

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2019/20



Contents

Introduction.....	3
Our vision:.....	4
Our strategy.....	5
Surrey – the context we work in.....	6
Our service.....	7
Financial assurance.....	8
Financial governance.....	8
External audit.....	8
Financial transparency.....	8
Governance assurance.....	9
Response to the Covid-19 pandemic.....	14
Operational assurance.....	15
Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's Making Surrey Safer Plan.....	16
Greater community resilience.....	16
Response.....	17
Our people.....	19
Service performance.....	21
Assurance and improvement.....	22
Collaboration and partnerships.....	24
Your views matter.....	25
Feedback.....	25

Introduction

Welcome to our annual Statement of Assurance for April 2019 to April 2020.

This Statement of Assurance is intended to provide our communities with clear and transparent information about Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) financial, governance and operational matters. It is a requirement of the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England (2018). We hope it will reassure you that we have the appropriate arrangements in place to deliver activities safely and effectively. We will reference other useful documents that you may wish to read and have provided links to these. Due to our efforts responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, the publication of this annual Statement of Assurance has been slightly delayed. Although this Statement of Assurance covers the period April 2019 to April 2020, we have also chosen to include some of our activities relating to how we responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have a fire and rescue service for our county that delivers our statutory responsibilities and we are determined to deliver our vision to make Surrey a safer place to live, work, travel and do business. As a result, we have introduced fundamental changes to the service and the way it operates over the past year. This has been in response to a period of great change nationally. Over the past decade there has been a significant decrease in the number of fires attended in Surrey. This can be attributed to several factors, including the prevention and protection work fire and rescue services carry out across the county, which we are actively increasing and improving to meet the needs of our communities. There are other risks we must prevent and respond to such as road traffic collisions and the impacts of climate change.

We know that we still need to do more to keep people safe from risk, especially the most vulnerable in our communities and to do this we will work more effectively with partner organisations. The Government's fire and rescue reform agenda is reinforced by a new statutory inspection regime by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, which monitors and reports on our performance. Moving forward, we need to maintain our statutory responsibilities and respond to new challenges, such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic and how this might change the landscape of society. We will be flexible and adaptable, with a diverse workforce that is proud to serve and protect our communities.

We hope that you are assured that we are keeping you safe and of our commitment to provide a fire and rescue service that meets the demands of Surrey in the 21st century.



Denise Turner Stewart
Cabinet Member for Communities



Steve Owen-Hughes
Chief Fire Officer
Head of Community Protection Group

Our vision:

Our fire and rescue authority, Surrey County Council (SCC), has set out a [Community Vision for Surrey](#) placing greater emphasis on prevention, services for vulnerable people, and the need for greater collaboration with partners.

By 2030 we all want Surrey to be a:

“Uniquely special place where everyone has a great start to life, people live healthy and fulfilling lives, are enabled to achieve their full potential and contribute to their community, and no one is left behind.”

We play a crucial role in making communities safer, whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks or responding swiftly to the emergencies that occur. Our Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection highlighted that the service needs to do much more to protect people and prevent emergencies from happening in the future.

We also need to ensure that we are providing an efficient, effective, accountable and transparent service that is reflective of the diverse community we serve. Our [Making Surrey Safer Plan](#) sets out how we will refocus our resources to increase our work with communities and businesses to prevent emergencies from happening, whilst also responding more efficiently when they do.

Our vision for the service is to make Surrey a safer place to live, work, travel and do business.



Our strategy

Meet customer needs and expectations:

- Preventing emergencies before they happen.
- Provide more accessible services that better support businesses and communities.
- Protect communities by responding to emergencies when they occur.

Resources:

- Decrease the demand for our response services.
- Sustain revenue and increase capital investment.
- Realign our resources based upon community needs.
- Use our resources appropriately, efficiently and effectively.

Provide customer-focused services

- Support the independence of individuals and businesses.
- Better promote and target our services.
- Learn more about communities, improve outcomes and evaluate services.

Manage the business

- Improve the use of technology and our infrastructure.
- Continually develop and sustain our operating models.
- Produce, analyse and act upon performance data.
- Improve our communications with staff and trade unions.

Improve partnerships and collaboration

- Improve partnerships with community stakeholders.
- Improve blue light interoperability and intelligence sharing.
- Establish more effective partnership with Borough/District Councils.
- Improve partnerships with county council stakeholders.

Establish a reputation of quality

- Attract, recruit and retain a more diverse workforce.
- Improve the confidence in our services.
- Make evidence and intelligence-led decisions.
- Assure and review all service changes.

Culture

- Be ethical, transparent and accountable.
- Develop a customer focus throughout the service.
- Recognise and reward our staff who exemplify our values and behaviours.
- Develop an inclusive service culture with zero tolerance of bullying and harassment.
- Ensure we have the right people, at the right time and place, with the right skills.
- Develop a service culture that is agile and flexible, which embraces change.

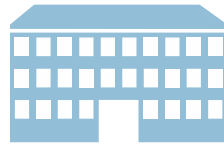
Surrey – the context we work in

As a place, Surrey has a range of unique features and qualities that can create different challenges and opportunities. The statistics below set these in context.



Population

- Population of 1.19 million (expected to rise to 1.26 million by 2030)
- Growing ageing population, by 2030 over 22% of residents will be aged 65+
- By 2030 47% of residents aged 65+ will be living in a care home



Education and skills

- More than 380 schools and around 157,000 children and young people
- 94% of Surrey schools are good or outstanding - highest in the South East
- Highly qualified workforce
Over 50% of working age population (16 – 64 years) hold a degree-level qualification.



Health and wellbeing

- Increasing demands on services for vulnerable adults, children and those with additional needs
- Affluent with pockets of social deprivation
- 25 most deprived neighbourhoods in Surrey are within the third most deprived areas in the country.



Crime

- The number of crimes recorded is the second highest rate in the South East
- Greater than regional average increase in recorded burglary, criminal damage and drug offences and significant increases in robbery and violent crime.



Environment and Infrastructure

- Surrey's road network is a high priority topic for residents
- Surrey has one of the busiest road networks in the country, which carry double the national average and have the greatest average delay on the roads out of all counties.



Economy

- A strong economy worth £40 billion, which grew by 23% between 2010 and 2017 - in line with economic growth in the South.
- An attractive and popular place for businesses. Number of business per 10,000 population in Surrey has increased by c.37% between 2010 and 2017.

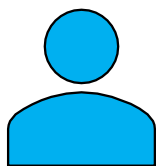
Our service

We employ 673 members of staff who work from 25 locations across Surrey. There are many diverse options when it comes to working for SFRS from working with your community and local businesses to responding to emergency incidents.

- We provide information and advice on community issues affecting public safety and enforce fire safety legislation.
- We focus our efforts on education – raising awareness amongst the most vulnerable people in order to prevent fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies.
- Our firefighters are trained to deal with a range of emergency situations.

These activities include working with Surrey Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners to respond to major incidents like widespread flooding, pandemics, acts of terrorism or dealing with emergencies that may involve hazardous materials.

We are proud to have:



12% support roles

Project and business managers, business support, diversity and inclusion lead, organisational development and communications roles.



9% community and business safety roles

Including Fire Investigator's, Youth Engagement Instructor, Education Officer and Wildfire & Rural Affairs Partnership Officer.



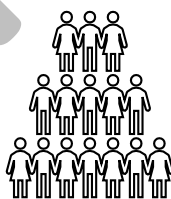
5% mobilising roles

Our control room is located at Salfords Fire Station.



74% response roles

We have two different types of firefighters, this is made up of 62% wholetime firefighters, 12% on-call firefighters.



Recruitment

We are constantly recruiting. In the last year we have recruited:
2 – community resilience and business fire safety role
13 – control room roles
56 – response roles



77 volunteers

We are extremely grateful to our volunteers who help us keep communities safe. Read more about our volunteers on page 20.

If you would like to find out more about what happens at our fire stations, please visit [our fire stations web page](#).

Financial assurance

SFRS is part of Surrey County Council and therefore receives its funding as part of the county council's budget planning process. It is included within a group of services called Community Protection (more on this on page 10).

Community Protection was allocated £33.8 million in the county council's [2020/21 budget](#), of which £31.3 million is allocated to SFRS.

The fire and rescue authority produces a [Medium Term Financial Strategy \(MTFS\)](#) which is reviewed annually. The MTFS sets out our revenue budget for the coming year and the five-year capital programme. The budget includes assumed inflationary increases for staffing, supplies and services.

Financial governance

Each year the county council publishes a set of accounts for public consumption. The [statement of accounts](#) includes the financial performance of SFRS over a given financial year, which always runs from 1 April to 31 March.

External audit

The county council has external auditors appointed by central government to assess their financial standing.

The authority's appointed auditor, Grant Thornton, undertakes an annual audit of the financial standing of the county council. They are required, under the Code of Audit Practice, to highlight all issues of significance arising from an audit, in the form of an annual audit opinion. Recent audit opinions can be found on the SCC's website along with the [statement of accounts](#).

Financial transparency

The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to publish their remuneration policies. The [Localism and Transparency page](#) of the SCC's website provides a number of documents relating to pay. These include the Pay Policy Statement and the Equal Pay Policy Statement. SCC publishes a range of [financial and procurement data](#).



Governance assurance

How the fire and rescue service is governed and managed

Good corporate governance underpins confidence in public services and should be transparent to all stakeholders.

Cabinet Member for Communities

The Cabinet Member for Communities has overall responsibility for the policy direction of SFRS and acts as the SCC lead.

Select Committees

Select Committees are made up of elected members and have three specific roles:

- scrutiny
- overview, policy review and development
- performance management.

The service falls within the remit of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.

Constitution of the council

SCC has a constitution that sets out how the council conducts its business, how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed to make sure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the council to determine itself. The constitution is updated at meetings of full council to ensure that it reflects changes in legislation and stays relevant to local needs. The latest version of the council's constitution can be viewed [here](#).

Code of Corporate Governance

SCC's Code of Corporate Governance sets out the mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the corporate governance arrangements, which enables the council to identify good governance practice and areas for improvement. For more information see [how the council makes decisions](#).

Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts

The council annually reviews the effectiveness of its governance arrangements and produces an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which summarises the governance framework and environment in place during the year. The AGS is signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council and is included within the [Statement of Accounts](#), as required by statute.

Audit and Governance Committee

The remit of the [Audit and Governance Committee](#) includes responsibility for corporate governance, risk management, the statement of accounts as well as internal and external audits.

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit function of SCC is undertaken by Orbis. Orbis is a shared services partnership between Brighton and Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, and Surrey County Council. The aim of this service is to ensure the council's processes are robust, and that the council appropriately uses public money to achieve its objectives. Audits of key financial systems cover all directorates and services including SFRS.

Additionally, audits of specific fire and rescue service functions and activities are undertaken on occasion. Any issues would be raised with the Service Leadership Team (SLT). Audit reports and agreed actions arising from these audits are reported to the Audit and Governance Committee and may be referred to the relevant Select Committee if necessary. Ownership of actions arising from audits remains in the remit of officers.

Community Protection Group

The Community Protection Group (CPG) supports the delivery of the 2030 Community Vision by making Surrey a safer place to live, work, travel and do business.

The CPG is made up of SFRS, Armed Forces Covenant, Emergency Management and Community Resilience, Health and Safety, support for the Coronial Service and Trading Standards. All these services have a vital role to play in directly protecting people from physical or financial risk, fires, floods or rogue traders, as well as providing help, advice and welfare support to residents who need it.

The CPG works with residents, businesses, community groups and partners to raise awareness of preventative actions people can take to enable them, their families and communities to be more resilient to incidents and recover more quickly.

The group will focus on improving outcomes for residents and businesses through:

- Better use of data, information and expertise to enable more targeted prevention, protection and response work.
- Building a centre of excellence for criminal and civil investigations, regulation and enforcement within the county.
- Working with our political and other partners to maximise the collective opportunities and impact of the group.
- Assessing current and potential funding opportunities to ensure prevention, protection and response work can be afforded in the long term.

Service Governance Framework

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service implemented a new Governance Framework on 1 April 2020.

It includes:

- The governance operating model.
- The organisational design, strategy and business planning processes.
- SLT members' oversight and responsibilities, broken down by role.
- Working groups with clear terms of reference.
- A means by which any individual in the service can raise an idea, propose a change to an existing policy, etc. via a generic business case, and receive a formal response.
- Improved provision of data, as per recipients' needs, and the monitoring of performance and risk across all areas/teams within the service.
- Supporting frameworks, such as the Performance Management Framework, Risk Management Framework and Service Documentation Framework.

Fire legislation and acts

We have statutory responsibilities laid down in legislation to provide an effective, economic and efficient fire and rescue service. These are:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Local Government Act 1999.
- Localism Act 2011.
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018.

Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to:

- **Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by their members and co-opted members.** In response SCC has drawn up a [Member Code of Conduct](#) that is both clear and relevant.
- **Publish remuneration policies.** [The localism and transparency page](#) of the SCC website provides a range of documents relating to pay, including Pay Policy Statement, Equal Pay Policy Statement and transparency data

How the service manages risk and business continuity

[Surrey's Local Resilience Forum \(LRF\)](#) brings together all partners with a significant role to play in responding to and recovering from emergencies and was formed to meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The LRF has the responsibility to plan and prepare for local incidents and large-scale emergencies as well as identifying potential risks.

To prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident within our communities, the Surrey LRF produces emergency plans and assures these are reviewed and exercised throughout the year. The LRF delivers a compilation of agreed risk profiles for the area, through a Community Risk Register (see below) as well as encouraging a systematic, planned and co-ordinated approach for the agencies that need to respond. This addresses all aspects of policy in relation to:

- risk,
- planning for emergencies and business continuity management,
- publishing information about risk assessments and plans,
- arrangements to warn and inform the public,
- other aspects of civil protection duty (including the promotion of business continuity management by local authorities).

[Surrey Community Risk Register \(PDF\)](#) has been created to provide public information about the hazards that exist within the county and the control measures that are in place to mitigate their impact. The register has been published in response to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and is reflective of the National Risk Register; further information can be accessed through the UK resilience website.

Emergency management and business continuity policy

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a duty on the service to put in place business continuity arrangements to enable core functions to be maintained in the face of a serious and/or widespread disruptive event, including disruption to services during an emergency. You can download our [Business Continuity Policy \(PDF\)](#).

The [Corporate Resilience Policy \(PDF\)](#) ensures that SCC has a planning process in place that encompasses anticipation, assessment, prevention and preparation to deal with rapid increased demands for services caused by emergencies.

Emergency planning

Fire and rescue authorities are 'category 1 responders' under the [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#). This means they are subject to the full set of civil protection duties, including assessing the risk of emergencies happening (ranging from widespread flooding to terrorist attacks) and using this to inform contingency planning. Fire and rescue authorities must ensure that emergency plans and business continuity management arrangements are in place, exercised and able to be initiated, when required, to maintain business critical functions, such as our support to vulnerable residents and our ability to handle 999 calls.

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards

[The Fire and Rescue Service Emergencies \(England\) Order 2007](#) requires fire and rescue authorities, where provision of resources has been made by central

government, to respond to incidents, both within and outside the authority area, involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards and urban search and rescue.

National Mutual Assistance Protocol and the Fire and Rescue Act 2004, Section 13 and 16 Agreements

These require all fire and rescue authorities to make a reasonable response to requests for assistance in relation to any emergency outside their area. We have arrangements in place for mutual aid with all neighbouring fire and rescue authorities to improve resilience and capacity in bordering areas.

DRAFT

Response to the Covid-19 pandemic

As an emergency service and as part of the CPG, we have been at the forefront of the partnership response to the Covid-19 pandemic, led by our Chief Fire Officer in his role as the chair of the LRF. The role of the LRF is to co-ordinate the multi-agency, major incident response to protect the residents of Surrey from the impacts of the pandemic, while maintaining the benefits we have seen with communities coming together to help themselves and their neighbours. Although we are in unprecedented times, it is essential that we also continue our normal duties as a LRF. This guarantees that the LRF can operate effectively as a collective body, managing an agreed programme of work, ensuring that staff are trained and that plans tested and reviewed periodically.

Activities:

- Staff and Volunteers supported the temporary mortuary facilities, including facilities established at the service headquarters. All new volunteers were pre-screened by Occupational Health and undertook manual handling training as well as induction training at the Surrey University and Headley Court sites.
- Business Support staff were trained at the back up Control Centre to give additional resource, if required, to the service's Joint Fire Control.
- Staff and Volunteers were key members of the LRF response cells such as the Personal Protective Equipment and Logistics cell where we proved vital in the initial response and delivery.
- We also supported the Vulnerable People Cell by reaching out to the vulnerable people in our community and providing food parcels and medicines where required.
- The SFRS Incident Management Team (IMT) has provided support to the testing cell by collating information on SFRS staff who either had Covid-19 symptoms, were self-isolating or shielding as per NHS guidance. They also provided returns for the NFCC.
- The IMT are the single point of contact for Test and Trace if a frontline member of staff has been identified as being in contact with a positive case.
- The service was one of the first fire and rescue services in the country to enable staff access to key worker testing and are supporting the lessons learnt work being conducted by the NFCC and partners.
- Members of staff completed training delivered by South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb) in preparation for potential roles as Ambulance Assistants.

We are very proud of our response during this national crisis and how it demonstrates what we can achieve when we work in partnership with others.



Operational assurance

Each fire and rescue authority must provide assurance that they are meeting their statutory responsibilities and are delivering the strategies set out in their Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

Our plan is called “[Making Surrey Safer - Our plan for 2020-2023](#)” and it is our long-term, risk-based business strategy which outlines our future aims and priorities. It is our response to the risks in Surrey that we have identified and analysed in our Community Risk Profile. It sets out our understanding and analysis of risks in relation to the fire and rescue service’s activity, enabling us to establish our expected operational response standard and plan our response to a predicted level and type of incident. Importantly, it shows where we need to undertake community prevention and protection activities to prevent incidents from happening in the first place.

Our plan aims to transform the service to meet the needs, and manage the risks, that we will face throughout the county, now and in the future. We want to make sure we position firefighters and resources where they can have the greatest impact in an emergency and use our expertise in prevention to stop incidents in the first place. You can also find out more about [how we developed our plan](#) and [how we respond to emergencies](#).

Under the Equality Act 2010 all public sector organisations must consider the impact of each of their policy decisions on different ‘protected characteristic’ groups. To help us do this, we undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). The purpose of an EIA is to ensure our services are effective, efficient and fair. They help us to make sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are understood and mitigated and opportunities for promoting fairness and respect are maximised. We assessed the impact on different groups of the policies set out in our Making Surrey Safer Plan using this process [Equality Impact Assessment](#). Our EIAs have been reviewed and revised, following impacts of Covid-19. These will continue to be reviewed as the service recovers and returns to business as usual.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's Making Surrey Safer Plan

Greater community resilience

We have recognised that the demographics of Surrey are changing, as well as how people work and live their lives. The 3% increase in residents over the last five years is a trend we expect to see continue.

In our Making Surrey Safer Plan, we have refocused our priorities from responding to emergencies to creating more safe and resilient communities. This supports SCC's 2030 vision which is aimed at ensuring wellbeing and prosperity for the county and our residents through positive interventions and support for those most in need.

Our approach to community resilience focuses on our four core safety strands:



People



Places



Premises



Products

To do this, we are investing heavily in our Community and Business Safety Teams. We work in partnership with schools, businesses and community groups to support our residents based around a 'lifelong learning' pathway. This identifies and works with people who are dependent on others and those most vulnerable or at risk to enable them and those who look after them to enjoy safe and fulfilling lives.

We will also continue to focus on driver safety initiatives. This includes our Safe Drive Stay Alive initiative to equip our young, aspiring drivers to travel safely on the busy road networks throughout the county. Between April 2019 and April 2020, we engaged with 10,322 students aged 13-17 years old to educate them on the importance of road safety.

Prevention is better than cure, therefore the more protection work we do, the safer the buildings are to live and work within. While this work involves ensuring safety regulations are followed, we equally want to engage in business forums, such as the Chambers of Commerce, to promote simple measures that ensure the Surrey economy remains strong and productive. This also supports safe living and the investment in our business communities where we shop, spend time relaxing and socialising.



By ensuring we have the right allocation of resources to meet the needs of Surrey, we are able to reinvest in prevention and protection activities. As part of this work our firefighters undertake prevention activities as well as ensuring they continue to respond if an emergency occurs.

Response

In accordance with the Fire and Rescue Services Act of 2004, there are four key responsibilities we must ensure we provide for, which are:

- Protecting life and property in the event of fires in our area.
- Extinguishing fires in our area.
- Rescuing and protecting people in the event of a road traffic collision.
- Rescuing and protecting people in the event of other emergencies.

Other emergencies can include, but are not limited to, natural disasters such as flooding, incidents arising from acts of terrorism, hazardous materials incidents, transportation incidents, and in times of declared National Emergencies (such as the Covid-19 pandemic), where we may support our LRF as a Category 1 Responder, in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004.

Response data

Between April 2019 to April 2020 our average time to arrive at incidents was 7 mins 53 secs. This is against a target of the first fire engine attending, on average, within 10 mins.

During the same time period and a result of our prevention and protection work:



During 2019/20 we carried out 4,823 Safe and Well Visits (previously known Home Fire Safety Checks).



The number of fires where no smoke detector was present has reduced by 33% (154 to 104).



Accidental dwelling fires reduced by 17% (543 to 451). The number of injuries from them declined by 17% (35 to 29).



We attended 4,850 false alarms; this is a 6% reduction. Our Business Safety Team is working to reduce this further.



We undertook 28 rescues from water.



The number of road traffic collisions we attended has reduced by 14% (1,129 to 1,048).

Since 2019 and in line with the NFCC recommendations, we have been moving away from Home Safety Checks. Instead we carry out Safe and Well visits which are broader. These cover elements of fire safety, slips, trips and falls, health and general wellbeing and doorstep scams. Moving forward as part of the Making Surrey Safer Plan these will be the standard visit to homes.

We responded to 737 deliberate fires in 2019/20, an increase of 7% (688). As a result we have enhanced our partnership working with others to tackle root causes and reduce this behaviour. This includes:

- The Fire Investigation Team working with Surrey Police Anti-Social Behaviour Team to help reduce the instances of arson and domestic illegal burning.
- Partnering with the Local Authority Environmental Health team to tackle commercial illegal burning.
- Working with Surrey Police Serious Organised Crime Teams to reduce instances of stolen vehicles being set on fire.

In total, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service responded to 2,867 fire calls in 2019/20. Sadly, seven of these incidents resulted in fatalities. Of these, five were accidental (some of which are pending an outcome of Coroner's inquest and may not be fire related). All the fatalities were vulnerable adults.

When fatalities occur our Fire Investigation Team ensures that they are investigated thoroughly in partnership with Surrey Police. We have a Serious Incident Process that will collate and understand the incident information, key risks and ensure that any potential prevention work is highlighted. The most important factor in reducing fire deaths in Surrey is the vulnerability of the individual to fire. The key intervention strategy is to reduce the risk of accidental fires occurring in the first place through prevention work such as Safe and Well Visits. We also continue to develop closer working relationships with Adult Social Care to help us identify vulnerable people in Surrey.



Our people

Our people are our greatest asset and they are at the heart of what we do. Particularly during Covid-19 and our response to the pandemic, our people in all departments have shown their adaptability and willingness to go the extra mile for our county.

Without having an engaged, motivated and resilient workforce we will be unable to achieve our vision to make Surrey a safer place to live, work, travel and do business.

We want SFRS to continue to be a great place to work and to help our workforce to become more resilient and diverse. We are working to develop skills and maximise wellbeing at work. Due to the increasingly diverse demands of a fire and rescue service, we are working to improve the culture of our service and the way we work in order to meet these requirements.

We believe that the approach to our people, alongside the other changes we are making, will have a profound and positive impact on SFRS. These changes will of course take time and commitment to embed.

We recognise that health and wellbeing is not an optional extra. Supporting our staff to be physically and mentally healthy not only forms part of our legal responsibilities, and makes good organisational sense, it is also the right thing to do for our people who are working to protect our communities.

We offer a range of services to support all employees to maintain healthy lifestyles. These include access to a comprehensive Occupational Health Service, Employee Assistance Programme, The Fire Fighters Charity and MIND's Blue Light Programme.



We have a network of Wellbeing Champions who are all volunteers from throughout the service who play a vital part in our wellbeing approach. All our Wellbeing Champions have received 'peer support' training provided by MIND's Blue Light Programme equipping them with the skills, knowledge and understanding of techniques that can be used to support their colleagues for those times when their wellbeing may be suffering, along with helping raise awareness and encourage people to talk about their wellbeing.

We have developed a policy on fitness that requires operational firefighters to undergo annual fitness testing. Fitness testing results are monitored by the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Working Group.

Volunteers

We have, for several years, recruited and developed volunteers to help deliver services particularly around delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits and now Safe and Well Visits. They have and continue to provide targeted interventions to vulnerable people in their own homes to ensure they can continue to enjoy living safely in Surrey.

No greater example of volunteering can be found than during the Covid-19 pandemic where our volunteers went above and beyond in leading and supporting the

management, distribution and delivery of PPE and food parcels to care homes and people shielding during the most contagious stages.

Our volunteers also help at fire station open days and can be found promoting safety with Surrey Police at the Surrey County Show. Our Community Safety Team will be expanding volunteering further into local communities engaging with farmers and land managers to become first responders when environmental impacts such as flooding, and wildfire occur. These volunteers will work with us to plan, prevent and prepare for these major impacts and build back better when they do occur. As a service we are deeply appreciative of the hard work undertaken by our volunteers.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Our ambition is for our workforce to be more representative of the diverse communities within Surrey. We are passionate in our belief that a diverse workforce will enable us to deliver a better service and make Surrey even safer. We have therefore committed to a wide-ranging positive action initiative, aiming to attract candidates from diverse groups to join and stay with our service. We hope this will better equip us to meet the specific needs of the communities we serve.

The Public Sector Equality Duty set out in the [Equality Act 2010](#) requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work but our vision is that everyone representing the service will be an ambassador of equality, diversity and inclusion.

As part of our People Strategy we will focus on promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, understanding our communities requirements, deliver high quality and inclusive services. Throughout all of this we want to foster a positive, inclusive and diverse culture.

Health and safety

The Health and Safety Team ensure SFRS takes due care of the health, safety and wellbeing of employees and people who may be affected by its operations. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance Plan includes key performance indicators and targets which are monitored by the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Working Group. We train our staff to a high level and pride ourselves on our high safety culture.

Leadership development

The development of outstanding leadership skills, knowledge and capacity across all levels, will be supported by training that includes mentoring, talent management, people development programmes, e-learning and joint training.

We are the first fire and rescue service in the UK to offer membership to all employees for the Institute for Fire Engineers. This is an acknowledgment of professional skills from an international organisation of fire professionals, recognising competence, commitment and expertise.



Service performance

We produce a performance highlight report each year which gives information on, amongst other things, the number and types of incidents that we attend, how quickly we respond and the number of Safe and Well Visits we complete. You can view these reports here – [Surrey Fire and Rescue Tableau](#).

In addition to the data we collect on responses to incidents and fire safety activities (for both businesses and the community) we gather information about our performance from a range of other sources.

Residents' survey

The county council and Surrey Police jointly commission residents' surveys to regularly check public satisfaction with public services, gather views on local issues affecting quality of life and track change over time. SFRS has achieved the best ranking of all the county council services for over the last two years.

Benchmarking - Family Group 4

SFRS is a member of a benchmarking group, Family Group 4, made up of 14 fire and rescue authorities in England and Wales. Every quarter, each member authority submits data on performance. This is then fed back in the form of a benchmarking report which enables us to see how we are performing compared with the other authorities.

Station assurance visits

Station assurance visits are one of the ways in which we can highlight areas of operational best practice and learning by introducing a standard and consistent approach to measuring performance. The outcomes are used to show evidence of improvement, to implement corrective action, and to reduce/limit operational risk.

Operational policy and assurance

The Operational Policy and Assurance team collates examples of best practice and identified learning to improve the operational knowledge, understanding and procedures of SFRS. This is done through gathering and monitoring operational performance information from local and national sources. SFRS supports the NFCC Central Programme Office. Where learning has been identified locally that may be of interest to other fire and rescue services the National Operational Learning platform is utilised.

Assurance and improvement

Our Making Surrey Safer Plan has been created to meet the risks of the community, which is in line with the NFCC, and to transform the service to meet the HMICFRS recommendations.



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

The plan was created from a detailed risk analysis, using a range of information for fire and rescue cover in Surrey, including:

- Data about 999 calls over the past five years.
- Predictive data which shows us where those at highest risk are in Surrey.
- Local and national statistics about fires and other emergencies.



Brunel
University
London

Our desire is to continually assess our progress and improve our services to the residents and businesses of Surrey, so we approached the College of Business, Arts and Social Science (CBASS) at London's Brunel University. We

requested them to review our Transformation Programme and for them, as an external body, to assure the plans to support the delivery of Making Surrey Safer Plan. They concluded:

"Overall we are very satisfied that there is a robust data model that underpins the transformation plan. The plan as presented stands on firm ground."

We are delivering the Making Surrey Safer Plan in phases. Our entire approach is about the use of data and evidence to inform our decision making so we know it will deliver the right outcomes for our residents. Phase 1 took place in April when we changed the night and daytime cover at some stations and began our investment in prevention and protection activities. Phase 2 was due to be delivered in October and this involved further changes to night-time response cover. We have now asked Brunel to assure our plans for Phase 2 given the extraordinary events of the last few months and the changes as a result of the Grenfell enquiry.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Inspection

In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue services.

The [first inspection](#) of the service identified some significant issues and challenges that we needed to address. How we will do this is set out in the Making Surrey Safer Plan. When HMICFRS revisited in September 2019, they found "significant progress" had been made in several areas since the previous inspection. Their findings are outlined the [Surrey Fire and Rescue Service second revisit 2018/19 revisit letter](#).



They praised the Making Surrey Safer Plan and described it as a "comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of risk, with considered options".

They “*found appropriate governance structures both within the service and through Surrey County Council which provide scrutiny of progress.*” They also commended the service on setting up an advisory group to provide assurance to and challenge SLT throughout the implementation of the plan.

They recognised that considerable work has been carried out in relation to ensuring there is better management of overtime. The inspectors said there are now effective controls in place.

Future development

HMICFRS also recognised several areas for continued focus and development:

Communications

We also recognise that we need to be more proactive in our external communications and we have started a Customer Interface Project which will address the concerns around communications to the public.

Diversity

We need to do more to attract and recruit a more representative workforce. The service is now focusing on engagement with and encouraging women and BAME residents. This is to ensure that our workforce represents the communities that we serve.

On-call firefighters

Within Surrey we use a combination of wholetime and on-call staff to ensure the public are protected when emergencies occur. On-call firefighters are dedicated individuals who give above and beyond their normal workday to protect others.

HMICFRS in their report ‘State of Fire and Rescue 2019’ recognised on-call recruitment as a national issue. The HMICFRS inspection of Surrey specifically identified the need for SFRS to focus on retention and recruitment of on-call and emphasised its importance in their revisit letter.

In response we have create an on-call project, engaged with partners to gather best practice and invited views from ‘critical friends’; we also considered the national recommendations within the HMICFRS The State of Fire & Rescue Report and the Sir Ken Knight Report (Facing the Future 2013). We have also worked closely with the NFCC On-call Strategic Forum and On-call Working Group.

Availability

During April 2019 to April 2020, fire engine availability for both wholetime and on-call was a challenge for SFRS. We recruited 82 new wholetime firefighters and continue to recruit.

Summary

All improvements areas highlighted by HMICFRS have appropriate and positive actions incorporated into the improvement plan in order to drive forward our service transformation. HMICFRS will continue to monitor our progress and will return in 2020 for a Covid-19 themed inspection and in 2021 for a full inspection.

Collaboration and partnerships

Fire control projects

In January 2020 the transfer of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) mobilising arrangements to Surrey was approved at a meeting of East Sussex's Fire and Rescue Authority. This follows the successful transfer of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's 999 calls to Surrey's state of the art, tried and tested mobilising system in December 2019.

Control Operators will despatch firefighters and fire engines from ESFRS to emergencies in their county from the joint control room. The arrangement will further increase resilience and staffing numbers and is also likely to result in efficiency savings for the service.

This is another example of SFRS putting the Policing and Crime Act 2017 into practice by collaborating with others for the benefit of residents.

Other collaborations

Other successful collaborations include a joint Occupational Health and Wellbeing service being delivered across Surrey/Sussex Police forces and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and the future Integrated Transport function that will see the combined partnership with Surrey/Sussex Police East and West Sussex which will provide new and advanced joint vehicle workshop facilities to support our increasing range of vehicle and equipment needs for the future.

We work closely with all eleven district and borough councils within Surrey and with partners across multiple sectors to seek improved efficiency and effectiveness through collaboration and integration. We are proud to collaborate with many other groups and charities to support our staff and the wider community; in addition to those mentioned above we have worked with:



Your views matter

Your views are very important to us, we want to know what you think about us, our services and the way we deliver them.

We work hard to deliver quality services and we welcome feedback which enables us to improve our performance.

Feedback

You can contact us in writing or by telephone:

- **Write to us:** Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Croydon Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0EJ
- **Telephone:** 01737 242444
- **Email:** sfcontactqueries@surreycc.gov.uk

SCC has a process in place designed to help residents to make a comment on our service or register a compliment or complaint. Information is collected on complaints and compliments so that any themes or trends in what people are telling us can be identified.

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter please contact us by calling 0300 330 1000.

