

CHESHIRE  
FIRE  
BRIGADES  
UNION

**RESPONSE TO CF & RS INTEGRATED RISK  
MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018-19 AND INTERIM  
REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SERVICE**

# CHESHIRE

Written and compiled by Cheshire Fire Brigades Union



## **Foreword:**

*The FBU firmly believes in and supports the process of IRMP as described in all of the current national guidance documents. The FBU wants to work with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority and the service to implement and to further develop the IRMP process.*

*Fire and Rescue Services are fortunate in that the majority of their employees are members of a single representative body, the FBU. By involving the FBU in the IRMP planning cycle, CFRS has the opportunity to draw on the combined experiences of the majority of its workforce when considering the health and safety implications of potential systems of service delivery work.*

*It is with this collaborative approach that we have managed to work closely with the service recently on a number of areas of success:*

### **Emergency Medical Response:**

*The FBU worked alongside the service to successfully launch a pilot scheme, whereby our members respond to members of the community that suffer a Cardiac arrest (Red 1), and provide emergency intervention and basic life support. We jointly worked on creating the agreement with CFRS and NWAS, and on the Standard Operating Procedures.*

### **Station Manager Flexi Duty System:**

*We designed a new duty system for Flexible Station Managers that have achieved efficiency savings of c200k whilst up skilling the group of managers and allowing for family friendly arrangements during school holidays.*

### **New Maternity Policy:**

*The FBU approached the service with policies from other FRS around the country that evidenced the need to overhaul our existing policies. Together we have worked hard to create a maternity policy which we believe is the one of the best of the country, and one that will help attract more female applicants, thus enabling our service to be more diverse and representative of our communities.*

*The IRMP definition endorsed by the IRMP steering group is:*

*Integrated Risk Management Planning is a holistic, modern and flexible process, supported by legislation and guidance, to identify, measure and mitigate the social and economic impact that fire and other emergencies can be expected to have on individuals, communities, commerce, Industry, the environment and heritage. FRA's when establishing local options for risk reduction and management within annual action plans, must take account of the duties and responsibilities outlined in the national framework, the emergency services order, the civil contingencies Act and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.*


*This places emphasis on flexibility and partnership, working on local, cross border and regional planning for prevention and intervention activities to save and protect life and reduce the economic*



and environmental impact of fire to the community. Through this partnership approach IRMP should deliver a proportionate response, that is evidenced based, which will ensure efficiency.

**It is with this in mind that Cheshire Fire Brigades Union has produced its response to the services 2018-19 Plan.**

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 + NWFC handling times	2014/15 + NWFC handling times	2015/16 + NWFC handling times	2016/17 + NWFC handling times
Number of whole-time FF's employed by the authority	524	496	478	456	430	390	345
Average attendance times – life risk	00:07:33	00:07:41	00:07:47	00:08:49	00:08:41	00:09:18	00:10:01
Average attendance times – all incidents	00:07:22	00:07:31	00:07:55	00:09:04	00:09:47	00:09:40	00:09:54
Number of whole-time appliances available to respond (Day)	20						18
Number of whole-time appliances available to respond (Night)	17						11
Number of Fire Deaths	9	6	4	3	5	6	8
Number of non-fatal casualties	85	104	105	115	140	142	152
Total Incidents attended					7294	7716	8555
Average 'On Call' availability					73%	70%	70%
Levels of Reserves held	12M	16M	21M	29M	35M	36 Million	36.7 M

 This denotes not in receipt of information

Note: All information was obtained from either CFRS or published data from DCLG

NWFC: Call handling times added range from 90 seconds to 107 Seconds which are not included in CFRS published figures



## Are lessons being learned by CFRS?

When creating Integrated Risk Management Plans the impact of previous plans and decisions should be assessed. Here we draw attention to the data obtained on the previous page that highlights some alarming trends.

The previous seven years has seen a year on year decrease in the number of wholetime fire fighters employed by the Authority, it has also seen a year on year increase in the average time of response to life risks. It is important to note that the service is neither required to, or chooses to record the average time of attendance for the second appliance in attendance – something that was reportable prior to the national standards of attendance being abolished and replaced by local IRMP's. This is critically important as the intervention afforded by a crew of 4 riders only is very limited.

The data also shows a year on year increase in non-fatal casualties and most worryingly, a steady increase post 2013 in the number of fire deaths. Cheshire FBU believe that these are all intrinsically linked – If you cut the number of full time fire fighters and appliances, you will see an increase in attendance times and this will ultimately lead to an increase in preventable injuries and deaths.

All of the Integrated Risk Management Plans from 2010 to present have been titled 'Making Cheshire Safer' yet the data clearly provides evidence that this is not the case.

It is therefore crucial that the service, particularly the front line who have provided the bulk of efficiency savings, sees a return to investment not cuts if we are to truly work together in making Cheshire Safer.

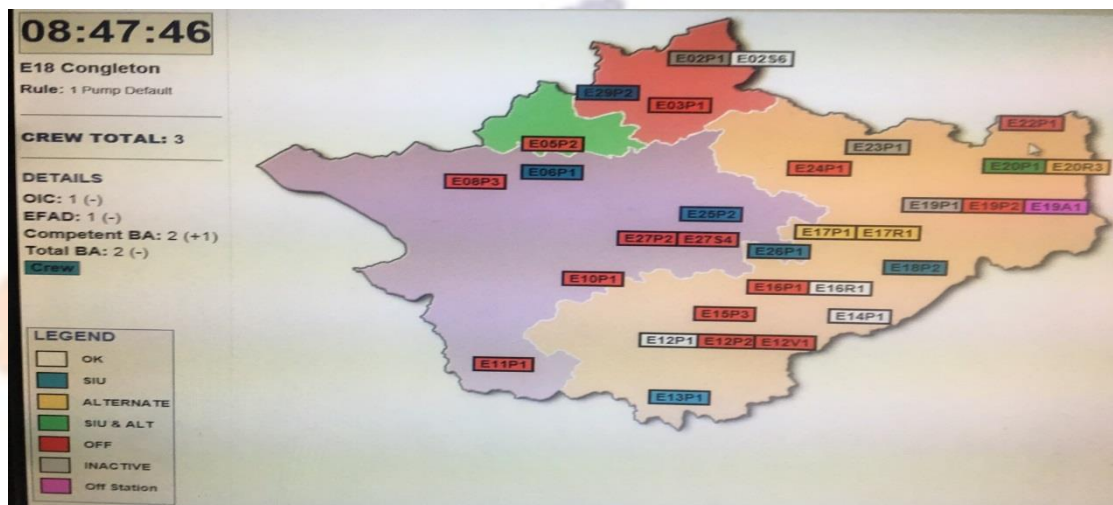
Last Year the Authority and the Senior Management Team heard from the FBU that the consultation process must be improved, to engage with all sections of the community in Cheshire and to reach larger numbers as the FBU were contacted by members of the public and were told that people simply were not aware of the changes taking place.

The Consultation process for the draft IRMP 2018/19 has repeated the very same mistakes – the form on the website is hard to locate and access, lost in between IRMP's for 2009 and 2013, despite all of the other plans being in most recent date order. This approach has made it difficult for those not accustomed to using website search facilities to have an active say in the consultation judging by the comments received by the FBU.

Again the PESTELO report which is supposed to accompany the Integrated Risk Management Plan is out of date by 3 years. – The Political, Economic, Sociological, Technical, Legal, Environmental and Organisational analysis report is for 2015, despite the requirement to update this to accompany the updated plan.

The reliance on the On-Call model to provide the emergency response cover has again been problematic and unreliable over the last 12 months, with resources frequently unavailable.

Shows just 2 from 22 on call appliances available



**The services own figures show that where the second appliance on a station is on call it is available on average just 40% of the time.**

The pressures and expectations on our on-call staff are far removed from when the response model was designed, with on call providing cover at rural locations or additional support as the third appliance in towns, to expect the amount of availability, commitment and capacity for training given the little financial reward is unsustainable going forward.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has again failed to make public the average attendance times for the second appliance attending an incident, we suspect this is due to the large lag times associated with appliances on the on-call duty system.

This impact's on the safety of crews on scene in the initial stages of an incident and also the public outcomes. When you consider that in Cheshire our full time appliances only crew to 4 riders instead of the nationally accepted 5 riders it is only a matter of time before one of our members is involved in an avoidable accident with potentially fatal consequences.

The lack of appliance capacity and resilience due to crewing to 4 riders can now be seen on a daily basis – between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017 fire appliances in



Cheshire were downgraded to Small Incident Units (SIU's) on over 300 occasions, and crewed by only 3 riders. The Fire Brigades Union does not accept appliances being crewed with 3 riders, and on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017 The Fire Brigades Union Cheshire took the unprecedented step of issuing a 'Safety Critical Notice' over the use of SIU's with 3 riders. Some six months later and we have still not received the risk assessments, task analysis or IRMP documentation requested over this unacceptable and unsafe practice.

It is important to note that the service is neither required to, or chooses to record the average time of attendance for the second appliance in attendance – something that was reportable prior to the national standards of attendance being abolished and replaced by local IRMP's. This is critically important as the intervention that a crew of 4 responders can make is very limited.

As a result of the loss of such large numbers of whole-time frontline fire fighters and appliances, the FBU strongly urges the Service to review each and every operating procedure to take into account the loss of that emergency frontline fire cover.

The review must take into account the revised safe working practises that would mitigate as best as is possible against increased risk resulting from the loss of immediate and adequate response to fire and other emergencies. It is one thing to declare that a fire appliance or appliances will be sent immediately to incidents it is another thing to apply that in practise. The low levels of retained availability compounds this issue.

The FBU have previously tabled a proposal which is a key risk and task analysis of all identified operational scenarios to the fire Service, which sets out the minimum safe number of firefighters for a number of known operational scenarios (33 in total). It is referred to as the Critical Attendance Standard, more commonly known as the CAST methodology.

The CAST methodology allows for a tightly-controlled phased arrival of fire appliances at emergency incidents. It takes into account of the effect of this phased arrival on both the incident and on the ability of firefighters to carry out Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) without increasing the risk to themselves above a level which they would normally expect and facing situations which are themselves inherently risky. Determining what is an acceptable phased arrival – or **LAG** – in fire appliance attendance times i.e. the time between the arrival of the first fire appliance and the second fire appliance sent as part of the initial emergency response to an incident, is critical.

For example, one of the most commonly attended categories of incident for the Fire and Rescue Service is for a dwelling house fire and rescues are regularly and often successfully carried out in such incidents by crews. The risk and task analysis provided within the CAST scenario for such an incident identifies that a minimum of **9** firefighters are required to successfully resolve this type of incident safely. For clarity the CAST scenarios are wholly based on risk and task analyses undertaken by Government as



part of the Pathfinder Review, it is effectively a Government scenario replicated and supported by the FBU.

The FBU have identified that one of the main issues of concern with the unprecedented loss of such significant emergency frontline fire cover is the amount of time it will now take for a second (or third) appliance to arrive on scene enabling the effective and safe working practises previously referred to. This LAG time not only informs how operational procedures can commence or continue, but it also is the very essence of the '*speed and weight of attack*' rationale often referred to by professional firefighters.

To underpin how important the speed and weight of attack is considered by Government as well as the professional firefighters the FBU refer the reader to the comments made by the former Prime Minister, Mr. D Cameron MP, in response to a question put to him in the House of Commons at Prime Ministers Question Time. Mr. Cameron stated at the time that '***Hon. Members must recognise that the most important thing is the time it takes the emergency services to get to an incident. As constituency MPs, we are naturally focused on the bricks and mortar items—whether ambulance or fire stations, or other facilities—but what really matters for our constituents is how quickly the emergency services get to them and how good the service is when they do so.***'

The Fire Brigades Union agrees completely with this comment made by the former Prime Minister.

Therefore the speed and weight of attack is crucial for both firefighter and community safety with the timely and appropriate provision of adequate numbers of firefighters. In its absence, safe systems of work are compromised and alternative less desirable strategies must be considered and implemented.

**However, when someone is screaming at firefighters to act, to rescue their parent, their partner or their child, and you are there as part of the fire service response, it does not matter how '*self-disciplined to work within accepted systems of work*' you may be, as a firefighter coerced into responding.**

These are not individual decisions. Such is the frequency of this event that they have become accepted group decisions amongst firefighters throughout the service. In short - they are given no alternative.

The Review of Standards of Emergency Cover undertaken by Government in 1999 recognised this problem, and the 'Pathfinder' report is crystal clear on this point. In any planning decisions relating to **when** the required firefighters and equipment should arrive at an emergency incident, it warns against placing firefighters in a position where they have no option but to act – even when there are insufficient resources available:

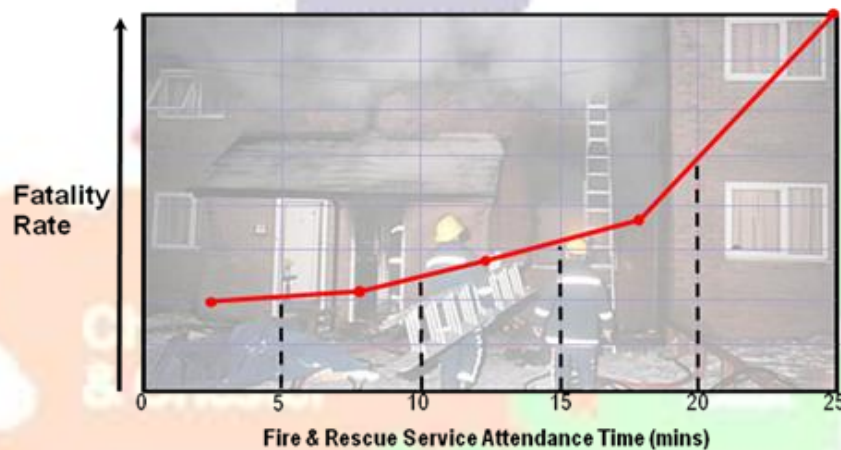
***"... it is essential to avoid situations which could motivate or pressurise firefighters to act unsafely in the interests of saving life."***

(Review of Standards of Emergency Cover - Technical Paper C – Response & Resource Requirements)

This is the very situation the FBU are referring to and potentially the very real danger facing CF&RS personnel unless dealt with appropriately.

To delay the speed and weight of attack has known effects in relation to fatality rates. It is now a regrettable fact that response standards within the UK F&RS's, including Cheshire, are getting slower, and that trend will continue given the latest round of cuts.

The following graph displays the rapid rise in rate of fatalities the greater the response time, remembering that to safely conduct most operational activities a minimum of nine firefighters are required as demonstrated by the CAST scenarios. So a first attendance while useful does not stop the clock ticking as the safe systems of work identified by CAST requires the full resource provision of 9 firefighters as a minimum.



The 2018/19 claims to have 'improved efficiencies' over the past 5 years, but the reality is a legacy of increasing attendance times and increases in fatalities and injuries against a backdrop of a move away from the old national standards to the 'Cheshire 10 minute response' which we believe is actually a 13-14 minute response in reality.

A new Automatic Fire Alarm policy which we believe is very dangerous, and has already seen increased fire and smoke damage to a historic property since its introduction.

New 12 hour shift systems for whole time operational fire fighters that are incredibly unpopular with staff and that are pointless, other than in reducing the number of staff employed by the authority.

Implementing Day crewing systems that again make reductions in the number of staff employed.





'Working with partners to deliver safe and well assessments' which has undermined the National Joint Council for Fire and Rescue Authorities as it has co-ordinated this work with a view to broadening the fire fighter role map, and in which Cheshire did not take part.

'Improving emergency response and safety of fire fighters' yet the service has reduced the number of full time fire fighters employed and has also reduced the numbers attending incidents on the appliances.

Sprinkler Campaigns – this is not a statutory responsibility, and whilst admirable, this money should be spent on protecting and improving the front line operational response, with additional funding being secured to deliver robust Sprinkler campaigns without impacting on operational capability. Government grants or an increase in the precept could fund this area of work.

'Precept – Propose to increase the Authorities Council Tax precept by 1.99%' – This is not risk management but a political decision, this is not for inclusion in an Integrated Risk Management Plan. We strongly assert that the service and Authority should be lobbying for an increase in the precept beyond the arbitrary imposed cap, with a view to securing a precept that provides the funding the service actually needs.



## Is the current response model fit for Purpose?

### A new approach to attendance planning

For the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the minimum level of fire service attendance at fires in the UK was defined by national standards of fire cover. These standards defined the number of appliances, the crew size and the attendance time.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, national standards of fire cover were abolished, and it was left up to each fire and rescue service to set its own standards. The type of fire appliances, the crew sizes and the attendance times could all be set locally.

It was believed that the old national standards of fire cover did not reflect the modern fire and rescue service and did not address the true risk within the community. Setting attendance parameters at the local level was intended to deliver a better service to the public.

However a *method* was required that would analyse modern fire and rescue service capabilities so that the effect of changes to attendance standards could be examined and assessed prior to implementation.

The *method* that was developed by government scientists was called the Brigade Response Options System (BROS).

### Brigade Response Options System (BROS)

Although it is called a *system*, BROS is essentially a *process*. Computer software has been created to make the BROS process easier to put into practice, but it can just as easily be worked out on paper.

BROS is a timeline based task analysis process.



The available firefighters are listed down the left hand side of a table, and the passage of time is represented across the width of the table. See Figure 1.

	1 minute	2 minutes	3 minutes	
Officer in charge				
Firefighter 1				
Firefighter 2				
Firefighter 3				
Firefighter 4				

Figure1. Task analysis table

The idea is that the activities undertaken by firefighters at an incident can be 'blocked in' to the table to show what each person is doing at any moment. This process is known as *task analysis*

This is not a process that produces results that are of 'engineering accuracy', but if the skill and judgement of a large number of professional firefighters is used to fill in the table, a realistic and justifiable outcome is obtained.

The BROS process is particularly useful for a number of reasons:

- BROS is not limited to attendance at fires. It can be used to assess the effect of attendance standards at any emergency incident.
- BROS can be applied to a 'typical' incident or it can be applied to a very specific case.
- BROS can be applied using 'typical' fire and rescue service resources or it can be applied using the known resources of a particular service or fire station.
- There are only as many rows on the table as there are firefighters. This avoids incorrect assumptions being made about the activities that can actually be carried out by the number of firefighters in attendance.
- The timeline encourages users to remember that certain activities cannot be started until other activities have been completed.
- The timeline makes it possible to work out the effect of actual attendance times of second and subsequent appliances just by adding more rows to the table at different times.



In very simple form, a table might look something like Figure 2 as it is completed:

	2 minute		4 minutes		6 minutes	
<b>First appliance:</b>						
Officer in charge	Risk assessment		Supervision		Briefing	Supervision
Firefighter 1	Pump operation					
Firefighter 2			BA rescue			
Firefighter 3			BA rescue			
Firefighter 4	Supplying water		Managing hose			1 <sup>st</sup> aid
<b>Second appliance:</b> (arrival time 5 minutes after 1 <sup>st</sup> appliance)						
Officer in charge					Briefing	Com support
Firefighter 1						Firefighting
Firefighter 2						Firefighting
Firefighter 3						1 <sup>st</sup> aid

Figure 2. Task analysis table being completed.  
Lag between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> appliance arrival is 5 minutes

A number of points must be considered at this stage:

- **Firefighter safety**

BROS enables an analysis of firefighter safety to be undertaken in the earliest planning stages of attendance planning.

As the rows in the table are filled in by professional firefighters, they will easily be able to identify issues of firefighter safety that place a demand on resources. For example, at a motorway incident, it may be necessary to allocate the activity of 'scene safety' to one person for the duration of the incident. This fills in one line of the table, and all of the other activities at the incident must be distributed amongst the remaining lines.

- **Firefighter physiology**

Firefighter physiology must be taken into account when using the timeline approach of BROS.

For example, if it is assumed that firefighters will be wearing breathing apparatus in arduous conditions, a period for recovery must be blocked into their timeline afterwards.

- **Resilience**

If the table shows every single firefighters to be engaged in risk critical activity and/or activity critical to firefighter safety, it must be realised that the task being described is 100% reliant on all equipment working, and on all firefighters being uninjured and not distracted.



If a hose needs replacing, or a firefighter is injured or forced to control bystanders, other important tasks will be delayed.

It is therefore not a bad thing that there will be periods of time when some firefighters will not be allocated tasks within the table. This provides built-in resilience to ensure that an incident can be concluded successfully even if unplanned events occur.

- **Starting position and incident development**

The initial scale of the incident and its growth or decline must constantly be kept in mind.

The BROS process does not consider the attendance time of the first appliance. (It would be possible to consider 'driving to the incident' as an activity, but attendance time should really be considered in a different way).

The important question is, exactly what will the first appliance in attendance be faced with?

If it is assumed that the attendance time of the first appliance will be 4 minutes, a fire will be a certain size. If it is assumed that the attendance time of the first appliance will be 8 minutes, a fire will be four times as big.

This is important because when considering tasks, a crew of five arriving at a fire after 4 minutes might be assumed to be enough to bring the fire under control. However a crew of five arriving at a fire after 8 minutes will have more tasks to perform – that will take longer – and they might NOT be able to bring the much larger fire under control.

In 2003/04, the FBU was concerned about the way in which fire and rescue services might apply the principles of task analysis and attendance planning.

The FBU therefore took a range of 'typical' emergency incidents and put them through the BROS process to identify the *critical* attendance standard that was required to deliver a satisfactory outcome.

The meaning of the word 'critical' is that fewer resources (firefighters) in the attendance standard would deliver a worse outcome, but additional resources (while beneficial) would not have a proportionately improved effect on the outcome.

For example, at a 'typical house fire', two appliances comprising 9 crew are able to safely commit two breathing apparatus teams to search for casualties and extinguish a fire. A single appliance crew would take twice as long to search a smoke filled house and would be unlikely to do so in compliance with a safe system of work. But equally, three crews and 13 or 14 firefighters would not be able to search a 'typical' house that much more quickly because – apart from anything else - three or four breathing



apparatus teams in a 'typical' house fire could get in each other's way and slow each other down. Thus, the 'critical' attendance at a typical house fire is 9 firefighters.

Note: Not all houses are typical and not all fires are typical so in some circumstances more than 9 firefighters would be critical to delivering a satisfactory outcome at a house fire.

The FBU's *critical attendance standards* are therefore nothing more than the results of FBU members carrying out incident ground task analysis using BROS, the Brigade Response Options System.

## Using CAST 10 years on

When they were first published, the FBU's CAST scenarios were widely used by both FBU officials and directly by fire and rescue services. The assumptions upon which they were based were realistic at the time and they could be – indeed they were – used to set fire and rescue service intervention standards.

As analysis of the typical resource needs at a range of typical incidents the CAST scenarios are generally just as valid today as they were when they were first published.

However, there have been some changes in procedures and in the type and availability of equipment used by fire and rescue services over the last ten years. Lessons learned from tragedies such as Harrow Court, Atherstone on Stour and Shirley Towers need to be incorporated in attendance planning, as do the greater use of command support and the 'typical' availability of equipment like thermal image cameras and positive pressure ventilation.

These sound like arguments for updating the CAST scenarios. But on the other hand, despite the best efforts of FBU officials and others outside the fire and rescue service, there has also been a great deal of fragmentation of services over the last ten years.

- Appliance crewing levels vary significantly by day and night,
- Planned attendance times for the same kind of incident can vary by 100% from one service to the next.
- Crewing levels of four or less on the first appliance to be mobilised is now a conscious pre planned decision by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

### **Post script on the application of BROS to training**

- So-called 'standard operating procedures' describe the idealised approach to dealing with different kinds of incidents. Training is then based on learning and practising standard operating procedures.



- However, standard operating procedures often assume an unrealistic level of resources at the early stages of an incident. This has always been the case in rural areas, but if the current round of cuts take place, it will be the case in some urban areas as well. What this means is that training firefighters to carry out 'standard operating procedures' fails to prepare them to deal with the situations in which they might actually find themselves.
- For example, a standard operating procedure for a non-dwelling property fire involves the use of two appliances and their crews. But in many parts of the country, a single appliance might be on its own at a non-dwelling property fire for five or ten minutes or more.
- During that time, the crew cannot operate the 'standard operating procedure', instead, the officer in charge has to make things up as they go along (or 'carry out a dynamic risk assessment' as it is often called). This is a completely unacceptable situation to put someone in when it is completely foreseeable.
- The solution is that the BROS process of task analysis should be used to analyse the activities that could be carried out by a single appliance for five or ten minutes or more. The crew in question should then train to undertake those activities, they should *not* train to implement an inappropriate 'standard operating procedure'.

### **But are Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and Authority meeting its legal obligations with regards the Health and Safety of its Staff?**

In April of this year Cheshire FBU took the unprecedented step of issuing a 'Safety Critical Notice' in response to the alarming discovery that between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 and 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017 appliances in Cheshire were downgraded to vehicles with only 3 riders in excess of 300 occasions.

The Safety Critical Notice called for this practice to stop immediately, and for the service to provide the FBU with the risk assessments for crewing or mobilising appliances with 3 riders, the Task Analysis for riding with 3 riders, and finally to direct the FBU to the relevant IRMP which sought public opinion and Authority approval for this practice.

The FBU have never received these documents, with CFRS responding that the risk assessments are generic as are the Standard Operating Procedures.

"An important underpinning principle, however, is that there must be adequate evidence to support and justify any changes proposed, ensuring the maintenance and improvement in community safety"

(The former ODPM 'IRMP Guidance note 1 final version)



“Fire and rescue services will need to provide evidence that the planned response is safe and appropriate. This is likely to involve carrying out detailed risk and task analysis of the planning scenarios”  
(The former ODPM ‘Preparation for the Fire Service, Emergency Cover Toolkit)

Generic risk assessments are produced centrally by the National Operational Guidance Board. The purpose of a GRA is to inform the strategic (local) risk assessment process that each brigade carries out when it develops its own local operational procedures that are based on its own crewing levels, appliance distribution, equipment and risks.

A generic risk assessment is NOT a risk assessment. A risk assessment includes an assessment of the likelihood of injury and the extent of injury. The GRAs are just lists of hazards. The employer has to examine the work practices of its employees (by time line based task analysis) in order to convert the GRAs into actual strategic risk assessments.

Within an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), local fire & rescue authorities are required to set out how they intend to make adequate provision for prevention and emergency intervention to meet efficiently and safely all normal requirements.

The nationally circulated guide ‘The Dynamic Management of Risk at Operational Incidents, A Fire Service Pamphlet’ states:-

“Legal Fire Authorities, in common with other employers, have many legal duties in respect of safety. The most relevant to this document are those imposed by sections 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and regulations 3 and 4 of the Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations (MHSAW), 1992. These require employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees and others affected by their work activities.

In order to achieve this, they must carry out and record suitable and sufficient risk assessments, then implement the control measures necessary to ensure an acceptable level of safety. Both the risk assessments and the control measures must be regularly monitored and reviewed to confirm their continuing validity.”

Ultimately the Service cannot consult the public on a matter that will potentially put the health and safety of firefighters at risk. Matters that potentially put firefighter’s safety at risk must be addressed and resolved through the health and safety committee. Just because the public do not raise any objections to a proposal that will put firefighters at risk, does not mean that the Service can implement that proposal.





## Risk Assessment – The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations

In the 1990's the manner in which consideration of employee health & safety was approached in the UK underwent a fundamental change. European legislation was enacted which shifted the emphasis from prescriptive requirements to requirements and procedures based on an assessment of risk. The Management of Health & Safety at Work (MHSAW) Regulations placed a requirement on employers to consider all work activities from the perspective of the risk they posed to their employees, and the risk posed to other persons who could be affected by the way their employees were undertaking tasks. It was ruled that fire & rescue authorities (As employers) were not exempt from the requirement to comply with this legislation.

This had major implications for the Fire and Rescue Service, particularly in relation to procedures at emergency incidents, where the risks posed to Firefighters were potentially the greatest. Fire & Rescue Service Employers now had to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs); these SOPs have recently evolved in Merseyside F&RS into Service Instructions (SIs), which should ensure that the Service has taken all steps required to actively reduce the risk to a level that was considered as acceptable.

The Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association (CACFOA), now the NFCC summed up the new health & safety requirement in their 1996 publication 'Guidance on the Application of Risk Assessment in the Fire Service', stating that it was now necessary to:

**“... define the safety critical support issues for fire service personnel and others ...”**

**(Guidance on the Application of Risk Assessment in the Fire Service – page 6)**

The initial Fire & Rescue Service response to this new health & safety requirement was to develop a range of Generic Risk Assessments (GRAs) covering the broad range of risks that Firefighters could routinely expect to encounter at emergency incidents.

The Generic Risk Assessments were grouped into:

Rescues (from ice, lifts, sewers, collapsed structures etc);  
Fighting fires;  
Incidents involving transport systems (road, rail, air etc);  
Generic hazards (such as acetylene, electricity, chemical hazards, civil disturbances etc.).

These GRAs were published in 1998 under the title 'A Guide to Operational Risk



Assessment'. It was however stressed to fire & rescue authorities at the time that the GRAs simply provided information to inform the authority's own risk assessments and SOPs/SIs for the various incidents which Firefighters could routinely expect to attend, crucially stating that“

**“It is imperative that brigades use these assessments as part of their own risk assessment strategy not as an alternative or substitute to it. They are designed to help brigades assess their own risks, so they should be included in the brigade's normal planning process.”**

**(A Guide to Operational Risk Assessment – page 4)**

Crucially 'A Guide to Operational Risk Assessment, Health and Safety, Fire Service Guide Volume 3' in its 'Fire Service Risk Assessment Summary Sheet, Generic Risk Assessment Summary Sheet (GRA 3.1) Section 3 page 15', lists operational activities in relation to 'Fighting Fires in Buildings' as being considered as High Risk to Firefighters; these include heat and humidity, limited visibility, and uncontrolled ventilation. One of the key 'Control Measures' it lists in relation to these High Risks is the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA's), clearly the amount of Firefighters on the initial attending fire appliances is taken into account in GRA3.1.

**Simply adopting the GRAs alone does not discharge the individual employer's responsibility to carry out a full risk assessment, and to subsequently ensure that the Standard Operating Procedures assessed as being necessary were put in place**

CF&RS's use of 'risk assessment' to justify a crewing level of 4 or 3 is in contravention of the guidance contained in the Health and Safety Executive's Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations which states-

**“Where established industry practices result in high levels of health and safety, risk assessment should not be used to justify reducing current control measures”**

Changing crewing levels can only be carried out after proper strategic risk assessments are developed as part of a project coordinated through the health and safety committee. Regardless of the content of the IRMP, the FBU will pursue the issue through the health and safety committee, will issue further safety critical notices if required, and FBU members will not cooperate with ill planned cuts that have not been subject to robust risk assessment, scrutiny, and consultation or put through the correct forums.



## Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018/19

Despite the FBU informing the Authority and the Senior Management Team of the flaws in the 2017/18 IRMP, we are extremely disappointed to see yet again that the Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2018/19 is devoid of any information in detail and without explanation on the risk presented to residents and the community or how the Authority plans to mitigate or deal with those Risks.

We are often told of the mutual aid arrangements or over the border arrangement in place, yet these are not made public or scrutinised by the Authority or representative bodies.

Integrated Risk Management is the development of a balanced approach by the Fire and Rescue Service to reducing risks within the community. This is achieved by combining prevention, protection and emergency response, on a risk-assessed basis, in order to improve the safety of the community and also create a safer working environment for firefighters. Also very important to this strategy are the measures taken to help the community recover quickly in the aftermath of an emergency and minimise the impact both to people and the local economy, yet the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plans are viewed by our members as little more than glossy narcissistic programmes that highlight past perceived triumphs rather than detail how the service is to face the operational challenges of the future.

Of the few proposals that are contained within the Risk Management Plans crucial evidence based data is often lacking.

Take for example the 'bespoke 10 Minute Cheshire Standard', whereby the call handling times which can vary from one minute to over three and a half minutes are alarmingly omitted from the reported standard, despite the guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government to include this crucial data, and despite complaints to the authority about this omission.

Or the plans to change to a day duty system and implement the transition to on-call (part time) fire fighters for night time cover but fail to make clear to the public the risks and how the cover will be maintained when personnel are not available –such as we have seen at Wilmslow Fire station. To this day some 7 years on it still has to be propped up by drawing critical resources from other stations even though senior management have stated that as it would stand alone.



What Risks should be assessed and included within the Plan  
(Example of Cheshire Resilience Forum Risk Register)

<b>H21</b>	Type of Risk	Natural Hazards and Severe Weather (National Risk)					
	Outcome Description:	A single massive fluvial event or multiple concurrent regional events following a sustained period of heavy rainfall extending over two weeks (perhaps combined with snow melt and surface water flooding). The event would include major fluvial flooding affecting a large, single urban area. Closure of primary transport routes and infrastructure failure (including essential services) Significant regional economic damage. Possibility of causing a moderate number of fatalities and significant numbers of casualties, as well the possibility of significant numbers of people requiring evacuation					
	CRF Risk Score = Impact x Likelihood	CRF Impact Score:	<b>4 (Significant)</b>	CRF Likelihood Score:	<b>3 (Medium)</b>	CRF Risk Score	<b>12 (Very High)</b>
	Controls in Place:	CRF Emergency Response Manual; CRF Media Plan; Other CRF Plans; Individual Agency's Emergency Response Plans and Operational Procedures; LA Flood Plans; LA Rest Centre Plans; LA Humanitarian Assistance Plans; LA Crisis Support Plans					
	Date reviewed:	Dec-15	Date of next review:	Dec-17			

<b>H08</b>	Type of Risk	<b>Industrial Accidents and Environmental Pollution</b>					
	Outcome Description:	Up to 10 km from site with the possibility of causing significant fatalities and casualties. Toxic release could be due to loss of containment of chlorine – or a number of other chemicals, e.g. anhydrous hydrofluoric acid, refrigerated ammonia, sulphur di-oxide (or tri-oxide) gas. Huge challenge to health care providers. Water supplies might be at risk. Contamination of land could lead to avoidance of certain foodstuffs					
	CRF Risk Score = Impact x Likelihood	CRF Impact Score:	<b>4 (Significant)</b>	CRF Likelihood Score:	<b>2 (Med/Low)</b>	CRF Risk Score	<b>8 (High)</b>
	Controls in Place:	CRF Emergency Response Manual; CRF Media Plan; Other CRF Plans; COMAH On and Off Site Plans; Individual Agency's Emergency Response Plans and Operational Procedures; LA Rest Centre Plans; LA Humanitarian Assistance Plans; LA Crisis Support Plans					
	Date reviewed:	Jun-16	Date of next review:	Jun-18			

<b>H04</b>	Risk Category	<b>Fire or explosion at a fuel distribution site or a site storing flammable and / or toxic liquids in atmospheric pressure storage tanks</b>					
	Type of Risk	Industrial Accidents and Environmental Pollution (National Risk)					
	Outcome Description:	Up to 3km around site with potential to cause significant fatalities and casualties. Might be disruption to air transport in the short-term until fuel supply redirected. Short-term regional excessive demands on health care services. Closure of roads in locality for a short period of time					
	CRF Risk Score = Impact x Likelihood	CRF Impact Score:	<b>4 (Significant)</b>	CRF Likelihood Score:	<b>2 (Med/Low)</b>	CRF Risk Score	<b>8 (High)</b>
	Controls in Place:	CRF Emergency Response Manual; CRF Media Plan; Other CRF Plans; COMAH On and Off Site Plans; Individual Agency's Emergency Response Plans and Operational Procedures; LA Rest Centre Plans; LA Humanitarian Assistance Plans; LA Crisis Support Plans					
Date reviewed:	Jun-16	Date of next review:	Jun-18				



## North West Fire Control

The provision for mobilising the fire appliances and resources rest with the individual Fire and Rescue Authorities, which is then contracted out to North West Fire Control Ltd, and arrangements made through service level agreements. But these arrangements are not subject to public scrutiny nor are they contained within the Cheshire IRMP, and North West Fire control Ltd does not produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan. None of the arrangements are available to the Representative Bodies, there is no consultation nor again are they available for public Scrutiny. For example, the arrangements for dealing with a critical loss of infrastructure, IT systems, flu pandemic or Industrial action have not been subject to this scrutiny process. This lack of transparency is a serious concern. Let us remember that North West Fire Control Ltd is supposed to be a public service led company.

As the mobilisation of appliances and resources is absolutely pivotal in terms of our statutory duty, response and safety, the process of examining the existing arrangements allowing for evaluation and a continuing cycle for improvement is clearly absent under the current constitutional and operating arrangements.

We have also discovered that the average call handling time for North West Fire Control has increased to an incredible 3 minutes 36 seconds which is a cause for serious concern.

Additionally we believe that the people of Cheshire have a right to know that the Limited company is financially viable or underwritten.

The external auditors have also advised that the public accounts in terms of cost should be included in CFRS accounts which currently they are not.



## The level of Financial Reserves held by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority

The reserves held back by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority has increased from 12 Million in 2010/11 to 38 Million at the start of 2017/18. This prodigious rise has been achieved in the main by cutting the full time operational response – our member's jobs. We see a year on year underspend across the service, with huge savings in service delivery, only to see the 'savings' transferred into capital reserves.

Capital reserves are then used to finance what our members view as ostentatious projects such as the safety centre or the proposed new training centre.

To spend over 9 million pounds on a new training facility to improve fire fighter safety when we only have 4 riders on our fire engines and only 12 full time stations and therefore guaranteed fire engines to respond at night is nonsensical.

Whilst the FBU recognises the need to have some level of reserves to meet the costs of unexpected major incidents, the BELLWIN scheme provides for these costs, and whilst we recognise reserves need to be held for example Pension reserve or adjustment account, we believe that the authority must now use the general reserve to finance an urgent investment into front line firefighting and emergency response, as the cuts have gone too deep, too far and have left our response model in a fragile and unsustainable state.

**With this, the practice of transferring the yearly underspend to capital reserve must stop.**

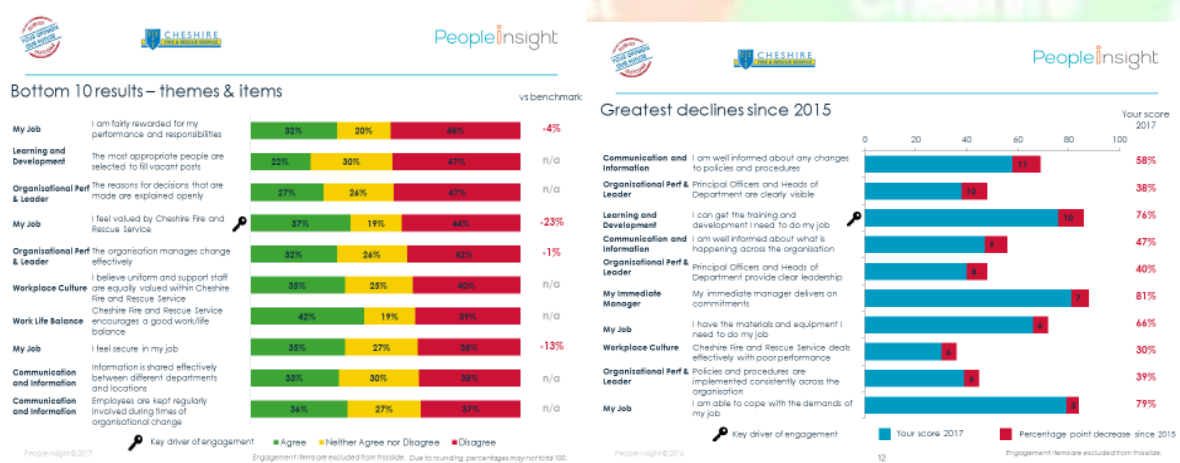
## Workplace Culture

Following the 2015 staff survey CFRS created action plans to address the key concerns arising from the survey, but the FBU were not consulted or given key participants status is designing these action plans. Throughout 2016 and 2017 we have heard from our members that they felt Cheshire Fire and Rescue operated a discipline culture, a culture where the views of staff were not acted upon or worse ignored, and that workplace stress was now on a dramatic increase.

As a result Cheshire FBU have called for a NJC cultural review or an Independent Cultural Review to highlight where as a service we are going wrong, and to provide a platform for real positive change. Disappointingly, these requests to work together to improve the culture were declined.

The 2017 Staff survey has just been completed, and it is disturbing to see the areas requiring improvement highlighted from 2015, and which were subject of bespoke action plans have actually got worse during that period.

We now call on the authority to work with the FBU and through the NJC look to address the areas requiring improvement to create an inclusive fire service that values staff and becomes a happy place to work to benefit those who work for the organisation and the communities we serve.




A major concern to our members is the continuation of implementing duty systems that are not family friendly, which we believe is the reason for the increase in our members leaving to seek alternative employment.

Childcare cost are rising at up to 7 times that of pay rises and with the 12 hour shifts already creating opening and closing time issues this would deter single parents to seek employment within the fire service.

The FBU have also seen an increase in the number of reported grievances, disciplines and resignations over the last 12 months – indicators of issues with organisational culture.

# Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Management IRMP 2018/19 Proposed Cuts to the Service



**CFRS Proposal to review the number of Aerial appliances with a view to removing the appliance at Macclesfield altogether and reducing Cheshire's aerial capability from 3 to 2:**

This would leave the whole unitary area of Cheshire East without a specialist appliance for working at height. There are a number of high rise buildings within Cheshire East, and the FBU believe that the increased travel times (See table below) will put the lives of communities and fire fighters at greater risk.

The Aerial appliance at Macclesfield is crewed by on call personnel, so the only efficiency savings to be gained from this reduction in response are those linked to training and vehicle maintenance we therefore do not believe the risk benefit supports the removal of this appliance from service.

Further consideration should be given to changes in the provision of emergency response and service delivery in neighbouring services, and the collaborative working arrangements when assessing the impact of a reduction in response as part of the IRMP planning process. In this instance, changes in Greater Manchester to the way the specialist appliance for dealing for height is crewed should be considered.

The nearest appliance is now not "primary crewed," and there is also a review underway that will also see a likely increase in the demand for this appliance across GMFRS.





STATION AREA	DISTANCE/TIME FROM MACCLESFIELD	DISTANCE/TIME FROM CHESTER	DISTANCE/TIME FROM LYMM
CREWE	20 Miles 40 MINUTES	20 Miles 41 MINUTES	23 Miles 40 MINUTES
NANTWICH	28 Miles 44 MINUTES	20 Miles 42 MINUTES	32 Miles 44 MINUTES
SANDBACH	15 Miles 28 MINUTES	39 Miles 48 MINUTES	19 Miles 28 MINUTES
AUDLEM	31 Miles 53 MINUTES	29 Miles 47 MINUTES	35 Miles 53 MINUTES
CONGLETON	8 Miles 15 MINUTES	32 Miles 58 MINUTES	25 Miles 35 MINUTES
MACCLESFIELD	2 Miles 6 MINUTES	44 Miles 1HR 4 MINUTES	23 Miles 42 MINUTES
POYNTON	8 Miles 17 MINUTES	41 Miles 55 MINUTES	19 Miles 34 MINUTES
BOLLINGTON	4 Miles 11 MINUTES	43 Miles 1Hr 2 MINUTES	22 Miles 41 MINUTES
ALSAGER	14 Miles 29 MINUTES	31 Miles 56 MINUTES	23 Miles 35 MINUTES

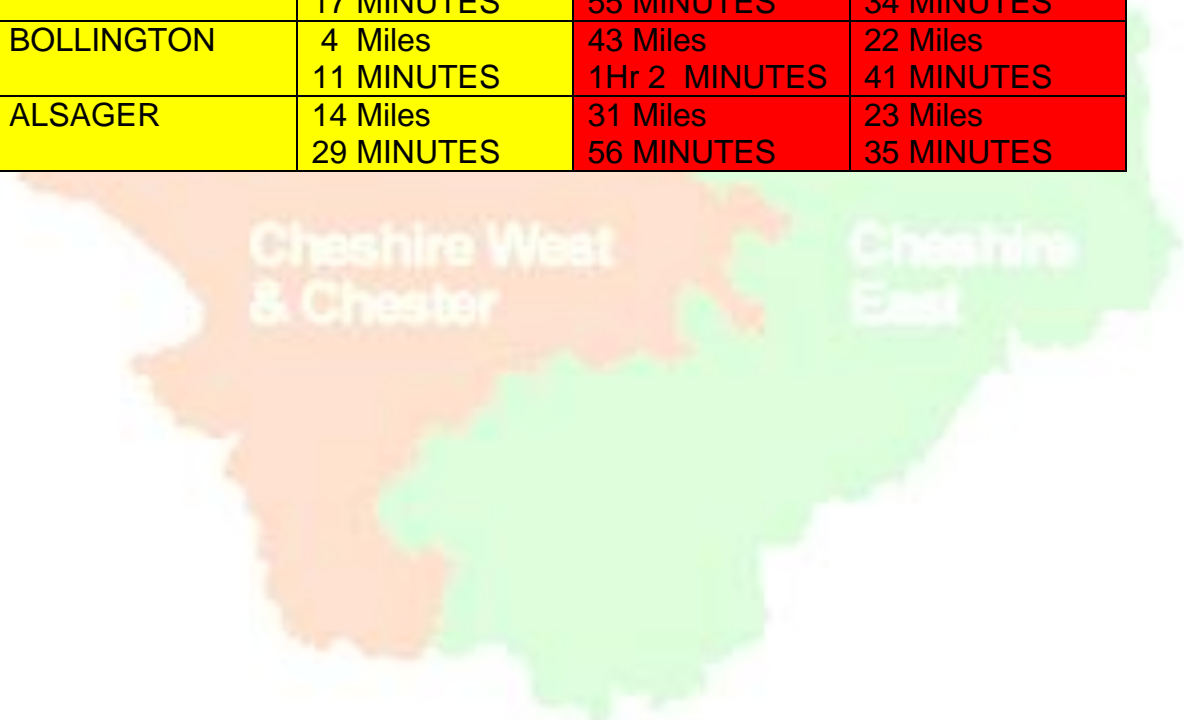


Table highlights the Travel distances and times to areas within Cheshire East

In addition, the recent inquest and recommendations from **Regulation 28, Report on Action to prevent future Deaths: FF Stephen Alan Hunt, comments:**

(6) It is suggested that all FRSs should undertake a review to ensure the adequacy of stand operating procedures, guidance and training in the deployment of aerial monitors to ensure the safety of any personnel within the risk area is not compromised.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor – Peter Holland comments:

*“The use of aerial monitors is covered briefly in the following two national guidance documents: Fires in the built environment and Fires and fire-fighting”.*

*“Both documents refer to the need to monitor the impact of the techniques to ensure the safety of crews and to ensure the fire is brought under control and eventually extinguished. The use of aerial appliances and water towers is covered in individual fire and rescue services policies and procedures and following the dissemination of your regulation 28 report to Chief Fire Officers they will review these policies”.*

It is surprising and alarming therefore to see a proposal to remove one of these risk critical appliances from service. With the Increased demand on this type of vehicle for large Incidents, Incidents requiring a safety monitoring tower, Incidents to reduce working at height and JESIP Incidents, removing this appliance would leave large areas of the county at risk through lack of resilience.



You will be aware of the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower Block in London, a tower block of public housing flats. This tragedy has so far taken the lives of 69 people.

There are 21 Domestic tower blocks for social housing in Cheshire, and the current capability to deal with such incidents should be enhanced not reduced. Lessons must be learned from this tragedy to avoid such an Incident happening again.

In 2015 CFRS borrowed a 42 meter aerial ladder platform from Surrey at the Bosley Wood Mill fire, the same platform used for the operational response at the Grenfell Fire.

Cheshire FBU therefore call on the Authority to not support any review that proposes to remove an Aerial appliance from the service, but rather look at the purchase of a 42 metre aerial ladder platform to serve Cheshire and the wider North West area. We also call on the Authority to change the way the Macclesfield Aerial appliance is crewed to increase its availability, we have already put forward ideas to the service that are cost neutral yet these have been totally rejected which we believe are in order to make a case for removing the appliance.



**CFRS Proposal – Review to remove the Second Appliances at Crewe and Ellesmere Port:**

In IRMP 2013/14, the previous aspirational plans were approved, which were subject to review, that the way the second appliances were crewed at Crewe and Ellesmere Port be changed from a wholtime (guaranteed stand of fire cover) to an on call crew (reliant on availability of responders).

The last 2 years has seen a number of recruitment initiatives that have failed to provide the service with the numbers required to staff these fire engines. In addition, of the few that have been recruited, a number have left. The FBU previously highlighted the issues the service would face in recruiting both the number and the suitability of individuals required to enable this proposal to be realised.

The current proposal is to staff the second appliance in these stations on a new shift system that is Monday-Friday daytime only. This is a reduction in the standard of fire cover during evenings and at weekends. The FBU opposed the plans to downgrade the second appliances at the six wholtime stations at the time, and it re-iterates that opposition again.

Crewe fire station will provide the only appliance that has a guaranteed response to cover the entire Cheshire east area at night. This leaves the area of over 1,116km<sup>2</sup> and a population of over 370,000 residents at risk from shortages in the level of guaranteed response.

Ellesmere Port station will provide cover to a local population of 57,000, and has seen the building of 3500 new homes since the initial proposal was approved, alongside a 10% increase in industry growth. Cheshire West and Chester has 17 COMAH sites – the largest in the UK. Ten years ago Chester and Ellesmere Port stations had 5 fire appliances and 25 fire fighters compared to just 2 engines and 10 fire fighters if this proposal goes ahead.

The FBU call on the authority to reject the Services proposals regarding the second appliances at Crewe and Ellesmere Port, and instead approve the proposals by the FBU to maintain the two appliances as they are crewed now – 24/7 by wholetime crews on the present duty system. This will ensure adequate fire cover for local communities, improve fire fighter safety by the improved probability of implementing safe systems of work more quickly, and provide the service with the flexibility and capacity to cover training courses and exercises. This is about the level of resilience the service can provide.



### **CFRS Proposal - Review to change to a non-guaranteed night time cover at Penketh Fire Station**

Penketh Fire station has only been live for 12 months, therefore how is it, that a planning application granted partly due to its wholetime operational strategic importance i.e. 24/7 is no longer the case. This was the criteria that the local community deliberated and agreed upon. The local community of Penketh did not support the previous proposal to build a station there with a view to it being downgraded as this was not part of the consultation.

Nor would it be appropriate to review the station after such a short period of time, when the demand, capacity or emerging risks cannot be subject to a sound analysis. The area is still becoming accustomed to losing a full time appliance from Warrington, and the FBU contend that any review should incorporate data from at least 5 years to be able to draw robust conclusions and make credible recommendations. Any downgrading



to fire cover at night would further reduce the capacity and resilience of the service which the FBU believe is already at dangerous levels, and is now based on chance rather than risk.





## **CFRS Proposal - Emergency Medical Response**

Whilst it may be an aspirational objective within the Services IRMP to roll out EMR across the service, the FBU must point out that Emergency Medical Response, or any other expanding of the fire fighter role map is not within the gift of CFRS or the local FBU, and is subject to complex national negotiations. The FBU in Cheshire is unable to agree to any expansion of the national role maps, and it would be extremely damaging to local industrial relations for CFRS Authority to seek to do so.

In addition, it is with concern that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service employ directly the services of a Medical Director who is using CFRS's name to say that the use of a drug called Pentrox has been piloted by the service. This is not the case as he is the one and only practitioner within the service although his own company has rolled out a training package for CFRS for the use of Pentrox. Our concerns are also increased by the fact that NWS do not administer this drug and their trade unions also have raised concerns. Asking firefighters to prescribe pain relief drugs for self-administration must be seen surely as a step too far and extra funding should be directed towards ambulance services to allow the right people to carry out the right job.



## **CFRS Proposal - Fire Protection Review**

Governments in the UK have historically taken a reactive approach towards fire safety. For the first half of the twentieth century, regulations applied to industrial workplaces alone, and were only strengthened after major fires.

The 1960s saw an extension of safety regulation into other workplaces – licensed premises (1961) and shops, offices and railway premises (1963) – following fatal fires in a Liverpool department store and a Bolton nightclub.

The Fire Precautions Act (1971) was another reactive measure following a hotel fire in Saffron Walden. It empowered fire authorities to enforce safety through inspection and certification of premises. It legitimized the fire service's growing expertise in fire prevention but, owing to strict enforcement, was criticised by business leaders and politicians in the 1980s and 1990s.

Beginning with Margret Thatcher's Conservative government, a 30-year period of deregulation of fire safety followed, justified by successive governments asserting that the abolition of "red tape" was good for both private business and public sector efficiency.

Grenfell Tower block fire showed us the results of this approach to fire safety and deregulation. Cheshire Fire Brigades Union supports this proposal if it is to reinvest and reinvigorate this important part of our service, but would not support any reduction in the establishment of our fire safety teams.



## **CFRS Proposal - Sadler Road Training Centre**

The Fire Brigades Union welcomes any proposal to improve training facilities or opportunities for our members, but we do not believe this proposal is value for money nor prioritise fire fighter safety. The Fire Authority have approved the financing of this project from reserves to the tune of 9 million pounds, in order to improve and protect 'fire fighter safety', yet in Cheshire we have only 4 riders on our fire engines, sometimes even 3 riders, we do not yet have telemetry capability on our breathing apparatus sets providing the crucial secondary communications facility and we have a response model with a skeleton full time provision.

Fire-fighters will on average, only attend the central training centre for only 3 days per year. So to spend 9 million pounds on a training centre when we are so far behind other Fire and rescue services seems ill considered. If the proposals to downgrade Crewe and Ellesmere Port appliances are approved then we are also concerned at how the crews attendance at training events will be facilitated, as at the moment the appliances at Crewe and Ellesmere Port are being taken out of their communities to provide standby cover just to release crews to attend mandatory training refreshers – highlighting the fragility and lack of resilience in the current provisions.

Should we see a return to 5 riders on our appliances, the latest safety equipment provided and the financing of projects such as this that does not result in our profession being cut in terms of establishment capability then we would fully support such a proposal.





Cheshire West

Cheshire

## CHESHIRE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

### IRMP 2018/19 Proposals for Firefighter and Public safety





## Cheshire FBU proposal: Crewing all wholetime appliances with a minimum of 5 Fire fighters

In determining a strategy for emergency cover, reference should be made to the outcomes of similar events in the past, and the effect of different levels of emergency cover. Reference should also be made to the FBU's 2004 publication – Integrated Risk Management Planning the National Document. This document describes Critical Attendance Standards (CAST) planning scenarios that describe suitable resource requirements for a wide range of incidents that the Fire and Rescue Service is now expected to deal with.

FSEC, generic risk assessments and the FBU's CAST scenarios all model both the material and the human resources required to safely intervene at a range of emergency incidents. These models are invariably based on the assumption that fire appliances, especially the first appliance on scene, will have a crew of five.

Therefore, according to these nationally accepted models, when crewing appliances with only four fire fighters, the attendance of one or even two appliances at a property fire will probably not be sufficient to safely undertake offensive fire-fighting or to carry out anything but snatch rescues.

A 'weight of attack' of two appliances with 8 crew is therefore not the same as a 'weight attack' of two appliances with 9 or 10 fire fighters. This must be taken into account when developing strategies.

It must also be taken into account when reporting performance to the public.

It would be reasonable for the public to assume that the same level of service is being provided by two different Fire and Rescue Services who both have a performance standard of two appliances to arrive at incidents within 10 minutes. However if one Fire and Rescue service only has 8 fire fighters crewing those two appliances, while the other has 10, then the former cannot offensively intervene or carry out rescues until a third appliance arrives.

The majority of major towns across Cheshire have seen its guaranteed wholetime response reduced from 9 fire-fighters, down to 8 fire-fighters and now down to 4 fire-fighters.



The FBU contend that this dramatic decrease in front line responders has increased the risk to communities and will cost lives, and that this decision was made not on the basis of the level of risk, but on the grounds of cost.

We call on Cheshire Fire Authority to approve our proposal to staff all wholetime appliances with 5 fighters as a minimum.

## Cheshire FBU proposal: The purchase of the best equipment for our fire fighters:

For some time now, many services in the UK fire and rescue service have been using Telemetry boards for use to monitor and control the use of Breathing Apparatus wearers. In Cheshire we upgraded our BA sets to the most current in 2010, but took the decision not to purchase the control boards that are used in conjunction due to cost.

Cheshire FBU feel that providing our members with the latest technological advances in equipment will increase the safety of crews when operating in dangerous and dynamic environments.

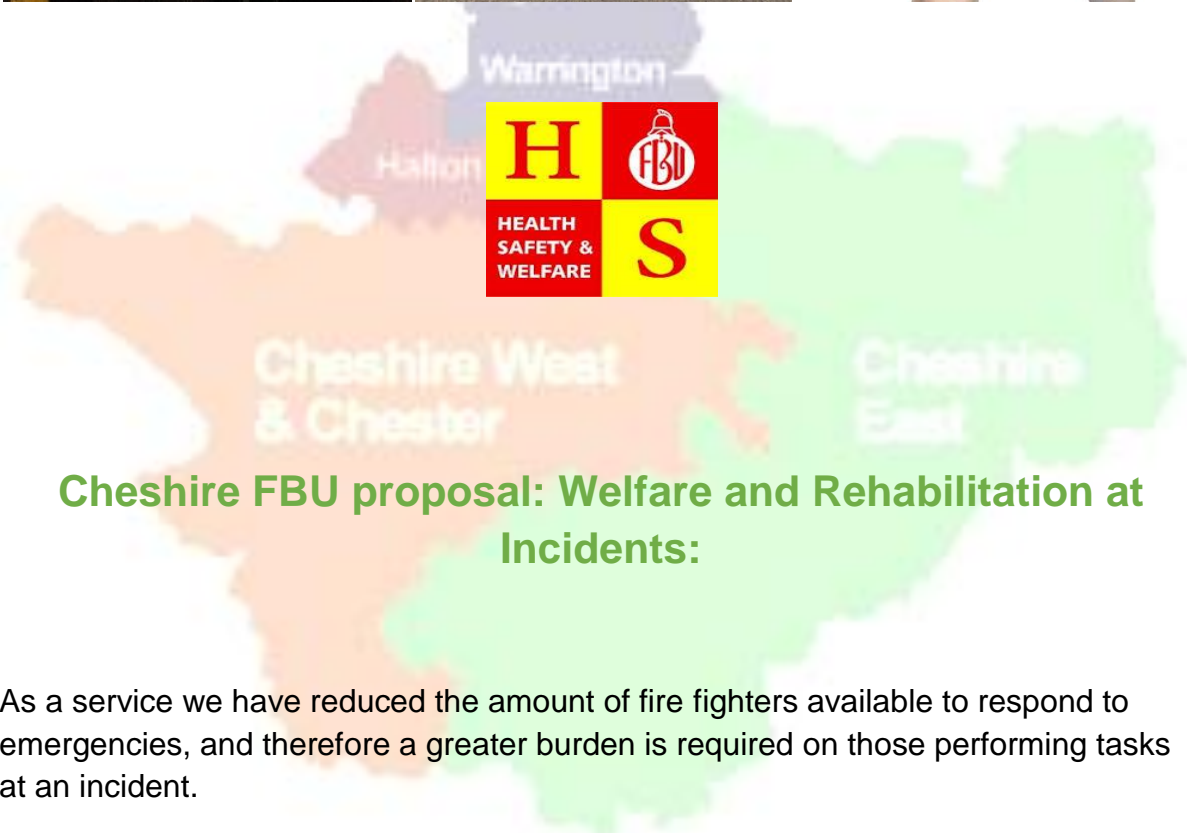
Indeed the recent inquest and recommendations from **Regulation 28, Report on Action to prevent future Deaths: FF Stephen Alan Hunt, comments:**

(2) It is suggested that all FRSs should consider the implementation of measures to reduce the risks associated with the loss of communications at operational incidents. For example, to include safety control measures to ensure BA teams can be within from the risk area if needed.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor – Peter Holland comments:

This concern is covered in part B-3 Communications of OGBA and is further enhanced by the use of telemetry which provides additional communication capabilities.

Cheshire FBU propose that its Service FBU Health and Safety Representative sits on a 'procurement panel' that is to meet quarterly, with the purpose being to examine the latest equipment being used in other FRS's and discuss the benefit of these with the intention of trialling equipment to improve fire fighter safety and service delivery.



## Cheshire FBU proposal: Welfare and Rehabilitation at Incidents:

As a service we have reduced the amount of fire fighters available to respond to emergencies, and therefore a greater burden is required on those performing tasks at an incident.

In addition, CFRS is looking to increase the number of female fire fighters and fire fighters from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

The Workplace health, safety and welfare Regulations 1992 refer to the following under Temporary work sites – At temporary work sites the requirements of these regulations for sanitary conveniences, washing facilities, drinking water, clothing accommodation, changing facilities and facilities for rest and eating meals apply so far as reasonably practicable.

These include work sites used only infrequently or for short periods.



Currently CFRS has a single vehicle available to respond for welfare purposes, this provides two toilets. However this vehicle is crewed by part time (on call) staff and its availability cannot be guaranteed. For large incidents (six pumps and over) a service level agreement is in place with the Salvation Army, to provide welfare facilities. Whilst this is and has been welcome, Cheshire FBU feel that in 2018 the reliance on volunteers is not the best way to ensure the management of welfare for operational crews. Nationally, CFRS seem to be behind many other services.

Cheshire FBU are looking to the authority to approve its proposal to provide a Welfare and Rehabilitation unit, that is primary crewed by wholetime fire fighters that ensures it is available, and can be called upon for any incident where an appliance or number of appliances are likely to be engaged in operational activity beyond 60 minutes.

This vehicle will provide sanitary conveniences, toilets, high protein meal packs which include options for those with specific dietary requirements for medical or religious reasons. It will also provide a tent like structure that will provide a rest area and a private changing area.

This unit which will also be a rehabilitation unit, is designed to provide facilities to assist with the management of the physiological condition of operational personnel attending incidents or exercises, such as the provision of cool vests and will play a critical in the prevention of heat related illness.

At larger scale incidents, a Welfare and Rehabilitation Officer shall be appointed, who will work as part of the command support sector. He or She will then be responsible for food and fluid replenishment, physiological rest, relief from climatic and environmental conditions, manage the rotation of crews, and record any interventions personnel have received. He or She will also be responsible for planning and facilitating the reliefs of appliances and operational personnel.



## Summary

It is recommended that members note the information presented in this response and request further detail on any matter if required.

This response proposes that:

### Recommendation 1

That the FBU and the Authority constitute a working party to examine whether the Government requirement of recording attendance times is adhered to and if not to ensure control call handling times are added back into the data to ensure a proper analysis of performance can be undertaken. The '10 Minute Cheshire Standard' should be inclusive of these times.

### Recommendation 2

Cheshire FBU call on the authority not to support the proposal to review or remove an Aerial Appliance from the Service, or support a review into the Penketh duty system.

### Recommendation 3

The FBU call on the authority to reject the Services proposals regarding the second appliances at Crewe and Ellesmere Port, and instead approve the proposals by the FBU to maintain the two appliances as they are crewed now – 24/7 by whole-time crews on the present duty system. This will ensure adequate fire cover for local communities, improve fire fighter safety by the improved probability of implementing safe systems of work more quickly, and provide the service with the flexibility and capacity to cover training courses and exercises. This is about the level of resilience the service can provide, and providing the appropriate response to communities.

#### Recommendation 4

We call on Cheshire Fire Authority to approve our proposal to staff all whole-time appliances with 5 fighters as a minimum.

#### Recommendation 5

Cheshire FBU propose that its Service FBU Health and Safety Representative sits on a 'procurement panel' that is to meet quarterly, with the purpose being to examine the latest equipment being used in other FRS's and discuss the benefit of these with the intention of trialling equipment to improve fire fighter safety and service delivery.

#### Recommendation 6

The practice of mobilising appliances with 3 riders known as 'Small Incident Units' is ceased immediately.

#### Recommendation 7

Cheshire FBU are looking to the authority to approve its proposal to provide a Welfare and Rehabilitation Unit, that is primary crewed by whole-time fire fighters that guarantees it is available, and can be called upon for any incident where an appliance or number of appliances are likely to be engaged in operational activity beyond 60 minutes.



### Recommendation 8

The service to agree a managed Relief plan with the FBU, to provide clear consistent and robust reliefs at Incidents which will address our members concerns with regards the lack of brigade resilience and safeguard the Health safety and Welfare of our members. The Relief strategy will feed into the Welfare strategy above.

### Recommendation 9

In light of the concerns raised in the 2017 Staff survey, and the failure the address the concerns from 2015 we call on the Authority to either implement an NJC review into the Culture within CFRS or an Independent Cultural Review

### Recommendation 10

The Cheshire Integrated Risk Management Plan must include how the service plan to Deliver its Prevention, Protection and Response Services and to respond to its known or emerging risks such as Fires, Road Traffic Collisions, environmental, commercial, economic and societal risks, the protection of Heritage and above all how it is to secure Safe Systems of Work for these strategies.

### Recommendation 11

In light of the concerns raised with regard the lack of available appliances, all authority members and FBU officials be given access to the Gartan system to enable the continual monitoring of the availability of resources, to operate in an open and transparent culture.





# Finally

**The FBU are willing to accept changes where they are justified, supported with real evidence and when we have been given every opportunity to influence that change.**

**That the service improves its commitment to work with the FBU to protect and develop the operational response to reverse the trends that have seen fire fighters and members of the community put at greater risk as a result of the changes previously approved.**

