

EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Meeting	Scrutiny and Audit Panel
Date	22 July 2021
Title of Report	2019/20 Service Benchmarking Report
By	Assistant Director Planning & Improvement
Lead Officers	Sharon Milner, Planning & Intelligence Manager Marcus Whiting, Planning & intelligence Analyst

Background Papers	Employee comparisons from the 'Fire and rescue workforce and pensions statistics: England, April 2019 to March 2020' Station and appliance comparisons from the 'CIPFA annual statistics for 2019-20' Health and Safety comparisons from the 'Fire and rescue workforce and pensions statistics: England, April 2019 to March 2020' Incident comparisons from the 'Home Office Incident Recording System, Fire Statistics: England April 2019 to March 20120' and the 'Fire Incident Response Times: England, for 2019-20' Sickness comparisons for the FG2 from the 'National Fire & Rescue Service Occupational Health Performance Report April 2019 – March 2020' Prevention and protection comparisons from 'Fire prevention & protection statistics, England, April 2019 to March 2020'
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Appendices	Appendix 1 - East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Benchmarking Report 2019/20 Appendix 2 - A summary of the key results for all fire and rescue services (as stated in the background papers listed above)
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Implications

CORPORATE RISK		LEGAL	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
FINANCIAL		POLITICAL	
HEALTH & SAFETY		OTHER (please specify)	
HUMAN RESOURCES		CORE BRIEF	
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT			

PURPOSE OF REPORT To present the Fire Statistics for 2019/20 and comparative benchmarking of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) against its family group in order to provide context to support the Authority's future decision making.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY This report serves as an illustrative benchmark of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service performance against other fire and rescue service performance. Appendix 2 provides the Scrutiny and Audit Panel with a summary of the national context across Fire & Rescue Service performance with key findings from the Fire & Rescue Incident Statistics. Appendix 1 provides a more in depth comparison against the twelve fire and rescue services that make up Family Group 2. These are Services deemed to be of similar size in terms of area and population.

The report brings together a wide range of information about how East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service compares in delivering its services to local communities, including the cost of service provision, current performance measures, as well as organisational resourcing.

Benchmarking performance enables the Service to make decisions based on the results and provides a spotlight to managers for further investigation. Results of previous year's benchmarking exercises has enabled the Service to prioritise a number of areas where concentrated effort has borne positive results in the 2019/20 year-end figures.

The panel is asked to note that the report contains information as at the 31 March 2020 as the national statistics are compiled a year in arrears.

RECOMMENDATION The Panel is asked to consider the results of the report and direct the Service into any areas of performance not highlighted in the report that it would like to see further investigation into.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report aims to provide the Scrutiny and Audit Panel with a summary of the performance across the fire and rescue service sector. The national context with key findings from the Fire & Rescue Incident Statistics, is summarised first (with a more detail reported in Appendix 2); followed by the Service's annual benchmarking report that compares ESFRS against the twelve fire and rescue services that make up Family Group 2. These are Services deemed to be of similar size in terms of area and population.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 provides comparator information across Family Group 2, focussing on the following areas:
- Employee comparisons from the 'Fire and rescue workforce and pensions statistics: England, April 2019 to March 2020'
 - Station and appliance comparisons from the 'CIPFA annual statistics for 2019-20'
 - Health and Safety comparisons from the 'Fire and rescue workforce and pensions statistics: England, April 2019 to March 2020'
 - Incident comparisons from the 'Home Office Incident Recording System, Fire Statistics: England April 2019 to March 20120' and the 'Fire Incident Response Times: England, for 2019-20'
 - Sickness comparisons for the FG2 from the 'National Fire & Rescue Service Occupational Health Performance Report April 2019 – March 2020'
- 1.3 The main purposes of the benchmarking report is to help us understand why we are achieving our performance levels, where our performance varies and help to investigate why variations may occur. This also provides us with an opportunity to see where other services are achieving better results than us and have conversations with them about any learnings and good practice that can be shared to improve our own situation. The results of previous benchmarking reports has enabled the Service to prioritise a number of areas where concentrated effort has borne positive results in the 2019/20 year-end figures.

2. **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY**

2.1 **Fire & Rescue Incident Statistics**

There was a 16% decrease in the number of fires that FRS attended in 2019/20 against 2018/19. FRS attended very similar numbers of AFA calls in 2019/20 when compared with the previous year. There was an 8% decrease in attendances at medical incidents and an 8% increase in all other special service incident types.

2.2 **Fire & Rescue workforce and pensions statistics**

Total workforce and leavers

The number of FTE staff employed by FRS at 31st March 2020 is similar to the previous year (40,408 in 2019/20). Around 9% of the headcount left FRS in 2019/20.

Workforce diversity

Women now make up 7% of all firefighters, for the first time since 2006 this is due to an increase in female firefighters and not due to the decrease in male firefighters. 4.4% of firefighters were from an ethnic minority and 3.3% were lesbian/gay.

Firefighter health and safety

There were 7% fewer firefighter injuries in 2019/20 against the previous year and no firefighter fatalities.

Firefighter pensions

Firefighters' Pension Scheme expenditure in 2019-20 was around £908 million, a six per cent increase compared with the previous year.

2.3 **Fire prevention and protection statistics**

Fire prevention

In 2019/20, FRS and their partners completed 581,917 HFSCs. This was three per cent fewer than the previous year

Fire protection:

In 2019/20 FRS carried out 48,414 Fire Safety Audits. This was two per cent fewer than the previous year. These audits were carried out in three per cent of premises known to FRS

2.4 **Fire & Rescue service Sickness statistics**

The total shifts lost per member of staff for all staff groups equates to 9.35 shifts per member of staff (9.17 shifts lost in the previous year).

3. **CURRENT POSITION FOR EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

3.1 The key areas of 2019/20 performance in *Operational Statistics* identified above for ESFRS are as follows:

- There were three fire fatalities in 2019/20, one fewer than in 2018/19, two of these fatalities occurred in deliberate fires; the remaining one was the result of an accidental dwelling fire.
- ESFRS attended 1,966 fires in 2019/20, a decrease of 8.8% on the previous year but a 23.6% reduction since 2010/11. The national trend was a 6% decrease.
- In 2019/20, ESFRS attended 4,683, false alarms an increase of 6.4% from the 4,403 false alarms recorded in 2018/19.
- ESFRS attended 3,580, non-fire incidents in 2019/20, 22.3% more than in 2018/19. This is due to an increase in Advice Only (193%, 29 more), No action (not false alarm) (105%, 46 more), Rescue or evacuation from water (100%, 10 more) Medical responder (91%, 30 more), Assist other Agencies (81%, 311 more).
- The most common types of non-fire incidents attended by ESFRS were Assist other agencies (19%) effecting entry (16%), road traffic collisions (12%), flooding (12%) and lift release (10%).
- Financial comparisons - ESFRS has the highest cost per Council Tax Band D against FG2.
- In 2019/20 ESFRS reported 10.77 shifts lost per person for WT and Control staff and 8.76 for support staff.

3.2 The main purposes of the benchmarking report is to help us understand why we are achieving our performance levels, where our performance varies and help to investigate why variations may occur.

4. **OUTCOMES FROM PREVIOUS BENCHMARKING EXERCISES**

4.1 This report provides the Service with an opportunity to consider its performance against those of its Peers. Over recent years this report has enabled the Service to focus on a number of areas where its performance is consistently in the bottom quartile.

4.2 **Accidental dwelling fires**

4.2.1 The accidental dwelling fire working group continues to meet on a regular basis. This group includes representation from operational personnel across the service area, the Community Safety Team, the communications and marketing team and the planning and intelligence team. Together they monitor any trends in increases of ADFs to try and identify any underlying reasons for this in specific areas. One of the main campaigns run during 2019/20 was 'Look while you cook' which culminated in 1,723 hits on the look while you cook campaign over the Christmas period.

4.2.2 The number of Home Safety Visits undertaken by Crews and Community Safety Advisors decreased against the previous year with 10,098 visits undertaken against a target of 10,000. The year end result of 453 accidental dwelling fires equates to an 11% decrease on the previous year when 509 accidental dwelling fires were attended. This was the lowest number of accidental dwelling fires recorded over the last 20 years from 1999/2000. The previous lowest number being 506 in 2010/11.

4.3 **Sickness absence**

4.3.1 Sickness still remains an area where we are high in comparison to our family group. We had the highest level of sickness for WT and Control staff in FG2 for 2019/20 with 10.77 days lost to sickness per employee, which is above the 2019/20 average of 8.19. However, five FRS from FG2 did not provide data in 2019/20. ESFRS support staff had the 4th highest level of sickness (from the 11 FRS that provided data) in FG2 with 8.76 days lost to sickness per employee. This figure is above the 2019/20 average of 8.22.

4.4 **The number of high risk inspections**

4.4.1 This was introduced as a new priority area in 2017/18 and critically important following the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017. As can be seen by the 2019/20 benchmarking report ESFRS completed the lowest recorded number of high risk audits per 1,000 non-domestic properties with 13.9, whereas Durham completed the most with 102.5 per 1,000 non-domestic properties.

4.5 **False Alarm Apparatus**

4.5.1 Similarly the benchmarking report has shown that the Service is high in relation to false alarms apparatus and lift rescues in recent years. This led to the Service undertaking a demand management review which was consulted in as part of the 2020-2025 IRMP. The IRMP was agreed at the Fire Authority meeting in September 2020 and our attendance to fire alarms operating in low risk commercial premises is

currently being reviewed. A paper presenting the recommendations from this work stream forms part of this Scrutiny and Audit Panel agenda.