



**AVON**  
FIRE & RESCUE

[www.avonfire.gov.uk](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk)



# Measuring how we are doing

Performance Report 2020/21



**Mick Crennell**  
MBA DMS GFireE

## Introduction from the Chief

Welcome to our Performance Report for 2020/21. As with the whole of the country and the wider world, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) with a challenging year. The pandemic has no doubt brought about societal change which has had an impact on the number and nature of incidents we have attended but it has also given us the opportunity to widen the work we do in serving our community.

Whilst it is impossible to gauge the extent of the impact of the pandemic, we are pleased to report that we have met almost all of our performance targets. Incident numbers have reduced and we have been successful in reducing sickness amongst our staff. We have also made a great start in reducing our carbon emissions, working towards our target of Net Zero carbon by 2030.

This report also informs you about the other work that we do where we don't set targets; this work is becoming an increasingly important part of our duties. It also contains information about the additional work we have undertaken to assist in the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also publish a Service Plan that sets the strategic direction for the Service, setting out what we will do to ensure we deliver a high-quality, best value fire and rescue service through our strategic priorities of Making our communities safer and Making our Service stronger. The Service Plan is available on our website [www.avonfire.gov.uk](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk).


The poster overleaf is displayed at our HQ, in our offices as well as at our fire stations and gives a summary of the great work we have done. I hope that you will find our performance report useful in keeping you informed about the service we provide.

*Mick Crennell*

IN 2020/21, DESPITE THE PANDEMIC, AVON FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

HANDLED **17,894** **EMERGENCY** CALLS 

**RESPONDED TO**  **9,049** **INCIDENTS**

WAS CALLED TO  
**550**  
FIRES IN THE HOME 

RESCUED  
**420** 

PEOPLE FROM  
**FIRE**  **AND OTHER**  
EMERGENCIES

**FITTED 3,480**  
**SMOKE ALARMS** 

CARRIED OUT  
**3,027** 

FIRE SAFETY  
**VISITS**  
IN THE HOME

ENGAGED WITH  
**2,553**  
BUSINESSES 

REDUCED OUR  
CARBON EMISSIONS BY  
**14%**



ATTENDED  **392** **VEHICLE FIRES**

TO PROVIDE  
**ADVICE**

COVERED OVER  
**700** 

SHIFTS  
**DRIVING**  
AMBULANCES

COVERED IN EXCESS OF  
**11,000 HRS**   
AT MASS VACCINATION CENTRES

WAS CALLED TO  
**392** **ROAD TRAFFIC**  
**COLLISIONS** 

RESPONDED TO OVER  
**2700**  **AMBULANCE 999 CALLS**

WE ARE HERE  **24 HOURS** | **SEVEN DAYS**  **365 DAYS**  
**TO HELP** **A DAY** | **A WEEK** **A YEAR**

ALL FOR ONLY  **10p** **A DAY** FOR EACH  **PERSON** **IN** **AVON**

## Measuring interventions and outcomes

AF&RS measure performance using a number of Local Performance Indicators (LPis). We have designed these indicators to measure how effective we are at meeting our key objectives of Preventing, Protecting, Responding and building Resilience.

## Scorecard

For most indicators we set a target and then we measure our performance against that target. We produce a Scorecard which records our performance against each target and we also compare our performance against a number of other Fire & Rescue Services known as our 'Family Group'.

For some indicators the numbers are too low to set a meaningful target however we still monitor our progress. All targets within the 2020/21 Scorecard are reported to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee.

## [View The Scorecard](#) >

A summary of performance against each target on the Scorecard is included at the end of this report.

## Customer surveys

Due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year we limited sending customer surveys to a randomly selected group of people who have received a home fire safety visit. The survey forms are returned directly to an independent research company. Outcomes from their findings are contained in this report.

Next year we will reintroduce customer surveys for people who we have responded to in an emergency.

## How are we doing?

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic AF&RS continues to make excellent progress in reducing risk in our community by reducing the number and impact of incidents attended. We have met the reduction targets for all of our incident indicators and have improved on last year's results. Each incident that is prevented represents a reduction of risk in our community.

We are committed to doing all that we can to make our community safer and our Service stronger. We continue to analyse our data to show us what additional interventions and initiatives we can take.

## Checking our progress

Our website [www.avonfire.gov.uk](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk) has monthly and annual data extracts of all the incidents we attend. These are in a format that allows anyone to download and analyse our data.

**These documents are available at**  
**[www.avonfire.gov.uk](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk)**

## Reference url

**Scorecard visit:** <https://www.avonfire.gov.uk/documents/category/191-performance-review-and-scrutiny-committee?download=1904:for-publication-prsc-papers-29-01-21>

## Activity

Overall we received 17,894 calls for emergency assistance compared to 20,009 last year and attended 9,049 compared to 12,024 in 2019/20. This is a reduction of 11% for emergency calls and 25% for attended calls.

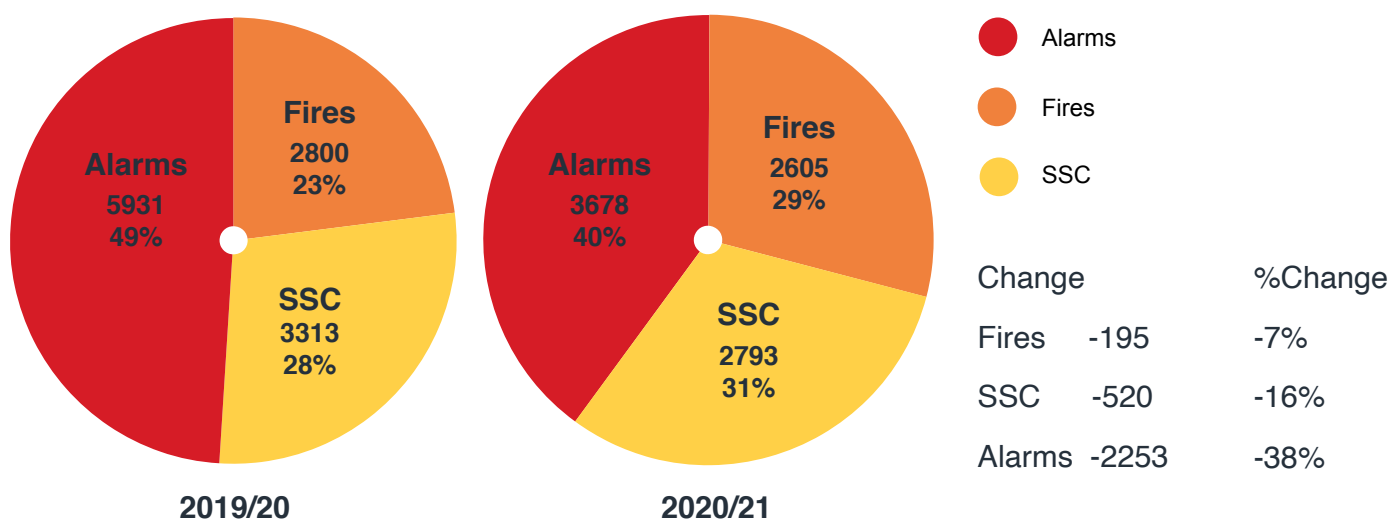
Where we don't attend it is either because questioning by our Control team found that there was no emergency to attend, or we received further information that there was no emergency and turned back before we arrived at the incident. We always try to reduce risk by ensuring that we only send appliances where there is an indication that there may be an emergency. If there is any doubt we will always send an appliance.

### Attended Incidents

Incidents that we attend are categorised in to three main types:

- **Fires** – where there is an emergency caused by fire ignition
- **Special Service Calls (SSC)** – any other emergency response
- **Alarms** – any incident where upon attendance no additional risk was found.

The chart below shows the % of the total incidents we attended broken down into these three categories:



The "SSC" terminology dates from when fire services were primarily involved in attending fires and attending anything other than this was considered a special event. These days we attend more SSCs than fires and we are working towards updating the terminology.

## Fires

We have a statutory duty to attend all fires and are the lead agency for reducing risk in our community by preventing fires. We set targets for reducing the number of fires and our progress is set out in the Progress against targets section below.

## SSCs

SSCs cover a wide range of activities from non-fire road traffic collisions to assisting the ambulance service with gaining entry to people who need medical attention.

We don't set reduction targets for SSCs as, unlike with fires, we only attend where there is a need for the fire service to attend. For example in Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) we only attend if there is a role we can play in dealing with the emergency.

In particular, the number of RTCs attended decreased by 31% compared to last year, with large reductions in the months of the first lockdown.



Rescues from SSCs

**391**



Injuries from SSCs

**423**

Deaths arising from SSCs

**51**

## Most common Special Service Requests

Effecting entry/exit



**699**

Assist other agencies



**359**



Lift release

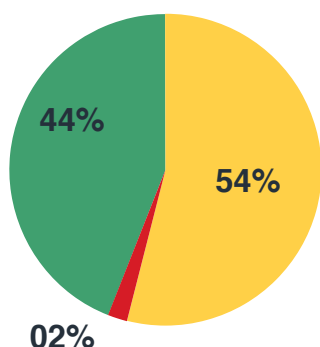
**98**

### False Alarms

False Alarms fall into three main categories:

- **Due to apparatus** – where an alarm system has alerted us. We set targets to reduce the number of these false alarms in Business Premises
- **Malicious alarms** – where there was no risk and we were alerted with malicious intent
- **Good Intent alarms** – where there was no risk and we alerted with good intentions

The 3,678 false alarms we received are broken down into these categories as follows:



### Alarm Categories

The number of good intent alarms increased by 6% compared to the year before, mainly due to an increase in controlled burning and bonfire incidents. Further information about alarms due to apparatus and malicious alarms is included in the Progress against targets section below.

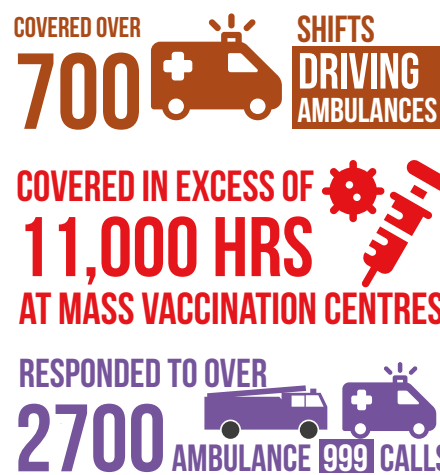


### COVID-19 pandemic

We are proud of the contribution we have made to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020/21 we:

- Covered over 700 shifts for South West Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST) driving ambulances
- Crewed three SWAST ambulances 24/7
- Responded to 2,700 emergency calls on behalf of SWAST
- Provided staff as vaccinators at the NHS mass vaccination centres
- Supported the local surge testing response to outbreaks of concern
- Provided over 11,000 hours of marshalling assistance at NHS mass vaccination centres



## Fires

We measure fires in a number of different ways dependent on the type of property involved and whether the cause of the fire is accidental or deliberate. In broad terms we describe a fire as primary if it affected a non-derelict property and secondary for other fires. An accidental fire is where it is caused by accident or carelessness (not thought to be deliberate).

We have four main fire types that we measure our progress against and we set targets for reducing incidents of these fire types. The fewer incidents that we attend the more successful we have been in reducing risk in our community.

### Accidental dwelling fires

We recorded 462 accidental dwelling fires in 2020/21 compared to 505 last year. We record a wide variety of information about each incident including what our investigations tell us were the causes and the behaviours that led to the fire happening. For example most incidents happen at mealtimes (24% between 17:00 and 19:59) and involve cooking (50%), often caused by the occupants being distracted (14%).

We also measure the number of incidents where, though we have attended, there was no firefighting required. This means that though there was a fire, the alarm systems and safety education we have put in place minimised the impact of the fire. In 2020/21 this was the case for 43.9% of incidents and it is a good measure of our success in protecting our communities against fire.

### Deliberate primary fires

Deliberate primary fires cover a wide range of property types, from fires in our prisons to fires in sheds. In 2020/21 we attended 163 deliberate primary fires against a target of 228.

Each deliberate fire is reported to the police and our team of fire investigators will attend major incidents, often with our police Crime Scene Investigator colleagues, to help ensure that where a crime has been committed the offenders are brought to justice.

We also run a Firesetters scheme to work with young people who have an interest in fire which is putting themselves, their family, friends and homes at risk.

### Deliberate vehicle fires

In 2020/21 we attended 227 deliberate vehicle fires against a target of 376. In the last 12 years the number of deliberate vehicle fires has reduced by 63% (226 compared to 618).

### Deliberate secondary fires

In 2020/21 we attended 816 deliberate secondary fires against a target of 1,005.

22% of these fires are caused by people setting light to loose refuse and 12% are fires in small bins.



**DELIBERATE  
VEHICLE  
FIRES**

**A DECREASE OF**

**63%**

**OVER 12 YEARS**

**816**

**DELIBERATE  
SECONDARY  
FIRES AGAINST  
AGAINST OUR**



**TARGET  
1005**



# Alarms

## Fire alarms in non-dwellings

In March 2020 we introduced our new policy regarding attendance at alarms in commercial buildings where there is no sleeping risk and no confirmation of fire. In 2020/21 we attended 546 fire alarms in non-dwellings, meeting our target of 2,075. These are incidents where the fire alarm has activated and upon attendance we have found that there was no fire or other risk.

This change has brought us more in line with other UK Fire & Rescue Services and has reduced our attendance by 1,508 incidents or approximately 2,262 hours of fire appliance time. This change has reduced risk in our community by helping to ensure more fire appliances are available for emergencies and reducing the number of “blue light” journeys we make.

About a third of these alarms are caused by human error, mainly due to burning food or accidentally setting off the alarm, both of which are preventable.

## Malicious alarms

Each malicious alarm that we attend also increases risk in our community. We received 89 malicious alarms in 2020/21 compared to 194 last year, a reduction of 105.

Malicious alarms can be anything from deliberately breaking a fire call point to phoning 999 about non-existent emergencies. We may take action against such callers and, for frequent callers, will report the abuse to their mobile phone company; in extreme circumstances we will seek to prosecute. We also share information with other emergencies services about people who make malicious alarm calls.

We do what we can to “call challenge” malicious alarms using information we have about where the call is being made in relation to the stated location and questioning the caller if there is doubt about the validity of the call. In 2020/21, through call challenging, we did not attend 11 malicious alarms which is 12% of the total, exceeding our target of 5%.

## Deaths Injuries and Escapes

Each fire fatality is a tragic event and we will continue to do what we can to reduce the numbers of people dying due to fire. We do not set a target for deaths and injuries from fire as thankfully the numbers are too low for a target to be meaningful. We do however monitor each incident to learn what we can and to try and ensure such a tragedy does not occur again.

In 2020/21 we attended five fatalities in fires; two of these fires were accidental, two were deliberate and one was unknown. All five occurred in dwellings.

We also attended 43 injuries in fires that required hospital treatment, 35 of these were accidental, five were deliberate and one unknown. 37 were in buildings and four in vehicles.

**ATTENDED**

**546**

**FIRE ALARMS**



**IN NON-DWELLINGS**

**MEETING OUR TARGET OF**

**2075**

**89 MALICIOUS ALARMS**



**DECREASE OF**

**105**

**FROM YEAR THE PREVIOUS**

## Responding and Call Handling

### Response

This year is the first year of reporting our response using our new standards agreed in our Service Plan 2019-22. This means we measure our response using a more risk based approach, ensuring that we respond quickest to incidents with the most risk. For each of our three response categories we set a target based upon the average time from when we alert our appliances to when they arrive on scene.

For emergency critical responses (where there is a known life risk or involving a property) our target is an average of 8:00 minutes and on average we took 7:16 minutes.

For emergency non-critical responses our target is an average of 12:00 minutes and on average we took 7:31 minutes.

For non-emergency attended calls our target is an average of 60 minutes and on average we took 7:45 minutes.

Where we have not met our response standards it is usually because the nearest fire appliances were committed to dealing with other incidents.

Since the introduction of our new response standards, we have published an updated Service Plan 2021-24.

[View the Service Plan 2021-24](#) ➤



### Call handling

We do not set targets for the number of calls that we receive or the number that we attend. We continue to attend all reported incidents where there is any concern that there may be a risk to people or property.

We do however monitor both the number of calls and the number attended to help ensure that we are resourced effectively to meet local demand and risk.

In 2020/21 we received 17,894 emergency calls, a decrease of 11% from the previous year. We attended, under emergency conditions, 9,049 of these calls; a decrease of 25% on the previous year.

Our Control team met their target of answering at least 94% of 999 calls within seven seconds. In 2020/21 96.2% were answered within seven seconds (18,039 of 18,764).

#### Reference url

Service Plan 2021-24 visit: <https://www.avonfire.gov.uk/documents/category/216-service-plan?download=1921:service-plan-2021-2024-pdf-5kb>

# Safety in the community

## Community Safety

We ensure that we proactively target people in our community that are at greatest risk of fire. This helps to ensure that we are making the best use of our resources.

In 2020/21 we delivered 3,027 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) where we visited people in their home to deliver safety advice and, if needed, install smoke alarms. The number of visits was considerably down on the previous year, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We adopted a risk based approach, only conducting a HFSV where the fire safety benefit to the household outweighed the COVID-19 exposure risk in attending the home.

Next year we are hoping that COVID-19 restrictions will have eased and we are anticipating completing over 7,000 HFSVs.

If you are aware of any vulnerable people who may benefit from a visit please phone us on 0117 926 2061 or text 'visit' to 07507 319694 or visit our website at [www.avonfire.gov.uk](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk).

We also visited 29 schools to deliver a variety of interventions to keep children safe. Finally we attended or hosted 31 events to deliver community safety advice. Again the numbers were greatly impacted by the pandemic.

## Health and Safety

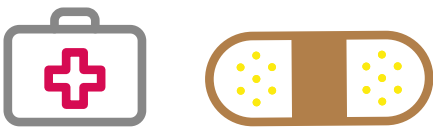
The safety of our workforce is one of our key priorities. We work hard to ensure that our people have the equipment and training needed to ensure they can do their jobs safely. We have two key targets for health and safety, both in areas where we are seeking to improve.

We met our target to reduce the number of vehicle incidents where we had low speed contact, often in congested streets or in small spaces. These low speed contacts were with something fixed or stationary and we were at fault. 17 reported incidents were reported which was lower than the number targeted for (24).

We also measure the number of incidents that have resulted in lost time for our people. In 2020/21 we recorded 21 incidents against a target of 17.

## Our Staff and improvements

**58.2%**  
OF STAFF HAD NO  
SICKNESS



SHORT TERM SICKNESS  
**REDUCED**

**44%**

### People

We measure sickness by dividing the number of days/shifts lost by the number of staff we have. We use the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) figure meaning that if someone works half hours we count them as half an FTE member of staff.

On our key measure of shifts/days lost per FTE member of staff we made good progress from 2004 to 2013 but from 2013 to 2019 we saw increases in lost days/shifts.

In 2019/20 we developed a health, wellbeing and welfare action plan. This is a three year strategy that focusses on improving how we prevent and protect our staff from sickness and respond effectively and compassionately when it occurs. Alongside this plan we have incremental improvement targets which aim to reduce the number of days/shifts lost per FTE for all staff to 8.11 by the end of the three years to match or to be better than the average for all UK Fire & Rescue Services.

The incremental target for year 2020/21 was 9.08 and are pleased to report that we ended the year on target with a loss of 8.28 days/shifts per FTE for all staff.

In line with most businesses and organisations across the country our sickness absences were no doubt impacted by the pandemic. As reported by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the UK sickness absence rate in 2020 was the lowest recorded level since the ONS began collecting consistent data in 1995. In particular our short term sickness absences (periods of less than 28 days) was at record low levels.

We lost a further 649.5 days/shifts related to COVID-19 (suspected, confirmed or vaccine reaction). If these were included our sickness figure would be 9.27 days/shifts lost per FTE compared to our reported 8.28. We do not include this sickness in our normal sickness reporting as it is an exceptional event that would otherwise skew our data for tracking and benchmarking purposes.

In 2020/21 58.2% (396 of our people) had no sickness days/shifts, up from 34.1% last year.

## Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

In 2017, the role of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) was widened to include inspection of fire and rescue services in England. The results of our first 'all-service' inspection were published in December 2018 and resulted in a comprehensive 102-point action plan to address three causes of concern (with six associated recommendations) and 15 areas for improvement.

Despite the impact of COVID-19 during the year, continued progress was made against our HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan during 2020/21 with a further nine actions being signed off as 'complete'. By 31 March 2021, 80% of the action plan had been completed with monthly updates provided to the Service Leadership Team and scrutiny provided by Elected Members at each meeting of the Fire Authority's Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee.

In August 2020 the Home Secretary also commissioned HMICFRS to undertake a COVID-19 inspection of all English fire and rescue services. She asked the Inspectorate to consider what worked well and what was learnt during the pandemic, how the fire sector responded, how the problems we faced were tackled and what changes were likely to emerge. Our results from this thematic review were published on 22 January 2021 and were extremely positive, with inspectors finding that the extraordinary efforts of all staff "... meant the people of Avon were better supported through the pandemic." Our report also helpfully highlighted two areas of focus for continuous improvement: as well as adopting the new and innovative ways of working during the pandemic into future 'business as usual', HMICFRS also recommended a continued focus on improvements to our IT systems. This work is already being addressed as part of our COVID-19 recovery plan and current three-year Transformation Programme.

Towards the end of 2020/21 we also undertook significant preparation for our next full inspection which took place in May/June 2021. It is expected that HMICFRS will issue their findings in a report during the winter 2021.

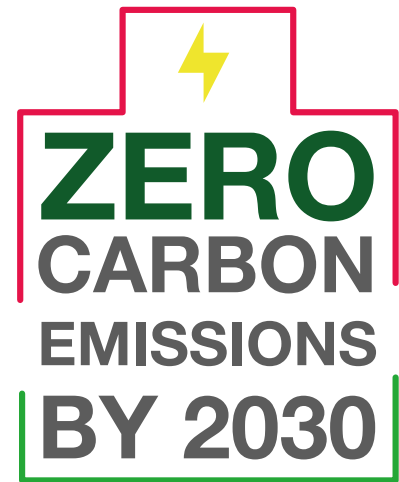
The results of all our formal HMICFRS inspection activity are available online at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/avon/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/avon/)

## Resources and Value for Money

### Environmental

We are proud of the work that we are doing to use resources more efficiently and to play our part in addressing environmental issues. In 2020 we set an overarching environmental target to reduce net carbon emission to zero by 2030. Over the 10 years of the target we will seek to reduce our emissions by 10% per year.

In this first year we met our 10% target, reducing carbon emission by 14%.



### Compliments and complaints

AF&RS monitors the compliments and complaints that are received and uses this information to improve the service we provide. In 2020/21 we received 27 complaints however, upon investigation, seven did not relate to the service we provide and we found a further 10 where we were not at fault. Of the remaining 10 where we were at fault, the subjects were:

- Driving 2
- Internal administration 4
- Operational response 2
- Community safety 2

The numbers are too small to identify any common patterns or causes.

In 2020/21 we also recorded 24 compliments about our service. We ensure that all compliments are passed on to the teams involved and, where particular praise is given, we publicise this to all of our staff. We would like to thank the community for their support.



## A summary of performance

| Indicator | Target | Actual |
|-----------|--------|--------|
|-----------|--------|--------|

| Fires  |                |       |
|--|----------------|-------|
| Accidental dwelling fire   | 497            | 461   |
| Deliberate primary fire (excluding vehicle)                              | 228            | 163   |
| Deliberate vehicle fire  | 376            | 227   |
| Deliberate secondary fire  | 1005           | 811   |
| % of accidental fires in dwellings where no firefighting action required | Not applicable | 43.9% |
| Deaths arising from primary fires  | Not applicable | 5     |
| Injuries arising from primary fires                                      | Not applicable | 43    |

| Alarms  |                |     |
|---|----------------|-----|
| Malicious false alarms  | Not applicable | 89  |
| % of calls to malicious false alarms not attended                             | 5%             | 12% |
| Alarms caused by automatic fire detection attended (Non- Domestic Properties) | 2075           | 546 |
| % of fires attended in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted              | Not applicable | 34% |

| Response and call handling                         |                |       |
|--|----------------|-------|
| Emergency critical response (average)              | 8:00mins       | 07:16 |
| Emergency non-critical response (average)          | 12:00mins      | 07:31 |
| Non-emergency attended calls (average)             | 60mins         | 07:45 |
| Calls for assistance answered within seven seconds | 94%            | 96.2% |
| Number of 999 calls received                       | Not applicable | 17894 |
| Number of incidents attended as emergency          | Not applicable | 9049  |
| % incidents attended as emergency/999 calls        | Not applicable | 50.6% |

## A summary of performance continued

| Indicator | Target | Actual |
|-----------|--------|--------|
|-----------|--------|--------|

### Safety in the community

|  |                |       |
|--|----------------|-------|
| School visits conducted by station personnel                       | Not applicable | 29    |
| Community events attended or hosted to deliver fire safety message | Not applicable | 31    |
| Home Fire Safety Visits completed                                  | Not applicable | 3,027 |

### Our staff

|   |      |      |
|---|------|------|
| Working days/shifts lost to sickness wholetime/control uniformed staff (per person) | 9.08 | 8.69 |
| Working days lost to sickness corporate staff (per person)                          | 9.08 | 6.59 |
| Working days/shifts lost to sickness all staff (excl. OnCall) (per person)          | 9.08 | 8.28 |
| % of Return to Work interviews completed within 15 days                             | 90%  | 81%  |
| Staff appraisal completion  | 95%  | 88%  |

### Resources and value for money

|  |      |      |
|--|------|------|
| Fire Service Vehicle incidents where hit fixed/stationary & at fault | 24   | 17   |
| Number of H&S incidents that have resulted in lost time              | 17   | 21   |
| Net Carbon emissions   | -10% | -14% |





## Get in touch

Avon Fire & Rescue Service is committed to ensuring our documents are accessible to all members of the community. If you have difficulty reading this document because English is not your first language and you would like a translation, please contact: The Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality team, Avon Fire & Rescue Service, Police & Fire Headquarters, PO Box 37, Valley Road, Bristol, BS20 8JJ.

Telephone: 0117 926 2061  
Email: [DICE@avonfire.gov.uk](mailto:DICE@avonfire.gov.uk)