



Statement of Intent

Definition of Risk

Water Related Incidents
and Flooding

February 2026

 PREVENTION

HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



Introduction

The information articulated in this Statement of Intent will help Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) identify how it will target its prevention activities regarding water related incidents and flooding.

HWFRS defines risk as a combination of the likelihood and consequences of hazardous events. This aligns with the National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) Definition of Risk.

As well as using the NFCC Definition of Risk, a range of other risks have been considered, which are important to understand when looking at areas presenting the greatest threat or harm to life.

This analysis of information will enable the Prevention department to plan how best to utilise its resources in delivering its preventative services in relation to water-related incidents.

The information contained in this Statement of Intent will help the Service to target its interventions accordingly.

The Service attends a wide range of water incidents and the NFCC Water Incident Dashboard identifies that from 2014 – 2021, HWFRS attended the highest number of water rescue incidents across the country.

HWFRS defines risk as a combination of the likelihood and consequences of a hazardous event.

Assessment of Risk

Flooding

Analysis of national datasets and statistics has enabled HWFRS to identify the areas of Herefordshire and Worcestershire that are at greatest risk of being affected by flooding.

- During the 5-year period under review the Service attended a total of 898 flooding incidents.
- This includes pumping water out of properties, evacuating individuals from their properties and providing advice.

Water Rescues

- During the 5-year period under review, the Service attended a total of 537 incidents involving rescue or evacuation from water incidents.
- This resulted in 17 individuals being taken to hospital with serious injuries and 24 of these individuals losing their lives.
- This includes people who have tried to drive through flood water, those who have got into difficulty whilst taking part in sport and leisure activities and helping individuals who have attempted suicide by jumping into deep or fast flowing water.

Fords

- During the 5-year period under review, the Service attended 52 incidents to water rescues at fords, recording 44 rescues of persons at these incidents.
- 62% of all these attendances occurred at either Shell Ford or Walcot Ford in Worcestershire. These two fords have been attended 32 times in the last 5 years with a total of 27 people, including drivers and their passengers being rescued by operational crew.

What does this mean?

Based on analysis and the risk methodology used, specific areas across the two counties have been identified as being at the highest risk of flooding or water rescues. As such, this data will be considered when carrying out targeted prevention initiatives.

This data has been modelled to develop a number of 'heat maps' which will be used to undertake proactive targeted Prevention activities, to include the delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) at properties known to be at risk of flooding, increasing the emphasis on helping the communities to build resilience.

There is no evidence of one vulnerability group being notably overrepresented in the casualty figures.

Within the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) risk analysis, households with residents over the age of 66 who live alone contribute to around 10% of the overall risk for water related incidents.

Future Targeting

Flooding incidents and water rescues are likely to be an increasing area of demand for our Service; some of these incidents are preventable, as they are often linked to human behaviour.

Water safety and flooding is a shared duty across statutory partners and effective safety campaigns will rely on partnership working. HWFRS will work alongside key stakeholders to improve water safety and flooding awareness with the aim of reducing the number of drownings. This collaborative work will include sharing information with partners where appropriate and:

- Working on campaigns with other Fire and Rescue Services and partner agencies including West Mercia Police, Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI), Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA), Royal Lifesaving Society (RLSS) Local Authorities and Community Safety Partnerships (CSP).
- Developing partnership arrangements with Mental Health teams and raising awareness with appropriate Service personnel on suicide prevention.
- Promoting the NFCC Water Safety Workstream and aligning Service activities to National Guidance.
- Carrying out proactive targeted Prevention work to include the delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) at properties known to be at risk of flooding, increasing the emphasis on helping the communities to build resilience.



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