



Community Risk Management Plan



2022 - 2027

This is a high level, strategic plan. More detail about the risks and how they have been established in our communities is in the Strategic Risk Analysis available on our website where you will also find the Equality Impact Assessment.

Text change. *Explanation - making the Strategic Risk Analysis more prominent to address feedback about lack of detail, and to replace previous note which signposted it being a draft plan.*



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Community Risk Management Plan

"Together we will work to end preventable fire and rescue emergencies, creating a safer world for you and your family."

Introduction

This document outlines who we are and what we do. It sets out the key challenges and patterns of incidents that we experience now and anticipate in the future. Specifically, it highlights the risks facing our communities and how we intend to reduce these over the life of this plan. The resources that we have available to us to achieve our priorities are also identified.

This Community Risk Management Plan is a five year strategic plan and is supported by a Strategic Risk Analysis and an Equality Impact Assessment which are available on our website. If any of the reviews proposed in this plan result in significant change to the service communities receive, we will consult further as required.

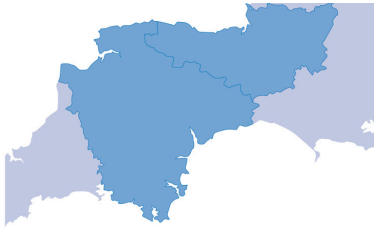
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About us

We are the largest non-metropolitan fire and rescue service in England, covering almost **4,000 square miles**.



We protect **820,000 households**, **74,000 businesses** and a further **1.1 million visitors** a year.

Our Service area has a network of over **13,000 miles** of roads, 90% of which are smaller, rural roads and country lanes, and **659 miles of coastline**.



We have **332 emergency response vehicles** and **1,915 dedicated staff**.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is responsible for ensuring that the communities of Somerset and Devon, including Plymouth and Torbay, are protected and supported by an effective and efficient fire and rescue service. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) is the organisation put in place by the Authority to deliver its duties and responsibilities.

Each fire and rescue authority has a statutory duty to produce a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) – this document. Our CRMP sets out the key challenges and risks facing our communities and how we intend to meet and reduce them. It demonstrates how our protection, prevention and response activities have, and will be, used collectively to prevent and/or mitigate fires and other incidents. This integrated approach will keep you safe and reduce the impact of emergencies on people, businesses and the local economy.

We protect over 1.8m people and we will always seek to prevent incidents from occurring but when you need us, we will respond quickly to minimise harm and economic loss.



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Prevention

We believe that prevention is better than cure. We aim to stop fires and incidents happening in the first place. By doing this we not only reduce the suffering caused but also save money, for ourselves and our partners, such as the police, ambulance service, local councils and the National Health Service.

We provide home fire safety advice so that you can keep yourself safe. For most people this is through targeted social and traditional media to influence behaviour. We also:

- deliver free home safety visits to people most at risk of fire
- deliver education and campaigns
- work with partners to deliver road safety advice, education and campaigns
- work with partners to deliver water safety advice and equipment.

We will increasingly use community partnerships, as well as internal and external learning, to identify trends and emerging risks to enable us to target prevention activities. We plan to better understand local risks to help us focus our activities on those most at risk of fire and high risk locations, taking a prevention-first approach.

We work with our partners to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable people by signposting appropriate help, advice and services, and helping them with basic crime prevention measures. Reducing the potential for slips, trips and falls, and reducing the likelihood of a fire, means that vulnerable people can carry on living independently in their homes.

More people are killed and seriously injured in road traffic collisions than in fires. With roads such as the M5, A30, A38 and A303 in our Service area, road traffic collisions form a significant part of our emergency response and we aim to educate drivers to reduce these.

One in four of our residents are aged 65 years or over¹, and 60,000 of those are over 85 years. As the population ages we expect to see greater numbers of older people living with some form of impairment, many of whom will be living alone and in relative isolation given the rural nature of much of our area. Fifty four percent of the victims of fires in the home live alone, meaning that people living alone are more likely to have a fire at home than those living with others.

Employment levels are relatively high and there are many affluent areas across the two counties. However the average hourly rate in Devon and Somerset is £9.15, significantly lower than the national average of £14.00². Those on a lower income tend to live in areas of deprivation, where the likelihood of a fire in their home is higher than those living in less deprived areas.

Help us to help you stay safe by following the advice on our website **dsfire.gov.uk/safety?home**

If you have paying guests, you will also need to ensure you comply with the law. Visit **gov.uk/government/publications/do-you-have-paying-guests** for guidance.

Text added. Explanation - wording changed to better reflect the data.

¹ Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates.

² From NOMIS labour market statistics.



Protection

We carry out fire protection activities guided by a risk-based approach, completing fire safety checks at lower risk business premises and fire safety audits at higher risk business premises. We work with partners to ensure fire safety in high-rise buildings and to ensure that public events are safe. The devastating fire at Grenfell Tower in London raised several significant questions over building regulations, how fire safety regulations are enforced in such premises and how the fire and rescue service respond to fires in high-rise residential premises.

There are 163 buildings in our Service area with six floors or more. We continue to focus our protection resources on the inspection of high-rise buildings and protecting buildings and the area around them. We will continue to adopt recommendations from the Grenfell Public Inquiry.

We are also involved in influencing the safety of buildings even before they are built. We work closely with architects, planners and owners, advising them how to maximise the safety of occupants, the public and our firefighters through technical solutions and building design. This work includes encouraging the use of sprinklers in higher risk buildings like high-rise properties, schools and residential care homes.

We work hard to support local businesses to help them reduce fire risk and be compliant with their legal responsibilities. We are the enforcing body for fire safety prosecutions and continue to take action against those who break the law. Fire protection laws are there to keep people safe whenever they enter a public building or business. We are here to help those responsible for these buildings meet the legal standards and to help them protect businesses from fire. We undertake fire safety audits based on our risk-based inspection programme.

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Response

Our response to emergencies is designed to get the right equipment to the right place as quickly as possible. It requires highly trained firefighters, with modern equipment, supported with risk information to respond safely. We have about 1,600 frontline operational staff and 83 fire stations across Devon and Somerset.

Our Emergency Response Standards enable us to monitor how often we arrive within our target attendance time to dwelling fires and road traffic collisions on a daily basis.

Our aim is for a fire engine to attend dwelling fires within 10 minutes of the emergency call being answered, and road traffic collisions within 15 minutes.

The rural nature of Devon and Somerset means that this isn't always going to be possible, so our target is to achieve the Emergency Response Standards for at least 75% of incidents.

Across our Service area, on average, we arrive at an emergency in about nine minutes from answering the call.

We have:

- **12 wholetime fire stations** (crewed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by immediately available wholetime firefighters. Ten of these stations also have an on-call section attached.)
- **69 on-call fire stations** (crewed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by firefighters who are on call and respond to the fire station within five minutes of a call being received)
- **two volunteer fire stations** (crewed by on-call firefighters).

Text added. *Explanation - this is in response to how people in rural areas tended to respond so wanted to make this clearer.*

As well as responding to fires and road traffic collisions we also undertake a wide variety of specialist rescues, working with the police, HM Coastguard, Environment Agency and many other organisations. Examples of our activities include:

- rescuing people from height or below ground
- rescue of extremely overweight people or supporting the ambulance service
- rescuing people trapped within or under structures or large vehicles
- rescues from difficult locations like lifts, cliffs and mud
- rescuing large animals that are trapped
- response to flooding incidents
- chemical and hazardous response
- marine firefighting.

All our firefighters are trained in casualty care. This is vital and means that when we are the first to arrive at an emergency we can provide immediate, and potentially lifesaving, first aid.

We also operate medical co-responder schemes at 20 of our fire stations, where trained firefighters attend medical emergencies at the request of the ambulance service. More recently, we have supported the ambulance service during the Covid-19 pandemic for example with firefighters driving ambulances.

We have a statutory duty to assess and plan for threats and risks to our communities. All fire and rescue services maintain a response capability to ensure that we can respond with our partners to foreseeable risks, such as those identified at a national or regional level.

We have specialist rescue capabilities and additional specialist vehicles at various locations that will support incidents where a higher level of intervention is needed, such as mass public decontamination. We also have two specialist teams prepared to help mitigate the impact of terrorism.

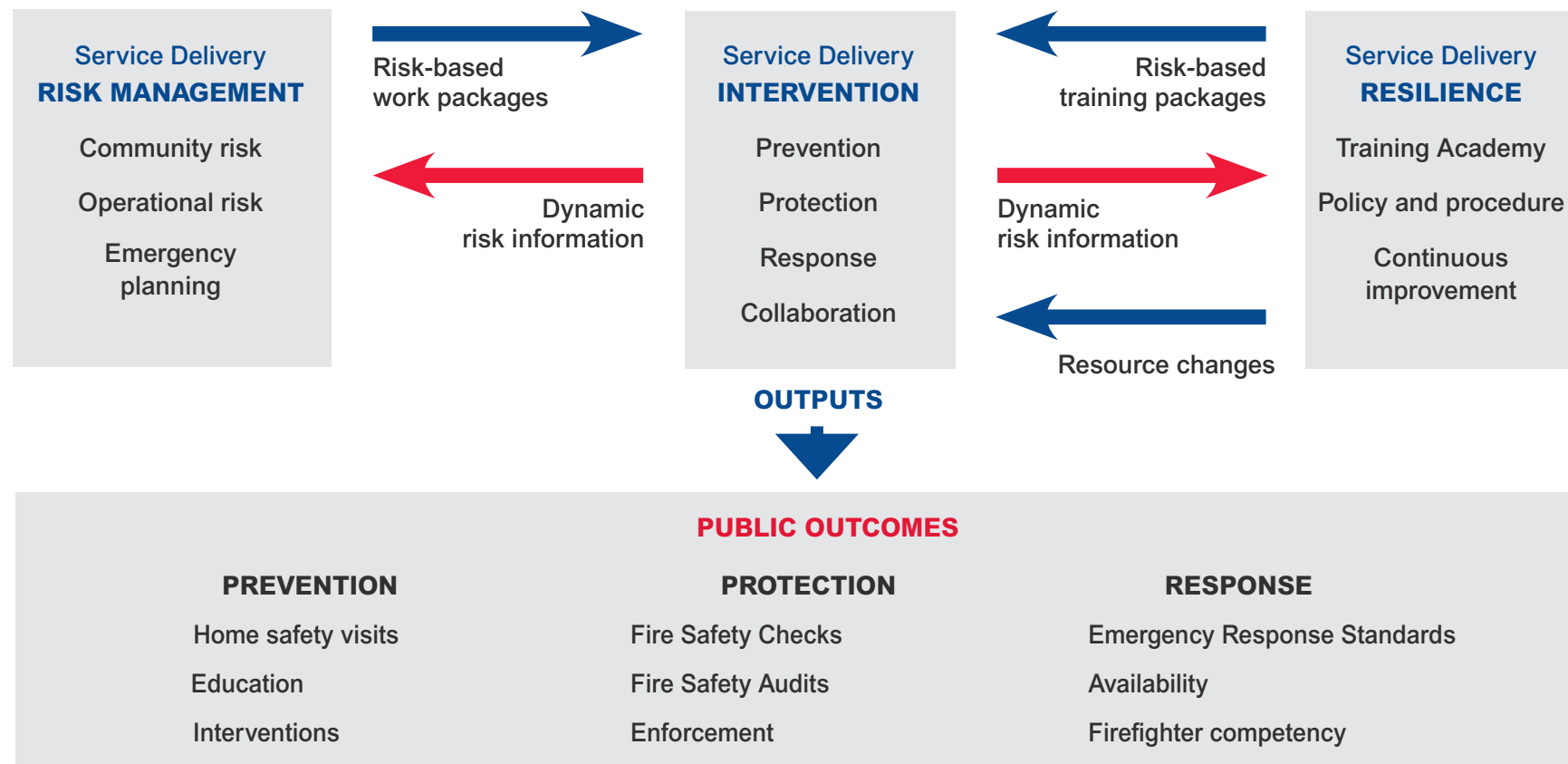
More information about us and how we use our resources is available on our website **dsfire.gov.uk**

Fighting fires and attending other emergency incidents is inherently dangerous. We need to ensure that we assess the risks faced by our staff and introduce control measures to reduce the risks as much as possible. We will continue to carry out operational assurance and learning to understand significant risks, providing our firefighters with access to a suite of guidance and risk information when attending incidents.



The diagram below shows how our work connects our planning activity to improve public outcomes. We use risk management to inform what needs to be done by who, where and when. We train our staff and have effective policy and procedures to ensure that our prevention, protection and response arrangements make people safer.

This is our high level operating strategy for Service Delivery. At the bottom are the public outcomes that we are here to deliver – anything and everything we do should be able to be linked to providing at least one of these outcomes.



Looking back

This plan provides an overview of fire and rescue-related risks faced by the communities we serve, and outlines how we will address them through our prevention, protection and emergency response activities. It's our strategy for the next five years to help keep you, your home, your community and your environment safe from fire and other emergencies.

This plan will replace our Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018-2022 (IRMP) and Fire and Rescue Plan 2018-2022. We will continue to build upon the work already delivered under these plans. We have outlined some of the changes and achievements below.

Under our existing **Integrated Risk Management Plan** we have:

- improved delivery of home fire safety visits using new working arrangements and training highly skilled staff to reduce the risk of fire to households
- developed a heritage property fire reduction policy
- expanded our community engagement and collaboration work with the police and other partners, including health and social care, to ensure the highest risk individuals can receive our support
- developed a strategy to support the installation of domestic sprinklers in the highest risk households
- improved control of fire risk through investment in training for business safety officers to expand our capability in enforcing fire safety legislation
- developed our relationships with partners who manage high risk sites to manage risk through legal compliance and integrated response plans
- implemented new firefighting technology, enhancing incident skills and knowledge of operational staff, and providing specific training to ensure they are prepared to deal with flooding, hazardous material and counter terrorism incidents

- shared data with partners and used predictive analysis to target interventions with road users
 - worked with other emergency services to share resources and response to resolve incidents effectively and efficiently
 - implemented an Operational Resource Centre to redistribute surplus capacity to meet forecasted crewing needs
 - reviewed skills and requirements for the role of on-call firefighter and adjusted recruitment process, ensuring positive action in place to encourage recruitment.
-

Our **Fire and Rescue Plan** identified six areas of focus and we have made significant changes and improvements, some of which are outlined below.

- **Service delivery** - how we deliver the best possible prevention, protection and response services to keep our community safe. For example we have:
 - introduced a model for centralised prevention and protection activity. Investing in more home fire safety visit technicians and specialist equipment to tailor solutions to keep those most at risk safe. Investing in more business safety officers to ensure that businesses comply with fire safety legislation
 - developed and implemented a new Service Delivery Operating Model. This included investing £3 million in our on-call model to support us to better match resource to risk, relocating Topsham and Budleigh Salterton crews to Clyst St George and Exmouth, moving fire engines and creating new on-call sections at Middlemoor and Clyst St George stations, and removing nine fire engines whilst maintaining operational cover. The new model brought together the four key components of our response capability: staff, the duty systems they work, the appliances used and the stations from which they operate. This has been a contributing factor to improving our risk-based appliance availability, and the wellbeing and retention of our staff, whilst fulfilling our statutory duties
 - collaborated with partner agencies both locally and nationally to improve emergency response
 - established a robust process for managing and implementing risk-critical information including learning from emergencies elsewhere.

- **People** - ensuring we are recruiting, retaining, supporting and developing the best people. For example we have:
 - developed a people strategy and established a workforce plan to support our new ways of working including improved leadership and management development, new apprenticeship opportunities and encouraging diversity and inclusivity in our workforce
 - introduced a new on-call duty system called Pay for Availability, which means that we now pay our on-call firefighters by the hour for their availability. Compared to the previous system, this approach allows more flexibility on the hours each person needs to commit to and enhances their pay
 - provided risk-based training and development that is centred on safety-critical elements.
- **Value for money and use of resources** - ensuring that we provide value for money, making the most of our assets, investing in improvement and planning a sustainable future. For example we have:
 - a medium term financial plan, and capital and investment strategies that take into account the interdependencies of revenue budgets and capital investments
 - produced an environmental strategy and action plan, and developed an estates strategy that provides the resources needed to deal with risk and maximises the opportunities for shared use, including investing in rebuilding Chagford, Brixham and Plymstock fire stations
 - designed our change and improvement programme around clearly identified cost-benefit analysis
 - reviewed our vehicle fleet to support new service delivery models – we have bought 35 new vehicles including 15 front-line fire engines and 20 specialist vehicles. We identified a need to improve our ability to get to locations off-road, so five of our new specialist vehicles are equipped to deal with this, and have improved our wildfire response
 - developed a reserves strategy to indicate how we are investing for the future.

- **Governance** - putting the right information, processes and people in place to help us make the right decisions. For example we have:
 - improved our governance and programme management arrangements
 - developed a comprehensive communications, consultation and engagement strategy, and also worked with our staff and their representative bodies on changes that affects them
 - introduced a new website
 - developed a performance management culture with meaningful conversations and measurable outcomes
 - published an annual report showing how we are meeting priorities and managing our finances.
- **Collaboration** - seeking opportunities to work better with others to provide an improved service to our shared communities. For example we have:
 - built on the work of the Offices for Data Analytics to develop an analytical model to predict locations with an increased risk of dwelling fires and we will be working to share data with other public sector organisations to improve services
 - improved our approach to partnership working across our Service area and have a key role in the South West Emergency Services Forum
 - established Community Responders (on-call firefighters who are also special constables) at three locations in Devon, with the ability to deliver a wider range of services at an overall reduced cost to the public
 - supported the ambulance service by providing firefighters to drive ambulances during the Covid-19 pandemic
 - continued to explore opportunities through strategic partnerships such as Networked Fire Services Partnership.

- **Digital transformation** - making use of technology to provide the information we need in the right way and developing smarter ways of working and thinking. For example we have:
 - developed a digital transformation strategy and invested in technology such as video conferencing and applications to help us work more efficiently and effectively
 - implemented a data architecture and improved operational data capture through the single operational reporting tool
 - restructured our business analysis and data architecture teams to support these ways of working.
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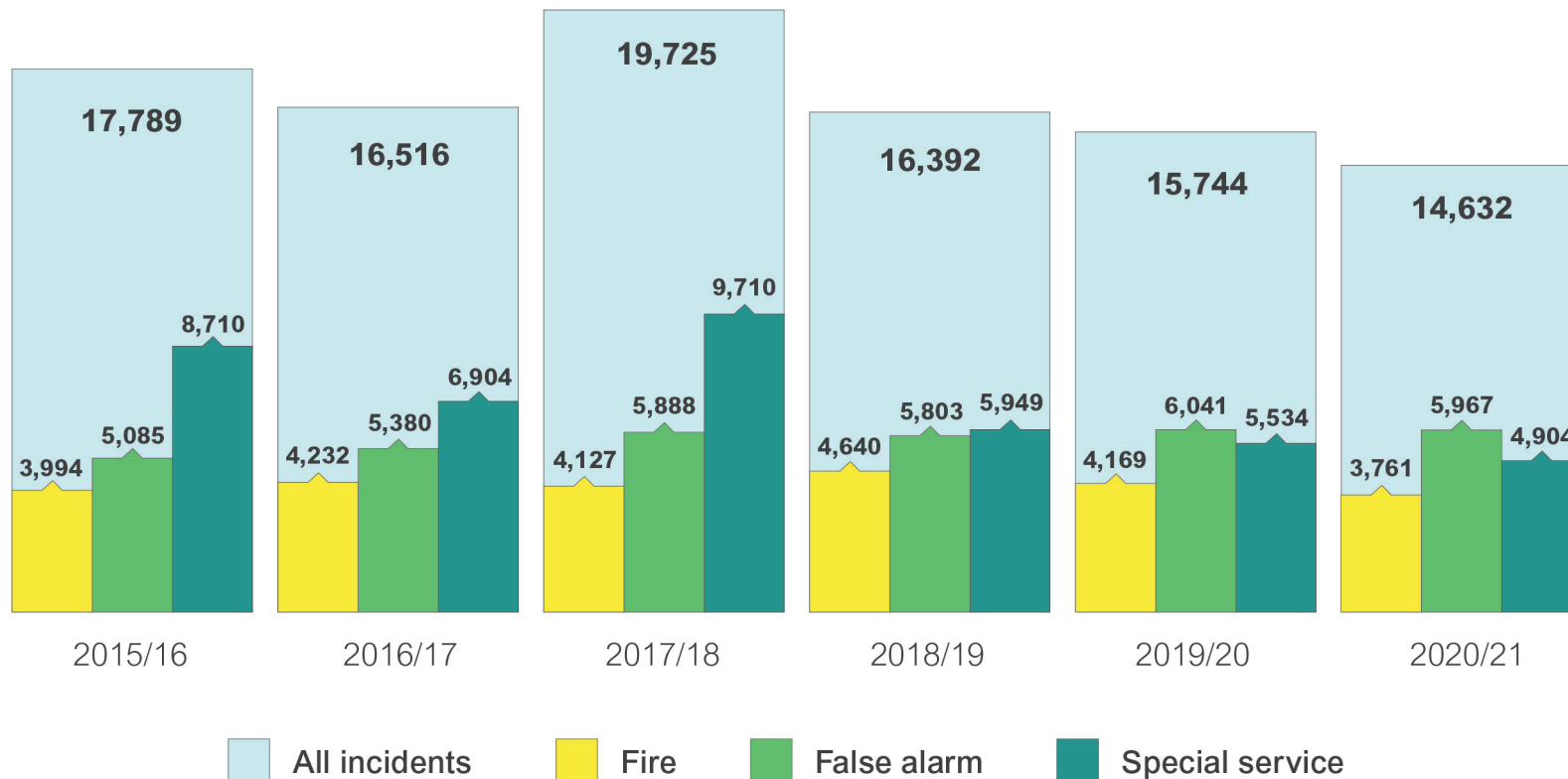
In 2019 we received recommendations from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services on the themes of effectiveness, efficiency and people. Full reports are published on their website. We developed a comprehensive action plan and some of the areas we have been focusing on include:

- improving the availability of on-call staff
- performance against Emergency Response Standards
- allocating prevention, protection and response resources in relation to risk
- using operational crews more efficiently to support prevention, protection, and response activity
- having assurance that operational members of staff meet the minimum fitness requirements to perform their role
- ensuring that selection and promotion processes are fair, open, and transparent and that feedback is available to staff.

You can find more information about the changes we have made, and continue to make, on our website. If you need the information in a different format please contact 01392 872200 or email comments@dsfire.gov.uk

Incidents attended over the last five years

This chart shows the total incidents in Devon and Somerset that the Service attended each year (2015/16 to 2020/21). The total is shown along with the number of fires, false alarms and special services attended.



The range of incidents that we attend is extremely broad and has increased over recent years, as has the equipment needed to deal with each incident type.

How this plan has been informed

When preparing this plan, we asked residents, businesses and our staff about the dangers they face and how we could help them feel safer. We did this with an online survey and an online forum, both also available to participate in over the phone. We received nearly 1,700 responses.

We consulted on the draft plan asking to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed with three statements.

- 71% agreed that the Service identified all the major risks it is responsible for.
- 63% agreed that the activities the Service continues to and proposes to deliver are appropriate to the identified risks.
- 57% agreed that the activities the Service continues to and proposes to deliver do not affect them or anyone else more positively or negatively than other people. 23% neither agreed nor disagreed.

We received around 250 responses to an online survey and by email. We also held focus groups and a paper version was available on request.

By looking at our data and listening to what our staff, partners and those who live and work in Devon and Somerset have told us, we have sought to identify the key fire and rescue-related risks, and how we will work with our partners and communities to reduce those risks. All of the feedback has been considered and, where appropriate, changes included in this plan.

What you told us

Our response

The plan doesn't include a risk facing my local community or what you will do in my local area.

This is a high level, strategic plan and does not detail every local risk or activity such as retaining walls, narrow bridges and type of fire engine at individual stations. Specific local risks will be covered in local risk management plans we will develop for each station area.

Local risk management plans have been added to the actions on pages 45 and 48 to make our intent clearer. We will refer to the local information provided when creating these plans.

There is now greater reference to the Strategic Risk Analysis, which provides more detailed information about risk.

Rural communities were less likely to agree that all the risks have been identified and that the activities planned were appropriate than those in urban or coastal areas.

We recognise that large parts of our Service area are rural. Whilst not specifically mentioned as a risk in itself, rural communities are considered throughout the plan, and in supporting Equality Impact Assessment and Strategic Risk Analysis.

We talk frequently about tailoring our service for those most at risk. This includes geographic areas (including rural) as well as groups of people.

Specific risks for rural communities will be picked up in the local risk management plans we plan to develop.

Young people and education were underrepresented in the draft plan.

We will continue to engage with young people through education programmes and activities including cadets, our firesetter intervention programme and partnership work.

Our prevention activities on page 43 have been updated to reflect this.

What are the risks?

As a result of engaging and listening to the public, partners and our staff we have a much better understanding of the risks we need to manage. Like all fire and rescue services, we are required to look at the risks faced by our communities. This is so that we can make sure that we have the best plans in place to reduce the likelihood of those risks becoming incidents, while also having the right people, skills, equipment and tactics in place to respond if an incident happens.

Risk category	Identified risks
Fires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dwelling fires ■ High-rise buildings ■ Large commercial, industrial and agricultural fires ■ Hospitals and residential care homes ■ Hotels and guest houses ■ Heritage property fires ■ Secondary fires ■ Fires on-board vessels ■ False alarms
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Road traffic collisions
Specialist rescues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rescues from height and confined space ■ Rescues from water ■ Animal rescues
Hazardous materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hazardous materials sites and incidents (including responding to collapsed structures and bomb or terrorist attacks)
Environment and climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Severe weather events including flooding response and water rescue
National risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Major emergencies ■ Resilience and business continuity
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Medical response and health-related incidents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Core operational activities and statutory duties ■ Other operational activities 	

Some of the main risks are shown on the table opposite and more detail is provided on the pages that follow. Full data for each risk is available in the Strategic Risk Assessment available on our website.

The main focus of this plan is to outline what the risk is to our communities and what our action is to mitigate that risk. Action is delivered through departmental and individual plans that have been aligned with our Priority 1* (prevention and protection) and Priority 2* (emergency response) activity. A series of charts on the following pages provide more detail on these risks.

Whilst the external risks are outlined in some detail within this document, there are also some internal risks that we will need to continue to manage if we are able to respond effectively. For example, if our staff are not well trained or not provided with suitable equipment we will not be able to respond effectively. Similarly, if we have limited financial resources, we will need to continue to focus our resources on areas where this has the greatest impact. These risks are addressed in Priority 3* and 4*.

This plan provides a high level overview of the risks and our main effort to reduce these.

* See page 42 for more detail about our strategic priorities.



Looking forward - future risk

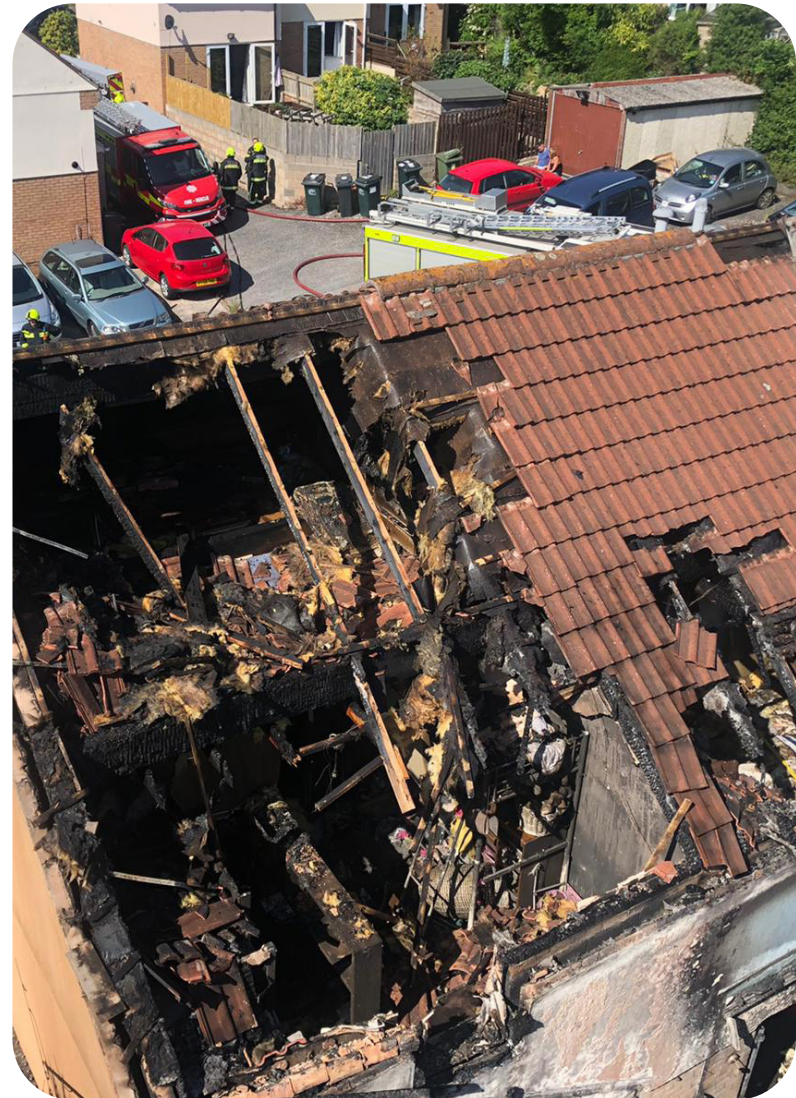
The expectations on fire and rescue services have increased as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire and Manchester Arena terrorist attack. Recommendations from these incidents will continue to be adopted in our own resilience and preparedness arrangements. The impacts of extreme events can be devastating and far-reaching, so we will work with our communities and partners to become more resilient.

We recognise the need to identify emerging and future risks and trends across our communities and to our staff. For example, electric vehicles and potential 'self-drive' vehicles, domestic and commercial battery energy storage systems, biomass fuel plants and the government's agenda for renewable energy, modern building construction methods, future pandemics and an increasing use of e-cigarettes.

We also recognise that risks may change following the Covid-19 pandemic, for instance due to a shift in people's working arrangements. We will monitor this through our annual review of this plan and make arrangements to deal with new and emerging risks should they arise.

To help us prepare we will link to national operational learning and review our position against national operational guidance. We will also collaborate with other fire and rescue services, the National Fire Chiefs Council and other blue light partners.

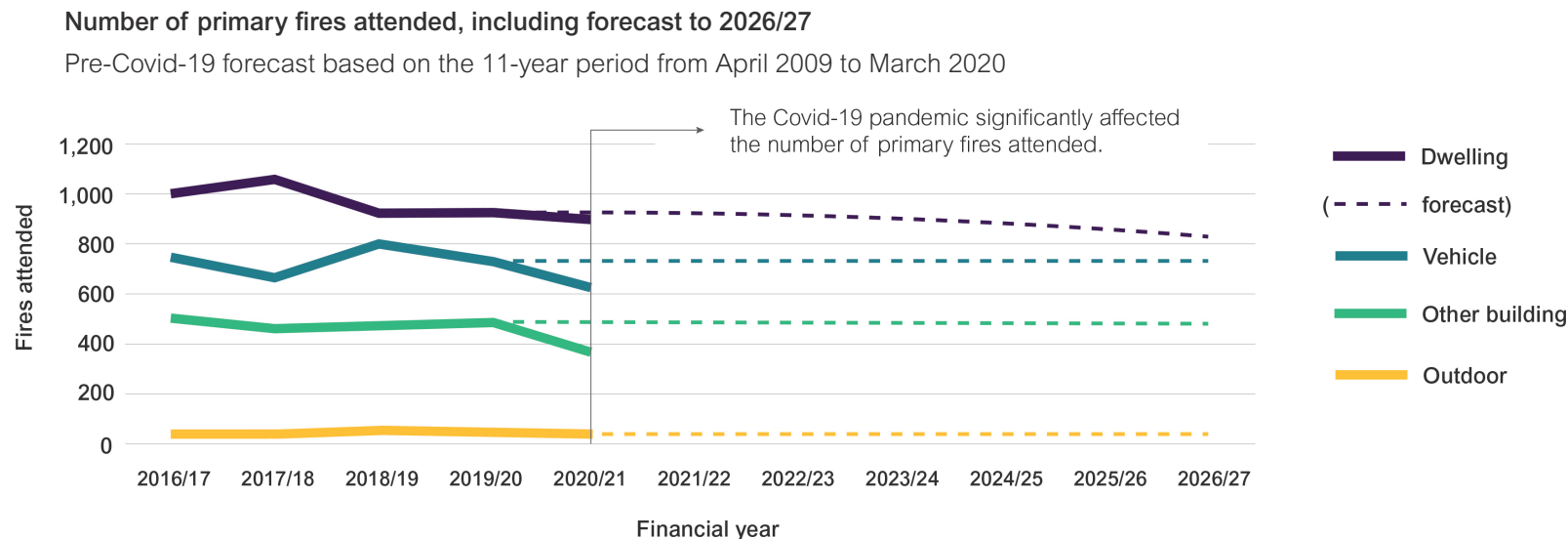
Text added. Explanation - added in response to feedback that this was not represented.



Fires

Fires in buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures are known as primary fires as they are most likely to involve a risk to life. The majority of outdoor fires, including grassland and refuse fires are known as secondary fires.

The following graphs show the number of fires we attend each year, the causes and the impact of fire on communities and individuals. They also indicate the trends we may expect by 2027 (based on the past being an effective indicator of the future). As indicated in the risk table presented earlier, fires continue to be a significant risk. The following chart shows the number of primary fires attended by type of fire. We have also developed a trend line to indicate a possible level of forecasted risk which can be used to anticipate demand.

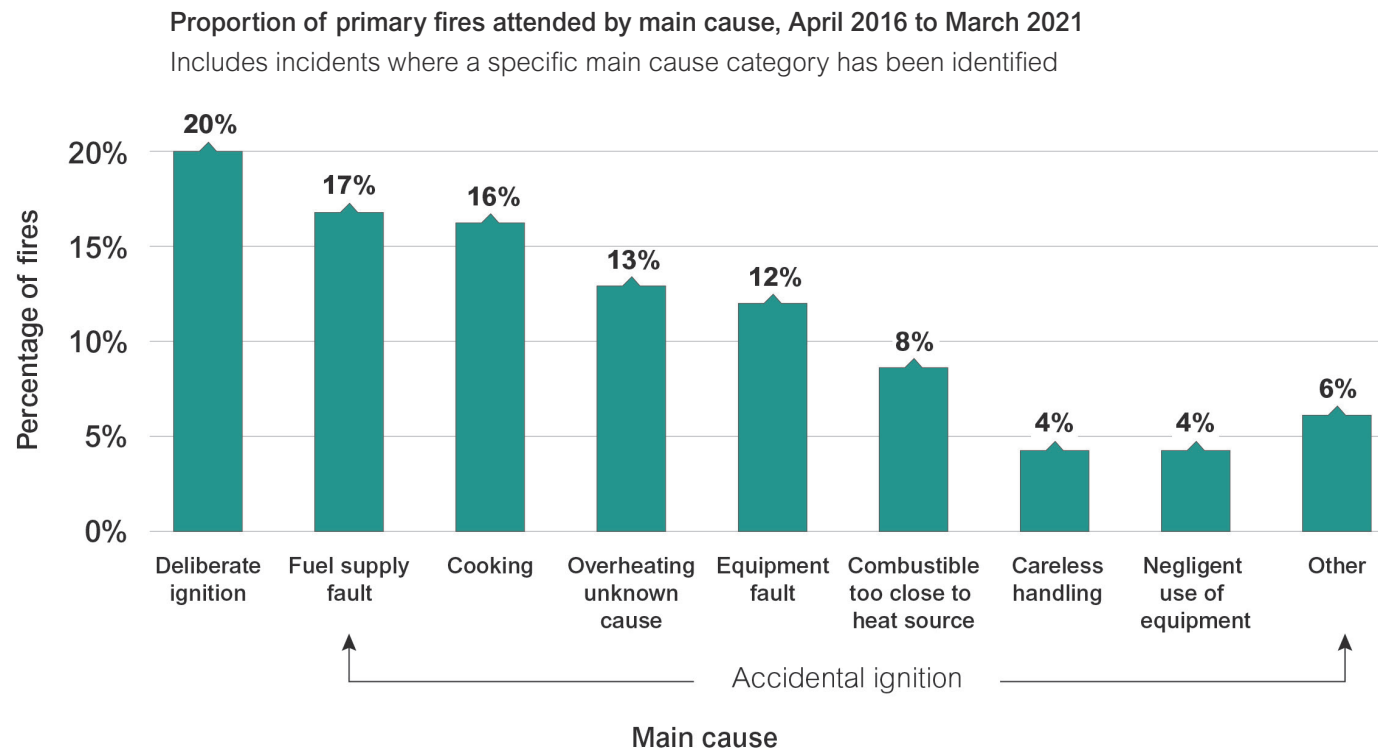


The chart above shows data for the four high level categories of primary fire attended: dwelling, other building, road vehicle and outdoor location. The forecasts are based on 11 years of historic data, from April 2009 to March 2020. We have excluded the 2020/21 financial year from our calculations as the Covid-19 pandemic had an exceptional effect on some of our incident levels.

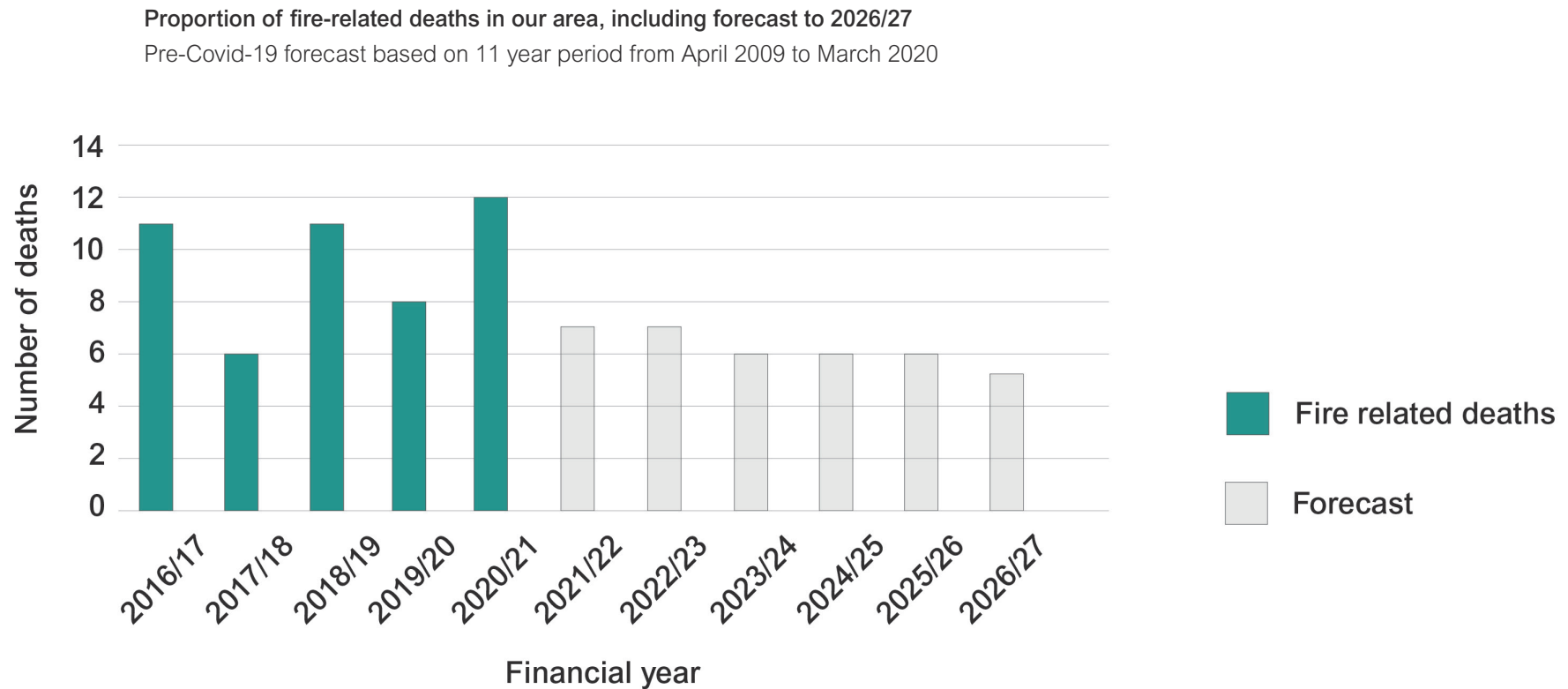
The forecasts indicate that we are likely to see a continuation of the downward trend in dwelling fires, while primary fires in other buildings, vehicles and outdoor locations are likely to remain at a relatively consistent level. This information helps us to understand what our future operational demand may look like.

The chart below shows the proportion of primary fires attended by the main cause of the fire for the period April 2016 to March 2021. Deliberate ignition, faulty fuel supply and cooking being the most prevalent. This type of data is used to inform our community safety messages

Between April 2016 and March 2021, over three-quarters of primary fires (80%) started accidentally. Fuel supply fault (17%) and cooking (16%) were the most common accidental causes. We use this information as a focus for our communication campaigns. Other causes include overheating (cause unknown), equipment fault and combustibles placed too close to a heat source.



The chart below shows the number of fire related deaths in our Service area for each financial year for the period 2016/17 to 2020/21. For the period 2021/22 to 2026/27 a forecast of fire related deaths is shown. There are around 1.8 million people in our Service area. Any fire death is a tragedy for those affected and we are committed to reducing fire deaths and injuries.



Primary fire risks in more detail

Dwelling fires: most fire-related deaths and injuries occur when there is a fire in a home, so we need to make sure that we are working effectively to reduce the number of fires and limit their severity when they do happen.

Evidence from national and local studies suggests that, while the overall risk of fire in the home is low, some people are at greater risk from fire than others. We undertake research and analysis to identify the lifestyle and environmental factors that are most commonly associated with fires and related deaths and injuries.

We understand from our recent survey that our communities are concerned about increases in housing stock. The Office for National Statistics estimates that by 2025 the population of Devon and Somerset will have increased by 5% and that by 2043 it will have increased by 14%³. We are expecting to see more than 78,000 new homes built in our two counties by 2031⁴, with most of this development focused around urban areas.

The Home Office publication 'Detailed analysis of fires attended by fire and rescue services, England, April 2020 to March 2021' states "by combining Incident Recording System (IRS) and English Housing Survey data, Home Office statisticians have calculated that you are around eight times more likely to die in a fire if you do not have a working smoke alarm in your home."⁵

High-rise building fires: seventy-two people died after a fire engulfed Grenfell Tower, a west London residential high-rise building. More than 200 firefighters and 40 fire engines responded to the fire, and 151 homes were destroyed in the building and the surrounding area.

The fire has impacted nationally on fire services' prevention, protection and emergency response arrangements. It will continue to do so as lessons are learnt and recommendations from both the public inquiry and Independent Review of Building Regulations are implemented.

³ Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates.

⁴ Office for National Statistics household projections for England.

⁵ Detailed analysis of fires attended by fire and rescue services, England, April 2020 to March 2021 - GOV.UK.

Large commercial, industrial and agricultural fires: these incidents can pose significant societal, economic and environmental risks to our communities and can require large numbers of our resources, meaning that they may not be available to respond to other incidents. Whilst the life-risk at these incidents is generally lower than at dwelling fires, undertaking firefighting activity in large and often complex buildings can pose a high risk to our firefighters.

Hospitals and residential care home fires: while the likelihood of a significant fire in hospitals, residential homes and other health care acute services is low, the potential severity of an incident in a setting that accommodates many people with greater levels of vulnerability due to health and wellbeing issues is high. The buildings are often large and complex and our response can be due to hazardous materials that may be present and the procedures that we need to follow.

Hotel and guest house fires: like hospitals and residential care homes, hotels and guest houses have the potential for significant loss of life in the event of fire. This is largely because many people are sleeping in an unfamiliar environment and are likely to be less aware of the layout of the building.

Heritage building fires: losing any historic building or landscape to fire, storm or flood would be a significant loss to local, and in some cases national or even international heritage. The effects can be far reaching, including loss of unique features and irreplaceable art, and the economic impact on local communities.

Fires on-board vessels: although the Service does not have an offshore firefighting responsibility, we do have a duty to respond to fires in vessels alongside (next to land). These incidents can be hazardous because of the way vessels are constructed. Getting in and getting out is difficult, and fire can spread easily by conduction through metal bulkheads and air handling machinery.

Flooding and wildfire: the impact of global warming on the environment can also be seen in the increase in wildfires globally. More locally, Devon and Somerset has two major national parks within our area and we need to ensure we have sufficient resources in place at the right time to minimise the impact on affected communities. At the same time, the Service has experience that it can use to support others who are charged with the responsibility for reducing the impact of flooding.

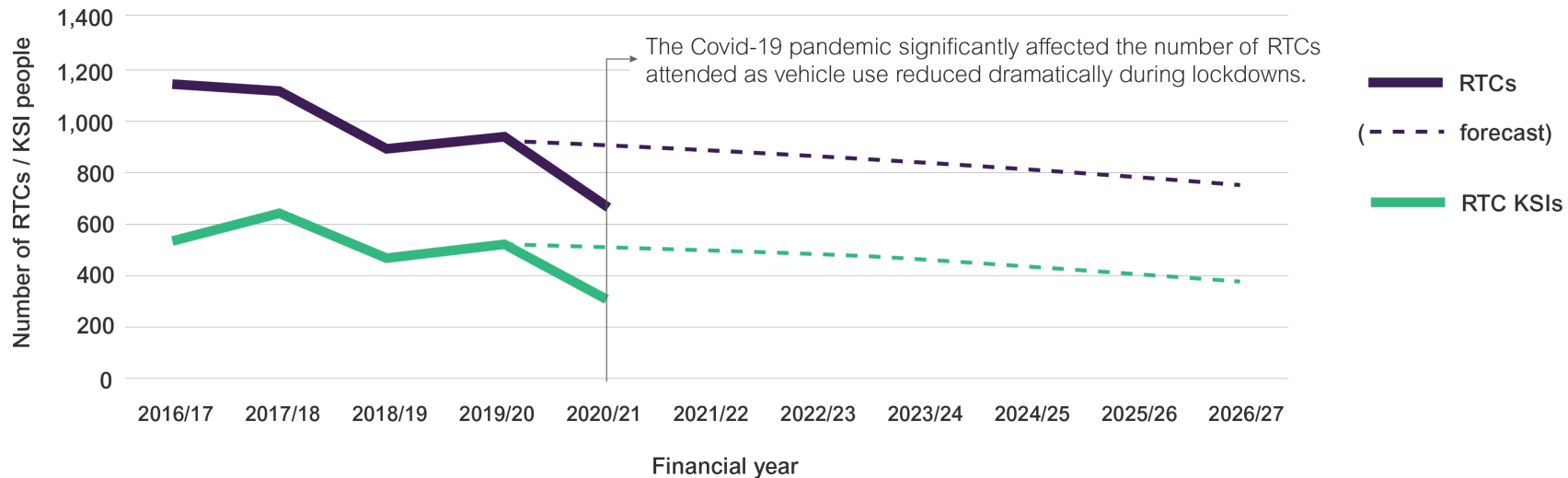
Road traffic collisions

More people are killed and seriously injured in road traffic collisions (RTCs) than in fires. While we do not need to attend every road traffic collision in our Service area, they do form a significant part of our emergency response.

Drawing from our main risk table, the chart below shows the number of collisions attended and the number of people killed and seriously injured per financial year. For the years 2016/17 to 2020/21 the actual number recorded is shown. A forecast is also shown. Road traffic collisions can result in a fire as a result of fuel coming into contact with an ignition source. Where vehicles catch fire but are not involved in a collision, we record these separately.

Number of RTCs attended and KSI ⁶ victims, including forecast to 2026/27

Pre-Covid-19 forecast based on 11-year period from April 2009 to March 2020



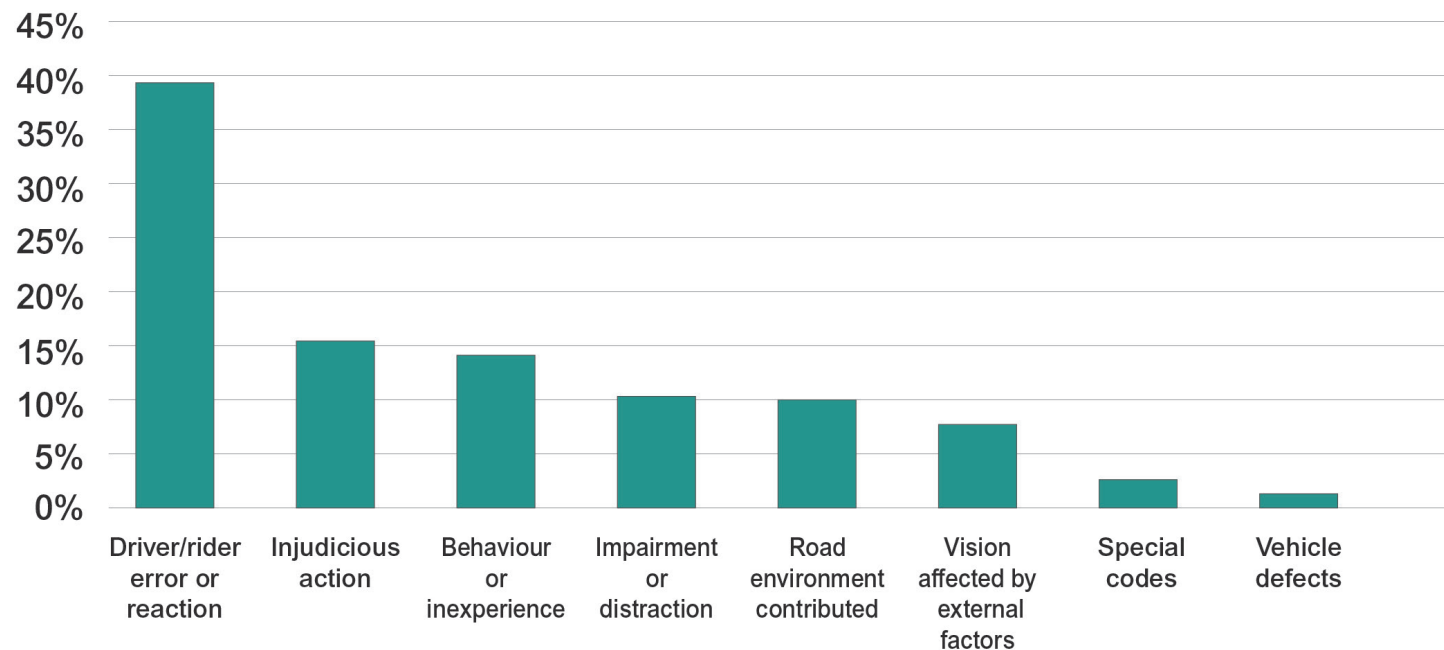
⁶ Killed or seriously injured (requiring hospital treatment) victims at incidents we attended based on our understanding at the point the incident concluded.



The chart below shows that almost 40% of road traffic collisions have ‘driver/rider error or reaction’ as a contributory factor and about 15% have ‘injudicious action’ (meaning showing very poor judgement) as a contributory factor. Special codes relate to specific endorsement and ‘penalty points’. The contributory factors present in more than 10% of collisions are ‘behaviour or inexperience’ and ‘impairment or distraction’.

Proportion of RTCs by contributory factor, South West England, April 2015 to March 2020

Source: Department for Transport data table - RAS50012: Contributory factors for accidents by English region and country



Specialist rescue

Specialist rescues are not statutory responsibilities for fire and rescue services, but there is an expectation and a need for our communities and partner agencies to be supported at these incidents. We also have legislative and regulatory requirements that apply when attending statutory duty incidents involving flooding, confined space and working at height.

In the following chart, it can be seen that water rescue incidents have seen an upward trend from 50 incidents in 2016/17 to 90 incidents in 2019/20 (which was a very wet year). Water rescue activity is forecasted to continue due to the effect of climate change. Rescues from height incidents have generally seen a downward trend from 60 incidents in 2017/18 this is forecast to continue to fall to less than 40 incidents per year by 2026/27. Large animal rescue incidents have fallen from more than 100 in 2016/17 to 80 in 2020/21. This trend is forecasted to continue.

Number of specialist rescue incidents attended, including forecast to 2026/27

Pre-Covid-19 forecast based on five-year period from April 2015 to March 2020

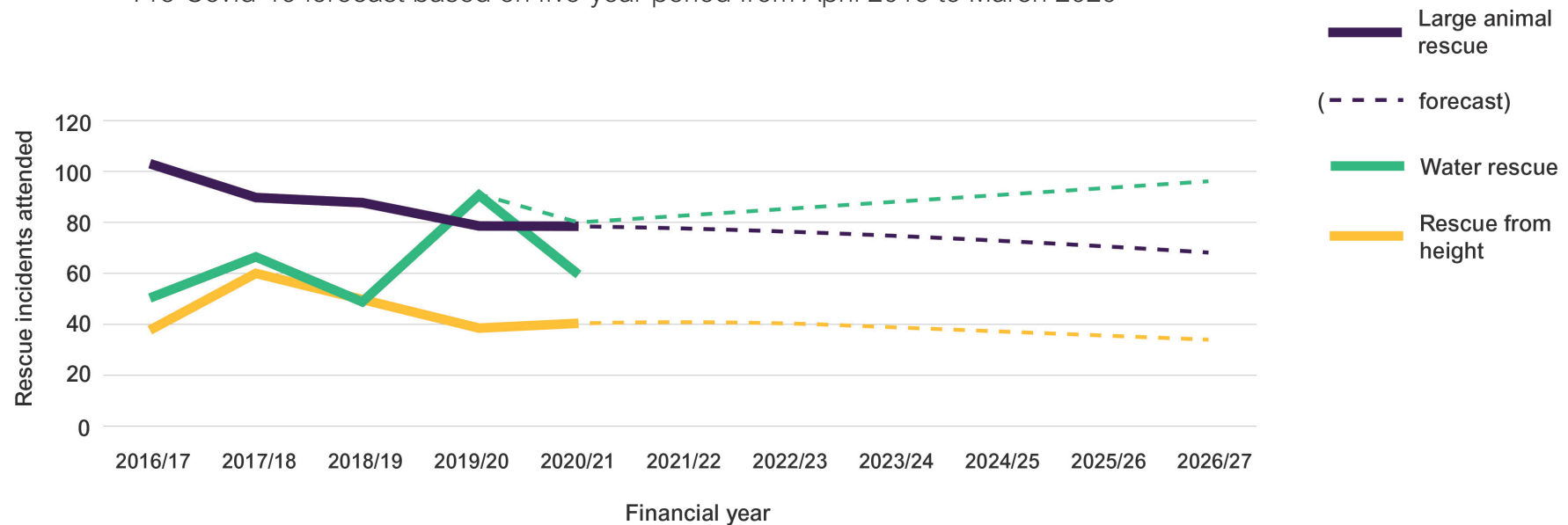




Image added. Explanation - to include a more diverse range of images.

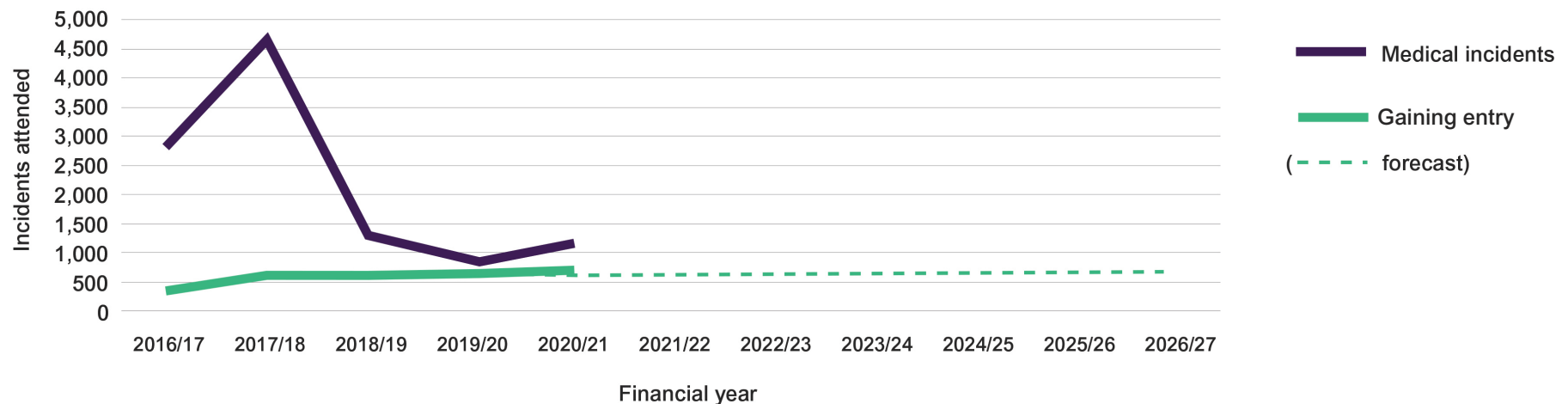
Medical incidents

As part of the wider emergency service community, to support our colleagues in the police and ambulance service, and to help keep our communities safe, we have 20 co-responder stations that have the capability to respond to medical emergencies. We also support the police and ambulance service to gain entry to properties where there may be a medical issue or risk to life.

Number of medical related incidents attended, including forecast to 2026/27

Medical pre-Covid-19 forecast unavailable due to changes in policy

Gaining entry pre-Covid-19 forecast based on three-year period from April 2017 to March 2020





Equality impacts

Research and information indicates some additional considerations in relation to fire risk. 'An investigation into accidental fatal fires in the South West of England' Report (2013-17) identified eight characteristics which increase the likelihood of fire death: mental health issues, alcohol use, drug use, smoking, poor housekeeping, limited mobility, living alone and low income. Certain groups of people are more likely to face these challenges than others. For example, elderly people are more likely to have limited mobility and live alone – over half of victims in dwelling fires live alone.

Our Service area has a growing and ageing population, with one in four of the 1.8 million residents aged 65 years or over ⁷. We expect to see greater numbers of older people living with some form of impairment, many of whom will be living alone and in relative isolation given the rural nature of much of our area. 54% of the victims of fires in the home live alone, making it the most common factor.

Over the next 20 years the population of Devon and Somerset is likely to change, with the Office for National Statistics estimating that by 2025 the population will have increased by 5% and that by 2043 it will have increased by 14%⁸.

Communities look very different across our counties and includes complex patterns of urban and rural deprivation across our service area. We know that the 10% most deprived areas have rates of fire nearly six times higher than those in the least deprived areas.

Deprivation consists of more than just poverty. Poverty is not having enough money to get by on whereas deprivation refers to a general lack of resources and opportunities. Pay inequality, poorer health outcomes and unemployment are a good indicator of the level of risk of fire in the home. Those with a lower income tend to live in areas of deprivation, where the likelihood of a fire in their home is higher than those living in less deprived areas.

Low quality or older housing doesn't tend to have the same advantages as modern homes with fire safety features, such as fire doors and hard-wired alarm systems. Other factors such as rising house prices and the prevalence of second homes in some areas can increasingly push people on lower incomes into poorer quality housing.

⁷ Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates

⁸ Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates

Private rented homes are more likely to be damp, less likely to have at least one working smoke alarm and are more likely to contain hazards such as infestations and electrical dangers that pose a risk to life.

Poorer health outcomes from behaviours such as smoking or substance misuse also tend to be higher in these areas, leading to an increase in the causes of fire such as smoking in bed or leaving appliances unattended.

The most deprived areas in our Service are concentrated around Plymouth, Torbay and Sedgemoor⁹.

Although we have a lot of information about how age or disability and fire risk are linked, certain characteristics like ethnic background, English as a second language, sexuality and religion, are not routinely captured within the data recorded and analysed by the Service. We need to capture and analyse more data and review our prevention, protection and response interventions to ensure that our services meet the needs of everyone and that no one is disadvantaged.

To ensure we serve all those in our communities and provide equal access to our services, we consider the make up of our communities when making decisions and developing prevention interventions and engagement opportunities.

An Equality Impact Assessment is published alongside this plan.

⁹ gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019



Action – what we will do to reduce the risks faced by our communities

The following high level actions will be undertaken to mitigate the risk anticipated by 2027 to better protect the public. These will be built into the annual planning cycles for each of the five years of this plan. In the section that follows, we link our activities to the risks identified earlier in the report.

As part of the annual budget setting process, areas for investment will be identified and consideration given by the Authority. As well as setting the operating budget for the Service, the Authority also scrutinises performance of the Service (for example decisions made in 2020 following a specific public consultation on the Service Delivery Operating Model).

The Authority has agreed four strategic priorities which guide the Chief Fire Officer, Directors and Department Heads in everything they do.



Our targeted prevention and protection activities reduce the risks in our communities, improving health, safety and wellbeing and support the local economy.



Our operational resources provide an effective emergency response service to meet the local and national risks identified in our Community Risk Management Plan.



Our Service is recognised as a great place to work. Our staff feel valued, supported, safe and well trained to deliver a high performing fire and rescue service.



We are open and accountable and use our resources efficiently to deliver a high performing, sustainable service that demonstrates public value.



Priority 1: Our targeted prevention and protection activities reduce the risks in our communities, improving health, safety and wellbeing, and supporting the local economy.

We will continue to do the following

- Deliver home safety visits to those most at risk of fire, raising their awareness, developing escape plans, fitting smoke alarms and providing a range of other safety equipment including misting systems and sprinklers.
- Engage with residents to provide prevention advice and education and working with partners on safeguarding.
- Work with partnership organisations to raise awareness of the services we provide and reduce risks such as wildfire, road safety, water safety and fires on vessels.
- Engage in national projects looking at changes to fire safety legislation to ensure we deliver a protection service that is aligned to changing national standards.
- Work with business owners and responsible persons to ensure they comply with fire safety regulations by:
 - carrying out fire safety checks and audits
 - working with local authority partners and carrying out operational risk inspections at the highest risk sites
 - providing advice and guidance on the issues and measures they can take to prevent false alarms. During 2019/20 false alarms accounted for 38% of the incidents that we attended – having the potential to draw resources away from higher life risk incidents like fires and road traffic collisions
 - responding to concerns about fire safety in buildings from partner agencies, members of the public and operational firefighters.
- Use a range of data to identify high risk and high priority buildings and to inform our risk based inspection programme, improving the accuracy of the information used.
- Engage with young people through education programmes and activities including cadets, firesetters and partnership work.

Text added. Explanation - addition in response to feedback that the impact of mental health on people who use our services was underrepresented.

Bullet point added. Explanation - inserted following feedback from consultation that underrepresented.

- Address the risks identified following the Grenfell Tower fire. We formed a specialist high rise building team in 2020, working closely with partners in local authorities and other housing providers to improve safety in these buildings, such as promoting the use of sprinklers.
- Continue to support national and local campaigns to raise awareness, provide advice and reduce risk.
- Act as a key consultee in building regulations applications.



What we plan to do

- 1.1 Further define our community safety campaigns to make sure we have a clear annual set of campaigns to influence people taking safer actions to prevent incidents, promote home fire safety visits, reinforce the benefits of smoke detectors, domestic sprinklers and mist suppression systems and provide advice about what to do during an incident.
- 1.2 Enhance our efforts to communicate road safety messages to those most at risk to reduce death and injury.
- 1.3 Review the effectiveness of our road safety education events and initiatives, delivered across Devon and Somerset in collaboration with partners including Learn to Live, Survive the Drive, Biker Down and My Red Thumb.
- 1.4 Increase communication campaigns to educate building owners about the impact of false alarms on the fire service and their business.
- 1.5 Work with those who are responsible for flood defence planning to support flood prevention efforts using our experience in responding to water rescue and flood incidents.
- 1.6 Engage closely with planning authorities to ensure that the housing growth includes domestic sprinklers or/water mist suppression systems in high risk housing to ensure that these buildings are safer for people.
- 1.7 Improve our use of data and intelligence to more effectively target those people most at risk of fire.
- 1.8 Improve our learning from serious incidents, including the Grenfell Tower fire, to identify how we can improve our prevention and protection work.
- 1.9 Increase our work with partners to help communities prepare themselves for major emergencies and severe weather events, by providing training and storage for equipment.
- 1.10 We will prepare for the impact of climate change on our communities (for example wildfire and flooding) and work with partners to reduce the impact.
- 1.11 We will develop local risk management plans for each station area, involving staff, partners and communities, to help us shape and improve the service we provide.

Text added. Explanation - to provide additional clarity following consultation feedback as mentioned on page 44.

Bullet added. Explanation - added in response to feedback that the draft did not account for very specific local differences.



Priority 2: Our operational resources provide an effective emergency response to meet the local and national risks identified in this plan.

What we will continue to do

- Ensure we have the right fire engines and equipment in the right place at the right time to match the risks faced by communities.
- Develop tactical plans specific to individual sites, which set out the right number and type of operational resources (such as water supplies), salvage plans and how we work with the owner (or custodian) and other emergency services to deal effectively with the incident.
- Invest in our fleet and equipment strategy ensuring that our fire engines, special appliances and equipment meet modern standards for efficiency and meet the risks identified in communities.
- Invest in our information and communications technology to ensure we are able to support the delivery of front line services.
- Increase our work with partners to provide life-saving water safety equipment at locations with a high number of drownings, similar to the work carried out at Exeter Quay in 2021 to provide reach poles and throw lines.
- Work with partners in local resilience forums to plan and co-ordinate multi-agency responses to major incidents, severe weather and national emergencies.
- Have a working at height and confined space capability at key stations located across our Service area.
- Continually review operational procedures in line with national guidance and best practice to improve and refine our response to commercial, industrial and agricultural fires.
- Develop our team of hazardous material and environmental protection advisers ensuring that they are trained and equipped to identify hazardous materials present at incidents, assess the risk posed by those materials and advise the incident commander.

- Investigate fires to identify probable causes and support police where arson is suspected.
- Support the provision of high volume pumping equipment for use in local and national flooding.
- Support the National Resilience Capabilities Programme which can provide support across the country in the case of a national emergency.
- Provide emergency medical response in support of the ambulance service to communities through our co-responding at stations.
- Improve our operational assurance process to ensure that we learn from incidents and continue to improve.
- Prepare for and respond to terrorist incidents.



Image added. Explanation - to include a more diverse range of images.

What we plan to do

- 2.1 Use our new Management of Risk Information system to better provide accurate, relevant and timely information to operational crews responding to incidents.
- 2.2 Review the location and type of specialist vehicles to ensure that they are correctly located and have the capacity and capability needed to deal with incidents effectively.
- 2.3 Improve our off-road capacity by introducing all-terrain vehicles with firefighting capability.
- 2.4 Review how we respond to gaining entry requests in support of the police and ambulance service to ensure that we are providing this service efficiently.
- 2.5 Review how we assist the ambulance service to move extremely overweight patients in emergency situations to ensure the best use of resources and the best outcome for patients.
- 2.6 Review and introduce new capabilities to deal with incidents in high-rise buildings. For example the smoke hoods we now carry on our fire engines to assist evacuation in smoke filled escape routes.
- 2.7 Review our flood response capability to ensure that our resources are matched to risk and need.
- 2.8 We will develop local risk management plans for each station area, involving staff, partners and communities, to help us shape and improve the service we provide.

Bullet text change. Explanation - bullets 2.2, 2.3 and 2.5 consolidated into one to remove duplication.

Bullet added. Explanation - added in response to feedback that the draft did not account very specific local differences.



Priority 3: Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is recognised as a great place to work: our staff feel valued, supported, safe, and well-trained to deliver a high performing fire and rescue service.

What we will continue to do

- Improve staff safety through continuous improvement.
- Provide staff with access to counselling and mental health support services.
- Carry out operational exercises to ensure that our staff are familiar with the risks and are able to practice procedures.
- Develop and train specialist responders for terrorist incidents.
- Train and exercise our operational crews and commanders to deal with large scale multi-agency incidents using the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme principles.
- Develop our specialist officers (water incident managers) trained to deal with flood incident management.
- Carry out exercises to test our business continuity plans.



What we plan to do

- 3.1 Further develop our occupational health screening to support the wellbeing of staff.
- 3.2 Further develop our defusing service, which helps staff to mentally recover from traumatic incidents, to cover suicide-related incidents.
- 3.3 Evaluate the training of operational crews, who have an identified risk in their area, in maritime firefighting techniques and procedures.
- 3.4 We will enhance our 'Safe to' approach to encourage psychological safety so that we can learn from our experiences and generate a culture of constructive challenge at all levels.
- 3.5 Review, update and improve policies, procedures, training, specialist advice and equipment to support operational crews in successfully resolving hazardous materials incidents.
- 3.6 Create a more diverse workforce and engage with underrepresented communities to help us do this.
- 3.7 Develop our next people strategy to support us with developing our workforce.
- 3.8 Improve our on-call firefighter recruitment process to encourage more people to join us and support their local communities.'

Text added. *Explanation - added to provide additional clarity in response to comments about inclusion and diversity.*

Bullet added. *Explanation - additional action following internal feedback.*



Priority 4: We are open and accountable, using our resources efficiently to deliver an effective, sustainable service that demonstrates improving public value.

What we will continue to do

- Work in collaboration with partners in other public sector organisations and neighbouring services, to address multiple risks across legislative boundaries.
- We will continue to carry out operational risk inspections at the highest risk sites up to 15km cross-border.
- Tailor our approach to enable us to identify those most in need of our support and to deliver services that meet their needs effectively.
- Work in partnership with neighbouring fire services to cope with high numbers of calls through our Networked Fire Control agreement. For example during extreme flooding events.
- Continually review our business continuity plans to ensure minimum impact on the delivery of our services should a business continuity event happen.



What we plan to do

- 4.1 In addition to preparing for the community impact of climate change (such as wildfires or flooding), we will minimise our own impact. Our Environmental Strategy¹⁰ sets out how we plan to reduce our impact on the environment. We aim to reduce our impact on the environment and deliver efficiency savings from improved practices.
- 4.2 Invest in our estate ensuring that our buildings meet modern standards for energy efficiency and have suitable training facilities for operational crews to maintain their competence.
- 4.3 Capture more data to inform our learning, enabling us to consider the impact on individuals and communities and to refine the range and depth of our services.
- 4.4 Engage more with community groups, businesses and through established networks. We will carry out effective and meaningful engagement activities with our staff, partners, wider stakeholders and communities by offering a range of opportunities for them to get actively involved, have their say and work with us to help shape and improve the service we provide.
- 4.5 Increase our focus on equality of access to our services, recognising the diversity of our communities.
- 4.6 Share resources widely with emergency, local authority and public health partners and seek to learn from commercial partners.
- 4.7 Following repeated attendance at unwanted fire alarms, we will explore options to reduce the costs to the Service.
- 4.8 We will review and evaluate our approach to reducing unwanted fire alarms.
- 4.9 We will be a partner in the Devon and Cornwall Serious Violence Prevention Partnership.

Bullet added. *Explanation - addition following feedback from Devon and Cornwall Police.*

¹⁰ dsfire.gov.uk/about-us/environmental-strategy

Summary table of our actions mapped against our risks (Note: these are in addition to the work we are currently undertaking).

Risk category	Identified risks	Proposed actions
Fires	Dwelling fires	Action 1.1. Action 1.6. Action 1.7. Action 1.8. Action 2.1. Action 2.8. Action 3.6. Action 4.4. Action 4.5.
	High rise buildings	Action 1.1. Action 1.6. Action 1.8. Action 2.1. Action 2.6. Action 2.8. Action 4.4.
	Large commercial, industrial and agricultural fires	Action 1.1. Action 1.7. Action 1.8. Action 2.1. Action 2.8. Action 4.6.
	Hotels and guest houses	Action 1.1. Action 1.4. Action 1.7. Action 1.8. Action 2.1. Action 2.6. Action 2.8.
	Hospitals and residential care homes	Action 1.1. Action 1.4. Action 1.7. Action 1.8. Action 2.1. Action 2.8.
	Heritage property fires	Action 1.1. Action 1.6. Action 1.7. Action 1.8. Action 2.1. Action 2.8.
	Secondary fires	Action 1.1. Action 1.7. Action 1.10. Action 2.1. Action 2.4. Action 2.8.
	Fires on board vessels	Action 1.1. Action 1.7. Action 2.1. Action 2.8. Action 3.3.
	False alarms	Action 1.1. Action 1.4. Action 2.1. Action 2.8. Action 4.7. Action 4.8.
Transport	Road traffic collisions	Action 1.1. Action 1.2. Action 1.3. Action 2.1. Action 2.2. Action 2.8.
Specialist rescues	Rescues from height and confined space	Action 1.1. Action 2.1. Action 2.2. Action 2.8.
	Rescues from water	Action 1.1. Action 1.9. Action 1.10. Action 2.1. Action 2.2. Action 2.7. Action 2.8.
	Animal rescues	Action 1.1. Action 2.1. Action 2.2. Action 2.8.
Hazardous materials	Hazardous materials sites and incidents (including responding to collapsed structures and bomb or terrorist attacks)	Action 1.1. Action 1.7. Action 1.8. Action 2.1. Action 2.2. Action 2.8. Action 3.5.
Environment and climate change	Severe weather events including flooding response and water rescue	Action 1.1. Action 1.5. Action 1.9. Action 2.1. Action 2.2. Action 2.3. Action 2.7. Action 2.8. Action 4.1. Action 4.2.
National risks	Major emergencies Resilience and business continuity	Action 1.9. Action 2.1. Action 2.8. Action 3.7. Action 4.3.
Health and wellbeing	Medical response and health-related incidents	Action 1.1. Action 2.1. Action 2.4. Action 2.5. Action 2.8. Action 3.1. Action 3.2. Action 3.4.

Resources available

The Service receives funding each year from a combination of local taxation business rates (NNDR) and council tax (precept) as well as receiving central government grants. This funding is used to pay for our day-to-day expenses such as our workforce, fuel, heat and light, and to provide the systems, resources and infrastructure needed to support our services.

Total funding as of 2021/22 of **£74.2 million** for the financial year 2021/22 from the following sources.

- **Council tax** **£54.8 million**
- **Non-domestic business rates** **£13.0 million**
- **Central government grants** **£6.4 million**

There are also financial reserves to help pay for specific projects and to reduce the amount we need to borrow.

The total net cost of running Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service for the 2021/22 financial year is **£74.2 million**. These costs cover:

- **Workforce** **£66.2 million**
- **Premises and fleet** **£7.4 million**
- **Other** **£13.5 million***
- **Income** **£12.9 million****

*this includes: equipment and furniture (mostly equipment on appliances), information and communication technology, and loans and leases.

**such as Government grants for Covid-19, Fire Protection Grant, Mobile Communications, Urban Search and Rescue.

The Service continues to make affordable and sustainable capital investments, such as the re-development of our estate and fleet.

The Service is required to deliver a balanced budget meaning outgoings do not exceed income. We will use the resources available in the best way to minimise the impact of risk to our communities. Further information about our spending, including the medium term financial plan¹¹ is on our website.

Measuring and evaluating impact

The Service provides performance information on our website¹² and Authority committees scrutinise performance as does the fire service inspectorate. We have also agreed an evaluation framework that is based on established good practice (College of Policing) and this is built into commissioning and portfolio management arrangements.

¹¹ dsfire.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-spend

¹² dsfire.gov.uk/about-us/our-performance



Glossary

Appliance - The general term used to describe all firefighting vehicles, including the standard fire engine or pumping appliance.

Community risk - The risk of unwanted events that might occur in the community, which Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service aims to reduce. Includes fires, road traffic collisions and other incidents that the Service might respond to.

Co-responders - On-call firefighters who receive enhanced training and respond to medical emergencies in their communities in support of the ambulance service.

Emergency Response Standard - A risk-based target for response times and number of personnel to attend all relevant emergency incidents in Devon and Somerset.

Gaining entry - An initiative where firefighters assist the ambulance service to get into properties where they suspect there is an unconscious or unresponsive casualty inside.

Hazmat - Hazardous materials like chemicals, fuel spillages, substances that can cause harm to persons and or environment.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services - The body that independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of the police and fire service.

Incident - An event requiring fire service assistance.

National resilience - The National Resilience Programme was introduced in 2003 to strengthen the country's ability to handle emergencies and crises. The national resilience assets are owned by the fire and rescue services which host them. Servicing of the vehicles and procurement of equipment for them is managed centrally.

The programme delivers:

- mass decontamination
- urban search and rescue
- high volume pumping capacity
- operational logistics and support
- long term capability management.

Prevention - Activity associated with fire safety in the home and community.

Primary fire - Fires in buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures.

Protection - Sometimes referred to as 'Business Safety'. This activity is linked to the advice and guidance for regulated premises and enforcement of the Regulatory Reform Order 2005.

On-call - Firefighters recruited to be available on call close to their local fire station for a certain minimum number of hours per week, plus regular training. They carry an alerter to call them to the fire station when an incident happens in their area. Many have other employment or a lifestyle that enables them to commit a certain number of hours per week to be on call.

Operational risk - The risk of unwanted events that might occur to the Service while carrying out its operations. Includes firefighter occupational accidents or illness.

Resilience - The ability to respond to major or larger incidents whilst maintaining the core service provision. This is made possible through effective emergency planning and flexible resource arrangements.

Risk analysis - The process of examining in detail the risks that could affect the communities in Devon and Somerset.

Road Traffic Collision - An incident involving vehicles on the highway.

Secondary fire - The majority of outdoor fires, including grassland and refuse fires.

Wholetime - Operational staff immediately available while on duty.



DEVON &
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