



Annual Service Report 2020/21

Welcome to our Annual Service Report

2020/21
ANNUAL SERVICE REPORT

Looking back at 2020/21, it is hard to think of a more demanding period in Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's history. The Service has always adapted to changing risks affecting the safety of communities however Covid-19 presented our greatest challenge yet.

Our people rose to the challenge with enthusiasm and determination, keen to support communities and public services across Lancashire. We've played a central part in the response, applying our skills and expertise in areas where we could support partners and make a difference.

From visiting vulnerable residents and vaccinating people to distributing personal protection equipment and fitting face masks for health workers, the ways in which we serve our communities evolved to reflect the needs brought about by the pandemic.



In December 2020, we supported the NHS to establish vaccination sites across the county, one of the first fire and rescue services in the country to adopt this role. Firefighters and support services staff have been helping to deliver the vaccination programme, acting as site managers and marshals as well as administering vaccines, ever since.

The Service has been at the heart of Lancashire's response to the crisis and I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved together.

2020/21 brought a variety of complex and demanding incidents including multiple wildfires, wide-spread flooding, numerous large-scale fires and a bonfire period with increased risk of fires and injuries. We continued to provide emergency services, saving lives and helping people with the highest levels of operational standards and professionalism despite very challenging circumstances.

Covid-19 caused much of our planned work for the year to be put on hold, so it is testament to the commitment towards continuous improvement within the Service that the progress reported here has been achieved.



Justin Johnston
Chief Fire Officer
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service



Our Covid-19 pandemic response

Making Lancashire safer during the Covid-19 pandemic

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service played a central role in the response to the pandemic from an early stage, working as one team alongside partner agencies in the Lancashire Resilience Forum. Over 500 members of staff offered to carry out new activities delivering essential services;

- Visited over 1,400 vulnerable residents delivering interventions and welfare checks.
- Coordinated distribution of PPE supplies to health and social care settings across the county from our training centre.
- Provided P3 face mask fitting to hospital and social care workers.
- Supported the establishment of a temporary hospital and morgue and trained 54 staff to assist with mass casualties.

We also adapted our services to support people in alternative ways;

- Reconditioned 57 iPads and donated them to hospitals and hospices for virtual visits.
- Created digital fire safety education sessions when face-to-face engagement couldn't take place in schools.
- Launched a digital Prince's Trust programme for vulnerable young people who lost support and coping mechanisms during the pandemic.

With public events unable to take place, Bonfire Night presented an increased risk of fires and injuries across the county as people held celebrations at home.

- We worked with local authorities, Lancashire Police and North West Ambulance Service to carry out tactical prevention activity in communities and co-respond to incidents over the bonfire period.

- Digital Bright Sparx education sessions, designed to educate young people about bonfire and fireworks safety, were delivered to over 10,000 pupils.
- Our public safety campaign encouraged people to enjoy the event in alternative ways, including watching our family fireworks display which was streamed online.

By Christmas, our attention turned to supporting local NHS services to establish vaccination centres. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service led the sector in taking on this role, providing site management, marshalling, administration and logistics support to mass vaccination venues and community sites.

Firefighters and support services staff worked at vaccination centres seven days a week:

- Meeting and greeting patients.
- Completing patient health checks.
- Reassuring people as they prepared for the vaccine.
- Helping clinical staff when needed.
- Giving post vaccine support.
- Administering vaccines directly to patients.

By the end of March, the Service had supported the delivery of 170,500 vaccinations, with 19,800 vaccines administered by our staff.



“We’re still helping to deliver Lancashire’s vaccination programme and will continue to do so for as long as we’re needed.”



Our year in numbers



869

accidental dwelling fires (ADFs)

**7 mins
40 secs**
average
attendance time

17,334
incidents
attended

5,221
fires
attended



2

people lost their
lives in ADFs



35

casualties from
ADFs



95%

ADFs with a low or
medium fire severity



90.4% of the time

On-call fire engines available to
respond to incidents



38

missing person
searches



811

gaining entry to
property incidents



497

road traffic collisions



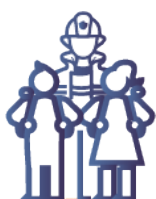
44

on-call firefighters
recruited



11,903

Home Fire Safety
Checks delivered



21,100

young people received
prevention education



5,957

people took part in
road safety education



63

fire safety enforcement
notices issued



11

businesses prohibited
from operating

Prevention and protection activity

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

Review of the Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) referral pathway

Extensive work with our partners has involved assessing the quality of HFSC referrals and providing feedback, establishing a focus group to improve communication and referral management and design of a partnership cycle which allows us to maintain effective partner relations. An ongoing quality assurance process ensures we are receiving appropriate referrals and identifies any gaps.

We have also improved our HFSC re-visit policy, aligning it to the person and risk identified within the property, and established a seamless process when we are unable to contact someone. A trial with referring partners to increase the opportunity for successful contact that results in a visit is ongoing.

Embed Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) awareness

ACE awareness toolbox talks have been held across the Service and an e-learning module released to the whole organisation. ACE awareness is now part of our wholetime firefighter recruits' course, so new recruits learn about the impact of traumatic experiences in childhood on behaviour and how this relates to community engagement from the start of their careers.

Built Environment Assessment Team

Established to address the evolving risks posed by an increasingly complex built environment and the potential for buildings to perform unexpectedly in a fire, the team increased our knowledge and understanding of buildings in Lancashire.

A series of recommendations to strengthen and improve core services across prevention, protection and operational response is currently being implemented within the Service.



Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently



Response activity

Strengthen operational assurance

There has been significant progress made in developing our assurance monitoring system (AMS), which is improving the way we analyse data, identify trends and apply learning from exercises and incidents.

The AMS is enabling the Service to plan training more effectively and track actions robustly, including those relating to national learning. The development includes features, such as the automatic transfer of data from our incident debrief app and the ability to review key metrics on an intuitive dashboard. This automated end-to-end process is leading the way in the fire sector in terms of assuring safe and effective operations.

Respond to the impacts of climate change

Our commitment to reducing environmental impact recognises the reality of climate change and our carbon management plan contains a target to reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2030.

As part of an ongoing vehicle replacement programme, which has included a move away from diesel vehicles, the Service has introduced several hybrid blue light response cars into the fleet and plans to trial all-electric cars in prevention and protection services.

During the year, there has been continued development of response capabilities in relation to the increasing impact climate change is having on certain incident types, particularly wildfires and flooding.

We have invested in specialist equipment and developed highly trained people, such as wildfire tactical advisors and waste fire tactical advisors, to respond to and manage incidents at local and national levels. Tactical flood plans in known flood hot spots have greatly improved preparedness for dealing with flooding incidents effectively.

Optimise rota management

During 2020-21, a comprehensive trial was carried out to introduce several new processes designed to make detachment and overtime planning more efficient. This included a new staffing management app to advertise opportunities for people to cover shortfalls and maintain operational response arrangements and the procedure for identifying rota breaches and causes.

Feedback and learning from the trial are being used to inform our policies and we are working with our rota management provider to devise a more automated approach, further streamlining how we manage staffing levels across our shift systems.

Replace incident command units and software

Work is ongoing with the incident command software. A supplementary document has been produced to describe in simplistic terms how incident command works, what is required and why.

A further review of the whole project has been undertaken to broaden the scope to incorporate additional requirements that support our needs in relation to large scale incident management. This has included collaborative work to ensure we are taking a regional and consistent approach in the procurement of command support resources and software.

Evaluate tools to strengthen our response

During 2020-21 we rolled out a pre-alerting system, designed to reduce incident response times, to wholtime and on-call fire stations. As a result of findings during initial trials, a system has been created to fully assess each pre-alert and provide accurate reporting. This data shows that the system improves average reaction times across all duty systems by 55%. The improvement ranges from 26 seconds up to 1 minute and 31 seconds dependent on the shift system and time of day.

All mobilisations were previously based on a standard delay that was appropriate to the shift system. We have now moved to a data-led, real-time response across all stations which will effectively mobilise the nearest and quickest asset for any specific incident type.

The next step is to implement pre-alerting at stations with both wholtime and on-call appliances. The system is constantly under review to identify learning and improve our processes.



Develop a strong organisational culture based on values and wellbeing

A programme of work to develop an organisational culture that promotes a healthy state of wellbeing and truly represents the Service's STRIVE values: service, trust, respect, integrity, value and empowerment.

- Planned leadership development events were moved online due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to identifying new ways of delivering future events. The events focused on the leadership framework within LFRS, the concept of psychoneuroimmunology, leadership styles, the importance of positive emotions at work, how to encourage engagement and innovation whilst building resilience and maintaining productivity.
- We developed our approach to talent management which is being rolled out across the Service. Promotion pathways are being reviewed to ensure that opportunities to identify and develop leaders for the future are fully explored and utilised.
- Health and wellbeing support during 2020-21 principally focused on the impacts of Covid-19 and supporting staff through uncertain times. This included how to access urgent mental health support, supporting family and friends through the pandemic, how to apply a positive mindset, managing anxiety, wellbeing support for our Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff, coping with grief, and helping managers to support their staff.
- To embed revised performance management arrangements briefing sessions continue to be delivered across the Service in relation to talent management and the importance of coaching and developmental feedback within the appraisal conversation. The appraisal process has been built within our iTrent and MiPlace systems enabling more accurate reporting and accessible information to inform workforce planning.
- Promotion process policies and guidance have been merged into one holistic policy, making the communication of options and opportunities more straightforward, and shared across the organisation. The internal selection process for fire protection roles has been refined to ensure staff who wish to develop and work in this essential area are selected based on aptitude and suitability for the demanding specialism, rather than incident command skills which historically was the case.
- 360-degree assessments were delivered to all station managers and above to inform their personal development. This is now included as an element within supervisory and middle manager development programmes.
- The Service has supported 36 operational members of staff to access the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) levels 3 and 6, and five business support staff have undertaken ILM levels 3 and 5, one via an apprenticeship. We've also supported three operational and two business support leaders to achieve Level 7 Strategic Leadership, with two people completing these through apprenticeships. External coaching was provided to 47 members of operational and non-operational staff.

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fire safer



Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion within the Service

Recruiting, developing and retaining a workforce that is inclusive and more reflective of Lancashire's communities is central to serving our communities as effectively as we can.

- During the pandemic, community engagement was particularly focused on Lancashire's Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in Preston and East Lancashire. Local radio, targeted publications, online platforms and material in alternative languages were used by staff in those areas to help share critical health information and encourage vaccination take-up. Members of staff working in vaccination centres were able to correct misinformation and reassure people. We also worked with mosques to discuss fire safety and the need for updated fire risk assessments and fire drills when students returned to study. The Service's equality, diversity and inclusion employee voice groups steer this work, identifying needs and opportunities to improve engagement to help keep people safe.
- A trial of flexible annual leave arrangements began at Blackpool and South Shore fire stations, with all staff at those locations volunteering to participate. A mid-year evaluation has been completed and findings will be considered once the trial is complete.
- Face-to-face opportunities to engage with our diverse communities and promote opportunities to work for the Service was a challenge last year due to the pandemic. However, we broadened our recruitment approach through targeted online media, which proved successful in increasing the number of female applicants interested in joining as an apprentice firefighter.

Expand apprenticeship opportunities

We have continued to offer firefighter apprenticeship courses throughout the pandemic to ensure we meet the needs of our workforce profile. Development of apprenticeships remains a priority to ensure we offer the most appropriate apprenticeship programmes relative to the knowledge, skills and behaviours of those we employ

Upgrade fire station accommodation

South Shore fire station has been extended and work to improve accommodation and facilities completed, providing a positive working environment that enhances health and wellbeing. Similar plans are in place to upgrade Blackpool and Hyndburn fire stations.

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Invest in training and equipment

Investment in a programme of significant, long-term improvements continues to ensure that our people have the best equipment and training available to deliver effective services now and in the future.

- Construction work is underway to expand the existing fleet garage and provide a purposely designed breathing apparatus training school at our training centre in Chorley, with completion expected in 2021-22.
- A review of drill tower provision across the Service has been completed to produce a medium to long term replacement plan based on specialist skills and the condition of existing facilities. Implementation will start in 2021-22.

Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

- Following extensive staff consultation and trials, the Service introduced new duty rig uniform for operational and business support staff purchased through regional collaborative procurement arrangements. More comfortable and practical trousers and new safety boots offer increased versatility to meet the needs of our activities (both emergency and non-emergency).
- Due to the need to rationalise on-vehicle technology and consider integrated vehicle systems, plans to install CCTV on fire appliances were paused during 2020/21 while further exploration and analysis was undertaken. This has the potential to reduce the number of stand-alone vehicle systems, enabling remote monitoring of specific vehicle operations. As a result, and in collaboration with regional fire and rescue services and blue light partners, we are currently evaluating emerging cloud-based in-vehicle technology with a view to integrating CCTV, telematics and on-board diagnostics.





Collaborate with other public services

Covid-19 paused our plans through the Blue Light Collaboration Board but presented new ways for the Service to diversify and work with partners to support the pandemic response in Lancashire.

Our people volunteered to provide essential services: they delivered interventions and welfare checks to Lancashire's most vulnerable residents; trained to handle mass casualties and support temporary morgues; coordinated the distribution of personal protection equipment (PPE) supplies to health care settings; and fitted P3 face masks for hospital and social care workers.

From December 2020, we supported local NHS services in establishing vaccination centres in the county. Operational and support services staff have been helping to deliver the vaccination programme, acting as site managers and marshals, and administering vaccines, ever since.

Replace performance and analysis software

Initial plans to replace reporting software have developed due to technological advances. The project now includes a wider range of key performance indicators across all areas of the Service, to enable more efficient and effective monitoring.

The new requirements have been scoped and underpinning work to support the new developments is underway, with a view to delivering a phased approach over the next two years.



Significant incidents



1. Commercial building fire in Adlington

April 2020

Eight fire engines from Lancashire and Manchester, with two Stinger appliances and an aerial ladder platform, tackled a fire in a warehouse which was completely destroyed.

2. Fencing fire in Lancaster

May 2020

Six fire engines and an aerial ladder platform attended a fire involving composite fencing that spread to four houses causing extensive damage. A further two homes suffered smoke damage and several people were evacuated.

3. Commercial building fire in Burnley

May 2020

Eight fire engines, two aerial ladder platforms, a Stinger appliance, a high-volume pump, the air support unit, and command support unit were required to respond to a fire in a building used for manufacturing rubber matting. The fire caused a large smoke plume that affected nearby residents before it was brought under control by crews.

4. Multiple wildfires cause a major incident

May - June 2020

A major incident was declared because of multiple wildfires in Lancashire. The first fire broke out on Darwen Moor after a disposable barbecue set surrounding grass alight and spread quickly across a vast area of the moors. The following day, a fire involving a tree plantation at Longridge Fell was believed to have been started by a campfire.

At their height, both incidents were attended by ten fire engines, approximately 60 firefighters, along with specialist units and vehicles. The Service also dealt with large grass fires at Winter Hill in Rivington and in Haslingden, along with multiple smaller fires across the county. Firefighters were supported by multiple partners including United Utilities, Lancashire Police, Community 4x4 Response, Bolton Mountain Rescue and neighbouring fire and rescue services.

5. Pier fire in Blackpool

July 2020

Over ten fire engines, along with a command support unit and air support unit, attended Central Pier in Blackpool, where a building and pleasure ride were on fire. Firefighters quickly brought the fire under control using hose reel jets.

6. Flooding across Lancashire August 2020

Firefighters attended over thirty flooding related incidents due to severe weather across the county, mainly in Lancaster, Warton, Kirkham, Hesketh Bank and Tarleton. In Lancaster, Burrow Beck flooded affecting several properties and resulting in a rest centre being opened for residents.

7. Chemical spill in Heysham August 2020

Six fire engines were called to a small chemical leak at Heysham Port involving a tanker containing nitric acid on land. Firefighters assessed the scene wearing gas tight suits before isolating the leak. The port was temporarily closed, as was the Heysham Bypass westbound, to help stack vehicles waiting to access the port.

8. Building fire in Blackpool August 2020

Six fire engines and two aerial ladder platforms attended a fire involving a shop and the flat above. Quick action by firefighters stopped the fire spreading to adjacent properties.

9. Mill fire in Haslingden January 2021

Fourteen fire engines plus seven fire engines from Manchester, an aerial ladder platform, high volume pump, Stinger appliance and air support unit were required to deal with a fire in a commercial mill in Haslingden. Around thirty nearby homes were evacuated as a precaution, with residents provided with temporary accommodation as firefighters brought the fire to an end over a period of two days.

10. Commercial building fire in Chorley January 2021

Twelve fire engines, supported by one fire engine from Manchester and several specialist appliances, responded a fire at a single storey, derelict, commercial building in Chorley. Firefighters rescued one casualty at the incident.



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

- Review the Home Fire Safety Check referral pathway
- Embed Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) awareness
- Develop the work of Built Environment Assessment Team (BEAT)

Responding to fires and other emergencies quickly and competently

- Strengthen operational assurance
- Respond to the impacts of climate change
- Optimise rota management
- Replace incident command units and software
- Evaluate tools to strengthen our response

Valuing our people so they can focus on making Lancashire safer

- Develop a strong organisational culture based on values and wellbeing
- Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion within the Service
- Expand apprenticeship opportunities
- Upgrade fire station accommodation

Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

- Invest in training and equipment
- Collaborate with other public services
- Replace performance and analysis software

 Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (Official)

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www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk