

## EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

**Meeting** Fire Authority

**Date** 5 September 2019

**Title of Report** 2018/19 Annual Performance Outcome Report

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**Background Papers** Fire and rescue incident statistics, England, year ending March 2019

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**Appendices** Appendix 1 – Annual performance outcome report 2018/19  
Appendix 2 – Plain English indicator definitions

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### Implications

*Any implications affecting this report should be noted within the final paragraphs of the report*

<b>CORPORATE RISK</b>		<b>LEGAL</b>	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>		<b>POLICY</b>	
<b>FINANCIAL</b>		<b>POLITICAL</b>	
<b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>		<b>OTHER (please specify)</b>	
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>		<b>CORE BRIEF</b>	

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT** To present the annual performance results for 2018/19.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** This report provides the Fire Authority with details of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service's performance for the period April – March 2018/19. Eight top level indicators improved or met the target set in 2018/19 (42%) and 11 indicators declined.

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**RECOMMENDATION** The Fire Authority is asked to:

1. Consider the performance results and progress towards achieving the Service's purpose and commitments.

2. Consider the performance results and remedial actions that have been taken to address areas of underperformance in the Fire Authority's priority areas.
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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report summarises the 2018/19 performance outcomes for East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The report aims to provide a single view of information which allows Elected Members, Auditors and members of the public to hold the Service's senior managers and staff to account in terms of the provision and performance of their Fire & Rescue Service for 2018/19.
- 1.2 The report provides a comparison against last year's performance, whether or not the target was achieved, where one has been set, and the direction of travel from the previous year for example, improved, stayed the same or declined.
- 1.3 East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service results are compared against the results for Fire and Rescue Services in the rest of England on a scale of best to worst performance based on the 2017/18 national data sets which are the latest available.
- 1.4 The report highlights a decline on last year's performance as 42% of indicators improved or met the target as opposed to 50% the previous year.
- 1.5 The Home Office have recently issued the incident statistics for 2018/19, the overarching report shows that nationally England has attended 2% more incidents over this period than previously in 2017/18. Primary fire attendances decreased by 1% but secondary fires increased by 19%. ESFRS saw a 0.8% increase in the total number of incidents attended in 2018/19 against 2017/18; an increase of 4.5% primary fires and 6.5% increase at secondary fires.

## **2 MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 In 2017/18 The Scrutiny and Audit Panel set seven priority areas for the Service to concentrate on. This report provides detailed commentary against those areas. Additional commentary is also provided for other areas of interest.

The Fire Authority priorities areas are:

1. Reducing accidental dwelling fires
2. Confining the fire to the room of origin
3. Reducing attendance at false alarm calls
4. Increasing the number of home safety visits to vulnerable members of our community
5. Reducing sickness
6. Numbers of home safety visits
7. Increasing inspections in high risk premises

## **2.2 Reducing accidental dwelling fires**

2.2.1 Accidental dwelling fires (Section 5.2 in Annual Performance and Outcome report for 2018/19) have been a priority area for the Service for a number of years. Accidental dwelling fires have reduced by 38% from 2000/01 overall, but have plateaued in recent years. In 2018/19 508 accidental dwelling fires were attended which is 6 higher than 2017/18 which was the lowest number of accidental dwelling fires recorded over the last 19 years from 1999/2000. The previous lowest number being 506 in 2010/11. The intervening years since then saw 538, 558, 526, 544, 552 and 538 respectively. 59% of the accidental dwelling fires occurred in the kitchen, with cooking appliances responsible for 244 (81%) of these.

2.2.2 However due to on-going issues in 4i there are still around 10 incidents that are not in the IRS system and a number of these will be accidental dwelling fires so expect the year end figure for 2018/19 to increase slightly. The accidental dwelling fire reduction group continues to proactively engage with our communities and there have been a large number of social media campaigns.

## **2.3 Responding quickly to a fire to stop it spreading from the room it started in**

2.3.1 There was a decrease in performance in comparison to last year, with 92.4% of fires confined to the room of origin in 2017/18 compared to 90.7% in 2018/19 we consistently perform well in this area. In real numbers this means that out of 508 fires attended we contained 461 to the room of origin.

## **2.4 Reducing false alarm calls, especially in properties with a previous history of this**

2.4.1 47.2% (4,429) of our total incidents in 2018/19 were to false alarm calls, of these 32.7% (3,071) were from automatic fire detector systems. An unwanted fire alarm signal is where an automatic fire alarm (AFA) system activates and initiates a response from the fire service and on attendance it is found to be a false alarm. A call challenge policy is in place with responsible premise owners being asked to confirm the need for an attendance. We are undertaking more targeted work to ensure that we continually review and improve efficiencies across the Service. A demand management review is ongoing as part of the Authority's last Integrated Risk Management Plan and will be looking at our attendance at non-life-threatening incidents. By reducing the demand on our Service for calls that are not deemed appropriate to attend, we will free up our resources to undertake meaningful community safety work that will make people safer in our communities.

2.4.2 As detailed in the AFA Service position statement, work is underway to separate out unwanted fire alarm calls from those that are considered near misses as each require a very different response. For example, to treat a near miss as an unwanted fire alarm call would be wholly inappropriate as we would miss an opportunity for engagement with service prevention resources that could prevent a further more serious incident in the future.

## **2.5 Increasing the number of home safety visits that we complete with the more vulnerable members of our community**

2.5.1 We delivered 91.2% of our home safety visits to vulnerable people within our community 2018/19 which is a slight decrease on last year (91.7%). This means that out of 11,049 visits 10,076 were to vulnerable people in the community which compares to 10,102 in the previous year.

## **2.6 Reducing the number of absences of our employees due to sickness.**

2.6.1 Sickness absence (Section 5.5 in Annual Performance and Outcome report for 2018/19) is another priority area for the service and performance has improved from the previous year, with 8.8 shifts lost against 10.8 in 2017/18. Of the 8.8 shifts lost per employee at the end of 2018/19, 5.1 of these are due to long term sickness, 1.2 due to medium term sickness and 2.4 due to short term sickness. By the end of 2018/19 Wholetime had lost 9.5 shifts per employee, Control 9.7 shifts per employee and support staff 6.7

2.6.2 A number of work areas have been progressed throughout the year to support the organisation in managing attendance and this is bearing positive results.

## **2.7 Number of Home Safety Visits**

2.7.1 A concentrated effort to increase the number of home safety visits (Section 5.2 in Annual Performance and Outcome report for 2018/19) during the year with 11,049 visits undertaken against a target of 12,000. The shortfall falls in the Community Safety Advisors target. The teams have been working in pairs, due to lone working concerns and sickness and staff turnover have also impacted on the year end result. An accidental dwelling fire working group made up of staff from stations, community fire safety, communications and planning and intelligence continue to meet and a number of high profile campaigns and events ran throughout the year.

2.7.2 As we become more sophisticated in targeting those most vulnerable, we are finding that more and more visits are requiring two staff to attend and therefore the same level of performance that has been determined would deliver 12,000 visits now results in 10,000; based on a S&W advisor/team delivering 84 visits a month. A number of innovative ideas are being considered to provide the Authority with future options and will be discussed at a future member's seminar as we face the challenge of balancing quality and quantity. Funding for the two specialist Safe and Well advisors has now ceased and although alternative funding is being sought to provide further options in the future the 12,000 visits was also predicated on this resource. Performance of both the crews and the teams continues to be closely monitored and the crews delivered the required target of 7,000 for 18/19 and are set to repeat this stretched target this current year. In summary the 5,000 target set for S&W based on 8.4 staff (hours) and lone working is not realistic with a staff count of 6.4 working in pairs and 3,000 now represents a significant stretched target that will need to attract some innovative practice to ensure the Service delivers 10,000 visits over this forthcoming year, which the team are determined to deliver and have been striving to achieve over recent months.

## **2.8 Inspections of high risk premises completed**

2.8.1 This priority area was introduced in 2017/18 and deemed critically important following the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017. At the end of 2018/19 581 audits had been completed, this is an increase of 16% on the previous year when 499 were undertaken.

2.8.2 The Service is reviewing the current national Risk Based Inspection program and has introduced Business Safety checks/audits by operational personnel. There are a number of areas that will help improve performance in this area including:

- The upgrade of the Customer Relationship Management database to help staff record audits quickly and effectively and it will be developed to deliver a qualitative risk based inspection program. The project will deliver a mobile digital platform to support efficiencies in the audit process.
- Competency-based Business Safety training will be given to operational staff
- We will continue to identify and inspect premises at higher risk of fire
- We will provide all premises where the Fire Safety Order applies with a qualitative relative risk rating
- There are plans to use the inspection program to collect enhanced firefighter risk information

## **2.9 Other commentary**

### **2.9.1 Number of RIDDOR incidents**

2.9.2 The majority of the RIDDOR (Section 5.6 in Annual Performance and Outcome report for 2018/19) notifications to HSE are for incapacitation over 7 days. There has been a decrease of 33% when compared to the previous year. Seven RIDDORs were due to absences of over 7 days following an injury; two were due to BA failures (indicative of the ageing BA sets), and 1 was a fracture.

### **2.9.3 Compliments and complaints**

2.9.4 The annual outcome report (Section 6) contains a summary of the complaints received against the Service. Effective complaint management is an important element of maintaining the Service's reputation. Complaints are also a valuable tool in helping to understand resident's expectations of service delivery and should be an essential part in identifying improvements across the organisation.

2.9.5 Complaints received are formally recorded by the Service Complaints Officer (SCO) and, as far as possible, dealt with immediately. Where this is not possible, complaints are:

- acknowledged within three working days

- responded to within one month of the complaint being received by ESFRS
- kept under review and the complainant kept informed of progress or any reasons which are causing a delay
- monitored by the SCO to identify problem areas.

2.9.6 There were 30 complaints received in 2018/19, four more than the previous year. Of the complaints, four were considered justified, four partially justified and two unjustified. A further 13 were logged for recording purposes another one was logged as an observation rather than a complaint and the final six were listed as being unsubstantiated.

2.9.7 Upon analysis, poor driving standards of which one was justified and one partially, three more were unsubstantiated and employee conduct were the highest causes for complaints in 2017/18. In order to raise awareness and address issues of poor driving standards any future complaints are now considered by the Operational Assurance Group chaired by the Assistant Director of Operational Support and Resilience.

2.9.8 During the year we received 214 “thank you” letters from various members of the public as opposed to 127 received last year. Compliments are circulated to staff through the service brief on a weekly basis and cover all aspects of our service provision including home safety visits, incidents attended, school visits, education events etc.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Complaints received	20	26	30
Compliments received	177	127	214

2.8 The performance outcome summary is set out in Appendix 1 attached as a separate document.

2.9 A list of useful definitions is attached at Appendix 2.