



Essex County  
Fire & Rescue Service

# **Our year in review:**

**Annual Report  
and Fire and  
Rescue Statement**

**2018/19**

## **Welcome to the Annual Report and Statement of Assurance for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.**

The report covers the financial year 2018/19, and includes highlights of the year, performance against our targets and how we are working to improve our service to you.

It incorporates the Fire Authority's Statement of Assurance. Under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, fire and rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters.



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# 2018/19

## Our year at a glance



### **April** New CFO/ CEX

Jo Turton joins ECFRS as Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive.



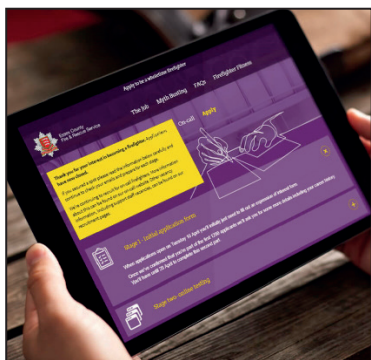
### **May** Firefighters Memorial Day

Chelmsford MP Vicky Ford joined our CFO at Chelmsford Fire Station to mark Firefighters Memorial Day.



### **June** Men's Health Week

Live well, feel well, work well: showing our support for all health awareness events.



### **July** On-call recruitment website launch

Our new website provides information, fitness tips, myth busting and a portal to apply online.



### **August** The power of social media

A story about parking over fire hydrants became the most popular post our Service has seen - engaging with over 150,000 people.



### **September** #OneTeam. New uniform for the Service

All our operational colleagues now wear the same uniform, supporting our #OneTeam value.



**October**  
New operational devices for appliances

New tablets and data terminals are rolled out across fire appliances.



**November**  
Long Service and Good Conduct

31 colleagues achieve 20 years Long Service and Good Conduct.



**December**  
Essex and London working together

ECFRS and LFB tested cross border working arrangements and equipment compatibility.



**January**  
Getting fire fit

Fitness team launches guide to help applicants reach firefighter fitness requirements.



**February**  
Fire and Rescue Plan launched

New Service strategy and first of it's kind in the country.



**March**  
New wholetime firefighters

Twelve new firefighters join the Essex fire family, making a total of 42 new wholetime firefighter joiners.

# A message from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst

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This report is the first to cover a full year since Essex introduced joint governance arrangements in October 2017. During this time we have been able to embed the new governance arrangements, increasing transparency of decision making and scrutiny of the Service. We have consolidated the sound financial position of the Service and developed our ability to identify, understand and manage risk. At the same time, working with partners, we have set a challenging, ambitious new vision for the Service.

In April 2018 I was pleased to welcome our new Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive Jo Turton. Jo brought with her a wealth of experience and expertise in managing complex organisations through significant change and has worked hard throughout the year to develop the Service and build a new Service Leadership Team.

Working with Jo and after considerable engagement with firefighters, staff, partners and the public, I was pleased to be able to launch the first Fire and Rescue Plan in the country in February 2019. This is our important strategic document that sets out an ambitious vision for the Fire and Rescue Service until 2024. The Plan details eight priorities which will guide the Service's activity, ensuring we deliver a suitable response while also working hard to prevent harm, protect the vulnerable and reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured across Essex. The Service is currently developing the Integrated Risk Management Plan which will set out how it will deliver against the priorities in the Plan.

In developing the Plan we had extensive engagement with partners both from the public and partners. A consistent theme

throughout these discussions was the desire from our partners to work closely with the Service to improve public safety, particularly for those who are the most vulnerable in society.

This shared desire to create safe and secure communities is also the driving force behind our collaboration with our emergency service partners. During this period the Service has continued to build on its existing collaboration and during the year opened **ADD NUMBER** drop in centres for police officers in Fire & Rescue Stations across the county. The Service has also continued its excellent school engagement programme in collaboration with Essex Police which has reached 82% of schools in Essex over the year.

A joint Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and East of England Ambulance Service Information Sharing Agreement has been developed and agreed. This is the first agreement of its kind relating to collaboration nationally and will enable services to undertake a wide range of new exciting projects.

I would finally like to thank all those in Essex County Fire and Rescue Service who work so hard, day in, day out, to make our county safe. From the many public events I attend, I know that the people of Essex value the Service's dedication and commitment.

I would also like to thank the many partners we work with and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel for their robust and challenging scrutiny.

# A message from the Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive Jo Turton



This period of this report covers my first full year as Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. It has been a tremendous year, where we have demonstrated that as a Service we are committed to deliver the highest standard of prevention, protection and response to our communities.

A significant development for us as a Service, and an important outcome for me as CFO in my first year was developing and delivering the new Fire and Rescue Plan alongside the PFCC. It sets a clear strategic framework for the next five years for our Service, and is the platform for the development of our ext Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

One of my priorities was to restructure our leadership team, ensuring we have a team that is right for our Service, and provides us with the resources we need to maximise the opportunities and overcome the challenges that lie ahead. This team is now in place, and their

We know that the best way of protecting our communities from fire and other emergencies is to prevent that emergency before it happens. We continue to focus on reaching our communities and engaging with them to keep them safe in their homes.

Last year we engaged with 82% of schools - delivering joint safety messages with Essex Police, we fitted 9,814 standard smoke alarms and we conducted 8,553 Safe and Well and Home Safety Visits. This is good, but my ambition is for this to be more. I want us to reach all our communities, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Last year we recruited wholetime firefighters for the first time in nine years. Our recruitment campaign was designed to bust all those myths that the public may have about the role of a firefighter. Welcome to our cohort of 42 firefighters who have joined our fire family following this recruitment.

As an organisation, we have been through some major changes in the last few years, but one thing has remained constant is the passion and professionalism that our staff and volunteers display. I would like to thank them for their support in achieving our mission to make Essex a safe place to live, work and travel.

And of course, thank you to our partners and our communities for continuing to engage with our Service. Your support and feedback is invaluable.

# About us

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) is one of the largest fire and rescue services in the country, serving a county which includes Stansted and Southend airports, Harwich seaport, Lakeside shopping centre, Coryton oil refinery, power stations, docks at Tilbury and parts of the M25 and M11 motorways.

ECFRS provides prevention, protection and emergency response services from 50 fire stations and an Urban Search and Rescue facility.

The organisation is administered from its headquarters at Kelvedon Park in Kelvedon, where the Service also has a mobilising control centre.

The Service is governed by Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Authority (referred to as the Authority).

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 over 14,000 listed buildings.





## Our mission

To make Essex a safe place to live, work and travel

## Our values

We are open, honest and trustworthy

We are courageous in everything we do

We work as one team

We are always professional

We value the contribution of all

## Our Structure Service Leadership Team

### Jo Turton

Chief Fire Officer/  
Chief Executive



### Rick Hylton

Deputy Chief Fire  
Officer



### Colette Black

ACEO People, Values  
and Culture



### Dave Bill

Director of Innovation,  
Risk and Future  
Development



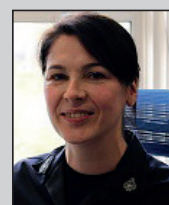
### Karl Edwards

Director of Corporate  
Services



### Moira Bruin

Director of Operations



# Our Strategy

## Fire and Rescue Plan

The Fire and Rescue Plan sets out the priorities Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, and a series of strong, tangible commitments to how we will help keep our communities safe.



### The priorities

- Prevention, protection and response
- Improve safety on our roads
- Help the vulnerable stay safe
- Promote a positive culture in the workplace
- Develop and broaden the roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service
- Be transparent, open and accessible
- Collaborate with our partners
- Make best use of our resources

# Our Plan

## Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2016-2020

As required by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 the Government outlines its expectations of English Fire & Rescue Services through the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities.

One of the Government's expectations is the assessment of local risks to life and how effectively resources are used in response to those risks, at the same time providing value for money to the local taxpayer – **this is called an Integrated Risk Management Plan.**

Our IRMP considers four key elements:

- What are the existing and potential risks in Essex?
- How effective are our current community risk management measures?
- What standards should be set for the Fire and Rescue Service's activities?
- What resources are necessary to meet those standards?

The plan was informed by two 12 week consultations to obtain the views and opinions of the public of Essex, partners and stakeholders, and of course our employees at the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

**This plan puts emphasis on prevention work, helping people avoid having fires and other emergencies, further reducing the demand on our response services, while still providing an effective and professional response service.**

As an Service that places serving our communities at the heart of everything we do, we have developed seven strategic commitments.

**Our IRMP 2016-2020 commitments:**

- Getting our first attendance to potentially life-threatening incidents within 10 minutes (on average) from the time we receive a call
- Getting our first attendance to all incidents within 15 minutes on 90% of occasions from the time we receive a call
- Giving safety messages to every school child in Essex
- Ensuring there is a working smoke alarm in every household
- Working with partner agencies to meet the other social needs of vulnerable members of our communities
- Supporting the installation of systems such as sprinklers to protect buildings and their occupants
- Working with drivers and riders to reduce the number of people killed or injured on our roads

## Progress against our IRMP 2016-2020

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 IRMP 2016-2020 are shown in the table below:

		Performance		
IRMP	Target	2018/19	2017/18	
Average time to attend a potentially life threatening incident	10 mins	10 mins 29 secs	10 mins 37 secs	Over the last year, the Service has seen an increase in average call handling times and in travel times. There has been an increase in on-call average turnout times due to reduced numbers of on-call staff.
Percentage of incidents attended within 15 minutes	90%	87%	87%	Going forward the Service would like to see more effective implementation of the Mixed Crewing and Additional Shift Working policies to increase appliance availability.
The number of schools who received safety messages	100% (by 2020)	82%	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 Essex homes with a working smoke alarm	100% (by 2020)	91%	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.

The number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions	977*	893	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.
Installation of sprinklers to protect buildings and their occupants	<p>The Authority match funds up to £250,000 per year for the installation of sprinklers.</p> <p>Last year, hundreds of people in Southend and Basildon were made safer than ever in their homes, thanks to sprinklers that were part-funded by our Service.</p> <p>In total, five properties in Southend and high-rise block of flats in Basildon have been fitted with the life-saving devices.</p>			
Work with partner agencies to meet social needs of vulnerable members of our communities	<p>Partnership working is one way in which ECFRS realises its ambitions and objectives.</p> <p><b>Community builder engagements</b></p> <p>Walk and Talk Dementia Group Surround the Town - Thaxted Street Weeks Winter Warmers</p> <p><b>Current Prevention partnerships</b></p> <p>Safer Essex Roads Partnership, UK Power Networks, CADENT, PROVIDE, Essex Cares, Independent Age, Public Health Essex, COMPACT, Careline, Connect Well, Anglia Water, University of Essex, Neighbourhood Watch, BOC, ACE, Essex Police</p>			

# Our Year 2018/19

Making Essex a safe place to  
live, work and travel

## Prevention and Protection

**8,553** Home safety visits

**82%** Schools visited and received safety messages

**91%** Working smoke alarms

**50** Fire Stations

**1** USAR facility

**106** Appliances

**13** Fire Stations share their  
station with Essex Police

# Infographic to be developed

## Response

**15,513** Incidents

**4,937** Total fires

**xx** Accidental Dwelling Fires

**6,292** False alarms

## Public value

Annual budget **£72m**

## Our people

**630** Wholetime firefighters

**500** On-call firefighters

**35** Control staff

**303** Support staff

**84.7%** of our staff are male

**15.3%** of our staff are female

## Social Media

**16,978** Facebook followers

**36,100** Twitter followers

**2084** Instagram followers

**1.4** Website views

# Prevention and Protection

We know that the best way of protecting our communities from fire and other emergencies is to prevent that emergency before it happens.

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.

Prevention avoid suffering and harm, and also reduces demand on our services which saves the community money, while still providing an effective professional emergency response when required.

Our prevention work is aimed at people of all ages and backgrounds but targets those most at risk. Sadly, despite our efforts, emergencies do still happen. When they do, we learn as much as we can from them, guiding our future prevention and protection work.



## Safer Essex roads partnership

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.

Road traffic collisions affect hundreds of people each year, often with devastating results to families and communities. The economic impact also makes a significant financial difference to families and businesses in our county.

As a key partner of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) we are working collaboratively to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.

In the calendar year 2018, 908 people were killed or seriously injured on the roads in Essex. While the number of casualties has fallen since 2007, the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads remains much too high.

SERP's purpose is to reduce death and serious injury on Essex roads to zero - an ambitious vision, and one that the Partnership cannot tackle alone: each road user plays a part.

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.

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.

## 2018/19 road safety events

### RTC reduction

384 Road safety events  
41,948 Interactions

### FireBike

26 General events  
18 Better biking courses  
11 Advanced machine skills

### Community Speedwatch (CSW)

2,120 CSW sessions  
23,656 Warning letters generated  
386 New CSW volunteers  
11 New CSW groups

### Fire Car

111 Events  
14,911 Interactions

### Community Wheels

100 Events  
14,911 Interactions

### Street Spirit Young Rider

12 Events  
1,075 Interactions



## Our schools programme

We seek to educate young people in Essex, so they become safer adults.

In 2018/19 our Service visited 82% of schools in Essex.

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.



Our core programmes are offered to all schools across Essex, and include:

- Home safety
- Cyber safety
- Arson and hoax call prevention
- Pedestrian safety
- Healthy relationships
- Firework/ Halloween safety
- Summer 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 2018 and March 2019, we were referred 73 cases - 97% of which were new cases.

As a result of our scheme, 90% of these cases were considered to be at low risk of further fire setting. 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.

During 2018/19, we delivered 69 courses, working with vulnerable people in our communities, as well as offenders and victims.

## Home Safety Visits

We deliver Home Safety Visits (HSVs) and Safe and Well visits to residents across Essex, upon request, to reduce the risk from Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF).

The visit is carried out by dedicated officers 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.

The Safe and Well visits encompass fire safety, health, well-being and home security messages.

### Total home safety and safe and well visits:

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

	No of visits conducted
2016/17	9024
2017/18	8829
2018/19	8553

### You can book a free visit:

0300 303 088

[essex-fire.gov.uk/book](http://essex-fire.gov.uk/book)

### Number of alarms fitted 2018/19:

Standard alarms	9814
Sensory alarms	864
Carbon monoxide alarms	315



## Our Volunteers

We have 45 active volunteers, and are grateful for their support. Between them, they gave more than 5,185 hours of support to our Service and the public of Essex in 2018/19.

**Volunteers complement the work of our staff. In 2018/19, our Home Safety Volunteers conducted 1,887 Home Safety and Safe and well visits.**

The Essex Fire Museum relies heavily on volunteers. Overall, open days at the museum saw 3,470 visitors, compared to 3,849 in 2017/18.

Essex Fire Museum 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.

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.

## Accidental Dwelling Fires

We deliver Home Safety Visits to reduce the risk from accidental dwelling fires.

### Rate of accidental dwelling fires (ADF) per 10,000 dwellings

2018/19	10.7
2017/18	10.8
2016/17	11.3



## Sprinklers

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

That's why in 2013, we agreed to pledge £250,000 per year to match fund sprinkler installations across buildings and accommodation in Essex.

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

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.

## 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.



# Response

We ensure the safety of our firefighters at all operational incidents, regardless of the nature and scale. We also ensure 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 TFP, 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 57 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. Across the Service, our Stations also currently have 885 SSRIs (Site Specific Risk Information documents).

## Lessons learned

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.

Recent examples include:

- Implementation of Waste Fire Tactical Advisors, who will be informed of incidents at Recycling/Landfill sites and are also available on request from an Incident Commander
- Research and Development into the use of 'fog spikes' in compartmental firefighting
- Increased awareness regarding decontamination of equipment and PPE following low level hazard incidents – 'No Time To Lose' campaign
- Increased information gathering upon initial call by Control Operators with reference to ALP mobilisation, should a roof be reported to be involved in fire
- Improved communication with 'over the border' Fire & Rescue Services during 'cross border' incidents.

## Debriefs

In 2018/19 there were 117 debriefs carried out by our Service (94 incidents, 22 exercises and 1 for the Presidential visit).

Incident Debriefs	2018/19
JESIP	3
JESIP/Strategic	2
Operational debriefs	26
Operational/Tactical	1
Strategic debriefs	1
Tactical debriefs	53
Tactical/JESIP	1
Tactical/Over the Border	1
Tactical/Strategic	5
Other (Fire of special interest)	1
Total	94

Exercise Debriefs	2018/19
JESIP	1
Tactical debriefs	18
Tactical/JESIP	1
Tactical/Strategic	1
Operational debriefs	1
Total	22

## Appliance availability

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

### During 2018/19 our fire engines had 83.5% 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	2018/19	Target
86%	85%	83.5%	94%

When required, we respond quickly to those in need.

Our Control Team monitors 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.



## Response attendance

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

In 2018/19, 87% of incidents were attended within 15 minutes.

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target
88%	87%	87%	90%

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

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target
10.35 min	10.37 min	10.29 min	10.00 min

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

Over the last year, the Service has seen an increase in average call handling times and in travel times.

The Service continues to work on its mobilising software to ensure that the fastest, most appropriate, resource is allocated and that our call management provides an accurate picture of the call times.

## Average turn out times

There has been an increase in on-call average turnout times due to reduced numbers of on-call staff at this time and the increase in certain turnout times (over 6 minutes) in certain areas.

There has been a reduction in wholetime turn out times.

Travel time increases can be attributed to the increasing times that on-call appliances are not available, resulting in stations further away attending these calls, which are not in their station ground.

The positioning of some of our stations on busy roads and traffic flow is also a contributing factor along with call volume.



## Rate of injuries

**The rate of injuries resulting from primary fires per 100,000 population for 2018/19 was 3.8.**

In 2018/19, there were four fatalities, and 137 injuries resulting from primary fires (94 in dwellings).

Injuries as a result of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF) has decreased over the last three years by nearly 30%.

### Injuries from primary fires in dwellings

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
136	104	94

# People and Leadership

The Fire and Rescue Plan sets out our commitment to promoting a positive culture in the workplace.

**Our objective is to have a safe and diverse workforce who we enable to performance well in a supportive culture underpinned by excellent training.**

There are key strands of activity that enable this objective:

**Continuously improve the diversity of the workforce to ensure it represents the community**

## Recruitment

Throughout our recruitment campaigns in 2018/19 we used myth busting and positive action to improve the diversity of our workforce. We continue to drive towards making Fire Service careers attractive to all.

## Raising awareness

We have also focussed on neurodiversity, running a range of employee awareness sessions. Our Dignity at Work Champions have continued to flourish and we have a range of peer support and action groups in place.

**Ensure strong, effective leadership is in place**

## Talent Pools

We have been developing our people to assume greater responsibilities.

In 2018, we promoted 52 people through the talent pool process. Feedback from talent pool processes is a key development tool.

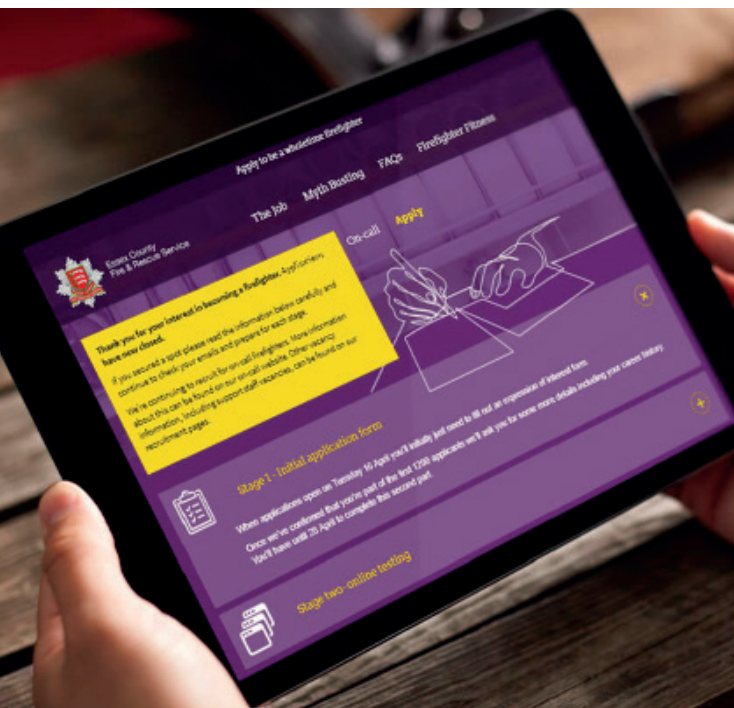
In 2018, 98% of talent pool candidates accepted the offer of developmental feedback.

**Developing new training programmes and extending training opportunities**

## Leadership Development Programmes

In 2018/19 we ran a range of Leadership Development Programmes including Developing Potential, Supervisory and Middle Management. Senior leaders have access to the Executive Leadership Programme.

96% of colleagues that completed feedback said their professional development training was satisfactory/very satisfactory.



## Operational Training

We have invested significantly in operational training. This enables a clear training programme with extended training opportunities so that all of our staff have the skills and training they need to remain safe in their work.

We are utilising workforce planning to deliver the skills the Service needs now and in the future. We are working towards greater levels of station-based training delivery and locally led development.

## Feedback

We have continued to focus on providing simple enabling forms that prompt a meaningful performance appraisal conversation.

This approach has delivered results- between 2017 and 2019 our completion rates increased from 41% to 94%.

## Ensure a safe workforce, support health, safety and well-being

We are committed to supporting and protecting both the physical and mental health of our people.

We have an ongoing health promotion programme. In 2018/19 this has included Stress Management and Mental Health Awareness for Manager sessions.

We continue to reward and recognise the contribution of our people who go above and beyond the normal expectations of their role.

We know that positive relationships and recognition are a part of well-being.

The second annual 'Celebrating our People' awards were held in November 2018. This annual event recognises and celebrates the great work that our employees do.



# Equality and Diversity

**We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive workplace that enables us to utilise the experience of people that think differently to generate ideas, educate others and make our very best decisions.**

To be the best Service that we can be, we encourage open minds to create a culture where people from all walks of life can build a rewarding career and achieve their full potential, a place where they can thrive by being their true self.

**The Service recognises that we still have a long way to go to achieve our aspiration. We work with our people, representative bodies, partners and other stakeholders to ensure we have the right policies, practice and working relationships to create accountability so that we continually improve.**

Driving sustainable and meaningful change is a priority for the Service so that our communities continue to get what they need from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. Greater cultural understanding, being more accessible and knowing what matters most to our communities, enables us to minimise the risks for all.

Society is ever changing and as the population of the County increases, so does the diversity of the people that live, work and travel in Essex.

The Service utilises best practice to do all that can be done to create an environment that is encouraging for existing and potential employees, as well as those that work with us from partner agencies. Working together, we all have a role to play in creating an environment

that we all deserve so that the public get what they deserve from us.

We utilise a range of positive action initiatives to try to attract more diverse candidates to apply for our vacancies.

As part of our Firefighter recruitment campaign, we held “taster sessions” aimed specifically at Women and Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) individuals as well as sessions that were open to all following feedback received from our previous campaign.

These sessions provided an opportunity to better understand the role and requirements of a Firefighter.



Over the past year, we have introduced over 50 Dignity at Work Champions to provide an informal and confidential point of contact for staff who may be concerned about unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.

**Dignity at Work Champions are Service employees, and they also help to identify areas where the Service can be more inclusive.**



We have improved our approach to identifying and supporting neurodivergent people in our workplace, this includes those with dyslexia, autism and attention deficit disorder. We value diversity of thought as we know that our best ideas and solutions will come from a variety of people working together on shared objectives.

We strive to improve the data that we collect to better understand the demographic of people using our Services such as our Home Safety visits; this will help to identify any communities that we may not currently be reaching so that we can take action to address any gaps.

The Service has introduced a Women's Forum over the past year to better understand the needs and experiences of Women working throughout our Service. Women currently make up 16% of the whole workforce.

**The Forum aims to support, encourage and empower women in the Service to have a voice and be heard.**

The Service undertakes its Gender Pay Gap analysis and reporting annually. The Gender Pay Gap calculations enable the Service to identify potential barriers to Women in our Service and combined with feedback from the Women's Forum, allow us to take action where required.

In addition, an Inclusion and diversity steering group has been established over the past year. This group is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive to bring together a range of experience and ideas to support continuous improvement in the area of Inclusion and diversity.



# Making the best use of our resources

## Financial assurance

**Ensuring that we have an efficient Service that offers value for money underpins everything we do.**

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 2019 was published July 2019.

## Revenue account

**In 2018/19 the Authority's total planned net expenditure was £72.2m.**

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 net expenditure of the Authority 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 grant. Specific grants provided by the government, for example to support the Authority's Urban Search and Rescue unit are included in operational income.

During the year expenditure has been kept under strict management control thus ensuring that only essential expenditure was incurred.

Overall employment costs were £0.2m under budget for the year. The Authority continued to process the recruitment of whole time firefighters and during the financial year a cohort of 42 wholetime firefighters joined the Service.

## A summary of how much we spent against our budget:

2017/18		2018/19		
Actual £000	Net Revenue Expenditure	Latest approved budget £000	Actual expenditure £000	Variance overspend/ (underspend) £000
29,545	Firefighters	29,842	30,037	195
5,395	On call firefighters	6,401	5,636	(765)
1,364	Control staff	1,436	1,422	(14)
13,992	Support staff	12,959	13,330	371
<b>50,296</b>	<b>Total Employment Costs</b>	<b>50,638</b>	<b>50,425</b>	<b>(213)</b>
2,200	Support costs	1,803	2,010	207
9,866	Premises & Equipment	10,698	10,250	(448)
3,681	Other costs & services	3,583	3,248	(335)
2,185	Ill health pension costs	2,200	2,320	120
1,432	Lease and interest charges	1,551	1,380	(171)
5,150	Revenue provision for Capital Financing	5,492	4,937	(519)
<b>24,514</b>	<b>Total other costs</b>	<b>25,327</b>	<b>24,181</b>	<b>(1,146)</b>
<b>74,810</b>	<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>75,965</b>	<b>74,606</b>	<b>(1,359)</b>
(4,800)	Operational Income	(3,732)	(4,239)	(507)
<b>70,010</b>	<b>Total net expenditure outturn</b>	<b>72,233</b>	<b>70,367</b>	<b>(1,866)</b>
	<b>Funding</b>			
11,033	Revenue Support Grant	9,347	9,347	-
15,699	Non Domestic Rates	15,720	16,697	977
846	Council Tax Collection Account	688	702	14
42,783	Council Tax Precepts	44,241	44,079	(162)
(351)	Contribution (to)/from Reserves	2,237	(458)	(2,695)
<b>70,128</b>	<b>Total funding</b>	<b>72,233</b>	<b>70,367</b>	<b>(1,866)</b>

Operational income is £0.5m over budget which includes additional funding for collaboration with Essex Police and higher grant income than budgeted.

The net outturn shows that a contribution of £458k was made to reserves in the year, £400k of which will be used to increase the earmarked reserve for Operational Training to £1m.

Net expenditure charged to the revenue account was £70.4m in the year, due to a number of technical accounting adjustments this figure is different from the cost of the provision of fire services, £91.6m, shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account.

We invested £1.6m in our property portfolio mainly on fire stations and training facilities. In addition there was spend of £0.9m on ICT and operational equipment and £1.0m on vehicles.

## What we own

At the year end the Authority had £119.1m of long term assets, comprising fire stations, offices, workshops and fire appliances.

These are funded by £24.5m of long term loans. The Authority's general reserve stood at £7.9m and the earmarked reserves decreased by £0.1m to £5.7m.

## Capital spending

During the year, we invested £1.6m in our property portfolio mainly on fire stations and training facilities.

In addition there was spend of £0.9m on ICT and operational equipment and £1.0m on vehicles.

An extensive review of all planned capital expenditure was carried out in October 2018 which resulted in a number of projects being rescheduled or cancelled, and a revised forecast of £5.2m was agreed.

At 31 March 2019 the Authority had capital expenditure commitments of £0.8m.

	Actual capital expenditure £'000
Property	1,589
Vehicles	1,067
Information systems and equipment	877
<b>Total capital payments</b>	<b>3,533</b>



## **Financial Outlook**

The Authority sets a budget that is affordable and sustainable over the medium term.

The budget for 2019/20 was approved by the Authority in January 2019 and reflects an increase in the total budget from £72.2m (2018/19) to £73.8m (2019/20).

The budget for 2019/20 is available at [www.essex-fire.gov.uk](http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk)

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# 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 mission, 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.

A productive relationship has been established between the Health and Safety Trade Union Safety Representatives and the Health and Safety Team.

## Health and Safety statistics

Over the last four years, there was a 13% reduction in accidents.

Following a campaign to encourage reporting attacks on Fire Service personnel, there has been an increase of 46% reported over the last four years: one related to a physical assault, and 18 were verbal abuse. None of them resulted in injury.

	Accidents	Attacks on FSP	RIDDOR* count
2015/16	135	13	23
2016/17	123	20	17
2017/18	121	20	30
2018/19	118	19	28

\* RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations

## RIDDOR

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable incidents have decreased by 6% from last year.

The 28 reported in 2018/19 consist of:

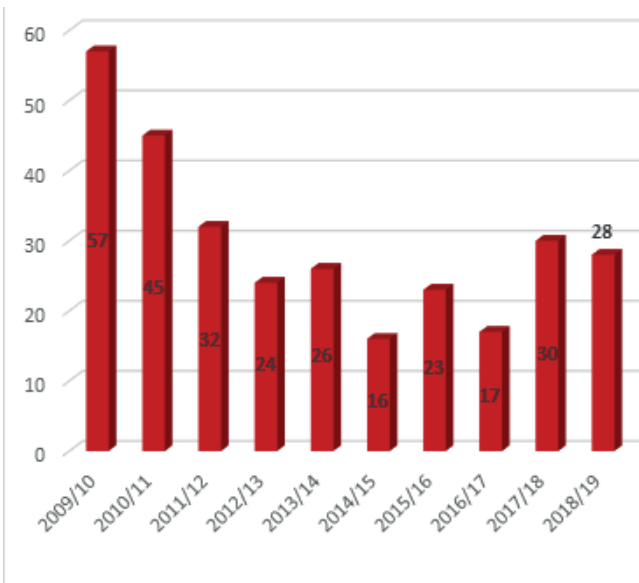
1 - Dangerous occurrence - BA set malfunction

4 - Specified injury's (all were bone fractures), 2 at Operational Incidents, 1 whilst playing volleyball and 1 while traveling to work (attack on FSP, road rage)

3 - Injuries to members of public (MOP), 1 – injured on Fire-Bike course, 1 – car hit by appliance on blue light, 1 – MOP hit rear of an appliance whilst it was stationary

20 - Over 7 day reports (which was 4 less than the previous year)

Note: 1 vehicle collision resulted in 3 of the above RIDDOR reports (1 specified injury and 2 over 7 day reports)



# **Assurance and our legal responsibilities**

Our responsibilities as an emergency service are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, and also in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. As a public service provider, we also have responsibilities under the Equality Act 2004.

## **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 2018/19 – 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**

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible for the governance of our Service, including setting the strategy and budget and holding the Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive to account.

The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (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.

## **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.

## **Essex Resilience Forum**

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 Government using historical and scientific data, and the professional judgements of experts to analyse the risks to the UK produces the national register.

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.

## **External Assurance**

Our Service has engaged an external firm 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.

## Your views count

Your views are important to us, and we welcome any comments you may have about this document.

You can share your thoughts to xxxx

or write to

ECFRS HQ  
Kelvedon Park  
London Road  
Rivenhall  
Essex CM8 3HB

[www.essex-fire.gov.uk](http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk)

## Complaints and compliments

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is fully committed to providing the highest possible levels of service to the communities in Essex.

We would love to know when you have received especially good service from us.

**This feedback is useful because it helps us to learn about the things we are doing right, so we can make sure we carry on doing those things in the future.**

To send us your compliments please email:

[compliments.complaints@essex-fire.gov.uk](mailto:compliments.complaints@essex-fire.gov.uk) or call: 0300 303 5555.

Sometimes things do go wrong. Hearing about times when we've not met your expectations helps us to improve the service we provide.

We will always make sure your complaint is dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently.

If you want to make a complaint, please email:

[compliments.complaints@essex-fire.gov.uk](mailto:compliments.complaints@essex-fire.gov.uk) or call: 0300 303 5555.

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