



Cheshire
Fire Authority

Annual Report

2019 - 2020



Fundraising for The Fire Fighters Charity

When The Fire Fighters Charity made an appeal for help to its fire and rescue service family during the pandemic, staff from across the Service leapt instantly to its aid.

To date more than £50,000 has been raised for the charity in Cheshire alone, which is a staggering amount, grown through dedication and sheer determination to support the cause.

Every year the charity needs £10m to operate its services in support of the entire UK fire service family. This year, however, the coronavirus pandemic has brought its traditional fundraising to a halt, with the cancellation or postponement of countless events and challenges, losing the charity £200,000 per month.

To help reduce the shortfall, firefighters have been running marathons around fire station drill yards, climbing ladders to the height of Everest, cycling the equivalent distance of the entire UK coastline without leaving the fire station, run 30 half-marathons in 30 days and running a full marathon in one day in full fire kit, to name just a few of the endurance feats the crews have risen to.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Gus O'Rourke said: "What a fantastic effort from everyone, raising so much money in such a short space of time. I'd like to personally pass on my sincere thanks and a massive well done to everyone who has helped to raise this incredible amount and good luck to anyone with challenges still to come."



Helping the community during coronavirus

The outbreak of Covid-19 has caused significant changes to everyone's work and personal lives, and the Service has risen to the unprecedented challenges posed by the global pandemic every step of the way.

As well as continuing to provide the public with our full range of fire and rescue services – whilst implementing the necessary precautions to keep staff and the wider community safe – we have been providing extra services to ensure that the needs of the people of Cheshire are met.

Since the start of lockdown the Service has been working closely with local authorities and health partners to determine ways in which our skills, resources and vehicles can be best utilised to support the requirements of the community. A temporary Community Support Management Team was formed to allow a direct route for statutory partners to request support.

Staff and volunteers

The Service was inundated with offers from staff and volunteers wanting to help in any way that they can.

A vast number of existing and former CFRS staff signed up to support the community of Cheshire in their spare time.

Seventeen former operational staff returned to the Service as resilience firefighters and, where possible, other staff members had their duties amended to enable them to support the community as part of their core working pattern.

Vehicles

A large number of Service vehicles have been allocated for community work, including cars, motorbikes, small and large vans, flat-bed heavy goods vehicles and minibuses. They have been used for everything from transporting staff to Covid-19 testing centres to delivering vital blood and tissue samples and breast milk donations.

Support

Throughout the pandemic the efforts of our staff and volunteers have made a huge impact on both Cheshire residents and our statutory partners. We have delivered thousands of emergency food parcels and prescription medication packages to the most vulnerable people in our community, allowing those most at risk to stay at home.

The Service has also supported the bulk distribution of personal protection equipment for colleagues in both health and care settings, as well as a programme of face mask fit testing for the NHS.

- To date, staff have carried out more than
- 1,295 welfare visits to people shielding at home
 - 8,134 collections and deliveries of prescription medication
 - 1,440 telephone calls to check what support people need
 - 4,223 food collections and deliveries, often working with local food banks
 - 121 Free School Meals to eligible households during the summer holidays
 - 152 education resource packs including laptops provided by the Department for Education
 - 73 Covid-19 swab test kit deliveries and collections to homes of patients due to be admitted to hospital for a procedure.
 - 50 bulk deliveries of PPE
 - 136 blood bike runs and
 - 168 Qualitative Face Fit Tests across the critical care sector

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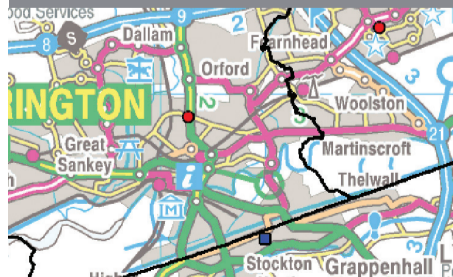
IRMP 2020-2024 approved

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Serious fire safety breaches conviction

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Your Service Where You Live

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Summary of accounts 2019-2020

IRMP 2020-2024 approved



Cheshire Fire Authority has approved the publication of its Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2024 (IRMP), setting out the strategic plan for the Service over the next four years.

Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority, Councillor Bob Rudd said: "The Fire Authority endorsed this IRMP because it is ambitious and will make Cheshire a safer place to live and work for both our communities and our firefighters. The Authority has had to take difficult decisions in recent years because of cuts to our funding. Therefore it is pleasing to approve a plan that invests in our future and will continue to provide Cheshire with the first-class fire and rescue service it deserves."

The development of the IRMP has taken two years and has been informed through extensive consultation with staff, trade unions, local stakeholders, partner agencies and residents across Cheshire.

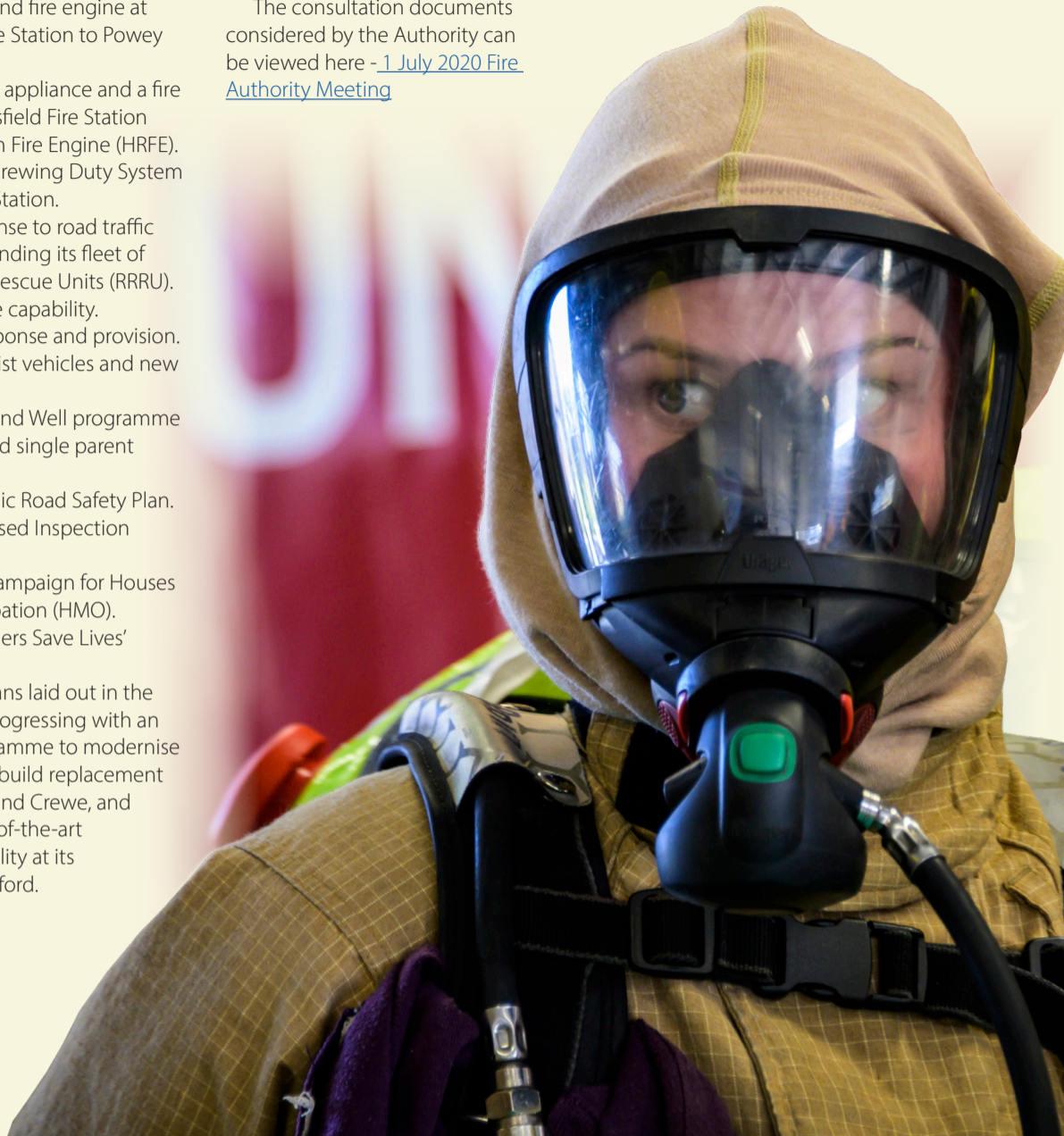
The key decisions made are for the Service to:

- Relocate the second fire engine at Ellesmere Port Fire Station to Powey Lane Fire Station.
- Replace the aerial appliance and a fire engine at Macclesfield Fire Station with a High-Reach Fire Engine (HRFE).
- Introduce a Day Crewing Duty System at Wilmslow Fire Station.
- Improve its response to road traffic collisions by expanding its fleet of Rapid Response Rescue Units (RRRU).
- Develop a wildfire capability.
- Review water response and provision.
- Review its specialist vehicles and new equipment.
- Expand the Safe and Well programme to lone person and single parent households.
- Develop a Strategic Road Safety Plan.
- Review its Risk-Based Inspection Programme.
- Launch a safety campaign for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).
- Expand its 'Sprinklers Save Lives' campaign.

In addition to the plans laid out in the IRMP, the Authority is progressing with an ambitious capital programme to modernise most of its fire stations; build replacement fire stations at Chester and Crewe, and is building a new state-of-the-art operational training facility at its Sadler Road site in Winsford.

To view the IRMP 2020-2024, please follow this link [IRMP 2020-2024](#)

The consultation documents considered by the Authority can be viewed here - [1 July 2020 Fire Authority Meeting](#)



Sadler Road Training Centre

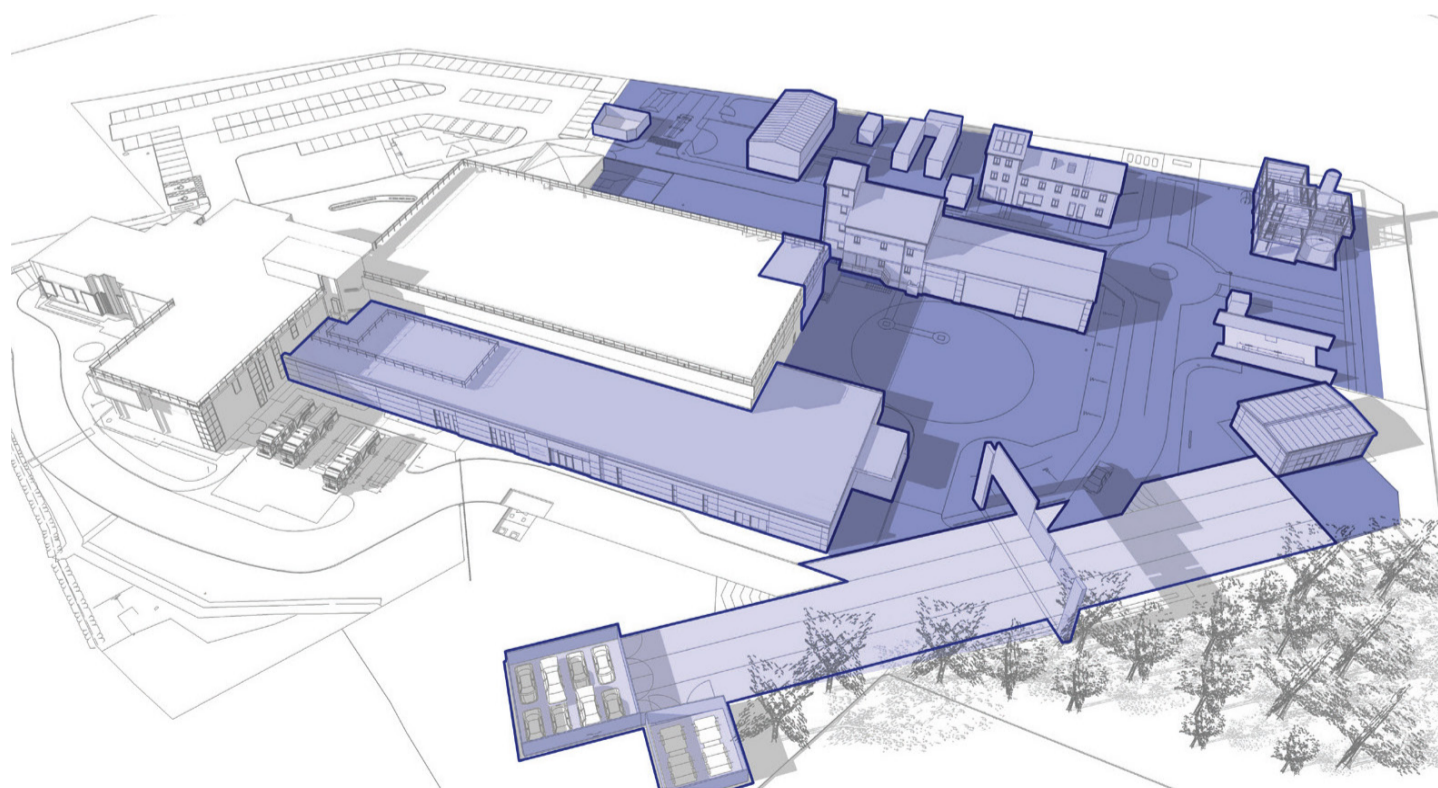
The new training centre continues to take shape at the former Service headquarters in Sadler Road, Winsford.

The facilities, which will be among the best in the country, will immerse staff in real-life operational situations making them better equipped and skilled to keep the communities of Cheshire safe.

Our firefighters have to be able to deal with a wide range of incidents as the county has a large number of chemical and industrial risks, four major motorway networks spanning the length and breadth of the county and great swathes of rural areas which present a host of operational hazards and risks.

The new training facility will provide innovative technology and real-life scenario sets, ranging from serious motorway collisions to dealing with building fires and chemical incidents, keeping our firefighters highly skilled and equipped to deal with a myriad of life saving situations.

Due to coronavirus, progress has inevitably slowed down as contractors continue to develop the new training centre while observing social distancing rules. Factories that make some of the bespoke elements of the structures were closed for several months due to the lockdown and this has again led to some delays in the critical path of the programme. The revised completion date is set for late October 2020.



The centre comprises zones specific to the training needs of a modern day fire and rescue service. It incorporates a fire house and breathing apparatus training building, petrochemical training rig, a row of terraced houses and small commercial building,

farm/stable building, motorway simulation scenario, road traffic collision training building as well as indoor and confined space training areas and refurbished vehicle workshops.

Each zone provides realistic and

immersive scenarios, representative of what firefighters can face in the course of their work. More detailed information about the training centre can be found on the [Service website](#).

Exercise tests Service's readiness for a terrorist attack

The Service has been working closely with partners within the Cheshire Resilience Forum to test our multi-agency response to a terrorist incident.

A training exercise to ensure that all agencies are able to execute a co-ordinated response in the event of a major incident was held at Virgin Trains in Crewe. It involved the release of an unknown chemical and marauding terrorist attack on a train.

The exercise gave the Service the chance to bring together our marauding terrorist attack (MTA) and hazardous materials procedures for a very challenging scenario in a realistic environment and test how they work with other agencies.

Partners from North West Fire Control, Virgin Trains, Cheshire Constabulary, North West Ambulance Service, British Transport Police, NW Hazardous Area Response Team, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Network Rail all took part in the exercise.

Cheshire Resilience Forum exists to prepare for, respond to and recover from any emergency. They bring together local emergency services, National Health Service and local authorities who can help to prepare and respond to any event.



Pub owner convicted of serious fire safety breaches

The owner of a country inn in Tarporley has been convicted of serious breaches of fire safety law after firefighters raised concerns following a chimney blaze at the premises.

Stuart Hulse pleaded guilty on behalf of himself, and Foresters Arms (Tarporley) Ltd, to nine breaches of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. He was sentenced to four months in prison, suspended for 12 months, and the company was ordered to pay £2,250 in fines and the same amount towards the cost of the investigation.

A fire safety audit was undertaken by the Service's Protection team following the chimney fire in January 2019. A number of serious deficiencies were identified that put customers and staff members at risk of death or serious injury in the event of a fire.

The inspection found that there was inadequate emergency lighting, none of the bedrooms that guests stayed in had fire doors and guests were expected to use a ladder to escape in the event of a blaze. The team subsequently issued both a prohibition notice and an enforcement notice and began a prosecution case.

The notices were lifted after work had been undertaken to bring the premises up to the required standard.



Virtual fire station open days

When the prime minister announced a national lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic back in March, the Service cancelled all station open days to help keep the staff and our communities safe.

With a bit of creative thinking, however, the open days were back on the agenda shortly afterwards.

They were held online where members of the public would be able to join in with their local stations open day, virtually.

The Service's first 'virtual open day' took place on Saturday 6 June at Wilmslow Fire Station.

From tours of specialist vehicles and fire engines, to an array of demonstrations such as a road traffic collision and kitchen and BBQ safety - the virtual open day was action packed, all for the public to enjoy on social media from the comfort and safety of their own home. Throughout the summer months, when station open days are usually held, other Cheshire fire stations have followed suit, adding their own creativity to make each one a different experience.

Your Service wherever

We continue to focus on providing excellent emergency response services and high quality, innovative prevention and protection activities, focused on reducing risks and keeping the community safe.

Cheshire East Unitary performance area profile



Last year in Cheshire East we responded to 2,834 emergencies. Our prevention and protection work took us into 14,651 homes, many schools, community groups and local businesses. We also delivered youth programmes and have vibrant fire cadet units operating on many of our stations. We worked with many partners to improve road safety.

There were 307 primary fires during 2019/20; 63 fewer than the previous year. These are more serious fires that cause harm to people or damage to property. Compared to 2018/19, the number of deliberate primary fires (involving buildings and vehicles) decreased from 64 to 61, while deliberate secondary fires (generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property) saw a significant decrease from 150 to 103. Our intelligence-led approach to identifying 'hotspot' areas of high activity has become more sophisticated so problem areas will be highlighted and tackled with a range of arson reduction and youth engagement initiatives. Accidental fires in the home have reduced by 19 compared to the previous year, to 111 in total during 2019/20. In total, 65 (59%) of these fires started in the kitchen and so this area continues to be a key focus of our campaigns. Fortunately the majority of fires in the home were not serious, with 97 (87%) staying confined to the room where the fire started. Unfortunately, there were 3 deaths from accidental fires in the home during 2019/20. Injuries remain low and have decreased from 14 in the previous year to 10, with all 10 slight injuries last year.

Fire Authority Members

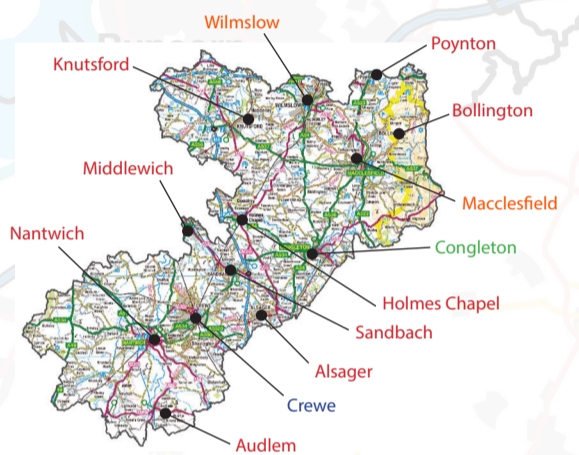


Key statistics	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Primary fires per 100,000 population	96.08	97.17	79.92
Fatalities from primary fires per 100,000 population	0.26	0.26	0.78
Injuries from primary fires per 100,000 population	6.07	3.68	2.60
Deliberate primary fires per 10,000 population	1.79	1.68	1.59
Deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population	5.38	3.94	2.68
Deliberate fires per 10,000 population	7.18	5.62	4.27

Key contacts



Matt Barlow Service Delivery Manager
Lorraine Page Locality Safety Manager
Bev Hughes Hub Administration Manager
Carl Rainbird Protection Manager



- Wholetime station
- Day crewed station
- Day crewed 12hr shift
- On-call station

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Your local station – For more information about your local fire station, please visit our website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

Cheshire West and Chester Unitary performance area profile



Last year in Cheshire West and Chester we responded to 2,485 emergencies. Our prevention and protection work took us into 14,703 homes, many schools, community groups and local businesses. We also delivered youth programmes and have vibrant fire cadet units operating on many of our stations. We worked with many partners to improve road safety.

There were 320 primary fires during 2019/20, which was an increase of 8 when compared with the previous year. These are more serious fires that cause harm to people or damage to property. Compared to 2018/19, deliberate primary fires (involving buildings and vehicles) increased from 62 to 70 incidents; while the number of deliberate secondary fires (generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property) reduced from 234 to 144 (-38%). Our intelligence-led approach to identifying 'hotspot' areas of high activity has become more sophisticated so problem areas will be highlighted and tackled with a range of arson reduction and youth engagement initiatives. Accidental fires in the home have increased slightly from 100 in 2018/19, to 109 in 2019/20, with 65 (60%) of these fires starting in the kitchen and so this area continues to be a key focus of our campaigns. Fortunately the majority of fires in the home were not serious with 98 (90%) staying confined to the room where the fire started. Unfortunately, there were 3 deaths from accidental fires in the home during 2019/20 and injuries remain low but have increased slightly from 11 in 2018/19 to 13 in 2019/20, consisting of five serious and eight slight injuries last year.

Fire Authority Members

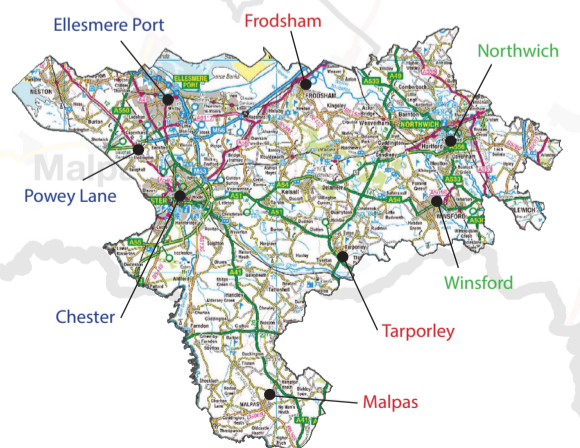


Key statistics	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Primary fires per 100,000 population	104.15	91.63	93.28
Fatalities from primary fires per 100,000 population	0.59	0.00	0.87
Injuries from primary fires per 100,000 population	5.92	3.23	3.79
Deliberate primary fires per 10,000 population	2.28	1.82	2.04
Deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population	7.40	6.87	4.20
Deliberate fires per 10,000 population	9.67	8.69	6.24

Key contacts



Tony O'Dwyer Service Delivery Manager
Emma Coxon Locality Safety Manager
Emma Mason Hub Administration Manager
Ian Kay Station Manager - Protection



- Wholetime station
- Day crewed station
- On-call station

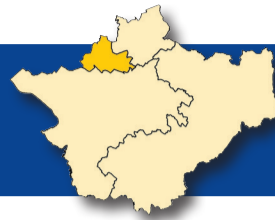
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Your local station – For more information about your local fire station, please visit our website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

e you live 2019-20

Halton

Unitary performance area profile



Last year in Halton we responded to 1,250 emergencies. Our prevention and protection work took us into 5,309 homes, many schools, community groups and local businesses. We also delivered youth programmes and have vibrant fire cadet units operating on many of our stations. We worked with many partners to improve road safety.

There were 133 primary fires across Halton during 2019/20, which was 32 fewer (-13%) than the previous year. These are more serious fires that cause harm to people or damage to property. There were 57 deliberate primary fires (involving buildings and vehicles), which was the same as the previous year but 21% less than 3 years ago and there were 201 deliberate secondary fires (generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property); a decrease of 21 over 2018/19. Our intelligence-led approach to identifying 'hotspot' areas of high activity has become more sophisticated so problem areas will be highlighted and tackled with a range of arson reduction and youth engagement initiatives. Compared to 2018/19, the number of accidental fires in the home decreased by thirteen, to 37 such incidents during 2019/20, with 18 (49%) of these fires starting in the kitchen, so this area continues to be a key focus of our campaigns. Fortunately the majority of fires in the home were not serious, with 33 (89%) staying confined to the room where the fire started. There were no deaths from accidental fires in the home, for the third year running. Injuries remain low and have decreased further from 15 the previous year to 9, with all 9 injuries being slight in 2019/20.

Key statistics	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Primary fires per 100,000 population	119.13	128.47	102.77
Fatalities from primary fires per 100,000 population	0.00	0.00	0.00
Injuries from primary fires per 100,000 population	8.62	11.68	6.95
Deliberate primary fires per 10,000 population	5.64	4.44	4.40
Deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population	16.62	17.75	15.53
Deliberate fires per 10,000 population	22.26	22.19	19.94

Key contacts



Mike Clark
Service Delivery Manager



Lorraine Page
Locality Safety Manager



Liz Thompson
Hub Administration Manager



Mark Pollard
Station Manager - Protection



Phil Harris

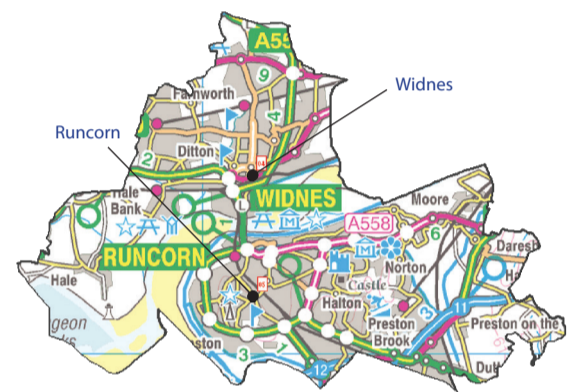


Stef Nelson



Rob Polhill

Fire Authority Members



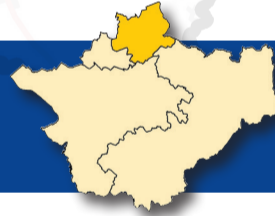
■ Wholetime station
(Runcorn also has an on-call watch)

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Your local station – For more information about your local fire station, please visit our website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

Warrington

Unitary performance area profile



Last year in Warrington we responded to 1,564 emergencies. Our prevention and protection work took us into 7,745 homes, many schools, community groups and local businesses. We also delivered youth programmes and have vibrant fire cadet units operating on many of our stations. We worked with many partners to improve road safety.

There was a decrease of 32 primary fires (192 in total) when compared with the previous year. These are more serious fires that cause harm to people or damage to property. Deliberate primary fires (involving buildings and vehicles) decreased by 3 (65 in total) from the previous year. Deliberate secondary fires (generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property) saw an increase from 219 in 2018/19 to 227 incidents in 2019/20. Our intelligence-led approach to identifying 'hotspot' areas of high activity has become more sophisticated so problem areas will be highlighted and tackled with a range of arson reduction and youth engagement initiatives. There has been a decrease of 22 accidental fires in the home (61 in total), when compared with the previous year with 32 of these fires starting in the kitchen so this area continues to be a key focus of our campaigns. Fortunately the majority of fires in the home were not serious, with 56 (92%) staying confined to the room where the fire started. There were no deaths from accidental fires in the home, for the second year running. Injuries remain low and have decreased from 17 in the previous year to 6 with one serious and five slight injuries in 2019/20.

Key statistics	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Primary fires per 100,000 population	106.82	109.28	91.42
Fatalities from primary fires per 100,000 population	0.48	0.00	0.00
Injuries from primary fires per 100,000 population	3.34	8.11	2.86
Deliberate primary fires per 10,000 population	3.24	3.25	3.10
Deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population	11.40	10.45	10.81
Deliberate fires per 10,000 population	14.64	13.70	13.90

Key contacts



Mike Clark
Service Delivery Manager



Lorraine Page
Locality Safety Manager



Liz Thompson
Hub Administration Manager



Mark Pollard
Station Manager - Protection



Mike Biggin



Karen Mundry

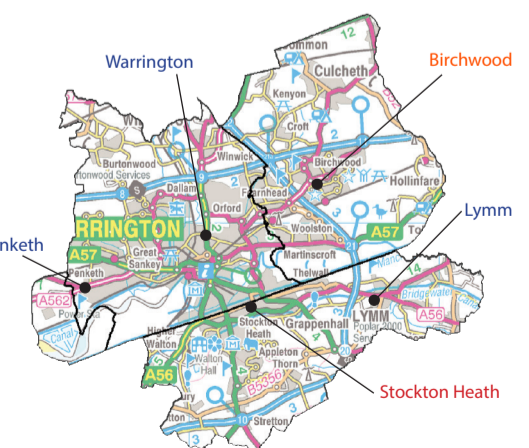


Les Morgan



Steve Wright

Fire Authority Members



■ Wholetime station
■ Day crewed station
■ Day crewed 12hr shift
■ On-call station

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Your local station – For more information about your local fire station, please visit our website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

Note – The latest home office data release (Fire stats monitor report) shows a 17.3 per cent increase in deliberate secondary fires across England in the past 3 years [2016/17 – 54,066, 2018/19 – 63,427] with a 10.4 per cent decrease in deliberate primary fires (2016/17 – 22,065, 2018/19 – 19,766).



Focus on Performance 2019-20

The Service continues to focus its fire prevention activity on those who are most vulnerable. Over the past three years fire crews and safety advocates have visited and carried out over 113,000 Home Safety Assessments (which became Safe and Well visits in February 2017).

The Service's prevention agenda continues to have a positive impact on the numbers killed and injured. Over the past decade accidental fires in the home have reduced by 33 per cent, with fire related injuries in accidental fires in the home reducing to a 10 year low. In 2019/20, 88 per cent of households where dwelling fires occurred had a working smoke alarm.

In addition, deliberate fires, which often occur outdoors, have also reduced by 65 per cent since 2009/10.

The Service has also helped to change the lives of approximately 400 young and often disadvantaged young people through its Prince's Trust and RESPECT courses during 2019/20, with over 8500 attendees since they began.

The following infographic highlights some of the key trends relating to different aspects of the organisation's performance over recent years.

Furrow not furlough for Widnes fire cadets



Fire Authority Member Cllr Phil Harris put out a call for volunteers to support a community project at a care home in Widnes.

The project involved renovation of the outdoor space and gardens at Madeline McKenna Court for the benefit of staff and residents.

Princes Trust Manager, Jason McTigue, answered the call and coordinated volunteers from across the service.

Local fire cadets also stepped forward, working in small groups, under close supervision and in line with social distancing and risk assessments. They got busy with weeding, mulching, sanding and construction of wooden planters and a pagoda.

Cllr Harris said: "The volunteers and cadets did a fantastic job and on behalf of the staff and residents I want to say thank you. You have made a real difference to the lives of local residents during a difficult time. Your skills, hard work and contribution is very much appreciated."

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Alex Waller added: "This work involved a fantastic team effort to improve the lives of vulnerable residents. I am sure that the fruits of labour will be enjoyed for many years to come. Everyone at Madeline McKenna Court can now enjoy the outside space, fresh air and colourful surroundings, which will improve wellbeing. I wish the cadets every success in their Duke of Edinburgh Awards."

Any fire cadet aged 14 and above can do their DofE regardless of ability, gender, background or location. Achieving an Award isn't a competition or about being first. It's all about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries, and the Widnes unit has been doing that in spades.

Find out more about [Cheshire Fire Cadets](#) and other youth opportunities with the Service.

Biker Down - course for motorcyclists

Biker Down is a course aimed at motorcyclists of all ages and experience.

The free course offers people the chance to learn practical skills to help avoid being involved in a crash, as well as essential first-aid training and advice on what to do should they find themselves first on the scene of a crash where someone is injured.

If you were the first on the scene of an accident involving a biker, would you know what to do? Would you know who is most at risk, how to protect the area or whether you should remove the helmet of a downed rider? Actions taken in the first few moments after an accident can be crucial in minimising injuries and can make a real difference to the lives of those involved.

Here you will find more information about our free [Biker Down](#) courses



Key Service Trends 2019/20

Community Outcomes

318 accidental fires in the home were attended in 2019/20.

This is the lowest number recorded in the last 10 years.



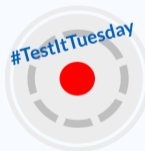
179 (56%) of these fires started in the kitchen.

Just under half of these (**44%**) had a main cause of cooking.

Kitchen fires have seen a decrease over recent years.

20 injuries were recorded in accidental fires in the home.

This is the lowest number recorded since 2009/10.



In 2019/20, **88%** of households, where dwelling fires have occurred, have a working smoke alarm.

2378 fires were attended in 2019/20.

This is **over 2000** fewer fires compared to 10 years ago



928 deliberate fires were attended in 2019/20.

This is **65%** fewer deliberately ignited fires than 10 years ago.

The majority of these are smaller outdoor fires

Prevention and Protection

In the past 3 years, over **113,000** Home Safety Assessments have been completed at heightened risk households



The Service continues to work with partners to share and analyse data and identify those who are most at risk.



Close to **6,000** young people have completed Prince's Trust and approximately **2,700** have completed RESPECT courses since they began



There were **515** False alarms attended caused by automatic systems in businesses and commercial premises in 2019/20.

This is a reduction of **51%** over 5 years



Nearly **1,600** fire safety audits in non domestic premises were completed last year

Staff and Services



Sickness remains low with an average of 4.4 days per person



All essential firefighting training has been completed



Priority based budgeting continues to generate savings

Stonewall success reaps rewards

Stonewall, the UK's leading LGBT rights charity has once again placed our Service third in its top 100 business index for the great work carried out over the past year to help achieve acceptance without exception for all LGBT people.

For the second year running the Service has ranked third in Stonewall's Top 100 Employers list, beating off competition

from more than 500 organisations across 20 different sectors, including government departments, global brands and international investment banks.

The Service has also retained its place for the fifth year running as the UK's most inclusive emergency service and Stonewall's top employer in the North West.

In addition, the Service received a number of accolades at a Stonewall

awards event including Chief Fire Officer Mark Cashin being named the North West Senior Champion of the Year. We were also identified as one of Stonewall's Top Trans Employers.

These accolades reflect the extensive efforts and commitment the Service has shown to LGBT inclusion work over the past decade.

#thinkoncall



On-call firefighters are a vital part of today's fire and rescue service, providing an efficient, effective service that gives emergency cover to more than 90 per cent of the UK.

We are keen to recruit both men and women as on-call firefighters, and if you think the female roles are more administrative, you would be totally wrong - all firefighters operate in frontline situations.

On-call firefighters come from every walk of life, including shopkeepers, builders, plumbers, farmers, secretaries, engineers and directors of companies together with people who are not currently employed. Previous experience is not required thanks to the comprehensive training programme.

Our on-call programme is developed and managed by a dedicated team of officers and staff which has streamlined the recruitment process and training schedule and promotes the national 'Need More' on-call campaign.

To apply to become an on-call firefighter email the HR Recruitment team on recruitment@cheshirefire.gov.uk



Summary of accounts 2019-20



Cheshire Fire Authority is the public body which manages Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of local communities.

From April 2019 to March 2020 it was made up of 23 elected Members, with seven appointed by Cheshire West and Chester, eight by Cheshire East, three by Halton Borough and four by Warrington Borough. The political composition of the Authority at that time comprised Conservative (6), Labour (14), Independent (2) and Liberal Democrat (1).

The Authority is a separate legal body and has the power to set council tax and agree its own policies and procedures without needing the approval of these local councils. Its meetings are open to the public and are usually held at the Service's Sadler Road site in Winsford. Full details are

on the website – www.cheshirefire.gov.uk.

Its key duties include approving the annual budget; setting its council tax level and approving the organisation's key policies, plans and strategies.

It is also responsible for ensuring its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is properly accounted for and seeks to secure continuous improvement. To demonstrate this it produces an Annual Governance Statement to accompany the Statement of Accounts.

Accounts

The Fire Authority's accounts show how it uses its resources to deliver a fire and rescue service across Cheshire. The summary accounts provide an overview of where the funds come from, how they

are used and the financial position as at 31 March 2020. The 2019-20 Statement of Accounts include the Authority's share of the cost of running of North West Fire Control Limited.

Summary Revenue Account

The 2019-20 Fire Authority net revenue budget and expenditure was £43m. The Authority has a general reserve of £2m at 31 March 2020, which is roughly five per cent of the budget, any underspends reported in the year for 2019-20 has been transferred to support capital expenditure.

The Authority also holds earmarked reserves to meet specific needs in line with its Reserves Strategy. The Authority is developing a range of options to ensure that it can operate efficiently and effectively and provide value for money.

Summary Balance Sheet

The Summary Balance Sheet shows the 2019-20 end of year position and the most obvious point to note is the net liability of £424m. In other words, assets of £111m, current liabilities of £11m but long term liabilities of £524m. Most of the liabilities relate to expected future pension costs of £523m, compared to £592m in 2018-19. All local authorities are required to recognise this liability in their balance sheet even though it is not an immediate call on their resources, but instead is paid out over the life of existing and future pensioners. At present, all deficits on the Firefighters Pension Scheme are funded by government through a specific top up grant.

Summary Revenue Account 2019-20	£'000	£'000
Firefighting and Rescue Operations	26,769	
Protection and Prevention	3,718	
Premises, Fleet and other Corporate Support Costs	10,338	
Actuarial pension costs - McCloud Judgement	-1,800	
Net Cost of Service		39,025
North West Fire Control - Cost of service		120
Other income, expenditure and adjustments		4,483
Amount to be met by Govt Grant and Local Taxation		43,628
Revenue Support Grant and Local Taxation	-29,084	
Council Tax	-14,544	
Net General Fund (Surplus)/Deficit		-
Balance on General Fund brought forward	-2,286	
Net movement on general reserves	-2	
Balance on General Fund Carried Forward		- 2,288

Summary Balance Sheet 2019-20	£'000	£'000
Long Term Assets	83,750	
Current Assets	27,657	
Long Term Liabilities	-523,598	
Current Liabilities	-11,618	
Total Assets less Total Liabilities		-423,809
Financed by:		
Unusable reserves	445,351	
Earmarked Reserves	-19,254	
General Reserve	-2,288	
TOTAL NET WORTH		423,809

The audit of the Authority's accounts for the year ending 31-03-2020 will be completed before the end of November 2020, the deadline has been delayed due to the coronavirus epidemic. A draft copy of the statement of accounts are available on our website at www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

Wendy Bebbington, Head of Finance, 01606 868700

Safety Central goes from strength to strength



The Service's safety and lifeskills education centre Safety Central welcomed its 20,000th visitor in March, shortly before the Covid-19 lockdown forced it to close temporarily.

Located near Lymm, the purpose-built facility that uses world-class special effects and scenery to simulate hazards and teach people hands-on ways of staying safe and well.

It has proven incredibly popular with schools and community groups from across Cheshire and beyond since its launch in July 2017. Between April 2019 and March 2020 alone, more than 8,700 people visited, an increase of 26 per cent on the year before.

The centre's cohort of volunteer rangers, who guide groups around the centre, increased to almost 40 during the year.

Mark Shone, Safety Central Manager, said: "We're now working hard to ensure schools and community groups can visit safely and continue to learn life-saving skills at our centre. This will inevitably mean some changes to our programmes and to group sizes we can accommodate."

Schools and community groups already booked for 2020/21 are being contacted and further information about how the centre will be running can be found at safetycentral.org.uk



Performance at the end of March 2020



Since April 1st 2019 we have welcomed a total of **8,773 visitors** including:

3,434 pupils and **452 adults** from **72 mainstream schools and groups**

481 young people and **176 adults** from **31 non-mainstream schools and colleges**

1,598 people and **211 helpers** from **83 community groups**

2,421 stakeholders attending training, events or meetings

Total number of visitors since we opened in July 2017: **20,193**



37 volunteers are currently active and **5 more** have applied or are in training. A total of **3,843 volunteer hours** have been logged so far this year.



Pre-visit

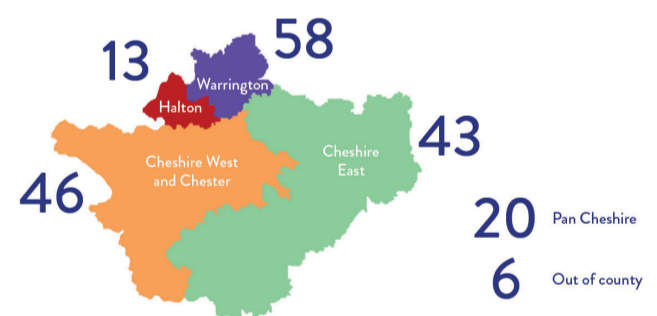


Post-visit

Average **improvement** of **68%** in test of key lifeskills subject knowledge



Cheshire
Fire & Rescue Service



186 schools and groups in total

"Wonderful visit, so hands on and current. Excellent, welcoming leader with wonderful rangers."

"A very interesting and professionally run establishment."

"We really can't believe how much you packed in to the day and how much the children learnt. Parents have already said they haven't stopped talking about it."



Visitor experience

100% of 137 teachers rated their visit as 'very good' or 'excellent' and **100%** would visit again.

94% of 736 pupils and students gave their visit 4 or 5 out of 5.

99% of 420 adult visitors gave their visit 4 or 5 out of 5.

