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Our reference: LC

Date 27th October 2025

CUMBRIA POLICE, FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER'S PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY CONFERENCE

The Police and Crime Commissioner's Public Accountability Conference will take place on
Wednesday 5th November at 13:00

The purpose of the Conference is to enable the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to
hold the Chief Fire Officer to account for operational performance.

If you would like to join the meeting as a member of the public or press, please contact
Louisa Curran on Louisa.Curran@cumbria.police.uk. Following the meeting papers will be
uploaded on to the Commissioner's website.

G Shearer
Chief Executive

Attendees:

Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner	- Mr David Allen (Chair)
OPFCC Chief Executive	- Ms Gill Shearer
Chief Finance Officer	- Mr Steven Tickner
Chief Fire Officer	- Mr Paul Hancock
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	- Ms Lauren Woodward
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	- Mr Ben Ryder

AGENDA

PART 1 – ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. URGENT BUSINESS AND EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider (i) any urgent items of business and (ii) whether the press and public should be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of any Agenda item where there is likely disclosure of information exempt under s.100A(4) and Part I Schedule A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in not disclosing outweighs any public interest in disclosure.

3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

An opportunity (not exceeding 20 minutes) to deal with any questions which have been provided in writing within at least three clear working days before the meeting date to the Chief Executive.

4. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

Attendees are invited to disclose any personal/prejudicial interest, which they may have in any of the items on the Agenda. If the personal interest is a prejudicial interest, then the individual should not participate in a discussion of the matter and must withdraw from the room unless a dispensation has previously been obtained.

5. MINUTES OF MEETING & ACTION LOG

To receive and approve the minutes and actions of the Public Accountability Conference held on 22nd July 2025.

6. PERFORMANCE

To receive a report detailing the latest performance position of Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service.

7. HMICFRS

To receive a report detailing Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service latest position against the findings of its recent HMICFRS Inspection.



Item 5A

**CUMBRIA POLICE, FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER
PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY CONFERENCE**



Minutes of the Public Accountability Conference held on
Tuesday 22nd July 2025
at 13:00 in the Community Room, FRS HQ

PRESENT

Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner – David Allen (Chair);

Also present:

Chief Fire Officer (Paul Hancock);

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Lauren Woodward);

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Ben Ryder);

Area Manager, Head of Operational Preparedness (Dave Love)

CFRS Head of Performance & Assurance (Mark Clement)

OPFCC Chief Executive (Gill Shearer);

Chief Finance Officer (Steven Tickner);

OPFCC Blue Light Collaboration Manager (Steph Stables);

OPFCC Administration Support Officer (Louisa Curran) - taking minutes

Apologies: None

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

001. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received ahead of the meeting.

002. URGENT BUSINESS AND EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items of urgent business to be considered by the Committee.

003. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A question had been received from a member of the public:

How is Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service working with other agencies to prepare for a potential flooding incident?

The question and answer were circulated to attendees ahead of the meeting and assurance was received. The response will be forwarded to the individual who asked the question.

Response:



Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, plays a key role in planning for and responding to emergencies, including flooding. The service works closely with other emergency services, local authorities, health agencies and utility providers as part of the Cumbria Resilience Forum (CRF) to ensure a coordinated and effective multi-agency response.

The service's planning and preparedness activities are informed by HM Government's Emergency Preparedness statutory guidance, which outlines how Category 1 and 2 responders must prepare for civil emergencies.

The way the service and partners respond to such events follows HM Government's Emergency Response and Recovery non statutory guidance, ensuring a joined-up and structured approach throughout the incident.

Importantly, all responders in Cumbria have adopted the JESIP Interoperability Framework. JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles) provides a set of common models and principles — such as joint decision-making, shared situational awareness, and coordinated communication — that, when applied consistently, significantly improve collaborative working between responding organisations during multi-agency incidents. 2

These plans and frameworks are regularly tested through joint exercises, and learning is shared and embedded across agencies via the Cumbria Resilience Forum.

Flooding has also been identified as a risk in the service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28. Consequently, the service maintains a range of specialist teams, equipment and training, including water rescue capability, strategically located across the county to ensure rapid and effective deployment to incidents whenever and wherever required.

This collaborative, well-practised approach ensures Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service is well-prepared to protect communities during flooding events and to support wider emergency response operations across the count

004. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of any personal interest relating to any item on the agenda.

005. MINUTES

The Chair presented the minutes of the CFRS Public Accountability Conference held on the 14th May 2025 which had previously been circulated with the agenda. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.



The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and discussed. Following discussion both were accepted as complete and closed.

RESOLVED, that, the

- (i) Minutes of the CFRS Public Accountability Conference held on the 14th May 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair;

006. PERFORMANCE

The report was presented by ACFO Woodward.

Across a twelve-month average, the service response time is 10m 09s – this is slightly above the target of 10m. The Commissioner raised a question around what action was taking place to address this and meet the 10-minute target. A brief explanation was given around current monitoring of areas including rurality, travel distances and on-call availability.

Service availability has suffered a minor decline, however still ranks within the top 50% of comparable Services. The target is 90%, and currently wholetime availability is 78.5% and on-call is 73.1%. This is being monitored by the Service Improvement Board, which has identified that the decline is more of an issue with retention than with recruitment. These discussions are productive and have brought a local perspective – for example, one Station has less than 20% availability which is skewing the numbers somewhat. The engagement of the Service Improvement Board ensures that local knowledge is utilised to pick up specific issues as they develop.

The Service delivered 532 high risk audits in the 2024-25 financial year, which is an increase from 377 in 2023-24.

The target for commercial false alarms was ambitiously set at 10% and was achieved at 9.6% following close working with repeat offenders and engagement with the North West Fire Control (NWFC).

A query was raised around the Service's usage of benchmarking, and it was requested that going forward some regional/national context be included in this report.

Over the previous twelve months an 18% reduction in commercial fires was noted, however a spike was observed in June and September 2024. This has been explored and no particular trends were identified that could have caused this.

It was noted that some of this reduction may be attributable to the work of the Protection team and their engagement with local business. It is a likely area of growth, particularly due to the expected increase in population in areas such as Carlisle and Barrow. Reassurance



was received that a succession plan is in place to manage this, and the Service is confident that the staff development model is sustainable enough to manage this increase.

It was noted that there are new Building Regulations due to be implemented – these have passed through Parliament and are expected to go out in April 2026. This will have significant implications for all FRSs.

Overall across the previous 12 months, an 11.1% reduction in fires has been achieved. There has been a reduction in primary dwelling fires – no particular trends or themes have been observed, however prevention messaging has given particular emphasis to safety in the kitchen, which is where the majority of domestic fires start. Two people are employed on 12-month fixed-term contracts in order to maintain the prevention offer, including the home fire safety visits.

It was noted that there is a set criteria for home fire safety visits for elderly, disabled and/or vulnerable households. The Q1 data is not yet available but so far looks positive.

Domestic false alarms have decreased, and there has been a 33% reduction in water incidents. A reduction has also been noted in RTCs from 2024-25. As it stands there has only been one water fatality, in March.

The service absence target is under constant review – it tends to be kept higher than target by long-term sickness absences, of which two have just been resolved. As there are low numbers of these, a small change can cause a significant skew in statistics. It is discussed at Senior Leadership Team meetings every month, and engagement with group managers, stations and other officers. This means that the data received is of a high quality and lends itself well to strong targets for quality interventions.

The Water Safety Partnership has just had its first year celebrations – feedback has been very positive and the Partnership is regarded as a very necessary entity given the county's geography.

It was noted that the HMICFRS report also highlighted potential improvements around performance management – this is on the radar and in the process of being developed.

Feedback was received that performance is generally good, and most things are moving in the right direction. Some concern was raised around availability and attendance times – attendance times are often within seconds of target, however focus needs to go onto making sure these targets are met. Availability is a separate issue with will be picked up outside of this meeting.

It was requested that further reports provide some clarity on data by means of benchmarking, against national/regional/comparable services. This has been brought up by external auditors and may come forward in their report.



Concern was raised around the upcoming IT project being undertaken in collaboration with the Constabulary – this is predominantly being dealt with through Executive Board - Working Together, however it was agreed that there was some work to be done around early recruitment to backfill temporary posts vacated by staff on longer term sickness or maternity, in order to ensure correct resourcing.

Issues around on-call availability were picked up as being an issue worth approaching surgically, as improvements in 2-3 stations that have <20% availability will improve overall statistics significantly.

RESOLVED, that

- (i) The report be noted;

007. RESILIENCE

The report was presented by Dave Love, Area Manager – Head of Operational Preparedness.

This report provides an overview of the multi-agency approach embedded in the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and the work that is done off the back of the LRF plans. This is nothing new to the service and incorporates the Fire and Rescue Service's contribution to the response to major incidents such as storms and floods that may result in major, widespread damage and/or prolonged disruption.

The FRS looks to enhance its approach through various means, one of which is the national operational guidance provided by the NFCC. Its measures aim to be flexible, risk-informed and reflect diverse challenges and risks across Cumbria. This is achieved through risk profiling to establish operational preparedness. Risk profiles are aligned to the CRMP, and informed by historical, seasonal and data-led trends including identifying risks such as flooding, wildfires, and the impact of tourism.

It was agreed that the report is very positive and feeds effectively into the Fire Cover Review that is currently ongoing – the completion of this is due imminently, however ORH have been asked to do some additional modelling around the increase in population and infrastructure anticipated on the back of the Garden Village development in Carlisle and BAE's development in Barrow. The goal is to complete this review by the end of July.

With regard to the development, particularly in Barrow where the population is anticipated to increase from 60,000 to 90,000 as a result of BAE's expansion, there is a need to ensure that protective and prevention measures are maintained and expanded proportionately as need requires. This will have implications for financial planning and risk management plans – it will be important to ensure that planning and consultation, both internally and externally, are all in place in plenty of time to anticipate that development.



With regard to the timing of this consultation, it was further noted that any public consultation on this matter should not take place at the same time as the Council Tax precept consultation for 2026-27. It was discussed that the intention is to run this twelve-week consultation in 2026. The Police, Fire and Crime Panel will be involved in this process.

The role of Critical Incident Teams at times of high demand was discussed – this is an internal model which allows the Service to resource emergent or unexpected stresses on demand while maintaining business as usual. This relates to the Service's commitment to operational flexibility, particularly improving on the Service's ability to respond quickly and effectively to wildfires.

Cumbria is home to multiple high-risk locations including BAE Systems, Sellafield, Spira Energy and Innovia – regular simulation exercises are regularly undertaken at these COMAH and REPIR sites, which ensures the Service's compliance with statutory requirements and readiness. Any significant learning from these exercises is brought to operational improvement group, which informs improvement across the prevention, protection and response functions.

Reassurance was received that the Service has ample capacity to work at height, with several stations and individuals specialising in this area.

Attendance and engagement with joint learning platforms was discussed, with reassurance received that the Service attend NW Response and Resilience Committee quarterly, and NW Operations and Learning regularly. At a seminar at NWFC in Warrington in June, CFRS presented learning from the fire at BAE in October 2024. All incidents and exercises that take place in Cumbria are shared nationally. The Civil Contingencies Act legislates for the obligation to share information with other responders and civil protection efforts. CFRS are an active participant in Cumbria LRF, and has the capacity to set up information cells to look at certain areas at the earliest stages of a major incident to ensure that information is shared in real time and with the right people. These arrangements are reviewed annually.

RESOLVED, that

- (i) The report be noted;

008. GRENFELL ENQUIRY

Phase 1 of this report details 46 recommendations for the FRS to be aware of. These include specialised areas such as evacuation, premises information, and Fire Survival Guidance. The Service has made good progress in addressing the Phase 1 recommendations, with overall completion at 89%.



In terms of Phase 2, there are 12 recommendations, five of which are specifically for Fire & Rescue Services. Recommendation 113.59, around radios, is complete and the correct equipment is in use. Firefighters are trained to respond appropriately to loss of communications and how to restore them.

In terms of water provision (113.63) the FRS is able to tap into the domestic water supply where required, and NWFC offers provision of a high-volume pump. United Utilities have introduced a fleet of vehicles capable of dispensing between 27,000 and 30,000 litres of water. High Volume Pumping units at Kendal can be used to pump water from rivers, lakes or hydrants where required.

Good progress has been made around these recommendations and evidence of compliance is being gathered as required.

An action was raised for the continued monitoring of the Grenfell Enquiry recommendations through Executive Board - Fire. The Commissioner requires ongoing assurance that the Service is delivering against the recommendations and has action plans in place to ensure their completion.

Assurance was received that the relevant areas have been embedded into FRS policy and practice and the Operational Improvement Group is driving them forward, ready for the December 2025 deadline.

ACTION:

- The Grenfell Enquiry recommendations continue to be monitored through Executive Board – Fire.

Assurance was received that the relevant areas have been embedded into FRS policy and practice and the Operational Improvement Group is driving them forward, ready for the December 2025 deadline.

RESOLVED, that

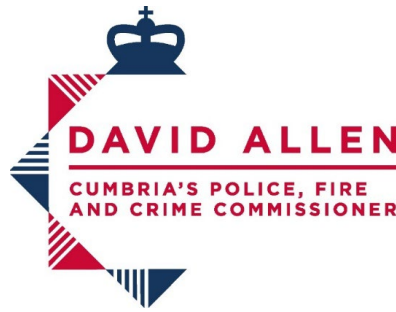
- (i) The report be noted;

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Fire Public Accountability Conference
OPEN ACTION LOG



Date of meeting	Action Number	Minute Number / Topic	Action to be taken	Lead Person/s	Report back to Board	Update	Review Date	Date Action Closed
22/07/2025	008	Grenfell Enquiry	The Grenfell Enquiry recommendations continue to be monitored through Executive Board - Fire.	OPFCC, Blue Light Collaboration Manager	No	This forms part of the Executive Board Fire Forward Plan	N/A	22.07.2025



Public Accountability Conference

Meeting Date: Wednesday 5th November

Agenda Item: 06

Report of: Head of Planning and Improvement

CFRS Q2 Performance 2025/26

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the end of Q2 performance position for the service against a set of agreed indicators.

Recommendation

2. That the Commissioner:
 - a. notes the content of the report.

Background

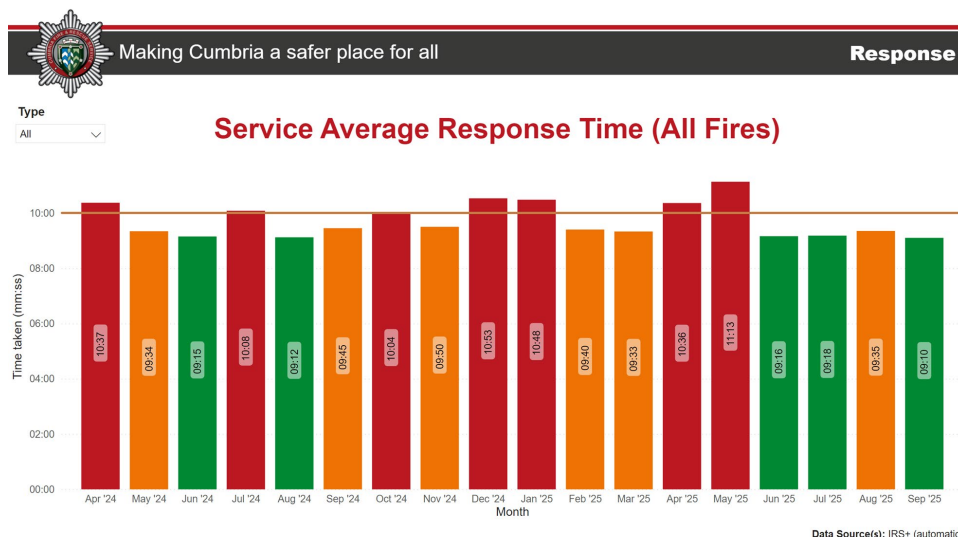
3. In April 2023, the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) took up his role as the Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority, replacing the County Council as the Fire Authority. This year also saw the start of the process to create the Services new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
4. These events created an opportunity for the Service to review our Performance Management Framework and performance measures. The main aim of which was to align the new measures against the priorities of the Fire and National Framework for England and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reporting requirements.

5. Following this review a core suite of indicators was created and subsequently agreed by the PFCC. This suite of indicators provides HMICFRS with the information they need, and also provides reassurance to the PFCC, the Strategic Leadership team (SLT) and the public that the Service is delivering against the objectives set out in the CRMP.
6. A breakdown of each performance indicator is provided in the appendix at the end of the report. Where possible valid comparisons have been made to the latest regional or national data. Commentary against each indicator is summarised below.

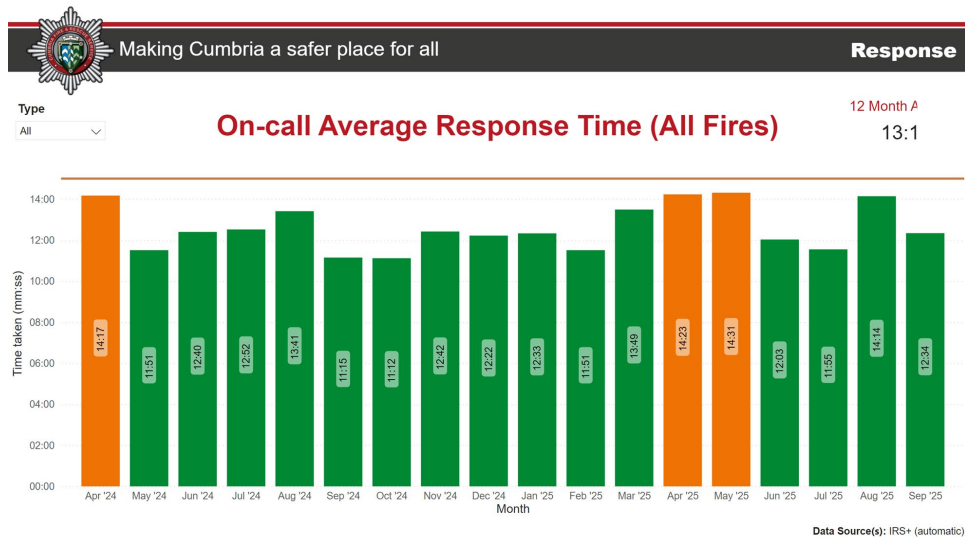
Operational Response

7. Average response times

8. Following feedback from HMICFRS in 2024/25 the Service changed its approach to setting response targets to be more realistic. The target for the Service to respond to all fire incidents was set at 10 minutes, with a corresponding target of 15 minutes for our On-call staff. We saw a slight reduction in response time over the previous financial year, in both instances we hit our target with figures of 9:43 and 12:59 respectively.
9. When compared to the other 13 predominately rural services, the grouping Cumbria fits into according to MHCLG, this places us mid table.
10. The charts below highlight monthly performance for Service average response times (all fires).

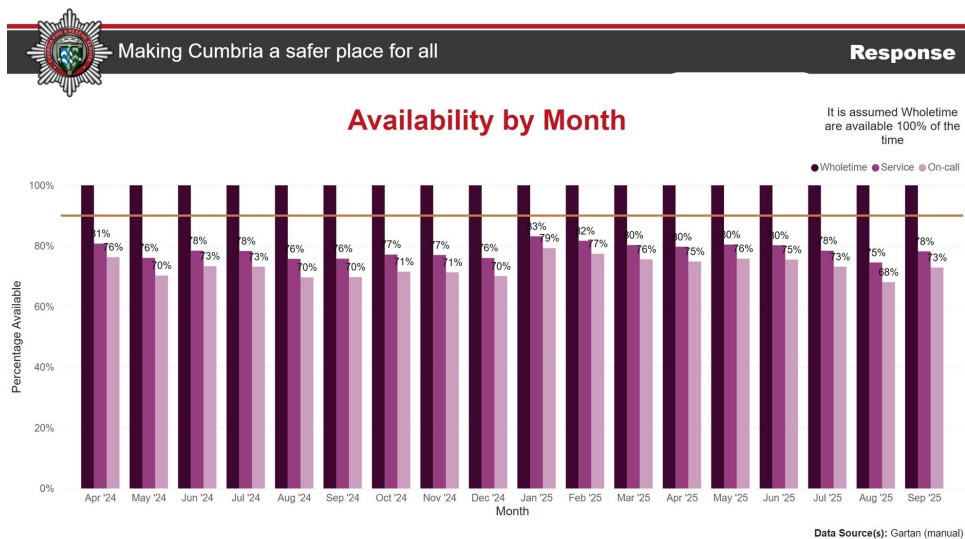


11. The chart overleaf highlights monthly performance for On-call average response times (all fires)



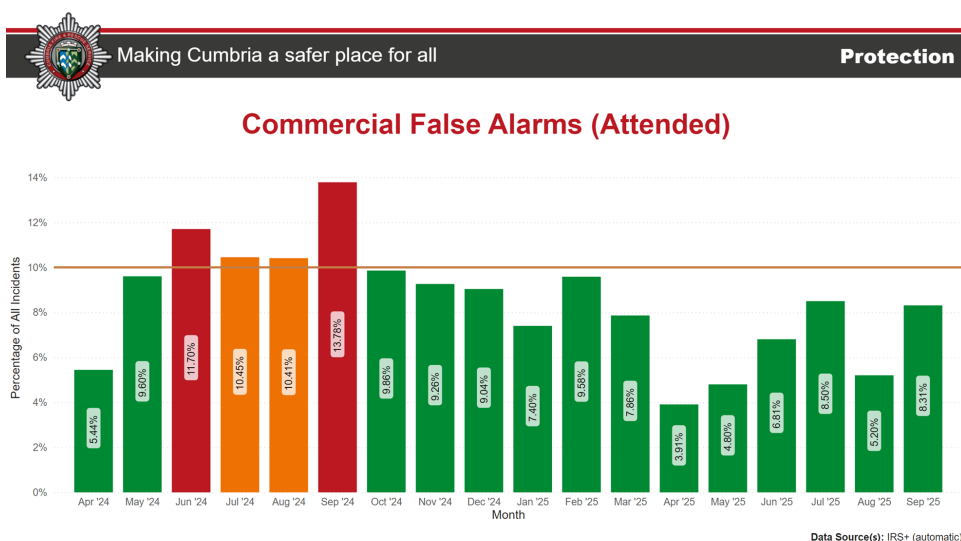
Service Availability

12. In terms of Service Availability, the Service has always had a target of 90%. In the current climate, this is particularly challenging as all Services with an On-call cohort are seeing a steady decline in availability. Cumbria's figures rank the Service in the top 50% of its comparators overall with a Service availability of 78.5% and an On-call availability of 74.5% which would rank us sixth nationally of those Services with an On-call cohort.
13. The chart below highlights the Service availability by Wholetime, On-call and Service average.



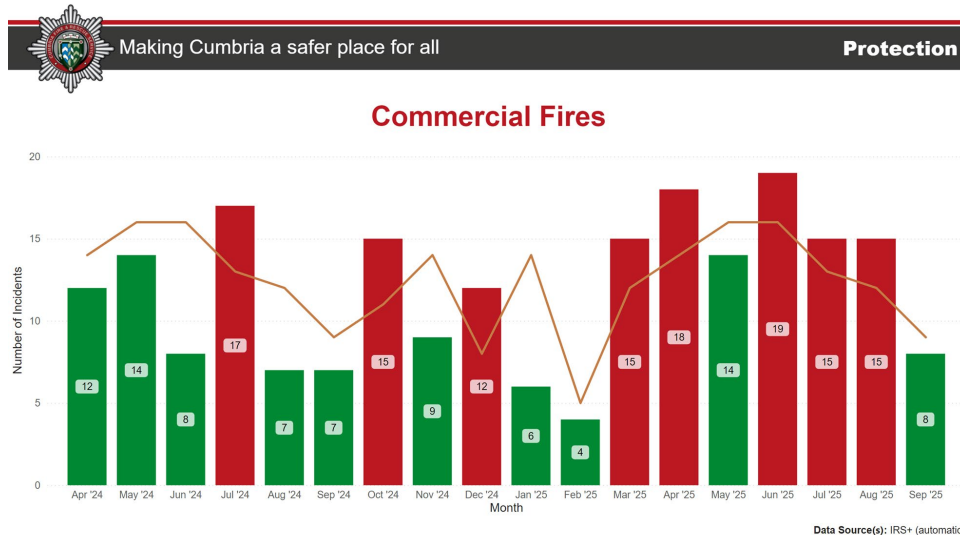
Protection

14. Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)
15. One of the key drivers of performance of the protection team is the delivery of the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). This is a list of all the high-risk premises in Cumbria. The previous RBIP ran up until Dec 2024, and the Service completed 86.5%. From January onwards a new RBIP was created using the latest available data and intelligence to ensure that the Services resources are utilised in the most effective way. This RBIP will be delivered against over a similar three-year period.
16. In numerical terms only, the Service delivered 126 high risk audits in the last half year, down from 204 in the previous period. There are currently known issues relating to the transfer of data from the RBIP to CFRMIS that the Service is working to resolve. The department has also suffered with long term sickness that has impacted performance. Following the retirement of a staff member, two advisors are acting up to the role of inspector. Whilst the performance figure reflects the data on the system, we believe that following a manual trawl of the data the real figure is somewhere between a 10% and 15% reduction.
17. Two of the drivers of activity within the Protection team are the number of false alarms that occur and the total number of commercial fires.
18. Commercial False Alarms
19. With regard to false alarms, the Service set itself a challenging target of 10% and achieved this with a figure of 6.3%. This has been achieved by identifying repeat offenders and working with them to raise awareness and identifying improvements in process.
20. The chart below highlights the number of commercial false alarms (attended)

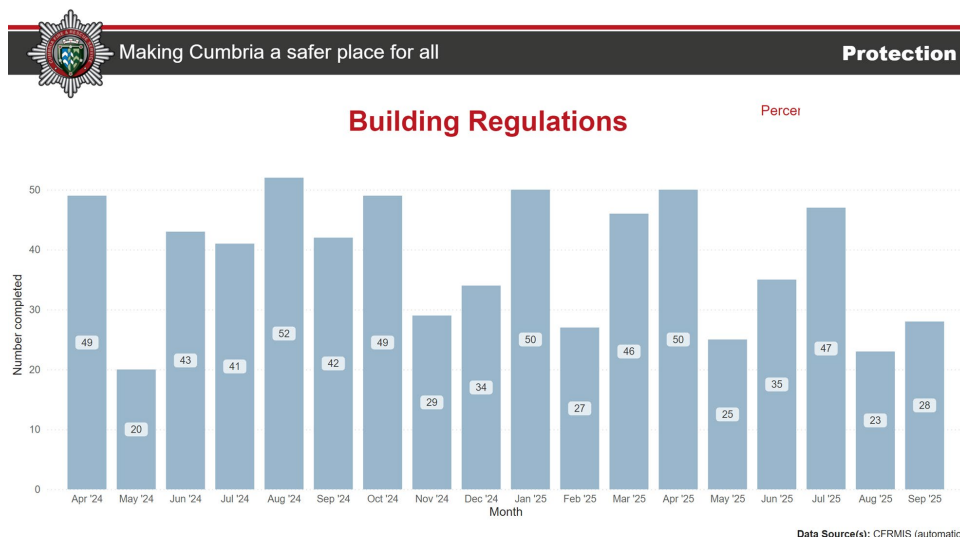


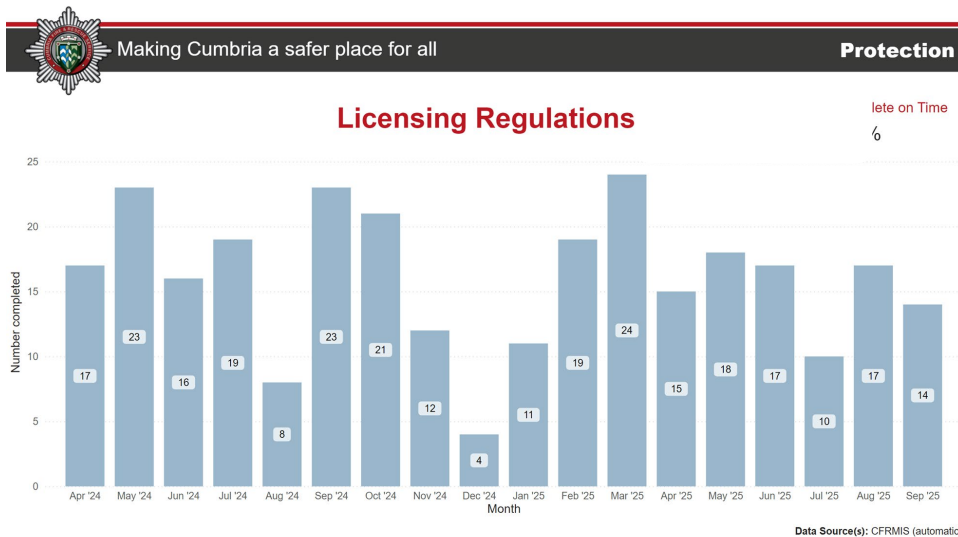
21. Commercial Fires

22. Over the last twelve months we have seen an increase in the number of commercial fires in Cumbria, as illustrated by the chart below. Following an analysis high risk areas have been identified, although no one specific reason for the increase at the beginning of the year has been identified.



23. Two of the statutory functions the Protection team deliver against are building and licencing regulations. Due to the statutory nature of this work, the Service has set itself the target of 95% compliance, and in the last six months has achieved figures of 96.6% and 100% respectively.
24. The charts below highlights the number of building regulations and licencing applications completed on time.



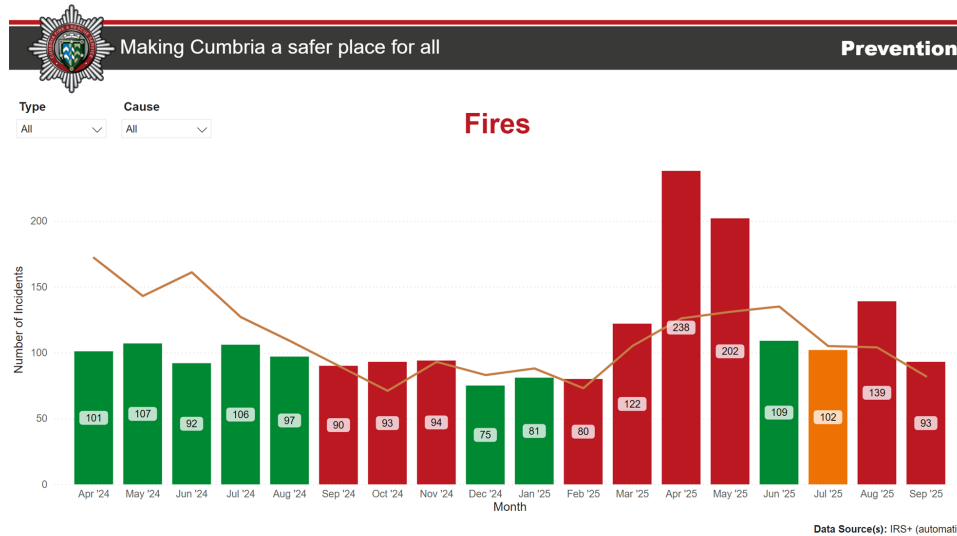


- 25 Regulation work was largely driven by one individual who has recently retired. The whole protection team has contributed to the recent maintenance of this excellent level of performance.

Prevention

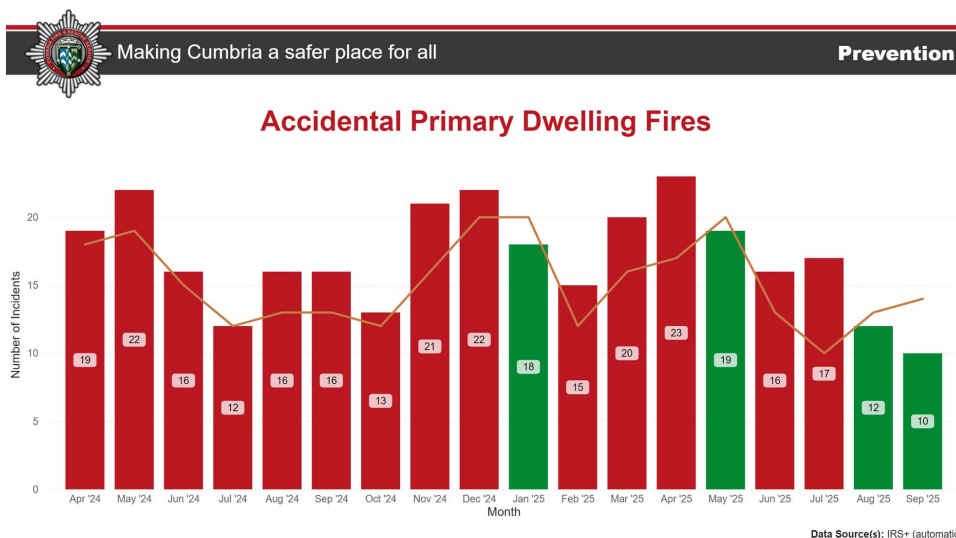
26. Fires

27. Overall, in Cumbria when compared to last year, we have seen a 48.4% increase in the level of fires. This has been predominately driven by the hot weather at the beginning of the year and the increase in wildfires.



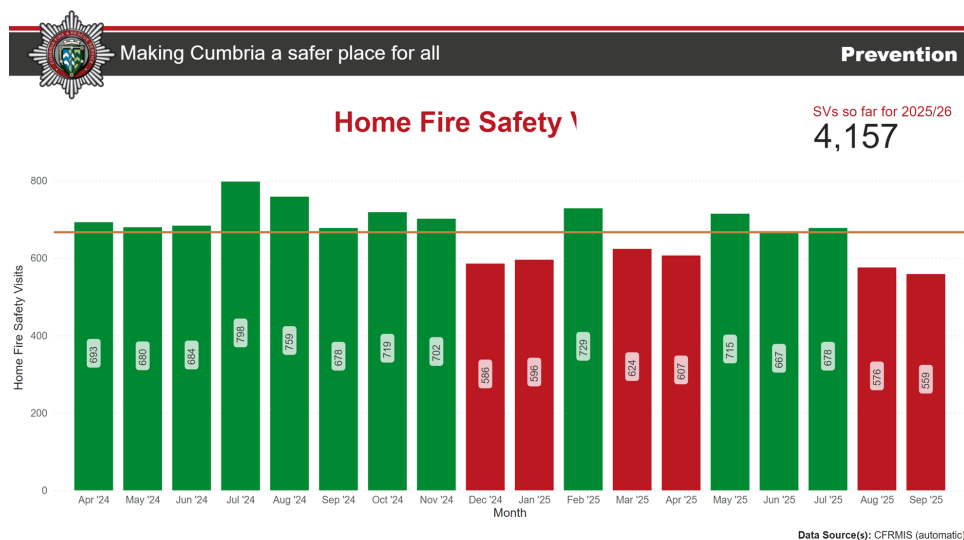
28. Proactively in response to the number of wildfire incidents, Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service engaged in a number of media opportunities to share key safety information, advice and guidance on how to prevent wildfires and what to do if you encounter one. This included interviews with ITV, BBC and Greatest Hits Radio, as well as providing comments to Newsquest Cumbria and Cumbria Crack.
29. The service also proactively shared information across its social media channels and on its website to highlight the dangers and recommend preventative measures.

30. Within CFRS we are implementing a structured approach to preventative activities to deliver intervention strategies following an increase in all fires throughout 2025/26. This includes
31. Ward-Based Engagement in which each Watch team is assigned specific wards for targeted outreach. Named Watch and Crew Managers serve as direct contacts, and this helps to deliver stronger relationships with residents, schools, and partners.
32. The delivery of a wide range of youth programmes that includes the use of the Stay Wise platform to deliver fire prevention, road safety, and water safety education in schools.
33. Funded through the Office of the PFCC we are delivering a Building Resilience Program: for high school students, and the Service has been successful in securing funding to implement three more fire cadet groups in Cumbria that work to promote safety and community values.
34. The Service works in partnership with other agencies to target hot spot areas. Recently we have noticed a high level of Anti-Social Behaviour and fire setting as well as false alarms at a large hospital within Cumbria.
35. To address this, we are delivering targeted interventions in that area as well as reviewing our tactical planning. This data has been shared with Cumbria Police and the Local Authority to deliver collaborative interventions in the area.
36. Accidental dwelling fires
37. Despite the overall increase, we have seen a promising decrease of 5.4% in accidental primary dwelling fires.
38. The chart below highlights the number of accidental primary dwelling fires.



Home Fire Safety Visits

39. The primary activity of the prevention team is to deliver Home Fire Safety Visits targeted at the most vulnerable households in Cumbria. We have set a target of 8000 visits annually which if achieved would place us in the top 10 best performing services nationally. In the last six months we are just below target having delivered 3,804.
40. Known sickness and maternity in the prevention team has impacted on performance. The solution to this is part of the post HMI AFI workstream to solve the chronic issue.
41. As previously mentioned, it is vital that our visits are delivered to vulnerable individuals. Using the Home Office definition, we know that 70% of our visits meet these criteria, of being either elderly or disabled. The remainder of our visits are referrals from partner agencies where despite not meeting the home office definition we would still consider the individuals to be high risk. For example, they may have drug or alcohol dependency issues or other factors which increase their fire risk.
42. The following chart highlights the number of HFSV conducted.



Domestic false alarms

43. Whilst we do not have a target, we do monitor how many false alarms we have attended in domestic properties. Currently this running at 20.2%, a slight reduction on the previous year's 21.2%.
44. Other incident types
45. At the beginning of the year, the Service did monitor several other incident types, those being Road Traffic Collisions, Water Rescues and Non-Fire incidents. With regard to Water Rescues and Non-Fire incidents no targets were set. Over the last comparable period we have seen a 25.9% reduction in the number of water rescues and a 10.0% reduction in non-fire incidents.

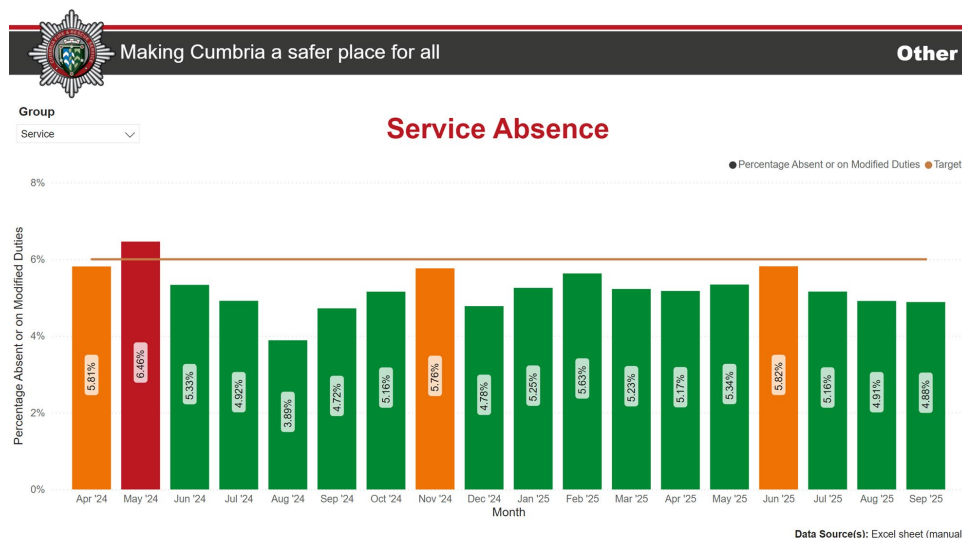
46. Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)

47. Partway through the year a decision was taken to look at RTC data in a different way. Essentially the fire service only looks at a snapshot of data, those that they attend, rather than the complete data set. To enable more informed decisions to be taken a quarterly report is now developed using the more robust constabulary data and shared throughout the Service.

People

44. Service Absence

45. Throughout the Service, the wellbeing of staff is paramount to the delivery of a first-class service to the people of Cumbria. To that end, we constantly monitor absence levels across the organisation against a target of 6%. Over the last six months, sickness levels for the Wholetime, On-Call and Corporate staff have run at 7.3%, 3.9% and 3.3% respectively. The chart below illustrates the combined monthly sickness levels. Serious absence cases are discussed at the Fire Exec Board and three long term cases will be resolved in the near future, which will contribute to a predicted reduction in absence in Q3.



Issues for Consideration

46. Within the Service, Performance is not considered in isolation. Every month the latest information is made available to SLT via a performance dashboard, and the Head of Planning and Improvement reviews the underlying data. If there are any emerging trends or anomalies that need to be addressed, then action can be taken. Detailed performance scorecards are also discussed quarterly at the Service Improvement Board. These scorecards are currently being reviewed to ensure they reflect areas the Service consider important and are not just a reflection of the demands of HMICFRS.

47. The Service recognises the value of preventative work in the community to reduce the risk of fire and the subsequent impact on communities. Ensuring responsibility for delivering interventions is held at a local level and intelligence led ensures that we are operating in an effective and efficient manner

The next twelve months

48. The consideration of performance within Service aims to drive forward the objectives within the CRMP and within the Commissioners Police and Fire and Crime Plan.
49. Having received our latest HMICFRS report, we will ensure that performance information is used to shape our approach to our areas for improvement.
50. The report highlighted several areas within the performance arena that need addressing including several key points of failure. We will work to address these over the next twelve months and embed performance management within the Service.

Conclusion

51. Performance data is a valuable tool in helping to shape service delivery within Cumbria and inform areas for improvement. Service performance when considered holistically and when compared to other services is in a good place, and in those areas where an intervention has been required, action has been identified and progressed, which in turn ensures an improved service to the people of Cumbria.

Financial Implications

52. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

53. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Implications

54. There are no risk implications associated with this report.

HR and Equality Implications

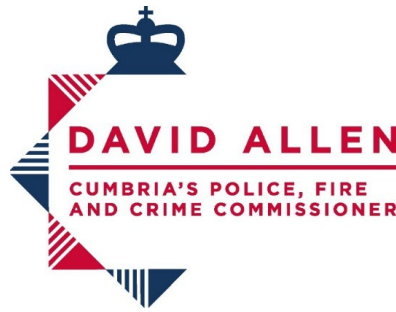
55. There are no human resources or equality implications arising from this report.

Procurement Implications

56. There are no procurement implications associated with this report.

DDaT Implications

57. There are no DDaT implications associated with this report.



Public Accountability Conference

Meeting Date: 5th November 2025

Agenda Item: 07

Report of: Charlotte Kirkwood

SLT Member: ACFO Lauren Woodward

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - Post Inspection Update October 2025

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide a detailed outline of how the Service will address the areas of concern raised in the HMICFRS report.
2. To explain how we as a Service will continue to enhance performance, and improve outcomes for the Community, to become an outstanding Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) to the people of Cumbria.

Background

3. The HMICFRS inspect all 44 FRS's in England over a two-year period on effectiveness, efficiency and how they look after their people. In July this year the HMICFRS published its third assessment of Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service. The Service is assessed and given graded judgements for 11 diagnostic questions. From 2025, the HMICFRS have combined the efficiency questions and reduced the overall number of diagnostic questions to 10. The FRS's are measured against the 'characteristics of good performance' as set out below.

Graded judgments

FRSs will be assessed and given graded judgments.

The categories of graded judgment are:

- **Outstanding** – The service has substantially exceeded the characteristics of good performance;
- **Good** – The service has demonstrated substantially all the characteristics of good performance;
- **Adequate** – The service has demonstrated some of the characteristics of good performance, but we have identified areas where the service should make improvements;
- **Requires improvement** – The service has demonstrated few, if any, of the characteristics of good performance and we have identified a substantial number of areas where the service needs to make improvements; and
- **Inadequate** – We have causes for concern and have made recommendations to the service to address them.

Figure 1

- As well as the graded judgements, the report sets out detailed findings about the areas in which the Service has performed well and where it should improve.

Summary of Findings

- Out of the 11 questions, the Service were graded 5 as 'Good' and 6 as 'Requires Improvement' as detailed in the picture below.

Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how well Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service has performed in 11 areas. We have made the following graded judgments:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies		Preventing fires and other risks	
	Protecting the public through fire regulation		Making best use of resources	
	Responding to fires and other emergencies		Promoting the right values and culture	
	Responding to major and multi-agency incidents		Getting the right people with the right skills	
	Making the FRS affordable now and in the future		Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	
			Managing performance and developing leaders	

Figure 2

- The Inspectorate was satisfied with some aspects of the performance of CFRS in keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks but did recognise areas in which it needs to improve. In particular, the Service needs to upgrade its IT provision to improve efficiency, productivity and oversight; strengthen its evaluation of

prevention work and address barriers to equal opportunities, including the way it collects equality data.

7. A promising practice was identified in relation to the Penrith Day Crew (PDC) and how they make a significant contribution to the Services operational assurance and intelligence functions. The team demonstrated high productivity and efficient use of resources. The PDC combine operational practice together with computer based workstreams producing 97 internal debriefs, 3 multi-agency debriefs, 4 operational assurance letters, 58 reviewed documents, 54 quality assured site-specific risk information, the implementation of the national operational guidance (27 risk assessments, 27 aide-memoires and 116 operational intelligence) alongside their core responsibilities, operational response, protection, prevention and the maintenance of their operational competence.
8. The report shows an improvement in the Service's culture and values and reported that the Service has well-defined values that staff at all levels understand and demonstrate. The Inspectorate found that there is a positive working culture throughout the Service with staff empowered and willing to challenge poor behaviours. Staff referred to this as 'the Cumbria vibe'.
9. Within the 'Requires Improvement' judgement, the report highlighted 17 Areas for Improvement (AFI's).

Areas for Improvements

10. The AFI's fall within one of the three principle HMICFRS questions, (Efficiency, Effectiveness and People), and then they have been allocated to the relevant department within the Service. If the AFI applies to more than one department, it has been allocated to the main department which it falls under. There are 3 AFI's for the ED&I Department, 9 for People & Talent, 2 for Prevention, 2 for Improvement & Performance and 1 for Programmes & Risk.
11. An AFI Improvement Plan (Appendix A) has been created to gather information on any Service Knowledge as to why the AFI was given, how the Service can improve, and how the Service would maintain any improvements. The Improvement plan also includes NFCC recommendations, other services good practices, links to the CRMP deliverables and Fire Standards to take into consideration.
12. From the Improvement Plan an Action Tracker will then be created by the Heads of Departments and their teams, allocating tasks with timescales for delivery and thought given to any interdependencies and challenges.

Continuous Improvement

13. Immediately following the release of the HMICFRS Report, the Service held a Media Event to talk through the outcomes of the report to the public, and an internal engagement session to praise positive outcomes to the staff and to talk through how

the Service will deal with the areas for concern and look to continuously improve and grow the Service.

14. The SLT also held a “Pause and reset day” to discuss in detail the findings of HMICFRS report. The outcome from the day was that the Service wanted to embed improvements into day-to-day operations, ensuring it becomes a core part of how the Service works rather than a one-off activity.
15. Some areas of concern raised in the report have already started to be improved, such as Managing Performance and Developing Leaders. The Service have started to make progress by appointing Staff into permanent positions and creating a workforce plan which will include succession planning, so we are less reliant on temporary roles. Meeting structures have been developed (Appendix B) to provide clarity and standard agenda items are being implemented into meetings for consistency.
16. The Service’s new Liaison Lead for HMICFRS visited the service at the beginning of October to introduce themselves. Regular visits and contact will help build a good relationship between the Service and HMICFRS. Having a good relationship with HMICFRS will create a better experience for staff at the next inspection and the inspectorate will get a better version of the Service and will therefore be able to provide a more accurate report.
17. The recent Operational Cover Review (OCR) by ORH which the Service commissioned has provided an insight into the best use of our resources and future affordability, which will link into the HMI report as these are two areas that we are judged on.

The next twelve months

18. Over the course of the next twelve months an Action Tracker will be created with individual tasks allocated into departments with timescales for implementation. The Heads of Departments will provide updates in SLT meetings, and performance data will be analysed to evaluate if our improvements are effective or if we are seeing challenges.
19. The Service will also develop an overall HMICFRS Plan that outlines all the criteria which the Service are assessed against by HMI. This plan will be reviewed regularly to monitor and evaluate compliance. The goal for the overall HMI Plan is for the Service to establish a clear picture of how the Service are performing and if there are any gaps. The plan will allow the Service to focus not only on the AFI’s but also the areas where we have been graded as good, to see if we can grow and become outstanding in that area.
20. The Service will provide regular updates to all Staff and the Public on how the Service are progressing with the HMICFRS Improvement Plan and obtain feedback to help drive continuous improvement.

The next twelve months

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
AFI Improvement Plan <i>(ideas collated from SLT Members)</i>												
AFI Action Tracker <i>(tasks created and allocated to staff)</i>												
Review of AFI Action Tracker <i>(progress on tasks/any issues)</i>												
Overall HMI Review												
Leadership Days												
Pause & Reset Days												
<u>Projects:</u>												
FireWatch												
DDaT												
Occ Health												

Challenges

21. Dealing with our AFI's will require resources and have cost implications. The Service will look at each AFI and prioritise tasks based on resources, cost, sustainability and any interdependencies.
22. Current projects such as Digital Data and Technology (DDaT), Occupational Health and the OCR will need to be considered when looking at what resources and budget the Service have to deal with the AFI's, of which some might be interdependent.

Conclusion

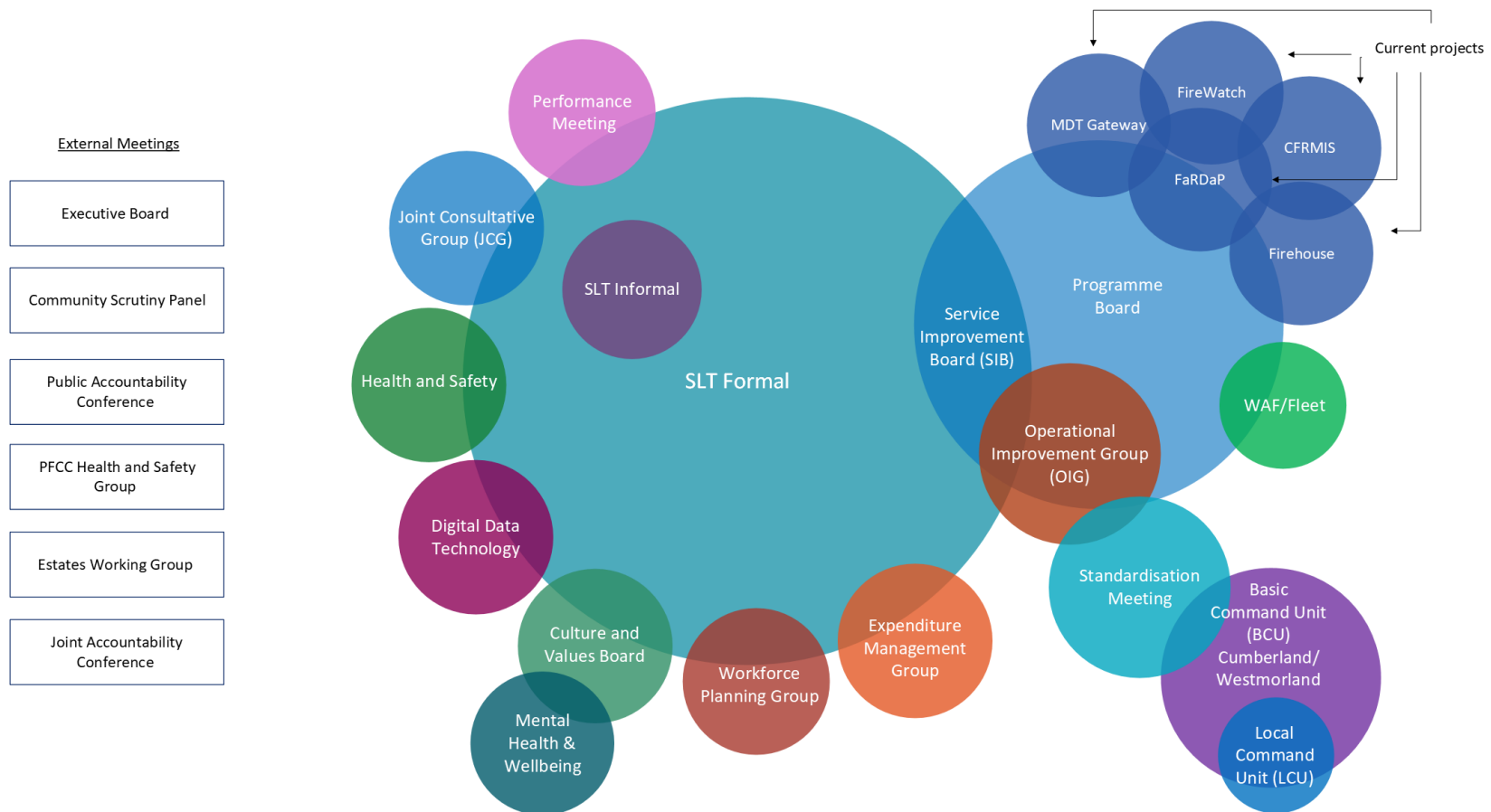
23. The Service is taking a more thorough approach this round of inspection in dealing with the HMICFRS assessment as detailed in this report. The approach looks at a longer-term continuous improvement for the Service rather than a short-term fix. Tasks will be integrated into standard business practices to ensure long term improvements. The Service will have a plan on how to improve the AFI's, an action tracker to allocate tasks and overall HMICFRS plan which will be reviewed regularly to check progress is being made and if there are any gaps. The action tracker and overall plan will be monitored by monthly meetings, performance data and peer reviews.

Appendix A - HMI Improvement Plan

Appendix B – Meeting Structures

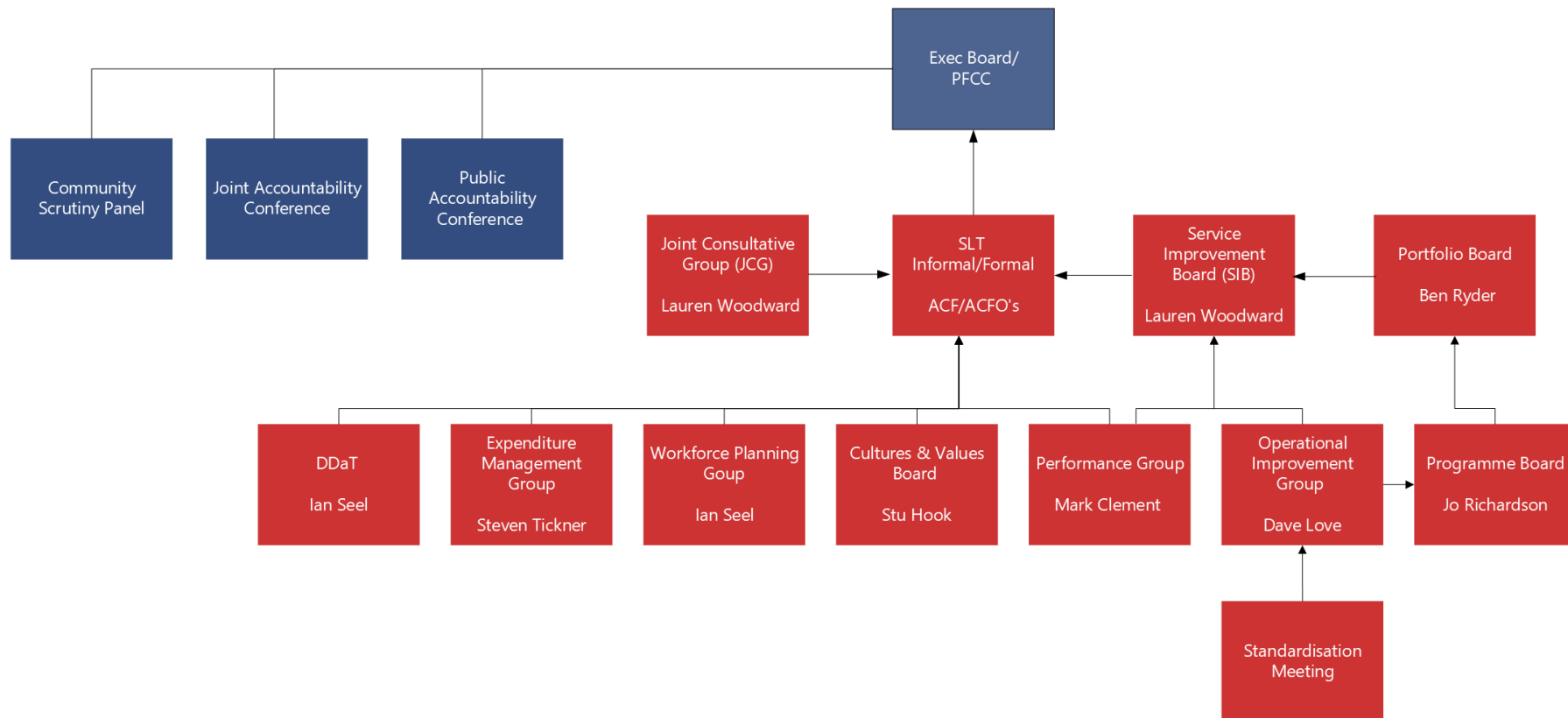


Meeting Overview





SLT Meeting Structure



AFI Improvement Plan

AFI People 1: ED&I The service should identify and overcome barriers to equal opportunity, so its workforce better represents its community.	
Service Knowledge <i>(do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)</i>	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	Ensure the Service is an inclusive organisation where all employees and potential employees have fair and equal access to opportunity.
Fire Standards:	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity
HMI Good Practices	NFCC Recruitment pack is due for review but still a useful assurance point
NFCC Suggestions	Recruitment Hub - NFCC NFCC Career Pathways - NFCC Equality of Access - NFCC
AFI People 2: ED&I The service should make sure it has robust processes in place to carry out equality impact assessments and review any actions agreed as a result.	
Service Knowledge <i>(do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)</i>	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	Ensure the Service is an inclusive organisation where all employees and potential employees have fair and equal access to opportunity
Fire Standards:	
HMI Good Practices	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity
NFCC Suggestions	Equality Impact Assessment - NFCC EQIA Training: Events from November 12, 2024 – March 3, 2026 – NFCC
AFI People 3: ED&I The service should make improvements to the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographic and needs.	
Service Knowledge <i>(do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)</i>	

How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	
Fire Standards:	
HMI Good Practices	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity
NFCC Suggestions	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data Toolkit - NFCC

AFI People 4: People & Talent

The service should make sure there is an effective induction process in place to support new recruits.

Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	
Fire Standards:	
HMI Good Practices	
NFCC Suggestions	Can signpost to other services with same AFI

AFI People 5: People & Talent

The service should make sure it is transparent and fair when recruiting, developing and promoting staff.

Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	Ensure the Service is an inclusive organisation where all employees and potential employees have fair and equal access to opportunity. Review and develop cultural values and behaviours that makes CFRS a great place to work.
Fire Standards:	
HMI Good Practices	
NFCC Suggestions	Note wellbeing is a key pillar in the new NFCC PCL strategy

AFI People 6: People & Talent

The service should address the high number of staff in temporary promotion positions.

Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	Ensure that we have the right people in the right posts at the right time.
Fire Standards:	
HMI Good Practices	Managing performance and developing leaders
NFCC Suggestions	Oxford currently has an AFI in this area and keen to liaise with others. Workforce planning - NFCC North Yorks had a CofC lifted on this in recent years, can connect you Maturity models might help Maturity Models And Workforce Good Practice Framework - NFCC
AFI People 7: People & Talent The service should develop a system to identify and develop high-potential members of staff.	
Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	Ensure leaders and managers are equipped with the right skills, tools and guidance to promote compassion, accountability, support and trust.
Fire Standards:	Internal Governance and Assurance Leading The Service - Fire Standards Board Leading and Developing People - Fire Standards Board
HMI Good Practices	Managing performance and developing leaders
NFCC Suggestions	New Training managers at TW and Cleveland both keen to meet others to discuss this at present.
AFI People 8: People & Talent The service should make sure its workforce plan takes full account of the skills and capabilities it needs to implement its community risk management plan.	
Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	Ensure leaders and managers are equipped with the right skills, tools and guidance to promote compassion, accountability, support and trust.

	Ensure that we have the right people in the right posts at the right time. Ensure the Service is an inclusive organisation where all employees and potential employees have fair and equal access to opportunity.
Fire Standards:	Community Risk Management Planning - Fire Standards Board Internal Governance and Assurance
HMI Good Practices	Getting the right people with the right skills
NFCC Suggestions	Review progress against the LDP fire standard Review use of MLP, SLDP: Middle Leadership Programme - NFCC Supervisory Leadership Development Programme - NFCC North Yorks is currently reviewing all e-learning packages Check all NFCC learning materials have been utilised: Organisational Learning - Learning materials - NFCC Use Talent Management Self assessment: Talent Management Toolkit - NFCC
AFI People 9: People & Talent The service should assure itself that all staff are appropriately trained for their role.	
Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	
Fire Standards:	
HMI Good Practices	Getting the right people with the right skills
NFCC Suggestions	Recruitment Hub - NFCC Talent Management Toolkit - NFCC
AFI People 10: People & Talent The service should provide clear and appropriate development for all staff.	
Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	
Fire Standards:	Leading and Developing People
HMI Good Practices	Getting the right people with the right skills
NFCC Suggestions	Recruitment Hub - NFCC Talent Management Toolkit - NFCC Review LDP and LS fire standards Embed Core Code of Ethics into these processes

AFI People 11: People & Talent

The service should have effective processes to monitor the working hours of its staff.

Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	
Fire Standards:	
HMI Good Practices	Promoting the right values and culture
NFCC Suggestions	Recruitment Hub - NFCC Talent Management Toolkit - NFCC Review LDP and LS fire standards Embed Core Code of Ethics into these processes

AFI People 12: People & Talent

The service must make sure that all staff in operational roles have a current and valid fitness assessment.

Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	
Fire Standards:	
HMI Good Practices	Promoting the right values and culture
NFCC Suggestions	Have previously discussed this and can signpost. Succession planning/critical role planning recently reviewed at North Yorks and Durham

AFI: Effective 1: Prevention

The service should make sure it puts effective measures in place to address the backlog of home fire safety visits.

Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	

CRMP Deliverables:	Prevention 1, Prevention 2,
Fire Standards:	Prevention - Fire Standards Board
HMI Good Practices	Preventing fires and other risks
NFCC Suggestions	
AFI Effective 2: Prevention The service should evaluate its prevention activity, so it understands what is most effective.	
Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	
Fire Standards:	Prevention - Fire Standards Board
HMI Good Practices	Preventing fires and other risks
NFCC Suggestions	Already had some input on NFCC-Evaluation-Methods (11).pdf, can also support to review this checklist: NFCC-Prevention-Evaluation.pdf and implement this if not already sighted: Evaluation Framework for Home Fire Safety Visits - NFCC Service already using Early intervention evaluation Staywise has some data collection options that can help evaluation Application of org learning good practice guide to ensure learning is systematically processed, currently in draft format: Organisational Learning Good Practice Guide consultation

AFI Efficiency 1: Improvement & Performance The service should assure itself that all processes in place to support performance management are effective.	
Service Knowledge (do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	
Fire Standards:	Data Management
HMI Good Practices	Making best use of resources
NFCC Suggestions	Further conversation required to understand detail

	Innovative Working Patterns - NFCC
AFI efficiency 2: Improvement & Performance The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.	
Service Knowledge (<i>do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?</i>)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	As a result of disaggregation identify the most effective and efficient solutions for CFRS and explore areas for collaboration with other blue light agencies and partners on key areas such as ICT
Fire Standards:	Leading the Service
HMI Good Practices	Making best use of resources
NFCC Suggestions	Northumberland and Durham and Darlington have both recently progressed with this
AFI: Efficiency 3: Programme & Risk The service should make sure it has appropriate business continuity arrangements in place. It should regularly review the arrangements and test them to make sure they take account of all foreseeable threats and risks.	
Service Knowledge (<i>do we have any service knowledge as to why we got this AFI?</i>)	
How do we improve?	
How do we maintain?	
CRMP Deliverables:	
Fire Standards:	Emergency Preparedness and Resilience - Fire Standards Board Have business continuity plans (BCP) in place relating to all critical functions, that: • demonstrate a clear procedure for invoking the BCP and set out the core of a response to emergencies; and • are reviewed and exercised periodically
HMI Good Practices	Making best use of resources
NFCC Suggestions	NFCC peer business continuity group Can signpost to contacts at Northumberland and West Yorks.