

Welcome to our Annual Service Plan

Our Annual Service Plan sets out how Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service will adapt to changing risks and challenges, to ensure our services remain effective and efficient for the future.

A key focus for the year ahead is shaping our next Community Risk Management Plan, a five-year plan to guide how the Service will make Lancashire safer from 2027 onwards. We intend to review all our services alongside, to make sure we are well prepared to deliver the activities and interventions in the new plan.

The Service faces a range of pressures that are driving change: risks are evolving across communities, and demand is shifting towards more varied types of emergencies, including those linked to climate change. At the same time, significant financial pressures and the need to invest in buildings, require greater efficiency.

Last year, we set the national benchmark for excellence, achieving the best performance in the country in His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' inspection programme. We want to evolve in ways that preserve what is exceptional about Lancashire and intend to use our expertise and experience to introduce changes carefully and to the highest standards.

Data, digital and technology will sit at the heart of opportunities to innovate and modernise vehicles, equipment, and ways of working, with the aim of using our resources in the most impactful and cost-effective ways.

Residents, businesses, our staff, and partners will be invited to help shape this new direction, and we will listen to the feedback to understand what is important to the people who live and work in our county.

The Service is consistently recognised not just for the work we do but also the way we do it; through our strong values and positive culture. I firmly believe that these are our greatest strengths and Lancashire's communities can trust that we will rise positively to our challenges and continue providing the best possible services.

Jon Charters

Chief Fire Officer

Shaping our services for the future

Develop a new plan for making Lancashire safer

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is a five-year plan for how we will achieve our aim of making Lancashire safer. Our next CRMP will set out the direction of the Service from 2027 to 2032, based on the greatest risks to the people and communities of Lancashire.

The environment we operate in is constantly changing and new risks to our communities frequently emerge. Wildfires, illegal waste site incidents, and e-charging fires are all examples of emergencies that have become higher risks in recent years.

It is our job to make sure we are equipped to deal with these changing risks by adapting our services and skills to prevent, protect and respond effectively. This is the purpose of our CRMP.

We will:

- Consult with a wide range of stakeholders including residents, businesses, partner agencies and employees to produce a new CRMP for 2027-32 and supporting strategies.

Review our services to meet changing risk and demand in Lancashire

The ways we operate evolve as risks to public safety change. The number of fires we attend has gone down over the last 15 years and the types of emergencies has changed, with incidents like flooding, road traffic collisions, and assisting other agencies rising.

Where we are located, the types of vehicles and equipment we use, and the skills our people possess must match community risks and incident levels across the county. Our prevention and protection services are also targeted at reducing emergencies in the areas of highest risk.

Our services must be capable of delivering the activities and interventions in our new CRMP for 2027-32. It is also critical to address operational and financial challenges so that we can continue to deliver effective services across Lancashire in the most efficient way.

We will:

- Review all our services and consult the public on options for how they could be delivered in future to align with the new CRMP, address our challenges, and capitalise on opportunities to make Lancashire safer.
- Trial different ways of working that make better use of our resources to inform our approach to delivering services in the future.

Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer

Service headquarters and leadership and development centre masterplan

We have developed a masterplan for the redevelopment of Service headquarters and our leadership and development centre in Chorley, including new training props and modernised learning and office space. The redevelopment represents vital investment in aging buildings and facilities that are uneconomical to maintain and will lead to efficiency, sustainability, and modernisation gains.

We will:

- Continue to develop the masterplan focussing on the replacement of training props to ensure training provision is aligned to the risks identified in our Strategic Assessment of Risk.

Upgrade fire station facilities

Investment in fire stations is part of our commitment to ensuring our people have facilities that are fit for the future to support their health and wellbeing by providing a safe and positive working environment.

We will:

- Following building condition and decarbonisation surveys undertaken last year, develop our Property Asset Management Plan to inform decisions about short, medium, and long-term investment required in our property and estates assets.

Invest in firefighter safety

We aspire to the highest standards of health, safety, and wellbeing for our staff. This year our focus is on reducing the risks to firefighters from being exposed to harmful substances and introducing new breathing apparatus (BA), which is worn by firefighters to enable them to breathe safely in environments filled with smoke, toxic gases, or low oxygen levels.

We will:

- Following a series of rigorous trials and evaluations, introduce new BA sets across the Service supported by a training programme to provide the highest level of firefighter safety.
- Introduce several new 'clean cab' fire engines into our fleet that store breathing apparatus separately from the cab (where firefighters ride), meaning it is kept clean and free of contaminated equipment after a fire.
- Continue our work to lessen the impacts of fire contaminants in line with our new Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy by implementing national best

practice, the latest developments in guidance and research, and developing procedures based on feedback from our staff.

Create more efficient people processes

We aim to offer a welcoming environment and simple processes for people from applying for a job, to joining our Service, and throughout their career. Improved systems and digitisation will create a smoother experience for both job applicants and our staff.

We will:

- Introduce a new, more streamlined recruitment system which improves the candidate experience and prepares new employees for their new roles.
- Continue to digitise and streamline HR processes, including the automation of forms, to improve efficiency and the employee experience.

Improve how we assess the impact of our decisions

Acting on feedback from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, we are committed to improving how we assess the equality impacts of our work, ensuring our practices remain fair, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of our workforce and communities.

We will:

- Develop skills in our staff to analyse how decisions and policies impact on diverse groups of people and implement a new system to monitor the completion of effective equality impact assessments.

Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening

Review how prevention services are delivered

Prevention is by far the most effective way to make Lancashire safer. We identify those who are most vulnerable in our communities, and design and target our prevention activities to support people to adopt safe practices and reduce their risk. Our main service is the home fire safety check service, where we make practical interventions in the homes of those most at risk of having a fire.

We will:

- Review prevention activities to ensure we continue to deliver targeted activity to those most at risk, aligning resources and interventions to risk making communities safer.

Protecting people and property when fires happen

Adapt services to support new safety measures and increase efficiency

Our protection services aim to reduce the number of fires that occur in commercial premises and the impact on life, property, and business disruption when fires do occur. We support businesses, employers, and landlords to meet their legal duties and keep people safe in their buildings with a county-wide inspection programme. We take a risk-based approach to inspecting businesses: fire safety inspectors focus their activity on complex, high-risk premises and operational crews check lower risk premises such as schools, shops, and offices through our business fire safety check service.

We will:

- Introduce a new digital system within our prevention and protection functions to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity across all our fire safety activities through mobile working, streamlining, and automation.
- Adapt how we support businesses for the introduction of new residential evacuation procedures, which become mandatory in tall buildings from 1 April 2026.
- Work locally, regionally, and nationally to implement the impacts of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 recommendations.

Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently

Focus on availability, preparedness, and operational competence

Risks in communities are changing and the types of emergencies firefighters respond to are increasingly varied. We constantly review and adapt our approach to ensure we have the right vehicles, equipment, skills, and technology to respond to different types of incidents quickly and competently. In 2026-27, fire engine availability, preparedness, and operational competence are the key priorities to ensure we continue to deliver the highest standards of emergency response.

We will:

- Review management structures to ensure arrangements support the key priorities and balance responsibilities, leading to closer contact between firefighters and leaders
- Empower firefighters to drive operational excellence through our new Operational Tactics Group, bringing together learning and best practice in structural firefighting and incident command.

Strengthen on-call fire engine availability

Lancashire has 32 fire engines crewed by on-call firefighters, who often have another job outside Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. They live or work very close to the fire stations they operate from and respond to emergencies in their communities from home or work. We undertake continuous improvement to strengthen recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters and increase availability of on-call fire engines.

We will:

- Analyse national on-call research to identify opportunities and implement recommendations to improve the on-call model in our Service.
- Deliver revised pay arrangements for on-call firefighters that better reflect hours of cover and reward acquisition of key skills.

Review specialist appliances

The Service has multiple specialist vehicles and equipment designed to fight and rescue people from a wide range of emergencies. A detailed evaluation of some of these specialist resources, in particular our aerial and water rescue provision, will inform our replacement programmes and future requirements.

We will:

- Review the types, risk, usage, numbers and locations of aerial appliances and water rescue resources.

Invest in our fleet and equipment

The Service conducts extensive research and development to ensure we invest in vehicles that provide the most effective response to emergencies and increased firefighter safety. Our staff are actively involved in developing, trialling, and evaluating vehicles to ensure they meet operational needs.

We will:

- Introduce and evaluate a new welfare unit designed to improve welfare for firefighters on the incident ground.
- Acquire and evaluate two smaller 4x4-type fire engines capable of off-road travel, which can give improved access to rural areas in the event of flooding or wildfires, in addition to being available to respond to all other incident types safely.
- Support the replacement of the mobilising system at North West Fire Control to ensure it is fit for the future, serves the needs of Lancashire's communities, and provides value for money.

Lead drone modernisation in fire and rescue

As the national fire and rescue service lead for drones, the Service is a partner in a project to ensure emergency services are included in future changes to UK airspace. Modernisation includes using drones to take aerial imagery from the incident ground prior to arrival of fire engines, the 'drone in a box' concept which negates the need for a human operator, and heavy lifting drones. Our participation will keep us at the forefront of innovation, development, and operations.

We will:

- Participate in research and trials, host drone activity at our Leadership and Development Centre, and facilitate show and tell events to share learning and innovation.

Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

Increase operational competence to strengthen resilience

Our plans to become more efficient in how we use our resources include utilising all our operational staff to respond to emergencies when needed. Ensuring firefighters who work in specialist roles, like training delivery and fire safety, retain the skills required to crew fire engines when needed will strengthen our resilience.

We will:

- Implement a training programme tailored to individuals so they can perform operational duties, alongside their primary roles, at times when more firefighters are needed.

Drive efficiencies through digital innovation

Our digital agenda aims to create a positive, inclusive culture that encourages innovation to increase efficiency and effectiveness across the Service. A workforce that is digitally engaged underpins our digital journey and our staff are at the centre of generating ideas and implementing solutions.

We will:

- Implement ideas from our new Modern Ways of Working Forum to drive improvements across the organisation through digital innovation and better use of technology.
- Upskill key people in the Service to build simple digital solutions and create more efficient ways of working by providing the tools and capability.
- Continue with our programme to develop Power-BI dashboards including tailored performance dashboards, financial reporting dashboards, and a self-service tool.

Maximise productivity and efficiency

We are driving improvements in how productive and efficient the Service is, making sure all our resources are used in a way that has the greatest impact on and delivers the best possible value for money for Lancashire's communities.

We will:

- Support the development of a national productivity tool for fire and rescue services to benchmark performance and identify areas for improvement.
- Update our annual Productivity and Efficiency Plan to reflect improvements made and planned initiatives.
- Consider options for more efficient, alternative fuelled vehicles including expansion of our infrastructure to enable onsite charging of electric vehicles.
- Support national and regional procurement activity through collaboration.