



Lancashire Fire  
and Rescue Service

# EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW 2022: Staff Consultation



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# INTRODUCTION

We are seeking your views on all the proposals in our emergency cover review (ECR). A survey has been created to collect feedback from the public and other stakeholders. We have also created an extended version of the survey for our staff which includes more questions about crewing arrangements and broadening on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response. This document supplements the public consultation document and gives further information about these two areas of staff consultation.

An ECR is carried out periodically to ensure that our emergency response remains effective and efficient, and that we are well equipped to respond to future challenges. It involves assessing the locations, numbers and types of fire stations and appliances against community risks and incident levels across the county. Duty systems are also reviewed to ensure effective crewing arrangements.



# Proposals to reduce day crewing plus

## Background to day crewing plus (DCP)

DCP was implemented in Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service in 2010, in agreement with local Fire Brigades Union (FBU) representatives at the time, as the only viable way to make significant cost savings while maintaining emergency cover levels during a period of severe austerity in the public sector.

It is a more cost-effective way of providing 24/7 emergency cover than the traditional wholtime 2/2/4 (WT 2/2/4) duty system, as it requires less firefighters to provide the same level of response. This is achieved by firefighters staying in purpose-built accommodation on fire station grounds to provide close standby at night, after working during the day. This extra commitment is compensated for with an additional 32% pensionable allowance and the ability to self-roster shifts, providing more flexible arrangements for individuals.

A DCP crewed fire engine costs about £880,000 a year to run, compared to £1.34m for one crewed by the WT 2/2/4 duty system.

Initially introduced at six fire stations, DCP was eventually implemented at 11 stations. The number of firefighters required to fully staff our DCP stations is currently 154 and all individuals volunteer to work the system.



# Why do we need to change?

DCP is a voluntary system that requires firefighters to opt out of normal working hours as specified in the working time directive. In addition, a local agreement with a relevant trade union is required to operate the system to ensure compliance with the regulations.

Although the Service believes that a local agreement with the FBU has been in place since the duty system was implemented in 2010, the FBU refutes that and in November 2021 the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA) decided that DCP would be withdrawn.

In October 2021 a full review of DCP concluded that there were a number of matters that needed further consideration including the limited movement and progression of people, health and safety concerns, and capacity to carry out prevention and protection work.

On the DCP duty system, incidents attended overnight result in recovery time the following day to ensure staff wellbeing and reduce fatigue. This can impact on the delivery of community-based prevention and protection services and training time, as well as service-wide resilience in respect of major incidents or when simultaneous incidents occur.

These issues can be addressed through revisions to the system, including a reduction in the number of fire stations operating DCP, however a trade union agreement is still required.

In April 2022, the Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA) and the Fire Officers Association (FOA) were recognised by the CFA for collective bargaining rights on behalf of firefighters. They joined the FBU in holding consultation and negotiation rights in relation to pay and conditions for Grey Book staff.

Following this, the Service issued draft proposals to maintain DCP in some areas to all three trade unions and in June 2022, an agreement was reached with FRSA and FOA.

In order to replace DCP with an alternative duty system at a number of stations and achieve a balanced budget, crewing arrangements at all stations have been considered as part of the review. This includes reducing the number of staff on each DCP unit from 14 to 13, with the exception of the urban search and rescue teams.

# Proposal for a new flexible wholetime duty system

A working group of firefighters volunteered to look at options for future crewing arrangements and consider the best way to replace DCP. Alternative duty systems have to meet the requirements of both the working time directive and Grey Book terms and conditions, and fall within budget in terms of operating costs. They also wanted a system that provides flexibility for people to choose their shifts.

The working group researched duty systems operated in other fire and rescue services, considered national guidance and sought views from staff across the Service. It recommended a flexible wholetime duty system and consultation and negotiation are underway with trade unions.

**Flexible Wholetime (FWT):** It is proposed that firefighters undertake 12-hour day or night shifts providing 24-hour cover from the station. They can self-roster their shifts for maximum flexibility. The duty system would operate with 24 firefighters on a station: two watch managers, six crew managers and 16 firefighters.



## Benefits of FWT

- Maintains effective emergency cover and response standards in areas that require 24/7 immediate response due to community risk and incident levels.
- Self-rostering shifts provides as much flexibility as possible to firefighters while ensuring that required crewing levels are maintained.
- Flexible working pattern may make a career in firefighting more attractive to a wider range of potential talent.
- Increases total number of wholetime firefighters employed by 25 over three years as more people are required to operate the system.
- Increases promotion opportunities through increased number of supervisory manager roles.

## Additional benefits on stations upgrading from DCP to FWT

- Stations moving from DCP to FWT are being upgraded to provide 24-hour emergency cover from the station in areas where risk and demand are higher.
- Station establishment on these stations will increase from 14 to 24.
- Strengthens resilience during major incidents or when simultaneous incidents occur due to reduced need for recovery time.
- A replacement crew comes on duty each morning to ensure services continue to be delivered.
- More capacity to deliver prevention and protection services due to more positive working hours across the 24-hour period.\*
- More time to train due to more positive working hours across the 24-hour period.\*

## Considerations

- DCP is a popular duty system for those working it and there is a financial impact moving off it with the loss of the additional allowance. FWT does not attract an additional allowance for those working the duty system.
  - In line with the findings of the DCP review, it is not feasible to keep it at 11 stations, however keeping it at five stations reduces the number of people affected.
  - Individual preferences and retirement profiles will be taken into consideration wherever possible to minimise the impacts. The staff survey has been created to gather information from those affected to help achieve this.
  - The changes are proposed over three years, starting in 2023-24 through to 2025-26, to allow as much time as possible for the transition.
- It is necessary to produce proposals that are within budget and make the best possible use of our resources to provide the best possible services for the people of Lancashire.
  - To balance the budget, the proposals include changing crewing arrangements to FWT at some stations operating the wholetime 2/2/4 (WT 2-2-4) duty system.
  - A change to FWT would cause no change to emergency response times at these stations, offers greater flexibility to staff working there and is necessary to balance the budget.
  - It is also proposed that two DCP stations change to flexible day crewing (FDC) due to lower risk and incident levels in those areas.

\* Positive hours will be in line with WT 2/2/4, stand-down midnight - 7am.

# Proposed crewing arrangements

The following proposed changes will be introduced gradually, working with staff and trade unions to manage the transition sensitively.

## Change crewing arrangements at seven fire stations to flexible wholetime (FWT) between 2023 and 2026:

- Skelmersdale (DCP)
- Morecambe (DCP)
- Lancaster (WT 2/2/4)
- South Shore (WT 2/2/4)
- Fleetwood (DCP)
- Bispham (DCP)
- Hyndburn (WT 2/2/4)

It is anticipated that the first station(s) will change in spring/summer 2023.

## Change crewing arrangements at two fire stations to flexible day crewing (FDC) in 2025-26:

- St Annes (DCP)
- Penwortham (DCP)

## DCP would remain at:

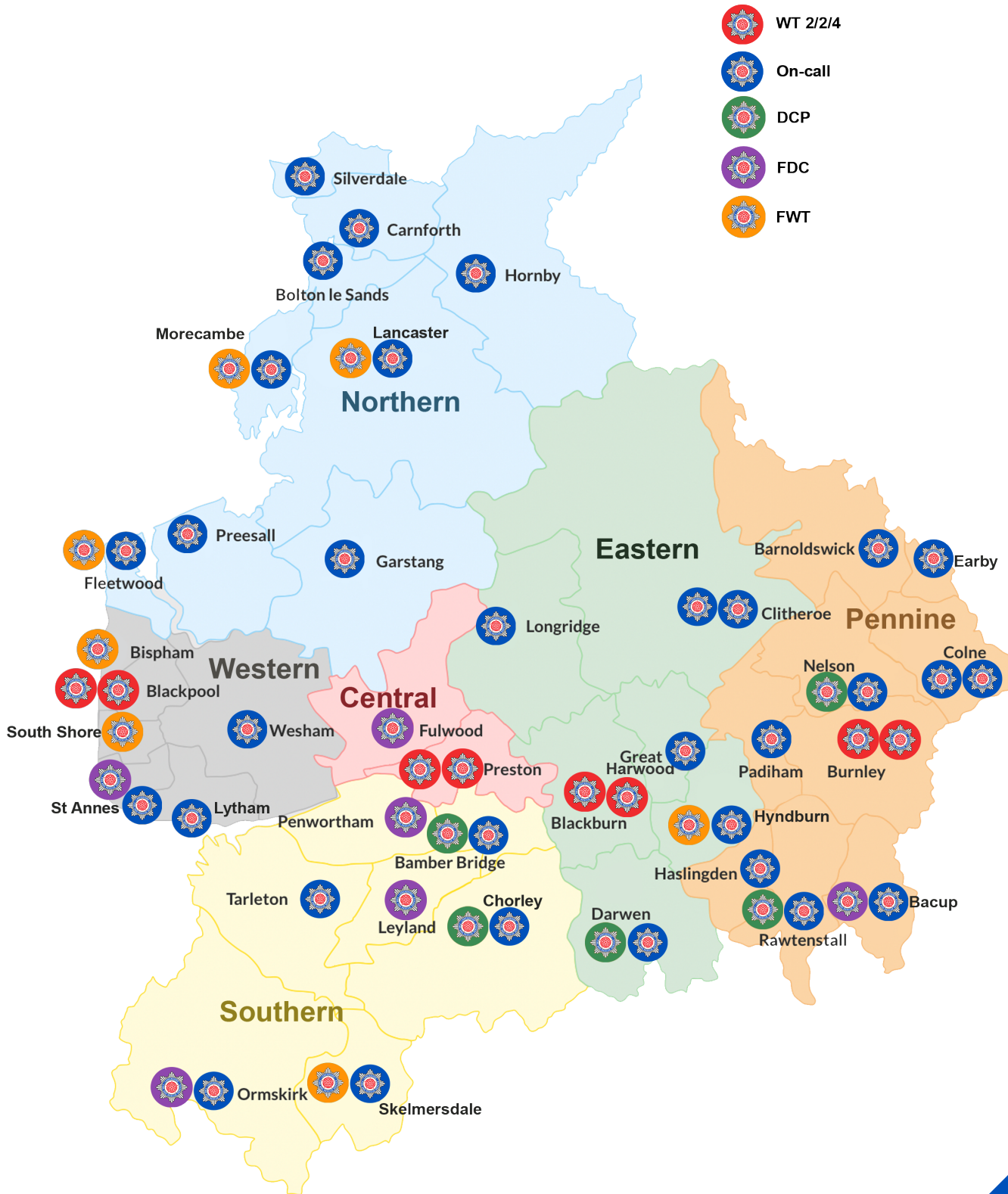
- Bamber Bridge
- Chorley
- Darwen
- Rawtenstall
- Nelson

## Urban search and rescue

A separate working group reviewed options for change of our urban search and rescue (USAR) provision, which currently operates DCP crewing arrangements at Chorley and Bamber Bridge. It found that DCP is the most appropriate duty system to maintain effective USAR capabilities due to training requirements for crews.



# Proposed placement of fire stations, fire engines and crewing arrangements



# Rationale for station changes

Decisions on station crewing are based on incident levels, community risks and the location of neighbouring stations, aligned with our robust response standards. When incidents occur and the impact of recovery time (where applicable) have also been considered.

Station	Current duty system	Proposed duty system	Rationale
<b>Morecambe</b>	<b>DCP</b>	<b>FWT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves emergency cover and prevention, protection and training time – currently only one other wholetime appliance in the north of the county (Lancaster).</li> <li>• Greatest LSOA risk – Very high requiring 6 minute response.</li> <li>• Average 700 incidents in station area per year (2018/19 – 2020/21).</li> <li>• Attracts the greatest number of recovery periods, average of 140 per year</li> </ul>
<b>Skelmersdale</b>	<b>DCP</b>	<b>FWT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves emergency cover and prevention, protection and training time – currently every wholetime appliance in the south of the county attracts recovery periods.</li> <li>• Greatest LSOA risk – Medium requiring 10 minute response.</li> <li>• Average 615 incidents in station area per year (2018/19 – 2020/21).</li> <li>• Average 95 recovery periods per year.</li> </ul>
<b>Lancaster</b>	<b>WT 2/2/4</b>	<b>FWT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce crewing from 28 to 24 to support changes across DCP stations, whilst maintaining immediate response.</li> <li>• Greatest LSOA risk – High requiring 8 minute response.</li> <li>• All wholetime (single pump) units are proposed to change duty system but as risk and incident levels remain high, the proposed changes maintain wholetime appliances.</li> </ul>

Station	Current duty system	Proposed duty system	Rationale
<b>Fleetwood</b>	<b>DCP</b>	<b>FWT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improves emergency cover and prevention, protection and training time – currently the only wholetime appliance in Wyre.</li> <li>Greatest LSOA risk – Very high requiring 6 minute response.</li> <li>Average 596 incidents in station area per year (2018/19 – 2020/21).</li> <li>Average 106 recovery periods per year.</li> </ul>
<b>Bispham</b>	<b>DCP</b>	<b>FWT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improves emergency cover and prevention, protection and training time.</li> <li>Greatest LSOA risk – Very high requiring 6 minute response.</li> <li>Average 527 incidents in station area per year (2018/19 – 2020/21).</li> <li>Attracts the second greatest number of recovery periods, average of 135 per year.</li> </ul>
<b>South Shore</b>	<b>WT 2/24</b>	<b>FWT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reduce crewing from 28 to 24 to support changes across DCP stations, whilst maintaining immediate response.</li> <li>Greatest LSOA risk – Very high requiring 6 minute response.</li> <li>All wholetime (single pump) units are proposed to change duty system but as risk and incident levels remain high, the proposed changes maintain wholetime appliances.</li> </ul>
<b>Penwortham</b>	<b>DCP</b>	<b>FDC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within a cluster of immediate response fire engines, response standards can still be met.</li> <li>Greatest LSOA risk – High requiring 8 minute response.</li> <li>Incident levels comparable with other areas operating FDC.</li> <li>Average 460 incidents in station area per year (2018/19 – 2020/21).</li> <li>Average of 124 recovery periods per year.</li> </ul>

Station	Current duty system	Proposed duty system	Rationale
St Annes	DCP	FDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FDC crewing arrangements will maintain response standards in the area.</li> <li>• Greatest LSOA risk – Medium requiring 10 minute response.</li> <li>• Incident levels comparable with other areas operating FDC.</li> <li>• Average 326 incidents in station area per year (2018/19 – 2020/21).</li> <li>• Attracts the second fewest number of recovery periods, average of 77 per year.</li> </ul>
Hyndburn	WT 2/2/4	FWT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce crewing from 28 to 24 to support changes across DCP stations, whilst maintaining immediate response.</li> <li>• Greatest LSOA risk – Very high requiring 6 minute response.</li> <li>• All wholetime (single pump) units are proposed to change duty system but as risk and incident levels remain high, the proposed changes maintain wholetime appliances.</li> </ul>

## Crewing levels

DCP currently operates with 14 firefighters per station. We propose changing this number to 13 at Darwen, Rawtenstall and Nelson. Bamber Bridge and Chorley will remain at 14 due to requirements for USAR provision.

Research by the working group showed that similar duty systems operate effectively in other fire and rescue services with between 11 and 13 firefighters. A crewing level of 13 also reduces the cost of the duty system, keeping the overall emergency cover proposals within budget. There will be no reduction in the number of firefighters employed; with the introduction of the FWT duty system, this number will increase by 25.

Duty system	Current	Proposed
DCP	14	13
DCP (USAR)	14	14
FDC	14	14
WT 2/2/4	1 pump stations - 28 2 pump stations - 52	1 pump stations - change to FWT 2 pump stations - 52
FWT	N/A	24

## Proposals to broaden on-call firefighting capabilities to strengthen operational response

We plan to expand training opportunities to enable on-call firefighters at some stations to crew the proposed off-road fire appliances in areas at high risk of climate change emergencies and operate water towers. We will also explore the potential for our on-call firefighters to drive a range of special appliances to improve our speed of response for some of these vehicles. Broadening the range of skills and knowledge among on-call crews will strengthen operational response and resilience, and creates further development opportunities for on-call firefighters.

The staff survey includes additional questions about this proposal including what types of activities you think should be extended to on-call firefighters and ability to commit to training requirements.

# Have your say

We want to know what you think of all the proposals in the emergency cover review. Do you agree with them? What impact might they have on you? Is there anything else we should have considered?

A survey has been created to help us collect feedback from the public and other stakeholders. We have created an extended version of the survey for our staff which includes more detailed questions about crewing arrangements and broadening on-call firefighting capabilities.

- To complete the survey go to The Engine House.
- You can request a paper copy of the survey by emailing [consultation@lancsfirerescue.org.uk](mailto:consultation@lancsfirerescue.org.uk).
- Station visits with area managers have been arranged at all stations where changes to crewing arrangements are proposed.
- We will review feedback regularly during the consultation period to understand any low-up or targeted activity that may be required, for example focus groups.
- The HR team will also be arranging individual meetings with those affected by the proposed changes.

If you have any further comments or questions after you have completed the survey, you can email [consultation@lancsfirerescue.org.uk](mailto:consultation@lancsfirerescue.org.uk).

The consultation survey launches w/c 18 July for 12 weeks, closing on 14 October. Consultation feedback will be considered by the CFA planning committee on 21 November and final decisions will be made by the CFA on 19 December.



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