

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance 2024-2025



"Working Together for a Safer Gloucestershire"

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1. Introduction and joint foreword

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) to publish an 'Annual Statement of Assurance'. This document is expected to provide assurance to communities and government regarding the delivery of our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), financial, governance, operational matters, and the National Framework itself.

We are pleased to share our Statement of Assurance for the financial year 2024–25, confirming that Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) continues to meet its statutory duties. This includes compliance with the Fire and Rescue Services Act, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, the Civil Contingencies Act, and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) operates as part of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), which serves as the Fire Authority. As an integral part of the Council's wider services, GFRS benefits from close collaboration across departments - enhancing its performance and helping ensure it meets all legal and regulatory responsibilities.

Over the past year, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) has made strong progress across a range of key areas. This includes delivering on the strategic priorities set out in our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), successfully addressing Causes of Concern and Areas for Improvement identified in our most recent inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), adopting emerging best practices, and responding to changes in legislation. Throughout this period, GFRS has continued to provide high-quality Response, Prevention, and Protection services to communities across Gloucestershire.

Performance and progress are regularly reported and subject to scrutiny through established governance arrangements within both GFRS and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC). With the continued support and strong partnership of GCC, we are confident that GFRS will maintain the delivery of high-quality services to communities across Gloucestershire. We remain committed to ongoing improvement and to fulfilling the Service's vision for the future.

'To create a positive workplace culture that empowers and supports our people to provide the highest standard of community safety and emergency response services to the communities of Gloucestershire'.



Councillor Paul Hodgkinson
Cabinet Member for Public
Health, Communities and Fire



Mark Preece
Chief Fire Officer
Gloucestershire
Fire and Rescue Service

2. Delivering our CRMP in 2024-25

As the Fire and Rescue Authority, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) is responsible for regularly identifying and assessing foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks - whether local, cross-border, multi-agency, or national. This risk assessment helps us determine how best to use our resources to protect communities, with a particular focus on those most vulnerable.

Our approach is set out in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which outlines how current and future risks will be managed to keep people safe now and in the years ahead. The latest CRMP, covering the period 2022 to 2026, is available on the GFRS website at www.glosfire.gov.uk. It sets out strategic aims we are working towards, and this section provides examples of the progress made during the 2024 - 25 financial year.

Strategic Aim: People

‘Ensure our services are delivered by a professional, well equipped, highly skilled, motivated and well-developed workforce which is able to work safely and whose composition reflects our diverse community’.

We continue to deliver our People Plan, reviewing our progress alongside the latest recommendations from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). We’ve made significant improvements in the quality and accessibility of our people data. This enables managers and senior leaders to make informed decisions and drive cultural improvements across the service.

To better understand staff experiences and feedback, we introduced a focused approach using questionnaires and staff focus groups. This work is helping us respond to findings from both HMICFRS and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) linked to organisational culture.

We’ve also enhanced our reporting systems, giving teams better access to data at all levels -both operational and strategic -so we can track progress and focus on priority areas of the People Plan.

In 2023, an Independent Review was carried out into historic reports of racism and bullying. The report published in November 2024 found that institutional racism was present between 1991 and 2018 but concluded that Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service is no longer institutionally racist. It made 14 recommendations, all of which are being actively addressed and monitored.

Informed by staff feedback, a new GFRS uniform has now been fully rolled out to all operational staff.

We successfully completed a recruitment campaign for wholetime firefighters, supported by our community engagement and Positive Action programme. The successful recruits bring a broad range of experiences and backgrounds, and this intake marks important progress in building a workforce that better reflects the diversity of Gloucestershire. We remain committed to attracting and retaining people from all parts of our community.

To support fairness in our promotion processes, we introduced an independent external assessor to help ensure that our organisational values are embedded throughout the recruitment and selection process to encourage diversity at all levels.

2. Delivering our CRMP in 2024-25

In January, HMICFRS returned to GFRS to assess our progress in addressing areas they had previously identified as a Cause for Concern. The culture-related Cause for Concern has now been discharged - an achievement made possible by the focused and collaborative work of our teams, with HMICFRS recognising the positive improvements we've made around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Finally, we launched our Workplace Charter Awards, which allow peers to nominate and celebrate individuals or teams who actively demonstrate and promote our service values.

Strategic Aim: Prevention and Protection

'Work with our local communities to reduce risks to life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies'

Through our focused Protection and Prevention efforts, GFRS continues to deliver significant value to the communities we serve. By combining robust enforcement with inclusive education and early intervention, we are reducing risk, protecting life and property, and supporting the most vulnerable residents across Gloucestershire.

Protection

GFRS continues to strengthen its protection work, with a clear focus on reducing the likelihood and impact of fires in commercial premises. Following targeted investment and increased staffing, we have successfully discharged the Cause of Concern issued by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). These improvements have enhanced the way we deliver inspections, audits, education, and enforcement, resulting in safer buildings and reduced risk to both the public and our firefighters.

A major enabler of this progress has been the successful upgrade of the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS). This modern platform automates key processes for Fire Safety Inspectors, improves data accuracy and better sharing of risk information within the service. This has enhanced both efficiency and our ability to target the highest-risk premises.

To further support regulatory compliance, we introduced the GFRS Enforcement Plan, which has driven a significant increase in enforcement activity. As part of this, body-worn cameras have been issued to inspectors to improve evidence gathering and transparency during enforcement action.

We have also strengthened our partnership working with other regulators through the introduction of joint inspections and new intelligence-sharing processes. These collaborative efforts allow for earlier identification of non-compliance, ensure consistent regulation across sectors, and improve outcomes for the community.

Engagement with businesses has evolved through the development of sector-specific 'Coach to Comply' sessions (formerly Business Safety Surgeries), which now include post-fire community visits and a customer feedback survey. These sessions support businesses in understanding their responsibilities while also providing GFRS with valuable insights to improve how we work with stakeholders. To ensure inclusivity and accessibility, translation tools have also been introduced to better support compliance within Gloucestershire's diverse business community.

2. Delivering our CRMP in 2024-25

Prevention

Our prevention work is focused on identifying and supporting people at increased risk from fire, working closely with partners and the community to help prevent harm before it occurs.

We continue to build strong relationships with other agencies across Gloucestershire to improve awareness of the risk factors that make people more vulnerable to injury in a fire. Through joint talks, community events, and awareness sessions for frontline professionals, we have improved the flow of information, allowing earlier intervention and more targeted support.

Recognising the challenges posed by fuel poverty, we have provided over 60 heated throws and electric blankets to people living in cold homes without working heating. Alongside this, we continue to make referrals to the Warm and Well service, helping residents to heat their homes safely and access long-term energy efficiency support.

We have also supported community wellbeing by subsidising transport to friendship groups in parts of Gloucester, where people could meet others, enjoy a warm drink, and take part in mobility-enhancing activities. These groups help reduce loneliness, promote independence, and ensure that people are physically able to evacuate safely in an emergency.

To help individuals living in hoarded homes, we funded additional training and support for our Enablement Teams through a partnership with a hoarding charity. This has enabled professionals to work sensitively with residents to clear escape routes and reduce fire hazards, improving safety for individuals and reducing operational risk for firefighters.

In partnership with Wales and West Utilities, we launched a project to install carbon monoxide alarms in homes where they are most needed. This proactive work ensures that vulnerable residents have life-saving detection equipment, helping to prevent serious harm from gas-related incidents.

Our prevention efforts also extend to those at risk of targeted fire-setting. We provided specialist safety advice and equipment to over 130 households experiencing domestic abuse, helping to prevent arson and increase personal safety in the home.

Children and young people remain a key focus of our prevention strategy. Our SkillZONE life skills centre has embedded its StreetWIZE and Serious Violence Duty programme, helping young people understand the risks associated with exploitation, county lines, and violence. We have also delivered outreach education to more than 3,000 children in schools across Gloucestershire, addressing issues like anti-social behaviour and deliberate fire-setting. A further 6,500 children attended SkillZONE in person, where they learned vital safety and life skills through engaging, interactive sessions.

Finally, we were proud to receive national recognition in 2024 through the UK Fleet Champions Awards for our road safety education programmes. This award highlights the high quality of our engagement work and its positive impact on reducing road traffic injuries and fatalities across the county.

2. Delivering our CRMP in 2024-25

Strategic Aim: Response and Resilience

'Respond promptly and efficiently to deal with fires and other emergencies when they occur'.

During 2024/25, GFRS has made measurable progress in improving how we deliver emergency response, ensuring that communities across the county continue to receive timely, effective and efficient services. We have focused on strengthening frontline operations, enhancing firefighter safety and delivering better value to the public.

A detailed review of response arrangements was completed in a previous year using independent third-party modelling. This analysis informed a Cabinet paper that identified opportunities to improve both productivity and efficiency within wholetime working practices by adjusting shift start and finish times. Aligning duty hours more closely with peak activity levels helps ensure we deploy resources when they are most needed - optimising cover, reducing unnecessary standby movements and optimising time management.

As part of this wider review, a revised duty system was identified with the potential to create up to 14 additional posts. These would enhance daytime fire cover for Cinderford and surrounding communities in the Forest of Dean. Strengthening response capability in rural areas during working hours helps reduce response times, supports quicker intervention during critical incidents and improves safety for both residents and firefighters.

To support service delivery, GFRS has introduced specialist equipment and training for responding to individuals with complex needs. Now based centrally in Gloucester, this capability allows crews to better support vulnerable people during emergencies - ensuring that our response is both safe for firefighters and appropriate for those receiving assistance.

New policy guidance has been developed to ensure the efficient use of day-duty Watch Managers. This change enables better supervisory coverage across wholetime and on-call stations, enhances operational resilience and delivers efficiencies within our staffing budget by using leadership capacity more effectively.

GFRS has also developed an IT roadmap, which sets out a clear framework and timeline for updating risk-critical IT systems within our control and mobilisation infrastructure. By investing in modern, reliable technology, we can ensure that emergency calls are handled quickly and that appliances and personnel are mobilised accurately and without delay. These improvements will further enhance service delivery, helping to protect life and property across Gloucestershire.

Finally, in support of Home Office guidance on productivity and efficiency, GFRS is reviewing how operational resources - from frontline firefighters to senior management - are deployed and managed. This includes assessing working practices, duty systems, and overall resourcing to identify where improvements can be made. The aim is to release more capacity for prevention and protection work, maintain high-quality emergency response, and ensure we continue to deliver the best possible value to the public.

3. Service Performance in 2024-25

Performance Processes

We aim to deliver high quality services to the community. We have robust processes and structures in place to ensure the right information is regularly monitored and scrutinised to make sure we know how we are doing at any point in time and can respond to changing circumstances in a timely way.

To help us achieve this we have a broad suite of data and information which is used on a day-to-day basis by teams delivering within Gloucestershire's homes and communities, and a shorter list of key indicators of performance (KPIs) that are reported through our governance framework. This framework is more detailed at an operational and tactical management level and is then provided at a broader level to enable strategic oversight of key performance areas within GFRS (for example at our Strategic Leadership Team meetings). This is subject to further scrutiny within GCC as the Fire Authority, as performance reports move from GFRS into GCC's governance structure. This structure can be seen in the visual on page 12, and quarterly performance reporting into the Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee is publicly available on the GCC website.

Challenging targets are set each year by taking account of national comparisons, previous and current performance, and local pressures and priorities. Currently our performance against these is measured every quarter at a senior management level, and more frequently at an operational level.

To understand how GFRS compares nationally against comparable fire services, we carry out an annual benchmarking exercise that is provided as a report to GFRS SLT and GCC's Corporate Leadership Team and Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee. The most recent report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is publicly available on the GCC website.

We are realising the potential of Microsoft 365 software. PowerBI is a tool that is part of our Microsoft 365 suite that turns data into insights, and during 2024-25 we continued to unlock its potential. We have established new reporting functionality and have designed and delivered suites of 'dashboards' to enable more accessible, timely, and accurate monitoring and reporting.

Performance overview at year end

Half of the Corporate Performance Data Set measures were better than or within tolerance. GFRS reports a core set of seven high level 'Corporate KPIs' through GFRS and into GCC governance structures. Four of these measures were better than target at the end of quarter four (January to March) 2024/25 and three were worse than target.

Average response times to dwelling fires (national definition) at the end of quarter four was 9 minutes 29 seconds and this was better than the same period in the previous year (9 minutes 40 seconds). However, this outturn is worse by 29 seconds than our target of 9 minutes and is also worse than our comparator group average of 9 minutes 1 second. We are always seeking ways to improve on these figures.

The service completed 3,848 'safe and well' visits between April 2024 and March 2025, and 961 in the final quarter of the year. This is equivalent to a rate of 1.46 per 1,000 population, which is worse than our target of 1.56 per 1,000 population, and worse than the same point in 2024 when the rate was 2.03. Although the rate of safe and well visits has fallen, the service continues its

3. Service Performance in 2024-25

positive work to reach the most vulnerable people in our community, where data tells us there is a higher risk of death if a dwelling fire were to occur. In quarter four 2024/25, 85.7% of safe and well visits were to people deemed vulnerable, this is better than our target of 83%. We are continuing to enhance how we are using data to help us target the right places and people; and make the best use of our resources by improving how we are mapping these data visually and aligning them with station areas.

The rate of dwelling fires in quarter four was 1.02 per 10,000 population (equating to 67 dwelling fires), which is better than the forecast which aims to see a reduction in incidents over time. Of those 67 dwelling fires, 91% were accidental (61) which is higher than the same point last year (88%, 66 out of 75 dwelling fires). Overall, there has been a small decrease in dwelling fires in the last 12 months, 289 during 2024-25 down from 301 in 2023/24. The rate of dwelling fires for the year 2024/25 was 4.38 per 10,000 population, which is worse than the comparator group (3.81 per 10,000 population) but the difference is not statistically significant. Our communications and engagement team continues to work proactively to drive high profile and relevant awareness campaigns through various media channels, physical content, and through attendance at events.

There is a requirement for business owners to make sure their buildings are safe. To support this, the service operates a Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) which manages risk by assessing various factors which relate to risk to life. The overall programme, which spans from June 2023 to March 2026, identified 2,343 premises for inspection. At the end of quarter four 2024/25, due to following successful recruitment and training activities, delivery was back on target after a period of falling behind the planned schedule. The current RBIP is on track for completion by the end of 2025/26 and planning is already taking place for the future inspection programme.

During the 2024/25 programme, 103 premises were identified to receive a site-specific risk information (SSRI) visit. These visits are carried out to gather detailed information about specific sites that may pose particular risks in the event of a fire or other emergency. At the end of quarter four, the programme had been completed as per the target (100%, equating to 103 premises).

In total, there were four fatalities from fire in 2024/25. This is double the number of fatalities from fires in 2023/24 and 2022/23 (2 in each year). There is a detailed report being compiled to identify any insights that can inform and improve how we carry out prevention activities or respond to an incident.

Please see Appendix 1 for a further breakdown of performance.

4. Legal and Statutory Responsibilities

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

The Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 sets out the duties and powers of fire authorities. The Fire and Rescue Authority has a number of core functions, which are set out below.

- To promote fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity on steps to be taken to prevent fires, and to give advice on fire prevention and escape planning from buildings in case of fire
- Extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in the event of fires
- Responding to, and rescue of people from road traffic collisions (RTCs) and protecting people from serious harm in the event of RTCs
- To deal with emergencies, other than fires and road traffic accidents

GFRS fulfils these functions through the efforts of our Response, Prevention, and Protection Teams and the effectiveness and efficiency with which these services perform are regularly monitored and scrutinised at both operational and more strategic levels.

Civil Contingencies Act 2004

The Act calls for a Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to be established and the local FRS to be a member. The LRF ensures that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi agency response to emergencies which may have a significant impact on communities. Plans are drawn from risk assessments and have regard for the arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public at the time of an emergency.

In Gloucestershire the LRF is established and functioning well, with effective links directly into senior management at GFRS for ongoing communications and support. GFRS is a key member of the LRF and a vital service in the planning and actioning of multi-agency responses to emergencies situations.

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

GFRS enforces the following fire safety legislation on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Authority (GCC):

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Dangerous Substances (Notification and Marking of Sites) Regulations 1990
- The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007

Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

On 23 January 2023, new fire safety regulations came into force, based on recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. These place duties on 'responsible persons' (RPs) in multi-occupied residential buildings, with actions required depending on building height.

4. Legal and Statutory Responsibilities

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service continues to support building owners by providing guidance on the strengthened requirements. These include the full recording of fire risk assessments, clearer responsibilities during building handovers, and updated standards for fire doors and evacuation procedures. Our fire safety inspectors are trained in these changes and work to ensure accurate, up-to-date safety information is available for all high-risk buildings in the county.

Building Safety Act 2022

The Building Safety Act 2022 takes forward the Government's commitment to a fundamental reform of the building safety system. The Act gives effect to policies set out in the Building a Safer Future consultation response, published in April 2020. It also serves as the vehicle for wider improvements and takes forward further changes to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO), building on the Fire Safety Act 2021. In line with the latest amendments to the Act - including enhanced powers for Remediation Orders and Contribution Orders, mandatory notifications during insolvency, and updated fire safety requirements - Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service continues to strengthen regulatory oversight, work closely with the Building Safety Regulator, and support partners in ensuring compliance across higher-risk premises. We remain committed to promoting safer buildings through proactive engagement, enforcement, and the integration of emerging legislative requirements into our inspection and protection activities.

Fire & Rescue National Framework for England

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England sets out the government's expectations for all fire and rescue services in England. The framework recognises that fire and rescue services are best placed to identify, plan, prepare for and address the risks within the communities they serve. As a County council FRS, the framework requires a CRMP and annual statement of assurance to be developed, approved, and published, plus a medium-term financial plan, an efficiency plan, and a reserves strategy- all of which can be part of the parent authority's documentation.

GFRS also have a responsibility to report annual statistics to the Home Office, the most recent returns are publicly available on the Government's statistical data set webpages, as 'fire statistics data tables'.

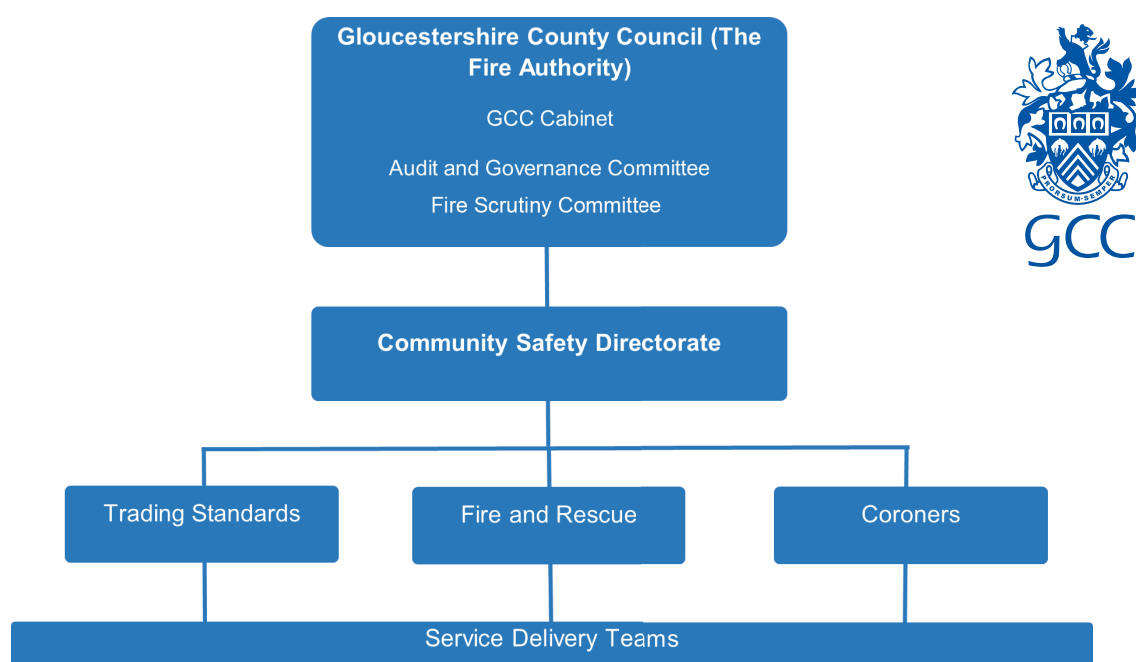
5. Governance and Assurance

The Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Authority, operating under Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), follows a formally approved Code of Governance, aligned with the council's broader governance arrangements. Governance describes how GCC ensures it does the right things, in the right way, for the right people - acting in a timely, inclusive, transparent, honest, and accountable manner. It defines the systems, processes, culture, and values by which the council operates, holds itself accountable, engages with communities, and, where appropriate, leads them GCC Constitution | Gloucestershire County Council

GCC's governance framework merges legislative requirements, governance principles, and management processes. This Code of Corporate Governance - a public declaration of the council's commitment - is based on the CIPFA/SOLACE "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016" and is updated annually. It was reviewed and endorsed alongside the 2024 25 Annual Governance Statement and Draft Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025. A link to GCC's Code of Corporate Governance can be found here: [Code of corporate governance | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

GCC requires all directorates and service areas to conduct an annual self-assessment of compliance against the seven core principles within the framework, formalised as the Annual Governance Statement. This statement, which details the council's performance, control environment, and planned improvements, is published as part of the 2024 25 Statement of Accounts. The statement can be found here: [Statement of accounts | Gloucestershire County Council](#).

High Level Governance Structure



5. Governance and Assurance

GFRS Governance Structure

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service operates within a robust and well-established internal governance framework that supports both operational delivery and strategic oversight. A structured tier of meetings - ranging from operational working groups to strategic leadership - ensures that key information flows effectively across the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to:

- financial planning and budget monitoring,
- performance measurement and reporting,
- risk identification, assessment and mitigation, and
- service planning, programme oversight and project delivery.

This integrated governance structure enables senior leaders to maintain real-time situational awareness, while also identifying and responding to emerging risks, challenges, and opportunities. It ensures that decisions are timely, informed, and aligned with the long-term goals of both the Service and the wider county council.

In addition to internal processes, GFRS is subject to a range of external governance and improvement mechanisms. The Service reports regularly into a dedicated Improvement Board within Gloucestershire County Council, which provides internal challenge, direction, and alignment with council priorities. GFRS is also accountable to the Fire Performance Oversight Group (FPOG), chaired by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). This group provides independent scrutiny of progress against HMICFRS inspection recommendations.

Membership includes representatives from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), the Local Government Association (LGA), and HMICFRS. Their involvement enhances the transparency, objectivity, and rigour of GFRS's governance arrangements - strengthening both accountability and the Service's capacity for continuous improvement. GFRS provides regular reporting into Gloucestershire County Council's overarching governance framework as set out on page 12

6. Finances

Our financial management arrangements meet the highest standards, and we maintain robust process and controls such as:

Monthly management accounts reported via our Financial Management Group, and into GFRS Senior Leadership Team

Quarterly management accounts are produced and reported back to the corporate Finance, Performance and Risk meetings and Scrutiny meetings.

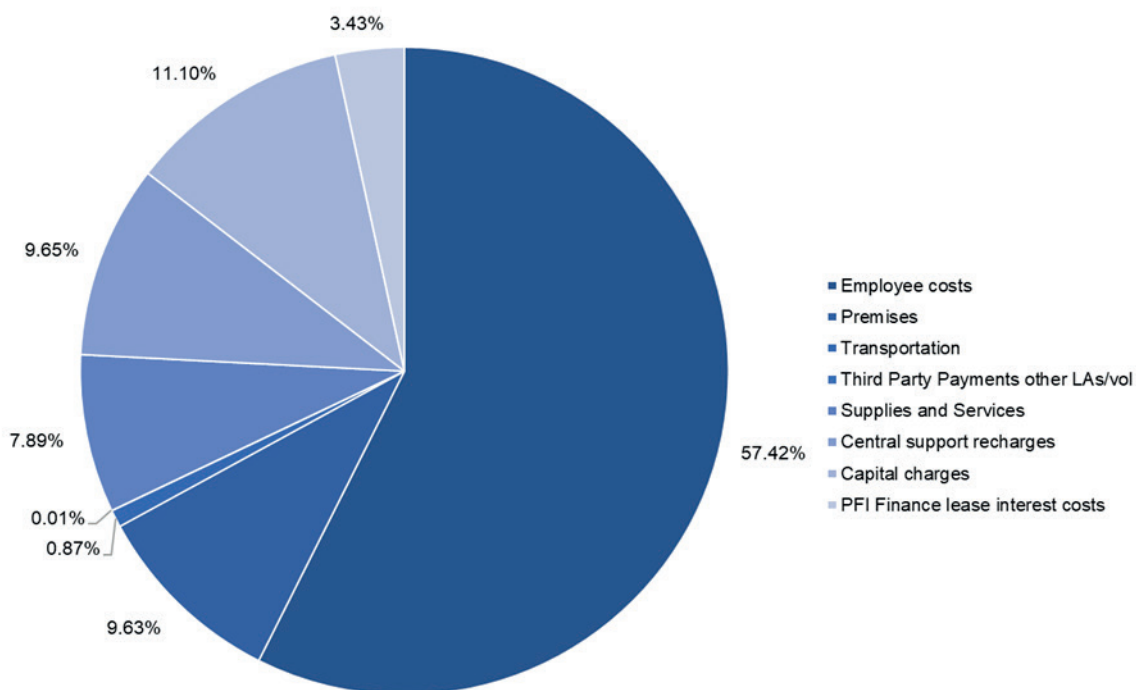
- An annual statement of accounts is produced by external auditors in line with accounting codes of practice and is scrutinised by GFRS senior leaders, and scrutinised and approved by GCC prior to publication.

The latest available annual statement of accounts, and historic documents, are publicly available on the GCC website on the Statement of Accounts webpage.

Financial Expenditure in 2023-2024:

In 2024/2025 GFRS net expenditure was £32,642,000; this figure includes expenditure of £37,642,000 and income of £4,973,000 consisting of specific revenue grants from HM Government and funds received where the Service has charged for activities related to its non-emergency functions. The chart below shows the breakdown by type of expenditure.

Data source: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)



7. Operational

Current Establishment

Workforce Overview

As at the end of the 2024/25 financial year, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service had a total headcount of 501 employees. Our workforce is made up of:

- 38% wholetime firefighters
- 46% on-call firefighters
- 16% support and fire control staff

Workforce Diversity

We are committed to building a workforce that is inclusive, representative and reflective of the communities we serve.

- 30% of our total workforce are women, which is significantly above the national average for all Fire and Rescue Services in England (19.4% – Home Office, April 2022 to March 2023).
- Of our operational firefighters (wholetime and on-call), 27.9% are women, demonstrating real progress in diversifying frontline roles.
- 3.6% of our staff are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is below the national average (6% – Home Office, April 2023 to March 2024) and the local Gloucestershire population average (6.9% – 2021 Census).

Although our workforce does not yet fully reflect the diversity of our communities, we are actively working to improve representation. In 2024-25, we continued to implement positive action initiatives, including targeted engagement to underrepresented groups as part of our wholetime recruitment campaign in November 2024. As a result of these efforts, we were pleased to see increased diversity among successful candidates, including improved representation of both women and individuals from ethnically diverse backgrounds. This outcome demonstrates encouraging progress toward our goal of building a more inclusive and representative workforce.

Workforce Structure and Operational Deployment

GFRS employs staff on a mix of full-time and part-time contracts. As a predominantly rural fire and rescue service (as defined by HMICFRS), we make extensive and effective use of on-call firefighters, particularly in areas where incident risk and population density do not require full-time crewing.

Fire Station Coverage

We operate 21 fire stations across Gloucestershire:

- 16 stations are staffed exclusively by on-call firefighters
- 3 stations operate a mixed model of wholetime and on-call staffing
- 2 stations are staffed entirely by wholetime firefighters

7. Operational

This flexible crewing model ensures that resources are matched to local risk and demand, maintaining effective emergency cover while delivering value for money.

On-Call Firefighters: Contribution and Community Benefits

On-call firefighters are trained professionals who live or work in the communities they serve. They are deployed flexibly across a wide range of activities, including:

- **Providing emergency response** in their local area, improving response times in remote or rural communities.
- **Delivering community safety education and prevention advice**, building trust and resilience within their own local areas.
- **Crewing specialist appliances** such as water rescue or wildfire units, based on additional training and local risk.
- **Supporting operational resilience**, by covering short-notice absences or surges in demand and working alongside wholetime colleagues during major incidents.
- **Co-responding to medical emergencies**, often arriving ahead of ambulances and providing life-saving early interventions.
- **Supporting our prevention teams**, including Safe and Well visits, home fire safety checks, and public engagement initiatives.

Our on-call model delivers real social and economic benefits, including:

- Keeping fire stations open and active in smaller communities
- Promoting local employment
- Enhancing community safety through visible, local role models
- Providing cost-effective emergency coverage without compromising service standards

Control and Support Staff

Our Fire Control team is an integral and often unsung part of our frontline emergency response. Based at our Tri-Service Emergency Control Centre, Fire Control staff are responsible for:

- Handling 999 emergency calls, often during high-pressure and life-threatening situations
- Mobilising the appropriate resources to incidents across Gloucestershire and supporting mutual aid to neighbouring services
- Providing life-saving guidance over the phone, including fire survival advice, CPR instructions, or reassurance to vulnerable callers until crews arrive
- Managing incident communications, ensuring up-to-date and accurate information is relayed between crews, officers, and partner agencies
- Supporting large-scale or multi-agency incidents, including coordinating resource deployment, liaising with other emergency services, and managing radio traffic

7. Operational

Fire Control staff are highly trained, technically skilled and emotionally resilient, working calmly and decisively, often in dynamic and demanding environments. Their contribution ensures that our operational response is safe, efficient and effective from the moment a call is received.

Our support staff also play a crucial role in maintaining the daily operations of the Service. They deliver core functions such as:

- Operational planning and performance management
- HR, administration and logistics
- Fleet maintenance and equipment servicing
- Procurement, stores and facilities management

During major incidents or periods of sustained operational demand, both Fire Control and support staff consistently go above and beyond, demonstrating commitment, flexibility and professionalism to ensure the public receives the highest standard of service.

Collaboration and Mutual Aid

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) remains committed to working in partnership with other organisations to ensure our communities have access to services that are efficient, effective, and provide best value. Collaboration is not only a statutory requirement under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 - it is a core part of how we maximise our resources and deliver broader social value for the people of Gloucestershire.

We continue to build on our collaborative approach by sharing facilities, expertise, and responsibilities with emergency service partners. GFRS co-locates key operational functions, such as control rooms and fleet workshops, with other emergency services to improve communication and coordination. We have extended this model into rural areas by sharing fire station space in Newent and Winchcombe with Gloucestershire Constabulary, enhancing visibility and coverage in those communities. We also co-locate with South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWAST) and Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA), strengthening our joint response capabilities and promoting efficient use of public assets.

Beyond sharing facilities, we work closely with partners on a wide range of joint safety initiatives. These include collaborative work on road safety education, safeguarding vulnerable individuals, and an agreement with both Telecare and SWAST to respond to specific calls for assistance. These arrangements allow us to use our existing capabilities to deliver a more coordinated and timely response, ultimately improving outcomes for individuals in need.

7. Operational

Each collaboration is underpinned by clear agreements - such as Memoranda of Understanding and partnership contracts - which set out the purpose, responsibilities, and governance arrangements. These are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain aligned with the needs of our communities and the objectives of the service.

To support oversight and strategic direction, the Gloucestershire Emergency Services Collaboration Board - comprising GFRS, SWAST, Gloucestershire Constabulary, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner - meets regularly to ensure partnership efforts remain effective and focused on shared goals. This board supports the legal duty to seek collaborative opportunities and ensures that services work together where it is in the mutual interest of efficiency or effectiveness.

Mutual Aid and Assistance

In addition to our local partnerships, GFRS meets its statutory duties under Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 by maintaining formal mutual aid agreements with all six neighbouring fire and rescue services. These legal arrangements ensure we can share resources and provide support across borders during major or complex incidents.

This reciprocal approach enhances our collective resilience, ensuring the fastest possible response regardless of geographical boundaries. It also provides greater flexibility and capacity to manage large-scale emergencies, keeping people and communities safe during times of greatest need.

Community Benefit

The overarching aim of all our collaborative and mutual aid arrangements is to serve the people of Gloucestershire more effectively. By working together with partner organisations, we are better positioned to respond quickly, use public funds wisely, and deliver services that are joined-up and responsive to local needs. These partnerships allow us to extend our reach, reduce duplication, and focus our resources where they can have the greatest impact.

Operational Assurance

GFRS recognise the importance of continuous improvement in all the services it delivers, with particular focus on the safe and effective delivery of emergency service response.

Operational Assurance is used to promote workforce learning by identifying good practice and where improvements can be made in the delivery of our service. It allows the service to identify trends and provide evidence to guide future plans, especially in the areas of training, operational policy and investment. This work not only supports local learning but includes reporting through the national channels of Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) and the National Operational Learning (NOL).

7. Operational

Audit and Assurance

His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS):

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses and reports on the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services (FRSs) to make communities safer. They ask questions they believe the public wish to have answered, and publish their findings, conclusions and recommendations in an accessible form, using their expertise to interpret the evidence.

HMICFRS provide authoritative information to allow the public to compare the performance of their FRS against others, and to determine whether performance has improved or deteriorated over time. Recommendations are designed to bring about improvements in the service provided to the public.

GFRS was inspected by the HMICFRS as part of the third cycle of inspections that began in February 2023. The final Round 3 report informed a comprehensive Improvement Plan that has been carefully planned out, prioritised, and has been successfully progressed over the following years as part of our continual improvement journey, as a service always striving to be better. The delivery has been co-ordinated and supported by a dedicated team and overseen by GFRS SLT, a joint GFRS and GCC Improvement Board, and further GCC governance structures.

We have already made great progress with two of the three Causes of Concern being resolved in January 2025 now resolved, with the HMICFRS noting the significant progress made. We are hopeful that the third Cause of Concern may be considered as resolved when the HMICFRS visit us again in July 2025.

County Council Audit:

GCC routinely undertakes an internal audit of functions and services that are carried out on their behalf.

Audit Risk Assurance (ARA) undertook a risk assessment of GFRS as part of our audit planning work in March 2023. As part of this, GFRS was not assessed to have areas for inclusion in ARA's Internal Audit Plan for 2024-25.

ARA provided an Acceptable level of assurance for GCC as a whole for 2022-23, and this was reported to the Audit and Governance Committee in July 2023.

8. Looking Forward

The operating environment

GFRS is delivering and planning within an external operating environment that is subject to frequent and ongoing national and local changes. The diagram shows the broad pressures and insights that shape and influence our emerging Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2026-2030. It is vital that these are regularly assessed and discussed to identify both short and long-term risks and opportunities, ensuring we are well positioned to address either. Our Leadership Team regularly assesses our operating environment and maintains a PESTLE assessment as part of its planning and delivery business cycle.

We make use of publications such as the National Risk Register and State of Fire and Rescue report; and external datasets such as census and Exeter data to better understand the communities we serve. Local knowledge, insights, and incident data support us to be able to understand and assess our local community risks and tailor the delivery of resources and approaches to respond to those effectively.



We have also carried out engagement activities on our Community Risk Profile in the autumn of 2024. This ensured we had insight from residents and stakeholders to validate that profile.

8. Looking Forward

2025-26 key activities

Our CRMP outlines the main objectives we will achieve over the next 2 years and can be found here:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/glosfire/about-us/community-risk-management-plan-crm-2022-26/>

Looking forward at the year ahead we have challenging targets for performance and a number of priority areas for delivery, these include:

- ✓ Delivery of existing HMI Improvement Plan and response to new HMI inspection
- ✓ Continued delivery of the People Plan (Cultural Improvement)
- ✓ Delivery of Fire Standards improvement plans and embedding self-assessment process
- ✓ Implementation of National Operational Guidance
- ✓ Development of CRMP 2026+
- ✓ Delivery of year three of CRMP 22-26; including:
 - Severn Park Training Centre Review
 - Response Review Consultation
 - Specialist PPE
 - Emergency Service Network Programme
 - Front line appliance review
 - Incident Command Unit Review
 - Aerial appliance review

9. Have your say

If you would like to comment on the activities of Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service or you are concerned on any fire safety matter, please visit our website for further information: -

<http://www.glosfire.gov.uk>

Should you wish to make any further comment, please contact us using the following details: -

Chief Fire Officer
Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service Fire
Service HQ
Quayside House
Quay Street
Gloucester GL1 2TZ
Telephone: 01452 888777
Email: fire@glosfire.gov.uk

Appendix 1: 2024-25 performance

The table below contains our highest level of performance indicators, our Corporate KPIs. These are reported through GFRS and into GCC for scrutiny and are part of a wider suite of indicators.

Corporate Performance Data Set, as reported April 2024	Good performance = high or low	Outturn quarter 4 2023-24	Outturn at quarter 1 2024-25	Outturn at quarter 2 2024-25	Outturn at quarter 3 2024-25	Outturn at quarter 4 2024-25	Improved / same / worsened compared to Q4 2023-24	March 2025 target	RAG
Response									
Average response time to dwelling fires (national definition)	Low	9.40	9.07	8.00	10.36	9.29	improved	9:00	Red
% of site-specific risk information visits (SSRIs) annual programme of work completed	High	n/a	27.2%	45.6%	74.0%	100%	n/a	100%	Green
Prevention									
Rate of safe and well visits per 1,000 population	High	2.03	1.41	1.49	1.48	1.46	worsened	1.56	Red
% safe and well visits undertaken to those deemed vulnerable	High	n/a	88.2%	89.0%	88.4%	85.7%	n/a	83%	Green
Rate of dwelling fires per 10,000 population	Low	n/a	1.12	0.94	1.30	1.02	n/a	1.03	Green
Number of fatalities from all fires	Low	n/a	2	0	1	1	n/a	0	Red
Protection									
% annual risk-based inspection programme (RBIPs) audits completed	High	14.8%	20.5%	31.1%	44.7%	55.1%	n/a	49%	Green

