

Statement of Assurance
2021 - 2022

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service



Introduction

Welcome to Cumbria Fire Authority's Statement of Assurance for 2021/22. As the Cabinet Member for Customers, Transformation and the Fire and Rescue Service, I am pleased to present this statement for our local communities, setting out how Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) meets the requirements of The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

This document explains how the Fire Authority and CFRS work together to deliver on financial, governance and operational matters. The document outlines how CFRS has performed in the financial year 2021/22 and provides reassurance that it is working effectively and efficiently.

2021/22 has been a busy time for the Service and the Fire Authority dealing with the consequences of Local Government Reform and a change in Governance to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. I am pleased to say that during this period the Service has worked diligently to protect the people of Cumbria whilst minimising the impact of the change in Governance.

I am particularly proud of the work the Service has done to engage with the Community. This engagement reinforces the fact that CFRS is dedicated to serving all the communities of Cumbria. The images within this document reflect just some of the engagement work that has taken place throughout the year and reinforce how dedicated Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is to serving the people, businesses and visitors to Cumbria.



Councillor Janet Willis

Cabinet Member for
Customers, Transformation
and Fire and Rescue
Service

The Statement of Assurance

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 sets out the requirement for all fire and rescue authorities to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and to show how they have due regard to the requirements included in the Framework and the expectations set out in the authority's own Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

To demonstrate this, the Framework requires that each authority publish an annual statement of assurance. This statement outlines the way in which the Fire Authority and its Fire and Rescue Service, has due regard to the National Framework, the IRMP and to any other relevant strategic plan prepared by the Authority for that period.

HMICFRS Inspection

In 2019, HMICFRS carried out its first assessment of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS). The assessment examines the service's effectiveness, efficiency and how well it looks after its people. It is designed to give the public information about how their local fire and rescue service is performing in several important areas, in a way that is comparable with other services across England.

As a result of the inspection CFRS was found to be good at making the best use of resources and at making its services affordable now and in future.

It was also found to be good at:

- Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies
- Preventing fires and other risks
- Protecting the public through fire regulation
- Responding to fires and other emergencies
- Responding to national risks

Throughout 2021/22 CFRS have worked hard to reinforce those areas its was found to be good in and has worked towards an improvement plan to address those areas it was not.

CFRS also volunteered in 2021/22 to be part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion pilot inspection programme.

A full copy of the HMICFRS inspection report can be found **here**.

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

The IRMP reflects the Service's risk profile and considers key areas of risk and demand across the County. This process enables the Service to be clear about the levels of risk that exist, influencing prevention, protection and response arrangements. In 2019 CFRS went through a comprehensive process to develop an IRMP to cover the years 2019 – 2023. This process involved the creation of a comprehensive Risk Based Evidence Profile (RBEP) using the latest available data, an independent review of station delivery and a comprehensive engagement programme.

Link to **CFRS 2019 - 2023 IRMP**

The monitoring of significant achievements against the IRMP is important and is contained within our **Annual Report 2021/22**.

Covid-19

During the pandemic, as well as delivering our statutory responsibilities, we carried out additional activities which were over and above our normal duties to support the response to the pandemic. These activities included:

- Training staff to be Covid-19 vaccinators
- Managing the non-clinical aspects of the mass vaccination centres
- Delivery of essential items to vulnerable persons
- Face-fitting masks to be used by NHS and clinical care staff
- Delivering Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other medical supplies to NHS and care facilities
- Packing food supplies for vulnerable people
- Supporting Lateral Flow Testing in schools and businesses
- Training staff to drive Ambulances to support North West Ambulance Service (NWS)
- Providing project management capacity to support Public Health

CFRS colleagues have also trained multiple local businesses and organisations to conduct lateral flow testing in their own organisations. This work enabled thousands of people in Cumbria to be regularly tested each week.

Throughout 2021-22 CFRS has worked to facilitate a move back towards more “normal” working. It has however embraced the use of new technology and uses this to facilitate a much more dynamic working environment.



Governance

Cumbria County Council (CCC) fulfils the role of the Fire and Rescue Authority for the county as prescribed under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. They have a statutory duty to provide a Fire and Rescue Service for Cumbria with responsibilities that include:

- Setting the overarching Corporate Strategy
- Making key decisions where:
 - I. Significant change or impact will affect two or more communities or wards
 - II. Expenditure or savings exceeding £500,000 are concerned
- Oversight, challenge, evaluation and reporting in respect of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) business decisions and activities
- Internal audit of CFRS activities to ensure, among other things, the correctness of all income and expenditure and;
- Provision of an Annual Governance Statement as set out in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended 2016).

The Fire and Rescue Service is within the Customers, Transformation and Fire and Rescue portfolio held by Councillor Janet Willis. The role of the Portfolio Holder is to oversee the work of the Fire and Rescue Service, supporting the council's Cabinet and Council in making key decisions about policies and services that matter to local people.

The performance of the Fire and Rescue Service is overseen by the Communities and Place Scrutiny Committee, Members' Performance Working Group and Audit and Assurance Committee.



Details of how you can attend meetings, access agendas and reports and view decisions are available on the **County Council website**.

Cumbria Fire Authority (Full Council)

The Fire Authority in Cumbria is the Full Council consisting of all 84 Members. A key part of their function is to approve the Policy Framework which includes the IRMP. They also approve the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which includes CFRS.

Cabinet

It is the responsibility of the Cabinet to implement the Budget and Policy Framework once it has been formally approved by Council. Cabinet receive quarterly performance reports against the Council Plan (see below) and budget monitoring reports against the MTFP.

In 2021/22 Cabinet considered the Statement of assurance 2020/21 and the transfer of governance of the Fire Authority as a result of Local Government Reform. Cabinet also consider strategies and policies, such as the Council's Workforce Plan, Sickness Management and Digital Strategy which encompasses CFRS.

The Chief Fire Officer is appointed by the Fire Authority and forms an integral part of the Corporate Management Team within CCC. The Chief Fire Officer has responsibility for all staff within the Fire and Rescue Service.

Under the 'Scheme of Delegations' (contained within CCC Constitution), the Chief Fire Officer has the full range of powers to discharge the Council's functions in relation to its Fire and Rescue Service and can also make decisions concerning:

- Resilience and Emergency Planning
- Any other services



Statutory Responsibilities

Fire and Rescue Authorities function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework as contained in the key legislation and guidance outlined below:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order
- Fire and Rescue Service National Framework
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Fire Service Governance

In July 2021 the decision was taken to restructure local government in Cumbria. This decision meant that from April 2023 the governance model of CFRS would change significantly. The Chief Fire Officer and Leadership Team have put a tremendous amount of effort into assuring the change in governance is managed effectively with negligible impact on service provision.

During 2021 / 22 the Chief Fire Officer and Leadership team engaged with the Local Government Program and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, necessitated by the fact that both were possible to assume the role of the existing fire authority. Despite having to service two possible delivery models, this work programme was delivered efficiently with a high degree of professionalism. This approach has been held up to scrutiny by the fire authority, and copies of all reports to the Communities and Place Scrutiny committee can be found [here](#).

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Inclusive and Safe Communities

Throughout 2021/22 CFRS has been committed to ensuring it meets the Public Sector Equality Duty providing equality of opportunity through access to services for all by ensuring:

- It's functions have clear information about Cumbria's diversity profile to inform them of the community they serve
- Communities of Cumbria and those underserved are involved in shaping CFRS's services
- CFRS work reflects the needs of our diverse communities including those underserved and it can demonstrate outcomes in addressing structural discrimination and inequalities
- Workforce outcomes for people who share a protected characteristic demonstrate the benefits of a proactive approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Service has moved towards "Inclusive and Safe Communities" and has set the following EDI priorities:

- Understanding our Communities
- Inclusive Services – (Response, Protection and Prevention)
- Valuing our People (Diverse and Inclusive Workforce)

In meeting this duty, CFRS has contributed towards the delivery of the Councils Equality Strategy and Objectives which can be found [here](#).

Volunteer for HMICFRS Inspection

CFRS has recently volunteered to pilot the latest HMICFRS inspection methodology in regard to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This pilot gave us valuable insights into HMICFRS expectation in regard to EDI going forwards. It also allowed us to validate our current delivery plans and also to shape subsequent inspections.



Council Plan 2018 - 2022

The Council's four year Plan sets out the outcomes the Council wants to achieve for the people of Cumbria, and the approaches it will use to contribute to achieving these outcomes.

The Plan is supported by an annual delivery plan which describes the key activities undertaken to deliver the outcomes.

In 2021/22 the Service contributed towards the following objectives in the delivery plan.

- Strengthen support for and increase operational availability in Cumbria fire and rescue On-call stations through ongoing recruitment, development of managers and different working arrangements to ensure availability of appliances by October 2020.
- Conduct the appropriate level of fire safety audits and visits in line with our Risk Based Inspection Programme
- Work in collaboration with statutory and voluntary partners to identify and engage with vulnerable members of the community and other 'at risk' groups and ensure we deliver prevention activity based on local needs including Safe and Well visits
- The number of accidental primary dwelling fires to be less than 241 in 2021/22.
- The number of High Risk Fire Protection audits in to be greater than 512 in 2021/22
- 10,000 safe and well visits carried out by 31 March 2022
- Focus on positive action to attract a more diverse workforce to the Fire and Rescue service so it truly reflects the diverse nature of the communities we serve by December 2020

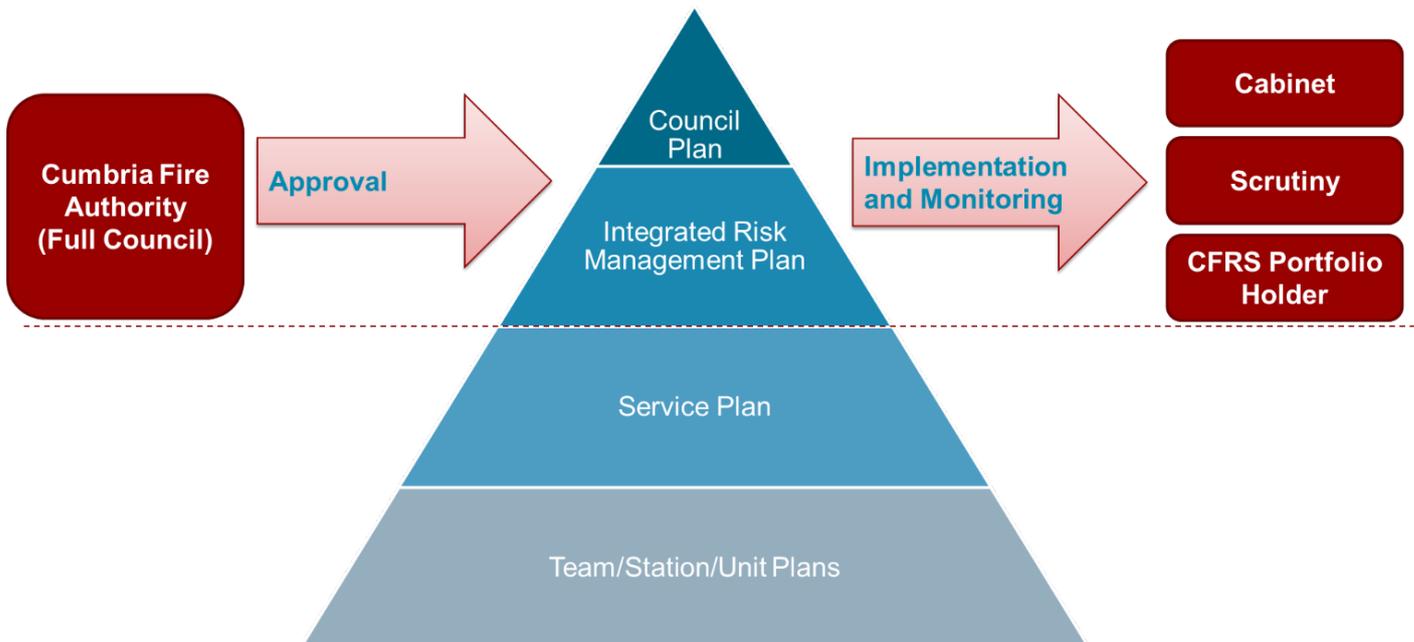


Diagram: Showing how CFRS strategy and plans align to the strategic intent of the CCC plan

Transparency

CFRS is open and transparent and ensures performance data is routinely made available on its website for any stakeholders, including communities, to scrutinise. This includes data to individual station level and fire engine availability and response times.

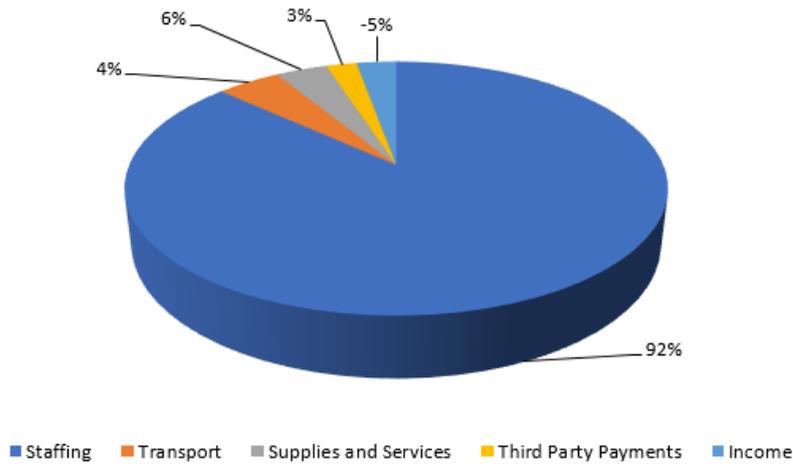
This can all be accessed at <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/cumbriafire/performance-and-transparency/performance-and-transparency.asp>

Finance

The Fire and Rescue Service budget is primarily aligned to staffing, transport and supplies and services, as shown in the graph below. In 2021/22 CFRS annual net revenue budget was £19 million, which included 3% income from external sources. There is also an additional capital budget to procure fleet vehicles, equipment and improve infrastructure.

When national comparisons are made using CIPFA data, CFRS is one of the most efficiently run services in the country given the area it covers.

Cost as a proportion of CFRS Budget



CCC is responsible for ensuring that public affairs are conducted in accordance with the law and public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

A 'Statement of Accounts' is produced and published annually on the Council's website which contains headline financial information. The accounts can be accessed on the **County Council Website**

The Annual Governance Statement sets out the main features of the Council's corporate governance arrangements and its effectiveness. This Governance Statement can also be found at the link above.



Service Assurance

The Service carries out a wide range of assurance functions that ensure we can review our performance and improve where possible. A key part of Service assurance includes Operational Assurance, Debriefs and Exercising. Another key area of focus is to ensure that we work effectively with our multi-agency partners under the Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles (JESIP). This approach is reinforced through the service using learning from inquests to inform policy, procedural reviews and to advise on any improvement to operational equipment where necessary.

Operational Assurance is used to promote workforce learning by identifying examples of good practice and where improvements can be made in the delivery of our service. This is captured through the Incident Monitoring processes. This work not only supports local learning but includes reporting through the national sector learning portals; Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) and the National Operational Learning (NOL).



Business Continuity – Civil Contingencies Act 2004

CFRS has robust business continuity plans in place. In addition, the Council's Resilience Unit is within the Fire and Rescue Service and work in close collaboration with fire officers. CFRS's approach to business continuity, including regular testing of plans contributed to the award of a "Good" rating for making best use of resources by HMICFRS.

If CFRS does come under pressure, there is a degradation plan in place that allows for the prioritisation of resources to protect the most vulnerable. This is tested regularly. Thanks to proactive senior management, this degradation plan has not had to be used and the service has continued to deliver services to the people of Cumbria.

Interoperability, Resilience and Safety

A comprehensive range of risk intelligence data and information is considered as part of the risk identification and analysis process underpinning the Community Risk Management Process. This includes Community Risk Registers, with the service having a leading role in the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum (CLRF) which focuses on interoperability and joint planning with other emergency services.

JESIP awareness within CFRS, is now an integral part of all incident command courses.

Control Room

North West Fire Control is a public sector company set up exclusively by the Fire Services in the North West to jointly handle all 999 emergency calls and be responsible for mobilising firefighters and fire engines to incidents in Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Cheshire.

North West Fire Control is responsible for emergency call handling, mobilising resources, incident support and co-ordination. The control room was part of the HMICFRS inspection and no areas for improvement were identified.



Over the Border Mutual Aid Arrangements

Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 allow mutual arrangements to be agreed with neighbouring services to improve resilience and capacity in border areas. Cumbria Fire Authority has in place contractual agreements with the following bordering Fire Authorities for response to operational incidents:

- Scotland
- North Yorkshire
- Durham and Darlington
- Lancashire
- Northumberland

National arrangements

The National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) contains a range of designated roles that provide levels of advice and coordination when National Resilience capabilities are required. National Resilience, in the context of the Fire and Rescue Service, is the capacity and capability of services to work together with other Category 1 and 2 responders (Civil Contingencies Act 2004) to deliver a sustained and effective response to major incidents, emergencies and disruptive events.

CFRS ensures its emergency preparedness and response capability is tried and tested through regular training and exercising on a local, regional and national scale.

Blue Light Partners

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a statutory duty on blue light services to collaborate where there are real opportunities to improve efficiency, effectiveness and improve public safety. The service has embraced this concept and has been instrumental in the establishment of a Blue Light Executive Leaders Board. Several collaboration projects have been progressed in 2020/21, including the use of Joint Incident Command Units, Resolution of Concern for Welfare, Missing Persons Searches and the piloting of Joint Emergency Services Officer roles.



Health and Safety

The Authority complies with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other relevant legislation in managing its health and safety (H&S) duties with clearly defined management responsibilities which includes the assessment and management of risks arising from its activities.

There is a clear commitment from the Authority that elected members, officers and trade union representative's work together to improve standards. Within this collaborative approach the service is well represented and works to deliver the Corporate Health and Safety Action Plan under the direction of the Assistant Director Organisational Change.

CFRS consults its employees on matters affecting H&S, providing information instruction and training to all employees.

In addition, the Service has systems in place to support the reporting and investigation of all accidents and near misses. This helps in limiting the potential for recurrence, learn from incidents and create a safer environment with a positive Health & Safety culture.

The Service works with Cumbria County Council and the Occupational Health Team to promote and support the wellbeing of our staff. The Service has a programme of health and wellbeing campaigns and has developed a cohort of mental health trainers and first aiders, thereby providing all staff with access to support for physical and mental wellbeing.

Prevention

CFRS utilises risk and demand information to ensure that strategic, tactical and operational activities are intelligence led, and research driven. This is achieved by using specialist systems, software, data and skills delivered through professional analysts as well as sharing data with partners. This approach supports the service's intelligence lead Prevention Strategy and ensures that the service prioritises its resource to the most vulnerable within the communities of Cumbria and actively supports the wider health agenda.

CFRS continues to run and participate in several targeted initiatives designed to prevent fires, reduce anti-social behaviour and improve life chances. These included working with Young Firefighters, Fire Cadets, and Junior Citizens.

Fire Protection Activities

CFRS enforces the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 through its delivery of its Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). The RBIP captures all designated premises across the County by calculating a relative risk score which in turn allows categorisation of properties into high, medium and low risk. This risk score combines the severity of impact as a result of a fire occurring alongside the likelihood of that fire occurring.

The RBIP highlighted the need for additional Fire Inspectors to undertake audits of high risk premises. In order to meet this requirement CFRS provided training to our existing Level 3 Fire Safety Advisors and using guidance from the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators supported those personnel in the achievement of Level 4 qualifications.

In order to enhance the skills of our Operational Firefighters and Business Fire Safety Apprentices and support the delivery of lower level Fire Protection Inspections CFRS developed and delivered a training package that allowed them to demonstrate their competency.

CFRS has provided support to local business through our delivery of Operational Business Engagements using Firefighters who go out and support regulated premises in compliance with the legislation. However, at times CFRS has been required to enforce the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat.

Response

CFRS responds to a range of emergency incidents with 45 fire appliances operating from 38 fire stations across Cumbria. Stations are crewed by operational staff who work different shift patterns depending upon local risk.

CFRS has in place a standard to respond to high risk incidents such as house fires within ten minutes on 80% of occasions. Pre-determined attendance requirements are developed through the analysis of risk information from sources such as incident data and site specific risk information. Through the Authority's review of emergency response, specialist assets have been placed in strategic locations to improve response to incidents across Cumbria and respond to local risks, such as road traffic collisions on motorways, or water incidents in the Lake District.

Operational Training

The CFRS People Strategy informs the development of its workforce. The annual Workforce Development Plan identifies and predicts the required skills and capabilities in line with appraisals, training needs analysis and workforce planning predictions. Our main priority of operational training is to ensure our incident commanders receive the appropriate command development and assessment to deal with a wide range of incidents.

The service continues to maintain established training plans underpinned by Maintenance of Skills (MOS) and Maintenance of Knowledge (MOK) programmes.

Fire Investigation

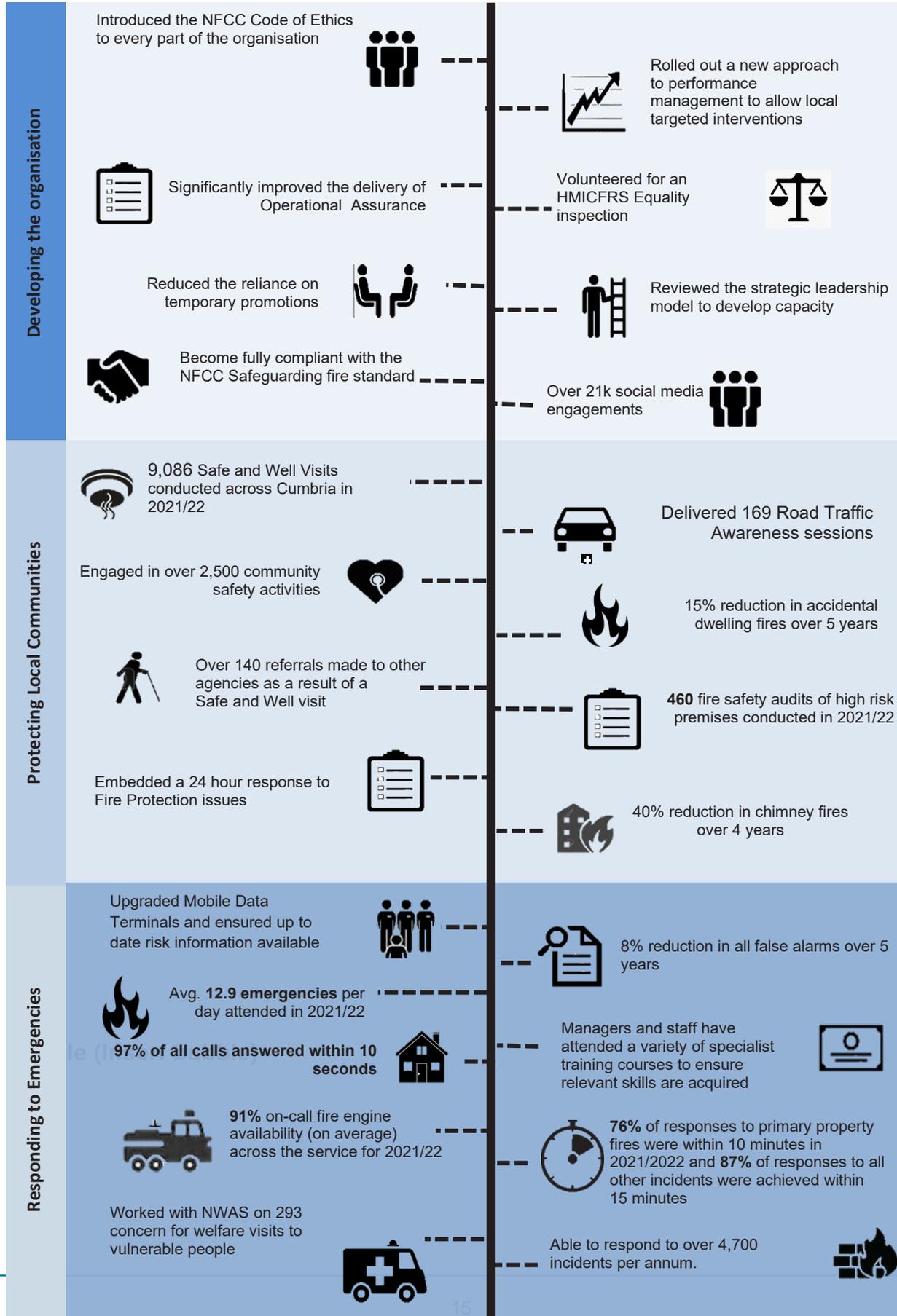
Fire investigation is an integral part of the Service's prevention and protection activities. The main purpose of fire investigation is to determine the origin, cause and development of a fire and to contribute to organisational learning.

Investigation outcomes inform future prevention and protection activities and also assist in the prevention and detection of crime.



Performance against priority areas

This section highlights CFRS's performance during 2021/22 against identified priority areas:



Translation Services

If you require this document in a different format, in braille, easy read version or in other languages, please contact us at [**fireservice.publications@cumbria.gov.uk**](mailto:fireservice.publications@cumbria.gov.uk)