

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Authority**

Creating the Safest Community



STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

2021 / 2022



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FOREWORD

Fire authorities are accountable for their performance and should be open to evaluation by the communities they service. By producing this Statement of Assurance, we aim to provide an easy and accessible way for you, the communities of Tyne and Wear, the Government, local authorities, and partners to make a valid assessment of our performance to ensure that we continue to fulfil our statutory duties.

This Statement of Assurance focusses on the Authority's financial, governance and operational activity that took place between 1 April 2021 and the 31 March 2022.

As Chair of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) and Chief Fire Officer (CFO) of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS), we are satisfied that during 2021/22 our business has been conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money was safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

Overall, we are satisfied that the Authority has done everything within its power to meet the requirements detailed within the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 (the National Framework).



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**Councillor Phil Tye, Chair
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority**



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Lowther'.

**Chris Lowther, CFO QFSM
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides the legal basis for establishing the Authority and sets out its statutory responsibilities, which include providing a fire and rescue service that has the people, equipment and training required to carry out its core functions. This Act is the main piece of legislation under which TWFRS operates.

This Act gives the Government responsibility for producing the National Framework, which sets out a requirement for the Authority to operate within a clearly defined statutory framework and to produce an annual Statement of Assurance. This Statement demonstrates how the Authority has acted in accordance with the requirements of the National Framework while discharging its functions, with respect to financial, governance and operational matters. The key priorities are:

- The provision for prevention and protection activities and the appropriate response to fire and rescue related incidents in Tyne and Wear;
- The identification and assessment of a range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks including those of a cross border, multi-authority and/or a national nature;
- Collaboration with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service provided;
- Being accountable to the communities of Tyne and Wear for the services provided; and
- Developing and maintaining a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Every two years, the Secretary of State reports to Parliament on the extent to which fire and rescue authorities in England are complying with the National Framework.

2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

What we value

The Authority is committed to improving the quality of life for those who live, work or visit Tyne and Wear by ensuring that the public are treated fairly, with respect and that consideration is given to those with different needs. The Authority will ensure that:

- Services delivered by, or on behalf of TWFRS are accessible and do not discriminate.
- Staff are supported to deliver accessible, non-discriminatory services.

The Authority is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)¹ when designing and delivering services and in employment practices, namely:

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- To advance equality of opportunity; and
- To foster good relations between those sharing a protected characteristic² identified in the Equality Act 2010 and those who do not.

Statement of intent

TWFRS has due regard for advancing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion

¹ s.149 of the Equality Act 2010.

² Protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation.

(ED&I) and ensures this is delivered through strategic plans, which support staff and managers in understanding the behaviours required to enable its core values. TWFRS strives for a Service that is fair, respectful and reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

The Service adheres to the PSED by considering how its policies and decisions impact those with protected characteristics and seeks to remove or minimise disadvantage suffered due to their protected characteristics. This includes taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people and encourages their participation in Service activities.

Collecting and analysing equality data aids the Service's understanding of its staff and the communities of Tyne and Wear. Equality, risk, and privacy impact assessments are carried out to ensure that any changes to procedures do not adversely affect any stakeholders or service delivery outcomes.

The [Equality Data and Gender Pay Gap Report](#) is published annually, demonstrating compliance with the PSED.

3. FINANCIAL

The Authority has a duty to ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Authority adheres to financial procedures for budget setting, monitoring and the production of its final accounts and fully complies with the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Financial Management Code. The Authority continues to deliver value for money and achieved significant budget efficiencies of over £4.711m in setting its Revenue Budget for 2020/21.

Annual Statement of Accounts

Financial assurance is provided through the publication of the Annual Statement of Accounts, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and are based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the unaudited accounts to be published annually by the 31 May and the audited accounts to be submitted for approval by the end of July. However, due to the disruption to local authorities preparation of the accounts caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the adoption of the Redmond Review³ recommendations, the Regulations were amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to revise and extend the statutory deadlines for both 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The unaudited Statement of Accounts 2021/22 were reviewed and noted by the Governance Committee on 29 July 2022, within the revised statutory timescale of 31 July 2022. The [audited Statement of Accounts 2021/22](#) are to be approved by the Governance Committee in autumn 2022, in line with the revised statutory timescales. The External Auditor gave notification that they would not be able to complete the audit until the end of November 2022 due to work pressures and delays caused by the 2020/21 audit work which is a position reflected nationally across the public sector.

³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2020) *Independent Review into the Oversight of Local Audit and the Transparency of Local Authority Financial Reporting*.

The financial statements are subject to review by independent auditors as directed by the Audit Commission Act 1998.

Annual Governance Statement

The Annual Governance Statement is a statutory requirement and forms part of the Annual Statement of Accounts. The [Annual Governance Statement 2021/22](#) includes an improvement action plan and was reviewed and noted by the Governance Committee on 27 May 2022 and approved by the Authority on 27 June 2022.

The Authority operates a [Code of Governance](#), which adheres to the CIPFA/SOLACE (2016) Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework and comprises of systems and processes to direct and control the Authority's activities.

External Audit

Mazars is the appointed External Auditors for the Authority and is responsible for the completion of the following assurance activities:

- Audit of the 2021/22 financial statements
- Opinion on the Authority's accounts
- Value for money conclusion

In line with auditing standards, the External Auditor produces an Audit Completion Report in which their opinion is given on whether the financial statements provide a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as of 31 March 2022 and on its income and expenditure for the year then ended. The Audit Completion Report sets out the detailed findings from the audit of the Authority for the year ending 31 March 2022.

Their audit work, findings, and opinions on the Authority's accounts and the value for money conclusion are included within the [Auditors Annual Report](#).

Internal Audit

Sunderland City Council provide the Authority's Internal Audit function. A number of audits were commissioned in line with the Authority's risk profile, which provided independent assurance on the Authority's control environment. The Governance Committee agreed the [Internal Audit Annual Plan 2021/22](#) on 8 March 2021, and the [Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/22](#) presented the findings to the Governance Committee on 27 May 2022.

Modern Slavery Statement

The Authority publishes an annual [Modern Slavery Statement](#) to adhere with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This statement details the steps the Authority has taken during the financial year to deal with modern slavery risks to the supply chain. The 2021/22 statement was presented to the Authority on 13 September 2021.

Transparency

There is a statutory requirement for the Authority to publish its financial results and has adopted best practice guidance as set out in the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. The Authority publishes [transparency](#) information on the TWFRS website to demonstrate how public money is spent and how value for money is achieved which includes financial information about payments for goods and services to external bodies and suppliers above £500, transactions made via procurement cards, tender and procurement information.

The Authority participates in the National Fraud Initiative and has anti-fraud, corruption, and whistleblowing policies in place to ensure it is operating in a fair and transparent manner.

4. GOVERNANCE

Organisational governance

The Authority is the publicly accountable body that oversees the policy and service delivery of TWFRS and comprises of 17 Members. The five constituent councils of Tyne and Wear nominate 16 elected Members, in line with Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1985. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 established routes by which Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) could become involved in the governance of a fire and rescue service and the PCC for Northumbria joined the Authority in 2017. Further details about the Authority, its Members and their allowances can be found on the [TWFRS website](#).

The Authority operates a [constitution](#) comprising of standing orders, which regulate the business of the Authority and provide a governance framework.

1. Standing orders
2. Standing orders - Financial regulations
3. Standing orders - Delegation scheme
4. Standing orders - Terms of reference
5. Standing orders - Code of conduct
6. Standing orders - Member allowances

To enable the Authority to carry out its duties effectively and for Members to consider key decisions and policies and to scrutinise the performance of TWFRS, Fire Authority meetings are held between June and April and supported by a committee structure:

Main committees

- Governance Committee
- Policy and Performance Committee
- Human Resources Committee

Ad hoc committees

- Appointments Committee
- Disciplinary Appeals Committee
- Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee
- Emergency Committee

Sunderland City Council's Democratic Service undertakes the secretariat function for Fire Authority and committee meetings. Reports can be viewed on the [Council's website](#).

The Authority operates a Pension Board whose purpose is to assist it in its role as scheme manager of the Firefighters Pension Scheme. The Board consists of employee and employer representatives who oversee the administration of the pension scheme by complying with regulations and legislation imposed by the Pensions Regulator.

Further details about the purpose and functions of the Authority, its committees and the Pension Board can be reviewed in the [terms of reference](#).

Executive Leadership Team

The Authority delegates the management of the fire service, its resources, the delivery of operational and support service functions and the execution of its statutory responsibilities to the CFO, who is held to account by the Authority for the delivery of these services. The CFO ensures that TWFRS's [Executive Leadership Team](#) (ELT) and staff deliver the required services. This leadership structure comprises of the:

- CFO / Clerk to the Authority (Head of Paid Services)
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DFCO)
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer (AFCO)
- Finance Director (Chief Financial Officer / Section 151 Officer)
- HR Director
- Area Manager Service Delivery
- Area Manager Community Safety
- Area Manager Digital, Data and Safety

Statutory roles

The Authority is required to appoint the following statutory officer roles to ensure that its affairs are conducted appropriately:

Head of Paid Services

The CFO fulfils this role and has overall responsibility for the management and operational activities of TWFRS, provides professional advice to the Authority and its committees and together with the Monitoring Officer ensures a system for the recording and reporting of Authority decisions.

Chief Financial Officer / Section 151 Officer

The Finance Director fulfils this role and is responsible for the financial management of the Authority. This role ensures the Authority's financial position is monitored with the support of External Audit and that financial processes are complied with. This role ensures consideration is given to financial implications when taking decisions and advises officers and Members on financial matters in line with CIPFA's (2010) Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government.

Monitoring Officer

The Head of Law and Governance at Sunderland City Council fulfils this role and is responsible for ensuring compliance with policies, procedures, laws and regulations, and the lawfulness and fairness of decision-making. The Monitoring Officer reports on matters relating to the conduct of Members and Principal Officers, the operation of the constitution and provides advice on matters that may be illegal or amount to maladministration.

Industrial and employee relation management

The fire and rescue service participates in political engagement with representative bodies, which include the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), GMB, and Unison. This relationship is managed through the Joint Consultative Committee, which meets monthly and considers issues associated with Service-employee relations and policy development. This forum complements the daily arrangements that support effective industrial / employee relations management.

Strategic planning framework

TWFRS's purpose and intended outcomes are communicated through strategic documents, the strategic framework aids the Service to achieve its vision by planning

activities and monitoring progress to ensure its vision is delivered. The [vision, mission and values](#) are key in setting the direction and influencing the culture of the Service. TWFRS's strategic objectives are set out in the [TWFRS Strategy 2025](#), which explains how it intends to deliver high quality services that meet the needs of the communities of Tyne and Wear now and in the future. The Strategy presents TWFRS's strategic goals:

- Service Effectiveness - committed to protecting our communities 24/7. We will target our fire prevention and protection activities to those at greatest risk from fire. We will enforce business fire safety legislation and compliance, delivering a first class emergency response that provides value for money.
- Efficiency - will deliver a robust financial planning approach, we will align budgets, and resources appropriate to the risk, never compromising on public safety. Collaborating with other blue light partners and achieving value for money.
- People - will develop and maintain an inclusive workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible, and diverse. Our leaders will be role models, providing positive leadership in line with our values. The health, safety, and welfare of our staff and our community is paramount, and is built into all that we do.

To achieve the strategic goals, the TWFRS 2025 Programme identifies three key strategic priorities to drive and direct transformation over the next five years:

- Inclusion - Further diversification of the workforce to ensure we reflect our whole community; to have clear, fair and transparent routes to both employment and progression and to have a positive culture where everyone is valued and takes pride and ownership of their actions and behaviour.
- An All Hazards Approach to Firefighter Safety - Provides an all hazards approach to firefighter safety, focusing on raising awareness and training on hazard and risk recognition and perception, thus allowing commanders to train to respond to the wide range of incidents they encounter. This builds on the Safe Person Concept.
- Digital and Data - To enable the effective use of technology to improve delivery of all our services, which will allow us to offer a wide range of improvement activity, along with transformational ways of working and robust governance and cyber resilience for the 21st Century.

The TWFRS Strategy 2025 is supported by the following strategic documents:

The Service Annual Operating Plan sets out priorities and actions for the year ahead and details the work to be undertaken in support of the strategic goals and priorities to realise the intended benefits.

The [Community Risk Profile 2020-2023](#) (CRP) provides a comprehensive assessment of the risks in the communities of Tyne and Wear and informs the TWFRS Strategy 2025.

The [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26](#) (MTFS) and [Reserves Policy 2020/21 to 2024/25](#) are key documents of the financial planning framework. The MTFS provides analysis of the financial position the Authority is likely to face over the next four years. It establishes approaches that direct and reinvest limited resources in addressing the strategic priorities of the Authority, achieving value for money in the use of those

resources, and assisting the budget-planning framework for the preparation of the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme. The Reserves Policy provides transparency to stakeholders about the purpose and level of the reserves held by the Authority and the financial risks they address.

The [People and Organisational Development Strategy](#) describes five themes, beliefs and expectations that will guide staff when working with one another and partners to evolve, improve, and change TWFRS. The themes support the development and maintenance of an inclusive workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Information governance

The Authority operates an information governance framework for the management and protection of information and seeks to comply with its responsibilities as outlined in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and legislation enacted in the UK in respect of the protection of personal data including the Data Protection Act 2018. TWFRS employs a Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) accountable for information risk across the Service, supported by the Data Protection Officer (DPO). They ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard and share information appropriately in line with data protection principles. Additional security measures are in place to protect health or children's data. The Service acknowledges that the accuracy and security of personal data is essential to retaining public confidence and trust and has a [privacy notice](#), which details how and why data is collected and how personal information is used.

5. OPERATIONAL

The Authority operates within a clearly defined statutory framework, the key documents defining operational responsibilities are the:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- Localism Act 2011
- Policing and Crime Act 2017
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

The Authority must produce an IRMP to assess local fire and rescue related risks and detail how these will be addressed. The Authority outlined its plans in its [IRMP 2021-24](#) about how it will meet these obligations. Following a period of public and employee consultation, the Authority approved three of the four proposed actions on 13 September 2021 and the fourth action approved on 11 October 2021.

The IRMP drives continuous improvement and innovation in TWFRS by ensuring that services are planned, designed, and delivered in a way that balances efficiency and community risk. The IRMP process is used to improve community outcomes, strengthen prevention, reduce costs, reduce incidents, and manage the risk in communities. The IRMP is based on the analysis of extensive data and information, local intelligence, and a comprehensive understanding of local, regional, and national risks.

The draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-24 outlining how the Authority identifies and mitigates risk to target resources effectively and efficiently is being consulted on and once approved will integrate the IRMP within it.

Stakeholder and partner engagement

TWFRS is committed to involving stakeholders in the development of its strategies and plans and encourages this by carrying out consultation and engagement activities. The IRMP and CRMP have been consulted on and public engagement has taken place on the proposals for the new tri-station at Hebburn. Information is shared with the public on the TWFRS website, via social media, through committee reporting and public attendance at meetings.

Performance management

The Authority monitors and scrutinises the performance of the Service using a range of key performance indicators (KPIs) and holds the CFO to account for TWFRS's performance. Performance is compared with other Service's in England and achievements against these indicators are published quarterly and scrutinised by the Policy and Performance Committee. [Performance](#) information can be accessed on the TWFRS website.

Prevention

TWFRS adopts a risk-based approach to prevention and uses a socio-demographic profiling tool, Exeter data from health partners and internal data to inform its Safe and Well Targeting Strategy. The Service also has a Vulnerable Persons Procedure to support the identification of those most vulnerable to fire risk.

In addition to the proactive identification of households requiring a safe and well check, residents are able to request a check themselves or undertake a [virtual safe and well check](#). Prevention and Education staff and firefighters carry out [safe and well](#) visits and safety features such as smoke detectors, kitchen heat alarms, and fire retardant bedding are supplied and fitted free of charge. Advice is provided about fire safety in the home, security and the prevention of slips, trips, and falls. Where appropriate, residents are referred to partner agencies such as Adult Social Care or other support networks.

Through the work of staff and the use of the internet and social media, the Service promotes [home safety](#), [water safety](#) and [road safety](#) messages and campaigns including initiatives such as 'Don't Drink and Drown', the 'Waterside Responder Scheme' and 'THINK!'. TWFRS aims to reduce the number of deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour by targeting interventions, raising awareness through the Lighter and Darker nights campaigns including an annual 'Bonfire campaign', working with partner agencies and promoting [Firestoppers](#). TWFRS introduced ReportIT an internal tool to report fly tipping and the build-up of refuse directly to local authorities to promote prompt collection to reduce the risk of it being ignited.

The Service is commissioned to provide early intervention programmes such as the [Juvenile Firesetters Education Programme](#), [Prince's Trust Team Programme](#), the [Phoenix Programme](#) (provider ceased in July 2021) and the Sunderland Community Hub.

The Service's interactive safety centre [SafetyWorks!](#) builds on this work and collaborates with partners such as Nexus, Local Authority Road Safety Teams, Northumbria Police, and the Royal National Lifeboats Institution to provide safety messages to schoolchildren and vulnerable adults. The Service has seven [Fire Cadet](#) units providing training and development for those aged between 13 and 17 years.

Prevent Strategy

TWFRS adheres to the [Prevent Strategy](#), part of CONTEST, the Government's counter terrorism strategy that aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. TWFRS operates a Prevent Policy, which aligns with safeguarding procedures, and work is undertaken whilst working with young people, learners, partners, families and communities.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an integral part of the Service's day to day work, with staff contributing to the Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards of the five local authority areas, who along with partners determine the most appropriate action to be taken. Staff have been trained to identify those at risk and to take action on safeguarding issues to avoid any further harm being brought. Staff participate in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and formal processes in place for information sharing.

Safe Havens

TWFRS in collaboration with Northumbria Police have introduced safe havens, located in fire stations, which provide a focal point where members of the public in distress may attend and be provided with help, advice, and guidance. The Service is a member of the Liberty Strategic Group, a multi-agency Modern Day Slavery Network that works to ensure partners are working to most recent legislation and that services are available to those most at risk.

Protection

The Service's protection work aims to ensure that businesses comply with fire safety regulations, petroleum and explosives legislation and that buildings are built, maintained, and protected from the risk of fires and other emergencies occurring. TWFRS aims to target resources at buildings most at risk from fire, which include business premises, hospitals, care homes, high-rise buildings, and buildings licensed for the storage of explosives or petroleum. Following lessons learned from the Grenfell Tower fire, the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, led by Dame Judith Hackitt, TWFRS made a commitment to transform its Fire Safety department in line with the proposed changes to the fire and building safety regime.

Risk Based Inspection Programme

The Service operates a Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) of non-domestic premises. High-risk buildings such as hospitals, care homes, sleeping accommodation and high-rise buildings are inspected more frequently. Other buildings such as factories, shops and offices are classed as lower risk and not inspected as frequently. A qualified Fire Safety Inspector will follow a set procedure whilst carrying out a fire safety inspection to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Enforcement and engagement

The Service aims to help businesses comply with fire safety regulations; however, at times it has to enforce the law by implementing a formal enforcement procedure and will on occasion prosecute. The [Enforcement and Engagement Policy](#) sets out the action, which may be taken to ensure compliance, is achieved. This policy ensures that inspectors act in an equitable, practical, and consistent manner. [Enforcement notices](#) served on the Responsible Person (RPs) as defined in the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005, Article 3 are published on the register for a minimum of three years. [Fire safety performance reports](#) and operating plans are located on the TWFRS website.

Fire Safety Act 2021

The Service continues to work with its business community to help them understand the Fire Safety Act 2021, to help them to fulfil their obligation to comply and will be organising a series of events to share the Service's approach to the new legislation. The Act clarifies that, in addition to general responsibilities under the Fire Safety Order, RPs for buildings containing two or more domestic premises must manage and reduce the risk of fire for the structure and external walls of the building, including cladding, balconies and windows, and entrance doors to individual flats that open onto common parts.

Primary Authority Scheme

The Government's Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) is a means for business to receive tailored advice and guidance through a single point of contact and the Service currently has [16 PAS partners](#). These partnerships are with businesses in the retail, housing, hospitality and leisure sectors and the Service has two dedicated officers whose role it is to manage these partnerships. The PAS team were awarded the Office for Product Safety and Standards Regulatory Excellence Award 2022 for outstanding partnership with NHS Property Services.

Fire Investigation

The Service's Fire Investigation (FI) function identifies the origin and cause of a fire. Investigation outcomes steer future prevention and protection work and may assist in the prevention and detection of crime. Information is shared with Northumbria Police, the coroner's office, insurers, and Trading Standards to help identify dangerous products and practices. The Fire Safety department is responsible for the FI function and a dedicated FI manager facilitates the FI function and supports the FI Officers. In 2019 a Section 22 (a) collaboration agreement between TWFRS, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, Northumbria Police and the PCC was signed. Over the next 12 months, procedures and documents for all parties to work to under this agreement will be developed and in line with the International Standard ISO / IEC 17020 accreditation.

Response

TWFRS responds to a range of emergency incidents with 25 fire engines and 21 special appliances operating from 17 fire stations across Tyne and Wear. Emergency response and specialist assets are placed in strategic locations to improve response to incidents.

Stations are crewed by operational response staff who work different shift patterns depending upon local risk:

- Wholetime: 15 stations where firefighters operate on stations 24 hours per day in a four-watch system, working 9-hour day shifts and a 15-hour night shift.
- Day Crewing On Call: One station where during the hours of 0800-1800 the station is crewed by wholetime firefighters who then provide emergency cover on call between the hours of 1800-0800.
- On-Call: One station where firefighters live or work in the local community near to the station and respond to emergency calls via an alerter.

TWFRS has in place a KPI to respond to life-risk incidents (e.g. house fires and road traffic collisions) within six minutes on 100% of occasions, with the second appliance arriving within eight minutes on 100% of occasions.

Pre-determined attendance requirements are developed through the analysis of risk information from sources such as incident data and site-specific risk information.

Crews respond to a wide range of emergency incidents, supporting other agencies in line with Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) including:

- Road traffic collisions where specialist-cutting equipment is used to rescue trapped casualties. Operational crews are first aid trained.
- Rescues from water including the Tyne and Wear Rivers and other inland waterways, led by the Swift Water Rescue Team and supported by the fireboat. Where required, rescues are also carried out on ice, mud and other unstable ground.
- Preparation for incidents involving chemicals, biological agents, and gases. TWFRS has the ability to decontaminate crews and the public in the event of a major incident.
- The specialist rescue of people or animals from inaccessible places like cliffs, cranes, bridges, and confined spaces using rope rescue techniques. Crews also attend rail, aircraft, and other incidents that involve fire or rescue.

Fire Control

Fire Control staff play a vital role in supporting the emergency response and are trained to deal with any call they may receive. Staff are responsible for the end-to-end call / support management of an incident from the first call, to responding to the needs of the firefighters by dispatching further resources as required, arranging relief crews, liaising with other agencies and providing operational information for the duration of an incident. Fire control and operational response staff work together to ensure incidents are attended promptly, with the right people, skills and equipment to deal with the incident efficiently and effectively.

Firefighter fitness

TWFRS must ensure the fitness of its operational staff and a full-time Health and Fitness Advisor supports staff to attain and maintain the fitness standards required, and to undertake fitness testing. Fitness testing for operational staff takes place on a six monthly schedule and is supported by a procedure, which adheres with the NFCC Fire Fit guidance documentation.

Operational training

TWFRS complies with its statutory duty to ensure operational staff are trained to undertake their roles effectively, safely and aligned to risk. Training requirements include a number of core risk critical skills that staff must undertake ensuring acquisition, maintenance, and assurance. These skills are independently assessed at agreed intervals for key disciplines such as breathing apparatus and incident command. Quality assurance and validation of operational training ensures that operational staff are trained and competent to fulfil the variety of operational demands placed on them, taking into account local threats and risks.

New trainee firefighters attend Foundation training and participate in a Level 3 Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship. Apprentice firefighters undertake an end-point assessment by Skills for Justice. TWFRS's pass and distinction rates are well above the national average.

TWFRS is a recognised centre for Skills for Justice incident command qualifications and its training provision undergoes a strict internal and external quality assurance process to assure the quality of training and assessment.

Operational standards and assurance

TWFRS has fully adopted the National Occupational Standards that apply to the fire and rescue service and implements a system of assurance to ensure staff have the necessary skills, knowledge, and understanding to fulfil the operational demands placed upon them.

During 2021/22, the Operational Standards team assessed all 61 watches across a range of standards outside of operational incidents to ensure all aspects of performance were observed, assessed, and assured. Stations and watches are audited four times a year, with more regular audits undertaken where the need arises. Any areas identified for focus or improvement are shared with the Operational Assurance Group (OAG) and Operational Improvement Group (OIG) to inform future training and learning provision.

The Service's Operational Assurance and Debrief Policy and Procedure ensures that performance and safety in the operational environment is subject to adequate monitoring and review. A team of officers regularly attend incidents, training and exercises to observe all aspects of operational performance. Information gathered on operational performance to verify and measure compliance with National Operational Guidance and incident management systems is recorded on the Risk Management and Assurance Database (RMAD). This ensures consistency across the Service and that learning is captured, areas of notable practice or issues identified are managed and rectified in an appropriate and timely manner. The OAG oversee this work and any identified trends are progressed to the OIG to be addressed through organisational training. RMAD and action plans are tracked to ensure a fully auditable route to completion.

In addition, the OAG reviews national and joint learning guidance and directives and determines any additions or amendments to training provision. The OIG oversees the implementation of the required training provision to ensure the Services training and operational response is in line with current guidance.

Practices for evaluating operational learning and improvement, which include active participation in providing information for National Organisational Learning (NOL) and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) platforms. These platforms enable learning to be shared nationally within the fire and rescue sector (NOL) and with other partners including the police and ambulance services (JOL).

Collaboration

The Authority has a historic and proven record of blue light collaboration, optimising multi-agency preparedness, response, and recovery through enhanced working relationships. The work undertaken via the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF) in response to the Covid-19 pandemic has strengthened existing partnerships, initiated new partnerships, and increased engagement with the most vulnerable in society. During 2021/22, work included supporting the national vaccination programme (provision of vaccinators and site management / marshalling), and administering lateral flow tests.

The Pollock Report 2013, Policing and Crime Act 2017 and the JESIP programme place responsibilities on fire, police, and ambulance services to collaborate effectively with each other to improve the interoperability of emergency services. TWFRS recognises that efficient joint working can deliver savings for taxpayers and improve services to the community.

TWFRS hosts Northumbria Police at six of its 17 sites and the North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS) operate from four. This figure will increase with the delivery of the planned carbon neutral tri station in Hebburn. The Service explores collocation opportunities with partners, especially when appraising works of a capital nature and is presently working with NEAS in support of its Strategic Operational Review.

TWFRS hosts selected public sector and charitable trusts in support of community safety and public service, examples being the North of Tyne Mountain Rescue, Northumberland Bloodbikes, the Great North Air Ambulance Service, HM Prison and Probation Service and Sunderland City Council (City Alarm and Emergency Centre). By adopting a collaborative approach, the Service actively supports community safety, ensures value for money, maximises spatial occupancy across its estate and generates sustainable income streams.

Mutual aid

Section 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, legislates for neighbouring fire and rescue authorities to enter into working arrangements to provide formal reinforcement and support to each other, in the event of a serious incident. The Service has arrangements with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service and Cleveland Fire Brigade.

TWFRS also makes provision to offer support outside of the geographical area of Tyne and Wear, and is a signatory of the National Mutual Aid Protocol through the National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF). This agreement establishes the terms under which TWFRS may expect to provide or request assistance in order to resolve an incident.

Local and regional resilience

TWFRS takes an active role in the LRF, the multi-agency partnership set up to ensure that responding organisations fulfil their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 and its accompanying non-legislative guidance. The LRF ensures emergency response and recovery arrangements are maintained for any localised major incidents, disasters, or emergencies, which may have an impact on the communities of Tyne and Wear.

In collaboration with LRF partners, TWFRS complies with its duties under the CCA by supporting the assessment of risk to inform and maintain emergency plans and business continuity arrangements. Partners cooperate through the sharing of information and in the preparation of multi-agency plans and other documents, including protocols, agreements and the co-ordination of multi-agency exercises and other training events.

National Resilience

National Resilience is a shared responsibility between central and local government and provides specialist capabilities, personnel and resources to fire and rescue services, to enhance the ability of the sector as a whole to respond collectively to national large-scale or critical incidents. Within Tyne and Wear, the Service hosts a number of National Resilience assets including Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability incorporating a canine search team, Hazardous Materials Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM), High Volume Pump (HVP) capability, a Mass Decontamination Unit (MDU), unmanned air support unit (Drone) and a Swift Water Rescue Team. Out of area deployments are co-ordinated by the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT).

NILO and Counter Terrorism

TWFRS works with partners nationally to support the Government's counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST. A number of staff are trained to take on roles as National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILOs) and work with the police, ambulance service, military and other Government agencies to share intelligence and support the resolution of operational incidents, which supports interoperability and the JESIP principles.

Risk and Business Continuity Management

The Authority employs the use of a robust risk management framework, to achieve its strategic priorities and to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. Risk is reported to the Authority on a regular basis.

The Authority's Business Continuity Management system is aligned with industry best practice and ISO 22301. Business continuity plans (BCPs) protect the Authority from adverse events and business interruptions and facilitate a co-ordinated recovery of critical functions both during and after such events. BCPs are reviewed frequently, undergo testing as part of an annual testing, and exercise programme undertaken by the Risk and Resilience team.

Within Tyne and Wear there are five Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) sites and the Service has suitable and sufficient response and preparedness arrangements in place to safely manage these premises. On and off-site External Emergency Plans are subject to a rigorous, statutory testing and exercise programme.

Health, Safety and Welfare

The Authority complies with its duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated legislation. A policy statement and policy in relation to health and safety roles and responsibilities is in place. A health, safety and welfare board at district and Service level is in operation, which includes staff and union representatives.

A health and safety training procedure is in place, which includes reference to the range of training to be provided to staff to promote safety and competence. Staff undertake the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) managing and working safely training commensurate with their role.

Accident and incident reporting and investigation policy, procedures and arrangements are in place and within these arrangements, TWFRS reports to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 as appropriate.

TWFRS demonstrates its commitment to health and safety by undertaking the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Achievement Award process annually. TWFRS has achieved the RoSPA Gold award consecutively for the previous five years.

The Occupational Health Unit (OHU) operates an online Health and Wellbeing Hub to assist staff and supports the MIND Blue Light campaign to aid mental health and wellbeing in the workforce and offers counselling and trauma support services. Trauma Support colleagues, the Welfare Manager and the FBU, jointly deliver a programme of health and wellbeing sessions to staff. TWFRS were awarded Gold in the Better Health at Work Award.

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

HMICFRS undertakes an assurance function to consider how effective and efficient fire and rescue services are, how well they manage their people and whether they are fulfilling their statutory obligations.

HMICFRS first inspected the Service in 2018/19 and in their [inspection report](#) judged the Service as 'Good' across the three pillars of effectiveness, efficiency, and people.

In August 2020, the Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS to examine how fire and rescue service's responded to the pandemic. In October 2020, a virtual inspection of the planning arrangements, response, and ability to demonstrate effective service during the coronavirus pandemic took place. The [Covid-19 inspection](#) did not generate a report and rather provided letters to fire and rescue services on general findings. For TWFRS it was noted that the Service had continued to deliver its statutory duties and the Authority had adhered to the principles of good governance and scrutiny during this period.

TWFRS received a full second inspection during 2021, and are awaiting the results.

6. FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The Service Annual Operating Plan sets out how the Service intends to deliver the strategic goals and priorities of the TWFRS Strategy 2025. These actions are detailed below:

Enhanced Firefighter Safety

TWFRS will continue to invest in its facilities and firefighter personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure staff receive first class learning and development and are safe and competent in fulfilling their roles. This includes:

- Enhancing the incident command training and validation programme;
- Restructuring the vehicle training school to reflect the new driving standards for blue light drivers;
- Strengthening staff understanding and application of the JESIP principles;
- Increasing cross-border training and exercising;
- Undertaking a breathing apparatus replacement programme; and
- Continuing work with NEAS in support of clinical governance and the upskilling of operational staff.

Investment in Technology

Further investment in technology will support the redevelopment of the Incident Command Suite, the replacement of the competency recording system, and continuation of the Cyber Resilience programme.

TWFRS will continue to deliver technical support in preparation for the introduction of the national Emergency Services Network (ESN) project in Tyne and Wear and the update to fire ground radios. The ICT team will continue to work with departments to identify and develop software solutions to support the effective delivery of services.

Investment in People, Enhance Inclusion, Workforce Diversification

TWFRS will establish an Inclusion Programme, building on the work currently undertaken with minority community groups, staff networks, and representative bodies, and will utilise specialist resources to enhance understanding and support amongst the workforce. This work will include improvements to the recruitment and retention of staff from minority groups. In addition, improvements will be made to the employee experience by:

- Introducing a new leadership development programme;
- Reviewing operational staffing and training processes and provision;
- Enhancing staff communications and engagement; and
- Introducing a mentor programme across the Service.

Develop our Estate Portfolio

TWFRS will continue to invest in its estate portfolio including the build of its first tri-service station in Hebburn, fulfilling the estates work from previous IRMP actions and the planning of a new interactive safety centre. To improve firefighter safety, works are planned to upgrade the USAR training facilities at the Brigade Training Centre. Work continues with partners to look for future opportunities to collaborate.

Focus on Investment and Value for Money

To provide a modern, effective, and efficient Service, investments are being made on a replacement appliance programme (including special appliances) and implementing the IRMP 2021-24, which reflects an investment in front line services.

Drive Continuous Improvement

Improvements will be made to key functions such as Human Resources, the OHU and Corporate Communications; and the realignment of the Service meeting structure. This will be supported by a new Service Improvement Plan, which incorporates improvements from a range of sources, including the 2021 HMICFRS Inspection.

There will be enhancements made to the education, early intervention and inclusion programmes, to improve safety and development of young people and vulnerable groups. Focusing on better utilisation of operational crews in prevention work, and introducing a community hub in Newcastle. Fire safety provision will embed improvements to the RBIP following a review last year, and will further upskill operational staff.

Enhance Assurance across the Service

This will be undertaken by engaging with audit, inspection and other peer review activities, and adopting learning and good practice. The introduction of a Service Assurance Programme will better assess and proactively identify areas for improvement to be implemented to support continuous improvement.

The plan is to also further enhance understanding of risk and improve the use of data and intelligence to better target resources to reach the most vulnerable people in the community. The Service will continue to build information sharing agreements with partners, and review its prevention and fire safety targeting strategies, with consideration to be given to new ways of working during and post Covid-19. The Service will continue to improve the range, accuracy, and currency of risk information, particularly that available to front line staff.

7. NATIONAL FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

Section 2: Delivery of Functions		
Framework requirement		Compliance evidence
Identify and Assess	<p>Assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect their communities, whether they are local, cross-border, multi-authority and/or national in nature from fires to terrorist attacks.</p> <p>Put in place arrangements to prevent and mitigate these risks, either through adjusting existing provision, effective collaboration and partnership working, or building new capability. Fire and rescue authorities should work through the Strategic Resilience Board where appropriate when determining what arrangements to put in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic planning framework – TWFRS Strategy 2025 supported by strategic plans, goals, priorities, and objectives. • A risk management framework to identify, mitigate and evaluate internal and external risks including ongoing oversight of the corporate risk register and regular reporting to the Authority. • A board and committee structure to ensure risks are identified and mitigated by monitoring performance. • Awareness of community risks through community safety education, the safe and well programme and safety campaigns. • Work undertaken with businesses to reduce risk through the RBIP. • Risk information held on mobile data terminals to aid operational crews at incidents. • Participation in the LRF and the maintenance of a multi-agency risk register. • Engagement with the Government and partners on issues of national resilience through the SRB. The CFO is a member. The SRB ensures capability gaps are brought to the attention of the Government, and where available, funding is secured to address these gaps.
Prevent and Protect	<p>Make provision for promoting fire safety, including fire prevention, and have a locally determined risk-based inspection programme in place for enforcing compliance with the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.</p> <p>Target prevention and protection resources on individuals or households at greatest risk from</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and well checks targeted to those at greatest risk and engagement with vulnerable persons. • Continue to increase efficiency and effectiveness through data sharing / agreements, collocation and working with other emergency services, health, and local authority partners. • Safety campaigns and initiatives,

	<p>fire in the home, and non-domestic premises where the life safety risk is the greatest.</p> <p>Identify those at greatest risk from fire and work closely with other organisations in the public and voluntary sector, as well as the police and ambulance services. Develop partnerships to support risk reduction services to those identified as vulnerable and wherever possible share intelligence and risk data.</p> <p>Work collaboratively with other public and voluntary sector organisations – both nationally through the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and through local arrangements – can make an important contribution to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of public services and alleviating pressures on local response resources.</p>	<p>such as deliberate fire reduction, bonfire, water safety, and road safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school education programme and interactive safety centre SafetyWorks! in partnership with a range of organisations. • Youth inclusion / diversionary activities in place. • Deliberate fire reduction strategy and effective use of Firestoppers. • Community Safety Advocates who provide education, support and engagement within the community. • Proactive use of social media to share local and national safety campaign messages. • Work with businesses to promote fire safety by undertaking: fire safety audits, RBIP, advice and enforcement action. • Staff represent TWFRS as members of the NFCC Prevention Group, NFCC Protection Group, and NFCC Business Safety Group.
Prevent and Protect	<p>In prevention and protection activities, assess what we are aiming to achieve, what type of intervention is most likely to achieve the aims and how best to measure and evaluate outcomes. Share details of interventions to understand and improve the evidence base of what works best and what is most cost-effective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention and protection activities are targeted to where they are needed most. • A quality assurance process through audits and surveys, which include After the Incident Surveys, fire safety audit surveys, and safe and well perception surveys. • Operate a RBIP and participate in a PAS with 16 national partners. • Where necessary, undertake fire investigations and fire safety prosecutions. • Compliments received in recognition of the work conducted by staff. • District and service-wide performance reports relating to prevention and protection activities, measured against local indicators.
Prevent and Protect	<p>Considering the wide range of roles that personnel undertake, including with people with complex needs and vulnerabilities, ensure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure and Barring Scheme and security clearance for staff working in the community. • Staff have the appropriate skills

	<p>all staff in public facing roles have the necessary appropriate skills and training to meet such demands.</p> <p>Safeguarding arrangements in place – including ensuring staff have appropriate vetting clearance.</p>	<p>and receive the necessary training to fulfil their roles safely and effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training provided on issues such as child sexual exploitation, make every contact count, domestic abuse, safeguarding and hoarding. • Work is informed by wider initiatives to support the most vulnerable in the community (e.g. Dementia Friends, Dyslexia Advocates).
Respond	<p>Make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies within their area and in other areas in line with their mutual aid agreements.</p> <p>So far as is practicable, enter into reinforcement schemes, or mutual aid agreements, with other fire and rescue authorities for securing mutual assistance.</p> <p>Have effective business continuity arrangements in place in accordance with their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Within these arrangements, meet the full range of service delivery risks and national resilience duties and commitments. Business continuity plans should not be developed on the basis of armed forces assistance being available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the necessary level of response to fires and other incidents, as set out in the IRMP. • Conduct IRMP reviews drawing on a strong evidence base. • A mobilising system supported by an emergency call management policy. • Use of targeted response vehicles to respond to lower risk incidents, considering demand, prioritising the speed and weight of response to higher risk incidents. • Familiarisation, inspection, and legislative support of high-risk premises. • Continuation of improvements to 'tall building' protocols, in line with Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations. • Contribute as the fire representative for the LRF. • Collaborate with the ambulance service and the police in the interests of public safety. • Support a range of community activities including post incident community engagement, prevention and protection duties, and assisting partner agencies and blue light colleagues. • Participate in multi-agency training exercises with responder organisations. • Participate in mutual aid arrangements under sections 13/16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain National Resilience assets and participate in the national operational guidance programme. • Participate in the NCAF and NRAT audits. • Maintain and test BCPs, which align to ISO 22301 (International Business Continuity Standard). • Resilience plans developed and approved by the Home Office in the event of depleted resources. • Contingencies in place in the event of industrial action.
Collaboration	<p>Statutory duty to keep collaboration opportunities under review, notify other emergency services of proposed collaborations that could be in the interests of their mutual efficiency or effectiveness; and give effect to a proposed collaboration where agreed it would be in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness and not have an adverse effect on public safety.</p> <p>Collaborate with other local partners, such as local authorities and wider health bodies. Collaborate with other fire and rescue authorities to deliver intraoperability and interoperability with other emergency services, wider Category 1 and 2 responders and Local Resilience Forums in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).</p> <p>Collaborate with the National Resilience Lead Authority to ensure interoperability is maintained for National Resilience assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to increase efficiency and effectiveness through data sharing agreements, collocation and collaborating with other emergency services and local authority partners. • Contribute as the strategic fire member of the LRF. Nominated fire members on or chairing Sub Groups of the LRF including the Training and Exercising, Risk Group, communications cell and business management group. • Operate SafetyWorks! as a community facility, in partnership with a range of organisations. • Collaborated with other emergency services via the Joint Strategy Board and Delivery Group, underpinned by a Statement of Intent. • Fire sector collaboration arrangements with Northumberland and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services supported by a Statement of Intent. • Along with the other three fire and rescue services in the North East lead, attend and participate in the NE Strategic Delivery Group and Services Operational, Response and Resilience Group (SORRG). • Participate in mutual aid arrangements under sections 13/16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the NCAF, and deploy national assets as required. • Operate a cadre of NILOs in collaboration with police and ambulance, within the NE region. • Lead and participate in JESIP, NOL / JOL and joint training with partners. • Participate in regional and national procurement frameworks.
Section 3: National Resilience		
Framework requirement		Compliance evidence
National Resilience	<p>Work with the lead authority to support the national resilience assurance processes to ensure capabilities are maintained at a high state of operational readiness. This includes devolved training and the long-term capability management arrangements.</p> <p>Through NFCC representation on the Strategic Resilience Board, work with the Government to identify and address any national resilience capability gaps through analysis of the National Risk Assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in mutual assistance arrangements / options under sections 13/16 of the Fire & Rescue Services Act. • Maintain policies and procedures relating to local and national risks and a multi-agency community risk register via the LRF. • The DFCO is the NE Regional Operations Coordination Committee representative. Participate in all NFCC groups relating to resilience including the Working and User for each of the New Dimension assets and resources. • Lead and participate in national and local exercises. • Host specialist assets and skilled personnel that can respond to an incident as a national capability. • Participate in NRAT multi-capability assurance inspections. • Engage with the Government and partners on issues of national resilience through the SRB. The CFO is a member. The SRB ensures capability gaps are brought to the attention of the Government, and where available, funding is secured to address these gaps.
Gap Analysis	<p>Risk assessments must include an analysis of any gaps between their existing capability and that needed to ensure national resilience (as defined above).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Risk and Resilience department, who plan and prepare for exceptional events, covering the delivery of key national programmes. • The National Resilience assurance cycle comprises of a cyclical three

	<p>Must highlight to the Home Office or Strategic Resilience Board, capability gaps that cannot be met even when taking into account mutual aid arrangements, pooling and reconfiguration of resources and collective action.</p>	<p>yearly programme of self-assessment, assurance visits, and exercise(s). Each capability within the relevant hosting organisation will be subject to each element of the cycle over the period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the Government on issues of national resilience through the SRB. The CFO is a member. The SRB ensures capability gaps are brought to the attention of the Government, and where available, funding is secured to address these gaps.
National Coordination and Advisory Framework	<p>Proactively engage with, and support, the NCAF arrangements including the NFCC's lead operational role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in and support the NCAF. The CFO is a member of the NFCC Board, Chair of the NFCC Operations Coordination Committee, Member of the NFCC Community Risk Programme Board, NFCC Steering Group, NFCC Strategic Resilience Board, NFCC JESIP Interoperability Board, and NFCC New Dimensions II Board.
Response to terrorist attacks or marauding terrorist firearms attacks	<p>Must be able to respond to the threat of terrorism and be ready to respond to incidents within their areas and across England. Be interoperable to provide operational support across the UK to terrorist events as required.</p> <p>Responsible for maintaining the robustness of MTFA capability. Appropriate multi-agency assurance mechanism that will ensure the capability is effective and delivered to the agreed standard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in and support the NCAF and JESIP to provide assistance on the occasions that specialist national resilience capabilities are required for the resolution of an incident. The Risk and Resilience department, lead TWFRS' participation in national and local exercises and oversee the response to MTA threats. Adhere to the CONTEST Strategy in response to terrorist threats by working with partners to mitigate and disrupt terrorist activity. This is a joint approach through all sectors of the community, led by police and Home Office intelligence agencies. Participate in collaborative training with partner agencies to improve knowledge and relationships, in relation to MTA incidents. Operate a cadre of NILOs in collaboration with the police and

		<p>ambulance service, within the NE region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute as the fire representative for the LRF.
National Resilience Assurance	<p>Work collectively and with the Strategic Resilience Board and the national resilience lead authority to provide assurance to government that resilience capabilities are fit for purpose and risks and plans are assessed and gaps in capability are identified</p> <p>Work with police forces and ambulance trusts to provide tri-service assurance of capability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with the Government and partners on issues of national resilience through the SRB. The CFO is a member, The SRB ensures capability gaps are brought to the attention of the Government, and where available, funding is secured to address these gaps. • NRAT USAR capability team consists of a number of seconded officers with relevant USAR expertise and experience. Their role is to support all elements of the USAR capability with the provision of advice, training, exercising, asset refresh, documentation, and capability assurance. The team leads on the delivery of the capability business plan and assurance process. USAR Capability Officers and the Capability Advisor undertake roles as defined within the NCAF arrangements, to support affected fire and rescue services at the scene of operations also assist and support the management of nationally mobilised resources. <p>TWFRS work with NRAT by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a National Resilience specific point of contact to maintain direct contact with national resilience. • Provision of a representative (at an appropriate level) to represent the region at various capability National Working Groups (NWG) and National User Group (NUG). • Support to NRAT USAR capability by providing representatives on several USAR Technical Working Groups supporting the delivery of the USAR business plan on behalf of the USAR NUG. • Support the delivery of national USAR training as an approved training delivery partner.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the delivery of the NDII Project by supporting the USAR Capability and Home Office in the delivery of the USAR First Response Evaluation exercises. • Participate in exercise programmes and ensure the training environment provides a challenging and stimulating experience for staff and partner agencies involved. • Have trained NILOs who work closely with counter-terrorist policing and other key agencies.
Section 4: Governance		
Framework requirement		Compliance evidence
Governance	Statutory duty to ensure provision of their core functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operates in accordance with a wide range of legislation and adhere to statutory duties. • The Authority's constitution (standing orders) outline how the Authority / Service carries out its business, how decisions are to be made and the roles and responsibilities of Members and officers are defined. • Robust governance arrangements are in place, which are overseen by the Authority, and committee structure. • Governance arrangements are reviewed annually in line with CIPFA principles, and the production of an annual Statement of Assurance and Annual Governance Statement (which forms part of the Statement of Accounts) and a Code of Governance.
Managing the Fire and Rescue Service	Appoint an individual – commonly known as a Chief Fire Officer – who has responsibility for managing the fire and rescue service. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority's constitution (standing orders) outline how the Authority / Service carries out its business, how decisions are to be made and the roles and responsibilities of Members and officers are defined. • The CFO is responsible for the day-to-day operational leadership of the fire and rescue service, accountable to the

	<p>The CFO must, in exercising their functions, have regard to the fire authority's IRMP and any set objectives and priorities, which may be outlined in a strategic plan. The fire and rescue authority should give due regard to the professional advice of the CFO while developing the IRMP and when making decisions affecting the fire service.</p>	<p>Authority, and is supported by a DCFO, AFCO, and the NDELT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CFO is the Authority's advisor on all matters, which are either not the responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) or the Monitoring Officer.
Documents to be Prepared	<p>Each fire and rescue authority is required to produce:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated Risk Management Plan Annual Statement of Assurance Financial Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRMP 2021-24 consulted on and proposals implemented. • CRMP in consultation. • Statement of Assurance 2021/22 (this document). • Annual Governance Statement published. • MTFS and Reserves Strategy published.
National Fire Chiefs Council	<p>Consult the NFCC for advice and support when developing improvement plans, particularly in response to inspections.</p> <p>Expectation is that fire and rescue services engage with NFCC and, in turn, that the NFCC works to support and represent every service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in and support the work of the NFCC including adopting Fire Standards and other guidance. • The CFO is a member of the NFCC Board, Chair of the NFCC Operations Coordination Committee, Member of the NFCC Community Risk Programme Board, NFCC Steering Group, NFCC Strategic Resilience Board, NFCC JESIP Interoperability Board, and NFCC New Dimensions II Board. • The DCFO is the regional representative of the NFCC OCC and regional lead for the NILOs. Until the group was disbanded, the DCFO was the regional lead for the NFCC Covid-19 Committee and Chair of the NFCC Scientific Advisory Cell. • The ACFO is the NFCC national lead for Respiratory Protection Equipment, the NFCC Representative on the PH4 group working on national respiratory protection standards for industry, Chair of the NFCC National Command and Control User Group, a member of National Operational Effectiveness Working

		<p>Group, a member of the NFCC Recruitment Board, a member of the NFCC Direct Entry Board and also a member of the NFCC Fires in Tall Buildings working group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other staff are members of a variety of NFCC committees and groups.
Section 5: Achieving Value for Money		
Framework requirement		Compliance evidence
Achieving Value for Money	<p>Manage their budgets and spend money properly and appropriately and ensure the efficient and effective use of their resources, pursuing all feasible opportunities to keep costs down while discharging their core duties effectively.</p> <p>Regularly review the numbers and deployment of firefighters and other staff to ensure the fire and rescue service has a workforce that is commensurate with the risks that they face.</p> <p>Financial decisions are taken with the advice and guidance of the chief finance officer and decisions are taken with an emphasis on delivering value for money. Ensure management of finances is undertaken with regard to published guidance.</p> <p>Publish a Medium Term Financial Plan, efficiency plan and reserves strategy.</p> <p>The Medium Term Financial Plan should include funding and spending plans for revenue and capital, take into account multiple years, the inter-dependencies of revenue budgets and capital investments, the role of reserves and the consideration of risks. Have regard to affordability, CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance, aligned with the Integrated Risk Management Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly consider resources relative to risk through the IRMP, which is subject to routine review and supported by evidence-based data. Consider value for money in all aspects of work, including workforce planning, budget monitoring and business cases. Proactively address feedback arising from Internal and External Audit. Manage finances with regard to published guidance, and make this information available via this report, the MTFS, the level of budget efficiencies achieved, and the Reserves Policy. Have a published MTFS, which is aligned to the IRMP and reported on regularly to the Authority. Strong track record of achieving budget efficiencies both in the past by overachieving on the Efficiency Plan (covering 2015/16 to 2019/20) where it achieved significant savings of £9.287m which were £1.039m in excess of our Government approved target and making significant budget efficiencies whilst developing the revenue budget each year since 2002/21 to date, in excess of £6m Report regularly to the Authority on the capital programme and revenue budget. Since the last HMICFRS inspection, TWFRS have continued to dispose of redundant and surplus assets (land and building(s)). This has resulted in

	Produce and publish an efficiency plan and publish an annual report on the progress against these efficiencies.	capital receipts of c£1.5m to date, which will be reinvested in support of future service improvements, furthermore TWFRS have benefited from sustained revenue savings of c£50k pa. The Service continues to review and appraise its land and building assets to ensure an adaptable estate that can accommodate emerging and future changes.
Reserves	<p>Publish policy on reserves.</p> <p>Reserves strategy should include details of current and future planned reserve levels, setting out a total amount of reserves and the amount of each specific reserve that is held for each year. The reserves strategy should cover resource and capital reserves and provide information for the period of the medium term financial plan (and at least two years ahead).</p> <p>The strategy should include how the level of the general reserve has been set, justification for holding a general reserve larger than five percent of budget and details of the activities or items to be funded from each earmarked reserve, and how these support the FRA's strategy.</p> <p>Provide clarity on how much funding falls into planned expenditure in Medium Term Financial Strategy, specific projects beyond Medium Term Financial Strategy and general contingency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A published Reserves Policy. • The Reserves Policy gives transparency to stakeholders on the purpose and level of the reserves held by the Authority. • The Reserves Policy references key documents including the Statement of Accounts, this report and the reports of Internal and External Auditors. • The Reserves Policy is taken into account in all aspects of financial planning, including the Budget Planning Framework.
Commercial Transformation	<p>Improve commercial practices including whether to aggregate procurement with other fire and rescue authorities or local services to improve efficiencies.</p> <p>Demonstrate and support national and local commercial transformation programmes where appropriate. Demonstrate full</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in regional and national procurement frameworks, and in 2021/22 drove procurement efficiencies of over £0.402m. • The Authority's standing orders set out clear guidelines for tendering procedures and approvals linked to contract values to ensure value for money.

	<p>awareness of the objectives to standardise requirements, aggregate demand and manage suppliers of products and services within their commercial arrangements.</p> <p>Ensure commercial activities; be that the placement of new contracts or the use of existing contracts is in line with their legal obligations (Public Contracts Regulations, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and transparency. commitments.</p>	
Research and Development	<p>Engage with national research and development programmes, including those overseen by the NFCC, unless there is a good reason not to.</p> <p>Where fire and rescue services embark on research and development outside of any national programme, processes should be put in place to ensure it meets quality standards and, where possible and appropriate, is available to the sector to enable good practice to be shared.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in national and research development programmes, including providing staff time to participate in NFCC initiatives. • Participation in the ESN delivered by the Emergency Services' Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) to replace the current Airwave system and provide a common communications platform.
Trading	<p>A trading company is a separate legal entity and elected members and officers should at all times be aware of potential conflicts of interest when carrying out their roles for their authorities, or when acting as directors of trading companies.</p> <p>Ensure any actions taken in respect of trading companies are considered against the requirements of competition law. Financial assistance – in cash or in kind – given by an authority that establishes or participates in it, should be for a limited period, set against the expectation of later returns, and re-paid by those returns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trading company, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Ltd (TWFRS Ltd), is compliant with all aspects of company law and a constitution is agreed. • TWFRS Ltd Directors have specified roles. • The Authority holds shares, although no dividends have been paid as the company business is undergoing a complete overhaul of its business plan and activities. • Commercial activities are performed in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), the Local Government Order 2009 and the Local Authorities (Goods and Services)

	Any assistance should be provided under a formal agreement with the company and must be entered into for a commercial purpose. Before entering into such an agreement, the authority should satisfy itself that it will achieve its objective, and the company should satisfy itself that it will meet its objective in terms of its business plan. The parties should consider any State Aid implications and obtain their own expert advice where necessary.	<p>Act 1970.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All commercial activities are exercised through a company within the meaning of Part 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. • State Aid regulations are observed.
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Section 6: Workforce

Framework requirement		Compliance evidence
People Strategy	<p>Have in place a people strategy that has been designed in collaboration with the workforce and take into account the principles set out in the NFCC's people strategy.</p> <p>It should cover improving the diversity of the workforce, equality, cultural values and behaviours, recruitment, retention and progression; flexible working; professionalism, skills and leadership; training; health and safety, wellbeing, disabilities and support; and tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A published People and Organisational Development Strategy, reflecting the principles and priorities of the NFCC's People Strategy. • A range of career development pathways, which encourages growth in the workforce to support high performance. • The NFCCs Core Code of Ethics has been adopted and sets out shared values and behaviours. • Commitment to ED&I evidenced through the establishment of an Inclusion Team, policy review and external benchmarking of ED&I performance. • An embedded Performance Development Review process that has enhanced individual objective setting. • TWFRS is represented on the NFCC Diversification of the Workforce and the Talent Management Working Group.
Professional Standards	<p>A coherent and comprehensive set of professional standards across all areas of fire and rescue services work to be developed drawing on existing standards where appropriate.</p> <p>Implement the approved professional standards that result from the national work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong training and development culture that ensures public and firefighter safety. • Adherence to the National Occupational Standards that apply to the fire and rescue service and a system of assurance to ensure staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to fulfil the vast array of operational

		<p>demands placed on them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the NFCCs Fire Standards Board to support the development of professional standards for the sector.
Fitness Principles	<p>Ensure firefighters remain fit and supported in remaining in employment.</p> <p>Have a process of fitness assessment and development to ensure that operational personnel are enabled to maintain the standards of personal fitness required in order to perform their role safely</p> <p>Ensure that no individual will automatically face dismissal if they fall below the standards required and cannot be deployed operationally.</p> <p>Ensure that all operational personnel will be provided with support to maintain their levels of fitness for the duration of their career.</p> <p>Consider where operational personnel have fallen below the fitness standards required whether an individual is able to continue on full operational duties or should be stood down, taking into account the advice provided by the authority's occupational health provider. In making this decision, the safety and well-being of the individual will be the key issue.</p> <p>Commit to providing a minimum of 6 months of development and support to enable individuals who have fallen below the required fitness standards to regain the necessary levels of fitness.</p> <p>Refer an individual to occupational health where underlying medical reasons are identified that restrict / prevent someone from achieving</p>	<p>Human Resources, OHU and Learning and Development provide support to staff.</p> <p>For operational staff, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to undertake physical training on a daily basis when at work, including the Chester Treadmill Test, a fitness assessment takes place every six months. Health monitoring by the OHU and associated fitness support / bespoke programmes. Routine Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) assessment. Access to a vaccination programme. <p>All staff receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to an independent qualified medical practitioner. Access to advice from a dedicated OH Advisor. Referral to physiotherapy or other specialist OH Advisor when required. Regular health education promotions, including stress awareness. Access to gym facilities at all stations, headquarters and the Technical Services Centre. <p>In addition TWFRS has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dedicated Health and Fitness Advisor to support staff to achieve their fitness objectives through individualised development programmes and activities. A range of facilities promoting and supporting good mental health initiatives, including Mental Health First Aid, Mental Wellbeing champions, access to professionally qualified Trauma Support Team. Provide reasonable adjustments and redeployment where necessary to ensure that staff can

	<p>the necessary fitness; and ensure that the individual receives the necessary support to facilitate a return to operational duties.</p> <p>Fully explore opportunities to enable the individual to remain in employment including through reasonable adjustment and redeployment in role where it appears the medical condition does not allow a return to operational duties.</p>	<p>remain in employment. Recommendations can be made by OHU to assist in this process about capability and reasonable adjustments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report annually on health and fitness data, and have written policies and procedures to support this approach.
Re-engagement of Senior Officers	<p>Must not re-appoint principal fire officers after retirement to their previous, or a similar, post save for in exceptional circumstances when such a decision is necessary in the interests of public safety.</p> <p>All principal fire officer posts must be open to competition nationally, and fire and rescue authority's must take account of this in their workforce planning.</p> <p>While the above requirements only extend to principal fire officers, we expect fire and rescue authority to have regard to this principle when re-appointing at any level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No principal fire officers have been reappointed. • Recruitment policies and procedures are adhered to.
Section 7: Inspection, Intervention and Accountability		
	Framework requirement	Compliance evidence
Inspection	<p>Cooperate with the inspectorate and its inspectors to enable them to deliver their statutory function. This includes providing relevant data and information to inform inspections.</p> <p>Give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS and if recommendations are made, prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan detailing how the recommendations are being actioned. If the fire and rescue authority does not propose to undertake any action as a result of a recommendation, reasons for this should be given.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support HMICFRS data requests and proactively engaged with HMICFRS during Discovery and Fieldwork Week. This includes working with the Service Liaison Lead and Inspectorate to ensure all required information is made available. • An Inspection Support Team, part of the Business Improvement department to co-ordinate inspection planning, and support the development of an HMICFRS Improvement Plan. • Implemented an internal communications plan to prepare the Service for inspection. • Support the regional sharing of information.

	When forming an action plan, the fire and rescue authority could seek advice and support from other organisations, for example, the NFCC and Local Government Association.	
Accountability	<p>Have governance and accountability arrangements in place covering issues such as financial management and transparency, complaints and discipline arrangements, and compliance with the seven principles of public life.</p> <p>Each fire and rescue authority must hold the individual who has responsibility for managing the fire and rescue service – an operational or non-operational Chief Fire Officer – to account for the delivery of the fire and rescue service and the functions of persons under their direction and control.</p> <p>In demonstrating their accountability to communities for the service they provide, fire and rescue authorities need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be transparent and accountable to their communities for their decisions and actions; • provide the opportunity for communities to help to plan their local service through effective consultation and involvement; and • have scrutiny arrangements in place that reflect the high standard communities expect for an important public safety service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operation of standing orders and financial regulations, outline how the Authority / Service carries out its business and how decisions are to be made, supported by a clear delegation scheme. The roles and responsibilities of Members and officers are defined in these documents. • Robust governance arrangements in place, overseen by the Authority and committee structure. • Governance arrangements reviewed annually in line with CIPFA principles, and the production of an annual Statement of Assurance and Annual Governance Statement (which forms part of the statement of accounts) and a Code of Governance. • Annually publish the financial accounts, which have an unqualified opinion from the External Auditor and an unqualified value for money conclusion. • Complies with the Data Transparency Code 2015 and publishes information on the website. • Seeks the views of the public through consultation and engagement. • Evaluate the Service's work via the views of service users from surveys and audits. • Invite compliments and complaints, and respond within 28 days.
Transparency	Must comply with their statutory transparency requirements. Subject to the Local Authority Transparency Code 2015 and publish certain information, including senior salaries; register of interests; staffing; income and expenditure; property; rights and liabilities; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complies with the Data Transparency Code 2015 and publish information on the website. • Adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR 2018. • Maintains policies and procedures relating to data and information governance.

	<p>decisions of significant public interest.</p> <p>Make communities aware of how they can access data and information on their performance.</p> <p>Submit to the Secretary of State any reports and returns that are required; and give the Secretary of State any information with respect to its functions that are required.</p> <p>Provide regular data to the Home Office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records and reports on key decisions of the Authority. Meeting papers are published and available to the public. • Publishes quarterly performance reports, benchmarked against other metropolitan fire and rescue services. • Reports performance through the Statement of Assurance (this report) and the Service's annual report. • Provide data returns as required to the Home Office and HMICFRS.
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8. YOUR VIEWS COUNT

If you would like to comment on this document then please get in touch as we welcome your feedback to help us shape our Service.

If you would like this document in another format or language, please contact us so we can discuss your needs.

For further details, please contact 0191 444 1500 or you can write to:

Business Improvement Department
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Barmston Mere
Washington
Tyne and Wear
SR5 3QY

or email Business.Improvement@twfire.gov.uk

Alternatively, if you would like more information about TWFRS you can visit our website www.twfire.gov.uk

Access to information

TWFRS is committed to being open, accountable, and transparent and or more information about our arrangements for access to data and information can be found on the website via the following link: [Access to Information](#).

How to make a compliment or make a complaint

If you would like to compliment us on a job well done or would like to raise a complaint, you can do this:

Via our website at: <https://www.twfire.gov.uk/about-us/contact/complaints/>

By telephone to 0191 444 1500

By email complaintsandcompliments@twfire.gov.uk

In writing, by addressing your letter to the:

Chief Fire Officer
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters
Nissan Way
Barmston Mere
Sunderland
SR5 3QY

9. GLOSSARY

ACFO	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
CCA	Civil Contingencies Act
CFO	Chief Fire Officer
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
COMAH	Control of Major Accident Hazards
CRMP	Community Risk Management Plan
CRP	Community Risk Profile
DCFO	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
DIM	Detection identification and monitoring
DPO	Data Protection Officer
ED&I	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
ESN	Emergency Services Network
FBU	Fire Brigades Union
FI	Fire Investigation
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
HVP	High Volume Pump
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IOSH	Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
JESIP	Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme
JOL	Joint Organisational Learning
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
MDU	Mass Decontamination Unit
MTA	Marauding Terrorist Attack
MTFS	Medium Term Financial Strategy
NCAF	National Coordination and Advisory Framework
NEAS	North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council
NILO	National Inter-Agency Liaison Officer

NOL	National Operational Learning
NRAT	National Resilience Assurance Team
NUG	National User Group
NWG	National Working Groups
OAG	Operational Assurance Group
OCC	Operations Coordination Committee
OHU	Occupational Health Unit
OIG	Operational Improvement Group
PAS	Primary Authority Scheme
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty
RBIP	Risk-Based Inspection Programme
RMAD	Risk Management and Assurance Database
RoSPA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
RP s	Responsible Persons
SIRO	Senior Information Risk Owner
SRB	Strategic Resilience Board
TRV	Targeted Response Vehicle
TWFRS	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue

