



West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Statement of Assurance 2023-24



Ownership: Corporate Services

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Protected: OFFICIAL

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Introduction

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (WYFRA) is required to produce an annual Statement of Assurance as part of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#). The purpose of the statement is to provide independent assurance to communities and the Government that the service is being delivered efficiently and effectively. Whilst the Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England, it does not prescribe operational matters as these are determined locally by fire and rescue authorities.

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) has published [Your Fire & Rescue Service 2022-25](#) which outlines the key priorities and builds upon the delivery and achievements of our previous Service Plan. A report on the programme of change is produced regularly to focus the work of WYFRS and to manage and monitor performance in order to achieve our ambition of 'Making West Yorkshire Safer'.

This Statement of Assurance provides assurance that WYFRA is providing an efficient, effective and value for money service to the community of West Yorkshire in its financial, governance and operational matters.

Financial

In accordance with the 2023/24 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) for 2022/23 and the Accounting Codes of Practice published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), WYFRA has produced the [Statement of Accounts 2023/24 \(the accounts are subject to final audit by Grant Thornton\)](#). As the Authority is funded by public money, it has a responsibility to ensure this money is used lawfully, effectively, efficiently, and economically.

The Statement of Accounts 2022/23 have not been audited by our incumbent external auditors, Deloitte LLP. The accounts are subject to an audit backstop which means that if they are not audited by a specified date (backstop), they will be subject to a qualified audit opinion. The previous government undertook consultation with the local government sector and introduced a backstop date of the 30th of September 2024 by which all outstanding audits must have either been completed or given a modified opinion. This date is currently subject to review following a change in government in July 2024.

There is a new reporting requirement from 2021/22, which is a separate Value for Money report which is required to be completed three months after the audit of the Statement of Accounts is complete. The 2022/23 Value for Money report is currently outstanding.

The [Annual Governance Statement](#), which is included within the Statement of Accounts, sets out the systems and procedures that are in place to ensure that the Authority's resources are used in accordance with the law and provide best value for the tax payer.

The Authority's governance framework comprises systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan which was approved by the Full Authority in February 2023 shows that the Authority has a balanced budget for 2023/24. All Fire Authorities in England were given powers by the Secretary of State to increase the precept by £5 on a Band D property. This additional precept income enabled the Authority to add £3.4m of growth to the revenue budget. West Yorkshire remains the fourth lowest precepting fire authority in England with a Band D property charge of £77.18.

In terms of Central Government funding, the Authority received another one-year financial settlement in 2023/24. In addition, the Authority received additional grants to fund work relating to Building Safety Reform and Fire Protection.

The Authority has healthy reserves that can be used to support the revenue budget with a general fund balance of £5m and earmarked reserves of £36.4m at the 1st of April 2023.

Internal Audit

The Authority's Director of Finance and Procurement has a statutory duty to provide a continuous and effective internal audit. This internal audit service is provided under a service level agreement with Kirklees Council, which provides approximately 160 days of audit time each year.

Internal Audit assesses the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's risk management system and internal control environment against an annual audit plan. The plan targets areas of highest risk as determined by the Authority through its risk management process and the resulting risk management matrix. Auditing of these risks accounts for approximately half of the available audit resource, with the other half involving the review of key financial systems and processes. The internal audit plan also considers audit areas where most value can be added.

Internal audit 'opinions' based on the level of assurance concerning each risk, system or process control is reported to the Authority's Audit Committee on a quarterly basis. The Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 resulted in all audits concluding with a 'substantial' or 'adequate' assurance, which confirms a robust framework of all key controls exists, that are likely to ensure that objectives will be achieved. Internal Audit provides recommendations where it is thought that risks can be reduced, and the control environment improved.

The audit plan and subsequent audits ensure an independent review is conducted at least once in a year of the effectiveness of the Authority's systems of internal control, which assists with the formulation of the Annual Governance Statement.

Transparency

In accordance with the [Local Government's Transparency Code 2015](#), WYFRA is committed to greater openness and financial transparency through the publication, on the website, of information regarding local decision making and how public money is being spent. This includes payments for goods and services to external bodies and suppliers above £500, details of salaries and allowances paid to staff and Members, transactions made via Government Procurement Cards, tender and procurement information, details of land and assets owned by WYFRA and details relating to Trade Unions. We ensure that the publication of any data complies with the Data Protection Act. All data is as accurate as possible at time of publication.

The data is routinely published on either a quarterly or annual basis in accordance with the requirements of the Code. All published data can be viewed on the [Data Transparency](#) section of the website.

The Authority makes information publicly available and promotes a spirit of openness and accessibility adopting an approach of making information available and a commitment to sharing information whenever it is appropriate in line with legislation. This commitment is described in the [Access to Information Policy](#).

Governance

WYFRA has an approved [constitution](#) which sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local citizens. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Authority to determine.

The Authority is composed of 22 members, all of whom are a Councillor elected to one of the five constituent district councils within West Yorkshire: Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. The overriding duty of Members of the Authority is to the whole community of West Yorkshire.

To strengthen Government arrangements and provide greater transparency and accountability, WYFRA has appointed an Independent Member to the Audit Committee in line with CIPFA 'good practice'.

Members have an approved [Code of Conduct](#) designed to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties and are required to comply with the [Principles of Public Life](#).

Codes of Conduct and Protocols included within the Constitution are:

- Code of Conduct for Members
- Officer Code of Conduct
- Member/Officer Relations and Procedural Protocol
- Officer Employment Procedure Rules

- Protocol regarding the use of Authority resources by Members
- [Compliments and Complaints Policy](#)
- [Whistle Blowing Policy](#)

In accordance with the Code of Corporate Governance and pursuant to the corporate performance monitoring processes an annual [Corporate Health Report](#) is submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the Authority to enable Members to scrutinise and challenge performance. A [Performance Management Report](#) is also presented to each Full Authority meeting to enable ongoing performance monitoring, scrutiny and challenge.

Information Governance

The Authority has developed and implemented a robust information governance framework for the effective management and protection of information held by WYFRA.

WYFRA ensures that the Service has appropriate governance arrangements in place and that risk and performance are being effectively managed. There is an Information Governance Framework and an Information Risk Policy which sets out how this is achieved.

The Authority has a designated statutory Data Protection Officer (DPO) and a Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) who ensures legal compliance with data protection requirements.

Data Protection audits are carried out across the Service via departments self-assessing against relevant criteria as part of the Service Assurance process. This ensures appropriate arrangements are in place.

Information governance describes the approach within which accountability, standards, policies, and procedures are developed and implemented, to ensure that all information created, obtained, or received by WYFRA is held and used appropriately.

The Authority has an [Information Governance Strategy and Policy](#) which describes its commitment to ensuring effective information governance as a means to enable the service to ensure it can make the best use of its information and to provide a solid foundation to enable it to be open and transparent.

At the same time, it takes account of and supports WYFRA's operational objectives and ensures that a balance is struck between operational and compliance objectives.

The Authority has achieved excellent audit reports in respect of the handling and processing of information including the personal information relating to customers. This includes the achievement of the highest level of 'Compliance Plus' within the annual [Customer Service Excellence report](#) for the strategic approach to Information Management particularly relating to our customers' privacy and confidentiality. This standard was first achieved in 2009 and has been maintained at this level since then.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on 25 May 2018, extending the privacy rights granted to EU individuals. The GDPR placed many new obligations upon

organisations that process personal data. The Data Protection Act 2018 incorporated the GDPR and brought it into UK law.

An audit of the Authority's data protection compliance was undertaken by Kirklees Internal Audit in December 2020/January 2021 which resulted in 'Substantial Assurance' for the arrangements in place.

WYFRA introduced a structured approach to Information Security (IS) aligned with ISO 27001 and His Majesty's Government Security Policy Framework. This approach includes regular information governance audits, access permission reviews, mandatory data security training, and ongoing communication of data protection advice.

The strategic Information Governance and Security Group (IGSG) and the operational Corporate Information Management Group (CIMG) promote information governance standards across all departments. Regular reviews and updates to policies ensure compliance with data protection regulations.

WYFRA utilises the Information Commissioner's Office Accountability Framework self-assessment, demonstrating strong adherence to GDPR. The continual use of Data Protection Impact Assessments and internal communications support data protection and security responsibilities across the service.

All information security incidents are monitored, and staff are required to report incidents to mitigate risks. The Records Retention Schedule is regularly reviewed and updated, ensuring adherence and reducing unnecessary documentation.

In summary, WYFRA's comprehensive Information Governance framework and proactive measures ensure effective information management, legal compliance, and risk mitigation, fostering transparency and operational efficiency across the organisation.

Risk and Business Continuity

WYFRA has a [Risk Management Strategy and Policy](#) and [Business Continuity Management Strategy and Policy](#) which provide clear and defined strategies to be implemented, adhered to and developed to aid achievement of the following objectives:

- Implement and maintain risk policy arrangements including a risk framework and processes, which will enable the organisation to identify, assess and manage strategic and corporate risks in an effective, systematic and consistent manner. This also assists in embedding a risk management culture.
- Implement and maintain a business continuity management system to ensure that key services can be maintained in the event of any disruption that threatens the delivery of services to the community of West Yorkshire.
- Protect the organisation from disruptive events and service interruptions and facilitate a co-ordinated recovery of organisational services and critical functions during and following such events.

An update on risk and business continuity is provided at each quarterly Audit Committee meeting, and a full report on progress and future developments is provided on an annual basis.

Operational (Service Delivery)

WYFRA operates within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework and the key documents setting this out are:

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England
- The Fire Safety Act 2021

At strategic level, Community Risk Management Planning is an integral part of the business planning process in West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS). The Service's strategic assessment of risk covers all foreseeable risks within the County and establishes baseline standards of service.

In February 2022, Authority members approved a report submitted by the Director of Service Support presenting the draft 'Your Fire & Rescue Service 2022-2025' document which replaced 'Your Fire & Rescue Service 2020-23'. The revised plan was updated to reflect the recent national fire standard for Community Risk Management Planning, the Core Code of Ethics for fire and rescue services, and our updated organisational priorities and programme of change.

[Your Fire & Rescue Service 2022-25](#) sets out the strategic priorities for the Service and provides an overview of how we intend to achieve our ambition of 'Making West Yorkshire Safer' and meet the challenges facing the Service between 2022/2025. The document also provides the overarching business case for delivering prevention, protection, response and resilience, and sets out how we aim to use our resources to manage the risks we face in a proportionate manner.

In 2022, a project was initiated which saw an investment in 34 whole time firefighter posts. In addition, we commenced a review of all operational staffing with the objective being to improve the flexibility, resilience, and efficiency of staffing on wholetime fire stations. To achieve our objectives and to increase productivity, we reviewed:

- The requirement to use overtime to backfill shortfalls in staffing.
- How firefighters over and above standard staffing can support risk reduction initiatives and operational training without impacting fire cover.
- The role of stations and the district team in leave and absence management.
- How the Employee Resource Team support district teams with leave and absence management.
- The management of non-establishment posts.

- Recruitment, retention, and development of 'Safe to Command' firefighters.
- Training budgets and training course bookings.
- The distribution and management of specialisms, including driver numbers across watches.

Customer Service Excellence

Since 1998, WYFRA has consistently attained the Charter Mark standard; the Government's national standard of customer service excellence for organisations delivering public services. In August 2009 the Authority invited an assessment against the new Customer Service Excellence standard, which was being phased in and which has now fully replaced the Charter Mark standard. The Customer Service Excellence standard is derived from the core concepts of customer focus and the delivery of excellent customer service and assesses, in great detail, the following areas:

- Customer Insight
- The Culture of the Organisation
- Information and Access
- Delivery
- Timeliness and Quality of Service

WYFRA has an independent assessment against the standard annually and in 2023 was awarded full compliance against the 57 elements of the standard including 33 'Compliance Plus' awards, which are awarded for behaviours or practices that exceed the requirements of the standard and are viewed as exceptional or as an exemplar for others – either within the organisation or in the wider public service arena. The summary of the [Customer Service Excellence report](#) clearly demonstrates the continuous commitment of the Authority to provide an excellent service to customers.

Communication and Engagement

WYFRS follows the Government's Consultation Principles 2018 in delivery and promotion of its consultations. The principles can be found [here](#).

Service Delivery Performance

Service delivery standards are established in 'Your Fire and Rescue Service 2022-25'. Performance against targets are reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority on a regular basis, with the latest annual [Performance Management Report for 2023/24](#) submitted in June 2023.

[Your Fire & Rescue Service 2022-25](#) includes reference to Risk Based Planning Assumptions (RBPA) for responding to emergencies. These are used to ensure resources are in the best place relative to risk and demand, with life risk incidents being the priority. The RBPAs are monitored at the quarterly Fire Cover Review Group.

The impact of any proposed changes can be measured and communicated by reference to the RBPA down to Lower Layer Super Output Area level. These were used in comprehensive consultation on changes to emergency cover in 2011; 2012; 2016; [2019](#), and during the more recent [2020](#) Cleckheaton Fire Station relocation proposal. These changes enable WYFRS to provide appropriate emergency cover and fire prevention activity whilst delivering significant financial savings.

Firefighter productivity activities are aligned to the delivery of 'Your Fire & Rescue Service 2022-25'. To enable us to deliver this work efficiently and effectively we understand wholetime firefighter capacity on each of our wholetime fire stations, taking into consideration the duty system, time allocated to station work, training, risk reduction activities and time spent in attendance at operational incidents.

OneView, our new bespoke performance management system is a series of intuitive dashboards that provide a comprehensive picture of WYFRS' progress towards achieving our strategic priorities and ambition of 'Making West Yorkshire Safer.'

Balanced activity reports are produced which consider performance across the whole Service, displaying clear governance and performance reporting. It is a more efficient way of collating, reporting, and analysing data.

Service performance is monitored through a set of key performance indicators that are reported to members of the Authority. All reports are available on the WYFRS website.

As part of the 2021/22 Spending Review, the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association proposed that across Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) in England, the fire and rescue sector could create 2% of non-pay efficiencies and increase productivity by 3% by 2024/25.

Our [Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2023/24](#) details how the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority aim to deliver efficiencies and increase productivity against national targets set for the 2021/22 - 2024/25 spending review period, and demonstrates how we add social and economic value through our response to fire and non-fire emergencies and through our daily risk reduction activity.

WYFRA discharges its statutory duties in relation to community safety, fire prevention and fire protection, including enforcement of relevant statutory regulations in accordance with the [Safer Communities Protection Strategy](#), [Safer Communities Prevention Strategy](#), and [Response and Resilience Strategy](#), with firefighters and specialist staff being deployed across districts where most needed based on risk.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carried out formal inspections to assess how we deliver our service in June 2019 and October and November 2021 following which we were rated 'Good' for all three pillars on both occasions. HMICFRS stated that they were pleased with the performance of WYFRS in keeping people safe and secure from fires and other risks and pleased with the progress made in most areas since

their initial pilot inspection in 2018. Our third HMICFRS inspection was carried out in January 2024.

The WYFRA's Service Assurance Framework details the high-level expectations of the service relating to:

- Compliance with the National Framework 2018.
- The assessment of performance via His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
- The annual completion of the Service Assurance process.
- A comprehensive approach to the assurance of service delivery through our Reality Testing of incidents process.

This is summarised within the Service Improvement and Assurance Report and provides assurance that the organisation is performing effectively and efficiently.

Agreements and Mutual Aid Arrangements

Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provide clear instructions for fire and rescue services regarding mutual assistance and the discharge of functions by others. West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority have Section 13 and 16 agreements with:

- Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
- North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority
- Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority
- Humberside Fire and Rescue Authority

These agreements are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary and are supplemented by specific agreements on specialist services, for example aerial appliances, and WYFRA is a major contributor to national and regional resilience with the capability to respond to major disasters and terrorist attacks. We are the only service in the country to host every National Resilience asset. In addition, we are one of the main providers of national resilience training under the national resilience distributed learning (NRDL) model.

Future Improvements

Our services are funded by the taxpayer; we have a legal duty to ensure the services we provide offer value for money to the taxpayer and meet the requirements of an ever-changing society.

WYFRA's annual budget is £104.3 million and despite cuts of £26.2 million since 2010, we believe that we are providing a high-quality affordable service for our communities.

During this time, we have redesigned our Service, moving fire station locations, removing fire engines, and ensuring resources remain allocated appropriate to risk and demand.

Through the implementation of smarter working and the introduction of an improved budget management system, the service has achieved a balanced budget. This means that our expenditure is matched by our funding and there is no need to use any of our reserves.

Our Community Risk Management Plan, Medium-Term Financial Plan and Workforce Plan are now aligned, and a range of financial planning scenarios have been produced which ensures a joined-up approach to the analysis of risk and the deployment of resources. Following budget approval, we recently increased firefighter numbers to enable us to provide increased capacity within our operational response service.

All our people are fundamental to WYFRS delivering our ambition. We will continue to develop the culture of the organisation and ensure our service values and the Core Code of Ethics for fire and rescue services are used to guide our behaviour and decisions. Our cultural development will be supported by our leadership and development programme, and there will be a clear focus on diversity and inclusion within our recruitment processes.

We have embarked on a programme of change that will realise new, innovative, and more effective ways of working over the forthcoming years. Moving forward with our programme of continuous improvement, we will focus on efficiency and effectiveness without compromising public safety.

Our current programme of change for 2023/24 includes:

Birkenshaw Site Redevelopment

Deliver a modern, energy-efficient Headquarters with a purpose-built training arena.

New Fire Engine Fleet

Introduction of a new fleet of modern fire appliances with provision to reduce firefighter exposure to contamination.

Keighley Fire Station

The construction of a new fire station on the existing site to replace an oversized and outdated fire station.

Halifax Fire Station

The construction of a new fire station on the existing site to replace an oversized and outdated fire station.

Huddersfield Fire Station

The construction of a new fire station on the existing site to replace an oversized and outdated fire station.

OneView Programme

Performance management programme to provide a transparent, timely and flexible method of sharing performance data with our colleagues, partners, and the communities.

Grenfell Programme

We will continue to implement the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report and await the outcomes and recommendations of the phase 2 report.

Fire Control

The existing mobilising system is approaching end of life. To meet the ever-changing demands placed on WYFRS and to continue to provide a resilient, effective service, a new mobilising system is required.

Fire Standards Programme

Implementation of nationally agreed fire standards across Fire and Rescue Service core functions.

Accessible Content Toolkit Project

Ensuring that digital content, including websites, mobile apps and documents that are shared electronically are accessible to all audiences.

Command Support Software

The project will deploy a command support system including hardware and software that will improve situational awareness of our incident commanders at larger scale incidents.

Special Projects Implementation

Following the conclusion of the Special Projects research phase on Aerial Appliances, Fire Appliances and Fire Station Design, the project has moved onto the implementation phase.

Office 365

Technical requirements to keep Microsoft office products up to date with the latest features and security. This includes the implementation of SharePoint Online, MS Teams and some Viva Products which will enhance work productivity and collaboration.

Data Centre

The relocation of our backup data centre which is required for disaster recovery and business continuity purposes.

MDT software

Replacement of Lego MDT software to coincide with the go live of the replacement mobilising system.

The annual planning cycle encourages teams to plan and consider activities and initiatives a year in advance of implementation. This means that stakeholder engagement is carried out earlier, involving those who are impacted and enabling change within the organisation. This assists with capacity planning and benefits realisation from the programme of change.

As the risk from fire has reduced, an increase in other types of emergencies is evident, for example:

- The terror attack at Manchester Arena
- The impact of climate change and severe weather
- COVID 19 Pandemic 2020/21

A review of foreseeable risks has taken place on the back of these incidents to assess their impacts and to plan for them accordingly. The outcomes of the review have been captured within the Community Risk Management Plan.

Since the tragic events of Grenfell, WYFRS has played a significant role in supporting the Government and the National Fire Chiefs Council in assessing and developing new ways of working to bring about much needed change in legislation through work we have carried out with the Protection Board.

The introduction of the new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and the Gateway regime will provide a new mechanism to ensure new buildings are built correctly, and existing occupied premises meet the same stringent safety standards. Our Protection team are prepared to enable them to support the work of the new BSR on a regional basis.

Within the building safety environment, the Authority continues to respond to the needs of business and strives to ensure the safety of relevant persons is maintained. Where we have evidence that this is not the case, we utilise our powers of enforcement to bring about a safe environment.

The future of fire protection continues to change and WYFRS is committed to ensuring that our team is ready and able to pick up the challenges we face. Our commitment is demonstrated within our CRMP and to ensure we achieve this; we continue to invest and recruit into our Fire Protection team structure. This will ensure we have the right number of people in the teams to continue to successfully deliver our statutory duties.

In recent years the dedication and commitment of WYFRS staff has saved many lives within West Yorkshire. Working with our communities as part of an intelligence led approach, we aim to stop fires before they happen.

We model the risk of fire across our communities, utilising the very strong correlation between the likelihood of fire and deprivation. We have embedded this over the last three years and building on this, we have introduced new ways of identifying individuals who are at the greatest risk of fire and being injured by fire, wherever they live within West Yorkshire. This allows us to target assistance to those at greatest risk to ensure our valuable resources are having the greatest impact on community safety.

To build on this work, we are utilising national guidance that has been released through the Definition of Risk Programme to profile all risk, not just risk from fire, across West Yorkshire.

Reducing the impact of climate related incidents such as flooding, and wildfire continues to be a priority for the Service. We have worked collaboratively with local partners to proactively challenge irresponsible behaviour, provide safety advice and where necessary responded quickly and effectively to mitigate the impacts on our communities.

Working with other organisations brings value to the service WYFRS provides. There is an ongoing programme of collaboration to improve how we work with the police and ambulance service and evaluation is being carried out on a wide range of opportunities to make more efficient use of resources. This includes sharing buildings, training, and staff to enhance community safety work, improve planning for emergencies, and supporting emergency response. The focus of Tri-Service collaboration moving forwards will be reducing risk and demand through data sharing.

Working with local authorities, health teams, community groups and voluntary organisations to support the most vulnerable people in our communities continues. WYFRS are also working more closely than ever with other fire and rescue service partners on projects such as the recent joint procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for firefighters and an upcoming procurement of multi-role PPE.

We are investing heavily in the health and safety of our firefighters by providing new PPE, appliances, and station upgrades to reduce the risks of contaminants from smoke on their health.

The importance of good health and wellbeing, as opposed to just safety can sometimes be overlooked, but plays a significant role in service delivery. The emphasis on improving mental health and wellbeing by improving our procedures and training, whilst developing a more robust framework of welfare support, continues to be a priority.

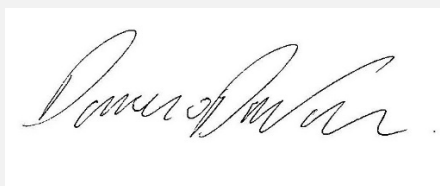
Whilst the traditional fire calls have reduced over the past 20 years, we are seeing a more diverse range of incident types leading to increased call volumes including helping multi-agency partners. The training priority continues to be to ensure that realistic training and shared learning continues to be developed to bridge this gap.

The Authority has a risk-based training strategy and continues to invest in a central training programme to make sure firefighter skills are kept at the highest level. We are investing in state-of-the-art training facilities at our Headquarters as well as training our firefighters at the Fire Service College to provide realistic training opportunities.

Our Firefighter Safety Team work to reduce the risk to firefighters and improve knowledge and understanding of tactical options and National Operational Guidance. In addition, WYFRS have procured new equipment to mitigate the rising threat of lithium-ion batteries and electric vehicle fires and the Firefighter Safety Team have provided training to all operational crews.

The Digital and Data Strategy 2021-25 continues to deliver an ambitious programme of change to meet the needs of our Service's ambition. The Strategy maximises the use of electronic ways of working, simplifies systems and produces a consistent user experience reducing repetition and exploiting the value of the information held within a secure and resilient infrastructure. This strategy will be key to supporting our focus on performance management and smarter working for the year ahead.

This Statement of Assurance is signed on 27 September 2024 on behalf of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren O'Donovan', is displayed within a white rectangular box.

Councillor Darren O'Donovan
Chair of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority