



**Northumberland
Fire and Rescue Service**

Business Fire Safety Strategy

| 2020-2021



Introduction

The purpose of this document is to;

- > provide a strategic overview of how the Business Fire Safety Department of Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) will utilise resources available to achieve NFRS's stated mission of 'Making Northumberland Safer'.
- > determine a Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) for non-domestic premises that is based on an assessment of the risk posed by generic premises types and known fire trends from incident data.
- > ensure that the fire safety inspection programme carried out by inspecting officers contributes to the Northumberland Fire and Rescue Plan (IRMP).

The National Framework 2008/11 expects that the Fire Authority has a fire protection management strategy and a risk-based inspection programme to enforce the provisions of the Fire Safety Order. This strategy document will enable the Fire Authority to demonstrate that it is meeting this expectation.

The 'Business Fire Safety Strategy' will commit the service to maintaining an awareness of risks affecting non-domestic premises within Northumberland and aligning available resources to have the maximum impact on reducing risk levels.

To be successfully delivered the strategy will require the Business Fire Safety Department to target resources flexibly between the risks identified through the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS), the incident information relating to Non-Residential fires and 'active' information on non-compliance received from partner agencies.



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Statutory Responsibilities

Delivery of the Business Fire Safety Strategy will demonstrate the service's commitment to ensuring the Fire Authority (Northumberland County Council) achieves its statutory obligations. The principle legislation to be considered includes;

- ① Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
- ② Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- ③ Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HASWA).
- ④ The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007;
- ⑤ The Safety Signs and Signals Regulations 1996;
- ⑥ The Dangerous Substances (Notification and Marking of Sites) Regulations
- ⑦ Petroleum (Consolidation) Regulations 2014
- ⑧ The Public Health Act 1961
- ⑨ The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002

In addition, the fire safety department will carry out all its operations in accordance with all relevant legislation including; environmental protection, financial and data security.

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

The business Fire Safety Department Strategy is linked to the following objectives identified in the NFRS Fire and Rescue Plan (IRMP).

(IRMP) Duties

- > Promote fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity on how to prevent fires, and on the means of escape from buildings in case of fire

(IRMP) Priorities

- > To make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents;
- > To identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;
- > To collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide;
- > To be accountable to communities for the service they provide; and
- > To develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Contribution to Northumberland County Council Vision and Priorities

'Making Northumberland Safer' aims

- > Reduce the number of deaths and injuries and mitigate the commercial, economic and social cost of emergency incidents
- > Safeguard the environment and heritage sites (both built and natural)
- > Provide value for money through the provision of a lean, efficient and resilient service

Culture and Values

Delivery of this strategy will be achieved through encouraging a people focused culture which is based on the Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and Northumberland County Council core values:

- > Residents First - 'Here for you'.
- > Excellence and Quality - 'Listening and learning to improve your service'.
- > Respect - 'You are valued'.
- > Keeping Communities Safe and Well - 'Your safety is at the heart of what we do'.

In addition, the behavioural pledge within the service will be followed to promote and encourage positive behaviour. To support a culture which values everyone:

- > We will be professional and provide leadership by example.
- > We will be open to challenge and change.
- > We will be fair, honest, transparent and act with integrity.
- > We will communicate openly and demonstrate empathy to all.

CONTEXT OF NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service provides the fire and rescue service functions as identified in the Fire Services Act and other appropriate legislation on behalf of the Fire Authority (Northumberland County Council, for the geographic area that is the county of Northumberland).

NFRS Business Fire Safety Department carry out the enforcement work relating the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, for Northumberland County Council Fire authority.

NFRS hold 9017 records for active premises within the county of Northumberland and a system of prioritisation is employed to target resources available to risk (RBIP). The Office for National Statistics identify the Northumberland Labour market as per the table below. The majority of businesses are identified as being in the micro to medium categories. (note - the table below identifies cottage industries as well, which may not be regulated under the RRO).

UK Business Counts (2019):		
	Northumberland (Numbers)	Northumberland (%)
Enterprises		
Micro (0-9)	10,065	89.1
Small (10-49)	1,075	9.5
Medium (50-249)	130	1.2
Large (250+)	25	0.2
Total	11,300	-
Local Units		
Micro (0-9)	11,365	84.3
Small (10-49)	1,785	13.2
Medium (50-249)	290	2.2
Large (250+)	30	0.2
Total	13,475	-

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS)

Note: % is as a proportion of total (enterprise or local units)

OVERARCHING AIMS

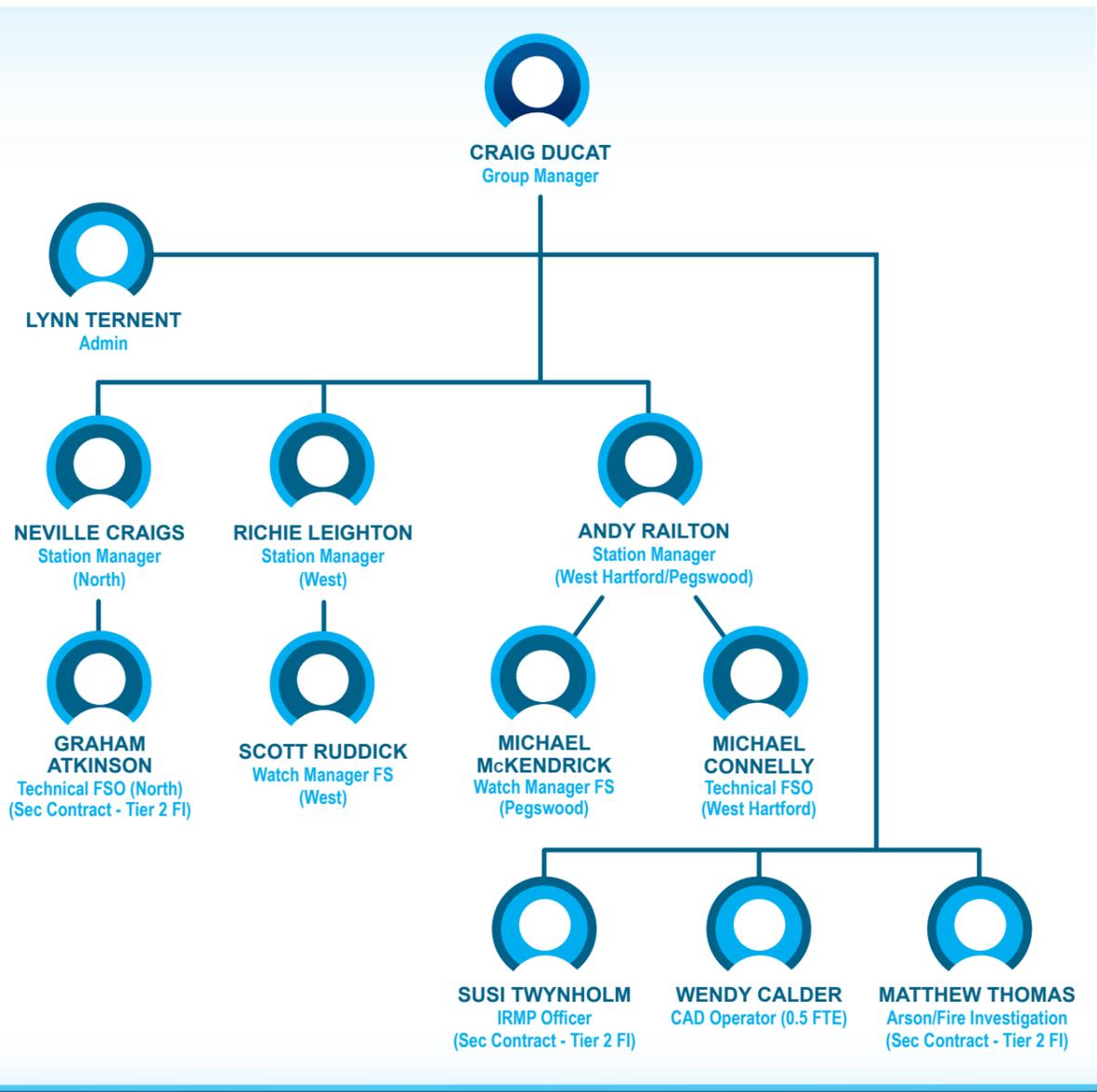
In addition to ensuring that the Authority's statutory fire protection duties are discharged efficiently and effectively, it is also a requirement to ensure our regulatory functions comply with the Better Regulation Executive's five principles of good regulation.

The following five principles of better regulation provide the basis for NFRS's risk-based, proportionate and targeted approach to enforcement which will help create a positive relationship between NFRS and business owners:

- **Targeted** – resources will be focused on higher-risk enterprises, reflecting local need and national priorities. Our aim is to create a 'level playing field' for businesses to ensure that non-compliant responsible persons are identified, and compliant businesses and consumers are protected.
- **Proportionate** – enforcement action will reflect the level of risk to the public and the seriousness of the possible offence. This should increase compliance without creating unfair burdens on businesses.
- **Consistent** – advice to business will be reliable and robust. Where circumstances are similar, inspecting officers will act in similar ways. Improved access to expert advice about regulatory issues that businesses can trust will give them more confidence to invest and grow.
- **Transparent** – businesses must be able to understand what is expected of them and what they can anticipate in return. This should build trust between inspecting officers and the regulated, increasing efficiency and improving outcomes.
- **Accountable** – activities will be open to public scrutiny, with clear and accessible policies, and fair and efficient complaints procedures. This will allow businesses and communities to shape the services they receive.

The Regulators' Code came into statutory effect on 6 April 2014 under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 and provides a clear, flexible and principles-based framework for how regulators should engage with those they regulate.

Business Fire Safety Management structure is as follows:



RISK MODELLING

Risk Based Inspection Programme - rationale

- > CFRMIS Premises Risk rating (IRMP Note 4)
- > ORH Report – focus on retail (Page 11 para 4.12 Commercial Retail and Industrial)
- > Intelligent Regulatory Information System (live pilot Sept 2020).
- > Petroleum – introduction of new policy and procedure (MoU with London Fire Brigade).
- > Statutory Consultations
- > Specific Inspections – complaints, requests for advice, general fire safety duties etc.

Methodology used to determine the RBIP

The inspection programme is underpinned by a determination of the level of risk presented by premises. The targeting of inspections will be determined by their priority when set against other premises which may present a greater or lesser risk. The focus of the Fire Safety Order is life safety.

A relative risk score was developed for the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) toolkit, which is a robust, third-party validated risk assessment and resource deployment tool. The individual scores for buildings assessed in FSEC can be exported and used as direct and compatible inputs for the relative risk score. NFRS's RBIP therefore considers risk in those terms and all risks in this document are for 'societal' life risk.

The relative risk score (calculated by our Premises Risk Database) considers a detailed analysis of national data (including information from the National Incident Recording System (NIRS)) and data from other sources. This includes evidence-based, empirical evaluations of the risk in buildings in terms of:

- > the frequency of fires nationally by type of premises, taken from the NIRS based on national and international, data;
- > the effectiveness of passive and active fire precautions;
- > the impact of fire safety management; and
- > the societal risk presented by the type of occupancy, e.g. less mobile occupants.

Risk is defined as the probability that an incident will occur multiplied by the impact that it will have. Hence, a low frequency may not mean a low risk, if the consequence is high. Similarly, high frequencies do not necessarily mean high risk. CFRMIS using the guidance laid out by Government (IRMP Note 4) calculates this relative risk rating and identifies inspection frequencies for premises. This information is considered with the findings of the ORH Community Risk Review and (as the pilot programme progresses), the information provided through the Intelligent Risk Information System (IRIS).

note – IRIS is a pilot programme being ran in the North East Region, coordinated by the Office of Product safety and Standards (OPSS) to share information between regulators. HSE will provide a tool which can be used to identify premises where non-compliance has been identified by other statutory regulators.

Influences of the RBIP

- > the number of occupants in the building;
- > historical information, including reports on any fires attended;
- > visits to gather operational intelligence;
- > particular local trends or socio-economic factors, and;
- > information from partner agencies.
- > department resources

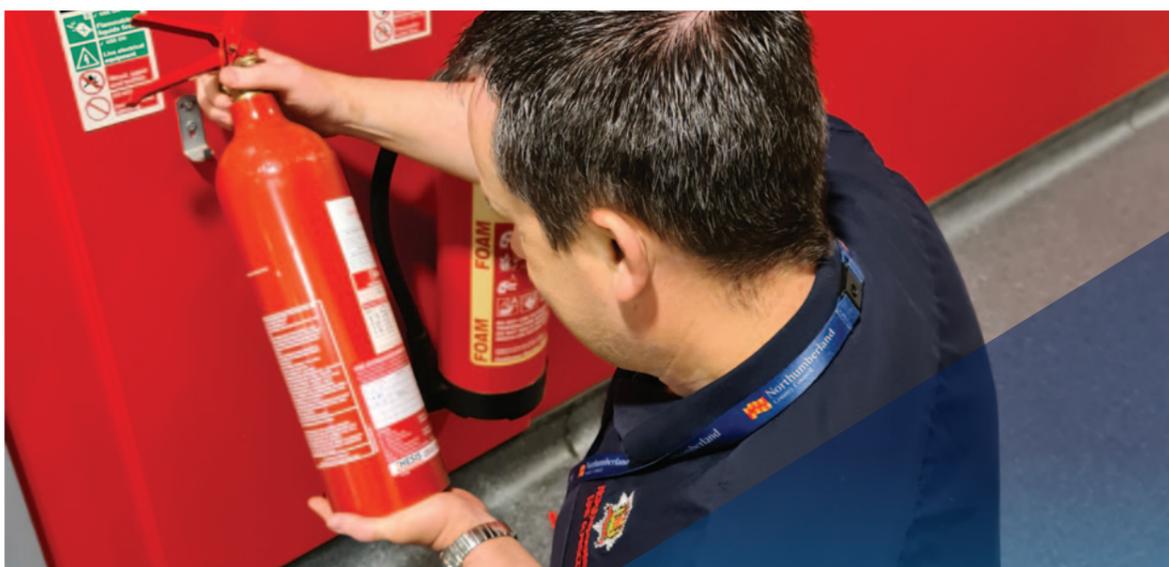
Major Risks

When ORH carried out their community risk review, they identified two non-domestic premises of concern;

- > **HMP Northumberland in the Amble area – this premises is inspected by the Crown Premises Fire Inspection Group, they have been assigned responsibility by Northumberland Fire Authority by way of a memorandum of understanding.**
- > **Essity (Paper mill) in the Prudhoe area – these premises will be inspected by the Business Fire safety Team in 2020/21, to ensure correct fire precautions are in place and being managed correctly.**

Inspection Team Resources

Succession planning for the maintenance of a qualified enforcement team needs consideration. We are currently developing three level 4 fire safety inspecting officers, over the next two years there is the potential for 3 of the enforcement officers (Station Manager - Level 4 diploma), to retire. NFRS may need to call upon neighbouring enforcing authorities for the assistance of experienced officers in this area.



PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT APPROACH

Inspections

Business Fire Safety Team – monthly job lists are generated by CFRMIS, these will be prioritised and allocated by the Area Fire Safety Officers (L4 Diploma qualified).

The L4 inspectors will carry out inspections as allocated by the area Fire Safety Officers. All high-risk premises and those with an identified 12-month frequency will be inspected. Medium-risk premises will be risk assessed and by exception moved to a future date if monthly workloads are such that they are unable to be inspected. Industrial and retail premises will be targeted during this prioritisation process.

The 'Short Audit' process will be employed by experienced Level 4 Diploma qualified officers (as per requirements of NFCC), to reduce the burden on businesses and minimise inspection time.

Operational Inspectors (L3 inspectors) – each officer will be allocated 2 jobs per month; these will be low and very low risk premises with a focus on retail. The strategy being to identify sleeping risk above commercial premises. Issues found will be progressed through the Area Fire Safety Officer.

PROTECTION STRATEGY

Risk Based Inspection Programme Objectives

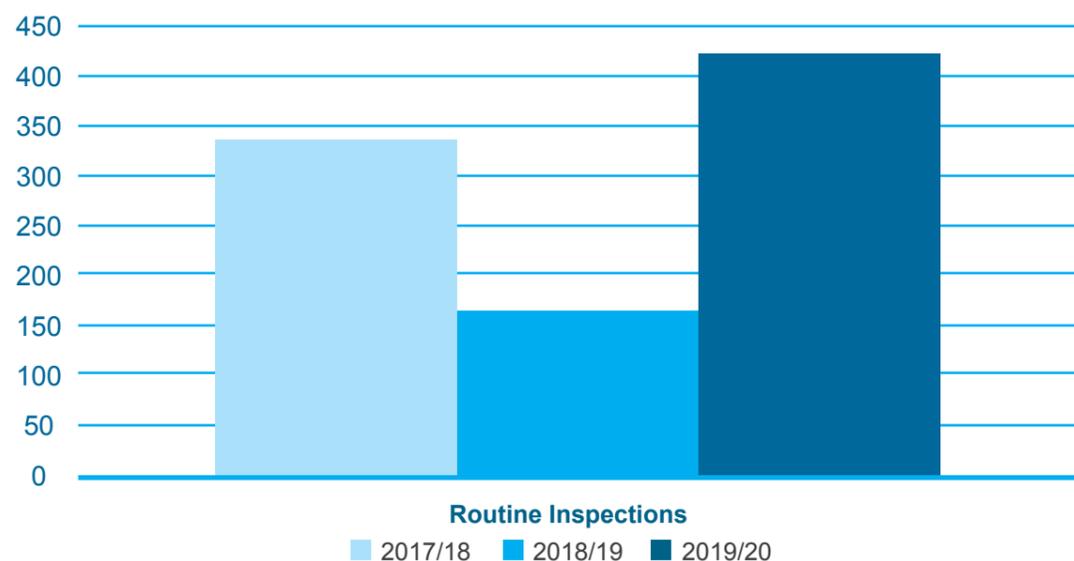
- > **All High risk and 12-month frequency premises (identified by CFRMIS - total of 39)**
- > **Focus on Commercial Retail and Industrial (L3 officers and L4/L4 diploma Fire Safety Inspecting Officers (FSO's).**
- > **Heritage Inspections – 4 per quarter**
- > **Statutory Consultations – target of 95% responded within 15 working days**
- > **Formal notice monitoring – 1 per quarter**
- > **Soft play facilities/ Village halls – inspect to ensure no sleeping risks**
- > **Holiday Lets – awareness of new 'Do you have paying guests guidance' - (postal campaign with self-assessment)**

These objectives are detailed in the Business Fire Safety Department Plan, where monthly updates will be provided to show progress against the objectives. The Business Fire Safety Department will report to Performance Review Action Group (PRAG) quarterly to provide scrutiny.

PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE

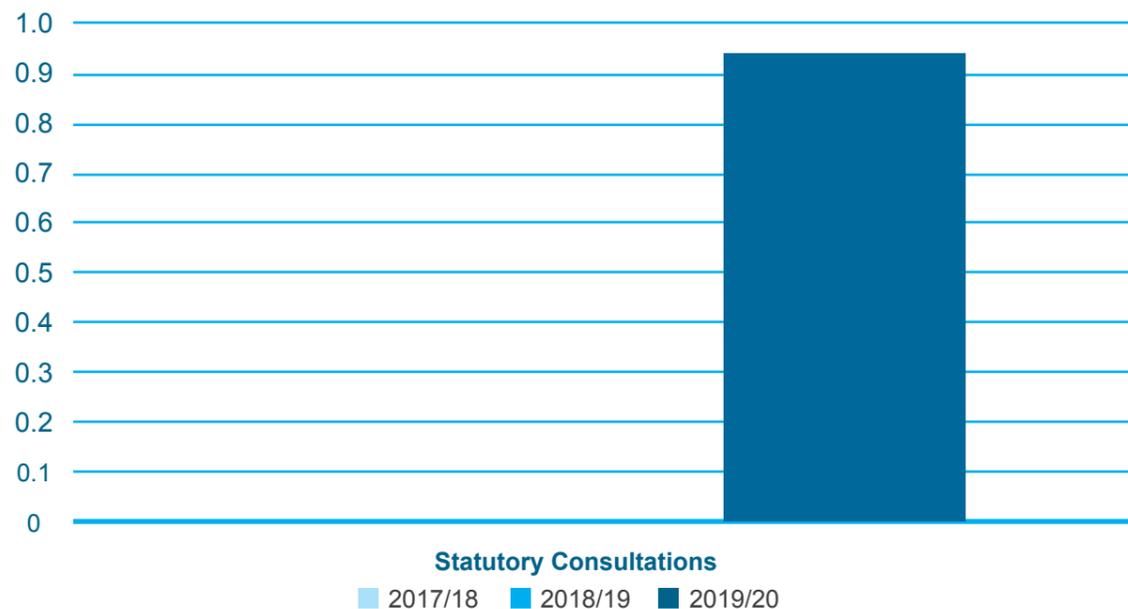
Routine Inspections

Audits carried out by qualified Fire Safety Inspecting Officers to inspect premises against the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Performance in 2018/19 was affected by the reduction of officer numbers in the inspection team.



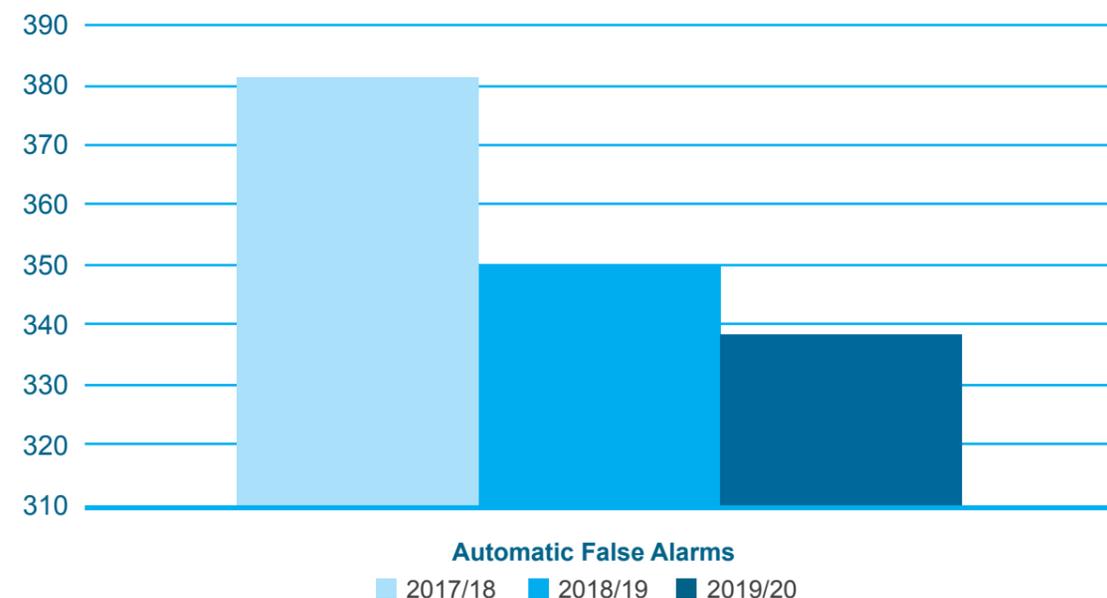
Statutory Consultations

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service are statutory consultees under Building Regulations, Licensing and Planning applications received by Northumberland County Council. This measure of performance has been introduced in 2019 following the requirements of performance monitoring identified by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).



Automatic False Alarms

The generation of Unwanted Fire Signals (AFA's) from Non- Residential and Other Residential premises are monitored to identify poor performance in the management of fire alarms in commercial premises. In June 2018 a system of cost recovery and reduced attendance was introduced to recover costs associated with attending unnecessary alarm actuations at problematic premises.



Regular Liaison Meetings

The Emergency Response, Community Safety and Business Fire Safety Department heads meet monthly to coordinate activities and assess progress against departmental and service objectives.

NFRS Business Fire Safety Team are members of Northumberland County Council's Corporate Enforcement Team and attend bimonthly meetings to share best practice and align enforcement activities to comply with corporate policies.

Regional Business Fire Safety meetings between NFRS, Tyne and Wear FRS, County Durham and Darlington FRS and Cleveland Fire Brigade are held quarterly to share best practice and align activities.

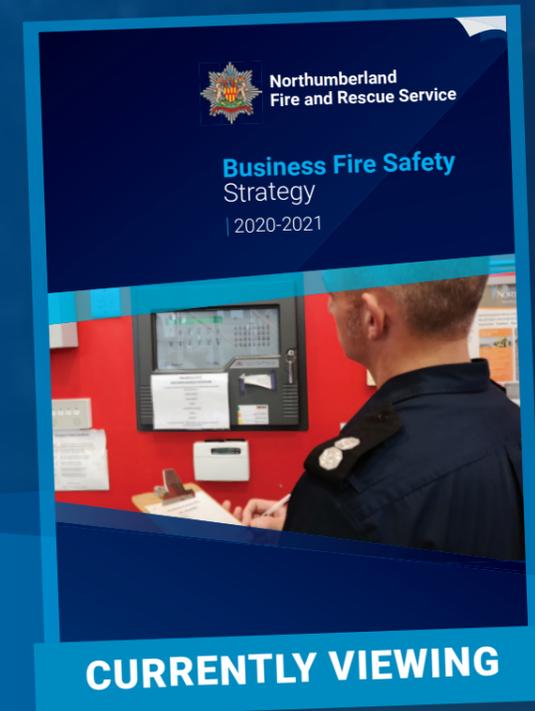
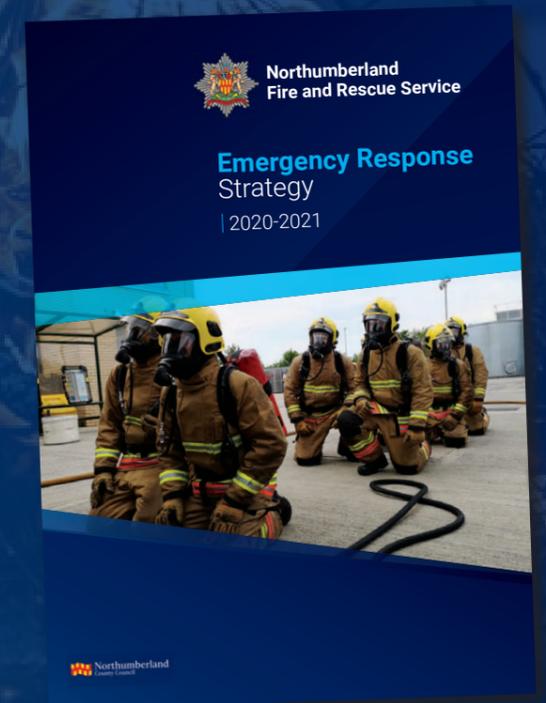
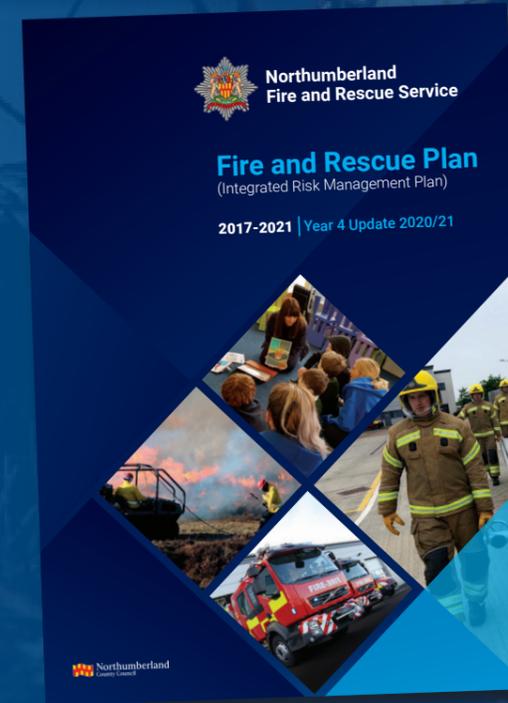
CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

NFRS Business Fire Safety Department have aligned the CPD of the inspection team to that of the National Fire Chiefs Council competency framework document. This equates to an average of 25 hours CPD per year (Level 4 and Level 4 Diploma qualified officers). This is achieved through a combination of regional CPD Days, attendance of national events and structured learning.

The L3 inspection team will be given a reduced CPD programme which will consist of a training day hosted by the Business Fire safety team and online learning using the Redkite training platform.



Related Documents



Additional Documents

National Framework Document 2008/11 | Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 IRMP Note 4 | Regulator's Code | Fire Safety Competency Framework Document | ORH Report



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