



DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE

Annual Report 2022-23

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Cllr Rebecca Knox
Chair of the Fire and
Rescue Authority



Ben Ansell QFSM
Chief Fire Officer

Last year was again very busy with new and emerging challenges. We attended 14,668 operational incidents where people needed our urgent assistance, which included rescuing 118 people from fires and 365 people from road traffic collisions. We were especially busy over the scorching summer, with our firefighters being called to 900 wildfires and 118 heathland and outdoor fires.

Whilst we are best known for responding to emergency incidents, we carry out a lot of work with partners and communities to prevent fires and accidents happening in the first place. This includes delivering Safe & Well visits in higher risk households. Through this we have engaged and supported 8,273 vulnerable people, helping them to make their homes safer by installing smoke alarms and other safety aids. Whilst doing this we also

look at ways to help them keep warm and assist those who have specific needs, working with our partners to get more support, where needed. We also work hard to help make our roads safer by engaging with key groups to help them make safer choices and be responsible to other road users.

During this year, new and revised legislation came into effect, following the Grenfell Tower fire in London in 2017. In line with our Community Safety Plan, we have increased the number of people to meet these new requirements. We have improved the way we provide information and support to those responsible for these buildings. Over the last year we engaged with hundreds of local businesses while carrying out 842 fire safety audits, 779 business fire safety checks and responding to 1,653 consultations from building control.

FOREWORD

We are also working with those responsible for making sure venues are as safe as reasonably possible, in line with new legislation to protect the public at large gatherings and venues following the Manchester Area terrorist attack in 2017.

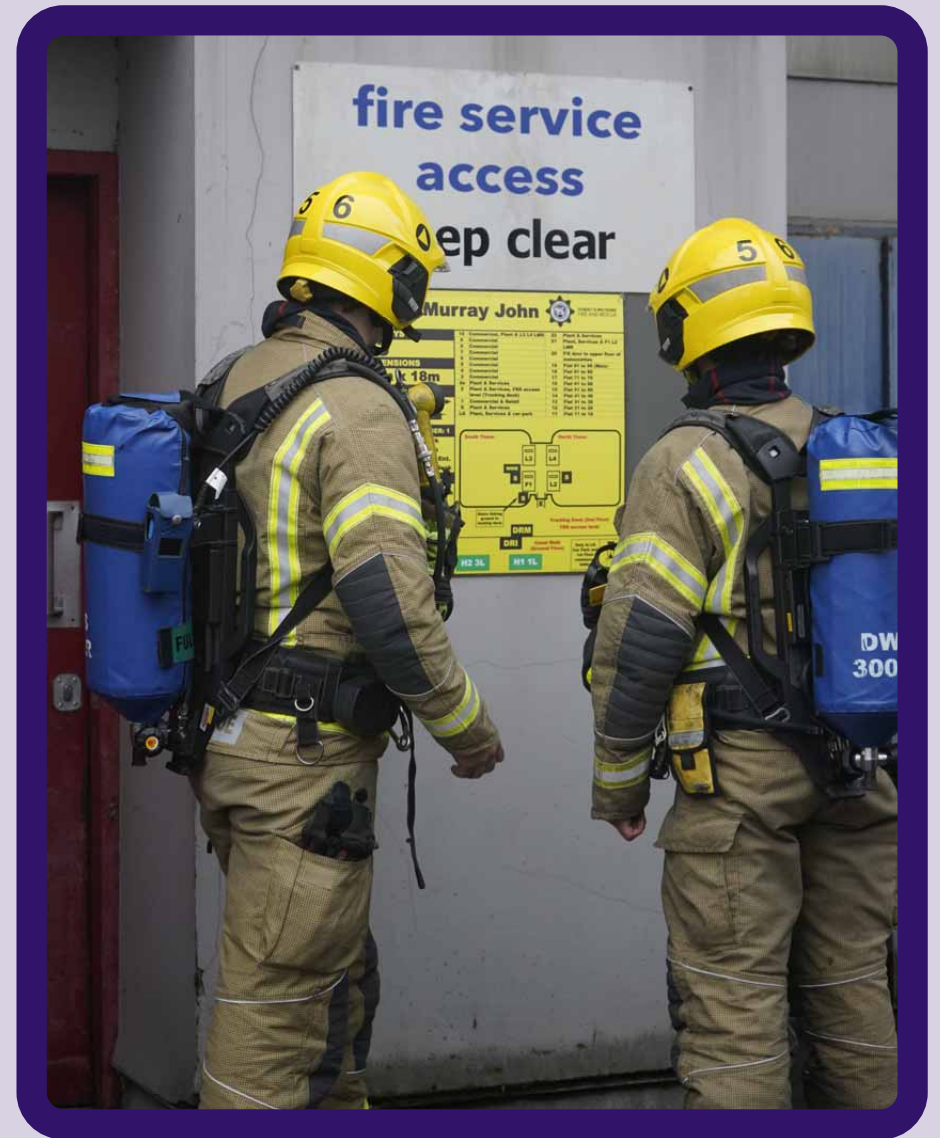
During February, March and April 2022, we welcomed His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services into our Service for their second full inspection. We were delighted with the report and gradings provided, with the inspectors rating us as one of the highest performing fire and rescue services in England and awarding us as 'Outstanding' in our work across their 'Efficiency' pillar.

Our staff and our culture have always been important to us, which

is why following the London Fire Brigade's Independent Culture Review report in November 2022, we undertook our own internal review. Additionally, following the reports raised by national news in early 2023, we commissioned an Independent Review to be undertaken. These review findings will be published later in 2023.

This Annual Report provides you with an overview of our performance and the work that we have undertaken in the last year. If you want to find out more, including about our Community Safety Plan 2021-24, please visit our website www.dwfire.org.uk, where contact information is also available.

We hope you enjoy reading this report.

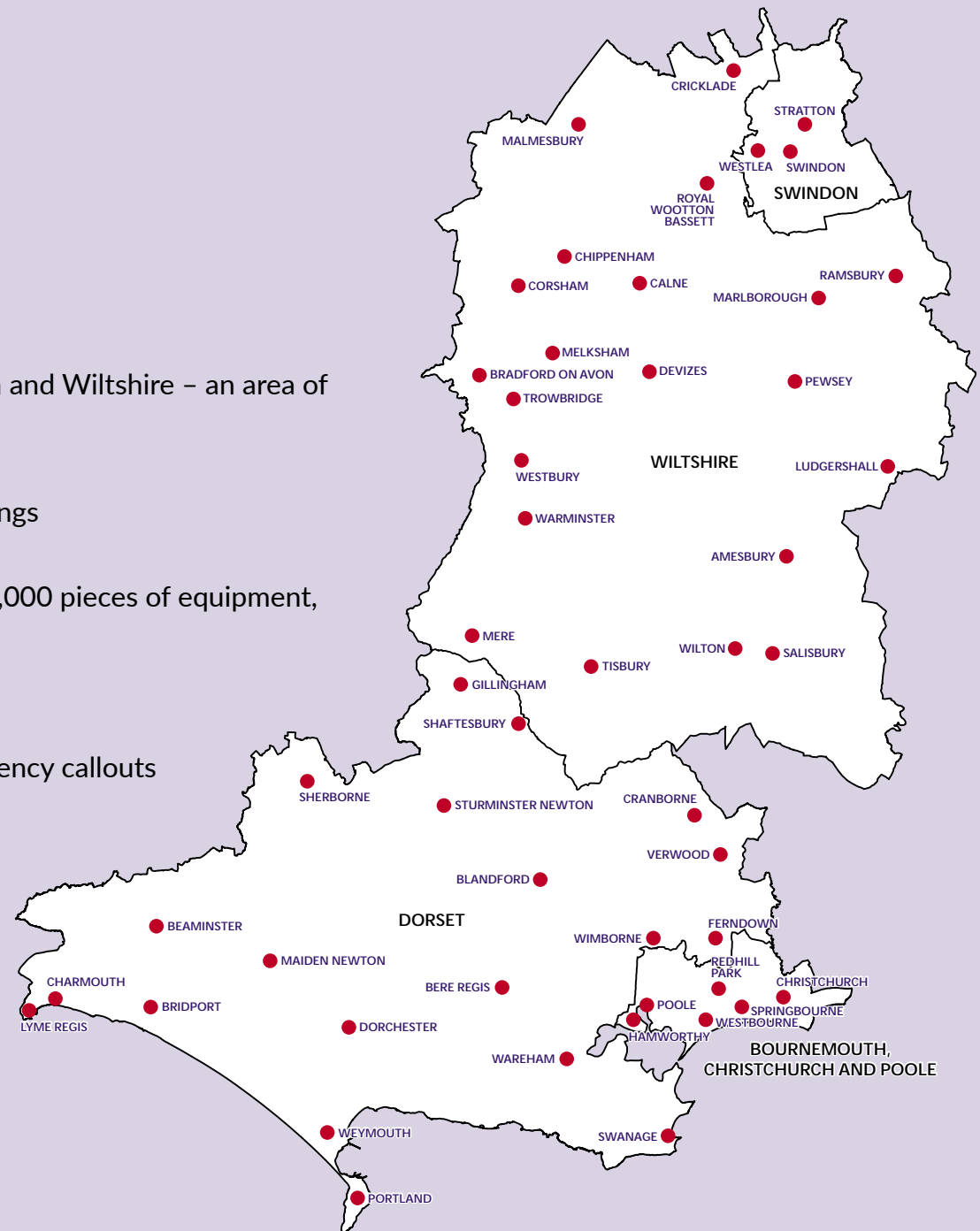




ABOUT US

Your fire and rescue service

- Serves around 1.5 million people
- Covers Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Dorset, Swindon and Wiltshire – an area of around 2,500 square miles
- Operates from 50 fire stations and a number of other key buildings
- Uses fire engines, a number of specialist vehicles and almost 70,000 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
 - wholtime firefighters, including those based in our control room who answer 999 emergency calls, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year
 - vehicle, equipment and information and communication technology technicians who provide a 24/7 service
 - corporate staff who help to provide our essential front-line services, and
 - volunteers who support us across our Service.



About this Annual Report

When you think of your fire and rescue service, you probably think of our emergency response. However, this is only one part of what we do. To help us focus our resources in the best way possible, we have five priorities aimed at improving the safety and quality of life for everyone who lives in or visits the counties of Dorset and Wiltshire. This Annual Report gives you an overview of our performance over the past year, against our five key priorities.



Our priorities



Prevention:

Making safer and healthier choices

Educating people to the dangers around them and preventing risky behaviour.



Protection:

Protecting you and the built environment from harm

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



Education

For children and young people to live safer and healthier lives they need to have the knowledge and understanding to make safe choices and reduce risky behaviours. We offer education, covering all aspects of safety and the fire and rescue service, tailored to their needs. This includes:

- **fire safety:** understanding how to make choices to be 'fire safe' at home and in their communities by increasing their fire safety knowledge
- **road safety:** increasing awareness of how to behave as a road user to keep themselves and others safe
- **water safety:** increasing awareness of how to stay safe in, on or near water, including inland waterways and flooding
- **anti-social behaviour:** understanding the consequences of playing with fire and making hoax calls, giving the skills to make positive behavioural choices
- **inspired by firefighters:** using firefighters as role models to develop skills to make positive, safer and healthier choices

Impact to wider society



Last year we delivered safety education talks in schools, children's groups and via community engagement, to 44,692 children. In 2008, the estimated cost of a house fire was **£44,523**. In today's prices these costs would be around **£60,756**. Our aim is that following these safety sessions, children will speak about what they have learnt with others in their household, helping to reduce the likelihood and financial impact of fires in the home. We estimate that the potential societal savings from these safety messages delivered in 2022-23 is **£8.2m**.

To target the most at risk, we prioritise our visits based on the following risks:

- number of domestic fires, with children living in the home, in the school area
- response time from the fire station to the school
- deprivation data
- local incident trends
- emerging trends of incidents



Community focus Universities

Across our Service area we have several university campuses with many tens of thousands of students attending them. Swindon has the Oxford Brookes University Campus, with nearly 17,000 students, whilst Wiltshire has Wiltshire College & University Centre with about 13,000 students. Bournemouth and Poole are home to Bournemouth Arts University and Bournemouth University where 20,000 students live across 30 accommodation blocks and private landlord accommodation, with high numbers of university and foreign exchange students staying over the summer months.

To help students make safer choices, accommodation managers are provided with help and guidance. This includes a Student Fire Safety Awareness Scheme for students who have been identified as requiring further guidance. Working with the accommodation managers, our operational crews have conducted several simulated evacuations, to test university procedures, increase fire service knowledge of accommodation blocks and improve student awareness. The education team also provides and manages targeted fire safety education.

PREVENTION: Making safer and healthier choices

As well as working in schools, we provide lessons to children by other means, such as through pupil referral/behaviour units, and home educated groups. We also visit special educational needs and disability schools. Children and young people's groups, such as Guiding and Scouting groups, are given safety advice during their visits to fire stations. We also engage with the community during events such as library story times, where we focus on different safety topics each school holiday.

We provide safety information to parents and carers to deliver

key messages in an easy to follow format. Children are encouraged to review these at home. This allows the child to share their knowledge with their parent/carer and together consider the safety messages, discussing positive behavioural changes they could make to keep themselves safer. There are different resources for different school years and groups, as well as on specific topics such as Halloween and Bonfire Night, outdoor fire safety, water safety and winter safety. We work closely with partners and use social media to help get our messages across.

Impact to wider society

Bring a Picnic Not a BBQ - reducing disposable BBQs



Disposable BBQs have caused a significant number of serious fires and damaged many of our precious heathlands. We have used social media and supported our partners Litter Free Dorset and the Urban Heaths Partnership in promoting outdoor safety campaigns. A successful campaign has been 'Bring a Picnic, not a BBQ' to our outdoor spaces, which encouraged our communities to take picnics rather than use disposable BBQs.

Youth intervention

Our youth intervention programmes have provided support to young people. Our Firesetters programme also supports children and young people that have shown an interest in fire setting behaviour or have become curious.

Impact to wider society

Firesetters

For each £1 we invest in our Firesetters scheme we generate a societal saving of **£10.63**. This includes savings for us, police, ambulance service and the wider National Health Service. Last year, this represented estimated savings of **£583k**.

Firesetters

To reduce the number of arson incidents within our communities we work with vulnerable children and young people via our Firesetters Intervention Scheme. This year we received 56 referrals from parents, carers and other concerned professionals such as teachers, social services and police. Our early intervention with the child or young person allows us to help them understand the dangers and consequences of their fire setting behaviour and make safer choices.

Fire Cadets

In 2022, Fire Cadet teams were based at Ferndown, Swindon and Trowbridge fire stations. The programme followed the National Fire Cadet curriculum and involved both practical and theoretical activities.

All of the cadets received the National Fire Cadets Award 1 and an Assessment and Qualifications Alliance certification in the Fire Service Training Programme. In September 2022 new teams started in Swindon and Trowbridge and they will complete their programme in July 2023.



PREVENTION: Making safer and healthier choices



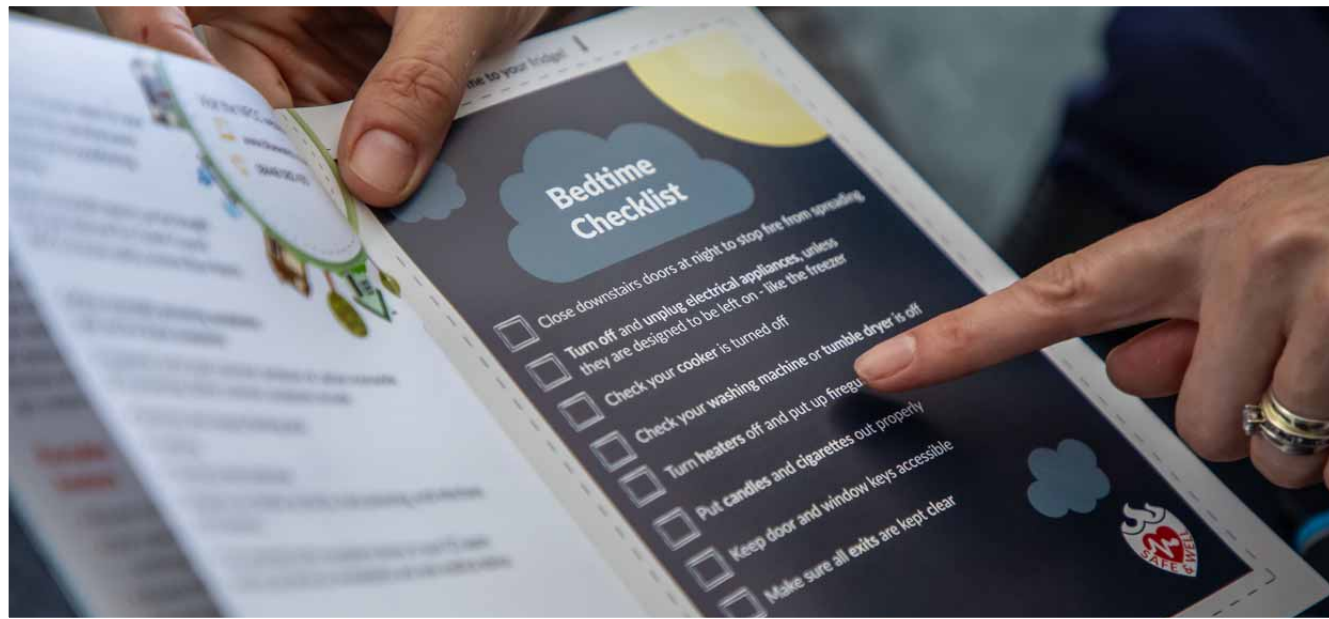
Home visits

Last year we conducted 9,712 Safe & Well visits in people's homes, and delivered fire safety information to a further 4,547 homes.

We received 4,745 referrals from key partners, such as South Western Ambulance Service, the police and local housing and care providers. The largest proportion of our referrals this year were received from Thames Water with 917 this year, Air Liquide provided 816 and South Western Ambulance Service 648. In January we received equipment to the value of £46,800 from SGN and Wales & West Utilities to enable us to provide 4,000 households with much needed carbon monoxide detectors, along with 400 wireless detectors. Wireless detectors are installed in homes where there are hearing impaired occupiers. We are extremely grateful for their support and finances.



Impact to wider society



With a unique access to homes and families, our staff have a valuable role to play in safeguarding our communities. In support of this we have arrangements in place to ensure guidance and support is available to our staff 24/7, through our dedicated Safeguarding team. We also contribute to safeguarding boards and support partners to help safeguard very high-risk people.

Preventing fires from happening reduces serious injuries and the loss of life, loss of business, the impacts on the local economy and the cost of damage to properties.

Through our prevention work, we can reduce the overall cost of responding to incidents. If just 1% of our Safe & Well visits prevent a house fire from occurring, this could result in estimated societal savings of **£5.9m**. For our Service this would mean we could save £112k per year by not sending resources to preventable dwelling fires. Overall, for every £1 invested in our Safe & Well activities last year we estimate that there was a societal return of **£7**.

PREVENTION: Making safer and healthier choices



13,162
people received
road safety
interventions



146,327
social media views
of road safety
messages



711
road traffic
collisions attended



365
rescues from road
traffic collisions



Road safety

In 2022-23 our Service attended 711 road traffic collisions and carried out 365 rescues. We work closely with the Dorset Road Safety Partnership and the Wiltshire and Swindon Road Safety Partnership to coordinate road prevention activities aimed at improving road safety. Our prevention activities follow local and national road safety campaigns. This year we actively used our social media platform to support national road safety campaigns, reaching a total of 146,327 people.

We have received £28,000 of funding, from local businesses and the Ministry of Defence, to help fund our road safety education activities across our Service next year. This will enable us to deliver campaigns such as Operation Close Pass (an initiative by Police forces to reduce the number of accidents caused by drivers not giving enough space to people riding bikes), Older Drivers and Seat Belt checks. We are very grateful to receive this funding support.

Our education programmes are delivered both virtually and in person, with events being supported by partners, and people whose lives have been affected by road traffic incidents. Over the past 12 months we have delivered:

- 63 Safe Drive Stay Alive events, with 9,587 attendees
- 14 Survive the Drive events with 1,100 attendees, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence
- 16 Biker Down activities
- eight corporate events for organisations such as Arval, BAE Systems, Lyons Seafood and Vodafone
- 94 road safety events, with 2,255 attendees (such as Child Seat Belt promotions and Equestrian Close Pass)
- there were 3,300 downloads of our digital education programmes via the Times Educational Supplement ([TES.com](https://www.tes.com)), which had the potential to reach up to 99,000 pupils across the UK

Online programmes suit many educational needs. This year we launched our new 360 degree virtual reality road safety lessons, with headsets purchased through funding provided by our sponsor Arval.

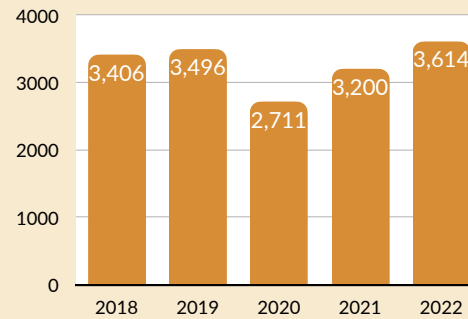


PREVENTION: Making safer and healthier choices

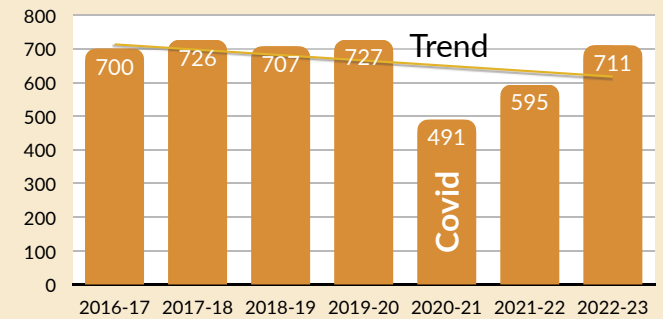


Impact to wider society

Number of road traffic casualties in Dorset and Wiltshire



Number of road traffic collisions attended



Since the pandemic, traffic levels have returned to normal levels, but over the last year we have seen an increase in the number of road traffic collisions our Service attends. Our road safety partnerships are expecting this increase to continue as traffic

is predicted to grow over the next ten years. This rise is reflective in the number of casualties from road traffic collisions, which rose by 11% last year. We continue to work proactively with partners and the public to keep people safe as they travel across the region.

Summary

This work leads to:

- reductions of accidental and preventable fires in the home through greater community awareness
- greater societal savings from the reduction in fires and other emergencies
- reductions in deliberate fires through targeted education and wider community work
- safer roads with fewer injuries and deaths, with an increased awareness across target audiences
- greater support and protection for vulnerable people
- fewer hospital admissions for vulnerable people

Moving forward our focus will be to:

- continue to maximise societal savings from the reduction in fires and other emergencies
- further strengthen our understanding and relationships with the communities we serve
- reduce community risk through targeted education

PROTECTION: Protecting you and the built environment from harm



842
fire safety audits



1,653
building regulations
consultations



467
licensing
applications



5,971
positive
engagements with
businesses



779
business fire
safety checks



23
enforcement
notices issued



24
prohibition
notices issued

Fire safety

The government has introduced the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. These place new requirements on the building managers of all multi-occupied residential buildings to conduct regular checks, share risk information, provide floor plans and report defects in firefighting equipment. In line with our Community Safety Plan, we have increased the number of people trained to support building managers make these improvements.

Our inspection programme looks at higher risk

buildings including high-rise buildings, residential care homes and sleeping risk above commercial catering premises. Whilst we always try to seek voluntary compliance with fire safety legislation, we have the ability to enforce, prohibit or prosecute building owners where dangerous conditions exist. As well as increasing our specialist teams, crews at wholtime stations have been trained to complete fire safety checks on lower risk premises such as offices, shops or small industrial units. We completed 779 of these checks this year. We also

completed 842 fire safety audits and responded to 1,653 building regulation consultations as part of our statutory duties. In total there were 5,971 positive engagements with businesses across our Service area.

We collect and share risk information across all departments, as well as with partner agencies, including a national agreement with the Care Quality Commission, to improve safety in residential care settings. Our approach to public events is being strengthened, with our partners, in preparation for

the introduction of new legislation known as Martyn's Law. This places a wider emphasis on public safety at sporting and cultural events. This information, along with other hazard information identified through our inspection and audit process, is shared with our firefighters to keep them safe when they attend incidents and to ensure that the firefighting response is efficient and timely. This year we have provided more training and exercising opportunities for our staff, with multi-agency partners, to support this new legislation and ensure readiness for such incidents.





Fire safety concerns

We continue to respond to fire safety concerns raised by the public and partners. A total of 147 higher priority fire safety concerns were dealt with this year and 66% of these were responded to within 24 hours.

We follow the government's Better Regulation Framework with an emphasis on a proportionate response and take action, up to and including prosecution, where required. In support of this we have appointed a new Prosecution Manager and strengthened our legal enforcement procedures.

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 (8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri), or



call our Service Control Centre on **03067 990019** out of office hours (weekdays 4.30pm-8:30am and 24 hours weekends).

For more information about business fire safety, please see our website www.dwfire.org.uk/business-fire-safety.

Summary

This work leads to:

- safer public buildings, keeping our communities safer and preventable fires
- higher levels of compliance in fire safety law, making workplaces and multi occupied residential premises safer
- reduced levels of unwanted fire alarms, particularly from commercial properties, through tighter procedures, call challenge and technical support to building owners

Moving forward our focus will be to:

- further improve the efficiency and ways of working with the support of partners and other regulators
- ensure alignment with the Fire Standards Board expectations and new competence framework
- evaluate the resource increases within the protection teams to ensure we are able to meet the increased demand and changes in legislation


999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us


14,668
 incidents attended


3,377
 fires attended
 (inc. 929 deliberate)


118
 rescues from fires


626
 accidental fires in
 the home attended


11.5%
 reduction in
 accidental dwelling
 fires

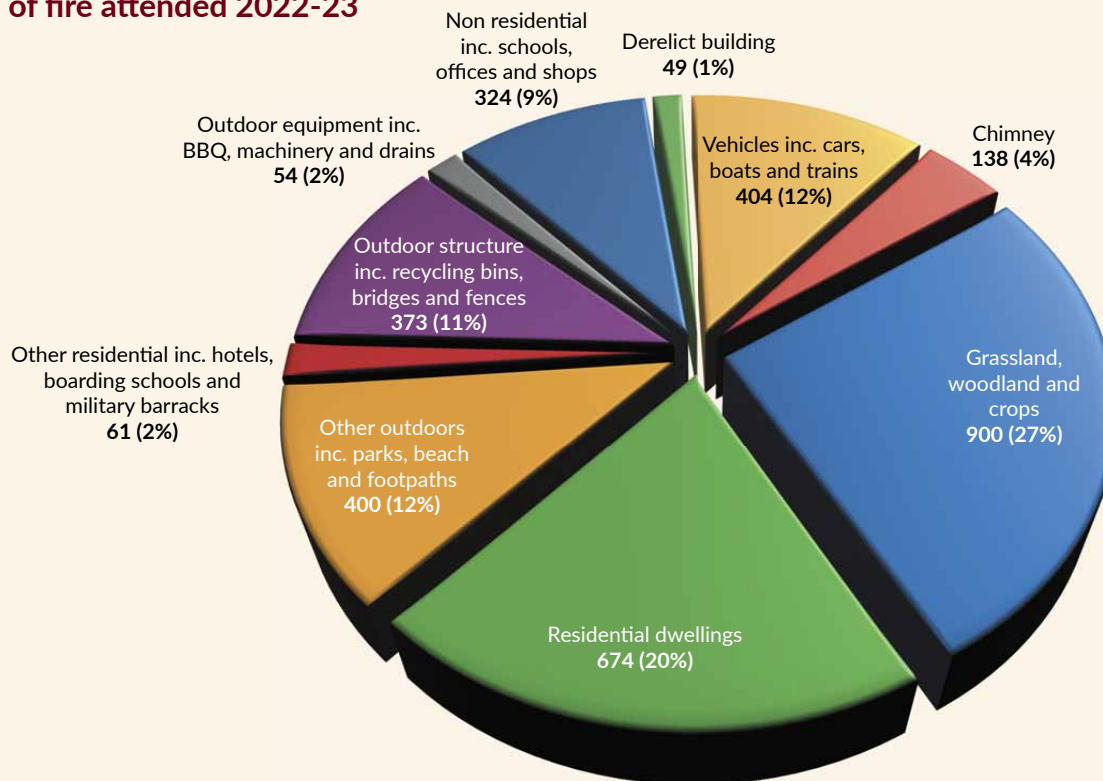

365
 rescues from road
 traffic collisions

Emergency response

Every emergency response begins with a request into Fire Control. Our highly skilled and professional operators answer emergency calls and mobilise resources until

the situation is resolved. It is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and this year answered 33,706 emergency calls.

Types of fire attended 2022-23



We work closely with other fire and rescue services and are part of a Networked Fire Services Partnership with Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service. This partnership not only helps save us money, but importantly offers good resilience, as we all use the same technology and can mobilise resources in each other's area during periods of high demand.

We prioritise our resources to saving lives. We will send two fire engines where there is an incident at a building where people sleep, such as private dwellings, care homes, hospitals, sheltered accommodation, student accommodation and hostels. From the time the call is received we aim for the first fire engine to arrive within 10 minutes and last year our average response time was 9 minutes and 13 seconds.

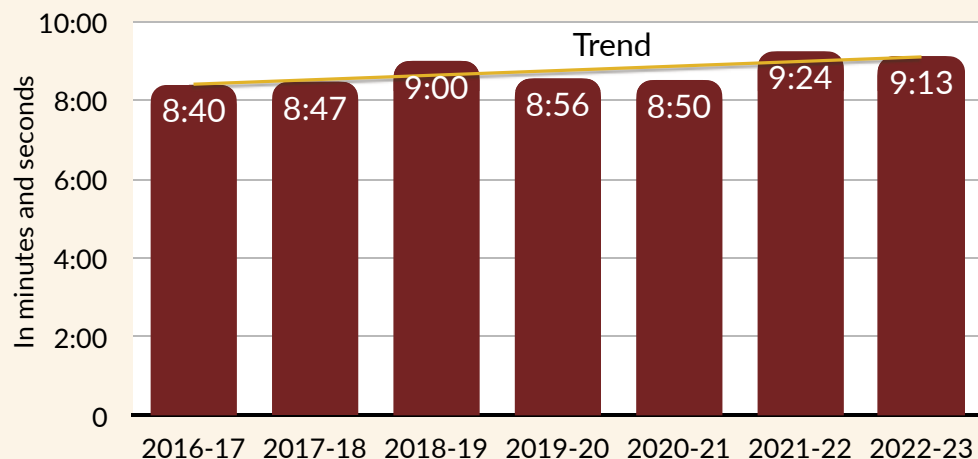
For other buildings (those not classified as a sleeping risk) our standard is 10 minutes for the first fire engine and our average response time was 10 minutes 12 seconds.

His Majesty's Coroner has confirmed three fire related deaths. There were a further three deaths in fire related incidents last year, His Majesty's Coroner has yet to determine if they were caused by fire.

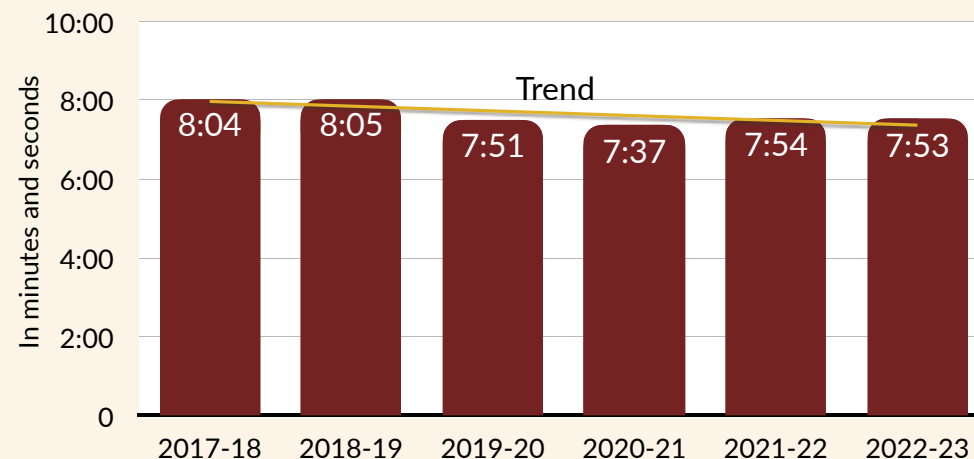


999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us

Average response time of first fire engine to sleeping risk properties



Average response time of first fire engine to sleeping risk properties within our 10 minute isochrone*

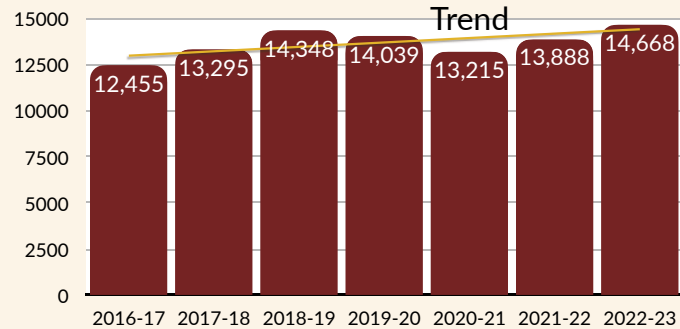


We work hard to identify those most vulnerable within our communities and focus on fire safety and prevention, especially for those that live in the most rural areas where our response to an incident can take longer. By working with the most vulnerable and effectively identifying risks within our communities, we aim to significantly reduce the risk of a fire occurring in the first place.

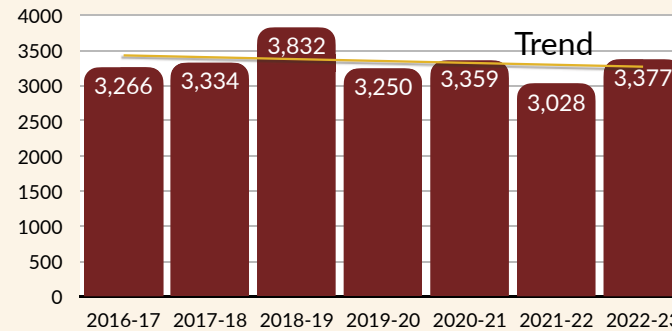
(* An isochrone is the area reached within a 10 minute travel time from our fire stations. Factors such as traffic or poor weather conditions may affect our ability to achieve a 10 minute response time within these areas)

Long term trends

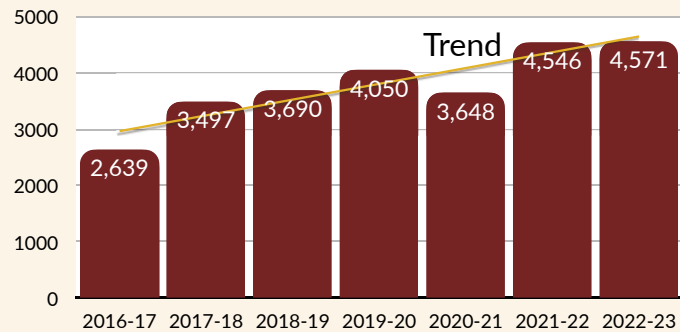
Number of incidents attended



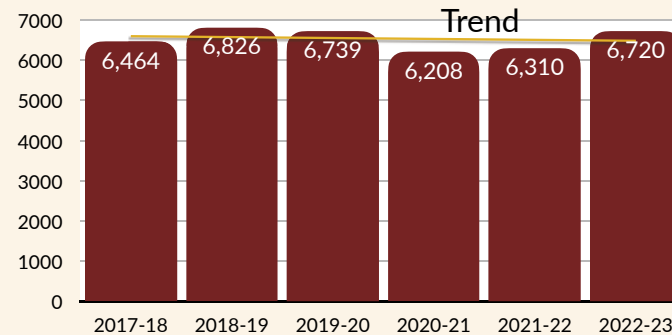
Number of fires attended



Number of non-fire related incidents



Number of incidents that turned out to be false alarms



Our attendances at non fire related incidents have increased this past year. Non fire related incidents are predominantly those incidents where we support our partner agencies. These include gaining access to properties, attending to people who have collapsed behind closed doors. We refer to this type of incident as a special service call.

The reduction of unwanted fire calls due to either faulty alarms or where the alarm is caused by another issue such as dust or burnt cooking remains a priority for us. We have focussed effort on this over the last five years which has resulted in the following savings:

Savings in time	£66,931
Cost avoided	£29,633

999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us

Incidents

We attend far more incident types than just tackling fires or rescuing people from road traffic collisions. We have specialist teams who can respond to all types of incidents. Our technical rescue teams are experts in rescuing people from height, water, confined spaces and incidents requiring animal rescue. These teams are trained to support our ambulance service colleagues when complicated rescues and extrication is required. We also have a number of specialist vehicles with additional capabilities to work at height, manage road traffic collisions involving large vehicles and to deal with large wildfires.

Canford Heath fire

On 23 April 2022, we received nearly 170 emergency calls for a large fire on Canford Heath in Poole. There were 16 fire crews on scene from across our Service.

The area of heathland affected was approximately 500m x 500m and it was well alight on arrival. The wind quickly moved the fire towards houses. Twenty

properties were evacuated as a precaution, with Ashdown Leisure Centre opened as a local evacuation centre for the people affected.



© Matt Hicks

Firefighters were praised by local residents, with two writing to the Chief Fire Officer saying "We would like to congratulate you and the wonderful firefighters, especially those of Red Watch from Poole, for the excellent way they dealt with the problem. It was a testament to all the training that you do to cope with a major incident. Without them, we would be homeless now."



© Dorset Police



© Matthew Pond

999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us

Wiltshire landfill site fire

Fire crews from across our Service were sent to a landfill site in Compton Bassett, near Calne on 27 April 2022, following multiple 999 calls reporting a large waste fire.

On arrival crews found 40,000 tonnes of low grade clinical waste and general household waste involved in fire, as well as an additional 2,000 tonnes of tyre bales. Working with on-site staff, crews were able to contain the fire, although it took several hours to safely bring the incident to a close. Our Fire Safety Team, in collaboration with the Environment Agency, visited the site to carry out a post incident audit, educating operators and business owners on how to reduce the likelihood of fires occurring again.



© Wiltshire Police

Heatwave and dry weather lead to increase in incidents

July and August 2022 were incredibly busy due to the continued hot and dry weather.

There was an increase of 182% in fires in the open over the same period the previous year, with 339 incidents attended compared to 120 in 2021. There was also a 30% increase in calls received to our Fire Control.

For more than a week, our Service committed resources to various parts of Salisbury Plain, where live firing had led to numerous fires. Due to these being mostly in the impact area, there were limits to what our crews could do safely, due to the risk of unexploded ordnance.

As the flames approached the 'safe' areas, firefighters worked alongside military personnel, with approximately 800 hectares of land affected. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation, which is responsible for Salisbury Plain's firing ranges, agreed to bring in helicopter support, as used at Wareham Forest in 2020. On just one day, we provided support appliances to enable the helicopter to drop 60,000 litres of water.

A large heath fire on the Studland peninsula started on the afternoon of 12 August 2022 and firefighters remained on the scene for three days. At the height of the incident, there were approximately 90 firefighters, drawn from across our Service area and neighbouring Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, tackling the blaze. The fire caused

significant damage to an area of almost five hectares of National Trust nature reserve and was most likely caused by misuse of a disposable BBQ and campfire, both of which are banned on the peninsula. The incident attracted a huge amount of local and national press interest with officers giving interviews on many national television and radio networks.



999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us

Exercises

Exercise Cardinal

During April and May 2022, Dorset Police held six, three hour, training exercises to test the multi-agency response to a potential terrorist attack. Each of the sessions were dynamic incidents, which tested the capabilities of the various commanders and operators across multiple emergency services, including police armed response. Officers and crews from across our Service took part, alongside colleagues from South Western Ambulance Service, specialist responders within each agency and a large team of volunteers.



Exercise held at Bournemouth Airport

A full scale live multi-agency emergency exercise was held at Bournemouth Airport on 18 January 2023. The aim was to test and assess the internal response of Bournemouth Airport and external emergency services, including Dorset Council, Dorset Police and South Western Ambulance Service, to a simulated aircraft incident. Crews from across our Service, worked alongside the airport's fire and rescue service.



999 RESPONSE: Being there when you need us

High-rise exercise held at Swindon's David Murray John building

A large-scale training exercise was held in March 2023, at the David Murray John building in Swindon. We simulated a fire in a tall building, where crews were faced with a challenging situation involving a severe fire in a flat, which caused smoke to spread to multiple floors.

The aim of the exercise was to test our operational procedures, including the evacuation of people from flats. The exercise, like real incidents, proved to be hard work but very beneficial as a learning event. Local crews were supported by staff from the British Red Cross, Fire Cadets, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, South Western Ambulance Service and Wiltshire Police.



Summary

This work leads to:

- continued development of techniques and equipment to ensure the best possible response to an incident
- better understanding of the communities we serve
- a reduction in 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
- continued improvements in collaborative working with our partners and neighbouring fire and rescue services

Moving forward our focus will be to:

- continue to review our support vehicle fleet to ensure our resources are placed in the best possible locations, considerate of current and future risk
- review our emergency response arrangements and resourcing across our area to meet changing community risks, delivering value for money with a sustainable balanced budget
- optimise the availability of our on-call appliances through recruitment, retention and demand analysis
- further develop our community mapping resources and integrate this into our station risk profiles, providing the most up to date information to our teams to effectively target our community activities

£ GOVERNANCE: Making every penny count



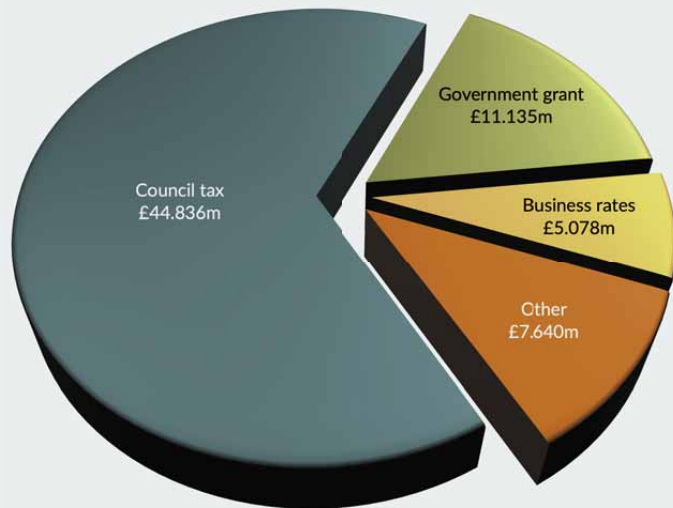
Good governance, ensuring value for money and strong financial management, is at the heart of everything we do. This is supported by achieving positive assurance from both our internal and external auditors, as well inspections from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

Our net budget for 2022-23 was just over £61m, funded by a combination of council tax and government grants, along with a share of local business rates. Seventy five percent of our funding comes from council tax and for 2022-23 our Band D precept was £79.43. This compares to a national average of £82.65.

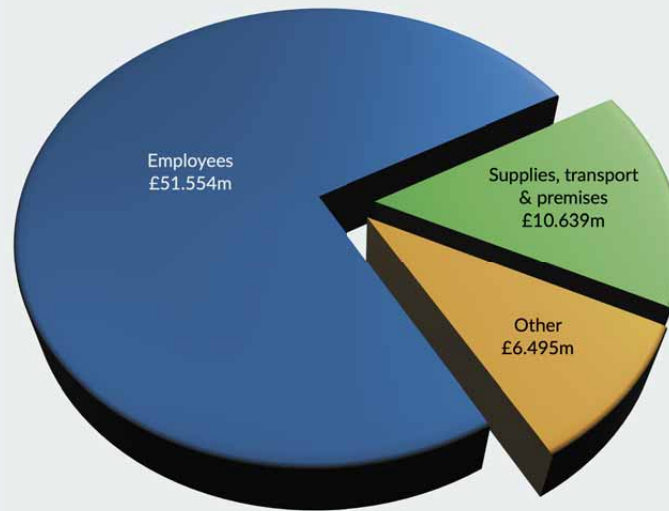
We have an excellent track record of making savings and, over the past seven years, we have saved more than £6.6m per year with cumulative savings surpassing £44m.

Our medium-term financial planning shows that we still have considerable financial challenges ahead if our share of central funding, council tax and business rates does not improve. We have a forecast budget gap of £0.7m from April 2024 rising to £1.5m from April 2027. Given the uncertain economic outlook, we anticipate that these forecasted deficits could rise further. This is due to factors such as continuing higher wage demands, the increased cost of all goods and services and government spending priorities. Through future planning and financial management we are working hard to deal with these financial challenges

Funding 2022-23



Spending 2022-23



so that we can set longer term sustainable budgets and deliver the priorities in our Community Safety Plan.


Our capital investment programme for 2022-23 totalled £4.6m. This included planned spending of £1m on maintaining our fire stations and other key buildings, £2.4m

on replacement vehicles and operational equipment, and £1.2m on information and communication technology equipment and information systems.

Our cost per firefighter figures continue to show that we offer good value for money, with costs per

1,000 population of £22.73, compared to a national average of £25.22.

More information about our financial planning and performance, including our approach to efficiency and value for money, is available through our website within the 'What we spend' section.

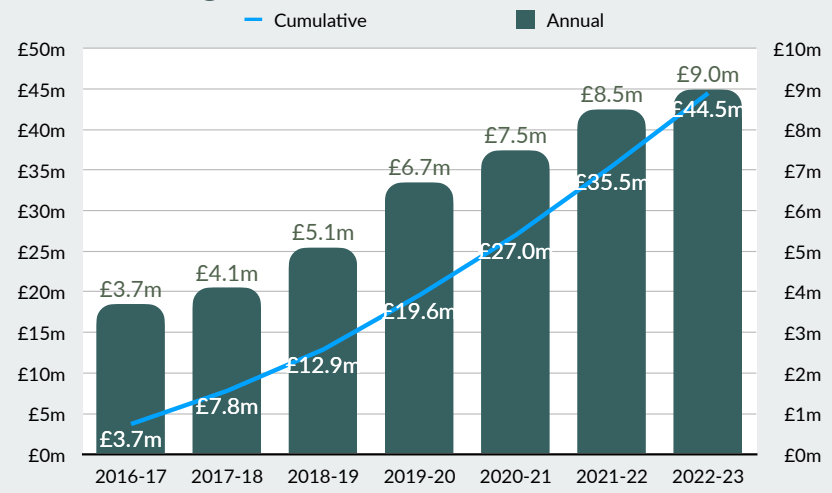


below average Band D council tax precept (£79.43 compared to £82.65 national average)

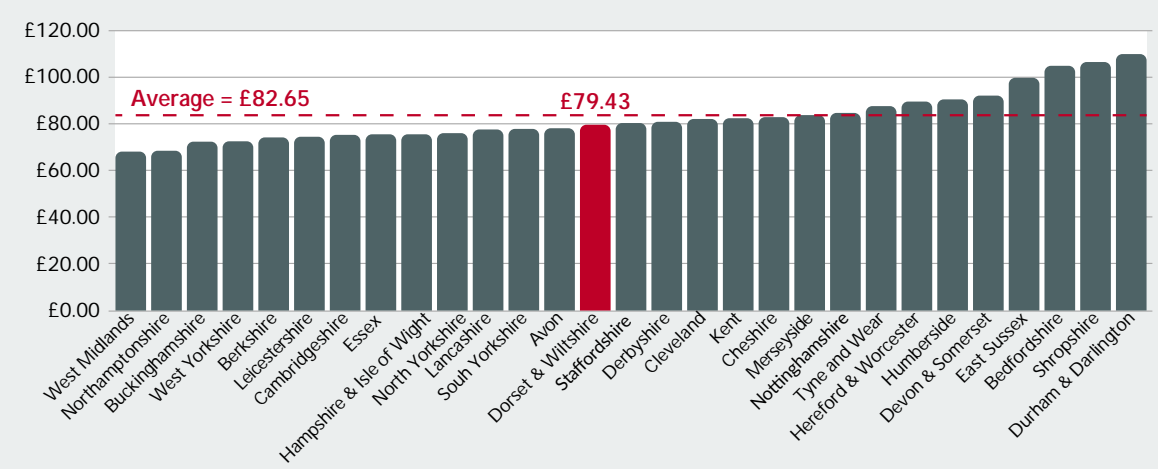


below average firefighter costs (£22.73 compared to £25.22 national average)

Service savings



Band D Council Tax charges for 2022-23





CYBER
ESSENTIALS

bsi.



Cyber threats and attacks remain a real risk globally to organisations. We are pleased to be re-accredited to the Cyber Essentials standard, which was confirmed in February 2023. We are only one of four fire and rescue services in England and Wales to have achieved this. Having this standard means that we continue to have appropriate arrangements in place to help us guard against a wide range of potential cyber threats and attacks.

We continue to hold accreditation for the International Standard 45001 in occupational health and safety, where our Service is audited by the British Standards Institution twice yearly, to ensure continued compliance. We also align our asset management practices to the International Asset Management System Standard 55001 and are working hard to gain full accreditation in 2023-24.

During February, March and April 2022, we were inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. This was our Service's second full inspection. The results of this inspection were published in January 2023, where our Service maintained its 'Good' ratings in the inspectorate's Effectiveness and People pillars and achieved an 'Outstanding' rating in the Efficiency pillar.

Summary

This work leads to:

- ensuring we are making the best use of our financial and physical resources and can demonstrate value for money in all that we do
- making our budget work even harder and smarter
- maintaining robust governance arrangements to ensure that we deliver an efficient and effective service
- good procurement and contract management, helping us to plan ahead and save money

Moving forward our focus will be to:

- maintain our focus on ongoing levels of efficiencies and productivity
- continue our positive assurance through audit and external accreditations, and secure the accreditation to ISO 55001 for asset management
- continue to strengthen our value for money tool kit
- further progress our environmental programme by continuing to build a sustainable service for the future

PEOPLE: Supporting and developing our people

Developing our people

We support the development, performance and wellbeing of our people, whilst creating an inclusive workplace. The safety and competence of our workforce is one of our priorities. Our staff are well trained so they are able to deal with the risks they may encounter when carrying out their role. We develop our incident commanders and have introduced new technology to support them. For example, by providing body worn cameras, our incident commanders can submit footage of real incidents for assessment of competence. The use of these cameras will also allow remote support at incidents, moving forward.

As part of our workforce development, we continue to provide extensive leadership and management training, which is achieved through our Leadership Development Programme as well as our Leaders Forum. We have a range of courses to enhance the skills of our leaders, so that they can drive cultural



change and enable all our staff to achieve their best. We also provide coaching and mentoring support, alongside our Learning Hub, which enables all staff to access a wide range of information to support personal and professional development.

In the last year we have seen an 18.2% increase in staff enlisted on an apprenticeship scheme. We offer apprenticeships in a wide range of areas across our Service including



Emergency Contact Handler (Control Firefighter), Facilities Management, Finance, Human Resources, Leadership Development as well as for Operational Firefighters.

To celebrate the success of our people and their work, our annual awards ceremony includes long service and good conduct medals, as well as commendations and awards, recognising outstanding contributions to our Service.



20%
reduction in
respiratory absence
after Covid



long term
absence trend
increasing



increased funding
to support mental
health

Staff wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of our employees is vital to the success of our Service and considerable work is underway to support this. We have a dedicated health and wellbeing team to ensure that managers

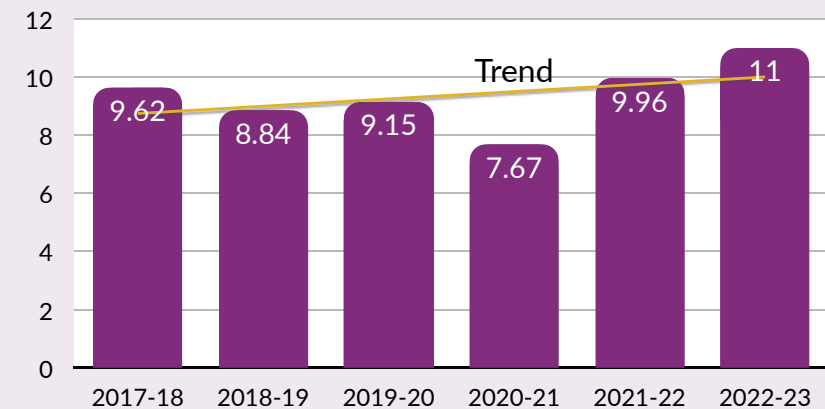
are confident and well equipped to better support and manage their teams. We also offer a range of physical, emotional and mental wellbeing services. To support our operational staff to maintain fitness, all

of our stations have well equipped gyms and are supported by dedicated health and fitness advisers, along with a network of station based physical training instructors. We also offer physiotherapy treatment to all staff with musculoskeletal issues to

support their recovery. We also take part in seminars on wellbeing issues, such as the menopause, which provide an opportunity for all of our staff to better understand the potential issues that woman can face when going through the menopause.



Average number of shifts lost to sickness



PEOPLE: Supporting and developing our people

Sickness absence has increased since last year to an average of 11.0 shifts lost per person per year compared to 9.1 shifts lost for the same period last year. The main causes of sickness absence are due to musculoskeletal issues and mental health and in support of this a range of health and wellbeing support mechanisms are available to all staff. We have further enhanced our mental health support arrangements through the provision of additional counselling and promoting the fantastic support facilities provided by the Fire Fighters Charity, which are available to all staff.

Our Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) arrangements enable us to support our employees when they have attended traumatic incidents. Furthermore, our stress management arrangements include supporting information for managers, so they have the tools and confidence to support individuals in the workplace.

Although absence has increased overall, there has been a 20% reduction in respiratory absence, due to a reduction in pandemic related sickness.



Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do, and we are committed to making a real difference to the lives of people in Dorset and Wiltshire.

Public trust and confidence in our fire and rescue service relies on us demonstrating ethical behaviours. Performance at work is not just about what we do or what we know, it is about how we do things. Our Code of Ethics sets out our five ethical principles which helps us to continuously improve our organisational culture, workforce diversity and assists us in supporting our communities.

We are continuing to embed our Code of Ethics and are working hard to provide our services in an inclusive way. One way we do this is by learning from the communities we serve. These engagement activities are vital to help us understand their needs. Over the past year we have held several events with guest speakers, providing an opportunity to learn more about each other. This helps to build and enhance community relationships and engagement.



PEOPLE: Supporting and developing our people

The diversity of our workforce remains a priority and we aspire to create a workforce that is more diverse. To ensure that everyone in our workforce feels supported we have several staff networks, these are:

- FirePride,
- Minority Ethnicity,
- Neurodiversity,
- Operational Women's, and
- Women's Support Networks.

We have also undertaken an internal culture review and an independent review into the culture of our Service. The recommendations arising from these reviews, as well as the

recommendations contained within the national His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services spotlight report into values and culture in fire and rescue services, will form an action plan that we are committed to delivering to enhance our workplace culture.

We also work closely with our staff networks and trade unions to learn from their experiences and listen to their suggestions as to how we can further improve our cultural development and create a more inclusive environment.

To attract, recruit and retain an inclusive workforce we use positive action activities. These include 'have a go days' and a buddying scheme to ensure



potential applicants have a good understanding of the work we do, as well as information and advice in the lead up to our recruitment processes. We also provide a lot of information on our website including videos of staff who share their experience of working for our Service, as well as handy recruitment tips for anyone considering a career in the fire and rescue service.

If any community groups would like to get involved with our community engagement events, please contact us via positiveaction@dwfire.org.uk. For more information, including our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and annual Workforce Equality Report, please visit our website www.dwfire.org.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion.

Summary

This work leads to:

- investing in the leadership 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, with low sickness absence
- recruiting and retaining on-call firefighters in new ways
- high levels of staff engagement, morale and a committed approach to increase the diversity of our workforce

Moving forward our focus will be to:

- evaluate how well our Service has embedded the Code of Ethics so we can attract, recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve
- review our job evaluation process and corporate pay structure, to ensure it supports our attraction, succession and retention plans
- ensure our health and wellbeing arrangements continue to support our staff
- implement actions arising out of cultural reviews and national reports

COULD YOU BE AN ON-CALL FIREFIGHTER?

Around two thirds of our firefighters work on an on-call basis. They are hugely important to both our Service and the communities that they serve. The majority of our 50 stations are crewed only by on-call firefighters. At many of our other stations on-call firefighters work alongside their wholetime colleagues.

On-call firefighters are paid professionals, who do the same work as their wholetime colleagues. Unlike wholetime firefighters, they are not always at the fire station but have other jobs and commitments, responding to emergencies only when alerted.

On-call firefighters are usually contracted for between 40 and 120 hours of cover per week, but this can vary. Between them, each fire station team will provide cover for weekdays, evenings, nights and weekends.

More information about becoming an on-call firefighter can be found on our website www.dwfire.org.uk/on-call-firefighters.



STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE

Performance against corporate targets

Target	Performance
We will reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires, compared to the average attended during the last five years.	11.5% reduction
We will reduce the number of deliberate fires, compared to the average attended during the last five years.	1.0% reduction
We will reduce the number of road traffic collisions compared to the average attended during the last five years.	10.4% increase
We will audit 100% of all buildings that fall within each year of our risk based inspection programme.	103.4% audited
We will achieve a reduction in our attendance at unwanted automatic fire alarms, compared to the average attended during the last five years.	3.0% increase
We will achieve a 10 minute response time for the first appliance in attendance at confirmed fires in sleeping risk premises. This includes call handling, turnout and travel time.	9 minutes and 13 seconds
We will achieve a reduction in the average sickness levels, compared to the average during the last five years.	21.6% increase
We will improve the diversity of our workforce as a whole, compared to the last five years.	4.7% increase

Key ■ Target achieved

■ Working towards target

■ Target not achieved

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