



Suffolk
Fire and Rescue Authority

Statement of Assurance

2015 – 2016

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1. Statement of Assurance

This Statement of Assurance details the financial, governance and operational arrangements that Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority had in place for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. The Statement was produced in accordance with the [guidance](#) published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 'Statements of Assurance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England.'

I am satisfied that Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority ensured that its business was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. I am further satisfied that the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England have been met.

I am proud of the fire and rescue service we provide and of the people who work so hard to keep our communities safe.

On behalf of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority, I will continue to progress the matters identified under 'Future Improvements'. I am committed to continually developing the Service so that it can continue to provide an effective, efficient and resilient fire and rescue service for the people of Suffolk and those who visit our county.



Councillor Matthew Hicks
Cabinet Member for Public Health & Protection
Directorate
Suffolk County Council

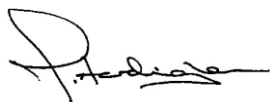


2. Introduction

As Chief Fire Officer of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service I am pleased to introduce our Statement of Assurance for 2015/2016.

The Statement is a requirement of the 2012 [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) and reinforces my commitment to provide you, the members of our communities, with clear information about how we manage public funds and assure the effectiveness of our financial, governance and operational fire service arrangements.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service provides a 24/7 emergency response service to deal with fires, road traffic collisions and a wide range of emergencies. Our people also deliver activities aimed at reducing fires and road traffic collisions, improving community safety and enforcing fire safety legislation. The services we provide help ensure that Suffolk remains a safe county. This means that deaths and injuries from fires and road traffic collisions are at the lowest level possible; fire-related crime is low; businesses are aware of their responsibilities regarding fire safety and people feel safe in their homes.



Mark Hardingham
Chief Fire Officer



3. Scope of Responsibility

Fire and rescue authorities carry out their functions within a defined statutory and policy framework. The key legislation and acts defining these requirements are:

- a. Local Government Act 1999
- b. Localism Act 2011
- c. Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- d. Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- e. Fire and Rescue National Framework for England
- f. Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- g. Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- h. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This annual Statement of Assurance must provide clear and accessible information. The Statement must enable communities, local authorities, central government and other partners to make an informed assessment of their fire service's performance. The Statement is also used as a source of information for the Secretary of State's biennial report, required by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

The Act is the principal legislation for fire and rescue services in England and Wales and imposes upon every fire and rescue authority a duty to provide a fire and rescue service that is: equipped to extinguish fires; protect life and property from fires; rescue people from road traffic collisions and respond to other emergencies. Services must also receive and respond to calls for assistance; ensure that staff are properly trained and equipped and gather information to deliver a safe and effective service.

The Act also requires fire and rescue authorities to provide communities with fire safety education and advice to reduce deaths and injuries from fire. The Secretary of State is permitted by the Act to publish National Framework requirements that set central government's priorities for authorities and fire and rescue authorities are required to pay due regard to the Framework.

4. Financial Statement

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority has duties under the Local Government Act 1999 to ensure that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Service, being part of Suffolk County Council, adheres to the council's financial procedures for budget setting, budget monitoring and the production of final accounts.

The county council's Chief Finance Officer prepares the Annual Statement of Accounts, which includes the fire and rescue service. The accounts detail the council's financial performance in accordance with the practices set out in the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) code of practice. The final accounts are submitted to the Audit Committee for approval.

Suffolk County Council's Annual Statement of Accounts is examined by external auditors who provide independent assessment that the statement presents a true and fair view and that appropriate accounting and financial systems are in place.

Their report includes a review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

The council’s Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2016 was externally audited in line with Audit Commission Act (1998) guidance. The Statement of Accounts for 2015/16 and external auditor’s letter are published on Suffolk County Council’s website:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/budget-and-finance/Statement-of-Accounts-2015-16.doc>

The council’s Audit Service provides an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council’s system of internal control. The head of the Audit Service has provided substantial assurance of both financial and non-financial systems. This provides confidence in the effectiveness of internal control arrangements of the council.

CIPFA publish annual financial performance data for all English fire and rescue authorities, enabling comparison between authorities. This shows that Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is the lowest cost-per-head of population of any fire and rescue service in England, with an expenditure of £27.72 per head, compared to the average cost of £37.68

CIPFA benchmarking data

Service performance against other fire and rescue services is measured primarily through CIPFA benchmarking data. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is routinely shown as low-cost and high-performing.

The following charts are drawn from a more comprehensive benchmarking report that compares Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service to 44 fire and rescue authorities in England (where current data is available). The current data is drawn from the CIPFA profile for 2015/16 (estimates). The final 2015/16 profile should be published by CIPFA by the end of November 2016.

Table 1 (below) shows Suffolk as the lowest cost per head of population fire and rescue service in the country. Suffolk’s current cost is £10 below the national average (£37.68 per person).

Table 1. Efficiency - £ per head of population









| Measure (comparison with all Fire Authorities) | |
|---|---|
| Efficiency - £ per head of population (average £37.68) | |
| Upper Quartile - HIGHEST £ COST  | £41.14 - £49.93 |
| Mid to Upper Quartile  | £37.15 - £40.51 |
| Mid to Lower Quartile  | £34.13 - £36.81 |
| Lower Quartile - LOWEST £ COST  | £27.72 - £33.80 SUFFOLK = £27.72 |

Table 2. Efficiency - £ per Hectare

| Measure (comparison with all Fire Authorities) | |
|---|---|
| Efficiency - £ per hectare (average £272.50) | |
| Upper Quartile - HIGHEST £ COST  | £241.03 - £2,368.88 |
| Mid to Upper Quartile  | £139.61 - £226.64 |
| Mid to Lower Quartile  | £78.99 - £137.39 |
| Lower Quartile - LOWEST £ COST  | £31.47 - £74.21 SUFFOLK = £53.86 |

Suffolk compares favourably to other authorities as far as expenditure is concerned. For example, the Service is in the lowest quartile in:

- a. Cost per head of population
- b. Cost per hectare
- c. Cost per incident
- d. Cost per fire station, fire appliance and incident
- e. Ratio of uniformed officers per fire station

The Suffolk Fire Service budget for 2015/16 was £22.304m with a confirmed full year spend of £21.604m. Throughout the year the Service maintained its efficiency agenda and an underspend of £0.700m was realised. The main underspend was due to no ill-health retirements in year and firefighter vacancies led to underspends on salary and training costs. The underspend has been transferred to a reserve to support public protection transformation work to include additional contributions to the emergency vehicle renewals programme, fire station PFI reserve fund and other improvements – all of which support important 999 emergency services. Revenue funding continues to support issues such as increasing blue light collaboration, revisions to full-time firefighter shift systems, improvements to rescue capabilities and enhanced fleet, equipment and property provision.

As of 1st April 2015 £1.099m was held as reserve funding and this was increased slightly at year end with a reserve of £1.323m.

The total capital programme for 2015/16 was £6.640m and £1.100m was spent, predominately for renewal of emergency vehicles and operational equipment for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and on the Fire Estates programme, including funding the refurbishment of Woodbridge Community Fire and Police station. The Fire and Rescue Service was previously successful in its bid for Fire Transformation Grant and received £4.943m which will be spent over 3 years to continue support blue light transformation and collaboration projects. Separately, the Police, in partnership with Fire made a successful bid to the Home Office for innovation funding of approximately £400,000. The funding is supporting the programme of work to substantially improve and share property assets.

The fire service is required to make additional savings of £1.3m by 2017/18 to meet the council's savings targets and reflecting further government grant reductions. To make this reduction, significant changes to service delivery, set out in the recent Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), will begin and changes to back office support and senior management are being made. The Service seeks to meet statutory, legal and moral obligations in the most cost-effective way and will continue to explore and implement further innovative opportunities to do so.

5. Governance Assurance

The fire and rescue authority for Suffolk is Suffolk County Council, which has 75 councillors. Most of the authority's daily business is discharged through the council's Cabinet. The Cabinet Member for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, is Councillor Matthew Hicks.

Suffolk County Council, as Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority, is responsible for ensuring Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service operates in accordance with the law. It must ensure public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and is used economically, efficiently and effectively. The fire and rescue authority also has a duty to continually improve the way its functions are carried out.

Governance principles adopted by the council follow those set out in the document: 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' produced by CIPFA and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives. The Suffolk County Council constitution sets out the commitment to good governance and describes the council's governance framework and processes. Suffolk's Constitution, which includes the Scheme of Delegation, is published on the council's website:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/the-council-and-its-committees/theconstitution/>

The council publishes its Annual Governance Statement through the Audit Committee. The Statement sets out the council's governance arrangements, which apply to and include Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. The Statement is available via the link below:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/budget-and-finance/Annual-Governance-Statement-2015-16-Signed.pdf>

The Chief Fire Officer is a member of the council's Corporate Management Team and reports to the Chief Executive. In 2015/16 the Chief Fire Officer had additional corporate responsibility for the council's Emergency Planning, Trading Standards, Health and Safety and Highways and Transport functions.

There are monthly 'Leadership Team' meetings between the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet, where policy development is discussed in advance of Cabinet and Full Council meetings.

A close working relationship exists between the Chief Fire Officer and Cabinet Member. Outside of informal day-to-day arrangements, this is conducted through weekly one-to-one meetings.

In addition, there are regular and more formal written briefings for the Cabinet Member, supported by the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

Councillors from the different political groups are involved in fire and rescue service business through the recently established Fire and Rescue Service Steering Group. This meets quarterly, has agreed terms of reference and is chaired by the Cabinet Member. The Group provides a steering function, ensuring that the fire and rescue authority was meeting the expectations and requirements set out in the National Framework, guiding the development of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and annual Statement of Assurance and reviewing the performance of the Service. In addition to the Steering Group there are regular written briefings and meetings with the lead member of the opposition party and regular informal briefings to the remaining parties, as required.

A 'golden thread' links the county council and fire and rescue service governance and management arrangements:

- a. Suffolk County Council Leadership Team (Corporate Management Team and Cabinet) – CFO attendee.
- b. Suffolk County Council Corporate Management Team – CFO attendee.
Public Health & Protection Directorate Management Team (Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, Public Health, Trading Standards, Emergency Planning and Health and Safety).
- c. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Strategy Group (senior fire officers at the following levels: Brigade Manager, Area Manager and equivalents) – CFO Chairman.
- d. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service budget management, command, department, team and individual and functional meetings.

Leadership of the Service is facilitated through a wide range of communication channels and management arrangements. These include senior officer face-to-face visits and presentations, regular manager forums, weekly information bulletins to all staff, regular Chief Fire Officer Managers' brief, a Senior Managers' Forum, the publishing of key messages and a regular Chief Fire Officer Blog as well as the use of the council's Intranet site and Fire SharePoint system for sharing important news and information. In 2015/16 fire stations and departments were visited and an update provided by a senior officer on relevant key issues, such as the financial and potential IRMP service delivery challenges and opportunities ahead. The fire service is included in the County Council's annual staff survey.

Political engagement with fire and rescue service representative bodies (Fire Brigades Union, Fire Officers' Association and the Retained Firefighters Union) is managed through a Fire Service Joint Forum. This is a cross-party councillor group supported by the Chief Fire Officer and senior staff. It is chaired alternately by the Cabinet Member and a representative body chairman. The Joint Forum considers issues associated with fire and rescue service employee relations and policy development. The forum complements the comprehensive arrangements that support effective industrial relations management across the Service.

6. Risk Management

Risk management is carried out in line with the council's risk management arrangements and this is linked to the Community Risk Register maintained by Suffolk Resilience Forum. Risk is monitored and reviewed, scored and then recorded on the council's JCAD system.

Control measures are developed to manage and mitigate risks and embedded within business continuity plans to reinforce delivery of mission critical activities and minimum acceptable levels of service. The highest strategic level risks are reported to the council's Corporate Management Team, Directorate Management Team and Fire Strategy Group.

7. Performance Management

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service managers monitor and manage performance to ensure the best possible services are provided and that timely action can be taken where any performance issues are highlighted.

Managers have regular Performance Development Reviews (PDR's) in line with Suffolk County Council policy following the ASPIRE (Achieve, Support, Pride, Inspire, Respect, Empower) principles. Frontline staff, at firefighter level, have yearly Training Needs Assessments conducted by their line manager. Performance issues are dealt with informally in the initial stages, moving to formal performance management procedures where necessary. Personnel that wish to develop and progress within the organisation are tested for their Personal Qualities and Attributes and, where suitable for development, are given development programs that can lead to opportunities for promotion.

Following the 2013/14 peer review, and taking into account, the national reform programme for the fire and rescue service, the Service has appointed a Performance Improvement Manager. This is not an additional post but instead a post re-directed from elsewhere in the Service.

A Management Information System and Key Performance Indicators assist in the recording, presentation and management of service performance. Quarterly and annual reports on performance are submitted to the Suffolk County Council corporate management team. These reports are routinely monitored by managers, the Cabinet Member and elected council members, providing the opportunity to consider and discuss the Service's performance.

To ensure the Service is transparent about performance, during 2016/2017 we will be publishing live performance data on response standards and other key performance indicators such as, time to answer fire calls and attendance times on our website (<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/>).

Some key areas of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service performance in 2015/16 are set out in this section.

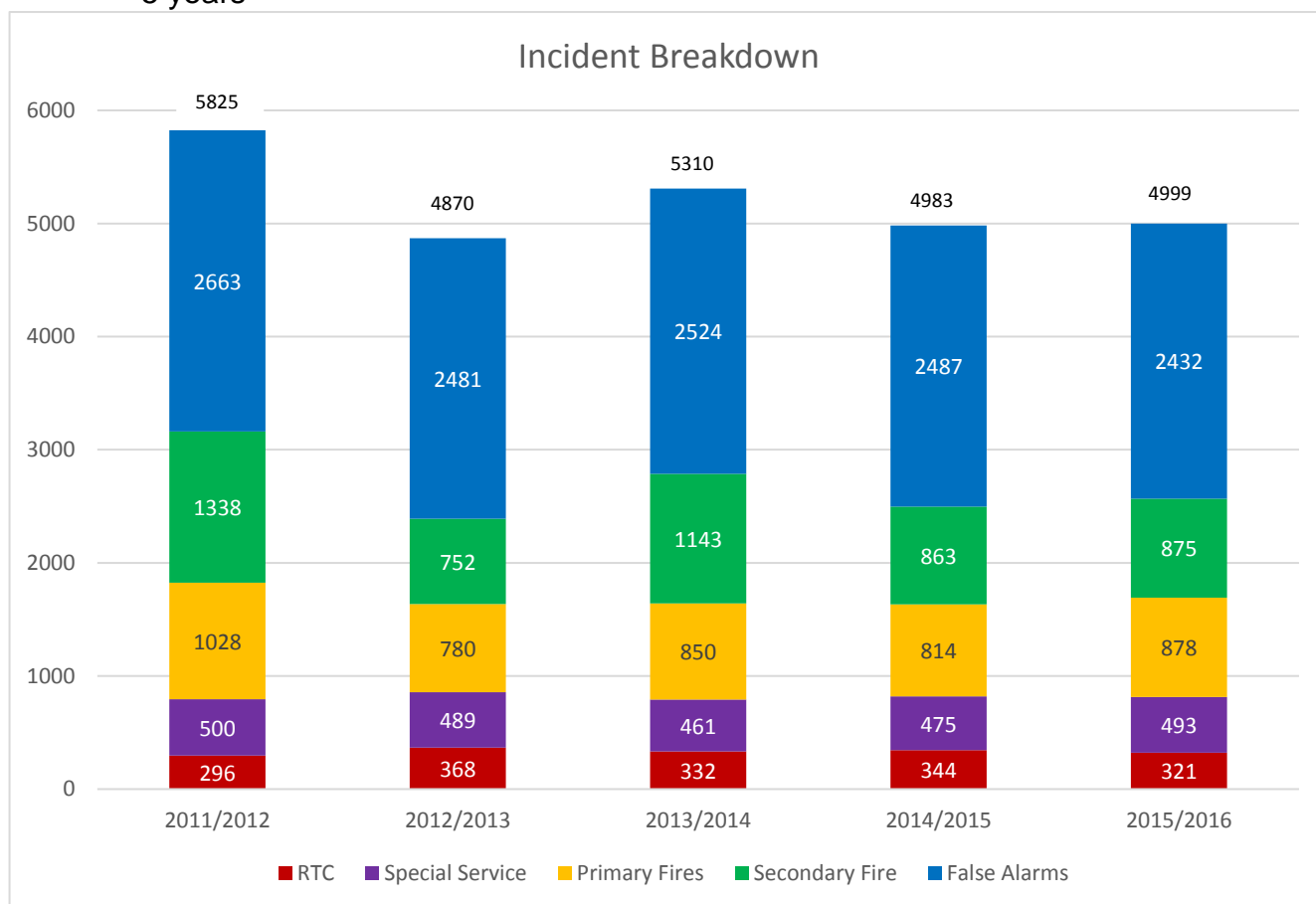
Incidents

The number of incidents that Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service attend has reduced significantly in the last 10 years and appears to have plateaued in the last 4 years. National fire statistics can be viewed on the Home Office website and the statistics can also be viewed by Fire Authority for a more detailed breakdown.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables>

The statistics produced in this document may vary from the National Statistics and previously produced information due to subtle variances in the data sets used, e.g. the national statistics only include reports up to July 2016, whereas the data in this document includes information up to and including 31st October 2016.

Figure 1. Breakdown of incidents attended by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service in the last 5 years



N.B. Figures may differ to previously published figures as the information is taken from live data from published Incident Reports. Figures also include officer only mobilisations and ‘Over The Border’ (OTB) incidents where SFRS fire engines have attended incidents outside Suffolk.

*All figures correct on the 31st October 2016. The number of incident reports that remained unpublished were 7 from 2014/15 and 50 from 2015/16.

In 2015/16, Combined Fire Control staff answered 9,066 999 calls for Suffolk and mobilised crews to 4,999 emergencies.

Fires

In 2015/16 there were 878 primary fires (fires in buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures, or any fire involving casualties, rescues, or fires attended by five or more fire engines) which represents an increase of 64 (7%) in the number attended in 2014/2015.

Table 3. Comparison of fires in 2014/15 to 2015/16:

| Type of fire/premises | 2014/2015 | 2015/2016 | % Difference |
|---|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Primary fires total | 814 | 878 | +7% |
| Secondary fires total | 863 | 875 | +1% |
| Dwelling fires (House, Bungalow, Flat, etc.) excludes chimney fires. | 324 | 329 | +2% |
| Commercial premises fires | 165 | 161 | -2% |

People killed or injured in fires

Compared to national levels, Suffolk continues to have a relatively low annual fire death rate with an average of 4 deaths per year over the period 2011/12 to 2015/2016. In 2015/16 there were 5 fire fatalities.

The average number of casualties in fires, over the period 2011/2012 to 2015/16, was 38.8 per year. The classification of fire casualty ranges from a minor injury such as a graze/cut that required first aid, to a casualty with life threatening burns. In 2015/16 there were 52 fire casualties which is an increase of 19% on the 42 from 2014/15. The ambition remains to achieve zero fire deaths and reduce the number of casualties due to fire to as few as possible. The Service's focus has remained on delivering effective fire prevention and fire protection advice to make people safer from fire in their homes and when at work and providing an effective emergency response to fires where these do occur.

Road traffic collisions

The number of road traffic collisions has decreased from 479 collisions (1994-1998 average) to 321 in 2015/2016. Since 2012/2013 the number of road traffic collisions attended by SFRS have reduced by 47. Road traffic collision prevention continues to be an important element of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's Prevention work and during 2015/16 the Service continued to work closely with stakeholders and agencies as part of Suffolk's Roadsafe Board.

People killed or injured in road traffic collisions

The average number of road traffic collision fatalities at incidents attended by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service was 15.8 per year over the period 2011/12 to 2015/16. There were 22 fatalities in 2015/16.

Fire, road traffic collision and special service fatalities and casualties at incidents attended by SFRS

Table 4. Number of fatalities and casualties at incidents attended by SFRS in Suffolk

| | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Fire Fatalities | 2 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| Fire Casualties | 42 | 24 | 34 | 42 | 52 |
| Road Traffic Collision Fatalities | 16 | 14 | 17 | 10 | 22 |
| Road Traffic Collision Casualties | 161 | 203 | 203 | 199 | 180 |
| Other Special Service Fatalities | 9 | 10 | 10 | 17 | 14 |
| Other Special Service Casualties | 29 | 36 | 33 | 51 | 52 |

N.B. The data set includes all published IRS records (31st October 2016), including OTB and officer only mobilisations.

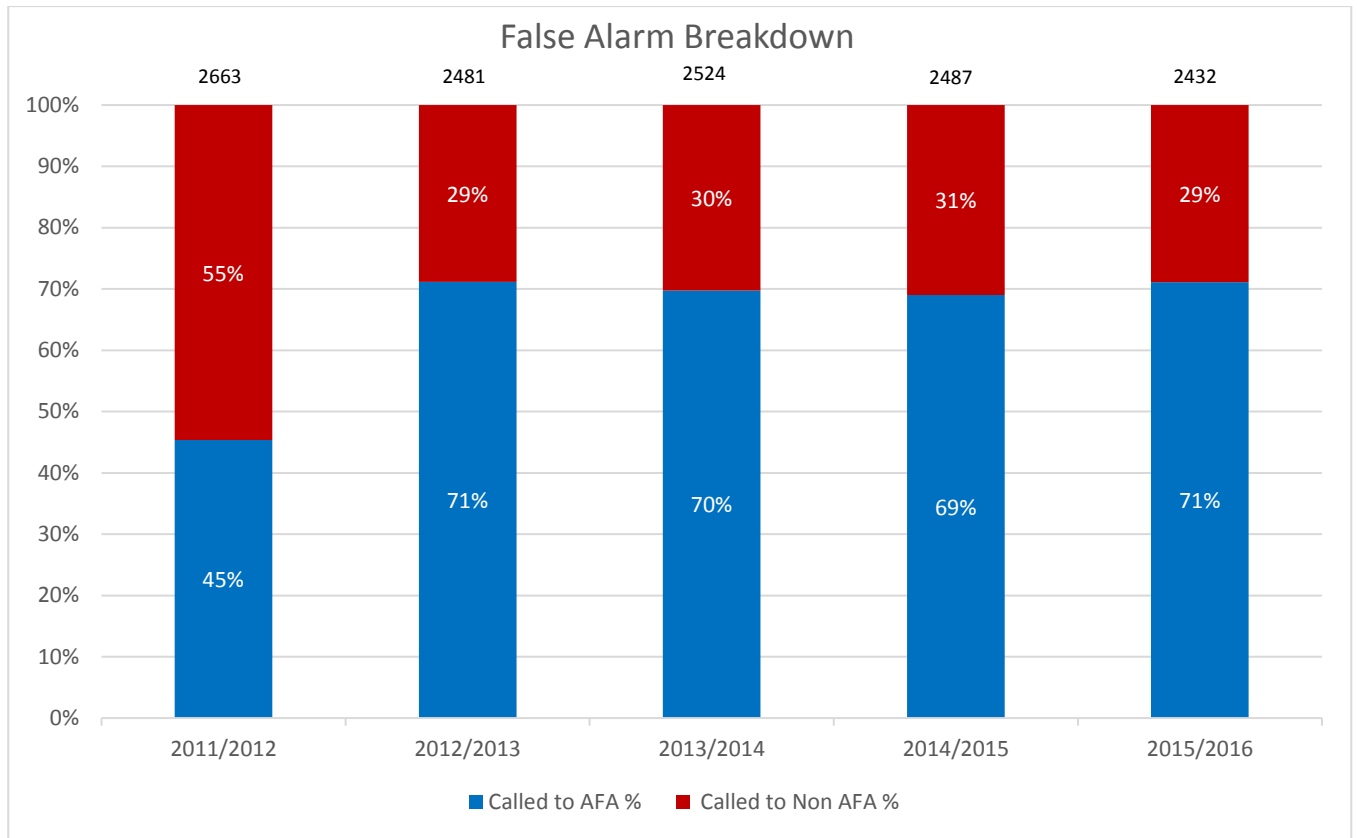
False Alarms

In 2015/16 Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service attended 2,432 calls which turned out to be false alarms which is a slight decrease on 2014/15 where 2,487 calls turned out to be false alarms. False alarms represented 49% of the 4999 calls attended in 2015/16.

False alarms may be classified as follows:

1. Those which are not related to Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) systems but instead where a fire alarm system is manually activated or where a person raises the alarm via a 999 call. These include hoax calls and where people report an emergency in good faith but where it is later found there is no fire (good intent fire calls) and;
2. AFA activations where there is no fire, which are emergencies raised by an AFA system where it is later found by firefighters there is no fire. The alarm may have activated because of insects or dust inside fire detectors, obstruction of optical smoke detecting beams or smoke from an outside source entering a building and activating the AFA system.

Figure 2. The proportion of calls to each category



Within the 2 categories of AFA and non AFA false alarms, they can be further broken down as follows:

- a) False alarms due to apparatus (faulty detectors e.g. smoke, flame, heat)
- b) False alarm malicious i.e. break glass point (including hoax calls)
- c) False alarm good intent (i.e. steam from a car engine seen by a person and mistaken for smoke).

Figure 3. The proportions of false alarms which are attributed to non AFA calls:

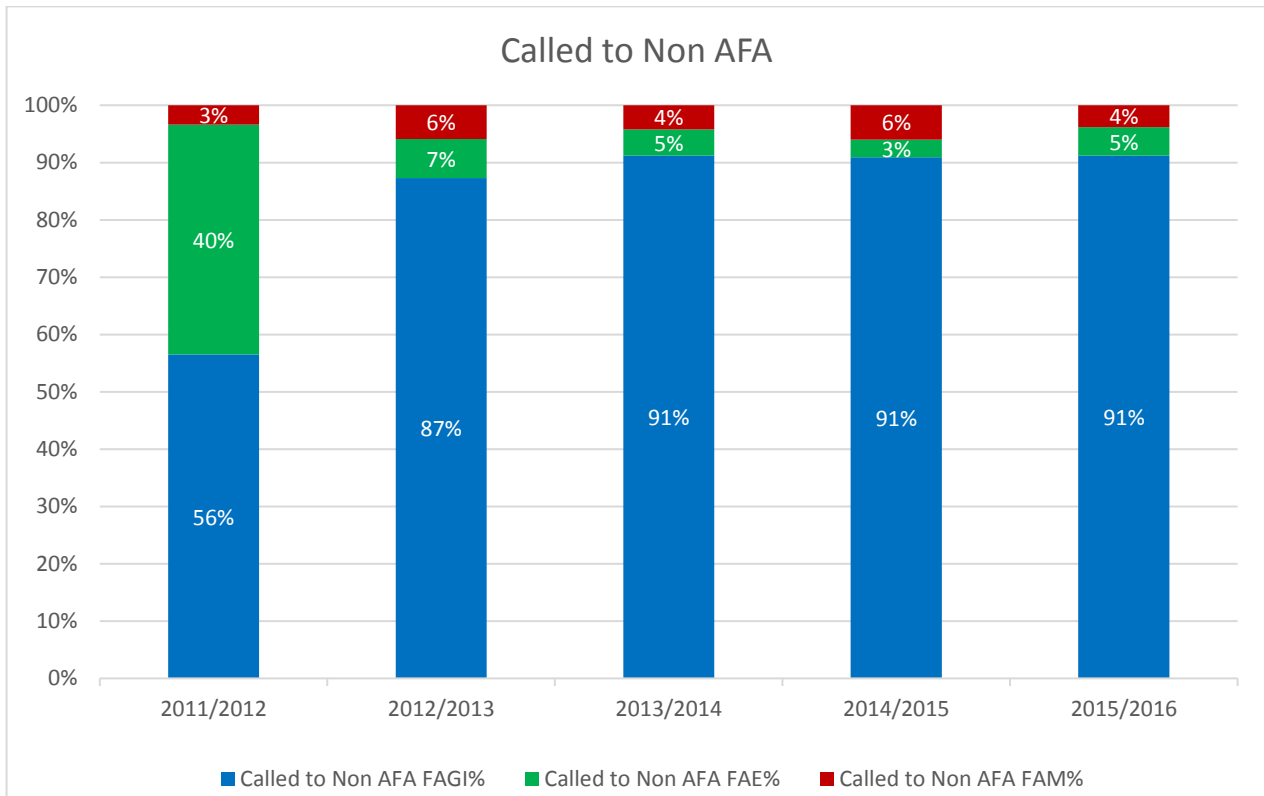
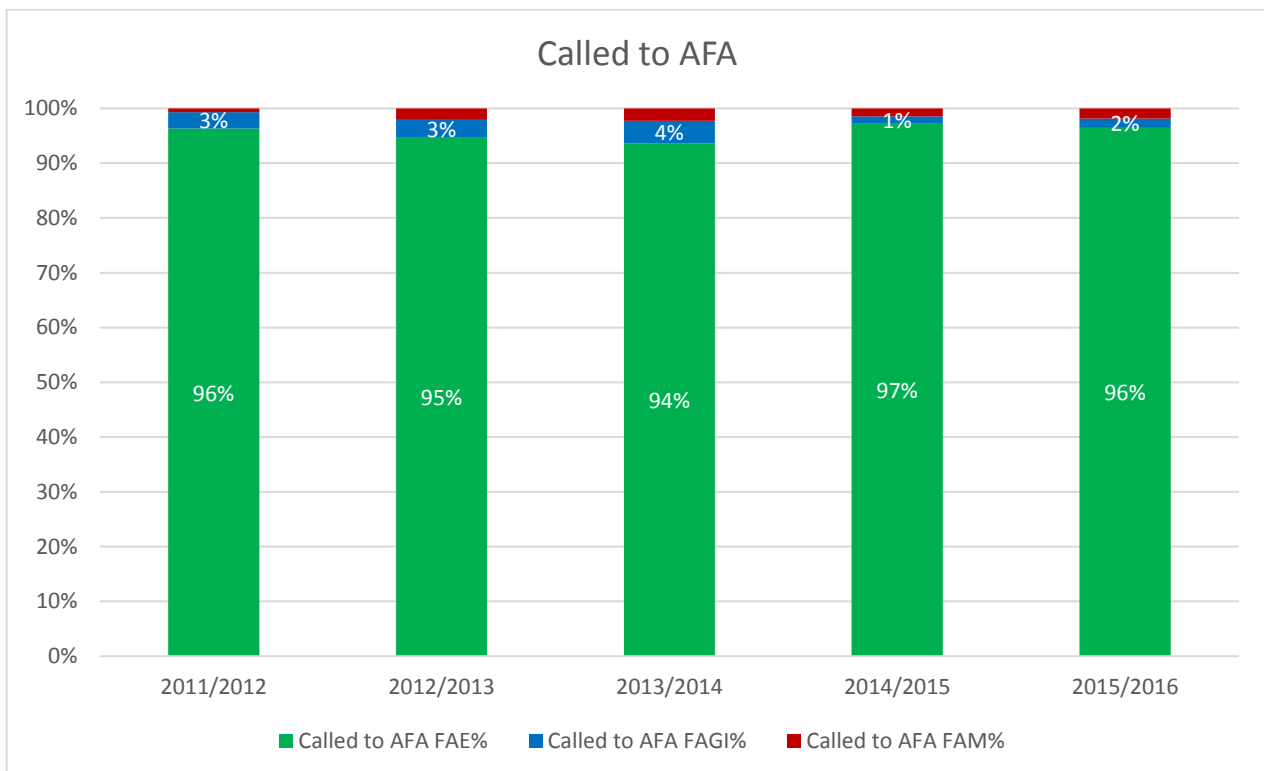


Figure 4. The proportions of false alarms which are attributed to AFA systems:



Only a small number of AFA calls are found to be fires on arrival at the emergency. Where this is the case the call is later re-categorised as a fire. In 2015/16 approximately 62 of AFA calls were classified as fires and in 2015/16 this represented approximately 3% of all AFA calls. Work continues to reduce the occurrences of AFA false alarms.

On-call firefighter availability

Every fire station in Suffolk is crewed by on-call firefighters, who solely crew 29 fire stations outside of the main towns of Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Lowestoft, Haverhill and Newmarket, where full-time firefighters are also based. Full-time firefighters provide an immediate response to emergencies where on-call firefighters normally respond from the station within approximately 5-6 minutes, subject to availability.

Overall on-call fire station availability in 2014/15 was 84.13% and in 2015/16 was 84.14%, a very slight increase.

Availability improves at nights and weekends, but during working weekdays it commonly reduces due primarily to the employment commitments of on-call firefighters.

On-call availability is a key priority for the Service and work continued in 2015/16 to seek improvements through several initiatives and key pieces of work. This work will continue in future years.

Figure 5. On-call fire engine availability 2014/15 across Suffolk

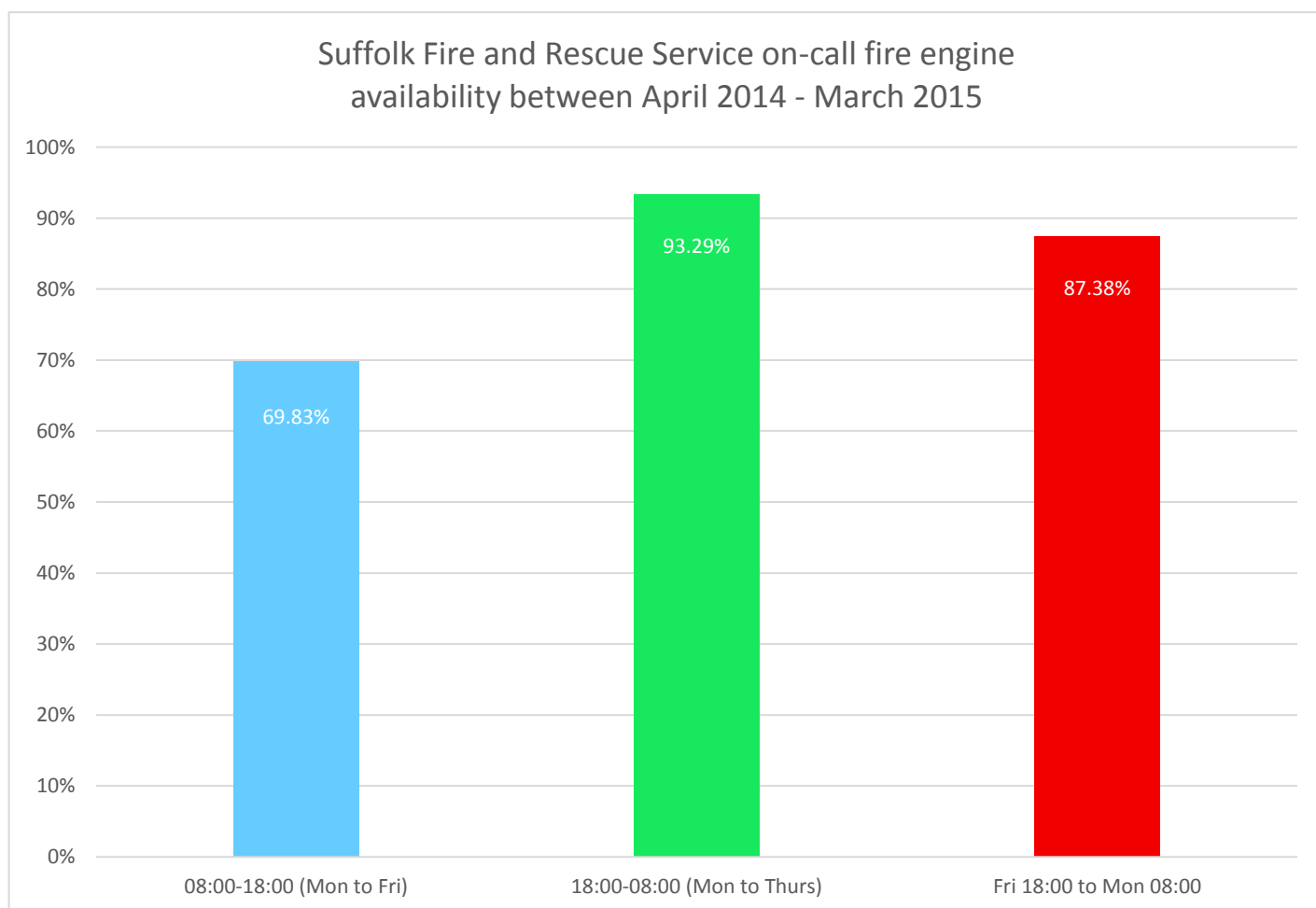
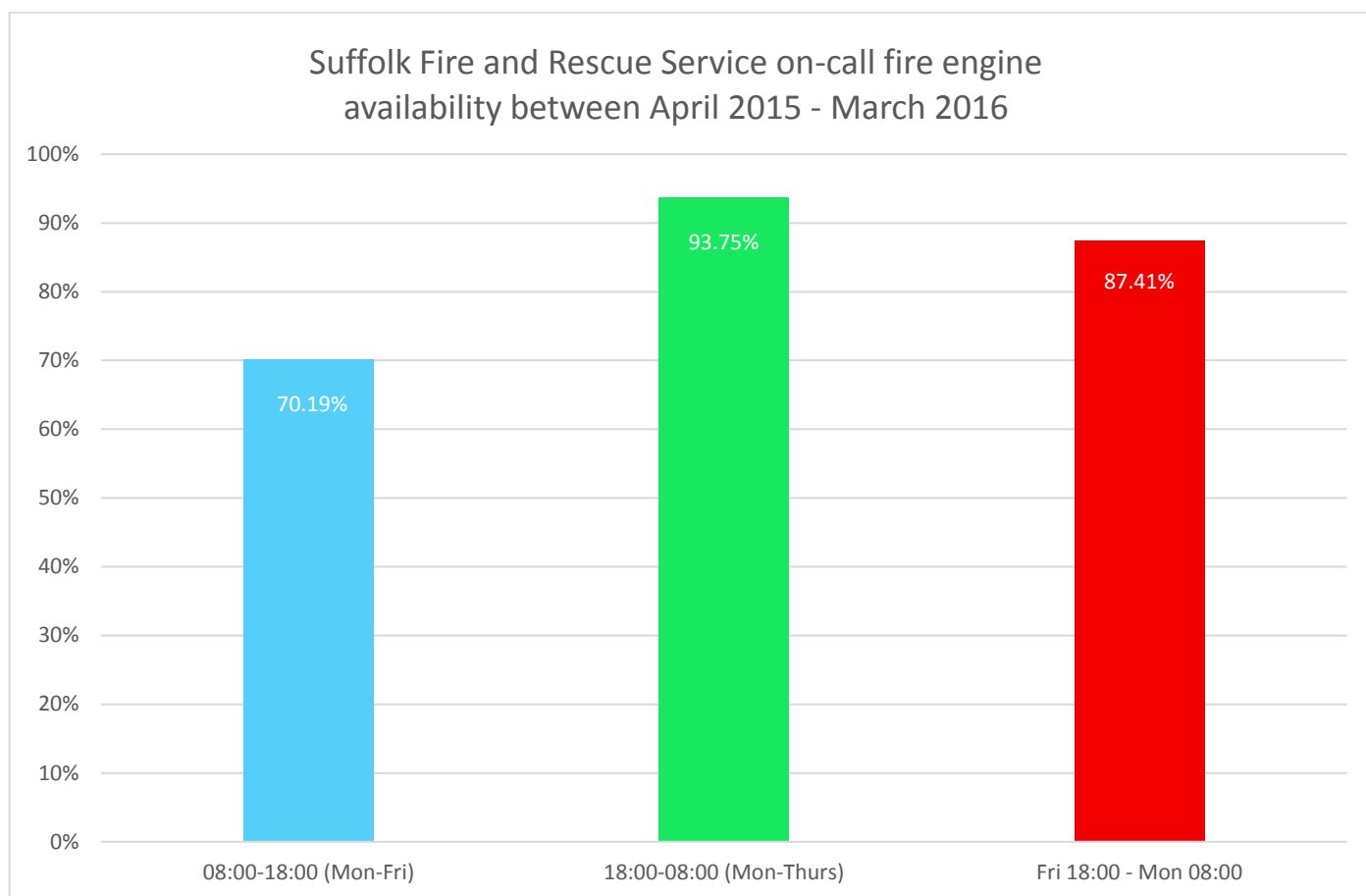


Figure 6. On-call Fire engine availability 2015/16 across Suffolk



999 Emergency Response Times

At a national level there is a trend, which is reflected in Suffolk, in increased response times. This is attributed, in part, to traffic volume and congestion on roads, particularly in urban areas. Other local factors, such as the adoption safer driving techniques (drive to arrive) by fire engine drivers and local requirements requiring crews to dress in firefighting protective clothing, as a safety measure, before turning-out also contribute to increased attendance times, albeit these practices have been in place for several years.

The national statistics for response times for 2015/16 will be produced by the Home Office and are not available until December 2016. For this reason, the statistics quoted below are for the year 2014/15.

National data provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government, shows that the average response time to dwelling fires in England in 2014/15 was 7 minutes 45 seconds, an increase of 20 seconds from the previous year. This is a continuation of a general long term increase in response times to fires in dwellings (see link below).

[Fire and Rescue Response Times 2014-15 Statistical Release](#)

The national statistics show that average response times to primary fires in Suffolk, were 11.1 minutes in 2013/14 and 11.3 minutes in 2014/15. Response to dwelling fires was 9.7 minutes in 2013/14 and 11.1 minutes in 2014/15.

To other building fires response times were 11.9 minutes in 2013/14 and 10.8 minutes in 2014/15. For road vehicle fires response times were 11.3 minutes in 2013/14 and 11.6 minutes in 2014/15. This data shows an increase in response times other than to other building fires, where times reduced in 2014/15.

For Suffolk, on average, for all incidents, in 2015/16 the first fire engine arrived in 9 minutes and 23 seconds from the time firefighters were first alerted to the call. The average time for on-call crewed fire engines to arrive at an incident was 11 minutes and 16 seconds. Full-time firefighter crewed fire engines arrived in 7 minutes and 13 seconds on average. These figures are up to date as from October 2016.

Response times in rural areas such as Suffolk, are significantly influenced by the availability of on-call firefighters. Work has continued throughout 2015/16 to improve on-call availability and response times. This work is ongoing.

Response Standards

Prior to 2004, targets for response times to fires and other emergencies were based on a prescriptive framework of national standards. In 2004 fire and rescue authorities were provided with the freedom to develop local response standards to reflect local risk. In 2010/11 the fire and rescue authority agreed a revised set of performance standards for response to emergencies.

Table 5. Performance against agreed standards

| Performance Standard | Target | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
|--|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Performance Standard 1 - Attend 80% of property fires within 11 minutes of alert (1 st fire engine) | 80% | 63.97% | 63.39% | 72.73% |
| Performance Standard 2 - Attend 80% of property fires within 16 minutes of alert (2 nd fire engine) | 80% | 71.5 % | 70.2% | 76.88% |
| Performance Standard 3 - Attend 80% of Road Traffic Collisions within 13 minutes of alert | 80% | 76.11% | 74.84% | 71.38% |

N.B. Information is taken from the Management Information System (MIS) which analyses live data from Incident Reporting Forms (data recorded 31st October 2016). This information will be subject to validation at year end.

Internal and external operational assurance

A range of internal and external audit, review and assurance arrangements are established within the Service. Internal audits are overseen centrally and focus on fire station and functional areas and a review of operational performance at incidents. Internal audits focus on key areas such as operational incident command and risk critical support functions, such as fire workshops, engineering and firefighter training.

Fire stations and departments are routinely audited every 3 years. However, more regular audits are carried out where a need arises. 13 internal audits were carried out in 2015/16 and the outcomes of these were reported to the Fire Strategy Group, which agreed appropriate actions and monitors progress and outcomes.

The audit process was reviewed in its entirety in 2014/15 and an electronic system is currently being developed with Red/Amber/Green action point status being used to ensure all action points are fully complied with. The next comprehensive station audit manual review is due to be undertaken in January 2017.

The revision ensures that the Service continues to focus on relevant key areas such as operational incident command, risk critical support functions such as fire workshops, engineering and firefighter training.

Significant emergencies attended are followed-up by a formal debrief at which the main agencies, partners, officers and crews are represented. This is an established process, designed to highlight notable practice, identify any issues arising and seek continual improvement. In 2015/16, 6 formal debriefs and 4 desktop audits were completed. Their outcomes were used to influence and improve the provision of training, equipment and standard operating procedures.

The Service's internal audit and review arrangements supplement the formal audits carried out by the county council's Audit Service, who undertake separate and independent audits to those described above. As Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service sits within the overall governance framework of Suffolk County Council the outcome of audits carried out across other council functions has a bearing on Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's practices, policies and ways of working.

In 2016/17 we plan to carry out between 12 and 14 station audits. Additional audits are planned for the Suffolk Fire and Rescue training facility at Wattisham, the Port of Felixstowe fire station, and two themed audits for the newly introduced electronic training recording system and breathing apparatus sets and testing, the results of which will be submitted to Fire Strategy Group at the end of 2016.

SFRS is part of the National Framework relating to Occupational Safety and Health. The eastern region group, of which Suffolk is a member, has signed a partnership agreement for regular external audit, utilising the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Quality Safety Audit (QSA) process to scrutinise its safety management systems. The last audit of Suffolk was carried out in 2014 and has been reported previously.

Peer Challenge

The Local Government Association (LGA) and Chief Fire Officers' Association work in partnership to provide fire and rescue services with the opportunity to access an external peer challenge service. Peer challenge is available once every three years and the most recent review in Suffolk was carried out in December 2013.

The [peer challenge report](#) is available on the council's website. Plans will be made for the next peer review, scheduled for 2017.

8. Operational Assurance

There are 35 fire stations located in Suffolk's largest towns and villages. Four stations; Bury St Edmunds, Lowestoft South, Ipswich East and Ipswich Princes Street are crewed around the clock, seven days per week. Two additional stations; Haverhill and Newmarket, revert to on-call crewing in the evenings and at weekends. The remaining stations are solely crewed by on-call firefighters, who respond to the station when required.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service operate a fleet of 58 front-line operational vehicles, including 47 fire engines, and a range of equipment required to deal with foreseeable emergencies. The number and type of vehicles, and operational equipment, is kept under review to ensure this remains fit for purpose and appropriate for the use intended.

Operational uniformed roles in Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service are based on seven nationally recognised and defined roles, set out below:

- a. Firefighter
- b. Crew Manager
- c. Watch Manager
- d. Station Manager
- e. Group Manager
- f. Area Manager
- g. Brigade Manager

Non-operational support roles are established in line with county council policy and associated local pay and grading arrangements. 59 non-operational staff were employed in support functions. This number included both full-time and part-time staff.

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The Fire and Rescue National Framework was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in July 2012 and sets out central government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. The Framework identifies the high-level expectations of Government but does not prescribe operational matters, which it considers are best-managed by local authorities in consultation with communities. The priorities in the Framework are for authorities to:

- a. Identify and assess foreseeable risks, making provision for prevention and protection activities and for appropriate response to operational incidents
- b. Work in partnership with local communities and partners
- c. Be accountable to local communities

The fire and rescue authority has considered the expectations of the National Framework and ensured that these are being met in an appropriate manner.

Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP)

The Authority adheres to the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework in producing its Integrated Risk Management Plans. In November 2015, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority embarked on a public consultation as part of reviewing its IRMP and to meet the financial challenge facing the County Council.

The 3-year plan, published in May 2016, sets out the programme to manage foreseeable risk across Suffolk. In accordance with requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework, the Authority reviews and evolves its Plan annually.

The Integrated Risk Management Plan details how foreseeable risks such as house fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies are effectively managed. These risks are identified using professional judgement and information about previous emergencies attended, supported by computer software; mapping information; national intelligence, planning information supplied by local authorities, and other relevant information from partner and other organisations. This data is brought together to enable the identification of resources and risk control measures to ensure the effective and safe delivery of services.

Mutual aid arrangements and agreements

The fire and rescue authority is a signatory to the National Mutual Aid Protocol through the fire and rescue service National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) for England. The NCAF guidance sets out the terms under which a fire and rescue authority may expect assistance from, or aid, another authority in the event of a serious national incident such as wide-scale flooding or terrorist attack.

Local plans and operational guidance are in place to provide and receive assistance through the NCAF arrangements using the Fire and Rescue Service National Coordination Centre in London. Local guidance has been informed by operational deployments and experiences during winter flooding in Somerset and Thames Valley and also East Coast surge events.

Formal mutual aid arrangements are also in place with neighbouring fire and rescue authorities for Essex, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. These arrangements provide for regular cross-border support and assistance in the event of a fire or another emergency incident. Specific arrangements are also in place with Norfolk FRS, to provide a joint Suffolk and Fire Special Operations Team capability to deal with significant incidents involving firearms and including local or national response to a Mobile Terrorist Firearms Attack. These plans are embedded and regularly exercised with Police and Ambulance for effective multi-agency response.

An audit of Mass Decontamination assets managed by Suffolk FRS concluded broad compliance with some areas highlighted which would benefit from improvement. An action plan to deliver improvements has been delivered to achieve those benefits and this includes a rationalisation of how the Incident Response Unit and Mass Decontamination Disrobe and Rerobe module assets are trained and crewed. Although these assets have not been called for national resilience deployments they are routinely used for local response to Hazmat type incidents and embedded in multi-agency response planning for incidents at Sizewell B Nuclear power station.

The Authority has an agreement in place with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority for the provision of a 999 Fire Control Service. The Combined Fire Control is based in Huntingdon and serves both counties. The arrangement is governed through a formal legal agreement and performance is managed through Executive and Operational Governance Boards, which met regularly in 2015/16.

The Service is an active partner in the Suffolk Local Resilience Forum, a multi-agency partnership of emergency responders and other organisations involved in supporting the emergency response in Suffolk. The Forum ensures that agencies work together to develop, agree and test the plans made to respond to and manage community risk in the event of an emergency.

Health and Safety

Fire-fighting, responding to emergencies, training and other public protection related activities present significant risk to the persons employed in these roles. Alongside the statutory and common law requirements to provide health and safety for our employees and those affected by our actions, SFRS continues to improve and develop its health and safety systems and culture and this remains a priority for the service as identified in the annual [Service Plan](#).

There is a clear structure within the county council and fire and rescue service to support the effective management of health, safety and wellbeing. The Chief Fire Officer chairs the Council's Strategic Health and Wellbeing Board and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer represents the fire and rescue service and also chairs the fire and rescue service Health and Safety Committee. It is through these meetings that health and safety arrangements for the fire and rescue service are managed.

The role of Health and Safety Manager is a dedicated management post and associated roles and responsibilities are based on Health and Safety Executive guidance and Approved Codes of Practice.

'Safe systems of work' are established for operational incidents, training and general non-operational work activity. A library of operational procedures, written in conjunction with national Fire and Rescue guidance, are used to support the safe system of work. They contain key risk and control measures and supporting information and are maintained to assist firefighters to resolve operational incidents effectively and safely and underpin training, assessment and development for all staff.

All staff are provided with health and safety training for their role. Senior managers attend the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health 'Directing Safely' course and uniformed middle managers complete the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) managing safely qualifications. Many managers are trained in accident investigation techniques to enable the Service to identify any potential failure in health and safety systems.

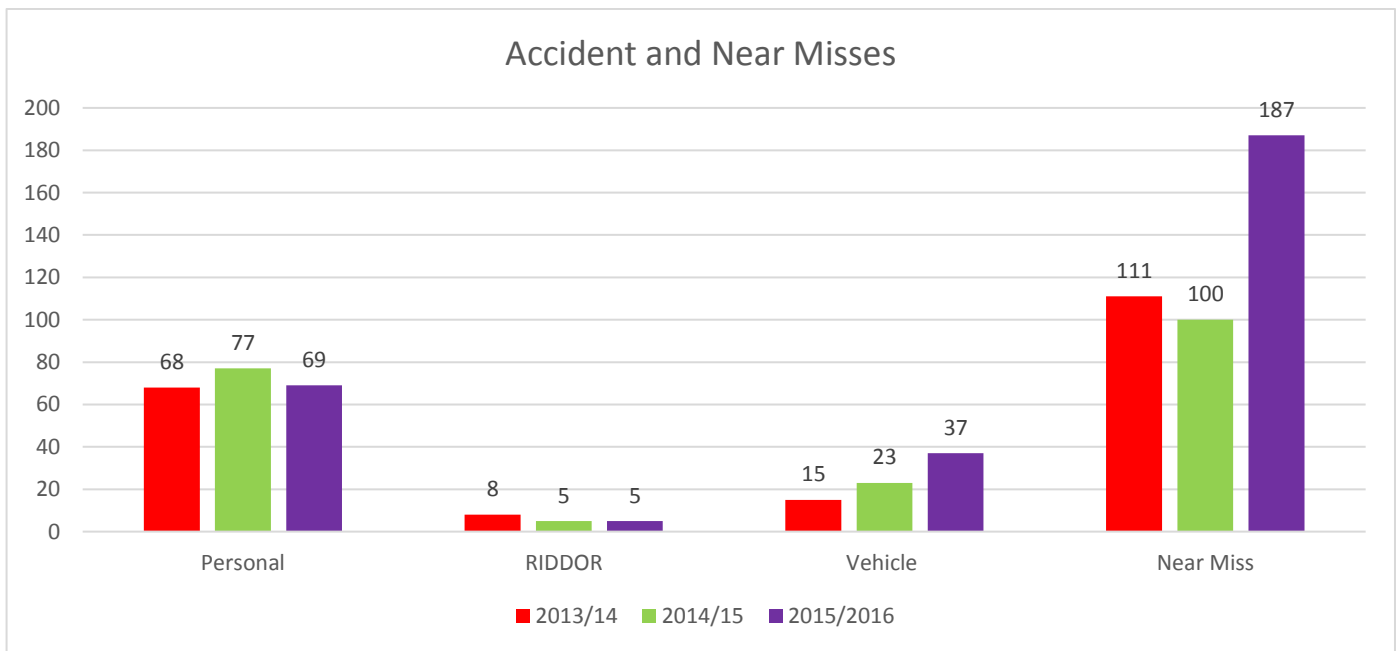
The Service closely manages health and safety performance including the number of accidents and near misses. These are reported to the Fire Strategy Group, the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and the Home Office. A manager investigates every near miss and accident.

In 2015/16, staff reported a total of 69 personal accidents, a decrease of approximately 12% on the 77 recorded in 2014/15. There were 37 vehicle accidents compared to the 23 reported in 2014/15, a rise of approximately 38%. 5 personal accidents were reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) in 2014/15. This is the same as was recorded in 2014/15.

Staff also reported 187 near-miss events in 2015/16 compared to 100 in 2014/15. Near-miss events are circumstances where staff report a potential hazard e.g. impact, trip, slip or fall but where there is no subsequent accident or injury. The reporting of near-miss incidents helps to reduce the risk of accidents and staff were actively encouraged to report these.

The main causes of the 69 personal accidents in 2015/16 were similar to 2014/15; swift water rescue training which involved bumps and bruises, compartment fire behaviour training, station based training, where minor injuries such as abrasions, bruising and musculoskeletal injuries occurred. The remaining accidents were made up of injuries either due to attendance at emergencies or when carrying out routine activities. This decrease recognises the importance of keeping firefighters safe, whilst maintaining realistic operational training.

Figure 7. Accidents and Near Misses



Business Continuity

Business continuity plans are in place to mitigate the impact of an incident which may interrupt the delivery of Mission Critical Activities and services; for example, industrial or strike action by staff, flu pandemic, severe weather or national fuel shortages. An audit of the fire and rescue service business continuity arrangements was carried out by the council’s Audit Service in 2012 with an outcome stating broad compliance with requirements. The next audit is scheduled for late 2016. A survey has been returned to Home Office regarding Business Continuity Plans for industrial action.

Business continuity activity and plan development is coordinated with multi agency partners through the Local Resilience Forum and 2015/16 joint exercising included Pandemic ‘flu and major power and internet outage affecting critical local infrastructure. These exercises have informed a review to enhance resilience arrangements and awareness. All plans are reviewed and exercised by managers and plan owners at regular intervals to ensure satisfactory compliance with requirements.

Training and Development

The training and development of all Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service personnel is still one of the priorities for the Service and sits firmly within our Service Plan.

Training is provided to all firefighters, officers and non-uniformed staff throughout the year, to improve knowledge, skills and experience in key areas, and ensure staff can carry out their roles safely and effectively.

Training and development needs are identified through various avenues, from face to face management meetings to national guidance requirements, from routine maintenance-of-competency training to representative bodies' consultation outcomes.

Collaborative opportunities with regional colleagues and partner agencies are explored for all activities in Training and Development, including assistance to quality-assure our practices.

Training and development is facilitated in various ways:

Training Centre

Facilities include: classrooms and welfare; realistic breathing apparatus facilities; rail incident infrastructure; road traffic collision and heavy-rescue infrastructure. This is also where new recruit firefighters receive basic training to ensure they are safe when first responding on a fire engine.

Plans are in place to further enhance facilities to stay in line with emerging new technologies being introduced into the Service.

Training Development Team

The team oversees the development needs of our personnel. Work includes: assisting with firefighter recruit selection; coordinating and carrying out assessment of Incident Command skills at all levels; maintenance and coordination of development programmes; facilitating promotional assessments; coordination of external training as required for uniformed and non-uniformed personnel, e.g. leadership and management skills.

Driver Training

This department oversees: Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) licencing and training; Emergency Response Driver Training (ERDT); assistance with driver and operator training for all new fleet vehicles; Driving Licence checks.

On Station and External Training

Routine maintenance of firefighter skills is carried out at station level. Some specialist training is delivered utilising district instructors, e.g. Breathing Apparatus instructors, Road Traffic Collision instructors, Swift Water rescue leads etc. Core skill and risk critical input will be delivered on stations and in departments by SFRS training instructors and/or subject matter experts. We also access training provided by Suffolk County Council's Learning and Development team, e.g. coaching and mentoring or management and leadership skills. Other external providers are utilised to develop staff in areas that are not currently facilitated within service, e.g. the Fire Service College and other subject specialists.

9. Prevention and Protection

Prevention

Prevention is about reducing risk by preventing deaths, injuries and damage to property and the environment from fire and other emergencies.

The Service delivers many different programmes that enhance community safety, including:

- a. Road safety education, including a new 'Firebike' safety scheme
- b. Working with disaffected young people
- c. Working with young people in education
- d. Promoting healthier lifestyles with young people
- e. Helping older people to live independently
- f. Thatch fire safety

Community Fire Volunteers, Prevention staff and firefighters carry out free Safer Home Visits for the most vulnerable people in Suffolk.

They fit safety features in homes such as smoke detectors and provide advice on safety, security and wellbeing. Where appropriate, people are referred to partner agencies such as Adult Social Care and the Benefits Agency etc.

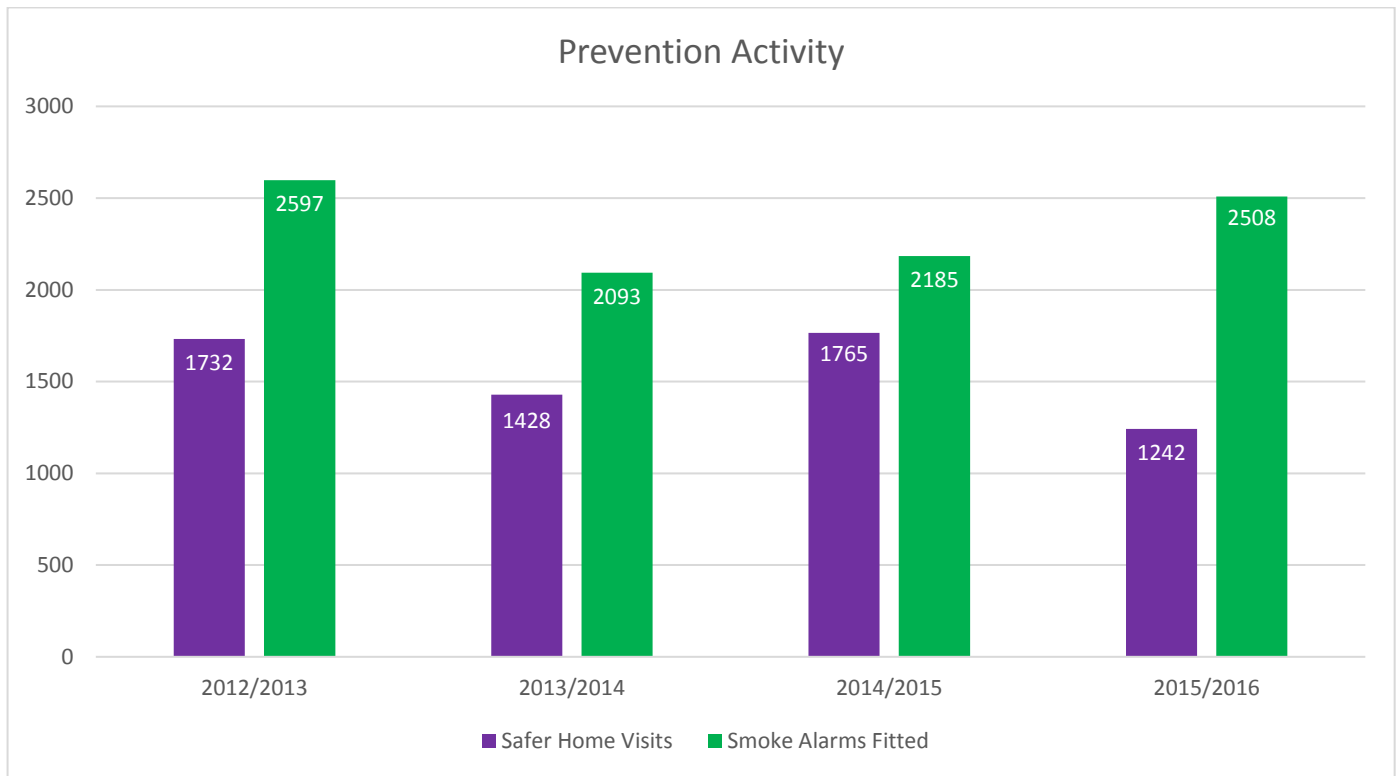
In 2015/16 there were 1242 Safer Home Visits carried out. This is a decrease of 523 on the 1765 undertaken in 2014/15. However, in 2015/16 there were 2,508 smoke detectors installed in homes, an increase of 323 on the 2,185 fitted in 2014/15 and 415 more than the 2,093 installed in 2013/14.

In 2014/15 the Service reviewed its arrangements for Safer Home Visits to help better target and prioritise these to the most vulnerable people. The arrangements are under constant review to ensure the approach continues to operate effectively.

Youth Campaigns and Initiatives

We carried out 25 visits and spent 210 hours on Fire-setter and anti-social behaviour and other Youth Diversion schemes and made a further 120 other visits under Other Youth Fire Safety Programmes totalling 2186 hours spent on such initiatives

Figure 8. Prevention Activity – No. of Safer Home Visits undertaken and Smoke Alarms fitted



Protection

Protection is primarily about the enforcement of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Officers carry out audits of buildings to establish compliance with the law, as far as fire safety is concerned. Audits are generated for the Service led Risk Based Enforcement Programme.

Premises are selected for audit based on the risk they may present to those who work in or visit them. Buildings where people sleep, such as hotels and residential care homes, are considered higher risk and are audited more frequently. Premises are also audited on receipt of information regarding poor fire safety conditions or where there has been a fire.

The number of audits carried out in 2015/16 was 743, a reduction of 93 on the 836 audits undertaken in 2014/15. This reduction in audits in 2015/16 is due to a reduction in the number of officers carrying out audit work and vacancies occurring in year, combined with additional training and workload generated to achieve the level 4 qualifications necessary for the existing team. There were 2 formal notices issued under the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (Articles 29, 30 and 31) in 2015/16, both Enforcement Notices.

There were 137 Premises rated as ‘Satisfactory’ following enforcement action by SFRS.

Running concurrently is the SFRS Protection Department driven special initiative. The “Joint Agency Impact Days”, involve FRS Protection, Prevention and Local Authority Environmental Housing Officers. Targeting a different town each month, the aim is to provide education, advice and a balanced intelligence based joint inspections programme, for premises with both residential and commercial areas.

These premises types were chosen following investigations into:

- Local and national incidents.
- Historic and current risks/high activity Protection areas.
- Results/feedback from a trial undertaken.

10. Achievements in 2015/16

Full-time firefighter shift review

Changes were made to the full-time firefighter shift system on completion of extended trials in 2013/14 after consultation with staff and trade unions.

On-call Improvement

Changes have been made to improve on-call fire station availability.

- a) An additional on-call firefighter training day has been introduced at our training centre.
- b) New on-call firefighter recruitment arrangements have been implemented to improve our on-call establishment and availability.
- c) Additional IT facilities made available to support on-call station activities.

Fire Appliances and Operational Equipment

Three new Unimog 4x4 vehicles were delivered to replace the two current Unimogs and in 2017 the three water rescue vehicles. The new vehicles will be used to support and improve the Service's large animal rescue capability, rural firefighting and water rescue and flooding capabilities with a motorised response at Ipswich and Lowestoft. We aim to have completed the training and have these vehicles in operational use by autumn 2016.

Fifteen Positive Pressure Ventilation units were introduced as the first phase of a plan to include these more widely across the service. The units help firefighters to ventilate structures affected by fire, reduce fire and smoke damage and assist with the control of fires.

We have installed defibrillator equipment on every fire engine. This life saving equipment will be used in cardiac emergencies and supports firefighters and the public at incidents. We are piloting first-responding to ambulance emergencies in the autumn of 2016, making use of the defibrillator equipment for the protection of the people of Suffolk.

Work has started on the procurement of three new B-type fire appliances which are due to be delivered into Service during the autumn of 2016. The three new appliances will carry some of the latest equipment available to fire services, including battery operated hydraulic rescue equipment (BRE) and Cobra cold cut firefighting system (Cobra). As BRE is powered by batteries this means the equipment does not require a generator or hydraulic hose. This means that the equipment is quicker to get to work, quieter and is not restricted in the distance it can be operated within by the hose connected to the generator. This will help to improve firefighter and casualty safety.

Property Collaboration

The Service, in collaboration with Suffolk Constabulary and the East of England Ambulance Service, have developed shared facilities at Ixworth, Elmswell, Framlingham, Debenham, Lowestoft South, Lowestoft North, Brandon, Bury St Edmunds and Clare Fire Stations. Further plans are being developed to create an additional seven shared stations. Two of the proposed new stations are approved by the partners involved and submitted for planning approval.

Completion of the schemes at Felixstowe and Saxmundham are expected to be completed by March 2017 and May 2017 respectively.

In addition to creating shared facilities with other blue light partners, the Service is working with other public sector partners to create a public sector hub in Mildenhall; providing a one stop shop for Mildenhall and its surrounding communities.

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)

ESMCP is a Government project to replace the current Airwave radio communications system and provide the next generation communication system for the 3 emergency services and other public safety users. This system will be called the emergency services network (ESN) and will provide a resilient and integrated voice and broadband radio and data services.

In 2015/16 the Service continued to work with the Regional Fire Customer Group in influencing national strategy and making regional decisions.

A Project Manager and Support and Training Officer have been jointly employed by CFRS and SFRS to manage the activity of the Services in preparation for, and during the migration to the ESN. The team members are working with the East of England Project Team to ensure the region successfully transitions within the timescales proscribed by central government, and that opportunities for collaboration are maximised reducing the burden to individual counties and services.

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP)

JESIP is a Government programme designed to enhance the ways in which police, fire and ambulance services work together at all emergency incidents to facilitate a coordinated and effective multi-agency command and control structure at the scene of a major and complex incidents.

JESIP training was provided to all flexible duty system officers and firefighters were provided with information and guidance on the new arrangements. JESIP principles have been integrated into operational guidance, core training and exercising and staff development folders. The Service's preparedness and application of JESIP protocols is continually reviewed and monitored through core SFRS Training and Development and through multi-agency exercises carried out in conjunction with Suffolk Resilience Forum including regulatory exercises at COMAH and REPIR nuclear sites. In 2015 Exercise Diamond Dragon tested emergency response to a military aircraft crash with US Air Force Europe and Government departments/Agencies including Ministry of Defence and Atomic Weapons Establishment.

Work continues to ensure that the JESIP principles are fully embedded into the culture of the emergency services in Suffolk.

National Operational Guidance

The National Operational Guidance Programme is a partnership between the Local Government Association (LGA), the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) the Department for Communities and Local Government's Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (CFRA) and the London Fire Brigade. The Programme is working with fire and rescue services to deliver new online national operational guidance that is consistent, easily accessible and can be quickly revised and updated if necessary.

In 2014/15 the Service established a Programme Board to oversee the implementation of National Operational Guidance and to help contribute to the work taking place nationally and regionally. This work involved reviewing Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's operational guidance notes, and related procedures, and identifying where these may need to change. All 146 individual pieces of Operational Guidance have passed through the Programme Board which means that the programme will be delivered on time and in line with regional services.

Training and Development

Our Training and Development team have trained drivers and operators for new compact fire appliances and off-road Unimog vehicles. We have introduced new large animal rescue techniques and equipment with the training at various levels for all staff. Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV) was introduced in 2014/2015, we have now moved from Phase 1 (ventilation after the fire is extinguished) to Phase 2 (ventilation after the fire has been controlled).

Our facilities at Wattisham Training Centre have been developed to deliver realistic practical training in aircraft incidents in collaboration with the MOD fire teams at Wattisham Flying Station.

We have introduced new Leadership and Management courses throughout the organisation. Crew Commander and Watch Commander level courses are provided by our Training and Development team; a Young Leader's course is provided by the Rotary Club and development courses are also available for middle and senior managers.

11. Future Improvements

The Service produces an annual [Service Plan](#) covering a three-year period. The plan sets out a range of tasks for delivery in 2016-19 and was published on the Council's website. The plan, which is updated annually, sets out improvements to services, some of which are summarised below:

On-Call Improvement

Work will continue to improve on-call fire station availability. This work will include, but not be limited to:

- a) New on-call firefighter availability contracts will be implemented for new on-call firefighters.
- b) On-call firefighter training arrangements introduced in 2014/15 will be reviewed and revisions made, where necessary, to reflect staff views and operational needs. The aim will be to provide more flexible training for on-call firefighters.
- c) On-call fire engine crewing arrangements will be reviewed to ensure that fire engines can respond without delay, with the correct number of crew, to people in need, whilst ensuring firefighter safety is maintained.
- d) An on-call Crewing Reserve Coordinator will be appointed to oversee and coordinate resources to target and improve on-call availability.
- e) An on-call Crewing Reserve will be established to help improve on-call fire station availability levels. This will be a pool of firefighters who are available for deployment to fire stations across Suffolk where staffing levels may need supporting.
- f) Permanent on-call Crewing Reserve positions will be created specifically to support on-call fire engine availability, subject to IRMP agreement. They will work flexibly across different locations and areas within Suffolk where staffing levels may need supporting.
- g) Complete the review of the wholetime duty shift system with a view to releasing capacity to further support the on-call duty system.

IRMP Implementation

Work will be undertaken to implement the agreed IRMP 2015-18 proposals. These include:

- a) Removal of a fire engine from Princes St fire station, Ipswich East fire station, Bury St Edmunds fire station and Lowestoft fire station;
- b) Replacing the fire engine at Wrentham with a Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV).

Blue Light Integration

Following receipt of the £4.93m DCLG grant funding in 2015-16, for future projects relating to property sharing with blue light partners, a Joint Programme Manager was appointed and blue light governance arrangements established. Plans have been developed for sharing facilities at Felixstowe and Saxmundham.

Feasibility studies for the creation of shared facilities at Stowmarket, Mildenhall, Leiston, Beccles and Princes Street, Ipswich are being developed.

Building work on the above projects is scheduled to commence in 2016/17, subject to the necessary approvals and planning consent. Other projects will be identified as collaborative opportunities arise.

Emergency Medical Trials

Since May 2015, 31 UK Fire and Rescue Services have taken part in a national trial for Emergency Medical Trials (Co-Responding). The trial it has been extended to February 2017 and in September 2016 will include five stations from Suffolk (Sudbury, Long Melford, Lowestoft South, Felixstowe and Haverhill).

Sourcing of equipment and station training will be concluded by mid-August 2016. A Standard Operating Policy has been drafted and will be circulated to the staff in August. Suffolk will contribute to the trial until its conclusion in 2017.

Procurement – New Vehicles and Equipment

Conventional methods of entering a fire compartment risks an explosive escalation of the fire, sometimes referred to as a backdraft. Temperatures within an ordinary property fire can easily reach more than 900°C, Cobra is a means of reducing both the temperature, and explosive range of fire gases by introducing a powerful fine water spray into a fire compartment without the immediate need to enter. This equipment is being built into three new appliances for an embedded evaluation.

Three 15 tonne pumping appliances are currently in build with Emergency One in Scotland, with completion due in Autumn 2016. The Mobile Data Terminals fitted to front-line fire engines will be replaced in 2016-17 with the latest equipment. These vehicle mounted computers will improve how firefighters access operational information, maps and procedural notes as well as providing data communications with the 999 Combined Fire Control.

Firefighting Clothing - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Suffolk has been part of a collaborative PPE contract involving about a dozen Services, for many years. Work has already taken place to refresh the new contract to change our firefighting PPE by 2018. SFRS representatives have been part of a much larger collaboration which amounts to about half of the UK fire and rescue services, for nearly two years. Our involvement has helped shape and influence preliminary work and practical trials which will

begin in Autumn 2016. Firefighting PPE is worn at nearly all incident types yet is specifically designed for the small amount of times firefighters are exposed to direct heat from fires within buildings. One of the main aims therefore, is to identify equipment to provide protection that is more suitable to all incident types. This work should complete in 2017 after practical trials.

Organisational Review

A review of roles and responsibilities at Group and Station Commander levels will be implemented in 2016/17. These arrangements will be kept under review and revised where necessary. Separately, a review of the wholetime duty system will be carried out with a view to identifying improvements and future options, which will be discussed with staff and trade unions.

Transparency with Performance Information

Emergency response standards will be displayed on the Suffolk County Council website updated daily in a clear format using graphs and pictograms for others to view and interpret.

A new Management Information System will be implemented in 2016/17 to help monitor, manage and present operational and other performance to a wide range of different audiences.

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)

The Project Board will continue to facilitate work at the local level to support the ESMCP, the national Government led programme to replace the emergency services Airwave radio system with a new Emergency Services Network (ESN). This work will continue at national, regional and local levels with the aim of the new system being implemented in Suffolk in Quarter 3 2017/18. Due to funding issues following the move of the Fire and Rescue service from DCLG to the Home Office, the two Project Managers, and Support and training Officers will be supporting six counties for the first year of the project. Suffolk FRS, Cambridgeshire FRS and Bedfordshire FRS will be jointly managed. The following work streams are due to be completed during 2015/16:

- Training needs analysis and the production of training materials .
- The completion of the User Transition Manuals.
- The engagement of a Destination Network Service Provider.
- Implementation of the Control Room inter-working solution.
- Review of application needs, working with suppliers to test and accept these into service.
- Review of current Airwave devices and development of the ESN device strategy.
- Review of network coverage assurance.
- Planning for User Organisation pilots and testing.

Prevention Activities

Further improvements will continue to be made to safer home visits to better target these to the most vulnerable people using data and knowledge from other local authority partners such as Public Health. Plans are also in place to broaden the remit of these visits to a 'Safe and Well' visit.

We are maintaining School Fire Liaison Officers in 2015/16 who, addition to their core firefighting role, provide a mentoring and support role for young children in a school, on a part-time basis.

Close engagement was sought with a range of partners, including the County Council's Children and Young Peoples Services and Public Health, to support work with young people and their families. This included obtaining funding to support the Service's Firefighter Fit-and-Healthy initiative through a partnership with Public Health. This helped sustain the scheme, which operates at Bury and Lowestoft fire stations. When the current contract with 'LiveWell' ends the service will be working in partnership with Public Health and the new provider to determine future requirements.

The Emergency Services Cadets scheme has been set up, joining the previously separate Police Cadet and Fire Cadet schemes. The scheme has been successfully introduced in Haverhill, Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds. The syllabus includes community safety, communication skills, first aid, leadership and citizenship. Fitness, activity and the promotion of healthier lives will also be covered.

12. Links to Key Documents

[Fire and Rescue National Framework](#)

[Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-18](#)

[The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

[Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999](#)

[Audit Commission Act 1998](#)

[Regulation 11 of the Accounts and Audit \(England\) Regulations 2011](#)

[The Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)

[The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)

[The Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#)

[The Localism Act 2011](#)

[The Health and Safety Act at Work, etc. Act 1974](#)

[Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Peer Challenge Report 2013](#)

[Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2016-19](#)

[Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Response Standards](#)

[Home Office National Statistics](#)