

Annual Service Review

2020-2021



Hereford & Worcester
Fire Authority

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Unless stated, figures used in this Review are as at 31 March 2021, rounded to the nearest 100 where appropriate. Population figures are updated to mid-2019 (the latest available).

Foreword

We are pleased to introduce the new-look Annual Service Review. The Review is a look back over the last twelve months (April 2020 – March 2021) focusing on some of the highlights and main events of the year.

It replaces the Fire Authority Annual Report, which we have now split into two smaller reports: this Review and a look-ahead report called the Annual Service Plan, which sets out what we'll be doing over the next twelve months.

We hope you find the new style easier to read and it helps you to appreciate the wide range of work we do to keep our communities across Herefordshire and Worcestershire safe from fire and other emergencies.

It's fair to say that the last year has been dominated by one issue: Covid-19. The pandemic has affected every one of us, and you can read more about how the Service has responded in this Review. Thankfully, we are now well-advanced on the national vaccination programme; hopefully, heralding a return to some sense of normality in the coming year.

Despite the pandemic, our fire and rescue work continued throughout the year. We attended just over 7,000 incidents, down by 11% on the previous year.

During the year, we also prepared our new Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25, which sets out our plans for keeping people, their homes, communities and the environment safe.

We've focused on some of the highlights and main events of last year in this Review, but you'll find a lot more about the wide range of our work on the [News and Events](#) page of our Website.

Finally, we would also like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation to our former Chief Fire Officer, Nathan Travis, for his dedicated service and leadership over the last five years, and wish him well in his future endeavours.



Councillor Roger Phillips,
Chairman of the Fire Authority



Jonathon Pryce, Chief Fire
Officer / Chief Executive

The Service in 2020-21



Core Purpose

“Keeping people safe from fire and other risks – responding efficiently and effectively to incidents and emergencies.”



Staff
Members
688
(774 roles)



25

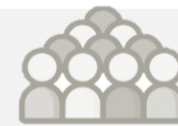
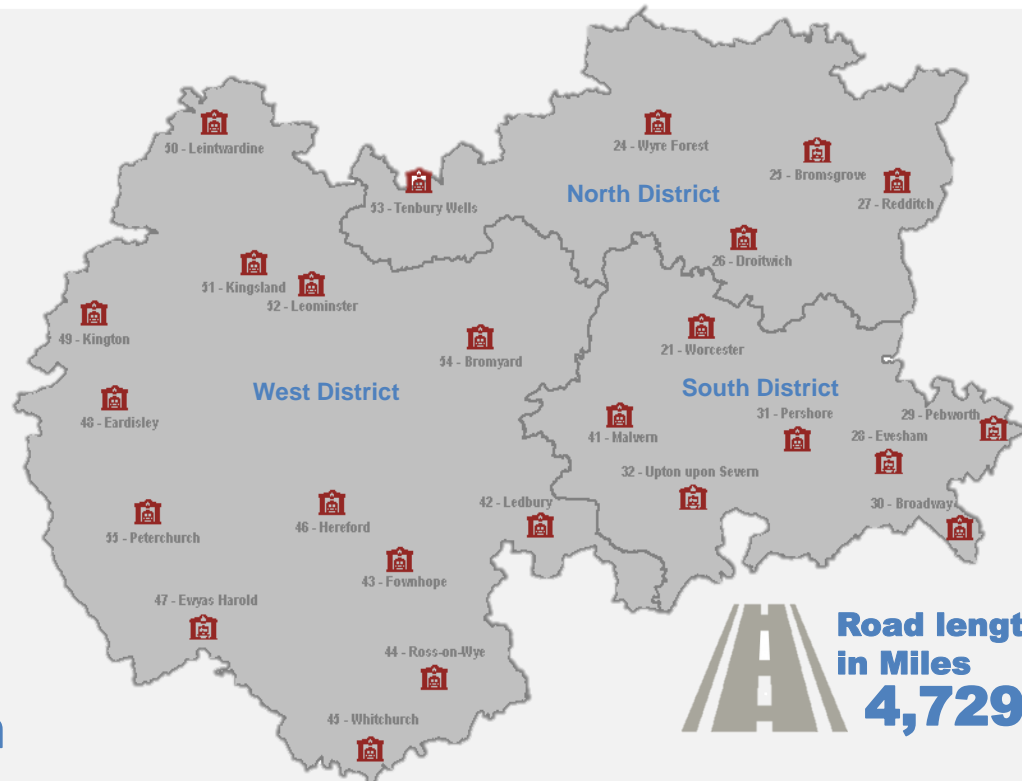
Fire
Stations



Fire
Engines
41



Budget
£36 Million



Population
788,600*

349,280*
Households



Area in
Hectares
392,000



Road length
in Miles
4,729



42,100*
Businesses



* Mid-2019 estimates

The Year In Numbers: Response



7,018

**Total number
of Incidents
attended**



11% Decrease
(883 incidents)

This is 833 incidents fewer than last year, largely due to a 27% fall in the number of Special Services incidents.

**Calls to Fire
Control
11,281**



11% Decrease
(1,407 calls)



**1,664
Fires**

2% Decrease
(42 incidents)

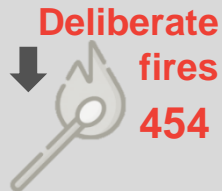


**1,210
Accidental
fires**



**497
Primary
Building fires**

19% Decrease
(118 incidents)



**Deliberate
fires
454**



**828
Outdoor
Fires**

24% Increase
(162 incidents)

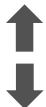


**69
Non Fatal
casualties from
fire incidents**



(Decrease of 7)

In 2020-21 the fire fatality rate in Herefordshire & Worcestershire was **0.38 per 100,000** population



Increase since 2019/20



Decrease since 2019/20

Continued ...

The Year In Numbers: Response



2,009
Special
Service
Incidents

↓ 27% Decrease
(735 incidents)



25% Decrease
(170 incidents)



501
Road
Traffic
Collisions



21% Decrease
(89 incidents)

342
Assisting
other agencies



**Animal
Rescues**
127 ↑

26% Increase (26 incidents)



171 **Flooding
Incidents**

52% Decrease
(183 incidents)



**Rescues
from water**
105



56% Decrease
(131 incidents)



3,345
False
Alarms

3% Decrease
(107 incidents)



2,391
False Alarms
due to
Apparatus



3% Decrease
(71 incidents)



920
Good Intent
False Alarms



1% Decrease
(13 incidents)



34
Malicious
False Alarms



44% Decrease
(23 incidents)



Increase since 2019/20



Decrease since 2019/20

The Year In Numbers: Prevention



Safe & Well/
HFSC Visits
2,080



Standard
Alarms
2,276



Specialist
Hearing Alarms
277

Signposting
910



Arson
Referrals
122



Firesetter
Referrals
30



Community
Safety Activity
130
(CE1 no. of hours)



Public
Engagement
3,308
(Total no. of people)



Safeguarding
68

HFSC = Home Fire Safety Check
CE1 = Community Education form

The Year In Numbers: Protection



RBAP/ Visits/
Post Fires
1,091

Fire door
Keep shut

BFSCs
1



Media
Campaigns
23

Building Reg.
Consultations
409



Licencing
Apps
231



Fire
Investigation
72



Twitter
35,760



CR 0800
phone calls
3,044



Enforcement
34

RBAP = Risk-Based Audit Programme
BFSC = Building Fire Safety Check

Incident Breakdown by District

North District



Population
286,400



124,650
Households

North District covers 180 square miles across northern Worcestershire with the majority of people living in the towns of Redditch, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Droitwich. It has five fire stations, the busiest of which during the year was Wyre Forest attending 1,118 incidents or 39% of incidents in the District.



2,860
Total number of
Incidents attended



710
Fires



768
Special Service
Incidents



2,389
False
Alarms

South District



Population
309,400



139,260
Households

South District covers 490 square miles with most people living in the city of Worcester and the two towns of Malvern and Evesham. It is served by six fire stations including Worcester, the busiest station in the two counties, attending 1,221 incidents or 51% of incidents in the District during the year.



2,389
Total number of
Incidents attended



533
Fires



636
Special Service
Incidents



1,220
False
Alarms

West District



Population
192,800



85,370
Households

West District covers the whole of Herefordshire. About a third of the population live in the city of Hereford, with most people living in smaller communities across the rural county. It has 13 fire stations, the busiest of which was Hereford attending 856 incidents (48%) during the year.



1,769
Total number of
Incidents attended



421
Fires



605
Special Service
Incidents



743
False
Alarms

Covid-19



Over the year, Covid-19 affected all aspects of life in the UK and across the globe. For the Service, it didn't just affect the work we do, but also how we work.

By April 2020, the UK was in the initial response phase and lockdown.

Firefighters continued working, assisted by a resilience register to cover for any periods of sickness, self-isolation or shielding.

The Service also took on additional duties to support the nationwide response including:

- Delivering personal protective equipment and other safety equipment to NHS and care partners
- Face fit testing for masks, including testing for 100 health and care staff in Hereford and Leominster in January 2021 alone.
- Movement of deceased persons

Active engagement with the Local Resilience Forum, including regular Strategic Command Group and Tactical Coordinating Group representation.

Most support staff were working at home within a day of the lockdown, supported by allocated ICT equipment and changes to working practices.

Response, prevention and protection training sessions were also adapted to ensure remote access to online courses.

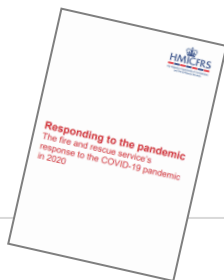


Community Risk technicians continued to carry out Safe & Well and Home Fire Safety visits to those households who were most vulnerable, often at weekends or on their days off – earning a well-deserved Letter of Congratulations from the Chief Fire Officer.



Other Key Events

HMICFRS



Over the autumn of 2020, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services carried out a national inspection of the fire and rescue service response to Covid-19 during the early months of the pandemic. Their [inspection letter](#) found that the Service had responded effectively, but could have done more in terms of protection and staff communication. Both of these areas have been quickly addressed.

CRMP 2021-25

Following public consultation during the year, the Service's new [Community Risk Management Plan](#) was agreed. The Plan is the Service's overall strategy for keeping people, their homes, communities and the environment safe. Prepared in conjunction with Shropshire FRS's new Risk Management Plan under the Strategic Alliance between the two Services, it features our future plans for prevention, protection and emergency response, as well as supporting our workforce and maintaining value for money.

It is supported by a number of more detailed strategies, including the new [Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25](#), which was also prepared during the year.



Grenfell Tower Inquiry



In line with the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1:

- All high-rise buildings in Herefordshire and Worcestershire have been inspected.
- Firefighters have undertaken 'real fire' training at specialist facilities in Oldbury, West Midlands.
- Training sessions have been held for officers and Fire Control staff focusing on key skills required in responding to incidents in tall buildings and where people need evacuation.
- Further investment in equipment and technology to assist response to fires in tall buildings.

Service highlights - 1

Prevention



Safe & Well

Over the year, our Community Risk technicians continued working hard to keep people safe at home. Over 2,000 **Safe & Well visits** took place promptly at high-risk households in a Covid-19 secure manner.



Our road safety scheme, **Dying 2 Drive**, moved to an online format with local school receiving videos and supporting safety information, ensuring young people continued to receive road safety information.

Community Safety Partnerships

Through our work with public health, local authority and voluntary sector partners, we completed important training to support our safety work with local communities, focusing on isolation, loneliness and hoarding.



Protection



Fire Safety Audits

Over **1,000 essential Fire Safety Audits** were completed at commercial premises across the two counties, meeting the year's annual target.

Vulnerability training

Throughout the year, protection staff have been trained in a variety of vulnerability issues, including exploitation and modern slavery, domestic abuse and safeguarding.

Primary Authority Scheme

In December 2020, Halfords joined other companies in our Primary Authority Scheme, which offers reliable and consistent regulatory support to businesses.



Response

Headlines


In addition to supporting the health response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we continued to deliver our normal response functions within the restrictions and safety guidelines, including:

- Completing our wholtime firefighter recruitment programme
- Revised crewing systems at a number of fire stations
- Completing the 'standard' and 'care home' risk Intel programme Fire Control
- Delivering a second drone at Wyre Forest station, improving our ability to support other agencies across both counties



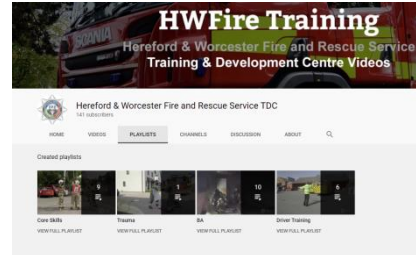
Service highlights - 2

Training

Despite the restrictions arising from Covid-19, our Training Centre was able to deliver over 3,200 prevention, protection and response training courses during 2020-21. Central to this was an innovative suite of online training skills videos hosted on the  platform helping staff to maintain essential skills in a safe environment.

Other highlights included:

- virtual online scenarios supporting assessments for Incident Command,
- 11 one-day training sessions to develop additional skills required following the Grenfell Tower experience
- face-to-face training where absolutely necessary, (such as for driving, breathing apparatus and water safety training) with all safety precautions in place



Fleet & Equipment

Over the year, we introduced 3 new fire engines, 4 water rescue vans and two workshop vans – total cost: £1.3 m.

We also purchased £125,000 worth of new equipment including:

- 12 new ladders,
- 19 thermal imaging cameras,
- 130 smoke hoods (in collaboration with Shropshire FRS and to help meet the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report), and
- 88 rescue stretchers



Our People, Purpose and Values

Staff Structure



The Service is led by the Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive with the support of the Senior Management Board (SMB), made up of Directors and Heads of Service. The Service employs 688 full-time and part-time members of staff, who work in 774 roles. Firefighters make up approximately 80 per cent of the workforce, assisted by professional teams providing support and enabling services such as financial, human resources and legal services. The 25 Fire Control officers are the frontline for receiving emergency calls and deploying crews to incidents. There are also 20 active volunteers supporting community safety activities, though their work was affected by Covid-19 during the year.

Our Purpose and Values



Staff Communication and Wellbeing

Over the year, the Service appointed a new Engagement and Wellbeing Officer, continued SMB visits, undertook staff surveys and feedback groups, including consultation on Service culture and values. A new promotion process is in place and an improved appraisal process is being developed.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, risk assessments have also been carried out for staff, including virtual support with mental health and wellbeing.



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Gender Balance



This is an improvement from 16% female - 84% male ratio recorded in March 2018

Ethnic Minority Representation



This is an improvement from 5% ethnic minority representation in March 2018

Staff Sickness



3.75 days/shifts** were lost per person in 2020-21, continuing a 5-year downward trend.

* 2011 Census

** excludes Covid-19 related sickness



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020-25

In 2020, we published our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan](#), which aims to promote equality, diversity and inclusion not just across the organisation, but also within the local communities we serve.

It focuses on three main areas:

- **Leadership and Corporate Commitment:** encouraging a culture that supports equal treatment, opportunity, inclusion and transparency at all levels
- **Service Delivery and Community Risk:** making sure our prevention, protection and response activities target the most vulnerable and the greatest risk
- **People and Culture:** developing a diverse workforce that represents our community.

- It is also supported by the Service's Positive Action Plan 2020-22.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan

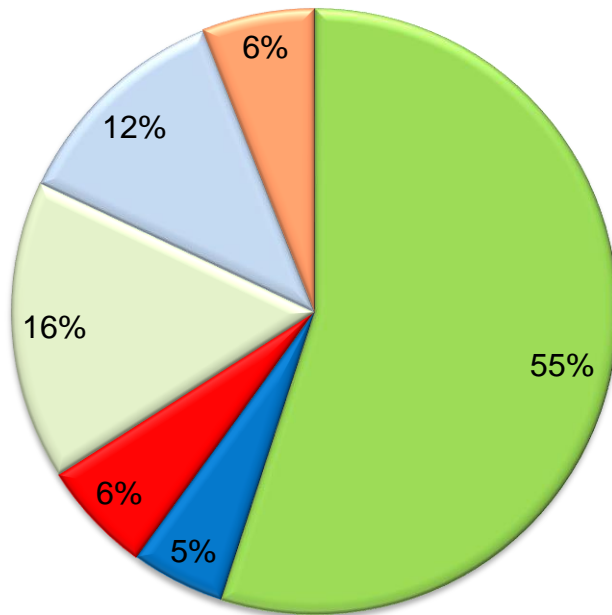
2020-25
Building an inclusive future

Positive Action Plan

2020-22
Increasing workforce diversity

Finance 2020-21

Fire Authority Budget 2020-21



- £19.8m - Uniform Staff
- £1.8m - Direct Support Staff
- £2.2m - Back Office Staff
- £5.6m - Fleet, Equip., ICT & Property
- £4.3m - Fixed Costs
- £2.1m - Other

Total: £35.8 million

Actual expenditure for 2020-21 was somewhat less than £35.8m as service activity was impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.

How the Service was funded

H&W Council Tax	£24.6m
H&W Business Rates	£2.7m
Government grants, etc.	£8.1m
Fire Authority Reserves	£0.4m
£35.8m	

The annual cost of the Service for the average Council Tax Band D was £85.99 or £1.65 per week.



Contact us ...

We always welcome any views or comments on our reports and plans, so if you want to contact us about any issues, 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 www.twitter.com/hwfire

or find us on

Facebook www.facebook.com/hwfire

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