



**YOUR
LONDON
FIRE
BRIGADE**

RECOVER

SERVICE STRATEGY 2026 – 2029

April 2026

LFB
LONDON FIRE BRIGADE



LONDON

- **London is home to over 9 million residents** and is one of the fastest growing regions in the UK, with the population expected to reach close to 10 million within the next decade.
- The city is a major high rise metropolis, with more than **8,000 high rise buildings** – around 60% of all those in England – and it experiences almost **40% of the country's high-rise fires**.
- Its complex infrastructure spans underground, overground, and aerial networks, including major rail hubs, the Channel Tunnel link, and the Elizabeth line, which alone made over 240 million passenger journeys last year. **London's mainline train stations collectively see more than a billion passengers annually**, making them among the busiest in the world.
- London is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world, with over **250 languages spoken** and more than **45% of residents identifying as ethnic minorities**, reflecting an exceptional breadth of cultures and heritages.
- London is also the third-most visited city in the world, welcoming **22.7 million international travellers in 2025**.
- More than **1 million Londoners are over 65**, a figure projected to rise by almost 70% by 2050, and it is estimated that one in five live in poverty.
- Around **1.2 million disabled people** live in London, most of them of working age.
- Nearly **half a million young adults aged 18–24** call the city home, many living independently for the first time.
- **London has one of the largest LGBTQ+ communities in Europe** and is widely recognised as a global LGBTQ+ hub in terms of culture, visibility, events, and institutions – reflecting its position as a centre of diversity and inclusion.

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INTRODUCTION

London Fire Brigade provides a vital fire and rescue service that protects residents and businesses across the city, operating within a changing national and international context where evolving political and societal dynamics shape the exceptional risks we must plan for.

London's recovery context

This document sets out the actions we take to help communities, businesses, partners and individuals recover from the impacts of fire and rescue service-related incidents and adverse events. When Prepare, Protect and Prevent activities cannot prevent

emergencies taking place or protect people from the effects of these emergencies, our Recover strategy focuses on supporting people and communities affected by an incident by helping to reduce its longer-term impacts. It describes how we may take action after an event, including providing proactive support and care to those affected.



ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Everything we do is guided by national legislation, the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, National Operational Guidance, Mayoral priorities, our Service Improvement Framework, our Community Risk Management Plan and our annual Assessment of Risk.

London Fire Brigade delivers services to London across six service areas: Prevent, Protect, Prepare, Respond, Recover, and Engage. Together, these services form a complete approach to risk management, from reducing the likelihood of

emergencies occurring, through protecting people and property when they do, to supporting communities in their aftermath. This strategy describes the Recover service and sets out how LFB will deliver it between 2026 and 2029.

Our vision: **Trusted to serve and protect London**



KEY PRINCIPLES

Our values are a set of guiding principles that help us to create a safe and professional workplace culture. In turn, they also help us achieve our vision – to be trusted to serve and protect London.

SERVICE

We put the **public** first

INTEGRITY

We act with **honesty**

TEAMWORK

We work **together** and include everyone

LEARNING

We listen so that we can **improve**

EQUITY

We treat everyone fairly according to their **needs**

COURAGE

We **step up** to the challenge

OUR RECOVER SERVICE

The Recover service covers the actions LFB takes to reduce the lasting impact of incidents on people, communities, businesses and infrastructure.

It begins during the emergency response itself, where crews work to limit damage, protect property and identify people who may need support. It extends into the period after the immediate emergency has been resolved, where LFB works alongside partner agencies to help those affected return to normal life.

LFB's recovery role takes two main forms

The first is response recovery: the practical work carried out by frontline crews during and immediately after an incident to control damage, preserve property and the local environment, identify vulnerability, and make referrals to appropriate support services. This is the area where LFB has the most direct impact, because it is delivered by the crews already on scene and begins at the point when it matters most.

The second is recovery in partnership: working alongside local authorities, other emergency services and partner organisations to support wider community recovery after significant incidents. In this role, LFB contributes operational capability, specialist expertise and local knowledge.

Recovery in London is a shared responsibility

The 32 boroughs and the City of London hold the primary statutory duty for community recovery following emergencies, supported by the multi-agency coordination structures and the London Resilience Forum. LFB's contribution to that system is important but bounded: we are often the first agency to identify people in need of support. We can deploy specialist capabilities to assist with recovery operations such as flooding or hazardous material incidents, and we provide fire investigation services that help individuals, insurers and criminal justice agencies understand what happened and why.



HOW WE SUPPORT RECOVERY ACROSS LONDON

Our risks

LFB's recovery activity covers the full range of risks identified in the Assessment of Risk. The nature and scale of recovery support varies by incident type.

Day-to-day risks

For the most common incidents, such as dwelling fires, road traffic collisions, and other day-to-day emergencies, recovery is primarily delivered by the crews on scene. This includes limiting damage, identifying people who need support, and making referrals to partner agencies. The most common of these day-to-day risks which result in incidents are:

RISK TYPE

	Fires in the home
	Fires in large public and commercial buildings
	Outdoor fire near urban areas
	Road traffic collisions
	Water related incidents
	Physical vulnerability
	Hazardous materials
	Persons trapped

Extraordinary risks

For larger or more complex incidents, such as major flooding, industrial accidents or terrorist attacks, LFB's recovery role extends beyond the immediate scene. This involves coordinated working with local authorities, other emergency services and specialist partners. The risks below represent those where LFB's recovery activity is most significant.

Flooding generates some of the most sustained recovery demand LFB faces. The aftermath can leave homes, businesses and public spaces waterlogged or inaccessible across wide areas simultaneously.

Extreme heat and wildfire events leave a growing recovery footprint. Recovery involves not only the immediate aftermath of fire damage but also supporting communities affected by destruction of property, loss of green space and temporary displacement.


Terrorism incidents generate recovery demands that are acute, complex and prolonged: involving mass casualty support, disaster victim identification, scene management, and long-term community recovery that can continue for years. LFB contributes fire investigation, specialist scene assessment and hazardous material capabilities, and supports the multi-agency structures that coordinate survivor care.

Industrial and hazardous materials incidents drive recovery challenges around contamination, environmental damage and prolonged disruption to surrounding communities. Recovery can require extended cordons, specialist decontamination and coordinated work with regulators including the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive. LFB's hazardous materials expertise and fire investigation capability contribute directly to establishing cause and advising partners on restoration. LFB supports businesses and partners in line with Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 2015.

RISK TYPE

	Urban flooding
	Outdoor fire near urban areas
	Terror-related

RISK DRIVER

	Sustainability and climate change
	Changing built environment
	Health security and resilience
	Population change

RESPONSE RECOVERY

This focuses on the work carried out by frontline crews and officers during, or immediately after, an incident. These actions aim to reduce the impact of the event, support those affected, and help communities recover and return to normal as quickly as possible. Recovery support is typically delivered in person as part of the initial response, comprised of three areas:

1. Personal and community recovery

Crews work closely with individuals and communities to understand what is most important to them and take practical steps to reduce losses and support recovery after the incident.

During the incident, alongside firefighting or other emergency actions, to prevent serious damage where possible:

Fire crews work to limit damage and protect what matters most to people and communities. This can include saving buildings, personal belongings, important records, community facilities, and the local environment wherever possible.

After the immediate danger has passed, to reduce existing damage and restore normal conditions:

Beyond their core emergency response, crews routinely use their skills, equipment and physical presence at and around incident scenes to help restore normal conditions for affected communities as quickly as possible. Where appropriate, this may include clearing debris or obstructions from roads and public spaces, removing fallen trees or hazardous materials that are preventing safe access, pumping floodwater from residential and community buildings, or making areas safe for residents to return. Where an incident has disrupted transport routes or restricted access to homes and businesses, crews work with partner agencies to reduce cordons and reopen roads as soon as conditions allow. The objective is to minimise the period during which communities are displaced or disrupted, using the capabilities and resources already deployed to an incident to practical effect while they remain on scene.

As part of their response, crews also look out for people who may need extra support. This includes identifying vulnerabilities such as health, wellbeing, or financial concerns, and taking immediate steps to keep people safe. Where needed, crews make referrals to the appropriate support services. When identifying people who may need extra support, crews take account of factors including language, disability, age, cultural background and living circumstances. Where communication needs require it, crews work with Community Engagement Officers or partner agencies to ensure affected individuals can access the information and support available to them.

Fire crews also carry out early fire investigation work, helping to preserve the scene and support the police. Understanding what caused an incident can help individuals and communities recover and reduce the risk of it happening again.

Following the incident, to help prevent any further loss or harm:

Crews carry out targeted home fire safety visits, known as 'hot strikes', in the immediate area surrounding the scene. While these visits are a prevention activity at their core, they serve an important recovery function: they provide visible reassurance to nearby residents, offer practical safety advice relevant to the type of incident that has just occurred, and create a direct opportunity for crews to identify individuals or households that may need further support.

Long term recovery – The fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017 fundamentally shaped how LFB understands and delivers long-term recovery. The recovery effort involved search and recovery operations, support for bereaved

families and survivors, and years of ongoing community engagement. The learning from Grenfell led directly to the creation of a dedicated Community Engagement team, the development of LFB's Community Forum, a community led Grenfell Memory Project and the development of structured approaches to long-term engagement with affected communities.

LFB's Community Forum brings together up to fifteen community members from across London, including people with lived experience of the Brigade's services. It helps ensure that community perspectives are reflected in how LFB designs and delivers its services, including its approach to recovery.

Through the Grenfell Memory Project, a Restorative Justice initiative, the Brigade has made a significant commitment to rebuilding its relationship with those affected by the Grenfell fire and to creating a meaningful legacy. This continues to inform our approach to long-term recovery, ensuring that when communities face the aftermath of major incidents, the Brigade is equipped to provide effective support.

2. Public infrastructure recovery

In areas where important local or national infrastructure is affected, an incident can disrupt essential services such as electricity, water, or communications. In these situations, protecting and restoring infrastructure is a high priority for fire crews to help communities recover as quickly as possible.

During or immediately after an incident, crews assess what resources are needed to limit damage and support

wider recovery. If additional support or specialist skills are required, officers will request extra resources. Crews then use their capabilities to help return the surrounding area to normal as soon as it is safe to do so. This support may include:

- Pumping water out of homes and buildings
- Clearing debris from roads and public spaces
- Containing or controlling hazardous materials during the emergency phase
- Providing specialist advice and safe systems of work for partner organisations
- Helping to ensure safe access in and out of affected areas for local communities

3. Private infrastructure recovery

Fire crews work to reduce the impact of incidents on businesses and privately owned buildings, including disruption caused by emergency response activity or the loss of essential services. They work closely with partner organisations to keep disruption to a minimum by reducing cordons, limiting restrictions, and reopening roads and transport routes as soon as it is safe to do so. This helps businesses return to normal operations as quickly as possible.

Where appropriate, crews may also use their skills and equipment to help limit damage and support recovery at commercial premises.

In some circumstances, we may recover costs for specific support provided to businesses. This applies to defined chargeable special services set out in our 'Charging for special service incidents' policy, which is available on the LFB website.

3. Private Infrastructure Recovery continued

This can include:

- Using Brigade equipment to supply or remove water
- Clearing floodwater from commercial properties
- Managing chemical or hazardous material incidents in non domestic settings.

Any such charges are applied in line with our policy and are intended to support recovery while ensuring emergency resources are used appropriately.

Charges do not apply where there is a fire or immediate danger of fire, where immediate action is required to save life or avoid imminent risk of injury, or where the incident involves domestic premises. Charges are also waived on humanitarian grounds, including where elderly, disabled or infirm persons are involved. The charging framework is separate from operational decision-making: an appliance will always be mobilised to any request, and the assessment of whether a charge applies takes place after the immediate risk has been managed.

Incident Commanders explain the charging procedure to the responsible person at the scene, including whether a charge applies, how much it would be, and the basis for any exemption.

Persons trapped – recovery support

Where incidents involve persons trapped, whether in collapsed structures, behind locked doors, in machinery, or on transport infrastructure, crews contribute to recovery alongside their rescue function.

For incidents affecting transport networks or public spaces, this can include working with operators and partner agencies to restore access and return services to normal as quickly as possible, for example supporting the clearance of a rail line following a rescue so that services can resume. Where structural collapse or significant damage has occurred, crews support wider recovery by assisting with making buildings and areas safe.

For smaller-scale incidents such as persons trapped behind locked doors, the recovery role is primarily focused on identifying vulnerability. Crews routinely encounter individuals, often elderly or isolated, whose circumstances may indicate a need for further support. In these cases, crews make referrals through the Person at Risk process, connecting people with local authority services and other partner agencies.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS

LFB's Community Engagement Officers provide a dedicated point of contact between the Brigade and the communities affected by significant incidents. Officers are available on a 24/7 on-call basis to respond when needed. Their involvement typically begins during the incident itself, providing advice and making early contact with local organisations and partner agencies when needed. Where the scale or impact of an incident warrants it, officers liaise directly with residents and partner agencies, assess welfare needs, and support

with planning the recovery activities that will follow once the emergency phase has concluded. Following an incident, Community Engagement Officers work to ensure that people who need support are connected with the right services. For serious or large-scale incidents, this engagement may extend into longer-term work, including facilitating contact between LFB and bereaved families or survivors, maintaining relationships with residents' associations, and supporting wider community recovery activity in the affected area.

FIRE INVESTIGATION

LFB's fire investigation teams play an important role in the recovery process, in addition to supporting our Prevention and Protection services (described in their respective service strategies). Establishing the cause of a fire helps affected individuals and businesses access insurance, supports criminal proceedings where arson or negligence is involved, and provides the evidence base that informs prevention activity aimed at stopping the same type of incident from

happening again. Investigation begins with initial scene preservation by responding crews and is continued by specialist fire investigators who attend more complex or serious incidents. The teams are often supported by LFB's fire investigation dogs, who are trained to detect the presence of accelerants at fire scenes. Fire investigation findings are shared with partners including the Metropolitan Police and other agencies involved in supporting those affected.

RECOVERY IN PARTNERSHIP

At larger incidents, responsibility for long-term community recovery usually sits with the local authority.

However, we can play an important supporting role working alongside communities and partner organisations to aid recovery, particularly where specialist capabilities or longer-term support are needed. Our contribution to frameworks such as the London Resilience Partnership reflects this approach, ensuring coordinated support that helps affected communities rebuild.

In some areas, the Brigade has formal partnership agreements in place. These set out how organisations will work together during emergencies, clearly defining roles, responsibilities and ways of working. This includes partnerships with organisations such as the Environment Agency, the Metropolitan Police Service, the London Ambulance Service, Local Authorities, the Greater London Authority (GLA), and Central Government.

Additionally, the Brigade is a member of local Safeguarding Adults Boards across London, which bring together the local authority, police, health services and other organisations to oversee adult safeguarding arrangements in the area. Borough Commanders represent LFB on these boards.

In other cases, we may engage with other organisations on an ongoing basis, for example local residents' associations after a major incident.

London Fire Brigade can support recovery in several ways, including:

- Assisting with the recovery and care of victims
- Supporting disaster victim identification processes
- Carrying out fire investigations and supporting criminal investigations
- Helping to detect, monitor and identify hazardous materials
- Working alongside local authorities through Local Authority Liaison Officers
- Providing practical and logistical support at Rest Centres and Survivor Centres

Through this partnership approach, the Brigade helps ensure communities are supported, informed and able to recover as effectively as possible after major incidents.

In some circumstances, we may use our discretion to deploy people and resources where the Commissioner determines there is a clear public need. This allows us to support communities and partner organisations beyond our core statutory duties when it is safe and appropriate to do so. This support may include:

- Providing trained personnel to help meet wider public needs.
- Supporting recovery from wide area flooding or climate related incidents.
- Assisting recovery following incidents of high threat and terrorism.
- Supporting the London Resilience Forum partners.
- Providing specialist staff to support national resilience arrangements or national priorities, such as the Pandemic Multi-Agency Response Team (PMART).
- Deploying non-emergency resources to support other fire and rescue services, emergency responders, or policing partners, including specialist capabilities.
- Supporting recovery from incidents involving hazardous materials.

The Brigade also supports wider multi-agency investigations arising from major or complex incidents in accordance with agreed processes. It does this by contributing specialist operational capability and technical expertise. This can involve leveraging our resources and capabilities to support our partners in a variety of circumstances, for example supporting Police Forensic Management Teams in recovering important evidence from potentially hazardous locations. Through this partnership approach, the Brigade helps other organisations carry out investigations safely and effectively, while supporting the wider recovery effort for those affected.

Any such support is carefully considered and delivered in line with the Brigade's responsibilities, ensuring that emergency response and public safety remain the top priority.

WORKFORCE COMPETENCY AND TRAINING

LFB maintains training provision to ensure staff are equipped to carry out their recovery functions effectively.

Frontline crews

All operational crews receive training in the core recovery skills that form part of their day-to-day role: limiting damage to property, identifying vulnerability in people affected by incidents, and officers are trained in making referrals to partner agencies and support services. Crews are also trained to carry out initial scene preservation to support fire investigation, and to deliver post-incident home fire safety visits (hot strikes) in the area surrounding an incident.

Safeguarding

All LFB staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role, in line with the Brigade's safeguarding policies. This training equips staff to recognise signs of abuse, neglect and self-neglect, identify vulnerability, and take appropriate action including making referrals to local authority social services departments using the Brigade's Person at Risk reporting process. Safeguarding referral responsibilities are embedded at every level of the organisation: frontline crews identify and report concerns, and Station Commanders and Borough Commanders review and progress referrals within defined timescales.

Community engagement at incidents

LFB delivers training to frontline officers to equip them with the skills needed to manage community engagement at the incident ground and in the immediate aftermath. This training has been rolled out to Group Commanders, Borough Commanders and Station Commanders, and is being rolled out to a wider cohort of operational officers. In addition to training, a Community Risk Assessment tool and relevant guidance have been developed to help Incident Commanders identify when dedicated Community Engagement Officer support should be requested, based on the nature and impact of the incident.

Operational Assurance

Operational assurance is delivered through structured incident reviews, command monitoring and proactive performance oversight. We also maintain a Fire Stations Assurance Framework which provides structured evidence that frontline crews are delivering key activities to the required standard and in compliance with relevant policies. Station Commanders and Borough Commanders use this framework alongside operational data to maintain oversight of local delivery and to identify where activity needs to be adjusted.

Operational Learning Model

LFB operates a structured operational learning cycle to ensure that experience from incidents translates into improvement. Learning is captured at the incident ground through hot debriefs that record safety events, hazards, control measures, equipment performance and operational decision-making while information is most accurate. Debrief outcomes are formally recorded through an electronic system and assessed by the Operational Learning Team, who evaluate significance, and determine where further structured debrief or review is required.

Where learning is assessed as actionable, it is progressed through a defined improvement process.

Specifically, we:

- **Capture debrief outcomes consistently** through an electronic debrief record, ensuring a clear evidence base from incidents.
- **Assess and prioritise learning** using a structured prioritisation approach, validating accuracy and

completing appropriate risk assessment so only actionable learning is progressed.

- **Embed improvements** through a defined process that updates policy, procedures, training, operational guidance and equipment requirements, with actions allocated to accountable owners and tracked through governance.
- **Share relevant learning externally** through established national mechanisms, including National Operational Learning (NOL) and Joint Operational Learning (JOL) where multi-agency relevance is identified, coordinated via a designated Single Point of Contact.
- **Close the feedback loop** by communicating outcomes and changes to staff, ensuring learning is understood and applied across the organisation and supports continual improvement in firefighter and public safety.

While the primary focus for this process is on the Respond service, any learning relating to Recover will also be captured and actioned in the same way.



IMPROVEMENTS WE WILL MAKE

This improvement helps to deliver Commitment 2 of our Community Risk Management Plan: "We will make it easy for you to access our services".

1. We will introduce a Non-Emergency Contact Service

- We will introduce an easy-to-use non-emergency contact service so people can request safety visits and advice, seek guidance and support and access alternative non-emergency channels designed to be more inclusive and accessible.

These improvements help to deliver Commitment 3 of our Community Risk Management Plan: "We will adapt our services as your needs change".

2. We will strengthen joint responses with partners to improve resilience to major incidents, while future-proofing our own prevention, protection and response services.

- We will continue to support national and international emergency response efforts – including National Resilience, International Search & Rescue and Joint Overseas Protect and Prepare operations - and look for further opportunities to help partners across the country.
- We will strengthen how we work with other emergency services and organisations by agreeing clear, formal arrangements that set out who does what, making it easier for teams to work together during incidents.

- We will use modelling and trend analysis to adapt our services as risks and community needs change.
- We will use our specialist skills and equipment to support London's recovery when major incidents or large scale disruption occur, including after our emergency responsibilities have ended.

These improvements help to deliver Commitment 4 of our Community Risk Management Plan: "We will design services around your needs and concerns".

3. We will embed the round the clock mobilisation of Community Engagement Officers at significant incidents

- We will embed the new 24/7 mobilisation policy and system for engaging Community Engagement officers at significant incidents.

4. Protect people at risk through strong safeguarding

- We will ensure all staff receive safeguarding training aligned to National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) safeguarding competency standards that is appropriate to their role, so they have the knowledge and confidence to recognise concerns and take the right action. We will also keep our safeguarding policies under regular review to make sure they are effective, clear, and meet our legal responsibilities to protect children, young people, and adults at risk.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Our day-to-day recovery activity is measured using the Community Satisfaction Rating KPI, which is drawn from independent polling and tracks the percentage of Londoners who agree that the services provided by London Fire Brigade to protect and serve London are the right services. This measure is reported regularly as part of our CRMP KPIs and provides a broad indicator of public confidence in the Brigade's overall service offer, including its recovery activity.

At a corporate level, KPI performance is reported quarterly through a Quarterly Report, which is reviewed by Service Delivery Board, Commissioner's Board, and the Deputy Mayor's Fire Board. Performance data is also reported externally through the London Datastore.

The Recover service improvements outlined in this strategy will be monitored as part of our Service Improvement Framework. This framework uses department, portfolio, borough and station plans to support all change across London Fire Brigade – including complex high value projects and programmes to continuous improvement work at a department or station level. Progress is reviewed quarterly at local board level and shared with Commissioner's Board.





The Community Forum, established in September 2022 following recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and HMICFRS inspection, brings together up to 15 diverse Londoners to provide a valued community voice to the Brigade's work. Meeting monthly, the Forum acts as a critical friend, co-designing solutions with staff and helping embed good practice in community engagement.

For more information scan the QR code or go to:
london-fire.gov.uk/community/community-engagement/community-forum/

