

were Satisfied or Very Satisfied with their Visit.



100%*

would recommend a Safer Homes Visit.

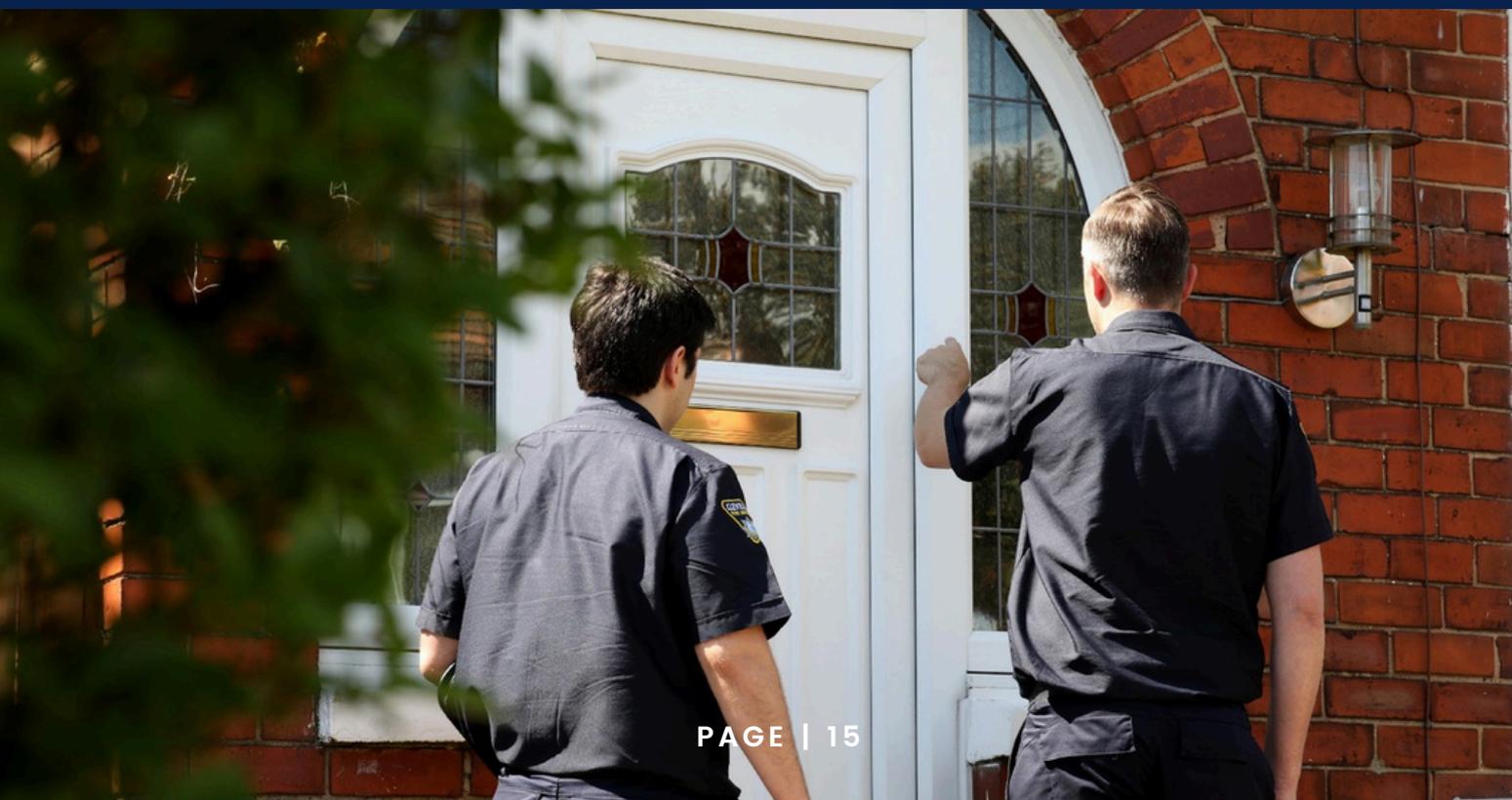


89%*

felt safer in their home following their visit.



* Of 182 Respondents



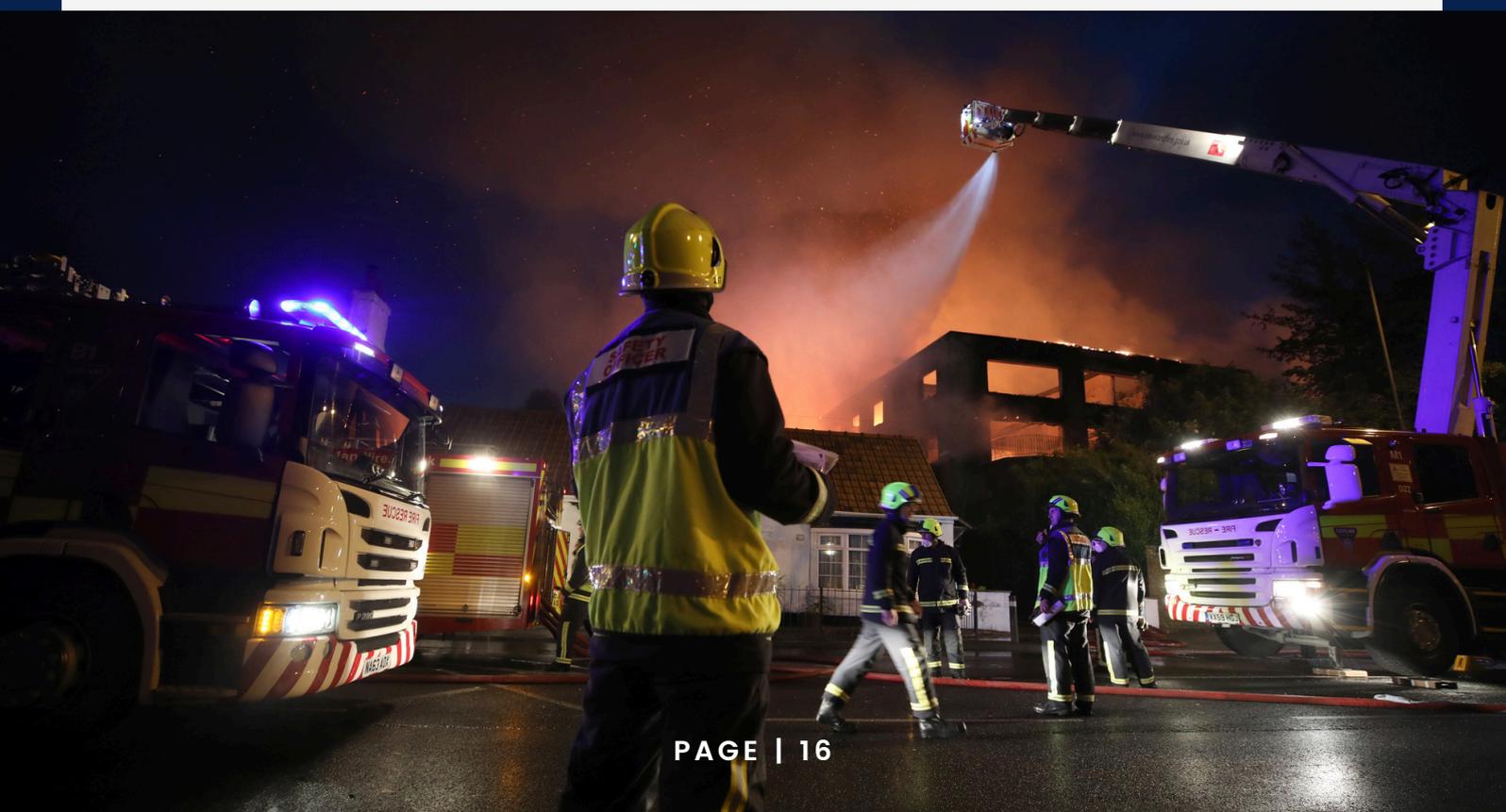
CRMP Priority 3

To tackle arson and deliberate fires.

Arson and deliberate fires continue to create a high level of emergency response demand for our service. Deliberate fires take up a considerable amount of our valuable resources and negatively impact people who live and work in Cleveland. We continue to record the highest rate of deliberate fires nationally, compared to other Fire and Rescue Services.

Despite our high overall ranking in this area, we are moving in the right direction following the publication of our Arson Reduction Strategy. We reported a 19% decrease on our five-year average number of deliberate fires in 2023/24. This gives us confidence that despite arson and deliberate fires continuing to be a significant issue for our community and our service, the steps we are taking to tackle these incidents are beginning to produce positive results.

We have, however, identified that this remains a challenge for our service moving forward and continue to deliver a range of activities to ensure incidents decrease. This includes being an active member of the four Community Safety Partnerships in Cleveland to ensure arson and deliberate fire setting are included in multi-agency priorities. Additionally, we have introduced risk based targeting for our Schools Education Programme, delivering sessions at schools in areas our data tells us are most at risk of deliberate fire. This means we can engage children and young people early and raise awareness of the impact of arson and deliberate fire on our service and their community. In 2023/24 we delivered 380 sessions in schools across Cleveland (an increase of 84% on the previous year), engaging 46,074 young people. We will continue to monitor the impact our interventions have on the prevention of arson and deliberate fire setting to understand what works.



CRMP Priority 4

To ensure our Prevention activities remain efficient, effective and deliver value for money.

Our Prevention service delivers a range of activities to achieve the corporate outcomes of Safer Homes, Safer Transport Infrastructure, Safer Neighbourhoods, Safer Roads, along with improving health outcomes. The Brigade offers a wide range of accessible activities that provide people with advice on general safety matters, education on the main causes of emergencies, and identification of issues along with their potential consequences.

In line with national work to deliver a 3% increase in productivity, led by The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Local Government Association (LGA), all Fire and Rescue Services are required to report to the Home Office on a quarterly basis, demonstrating their activities in Prevention and Protection, Training, Incident Attendance, and Other Tasks. Since January 2024, we have made significant improvements to the reporting of productivity and capacity and introduced new ways of working across both day and night shifts. These changes have enabled us to meet our targets for increasing efficiency and productivity across all our wholetime fire stations. Our early data in measuring our productivity shows we are making improvements, with more time spent on productive activity, making our service better value for money. As a result, we delivered over three times the national average number of Safer Home Visits last year and we are on course to achieve similar results this year.

Based upon nationally recognised calculations to assess the economic benefit of our prevention activity, approved by the National Fire Chiefs Council, the total economic value of saved property throughout Cleveland as a result of prevention of Accidental Dwelling Fires amounted to £1,561,333.19.

Alongside delivering Safer Home Visits, our crews have been highly visible within the community, promoting fire safety and engaging with numerous groups and individuals. This community facing work requires staff with the right skills and training to deliver high quality prevention activity, ultimately enabling them to safeguard, educate and save lives.

Subsequently staff receive Child and Adult Safeguarding training and training on the NFCC National Person Centred-Framework. This means staff can provide tailored support relevant to the specific needs of each person they meet, recognising the differences within our communities in behaviours and vulnerabilities.



CRMP Priority 5

To enhance our risk-based approach to support businesses to keep their buildings safe in line with the Fire Safety Order 2005.

Our Protection services aim to educate and regulate the built environment to protect people, property, and the environment from harm. We carry out audits of businesses, industrial premises, and other non-domestic buildings as part of our Risk Based Inspection Programme, fulfilling our responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005). We work closely with local industries to ensure safety of the High Hazard sites in our area, working collaboratively to ensure an effective and coordinated response. In 2023/24 we completed 857 Fire Safety Audits as part of our Risk Based Inspection Programme, which is over twice the national average.

We continue to target premises deemed highest risk using our robust methodology. The risk assessment for each building is evidence led, using national best practice as well as information relevant to our local context. Risk ratings consider the likelihood of an incident occurring and the potential impact if one occurred. The potential impact of an incident includes the safety of our communities and staff.

In 2023/24 we successfully prosecuted two cases against premises who were not compliant with Fire Safety regulations, consisting of five defendants. In doing so, we have demonstrated our commitment to using our full enforcement powers where required and our fulfilment of our duties under the Fire Safety Order. Additionally, carrying out this work has provided an important development opportunity for our Fire Safety Inspectors, giving them the skills and experience to fulfill their role in any future prosecutions brought on behalf of Cleveland Fire Authority.

Development of staff in our Protection service is particularly important as specific qualifications are required in order to carry out activities such as inspection of High-Rise Buildings. Our Culture and People Plan 2022-26 aims to ensure that we have the right people, with the right skills to carry out the right job, at the right time, so that our workforce can make a difference every day and save lives. The current challenge we face in the delivery of this priority is retention of staff once they are trained, due to competitive opportunities elsewhere (either in other departments or outside of our service).



CRMP Priority 6

To be better prepared to deal with incidents involving buildings where height can have a serious impact on firefighting and evacuation.

Incidents in High-Rise buildings pose a unique challenge to our operational crews and require robust safety processes, training and exercising to ensure our readiness to respond. Following our latest CRMP, and the Grenfell Tower Fire in 2017, we produced our dedicated Tall Building procedure in alignment with National Operational Guidance. The procedure ensures that our approach to fires in Tall Buildings implements national best practice and learning from other services and organisations. Our staff complete training and exercising as part of their annual maintenance of competence to robustly test our procedure. We also provide staff with dedicated equipment such as smoke curtain and smoke hoods to further enhance our operational effectiveness at incidents involving tall buildings. Our Fire Control Operators are trained in Fire Survival Guidance to support them to handle emergency calls and are involved in exercises alongside other operational staff.

In collaboration with lamtech, a local technology firm, we have introduced the Dwelling Occupancy Register as part of our electronic Incident Command System Software. This bespoke web-based system enhances our operational capabilities through comprehensive, real-time tracking of occupants during incidents in high-rise premises, enabling seamless communication between our Control Room, rescue teams, and command structures. The system provides access to users from any location relative to the incident, via smartphones, tablets, or laptops. Through smart devices on every front-line appliance, incident commanders at all levels have full access to critical information. This process ensures uninterrupted flow of data relating to evacuation status of individuals, enhancing situational awareness and operational decision-making.

We have incorporated bespoke building layouts for all known residential high-rises within the Brigade's response area. This allows commanders to access accurate floor and flat information, ensuring that resources are deployed efficiently, and that incident management is aligned with the evolving needs on the incident ground. The system also supports five distinct evacuation statuses—Stay Put, Evacuate, Resident Self Evacuating, Fully Evacuated, and Fire Survival Guidance. Key occupant details, such as flat and floor numbers, phone numbers, and evacuation status, are logged, and can be edited by authorised personnel at any location. The system ensures that risk-critical information is instantly updated and disseminated, resulting in a coordinated response across all command levels.

The comments section enables input of specific information on Fire Survival Guidance, breathing apparatus teams, rescue operations, casualty condition, and current location. Critical updates are captured in real-time, informing ongoing operations and enhancing crew safety. All operational staff have undergone extensive training with the system, ensuring familiarity and proficiency in its use during real-life incidents.

CRMP Priority 7

To ensure that our Firefighters plan and prepare to respond effectively to operational incidents including those across our borders.

The faster we respond to an incident, the greater chance there is that the incident is survivable. We closely monitor our performance in our operational response through monthly and quarterly reporting of our performance indicators including:



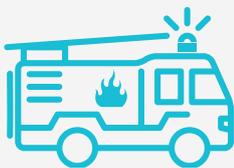
Response Standards

We have maintained a comprehensive, equitable and transparent suite of response standards since 2018. Our performance against these standards is monitored, reported on, and analysed throughout the year.



Actual Attendance Times

The Home Office publishes details of actual attendance times to fire incidents by each service on an annual basis. We continue to record one of the fastest actual response times to fire incidents in the country.



Appliance Availability

We have used our risk management and intelligence frameworks to identify the optimum operational configuration required to achieve our emergency response standards. Currently this configuration is 14-18 appliances dynamically and strategically deployed across the Authority Area. This configuration meets the requirements of the initial emergency response to the range of industrial worst case planning scenarios (WCPS) within high hazard site areas. We consistently monitor and report instances whereby the Brigade did not meet our optimum number of 14 appliances to understand the reasons why and implement control measures to prevent reoccurrence.

Through our partnership working arrangements, we meet our duty to collaborate under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and as a result we provide a more efficient and effective emergency response. More details of our improvements in Partnership working are outlined in CRMP Priority 9.

Mutual Aid

We maintain mutual aid agreements with our two neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, in accordance with the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

This enables us to provide mutual support to respond to incidents, ensuring we fulfil our statutory duties. Our procedures to securely share critical risk information with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services through Resilience Direct supports these agreements.

Risk Information Sharing

As part of the Cross Border Risk Information Group, consisting of six Northern FRS, we share operational risk information relating to High and Very High risks through the Resilience Direct platform. This information is accessed by our staff through Mobile Data Terminals on every appliance.

Our operational crews have access to risk information on each appliance which supports them to respond appropriately in an emergency. This includes Emergency Response Plans, Site Specific Risk Information and Site-Specific Pre Plans. Each station has access to Risk Based Footprints, which provide our crews with data relating to the risks in their station area. This approach is enhanced through ongoing information gathering and familiarisation visits by crews to key risk sites.

National and Local Resilience

We continue to be an active member of the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum (CLRF), a multi-agency partnership providing a consistent approach across agencies to the planning and preparation for major incidents and emergencies, which may have a significant impact on our communities. CLRF supports partners to meet their statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and accompanying statutory guidance. We are represented across several sub-groups of the forum, including the CLRF Strategic Board, Tactical Business Group, Training and Exercising Group, Flood and Adverse Weather Group and Blue Lights Group. Additionally, we are a member of Independent Safety Advisory Groups, and work within the Emergency Planning Unit alongside partners with a focus on operations relating to Counter Terrorism and Critical National Infrastructure sites in our area.

Risks that need to be planned for at a national, strategic level because of their impacts and consequences are known as National Resilience incidents. These incidents require Fire and Rescue Services to work together with other Category 1 and 2 responders to deliver a response to a major incident, emergency, or disruptive challenge. Our arrangements for our involvement in a National Resilience incident are assured through regular inspections, audits, self-assessments, and training exercises.

Safety Equipment

The procurement and introduction of the new MSA Breathing Apparatus sets across the operational workforce marks a significant achievement. These new sets are crucial for ensuring the safety and efficiency of our team, providing them with state-of-the-art equipment that enhances their ability to perform in challenging operational environments.

Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme (JESIP)

We work together with partner emergency services across the North East region to uphold the doctrine and principles of JESIP by continuing to design, develop and deliver training and exercise programmes for commanders at all levels; providing them with the competencies for Joint Decision Making in their day-to-day management of operational incidents, in the event of a major incident and/or significant adverse event. This ensures we provide an efficient and effective response alongside partner emergency services.

National Operational Guidance and Learning

National Operational Guidance (NOG) provides the foundation for developing operational policies, procedures, and good practice. They enable Firefighters to receive training to respond to incidents effectively and safely and ensure a consistent approach to incidents across the country. We are implementing guidance in a planned and phased approach to ensure all requirements are fully embedded in our operational practice. Our Operational Assurance Action Group (OAAAG) lead on sharing and embedding National Operational Learning (NOL) and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) into our operational practice. We gather learning through a proactive approach consisting of daily checks and horizon scanning for local, national and international incidents.



CRMP Priority 8

To develop options for improving the efficient and effective deployment of our Emergency Response resources to flexibly meet current and future risks and demands.

We continuously assess and adjust the deployment of our resources to address current risks effectively. Where we identify areas that our response capabilities may fall short of our established benchmarks we reallocate our resources to ensure our target response times are maintained.

To efficiently and effectively adapt to risk when deploying our Emergency Response resources:



We refer to our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and carry out frequent horizon scanning to enable us to adapt to a rapidly evolving operational landscape. As risks change we review our people and equipment to ensure the right resources are positioned in high-risk areas.



We consistently monitor incident data to identify where our resources should be positioned to provide rapid, efficient responses to all types of incidents.



Flood response resources have been strategically located in East Cleveland, as historical data indicates a higher likelihood of flooding in that region. In Middlesbrough, the growing complexity of the built environment demands specialised equipment and personnel trained to respond to incidents such as high-rise fires. As a result, Middlesbrough Fire Station is equipped with the brigade's assets required for an effective response to such challenges.



We develop strategies in response to specific risks and challenges. For example, our Wildfire Strategy ensures our policies and procedures are robust enough to manage wildfire incidents. The strategy involves provision of appropriate equipment for staff, specialised vehicles and targeted training for stations located in areas vulnerable to wildfires.

On-Call Firefighters contribute to providing an efficient and effective service. However, on-call availability is extremely challenging for all fire and rescue services, and we are no exception. We rely on the On-Call team to enhance appliance numbers and provide resilience across the county. We are committed to developing the On-Call fire provision, as demonstrated by the ongoing On-Call Improvement Review. Moving forward, we will implement strategic changes to improve On-Call availability.



CRMP Priority 9

To be 'Better Together' – working in partnership.

Working collaboratively supports us to respond to complex issues faced by our service and communities, providing solutions to problems that cannot be tackled effectively by any individual service alone. We fulfill our statutory duty to collaborate with other services under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, to support increased effectiveness and efficiency of our service.

An increased focus on partnership working in 2023/24, including our work to embed the new Partnership Framework into our operational practice, provides assurance that we meet our statutory responsibilities in this area and that we operate alongside other agencies to deliver joined up, co-ordinated services. Managers receive training on our Partnership Framework annually.

In addition to our Mutual Aid and Local Resilience partnership working, as detailed on pages 19 and 20, our partnership working arrangements over the last year include:

Collaborative Procurement of a New Mobilisation System

We are collaboratively procuring a new mobilising system alongside Durham & Darlington, Hereford and Worcester, and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services. The new system will enhance our resilience and ensure seamless handling of emergency response calls, especially during events which threaten our Business Continuity. Collaborative procurement also provides each service with better value for money.

Enhancing Maintenance of Cleveland's Emergency Response Vehicles

We provide maintenance services for selected Police vehicles at our Technical Hub. Evaluation of the pilot phases of this partnership with Cleveland Police showed that the arrangement provides the public with better value for money and has enabled us to recruit and train two new Apprentice Mechanics, adding capacity and resilience to our existing Technical Hub. This partnership has now been extended to a five year contract.

Our People



Values and Culture

The national spotlight on values, cultures and behaviours in the Fire and Rescue Service, has made us consider and reflect on the arrangements that we have in place to ensure Cleveland Fire Brigade is 'A Great Place to Work'. We have actioned all recommendations within the 'Values and Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service' report published by His Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). To ensure we are making satisfactory progress in this area we assess ourselves against the relevant national Fire Standards and put action plans in place to address areas where development is required for full compliance. In our Culture and People Plan we have identified thirteen specific components of our workplace culture that we plan to measure. One way in which we measure our workplace culture is through an annual staff culture survey. In 2023/24 the responses reflected that staff understand and promote the service's values and behaviours.

We have continued to embed our Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework, which reflects the requirements of the National Fire Chiefs Council's Fire Standard 'Code of Ethics' and strengthens our emphasis on ethical behaviours. In line with national recommendations we have reviewed key policies and procedures and strengthened our mechanisms through which staff can raise a concern. Managers have received training on having difficult conversations and investigating and hearing disciplines and grievances. Our Employee Relations Advisory Panel provides oversight of discipline and grievance cases to give assurance that they are conducted in a fair and transparent way, and that opportunities for learning and improvements are captured.





Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to consider how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. This means public services must eliminate discrimination, advance quality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't, and encourage good relations between different people in the course of their work. Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We recognise the importance of having a workforce that represents the diversity within our community and diversifying our workforce continues to be an ambition moving forward. In 2023/24 we continue to have a workforce that includes 20% Females and 2% Black Minority Ethnic (BME). 6% of our wholetime firefighters are women and 3% are from a BME background. This year we continued our ongoing work to understand barriers to the recruitment of groups that are underrepresented in our workforce and to identify the positive action we need to take to improve. We evaluated our recruitment campaign of wholetime firefighters, developed our 'Breaking Down Barriers' report with feedback from our communities, and worked with a marketing company to drive change in this area.

As a public sector organisation we are required to report annually on our adherence to the Equality Act 2010. We demonstrate this through publication of the following, which are all available on our website:

- [Public Sector Equality Duty Report](#)
- [Gender Pay Gap Report](#)

Additionally, we voluntarily report on:

- [Ethnicity Pay Gap](#)
- [Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)

Our Staff Networks ensure that the views of women, LGBTQ+, disabled and ethnic minority staff are considered in the day-to-day delivery of our service, ensuring that all staff have a positive experience of their workplace. Additionally, we continue to hold Disability Confident Leader and North East Better Health at Work Ambassador status, awards independently assessed which demonstrate our commitment to fostering equality, diversity and inclusion for staff within our workplace.



North East
Better Health
at Work Award



Training, Skills and Leadership

In 2023/24 we had one wholtime and one on-call recruit courses, from which our service gained 20 wholtime and seven on-call firefighters. New recruits and existing operational firefighters receive training to support the service to meet our statutory duties, as detailed throughout this document in relation to areas including National and Local Resilience, Emergency Response, Prevention and Protection and Safeguarding.

Our use of apprenticeships are integral to our leadership and management arrangements and are available to all staff. To date we have used the apprenticeship route for employment to firefighter and fire control roles, leadership and management roles and for those roles where there is a potential skills shortage in the market such as mechanics and procurement specialists. We are strengthening our performance management arrangements for our leaders and have commenced the delivery of Coaching and Mentoring training to provide those aspiring leaders with access to individuals who are able to provide guidance, support, and feedback to those seeking to develop their leadership skills and become more effective leaders.



Future Plans



01. Delivering on our CRMP 2022-26 priorities

Delivery of our service is led by the priorities set out in our CRMP. We will continue to deliver on the nine priorities within our current CRMP until March 2026.



02. Consult with our community and staff on our service and risks

In line with our Risk Management cycle, we are beginning planning for our next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which will outline our priorities from 2026-2030. A vital part of this process is consultation with our communities and staff to understand the risks in our area, which will begin in 2025.



03. Continue our governance arrangements to provide assurance of our adherence to our legal responsibilities

To provide the public with assurance that our service is delivered effectively and efficiently we will continue to provide assurance regarding delivery of our service priorities, our financial management and governance arrangements.



04. Implement learning from our upcoming HMICFRS inspection

Following our visit from His Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services, we will implement subsequent learning by celebrating good practice and taking steps to make any identified improvements.



For further inquiries about the contents of this document, please contact:

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