

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service

Statement of Assurance 2019/20



Fire and Rescue Service

Foreword



Councillor John Riddle
Cabinet Member for
Housing, Planning and
Resilience

We are proud to bring you Northumberland Fire Authority's (NFA) Statement of Assurance. Northumberland County Council as a unitary authority is the designated fire authority for Northumberland.

The current administration of Northumberland County Council was elected in May 2017 and is committed to improving the social and economic well-being of the people of Northumberland and their surrounding environment.

Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) is a key part of the County Council and is fully committed to the Authority's aims, vision and values.

This assurance statement outlines priorities, projects and initiatives that are in place to assure service delivery and ensure the safety of our staff and communities within Northumberland.



Paul Hedley QFSM
Chief Fire Officer

We are committed to delivering risk critical 'joined up' services for NCC and to continuous improvement through new initiatives as well as building upon the success of previous work to provide the best possible services to the communities of Northumberland.

We will continue to invest in our locally based workforce and deploy resources in an intelligent way based on an understanding and assessment of risk in all our communities (both urban and rural), as well as maintaining a very high level of prevention and protection work.

Central to this is preventing fires and other emergencies happening in the first place, reducing harm to vulnerable people, lowering the incidence of deaths, injuries and damage to property, whilst working toward our service's vision of 'Making Northumberland Safer'.

The communities we serve

Our community

Northumberland is home to just over 320,000 people, - of whom almost 55% live in the south-east corner – and there are approximately 161,000 residential properties within the county. Northumberland has the lowest population density of any area in England at 63 persons per square kilometre. The population is increasing and is forecast to rise by 5.1% to 339,415 people between 2020 and 2043.

Our natural environment

Northumberland is one of the most rural counties in England and is a popular visitor destination renowned for its rural beauty covering over 5,000kms². The provision of additional off-road response vehicles and partnership work such as the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum and the Northumberland Fire Group will assist in managing the risk from adverse weather, including wildfires, severe winter impact and flooding.

Our built environment

Northumberland has plans for attracting future economic and investment housing growth, with a focus on the Local Enterprise Partnership hubs. As we develop our service we will consider residential and commercial buildings/development, to ensure that we can continue to provide an excellent prevention, protection and response service to all areas of our changing county. Therefore, we will continue to engage at an early stage in any planning processes throughout the county to address any areas of concern and provide specialist advice where necessary to maintain assurance of public safety within the built environment.

Our heritage

Northumberland has over 5,600 listed buildings, including many sites of importance to the country's national heritage. Alnwick and Bamburgh are internationally renowned for their castles. Cragston and Wallington Hall head a list of nationally-important buildings/estates operated by the National Trust and are two of the many listed buildings in the county. Holy Island and Hadrian's Wall are also ancient sites of worldwide historical interest within the County. We will continue to work with owners and occupiers to ensure plans, risks, training and information are continuously reviewed to safeguard our heritage.

The risks we face

The Fire and Rescue Plan is NFRS's four-year analysis of the county's community risk profile, together with our strategic approach of how we intend to effectively manage those risks over the period.

The National Framework requires us to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan, known in Northumberland as the Fire and Rescue Plan (FRP), which identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect our communities, including those of a cross border, multi authority and/or national nature. Each year NFRS produces an annual update based on the FRP which sets out progress against the FRP priorities, any required revisions or amendments to the plan and a precis of our work and projects to ensure that residents and businesses are safer, whilst at the same time delivering an efficient and effective emergency response when necessary.

To view the Fire and Rescue Plan for 2017 – 2021 please see the link below:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Fire/Reports.aspx>

Social risk

Northumberland's population is living longer. By 2020 it is projected that there will be 81,000 residents aged 65 and over and that will rise to over 111,000 by 2043 – an increase of 37%. Historical data shows that older people are at a greater risk from suffering serious injuries or death from accidental fires. Our Community Safety Department, through partnership working, will continue to lead on work that targets high risk groups through our home *Safe and Wellbeing* programme. This initiative also seeks to reduce slips, trips and falls in the home, encourage a reduction in smoking and alcohol consumption and identify residents with specific vulnerabilities (such as dementia) which can be onward referred for specialist support and intervention.

Environmental risk

Northumberland has Northumberland National Park and Kielder Forest within its borders as well as significant peat and upland moorland – all of which presents a significant wildfire risk. Despite investment in multiple flood defence systems across the county we still retain residual flood risks, with the associated risks to people and property. Across the County we have firefighters trained to respond to their local environmental risk with specialist wildfire and water rescue teams strategically located in high risk areas. Trained personnel will also respond to national emergencies as part of the integrated national resilience programme to support wide area flooding and protracted wildfire incidents.

Economic risk

The county is home to a number of nationally and internationally recognised businesses, large employers and a number of strategic military establishments.

Our operational, civil contingency and fire protection personnel work with businesses to provide fire prevention advice, plan for emergencies and, where necessary instigate enforcement action.

This integrated approach ensures that we are able to support business development and resilience and the safety of staff and the public.

Risks beyond our borders

Over the Border Mutual Aid Arrangements

Through Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 NFRS has set up reinforcement schemes for securing mutual assistance with Fire Services of Scotland, Tyne & Wear, Cumbria and Durham & Darlington to provide and utilise resources such as additional fire appliances and support vehicles. Plans are also in place, through National Resilience arrangements, to provide, and receive, specialist appliances and crews for mass decontamination, water rescue, urban search and rescue and high volume pumping.

Fire Control Project

Utilising £3.6m of central government funding, NFRS, in partnership with TWFRS have designed, developed and installed an emergency fire control system which utilises modern technology to provide increased levels of resilience. Since the system went live in November 2013 both services can accept calls, mobilise resources and manage the incident on behalf of the other service. Ways of working have been developed which ensure that the nearest resource is mobilised to any life risk incident, regardless of the area in which the incident occurs. NFRS has also extended the provision of the out of hours call handling service on behalf of NCC, raising additional revenue for the service and supporting efficiencies within the local authority. Further revenue efficiencies have been achieved through the implementation of a demand led staffing model which has reduced the requirement for overtime payments for fire control staff.

Overview of Fire and Rescue Service

Overview of our structure

NFRS is led and managed by the Service Leadership Team (SLT) whose members are listed below.

Full SLT meetings are held monthly with weekly meetings of the Principal Officers to discuss specific issues. The Chief Fire Officer reports directly to the Chief Executive and is a member of the County Council Executive Team.

The Service Leadership Team is as follows:

- Chief Fire Officer (Chair)
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- Area Manager - Fire Support Services
- Community Safety Manager
- Civil Contingencies Manager
- Group Manager - Emergency Response
- Group Manager - Fire Safety
- Group Manager - Learning and Development

The CFO, DCFO and Civil Contingencies Manager also attend NCC Business Management Team (BMT).

Our Staff

As of April 2018, we had a total of **136** full-time operational firefighters (including officers) and **16** Emergency Control Room personnel. We also had **147** retained (part-time) firefighters working in and for our local communities across Northumberland. We employ 5 Apprentices, utilise 15 Community Volunteers, **38** corporate and delivery staff including 5 Civil Contingencies staff and 3 Union Learning Centre personnel and a very small number of externally funded staff.

Our resources

There are 15 community fire stations in Northumberland which deliver services 24/7 365 days a year by utilising full-time, day staffing and on-call firefighters. They are used as bases to offer community safety advice, community education, technical fire safety building advice and as the base for emergency call response. In many cases, they also act as a focal point for the delivery of essential community services from a wide range of partner agencies. NFRS also maintains a garaged appliance capability on Holy Island.

We have a front-line fleet of 22 fire engines and a range of strategically located specialist vehicles. These include an incident support vehicle (ISU) providing resilient command, control and communications facilities, a specialist rescue vehicle

for attending transport incident/rescues, 3 swift water rescue team vehicles/boats (SRT) and a fleet of over 20 4x4 support vehicles, some fitted with specialist cutting gear and water fogging systems. We maintain a High Volume Pump (HVP), and ancillary equipment, which are based at Pegswood which has a maximum pumping capacity of 7000l/min, and has the capability of delivering large volumes of water of great distances utilising additional pumps as boosters in a relay system.

Our values

NFRS is an organisation committed to equality and fairness and reflecting the diverse nature of the communities we serve. We have adopted the NCC Core Values and in order to ensure full awareness those values across the service, we delivered 20 staff workshops (attended by 40%+ of NFRS/CCT staff) which were also used to develop NFRS underpinning narratives and values based behaviours.

Our Vision: "One Council that works for everyone"

Our Values



Residents first – Here for you.

- Respond to the needs of all of our residents
- Provide the right information at the right time
- Deliver services that have positive outcomes for the community



Excellence and Quality – Listening and learning to improve our service.

- Respect the diverse communities that we serve
- Act on feedback to ensure the best customer journey
- Look for opportunities to improve customer experience



Respect – You are valued

- Build strong and long lasting relationships based on trust and mutual respect
- Involve communities and staff in decisions which affect them
- Support communities to embrace change and innovation



Keeping our communities safe and well – Your safety and wellbeing is at the heart of what we do.

- Quality and Safety will be at the heart of everything we do
- Empower our residents to do as much for themselves as possible
- Set clear standards and report against them

This approach applies to our interactions and relationships with staff, partner agencies, elected members, NCC colleagues and, most importantly, the people of Northumberland.

You can find more information at: Equality and Diversity:
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Equality.aspx>

Our services to the community

The Fire & Rescue Plan is NFRSs four-year analysis of the county’s community risk profile, together with our strategic approach to how we intend to effectively manage those risks over the period. Each year NFRS produces an update based on the plan which sets out a number of priorities to ensure that residents and businesses are safer, whilst at the same time delivering an efficient and effective emergency response when necessary. We will be undertaking public consultation in early 2021 on our proposed priorities to cover our new Fire & Rescue Plan which will be refreshed to cover the four-year period 2021 - 2025. In addition, the plan will describe how we intend to reduce or mitigate risks under the following headings:

- **Prevention** – eliminating or reducing the likelihood of the risk occurring
- **Protection** – reducing the impact of the risk should it occur
- **Response** – providing a rapid and effective response should an incident occur
- **Civil Contingencies** – ensuring effective corporate and strategic business continuity arrangements to maintain critical function delivery.

Governance arrangements

NFRS is an integral part of NCC. NCC are responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and according to proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and that public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively. NCC is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes making arrangements for the management of risk. NCC has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. The NCC Annual Governance Statement enables the Fire and Rescue Service to demonstrate that it has fulfilled its obligations under the Framework. Full details can be found in the NCC Annual Governance Statement which is included within our 'Statement of Accounts' publication, at the end of the document. These documents are published each year on the Council's website, on the 'Statement of Accounts' page: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Finance/Statement-of-accounts.aspx#statementofaccounts>

Your Fire and Rescue Authority

NCC is a unitary authority and, as such, is the delegated Fire Authority for Northumberland. All key policy decisions are taken by elected members, either jointly as the Cabinet or as individual Members making decisions within the remit of their delegated responsibilities. Where a Key Decision is required by Cabinet, notice of that intention must be published in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions on the Council's website not less than 28 days before the Cabinet meets. The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Chairman, in the case of the Fire and Rescue Service, the Communities and Place OSC, would be notified to determine whether the issue should be subject of scrutiny comment by the OSC prior to the decision being taken. Any comments would then be presented to the Cabinet by the OSC Chairman when the issue was discussed. The OSC may also request regular monitoring reports from the Portfolio Holder to ensure that any decision taken is implemented in accordance with that decision.

Councillor John Riddle who is the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning & Resilience, has delegated responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service as Chair of the Fire Authority.

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=11058>

Our legal responsibilities

Responsibilities under the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004

The Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out the duties and powers of fire authorities. Under the Act, the Fire Authority has a number of core functions:

- **Fire Safety** - promoting fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity and the giving of advice on how to prevent fires and on the means of escape from buildings in case of fire
- **Firefighting** - extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in the event of fires
- **Road Traffic Accidents** - rescuing people in the event of road traffic accidents and protecting people from serious harm in the event of road traffic accidents
- **Other Emergencies** - when necessary deal with emergencies, other than fires and road traffic accidents.

We address these core functions in our four-year Fire and Rescue Plan (FRP), which identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect our communities. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 can be found via the following link: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents>

Responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

NFRS enforces general fire safety legislation on behalf of the County Council. The legislation the Authority enforces includes:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Dangerous Substances (Notification and Marking of Sites) Regulations 1990
- The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007.

Our enforcement activities adhere to the principles of Better Regulation contained within the Enforcement Concordat and Regulators Code and we aim to support business and other responsible persons through education and the provision of advice and guidance.

Where it is absolutely necessary, we will take enforcement action and will only consider prosecution where it is in the public's best interest. Full details of how we discharge our responsibilities under fire safety legislation can be found via the following link:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Fire/Business.aspx#firesafetylegislation>

Responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

NFRS operates within the County Council's management framework which incorporates the provisions of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the responsibility to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy working environment for all employees. Full details of how we discharge our responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation can be found via the following link:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Protection/Safety/Work.aspx>

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Fire and rescue authorities have a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to work with partners in their Local Resilience Forum to plan and train for hazards identified in a joint Community Risk Register (CRR). A CRR identifies potential risks to the community 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 Fire and Rescue Plan 2017-2021.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017

The Act 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.

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework

The Fire and Rescue National Framework (see link below) sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England to:

- identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately;
- work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service;
- be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

A copy of the Fire and Rescue National Framework can be viewed online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england>

Full details of how NFRS assesses the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that our areas face, makes provision for prevention and protection activities and responds to incidents appropriately, can be found within the

Integrated Risk Management Plan, also known as the Fire and Rescue Plan. A copy of the Fire and Rescue Plan can be viewed on our website:

<http://fire.northumberland.gov.uk>

Management of Risk

The County Council has a risk management strategy which aims to ensure that there is continuous improvement in the arrangements for managing risk across NCC Groups. Full details can be found within the NCC Annual Governance Statement which is included within our 'Statement of Accounts' publication, at the end of the document. These documents are published each year on the Council's website, on the 'Statement of Accounts' web page. page:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Finance/Statement-of-accounts.aspx#statementofaccounts>

NFRS risk management strategy follows the principles of the Office of Government Commerce, Management of Risk Framework. All members of staff work to identify threats and opportunities to the service and our communities. Once a risk has been identified we decide how we want to deal with the risk and it will be closely monitored. Risk registers are maintained for Strategic Risk, Operational Risk, Community Incident and Firefighter Safety Risk and a Business and Resident Profile Risk Report is kept. The nature of certain risks means that not all records will be accessible to all: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Fire/Civil.aspx>

Our Purpose

Our Mission

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is proud of the quality of the services that it delivers to the public. We have a clear vision of *'Making Northumberland Safer'* and strive to recognise and respond to key issues and challenges.

Our collaborative arrangements

We have extant agreements for mutual aid and discharge of functions under Sections 13 & 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 with all of our neighbouring Fire Authorities. These are reviewed on an annual basis.

We have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with a number of partner agencies including Highways Agency, Northumbria Police, North East Ambulance Service, Defence Fire and Risk Management Organisation, other Category 1 responders and the Environment Agency. We also work with local partners such as RAF Boulmer, British Red Cross, HMP Northumberland and the Northumberland National Park and North of Tyne Mountain Rescue Teams.

Partnerships Arrangements

NFRS has several partnership arrangements in place. For instance, through our partnership arrangements with SureStart we host Children's Centres within a number of our Community Fire Stations, and have co-located partners such as North East Ambulance Service and Northumbria Police working from our stations across the county. Given the success of co-location with NEAS, Northumbria Police and Northumberland County Council Public Protection colleagues at West Hartford, Hexham and Alnwick, we are keen to look to expand partnership opportunities.

Business Continuity

Business Continuity Management is a series of processes and plans which identify risk and develop NFRS resilience to ensure that adverse events cause minimal disruption to the services provided and that critical services are maintained. The Civil Contingencies Team (CCT) manages the Business Continuity process for NCC and the Team sits within NFRS for management purposes.

The Civil Contingencies Team is responsible for statutory directives coming from:

- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 1999
- The Pipeline Safety Regulations 1999

Priorities for the team are to:

- Identify and record risks in a Community Risk Register
- Prepare appropriate emergency response plans

- Train our staff
- Test our arrangements through regular exercises
- Apply learning to review and amend plans

Our Performance

How we performed during 2018/19

Our performance is reported by the County Council on a quarterly basis and reported to the Council's Scrutiny Committee and NCC Policy Board:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=378#meetings>

Benchmarking

We use national benchmarking reports and tools. We are also part of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and benchmark against fire and rescue services of similar size and demographics and against national statistics provided by the Home Office.

National Fire Chiefs Council: <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/>

National Fire Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-statistics>

CIPFA National: <http://www.cipfastats.net/cipfastats/>

What others have said about our performance.

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

In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue service. HMICFRS now assess and report on the efficiency, effectiveness and people of the 45 fire and rescue services in England. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) were independently assessed by a ten-person inspection team from October 29th – November 2nd 2018. This was the first inspection of NFRS for approximately ten years. The final report was published on June 20th 2019. The judgment gradings contained in the final reports for NFRS were;

- Effectiveness ***Requires Improvement***
- Efficiency ***Requires Improvement***
- People / Leadership ***Requires Improvement***

The report identified 23 Areas for Improvement (AFI) which NFRS will seek to address through a detailed Improvement Action Plan in advance of the next inspection.

Customer Service

The Government wants services for all that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering, with the citizen at the heart of service provision.

Lessons learnt

Coroners Regulation 28 Notices

Coroners have issued three regulation 28 notices following firefighter fatalities at emergency incidents in the UK. The purpose of a regulation 28 notice is that the coroner will inform persons or authorities that they believe a similar incident can be prevented by taking certain actions.

It is important that the Fire and Rescue Service learns from these tragic incidents and implements changes to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future. As a result, we have conducted a review of the recommendations against our current policies, procedures and training programmes and have produced an action plan for improvement:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Fire/Reports.aspx>

Financial Performance (Statement of Accounts)

Our Budget for 2019/20

NFRS is an integral part of NCC. NCC provides the Statement of Accounts which can be found on the NCC public website:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Finance/Statement-of-accounts.aspx#statementofaccounts>

Revenue expenditure

The budget for the Fire and Rescue service for 2019/20 was £15,320,740.

Expenditure per head of population¹²

NFRS cost £39.26 per head of population in 2019/20. This compares to the average cost per head of;

- North East region fire and rescue services £41.58
- Family group fire and rescue services £38.36
- Predominantly rural group of FRS £34.65³
- All UK fire and rescue services £34.21

The NCC Pay Policy statement can be found at the following link:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=4402#objectives>

¹ Financial data is taken from the CIPFA Fire and Rescue Statistics 2018/19; FRSs that did not supply data to CIPFA are not included in these averages. Number of incidents taken from Home Office Fire Statistics Table 0102 is the latest available data

² Northumberland costs include central re-charge such as legal, HR, finance

³ Net Expenditure figures not available for Oxfordshire and Isles of Scilly.

Expenditure per incident

Our overall expenditure against the number of incidents we attend is £3,772 per incident in 2019/20 compared to the average of;

- North East region fire and rescue services £3,115
- Family group £4,409
- Predominantly rural group of FRS £3,797
- All UK fire and rescue services £4,098

The above average expenditure per incident is mainly due to the success of our prevention work. By using our resources effectively to deliver prevention work we are reducing the number of incidents that occur. Therefore those incidents that do occur are seemingly more expensive. It is also to a lesser extent due to the rural nature of Northumberland. To provide a suitable response across the whole county the level of resources we require are higher than more densely populated areas. This is why our retained firefighters are so important in delivering an excellent and cost effective service.

Auditor's findings

A summary of auditor's' reports and findings can be found in the Annual Audit Letter on the link below. The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 require local authorities, including fire and rescue authorities, to prepare an annual governance statement in support of the annual statement of accounts. Full details can be found within the NCC Annual Governance Statement which is included in our 'Statement of Accounts' publication, at the end of the document. These are published each year, on the Council's website, on the 'Statement of Accounts' page:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Finance/Statement-of-accounts.aspx#statementofaccounts>

Our Future Plans

Our future challenges

We regularly analyse the county's community risk profile and set out our strategic approach as to how we will effectively manage those risks. This is detailed in our Fire & Rescue Plan 2017-2021, which can be found using the link below. The Government requires us, by law, to regularly produce and review our plan, which is also known as a 'Strategic Integrated Risk Management Plan':

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Fire/Reports.aspx>

Our Service Priorities for 2019/20 were;

1. Review risks to our communities to ensure the effective delivery of our services

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.

2. 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 5 year technical refresh and upgrading software to ensure our staff have the access to the most suitable software to allow them to receive calls and mobilise resources as efficiently as possible. Working with the other three fire and rescue services in the region, 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 will result in the development of a Staff Communications and Engagement Framework, revisions to our recruitment, promotion and development processes and the development of an integrated People Strategy.

4. Resource and support inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

A dedicated team was established in advance of the full HMICFRS inspection to facilitate the data collection, engagement meetings and the field work assessment.

The team was maintained until the publication of the inspection report to ensure that post inspection activity could be properly managed.

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 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.

Our Community Engagement

How we can help you

If you are concerned about your fire safety and would like to know if you are eligible for a free safe and wellbeing visit please call our freephone number on **0800 731 1351** or email: SWV.NFRS@northumberland.gov.uk

Access to information

Referral@northumberland.gov.uk

Details regarding the Fire Authority's arrangements in respect of access to data and information can be found on the following website page:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Contact/Information.aspx#dataprotection>

Comments and Compliments

NFRS is passionate about delivering top quality customer service. Delivering excellent customer service benefits both our organisation and our customers. We also know that we need to continually adjust and improve because we need to meet the changing needs and expectations of our customers. If you have any compliments, comments, complaints or suggestions please contact us using whichever of the following methods is most convenient to you:

- In person at our offices
- By phone to Reception: 01670 621110
- By Freephone to: 0345 600 6400 (you may be charged if you call from a mobile)
- By fax to: 01670 713653
- By email to: ask@northumberland.gov.uk
- Online at: www.northumberland.gov.uk/fire
- By post to: Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service
Service Headquarters
West Hartford Business Park
Cramlington
Northumberland
NE23 3JP