



2024/25

Annual Statement of Assurance

CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

Table of Contents

04	—	Foreword
05	—	Introduction
07	—	Service Assurance Summaries
13	—	Annual Performance Summary
14	—	Progress Against Priorities
30	—	HMICFRS
31	—	Future Plans

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.

Cleveland Fire Authority
Endeavour House
Training and Administration Hub
Queens Meadow Business Park
Hartlepool
TS25 5TH
Telephone: 01429 872311
Email: communications@clevelandfire.gov.uk

Foreword

Cleveland's Annual Statement of Assurance provides assurance to our communities that, during 2024/25, 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 2025.



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 2024 to 31st March 2025.

In accordance with guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on Statements of Assurance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England (2013), 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 in the final year of 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 <https://www.clevelandfire.gov.uk/old-crmp-documents/>

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. This assurance update reflects progress in the final year of our 2022-26 CRMP, ahead of the publication of the 2026-30 CRMP in April 2026. Future assurance reports will capture updates against the new CRMP priorities.

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 2024/25, 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 prevention work including our Safer Homes Visits programme, which supports residents to reduce the risk of accidental fires in their home (detailed further on page 14), our Schools Education Programme and our

partnership working arrangements, we worked to prevent deliberate fires and arson (detailed further on page 16).

Additionally through delivery of Protection activity including business engagement, and provision of information and advice.

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 Protection team undertake inspections of industrial, commercial and non-domestic buildings, providing advice and guidance to owners and occupiers to ensure their premise complies 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. They act as a benchmark to measure performance against, helping us to drive continuous service improvements. As of 31st March 2025, 19 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 ten standards and have a remaining four 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, Public Health and Local Authorities, as well as other Fire and Rescue Services. We fulfil our statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) as a Category 1 Responder agency in the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum. Our Partnership Framework gives us the structure to review and evaluate our partnerships as required, to understand the benefits of collaborating. This is detailed further on page 22.

Mutual Aid

Cleveland Fire Brigade maintains formal mutual aid agreements with our neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, as well as Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. These agreements are established in accordance with sections 13 & 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and ensure effective support during operational incidents, enhancing our ability to meet statutory responsibilities. To support collaborative working, we share risk-critical information securely via the Resilience Direct platform. This strengthens the coordination and reliability of our mutual aid arrangements, ensuring all partners have access to vital information in real-time.

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 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

We report our performance against our Health & Safety indicators quarterly, with trends identified and used to ensure appropriate action is 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, overseen by the Assistant Director of Assets and have enhanced our Information Governance Framework. We comply with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, with added system 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 2024/25, all requirements associated with the Brigade's financial management were fully met, as evidenced by the information in our [Draft Financial Report](#) 2024/25. This is subject to the conclusion of our annual external audit.

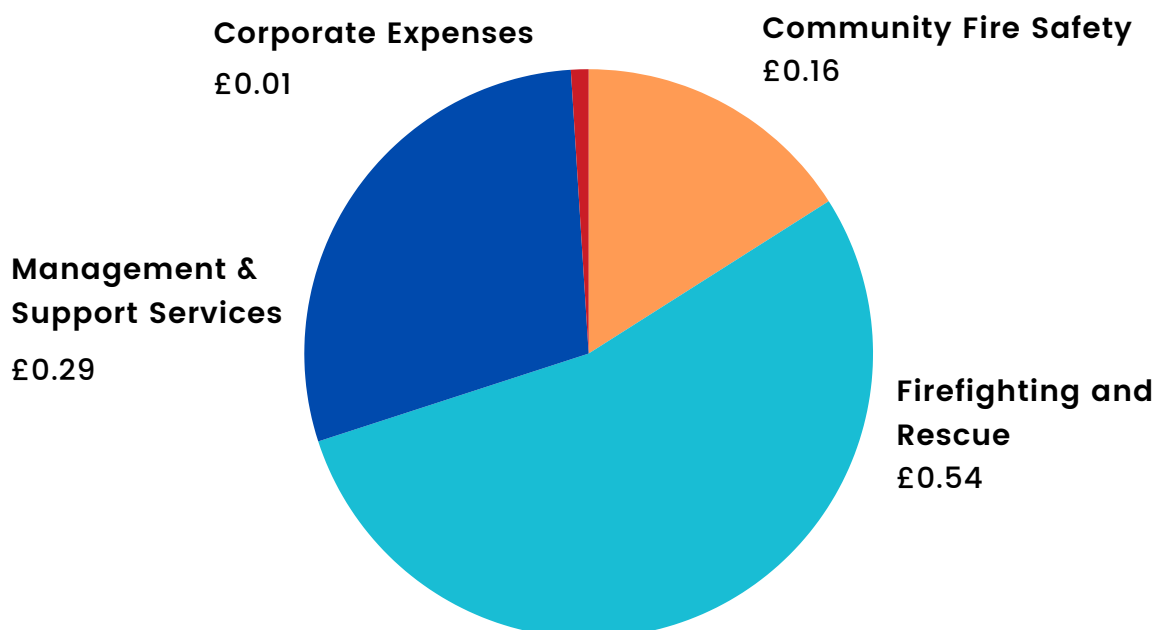
The Draft Statement of Accounts also contains our Annual Governance Statement and details our Internal Controls.

Supporting Evidence

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

- [Statement of Accounts 2023/24](#)
- [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25](#)
- [Internal Audit Outturn Report 2024/25](#)
- [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 2024/25, 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 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 2024/25 financial year, we have fully met all requirements.

Supporting Evidence

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

Annual Performance Summary

Emergency Response



13,458

Emergency Calls

00:06:00

Average
Appliance
Response Time



9,660

Total Incidents
Attended

Prevention and Protection



94%

of Building (72d)
Risk Inspections
Completed

44,587

children engaged
through Schools
Education visits



21,797

Safer Homes Visits
Completed

Value for Money



£16.563m

Efficiency Savings
made since 2011/12

–£4.7m (–25%)

Reduction in Government
funding over 10 years

Estimated Cost per
Resident this year

£57.18

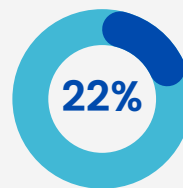


Our People

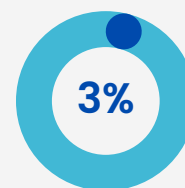
373

Operational
Firefighters

72% of all employees



of our overall
workforce is
Female



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

11.09

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.

Our well established Risk Management Framework is based on a wealth of data and evidence from a variety of sources to help us carefully identify risks effectively. This approach underpins all our activity and helps us to efficiently target our resources to risk through comprehensive horizon scanning, in-depth risk assessments, and detailed analysis. These activities are not just routine; they are fundamental to how we understand emerging challenges and opportunities that may impact our services and the communities we serve. In 2024/25 we further developed our approach to risk management by implementing a new methodology to our annual assessment of risk. Previously known as our Community Risk Profile, our Strategic Assessment of Risk 2025-2029 utilised best practice from Humberside Fire and Rescue Service to identify and assess all the strategic risks facing our service. The outcomes of this process, which combined national and local data with geographic risk modelling, public consultation and professional judgement, underpinned the development of proposed priorities in our draft Community Risk Management Plan 2026-30 document. Our new perspective aims to innovate our approach to strategic risk, helping us to remain responsive, informed, and accountable.

We maintain both Directorate and Corporate Risk Registers, which are continuously updated to reflect the evolving risk landscape. These registers play a critical role in helping us identify, monitor, and mitigate risks that could affect our service delivery or the wellbeing of our communities. To promote transparency and build public trust, we publish our Corporate Risk Register on our website. This public disclosure provides assurance that we are actively managing risks and have clear actions in place to address them. It demonstrates our commitment to openness and reinforces our accountability to the communities we serve. Moving forward, our new Strategic Risk Management Board will additionally provide governance over strategic risk management and risk information processes, to ensure the service effectively identifies, assesses and manages our risks.

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. Regular multi-agency training and testing ensures the effectiveness of these plans.

We play an active and vital role in safeguarding the safety, health, and wellbeing of our community through robust Safeguarding arrangements. These arrangements are not only embedded within our organisational practices but are also externally assured, providing an additional layer of accountability and confidence. Every two years, our safeguarding processes are independently reviewed by the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB), ensuring that our approach remains aligned with best practice and statutory requirements. The most recent inspection, conducted in 2023, reaffirmed the strength of our safeguarding framework, resulting in the retention of our 'Green' rating. This outcome reflects the high standards we uphold and highlights our commitment to protecting vulnerable individuals within our community.

Our safeguarding efforts are further strengthened by the presence of a dedicated Safeguarding Officer, who provides expert guidance and oversight. In addition, all Duty Officers across our organisation are fully trained in both adult and child safeguarding procedures, ensuring that frontline staff are equipped to respond appropriately and effectively to any safeguarding concerns.

Together, these measures form a comprehensive and resilient safeguarding system that supports our wider mission to reduce risks and promote wellbeing across the communities we serve.



CRMP Priority 2

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

We continue to be in the top three performing Fire and Rescue Services in the delivery of Safer Homes Visits (also known as Home Fire Safety Visits) achieving almost three times the national average. These visits are a cornerstone of our prevention strategy and are delivered using a nationally recognised person-centred approach, which allows us to tailor interventions to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of everyone.

Our teams carry out a wide range of targeted actions during these visits, including the removal of unsafe items, the provision and/or installation of risk reduction equipment, and referrals to partner agencies for additional support where needed. These interventions are designed not only to safeguard individuals but also to educate and influence behaviour, helping people understand the risks they face and how to reduce them. By improving awareness and encouraging safer practices, we significantly reduce the likelihood of emergencies occurring and mitigate the potential consequences when they do.

To ensure the continued effectiveness of this vital work, we have a well-established process for quality assurance and impact evaluation. Since our last Annual Statement of Assurance, we have fully embedded a system for gathering feedback from recipients of Safer Homes Visits. This feedback is used to continuously refine and improve our service, ensuring it remains responsive and effective. Responses from the quality assurance process are highly encouraging:

100%*

were Satisfied
or Very Satisfied
with their Visit.



100%*

would
recommend a
Safer Homes Visit.



96%*

felt safer in their
home following
their visit.



These outcomes reflect the professionalism and dedication of our staff, as well as the value of our person-centred approach in making a real difference to people's lives.

* Of 246 Respondents

CRMP Priority 3

To tackle arson and deliberate fires.

Arson and deliberate fire setting continue to place significant demand on our emergency response resources, diverting valuable time and capacity away from other critical areas of service. These incidents not only strain our operational capabilities but also have a profound and negative impact on the people who live and work across Cleveland. We continue to record the highest rate of deliberate fires nationally when compared to other Fire and Rescue Services.

In 2024/25, we experienced a concerning 25% year-on-year increase, equating to 142 additional incidents per 100,000 population. This brings our total to 700 deliberate fires, which is 592 more than the national average, a staggering 548% higher. These figures underscore the scale of the issue and the pressure it places on our resources, communities, and frontline teams.

We recognise that tackling deliberate fire setting requires sustained effort and collaboration. To that end, we continue to deliver a wide range of proactive interventions aimed at reducing incidents and have included this as a priority in our CRMP. We are an active member of all four Community Safety Partnerships across Cleveland, ensuring that arson and deliberate fire setting are prioritised within multi-agency strategies. Our current Arson Reduction Strategy is due for review early 2026, presenting an important opportunity to build on the progress made so far. As part of this process, we intend to develop a collaborative strategy that brings together the expertise and resources of Cleveland Fire Brigade, Cleveland Police, and local authorities. By working in partnership, we aim to create a more integrated and effective approach to tackling arson and deliberate fire setting, ensuring that prevention efforts are aligned, intelligence is shared, and interventions are coordinated to deliver the greatest possible impact for our communities.



In addition, we have introduced risk-based targeting within our Fire Education Programme delivered in schools, focusing our fire safety sessions in areas identified through our data as being most at risk of deliberate fire. This enables us to engage with children and young people early, raising awareness of the consequences of arson and the impact it has on their communities and emergency services. In 2024/25, we delivered 347 sessions in schools across Cleveland, reaching an impressive 44,587 young people and 629 one-on-one fire safety interventions working with 210 young people.

As part of our strategic restructure of the Prevention function, we introduced a dedicated Arson and Deliberate Fire Reduction team to strengthen our focus on tackling this persistent issue. This specialist team brings enhanced capacity and expertise to our prevention efforts, allowing for more targeted interventions and improved coordination with partners. The restructure was carefully designed to deliver greater value for money while maintaining the efficiency and effectiveness of our service. By concentrating resources where they are most needed, we are better positioned to reduce the incidence of deliberate fire setting and its impact on our communities.

We remain committed to monitoring and evaluating the impact of our interventions to understand what works best in preventing arson and deliberate fire setting. This evidence-based approach ensures that our strategies remain effective, responsive, and capable of delivering long-term change.

CRMP Priority 4

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

Our Prevention service plays a central role in achieving our corporate outcomes, which include Safer Homes, Safer Transport Infrastructure, Safer Neighbourhoods, and Safer Roads, alongside contributing to improved health outcomes across our communities. Through a wide range of accessible and inclusive activities, we continue to provide individuals with practical advice on general safety, deliver education on the primary causes of emergencies, and help identify potential risks and their consequences. These efforts are designed not only to inform but to empower people to take proactive steps in safeguarding themselves and others.

In alignment with national objectives to enhance efficiency, we are actively contributing to the sector-wide goal of a 3% increase in productivity, as set out by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA), demonstrating our performance across key areas including Prevention, Protection, Training, incident attendance, and other tasks.

We continue to make significant strides in improving how we measure and report productivity and capacity. The introduction of new ways of working across both day and night shifts have enabled us to meet our targets for increased efficiency across all our Wholetime Fire Stations. Data indicates that these changes are having a positive impact, with more time being spent on productive activities.

One of the standout achievements from last year was our delivery of almost three times the national average number of Safer Home Visits, a testament to the dedication and reach of our operational crews and Prevention teams. We are on track to maintain this high level of performance again this year.

Beyond Safer Home Visits, our crews have maintained a strong and visible presence within the community, engaging with a wide range of individuals and groups to promote fire safety. This community-facing work requires staff who are not only well-trained but also equipped with the right skills to deliver high-quality prevention activities. To support this, all staff receive Child and Adult Safeguarding training, as well as training on the NFCC National Person-Centred Framework. This ensures that our teams can provide tailored support that reflects the diverse needs, behaviours, and vulnerabilities of the people they serve, ultimately helping to safeguard, educate, and save lives.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving service delivery and value for money, a restructure of the Prevention team was undertaken. This strategic change was carefully designed to enhance operational efficiency without compromising the effectiveness of our prevention activities. By realigning roles and responsibilities, streamlining processes, and optimising resource deployment, we anticipate a measurable increase in value for money. Importantly, these changes have been implemented in a way that maintains the high standards of service our communities expect, ensuring that our prevention work continues to be both impactful and responsive.



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. During 2024/25 we completed 1,038 fire safety audits with in-excess of 71% identified as being unsatisfactory. In addition we also completed 931 consultations including Planning applications, Building Regulations submissions, Licensing applications and Houses in Multiple Occupation. We also completed an additional 1,878 other fire safety activities from dealing with complaints to providing advice to the business community. As a result of the number of unsatisfactory audits our level of statutory enforcement remains relatively high with a total of 45 notices being served, 11 Enforcement and 19 Prohibition, these either restrict the use of a building or prohibits the use of the full building and are served where there is a clear risk to the community. We also have an ongoing prosecution case following a fire within a care home with an appearance in Crown Court later this year. By undertaking this important work we demonstrate our commitment to using our full enforcement powers where required and our fulfilment of our duties under the Fire Safety Order.

We commenced a review of our inspection programme methodology during 2024/25 with the intention of commencing a new programme commencing in April 2026 this will ensure that we are following national guidance and best practice to make sure that we continue to prioritise the highest risk premises.

Development of staff in our Protection function 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. Our dedicated Tall Buildings procedure was produced in alignment with National Operational Guidance following the Grenfell Tower Fire in 2017 and the publication of our last CRMP in 2022. 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. In addition to this, we recently conducted a no-notice high-rise exercise, alongside partner agencies. This exercise, together with the subsequent debrief, has informed a comprehensive crew task analysis to ensure we are deploying the correct resources and response strategies, including additional measures required for an immediate building evacuation. To further embed this learning, we are producing new action cards to assist crews in understanding and fulfilling their role at high-rise incidents.

We continue to operate our 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.



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

Cleveland Fire Brigade maintains formal mutual aid agreements with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, including North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service. These agreements are established in accordance with sections 13 & 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and ensure effective cross-border support during operational incidents, enhancing our ability to

meet statutory responsibilities. To support this collaborative working, we share risk-critical information securely via the Resilience Direct platform. This strengthens the coordination and reliability of our mutual aid arrangements, ensuring all partners have access to vital information in real-time.

In 2023, Cleveland Fire Brigade formalised an agreement with local commercial stakeholders for the stockpiling and sharing of firefighting foam. This resource is accessible to all signatory organisations across Cleveland in the event of a major incident requiring enhanced firefighting capability. Additionally, Cleveland Fire Brigade works in partnership with Cleveland Police to provide shared access to key operational assets, including the Brigade's Incident Command Unit and Welfare Pod, as well as Cleveland Police's drone capability, supporting joint incident response and resilience.

Risk Information Sharing

Cleveland Fire Brigade is an active member of the Cross Border Risk Information Group, comprising six Fire and Rescue Services across the North of England. Through this collaborative forum, we share operational risk information relating to identified High and Very High risk premises and locations via the Resilience Direct platform. This information sharing ensures that responding personnel have timely access to critical site-specific data during emergency incidents.

Risk information is accessible to our operational crews through Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) fitted on every front-line appliance. Information available includes detailed risk information, Emergency Response Plans, Site-Specific Risk Information (SSRI), and Pre-Plans. In addition, each station has access to Risk-Based Footprints, which provide intelligence on known risks within their respective areas. This risk-informed approach is further strengthened by regular site familiarisation visits in line with the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, and continuous information gathering by crews at key risk locations, supporting effective and safe operational decision-making.

National and Local Resilience

We continue to be an active member of the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum 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 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

Cleveland Fire Brigade continues to invest in state-of-the-art equipment to ensure our crews can operate safely and effectively in a wide range of challenging environments. Recent investment includes the rollout of telemetry-enabled Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets, enhancing firefighter safety through real-time location monitoring. We are also rolling out battery-operated Road Traffic Collision (RTC) rescue tools across our fleet and have a 45-metre aerial appliance currently in manufacture to enhance our ability to deal with fires and the response to incidents that occur at height. To support water-related incidents, particularly on the River Tees, a new rescue boat has been procured, further strengthening our response capability. In addition, all frontline firefighters have been issued with new firefighting boots to reflect the evolving needs of modern operational activity. These underline our ongoing commitment to firefighter safety, technological advancement, and operational resilience.

Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme (JESIP)

Cleveland Fire Brigade works closely with partner agencies to uphold the principles of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP). We continue to design, develop, and deliver multi-agency training and exercise programmes for commanders at all levels, equipping them with the competencies required for effective Joint Decision Making during day-to-day incidents, major incidents, or significant adverse events. This collaborative approach ensures a coordinated, efficient, and effective response alongside multi-agency partners. In support of this, Cleveland Fire Brigade was subject to an assurance audit by the national JESIP Assurance Team, which provided positive feedback and confirmed that JESIP is well embedded across the organisation.

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 (OAAG) 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 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 the provision of appropriate equipment for staff, specialised vehicles, and targeted training for stations located in areas vulnerable to wildfires. This has recently included the introduction of new wildfire PPE, with further investment underway in the procurement of a new wildfire response vehicle to strengthen our operational capability.
- We also work closely with external organisations and partners to analyse risk data and local conditions. This includes our ongoing collaboration with Operational Research in Health (ORH), who are modelling our responses, resources, and time to incident to ascertain the most effective placement of stations and equipment. This evidence-based approach ensures our resources are aligned with both community risk and operational demand.

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 fulfil our statutory duty to collaborate with other services under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, to support increased effectiveness and efficiency of our service.

We have resourced to ensure we have dedicated governance of our partnership arrangements, and this continues to be a priority moving forward. We aim to continuously improve our Partnership Framework to provide assurance that we meet our statutory responsibilities in this area and that we operate alongside other agencies to deliver joined up, co-ordinated services. We are currently developing enhanced data and reporting around our partnership arrangements to ensure we can make decisions about partnerships that are based upon evidence. Moving forward we will use our resources to evaluate the impact of partnership working, particularly our partnerships aimed at preventing fire and other risks in our communities.

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 included further work on the delivery of a new mobilising system, procured collaboratively 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.



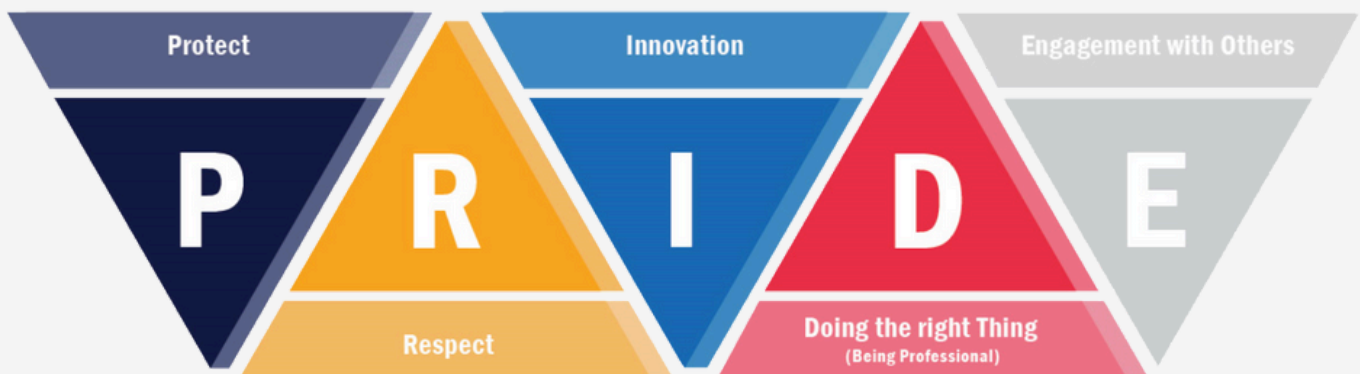
Our People



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 made good progress on the recommendations within the 'Values and Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service' report and the 'Standards of Behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services' report, published by His Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). To ensure maintenance of 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. A further staff culture survey is priority in this years Service Plan.

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. The introduction this year of a dedicated Commissioning Manager and Professional Standards 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 2024/25 we continue to have a workforce that includes 22% Females and 2% Black Minority Ethnic (BME). 8% 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.

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 culturally diverse 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 2024/25 we held two wholetime and one on-call recruit courses, from which our service gained 28 wholetime and three 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 is 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, procurement and Human Resource specialists. We are strengthening our performance management arrangements for our leaders and have delivered 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.





His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

In 2024 we received our third bi-annual inspection from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The inspectorate assessed service performance in 11 areas through analysis of documents and data, reviews of operational incidents, surveys of the public, and of FRS staff, interviews, focus groups, and observations of fire and rescue practice.

The inspectorate passed the following independent judgement:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Understanding fire and risk	Responding to fires and emergencies	Preventing fire and risk	
	Responding to major incidents	Right people, right skills	Public safety through fire regulation	
	Best use of resources	Promoting fairness and diversity	Promoting values and culture	
	Future affordability	Managing performance and developing leaders		

The full inspection outcome was published outside of the timeframe covered by this document. The report identified 16 Areas for Improvement (AFI's), divided between the areas judged as Adequate and Requires Improvement, which will be detailed fully in the 2025/26 Annual Statement of Assurance.

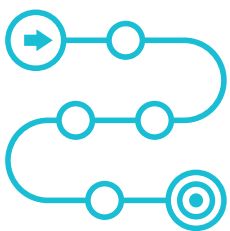
We welcome the findings of the HMICFRS report and are committed to addressing the recommendations presented by the inspectorate over the next two years through our ongoing action plan.

Future Assurance Plans



01. Progress against our HMICFRS Action Plan

Following publication of the HMICFRS inspection report, the service will make and monitor progress against the identified areas for improvement.



02. Publish our new Community Risk Management Plan (2026–30)

Following public consultation in 2025, the service will finalise and publish the Community Risk Management Plan which will capture service priorities between 2026 and 2030.



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.



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

Cleveland Fire Authority
Endeavour House
Training and Administration Hub
Queens Meadow Business Park
Hartlepool
TS25 5TH
Telephone: 01429 872311
Email: info@clevelandfire.gov.uk