

DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE

Annual Report
2020/21

PASSIONATE ABOUT
CHANGING & SAVING LIVES

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FOREWORD



Cllr Rebecca Knox
Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority



Ben Ansell QFSM
Chief Fire Officer

Like the world over, the last year has been dominated by the coronavirus pandemic and the national restrictions. As a Service, we needed to both adapt our ways of working and step up to support our partners, to ensure that our communities were kept as safe as possible.

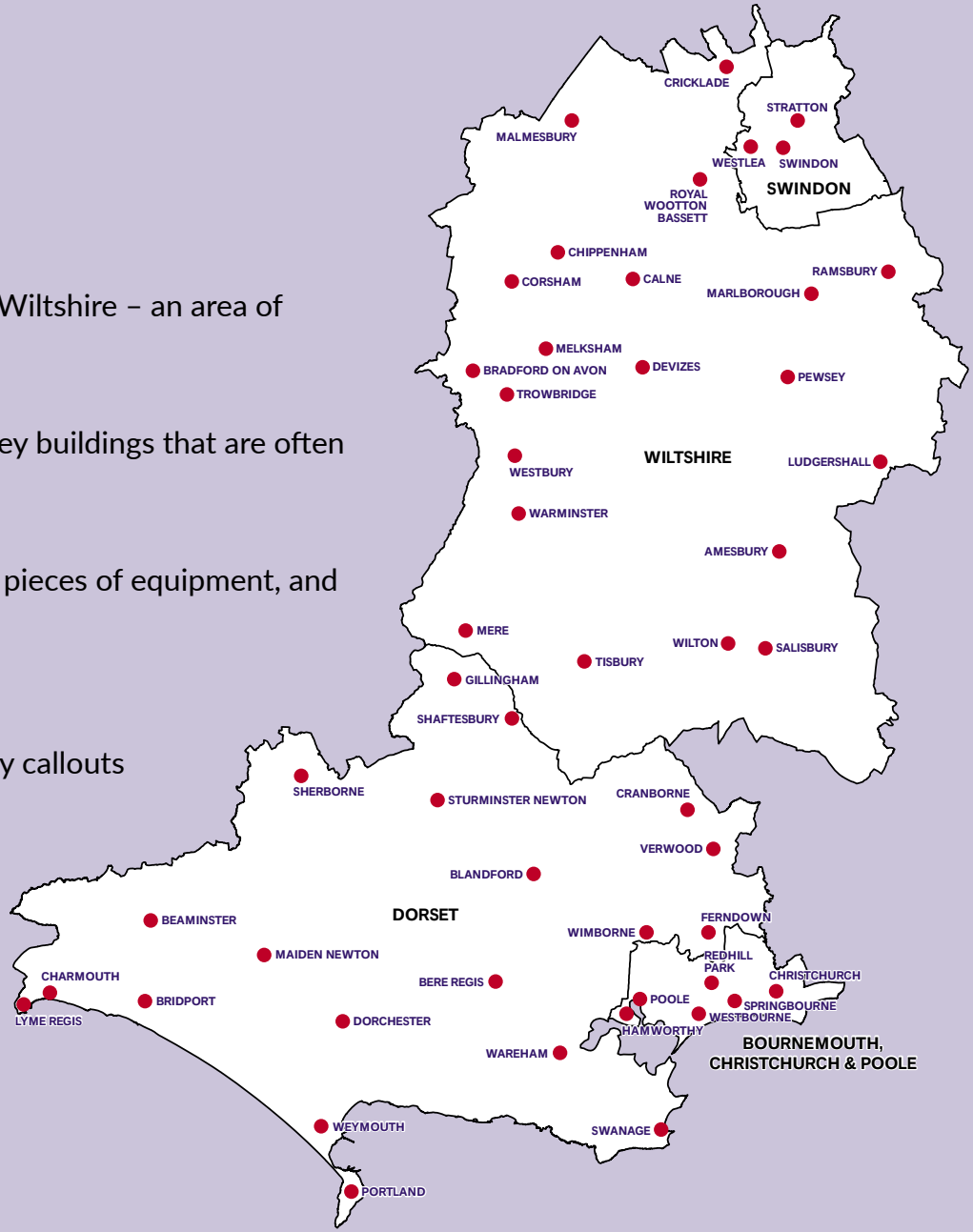
As well as preventing, protecting and responding to fires and other emergencies, we have worked hard to help keep health and care workers safe by fitting and testing thousands of face masks, vital to the safety of these important key workers. We drove ambulances and played our part in helping our health colleagues roll out the vaccine programme. We have also delivered food and other essentials to our vulnerable communities, collected unwanted laptops to repurpose for children learning at home and undertook a wide range of other tasks, necessary to keep safe the public we serve. Our response to the pandemic and the work undertaken was positively recognised by government inspectors.

This Annual report provides you with a flavour of the work that we undertook last year and how we are performing. If you want to see more about our future plans, please see our Community Safety Plan, which is available on our website **dwfire.org.uk**. We hope you enjoy reading this report, if you would like to know more please visit our website or contact us.

ABOUT US

Your fire and rescue service

- Serves around 1.5 million people
- covers Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole, Dorset, Swindon and Wiltshire – an area of around 2,500 square miles
- operates from 50 community fire stations and a number of other key buildings that are often shared with our partners
- uses fire engines, a number of specialist vehicles and thousands of pieces of equipment, and
- delivers these services through a fantastic team of:
  - on-call firefighters who make themselves available for emergency callouts depending on their other commitments
  - wholetime firefighters, including those based in our control room who answer 999 emergency calls, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year
  - corporate staff who help to provide our essential front-line services, and
  - volunteers who support us at community events.



ABOUT US



As your fire and rescue service we are always looking to improve what we do and how we do it. We have a great workforce that works tirelessly to help make Dorset and Wiltshire a healthier and safer place to live, work and visit. Although this report does look at what we did over the last year, we have recently published our new Community Safety Plan 2021–2024, which we developed in late 2020. This plan sets our future ambitions and is available on our website dwfire.org.uk.

When you think of the fire and rescue service you probably think of our emergency response service. However, this is only one part of what we do. To help us focus our thinking and resources, we have five priorities aimed at improving the safety and quality of life for everyone who lives in or visits the beautiful counties of Dorset and Wiltshire.

This Annual Report gives you an overview of our performance over the past year against our priorities.

Our priorities

Prevention:
Making safer and healthier choices
This is about educating people to the dangers around them and preventing risky behaviour.

Protection:
Protecting you and the environment from harm
This is our legal obligation to keep buildings and businesses safe for people to use.

Response:
Being there when you need us
Our emergency service responds quickly to people who are in danger or distress.

Governance:
Making every penny count
It is important we are well managed and that we spend our budget wisely and maximise what we do with it.

People:
Supporting and developing our people
Making sure our people are at the centre of everything we do and have the right knowledge, skills and behaviour; which is crucial to the success of our Service.

PREVENTION: Making safer and healthier choices

8,654
children received virtual safety messages

Education

By teaching children and young people to keep themselves and others safe and well, our education programmes aim to create safe and healthy communities. This includes:

- learning to be 'fire safe' at home and in their communities by developing their fire safety knowledge
- understanding the consequences of anti-social behaviour, such as deliberate fire setting and hoax emergency calls
- awareness of road safety, to reduce collisions on the road
- water safety awareness, to reduce deaths and injuries from flooding and other water related incidents, and
- developing skills to make positive choices to lead and maintain a safe and healthy lifestyle.

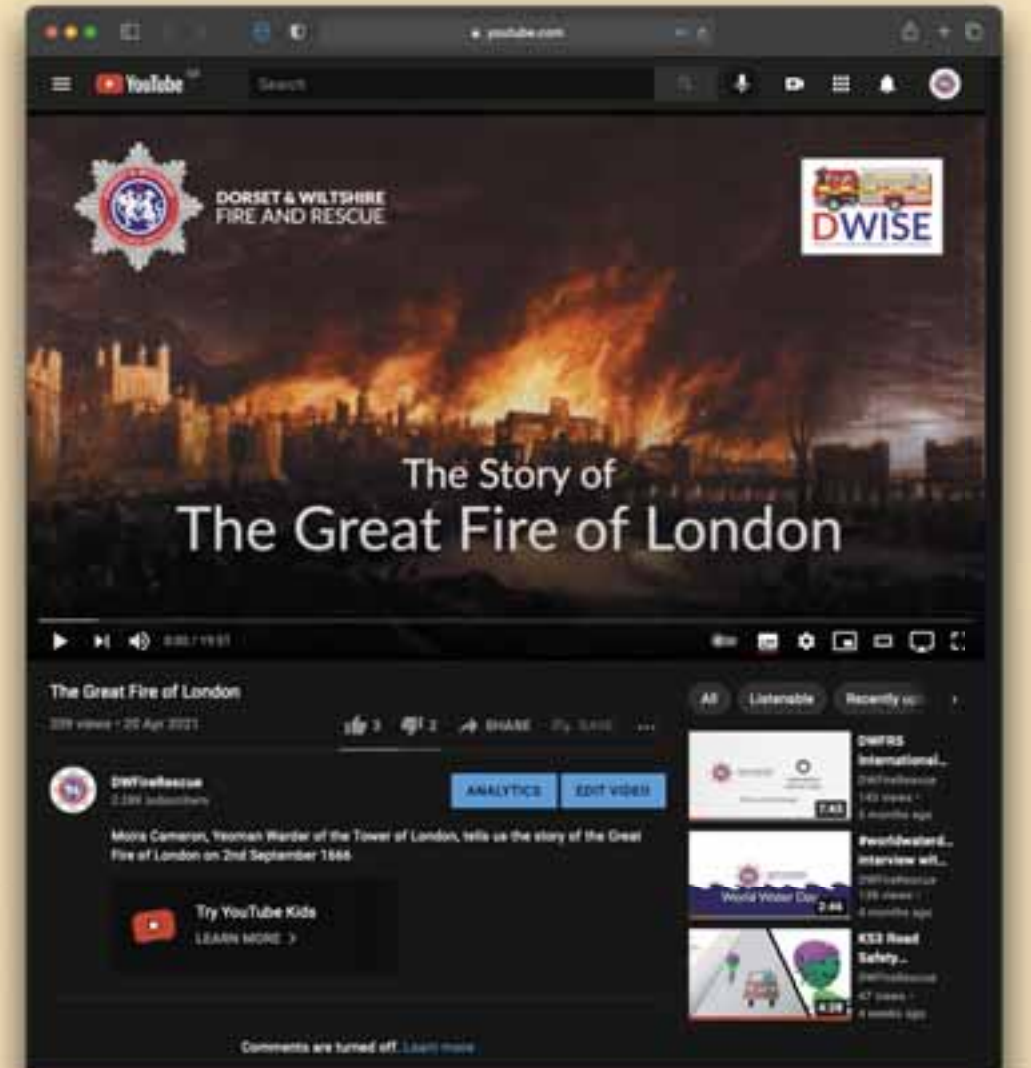
Due to the closure of schools during the coronavirus pandemic, we developed bespoke home education resources. These were made available to schools to support their online delivery programmes.

Impact to wider society



Last year we delivered virtual safety education talks in schools, children's groups and bespoke educational sessions, to 8,654 children. In 2008, the estimated cost of a house fire was £44,523, which with inflation would put the cost at around £60,751 today. Our aim is that following educational sessions, children will speak about what they have learnt with others in their household, helping to reduce the likelihood and subsequent financial burden of fires in the home. The estimated societal saving from the safety messages delivered in 2020-21 was £1.1 million.

We developed virtual online education lessons for when children returned to the classroom. The aim of this was to reduce the transmission of the virus but still deliver live interactive education lessons direct into the classroom. In addition, we developed home learning packages to support parents whose children were shielding or self-isolating and therefore unable to attend school.



We also delivered education messages to adults within our communities, including:

- reminders to test or replace smoke alarms
- how to stay safe during summer barbeque season
- safety advice during Bonfire Night
- highlighting the importance of chimney sweeping in autumn, and
- how to stay safe during Diwali, the festival of lights.

A 2019 Ofcom study found that nearly half of adults in the UK use social media to keep up with the latest news. We recognise the continued growth in use of social media and ensure that all our safety, prevention and protection campaigns are covered through our various online channels.

Community focus

In December 2020, we were proud to award a primary school child with a certificate of achievement for being a fire safety champion. Following their participation in a virtual lesson by our education officers, a child was able to apply their learning when they saw a fire out of their bedroom window. They knew to inform their mum to call the fire and rescue service, by dialling 999.

PREVENTION: Making safer and healthier choices

Fire Cadets
3
courses

Prince's Trust
3
courses

Youth intervention

Our youth intervention programmes have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, which has limited our ability to deliver all of our courses. Where possible we have adopted a virtual delivery method. We delivered our Fire Cadet course virtually in the first part of the year to 35 attendees, however this course has since been put on hold due to further challenges of the pandemic. These courses are due to restart in September and several applications have been received.

We are proud to continue working in partnership with the Prince's Trust, to deliver the Team programme. This helps to support unemployed young people, aged between 16 and 25, to recognise and achieve their potential. The 12-week course aims to help young people progress into work, education, training or volunteering. The course involves participants completing an activity based residential in Dartmoor, a community project to improve their local area, and a two-week work experience placement, culminating in a presentation delivered by each participant in front of their family, friends and invited guests. Other activities are embedded throughout the course to support future employment opportunities, such as emergency first aid, creating a CV and practicing interview skills.

Impact to wider society

Prince's Trust

Of the young people who completed the Prince's Trust programme in 2020-21, two thirds moved into education, employment or further training within six months of graduating. A national report by the Prince's Trust indicates that through helping young people into employment, £2.3m is saved in benefit payments and increased tax payments nationally. The report also outlines that a social benefit is created by supporting those who had previously offended, or those who were at risk from doing so. This demonstrates that for every £1.00 spent on the programme £2.99 of societal benefit was created. Combined with external funding, we spent £85,000 on the Prince's Trust programme this year, thereby providing societal benefit across our communities of almost £255,000.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic we were fortunate to complete two Prince's Trust courses. Across these courses we had a total of 14 young people attend, with nine young people moving into training or employment within six months.

In February 2021 we began delivering the Prince's Trust Team Achieve online programme, with nine young people enrolled.

We would normally deliver Junior Good Citizen events within Swindon and Wiltshire to children in year six. We were unable to deliver this virtually, however, we did engage with the schools due a visit and provided fire safety information, targeting just over 3,000 children.

Community focus

One of our Prince's Trust teams chose to support the Water Lily Project in Christchurch for their community project. They did a great job tidying up and painting the outside area, making it much more welcoming for visitors and staff. The team could not complete the usual car wash or bag packing fundraisers, so instead turned to virtual methods, managing to raise funds to cover the cost of the project. They created a magazine with positive articles and activities for people to complete during lockdown. In addition, they designed e-cards which were sent to local care homes and hospitals and put up a Christmas trail in the local area, giving families a free fun activity to complete during the holidays. A variety of qualifications were gained by the young people, including:

- Prince's Trust Employment
- Teamwork & Community Skills qualification
- Level 3 Emergency First Aid in the Workplace
- Level 2 Food Safety
- Manual Handling, and
- Customer Care.



PREVENTION: Making safer and healthier choices

This year we received 34 referrals to the Firesetters scheme. This is our education programme designed as an early intervention to stop deliberate firesetting. Talking to a young person early on is vital to stop the firesetting habit as soon as possible. Firesetting is dangerous and we can help to explain the dangers and consequences to the young person, in a sensitive and informed manner, with age and developmentally appropriate resources. Early intervention can greatly reduce the chances of it happening again.

The Firesetter advisors work to build rapport with the young person and their support network, which happens through sessions that can be carried out at home, school or a residential unit. Care is given to finding the best place for the delivery, in order to foster an environment where the young person feels confident to speak out about any concerns.

Youth engagement

SPECTRA

SUPPORT PURPOSE ENTHUSIASM CHALLENGE TRUST RESILIENCE ACHIEVEMENT

As we have not been able to deliver any youth engagement courses this year, we have taken the opportunity to rebrand our SPARC (Safer People and Responsible Communities) and Salamander Courses. Harmonising these with the new title of SPECTRA (Support, Purpose, Enthusiasm, Challenge, Trust, Resilience and Achievement). The SPECTRA name describes a young person's journey during the course, as they develop new skills, build confidence and gain knowledge to help them achieve a brighter and more positive future.

SPECTRA courses offer learners the opportunity to gain an AQA Award in Fire Service Training, consisting of activities including: hose, pump and hydrant operation, use of ladders, rope rescue (abseiling), road safety and road traffic collision extrication, search and rescue, casualty care and water rescue.

Impact to wider society



For each £1.00 we invest in our Firesetters scheme we generate a societal saving of £4.12. This includes savings for the fire and rescue service, police, ambulance and wider NHS. In 2020-21 this represented savings of almost £237,000. We are working towards achieving a 50% reduction in deliberate fires within Dorset and Wiltshire, which could see annual societal savings of around £350,000.

6,012
Safe & Well visits

Home visits

Due to the coronavirus pandemic restrictions, we have had to adapt all of our Safe & Well processes, to ensure the safety of both our crews and those most vulnerable in our communities.

Operational crews were unable to complete any visits. This has meant that we delivered 46% of the number of visits that we carried out in the previous year. However, those completed were targeted at the most vulnerable.

Our Safe & Well advisors provided safety advice to 2,317 households by telephone and attended 3,695 high risk households, wearing the necessary personal protective equipment and following government guidance.

We used this time to enhance our referral processes, improving patient access through working with hospital discharge teams. Through this work we have trained hospital staff on the Safe & Well process, so they can identify and refer patients at a greater risk of fire, due to mobility or mental health issues.

Despite the pandemic, and its effect on public health services and care agencies, we received 2,841 partner referrals this year. This is a drop of only 5% compared to 3,004 the previous year.

Impact to wider society



Preventing fires in the first place reduces the cost and damage to properties, loss of business and the terrible loss of life or serious injuries.

By investing in prevention we can be proactive and reduce overall cost of responding to incidents. For example, in the year prior to the coronavirus pandemic, for every £1.00 invested in the Safe & Well provision there was a societal return of £7.80. Therefore this activity potentially brings in £63,000 of savings to the Service.

PREVENTION: Making safer and healthier choices

We have an important role to play in reducing health inequalities. Our prevention work has a positive impact on the health of our communities, reducing the number of incidents or cases of preventable ill health. Our Safe & Well advisors are trained to recognise other risks in the home and not just focus on fire. They also engage in 'searching conversations' with occupants, to ascertain mental health, social isolation, domestic abuse and other general health problems. Furthermore, they inspect properties for slips, trips and fall issues. We pride ourselves on working with key partners to receive referrals, but we also will signpost occupants to other agencies that can assist them. An effective Safe & Well visit takes a holistic approach to reducing risk. This is achieved by considering the individual, their home environment and lifestyle. It places the wishes, behaviours, needs and abilities of the individuals at the heart of the visit.

This work not only benefits us, by reducing the money we spend, but also our partner organisations. By working with public health, local authorities, social services and the police, our approach helps to reduce the demands on these services and, as a result, saves money. It is estimated that nationally slips, trips and falls in the home cost the NHS £133m per year. If we can play our part in helping to stop or reduce this happening in the first place, then we reduce the impact on the NHS and wider society.

We take our approach to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children very seriously, with 24/7 arrangements in place to manage these concerns. All personnel with safeguarding responsibilities receive additional training. This includes being able to support the UK's approach to counter terrorism through training our staff on potential signs of radicalisation and extremism. We also work with multi-agencies through Prevent meetings, to monitor local and national trends and share learning.

Community focus



Following a safeguarding referral in Swindon in May 2019, a multi-agency response was triggered to help two adults living in a home with a high risk from hoarding. Throughout the process of moving the couple to a council owned property, our staff stayed actively involved as they were known and trusted. All involved in this response received a multi-agency Making a Difference award.

5,854
people received road safety messages

777,339
social media views of road safety messages

274
rescues from road traffic collisions

Road safety

Last year we attended 485 road traffic collisions, resulting in 274 rescues. Working in partnership with police and other organisations we aim to reduce the number of these incidents, through our prevention activities.



We have adapted the way we interact with our target audiences through utilising social media. This has led to an increase in the number of people we have reached with our road safety messages.

Over the last 12 months we have developed several new resources to expand our road safety education programme. This includes personal, social, health and economic education lesson plans. We have created interactive digital booklets, new Key Stage 3 and 4 lessons and numerous independent learning resources.

Working with our partners we have produced three interactive booklets covering the 'fatal four'. This focuses on the most common reasons for road traffic collisions of speeding, not wearing a seatbelt, driving while distracted (such as using a mobile phone) and driving whilst impaired by drugs or alcohol. The interactive booklets were a huge success and gained national attention. They were promoted by Road Safety Great Britain and several other road safety agencies across the UK adapted them for local use. As a result of this our road safety manager was invited to speak at the National Road Safety Conference.

PREVENTION: Making safer and healthier choices

We align our activity to local and national campaigns and we have co-ordinated 52 digital road safety education events with our partners, including both Safe Drive Stay Alive and Survive the Drive. Arval UK have continued to financially support us along with other groups such as the Ministry of Defence and The Hills Group.

We have continued to support the Ministry of Defence road casualty reduction programme by creating a digital version of Survive the Drive. This has been used by both local, national and international Ministry of Defence establishments.



Impact to wider society



Despite the number of vehicles on the road in Dorset and Wiltshire continuing to increase, there has been an annual reduction in the number of road traffic casualties on our roads, from 4,482 casualties in 2015, to 3,496 in 2019. According to Department for Transport figures, this equates to a reduction across Dorset and Wiltshire of more than £68m in casualty costs.

Summary

This work leads to:

- increased awareness and a reduction in the risks of accidental and preventable fires in the home
- societal savings from the reduction in fires and other emergencies
- fewer injuries and deaths on our roads, with an increased awareness across target audiences of road safety messages
- opportunities for young people to reach their potential and engage with their community
- more protection and support for vulnerable people so they can live fulfilling and independent lives, and
- fewer hospital admissions for vulnerable people.

Moving forward our focus will be to:

- work with the police, local councils and others to further strengthen our approach to reducing people killed or seriously injured on our roads
- explore establishing a means of securing charitable income to help fund prevention programmes and activities, and
- further develop collaborative partnership work in areas where there is a demand, such as by supporting hospital discharge teams.

PROTECTION: Protecting you and the environment from harm

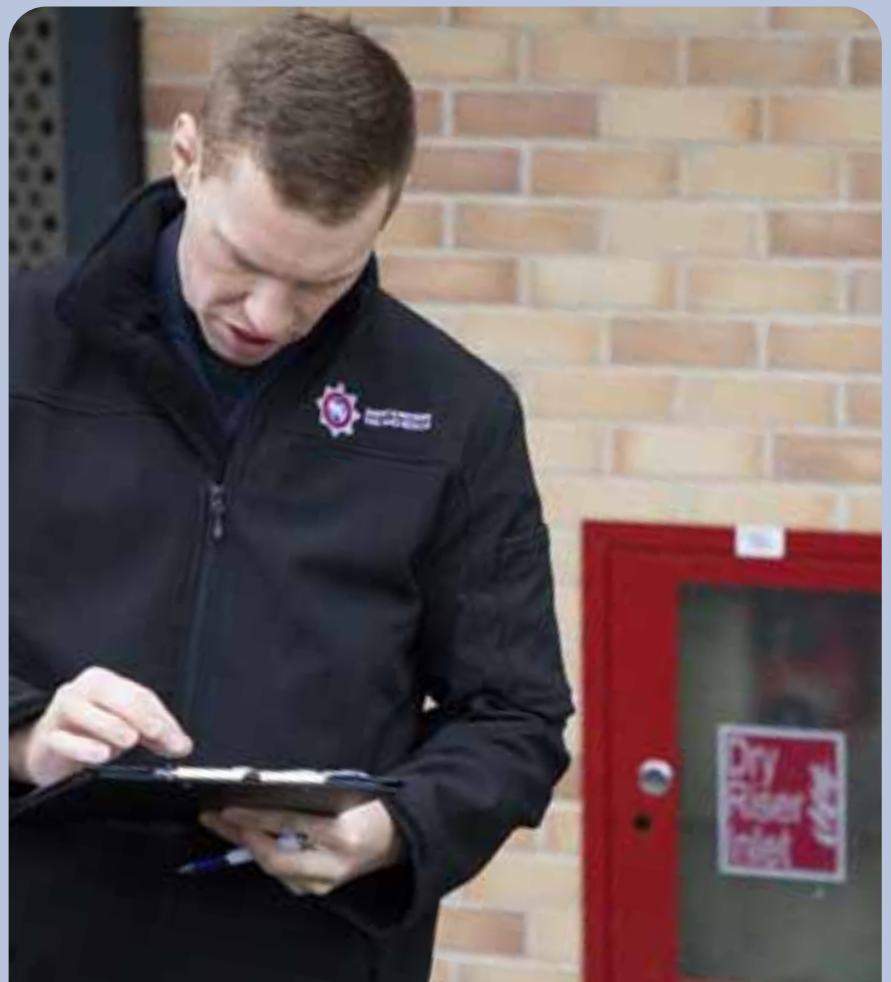
4,141
positive engagements with businesses

Our fire safety protection team gather and review information on premises to identify if they are high risk. This helps to ensure that crews are prepared for emergency incidents, should they occur. Those of highest risk have site specific risk information produced, which is available for crews when they attend incidents.

Our actions following the Grenfell Tower fire

Operational

Our operational crews continue to familiarise themselves with our high-rise buildings to keep residents as safe as possible. We capture and update site specific risk information to assist in the event of an emergency, which includes installing premises information plates in high-rise residential buildings. These plates provide us with up-to-date plans of every floor of the building. We have undertaken a programme of exercises to test our evacuation procedures against a range of scenarios, allowing the crews and building managers to practice working together to maintain the safety of occupants and our firefighters. All of our fire engines have now been equipped with fire escape hoods, which are used to protect victims of fire from the effects of smoke inhalation. These have been used successfully by crews, to rescue people, at recent incidents.



Protection

We have worked hard to implement the outcomes of the Dame Judith Hackitt's review on building safety and the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry. This has involved further strengthening the capability our fire safety team. We continue to work with building owners and local authorities to understand building construction and how the fire safety measures are remediated and maintained.

We continue to work closely with our Local Authority Housing and Building Control partners, ensuring housing and fire safety legislation is well understood and that our actions are proportionate and consistent. We also continue to share information to improve our mutual knowledge of buildings and their construction. Where premises are used as university accommodation, we work collaboratively with the housing providers to deliver advice to students at their induction. This is complemented by regular inspections and safety messages throughout the year.



Testing our high rise procedures

PROTECTION: Protecting you and the environment from harm

387
fire safety audits

1,072
Building Regulations consultations

415
licensing applications

Fire safety

Like all our teams, our fire safety officers were impacted by the coronavirus pandemic as they were unable to routinely attend premises to complete fire safety audits. The team adapted their ways of working to enable remote telephone audits to be undertaken in line with national guidelines. We completed 387 fire safety audits and responded to 1,072 Building Regulations consultations as part of our statutory duties. Last year, we adapted our media and website content to provide support to a range of businesses, enabling us to offer fire safety and safe working advice, during the pandemic. We also adapted our approach and support to a wide range of our partners such as Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Building Control. Working with these partners, offering advice on fire safety issues, ensures we continue to contribute to the safe design of buildings.

116
higher priority fire safety concerns dealt with

239
lower priority fire safety concerns dealt with

Fire safety concerns

Largely, due to buildings being closed due to the pandemic, we saw a reduction in our fire safety concerns from the public. One hundred and sixteen higher priority fire safety concerns were dealt with within 24 hours, and a further 239 less urgent concerns from members of the public were all resolved within seven working days. We follow the Government's Better Regulation Framework and will take robust action, including prosecution, where this is warranted. If you wish to tell us about fire safety risks in commercial premises, such as locked or blocked fire exits, you have three options:

- email the fire safety department at **enforcement@dwfire.org.uk**
- call **01722 691717** during office hours (9am-5pm), or
- call **0306 799 0019** for our Fire Control team out of office hours (5pm-9am).

Summary

This work leads to:

- fewer injuries, preventable fires, deaths and accidents
- increased self-compliance in fire safety law, making workplaces safer
- a reduction in the number of unwanted fire alarms, particularly from commercial properties, through tighter procedures, call challenge processes and providing advisory support, and
- fewer false alarms and unnecessary emergency call outs.

Moving forward our focus will be to:

- continue to closely monitor the outcomes of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry, Dame Judith Hackitt's review and any subsequent reports associated with building and fire safety
- continue to lobby for sprinklers in higher risk premises
- continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure high-rise and complex building fire safety remains a priority, and
- train our firefighters in some aspects of fire safety to allow us to triage high-rise buildings, to better focus our efforts on higher risk properties.

999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us

13,127
incidents attended

3,337
fires attended
(inc. 772 deliberate)

101
rescues from fires

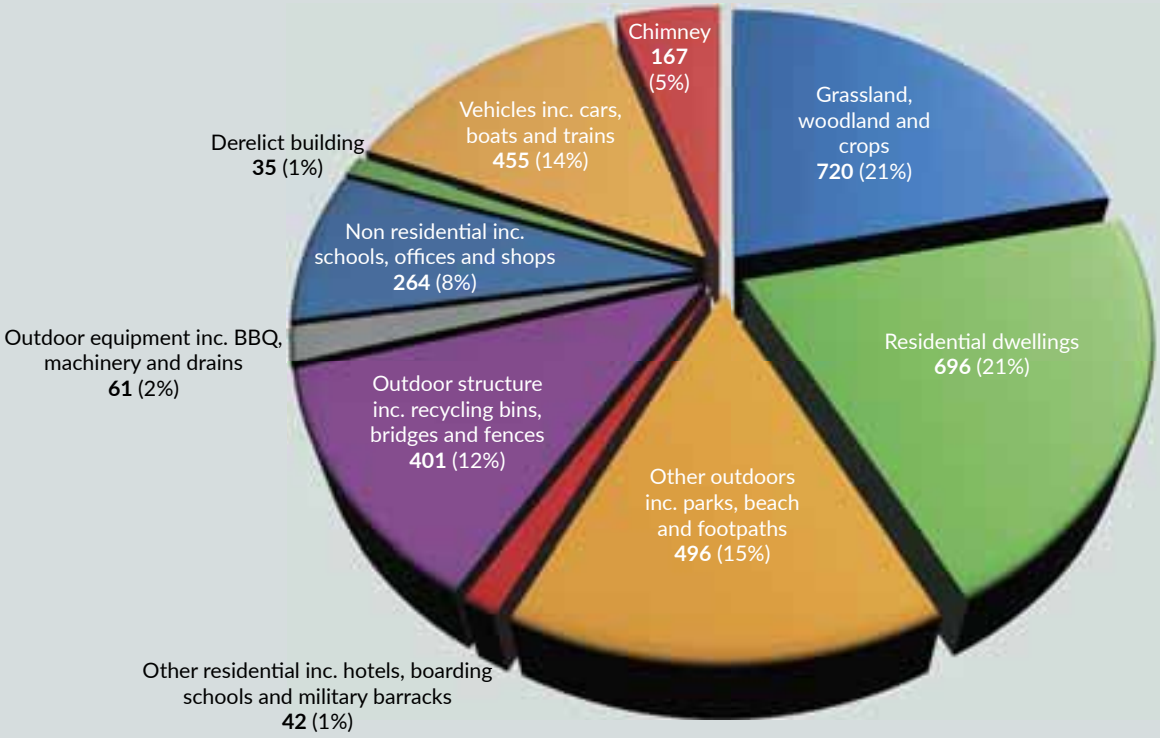
650
accidental fires in the home attended

12%
reduction in accidental dwelling fires

274
rescues from road traffic collisions

Last year we attended 13,127 incidents, including 3,337 fires; 772 were deliberate and 2,565 were accidental fires. Of these accidental fires 650 were in the home. This represents a 12% reduction, compared to the previous year, which reflects our ongoing focus on prevention activities. We also rescued 101 people from fires and 274 from road traffic collisions. Sadly, there were also nine deaths in fire related incidents, of which Her Majesty's Coroner has so far determined that (at time of publication) six were caused by fire.

Types of fires attended in 2020-21

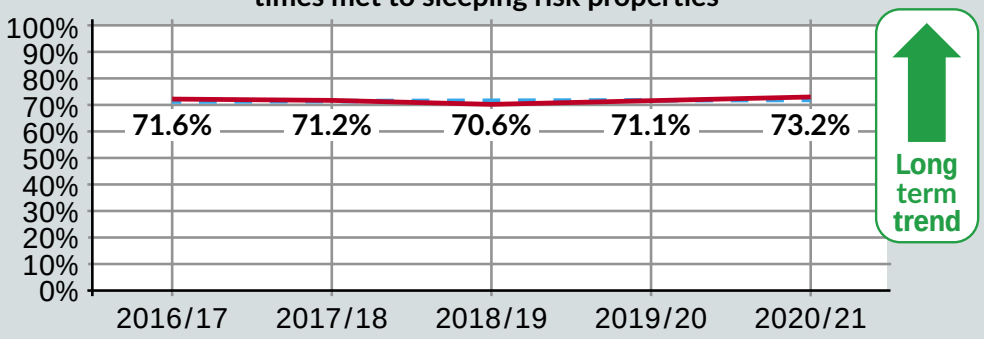


Emergency response

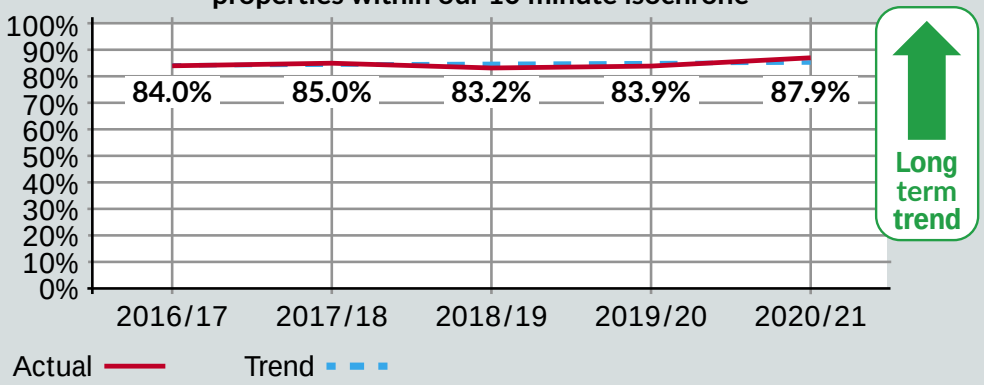
Our emergency response standards focus on life risk. When there is an incident at a property with sleeping risk (private dwellings, care homes, hospitals, sheltered accommodation, student accommodation, hostels etc.), we send two fire engines. We aim for the first fire engine to arrive within ten minutes and for the second to arrive within 13 minutes, from the time the call is received. Against our 75% target we achieved this standard on 73.2% of occasions for the first fire engine and 68.3% of occasions for the second. For other buildings (i.e., those not classified as a sleeping risk), our standards are ten minutes for the first fire engine and 15 minutes for the second. We achieved these standards on 57.5% and 61.7% of occasions, respectively.

We know that our ability to achieve our response standards is not always possible because of where people live and the rural nature of Dorset and Wiltshire. However, we continue to work hard to help identify the most vulnerable in our communities, allowing us to appropriately focus our efforts on fire safety and prevention activities. By focussing our resources on preventing fires, our aim is to mitigate and prevent the risk of a fire occurring in the first place.

Percentage of first appliance response times met to sleeping risk properties



Percentage of first appliance response times met to sleeping risk properties within our 10 minute isochrone*

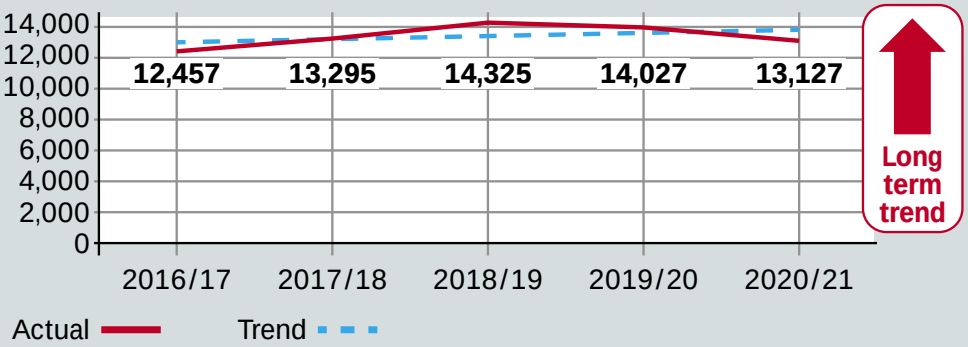


*An isochrone maps the area accessible within 10 minutes travel time from our fire stations. Factors such as traffic or poor weather conditions may affect our ability to achieve a 10 minute response time within these areas.

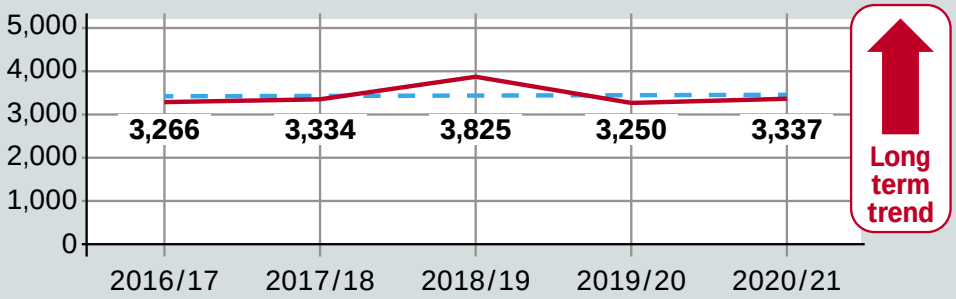
999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us

Long Term Trends

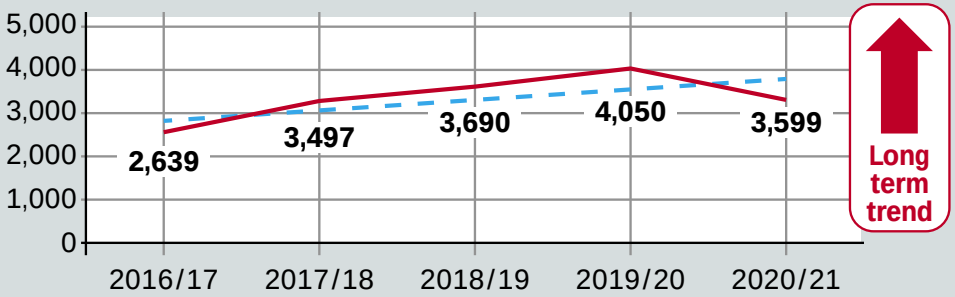
Number of incidents attended



Number of fires attended

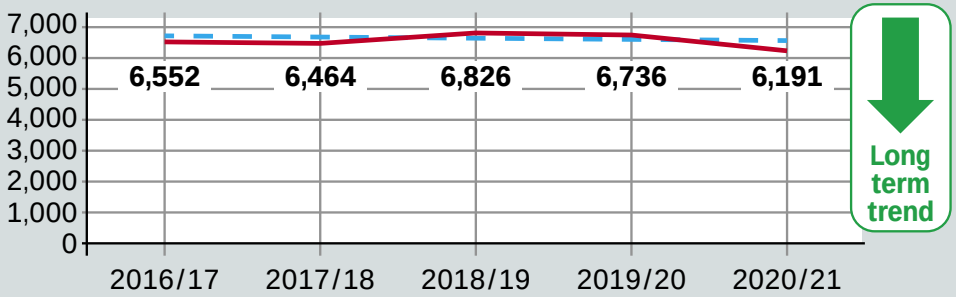


Number of non-fire incidents* attended



*Non-fire incidents that we are called to attend include: road traffic collisions, hazardous materials, animal rescue, flooding and assisting other agencies.

Number of incidents attended that turned out to be false alarms



To really focus our efforts, we work hard to reduce the number of unwanted fire calls from faulty alarms. Our work has led to a reduction of over 600 responses over the last year.

Savings in time	£72,029
Cost avoided	£55,765

Community focus

Firefighters from Bradford on Avon helped to clear a play park in the town that was destroyed in a suspected arson attack. The crew initially attended to deal with the blaze where the play equipment was destroyed. While replacements will be provided by an insurance claim, Bradford on Avon Town Council would have had to cover the cost of clearing the site, so the local community stepped in. A number of chefs, on furlough from work, were joined by our firefighters. Their efforts were captured by BBC Radio Wiltshire.



We support South Western Ambulance Service, by attending critical incidents where they need to gain access to people who have collapsed behind a closed door. We attend these incidents in replacement to, and in support of, the police. We use our access equipment, knowledge and skills of entry to support rapid medical intervention, by ambulance crews, to members of the public. Last year we attended 618 incidents, which is a 10% increase from the previous year.



999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us

During the coronavirus pandemic we worked hard with our partners to help them in their hour of need.

Our staff have undertaken 1,785 face fit tests to help improve the safety of doctors, nurses, paramedics, ambulance technicians and care workers.

We supported South Western Ambulance Service with firefighters driving emergency ambulances. Between April 2020 and March 2021, we responded to 3,447 calls and have worked over 1,590 shifts.

We have also supported the vaccination programme with members of corporate and operational staff volunteering to help run the mass vaccination centre in Salisbury, which has been a seven days per week commitment. It has been a privilege to work alongside our partners during this difficult time.

This support has provided direct benefits to our communities and partners, and built new relationships which help us continue to reach and support the people who need us.

Community focus

Several of our fire stations and offices are now drop off points for anyone wishing to donate a working laptop or tablet. This is to support the Laptops for Kids initiative, designed to ensure that children who may not have suitable technology to learn from home are not left behind during the pandemic. After laptops and tablets have been delivered to safe drop-off points, the devices are collected by Green Machine Computers, a specialist IT recycling company based in Wiltshire. These devises are then professionally cleaned of all data and provided to a child within the local community, who needs support for home learning. We have so far contributed to the collection of over 700 items from all partners, with 319 directly donated to our fire stations. Green Machine Computers have been able to refurbish 170 devices, with 102 items donated to schools.





HRH The Duchess of Cornwall visiting Swindon Fire Station in July 2020, to pay tribute to emergency services staff and other frontline workers at the forefront of the coronavirus pandemic.

999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us

Wareham Forest

The fire which started in Wareham Forest on 18 May 2020 is one of the most devastating forest and heath fires in our history. This was declared a major incident and took over eight weeks to fully extinguish. The total additional costs of the incident were in excess of £570,000. The fire is believed to have been started by disposable barbecues.

For more than two weeks, firefighters from all 50 of our fire stations were on scene. In addition to our own resources, we were also supported by numerous other fire and rescue services, landowners and Forestry England. The fire led to over 220 hectares of forest and heathland being destroyed, the equivalent of over 400 football pitches.



Forestry England were on scene every day to support the firefighting operation. Staff from Natural England, volunteers from the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation group and others involved in the preservation of wildlife, were also on site throughout the incident.



Following the incident, Forestry England launched a fundraising appeal in response to offers of help from the community to restore Wareham Forest. The devastating wildfire destroyed around 15% of the critically important conservation area. More information can be found at **www.forestryengland.uk/help-wareham-forest**.



As a Service, we are continually reviewing how we can drive down wildfire risks by:

- ensuring crews closest to the risk are visiting sites prior to the season for familiarisation and to meet with land managers
- developing relevant information and resources, and
- exercising our operational capabilities in a multi-agency environment.

999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us

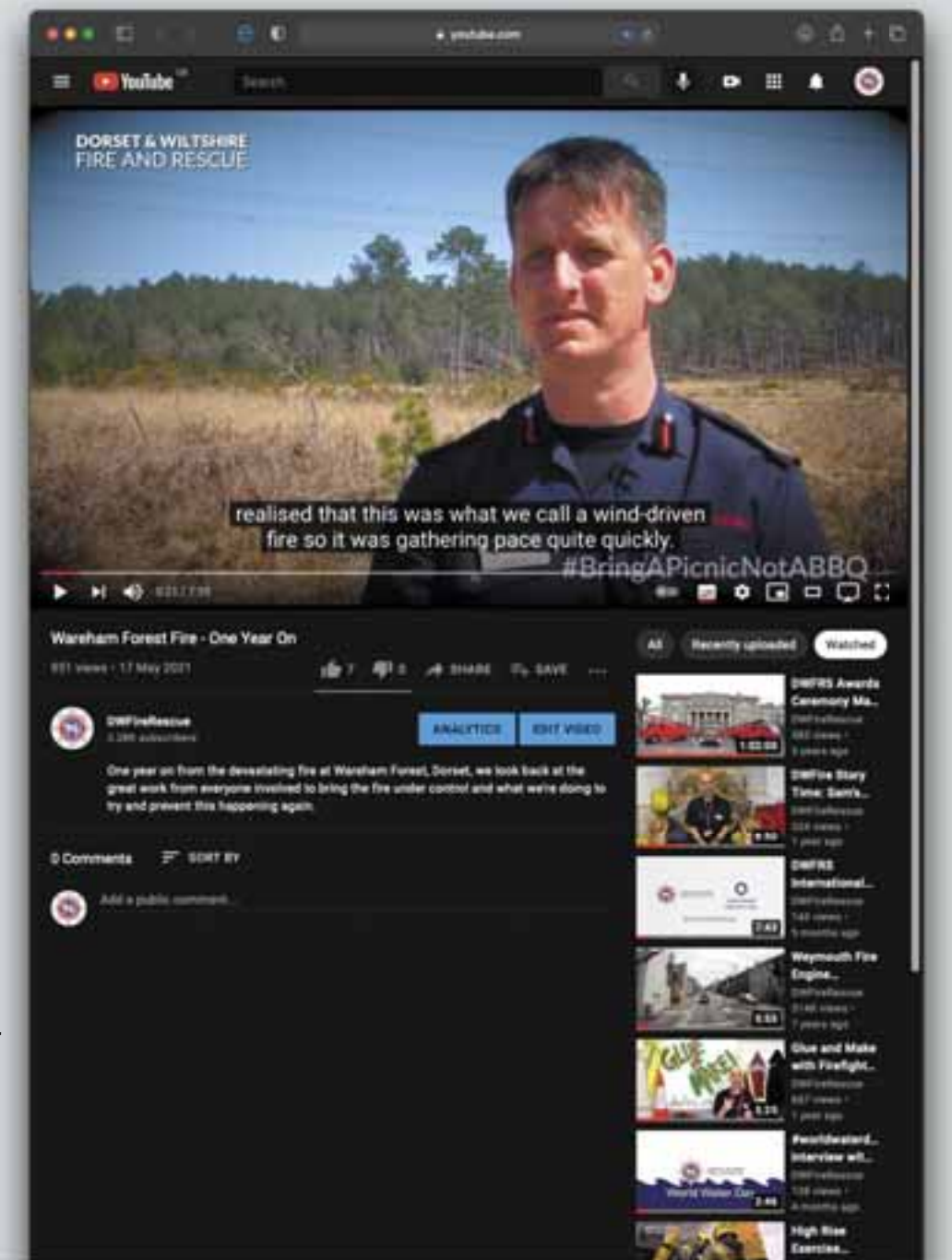
We deliver specific training to land managers and owners through the Urban Heath Partnership on how to manage their land. We encourage them to manage the fuel loading, maintain access routes and ensure we can enter the heath by either having keys or access codes.

We have received local support across our community, with over 100 businesses now displaying safety messaging to promote responsible use and discarding of disposable barbeques. This messaging also informs people that disposable barbeques are banned from many parts of land owned by Dorset Council, who were quick to act following this devastating fire. Several of our local businesses have also already removed disposable barbeques from their sale.

Community members have supported the campaign 'Watch it, Cool it, Bin it!', by talking to businesses and spreading the safety message, via social media. They have also called on their fellow social media users to take a stand and email their local supermarket chains to encourage them to choose to remove disposable barbeques from sale. Safety posters have also been distributed to all local supermarkets.

Across our social media platforms our campaign video has reached a total of 17,379 people.

Finally, we have worked with our partners to produce a video one year on from the Wareham Forest fire **https://youtu.be/MFlq3WEkn_A**.



Summary

This work leads to:

- fewer injuries and deaths from accidental and preventable fires
- safer roads with fewer road traffic collisions that result in injury and death
- fewer deaths and serious medical injuries
- safer firefighters and staff
- an increase in our understanding of the community risk and those we need to target, and
- working closely with our partners within the Networked Fire Services Partnership to identify opportunities for collaboration, including alignment of operational procedures with neighbouring fire and rescue services.

Moving forward our focus will be to:

- review the type, number and locations of special vehicles to ensure we have the right number of vehicles in the right locations based on strategic risk and demand
- review our emergency response arrangements and resourcing across the Service area to meet changing community risks and deliver value for money or achieve a sustainable balanced budget, and
- further strengthen the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters by:
  - looking at how we can recruit, employ and retain on-call firefighters in new and innovative ways, and
  - further strengthen the training and development for new firefighters to make it more flexible for them.

£ GOVERNANCE: Making every penny count

clean audit results from external auditors

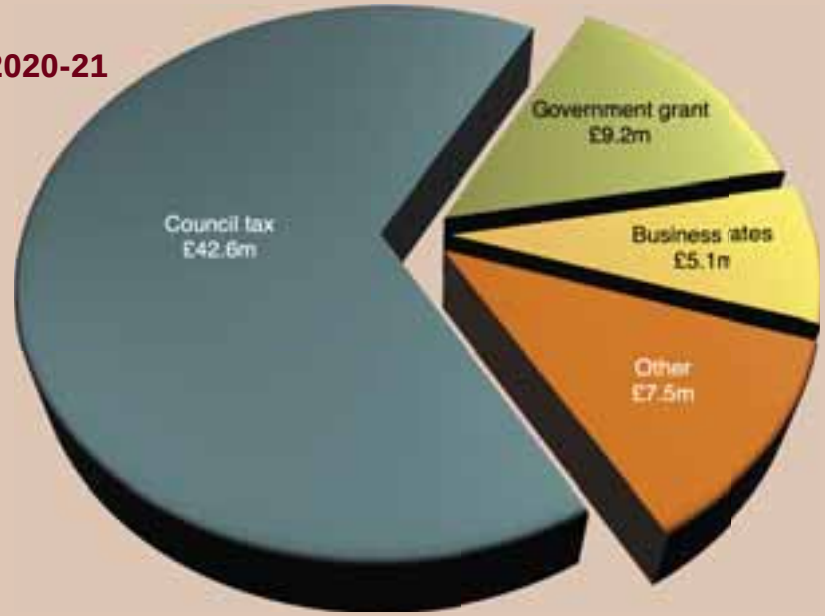
below average Band D council tax precept

Good governance and financial management is at the heart of what we do and this is supported by positive assurance opinions from our internal and external auditors.

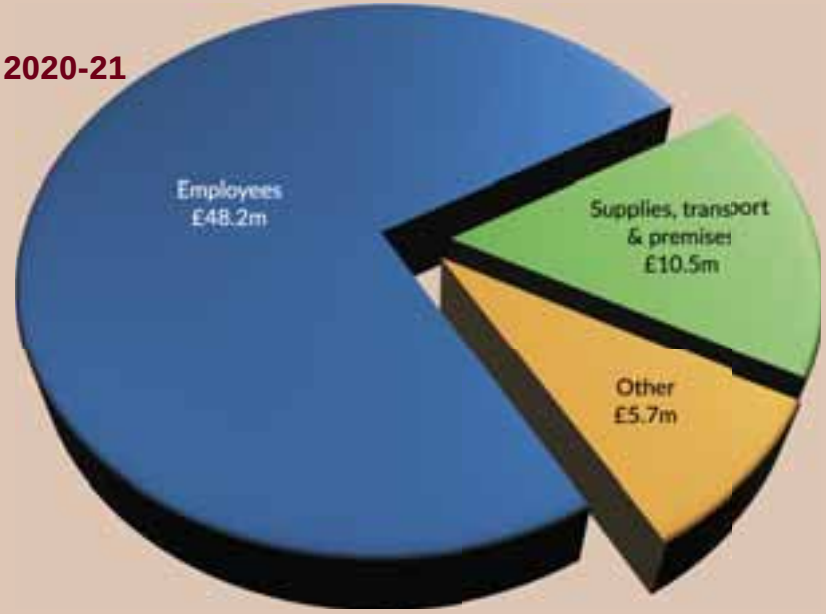
Our net budget for 2020-21 was £56.9m, funded by a combination of council tax, government grants and a share of local business rates. Seventy five percent of our funding comes from council tax and for 2020-21 our Band D precept was £76.36. This compares to a national average of £78.56. Full details of our financial performance is included within our Statement of Accounts 2020-21, which is available on our website **dwfire.org.uk**.

Our medium-term financial planning shows that we still have considerable financial challenges ahead if our share of government funding, council tax and business rates does not improve. We have a forecast budget gap of £1.5m from April 2022, rising to over £3m from April 2024. We are working hard to deal with these financial challenges, so that we are able to set a long-term sustainable budget and deliver the priorities in our Community Safety Plan.

Funding 2020-21



Spending 2020-21



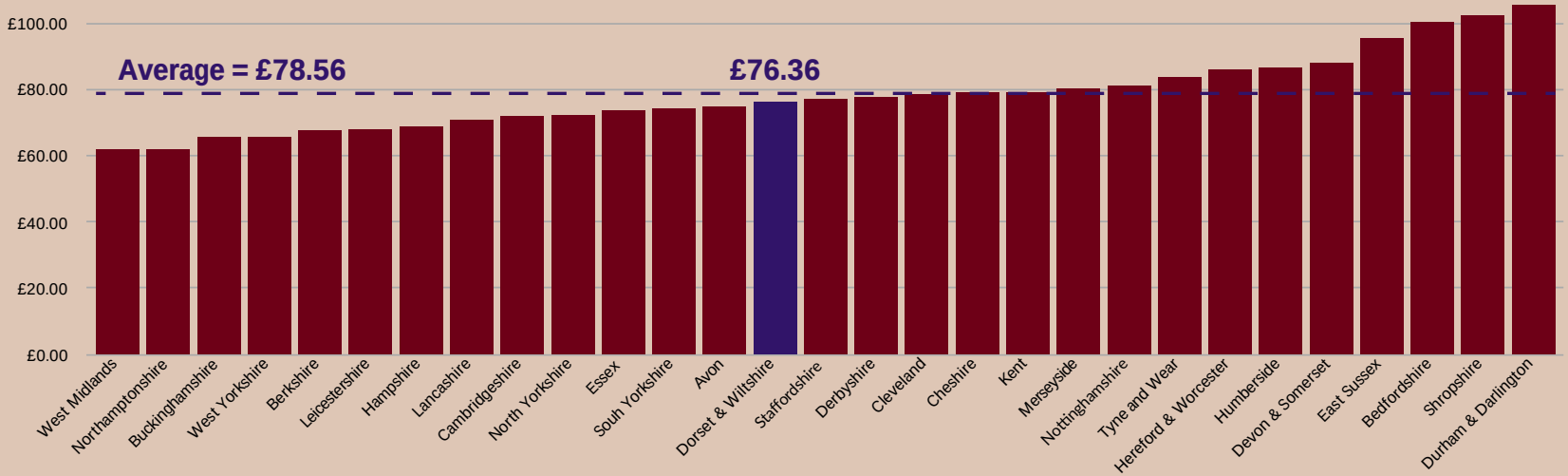
Below average firefighter costs (£22.06 compared to £23.94 national average)

We have a good track record of making savings and, over the last five years, we have saved more than £6.5m per year. Additional savings of more than £1m have been found in setting the revenue budget for 2021-22.

Our firefighter costs are below the national average, with costs per 1,000 population at £22.06 compared to a national average of £23.94. Over the past 12 months we have been further strengthening our approach to value for money. These changes help to ensure that we continue to demonstrate effective use of the resources available to us and help us to better understand and quantify our costs and savings, including any wider societal savings generated by our work.

For more information on our budget and our approach to efficiency and value for money please have a look at our Medium-Term Finance Plan, which is available on our website **dwfire.org.uk**.

Our Band D Council Tax charges for 2020-21 compared to other fire and rescue services



GOVERNANCE: Making every penny count

During 2018 we were inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. This included assessments of the operational service provided to the public, the efficiency of the Service, and the organisational effectiveness of the Service. In June 2019, the Inspectorate published their first report for the Service. We were delighted to be awarded a 'Good' rating against all three pillars of the inspection: efficiency, effectiveness and people.

In October 2020, the Inspectorate conducted a COVID-19 virtual inspection and we received a positive inspection letter. This showed how we responded to the coronavirus pandemic, maintained vital services to our communities and worked to support our partners. The full inspection outcome letter can be found on our website **dwfire.org.uk**.



"The residents of Dorset and Wiltshire can be confident that they are receiving a quality service and I look forward to seeing what further benefits result from their recent combination."

HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services
Wendy Williams CBE



Summary

This work leads to:

- evidence that we have robust financial and corporate governance arrangements
- ensuring we are making the best use of our resources and can demonstrate efficiency gains
- good procurement and contract management, which supports us to save money, and
- making our budget work smarter.

Moving forward our focus will be to:

- fully implement and embed our value for money tool across the Service to evidence reduced costs and improving outcomes with fewer or the same resources
- review our property, fleet and ways of working in light of our response to the coronavirus pandemic
- maximise our information and communication technology capability in supporting smarter ways of working, to improve our efficiency and reduce costs, and
- work with our partners, particularly our neighbouring fire and rescue services and the police, to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

PEOPLE: Supporting and developing our people

Developing our people

We have adapted our approach to staff development and remain committed to investing in our staff. Leadership sessions and training courses have been delivered virtually, during the coronavirus pandemic.

We have strengthened our incident command training through the implementation of virtual reality technology, which supports remote mobile assessments. Body worn cameras have been introduced to enable standardised incident and workplace assessments.

We have introduced a new system to ensure that we record and manage our skill sets. We also have plans to integrate this with our availability and rostering systems, which will strengthen our arrangements further.

We currently have 25 members of staff enrolled in the apprenticeship scheme. During the pandemic apprenticeships in all departments and at all management levels continued, supported by online learning and virtual meetings.



16.2%
reduction in staff absence

Staff wellbeing

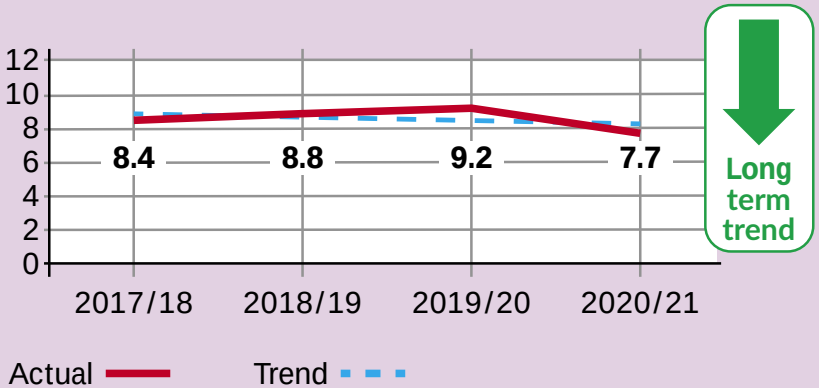
We work hard to maintain the health and wellbeing of all our staff by providing services that offer support in the home and at work with health-related issues. These services include physical, emotional and mental health support.

Mental health wellbeing sessions are integrated into the training for supervisory managers, to ensure they are supported and able to recognise the early signs of mental health issues for themselves and others. The integrated sessions use films, animations, interactive e-learning programmes and podcasts.

To help maintain the fitness of our operational staff, we ensure nutritional guidance and advice on weight management and fitness improvement are available. This support has been recently enhanced further by offering online one-to-one fitness sessions and online videos that staff can do at home.

Our long-term trend for all staff groups absence is reducing. Absence management continues to be a key focus for us and whilst there is some variability between staff groups, absence has decreased by 16.2% since last year to an average of 7.7 days/shifts lost per person per year.

Average number of shifts lost to sickness (all staff)



PEOPLE: Supporting and developing our people

below average gender pay gap

9.6%
of operational staff intake is from under-represented groups

Diversity & inclusion

Diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. We recognise that different groups have different needs, whether that be members of our workforce or members of our communities. We are committed to working with our communities to better understand their needs, so that we deliver a tailored approach to our services that keeps our communities safe.



We also work with our partners to identify the members of our communities most at risk. A vital part of our equality work is understanding what the differing needs are, to enable us to address these in our work and within the workplace.

We are committed to:

- providing services that do not discriminate against any section of our communities or staff groups
- identifying ways in which to advance opportunities and foster good relations between all groups through knowing our communities, staff and volunteers
- protecting our most vulnerable people
- taking action to make a difference, and
- evaluating our performance.

We are dedicated to ensuring we continually improve our diversity and inclusion arrangements and use the Local Government Association's Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework, to monitor and benchmark our performance.

We are working hard to attract under-represented groups to our organisation, through our positive attraction campaigns and community engagement initiatives. Our recruitment activities have been impacted during the first six months of the year, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In October 2020, we launched a recruitment process for wholetime firefighters. We used Facebook Live to provide interactive opportunities for prospective applicants, which we saw 112,547 engagements with. We also received 23,690 comments, likes and reactions across social media during our online recruitment campaign. Following this successful campaign, 22 candidates started with the Service on 1 June 2021.

For more information, including our annual Equality Report, please visit our website **www.dwfire.org.uk/annual-workforce-equality-reports**.



PEOPLE: Supporting and developing our people

Summary

This work leads to:

- investing in the development of our staff ensuring they are equipped with the skills and behaviours to succeed in their role
- increased staff confidence in the health and wellbeing arrangements in place with low sickness absence
- a committed approach to increase the diversity of our workforce, and
- recruiting and retaining on-call firefighters in new and innovative ways.

Moving forward our focus will be to:

- expand and enhance blended learning options and virtual training delivery to provide more flexible learning and development opportunities. This will reduce the amount of time employees spend away from home, their workplace or their primary employment
- ensure our workforce planning processes incorporate succession and talent management arrangements, offering greater flexibility and opportunities within our structures to develop and retain our staff, and
- continue to actively recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve by better understanding and refining recruitment practices.

Could you be an on-call firefighter?

As a Service we are reliant on on-call firefighters – almost two thirds of our operational staff work this duty system to keep our communities safe. An on-call firefighter is someone who responds to a range of fire and rescue service jobs; these range from emergency calls, working at open days, carrying out work within their local communities and acting as an ambassador for the fire and rescue service.

On-call firefighters carry a pager with them and respond to their local fire station when they are alerted. They deal with the same types of incidents and emergencies as their wholetime colleagues and are trained to the same standards including emergency response driving, breathing apparatus and casualty care. On-call firefighters train once a week on station at drill night. The night of the week varies depending on the station.



On-call firefighters come from every walk of life, including homemakers, shopkeepers, builders, farmers, office workers and directors of companies, together with people who are not currently employed. Full training is provided on an on-going basis, therefore previous experience is not needed. The on-call hours are based around people's availability and other commitments aligned to the requirements for operational cover at the station.

We are recruiting on-call firefighters at stations across the Service. In order to be an on-call firefighter you must be over 18, and live or work to be able to respond to the fire station, within five minutes of your pager going off. We are particularly interested in hearing from women and under-represented groups. We are an equal opportunities employer and applications are welcome from all. The application form and more information can be found on our website **dwfire.org.uk/on-call-firefighters**.

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE

Performance against strategic targets

Target	Performance
We will achieve a 5% reduction in the number of accidental dwelling fires we attend (over the average achieved during the last five years)	12% ↓
We will achieve a 5% reduction in the number of road traffic collisions we attend (over the average achieved during the last five years)	33% ↓
We will seek to secure 70% of all attendees completing the Prince's Trust Programme securing or moving towards training or employment within six months of completing the course	67%*
We will achieve a 5% reduction in deliberate fires (from the average achieved during the last five years)	22% ↓
We will achieve a 5% reduction in our attendance at unwanted automatic fire alarms (from the average attended during the last five years)	17% ↓
On 75% of occasions, we will achieve our response standards based on a 10-minute response time (including call handling and travel time)	73%
On 85% of occasions, we will achieve our response standards within a 10-minute isochrone from each fire station (including call handling and travel time)	88%
By 12 March 2021, to have achieved accreditation against International Organisation for Standardisation ISO 45001 – Occupational Health and Safety management standard	ACHIEVED
To reduce the number of working days lost to work related injuries and ill health by 5% (from the average achieved during the last three years)	38%** ↑
To reduce the number of working days lost to work-related non-physical injuries or ill health by 5% (from the average achieved during the last three years)	11% ↓
We will ensure that 20% of recruitment into our operational workforce is from under-represented groups	9.6%*
We will achieve a reduction in the average sickness levels from the average achieved during the last three years	16% ↓

Key Target achieved Target almost achieved Target not achieved

*Performance against this target has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic
**Due to one member of staff being on long-term absence

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