



AVON
FIRE & RESCUE

www.avonfire.gov.uk

Measuring how we are doing

Performance Report 2023/24



“We have recorded very high levels of customer satisfaction both with the speed of our response and the overall satisfaction with our service.”

Simon Shilton
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Introduction from the Chief

Welcome to our Annual Performance Report. This report is designed to provide a high-level overview of Avon Fire and Rescue Service's (AF&RS) performance for 2023/24.

I am pleased to report that we have met almost all of our performance targets. We have continued to meet our response standards, have driven down risk by meeting, or coming close to meeting, our incident reduction targets. We have also recorded very high levels of customer satisfaction both with the speed of our response and the overall satisfaction with our service.

We have also continued to make progress in reducing our carbon emissions, working towards our target of Net Zero carbon by 2030, and have met our statutory responsibility to process Freedom of Information requests. Our Business Fire Safety teams continue to work hard, meeting our targets for processing Building Regulation applications and completing fire safety audits.

I am also pleased to report that we are managing our budgets effectively with a 0% variance against our revenue budget.

We publish a Service Plan that sets our strategic direction, what we will do to ensure we deliver a high-quality, best value fire and rescue service through our strategic priorities of Making Our Communities Safer and Making Our Service Stronger. The Service Plan is available from our website www.avonfire.gov.uk.

I am also pleased to report that in April 2024 our Internal Auditors undertook an audit of our performance monitoring finding that:

“Avon Fire Authority can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective”.

This is excellent news and the Auditors had no recommendations for improvement in respect of our data integrity and how our performance data is reviewed and scrutinised.

Our performance metrics in 2023/24 were grouped under seven key objectives as illustrated in the diagram below.

We also produce a poster which is included below that is displayed at our fire stations and other media and gives a summary of the great work we have achieved.

I hope that you will find our performance report useful in keeping you informed about the service we provide.

Simon Shilton
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive







IN 2023/24 AVON FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

HANDLED **22,859** **EMERGENCY** CALLS 

RESPONDED TO  **12,455** **EMERGENCY INCIDENTS**

ATTENDED  **11,288** **EMERGENCY INCIDENTS** **RESCUED**  **1,037** **PEOPLE FROM FIRE AND OTHER EMERGENCIES**

WAS CALLED TO  **474** **ACCIDENTAL FIRES IN THE HOME** **CARRIED OUT**  **5,419** **FIRE SAFETY VISITS IN THE HOME**

FITTED **4,947** **SMOKE ALARMS** **REDUCED OUR CARBON EMISSIONS**  **-54%** **COMPARED TO 2020** **ATTENDED**  **519** **VEHICLE FIRES**

WAS CALLED TO  **570** **ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS** **ATTENDED**  **288** **FLOODING INCIDENTS**

717  **FIRE SAFETY** **AUDITS COMPLETED**

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

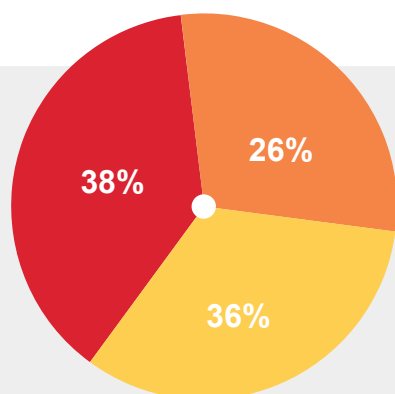
ALL FOR ONLY  **11p A DAY** **FOR EACH PERSON**  **IN AVON**

Overall Activity

Attended Incidents

Incidents that we attend are categorised into three main types:

- **Fires** – where there is an emergency caused by fire ignition
- **Special Service Calls (SSC¹)** – any other emergency response
- **Alarms** – any incident where upon attendance no additional risk was found.



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

● Alarms **4324, 38%** ● Fires - **2948, 26%** ● SSC - **4014, 36%**

Fires

We have a statutory duty to attend all fires and are the lead agency for reducing risk in our community by preventing fires. We set targets for reducing the number of fires and our progress is set out in the Progress against targets section below.

¹The "SSC" terminology dates from when fire services were primarily involved in attending fires and attending anything other than this was considered a special event. These days we attend more SSCs than fires and we are working towards updating the terminology.

SSCs

SSCs cover a wide range of activities from non-fire road traffic collisions to assisting the ambulance service with gaining entry to people who need medical attention. We don't set reduction targets for SSCs as, unlike with fires, we only attend where there is a need for the fire service to attend. For example, in Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) we only attend if there is a role we can play in dealing with the emergency.

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

	2022/23	2023/24	Difference	% change
Effecting entry/exit	899	910	11	1%
Road Traffic Collision	567	570	3	1%
Assist other agency	540	693	153	28%
No action	276	342	66	24%
Flooding	270	288	18	7%
Lift release	237	209	-28	-12%
Animal assistance	183	174	-9	-5%
Other release/rescue	171	149	-22	-13%

False Alarms

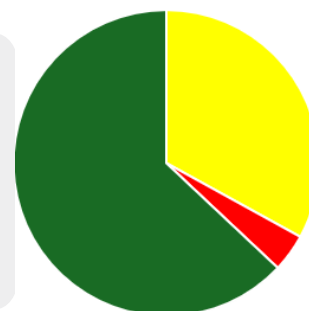
False Alarms fall into three main categories:

- **Due to apparatus – where a fire alarm system has alerted us. We set targets to reduce the number of these false alarms in Business Premises**
- **Malicious alarms – where there was no risk, and we were alerted with malicious intent**
- **Good Intent alarms – where there was no risk and we alerted with good intentions.**

Alarm Categories

The 4324 false alarms we received are broken down into these categories as follows:

- Apparatus - 2741, 63%
- Malicious - 150, 4%
- Good Intent - 1433, 33%



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

Measuring interventions and outcomes

AF&RS measure performance using a number of Local Performance Indicators (LPIs). We have designed these indicators to measure how effective we are at meeting our seven key objectives.

Customer surveys

We send out customer surveys to a randomly selected group of people who have had an emergency incident in their home or business or who have received a home fire safety visit. The survey forms are returned directly to an independent research company. Overall, our surveys found that 92% of respondents were very satisfied with the overall service at emergency incidents.

How are we doing?

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

We are committed to doing all that we can to make our community safer and our Service stronger. We continue to analyse our data to understand where, when, why and how incidents occur, evaluate the effectiveness of our interventions and help inform new interventions.

Checking our progress

Our website www.avonfire.gov.uk has monthly and annual data extracts of all the incidents we attend. These are in a format that allows anyone to download and analyse our data.

Prevention

Fires

We measure fires in a number of different ways dependent on the type of property involved and whether the cause of the fire is accidental or deliberate. In broad terms we describe a fire as primary if it affected a non-derelict property and secondary for other fires. An accidental fire is where it is caused by accident or carelessness (not thought to be deliberate).

We have four main fire types that we measure our progress against, and we set targets for reducing incidents for these fire types. The fewer incidents, the more successful we have been in reducing risk in our community.

Our targets for fires are based on the average of the last six years, excluding the highest and lowest year.

Accidental dwelling fires - We have met target with 474 accidental dwelling fires against a target of no more than 500. We record a wide variety of information about each incident including what our investigations tell us were the causes and the behaviours that led to the fire happening.

We also measure the number of incidents where, though we have attended, there was no firefighting required. This means that though there was a fire, the alarm systems and safety education we have put in place minimised the impact of the fire. In 2023/24 this was the case for 39.4% of incidents and it is a good measure of our success in protecting our communities against fire.

Deliberate primary fires -

Deliberate primary fires cover a wide range of property types, from fires in our prisons to fires in sheds. In 2023/24 we attended 209 deliberate primary fires against a target of 205.

Each deliberate fire is reported to the police and our team of fire investigators will attend major incidents, often with our police Crime Scene Investigator colleagues, to help ensure that where a crime has been committed the offenders are brought to justice.

We also run a Firesetters scheme to work with young people who have an interest in fire which is putting themselves, their family, friends and homes at risk.

Deliberate vehicle fires - we attended 300 deliberate vehicle fires against a target of 278. In the last 15 years the number of deliberate vehicle fires has reduced by 51% (300 compared to 618).

Deliberate secondary fires - we attended 892 deliberate secondary fires against a target of 982. 17% of these fires are caused by people setting light to loose refuse and 14% are fires in small bins.

WAS CALLED TO
474  **ACCIDENTAL
FIRES
IN THE HOME**



Safety in the community

We ensure that we proactively target Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) to people in our community that are at greatest risk of fire. This helps to ensure that we are making the best use of our resources. HFSVs are where we visit people in their home to deliver safety advice and, if needed, install smoke alarms.

In 2023/24 we delivered 5419 HFSVs and fitted 4947 smoke alarms. Next year we have set a target to complete over 7000 HFSVs

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

The number of educational events we attended increased to 762 against a target of 600, delivering a variety of interventions to keep children safe.

CARRIED OUT
5,419  FIRE SAFETY
VISITS
IN THE HOME

Fire Deaths, Injuries and Rescues

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

In 2023/24 we recorded two fatalities in fires which is the joint lowest annual total that we have records for. One fatality was in an accidental dwelling fire and one due to a car fire following a road traffic collision. We also recorded 58 injuries in fires that required hospital treatment and rescued 68 people from fire incidents.

Protection

Alarms

Malicious alarms

Each malicious alarm that we attend increases risk in our community. In 2023/24 we received 157 malicious alarms and attended 150 of these.

Malicious alarms can be anything from deliberately breaking a fire call point to phoning 999 about non-existent emergencies. We may take action against such callers and, for frequent callers, will report the abuse to their mobile phone company; in extreme circumstances we will seek to prosecute. We also share information with other emergencies services about people who make malicious alarm calls.

We do what we can to “call challenge” malicious alarms using information we have about where the call is being made in relation to the stated location and questioning the caller if there is doubt about the validity of the call.

Fire alarms in non-dwellings

In March 2020 we introduced our new policy regarding attendance at alarms in commercial buildings where there is no sleeping risk and no confirmation of fire. This change, plus the change in working practices and business opening brought about by the pandemic has meant setting an achievable and realistic target for reducing attendance at alarms has been problematic.

In 2023/24 we attended 515 fire alarms in non-dwellings, meeting our target of fewer than 595. These are incidents where the fire alarm has activated and upon attendance, we have found that there was no fire or other risk.

33% of these alarms are caused by human error, mainly due to burning food or accidentally setting off the alarm, both of which are preventable.



Response

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

Overall, we received 22,859 calls for emergency assistance, responded to 12,455 of these, and attended 11,288.

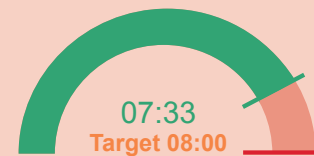
Where we don't attend it is either because questioning by our Control team found that there was no emergency to attend, or we received further information that there was no emergency and turned back before we arrived at the incident. We always try to reduce risk by ensuring that we only send appliances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

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

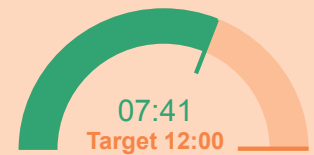
Call handling

With 95.5% (24206 out of 25358) of call answered within seven seconds in 2023/24, our Control team met their target of answering at least 94% of 999 calls within seven seconds. This 25,358 calls answered is higher than the number of emergency calls received as not all 999 calls are found to be reporting an emergency.

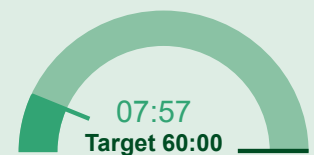
For **emergency critical responses** (where there is a known life risk or involving a property) our target is an average of 8:00 minutes and on average we took 07:33 minutes.



For **emergency non-critical responses** our target is an average of 12:00 minutes and on average we took 07:41 minutes.



For **non-emergency** attended calls our target is an average of 60 minutes and on average we took 07:57 minutes. These incidents are attended under normal road speeds.



We validate our response standards through our customer satisfactions surveys. In 2023/24 54% of respondents thought we arrived at the scene of the emergency quicker than expected and a further 35% thought we arrived as they expected.

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

Resilience

Sickness absence

We measure sickness by dividing the number of days/shifts lost by the number of staff we have. We use the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) figure meaning that if someone works half hours we count them as half a FTE member of staff.

On our key measure of shifts/days lost per FTE member of staff we made good progress from 2004 to 2013 but from 2013 to 2023 we have seen increases in lost days/shifts.

In 2023/24 we lost fewer days/shifts than the year before but ended the year off target with a loss of 9.15 days/shifts per FTE. The main cause of this is staff who are long term sick (more than 28 days) which accounted for 58% of the total days/shifts lost.

We have launched a new supporting attendance policy that will help our management of sickness absence



Improving our Service

Health and Safety

The safety of our workforce is one of our key priorities. We work hard to ensure that our people have the equipment and training needed to ensure they can do their jobs safely. We have one key targets for health and safety which is to reduce the number of incidents that have resulted in lost time for our people. In 2023/24 we recorded 15 incidents against a target of 17.

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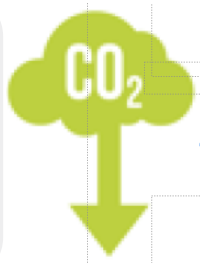
Environmental

We are proud of the work that we are doing to use resources more efficiently and to play our part in addressing environmental issues. In 2020 we set an overarching environmental target to reduce net carbon emission to zero by 2030. Over the 10 years of the target we will seek to reduce our emissions by 10% per year.

In this fourth year our target was to reduce by 40% and we are pleased to report that we have achieved a 54% reduction.

For the remaining six years we are changing to a non-linear target to take account of when we plan to make changes that will affect our carbon emissions

54%
reduction in carbon
emission.



Budget

We measure the expenditure of our Revenue budget with a target to ensure that we are not overspent by 1% or underspent by 2.5%. At the end of 2023/24 we were on target with 0% variance.

Investing in our staff

Staff appraisal completion

We conduct annual appraisals with our staff, helping to ensure that development needs are identified and performance is maintained. Our target is to ensure that 95% of appraisals are in date. We are pleased to report that at the end of the year we met this target with 96.3% in date.

Transformation

We introduced a new metric for 2023/24 which measured our progress against the actions in our Transformation plan with a target to have at least 85% on track. At the end of the year we have missed this target with 72% in date

For next year, 2024/25, we have introduced a new metric which will include all improvement activities and we will be revising the due dates to ensure that they are achievable and realistic.

Freedom of Information

In 2023/24 we received 420 requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Act requires us to respond to requests within 20 working days and we are pleased to report that we achieved this for 98% of the requests (412 requests).

Compliments and complaints

AF&RS monitors the compliments and complaints that are received and uses this information to improve the service we provide. In 2023/24 we received 40 complaints. After investigation, 10 of these were not about our staff or our services. Two of the complaints are still under investigation however we found 11 where we were not at fault.

Of the remaining 17 where we were at fault, the subjects were:

- Driving of vehicles 4
- Actions at emergency incidents 4
- Hydrant services 3
- Community safety 2
- Behaviour of staff 2
- Management of our premises 1
- Recruitment process 1

The numbers are too small to identify any common patterns or causes. We are also pleased to report that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has confirmed that in 2023/24 they received no queries regarding our response to complaints.

In 2023/24 we also recorded 82 compliments about our service. We ensure that all compliments are passed on to the teams involved and, where particular praise is given, we publicise this to all of our staff. We would like to thank the community for their support.

Thank you that is brilliant. Avon is by far my favourite Fire Service to deal with. It is fantastic!

A huge thank you to the guys who helped us out after a traffic accident...they helped keep us calm, were incredibly professional and truly are a credit to the fire service. Cannot praise them enough!

I saw some of your fire engines...I'd just wanted to express appreciation for the pride flag on the side of your trucks, particularly for the inclusion of the transgender flag during a difficult time for trans people in this country. Thanks so much, have a lovely day!

The firecrew were all well trained... were of the utmost courtesy and kindness to us and successfully completed their mission

Safer Community		
Indicator	Target	Actual
Prevention		
Accidental dwelling fire	500	474
Deliberate primary fire (excluding vehicle)	205	209
Deliberate vehicle fire	278	300
Deliberate secondary fire	982	892
% of accidental fires in dwellings where no firefighting action required	Not applicable	39.4%
% of fires attended in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted	Not applicable	38.9%
Deaths arising from primary fires	Not applicable	2
Injuries arising from primary fires	Not applicable	52
Home Fire Safety Visits completed	600	5419
Educational events	600	762
Protection		
Malicious false alarms	Not applicable	157
% of calls to malicious false alarms not attended	5%	4%
Alarms caused by automatic fire detection attended (Non- Domestic Properties)	595	515
Regulations processed in target	90%	98.5%
Licensing Applications processed in target	90%	89.7%
Audits in high-risk premises	700	717
Response		
Emergency critical response (average)	8:00mins	07:33mins
Emergency non-critical response (average)	12:00mins	07:41mins
Non-emergency attended calls (average)	60mins	07:57mins
Calls for assistance answered within seven seconds	94%	95.5%
Number of 999 calls received	Not applicable	22859
Number of incidents attended as emergency	Not applicable	11288
Resilience		
Working days/shifts lost to sickness wholetime/control uniformed staff (per person)	8.11	9.22
Working days lost to sickness corporate staff (per person)	8.11	8.94
Working days/shifts lost to sickness all staff (excl. OnCall) (per person)	8.11	9.15

Stronger Service		
Improve our service		
Number of H&S incidents that have resulted in lost time	17	15
Net Carbon emissions	-40%	-54%
Revenue budget Variance against planned	>1% & < 2.5%	0%
Invest in our staff		
Staff appraisal completion	95%	96.3%
Transformation		
% of transformation actions that are on track	85%	72%



Get in touch

Avon Fire & Rescue Service is committed to ensuring our documents are accessible to all members of the community. If you have difficulty reading this document because English is not your first language and you would like a translation, please contact: The Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality team, Avon Fire & Rescue Service, Police & Fire Headquarters, PO Box 37, Valley Road, Bristol, BS20 8JJ.

Telephone: 0117 926 2061

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