



AVON
FIRE & RESCUE

www.avonfire.gov.uk

Measuring how we are doing

Performance Report 2022/23



“We strive for efficiency and safer ways of working, making continual improvements to realise benefits from the Service’s investments, resources and technology, to deliver better outcomes for our staff and communities.”

Simon Shilton
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Introduction from the Chief

I am pleased to report that we have met almost all of our performance targets. Despite higher than normal levels of sickness and the exceptionally dry summer we have continued to meet our response standards, have driven down risk by meeting our incident reduction targets and have recorded very high levels of customer satisfaction both with the speed of our response and the overall satisfaction with our service.

His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) continues to provide valuable feedback on our overall performance. The results of our Round 2 inspection published at the end of 2021 demonstrated encouraging progress with the causes for concern and ‘inadequate’ ratings from Round 1 being resolved thanks to the dedication of the whole workforce and further information is included in this report. At the time of writing, HMICFRS has concluded its latest Round 3 inspection and our ongoing commitment to continual improvement will be vital to ensure that improvements are implemented where required.

We have also continued to make progress in reducing our carbon emissions, working towards our target of Net Zero carbon by 2030, though this has been impacted by higher numbers of appliance deployments over the dry weather period.

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. We have continued to support South Western Ambulance Service Trust by providing response drivers for ambulances. Over the Pandemic period we have:

- **Covered 3,524 shifts**
- **Responded to 11136 incidents**
- **Delivered 15400 hours of direct patient care**

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 from our website www.avonfire.gov.uk

We’ve also produced a poster, giving a summary of the great work we have achieved (included on page 3 and also available in digital format), which is displayed at all our fire stations and workplace locations. 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


Our performance metrics are grouped under our seven key objectives as illustrated below:



IN 2022/23 AVON FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

HANDLED 23,392 **EMERGENCY** CALLS 

RESPONDED TO  20,778 **EMERGENCY INCIDENTS**

ATTENDED
11,392 
EMERGENCY INCIDENTS

RESCUED
993 

PEOPLE FROM
FIRE  AND OTHER
EMERGENCIES

WAS CALLED TO
554 

FIRES CARRIED OUT
IN THE HOME **4,488**

 FIRE SAFETY
VISITS
IN THE HOME

FITTED 5,266
SMOKE ALARMS 

REDUCED OUR
CARBON EMISSIONS BY
14.6% 

ATTENDED
445 
VEHICLE FIRES

WAS CALLED TO
591 ROAD TRAFFIC
COLLISIONS 

ATTENDED
270 

FLOODING
INCIDENTS

OVER THE PANDEMIC COVERED
3,524  **SHIFTS**

DRIVING
AMBULANCES 

AND RESPONDED TO
11,136 **INCIDENTS**

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

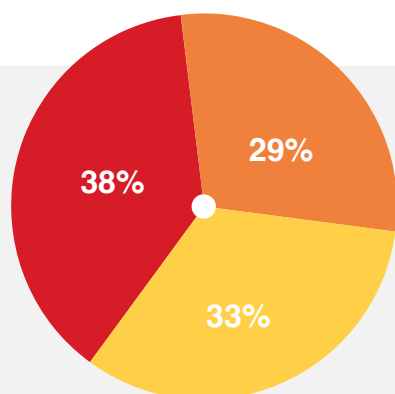
ALL FOR ONLY **11p** A DAY  FOR EACH PERSON  IN AVON

Overall Activity

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 (SSC¹)** – any other emergency response
- **Alarms** – any incident where upon attendance no additional risk was found.



2022/23

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

● Alarms **4382, 38%** ● Fires - **3246, 29%** ● SSC - **3764, 33%**

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 on page 5.

¹The "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.

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.

We have seen increases in most of the main SSC types:

	2021/22	2022/23	Difference	% change
Effecting entry/exit	840	899	59	7%
Road Traffic Collision	493	567	74	15%
Assist other agency	464	540	76	16%
No action	337	276	-61	-18%
Flooding	211	270	59	28%
Lift release	172	237	65	38%
Animal assistance	181	183	2	1%
Other release/rescue	144	171	27	19%

False Alarms

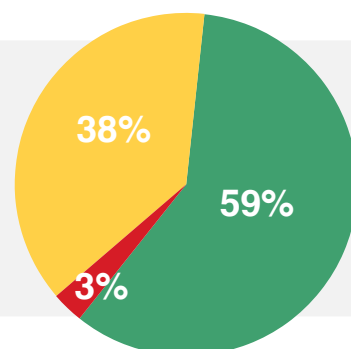
False Alarms fall into three main categories:

- **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.**

Alarm Categories

The 4,382 false alarms we received are broken down into these categories as follows:

- Apparatus - 2594, 59%
- Malicious - 139, 3%
- Good Intent - 1649, 38%



Further information about alarms due to apparatus and malicious alarms is included in the Protection section on page 9.

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 seven key objectives.

Customer surveys

We send out customer surveys 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 91% of respondents were very satisfied with the overall service at emergency incidents.

How are we doing?

We continue to make good progress in reducing risk in our community by reducing the number and impact of incidents attended. We have met the targets for most of our fire incident indicators. 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.

Prevention

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 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 are just off target with 495 accidental dwelling fires in 2022/23 against a target of no more than 492. 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, in 2022/23 most incidents happen at evening mealtimes (24% between 17:00 and 19:59) and involve cooking (52%), often caused by the occupants being distracted (11%) and almost half (47%) in single person households.

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 2022/23 this was the case for 41.6% 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 2022/23 we attended 211 deliberate primary fires against a target of 211.

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 -

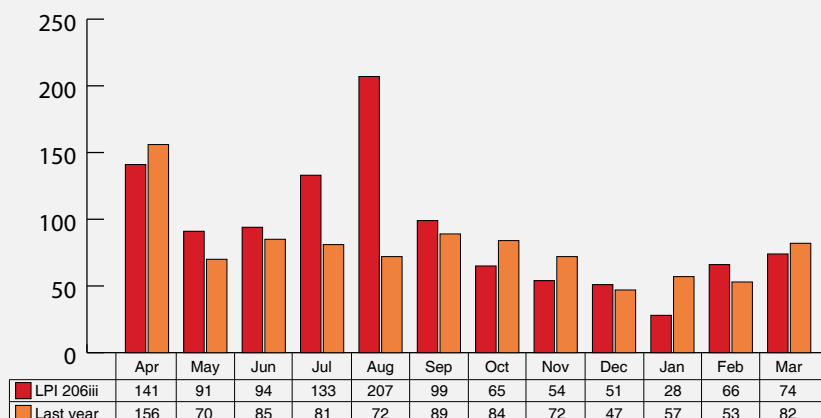
In 2022/23 we attended 264 deliberate vehicle fires against a target of 319. In the last 14 years the number of deliberate vehicle fires has reduced by 57% (264 compared to 618).

Deliberate secondary fires -

In 2022/23 we attended 1103 deliberate secondary fires against a target of 950. The number of incidents increased compared to last year by 16%. Month by month analysis shows that the increase was in August when there was a period of exceptionally dry weather:

Deliberate Secondary Fires (excl. Vehicle)

14% of these fires are caused by people setting light to loose refuse and 11% are fires in small bins



Safety in the community

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 2022/23 we delivered 4,488 HFSVs. Next year we have set a target to complete over 6,000 HFSVs.

Our customer satisfaction surveys found that 92% of respondents were very satisfied with the HFSV check provided.

The number of educational events we attended increased to 660, delivering a variety of interventions to keep children safe.

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 2022/23 we recorded six fatalities in fires. Three fatalities were in dwellings and thought to be accidental. We also recorded 55 injuries in fires that required hospital treatment and rescued 73 people from fire incidents.

Protection

Alarms

Malicious alarms

Each malicious alarm that we attend increases risk in our community. In 2022/23 we received 149 malicious alarms and attended 139 of these.

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 2022/23, through call challenging, we did not attend 10 malicious alarms which is 6.7% of the total, exceeding our target of 5%.

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 2022/23 we attended 567 fire alarms in non-dwellings, meeting our target of less than 622. These are incidents where the fire alarm has activated and upon attendance, we have found that there was no fire or other risk.

45% of these alarms are caused by human error, mainly due to burning food or accidentally setting off the alarm, both of which are preventable.



Response

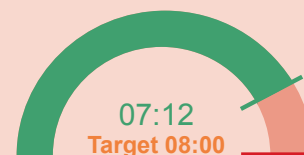
We do not set targets for the number of calls that we receive or the number that we attend. We continue to attend all reported incidents where there is any concern that there may be a risk to people or property. We do however monitor both the number of calls and the number attended to help ensure that we are resourced effectively to meet local demand and risk.

Overall, we received 23,392 calls for emergency assistance, responded to 20,778 of these, and attended 11,392.

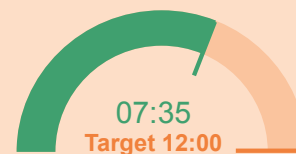
Where we don't attend it is either because questioning by our Control team found that there was no emergency to attend, or we received further information that there was no emergency and turned back before we arrived at the incident. We always try to reduce risk by ensuring that we only send appliances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

We measure our response using a risk-based approach, ensuring that we respond quickest to incidents with the most risk. For each of our three response risk categories we set a target based upon the average time from when we alert our appliances to when they arrive on scene.

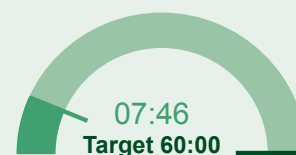
For **emergency critical responses** (where there is a known life risk or involving a property) our target is an average of 8:00 minutes and on average we took 07:12 minutes.



For **emergency non-critical responses** our target is an average of 12:00 minutes and on average we took 07:35 minutes.



For **non-emergency** attended calls our target is an average of 60 minutes and on average we took 07:46 minutes. These incidents are attended under normal road speeds.



We validate our response standards through our customer satisfactions surveys. In 2022/23 81% of respondents thought we arrived at the scene of the emergency quicker than expected and a further 19% 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.

Resilience

Sickness absence

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 a 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 2023 we have seen increases in lost days/shifts.

In 2022/23 we are off target with a loss of 10.68 days/shifts per FTE. The main issue we have is staff who are long term sick (more than 28 days) which accounted for 58% of the total days/shifts lost.

We lost 780.5 days/shifts related to COVID-19 (suspected, confirmed or vaccine reaction). If these were excluded our sickness figure would be 9.53 days/shifts lost per FTE compared to our reported 10.68.

We are working on a new attendance management policy that will help our management of sickness absence.

780.5
days/shifts

lost related to COVID-19
(suspected, confirmed or
vaccine reaction)

Improving our Service

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 one key targets for health and safety which is to reduce the number of incidents that have resulted in lost time for our people. In 2022/23 we recorded 13 incidents against a target of 17.

13 incidents
recorded against a target of 17.

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 third year our target was to reduce by 30% however we achieved a 14.6% reduction. Though we reduced carbon emission in our properties by 32% the increase in the number of incidents attended increases the carbon emission through fuel.

14.6%
reduction in carbon emission.

Budget

We measure the expenditure of our Revenue budget with a target to ensure that we are not overspent by 1% or underspent by 2.5%. At the end of 2022/23 we were on target with 0% variance.

Investing in our staff

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.

In 2023/24 we are launching a new staff appraisal system which will help us to ensure that all staff are helped to manage their development and improve their performance.

Transformation

We are introducing a new metric for 2023/24 which will measure our progress against the actions in our Transformation plan with a target to have at least 85% on track.

Other performance measures

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

The most recent outcomes of HMICFRS activity reported on our Round 2 inspection in May/June 2021 which were published on 15 December 2021.

The Inspectorate found that encouraging progress had been made since our first 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.

In particular, 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 start 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 have already been addressed. The upgrade of our IT infrastructure has been completed thanks to a £1.5 million investment agreed by the Fire Authority in October 2020, providing a good foundation for the ongoing 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 currently being implemented.

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. As of August 2023, 42% of the 64 individual actions contained within the plan have been completed with the remainder either currently 'in progress' (52%) or awaiting other actions to be completed before they can be started themselves (6%).

In March 2023 HMICFRS also published a 'Spotlight Report' on the values and culture in fire and rescue services. This national report contains a series of 35 recommendations addressing a range of issues including raising concerns, background checks and vetting of those working within the sector, leadership, training and improving the diversity of our workforce. Of those 35 recommendations, 20 are directed at local Chief Fire Officers for action within specified timescales and they are also monitored and included within our existing scrutiny arrangements.

Our HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan is regularly updated and published on our external website at www.avonfire.gov.uk/our-performance/hmicfrs

The latest full HMICFRS inspection was completed in summer 2023 and we expect the results to be published by the end of the year. We already know that while the inspection will examine progress against the familiar pillars of effectiveness, efficiency and people there will be some changes including the removal of graded judgments at the pillar level and the addition of a new grade of 'adequate'. As a result, the outcomes of our Round 3 inspection won't be directly comparable to those from Rounds 1 and 2 but will still provide an independent assessment of progress which will be reported in the 2023/24 edition of our Performance Report.

	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

The results of all our formal HMICFRS inspection activity are also available online:

www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/avon/

Freedom of Information

In 2022/23 we received 378 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 (368 requests).

Compliments and complaints

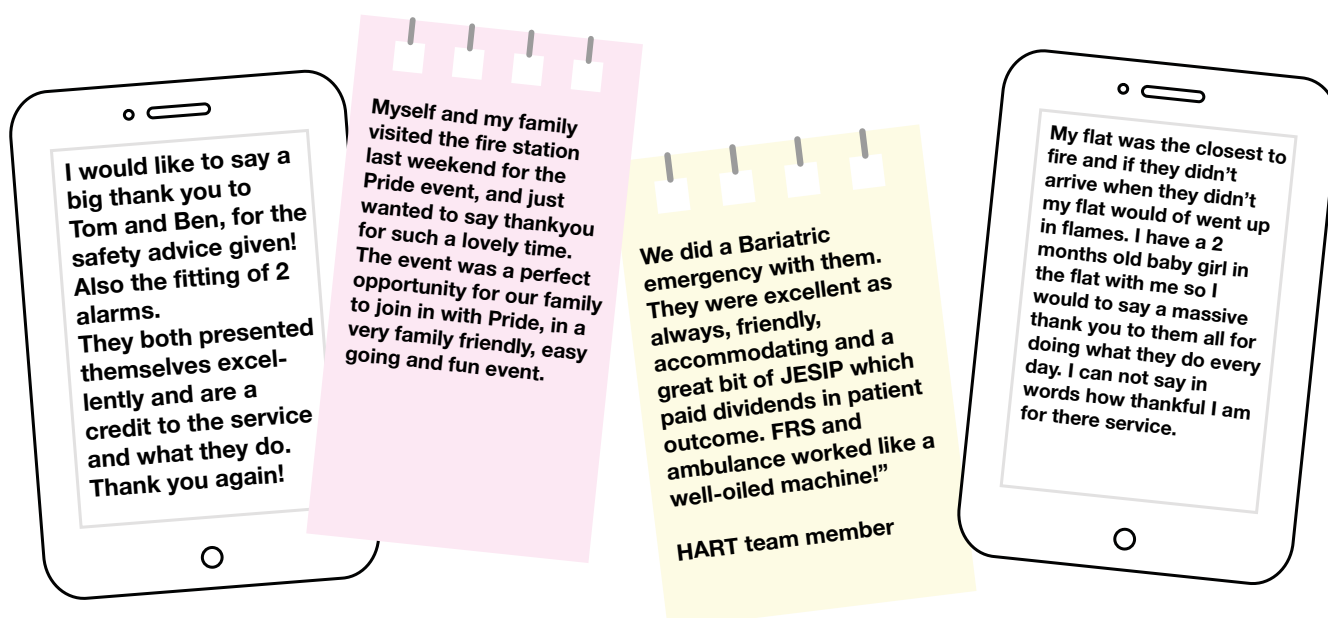
AF&RS monitors the compliments and complaints that are received and uses this information to improve the service we provide. In 2022/23 we received 30 complaints. After investigation, one of these was anonymous and did not contain enough information to allow us to investigate. A further two did not relate to the service we provide and we found a further 11 where we were not at fault.

Of the remaining 16 where we were at fault, the subjects were:

- **Driving of vehicles** 4
- **Behaviour of staff** 4
- **Management of our premises** 2
- **Community safety** 1
- **Recruitment process** 1
- **Communication** 1
- **Claim against insurance** 1
- **Control function** 1
- **Operational response** 1

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

In 2022/23 we also recorded 101 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
Prevention		
Accidental dwelling fire	492	495
Deliberate primary fire (excluding vehicle)	211	211
Deliberate vehicle fire	319	264
Deliberate secondary fire	950	1103
% of accidental fires in dwellings where no firefighting action required	Not applicable	41.6%
% of fires attended in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted	Not applicable	38%
Deaths arising from primary fires	Not applicable	6
Injuries arising from primary fires	Not applicable	55
Home Fire Safety Visits completed	5000	4488
Educational events	500	660
Protection		
Malicious false alarms	Not applicable	139
% of calls to malicious false alarms not attended	5%	7%
Alarms caused by automatic fire detection attended (Non- Domestic Properties)	622	567
Regulations processed in target	98%	96.8%
Licensing Applications processed in target	98%	95.7%
Audits in high risk premises	600	823
Response		
Emergency critical response (average)	8:00mins	07:12mins
Emergency non-critical response (average)	12:00mins	07:35mins
Non-emergency attended calls (average)	60mins	07:46mins
Calls for assistance answered within seven seconds	94%	95.1%
Number of 999 calls received	Not applicable	23392
Number of incidents attended as emergency	Not applicable	11392
Resilience		
Working days/shifts lost to sickness wholetime/control uniformed staff (per person)	8.11	10.15
Working days lost to sickness corporate staff (per person)	8.11	12.69
Working days/shifts lost to sickness all staff (excl. OnCall) (per person)	8.11	10.68
Improve our service		
Number of H&S incidents that have resulted in lost time	17	13
Net Carbon emissions	-30%	-14.6%
Revenue budget Variance against planned	>1% & < 2.5%	0%
Invest in our staff		
Staff appraisal completion	95%	91%



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