



AVON
FIRE & RESCUE

www.avonfire.gov.uk



Measuring how we are doing

Performance Report 2021/22



Simon Shilton
MBA DMS GFireE

Introduction from the Chief

Welcome to our Performance Report for 2021/22. Despite the continuing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) has continued to make good progress in driving down risk in our community by meeting our targets for reducing fires. The pandemic has continued to bring about societal change with how people work and travel and this is continuing to have an impact on the number and nature of incidents we have attended.

Whilst it is impossible to gauge the extent of the impact of the pandemic, I am pleased to report that we have met almost all our performance targets. Despite higher than normal levels of sickness, we continue to meet our response standards and have recorded very high levels of customer satisfaction both with the speed of our response and the overall satisfaction with our service.

I am also pleased to report that encouraging progress has been made since our last Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection with the previous causes for concern and 'inadequate' ratings being resolved thanks to the hard work, determination and commitment of the whole workforce. Further information is included in this report.



We have continued to make good progress 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, work which is becoming an increasingly important part of our duties. This includes continuing to support South West Ambulance Service Trust by providing response drivers for ambulances, covering over 2,195 shifts this year.

We 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 at www.avonfire.gov.uk.

We work hard to ensure that our data is accurate and timely. During 2021/22 our Internal Auditors inspected our performance management, and I am pleased to report that the overall findings were excellent, confirming:

"We consider the Service's performance management control framework to be well-designed with performance measures clearly defined and regularly reported on"

The poster overleaf is displayed on 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.

Simon Shilton
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

IN 2021/22, DESPITE THE PANDEMIC, AVON FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

HANDLED **20,979** **EMERGENCY** CALLS 

RESPONDED TO  **15,369** INCIDENTS

WAS CALLED TO
521
FIRES IN THE HOME 

RESCUED
768 

PEOPLE FROM
FIRE  AND OTHER
EMERGENCIES

FITTED 4,430
SMOKE ALARMS 


CARRIED OUT
3,871 

FIRE SAFETY
VISITS
IN THE HOME

ENGAGED WITH
3,113
BUSINESSES 

COVERED
2,195  SHIFTS

DRIVING
AMBULANCES 

TO PROVIDE
ADVICE **20.8%** 

REDUCED OUR
CARBON EMISSIONS BY

CO₂

ATTENDED  **430** **VEHICLE**
FIRES

WAS CALLED TO
535 **ROAD TRAFFIC**
COLLISIONS 

RESCUED
55 

PEOPLE FROM
WATER

WE ARE HERE
TO HELP  **24 HOURS**
A DAY

SEVEN DAYS |  **365 DAYS**
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). These indicators are designed to measure how effective we are at meeting our key purposes of Preventing, Protecting, Responding and building Resilience.

Customer surveys

Customer surveys are sent to a randomly selected group of people who have had an emergency incident in their home or business or who have received a home fire safety visit. The survey forms are returned directly to an independent research company. Overall, our surveys found that 89% of respondents were very satisfied with the overall service at emergency incidents.

How are we doing?

Despite the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic AF&RS continues to make excellent progress in tackling risk in our community by reducing the number and impact of incidents attended. We have met the targets for all of our fire incident indicators and are just off target for reducing attendance at alarms in commercial buildings. 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 understand where, when, why and how incidents occur, evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions and help inform new interventions.

Checking our progress

Our website 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.

Activity

Overall, we received 20,979 calls for emergency assistance compared to 17,894 last year and attended 10,223 compared to 9,049 last year. This is an increase of 17% for emergency calls and 13% for attended calls.

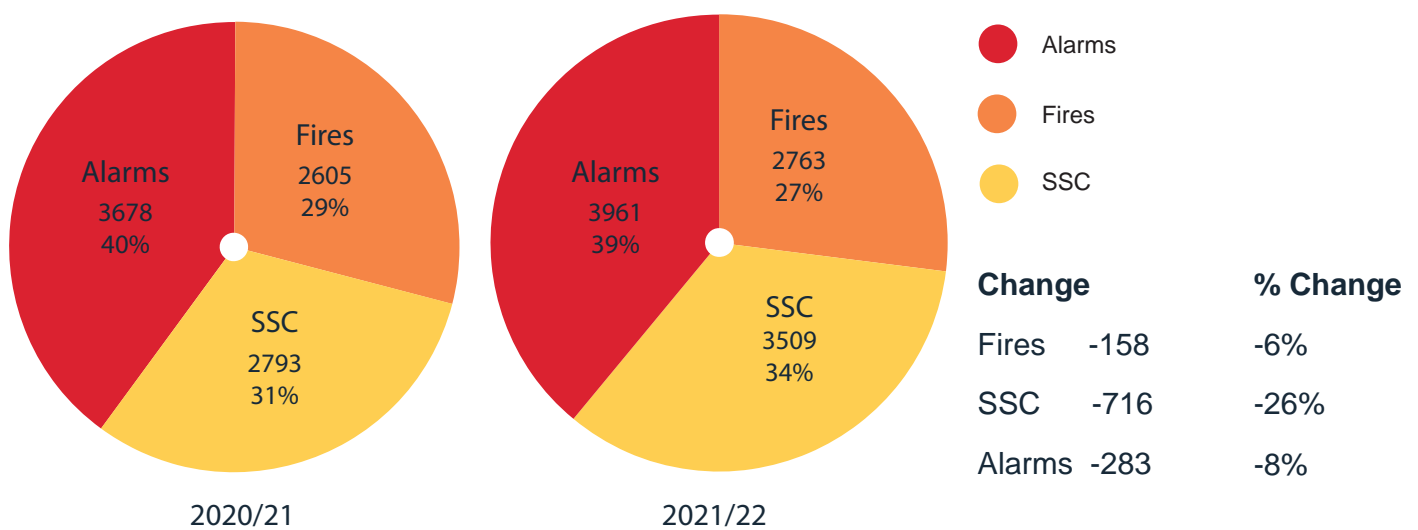
Where we don't attend it is either because questioning by our Control team found that there was no emergency to attend, or we received further information that there was no emergency and turned back before we arrived at the incident. We always try to reduce risk by ensuring that we only send appliances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

Reduction targets are not set 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.

We have seen increases in all the main SSC types, driven mainly by increases in activity post-pandemic:

	2020/21	2021/22	Difference	% change
Effecting entry/ exit	699	840	141	20%
Road Traffic Collision	374	493	119	32%
Assist other agency	359	464	105	29%
No action	259	337	78	30%
Flooding	198	211	13	7%
Animal assistance	154	181	27	18%
Making safe	105	175	70	67%
Lift release	98	172	74	76%

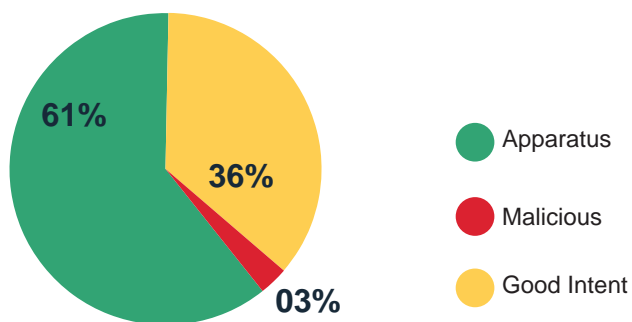
False Alarms

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 3,961 false alarms we received are broken down into these categories as follows:

Alarm Categories



Further information about alarms due to apparatus and malicious alarms is included in the Alarms section below.

Fires

We measure fires in several 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 for these fire types. The fewer incidents, the more successful we have been in reducing risk in our community. Our targets for fires are based on the average of the last six years, excluding the highest and lowest year.

Accidental dwelling fires

We recorded 470 accidental dwelling fires in 2021/22 against a target of no more than 492. A wide variety of information is recorded 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 (22% between 17:00 and 19:59) and involve cooking (49%), 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 2021/22 this was the case for 39.6% 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 2021/22 we attended 165 deliberate primary fires against a target of 241.

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 2021/22 we attended 235 deliberate vehicle fires against a target of 349. In the last 13 years the number of deliberate vehicle fires has reduced by 62% (235 compared to 618).

Deliberate secondary fires

In 2021/22 we attended 948 deliberate secondary fires against a target of 965. The number of incidents increased compared to last year by 17%. Our assessment is that this is mainly because of lockdown ending.

18% of these fires are caused by people setting light to loose refuse and 11% are fires in small bins.



235 DELIBERATE
VEHICLE
FIRES

A DECREASE OF
62%
OVER 12 YEARS

948
DELIBERATE
SECONDARY
FIRES AGAINST
AGAINST OUR

TARGET
965



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. This change, plus the change in working practices and business opening brought about by the pandemic has meant setting an achievable and realistic target for reducing attendance at alarms has been problematic.

In 2021/22 we attended 592 fire alarms in non-dwellings, just above our target of 573. These are incidents where the fire alarm has activated and upon attendance, we have found that there was no fire or other risk.

41% 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. In 2021/22 we received 130 malicious alarms.

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 2021/22, through call challenging, we did not attend 20 malicious alarms which is 15% of the total, exceeding our target of 5%.

Fire Deaths, Injuries and Rescues

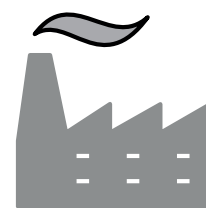
Each fire fatality is a tragic event, and we will continue to do what we can to reduce the numbers of people dying due to fire. We do not set a target for deaths and injuries from fire as thankfully the numbers are too low for a target to be meaningful. We do however monitor each incident to learn what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

In 2021/22 we recorded three fatalities in fires. All three fatalities were in dwellings and thought to be accidental. We also recorded 38 injuries in fires that required hospital treatment and rescued 32 people from fire incidents.

ATTENDED

592

FIRE ALARMS



IN NON-DWELLINGS



JUST ABOVE OUR TARGET OF

573

130 MALICIOUS ALARMS

130



Responding and Call Handling

Response

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 7:20 minutes.

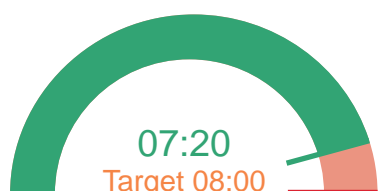
For emergency non-critical responses our target is an average of 12:00 minutes and on average we took 7:37 minutes.

For non-emergency attended calls our target is an average of 60 minutes and on average we took 7:51 minutes. These incidents are attended under normal road speed.

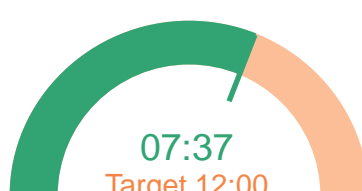
We validate our response standards through our customer satisfactions surveys. In 2021/22 46% of respondents thought we arrived at the scene of the emergency quicker than expected and a further 39% thought we arrived as they expected.

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

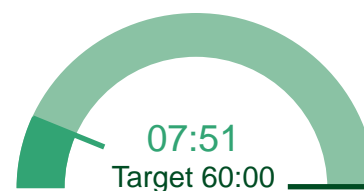
Emergency: critical



Emergency: non-critical



Non emergency



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 2021/22 we received 20,979 emergency calls, an increase of 17% from the previous year. We attended, under emergency conditions, 10,223 of these calls; an increase of 13% on the previous year.

Our Control team met their target of answering at least 94% of 999 calls within seven seconds. 95.4% were answered within seven seconds (21,856 out of 22,904).

Safety in the community

Community Safety

We ensure that we proactively target Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) to 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. HFSVs are where we visit people in their home to deliver safety advice and, if needed, install smoke alarms.

In 2021/22 we delivered 3,871 HFSVs. The number of visits was fewer than previous years, mainly due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We adopt 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 with the ending of most COVID-19 restrictions we are anticipating completing over 5,000 HFSVs.

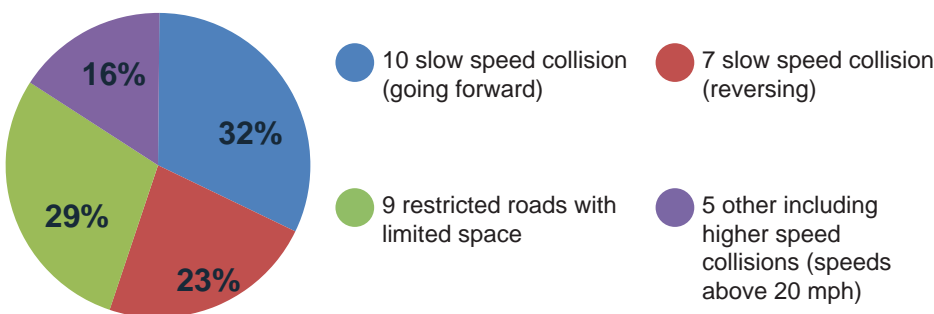
If you are aware of any vulnerable people who may benefit from a visit please phone us on 0117 926 2061 or visit our website at www.avonfire.gov.uk.

We increased the number of educational events to 477, delivering a variety of interventions to keep children safe. Finally, we attended or hosted 41 events to deliver community safety advice. This is lower than in previous years but was 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 are seeking to improve.

We met missed 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. 31 incidents were reported against the target of 24. Each incident is investigated, and the following chart shows details of the cause:



We also measure the number of incidents that have resulted in lost time for our people. In 2021/22 we recorded 13 incidents against a target of 17.

Our Staff and improvements

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 second year we met our 20% target, reducing carbon emission by 20.8%.

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 2020 we have seen increases in lost days/shifts.

In 2019/20 we developed a three year health, wellbeing and welfare action plan which came to an end this year. This three year plan focussed on improving how we prevent and protect our staff from sickness and respond effectively and compassionately when it occurs. We had incremental improvement targets which aimed 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 and rescue services.

At the end of 2021/22 and the completion of the plan we are off target with a loss of 9.65 days/shifts per FTE. The main issue we have is staff who are long term sick (more than 28 days) which accounted for 68% of the total days/shifts lost.

We lost a further 1,784 days/shifts related to COVID-19 (suspected, confirmed or vaccine reaction). If these were included our sickness figure would be 12.38 days/shifts lost per FTE compared to our reported 9.65. In line with national guidance, 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. From 2022/23 we will be including COVID-19 related sickness in our total data.

In 2021/22 39.7% (267 of our people) lost zero days/shifts due to sickness.

Return to work welfare checks - For each period of sickness greater than four days we conduct a welfare interview upon return to work. This helps us to ensure that the member of staff is well enough to return and to identify any support that is required. Our target is to complete 90% of these interviews in target, in 2021/22 we fell short of this with 83% completed within target; however, 100% were completed within year.

Staff appraisal completion - We conduct annual appraisals with our staff, helping to ensure that development needs are identified and performance is maintained. Our target is to ensure that 95% of appraisals are in date. At the end of the year we have missed this target with 91% in date.

39.7%
OF STAFF HAD NO
SICKNESS



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

HMICFRS undertook its latest full inspection of AF&RS in May/June 2021 and published its report on 15 December 2021.

The latest findings show encouraging progress has been made since our last full inspection in 2018 with the previous causes for concern and 'inadequate' ratings being resolved thanks to the hard work, determination and commitment of the whole workforce. In citing numerous areas of improvement, HMI Wendy Williams said she was "very pleased with the progress Avon Fire & Rescue Service has made" and specifically highlighted increased staffing in the Business Fire Safety department, better targeting of our fire prevention work on those most at risk, our continuing support to the ambulance service and NHS mass vaccination programme, and sound financial planning processes.

Our graded judgment for promoting the right values and culture under the people pillar leapt two grades from 'inadequate' in 2018/19 to 'good' in 2021/22. Following Avon Fire Authority's declaration of climate and ecological emergencies towards the beginning of 2021, our successful grant application totalling nearly £1 million from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme was highlighted for particular praise and noted as an example of 'innovative practice'. A dramatic reduction in the number of automatic fire alarms attended by the Service also drew positive acknowledgement from the inspectors, with firefighters now able to better use that time for uninterrupted risk critical training and community safety activities.

The report also included several areas for improvement which are already being addressed. The upgrade of our IT infrastructure is nearing completion thanks to a £1.5 million investment agreed by the Fire Authority in October 2020, providing a good foundation for the digital transformation programme.

The Service's plan to improve the way in which risk information is gathered, stored and made available to firefighters was approved in October 2021 and is now being implemented. A review of the Service's People and Development Strategy is also already underway.

Commenting on the Inspectorate's latest findings, recently retired Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Mick Crennell said:

"While the absence of any further causes of concern or inadequate grades is not the bar against which we judge ourselves, we're obviously pleased that the fantastic efforts made since our last inspection are resulting in significant improvements in so many areas. Our communities rightly deserve a fire and rescue service which is independently judged as 'good' across the board and our Service Plan is clear that we continue to strive for those grades – and this new report is an important stepping stone on our improvement journey."

As with every inspection, the focus is on continuous improvement and 22 'areas for improvement' were identified which now form the basis of our formal Round 2 HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan. This was approved by the Fire Authority's Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 21 April 2022 and is regularly monitored by the Service Leadership Team as one of CFO Simon Shilton's top three priorities for the Service. The action plan is regularly updated and published on our external website at www.avonfire.gov.uk/our-performance/hmicfrs

The results of all our formal HMICFRS inspection activity are also available online at www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/avon/

	2021/22 report		2018/19 report
Effectiveness	Requires improvement	↔	Requires improvement
Understanding fires and other risks (2018/19: Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies)	Requires improvement	↓	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	Requires improvement	↔	Requires improvement
Protecting the public through fire regulation	Requires improvement	↑	Inadequate
Responding to fires and other emergencies	Good	↑	Requires improvement
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents (2018/19: Responding to national risks)	Good	↔	Good
Efficiency	Requires improvement	↔	Requires improvement
Making best use of resources	Requires improvement	↔	Requires improvement
Future affordability (2018/19: Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future)	Good	↔	Good
People	Requires improvement	↑	Inadequate
Promoting the right values and culture	Good	↑↑	Inadequate
Getting the right people with the right skills	Requires improvement	↓	Good
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Requires improvement	↑	Inadequate
Managing performance and developing leaders	Requires improvement	↔	Requires improvement

Freedom of Information

In 2021/22 we received 365 requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Act requires us to respond to requests within 20 working days and we are pleased to report that we achieved this for 97% of the requests (355 requests).

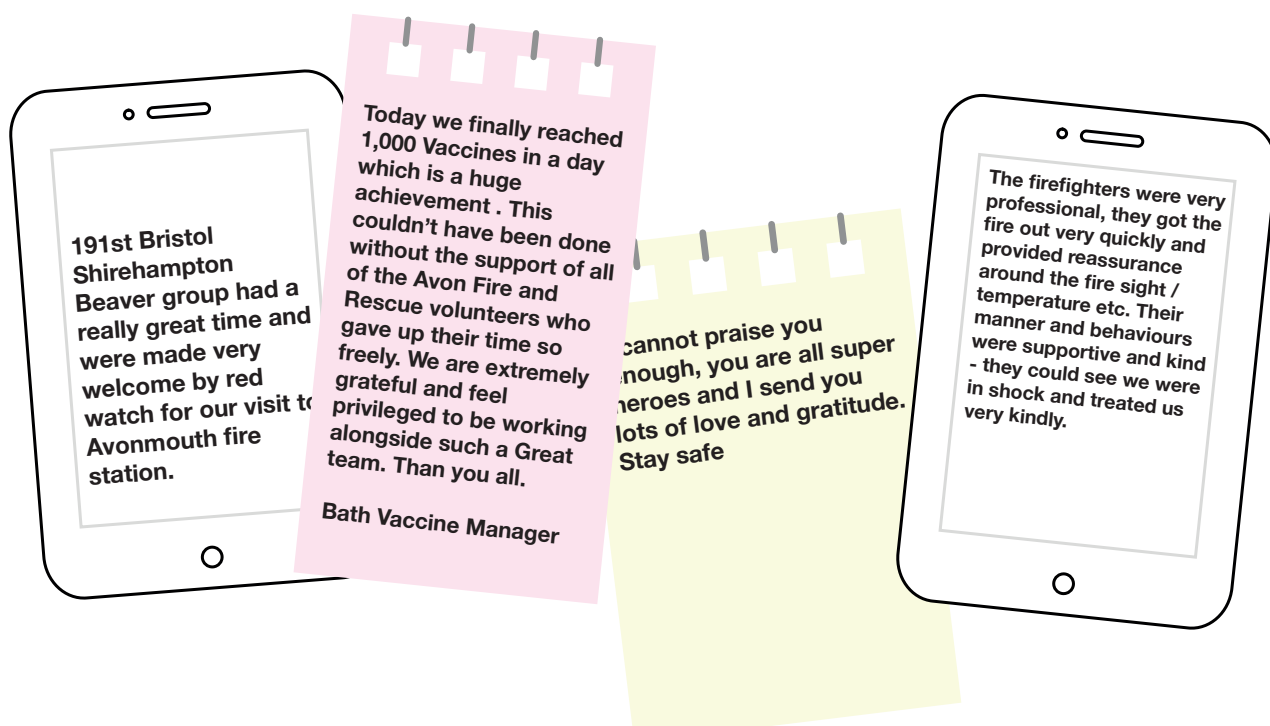
Compliments and complaints

AF&RS monitors the compliments and complaints that are received and uses this information to improve the service we provide. In 2021/22 we received 34 complaints however, upon investigation, nine did not relate to the service we provide, and we found a further 12 where we were not at fault. Of the remaining 13 where we were at fault, the subjects were:

- Management of our premises 5
- Behaviour of staff 4
- Community safety 2
- Recruitment process 1
- Communication 1

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

In 2021/22 we also recorded 53 compliments about our service. We ensure that all compliments are passed on to the teams involved and, where 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
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Fires		
Accidental dwelling fire	492	470
Deliberate primary fire (excluding vehicle)	241	165
Deliberate vehicle fire	349	235
Deliberate secondary fire	965	948
% of accidental fires in dwellings where no firefighting action required	Not applicable	39.6%
Deaths arising from primary fires	Not applicable	3
Injuries arising from primary fires	Not applicable	38

Alarms		
Malicious false alarms	Not applicable	130
% of calls to malicious false alarms not attended	5%	15%
Alarms caused by automatic fire detection attended (Non- Domestic Properties)	573	592
% of fires attended in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted	Not applicable	41%

Response and call handling		
Emergency critical response (average)	8:00mins	07:20
Emergency non-critical response (average)	12:00mins	07:37
Non-emergency attended calls (average)	60mins	07:51
Calls for assistance answered within seven seconds	94%	95.4%
Number of 999 calls received	Not applicable	20,979
Number of incidents attended as emergency	Not applicable	10,223
% incidents attended as emergency/999 calls	Not applicable	48.7%

A summary of performance continued

Indicator	Target	Actual
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Safety in the community

School visits conducted by station personnel	Not applicable	477
Community events attended or hosted to deliver fire safety message	Not applicable	41
Home Fire Safety Visits completed	Not applicable	3,871

Our staff

Working days/shifts lost to sickness wholetime/control uniformed staff (per person)	8.11	8.95
Working days lost to sickness corporate staff (per person)	8.11	12.46
Working days/shifts lost to sickness all staff (excl. OnCall) (per person)	8.11	9.65
% of Return to Work interviews completed within 15 days	90%	83%
Staff appraisal completion	95%	91%

Resources and value for money

Fire Service Vehicle incidents where hit fixed/stationary & at fault	24	31
Number of H&S incidents that have resulted in lost time	17	13
Net Carbon emissions	-20%	-20.8%



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