



Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

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Fire & Rescue Service

Our Year in Review: Annual Report and Fire and Rescue Statement

2017/18

Contents

A Message from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst	1
A Message from Chief Fire Officer /Chief Executive Jo Turton	2
2017/18 in Brief	3
About us	4
Our Year in Pictures	6
Performance in Summary	8
People and Leadership	10
Prevention	12
Protection	17
Response	20
Public Value and Collaboration	22
Assurance	26
Glossary	30
Contact details	30

Corringham Fire Station

A Message from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst



It is a privilege to be able to write this introduction for this year's annual report for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service as Essex's first Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

I took on the responsibility for the governance of the fire and rescue services on October 1st 2017 and my team and I have worked hard to bring in the new governance arrangements and make them work for the benefit of the Service and our residents.

2017/2018 was a busy year for the Service and there have been some real highlights. The Service has recruited whole time firefighters for the first time in seven years and 12 new recruits have now completed their training and are working at fire stations across the county.

At the same time as providing an efficient response to incidents, it is vital that we do everything we can to prevent accidents happening in the first place. On that basis it is very positive that more than 280,000 young people in Essex have received both fire and police safety messages from our Education Officers. We have a vibrant Community Fire Safety Programme, which is constantly developing its work to bring wider safety issues. In association with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership, we have an ambitious vision to reduce deaths and accidents on Essex roads.

A key recruitment we made this year, was that of our new Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive Jo Turton, who has held a number of executive roles in the public sector and brings a fresh pair of eyes to the Service. I am particularly grateful to the previous Chief Fire Officer, for the work he did in bringing the Service through some difficult times.

An important part of my role is to engage with the public. It is clear from my conversations with many of the county's residents that they hold the Service in extremely high regard. It makes me proud on your behalf to hear the regular praise the public have for fire service personnel. They, along with our partners, want to hear more about the work that goes on and this annual report serves to highlight the broad range of protection, prevention and response activity that the Service undertakes.

We have also taken time to go out and meet our people from across the Service and hear directly about what we can do together to deliver better outcomes for the public. One thing that has struck me is the commitment and dedication of all of our people. At the same time it is clear that while significant progress has been made in building an innovative and trusting culture there is still a lot more we can do for the Service to achieve its full potential.

The collaboration opportunities offered by joint governance are enormous, and I have set in train a series of projects based on the Local Business Case which I submitted and which was approved by the Home Secretary. These will provide an excellent opportunity to provide better services across the county.

There is much to be done. In the next financial year I will be issuing the new Fire and Rescue Plan which will set a clear direction and strategy for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, and enable me, on behalf of the people of Essex, to hold the Service effectively to account.

A Message from Chief Fire Officer /Chief Executive Jo Turton



Since joining the Service in April 2018, I have been impressed with the dedication of all our staff, volunteers and partners and would like to thank them for their support and dedication in helping to make Essex a safe place to live, work and travel.

In the past year, the focus has been on delivering the Service Strategy: Leading the way to a safer Essex. This document set out the strategic priorities for the Service: service led, community focused, a kind culture, and financially sustainable.

The aim, very simply, is now to develop and deliver the services that will prepare us for the challenges of the 21st century with operational and support staff who are trained, resourced and respected for the work they do.

More than ever we recognise the value of collaboration and working in partnership. Increasingly this influences and shapes how we provide our services and our other day-to-day work.

I am looking forward to working together with colleagues, partners and the public to build on the progress made in 2017/18.

2017/18 in Brief



We attended a total of **15,616** incidents:

6,334
False Alarms

of which:
2,656 Due to apparatus
3,462 Good intent
216 Malicious



4,785
Fires

involving:
1,453 Building fires
2,463 Outdoor fires
863 Road vehicle fires



4,497
Special Service

some of which involved:
1,215 Road Traffic Collisions
917 Effecting entry
689 Other
479 Assist other agencies
410 Flooding
294 Lift Release
144 Medical Incidents
131 Removal of objects from people
102 Animal assistance incidents
65 Hazardous Materials incidents
51 Removal of people from objects



1,906
Fire Prevention campaigns and initiatives



#NotJustFires



8,829 Home Safety Visits
[HSVs] carried out by FRS



1,290 Audits
[38 unsatisfactory]
2,440 Consultations

156 Other FS activities
3 Enforcement notices
5 Prohibition notices



About us

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is one of the largest fire and rescue services in the country, covering an area over 1,400 square miles and a population of 1.8 million people. We provide prevention, protection and emergency response services from 51 fire stations, including Urban Search and Rescue, staffed by wholetime and on-call firefighters. Our Service Headquarters are based at Kelvedon Park, where our mobilising Control Centre is also located.

Essex is a county of contrasts. It contains numerous ecologically important areas and manages one of the largest sections of coastline (350 miles) in the country. There are various conservation areas and more than 14,000 listed buildings. It has complex industrial sites, densely populated urban environments, and remote rural areas. Essex is an attractive place to live and work and has excellent transport links and leisure opportunities. Many people live within Essex and move to the area for employment.

The Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (referred to as the Authority) became responsible for the fire and rescue service from 1 October 2017.

Vision

Our vision is to make Essex a safe place to live, work and travel.

Our Values

We are open, honest and trustworthy

We respect and honour all we do for the Service and our colleagues, being transparent and consistent in our communications and throughout our work.

We are courageous in everything we do

Having the confidence to always own our part and not be a bystander in order to progress and learn from our experiences. **#JustOwnIt**

We work as one team

All in it together to deliver a safer Service and a safer Essex.
What part do you play?

We are always professional

We proudly stay ahead of the game by embracing training and development, continually learning, while delivering professional standards to efficiently serve our community.

We value the contribution of all

We create an inclusive and non-judgemental environment that respects people as individuals and embraces diversity.

We value everyone equally, create opportunities and celebrate our successes.

Integrated Risk Management Planning

The Essex Resilience Forum is a multi-agency partnership, made up of local councils, emergency services, health providers, the voluntary sector and many more organisations – working together to plan and prepare for a multi-agency response to a major emergency. The Forum produces the Community Risk Register which assesses the likelihood and impact of a range of hazards occurring in Essex. The Resilience Forum uses its own professional judgement along with guidance from the National Risk Register, to develop the Community Risk Register. The national register is produced by the Government using historical and scientific data, and the professional judgements of experts to analyse the risks to the UK.

Essex's Community Risk Register identifies the single and multi-agency emergency issues and situations where a risk may be increasing or decreasing in our county. It helps highlight any gaps in organisational ability to respond to an emergency and indicates what response is required.

A Service specific Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAOR) brings together historical data, known risks and includes appropriate horizon scanning. The document cross-references the risks identified to the Community Risk Register.

In October 2015, the Fire and Rescue Authority agreed new attendance standards, and in June 2016 the Authority approved a new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2016 to 2020, which agreed service changes.

Fire and Rescue Statement

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions. Every Authority must publish an annual statement of assurance of compliance as required by the National Framework.

For Authorities such as Essex, this statement is subject to scrutiny by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and is called the 'Fire and Rescue Statement'. The statement outlines the way in which the Authority and its fire and rescue service has had regard – in the period covered by the document 2017/18 – to this National Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and to any strategic plan prepared by the Authority for that period. The authority must also provide assurance to their community and to the Government on financial, governance and operational matters.

Governance Change

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Authority replaced the former Essex Fire Authority in October 2017, and the PFCC is now responsible for oversight of our Service, setting the strategy and budget, as well as holding our Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive to account.

The PFCC has published a Constitution, which sets out how decisions are made, and the procedures that are followed to ensure these are efficient and transparent. The PFCC is directly elected and accountable to local people.

Our Year in Pictures

2017



April:
Launch of our Day in the Life of a Colleague
 People from across our Service experienced first-hand the role of a firefighter by riding with a watch for the day, as well as having the opportunity to visit different departments.



June:
One Team response in Essex to the Grenfell Tower incident
 Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London, teams of our firefighters, community officers and volunteers from across our Service visited residents of all 270 high-rise buildings in Essex to provide fire safety advice.



August:
Large fire at Basildon Warehouse
 One of the largest fires of 2017 took place at a packaging and distribution warehouse in Basildon. Fifteen fire engines and a number of specialist appliances attended the incident, where firefighters worked quickly and professionally to stop it spreading.

May:
UKRO Extrication Challenge Regional win
 Our Service's Extrication Team finished first place in the Durham regional United Kingdom Rescue Organisation Extrication Challenge, winning the best overall team.



July:
Joint governance changes announced by the Home Office
 The Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd MP announced that Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) Roger Hirst would become the first in the country to take on responsibility for a fire and rescue service.



September:
Launch of Virtual Reality Road Safety experience
 We launched our new virtual reality headsets that position the user in the passenger seat of a car in the build-up to and in the aftermath of a serious road traffic collision (RTC).



2018



October:
Roger Hirst officially becomes the first Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in the country taking on joint governance of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and Essex Police. This new arrangement replaces the Fire Authority and supports closer collaboration between the two services.



December:
A Firefighter and Station Manager recognised
 Our staff were recognised for their brave and quick-thinking actions at a road traffic incident on the A12.



February:
Launch of our wholtime recruitment campaign
 In less than three hours, more than 1,000 applications were received for our wholtime firefighter vacancies. The successful applicants have now completed their basic training and have begun their operational duties.

November:
Our People Awards
 We recognised the teams and individuals who had made an outstanding contribution to the Service at our first ever Celebrating our People Awards. Award categories included excellence in innovation, outstanding service delivery, contribution to community safety and employee of the year.



January:
Special Performance Recognition Awards launch
 Every day across our Service, firefighters, control and support staff go beyond the necessities of their role to make Essex a safe place to live, work and travel. Our Special Performance Recognition Awards celebrate these amazing people.



March:
Thaxted Surround the Town Partnership Event
 A hugely successful three-day partnership event took place in Thaxted where a total of 1,215 domestic properties were visited and 65 home fire safety visits were completed.



Performance in Summary

The Performance and Resources Board considers performance on a monthly basis. A detailed report is published annually on our website. A summary of our Service's performance against key performance measures set by the previous Authority are shown in table below with further detail in the following sections about how we are progressing against our objectives.

Summary of performance against key performance indicators.

Indicator	Target	Performance	Commentary
Average time to attend a potentially life threatening incident	10 minutes	10 minutes 37 seconds	Going forward the Service would like to see more effective implementation of the Mixed Crewing and Additional Shift Working policies to increase appliance availability. That, coupled with a need to increase in On-call recruitment and retention through the Service completing work which has already been started on new contracts for our On-call staff, should lead to reduced response times and more effective performance against the current standard.
The percentage of incidents attended within 15 minutes	90%	87%	
The number of accidental dwelling fires	799	836	We have increased the number of technicians who deliver home fire safety advice, and last year we undertook 8,829 Home Fire Safety Visits.
The number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions	977*	943	We deliver a range of activities through Safer Essex Roads Partnership including: FireBikes, Community Wheels, Ford Driving Simulator, Fire Car, Virtual Reality Road Safety.
The number of fires in non-residential properties	440	406	We completed 1,290 audits of non-residential properties and issued 3 enforcement notices and 5 prohibition notices.
The number of school children who received safety messages	100% (by 2020)	72%	Our Education Officers deliver both fire and police safety messages to school children across the county. The collaboration between ECFRS and Essex Police began in 2016 and our education team have been delivering joint messages since 2017, ranging from fire safety to cyber security.
The percentage of homes which have a working smoke alarm	100% (by 2020)	91%	In 2017, we undertook a survey to identify the level of smoke alarm ownership in Essex to understand the groups of people who are less likely to have an alarm. This has allowed us to target our safety messages to those who need it most.

Key:

- More than 10% worse than target
- Less than 10% worse than target
- Better than target

* The target has been adjusted to allow for the CRASH effect. The new system introduced in 2015 improved the accuracy of casualty recording and resulted in an increase in reported serious injury casualties.



People and Leadership

We are committed to valuing our people and the work they do. A key strand of this has been the introduction of a scheme for rewarding and recognising the contributions made by individuals and teams who go above and beyond the normal expectations of their role. The plans for the Celebrating Our People Awards culminated during quarter three with more than 90 nominations made across seven categories by colleagues from across our Service. Shortlisting took place during October and the panel scored all the award entries against set criteria. The awards ceremony was held on 16 November 2017 and was an opportunity to recognise some incredible individuals and teams who work every day to make Essex safe.

A Special Performance Recognition Scheme was launched during quarter four to recognise those staff who have given an exceptional personal investment to the Service through their work, living our Service values and contributing to our vision. Nominations can be made at any time and by any member of staff, individual or teams. This ensures that recognition continues throughout the year. During February we received 18 nominations. One individual was awarded a silver award and four individuals received bronze awards. In March we received 10 nominations which resulted in seven winners, with one individual winning a silver and two teams and an individual receiving bronze.

The Dignity at Work Policy was launched in May 2017 and defines acts of bullying and harassment making clear what is considered as unacceptable behaviour. We are developing a group of 50 employees to act as Dignity at Work Champions and training courses have been held throughout quarter three and four. Our Dignity at Work Champions form part of a network to enable peer support led by our Inclusion and Diversity Lead.

CASE STUDY

A firefighter from Orsett Fire Station was travelling along the A13 on 20 March when he came across the aftermath of a road traffic collision, which had left someone trapped under a car.

Despite being off duty, he took control of the situation, calmed those at the scene, notified emergency services and began giving CPR.

He had no obligation to stop and intervene in what was a very difficult situation, but offered a calm, caring and professional approach nonetheless.

In doing so, he truly lived our Service values and showed an incredible desire to help others whenever and wherever the need arises. The fiancé of the man involved, who sadly passed away, arranged to meet with him to express her gratitude for his actions – the same reason why his Watch Manager nominated him for an award.

We create forums for regular feedback on our talent, their strengths and suitability for promotion and identify future opportunities for development.

In early 2018, the performance appraisal process was simplified. A range of additional tools were provided, and the emphasis has been on meaningful conversations. These changes have made a positive difference to the completion rate, which increased from 41% to 65%.

We are developing high-performing, high-potential employees with the potential to be able to assume greater responsibilities when opportunities become available in our Service. During quarter two, we launched the first stage of our Talent Pool process for Crew Managers and Station Managers. The Area Manager for Prevention, Protection and Response Policy was also appointed during quarter two.

During quarter three, the Talent Pool for all employees was launched. The supervisory manager level received 120 applications from across our Service. The next stage of the Talent Pool process focused on the middle manager level, and launched at the end of March 2018.

We will ensure that our Service reflects the diversity of our communities

We know that we are not as diverse as we need to be in order to reflect the communities we serve. This is important to us as we recognise the value diversity brings.

It enriches our perspective, and broadens the skills and attributes required of a high performing organisation. Our Inclusion and Diversity Group is working with our staff to collectively drive long-term change we need to see happen to create a workplace where people from all backgrounds want to work and build sustainable careers.

We understand that unconscious bias can influence decisions in recruitment, promotion and performance management. Unconscious bias training was held during quarter two and quarter three to help us better understand its impact and what we can do about it. The purpose of the training was to challenge our natural unconscious biases and make us more aware of them.



Prevention

We are committed to helping keep people safe when they travel in and through the county. Working in an effective partnership with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP), we aim to reduce death and serious injury on Essex roads to zero, which is an ambitious vision.

SERP's purpose is to reduce death and serious injury on the road to zero (Vision Zero) and it will be appreciated that this is an ambitious vision. SERP has set a challenging interim target to reduce RTC killed or seriously injured casualties (KSIs) by 40% by 2020 (from the 2005-2009 baseline average). This equates to 607 fewer deaths and serious injuries.



SERP is successful and effective at ensuring a co-ordinated collaborative approach to reducing RTC KSIs. All road safety activity within Essex across all partners is articulated in an annual Joint Road Safety Delivery Plan (JRSDP), built around key road user risk groups.

The work of SERP and the focus of the JRSDP ensures a targeted approach, removes duplication of effort, exploits the strengths of individual partners and ensures consistency.

As an emergency response service, we are regularly called upon to deal with the aftermath of RTCs with our highly trained firefighters and specialist equipment. We take prevention and protection seriously, so we actively seek to prevent RTCs from occurring in the first place through quality education and engagement activities as we know in the majority of cases, death and injury can be prevented through better education, awareness and responsibility of all road users. In 2017, our RTC reduction teams attended around 370 separate events, engaging with almost 40,000 road users.

We seek to influence driving/riding behaviour to reduce death and injury caused by RTCs. We have a range of products, initiatives and activities designed specifically to engage with and educate road users about the risks and potential consequences of using the roads. These include:

- **FireBikes:** used to promote motorcycle safety and reduce collisions and injuries. Our team delivers rider skills and roadcraft training through our 'Better Biking' and 'Advanced Machine Skills' courses.
- **Community Wheels:** our bespoke multi-media classroom/display vehicle is used to deliver road safety education to a wide audience in their own localities.
- **Ford Driving Simulator:** a fully immersive driving simulator using half of a Ford Fiesta with full panoramic projection screens to create a realistic experience for young prospective and newly qualified drivers.
- **Fire Car:** an Audi S3 performance car used to promote road safety risk and consequence particularly, but not exclusively, to young performance/modified car enthusiasts.
- **Virtual Reality Road Safety:** cutting-edge virtual reality headsets used to provide a truly immersive experience of being involved in an RTC and the emergency response in the aftermath.

Our road safety and RTC reduction activities relate to all road users. However, through data analysis we particularly focus on the highest risk groups - motorcycles and other powered two wheelers; young car drivers and their passengers; and children and young people; pedestrians and cyclists.

We will educate young people in Essex, so they become safer adults. 100% of schoolchildren are delivered an age appropriate safety message.

Our Schools Programme

In 2017/18 our Service visited 81% of schools in Essex and delivered 1,744 lessons on a variety of safety topics. During this period, we interacted with a total of 202,281 of the 282,769 students in Essex (72%).

Core programmes

(offered to all schools):

Year 3: Home Safety

(fire safety and stranger awareness)

Year 6: Cyber Safety

Year 7: Arson and Hoax call prevention
(linking in with anti-social behaviour)

Year 7: Pedestrian Safety

Year 8: Home Safety
(fire safety and home security)

Year 9: Healthy relationships
(linking in with domestic abuse, consent, sexting, CSE)

All year groups: Firework /Halloween safety

(linking in with antisocial behaviour)

Summer Safety assemblies (field fires, water safety, pedestrian/bike safety)

Juvenile Fire-setters

The Juvenile Fire-setter Scheme (JFS) is a free service that aims to deter children from becoming involved in fire-setting behaviour. Our trained advisors can offer help and guidance to young people up to and including 17 years of age. Our advisors work in pairs and can visit children in their homes, at school or a designated place of safety. The scheme began in 1997 and since then we have engaged with thousands of children. Between April 2017 and March 2018, we were referred 90 cases, which had a 94% success rate. If after one/two visits a child is considered at low risk of further fire setting, the case is closed. If the child is not re-referred to us, the case is marked as a successful intervention.

Fire Cadets

Our Fire Cadet programme is a nationally recognised three-year programme at six fire stations across Essex, including Clacton, Harlow, Great Baddow, Southend, Orsett and Dovercourt.

The programme includes taking part in lots of fire service related activities such as; hose running, ladder pitching, pumping, breathing apparatus search and rescue, team building exercises, first aid and team work.

Fire Cadets also have the opportunity to work towards Duke of Edinburgh Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards – for which we are a Centre of Excellence.



Firebreak

We are proud to work with a number of partners every year to help them to improve the lives and increase the confidence and self-esteem of people they work with.

This includes groups such as:

- Ages 10-12, 13-17, 18 onwards
- Gifted and talented
- Those who need confidence and self-esteem
- Those who would benefit from a diversionary mentoring scheme – breaking the cycle
- As a reward for good behaviour
- Those demonstrating risky behaviours

During 2017/18, we delivered up to 80 courses, working with vulnerable people in our communities, as well as offenders and victims.

We keep people safe in their workplaces and at leisure in Essex.

Our Technical Fire Safety (TFS) Team plays a key role in the management and enforcement of fire safety regulations for non-domestic premises in Essex. Our team conducts audits, provides advice and works with the responsible person(s) to make improvements, where necessary.

All inspecting officers working within our TFS department are highly skilled and hold BTEC Level 4 Diplomas in Fire Safety. In addition to this, we have three Fire Engineers who hold both Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Fire Engineering. These officers' skills are used within the county on complex projects and are also contracted to provide advice on fire safety engineering matters both within the region and nationally. The engineers have been used to provide expert evidence in court, both from a fire safety and a fire investigation perspective.

Our team also works with building control standards to ensure new buildings are developed to a safe standard. We will progress this further as part of the outcomes from the national review commissioned following the Grenfell Tower fire: Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety by Dame Judith Hackitt.

Wherever possible we seek to work with our communities and businesses to keep them safe, however, at times we need to use our enforcement powers under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

During 2017/18, we conducted 1290 audits and served three prohibition notices on businesses across Essex.

CASE STUDY

In 2017/18, a prosecution took place against a restaurant in Tilbury, after a long running case lasting two years. The court case took place in October 2017 and was for failure to comply with the requirements of a prohibition notice. The responsible person was found guilty on two counts and received a suspended prison sentence.

Safety messages relevant to all potentially life threatening calls attended by our Service are shared with the communities we are here to serve.

Our Corporate Communications and Marketing Team proactively identify opportunities where relevant and timely safety messages are partnered with information about recent incidents, giving clear calls to action to help keep the communities of Essex safe.

Safety information is shared on our website and through our social media channels, linking to more information around the particular cause of the incident or campaign message.

In 2017, our website received nearly two million page views – 1,750,945 – and our incident page had 442,319 page views.

Response to Grenfell – our commitment to reassuring our high-rise residents

The incident at Grenfell Tower in London serves as a reminder of the perilous nature of the job that firefighters do across the UK as they run towards danger to respond to potentially life-threatening incidents.

Across Essex, Southend and Thurrock, we have 270 high-rise buildings. We define a high-rise building as one that is four floors and above:

- 53 buildings are 10+ floors
- 217 are 4-9 floors high

Following the incident, residents in high-rise premises across Essex were understandably concerned about their safety. Our Service moved quickly so that every high-rise resident in every high-rise building was provided with reassurance, as well as information about the Stay Put Policy.

Our One Team approach included an increase in resources to high rise fire safety:

- Technical Fire Audits conducted by our TFS Team. Premises identified with aluminium composite material were visited and interim safety measures put into place.
- Community Safety reassurance visits - fifty of our non-operational staff also volunteered their time to support firefighters and our Community Safety Team in visiting high-rise premises across the county to advise residents; explaining the 'stay put' policy and ensuring their safety concerns were allayed after such a major incident.

Firefighters across the county were instrumental in the visits taking place.

- A communications campaign launched, including press interviews, production of high-rise safety leaflets, an animation and a British Sign Language video, as well as live Facebook conversations with Essex residents.

Live in a high-rise building?

Most high-rise blocks of flats have a "stay put" policy in the event of a fire. You should have been provided with this information when you moved in, however you can also find out your building's policy direct with the management company/council who own the building.

If there is a fire in **your flat**:

- follow your escape plan: get everyone out, stay out, call 999
- close all doors behind you as you leave to contain the fire
- walk down the nearest stairs or through the nearest fire exit. DO NOT use the lift.

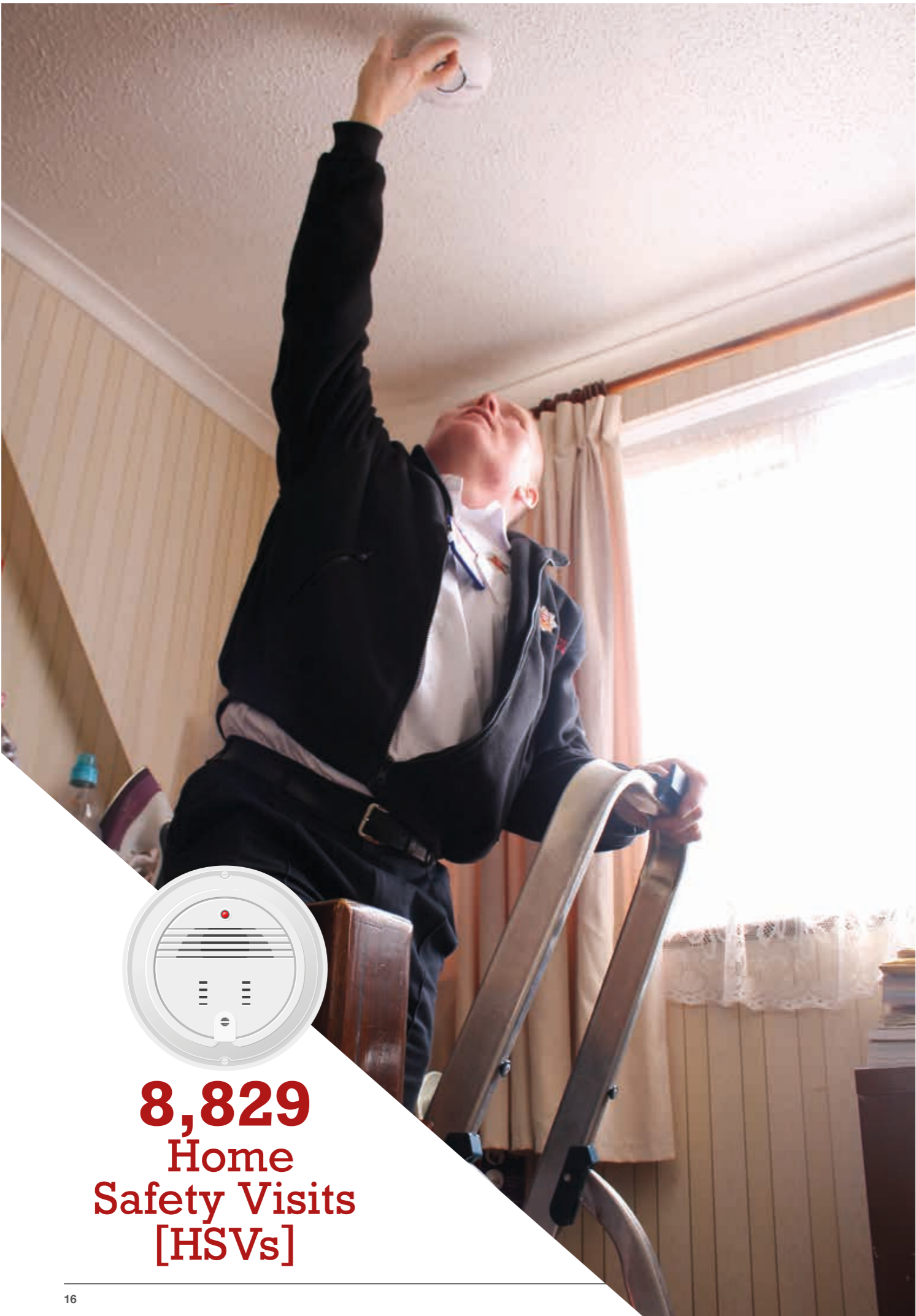
If there is a fire, but **not in your flat (and your flat is unaffected by heat or smoke)**:

- close your doors and windows
- stay put unless advised by the fire service
- call the fire service on 999 – NEVER assume that someone else has already done so – you could save someone's life.

If trapped in your flat by fire:

- get everyone to the safest room within the flat, furthest from the smoke/heat entry point is best
- call the fire service on 999 – and tell us your flat and floor number.

If the fire service needs to fully evacuate the building they will knock door-to-door.



Protection

We keep people - including the elderly and vulnerable – safe in their homes protected by a working smoke alarm, and for higher risk buildings, a sprinkler.

Sprinklers

We see the promotion of sprinklers as important, not only in protecting vulnerable people, but also in protecting businesses and the vital community infrastructure.

There is overwhelming evidence that the risk to human life in fires can be minimised through the installation of automatic water suppression systems.

CASE STUDY

Colchester's Enoch House now has sprinklers fitted, thanks to part funding by our Service. The sheltered housing scheme in Magnolia Drive, Colchester, has 36 flats and is run by Colchester Borough Homes on behalf of Colchester Borough Council.

Following an extensive refurbishment project, the building and individual flats now have the excellent fire protection of sprinklers.

The sprinkler systems work automatically, so if a fire breaks out the system sprays water into the affected room to contain and extinguish the fire.

Home Safety Visits

We deliver Home Safety Visits (HSVs) to residents across Essex, upon request, to reduce the risk from accidental dwelling fires. The visit is carried out by dedicated technicians and operational crews.

The visit includes providing the occupier with general fire safety advice such as electrical and kitchen safety, as well as offering guidance on night time routines and a fire action plan. We recently introduced an enhanced Home Safety Visit – Safe, Well and Secure Visits – which encompass fire safety, health, wellbeing and home security messages.



Smoke alarms are also provided and fitted, at no cost to the occupier, if it is deemed necessary.

You can book a visit – call 0300 303 088 or visit essex-fire.gov.uk/book

NUMBER OF HOME SAFETY VISITS						
Type	Technicians	Parish Safety Volunteers	Volunteers	Community Safety Officers	Station Personnel	Total
2016/17	6882	455	1001	463	223	9024
2017/18	6713	511	1100	141	49	8829

The demand for Home Safety Visits understandably increased from May 2017 following the Grenfell Tower fire. Community Safety Officers provided our Service two full days a week to conduct HSVs, and this came to an end in the latter part of 2017.

Technician numbers have increased from five full-time to nine full-time as of February 2018, increasing our capacity to deliver HSVs to make Essex safe.



8,829
Home
Safety Visits
[HSVs]

Our Volunteers

We are grateful for the support of our volunteers, who between them gave more than 6,000 hours of support to our Service and the public of Essex 2017/18. Volunteers complement the work of our staff, and Home Safety Volunteers accounted for 20% of all visits in 2017/18.

The Essex Fire Museum relies heavily on volunteers. The Museum’s 10-year anniversary open day saw the biggest turn out yet with 800 visitors. Overall open days at the museum saw 3,849 visitors, up by 1,617 from 2,232 visitors in 2016/17.

BREAKDOWN OF VOLUNTEER HOURS AGAINST ACTIVITIES					
Year	Home Safety Visits	Community Safety activities	Museum	Training	Total
2016/17	2887	2043	2160	566	7656
2017/18	2731	1560	1872	372	6535



CASE STUDY

Essex Fire Museum, which is based at Grays Fire Station, gives visitors the opportunity to take a fascinating look at the history of the Fire and Rescue Service here in Essex - housing a collection featuring historic fire engines, firefighting equipment, uniforms and photographs. Visitors to the museum will see for themselves how firefighting has changed over the years as technology has advanced.

Collected and curated by retired firefighter Roger Pickett, the museum provides a fascinating look back in to the history of the fire service and the men and women who fought fires to keep the public safe.

Further information about the Museum is available on our website.

Strategic After Incident Response (SAIR)

A SAIR is undertaken following a serious or fatal fire in a dwelling. Community Safety engagement staff will allow a respectful period before entering the community to gather relevant information about the incident. We work closely with other emergency services and partners, such as the Local Authority, to build a picture of the circumstances that led to the fire. This is then used in collaboration with partners, so we can act to minimise the likelihood of similar fires occurring elsewhere in the county.

After Incident Response (AIR)

Our Community Safety engagement team monitors the Incident Reporting System (IRS) on a daily basis to identify any fires that have occurred in domestic premises or sheltered accommodation. The surrounding areas of a property are identified on a map and sent to the relevant Station/Watch for action. The Station/Watch will carry out a local door-knocking exercise to have a conversation about the fire and to offer our HSV advice to reduce the risk. All HSV referrals are recorded and sent to our admin team to arrange the visit.

CASE STUDY

A recent SAIR indicated that a person who tragically died in house fire was in receipt of care at the time of the incident, and that emollients, such as moisturisers, were a contributing factor to the fire.

Our Service is now in the process of engaging with domiciliary care managers and teams to highlight the flammability risk of emollients and raise awareness of an e-learning package for carers to identify and reduce fire risks to their clients and refer into our Service.

Reassurance and our Home Safety Visits are also offered to the community, along with talks to groups on fire safety to reduce risk within these areas.



Response

We ensure the safety of our firefighters at all operational incidents, regardless of the nature and scale and that those with responsibility for incident command decision-making are consistently competent to undertake that role. We recognise the need to invest in order to ensure that our operational personnel have the necessary access to training facilities to support their development and maintenance of operational competence.

Our Response Strategy details how we will respond to positively impact on resolving an incident and effectively mitigate the impact of an emergency to the Essex community.

We deal with incidents safely and effectively and ensure that for every known high-risk location in Essex there is an up-to-date and effective Tactical Fire Plan (TFP), where the content is understood by those who are most likely to enforce it.

The highest risk premises across Essex require a Tactical Fire Plan, which contains all the relevant information about a premise that enables the Officer in Charge to develop an operational plan to tackle a fire incident.

We have 56 TFPs in place, which are reviewed and exercised (either practically or table top) each year. The TFPs are managed at station level and are submitted after review to Operations Policy to update operational risk information and to ensure consistency.

We ensure that lessons learned from all operational incidents, regardless of the nature and scale, are captured, fed back and acted upon. Debriefing allows reflection on how the incident was tackled for valuable learning and improvement of operational decision-making. Learning outcomes are used to improve, amend or review existing policies, procedures and inform future planning to ensure optimal performance. Examples include new guidance on radio usage and

trials of new equipment for gaining entry to premises.

In 2017/18 there were 87 debriefs carried out by our Service.

Debriefs	2017/18
Level 1 Operational debriefs	27
Level 2 Strategic debriefs	7
Level 3 Tactical debriefs	53
Total	87

We maximise the availability and utilisation of resources within our operational response model.

During 2017/18 our fire engines had 85% availability.

Our Central Resourcing Team (CRT) and our Control Team consistently monitor the availability and levels of resource within Essex. This includes those at station ready to respond and those already attending incidents across the county.

The CRT pre-plan activity around moves to cover shortfalls in staffing at stations by using off-duty firefighters to cover shifts.

2016/17	2017/18	Trend	Target	Target
86%	85%	Away from target	94%	Off target

When required, we respond quickly to those in need.

Our Control Team monitor these shifts prior to them starting and arrange through a dynamic system of moving staff from station-to-station to cover any shortfall that has occurred.

During an operational incident, Control will monitor resources and specialist resources to ensure that stations and areas are covered appropriately. This is completed by moving cover around the county or from other counties if appropriate.

To get first attendance to an incident within 15 minutes on 90% of occasions

2016/17	2017/18	Trend	Target	Target
88%	87%	Away from target	90%	Off target

In 2017/18, 87.2% of incidents were attended within 15 minutes, which was marginally lower than 2016/17.

To get our first attendance to a potentially life-threatening incident within an average of 10 minutes

2016/17	2017/18	Trend	Target	Target
10.35	10.37	Away from target	10.00	Off target

During 2017/18, there were 4,594 incidents that were classed as potentially life threatening. The average response time to these calls was 10 minutes and 37 seconds.

The Service regularly monitors performance on the number of factors which are influencing the current response times. The Service continues

to work on its mobilising software to ensure that the fastest, most appropriate, resource is being allocated and that our call management provides an accurate picture of the call times, with the times always reflecting the call that instigated a resource being mobilised rather than when a first initial call was received (some calls do not require an immediate response on first call to i.e. some animal rescues) as this has been identified as a factor which has had a detrimental effect on our average response times. Another key factor would be the availability of appliances. Going forward the Service would like to see more effective implementation of the mixed crewing and additional shift working policies to increase appliance availability. That, coupled with a need to increase in on-call recruitment and retention through the Service completing work which has already been started on new contracts for our on-call staff, should lead to reduced response times and more effective performance against the current standards.

Injuries during operational incidents

In 2017/18 there was a 31% reduction – 16 fewer people – injured during operational incidents compared to 2016/17.

INJURED PERSONS AT OPERATIONAL INCIDENTS							
Year	Injuries at Fire		Injuries at Road Traffic Collisions		Injuries at other Special Services		Total
	Wholetime	On-call	Wholetime	On-call	Wholetime	On-call	
2016/17	19	9	7	0	11	5	51
2017/18	17	9	2	1	6	0	35

INJURED PERSONS AT NON-OPERATIONAL INCIDENTS							
Year	Operational Training		Fitness Training		Injuries During Routine Activities		Total
	Wholetime	On-call	Wholetime	On-call	Wholetime	On-call	
2016/17	15	8	3	1	10	3	40
2017/18	16	0	5	0	23	3	47

2017/18 saw an increase of seven injured persons during non-operational incidents compared to 2016/17.

There has also been an increase in minor injuries reported, including 26 injuries during routine activities. The majority of these are made up of: five manual handling, eight slips, trips and falls, and four illness/medical reasons.

Public Value and Collaboration

In 2017/18, the Authority's total planned net expenditure was £70.1m. The end of year position is set out within the following table, which compares actual net expenditure with the approved budget.

Just over half (61%) of the Service's net expenditure is funded by council tax, payable by householders in Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. The balance of funding is provided by central government, through a share of non-domestic rates and revenue support grants. Specific grants provided by the Government, for example to support the Authority's Urban Search and Rescue unit, are included in operational income.

Our total funding for 2017/18 was £70.4 million
[of which 61% is funded by council tax]



2016/17		2017/18		
Actual £000	Net Revenue expenditure	Latest Approved Budget £000	Actual Expenditure £000	Variance overspend (underspend) £000
30,560	Firefighters	29,345	29,545	200
5,612	On Call Firefighters	5,843	5,395	(448)
1,272	Control	1,392	1,364	(28)
12,474	Support Staff	13,442	13,992	550
49,918	Total Employment Costs	50,022	50,296	274
4,590	Support Costs	1,954	2,200	246
9,394	Premises & Equipment	10,325	9,866	(459)
4,070	Other Costs & Services	3,668	3,681	13
2,201	Ill health pension costs	2,118	2,185	67
1,506	Lease and Interest Charges	1,552	1,432	(120)
5,203	Statutory Provision for Capital Financing	5,969	5,150	(819)
(1,580)	Contribution from Capital Receipts Reserve	(1,361)	-	1,361
-	Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(338)	351	689
25,384	Total Other Costs	23,887	24,865	978
75,302	Total Gross Expenditure	73,909	75,161	1,252
(3,993)	Operational Income	(3,781)	(4,800)	(1,019)
71,309	Total Net Expenditure Outturn	70,128	70,361	233
	Funding			
14,230	Revenue Support Grant	11,033	11,033	-
14,975	Non Domestic Rates	15,427	15,699	272
880	Council Tax Collection Account	846	846	-
41,224	Council Tax Precepts	42,822	42,783	(39)
71,309	Total Funding	70,128	70,361	233

Financial Assurance

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that our Service's business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Authority also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way our Service's functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Statement of Accounts includes an Annual Governance Statement that sets out a review of the key financial controls. The Statement of Accounts for the financial year that ended on 31 March 2018 was published on 31 July 2018.

The governance arrangements include an independent internal audit function, delivered under contract by RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP. The internal auditor has responsibility to review and report to the independent audit committee annually, to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Service's arrangements for governance, risk management and control. An overall adequate and effective opinion was given for 2017/18.

In addition to their audit certificate, Ernst and Young LLP report on their conclusion on the Service's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

Ernst and Young LLP issued an unqualified opinion on the financial statements. They confirmed that the Service had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2018.

Collaboration

Working collaboratively is important to us as a Service. We already do a great deal of partnership working and, we know that together, we can often achieve great things more efficiently.

Alongside Essex Police and East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust, we are exploring how our skills and resources are used in the most effective way for the people of Essex.

Leaders from all three organisations have signed up to the Emergency Services Collaborative vision: Working together, we will deliver safe and secure communities to enable people to thrive.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 gave emergency services a statutory duty to consider collaboration in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness. Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and the Office of the PFCC have created a collaborative team to explore how the police and fire service can work together more to provide an even better service to the people of Essex.

There is a well-established Emergency Services Collaboration Programme which is actively exploring opportunities for collaboration through a number of tactical and strategic projects.

Tactical projects

- Essex Risk Intervention Service (ERIS)
- Rural engagement initiatives
- Keeping strategic roads open
- Duke of Edinburgh Scheme for Police Cadets
- Joint Education Team
- Develop use of Firebreak as a Restorative Justice tool

Strategic projects

- One Public Estate. The Cabinet Office and Local Government Association's national programme has awarded funding for property-focused projects.
- Co-use of fire stations
 - Joint classroom training
 - Specialist capabilities

The business case for joint governance of Police and Fire in 2017 outlined a number of areas for collaboration projects.

- Control room
- Joint procurement initiatives
- Fleet workshops/management
- Facilities management
- Shared enterprise resource management

A number of joint Chief Officer workshops for Police, Fire and Ambulance agreed the scoping of the following projects at the beginning of 2018:

- Community Safety Hubs
- Joint community safety
- Ambulance Cadet Force /Joint Leadership
- Increased resources in the Dengie Peninsula
- Joint ICT Strategy



Assurance

Mutual aid

The Authority has formal mutual aid agreements for incidents close to the county's boundaries with the Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority, Hertfordshire and Suffolk County Councils and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

Business Continuity

Business continuity plans to maintain firefighting activities during periods of industrial action or severe staff shortages are in place. The business continuity plans provide for a number of appliances to be crewed, together with specialist appliances, such as aerial ladder platforms.

National Resilience

Within Essex, our Service has a range of vehicles and equipment that form part of a national capability and framework of assets. These assets are positioned within Fire Services across the country to provide emergency response and have the capability to deal with large scale and widespread incidents.

These vehicles and the associated equipment can also be used locally for incidents when appropriate and provide a valuable additional resource for the county.

Specifically, our Service has the following specialist capabilities supporting the national infrastructure:

- Urban Search and Rescue units provide a capability to deal with major incidents both in Essex, the UK and overseas.
- High volume pumps that can be used for widespread flooding incidents where greater pumping capacity is required.
- Detection, Identification and Monitoring Unit that supports the identification of chemicals and other substances.
- In addition to this, our Service maintains specially trained officers to support national arrangements to deal with multi-agency security related incidents.

External Assurance

Our Service has engaged an external firm (RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP) to provide internal audit services. The Audit Committee agrees the annual audit plan of functional audits. These are completed and any recommendations generate action plans that are monitored by the Committee until completed.

Internal Assurance and Assessment

Risk management, control and governance comprise the policies, procedures and operations that have been established to ensure the achievement of objectives. Our Operational Assurance and Assessment team assesses the compliance with relevant legislation, regulations and guidance, and best practice; moreover, it also assesses compliance with the behavioural and ethical standards set for the organisation. Through a structured process, the Operational Assurance and Assessment team focus on key issues in five ways.

1. By producing an annual plan of the Fire Station assessments to be conducted during the year.
2. By undertaking additional reviews of specific areas of the organisation due to an emerging risk.
3. By directly monitoring the performance of Officers-in-Charge at operational incidents to ensure they have safe systems of work in place and share best practice.
4. Carrying out debriefs for all operational incidents in the spirit of being a learning organisation; local hot debriefs for small incidents, a more formal process for medium size incidents and multi-agency debriefs for large incidents using JESIP principles.
5. Using National Operational Learning (NOL) and creating a gap analysis for each significant national event to ensure lessons learned are adopted at our Service.

Key stakeholders within Operations, Health and Safety and Learning and Development are brought together through the Operational Assurance Group to review the findings of the Operational Assurance and Assessment Team. This ensures the arrangements in place for monitoring and measuring health, safety and welfare performance against predetermined plans and standards includes learning from incidents by using the information to improve operational performance and safe systems of work.

The Operational Assurance and Assessment Team sets out the process of how assessments will be undertaken in terms of its scope, individual responsibilities, operating framework, quality assurance and a code of conduct. The team then provides a reliable opinion on the management systems and processes by measuring performance against policies and standards and identifying areas for improvement.



Health and Safety

Our Service recognises and accepts the responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of our employees and undertakes to protect people, assets and the communities in which we work. To achieve this, we meet all relevant requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (together with all other statutory provisions associated with it) and supports staff in meeting their obligations under the act.

Detailed health, safety and welfare specific arrangements, based on the Health and Safety Executives methodology, are set out in our Health and Safety Policy and associated framework of policies, which have been developed to take relevant legislation, guidance and industry best practice into account. The policies provide employees with relevant and comprehensive information on the risks they face and the preventative and protective measures required to minimise them. Quarterly inspections are carried out on all our premises and any defects are reported and monitored until completed.

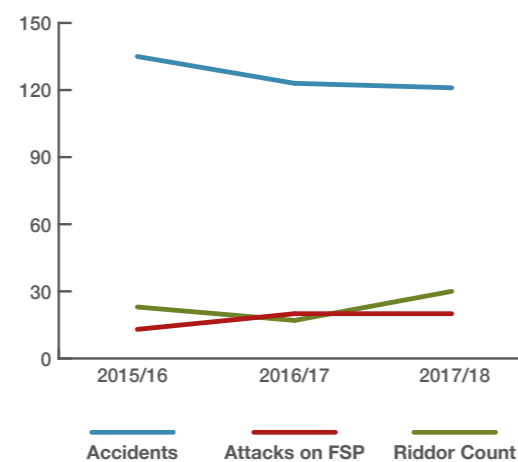
There is a shared common understanding of the Service's vision, values and beliefs and a positive health and safety culture is fostered by the visible and active leadership of Senior Managers. Our Health and Safety Team continually develops and improves systems for monitoring and improving the effectiveness of our Health and Safety Management Systems.

These processes include peer Health and Safety Audits. We were last audited in 2017 and an action plan has been created, which is monitored at the Health, Safety and Welfare Strategy Group which is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer for Prevention, Protection and Response. A productive relationship has been established between the Health and Safety Trade Union Safety Representatives and the Health and Safety Team. One Trade Union Safety Rep is seconded 50% of their time to work within the department to show our commitment to work together in an open and transparent environment.

Health and Safety in 2017/18

Over the last three years, there was a 10% reduction in accidents. This reduction is against a backdrop of 12% increase of incidents over the three-year period. Following a campaign to encourage reporting attacks on fire service employees, there has been an increase of 53% in three years. All were verbal abuse, and none related to physical violence or injury.

3 Year Comparison

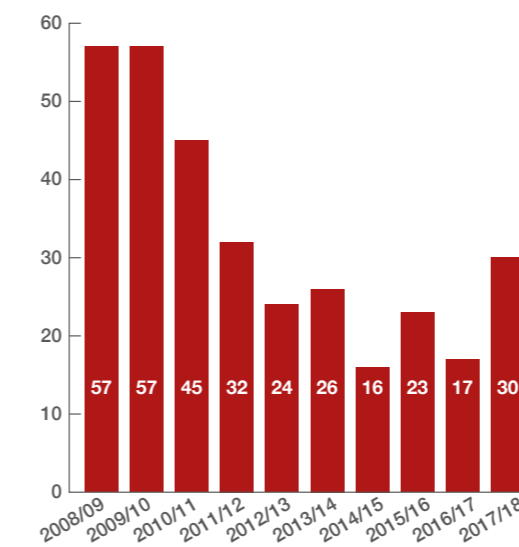


Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable incidents have increased by 30% over the last three years.

The 30 reported in 2017/18 consist of:

- 1 dangerous occurrence – breathing apparatus set malfunction.
- 1 – specified injury to a firefighter at an operational incident
- 4 – injuries to members of public – 1 car hit by a fire engine when on blue lights, 1 fall over water hydrant cover, 1 fall on stairs at Service Headquarters, 1 student on Better Biking course.
- 24 – over seven-day reports.

RIDDOR Count

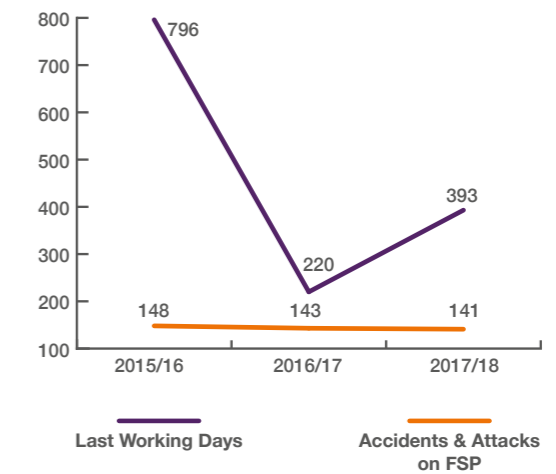


Although an increase from last year, the total number of lost working days due to accidents has decreased by 50% over the last three years.

The total number of working days lost to absence last year across our Service was 8,884. The total working days lost following accidents was 393. That means that days lost following accidents made up 4% of the total days lost to absence.

277 of the days lost following accidents were made up by 11 individuals who have been, or were long term absent from the workplace.

Last Working Days



Glossary

AIR	After Incident Response
BA	Breathing Apparatus
CRT	Central Resourcing Team
HSV	Home Safety Visit
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
JFS	Juvenile Fire-setters
PFCC	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
RTC	Road Traffic Collision
SAIR	Strategic After Incident Response
SAOR	Strategic Assessment of Risk
SERP	Safer Essex Roads Partnership
TFS	Technical Fire Safety
UKRO	United Kingdom Rescue Organisation

Contact details




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Witham
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CM8 3HB

Tel: 01376 576000
Tel: 0300 3035555

Book a Home Safety Visit

To report an emergency please call **999**

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