



**Cumbria Fire
and Rescue
Service**

**Statement of
Assurance
2020/21**



Introduction

Welcome to Cumbria Fire Authority's Statement of Assurance for 2020/21. 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 2020/21 and provides reassurance that it is working effectively and efficiently. The document also provides details about how CFRS have responded to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

I am particularly pleased this year with the opening of the Furness Peninsula Blue Light Hub. This modern building will contribute to the delivery of an excellent service to the community both from CFRS and its blue light partners.

The last twelve months have seen CFRS demonstrate its ability to work with partners and to show strategic leadership in dealing with the pandemic. The approach to partnership working is a priority for the authority and ensures that CFRS continues to deliver services that benefit the community. This approach has contributed towards the excellent performance highlights contained within this document.



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 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 2020/21 CFRS has worked hard to reinforce those areas it was found to be good in and has worked towards an improvement plan to address those areas it was not.

Notable successes in delivering the improvement plan include

- The development of a holistic approach to safeguarding
- The use of risk information to enable the effective targeting of resources
- An excellent approach to service assurance that allows the service to run effectively and efficiently whilst learning lessons when things don't quite go as planned

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 2020 /21 **here**

Covid-19

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service



Supporting our communities throughout Covid-19

Since January 2021, we have:

Delivered 532 Face Fits sessions for clinical care staff 	Supporting 12 Community Testing Sites across the county 	263 employees volunteered to undertake additional duties 
12 employees have commenced ambulance driving training 	Conducting Lateral Flow Testing across all 38 Fire Stations 	Delivered 36 LFT Train the Trainer sessions to local businesses enabling them to regularly test over 5000 employees 
18 employees are fully-trained as vaccinators 	Mobilised our rapid response team 4 times to deal with COVID-19 outbreaks 	Supported the rollout of Lateral Flow Testing in 16 schools, testing 17,129 pupils 
We are ready, willing and able	Covered 148 12-hour shifts at Kendal's MVC 	Arranged 66 laptops to be reconditioned and distributed to schools 
		Delivered 468 emergency food parcels and free school meals 

In August 2020, HMICFRS were commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect how fire and rescue services in England are responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

HMICFRS found that the service adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively. It continued to respond to emergencies, and it gave additional support to the community during the first phase of the pandemic. It used both its Wholetime and On-call firefighters to respond to emergencies and give additional activities. The service was able to demonstrate its ability to deliver services of great benefit to the community in an agile manner and also provide strategic leadership through its role with the Local Resilience Forum.

Operational staff visited the most vulnerable people and wore personal protective equipment (PPE) when they did so. By adapting and responding effectively, the service supported the people of Cumbria well during the first phase of the pandemic.

HMICFRS also found that the service managed resources well. As well as its own incidents, the service was able to support neighbouring services with significant incidents during the pandemic

The service also continued to provide its core statutory functions throughout the pandemic in line with advice from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). This meant that the service continued to respond to calls from the public and attend emergencies. It also continued to visit vulnerable people in the community who were at the greatest risk of fire and continued to audit its highest-risk premises.

North West Fire Control who provide the control room function for the service had good arrangements in place so that its control room had enough staff during the pandemic. These included effective resilience arrangements, such as adapting ways of working, and having good fallback provision with West Midlands Fire Service and London Fire Brigade as part of a tri-services agreement.

A full copy of the HMICFRS Covid-19 report can be found [here](#)

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
- 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 your 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 2020/21 Cabinet considered the Statement of Assurance 2019/20. Cabinet also consider strategies and policies, such as the Council's Workforce Plan, Sickness Management and Digital Strategy which encompasses CFRS.

Cabinet also received regular Covid-19 updates which included actions taken by Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

The Chief Fire Officer is appointed by the Fire Authority and forms an integral part of the Corporate Management Team within CCC.

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 allocated or re-allocated to the Chief Fire Officer by the Chief Executive



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

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (“Inclusive and Safe Communities”)

CFRS is committed to ensuring it meets the Public Sector Equality Duty providing equality of opportunity through access to services for all by ensuring:

- CFRS Services has clear information about Cumbria’s diversity profile to inform it of the community it serves
- Communities of Cumbria and those underserved are involved in shaping CFRS service
- 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 moved towards “Inclusive and Safe Communities” by setting the following EDI priorities:

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

It also appointed a full time Equality Diversity and Inclusion Manager to ensure this agenda is delivered.

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



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. The delivery plan for 2020/21 was agreed by Cabinet in September 2020 and included actions and measures related to CFRS and is available on the Council's website. These actions included

- 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
- Ensure The number of accidental primary dwelling fires to be less than 241 in 2020/21
- Ensure The number of fire protection audits in commercial premises to be greater than 800 in 2020/21
- 10,000 safe and well visits carried out by 31 March 2021

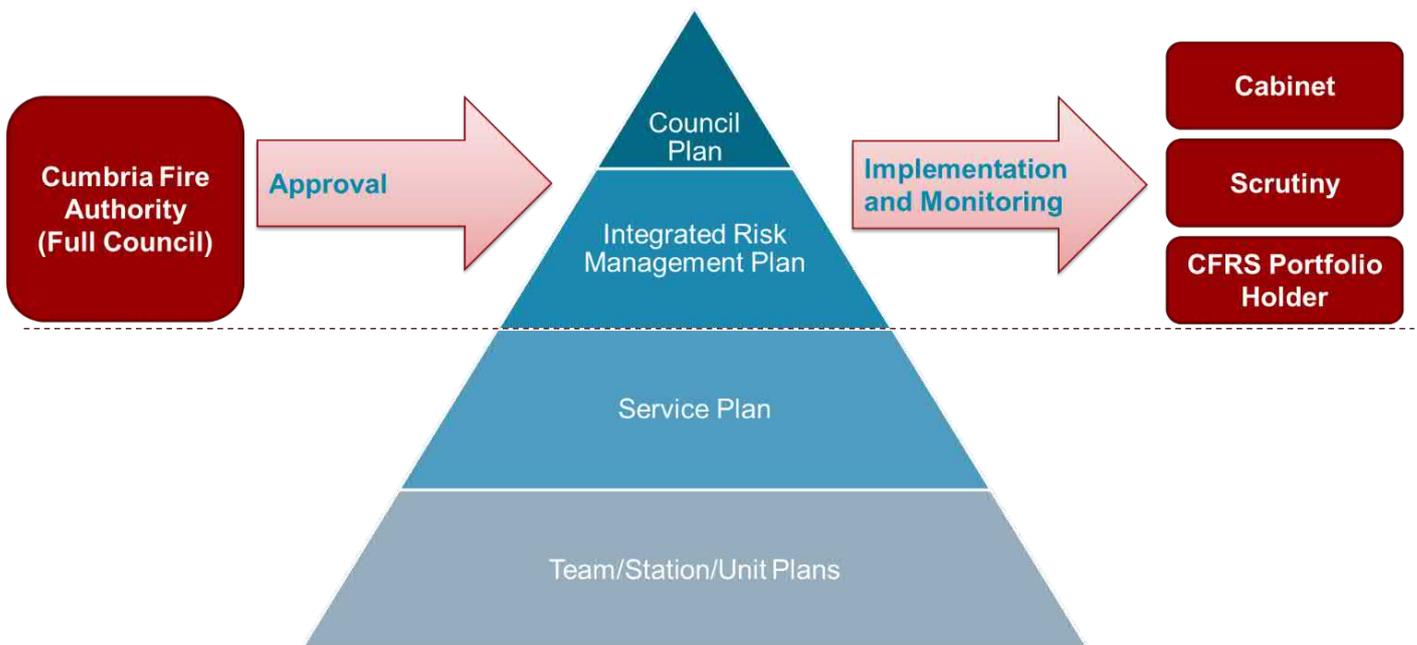


Diagram: Showing how CFRS strategy and plans align to the strategic intent of the CCC plan

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.

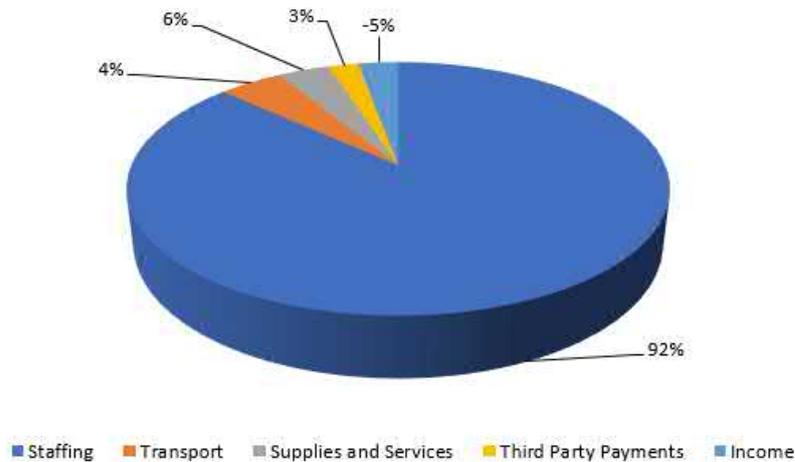
This can all be accessed at <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/cumbriafire/performance-and-transparency/performance-and-transparency.asp>

Finance

The fire and rescue service budget is primarily aligned to staffing, transport and supplies and services, as shown in the graph below. In 2020/21 CFRS annual net revenue budget was £19 million, which included 5% income from external sources. There is also an additional capital budget to procure fleet vehicles, equipment and improve infrastructure. In 2020/21 CFRS negotiated a further £750,000 investment from the fire authority that helped deliver increased benefits to the community.

HMICFRS recognised that CFRS manages its budget efficiently, and indeed, 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. This is supported by a Service Assurance policy.

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.

Workforce learning is achieved by identifying examples of good practice and where improvements can be made in the delivery of our service. This is captured through the operational assurance process. 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 continues to have robust business continuity plans in place, these plans have included wider work in line with national and community risks and concurrent events such as Covid-19. The council's Resilience Unit is within the fire and rescue service and works in close collaboration ensuring preparation, response and recovery plans are tried, tested and the service can effectively and efficiently provide professional services to the communities of Cumbria.

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 including a recent pandemic flu exercise. 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. This has been reaffirmed by HMICFRS who recently inspected the response to the pandemic by the service in Cumbria.

Interoperability, Resilience and Safety

A comprehensive range of risk intelligence data and information is utilised as part of the risk identification and analysis process underpinning the Integrated Risk Management Plan, which ensures CFRS have the right resources, in the right place at the right time. This includes Community and National Risk Registers, with the service having a leading role in the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum (CLRF) that focuses on interoperability and joint planning with other emergency services in line with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

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

HMICFRS recognised that CFRS has a strong track record of responding to national incidents and collaborating with other services to manage major incidents.

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 actively takes the lead in developing collaboration projects within Cumbria, and 2020-21 saw the opening of the Furness Peninsula Blue Light Hub, a purpose built building for use of all emergency services.

Several collaboration projects have also been progressed in 2020/21, including the concern for welfare project which sees firefighters supporting both the police and ambulance services in gaining access to the properties of vulnerable people who need assistance.



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.

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.

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.

The fire protection team deliver engagement sessions with various groups targeted at associated risks e.g., holiday lets. They also support national and local campaigns such as the NFCC business safety week and national sprinkler week. The CFRS business safety pages on the CCC website have been reviewed and updated to help businesses comply with the fire safety regulations (RRO).

National Learning

Following the publishing of the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 report, CFRS has produced an action plan to highlight the areas it needs to focus on to meet these recommendations. Internally, the service is responding to all calls for evidence and consultations from both the MHCLG and the National Fire Chiefs Council to support the national direction.

The recommendations from the inquiry are being embedded within the service to ensure that we continue to be a learning organisation. Externally, the service has worked extensively with North West Fire Control to ensure it delivers on the recommendations outlined by the Inquiry to provide the best possible service to the public.

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. Risk Based Evidence Profiles for each fire station area provide a clear and effective response model which aligns to specific risks.

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.

CFRS continue to review and monitor current and emerging risks so that operational firefighters train and exercise on specific risk sites to maintain an effective response to identified risks.

People and Development

The CFRS People Strategy has continued to influence the development of our workforce with a significant part of this work being overseen by the Workforce Development Group.

One of our main priorities has continued to be operational training particularly ensuring our workforce maintain high risk critical competencies e.g., BA Hot Fire, Emergency Response Driving and that our incident commanders receive the appropriate command development and assessment to deal with a wide range of incidents. This has continued throughout the Covid-19 period.

The service Maintenance of Skills and Knowledge programmes continued to be delivered with some prescribed changes to support additional control measures put in place due to Covid-19.

Fire Investigation

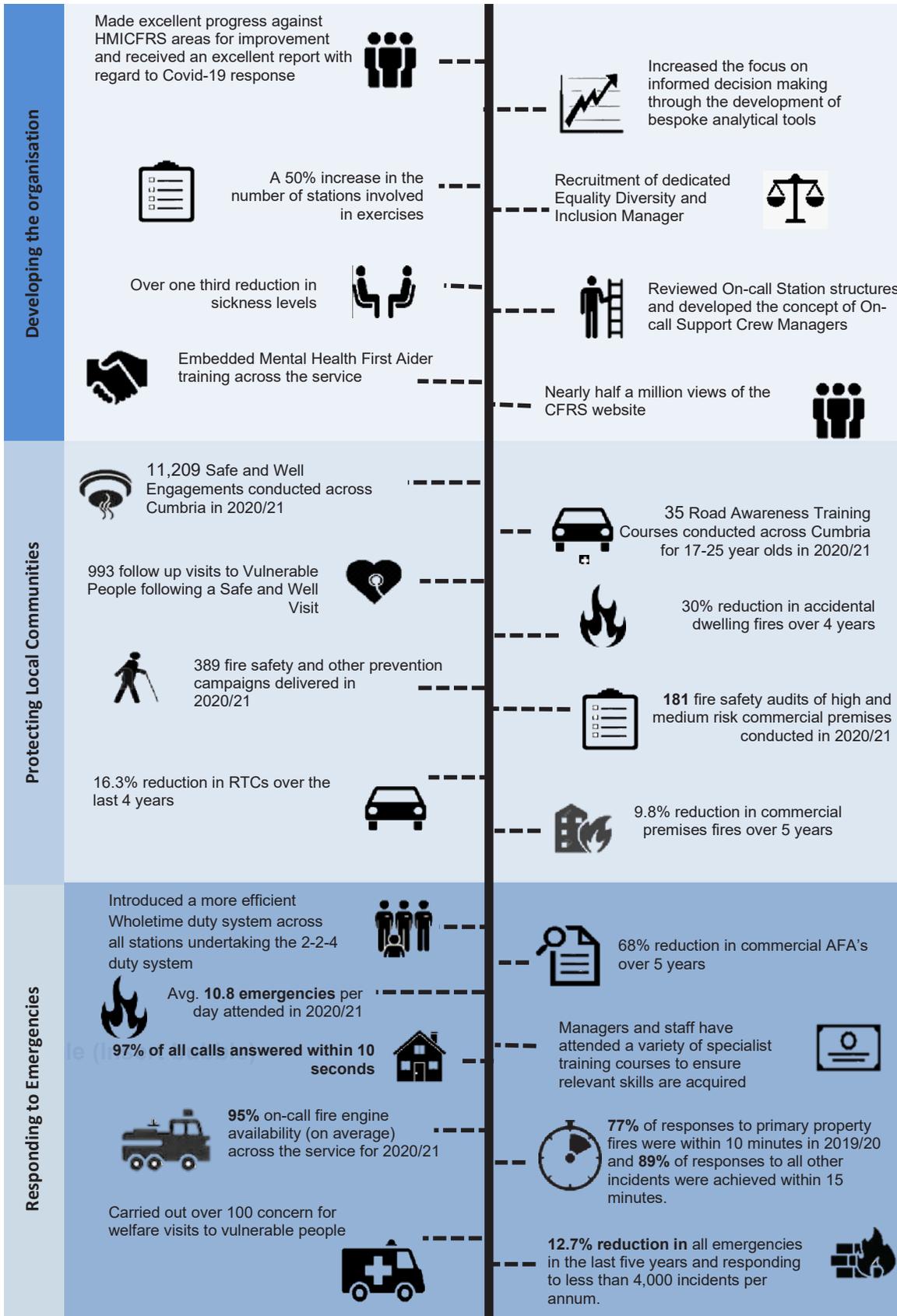
Fire investigation is an integral part of the service's prevention and protection activities. The main purpose of fire investigation is to determine the origin, cause, and development of a fire and to contribute to organisational learning.

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 performance during 2020/21 against identified priority areas



Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (eg CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone **01768 812612..**

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