



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**

COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-2030



*Safer
Together*

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OUR COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN



Chairperson's Foreword



On behalf of the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) Board, it is my pleasure to introduce the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030.

A recent report by His Majesty's Fire Services Inspectorate (HMFSI) (Scotland), published in September 2023, commented on the commitment and dedication of NIFRS staff to making Northern Ireland a safer place for all.

As Chairperson, this makes me exceptionally proud of our Service and staff and I know that this provides a firm foundation on which to build continuous service improvement.

This is our first CRMP and it supersedes all previously published, and now outdated, Integrated Risk Management Plan documents.

As a Service, given the challenging financial climate, we aim to be more efficient and effective whilst working in partnership to keep our community safe. This will likely result in

NIFRS doing things differently, utilising flexible risk interventions with an increased focus on prevention.

In preparation for development of this CRMP we have procured and implemented new operational risk modelling software.

We have also worked closely with the National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) Risk Management work-stream in the enhancement of our risk methodology.

As a result, new operational risk profiles and associated maps have been generated within a Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAR) document which will be maintained as a live document and provide the basis for all future operational decisions.

This CRMP will provide a blueprint for service improvement, setting out NIFRS' strategic

priorities and the steps that the Service will be taking to scope and deliver new programmes of work to help ensure that Northern Ireland continues to be a safe place to live and work.

We will be seeking the views of key stakeholders at key milestones within the 5-year CRMP, covering the period 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2030, and I would encourage your engagement. Firstly we sought your views via consultation on our proposed direction of travel as defined in this document, and subsequently we will re-engage with further detail and supporting documentation through focus groups, engagement activities and/or formal consultation, as we start implementing proposals for change.

Mr Jay Colville
Chairperson
NIFRS Board

Chief's Introduction

I am delighted to be able to share with you our plans for your Fire & Rescue Service.



Our CRMP sets out in detail who we are as a service, the work that we carry out, and the steps that we take to respond effectively to an emergency situation as well as how we try to prevent emergency situations from arising in the first place.

This document forms the cornerstone of NIFRS, setting the direction of each of our teams over the course of the next 5 years to ensure that we remain a strong and resilient team, there for you when you need us most.

Like all organisations, the Covid-19 pandemic posed many challenges, but also brought positive opportunities. NIFRS introduced agile working, supported by the use of IT, and changed how we deliver our service to our community.

NIFRS has a strong reputation for timely operational response. During the pandemic, the emergency response received by the community of Northern Ireland was maintained; and while this may have appeared quite seamless, behind the scenes, this required significant manual interventions and increased flexibility in decision-making and Service wide commitment to our community.

The learning from this period is the knowledge that a static service delivery model does not always produce the best outcomes and that future modelling may need to be more flexible to increase resource mobility to reflect the changing risks across our community.

Over the next 5 years, commencing on 1 April 2025, we will be looking at our operational response model using enhanced operational risk information and reviewing our Emergency Response Performance Standards (ERPS). This will allow us to more accurately

review the composition and locations of our operational delivery model and inform the provision of alternative preventative interventions. Effectively, NIFRS will be ensuring that it will provide Northern Ireland with the right resources in the right place at the right time based on risk.

In addition to operational response, our Prevention and Protection team have also needed to flex normal delivery methods to support and provide advice to the public and business community, taking action when needed to keep people safe. Throughout the CRMP period, we will continue to build on and improve on our established prevention and protection activities.

We will develop and implement a new Community Prevention Strategy which will focus on interventions for those most at risk from fire, while also reinvigorating our public education activities. Thereby, we hope,

”

We will continue to build on and improve on our established prevention and protection activities.

reducing fire incidents and other emergencies. Our staff are at the core of the Service we deliver and we want our people to feel safe and part of a supportive work community. Work is already underway in developing and implementing career pathways for all staff through our Organisational Development team.

We will strive to be an employer of choice with the aim of being more representative of the community we serve. The introduction of employee networks, engagement initiatives and improved recruitment practices will be central to a new People Strategy which we will begin implementing in Year 1 of the CRMP.

Additionally, to further support our people we have moved to our new state of the art Learning & Development College at Cookstown which will expand and increase our training potential and the way we deliver training.



To support these CRMP activities we will:

- > review our governance policies and procedures
- > implement a new performance management framework underpinned by better information
- > develop and commence implementation of a digital strategy, and
- > ensure our operational staff are provided with suitable operational guidance, operational equipment and personal protective equipment to allow them to perform their core duties.

The foundation stone to all of the above CRMP activities is understanding risk. From there we can work out what steps need to be taken to manage that risk. This helps us to work out where we need our staff and resources, so we can respond to high-risk incidents and plan how to deliver our vital prevention and protection work.

This plan sets out how we intend to address those risks that we deal with on a day-to-day basis here in NI, as well as identifying new and emerging trends that will impact how we deliver our work and become safer together.

Mr Aidan Jennings
Chief Fire & Rescue Officer

OUR GOVERNANCE



NIFRS Statutory Purpose

NIFRS is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) established on 1 July 2006 by The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. This Order established the body corporate, known as the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board, and the NIFRS Board shall be the fire and rescue authority for Northern Ireland.

Statutory Purpose and Objectives

NIFRS as a NDPB, is accountable to the Department of Health (DoH) for all its actions and specifically the roles and responsibilities as laid out in the Partnership Agreement signed in 2024 that replaces the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) (July 2017).



Legislation

NIFRS’ statutory functions, duties and powers are outlined in three primary pieces of legislation.

The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

This established NIFRS as an entity and placed a statutory obligation on NIFRS to fight fire; to respond to road traffic collisions; to train and equip staff; along with a requirement to focus on fire safety prevention and education.

The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010

This shifted focus away from the prescriptive nature of older fire safety legislation to a more risk based approach.

The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2011

This extended NIFRS’ role to include statutory responsibility for Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear (CBRN); Search and Rescue (SAR); serious flooding; and serious transport incidents.

Function, Duties & Powers

The statutory functions, duties and powers are as follows:

Statutory Function

Provision of a fire and rescue authority for Northern Ireland.

Duties

Training and equipping staff to fight fire; to respond to road traffic collisions; to respond to other emergencies; to focus on fire safety, prevention, and education; and to discharge statutory responsibilities for Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear (CBRN); Search and Rescue; serious flooding; and serious transport incidents.

Powers

Articles 18 – 21 of the Fire & Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 give specific powers to NIFRS and their Officers.



Civil Contingencies



The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework complements The Civil Contingencies Act of 2004. It defines the arrangements for those responsible for effective emergency management, identifying the processes involved in preparing for, responding to and recovering from an emergency in Northern Ireland.

Civil contingencies here are largely a devolved matter, with functions being exercised routinely by the Northern Ireland Departments.

The Civil Contingencies Framework, while not a legislative document, enables Northern Ireland regional cohesion at a strategic level. It is supported by local and departmental plans, at both operational and tactical levels.

Some functions are not devolved and are delivered in Northern Ireland by bodies that fall within the remit of the UK Government and the Civil Contingencies Act (2004).

In practice, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) are the only agencies that undertake the full cooperative duties, listed within Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act.

NIFRS is not a designated Category 1 or Category 2 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act. However, it undertakes responsibilities outlined within the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework.

NIFRS works within the framework's principles of collaboration, coordination and transparency, and uses the holistic approach of Integrated Emergency Management to prevent and manage emergencies.

Fire and Rescue Framework



While development work is progressing in respect of a Fire and Rescue Services Framework for Northern Ireland, NIFRS will adopt best practice for the completion and implementation of CRMP as implemented by The Fire and Rescue National Frameworks for England, Scotland and Wales. These outline that Fire Authorities must ensure the following 5 priorities are met:

- > To be accountable to the communities for the service they provide;
- > To identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;
- > To make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents;
- > To develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and delivers, and;
- > To collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency; and effectiveness of the service they provide.

Oversight & Accountability

Departmental Oversight

NIFRS, as a Non-Departmental Public Body, is accountable to the DoH for all its actions and the Minister for Health is answerable to the Assembly for the overall performance and delivery of both DoH and NIFRS.

The Northern Ireland Executive’s outcome-based approach to delivery recognises the importance of arm’s length bodies and departments working collaboratively and together in a joined up approach to improve overall outcomes and results.

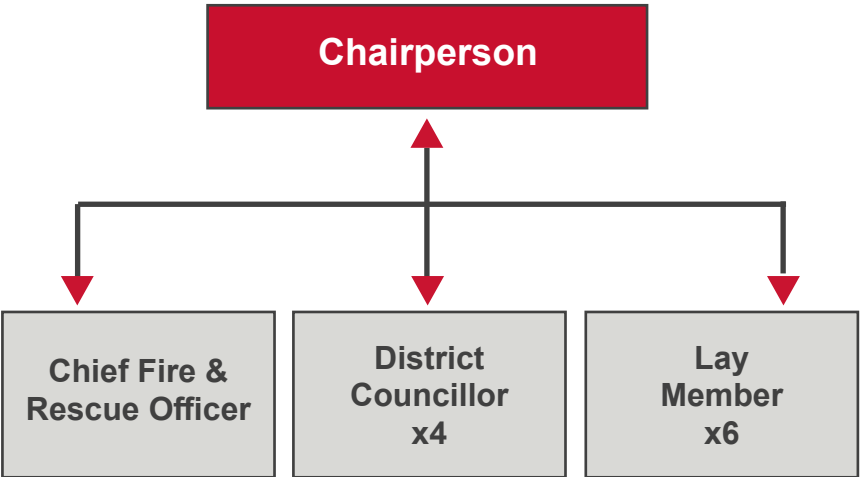
To that end there is strategic alignment between the aims, objectives and expected outcomes and results of NIFRS and DoH.

The strategic outcomes of NIFRS are influenced and shaped by a number of factors including the Draft Programme for Government (PFG), as shown to the right, and wider DoH outcomes.

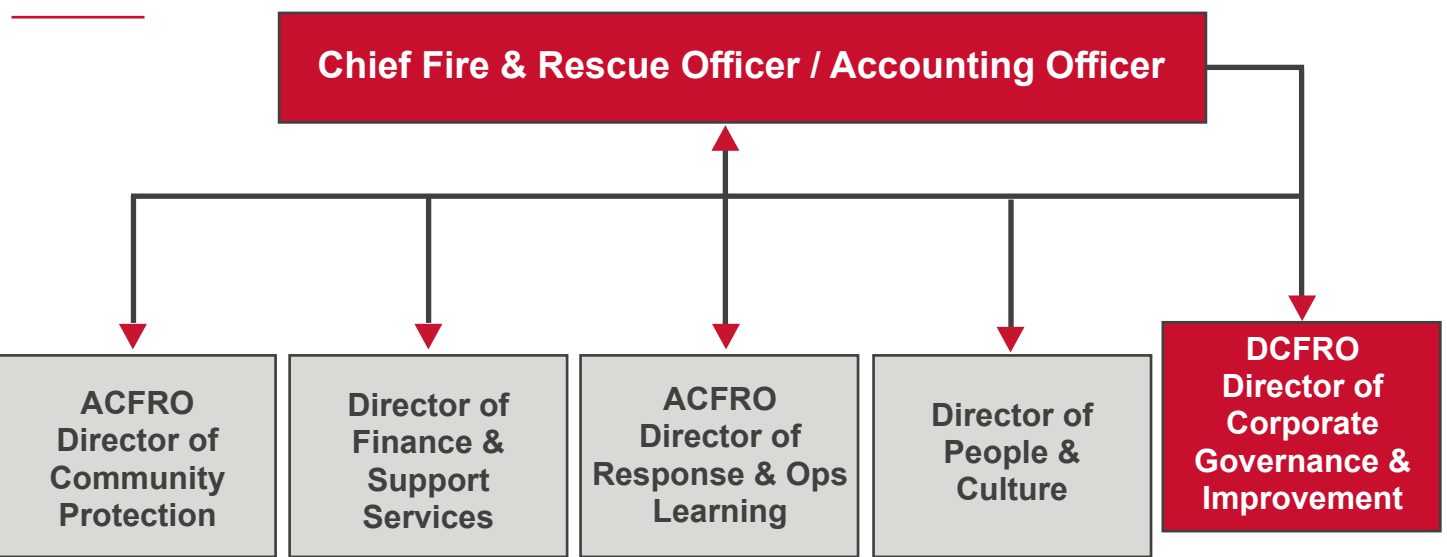
Departmental accountability is currently managed through day to day interaction with Sponsorship of Public Safety and Inquiries (SPSI) and more formally via DoH Accountability Meetings scheduled throughout the year.



NIFRS Board



Executive Leadership Team




NIFRS Board

The strategic direction, performance and scrutiny of NIFRS is overseen by the NIFRS Board, a body which was established under The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.


The NIFRS Board is appointed by the Minister of Health and comprises a non-executive Chairperson and 10 non-executive Members, 4 of whom are District Councillors and the remainder are Lay Members. The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer is also a member of the NIFRS Board.



Mr Jay Colville
Chairperson




Aidan Jennings
Chief Fire & Rescue Officer




Ms Bonnie Anley
Board Member




Cllr Jonathan Craig
Board Member




Cllr Laura Devlin
Board Member



Mr Paul Kennedy
Board Member



Mr Jim Lennon
Board Member



Alistair Cathcart
Board Member




Cllr Thomas O'Hanlon
Board Member



Mr Jim Quinn
Board Member



Mrs Hilary Singleton
OBE
Board Member



Ms Lindsey Smith
Board Member

Our Executive Leadership Team

Our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is responsible for the overall management and strategic direction of NIFRS and is accountable to the NIFRS Board.


Membership of ELT comprises of:




Marcus Wright
ACFRO
Director of
Community Protection




Paula White
Director of
Finance & Support
Services




Mark Deeney
ACFRO
Director of
Response & Ops
Learning



Tabitha Ramsay
Director of
People & Culture



Paul Harper
DCFRO
Director of Corporate
Governance &
Improvement

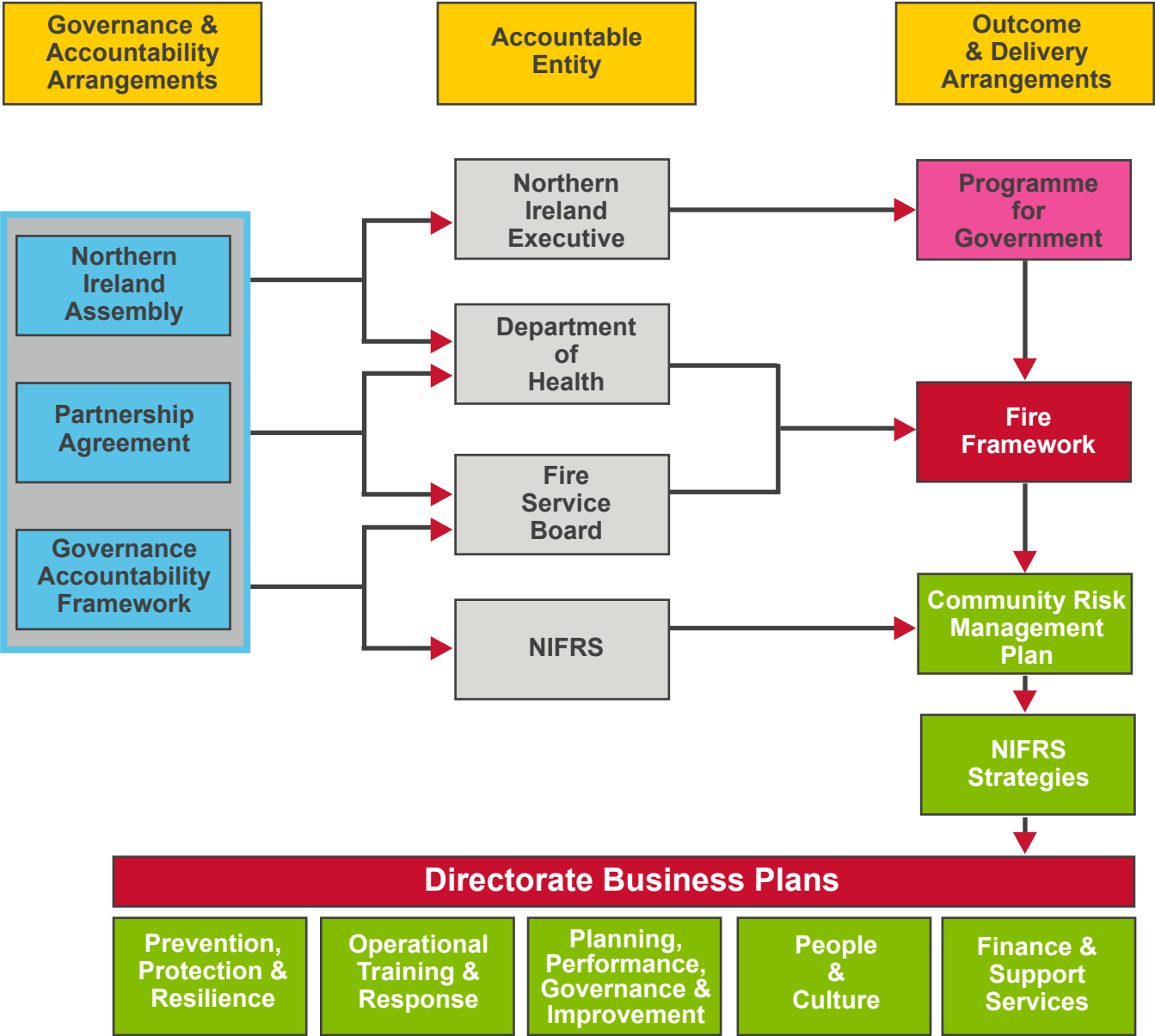


Aidan Jennings
CFRO
Accounting Officer

Strategic Oversight

Through its Strategic Plan, this CRMP and related organisational strategies, NIFRS will ensure that it supports PfG and Departmental requirements through the development of a new Northern Ireland Fire Framework.

Here are our key oversight, accountability and delivery linkages.



OUR SERVICE



Vision, Purpose, Values & Outcomes

Our Guiding Principle

Safer Together

Our Vision

We will work with others to deliver a high quality Fire & Rescue Service that is valued by the public, our partners and our people.

Our Purpose

We will help make Northern Ireland a safer place and improve community wellbeing.

Our Values

Community

We will put our community first.

Integrity

We do the right things and ensure transparency in all that we do.

Dignity & Respect

We will treat everyone with dignity, respecting our differences, and acting compassionately in all that we do.

Leadership

We will develop our staff potential to lead and support a professional service which strives for excellence in all that we do.

Our Strategic Outcomes

1. Service Improvement

We will, through our CRMP, design and deliver an effective Fire & Rescue Service based on community risk identification; identifying new and innovative ways to modernise our service and implement progressive change.

2. Community Protection

We will work with communities and partners to target our prevention, protection, resilience and preparedness activities to reduce community risk and enhance Firefighter safety.

3. Response

We will, through policy, procedure, training and equipping our staff, provide an effective operational response from call receipt to incident conclusion.

4. People

We will embed a high performing and inclusive culture ensuring our people are supported, engaged and inspired to deliver on service priorities.

5. Corporate Governance & Performance

We will maintain robust stewardship over our finance, corporate governance, planning and performance management to ensure we make effective and appropriate use of the available budget. We will ensure governance and planning arrangements underpin the effectiveness of the service we deliver.

6. Asset Management & Sustainability

We will ensure the effective development and management of all organisational assets in a way that drives efficiency and supports the delivery of our service in a sustainable way.

Our Organisational Context



Our Resources

The location of our fire resources are there to respond when the risk of fire or other emergencies is realised.

Locations

NIFRS has a total of 68 Fire Stations across Northern Ireland, 1 of which is a Satellite Station located in Dunmurry. These utilise a variety of crewing models using Wholtime, On-Call, and Volunteer Firefighters. We deliver other vital safety duties across the community through Prevention and Protection

Prevention

We want to reduce both the volume and severity of emergencies occurring in our community through fire, road, water safety awareness, and other reduction interventions.

We aim to achieve this through a range of targeted programmes and partnership working, aligned to our statutory duties, aimed at keeping those most at risk in our society safe.

Protection

Business safety and regulatory compliance activities help reduce risk, minimising the chance of fire and other emergencies, and reducing the severity if an incident occurs.



Interim Crewing Model

This map shows the Interim Crewing Model currently in place subject to review throughout the lifetime of this CRMP.

Key

Wholtime Station

Wholtime/On-Call Station

Day Crewing Station

On-Call Station

Voluntary Station

Dunmurry Station



Our Operational Composition

 999 Regional Control Centre	 Area HQ Eastern Western Southern Northern	 67 Fire Stations 1 Satellite Station
 Prevention & Protection Team	 Service Support Centre Belfast	 Learning & Development College Cookstown
 4 Geographical Area Commands	 113 Pumping Appliances on the run	 NIFRS HQ Lisburn

You'll Find Us

 Promoting Fire Safety	 Enforcing Fire Safety Legislation	 Responding to Serious Transport Incidents & Road Traffic Collisions
 Dealing with Structural Collapse	 Responding to Serious Flooding	 Responding to Serious Fires
 Working with Key Partners to Enhance Community Safety	 Planning for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Incidents	 Performing Rescues at Heights

OUR COMMUNITY



Our Planning Basis

To make a difference to the safety of people, buildings and places, our CRMP approach is broken down into 3 themes.

1. Demand

We use information about incidents that have happened in the past and analyse how we have responded to them, to better understand what happened and how efficient and effective we have been. This demand focus will enable us to plan to respond more effectively and efficiently to similar emergencies that occur in the future.

2. Risk

We identify people, buildings and places where there is a likelihood of an emergency incident happening that would have a potentially serious effect on our communities. We work with the people responsible for buildings and locations to help to reduce that risk while also planning and reviewing how we would deal with an emergency if it did occur.

3. Vulnerability

We use information to identify the types of people who would be most likely to have a fire or other emergency and who would be most likely to suffer harm. This could be through personal or environmental characteristics such as age or illness, or something that might be related to where people live, work or visit. We use this information, on our own and with others, to provide services to prevent and respond to fires and other emergencies in the most effective way.

NIFRS PLANNING PROCESS

Demand			
Past Incidents	Our Response	What Happened	Effective & Efficient

Risk			
Identify Areas	Work With Others	Reduce Risk	Plan & Review

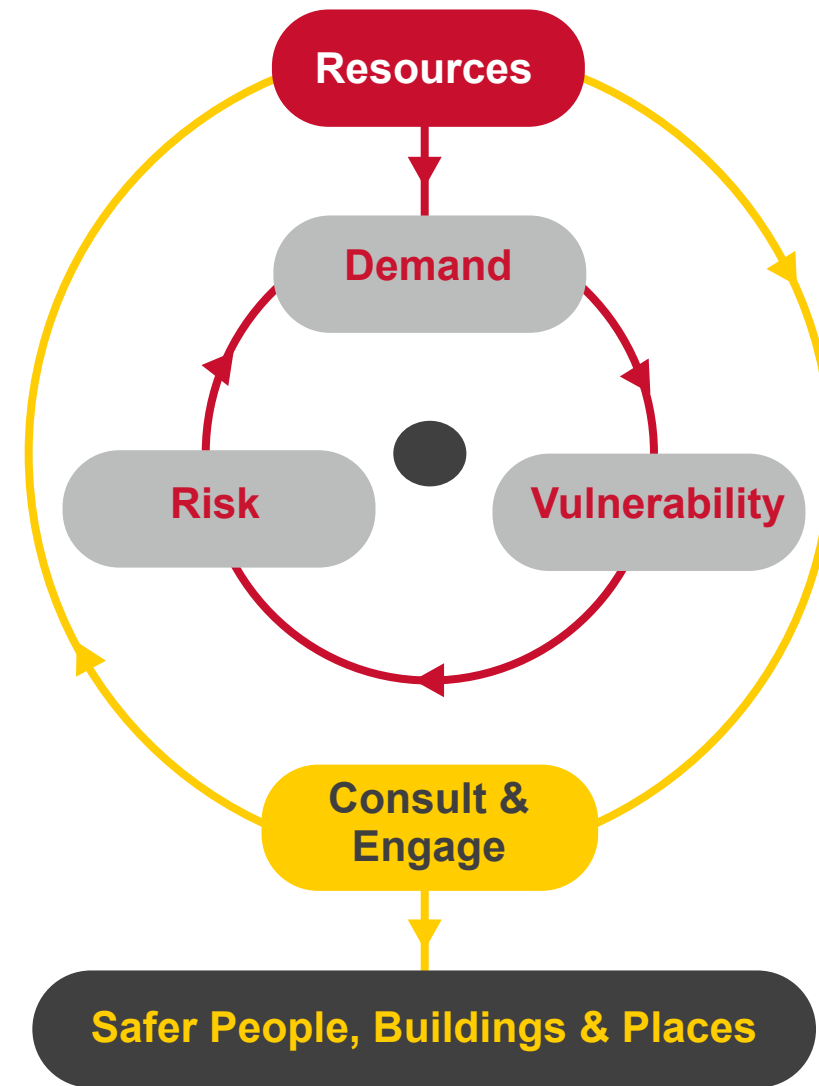
Vulnerability			
Identify Types	Personal or Environmental	Work With Others	Prevent & Respond

Our Resources

Like all organisations, NIFRS is provided with a prescribed budget to spend on our staff (including our Firefighters), our equipment and our services.

We receive our budget allocation from our sponsor department, the DoH.

When deciding how to tackle Risk, Demand and Vulnerability we also have to think about how we spend our budget to make sure we place our resources in the most effective location to have the most positive impact on our communities.



Consultation & Engagement









We want to hear from you.

NIFRS commits to speaking and listening to all relevant key stakeholders before we make any significant changes to the Service we provide.

We sought your views in regard to the roadmap outlined in our CRMP and we will separately consult and give stakeholders a voice at relevant points across the 5-year CRMP period commencing on 1 April 2025.



Overview of Northern Ireland

 <div><div>We Cover</div><div>5,500</div><div>Sq Miles</div></div>	<div><div>FRS</div><div>2nd Largest</div><div>UK Fire & Rescue Service</div><div>by geographical area</div></div>	<div><div>3</div><div>Main Airports</div></div>
<div><div>150</div><div>Miles of Coastline</div></div>	<div><div>2</div><div>Main Hill / Mountain Ranges</div></div>	<div><div><div>310</div><div>Mile Border with Republic of Ireland</div></div></div>
<div><div><div>11</div><div>Government Districts</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>6-8%</div><div>Forestry & Woodland</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>25,790</div><div>Km of Public Road</div></div></div>

Geographical Profile

NIFRS is the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) for the whole of Northern Ireland; an area of approximately 5,500 square miles. In terms of geographic area NIFRS is the second largest single UK FRS, after Scotland.



- Northern Ireland has:
- > A 310-mile border with the Republic of Ireland
 - > Rathlin Island, its largest island, situated off the north Antrim coast
 - > 150 miles of coastline and inland loughs, collectively covering approximately 265 square miles
 - > A unique position in the UK in that it is a Standalone Service with no land link to any other UK Fire & Rescue Service
 - > Lough Neagh, our largest lake, covering approximately 150 square miles
 - > Lower and Upper Lough Erne, our second extensive lake system, in Fermanagh
 - > Strangford Lough, the largest inlet in the UK, covering 58 square miles.
 - > 2 main hill/mountain ranges including the Sperrins in the North West and the Mourne Mountains in the South East. The Antrim Plateau is in the North East.
 - > Forestry and woodland covering about 6-8% of the land area.

Local Government Districts

Northern Ireland is split into the following 11 Local Government Districts.

Key

Belfast

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon

Newry, Mourne and Down

Ards and North Down

Derry City and Strabane

Mid Ulster

Lisburn and Castlereagh

Antrim and Newtownabbey

Causeway Coast and Glens

Mid and East Antrim

Fermanagh and Omagh



Urban/Rural Classification

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements, March 2015, identifies 8 settlement bands across NI.

The default urban/rural classification is that Bands A – E are urban and Bands F – H are rural.

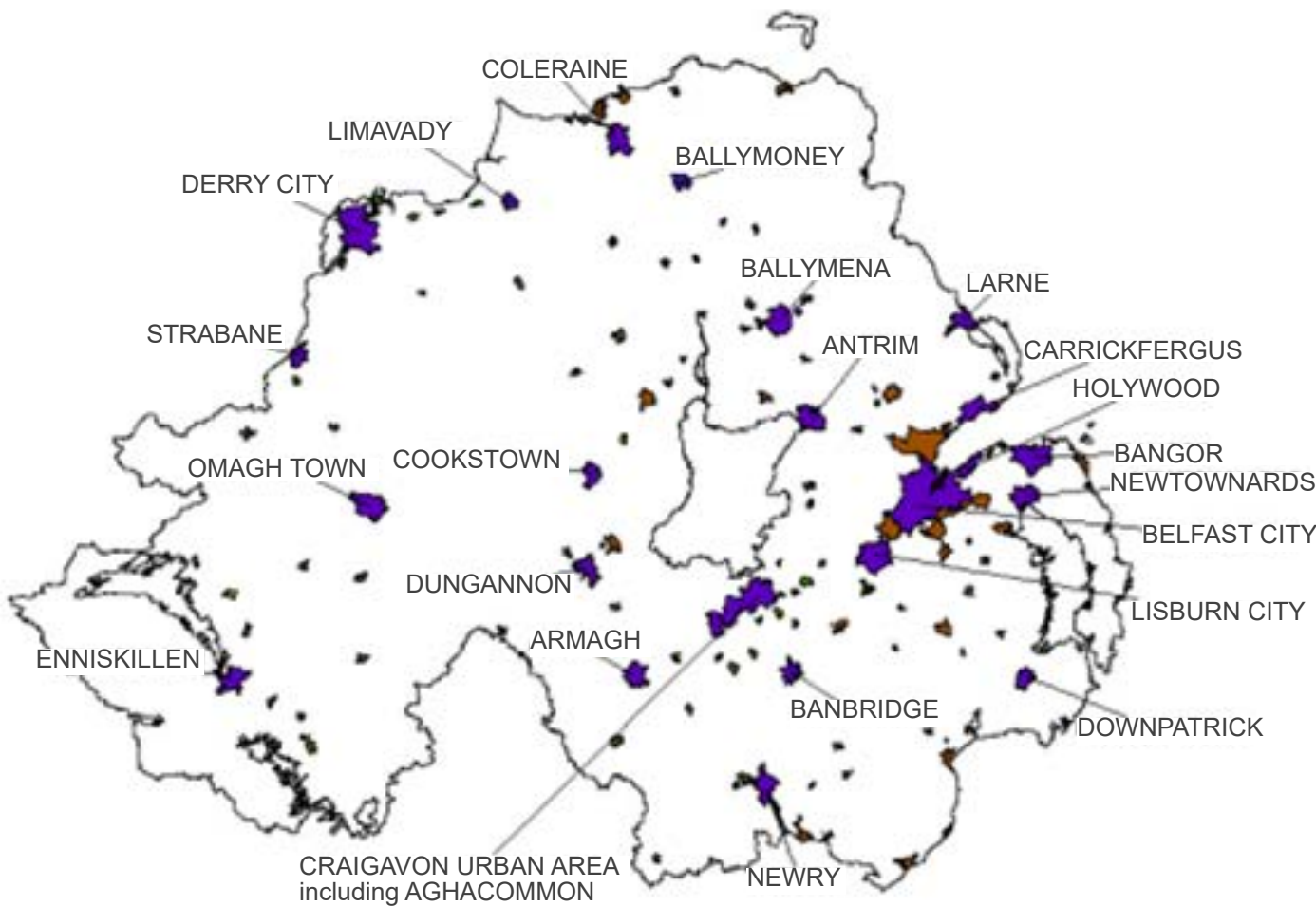
Classification	Band	Settlements
Urban	A	Belfast
	B	Derry City
	C	Large Town, population greater than 18,000 people
	D	Medium Town, population between 10,000 and 18,000 people
	E	Small Town, population between 5,000 and 9,999 people
Rural	F	Intermediate Settlements, population between 2,500 and 4,999 people
	G	Village, population between 1,000 and 2,499 people
	H	Open Countryside and small villages, population less than 1,000 people



Settlement Development Limits

This map shows the Settlement Development Limits of all settlements with a population of 1,000 or more and the urban/rural settlement classification.

All the blank spaces on the map outside the Settlement Development Limits are settlements which fall under Band Classification H – populations of less than 1,000 and open countryside.



Key

A - D	Urban greater than 10,000
E	Urban less than 10,000
F - G	Rural greater than 1,000
H	Rural less than 1,000 and countryside

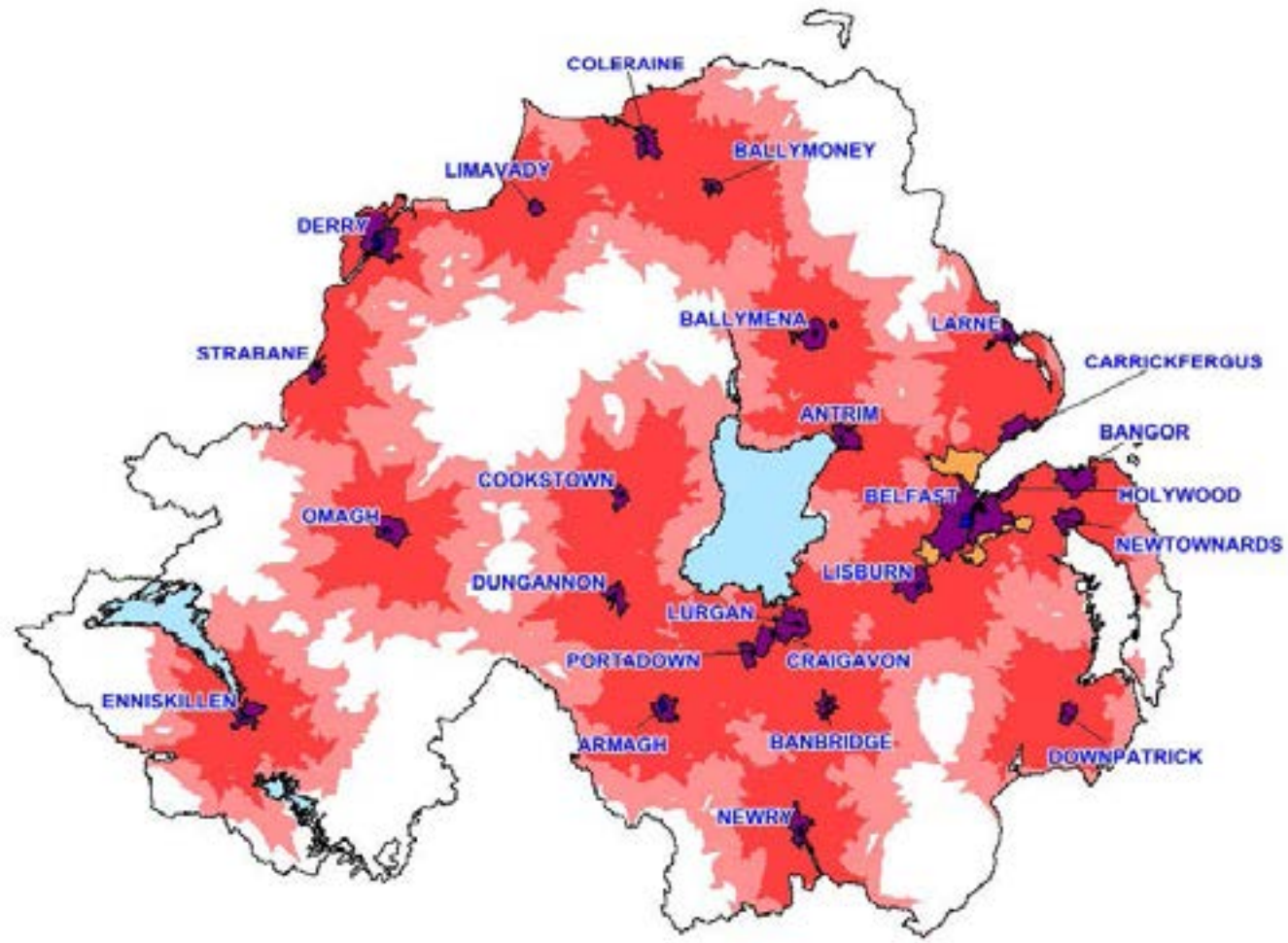
Drive-time

NISRA’s research on settlements shows that approximately 93 percent of Northern Ireland’s population live within 30 minute drive-time of the town centre of a settlement containing a population of at least 10,000. Approximately 80 percent live within a 20 minute drive-time.

This map shows 20 and 30 minute drive-time boundaries from settlements with populations of 10,000 or more (Settlements in Bands A to D)

Key

Blue square	Town Centre
Purple square	Settlement Development Limit
Orange square	SDL with no Town Centre
Red square	20 min Drive-time Boundary
Light red square	30 min Drive-time Boundary



Infrastructure



Unclassified roads 61%
C roads 18%
B roads 11%
A roads 9%
Motorways less than 1%

Road

Road is the main form of internal transport for people and freight in Northern Ireland. The M1/Westlink connects the M1, M2 and M3 motorways within Belfast. The M1/A1 links Belfast and Newry to Dublin in the Republic of Ireland.

The Department for Infrastructure reported on 1 April 2021, that there were 25,790 kilometres of public road in Northern Ireland.

- > Unclassified roads accounted for the largest proportion (61%) of all roads followed by C roads (18%), B roads (11%), A roads (9%) and Motorways (less than 1%).
- > Analysis of the urban - rural split of the road network reveals that 23% of carriageway road lengths are urban (speed limit of 40 mph or less) and 77% are rural (speed limit of more than 40 mph).

Public Transport

Translink operates public transport in Northern Ireland, providing a network of bus and rail services.

Sea Ports

The main working seaports in Northern Ireland are Belfast, Derry-Londonderry, Warrenpoint and Larne. There are a number of smaller ports.

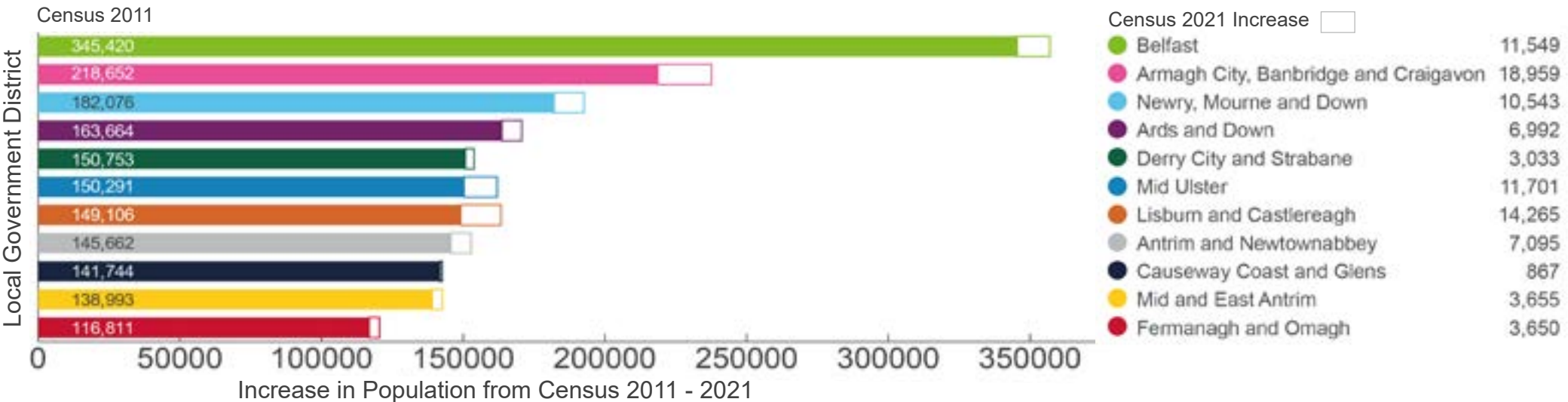
Airports

Northern Ireland has three airports operating daily flights in and out of Northern Ireland:

- > George Best Belfast City Airport
- > Belfast International Airport
- > The City of Derry Airport.

The Community We Serve

On Census Day, 21 March 2021, the population of Northern Ireland was 1,903,175.



Population

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) NI: In Profile Report (November 2022) states that this population growth is mainly due to natural change (births minus deaths) with net migration being a smaller factor.

At Local Government District (LGD) level, the highest population concentration was Belfast LGD with 345,420 people accounting for 18.1% of the total population. The lowest population was Fermanagh and Omagh LGD with 116,811 at 6.1% of the total population.

Since the 2011 Census, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon has seen the biggest increase in population with 18,959 additional residents. Causeway Coast and Glens has had the smallest increase, with 867 additional residents.

Ageing Population

The population of Northern Ireland is ageing and NISRA project this will only speed up over the next decade with the impact of the 1960s baby-boom.

NISRA projections indicate that in 2028 Northern Ireland will have more people aged 65+ than children. There are currently 27 people aged 65+ for every 100 people of working age; this is projected to be 42 in 2045 (NISRA, 2022).

Local Government District	% of population over 65 in each LGD
Belfast	14.9
Ards and North Down	22.1
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	16.0
Newry, Mourne and Down	8.8
Mid and East Antrim	19.3
Causeway Coast and Glens	18.1
Lisburn and Castlereagh	22.4
Antrim and Newtownabbey	16.8
Derry City and Strabane	17.4
Mid Ulster	15.0
Fermanagh and Omagh	11.8

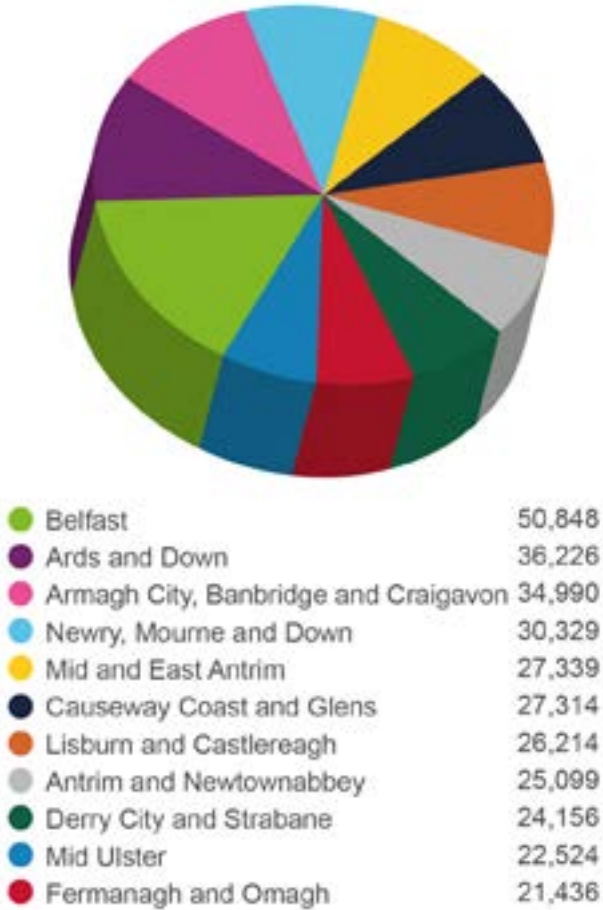
Age

Belfast LGD has the highest number of people aged 65+ years with 50,848 residents, 14.9% of the total population.

Fermanagh and Omagh has the lowest with 21,436 people aged 65+ years, 11.8% of the total population.

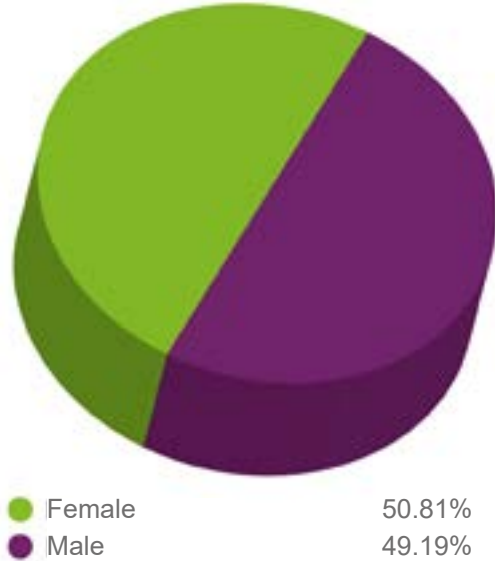
Over 65 years 2021

Age by District



Gender 2021

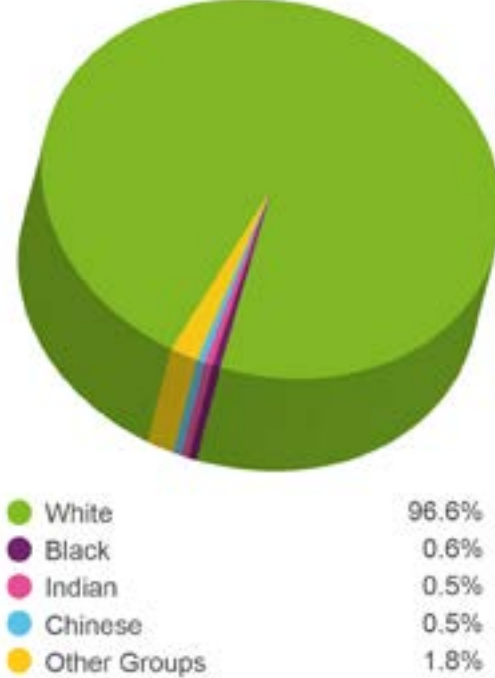
Gender



According to the 2021 Census the population remains largely evenly split between male and female.

Ethnicity 2021

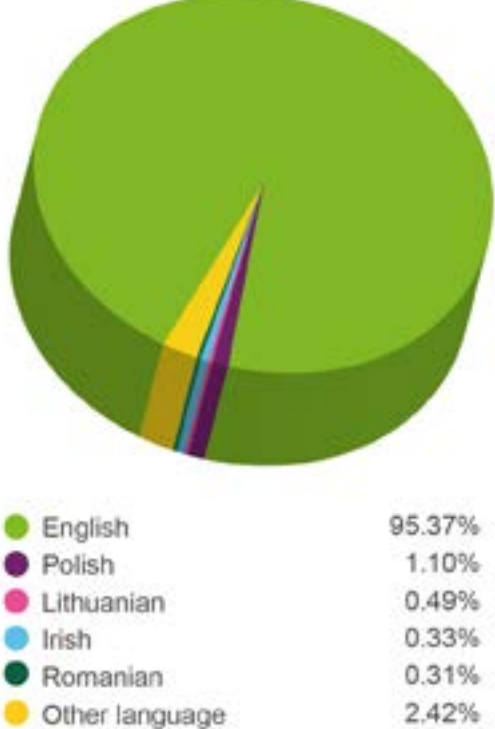
Ethnicity



The majority of the Northern Ireland population identified their ethnicity as white. The percentage of people with a minority ethnic group increased from 0.8% in 2001 to 3.4% in 2021, showing an increase in the diversity of the population.

Language 2021

Language



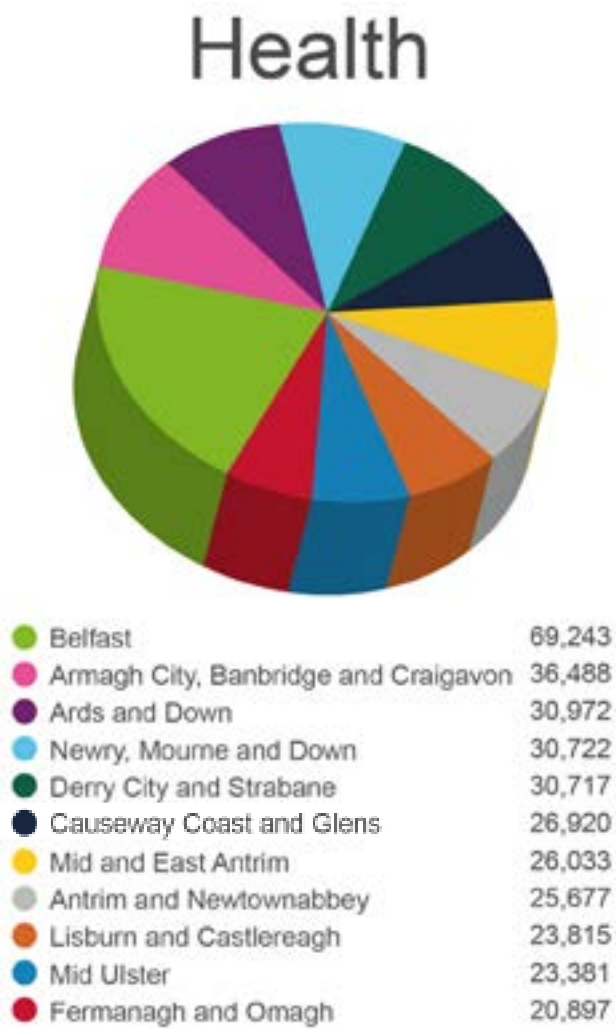
95.37% of households in Northern Ireland, speak English as their main language.

The 2021 Census reports that 258,537 households in Northern Ireland have one resident with a limiting long-term health problem or disability and 86,328 households have 2 or more residents with a limiting long-term health problem or disability.

Belfast LGD has the highest number of households with one or more residents with a limiting long-term health problem or disability.

Local Government District	1 resident	2 or more residents
Belfast	52,756	16,487
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	27,300	9,188
Ards and North Down	23,299	7,673
Newry, Mourne and Down	22,757	7,965
Derry City and Strabane	23,028	7,689
Causeway Coast and Glens	19,988	6,932
Mid and East Antrim	19,592	6,441
Antrim and Newtownabbey	19,144	6,533
Lisburn and Castlereagh	17,875	5,940
Mid Ulster	17,052	6,329
Fermanagh and Omagh	15,746	5,151

Table shows numbers of residents with a limiting long-term health problem or disability



Measuring Deprivation

Measures that describe the spatial distribution of deprivation or disadvantage have been developed and used by Government and others in Northern Ireland since the 1970s. They are used to inform the targeting of resources to the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 (NISRA) ranks the areas for each 7 distinct domains of deprivation. They have been combined to produce an overall multiple deprivation measure rank of the areas.

The 7 domains are:

- > Income
- > Employment
- > Health and Disability
- > Education
- > Skills and Training
- > Access to Services
- > Living Environment, and Crime and Disorder.

Research has shown that increased levels of Multiple Deprivation are associated with increased risks from dwelling fires.



Super Output Area

The Multiple Deprivation Measures are available at a number of geography levels and are ranked from most deprived to least deprived. This map shows the ranked multiple deprivation areas at Census 2011 Super Output Area (SOA). The darker blue areas are more deprived and the lighter areas are less deprived. This will be refreshed once Multiple Deprivation Measures from the 2021 Census are made available.

The top 10 most deprived SOAs are in Belfast and Derry City and Strabane LGDs.

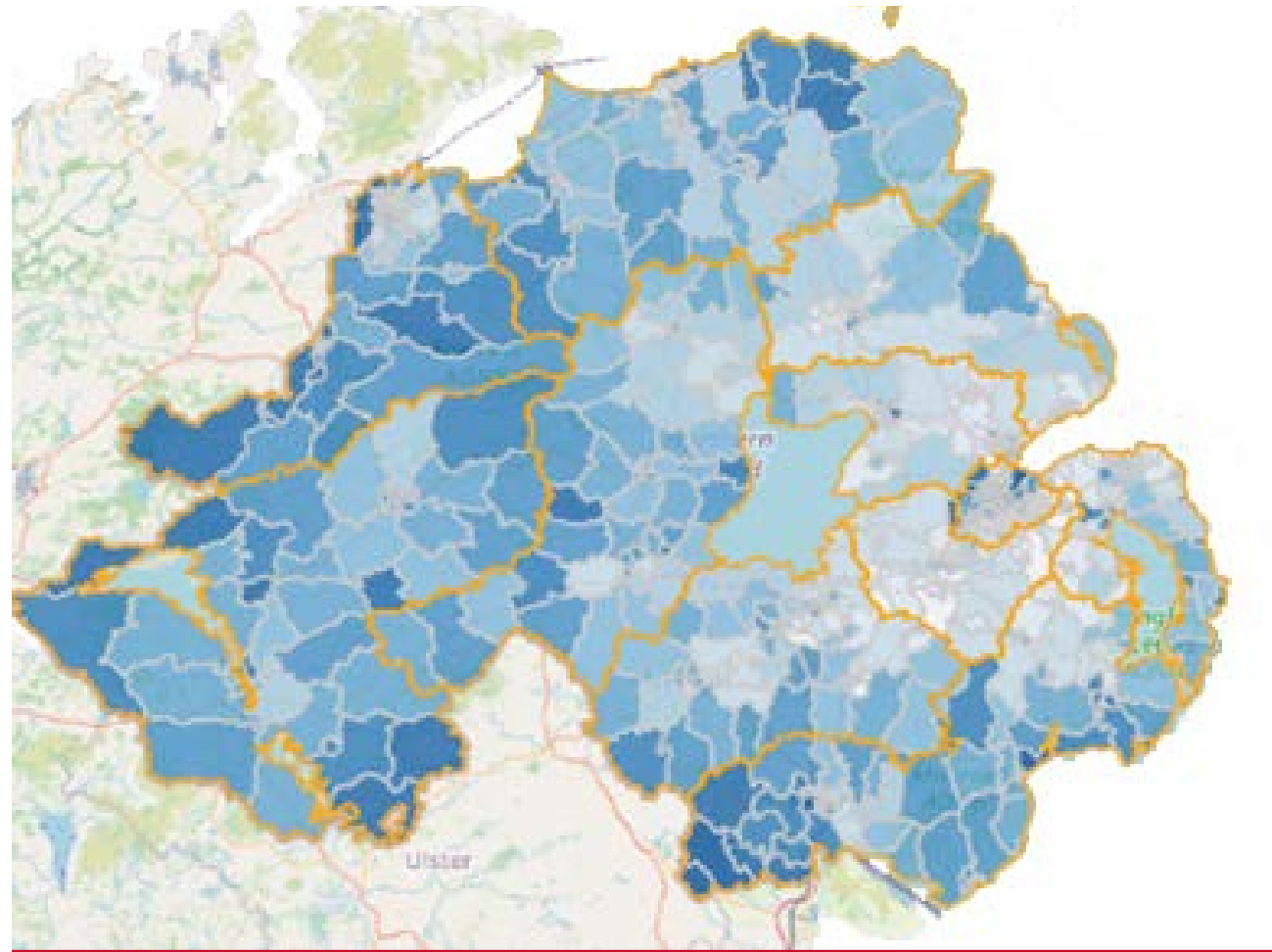
It is important to note that these are a measure of relative deprivation, not affluence, and to recognise that not every person in a highly deprived area will themselves be deprived.

Key



More Deprived

Less Deprived



OUR RISK AREAS & DEMAND



COMMUNITY RISK ASSESSMENT

Community Risk Assessment

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) define risk as a combination of the likelihood and consequences of hazardous events. NIFRS, through its CRMP Project Board, has adopted this definition in all CRMP analysis.

Defining Risk

Risk is the potential for an emergency to occur, that may threaten life, cause damage or harm to people, property, or the environment, including an impact on critical infrastructure, or protracted demand on NIFRS resources.

We will identify, assess and research our foreseeable risks, drawing on local incidents, feedback and learning from significant local and national events and this information will be contained within our Strategic Assessment of Risk document. This will be reviewed annually to identify our priorities, set our objectives and measure our performance.

We will also consider the needs of the community, our stakeholders and all our partners through consultation and include consideration of their existing plans and risks.

Hazard Identification

The identification of hazards is informed by NIFRS operating context and strategic objectives.

Hazards are the potential sources of harm that could impact on people, property or the environment in Northern Ireland.

To understand risk we need to identify the hazards and understand who or what is more likely to be at risk of harm should there be a hazardous event.

When we respond to emergency incidents, a hazardous event has occurred and the underlying risk has been realised.

Hazards

What are the potential sources of harm that could impact people, property or environment?

Events

What are the potential events that could lead to a hazard causing harm?

Groups

Who or what within the community is at risk?

Analysing Risk

NIFRS risk analysis process determines the risk level of an identified hazard.

Monitoring our response activity to incidents is a good indicator of the types of hazards, the likelihood of them occurring and where they might occur again.

The consequence can be determined from the severity of outcome attributed against the levels of casualties, fatalities, property damage or loss, societal loss, or any combination of these.

Calculating
the probability
and/or frequency
of a hazardous
event occurring

Likelihood

Assessing
the severity
and extent of the
harm caused by a
hazardous event

Consequence

Risk Metric

The process of measuring the level of risk
to assist with prioritisation and weighting



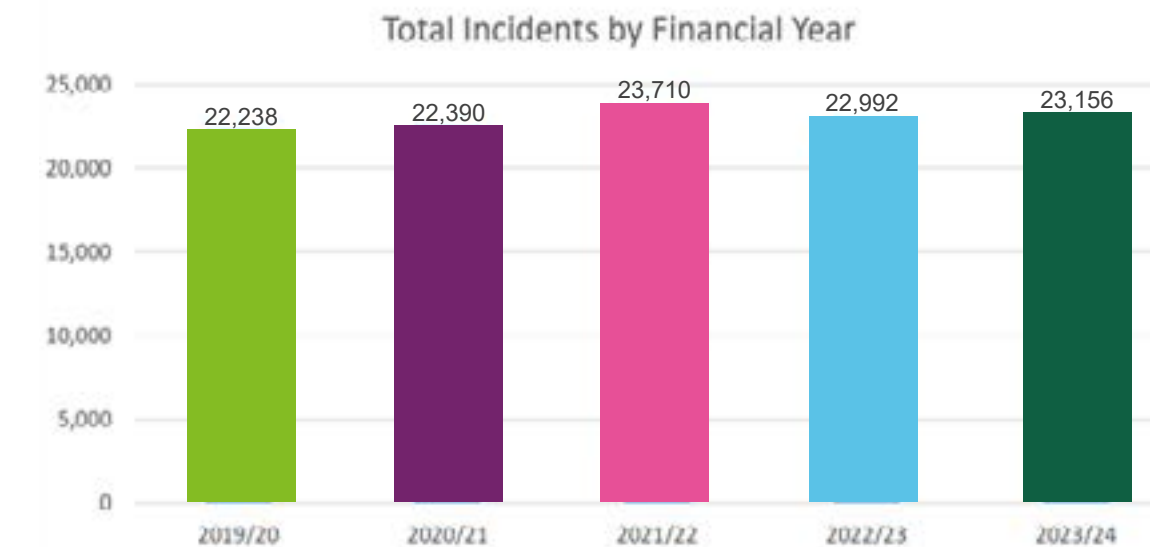
Our Demand

Over the past 5 years, NIFRS has responded to 114,486 incidents.

NIFRS Incident Activity

Following a reduced number of incidents in 2019/20 and 2020/21, the number of incidents increased in 2021/22 to 23,710. This was a 5.9% increase from the previous year. The number of incidents decreased in 2022/23 to 22,992, a decrease of 3.03% from 2021/22.

In 2023/24, fire crews responded to a total of 23,156 emergency incidents, an increase of 0.71% from the previous year and 4.13% from 2019/20.



NIFRS Incidents Responded to by Financial Year 2019 to 2024

Safer
Together

Incidents



● Fires	5,937
● Special Service Calls	4,009
● False Alarms	12,341
● Standbys	869

Every year NIFRS responds to a broad range of incidents, which can be classified into four broad categories of Fire, Special Service Calls, False Alarms and Standby.

The main aim for understanding the risk to our community is so that we can use our resources to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured, minimise loss and reduce societal impacts.

The types of incidents where NIFRS unfortunately see the most casualties and fatalities and/or property damage are dwelling fires, fires in other buildings, road traffic collisions and other types of special service calls. These incident types are analysed as individual risk types.

Further analysis of this risk is included in our Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAR) document.



Understanding Operational Risk

The hazards and risks NIFRS must plan for, and help to prevent and protect against, are complex.

Analyse

NIFRS conducts varying levels of analysis to support its understanding of risk within the country and how this relates to demand for our services.

Monitor

NIFRS continually monitors the demand and risk profiles across Northern Ireland. Information from internal departments and operational intelligence, alongside information from our partner organisations, is used to identify any significant developments or changes that may impact our service delivery or provide indications of future risks.

Consider

The SAR document has been developed, to ensure that all potential and foreseeable risks to our community are considered, and that our planning, policy and decision making is driven by risk.

Plan

This risk information will form the foundation upon which we build our CRMP and our underpinning strategies and annual delivery plans.



Horizon Scanning for Risks

There are a number of hazards and threats that carry a risk impact for NIFRS, including hazardous materials, loss of critical infrastructure and major accidents. In addition to these inherent risks, we also need to plan for and respond to changing or emerging risks including climate change, vehicle technology and renewable energy.

Climate Change

Over the coming years, we are likely to continue seeing the consequences of rising temperatures and an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events.

Severe weather can take a variety of forms, including heavy rain or snow, strong winds and extreme temperatures, causing significant problems and disruption. The risks emerging for NIFRS from environmental changes are increased demand in areas such as wildfire and flooding.

Vehicle Technology

An increase in alternative fuel vehicles and the development of automated vehicles will have implications on the vehicle related incidents we attend and how we safely deal with them.

Renewable Energy

The increased use of renewable energy sources has given rise to a number of different risks. For example, the risks posed to the public and Firefighters from solar farms and large-scale energy storage (batteries) facilities. This will impact the types of incidents we attend and how we safely deal with them.



Other Risks

NIFRS will, alongside partner agencies, continuously assess the likelihood and severity of a broad range of potential risks and develop robust business continuity arrangements to allow our service to respond safely and appropriately.

As such we need to continue to learn lessons from both local and national events to inform future practice. For example, lessons from our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications it had for our service have informed how we can better maintain core services in the future.

This learning also recognises that COVID-19 will have longer term impacts on the service, including:

- > a potential impact on funding in years to come;
- > changing processes and expectations as we continue to learn to live with the virus;
- > on-going physical and mental health implications.



Safer
Together

OUR STRATEGY



Strategic Focus

Key Strategic Outcomes

As an organisation we have identified 6 key strategic outcomes covering all we do to ensure statutory compliance and outline our key strategic focus for the next 5 years.

In terms of our CRMP this translates into the following outcomes.



Strategic Outcome 1 - Service Improvement

We will, through this CRMP, design and deliver an effective Fire & Rescue Service based on community risk; identifying new and innovative ways to modernise our service and implement progressive change.



Service Improvement Programme

Throughout the duration of the 5-year CRMP period we will progress our Service Improvement Programme (SIP).

The aim of the SIP is to redesign our Fire & Rescue Service to ensure that we are more effectively structured. To have the right resources delivering the best, affordable service, to our community. We want to have the right people, in the right place at the right time.

Strategic Assessment of Risk

To support the redesign process, we generated an updated Strategic Assessment of Risk during 2022-23. This will be reviewed and continually developed on an annual basis.

Our SAR document will reflect risk, activity and demand across Northern Ireland. It will be used to inform the CRMP and all linked projects, so that risk is at the foundation of all we do.

The SIP will, in this initial CRMP period, look at a number of key workstreams under the headings of Response.

We aim to review and progress implementation, following approval, of preferred options in respect of:

- > ERPS
- > Geographical Area Command Review;
- > Flexi Duty System and Day Duty Review;
- > Mobilisation protocols;
- > Red Fleet (station locations, crewing and appliance numbers);
- > Specialist Response Capabilities;
- > Ongoing physical and mental health implications.

The proposals within each of these individual reviews will be subject to relevant stakeholder engagement and consultation activities. Giving key stakeholders a voice at each stage of the service redesign process.

We aim to complete the redesign process by the end of year 3, progressing implementation of individual workstreams, subject to approvals throughout the 5-year CRMP.

We look forward to shaping the future direction of NIFRS with key stakeholders including the responsible Minister, and the DoH.

Information Technology

In addition to a fundamental risk based review of our Response methodology, we will also be building on a previous Information Technology refresh programme and will be developing a Data & Digital Strategy. Through this strategy we aim to understand stakeholder requirements; and determine and progress key projects thereby digitising existing manual paper-based systems; linking existing electronic systems to allow single points of entry; and making real time performance management a possibility.

Over the 5-year CRMP period we will demonstrate success through the following outputs;

- > Development of revised ERPS.
- > Completion of the Territorial Area Command Review.
- > Completion of a Flexi Duty System and Day Duty Review.
- > Completion of a Mobilisation Protocol Review.
- > Completion of a Specialist Capabilities Review.
- > Completion of a Red Fleet Review covering station locations, crewing and appliance number options whilst also taking cognisance of changing community and partner agency needs, and emergent national directives and agreements.
- > Completion of the Data & Digital Review.
- > Development and approval of a Data & Digital Strategy.
- > Progression of key projects as detailed in the Data & Digital Strategy.

Strategic Outcome 2 - Community Protection

We will work with communities and partners to target our prevention, protection, resilience and preparedness activities to reduce community risk and enhance Firefighter safety.



2
Community Protection

We will manage Community Protection through prevention, protection and resilience.

We recognise the need and value of our operational response however we are committed to preventing fires and other emergencies from occurring in the first place.

We want to reduce both the volume and severity of emergencies occurring in our community. We aim to achieve this through a range of targeted programmes and partnership working, aligned to our statutory duties, aimed at keeping those most at risk in our society safe.

We will develop a Community Protection Strategy with 3 key pillars: Prevention, Protection and Resilience to define how we will protect our community.

Prevention

The Prevention pillar will have the flexibility to proactively respond and adapt to the changing needs of our community.

We will place the individual and the community we serve at the core of prevention activity. This will be supported by a named lead for prevention from within the service and will include the following:

Home Safety

We will utilise intelligence and accurate data to target the most vulnerable people in our community, in order to reduce the volume and severity of dwelling fires using evidenced based decision making.

By using a targeted approach, we will offer a range of engagement and intervention initiatives, including individual, person-centred fire safety advice via our free Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) service. Where required we will fit free smoke alarms.

Partnerships

We will build our existing partnerships, particularly those who work with the most vulnerable people in our community, to

collectively improve health, safety and wellbeing of those most at risk.

Effective partnership working remains key to driving down community risk. NIFRS will strive to develop new and existing partnerships including data sharing with:

- > NI Local Government Councils
- > Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS)
- > Health Trusts
- > Statutory agencies
- > Voluntary agencies
- > Partnerships in local community
- > Education Authority
- > Organisations that can help us reduce community risk

We will strengthen and build upon our existing work with partners through the Community Planning and Policing and Community Safety Partnership, to ensure that we are collectively improving the safety and wellbeing of our community, aligned to the programme for Government outcomes.



2
Community Protection

Furthermore we will continue to work with NIAS, with significant collaboration in relation to sharing of estate; delivery of training at LDC Cookstown; and establishment of AED defibrillators linked to the NIAS circuit at all NIFRS buildings. There is recognition that this partnership has the potential to yield further benefits to citizens in terms of the wider role of the Firefighter and specifically around the opportunities which may exist in a NIAS/ NIFRS co-responding emergency medical response.

Children & Young People

We are aware of the importance of early education in building fire safety knowledge and wider community safety education messages.

In terms of education, we will continue to invest in our Key Stage and Safety Team Programmes, where operational crews visit schools across Northern Ireland to provide foundation fire safety advice. Through this programme children are educated on the main causes of fire in the home; the importance of having and testing smoke alarms; how to prevent accidental fires occurring; and what to do in the event of a fire.

We will also continue to build resilience by investing in our young people. We will continue to deliver other youth engagement programmes with our volunteers and partner agencies where capacity allows. These programmes include:

- > NIFRS Fire Cadets Scheme
- > Kings Trust
- > Duke of Edinburgh

Deliberate Fire Setting

We will identify areas where deliberate fire setting has occurred and introduce local targeted initiatives.

We will work with partners, the local community and statutory organisations to deliver targeted initiatives aimed at reducing the risk deliberate fire setting presents.

Where someone is identified as being a particular risk of fire setting we will plan and deliver our Fire Safety Intervention Programme.



2 Community Protection

Community Safety Awareness & Messaging

NIFRS responds to a wide range of community risks. We will work to prevent these through education, awareness, and building resilience in our community.

We will build on the wider community safety messaging via our website, which can be converted in different languages using the ReachDeck Software; leaflets printed in different languages; and social media channels to reach all sections of our community and ensure awareness and community resilience.

We recognise the diversity of our community and ensure equality of access in our approach to community safety. These risks include:

- > Wildfires
- > Flood
- > Business safety
- > Seasonal messaging
- > Water safety
- > Carbon monoxide

Road Safety

NIFRS is committed to supporting NI Road Safety Strategy 2030. In doing so NIFRS will work in partnership with statutory and voluntary groups to improve the safety of our roads and reduce the number of road traffic incidents. We will implement measures to change driver and passenger behaviours through smarter working arrangements and the use of new technology. Alongside our partners we will deliver an extensive and targeted programme of road safety interventions to new and inexperienced drivers to educate and change behaviours. This will also be supported by media campaigns.

Safeguarding

We are aware our staff hold trusted positions in the community, therefore it is vital that our staff adhere to our safeguarding standards and procedures.

We will ensure the wellbeing of those who are most vulnerable in our community by ensuring our staff are suitably vetted, trained and aware of NIFRS safeguarding responsibilities.

Continuous Improvement in Prevention

We will review, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of our prevention activities. We will embrace national and organisational learning to ensure we identify and capture feedback from a range of sources.

We will evaluate, share and act upon it to drive innovation and continuous improvement, and enhance future performance.



2 Community Protection

Protection

Fire safety regulations apply to relevant premises as defined in Article 50 of The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. The Order applies to almost all buildings, places and structures that are not domestic premises. This includes Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and facilities for the protection of Firefighters in blocks of flats and maisonettes.

NIFRS is the enforcing authority for fire safety duties as detailed in The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

For the 65,000 non-domestic premises in Northern Ireland that need to comply with this legislation, it outlines the responsibilities of owners, managers or operators of businesses such as offices, factories, shops and public buildings. This is to ensure their premises reach the required fire safety standards, and that their employees are provided with adequate fire safety training.

The Protection workstream covers the areas of legislative fire safety and the built environment.

Risk Reduction Activities

Our Protection Department aims to reduce risks and incidents in the built environment through the following key workstreams:

Relevant Premises Audit

Our primary method of ensuring premises are safe will be through our risk based inspection programme.

We will use enhanced risk information to assess premise risk.

We will continue to appropriately train protection staff to carry relevant premises audits in highest risk premises, as well as those referred through concerns from the public or partners and operational crews.

Fire Safety Concerns

We will respond to concerns about fire safety raised by members of the public and partner agencies. We will take every concern seriously and each concern will be assigned to officers with the appropriate level of competence and authority in relation to the nature and type of premises.

Advice for Business

We will provide a competent and transparent service offering timely and accessible advice to those with responsibilities for fire safety. When dealing with responsible persons and duty holders, we will provide a level of advice that enables them to understand what is required by the legislation, but will not extend into the field of consultancy.

Our website is designed to be a self-service resource. It allows responsible persons and duty holders to find the information they may need to understand their responsibilities and requirements of the legislation.

2 Community Protection

Licensing & Consultation

We will continue to consult with relevant statutory bodies including licencing and building control, ensuring advice given meets the required compliance with The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

Enforcement & Prosecutions

The appropriate use of statutory powers including enforcement, prohibition and prosecution, is important, both to secure compliance with the law and to ensure that those who have duties within it may be held to account for failures to safeguard health, safety and welfare.

We will use the powers of legal enforcement and prosecution available, where this is appropriate, to ensure public safety.

Fire Investigation

We will continue to investigate, report on and learn from the causes of fire in our built environment. To support this process we will ensure our fire investigation officers are adequately trained, work closely with our partners, and share any learning captured regionally or nationally.



Fire Alarms/Unwanted Fire Signals Policy

A large number of NIFRS calls received via businesses and call handling agencies are false alarms, which is a poor use of public resources.

We will review our response to automatic fire alarms and work with business owners and call handling agencies to reduce the number of false alarms which we attend.



Resilience

The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2011 places a requirement on NIFRS to make our community safer by planning and preparing, in terms of capacity and capability, to respond to and recover from threats and emergencies that can cause major disruptions for our community. These incidents include:

- > Major industrial & transport incidents
- > Large collapsed structures
- > Terrorist related incidents
- > Natural environmental risks including serious and widespread flooding
- > Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) incidents

Developing our resilience capability ensures that we can fulfil our statutory duties and prepare more effectively with partner agencies to respond to large scale incidents.

Specific operational capabilities to enhance resilience include rope rescue, urban search and rescue (USAR), flood response, high

volume pump (HVP), marine response, hazardous material (Hazmat), large animal rescue, and heavy vehicle rescue.

We currently have a number of highly trained tactical advisors across Northern Ireland who are able to offer technical support and information at complex incidents.

We will continue to train relevant staff to ensure that this tactical support and advice is maintained and available 24/7.

We will continue to regularly test our plans and exercise with multi-agency partners to ensure preparedness and we will provide operational assurance of our capability to respond to all types of incidents.

Emergency Planning

The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework sets out the Northern Ireland arrangements for effective emergency management, identifying the processes involved in preparing for, responding to and recovering from an emergency.

2 Community Protection

While not a legislative document the Framework provides regional cohesion to the civil contingencies agencies by common acceptance of its principles and guides.

These principles of collaboration, co-ordination and transparency, aligned to the steps of Integrated Emergency Management ensure a unified purpose of preparedness, response and recovery for emergency responders.

To ensure that we deliver for our community when you most need us we are represented strategically on the Civil Contingency Group NI (CCGNI) and Northern Ireland Emergency Preparedness Group (NIEPG), and regionally on the 3 Emergency Preparedness Groups (EPGs) across Northern Ireland and on the Cross Border Emergency Management Group (CBEMG).

Through these structures NIFRS contributes to the wider multi-agency pre-planning for response and recovery to events that impact Northern Ireland.

2 Community Protection

We will continue to play an active role within these structures to ensure that we are prepared to respond and able to support recovery operations in the event of an emergency.

We will ensure that our staff are prepared, highly trained and tested in the delivery of emergency management. We will do this aligned to risk and in partnership with our civil contingency partner agencies, in order that we can provide the best possible service to our community.

Risk Critical Information

To further support our preparedness and ensure the most effective response, we will continue to prioritise the collection of relevant risk critical information about specific higher risk sites across Northern Ireland.

Operational risk information is critical to ensuring Firefighter and public safety. We will ensure that the information collected is regularly validated by operational crews to ensure it remains accurate and relevant to our responding Firefighters and supervisory officers.

We will work with business owners and responsible persons for those identified higher risk sites, to ensure preparedness, support an effective response and deliver an efficient recovery in the event of an emergency.

We will review systems, including IT systems, for ensuring collection, recording, security and presentation of this risk critical information during an emergency response is appropriate to the operational needs of our responding Firefighters on both the incident ground and in command rooms.



2 Community Protection

Health & Safety

The health, safety and wellbeing of NIFRS employees is fundamental to what we do. We ensure health and safety is integral to all levels of management and focus on always improving performance related to health and safety matters.

NIFRS utilises sector specific guidance to adopt best practice and ensure we comply with our legal duties under The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

As a Fire & Rescue Service our staff often work in hazardous and dynamic environments. However whilst injuries are sustained at, or while responding to emergency incidents, we have more injuries sustained during training and other routine activities. Therefore we have systems in place to ensure accidents and near miss events are appropriately investigated to allow lessons to be learnt for future improvement towards a safer working environment for all staff.

The health, safety and wellbeing of all our employees, contractors, visitors and members of the public remains of paramount importance to us.

As we look forward through the CRMP we will be focusing on enhancing the safety of our Firefighters and support staff to limit exposure to hazards, including contaminants and build upon current procedures to adopt the latest best practice industry guidance bidding for additional funding as necessary.



We will work to educate staff and support greater awareness and understanding of the risks associated with work practices to continually improve behaviours on our premises, in training and at operational incidents.

NIFRS is committed to pursuing progressive improvements in health and safety performance.



2

Community Protection

We will demonstrate success through the following output:

- > Development and implementation of a Community Protection Strategy covering Prevention, Protection & Resilience.

Through this Strategy we will:

- > Utilise intelligence and accurate, consistent data to target the most vulnerable people in our community.
- > Ensure equality of access in our approach to community safety.
- > Use a targeted approach and offer a range of engagement initiatives, including individual, person-centered fire safety advice via our free HFSC service, and where required, we will fit free smoke alarms.
- > Build new partnerships and enhance existing partnerships to aid collaborative working.
- > Continue to educate and build resilience in children by investing in our Key Stage and Safety Team programmes; and delivering other youth engagement programmes with our volunteers and partner agencies.
- > Identify areas where deliberate fire setting has occurred and introduce local targeted initiatives.
- > Plan and deliver a Fire Safety Intervention Programme.
- > Enhance wider community safety messaging.
- > Support the wellbeing of those who are most vulnerable in our community by ensuring our staff are suitably vetted, trained and aware of NIFRS safeguarding responsibilities.
- > Continue to appropriately train protection staff to carry out relevant premises audits in the highest risk premises.

2

Community Protection

Continued...

- > Provide a competent and transparent service offering timely and accessible advice to those with responsibilities for fire safety; and to concerns about fire safety raised by members of the public and partner agencies.
- > Use the powers of legal enforcement and prosecution available, where appropriate, to ensure public safety.
- > Review our response to automatic fire alarms and work with business owners and call handling agencies to reduce the number of false alarms which NIFRS attends.
- > Train relevant staff to ensure operational tactical support and advice is maintained and available 24/7 for specialist capabilities.
- > Regularly test our operational plans and exercise with multi-agency partners to ensure preparedness and provide operational assurance of our capability to respond to all types of incidents.
- > Prioritise the collection and validation of relevant risk critical information about specific higher risk sites across Northern Ireland, to ensure this information is always available to operational crews attending these incidents at higher risk sites.
- > Focus on enhancing the safety of our Firefighters and our support staff to limit exposure to hazards, including contaminants and build upon current procedures to adopt the latest best practice industry guidance.
- > Educate staff and support greater awareness and understanding of the risks associated with work practices to continually improve behaviours on our premises, in training and at operational incidents.



Strategic Outcome 3 - Response

We will, through policy, procedure, training and equipping our staff, provide an effective operational response from call receipt to incident conclusion.



Response

The Operational Learning, Development & Response Directorate is responsible for the frontline emergency response to fires and other emergencies. The Directorate is made up of three areas: Response including Areas/Stations/Regional Control Centre (RCC); and Operational Learning & Development.

The Directorate supports and protects the safety of Firefighters when training or at incidents, improves how we respond to incidents, and makes sure that standards of performance are achieved.

Under the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, our response duties moved beyond the historical activities of extinguishing fires to include other response activities, such as road traffic collisions (RTC). The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2011 further extended our statutory responsibility to include chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN), search and rescue, serious flooding and serious transport incidents.

We also respond with partner agencies to incidents such as water rescues, bariatric rescues and large animal rescues as part of our wider corporate social responsibility.

During 2023/24, fire crews responded to a total of 23,156 emergency incidents across Northern Ireland, an increase of 0.71% from 22,992 in 2022/23.

We will continue to improve our service delivery in line with Strategic Outcome 1.



Regional Control Centre

NIFRS has a dedicated RCC where all the Fire & Rescue Service 999 calls for Northern Ireland are answered, and Fire Crews mobilised to respond.

RCC provides 24 hour emergency call management including call handling, call challenge to identify hoax calls, mobilising the nearest available and appropriate appliance(s) and crew(s), information flow between operational crews and managers, and information recording.

NIFRS is tasked to a variety of increasingly complex incidents requiring a diverse range of resources to be mobilised. Our RCC constantly reviews our operational resource availability in terms of active incidents, emerging issues, national and international best practice including National Operational Guidance.

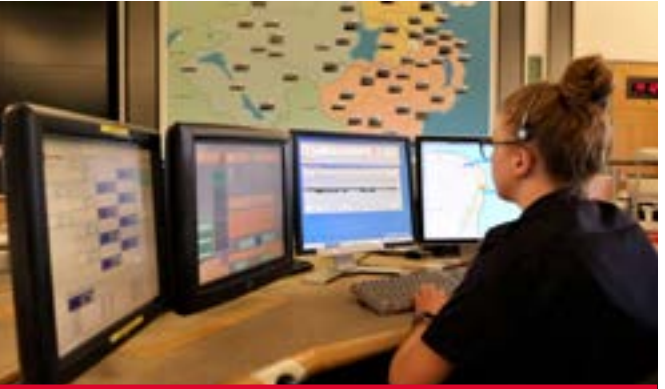
During 2023/24, NIFRS received a total of 34,697 emergency calls for help to its RCC, representing an in-year increase of 1.92% (2022/23: 34,044). RCC also received 742 hoax calls, a 17.83% decrease from the

previous year of 903. However, through the skills demonstrated by RCC personnel, in terms of call management and call challenge, crews were mobilised to less than 50% of those calls with 361 mobilisations (2022-23: 443).

To support mobilisations we will develop, scope, obtain approval for and commence implementation of key strategic operational communications projects such as replacement radios and relevant hardware and software refreshes.

With these increasing demands comes an extended need for modern mobilising equipment in the form of a new command & control system. The new command & control system will give NIFRS the best opportunity for efficient future service delivery.

We will support, as applicable, collaborative working with key partner agencies. Over the 5-year CRMP period, we will continue to review and mobilise in line with policy and procedure to the operational incident types for which we are legislatively responsible.



3 Response

Operational Learning & Development

NIFRS provide a range of operational training to ensure that we support our people to remain competent in their role. This training includes breathing apparatus; road traffic collision; casualty care; compartment firefighting training; working at height; emergency fire appliance driving and operation; and incident command. We also deliver training aligned to our risk profile and our additional statutory duties under the Emergencies Order 2011.

This training provision is supported by an operational competence framework (OCF) which includes a standardised and service-wide training planner; simulation & performance reference (SPR) booklets; and the national drill book for standardising the use of procedures and equipment.

Over the last number of years we have been working to develop our new Learning & Development College (LDC) at Cookstown. The initial phase of the project has enabled us to provide enhanced breathing apparatus and compartment fire (live burn) training which have been combined into a new tactical firefighting module.

In June 2022 we cut the first sod on the £42.6million final phase of our LDC at Cookstown. In June 2024 we moved from Boucher Road, Belfast to Cookstown. This investment includes a specialist driving and road traffic collision training area, a training environment for collapsed buildings and below ground rescue, a flood water rescue training facility, and a call out village with a bungalow, a semi-detached dwelling and a detached dwelling.

We are implementing a Transition Strategy which will ensure the smooth transition onto the new site.

We will develop and implement a revised Operational Training Strategy. To support this, we will develop and implement a training delivery plan including methods of delivery and assurance, and develop and enhance our recording and reporting system(s).

We will review our training structures, staffing and curriculum to ensure that our operational training content supports our Operational

Competency Framework, and alignment to National Operating Guidance.

We have a range of multi-agency partners including cross border agencies and Fire Brigades with whom we are engaging with regards third party usage. NIAS and National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) (ROI) will begin usage as a third party partner in early 2025 with a view for regular longer term commitments. Work is ongoing around Shared Island and Peace+ funding to support wider increased usage over the life of the facility.



3 Response

We will demonstrate success through the following outputs:

- > Development and implementation of an Operational Communications Strategy covering the following key workstreams - RCC and Operational Communications
- > Development and implementation of an Operational Learning & Development Framework/Policy, and
- > Development and implementation of a Learning & Development site Transition Plan.

Through these Strategies and Plan we will:

- > Review mobilisation policy and procedure for each operational incident type for which we are legislatively responsible and support, as applicable, collaborative working with key partner agencies.
- > Scope and implement a new command and control system.
- > Develop and implement key strategic operational communications projects such as replacement radios and relevant hardware and software refreshes.
- > Develop and implement a training delivery plan including methods of delivery and assurance, and develop and enhance our recording and reporting system(s).
- > Review our training structures, staffing and curriculum to ensure that our operational training content supports our Operational Competency Framework; and alignment to National Operating Guidance.
- > Utilisation of the new LDC at Cookstown against training needs analysis therefore providing staff with improved training opportunities.



Strategic Outcome 4 - People

We will embed a high performing and inclusive culture ensuring our people are supported, engaged and inspired to deliver on service priorities.



4
People

We work with our community and partners every day to prevent emergencies, and help everyone in Northern Ireland stay safe.

Emergencies will always happen and when they do, we are ready to respond as quickly as possible to help people in their time of need and to save lives.

Our Employees

Our core strength in achieving this is through our staff who are proud to serve and who are genuinely committed to keeping people safe and saving lives.

Our overarching aim is to empower and support our staff to be the best they can be, by delivering to the highest standards when serving our community and upholding the values of our Fire & Rescue Service.

NFCC Code of Ethics

To support this aim of empowerment and support we will develop and embed a new People Strategy with all of our people workstreams being underpinned by revised core values and the NFCC Code of Ethics.



Our People Strategy

This People Strategy will focus on developing key areas such as:

- > Culture
- > Leadership
- > Recruitment, selection and promotion
- > Organisational development
- > Talent management, and
- > Professional competence.

We understand that getting the right staff in the right role is key to our continued service delivery. As such, we will develop a Strategic Workforce Plan and take steps to fill vacancies across the organisation and provide stability.

This will strengthen our ability to provide an excellent Service by attracting a broad range of people from different backgrounds to help us respond more effectively to our different community needs and to continue to nurture a fair and equal place to work.

Engagement

We appreciate that the provision of an excellent service is dependent on understanding the perspectives and needs of everyone in our community, promoting inclusion and creating a fair and equal place to work. We will support this through engagement and our equality and inclusion activities.

We want our organisation to be a great place for our staff to work, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and is able to work in an empowered, collaborative, and innovative environment to support our community.

We have noted the sector issue around culture and as an organisation we need to review and embed revised cultural requirements to ensure values and behaviours are at the highest standard, thereby providing staff with a sense of psychological safety.

Leadership

Our people are at the core of our Service and while the primary focus for operational staff will rightly be on operational response capabilities, we understand there is a need to strengthen leadership and line management skills across the organisation. This will support organisational cultural change, talent management and service delivery to the public.

We wish to support our staff throughout their career and we are committed to their development. Through our organisational development activities we provide opportunities for training and qualifications that enable high performance and career progression, within a supportive environment.



Health & Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of our staff is our priority. We support this through a range of methods such as counselling and support services; mental health first aid and other support given by mental health champions; critical incident stress management (CISM); post incident debrief; online health and wellbeing support; and employee assistance programmes. This supports our staff and their families.

We will continue to support our employee's health and wellbeing through enhancement of the support mechanisms available.



4 People

We will demonstrate success through the following output:

- > Development and launch of a People Strategy.

Through this Strategy we will:

- > Develop, launch and embed a Strategic Workforce Plan.
- > Become more representative of the community we serve.
- > Re-orientate leadership and development training.
- > Develop and embed a suitable Professional Competence Framework for uniformed employees.
- > Update and embed HR policies and procedures that improve the employee experience, performance the work environment.
- > Examine and understand the viability of internal communication channels across the whole service.



Strategic Outcome 5 - Corporate Governance & Performance

We will maintain robust stewardship over our finance, corporate governance, planning and performance management to ensure we make effective and appropriate use of available budget. We will ensure governance and planning arrangements underpin the effectiveness of the service we deliver.

Corporate Governance

Good corporate governance is at the core of all that we do and we are committed to reviewing and revising our governance processes throughout the CRMP period. We will provide the necessary training and support to our employees.

Finance

As a NDPB, NIFRS is funded directly from the block grant allocation made to the DoH. NIFRS receives 3 annual budget allocations:

- > Capital
- > Resource DEL (Departmental Expenditure Limits) and
- > Resource AME (Annually Managed Expenditure).

Our non-cash costs and pensions-in-payment are funded through AME and an allocation is made by our Department at year end to match the in-year costs. Our DEL and Capital allocations are made

at the start of the financial year and NIFRS manage spend within these allocations. Currently our primary outlay, comprising approximating 85% of current budget, is on staffing.

We will continue to work closely with DoH to ensure sound financial management and use a collaborative approach to achieve breakeven at year-end.

As is the case with most public sector organisations, our revenue budget has been decreasing or has flat-lined in real-terms year-on-year and this is likely to continue into the future. Since 2011/12 NIFRS have had a real-terms reduction of £12m.

This places significant financial pressure on the service and when allocating our budget, we need to prioritise against risk while striving to improve the way we provide our service. It is a challenge to balance long-term financial

5 Corporate Governance & Performance



planning against an annualised budgeting framework as we are unable to carry reserves and must use funding in the year that it is allocated to us.

We are embracing this challenge and working with DoH and through our SIP we strive to agree on a sustainable funding model for the future that will support and enable longer-term strategic financial planning, cognisant that people are our primary resource and expense.



Safer
Together

Economic & Social Value

Emergency incidents often result in high costs to life with fatalities, casualties and rescues, and damage to properties. This information already forms part of our performance management data and informs our strategic planning.

The other side of this is the Economic & Social Value (ESV) that NIFRS adds to the community of Northern Ireland by stopping incidents from happening or reducing the severity if they do through our Prevention & Protection activities. In addition, the value brought by responding effectively and resolving the incident, stopping any further harm or damage through our operational response.

NIFRS will build upon the NFCC commissioned research on the ESV of the Fire and Rescue Service (2022) to understand the value NIFRS provides through different service delivery methods. Understanding both the costs and the value NIFRS adds, will help us in making the most effective and appropriate use of available budget.

Assurance & Accountability

The partnership agreement between the DoH and NIFRS replaces our current Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) and formalises the roles and responsibilities across NIFRS and within DoH as our sponsor body linking into Northern Ireland Assembly expectations.

From this we will develop an Assurance & Accountability Framework, which will be refreshed on an annual basis. In support of this Assurance & Accountability Framework we will work with DoH in the development of a Fire Framework. This will be a new document that sets out the strategic priorities for NIFRS.



National Operating Guidance

We have prioritised the implementation of robust systems and processes to assess the effectiveness of our current operational guidance.

This guidance is benchmarked against national best practice and focuses on the identification of potential hazards in the operational environment and providing the relevant control measures to mitigate the risk.

The continued focus on alignment with national best practice and the development of a dedicated resource to develop and maintain this safety critical information will enable us to provide safe, effective and efficient response information and training material for responding crews to use at operational incidents.

As such we will develop, agree and implement a risk based plan to align National Operational Guidance in terms of NIFRS policy, guidance, incident command and training.

Fire Standards

Over the last number of years the Fire Standards Board (England) have been working on the development of a number of fire standards covering areas such as:

- > Operational preparedness
- > Operational competence
- > Operational learning
- > Emergency response driving
- > Code of ethics
- > Prevention
- > Protection
- > Safeguarding
- > Fire investigation
- > Emergency preparedness & resilience
- > Data management
- > Leading the fire service
- > Leading & developing people

* with others currently out for public consultation.

In its drive for continuous improvement NIFRS will be focused on the adoption, alignment and integration of fire standards during the 5-year CRMP period with the establishment of an internal validation processes.

Operational Assurance

As part of our Operational Assurance processes, we continue to identify and learn lessons from internal and external sources. These include the recognised bodies of National Operational Learning (NOL) for the Fire Sector and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) for the wider emergency services.

Significant incidents are subject to a structured debrief with the intended outcome of generating formal recommendations for Service improvement.



All learning is analysed and shared across the Service with resultant actions allocated to the appropriate section for implementation. This enables us to continuously review and develop our policies, procedures, use of emerging technology, vehicles, equipment and personal protective equipment.

We will continue to enhance our operational assurance processes by working with key stakeholders.



5 Corporate Governance & Performance

Performance Management

At the core of our service delivery is good planning and performance management. In the preparation of this CRMP document, we have fundamentally reviewed our existing Corporate Planning & Performance Management processes.

We have reviewed our Strategic Plan, developed in line with the Partnership Agreement between NIFRS and our sponsor body, DoH which defines how we work together.

In addition, we have looked at our performance management systems including how we will be managing performance based on current and future information requirements.

Now that we have established future requirements we will develop a revised Corporate Planning & Performance Management Framework to complement the Strategic Plan and measure progress against this Plan.



5 Corporate Governance & Performance

Over the 5-year CRMP period we will:

- > Continue to work closely with DoH to ensure sound financial management and use a collaborative approach to achieve breakeven at year-end.
- > To work with DoH and through our Service Improvement Programme strive to agree a sustainable funding model for the future that will support and enable longer-term strategic financial planning, cognisant that people are our primary resource and expense.
- > Calculate the Economic & Social Value NIFRS provides to the community of Northern Ireland.
- > Develop an Assurance & Accountability Framework which will be refreshed on an annual basis.
- > Work with DoH in the development of a new key governance document - Fire Framework.
- > Develop, agree and implement a risk based plan to align National Operational Guidance.
- > Focus on the implementation of fire standards with the establishment of internal independent validation processes.
- > Continue to enhance our Operational Assurance processes by working with key stakeholders.
- > Develop a revised Corporate Planning & Performance Management Framework to complement the Strategic Plan and measure progress against this Plan.



Strategic Outcome 6 - Asset Management & Sustainability

We will ensure the effective development and management of all organisational assets in a way that drives efficiency and supports the delivery of our Service in a sustainable way.



Our Estate

The freehold estate includes a total of 69 sites: 67 Fire Stations, the Headquarters office building in Lisburn, and the LDC in Cookstown. There are 4 leasehold sites; Dunmurry Fire Station, Service Support Centre (SSC) and the Learning & Development College (LDC) Boucher Road along with the Downpatrick District Office and a drill tower site.

NIFRS utilising inter-body guidance has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NIAS for the exclusive use of accommodation at Bangor, Comber and Northland Fire Stations and there are a number of Fire Stations that NIAS use for ad hoc use and as deployment points. The MOU is reviewed regularly and there is ongoing engagement between NIAS and NIFRS regarding collaborative opportunities and continued shared use of sites.

32% of our estate is over 50 years old and only 12% is less than 10 years old. This presents a number of challenges in terms of managing risk, maintaining an operational estate while reducing backlog maintenance.

Our Strategic Approach

Our overriding aim is to manage and develop the estate in a value for money way to support the delivery of an excellent Fire & Rescue Service using an evidence based approach to enable effective investment decision making. To meet this aim, a number of key objectives have been established within a balanced Estate Delivery framework.

- We will achieve this through the following;
- > Meeting organisational needs
 - > Developing the estate infrastructure
 - > Promoting sustainability
 - > Enhancing estate management processes
 - > Meeting stakeholder needs

Our Estate Strategy brings together initiatives from a number of our organisational plans and sets out a corporate approach to their implementation.

Over the medium to longer term, the aim is to move away from a responsive approach to maintenance and, instead, adopt a more strategic and proactive methodology.

We will achieve this through the establishment of robust processes of Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) inspection programmes, works schemes and projects, which will identify and remedy maintenance issues at an early stage and also help to reduce the level of backlog maintenance.

Our Current Position - 5 year point

Facilities & Assets, in improving and retrofitting the estate, have access to and utilise a number of frameworks and procurement routes:

- > The Emergency Services Design Team Framework
- > Term Service Short Contract Lot 3 (for works up to £500k)
- > eTendersNI Dynamic Shortlisting System (for works over £500k).



At the mid-point of the 10-year Capital Plan, Facilities & Assets have undertaken full Station refurbishments at:

- > Newtownhamilton Fire Station
- > Banbridge Fire Station
- > Ballyclare Fire Station
- > Magherafelt Fire Station
- > Pomeroy Fire Station
- > Ballynahinch Fire Station
- > Carrickfergus Fire Station
- > Larne Fire Station
- > Carnlough Fire Station
- > Limavady Fire Station
- > Dungiven Fire Station
- > Antrim Fire Station



In addition to the full station refurbishments there have been a number of facilities improvement schemes delivered to enhance the welfare provision across the estate.

Over the past number of years, we have made significant progress in addressing concerns with female facilities. We have invested in a series of refurbishment projects to ensure that adequate facilities are in place. This provision remains a key priority for the organisation. We are also committed to incorporating appropriate zoning into station layouts, ensuring that facilities support best practices in contamination control.

This has had a positive impact on morale and the plan is to continue to target investment to upgrade facilities.



6 Asset Management & Sustainability

Where We Want To Be

As part of our project pipeline, we plan to undertake full retrofit upgrade/refurbishment of 2-3 Stations per year. The project pipeline is informed by a number of factors including:

- > Physical condition & age
- > Adherence to statutory requirements and equality legislation
- > Compliance with our Contaminants Working Group Fire Station design principles
- > Health and Safety considerations.

Our Stations and sites are surveyed and assessed, using the criteria above as part of our 5 year Estate Wide Condition Surveys. The last survey exercise was undertaken in 2019/20 with a renewed survey planned for 2024/25. This refreshed survey will validate existing information and inform the development of the next tranche of projects and align with the 10-year capital plan.

Sustainability & Energy Reduction

We are committed to meeting our obligations under the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, integrating climate action into our strategic planning and decision-making. Through these initiatives, we will enhance our resilience while contributing to Northern Ireland's sustainability goals.

Facilities & Assets have developed an Energy Reduction Scheme to ensure a planned approach to energy reduction in accordance with the Northern Ireland Assembly's Asset Management Strategy Action Plan 2016.

This plan required that we, as an organisation, implement effective energy management processes to unlock value and reduce net energy consumption by 30% by 2030, from a baseline year of 2017.

Summary

Across the organisation, change activities are being undertaken, with further works aligning to risk and future planning. The outputs from CRMP projects will become our blueprint for the future, and we will be engaged in delivering change from a property and infrastructure aspect, as part of our 10-year capital plan.



6 Asset Management & Sustainability

Over the 5-year CRMP period we will:

- > Develop a rolling 10-year Capital Plan to reflect organisational need and overlay of DoH 10-year plan.
- > Continue to take steps to meaningfully progress collaboration, co-location and closer working with NIAS and see this as key to 'delivering together'.
- > Adopt the executive blueprint for the future, moving to a more sustainable and energy efficient organisation over the coming years.
- > Continue our research and development activities to support service improvement proposals and ensure our staff are suitably equipped in line with The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2011.
- > Remain up-to-date with new technology, ensuring that fleet replacements meet the corporate aim to reduce emissions.
- > Scope out the ability to add electric vehicles and the supporting estate to the overall fleet with a view to moving to a more sustainable and energy efficient fleet over the coming years.



OUR LINKED DOCUMENTS



This CRMP should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- > NIFRS Strategic Plan
- > Draft Programme for Government (PfG)
- > NIFRS Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAR)
- > Department of Health Strategic Plan
- > NIFRS Annual Business Plan
- > Northern Ireland Fire Framework (once agreed) and
- > Partnership Agreement.



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