



# safety and wellbeing plan 2016/18



**Kent** Fire &  
Rescue Service



# Contents

|   |    |   |    |
|---|----|---|----|
| Chairman’s introduction .....   | 3  | Where will other savings come from? ..... | 21 |
| About the Service .....   | 4  | Planning our financial future .....       | 22 |
| The risk profile for Kent .....                                       | 8  | How are we doing? .....                   | 23 |
| What is our role in health and wellbeing? .....                       | 11 | Technical appendices .....                | 24 |
| Responding to medical emergencies.....                                | 14 | Glossary .....                            | 25 |
| Responding to fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies... | 15 | Notes .....                               | 27 |
| Staffing fire stations.....   | 18 | Have your say .....                       | 28 |
| Investing in our fire stations.....                                   | 20 |   |    |

# Chairman's introduction

Kent and Medway remains one of the safest areas to live and work in England, and we want to keep it that way. To do this, we cannot stand still. We need to change how we work, invest in technology and equipment for our firefighters, and, how we work alongside partner agencies, to focus on those most at risk. This plan explains how we want to do this.

We have changed the name of this document to the Safety and Wellbeing Plan which I believe better reflects the role of a modern fire and rescue service. The plan still covers our existing priorities, and introduces the ideas we have for changes over the next two financial years. I would like your views on the plan, as a taxpayer, a business, a member of staff or anyone else with an interest in the fire and rescue service in Kent and Medway.

This year we have two big themes. The first is about our work to help keep you safe in your home, at work, or on the road. We already do this in partnership with other agencies like Kent Police, the Ambulance Service, and local authorities. But we can do more together to make the communities of Kent and Medway the safest in the country.

The second part of the plan focuses on our finances. Over the last few years we have been changing how we work, as we knew that we would get less money from the Government in grants. We will find out in December how much grant money we will get from the Government for 2016/17, but we may have to wait longer to find out what additional savings we need to make across the next four years. The best-case scenario is that over the next four years we may need to save £8m, but in the worst case scenario it could be as much as £18m. This uncertainty is why our plan provides a number of options. There is more information about how we are funded later in the plan.

Because 73 per cent of our spending is on staff, most savings have to come from reducing the number of people we employ. Our natural turnover rate is around 30 firefighters a year. If we don't replace them but crew our fire engines in different ways, we could meet much of our annual savings target without reducing our service to the public, and without closing fire stations as a cost-cutting measure.

## **Nick Chard**

Chairman

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

If you would like to give us your views or want any further information on our proposals please email us at:

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# About the Service

## How the Service links with other agencies

The Service pioneered approaches to community safety, when it launched its pioneering “Making Kent Safer” programme. In the mid 2000s it worked with Kent County Council on a public service agreement under which deaths and injuries from accidental fires in the home in Kent and Medway fell dramatically. We have been co-responding from fire stations in Kent and Medway since 2004 and have recently started responding to a wider range of critical medical emergencies on behalf of the ambulance service. We are commissioned to deliver services directly to clients referred to us by local authority social services departments. We are also working with public health colleagues to map impacts on the health economy by securely sharing some data with them.

In effect, the Service is delivering the wider role we believe a modern fire and rescue service needs to undertake, with prevention forming a critical part of its front-line of service delivery. The diagram below shows how the Authority has positioned itself at the centre of the four other critical partners with which it works to keep people safe.



*Diagram 1: Alignment of the fire and rescue authority to other agencies*

## Our fire engines

As well as a range of specialist vehicles, the Service currently has 75 front-line fire engines:

- 17 are crewed by firefighters using the whole-time shift duty system, which means firefighters are available on the fire station 24/7. To crew a fire engine under this system costs about £1m per year;
- Nine are crewed by firefighters using the whole-time day-crewed duty system, where firefighters are available at the fire station during the daytime, and are called out from their nearby homes at other times. Under this system each fire engine costs about £600k per year in salary and related costs; and
- 49 are crewed by firefighters using the on-call duty system, which is where firefighters respond from their own homes or workplaces located near to the station both day and night on an on-call basis. 34 of these are based at on-call fire stations, in villages and small towns. Each fire engine costs about £150k per year under this system in salary and related costs, but this figure does not include significant training and recruitment costs associated with this duty system. Some of these stations suffer from significant shortages of staff, and this impacts on how often they are available for use.



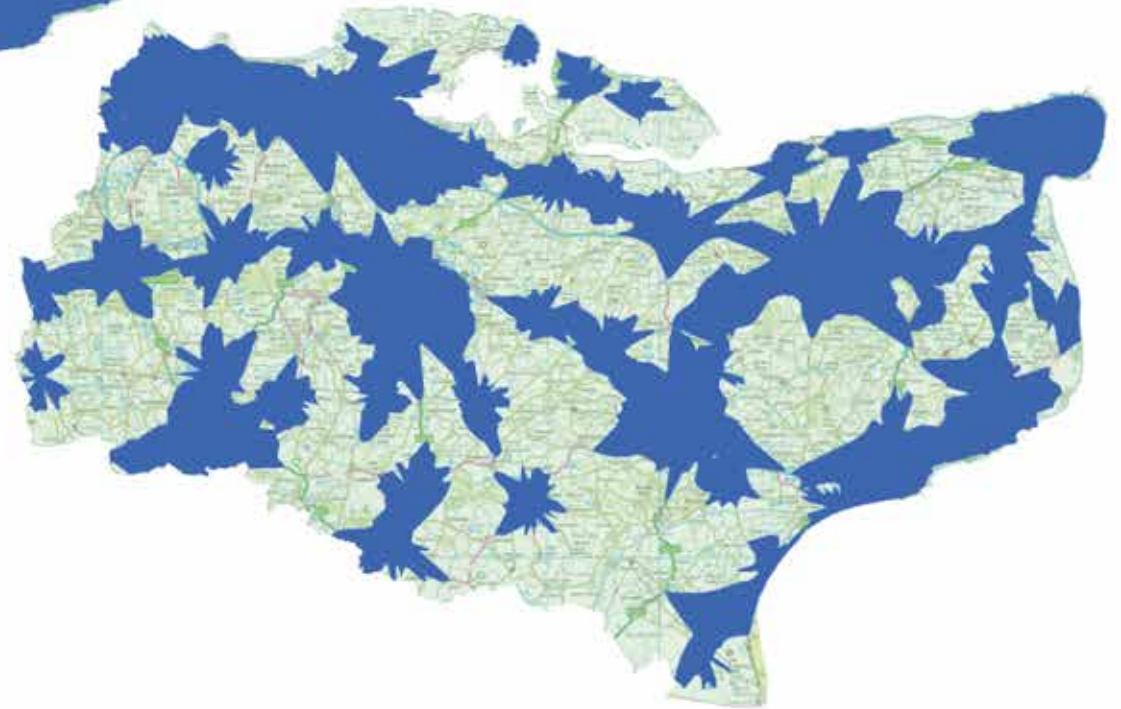
## Our fire stations

Our 75 fire engines are based at 55 individual fire stations located across Kent and Medway<sup>1</sup>. They are spread across the county, to help us meet our main performance measure of the first fire engine attending 80 per cent of all life-threatening 999 calls within 10 minutes. “Life-threatening calls” include fires in the home and collisions on the road. This measure underpins almost all our response plans. Last year we achieved this on 75.8 per cent of occasions.



*1: We also own two fire stations which are no longer operational and will be disposed of in the future, and we have firefighters located at the fire station at the Channel Tunnel. We do not own the fire station there.*

*Areas calculated to be reachable in 10 minutes (top: day, bottom: night)  
Kent Fire and Rescue Service © Crown Copyright 100033707 2015*



## Reaching incidents

There are some areas which we cannot reach in less than ten minutes, and this has always been the case. These tend to be areas where demand is very low, so a fire station could not be justified on cost grounds.

The maps shown here give an indication of where we can reach, although some stations shown as not available during the day might actually be used if we needed them.

# The risk profile for Kent

## The people of Kent and Medway

The latest population estimates for Kent and Medway show that the population is increasing overall. Not only this, the proportion that is older is also increasing, as life expectancy increases. However, this hides significant differences between areas in health, job prospects and access to services, even though they are close geographically. We can predict where our higher risk areas are by using this type of information and combining it with incident data and fire station locations using specialist risk calculation software. Whilst it will never be possible to predict where the next house fire in Kent and Medway will be, risk assessment that informs us where to focus our prevention work and where to position our fire engines is a constant process within the Service. Maps are available in the technical appendices to the plan, depicting an overall risk map for the whole of Kent and Medway and local areas. These are published on our website at [www.kent.fire-uk.org](http://www.kent.fire-uk.org)

## New developments

In the Thames Gateway area, a theme park is to be built on the Swanscombe peninsula. This will generate issues for us, both while being built and when it opens. In the same area, a whole new town will also be built, and the Bluewater shopping complex is looking to significantly extend.

Housebuilding is also starting to pick up in the county again, and whilst this has little impact on us in terms of additional demand, it may increase demand for our safety services in the home, as more people live alone, and live further into old age at home, than they may have done in the past.

## How busy are we?

Overall, demand for our emergency response service fell again in 2014, as shown in Graph 1 opposite. This is mainly because we go to far fewer false alarms from automatic systems, as we ask premises' owners to confirm there is a fire before we send a fire engine. On 99 per cent of occasions there isn't one. Such systems are mostly found in business premises and places like hospitals. In areas like Ashford and Medway this has had a big impact on how often the fire engines based there are called out.

Our response times to life-threatening incidents, whilst slightly lower than in previous years, have not changed significantly, and the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads has stayed relatively static, despite increasing volumes of traffic. This proves we can be innovative and change the way we operate without performance declining.

## Duty systems

In 2014, we changed fire stations that use the day-crewing system to a flexible rostering pattern. Under this pattern, staff at the station decide who works when, and so long as four firefighters with the right skills are on duty during the day, and on average each one does a set number of shifts over the year, they can work out the arrangements locally. This has worked very well, thanks to how well our staff have embraced the system, and has also allowed us to reduce the number of staff at these fire stations by two per station. The same model has also been adopted at the fire station at the Channel Tunnel.

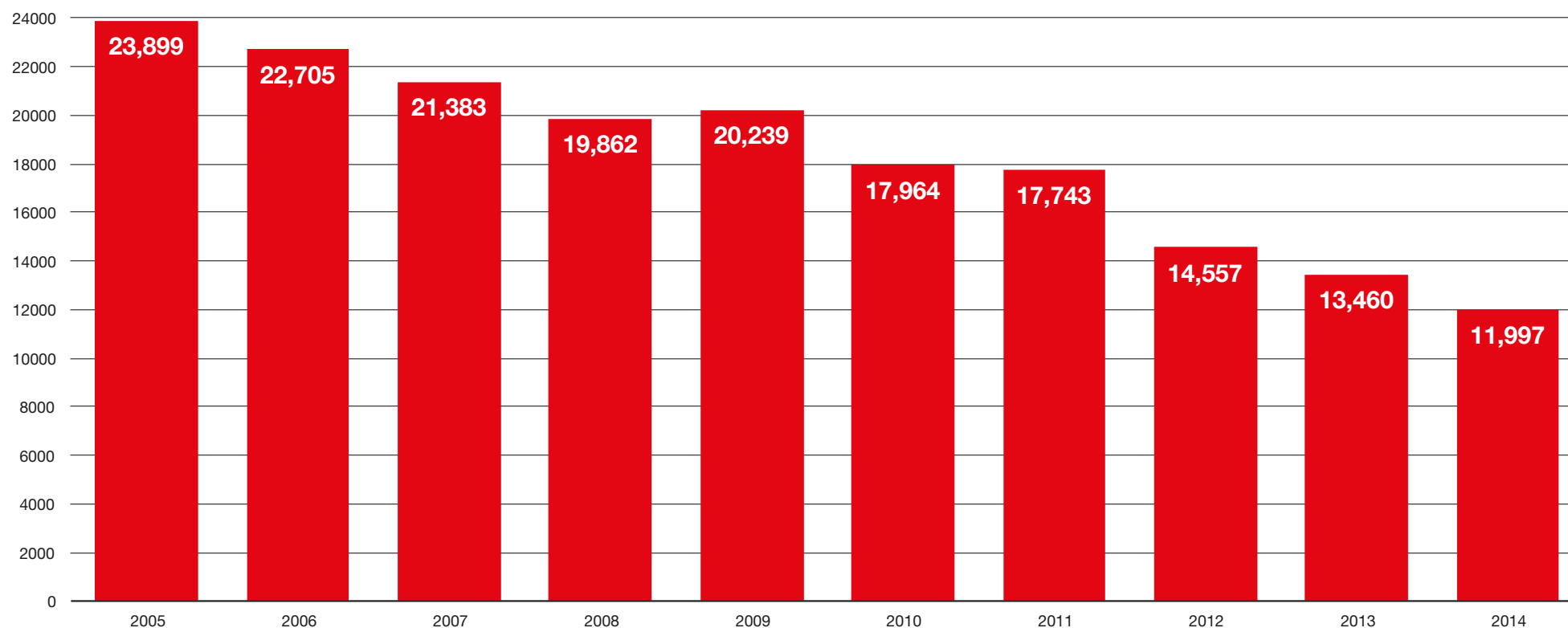
We will roll the same model out to stations that operate the whole-time shift duty system over the next three years.

We plan for each fire engine to have four firefighters on it whenever it is called out. Sometimes, despite our best efforts, there are only three firefighters on



duty at some on-call fire stations. When this happened in the past, the fire engine was not available for use, even if an incident occurred close by. We felt this was not right as there are things a crew of three firefighters can do in the early stages of an incident to provide potentially life-saving help to the public. Following previous consultation we have started to use a number of on-call fire engines when they have a crew of only three firefighters in order to get a speedier response to local incidents, rather than wait longer for a crew of four from further afield. To date the system has been used at 13 operational incidents, with no significant issues. We will continue to try to make sure that four firefighters are regularly on duty though, and we have no plans at present to look at reducing the normal crewing of fire engines to three firefighters.

**Graph 1: Overall demand across Kent and Medway by calendar year**



Investment in new equipment: In order to deliver a good service to our community and provide firefighters with the right equipment to do the job, we have invested in new equipment that can tackle fires more effectively, make a difference in road traffic collision rescues, and assist with a whole range of emergency situations, including flooding.

## Possible changes to how fire and rescue services are run

The Government has recently consulted on potential changes to how fire and rescue services in England are run. Currently, in Kent and Medway, the Fire and Rescue Authority, made up of elected politicians from Kent County Council and Medway Council, performs this role. The consultation suggested this could be changed to a number of different models, including placing fire and rescue services under their local Police and Crime Commissioners. The Authority has indicated in its response that it would prefer the existing governance arrangements to remain broadly unchanged. We await the outcome of the consultation, which is likely to be published early in 2016.

The next section of the plan looks at how we can work more closely with other agencies such as the ambulance service and health providers to use our skills to best assist local people in Kent and Medway.



### Box 1: Investment in new kit saves property worth millions

New equipment that the Authority had bought in order to improve firefighting was put to use at major fires in Maidstone, Chatham and Canterbury within days of it being installed on fire engines this summer. The equipment and new ways of tackling the fires prevented them spreading and meant that damage was kept to a minimum, allowing local firms to get up and running much more quickly.

Alongside other new equipment and techniques now being used by KFRS is an innovative bit of kit called Fogspike. It punches a small hole through roof tiles and walls in order to insert a sprinkler that can help prevent fire spreading to neighbouring properties. Following the major fire in Maidstone town centre in the summer, a shop owner summed up the benefits by thanking crews for preventing the fire spreading to his shop, and with minimal water damage, so enabling him to reopen just 24 hours later.

# What is our role in health and wellbeing?

## Why health and wellbeing?

Preventable illness is a huge drain on public resources. We believe that everyone has a role to play in the health and wellbeing of their community, including public services. Recent research suggests that almost a third of the population could have a role in wellbeing: either directly, for example as a health professional; or indirectly, as a carer for a family member; or as a volunteer. This section is about our future role in this field, which is to provide the right services in people's homes, designed in partnership with other agencies, to help to prevent people having to go to hospital as a result of accidents in the home.

## What do we do now?

We provide a range of services to keep people safe, including about 10,000 home safety visits per year. These visits aim to reduce risk from fire by providing advice and are targeted at higher-risk homes. They are carried out by a specialist team of non-firefighting staff. As part of the visit we fit equipment such as smoke alarms, although we do refer other health and welfare issues to partner agencies where necessary (but only with the person's consent, of course).

After a fire occurs in someone's home our firefighters also visit neighbouring residents to offer safety advice and fit smoke alarms where needed.

## The future – 'safe and well visits'

As the number of fires in the home is reducing overall, we want to extend our safety remit throughout Kent and Medway to make the fire and rescue service the safety service for the home. In future we will carry out 'safe and well visits'



### **Box 2: Case study of a visit to a vulnerable person's home and outcomes**

KFRS has had a team dedicated to helping the most vulnerable people in the county for the last five years. During that time the team's specially trained staff have helped keep around 12,000 people safe and independent in their own homes.

One example is an elderly couple we visited following a call from their daughter. She was concerned as her mother was deaf and her father, who was starting to show signs of dementia, would sometimes fall asleep while smoking in bed. She told us that her Mum was having sleepless nights worrying that if Dad caused a fire in the night she wouldn't hear the smoke alarm. KFRS visited them in their home and provided reassuring safety advice, a special smoke alarm to alert someone with hearing problems and a fireproof bedding pack.

The couple's daughter told us that the help provided made a big difference, not only in practical terms, but also in allowing her Mum to sleep more soundly at night, which helped her cope with being the main carer for her husband.

to higher-risk people in their homes. We will help higher-risk people stay independently in their homes for longer by dealing with a wide range of issues when we visit, possibly by fitting equipment to avoid slips, trips and falls. These visits will also include advice and support around other personal safety and health issues, such as dementia, but fire prevention will remain our core business. This takes advantage of the high regard people have for the Service, and will avoid multiple home visits by a variety of agencies. It also helps prevent costs occurring elsewhere in the health service.

We will generate our own programme of visits through information we hold about who might be at risk, as well as through the sharing of information with public health departments at Kent County Council and Medway Council. But we also want to be commissioned, either by Clinical Commissioning Groups, or directly by GPs, to provide services to their clients. This should generate significant savings for the health sector. By making a simple adaptation in the home of an elderly person, such as fitting a grab rail, we reduce the chance that the person will then have to go to hospital having suffered a fall. For the benefit of the health service and the individuals themselves this has to be the right thing to do.

We will gradually add other aspects to safe and well visits. These could include issues such as home security, loneliness and isolation, fuel poverty and winter warmth, medical care, and energy efficiency. We would provide links to other agencies as necessary, as they might want to provide more detailed information. We want to expand our home safety team to carry out more visits and to provide them with the capacity to spend longer on some visits if necessary. Additional capacity would also allow the team to return to a home more frequently to check on any ongoing issues.

## Working with other agencies

We will work with the ambulance service at calls where they have gone to a person's house and cannot get in, but they think that the person needs medical attention. We have already invested in equipment that helps our firefighters to enter property quickly with minimum damage. However, we will not get involved in core ambulance roles like taking patients to hospital. We may also perform some visits on behalf of the Police where they are notified of concerns about someone's welfare or their whereabouts (for example, an elderly person who has not been seen outside their home for some weeks). However this role is likely to be more limited.

In partnership with Kent Police and Kent County Council we have created a single community safety team for all three organisations. This team will deliver the county-wide functions in community safety, such as the approach to troubled families, education programmes and partnership schemes to support district councils.

## The role of firefighters

Our firefighters will undertake more planned home safety visits in higher risk areas as part of a whole-street approach. These visits will incorporate operational work such as checking access arrangements and that fire hydrants in the road are working effectively. Gradually, the remit of these visits will widen but this will require additional training and development for our staff.

Where an activity is outside our firefighters' or specialist staff's skill set, or could damage the standing of the Service, we will not play a role. But where it is obvious that we have the skills and the capacity to make a difference, we will try to do so. This has to be balanced against any requirements for

savings. This is why we will train existing firefighters where we can, although we may need to recruit staff to undertake 'safe and well visits' for the most high-risk people.

## Summary of proposals

- Develop the concept of 'safe and well visits'
- Increase the number of people employed to perform 'safe and well visits'
- Develop the concept of a focused safety event on a street by street basis, performed by local firefighters
- Work with the ambulance service and police to develop a response protocol for each organisations' 'concern for welfare' category of emergency call

# Responding to medical emergencies

All our firefighters are trained as first aiders and more than half are trained as immediate emergency care responders to deal with medical emergencies, usually injuries suffered during fires or road traffic collisions. This training is the equivalent of a care support worker in the ambulance service (the level below a paramedic). We want to help save more lives, so we are currently piloting a scheme where a fire engine with a full crew of four firefighters is sent by the ambulance service (in addition to their normal response) to the most serious medical emergencies, including heart attacks, when that fire engine is closer than the nearest available ambulance. Research from the United States has shown that survival rates from cardiac arrest are higher when four people perform chest compressions (known as CPR) and also use a defibrillator where needed. We also have defibrillators in every fire station, fire engine and every car with blue lights.

We are piloting the scheme to send a fire engine to medical emergencies at seven full-time stations, and one on-call station. We also have more than 20 officers in response cars available in the pilot as well. We believe the trial will be a success, and on that basis we will look at rolling it out across the whole Service during 2016/17, once we have evaluated the trial. This will make our firefighters busier, and that may mean we will need to look at how many fire engines we have available during the day and where they are based – although any additional requirement would be largely for covering medical emergencies. We will also look at how we promote the on-call service when we are recruiting to make it clear that a lot of their work will be dealing with medical emergencies, as well as fires, flooding and road traffic collisions.

We think we can attend more medical emergencies without an impact on our core business, as fewer incidents mean that simultaneous demand is rare. Nevertheless, we need to watch this very carefully to see how the demand pattern for medical emergencies affects our availability for fires and other emergencies. However, if we were dealing with a fire in a skip, which is away from any property and not going to spread, and we had a further emergency call to a child who had stopped breathing, we think you would expect us to leave the

bin fire and go to help the child, if a fire engine was the closest unit available to potentially save its life.

## Summary of proposals

- Complete the initial trial of responding to medical emergencies and, if successful, roll-out to additional fire stations
- Assess the impact of responding to medical emergencies and ‘concern for welfare’ calls on overall demand patterns



*Firefighters and paramedics are now working together on medical emergencies*

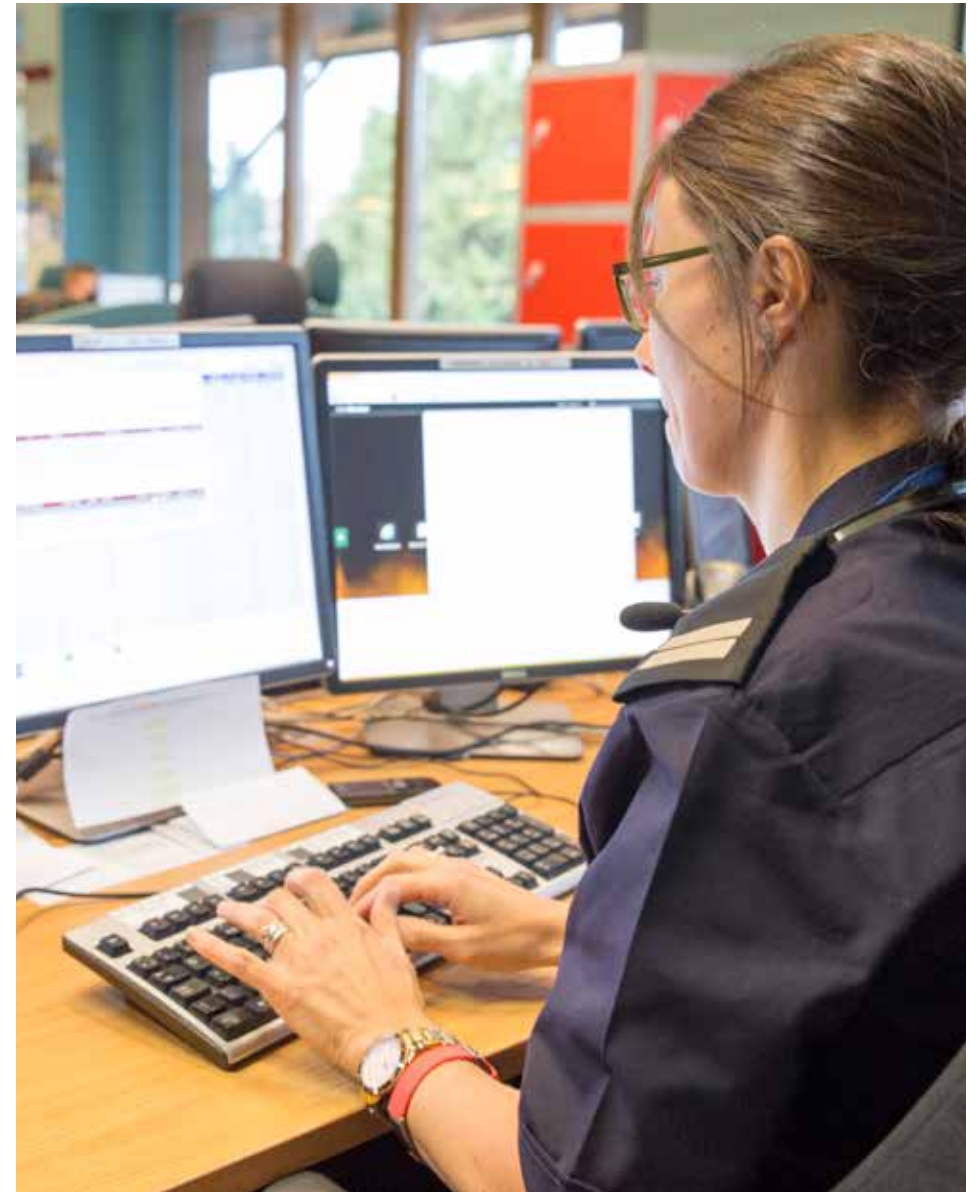
# Responding to fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies

Earlier in the plan we said that demand for the fire and rescue service from 999 calls has continued to reduce. For the public and businesses this is good, as it means fewer injuries, less damage to property, and fewer businesses closing due to fires and failing to reopen.

We have to balance “risk”, “demand” and “isolation”; the need to deal with the rare but resource-hungry large incidents; and all in a challenging financial climate where we simply have to become a smaller organisation. And finally we need to integrate responding to medical emergencies and other new areas of work into our day to day business. This part of the plan sets out how we intend to do this. We have also published technical appendices which show our risk assessment across the county and for individual areas, as well as information on the number of emergencies we have attended in those areas. They are all available on our website.

In 2012, we closed a number of fire stations which we no longer needed, because they served areas which could be covered by other nearby fire engines. We defined the maximum number of fire engines we needed to meet our attendance measure as 61 during the day, and 75 at night. Since 2012, we have operated with around 40 fire engines during the day, and around 50 at night. We have simply been unable to deliver the “ideal state” model published in 2012, mainly because attracting and retaining on-call firefighters remains very difficult. We are looking at this issue, and more information is given later in the plan.

Since 2012 experience has told us that, for anything but the most significant level of demand, we can run comfortably with around 50 fire engines, and this allows us to achieve our performance measure on around 75 per cent of occasions. More fire engines than this would be good, and would allow us to get closer to achieving our target of 80 per cent. Significantly fewer fire engines would begin to have a real impact on the service the public receives, depending where the gaps are. Having 50 fire engines available is the level



we want to regularly achieve, if not exceed, for at least the next two years. This doesn't mean that we don't need the remaining fire engines or any of our existing fire stations though. Earlier in the plan, we talked about our intention to attend more medical emergencies and 'concern for welfare' calls on behalf of the ambulance service or police. Until we have done this for a period of time, and seen how successful it is for the public, we do not want to reduce the number of fire engines we have overall, even if they are not all available at the same time.

Over the next two years, we will assess current demand and likely incidents, and take a pragmatic view of availability to fill any gaps in our cover, and any which the ambulance service asks us to cover in the short-term for them. We can then change which on-call fire engines we use to supplement our 26 full-time fire engines, which are always available during the day<sup>2</sup>; we can make more on-call fire engines available; or we can relocate a full-time fire engine to another area temporarily. This means that we can make sure that all firefighters get enough exposure to real incidents to maintain their skills, as well as allowing us to attend medical emergencies.

## In the longer term...

We will have to consult on how many fire engines we need overall; where they are located; and possibly our attendance performance measure, in the next plan. It is unlikely that we will be able to justify having stations that are infrequently used, even if it has an impact on how quickly we could get a fire engine to the areas which they serve. This is because we need to look much more closely now at demand, whereas the previous model was based mainly on risk. We do not intend to close any fire stations or remove any fire engines from service within the next two years. But as we get more clarity around our future funding, we may need to consider this in the longer term.

Closing an on-call fire station, or an on-call section attached to a full-time station, is unlikely to be something we would do if very quick savings are needed though, because it simply wouldn't save us enough money. But at day-crewed fire stations, we might start to use the on-call firefighters as part of the same crew as their full-time colleagues at night. Potentially this could lead to the removal of one of the fire engines

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*2: The crews of the nine fire engines on the whole-time day-crewed duty system respond from home at night, so those nine engines become effectively on-call fire engines using full-time firefighters.*





from day-crewed stations. It would mean though that the remaining fire engine might attend incidents with five or six firefighters, rather than four.

## Moving our fleet more

From April 2016, we will start a long-term trial to move our full-time fire engine fleet around the county more, mainly into areas where daytime on-call cover is difficult to provide, or to areas where we feel that using a full-time fire engine will give the public a better service overall, especially by going to road traffic collisions on motorways and major roads. This trial will involve fire stations that have two full-time fire engines 24 hours a day. The moves we will make (all during the day but returning to base at night) are likely to be:

- One of Dartford's fire engines to Swanley<sup>3</sup>
- One of Thames-Side's (which is in Gravesend) fire engines to Borough Green or Westerham
- One of Maidstone's fire engines to Lenham, Headcorn or Marden
- One of Canterbury's fire engines to Wingham, Aylesham or, if needed, into the Thanet area

These moves are not set in stone though, and depending on business needs on the day, we may move the fire engines to other locations.

Making these moves will show if, in the longer term, two full-time fire engines are needed at Dartford, Thames-Side, Maidstone and Canterbury. At the moment, taking into account risk, reducing demand and isolation, it is beginning to look as if they may not be needed by around 2020. If, within the

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<sup>3</sup>: We have already begun to trial this arrangement at Dartford/Swanley, and it is already proving successful

next two years, we can no longer afford as many fire engines as we have now, it is the fire stations with two full-time 24 hours a day fire engines we would look at first. We know this will increase the gap between the first and second fire engine arriving at an incident that needs two crews to tackle it, but we do not believe this will have a significant impact as it is what happens now in areas where a station has one full-time fire engine.

## Summary of proposals

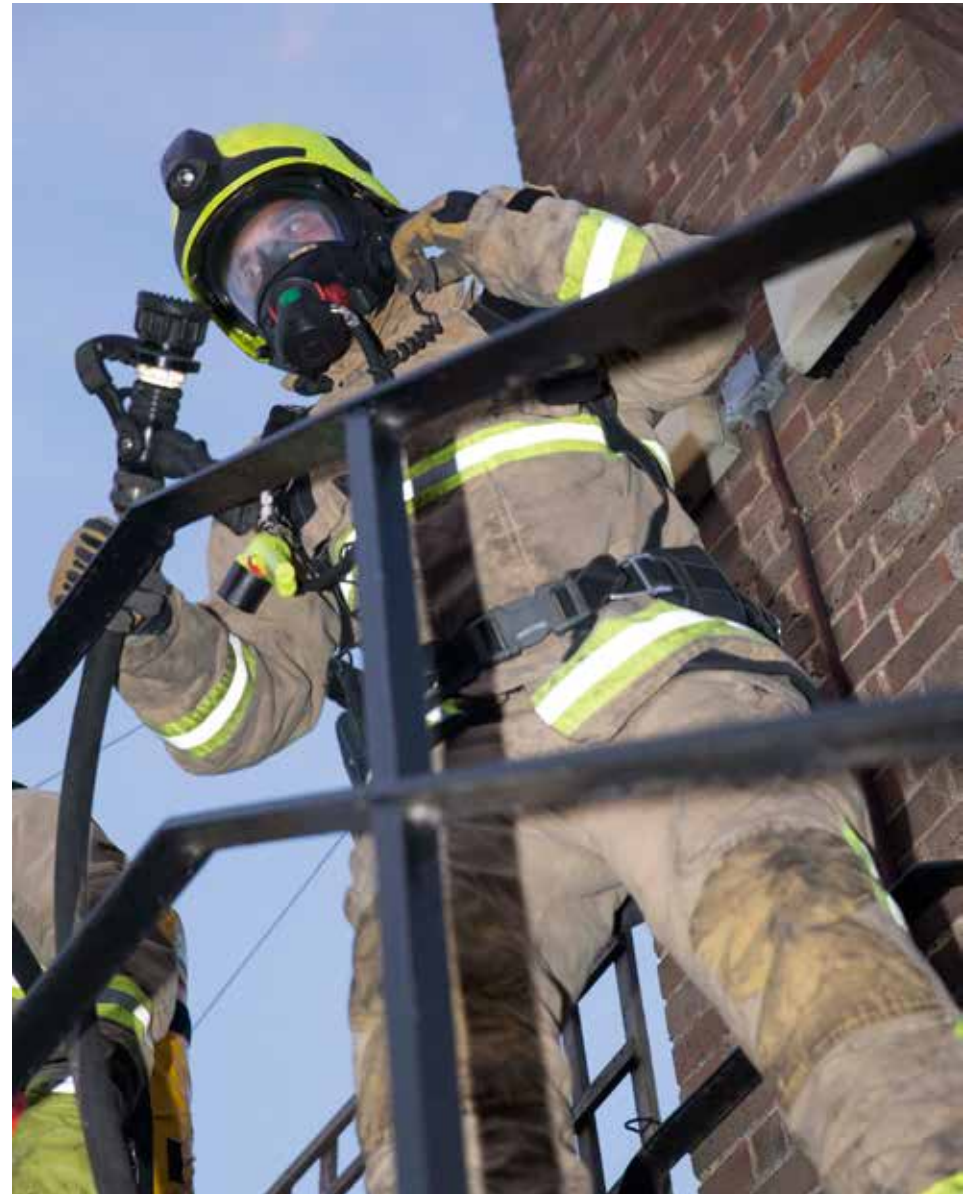
- Have around 50 fire engines available for incidents at all times, including any already deployed at incidents
- Start a trial of the use of fire engines from Dartford, Thames-Side, Maidstone and Canterbury at other locations during the day
- Assess the impact of any funding cuts on the pace of change to emergency cover across Kent and Medway
- Assess the impact of responding to medical emergencies and 'concern for welfare' calls on overall demand patterns

# Staffing fire stations

## Whole-time shift fire stations

Starting in January 2016, we will start to roll-out the flexible rostering duty system to whole-time shift fire stations. Under this system we will need 22 members of staff for a fire station with one full-time fire engine, made up of 16 firefighters, four “crew managers” and two “watch managers”. This would mean that crewing the fire engine would cost approximately £890k a year. Currently fire engines like this have between 24 and 32 members of staff in total. At stations with two full-time fire engines, we will need 42 members of staff in total.

The new stations at Rochester and Chatham will use flexible rostering as soon as they open in early 2016. Strood fire station will move to flexible rostering at the same time. In January 2017, Dover, Folkestone and Tunbridge Wells fire stations will convert, with the remaining whole-time shift fire stations converting in January 2018. This pattern has been chosen as those stations that will change earlier are closer to the required staff numbers now. The timetable could be accelerated if more savings were needed more quickly. But were this to be the case, it would mean looking at the potential for involuntary redundancy of firefighters as the change to flexible rostering would happen more quickly than our natural staff turnover rate. This is not something we want to do.



## On-call fire stations and sections

In June 2011, we moved all firefighters that worked on the retained duty system to a contractually-based on-call arrangement. This was to give us guaranteed on-call cover where and when we needed it. Historically the availability of on-call fire engines varied on a minute by minute basis which made planning emergency cover very difficult. As there were no contracted hours in place, retained firefighters could decide with limited notice that they weren't available, and so make their fire engine unavailable.

It's been four years since the new system was launched, and it has not been without its issues. A number of firefighters didn't want to commit to guaranteed hours of availability. Some simply couldn't commit, due to their commitments with their main employer. Overall, the availability of on-call fire engines reduced following the change. However, one benefit of the new system is that we do now know in advance when on-call fire engines are available to be sent to an incident, which we didn't fully before.

We have spent some time talking to on-call firefighters over the last year about the on-call system. We also commissioned some work to look at why members of the public who started the recruitment process did not complete it, and why on-call firefighters left the Service once they had joined. The biggest single message that has come out of these discussions is that on-call fire engines are not as busy as they were, leading to on-call firefighters feeling underutilised. The second issue is flexibility. The rigidity of the current contracted hours makes renegotiating them very hard when people's circumstances change. On-call firefighters generally understand why we need guaranteed hours of availability, but they have also said that with some discretion at local level, the availability of their fire engine could be improved.

We will be seeking the views of our on-call staff on the kinds of flexibility in contracted hours they would like to see, and on how they think we could encourage more people to join the Service, especially for work during the

day, for example by introducing a cadet scheme in rural areas. We will also be gradually making on-call fire engines busier through responding to medical emergencies.

We do not think there is generally a role for on-call firefighters in delivering 'safe and well visits' in their local areas. We do not think they will have the time but will always welcome their input if they do. We will use the other specialist teams mentioned earlier in this plan to provide safety advice where needed, in addition to the general advice available on our website.

## Summary of proposals

- Convert all whole-time shift fire stations to the flexible rostering system by January 2018
- Review the Service's offer to on-call firefighters so that more fire engines are available during the day and at weekends

# Investing in our fire stations

We need good quality buildings from which to provide our services, regardless of the need for us to save money overall. In the last three years, we have built one brand new on-call fire station in Ash-cum-Ridley; started building a brand new fire station in Rochester; started the redevelopment of the fire station at Watling Street in Chatham; and secured planning permission for a new fire station in Ramsgate. A significant proportion of the cost of these works was met from the sale of the fire stations we closed, and of other property we no longer needed.

Some of our fire stations need moving to a new site, or are in need of refurbishment. In some cases work is needed to fire stations to assist the more flexible use of full-time fire engines based at Maidstone, Canterbury, Thames-Side and Dartford. We hope to carry out these works over the next ten years and the stations likely to be affected are:

- Borough Green
- Dartford
- Dover
- Herne Bay
- Lenham
- Margate
- Sheppey
- Swanley
- Swanscombe
- Westerham

Whilst there is no priority order in the list above, we do want to identify a new site for Herne Bay fire station first. In looking at sites, we will also look at what partners, such as the Police and ambulance service, are doing. Where their needs and ours can be met from the same location, we will try to build something jointly. We are also looking at opportunities to share our premises with other public sector organisations where this makes business sense for us both.

## Summary of proposals

- Commission feasibility studies to look for suitable sites to re-locate some stations, and at the refurbishment/redevelopment of other stations



*Computer generated image of the proposed new fire station in Ramsgate*

# Where will other savings come from?

It is not right that all savings are taken from our firefighting staff. The majority will need to come from that area, as that is where we employ most people. As and when firefighting and support staff retire from the Service, we will take the opportunity to determine whether their posts are still required or whether their function can be carried out in another way. As the number of firefighters reduces, the number of other staff in areas such as finance, HR and IT need to be reviewed as well. We have already reduced 'back office' posts by 57 since 2011, and it is inevitable that the number of these posts will continue to reduce. Investing in electronic systems will reduce administration, which is one way in which we think we can reduce the number of back office staff.

But this needs to be balanced with an increasing requirement for some more specialist skills, as the needs of the people we serve in Kent and Medway are becoming more complex. Delivering a 'safe and well visit' may need different skills to get both our and our partners' messages across.

Finally, you would expect us to take a hard look at all our spending, not just on staff pay, but on everything we buy, to see if we can deliver as good a service at a lower cost. We will still invest where we need to in order to make longer term savings. We see investment in IT as one such area, as this allows us to remove manual processes.

## Summary of proposals

- Review all 'back office' functions within the next three years



# Planning our financial future

The Government continues to highlight the need for reductions in public spending for at least the next few years. Whilst we make efficiencies wherever possible, we will need to continue to save money and reduce spending for the foreseeable future. We want to achieve this whilst still providing the best possible fire and rescue service to the people of Kent and Medway. This may involve changing how we work, whilst also keeping pace with improvements in equipment and technology.

| Important financial facts               |        |
|---|--------|
| Our 2015/16 revenue (day to day) budget | £69.9m |
| Our 2015/16 capital budget              | £12m   |

We are already well on the way to achieving the £2.7m of savings set out in our budget for 2015/16. We plan to continue to make savings in future years, but we need to ensure that they are sustainable and deliverable. For example, changes to duty systems, as described earlier in the plan, will be rolled out incrementally over the next two to three years, to ensure that the changes are deliverable and sustainable, and to avoid involuntary redundancies for as long as possible.

Approximately 60 per cent of our funding comes from Council Tax. When you pay your Council Tax bill each year, we receive around 5 per cent of the amount that you have paid. So, in 2015/16, we receive £70.65 from a Band D property. If we were to increase this next year by just under 2 per cent, it would increase the Council Tax for a Band D property to £72.00, an increase of £1.35 per year, which equates to an increase of 2.5 pence per week. At the time of writing, the Government has not confirmed if it will limit the amount by which local authorities can increase Council Tax, but last year the limit was 2 per cent. Any increase above this amount would be subject to a binding referendum.

The proposals made in this plan are based on us increasing our share of the Council Tax by just under 2 per cent. If we are not able to do this, it is very likely that we will have to look at reducing the service we offer, or making some firefighters redundant within the next two years.



# How are we doing?

If you want to know how we are doing, there are a number of pages on the website at [www.kent.fire-uk.org](http://www.kent.fire-uk.org) to help you:

**Assurance statement:** This tells you how we are meeting the requirements set by the Government in the national framework. It's all on the website.

**Performance information:** Routinely published on our website, and also reported to Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority.

**Freedom of information:** Have a detailed query? Ask us and if we hold the data, and it's not restricted in some way, you can have it. We'll help you make sense of it too. Make a request via [information.officer@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:information.officer@kent.fire-uk.org) and we will respond within 20 working days, often quicker. But check the website first as the information you want might already be published.

**Complaints, comments and compliments:** These are always welcomed, and complaints are fully investigated because we recognise that sometimes things do go wrong and we are keen to put them right. But if we have done a good job, let us know, so we can let the firefighters know.

**Accounts and financial information:** Another year, another clean bill of health financially. More information is published on the website, alongside all transactions over £250 (excluding VAT) from across the Service.

**The website:** Our new and revamped website at [www.kent.fire-uk.org](http://www.kent.fire-uk.org) now has frequently asked questions, incident information, and everything we have to publish under the Government's transparency agenda.

**Facebook:** Like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/kentfirerescue](http://www.facebook.com/kentfirerescue)

**Twitter:** Follow us at [@kentfirerescue](https://twitter.com/kentfirerescue) for live incident updates, campaigns and general safety messages.

Comments on this Plan: email us at [information.officer@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:information.officer@kent.fire-uk.org)



# Technical appendices

All the research used in the development of the proposals in the plan are supported by more detailed technical appendices and an equality impact assessment. These are much more technical in nature, and the content is summarised in the plan. However we feel it is important to be open about the data that supports the proposals we are making.

This year's technical appendices can be found on our website at [www.kent.fire-uk.org/safetyplan1618](http://www.kent.fire-uk.org/safetyplan1618)

If you would like to receive this document in a different format or language please telephone 01622 212 428.

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إذا أردت هذه الوثيقة بصيغة مختلفة أو بلغة أخرى، فيرجى الاتصال برقم الهاتف 01622 692 121

আপনি যদি এই প্রমাণপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) অন্য কোন আকারে অথবা ভাষায় চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 01622 692 121 নম্বর টেলিফোন যোগাযোগ করুন।

اگر دوست دارید این مدرک را در فورمت (شکل) متفاوتی یا به زبان دیگری دریافت کنید، لطفاً با شماره تلفن 01622692121 تماس بگیرید.

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य रूप या भाषा में चाहिये तो कृपया नंबर 01622 692 121 पर फोन करें।

ئەگەر دەتەوێت ئەم نووسراوەت بە شێوازیکی تر یان بە زمانیکی تر بۆ دابین بکەیت، تکایە تەلەفۆن بۆ ژمارە 01622 692 121 بکە.

यदि तपाईं यस डक्युमेन्टलाई अन्य कुनै भाषा अथवा फर्म्याटमा चाहनुहुन्छ भने, कृपया 01622 692 121 मा फोन गर्नुहोला।

Jeżeli ktoś chciałby otrzymać ten dokument w innym formacie lub języku powinien zatelefonować pod numer 01622 692 121.

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਥੇਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਨੰਬਰ 01622 692 121 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Haddii aad dokumentigaan ku jeceshahay hab ama luqad kale, fadlan soo wac 01622 692 121.

如欲索取本文件的其他格式或語文版本，請致電 01622 692 121。

اگر آپ کو یہ دستاویز کسی مختلف وضع یا زبان میں درکار ہے تو براہ کرم 01622 692 121 پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજ બીજી રચના અથવા ભાષામાં જોઈતો હોય તો, કૃપા કરી 01622 692 121 ઉપર ટેલિફોન કરો.



# Glossary

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Activity</b>                      | The incidents attended by each individual fire engine in the local area or elsewhere.   |
| <b>Call</b>                          | A request for assistance by the public or any other body or agency made to the fire and rescue service.   |
| <b>Capital budget</b>                | The money spent on buying big physical things, like fire engines, buildings, or our IT systems.   |
| <b>Clincial Commissioning Groups</b> | NHS organisations set up by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to organise the delivery of NHS services in England in local areas.   |
| <b>Co-responding</b>                 | An agreement with the ambulance service to send specially trained on-call firefighters to provide initial emergency medical care in the event of e.g. someone suffering a heart attack in their home. An ambulance is also always sent.   |
| <b>County</b>                        | The whole geographical area known as Kent. This includes the area where local services are provided by Medway Council as well as Kent County Council.   |
| <b>Day-crewed duty system</b>        | See whole-time day-crewed duty system.  |
| <b>Defensive firefighting</b>        | Where firefighters take a defensive position to prevent fire spread. This would be from outside the building as it may be too dangerous for firefighters to enter even wearing their protective equipment. The opposite is offensive firefighting (see below).  |
| <b>Demand</b>                        | The number of incidents that happen in a defined area over a defined period of time.  |
| <b>Flexible rostering</b>            | An approach to crewing fire engines at normal crewing levels which stipulates the outcome required (a crew of four firefighters, including one driver, one incident commander, and two wearers of breathing apparatus) but devolves how this is delivered to local management groups at each station. |
| <b>Incident</b>                      | Any call to which the Service sends a response. As a lot of people may call us about the same incident, this number is always lower than the number of calls we receive.  |
| <b>Isolation</b>                     | The distance of a place or community, measured in travel time, from the nearest fire engine when it's at the fire station and ready to respond.   |
| <b>Medical emergency</b>             | A term covering calls made to the ambulance service to which they respond as an emergency. Calls are graded, with Red 1 calls being the most urgent priority (eg stroke, breathing stopped, cardiac arrest), and Red 2 being less urgent but still priority.  |
| <b>Mobilisation</b>                  | Every occasion when a fire engine or special appliance is sent to an emergency. Individual incidents may require just one or several mobilisations to resource it properly.   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Natural turnover</b>                  | The rate at which eligible members of staff leave the organisation as they reach their defined retirement age under the pension scheme of which they are members.          |
| <b>On-call duty system</b>               | A duty system where firefighters respond from their own homes or workplaces located near to the fire station on an on-call basis.  |
| <b>On-call fire station</b>              | A fire station crewed entirely by firefighters working the on-call duty system.  |
| <b>Referendum</b>                        | A general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision.  |
| <b>Revenue budget</b>                    | This is the day-to-day budget used to run the service provided by firefighters and other staff across the county.  |
| <b>Risk</b>                              | The combination of factors that adds up to the likelihood of an incident in an area.   |
| <b>Simultaneous demand</b>               | Occasions when more than one incident is happening at the same time in the same area – for instance in the whole of Kent and Medway, or just in the same town.             |
| <b>Troubled families</b>                 | UK Government scheme under the Department for Communities and Local Government with the stated aim of helping troubled families turn their lives around.                   |
| <b>Whole-time shift duty system</b>      | A duty system under which firefighters are available on the fire station 24/7.   |
| <b>Whole-time day-crewed duty system</b> | A duty system under which firefighters are available at the fire station during weekdays and Saturday mornings, and are called out from their nearby homes at other times. |

# Notes

# Have your say

If you have any comments on this plan, please send them in. We will report the outcomes in full to the meeting of Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority on **12 February 2016**.

If you would prefer a paper copy of this document or the questionnaire, please email us at [safetyplan@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:safetyplan@kent.fire-uk.org) or call **01622 692 121**.

The closing date for comments is **9am on 18 January 2016**.



**safety** and  
**wellbeing**  
plan 2016/18