

Welcome to our Annual Service Plan for 2019/20

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is one of the best services in the country, recognised for how well we keep people safe and secure and how motivated and positive our people are.

This is due in part to a long history of continuous improvement that has kept the Service evolving, and last year was no exception. We set out to build on our achievements and stay focussed on making the people of Lancashire safer.

I'm proud of how we learn from incidents as a driver for improvement, alongside leading innovation in the fire and rescue service to benefit our communities.

Last year we introduced a newly established wildfire burn team as a result of our learning from the Winter Hill moorland fire in 2018. Controlled burning can greatly reduce the spread and duration of a fire, minimising the risk to people, property and the environment. This expertise has proved valuable in a very short space of time, delivering successful interventions to reduce the impact of a number of incidents.

A second Stinger has been added to our fleet, doubling the benefits of this water tower appliance that enhances both firefighter safety and firefighting capability, while at the same time minimising fire damage to businesses and homes.

After transforming the way we fight fires using aerial intelligence, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service now leads the fire sector's use of drones. We assist other emergency services across the country in developing their own drone capability alongside our continued partnership with Lancashire Constabulary to enhance operational response in Lancashire.

Our people remain firmly at the centre of everything we strive to achieve and in 2019/20, I set an intention to create more opportunities for colleagues to contribute their experience, expertise and ideas. This is one of our most valued achievements; people in all roles and ranks have helped to shape many areas of activity including a new approach to appraisals, improved facilities at fire stations and our training centre, and changes to duty rig uniform.

We finished the year being named UK Fire Service of the Year at the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards, recognition for the whole Service that reflects our investment and innovation in frontline services. This achievement is due in no small part to the way our people respond positively to challenges and lead new ways of firefighting.

Justin Johnston
Chief Fire Officer

Our year in numbers

17,206 incidents attended

Average attendance time 7 mins 28 secs

5,010 fires

5 people lost their lives

816 accidental dwelling fires (ADFs)

53 casualties from ADFs

85% of damage limited to item first ignited or room of origin minimising property loss

On-call fire engines available to respond to incidents 87% of the time

42 missing person searches

829 gaining entry to property incidents

692 road traffic collisions

83 on-call firefighters recruited

17,368 home fire safety checks delivered

156,641 children and young people received prevention education

21,516 people took part in road safety education

120 fire safety enforcement notices issued

42 businesses prohibited from operating

Annual Service Plan Progress Report

Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening and protecting people and property when they do

Deliver tailored prevention activity

CookSafe and TeenSafe campaigns

Our Keep It Clean, Keep It Clear cooking safety campaign ran from July to October 2019 and was centred on keeping ovens and hobs clean and clear to reduce the risk of fire. High risk areas were targeted as part of the campaign, as well as people living alone and people over the pensionable age. There has been a decreasing trend in cooking related accidental dwelling fires since the CookSafe campaign started in 2017.

The 2019/2020 academic year saw the first full year of key stage 3 TeenSafe delivery, which provides targeted sessions on themes such as Bonfire Night, water safety, grass fire safety and anti-social behaviour. In addition we provided prevention sessions for year 2 and early years pupils, both at their settings and on stations. We also worked with voluntary youth groups such as guides and scouts, as well as further education and higher education establishments delivering student safety sessions.

Become an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) aware organisation

During 2019/20, ACE toolbox talks were undertaken at the Service's headquarters and training centre, and a number of fire stations across Lancashire. Delivery of the talks is continuing in 2020/21 until ACE is embedded as a core organisational offering.

Harness technology to improve protection activity

Work is ongoing to develop technology to support quicker report production and wider digitisation of business safety and enforcement services, with more agile ways of working including mobile access to building files and plans. This is part of a wider project to ensure fire safety inspectors' resources are targeted at the most appropriate premises through an increasingly refined risk based inspection programme which considers building use, management history and other factors such as cladding.

Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently

Evaluate tools to strengthen our response

Pre-alerting system

Following promising results at four fire stations, the trial has been extended to include the majority of fire engines in the north of the county to examine the impact of early mobilisation messages on performance levels on all shift systems including on-call.

Dynamic cover tool

We are continuing to explore the feasibility of a shared product with regional partners to improve the effectiveness of geographical resource allocation across Lancashire.

Strengthen our operational assurance

Following the successful launch of a debrief app we have continued to develop a bespoke assurance monitoring system. The system will ensure we are able to record, analyse and track any learning from incidents and exercises effectively and efficiently. Learning from other fire and rescue services and from station assurance visits will also be managed through the system.

Integrate a second water tower into our fleet

Following evaluation of our first Stinger appliance and confirmation that the appliance significantly enhances firefighter safety, firefighting capability in the built environment and pumping capacity, a second Stinger has been integrated into the Service's fleet and is based at Skelmersdale Fire Station.

Replace incident command units

Work to finalise the specifications for the incident command unit as well as incident command software has progressed, and will provide the Service with a bespoke vehicle for use at multiagency and major incidents. This will enhance command and control capability and provide a space for high level incident ground discussions and decisions to take place. New software will enable us to safely and efficiently share information across the incident ground and with other agencies. A physical prototype of the new command support unit has been constructed and work is being carried out to ensure the unit and software can be seamlessly integrated. Once both the

specifications and prototype have been finalised the procurement process can commence.

Optimise rota management

LFRS operates a risk based approach to staffing fire appliances and other specialist vehicles and by necessity there are a range of duty systems in use, each with their own guidelines, management overheads and interdependencies. We have been working to ensure this project will reduce the amount of time staff spend in both operational and administrative roles in managing people disposition. The project has already delivered a contemporary approach to overtime management, utilising an app, and will go on to focus on smarter ways to manage other aspects of staffing.

Establish a wildfire burn team

The crew at Bacup Fire Station now make up a newly established specialist wildfire burn team capable of proactively burning areas of land to reduce the spread and duration of wildfires. The team has provided successful interventions at several wildfire incidents resulting in fires being contained and extinguished in a relatively short period of time; prevention of further fire spread; and no reported injuries. The team helps to maximise firefighter safety and minimise the risk to people, property and the environment, and positive feedback has been received from partner agencies.

Lead nationally on the use of drones

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service remains at the forefront of emergency service drone technology and maintains a joint drone team with Lancashire Constabulary. Through our national lead status, we have assisted a large number of other emergency services in developing their own drone capability. As the only Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) qualified training organisation in the sector, we have also delivered training to other services and government agencies.

The Service keeps up with the rate of technological change in the drone industry through links with research organisations, manufacturers and academia. We are currently supporting a number of research projects including the development of the Lancashire Unmanned Aviation Vehicle Cluster in conjunction with the University of Central Lancashire.

Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer

Develop a strong organisational culture where our values are understood

Improve how we undertake the appraisal conversation

Further to extensive staff consultation, a revised approach to the appraisal conversation was created including new documentation. This was launched alongside a video to ensure colleagues were aware of the reasoning behind the change in arrangements. The new approach has been welcomed by members of staff and alternative recording arrangements are now being developed within existing HR systems. To ensure that meaningful conversations take place in relation to performance we have included activity around having difficult conversations within the development programme for supervisory managers. Line managers also attend coaching development sessions.

Performance manage the completion of appraisals

Further to the implementation of the new appraisal approach, the completion rate in relation to appraisals last year was 98% for operational members of staff and 97% for support staff.

Tools to improve the appraisal conversation

A 360 degree appraisal tool has been developed however the launch of a pilot was postponed due to the Covid-19. We are looking to implement this work in September 2020.

Encourage and listen to employee voice

Following months of staff consultation, our new internal intranet 'The Engine House' was launched and is now widely used. Incorporating social networking to connect staff across the Service, the site allows them to raise and discuss new ideas, as well as share knowledge and ideas in an open forum. The Engine House is used as a central hub for all internal information.

Promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the Service

Promote opportunities to diverse communities

We have selected suitable candidates for firefighter recruitment courses in September 2020 and January 2021 following a positive action campaign in February 2019. We are now exploring how social media could be used to engage diverse groups in our next recruitment drive.

A careers insight day gave operational and support staff the opportunity to learn about the variety of roles available in the Service from those with experience, how to access them and pathways to promotion.

Consult communities to shape our activity

Throughout 2019/20 we have consulted with staff regarding options for new and improved uniform; proposed building work to create dormitory facilities for women at South Shore, Blackpool, Hyndburn and Preston fire stations; and locker rooms in our fleet garages at Service Training Centre. We reviewed our network of contacts across minority groups in Lancashire to ensure we are best placed to engage with them and we have worked specifically with the LGBT community, people with disabilities, women and families and ethnic minorities in terms of considering a career in the fire service.

Pride events

The Service has utilised its Pride liveried fire engine to highlight our inclusive employer status. Over the last year, the number of Pride events in Lancashire has increased and we have used this as an opportunity to promote our key prevention and recruitment messages at Blackpool, Lancaster, Morecambe and Preston based events. Given the scale of the celebration and crowds, we also attended Manchester Pride to promote recruitment to the many thousands of attendees. In addition to these formal events the LGBT employee voice group has worked closely with other colleagues and supported a number of fundraising, health and wellbeing and recruitment events using the striking appliance as a key backdrop, supporting engagement at the event and also across the Service's social media platforms.

Expand apprenticeship opportunities

The Service was successful in gaining employer provider status and is now delivering firefighter apprenticeships. This benefits new starters who receive a more individually focused training course and subsequent development programme to support them on station. The first cohort of apprentices have completed their initial recruits' course and are progressing with their development at stations across the county.

Build a strong and resilient workforce

Embed Trauma Risk Management (TRiM)

Health and wellbeing toolbox talks have been delivered to all members of staff in order to embed TRiM. The talks, which continue across the Service, also provide key information about PPE contamination, musculoskeletal issues, mental health and wellbeing and the link with physical fitness, all to help improve personal resilience.

Blue Light Wellbeing Framework assessment

A gap analysis against the Blue Light Wellbeing Framework hosted on Oscar Kilo has been completed. Some of the key themes highlighted were flexible and family friendly working practices, rewards and recognition and future training on wellbeing topics ranging from difficulty sleeping, menopause and nutrition to personal resilience, alcohol and drugs and suicide prevention. The framework is a live document being used to develop continuous improvement.

Redevelop Preston Fire Station

The scope of this redevelopment and potential to site share with other public services has been evaluated and the costs will be considered pending a medium term financial settlement from the government.

Upgrade fire station accommodation

Progress has been made towards upgrading accommodation at South Shore, Hyndburn and Blackpool fire stations. At South Shore, planning permission has been obtained and tender documents approved. At Hyndburn we are working with the contractor towards starting the procurement process and planning permission has been received for proposals at Blackpool however procurement for this project will commence upon completion of South Shore and Hyndburn works.

Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

Invest in training and equipment

Expand facilities at Service Training Centre

Building plans for the upgrade of facilities at our training centre have been developed and planning permission to expand has been requested. The contract has been awarded to the successful bidder and pre-construction work is progressing, although somewhat delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Firehouse refurbishment

The firehouse has been refurbished and now allows for basement fire training in a realistic fire environment. This enhanced training facility enables operational crews to develop further skills and knowledge in a practical setting.

Review of duty rig uniform

Extensive staff consultation and trials have taken place to ensure that new duty rig uniform meets the needs of our workforce. As a result, new trousers and boots have been chosen and will be rolled out across the Service in 2020/21.

CCTV on operational fire appliances

Work has progressed to scope the fitting of CCTV on all operational fire appliances. Soft market testing has been completed and the tender process is being prepared. Once fitted, these CCTV systems aim to improve driver training and reduce the amount of time taken to investigate incidents.

Collaboration with other public services

Collaboration programme with Lancashire Constabulary

Work is ongoing to expand our collaboration opportunities with Lancashire Constabulary, specifically looking at joint accreditation of our staff to undertake fire scene investigations.

Site sharing opportunities

We have established a shared location with the local neighbourhood policing team at Skelmersdale Fire Station and continue to explore site sharing opportunities with other partners.

Information management strategy

Centralised document management system

This project has a number of inter-dependencies and has been incorporated into wider work to develop our information management strategy.

Integrated Planning and Performance (IPP)

Given the resources required to maintain the current reporting system (Corvu), we decided to refocus the direction of this work solely on replacing this vital tool rather than developing it. This activity underpins much of our IPP work and allows progress to be made towards multiple organisational objectives. An interim solution that delivers data directly from the existing system to planning documents was rolled out successfully in 2019.

Making Lancashire safer

In addition to the priorities set out in our Annual Service Plan, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service provides a wide range of services throughout the year to help keep people safe.

Throughout 2019/20, we worked alongside Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to provide realistic high-rise firefighting training based on learning from the Grenfell Tower fire. This included practical live fire exercises coupled with realistic incident command based scenarios, along with theoretical input, ensuring the Service is best placed to deliver against the challenges of an increasingly complex built environment.

Last year also saw the implantation of rapid flood catchment area response plans, which enable North West Fire Control to mobilise the nearest resources on receipt of flooding notifications. This ensures a swift response for operational crews to assess the situation and mitigate the impact of flooding to local communities and infrastructure, supported by partner and local organisations.

Following a rigorous application process, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service was successful in gaining employer provider status to run operational firefighter apprenticeships. This benefits new starters in relation to receiving a more individual focused training course and subsequent development programme to support them on station. In addition to being subject to our own internal quality assurance processes, we are subject to external scrutiny from OFSTED and the Education and Skills Funding Agency, ensuring that programme delivery is compliant and meets best practice. Our first firefighter apprentices joined the Service in September 2019 with the next intake due to arrive in September 2020.

In 2019/20, we held a combined event for members of staff who had achieved 20, 30 and 40 years' service and those awarded our employee Star Awards, at the Village Hotel in Blackpool. In addition to receiving their awards, colleagues were able to attend The Firefighters Charity annual ball afterwards in recognition and appreciation of their service and conduct. This was the first year these events were combined and held at an external venue, and we plan to do the same again following positive feedback from our staff.

Last winter's safety campaign focused on elderly, isolated and vulnerable members of our community. We targeted these groups and encouraged them to reach out for help and support over the winter months. Activity included the launch of our Nosey Neighbour campaign encouraging people to look out for others and delivery of Christmas cards to those who may benefit from additional support. This was supported by advice on keeping safe, warm and well and provision of thermometer cards. Many of our partners, members of the public and community groups signed up to the Nosey Neighbour campaign and delivered almost 7,000 Christmas cards to isolated and vulnerable members of our community.

The latter part of 2019/20 saw the outbreak of Covid-19 in the UK. The Service acted quickly to continue responding to emergencies, protect the most vulnerable members of our communities and ensure the health and safety of our people. We also reallocated resources to support the Lancashire Resilience Forum with a number of activities including helping vulnerable people in the community, distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) across the county, assisting in taking samples for Covid-19 antigen testing and face-fitting masks for NHS staff.

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Significant incidents

Wildfire in Bacup, April 2019

Ten fire engines including colleagues from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, along with specialist wildfire units and the air support unit attended a moorland fire in Bacup. The wildfire burn team carried out tactical burning assisted by firefighters using blowers and beaters to extinguish the fire.

Commercial building fire in Lower Darwen, May 2019

Six fire engines, an aerial ladder platform and the air support unit were called to a single storey, building fire involving multiple commercial units in Lower Darwen, Blackburn.

Recycling centre fire in Preston, August 2019

Seven fire engines, an aerial ladder platform and a Stinger responded to a fire involving material from road vehicles at a recycling centre in Preston. This site has previously experienced fire and firefighters remained at the incident for two days.

Derelict building fire in Preston, October 2019

Six fire engines, an aerial ladder platform, a Stinger and the air support unit attended a fire involving the first floor and roof of a derelict building in Preston. Firefighters worked with Lancashire Constabulary for two days to ensure that the building was empty and safe.

Commercial building fire in Conder Green, January 2020

Ten fire engines, two aerial ladder platforms and a high volume pump were called to a fire involving a two-storey commercial building in Conder Green.

Storm Ciara across Lancashire, February 2020

On 9 February between 7am and 5pm, North West Fire Control received 407 calls reporting incidents in Lancashire, 210 of them in relation to flooding, and a major incident was declared. Areas across the county were affected including Blackpool, Whalley, Longton and Rossendale. Incidents included vehicles trapped in flood water, electrical damage due to properties flooding and dangerous structures.

Derelict building fire in Lytham St Anne's, February 2020

Six fire engines and an aerial ladder platform were called to a derelict building fire in Lytham St Anne's.

House fire in Preston, February 2020

Multiple fire engines were called to a fire involving a terraced house in Preston which also affected a neighbouring property.

Commercial building fire in Preston, February 2020

Ten fire engines and an aerial ladder platform responded to a commercial building fire in Preston. The fire involved two commercial units, containing vehicles, inside a single storey garage.