



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Emergency Response

42 Hour Duty System Policy

(Locally Determined Shifts – Wholetime Duty Shift Based Operational Personnel)

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Responsible Person	Head of Emergency Response
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1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance outlines the specific principles and framework for the whole-time locally determined shift system related to operational personnel.

This policy and its application are to be read in conjunction with the Emergency Response Planning Policy, including the Fatigue Policy, and the Risk Assessment that applies to the locally determined shift system. Proactive and reactive monitoring of the Risk Assessment will be carried out throughout the trial.

This policy outlines the principles, expectations, governance, and operational framework for the continuation of a 42-hour duty system trial within Humberside Fire & Rescue Service (HFRS). Starting on 1st March 2026, this policy is an agreed amendment to Appendix 1 of the 2021 Collective Agreement (42-hour duty system) and removes the application of the 2023 Addendum. It incorporates shift steering group recommendations, 2025 CRMP Project 3 recommendations, HMICFRS findings, NFCC best practices, and operational lessons from other Services' arrangements.

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) is committed to providing the best possible service to its communities. The scope of operational activities incorporating response, operational risk, protection, prevention, safeguarding and inclusion require the provision of the appropriate resources and competent staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To meet this demand, an effective duty system is necessary that both enables service delivery, and supports the health, safety and wellbeing of operational staff.

Station Level Trial

This policy applies to all individuals at whole-time stations selected to continue the trial, and by agreement, these individuals will no longer be subject to the 2023 Addendum and associated policies.

This policy is effective from 1st March 2026 until such time as the parties to this Agreement agree either to implement the trial Locally Determined Shifts on a permanent basis or to a mutually acceptable, alternative Duty System. It is to be reviewed by the Shift Steering Group throughout this period. This policy is underpinned by a separate collective agreement which covers the trial period.

Throughout the trial, Service Management and/or the Representative Bodies (with the agreement of their membership) may end the trial by giving 60 days' notice to all parties involved. In those circumstances, the default position will be to revert to the 2017 2-2-4 shift system with block leave arrangements.

Stations volunteering to trial this policy during 2026 may also end the trial by giving 60 days' notice to all involved parties. If the trial ends at a volunteer station's request, the default position will be that the station either reverts to the 2023 trial arrangements as outlined in the 2023 Addendum or returns to the 2017 2-2-4 shift system with block leave arrangements.

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During October, the Shift Steering Group will carry out a final review to evaluate the trial's success. If the trial is successful, an agreement between Service Management and the Representative Bodies will be reached before moving this '42-hour duty system (locally determined shifts) - WDS Shift-based Operational Personnel' to a recognised shift system within Humberside Fire and Rescue Service.

Core Code of Ethics

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) has adopted the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. The Service is committed to the ethical principles of the Code and strives to apply them in all we do; therefore, those principles are reflected in this policy.

National Guidance

This policy and its application are to be read in conjunction with the associated Policy Delivery Guidance documents listed below, along with all other associated documents. Any National Guidance which has been adopted by HFRS will be reflected in this policy.

2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

HFRS has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010, and a commitment to ensure it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly in any of its functions and services or in its treatment of staff, in relation to race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, gender reassignment or marriage and civil partnership. It also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, employees and service users.

The model supports:

- Staff with caring responsibilities
- Staff needing flexible arrangements
- Fair access to leave and shifts
- Inclusive participation in shift planning

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim:

The aim is to implement a modern, flexible framework that ensures HFRS's wholetime duty system is fit for purpose, aligns staffing with the clear peaks in operational demand identified between 07:30 and 19:30, and maintains the Community Risk Management Plan level of availability. The policy will enhance efficiency and productivity across the working period while offering improved fairness, resilience, and wellbeing for staff.

Informed by CRMP Project 3, HMICFRS findings, and national NFCC research, the framework aims to provide greater choice and flexibility in how shifts are worked,

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reduce the cultural and operational limitations of rigid systems, and reflect the nationwide move toward self-rostering and 12-hour duty systems.

HFRS will ensure that conditions relating to the duty system are in line with the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service (seventh edition). The Grey Book, whilst maintaining operational readiness (subject to the conditions of the Collective Agreement).

The overarching purpose of the introduction of a locally determined shift scheme is to ensure effective operational availability is maintained and to allow shifts to be managed by local Watch Management Teams (WMTs).

The policy is designed to maximise the flexibility and efficiency of the duty system while operating within the station and Service-level ridership factors and staffing numbers, as of 1st January 2026. Accordingly, each station's staffing levels will be maintained throughout the trial.

Objectives:

The primary objective of this policy is to enable the HFRS mission statement of "Proud to serve our community". This is outlined in relevant documents, including the Community Risk Management Plan, the Strategic Plan and the Core Code of Ethics.

The following are also applicable:

- Align crewing levels with risk and demand patterns.
- Maintain or improve appliance availability, crewing competence, and resilience.
- Improve flexibility, allowing staff more choice over when they work without compromising the quality of service delivery provided.
- Enhance staff wellbeing through better control of work patterns, fair access to shifts, and reduced fatigue.
- Support a more inclusive and modern organisational culture.
- Ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability.
- Provide a clear set of rules and procedures to support WMTs in managing and forecasting the required local availability.
- Promote the ownership of absence management and availability by WMTs within the defined parameters of the Locally Determined Duty System.
- Coordinate the allocation of training courses by the relevant sections prior to the start of the calendar year.
- Regularly review the Locally Determined Duty System to evolve and adapt with changing times and demands, utilising evidence such as performance metrics and staff feedback to ensure it remains current and viable.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Equality Impact Assessment](#)

Legal References

- [The Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#)

- [Working Time Regulations 1998](#)

National Guidance

- [National Joint Council For Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of conditions of service \(seventh edition\). The Grey Book.](#)

Local Guidance

- [Collective Agreement and Addendum to the Agreement](#)
- [Emergency Response Planning Policy](#)
- [Fatigue Policy](#)
- [Time Off in Lieu Policy Delivery Guidance](#)
- [Detachments & Deployments Policy Delivery Guidance](#)
- [Course Leave Policy Delivery Guidance](#)
- [Uniformed Staff Overtime Policy Delivery Guidance](#)
- [Acting Up Policy Delivery Guidance](#)

5. PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS OF THE LOCALLY DETERMINED DUTY SYSTEM

The Locally Determined Duty System adopted must be in line with the four principles identified within the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service (seventh edition). The Grey Book, Section 4 Part A3:

Duty systems will need to meet the requirements of the fire and rescue employer's Community/Integrated Risk Management Plan. Any proposed system should be discussed with the recognised trade unions and be based on the following principles:

- (1) Basic working hours should average forty-two per week (inclusive of three hours of meal breaks in every twenty-four hours) for full-time employees. Hours of duty should be pro-rata for part-time employees.*
- (2) There should be at least two periods of twenty-four hours free from duty each week.*
- (3) It should comply with all relevant legislation, including the Working Time Regulations 1998, and Health, Safety and Welfare at Work legislation.*
- (4) It should have regard to the special circumstances of individual employees and be family friendly.*

Organisational Principles

- a. Fairness and transparency underpin all rostering decisions: Clear rules, impartial access to popular shifts, and rotation of first-choice selections.
- b. Crewing will be rostered to a maximum of Standard Appliance Crewing Levels (SACL).
- c. The system operates on 12-hour shifts.
- d. Night shifts will maintain a 7-hour stand-down period (12am-7am).
- e. Staff will have at least one 48-hour period free from duty every two weeks.
- f. Rosters must maintain full competency profiles.
- g. No more than 32 12-hour shifts can be worked in each 8-week reference period.

Innovation Group Principles (Staff-Led)

- a. Maximise personal choice within safe limits.
- b. Enable predictable planning for home and caring commitments.
- c. Fairly distribute day, night, and weekend duties.
- d. Protect against excessive workload or fatigue.
- e. Guarantee leave blocks in a rolling cycle.
- f. Establish clear, consistent rules for swaps, movement of shifts, and disputes.
- g. Provide supportive, non-intrusive management oversight.
- h. Have transparent consequences for rule breaches.

6. FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Duty System Structure

- a. Day Shift: 0730-1930
- b. Night Shift: 1930-0730

Annual Shift Requirements

Individuals are required to meet their contractual average of forty-two (42) hours per week, in accordance with the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service (the Grey Book). This requirement is met by completing the annual number of twelve-hour shifts set out below:

- 182 12-hour shifts per year (without leave)
- 149 12-hour shifts with long service leave
- 152 12-hour shifts without long service leave

Planning Structure and Fairness Mechanism

This planning process, conducted before the start of the year, provides individuals and managers a framework to promote the fair distribution of shifts and leave. Individuals will be aware of their on-duty and leave schedules for the entire year based on the traditional four-watch duty system, except for shifts they must undertake to compensate for any 'Standdown' shifts.

- a. Staff are assigned shifts using a watch-based structure prior to the start of the year.
- b. Leave will be incorporated into the planning structure using an allocated leave group model.
- c. Leave can then be swapped and moved fairly, ensuring SACLs and competency are maintained.
- d. Crewing will then be rostered to a maximum of SACLs by WMTs. WMTs provisionally allocate individuals 'Standdown' shifts, in which individuals over SACL will know there is a potential that they will not be rostered on duty.
- e. If WMTs wish to limit the number of 'Standdown' shifts to 12 per individual, this should be achieved by allocating night shifts initially. The number of 'Standdown' shifts will be reviewed by the WMTs in each cycle and may need

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- to be increased to accommodate high levels of sickness and other absences.
- f. A minimum of 137 annual shifts will be allocated to each individual within the planning structure.
 - g. The planning structure offers a “first choice” priority during the Flexible-Rostering Process, so that individuals can work their allocated duty days if they wish to do so.
 - Where agreement cannot be reached, WMTs allocates shifts based on the planning structure.
 - Where WMTs are unable to achieve SACLs with available personnel, individuals will be assigned shifts based on the planning structure.
 - Ensures equal opportunity for popular days and fair distribution of days, nights, and weekend duties.
 - h. In addition, individuals will then roster themselves on required training courses that do not fall within their rostered duty day within the planning structure.

Flexible Rostering Process

This process is designed to provide even more flexibility within the duty system, allowing individuals to change their allocated shifts, subject to the flexible availability of others.

- a. The flexible-rostering process will be managed by WMTs and delivered in pre-agreed rostering cycles, with each cycle limited to a maximum duration of three months to ensure regular review, fairness, and consistency.
- b. This process will be finalised at least 3 weeks before the cycle starts.
- c. In preparation for this process, individuals select shifts they are unavailable for via Fire Service Rota.
- d. WMTs then allocate shifts to achieve SACLs, as well as confirming provisionally allocated ‘Standdown’ days within the planning structure.
- e. This is achieved using the planning structure in the first instance so that if individuals wish to maintain their planned shifts, they can do so.
- f. If individuals require flexibility in the planning structure, this can be achieved subject to the availability of others being available for that shift. If available, individuals will be offered alternative shifts based on the number of annual shifts they have worked (those who have worked fewer shifts will be given the opportunity to work alternative shifts first).
- g. Rosters must maintain:
 - Standard appliance crewing levels
 - Competency of staff
 - Appropriate OIC crewing
- h. No more than 32 12-hour shifts can be worked in each 8-week reference period.

Leave and Guaranteed Non-Working Blocks

- a. Leave will be planned as described within this policy, and individuals who are part of the trial will not be subject to the Full-Time Shift Based Leave System Policy Delivery Guidance.

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- b. Leave blocks may be consecutive.
- c. Consecutive time off must not exceed 21 days, including 'Standdown' days (29 days with station manager approval).
- d. To ensure fairness, individuals will be allocated leave groups, and the groups will be populated into the planning structure by 1st November for the following year.
- e. Leave can be swapped and moved (subject to WMTs approval), ensuring SACLs and competency are maintained.

Sickness and Absence

- a. Absence (sickness, maternity, paternity, approved compassionate, etc) will result in the reduction of an individual's annual shift requirement. This will be calculated either based on the individual's shift allocation in that cycle or as an average of 42 hours per week, whichever is greater.
- b. Normal sickness reporting and pay rules apply.
- c. Individuals are required to inform a member of the WMT to allow for sickness absence cover to be arranged.
- d. Absences will be filled as per the surplus and deficit shift arrangements below.

Surplus and Deficit Shifts

This Locally Determined Duty System operates on the difference between annual shifts allocated and annual shifts required. Individuals will need to work additional shifts throughout the year to achieve the required number of Annual Shifts.

Shifts that individuals are required to work over their allocated shifts will be recorded on Fire Service Rota as full 12-hour shifts. Individuals will achieve their annual shift amount in the following way:

- a. At the start of the year, individuals can plan themselves onto training courses that do not fall on an allocated rostered shift within the planning structure, with a personal responsibility to attend each mandatory course once each year.
- b. Available individuals will be offered the opportunity to cover sickness and other absences that take the station below SACLs.
- c. Available individuals may be offered the opportunity to attend work for an agreed duration to carry out prevention/protection activities, and/or assist in maintaining on-call or other station availability.
- d. Available individuals may be offered the opportunity to work for an agreed duration to carry out any other pre-approved activities within their role. This will be voluntary.
- e. For paragraphs above, all available individuals will be contacted by their station WMTs and given the opportunity to work these shifts. WMTs will allocate shifts fairly, with those who have worked fewer shifts given the opportunity first.
- f. WMTs will monitor the achieved annual shift amounts of their teams at the end of each cycle. This is to assist their teams in achieving annual shift requirements fairly.

Overtime

Payment of overtime under this policy will be subject to the amended Operational Staff Overtime Policy Delivery Guidance.

a. Pre-Arranged Overtime

Where an individual has met their annual shift requirement, including any deficit shifts, and voluntarily agrees to work additional shifts to support appliance availability, these shifts may be paid as overtime. This will apply only where the WMTs have exhausted all other available resourcing options, and the additional shift is required to maintain appliance availability.

b. Casual Overtime

Casual overtime refers to occasions where the work is unforeseen and cannot be arranged in advance (or with little notice). The situations that give rise to casual overtime payments are:

- Overtime as a result of a requirement to remain on duty at an operational incident.
- Overtime as a result of remaining on duty awaiting the arrival of a deployment or stand-in for the oncoming Watch.
- Travel Time Allowance (TTA) as a result of agreeing to work a shift to maintain on-call or other station availability, and where the shift and associated travel time exceed the individual's normal shift.

7. GOVERNANCE, OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION

Watch Management Teams (Supervisory and Line Managers)

Responsible for the day-to-day rostering of WDS employees and the overall management of the systems that have been adopted in line with this policy document.

To ensure that the Collective Agreement and this policy are applied correctly within their teams.

Local Station Manager Responsibilities

Will support Supervisory Managers in implementing and applying this policy. They will monitor, manage, and report on their teams' performance against required performance standards, and ensure procedures are applied correctly within their teams, including:

- Oversee rosters and ensure compliance.
- Audit rostering and shift balances.
- Handle dispute resolution.

Shift Innovation Group Oversight

Will support Local Station Managers and Watch Management Teams in implementing and applying this policy, including:

- Review compliance and support stations with issues.
- Review escalated unresolved problems.

Attend trial review meetings at the following points:

- Month 3: Early learning review
- Month 6: Interim evaluation
- Month 9: Full evaluation with recommendations to SLT
- Month 12: Ongoing review of wider Service implementation.

Evaluating the trial using the NFCC Working Patterns Case Study Evaluation Tool, including assessment against the six pillars: Competency, Efficiency & Effectiveness, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Safety, Wellbeing, and Community Impact.

Group Manager and Service-Level Oversight

Emergency Response Group Manager and relevant senior leaders will provide organisational governance of the trial by:

- Conducting reviews aligned to the CRMP Project Plan and Service Improvement Plan.
- Reviewing performance against key indicators, including:
 - Appliance availability
 - Shift compliance and balance
 - Fairness of leave distribution
 - Staff satisfaction and feedback trends
 - Overtime levels and patterns
 - Sickness and absence trends

Using these KPIs, along with NFCC evaluation outcomes, to provide SLT with evidence-based assurance, identify areas for improvement, and determine the long-term viability of the Locally Determined Duty System.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY

The locally determined duty system will operate in full compliance with all relevant legal and contractual requirements. This includes adherence to the Working Time Regulations, the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work legislation, and the national conditions of service set out in the Grey Book. In addition, the system will remain aligned with the Collective Agreement governing the 42-hour duty system, ensuring that its implementation supports both statutory obligations and the terms negotiated locally with representative bodies.

Key risks include:

- Fatigue
- Uneven staffing
- Cultural tensions, individuals applying the system for personal gain.
- Overuse of shift swaps and working excessive hours

Controls include:

- Maximum shift limits
- Minimum rest periods
- Strong governance
- Digital monitoring
- Transparent escalation routes

9. CONCLUSION

This policy offers the framework for HFRS to implement a modern, fair, equitable, and resilient 42-hour flexible system. It reflects organisational objectives, findings from CRMP Project 3, best practices across the fire sector, and staff preferences.

The 12-month trial will undergo a structured review, and the outcomes will influence future duty system policies across HFRS.

**If you require any further information relating to this policy, please contact
Emergency Response**