

# Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority



## Integrated Risk Management Plan Action Plan

**2008/09**

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## **1 FOREWORD BY COUNCILLOR PETER GIBSON, CHAIRMAN**

I am pleased to present the Authority's draft IRMP Action Plan 2008/09 for consultation and to record my personal thanks to all those members of staff involved in its preparation.

It introduces new initiatives that will improve service delivery to the communities of Tyne and Wear. For example the introduction of the Road Traffic Collision Policy will see the Authority engage in a multi-agency approach to reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on the roads.

Our continued focus on the prevention of fire and other emergencies will also continue as the Authority strives to drive down the numbers of fires and injuries occurring in our communities.

A prime example of our fire prevention work was 'Operation Early Warning', which took place over a three-month period, targeted high risk groups living throughout Tyne and Wear. During this time 13,252 free home fire risk assessments were carried out; 17,094 free smoke detectors were fitted and 1,150 free deep fat fryers were issued. Alongside this initiative, our normal programme of home fire risk assessments also continues apace. In 2006/07 we offered home risk assessments to nearly 22,000 householders who live in areas of elevated risk. Just over 4,000 of these were delivered by the dedicated community safety staff that were introduced as part of the IRMP process. During the same period over 19,000 free smoke alarms were fitted.

These initiatives are making a significant contribution to the reduction of casualties in accidental dwelling fires. The number of people seriously injured in accidental dwelling fires is now almost one quarter of the level recorded in 2001/02. Linked to this is the fact that the Authority currently has the highest rate of '*incidents attended in which a smoke alarm alerted the occupants to a fire*' than any other Metropolitan area.

Building on this success, this Plan also sets out how the Authority will address the risks faced by the community by continuing to deliver fire safety education through our community fire stations and schools education programme. The Authority will continue to review how it responds to incidents to ensure that the right resources are in the right place at the right time to prevent injuries, and save lives, whilst also providing an efficient and cost effective service. The Authority will also maintain our commitment to fairness and diversity both in the workplace and in the communities that it serves.

The Authority is confident that its staff have the drive, leadership, competency and enthusiasm to continue to improve our fire and rescue service. All of the employees of the Authority are dedicated and committed individuals who will be supported in their efforts to maintain and improve, the excellent services already provided.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me in writing, or e-mail your comments via our website at [www.twfire.gov.uk](http://www.twfire.gov.uk)

Cllr Peter Gibson  
Chairman  
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

## **2 PURPOSE OF THE INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN 2004-09**

In April 2004 the Authority successfully published its first, five year, Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) following an extensive consultation process with the public and businesses in Tyne and Wear. The objectives of the IRMP are to:

- Reduce the number of fires and other emergency incidents;
- Reduce the severity of injuries in fires, road traffic accidents and other emergency incidents;
- Reduce the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents; and,
- Safeguard the environment and heritage (both built and natural).

In support of the five year plan an Annual Action Plan is also published in April of each year. This 2008/09 Annual Action Plan is part of the continuous improvement process that is embedded in the IRMP 2004/09. It follows the same rationale as previous Action Plans in that it utilises the original framework within which the Authority intends to develop its strategies for the creation of safer communities in line with the Fire and Rescue Services National framework 2006/08.

In line with the Authority's Value for Money framework document, a key aim of the IRMP is to provide value for money whilst delivering an excellent service to the public. The Authority will work closely with partners and members of the community to ensure that risks are managed in an efficient and effective way.

The Action Plan also contributes to the delivery of the Authority's core functions as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Our primary core functions are to provide community fire safety (including legislative fire safety), to make provision for fighting fires, and provision for dealing with road traffic collisions (including road traffic collision prevention) and to make provision for other major emergencies such as urban search and rescue and mass decontamination.

In May 2007 Communities and Local Government issued a revised and updated definition of Integrated Risk Management Planning through its IRMP Steering Group.

The new definition retains all of the areas mentioned above but directs the Authority to tailor its approach to take account the introduction of new legislation such as:

- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007;
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004;
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire safety) Order 2005.

The new definition also stresses the importance of 'Partnership Working', something the Authority has been pursuing for some time.

The Authority's plans reflect this new guidance.

### 3 BACKGROUND TO TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

The Authority serves a geographical area of 208 square miles, which contains within it a population of 1.09 million. The area is divided into five metropolitan local authorities: Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland.



The Tyne and Wear area is developing strongly, both economically and culturally. It is home to many world class businesses such as Nissan Motor Manufacturing, the Sage Group, the AA, Komatsu, and many others.

Also there are a number of highly respected arts and cultural venues such as the Theatre Royal in Newcastle, the Empire Theatre in Sunderland, the Sage in Gateshead, Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens along with many others. The area is emerging as a centre for

innovation and high quality education, being home to the International Centre for Life and 3 popular universities who, between them, have a combined enrolment of over 55,000 students.

Unfortunately, this picture fails to tell the whole story. Less than a generation ago, Tyne and Wear had thriving shipbuilding and heavy engineering industries, which along with coal mining, formed the core of its economy. This industrial base was supported by strong local communities. The relatively recent and rapid decline of these industries had an adverse impact on the local economy and on the local communities themselves.

A host of socioeconomic indicators suggest that deprivation and social exclusion still affect many areas and sizeable sections of the population. The Deprivation across the area is both all encompassing as well as hot spot focused and, unfortunately, none of the five Local Authority areas escape any of the seven distinct domains that combine to form the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Generally speaking, in Tyne and Wear, people suffer from poorer health, are more likely to be a victim of crime and are liable to be less highly educated than nearly anywhere else in England. The county also has the lowest rates of home ownership in the UK and an above average proportion of it's residents depend on social benefits. All of the Tyne and Wear Districts display poverty higher than the National equivalent, ranging from 2% above the UK average in North Tyneside to 19% higher in Sunderland. Since 2004 the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), has been published at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), level when previously it was published at Electoral Ward level. Super Output Areas can be thought of as 'statistical wards'. There are 32,482 LSOAs in England. Each LSOA has an IMD score and these scores are ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 32,482 (least deprived).

The average IMD rank for Tyne and Wear is 10028 which is much lower than the average rank for England as a whole 16242. Table 1 below shows the distribution of average IMD ranks across England and as can be seen; Tyne and Wear, along with the North East have the lowest average ranks, which on this basis make them the most deprived areas in the country.

**Table 1 – Multiple Deprivation**

Region		Average of IMD Rank
Tyne and Wear Average Rank	Most Deprived	10028
North East Average Rank		11206
North West Average Rank		12833
London Average Rank		13274
Yorkshire and The Humber Average Rank		13507
West Midlands Average Rank		14592
England Average Rank		16242
East Midlands Average Rank		16708
South West Average Rank		18292
East of England Average Rank		20320
South East Average Rank		Least Deprived

**Table 2 – Resident Population – High Deprivation**

Local Authority	Count of Super Output Areas that feature in the top 10 of the most deprived in England.	Population in those areas	Population for the whole Local Authority	Percentage of Local Authority population living in the top 10 of the most deprived areas in England.
Gateshead	34	51700	191160	27
Newcastle upon Tyne	53	81880	261180	31
North Tyneside	14	19990	191960	10
South Tyneside	20	30150	152740	20
Sunderland	51	75780	280750	27
<b>Total for Tyne and Wear</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>259500</b>	<b>1077790</b>	<b>24</b>
All SOAs in Tyne and Wear	719			

Of the 719 LSOAs in Tyne and Wear, 172 (24%), can be found in the top ten percent of the most deprived areas in England. There are some 259,500 people living in these areas, which mean that almost a quarter of the county's resident population is living in areas of relatively high deprivation. Table 2 above provides a breakdown of the distribution of these areas by Local Authority. As can be seen, Newcastle has the highest number of people living in relatively deprived areas with North Tyneside the lowest. The Authority has strong grounds to suggest that there are links between deprivation and fire incident rates, particularly in relation to dwelling fires.

Research conducted by the North East Public Health Observatory (NEPHO) in 2004 suggests that smoking is more prevalent among people living in deprived areas. The report "Are NHS Stop Smoking Services Reducing Health Inequalities in the North East of England?" estimates that around 33% of those who smoke in the region live in the most deprived LSOAs. This research supports what Fire and Rescue Services have suggested for a long time namely that smoking, which is the most common cause of fatalities in accidental dwelling fires, is inextricably linked to measures of deprivation.

**Table 3 – Smokers Living in Deprived Areas**

Local Authority	Count of Super Output Areas that feature in the top 10 of the most deprived in England.	Population in those areas	Estimated Number of Smokers inferred from NEPHO study
Gateshead	34	51700	17061
Newcastle upon Tyne	53	81880	27020
North Tyneside	14	19990	6597
South Tyneside	20	30150	9950
Sunderland	51	75780	25007
<b>Total for Tyne and Wear</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>259500</b>	<b>85635</b>

The above data provides an estimate of the number of smokers who live in deprived areas based on the NEPHO study.

It has also been suggested that a significant proportion of the population who live in deprived areas are hard to influence. This means that Authority staff have to find ways of conveying the safety messages that are acceptable to those at greatest risk.

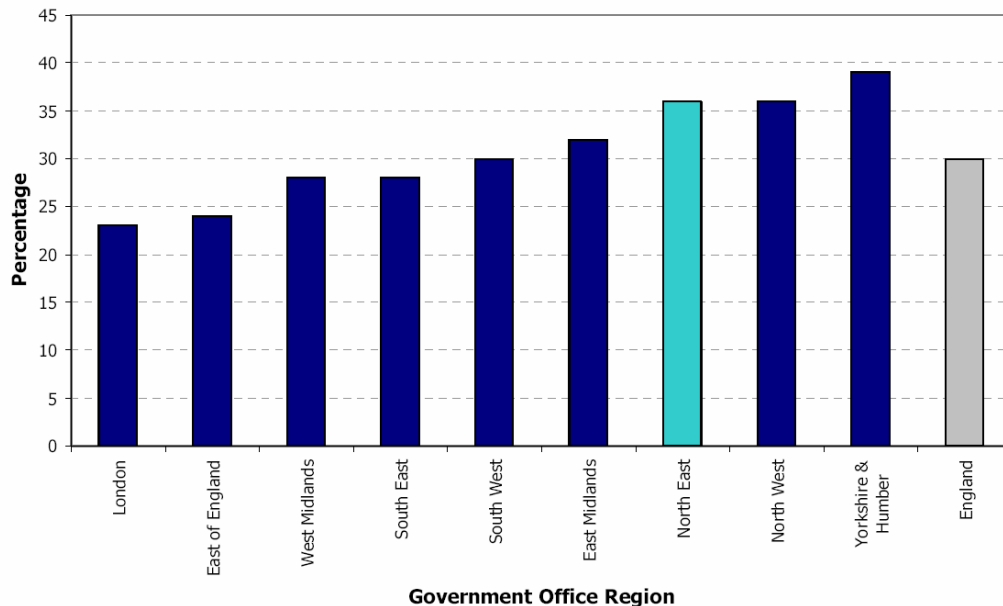
Another key contributor to the incidence of dwelling fires and fire casualties is the consumption of alcohol. A recent study into fatal fires conducted by the Arson Control Forum showed that alcohol impairment contributed to the cause of 25% of fatal fires.

In another report, produced by the North East Public Health Observatory it was shown that:

- Adults in the North East are more likely to drink heavily than adults in England generally.
- There is a higher prevalence of hazardous or dependent alcohol consumption in the North East than in comparison to England.
- There are higher rates of alcohol related death and poor health in the North East among men and women than in comparison to England.
- The costs of alcohol consumption and misuse within the North East could be approximately £1 billion per year.

Figure 1 below chart shows alcohol consumption patterns by Government Office Region. The information was collected during the 2004 sweep of the General Household Survey. The chart shows the percentage of respondents who consumed 3 to 4 units of alcohol on at least one day in the week prior to the survey.

Fig 1



The chart suggests that alcohol consumption in the North East is the second highest in the country alongside the North West, who appear to consume equally as much.

Once again it is important to recognise that a relationship appears to exist between measures of deprivation, alcohol consumption and the prevalence of fire and fire casualties. As will be seen later in this document, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service works incessantly, often in conjunction with community partners, to reduce the number of fires and fire casualties. However, given the strong link between fire and deprivation and that over a quarter of a million people live in deprived areas in this county, it is no trivial task. It is however one that the Authority is determined to pursue, given time, and adequate resources.

Accordingly this document sets out the actions the Authority aims to implement this year in its endeavours to create the safest community.

## 4 WHAT IS THE AUTHORITY TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

This Action Plan will continue to focus on efforts to reduce the risks to which the public is exposed by working to reduce fires, fire deaths and injuries and other emergencies, primarily by using direct intervention methods such as home fire risk assessments and education. Furthermore, in conjunction with our partners, the Authority will continue to develop the legislative fire safety service to deliver the most appropriate inspection methodology to meet the requirements of new legislation and the needs of the wider business community. Our risk based operational response is also under continuous review to ensure that the Authority responds to emergency calls in the most appropriate manner, with the right number of personnel and equipment.

The IRMP Action Plan will therefore contribute directly towards our Vision, which is:

### ***“Creating the Safest Community”***

The IRMP Action Plan also assists in the achievement of the objectives identified within our 2007 – 2012 Strategic Plan: ([www.twfire.gov.uk](http://www.twfire.gov.uk))

- GOAL ONE:** Prevent loss of life and injury from fires and other emergencies
- GOAL TWO:** Respond appropriately to the risk
- GOAL THREE:** Plan and prepare for exceptional events
- GOAL FOUR:** Deliver a modern, effective service, which delivers value for money

All of the action points within the plan are aligned directly with our 2007 – 2012 Strategic Plan and departmental operating plans.

Attainment of our goals requires a risk based approach to determine our priorities and consequently, where the Authority needs to place its resources to ensure that they are most effective and provide value for money. The next section describes the progress that has been made in the development of our risk analysis processes.

## 5. DEVELOPMENTS IN RISK ASSESSMENT

Since the publication of our first IRMP in 2004, the Authority has continued to develop and refine the risk assessment processes that we use to measure the risk posed by a number of hazards. The system we use is known as the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) Toolkit, and it is widely used by fire and rescue services throughout the UK.

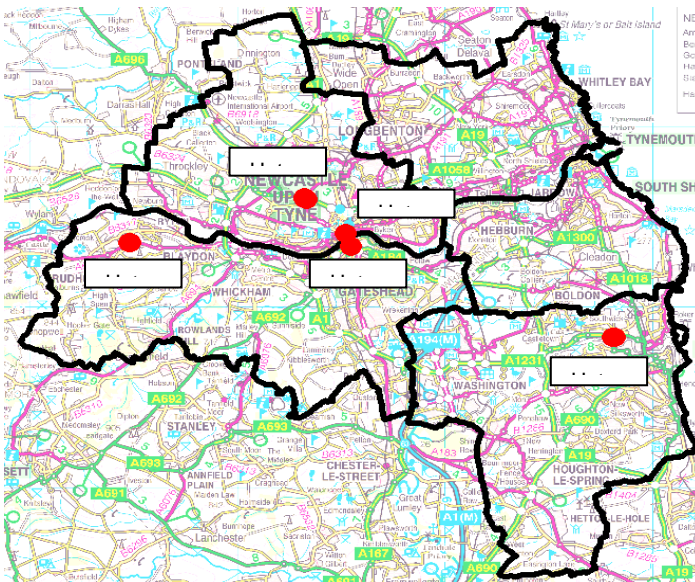
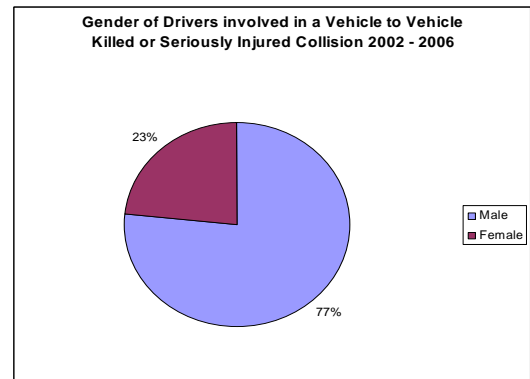
Laterally we have also begun to supplement the results of the FSEC toolkit with a range of other risk analysis tools.

In 2007 the FSEC Team undertook research into road traffic collisions (RTCs) occurring in the County using data supplied by Gateshead Council’s Traffic Accident Data Unit (TADU).

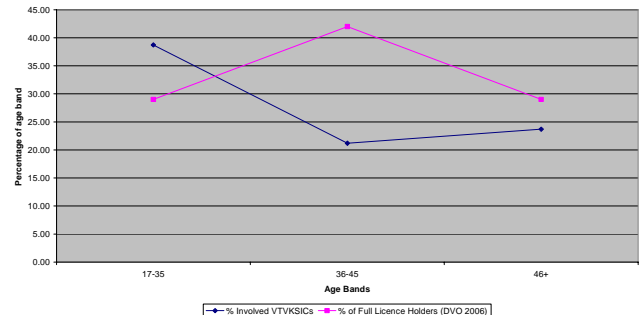
The research looked specifically at RTCs that involved more than one vehicle and were one of the ‘occupants’ was killed or seriously injured during the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006.

The report confirmed that young male drivers in the County, are more likely to be involved in such incidents. It also confirmed that young people, whether drivers or passengers, are also more likely to be killed or seriously injured. Both of these findings reflect the national position. A number of RTC ‘hot spots’ were also identified.

The results of this research will be used to help inform the Authority’s prevention and response work in relation to RTCs.



Percentage Drivers involved in VTKVSCs compared to percentage of full UK licence holders (NB 4% of drivers involved in VTKVSCs were under 17 and that age data was unavailable for 12% of these drivers)



The FSEC Team also undertook some research into the risks associated with heritage buildings in the County. Information was obtained from English Heritage,

Tyne and Wear Museums and Newcastle City Council's Historic Environment Manager. This enabled the FSEC Team to identify the location of a range of heritage risks. This information will also be used to shape the Authority's prevention, protection and response policies in relation to these buildings.

## **6. ACHIEVEMENTS IN YEAR FOUR OF THE IRMP**

In April 2004 the Authority introduced its first IRMP which carefully outlined the background to the process of integrated risk management and further explained the rationale and reasoning behind the service improvements planned from April 2004. These improvements were targeted at how the Authority could become more effective and efficient in our approach to community safety, legislative fire safety and response to emergency calls. In particular, the planned changes re-focused our efforts in driving down the risks (from fire and other threats) facing people in their domestic, social and working environments. This work has continued through 2006/07 as outlined in the fourth IRMP and several important initiatives have been delivered to date, in particular:

### **Continued Rationalisation of Crew Levels**

The policy for minimum ridership of 4 x 4 on two pump stations is now in its final year of implementation. This initiative has allowed resources to be reinvested into community safety, whilst also assisting the Authority in meeting the Government's efficiency targets.

### **Strategic Review of Fire and Emergency Cover**

The process of replacing the fire station located on Station Road, in the Fulwell area of Sunderland, is well underway. Preliminary risk analysis has helped identify some possible locations for a new community fire station. The Service's Estates Department will now go on to evaluate these as well as exploring the option of rebuilding or refurbishing the station on the current site.

### **Broaden Skills Base within Legislative Fire Safety**

The Authority has now appointed two women as Technical Fire Safety Officers in order to broaden its pool of staff in respect of this specialised area of work.

### **Community Advocates**

The Authority has appointed 3 community advocates. They have begun working with local communities and partners to break down cultural and language barriers and increase fire safety awareness among hard to reach groups. In addition, the advocates aim to promote a greater understanding of the work of the fire and rescue service within these communities, particularly in relation to career opportunities.

### **Resilience and Contingency Group**

The Authority has appointed two personnel to the group. They will have responsibility for ensuring that the Authority is properly prepared to respond to any large scale incidents that may occur. They also have a liaison role with other Authorities in order to ensure that plans are comprehensive and robust.

### **Further Development of the Risk Assessment Process**

As set out earlier, in 2007, the FSEC Team undertook research into road traffic collisions (RTCs) occurring in the County using data supplied by Gateshead Council's Traffic Accident Data Unit (TADU). The FSEC Team also undertook some research into the risks associated with heritage buildings in the County. The results of this work are now being used to shape the Authority's prevention, protection and response policies in relation to both of these risks.

The Authority has also acquired software tools which can be used to complement and validate the risk analyses produced using the FSEC Toolkit. These tools are now being used to examine the impact that simultaneous demand or 'workload' has on our response arrangements.

### **Watch Manager Empowerment Programme**

The Watch Manager Empowerment Programme has been a significant success and has devolved responsibility to Watch Managers to enable them to practice their innovative and entrepreneurial skills and produce innovative ways of delivering services to the community.

### **Evaluate the use of Compressed Air Foam Systems**

The Authority is continuing to explore the use of Compressed Air Foam Systems (CAFS) as an extinguishing medium, including how CAFS could be integrated with current systems, the impact on firefighter safety, cost effectiveness and its suitability for use on Class B (flammable liquids) fires.

### **Reduce the number of false alarms caused by automatic fire alarms**

The Authority is working with ADT with a view to target 30 non domestic premises to reduce the number of false alarms caused by automatic fire alarms. This process will result in the premises being monitored in accordance with the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) protocol.

## 7. JUDGING OUR PERFORMANCE

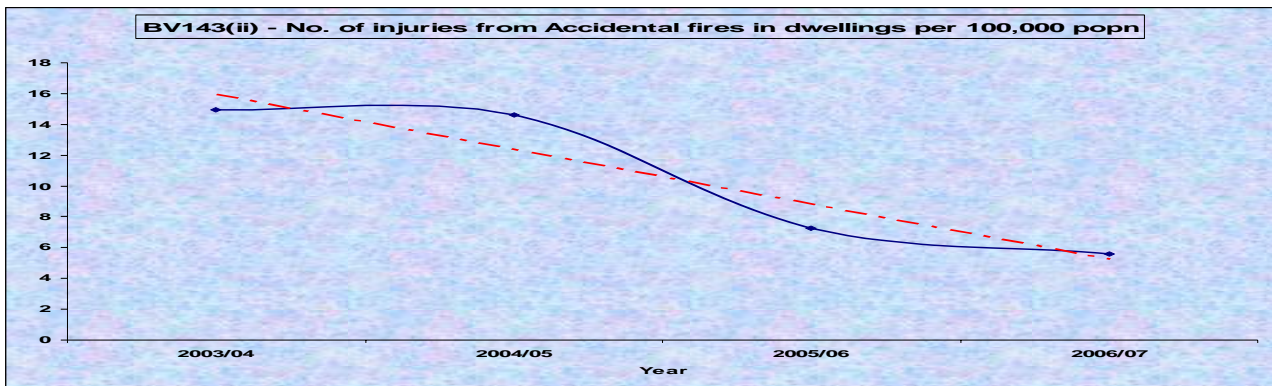
Evaluating the success of the IRMP initiatives is an important element of the Authority's work. To achieve this requires the use of a performance management and monitoring framework.

The Authority's performance is currently assessed in a number of ways. However, arguably the most widespread and commonly recognised of the performance monitoring mechanisms are the national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) for the Fire and Rescue Authorities. These indicators are published by the Audit Commission and demonstrate individual fire and rescue performance over time.

The majority of the BVPI's relating to the Authority demonstrate that there is a sustained improvement in respect of reducing the risks facing the public and in improving the service in general. Furthermore, the Authority is confident that actions undertaken as a consequence of Integrated Risk Management Planning are playing a key role in this welcome trend.

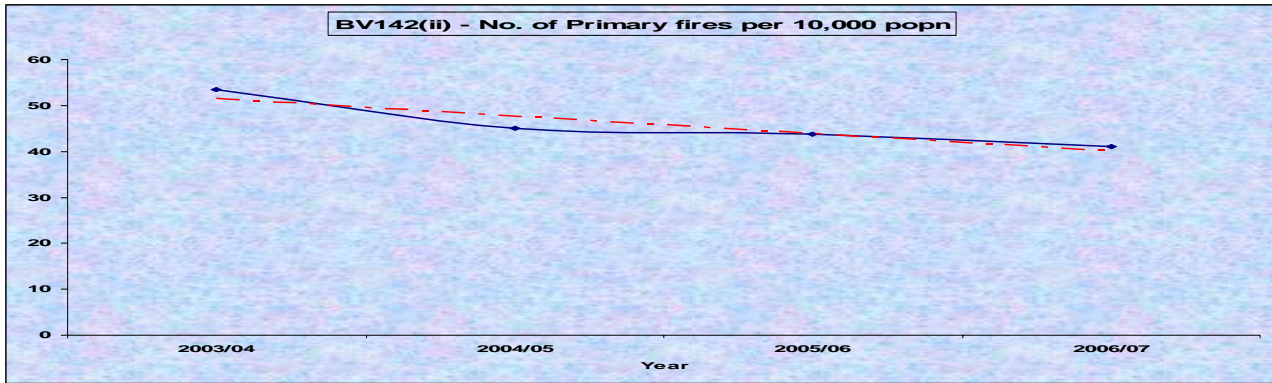
Thus, for example, one area in which the IRMP has had a dramatic effect is in the reduction of casualties arising from accidental dwelling fires. The graph relating to BV143(ii) below shows that there has been a 63% reduction in these casualties when compared to 2003/04 which is the year before IRMP was introduced.

**Fig 2**



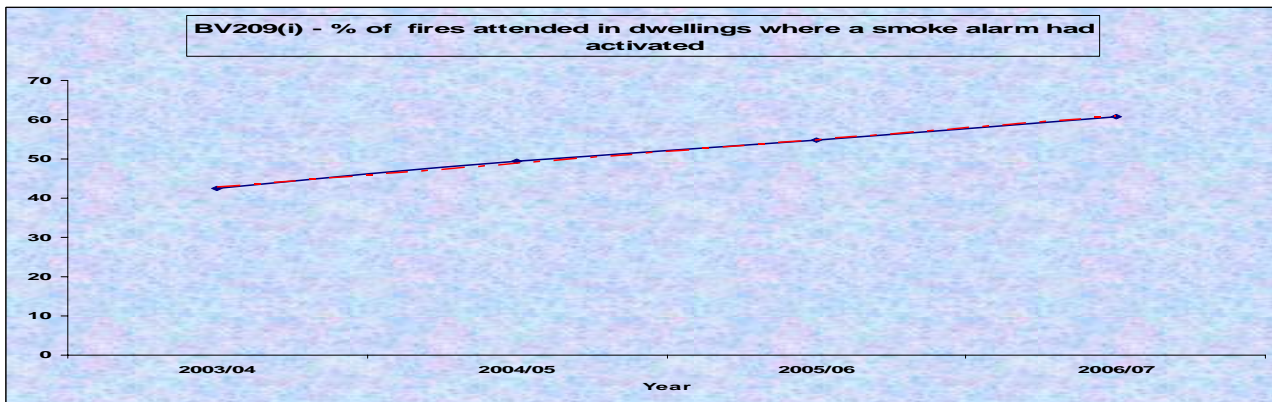
In a similar way the total number of primary (property) fires, as measured by BV142(ii), have fallen by 23% in the same period. Once again, actions arising from the IRMP ensure that these lower levels are maintained.

**Fig 3**



Another area of notable success is the increase in the percentage of fires attended in which a smoke alarm had actuated, as measured by BV209(i). This demonstrates that the issuing of free smoke alarms as part of the Authority’s Home Fire Risk Assessment programme is having the desired effect of ensuring that householders are alerted to a fire in good time.

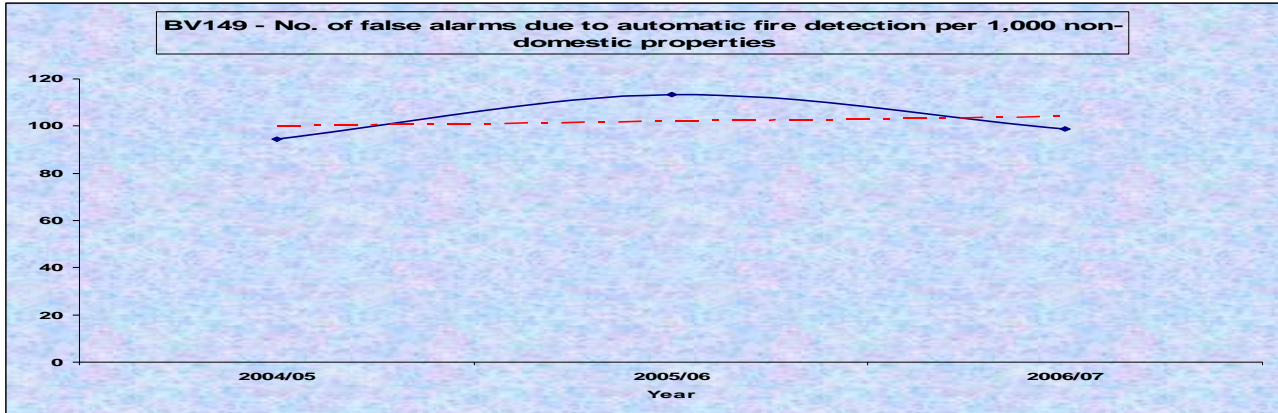
**Fig 4**



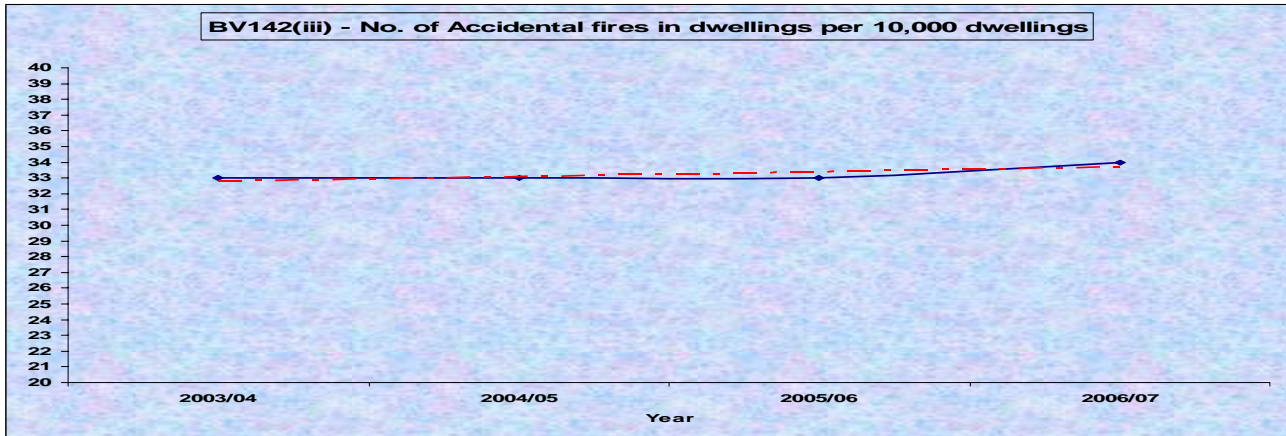
However, whilst the majority of these BV indicators demonstrate significant improvements to which the IRMP initiatives can claim a portion of the credit, there are still some areas where there has yet to be a sustained improvement. Namely the number of false alarms, caused by automatic fire detection systems in non domestic premises BV 149, the number of accidental house fires that occur BV142(iii) and the total number of calls to all fires LI142(i).

The number of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection systems in non domestic premises as measured by BV 149, have remained stable but at a level that is still unacceptably high to the Authority. New measures introduced in the Authority’s 2006/07 IRMP Action Plan to address this have not yet managed to feed through into the performance indicators reported here, but should lead to improvements soon. Please note that changes in the way this data was recorded means that relevant historical information is only available from 2004/05 for this indicator.

**Fig 5**

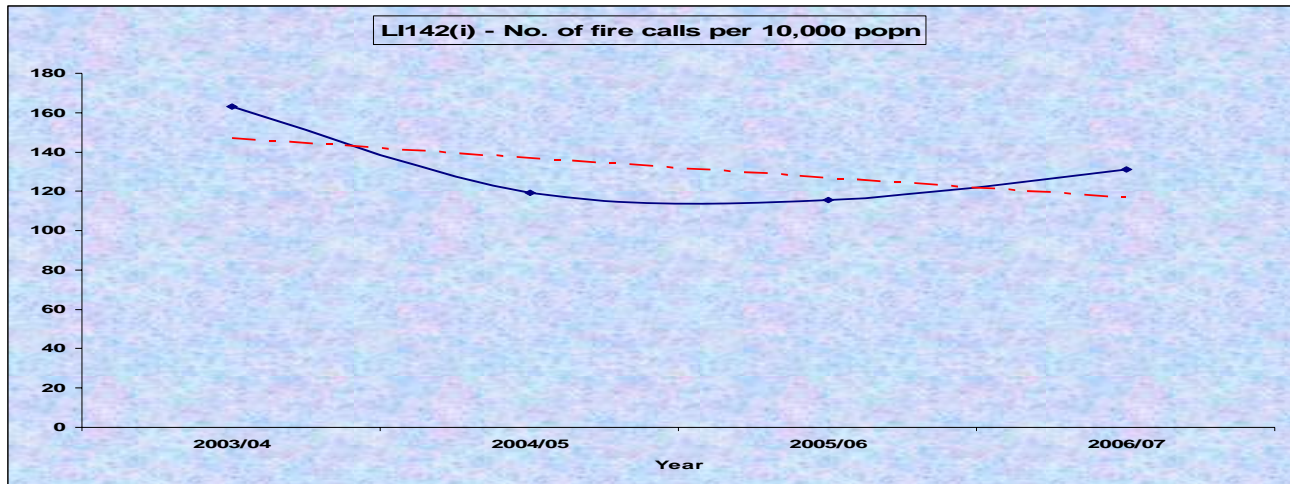


**Fig 6**



Accidental fires in dwellings as measured by BV 142(iii) are on the increase, as the graph above illustrates. Even though the increase is small (about 1%), this will continue to be a key area of focus for the Authority in the years ahead as work continues to try and bring about a significant and sustained reduction in accidental dwelling fires.

**Fig 7**



Similarly, LI142(i), which measures the total number of calls to all fires, has shown a marked downward trend since the introduction of the first IRMP action plan in April 2004. There was however a slight increase in 2006/07. This is attributed to the spell of hot dry weather in the early part of the summer of 2006 which saw a rise in the number of grass and heathland fires.

From the foregoing it can be seen that the Authority is making significant improvements to the safety of the community, however it is not complacent and will be ensuring that efforts are redoubled in an attempt to drive down all incidents to the lowest levels possible. Indeed the very purpose of this document is to set out for consultation, a range of initiatives that the Authority wishes to introduce in 2008/09.

Initiatives that are intended to drive down further the level of risk to which the public is exposed. These include direct action such as refining the home risk assessment process, as well as indirect actions designed to release resources for re-investment by the Authority in pursuit of its strategic goals. The specific initiatives proposed for 2008/09 are outlined in the following section of this document.

## **8. WHAT THE AUTHORITY PLANS TO DO NEXT YEAR – SUMMARY OF OUR IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS FOR 2008/09**

As stated earlier, the 2008/09 Action Plan will be the fifth such document produced in support of the five year Integrated Risk Management Plan. The initiatives for the coming year, in support of the plan, are:

### **MONITORING OF 4 X 4 CREWING LEVELS**

This initiative was introduced on a gradual basis over the first four years of the 2004/09 IRMP. Consequently, 2008/2009 will be the first full year that 4 x 4 crewing has been the standard model across the Authority's two pump stations.

Consequently, monitoring of the impact of the initiative will be continued to be undertaken to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the delivery of the Authority's services.

### **CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS**

In addition to ensuring that we provide advice and assistance to householders in respect of fire safety it has become apparent that there is the potential for basic advice to be provided regarding the risks posed by carbon monoxide poisoning in the home.

This service has, on a number of occasions, attended tragic incidents where such poisoning has been the root cause.

Accordingly work will be undertaken to introduce CO information leaflets into the HFRA programme. In addition, work will be undertaken to ascertain whether there is the possibility of forming a partnership with other agencies concerned with this matter.

### **REVIEW OF WATER RESCUE ARRANGEMENTS**

Last year we saw large scale floods within Gloucestershire, Humberside, South Yorkshire and Hereford and Worcestershire. We have also had an increase in flash floods locally due to spate weather conditions and these occurrences appear to be on the increase.

Section 11 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 gives Fire Authorities the power to respond to "other eventualities". This includes an event or situation that causes or is likely to cause: one or more individuals to die, be injured or become ill.

Following from this, the Authority has taken steps to ensure that all operational response personnel have been trained in basic water awareness skills and all fire appliances carry a range of water safety equipment such as floating lines and buoyancy aids.

The Water Awareness training provides all operational response personnel with the knowledge of the hazards present at water incidents and the levels of risk they cause. The Authority has provided a modern fire rescue boat which has already proved its worth since its introduction three years ago. A smaller boat is also available where the use of a smaller craft may be more appropriate.

It is proposed therefore to review our existing arrangements taking into account the lessons learned as a consequence of the extensive flooding elsewhere in the UK.

## **IMPLEMENT RTC POLICY**

One of the core functions the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out for Fire Authorities is to ensure they will undertake “(a) rescuing people in the event of road traffic accidents in its area” and “(b) protecting people from serious harm, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, in the event of road traffic accidents in its area”.

Recent research undertaken by the Authority has highlighted that young male drivers are at elevated risk of being seriously injured or killed on the County’s roads. The research also identified a number of areas where serious incidents are more prevalent.

The Authority following consultation and in conjunction with the five highway authorities and other relevant stakeholders look to engage in a multi-agency approach to reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on the roads through prevention, protection, response, marketing and establishing and developing partnerships with organisations that have common road safety missions.

## **TRAINING FOR COMMAND AND CONTROL**

A ‘major incident’ is an emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or all of the emergency services. The declaration of a major incident by one of the named agencies above allows the release of additional resources in order to respond to and manage the emergency whatever it may be.

To enable us to be prepared for such an occurrence it is imperative that all operational staff receive appropriate and regular training.

Using the command and control simulator the Authority will enhance training at bronze, silver and gold command levels. This will improve command and control at emergency incidents, including working jointly with partner emergency incident responders.

## **THEMATIC INSPECTIONS OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS**

Fire is the single greatest threat to occupants, contents and fabric of any building. Whilst life safety should always remain paramount, where fire occurs in a historic building the loss of authentic fabric and valuable contents is inevitable. Effective fire safety management of properties will greatly reduce the impact and consequences of fires.

The Authority has already taken some steps to identify and record the location of buildings that could be considered to be a “heritage risk” in conjunction with English Heritage, Tyne and Wear Museums and Newcastle City Council’s Historic Environment Manager (who has a County wide remit for these properties).

As a result the Authority will benefit from greater risk intelligence that will assist operational preparedness. Findings from these audits will result in partnership working with local authorities and heritage associations to ensure a sympathetic approach to the integrity of the buildings fabric, should remedial work be required.

## **EXTEND AFA AND UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS IN DWELLINGS PROTOCOL TO ALL FIVE LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS**

AFA (automatic fire alarms) and unwanted fire signals (calls received by the FRS as a result of AFAs) in dwellings are at unacceptable levels in Tyne and Wear and cause an unnecessary use of the resources. The Authority is committed to manage the situation by taking proactive measures in partnership with key stakeholders.

Reducing these occurrences would benefit the Authority through efficiency savings through reduction in fuel usage and wear and tear on appliances and by allowing operational crews to use time freed up to conduct community safety activities.

The Authority has entered into partnership with Your Homes Newcastle (YHN), who manages the social housing and community care stock for Newcastle City Council. This involves support and training from TWFRS and an advanced call challenge methodology put into practice by YHN.

The Authority would like to roll this protocol out to all five local authority areas so that similar benefits could be realised across Tyne and Wear.

## 9. CONSULTATION INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK METHODS

The Authority has used the same communication methodology as was used for its IRMP 2004/05 and continued the collaborative approach with the other North East Fire and Rescue Services. This conforms to the principles of Best Value and the guidance set out in the Code of Practice for Consultation, ensuring consistency, shared resources, reduced costs and avoidance of consultation fatigue.

Successful consultation requires the involvement and participation of key stakeholders. The list below identifies how the Authority will inform interest groups of the proposals outlined in the Action Plan:

- Face to face consultation using a citizens panel convened by Northumbria Police
- Engaging with the media to ensure coverage in the local press throughout the consultation process.
- The production of a 2008/09 (draft) Action Plan made available to Fire & Rescue staff, businesses, MP's, councillors and partner organisations (such as the Ambulance Service and the Police).
- The Plan can also be made available upon request in large print or on audiotape and a summary can be obtained in one of six minority languages.
- Providing detailed information at [www.twfire.gov.uk](http://www.twfire.gov.uk)
- Providing hyperlinks on the web-sites of the five local authorities to the consultation document held at [www.twfire.gov.uk](http://www.twfire.gov.uk)
- Circulating information to staff via the Chief Officer's Bulletin and the 'Gazette' magazine.
- Providing information seminars for staff.
- Consulting with the Fire Brigades Union and other representative bodies on the IRMP.

## 10. CONCLUSION

This 2008/09 Action Plan is an essential component of the five-year IRMP strategy; it has embedded within it the principles that underpin the Authority's determination to reduce fires, and deaths and injuries from fires and other incidents.

The Plan is the Authority's means by which the significant challenges facing us can be identified and the subsequent actions to meet these challenges developed. It identifies how the Authority can make our operational response more effective and efficient and reflects the changes required following recent and pending legislation such as the Fire and Rescue Services Act, the Civil Contingencies Act, Licensing Act and the Fire Safety Order.

The Plan is a specific response to the needs of those areas identified as being at greater risk within Tyne and Wear, by providing the public with a range of effective community safety initiatives in the months and years ahead.

The Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to support and develop this work and to strive towards achievement of its vision:

*"Creating the Safest Community"*

**Aerial ladder platform** High Rise Appliance e.g. Turntable ladder.

**AFA** Automatic Fire Alarm.

**Best value** To provide the very best level of services that the public require at a price they are prepared to pay.

**Consultation** The process of collating the views of appropriate stakeholders.

**Co-responder** The process whereby the Fire Service co-responds to a medical emergency with the Ambulance Service.

**DCLG** The Department for Communities and Local Government (formerly the ODPM – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister).

**Deprivation** A measure of economic, social and environmental conditions against specific criteria from census information.

**District** A specific area controlled by a Local Authority

**Emergency Tender** A specialist emergency vehicle with particular a operational reference.

**Environment** Surroundings or circumstances affecting life, person or society.

**False Alarm** An emergency call which subsequently turns out to be unfounded.

**FAM** False Alarm Malicious - criminal offence of calling the Emergency Services without cause.

**Fire Authority** Local Authority Constituted Group, which oversees the Fire Service.

**Fire Station** A Fire and Rescue Service building for the location of resources and community use.

**Home Fire Risk Assessment** The process whereby residents receive free fire safety advice.

**Human Resources** Meeting the needs of personnel in terms of training, welfare and systems of work.

**IMD** Index of Multiple Deprivation.

**IRMP** Integrated Risk Management Plan.

**Intervention** An operational response to an incident e.g. fire engines.

**Key Performance Indicator** A Nationally set statistical measure of performance.

**Regional Management Board (RMB)** A regional collaboration partnership, which includes Cleveland Fire Brigade, Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service, managed by a Board of nominated Fire Authority Representatives.

**New Dimension Programme** A series of national measures to mitigate the consequences of a major incident.

**Non-emergency Service** A service provided that falls outside of normal emergency e.g. pumping out a basement.

**ODPM** Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

**Performance Indicator** A specific measure used for comparison of statistics between time periods or organisations e.g. the number of fires per 10,000 population.

**Prevention** Community safety actions to prevent fires and other accidents.

**Primary Fire** Fires involving buildings, vehicles and injuries.

**Project Board** The group of people responsible for the decision-making and guidance for a project.

**Protection** The works required by legislation to make a building safer from the effects of a fire.

**Response** The type of resources sent to an incident e.g. how many fire engines.

**Retained Firefighter** A trained fire fighter who is contracted only part-time to provide a service.

**Risk Assessment** The identification of risk areas using computer software programmes and on site/property inspections.

**Risk Footprint** A geographical representation of a type and level of risk.

**RTC** Road traffic collision.

**Secondary Fires** All fires not involving property, structures, vehicles and injuries by fire.

**Social Inclusion** Involvement of all members of the community including hard to reach groups.

**Socio-Demographic** The social factors in a community.

**Special Appliance** A fire and rescue appliance with a specialist role or function e.g. emergency tender.

**Special Risk** A particular premises or site which is a higher risk than the surrounding area e.g. large hospital.

**Stakeholder** A person, group or organisation who may have an interest in a subject.

**Super Output Areas** An area used for the collection and publication of small area statistics. Super Output Areas are used for statistical analysis as they are relatively consistent in size of population.

**Task Group** A group of people whose function is to inform on a subject area.