



Response Strategy 2022-27



Response Strategy

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Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

Introduction

This response strategy has been developed to outline how we will deliver our operational response function to the communities of Lancashire.

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA) is responsible for providing an effective and efficient Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) to protect communities and businesses across Lancashire. This response strategy outlines how Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) will respond to a range of emergencies and operational incidents and manage our resources to enable the most appropriate and efficient response.

Our response commences from the initial call to North West Fire Control (NWFC). We attend a wide range of incidents which include building fires (domestic, industrial, commercial), road traffic collisions, railway incidents, building collapse, hazardous materials, humanitarian services, wildfires, water rescues, flooding, rope rescue, confined space and assisting other agencies. We have diversified into areas such as gaining entry on behalf of North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) and missing person searches in collaboration with Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon).

We have specialist teams and equipment that respond to reduce harm from a wide range of incident types including rope rescue teams, urban search and rescue specialists, swift water rescue operatives, wildfire burns teams, environmental protection, air support team (drone) and canine units which provide bespoke search capabilities.

Our delivery of services is influenced by and aligned to legislation, the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England National Operational Guidance and our Risk Management Framework; the framework includes our Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR), Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and annual service plans (ASP).

Reducing risks and preventing incidents is a critical part of the service we deliver. However, being prepared to respond to emergencies when they occur is at the heart of what we aim to achieve. We seek to deliver the highest standards of operational response by continuously planning, preparing, and training for emergencies, so that we can respond with the correct resources, skills and equipment to deal with any incident safely, efficiently, and effectively.

To support and develop our response activities we have a dedicated Response Task Group (RTG) which aims to:

- Work collaboratively in preparing and developing operational/response policy and procedures.
- Update existing policy and procedures following research and development activities.
- Investigate and report on activities internal and external to the service.
- Deliver service improvement to support the objectives of the CFA.
- Identify and provide options to improve service performance in all areas of operational response.
- Provide a sounding board for relevant tactical and procedural issues, using this process to promote best practice.

Key principles

Our response strategy defines how we ensure sufficient and proportionate emergency response arrangements are available to respond to and manage a wide range of risks and threats, delivered through a range of local, regional, and national delivery models. Our culture plays an integral part in enabling the service to achieve our priorities of:

- Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer.
- Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening.
- Protecting people and property when fires happen.
- Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently.
- Delivering value for money in how we use our resources.

Our service “STRIVE” values underpin everything we seek to achieve, which fundamentally aligns to the fire and rescue service national code of ethics:

- Service
- Trust
- Respect
- Integrity
- Value
- Empowerment

Through the key objectives set within the response strategy, we aim to support the creation of a positive, inclusive culture that encourages innovation and continuous improvement. Achieving the right culture will enable us to deliver the best services and be an outstanding fire and rescue service for our communities and visitors.

- Our response strategy has been produced to translate the expectations laid out in relevant legislation, guidance and national reports into appropriate action as well as taking cognisance of our SAoR and CRMP.
- We constantly review our approach to providing and deploying resources to ensure they remain flexible and where possible, seek to improve our capabilities to deal with the wide range of foreseeable emergencies and risks as detailed in our SAoR, balancing demand and risk.
- We will ensure that our resources remain fit for purpose through analysis of data and reviews, for example our emergency cover review (ECR) process which reviews fire station/engine location and crewing arrangements. Our special appliance review ensures that we have the right specialist assets and skills to support the wide range of incidents we attend and provide appropriate arrangements for future emerging risk as detailed within our SAoR.
- We will prioritise statutory requirements, ensuring that our firefighters are provided with the best training, best facilities, best appliances, and best equipment to ensure they remain as effective and efficient in preparedness and response, whilst remaining focused on their health, safety, and wellbeing.

The response strategy focuses on the following areas to achieve its aims:

- Preparedness.
- Response arrangements.
- Innovation and technology.
- National resilience.
- Business continuity.

Preparedness

National operational guidance

We will maintain, review, and develop robust systems, processes and procedures that build upon national operational guidance, and fire standards supporting the identification and management of operational risk. This will enable us to provide clear guidance for operational responders to ensure a safe, effective, and efficient response to operational incidents.

Training and Operational Review (TOR)

Operational learning and training are an essential component used to develop and maintain competent firefighters and officers to respond with the right knowledge and skills to a wide range of incidents, safely and effectively. Our training facility ensures that our firefighters and managers are trained to high standards. This is completed through realistic practical and theoretical training sessions utilising a range of props and technology in simulated training sessions and exercises.

We will continue to deliver and participate in collaborative training in line with the requirement as laid out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

Training will be in the form of practical and desktop exercise throughout the period of this response strategy. Key areas of training will be determined by due consideration of the national risk register, local community risks and both national and local operational learning. We will continue to support our firefighter apprentices and focus on our new starters growth to ensure they contribute to our operational preparedness and response arrangements, supporting our diverse communities.

Response and Emergency Planning (REP)

REP is fundamental to our response activities; the department write and develop policy and procedures which are derived from national operational guidance. Business continuity planning ensures that a strong response position is maintained for spate condition such as bad weather, pandemics, staff absence, fall back mobilising, major/critical incidents, and incident command support.

Operational assurance and learning

We will continuously review all aspects of the operational performance of our crews, to enable us to monitor compliance with requirements, but more importantly, to identify learning, ensuring we act to immediately rectify any identified shortfalls and continuously improve.

To make sure that we operate as safely and effectively as it can, we will continue to build strong planning, preparedness, response and learning processes. We will audit our work to evaluate how well we perform. In order for us to do this:

- We will prepare for inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. This programme has been established under the Government's Fire Service reform agenda to assess effectiveness, efficiency, and leadership.
- We will review national operational guidance, fire standards, and make amendments (where necessary) to standard operating procedures and associated training activity, which will be aligned to new national training specifications.
- We will complete an operational debrief for all incidents and complete a command debrief and multi-agency debrief when appropriate to ensure learning and good practice. Incident assurance will be delivered by competent assessors and a proactive operational capability monitoring process.
- We will, where appropriate to do so, share lessons learned nationally through joint organisational learning (JOL) and national operational learning (NOL) protocols, we will also share this information with local partners and where appropriate, with regulatory authorities to prevent any reoccurrence.

Built Environment Assessment Team (BEAT)

The BEAT was formed in 2019. The purpose of the team was to offer an informed assessment of how well we managed risk within the built environment, identifying areas of best practice, development growth and opportunities.

The BEAT focussed on three key thematic areas:

1. Operational training.
2. Operational response.
3. Fire protection.

In determining our preparedness and response to the built environment risk, the team considered three key areas:

1. Our people.
2. Our process.
3. The technology we use.

This framework enabled the BEAT to draw together information, intelligence, data, best practice, and professional judgement to evidence the current position and how we may develop, grow, and refine over the coming years to ensure it remains fit for the future.

To assess how we prepare, respond, learn, and manage built environment risk, the team looked at the three thematic areas which are the most fundamental aspects of the practical application of managing this risk. Namely, protection-based activities, operational activities (both planning and responding) and training activities across all functions.

To better frame the questions and provide structure to the information gathering the team considered:

- Organisational legislative requirements: for instance, FRS Act 2004, Fire Safety Order 2005, CCA 2004.
- Role specific legal requirements.
- Best practice/guidance, e.g., national operational guidance (NOG).
- The organisation's preparedness and understanding of the environment it is operating in i.e., Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR), Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

- The policies and procedures currently in place which shape its people, process, and technology: for instance, selection and development, project management, strategic ownership and accountability.
- The training and development of its staff across all functions.
- The implementation of procedures and ‘ways of working’ across all functions along with the consistency, robustness, and perceived benefits.
- The mind-set throughout the organisation.

This structure, therefore, ensured a logical methodology flowed; from how we interpret, understand, and apply our legal duties, to assessing and managing risk through local delivery of those legal duties.

It also ensured that any recommendations made, were supportive of organisational improvement to better align us back with its intended mission along with complementing one another to provide a ‘golden thread’ throughout the Service.

In short, the BEAT looked at how well we prepare and equip our people to do the job at hand and, ultimately how effective our structure, training and governance combined from top down and bottom up is, to remain competent, proficient, and fit for the future.

The work and report have culminated with 14 recommendations drawn together from intelligence, data, and professional judgement. These recommendations will build upon an existing foundation of solid knowledge, understanding and actions whilst shaping thinking, workstreams and decision making, to better improve our response, not just to the built environment risk, but to our operating environment across Lancashire.

Site specific risk information (SSRI)

The gathering of operational risk information is one of our key activities. We have an integrated approach to managing the risk; thereby ensuring safe systems of work for all employees.

We will undertake incident pre planning and the gathering of operational risk information to enable:

- The prevention of injury and ill health of firefighters and other emergency responders.
- Management and mitigation of risks in the community.
- Continual improvement in the provision of accurate, relevant and timely operational information available to responding crews.
- Compliance with the legal duties on fire and rescue authorities in relation to operational risk information
- Compliance with formal guidance and “best practice” models; and
- Audit and review mechanisms

We will review the relationship between our fire protection and response teams to ensure all of our staff are aware of the emerging built environment risk to ensure our preparedness work through SSRI visits, plans and exercises is robust.

Partnership working

We will, in line with our responsibilities as a category one responder under the Civil Contingencies Act, play a full and active part of Lancashire’s Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The LRF’s main responsibilities are to ensure that local risks are assessed and that preparedness, in terms of response and recovery arrangements are in place to deal with the range of potential emergencies that could affect the county.

The LRF aims to help Lancashire be resilient to emergencies by working together to plan, respond and recover from events affecting people, economy, or the environment.

We have fully embedded the principles that underpin the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) and work together via the LRF to ensure a common understanding and shared situational awareness exists across all category 1 and 2 responder agencies.

We will undertake regular exercises with the LRF and partners to test its own plans and also work with other agencies to test the multi-agency plans. Our joint aim within Lancashire is to improve our capability to respond to any disruptive challenges and minimise the effects on our communities.

Collaboration and interoperability

We have a long history of successful partnership working and work closely with our key partners to ensure that we fully understand each other's capabilities and limitations, command and control procedures and can communicate with one another effectively at incidents.

Through the Blue Light Collaboration Board, we have a programme of identified opportunities that are explored for feasibility and innovative ways of enhancing the emergency service available to our communities, whilst at the same time realising greater efficiencies through working together. We will continue to scope new opportunities, whilst delivering against feasible agreed deliverables.

Research and development

We will through our research and development group constantly review our operational resources considering emerging issues, equipment and practices against national and international best practice.

We will consider advances in technology, enhancing our operational capability and ensure firefighter safety is enhanced through the provision of robust procurement, evaluation, monitoring and maintenance of all operational assets and equipment ensuring they perform when required.

Response arrangements

Our station arrangements and staffing models

The map below shows the current locations of our fire stations (indicated by each blue star) along with a heat map representing the highest activity areas.

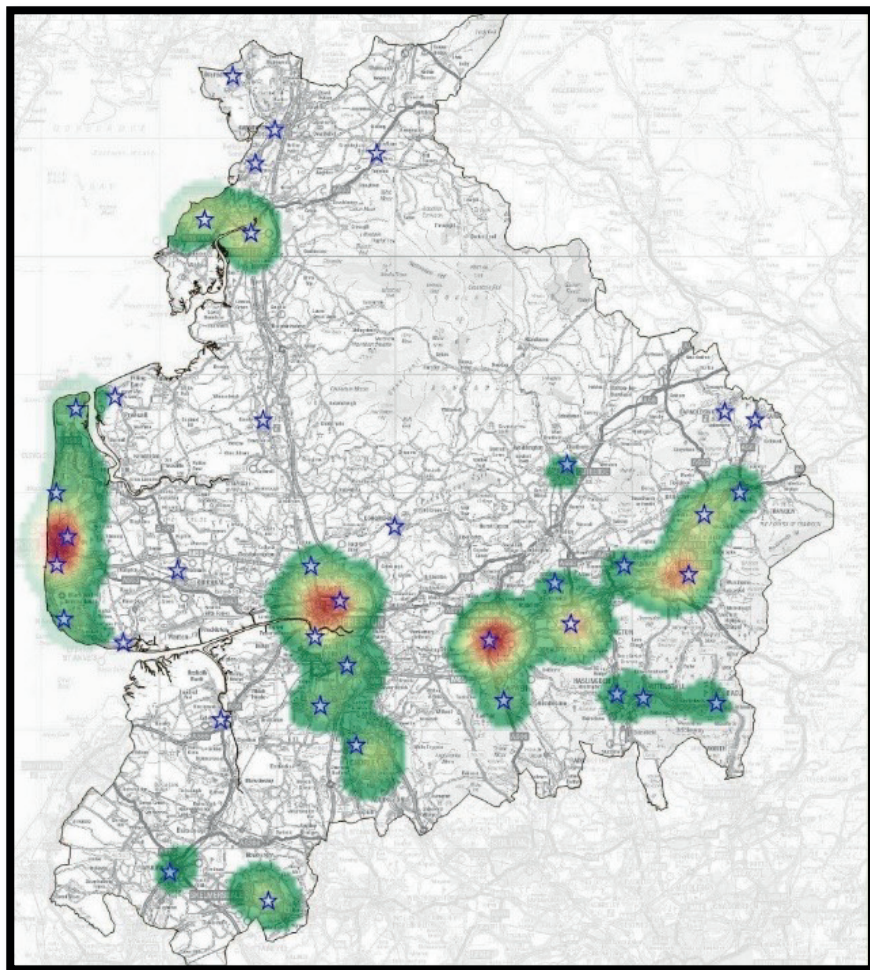


Figure 1

The service operates wholtime and on call shift systems to provide efficient and effective emergency cover across Lancashire. These operate 24 hours, 365 days a year cover for all emergency requirements.

Fire engines

We will provide fire engines, located, and deployed to address identified risk and response standard requirements. Across Lancashire currently there are a total of 39 fire stations, and 58 fire engines.

Our fire stations

The following table provides detail on station locations and the number of fire engines (pumps).

Station	WT Pumps	On Call Pumps
Preston	2	
Blackpool	2	
Blackburn	2	
Burnley	2	
South Shore	1	
Hyndburn	1	1
Lancaster	1	1
Darwen	1	1
Morecambe	1	1
Rawtenstall	1	1
Nelson	1	1
Chorley	1	1
Bispham	1	
St Anne's	1	1
Fleetwood	1	1
Bamber Bridge	1	1
Skelmersdale	1	1
Fulwood	1	
Bacup	1	1
Leyland	1	
Ormskirk	1	1
Penwortham	1	
Preesall		1
Lytham		1
Longridge		1
Carnforth		1
Wesham		1
Earby		1
Silverdale		1
Bolton Le Sands		1
Garstang		1
Barnoldswick		1
Colne		2
Clitheroe		2
Tarleton		1
Haslingden		1
Great Harwood		1
Hornby		1
Padiham		1
39	26	32

Wholetime fire engine availability - Central to providing an effective emergency response in Lancashire is ensuring that our fire engines are available to respond when we need them. These are the availability of our fire engines that are crewed by wholetime, day crewing and day crewing plus shifts. We will aim to achieve 99.5% availability.

On-call fire engine availability - Central to providing an effective emergency response in areas of lower risk and demand in Lancashire is ensuring that our fire engines are available to respond when we need them. These are the measurements of availability of fire engines that are crewed by our on-call firefighters. We will aim to achieve 95% availability, although we accept that nationally the availability of on-call firefighters is a growing challenge. We will continue to review our crewing arrangements throughout the life of this strategy through emergency cover reviews as appropriate.

How we achieve our availability

Crewing of vehicles

We will deploy our fire emergency response vehicles to the right places, at the right time and in the right proportions to deal with the risks our staff will face. The 'weight' and 'speed' of attack are factors that are very important to us.

Weight of attack - In terms of 'weight of attack', we have constructed pre-determined attendance criteria for all emergency incident types. This ensures that we send the right number of people, with the right skills and the right equipment to every incident.

Speed of attack - In terms of 'speed of attack', we have established how long it should take for our resources to arrive at any type of emergency incident. Our response standards in respect of 'Speed of Attack' can be seen further on in this strategy.

We will ensure our crewing arrangements are constantly reviewed to deliver the quickest and most appropriate response to 999 calls when our communities need us the most.

Small incident units (SIUs)

Our small incident unit policy enables a response to small incidents that can be managed with limited personnel. The criterion for mobilising is built into our crew availability system which manages personnel and enables NWFC to mobilise an SIU, when appropriate. The interface with our crew availability system and North West Fire Control (NWFC) will only propose SIUs for incidents such as small fires in the open, road traffic collisions, and other risk assessed incidents. In line with our CRMP, we will ensure we have the most appropriate vehicles available across the county to meet our risk and demand profile.

Wholetime firefighters

Wholetime staff are based at stations which are permanently crewed by full-time employees only who work in accordance with the wholetime shift system.

There are a variety of duty systems which can be used to employ full-time firefighters, in response to the risk and demand across individual locations within Lancashire. We will continue to utilise duty systems that are appropriate to this risk and demand.

On-call firefighters

On-Call firefighters are an integral part of LFRS' response arrangements and ensure our county wide operational response is effective and efficient. We continually look to support our On-Call response arrangements via our Strengthening and Improvement Project. Additionally, we continue to support the National Fire Chief Councils (NFCC) On-Call Practitioners' and Steering Groups to ensure we deliver best practice.

Flexi duty officers (FDO)

The FDO role in LFRS has several functions, these include Service Delivery, Prevention, Protection, Training, Emergency Planning, Fleet Services, Assurance, and Service Development. The FDO cohort operates across Lancashire enabling the required levels of supervision at operational incidents. FDO's continue to work closely with other agencies to resolve operational incidents such as Police, Northwest Ambulance Service, Environment Agency, Local Authorities. Our FDO's have the knowledge and skills required to provide an advanced level of tactical and strategic command and coordination at the largest and most serious incidents, utilising developed command skills within a multi-agency environment.

In addition, the FDO role has a range of specialist functions, such as:

- Hazardous Materials Environmental Protection Officer (HMEPO).
- Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Strategic and Tactical Commander.
- National Interagency Liaison Officer (NILO).
- Wildfire Tactical Advisor.
- Waste Tactical Advisor.
- Mass Decontamination Tactical Advisor.
- Urban Search & Rescue Service Tactical Advisor.
- Water Incident Manager.
- Airwave Tactical Advisor.
- Maritime Incident Tactical Advisor.

We have a continual cycle of training for FDO's using in house training resources and external training providers. Initial training courses, refresher training, CPD events and command assessments are planned throughout the year to ensure an experienced and competent response.

What we respond to

Climate change - wildfire

Wildfires remain a significant risk in Lancashire, therefore we are developing a bespoke Wildfire Strategy. We have invested in new equipment, skills, and all-terrain vehicles to ensure we are able to provide a sufficient, and effective response to these incident types. Our units and specialist wildfire response teams including a burns team are strategically located for an efficient response, and we will continue to review our arrangements to ensure we are resourced for the levels of risk and demand across Lancashire.

We will continue to engage with partners, land, and property owners to inform, educate and subsequently mitigate the impact wildfire has on our communities through the national Firewise initiative. We will continue to develop our internal cohort of wildfire tactical advisors and continue to develop our national wildfire tactical advisors through local, national, and international support.

Resource response to incident type	Resource allocation
Wildfire burns team	1 team strategically placed according to demand and risk
Wildfire unit	1 team strategically placed according to demand and risk
Drone teams	Specialist drone pilots – all year round on-call capability
Wildfire responders	All staff across Lancashire
Command support units	2 placed strategically within Lancashire
High volume pump	1 placed strategically within Lancashire
Hose layer unit	1 strategically placed according to demand and risk

Climate change - flooding

Wide area and localised flooding can and do devastate our communities and impact years beyond an event. Water related incidents tragically result in deaths each year and incur considerable economic loss. Flooding can happen at any time of the year and requires an effective and appropriate response. We will set out a 5 Year Delivery Plan through our Climate Change Operations Plan which will look at preparing and responding to future effects of climate change. The service hosts strategically placed water rescue tenders and water incident units. Our response arrangements contribute to the National DEFRA (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs) response managed by National Resilience.

We are a host service for a high volume pump (HVP) which is part of the national capability, the HVP are embed into core business and offer a substantial resource to move large volumes of water quickly. We have invested in equipment and training to support our flood response and we will continue to work with partners to develop multi-agency flood plans and rapid catchment flood area response plans. The main objective of these plans is to ensure our response is coordinated and protects life, property and environmental damage is mitigated.

Resource response to incident type	Resource allocation
Swift water rescue teams	6 placed strategically across Lancashire
Flood suit responders	All staff across Lancashire
Water rescue teams (includes motorised boat)	2 placed strategically within Lancashire
Drone teams	Specialist drone pilots – all year round on-call capability
High volume pump	1 placed strategically within Lancashire
Command support units	2 placed strategically within Lancashire

We will continue to invest in resource to ensure our frontline responders have the most appropriate equipment and PPE to enable them to operate effectively at water related incidents.

Fires in the built environment

This area covers a wide range of building stock from domestic commercial, industrial, retail, entertainment, education, hospitals, and high-rise premises which include a wide variety of building constructions that all require individual and unique responses. These fires may be classified as accidental or deliberate causes. A set of defined predetermined attendances are in place which will ensure the correct resources, such as the number of fire engines and specialist appliances are dispatched to these incident types. Our operational and response priority will be to minimise the impact on life, infrastructure, and the environment.

Resource response to incident type	Resource allocation
Fire appliances	58 across Lancashire
Aerial/high reach assets	6 placed strategically across Lancashire
Incident intelligence officers (fire investigation)	Specialist fire investigation officers – all year round on-call capability
Drone teams	Specialist drone pilots – all year round on-call capability
Canine provision	Specialist canine assets – all year round on-call capability
Breathing apparatus unit (large scale or protracted incidents)	1 centrally located within Lancashire
Command support units	2 placed strategically within Lancashire

We will continue to invest in technology and firefighting tactics and equipment to ensure we have the right resource in the right place at the right time to protect our communities.

Transport incidents

Death and serious injuries on Lancashire's roads because of RTCs and road vehicle fires occur each year. They can also affect infrastructure, communities, the environment and residents and visitors to the county. Lancashire services a large transport infrastructure including motorways, major A and B roads, rail systems and an airport. We are prepared and ready to deal with incidents on all scales from small vehicles to large aircraft. Our operational response arrangements to transport related incidents will continue to maintain a high level of preparedness to respond to these incident types. We will continue to refresh our specialist equipment to deal with this type of emergency and ensure that our operational crews and managers have access to state of the art equipment.

Resource response to incident type	Resource allocation
Fire appliances	58 across Lancashire
Major rescue unit	1 centrally located within Lancashire
Foam unit	2 centrally located within Lancashire
Urban search and rescue team	2 teams centrally within Lancashire
Demountable specialist rescue pods (roll on/ roll off units)	Strategically placed at numerous stations across Lancashire
Command support units	2 placed strategically within Lancashire

Hazardous materials incidents

Hazardous materials can present a risk to the public from a range of sources including road transport, industrial sites, and malicious use by terrorist or organised criminal groups. There are a significant number of hazardous materials we must be prepared to deal with ranging from different types of dangerous liquids to cylinders and chemicals. Our operational response arrangements to emergencies involving hazardous materials will continue to provide equipment and training so we can effectively deal with these incident types. This will include training our operational crews and incident commanders and specialist hazmat and environmental protection officers to ensure that they have the specialist skills, knowledge and understanding to ensure that all incidents are resolved safely, efficiently, and effectively.

Resource response to incident type	Resource allocation
Fire appliances	58 across Lancashire
Hazardous material units	2 placed strategically within Lancashire
Command support units	2 placed strategically within Lancashire

Specialist rescue capability

We are equipped to deal with a range of more specialist risks which require a different response, strategies, and equipment. As such, we host and maintain an enhanced capability across the fleet to manage and deal with specialist rescue incidents. For example, rescues from water, search and rescue of collapsed structures, confined space operations, rescue of animals from water, ditches and mud, high line rope rescue operations, canine search procedures and lift rescues. Our operational response arrangements to specialist rescue emergencies will continue to maintain a high level of preparedness to respond using specialist equipment and specially trained staff.

Resource response to incident type	Resource allocation
Fire appliances	58 across Lancashire
Large animal rescue teams	6 placed strategically across Lancashire
Major rescue unit	1 centrally located within Lancashire
Urban search and rescue team	2 teams based centrally within Lancashire
Rope rescue team	1 strategically placed according to demand and risk
Canine provision	Specialist canine assets – all year round on-call capability
Demountable specialist rescue pods (roll on/roll off units)	Strategically placed at numerous stations across Lancashire
Command support units	2 placed strategically within Lancashire

Terrorist incidents

Terrorism presents a serious and sustained threat to the UK and UK's interests abroad. With the current threat from extremism means, the service remains vigilant and ready to respond. Due to the increase in terrorist attacks within the UK over recent years, we are committed to the Marauding Terrorist Attack Joint Operating Principles (MTA JOPs) and as a FRS will form part of a multi-agency response to such events. We maintain a cadre of national inter-agency liaison officers (NILO) who have received in depth training in responding to terrorism. The service also maintains close links with Lancashire Constabulary and Lancashire Resilience Forum partners to ensure that joint plans and ways of working are in place, in line with JESIP principles.

Resource response to incident type	Resource allocation
Fire appliances	58 across Lancashire
Major rescue Unit	1, centrally located within Lancashire
Urban search and rescue team	2 teams centrally within Lancashire
Canine provision	Specialist canine assets – all year round on-call capability
Demountable specialist rescue pods (roll on/ roll off units)	Strategically placed at numerous stations across Lancashire
Command support units	2 placed strategically within Lancashire
NILO	Skill distributed amongst the FDO cohort, with a minimum of 1 NILO on duty at any time

There are other resources that are available across all incident types that support our response arrangements.

In addition to our own assets, we have developed partnerships with various external organisations and bodies that can be drawn upon to assist in the resolution of incidents as and when they occur. They can also play a vital preventative role in limiting the impact incidents have on the public, property, and the environment.

Resource response to incident type	Resource allocation
Fire emergency support service	All year round on-call capability
Welfare unit with toilets	
Toilet unit	
Media unit	
Salvation Army Catering unit	
Mountain rescue	
Bay Search and Rescue	
Utility companies	
Environment Agency	
Bureau Veritas	
National resilience assets	

Special appliances

The Service operates a range of special appliances. Special vehicles fulfil four broad generic roles across intervention and operational support. They will be provided, located, crewed, and deployed in accordance with the service risk profile and empirical evidence of operational activity and will be subject to periodic review as required.

Special vehicles impose an additional training requirement, and the disposition of these vehicles will ensure that training programmes are manageable within available time constraints.

Special appliances
4 x Aerial ladder platforms (ALP)
2 x Water towers (Stingers)
1 x Major rescue unit + polaris (MRU)
2 x Foam units (FU)
1 x Breathing apparatus unit
2 x Water rescue units (WRU) rescue boats + SRT
2 x Hazardous materials and environmental protection units (HMEPU)
1 x Hose laying and retrieval unit.
2 x Control units (CU)
1x 9000 litre water bowser
6 x 4x4 vehicles equipped with wildfire equipment
2 x Haglund for wildfires
2 x Rope rescue units (RRU)
6 x Water rescue tenders (WRT) with SRT capability + bariatric equipment
1 x Air support unit (ASU) drone
1 x Canine trained for accelerants + 1 x canine cadaver
1 x Fire emergency support unit (FESS)
1 x Welfare unit with toilets
1 x Toilet unit
1 x Media unit
1 x Salvation army catering unit
National resilience
1 x High volume pump + hose box (HVP)
1 X Urban search and rescue unit (USAR)
2 x Search and rescue canine and handlers

Our response standards

Critical fire response - 1st fire engine

Our response standards, in respect of critical fires, are variable and are determined by the Lancashire risk map and subsequent risk grade of the area in which the fire occurred. Our measure of these response times is from the 'time of call' (this includes the call handling performance, measured within NWFC's KPI's) to the 'time in attendance', i.e., when the 1st fire appliance arrives at the incident location. The response standards for the 1st fire engine attending a critical fire are as follows:

Risk	Time
Very high risk area	6 minutes
High risk area	8 minutes
Medium risk area	10 minutes
Low risk area	12 minutes

We have achieved our standard when the time from the first fire engine arriving and the time it was sent to the incident is less than the relevant response standard. We will aim to achieve these standards on 90% of occasions.

Critical special service response

Critical special service incidents are non-fire incidents where there is a risk to life, for example, road traffic collisions, rescues, and hazardous materials incidents.

For these incidents there is a single response standard which measures call handling time and fire engine response time. The response standard for the first fire engine attending a critical special service call is 13 minutes. We have achieved our 90% standard when the time between the 'time of call' and 'time in attendance' of first fire engine arriving at the incident is less than the response standard.

Fire standards

The Fire Standards Board has been set up to oversee the identification, organisation, development, and maintenance of professional standards for FRS in England. We will ensure our response arrangements align to the fire standards.

Measuring response activity

To ensure we provide the best effective, efficient and value for money service to the communities of Lancashire we use a range of targets to measure performance which are scrutinised under our governance arrangements.

We have several Service wide targets, known as key performance indicators (KPIs) that are outlined within our annual service plans. These KPIs are reported quarterly in the publication known as Measuring Progress which is available on our website. At the end of each reporting year, we will produce an annual service report which covers our performance.

We will continue to utilise local indicators to monitor trends and changes in activity and risk which help us locally plan activities and resource allocation to meet the changing needs of the diverse communities that we serve.

Innovation and technology

Optimising availability of operational staff

We operate a number of wholetime and on-call shift systems to provide an efficient response that meets the risk and demand in the communities of Lancashire. We will review how we manage staffing levels across the shift systems to help us maintain and maximise the availability of our front-line services more effectively, particularly during periods of high demand and absence. We operate rota management systems to ensure optimum staffing levels are maintained. These systems are managed and reviewed on a perpetual basis ensuring that functionality evolves with modern technology.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

The ICT department is the central point of contact for the processing and resolution of all issues and requests relating to ICT equipment and technology services across LFRS. The ICT department supports and maintains the ICT infrastructure and applications throughout their lifecycle in partnership with our suppliers and supports the organisation's business intelligence requirements. Information technology is fundamental to our response operations which encompasses development and support for our mobilising systems, radio communications, vehicle mounted data systems (on board computers).

We will continue to innovate in relevant technology with an aspiration to achieve a more “digitally focussed” fire engine to ensure we are effective and efficient whilst mobile in our communities.

Rota technology

We will continue to utilise technology to manage operational staff and appliance availability. Getting the right people in the right place at the right time delivers an efficient work-time management process giving a global view of staff availability. The systems encompass multiple shift patterns, duty systems and multiple locations and is fully compatible with a range of data bases, enabling information to be analysed. It offers a real-time view of staffing today and into the future and it caters for users with all levels of computing experience.

The roster module has been designed and implemented to manage wholetime staff across the differing duty systems. These include, principal officers, flexi duty officers, wholetime (2-2-4), day crewing plus, flexi day crewing, protection and media. Roster offers instant staffing shortage alerts, work-time management process - SMS & internal messaging facilities, shift position/rider board, global staffing, appliance position mapping and skills.

The crew availability system has been designed and implemented to manage availability of on-call firefighters. This enables staff to update their availability to the nearest fifteen minutes. The software package provides up to date mobilising information for North West Fire Control via an automated interface which delivers live data. This identifies the nearest available on call appliance for immediate dispatch.

We will evaluate other software packages that support front line resource management and, where we can demonstrate better value for money and effectiveness, invest appropriately.

Pre-alerting

Pre-alerting is a module available in the North West Fire Control mobilising system. Its function is designed to pinpoint a caller's location using coordinates as soon as the control operator answers a 999 call and then instigates a pre-alert via the turnout system to the nearest resource which is closest to that location. The pre-alert enables the crew to prepare for mobilisation and proceed more quickly once the full mobilisation has been received.

For a landline call the system is extremely accurate as it pinpoints the exact address, for calls from mobile phones, the system will triangulate between several phone masts and give an approximate location. A pre-alert is sent within two seconds of a call being answered and does not require any human intervention. This enables crews to be alerted to a potential incident on average ninety seconds before the full mobilising message is sent. We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the pre-alert system and ensure it is available to appropriate stations and crewing arrangements.

Automatic vehicle location system (AVLS) road speed

Our communities expect the quickest possible response times to an emergency. A module within the mobilising system gives us the ability to input individual pump delays. This is achieved at North West Fire Control by selecting each appliance according to a road speed calculation and the time it should take each appliance to leave the station. Using previous average road speeds and “alerting” times we can mobilise the nearest resources rather than relying on arbitrary station boundaries. The new NWFC road speed calculations have been rigorously tested and are deemed to be accurate. This enables the quickest response to attend an incident.

Emergency services network (ESN)

This is a national project to replace the communications network used by the police, fire and rescue, and ambulance services in the UK. Staff from the service are seconded on the ESN project long term. The new ESN will provide voice communication and broadband data services. LFRS will continue to support national and regional development of the ESN to prepare us for local delivery once the project is ready to commence.

North West Fire Control (NWFC)

NWFC is a public sector company set up exclusively by four of the fire services in the North West Region to jointly handle all 999 emergency calls and be responsible for mobilising firefighters and fire engines to incidents in Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, and Cheshire.

This collaboration between the partner fire and rescue services sees the North West gaining maximum benefit providing the best possible service to the public across the North West. Staff work within the main control room answering 999 calls mobilising fire engines across the region respectively, they also provide support and guidance to staff and support ongoing incidents. NWFC offers a service which is covered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. NWFC use one of the most advanced mobilising systems in the country to ensure that fire engines, special appliances and firefighters are dispatched efficiently to any incident they are required to attend.

The mission for NWFC as a company, is to protect lives through excellence in emergency call handling, mobilising resources, incident support and co-ordination. Therefore, they recruit for values, train for skill and deliver with excellence. NWFC is committed to giving the public a service of the highest possible standard and are committed to delivering excellent and resilient emergency call management and mobilisation on behalf of the FRS in the North West Region.

We aspire to invest in new technology to assist NWFC provide effective mobilisations of Lancashire resources to all incident types to make Lancashire safer.

Command units

Our incident command units are critical to how we manage complex or large-scale incidents. During the period of this strategy, we will replace our command units and equip them with state-of-the-art incident command software. This will enable efficient and effective firefighting tactics and strategies to be implemented, ultimately improving firefighter and community safety.

Fire engines and water towers

Our fleet replacement programme will continue to add new state of the art fire engines with innovative technology enabling efficient and effective firefighting solutions. The successful introduction of our water tower appliances (stinger) into our fleet has resulted in significantly enhanced firefighter safety and firefighting capability. The stinger helps to minimise fire damage and associated costs to businesses and homes whilst enhancing firefighter safety. These appliances are a leading innovation for the UK fire sector.

Aerial capability

We have strengthened our aerial response capabilities with new state of the art aerial appliances. This enables a range of alternative access provision for rescues and firefighting operations at height. The aerals are strategically located to cover appropriate risk across Lancashire.

During the period of this strategy we will replace one aerial ladder platform (ALP) and we will evaluate all options to ensure our resources are appropriate to risk requirements, cognisant of our BEAT and SSRI findings.

Drone

Lancashire is the lead for drones nationally. We have taken full advantage of the drone innovation and capability. The drones offer situational awareness for incident commanders which aids tactical decision-making enabling incidents to be brought to a safe conclusion efficiently and effectively. Collaboration with Lancashire Constabulary has led to joint working offering resilience for the capability. The evolution of technology provides opportunities for us to explore innovations in both aerial and underwater drone technology.

National resilience

We have statutory duties as outlined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007, in relation to National Resilience assets, to ensure they are being satisfactorily discharged.

Since inception, national resilience assets have been embedded into LFRS core business activity and form our heavy rescue response capability for collapsed structures, confined space, working at height and heavy transport.

The National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) visit LFRS to undertake an assurance process over a 3-year cycle: year 1, self-assessment – year 2, capability assurance visit – year 3, national exercise. This is to ensure, as hosts for national resilience assets, the achievement and maintenance of an effective operational capability to respond to national and major emergencies.

We will maintain compliance with the areas of assurance and meet its legislative obligations and respond as a host service with the following assets:

- Urban search and rescue (USAR).
- High volume pumping (HVP).

We will also be familiar with other assets available from national resilience:

- Mass decontamination (MD).
- Detection, identification and monitoring (DIM).
- Marauding terrorist attack (MTA).
- Flood response.

We will achieve the following objectives to ensure that it meets its obligations to national resilience and the communities we serve:

- We will ensure that the necessary skills and attributes are being maintained to enable deployment of national resilience assets locally, regionally and nationally in an efficient and effective manner.
- We will ensure that organisational structures are in place within LFRS to meet the published criteria for effective national resilience assets, response to national level incident on request.
- We will identify and confirm that the national resilience capability equipment is being maintained and that defects are managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of use.

The USAR capability can also be used to support incidents which fall outside of the scope of article 3 of the Emergency Services Order (England) 2007. These incidents may include high-profile searches for missing persons, responses to extreme medical cases requiring technical extrication, and support to other agencies, where the additional expertise and technical capability of the USAR team will expedite a safe and effective resolution. In addition, the USAR capability will support other national resilience capabilities with responses to incidents on request.

Article 5 of the order gives each FRA-hosting specialist USAR resources (equipment and/or personnel) a statutory duty to deploy them outside their area to an extent reasonable for dealing with an emergency following a request from an affected authority. In practice, FRAs participating in the national mutual aid protocol for serious incidents (FRA Circular 42/2006) will receive the request via FRS mobilising controls, through existing local mutual aid arrangements, or via the FRSNCC.

Section 13 and 16 of the Fire Services Act 2004

This places an obligation on FRSs to work together, where practicable, to enable mutual assistance in the execution of their functions. We have 'memorandum of understanding' (MOU) arrangements in place with our regional and neighbouring FRS in terms of reinforcement schemes to ensure serious emergencies are attended in an efficient and effective manner. This also includes specialist functions such as Rope Rescue.

Through the North-West Regional National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) meetings we will continue to innovate, share best practice and resources as required.

Business continuity

The Civil Contingencies Act requires category 1 responders (such as FRSs) to maintain plans to ensure that they can continue to exercise their functions in the event of an emergency so far as is reasonably practicable. The duty relates to all functions, not just emergency response functions.

Our business continuity plans (BCP) are in place to ensure that the critical business functions we provide continue to operate, despite serious incidents or disasters that might otherwise have interrupted them.

To provide assurance that current business continuity plans are valid and appropriate we will ensure that each plan is reviewed annually and live tested at intervals of not more than two years. The impact of the coronavirus will influence actions for us and our partners now and in the future. Emergency response continues to respond to the crisis and to prepare for future demands and challenges in the years to come.

A review of current arrangements will help to inform future business continuity planning where appropriate. We have an operational degradation plan to ensure appropriate emergency response

cover can be maintained during high periods of operational activity or business disruption events. This is calculated on the assumption that the service will be able to simultaneously manage several incidents at any one time.

BCP training

We will develop a range of training packages in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire to enable staff to have sufficient knowledge and skills to effectively complete BCP training and reviews.

How will we measure success?

We recognise the importance of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of its response activities.

The Combined Fire Authority sets the service challenging targets for a range of key performance indicators (KPI) which help them to monitor and measure our performance in achieving success and meeting our priorities. Performance against these KPIs is scrutinised every quarter at the Performance Committee.

We will closely monitor performance against our critical response standards. We will regularly report our performance to the Home Office and HMICFRS.

We will use quality operational assurance processes to ensure our response services are delivered safely and consistently in accordance with our standard operating procedures.

We will ensure all data and information collated is compliant with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Conclusion

Our response strategy provides a framework in which our operational response arrangements can be delivered in the most efficiency and effectively way, making Lancashire safer. It clearly explains our statutory duties in responding to the range of diverse emergencies and supporting our diverse communities that we serve across the county of Lancashire.

This strategy will be constantly reviewed to ensure its effectiveness. A full refresh of the strategy will align with the release of our 2022- 2027 CRMP.

Relevant Legislation

- Fire and Rescue Framework 2018
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies 2017
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- National Fire Chiefs Council [NFCC] Position statements
- Audit and assurance provided by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)



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