

HMICFRS Areas for Improvement Action Plan

EFFECTIVENESS: How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?

Area for Improvement 1: *The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information. This should include site-specific information*

What we aim to achieve

1. We will work with an independent organisation to further review the community risk levels in Northumberland to create an updated community risk profile of the county. This information will be used to inform future decision making regarding the deployment of resources between the protection, prevention, response and support departments of the service.
2. Further, we will develop a strategy for collating and analysing site-specific risk information which will be used to develop tactical plans for specific sites. This information will be readily available to responding crews, both from Northumberland and neighbouring services and will be updated on a regular basis.
3. The strategy will include receiving and ensuring appropriate access to risk information from neighbouring services for sites where there is potential for NFRS appliances to respond to emergency incidents.

What we have achieved so far

- € The risk profiling work completed with a third-party organisation, with expertise in community risk profiling, has led to the development of our county wide Integrated Risk Management Plan, giving us a greater understanding of risk to the community. This has defined annual strategies, shaping our station plans for 2021.
- A working group has undertaken a training needs analysis for SSRI procedures, quality assurance and cross-border arrangements. The group is progressing each workstream.
- € All current site-specific risk information is readily available via mobile data terminals in all fire appliances. This includes information for all such premises in Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service (TWFRS). Similarly, all Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) information is available to TWFRS staff attending incidents within Northumberland. Arrangements have been established with Cumbria and Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Services to exchange risk information via the Resilience Direct platform. Work is ongoing to develop similar arrangements with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.
- € A review of safeguarding arrangements has resulted in the provision of additional information for crews attending incidents where vulnerable persons may be involved. A clear roadmap for ongoing future training has been developed.

Area for Improvement 2: *The service should assure itself it allocates the right resources to prevention activities and that prevention activities align to risk*

What we aim to achieve

1. We will work with an independent organisation to further review the community risk levels in Northumberland to create an updated community risk profile of the county.
2. This information will be used to inform future decision making regarding the deployment of resources between the prevention, protection, response and support departments of the service.
3. Analysis of the risk profile will be used to ensure that the prevention strategy incorporates activities most appropriate to reducing community risk levels to the lowest reasonably achievable level and which align to the priorities of the service and the council.
4. Where appropriate prevention activities will be delivered within robust partnership arrangements.
5. Priorities within the prevention strategy will include ensuring effective safeguarding arrangements are maintained, delivery of a targeted safe and wellbeing programme and increasing delivery of road safety programmes.
6. Key prevention activities will be evaluated to ensure effectiveness.

What we have achieved so far

- € Having engaged the services of a third-party organisation with expertise in community risk profiling, the outcome of this work is now used to inform the accidental dwelling fires reduction strategy. Findings have also been used to develop a specific prevention protection and emergency response strategies, which will include the approach to delivering the safe and wellbeing programme. The Covid-19 pandemic has delayed the full implementation of this multi departmental strategy but will commence in June 2021.
- The Safe and Well-Being Programme prioritises according to partner referrals and is underpinned by a risk modelling process. This risk model allows the service to prioritise visits to some of the most vulnerable people in the county, and following a comprehensive review, will be refreshed annually.
- Quality assurance and evaluation objectives have been included in the prevention department plan, with specific focus on safe and wellbeing visits. Response to the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in delays in developing arrangements for quality assurance and evaluation. Work continues to develop these key workstreams and following the development of a revised safe and wellbeing product will be delivered by December 2021.

Area for Improvement 3: *The service should evaluate and assure its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better*

What we aim to achieve

1. We will ensure that the prevention strategy includes development and use of an evaluation toolkit.
2. This will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of key prevention activities, including our partnerships. In doing this, cognisance will be taken of any developments at a national level, in particular the work being conducted by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Community Risk Programme.
3. The operational assurance process will be further developed to encompass all other areas of the service, including prevention. This will ensure that standards of performance are established and achieved for prevention activities.
4. Additionally, the service performance management framework will be reviewed to

What we have achieved so far

- Quality assurance and evaluation objectives have been included in the prevention department plan, with specific focus on safe and wellbeing visits. Response to the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in delays in developing arrangements for quality assurance and evaluation, which were due to be in place by June 2020. These are currently under continued development, in line with the revised Safe and wellbeing product, and are due for implementation towards the end of 2021.
- A performance management framework has been developed to ensure prevention

ensure that prevention activities are included.

5. Consideration will be given to enhancing the value of customer satisfaction surveys for prevention activities.

activities are included.

Area for Improvement 4: *The service should improve its use of communications to provide information about fire prevention and to promote community safety*

What we aim to achieve

1. We will conduct a review of internal and external communications and develop a strategic communications plan for the service.
2. The communications plan will provide means for communicating both internally within the service and externally with local communities.
3. External communications will utilise all available and appropriate platforms, including social media, to provide information about fire prevention and to promote community safety.
4. Where appropriate, the information provided will be bespoke in terms of both content and delivery methods to reflect the target audience and potential barriers to communications to hard to reach groups within Northumberland.

What we have achieved so far

- NFRS now has bespoke Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, which are regularly updated to provide information about fire prevention and to promote community safety. These forums have been used very effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic response, where face to face communications were limited. Use of social media continues to expand to support the work undertaken by NFRS.
- Staff engagement and internal communications is now an integral part of the new NFRS people strategy.

Area for Improvement 5: *The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme*

What we aim to achieve

1. We will work with an independent organisation to further review the community risk levels in Northumberland to create an updated community risk profile of the county.
2. This information will be used to inform future decision making regarding the deployment of resources between the protection, prevention, response and support departments of the service.
3. Analysis of the risk profile will be used to ensure that the protection strategy incorporates a revised risk-based inspection programme for business and commercial premises.
4. Programme resourcing levels will be developed proportionate to reducing commercial premises risk levels to the lowest reasonably achievable level and which aligns to the priorities of the service and the council.

What we have achieved so far

- Having engaged the services of a third-party organisation with expertise in community risk profiling findings have been used to develop the development of a protection strategy.
- The capacity to conduct risk-based inspections of business and commercial premises has been increased by the training of a number of emergency response managers to enable them to carry out inspections of lower risk premises. Training of a second cohort of 16 emergency response managers was due to be completed by the end of March 2020, however this has been delayed due to the COVID-19 response. All premises classified as high risk in Northumberland were inspected during 2019/20, and this has continued during 2020/21. However, progress with this plan has been adversely affected by the COVID-19 response with the risk-based inspection programme having been suspended between March and July. Despite this, at end of

5. Protection activities will be reviewed to identify potential for delivery within robust partnership arrangements.

August 2020 26% of this target had been achieved and the service is on track to achieve 100% by end of March 2021.

- The Fire Authority has approved the recruitment of two additional fire safety inspection officers, who have completed intensive specialist training for their roles. This will further increase the capacity of the service to deliver the risk-based inspection programme. In addition, specific grant funding from central government has enabled the service to recruit a further inspecting officer.

Area for Improvement 6: *The service should ensure it works proactively with local businesses to share information and expectations on compliance and fire safety regulations*

What we aim to achieve

1. The protection strategy will include the provision of resources to work proactively with local businesses to promote awareness of fire safety regulations.
2. We will work with regional fire and rescue partners and wider partners to develop a business engagement strategy.
3. A business engagement strategy will be developed to maximise the use of our social media platforms and the development of bespoke business / commercial liaison and engagement - LinkedIn.
4. We will ensure that NFRS is actively represented at business forums to maximise our engagement and networking opportunities i.e., North East Chamber of Commerce; Better Business For All Forum.
5. We will support NCC Public Protection in providing advice and guidance to private sector and commercial landlords.

What we have achieved so far

- NFRS is now a member of Northumberland Chamber of Commerce and has regularly attended meetings since June 2018.
- A regional fire safety group analysed areas for further collaboration between services, with recommendations accepted by the regional collaboration board. This will result in the adoption of a regional approach to business engagement.
- NFRS Fire Safety staff have continued to attend business engagement events, including NE EXPO during 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the ability for face-to-face representation, but virtual sessions have been delivered, and well received, through the business forum, Better Business For All.
- NFRS is now established as a Better Business For All (BBFA) partner, as mentioned above. The group aims to achieve better regulation and business support. This is achieved by improving awareness between business and regulators to ensure that the purpose of regulation is understood and that regulators are aware of each other's activities and share findings. NFRS fire safety staff have supported Better Business For All, train the regulator events.
- NFRS is involved in the Intelligent Risk Information System (IRIS) project, aiming to utilise regulator information to inform inspection strategies. The proposal is to use inspection activities by partners such as Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Local FRS's HSE etc, sharing inspection results to inform the inspection plans of other regulators. The premise that if a business is compliant in one regulatory area, then they are likely to be compliant in other regulatory areas and therefore of a lower inspection priority than non-compliant premises. To date a data protection impact assessment has been conducted and a memorandum of understanding is currently being consulted on. A pilot scheduled for early 2020 has been delayed by the COVID-19 response.
- We have improved our business specific engagement through social media and as

an example supported the national social media campaign developed for fire sprinkler awareness week. To complement our messaging on Twitter and Facebook, we have also developed a dedicated LinkedIn page which has been set up to specifically promote events and business fire safety advice. Business engagement via social media has continued throughout 2020 and 2021, particularly during the COVID-19 response when face to face communications was not possible. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on how businesses operate has required specific fire safety advice to be developed and delivered, primarily via social media and the delivery of online live business fire safety engagement events.

Area for Improvement 7: *The service should ensure staff know how to command fire service assets at incidents effectively and safely*

What we aim to achieve

1. We will develop a strategy for responding to emergency incidents which will ensure that all staff with incident command responsibilities are provided with adequate training and development and are competent to perform the role.
2. Operational command competence will be assessed at regular intervals in accordance with national operational guidance and will be subject to the operational assurance process.

What we have achieved so far

- An incident command (IC) strategy has been developed, including ICL levels 1, 2 3 and 4.
- The acquisition stage is delivered by external providers, with the maintenance stage delivered by NFRS incident command specialists in accordance with national operational guidance. Initially over 100 incident commanders required training. This training has now been completed.
- A comprehensive database has been established to ensure development is recorded and that recertification is completed in a timely manner.
- The operational assurance process is becoming established as a means of confirming the competence of staff to command incidents. The process currently includes active incident monitoring and incident debriefing. The debriefing process was updated during 2019 to facilitate virtual debriefs and to capture learning from hot and informal debriefs. Organisational Learning Bulletins have been introduced as a means of sharing learning from operational incidents. A pre incident operational assurance model is currently being developed to close the loop.
- A service specific programme has been developed for firefighters who may be required to take charge of fire appliances. A pilot course was delivered for eight students during February 2020, with a further four courses delivered to date.

Area for Improvement 8: *During incidents, the service should ensure it gives relevant information to the public to help keep them safe*

What we aim to achieve

What we have achieved so far

1. We will conduct a review of internal and external communications and develop a communications plan for the service.
 2. The communications plan will provide means for communicating both internally within the service and externally with local communities.
 3. The provision of incident information to the public will be on a 24/7 365 basis.
 4. External communications will utilise all available and appropriate media, including social media to provide relevant information to the public to help keep them safe before, during and following incidents.
 5. Where appropriate, the information provided will be bespoke in terms of content and delivery methods to reflect the target audience and potential barriers to communications within Northumberland.
- NFRS now has bespoke Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. These are used to good effect to give relevant information to the public to help keep them informed during incidents. These methods of communication have been expanded to incorporate national prevention campaigns as well as regional recruitment campaigns.
 - The service Twitter and Facebook accounts are updated dynamically by fire control to provide information during operational incidents on a 24/7 basis. NCC central Communications team provide out of hours support.
 - Staff engagement and internal communications is now an integral part of the new NFRS people strategy.

Area for Improvement 9: *The service should ensure an effective system of debriefing to enable staff to learn from operational incidents to improve future response and command*

What we aim to achieve

What we have achieved so far

1. We will further develop the operational assurance process to incorporate a pre-incident phase to provide assurance that all staff, equipment, PPE, training and welfare arrangements necessary to support our fire appliances responding to incidents are in place.
 2. Work will be conducted to fully embed the existing active incident monitoring and incident debriefing procedures to ensure that all learning is recorded and shared as appropriate.
 3. Once fully established and embedded, there will be full approach to quality assuring and learning from our response to operational incidents.
 4. The debriefing process will include outcomes from both formal and informal debriefs.
- The active incident monitoring and incident debriefing processes were established in 2018.
 - The debriefing process was updated during 2019 to facilitate virtual debriefs and to capture learning from hot and informal debriefs. To date, 31 debriefs have been completed for 2021. Organisational Learning Bulletins have been introduced as a means of sharing learning from operational incidents. This has increased the amount of learning from operational incidents across the service.
 - Further training on incident debriefing was delivered to middle managers by the College of Policing in June 2019.

Area for Improvement 10: *The service should ensure that supervisory managers know how to apply Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles*

What we aim to achieve

What we have achieved so far

1. We will continue to promote and embed the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) to all levels within the service and with wider partners as appropriate.
- JESIP is embedded in all relevant service orders, incident command training, assessment and operational assurance events.

2. We will ensure that we monitor national JESIP development and revisions to ensure that staff are always working to the current standards and doctrine.
 3. Application of JESIP will be included in all incident command training, assessment and operational assurance events.
 4. JESIP will be integral to the national operational guidance (NOGP) doctrine once adopted by the service.
- As a constant reminder of JESIP to supervisory managers, the principles have now been prominently displayed in all NFRS vehicles.
 - Appropriate personnel have been issued with JESIP aide-memoires for reference.
 - Operational Information Notes (OIN), providing an aide-memoire of initial considerations for dealing with a range of incident types, are currently being developed to replace our existing standard operating principles. The OINs will be structured in accordance with the JESIP Joint Decision Model (JDM).

Area for Improvement 11: *The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information. This should include cross-border risk information*

What we aim to achieve

What we have achieved so far

1. We will work with an independent organisation to further review the community risk levels in Northumberland to create an updated community risk profile of county. This information will be used to inform future decision making regarding the deployment of resources between the protection, prevention and response departments of the service.
2. Further, we will develop a strategy for collating and analysing site-specific risk information which will be used to develop tactical plans for specific sites. This information will be readily available for responding crews, both from Northumberland and neighbouring services and will be updated on a regular basis.
3. The strategy will include receiving and ensuring appropriate access to risk information from neighbouring services for sites where there is potential for NFRS appliances to respond to emergency incidents.

- The risk profiling work completed with a third-party organisation, with expertise in community risk profiling, has led to the development of our county wide IRMP strategy, giving us a greater understanding of the risk to the community. This has defined our ongoing IRMP year on year strategy, shaping our station plans for 2021.
- A working group has developed a training needs analysis for SSRI procedures, quality assurance and cross-border arrangements. The group is progressing these workstreams.
- € All site-specific risk information is readily available via mobile data terminals in all fire appliances. This includes information for all such premises in Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service (TWFRS), similarly all Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) is available to TWFRS staff attending incidents within Northumberland. Arrangements have been established with Cumbria and Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Services to exchange risk information via the Resilience Direct platform. Work is ongoing to develop similar arrangements with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.
- € A review of safeguarding arrangements has resulted in the provision of additional information for crews attending incidents where vulnerable persons may be involved. A clear roadmap for ongoing future training has been developed.

EFFICIENCY: How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?

Area for Improvement 12: *The service should ensure resources allocated to prevention, protection, response and support activities are linked to risks and priorities set out in its integrated risk management plan*

What we aim to achieve

What we have achieved so far

1. We will work with an independent organisation to further review the community risk levels in Northumberland to create an updated community risk profile of county. This information will be used to inform future decision making regarding the development of a service wide strategy for the deployment of resources between the protection, prevention, response and support departments of the service.
2. Analysis of the risk profile will be used to ensure that the prevention, protection,

- € The risk profiling work completed with a third-party organisation, with expertise in community risk profiling, has led to the development of our county wide IRMP, giving us a greater understanding of the risk to the community. This has defined our ongoing IRMP year on year, shaping not only our prevention and protection strategies but underpins our response strategy and informs our station plans for 2021.

response and support activities are most appropriate to reducing community risk levels to the lowest reasonably achievable level and which align to the priorities of the service (IRMP) and the council.

3. The risk profile and consequent deployment of resources will be kept under regular review.

€ A decision was made to extend our current IRMP for a number of reasons, namely to align with NCC administration, to recognise the development of the national risk programme and fire standard, and to allow for comprehensive consultation with our communities and partners.

Area for Improvement 13: *The service needs to improve how it monitors the productivity of staff. It needs to ensure there is appropriate monitoring and management of working time*

What we aim to achieve

1. We will strive to develop and promote an organisational culture which values the contribution of staff, whilst also recognising the need to protect their health and wellbeing by encouraging a good work/life balance.
2. We will develop an overarching strategy, based on a refreshed community risk profile for Northumberland, which ensures that adequate resources are available across all levels of the service to achieve the services mission and priorities. This work will include a review of the current management structures and arrangements.
3. We will ensure that work undertaken by teams and individuals is aligned with the priorities of the service and the council through robust performance management and quality assurance arrangements.
4. Guidance will be provided for all staff regarding contract arrangements and work patterns.

What we have achieved so far

- Guidance has been communicated to all staff via email and routine notice regarding working time arrangements as an initial action prior to the development of an overarching strategy which ensures adequate resources are available across all levels of the service.
- A service order has been developed, providing staff with guidance regarding rest periods.
- Managers are being supported by HR (Human Resources) to ensure that staff are compliant with guidance.
- NFRS has continued throughout the pandemic to maintain service provision to the community by adapting to a blended approach to virtual/homeworking models.

Area for Improvement 14: *The service should ensure it has good continuity arrangements in place and take account of all foreseeable threats and risks. It needs to review and test plans regularly*

What we aim to achieve

1. We will work with an independent organisation to further review the community risk levels in Northumberland to create an updated community risk profile of the county. This information will be used to inform future decision making regarding the development of a service wide strategy for the deployment of resources between the protection, prevention, response and support departments of the service. The allocation of resources across departments will consider future management and business continuity arrangements, to ensure the service is as robust as is reasonably practicable.
2. Additionally the community risk review will provide information of the range and likelihood of incidents to be expected within Northumberland, which will be used to

What we have achieved so far

- All NFRS business continuity plans have been updated and approved by the service leadership team (SLT) in February 2019. All such plans will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis, with a six-monthly report on progress to SLT. Although initially reviewed in 2020, all plans require further updating following the COVID-19 experience. A full debrief of the response has been conducted and the results are currently being considered.
- Quarterly business continuity exercises are now scheduled for fire control.
- Exercising arrangements for other plans are currently being developed with the civil contingency team and learning & development department. A major business

inform the community risk register. In turn this information will determine pre-planning and contingency arrangements for a range of emergency incidents NFRS will respond to and incidents/occurrences which may have a detrimental effect on NFRS ability to carry out its statutory functions.

3. A generic business continuity plan, as well as specific plans (e.g., fuel, pandemic flu, threat level, resilient plans) will be maintained and exercised to ensure that NFRS has the necessary levels of resilience in order to continue to fulfil its statutory functions in the event of all foreseeable threats.

continuity exercise was due to be conducted in September 2020, however this was rescheduled to later in the year, when a COVID-19 related exercise was conducted in November 2020. Outcomes have been fed directly into the business continuity plan.

Area for Improvement 15: *The service needs to agree ways of working within its reducing budget that enables it to meet future prevention, protection and response requirements*

What we aim to achieve	What we have achieved so far
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will work with an independent organisation to further review the community risk levels in Northumberland to create an updated community risk profile of county. This information will be used to inform future decision making regarding the development of a service wide strategy for the deployment of available resources between the protection, prevention, response and support departments of the service. The allocation of resources across departments will consider future management and business continuity arrangements, to ensure the service is as robust as is reasonably practicable. 2. In addition to working closely with Northumberland County Council, we will explore all appropriate areas for partnership working which has potential to increase the effectiveness and/or efficiency of the service. Partnership working will initially focusing on engaging with the north east fire collaboration project, which aims to improve effectiveness and efficiency through greater collaboration between Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and Durham & Darlington FRSs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € The risk profiling work completed with a third-party organisation, with expertise in community risk profiling, has led to the development of our county wide IRMP, giving us a greater understanding of the risk to the community. This has defined our ongoing IRMP year on year, shaping our prevention, protection and emergency response strategies. € Working patterns within the central Community Safety (prevention) Team have been reviewed and changed to increase capacity on specific programmes. Additional investment by NCC has enabled the service to recruit additional community safety delivery staff to enhance the delivery of the safe and wellbeing product. € A Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been established with NCC Youth Services, to enable the service to draw on the experience of youth workers to support programmes targeting vulnerable young people. This arrangement continues to work well. € Several Prince's Trust sessional workers have been recruited to provide support to mainstream instructional staff when required and when external funding allows. € Staffing arrangements have been reviewed within the Fire Safety Department (Protection) and a new structure has been agreed that will both increase capacity and improve efficiency. Increased use of emergency response personnel to increase delivery of risk-based protection inspections has also improved capacity and efficiency. € Work scheduled to review the number of fire appliances which are sent to incidents (pre-determined attendance) has now been completed. € Work continues at a regional level to identify more effective and efficient ways of

delivering the fire control function, although progress has been delayed by the COVID-19 response.

PEOPLE: How well does the service look after its people?

Area for Improvement 16: *The service should make sure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation*

What we aim to achieve

1. We will work with NCC to develop a set of NFRS values which clearly link with both the NCC and national fire service values. Staff at all levels of NFRS will be involved in developing a set of values which reflect the service and which are recognisable to all staff.
2. Supported by NCC, we will work with appropriate organisations to conduct a cultural review/ audit.
3. We will strive to develop and promote an organisational culture which reflects the needs and expectations of the communities we serve, while also valuing the contribution of staff. The culture will aim to support the health and wellbeing of staff by encouraging a good work/life balance.
4. In developing the behaviours staff at all levels within the service, we will take cognisance of the findings from the NCC staff survey and use the next survey to measure improvement.
5. We will conduct a review of the service leadership team, to ensure that the senior leaders actively demonstrate behaviours which align with the service values and which encourage a positive culture for the organisation.
6. In conjunction with NCC, we will conduct a review of internal and external communications and develop a strategic communications plan for the service.
7. The communications plan will provide means for communicating both internally within the service and externally with local communities.
8. The communication plan will promote the use of all available and appropriate

What we have achieved so far

- NFRS conducted 17 staff engagement workshops during the period July to December 2019, attended by over 100 staff members to embed the NCC values into the service and agree NFRS specific leadership commitments for each value along with desired behaviours. This is now complete.
- Work to develop a NFRS specific visualisation of the values and supporting leadership commitments which can be used to engage staff was initially delayed due to the COVID-19 response however is now in place across the service locations. HMICFRS Covid-19 Thematic Review indicated that 98.3% of respondents knew NFRS Values.
- Work will commence on an internal cultural review of the service by consolidating information from values workshops and staff surveys. This work was due to commence in the early part of 2020/21, however the COVID-19 response has resulted in this work being delayed. The review will be underpinned by NFCC maturity models.
- Staff engagement and internal communications is now an integral part of the new NFRS people strategy. Additional opportunities for staff feedback are provided by the Fire Away Staff Engagement Forum and Community Risk & Response Managers meetings.
- Leadership structures have been reviewed within the service. Leadership behaviour will be reviewed during the ED&I thematic review.

platforms to promote the values of the organisation, both internally and externally.

Area for Improvement 17: *The service should make sure its workforce plan includes how it intends to reduce the number of staff in temporary positions*

What we aim to achieve

What we have achieved so far

1. We will review the management structure within the service to ensure that we have staff with the appropriate competencies to fulfil roles.
2. We will ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to each department in accordance with the revised community risk review.
3. To ensure we have a resilient approach to managing the service, we will complete a succession planning exercise for key roles.
4. We will work with Skills for Justice to develop, implement and maintain a quality assured workforce development policy for all staff. Where necessary we will implement development plans for individuals to provide continuity.
5. We will conduct assessment processes for supervisory, middle and strategic management levels and select suitable personnel to be developed for substantive roles.
6. We will adhere to service policy regarding the use of temporary promotions to fill management vacancies at all levels.

- € An initial audit of the service's workforce development policy and strategy was conducted by Skills for Justice in March 2019. The report of this audit has been developed into an action plan, which has now been implemented. It was planned that Skills for Justice would provide third party assurance of the workforce development policy and strategy via their Quality Mark by September 2020 however the COVID-19 pandemic had prevented Skills for Justice from conducting the final site visit, necessary to be awarded the Quality Mark. This has now been completed and NFRS has been awarded the Skills for Justice Quality Mark.
- € The Fire Authority has approved the permanent appointment of a Fire Control and Operational Communications Manager on 1st January 2020. This had been a temporary position for over five years.
- € A Station Manager promotion process was conducted during December 2019, providing a cohort of six personnel who can be developed into substantive roles in the future. By the end of November 2020, four personnel from this cohort have been substantively promoted to the role of Station Manager, with further plans to extend the programme.
- € Watch Manager and Crew Manager promotion processes have been conducted to identify a fresh cohort of suitable personnel to be developed into substantive roles in the future.
- € A retained to wholetime process was delivered during late 2019 / early 2020, resulting in five additional wholetime firefighters being appointed.
- € A wholetime firefighter recruits' course was delivered between May and July 2020, providing a further 10 firefighters for the establishment. Recruits were selected via regional recruitment process. This is the first wholetime recruits course delivered in-house since 1979. A further wholetime recruitment and training programme scheduled for the second half of 2021.
- € Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic initially delayed the planned recruitment for both RDS (Retained Duty System) and Wholetime firefighters, this allowed the time for a

comprehensive review of the programme. This resulted in the recent successful delivery of an RDS recruitment training programme, whereby all 15 candidates completed their training.

Area for Improvement 18: *The service should assure itself that it trains all staff properly for their roles*

What we aim to achieve

What we have achieved so far

1. We will work with Skills for Justice to develop, implement and maintain a quality assured workforce development policy for all staff.
2. The workforce development policy will include a review of all risk critical training, assessment requirements for all courses. This will include a review of how Redkite is used to record competence against role requirements.
3. We will ensure that all development programmes associated with operational response, including the initial trainee and incident command courses are aligned with the NOGP training specifications.
4. We will also conduct a review of arrangements for exercising operational procedures in realistic situations, involving neighbouring FRSs and other partners as appropriate.
5. We will develop a competence framework for Fire Control.
6. To ensure we have resilience for key management roles in the future, we will complete a succession planning exercise. Where necessary we will implement development plans for individuals.

- € An initial audit of the service's workforce development policy and strategy was conducted by Skills for Justice in March 2019. The report of this audit has been developed into an action plan, which has now been implemented. It was planned that Skills for Justice would provide third party assurance of the workforce development policy and strategy via their Quality Mark by September 2020 however the COVID-19 pandemic had prevented Skills for Justice from conducting the final site visit, necessary to be awarded the Quality Mark. This has now been completed and NFRS has been awarded the Skills for Justice Quality Mark.
- € Appropriate training and competence assessment has been provided for all staff who are likely to undertake an incident command role.
- € Fire Control now record competence against the national occupational standard on Redkite.
- € A review of risk critical training has been completed and a three-year training plan has been released and incorporated into the workforce development plan.
- € Following the review, service orders supporting succession planning, career progression along with selection, promotion and development were launched in June 2021.

Area for Improvement 19: *The service should make sure there is a training plan for all staff and there is a consistent method of recording when staff have received training*

What we aim to achieve

What we have achieved so far

1. We will work with Skills for Justice to develop, implement and maintain a quality assured workforce development policy for all staff. Where necessary we will implement development plans for individuals.
2. The workforce development policy will include a review of all risk critical training,

- € An initial audit of the service's workforce development policy and strategy was conducted by Skills for Justice in March 2019. The report of this audit has been developed into an action plan, which has resulted in the development of a Learning & Development Foundation document, which is supported by a number of Service Orders. It was planned that Skills for Justice would provide third party assurance of

assessment requirements for all courses. This will include a review of how Redkite is used to record competence against role requirements.

3. We will develop a training competence framework for Fire Control.

the workforce development policy and strategy via their Quality Mark by September 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has prevented Skills for Justice from conducting the final site visit, necessary to be awarded the Quality Mark. This has now been completed and NFRS have been awarded the Quality Mark.

- € Fire Control now record competence against the national occupational standard on Redkite. Plans are currently being established to second a sector competent member of fire control staff to work with Learning & Development of further developing the fire control competence framework in early 2021.
- € A review of risk critical training has been completed and a three-year training plan is now in operation.

Area for Improvement 20:

The service should make sure issues identified through its staff survey are appropriately addressed and that actions taken are communicated to staff in a timely way

What we aim to achieve

1. We will take cognisance of the findings from the NCC staff survey as we continue to develop the behaviours of staff at all levels within the service. We will use the results of future staff surveys to measure improvement.
2. We will work with NCC develop a set of NFRS values which clearly link with both the NCC and national fire service values. Staff at all levels of NFRS will be involved in developing a set of values which reflect the service and which are recognisable to all staff.
3. Supported by NCC, we will work with appropriate organisations to conduct a cultural review/ audit.
4. We will strive to develop and promote an organisational culture which reflects the needs and expectations of the communities we serve, while also valuing the contribution of staff. The culture will aim to support the health and wellbeing of staff by encouraging a good work/life balance.

What we have achieved so far

- Following release of the 2019 staff survey results, we have confirmed our priorities as being culture and communications. NFRS continue to attend NCC staff survey action plan meetings.
- NFRS achieved a 60% response rate in the most recent staff survey, which represents a 14% improvement on the previous survey.
- NFRS delivered 17 staff engagement workshops during the period July to December 2019, attended by over 100 staff members to embed the NCC values into the service and agree NFRS specific narratives for each value along with desired leadership commitments. These were circulated to all staff for comment and are now in place across the service.
- Work to develop a NFRS specific visualisation of the values and supporting behaviours which can be used to engage staff was initially delayed due to the COVID-19 response however is now in place across the service locations. HMICFRS Covid-19 Thematic Review indicated that 98.3% of respondents knew NFRS Values.

5. We will conduct a review of the service leadership team, to ensure that the senior leaders actively demonstrate behaviours which align with the service values and which encourage a positive culture for the organisation.
6. In conjunction with NCC, we will conduct a review of internal and external communications and develop a strategic communications plan for the service.
7. The communications plan will provide means for communicating both internally within the service and externally with local communities.
8. The communication plan will promote the use of all available and appropriate platforms to promote the values of the organisation, both internally and externally.

- Work will commence on an internal cultural review of the service by consolidating information from values workshops and staff surveys. This work was due to commence in the early part of 2020/21, however the COVID-19 response has resulted in this work being delayed. The review will be underpinned by NFCC Maturity Models.
- Staff engagement and internal communications is now an integral part of the new NFRS people strategy. NFRS has now published its people strategy with internal communications forming an integral part of this.
- A draft NCC staff engagement toolkit was reviewed by the service in February 2020, with comments provided regarding suitability.

Area for Improvement 21: *The service should assure itself that staff are confident using its feedback mechanisms*

What we aim to achieve

1. Supported by NCC, we will work with appropriate organisations to conduct a cultural review/ audit of the service.
2. We will strive to develop and promote an organisational culture which reflects the needs and expectations of the communities we serve, while also valuing the contribution of staff. The future culture should encourage mutual trust, honesty and openness at all levels of the service.
3. We will conduct a review of the service leadership team, to ensure that the senior leaders actively demonstrate behaviours which align with the service values and which encourage a positive culture for the organisation.
4. In conjunction with NCC, we will conduct a review of internal and external communications and develop a strategic communications plan for the service.
5. The communications plan will provide means for achieving two-way communications from bottom to top within the service.
6. The communication plan will promote the use of all available and appropriate platforms to promote the core values within the service.

What we have achieved so far

- NFRS delivered 17 staff engagement workshops during the period July to December 2019, attended by over 100 staff members to embed the NCC values into the service and agree NFRS specific narratives for each value along with desired behaviours. These were circulated to all staff for comment and are now in place across the service.
- Work to develop a NFRS specific visualisation of the values and supporting leadership commitments which can be used to engage staff was initially delayed due to the COVID-19 response however is now in place across the service locations. HMICFRS Covid-19 Thematic Review indicated that 98.3% of respondents knew NFRS Values.
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- A draft NCC staff engagement toolkit was reviewed by the service in February 2020, with comments provided regarding suitability. NFRS has now published its people strategy with internal communications forming an integral part of this.
- A regular message inviting feedback to the Chief Fire Officer is communicated via the service routine notice (weekly bulletin). Additional opportunities for staff feedback are provided by the Fire Away Staff Engagement Forum and Community Risk & Response Managers meetings.

Area for Improvement 22: *To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and achieve a more representative workforce, the service should make sure diversity and inclusion are well understood and become embedded in the service*

What we aim to achieve

1. We will undertake a review of current management arrangements within the service, which is primarily structured around the operational command model.

What we have achieved so far

- Training has been provided as part of continuous professional development (CPD) for middle and supervisory managers on the value of equality of opportunity, diversity,

2. We will work with NCC develop a set of NFRS values which clearly link with both the NCC and national fire service values. Staff at all levels of NFRS will be involved in developing a set of values which reflect the service and which are recognisable to all staff.
3. Supported by NCC, we will work with appropriate organisations to conduct a cultural review/ audit.
4. We will strive to develop and promote an organisational culture which reflects the needs and expectations of the communities we serve, while also valuing the contribution of all staff. The culture will aim to recognise the positive contribution of equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion to the success of an organisation.
5. In conjunction with NCC, we will conduct a review of internal and external communications and develop a strategic communications plan for the service. The communication plan will use all available and appropriate platforms to promote the value of equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion, both internally and externally.
6. We will conduct a review of the service leadership team, to ensure that the senior leaders actively demonstrate behaviours which align with the service values and which encourage a positive culture for the organisation.
7. We will provide training to all staff on the value of equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion. Training provided will include ensuring staff are aware of the concept of 'unconscious bias'.

inclusion and unconscious bias.

- NFRS delivered 17 staff engagement workshops during the period July to December 2019, attended by over 100 staff members to embed the NCC values into the service and agree NFRS specific narratives for each value along with desired behaviours. These were circulated to all staff for comment and are now in place across the service.
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- A regular message inviting feedback to the Chief Fire Officer is communicated via the service routine notice (weekly bulletin). Additional opportunities for staff feedback are provided by the Fire Away Staff Engagement Forum and Community Risk & Response Managers meeting.

Area for Improvement 23:

The service should put in place a system to actively manage staff careers, to diversify the pool of future and current leaders

What we aim to achieve

1. We will undertake a review of current management arrangements within the service, which is primarily structured around the operational command model. Where appropriate, we will develop a more balanced management structure recognising the competencies of both green and grey book staff.
2. To ensure we have resilience for key management roles in the future, we will complete a succession planning exercise. Where necessary, we will implement development plans for individuals in preparation for such roles.

What we have achieved so far

- A succession planning strategy has been developed by senior managers in conjunction with NCC Human Resources Department.
- The service has created a non-operational (green book) strategic leadership role, which was filled in October 2020, thus providing further career opportunities for green book staff.

3. We will work with NCC to develop a set of NFRS values which clearly link with both the NCC and national fire service values. Staff at all levels of NFRS will be involved in developing a set of values which reflect the service and which are recognisable to all staff.
 4. Supported by NCC, we will work with appropriate organisations to conduct a cultural review/ audit.
 5. We will strive to develop and promote an organisational culture which reflects the needs and expectations of the communities we serve, while also valuing the contribution of all staff. The culture will aim to improve equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion within the service.
 6. In conjunction with NCC, we will conduct a review of internal and external communications and develop a strategic communications plan for the service. The communication plan will use all available and appropriate platforms to promote the value of equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion, both internally and externally.
 7. We will conduct a review of the service leadership team, to ensure that the senior leaders actively demonstrate behaviours which align with the service values and which encourage a positive culture for the organisation.
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 - A regular message inviting feedback to the Chief Fire Officer is communicated via the service routine notice (weekly bulletin). Additional opportunities for staff feedback are provided by the Fire Away Staff Engagement Forum and Community Risk & Response Managers meeting.
 - Training has been provided as part of continuous professional development (CPD) for middle and supervisory managers on the value of equality of opportunity, diversity, inclusion and unconscious bias.