



**GREATER
MANCHESTER**
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Prevention and Protection Strategy 2026-2029

Preventing emergencies by protecting people and
places

December 2025

Introduction

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) provides a range of services to the people who live, work, visit, and study in our city-region. With a population of circa 3 million, Greater Manchester is the second largest and fastest growing economy in the UK, playing a crucial role in regional and national growth.

The changing built environment and population of the city region poses unique challenges in relation to preventing and protecting communities from fires and other emergencies.

This Prevention and Protection strategy is our blueprint for supporting a safer, stronger Greater Manchester. It sets out how we will prevent emergencies and protect people and places through a range of inspections, enforcement, programmes, education, campaigns and interventions which are underpinned by three key principles.

- Improving and innovating
- Engaging with others
- Creating opportunities

These principles are at the core of the work we plan to deliver and our commitments under this strategy. They will enable us to evolve our work to meet emerging risks, expand our reach and maximise our impact.

Our approach is agile and evidence-led, person-centred, and place-based, ensuring we target risk effectively and deliver interventions that primarily reduce the risk of fire or other risks, whilst also contributing to shared ambitions such as improving health, wellbeing, and housing safety.

By aligning with the Fire Plan 2026-2029, Greater Manchester Strategy and Greater Manchester's Live Well and Housing First ambitions, we will reduce risk, create safer communities, reduce inequalities, and build resilience for the future.

Our Approach

The **Fire Plan 2026-2029** is the overarching four-year strategy for GMFRS. It is built around four key pillars each with a series of commitments to our staff, communities, and partners, summarising our forward plans.

- **Pillar 1: Prevent & Protect:** Prevent emergencies by protecting people and places
- **Pillar 2: Respond:** Deliver an outstanding emergency response
- **Pillar 3: People & Culture:** Look after our people and foster a culture of equality, inclusivity, and excellent leadership
- **Pillar 4: Excellence & Value:** Maximise public value through continuous improvement and sustainable use of resources

Our Prevention and Protection strategy covers the period 2026-29 and primarily supports the delivery of Pillar 1 of the Fire Plan but underpins the commitments of GMFRS under all the pillars.

This Prevention and Protection strategy is our blueprint for supporting a safer, stronger Greater Manchester. It sets out how we will prevent emergencies and protect people and places through a range of interventions which are underpinned by three key principles.



Improving and innovating

To stay ahead of emerging risks and meet the changing expectations of our residents and businesses we are committed to embracing innovation and continuous improvement.

Improving and Innovating is about challenging the status quo - using evidence, technology, and creativity to develop and deliver smarter, safer solutions. We will harness data to predict, assess and respond to risks. We will invest in digital transformation enabling us to share risk-based information which impacts vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups and work in collaboration with others to mitigate and respond to these risks.

We will build on our record of developing new interventions to support improving health, wellbeing, and housing conditions.

Through this principle, GMFRS will lead the way in shaping a modern fire and rescue service that is agile, proactive, and relentlessly focused on reducing harm.

Engaging with others

Supporting communities to be safer and stronger is a shared responsibility. Engaging with others reflects our commitment to collaboration - working hand-in-hand with communities, partners, and stakeholders to co-create solutions that make Greater Manchester safer.

For many elements of our work this involves deepening our community engagement and working further with our voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) partners to utilise their expertise to challenge us to improve.

We endeavour to co-design our interventions with partners and the public. We will deliver our interventions in a way that builds trust through transparency and inclusion and supports tackling inequality and improving life chances.

Through strategic partnerships - from road and water safety to building safety reform - we will ensure our efforts are not only effective but transformative and can be delivered as part of integrated place-based working.

Our commitment to engaging with others goes beyond Greater Manchester and we will engage at a national and regional level to deliver the best services possible. This includes our work with the National Fire Chiefs Council, engagement on the building safety agenda, accelerating remediation and collaborating with key stakeholders on shared outcomes.

Creating opportunities

Our Prevention and Protection functions are not just about reducing risk - they are about creating opportunities for residents and businesses to thrive.

This principle is also our promise to invest in training, education, skills, and pathways that empower individuals and communities.

From inspiring young people through our Bury Safety Centre, King's Trust and Fire Cadets to supporting volunteers and developing our workforce, we will build resilience and unlock potential.

We will continue to create gateways to employment within GMFRS and wider Greater Manchester Combined Authority family group to allow individual development and expand career opportunities.



Our Prevention and Protection Strategy

Our Prevention and Protection work is designed to reduce the risks to communities to reduce the need for us to respond to emergencies. We will always be there in an emergency, and we are committed to delivering an outstanding emergency response when required, but by proactively protecting people and places we can reduce the number of emergencies we need to attend.

This strategy outlines how we will deliver our Prevention and Protection functions to the communities of Greater Manchester.

The communities of Greater Manchester have changed and so have the risks that they face - not just from fires in the home. We have already increased the range of support and interventions we offer to residents and businesses but need to go further than this and design and develop new approaches to reducing risk and preventing emergencies.

GMFRS is committed to using data and evidence-based approaches to identify those most at risk to deliver our targeted interventions. We will collaborate with communities and partners to develop and deliver innovative, research-led activities to reduce risk across Greater Manchester.

GMFRS will align its prevention and protection activities with Greater Manchester's Public Service Reform agenda, ensuring our work contributes to wider goals such as reducing inequality, improving health outcomes, and supporting economic growth. We will integrate our services into locality structures and collaborate with partners to deliver holistic solutions that address the root causes of vulnerability.



Our Commitments

1. Transforming through digital technology.

We will: Deliver our services more effectively and efficiently through implementing and embedding the use of technology. This will provide residents and businesses with improved services which are agile and easy to access.

Why this is important: Our digital tools and capabilities have not kept pace with the interventions we deliver, or the needs of residents, businesses and partners. Developing a single unified solution for our interventions will free up time for colleagues to deliver more for communities and enable us to share risk information and data more effectively across the service and with partners. Improving the way we plan and record our work will improve our effectiveness and reduce administrative work and duplication for our frontline and corporate support staff. Improving user experience will improve the quality of our interventions and interactions with the public

How we will we do this?

Through our Digital Transformation Project, we are recognising a wide range of benefits and improvements we can make to efficiency, effectiveness and user experience. We are ambitious, and the project is not only the development and implementation of a digital solution to improve our technological ways of working and replacing systems that are not fit for purpose or duplicated.

We are aiming to be truly transformational in all aspects of our work and change the 'way we do things' to 'doing things differently' to benefit staff and communities. Our Digital Transformation Programme is intended to deliver a full transformation of Prevention and Protection processes and associated systems, including the replacement of 37 fragmented systems with a single, integrated solution. All Prevention and Protection related interventions will be supported in a single, user friendly and agile system improving data consistency, user experience, and operational effectiveness.

Delivery is structured around two workstreams: Process Improvement and Digital Transformation with phased implementation and regular gateway reviews to validate benefits and maintain alignment.

2. Develop agile and adaptable interventions

We will: Continue to develop and evolve our programmes and interventions to address multiple disadvantages and support the most vulnerable and those most at risk.

Why this is important:

The introduction of the Serious Violence Duty in 2023 and the breadth of the Building Safety Reform agenda are examples of extraordinary and unpredicted change within the fire sector. As a modern and resilient fire and rescue service we must be adaptable, flexible and agile to change at both local and national levels this will ensure we not only satisfy delivery of strategy and plans but continue to meet the needs of our communities through valid and appropriate intervention.

How will we do this?

We will continue to develop new programmes and referral pathways – we have a strong background in developing and introducing new and innovative interventions based on emerging risks. Our award-winning Atlas Project and Prevention in Prisons Programme are examples where we have identified community risk and, supported by academic rigour, implemented programmes to mitigate the risk and build individual and community resilience for those that are most vulnerable and at risk.

This provides a strong foundation for us to work with partners to design, develop and deliver against emerging and key risks in collaboration with partners and stakeholders. Our Safer Communities and Interventions leads have built trust through delivery of collaboratively developed programmes and referral pathways.

We will also review our existing interventions to ensure that they are inclusive and remove barriers to accessing our services. We will ensure all staff and volunteers are equipped to engage effectively with individuals who may have additional needs or disabilities. We will provide our staff and volunteers with training on specific communication strategies, accessibility, and inclusive practices to ensure interventions are delivered in a tailored and respectful way. We will work with specialist organisations to develop resources and guidance that support accessibility requirements across all prevention and protection activities.

By working with the NFCC, Fire and Rescue Services, leading academics and subject matter experts, we have learnt the benefit and advantage of ensuring our programmes and interventions are built on the solid foundations of academic research and knowledge. We will strive to ensure we maintain this approach to provide the best possible service and outcomes for our communities.

We will continue to utilise our Evaluation Framework to robustly assess the effectiveness of our work and shape improvements to our services strengthening the role of feedback from individuals, communities and businesses. This will ensure our evaluations are outcome focussed and able to track and monitor long term impacts.



3. Work in partnership to identify and support people at risk

We will: Utilise existing partnerships and build new ones to ensure we get the right support to the right people at the right time.

Why this is important:

Due to the lessons we have learnt over previous years, we recognise that we cannot work alone, and in doing so we will not achieve the best results, outcomes or objectives in keeping communities safer.

GMFRS mission is to Save Lives, Protect Communities and Work Together. This strategy aims to put this mission and partners at the heart of our delivery of protection and prevention activity. Themes such as shared outcomes, thematic risks, data sharing, multi-agency delivery models and identifying and exploring collaboration opportunities are all areas of focus for improving our key partnerships.

How will we do this?

GMFRS will work proactively with partners across Greater Manchester and nationally to influence policy, share best practice, and deliver joint initiatives that reduce risk. We will strengthen relationships with statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, and private sector partners to ensure a coordinated approach to prevention and protection. This includes active participation in multi-agency boards and forums to shape strategic priorities and operational delivery.

We have a strong track record of encouraging partners to refer vulnerable residents for our Home Fire Safety Assessments but there is more to do to build a shared understanding of fire risks in the home. We will build on our referral pathways to increase referrals from professionals, partners and the community so we can target our support to those highest at risk.

We will use an evidence and data-based approach and work with partners to develop new targeted interventions differentiating between risks for different age groups aligned to their circumstances. This will underpin our contribution to the Live Well and Housing First ambitions. To maximise our reach, it will be essential that our partners recognise, support and in some cases deliver these interventions directly.

Working with others is essential to our commitment to accelerate Remediation and ensure a resident first approach. We have and will continue to engage with those affected by the building safety crisis and develop responses in conjunction with key stakeholders to ensure that we not only make homes safe but residents feel safe.



4. Ensure the safety of the built environment

We will: Effectively regulate the built environment and work with partners to respond to new and emerging risks through engagement, inspection and enforcement.

Why this is important:

Greater Manchester's risk landscape is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by urban expansion, demographic shifts, and the emergence of new industrial and environmental hazards. The skyline is rising, densifying, and diversifying. High-rise residential towers, complex mixed-use developments, and large-scale industrial zones are becoming the norm, particularly in Manchester and Salford. The Places for Everyone plan alone outlines tens of thousands of new homes and millions of square metres of commercial space to be delivered by 2037.

The population of Greater Manchester is growing, ageing, and becoming more diverse. This will increase the number of people living in buildings which are generally considered to be higher risk, such as care homes, extra care schemes and supported housing and high-rise buildings and couples with the housing crisis likely to result in more residents living in poor quality rented housing including houses in multiple occupation and flats above commercial premises. At the same time, technological advances are changing how people live, work, and travel. The rise of electric vehicles, smart buildings, and energy storage systems introduces new fire risks that are not yet fully understood or regulated.

How will we do this?

We will continue to base our interventions on risk ensuring a proportionate approach which meets our obligations under the Regulators Code. This means working in collaboration with national and local regulators to support compliance and growth across all areas of activity to support wider Greater Manchester ambitions.

Our business engagement activity will evolve to expand the advice available to different sectors underpinned by technology to ensure that information is easily accessible. We will work with partners to co-produce materials that support businesses to respond to legislative changes, reduce the risk of fires and support resilience.

We will continue to play a leading role in implementing building safety reforms, working closely with the Building Safety Regulator and other stakeholders to ensure compliance and accelerate remediation of unsafe cladding and other fire safety defects. We will provide expert advice, influence national policy, and support residents and building owners through clear guidance and engagement.

Our inspection and enforcement activity will continue to be risk-based targeting proactive inspections at higher risk premises and ensuring we are equipped to respond to complaints and intelligence from the public and partners.



5. Follow up and learn from every fire

We will: Ensure that every opportunity for learning is undertaken, deliberate fire setting is reduced, and residents get the best possible service following fire related incidents in homes and businesses.

Why this is important:

The fire sector is ever changing and improving the way it delivers services. Organisational and operational learning, evaluation and feedback are key components to identifying areas for improvement. Currently, some of these areas do not underpin a drive for improvement and there is more we can do to ensure we have an assurance of the quality and excellence of our work. We have recently seen the emergence of an increase of deliberate fire setting and varying factors on how this has increased, and it impacts on communities and costs to our service, other agencies and the public. Therefore, we aim to build on our current offers within prevention, protection and response, to ensure we extract learning and feedback to allow us to introduce improvement.

How will we do this?

We aim to build on our work to introduce digital solutions to support this work. We aim to better support residents who experience the trauma of a fire in their homes by following up with bespoke advice, guidance and signposting to other support.

We will work with partners to develop collaborative opportunities to reduce deliberate fire setting. We will be agile and flexible to be able to adapt our fire setting interventions and evaluate our outcomes.

We will focus on those most vulnerable and those most at risk. We will scope every opportunity to achieve comprehensive data sharing agreements to allow us to target our interventions to those most at need.

We will work closer together within our own teams and departments to link up joint outcomes and ensure our staff are trained and competent to a high standard in fire investigation and delivering home fire safety and fire stopping interventions.

6. Respond to water and road risks.

We will: Reduce the road and water related risks in Greater Manchester and across the region through supporting Vision Zero and Water Safety Partnerships.

Why this is important:

Fire and Rescue Services hold limited statutory duty for preventing incidents or mitigating road or water related risks. We have long-standing and trusted partnerships, and we support a wide range of prevention activities as we know, despite limitations within statutory duty, this is the 'right thing' to do to support and protect our communities.

We have seen an emergence of water-related deaths and for three out of five previous years, we have seen these statistically overtake the number of fire deaths we have within Greater Manchester.

Data and evidence demonstrate that road traffic collisions are a key risk for residents of Greater Manchester and road traffic collisions cause more deaths and injuries than fire and water-related incidents combined.

Unfortunately, our young people are also particularly at risk on our roadways. Younger people are within a high statistical demographic in relation to road-related casualties for vulnerable road user groups of pedestrians, cyclists, young drivers and motorcyclists or powered tow-wheeler riders.

We recognise the NFCC's Road Safety Policy Position Statement and support the associated recommendations. We will support and align our ambitions to national road safety strategies alongside our own ambitions of our city region for Vision Zero.

How will we do this?

We will utilise data and evidence from our own response information and learning and use shared data from partners such as casualty data dashboards. We will be a stakeholder in data analyst and fatal incident review groups working groups.

We will deliver academic, research-led and evaluated interventions with the aim of reducing road related incidents for the most vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and young and aged drivers.

Alongside this work we will play a lead role in delivery for 'safe road users' in the GM Vision Zero strategy, and support other safe systems and ensure the Vision Zero action plan is fundamental to our interventions and delivery of the 'safe systems' principles.

We will continue to drive progress within the 10 Water Safety Partnerships, whilst playing a key role in further improving work within the GM Strategic Water Safety Partnership.

We will align our work to national and local strategy and influence key partners in promoting safer water related activity, education and awareness of risk.



7. Support Community Resilience.

We will: Support communities and businesses to develop and maintain resilience to threats, including those caused by the climate emergency.

Why this is important:

The climate emergency poses real risks to our communities and businesses from wildfires to flooding and the rising temperatures all of which can adversely impact health, cause disruption to businesses and increase the risk of emergencies.

We have seen recent impacts of political and societal issues affecting our communities. Whilst we identify risk through our planning, we need to further develop our Prevention and Protection responses not only following operational incidents, but to address rising tide events and to support community tensions.

Our ability to engage means that we can support communities to proactively prepare for these threats and develop resilience to minimise the impact.

How will we do this?

We have historically run reactive publicity and reassurance campaigns as part of our response to major incidents, emergencies and extreme weather conditions. We will evolve our approach to support the preparedness and resilience in advance of these events and align this with the delivery of existing interventions. We will work with communities and partners in the VCFSE sector to devise appropriate messaging and delivery arrangements.

Our Outreach Team is agile and adaptable providing the capability to undertake targeted engagement with the public, community groups and businesses. We will continue to develop the approach of our Outreach Team to proactively support community preparedness and resilience to incidents before they occur.

Developing Prevention Champions – We will endeavour to support, train and educate our volunteers and partner agencies within the VCFSE in the importance of identifying and reducing risks within our communities. We will provide signposting to our services, campaigns and reporting mechanisms to ensure there is easy but robust pathway to get the right services to the right people.

Through our Protection Teams we engage with businesses and provide information in a range of ways. We will look to incorporate business continuity advice as part of our engagement with businesses and proactively target those businesses which may be particularly vulnerable or at increased risk.



8. Invest in and develop talent.

We will: Continue to deliver services to young people to support them to achieve their potential. By investing in our staff, volunteers and creating employment opportunities through work placements, apprentices and career progression pathways we will further diversify and expand our talent.

Why this is important:

Delivering our ambition to improve and expand the way we work with communities needs new ideas, innovation and lived experience to shape our services. To be a truly modern, flexible and resilient fire and rescue service requires harnessing the breadth of talent which exists in our communities – unlocking the potential of people of all ages and backgrounds.

How will we do this?

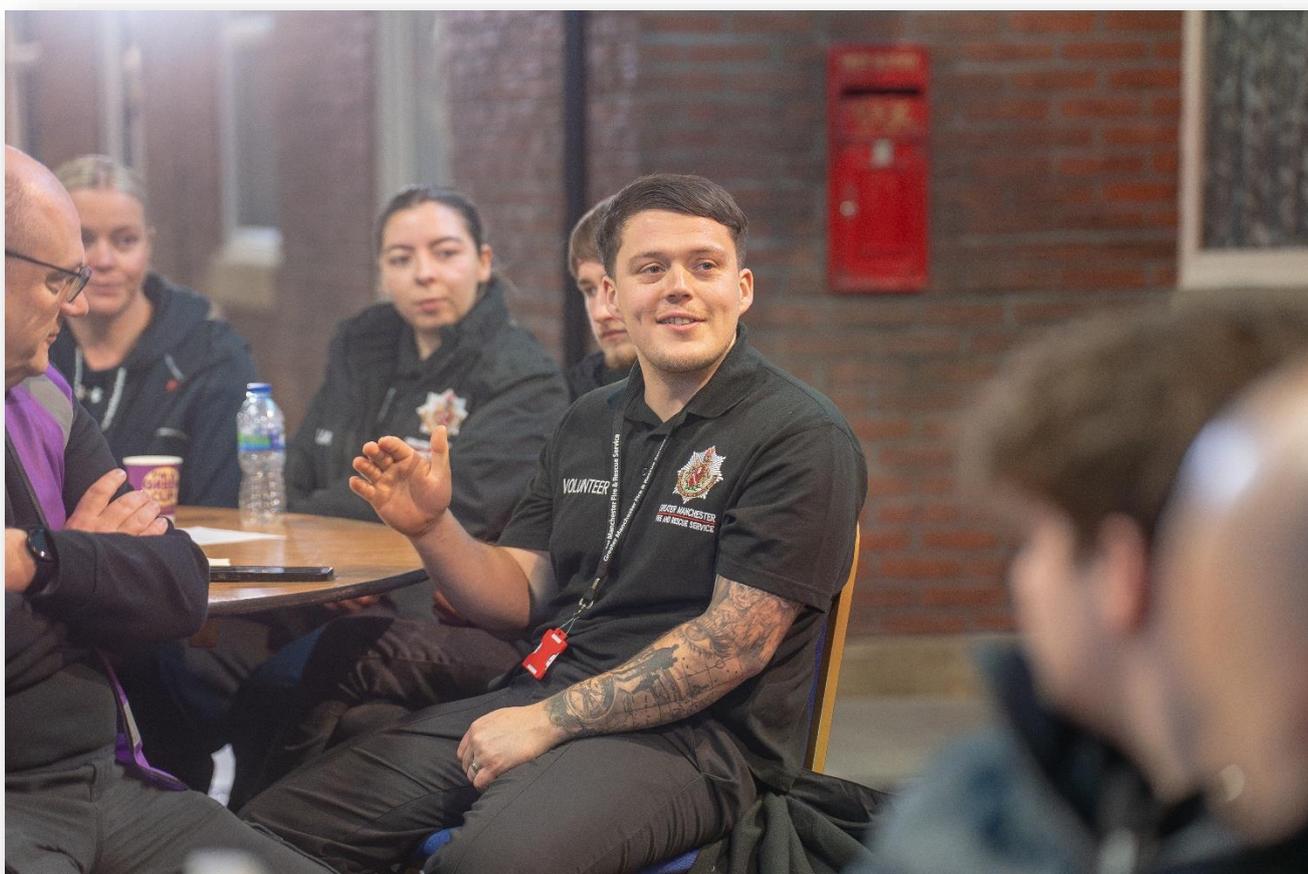
GMFRS recognises that skilled and confident staff and volunteers are essential to delivering high-quality prevention and protection services. We will provide comprehensive training programmes that cover technical skills, community engagement, and where appropriate trauma-informed practice.

We have already adopted and embedded the NFCC Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators and will continue to utilise and embed this. We will align to Prevention Competency Frameworks developed by the NFCC and in accordance with national Fire Standards. The frameworks define the skills, knowledge, and behaviours required for prevention and protection activity and provide a clear structure for assessment and progression. We will embed the frameworks into recruitment, training, and performance management processes, ensuring staff have the tools and support to deliver excellent services in a consistent way.

Our Protection Training and Development Team will continue to develop and deliver training packages aligned to the risks in Greater Manchester and collaborate with other North West Services. We will develop further packages to support front line crews to recognise and respond to fire safety risks when attending incidents and undertaking fire safety checks. We will continue to develop training and resources to support our staff and partners to deliver prevention activities and interventions.

All of our volunteers will receive tailored induction and development opportunities to ensure they can contribute effectively and safely. We will also create pathways for volunteers to progress into paid roles where appropriate, supporting workforce diversity and resilience.

We will continue to evolve and improve our programmes for Young People to support them achieving their potential. In addition, we will create workplace opportunities through supporting work experience for those participating in Kings Trust and workplace placements for those undertaking T-Level and other vocational qualifications.



Measuring Success

The Fire Plan 2025–2029 sets out what we intend to achieve through the delivery of our commitments. The delivery of this strategy will support the outcomes of the Fire Plan, which are:

1. Reduce deaths, injuries and damage caused by fire and other threats, and help build stronger communities.
2. Ensure people are safer in the buildings they live in, work and visit, and help make businesses more resilient to fire.
3. Develop and maintain a diverse, high-performing, and healthy workforce.
4. Deliver the best value to the public with the least impact on the environment.

Success will be measured through a comprehensive framework of performance indicators that demonstrate impact, efficiency, and continuous improvement. We will track progress against our performance management framework, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Our approach will include:

- **Risk Reduction:** Monitoring decreases in accidental dwelling fires, deliberate fires, road traffic collisions, and water-related incidents.
- **Compliance, Performance and Standards:** Measuring improvements in building safety compliance, completion of risk-based inspections, and adherence to Fire Standards.
- **Community Engagement:** Evaluating the reach and effectiveness of education programmes, youth interventions, and volunteer participation.
- **Workforce Development:** Tracking staff competence, diversity, and progression through training and talent management frameworks.
- **Continuous Improvement and Learning:** Reviewing outcomes from audits, evaluations, and peer reviews to embed best practice and drive innovation.

Governance and Review

Delivery of this strategy will be underpinned by strong governance and transparent reporting to ensure accountability and continuous improvement. Oversight will be provided through GMFRS's established governance structures.

We will embed a structured review process that includes:

- **Annual Strategy Review:** Assessing progress against objectives, adapting priorities to reflect emerging risks, legislative changes, and community needs.
- **Performance Monitoring:** Regular reporting through key performance indicators aligned to the Fire Plan and strategic objectives.
- **Independent Scrutiny:** Engagement with HMICFRS, peer reviews, and external audits to validate effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Transparent communication with communities, partners, and staff through published reports, consultations, and feedback mechanisms.
- **Continuous Learning:** Using insights from evaluations, audits, and organisational learning frameworks to refine delivery and embed best practice.