

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service



Statement of Assurance

2021 to 2022

Director Fire and Rescue (Chief Fire Officer)

Ceri Sumner

September 2022



Norfolk County Council



INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

Fire and Rescue Authorities must provide both local communities and the Government with an annual statement of assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. This means that Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) must demonstrate that it is doing what the Government expects of it, as laid down in the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#), and that it is delivering the local Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) formerly known as the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The National Framework was last updated in 2020.


This statement of assurance covers the period April 2021 to March 2022.

NORFOLK'S CONTEXT

In Norfolk, the Fire and Rescue Authority is Norfolk County Council which governs and operates the Fire and Rescue Service as a service in the council's Community and Environmental Services Directorate. Our Director of Fire and Rescue (Chief Fire Officer) is a member of the Departmental Management Team with the responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service.

The type of fire and rescue service that is operated is influenced by the nature of the area in which it works, for Norfolk this includes:


- Increasing and ageing population
- Fifth largest county in England
- Second most rural county with one of the lowest population densities in England
- Relatively flat county prone to flooding and coastal tidal surges
- Changing emergency call profile - as well as fires we also attend a wide variety of incidents like rescues from water and road traffic collisions
- Norfolk's ethnic make-up is characterised by a predominantly White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British or Irish population (92.9%). (A further 0.1% are Gypsy/Irish Travellers and 3.5% Other White.)
- The proportion of people with an ethnic group other than White is 3.5%, and this varies from 1.4% in North Norfolk to 9.2% in Norwich.
- There are around 160 languages spoken in Norfolk. English is not the first language of around 12,400 school children in the county.
- Norfolk's population could rise by an estimated 60,600 over the period to 2028 - this is an increase of 6.7%. Norfolk's population is projected to exceed one million by 2036.


907,800 population
24.5% aged over 65


90 miles of coastline
250 miles of navigable inland waterways


6,256 miles of roads


More than 50% of the population live in "Urban" areas


93% (approx.) land area rural

An extensive profile of Norfolk can be found in Norfolk's Story. [Download "Norfolk's Story" from the Norfolk Insight website.](#)

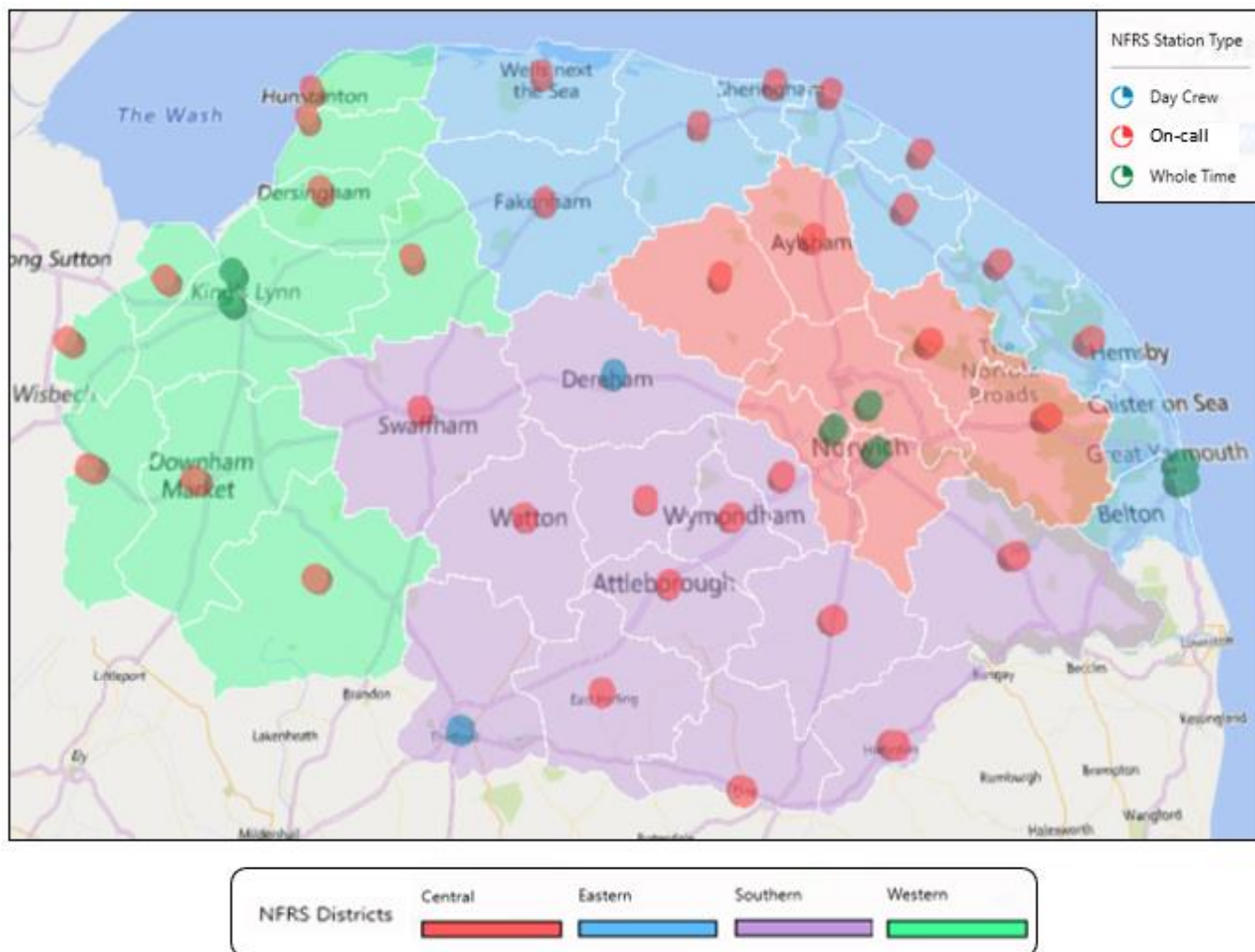
NORFOLK FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE RESOURCES

There are 42 fire stations across the county. Carrow and Sprowston in Norwich, and King's Lynn South are wholtime stations crewed by firefighters 24/7. Four stations have a mix of wholtime and on-call firefighters (Earlham, Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and King's Lynn North), two stations have a mix of Day Crew and on-call firefighters (Dereham and Thetford) and 33 stations are crewed by on-call firefighters in market towns and villages. On-call firefighters are staff whose main job is outside the Fire and Rescue Service, but they are available on-call to respond to emergencies in their area.




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SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY




The service has a variety of fire engines to tackle a range of different emergencies. For example, Heavy Rescue Pumps (HRPs) are equipped to respond to road traffic collisions and Technical Rescue Units (TRUs) attend water rescue and large animal rescue incidents. The off-road 4x4 fire engines are used for flooding incidents, heathland/forest fires, firefighting and rescues at height.


Our fleet of specialist vehicles also includes, four Heavy Rescue Pumps, two Environmental Protection Units (EPUs), an Incident Command Vehicle, two Water / Foam Carriers (WFCs), three Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs), 5 Wildfire Water Misting Units, two Drones, a High-Volume Pumping (HVP) Unit, four Water Rescue / Animal Rescue units, a Mass Decontamination Unit and driver training vehicles. The Service also hosts a team of Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) personnel and vehicles that are trained to respond to national, regional or major incidents, including a search and rescue K9 Unit. This specialist team make up a national response capability, who can also respond to a terrorist threat should such an incident occur



Firefighters
261 Wholetime
339 On-Call



57 Support
12 School Crossing



26 Control Room

Employee full time equivalent at end of March 2021



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OUR VISION AND MISSION

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service is at the heart of protecting communities.

We exist to make our county as safe as possible.

Our mission is to make Norfolk a safer place through:

PREVENTING fires and other emergencies

PROTECTING people, buildings and the environment

RESPONDING to fires and other emergencies when they arise

We will deliver our vision by...

Having a service that remains relevant, capable and agile to protect Norfolk as best it can

Supporting our communities to reduce risk by educating and advising them

Responding to incidents, ensuring we have the best people, equipment and technology to be able to do this

We will support Norfolk by...

- ✓ Educating adults, children, partners and businesses so they all better understand the part they can play in reducing risk.
- ✓ Understanding the diverse needs of our communities, using local knowledge and risk mapping based on current data.
- ✓ Being prepared for the unexpected, through continued staff training opportunities, investment in our service and flexibility to take on different duties with utmost professionalism.
- ✓ Being a trusted voice. We will work with businesses and residents to help them reduce the risk of incidents occurring, whether at work, at home, in public places or on the move.
- ✓ Take enforcement action where attempts to work with people have not resulted in the safest course of action being followed to ensure the ongoing safety of everyone.

Our priorities and action will be driven by...

- ✓ We will do what matters – we will have clear strategic priorities and plans, based on evidence and need.
- ✓ We will do the right thing – we will have honest and thoughtful conversations and use our expertise to take the right course of action whatever the circumstances.
- ✓ We will adhere to our corporate values and behaviours to ensure we work as one inclusive team.
- ✓ We will show compassion and empathy with our audiences, supporting them in the most appropriate ways.

**The future of Norfolk
will be safer through the work that we do.**



IRMP

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

The IRMP20-23 set out the risks and issues Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service needed to respond to over the three years from 2020 to 2023 and how it will do it. The IRMP is the single most important document for the Fire and Rescue Service as it shows what the Service will be doing and why. It is also one of the means by which the public can hold the Service to account. We are currently continuing the process of drafting, engaging, and will be consulting on, the Community Risk Management Plan 2023-26 (CRMP - the new name for IRMP).



Our current IRMP 2020-2023 was approved in January 2020. [Download the IRMP 2020-23 \(PDF\) from our community risk management plan webpage.](#) NFRS will be engaging internally and externally through 2022 and then consulting on a draft CRMP 2023-2026 plan from October 2022 to December 2022 and will consider all responses received. Elected members will then make decisions about which proposals to adopt and we will look to publish our new CRMP 2023-2026 in the spring of 2023.

Collaborative working

We have an established record of working in partnership to deliver effective and efficient services. This includes:

- Fulfilling our duties outlined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 by working as part of the Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) to maintain and develop Norfolk's Community Risk Register, plan the response to major incidents and emergencies in the county, and carry out Multi-Agency training exercises as part of the preparation of an effective response.
- Participating in over the border mutual aid agreements via the National Resilience Programme, which shares specialist response assets across the country. Alongside these wider arrangements, we have local agreements in place with neighbouring fire and rescue services (Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk) to ensure the fastest response to emergency calls and to share specialist assets.
- Working with other Fire and Rescues Services to improve interoperability. We are part of the East Coast and Hertfordshire Control Room Consortium, a group of fire and rescue services that are working together to standardise control room practices so that we can support each other in the event of major incidents. We make use of national operational and tactical guidance. We will be changing our communication systems as part of the national emergency services mobile communications programme (ESMCP).
- Increasing our collaboration with other emergency services. Our shared Communication and Control Room with Norfolk Constabulary allows us to share information directly with our emergency service partners. We can also share operational intelligence and information on a daily basis directly between the two organisations. Managers are able to quickly offer advice and support to each other and share joint situational awareness with immediate effect due to working in the same building. Further evidence of our collaborative work can be found in the annual Police and Fire Collaboration Report. [Download this report from our collaboration webpage.](#)



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Our “Plan on a Page” summarises our service delivery model. For 2021/22 it was:

What we will do:

Our outcomes:

- Preventing fires and other emergencies
- Protecting people, buildings and the environment by
- Responding to fires and other emergencies when they arise.

Our priorities:

- Being a trusted voice, educate adults, children, partners and businesses so they all better understand the part we all play in reducing risk.
- Being evidence based, understand the diverse needs of our communities by building on local knowledge and risk mapping to target our delivery outcomes.
- Being prepared through continued staff training opportunities, investment in our service and flexibility to take on different duties with utmost professionalism.
- Take enforcement action where attempts to work with people have not resulted in the safest course of action being followed to ensure the ongoing safety of everyone.
- Continue to develop our organisational culture by caring, engaging and investing in our people.
- Develop our Concept of Operations.

Priority	How we will do it	How we will know if we have made a difference
Prevention	Preventing fires and other emergencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By reducing fires, improve home, road and water safety • By working with partners to support vulnerable people and reducing the risk and effects of fire • By promoting the installations of smoke alarms. • by working with the Police to reduce arson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have attended fewer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accidental domestic dwelling fires, injuries and deaths ○ Killed or seriously injured people on the roads ○ Arson incidents • We have reduced the percentage of fires attended with no smoke detector fitted.
Protection	Protecting people, buildings and the environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing advice to organisations on how to reduce the risk and impact from fire and enforce fire safety legislation • By working with other enforcement agencies to share information on risk and to take joint enforcement action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have attended fewer accidental non-domestic dwelling fires
Response	Responding to fires and other emergencies when they arise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By ensuring operational readiness and firefighter safety • By improving the availability and response times of our fire engines • By learning from operational incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of time first fire engines are available is greater than 90% • Our attendance times at ‘Fires where life may be at risk’ will be better than 80% within 10 minutes • Our attendance times at ‘Other emergencies where life may be at risk’ will be greater than 80% within 13 minutes
Service	Developing our service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By caring for and investing in our people • By engaging and listening to all voices in our service • By improving the diversity of our workforce • By keeping our staff safe and well • By reducing our impact on the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diversity of applications has improved • The number of over 7-day RIDDOR events has reduced. • Service progress reflects the intent of our 5-year plan



COVID RESPONSE

Our last Statement of Assurance 2020-21 detailed Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection findings of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We continued to respond strongly through 2021-22:

PREVENTION

- We continued to provide prevention (and protection) activities using a risk-based approach in line with NFCC guidance.
- We maintained our new way of assessing the risks for vulnerable people in the community and continued to target individuals identified as being at an increased risk from fire, including those at increased risk as a result of the pandemic.
- We continued offering face to face safe and well visits on a risk-assessed basis and provided staff with suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) to do so.

PROTECTION

- We reviewed premises risk assessments, recognising the risk to the public from fire can increase as businesses and other premises change their working environments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We continued to respond to complaints and to issue alteration notices, enforcement notices and prohibition notices. We also continued responding to statutory building control consultations.
- We continued to engage with those responsible for fire safety in high-risk premises with cladding.

RESPONSE

- The overall availability of crewed fire engines declined during the latter phase of the pandemic, due to the increased number of staff absent through isolation or illness. Our average availability for the year was 79.7% against the previous year average of 90.2%.
- Our average response time to fires improved in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21.
- We had good arrangements in place to make sure that our control room had enough staff during the pandemic.

PEOPLE

- Staff wellbeing was a clear priority for the service during the pandemic. We proactively identified wellbeing problems and responded to any concerns and further needs.
- Senior leaders actively promoted wellbeing services and encouraged staff to discuss any worries they had.
- Staff could access services to support their mental wellbeing if needed.
- Staff most at risk of COVID-19 were identified effectively, including those from an ethnically diverse background and those with underlying health problems.





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- We made sure that firefighters were competent to do their work during the pandemic. This included keeping up to date with mandatory firefighter fitness requirements.
- We updated the way we dealt with staff absences to help it better manage staff wellbeing and health and safety and make more effective decisions on how to allocate work.

LOGISTICS

- We assessed the risks of new work to make sure staff had the skills and equipment needed to work safely and effectively
- We provided our workforce with suitable PPE on time. We participated in the national fire sector scheme to procure PPE, which allowed us to achieve value for money.
- We made robust and realistic calculations of the extra costs faced during the pandemic. Where possible, we exploited opportunities to make savings and used them to mitigate the financial risks we had identified. We fully understand the effect this will have on our previously agreed budget and anticipated savings.

PLANNING

- In line with good governance, our service had a pandemic flu plan and business continuity plans in place, which were in date. These plans were activated and regularly reviewed to reflect the changing situation and our learning during the pandemic. We produced and implemented a COVID-specific 'concept of operations' which guided our organisational response.
- We continued to provide core statutory functions throughout the pandemic, in line with advice from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).
- Good practice of issuing of guidance across the frameworks to inform staff on how to deliver during the pandemic.
- The service provided regular and relevant communication to all staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES & COLLABORATIVE WORKING

- We were an active member of the Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) during the pandemic. As part of the NRF's response to COVID-19, our service was a member of the strategic co-ordinating group, tactical co-ordinating group, Multi-Agency Fusion group, PPE distribution group, and communities and vulnerable group. The service was able to allocate suitably qualified staff to participate in these groups without affecting its core duties.
- The fire and rescue authority chair and the service maintained a constructive relationship. The service regularly updated the fire and rescue authority, including through weekly reports to the chair.

AGILE & ADAPTABLE

- We changed how we operated during the pandemic. We continued using smarter, flexible working arrangements and virtual communication platforms.





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- We could quickly implement changes to how we operate. This allowed our staff to work flexibly and efficiently during the pandemic.
- Our senior leaders had positive feedback from staff on how they were engaged with during the pandemic. As a result, the service has adopted these changes into our usual procedures and reviews how they can be developed further to help promote a sustainable change to our working culture.
- The service had enough resources available to respond to the level of demand during the COVID-19 pandemic and to re-allocate resources where necessary to support the work of its partner organisations.
- Arrangements put in place to monitor staff performance across the service were effective. This meant the service could be sure its staff were making the best contribution that they reasonably could during this period.
- As well as performing their statutory functions, wholetime and on-call firefighters undertook extra activities, including those under the tripartite agreement.



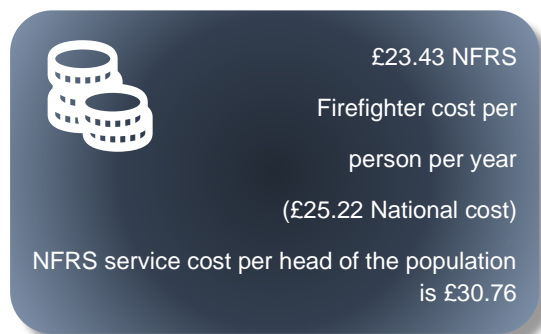


FINANCIAL ASSURANCE

NFRS Budget & Financial Management

NFRS operates on a revenue budget which in 2021/22 was £28.1 million net, 6.4% of the Council's overall net revenue budget. This equates to £30.76 (£31.29 2020/21) per head of population including capital charges, £28.17 (£28.46 2020/21) per head excluding capital charges.

The service has an approved capital programme of £21.5m over 3 years, 21/22 £1.3m, 22/23 £14.1m and 23/24 £6m, with the largest spend relating to fire appliances to be phased in over 22/23.



Financial Management

The Council's [Constitution](#) sets out the Council's decision-making framework, including delegation arrangements. The Constitution includes Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which set out how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed. Updated Financial Regulations were approved by Cabinet in April 2019. All Responsible Budget Officers/ Management of NFRS are made fully aware of their duties with checks and oversight by the Fire Services Procurement Manager and Finance Officer.

The County Council is legally required to provide an annual report, the Statement of Accounts, on how it spends its money. As the Fire Authority, the Council includes in the Statement of Accounts details of the NFRS financial position. The accounts, along with the Fire Fighters Pension Fund Accounts, are audited to confirm their accuracy.

Following the signing of the Statement of Accounts and the conclusion of the annual audit, our external auditors write an Annual Audit Letter to the Council. The letter summarises the findings of the auditors and formally concludes the audit.

The latest Statement of Accounts and audit letters are available on the [County Council's website](#). These confirm that the budget has been managed in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is being used economically, efficiently and effectively.

If you would like further details about where the Service spends its money, such as expenditure on staff and expenses and where we spend over £500, this is available on the [Council's Open Data website](#).





GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE

National Governance

In January 2016 responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services moved from the Department of Communities and Local Government to the Home Office. Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) operate with a range of different locally determined governance arrangements including an individual – either a police, fire and crime commissioner (PFCC) or a mayor – having sole responsibility for being the fire and rescue authority for an area.

Each FRA will appoint an individual – commonly known as a Chief Fire Officer – who has responsibility for managing the fire and rescue service. This role does not have to be operational but includes managing the personnel, services and equipment secured by the fire and rescue authority for the purposes of carrying out functions conferred on it by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and other enactments. Each fire and rescue authority must hold this person to account for the exercise of their functions and the functions of persons under their direction and control.

In 2022 the Home Office published a consultation White Paper (May 2022). At the centre of the White Paper are plans to deliver:

- Increased public safety: by improving the professionalism of the fire and rescue service through modern workforce practices and potentially establishing a College of Fire and Rescue.
- Improved accountability: through the proposals to transfer fire governance to a single elected individual, overseeing delivery by operationally independent Chief Fire Officers.

The White Paper explains that government want to build on a legacy of reform introduced by the Home Office over recent years to make FRS's more efficient and effective and adapt to public safety challenges and emergencies. The White Paper provides a further opportunity to continuously improve what fire and rescue services do.

Democratic Accountability

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is one of the services provided by Norfolk County Council (NCC) which acts as the Fire and Rescue Authority. The County Council has a [Constitution](#) which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. It includes clear communication protocols and clearly defines roles and responsibilities.

On a regular basis, the County Council's Cabinet review the performance of the Fire and Rescue service, its financial position and risks that have been identified. County Councillors also play a key role in shaping the long term development of the Service including approving the [Integrated Risk Management Plan \(IRMP\)](#).

Since May 2019, under the Cabinet system of Governance, day to day oversight is the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships, Cllr Margaret Dewsbury. The Infrastructure and Development Committee also has a role in reviewing and developing policies and strategies.

A Scrutiny Committee also forms a key part of the democratic checks and balances of the Cabinet system of governance. The Committee is able to review or scrutinise decisions taken by the Executive and to make reports to the Cabinet or Full Council. The roles of Cabinet, Full Council, Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees are set out in the Council's Constitution.

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The IRMP forms part of the Council's Policy Framework and therefore is considered and approved by Full Council. The CRMP for 2023-2026 is currently being developed and will be subject to scrutiny before final Cabinet approval in early 2023.



Service Management

The Director of Fire and Rescue (Chief Fire Officer) is accountable to the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services. Under the Council's scheme of delegated powers, the Chief Fire Officer has authority to exercise the council's functions relating to fire prevention, firefighting, fire safety, explosives and petroleum licensing and the functions conferred on the local authority under Article 25 of the Fire Safety Order 2005.

The Chief Fire Officer is supported by a Senior Leadership Team comprised of senior officers from the Fire and Rescue Service with corporate support from Norfolk County Council. Decisions are taken in accordance with the scheme of delegation set out in the Council's Constitution.

Governance Standards

Norfolk County Council is responsible for putting in place effective systems for the governance of its affairs, ensuring services are delivered properly and legally and that any associated risks are managed. The [Code of Corporate Governance](#) sets out the governance standards.



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ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Performance Management Framework

NFRS operates within the County Council's corporate performance framework. A set of 'vital signs' for each service have been produced which provide transparency and assurance on the health of key services. The vital signs for NFRS are 'Emergency Response Standards (ERS)', 'Percentage of high-risk home fire safety visits carried out' and 'Percentage of high-risk fire safety audits completed'. These are regularly monitored by department management teams and County Councillors through the democratic process.

In accordance with the corporate performance framework, our Service Leadership Team monitor a broader dashboard of indicators and escalate issues to County Councillors if required. Some of the indicators are former national indicators that we can compare with other fire and rescue services and others are locally determined. An overview of our performance over the past 4 years can be found in the next section.

Performance 2018/19 to 2021/22

The Government collate [national statistics](#) about all fire and rescue services.

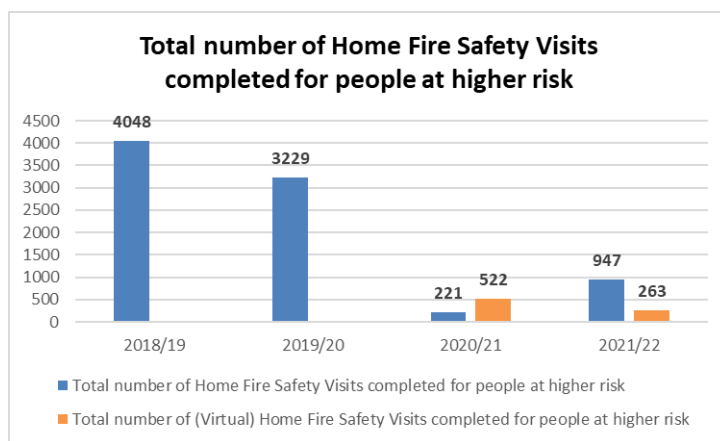
Priorities

We publish an annual Service Delivery Plan which sets out targets which will deliver against our key priorities:

- Prevent & Protect: We will prevent fires and other emergencies from happening and reduce the impact of fires other emergencies on people
- Response: To respond efficiently and effectively to calls for assistance
- People: To build a diverse, skilled, safe and high-performing workforce
- Logistics: To maintain and manage resources and equipment efficiently and responsibly
- Planning: To ensure we meet our customer's expectations

Prevent

Covid 19 heavily impacted on our ability to deliver the range of Prevention activities we had planned to do. We amended our practices in 2020 to deliver Home Fire Safety Checks via telephone where possible, but all activities were impeded by the Lockdowns and restrictions on social interactions through to the end of 2021/22.





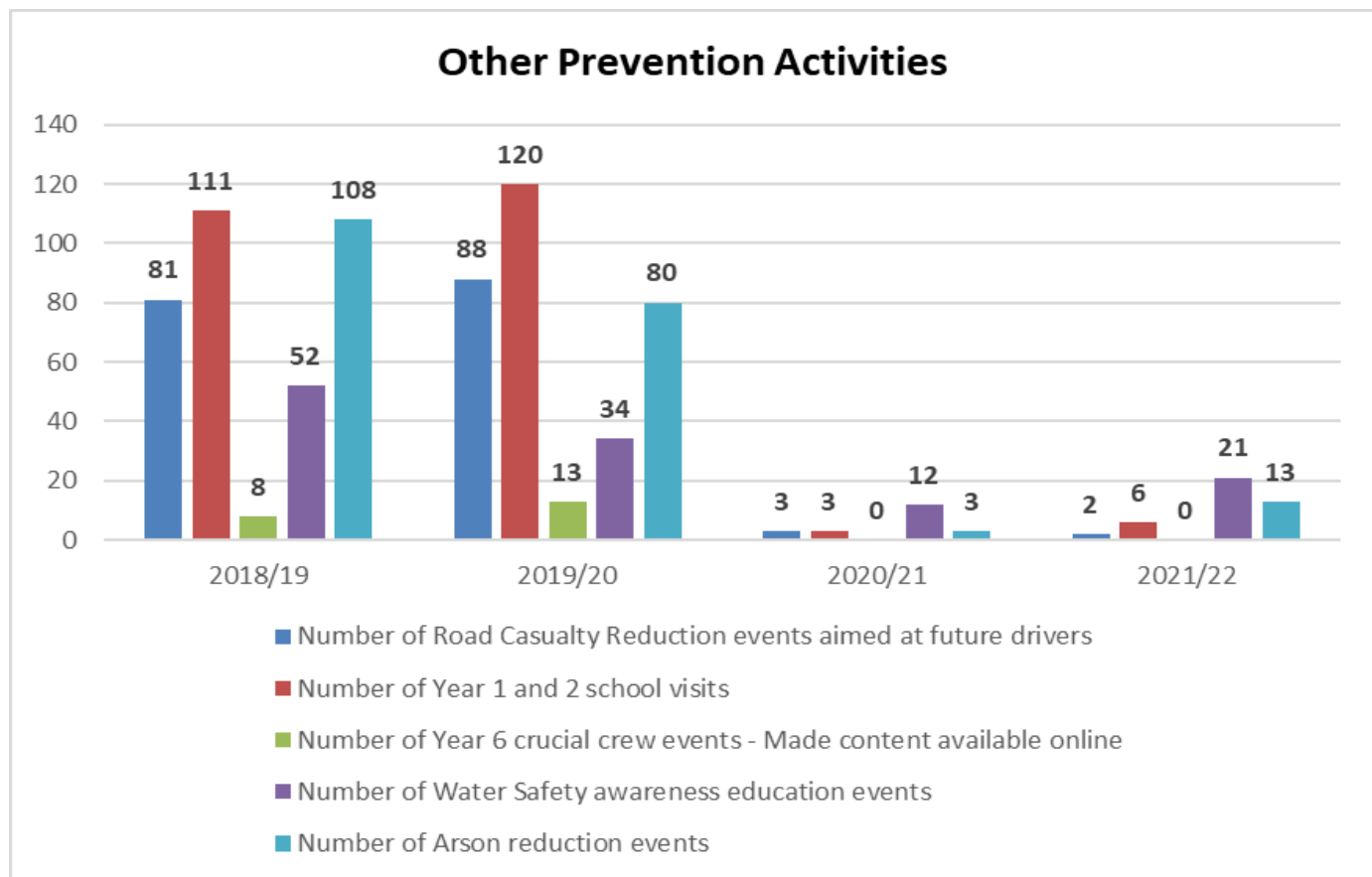
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Total number of home fire safety checks completed for people at higher risk:

- Year 2018/19: 4048
- Year 2019/20: 3229
- Year 2020/21: 221
- Year 2021/22: 947

Total number of virtual home fire safety checks completed for people at higher risk:

- Year 2020/21: 522
- Year 2021/22: 263



Number of Road Casualty Reduction events aimed at future drivers:

- Year 2018/19: 81
- Year 2019/20: 88
- Year 2020/21: 3
- Year 2021/22: 2

Number of Year 1 and 2 school visits:

- Year 2018/19: 111
- Year 2019/20: 120
- Year 2020/21: 3
- Year 2021/22: 6



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Number of Year 6 Crucial Crew events:

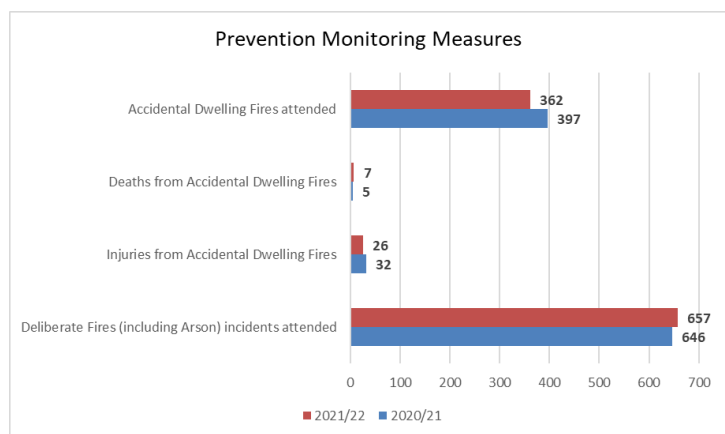
- Year 2018/19: 8
- Year 2019/20: 13
- Year 2020/21: 0
- Year 2021/22: 0

Number of water safety awareness education events:

- Year 2018/19: 52
- Year 2019/20: 34
- Year 2020/21: 12
- Year 2021/22: 21

Number of arson reduction events:

- Year 2018/19: 108
- Year 2019/20: 80
- Year 2020/21: 3
- Year 2021/22: 13



The number of other prevention activities increased slightly through 2021/22 however we continued to experience significant restrictions due to the Covid 19 Pandemic that impacted on the delivery of our services. Covid 19 may also have had an impact on the number of deliberate fires (including arson) incidents and the number of accidental dwelling fires.

Accidental dwelling fires attended:

- Year 2020/21: 397
- Year 2021/22: 362

Deaths from accidental dwelling fires:

- Year 2020/21: 5
- Year 2021/22: 7

Injuries from accidental dwelling fires:

- Year 2020/21: 32
- Year 2021/22: 26

Deliberate fires (including arson) incidents attended:

- Year 2020/21: 646
- Year 2021/22: 657

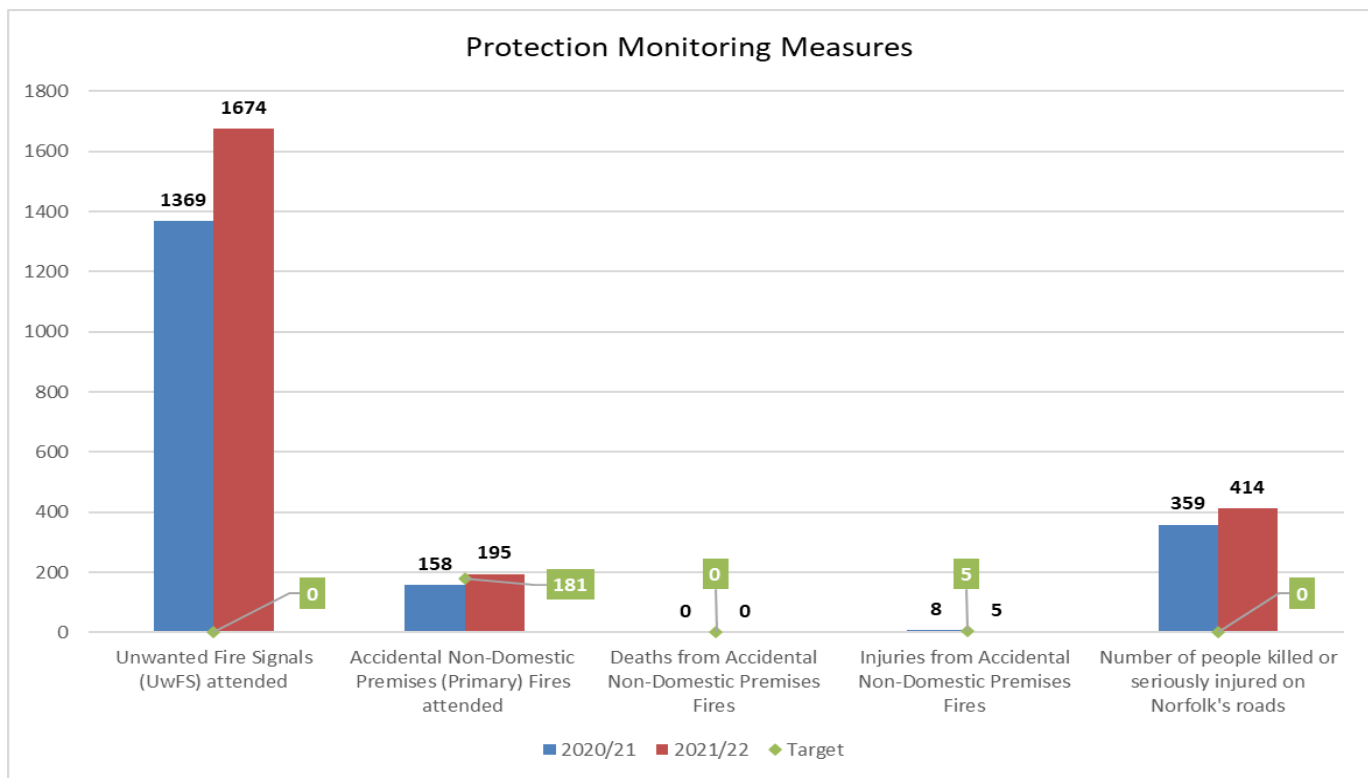




Protect

Carried out 280 Fire Safety audit visits (257 full, 18 short and 5 telephone, incl. 15 high risk) of non-domestic premises to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations (2020/21 was 370).

- Carried out 71 post fire investigations (55 inspections and 16 audits), supporting business resilience, which includes enforcement and prosecutions for serious cases (2020/21 was 42).
- Maintained up-to-date files of the risks at over 650 non-domestic premises so that if an incident did occur, we would have the information needed to deal with the event as safely as possible, thus reducing the risks for our firefighters and the public.



Unwanted fire signals (UwFS) attended:

- Year 2020/21: 1369
- Year 2021/22: 1674

Accidental non-domestic premises fires attended (number):

- Year 2020/21: 158
- Year 2021/22: 195
- Target (less than): 181

Deaths from accidental non-domestic premises fires (number):

- Year 2020/21: 0
- Year 2021/22: 0
- Target (less than): 0





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Injuries from accidental non-domestic premises fires (number):

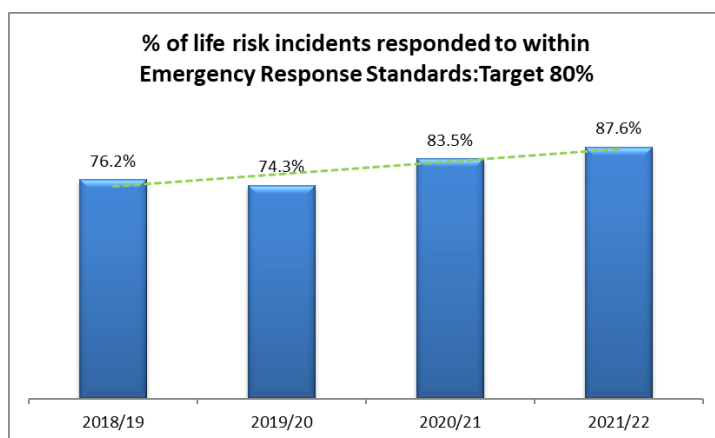
- Year 2020/21: 8
- Year 2021/22: 5
- Target (less than): 5

Number of people killed or seriously injured on Norfolk's roads (updated monthly):

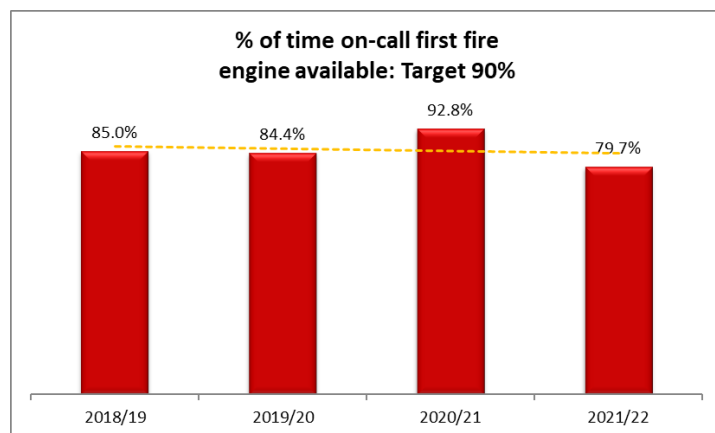
- Year 2020/21: 359
- Year 2021/22: 414

Response

During 2020/21 we aimed to get to 80% of life risk incidents within our Emergency Response Standards (how quickly we should attend an incident) and achieved this on 87.6%* of occasions. We reviewed our methodology for reporting on this in 2020/21 and as a result we will be able to better evaluate risk mitigation activity for more remote locations through our performance framework and this was reflected in our target setting for 2021/22.



Our on-call first fire engines were available and ready to respond to an emergency 79.7% of the time against a target of 90%. This is a decrease on last year's figure of 92.8%. It is worth noting that availability in 2020/21 was improved as a result of Covid 19 lockdowns, as more On Call staff were available.



The ERS measure was a Vital Sign and reported through the corporate reporting system to Norfolk County Council.

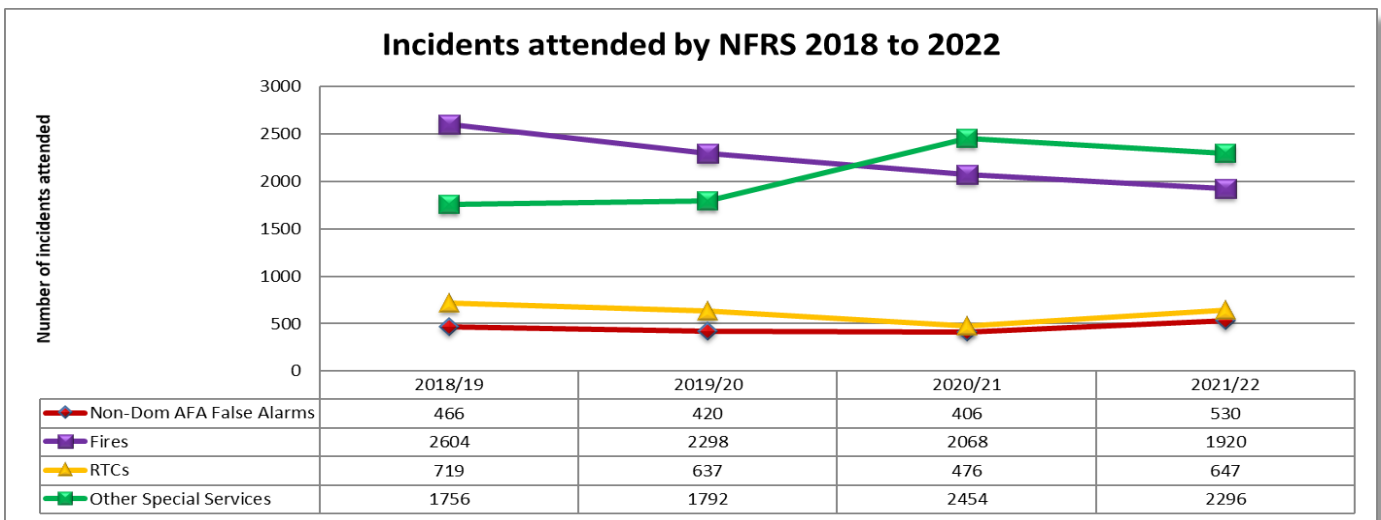




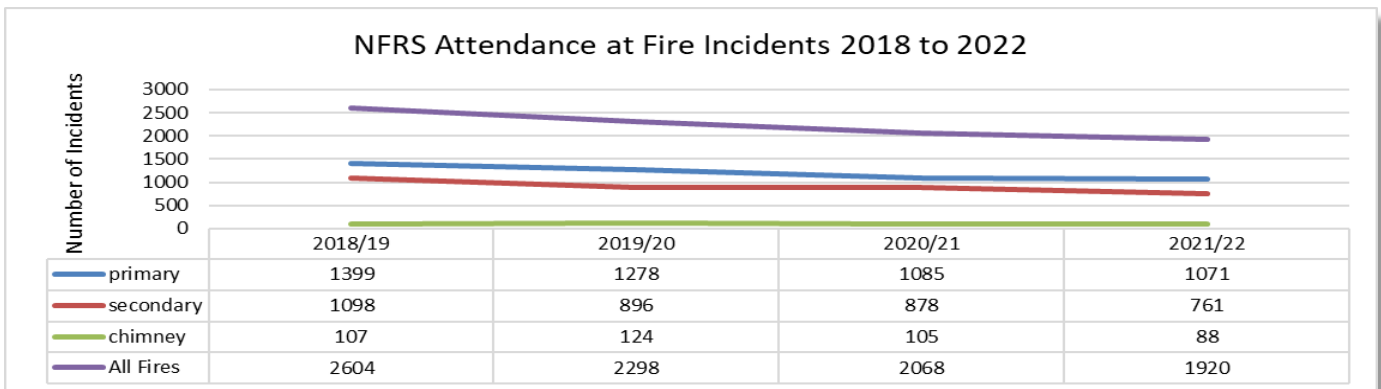
Incident Attendance

Incident Type	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Attendance to AFA non-domestic False Alarms (BVPI 149i)	466	420	406	530
Attendance to Fires	2604	2298	2068	1920
Attendance to RTC's	719	637	476	647
Attendance to Other Special Services (not RTC's)	1756	1792	2454	2296
Total (Fire, RTC and Other Special Services)	5545	5147	5404	5393
Total attendances of all types	7640	7131	7517	7554
RTC Extractions (number of incidents, not number of people)	200	196	134	168

NOTE the number of non-domestic AFA False Alarms attended now uses data reported to Home Office IRS system.



Incident Type	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Non-domestic AFA False Alarms	466	420	406	530
Fires (All)	2604	2298	2068	1920
Fires (Primary)	1399	1278	1085	1071
Fires (Secondary)	1098	896	878	761
Fires (Chimney)	107	124	105	88
RTC's	719	637	476	647
Other Special Services	1756	1792	2454	2296



STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE



We attended 1,920 fires – 148 less than last year (a reduction of 7.2%). This included:

- 362 accidental dwelling fires in people's homes – 35 less than last year, resulting in seven fatalities and 26 people being injured. This compares to five fatalities and 32 injuries in 2020/21.

Year	Total accidental dwelling fires	Total fire related fatalities	Total fire related injuries
2018/19	427	3	50
2019/20	425	3	34
2020/21	397	5	32
2021/22	362	7	26

- 657 deliberate fires (potentially arson) incidents – an increase of 1.7% compared to 2020/21.

Year	Total deliberate fires (excluding not known)
2018/19	859
2019/20	787
2020/21	646
2021/22	657

- 37 more accidental non-domestic premises fires (194 in total) – an increase of 23.4%. This resulted in 5 persons being injured.

Year	Total accidental fires (non-domestic premises)	Total accidental fires (NDP) related fatalities	Total accidental fires (NDP) related injuries
2018/19	213	1	3
2019/20	246	0	4
2020/21	158	0	8
2021/22	195	0	5

We attended a 30.5% increase in non-domestic false automatic fire alarms against a backdrop of increasing false alarms (22.3%).

We attended 647 road traffic collisions which involved the extrication and release of persons from their vehicles at 168 of those incidents. The increase in our attendance at road traffic collisions can be attributed to a return to increased traffic on roads following removal of Covid 19 lockdowns and fluctuating periods of working from home.

We attended 2,296 other special service incidents such as flooding, freeing trapped people or animals and calls to assist other agencies (a decrease of 6.4% against 2020/21).





Continuous Organisational Improvement & Learning (COIL)

NFRS Landscape...(what we do and how we deliver it)

We have a number of strategic documents that inform what we do. Some of these are published and public facing:

- [NFRS Vision & Mission Statements](#)
- [NFRS Service Delivery Plan](#) (feeding District & Station Plans)
- [Integrated Risk Management Plan](#) (IRMP)

Others are internal documents:

- NFRS Plan on a Page
- Community Risk Profile (CRP)
- Strategic Frameworks (Prevent Protect, Response, People, Logistics & Planning)
- Strategic Intent (5 Year View)
- Assurance Governance Framework

The Journey...(what we want to do better)

- Enable improvements to our service as detailed in the NFRS Service Philosophy (CFO Statement)
- Deliver the Strategic Intent (5 Year View)
- Receive external acknowledgement of improvement and positive change (HMICFRS)

The Vehicle...(how we will monitor, track and drive forwards)

- Continuous Organisational Improvement & Learning

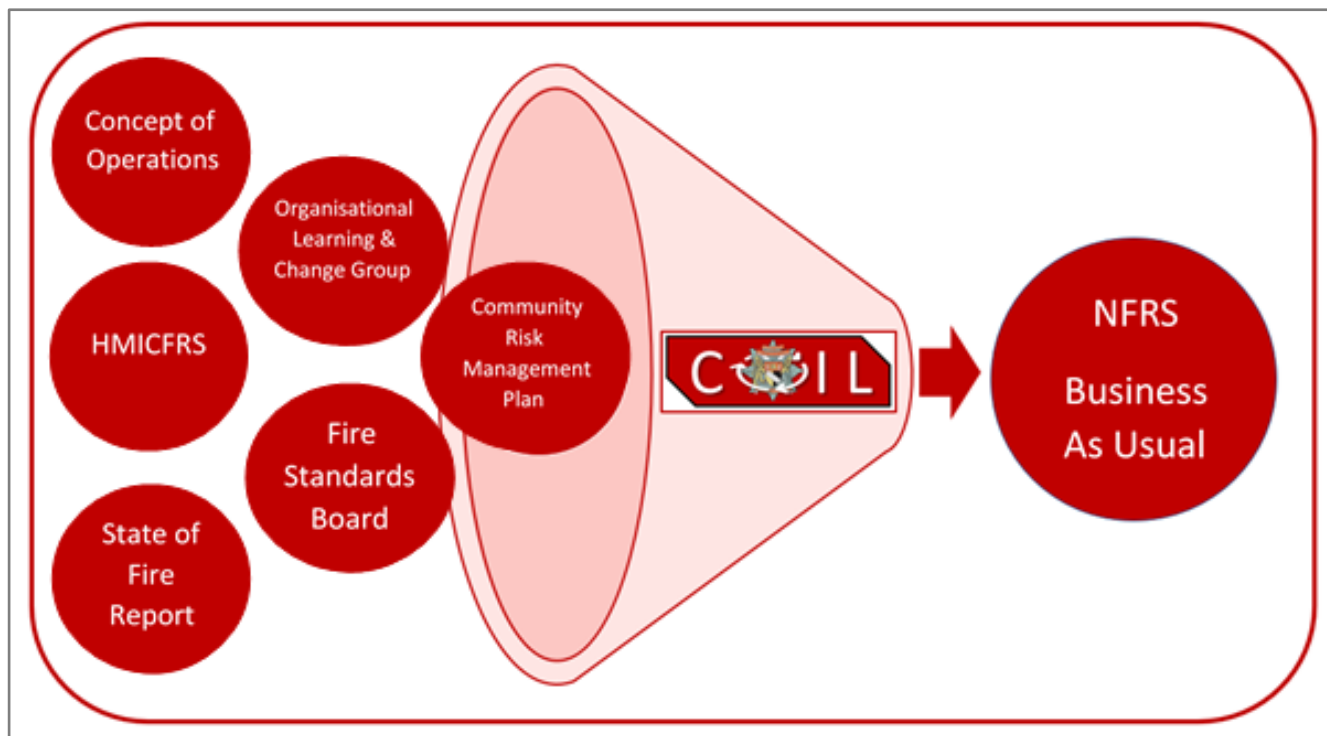


COIL is a **mechanism** to enable improvement. It wraps around our service and draws together all sources of organisational learning and improvement, ensuring that we can **capture, track and review** all strands.

COIL will also allow us to capture the **narrative** around service redesign and change improvement. It will provide a running **record of activities** that have been implemented across our service and the **outcomes** of these. This narrative will allow us to demonstrate how we have improved what we do and how we do it.

COIL is the **roadmap** of NFRS organisational learning and improvement. It will replace the HMICFRS focussed improvement plan, replacing it with a **sector-focussed** roadmap.





The Continuous Organisational Improvement and Learning (COIL) mechanism is the process by which different sources of improvement and learning feed into NFRS business as usual (BAU). The sources that feed into the COIL flow includes (but is not limited to): Concept of Operations (ConOps), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services (HMI), State of Fire Report (SoF), Operational Learning and Change Group (OLCG), Fire Standards Board (FSB), Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

Measuring Against and Reporting On

Our mission, values, behaviours and outcomes (plan on a page) sets out NFRS's intent to protect communities and make the county safer. We will do this by improving our relevance, our agility and our capability, becoming better at preventing fires, protecting people, buildings and the environment and responding to fires and other emergencies. COIL will detail activities that demonstrate how we are:

- Reducing instances of fires and increasing **effectiveness** of home, road and water safety
- Providing greater support for vulnerable people through partner **collaboration**
- Improving our **efficiency** by reducing the impact from fire and enforcing fire safety legislation (risk reduction) through engagement with external organisations
- Maximising our **effectiveness** through training, assurance and learning; ensuring operational readiness & firefighter safety, improving the availability & response times of our fire engines and learning from operational incidents.
- Developing, investing and caring for our **people**; engaging and listening to all voices in our service, improving the diversity of our workforce, keeping our staff safe and well and reducing our impact on the environment.

COIL highlight reports will therefore report progress on all activities and how they are improving our:

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- People.





Training & Development

We assure the quality of our operations by providing appropriate training, development and assessment for all staff, and carrying out audits and reviews of working practices to make sure that they are safe, efficient and effective. This includes performance reviews of how well our officers and firefighters manage incidents when they occur with advice and further training provided if required.

To ensure our firefighters maintain their competency in fighting fires we hone skills using our Fire Training Structure at Scottow Enterprise Park. The unit opened in August 2016 and enables our firefighters to train in live fire conditions. Firefighters also take part in regular Maintenance of Competency Breathing apparatus scenarios throughout the year.

In the context of the recommendations made in the CFOA Firefit review, together with the changes to the pension scheme meaning that operational staff will be working longer, the Service recognises the importance of effectively managing and promoting firefighter fitness and welfare. All personnel undergo an annual fitness assessment, and our Physical Training Adviser works proactively with individuals and stations to embed a culture of fitness and wellbeing. This will be supported by the Physical Fitness Policy which has been reviewed and is out for consultation. All operational personnel also undergo a 3 yearly medical assessment which includes assessment of eyesight, hearing and lung function.

NFRS offers a range of accredited courses and holds various accredited standards to support T&D delivery, including;

- Level 3 Initial Incident Command and Level 4 Intermediate Tactical Command; both accredited by Skills for Justice (SFJ)
- Wholetime new recruits are registered on the Level 3 Firefighter Apprenticeship Scheme: apprentices complete internal gateway assessments before passing the accredited End Point Assessment through external SFJ accredited assessors. On Call recruit firefighters are registered on the SFJ accredited development pathway.
- We offer managerial apprenticeships L3 through to L7
- Driving instructors are accredited through DVSA and must hold suitable qualifications to instruct and assess/qualify.
- Water Rescue course provision is accredited through Rescue 3 – instructors must have all achieved the instructor pathway courses; accredited with Rescue 3.
- Rescue, Trauma and Casualty Care (RTACC) is accredited through The ATACC Group (TAG) and aligns with Level D on the Phem Framework – instructors must be trained to Level E which must be maintained through requalification.
- Breathing Apparatus Instruction courses are accredited through SFJ
- Instructors hold educational awards (levels 3 and 4) in Education and Training (formerly PTLLS) and assessor (AVA) qualifications.
- Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) on qualifications is undertaken by qualified personnel.





Health & Safety and other Legislation

NFRS, supported by NCC HSW Team aims to ensure compliance with NCC requirements and expectations to reduce and manage risk. We ensure that we monitor and review our performance and focus on areas of concern. During 2021/22 we commenced the transition of our Health & Safety support and advice to the wider Norfolk County Council HSW Team, thereby benefiting from shared service provision. Further actions are planned and actively managed as part of this transition process.



In 2021/22 there were 7 reportable health and safety absences lasting more than 7 days – 3 less than the previous year

Improvements to accounting, governance and operational assurance

In reviewing our financial, governance and operational arrangements we continue to identify and incorporate improvements which will further strengthen our approaches and ensure that we are meeting our statutory obligations to best effect.



ACCOUNTABILITY – EXTERNAL SCRUTINY (HMICFRS)

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) undertook their second inspection of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) in late 2021. This detailed process involved a thorough inspection of our Service and their report and findings is due to be published during 2022.

This was the second time that HMICFRS had inspected fire and rescue services across England. In carrying out the inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England, HMICFRS look to answer three main questions:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

In all three areas, Norfolk FRS was rated as "Requires Improvement". Norfolk FRS was given the same rating in the 2018/19 inspection; within this were four detailed areas of service which were rated 'Good'.

The inspector noted particular concerns about the performance of Norfolk FRS in terms of prevention activity and understanding vulnerability. The report also recognised that some activities were affected by restrictions related to Covid lockdowns etc, and that alternative risk-based approaches had to be put in place.

NFRS have produced and published an improvement action plan to track initial service progress against the HMICFRS areas of improvement identified. Our improvement activities will also be captured within the COIL process. Oversight arrangements have been set up to monitor progress against the HMICFRS actions. Cabinet will also monitor progress regularly.

The Cabinet paper containing the improvement plan can be found [on the NCC Website](#).

We have already implemented robust arrangements to ensure Multi-Agency review and learning from fatal fires and serious incidents, additional capacity to deliver community safety activities, refreshed our prevention plan so that it clearly sets out priorities for delivery within the capacity available, targeting resources to support those most at risk of fire and have implemented targeted strategic governance arrangements to provide oversight, energy, and support to implement the Development Plan. (A Community Development Safety Board).

NFRS is also subject to governance review and scrutiny through the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

Blue light collaboration continues to be a key enabler for NFRS and improving our service to the community. We continue to benefit from well-developed and positive relationships across the blue light services – this is demonstrated through an active programme of collaboration including joint estates, a plan to co-locate our control function with Norfolk Constabulary and helping paramedics to gain access to premises in a medical emergency. In 2018 this relationship was further strengthened by the signing of a formal Memorandum of Understanding between Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and Norfolk Constabulary on emergency services collaboration 2018/19 ([MoU between NFRS, NCC, Police and other emergency services](#)).

Collaboration governance arrangements include the Strategic Oversight Board (chaired jointly by the CFO and NCC), as well as an officer operational group.





OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Accounting

Our [Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-23](#) sets out our plans for the time period. We are currently developing our next Community Risk Management Plan 2023-26 (the replacement for the IRMP).

A dedicated Finance Business Manager (FBM) oversees our financial management to ensure that expected income growth and expenditure is correctly identified. The FBM is also a Director of Norfolk Safety (CIC) but does not have any specific responsibility around finances. The CIC uses an external company to audit and file accounts.

Senior Management

Following the permanent appointment of our Chief Fire Officer (CFO) in 2019, our senior management team structure was established to manage the service. This has changed in early 2022 with the retirement of the permanent CFO and their replacement by an Interim Chief Fire Officer. In September 2022 Ceri Sumner took up with permanent role as Director of Fire and Rescue (Chief Fire Officer) with all statutory responsibilities with the exception on incident command.

Our [principal officer overview](#) can be found on our website.

Strategic Organisational Review – Concept of Operations Project

One of the proposals made in our IRMP 2020-2023 was to develop a new Concept of Operations. This project would enable us to review what we do and how we do it and identify any areas of improvement and change we could implement in order to maximise our effectiveness and efficiency.

The project ran through 2021-22 and has delivered the following benefits:

- Changed quarterly maintenance of competence to four-monthly to free up time to develop On-Call firefighters and free up time for greater Prevention and Protection activities for the Wholetime staff
- Changed On-Call contracts to include three-hour drill nights
- Re-set and aligned turn-out times for all On-Call crews
- Moved our Water team from Procurement to CFP
- Transitioned and integrated some of our support functionality (Human Resources, Pay, Equality Diversity and Inclusion and Health & Safety) into NCC Corporate shared service provision

It has also identified a range of further opportunities for transformation that will be reviewed through our Strategy and Transformation Programme and / or through the development of our Community Risk Management Plan 2023-26:

- Staffing - What contract changes could be considered for Wholetime staff to incorporate new ways of working for modern firefighters
- Crewing - Variable crewing options
- Training and Development – review of requirements and methodology
- Capability - Operational response structure review as a result of Norfolk infrastructure changes
- Logistics – Redistribution of specialist rescue capability (HAZMAT and Water)





AUTHORISATION

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority provides assurance to the people of Norfolk that we are satisfied that the Authority's financial, governance and operational assurance arrangements are adequate, operating effectively and meeting statutory requirements detailed within the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018 and subsequent updates.

This Statement of Assurance was approved by the Authority at the Cabinet meeting on 3rd October 2022.

Margaret Dewsbury, Cabinet Member
Ceri Sumner, Director of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (Chief Fire Officer)

