



AGENDA ITEM: 7

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

21 September 2015

DRAFT ASSESSMENT OF THE AUTHORITY'S PERFORMANCE IN 2014-15

Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To present for Members' approval the draft assessment of the Authority's performance in 2014-15.

Background

- 2 Fire and rescue authorities are required to publish performance information relating to each financial year, by 31 October, in the year following that to which the performance relates. This is in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Information

- 3 This document has been compiled in compliance with Section 15 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, to give within a single document an account of the Authority's activities and performance in 2014-15.
- 4 It provides an assessment of how the Authority has discharged its general duty to improve and its progress against the improvement objectives it set itself for last year (2014-15). It also summarises its performance against specified national and local performance indicators and measures of success. Before publication, officers may need to add sources, updates to external data and make formatting and/or typographical corrections.

Recommendation

- 5 That Members approve the draft assessment of the Authority's performance in 2014-15 for publication before the statutory deadline of 31 October 2015.




**NORTH WALES
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**



HOW DID WE DO IN 2014-15?

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AUTHORITY'S
PERFORMANCE**



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**Our mission is to make North Wales
a safer place to live, work and visit**

ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS

Versions of this document are available:

- in paper and electronic formats;
- in English and Welsh;
- as a short summary leaflet of the key points;
- in accessible formats through our website.

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You can also follow us on:

Twitter @northwalesfire

www.facebook.com/northwalesfireservice

AN INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is constantly looking for ways to improve its operations and delivery of services. By regularly publishing information that is meaningful we hope to attract an increasing level of engagement with the people and communities who rely on our services.

So, if you have any comments about this Assessment, or how we might improve our future Annual Performance Assessments, we would very much like to hear from you.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

This document has been compiled in compliance with Section 15 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to give, within a single document, an account of the Authority's activities and performance last year, 2013-14.

It provides an assessment of how the Authority has discharged its general duty to improve and its progress against the improvement objectives it set itself for last year. It also summarises its collaborations and its performance against specified national and local performance indicators and measures of success.

A summary version of this document is available from our website:

www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

More information about the improvement objectives the Authority set itself for last year, and its approach to setting objectives, can be found in the Combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan 2014-15. A copy of this is available from our website:

http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/media/329289/final_approved_improvement_and_risk_reduction_plan_2014-15_-_english.pdf

NOTE ON COMPARISONS

Comparisons between fire and rescue authorities in England and Wales are produced in this document from figures compiled and published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. Occasionally, we find small variations between these published figures and our own figures, generally because of later quality assurance of our own data. For the purpose of comparisons, the externally published data has been retained in this document in its published format.

THE SERVICES WE PROVIDE

Fire Prevention

Under legislation, fire and rescue authorities must arrange for fire safety to be promoted in their area. This would include informing people about fire prevention and advising them how best to react if a fire does break out.

Fire Safety Enforcement

Fire and rescue authorities have a duty to enforce fire safety in non-domestic premises (hotels, schools, shops and offices, etc.). This duty includes exercising powers to issue alteration, enforcement and even prohibition notices if they find that fire safety arrangements in premises are unsatisfactory.

Emergency Response

Fire and rescue authorities must make arrangements for receiving 999 calls and for sending trained and equipped personnel to extinguish fires and protect life and property at those fires.

They must also make arrangements for rescuing people from road traffic collisions and for protecting them from serious harm.

Planning and Response to Other Emergencies

Fire and rescue authorities must make arrangements for mass decontamination of people after chemical, biological or radio-active incidents, and for rescuing people from trains, aircraft and collapsed buildings. They must also be prepared to assist with large-scale emergencies elsewhere in the UK.

As 'Category 1' responders under the Civil Contingencies Act, fire and rescue authorities also have duties relating to large scale events that threaten serious damage to the welfare of people, wildlife, the environment and primary supply chains.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is one of three fire and rescue authorities in Wales. It was established in 1996 and provides fire and rescue services in the unitary authority areas of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham. It covers a land area of 2,375 square miles encompassing agricultural and open land, forestry and woodland, 5,790 miles of roads, and rail and waterway networks.

It helps to protect a resident population of 691,986 people, 321,061 dwellings and 28,334 non-domestic premises.

Fire Stations:

North Wales Fire and Rescue operates:

24-hour Shift Fire Stations

Three fire stations that remain open continuously. These are located in Wrexham, Deeside (Queensferry) and Rhyl.

Day Crewed Fire Stations

Five fire stations that are crewed between midday and 10:00p.m., and operate as retained fire stations outside those hours.

Retained Fire Stations

Thirty-six fire stations that operate wholly as retained fire stations.

Anglesey

1 day crewed station
6 retained stations

Conwy

2 day crewed stations
6 retained stations

Flintshire

1 24-hour shift station
4 retained stations

Gwynedd North

2 day crewed stations
4 retained stations

Denbighshire

1 24-hour shift station
6 retained stations

Wrexham

1 24-hour shift station
2 retained stations

Gwynedd South

8 retained stations

Each of the 36 retained fire stations has one fire engine crewed by Retained Duty System staff, with the exception of Pwllheli which has two (total 37).

Each of the 8 wholetime fire stations has one fire engine crewed by Retained Duty System staff, plus one fire engine that is crewed by Wholetime Duty System staff, with the exception of Wrexham which has two (total 17).

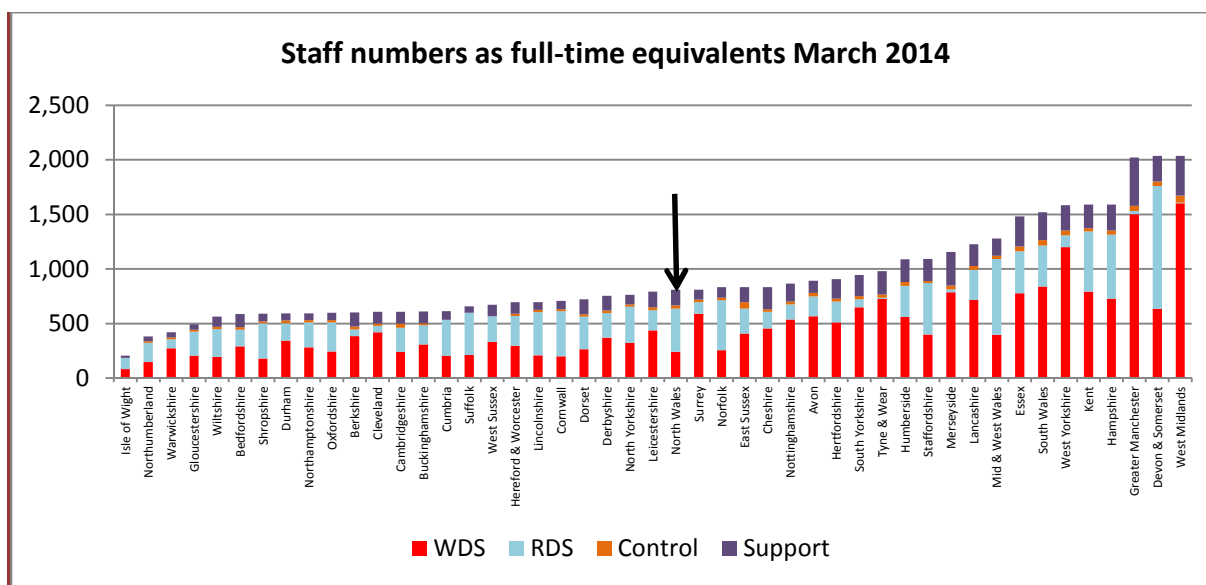
Staff:

As at 31 March 2015, North Wales Fire and Rescue employed:

	Full time equivalent strength	Headcount of individual staff
Wholetime operational (WDS)	251.5	260
Retained operational* (RDS)	374.75	433
Support and prevention	143.19	154
Control	26.25	29
Totals	795.69	876

*Because of the 'on call' nature of these posts, they are calculated as '24-hour units of cover' instead of full-time equivalents.

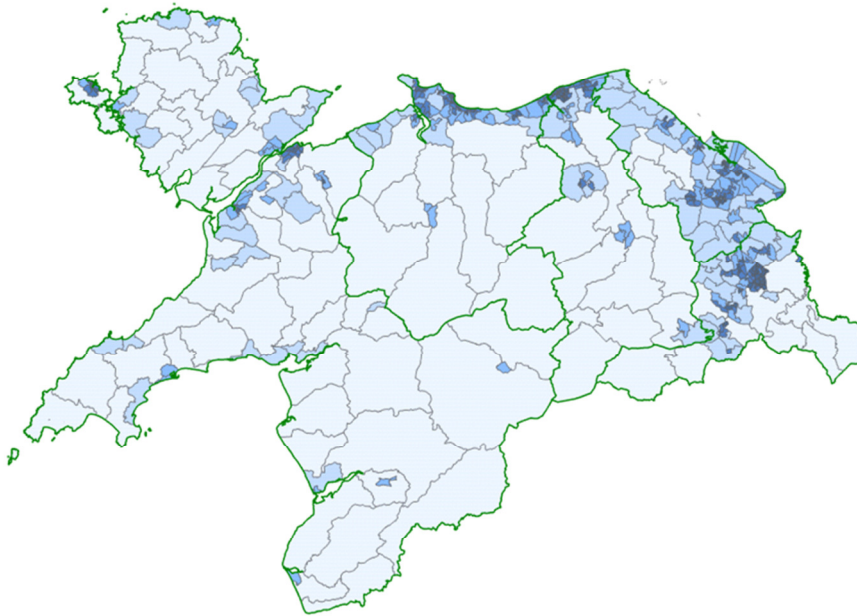
By comparison with fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in England, North Wales has amongst the lowest number of wholetime operational staff (only 9 FRAs have fewer) and amongst the highest number of retained duty operational staff (only 6 FRAs have more).



Note: Because of the scale, figures for Greater London have been excluded from the graph. These were 5,337 wholetime staff, 100 fire control staff and 824 support staff. Total 6,261.

A PROFILE OF NORTH WALES

POPULATION: The North Wales resident population of around 694,038¹ people is largely concentrated in the more industrial and urbanised areas of the north east and along the coast.



Source: Infobase Cymru

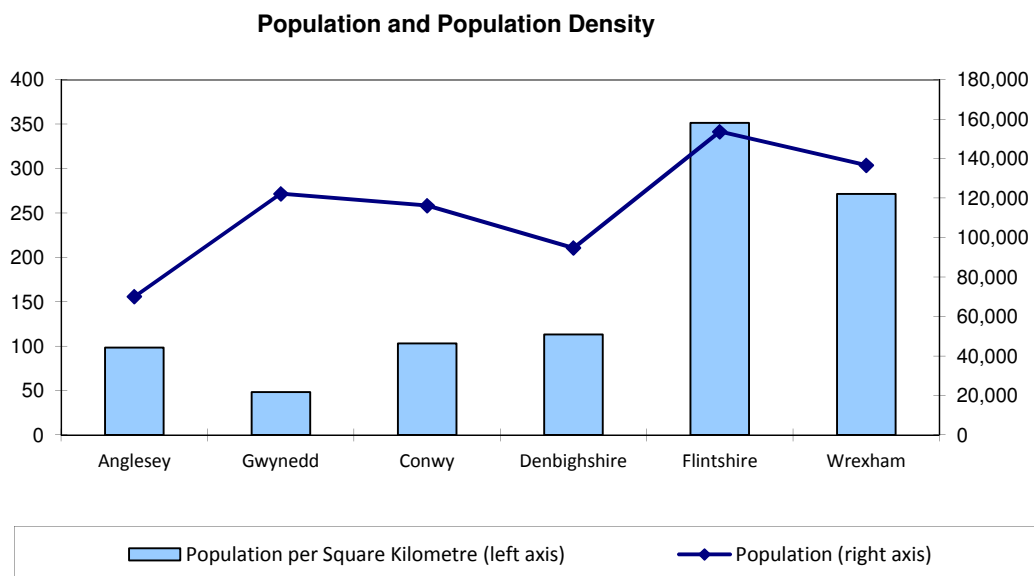
The map illustrates where the more sparsely populated and the more densely populated areas are in North Wales². Darker shades show a higher population density.

At a county level the population density ranges between 48 people per square kilometre in Gwynedd - one of the most sparsely populated counties in England and Wales - and 352 people per square kilometre in Flintshire.

¹ Office of National Statistics mid year estimates: 690,434 in 2012, 691,986 in 2013, 694,038 in 2014. Source: StatsWales. Last updated 25 June 2015.

² Figures taken at the time of the 2010 Small Area Population Estimates, published October 2011.

POPULATION DENSITY:



Source: StatsWales <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Density/PopulationDensity-by-LocalAuthority-Year> (2014)
<https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Estimates/Local-Authority/populationestimates-by-localauthority-year>

ETHNICITY: The latest population estimates³ indicate that the population of North Wales is predominantly white (97.23%, compared to 95.88% for the whole of Wales).

NATIONAL IDENTITY: According to 2012's Annual Population Survey⁴, the percentage of the North Wales counties' population that considered themselves to be Welsh ranged between 39% and 68% compared to a Wales average of 64%.

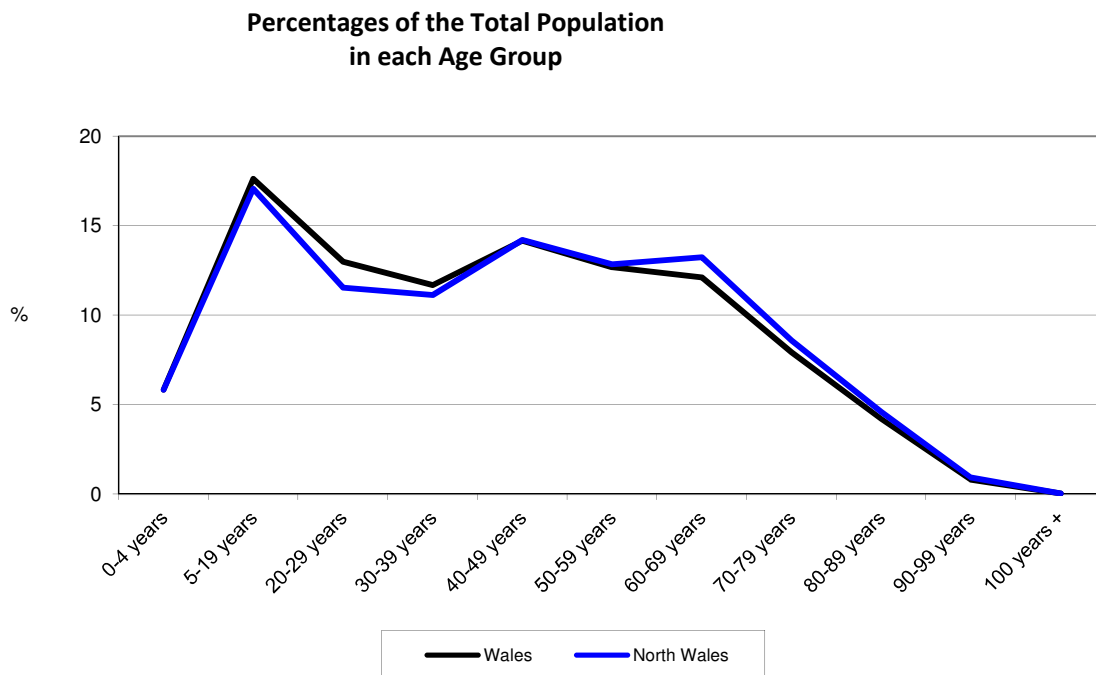
WELSH LANGUAGE: The 2011 Census⁵ indicated that the percentages of Welsh speakers in North Wales counties ranged between 13% to over 65%, compared with a Wales average of 19%.

³ <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Ethnicity/Population-Estimates/PopulationEstimates-by-LocalAuthority-Ethnicity-Age>

⁴ <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/National-Identity/NationalIdentity-by-Area-Identity> (2012 Year)

⁵ <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/WelshSpeakers-by-LA-BroaderAge-2001And2011Census>

AGE: The population of North Wales, according to the 2011 Census, has a slightly lower percentage of people in their twenties and thirties, and a slightly higher percentage of people in their sixties, seventies and eighties than the whole of Wales. In March 2011, there were over 97,000 people aged over 70 years living in North Wales, including 159 centenarians.



Source: Census 2011 (StatsWales)

DISABILITY: According to 2012 population survey⁶, it was estimated that between 17% and 24% of the population of North Wales had some form of disability, compared with just over 22% for the whole of Wales.

SEXUAL IDENTITY: Responses to the Integrated Household Survey conducted in 2011⁷ suggested that between 92% and 96% of the population of North Wales was heterosexual, compared to the all-Wales average of 94%.

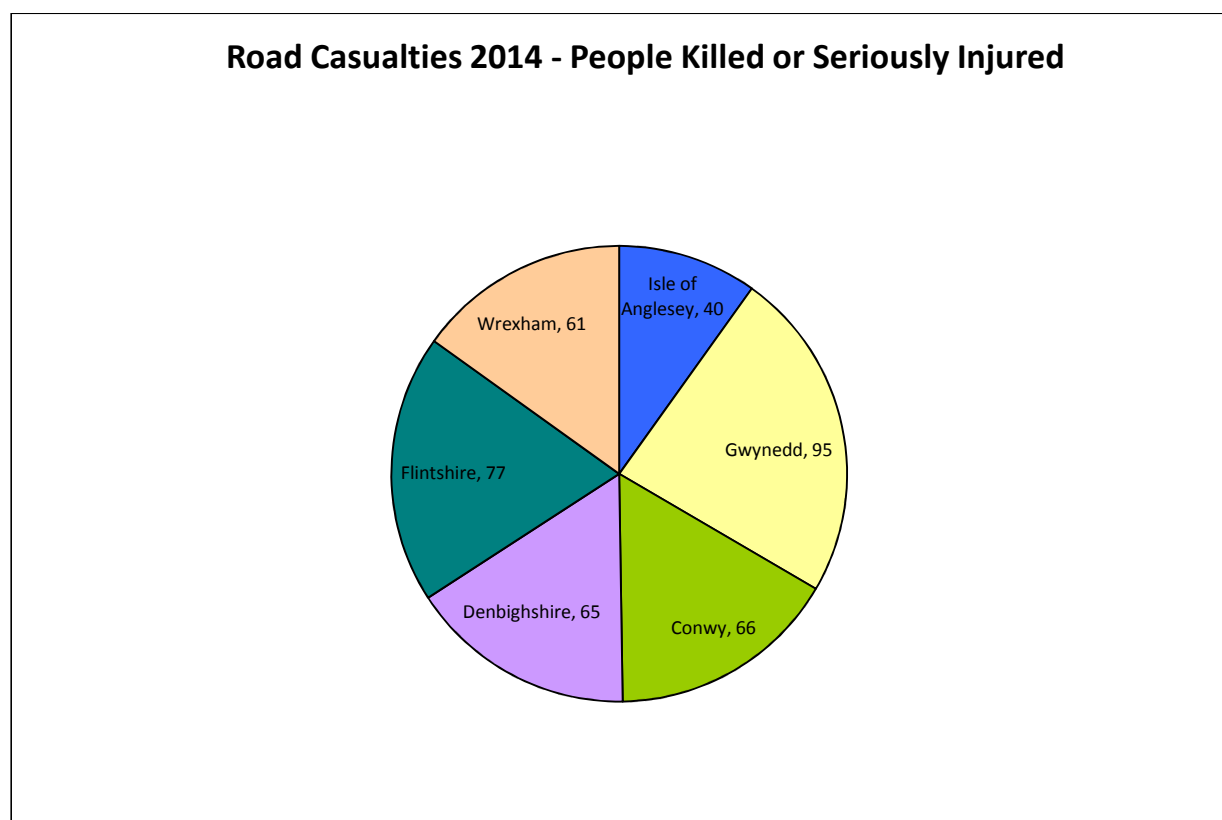
⁶ <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Disability/PeopleOfWorkingAgeWithDisabilities-by-Area-DisabilityType>

⁷ <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Sexual-Identity/SexualIdentity-by-Area-IdentityStatus>

ROADS AND ROAD TRAFFIC: The key road transport links are the A55 Expressway, the A5, A483, A487, A470 and A494. In total, there are around 5,796 miles of roads in North Wales, of which around 84% are classed as minor roads, with the remainder classed as either trunk or principal 'A' roads.⁸

Department of Transport statistics estimate that 4.02 billion vehicle miles were travelled in the six counties of North Wales during 2014. Of those, 3.15 billion vehicle miles were travelled in cars.⁹

In 2014, there were 1,960 reported road casualties in North Wales, of which 25 died, 379 were seriously injured and 1,556 were slightly injured.¹⁰



⁸ Table RDL0102. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/road-lengths-in-great-britain-2014>

⁹ Tables TRA8901 and TRA8902. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/road-traffic-estimates-in-great-britain-2014>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-main-results-2014>

SECTION 2

HOW DOES NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE COMPARE?

Comparing ourselves with others can provide useful indicators of where we could potentially improve. Although information is not always available to help us do this, or it is so different that the comparison has no value, there are some examples that help us to explore the differences.

RURILITY

North Wales is a predominantly rural area, where population density ranges from 48.2 people per km² in Gwynedd to 351.6 people per km² in Flintshire. The figure for the whole of Wales is 149.1 people per km².

Distances and travel times affect almost all aspects, for example:

- our engagement with our communities
- the types of incidents that we attend
- our attendance times to emergency incidents
- prevention and inspection activities
- routine work such as buildings maintenance
- routine activities such as meetings and training courses
- the availability of potential employees in less populated areas
- information and communications technology
- fleet maintenance
- vehicle fuel usage.

Because we provide fire and rescue cover across the whole of North Wales, we have to be able to deal with the challenges of serving both the remote rural areas and the larger towns and more urban areas.

Attendance times to fires in England are reported by the UK Government as averages. In 2013-14, the average response time for attending fires in predominantly rural fire and rescue authorities in England was 10.5 minutes.¹¹

Attendance times to fires in Wales are reported by Welsh Government as percentages within defined time brackets¹². The North Wales figures - like those for the rest of Wales - have remained relatively constant from year to year, with the majority of fire calls attended in under 10 minutes and the “rurality effect” being reflected in the percentages that took longer to reach. In areas covered by retained fire crews, the attendance time calculation includes the time taken for the crew members to reach the fire station.

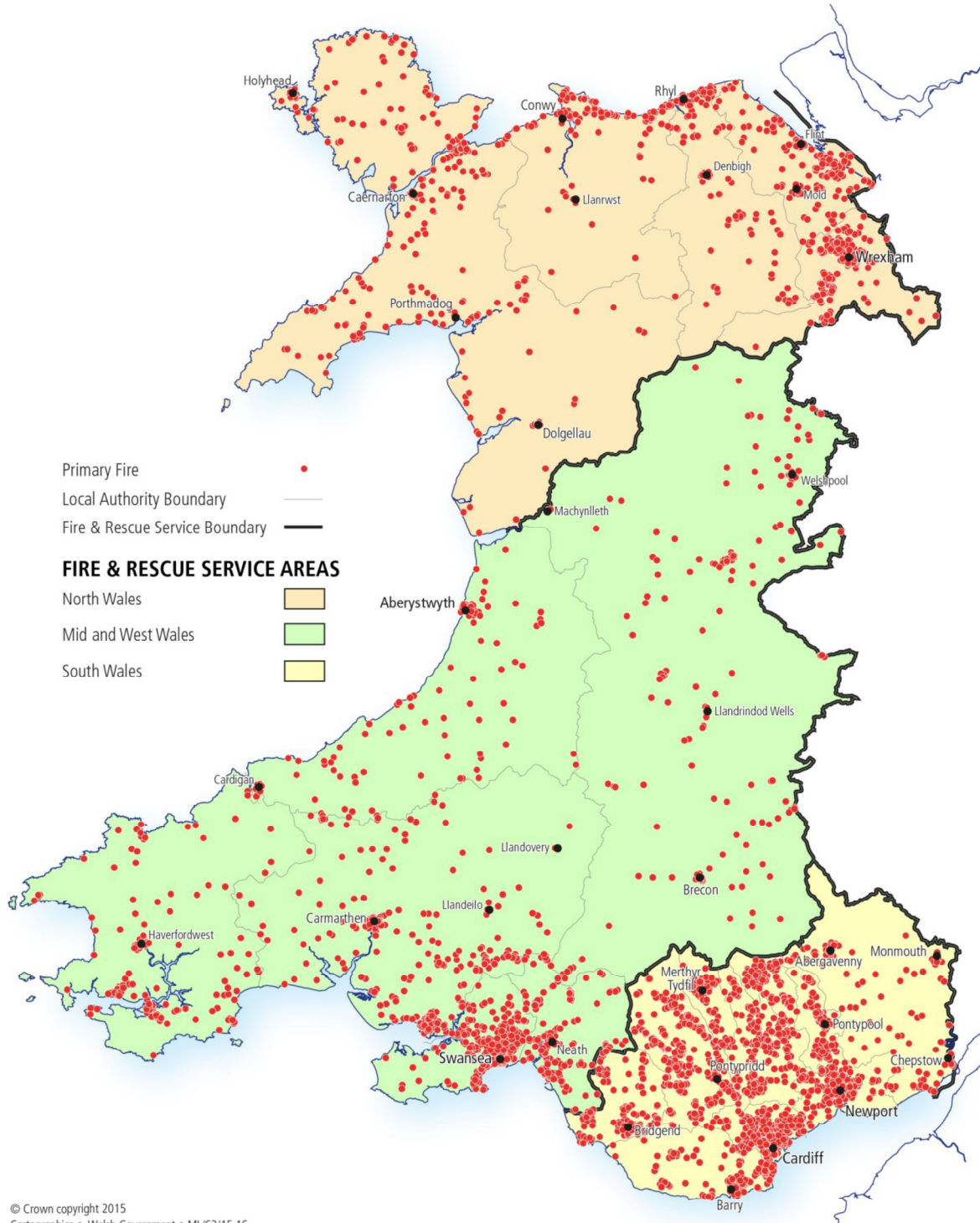
	Between 1 and 5 minutes	Between 5 and 10 minutes	Between 10 and 15 minutes	Longer than 15 minutes
2011-12				
North Wales	15%	51%	23%	11%
Mid & West Wales	17%	51%	21%	11%
South Wales	21%	58%	16%	4%
2012-13				
North Wales	15%	51%	23%	11%
Mid & West Wales	15%	51%	22%	12%
South Wales	22%	59%	16%	4%
2013-14				
North Wales	17%	47%	22%	13%
Mid & West Wales	17%	48%	23%	12%
South Wales	21%	59%	16%	4%
2014-15				
North Wales	14%	48%	24%	14%
Mid & West Wales	15%	52%	20%	13%
South Wales	22%	56%	17%	5%

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-incidents-response-times-england-2013-to-2014> Table 1c.

¹² <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/fire-statistics/?lang=en> Table 24.

The map below, produced by the Welsh Government¹³, illustrates the higher concentration of primary fires that occur in urban areas.

Primary Fires across Wales, 2014-15

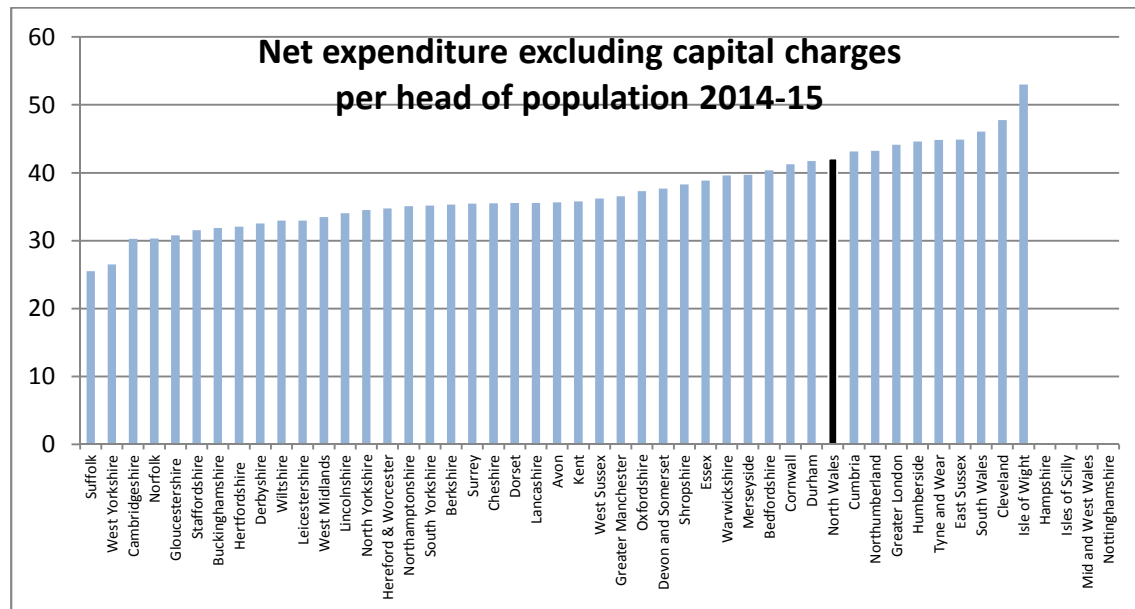


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 July 2015

¹³ Fire statistics Wales, 2014 15. <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/150730-fire-statistics-2014-15-en.pdf>

COST

Please refer to our 2013-14 Annual Performance Assessment for comparisons of costs based on figures published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in March 2014.



CIPFA 2015 Column 12

ACTIVITY

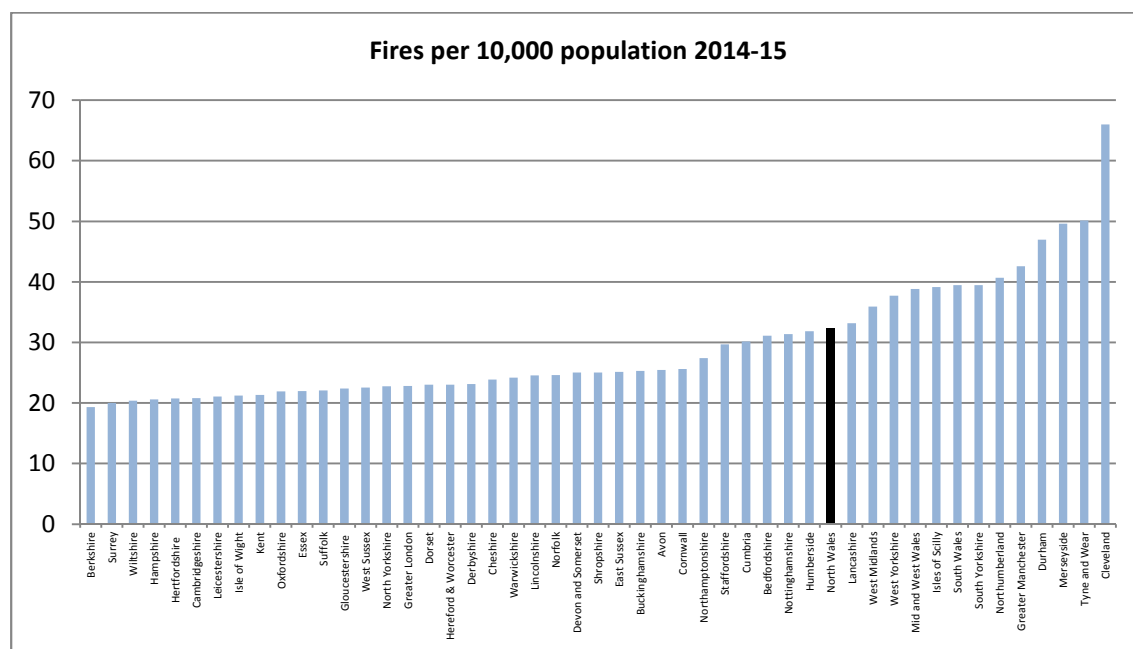
Activity comparisons in this section are based on 2014-15 fire statistics published by Communities and Local Government and the Welsh Government, and population figures published by CIPFA. Links to the external sources are provided in Section 6.

During 2014-15, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service attended 2,244 fires, 631 non-fire emergencies and 3,218 false alarms.

In addition to working to prevent fires and other incidents from occurring, the Service also works hard to identify 999 calls that either do not require a response at all or that are better passed to more appropriate agencies to attend. This means that the service can remain available to deal with genuine incidents where its skills and expertise can be put to good use. As well as reducing the overall risk in the area, it also helps to keep costs down.

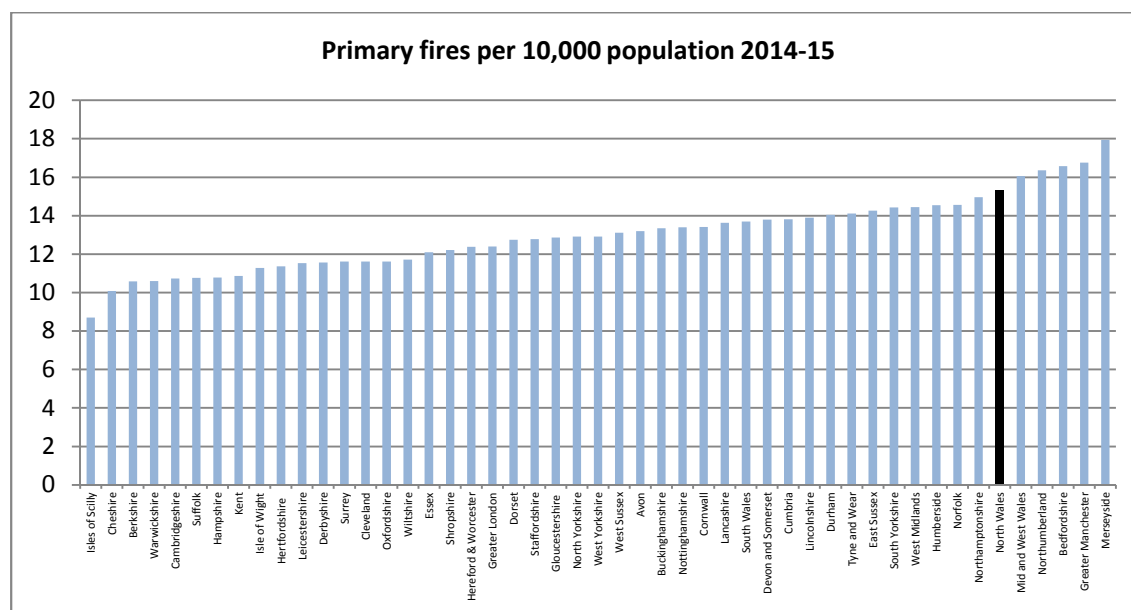
Fires:

Total fires Between 2013-14 and 2014-15, there was a 7.1% reduction in fires in North Wales compared with a 10% reduction in England and an 11.5% reduction in the whole of Wales.



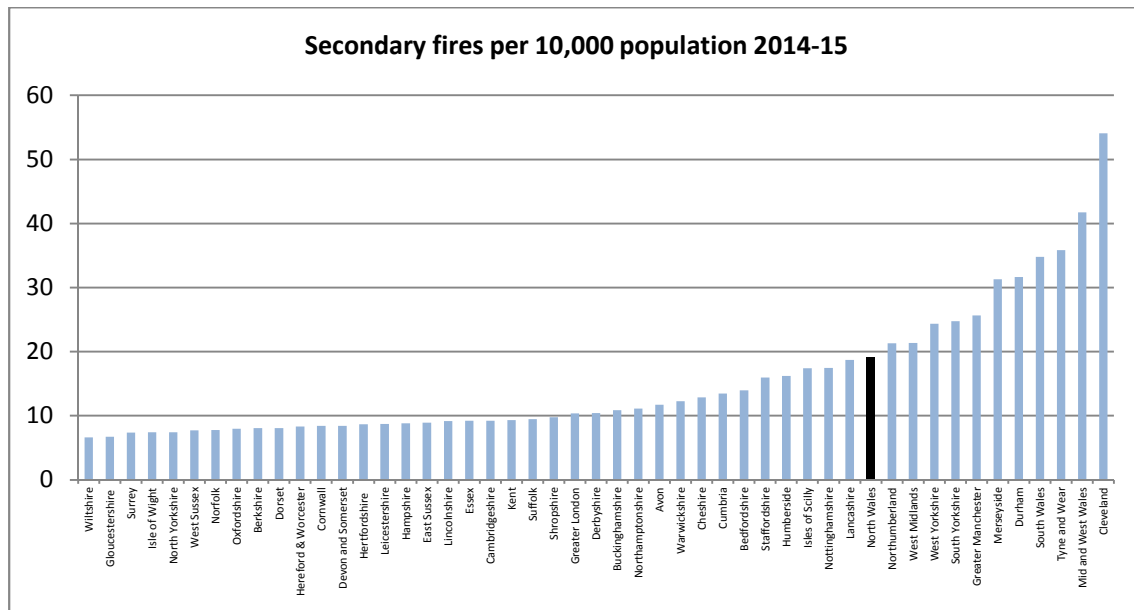
North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The total number of fires attended.	3,297	3,165	2,349	2,416	2,244

Primary fires Between 2013-14 and 2014-15, the number of primary fires in North Wales decreased by 5%, which was more than the 3% decrease in England and equal to the 5% decrease in Wales as a whole.



North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of primary fires attended.	1,346	1,299	1,143	1,117	1,063

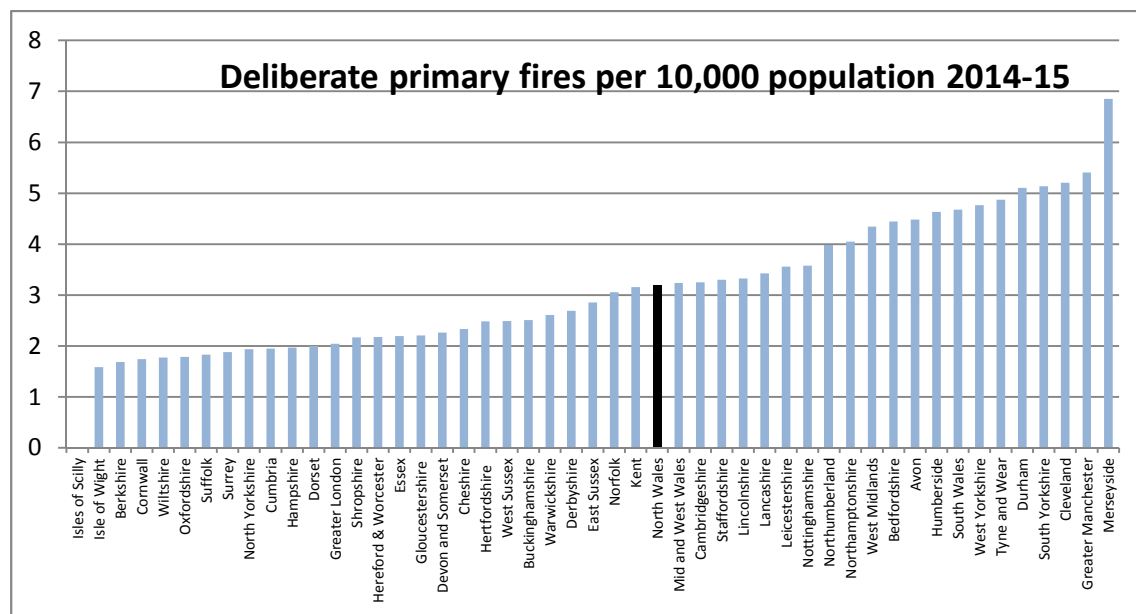
Secondary fires The number of secondary fires decreased by 11% in North Wales between 2013-14 and 2014-15. This was less than the 15% decrease in England and the 16% decrease in Wales generally.



North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of secondary fires attended.	1,626	1,613	887	1,087	964

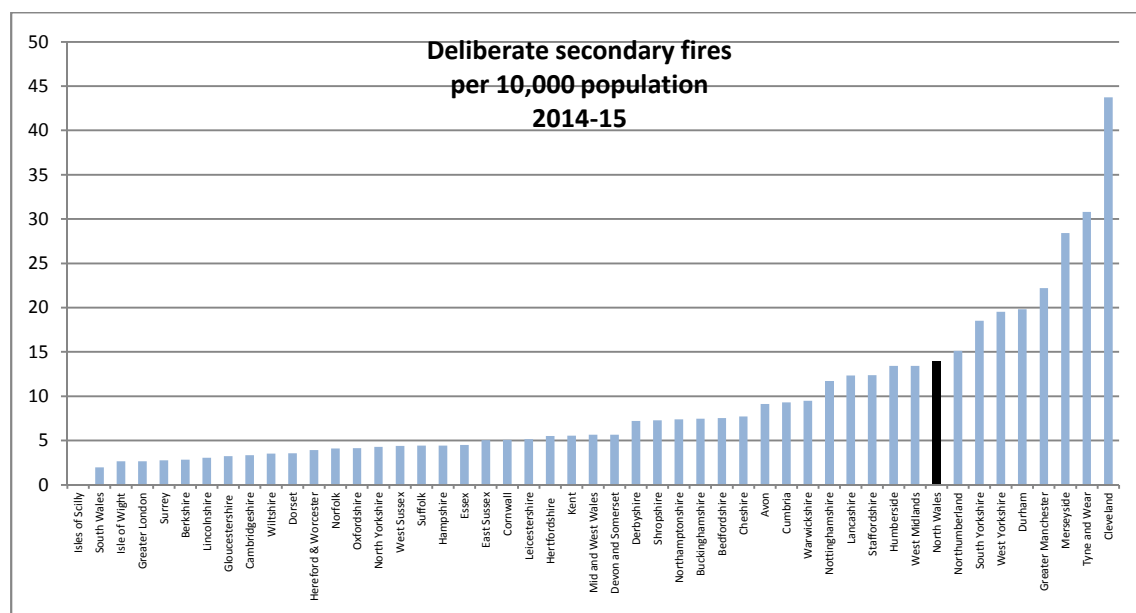
Deliberate fires North Wales Fire and Rescue Service collaborates with North Wales Police to reduce the incidence of arson and deliberate fire-setting. The decrease in primary fires in North Wales can be partly attributed to a reduction in the number of those fires that had been started deliberately.

Deliberate primary fires Between 2013-14 and 2014-15 there was a 9% reduction in the number of deliberate primary fires in North Wales. This compares well with the 3% decrease in England and the 10% decrease in the whole of Wales.



North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of deliberate primary fires attended.	373	367	286	243	222

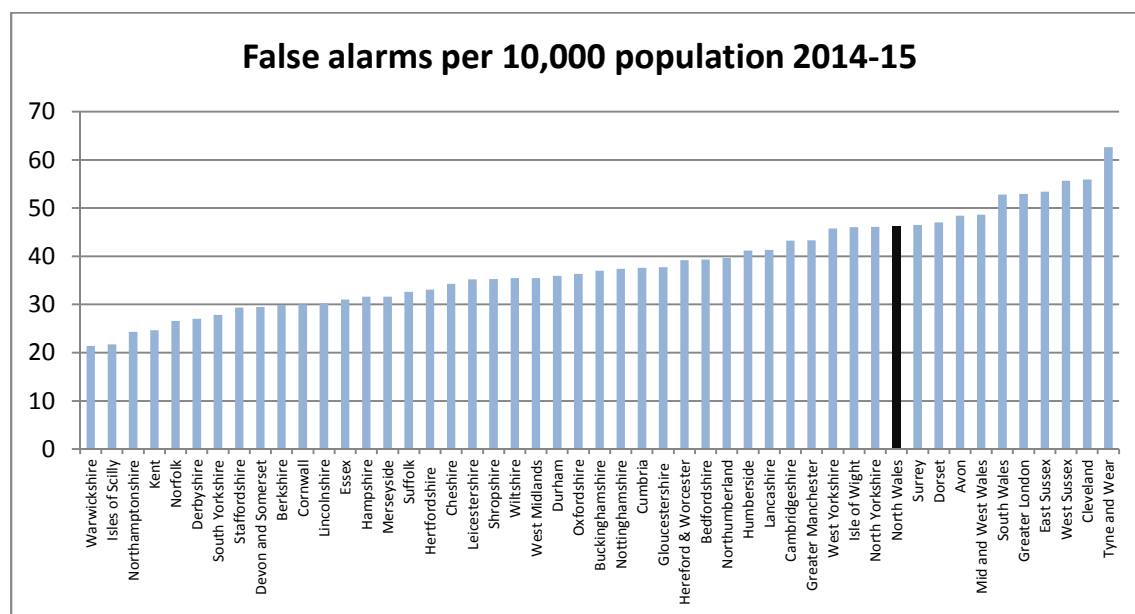
Deliberate secondary fires The number of deliberate secondary fires in North Wales decreased by 9% between 2013-14 and 2014-15. This is less than the 14% decrease in England and the 16% decrease in the whole of Wales.



North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of deliberate secondary fires attended.	1,065	1,003	549	549	502

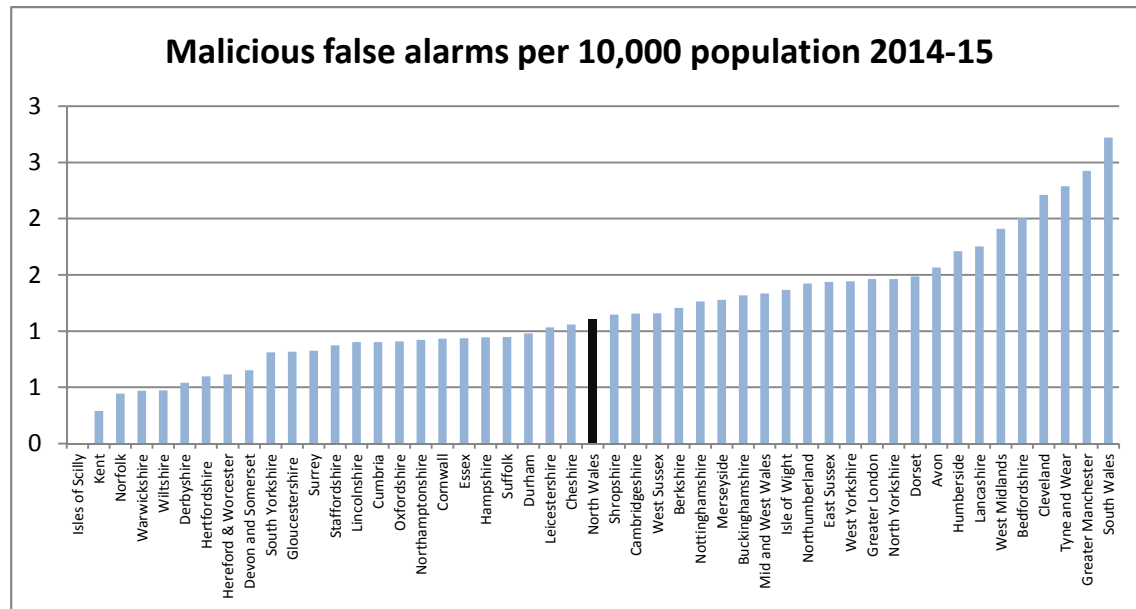
False Alarms:

Total false alarms Between 2013-14 and 2014-15, there was a 4% increase in the number of false alarms attended in North Wales – more than the 4% decrease in England and the 1% increase in Wales as a whole.



North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The total number of false alarms attended.	3,750	3,566	3,249	3,102	3,218

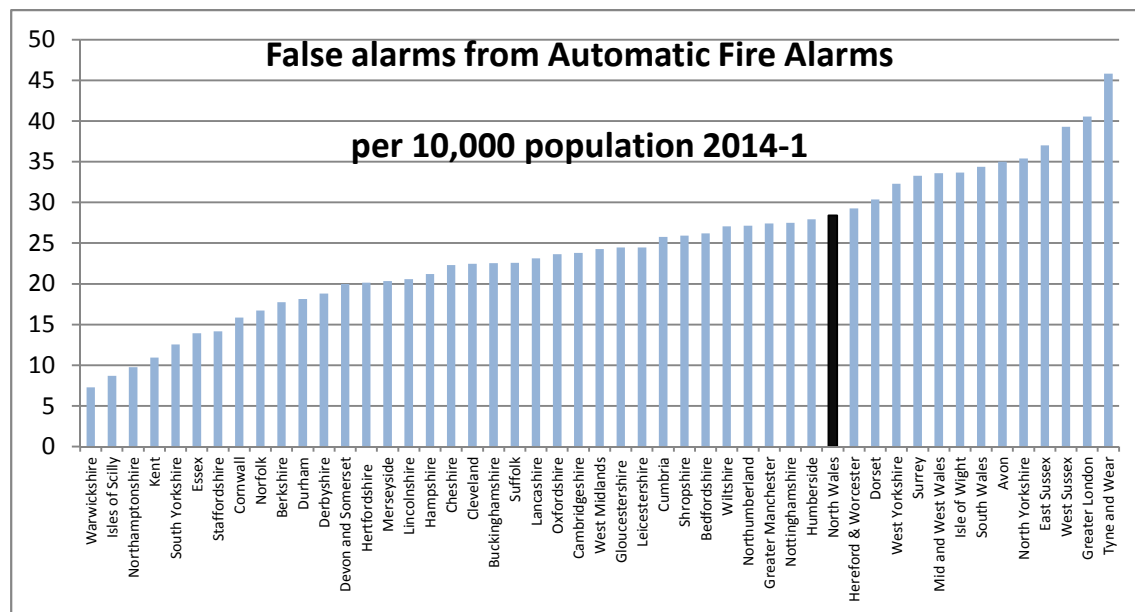
For a number of years, North Wales Fire and Rescue has been working to reduce the number of malicious false alarms being made through the emergency 999 system, and also to identify as many hoax calls as possible before committing valuable resources to attend.



North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of malicious false alarms received.	491	538	473	382	194
The number of malicious false alarms attended.	118	133	106	77	77
The percentage of malicious false alarms received, but not attended (to the nearest whole number).	76%	75%	78%	80%	60%

Between 2013-14 and 2014-15, the low rate of attending malicious false alarms was maintained for a second year in North Wales, compared with a 10% decrease in England and a 6% decrease in the whole of Wales.

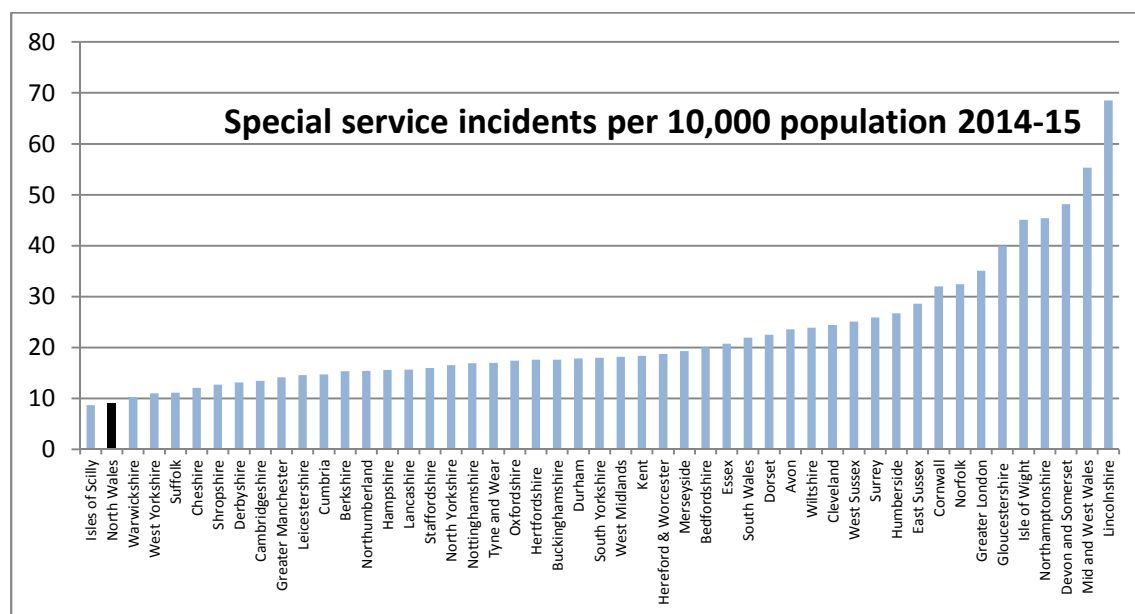
Between 2013-14 and 2014-15, there was a 6% increase in the number of false alarms generated by automatic fire alarms (AFA) attended in North Wales. This was much higher than the 4% decrease in England and slightly higher than the 3% increase in the whole of Wales.



North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of false alarms from automatic fire alarms attended.	1,940	2,032	1,960	1,855	1,972

Non-fire emergency incidents (special services):

2014-15 saw another large reduction in the number of special service incidents attended in North Wales. The graph below includes first- and co-responding incidents attended.

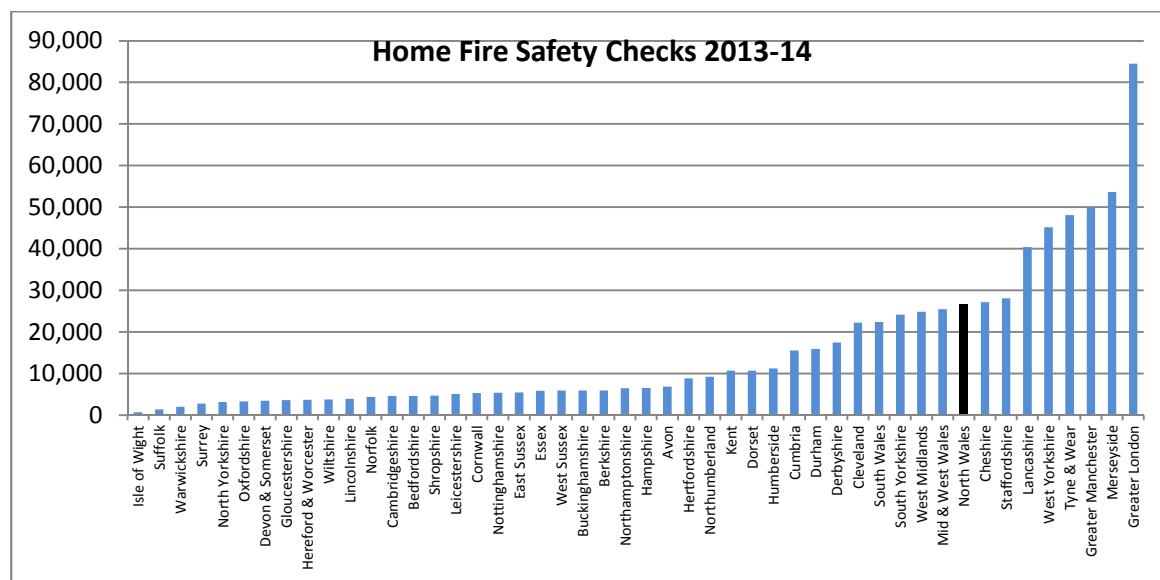


North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The total number of special service incidents attended.	1,360	990	1,204	837	631
Special service incidents that were road traffic collisions.	621	461	399	312	267

Fire prevention:

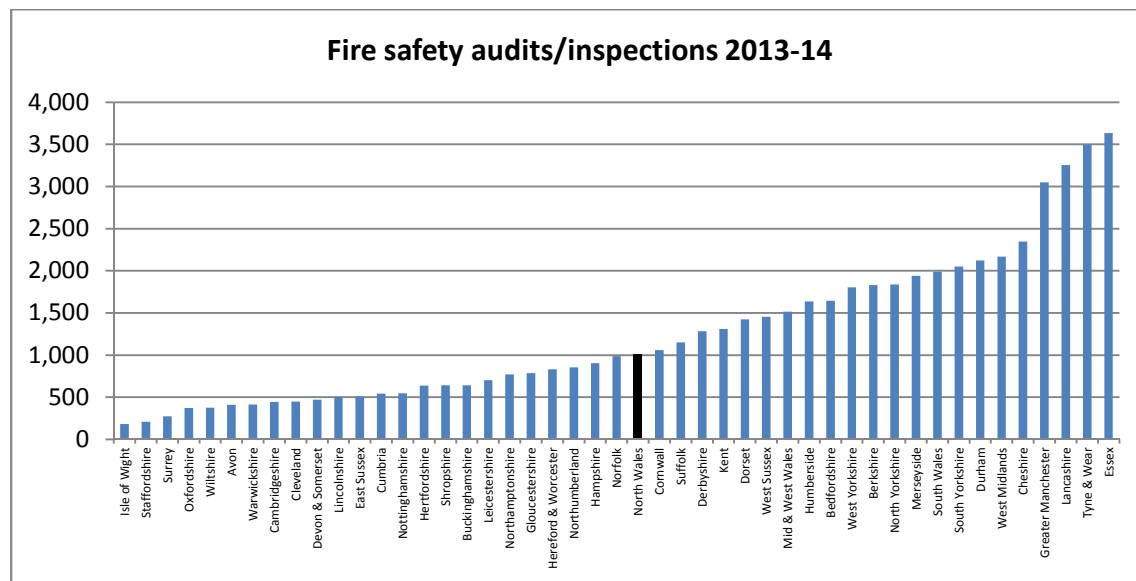
[Operational statistics for England 2014-15 not yet released.]

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service delivers a comparatively high number of Home Fire Safety Checks as part of its community safety strategy.



North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of home fire safety checks delivered.	36,905	28,472	22,201	26,703	27,352

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service also completes hundreds of fire safety audits/inspections of non-domestic premises every year for the purposes of checking fire safety arrangements.



Because of the scale, Greater London, which completed 13,275 audits/inspections, has been excluded from the graph.

North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of fire safety audits/inspections completed.	723	392	867	1,017	880

SECTION 3

PROGRESS AGAINST SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES IN 2014-15

Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales are classed as ‘Welsh Improvement Authorities’. They are subject to requirements of the Local Government Measure 2009 and must follow an annual process of setting and achieving local improvement objectives.

From its horizon-scanning and assessment of risk in North Wales, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority identified some strategic issues that it considers appropriate to address through this improvement planning process.

This section presents the Authority’s objectives for 2014-15, a summary explanation of the reason why each one was adopted, what we planned to do, what we expected to achieve, and whether or not we succeeded.

Each objective is reported in terms of:

- measuring our performance;
- comparing our performance; and
- assessing our performance.

SERVICE PLANS

To make sure that the objectives were achieved as planned in 2014-15, aspects were allocated (with budgets, where relevant) to departmental service plans. These plans are centrally monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure that both the actions and the planned spending for the year are on course.

Improvement Objective 1

To help to keep people and communities safe by preventing deaths and injuries from accidental fires in living accommodation.

Why was this objective chosen?

Because keeping people safe is at the heart of what the Authority does. The safety of people in North Wales is its primary concern, but also it makes more sense to prevent incidents from happening than to simply react every time they do.

What was the expected outcome?

People expect to be safe in their homes. With the right support and advice, people can protect themselves from accidental fires, both by preventing a fire from starting in the first instance, and by knowing how to react quickly and correctly if one does occur.

Where that has failed, people should have confidence that the fire and rescue service will respond quickly and effectively to rescue them and limit the damage to their property.

WAS THE 2014-15 OBJECTIVE 1 ACHIEVED?

Measuring our performance:

North Wales	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Change between last two years (to nearest whole number).
The number of accidental dwelling fires attended.	454	479	401	-16.3%
The number of deaths arising from accidental dwelling fires.	3	3	2	-
The number of injuries (excl. precautionary checks) arising from accidental dwelling fires.	45	58	35	-40%
The percentage of people in accidental dwelling fires who were able to escape unharmed without assistance from a fire crew to do so.	77%	79%	86%	+6.3pp.
Home fire safety checks delivered	22,201	26,703	27,352	+2.4%
Percentage of home fire safety checks that came from referrals	35%	32%	36.7%	+4.7pp

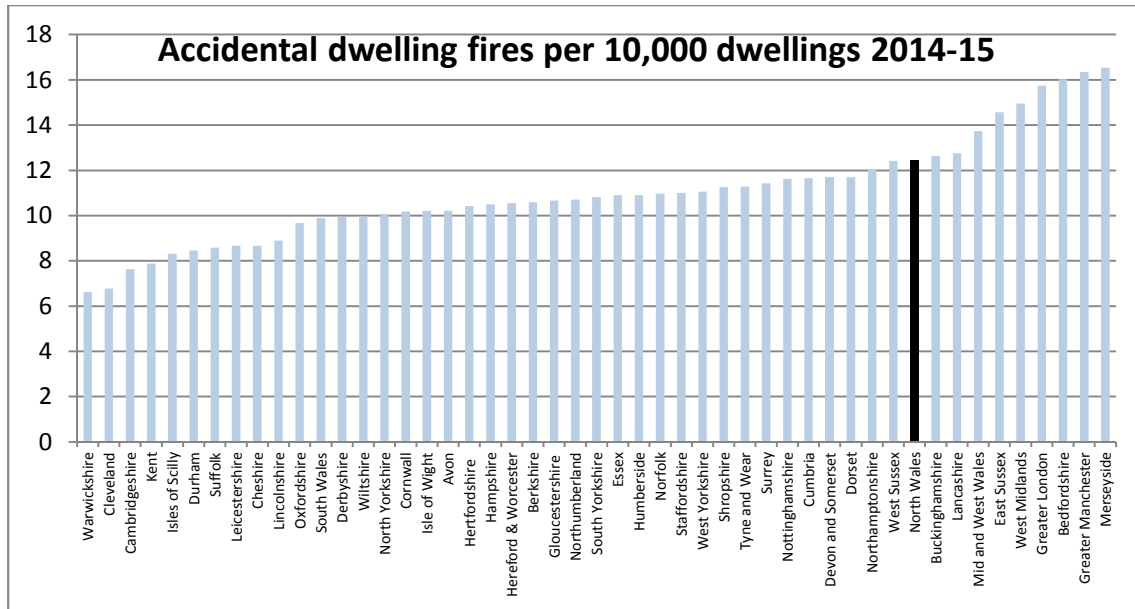
pp = percentage points.

What new actions were planned for 2014-15?

	Achieved?
Continue to seek more partner organisations able to help deliver Home Fire Safety Checks in North Wales.	X
Aim to deliver 30,000 Home Fire Safety Checks.	X
Aim to have 30% of Home Fire Safety Checks delivered following a referral from a partner agency	✓
Support and promote the provision of linked smoke detectors in dwellings that have resident remote monitoring care systems in place.	✓

Comparing our performance in reducing accidental dwelling fires:

Figures for England show a 1% decrease and for Wales show a 6% decrease between 2013-14 and 2014-15 in the number of accidental dwelling fires attended.



The 16% decrease in North Wales was excellent, although the actual incidence per 10,000 dwellings is amongst the highest in England and Wales.

The picture in Wales¹⁴ was of an overall reduction in the number of accidental dwelling fires between 2013-14 and 2014-15, and a significant reduction in all three Welsh fire and rescue authority areas over the longer term:

ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES				
	North Wales	Mid & West Wales	South Wales	Wales
2001-02	614	821	1,055	2,490
2002-03	554	745	1,077	2,377
2003-04	501	838	940	2,279
2004-05	531	727	891	2,150
2005-06	502	749	921	2,172
2006-07	459	663	867	1,990
2007-08	526	642	867	2,035
2008-09	482	638	799	1,919
2009-10	478	584	802	1,864
2010-11	469	605	752	1,826
2011-12	476	555	758	1,789
2012-13 (r)	455	525	745	1,725
2013-14 (p)	480	572	680	1,732
2014-15 (p)	401	579	655	1,635

When standardised across the three services, all three Welsh fire and rescue authorities have seen a steady decrease in the number of accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 dwellings.

The number of accidental dwelling fires in North Wales in 2014-15 was the lowest ever recorded, which is extremely heartening.

North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 <u>dwellings</u> .	15.35	14.95	14.26	14.98	12.49

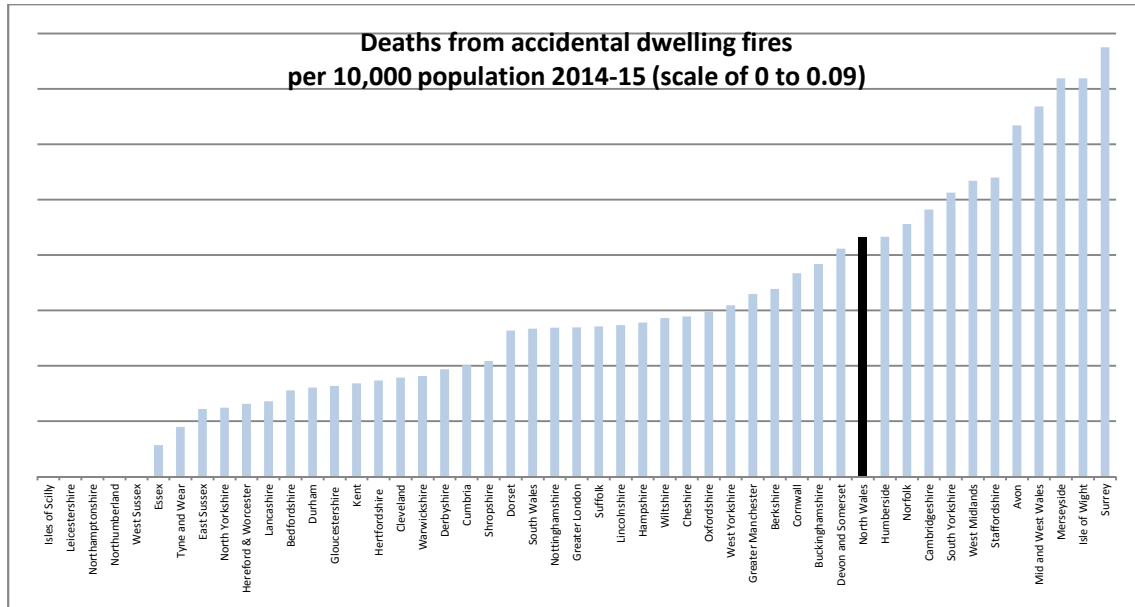
¹⁴ Fire Statistics 2014-15 published 30/07/2014 by the Welsh Government. Table 6. <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/fire-statistics/?lang=en>

The number of chimney fires has been falling in Wales, too, with a particularly sharp reduction in North Wales in 2013-14. However, the frequency of chimney fires does tend to follow weather patterns, with increases during periods of colder weather.

CHIMNEY FIRES				
	North Wales	Mid & West Wales	South Wales	Wales
2001-02	439	276	181	896
2002-03	357	291	123	771
2003-04	291	288	124	703
2004-05	288	246	120	654
2005-06	280	278	111	669
2006-07	268	241	86	595
2007-08	279	254	87	620
2008-09	380	326	106	812
2009-10	351	330	109	790
2010-11	325	337	109	771
2011-12	254	260	101	615
2012-13 (r)	319	340	112	771
2013-14 (p)	212	265	101	578
2014-15 (p)	217	220	112	549

Comparing our performance in reducing the number of people killed or injured in accidental dwelling fires:

Deaths from accidental dwelling fires are rare but tragic occurrences. The rate in North Wales was 0.04 per 10,000 population in 2014-15. The highest rate in England and Wales was 0.08 per 10,000 population.



For the third year in succession, there was a low number of deaths in North Wales that arose from accidental dwelling fires – the first time that such a low number has been recorded in three successive years, which is very encouraging.

North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of deaths arising from accidental dwelling fires.	10	6	3	3	2

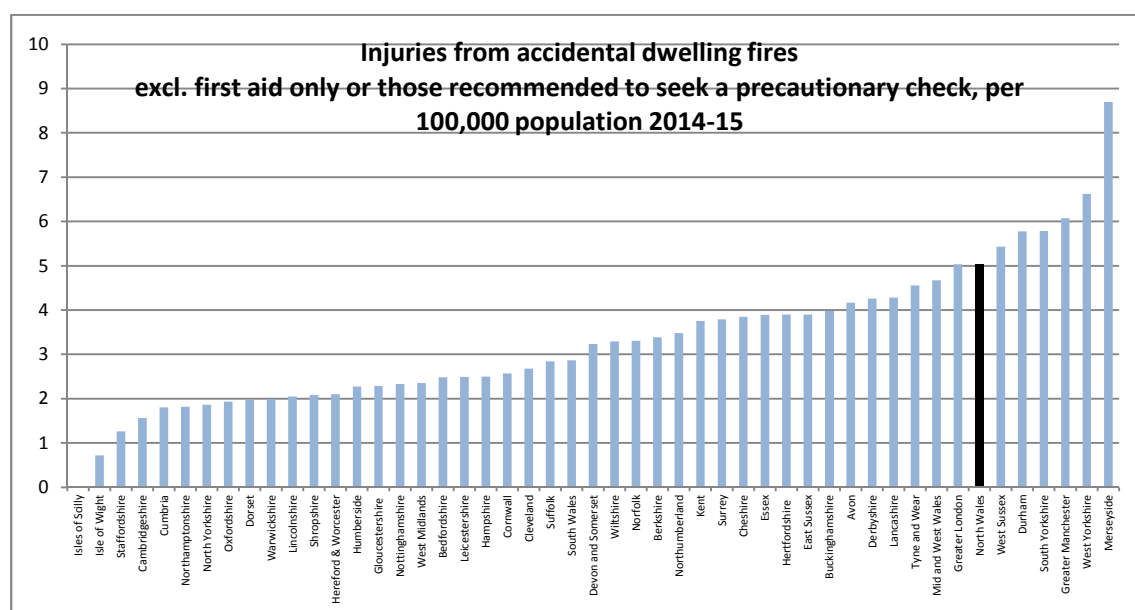
Serious injuries from accidental dwelling fires are also comparatively rare. For consistency after September 2009 across the UK, fire casualties have been recorded under four categories of severity:

- i) the victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be serious;*
- ii) the victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be slight;*
- iii) the victim was given first aid at the scene only, but required no further treatment;*
- iv) a precautionary check was recommended – the person was sent to hospital or advised to see a doctor as a precaution, but having no obvious injury or distress.*

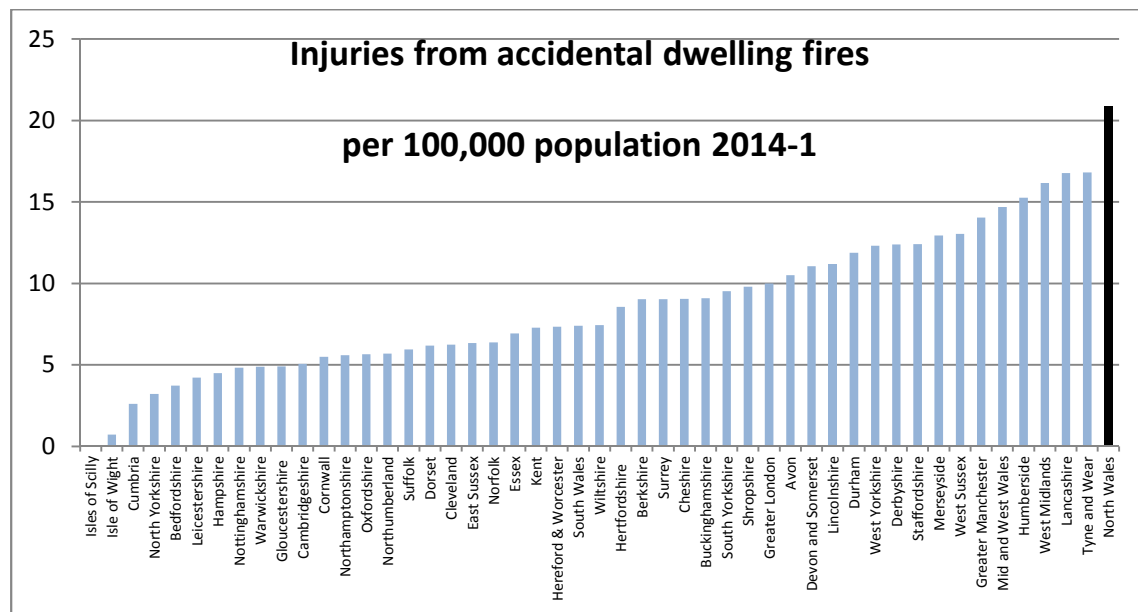
In 2014-15, two people were taken to hospital after being involved in an accidental fire in a dwelling with what was recorded as serious fire-related injuries. A further thirty-five people were taken to hospital with what was recorded as slight injuries.

North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of casualties from accidental dwelling fires who were sent to hospital with serious or slight injuries.	53	34	45	58	35

Although these numbers may appear low compared to the number of hospitalised fire casualties being recorded elsewhere in England and Wales, the 5 casualties per 100,000 population in North Wales appears high.



If calculated on the basis of all four categories of casualty, the figure for North Wales rises to 21 casualties per 100,000 population – higher than any other area in England and Wales.



Understanding the reasons why the number of casualties being recorded in accidental dwelling fires in North Wales is not showing the same pattern of improvement will be key to securing improvement in future.

We would have expected to see a pattern of reduction in the number of casualties because the number of accidental dwelling fires has fallen and other relevant factors are showing very good results:

1. Safe escapes

The percentage of people in accidental dwelling fires who were able to escape both unharmed and without needing assistance from a fire crew to do so is consistently high:

North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The percentage of people in accidental dwelling fires who were able to escape unharmed without needing assistance from a fire crew to do so.	82%	78%	77%	79%	86%

2. Fire Spread

The majority of accidental dwelling fires do not spread any further than the room where they started:

North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The percentage of accidental dwelling fires that were confined to the room of origin	91%	92%	91%	92%	89%

3. Home Fire Safety Checks

Since 2004/05, we and our partner agencies have delivered over 250,000 Home Fire Safety Checks in North Wales, fitting smoke alarms with 10-year batteries in the majority of those homes.

We initially aimed to deliver 30,000 Home Fire Safety Checks in 2014/15, with 30% following referral from partner agencies. However, extended periods of industrial action affected our performance during the year, resulting in our missing the target by 2,648. Nevertheless, 36% of the 27,352 that we did deliver were to people who had been specifically referred to us by partner agencies.

4. Smoke alarm ownership

The percentage of dwelling fires where a working smoke alarm was in place to give the occupants early warning of a fire developing is very high indeed. The latest published figures¹⁵ on the presence and operational status of smoke alarms in dwelling fires in Great Britain show that there was no smoke alarm present in almost one third of dwelling fires. In North Wales, this is significantly lower:

¹⁵ Fire Statistics: Great Britain April 2012 to March 2013, figure 2.4. Published in June 2014.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/313590/Fire_statistics_Great_Britain_2012-13_final_version_.pdf

North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The percentage of dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm:					
• had been fitted and it actuated	61.50%	60.57%	59.43%	58.77%	65.3%
• had been fitted but it did not actuate (usually because the fire did not reach as far as the detector)	22.06%	24.34%	25.96%	25.05%	22.83%
• had not been fitted.	16.45%	15.09%	14.60%	16.18%	11.87%

5. Targeted home safety advice

As an indicator of the correct targeting of our advice to householders on how to stay safe if they were faced with a fire in their home, we also match up the addresses where we provided a home fire safety check and the addresses where we later attended a fire. In 2014-15, of the 438 dwelling fires we attended, 116 (26.5%) had received a free check during the two years prior to the fire.

North Wales	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
The number of fires in dwellings where a Home Fire Safety Check had been provided 2 years or less before the date of the fire.	134	164	145	148	116

Assessing our performance

Our objective at the beginning of 2014-15 was to help to keep people and communities safe by preventing deaths and injuries from accidental fires in living accommodation.

Assessing our performance in reducing accidental dwelling fires

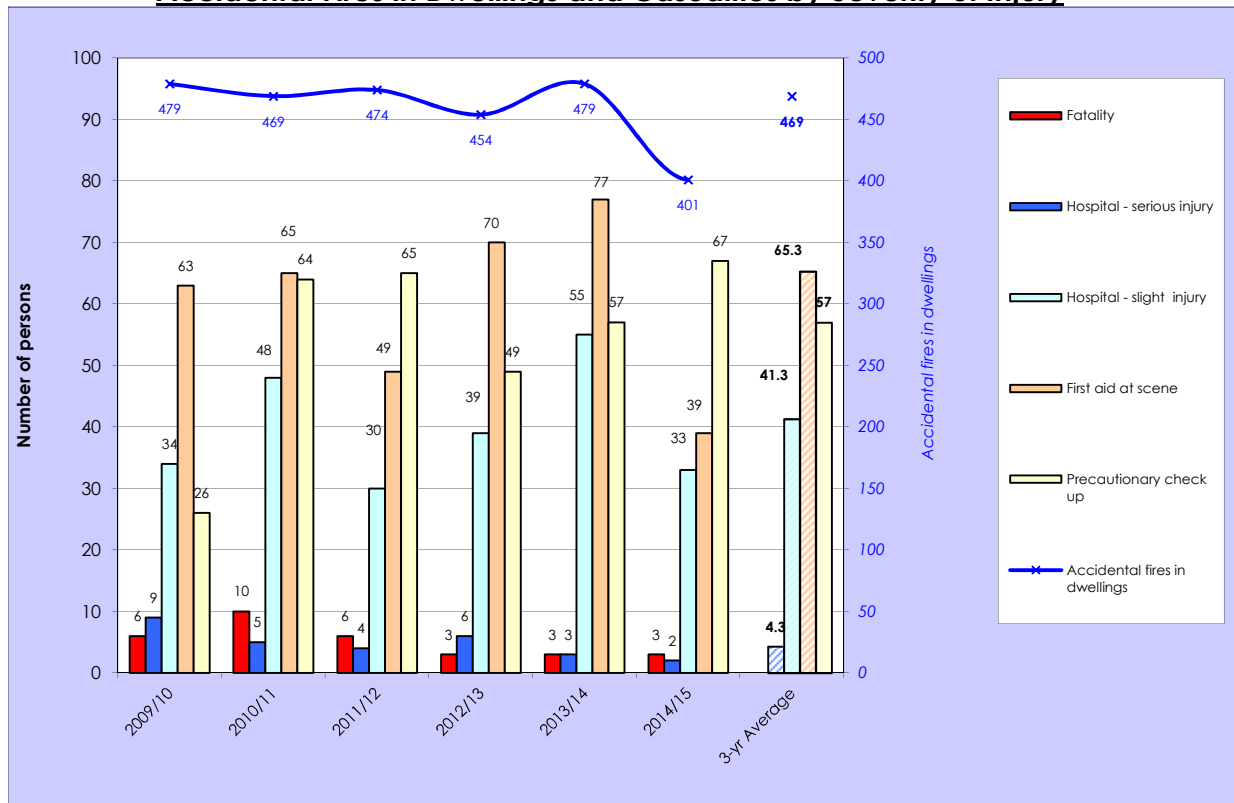
The 16% reduction in accidental dwelling fires was significantly better than in previous years and greater than the overall rate of reduction for England and Wales. However, the incidence per 10,000 dwellings remains relatively high, which suggest that more needs to be done in terms of prevention.

We know from our own analysis that the majority of accidental dwelling fires start in the kitchen or the living room. We also know that the majority of accidental dwelling fire injuries are sustained in either the kitchen or the living room. Our campaigns to raise awareness of cooking fires and our targeted messaging around home fire safety should help to reduce these in future.

Assessing our performance in reducing casualties of accidental dwelling fires

We are pleased that we were able to maintain low levels of fire deaths (3) and serious fire injuries (2) from accidental dwelling fires during 2014-15.

Accidental Fires in Dwellings and Casualties by Severity of Injury



We also saw a reduction in the number of people recorded as having been sent to hospital with slight fire injuries or having received first aid at the scene of the fire. The number of people given, or advised to seek a check-up as a precaution increased again after two consecutive years with lower numbers.

The total number of casualties sent to hospital (35) is not high from a population of 691,986, but nevertheless the impact of a dwelling fire on a family and on a community can be great, and reducing the number of people injured in them remains a high priority for the Authority.

The indicators relating to people who escaped unharmed and unaided from dwelling fires, fires confined to the room of origin and smoke alarm ownership are consistently good. The latter indicator is particularly good, showing that our messages about maintaining working smoke alarms have been taken up by the majority of the North Wales population.

Improvement Objective 2

To implement a 3-year financial plan for 2014/15 to 2016/17 that funds the current level of service, but that aims to limit the cost of doing so to the equivalent of an extra £1 per head of population.

Why was this objective chosen?

The Authority's annual budget had stayed the same since 2010/11, which had meant lowering the Service's annual running costs by £2.45million. This had been achieved mainly through 'internal' cutbacks that were largely imperceptible to service users.

This objective sought to balance the need to maintain a level of service but also acknowledged the forecast financial pressures on the six unitary authorities in North Wales that fund the majority of the Authority's operations. In 2014/15, this meant freezing the budget for a fourth year and moving £1million into a general reserve which could be used to cover any overspend which might arise through increased activity.

What was the expected outcome?

To maintain the existing level of service, and providing that there was no increase in activity, the Authority anticipated that it would be able to manage within the parameters of a frozen budget. However, should there be an increase in activity then general reserve, would be available as a fall-back position.

What new actions were planned for 2014-15?

1. Workforce planning including forecasting of demand and supply.
2. A review of the turnover profile of the operational workforce to identify strategies for reducing cost.
3. Focusing on minimising budgetary increases and continuing to identify efficiencies within the Service.
4. Finding ways of identifying the financial impact of different methods of providing fire cover in rural areas.

Reporting would be through budget reports and financial information presented to the Authority.

WAS THE 2014-15 OBJECTIVE 2 ACHIEVED?

Yes. Contributions from the county councils for the 2014-15 year remained at £31,772,011, the equivalent of £46 per head of population.

£	Contribution 2011/12	Contribution 2012/13	Contribution 2013/14	Contribution 2014/15	Contribution 2015/16
Anglesey	3,236,545	3,219,270	3,216,231	3,198,669	3,200,523
Gwynedd	5,588,685	5,525,827	5,507,985	5,588,255	5,602,787
Conwy	5,240,568	5,206,959	5,198,570	5,283,704	5,289,891
Denbighshire	4,549,039	4,569,316	4,593,630	4,342,155	4,360,740
Flintshire	7,051,716	6,981,590	6,955,089	7,018,721	7,033,548
Wrexham	6,266,101	6,269,049	6,300,506	6,340,507	6,398,354
TOTAL	31,932,654	31,772,011	31,772,011	31,772,011	31,885,843
Cost per head of population	£47	£46	£46	£46	£46

A detailed report was presented by the Treasurer to the Fire and Rescue Authority at its meeting on 15 June 2015. This report is available from: <http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/fire-and-rescue-authority/meetings/2015/6/15/2015-june-fra-meeting.aspx?lang=en>

Improvement Objective 3

To ensure that North Wales gets the best possible level of service within financial constraints, use a variety of management solutions to optimise fire and rescue cover in the area.

What was the expected outcome?

Sustainable and affordable fire and rescue service provision that could continue to cope with fluctuating and unpredictable levels of demand.

What new actions were planned for 2014-15?

1. The introduction of a new recruitment strategy for operational personnel that uses flexible contracts.

This was achieved. Flexible (WDS Rural) contracts were introduced and a new recruitment and selection policy was adopted.

2. A review of the resilience requirements for 24-hour shift and day crewed fire stations to ensure that medium term sickness absence had a minimal impact on crewing levels.
3. Seeking to improve the availability strategy for operational crews.

This was achieved. The resilience review was completed and confirmed that the resilience requirement for each station was consistent with the system in place. Some opportunities for improvement were highlighted, and recommendations were made ensure future success.

4. A review of specialist rescues, equipment and associated training provided by the Service to ensure that there was no overprovision in the area, and, working with partners, explore the possibility of alternative providers.

This was achieved. Reviews of specialist rescue equipment were undertaken. Servicing packages for the equipment were reviewed and renewed with improved costs and efficiencies as well as more robust asset management. Improvements were also introduced to improve monitoring of the testing regime.

5. Further improvement of the Service's use of technology to manage availability of stations, potentially expanding this to include all operational duty systems within a single availability system.

This was achieved. Research was undertaken into specific computer software system but costs were found to be too high. Other alternatives will be explored.

SECTION 4

The Dwelling Fires Response Charter in 2014-15

During 2012 the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities jointly developed an all-Wales Charter to ensure that wherever people live in Wales they can expect to be helped and supported to remain safe from fire in their homes and that if a fire does break out that they will receive a prompt, effective and professional emergency response to their call for assistance.

The Charter makes seven specific commitments that the Fire and Rescue Authority will:

1. Take the lead in driving down the number of dwelling fires that occur and in reducing their impact on people.
2. React quickly and efficiently every time we receive an emergency 999 call to attend a dwelling fire.
3. Attend dwelling fires swiftly and properly equipped to deal with them.
4. Deal with dwelling fires effectively, efficiently and professionally.
5. Help to restore normality to communities in the aftermath of dwelling fires.
6. Investigate the causes of dwelling fires and hold relevant people to account when appropriate to do so.
7. Strive to maintain high standards and improve aspects of what we do.

The following pages provide information about our compliance with these commitments during 2014-15.

We propose, for consistency, to use a standard narrative for reporting against the Charter each year, and only updating the figures within that narrative framework.

1. We will take the lead in driving down the number of dwelling fires that occur and in reducing their impact on people.

We are committed to taking the lead in maintaining a downward trend in the incidence of dwelling fires and associated casualties in Wales.

In 2014-15 we provided advice and encouragement to people on how they can prevent fires from starting in their home and how they can keep themselves safe from fire. Our prevention activity included delivering 27,352 Home Fire Safety Checks to householders, 237 talks to school pupils at Key Stage 1, 236 at Key Stage 2, and 43 at Key Stages 3 and 4.

During 2014-15 we attended 401 accidental dwelling fires, where 3 people were killed and another 35 people sustained injuries.

Also during 2014-15 we attended 37 dwelling fires that had been started deliberately, where 1 person was killed and 4 people were injured.

The trend in the number of dwelling fires in the FRA area over the past five years is showing a steady decline.

The trend in the number of people being killed or injured in dwelling fires in the North Wales FRA area over the past five years is showing a gradual decrease.

2. We will react quickly and efficiently every time we receive an emergency 999 call to attend a dwelling fire.

We are committed to reacting quickly and efficiently when emergency 999/112 calls are put through to us by the operator.

Our emergency fire control facility remains available permanently, with special arrangements in place for a seamless transfer of calls from one control facility to another in the event of serious disruption or a surge in the number of calls coming in at the same time.

Sophisticated mapping and electronic systems help us to: a) identify the location of the reported incident and b) send the most appropriate available resource to attend the incident.

In 2014-15, we handled a total of 12,722 emergency 999/112 calls. We answered XX% of those calls within 7 seconds, XX% within 10 seconds and XX% within 20 seconds.

In 2014-15, we were also able to obtain enough information about the emergency incident to alert the appropriate initial response within a matter of seconds. However, we know that the speed of call handling – although important - is not the only relevant yardstick. Knowing where our services are needed requires specialist skills to effectively glean information from callers who may, for example, be unfamiliar with the area they are in, be frightened or in distress, be very young, or have communication or language difficulties to contend with.

Another important skill is recognising when a caller is abusing the 999/112 system by falsely claiming that there is an emergency when, in fact, there is not. It is a criminal offence to knowingly make false calls to the emergency services. Sadly, that does not seem to deter a minority of people who tie up the 999 lines and divert services away from people who may be in a genuinely life-threatening situation. Every time we turn out to one of these malicious false alarms it wastes both time and money and places the rest of the community at higher risk.

In 2014-15, we received 194 malicious false alarms. In 60.3% of cases, we were able to establish that these calls were not genuine and so avoided needlessly mobilising resources to attend.

3. We will attend dwelling fires swiftly and properly equipped to deal with them.

Once we have answered the emergency 999/112 call and allocated the most appropriate resources to make up the initial attendance at the incident, our next priority is to get to the incident quickly, safely and properly equipped to deal with it.

In 2014-15 we responded to 18% of dwelling fires within 1-5 minutes, 50% within 5-10 minutes, 20% within 10-15 minutes and 12% in over 15 minutes. These times include the time it takes for personnel to turn in to the fire station as well as the travel time, so a number of things can affect the speed of response figures, including the urban/rural geography and the nature of road networks in the area.

Speed of response to dwelling fires is extremely important, but we cannot over-emphasise the importance of preventing those fires from happening in the first instance, and of having at least one working smoke alarm fitted and a pre-planned escape route in case a fire does occur. However, if a dwelling fire has occurred, we ensure that our firefighting crews are properly equipped to deal with it.

We equip our firefighters with high quality personal protective equipment and firefighting equipment. We require them to be operationally fit and healthy and we make sure that their skills are routinely tested and exercised. We also routinely check that the way our crews dealt with incidents was in accordance with accepted firefighting procedures.

We take the safety of our firefighters very seriously, given the nature of the work that they undertake. In 2014-15 our crews attended 2,244 fires in a variety of different types of premises and at outdoor locations. Whilst fighting those fires, 12 operational staff received an injury. For some, the injury was slight, but for others the injury was sufficiently serious that it meant that they had to take time off to recover. In total, 144 working days/shifts (including programmed rest days) were lost as a result of personal injuries sustained either when travelling to or from a fire or when at the scene of the fire. It is rare that firefighters sustain serious injuries – of the total above, two were classed as a ‘major’ injuries under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

4. We will deal with dwelling fires effectively, efficiently and professionally.

We are committed to dealing with fires effectively, efficiently and professionally. To this end, we equip our highly trained fire crews with the right skills, knowledge, information, firefighting equipment and command support so that whatever the circumstances of the dwelling fire, they will be correctly prepared to deal with it.

In 2014-15, of all the accidental dwelling fires that we attended, 89.3% were successfully contained within the room of origin, without spreading any further. Although a number of factors could contribute to this statistic that would be outside the control of the attending crews (such as how long it took for someone to discover the fire in the first instance, whether or not internal doors had been shut to help prevent the spread of the fire, and how far away from a fire station the dwelling was located), we still consider this to be a reasonable indicator of our firefighting success.

We recognise the importance of research and equipment improvements, and ensure that we invest time and effort in staying in touch with the latest developments.

We also take very seriously the professional image of the fire and rescue service. We place great emphasis on the personal qualities and attributes of all our operational staff, as well as their physical and psychological fitness and the high standard of their operational and management training.

We encourage all our staff to adhere to a set of core values that was adopted nationally by the UK fire and rescue service and that expresses our commitment to valuing service to the community, people, diversity and improvement.

5. We will help to restore normality to communities in the aftermath of dwelling fires.

We are committed to helping to restore normality to communities in the aftermath of dwelling fires.

A fire in the home can leave people feeling extremely vulnerable. When people have lost their possessions, they will have need of practical as well as emotional support. When people have been injured or killed in the fire, the experience can affect whole communities as well as the individual and his or her immediate friends and family.

For this reason, the Fire and Rescue Service's role in supporting communities does not end when the fire has been extinguished and everyone has been accounted for.

In all cases, the cause of the fire will be investigated and carefully recorded. Every detail of how and where the fire started, how far it spread, any special circumstances, any particular factors that contributed to the fire will be recorded as a source of future learning, research and monitoring.

If there are reasons to believe that a fire was started deliberately in a dwelling, either by someone living there or by someone else, this will be followed up with the Police and other relevant agencies.

In some premises, such as blocks of flats or houses occupied by a number of different tenants, the post-incident investigations might indicate that a landlord had failed to ensure the necessary level of fire safety. Our specialist fire investigators might then be involved in a criminal investigation and court proceedings.

If a fire is found to have started accidentally, we might undertake some form of community safety activity or campaign in the vicinity, offering advice and reassurance by way of free Home Fire Safety Checks.

6. We will investigate the causes of dwelling fires and hold relevant people to account when appropriate to do so.

We always investigate the causes of dwelling fires. In many cases the cause and origin of a fire will be very clear and straightforward, but in others a more in-depth, forensic investigation will be required to ascertain the most likely cause of the fire. Only in a small minority of instances is the cause 'unknown'. In 2014-15, **XXX** dwelling fires were recorded as having an unknown cause.

If crime is suspected, the investigation of the fire will be conducted with the Police. People suspected of deliberately setting fire to a dwelling are likely to face criminal prosecution, although in some cases this may not be the only course of action available – for example if the fire has been started by a young child or by a person attempting suicide.

In 2014-15 we attended 438 fires in dwellings, of which 37 were found to have been started deliberately.

In some residential premises, such as flats and houses of multiple occupation, the communal and shared areas are covered by regulations that require whoever is responsible for those premises (such as the landlord or the premises manager) to have good fire safety arrangements in place. Failure to do so can lead to the closure of the premises and prosecution of the responsible person with the prospect of imprisonment and/or unlimited fines.

As an enforcing authority, we ensure that responsible persons fulfil their obligations under this legislation, and can select from a range of enforcement options available to us, depending on the seriousness and risk posed by the contravention.

In 2014-15 we served 6 Enforcement Notices, 4 Prohibition Notices and 1 Formal Caution. No prosecutions were concluded during the year.

7. We will strive to maintain high standards and improve aspects of what we do.

We continuously strive to maintain high standards and improve aspects of what we do.

Under legislation, Fire and Rescue Authorities are classed as 'Welsh Improvement Authorities' and are expected to routinely review and continuously improve their own performance through a formal process of setting, implementing and reporting against annual improvement objectives.

We do not limit our improvement activity to this formal annual process, however, as high standards and continual improvement form an integral part of our everyday running of the Fire and Rescue Service.

Examples of improvement activities that go on include:

- Continuously reviewing organisational performance and effectiveness to identify opportunities to improve
- Responding positively to peer reviews, audits and inspections
- Responding positively to consultation responses, feedback from stakeholders, complaints and compliments
- Learning from our experiences, such as from post-incident debriefs, reports of accidents or 'near misses'
- Contributing to working groups, sharing good practice, and learning from research undertaken
- Taking opportunities to learn from - and with- other organisations through partnerships, committees, boards and professional associations
- Planning for potential challenges to maintaining our operations, such as through business continuity management processes
- Planning for potential challenges to future service delivery, such as through local resilience forums

- Continuously developing the technical and professional skills of our staff

Maintaining and renewing our physical and computerised assets such as our equipment, vehicles, buildings and technology

Health and Safety in 2014-15

North Wales Fire and Rescue treats the health and safety of its staff very seriously. We are pleased to report that 2014-15 saw a reduction in the number of injuries sustained by operational staff.

	2013-14	2014-15
The number of operational staff injuries sustained at fires, non-fire incidents and during training for operational incidents.	46	37
'Over 7 day' injuries	10	3
RIDDOR major injuries	1	2
Total working days lost following injury	855*	208

*This includes 244 duty days lost during 2013/14 following an injury sustained in the previous year.

There were no fatal injuries during the year. As a comparison, statistics published by the Health and Safety Executive¹⁶ on the number of workers fatally injured in Britain in 2013-14 reported 0.44 deaths per 100,000 workers. The highest rate of fatal injuries was seen in the agricultural sector, with 8.7 deaths per 100,000 workers.

¹⁶HSE Statistics on fatal injuries in the workplace 2014. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/pdf/fatalinjuries.pdf>

SECTION 5

WHAT OTHERS SAID ABOUT US IN 2014-15

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit Annual Statement of Assurance 2014-15 was presented to the Authority at its meeting in June 2015.

The internal audit opinion was that North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority had adequate and effective control processes to manage its achievement of the Authority's objectives for the 12 month period to 31st March 2015.

There were no critical or major category recommendations that Internal Audit considered were not receiving adequate management attention. Reports were presented to the Audit Committee of the Fire and Rescue Authority in June 2015. These are available from <http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/fire-and-rescue-authority/meetings/2015/6/1/audit-committee-meeting-010615.aspx?lang=en>

Audits were completed of:

Payroll – HR and payroll administration of starters and leavers.

Audit Opinion: Satisfactory

Fuel Management – Procedures for refuelling and fuel usage of vehicle fleet.

Audit Opinion: Satisfactory

Home Fire Safety Checks – Management of referrals from partner organisations and information sharing protocols.

Audit Opinion: Satisfactory

Rhyl Community Fire Station – Management of business processes including room hire by external groups.

Audit Opinion: Satisfactory

Recommendations made by the Internal Audit Service following the 2014-15 Audits have been translated into action plans for further improvement.

Wales Audit Office – Annual Improvement Report

The annual improvement report published in August 2015 is available from:
<http://audit.wales/publication/north-wales-fire-and-rescue-authority-annual-improvement-report-2014-15>

SECTION 6

OTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT DETAILS

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St Asaph Business Park
St Asaph
Denbighshire
LL17 0JJ

Telephone: 01745 535250

Website: www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004** came into effect in October 2004, replacing the previous Fire and Rescue Services Act 1947 in England and Wales.

It clarifies the duties and powers of Fire and Rescue Authorities to:

- Promote fire safety
 - Fight fires
 - Protect people and property from fires
 - Rescue people from road traffic accidents
 - Respond to other specified risks, such as chemical incidents
 - Respond to large scale emergencies such as terrorist attacks
- **The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2012 Onwards** was published by the Welsh Government in March 2012, replacing the previous 2008-11 Framework. This document sets out the Welsh Government's vision and priorities for Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales.

- **The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009** came into effect from 1st April 2010. It created a statutory regime that integrates shorter term local service improvement and long term community planning. Specific guidance relating to the improvement element (Part 1) for fire and rescue services was issued by the Assembly in May 2010.
- The **Fire and Rescue Authorities (Improvement Plans) (Wales) Order 2012** came into force on May 21st 2012. It requires fire and rescue authorities to publish their improvement plan as soon as reasonably practicable after 31 December in the year prior to the financial year to which the improvement plan relates.
- The **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** came into effect in October 2006, replacing over 70 pieces of fire safety law. It applies to all non-domestic premises in England and Wales, including the communal parts of blocks of flats and houses in multiple occupation. It abolished the requirement for businesses to have fire certificates and put the onus on the person responsible for the premises to address fire safety in those premises.
- The **Equality Act 2010** replaced over 100 pieces of equality law. The General Duty and specific duties for the public sector in Wales came into force in April 2011. Listed bodies (including Fire and Rescue Authorities) had until April 2012 to publish equality objectives and Strategic Equality Plans.
- The **Civil Contingencies Act 2004** provides a single framework for civil protection to large scale emergencies that threaten serious damage to human welfare, the environment or to security. Fire and Rescue Services are 'Category 1' responders under this act.
- **Welsh Government Fire and Armed Forces Branch**
The responsibility for providing fire and rescue services and promoting fire safety in Wales was devolved to the National Assembly for Wales on 10 November 2004. The Community Safety division of the Welsh Assembly Government is based at Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ.
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/safety/?lang=en>

- **Wales Audit Office**

The Wales Audit Office publishes reports on behalf of the Auditor General who is required to assess the likelihood that the Authority will continue to improve and whether the Authority is discharging its duties and acting in accordance with relevant issued guidance. Auditors also work with fire authorities across Wales to deliver a programme of financial and value-for-money audits. <http://audit.wales/>

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- **External information sources used in compiling this document**

Great Britain Statistics on fatal injuries in the workplace 2014.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-statistics-great-britain-2012-to-2013>

England Fire statistics monitor: April 2014 to March 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-monitor-april-2014-to-march-2015>

Wales Fire Statistics 2014-15.

<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/fire-statistics/?lang=en>

Stats Wales <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue>

CIPFA Fire and Rescue Statistics 2015

www.cipfa.org.uk

- **Periods of industrial action by firefighters during 2013-14**

25 September (12:00-16:00)

13 December (18:00-22:00)

01 November (18:30-23:00)

14 December (18:00-22:00)

04 November (06:00-08:00)

24 December (19:00-00:00)

13 November (10:00-14:00)

31 December (18:30-00:30 on 01 Jan)

03 January (06:30-08:30)

- **Periods of industrial action by firefighters during 2014-15**

02 May (12:00 – 17:00)

21 June 2014 (10:00 – 17:00)

03 May (14:00 – 02:00 on 04 May)

10 July (10:00 – 19:00)

04 May (10:00 – 15:00)

14 – 21 July (discontinuous)

12 June (09:00 – 09:00 on 13 June)

09 – 16 August (discontinuous)

INTERVENTION IN THE EVENT OF FAILURE OR POTENTIAL FAILURE TO COMPLY

The Welsh Government has powers of intervention:

- under section 22 of the **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004** if it considers that a Fire and Rescue Authority is failing, or is likely to fail, to act in accordance with the National Framework. In such cases, section 23 - Intervention Protocol would apply.
- under section 29 of the **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009** if it considers that a Fire and Rescue Authority is failing, or is at risk of failing, to comply with the Measure. However, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, Welsh Ministers may only intervene after they have offered voluntary support to the Authority under section 28 of the Measure.

NEXT STEPS IN RELATION TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) MEASURE 2009

Date	Action
October 2015 to January 2016	Public consultation period for the draft Improvement Objectives for 2016-17
By March 2016	The Authority publishes its Improvement Plan 2016-17
2016	Wales Audit Office publishes an Annual Improvement Report for North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority that summarises and reports on all the work it has carried out, including its audit of the Authority's own assessment of its performance in 2014-15 and the statutory performance indicators for that year. http://audit.wales
By 31 October 2016	The Authority publishes this assessment of its own performance in 2015-16 and the statutory performance indicators for that year.

CONSULTATIONS

	Consultation	Publication	For year
Full Risk Reduction Plan (principles)	Summer 2009		
Full Risk Reduction and Improvement Plan (detailed)	Summer 2010	October 2010	2011-12
Annual Action Plan	Summer 2011	October 2011	2012-13
Improvement Objectives for 2013-14 and outlining preparations for 2014-15	Autumn 2012	March 2013	2013-14
Improvement Objectives for 2014-15 including new financial strategy	Autumn 2013	March 2014	2014-15
Improvement Objectives for 2015-16	Autumn 2014	March 2015	2015-16
Improvement Objectives for 2016-17	Autumn 2015	March 2016	2016-17

SECTION 7

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Year	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
NATIONAL STRATEGIC INDICATORS					
RRC/S/001i N Total number of fires	3,297	3,165	2,349	2,416	2,244
RRC/S/001i D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 10,000 population	48.57	46.65	34.12	34.99	32.43
RRC/S/001ii N Total number of all primary fires	1,346	1,299	1,143	1,117	1,063
RRC/S/001ii D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 10,000 population	19.83	19.15	16.60	16.18	15.86
RRC/S/001iii N Total number of accidental fires in dwellings	469	474	454	479	401
RRC/S/001iii D Total number of dwellings in FRA area	305,583	317,051	318,404	319,771	321,061
per 10,000 dwellings	15.35	14.95	14.26	14.98	12.49
RRC/S/001iv N Total number of all deliberate fires	1,438	1,370	835	792	724
RRC/S/001iv D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 10,000 population	21.19	20.19	12.13	11.47	10.46
RRC/S/002i N Total number of fire deaths	10	8	8	3	6
RRC/S/002i D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	1.47	1.18	1.16	0.43	0.87
RRC/S/002ii N Total number of accidental fire deaths	10	8	3	3	5
RRC/S/002ii D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	1.47	1.18	0.44	0.43	0.72

Year	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
RRC/S/002iii N Total number of deaths caused by fires started deliberately	0	0	5	0	1
RRC/S/002iii D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	0.00	0.00	0.73	0.00	0.14
RRC/S/002iv N Total number of fire injuries (excluding precautionary checks)	97	64	60	101	53
RRC/S/002iv D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	14.29	9.43	8.72	14.63	7.66
RRC/S/002v N Total number of injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started accidentally	86	56	55	80	48
RRC/S/002v D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	12.67	8.25	7.99	11.59	6.94
RRC/S/002vi N Injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started deliberately	11	8	5	21	5
RRC/S/002vi D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	1.62	1.18	0.73	3.04	0.72
RRC/S/003 N Number of fires in non-domestic premises	229	215	147	115	139
RRC/S/003 D Number of non-domestic premises in FRA area	27,419	27,484	27,759	28,083	28,334
per 1,000 population	8.35	7.82	5.30	4.10	4.91
RRC/C/006 Number of fires homes in which a HFSC and/or associated risk reduction activity had taken place within two years before the fire. <i>(Reference RRC/S/004iv in 2012-13 and 2013-14)</i>	134	164	145	148	116

Year	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
CORE INDICATORS					
RRC/C/001i N Deaths caused by fires started accidentally in dwellings	10	6	3	3	3
RRC/C/001i D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	1.47	0.88	0.44	0.43	0.43
RRC/C/001ii1 N Deaths caused by fires started deliberately in dwellings	0	0	5	0	1
RRC/C/001ii D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	0.00	0.00	0.73	0.00	0.14
RRC/C/001iii N Deaths caused by fires started accidentally in non-domestic premises	0	0	0	0	1
RRC/C/001iii D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14
RRC/C/001iv N Deaths caused by fires started deliberately in non-domestic premises	0	0	0	0	0
RRC/C/001iv D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
RRC/C/001v N Injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started accidentally in dwellings	53	34	45	58	35
RRC/C/001v D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	7.81	5.01	6.54	8.40	5.06
RRC/C/001vi N Injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started deliberately in dwellings	9	4	3	8	4
RRC/C/001vi D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	1.33	0.59	0.44	1.16	0.58
RRC/C/001vii N Injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started accidentally in non-domestic premises	14	3	2	2	3
RRC/C/001vii D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	2.06	0.44	0.29	0.29	0.43

Year	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
RRC/C/001viii N Injuries (excluding precautionary checks) arising from fires started deliberately in non-domestic premises	1	0	0	8	0
RRC/C/001viii D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 100,000 population	0.15	0.00	0.00	1.16	0.00
RRC/C/002i N Total number of malicious false alarms received	491	538	473	382	194
RRC/C/002i D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 1,000 population	0.72	0.79	0.69	0.55	0.28
RRC/C/002ii N Total number of malicious false alarms not attended	373	405	367	305	117
RRC/C/002ii D Total number of malicious false alarms received	491	538	473	382	194
% of the total that were not attended	75.97%	75.28%	77.59%	79.84%	60.31%
RRC/C/002iii N Total number of malicious false alarms attended	118	133	106	77	77
RRC/C/002iii D Total number of malicious false alarms received	491	538	473	382	194
% of the total that were not attended	24.03%	24.72%	22.41%	20.16%	39.69%
RRC/C/003 N Total number of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection and alarm systems in non-domestic premises	1,322	1,411	1,350	1,211	1,250
RRC/C/003 D Number of non-domestic premises within FRA area	27,419	27,484	27,759	28,083	28,334
per 1,000 non-domestic premises	48.21	51.34	48.63	43.12	44.12
RRC/C/004i N Number of deliberate primary fires	373	367	286	243	222
RRC/C/004i D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 10,000 population	5.50	5.41	4.15	3.52	3.21
RRCC/004ii N Number of deliberate secondary fires	1,065	1,003	549	549	502
RRC/C/004ii D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 10,000 population	15.69	14.78	7.97	7.95	7.25

Year	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
RRCC/004iii N Number of deliberate fires in dwellings <i>(new data requirement for 2011-12)</i>	66	56	39	40	37
RRCC/004iii D Number of dwellings in FRA area <i>(new data requirement for 2011-12)</i>	305,583	317,051	318,404	319,771	321,061
Per 10,000 dwellings <i>(new data requirement for 2011-12)</i>	2.16	1.77	1.22	1.25	1.15
RRC/C/005i N Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm and/or other fire detection equipment had actuated	329	321	293	305	286
RRC/C/005i D Total number of dwelling fires attended	535	530	493	519	438
% where alarm actuated	61.50%	60.57%	59.43%	58.77%	65.3%
RRC/C/005ii N Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm and/or other fire detection equipment was fitted but did not actuate	118	129	128	130	100
RRC/C/005ii D Total number of dwelling fires attended	535	530	493	519	438
% where alarm fitted but did not actuate	22.06%	24.34%	25.96%	25.05%	22.83%
RRC/C/005iii N Dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm and/or other fire detection equipment was not fitted	88	80	72	84	52
RRC/C/005iii D Total number of dwelling fires attended	535	530	493	519	438
% where no alarm fitted	16.45%	15.09%	14.60%	16.18%	11.87%
CHR/ C/004i N The total number of FTE working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by all staff (excluding RDS staff)	3,259	3,969	4,530	4,423	4,293
CHR/ C/004i D The average number of all staff (excluding RDS) as FTE	459.00	445.91	429.53	416.10	416.49
days/shifts lost per person	7.10	8.90	10.5	10.6	10.3
CHR/ C/004ii N The total number of FTE working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by wholetime uniformed staff	1,963	2,261	2,433	2,399	2,389
CHR/ C/004ii D The average number of wholetime uniformed staff as FTE	290	277.50	262.00	247.00	245.75
days/shifts lost per person	6.80	8.15	9.3	9.7	9.7

Year	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
CHR/ C/004iii N The total number of FTE working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by control staff	227	276	259	242	189
CHR/ C/004iii D The average number of control staff as FTE	28.57	28.23	28.50	28.5	27.25
days/shifts lost per person	7.90	9.78	9.1	8.5	6.9
CHR/ C/004iv N The total number of FTE working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by non-operational staff	1,069	1,432	1,838	1,782	1,715
CHR/ C/004iv D The average number of non-operational staff as FTE	141	140.18	139.03	140.6	143.49
days/shifts lost per person	7.60	10.22	13.2	12.7	12.0
CHR/ C/005i N Total number of ill health retirements	11	11	7	9	1
CHR/ C/005i D Average number of total FRS employees	1,046	1,020.50	941.50	890.5	878.5
as % of total workforce	1.10%	1.08%	0.7%	1.0%	0.1
CHR/ C/005ii N Number of wholtime operational ill health retirements	4	4	1	2	1
CHR/ C/005ii D Average number of wholtime operational personnel	289.50	277.50	262.00	247.00	250.00
as % of total WDS workforce	1.40%	1.44%	0.4%	0.8%	0.4%
CHR/ C/005iii N Number of RDS ill health retirements	6	6	4	6	0
CHR/ C/005iii D Average number of RDS personnel	571.0	557.0	497.50	462.5	445.5
as % of total RDS workforce	1.05%	1.08%	0.8%	1.3%	0.0%
CHR/ C/005iv N Number of control personnel ill health retirements	0	1	0	0	0
CHR/ C/005iv D Average number of control personnel	33	32	31.50	31.50	30
as % of total Control workforce	0.00%	3.13%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
CHR/ C/005v N Number of non-operational personnel ill health retirements	1	0	2	1	0
CHR/ C/005v D Average number of non-operational personnel	152.5	154.00	150.50	149.50	153
as % of total non-operational workforce	0.70%	0.00%	1.3%	0.7%	0

Year	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
LOCAL					
Local N Total number of secondary fires attended	1,626 ¹⁷	1,613	887	1,087	964
Local D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 10,000 population	23.94	23.77	12.88	15.74	13.93
Local N Total number of malicious false alarms attended	118	133	106	77	77
Local D Population of FRA area	678,750	678,461	688,417	690,434	691,986
per 1,000 population	0.17	0.20	0.15	0.11	0.11
Local The total number of Home Fire Safety Checks delivered	36,905	28,472	22,201	26,622**	27,352
Local The percentage of accidental dwelling fires confined to the room of origin	91%	92%	91%	92%	89%

**Although 26,622 were reported at the end of the year, this did not take account of reports that were still in progress. The final figure rose to 26,703 for the 2013/14. We are working to shorten the time it takes for us to receive the information for inputting into our electronic database.

¹⁷ Amended post audit.

SECTION 8

GLOSSARY

Fires	All fires fall into one of three categories – primary, secondary or chimney.
Primary Fires	<p>These are fires that are not chimney fires, and which are in any type of building (except if derelict), vehicles, caravans and trailers, outdoor storage, plant and machinery, agricultural and forestry property, and other outdoor structures such as bridges, post boxes, tunnels, etc.</p> <p>Fires in any location are categorised as primary fires if they involved casualties, rescues or escapes, as are fires in any location that were attended by five or more fire appliances.</p>
Secondary Fires	<p>Secondary fires are fires that are neither chimney fires nor primary fires.</p> <p>Secondary fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.</p> <p>Secondary fires are those that would normally occur in locations such as open land, in single trees, fences, telegraph poles, refuse and refuse containers (but not paper banks, which would be considered - in the same way as agricultural and forestry property - to be primary fires), outdoor furniture, traffic lights, etc.</p>
Chimney Fires	<p>These are fires in occupied buildings where the fire is confined within the chimney structure, even if heat or smoke damage extends beyond the chimney itself.</p> <p>Chimney fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.</p>

Special Service Incidents	<p>These are non-fire incidents which require the attendance of an appliance or officer and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local emergencies e.g. flooding, road traffic incidents, rescue of persons, 'making safe' etc; • Major disasters; • Domestic incidents e.g. water leaks, persons locked in or out etc; • Prior arrangements to attend incidents, which may include some provision of advice and inspections.
Fire injuries	<p>For consistency after April 2009 across the UK, fire casualties are recorded under four categories of severity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be serious; ii) the victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be slight; iii) the victim was given first aid at the scene only, but required no further treatment; iv) a precautionary check was recommended – the person was sent to hospital or was advised to see a doctor as a precaution, but having no obvious injury or distress.
False Alarm (general guidance)	<p>Where the FRS attends a location believing there to be an incident, but on arrival discovers that no such incident exists, or existed.</p> <p>Note: if the appliance is 'turned around' by Control before arriving at the incident it is not classed as having been attended and does not need to be reported.</p>
False Alarms - Malicious	<p>These are calls made with the intention of getting the FRS to attend a non-existent incident, including deliberate and suspected malicious intentions.</p>
False Alarms - Good Intent	<p>These are calls made in good faith in the belief that the FRS really would attend a fire or special service incident.</p>
False Alarms - AFA	<p>These are calls initiated by fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment. They include accidental initiation of alarm apparatus or where an alarm operates and a person then routinely calls the FRS as part of a standing arrangement, i.e. with no 'judgement' involved, for example from a security call centre or a nominated person in an organisation).</p>