Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

End of Year Performance Report

2020 - 2021

Prepared By:

Performance & Data Team

Information Cut Off Date (ICOD):

4 May 2021

ABOUT

An end of year performance report is produced for the Service Leadership Team (SLT) and other key members of Essex Country Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) to monitor performance of the service, ensuring that budgeted resources are aligned to priorities, and being used effectively and efficiently.

The report is structured based on priorities within the Fire and Rescue Plan (FRP). Each priority has one or more performance measures (Service or FRP), data, information and commentary are aligned to them to demonstrate that ECFRS are using their resources to drive continuous improvements within the Service, as well as make Essex a safer place to live, work and travel.

PFCC
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

ECFRS performance reports are used in Performance & Resource Boards to enable the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) to scrutinise, challenge and support the overall performance of the Service. The end of year and quarterly performance reports are also used at Police, Fire and Crime panel to scrutinise the PFCC.
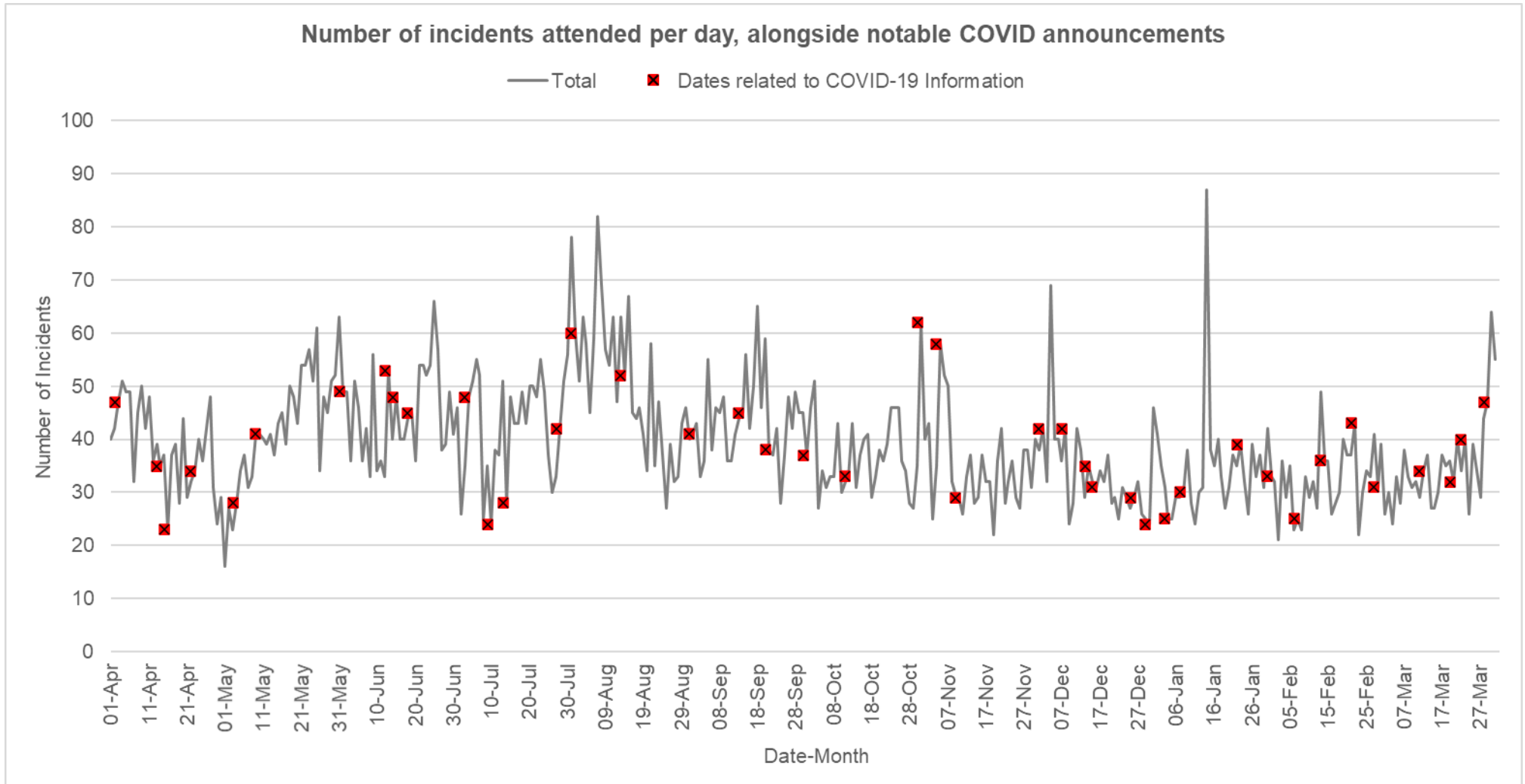
COVID-19 AND PERFORMANCE

2020/2021 has been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic with a series of lockdowns that involved restrictions to individuals' livelihoods, businesses, and organisations including Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

The following page shows some, but not all, of the key announcements that were collected by the Performance & Data team at or near to the time of reporting and are considered to be important to understand the scale of the impact to our public and on our Service's activities. The chart on the following page also visually depicts the number of incidents per day over the last year alongside the announcements listed in the table.

Data and commentary in the report provides extensive insight into how the pandemic has impacted our Service's prevention and protection activities, as well as our availability and response standards. A significant amount of the commentary provided insight into how our Service has adapted to new ways of working, ensuring that it manages risk to our staff from the Coronavirus but also to the public that we engage with, the majority of whom are vulnerable. As the latest lockdown eases, it is expected that activity will increase.

Date-Month	Announcement
03-Apr	UK road traffic levels fall by 73% and at their lowest since 1955.
14-Apr	People start blaming 5G for pandemic, mobile operators report arson attacks on masts.
16-Apr	Three-week extension to the nationwide lockdown as the number of cases surpasses 100,000
23-Apr	First human trials of a Coronavirus vaccine in Europe begin in Oxford, UK.
04-May	NHS test and trace beta app approved.
10-May	Prime Minister Boris Johnson sets out a three-step plan to begin easing lockdown restrictions
01-Jun	Gatherings of people from more than one household are limited to six people outdoors and are prohibited entirely indoors.
13-Jun	Support bubbles allowed.
15-Jun	Re-opening of retail shops and public-facing businesses.
19-Jun	UK's COVID-19 alert level is lowered from level 4 (severe risk, high transmission) to level 3 (substantial risk, general circulation).
04-Jul	Lockdown restrictions were relaxed (except the city of Leciester).
10-Jul	Quarantine rules are relaxed for people arriving in the UK from 75 countries and overseas territories.
14-Jul	The wearing of face coverings becomes compulsory in shops and supermarkets in England.
28-Jul	PM Johnson warns that there are signs of a European second wave of the virus.
01-Aug	Shielding programme is paused for England and Scotland.
14-Aug	UK records its highest daily rate of new COVID-19 cases since 14 June, with 1,441 new cases.
01-Sep	Majority of schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland reopen for the autumn term.
14-Sep	Rule of six for gatherings is introduced.
21-Sep	UK Coronavirus alert level is upgraded to level 4, meaning transmission is "high or rising exponentially".
01-Oct	Around a quarter of the population of the UK, about 16.8 million people, are now in local lockdowns.
12-Oct	PM Johnson unveils a three-tier system of restrictions for England to come into force on 14th October.
31-Oct	UK reaches a million COVID-19 cases.
05-Nov	England's second lockdown begins.
10-Nov	NHS is ready to begin providing the COVID vaccine "as fast as safety possible" (Hancock).
02-Dec	UK becomes the first country in the world to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

08-Dec	UK's vaccination rollout will begin on Tuesday 8th December.
14-Dec	A new variant of SARS-CoV-2 has been identified that is spreading faster in some areas of the country
16-Dec	London, and parts of Essex and Herfordshire, are placed into tier three of England's COVID system
26-Dec	Tougher COVID restrictions are imposed on large parts of the UK
30-Dec	Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is approved by the UK.
04-Jan	National lockdown is announced in England and Scotland.
08-Jan	Moderna vaccine is approved by the UK.
23-Jan	Over 6 million doses of COVID vaccine administered.
31-Jan	One year since the UK recorded its first domestic cases of COVID-19.
07-Feb	12 million people have received their first COVID vaccine.
14-Feb	The UK reaches the target of vaccinating 15 million people before 15 February
22-Feb	PM Johnson unveils a four step plan for ending Coronavirus restrictions in England by 21 June, subject to tests.
28-Feb	20 million people have received their first COVID vaccine.
12-Mar	The R number is at its lowest since recording of the figure began in May 2020.
20-Mar	Half the UK's adult population, have now received their first COVID vaccine.
23-Mar	Anniversary of the day the UK's first lockdown was announced.
29-Mar	Stay at home order for England comes to an end, as two households or six people are allowed to meet up outside.

Number of incidents attended per day, alongside notable COVID announcements

CONTENTS

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: HELP THE VULNERABLE STAY SAFE

The aim of this priority is to support those who are at higher risk of harm are safer and more resilient.

Service Measure: Number of Safe and Well visits delivered to our most vulnerable groups.

The table below shows data about prevention activity conducted in 2020/21, and for comparison 2019/20. In relation to the measure, the second row of the table shows the number of safe and well visits completed and the table on the following page shows the number of people who received a visit and had one or more of the vulnerable factors e.g., over 65, lived alone, had a disability, or lived in social housing.

Measure	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020
Total number of Visits	4,346	7,718
Number of Safe and Well Visits	3,764	5,288
Number of Home Safety Visits by Stations	140	295
Number of Home Safety Visits by Volunteers	17	1,480
Number of Visits by Other (CSO''s, CB's, FSO's)	425	655
Number of FHB10 (standard smoke detectors) fitted	5,865	8,459
Number of FHB10W (sensory smoke detectors) fitted	753	1,307
How many enquiries did we receive to the Information Centre	5,727 Incoming Calls	10,452 Incoming Calls
	10,279 Outgoing Calls	19,011 Outgoing Calls
	3,244 Email Enquiries	4,673 Email Enquiries
Home safety doorstep drop off interactions completed by CSOs*	762	N/A
Number of FHB10 smoke alarms provided by CSOs to the public during drop offs*	1,349	N/A
Number of referrals made by Safe and Well Officers to other agencies	62	332

Number of individuals visited in the following vulnerable groups:	2020 – 2021	2019 – 2020
The number over 65 years old	3,230	5,278
The number who lived alone	1,916	3,248
The number who had a disability	1,663	3,053
The number who lived in Social Housing	243	525

For benchmarking purposes, fire prevention activity carried out by fire and rescue services is submitted to the Home Office on an annual basis at the end of the financial year. The data will be published circa autumn 2021. Previous quarterly performance reports have provided statistics on ECFRS prevention activity in comparison to other Services[1].

Fire and Rescue Plan Measure: People who received an intervention feel safer and less at risk.

For the duration of the pandemic, ECFRS ceased handing out paper evaluation forms to be returned by members of the public in line with COVID-19 risk assessment controls. There is, therefore, no data recorded for service evaluations. However, feedback was received directly to the Home Safety Information Team, of which 93% of it was positive.

Commentary for this priority is included in the next under Prevention.

[1] FIRE1201: Home fire risk checks carried out by fire and rescue authorities and partners, by fire and rescue authority

Focus: Safeguarding

The Community Development & Safeguarding Team process safeguarding referrals received into the Vulnerable Adults and Children Safeguarding Mailbox. Referrals are assessed against the Essex Effective Support Windscreen to ensure appropriate support and signposting is provided. The table below shows the number of referrals per month for the last year, with comparison to the previous year, to show how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on safeguarding referrals.

	2020 – 2021		2019 – 2020	
	Adults	**Children**	**Adults**	**Children**
April	41	0	71	3
May	35	3	57	3
June	42	1	58	5
July	45	2	62	5
August	36	3	58	6
September	42	1	60	1
October	70	0	52	3
November	51	5	66	4
December	53	2	58	2
January	39	2	65	6
February	59	1	55	4
March	63	1	64	2
Totals	**576**	**21**	**726**	**44**
	597		**770**	
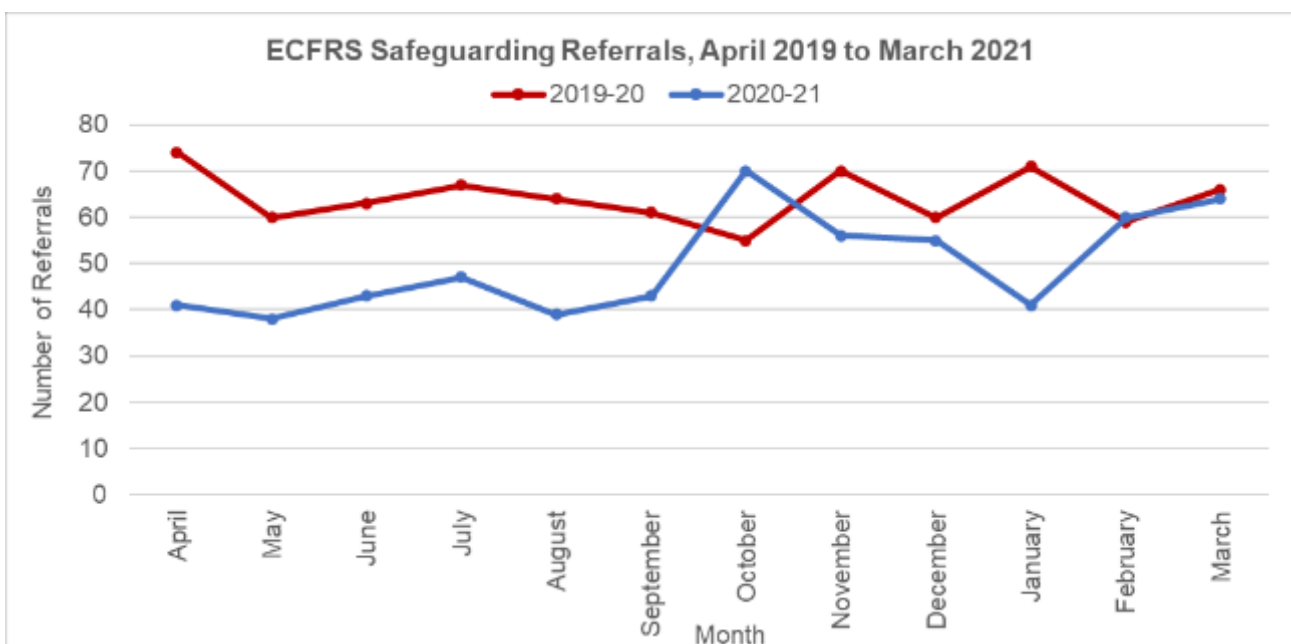
With the introduction of the different lockdowns, ECFRS saw a drop in the number of referrals compared to the previous year, however, these are now steadily increasing with the easing of government restrictions and partner agencies own procedures allowing re-engagement with vulnerable people. The decrease in referrals is thought to be caused by the government restrictions preventing many of our partner agencies being able to enter properties. Therefore, it is perceived that, concerns have not been identified and referrals not created.

This has also been attributed to partners and ECFRS staff such as Community Builders, not having the opportunity to 'sit around the table' at partnership meetings to discuss cases and vulnerable people in the community. The team assign case work to Community Builders, managed by the Operational and Community Risk Managers. The Community Builders assess the risk from fire and other forms of harm and mitigate the identified risks through direct support and signposting to universal services and social care. The successful partnership working achieved through the Community Builders results in safeguarding referrals being received from a number of partner agencies. Community Builders and Safe & Well Officers visited individuals where they met the Gold assessment criteria (see table below) through the Home Safety Control and Command Team. Safeguarding and Safe & Well continue to work effectively together ensuring the most vulnerable are at the forefront of what we do.

Critical Factor	Combined with
An individual smokes in bed and is immobile/restricted to bed/hardly leaves their bed	No working smoke detectors
Domestic Abuse Visit, or risk of arson visit requested by Essex Police	No working smoke detectors
Restricted to bed /restricted to chair use because of pre-existing ill-health/conditions	No working smoke detectors
Oxygen Users	And the individual does not have working smoke detectors or is an oxygen user combined with any other critical factor in Gold or Silver
Hoarder	No working smoke detectors
Sensory Impairment	No working smoke detectors or smoke detectors are not appropriate and therefore, effective
An individual is over the age of 75	No working smoke detectors

A proportion of Community Builders were able to carry out 'over the threshold' visits, whilst all Community Builders continued to engage with the most vulnerable, giving thorough safety advice and signposting to partners either over the phone or at the doorstep. Community Builders continued to engage with their communities as best they could and in some areas are now part of the Vulnerable and Shielded Task Force Group.

Crews have still been entering properties during the COVID-19 pandemic following 999 calls to properties and therefore still able to identify concerns. Below is a graph and table of the referrals we have received over the last year and where they came from.

Number of Referrals per Agency/Referrer
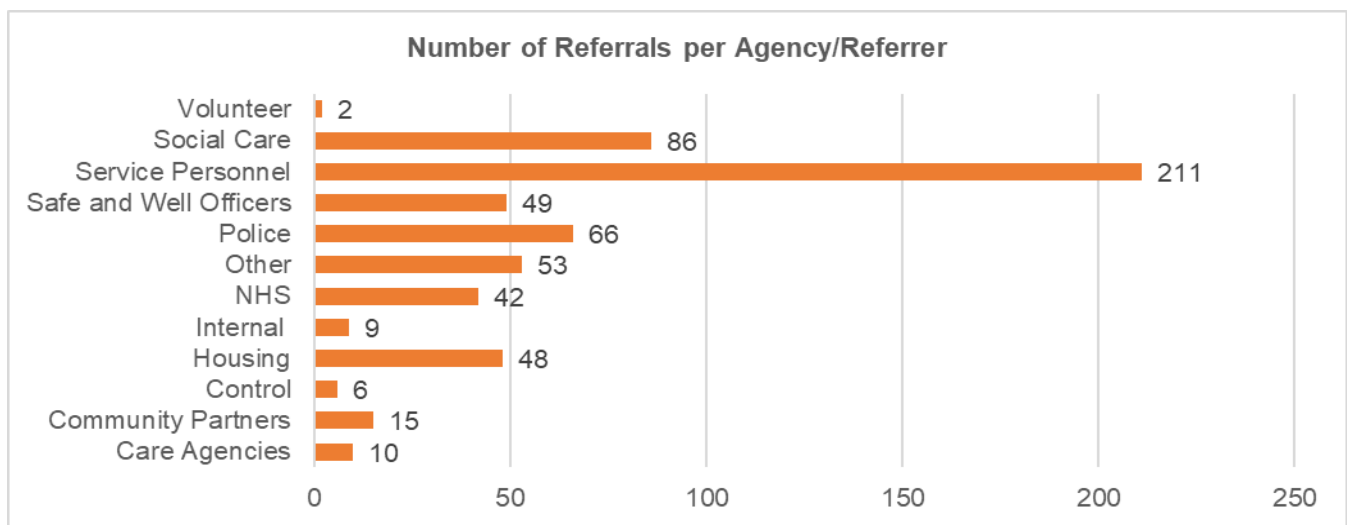
Referrer	2020 - 2021											
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Care Agencies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	0	3
Community Partners	3	4	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	2
Control	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0
Housing	2	2	4	2	1	7	11	3	5	1	4	6
Internal	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1
NHS	2	1	2	2	2	5	7	5	3	6	4	3
Other	1	0	6	4	19	3	6	5	3	2	1	3
Police	5	4	2	4	2	5	4	6	9	4	6	15
Safe & Well Officers	1	4	17	7	0	1	8	4	3	1	1	2
Service Personnel	20	14	7	15	12	20	25	15	23	15	24	21
Social Care	7	8	4	8	1	2	6	10	4	10	18	8
Volunteer	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	41	38	43	47	39	43	70	56	55	41	60	64

The graph and table below show the area the referrals came from each command group.
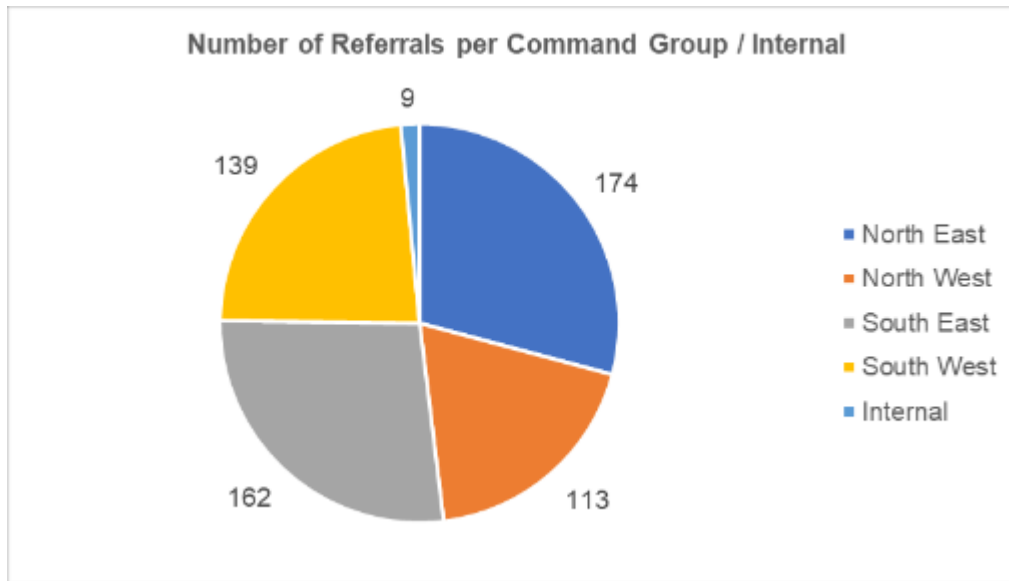
	2020 – 2021											
Command Group	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sept**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**
North East	16	11	22	13	8	12	14	9	17	9	26	17
North West	5	8	8	4	9	10	20	13	5	5	9	17
South East	9	9	5	15	11	13	22	16	19	10	12	21
South West	11	9	8	12	11	8	14	17	13	15	13	8
Internal	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1
Total	**41**	**38**	**43**	**47**	**39**	**43**	**70**	**56**	**55**	**41**	**60**	**64**

It is important to recognise, the Community Builders are able to use the trusted position held by the fire service in the community to engage with some of the most vulnerable members of our county. Community Builders are often able to successfully engage otherwise disengaged people to other services, completing many joint visits with Essex Police and Social Care.

On completion of an intervention, the Community Builders complete a detailed report of the risks identified and their actions. Two example case studies from the last year can be seen on the following page.

	Concerns	Actions
Case Study 1	Referral received from a crew following a fire at the address. On inspection, there was an extreme amount of waste in black bags piled on the balcony creating a potential hazard. The property itself had a high degree of uncleanliness with rubbish and general waste in all areas, which could be a risk to the children and adults if needing to escape or for crews to search the property. There was high level of concern with regards to fire safety as there seemed to be only one working smoke alarm in the hallway. The Community Builder found that there was an issue with bin collections which led to the problem of the residents in the block having to keep their bags of rubbish on their balconies or in their home as they would be fined if they left them in the bin areas but not in the bin, which was full.	The Community Builder liaised with the council, management, and Protection department to alleviate the risk and make the area safer. Management and the council were advised of the situation and potential risk. The council have now rectified the refuse situation and have said no resident will be charged for placing bin bags on the floor if the containers are full. Tenancy Management will be looking into the rubbish on balconies situation to resolve this issue. Crews carried out an After Incident Response and are monitoring the refuse situation.
Case Study 2	A Community Builder has been volunteering for Community 360, offering weekly welfare calls and checks to two residents in Colchester. They call them both every week during and have built an excellent rapport with them both. As part of the conversation, both mentioned having old smoke alarms. During one call the Community Builder could hear in the background that the smoke alarm was bleeping constantly, and the lady advised that it had been doing this for some time.	The Community Builder took details and arranged for a Safe & Well Officer to deliver alarms to both addresses for self-installation. The Community Builder also posted fire safety booklets to follow this up. Both residents were really pleased, and they now have new working smoke alarms.

The Community Builders have also supported the ECFRS Staff Volunteering Working Group, with the responsibility of helping to coordinate staff volunteers at the vaccination centres in both Colchester and Chelmsford. This has involved coordinating resources, monitoring mailboxes over the week and weekend and attending twice weekly meetings with the rest of the volunteering team.

Training

The Safeguarding Team held upskilling sessions on the DBS check process to HR Business partners to ensure they were conversant in the process and to ensure good practice in safer recruitment.

The Safeguarding Team have been working on a number of one-minute guidance documents covering Hoarding, Scams and Cyber Crime. These can be found under the Safeguarding tab on the intranet. Communications of where to find the information was promulgated during National Safeguarding Week (16th – 22nd November 2020). As part of this week, several webinars were available, and these were shared widely across the service and directly with the Community Risk Managers and the Live Safe Manager.

The team are also supporting the service in a number of other ways including:

- Promotion of domestic abuse support and signposting.
- Updating the Wellbeing and Safeguarding Workplace pages with relevant advice, signposting and current scams.
- Creating a Safeguarding Training programme to deliver to service personnel.

NFCC National Safeguarding Working Group

The Community Development Manager and Head of Safeguarding, continues to chair the NFCC National Safeguarding Working Group. The meetings are attended by safeguarding leads from around the UK. The group continues to increase its membership which will ensure we have the input from as many FRS as possible and greater support with future actions. Current areas of work include:

- National Training,
- Fire deaths and SAIRS,
- Risk Assessments,
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and DBS update,
- Regional workstreams,
- Vulnerable Adults statement.

The National Working Group are also encouraging regional safeguarding groups to be established to ensure local need and issues are taken forward to the national working group. ECRS chaired their first regional safeguarding group in January 2021.

Police and Ambulance

The team had a meeting (4th March 2021) with Essex Police's Safeguarding Team to discuss how we can continue to improve our working relationship. The Community Builders provided detail about their role and how they engage with the communities and partner agencies. Since this meeting there has been an increase in referrals from the Police and both teams are working well together.

The team have a meeting (22nd April 2021) with East of England Ambulance Safeguarding Team to explore how best we can work together.

CFRMIS

The team are currently working closely with the Performance and Data department in migrating our safeguarding data and processes onto the CFRMIS system. The team have had support from the Home Safety Team as they are currently live in CFRMIS and have good experience in creating questionnaires/forms which will be used to capture referrals moving forward. The final implementation of safeguarding data and referral processes is planned to go live on the 4 May 2021.

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: PREVENTION, PROTECTION & RESPONSE (PPR)

The aim of this priority is that the trust and confidence of communities in Essex is maintained through effective pre-planning, monitoring and evaluation.

PREVENTION

Service Measure: Rate of accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) per 10,000 population.

Month	ADF Rate	
	2020 - 2021	**2019 - 2020**
Apr	0.4	0.4
May	0.5	0.4
Jun	0.3	0.3
Jul	0.3	0.4
Aug	0.4	0.2
Sept	0.3	0.4
Oct	0.3	0.3
Nov	0.3	0.3
Dec	0.4	0.4
Jan	0.3	0.3
Feb	0.3	0.3
Mar	0.3	0.4
Rolling 12 month	**4.0**	**4.2**

Quarter, Months	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020	2018 - 2019	2017 - 2018
Q1, Apr – Jun	205	208	219	199
Q2, Jul - Sept	186	189	188	216
Q3, Oct - Dec	173	187	215	209
Q4, Jan - Mar	170	195	202	207
TOTAL	**734**	**779**	**824**	**831**

Number of ADFs from April 2017 to March 2021
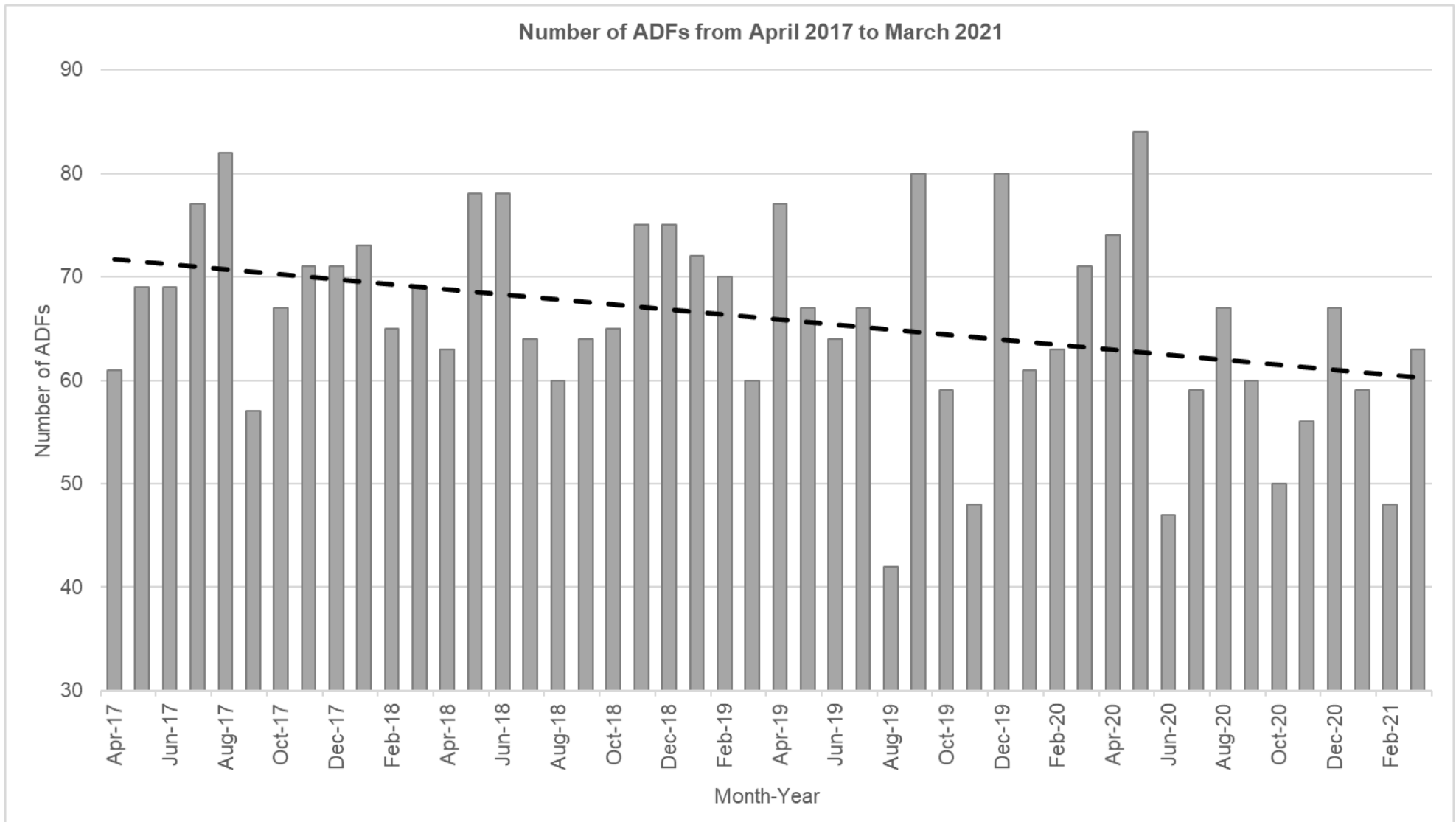
The tables and chart on the previous pages show a decrease in the number (and rate) of accidental dwelling fires within ECFRS' service area. This decreasing trend can also be seen nationally[2], as the number of ADFs in 2010/11 was 36,611 and in 2019/20 was 28,503, a 22% decrease. In 2019/20, ECFRS' ADFs accounted for 3% of all attendances to this incident type by fire and rescue services, the same percentage as the following non-metropolitan services: Lancashire, Hampshire, Devon and Somerset as well as Dorset and Wiltshire. For context, the metropolitan fire and rescue services of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear accounted for 2% ADFs attended by FRSs. The chart also clearly shows that May 2020 had the highest number of ADFs with 84 fires and the following month, June, had the least with 47 fires. This differs from 2019/20 where the peak month/s was September and December 2019, and the highest number of ADFs in a month was 80.

Service Measure: Percentage of ADFs that are cooking related.

The Service monitors under this service measure the percentage of ADFs that are cooking related.

Month	% of ADFs that are cooking related.	
	2020 - 2021	**2019 - 2020**
Apr	27%	26%
May	26%	39%
Jun	34%	27%
Jul	27%	31%
Aug	25%	43%
Sept	37%	29%
Oct	24%	34%
Nov	25%	35%
Dec	33%	39%
Jan	34%	23%
Feb	23%	27%
Mar	22%	24%
Total (Average)	**28%**	**31%**

The table above shows that there was an improvement on the percentage of ADFs that were cooking related in 2020/21, compared to previous year.

For national context, 5% of accidental dwelling fires attended by English fire and rescue services in 2019/20 were related to chip/fat pan fires specifically[3].

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[2] FIRE0202: Primary dwelling fires, fatalities and non-fatal casualties in dwellings by motive and fire and rescue authority, England
[3] FIRE0601: Primary fires in dwellings and other buildings by cause of fire

Service Measure: Smoke alarm ownership.

The table below shows the percentage of ADFs where a smoke alarm was present and worked.

Month	% of ADFs with working smoke alarm.	
	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020
Apr	47%	57%
May	52%	57%
Jun	60%	58%
Jul	64%	54%
Aug	55%	67%
Sept	55%	53%
Oct	54%	46%
Nov	59%	77%
Dec	61%	70%
Jan	56%	61%
Feb	54%	51%
Mar	56%	49%
Total (Average)	56%	58%

ECFRS' quarter two performance report provided data and information on the national figures concerning smoke alarms, referring to data collection via the English Housing Survey.

Fire and Rescue Plan Measure: Reduction in Fatalities and Injuries.

This measure monitors the number of fire-related fatalities and casualties, particularly those involved in ADFs.

The table shows the number of fire-related fatalities and casualties over the last two financial years. Note, in 2020/21, all the fire-related fatalities were involved in ADFs.
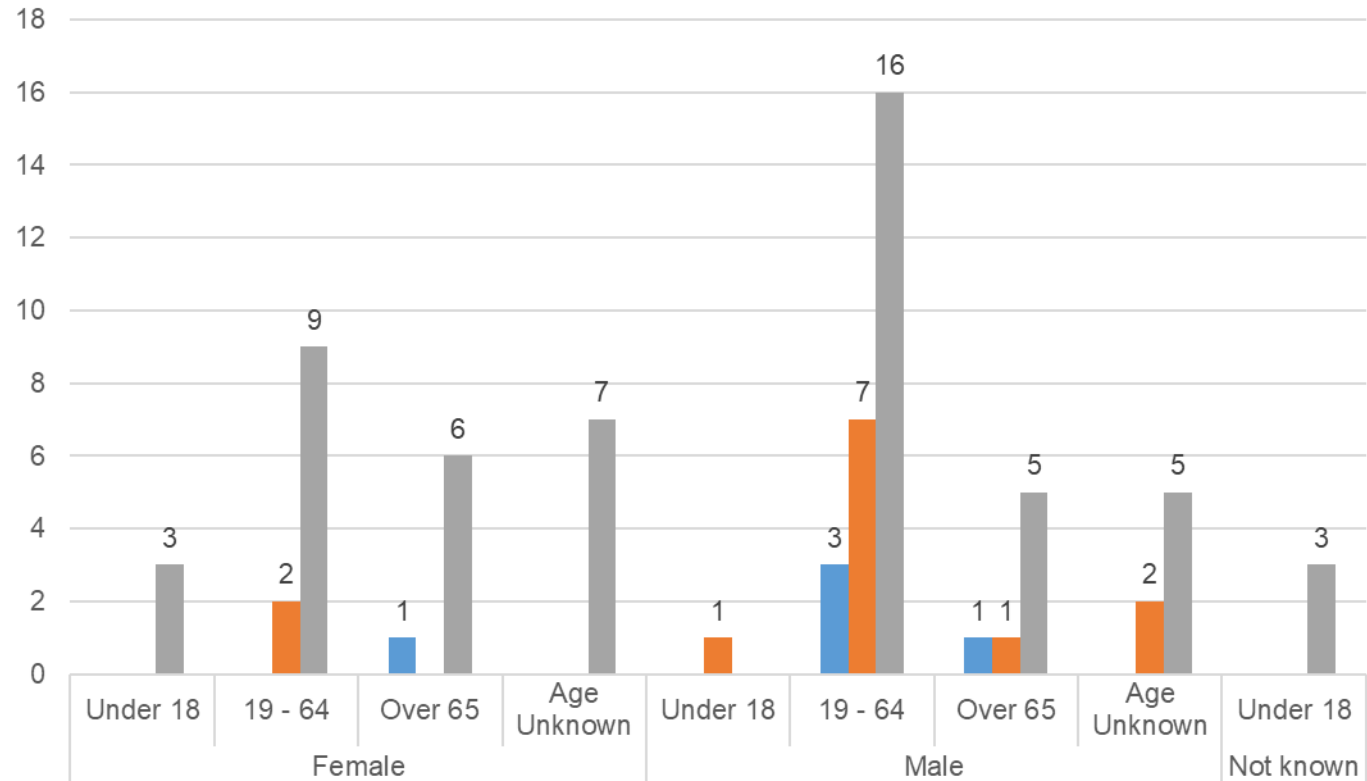
Month	Fatalities		Casualties (victim went to hospital with serious or slight injuries)	
	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020
Apr	2	1	8	11
May	0	0	9	8
Jun	1	1	10	9
Jul	0	0	5	3
Aug	0	0	1	9
Sept	0	0	6	4
Oct	0	0	2	2
Nov	0	0	6	5
Dec	0	0	9	2
Jan	1	0	0	7
Feb	0	0	3	4
Mar	1	0	8	2
Total	5	2	67	66

The chart on the following page shows the gender and age of the victims involved in the fire-related fatalities and casualties that occurred in 2020/21.

First Aid at Scene & Precautionary Checks Recommended

There were also 26 victims who received first aid at scene by ECFRS and a further 8 who were recommended a precautionary check following a fire. 32 of these victims were involved in accidental fires, of which the majority (75%) were in dwellings. 38% of the ADFs, the fire started in the kitchen and 15% in bedroom. 20 of these victims were male and 12 were female, where the majority for both genders was aged between 19 – 64, 6 were over 65 and 2 were the age was unknown. The other 2 victims were involved in a deliberate fire (others property), one victim was female and the other was male (ages unknown).

Victim profile of fire-related fatalities and casualties that occured in 2020 - 2021

	Female				Male				Not known
	Under 18	19 - 64	Over 65	Age Unknown	Under 18	19 - 64	Over 65	Age Unknown	Under 18
Fire-related Fatal - Fatalities			1			3	1		
Injury (incl. rescue with injury) - Victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be Serious		2			1	7	1	2	
Injury (incl. rescue with injury) - Victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be Slight	3	9	6	7		16	5	5	3

Nationally, the number of fire-related fatalities in England has decreased since 2010/11, as shown by the trendline on the chart below, despite a peak in 2017/18 which is associated with Grenfell Tower fire in London. In 2019/20, ECFRS' fatalities accounted for 1% of all fire-related fatalities, a decrease from 2% of the total in 2018/19.
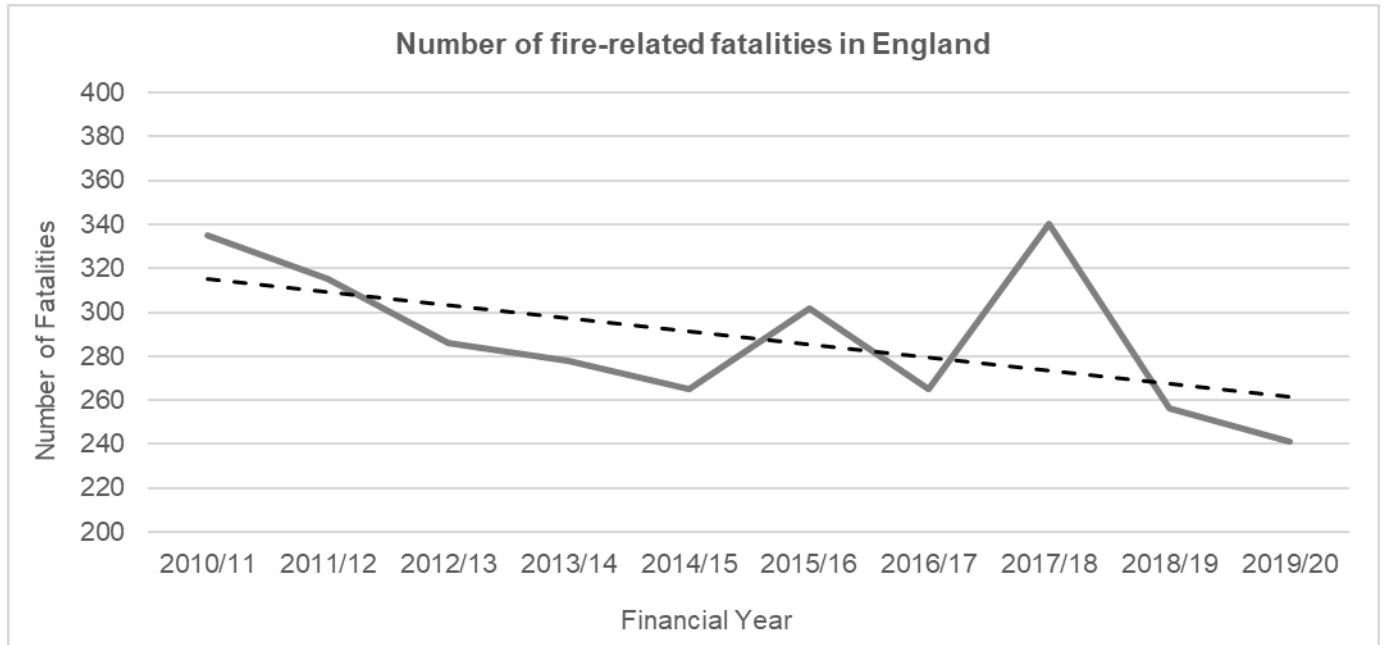
Similarly, the number of fire-related casualties requiring hospital treatment in England has decreased over the same period. In 2019/20, ECFRS casualties accounted for 3% of England's fire-related casualties requiring hospital treatment. Other FRSs with the same percentage were West Midlands and Hertfordshire.
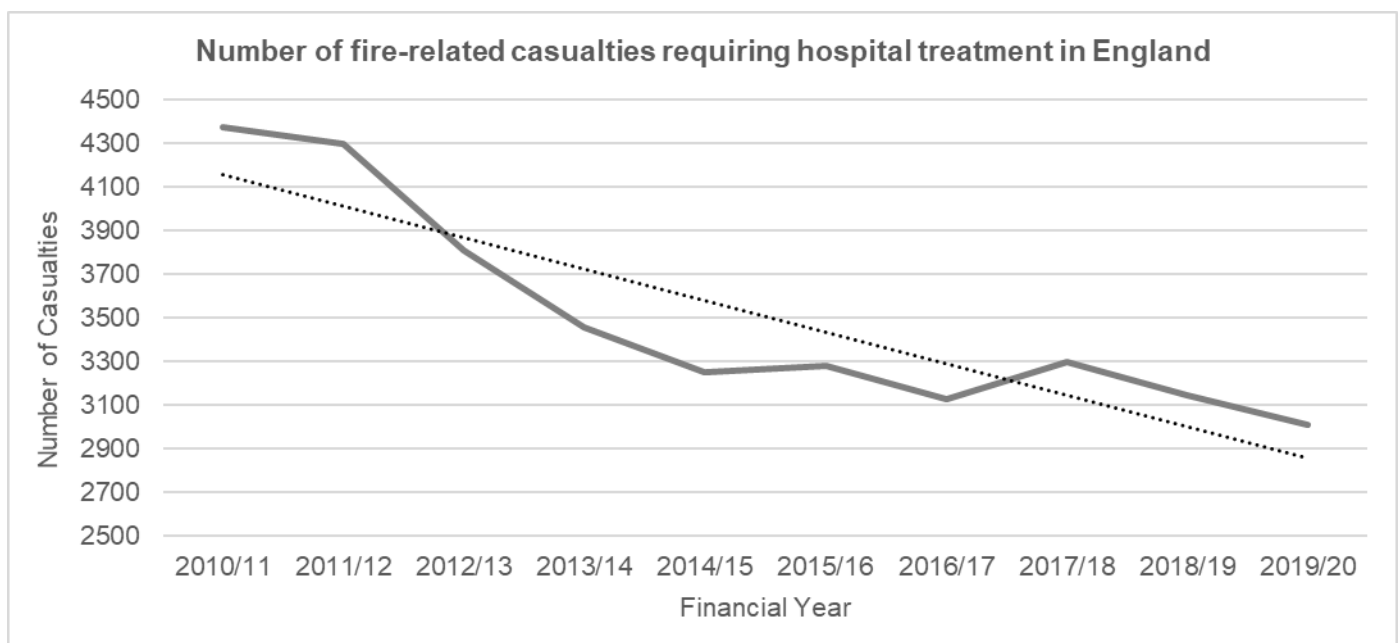
Service Measure: Rate of deliberate fires per 10,000 population.

The table below shows the rate deliberate fires[4] per 10,000 population, by fire classification (primary/secondary) with the respective targets for each, for the last financial year and 2019/20's figures for comparison. Cells/values highlighted in green indicate that the target was met.

Month	Primary[5] Deliberate Rate Target (Month) – 0.2		Secondary[6] Deliberate Rate Target (Month) – 0.6	
	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020
Apr	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.8
May	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.8
Jun	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.7
Jul	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.9
Aug	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.8
Sept	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.7
Oct	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4
Nov	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.4
Dec	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3
Jan	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3
Feb	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
Mar	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4
Rolling 12 month	1.7	2.4	4.5	6.6

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[4] Deliberate fires include those where the motive for the fire was 'thought to be' or 'suspected to be' deliberate. This includes fires to an individual's own property, others' property or property of an unknown owner. Despite deliberate fire records including arson, deliberate fires are not the same as arson. Arson is defined under the Criminal Damage Act of 1971 as 'an act of attempting to destroy or damage property, and/or in doing so, to endanger life'. Source: Fire statistics definitions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[5] Primary fires are potentially more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property and meet at least one of the following conditions: any fire that occurred in a (non-derelict) building, vehicle or (some) outdoor structures, any fire involving fatalities, casualties or rescues, or any fire attended by five or more pumping appliances. Source: *ibid.*

[6] Secondary fires are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property. These include refuse fires, grassland fires and fires in derelict buildings or vehicles, unless these fires involved casualties or rescues, or five or more pumping appliances attended, in which case they become primary fires. Source: *ibid.*

The table below shows the total number of deliberate fires per quarter for the last four financial years as well as the chart shows the number per month, by type (primary or secondary deliberate).

Quarter, Months	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020	2018 - 2019	2017 - 2018
Q1, Apr – Jun	379	521	404	651
Q2, Jul - Sept	411	584	619	440
Q3, Oct - Dec	185	299	313	376
Q4, Jan - Mar	161	271	324	272
TOTAL	1136	1675	1660	1739

Number of Deliberate Fires from April 2017 to March 2021
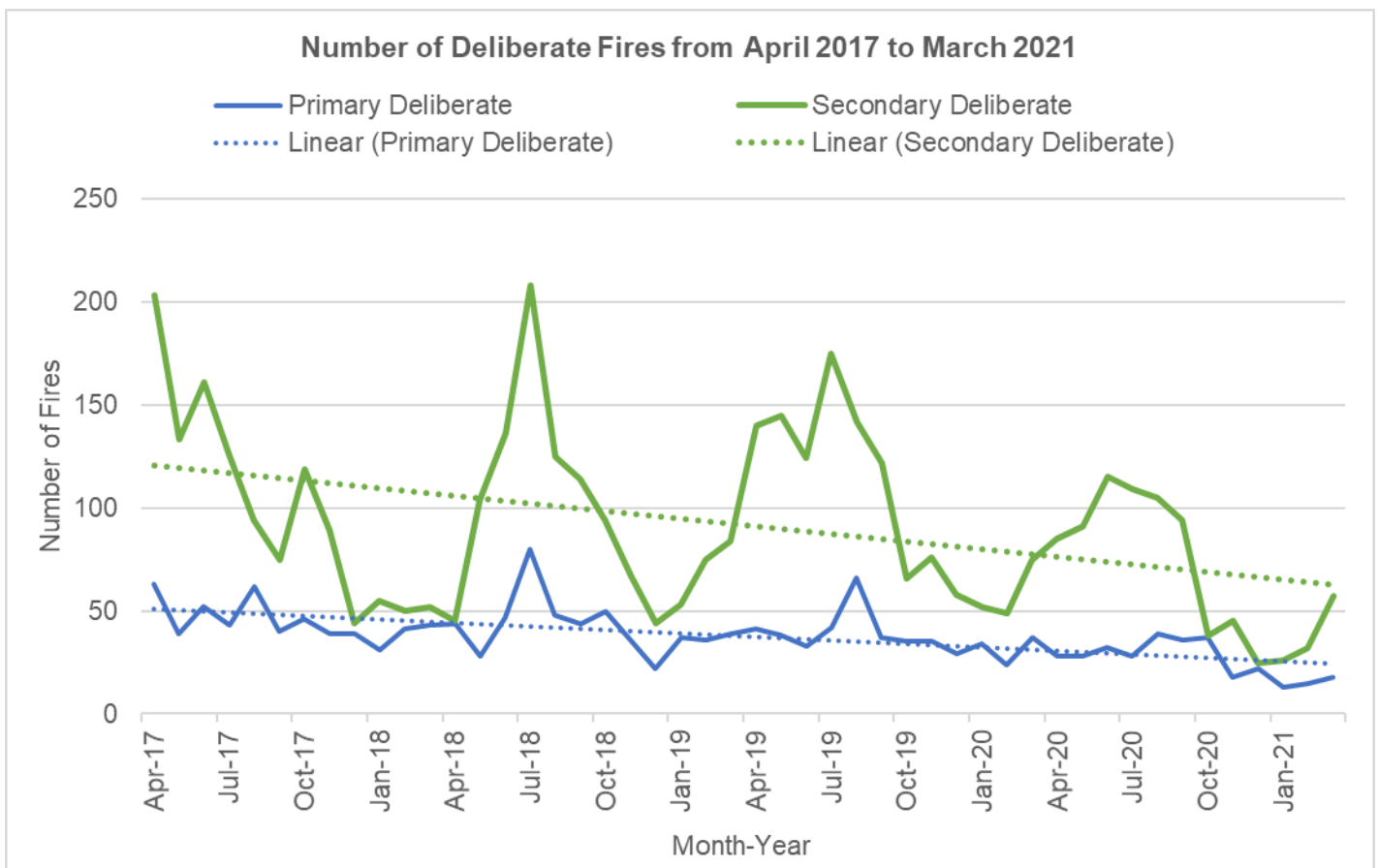
The totals in the table and linear trendlines on both lines of the chart indicate that there has been a decrease in the number deliberate fires between April 2017 and March 2021. The rate table further reinforces that the last financial year has seen pattern as the target has been met in all months for both primary and secondary deliberate fires per 10,000 population.

Nationally[7], there was a significant decrease in the total number of deliberate fires between the years, 2010/11 (116,812) and 2012/13 (68,760), with gradual increases nearly every year until 2018/19 back to 83,247 fires. 2019/20 had the lowest number of deliberate fires since 2012/2013 with 69,879. In 2019/20, ECFRS' deliberate fires accounted for 2% of the total, like Kent, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Hampshire, Avon, Hertfordshire as well as Devon and Somerset fire and rescue services. Non-metropolitan services with higher percentages of the yearly total were Cleveland (5), Durham, Humberside (4% each respectively) and Lancashire (3%). On average, over the last 10 years, 74% of deliberate fires in England were secondary fires.

Number of Deliberate Primary (incl. Chimney) and Secondary Fires in England

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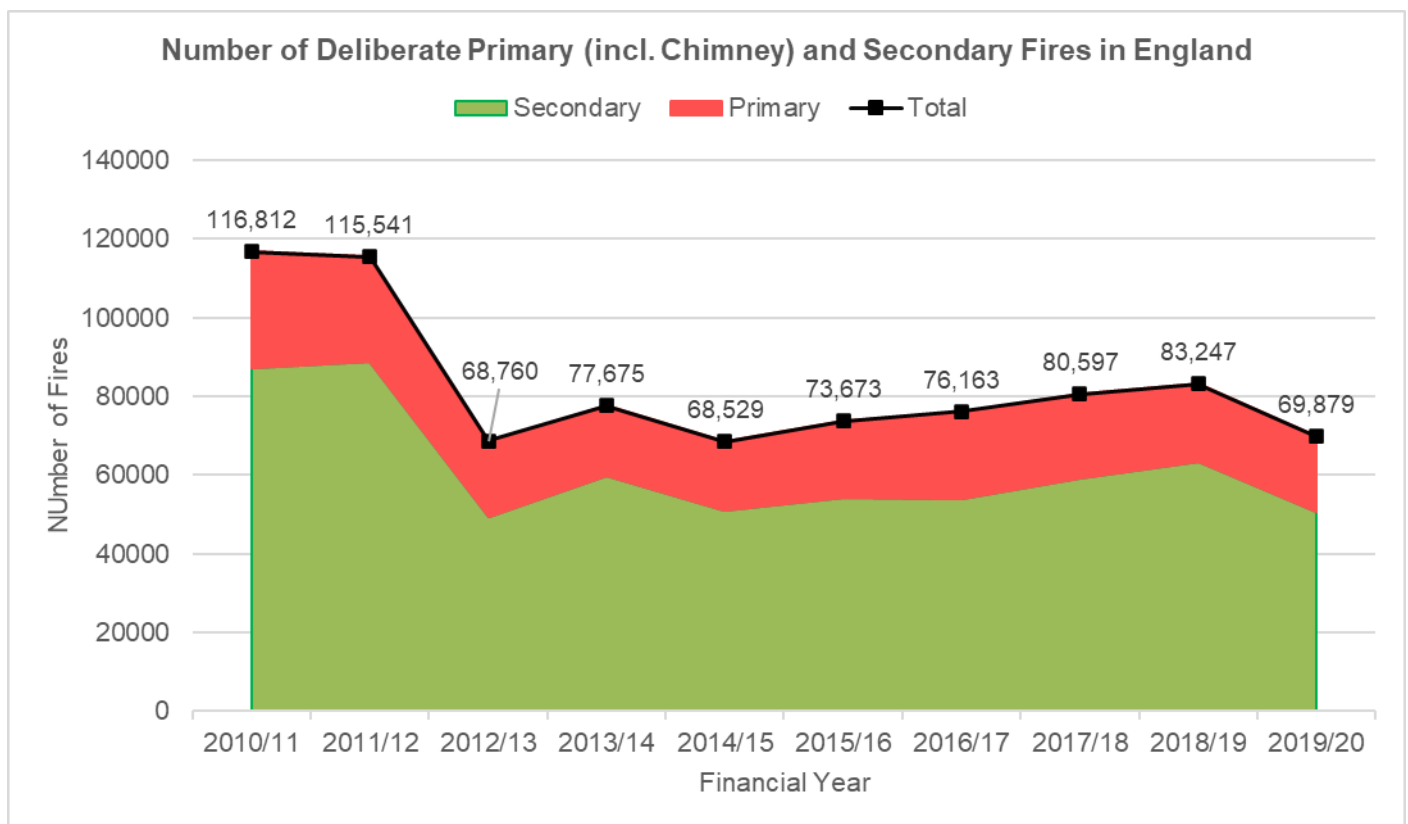
[7] FIRE0401: Deliberate fires attended by fire and rescue services in England, by incident type and fire and rescue authority

Commentary (Prevention)

Key actions taken in the year

This has been a challenging year for teams involved in the delivery of Home Safety, perhaps most importantly because of the direct impact that managing the risks associated with COVID-19 have had on our ability to provide effective prevention activity at our usual rate of delivery. It has been the priority of ECFRS this year to protect our personnel from contracting the virus, and equally, to prevent them transmitting the virus to those individuals we visit, the overwhelming majority of whom are over the age of 65 and a significant proportion of whom are vulnerable in other ways.

ECFRS Prevention Teams have adjusted activity during 2020/21 which had the overall effect or reducing the number of individuals for whom a Home Safety interaction was provided, but crucially, ensured that ECFRS were still able to provide a service to those most at risk of fire.

In March 2020, the Home Safety Team briefly ceased all prevention activities in response to the UK Government announcement of a nationwide lockdown. Safe and Officers resumed restricted visits in full PPE within 14 days, following the completion of a Site-Specific Risk Assessment.

The Home Safety Team, in partnership with the Safeguarding Team reviewed and adjusted the way it assessed the risk of fire in the home, and used this model to determine whether ECFRS personnel were able to enter a residents home during COVID-19. The model was designed to assess the risk of the virus against the risk of fire for each referral into ECFRS. At different points during the pandemic, and in step with UK Government advice, the Home Safety Team have agreed to visit people in just one, or several of the following categories: Gold Crisis, Gold, Silver and Bronze, with Gold Crisis being considered the referrals with the highest risk of fire. The overall effect of restricting the number of visits conducted to those at highest risk of fire, resulted in an overall reduction in number of visits undertaken by ECFRS by 44% in comparison with the previous year.

For the duration of the Pandemic, prevention activity undertaken by operational personnel has been significantly restricted to protect operational availability. This has therefore, impacted plans to increase the number of Home Safety Visits undertaken by firefighters and reduced the number undertaken in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 by 53%.

Volunteer activity by ECFRS volunteers (not staff) was switched off entirely for the duration of the pandemic, in consultation with ECFRS volunteers, taking into account their own level of vulnerability and the risk presented to residents. This has not affected the delivery of internal staff volunteering but has meant that only 17 volunteer visits were completed in 2020/21.

During the past 15 months, ECFRS staff have volunteered approximately 4,000hrs to the pandemic response in various roles including logistical support to Volunteer Vaccinator roles. In April 2020, the ECFRS Staff Volunteer Working Group was formed, with colleagues who volunteered to be part of the management and oversight of our efforts in the community.

In periods of loosened restrictions, the Community and Operational Risk Team has undertaken doorstep engagements, most notably in rural parts of Essex where properties are geographically further away from fire stations. This has resulted in 762 home safety interactions and the provision of 1,349 smoke alarms. In addition, wider prevention teams completed 425 Home Safety Visits.

Of the total of 4,346 visits conducted during 2020/21, Safe and Well Officers completed 87%. These visits are listed in the table above as Safe and Well Visits. This is an increased percentage on 2019/20, where Safe and Well Officers completed 69%.

The restricted service provided by ECFRS in response to the pandemic, and the reduced public appetite for ECFRS personnel entering their homes has led to a 45% reduction in calls to the Home Safety Information Team (HSIT), a 46% reduction in calls made by the HSIT and a 31% reduction in email enquiries.

Home Safety Visits, and Safe and Well Visits have remained focused on those who are most at risk of fire. Indicators for the number of individuals who lived alone, and who were over the age of 65 increased as a proportion of overall visits in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20 by 2% and 6% respectively. There were small percentage reductions in the number of individuals who reported having a disability or who lived in social housing, visited by ECFRS as a proportion of overall visit numbers. For individuals with a disability the 2% reduction is likely to be a consequence of the high rate of shielding undertaken by individuals with disabilities for much of 2019/20. Social housing is an area that ECFRS struggles to engage with, primarily because by law, these households should already have working smoke detection and therefore, fewer contact the Home Safety Service. ECFRS visited 1% fewer social housing properties in 2020/21 in comparison with the previous year.

For the duration of the pandemic, ECFRS ceased handing out paper evaluation forms to be returned by members of the public in line with COVID-19 risk assessment controls. There is, therefore, no data recorded for service evaluations. During the period, ECFRS did receive 29 emails relating to our service and performance, 93% of which were positive.

Safe and Well Officers made 81% fewer referrals to other agencies than in 2019/20, a reflection of the reduced number of visits enabled by COVID-19 restrictions, reduced partner activity due to COVID-19, and the feedback that many of the individuals ECFRS was still able to visit, were already known to partner agencies and accessing additional support. Nonetheless, 62 residents were connected with support in areas such as smoking cessation, mental health support, dementia support, fuel payments and help with mobility.

The number of standard optical smoke detectors fitted by ECFRS in 2020/21 decreased by 31% in comparison to the previous year, whilst the number of sensory alarms provided also decreased by 42%. These reductions are a direct result of the reduction in the overall number of visits undertaken by ECFRS. It should be noted, that enabling the provision of alarms for self-fit resulted in ECFRS providing 1,349 smoke alarms to members of the public as part of targeted community

engagement activity. This was a new activity, and is therefore not comparable to the previous year, or included in the total number of alarms ECFRS fit as part of our visits. As a reference the number of standard smoke alarms fitted in 2019/2020 was 8,459 and in 2020/2021 fitted/supplied totalled 7,214 (5,865 from visits & 1,349 drop off's from CSO's) so being a of decrease of 15% overall. The number of Sensory alarms fitted in 2019/2020 was 1,307 and in 2020/2021 was 753, there were no Sensory alarms provided as part of the drop off's for CSO's.

Actions planned for year ahead

The introduction of a new Prevention Strategy in February 2021 has led to a review of Home Safety at ECFRS, and the delivery model used to generate, allocate and deliver home safety interactions at our Service. This review, once complete, will both refresh the Home Safety Strategic Delivery Plan and introduce changes designed to increase the number of home safety interactions conducted by ECFRS personnel, whilst maintaining a focus on those who are most at risk of fire.

A pilot of the HARM Model is scheduled for May to July 2021, this will allow the service to target areas of risk within the county; the model draws on multiple datasets providing a risk scoring based on geographic areas. The pilot will focus on ADF within the Clacton areas and will utilise resources from both the Central Prevention Team and Operational Community Risk Teams.

The Service is working with Essex Centre of Data Analytics (ECDA) to further explore at risk groups of ADF. This research will form the future understanding of AFD and will be utilised to inform ECFRS Prevention Activities for the future.

The service has worked in partnership with the NFCC and Kent Fire and Rescue Service (April 2021) to oversee and manage the national consultation to the Fire Prevention Standard. During this next period ECFRS will work to implement the National Fire Prevention Standard to ensure alignment.

Pilot activity is already underway to introduce a new educational home safety module to be offered to any individuals who work or volunteer in the homes of another person in Essex. This module will help in the dispersal of home safety awareness beyond the confines of ECFRS, investing our partners and friends with crucial knowledge that could prevent fire, and save lives.

The Home Safety Team will increase and strengthen our partnerships, introducing monitoring of the percentage of referrals received from partner agencies and aiming to ensure that partner referrals form the majority of our Safe and Well Officer workload. We will also work with our partners to increase the number of referrals we are able to make to partner agencies, increasing our awareness of their services and passing this knowledge to residents we engage with.

The Home Safety Team will work with the Community and Operational Risk Team and Station Managers to increase the number of Home Safety interactions undertaken by operational personnel.

The Home Safety Team will work to ensure that The Safe and Well Officer Team, and all personnel who are undertaking Home Safety activity have the training and support they need to deliver a high-quality and impactful prevention intervention.

The Home Safety Team will finish the implementation of our service evaluation plan, paused at the onset of COVID-19. We will report on how much we do, how well we do it, and whether that activity makes a difference in achieving our goals. Our evaluation will inform the future design and development of our services.

Operational Community Risk Team

The Operational Community Risk activities were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with community events cancelled and partners working from home. The team stepped forward to assist our Partners through volunteering for logistics at local hospitals, working with vulnerable people who were required to shield and conducting After Incident Responses across the county.

Although the pandemic impacted on the delivery, the team knocked on 23,143 doors, engaged with 7,869 residents, made 191 targeted interventions and conducted 5 Safe & Well events in 2020/21. During this period, the team issued 1204 Smoke Alarms to residents.

People living in rural communities are geographically isolated with restricted access to resources, which from a fire and rescue service perspective means longer response times to incidents therefore we need to support people to be more prepared and resilient. Any rural area that falls outside of the ten-minute response time of an appliance is considered as a target group for the team to engage with in the coming year and ensuring that residents have a working smoke alarm.

The team will also be working under the new Response strategy and operational delivery plan to meet the priorities of the Service in 2021/22.

Focus: Education

In the Fire & Rescue Plan, there is the following 'we will' statement: 'educate and inform young people, so they live safe lives' under the priority, Prevention, Protection and Response (PPR).

During this past year, schools were closed for a number of months in line with government guidelines and restrictions. However, the Education Team within the Community Development & Safeguarding Team were quick to act. The team were the first Fire & Rescue Service in the country to create and move all their education programmes online with the creation of the Education Hub. The team videoed themselves at home delivering all our programmes enabling the content to be shared widely and directly to young people, parents, guardians, schools and other agencies.

> **Since the launch in April 2020, the Education Hub has had 6,251 views.**

When restrictions were lifted, the team were able to return to schools and deliver some face-to-face lessons. However, each school had their own risk assessments and confidence in allowing this to happen. They also had a significant amount of curriculum delivery to catch up on which resulted in a decrease in visits from the team. Once again, the team ensured they were as accessible as possible, enabling virtual lessons to be delivered over Zoom. The virtual delivery allowed the team to see a number of different classes, and in some cases, a whole year group, during just one session. Moving forward, the team will continue to be offering this blended approach to delivery – booking face-to-face visits, promoting the online Education Hub and offering virtual lessons. These opportunities will be promoted too all schools in Essex.

Promotion and communications regarding the Community Development & Safeguarding Team's virtual Education Hub has continued to be shared throughout. All programmes are divided into key stages, so education providers are aware of what programmes are suitable for the children they teach. The table below shows the number of children and young people seen during the last year compared with the previous year.

	2020 – 2021	2019 – 2020
Face-to-face	5,366	191,491
Virtual	15,390	N/A
Total	**20,756**	**191,491**

The graph below shows a breakdown of the types of educational programmes delivered throughout the financial year, followed by a table with comparisons from the previous year. Highlighted in green in the table are the five most popular programmes (by financial year).

Number of students per programme

Programme	Students
Respect Assembly	210
People Who Help Us	939
Other*	205
Making a Safer Journey / Road Safety	2,036
Knife Crime	972
Home Safety (Primary & Secondary)	2,670
Healthy Relationships	305
Hate Crime	2,640
Great Fire of London	1,211
Gangs Awareness	1,206
Fireworks / Halloween	4,547
Cycle Safety	30
Cyber Safety (Primary & Secondary)	2,825
Arson and Hoax calls	960

Programme	2020 – 2021	2019 – 2020
Arson and Hoax calls	960	5,944
Cyber Safety (Primary & Secondary)	2,825	14,718
Cycle Safety	30	60
Fireworks / Halloween	4,547	74,197
Gangs Awareness	1,206	5,019
Great Fire of London	1,211	4,052
Hate Crime	2,640	11,439
Healthy Relationships	305	5,288
Home Safety (Primary & Secondary)	2,670	14,587
Knife Crime	972	5,444
Making a Safer Journey / Road Safety	2,036	6,077
Other*	205	17,394
People Who Help Us	939	3,132
Respect Assembly	210	1,035
Summer Safety	0	23,104
Total	**20,756**	**191,491**

*A large portion of the programmes delivered in the 'Other' category are ad hoc tailored programmes required by the school – these include preschool visits, child safety week campaign, personal safety, and Prison Me! No Way!
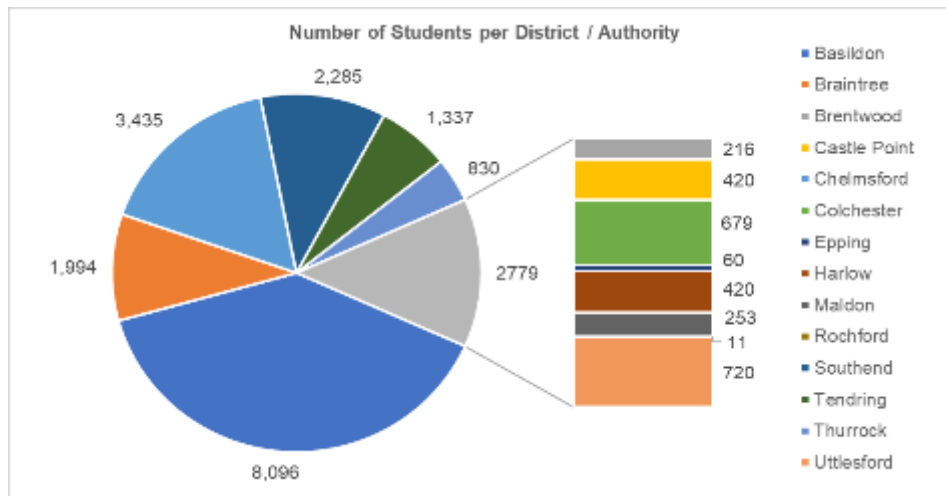
The graph below shows a breakdown of the where the programmes were delivered throughout the year followed by a table with comparisons from the previous year.

District	2020 – 2021	2019 – 2020
Basildon	8,096	25,665
Braintree	1,994	13,117
Brentwood	216	7,995
Castle Point	420	15,334
Chelmsford	3,435	12,904
Colchester	679	22,842
Epping	60	14,275
Harlow	420	12,817
Maldon	253	5,188
Rochford	11	7,598
Southend	2,285	16,707
Tendring	1,337	11,636
Thurrock	830	19,966
Uttlesford	720	5,447
Total	**20,756**	**191,491**

For benchmarking purposes, Home Office statisticians considered the future collection of the 'campaigns and initiatives' information such as activity in schools, fire setter and youth fire safety programme in 2019 with regards to the burden of collection and the use made of the data given its known limitations and it was decided to not collect this information[8].

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[8] FIRE1203: Fire and rescue authority campaigns and initiatives, by fire and rescue authority

Commentary (Education, Prevention)

Observations and key insights about the data

There has been an 89% decrease in the number of children and young people reached over the last year due to COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions.

There was a clear shift of preference from face-to-face to virtual visits due to COVID-19 risk assessments and school's confidence in allowing external visitors into the classroom – with a 97% decrease in face-to-face visits.

The table below shows that, although reduce, the pattern of popularity with our programmes remained relatively similar.

- The Firework / Halloween programme remained the most popular – this is often since whole year groups will engage in one session allowing large numbers to be educated.
- Home safety across secondary and primary remain the second most popular – this is extremely positive as these cover fire/crime reduction messages with key actions young people can take to keep themselves, their families, and their communities safe from harm.
- Schools were closed during the summer months due to the government lockdown therefore no Summer Safety Campaign could be delivered in 2020-21 virtually or face-to-face. The content was still available on the Education Hub online
- The 6th and 7th most popular programmes in 2019-20 were Hate Crime and Road safety which mirrors the 4th and 5th most popular in 2020-21/

	2020 – 2021		**2019 – 2020**	
1	Fireworks / Halloween	**4,547**	Fireworks / Halloween	**74,197**
2	Cyber Safety (Primary & Secondary)	**2,825**	Summer Safety	**23,104**
3	Home Safety Primary & Secondary	**2,670**	Other	**17,394**
4	Hate Crime	**2,640**	Cyber Safety (Primary & Secondary)	**14,718**
5	Making a Safer Journey / Road Safety	**2,036**	Home Safety Primary & Secondary	**14,587**

Key actions taken in the year

The Education team have worked extremely hard to create as many accessible platforms as possible to engage schools and young people – this includes the online Education Hub (videos of Education Officers delivering the education presentations and online materials/presentations) and the offer of virtual lessons and face-to-face visits.

Throughout the year, the team have contacted 100% of schools (primary, secondary, SEND and PRU) in Essex to ensure they are aware of the education offer available to them – whether that is virtually, face-to-face or signposted to the Education Hub online.

The Education team will continue to promote both face-to-face lessons, with 488 lessons already booked for the coming year, as well as the Education Hub. Furthermore, the team has been liaising with schools to see how best to engage during a virtual session so can we see the students via the camera, and questions be fielded by the teacher to the presenter.

In terms of content delivered, the team reviewed the school presentations to ensure that they were current and regularly do this. The Education also created alternative films to ensure accessibility and inclusion of current trends. In addition to, creation of safety education films for adults (to be uploaded to the Education Hub) and trialling personal safety lessons (KS5).

In addition to the above, the team also made contact with Staywise (national online resources / learning materials created by the NFCC nationally) to see if any more input required from ECFRS. All ECFRS school programmes had been previously sent to Staywise.

Actions planned for year ahead

- Creation of an Education steering group with Essex Police in April 2021.
  - o Previously, when new programmes ad been developed / trialled, Police colleagues have been invited to observe lessons and give feedback.
  - o The steering group will discuss prioritising areas /districts for the Education Team to visit based on police data.
  - o The steering group will review the Education team programme offer to ensure they meet the current police strategy.
- Continued promotion of face to face and virtual lessons.
- Continued promotion of Education Hub.
- Additional learning materials and films to be added to the Education Hub.
- Contact with schools about competitions and ideas to create more engagement (poems, short stories, poster designs from students).
- Contact with schools to set up focus groups to look at issues / concerns of students (e.g., Cyber Safety, gangs etc).
- Development of Hate crime materials (after contact with Victim Support).
- Development of pedestrian safety materials (in conjunction with the RTC Team).
- First Police/ Fire Education steering group to be actioned.
- Migration of Education data to CFRMIS.

PROTECTION

Service Measure: Number of fires in non-residential properties.

The table below shows the number of fires in non-residential properties for each quarter and the total for 2020/21 as well as for previous financial years. The totals within the table and chart below clearly shows a decreasing trend in the number of fires in these properties.

	2020 - 2021	**2019 - 2020**	**2018 - 2019**	**2017 - 2018**
Q1, Apr – Jun	107	109	130	135
Q2, Jul - Sept	119	131	120	118
Q3, Oct - Dec	93	99	101	110
Q4, Jan - Mar	63	88	97	113
TOTAL	**382**	**427**	**448**	**476**

Number of Fires in Non-Residential Properties, April 2017 to March 2021
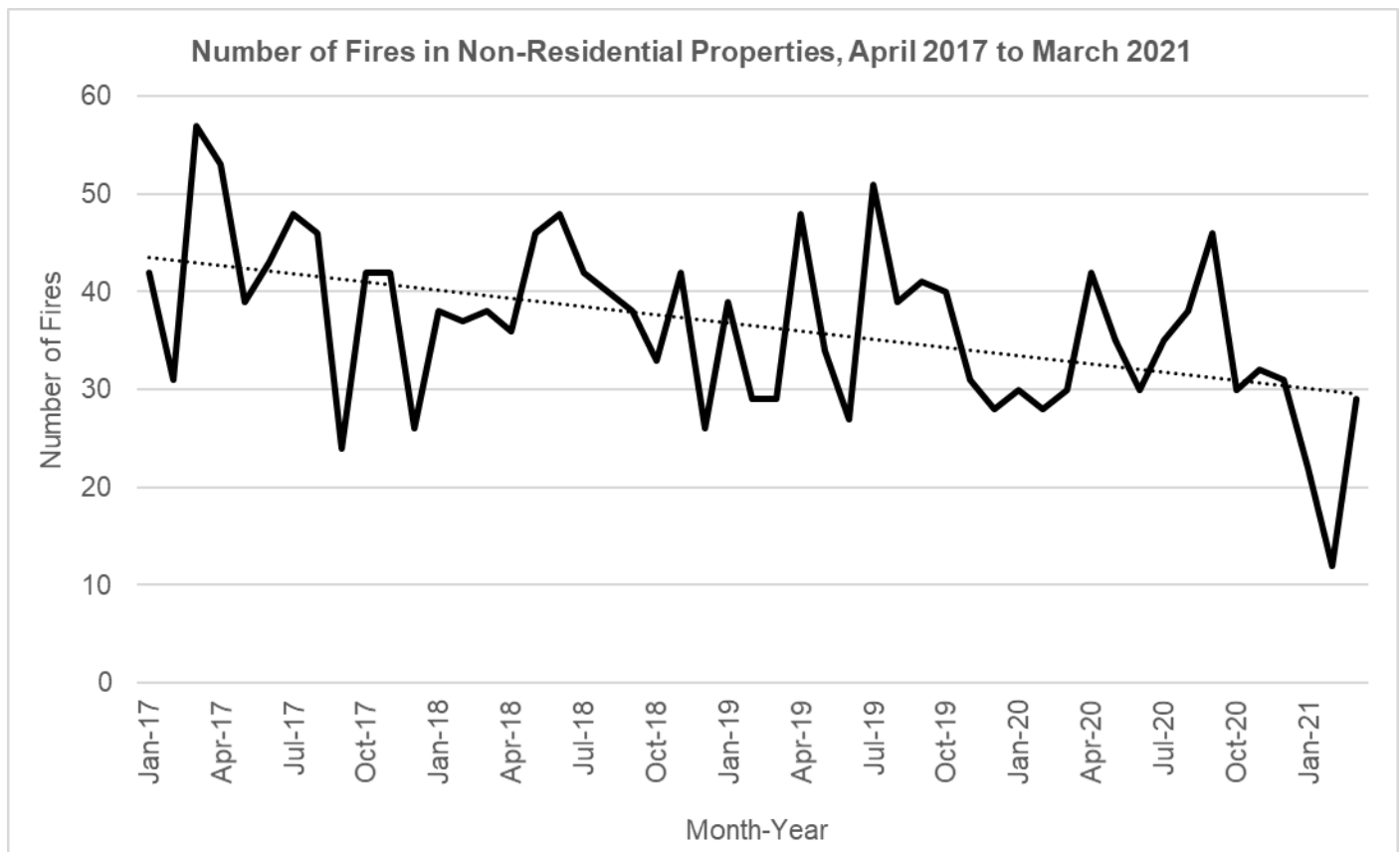
Top 10 Property Types involved in Fires within Non-Residential Properties
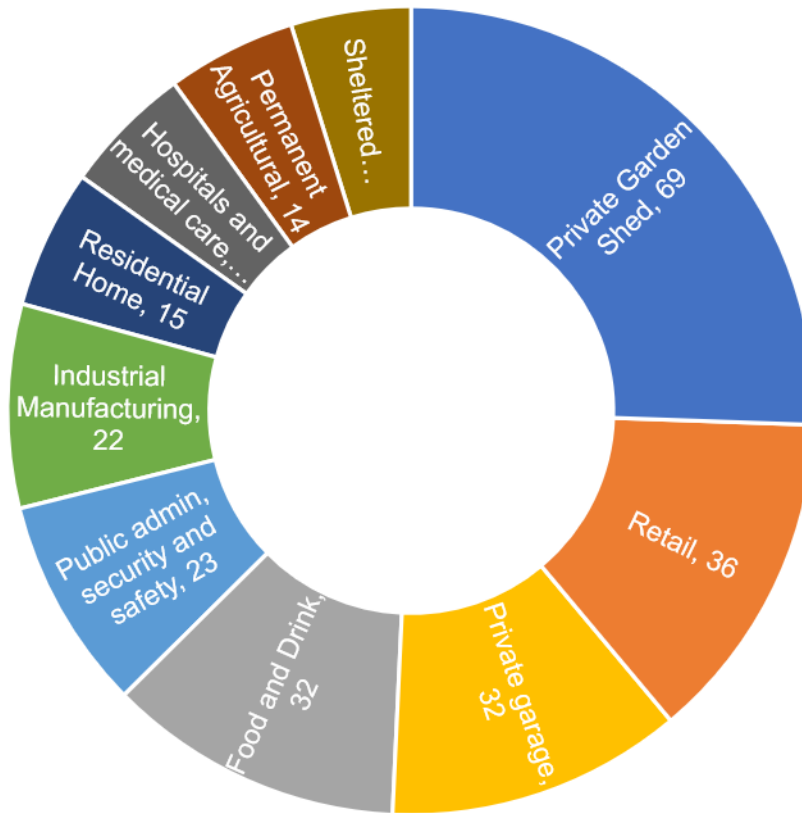
Note – Private Garden Sheds and Garages do not fall under the auspices of the Fire Safety Order, and therefore are not manageable by the Protection team.

In 2020/21, 18% of all fires in non-residential properties were in private garden sheds (69 fires), 9% in retail (36) and 8% each in food and drink (32) and private garage (32). Of the 36 fires in retail, 47% occurred in single shops and the peak month was March 2020 (5 fires), closely followed by November 2020 (4 fires). 56% of the fires that occurred in food and drink establishments were in pubs/wine bars/bars, and the peak month was October 2020 (6 fires).

Nationally[9], the number of fires in other buildings decreased from 20,755 fires in 2010/11 to 15,560 fires in 2014/15 and plateaued (with small decreasing increments) until 2019/20 where there were 14,308 fires. Over the 10-year period, on average, 21% of these fires were in private non-residential properties, like ECFRS' pattern as described above. In 2019/20, in particular, 21% of non-domestic fires were in private buildings, 14% in industrial premises, 10% in retail as well as food and drink premises.

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[9] FIRE0301: Primary fires, fatalities and non-fatal casualties in other buildings by motive and building type, England.

Focus: Protection Activity

The Service monitors activity undertaken by the Protection team and the table below shows the number of jobs completed in 2021/21 as well as 2019/20's figures for comparison.

Job Type	2020 - 2021					2019 - 2020
	Completed	Successful	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	RBIP H or VH (%)	Completed
Planning	921	917*1				532
Desktop Audit	2293				86*2	0
Full Audit	319		168	151	88*2	824
Building Regulations	1375	1368*1				1326
HMO	128					165
Licencing	510	509*1				507
Other Fire Safety Activity	685					922
Other Consultation	138					132
Alleged Fire Risk	224					234
Other*3	598					2424
Enforcement Notices	11					0
Prohibition Notices	0					7
TOTAL	**7202**					**7073**

*1 2794 out of the 2806 statutory consultations were responded to within 15 working days = 99.6%
*2 88% of Full Audits and 86% of Desktop Audits were carried out at High (H) or Very High risk premises as defined within the Service's Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) (figures are from January – March 2021 only, due to the introduction of the new RBIP)
*3 Other = FSO30/40/50 inspections, dry riser inspections

151 Notifications of Deficiencies were served.

11 Enforcement Notices issued:

- 8 to high rise residential premises (as part of the NFCC's Building Risk Review project focusing on External Wall Systems (Cladding) following Grenfell).
- 1 to a student residential premises
- 1 to a hotel
- 1 to a caravan site

For benchmarking purposes, fire protection activity carried out by fire and rescue services is submitted to the Home Office on an annual basis at the end of the financial year. The data will be published circa autumn 2021. Previous quarterly performance reports have provided statistics on ECFRS fire protection activity in comparison to other Services[10].

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[10] FIRE1202: Fire safety audits carried out by fire and rescue services, by fire and rescue authority

Commentary (Protection)

Observations and key insights about the data

The number of fires in non-residential premises is lower for 2020/21 than for 2019/20, they are also lower for every quarter when compared to the corresponding quarter for 2019/20. This continues the downward trend showed for the last 3 years.

18% of or non-residential fires occurred in private garden sheds. This is not covered under the order but a collaborative response between Prevention and Protection departments can be used to mitigate.

Despite being in a pandemic, the Protection team carried out more activity (7202 jobs) than in 2019/20 (7073). Enforcement activity has significantly increased in the period than has been the case in previous years.

Key actions taken in the year

Two strategies related to Protection were developed and approved in the year:
1. Protection strategy
2. Enhanced Enforcement strategy

The HMICFRS protection improvement plan was concluded. A peer review of the HMICFRS protection improvement plan was commissioned and delivered.

ECFRS' new Risk Based Inspection Programme was launched and implemented. It has been embedded into the new risk information system, CFRMIS, that has been implemented in the Protection team and across the wider Service.

Where safe and possible to do, the Service conducted full audits of premises in the Service area. However, due to restrictions, the Service also instigated desktop audits which enabled high risk premises to be inspected during a pandemic.

10 new inspecting officers were trained during the period and an additional 7.6 recruited.

Actions planned for year ahead

- ECFRS new Protection lead will be joining the Service in Q1 2021/22.
- An updated Risk Based Inspection Programme will be developed.
- The protection department will be restructured to deliver against the new strategy.
- Business engagement will be enhanced, and new technologies will be utilised to enhance this.
- Additional Government surge funding will be allocated to key areas.

- Delivery of the Grenfell Phase one Action plan.
- Continued refinement, identification and targeting of those premises identified as high risk.
- Continued partnership working including identification of new partnership opportunities.
- Operational crews will receive enhanced levels of training to enable a greater number of properties audited.

RESPONSE

Focus: Incidents Overview

ECFRS attended 14339 incidents in 2020/21 and as the table below shows, this is less than previous financial years. It shows that there were fewer attendances to fires and special service incidents in 2020/21 compared to previous year, whereas ECFRS attended more false alarms. Fires and special services both accounted for 29% of all incidents and false alarms, 42%.

	Total	Fires	Special Service	False Alarms
2017 - 2018	15566	4769	4485	6312
2018 - 2019	15515	4938	4283	6294
2019 - 2020	15243	4720	4521	6002
2020 - 2021	**14339**	**4201**	**4088**	**6050**

Fires are covered in detail under the Fire and Rescue Plan priority, Prevention section of PPR. Nonetheless, the table below shows the number of fires by classification in 2020/21.

Primary	Secondary	Chimney	Other
1907	2233	60	1

Special Services are normally reported as Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and non-RTCs, where the former is reported in more detail under the Fire and Rescue Plan priority, 'Improve Safety on our Roads'. In 2020/21, despite a pandemic that had travel restrictions, 21% of special service (SS) incidents attended by ECFRS were RTCs (845). The most common special service incidents, i.e., non-RTCs were effecting entry/exit (836, 20% of SS incidents), flooding (492, 12% of SS) and assist other agencies (471, 12% of SS). The table below shows the peak months in 2020/21.

Incident	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
RTC	29	53	64	82	101	70	97	71	88	70	52	68
Effecting entry/exit	55	58	62	64	76	81	76	68	77	85	62	72
Flooding	22	24	24	27	78	23	37	30	56	94	45	32
Assist other agencies	44	26	43	51	44	37	53	34	36	32	36	35

False Alarms are covered in detail under the priority, Make Best Use of Resources.

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

This measure calculates the response time of first attendance to a potentially life-threatening incident and the target is a 10-minute average. The table below shows the response time in minutes: seconds (mm:ss) for potentially life-threatening incidents for the last two financial years. Values highlighted in green indicate when the 10-minute average was met.

2020 - 2021	Response Time (mm:ss)	2019 - 2020	Response Time (mm:ss)
Apr-20	09:21	Apr-19	09:56
May-20	09:11	May-19	10:44
Jun-20	10:11	Jun-19	10:20
Jul-20	09:52	Jul-19	10:09
Aug-20	10:00	Aug-19	10:41
Sept-20	10:14	Sept-19	09:57
Oct-20	10:22	Oct-19	10:08
Nov-20	10:17	Nov-19	10:26
Dec-20	11:07	Dec-19	10:18
Jan-21	11:00	Jan-20	10:16
Feb-21	09:34	Feb-20	10:30
Mar-21	10:49	Mar-20	09:27
Average of Averages	10:10		10:14

Service Measure: Percentage of incidents attended within 15 minutes.

This measure calculates the percentage of incidents that were attended by an ECFRS appliance within 15 minutes. The service-wide target is 90%.

The graph below has the percentages attained for each month since April 2017 to March 2021.
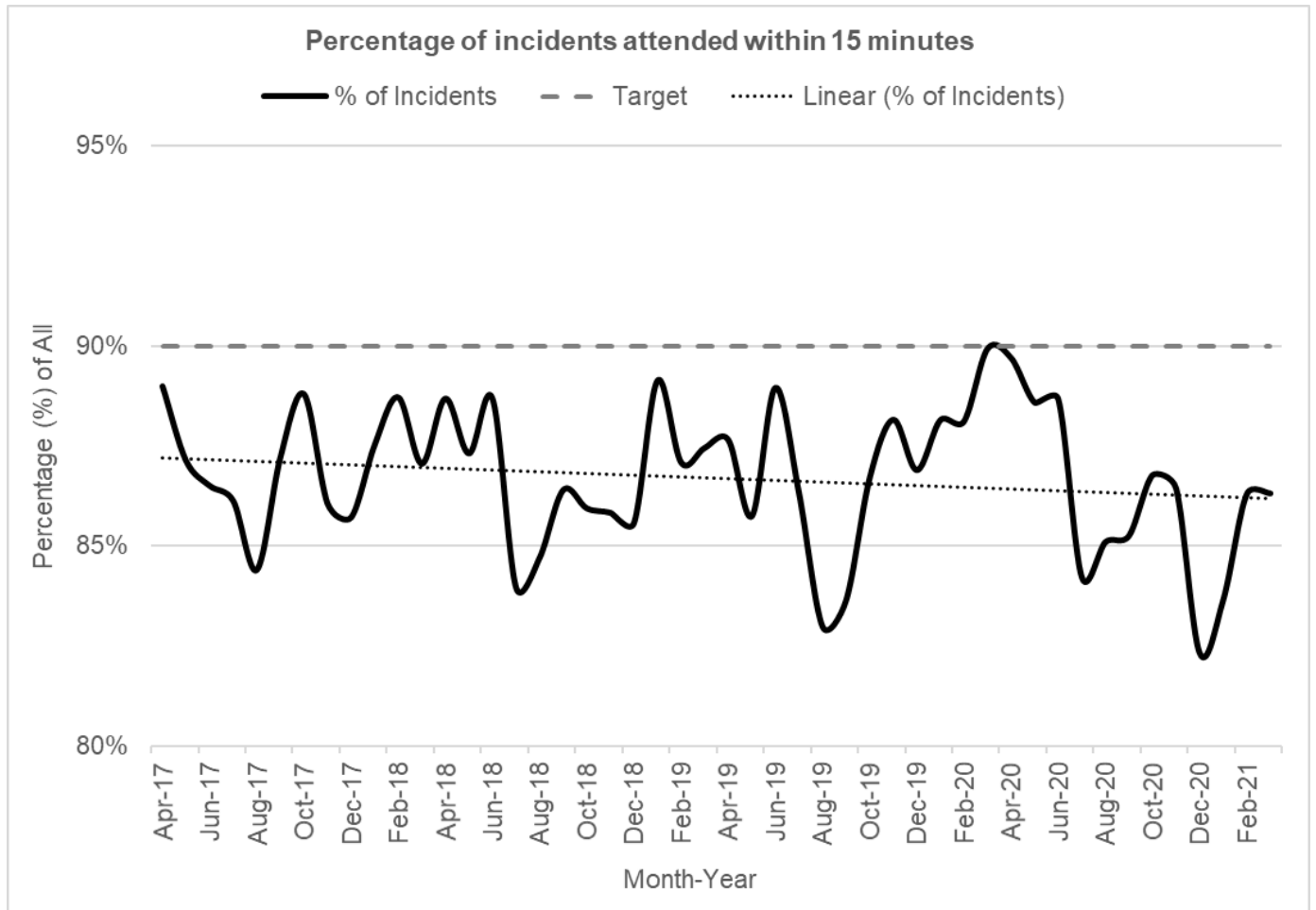
It clearly shows that the target of 90% was met in the last financial year, in April 2020, and was 1% away from it in the following two months (May and June 2020). 82% was the lowest percentage of incidents attended within 15 minutes in 2020/21, which is only 8% from the target.

Service Measure: Total Pumping Appliance Availability

This measure includes the total pumping appliance availability for the Service as well as the Wholetime and Day Crew (WT & DC) and on-call (OC) pumping appliances availability. Each crewing type has a target: total is 94%, WT &DC is 98% and OC is 90%.

The table below shows the pumping appliance availability by month for the last two financial years and percentages highlighted in green when the target was met.

2020 - 2021	TOTAL 94%	WT & DC 98%	OC 90%	2019 - 2020	TOTAL 94%	WT & DC 98%	OC 90%
Apr-20	94%	99%	92%	Apr-19	82%	96%	75%
May-20	91%	99%	88%	May-19	80%	95%	73%
Jun-20	87%	99%	82%	Jun-19	80%	96%	73%
Jul-20	84%	97%	77%	Jul-19	82%	95%	75%
Aug-20	78%	94%	71%	Aug-19	77%	93%	70%
Sept-20	83%	95%	78%	Sept-19	79%	94%	72%
Oct-20	81%	96%	74%	Oct-19	80%	96%	72%
Nov-20	82%	96%	76%	Nov-19	81%	96%	74%
Dec-20	76%	87%	71%	Dec-19	79%	94%	72%
Jan-21	85%	98%	79%	Jan-20	85%	98%	79%
Feb-21	85%	97%	79%	Feb-20	83%	97%	76%
Mar-21	85%	97%	79%	Mar-20	86%	97%	80%
Total (Average)	84%	96%	79%	-	81%	96%	74%

On average, total pumping appliance availability improved, from 81% in 2019/20 to 84% in 2020/21. This improvement is highly likely due to the increased availability of on-call pumping appliances, from 74% in 2019/20 to 79% in 2020/21. On-call pumping appliance availability was higher for every month, when compared with previous year's figures, for nine months of 2020/21. The months of April, May and June had significant availability for on-call pumping appliances.

Wholetime and day crew pumping appliance availability average was 96% for both years.

Commentary (Response)

Observations and key insights about the data

The Service attended just over 900 fewer incidents in 2020/21 than in 2019/20, it is highly likely that this is due to the three lockdown periods throughout the year. The reduction in incidents was primarily made up of 520 fires and 434 Special Services, the main response type to False Alarms only saw a reduction of 47.

The average speed of response to potentially life- threatening incidents within 10 minutes was slightly improved on last year, except for December and January which saw a marked increase on 2019/20 of approximately 40seconds.

It is encouraging to note that for some months of the year, the percentage of incidents / calls attended within 15minutes hit or was close to the target of 90% and the lowest percentage of 82%, is only 8% from the target. Additional work around call handling and the time needed by service control to manage the calls has offered an opportunity for response and service control to develop further joint working.

Additional variables within the response timings can be linked directly to appliance availability and particularly the increased availability of on-call appliances during the lockdown period due to more On-Call firefighters being available.

Increases are often linked to appliances needing to travel further distances as other stations may not be available therefore increasing attendance times. December and January's increase is likely due to the decrease in on-call availability and the end of the whole-time leave period where an increase in the taking of leave, which had not been taken during the year. Under the current national pandemic restrictions, the taking of leave and working from home may have altered previous patterns.

Key actions taken in the year

This has been a challenging year for Operational teams on fire stations because of the direct impact that manging the risks associated with COVID-19 have had on their ability to provide an effective response whilst maintaining their own safety.

It has been a Service priority to protect our personnel from contracting the virus, and equally, to prevent them transmitting the virus to those individuals that they come into contact with a significant proportion of whom would have some form of vulnerability. For a significant period, stations were locked down and personnel have worked well to ensure that the service has in the main seen lower levels of Covid 19 infections than anticipated originally.

Actions planned for year ahead

There has been some good progress made in the transition to on-call from wholetime at Dovercourt, and the lessons learned are being utilised at South Woodham Ferrers, Great Baddow and Waltham Abbey by the new Station Managers, of which improvements are already being noted.

The current day crewed stations that are continuing to show low availability are due to crewing levels at the station with recruitment continuing to be supported by the On Call Liaison Officers.

The Staff Team continue with their availability modelling of on-call stations to predict the stations that regularly have short falls during the day as some stations still have areas of concern and continue to have poor availability. The key areas of concern around availability are mainly during daytime hours with already low crewing numbers and the potential opportunities for recruitment being hampered due to town sizes, transient populations, the required turn out times (6 minutes) and on-call to wholetime firefighters transferring. In particular, Canvey On Call availability has been performing poorly, however a sustained recruitment and promotional campaign have started to show results and a marked increase in potential firefighters being recruited.

The new Response Strategy has been approved by SLT and will be ready to be launched after June 2021. The Strategy details how ECFRS will deliver against the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-24 (IRMP) to reduce the impact of an emergency within Essex, however the new strategy will not only enable the service to resolve emergency situations efficiently and effectively but also adapt to the changing political, environmental, and societal impacts that are facing Essex and therefore ECFRS.

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: IMPROVE SAFETY ON OUR ROADS

The aim of this priority is that fewer people are killed or seriously injured on Essex roads.

Fire and Rescue Plan Measure: Reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured.

The Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) that ECFRS are a key partner in launched Vision Zero in 2020, an ambition to have zero road deaths and serious injuries on roads in Essex, Southend, and Thurrock council areas by 2040.

The table below shows the number of people that were killed or seriously injured (KSI) in 2020/21 (provisional figures), and the previous financial year.

2020 - 2021	Fatal	Serious Casualties	Total	2019 - 2020	Fatal	Serious Casualties	Total
Apr-20	2	25	27	Apr-19	2	60	62
May-20	4	53	57	May-19	4	74	78
Jun-20	6	49	55	Jun-19	5	61	66
Jul-20	5	51	56	Jul-19	1	74	75
Aug-20	7	76	83	Aug-19	6	68	74
Sept-20	4	53	57	Sept-19	3	70	73
Oct-20	4	51	55	Oct-19	6	53	59
Nov-20	1	54	55	Nov-19	5	72	77
Dec-20	5	53	58	Dec-19	1	78	79
Jan-21	2	49	51	Jan-20	1	62	63
Feb-21	1	38	39	Feb-20	5	59	64
Mar-21	1	49	50	Mar-20	4	47	51
	43	598	641		43	778	821

Data Source: KSI stats as at 3 May 2021 from Essex Police, sourced from CRASH system.

The highest number of people KSI in the last two financial years was 83 in August 2020, this is when COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were easing and during the summer months where the weather is fair. The lowest number of people that were KSI in road collisions was 27 in April 2020, which coincides with the first nationwide lockdown.

Service Measure: Number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) attended by ECFRS.

This measure is monitored by the Service with no target. The table below shows the number of RTCs attended by ECFRS for the last four financial years as well as a chart to show the number per month. The totals in the table show that the last financial year was the lowest number of attendances to RTCs in the last four, with less attendances across all quarters but particularly Q1.

	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020	2018 - 2019	2017 - 2018
Q1, Apr – Jun	146	284	271	293
Q2, Jul - Sept	253	295	336	307
Q3, Oct - Dec	256	321	340	309
Q4, Jan - Mar	190	244	248	296
Total	845	1144	1195	1205

Number of RTCs attended by ECFRS from April 2017 to March 2021
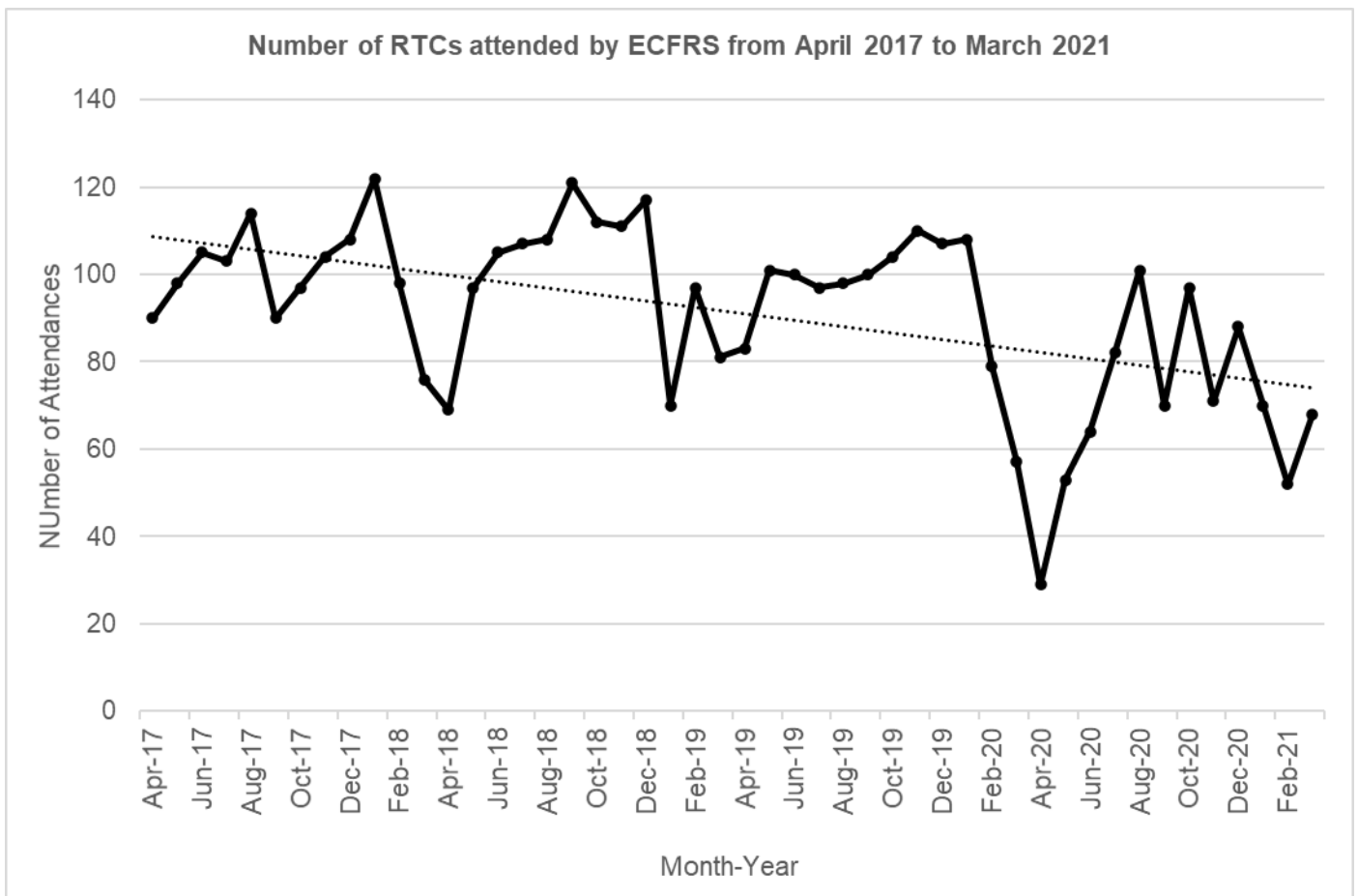
The table below lists the property types involved and the activity undertaken by ECFRS at RTCs in 2020/21. 56% of the activity were undertook at RTCs was making the scene or vehicle(s) safe and 24% involved the release or extrication of person/s.

Property Type	Advice only	Extrication of person/s	Make scene safe	Make vehicle safe	Medical assistance	Other	Release of person/s	Stand By	Wash Down Road	Total
Car	21	78	158	178	9	5	73	52	12	**586**
Multiple Vehicles	4	23	71	29	3	1	16	13	5	**165**
Motorcycle			15	5	4			5	7	**36**
Van	1	2	4	2	1	1	3	4	1	**19**
Lorry/HGV		3	4	3			3	2		**15**
Other outdoors (including land)			1		1			1	3	**6**
Bicycle			1		1			1		**3**
Dwelling			1					2		**3**
Bus/coach				1				1	1	**3**
Other				1	1					**2**
Non Residential			1					1		**2**
Tanker									1	**1**
Aircraft								1		**1**
Minibus		1								**1**
Outdoor equipment and machinery			1							**1**
Outdoor structures	1									**1**
Total	**27**	**107**	**257**	**219**	**20**	**7**	**95**	**83**	**30**	**845**

Service Measure: Number of deaths and serious injuries at RTCs attended by ECFRS.

ECFRS attend a proportion of RTCs that are KSI collisions, whereas the Police and the Ambulance Service will attend all. In 2020/21, ECFRS attended 845 RTCs of which 95 incidents (11%) involved victims who died or sustained serious injuries (where victim to hospital with injuries that appeared to be serious) within the collision.

ECFRS attended 95 incidents where 21 people were killed, of which 17 of these were male, 3 were female and 1 person where the age and gender was not known. 87 people were seriously injured where 64 were male and 23 were female.

Furthermore, the Service also attended 209 incidents where there were 239 victims who went to hospital with injuries following an RTC. 127 victims were male, 108 victims were female and four victims where the age and gender were unknown.

RTC Reduction Events in 2020 - 2021

P2W

11 Total FireBike events/115 interactions
6 FireBike Advanced Machine Skills Courses/65 riders trained
5 FireBike Better Biking Courses/50 riders trained

RTC – Other

7 Total events, (1x NCS) (2x Military), (3x Rochford Hospital) and (1x Young Drivers Scheme)
In the events, the Fire Car was used 3times, the Van once, and Community Wheels once.

2021/22:

FireBike activities are planned to resume in May, running through to October, subject to the Covid situation nationally. FireBike team members will be undergoing their annual advanced rider/instructor refresher training during May.
RTC events will be delivered via Secondary Contract Personnel at the start of this year, while the Department goes through its restructure and support posts are clarified.

Commentary

Observations and Key Insights about the Data

Reduced traffic levels have had an impact on road casualties in the last 12 months. The data presented by SERP (reported in previous ECFRS performance reports) regards traffic flow and capacity in Essex during 2020/21 is as expected, exceptional. There was a significant drop in traffic during the earlier lockdown months, although higher speeds were recorded, which has continued as lockdown measures are lifted and traffic flows have returned to almost normal levels.

There was an increased prevalence of speed and errors behind the wheel as factors in RTC's, suggesting driver skills had declined during lockdown, and/or drivers and riders took the opportunity to drive faster. Younger drivers are the most effected.

Causation for the RTC mostly attributed to observation / distraction such as use of a mobile phone while driving, combined with high speed. Essex Police reported an increase in drug driving impairments alongside other offences.

ECFRS notes that there was a slight increase in powered two-wheeler (P2W) KSI from previous years. Motorcycle casualties are often influenced by good weather conditions, which Essex experienced for much of last year, alongside some riders sought to take advantage of the quieter roads at those times.

The road network saw more people taking up cycling, with anecdotal evidence of an almost doubling of the number of this road user group.

Key actions taken in the year

The Safer Essex Roads Partnership launched the aspirational strategy of Vision Zero, which can only be realised by adopting a "safe system" approach to road safety. ECFRS continue to develop our Road Safety pillar within the Prevention Strategy, by embedding a safety culture and considering our role in the delivery of a safe system approach.

The SERP MOU was signed by our Senior Leadership Team, continuing our partnership approach to Vision Zero, and embedding a safe system within each partner organisation. Following this, the SERP delivery plan was agreed, which sees ECFRS refresh its commitment to work in partnership to make Essex Roads safer. However, there is a decrease in funding available to ECFRS for activity in the coming year as caution is applied to the SERP budgets, coming out of the pandemic.

During this period, the team saw changes in line management and other movements within the team. The team has also managed change in relation to personnel and RTC products. Discussions are in place to consider options for RTC Reduction Products namely Community Wheels as it reaches end of life.

The Covid pandemic had a significant impact on the delivery of all RTC activity in the year 2020/21.

A highlight in quarter four was a replacement of a new Fire Car which was kindly gifted via Audi; the team aim to utilise this vehicle over the next few months in RTC activities and campaigns. It should be noted that the Fire Car is provided by Audi for an undetermined duration.

Actions planned for year ahead

The Service will look to embed the principles of Vision Zero within ECFRS Delivery.

The RTC Reduction Officer role will become vacant over the next period and the service will look to revise this role into a Water Safety and RTC Reduction Officer.

The recruitment process for the Community Speed Watch (CSW) Co-ordinator took place in the last quarter, with the successful appointment made in April. Support from the wider prevention team has been gratefully received during the absence of a dedicated member of staff. Furthermore, CSW recommenced under the COVID-19 risk assessment, and issues relating to letters being sent to offending motorists has been resolved.

The SERP Strategic Group meeting was held on Teams recently. SERP is taking the opportunity to undertake a review of all its P2W safety activities/interventions, and a specific Working Group has been established for this purpose, chaired by ECFRS' FireBike & P2W Safety Manager

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: MAKE BEST USE OF RESOURCES

The aim of this priority is to reassure the people of Essex that their money is being used efficiently and effectively.

There are three Fire & Rescue Plan measures under this priority and the one reported on regularly is related to false alarms. The other two measures, the HMICFRS rating and cost of the service per resident are reported when data is finalised by the relevant department or following inspections.

Fire and Rescue Plan Measure: Reduction in number of false alarms.

The table below shows that ECFRS attended 6050 false alarms in 2020/21, 48 more than in 2019/20 but less attendances than in 2018/19 and 2017/18.
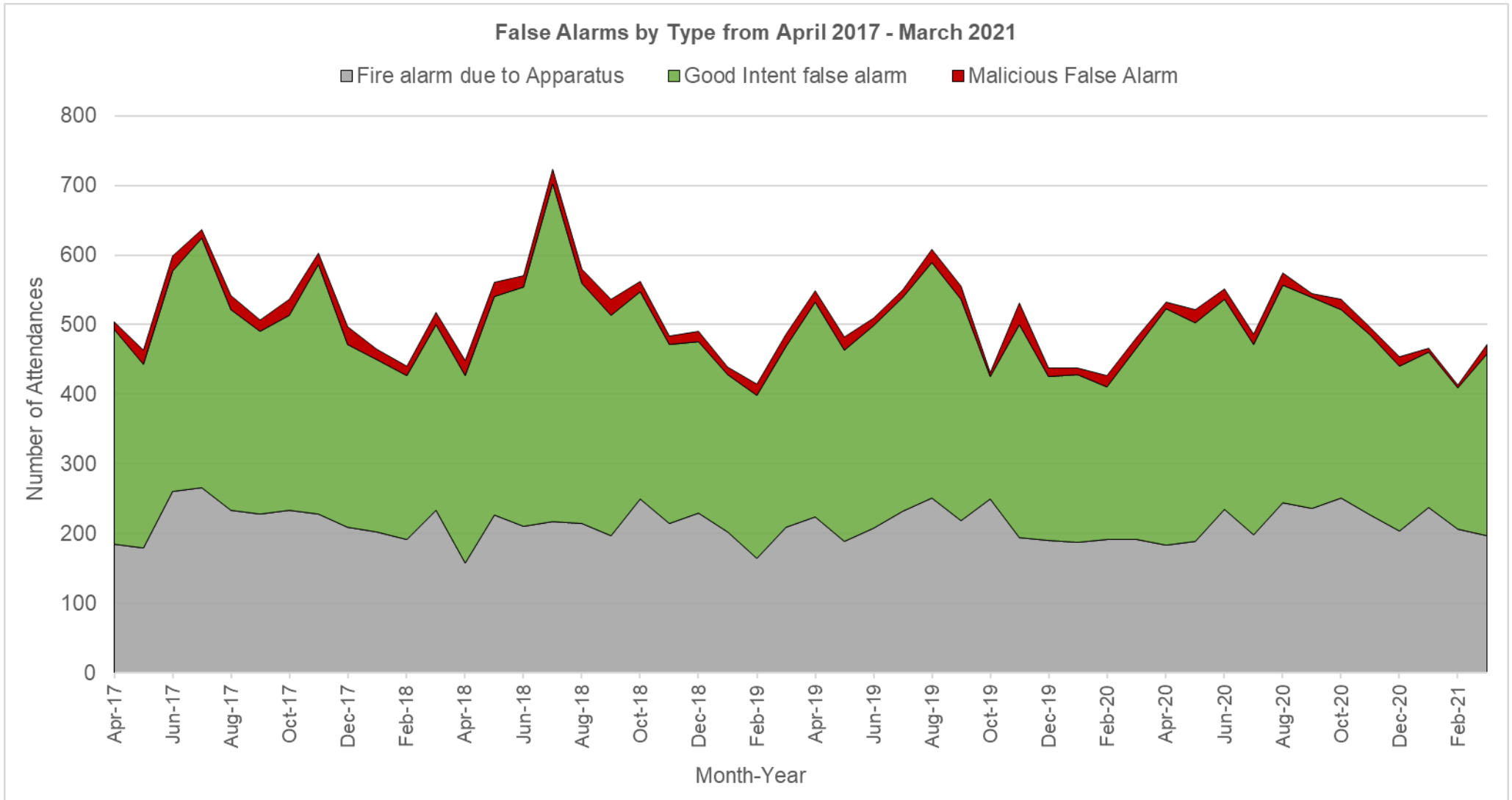
	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020	2018 - 2019	2017 - 2018
Q1, Apr – Jun	1606	1540	1579	1567
Q2, Jul - Sept	1606	1714	1839	1686
Q3, Oct - Dec	1487	1400	1536	1637
Q4, Jan - Mar	1351	1348	1340	1422
Total	**6050**	**6002**	**6294**	**6312**

The peak months for false alarm attendances by ECFRS are July and August, as the Service has attended over 600 false alarms in these months for three consecutive years. The highest number of false alarms attendances in a month in 2020/21 was 574 in August 2020.

Comparing false alarm attendances across all quarters for 2019/20 by ECFRS in comparison to other fire and rescue services (FRSs), except Isles of Scilly due to exceptional small number of incidents, it shows that on average, 28% of false alarm attendances occurred in quarter two for all FRSs. Similarly, to ECFRS (see table above), other FRSs in England attended less false alarms in quarter four of 2019/20, with 23% of the grand total.

The chart on the following page shows the number of attendances to false alarms by subtype (due to apparatus, good intent or malicious) from April 2017 to March 2021. During peak months for all financial years reported, good intent false alarms counted for at least 55% of the false alarms attended. At the highest peak in July 2018, good intent false alarms accounted for 67% of all these false alarms attended within the month.

False alarms due to apparatus attended by FRSs (excluding Isle of Scilly) in 2019/20 accounted for, on average, 68% of attendances, with 19% occurring in quarter two and 18% in quarter three. 29% of all false alarms attendances by FRSs were due to good intent and ECFRS attended a higher proportion of this subtype (instead of the former), in quarter one and two of the period compared to other FRSs. For example, in quarter two of 2019/20, 15% of ECFRS' false alarm attendances were due to good intent, second to South Yorkshire (17%), which is higher than the average of 8% for all FRSs. Conversely, this means that the Service (13%) and South Yorkshire FRS (12%) attended less false alarms due to apparatus in this quarter of 2019/20. In relation to malicious calls, the number of calls attended by FRS (excl. Isle of Scilly) in 2019/20 ranged from 23 by Warwickshire FRS to 973 at London Fire Brigade. ECFRS attended the third highest number of malicious calls for a non-metropolitan FRS in 2019/20.

False Alarms by Type from April 2017 - March 2021

■ Fire alarm due to Apparatus   ■ Good Intent false alarm   ■ Malicious False Alarm

The Service monitors unwanted fire signals which are false alarms due to apparatus caused by automatic fire detection in properties categorised as 'non-residential' and 'other residential'. The table below shows ECFRS attended 991 unwanted fire signals in 2020/21, less than the number attended in 2019/20 and 2017/18 and only 13 more than 2018/19.

	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020	2018 - 2019	2017 - 2018
Q1, Apr – Jun	228	273	214	230
Q2, Jul - Sept	251	282	248	334
Q3, Oct - Dec	248	261	270	277
Q4, Jan - Mar	264	219	246	255
Total	991	1035	978	1096

Since April 2017, there has been nine months where ECFRS has attended over 100 unwanted fire signals in a month. These were:

- 2017 – July (113), August (107), September (114), November (105)
- 2018 – November (116)
- 2019 – October (113)
- 2020 – September (102)

Based on the months listed above, autumnal months (i.e., September onwards) are likely the peak period for unwanted fire signals within Essex Fire's service area. Further exploratory analysis of 1133 unwanted fire signals that occurred between September and November in the last four years indicates that 59% were in non-residential and 41% in other residential properties. Of interest, 44% of the 1133 unwanted fire signals were caused by human/s, 20% by smoke alarm system 15% by other system and 13% by contaminants.

For benchmarking purposes, false alarms distributed by property type are not published by Home Office fire statistics.

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: PROMOTE A POSITIVE CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE

The aim of this Fire and Rescue Plan priority is to establish a modern, forward looking, innovative and collaborative culture in the Service that anticipates and delivers against the changing needs of communities in Essex.

Fire and Rescue Plan Measure: Improved workforce diversity.

This measure is for monitoring purposes only. The following tables present the Service's headline diversity metrics as at 31 March 2021 and as at 31 March 2020 for comparison.

EE Group	Gender - % Female[1]			Percentage that are women England 2020[11]
	2021	**2020**	**Trend**	
Wholetime	7.4%	6.6%	↑	7.4%
On-Call	3.0%	1.5%	↑	6.2%
Control	86.5%	83.3%	↑	76.1%
Support	52.7%	52.5%	↑	53.6%
Overall	**18.3%**	**17.0%**	↑	**17.3%**

EE Group	% Ethnic Minority[1]			Percentage from an ethnic minority, England 2020[12]
	2021	**2020**	**Trend**	
Wholetime	3.6%	2.6%	↑	5.9%
On-Call	1.9%	2.5%	↓	1.5%
Control	2.8%	3.7%	↓	2.9%
Support	3.5%	2.7%	↑	8.0%
Overall	**3.0%**	**2.6%**	↑	**5.1%**

EE Group	Majority Age Band			Indicative Average Age, England 2020[13]
	2021	**2020**	**Trend**	
Wholetime	46-55	46-55	←	42
On-Call	25-35	25-35	←	39
Control	25-35	25-35	←	42
Support	56-65	56-65	←	46
Overall	**46-55**	**46-55**	←	**42**

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[11] Home Office Fire Statistics data table: FIRE1103: Staff headcount by gender, fire and rescue authority and role
[12] Home Office Fire Statistics data table: FIRE1104: Staff headcount by ethnicity, fire and rescue authority and role
[13] Home Office Fire Statistics data table: FIRE1105: Staff headcount by age, fire and rescue authority and role

EE Group	% LGBTQ+ [1]			% Disability		
	2021	**2020**	**Trend**	**2021**	**2020**	**Trend**
Wholetime	6.4%	5.3%	↑	4.3%	1.4%	↑
On-Call	3.8%	1.2%	↑	3.6%	1.4%	↑
Control	3.4%	9.5%	↓	0.0%	0.0%	←
Support	5.7%	6.8%	↓	6.0%	4.0%	↑
Overall	**5.4%**	**4.7%**	↑	**4.3%**	**1.9%**	↑

Note 1: reflects the proportion of those individuals that explicitly self-identified their gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.

For benchmarking purposes, Home Office fire statistics data tables provides statistics as at 31 March 2020, and figures as at 31 March 2021 are expected to be published soon. Statistics for percentage of staff that explicitly self-identified their gender and sexual orientation as well as age has been extracted from the tables to compare ECFRS' 2020 figures with England's figures.

ECFRS provides percentage of staff that explicitly self-identify their sexual orientation as LGBQ+ whereas national (Home Office) statistics are solely LGB therefore not suitable for benchmarking. At ICOD, there is no publicly available fire service related statistics to compare the percentage of ECFRS staff that declared a disability.

Service Measure: Average number of working days/shifts lost per person per year.

This measure has a target of 6.9 days for the average number of days/shift lost per year (median).

The table below presents the Service's sickness absence metrics for the 12 months up to 31 March 2021, and last year's for comparison.

Figures include any time recorded as self-isolating or otherwise absent from the workplace due to COVID-related reasons.

EE Group	% of Employees taking sick leave			Median Working Days Lost per Person			Total Working Days Lost to Sickness Absence			% of which were Long Term[1]		
	2020/21	2019/2020	Trend	2020/21	2019/2020	Trend	2020/21	2019/2020	Trend	2020/21	2019/2020	Trend
Wholetime	66.8%	62.8%	↑	9.0	7.0	↑	9,056	7,279	↑	59.4%	66.09%	↓
On-Call	56.0%	42.5%	↑	14.0	14.0	←	9,535	7,546	↑	54.9%	75.79%	↓
Control	92.1%	75.7%	↑	14.0	8.0	↑	846	392	↑	59.5%	43.12%	↑
Support	38.4%	60.2%	↓	6.0	5.4	↑	2,503	2,680	↓	68.2%	54.33%	↑
Overall	**57.7%**	55.7%	↑	**11.0**	**8.0**	↑	**21,941**	17,898	↑	**58.5%**	**67.91%**	↓

Note 1: Periods of absence lasting 28 calendar days or more are classified as Long Term. All shorter periods than this are considered to be Short Term.

Note 2: Sickness data for 2019/20 refreshed for end of year performance reporting.

At ICOD, there is no publicly available data to enable benchmarking.

Service Measure: Employee relations casework.

This Service measure includes the percentage of end of year appraisals completed (target of 100%), however, this will be reported in a 2021/22 performance report as the process is ongoing at time of reporting.

This measure also monitors the Service's employee relations casework, and the table below presents the metrics as at 31 March 2021, with comparison to the end of the previous financial year.

Case Type	Number of New Cases in Year			Number of Cases Closed in Year			Average time to Close Cases (Calendar Days)			Number of Cases Open at Year End		
	2020/21	2019/20	Trend	2020/21	2019/20	Trend	2020/21	2019/20	Trend	2020/21	2019/20	Trend
Attendance	68	132	↓	88	148	↓	131	183	↓	16	34	↓
Disciplinary	6	5	↑	8	5	↑	296	136	↑	1	3	↓
Grievance	11	9	↑	13	7	↑	79	125	↓	0	2	↓
Performance	22	52	↓	32	42	↓	108	108	←	4	16	↓
Overall	**107**	**198**	↓	**141**	**202**	↓	**131**	**164**	↓	**21**	**55**	↓

At ICOD, there is no publicly available data to enable benchmarking.

Commentary
Observations and key insights about the data
Overall, the proportion of those individuals that explicitly self-identified their gender as female, sexual orientation as LGBQ+, ethnic minority or declared as disability as at 31 March 2021 has increased when compared with previous year's percentages. The majority age band has remained the same (overall), 46 – 55, across all employee groups.

For benchmarking, Home Office has published data for some diversity metrics (gender, ethnic minority and age), as at 31 March 2020 (at ICOD), to enable ECFRS to be compared with the percentage for all English fire and rescue services. ECFRS had an overall higher percentage of staff that self-identified as a female or from an ethnic minority, as at 31 March 2020 compared with the England percentage.

With regards to absence, the overall percentage of employees taking sick leave was 57.5% in the last 12 months up to 31 March 2021, a 2% increase compared to previous year. There were percentage increases for Wholetime, On-call and Control staff, but a decrease in percentage support staff taking sick leave. Similarly, overall, the median working days lost per person increased when comparing the two years, and above the target of 6.9, although this has been an unprecedented year with COVID-19. Also, the overall percentage of staff with long-term sick was 58.5% in 2020/21, a decrease from 67.9%. This is likely due to the percentage decrease for long-term sick from Wholetime and On-Call staff, whereas increases for Control and Support.

The final metric is employee relations casework, and the table on the previous page shows that there has been a decrease in the overall number of new, closed, and open cases at year end, as well as the average time to close has decreased by 33 calendar days. This decrease can be attributed to a decrease in attendance and performance management cases, although it should be noted that the last year has seen an increase in the number of grievance and disciplinary cases.

Key actions taken in the year

Recruitment / inclusion
In August 2020, the Service adopted a series of Positive Action recommendations and updated the recruitment process and assessment methods for potential firefighters in order to provide equal opportunities to candidates from under-represented groups.
This included:
- allowing candidates to present existing level 2 qualifications,
- changing the provider that undertook the literacy and numeracy assessment,
- a move to an objective, game-based psychometric assessment rather than manually assessed PQA statements. The provider has been able to demonstrate that their product – Arctic Shores - removes bias and increases the opportunities for candidates from minority backgrounds and / or where English as an additional language, as well as provides an efficient Service, able to manage the over 3000 applications that have been received,
- adoption of an additional alternative (Chester Treadmill test) method of attempting the fitness test while achieving the same standards,
- access to "how to" videos for the manual dexterity test, and
- a move to Values and Success based interviewing from PQA / competency interviewing.

These measures have been successful in not only reducing the drop off for candidates from under-represented groups at points in the process where those groups traditionally were unsuccessful in progressing and have directly led to an increase in the diversity of new recruits, and to maintaining proportionate numbers of individuals from underrepresented groups at each stage of the process.

In addition, focus groups such as the Women's Forum, the Female Firefighters forum and the ethnic minority forum have had a greater presence in recruitment activity, which has helped with representation. The panel of assessors was expanded to include firefighters, and a principle of balancing operational and non-operational employees, and male and female panel members adopted.

Wellbeing & attendance management
In the context of COVID-19 pandemic, an increase in absence from the workplace throughout 2020/21 was to be expected, and it is testament to the guidance and communications and work undertaken around COVID safe ways of working, that the absence increase has been, in most areas, a minor increase.

The move to homeworking has resulted in a significant decrease in cases of support staff absence as people have been able to continue working when isolating, or mildly symptomatic, and cases of cold / flu / gastro are significantly reduced, likely to be due to different ways of living and working.

There was a significant focus on wellbeing and health support work, including mental health awareness work, throughout the year as part of a holistic drive to support employees maintain healthy living throughout the pandemic.

Casework
In light of an increased focus on wellbeing and attendance management support throughout the year, with a focus on early intervention, the number of long-term absence cases has been reduced. In addition, several long-term attendance cases were resolved. In addition, the HR team, and in particular the Business Partnering team, had a priority to review attendance management cases and practices from the outset of 2020, in line with a specific and requested PFCC focus.

Grievance and disciplinary process remained at a stable level, and, despite restrictions, a focus on maintaining contact and presence (virtually) in all areas of the Service from supporting individuals led to a continuation of early interventions and resolving issues as early and as informally as possible.

Further investigation into the reasons behind the reduction in performance cases will need to be undertaken to understand the reasons behind this and to assure that appropriate performance management is being undertaken and new ways of working have not been a barrier to this.

Actions planned for year ahead

The HR action plan for 2020 was achieved, and the focus areas for 2021 will include consolidating on the work regarding wellbeing and attendance management.
Focus on the recovery plan and transition back to the workplace by adapting and applying a range of measures that may be impacting wellbeing and mental health.

Focus on looking to review positive action interventions in other areas of recruitment (including internal progression and promotion), increasing representation in other areas of the Service – in particular with a focus on On-Call and increasing representation in this employee group by applying the learning outcomes form the Wholetime Firefighter campaign to On Call attraction and selection process.

This inclusion and diversity focus will also include operational management and succession planning as part of overall employee wellbeing – satisfying the need for self-fulfilment and development by providing opportunities for growth and development.

HCMIFRS audits and review of internal promotion processes, and employee relations (disciplinary and grievance) are due in Summer 2021 which will further sharpen this focus, and in addition, Disciplinary Policy is due to be consulted on throughout 2021.

One of the key elements of the Service's People Strategy focuses on wellbeing, and focus will be on continuing to support a reduction in longer-term attendance management cases.

Focus will remain on early and, where possible and appropriate, informal intervention in grievance and conduct issues. We believe that every employee has the right to be treated fairly, inclusively, with kindness, equality, dignity and respect. We are committed to providing a supportive and inclusive working environment to foster such a culture. We are supporting managers to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination in a timely and consistent way.

A new Disciplinary Policy will be launched in Quarter 4 to reflect current Service practice and the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Code of Conduct for Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. It provides managers with practical procedural guidance to support colleagues in the fair and consistent management of behaviour and conduct issues.

The overall number of all cases and the duration of cases has reduced. This is because of improved housekeeping in the system and focused working with line managers to deal with issues at the lowest practicable level and to ensure that our approach supports timely and appropriate outcomes.

FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN: BE TRANSPARENT, OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE

The aim of this Fire and Rescue Plan priority is to enable the public to hold ECFRS to account for the services it provides.

Service Measure: Percentage of FOIs, SARs and EIRs closed on time.

The target for the percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, Subject Access Requests (SARs) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests closed on time is 90%. The closed-on time refers to the number of requests responded to within 20 working days.

The table below shows that the response rate for 2020/21 was 90% (target met). For comparison, ECFRS responded to more statutory requests within time limit in 2019/20.

2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020
90%	96%

For monitoring purposes, the Service also provides the number of FOIs, SARs and EIRs received per month in 2020/21.

Requests received from April 2020 - March 2021
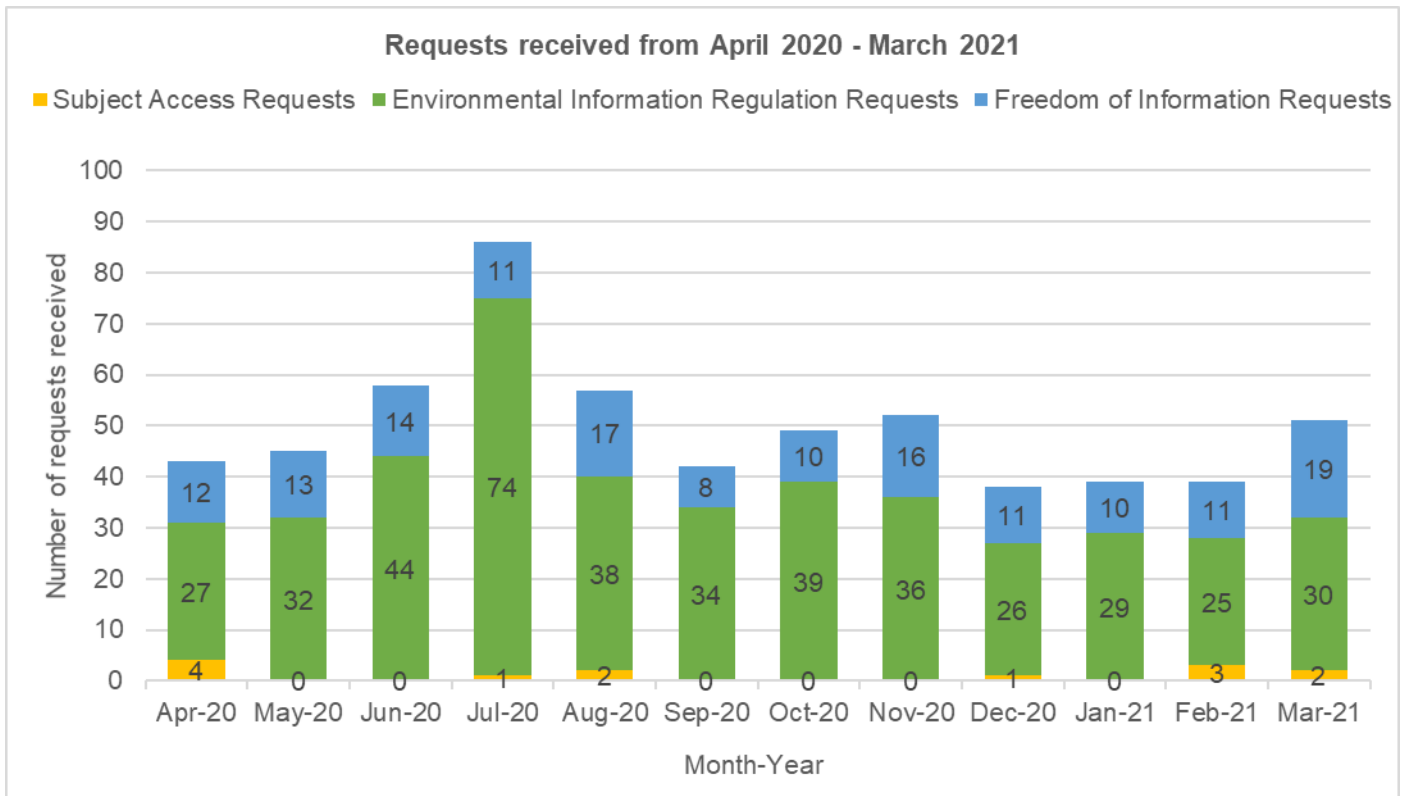
The chart on the previous page shows that the Service received a high number of statutory requests in July 2020 (14% of annual total), the majority of these were EIRs. There were also a high number of requests in June (58) and August (57).

The total number of requests received in 2020/21 was 599, and the statements below provide the number per type and main themes associated with each:

- 434 EIR Requests, and 64 more than 2019 – 2020 (370). The main themes were fire reports (422) and other environmental information requests (12).
- 152 FOIs, 11 less than 2019 – 2020 (163). The main themes around FOIs were data requests (57), fire safety (20), HR/Recruitment (19), ICT (18), contracts (8), operations (7), purchasing (7), finance (4), fleet (4), policy (2), training (1), H&S (1) and others (4).
- 13 SARs, 17 less than 2019 – 2020 (30). 6 SARs were received from current members of staff, 4 SARs from former staff members, 2 SARs from the Police and 1 SAR from HMRC.

ECFRS' Information Governance (IG) team publish responses to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 on the Service's transparency page. Responses are published as they demonstrate how we have made decisions, spent public money, or used our resources. Personal information has been removed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. The page can be accessed via this hyperlink or copying the following URL into a web browser: https://www.transparency.essex-fire.gov.uk/information/

The IG team also uploads incident data on ECFRS' transparency page. During the year, monthly incident datasets are uploaded and after all quality assurance has been completed, a single dataset for the financial year is uploaded. Incident data and appliance definitions are also provided to aid understanding.

In April 2021, the ECFRS worked in collaboration with Essex County Council's Open Data team to publish a Fire Service incidents dashboard on the Essex Open Data platform. The dashboard displays the last three years' worth of incident data that has also been published on the transparency page. It aims to reduce the number of data-focused FOI requests.

Service Measure: Complaint Response Rates.

The target for the percentage of complaints closed on time is 90%.

The table below shows that the response rate for complaints in 20/2021 was 94%. This means that ECFRS responded to 21 (out of 23) complaints within 20 working days. For comparison, ECFRS closed more complaints on time compared to last year.

2020 – 2021	2019 – 2020
94%	81%

The main complaint themes were staff attitude/behaviour (9), driving (5), operational capability/service provision (5), HR/Recruitment (1), social media (1) and others (2).

In total, ECFRS received 58 complaints and compliments in 2020/21, compared to 63 in 2019/20. Note, in January 2021, ECFRS reviewed complaints handling and a number have been reclassified as fire safety correspondence for the Protection Team.

Alongside statutory requests, ECFRS' IG team handles reported data breaches. In 2020/21, the team handled 30 data breaches, of which 1 was reported to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). For comparison, ECFRS handled a reported 43 data breaches in 2019/20.

Every member of staff must complete mandatory e-learning on managing personal information. The table below shows the completion rate of this training as at 31 March 2021 and 2020's figures for comparison. It shows that the completion rate as at 31 March 2021 was 86.5%, with higher rates overall and for all employee groups except support. It is likely that the decrease in completion rates for support personnel is due to the levels of turnover.

Employee Group	As at 31 Mar 2021	As of 31 Mar 2020	Trend
Wholetime	92.1%	89.0%	↑
On Call	82.6%	70.3%	↑
Control	92.1%	89.2%	↑
Support	80.7%	82.4%	↓
Overall	**86.5%**	**81.3%**	↑

Furthermore, the IG team conducts several training and awareness sessions to reinforce or improve understanding of managing information securely. The team organised and completed 11 sessions between April 2020 to March 2021, 22 less than the previous year.

Information Asset Register (IAR)

ECFRS' Information Governance Officer facilitates the completion of the IAR, a database that holds all the information assets across the Service. This document is essential to demonstrate compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Records Managements regulations.

As at 31 March 2021, 72% of the data in the IAR has been reviewed and recorded in ECFRS' Data Protection management system. It includes an inventory of new technology implementations and upgrades, as well as data cleansing and records assessment. Most departments in the Service have updated their information assets and retention periods. These steps are helping to identify essential records and their location.

Commentary

This year, key highlights include finding ways of handling statutory and non-statutory requests in a compliant manner from home. The team had to quickly adapt, retrain, and respond in a manner that meant we still met our deadlines. Another has been progress in records management. The actions taken on records were in response to the two external audits that the Service had in the previous financial year. Completing the records management piece of work will move the Service compliance level from "adequate to complete". On completion of the data cleansing, departments are handed over to ICT department to undertake the migration of data to SharePoint or other locations that line up with the Service Digital and Data strategy.

Technologically, Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) were conducted on key systems and activities including the Service wide Office 365 programme. Drones were commissioned for operational use for the first time in ECFRS after a DPIA, training and policy was put in place. The Information Governance Board continued to meet virtually once every two months this year.

Statutory requests continued to be handled in the lawful manner with over 90% completion rates as seen above. This year, there was a fall in the number of Subject Access Requests (SAR) received. There has been a 17% increase in the number of Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests compared to previous year, this is mainly due to an increase in the number of fire report requests. March 2021 had an increase in the number of FOI requests, aligning with purdah.

There has been a review of how complaints are handled/processed by the Information Governance (IG) Team. This has involved improving the triaging and classification of complaints, as well as identifying and training colleagues who have the potential to handle/investigate complaints on behalf of the Service. The changes in triaging of complaints have resulted in a fall in the number of complaints recorded. Fire safety concerns are no longer recorded in the IG data, they are recorded and handled by the Protection Team, which has helped both teams to handle complaints promptly and to a high standard. 94% of complaints were closed within 20 working days, a percentage increase compared to previous year. This is likely due to the public's recognition of the role that the Service has in carrying out not just our statutory responsibilities but also volunteering during the pandemic.

Training and awareness on our data protection obligations have continued this year despite the COVID-19 restrictions and impact on face-to-face training. Focus has instead been on more risky areas and activities that are being undertaken by the Service. The Service Leadership Team undertook training on data protection this year. Training sessions have also been delivered via Teams to Information Asset Owner, HR, Control and Finance. Information Asset Owners meet regularly to focus on and deal with more detailed issues around information governance that the Information Governance Board is unable to effectively cover in its bimonthly meetings.

Actions planned for year ahead

The Service is in the process of rolling out a new e-learning package for colleagues. This will include courses on Phishing, data protection and records management. If employees undertake these training, it will equip them with the knowledge, ability, and confidence to handle records and personal data in a manner that reduces reputational, financial and other risks to the organisation. These refreshed and new training packages will be rolled out in May 2021 and colleagues are expected to compete them by the end of June 2021.

This year, other lessons learned include:
1. The Service can still comply with our legal obligations even while working differently.
2. Automated processes and using less paper reduce the number of data breaches.
3. Training that is being offered to colleagues need to be relevant, interactive, and reflective of changing circumstances such as working from home, etc.

[END OF REPORT]

ANY QUESTIONS

OR FEEDBACK…

CONTACT US

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SUBJECT LINE TO INCLUDE "END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT"

Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service