

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service

Statement of Assurance 2015-16 Addendum

Operational Response - Business Continuity Arrangements

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 place a legal duty for all Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to write and maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the Authority is able to continue its core functions.

Nationally the Fire and Rescue Service is undergoing a prolonged and sustained period of change. The change agenda has several drivers, such as central government policy, increased inter-service collaboration, development of common policies and procedures, innovative local Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs), as well as responses to the wider financial climate, public spending cuts and the drive for effectiveness and business efficiencies. Coupled to this are other ongoing threats across the UK, particularly from terrorism, extreme weather and other unforeseen events.

Cumbria County Council (CCC) as the FRA and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) recognise that during any period of change there is also an increased potential of staff groups taking lawful industrial action to try to influence the pace or direction of the change process.

The FRA and CFRS work hard to ensure good industrial relations with all staff groups and trade unions. The organisation's intent would be to always try to resolve any issue through local dialogue and by being as inclusive as possible. The intent would be to avoid industrial action. Our aim is for staff, elected members and trade union representatives from all areas of the organisation to be party to the development of organisational priorities, objectives and plans so as to protect the public, minimise staff uncertainty and potential for industrial unrest.

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is an important part of the Authority's strategy and a robust programme is well established. Business Continuity plans are maintained and tested, with the plans being owned by the CFRS Service Management Team.

BCM arrangements within CFRS consist of a number of plans and processes which identify risk and develop resilience across the Service. These are developed and regularly reviewed to ensure that adverse events cause minimal disruption to the services provided and that critical services are maintained.

Find below examples of BC plans in place:

- Withdrawal of Labour Plan;
- Death of service personnel on duty;
- Loss of or disruption to a fire station/s;
- Fuel shortage plan.

During 2014-15 there were a number of national strikes called by the Fire Brigades Union; therefore the Withdrawal of Labour Plan has undergone 'live testing'. Critical Incident Team

meetings have been carried out prior to, and after the strikes to plan, prepare and capture any lessons learned. These then inform the Business Continuity plans in place within CFRS.

The FRA carry out their functions within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework. A list of key legislation/guidance appears below:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- Localism Act 2011
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England
- Health and Safety Act 1974.

Also, Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 allow for mutual assistance arrangements to be agreed with neighbouring Services to improve resilience and capacity in border areas. CFRS has in place agreements with all bordering Fire Authorities for response to life risk incidents.

CFRS's 999 calls are handled by North West Fire Control, and as a result the Service is well positioned in terms of interoperability and shared services across the four FRA's involved (Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Cheshire)

In summary:

The Business Continuity plans are comprehensive, robust, and tested, to ensure they are current and fit for purpose.

The plans provide clear and defined strategies to be adopted to aid achievement of the following objectives:

- Provide a response to events that threaten the delivery of services to the communities across Cumbria
- Protect the Service from service interruptions;
- In the event of service interruptions to provide a co-ordinated recovery;
- Facilitate a risk management culture embedded into the Service to enable risks to be identified and managed effectively.



Paul Hancock
Chief Fire Officer