

Fire and Rescue Plan

(Integrated Risk Management Plan)

2017-2021 | Year 4 Update 2020/21



01/Foreword

Welcome to Northumberland County Council's (NCC) Fire and Rescue Service's Fire and Rescue Plan (FRP), Year 4 Update (2020/21).

The Year 4 Update reflects back on the first three years of the 2017-21 Fire and Rescue Plan to provide details on our performance, risks, progress and achievements since 2017/18. The Year 4 Update is also an opportunity to demonstrate what we hope to deliver in 2020/21. The plan builds on our previous work to improve our preparedness, prevention and response to emergencies, our prevention initiatives to reduce the harm, and increase the protection to vulnerable members of our communities.

We are excited by the new opportunities we are exploring with partners to deliver improved outcomes for our residents and, as a key part of Northumberland County Council (NCC), we can assist to deliver the strategic aims of the council by working closely with other NCC Directorates to provide integrated services which maximise outcomes for communities. The work we are doing with NCC colleagues supports NCC's vision, values and priorities detailed in the Corporate Plan 2018-21, especially the priority of "Living" - we want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for.

From 29th October – 2nd November 2018, the Service underwent its first independent assessment by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - our first servicewide inspection since our Peer Review in November 2013. We received the results of the inspection process on 20th June 2019 and were assessed as Requires Improvement across the pillar gradings of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People - the report can be viewed **here**. We have already made significant strides to address the areas for improvement identified within the report and the full delivery of the HMICFRS Improvement Action Plan will be fundamental to assisting our aspiration and ambition to move from Requires Improvement to Good and our commitment to continually improve the way we deliver our services.

The 2017-2021 Fire and Rescue Plan is available **here** The 2018-2021 Service Statement is available **here**

From late February, NFRS has been responding to the unprecedented challenges that the Covid19 crisis has presented. We have invoked, or developed, business continuity arrangements to ensure that critical functions can be maintained during the pandemic and have introduced new risk assessed ways of working to protect our workforce. At the same time, we have continued to provide an unrestricted emergency response capability and focussed risk critical fire safety and prevention interventions to our communities. Under the provisions of the national Tripartite Agreements we have introduced additional areas of activity to support the national response to Covid19 - this has included delivery of emergency food parcels, collection and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), delivery of community pharmacy prescriptions, body recovery and transportation and assisting with the resourcing and management of NCC Community Together coordination hub.

We remain in challenging times financially, with the full impact of Covid19 on future budgets and finance yet to be determined, but we also know that we must ensure that we continue to deliver high quality protection and prevention services to those most at risk, whilst at the same time maintaining a resilient, well equipped and highly trained operational workforce able to respond effectively to incidents when they occur.

We also know we must aim to maintain our focus on regularly reviewing our community risk profile to utilise our personnel and resources where they can have the maximum impact, preparing the service to effectively meet those risks and being as proactive as possible to prevent fires and other emergencies occurring in the first place.



CLLR John Riddle

NCC Cabinet Member Planning, Housing & Resilience & NCC Fire Authority Chair



Paul Hedley

Chief Fire Officer and NCC Head of Service

Performance

Progress

Priorities 2019

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02/Statutory Responsibilities

Fire and rescue authorities have a number of duties as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Under the Act, fire and rescue authorities must:

- Promote fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity on how to prevent fires, and on the means of escape from buildings in case of fire
- > Extinguish fires and protect life and property in the event of fires
- Rescue people and protect people from serious harm in the event of road traffic collisions
- When necessary, deal with emergencies other than fires and road traffic collisions

Fire and rescue authorities in England have further responsibilities under the fire and rescue national framework for England 2018 to 'assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect their communities'.

The framework identifies five priorities for fire and rescue authorities:

- To make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents;
- 2 To identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;
- To collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide;
- To be accountable to communities for the service they provide; and
- To develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Fire and rescue authorities are required to produce an 'Integrated Risk Management Plan' (IRMP) which will inform communities how it will deliver those priorities. In Northumberland, we call this our Fire and Rescue Plan. Our current plan covers the four year period 2017-2021. We will refresh our plan annually, at which time we will review our community risk profile to ensure it remains accurate. We will be consulting on our brand new Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-25 next year.



Staff testing smoke alarms throughout Northumberland (Left), Fire recruits training with our Learning & Development Department (Right).

The Service also supports the Council in its responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, providing businesses, and other responsible persons, with education, advice and guidance. Prosecutions will be pursued when it is in the public's best interests to do so.

In addition, fire and rescue authorities have a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to work with partners in their Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to plan and train for hazards identified in a joint Community Risk Register (CRR). A CRR identifies potential risks to the community from, for example, flooding. This assists in risk management planning, including the allocation of resources, training and preparation for the response to emergency incidents. Risks identified in the CRR are reflected in our plan.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 further reforms policing and enables important changes to the governance of fire and rescue services. The Act places a duty on police, fire and ambulance services to work together and enables police and crime commissioners to take on responsibility for fire and rescue services where a local case is made.

Prior to the enactment of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service established a Strategic Delivery Board with the following aims:-

- > Better value for money the collaboration produces quantifiable efficiencies, either on implementation or in the longer term
- > Improved outcomes the collaboration maintains or improves the service it provides to local people and local communities
- Reduced demand the collaboration should contribute towards the longer term strategic objective of decreasing risk in communities and reducing demand on services

In 2018 the role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary was extended to incorporate the inspection of fire and rescue services. Rebranded as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS); the team inspected all 45 fire and rescue services in England during 2018/19. NFRS were inspected during autumn of 2018 with the final report published in June 2019. The inspection programme included assessment of:

- **Effectiveness** including prevention, protection, resilience and response
- **Efficiency** how well we provide value for money, allocates resources to match risk and collaborates with other emergency services; and
- How well we look after our **People** promoting values and culture, training staff to ensure everyone has the necessary skills to perform their role, ensuring fairness and diversity and developing leadership and service compatibility.

The inspections are designed to enable the public to see how well fire and rescue services are performing and assess how we perform in relation to other fire and rescue services. NFRS report can be found **here**. An Improvement Action Plan has been established and can be found **here**. NFRS received a 'Requires Improvement' judgement against each of the three areas of assessment, and the report can be found **here**.

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Your safety and wellbeing is at the heart of what we do'





To deliver its mission statement of 'Making Northumberland Safer', NFRS has developed the following aims:

- > Reduce the number of fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies occurring in Northumberland
- Reduce the number of deaths and injuries and mitigate
 the commercial, economic and social cost of emergency incidents
- > Safeguard the environment and heritage sites (both built and natural)
- > Support communities to protect themselves from harm
- Provide value for money through the provision of a lean, efficient and resilient service

NFRS recognises that values act as a framework for attitude and behaviours that are necessary to achieve a positive outcome. As a result, all staff were invited to participate in a consultation process to agree the NFRS narrative and underpinning behaviours that support NCC values of:

- > Residents First 'Here for you'.
- > Excellence and quality 'Listening and learning to improve your service'.
- Respect 'You are valued'.
- > Keeping communities safe and well 'Your safety and wellbeing is at the heart of what we do'.

150 members of staff participated in the consultation during 23 workshops and the feedback from these sessions was presented and approved by Service Leadership Team (SLT) in February 2020. The underpinning behaviours were agreed as follows:

- > Be professional and provide leadership by example.
- Be open to challenge and change.
- Be fair, honest and transparent, acting with integrity.
- > Communicate openly and demonstrate empathy to all.

NFRS is now building a culture based on these values by embedding them in core business throughout the service including; recruitment, appraisals, communications and day to day interactions. This cultural change continues to be monitored.

03/YOUR FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Northumberland County Council's (The Fire Authority) area:

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Area:	5026 Sq Km (1941 Sq Miles)
Population:	320,274
Dwellings:	161,231
Non Domestic Premises:	14,104
Fire Stations:	15
2 Wholetime (full time), 2 Day 11 Retained (part time), 1 Ga	y staffed (part time at night), raged appliance on Holy Island
Fire Engines/Specialist Vehic	cles: 37
Support Vehicles:	37
Average yearly incidents atte	ended: 3,300

•

The people who deliver your service

Fire and Rescue Establishment (as of 1 April 2020)

Emergency Response: Wholetime (including Officers)	131
Retained*	154
Fire Control	15
Corporate**	39
Total Establishment	339

Note the number of retained / on-call firefighters fluctuates due to the nature of their role
 includes Civil Contingencies, Community Safety, Fire Safety, Fire Support Services and Learning & Development.



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Fire Engine Availability

Northumberland FRS always strives to maximize the availability of its 21 operational fire engines from our 15 fire stations across the county. Whilst the expectation of the public may be that their local fire engine(s) are always available to respond, the reality may be different. In 2019/20 we averaged a total fire engine availability rate of 88% across Northumberland - this is influenced by a large number of factors; with recruitment to fill current vacancies of On-Call firefighters a primary challenge across Northumberland.

We are working hard to improve that figure.

70% of Northumberland FRS area (1348mls² / 3492km²) is initially covered by an operational emergency response from one of 11 On-Call fire stations. Those stations are staffed by firefighters who, in most cases, are self-employed or have other primary employment. There are a number of factors which mean that they may not be available to respond to fire calls, especially during 08.00 - 18.00 Monday to Friday - this potentially impacts upon the availability of an operational response from their local station. Because NFRS operates a "global" fire cover model, we often use on duty whole-time personnel to supplement staffing at On-Call stations to maximise the fire cover across Northumberland and to ensure that we can have as many fire engines as possible 'on the run'.

NFRS believes that a more useful and meaningful indicator for the public would be how often their local fire station was available to respond to an emergency incident rather than focus on the availability of all of the fire engines. In 2019/20 we had an available resource response rate from our 15 fire stations of just over 93%.

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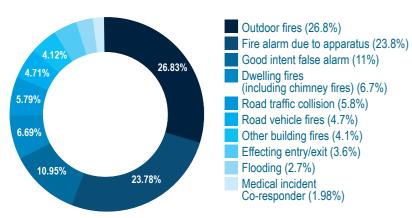
04/Identifying Risks

The 2017-21 Fire and Rescue Plan outlines how we identify, assess and mitigate fire and rescue related risks to the communities of Northumberland. Whilst we have a requirement to identify all fire and rescue related risks, it is risk to **life** that is given the highest priority.

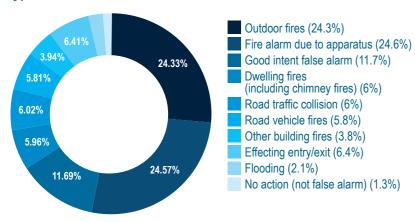
We have continued to identify and assess the level of risk to communities within Northumberland. This work includes consideration of risk modelling, historical data and professional judgement. The assessment of risk requires both quantitative and qualitative analysis that examines both the likelihood and impact of identified risk. Working with Operational Research in Health Ltd (ORH) we have refreshed our fire and rescue related risk profile of Northumberland, and will be utilising this profile to inform our strategic plans for Prevention, Protection and Emergency Response.

In the last 10 years, the total number of incidents in Northumberland has reduced by nearly 17%. Over the past 5 years (2015/16 - 2019/20) the 10 most frequently attended incident types account for 91% of all incidents, 86% of casualties and 66% of fatalities. A comparison between the most frequently attended incident types over the last 5 years and those attended in 2019/20 are detailed in the pie charts below.

Pie Chart 1: to show the 10 most frequently attended incident types across Northumberland in the last five years



Pie Chart 2: to show the 10 most frequently attended incident types across Northumberland in 2019/20*



Activity 2019/2020











Significant efforts have been made by the service to reduce the high level of demand placed on fire crews by fire alarm (apparatus) and outdoor type incidents. Combined, these two incident types account for over 50% of the total incidents attended. Initiatives to reduce the number of such incidents include:

Working with partners to identify and, where appropriate, remove outdoor fire risks e.g. accumulations of flammable materials

Securing premises awaiting demolition

Working with schools to educate students about the risks of outdoor fires

Supporting farmers and landowners to encourage safe burning practices

Provision of advice and guidance for organisers of bonfires

Provision of advice and guidance to owners/occupiers of premises where fire alarms activate when there is no fire

Reducing the number of fire appliances mobilised to automatic fire alarms

Recovering costs from the occupiers/owners of premises that repeatedly call in the fire service to false alarms

The review of community risk will continue throughout 2020/21 to inform the Fire and Rescue Plan (Integrated Risk Management Plan) 2021 - 2025 and we will take cognisance of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Community Risk Programme while we undertake this work.

NFRS response standards

There are a number of response standard (times) methodologies in use by English FRS. Many consider a combination of life and area risk, as well as reflecting the geographical size of the area to be covered. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service has undertaken a review of similar fire and rescue service's response times to act as a benchmark for revising our current attendance times.

It is important to ensure that we are able to operate to a single standard across Northumberland which challenges us to provide a high quality emergency response but also reflects the unique challenges of providing an effective operational response across a large, predominantly rural, area with an average station area of 334km², and where 70% of the county is covered by On-Call personnel,

Our revised response standards which we will pilot and evaluate during 2019/20 are;



Standard 1

The Service will endeavour to ensure that the first mobilised fire engine attends all property fires within 10 minutes of alerting on 80% of occasions.



Standard 3

The Service will endeavour to ensure that the first mobilised fire engine attends all road traffic collisions within 15 minutes of alerting on 80% of occasions.



Standard 2

The Service will endeavour to ensure that the second mobilised fire engine attends within **13** minutes of alerting on 80% of occasions.



Standard 4

The Service will endeavour to ensure that the second mobilised fire engine attends all road traffic collisions within 20 minutes of alerting on 80% of occasions.

Standards 1 and 3, relating to the attendance of the first responding fire engine, have been increased from the previous performance measure of 75%.

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05/Performance

How well are we performing?

A robust process for measuring and reporting against performance ensures the authority regularly monitors outcomes for our communities. Detailed information about our performance can be found here. We have summarised our performance for you below:



In 2019/20 in numbers:	
Total incidents attended	3355
Dwelling fires attended	142
Road Traffic Collisions attended	202
Smoke detectors fitted	5541
Safe and wellbeing visits completed	7665
Engaged young people	13685
School visits completed	227
Fire safety audit inspections conducted	427
Fire investigations conducted	74
Fire investigations in conjunction with Northumbria Police conducted	11
Contributed to the successful prosecution of one case of arson and one other is currently progressing through the criminal justice system	
Delivered 278 courses totalling 790 instructor days. This was supported by course delivery	

Delivered **378** courses totalling **790** instructor days. This was supported by course delivery from external providers in specialist subject areas

2018/19 to 2019/20:

Reduced deliberate primary fires by	5% ▼
Reduced deliberate secondary fires by	14% 🔻
Reduced all primary fires by	2% ▼
Reduced injuries from primary fires by	75% 🔻
Reduced accidental dwelling fires by	2% ▼
Reduced fires in non-domestic premises by	13% 🔻
Reduced malicious false alarms attended by	38% ▼
Reduced false alarms caused by fire detection systems by	2% ▼

Since we started to produce our Fire and Rescue Plan 2003/04 - 2019/20:

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Reduced deliberate primary fires by	76% ▼
Reduced deliberate secondary fires by	63% 🔻
Reduced all primary fires by	59% ▼
Reduced injuries from primary fires by	92% 🔻
Reduced accidental dwelling fires by	46% 🔻
Reduced fires in non-domestic premises by	73% 🔻
Reduced malicious false alarms attended by	85% 🔻
Reduced false alarms caused by fire detection systems by	64% 🔻

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06/Progress

Our progress against priorities for 2019/20:

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service priorities for 2019/20 were as follows:-



We have supported the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Community Risk Programme. This programme includes the development of guidance, tools and a fire standard relating to risk management planning. We have developed a fire and rescue related risk profile for Northumberland to inform our prevention, protection and emergency response strategic plans. We have developed local area profiles to inform our community fire station plans. This will ensure that we target both county-wide and local risk effectively and efficiently.

Continue to deliver the modernisation of the Emergency Control Centre, including the Emergency Mobile Communications Project.

We have continued to modernise the Emergency Control Centre throughout 2019/20. This has involved replacing key hardware where required as part of the planned five year technical refresh and upgrading software to ensure our staff can receive calls and mobilise resources as efficiently as possible. Working regionally, we have kept abreast of national progress with the Emergency Mobile Communications Project (ESMCP). This has required additional hardware and software upgrades to the system, which have been funded by the central government. Where these upgrades have not been completed, they are planned to be completed well in advance of the current go-live date for ESMCP in 2022/23. Work was undertaken during the summer of 2019 to explore potential for further collaboration between fire controls in the northeast region. This resulted in the approval of a range of recommendations to improve alignment of procedures and ways of working, sharing mobilising system platforms and the potential for a joint emergency control centre covering the north east region by 2028.

3 Create a healthy and positive working environment

We have undertaken a series of initiatives and workshops to develop strategies to improve communications and engagement across NFRS. We have ensured that staff have had the opportunity to inform the process of developing our values, values based behaviours and also the revisions that are necessary to provide confidence and assurance that everyone matters, everyone's voice can be heard and everyone has a stake in the future of the service - this included the delivery of 23 staff workshops engaging over 150 members of staff.

We are currently finalising the publication of our new Staff Communications and Engagement Framework, undertaking values based revisions to our recruitment, promotion and development processes and, with assistance from NCC, developing an integrated People Strategy which we will be consulting on with staff.

Respond to the independent inspection of NFRS by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) through a service-wide Improvement Action Plan

The 23 Areas for *Improvement* identified in the HMICFRS report on NFRS have been incorporated into the Service Improvement Action Plan. The plan also includes actions associated with the FRP (also known as IRMP), the National Framework document and the Death at Work report. The action plan is divided into 12 key themes, each comprising a number of key actions, with each theme and individual action having a designated lead manager. Robust governance arrangements have been established, ensuring progress is monitored and reported both within the service and within NCC.

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07/Achievements

During 2019/20 Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service has achieved the following:

Submitted a total of 117 safeguarding referrals, with 93.2% of safeguarding referrals leading or contributing to positive action for individuals living in communities of Northumberland

Responded to 148 Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) research requests

Delivered Operational Risk Critical Training - including Breathing Apparatus, Incident Command, Health and Safety, and Driving and Water Rescue to ensure that NFRS maintained an operational response appropriate to the risks and operational incident types in Northumberland

Developed a Learning and Development Foundation and Strategy Document to establish the fundamentals for delivery of quality training in NFRS

Completed Stage 2 development of the Breathing Apparatus Training School to provide a modern, realistic and safe training environment

Delivered Wildfire Training to a range of Fire and Rescue Services and partner organisations in the UK and Ireland

Supported the design, construction and handover of the new Ponteland Community Fire Station

Completed the move to the new Ponteland Community Fire Station

Undertaken a Service Order Review

Completed a Retained (on call) to Wholetime recruitment process

Completed a regional recruitment campaign

Conducted a regional High Volume Pump Exercise

Conducted a regional water safety campaign

Enhanced our relationship with Northumberland Mountain Rescue Teams

Trialled and issued new Road Traffic Collision operational equipment

Reviewed our Safe and Wellbeing Programme

Conducted a review of NFRS' performance management arrangements, made subsequent recommendations and established a revised methodology

Delivered Phase 2 of the new breathing apparatus facility at Pegswood Community Fire Station

Reviewed our current methodology for critical incident debriefing

Led a review of fire control provision across the north east (Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and Durham & Darlington) and agreed recommendations for increased collaboration in the future

Upgraded our mobilising system to ensure we have the latest technology available for our fire control staff and to ensure we are able to connect to the Emergency Services Network when it becomes available

Increased our Twitter followers by 83.5%

Increased our Facebook fans by 72.45%

Achieved 5,361,499 impressions on social media with 430,041 people sending a message or reacting to a post on social media

08/Priorities 2020/21

Prior to publication of this document, the service has reviewed it's priorities for 2020/21 in line with COVID-19 response and recovery. In particular we have taken cognisance of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidance document 'Agreed Best Practice for Recovery from COVID-19'. We will use the best practice checklist to quality assure our recovery and restoration from this pandemic. Our 2020/21 priorities are as follows:



Continue to identify fire and rescue related risks within our community to ensure the effective delivery of our service



To continually develop the service through delivery of the service-wide Improvement Action Plan



Create a healthy and positive culture, reflective of our vision and values



To undertake a service wide governance review.



Community Safety Department conducting a Safe and Wellbeing Visit in Bedlington (Top), Fire Safety Team inspecting local business premises (Bottom Left), Fire Control receiving calls at NFRS Headquarters (Bottom Right).

12 | Looking Forward Fire and Rescue Plan (IRMP) Year 4 Update

09/Looking Forward

During 2020/21 we will strive to:

Civil Contingencies Team

- Further develop robust emergency plans to ensure NCC and the NFRS able to respond to the range of incidents arising from Hazards and Threats identified in the Community Risk Register;
- Organise and participate in a range of exercises to validate those emergency plans;
- Develop and implement relevant policies and procedures for Risk Management and Protective Security within NFRS:
- Ensure NCC and NFRS are able to contribute to and be fully considered in arrangements made by the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum:
- Ensure a Civil Contingencies support provision is available 24/7 with relevant resources to coordinate the response of NCC and the NFRS to emergency incidents;
- To raise awareness of Civil Contingency issues within NCC and NFRS; and
- Fully review our business continuity and critical function plans to ensure that they reflect the reality of a revised Reasonable Worst Case Scenario following the response to the Covid 19 crisis.

Community Safety Department

- Continue to coordinate HMICFRS inspection process and support the development and delivery of a post inspection action plan;
- Develop a prevention strategic plan informed by Northumberland's fire and rescue related risk profile;
- Review and further develop quality assurance processes for all Community Safety programme delivery; and
- Embed the revised safe and well-being programme.

Emergency Response

- Undertake a PreDetermined Attendance (PDA) review to ensure we continue to have the right number of fire engines attending incidents in our county.
- Undertake a Phased Response review to ensure we effectively and safely utilise available personnel on retained stations.
- Review the Site Specific Risk Information process to ensure high quality risk information is available to operational personnel:
- Complete the conversion all Emergency Response guidance and review Service Orders to ensure upto date and relevant information is available;
- Review and ratify a Quality Assurance process for Emergency Response activities;
- Review Emergency Response strategies; and
- Resource and support inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

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Fire Control

- >> Upgrade mobile data terminals on all fire appliances;
- Upgrade the integrated call concentrator screen (ICCS) aspect of the mobilising system;
- Develop common ways of working across fire controls in Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and Durham & Darlington; and
- Implement the staff development strategy for fire control.

Learning and Development

- Deliver operational risk critical training to develop and maintain a safe and competent workforce;
- Continue to deliver HMICFRS action plan and prepare for 2021 inspection within L & D;
- Seek to gain the Skills for Justice Quality Mark;
- Deliver a Wholetime Firefighter Trainee Foundation Course; and
- Establish a new Wildfire Hub Station at Haltwhistle to support NFRS response to Wildfire incidents.

Fire Support Services

- Implement the National Operational Guidance Programme (NOGP) doctrine into NFRS;
- Roll out an asset management system, with consequent review of stores arrangements;
- Review health and safety arrangements within the service;
- Complete a technical refresh upgrade of the mobilising system and Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs);
- Evaluate the service's revised approach to performance management; and
- Implement and conduct a subsequent evaluation of a revised approach to critical incident debriefing.

Fire Safety Department

- Inspect all non-domestic high risk premises;
- Increase the inspection capability of NFRS Fire Safety Department;
- Expand NFRS's operational based fire safety inspection team;
- Increase NFRS business engagement to raise awareness of fire safety responsibilities in non-domestic premises; and
- Work with Regional Fire Services to collaborate on Business Fire Safety





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