



Hereford & Worcester
Fire Authority

Fire Authority **Annual Report** 2016-17

Contents

Page

Foreword	4
The Fire Authority	6
The Fire and Rescue Service	7
Our Strategy and Values	13
Our performance in 2015-16	15
Budget savings	18
Collaboration and the Policing and Crime Bill 2015-16	19
2020 Vision Programme	20
Our work completed in 2015-16	30
Our work to be completed in 2016-17	59
Resourcing the future	76
What do you think of our Annual Report?	80

Foreword

Welcome to the 2016-17 Fire Authority Annual Report. This report tells you about what we did last year, including our overall performance and some of the main highlights of our work across the two counties. It also sets out some of the work we're planning to do this year.

This year's Annual Report sees us moving forward with a new Chief Fire Officer following the retirement of our former Chief Fire Officer Mark Yates at the end of March 2016. Mark joined Hereford and Worcester as Chief Fire Officer in April 2010 and helped to navigate us successfully through one of the most challenging periods of austerity in our history.

As a result, we start this new year with a balanced budget, a leaner but more flexible Service and lots of plans to guide us through the next few years of transformation and change. To help us get where we need to be, Nathan Travis, Deputy Chief Fire Officer of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has joined us as Chief Fire Officer on an interim basis.

2016-17 may prove to be a watershed year for the Authority and Service. Changes at Government level see us with a new Fire

Minister along with a move to the Home Office from the Department for Communities and Local Government. There is also a Policing and Crime Bill moving through Parliament, which may have a considerable impact on the way the Service is run in the future and there is a new Policing and Crime Commissioner for the West Mercia region, John Campion, who will be keen to develop further collaboration initiatives with the Fire Service locally.

In fact, much of the change at national level is designed to encourage greater collaboration between emergency services. You will see as you read through our report of what we achieved last year and our plans for the future that collaboration and joint working with our emergency service partners, local authorities and voluntary organisations is already well-embedded in practically everything we do. Our transformational projects in the 2020 Vision Programme are all about building new relationships and new ways of working, and much of our day-to-day work involves co-operating with others to achieve our aims.

Last year we continued to tackle the funding pressures facing the Service, and managed to maintain a balanced budget. Our changes to staffing at fire stations and at headquarters plus the removal of

two fire engines from the fleet in 2015 along with a small increase in the income we get from Council Tax has helped us to manage the ongoing grant cuts. Nevertheless, our financial calculations suggest that we are still likely to have to find a further £2.4 million by 2019-20. We are continuing work to identify how to make these further reductions without impacting on the communities of our two counties.

Despite small rises in the numbers of incidents attended last year, the overall downward trend continues and is still about a third lower than it was ten years ago. Nevertheless, we are not complacent and we are always reviewing incidents, trends and the quality of our services to find new and better ways of delivering our services.

We are committed to our core purpose of providing our communities with sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services, and we want to thank all our staff who continue to work with great professionalism and dedication to help achieve this. The achievements from last year are clear evidence of this dedication and we believe we are well placed to meet the challenges of forthcoming years.

This Annual Report gives an overall view of our work and performance in 2015-16 and our future plans, but to get a fuller

perspective we recommend you look through the pages of our [website](#) and our reports to the Fire Authority and its Committees.

Finally, we always welcome your comments and thoughts, and there are many ways you can do this, all of which are detailed at the end of this report.



Cllr. Derek W. Prodger MBE,
Chairman of the Fire Authority



Nathan Travis, Chief Fire Officer/
Chief Executive

The Fire Authority

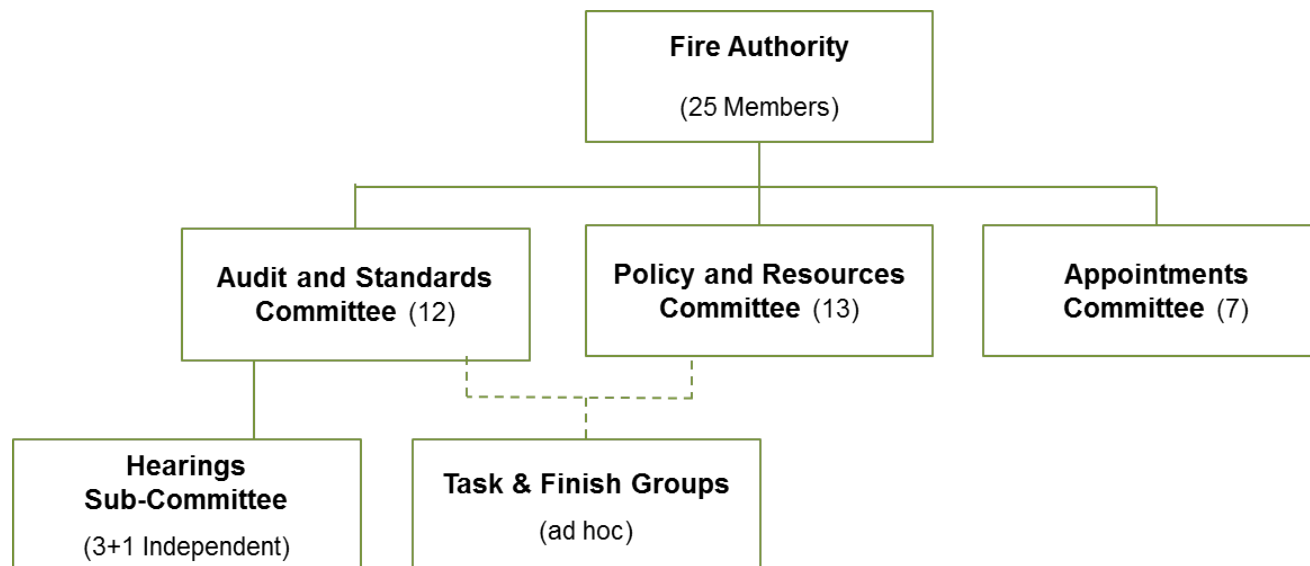
Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority is the governing body of the Fire and Rescue Service. It's made up of 25 local councillors, six from Herefordshire Council and 19 from Worcestershire County Council. They make sure the Service carries out its duties in relation to fire prevention, fire safety, firefighting and rescues, including from road traffic collisions and other emergencies such as flooding, as set out in the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#).

The Authority sets the budget and approves the overall direction for the Service. It also appoints the Chief Fire Officer and makes sure

the Service has the right people, equipment and training to deliver their services effectively and efficiently in the best interests of the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The Fire Authority meets four times a year and is supported by three committees as shown in the structure chart below. Meetings are usually open to the public.

Members of the Authority are also kept up to date on fire and rescue matters through an annual programme of seminars, workshops and visits to fire stations and other facilities.



The Fire and Rescue Service

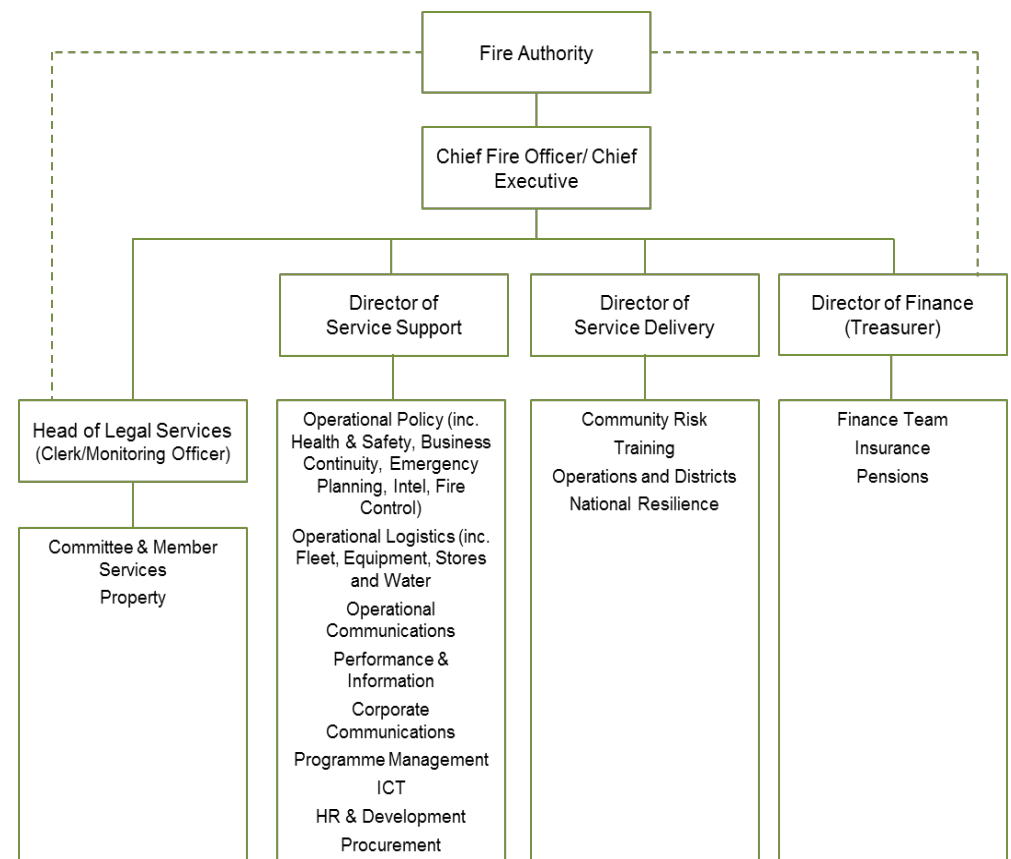
The Service is led by the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive with the support of the Senior Management Board. The Service employs just over 750 full-time and part-time staff, most of whom are highly trained firefighters (approximately 80 per cent of the total workforce).

In addition to Service Headquarters in Worcester, there are 27 fire stations across the two counties, a training centre, stores/workshops and a number of locally based training facilities.

The Service is structured into three directorates – Service Support, Service Delivery and Finance. Most staff are directly involved in providing prevention, protection, response and resilience services. These services are designed to keep the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire as safe as possible by working with local people, organisations and business to try to make sure emergency incidents don't happen in the first place, as well as by being able to respond quickly and effectively to any emergencies that do happen.

These essential services are supported by a wide range of organisational support services such as financial, personnel and

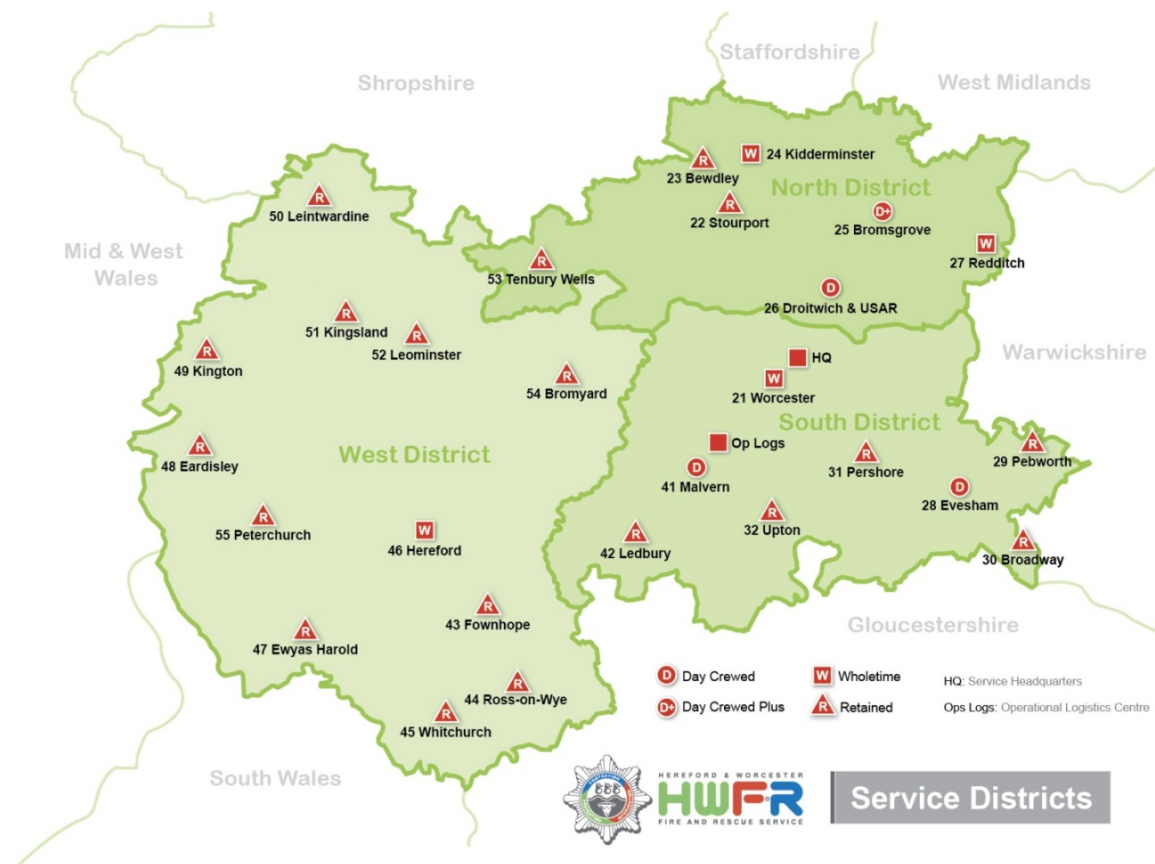
legal management functions. The full range of services is shown in chart below.



Our Districts

The Service covers the whole of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, an area of around 1,500 square miles (390,000 hectares) and a resident population of about three-quarters of a million people (753,700 – ONS mid-2014 population estimate). Of these, three in

four live in Worcestershire, with around 100,000 people living in the city of Worcester. Herefordshire is more sparsely populated with a largely rural population, about a third of whom (60,000 people) live in the city of Hereford.



Our services are organised around three Districts – North, South and West – to provide a balanced response to reducing community risk. This is supported by a Training Centre in Droitwich, a fleet maintenance and supplies centre called Operational Logistics in Malvern, and a Service Headquarters in Worcester.

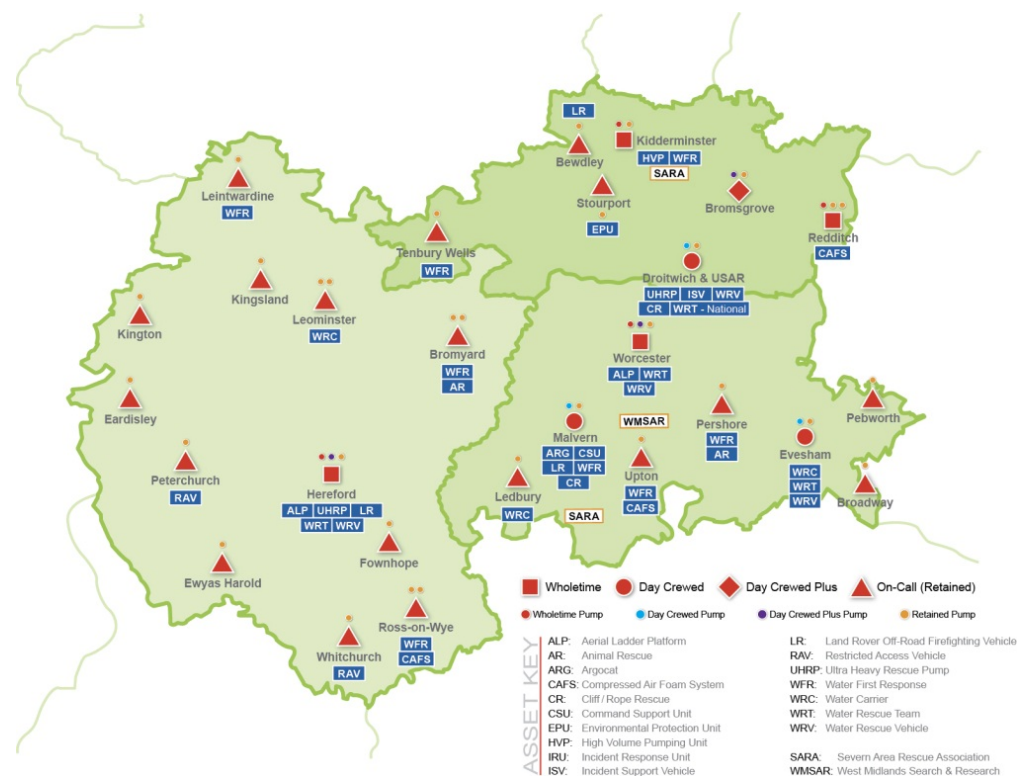
Across the three Districts we have 27 fire stations and 41 fire engines, each of which is strategically placed to be able to respond effectively as soon as an emergency call is received. Every fire station has an On-Call crew of part-time firefighters who live or work locally and are available should they be needed. Eight fire stations also have Wholetime crews, who are available full-time.

In 2015-16, we received 9,346 emergency calls covering a wide range of incidents including property and countryside fires, road traffic collisions, water and animal rescues, collapsed structures and dealing with hazardous substances. In all, we attended 6,459 incidents, about 123 a week, which continues a general downward trend.

To make sure we are as prepared as possible we continually examine risk levels across the two counties and review our response arrangements. This helps to make sure we have the right resources in the right place. For example, in areas where most people live, such as the larger towns, the risks tend to be higher so we have permanent 'wholetime' crews working during the day (with part-time crews at night) or providing 24-hour cover. Most of our fire stations are crewed by on-call firefighters in areas where risk are generally low.

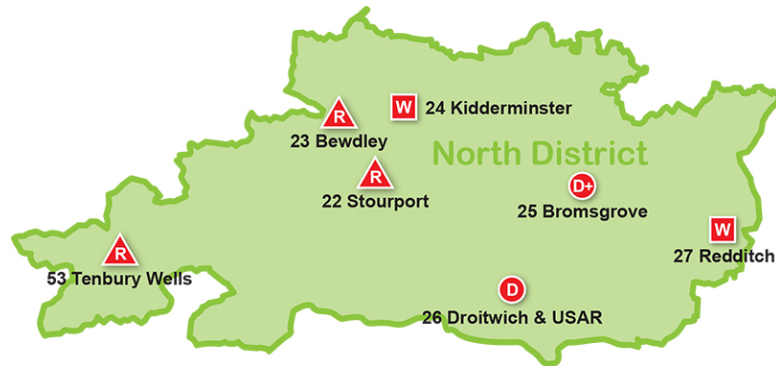
We also make sure our specialist vehicles and assets, such as boats, are at those fire stations where this additional support is more likely to be needed.

The following map shows the different types of crewing and specialist vehicles at our 27 fire stations. More details on crewing and vehicles can be found in [the Fire Service](#) section of our website.



Each District has identified the main risks in their areas. The risks vary across Districts, but generally include major industrial sites and buildings, important heritage sites and buildings and environmentally sensitive areas as well as key public buildings such as hospitals. Our crews maintain detailed information about the different types of risks they may face should there be an incident at any of these sites and undertake specific training against them, including with the aid of computer-generated simulations.

North District



North District covers the northern area of Worcestershire with the majority of people living in the main towns of Redditch, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Droitwich. Like most of the Service area it has an ageing population, though Redditch has more young people. Overall, about one in five of residents are aged over 65 years and this is expected to increase over the coming years. It is a generally prosperous area with a few pockets of deprivation, notably in the built-up areas of Kidderminster and Redditch. The District includes mainline rail and major road infrastructure, such as the M5 and M42 motorways. While large industrial sites are a feature of the area there are also heritage and environmental considerations. An example of this is the rivers Severn and Stour to the east of the area.

North District is served by seven fire stations. Redditch is the busiest in the area with 869 incidents in its area during 2015-16. This represents 32 per cent of the 2,701 incidents in total across the District.



South District



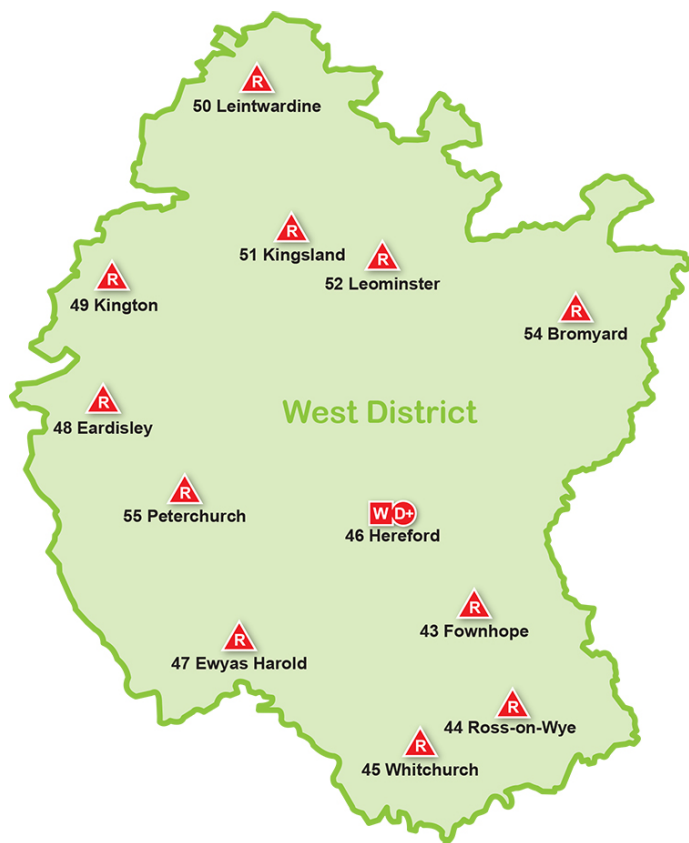
South District covers south Worcestershire and part of Herefordshire. Most people live in the city of Worcester and the two main towns of Malvern and Evesham. Worcester is the largest urban area in the two counties and is the main centre for employment, retail and tourism. Like North District, there is an ageing population, which is likely to continue rising over coming years. The District is relatively prosperous though there are some local areas, notably in parts of Worcester, where the quality of life is poorer in terms of employment, health, crime and educational attainment. Features of the District include large industry in Worcester and the main towns, and major infrastructure networks, such as the M5 motorway. There are also heritage and

environmental considerations, such as Worcester Cathedral and the extensive areas of open countryside and farmland, including the Vale of Evesham and the Malvern Hills.

There are eight fire stations in the District, with Worcester being the busiest fire station in the two counties. In 2015-16 there were 1,159 incidents in the Worcester area, 50 per cent of the 2,335 incidents in South District.



West District



West District covers most of Herefordshire, one of the most rural and sparsely population counties in England, with less than one person per hectare. About a third of the population lives in the city of Hereford, the county's main employment and retail centre.

With the majority of people living in a handful of market towns and smaller villages, access to services is a particular issue with some communities in relatively remote and hard-to-reach locations. This rural location also provides environmental considerations such as the Rivers Wye, Teme, Lugg and Arrow and significant heritage sites such as Hereford Cathedral. Although mainly rural, Herefordshire also contains several large industrial sites such as Rotherwas Industrial estate.

The District is served by 12 fire stations located in Hereford, the market towns and smaller settlements along the county border with Wales. Hereford fire station is the busiest in the area with 752 incidents in 2015-16, 53 per cent of the 1,423 incidents in West District.

Detailed data and statistics about the Districts and their fire stations are available on the Service website, if you would like more in-depth information.



Our Strategy

‘Our Strategy’ is the Service’s overall statement of intent. With safety firmly at its heart, the statement has a clear core purpose built on strong foundations linked by three driving principles: firefighter safety, community safety and the delivery of quality services.

It relies on all parts of the Service – from frontline firefighting to support staff and community safety volunteers – working together to deliver services and plans.

The following diagram illustrates how Our Strategy brings all this together.



Our Values

The Service has developed a unique set of values, which guide all members of staff in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. They help the Service to maintain high standards in operating fairly, ensuring dignity and respect in the workplace and working in

communities, recognising individual contribution and working towards eliminating discrimination. A summary is set out below, and further information can be found in the Service's [Ethical Framework and Code of Conduct](#), available on the Service's website.

We Value Innovation, Change and Learning

- we encourage critical and lateral thinking and manage constructive challenge
- we take responsibility for improving our performance
- we develop ourselves and others to achieve our full potential
- we take responsibility for our actions
- we encourage problem solving at all levels

We Value Diverse Communities

- we are committed to serving all parts of our communities
- we recognise that diverse needs, expectations and risks need diverse solutions
- we always fulfil our responsibilities to people, communities and the environment
- we remove barriers to entry and seek true diversity to reflect the communities we serve
- we will challenge inappropriate behaviour

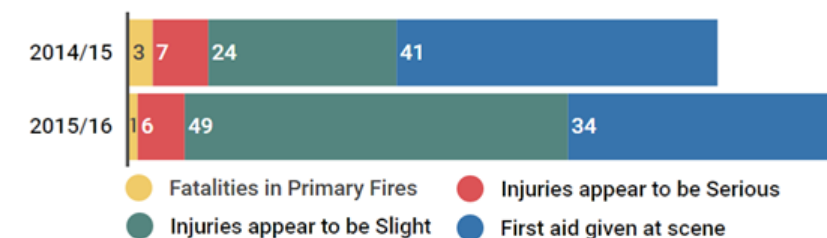
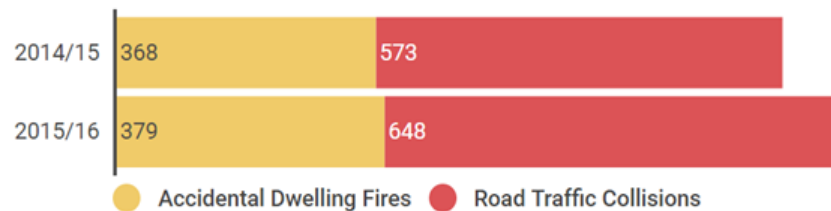
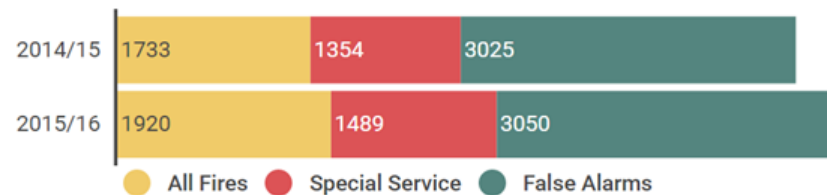
We Value Our People

- we are committed to developing our people
- we build relationships based upon mutual trust and respect
- we work in an inclusive way
- we recognise that everyone has a contribution to make
- we respect and see difference as a strength
- we behave in an ethical way

We Value Our Fire and Rescue Service

- we are passionate about maintaining/improving our great reputation
- we make work rewarding and motivating
- we all pull together in the right direction
- we are a team and not a family
- we enjoy and celebrate our work
- we focus on priorities by setting clear objectives and accountabilities

Our performance in 2015-16: at a glance



The Service attended 6,459 incidents in 2015-16. This was 347 or just over 5% more than last year. Although we expect there to be fluctuations up and down in the number of incidents from year to year, we still analyse the underlying causes, with the aim of improving our targeted prevention activities. Despite the increase, though, the overall trend continues to be downward, and this year's total is still the second lowest total in the ten years we have collected data in this way.

There has been an increase in the number of incidents in each of the three main categories. False Alarms continue to be the largest proportion of incidents, representing almost one in every two incidents (47%) and the Service is working with businesses as well as call challenging to reduce this. We continue to work with occupiers to identify where false alarm activations by repeat offenders could be reduced.

We attended 11 more accidental dwelling fires and 75 more road traffic collisions than we did last year. We will ensure our prevention activities and our work with partners continues to target these potentially life-risk incidents.

The number of people killed or seriously injured in primary fires we attended fell to seven from ten last year, with most injuries requiring some first aid attention. There was one death caused by an accidental dwelling fire. In the previous year there were three dwelling fire deaths, two of which were accidental and one was a deliberate fire.

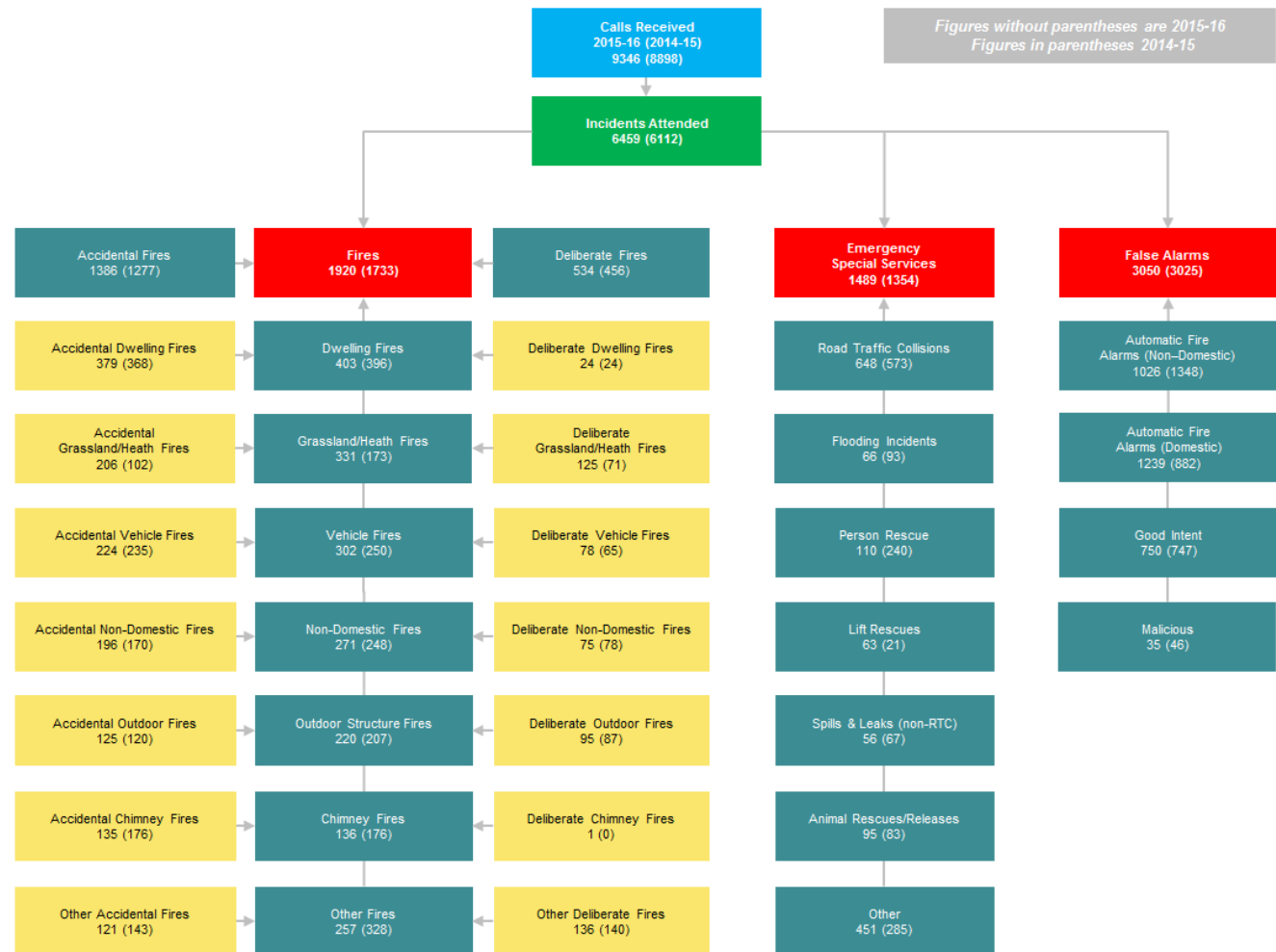
In terms of staffing matters, overall sickness levels saw a small decrease to 5.91 days lost per head in 2015-16 (compared to 5.96 in 2014-15). This still compares favourably with local partners e.g. Worcestershire County Council had 8.24 days lost per head in 2015-16 and Herefordshire Council 10.0.

Summary of 2015-16 incidents

This table shows the breakdown of fires, special services and false alarm incidents attended by the Service last year, with the 2014-15 equivalent figures shown in brackets. The figures are used for comparison with other fire and rescue services and for reporting to central government.

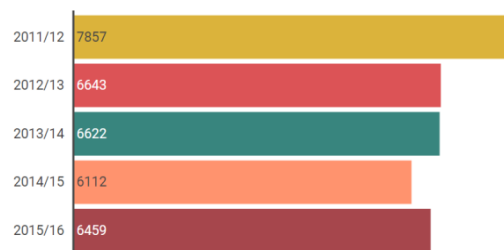
The figures do not include mobilisations to other miscellaneous incidents attended by the Service, such as attendances to incidents in neighbouring counties, those where we arrived at the scene and were not required, exercises, and where crews are asked to stand by.

Overall performance data, including 'key performance indicators' (or KPIs), are reported to the Authority's Policy and Resources Committee every quarter – these reports can be found on the Service website. Our performance is also compared against similar Services, and this information can also be found on the website.



Our performance: five-year trends

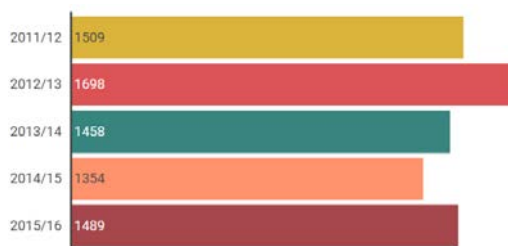
All Incidents



The table shows that this year's figure of 6,459 incidents attended was the second lowest in the last five years. It continues a general downward trend, though with similar totals since 2012-13 this may

indicate some levelling out. This year's total is actually 3,260 incidents fewer than just ten years ago, a fall of 33 per cent. The Service's community and business safety work continues to focus on prevention, protection and education, especially targeted towards those groups more likely to be at greater risk than others.

Special Service incidents



Special Service incidents are those such as road traffic collisions, flooding, person rescues, spills, leaks and animal rescues. Although the total increased in 2015-16, it is still over 16

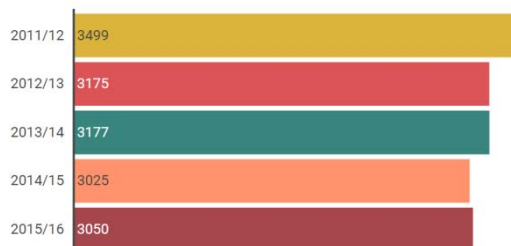
per cent lower than ten years ago. The 10 per cent increase over 2014-15 is largely accounted for by a rise in the number of road traffic collisions and weather-related incidents in the wake of major storms during the 2015-16 winter period. For example Storm Barney led to a 46% increase in RTCs in November 2015.

All Fires

The number of fires shows an increase of 187 incidents (about 11 per cent). This is mostly related to a seasonal peak in grassland, woodland and crop fires during the drier summer months of May to August 2015. Despite the rise this year,

the total is still 1,249 (39 per cent) fewer fire incidents than ten years ago. There was one fatality in an accidental house fire this year, compared to two last year. Following the fatality the Community Risk team launched a specially targeted fire safety campaign in the local area and generated over 100 additional Home Fire Safety Checks specifically for vulnerable households.

False Alarms



The number of false alarms has remained relatively consistent over the last four years and is currently over 20 per cent lower than ten years ago. While there was a small

increase of less than one per cent over 2014-15, the overall downward trend continues, reflecting the ongoing work of business fire safety officers and the impact of call-challenging by Fire Control officers.

Budget savings

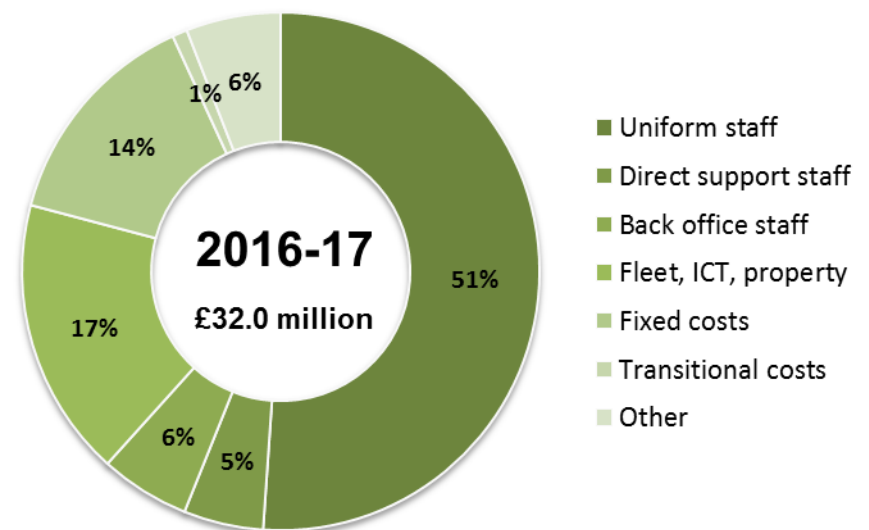
Since the start of the 'austerity' period in 2010-11, the Fire Authority's annual revenue budget has reduced by 16 per cent in real terms. Taking into account the additional running costs over the last five years, such as inflation pressures, national pay rises, tax increases and maintenance of property and equipment, this has resulted in a headline budget reduction from £32.6 million in 2010-11 to £32.0 million in 2016-17.

In order to meet these pressures, we have made reductions in our workforce, including managers and support staff, made changes to crewing at fire stations, cut our spending budgets and removed two fire engines from the fleet. By 2019-20 the full implementation of these measures will be saving £6.7 million per year.

Improvement in income from Council Tax has meant we have been able to set a balanced budget in 2016-17 and a virtually balanced budget for 2017-18.

Government has now provided figures for the four years to 2019-20, and this shows a further 30% reduction in grant over this time. Even with a continued growth in Council Tax income, the Fire Authority is

likely to have to find a further £1.6 million of annual savings in 2018-19 and a further £0.8 million by 2019-20.



Fire Authority Budget 2016-17

For further information on the spending gap up to 2019-20, see the section 'Resourcing the future: financial information' later in this report.

Collaboration and the Policing and Crime Bill 2015-16

With the introduction of the new Policing and Crime Bill later this year, there will be a statutory duty on fire and rescue services to work collaboratively with their local Police and Ambulance Services. Hereford & Worcester FRS is already well advanced in this collaborative approach and there are many examples of effective joint working and blue-light co-operation throughout this Annual Report.

The new Bill is part of the government's intention to ensure there is greater joint working between all police, fire and ambulance services. The introduction of a statutory duty aims to improve efficiency and effectiveness through better local accountability and

an improved service for communities as well as savings for taxpayers.

Within the Bill, there are further specific provisions covering collaboration between police and fire services. These provisions relate to the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), who would be enabled to take on more responsibility for fire and rescue services. The Police and Crime Commissioner is an elected official responsible for ensuring efficient and effective policing of a police area. Our police area is West Mercia, which covers Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire (including Telford and Wrekin).

The Bill should become law in late 2016.

2020 Vision Programme







In the last Fire Authority Annual Report we introduced the 2020 Vision Programme. The programme has been designed to help secure our ability to provide our communities with sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services into the future.

The programme brings together a host of priority projects, each of which is critical to protecting the future of the Service and ensuring its on-going resilience in the coming years, while maintaining our identity and the very best of our traditions.

There are currently twelve projects in the programme, nine of which are underway while three have already been completed. The projects include new fire stations for Evesham, Hereford and Wyre Forest, the roll out of vital new technology upgrades as part of national projects, and pivotal work with local partner organisations. Some have been successful in gaining millions of pounds of funding

from central Government for transformational public sector projects, including moving our Service HQ to the headquarters of West Mercia Police at Hindlip.

Work on each project got underway during 2014-15 and a short summary of progress to date is set out in the following table. The table has been colour-coded to give an idea of the aim of each project, as follows: -

	Mandatory projects	A change which ensures we comply with new rules and regulations, for example a change in the law.
	Transformational projects	A change which brings about new ways of working, for example co-location or collaboration with other blue light partners.
	Legacy projects	A change which sustains our Service, for example replacing an old fire station.
	Strategic projects	A change to the structure of our Service, for example a new crewing system.

	Mandatory Projects	Summary	Update	Benefits
1	ESMCP Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme	This project will implement a new national mobile communications scheme to replace services currently provided by Airwave. The new communications system, Emergency Services Network (ESN) will enable the emergency services – police, fire, ambulance and other public safety organisations – to share an extensive, highly secure and resilient integrated voice and broadband data mobile communications network.	ESMCP intends to deliver ESN when the Airwave contracts being to expire from mid-2017. The aim is for the Service to have the ability to take initial voice and data transmissions by early 2017 ready for transition across the West Midlands region in May 2018. National roll-out across all emergency services should be complete by 2020, when all existing contracts have expired.	In addition to providing a faster, more secure and resilient communications system, the project will be more cost-effective than the current system, which is unable to handle broadband data as well as more costly to run.

	Mandatory Projects	Summary	Update	Benefits
2	Public Services Network (PSN)	This project is part of the government's high-performance ICT network, which helps public sector organisations work together, reduce duplication and share resources. PSN ensures that the Service's data is protected and our network is safe, and as other public sector organisations will be connected to the same system we will be able to share data securely in a timely and efficient manner.	Procedures are now in place to ensure we become a PSN compliant service, and all staff will complete training during 2016 to understand the necessary working practices they need to adopt. The systems should be fully implemented by early 2017.	This project offers a dedicated, secure information network that meets Data Protection requirements. It keeps both electronic and physical data secure, and is a strategic prerequisite for delivering the ESMCP project.
3	Payroll (now complete)	This project transferred the delivery of the Service's payroll service from Worcestershire County Council to Warwickshire County Council.	The changeover took place at the start of April 2015, and the new payroll service began operating.	There is now a more cost-effective, streamlined and robust payroll service for all staff, made possible through effective collaboration with Warwickshire County Council.

	Transformational Projects	Summary	Update	Benefits
4	OCC Operations and Communication Centre	In 2014 West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police secured government funding to redesign and redevelop their control rooms and communications systems for managing emergency calls at a new facility at Hindlip. HWFRS were invited to participate in this by including its own Fire Control functions at the new site, which would have the all the benefits of closer working, including the ability of both services to support each other during peak periods or critical incidents.	Planning permission for the development was approved in March 2016. Building works are due to start in June 2016 and the new OCC is expected to be completed by the end of 2017-18. It is anticipated that Fire Control will be able to move to the new centre once the current Fire Control project is complete.	Working alongside the Police brings the additional benefits of improving our ability to share data and intelligence quickly, for sharing training and best practice in ways of working and for promoting joint working. It is also anticipated that the closer working environment will bring longer term cost savings.
5	Project Arrow	This project has developed collaborative opportunities with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service aligning policy, procedures, systems, resources, guidance and best	Managers from both Services have developed plans to take forward specific areas of collaboration, which began to be implemented in	Closer working with our neighbouring Fire and Rescue Service is already benefiting through joint

	Transformational Projects	Summary	Update	Benefits
		practice in areas such as Training, Development, Operational Support, Health & Safety, Equipment, Stores, Hydrants, Fire Protection and Fire Prevention.	March 2015.	training and shared training facilities, shared policy and incident monitoring procedures. It has also helped build a deeper and more resilient relationship, enabling efficiency savings to be achieved.
6	Wyre Forest Blue Light Hub	This project aims to develop a new Emergency Services Hub Station within the Wyre Forest area. Supported by government funding, the project will enable fire, police and voluntary emergency service partners to share the same base location. This will provide a great opportunity to make more efficient use of resources, increase joint training and share expertise and facilities to achieve better outcomes for the public.	Following a full public consultation during 2015, further work was undertaken to identify suitable sites for the new hub station. The Fire Authority will be considering the locations at their meeting in June 2016, and subject to approval, a further phase of public consultation will commence.	Providing a state-of-the-art hub station will offer operational benefits for the emergency services sharing the same location, and community benefits in terms of offering local facilities such as a meeting room and training venue.

	Transformational Projects	Summary	Update	Benefits
7	Hindlip (Headquarters relocation)	This project aims to move the functions and staff at the current Service Headquarters to co-locate with West Mercia Police at their Hindlip Park site. It aims to foster a closer working relationship between the two Services as well as producing ongoing savings such as through reduced duplication, better data sharing and improved coordination and joint working.	Over the year, the Service has been carrying out meticulous planning for moving the whole of Headquarters functions to a new site. It is likely that different sections from HQ would migrate to the new site over time, with a completion date towards the end of 2017-18.	Bringing the two blue light services, including management teams, together under the same roof will help to create opportunities for closer collaboration at all levels, from strategic planning to day-to-day support services.

	Legacy Projects	Summary	Update	Benefits
8	Evesham Fire Station	This project builds a new two-storey fire station in an excellent location close to the leisure centre in Evesham. It will have three fire engine bays and a gas-fired fire training facility on site. The project has been possible through close work with Wychavon District Council and the Waitrose company,	Work on the new building began in January 2016 and is expected to be complete towards the end of 2016.	The new building will benefit from being more efficient and have lower maintenance costs resulting in significant savings over coming years. By working closely

	Legacy Projects	Summary	Update	Benefits
		who will build a new supermarket on the old fire station site, which was becoming increasing costly to maintain.		with the local council to help regenerate the town centre, we will have new facility worth around £3.5 million for a cash outlay of just £0.5 million.
9	Fire Control	This project enhances the Service's 999 response resilience in association with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. It involves creating a new Command and Control (C&C) system at Service Headquarters so that both Fire Services can take calls and mobilise each other's resources if needed, and also involves co-locating with West Mercia Police's control centre as part of the plans to move Fire Service HQ to Hindlip.	Fire Control moved to Service Headquarters with the new C&C system in 2012, and the links with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service were completed in 2015. The final stage, improving on-board devices and officer mobilising systems are due to complete in 2017.	With the new updated technology in place, the project offers a much better mobilising system than previously and the links with other blue light services provide more overall capacity and resilience.

	Legacy Projects	Summary	Update	Benefits
10	Hereford Fire Station	This project aims to develop a new fire station in Hereford to replace the existing station, which is in a poor condition and no longer suitable. We are working closely with Herefordshire Council to secure a suitable location for the new fire station.	Delivery of the project transferred to Place Partnership Limited in September 2015. Pending the outcome of discussions with Herefordshire Council, a planning application will be prepared. Subject to approval, we would aim for a provisional start on site set during 2017.	The new fire station would offer a modern and more cost-efficient facility with lower maintenance and running costs, resulting in ongoing savings.

	Strategic Projects	Summary	Update	Benefits
11	CRMP (review in 2017-18)	This project implemented the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020, including changes to fire and emergency cover. The changes to cover include a two year trial of the Day Crewing Plus duty system for the second fire engines at Hereford and Worcester fire stations, removing one each of the two on-call fire engines at Ledbury and Tenbury fire stations and operating a standard crewing of four firefighters on all first fire engines (though for a two year period five firefighters will be maintained on as many occasions as possible).	The CRMP runs to the end of 2019-20 and guides how the Service will manage its resources against risks to provide the best possible service to our communities. It is due to be reviewed and updated during 2017-18.	The CRMP is at the heart of the Service's strategic planning to help achieve the core purpose of providing our communities with sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services. It also provides the public with a transparent overview of how we intend to manage risk over the coming years, as required by the government's National Framework for fire and rescue services.

	Strategic Projects	Summary	Update	Benefits
12	Place Partnership Limited (PPL) (now complete)	This project amalgamated the Service's property functions with five other local partners in a new and unique public sector company called Place Partnership Ltd. The project is the first of its kind and has full government support.	The new company went live in September 2015 and is supporting the delivery of projects such as the proposed new Hereford fire station and is currently leasing the ground floor of Service Headquarters creating both savings and an income stream for the Service.	Through more efficient use of property and resources it is expected to deliver significant savings for the Service in coming years.

Our work completed in 2015-16

Throughout 2015-16 we continued the process of making sure our Service is well placed to sustain a high quality service into the future in the face of ever-present financial pressures. As we said last year, we have had the stability of a balanced budget for 2015-16, which has helped us to continue delivering our services effectively.

We are a year into our Community Risk Management Plan for 2014-2020 and have implemented several changes to crewing systems and reduced our fire engine fleet from 43 to 41 creating ongoing savings each year. With the changes made we now have around 44 fewer wholetime firefighters than we did a couple of years ago, but

we have achieved this through careful workforce planning to ensure no compulsory redundancies and no impact on the overall quality of our service.

This section expands on our work over the year and picks out a number of key highlights. To present a fuller picture of the wide range of our work, we've used the main themes set out in the CRMP 2014-2020 as headings: prevention, protection, response and resilience and organisational support and development.

Prevention highlights

Prevention is about delivering activities that aim to stop incidents happening in the first place. Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening is the most effective way of saving lives and property.

Highlights of our work in 2015-16 are set out in the following sections

Community Safety activities

Existing prevention activities link directly to HWFRS 'Our Strategy' and the key areas identified, namely;

- accidental dwelling fires
- vulnerable people
- arson
- road safety

During 2015-16, we distributed 4,770 smoke alarms and over 500 carbon monoxide monitors, carried out more than 3,750 targeted Home Fire Safety Checks and reached more than 4,000 young people with a range of community safety education initiatives. We also completed over 1,000 signposting referrals and further developed our joint work with partner agencies.

Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs)

Our firefighters and community risk officers target the most vulnerable groups across the two counties, particularly the elderly and disadvantaged groups, to help them stay safe and well in their own homes. When delivering HFSCs our officers are trained to recognise when other agency support might be needed (for example, where there may be security concerns or health and welfare issues). With the permission of the householder, we use our 'signposting' procedures to safely share their details with partner agencies, who can then provide additional support. The support typically ranges from fitting security locks and providing home aids and equipment to helping the householder to access benefits payments they were not aware of.



Young people initiatives

Our work ranges from providing young children with information about road, water and fire safety to giving older teenagers important advice about driving and road safety. We also work with young people who aren't in mainstream school education, who might be at greater risk. Our initiatives in the year included:

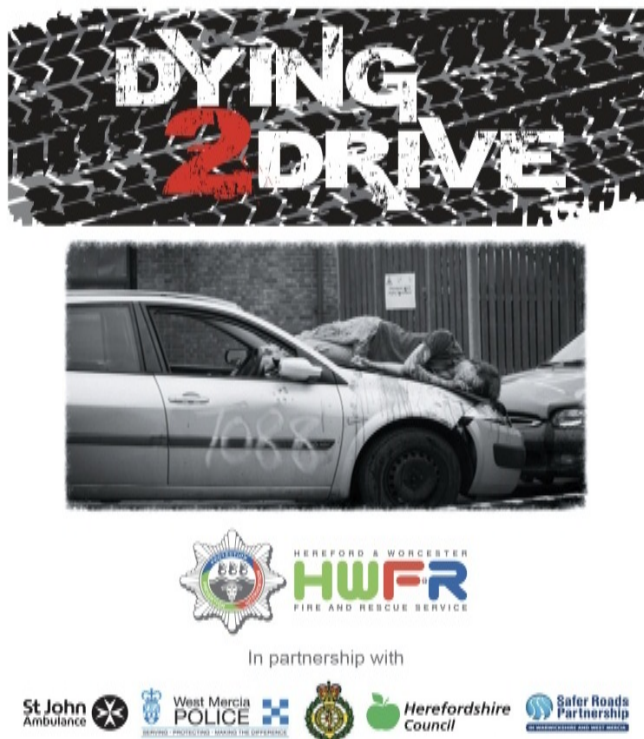
Crucial Crew: Along with the police and other agencies we carried out workshops for over 1,300 year-six pupils at Leominster Police Station. The workshops have a range of interactive experiences, such as finding out what to do in a smoke-filled house, to help with learning about fire safety, the importance of smoke alarms and escape plans, and the consequences of arson and hoax calls.



Young Firefighters Association: In May 2015, we held the fifth annual passing out parade for our joint Redditch/Droitwich Young Firefighters Association (YFA). The young people worked together to demonstrate their new firefighting skills as well as their growing self-esteem and confidence.

In June, the Redditch YFA entered and won the Arrow Valley Cadet Challenge in Redditch despite stiff competition from teams of police, army and sea cadets. Through their excellent team work and discipline, they managed to get through a series of mentally and physically challenging tasks with flying colours.

Dying2Drive



Dying2Drive is a free multi-agency road safety scheme aimed at reducing death and serious injury amongst young road users in Herefordshire. Our educational events involve a realistic road traffic collision (RTC) reconstruction followed by powerful interactive workshops. The scheme is aimed at Year 11 students who will soon become young drivers.

During September 2015 this hard-hitting road safety workshop was held in Peterchurch and Leominster. Over 1,600 students witnessed a dramatic reconstruction of a serious car crash, watched the crucial joint effort of all the emergency services working together to try to rescue and save the lives of casualties and experienced the tragic aftermath and impact on families, friends and everyone involved.

The reconstructions were closely followed by powerful, interactive workshops, which explored the consequences of bad decisions and students were shown how to perform life-saving CPR.

The scheme will be expanding into Worcestershire schools during 2016-17, which will help to reach a further 350 prospective new drivers.

Young Citizen Challenge: A multi-agency Worcestershire initiative for year-six pupils helping them to learn about fire safety using interactive experiences such as the smoke-house and workshops exploring the consequences of arson and hoax calls. They also learn about water safety, 'stranger danger', electricity and anti-social behaviour. This year it reached over 1,700 pupils in Bromsgrove, Kidderminster and Redditch over a two-week period over the summer term.

Ignite: A week-long course for young people outside mainstream education with a range of behavioural, social and emotional needs. One course was held at Brookfield School, Hereford with year-ten pupils, and involved challenging tasks with young people working together, building new skills and learning about fire and water safety, arson awareness, first aid and road safety. The week culminated in a practical demonstration involving the students bringing all their new skills together to tackle a simulated car fire.

Green Light: A road safety programme for colleges and sixth forms linked to the Safer Roads Partnership and aimed at reducing collisions and casualties on the roads, where young drivers and passengers are over-represented in the statistics.

Partnership working highlights

Signposting: An initiative with partner agencies which connects people to services that can provide them support and assistance they aren't currently receiving. Last year the Signposting service received over 1,000 referrals for Home Fire Safety Checks for the most vulnerable members of our communities. Out of these referrals we connected people to



additional services leading to over 200 further requests for extra help to keep people safe and well in their own homes.

Community Safety Partnerships: We are active members of CSPs across the two counties. CSPs link the emergency services with other support agencies such as social services, primary care trusts, housing association and voluntary organisations such as Age UK and Mind. Pooling information within the CSP helps us all to work together to provide support for those who need it most. In the last year, our work has included water, road and fire safety as well as supporting the health inequalities agenda. Whilst the impact of these partnerships is difficult to identify, the benefits of joint working and continual communication assists HWFRS in reaching vulnerable people, enabling us to deliver targeted HFSC and Fire Setter Interventions.

National Health Service data: We have worked closely with the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and other fire and rescue services in our region to assess data provided by the National Health Service data. This new initiative has provided us with important information on elderly people likely to have health issues, who might be more at risk of fire. We can now combine this information with other data to enable us to better target these potentially more vulnerable members of our communities.

Sharing good practice: our successful volunteering model has been shared with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service

Service, while our signposting and partnership working models were shared with a number of charitable agencies including Age UK and the British Red Cross.

Other highlights



Our area knows only too well the dangers of swimming in unsupervised areas such as rivers, lakes, weirs and deep quarries, so in April several of our fire stations were involved in promoting water safety

during the national CFA Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week. Our crews spent time in these areas talking to people about the risks, how to stay safe and what to do in an emergency.

In April, crew members from Bromsgrove fire station were involved in making and screening a new film to raise people's awareness about recognising the signs of early onset dementia in young people. The

film called The Shout, featured a firefighter with dementia and highlighted some of the early warning signs to look out for that can be easily missed in a younger or middle-aged person.

We also assisted the local NHS clinical commissioning group in their 'Stay Well' winter campaign in December, helping to promote simple health and safety messages to stay well during the winter period.

We work closely with many partner organisations from local authorities to voluntary organisations to help us target vulnerable groups and deliver our community safety initiatives and messages. Here are just a few of our partners:



Protection highlights

Protection is about making sure buildings and places where people work, shop and visit are as safe as possible. Our highly specialised work significantly reduces the risk of fire in buildings and involves providing advice to businesses, inspections of business premises and enforcing fire safety measures when required.

Highlights of our work in 2015-16 are set out in the following sections below.

Fire Safety activities

During 2015-16, we carried out almost 800 Business Fire Safety Checks (BSFCs) and completed over 1,400 audit visits and 90 fire investigations. We also maintained our training and development programmes to help ensure all firefighters are well-trained in business fire safety matters.

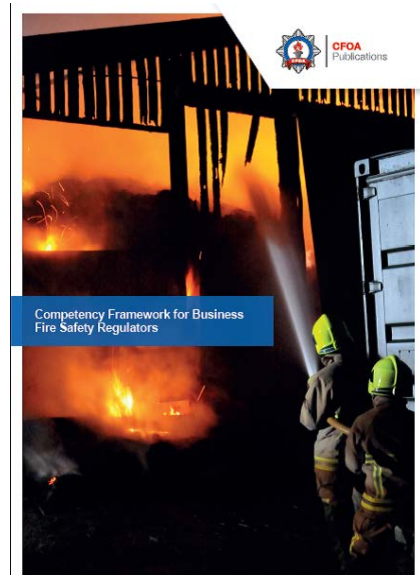
Business fire safety training

All firefighters have been trained in technical fire safety, which enables them to carry out Fire Safety Checks at business premises. The check involves a practical inspection aimed at preventing fires and making sure there are measures in place to protect people from

fire. To complement this, officers in the Community Risk team have undertaken nationally recognised fire safety qualifications during the year. The qualification covers key areas such as fire safety regulation and enforcement, and assessing risks and protection measures in more complex buildings.

In 2015-16, we also undertook joint training sessions with fire safety

officers from Shropshire and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services in relation to a new short audit form developed through the Chief Fire Officers Association. The form will enable fire safety officers to scale down their approach when auditing small (low risk) premises, both reducing the legislative burden on smaller businesses and allowing more scope for officers to concentrate on the larger, more complex business premises. We have also seconded officers to both fire and rescue services assisting them in relation to building control consultations on fire safety matters in new commercial developments.



Our first Primary Authority Partnerships

The Service is working with national brewery Marston's and Mainstay Residential, a Worcester-based property company, to provide fire safety advice and discuss enforcement matters regarding their



property estates around the country. This means that both companies will be receiving consistent advice about fire safety regulations from our fire safety officers for which we will be able to recover appropriate fees.

These partnerships were made possible through the Primary Authority Scheme, run by the Government's Better Regulation Delivery Office, which approved our application in December 2015. We

will continue to discuss further opportunities with other interested businesses as appropriate.

Risk-Based Audit Programme

We completed 1,428 audits and visits to business premises during 2015-16, where we assessed the level of risk and its potential impact

and the firefighting requirements should an incident occur. This year we also targeted and contacted over 400 premises where people might be exposed to a 'sleeping risk' such as hostels and care homes. This follows concerns raised in a recent coroner's report about the level of fire safety in care homes. In one case, following the death of a resident, a care home in London was prosecuted and fined £120,000 for fire safety offences. With the assistance of fire safety officers these risks can be much reduced and care home operators can ensure they comply with fire safety legislation.

Smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector legislation

In October 2015 the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Regulations 2015 were introduced by Government. The Community Risk department have now distributed over 4,700 smoke, and 500 carbon monoxide alarms, supported by government funding to assist private landlords to comply with the new rules. Our staff have also attended local authority landlord forums to help introduce the new regulations, which will be enforced by local authorities. Following the first year of implementation, an analysis of whether or not fire calls to such addresses have increased will be considered.

Sky Lanterns campaign

Sky lanterns have caused concerns as a potential fire hazard posing risks to farmland and livestock, campsites, thatched buildings and other areas with flammable material on site. In light of a number of fire incidents involving sky lanterns, Community Risk officers are supporting the Chief Fire Officers Association position on discouraging their use. There are now a number of restrictions in place stopping their use at large events, and we continue to issue press releases and website articles warning the public of their dangers.

Fire Investigations

We have carried out 90 fire investigations over the last twelve months and have attended both criminal and coroners' courts to provide expert witness advice in two cases of suspected arson, both leading to successful convictions. We have ten Fire Investigation



Officers trained and qualified to investigate fires and explosions, who help to determine how and where a fire

started. They often work in conjunction with Police Scenes of Crime Officers and CID, and in cases of possible arson, we regularly use a Regional Fire Investigation Dog to search and signal the presence of flammable liquids.

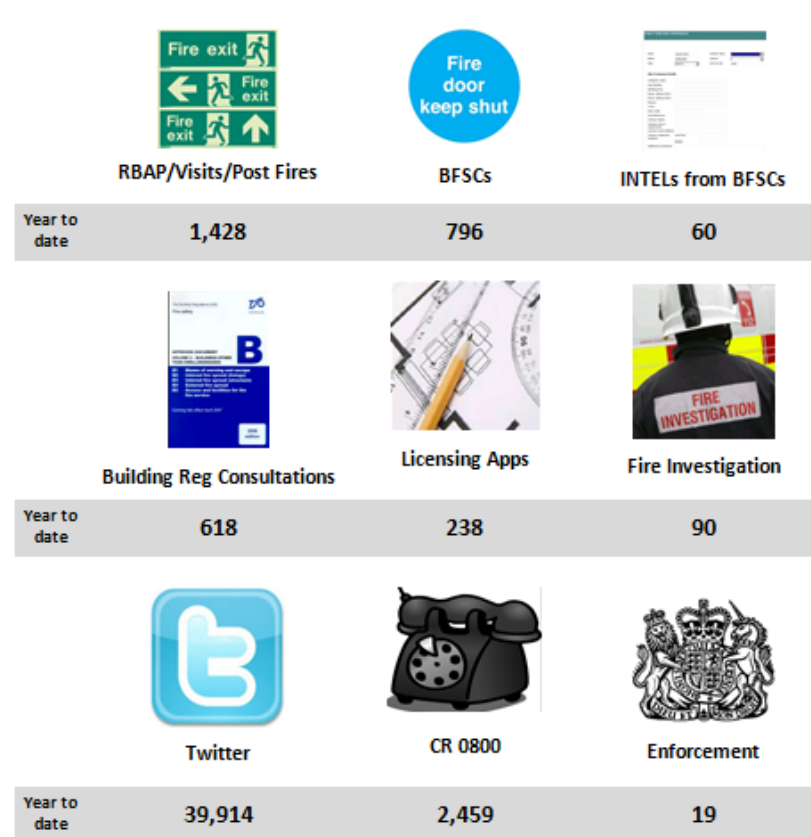
We also have a new search and rescue dog of our own, Marley, a Springer-Collie cross, who was trained over three months by West Mercia Police so he can be used for both fire and police responses, such as finding casualties and missing persons. We'll also be getting a new dog van in the coming year.



Community Risk Dashboard

A new table of activity carried out by the Community Risk team has been designed. Called a 'Dashboard', the table gives a visual snapshot of our wide range of prevention and protection work. We will be publishing it quarterly on our website alongside our

performance snapshot, so readers will be able to see the extent of our work in just a few pictures and graphs.



Response and Resilience highlights

Being able to act quickly, safely and effectively in the event of an emergency is at the heart of our response services. Crucial to this is ensuring our firefighters are well-trained and well equipped to be able to tackle all types of emergencies across the two counties.

Resilience is about being as prepared as possible for whatever emergency might happen and being able to provide timely back up support at incidents. It requires careful contingency planning and close working with our emergency service partners.

Highlights of our work in 2015-16 are set out in the following sections below.

Fire Stations

Worcester fire station

As we reported in last year's Annual Report, the new Worcester fire station was open for business in May 2015. The official opening took place in November with the ceremony carried out by His Royal Highness, The Duke of Gloucester, who also took a tour of the new facilities at the fire station, including taking the opportunity to ride on

the aerial ladder platform used for firefighting and carrying out rescues at height.



Evesham fire station

In January 2016, we completed the sale of the old Evesham fire station site and purchased a new site near the town's leisure centre off Abbey Road. Work on the new state-of-the-art fire station along with a gas-fired training facility also began in January and should be complete by the end of the year.



The design of the new fire station will be a great improvement on the old building, offering greater resilience including an improved Breathing Apparatus servicing room, modern welfare facilities, excellent storage space for equipment and an appliance bay suited to our modern fire engines.

Hereford fire station

A potential site for a new Hereford fire station has been identified at Edgar Street, Hereford. We are currently investigating if the site will meet our requirements for a new fire station.

Service Exercises and Training

Every year our firefighters take part in many different exercises to practise their skills, test their knowledge and competence and assess how well they work together with other organisations, especially at the scene of an incident. Hands-on practical training is of paramount importance in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our firefighters in whatever circumstances they may face in their jobs.

There are usually at least one or two major exercises involving lots of different agencies with assessors on hand to check how well the agencies work together to resolve complex situations.

2015 was no exception, with plenty of challenging exercises to test our crews and to learn from. The training scenarios ranged from a major police emergency involving gunmen and multiple large fires, a factory explosion and severe fire, rescues from a smoke-filled school and a multi-vehicle road crash involving a bus. There's more information on some of these below to give a flavour of the wide range of training we undertake and the different types of situation we need to be ready for.

Exercise Odin was held at the Fire Service College on 11 October. The exercise was based on a police pursuit of gunmen that resulted in two large buildings being set alight and numerous casualties; both from gunshot injuries and the effects of fire.



The exercise was attended by 16 Service fire engines, five West Midlands Fire Service fire engines, a variety of specialist appliances and a range of partners including West Mercia Police and West Midlands Ambulance Service.

This was a highly realistic and testing scenario for the attending crews and partners and was unusual in that all resources were held back until the police declared the area safe; meaning the full range of

resources were deployed together rather than the incremental build-up that is normally seen at most incidents.

As the exercise was held at the Fire Service College, the organisers also had to consider

business-as-usual resilience back in the Service, another aspect of the organisational test.



Explosion and severe fire exercise: This was another large multi-agency training exercise held in Herefordshire earlier this year. In March 2016, a scenario involving a simulated explosion and severe fire at Cargill Meats poultry business in Shobdon faced our crews working alongside the Environment Agency and Herefordshire Emergency Planning.



Eight fire engines and over 60 members of staff took part, plus a number of Cargill employees. No-one knew what they would be facing beforehand,

including the Cargill staff. Exercises like this test how prepared we are for any emergency situation we may face, and how well we work with others to resolve incidents quickly and safely.

School fire and rescue exercise: In August, fire and rescue crews worked with Leominster Primary School to simulate a rescue exercise over two floors of a smoke-filled school complete with 'live'

volunteer casualties and training dummies. This was a good test of new breathing apparatus procedures in tough conditions as well as giving the school an opportunity to test its emergency planning arrangements. The photos show how difficult conditions can be when dealing with heavy smoke logging inside a building.



Bus crash at night exercise: In late November, crews from Droitwich, Hereford and Bromyard fire stations joined West Midlands Ambulance Service in a simulated crash scenario in which numerous casualties needed to be freed from the wreckage of a bus and car crash.



Firefighters had to cut volunteer ‘casualties’ out of the vehicles, while paramedics tended to their many injuries. This was a highly realistic test not only of our ultra-heavy rescue equipment, but also gave Incident Commanders from both ‘blue light’ services an opportunity to put the JESIP principles into practice in very trying and traumatic circumstances. (There’s more information about JESIP later in this section).

Water rescue exercise: In July crews from Leintwardine and Eardisley tested their water safety and rescue skills on the River Wye in Bredwardine. With many rivers throughout our two counties, this is



essential training in being able to work together quickly in fast flowing water.

Training with other fire and rescue services: Our ability to work with other fire and rescue services is also a significant theme of our exercises. In March our Urban Search and Rescue experts from Droitwich fire station join USAR teams from Avon, South Wales and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Services in a 24-hour exercise at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire. Crews were confronted with a realistic scenario involving a collapsed multi-storey car park adjacent to a school. This was a great way of testing how well different teams from across the country communicate and work together.

We also carry out joint training exercises with neighbouring fire and rescue services on our border. This is important because we may need to call on each other to provide support if any major incidents occur within about 10 miles either side of the county boundaries. There is clear need for fire stations on the borders to know what kinds of risk there might be close by in neighbouring counties, so we share information and train with them, which also gives crews an understanding of how the other crews work. Some of our recent training included joint-exercises with South Wales and Mid and West Wales fire services at locations such as Monmouth Boys School and Bronllys Hospital near Brecon. Another important benefit of working with our neighbouring fire and rescue services is that we can share good practice; for instance, our new breathing apparatus procedures have shown other services better safety practices.

Other training improvements

- i. All On-Call crews at our Wholetime fire stations have now been given practical training in controlled tactical ventilation in buildings. The training involved the use of large mechanical fans to help control the removal of smoke and other fumes at a building fire to improve conditions for firefighters and anyone trapped inside.
- ii. The high speed driver legislation is fully embedded and all refresher courses are now complete. We are also working with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service to develop joint-plans to comply with legislation.
- iii. A new technical rescue training post has been established in the Training Centre to support training in rope rescue, water rescue, urban search and rescue and high volume pump operation.
- iv. All operational staff have adopted new breathing apparatus procedures following recent national guidance; this helps to improve firefighter safety and work with other fire and rescue services.
- v. Officers have undertaken media training refresher courses and are being trained in using an upgraded trauma pack recently introduced (there's more on the new trauma pack later in this section).
- vi. A new Tri-Service Supervisory Incident Command course has been piloted with Shropshire and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services to provide training and support for aspiring crew commanders. This will be increased in 2016-17.
- vii. Work with our blue light partners through the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) principles has been very successful with improvements in situational awareness and joint understanding of risks at critical incidents. E-learning training packages to suit all levels of the Service from new recruits to

tactical commanders have also been introduced, which will also help to ensure an effective joint response at incidents.



The JESIP principles

National Flood Support

Throughout December 2015 parts of the UK were beset by torrential rain, notably from Storms Desmond and Frank, which caused severe flooding across the country with Cumbria, Lancashire and Yorkshire worst hit. The national flood response was immediate with no fewer than sixteen fire services from across the country sending expert staff, high volume pumps and other vital equipment to assist with relief efforts. Our Service assembled a tactical team with pumps and

boats, which was ready within two hours for a 10-day assignment in the affected areas. Feedback from local communities shows that our team was highly appreciated for their skilled, professional and sensitive approach in very difficult circumstances. Coordinating such a massive national response was our own Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Richard Lawrence, who is the Chief Fire Officers Association lead for flood response. It's a great testament to his leadership and the professional skills of our own staff and crews that the response was so quick and effective.



Crewing

New crewing arrangements at Hereford and Worcester fire stations:

A change to how fire engines are crewed was introduced during the year at Hereford and Worcester fire stations. The crews of the second fire engine at each station began operating a new system called Day Crewing Plus or DCP on 11 May 2015, coinciding with the move to the new Worcester fire station. The system involves having 12 crew members on a self-rostering basis rather than the traditional wholetime watch pattern. Operating the new system will help us make better use of our limited resources as well as making ongoing savings, while local communities will see no difference in the high quality service they receive. Staff operating the DCP system need to have accommodation on site, so the new Worcester fire station is having this purpose-built, while the existing Hereford fire station is being adapted to provide similar. If DCP continues beyond the two-year trial, any new fire station for Hereford will incorporate the need for accommodation in its design.

On 1 October 2014, the Fire Authority agreed that [standard crewing](#) on all fire engines would be four firefighters. However, the Service aims to have five firefighters on all first fire engines wherever possible. In line with this decision, the Service has maintained five

firefighters on first fire engines about 75% of the time. This position is continually monitored.

Retained Availability: This is a term we use to measure how often On-Call fire engines are available to respond to any incidents in their local areas. On-Call or 'Retained Duty System' (RDS) firefighters are men and women employed on a part-time basis, who are available to respond to emergency calls whenever they are needed. All 27 fire stations in Herefordshire and Worcestershire have a complement of RDS firefighters and 19 of these, mostly in our more rural areas, are solely crewed by RDS staff. In fact, HWFRS employs around 380 RDS firefighters, who live and/or work in their local communities, and they crew a total of 31 fire engines. In 2015-16, the total availability for On-Call fire engines was around 94%, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This is a tremendous achievement and it is a credit to their dedication and to their families' and employers' appreciation of the added value they bring to keeping their own communities safe.

Risk Modelling

The top 15 risks across the two counties have been modelled using an XVR simulation programme at the Training Centre, which provides incident commanders and operational



groups with a computer-generated realistic training experience. The software has now been made available on



laptops to enable delivery at local fire stations. The photographs show training sessions involving a major building fire and road traffic collision scenario.

World-Class Competitions

We continually challenge ourselves to be the best at what we do and one of the best ways of doing this is by testing ourselves against other Services. It's also a great way of demonstrating our skills as well as an opportunity to learn new skills and best practice which will help keep Herefordshire and Worcestershire communities as safe as possible. This year, we have performed exceptionally well with four of our teams reaching national finals, two of whom also reached world finals. The competitions covered areas such as rescuing people from road traffic collisions, providing trauma care at various incidents and using breathing apparatus in building fires.

RTC Extrication Challenge: Run by the UK Rescue Organisation (UKRO) this Challenge presented teams with a range of difficult rescue scenarios such as extricating a casualty from a simulated car crash within 20 minutes and rescuing casualties from a crash between a lorry and a car. Our RTC Extrication team from



Ross-on-Wye fire station represented the Service and fought through



local and regional rounds to reach the national final held at the Fire Service College in summer 2015. Competing against 21 other teams, they finished in an excellent second place only just behind the team from Hampshire Fire and

Rescue Service, who were also the reigning world champions. Their great performances have earned them a place in the World Extrication Championships to be held in Brazil in October 2016. In the meantime, the team also competed against 28 international teams from 16 counties in a 6-day extrication challenge in Germany in June and finished in a very creditable 11th place, beating the current world champions in the process.

Trauma Challenge: Also run by UKRO, this Challenge tests teams of two, who are presented with a selection of simulated traumatic incidents to deal with ranging from someone badly injured in a motorcycle crash to multiple casualties of a car explosion. Our team, Jayne Collins from Redditch fire station and Simon Griffiths from Hereford fire station fought their way through to the national final at the Fire Service College, where the roles of casualties were played by qualified doctors, nurses and paramedics. After two days of challenges they managed to finish a very good fifth, which earned them a place at the World Trauma Championships in Portugal in October.



At the four-day event the pair faced tough competition from the best teams from around the world, and they gave an outstanding performance finishing in an impressive sixth place overall. Their achievements and the new skills and medical techniques learned will help to continue our drive to ensure we provide the best trauma care at any incident we attend.

National Breathing Apparatus Challenge: One of the most challenging incidents to face is a building fire with persons reported missing. This was the scenario facing crews last April in our local breathing apparatus (BA) challenge. It was held at Kidderminster fire station using the 'smoke house' in the Strategic Training Facility to simulate the gruelling conditions inside a burning building facing firefighters wearing full BA kit. At the event, the first teams from Worcester and Broadway fire stations came first and second and went on to represent the Service at the National BA Challenge final at the Fire Service College in October.



At the national event, sixteen teams from around the country tackled a variety of BA challenges, closely watched by expert assessors judging every aspect of performance. Both teams from the Service did exceptionally well with Worcester coming second and Broadway sixth overall. This was our best ever performance at the event and shows how well we're developing our knowledge and skills in this crucial area of firefighting.

Closer working with other blue light services

Throughout the year, the Service has continued to develop its excellent working relationship with the Police service. This is helping both Services to make more efficient use of our resources as well as improving how we work together, share information and manage facilities. Some work is high level, such as our plans to move Service Headquarters to the West Mercia Police site at Hindlip and our proposal to create a blue light hub station for fire, police and other emergency service volunteer organisations in the Wyre Forest area. Other work is at a smaller and more local scale such as sharing facilities.

Sharing local fire stations with the police: An example of local cooperation is a proposal to share our facilities with the local police teams in Bromyard, Peterchurch and Tenbury. During 2016-17, we'll



be making some minor alterations at the three fire stations in these towns so that

the local police teams can move into separate offices. This will also help to



make more cost-effective use of publicly-owned buildings, which are usually unoccupied most of the time. It will also potentially free up the existing police station sites for future redevelopment opportunities.

We're also looking at the potential for doing the same at other sites, including studying the feasibility of relocating Kington fire station to the local Police station.



PCSOs training to become On-Call firefighters: Together with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and West Mercia Police, we have developed a new joint initiative to train Police Community Service Officers (PCSOs) to become On-Call firefighters. Through an arrangement with the Police, these officers will be available to be called upon if they are needed to help crew a fire engine in an emergency providing they aren't already committed to a police matter. This will not only help us have a larger pool of On-Call firefighters, but will also make excellent use of limited public resources as well as continuing to build our close working relationships with our emergency service colleagues. Training started in January 2016 and the first successful PCSO candidates started responding as On-Call firefighters in April. Based on historical frequency of incidents in the rural areas they are covering, it's

unlikely that our latest recruits would be required to attend any more than one call a week. The calls usually take about an hour, so it's not too much time out of the PCSO's duties, and their availability could be the difference between a fire engine being available or not.

NILOs: With the need to be ever alert to the potential threats of terrorism and other security matters, it's important to be able to share information with blue light colleagues and other agencies and to have plans in place to support our response to a range of incident situations. Within the Service, we have a number of National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers or NILOs, who provide us with the necessary tactical advice and support to ensure we have the operational capacity and capability to help us reduce risk and keep our communities and firefighters safe in the event of such serious incidents.

Operational Policy: Collaboration is now well embedded and at the heart of the work of our Operational Policy Departments, which is based at the Hindlip police headquarters. Sharing information and best practice has become a normal way of working. Policy documents are also jointly created with regional fire and rescue services, and risk information is shared efficiently using the new Resilience Direct website, which enables common practices to be

adopted at incidents over Service borders, such as in Shropshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire and West Midlands.

New equipment and vehicles

Like all fire and rescue services, we aim make sure we have the most up-to-date equipment available to support our crews. New equipment acquired in the year included respirators and gas detectors, thermal imaging cameras and ventilation fans.

Go-Bag: We also introduced a new piece of trauma kit called a 'Go-Bag', which recognises the increasing medical assistance role of firefighters when first on scene, especially at road traffic collisions. The kit is being introduced for all front-line fire engines. The Go-Bag was designed by an ex-special forces operative originally for military use on the battlefield, and has been modified to meet the needs of our crews in the pre-hospital environments they work in. The bag is designed so it has everything you need laid out in life-saving order to help as an aide-memoir at incidents.



We began trials of possible replacements for our hydraulic rescue equipment and reviewed the fire ground communications radios for possible replacement in future years.

We also continued our programme of fire engine replacement along with three response cars and three support cars, and a new search dog van being introduced in 2016. Enhancements have also been made to a new Incident Support Vehicle to provide it with a much greater capacity to provide back-up support for all kinds of incidents. It now carries a range of equipment for lifting and moving, heavy-duty cutting, shoring and for chemical response and decontamination. It also has cameras, breathing apparatus equipment and gas-tight suits and a range of crew welfare support facilities.

Policies and plans

Policy documents are constantly under review and those that cover areas of highest risk have been reviewed during 2015 to ensure firefighter safety and provide organisational assurance.

Regional policy alignment is now well established and has already seen new Breathing Apparatus and Incident Command procedures reviewed and incorporated during 2015-16. This work is closely linked to the National Operational Guidance work streams providing best practice and industry standard guidance.

The Service holds a comprehensive library of Station fall-back arrangements that were monitored; updated and exercised against during 2015. This will continue to remain a priority during 2016.

The current site-specific risk information system maintains relevant information for firefighters to use when making decisions at operational incidents. It allows new risks to be generated and displays plans for risks along with supporting information, all of which is available on Mobile Data Terminals on our fire engines. The system was reviewed in 2015-16 and there are now over 2,000 premises in the database with a programme of reviews to ensure firefighters have up-to-date information on hazards, water supplies, etc.

Contingency planning

The Service is a key member of the Local Resilience Forum which plays a vital role in monitoring risks within the two counties, influencing and planning for emergencies of all types, and ensuring continuity planning arrangements are fit for purpose. During the year there was an audit of resilience capabilities and all recommendations were adopted.

Organisational Support and Development highlights

This is about making sure the Service is able to deliver its main responsibilities. It covers all the support functions in the Service, which help to make sure we continue to deliver effective frontline services for our communities.

The work includes ensuring our workforce continues to deliver its services while at that same time balancing the budget to manage ongoing funding reductions. It also covers the usual business functions such as financial and legal management, information and communications technology, human resources and corporate services as well as vehicle and equipment maintenance and property management.

Highlights of our work in 2015-16 are set out in the following sections below.

Workforce planning

In last year's Annual Report we said there was still a need to reduce our full-time firefighter workforce by around 55. Our retirement profile and natural turnover would not be able to meet the need, so we planned a programme of departmental restructures, staff secondments, transfers, career breaks and voluntary redundancies.

By the end of April 2016, this has been reduced to twenty six posts 'over establishment'. Much of this is down to close working with staff and trades unions to put together packages of well-managed interventions without the need for any compulsory redundancies. The current position is being effectively managed, largely to the credit of 49 of our firefighters who have taken the opportunity of being seconded to a neighbouring fire and rescue service, which has offset in the region of £1.3 million in staffing costs. We are also appreciative of the support of our neighbouring Services, who were able to accept secondments:

Fire and Rescue Service	No. of secondments
Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service	16
Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service	14
West Midlands Fire Service	15
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service	3
Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service	1

Our projected retirement profile means that the Service will not achieve budgeted staffing levels until September 2019 so there is still some way to go. Without further action we would be likely to incur £3.8 million of unbudgeted staffing costs up to 2019. To tackle this we will still have to rely heavily on the continued support of staff, and we have been investigating the opportunity to use voluntary early retirement and voluntary redundancy as additional options. Both options will be added to the package of measures available over the next two years.

Operational Assurance

Operational Assurance supports the Service's commitment to firefighter and community safety, and it plays a key role in Service improvement. It continues to focus on safety critical areas of our work and practical skills and station assurance audits will continue through 2016-17.

The programme of operational assurance audits is designed to look at ways of improving safety as well as enhancing the service to the community. In 2015-16, audits were completed in Incident Command assessment and accreditation, operational intelligence, JESIP, and Health & Safety. Recommendations from these audits

will be implemented in 2016-17, though overall findings showed that the Service continues to perform very well in these areas.

During 2015-16, the Active Incident Monitoring (AIM) system was successfully embedded, with over 400 monitoring forms completed since its introduction in 2014. AIM involves a senior officer carrying out a critical appraisal of the performance of an Incident Commander at an operational incident or exercise. The outcomes support the continuous professional development of our current and prospective new Incident Commanders.

In 2016-17 the audits will continue to test operational personnel on safety critical, evidence based themes including tactical ventilation, Breathing Apparatus, Incident Command, road traffic collision hazards, trauma care and casualty decontamination.

Mind Blue Light Programme



In January 2016, the Service signed up to the national Mind Blue Light

Pledge, which will help to promote mental health awareness in the workplace and remove the stigma about speaking openly about it. It's an important recognition of our aim to make sure we are all aware of the need to support the mental health of our crews and

staff, especially the impact on crews and communities when confronted by traumatic situations. It is supported by additional guidance for managers and action plans, which review key policies such as sickness, capability and stress management.



Assistant Chief Fire Officer John Hodges signed the Blue Light Pledge alongside David Harding, Operations Manager representing Herefordshire Mind.

Other staff support activities during 2015-16 included:

- **Annual fitness tests:** These tests have now been made available for all staff as well as firefighters. Staff will be able to receive bespoke reports on their fitness and wellbeing. Further guidance on fitness has been made available of the Service's

internal website, and gym instructors now operate at fire stations and at Service headquarters.

- **Ethical Framework:** Annual refresher training in relation to the Service's ethical framework has been carried out for all members of staff. The work is support by an Equality and Diversity Advisory Group chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, which provides advice in areas such as recruitment and staff turnover. All equality objectives and monitoring data are available on the Service website.
- **Pensions Board:** A local pensions board has been set up to assist in the administration of the recently introduced Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015. This brings the number of firefighter pension schemes to five, in addition to the Local Government Pension Scheme for non-uniformed staff.
- **Place Partnership Limited:** The formal transfer of the Service's Property Team to the new Place Partnership Limited was completed during the year.
- **Occupational Health:** future provision of this service is being reviewed for renewal from January 2017.

Data sharing and information security

Being able to share data with other public sector organisations provides us with important information that helps us reduce risk, especially for those members of our communities who are likely to be more at risk than others. Likewise it's important to be able to communicate securely with our emergency service and public safety colleagues. However, this data can be very sensitive so we need to make sure it's kept safe and secure. To help manage this, the Service is committed to delivering the national Public Services Network (PSN) and Emergency Services Network (ESN) projects as part of our 2020 Vision Programme.

Crucial to delivering these projects is our Information and Communications Technology (or ICT) infrastructure, which needs to be robust and capable of supporting all the data requirements. Throughout 2015-16 our ICT department has been working behind the scenes to put the necessary mechanisms in place to provide an assured network. This has involved both physical security measures, for instance new security features at all our buildings, and technical information security such as training all staff and auditing procedures, which will continue through 2016-17.

The ICT department has also been setting up the necessary infrastructure and security protocols for other major projects including Hindlip and the proposed move of Fire Control to the new OCC centre (see the 2020 Vision Programme section for more information). In terms of the Fire Control system, we have also invested in additional technology to support the current Command and Control system, which manages emergency calls and mobilisations. The Fire Control system is now networked with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services, which provides a more robust and resilient platform for sharing data effectively, improving both the quality and timeliness of information.

Supporting Fire Authority Members

Each year Members of the Fire Authority increase their knowledge and awareness of the work of the Service, which helps to strengthen their roles in decision-making and in providing challenge. The development plan theme for 2015-16 was 'Resourcing the Future' and Members attended sessions on finance such as pensions and the 2020 Vision Programme projects, along with tours of facilities including an opportunity to observe the major Service exercise at the Fire Service College.

HWFRS Website and publicity



The Service's website goes from strength to strength and is now attracting around 25,000 'hits' every month, a great increase over previous years. Visits to the Service's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) social media sites have also increased. Our Twitter accounts provide key safety messages and now have over 26,000 'followers', while the Facebook currently has almost 2,000 'likes'. We have also developed our [YouTube channel](#) and will be adding more videos throughout 2016-17.

Media coverage of our fire and rescue activities also increased significantly over the year. In addition to extensive reporting of incidents and safety messages in the local Herefordshire and Worcestershire newspapers, there was also considerable radio and television coverage.

In May 2015, the BBC's 'Close Calls On Camera' featured Watch Commander Darren Packwood in their series about people who have come into contact with danger, but through the work of the emergency services have been rescued from a potentially life-threatening situation.



Darren spoke about an incident in 2012 when a Bromsgrove fire crew

rescued a young teenage girl from beneath a lorry. The girl, now 22, has almost made a full recovery and also told her story, highlighting the exceptional life-saving work of our firefighters.

In June 2015, Free Radio breakfast presenters, Hursty and Helen, stepped into the shoes of firefighters when they visited Worcester fire station. They took part in exercises including crawling through confined tunnels in full Breathing Apparatus kit, cutting through a car roof to rescue a casualty and a tough fitness trial.

The experience left them exhausted and exhilarated, and with nothing but admiration for all our firefighters.



In January 2016, the BBC Midlands Today programme featured the medical and trauma care skills of our crews. Firefighters from Droitwich fire station demonstrated their skills and the new life-saving 'Go-Bag' trauma kit in a training exercise which saw them treat and rescue a young girl injured in a road traffic collision.



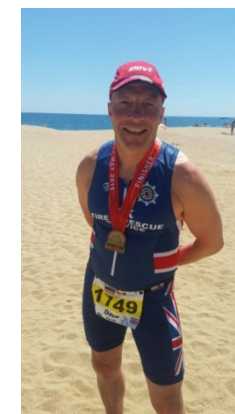
Fundraising and charity events

As in previous years, the Service continued to raise money for charities and local areas. There were the ever-popular car wash events at most of our fire stations throughout the summer, along with 24-hour bike rides and clothing collections. There was even a fire engine pulling competition.



Ross-on-Wye fire station collected over a tonne of textiles in its recycling bank, adding to a total contribution of eight tonnes to the national Fire Fighters Charity Textile Recycling Challenge, which raised over £40,000 across the country. Our fundraising tally to the end of 2015-16 came out at almost £74,848, approximately £5,000 more than the previous year.

Some of our firefighters also went a little bit further. Dave Fenton from Kidderminster Blue Watch represented the Service in the UK Fire and Rescue Service triathlon championships at the Barcelona Ironman event. After swimming 1.2 miles in the sea, cycling 56 miles and running 13 miles, Dave came second in his age category out of 36 competitors.



Our work to be completed in 2016-17

Work planned for the coming year builds on the overall direction for the Service set out in the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020. At the heart of this is the 2020 Vision Programme, as seen earlier in this report and the ongoing work to ensure the Service keeps on a firm and sustainable financial footing in a time of considerable change.

At the same time we are continuing to deliver our day-to-day services, and the following section provides an overview of the main areas we'll be working on. It uses the same CRMP action plan template as last year to help stay consistent with previous Annual Reports.

CRMP Action Plan 2016-17

The CRMP 2014-2020 gave an overview of the services we will be delivering through to 2020 to ensure we meet the main principles of Our Strategy – firefighter safety, community safety and quality services. It's broken down into the Service's four main responsibilities – prevention, protection, response and resilience – and a fifth theme, 'organisational support and development', which covers the range of support functions often termed 'back office' services.

CRMP Theme	Objectives 2014-2020
1 Prevention	Delivering activities that aim to stop incidents happening in the first place
2 Protection	Making sure buildings where people work, shop and visit are as safe as possible
3 Response	Being able to act quickly, safely, effectively and efficiently in the event of an emergency
4 Resilience	Being as prepared as possible for whatever emergency might happen
5 Organisational Support and Development	Making sure the Service is able to deliver its main responsibilities

1 Prevention

Preventing fires and other emergencies from happening in the first place is the most effective ways of saving lives and property. To support this over the next five years, the Community Risk department will:

- Continue to develop our risk prevention work.
- Concentrate community safety activities on those groups most at risk.
- Use risk analysis software and techniques to help to keep work targeted on changing risks.
- Work with partners to improve how risk data can be shared more effectively.
- Work with partners to identify joint community safety initiatives to help protect local communities
- Promote the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve

	In 2016-17 activities contributing towards achieving these aims will include the following:	Purpose of the activity
a)	<p>Our community safety activities and campaigns will continue to focus on prevention work with those groups and areas most vulnerable to fires and other emergencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accidental dwelling fires• vulnerable people• arson• road safety	<p>Activities support a key strand of 'Our Strategy' ensuring that communities of the two counties receive high-quality preventative services. These are targeted to help ensure that they reach those most vulnerable</p>

b)	Key target audiences for community safety work in the year will continue to be elderly people, and in particular there will be greater collaboration with signposting partners including the National Health Service and Clinical Commissioning Groups around the health and wellbeing agenda.	This work will build on the government initiative 'making every contact count' as well as working closely with health partners to ensure that community safety activity is specifically linked to an ageing population.
c)	Continue to build strong relationships with public, private and third sector partner organisations to help to share data and identify those most vulnerable to fires and other emergencies. In particular we will work with local health providers to enhance our Home Fire Safety Checks programme by collecting further health information to help determine the need for additional support such as specialist smoke alarms and assistive technology.	Greater joint working and sharing with partner organisations will help to reach more vulnerable members of the community with prevention services.
d)	Continue to evaluate youth education programmes to assess their contribution to reducing the number and severity of fires in the home and for road safety. This will include targeting, where appropriate, known challenging groups, such as those attending exclusion units.	Evaluation helps us improve our prevention services for young people, particularly in terms of ensuring they are informed about driving and road safety, the implications of arson as well as the importance of building self-esteem and encouraging teamwork.
e)	Our work with partner organisations will continue to seek ways of sharing risk data, encouraging data sharing arrangements to be used, and allowing organisations to improve targeting of the most vulnerable. An example of this is using "Exeter data" provided by the Health Service alongside local knowledge and lifestyle data to enhance our approach to targeting the reduction of accidental dwelling fires. "Exeter data" is a	Gaining access to additional information about particularly vulnerable groups, such as elderly people, helps to ensure that our prevention work is well-targeted.

	general term for a range of data about potentially vulnerable older people, which is available from the National Health Service.	
f)	We will continue to share good practice and expertise with our key partners including Shropshire and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services, Age UK and the British Red Cross.	Engagement with partner organisations and sharing good practice ensures that we continue learning from others, provide a consistent approach and deliver a quality prevention service with the resources available to us.
g)	We will continue our partnership approach with the Police and identify mutually beneficial community safety initiatives.	Working with partners will help to ensure that joint resources have the potential to have a greater impact on improving the safety of our communities.

Throughout the year the Service promotes a wide range of community fire safety messages as part of the national FireKills campaign. This covers many safety themes such as smoking, outdoor fire safety, cooking and smoke alarm testing. The calendar for 2016 can be found on the government's website or through facebook: www.gov.uk/firekills and www.facebook.com/firekills



2 Protection

Protection work significantly reduces the risk of fire in buildings where people work, shop and visit. The work is highly specialised and involves carrying out inspections of all business premises and enforcing fire safety measures when required. Over the five years, the work will involve:

- Advising business about the risks of fire and ensuring they have appropriate fire safety precautions in place.
- Carrying out risk-based audits of premises identified as posing higher fire risks than others.
- Training more fire and rescue officers in delivering legislative fire safety requirements.
- Sharing technical expertise and good practice with partners to foster a consistent approach to fire safety.

In 2016-17 activities contributing towards achieving these aims will include the following:	Purpose of the activity
a) Training to the nationally recognised fire safety qualifications framework will continue in 2016-17, using in-house officers and external providers. Fire safety staff who have completed level 4 qualifications will work towards specialist fire safety modules, including health care, heritage, and engineering (sprinklers, smoke control, and complex building design). General fire safety training will continue with operational crews, to enable continuation of the business fire safety check programme.	This is linked to the Our Strategy 'people' foundation ensuring we have the right people with the right skills and training to carry out the job at the right time. The national Chief Fire Officers Association competency framework for fire safety officers also ensures that we deliver consistent advice to businesses across the two counties.

b)	The department will continue to engage with local businesses, and when appropriate form partnerships under the Government's Primary Authority Scheme, supporting the HWFRS fire safety team in offering consistent advice to local businesses whose premises cross numerous county boundaries.	Primary Authority is a Government initiative to ensure businesses are provided with consistent, high-quality advice. The Service supports the ongoing development of Primary Authority partnerships.
c)	Fire safety officers will continue working closely with local authorities and other agencies in targeting non-compliant businesses and landlords to ensure that enforcement of fire safety legislation is maintained.	Close working with local authority partners ensures a consistent approach to fire safety enforcement and helps to focus available resources.
d)	Continue to engage with the regional Chief Fire Officers Association business safety group, including working with West Midlands, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services to share good practice and technical expertise, including work to align practices, share resources and focusing on consistency of approach.	Collaboration with others to share expertise, training and good practice is central to delivering quality services for the communities of the two counties.
e)	The Risk Based Audit Programme (RBAP) will continue with a planned audit in 2016-17 covering around 950 business premises in the two counties. The introduction of a new short audit form from the Chief Fire Officers Association will help to reduce impact on those local businesses that meet fire safety requirements, allowing officers to focus on non-compliant and higher risk business premises. Linked to the audit programme, fire safety officers will continue to provide advice to businesses through an 0800 telephone number.	The RBAP is a government requirement aimed at ensuring fire safety legislation is checked across the whole country, and the outcomes reported annually. Our programme ensures that inspections are targeted across the two counties.

3 Response

Being able to act quickly, safely and effectively in the event of a fire and rescue emergency is at the heart of our response services. To maintain this, our firefighters need to be well trained and well equipped to be able to tackle all kinds of emergencies across the two counties. At the same time, we need to ensure our fire and emergency response arrangements remain appropriate in the light of changing risks and available resources. Over the next few years to 2020, work will involve:

- Implementing changes to fire and emergency cover arrangements as set out in the CRMP.
- Designing and delivering firefighter training courses to develop fire and rescue skills and technical knowledge.
- Enhancing training facilities to support greater practical experience in more realistic conditions.
- Sharing training expertise and facilities with other fire and rescue services to enhance skills and competence.
- Researching and understanding general and local hazards and risks.
- Reviewing operational planning arrangements with other fire and rescue services to help ensure common practice and consistency, high standards and value for money.

- Exploring and evaluating innovations in fire and emergency cover to maximise effectiveness and efficiency of response.
- Investigating new technologies to improve firefighting and rescue techniques.
- Making best use of resources and assets, including exploring opportunities with partners to share facilities.

Having the right people, with the right skills and training to carry out the right job at the right time will help us to provide our communities with high quality firefighting and rescue services.

In 2016-17 activities contributing towards achieving these aims will include the following:	Purpose of the activity
a) Undertake a review of the two-year Day Crewing Plus trials at Hereford and Worcester Fire Stations to determine suitability for implementing as crewing systems at these two fire stations.	On 18 February 2015, the Fire Authority authorised a two year trial of Day Crewing Plus at Hereford and Worcester fire stations. The review is scheduled to be considered by the Fire Authority at their meeting in December 2016.
b) Maintain and enhance the programme of training scenarios using software to model the main risks across the Service. This will build on the newly-established library of risk information to ensure that the highest risks in each area are identified, recorded and appropriately trained against.	Enhancements to the current training and exercising programme will help to ensure that firefighter safety remains our highest priority.
c) Deliver a range of training exercises to practice and develop firefighting skills and operational procedures, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A major training exercise at the Fire Service College in October 2016 involving a multi-agency response at a large-scale road traffic incident. ii. Various training exercises with partner agencies, including swift water rescue and working at height training with the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) from West Midlands Ambulance Service. iii. July 2016: annual rescue challenge – a showcase for teams to test their skills in trauma, extrication and water rescue. Winning teams 	Undertaking a wide range of exercises throughout the year helps to ensure the Service continues to deliver its Core Purpose of maintaining a high-quality firefighting and rescue service as well as keep firefighters as safe as possible at all times.

	<p>from each challenge go on to represent the Service nationally and, potentially, internationally.</p> <p>iv. The two-year programme in controlled tactical ventilation in buildings for all firefighters will be complete following the training of crews at the Service's On-Call fire stations during 2016-17.</p> <p>v. Further develop the new Tri-Service Supervisory Incident Command course.</p>	
d)	Continue to introduce new, and replace older, equipment to help improve firefighting effectiveness and firefighter safety. This will include introducing two new electronic mobile fire simulators to assist in training and exercises, replacing a large shipping container used to demonstrate fire behaviour such as backdraft and flashover, and testing new advances in personal protective clothing and hydraulic rescue equipment for potential introduction during 2017-18.	Providing, replacing and maintaining operational equipment will ensure our staff are able to carry out their jobs effectively. This is also supported by the enhancements to the training and exercising programme.
e)	Undertake a joint review of recruit firefighter training courses with Shropshire and Warwickshire fire and rescue services to improve user-friendliness and flexibility and to reduce the impact on employers; for example, by using online training packages which will allow more time for practical skills training. A new course management and e-learning system will be developed with Warwickshire fire and rescue service in 2016-17.	Collaboration and joint working with other fire and rescue services helps to not only share good practice in all areas, but also helps to reduce duplication and deliver greater efficiencies.
f)	Continue to introduce new and replacement fire appliances, including two new smaller vehicles to replace the very large Command Support Unit designed for supporting the command and control of large and major	The Service continues to ensure its operational fleet is suitable for modern-day firefighting and rescue services.

	incidents, several response and support cars and a van for transporting the fire dog to incidents. Additional enhancements to the equipment on board fire appliances will also be made where appropriate, including for the relatively new Incident Support Vehicle.	
g)	Develop working relationships with other local fire and rescue services to help to align firefighter training course structures and content for greater efficiency and flexibility. Part of this work will include increasing the training estate; that is, being able to use the facilities of neighbouring fire and rescue services and the Fire Service College.	As at e). above, collaboration and joint working with other fire and rescue services helps to not only share good practice in all areas, but also helps to reduce duplication and deliver greater efficiencies.
h)	<p>Continue the fire station replacement and rebuild programme to update and modernise buildings and facilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A new Evesham Fire Station and training facility is scheduled to be complete during 2016-17. ii. Complete feasibility work for the development of a new Fire Station in Hereford which, subject to planning permission, aims to start on site in 2017. iii. Complete investigation work to determine a suitable location for a new blue light hub station serving the Wyre Forest area, and undertake local consultation on the proposed site. iv. Building works for the new Operations and Communications Centre at Hindlip are due to start on site in summer 2016, prior to the transfer of Service Headquarters personnel. v. Investigate opportunities for a new fire station for Redditch and 	This programme continues to support the Core Purpose of sustainability. The Service has a proactive approach to the replacement of obsolete fire stations, as evidenced by the agreement with Wychavon District Council to help replace the old Evesham fire station. Other collaborate opportunities are also being pursued to help develop better ways of working.

	<p>investigate the potential for other replacement fire stations as appropriate.</p> <p>vi. Undertake minor works to Bromyard, Peterchurch and Tenbury fire stations to enable the facilities to be shared with West Mercia and Warwickshire Police.</p>	
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4 Resilience

Resilience means being as prepared as possible for whatever emergency might happen and being able to provide timely back up support at incidents. It requires having local and national contingency plans in place for all kinds of incidents, and involves working together with other emergency services. To support this over the next five years, work will involve:

- Working with other emergency services and agencies to assess risks and preparing plans to tackle them if they happen.

- Maintaining working relationships both nationally and with neighbouring fire and rescue services in providing mutual assistance when needed.
- Carrying out assessments of risks specific to each local fire station area.
- Reviewing and updating procedures set out in business continuity plans for all parts of the Service.

	In 2016-17 activities contributing towards achieving these aims will include the following:	Purpose of the activity
a)	Review and maintain the comprehensive suite of business continuity plans, risk registers and Station fall-back arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose.	Keeping our back-up plans updated helps to ensure we can continue to deliver our services if there are interruptions to our day-to-day business. This is one of our main duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 .
b)	Embed 'Resilience Direct', a website with a shared database of operational information used by fire and rescue services This will be the key platform for emergency planning and response during 2016 onwards, facilitating the effective sharing of risk information and promoting consistency in working practices across the region.	Using Resilience Direct will assist us in working more closely with local and national emergency response and support agencies and will help to fulfil our duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 regarding sharing information and co-operating with other emergency responders.

c)	Maintain and enhance the Service Risks project initiated in 2015, building on the library of risk information to ensure that we remain as informed and prepared as possible, especially in the event of high-risk incidents occurring.	This will help to ensure that we manage risks to the Service effectively and inform our contingency planning.
d)	As a key member of the Local Resilience Forum, which plays a vital role in monitoring risks across the two counties, the Service will continue to plan for emergencies of all kinds, as well ensuring they remain fit for purpose through regular testing and exercises.	This involves sharing information and cooperating with other local responders under our duties in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. In this context, responders include fire authorities, police forces, ambulance services, health services and local authorities.

5 Organisational Support and Development

Organisational Support and Development covers the range of support functions that are often termed 'back office' services, which help to make sure we continue to deliver effective frontline services. The work includes business functions such as financial and legal management, information and communications technology, human resources and corporate services as well as vehicle and equipment maintenance and property management. Over the next five years, these services will continue to provide essential support as the Authority implements its plans to transform how its services are delivered and ensure a sustainable future.

Key areas of support will include:

- Workforce planning and support.
- Financial planning and budgeting.
- Strategic planning support and partnership working.
- Information and communications technology support systems.
- Media and communications.
- Member support services.

	In 2016-17 activities contributing towards achieving these aims will include the following:	Purpose of the activity
a)	<p>During the year, the Service will amalgamate the key strands of health & wellbeing and equality & diversity to provide a more comprehensive advice and support framework. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reviewing a revised fitness standard, which has been recommended nationally.• developing options for the renewal of occupational health provision from January 2017, when the current contract is complete.	<p>This supports the delivery of the 'people' strand of Our Strategy by helping to ensure all our personnel are fully supported in their well-being and welfare needs.</p>

b)	<p>Continue to support innovative ways of managing and supporting the workforce and preserving skills as the Service moves through the transformation period. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managing secondments and staff returning from secondments, career breaks, transfers and other employment arrangements. • reviewing the job evaluation process. • reviewing the assessment and development programme, looking at areas such as competence, promotion and career pathways. • reviewing the pensions administration procedures including options for delivering these services. • developing proposals to move towards the electronic management of files in the Human Resources system. • refreshing the overall approach to delivering the provisions of the Service's Ethical Framework 	<p>These initiatives support the delivery of the 'people' and 'resources' strands of Our Strategy, ensuring our staff are supported as the Service moves through a transformational period and manages our available resources as effectively as possible throughout this period.</p>
c)	<p>Review and update key strategic documents such as the Community Risk Management Plan and Fire Authority Annual Report as new incident data and risk information becomes available. This will include a mid-point review of the Community Risk Management Plan during 2017-18, to incorporate an updated strategic risk review.</p>	<p>The Community Risk Management Plan is our overall strategy for tackling risks to our community, to our firefighters and to our effectiveness and efficiency as a public service. The Plan is prepared in accordance with the government's National Framework for fire and rescue services, which sets out what is required in the plan</p>

d)	<p>During 2016-17, Information and Communications Technology support systems will continue to be upgraded and embedded throughout the Service. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a major programme of IT security training through e-learning packages to make sure all staff are well trained in 'protective security': that is, being able to recognise and understand how to keep information secure, from paperwork to data that's electronically stored. • a major programme of physical security works at fire stations and other locations, to include access control and intruder alarms in buildings and vehicles, as well as securing computer procedures and work practices. • a new upgraded paging system will be installed to replace local transmitters at fire stations, which will provide greater reliability and availability. • various systems upgrades and replacements including new computer software • a robust staging platform to support the development of the Fire Control (Command and Control) mobilising system. 	<p>Improvements to our Information and Communications Technology infrastructure and support framework are crucial to ensuring the Service can continue to deliver sustainable, high-quality services into the future.</p>
e)	<p>Continue development of the Service's interactive website and social media presence, and undertake improvements to internal communications procedures following the review in 2015.</p>	<p>Proactive improvements to public and internal communications helps to ensure the communities of Herefordshire and Worcestershire have access to a wide range of safety advice as well as ensuring greater overall transparency.</p>

f)	Continuing the focus on the safety-critical aspects of our work, in 2016-17 the Operational Assurance audit programme will include testing practical skills and station assurance in tactical ventilation, Breathing Apparatus, Incident Command, road traffic collision hazards, trauma care and casualty decontamination.	This helps to support the National Framework requirements to focus on firefighter safety and provide assurance on operational matters.
g)	In 2016 the Fire Authority Member development themes will be 'Ensuring Firefighter Safety' and 'Ensuring Community Safety'. Sessions will provide Members with insights into firefighter and officer training and will raise awareness of the role of prevention in keeping communities safe. During 2016, a new 2017-2020 Member Development Strategy will also be drafted.	This supports our commitment to engaging Fire Authority members in the all matters affecting the Service.

Resourcing the future: financial information

This section shows what the Fire Authority spends and breaks it down into the on-going running costs and major capital investments.

Summary of our workforce		What the Service costs in 2016-17	
As at the end of March 2016			£m
Wholetime firefighters	43%	Employees	20.8
On-call firefighters	40%	Fleet, equipment, ICT, property	5.6
Support staff	14%	Capital financing *	3.2
Fire Control staff	3%	Other running costs **	2.1
		Transition costs ***	0.3
Total number of employees (Fulltime equivalent - FTE)	619	Total	32.0

* Capital financing is interest and provision to repay loans.

** Other running costs include training costs, community safety material, payroll services, legal costs, Fire Authority costs and insurances.

*** Temporary cost of reducing workforce to approved levels.

Summary of our resources	How the Service is paid for	
As at the end of March 2016		£m
27 fire stations	Herefordshire and Worcestershire Council Tax payers	21.1
41 frontline fire engines	Herefordshire and Worcestershire business rates, etc.	2.3
28 specialist vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles, aerial appliances and boats	Government grants (Revenue Support Grant, special grants)	8.6
Training Centre	Total	32.0
Strategic Training Facilities		
Fire Service Headquarters		
Operational Logistics Centre		
Urban Search and Rescue facility		

The cost of the Fire and Rescue Service to the average household in Herefordshire and Worcestershire (Council Tax Band D) is £78.00. This is above the £71.50 average for comparable Fire Authorities in 2016-17, but considerably less than the highest

cost of £95.76. One of the reasons for this is the historically low level of grant we receive from Government, because of the way the formula is worked out nationally.

Capital investment: 2016-17 to 2019-20

The table below provides details of the Authority's estimated investment in major capital schemes such as major building works and purchase of fire engines. Unlike revenue expenditure, this is funded through borrowing, with only a small proportion funded through central government grants.

	£m
Fire stations / training facilities	15.0
Vehicles and equipment	7.8
ICT / communications system / minor building works	3.4
Total	26.2

Closing the spending gap

As part of the 2016-17 grant settlement, government gave indicative grant figures for the next four years. Although the pace of cuts is greater than expected, the overall estimated position at 2019-20 is almost exactly as the Fire Authority assumed within its Medium Term Financial Plan.

Unplanned in-year savings have helped fund the change in pace of the grant cuts, while the number of people paying Council Tax continues to increase. This has helped offset a reduction in business rate income.

The Fire Authority is expecting to increase Band D Council Tax by just under 2 per cent per year, which is in line with the government's own planning assumptions for Fire, and has made appropriate provisions for pay awards and inflation.

The budget has also had to contain changes to government taxation arrangements (increasing the cost of National Insurance significantly) and new initiatives such as the apprentice levy. These costs alone are equal to 2.2 per cent of the 2015-16 B and D Council Tax.

Based on all these assumptions a balanced budget has been set for 2016-17 with a small budget gap of £0.3 million in 2017-18. After that the gap is more significant, rising to £1.6 million in 2018-19 and £2.4 million in 2019-20.

Budget reduction has been a key theme of the Fire Authority's planning since 2010-11 and work continues to identify further reductions that can be made and implemented from 2018-19 onwards.

What do you think of our Annual Report?

We welcome any views you have on the content of this Annual Report or the way in which Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority delivers its services.

If you have any comments or would like to contact us about any issue, please visit our website at www.hwfire.org.uk where you will find full contact details along with links to further information about our services and activities.

If you have any general enquiries, please call 0345 122 4454 or email us at info@hwfire.org.uk.

You can also follow us on
Twitter at [@HWFire](https://twitter.com/HWFire)

or find us on
Facebook at
www.facebook.com/hwfire

Alternatively you may write to:

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,
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Charles Hastings Way,
Worcester
WR5 1JR

If you would like this information in an alternative language or format such as large print or audio, please contact us on 0345 122 4454.

Your right to know: access to information

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service collects and maintains information and data to enable it to carry out its statutory duties. A great deal of information on the Service is already available in the public domain through our Publication Scheme and [Transparency Webpage](#). Service staff will help you obtain the information you want unless disclosure would be against the law. You have a right to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which gives you

a general right of access to recorded information held by the Service. The Act is designed to ensure greater accountability, as well as to promote a more open culture. If you want to know what personal information is held about you, you can make a request under the Data Protection Act 1998. To find out more, please follow the link: [Your Right to Know](#)



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