

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Service**



**COMMUNITY SAFETY
PLAN
2023- 2024**



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1 INTRODUCTION

The vision for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service is ‘Creating the Safest Community’ and the delivery of Prevention and Protection activities across the region is crucial to the delivery of that strategy.

Community Safety is an integral part of our **Strategy 2025** which focusses on achieving our Strategic goals:

- **Service Effectiveness**
- **Efficiency**
- **People**

To manage all our activities consistently, and drive innovation and improvement the Service have the Strategic Priorities:

- **Inclusion**
- **An all hazards approach to firefighter safety**
- **Digital and data**

From carrying out a home fire safety check, to conducting a fire safety audit at a local business, the work of the Community Safety functions is equally as important as our response to a 999 emergency call.

Our Community Safety Plan 2023-24 sets out a number of strategic priorities that will define how we deliver community safety activities across Tyne and Wear over the next financial year.

This plan clearly sets out vital community safety work due to be undertaken by our Prevention and Education, Fire Safety, Risk and Resilience and Operations Departments.

Our Community Safety Plan sits alongside our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and will help to address risk as identified by our Community Risk Profile (CRP).

Those risks will continue to change as our communities evolve. Whether that be changing demographics, increases in our population, climate change, societal, anti-social behaviour, age, pandemic or a cost-of-living crisis.

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, otherwise known as Martyn’s Law or the Protect Duty, will be a new piece of anti-terrorism legislation, designed to ensure the public is better protected from a “multifaceted, diverse and continually evolving” terror threat. Our Risk and Resilience Department will continue to lead the Service on terror threat.

Ensuring our staff can act appropriately in relation to Safeguarding concerns for the public and our own employee’s lies with us all as members of the public, volunteers and professionals and our Prevention and Education Department provide guidance and support.

We must always adapt how we deliver our community safety activities but the strategic priorities that underpin them will remain the same. Those priorities have been clearly outlined in this Community Safety Plan and, if successful, they will support us in creating the safest community here in Tyne and Wear.

2 OUR COMMUNITY SAFETY STRUCTURE



3 COMMUNITY SAFETY PRIORITIES

In supporting the vision of this Community Safety Plan, and the **TWFRS Strategy 2025**, we will focus on our own specific priorities.

Our Community Safety priorities are:

- We strive to help people to stay safe in their own homes
- We will work with our communities to prevent fires.
- We will engage with young people at an early age seeking to reduce deliberate fires and anti-social behavior.
- We will focus on higher risk places including High Rise Accommodation
- We will undertake inspections of commercial buildings based on risk
- We will continue to develop operational procedures and equipment to drive improvements in firefighter safety
- We will work with our partners to achieve shared outcomes
- We will work to mitigate risk and put in plans to aid recovery should they be required.



We will measure success and hold ourselves accountable by using a performance management framework and benchmarking our performance against the nationally recognised Fire Protection and Prevention standards.

4 PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

The best way to achieve our Service vision of ‘Creating the Safest Community’ is by education therefore preventing incidents from happening in the first place.

Our Prevention and Education Department play a proactive role in mitigating risk in our communities through a targeted approach of education, advice and intervention.

We use data, intelligence and our Community Risk Profile (CRP) to deliver activities in the areas of greatest need, to those who are identified as being at the highest risk.

Our aim in prevention is to help people be safer in their homes, at work, in public places, during leisure time and when visiting our area.

This work will be delivered through four key areas:

- **Home safety**
- **Safeguarding the vulnerable**
- **Community engagement**
- **Youth engagement**

In this section we provide an overview of the work we undertake in those four areas, and what our plan is to make improvements in the next 12 months.

An overview of our Prevention and Education work

Safety in the Home

It is important for us to target our resources to prevent fires in the home from occurring, helping to reduce risk and save lives.

Our prevention teams and operational personnel work to educate our communities about what they can do to keep themselves safe from fire, as well as reducing the risk of a wide range of other emergencies such as slips, trips and falls etc.

We do this by:

- Working with partners and the community to identify and help support vulnerable people
- Delivering a comprehensive programme of Safe and Well checks in people’s homes, targeting those most at risk
- Working in partnership to help integrate services that improve health and wellbeing
- Working with partners to promote the installation of domestic sprinkler systems where appropriate
- Targeting areas of deprivation to reduce risk to the community.

Working with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidance, we have adopted the National Person Centred Framework which encourages fire and rescue services to work in partnership with others to address the underlying causes of fire fatalities and injuries. To enhance this we continually engage with our communities to learn and understand the diversity within our region, helping us to tailor our Safe and Well Checks.

In 2022, we introduced an Online Home Fire Safety Check on our website, allowing residents of Tyne and Wear to undertake an assessment of their homes and living arrangements where, following a review of the information are offered either a physical visit by our prevention specialists or written advice is provided where needed.

Our approach to safeguarding the vulnerable

All of our staff and operational crews receive regular safeguarding training to ensure the basic human rights of Tyne and Wear residents are protected through our safeguarding policies, procedures and practices as we go about our work.

We aim to ensure that vulnerable adults and children can live their lives free from harm, abuse and neglect. To do this we will continue to work collaboratively with safeguarding professionals from all partners organisations and we have representation on all five of Tyne and Wear's local authorities safeguarding adults and children's boards.

As part of that collaboration, we helped develop the "Self-Neglect Thematic Review" with Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board, bringing our experience and expertise to the main issues arising in the region.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is vitally important to how we build trust and confidence in TWFRS. Without that trust, it is very difficult for us to be effective in the delivery of our community safety messaging.

Our focus when it comes to community engagement is to raise awareness, reduce risk and ultimately prevent incidents from ever taking place. We use census data, incident data and local intelligence to focus that engagement in the areas where we can have the greatest impact.

Our highly skilled staff and volunteers come from a variety of diverse backgrounds and that has allowed us to establish trusted relationships with hard-to-reach communities across Tyne and Wear.

Not only do we use data, but our community engagement team use their knowledge to engage with those within our communities that need our services most. We will continue to develop our understanding of our communities; building both relationships and partnerships as well as promoting wellbeing, cohesion and inclusion.

We have also introduced the **Sunderland Community Hub** at Sunderland Central Community Fire Station. This has provided a location where local residents can engage with their fire and rescue service through the delivery of wellness and fitness sessions. That includes boxing lessons for young people, sessions for elderly residents and a location to host diversionary activities and violence reduction education.

Working closely with our Communications and Engagement team, we also run **targeted community safety campaigns**, and themed events, to provide advice and education on a range of issues including fire, road and water safety. The year is split into two main campaigns 'Darker Nights' and 'Safer Summers' these are delivered year on year to focus on the annual issues that arise within those periods.

Following serious incidents, to reduce the risk of reoccurrence, we reassure and educate local communities. We will continue to work with local authorities, community groups, and partners to reduce deliberate fires and other anti-social behaviour. We are a leading partner in the North East **FireStoppers** group which provides an anonymous way to report fire setters and we will seek innovative ways to promote the use of FireStoppers.

We are expanding our road and water safety programmes seeking to use best practice to reduce the risk in our communities. Using the experience of our staff we can educate and inform the community of the impact these events can have and reduce occurrences in the future.



Youth Engagement

The vast majority of deliberate fires we attend are secondary fires and many of those fires are linked in some way to youth anti-social behaviour. It is therefore a priority for the service to engage with young people in Tyne and Wear at an early age.

Statistics inform us that young drivers are more likely to be involved in a road traffic collision, and children are more likely to get in trouble in the water. In the last 12 months there have been child fatalities linked to waterways both nationally, and here in the North East.

By taking a proactive approach to youth engagement and educating children in the region about fire, road and water safety to prevent dangerous incidents from occurring.

Early engagement with young people will have positive effects in social responsibility and having respect for others and their property. This will lead to links for young people to understand the Fire Service and the role we have in the community.

To support that early engagement work we run a **Fire Cadets Programme** for young people aged between 11 and 17-years-old, providing them with personal development opportunities, self-discipline, leadership skills, team work and a understanding of what it means to be a good citizen.

As part of the programme cadets have the opportunity to take part and support in community events and social activities to help develop community spirit and inclusion.

We also operate a **Schools Education Programme** and our SafetyWorks! interactive safety centre plays a role in its delivery.

Targeted lessons are delivered at the centre in partnership with Northumbria Police, local authority road safety teams, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Nexus, RNLI and Sainsbury's. It provides realistic, relevant and interactive educational experiences for young people and vulnerable adults.

Our Prevention and Education Department identify and target schools in Tyne and Wear, delivering education to year 2, year 6 and year 8.

Pupils are targeted within geographical areas that have been identified as showing an increase in anti-social behaviour and deliberate fire activity. This also includes targeted education at key times of the year, e.g. bonfire period.



Diversionsary Activities

The Service has delivered diversionary activities for over 20 years, we understand the benefit that such activities can bring, in terms of reducing anti-social behaviour, secondary fires, encouraging community engagement, and promoting understanding of the wider role of the fire and rescue service.

In partnership with the **Prince's Trust**, we deliver the nationally recognised 'TEAM' programme from two operational fire-stations in Sunderland. It is delivered by a team of dedicated staff from our Diversionsary Activities team.

The TEAM programme is a 12 week course designed to develop employability skills in young people aged 16-25 from a variety of backgrounds and abilities who are not currently in education, employment or training. Young people undertake a range of challenges including work experience, community projects, CV & interview skills and an outdoor education residential. The TEAM programme leads to a nationally recognised qualification which can be awarded up to level 2.

We also run a diversionary initiative called **The Phoenix Programme** which uses our reputation as a trusted and respected community partner to deliver a programme of activities aimed at vulnerable children and young people aged 8 to 18. The Phoenix Programme supports children and young people who may be struggling to overcome the risks and challenges they are exposed to in their daily lives or local communities.

We use evidence based activities to help vulnerable children and young people to be more resilient, confident and consequently achieve more positive outcomes. This helps build stronger and safer communities.

The Phoenix Programme has traditionally been delivered in partnership with local authority agencies to ensure our support is targeted at the children most at risk and in need of our interventions.

We operate a **Juvenile Firesetters Education Programme (JFEP)** that sees our staff deliver a bespoke education programme working with young people and their families/carers either, once fire setting behaviour has been highlighted or when a young person is showing an unusual interest in fire.

The programme provides information and education on the risks and effects of fire setting and has been designed in collaboration with leading experts in this field.



What is our plan for Prevention and Education in 2023/24?

Introducing a new Online Home Safety check

In conjunction with the National Fire Chiefs Council, we will upgrade our Virtual Safe and Well Check tool by introducing the national Virtual Home Safety Check tool.

This tool will align us with the national programme, improving the consistency of information and advice given. With additional funding we will be able to automate some of our triage work to provide efficiencies whilst identifying the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Launch a new home safety targeting strategy

Currently we identify or target the most vulnerable members of the community through a mix of referrals, socio-economic profiling, partner and historic data or local intelligence.

Through review and evaluation we have learned that referrals from the community, partners and self-referrals are statistically more successful at identifying people who are at higher risk of injury or death from fire.

We are currently reviewing our targeting strategy and safe and well delivery models to identify alternative working practices to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our Safe and Well programme.

Improve how we work with partners

In 2023/24 we will engage with partners to identify those members of the community indirectly at risk from fire related incidents. For example we are currently investigating working opportunities with a research group to identify the effects of low levels of Carbon Monoxide on unborn babies from lower socio-economic groups across the region.

In South Tyneside we will introduce partnership arrangements and working practices with South Tyneside Council, and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, to support health screening during our home safety visits. This will provide further support for families with complex multiple needs and tackle health inequalities specifically related to bowel cancer in over 56-year-olds and abdominal aortic aneurism screening in males over 65-year-old.

In North Tyneside in addition to the falls prevention work we already undertake, and in addition to our safe and well offer, we will work with North Tyneside Public Health and the Integrated Care Board to offer blood pressure and atrial fibrillation testing with referrals back to GPs to help early detection.

We will continue to investigate opportunities to work collaboratively to reduce the risks to Tyne and Wear residents. We will evaluate these opportunities to measure outcomes and if they are successful.

To improve training for our staff around safeguarding

As safeguarding referrals increase, we will explore additional training opportunities across the region, to ensure staff are equipped to continue protecting the most vulnerable, with high quality narrative and identifying significant risks.

We will work closely with the NFCC to standardise the levels of Safeguarding across each Service, and continue to drive standards regionally, as part of the Northern Fire and Rescue Service Safeguarding Group.

In 2023/24 we will establish a region wide “Fire Death Thematic Review”, with all five local authority partners, to further develop our systems, processes and partnerships in the protection of those most at risk.

Widen the scope of our community engagement activities

To support the attendance at events we will introduce an annual initiative calendar that will support the NFCC campaign calendar. This increase in effective planning, activities and publicity will allow greater collaborative opportunities with partners and increased engagement with the public.

In 2023/24 we will explore the expansion of community rooms across the Service area. This will provide opportunities to support community activities by allowing groups to utilise our spaces. This will increase our links with local community and help us engage with traditionally hard-to-reach groups.

We will engage with existing community groups to offer diversionary activities. This includes providing structured clubs and community spaces to vulnerable residents to reduce the risk of social isolation. We will also offer exercise activities to older residents to increase mobility and reduce the risk of frailty.

This work will improve relationships with the community, provide opportunities to offer vital community safety advice and offer practical solutions that reduce fire risks in the home.

Increase the number of Fire Cadet branches

During the Coronavirus pandemic it proved difficult to maintain all of our Fire Cadet branches due to a lack of volunteers, and the number of young people able to enroll on the programme.

Now that the country has returned to normal, our plan is to increase our branches from four to six in 2023/24, with at least one Fire Cadet programme in each local authority area.

In 2023/24 we will re-write our Fire Cadet Programme to enable delivery of a standardised programme. This will allow us to then enroll all Fire Cadets on the national Fire Cadet Award which is currently voluntary.

A successful Fire Cadet Programme can provide multiple benefits including an avenue to disseminate safety advice, recruit them as advocates to offer that advice to their peers, and help promote the fire and rescue service as an attractive career for when they leave education.

Improving how we deliver our Schools Education Programme

In 2023/24 we will review our Safety Education Centre to consider the feasibility of a revised delivery strategy and how we may engage partners in funding and delivery of the services.

In 2023/24 we will explore more technology-based learning packages which proved to be a successful method of delivery during the Coronavirus pandemic.

That will see us utilise StayWise, a National Fire Chiefs Council approved education portal that promotes sharing of learning materials for children and young people. It focusses on the emergency services and their key messages but links these sessions in with elements of the national curriculum.

In 2023/24 we will introduce further educational themed packages to deliver our key messages to the right age groups and be focused on messages that are relevant to current trend or seasons.

These will be offered to schools across Tyne and Wear to address risk and link in with our annual 'Darker Nights' and 'Safer Summers' community safety campaigns.

Introducing a new Prince's Trust TEAM programme

The success of TWFRS's existing Prince's Trust TEAM programmes mean that we are now able to expand into other areas of Tyne and Wear. In 2023/24, we will deliver a TEAM programme in South Tyneside, operating from the South Shields Community Fire Station.

We will continue to work with the Prince's Trust, funding partners and local communities to roll out TEAM programmes in the remaining areas of Tyne and Wear.

This will help to expand our diversionary opportunities and provide young people with skills and confidence to re-enter employment or education, diverting them from criminality or isolation.

Expanding our diversionary activity programmes

In 2023/24 we will expand The Phoenix Programme. It currently operates in Sunderland but we will launch the project in South Tyneside with the intention of expanding to other local authority areas.

In 2023/24 we will launch The Spark Programme. This will use the same content as the Phoenix Programme but will condense the activities into two sets of three day blocks that are delivered three months apart.

In 2023/24 we will also launch The Ignite Programme which will again utilize much of the same content as the Phoenix Programme. It will be delivered as a series of one-day weekly sessions during school holidays and after school hours.

5 FIRE SAFETY

The Fire Safety Department is primarily responsible for Protection activities in Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS).

That includes working closely with commercial businesses, landlords, responsible persons and partner agencies to ensure compliance with fire safety legislation.

Not only are they responsible for enforcement activities but they help work with businesses to ensure communities receive appropriate protection messaging.

The work of the Fire Safety Department can be broken down into a number of key areas. They are as follows:

- Risk Based Inspection Programme
- Working with partners to improve fire safety
- Building Safety Regulator
- Ensuring compliance with Fire Safety legislation
- Regulating the sale and storage of fireworks and petroleum
- Providing advice and guidance to members of the public and other partners

The Fire Safety Department has recently gone through a review of its structure and a large number of staff have been recruited into newly created roles.

This has allowed us to introduce new skills and experience to ensure the blend remains dedicated to continuous improvement and in touch with the non-domestic building stock within Tyne and Wear.

In this section we will provide an overview of the work we undertake in the areas, and what our plan is to make improvements in the next 12 months.

An overview of our Fire Safety work

Risk Based Inspection Programme

With approximately 32,000 commercial premises within Tyne and Wear, the Fire Safety Department works to a structured Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). The RBIP takes into account for both risk and compliance of a premises and uses local indicators to identify our priorities.

The RBIP is continually monitored and formally reviewed on a three yearly basis. The monitoring and formal review ensures that it is relevant to local factors of enforcement and fire trends and to ensure that Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) has an even spread of planned fire safety jobs to be allocated throughout the year.

The trend analysis is guided by nine variables including fires, injuries, Fire Safety enforcement including prohibition and enforcement notices, levels of risk and compliance within the premises. Each of these variables has a weighting factor.

The Inspection Frequency Officer Grade Planner (IFOG), within CFRMIS, directs the frequency of future fire safety audits and is guided by Departmental priorities i.e. those premises deemed to be high priority for Fire Safety (such as sleeping risks) will have more frequent inspections compared to those deemed as being a lower priority (such as offices and shops). This is because the consequences should a fire start in these high priority premises is much more severe.

The department allocates its workload on a quarterly basis and can change its priorities in accordance with this depending on circumstances. Regardless of the RBIP approximately 50% of the department's workload is based upon reactive workload, this means the department works dynamically to address those issues which have immediacy.

This work includes post fire engagement with businesses who have been affected by a fire or where a fire has occurred in the area. This 'hot strike' approach allows for timely engagement to those that need it most.

Working with partners to improve fire safety

The Fire safety department has long built strong collaborative partnerships with a variety of key organisations, this collaborative approach looks to extend our reach within the community as well as target our resources in the most appropriate manner. The collaborations are two way processes so that we ensure the best outcomes for all involved.

We work with the Care Quality Commission on a local and national level to ensure compliance within the care sector. Both parties look to refer issues which they may find during our routine engagement. This engagement is vital to ensure the strongest compliance and safety of premises within this sector. As with all sectors we monitor the compliance to ensure our inspection frequencies are appropriate and alter these accordingly.

The department has long worked with the NHS Trusts within the area. This engagement drives up fire safety standards and works closely with each Trust's fire safety team.

In recent years this work has allowed Trusts to be included in the Risk Based Attendance Policy which allows each Trust to manage the fire alarm actuations without the Service attending unnecessarily thus allowing them to be available for other emergency calls and community engagement.

Contributing to the NFCC Protection Policy Reform Unit

To ensure that the communication between Government and Fire and Rescue Services across the country is robustly maintained, the National Fire Chiefs Council set up the Protection Policy Reform Unit (PPRU).

The PPRU looks to promote a consistent and co-ordinated approach to fire safety regulation, support and promote the swift remediation of buildings, support the Government reform agenda.

The Fire Safety department is involved with a number of work streams with the PPRU and is a regular consultee on proposed national guidance and policy. This allows us to influence the direction of national fire safety policy.

Building Safety Regulator

Following the Grenfell tragedy reassurances were sought by Government and the general public that High Rise Residential Buildings were safe. This led to several significant pieces of work for the Service and the Fire Safety department particularly.

Initially every high rise residential premises was visited and evaluated by the department, work was progressed with our housing partners to ensure the community was safe. This work continues to be a significant part of the Fire Safety Department's focus.

The department works with Local Authority Partners, the national Joint Inspection Team (JIT) and more recently have begun to look forward to our role as regional fire service lead in the Building Safety Regulator.

This regulatory group, led by the HSE, will jointly inspect every High Rise Residential Building as part of a separate RBIP. The Department will provide a number of specialised officers to support this work.

Ensuring compliance with new legislation

It is the responsibility of the Fire Safety department to support businesses and responsible persons across Tyne and Wear in compliance with existing Fire Safety legislation.

A significant focus in recent years has been significant changes to fire safety legislation following the Grenfell Tragedy, and the subsequent phase 1 inquiry. Those changes were first introduced in 2022/23, with further legislation coming into force in 2023/24.

The Fire Safety Act 2022 places focus on certain aspects of high rise residential buildings and places areas such as the external wall system, the flat front doors and balconies within the enforcement range of the fire service.

The Building Safety Act 2022 looks to regulate the built environment from conception to overall management when occupied. The 'golden thread' that runs through the process will look to hold people accountable for compliance.

The Fire Safety Regulations 2022 will make it a requirement in law for responsible persons of high-rise blocks of flats to provide information to Fire and Rescue Services to assist them to plan and, if needed, provide an effective operational response. This information will include:

- Building Plans
- External Wall Systems
- Firefighting Lift information
- Information Boxes
- Wayfinding signage



In addition to this it will require those responsible for premises to report faults with fire safety features that are expected to last longer than 24 hours to notify the Fire Service.

The Fire Safety Department are responsible for supporting compliance with the legislation and taking enforcement action where it is necessary and proportionate to do so.

Regulating the sale and storage of fireworks and petroleum

As a Metropolitan Service, we are also regulators for firework storage and petroleum sites. This is a key role of the Fire Safety department and helps keep communities across the region safe.

Sites that wish to store and sell fireworks require the appropriate license, these licenses are issued by the Fire Safety department. Premises are routinely inspected during specific sales periods, including the lead up to Bonfire Night.

We work closely with our partners in Northumbria Police and Local Authority Trading Standards to ensure compliance. We have the powers to seize where necessary and have, in recent years, prosecuted a number of individuals for breaching regulations.

All sites selling and storing petroleum also require a license and these are again issued by the Service. Regular monitoring of these sites is also carried out by the Fire Safety department to ensure compliance with the legislation.

What is our plan for Fire Safety in 2023/24?

Adopt a new strategy for our Risk Based Inspection Programme

In 2023/24 the department will temporarily adopt a different strategy whereby in addition to the RBIP, premises which are deemed low priority/low risk will be audited by some members of the department. These premises are typically infrequently (or not at all) they will be the primary focus of our four fire safety auditors. They will be supported by the remainder of the department as necessary. They will look to audit these premises so that we have a true reflection of the nature of the risks in such premises.

In addition to this the department will adopt a robust 'hot strike' process around the serving of prohibition notices whereby the auditors will engage with a local area following a prohibition notice being served. In general the built environment in the surrounding locality is often similar and therefore there is a likelihood of others being at risk in these properties.

In addition to the RBIP, approximately 50% of the department's workload is based upon reactive workload, this means the department works dynamically to address those issues which have immediacy. This work includes post fire engagement with businesses who have been affected by a fire or where a fire has occurred in the area. This approach allows for timely engagement to those that need it most.

Increasing our reach by upskilling Service Delivery Teams

Whilst the RBIP and the reactive work is the primary focus of the fire safety department, the amount of commercial premises within Tyne and Wear that require engagement exceeds the capacity of the fire safety department. This was recognised some years ago and as such, in an aim to ensure we delivered the best service to the community, we undertook an upskilling of our station based teams to undertake compliance checks. Their work in these types of premises means that, as well as checking compliance they also raise relevant concerns to the fire safety department how undertake further robust engagement. The types of premises they attend is monitored to ensure the best outcomes for the community are achieved.

This embedded process now ensures that we engage with a significant number of additional premises which the department would not be able to reach. The training and engagement is delivered and quality assured by the Fire Safety Department to ensure we maintain our high standards and, when issues are identified, they are signposted to the Fire Safety Department.

In 2023/24 we will continue to upskill operational personnel and provide them formal qualifications which means they will be able to undertake audits in line with the National Competency Framework for Fire Safety. These audits will mean the fire safety department do not need to visit the premises thus freeing up capacity and in addition ensuring premises are compliant with the fire safety order.

Introduce a new Unwanted Fire Signals strategy

The service has a strategy to engage with premises following an Unwanted Fire Signal, the current policy focusses on the engagement of Service Delivery Managers to monitor and manage the reduction. This involves identifying certain triggers and writing to the occupiers of the premises, potentially on numerous occasions.

Fire Safety has limited involvement currently and is only requested to assist should the local Station Manager request assistance. Over the past five years, whilst there was a slight reduction in 2020/21 which can be attributed to COVID and including both educational and hospitals within the risk based attendance policy, there has been limited impact in the reduction of Unwanted Fire Signals utilising the current strategy.

A new strategy will be adopted in 2023/24. This will see Operational personnel record the details on any Unwanted Fire Signals electronically through a CFRMIS questionnaire. Multiple records over a 12month rolling period will then generate a workflow, which will sit with fire safety for action.

This means that appropriate and timely intervention can take place by those that have specialist knowledge. It also means that our Operational personnel are not burdened by administration and engagement and allow them to undertake more critical work.

The progress of this new strategy will be monitored and reviewed by the Unwanted Fire Signals group and reported to the Performance Action Group (PAG) by the department.

This timely intervention and engagement will reduce the burden the service by a reduction in Unwanted Fire Signal attended allow them to focus on critical activities such as attending critical incidents training and other community engagement and in addition unwanted disruption to those in the premises.

In the past five years the number of Unwanted Fire Signals in Student Halls of Residence has increased by 51% and now account for 11% of all Unwanted Fire Signals. The predominant reason attributed to these occurrences is cooking.

In 2023/24, Fire Safety will look to undertake further targeted engagement with new students as they enter the halls to educate them about the impact of these on the service and the wider community and how these instances might be reduced. We will look to work with providers and Prevention in a joint approach to drive down this number and aim for a 25% reduction initially.

Investing in technology

The department looks to utilise and develop technological processes to assist with our engagement. The use of Virtual Reality (VR) technology has been trialed within the Fire Investigation team and has proven to be of great benefit to staff development.

In 2023/24 the Department will invest further in a comprehensive VR system. The system will educate Fire Safety staff in a number of areas, including fire development, in a safe, controlled and environmentally considerate situation. The technology will also be used as a training aid to highlight fire safety issues to both fire safety staff, Service Delivery, the Flexi Duty Officer (FDO) cadre and also our external partners.

In the coming year we will also explore whether the technology can be utilised by other departments within the service.

The Fire Safety department continues to be heavily reliant of the correct data for all the commercial premises within Tyne and Wear, as such the integrity of CFRMIS is vital.

In 2023/24, the Department will work with the Prevention and Education Department to put in place a CFRMIS data manager who will look at a number of developments in the system. This post is vital to ensure all our activities are carried out robustly and will withstand scrutiny.

Create a new team to support work on the Building Safety Regulator

Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, reassurances were sought by Government and the general public that High Rise Residential Buildings were safe. This led to several significant pieces of work for the Service and the Fire Safety Department particularly.

One such work-stream was the development of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). The BSR is a regulatory body headed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who will engage with all high rise residential premises throughout the country. As well as the HSE, the BSR is also supported by dedicated teams from Local Authority Building Control and the Fire Service.

Under the guidance of the NFCC, regional leads have been created depending upon the relevant premises demographic. This has led to TWFRS being the regional lead for North East.

In 2023/24 work will begin to create a new team within the Fire Safety Department consisting initially of a team manager and two inspectors. They will work closely with the other BSR members regionally and nationally.

Increasing our presence in the night-time economy

The Fire Safety Department has developed strong working relationships with local partners for many years, particularly through our work around high rise premises.

In 2023/24 we will continue to build those relationships but there will be an emphasis on how we can improve our work in the night-time economy across Tyne and Wear.

In the year ahead, we will undertake joint work with Northumbria Police and Newcastle City Council to visit premises within the night time economy so we can assess fire safety risk when those premises are in use. The current program will look to undertake this work on a monthly basis and will target premises with a previous noncompliance and also ones which partners have identified as having issues. The benefit of the work will be reviewed as part of the department performance review on a quarterly basis.

That will ensure any fire safety risks are identified and addressed in a timely manner, through a collaborative approach to community safety.

6 OPERATIONS

The Operations Department includes our Control and the department contributes to a collaborative approach between multiple departments including Technical Services Centre (TSC), Procurement and ICT to play a crucial role in supporting our front-line response by ensuring staff have the necessary resources to perform their role and protect the community they serve.

The Department is responsible for ensuring operational crews have the right appliances, equipment and information to deliver a safe and effective service to the community.

Staff within Operations lead on developing knowledge, understanding and research to advance the design of policy, procedure and equipment for firefighter and community safety.

Staff also play a central role in ensuring the accuracy and currency of operational policies, procedures and risk information, as well as compliance with national operational guidance.

The work of the Department can be broken down into a number of key areas:

- Fire Control
- Research and development – Currently under development is the introduction of wetting agents into TWFRS to deal with protracted fires more effectively and to significantly reduce our environmental impact
- Managing and reducing contaminants
- Maintenance of equipment and appliances
- Identifying new risks
- Protecting the environment
- The ongoing review and updating of all Service policy and procedure on a 3 year rolling program.

- National Operational Guidance – The implementation and communication strategy of NOG from framework creation through strategic gap analysis to a creation and adoption of all agreed Ops information notes and associated training.

In this section we will provide an overview of the work we undertake in these areas, and what our plan is to make improvements in the next 12 months.

An overview of our Operations work

Fire Control

The Fire Control room is based at our HQ in Washington, they operate 24/7 and 365 days a year. They are the first point of contact with the public when requests come in for assistance.

Fire Control operators undertake extensive training on how best to manage fire calls from the public, and deliver safety and survival advice. They are the conduit to accurate and effective communications between the public and the emergency responders.

The technology within the fire control room allows for direct communications to take place between the fire, police and ambulance control rooms, this is crucial when sharing information about large scale incidents. Access to CCTV in Newcastle, Sunderland and South Tyneside help operators pass vital information to fire crews and officers.

Access to CCTV in Newcastle, Sunderland and South Tyneside help operators pass vital information to fire crews and officers.

The integration of Sunderland City Councils CCTV management suite in to Service Headquarters further enhances the ability to share real time information and intelligence.

The trial of the FLAGMII® system which allows our Service Control room to connect with an on scene mobile phone to stream live footage. This system is an App based product that sends a text message to a mobile phone, once opened a secure link is created so real time footage from an incident is directly broadcast back to our control room or another approved user.

Ensuring our staff are properly equipped

It is the responsibility of the Operations Department alongside our dedicated TSC to ensure operational staff have the right equipment to respond to a wide range emergencies across Tyne and Wear.

The Operations Department maintains a constant review and improvement program across all operational equipment. As well as the maintenance of current equipment, the department takes a forward outlook on developments within the sector.

This wider view ensures our crews have the most up to date tools to keep them and the communities we serve safe.

Extensive research is carried out into new pieces of equipment available across the sector, a recent example being the introduction of three thermal image cameras on every appliance in Tyne and Wear.

The cameras assist firefighters in locating fires and casualties that may be hidden or trapped in buildings. This can be used to enable a more efficient and effective response to a time-critical incident where there is an immediate threat to life or property.

The Operations Department has overseen the introduction of the COBRA abrasive extinguishing system onto every fire appliance. This equipment enables suitable surfaces to be pierced by water, meaning fires can be extinguished without the initial need to enter a compartment. This safe early intervention into fire compartments, improves the conditions for any person trapped inside, whilst also dramatically reducing our crews and partners exposure to harmful contaminants.

This equipment is now embedded in to the service and makes up an essential element of an Incident Commanders decision making process. The ability to fight fires externally and in difficult areas is becoming more prevalent with the growth of battery energy storage systems and the increase in Electric Vehicle incidents. The ability to attack a fire in a difficult to reach location such as a car sub frame using COBRA is likely to become key to our EV incident response.

Managing our Appliances

It is the role of the Operations Department to ensure we have a fleet that meets the needs of the community we serve and ensures our firefighters can respond to emergencies safely. In Spring 2023 all of our frontline fleet excluding one appliance located at Chopwell Fire Station will be Volvo FL2020 pumping appliances, these appliances have been bespoke engineered to TWFRS specifications.

To align with the service commitment to reducing exposure to contaminants. All new appliances have a purpose built locker designed to accommodate 'contaminated' PPE and equipment. This allows fire-kit and breathing apparatus sets, which have been contaminated at incidents, to be stowed in external fire appliance lockers and not where firefighters sit.

The clean cab policy is the foundation of the locker design and is further reinforced by dedicated gas monitoring in the crew cab. This constantly monitors the conditions within the cab and alerts personnel to any harmful contaminants that may be present.

Adaptations have been made to our smaller style targeted response vehicles, these will still be able to respond to smaller type fires but can now also provide enhanced command and control at all incidents. Following recommendations from the Grenfell inquiry, these small vehicles now perform the roll of forward command points at hi rise incidents. Their role is to become a focal point for all evacuation activities.

This work has been undertaken following recommendations from the Grenfell Tower fire. The Operations Department has invested in equipment and changed procedures to reduce the likelihood that such an incident could ever take place within Tyne and Wear. All tall buildings within TWFRS have been inspected to ensure that the most up to date risk information is held and that any necessary information is readily available to incident commanders.

The Service has the ability to deploy a permanently moored fireboat on the River Tyne as part of its fleet the fireboat provides a rapid and effective response to incidents involving people who require rescue from in and around water. TWFRS also operate a number of inflatable craft that can be quickly mobilised to incidents via vehicles based at Byker Community Fire Station. These inflatable boats allow the service to respond to additional risks including the River Wear and smaller lakes in the area.



Researching new equipment, developments and risks

The Operations Department ensure that the Service understands emerging technologies and risks so that we can make investments that ensure our firefighters can respond to incidents safely.

Recent work by the Operations Department has seen a procedure established with colleagues in Northumbria Police that sees images from the police helicopter sent directly into the Command and Control vehicle and our Fire Control.

An aerial view of the incident provided by the Police Helicopter will give Incident Commanders the ground a greater overview of how an incident is developing, prior to this agreement this would not have been available. Now Incident Commanders can include an aerial over view when formulating and delivering operational plans to responding Crews and Partners.

It is vitally important that the Service understands emerging risks and the Operations Department takes primary responsibility in this area. An example of this work is research into incidents involving lithium ion batteries. It is a risk that continues to grow with the introduction of more lithium ion battery products being introduced to the home.

The operations department will attend demonstration events and trade shows to ensure that we are fully aware of developments in this field. As well as being current with developments in the market, the understanding of incidents that occur nationally is a priority for the department. Having this awareness enables us to identify practical solutions that have had positive results and consider the feasibility of them being included in our response.

To complement the research and development solutions to Lithium Ion battery incidents, the Operations Department will engage with other organisations for example the United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO) and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to ensure that any new research or learning is fully considered.

Another emerging risk that continues to be an area of priority for the Department is the increase in incidents linked to climate change. In 2022/23 there was a significant increase in the number of wildfires during periods of extreme heat. It is the responsibility of the department to ensure firefighters are best equipped to respond to such incidents.

The Operations department are in the process of identifying options to equip operational crews to deal with these types of incidents. Wildfire firefighting requires specific PPE, this includes identifying additional headwear options, long sleeve T-shirts and the provision of high factor sun tan creams.

Contamination

The health, safety and wellbeing of firefighters, partners and members of the public is always at the forefront of everything that is done within the Operations Department.

Better equipment, new techniques and alternative approaches to managing incidents ensure risks to both individuals and the environment are constantly being reviewed and reduced.

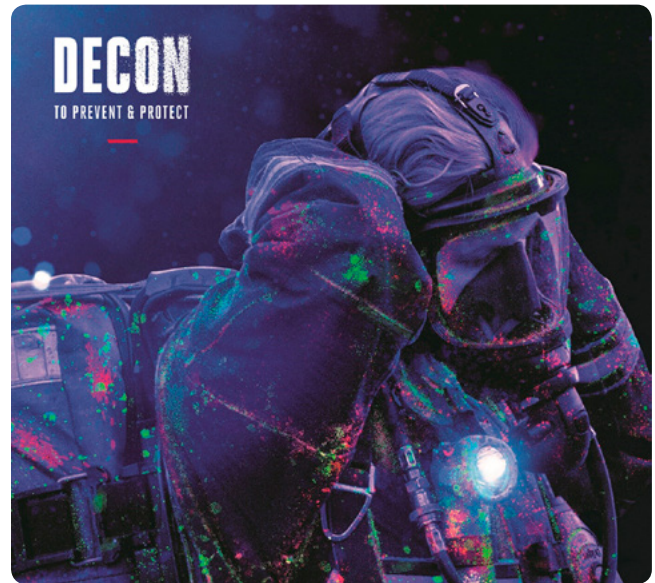
A key focus of the department is to reduce the harmful exposure to all contaminants faced by firefighters, this will lessen the likelihood of any uncontrolled exposure damaging their health and wellbeing.

As a Service, we have also been supporting research by subject matter expert Professor Anna Stec at the University of Lancashire into the effect of contaminants on firefighters and staff. This has seen a number of our staff volunteer for health screening so Professor Stec can analyse the impact on firefighters with varying lengths of service.

The way we manage welfare at incidents is a priority and the Operations Department are improving the ability for personnel to wash and remove contaminants through the provision of a welfare unit.

The Operations Department are leading a project based on decontamination of PPE.

A communications campaign is being developed to inform personnel of the necessary steps to take to aid cleaning post incident. This will form a suite of documents and instructions to ensure that the cleaning and decontamination of persons and PPE is of the highest standard.



Reducing the impact of our response on the environment

The department works closely with colleagues in the Environment Agency (EA) to reduce the impact that a fire and rescue response has on the environment and local eco-system.

Equipment provided by the Environment Agency compliments existing equipment held on a specialist appliance. For example, the ability to extinguish large scale petrol chemical incidents is sometimes only possible through the use of firefighting foam.

The Operations Department have recently replaced all stocks of foam to mitigate this risk and the Service now only uses alcohol-free foam. This minimises any wider impact on the environment.

To further enhance our existing relationship with the Environment Agency, there is a number of joint exercises planned, the sharing of operational knowledge is key to ensuring that this relationship benefits both parties. The Environment Agency are playing a key part in the development of our Operational Support Unit based at Gateshead Community Fire Station as a primary haz-mats response appliance. As experts in their field they are offering valuable advice on the equipment required and also supporting the Organisation with providing certain items that form our response.

Ensuring compliance with operational procedures

National Operational Guidance (NOG) is a platform that provides hazards and control measures in a single all-encompassing suite of documents to all UK fire and rescue services.

The Operational information notes (OINs) created by the Department reflect national operational guidance, they are not prescriptive procedures but allow incident commanders to have an all hazards approach when considering their tactical and strategic objectives. The all hazards approach compliments the strategic 2025 vision for the service.

In 2023 we will be further embedding National Operational Guidance in to all aspects of the service. This project will see the creation of a NOG framework document with will be the overarching policy to outline how we intend to become compliant with the issued guidance.

As well as creating an overall framework policy we will be carrying out a strategic gap analysis in all areas. This will identify areas where we are and aren't compliant. Following the identification of these areas an assessment will be made by qualified persons to see if this is a risk relevant to our Service.

The areas that require further investigation and action will be assigned to our Flexi Duty Rota Officers, the individuals in this group have significant operational experience and perform the role of subject matter experts in numerous areas. These individuals will be best placed to make informed decisions on areas identified.

On the completion of the strategic gap analysis, we will be reviewing all training packages. This will ensure they are compliant against the NOG product packs and they reflect the actions to be taken at each incident type.

Once we have carried out these tasks and National Operational Guidance is firmly embedded in all that we do, a period of quality assurance will be carried out. This will include Performance and Review of incidents, Operational Standards inspections, specific exercises, training sessions and Station Inspections. With this wide range of quality assurance we will get a true reflection of the success of the NOG implementation.

What is our plan for the Operations Department in 2023/24?

Extensive research and development will be performed to introduce new equipment and techniques to manage operational incidents more effectively.

Wetting Agents

TWFRS have faced significant incidents in the recent past (Hendon scrapyard fire July 2021) where wetting agents would have been a huge benefit. These type of incidents place a high burden on operational resources and take significant personnel to extinguish. By using a wetting agent that makes our extinguishing media more efficient, we would be able to tackle these types of incidents without them having the prolonged wider impact that they currently do. The introduction of wetting agents will deliver a more efficient and effective firefighting response.

By reducing the amount of water used to extinguish fires TWFRS will significantly reduce any environmental impact.

Lithium-ion Batteries

Incidents involving lithium-ion batteries is an area that requires significant focus by the Operations Department in the next year. As a relatively new and emerging incident type, progress and developments are occurring at a rapid rate. The department will be monitoring advances in techniques and technology to ensure that we are able to deal with such incidents. As a department we have established links with the companies who are developing the solutions to these incident types, we will be regularly meeting with representatives from these to identify any possible solutions that could benefit the Service.

Data & Digital Transformation

Research into how technology can improve the way we deliver our service is also an area that the Operations Department is carrying out. In 2023/24 the Operations Department will facilitate a Body Worn Video Camera replacement programme.

The Operations Department will work with a range of suppliers to identify the best option for the Service. This process will include not only provision for Service Delivery, it will also identify options to ensure that our Flexi Duty Officers, Fire Safety and Prevention and Education departments are included in the purchase.

The continued development of city centre CCTV access, smartphones, rugged tablets and drone footage will ensure incident commanders have swift access to risk information making the fire ground safer.

The available incident information will be of a high standard and up to date, this information is under constant review and amendment via the SSRI delivery program.

Investment in new appliances

In 2023/24, we will take delivery of a further 10 appliances which will ensure our entire front line fleet provide the state of the art facilities required to respond to emergencies as efficiently and effectively as possible.

All appliances will have a COBRA abrasive water extinguishing system which allows us to penetrate surfaces with a high pressure jet of water in certain circumstances. They are all fitted with purpose built locker has been designed to accommodate 'contaminated' PPE and equipment.

These appliances will last for 10 years and will ensure that the service has a modern and efficient fleet that allow us to mitigate risk to our staff, and also in communities across Tyne and Wear.



7 RISK AND RESILIENCE

Our Risk and Resilience Department are responsible for looking after the risks posed by some of the largest premises across Tyne and Wear, ensuring the Service can respond to major incidents and emergencies, effectively and efficiently.

They oversee the delivery of risk critical training to all staff, and manage many of the specialist resources we have available to us here in Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

Some of their areas of responsibility include:

- National Resilience Capabilities
- Control Of Major Accidents and Hazards (COMAH)
- Business Continuity Management
- Operational Support and Assurance
- JESIP

In this section we will provide an overview of the work we undertake across these areas, and what our plans are to make improvements over the next 12 months.

An overview of our Risk and Resilience work

National Resilience Capabilities

As a service we must be able to provide a response to a huge range of incident types and hazards. In order for us to be effective at protecting our local communities we must be able to respond efficiently to the largest and most serious incidents.

Our Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability is just one of an ever growing number of capabilities which we host here in TWFRS which allows us to respond to just such emergencies, when the public need us the most.

Our other specialist capabilities include Hazardous Materials Detection, Identification and Monitoring (HDIM), Mass Decontamination Units (MDU) and High Volume Pumping (HVP); we have teams of specialist operators who are highly trained in each of these specialist skills, who can deploy to large scale disasters within 60-minutes notice.

Through the USAR team, the Service also has the facility to deploy a drone and a canine search unit as part of our comprehensive suite of search and rescue tactics.



Working with Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites

As a metropolitan fire and rescue service, the provision of a COMAH function is a statutory requirement under various pieces of legislation including the Fire Services Act 2004, the COMAH Regulations 2015, and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

COMAH premises are so called due to the nature of the materials and the processes which are carried out on their sites, and in doing so present a major risk to our communities.

It is our responsibility as a Fire and Rescue Service, in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency, to guarantee the public are safe from these potential hazards.

Ensuring our Business Continuity plans are fit for purpose

We have a legal requirement to ensure we have suitable and sufficient contingencies in place for a range of different business interruptions, as part of our duties as a Category 1 responder, under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA), 2004.

Business continuity planning (BCP) is the process involved by creating a 'backup plan' in the event of any potential threats to a community or organisation, such as natural disasters or cyber-attacks. These plans ensure that people, buildings and equipment are protected, so they are still able to function quickly in the event of a disaster.

Our ongoing commitment to the communities we serve is to always be in a state of preparedness for any disaster or crisis, whenever it may happen. We provide an ongoing commitment to the public to maintain a constant state of readiness to protect them before, during and after, any state of emergency.

Operational Support and Assurance

Operational Support and Assurance is our personal guarantee to our communities that we are committed to not only prioritising the safety of the public, but also that of our own people.

We currently provide a dedicated emergency response officer who attends incidents with fire crews to monitor their safety and ensure correct practices and procedures are being followed. This ensures that we are as morally and legally ethical as we can be, when we are going about our business.

Operational Support and Assurance is our means of mentoring, developing and supporting our frontline staff and ensuring that we share lessons learned and development opportunities with others, including our blue light partners and wider colleagues in the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF). We do this by submitting lessons learned from incidents and exercises, via a national online learning portal where we can exchange information and learning opportunities with other responder organisations.

We will also invest a significant amount of time and resources into the development of a new post-incident online risk management reporting system which will help us to monitor and manage performance of individuals, stations and departments.

As part of our operational assurance programme, we are also committed to a comprehensive exercising programme which allows us not only to test the way we work, but also to learn in a safe environment. We do this regularly with other Fire and Rescue Services and our wider partner agencies.

Implementing the Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme (JESIP)

The JESIP concept is an operating framework which has been designed for all responding organisations, to allow us to work better together at incidents.

JESIP was originally developed following a review of several large scale incidents where common trends were identified which, if addressed and improved upon, would allow blue light agencies and other partners to work more effectively together.

As a Service, we have made a firm commitment to implementing the JESIP operating principles as our standard way of working. In order to fully embed the concept, the Risk and Resilience department have consulted with Central Government and the Home Office, to identify changes in the latest JESIP doctrine and methodology.

The Risk and Resilience department also recently collaborated with the Cabinet Office on their Joint Overseas Protect and Prepare (JOPP) initiative, delivering JESIP awareness training to some of our international blue light colleagues.

TWFRS hope to continue to forge relationships with our colleagues in central and local government and provide further training to all of our wider response partners nationally and beyond.

Maintaining our National Resilience capability

In partnership with National Resilience, we host several emergency response capabilities in order to provide assistance at any large scale emergency or major incident, both regionally and nationally.

Local risks which are identified in the Northumbria LRF Regional Risk Register include large scale flooding, major fires, incidents involving chemicals or hazardous materials, or even a marauding terrorist attack.

Despite the substantial risks within TWFRS, we have assets and capabilities to resolve any incident type because we know our communities are relying on us for that.

We have recently completed the construction of a new underground modular chamber complex which allows our instructional team to replicate a large number of diverse and complex training scenarios and our training centre will be further enhanced over the next two to three years following a significant seven figure investment in the construction of a state of the art training facility.

This site, along with other realistic scenarios, are available to all services who wish to visit our Barmston Training Centre (BTC) and use our facilities for any type of collaborative National Resilience training.

What is our plan for Risk and Resilience in 2023/24?

Transforming our USAR capability

Following our National Resilience (NR) assurance inspection in the summer of 2022, it has been possible to identify areas which may benefit from some restructure within our USAR function.

A priority in 2023/24 will be to improve the overall effectiveness of the USAR function and to do this, we will measure our performance against the National Resilience Key Performance Indicators.

This process has already started following the introduction of new training and response models, which are designed to improve our efficiency and effectiveness. By doing so, we ensure the safety of our communities remains at the heart of everything we do.

We are already established as a reliable and effective training partner for all National Resilience courses as a result of our sector leading training facilities and dedicated staff, and we will build on our good reputation this year, as we continue to train delegates from Fire Services across the UK.

Over the coming year, we will undergo transformational changes in relation to our USAR training and response models and it is hoped this will allow us to achieve our goal of being recognized as an exemplar for USAR training and deployment.

Invest in our COMAH function

The number of COMAH sites in Tyne and Wear has risen in the last decade with the inception of several new sites in the area, including 'Envision', which is expected to become the largest lithium ion battery manufacturing and storage facility in Europe.

With sites such as this, and the rapid expansion of existing COMAH sites in our area, it is crucial that we plan and prepare for this change to our community risk profile and the hazards they pose to our people.

By redesigning our budget and recharging cost models, in order to allow sites to better plan and budget for the work we undertake on their behalf we can effectively streamline our ways of working.

We plan to do this over the next twelve months by engaging with our COMAH site operators and developing mutually beneficial working arrangements, which will allow us to increase our productivity and ensure all sites get fair and equal representation.

Bringing all regional COMAH leads together at our Service Headquarters to attend COMAH seminars and training experiences, has also evolved into a productive regional working group. By continuing this collaborative approach, we can collectively increase our testing, exercising and shared learning potential, which will allow us to move forward together as a region.

Ensuring our Business Continuity Plans are fit for purpose

We are anticipating significant legislative and organisational reform within certain areas of the fire sector in the coming years and must adapt our business continuity planning accordingly.

In 2023/24, and likely for a number of years beyond, we will focus on ensuring that we are monitoring and evidencing our compliance to the revised CCA 2004, the release of new Fire Standards and also the recommendations for FRS reform, contained within the recently published government white paper and independent public inquiries.

In order to manage and monitor our performance in these areas, and to ensure that we are in a state of preparedness to continue providing our emergency response to the community in the event of any large scale major incident or disaster, we will continue to carry out a robust business continuity testing schedule, which is designed to challenge all of our departments and support services, using a range of business interruption scenarios.

This will allow us to evidence the efficiency of all of our business continuity plans and ensure that they adequately support our organisational, community and regional risk registers. In doing so, we can report into the Fire Authority with confidence regarding our contribution towards protecting our national critical infrastructure.

Widening the scope of Operational Support and Assurance

In 2022/23, we have widened the scope of the Operational Support and Assurance function to incorporate a number of new elements, with an emphasis on developing and mentoring new talent and futureproofing our firefighters and commanders of the future.

Our dedicated Operational Support Officer will look to attend as many incidents as possible across the service during business hours; for any incidents which aren't attended within this timeframe, this will trigger the debrief process so that any qualitative data can be collected retrospectively.

As a result, the data and information collected will be used to inform our training and development strategy for subsequent years via the Operational Assurance and Operational Improvement Working Groups.

This information gathering will allow us to continue to provide evidential support to ELT for HMICFRS inspections, Fire Standards Board compliance, Sunderland City Council internal audits and any other assurance processes, but also allow us to share any data regarding 'lessons learned' via the National Operational Learning and Joint Organisational Learning online reporting pathways.

To compliment this, in 2023/24 our internal Operational Assurance Group will undergo significant restructure in terms of its lines of communication and its reporting mechanisms.

This will include revised terms of reference, a review of the membership criteria and a revision of the meeting structure and frequency. This will improve its overall effectiveness and streamline its ability to inform the wider board structure.

Investing in our JESIP training and facilities

Following a number of high profile national critical incidents, the requirement for emergency services to fully implement and embed JESIP interoperability principles has been highlighted in a number of independent reviews and inquiries.

With strategic commanders within TWFRS holding a number of influential positions across national groups and networks, there is an aspiration for our organisation to become an exemplar for JESIP and multi-agency working.

Following a comprehensive planning stage this year, over the next two to three years we will make a significant investment into our incident command training facilities with the view to creating a JESIP 'Centre of Excellence' which will provide a state of the art immersive training environment for all new and existing incident commanders.

In 2023/24 we will aim to design and build a national JESIP qualification which will be externally accredited by Skills for Justice and will provide incident commanders with a number of modular awards in various aspects of JESIP command and control.

We will continue raising the profile of our JESIP work through the National Interoperability Board, JESIP Strategic Board and Operational Preparedness, Response and Resilience (OPRR) committee and also through continued work with Homeland Security and the JOPP programme.

Expanding our National Resilience capability

Due to budgetary constraints, some National Resilience host services are being restructured nationally as part of a national spending review initiated by central Government.

We currently find ourselves in a good position in relation to our assets and capabilities and in 2023/24, whilst many other services are forced to absorb the effects of austerity, we will look to consolidate and expand our National Resilience capability; to do this, we will explore the possibilities of hosting further National Resilience assets such as Enhanced Logistics Support (ELS) and a service wide Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) response capability, where possible.

In addition to this, we will continue to establish ourselves as a host service for all National Resilience training courses including Chainsaw, advanced specialist cutting, breaching and breaking and SWAH, LACE and confined space.

In 2023/24, we will also build on our current 13/16 agreements with our colleagues in Northumberland FRS (NFRS) by investing in training and PPE to improve our Wildfire capability; we will implement four qualified wildfire advisors and train crews located at our outlying locations in tactical wildfire firefighting, so that we are able to support our NFRS colleagues at any wildfire incidents in their densely rural service area.

8 HOW WE WILL EVALUATE WHAT WE DO

Our Community Safety Plan supports the TWFRS Strategy 2025 and in the appendices a Community Safety Action Plan has been developed to clearly outline the actions proposed for 2023/24.

Each action will be monitored by the Area Manager for Community Safety and reported on by the respective Head of Department as part of the Community Safety Board.

A full evaluation as to the action plan will take place at the conclusion of 2023/24 and any further actions may be carried forward as part of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-27.

Each department will also have annual department plans that will support the actions proposed as part of this Community Safety Plan. Those department plans will be monitored by the TWFRS Programme Office and the project managers will be responsible for reporting on key milestones for their respective plans.

Each department will also have a number of Departmental Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will inform whether or not the investments they are making are resulting in improvements to the service we deliver to our communities.

Data from quarterly performance reports will also be used to inform areas of propriety throughout 2023/24 to ensure that any actions within this Community Safety Plan continue to be informed by data.

APPENDIX A COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTION PLAN

Department	Action	Intended benefit	Target Date
Prevention and Education	Introduce a new virtual Safe and Well check	This tool will align us with the national programme, improving the consistency of information and advice given.	Completed May.2023
Prevention and Education	Launch a new home safety targeting strategy	This will identify alternative working practices to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our Safe and Well programme.	Completed May 2023
Prevention and Education	Introduce partnership arrangements and working practices with South Tyneside Council, and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital	This will provide further support for families with complex multiple needs and tackle health inequalities specifically related to bowel cancer in over 56-year-olds and abdominal aortic aneurism screening in males over 65-year-old.	Commenced - Partnership has been introduced and will be refined and evaluated over the coming months.
Prevention and Education	Introduce a partnership with North Tyneside Public Health and the Integrated Care Board to offer blood pressure and atrial fibrillation testing	This will lead to earlier referrals back to GPs to help early detection of potentially serious health conditions, reducing risk in vulnerable residents in our communities.	Commenced April 2023

Prevention and Education	To improve training for our staff around safeguarding	This will ensure staff are equipped to continue protecting the most vulnerable, with high quality narrative and identifying significant risks.	April 2024
Prevention and Education	Establish a region wide “Fire Death Thematic Review” with all five LA partners	This will further develop our systems, processes and partnerships in the protection of those most at risk.	March 2024
Prevention and Education	Increase number of Fire Cadets Branches from 4 to 6	A successful Fire Cadet Programme can provide multiple benefits including an avenue to disseminate safety advice, recruit them as advocates to offer that advice to their peers, and help promote the fire and rescue service as an attractive career for when they leave education.	December 2023
Prevention and Education	Re-write our Fire Cadet Programme to enable delivery of a standardised programme	This will allow us to then enroll all Fire Cadets on the national Fire Cadet Award which is currently voluntary.	October 2023
Prevention and Education	Explore opportunities to build a new bespoke Safety Education Centre that will replace SafetyWorks!	This would provide us with the opportunity to design and build a new space that incorporates interactive and immersive	April 2024

		technological areas alongside the traditional tactile environments that we currently operate, creating an exciting and informative learning experience.	
Prevention and Education	Explore more technology-based learning packages as part of our Schools Education Programme, including the introduction of StayWise resources	Links our key messages to the national curriculum and extends our reach when it comes to schools education.	Work ongoing, target completion date August 2023
Prevention and Education	Deliver a TEAM programme in South Tyneside, operating from the South Shields Community Fire Station.	Expands our diversionary opportunities and provides young people with skills and confidence to re-enter employment or education, diverting them from criminality or isolation.	First course started 09.05.2023
Prevention and Education	Expand The Phoenix Project to South Tyneside.	Expands our diversionary opportunities and increases the number of direct interventions.	March 2024
Prevention and Education	Launch the Spark Programme	Expands our diversionary opportunities and increases the number of direct interventions.	March 2024

Prevention and Education	Launch the Ignite Programme.	Expands our diversionary opportunities and increases the number of direct interventions.	March 2024
Fire Safety	Adopt a new strategy for our Risk Based Inspection Programme	This approach allows for timely engagement to those that need it most.	
Fire Safety	Adopt a new strategy for our Risk Based Inspection Programme	This approach allows for timely engagement to those that need it most.	March 2024
Fire Safety	Adopt a more robust 'hot strike' process around the serving of prohibition notices	This approach allows for timely engagement to those that need it most.	Nov 2023
Fire Safety	Increasing our reach by upskilling Service Delivery resources	This approach allows for timely engagement to those that need it most.	March 2025 – This is the date within the action plan. Milestones will be in place to aim to achieve. Scoping options – Sept 2023 Plan/ELT approval – Dec 2023
Fire Safety	Introduce a new Unwanted Fire Signals strategy	Appropriate and timely intervention can take place by those that have specialist knowledge. It also means that Service Delivery personnel are not burdened by administration and engagement which has, thus far, had limited effect.	March 2024

Fire Safety	Undertake further targeted engagement with new students	Reduce the number of unwanted Fire Signals in student halls of residence	Nov 2023
Fire Safety	Invest further in a comprehensive virtual Reality system	The system will educate Fire Safety staff in a number of areas, including fire development, in a safe, controlled and environmentally considerate situation.	Jan 2024
Fire Safety	Create a new team to support work on the Building Safety Review	Ensure TWFRS has the resources required for its role as regional lead for the Building Safety Review.	Sept 2023
Fire Safety	Increase our Fire Safety presence in the night-time economy	This will ensure any fire safety risks are identified and addressed in a timely manner, through a collaborative approach to community safety.	April 2023 – to be further imbedded and evaluated
Operations	New Appliance Roll Out	Completion of the appliance replacement program. This will see the replacement of all current 09 registered Category two appliances as well as the remaining two category one appliances based at Rainton Bridge and Sunderland Central. With this final upgrade to our frontline fleet, all whole time appliances will be new style	Completed June 2023

		Volvo vehicles which have been designed with the clean cab policy at their core.	
Operations	Wetting Agents	Research, development and introduce wetting agents into TWFRS to deal with protracted fire related incidents more effectively and to significantly reduce our environmental impact	March 2024
Operations	Body Worn Video Camera Refresh	The Operations Department shall facilitate a Body Worn Video Camera replacement programme in 2023/24. This will allow ICs to record dynamic command decisions and improve firefighter/community safety.	February 2024
Operations	Embed National Operational Guidance throughout TWFRS	Following a NFCC NOG Surgery, the Operations Department intends to carry out an implementation process and communication strategy that will see the following work streams embedded into out ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOG Strategic Gap Analysis • NOG Training Gap Analysis • NOG Competency Recording 	March 2024

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOG Quality Assurance 	
Operations	Facilitate the Operational Equipment and Special Appliance Replacement Programme	In line with our Community Risk Management Plan and our Operational Equipment Replacement Programme the Operations Department will ensure that operational crews have the appropriate appliances, equipment and information to deliver a safe and effective service to the community.	March 2024
Risk and Resilience	Invest in learning and development of core USAR instructors and technicians	Support our goal of national recognition, as an exemplar for USAR training and deployment.	In progress – January 2024
Risk and Resilience	To restructure the staffing and cost models of our COMAH function through the creation of an additional COMAH and Resilience Officer role.	Increases our productivity and ensure all sites get equal representation. Improve relationships between ourselves and all COMAH site operators.	In progress – November 2023
Risk and Resilience	Ensuring our Business Continuity Plans are fit for purpose	Compliance with changes to the CCA 2004, the Fire Standards Board and also the recommendations for FRS reform, contained within the recently published government white paper and independent public inquiries.	In progress - October 2023

Risk and Resilience	We will implement a revised and robust testing and exercising schedule.	This will allow us to test the efficiency of all of our business continuity plans and ensure that they adequately support our organisational, community and regional risk registers. In doing so, we will contribute to the National Risk Register within central Government and help to protect our national critical infrastructure.	In progress - October 2023
Risk and Resilience	Restructure of Operational Assurance Group	This will improve its overall effectiveness and streamline its ability to inform the wider board structure	Completed July 2023
Risk and Resilience	Investment in our Incident Command training facilities	Supports our long-term goal of creating a JESIP 'Centre of Excellence' which will provide state of the art immersive training environments for all new and existing incident commanders.	Training Facilities Group will monitor this action
Risk and Resilience	Adopt an Enhanced Logistics Support Appliance	Enhance our reputation as a lead for National Resilience training and facilities.	April 2024
Risk and Resilience	Build on our current 13/16 agreements with our colleagues in Northumberland FRS	To improve our Wildfire capability, and support Northumberland FRS at any wildfire incidents in their densely rural service area	R&R department objective 2023/24 - April 2024



**COMMUNITY SAFETY
PLAN
2023 - 2024**

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Service**

