

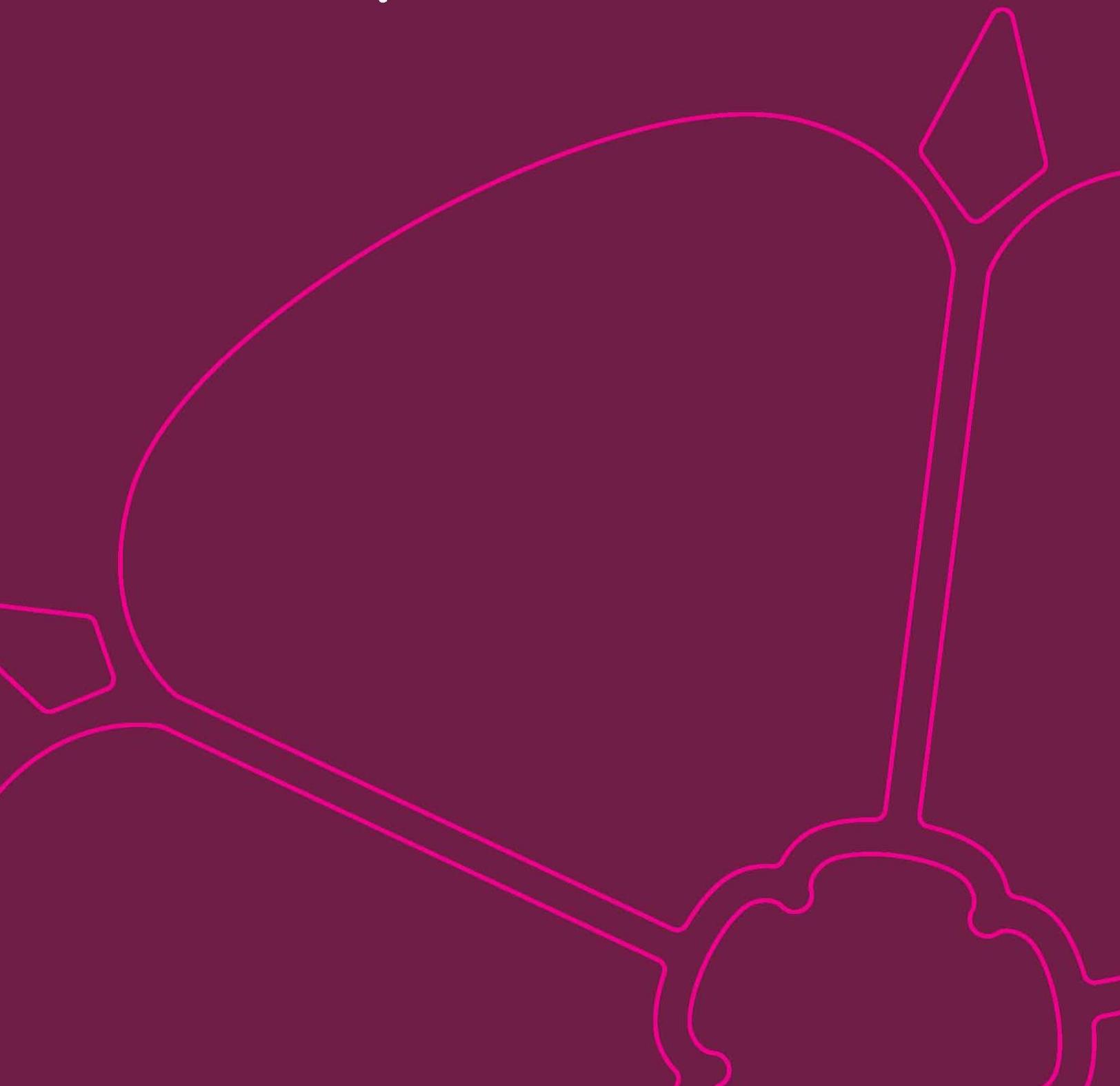
2022-2023



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
POLICE, FIRE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

Stephen Mold

Annual Report



Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (NCFRA)

Fire and Rescue Statement 2022/23

Introduction and background

Fire and rescue services play a crucial role in making our communities safer, whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks or responding swiftly and effectively to the incidents and emergencies that occur. The Fire and Rescue National Framework (2018) provides overall strategic direction and guidance with how fire and rescue authorities discharge their functions. Within the framework, there is a requirement for the authority (NCFRA) to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. In addition, strategic direction is also provided by other plans for which the annual assurance is also required to show due regard to:

- The Police, Fire and Crime Plan
- The Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

Governance transferred to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) on 1 January 2019. This year's statement comes at the end of the fourth full financial year of governance under the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC).

During 2021/22, the service developed 'A Vision for 2025 – Fire 25' and the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25 (previously known as Integrated Risk Management Plan). These two documents provide strategic direction for the service over that period and sit alongside the PFCC's plan 2021-26 (Police, Fire and Crime Plan) the first combined plan for both police and fire. The service has been the subject to three inspections (two full effectiveness and efficiency inspections, and one COVID-19 compliance inspection) by HMICFRS since 2019. The next full inspection is due in September 2023

In October 2022, Chief Fire Officer Darren Dovey retired from Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service after 35 years in the sector. Following a robust recruitment process, Chief Fire Officer Mark Jones was appointed by the Commissioner and the appointment ratified at the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in July 2022.

Performance

The Authority monitors fire and rescue performance through the OPFCC Accountability Board. This board maintains oversight of key delivery areas including operational response, prevention and protection. This board holds strategic leads accountable for the delivery of community outcomes, improvement actions and performance outcomes.

Community outcome measures

	2022/23				21/22	22/23	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	EOY	EOY	
No. of Deliberate Primary Fires per 10,000 population	0.98	1.02	0.65	0.51	2.80	3.15	↑
No. of Deliberate Secondary Fires per 10,000 population	2.26	3.76	0.98	0.90	6.30	7.90	↑
No. of Primary Fires per 100,000 population	31.39	36.60	26.43	25.03	118.08	119.46	↑
No. of Fatalities in Primary Fires per 100,000 population	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.66	0.13	↓
No. of Non-Fatal Casualties in Primary Fires per 100,000 population	0.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.21	0.79	↓
No. of deaths arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population ##	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.13	↑
No. of injuries (exc precautionary checks) arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	0.64	0.25	0.38	0.51	1.72	1.78	↑
No. of accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 population	2.57	2.47	2.67	2.87	10.69	10.59	↓
Non-Domestic Fires per 1000 Non-Domestic premises	1.43	1.35	1.51	1.19	6.05	5.49	↓
Sickness – Wholetime (days/shifts lost per head) ^	3.37	2.98	2.99	1.96	10.10	11.30	↑
Sickness – All staff (days/shifts lost per head, excluding on-call) ^	2.95	2.67	2.67	1.85	9.83	10.15	↑
Prevention	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	21/22	22/23	
Delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV)	1349	1285	1572	1480	4255	5685	↑
Protection	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	21/22	22/23	
Risk Based Inspection Programme Inspections RI/FURI*	193	185	160	225	644	763	↑
Full Inspections FI	67	33	74	29	205	203	↓
Informal Notifications	22	836	35	15	79	108	↑
Enforcements Served	4	5	14	6	24	29	↑
Prohibitions Served	2	4	6	9	7	21	↑
Building Regulation consultations BR	126	128	139	113	495	506	↑
Other Consultations OC	23	14	12	12	112	61	↓
Other Fire Safety Activities OFSA	208	209	189	220	1098	862	↓
Total Risk Inspections FRRI / FI / BR / OC / OFSA*	617	569	574	599	2554	2359	↓
Response	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	21/22	22/23	
Average of Full Response Time (including call handling)	09:55	10:32	10:08	10:12	10:16	10:14	↓
Average Call Handling Time (call to mobilise)	01:43	01:38	01:40	01:44	01:40	01:41	↑
Average appliance availability (No. of appliances)	17.93	17.82	18.01	17.81	-	17.90	
Training	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	21/22	22/23	
% of Wholetime operational staff in date with Core Competences^^	95%	80%	85%	95%	94%	95%	↑
% of on-call operational staff in date with Core Competences^^	84%	73%	72%	83%	84%	83%	↑

Data Notes:

2021/22 population figures based on 757,100. 2022/23 population figures based on 786,900 = 4.33% population increase

* Protection codes – RI – Re-Inspection, FURI – Follow up re-inspection, FI – full inspection, BR – building regulation, OC – other consultation, OFSA – other fire safety activity

– Number of Fatalities in Primary Fires per 100,000 population. This indicator includes all fire related fatalities in all property types. During 2022/23 there was 1 fire fatality within a domestic dwelling.

^ Sickness - Wholetime (days/shifts lost per head) and sickness absence (All staff, excluding on-call). There has been a high level of sickness reported throughout 2022/23, however there is a steady decline over the last 2 reporting quarters.

^^ Training – in September 2022 a new Competency Based Training Framework was introduced which captures and records slightly different data hence initial slight drop in %.

Financial assurance

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner acting as Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible under legislation for ensuring all financial activities are carried out in accordance with statutory and professional requirements. This includes safeguarding public money, receiving all income due to the organisation and meeting all financial obligations in respect of for Northamptonshire Fire.

As a corporation sole, NCFRA is required to have a Section 151 Officer. In line with the options set out within the Home Office Financial Management Code of Practice, the role of NCFRA Section 151 Officer in Northamptonshire is also undertaken by the PFCC and Group Section 151 Officer for Policing.

The PFCC delegates financial arrangements within NCFRA to ensure day to day activities can be undertaken and decisions can be made by those who have the knowledge and authority to do so. The PFCC delegates the operational Fire service budget to the Chief Fire Officer and sets out the requirements of this allocation in an annual strategic outcomes letter.

Delegation arrangements and levels are set out within NCFRA's Corporate Governance Framework (CGF). The CGF was established at the time of the governance transfer in January 2019. A full review of the framework started in 2022 and was concluded in May 2023.

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.

Financial performance, level of reserves and medium-term financial outlook is included within the annual NCFRA Statement of Accounts and is subject to external audit.

Since the Governance change on 1 January 2019, the Authority has produced three Statement of Accounts, all of which have received unqualified audit opinions:

- 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 and
- The 2020/21 accounts cover the 12-month period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

The 2021/22 Draft Statement of Accounts were published on the OPFCC website in line with statutory deadlines and it is anticipated the audit opinion will be issued in the coming months.

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 and makes recommendations for changes in the following year.

As in previous years, the pre-audit Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 were published by the statutory deadline and a workshop took place with auditors, officers and Joint Independent Audit Committee members scrutinising the Statements in December 2022.

Work is well progressed on the 2022/23 statement of accounts for NCFRA which cover the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. 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 after this date.

Governance assurance

In his role as NCFRA, the governance of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is the responsibility of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire. Governance is concerned with how NCFRA manages its affairs on a day-to-day basis including its business practices, standards of conduct and overall management procedures. These arrangements are set out within the Corporate Governance Framework, a copy of which is available on the OPFCC website.

For the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 23, NCFRA have 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.

Whilst internal audit work for 2022/23 has not yet concluded, in their draft annual report for the year, the Chief Internal Auditor issued a draft opinion based on the audit work undertaken as at the date of the Annual Governance Statement:

Audit Opinion - 22/23

I can confirm that sufficient work has been completed to allow me to form a conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority's internal control environment. Based on audit work undertaken during the year, in my opinion, NCFRA's framework of governance, risk management and management control is GOOD.

Audit testing has demonstrated that controls were working in practice across key areas for the most part during the year.

Where weaknesses have been identified through internal audit review, we have worked with management to agree appropriate corrective actions and a timescale for improvement.

Jacinta Fru BA (Hons) FCCA, Chief Internal Auditor

In her report, the Chief Internal Auditor concluded that NCFRA's framework for 2022/23 was assessed as "Good". This assessment is an improvement on every year since NCFRA was established as they have previously been assessed as "Satisfactory."

This Chief Internal Auditor's opinion was considered by statutory officers charged with governance in the formulation of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23. In line with the approach undertaken in previous years, the report and opinion will be considered in full at the Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) in July 2023.

Operational assurance

The Northamptonshire Commissioner 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

Whilst the Authority is primarily a locally based service, mutual aid arrangements are in place with other services where incidents occur near our borders and 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.

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. These plans underwent significant test and review during 2022/23 to provide community reassurance throughout lengthy periods of high temperature during the summer period and in preparation for potential periods of industrial action and national power outages.

The Authority publishes a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 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 came into effect on 1 April 2022 and runs until 2025. It has now reached the end of its first full year and is undergoing its planned annual review.

A copy of the current Police, Fire and Crime plan, CRMP, Fire 25 and related documents can be found on our website at: <https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/fire-and-rescue-service/>

The service was subject to an inspection by HMICFRS in January 2022, providing a 'good' rating for 8 out of 11 areas inspected. The report findings were published in September 2022 and can be found here along with any associated public facing action plan.

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/frs-assessment/frs-2021/northamptonshire/>

Overall assurance arrangements

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



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