



# Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire & Rescue Authority

## Annual Report & Fire & Rescue Statement 2020/21

### 1. Introduction & Background

1.1 The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out a requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. In addition, the annual report is required to show due regard to:

- The Fire and Rescue National Framework
- The Fire and Rescue Plan for the area
- The Integrated Risk Management Plan for the area

1.2 This year's statement comes at the end of a year that continues under the governance of Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. It also reflects performance within a year of Global pandemic in which the Service has had to restrict face to face preventative and protection visits during periods of lockdown, deliver elements of its service in innovative ways and assist other agencies to deliver other community priorities through a collaborative response model.

1.3 In addition, the service has been subject to a revisit from the inspection team of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services to view progress made against the causes of concern and recommendations made as a result of the inspection in November 2018, and to conduct a covid-19 inspection. Further detail is found in section 6: Operational Assurance.

### 2. Performance

2.1 The Authority continues to monitor progress against the Fire and Rescue Plan and an Integrated Risk Management Plan. Community outcome measures and operational objectives are included within the plans.

### 3. Community Outcome Measures:

		2020/21						
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	<u>2019/20</u> <u>EOY</u>	<u>2020/21</u> <u>EOY</u>	Compared to previous EOY
NI 33 (A)	No. of Deliberate Primary Fires per 10,000 population	0.67	0.80	0.68	0.48	3.79	2.64	↓
NI 33 (B)	No. of Deliberate Secondary Fires per 10,000 population	1.55	1.35	0.78	0.74	5.82	4.42	↓
NI 49 (1)	No. of Primary Fires per 100,000 population	29.72	29.72	27.31	22.49	132.80	109.24	↓
NI 49 (2)	No. of Fatalities in Primary Fires per 100,000 population	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.27	0.13	0.40	↑
NI 49 (3)	No. of Non-fatal Casualties in Primary Fires per 100,000 population	1.61	0.94	0.40	1.07	3.48	4.02	↑
BVPI 143 (i)	The No. of deaths arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.13	→
BVPI 143 (ii)	The No. of injuries (excluding precautionary checks), arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	0.67	0.40	0.13	0.67	2.81	1.87	↓
BVPI 142 (iii)	Accidental fires in Dwellings per 10,000 dwellings	2.64	2.30	2.54	2.40	10.49	9.89	↓
BVPI 207	Non-Domestic Primary Fires per 1000 Non-Domestic	1.04	1.19	1.39	0.88	6.13	4.50	↓
LPI 8ai	LPI 8ai Sickness - Wholetime (days/shift lost per head)	1.44	1.11	2.81	1.63	7.00	8.04	↑
BV 12 (ii)	Sickness Absence (All staff, excluding RDS)	1.58	1.64	2.74	1.62	7.59	8.68	↑

		2020/21						
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2019/20 EOY	2020/21 EOY	
	Home Fire Safety Checks and refits completed	305	486	434	546	5376	1771	↓
LPI 77	Total number of Protective Full Risk Inspections (FI) and Re-Inspections (RI) Completed	27	42	101	52	735	222	↓
LPI 78	Percentage of Protective Risk Inspections in high risk areas (sleeping risk)	88.89%	80.00%	71.11%	72.73%	78.26	75.72	↓
	Average of Full Response Time*	9.49	9.53	10.10	10:17	10.19	10.17	↓

\*\*The quarterly figures are not cumulative

### Table Notes:

**NI 49 (2)** - No. of Fatalities in Primary Fires per 100,000 population – This indicator includes all fire related fatalities in all property types (not just accidental dwelling fires). During 2020/21 there were 3 fire fatalities, 2 of which were within vehicles and one within a property.

**NI 49 (3)** - No. of Non-fatal Casualties in Primary Fires per 100,000 population – There was an overall increase of 30 non-fire casualties in 2020/21 compared to 26 within 2019/20. The majority of non-fire casualties related to injuries which appear to be slight (20 people). A total of 6 people were taken to hospital with what appeared to be serious injuries. More casualties were taken to hospital as a result of the fire being considered deliberate (or where there was intent to cause damage but not deliberate ignition).

**BVPI 143 (i)** - The No. of deaths arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population – This figure has remained at the same level as the previous year.

**LPI 8ai** - Sickness - Wholetime (days/shift lost per head) – Sickness for Wholetime overall has risen during 2020/21, this is partly due to the recording of Covid related absences which included confirmed and non-confirmed symptoms. In 2019/20 there was a rise in Musculoskeletal sickness (400 more sickness days across all staff types), this was reduced significantly during 2020/21, with 234 days lost to Musculoskeletal absence across the Wholetime.

**BV 12 (ii)** - Sickness Absence (All staff, excluding On-Call) – Although we have had fewer days lost regarding sickness (580 fewer sickness days/shifts lost in 2020/21), the impacts of Covid absence due to confirmed/non-confirmed symptoms has impacted on the overall sickness figures.

**Home Fire Safety Checks and refits completed** - Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) numbers continue to be lower than the previous year as Prevention is still working within the NFCC Strategic Intentions during COVID to target only those at most highest risk. Though the number of visits is lower, 100% of these are for those at the highest level of risk – Very High and many with complex needs.

**LPI 77/LPI 78** - Total number of Protective Full Risk Inspections (FI) and Re-Inspections (RI) Completed – The total number of Full Risk inspections, Re-Inspections and Protective Risk Inspections have been impacted by the Covid Pandemic restrictions. A high number of inspections were completed via remote auditing and there has been a gradual return to more routine fire safety audits with the 3 year risk based inspection program starting to be rolled out, originally due to start 1st April 2020. There is a planned change to the future reporting statistics will be a progress report against the premises which the department will plan to proactively inspect within the 3 year risk based inspection program.

**Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service Response to Covid-19 Pandemic** (data time period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 unless otherwise stated)

Activity	Total	Commentary
Total Calls to Fire Control	12187 Calls handled by Fire Control 4846 Total Incidents	This included localised flooding and national lockdown periods. An overall reduction of Road Traffic Incidents by 34.2%
Average Appliance Availability	20 Appliances	The Service maintained on average 20 appliances per day from 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2020 – 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2021.
Collaborative working with partner agencies (EMAS and NHS)	1096 shifts conducted with EMAS 26 NFRS Volunteers	The Service supported EMAS with Ambulance driving transporting patients. The Service also supported local hospitals with mortuary work from 21 <sup>st</sup> December 2020 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2021.
Wellbeing Support	55 wellbeing referrals 39 wellbeing calls 1 hour average time spent per wellbeing case	The Wellbeing Team supported 59 individuals during the pandemic, with a total of 39 wellbeing calls made to check in on volunteers who supported EMAS and Body Movement Teams
Pharmacy Deliveries	2959 Pharmacy Deliveries	Pharmacy Deliveries were made to the vulnerable people in our community

## **4. Financial Assurance**

- 4.1 The Authority is responsible for ensuring that our Services business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. The Authority is required to ensure that finances are used to ensure a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 4.2 Regular financial monitoring reports are considered monthly by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and regularly throughout the year at the Accountability Board. Financial updates are considered by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel throughout the year.
- 4.3 Financial performance, level of reserves and medium term financial outlook is included within the annual NCFRA Statement of Accounts.
- 4.4 Since the Governance change on 1 January 2019, the Authority has produced two Statement of Accounts:
- The 2018/19 accounts cover the 3 month period 1 January to 31 March 2019 , and
  - The 2019/20 accounts cover the 12 month period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.
- 4.5 The Statement of Accounts were produced ensuring compliance with Codes of Practice issued by CIPFA and include within it an Annual Governance Statement which assesses controls within the Authority, making recommendations for changes in the following year.
- 4.6 The pre-audit Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 were published by the statutory deadline of the 31 August 2020 and a workshop took place with auditors, officers and Joint Independent Audit Committee members scrutinising the Statements in September 2020.
- 4.7 The Statement of Accounts were externally audited by Ernst and Young and the accounts, alongside the audit report to those charged with governance (the ISA260) were signed off and received an unqualified audit opinion on 31 March 2021.
- 4.8 The 2019/20 audited Statement of Accounts can be found at the following link:
- <https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/our-information/financial-information/>
- 4.9 Work is well progressed on the 2020/21 statement of accounts for NCFRA which cover the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The pre-audit Statement of Accounts will be published prior to the statutory deadline and available on the PFCC website after that time, with the external audit taking place shortly after this date.

## 5. Governance Assurance

- 5.1 The governance of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is the responsibility of The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire
- 5.2 Governance is concerned with how the Authority manages its affairs on a day to day basis including its business practices, standards of conduct and overall management procedures. The 'rules' for how the Authority conducts business are set out in the Corporate Governance Framework which can be found [here](#).
- 5.3 For the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 20, the Authority prepared an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) as part of the Statement of Accounts and which included:
- an acknowledgement of responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of governance and system of internal control;
  - a brief description of the key elements of the governance arrangements including explicit areas such as internal audit and risk management;
  - a brief description of the process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance arrangements;
  - an evaluation of the level of assurance that the systems and processes that comprise the governance arrangements can provide an outline of the actions taken, or proposed, to deal with significant governance and internal control issues.
- 5.4 The 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement for the Authority for the 12 month period is included in the Statement of Accounts and can be found by accessing the link above.
- 5.5 With 2019/20 as a full year of Internal Audit for NCFRA, the Chief Internal Auditor provided his annual opinion on the NCFRA Internal Control environment which he assessed as **"Satisfactory."**
- 5.6 This Chief Internal Auditor's opinion was considered by the PFCC and statutory officers charged with governance in the formulation of the Annual Governance Statement for the year and the report and opinion were considered in full at the Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) in July 2020.

## 6. Operational Assurance

- 6.1 The Northamptonshire Commissioners Fire and Rescue Authority has carried out its functions in accordance with the defined statutory and policy framework in which it is required to operate. The key documents setting this out are:
- [the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

- [the Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)
- [the Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [the Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#)
- [the Localism Act 2011](#)
- [the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)
- [the Health and Safety Act at Work etc Act 1974](#)

6.2 Whilst the Authority is primarily a locally based service, mutual aid arrangements are in place with other services to provide resilience for large scale or complex incidents where additional resources need to be called on. The Authority contributes to national resilience and can make a number of its assets available to support a national emergency.

6.3 The Authority has robust Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans in place which are integral to our strategy in managing corporate risk and to provide, in the event of a major disruption, a fire and rescue service to the community.

6.4 The Authority publishes an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) that sets out details of its operational service provision and improvement plans at a local, regional and national level, together with individual delivery plans. The current Plan covers the period 2019 – 2022.

6.5 A copy of the Current Fire and Rescue plan, IRMP, and related documents can be found on our website at:  
<http://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/fire-and-rescue-plan/>

6.6 The service was subject to an inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) in November 2018. The report findings were:

Effectiveness	Requires Improvement
Efficiency	Requires Improvement
People	Requires Improvement

6.7 Understanding the risk of fires and other emergencies, as well as promoting the rights values and cultures were both graded as Good.

6.8 Two areas (responding to fires and other emergencies and getting the right people with the right skills) were graded inadequate and were therefore subject to a revisit in June 2019. The inspectorate found that encouraging signs of progress were there on both areas in the revisit.

6.9 The service was subject to a further revisit in March 2020. The inspection team found that the tangible improvements the Service had made had mitigated the risks to public

safety that they identified in their original inspection and there was no longer any requirement to carry out any further revisits on these causes of concern.

- 6.10 In March 2021 HMICFRS wrote to PFCC Stephen Mold and CFO Darren Dovey releasing NFRS from the Causes of Concern. The letter can be found following this link.  
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publication-html/northamptonshire-fire-and-rescue-service-causes-of-concern-revisit/>

The summary findings in a letter from Zoe Billingham, HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services NFRS

*“After reviewing your plans, it is clear the service now has established procedures in place to make sure it has appropriate oversight on fire engine availability. Action is also being taken to increase fire engine availability.*

*We also recognise the service’s increased focus on recruitment, selection and staff training. Regular audits of training and competence records make sure that staff meet the required standard or revalidation timescales.*

*There continue to be effective governance arrangements within the service and through the police, fire and crime commissioner to scrutinise progress.*

- 6.11 In October 2020 HMICFRS inspected NFRS in respect of the service’s response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. In the summary findings of the inspection, Zoe Billingham: HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services praised NFRS for their response to the Pandemic, stating:  
*“Proactively providing additional support to the community” and “Worked closely with partners supporting the needs of their local communities.”*

## **7. Overall Assurance Arrangements**

- 7.1 The assurance arrangements that the Authority had in place are considered to meet the requirements set out in the National Framework.