



Core Strategy

# Protection Strategy 2021-25

1 July 2021 to 31 March 2025



HEREFORD & WORCESTER  
**HWFR**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

# Contents

Foreword	1
Our Purpose, Vision and Mission	2
Who We Are: Protection	3
Our Ethical Principles	4
Introduction	5
Principles	5
Promoting Fire Safety	6
Increasing Compliance	7
Investigating and Enforcing	10
CRMP 2021-25: Core aims for Prevention	11
Legislative Requirements	12
Monitoring and Review	14



Fire door  
keep shut

# Foreword

This document sets out the headline objectives of the Protection Strategy. The strategy is one of three Core Strategies designed to outline how the strategic aims of our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) will be delivered through our Response, Protection and Prevention services. Alongside the CRMP, the Core Strategies drive everything we do, and underpin our mission of delivering high quality and sustainable services to our communities.

The Protection Strategy aims to give clarity and direction on how will deliver our protection services across our counties. Protection is a legal responsibility and is an integral part of keeping our communities safe in our commercial and public buildings. It would also be realistic to say that this is not the most visible part of the Service but following the Grenfell fire tragedy it is one that has come to the fore in terms of public expectations.

Protection and the understanding of risk is an area that requires a specific and complex skill set and our communities rightfully expect a high standard of knowledge and expertise in a wide range of protection matters throughout our organisation. It is no longer appropriate to have protection matters confined to one specialist department, as this should be a skill that is more widely distributed and understood in all corners of the Service.

The Response Strategy focuses on those times when things go wrong for our communities so that we can respond as quickly as possible and help save life and property whereas the Prevention Strategy is aimed at changing behaviours in society to prevent fires and other emergencies. Uniquely, the Protection Strategy has a clear and unequivocal role in enforcement and, if necessary, prosecution where statutory requirements are not met. We will of course always strive to encourage changes in attitudes and approaches to Fire Safety matters before we enforce; however, this is not always possible.

Above all else we will endeavour to deliver this Protection Strategy as part of our Organisational Excellence programme and will invest in our staff to ensure they are competent and highly skilled so that a resilient and flexible model of delivery can be developed to meet the wide ranging breadth of challenges posed by heritage, legacy and complex modern building construction across both our counties.

Over the next four years, the strategy has a number of headline aims and objectives which will determine how we will work as a Service to improve the safety and wellbeing of our communities by reducing risk and incidents in the built environment. It focuses on educating and regulating those responsible for keeping buildings safe to adopt safer behaviours and robust fire protection activities. In this respect, our work will aim to align with the [Fire Standards Board Protection Standard](#). The strategy also sets out how we will support our overarching core purpose, vision and mission and will be guided by the [NFCC Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services](#).

As a living document, the strategy must remain agile and flexible to be able to respond to the changing needs of our local communities, our workforce and other circumstances as necessary. We will maintain this through continual monitoring and review of all aspects of the strategy.

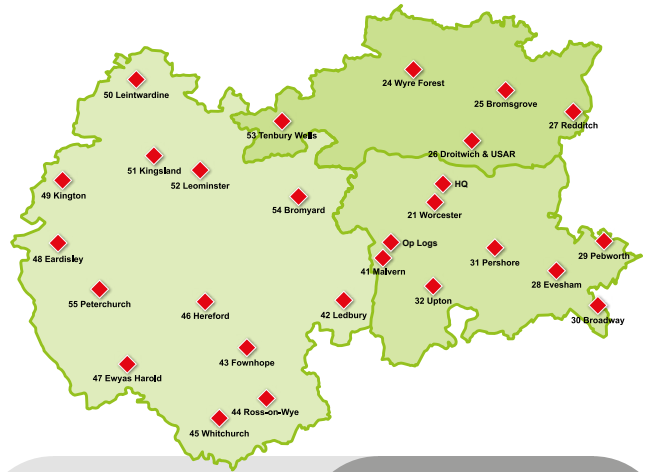


**Jonathon Pryce**  
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

# Our Purpose, Vision and Mission

## Who We Are

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) works to keep people safe from fire and other risks. We employ over 690 full-time and part-time members of staff in 770 roles, delivering a wide range of prevention, protection and emergency response services across Herefordshire and Worcestershire (an area of 392,000 hectares with a population of over 790,000 people).



**25**  
Fire Stations



**41**  
Fire Engines



## Purpose

### Why we are here

Keeping people safe from fire and other risks. Responding efficiently and effectively to incidents and emergencies.

## Vision

### What we want to do

Saving More Lives: Building on our successes to continue to make a difference, improve lives and help secure resilient communities.

## Mission

### What we do every day

As one professional team we will work hard every day to deliver high quality, sustainable services to our communities.

**251**  
Wholetime Firefighters



**368**  
On-Call Firefighters



**24**  
Fire Control Firefighters



**127**  
Support Staff



In 2021-22 our Firefighter Control service dealt with over 16,000 calls and we attended over 7,400 incidents, including property and countryside fires, road traffic collisions, water rescues, collapsed structures, hazardous materials and animal rescues (an average of about 142 incidents every week).



**16,212**  
Calls to Firefighter Control



**7,419**  
Incidents attended



**1,605**  
Fires



**2,385**  
Special Service Incidents



**3,429**  
False Alarms

Our core purpose, vision and mission guide us in our work to make the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire safer. To do this effectively we need to ensure we understand and appreciate the diversity of the communities we serve, and have a workforce that is inclusive and fully represents and understands those communities.

# Who We Are

## Protection

Our Protection capability consists of a specialist department made up of staff that are trained and experienced at understanding fire safety issues in a range of premises. With a database of around 42,000 premises across our two counties, the department takes a risk-based approach to ensure that high risk premises are prioritised for inspection. While the majority of premises are low-risk, the department, supported by our operational crews, inspect and audit over 1,100 premises every year.

The Protection Strategy sets out our plans for the next four years towards achieving our overarching Core Purpose, Vision and Mission and our work will be guided by the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services.





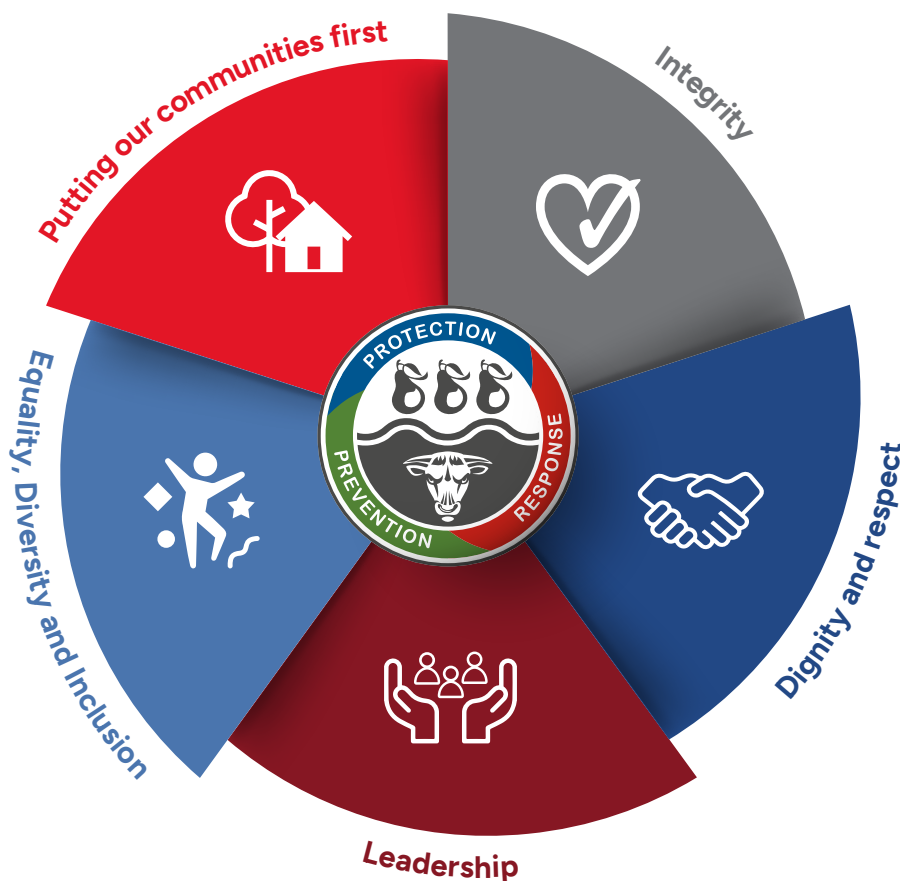
# Our Ethical Principles



NFCC  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council



How we deliver our services to achieve our core purpose is guided by the [Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services](#) in England, which has been jointly developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Local Government Association and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. The Code sets out five ethical principles, which provide the basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour. By adopting the Code as our guiding set of values, we are committed to championing ethical behaviours that help to improve organisational culture and workforce diversity, ensuring that communities are supported in the best way.



## Putting our communities first



We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

## Integrity



We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

## Dignity and respect



We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

## Leadership



As positive role models, we are accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.

# Introduction

In line with statutory responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue Service's Act 2004, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) is committed to providing protection capabilities to ensure it promotes fire safety, delivers a risk based inspection programme and enforces fire safety compliance.

To achieve this protection capability, HWFRS will ensure our staff are suitably qualified and equipped to work with local businesses to support and advise them on meeting their fire safety requirements. Where necessary, we will use our enforcement and regulatory powers to ensure their premises are safe. Our protection work is designed to deliver the CRMP aims of protecting people, firefighters, property and the environment, and our protection activities are guided by the [Fire Standards Board Protection Standard](#).



## Principles

The main principle behind HWFRS's **Protection Strategy** will be to reduce the risk of fire in commercial and other public premises where people live, work, shop and visit, whilst mitigating the impact of business disruption and the cost to the local economy and the environment. This will be achieved by ensuring premises comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

HWFRS's approach to protection will be data-driven, underpinned by our professional judgement, using local and national incident and enforcement trends to develop an understanding of risk in order to target our protection activity and resources appropriately. Additionally, we will utilise systems and national guidance to ensure that we provide efficient and sustainable services. This includes sharing information and intelligence about building risks with staff and partners to support our **Response Strategy** and continually improve public and firefighter safety.

Furthermore, to ensure we meet the requirements set out in the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators, and deliver a high quality service, we are investing in fire safety training across our workforce. Additionally, we plan to drive professional organisational excellence through a programme of Continuing Professional Development and membership of professional bodies.

The core foundations in delivering this strategy are **Promoting Fire Safety, Increasing Compliance** and **Investigating and Enforcing**. In other words, we will promote fire safety through information and encouragement, carry out fire safety inspections, investigate the cause of fire and enforce compliance where breaches are found.

# Promoting Fire Safety

We aim to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and the economic cost of fire by working with premises owners to ensure they understand their responsibilities under legislation and educate them about new and evolving risks. We will achieve this through advice and guidance, advising on statutory consultations and promoting fire safety initiatives such as the installation of sprinklers.

## Advice and Guidance

Our staff are specially trained to provide advice and guidance on fire safety and the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In addition, we will promote fire safety issues through our website, social media messaging and forums/presentations. We will prioritise our resources based on life risk, targeting the highest risk buildings including high rise residential buildings and complex premises and buildings providing sleeping accommodation. We will also provide guidance to businesses and in relation to sites of historic and local interest in order to reduce the economic cost of fire and support the local economy.

## Statutory Consultations

HWFRS will respond to consultations and requests for advice, where the Fire Authority is a statutory consultee or has the expertise that can support public safety; this includes building regulations, licensing applications and the Safety Advisory Groups (SAG). In each of these areas HWFRS aims to promote fire safety and provide guidance to authorities, premises owners, and event organisers to keep people safe from fire.

## Sprinklers

We support the NFCC's stance that: "sprinklers are the most effective way to ensure that fires are suppressed or even extinguished before the fire service can arrive" and will work with local Building Control Bodies to promote their use in all high risk buildings. Furthermore, we will work alongside developers, local authorities, housing providers and landlords to support the installation of Automatic Fire Suppression Systems (AFSS) in building stock.

### **A number of headline objectives will be delivered to support the promotion of fire safety:**

- We will provide fire safety advice and support to local businesses to help them meet their legislative requirements.
- We will continue to promote the introduction of sprinklers within all potentially high-risk commercial and residential premises.



# Increasing Compliance

To increase compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, we carry out fire safety audits. These audits are completed in accordance with national guidelines to ensure any advice provided is consistent and proportionate to the fire risk at the premises and to keep people safe. Our two main programmes are the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) and the Intelligence Led Inspection Programme (ILIP).

## Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)

RBIP is an annual pre-planned fire safety inspection programme based upon assessing the risk posed by generic types of premises and individual buildings and the current level of compliance with the requirements of the Fire Safety Order. We use externally verified data to calculate risk, including building type, size and location, maximum probable loss, and the type of people who live or work in the building. The primary aim of this programme is to prevent death or serious injury in the event of a fire.

We use the NFCC fire safety audit forms (short and full audit) to check compliance with the Fire Safety Order. Our staff will actively work with the responsible person(s) to advise and assist with meeting the standard required. Where advice and guidance do not achieve compliance with the Fire Safety Order, or the risk of death or serious injury in the event of fire is high, we will enforce the requirements of the Fire Safety Order to ensure compliance and public safety. A guide to the Fire Safety Audit Process can be found [here](#).

## Intelligence Led Inspection Programme (ILIP)

In addition to our Risk Based Inspection Programme, we also carry out an Intelligence Led Inspection Programme (ILIP). This is a fire safety inspection programme based upon local or national fire trends and local or national non-compliance trends linked to the Fire Safety Order. This programme also includes a sample percentage of audits of low risk premises supporting the overall number of inspections carried out by the RBIP. In recent years, this programme has consistently identified issues around non-compliance with the requirements of the Fire Safety Order. Therefore, we provide fire safety information and education advice to the responsible person before an ILIP commencing. As with the RBIP, the programme aims to prevent death or serious injury in the event of fire, and limit the economic cost of fire, by ensuring compliance with the Fire Safety Order.

To support this, we will gather trend data from:

- NFCC and national data sources;
- Previous RBIP and ILIP findings;
- The outcomes of national recommendations following inquiries, inquests and Coroner's Rule 43 findings;
- The outcomes of local and national fire trends and fire investigation findings.

## Increasing Compliance (continued)



### Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement (MATE)

As part of the ILIP, we carry out multi agency inspections based on information and intelligence shared between agencies including West Mercia Police, Local Authority Housing, Trading Standards and other Regulatory Services, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Home Office Border Force and others.

The MATE strategy provides an effective and efficient methodology for Enforcing Authorities working within Herefordshire and Worcestershire, allowing all agencies to access premises in a single visit, to ensure compliance with several pieces of UK legislation, protecting those who are considered to be at high risk and making premises safer for all. This approach also supports the disruption of serious and organised crime in our area.

We intend to grow our ILIP, including MATE, to assist our understanding of risk and target our prevention and protection resources. In addition, we will use the data from these visits to target future inspection programmes (RBIP and ILIP) and track this through quarterly reporting and an annual action plan.

### Reactive Fire Safety Inspection

In addition to our audit programmes, we also respond to business fire safety complaints or concerns raised by members of the public and other agencies and, in the event of a fire occurring, by carrying out an inspection (post fire audit). In these circumstances, and where appropriate, we ensure compliance with the Fire Safety Order by issuing letters and notices to the responsible person. In the case of post fire audits the Service will identify and report on origin and cause and use this data to inform our Intelligence Led Inspection Programme and assessment of risk. We will also identify if the origin, cause or spread of fire was compounded by a failure to comply with the Fire Safety Order and in such cases take steps to enforce compliance. We will also inspect premises following unwanted automatic fire alarm activations to ensure that they comply with the Fire Safety Order. This approach also supports the availability of emergency cover in our Response Strategy.

## Enhancing our Capability and Extending Business Fire Safety Skills

HWFRS is investing in our fire safety department in order to ensure we are able to provide a high quality of service. This includes increasing the number of inspecting officers and providing them with the knowledge, skills and experience to carry out their roles to the highest standard. Furthermore, we are enhancing our capabilities by investing in fire engineering and other fire safety qualifications.

We intend to extend and embed fire safety knowledge across the Service to ensure a high quality and sustainable service to our communities by investing in an extensive training programme for our operational staff. This programme will enhance the understanding of operational firefighters in fire safety, thereby supporting the delivery of our protection services whilst also providing them with knowledge that will assist them when dealing with complex fires.

### **A number of headline objectives will be delivered to support increasing compliance:**

- We will carry out fire safety audits to ensure local businesses are complying with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- We will develop our common understanding of trends and issues and share these with our communities and the fire sector to reduce injury and death from fire in business premises.
- We will undertake appropriate levels of specialist training to ensure protection officers can continue to provide proportionate, efficient and effective business safety advice and carry out inspections.
- We will continue to extend business fire safety training across the Service to support firefighter safety and technical awareness.



# Investigating and Enforcing



## Investigating the Cause of Fire

At every incident HWFRS attends we will carry out investigations to establish the fire's origin and its cause and we will use this data to both support criminal and civil court proceedings. Furthermore, we will analyse trends which will help to inform our guidance to business owners and develop our Intelligence Led Inspection Programme. Our Fire Investigation Officers will also support the post fire audit process which will seek to support business owners, who have had a fire, through education and, where appropriate, enforcement of compliance with the Fire Safety Order. Data on the cause of fire will be reported nationally and via our website.

We will also be investing in training for our staff to further enhance their understanding of the causes of fire and the signs of arson. This investment will include our specialist Fire Investigation Officers as well as front line crews and will be delivered in line with NFCC guidance.

## Enforcement

When an unsafe situation is identified following a fire, or as part of an audit or inspection, which indicates a failure to meet the requirements of fire safety legislation, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is required to determine what action to take. The action will depend on the nature of the failure and will be based on the principles set out in the Authority's Enforcement Policy, which is in accordance with the Regulators' Code 2014 and the regulatory principles required under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006.

Inspecting officers may take enforcement action where there is an identified failure to comply with the legislation. The outcome of enforcement can include a notice of required action, the prohibiting of the use of all or part of a premises or prosecution. To provide transparency and consistency, enforcement action is also registered on a national database and statistics are annually produced for His Majesty's Government on the number and type of enforcement actions that have occurred.

### **A number of headline objectives will be delivered to support the investigation and enforcement:**

- We will investigate the cause of fire and use this to inform our education and inspection programmes.
- We will investigate fire safety concerns and take proportionate enforcement action.



# CRMP 2021-25

## Core aims for Protection

### Protection

## Protecting people, firefighters, property and the environment when fires, floods and other emergencies happen



Our aims	What we will do to achieve our aims
Reduce the risk of fire in commercial and other premises where people work, shop and visit, and mitigate the impact of business disruption and the cost to the local economy and the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide business safety advice and support to local businesses to help them meet their legislative requirements.</li><li>• Investigate the potential of developing the Primary Authority Scheme across the Fire Alliance to ensure consistent advice, inspection and enforcement processes.</li><li>• Continue to promote the introduction of sprinklers within all potentially high-risk commercial and residential premises.</li></ul>
Ensure local businesses increase their fire safety compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carry out fire safety audits to ensure local businesses are complying with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Many of these audits will be pre-planned through our risk-based and intelligence-led audit programmes, which assist in targeting those premises identified as representing the greatest risk to life in the event of a fire.</li><li>• Undertake appropriate levels of specialist training to ensure protection officers can continue to provide proportionate, efficient and effective business safety advice, carry out inspections and take enforcement where necessary.</li><li>• Continue to extend business fire safety training across the Service to support firefighter safety and technical awareness.</li></ul>
Reduce the number of arson-related incidents in commercial premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carry out fire investigations and work with the police and other partners to produce evidence to support the criminal justice process.</li></ul>
Help to protect property, possessions and local heritage sites and valuables from fire and the effects of flooding and other extreme weather events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to prepare site plans with key information to ensure effective firefighting, firefighter safety, and salvage where possible, and make this information available at the incident ground.</li><li>• Continue working with partners to help ensure local communities understand what to do to keep themselves, their property and possessions safe in the event of fire, flood or other emergency incident.</li></ul>
Respond effectively to the key findings and recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to work with local and national partners, including the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Representative Bodies, to address the key findings and recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, including adapting processes and procedures in line with new guidance and legislation.</li><li>• Work with communities and businesses to educate, support and, where appropriate, enforce change in line with new guidance and legislation.</li></ul>



# Legislative Requirements

There are a number of statutory functions and duties that we must carry out according to law (core legislation summarised below).

## The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

This is the [core legislation](#) for all fire and rescue services and it details legal powers and responsibilities of Fire Authorities.

### Part 2, Section 6 – Fire safety

- 1) A fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety in its area.
- 2) In making provision under subsection (1) a fire and rescue authority must in particular, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, make arrangements for –
  - a) The provision of information, publicity and encouragement in respect of the steps to be taken to prevent fires and death or injury by fire;
  - (b) The giving of advice, on request, about –
    - (i) How to prevent fires and restrict their spread in buildings and other property;
    - (ii) The means of escape from buildings and other property in case of fire.



## The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Under Articles 25, 26 & 27 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, HWFRS is an enforcing authority for premises within its area and must enforce the provisions of the Order and, for that purpose, will appoint authorised inspectors.

## Fire Safety Act 2021

This act amends the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and clarifies that the Responsible Person for multi-occupied residential buildings must manage and reduce the risk of fire for the structure, external walls of the building including cladding, balconies, windows and entrance doors to individual properties that open onto a common part.

## Building Safety Act 2022

The Act makes provision to give residents and homeowners more rights, powers and protections, including a toolkit of measures that will allow those responsible for building safety defects to be held to account.

## National Framework Document

The [Framework document](#) sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for the fire and rescue service. It states: *Fire and Rescue Authorities (2.3) must make provision for promoting fire safety, including fire prevention, and have a locally determined risk-based inspection programme in place for enforcing compliance with the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in premises to which it applies.*



# Monitoring and Review

## Monitoring

The headline objectives set out in this strategy are measurable. Therefore, we are able to continually monitor relevant information to make sure they will be delivered to support this Protection Strategy. Monitoring progress in implementing the headline objectives will also enable us to understand how the strategy is being used and to be fully informed of progress made.

## Review

Alongside monitoring, we will review the headline objectives of the Protection Strategy. The review will be informed by the monitoring and will enable us to identify subsequent actions which may need to be carried out to ensure the headline objectives are delivered within the strategy period. The first review will be carried out no later than one year from the publication of the strategy and will then be reviewed on an annual basis.

The monitoring and review of this strategy will be reported in the Annual Service Review.

We will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of our protection activities through a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) taking in to account seasonal variations and trends. Examples of KPIs include:

- Number of Fire Safety Inspections completed by qualified staff, including Fire Safety Officers and operational crews.
- Number of statutory consultations and post fire audits completed within specified timescales.

Key Performance Indicators will be regularly reviewed in Service Performance Reports to ensure that increasing compliance is effectively monitored.







HEREFORD & WORCESTER  
**HWFR**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



© 2023 Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service  
Service Headquarters, Hindlip Park, Worcester WR3 8SP  
0345 122 4454 | [info@hwfire.org.uk](mailto:info@hwfire.org.uk) | [www.hwfire.org.uk](http://www.hwfire.org.uk)