



West Yorkshire  
Fire & Rescue Service

# Statement of Assurance 2024-25



Ownership: Corporate Services

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# Foreword

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.

Fire and rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the Framework. To provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority performance' *Home Office Guidance on Statements of Assurance for FRAs in England*

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.

The most recent His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection of WYFRS took place between November 2023 and February 2024, with the final report submitted in July 2024. The inspection assessed WYFRS across the three core pillars: **Effectiveness**, **Efficiency**, and **People**.

WYFRS successfully addressed several key areas, including:

- Ensuring firefighters have **access to up-to-date risk information**.
- Improving the **reliability of mobile data terminals**.
- Establishing **effective performance management** processes.
- Enhancing **support for staff following traumatic incidents**.
- Strengthening **health and safety training** and **eLearning systems**.
- Reviewing and improving the **bullying, harassment, and discrimination policy**.
- Increasing staff understanding of the **performance review process**.

The HMICFRS public report confirms that WYFRS continues to perform well in keeping communities safe and is making steady progress in addressing sector-wide challenges such as leadership consistency, values and culture, and staff wellbeing.

## Overview of West Yorkshire



## 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](#)
- [Whistleblowing 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.

## Overview of WYFRS

We serve a population of more than two million people, spread over 783 square miles, providing emergency cover 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

There are over 1,400 people who work for WYFRS ensuring that we deliver the highest standards of prevention, protection, response and resilience to the communities of West Yorkshire. We have 938 whole-time firefighters, 140 on-call firefighters, 47 Fire Control operators, and 340 support staff, who all contribute daily to our ambition: 'Making West Yorkshire Safer'.

We operate out of 40 fire stations, located across the five districts: Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield.

We have 46 Emergency Fire Appliances, 4 Aerial Appliances, a Technical Rescue Unit and a number of resilience appliances available to ensure we are operationally ready whenever needed. We also host a suite of specialist resources that can be deployed anywhere in the UK, including high volume pumps, flood response, wildfire response, urban search and rescue, and response to chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear hazards.

We work hand-in-hand with our communities to prevent fires and other emergencies, constantly striving to enhance safety and wellbeing. Our initiatives aim to mitigate risks to life, property, and the environment. The unwavering dedication and commitment of our staff has been instrumental in saving numerous lives across West Yorkshire.

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 2018
- The Fire Safety Act 2021

In June 2025, Authority Members approved the '[Your Fire and Rescue 2025-28](#)'; document which is a three-year strategy aimed at identifying the key risks and challenges facing the communities of West Yorkshire, alongside our strategies to address them.

Your Fire and Rescue 2025-28 has been developed using the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Fire Standard Methodology. By adopting this methodology, we ensure that our CRMP:

- Demonstrates how protection, prevention and response activities have and will be used collectively to prevent and/or mitigate fires and other incidents to reduce the impact on our community, firefighters and promotes economic well-being.
- Effectively consults and engages with our communities, FRS staff and stakeholders at appropriate stages of our community risk management planning process.
- Uses a robust risk analysis process to support evidenced, transparent and inclusive decision making regarding resource deployment.
- Ensures resource deployment decisions are balanced against an assessment of internal and external resource availability and other key organisational influences that inform the overall strategic planning process.

Your Fire and Rescue 2025-28 includes:

- A compilation of foreseeable fire and rescue-related hazards.
- The deployment of resources for prevention, protection, and response measures.
- Our Service's priorities, outlining how resources will be allocated to mitigate these risks.

The ambition of West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (WYFRS) is 'Making West Yorkshire Safer'. To achieve this, we must identify and understand the current and future risks and challenges faced by our local communities.

Your Fire and Rescue 2025-28 sets out our strategic priorities for the next three years which are:

- Provide a safe, effective and resilient response to local and national emergencies.
- Focus our activities on reducing risk and vulnerability.
- Enhance the health, safety, and well-being of our people.
- Prioritise a people first mindset through ethical and professional leadership and management.
- Work with partners and communities to deliver our services.
- Use resources in an innovative, sustainable, and efficient manner to maximise value for money.
- Further develop a culture of excellence, equality, learning, and inclusion.

Our Strategic Risk Assessment examines all potential and foreseeable risks allowing us to use planning, policies and decision making to mitigate them. WYFRA ensures that the Service has appropriate governance arrangements in place and that risk and performance are being effectively managed.

The approval of Your Fire and Rescue 2025-28 saw the conclusion of its predecessor Your Fire and Rescue 2022-25; since launching this plan in April 2022 we have reached several significant milestones

- Replacing our fleet of fire engines and aerial ladder platforms providing a safer, cleaner working environment for our staff.
- Redeveloping our main site in Birkenshaw to deliver a modern, energy-efficient Headquarters, with a purpose-built training arena and the new Spen Valley Fire Station.
- Investing £8m in a replacement mobilising system for Fire Control.
- Introducing lightweight, multi-role personal protective equipment (PPE) to all operational staff as the range of incident types requires a range of PPE to best protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.
- Assessing our protection framework and investing in our Fire Protection staff resource and capability to ensure we meet the new demands on regulation of the built environment and strengthen the inspection programme.
- Increasing the number of firefighters we employ to improve our response and speed and weight of attack.

- Expanding our youth intervention team, allowing us to connect with even more young people across our communities to help them be safer and more engaged members of our communities.
- Investing substantial capital in our Digital, Data, and Technology team to enhance our digital infrastructure and make us a more efficient, data literate organisation.

## Our Services to the community

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 [WYFRS Protection Strategy 2025-28](#), [WYFRS Prevention Strategy 2025-28](#), and [WYFRS Response and Resilience Strategy 2025-28](#).

### Operational Response

We use a data-driven approach to ensure our fire engines and specialist resources are located and staffed to provide the optimal level of emergency cover based on local risk. Your Fire & Rescue Service 2025-28 includes our Risk Based Planning Assumptions (RBPA) for responding to emergencies. We continuously monitor our performance against risk-based planning assumptions to help us maintain a safe and effective response and assure the Authority we are continuing to provide a high level of service delivery.

Our Fire Control handles all 999 emergency calls, with operators assessing each call to determine the necessary emergency response. Fire Control dispatches the fire engine(s) or specialist resource(s) that can respond the quickest to the emergency.

The combination of our response time and the number of firefighters attending a fire is crucial. More serious and complex emergencies typically require more firefighters, a strategy we refer to as our 'speed and weight of attack'.

We aim to maintain the current number of fire stations and fire engines to preserve our existing 'speed and weight of attack'.

Each station operates a shift system based on the local community's risk level. Higher-risk areas are covered by wholetime (24/7) stations, while lower-risk areas are covered by on-call stations. Areas with intermediate risk levels have a combination of both, with day-crewed stations (working during the day and on-call at night).

Our 46 fire engines are equipped to handle most emergencies. For more complex emergencies, we have strategically located specialist resources available.

When a fire engine is unavailable due to an emergency or operational training, we have systems and procedures in place to relocate other fire engines to maintain a high standard of cover where it is most needed, according to risk.



## Prevention

We raise awareness of risks to help prevent emergencies and reduce vulnerability. When not responding to incidents, our firefighters carry out prevention activities informed by data and intelligence, allowing us to adapt quickly at the district level. Complex situations are managed by specialist staff working with partner agencies to lower community risk.

Resources are allocated according to risk factors, and prevention efforts focus on the most vulnerable. Our Corporate Communications Team promotes prevention campaigns to reach those most at risk. We also work with schools and community groups to educate young people about fire, road, and water safety.

## Protection

Fire safety measures required by law are implemented and enforced to protect occupants in case of fire. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is enforced by competent and qualified officers appointed under the regulations which cover most buildings except single private homes.

Investment in the Fire Protection Team enables us to allocate adequate resources to ensure we are able to inspect premises in line with our Risk Based Intervention Programme. Inspecting officers are tasked with addressing new and emerging risks in West Yorkshire. Our Risk Based Intervention Programme utilises national guidance, and local data to focus resources on premises that pose the greatest risk to occupants during a fire.

The team consists of qualified fire safety officers who provide guidance, support, and investigate complaints regarding fire safety concerns. By applying enforcement and licensing procedures, steps are taken to improve safety standards in inspected premises.

We collaborate with local authorities and approved inspectors to consult on statutory Building Regulations consultations, ensuring the design of new buildings incorporate relevant fire safety measures.

Engagement with businesses assists them in meeting their fire safety obligations in accordance with the law. The introduction of Business Fire Safety Advisor roles aims to facilitate engagement with various businesses and build capacity for future needs. Progression paths from Advisor to Inspector contribute to sustaining the team's function.

Protection efforts concentrate mainly on premises assessed as higher risk, due either to building complexity or characteristics of occupancy. Attention is given to buildings with external wall defects requiring remediation, and cooperation occurs with local and national bodies to ensure timely correction of such defects.

The Fire Protection Team also enforces legislation concerning the storage of petroleum-spirit, explosives, and fireworks by issuing relevant certificates and licenses. Ongoing initiatives aim to reduce misuse of fireworks and to enhance related legislative and licensing frameworks.

Unwanted fire signals is a key area of work for the Protection team, having adopted a cost recovery policy for attendance of crews to persistent false alarms. The team have, together with

changes to mobilising policy, had a significant impact on the number of false alarms we attend, with a substantial reduction in persistent false alarms over the past decade.

## Resilience

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

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 maintain a full suite of specialist resources that can be deployed anywhere in the UK. Similarly, we can call upon specialist resources hosted elsewhere in the country to respond in West Yorkshire. We have agreements in place to share these resources when needed, and we consider our national commitments when making local plans.

## Local Resilience Forum

We recognise that the causes and consequences of fires and other emergencies cannot be addressed by the Fire and Rescue Service alone. Therefore, working in partnership with other agencies is fundamental to how we deliver services at all levels and in all areas; partnership working is considered part of our core business.

As a member, WYFRS plays a key role in the West Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (West Yorkshire Prepared), established under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. West Yorkshire Prepared coordinates the actions and arrangements between responding services to prepare for and respond to civil emergencies. It also assists people and communities in recovering after adverse events. Our partners work collaboratively for the benefit of the communities we serve.

## Collaboration and partnership working

We understand the benefits of collaboration and work closely with partners such as regional fire and rescue services, local authorities, emergency services, health teams, community groups, and voluntary organisations to identify and support the most vulnerable individuals in our communities.

By seeking out collaborative opportunities, we have been able to find possibilities to share estates with West Yorkshire Police and Yorkshire Ambulance Service. This has provided opportunities for joint training, combined community engagement opportunities and better multi-agency working. This collaborative effort supports more cohesive service delivery, achieves

better value for money, and facilitates more effective planning for emergencies and pre-planned events.

## Service Delivery Performance

Performance against service delivery targets are reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority on a regular basis, with the latest annual [Performance Management Report](#) submitted in June 2025.

OneView is West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service's centralised performance management and reporting platform. It is designed to improve data-driven and empowered decision-making across the organisation. It consolidates live operational, prevention and protection data into a single, accessible interface for all staff. OneView supports strategic oversight through dashboards, trend analysis and automated reporting. It enables teams to track incidents, manage risk, monitor sickness and absence, and improve data quality. With ongoing development in areas like PowerApps integration and further GIS support, OneView continues to evolve and enable the Service to drive digital transformation and operational efficiency. Comprehensive activity reports are generated to assess performance across the entire Service, ensuring transparent governance and effective performance monitoring. This approach streamlines the processes of data collection, reporting, and analysis.

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.

## Enabling our Service

Our enabling functions deliver crucial services across multiple areas, playing a vital role in the delivery of our service.

- Committee Services
- Corporate Communications
- Corporate Services
- Digital Data and Technology
- Employee Resourcing
- Finance and Procurement
- People and Culture
- Legal Services

- Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Organisational Development & Learning
- Estates
- Service Improvement and Assurance
- Strategic Development
- Transport and Logistics

We employ 1,466 dedicated staff members who contribute to promoting safety and well-being across all communities in West Yorkshire.

We acknowledge the crucial role our workforce plays in achieving our ambition. As one of the country's leading Fire & Rescue Services, we are committed to supporting and developing our personnel and investing in their future.

Our People and Culture Strategy offers a strategic framework that aligns with the Service's aim and priorities. It ensures we have the right people with the necessary skills, in the right positions, at the right time.

## Communication and Engagement

WYFRS ensures robust communication and engagement through a multi-layered strategy that integrates consultation, internal dialogue and engagement, and community outreach.

WYFRS follows the Government Consultation Principles 2018, ensuring that all engagement is clear, purposeful, targeted, and inclusive.

WYFRS has embedded the NFCC Communication and Engagement Fire Standard by:

- Adopting a strategic communications and engagement approach, including consultation, that clearly defines how the service communicates with our community. This aligns with our Strategic Priorities, Values, and the Core Code of Ethics.
- Ensuring leadership actively supports and models effective communication and engagement with our people.
- Making communication and engagement responsibilities clear to all employees, so everyone understands their role.
- Maintaining a skilled and well-resourced communications function that:
  - Responds to crises and emergencies in coordination with resilience partners.
  - Plans and delivers proactive, targeted internal and external communications.
  - Conducts meaningful engagement and consultation activities.
  - Providing resilient out-of-hours arrangements for managing communications during emergencies and supporting the incident command teams in attendance.
  - Delivering consistent inclusive and accessible communications, recognising the diverse needs of our people and our communities.
  - Evaluate communication and engagement efforts, assessing outcomes and identifying lessons to improve future practice through effective, comprehensive evaluation and debriefing.

WYFRS also uses communication to shape organisational culture and strategic direction through internal messaging, sharing of success and open dialogue around expected values, behaviours and leadership.

## Information Governance

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

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 and actions are carried out to ensure continuous improvement.

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.

In line with the Risk Management Strategy/Policy and the Business Continuity Strategy/Policy, WYFRS will continue to review and develop arrangements in these areas where benefit, effectiveness and further good practice can be achieved.



In early 2025 a comprehensive review commenced in relation to all corporate, strategic and foreseeable risk arrangements, registers, documents and processes within WYFRS.

This review will also consider how other fire and rescue services, emergency services and organisations manage their risk arrangements with the aim to have any revised/additional arrangements in place during 2026.

## 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 2024 was awarded full compliance against the 57 elements of the standard including 36 '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.

## Financial

In accordance with the 2024/25 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) for 2024/25 and the Accounting Codes of Practice published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), WYFRA has produced the [Statement of Accounts 2024/25](#) (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.

Although the audit of the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts was completed and approved within the audit back stop deadline of the 28 February 2025, these were modified with a qualification in respect of the comparatives and opening balances due to the lack of a full audit of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts by our previous auditors, Deloitte LLP.

Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice there is a requirement for the auditor, Grant Thornton, to consider whether an Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, effectiveness and efficiency in its use of resources. This is presented in 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 2023/24 Value for Money resulted in a positive outcome with five minor recommendations which have been implemented by the Authority. The 2024/25 Value for Money audit will be presented to the Audit Committee in February 2026.

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 2024 shows that the Authority has a balanced budget for 2024/25. Fire Authorities in England were given powers by the Secretary of State to increase the precept by 2.99% without the need to hold a referendum. The increase in precept generated an additional £2.278m precept income from 2023/24 which enabled the Authority to add growth to the revenue budget. West Yorkshire remains the fourth lowest precepting fire authority in England with a Band D property charge of £79.49.

In terms of Central Government funding, the Authority received another one-year financial settlement in 2024/25. 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 £5.7m and earmarked reserves of £25.986m at the 1st April 2024.

## 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 2024/25 resulted in nine audits being completed during the year, apart from one, all audits concluded with either a 'substantial' or 'adequate' assurance. This confirms that a robust framework of all key controls is in operation. 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.

## Information Transparency

In accordance with the [Local Government 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](#).

## Future Improvements

We are committed to continuous learning, adaptation, and improvement in all our activities. Our dedication to excellence is unwavering, and we are constantly exploring new methodologies and incorporating feedback to refine our processes.

By embracing innovation and best practices, we aim to stay ahead of emerging challenges and ensure that our services remain effective and responsive to the needs of West Yorkshire. We conduct regular training sessions for our staff to enhance their skills and knowledge, allowing them to better serve our community. Furthermore, we invest in advanced technologies and tools that enable us to perform our duties with greater precision and efficiency.

In our pursuit of continuous improvement, we make it a priority to engage with the community, gathering their insights and concerns to better understand their needs. This collaborative

approach ensures that our strategies and initiatives are aligned with the expectations of those we serve. We also work closely with partner agencies and stakeholders, fostering strong relationships that contribute to a coordinated and comprehensive approach to public safety.

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

WYFRA's annual budget for 2025/26 is £117.197 million and we are committed to delivering the best affordable service for our communities.

By implementing smarter working practices and introducing an improved budget management system, we have achieved a balanced budget. This means our expenditure matches our funding, eliminating the need to use any of our reserves. Additionally, we continuously seek ways to optimise our resources and improve efficiency, ensuring that we can maintain high standards of service while being fiscally responsible. 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.

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 2024/25](#) details how West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority aims 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.

### **Risk-Based Prevention, Protection, and Response**

- Targeted campaigns in high-risk areas using demographic segmentation and fire risk mapping.
- Enhanced Safe and Well visits and community education to improve public understanding of fire safety.

### **Digital Transformation and Smarter Working**

Rollout of new systems including:

- New Prevention Database.
- New Control Mobilising System.
- New Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs).
- New Station End Equipment.

Continued investment in the Smarter Working Programme to streamline operations and improve productivity.

### **Workforce Development and Culture**

- Implementation of the new people and culture plan to embed WYFRS values, reduce absence, and improve engagement.
- Ongoing leadership development through apprenticeships and training in diversity, coaching, and safer recruitment.

### **Efficiency and Productivity**

Efficiency is reinforced through:

- Collaborative procurement via the Yorkshire and Humber regional group.
- Use of national framework agreements to maximise value for money.
- Strategic use of reserves and capital financing to support transformation without compromising service delivery.

WYFRS has embedded a benefits realisation framework to track the impact of change initiatives:

- Identify and implement efficiency opportunities.
- Monitor both cashable and non-cashable benefits.

### **Partnership and Resilience**

- Active role in the West Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum to coordinate emergency planning and response.
- Collaboration with police and ambulance services through the Violence Reduction Hub.

### **Governance and Assurance**

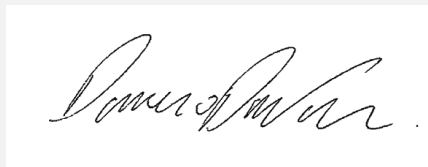
WYFRS is actively refining its governance model to further deliver transparency, accountability, and strategic coherence. A key priority is the development of a more integrated and visible governance structure that:

- Clarifies decision-making pathways across teams and boards.
- Enhances transparency and accountability for staff at all levels.
- Reduces the disconnect between strategic intent and operational delivery.

WYFRS are adopting a dual framework for assurance:

- Operational Assurance: Includes incident assurance, training and exercising, reality testing, and alignment with National Operational Guidance (NOG) and Fire Standards.
- Service Assurance: Covers self-assessment, internal audit, HMICFRS inspection readiness, and alignment with the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

This Statement of Assurance is signed on 26 September 2025 on behalf of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren O'Donovan', enclosed within a light gray rectangular box.

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