



Annual Report 2006/2007



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The information contained in this document can also be provided in other formats including braille, audiotape and large print. Please call 0845 8009000.

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Firework Safety Initiative



Working with deaf communities



Emergency response

The Authority's Vision and Mission Statements

The Vision Statement:

“Making West Midlands Safer”

The Mission Statement:

**“Providing a quality service to reduce risk by:
Preventing • Protecting • Responding”**

Statement of Responsibility

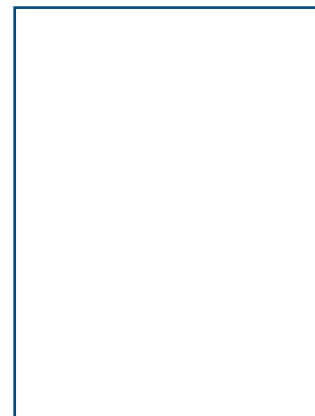
The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (referred to from now onwards in this document as 'the Authority') is responsible for West Midlands Fire Service. In this capacity, the Authority is also responsible for the preparation of this combined Annual Report, for the information and assessments set out within it and the assumptions and estimates on which they are based.

The Authority is also responsible for putting in place appropriate performance management and control systems from which the information and assessments in the Performance Plan have been derived. The Authority is satisfied that the information and assessments included in the Plan are, in all material respects, accurate and complete and that the Plan is realistic and achievable.

This Annual Report fulfils the Authority's requirement under the Local Government Act 1999 in accordance with Government Circular 9/2004.

This Annual Report provides an opportunity to review our work and outcomes in the previous financial year and to report the measures being undertaken by this Authority to deliver service improvements to local people.

Its principal audiences are likely to be the staff and Elected Members of the Authority, groups and organisations with an



Chair

West Midlands Fire &
Rescue Authority



Chief Fire Officer

Frank Sheehan

QFSM
West Midlands Fire Service

interest in the activities of the Authority, regulatory bodies and central Government. Nevertheless, it is a public document and potentially an important means of communicating with local people directly. For this reason, it will be made available on this Authority's website and in main libraries in the West Midlands area.

**Looking back on success over the
last year 2006/2007**



Firefighters train to a high level of competence

Over the last year, West Midlands Fire Service has continued the drive to improve public safety by providing a modern and proactive fire and rescue service. Some of the overriding good work undertaken by our personnel is reviewed on the following pages.

A Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process was completed on all brigades by the Audit Commission. This resulted in the Audit Commission finding West Midlands Fire Service to be “performing well”, and also noted that the West Midlands Fire Service “...meets the needs of its diverse community”. The Audit



Urban Search and Rescue Team (USART)

Commission also published the results of its Direction of Travel Assessments and Use of Resources Assessments for Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2006, and we were found to be “performing well in operational preparedness and emergency response”. The report also recognised “...that fundamental changes to service delivery have resulted in a focused approach to community safety”.

To build on these strong foundations, during 2006 we restructured some of our departments, with dedicated Directors for our Borough Command and service delivery structure (Operations), and for central co-ordination of policies and resources (Operations Support). This restructures also consolidated our Finance and Procurement sections and our Human Resources departments with strategic heads.

Following periods of consultation, we published our Race Equality Scheme (September 2006) and our Disability Equality Scheme (January 2007) which both outline strategies and actions to support our workforce and our communities. An Equality Impact Assessment process has been implemented and the establishment of Peer Support Officers has ensured



support for equality and diversity throughout our organisation and the communities we serve.

In March 2007, West Midlands Fire Service published its Corporate Strategy and Annual Service Plan: these forward looking documents detail how the organisation will align and deliver services that will enable us to fulfil our vision of 'Making West Midlands Safer'.

Both documents are available on our website at **www.wmfs.net**.

Free Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) continue to reduce fire risk, as a key part of the service provided by our Firefighters. Throughout last year, alternative versions of HFSCs have been tested to maximise the service provided by our personnel and our promotion of safety



Our Community Advocate Team

awareness to people at risk within our community. Our Community Advocates establish relationships with hard to reach groups and the team has now been expanded with permanent staff.

For your free Home Fire Safety Check, please call 0800 389 5525.

Community fire safety work has been carried out by individual officers who are knowledgeable in British Sign Language (BSL), which has led to a full time dedicated Deaf Link Officer for West Midlands Fire Service.

This role includes working with deaf schools, deaf clubs, Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) events and deaf centres in providing a signed HFSC service and setting up a network that enables stations to fit smoke alarms for the hearing impaired and work closely with other organisations and agencies.



Working with the deaf community

Clive Robinson, 'Deaf Community Link Officer', recently won the Contribution to Community Fire Safety (Best Individual) category at the Fire Industry Awards 2007 for his work with the deaf and hearing-impaired community.



A new community centre complete with specialist facilities to teach people about fire safety issues is now open at Erdington Community Fire Station. The Interactive Centre features a fire experience zone where visitors can see before and after views of a fire scene giving a realistic picture of the damage caused during a typical fire in the home. Fire Service staff will use this to teach young people and the wider community about fire safety.

In July 2006, our Dudley, Sandwell and South Birmingham boroughs launched a Fire Safety Schools Quiz to educate children about fire safety issues. In 2007, this proactive competition will be run across the West Midlands area, with an overall final culminating in July 2007.



Handsworth interactive DVD

Further work was undertaken on our firework safety prevention material, with the production of messages for use on mobile phones, and a DVD, package. This was co-ordinated and produced by Hay Mills Community Fire Safety and our Educational Adviser, based in Operations Support.

Handsworth Community Fire Safety Centre, working in partnership developed an interactive DVD with the aim of educating young people in the prevention of fires in the home caused by smoking. Another preventative project is the 'FIRE' Project (Fire, Intervention, Reparation and Education) developed in Coventry, which over the last year was expanded to work with disadvantaged young people.

Our Educational Adviser, Joanna Thomas, has undertaken a huge amount of proactive work. This wide range of work includes schools educational resources, and targeted resources for hoax calls, arson and road traffic collision prevention. Joanna and Assistant Education Adviser Fiona Rhodes won the Contribution to Community Fire Safety (Best Team) category for their newly developed Special Needs programme at the Fire Industry Awards 2007. This consists of a box of activities, to be used by fire service personnel, aimed at educating people of all ages with special needs, to keep safe from fire and in survival in the event of fire.



Initiatives such as these complement the Junior Firesetter, Tutoring Scheme that West Midlands Fire Service has successfully run for some years; this scheme continues to build on our successes by educating children and young people about the serious consequences of starting fires.



Junior Firesetters Tutoring Scheme

Promotional fire safety campaigns continued with “Fire; don’t let it light up your home” running throughout December 2006, and a Chinese New Year campaign in February 2007, both promoting fire safety awareness and HFSCs.



West Midlands Arson Task Force (WMATF) launched the second tour of the “SPARX!” theatre project, which is designed to raise awareness of the dangers and consequences of malicious fire setting and anti-social behaviour. This will tour again in 2007, on a regional basis.



‘Sparx!’ Theatre Project

The WMATF also undertook several successful campaigns, which drove down the numbers of deliberate vehicle fires. WMATF have been nominated for a series of awards, including a nomination for the contribution to Fire Safety (Best Team) category of The Fire Industry Awards 2007.

Work aimed at reducing Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) has continued throughout the last year; the “Dying to Drive” initiative and major radio campaigns aim to raise awareness about horrifying road crashes involving young people.



Dying to Drive!

A special Commendation Award at the Fire Industry Awards 2007 recognised the work of Station Officer Paul Guyver (Road Casualty Reduction Officer) and Stuart Fisher on their initiatives to educate young people about the dangers of anti-social and dangerous driving.



Stuart was left disabled after a hit-and-run incident when he was 17. He now works closely with Paul and West Midlands Fire Service, visiting schools to talk to pupils about his experiences.

This work is now developing into a more comprehensive package “Your Choice: On the Road”. Our Commercial & Industrial Training Unit continued to provide a full range of training services in relation to fire safety and fire risk assessment.



In line with the change in fire safety law, when the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into force on the 1st October 2006, the WMATF, working with Fire Safety and Marketing teams from West Midlands Fire Service, produced a fully compliant update to “Keep Your Business in Business”, a full fire risk assessment pack for business. A similar pack was developed for use by schools – “Keep Your School in Business”.

The “Homestamp” consortium continues to provide information and advice for landlords on fire safety licensing and standards within privately rented accommodation. This initiative has a wide range of partners from across the county and is nationally and internationally recognised for its good work.



On the 1st December 2006, West Midlands Fire Service formally launched its Urban Search and Rescue Unit as part of the New Dimension programme. New emergency response equipment is continually being tested and released for operational purposes, with the Appliances and Equipment section providing a co-ordination role in testing and implementation.



A series of operational training exercises took place over the year. During one water rescue training exercise, an 89 year old man was rescued on the River Severn, near Bewdley. Exercises also included a rope rescue exercise at Cadbury, Birmingham.

Rope rescue exercise

Our Recruitment Team continues to promote our service and the opportunities available for potential firefighters, by working in partnership with several groups and running a range of awareness initiatives. Partnership schemes include Birmingham County Women’s Football Association and Women’s Cricket Clubs across the county.



West Midlands Fire Service acknowledged the hard work and dedication of staff through Long Service and Good Conduct Award ceremonies, the inaugural 30 Year Service Award presentation, and the annual prestigious Achievement Awards, recognising both fire service and public bravery and innovation.

West Midlands Fire Service personnel were also recognised nationally by external agencies and organisations;

Station Officer Ian Rawlings was commended for his work with Crimestoppers;

Tim Needham from our Information Technology section was named IT Professional of the Year at the Computing Awards for Excellence 2006.

The Information Technology team won the Innovation and Best Practice In Local Government Award from the Association of Geographic Information.

Station Officer Ian Rawlings



Crew Commander Andrew Brown also won a prestigious Godiva Award for being the top performing UK Candidate in the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) exams.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Vijith Randeniya, was also awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.



Crew Commander Andrew Brown

Further information on the wide range of work undertaken by West Midlands Fire Service is available on our website **www.wmfs.net** and in our magazine "FirePower."

Partnerships 2006 – 2007

The Authority recognises that it cannot achieve its Vision 'Making West Midlands Safer' in isolation. Therefore, we strive to build robust relations with the seven Local Authorities by working in partnership and ensuring that, where possible, West Midlands Fire Service partnership activities are aligned with the Local Area Agreement objectives. Below are just a few examples of partnership working undertaken by West Midlands Fire Service.

1. Coventry Contact & Connect (60+)

Coventry Contact & Connect is a multi-agency project that seeks to enable older people (60+) to live independently and safely in their own home. From the first contact made by any of the partner agencies and following the completion of a 'Contact Form', individuals can be referred to a variety of services within Coventry. The 'Contact Form' is completed on behalf of, and with the consent of, the individual.

The scheme allows for more efficient joined-up working arrangements between the various relevant agencies to provide a more effective means of improving the safety and wellbeing of a significant 'at risk' and 'hard to reach' section of the community. Sharing resources and capacity building, we provide a much less threatening approach to the more vulnerable and Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) targets are met, monitored and evaluated. West Midlands Fire Service is promoted through other public services, voluntary and community agencies, which in turn provide access to other vulnerable groups such as those suffering from poor health.

Within the first six months (April – September 2006), 1,067 referrals were made by:

- Coventry Contact & Connect to the partner agencies and other agencies of which 36% were to West Midlands Fire Service. Of these, 161 referrals were made from Coventry Contact & Connect, of which, 83 HFSCs were completed and 123 smoke alarms fitted.
- Coventry Contact & Connect has processed 1,600 contact forms for 1,412 clients between June 2006 and Feb 2007, of which 37.8% were for smoke alarms and fire safety advice.
- 249 referrals were made in one month (February 2007), 43.8% of which were for smoke alarms and fire safety advice.
- Community Mental Health Team (Coventry East, Coventry West & Coventry North) have been trained by Coventry Contact & Connect during February and March 2007 and therefore, provided access to another section of the vulnerable community within Coventry.



Multi-agency partnerships

2. The BID Project (Birmingham Institute for the Deaf)

The aim of this joint project is to ensure that all the services being provided by the West Midlands Fire Service are accessible and that members of the deaf community are made safer. Individual officers with an understanding of the deaf culture and who are knowledgeable in British Sign Language (BSL) undertake excellent community fire safety work. This work, over a number of years, has led to the successful appointment of a full time dedicated Fire Link Officer. The role of the link officer will vary



from educating at Deaf Schools using BSL to the fitting of specialised smoke alarms. The officer will also work closely with other organisations for example the Police, in order to raise the profile of deaf awareness and safety.

The project is seeking further joint funding in a bid to develop more suitable fire detection systems and to continuously improve the way the West Midlands Fire Service meets the demands of the deaf community.

3. Homestamp

This is a partnership consortium with membership including Local Authorities and the private rented housing sector. West Midlands Fire Service has been an integral member of the consortium since the inception of the scheme back in August 2000, holding the position of Secretary. Forthcoming work sees the development of a Midlands-wide Landlord Accreditation Scheme and the formation of a focus group. The aim of the focus group will be to look at sprinkler systems in residential property with the intent of improving community fire safety within the private rented housing sector.

More information about Homestamp can be found by logging on to **www.homestamp.com**

4. 'Your Choice On the Road'

The aim of this programme is to educate and raise awareness about the dangers and consequences of anti-social behaviour when driving. The elements included general road safety, speeding, drink driving, road rage and other causes of road traffic collisions. This project has been particularly successful in targeting those individuals who are considered 'at risk' of committing vehicle crime.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), West Midlands Casualty Reduction Partnership, West Midlands Police, West Midlands Ambulance Service, alongside West Midlands Fire Service continue to support this programme throughout 2007.



5. Community Advocates

West Midlands Fire Service has an aim to reduce the number of house fires, injuries and deaths within our Community by carrying out free HFSCs and installing free smoke alarms in every home in the West Midlands. This is why West Midlands Fire Service has appointed Community Advocates to work in partnership with Fire Service personnel and other agencies to provide fire safety education, arrange HFSCs and install free smoke alarms to those who are most at risk from fire.

Balsall Heath Forum is working in partnership with Highgate Fire Station for the provision of a Community Advocate and Community Wardens.

Coventry City Council, in conjunction with the Coventry City Fire Stations, has provided match funding for the provision of a Community Advocate.

Walsall stations have also worked in partnership for the provision of two Community Advocates.

Provision of Services

The West Midlands Fire Service covers the City of Birmingham, the City of Coventry, City of Wolverhampton and the Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull and Walsall. It is accountable to the public, via the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority, made up of 27 Elected Members from all of the above areas, headed by a Chair of the Fire Authority. The Service is managed directly by the Chief Fire Officer and the senior management team.



Profile

Area (in hectares):	91,276
Population:	2,591,305
Fire Stations:	40
Wholetime Uniformed Posts:	1,886
+ 23 posts for flexible working requests/trainee firefighters	
Retained Uniform Posts (fte):	10.25
Control Staff Posts:	65
Non-Uniformed Posts (fte):	484
Operational Vehicles:	96
Revenue Budget (2006/2007):	£108.877m

Operational Responses 2006/2007

Fires:	22,641
Other Emergency Incidents:	7,020
False Alarms:	
• Good Intent	5,525
• Automatic Detection Systems	12,591
• Malicious	2,578
Total	50,355

Fire Safety 2006/2007

Fire Certificates In Force*:	5,384
Outstanding Applications*:	19

* These figures are accurate up until 30th September 2006. On 1st October 2006, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into force, which withdrew the requirement for fire certificates.

Deaths from accidental dwelling fires:	18
Injuries from accidental dwelling fires:	165

How the Service performed against it's budget

To be inserted after the Annual General Meeting of the Fire Authority on the 25th June 2007 when these figures will be reported.

Further information is available in our Corporate Strategy available via our website www.wmfs.net

The Authority's Approach to Best Value

Best Value is part of the Government's agenda for modernising public services. The requirements of Best Value, which are laid out in the Local Government Act 1999, state that...

"A Best Value Authority must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness."

Our approach has been to understand the philosophy and overall aims of Best Value and to integrate Best Value principles into the decision making process of the Authority.

In process terms, the Authority:

- considers and approves completed reviews via the Authority meetings;
- measures performance against previously identified Performance Indicators including Local Indicators; and
- undertakes consultation using a variety of methods.

The Authority has put in place arrangements to:

- achieve even greater efficiency, economy and effectiveness;
- respond to the requirements to challenge, compare, consult and compete; and
- pursue its Vision and Mission Statements and its core values, priorities and goals.

The Authority has been awarded the following quality accreditation standards:

- ISO 9000 Award for its Transport Engineering Workshops;
- Institution of Fire Engineers' Accreditation for its Phase 1 Trainee Training Course;
- Approved Centre Status for its Training Centre or Competency Based Training team.

Code of Practice on Workforce Matters

In producing this Annual report, the Authority confirms that it will comply fully with Annex D of ODPM circular 09/2004 in respect of the code of practice on workforce matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.

The Cycle of Best Value Reviews

During 2006/2007 the Best Value Team was involved in a major review of the West Midlands Fire Service training activities.

An update on progress made with this Best Value Review (BVR) can be found on page 81.

Assessment of Last Year's Performance Against Target and Against Performance Over Previous Years



The following section details our results for 2006/2007 against each of our Performance Indicators, as well as targets for 2007/2008, 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.

These figures are set alongside our year on year performance since 2003/2004. We have also provided some comments on our performance generally, and in comparison with other Fire Authorities.

At the end of the section we list a number of Local Indicators.

Note: Best Value requires us to report against two types of Indicator; Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and Local Indicators (LIs). BVPIs are designated either 'Service Specific' or 'Corporate Health' (see Glossary on pages 84–85 for definitions).




Summary of Performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators for 2006/2007

Of the 17 Best Value Performance Indicators relating to Fire Service specific activity (where targets had to be set) the Authority met the target against eleven of them.

In respect of the Corporate Health Indicators for the Authority, there were 16 of these and the Authority met the target against 11 of them.

KEY ON INDICATORS



To aid understanding, all Indicators in this section are marked as follows:

-  For Indicators where the target has been met or exceeded
-  For new Indicators where it is not possible to comment on performance
-  For Indicators where the target has not been met

Indicators Relating to Fires

BVPI 142ii	The number of property and vehicle fires per 10,000 population
LI 10	The number of property and vehicle fires



DEFINITION: The number of fires in dwellings, other buildings and vehicles, attended by the Brigade.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 142ii	Service Specific	43.38	36.41	31.14	34.68 [†]	28.14	27.63	
LI 10	Local	11,175	9,387	8,031	8,944	7,291	7,160	

[†] Targets for BVPI 142ii have been set at 27.09 for 2008/2009 and 26.55 for 2009/2010

BVPI 142iii	The number of accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings
LI 11	The number of accidental fires in dwellings

DEFINITION: Dwelling fires where the cause was an accident or not known. Fires where the suspected cause was arson, are excluded.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 142iii	Service Specific	25.35	23.52	22.50	22.60 [†]	20.17	19.39	
LI 11	Local	2,647	2,466	2,369	2,379	2,133	2,050	

[†] Targets for BVPI 142iii have been set at 18.61 for 2008/2009 and 17.87 for 2009/2010

Indicators Relating to Fires

Background to BVPI 142ii and iii

We are constantly striving to reduce the damage and loss caused by all types of fire.

We focus particularly on fires in the home, which pose the greatest threat to the lives and safety of the community, by acting to prevent fires before they occur.

We will always be there to respond quickly to emergencies should the worst happen, but we would rather prevent fire by informing the community of the dangers, helping educate children about fire risks and working with others to make those most at risk from fire, safer.

How the New Target will be met

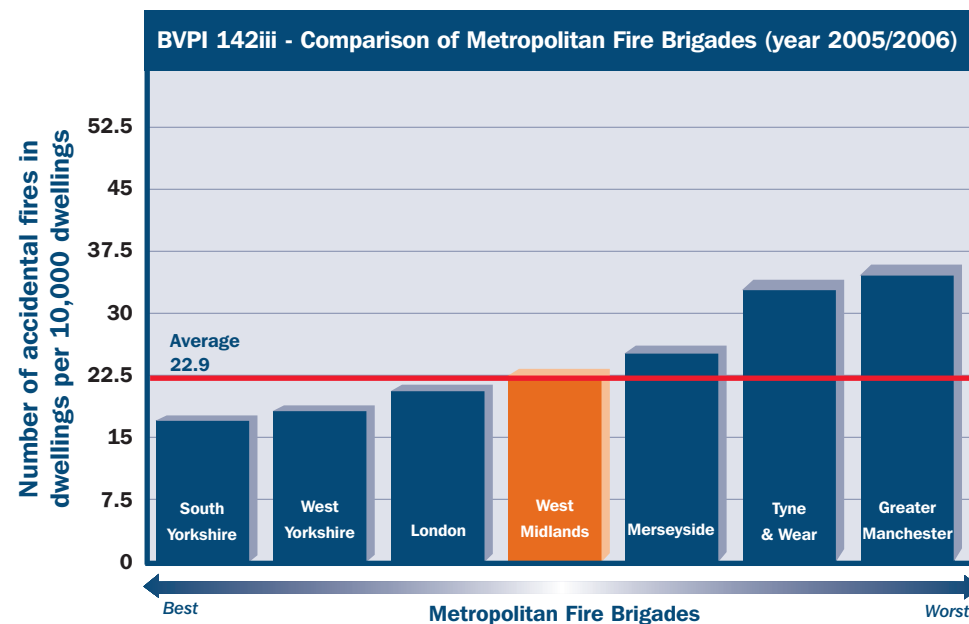
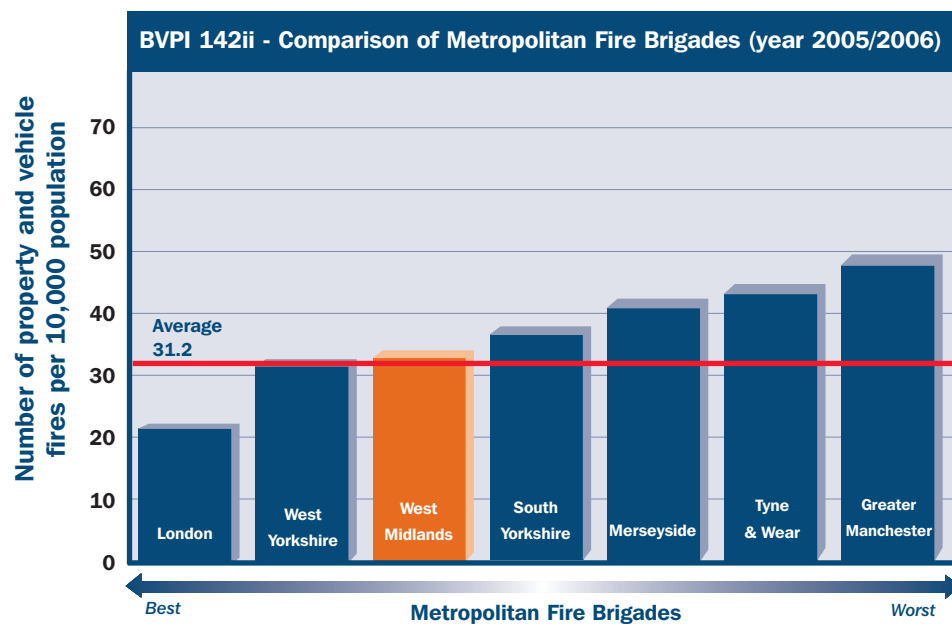
We can never be complacent about the number of property fires and accidental dwelling fires and we must continue to find new ways to make the community safer.

- We will continue to work in partnership with other agencies including Local Authorities, schools and health agencies.
- We will actively target higher risk areas and vulnerable groups with the aim of carrying out 40,000 Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs).

- This will be achieved through programmes such as 'SPARKS' and the arson and hoax calls materials (education resources which both target Key Stage 2 pupils).
- We will maximise the delivery of HFSCs by using Firefighters in our Strategic Reserve during prime customer contact time.
- We will use Community Advocates and the HFSC referral process in targeted areas.

Indicators Relating to Fires



The following two charts show the West Midlands results compared with other Metropolitan Fire Brigades' for the two category areas shown on page 22.



Indicators Relating to Fires

BVPI 206i	The number of arson property fires (excluding arson fires in vehicles) per 10,000 population
LI 24	The number of arson property fires (excluding arson fires in vehicles)



DEFINITION: The number of fires in dwellings or other buildings where the cause was arson.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 206i <small>Service Specific</small>	9.48	7.56	6.62	6.93 [†]	6.44	6.38	
LI 24 <small>Local</small>	2,443	1,948	1,707	1,787	1,668	1,652	

[†] Targets for BVPI 206i have been set at 6.31 for 2008/2009 and 6.21 for 2009/2010

BVPI 206ii	The number of arson fires in vehicles per 10,000 population (excluding derelict vehicles)
LI 3	The number of arson fires in vehicles (excluding derelict vehicles)

DEFINITION: The number of fires in vehicles where the cause was arson (excluding derelict vehicles).



Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 206ii <small>Service Specific</small>	15.83	12.24	9.76	11.60 [†]	7.27	7.27	
LI 3 <small>Local</small>	4,077	3,156	2,517	2,991	1,883	1,883	

[†] Targets for BVPI 206ii have been set at 7.27 for 2008/2009 and 7.27 for 2009/2010.

Indicators Relating to Fires

BVPI 206iii	The number of arson fires not involving property or vehicles (e.g. grass or rubbish fires) per 10,000 population
LI 25	The number of arson fires not involving property or vehicles (e.g. grass or rubbish fires)



DEFINITION: The number of arson fires not involving property or vehicles e.g. grass or rubbish fires.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 206iii <small>Service Specific</small>	73.37	41.24	44.34	52.95 [†]	49.94	52.70	
LI 25 <small>Local</small>	18,898	10,633	11,436	13,656	12,942	13,656	

[†] Targets for BVPI 206iii have been set at 52.70 for 2008/2009 and 52.70 for 2009/2010.

BVPI 206iv	The number of arson fires in derelict vehicles per 10,000 population
LI 26	The number of arson fires in derelict vehicles

DEFINITION: The number of arson fires in derelict vehicles per 10,000 population.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 206iv <small>Service Specific</small>	1.74	0.93	0.62	1.10 [†]	0.54	0.50	
LI 26 <small>Local</small>	449	239	160	283	141	130	

[†] Targets for BVPI 206iv have been set at 0.46 for 2008/2009 and 0.43 for 2009/2010

Indicators Relating to Fires

Background to BVPI 206i, ii, iii and iv

The West Midlands Arson Task Force (WMATF) has been specifically established to support the targeting of all deliberate fires, initially concentrating on the reduction of vehicle arson by working with our partners in Local Authorities.

The work is divided between prevention, education, investigation and detection.

The WMATF combines the information from its partners disseminating those results to determine its priority for that year, therefore being efficient in managing the work to achieve the best impact.

This approach to data exchange allows all concerned to understand the real issues and minimises misconceptions or distorted views.

How the New Target will be met

It is accepted that each type of deliberate fire requires a different strategy.

- **Building Fires**

Following the success of the schools 'Play it Safe' campaign, the WMATF has combined with its regional partners to launch 'Keep Your School in Business' This pack will be distributed free to all regional schools as a result of financial support from the Fire Research and Training Trust. The pack has been designed to provide the best information to encourage quality fire risk assessments and reduce fire risk in schools.

- **Vehicle Fires**

Challenging fire related targets have been set within each Local Area Agreements. We will continue to work with all the Local Authorities to improve the efficiency of abandoned vehicle removal and vehicle 'hand in' schemes. The successful pilot of a 'Tow Away Zone' in Birmingham, where dangerous abandoned vehicles are removed immediately, will be expanded to be used

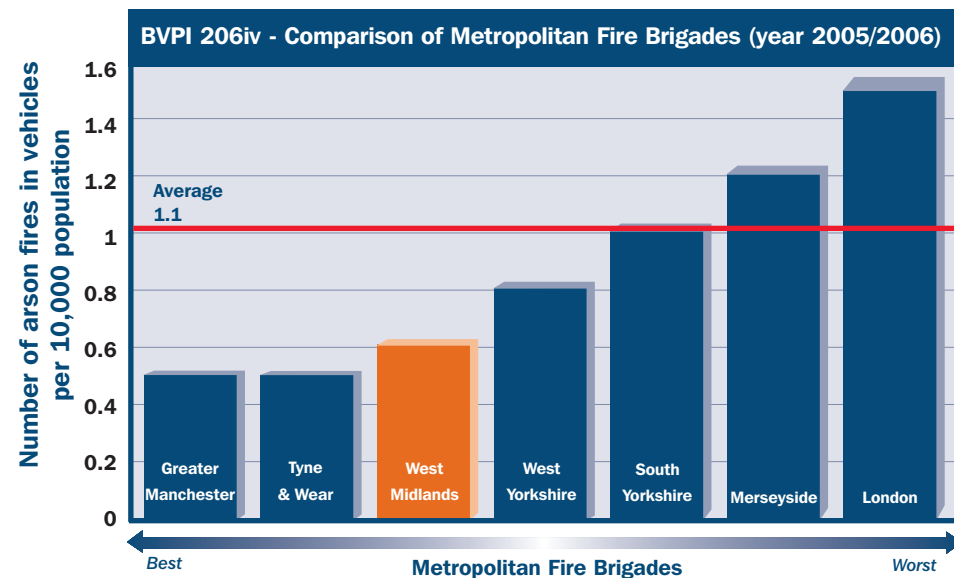
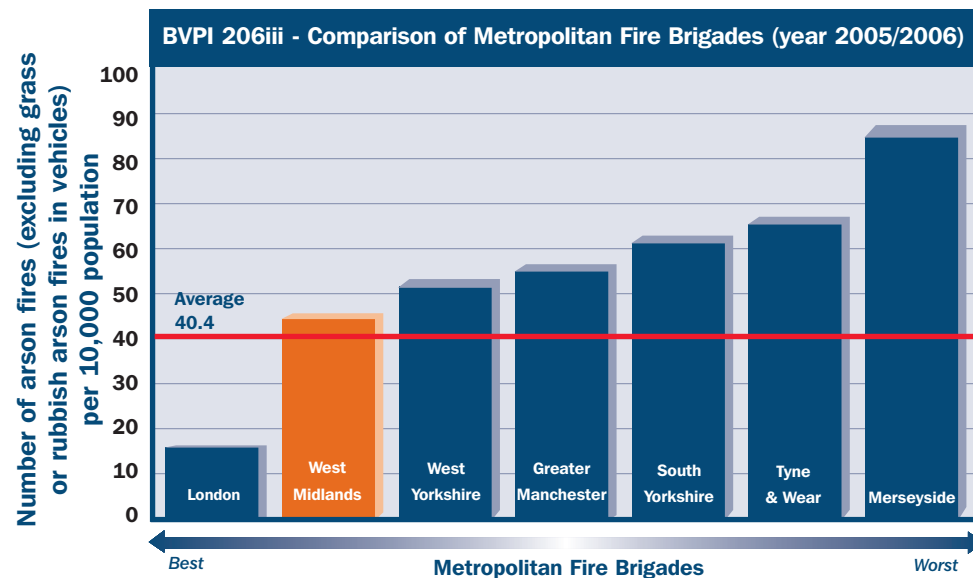
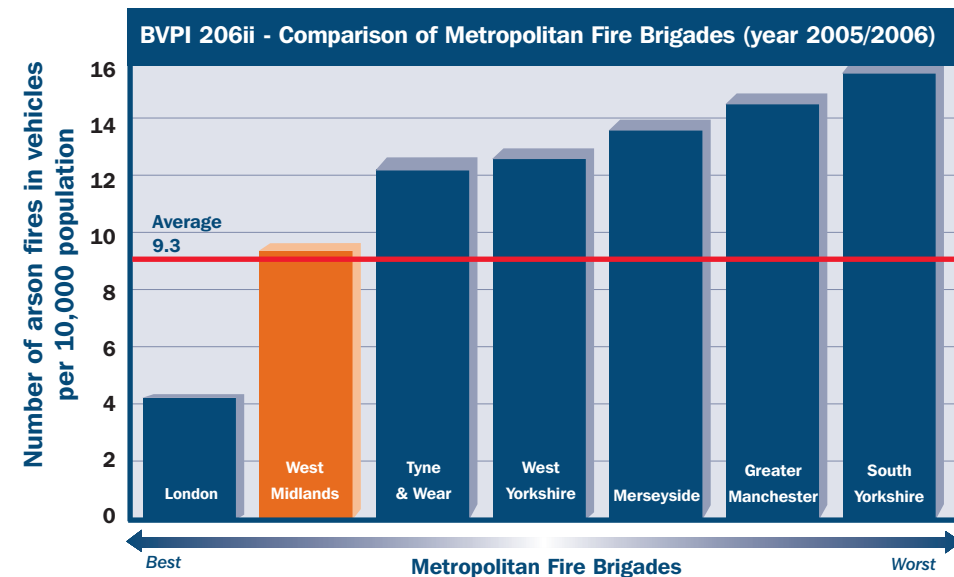
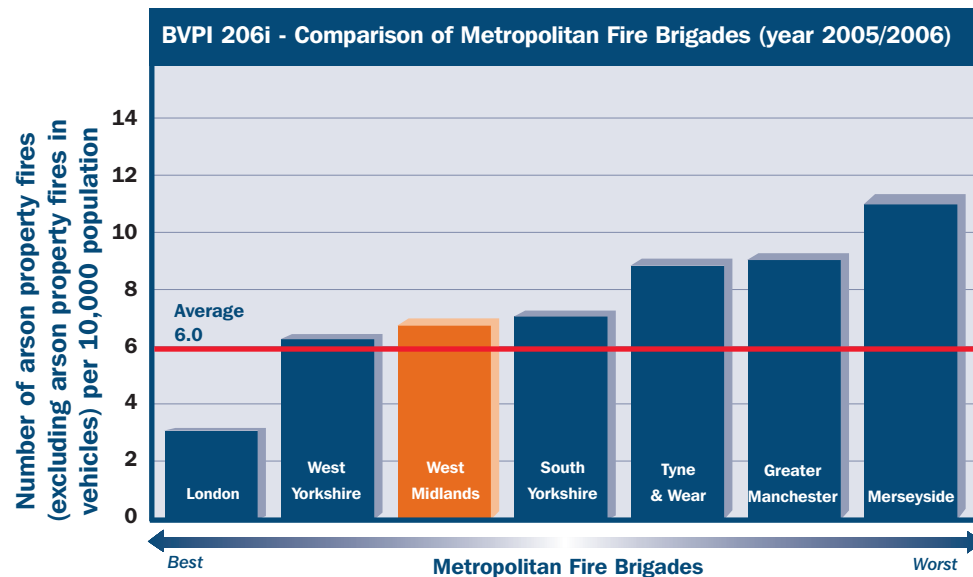
in further vehicle arson hot spot areas. Work will continue to be undertaken in liaison with many agencies and community representatives at a local level, in order to increase capacity and outreach into the most vulnerable neighbourhoods.

- **Secondary fires***

The new 'Arson and Hoax Call' pack has been provided to every watch (shift of firefighters) in the West Midlands and is intended to support the established 'SPARK' fire safety pack for Key Stage 2 education. The six week theatre in education tour of 'SPARX' will continue, increasing its audience to get over vital and thought provoking messages to its youth audience prior to the summer holiday. We intend to deliver a number of 'positive influence' projects involving young people from local Youth Offending Teams. We intend to increase the number of children participating in the Youth Quiz.

* Secondary fires include grass, rubbish etc...



Indicators Relating to Fires



Indicators Relating to Fires

BVPI 207	The number of fires in non-domestic premises per 1,000 non-domestic premises
LI 27	The number of fires in non-domestic premises

DEFINITION: The number of fires in non-domestic premises per 1,000 non-domestic premises.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 207	Service Specific	17.87	16.75	14.39	New	12.97	12.44	
LI 27	Local	1,588	1,499	1,293	New	1,178	1,130	

† Targets for BVPI 207 have been set at 11.94 for 2008/2009 and 11.45 for 2009/2010.

Background to BVPI 207

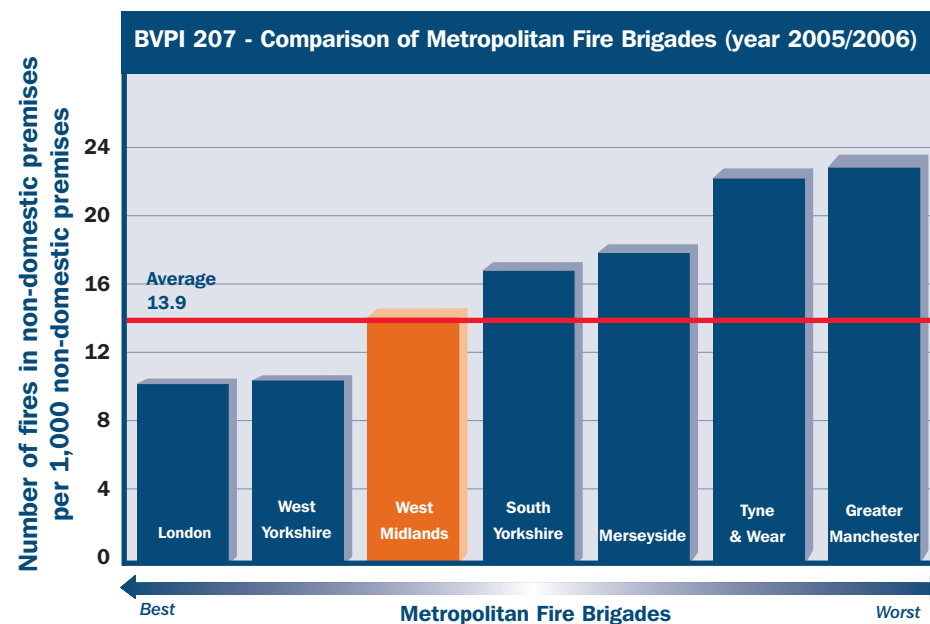
We recognise the profound impact that fires in commercial premises have, not only on the economy, but the environment and the community.

Together with partners, we strive to educate and reduce risk to employers and employees, to reduce the impact of fires and help to prevent them.

How the New Target will be met

The West Midlands Arson Task Force will continue to work with our partners to profile and manage non-dwelling arson, to reduce risk and manage down incidents.

We will continue to work with the Fire Safety Centres and Business Liaison Officers to distribute the latest edition of 'Keep Your Business in Business'. We will also promote the delivery of 'Keep Your School in Business' to those schools considered most at risk.




Indicators Relating to Fires

BVPI 208

The percentage of people in accidental dwelling fires who escaped unharmed without any assistance

DEFINITION: The percentage of people in accidental dwelling fires who escaped unharmed without any assistance.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 208 <small>Service Specific</small>	n/a	n/a	92.39%	92%†	82.51%	88%	

† Targets for BVPI 208 have been set at 90% for 2008/2009 and 92% for 2009/2010.

Background to BVPI 208

In our aim of continuous improvement, we are striving to reduce death and injuries from fires occurring in the home. We have identified those people in our community who are at greatest risk.

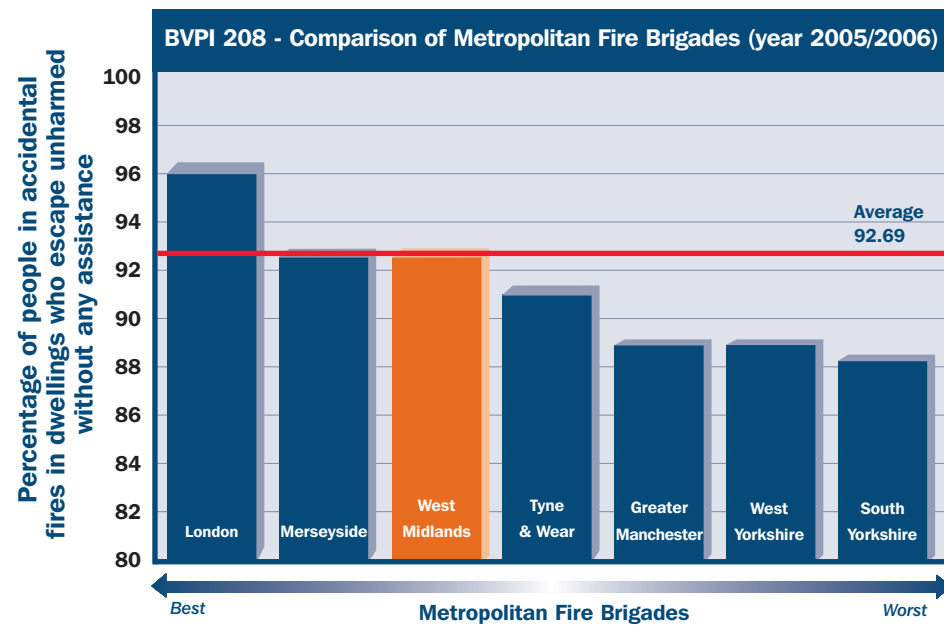
We can respond quickly to incidents, but through education and a targeted programme to increase smoke alarm ownership, we aim to reduce the numbers of injuries and rescues from accidental dwelling fires, ensuring more people escape unharmed.

How the New Target will be met

The successful Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) initiative is increasing smoke alarm ownership within the community by raising the awareness of the dangers of fire in the home and encouraging people to make escape plans.

To support this ongoing initiative we will:

- Focus our resources on identified high risk groups and areas in our community. Strategies to enhance our ability to deliver this include Home Approach and Advocacy work.
- Continue to deliver our multi-faceted Fire Safety Education Programme encapsulating fire safety messages which are appropriate to all primary schools across the West Midlands. The programme is delivered primarily by station personnel and will be further enhanced to encompass Key Stage 3 school children. The latter will be delivered specifically by trained tutors.
- We will work in partnership with agencies to develop sustainable HFSC referral schemes that target “at risk” groups.




Fire Investigation Dog Team



Indicators Relating to Fires

BVPI 209i The percentage of dwelling fires where a smoke alarm activated


DEFINITION: The percentage of fires attended in dwellings where a smoke alarm activated and raised the alarm.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 209i <small>Service Specific</small>	34.38%	37.85%	32.77%	New	34.11%	35%	

† Targets for BVPI 209i have been set at 35.89% for 2008/2009 and 36.78% for 2009/2010.

BVPI 209ii The percentage of dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm was fitted but did not activate


DEFINITION: The percentage of fires attended in dwellings where a smoke alarm was fitted but did not activate.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 209ii <small>Service Specific</small>	12.02%	14.19%	10.96%	14.2%†	10.39%	15%	

† Targets for BVPI 209ii have been set at 19.61% for 2008/2009 and 24.22% for 2009/2010.

BVPI 209iii The percentage of dwelling fires attended where no smoke alarm was fitted

DEFINITION: The percentage of fires attended in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 209iii <small>Service Specific</small>	53.51%	47.83%	56.3%	31%†	55.47%	50%	

† Targets for BVPI 209iii have been set at 44.50% for 2008/2009 and 39% for 2009/2010.

Indicators Relating to Fires

Background to BVPI 209i, ii and iii

Working smoke alarms play an important role in reducing the levels of death, injury and loss from fire.

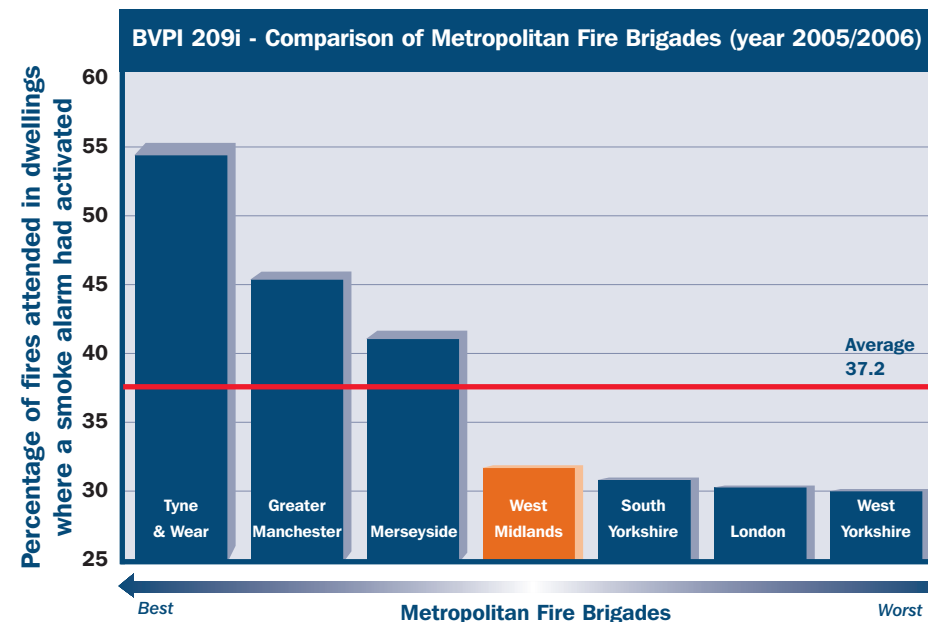
These BVPIs give us an indication of the levels of smoke alarm ownership within the premises affected by fire. Data collected can be used to form the basis of future prevention based activity.

How the New Target will be met

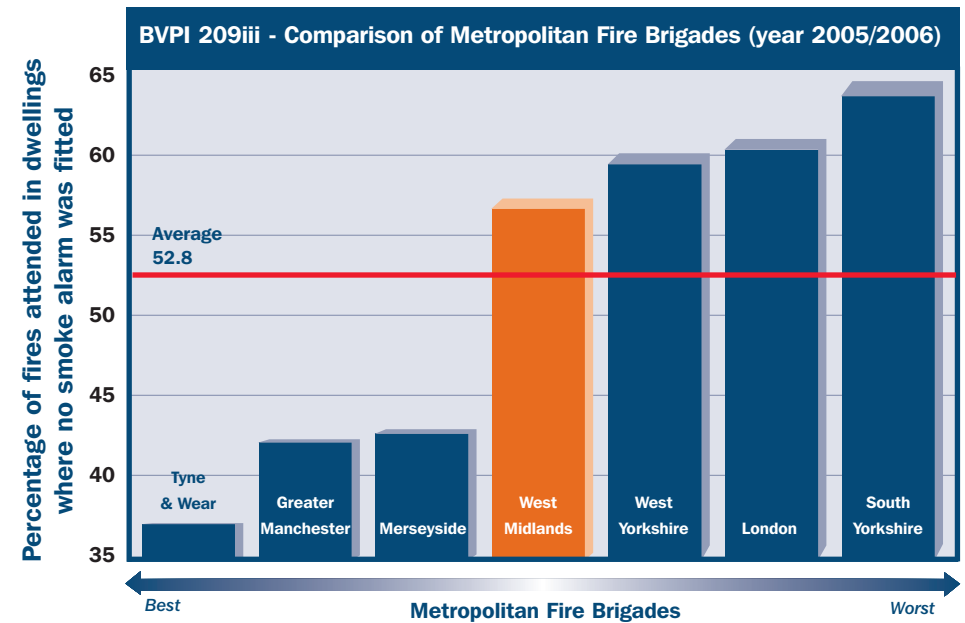
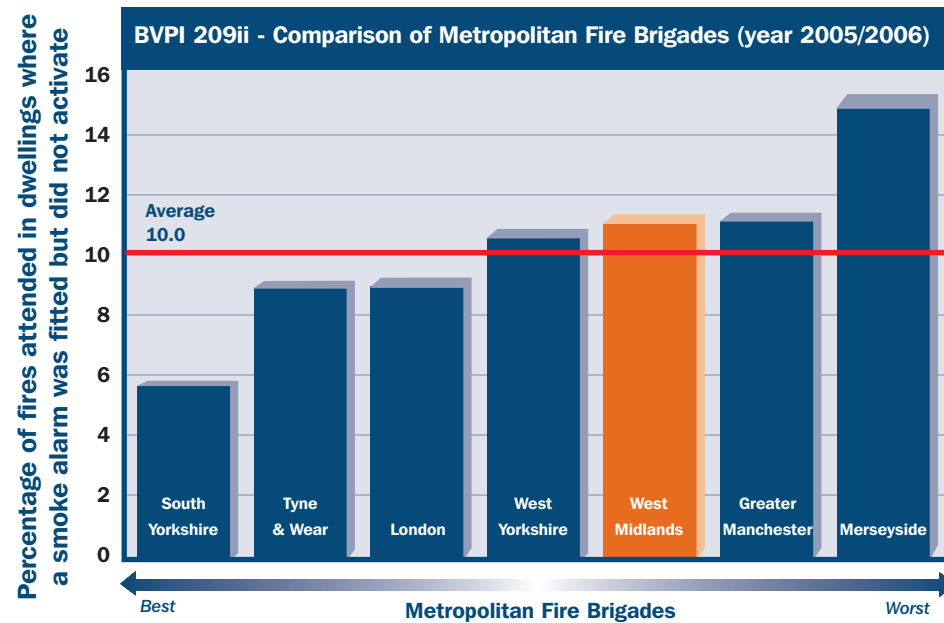
The positive action of target setting for the Service and Fire Stations will lead to increased Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC), resulting in a higher percentage of smoke alarm ownership. We will target our HFSC activity at those considered to be most “at risk” from fire.

As part of the HFSC initiative we now provide 10 year sealed smoke alarms which remove the need for battery replacement on an annual basis. In addition, firefighters and Fire Service trained external partners carry out HFSCs and smoke alarm fitting. With the financial support of the Communities and Local Government (CLG), we are increasing the amount of activity in this area.

We will provide and fit special smoke alarms for those with particular needs including the deaf and hearing impaired.



Indicators Relating to Fires




Indicators Relating to Fires

BVPI 144

The percentage of accidental fires in dwellings confined to the room of origin

DEFINITION: The percentage of dwelling fires where the cause was accidental or not known, where fire and heat damage were confined to the room of origin.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 144 <small>Service Specific</small>	90.63%	89.9%	85.27%	89.90% [†]	86.97%	87.50%	

[†] Targets for BVPI 144 have been set at 88.00% for 2008/2009 and 88.50% for 2009/2010.

Background to BVPI 144

This Indicator demonstrates:

- The effectiveness of actions taken by members of the public to prevent fires occurring;
- The protection measures that are in place to detect fire and contain it within the room of origin; and
- The effectiveness of the emergency response that we provide.

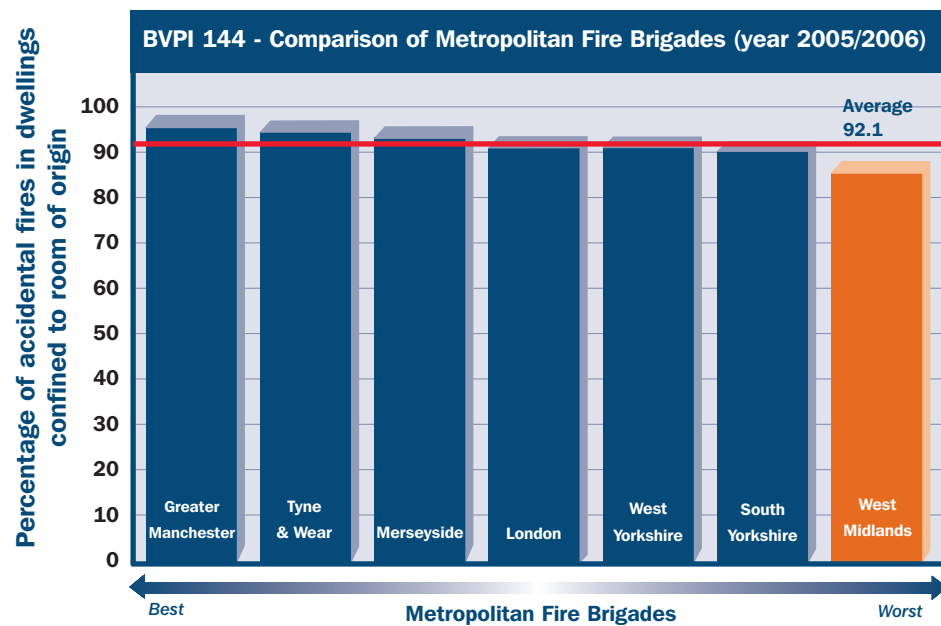
Through the HFSC process and other fire prevention-based activity, we will be increasing the quality of our work and the amount of time that we commit to this type of activity, so that we can improve our performance.

How the New Target will be met

We will reduce the risk of fire spreading from the room of origin by increasing the number of HFSCs targeted at those considered most “at risk”. This will be achieved through the installation of free life-long smoke alarms in peoples homes by our firefighters and/or partner agencies.

A key element to this initiative will be the fitting of smoke alarms to provide early detection of fire. In addition, we will ensure that we target our resources to the areas which present the greatest risk. We will use Community Advocates to assist us in reaching the people most at risk from fire.

We will continue to campaign for the installation of residential sprinklers in those dwellings that present the highest risk from fire. We will also fit Portable Mist Suppression Systems where there is a high risk of fire occurring.





Firefighters at Exercise "Hot Strike" in Birmingham

Indicators Relating to Fires

BVPI 146i	The number of malicious false alarm calls not attended by the Brigade per 1,000 population
LI 4c	The number of malicious false alarm calls not attended by the Brigade



DEFINITION: The call was made with the intention of calling the Brigade to attend a non existent fire – not attended.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 146i	Service Specific	1.27	1.29	1.39	1.27 [†]	1.27	1.27	
LI 4c	Local	3,268	3,331	3,575	3,269	3,283	3,300	

[†] Targets for BVPI 146i have been set at 1.27 for 2008/2009 and 1.27 for 2009/2010.

BVPI 146ii	The number of malicious false alarm calls attended by the Brigade per 1,000 population
LI 4b	The number of malicious false alarm calls attended by the Brigade

DEFINITION: The call was made with the intention of calling the Brigade to attend a non existent fire – attended.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 146ii	Service Specific	1.58	1.25	1.12	1.24 [†]	0.99	0.96	
LI 4b	Local	4,069	3,214	2,897	3,186	2,578	2,500	

[†] Targets for BVPI 146ii have been set at 0.94 for 2008/2009 and 0.91 for 2009/2010.

Background to BVPI 146i and ii

Deliberately calling the Fire Brigade when there is no emergency has a serious impact on the service that we provide and can lead to loss of life. Most of these calls are made by children.

For several years, we have been working with partners, including the Police and telephone companies, to reduce this problem.

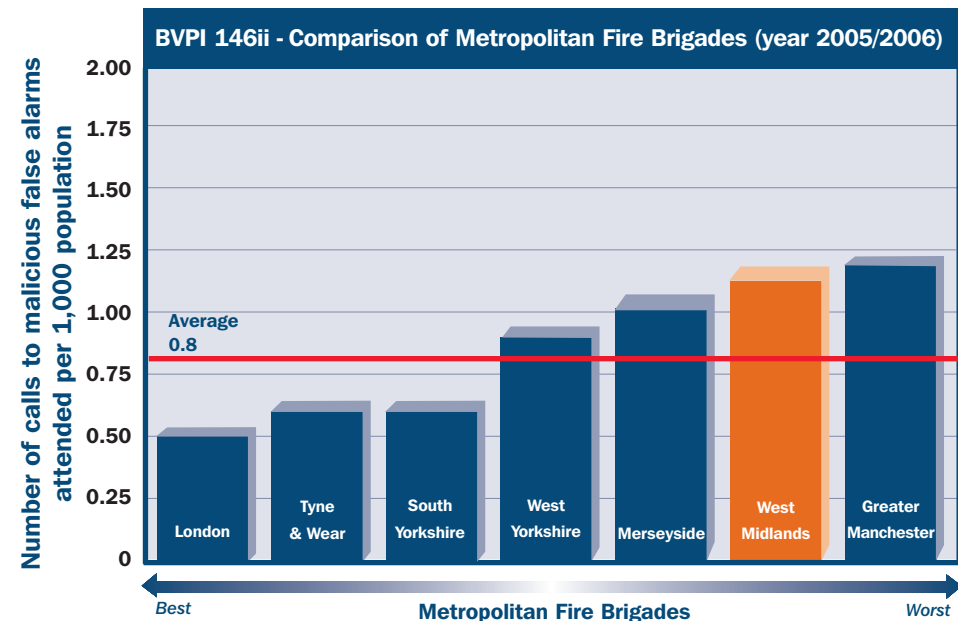
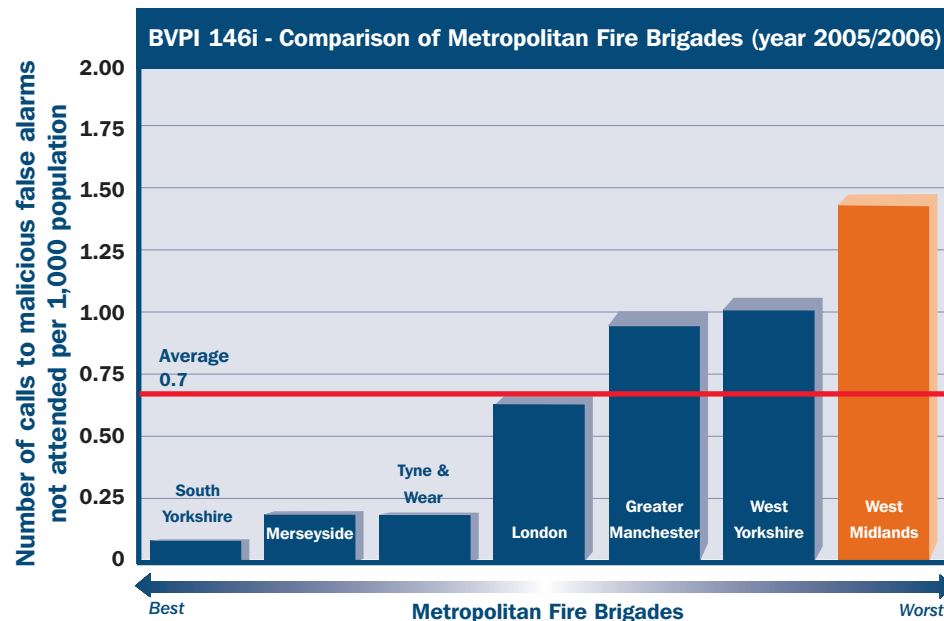
Indicators Relating to Fires

How the New Target will be met

Our initiative to target hoax calls from mobile phones has proven to be a successful initiative which is ongoing. Procedures have been revised regarding abandoned calls; we will only attend if contact can be re-established with the mobile phone caller. The West Midlands Fire Service is also pro-active in the support of prosecution for malicious callers, working in close liaison with the Police and telephone providers.

We will target Key Stage II, year 6 with a hoax calls education programme. We will use our Red Hot Education Station at Handsworth Community Fire Safety Centre to enhance the education experience of targeted young people.



We will continue to develop our call management strategy in line with legislation.



Indicators Relating to Fires

BVPI 149i	The number of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection per 1,000 non-domestic properties
LI 28	The number of false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms in non-domestic properties


DEFINITION: The call was initiated by, or in response to, automatic fire alarms in non-domestic properties

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 149i <small>Service Specific</small>	n/a	n/a	86.19	86.19 [†]	88.36	88.36	
LI 28 <small>Local</small>	n/a	n/a	7,744	7,744	8,024	8,024	

[†] Targets for BVPI 149i have been set at 88.36 for 2008/2009 and 88.36 for 2009/2010.

BVPI 149ii	The number of those properties with more than one attendance since 1.4.06
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DEFINITION: The number of those properties with more than one attendance.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 149ii <small>Service Specific</small>	n/a	n/a	1,014	1,014 [†]	982	982	

[†] Targets for BVPI 149ii have been set at 982 for 2008/2009 and 982 for 2009/2010.

BVPI 149iii	The percentage of calls which are to a property with more than one attendance since 1.4.06
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DEFINITION: The percentage of calls to those properties with more than one attendance.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 149iii <small>Service Specific</small>	n/a	n/a	58.59%	58.59% [†]	59%	59%	

[†] Targets for BVPI 149iii have been set a 59% for 2008/2009 and 59% for 2009/2010.

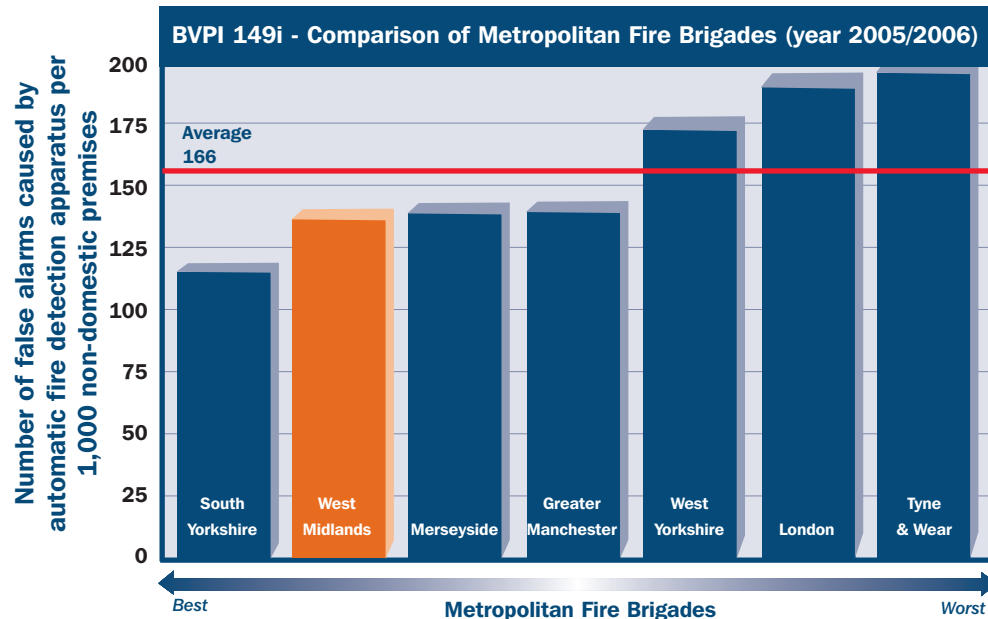
Note: Both BVPI 149ii and BVPI 149iii are linked to BVPI 149i.

Indicators Relating to Fires

Background to BVPI 149i, ii and iii

There is continuing growth in the number of Automatic Fire Alarm systems being installed throughout the country, and this has increased the potential for false alarms.

This is a national problem reflected in the number of calls received from these systems within the West Midlands area.



How the New Target will be met

The responsibility for installing and maintaining reliable systems falls to the owners and occupiers of those buildings. We will work with representatives to manage down the current call rate.

We have reviewed our policies in regard to the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) Unwanted Fire Signals report and have recently piloted a call reduction strategy in partnership with Social Alarm providers.



We intend to introduce a call challenge procedure between 09:00 and 18:00 hours in commercial premises. This will not include people with mobility difficulties for example: those in care homes, or those in hospital who cannot leave the building unaided. Between these hours, callers will be asked to investigate the cause of the alarm before any response is made.

Firefighters, with support from our Business Liaison Officers, will work in some of the larger premises to help identify problem areas. In addition, we will provide technical expertise and assistance to enable a reduction in calls.

Indicators Relating to Fires

BVPI 143i	The number of deaths from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population
LI 18	The number of deaths from accidental fires in dwellings



DEFINITION: Deaths which occurred in dwelling fires where the cause of the fire was accidental or not known.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 143i	Service Specific	0.58	0.35	0.43	0.35 [†]	0.69	0.35	
LI 18	Local	15	9	11	9	18	9	

[†] Targets for BVPI 143i have been set at 0.35 for 2008/2009 and 0.35 for 2009/2010.

BVPI 143ii	The number of injuries from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population
LI 20	The number of injuries from accidental fires in dwellings

DEFINITION: Injuries which occurred in dwelling fires, where the cause of the fire was accidental or not known.
(Those people who attended hospital for a precautionary check up are not included in these figures.)

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 143ii	Service Specific	7.69	7.60	6.79	7.13 [†]	6.37	5.98	
LI 20	Local	198	196	175	184	165	155	

[†] Targets for BVPI 143ii have been set at 5.63 for 2008/2009 and 5.29 for 2009/2010.

Indicators Relating to Fires

Background to BVPI 143i and ii

The greatest number of people who die in fire, do so in the home. Many of these victims are those who are vulnerable in society: older people, those on low incomes, those living alone and people affected by alcohol or drugs. Smokers are at a significantly higher risk. Many live in poor quality housing with lower standard of furniture. Although no one can afford to be complacent about fire, this combination of circumstances means that some groups are at higher risk.

We have introduced many programmes over the last ten years, substantially and consistently reducing these deaths to the current level. We need to maintain this pressure and work harder to help those most in need.

Many of the factors that lead to death from fire also result in injuries, which can be severe. The most common injuries occur in the kitchen, usually involving fat pans or grills.

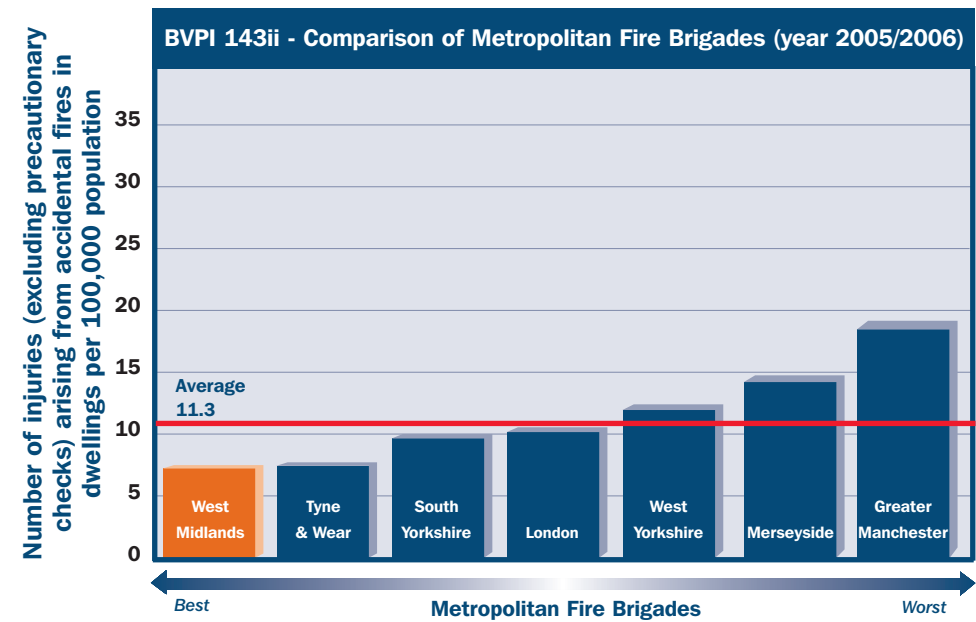
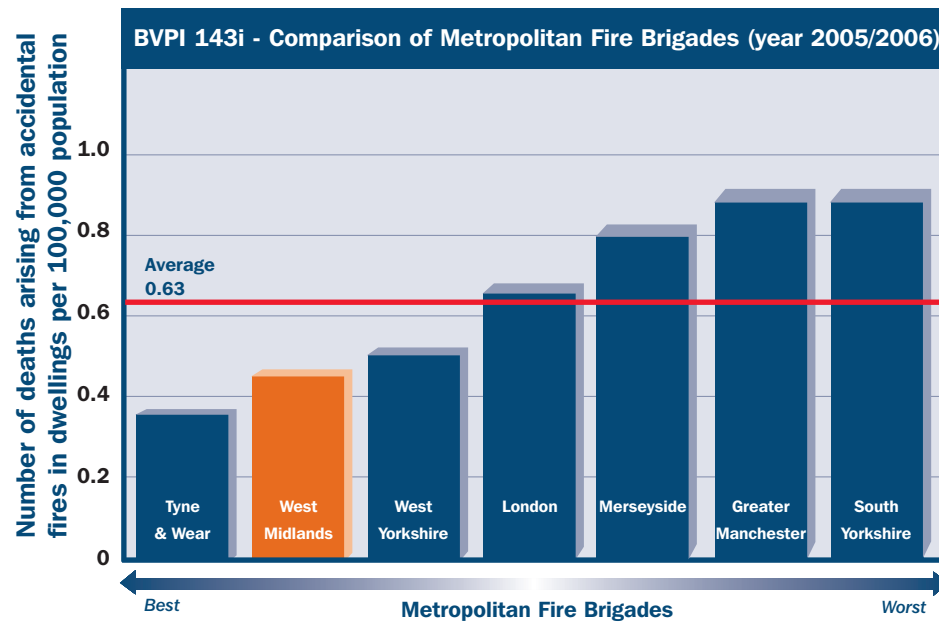
How the New Target will be met

The main tool for addressing accidental fire deaths and injuries is through the Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) process. This will reduce the potential for fire by raising the awareness of the common causes of fire: chip pans, smoking and electrical faults, and by encouraging people to develop escape plans.

We will also continue to campaign for the installation of Automatic Fire Suppression Systems in those dwellings that present the highest risk from fire.

Educational resources are utilised at all Key Stage levels (1-4) to deliver our Fire Safety Education Programme.



Indicators Relating to Fires



Personnel Indicators

BVPI 11i	Women in Senior Management
LI 30	The number of Women in Senior Management

DEFINITION: The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 11i	Corporate Health	5.29%	4.76%	6.77%	6.17%†	8.2%	8.33%	
LI 30	Local	12/227	10/210	13/192	14/192	15/183	16/192	

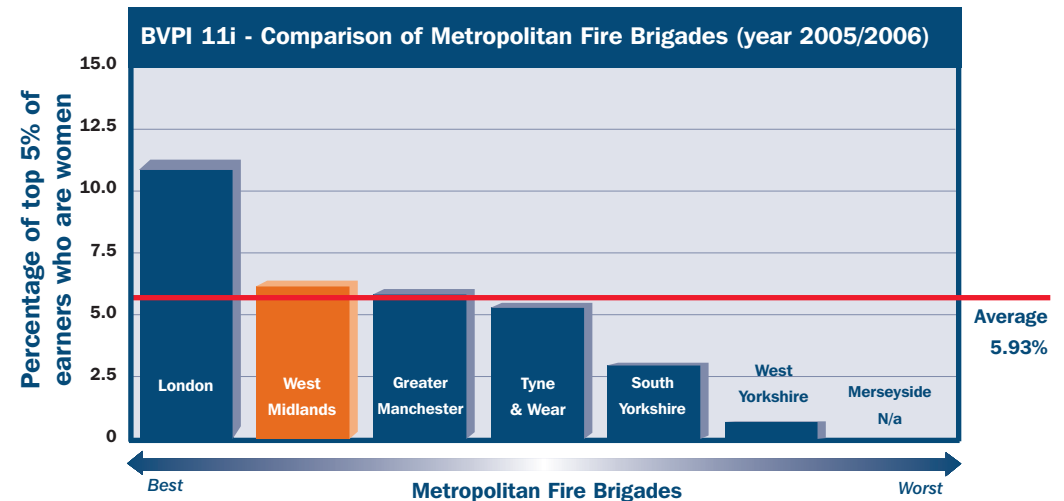
† Targets set for BVPI 11i have been set at 8.85% for 2008/2009 and 9.38% for 2009/2010. Note: Raw data figures have been used to set local Indicator.

Background to BVPI 11i

This figure is particularly influenced by the overall low percentage of women employed as uniformed staff (see BVPI 210 on page 53), as the greater number of 'senior management' positions are held within the uniformed structure of the organisation.

How the New Target will be met

The Authority will continue to actively promote equality of opportunity throughout its organisational structures and in all of its employment policies and practices, and will seek to recruit, retain and develop women staff in middle management positions. This will include reviewing the approach to recruitment at middle management level to ensure we attract a diverse range of applicants.



Personnel Indicators

BVPI 11ii	Ethnic minority Staff in Senior Management
LI 35	The number of Ethnic minority Staff in Senior Management

DEFINITION: The percentage of top 5% of earners from ethnic minority communities.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 11ii	Corporate Health	1.32%	0.95%	1.56%	2.08%†	1.64%	2.08%	
LI 35	Local	3/227	2/210	3/192	4/192	3/183	4/192	

† Targets for BVPI 11ii have been set at 3.5% for 2008/2009 and 3.13% for 2009/2010. Note: Raw data figures have been used to set local Indicator.

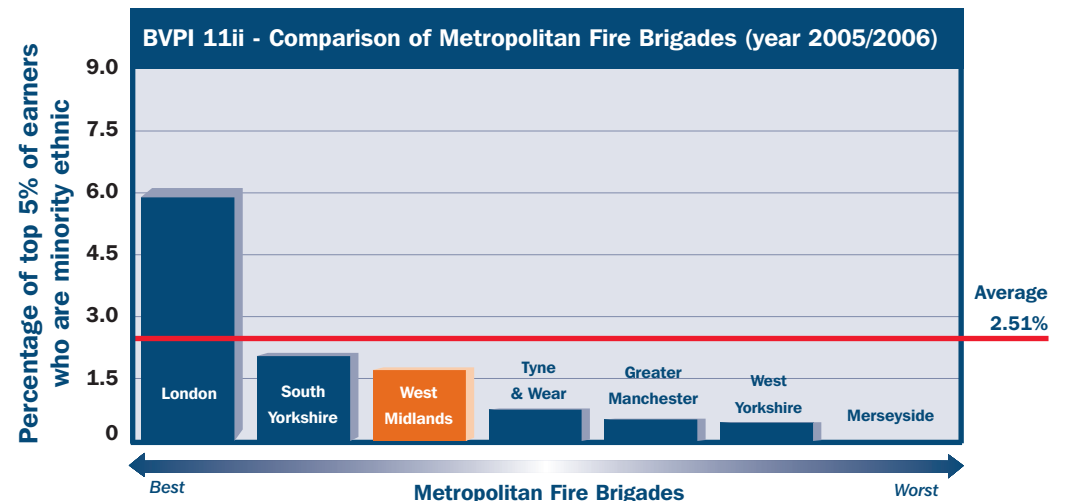
Background to BVPI 11ii

The Fire Service has been actively trying to secure a workforce that is reflective of the community in terms of ethnicity.

However, this Indicator is designed to monitor the progress of ethnic minority staff to senior management positions.

How the New Target will be met



The Authority will continue to actively promote equality of opportunity throughout its organisational structures and in all of its employment policies and practices, and will seek to recruit, retain and develop ethnic minority staff in middle management positions. This will include reviewing the approach to recruitment at middle management level to ensure we attract a diverse range of applicants.



Personnel Indicators

BVPI 11iii	The top 5% of earners that have a disability
LI 32	The number of Staff in the top 5% of earners that have a disability

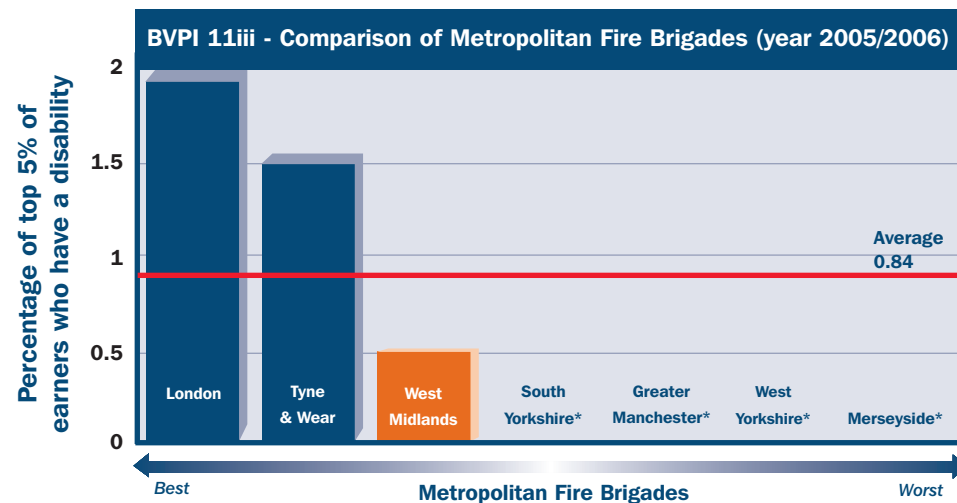
DEFINITION: The percentage of the top 5% of earners that have a disability

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 11iii	Corporate Health	n/a	0.48%	0.52%	1.04%†	2.73%	3.13%	
LI 32	Local	n/a	1/210	1/192	2/192	5/183	6/192	

† Targets set for BVPI 11iii have been set at 3.65% for 2008/2009 and 3.65% for 2009/2010. Note: Raw data figures have been used to set local Indicator.

Background to BVPI 11iii

This Indicator was introduced to remove barriers to career progression traditionally experienced by people with disabilities.



How the New Target will be met


The Authority will continue to actively promote equality of opportunity throughout its organisational structures and in all of its employment practices, and will seek to recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities. This will include reviewing the approach to recruitment at middle management level to ensure we attract a diverse range of applicants, and a review of our policies related to employment of people with disabilities and retention or redeployment of employees with disabilities. We recognise our responsibility to adapt the workplace and/or role for people with disabilities and a budget has been set aside to support this.

Personnel Indicators

BVPI 12i

The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence – wholetime, uniformed staff

DEFINITION: The total number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence by all wholetime, uniformed staff, divided by the number of wholetime, uniformed staff, excluding staff working in our call handling centre (Fire Control).

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 12i Corporate Health	10.58	9.84	11.38	10.5†	8.32	9.5	

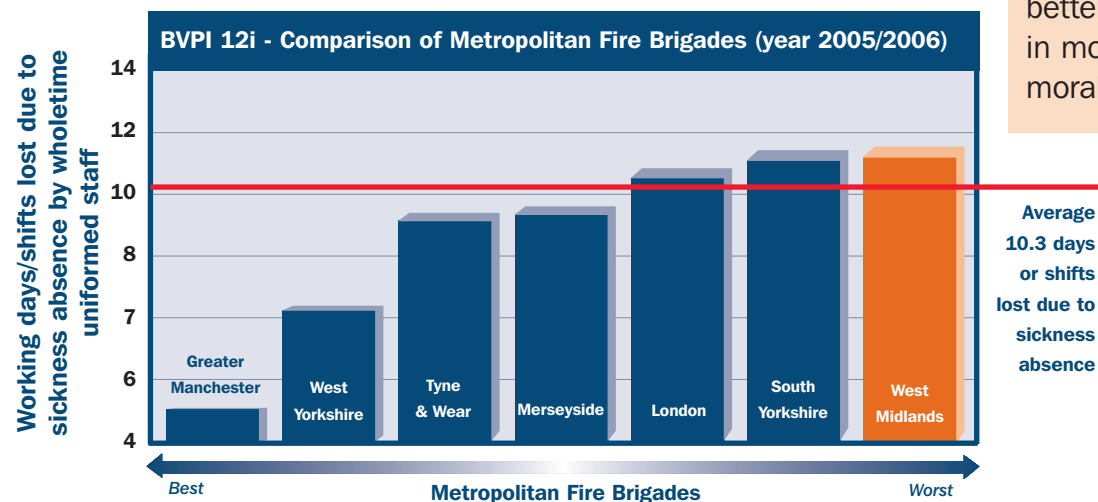
† Targets for BVPI 12i have been set at 9 for 2008/2009 and 9 for 2009/2010.

Background to BVPI 12i

This Indicator was introduced following the publication of a number of Government reports on growing concerns regarding the sickness levels of Local Government employees.

How the New Target will be met

The Authority will soon complete a review of our approach to absence and attendance management and a revised Policy on this will then be launched to guide and support line managers in their management of sickness absence and broader health issues. We are also looking at how line managers can have better access to information on sickness absence to assist them in monitoring and managing this. Efforts continue to improve morale and to better manage ill health.




Personnel Indicators

BVPI 12ii

The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence – All staff

DEFINITION: The total number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence by all staff, divided by the number of staff.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 12ii Corporate Health	10.88	9.72	10.97	10.25 [†]	9	9.5	

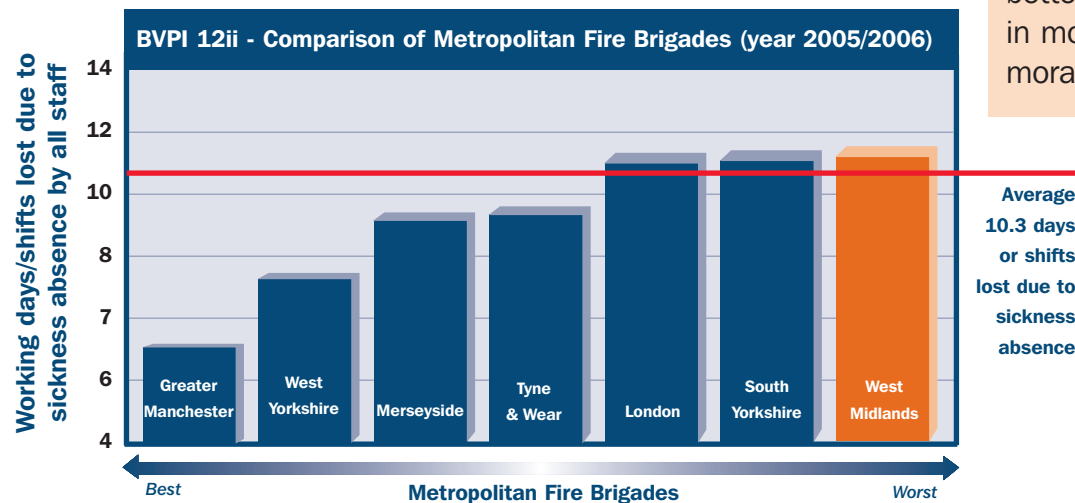
[†] Targets for BVPI 12ii have been set at 9 for 2008/2009 and 9 for 2009/2010.

Background to BVPI 12ii

This Indicator was introduced following the publication of a number of Government reports on growing concerns regarding the sickness levels of Local Government employees.

How the New Target will be met



The Authority will soon complete a review of our approach to absence and attendance management and a revised Policy on this will then be launched to guide and support line managers in their management of sickness absence and broader health issues. We are also looking at how line managers can have better access to information on sickness absence to assist them in monitoring and managing this. Efforts continue to improve morale and to better manage ill health.



Personnel Indicators

BVPI 15i	The percentage of those staff eligible for the firefighters' pension scheme retiring on grounds of ill health
LI 33	The number of staff eligible for the firefighters' pension scheme retiring on grounds of ill health

DEFINITION: The percentage of those staff eligible for the firefighters' pension scheme taking ill health retirement. Ill health retirement can occur at any age where a duly qualified doctor certifies that the employee is permanently disabled for work.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 15i	Corporate Health	2.99%	1.18%	1.11%	1.06% [†]	0.16%	0.16%	
LI 33	Local	59/1,970	23/1,956	21/1,890	20/1,890	3/1,870	3/1,890	

[†] Targets for BVPI 15i have been set at 0.16% for 2008/2009 and 0.16% for 2009/2010. Note: Raw data figures have been used to set local Indicator.

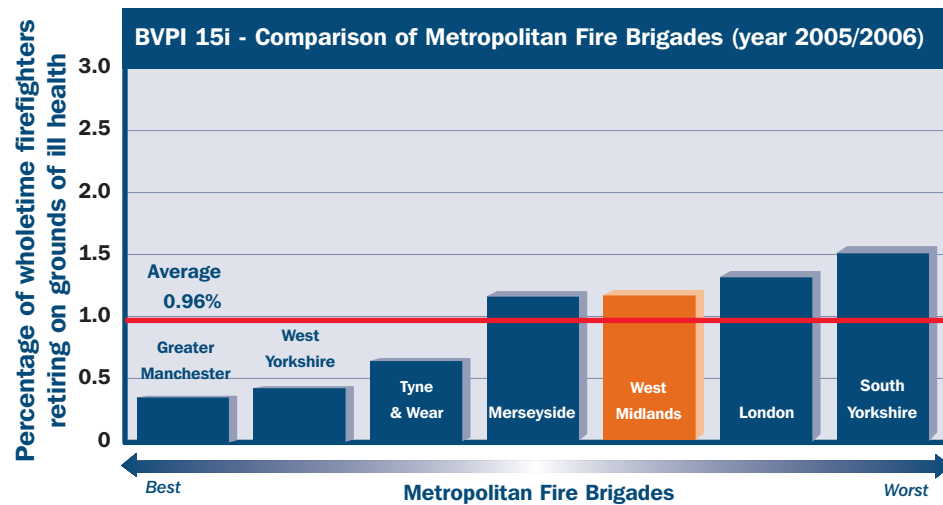
Background to BVPI 15i

This Indicator was introduced following the publication of a number of Government reports on growing concerns regarding the levels of early retirements within the Local Government Sector. Due to the nature of the duties undertaken by uniformed staff, it is inevitable that a percentage of the workforce will sustain injuries that will preclude them from continuing as operational personnel.

However, redeployment of individuals into another position will be pursued wherever possible, thus enabling them to continue in employment.

How the New Target will be met

Changes to the way Occupational Health is managed within the West Midlands Fire Service, including the use of practitioners with formally recognised Occupational Health qualifications, and changes to the Firefighter's Pension Scheme, have significantly reduced the numbers taking ill health retirement and it is expected that these measures will enable us to maintain that low target.



High Volume Pump equipment in use



Personnel Indicators



BVPI 15ii

The percentage of those staff eligible for the Local Government Pension Scheme retiring on the grounds of ill health

LI 34

The number of those staff eligible for the Local Government Pension Scheme retiring on the grounds of ill health

DEFINITION: The percentage of those staff eligible for the Local Government Pension Scheme (non-uniformed and Fire Control staff) taking ill health retirement. Ill health retirement can occur at any age where a duly qualified doctor certifies that the employee is permanently disabled for work.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 15ii	Corporate Health	1.40%	0.51%	0%	0.33%†	0%	0.32%	
LI 34	Local	8/570	3/585	0/616	2/616	0/632	2/616	

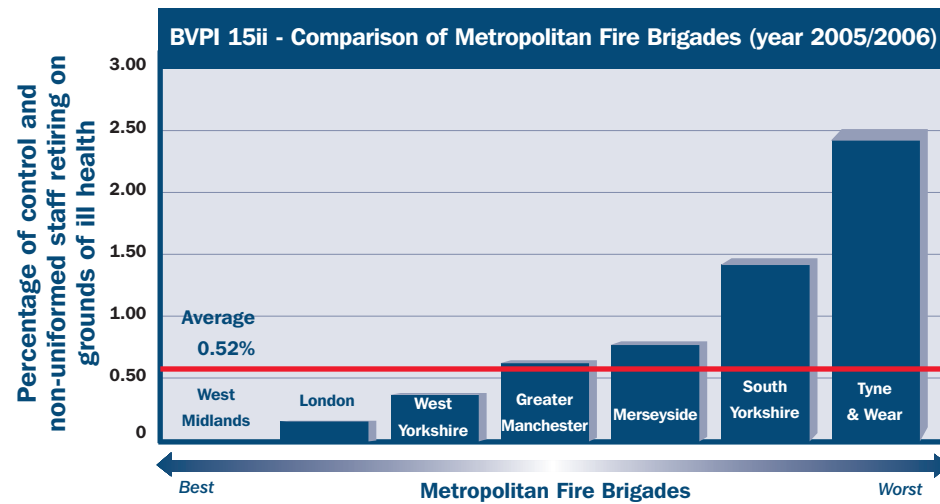
† Targets for BVPI 15ii have been set at 0.32% for 2008/2009 and 0.32% for 2009/2010.

Background to BVPI 15ii

This Indicator was introduced following the publication of a number of Government reports on growing concerns regarding the levels of early retirements within the Local Government Sector. It is inevitable that a number of employees will develop illnesses and disabilities that will preclude them from continuing to work. However, a number of initiatives are in place which will allow some individuals to be retained by the organisation, the prime initiative being that of redeployment into another position, thus enabling them to continue in employment.

How the New Target will be met

Changes to the way Occupational Health is managed within the West Midlands Fire Service, including the use of practitioners with formally recognised Occupational Health qualifications, have significantly reduced the numbers taking ill health retirement and it is expected that these measures will enable us to maintain that low target.





Urban Search and Rescue Team (USAR)



Personnel Indicators

BVPI 16ai	The percentage of wholetime uniformed and retained duty system employees with a disability
LI 35	The number of wholetime uniformed and retained duty system employees with a disability



DEFINITION: The percentage of wholetime uniformed and retained duty system employees with a disability.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 16ai	Corporate Health	n/a	0.20%	0.32%	0.32%†	2.35%	2.44%	
LI 35	Local	n/a	4/1,959	6/1,886	6/1,886	45/1,913	46/1,886	

† Targets for BVPI 16ai have been set at 2.49% for 2008/2009 and 2.55% for 2009/2010. Note: Raw data figures have been used to set local Indicator.

BVPI 16aii	The percentage of fire control and non-uniformed employees with a disability
LI 36	The number of fire control and non-uniformed employees with a disability

DEFINITION: The percentage of fire control and non-uniformed employees with a disability.

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 16aii	Corporate Health	n/a	0.17%	0.33%	0.49%†	6.48%	6.64%	
LI 36	Local	n/a	1/595	2/610	3/610	41/633	42/633	

† Targets for BVPI 16aii have been set at 6.79% for 2008/2009 and 6.95% for 2009/2010. Note: Raw data figures have been used to set local Indicator.

How the New Target will be met

The Authority will continue to actively promote equality of opportunity throughout its organisational structures and in all of its employment practices, and will seek to recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities. This will include reviewing the approach to recruitment to ensure we attract a diverse range of applicants, and a review of our policies related to employment of people with disabilities and retention or redeployment of

employees with disabilities. We recognise our responsibility to adapt the workplace and/or role for people with disabilities and a budget has been set aside to support this. In addition, the Service has recently set up a Task and Finish Group, including Members, Representative Bodies and Managers to review what more can be done to ensure a more diverse workforce.

Personnel Indicators

BVPI 16bi

The percentage of the economically active population in the Authority area who have a disability
 • 18-54 uniformed * • 18-64 non-uniformed †



DEFINITION: The percentage of the economically active population in the Authority area who have a disability.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Actual Figure for 2006/2007
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	
BVPI 16bi* Corporate Health	n/a	12.64%	12.64%	12.64%*
BVPI 16bi† Corporate Health	n/a	n/a	16.39%	16.39%†

Personnel Indicators

BVPI 210	The percentage of women firefighters
LI 19	The number of women firefighters

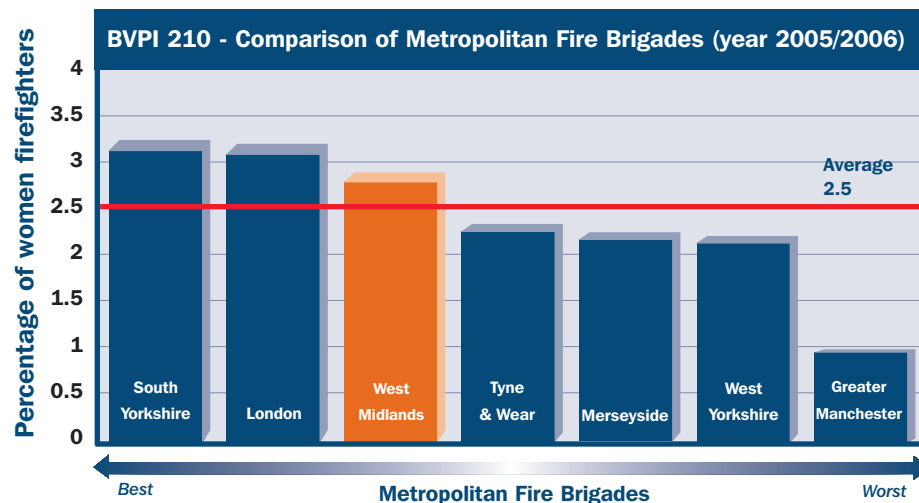
DEFINITION: The percentage of women firefighters as a percentage of all uniformed staff (excluding Fire Control).

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 210	Corporate Health	1.77%	2.10%	2.71%	2.98% [†]	2.88%	3.14%	
LI 19	Local	35/1,979	41/1,955	50/1,847	55/1,847	55/1,913	60/1,913	

[†] Targets for BVPI 210 have been set at 3.39% for 2008/2009 and 3.66% for 2009/2010. Note: Raw data figures have been used to set local Indicator.

Background to BVPI 210

We have been working towards local and national targets since 2000. The targets were designed to encourage Fire Services to become more reflective of the community they serve and to ensure that equality of opportunity was afforded to all those who wished to become a firefighter.



How the New Target will be met

The Fire Service has continued to use a range of innovative recruiting approaches to attract applications from women and this has produced an increase in the numbers of women (although the percentage for this year is slightly lower than target because of an overall increase in strength). These initiatives include:

- holding awareness events;
- provision of advice on achieving physical fitness standards;
- proactive use of women in advertising literature;
- working with groups of women that may be interested in applying for work, for example local women's football clubs; and
- moving from discrete recruitment campaigns to continuous recruitment so that potential applicants identified at awareness events can be encouraged to apply immediately.

These will continue and, in addition, the Service has recently set up a Task and Finish Group, including Members, Representative Bodies and Managers to review what more can be done to ensure a more diverse workforce.


Equality & Diversity Indicators

BVPI 2a

The Level of The Equality Standard for Local Government to which the Authority conforms

DEFINITION: There are six levels of The Equality Standard for Local Government:

- Level 0: The Authority has not adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government
- Level 1: The Authority has adopted a comprehensive equality policy including commitments to develop equality objectives and targets, to consultation and impact assessment, monitoring, audit and scrutiny.
- Level 2: The Authority has engaged in an impact and needs assessment, a consultation process and an equality action planning process for employment and service delivery.
- Level 3: The Authority has completed the equality action planning process, set objectives and targets and established information and monitoring systems to assess progress.
- Level 4: The Authority has developed information and monitoring systems that enable it to assess progress towards achieving specific targets.
- Level 5: The Authority has achieved targets, reviewed them and set new targets. The Authority is seen as exemplary for its equality programme.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 2a <small>Corporate Health</small>	1	1	2	3 [†]	2	2	

[†] The target for BVPI 2a has been set at 3 for 2008/2009 and 3 for 2009/2010.

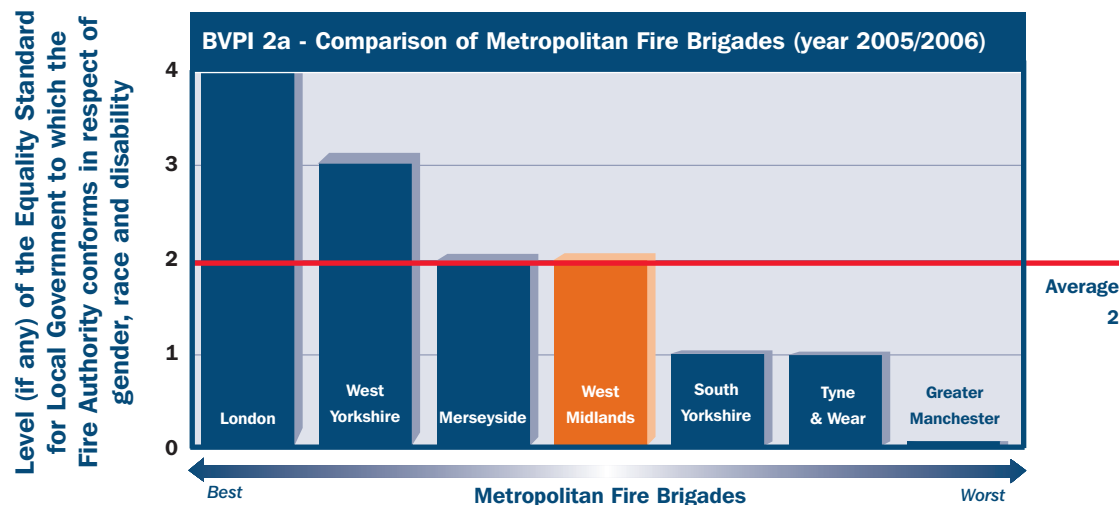
Equality & Diversity Indicators

Background to BVPI 2a

The Equality Standard has been developed as a tool to enable us to mainstream gender, race and disability into our policies and practices. It provides a framework for identifying and removing discriminatory barriers that prevent equal access to services and employment.

How the New Target will be met

- Systematic monitoring will be introduced to ensure we know who our users, partners and stakeholders are to inform our policies and strategies.
- An audit of Equality and Diversity initiatives, skills and projects across the West Midlands Fire Service will be carried out.
- A reviewed and updated Corporate Equalities Strategy will be developed and mainstreamed into the organisation, with devolved local responsibilities for targets clearly identified.



Equality & Diversity Indicators

BVPI 2b

The Duty to Promote Race Equality

DEFINITION: 1. Does the Authority have a Race Equality Scheme (RES) in place?

Does the RES:

- a. list the functions and policies that are relevant to the general duty?
- b. consist of a strategy, which addresses the general duty and each of the specific duties?
- c. contain clear priorities, targets and outcomes in order to fulfil the general and specific duties?

Is the RES:


- d. supported by a timetabled, three-year action plan?
- e. clearly integrated in all corporate and service level plans and strategies?
- f. clearly integrated in procurement and partnership strategies and policies and best value reviews?
- g. actively communicated to members of the public and to staff?
- h. reviewed regularly by the Authority?
- i. owned by Council Members and senior officers who share responsibility for ensuring outcomes are met and are involved in reviews of the scheme?

2. Are there continuing improvements for race equality from application of the RES?

Is there evidence of the measurable improvements in respect of:

- j. the representation in the workforce at all levels of the range of ethnic groups in the local area and relevant labour markets?
- k. improving staff perceptions of equal opportunities for all ethnic groups and reducing any differences?
- l. widening the ethnic profile of service users having a regard to need and relative to the local population?
- m. improving satisfaction rates among service users of all ethnic groups and reducing any differences?
- n. reducing the number of complaints from service users of all ethnic groups and reducing any differences?
- o. providing services that meet the needs of all ethnic groups in the communities the Authority serves?
- p. improving service outcomes for all ethnic groups and reducing any differences?
- q. increasing confidence in reporting racial incidents?
- r. increasing satisfaction in the way racial incidents resulting in further action are handled?

Equality & Diversity Indicators

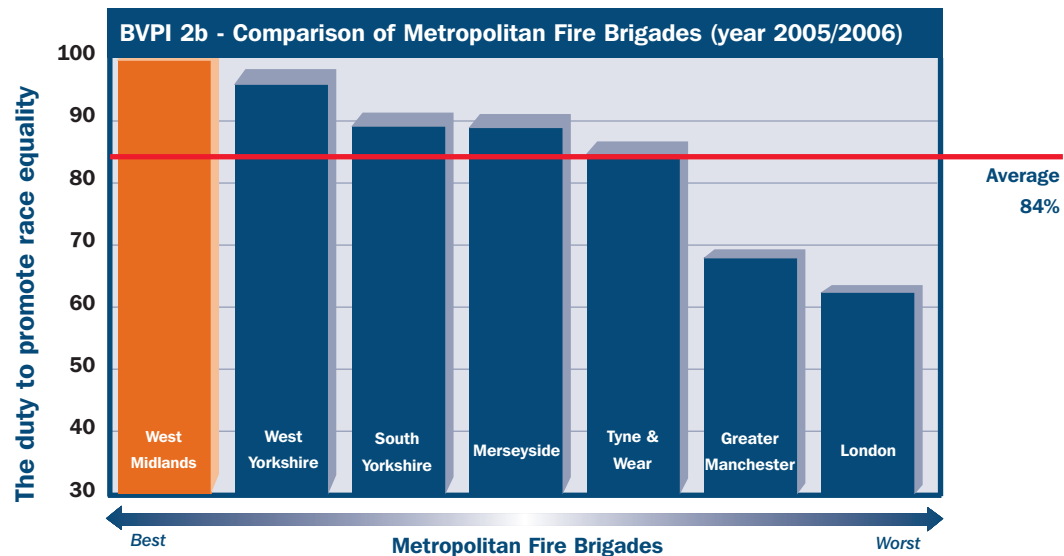
Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 2b <small>Corporate Health</small>	50%	79%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Background to BVPI 2b

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on the Fire Service to promote race equality and to publish a Race Equality Scheme, identifying how we intend to achieve the general and specific duties encompassed within the legislation.

How the New Target will be met



The target has already been met.



Equality & Diversity Indicators

BVPI 17	The percentage of ethnic minority uniformed staff and the percentage of ethnic minority population of working age in the Fire & Rescue Service area
LI 37	The number of ethnic minority uniformed staff

DEFINITION: A. The percentage of uniformed staff from ethnic minority communities.
 B. The percentage of ethnic minority population of working age (18 - 54) in the Fire & Rescue Service area

Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 17	A	4.79%	5.19%	5.68%	5.99% [†]	6.6%	6.9%	
Corporate Health	B	16%	21.17%	21.17%	no target	22.8%	no target	—
LI 37 Local	A	98/2,048	105/2,023	109/1,919	115/1,919	131/1,985	137/1,985	

[†] Targets for BVPI 17 have been set at 7.25% for 2008/2009 and 7.56% for 2009/2010. Note: Raw data figures have been used to set local Indicator.

Background to BVPI 17

The Stephen Lawrence enquiry highlighted that people from ethnic minority communities were under represented within the emergency services. It recommended that steps should be taken to redress this imbalance.

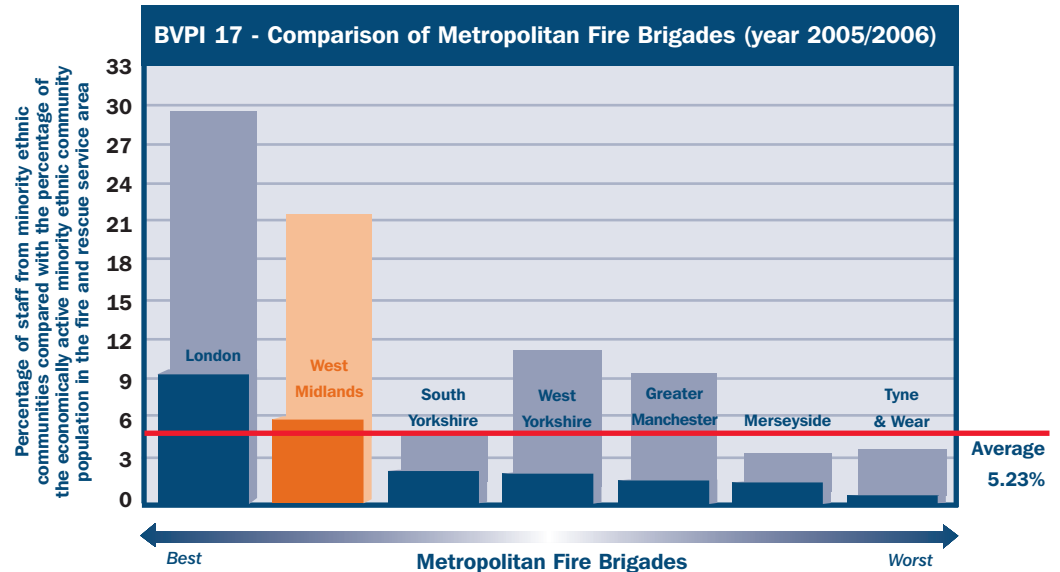
Whilst the national target is 7% (for England and Wales) the West Midlands Fire Service has been set a specific target of 16% by 2009, reflecting the area in which it operates.

How the New Target will be met

The Fire Service has continued to use a range of innovative recruiting approaches to attract applicants from ethnic minority communities and this has produced an increase in the numbers of ethnic minority employees. These initiatives include:

- holding awareness events;
- attending careers/recruitment events targeted at ethnic minority communities;
- targeted advertising;
- compilation of profiles of existing employees and their roles; and
- moving from discrete recruitment campaigns to continuous recruitment so that potential applicants identified at awareness events can be encouraged to apply immediately.

These will continue and, in addition, the Service has recently set up a Task and Finish Group, including Members, Representative Bodies and Managers to review what more can be done to ensure a more diverse workforce.




Financial Indicators

BVPI 8

The percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services that were paid by the Authority within 30 days of such invoices being received by the Authority.

DEFINITION: The number of undisputed invoices for commercial goods and services paid to external contractors and suppliers during the year, by the Authority, within mutually agreed terms or 30 days if such terms do not exist, as a percentage of all such invoices paid by the Authority in the year.

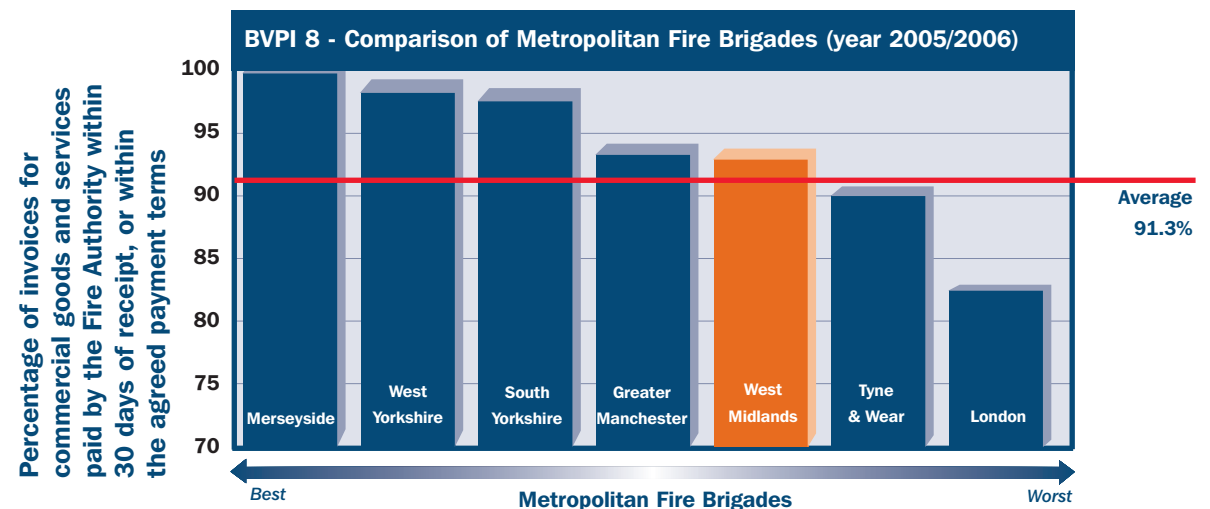
Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 8 Corporate Health	83.70%	86.61%	93.09%	100%	98.26%	100%	

Background to BVPI 8

The target for this Indicator is set by the Government at 100%.

How the New Target will be met

Increased awareness throughout the organisation of the need to pay invoices in a timely fashion should help achieve a higher performance level in 2007/2008.




Financial Indicators

BVPI 150

Net expenditure on the Authority per head of the population

DEFINITION: The net expenditure on the Authority divided by the population of the West Midlands.

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
BVPI 150 <small>Corporate Health</small>	£37.25	£39.78	£42.25	£46.25†	£45.70*	£50.00	

† Targets for BVPI 150 have been set at £54.00 for 2008/2009 and £58.40 for 2009/2010.

* Estimated figure. Actual figure not available until late Summer 2007.

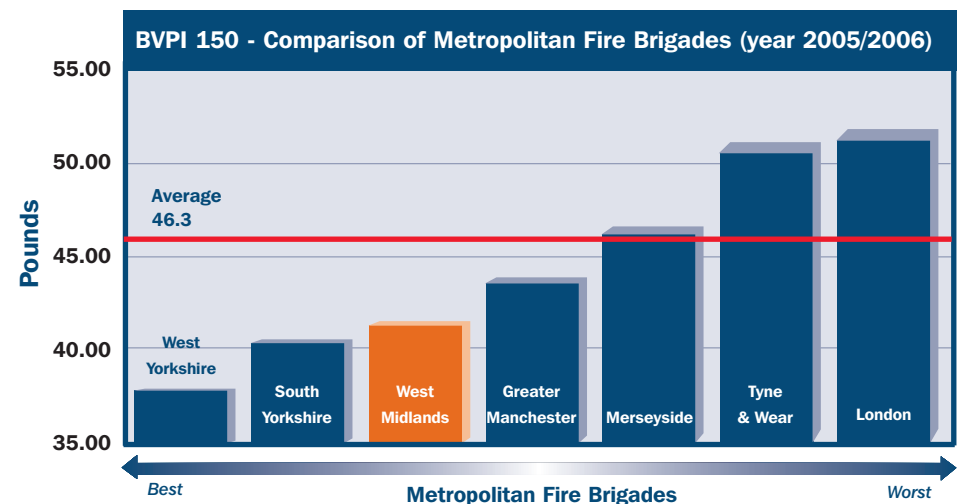
Background to BVPI 150

The target figures are determined from budgetary assumptions and population estimates.

The basis of net expenditure is affected by Financial Reporting Standard 17 (FRS 17). FRS 17 is an accounting code applied to the cost of pension schemes. The factors affecting this issue are subject to potentially significant changes which has primarily caused the target to be exceeded.

How the New Target will be met

The Authority continues to maintain a better than average performance when measured against the Metropolitan Fire Brigades generally. This is achieved by pro-active and strict budgetary control, combined with the identification of efficiency savings, wherever possible.




Overall Service Indicator

BVPI 3

The percentage of persons satisfied with the overall service provided by the Authority

DEFINITION: The percentage of persons 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the overall service provided by the Authority taken from the National Public Opinion Survey

Indicator	Actual Figures		Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	How good our performance is against the 2003/04 target
	2000/2001	2003/2004			
BVPI 3 <small>Corporate Health</small>	78%	72%	80% by 01/04/07	75%	

Background to BVPI 3

Our Customer Care policy has been formulated to help us focus on the needs of our customers and includes a range of standards. We will consistently check our performance in this area, to ensure that we meet our standards and where necessary we will take action to make improvements.

Part of this policy includes a "Compliments, Comments and Complaints" (CCC) process, available for members of the public to comment on our services. Information can be found in our booklet which is available from public libraries, fire stations and on our website **www.wmfs.net**.

This CCC procedure is available on our website, for on-line communication.

How the New Target will be met


The National Public Opinion Survey is only calculated once every three years.

We are always looking to achieve a higher level of satisfaction rate with our services. It is hoped that the significant increase in Home Fire Safety Checks will have a positive effect on the view of the community regarding the West Midlands Fire Service.


Overall Service Indicator

Indicators relating to Fires


LI 5 The number of false alarms calls due to Automatic Fire Alarms

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 5 <small>Local</small>	11,861	12,832	12,314	11,222	12,591	12,591	


LI 12 The number of arson fires in dwellings

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 12 <small>Local</small>	947	789	670	701	611	600	

LI 13 The number of accidental fires in buildings other than dwellings

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 13 <small>Local</small>	1,045	1,024	890	New	788	750	


LI 14 The number of arson fires in buildings other than dwellings

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 14 <small>Local</small>	543	475	403	New	390	380	

Other Local Indicators


Indicators relating to Fires

LI 16
The number of fires not involving property or vehicles e.g. grass fires

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 16 <small>Local</small>	21,534	12,454	13,414	15,801	15,352	15,801	


The Brigade continues to put in measures to drive down the number of fires through fire prevention activity, education and involvement of Local Authority partners.

F8 CPA
Number of non-fire related incidents per 10,000 population

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
F8 CPA <small>Local</small>	32.77	27.51	27.94	26.79	27.09	27.03	


The above is a Comprehensive Performance Assessment Indicator as proposed by the Audit Commission in the Fire and Rescue framework 2006/2007 consultation document published April 2006.

LI 39
Number of non-fire related incidents

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 39 <small>Local</small>	8,442	7,094	7,205	6,909	7,020	7,005	


Other Local Indicators

Indicators relating to Fires

LI 4a		The number of malicious false alarms calls received by the Brigade						
Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 4a	Local	7.337	6.545	6.472	6.455	5.861	5.650	

As part of our Fire Safety Education Programme (Key Stage 2 Hoax Calls), we strive to raise awareness of the seriousness of malicious false calls. This programme assists us in our efforts to drive down the number of calls made.


Indicators relating to non-fire emergency calls


LI 6a		The number of incidents not involving a fire e.g. lift releases						
Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 6a	Local	6,011	4,812	4,797	4,788	4,803	4,788	


Protocols for dealing with incidents such as lift releases through Local Authorities led to a significant reduction in incidents attended for 2004/2005. The scheme will be extended to commercial properties this year with further reductions expected in 2007/2008. As part of our role in managing risk in society, we will work with the Police to reduce the number of Road Traffic Collisions. We will continue to use the 'Dying to Drive' model as a key tool in our approach to this area of work, and develop our work in Road Safety.

Other Local Indicators

Indicators relating to Fire Safety

LI 7a		The percentage of dwelling fires where a smoke alarm was fitted						
Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 7a	Local	46.49%	52.17%	43.70%	69.01%	44.5%	50%	

LI 7b		The percentage of dwelling fires where a working smoke alarm was fitted						
Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 7b	Local	38.37%	42.15%	35.74%	50.2%	36.6%	38%	



LI 38		The number of Home Fire Safety Checks conducted by the Brigade						
Indicator		Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 38	Local	n/a	8,986	13,194	40,000	26,555	40,000	

Ownership of a working smoke alarm is central to our protection activity. These additional smoke alarm indicators will help us to measure the success of our Home Safety Fire Check (HFSC) initiative.

Other Local Indicators

Equality & Diversity Indicators

LI 22 The percentage and number of non-uniformed staff from ethnic minority communities


Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 22 <small>Local</small>	8.90%	11.170%	11.33%	11.10%	12.66%	12.8%	
Raw Data Figures	44/495	60/537	63/555	65/555	71/561	72/561	

Note: Raw data figures have been used to set local Indicator.


The West Midlands Fire Service continues to use a range of innovative recruiting approaches to attract applicants from ethnic minority communities. This includes attending careers/recruitment events targeted at ethnic minority communities which has produced an increase in the numbers of ethnic minority employees.

Personnel Indicators

LI 8 The number of serious injuries to employees

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 8 <small>Local</small>	58	77	41	65	56	53	

LI 8a The number of serious injuries to firefighters at incidents

Indicator	Actual Figures			Target for 2006/2007	Actual Figure for 2006/2007	Target for 2007/2008	How good our performance is against the 2006/07 target
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006				
LI 8a <small>Local</small>	27	36	20	25	30	28	

The Assessment of Progress on Action Plans for the Previous Financial Year



In our Best Value Performance Plan for 2005/2006, we detailed specific action plans resulting from recommendations made during inspection or audit of the Authority, as well as a summary of recommendations arising from our Best Value Reviews. This section explains our progress in meeting the requirements detailed in each.

Note: All action plans resulting from inspections or audits and Best Value Reviews are available in full on our website at www.wmfs.net

Transport Engineer Workshops maintains all our vehicle fleet

Progress on Action Plans resulting from KPMG Audits carried out during 2005/2006

KPMG, the Authority's external auditor, is responsible for carrying out an annual independent audit of the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) as well as a management audit of the Authority generally.

Auditor's Responsibilities

"We are required by the Audit Commission Act 1998 to be satisfied that proper arrangements have been made by the Authority for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice issued by the Audit Commission requires us to report to you our conclusion in relation to proper arrangements, having regard to relevant criteria specified by the Audit Commission for other local authorities. We report if significant matters have come to our attention which prevent us from concluding that the Authority has made such proper arrangements. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

We are required by section 7 of the Local Government Act 1999 to carry out an audit of the Authority's best value performance plan and issue a report:

- certifying that we have done so;
- stating whether we believe that the plan has been prepared and published in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 6 of the Local Government Act 1999 and statutory guidance; and

- where relevant, making any recommendations under Section 7 of the Local Government Act 1999.

Conclusion

We have undertaken our audit in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice and we are satisfied that, having regard to the criteria for other local authorities specified by the Audit Commission and published in July 2005, in all significant respects, West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2006.

Best Value Performance Plan

We issued our statutory report on the audit of the Authority's Best Value Performance Plan. We did not identify any matters to be reported to the Authority and did not make any recommendations on procedures in relation to the Plan.

Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the Audit Commission."

Progress on Action Plans resulting from KPMG Audits carried out during 2005/2006

1. Performance Management Arrangements

Developing the performance management arrangements and support at an area level will ensure the Authority's objectives are deliverable.

Response

The Authority has reviewed the way it provides performance management information and is currently working with consultants Price Waterhouse Coopers to further improve and embed performance management in the organisation.

2. Budget Monitoring

Review resource allocation and budgets on both a subjective and thematic basis to aid understanding of costs associated to the Authority activities.

Response

Resource allocations have been reviewed and adjusted appropriately.

3. Statement of Internal Control

The Authority should:

- define the quality of, and type of, assurances needed to sign up to the statement;
- consider incorporating the Authority's action in response to key risks in the statement of internal control; and
- ensure the statement of internal control is signed by both the Chair of the Authority and the Treasurer

Response

All these recommendations have been implemented in accordance with the recommendations

4. The Service Level Agreement with Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council for 2006/07 should be specific in terms of who is expected to undertake finance system related tasks.

Response

Implemented as recommended.

Progress on the Integrated Risk Management Action Plan for 2005/2006

Integrated Risk Management Action Plan

Background

Following the Authority's first Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) being published in April 2004 and implementation of the recommendations contained within it, the Authority published a third Action Plan to further improve the service provided. Once again recommendations focused on prevention and protection, as well as providing an emergency response which is in line with the Authority's Vision and Mission statements.

The Action Plan, which is now part of the Annual Service Plan, was again subject to a period of public consultation and was published on 1st April 2007.

Recommendations

Both the recommendations to change the shift patterns and hours of work to match latest demand levels, and the proposal to relocate fire engines from Central Fire Station to Aston Fire Station and Hay Mills Fire Station have been implemented.

Full details of the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Action Plan can be found on our website at www.wmfs.net or by contacting us by using one of the methods detailed on page 2 this document.

Progress on Action Plans resulting from Assessments carried out during 2005/2006

Corporate Risk Management

In 2005, as part of the annual risk management cycle, nine corporate risks were identified by the Corporate Board and Fire Authority. Below is an update on progress against them.

1. Cultural Change

- Training has commenced and continues throughout the Service on the Core Values.
- The new shift system has been embedded and personnel are working to new work routines.
- Headquarters departments are also reviewing their working hours to support front line services.
- Increasing numbers of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) and fire safety education programmes of work are shifting the emphasis more towards prevention and protection.
- Stress survey commissioned results shared with staff and a working group involving the representative bodies is looking to address the issues arising.
- The move to the new predominately open plan Headquarters in 2008 will also have a beneficial effect on cultural issues with easier, open communication being facilitated.

2. Duty System

The revised duty system was implemented in November 2006. The change was made by working more closely with the Fire Brigade's Union. It is now embedded and a review of progress will take place in 2007.

3. Staff Satisfaction

- Reviewed and implemented new duty system for operational-based personnel; introduced new rest facilities.
- Task and finish group established to promote diversity.
- Celebration of staff achievements.
- Stress survey and action planning group set up.
- Review of the Human Resources Department initiated.
- Increased number of visits to stations included Elected Members.

4. Viral Pandemic

Viral Pandemic Contingency plan now in place using PRINCE2 methodology. Current risk assessment lower than first believed in terms of likelihood.

5. Programme Management

Programme Support Office established, PRINCE2 in operation and Programme Management Group set up with quality assurance sessions incorporated to keep Service targets on track. Regional Projects also managed using PRINCE2.

6. ICT Reliance and Integration

PRINCE2 project management methodology has been used to help reduce the risks in this area, including the early identification of issues and interdependencies. However, it remains in the Corporate Risk Register for 2007/2008.

Progress on Action Plans resulting from Assessments carried out during 2005/2006

Corporate Risk Management (continued)

7. Fire Control National Project

PRINCE2 methodology at a national and regional level has been used to reduce the risk. A full-time Change Manager has been appointed and work packages and stream, for example data and people, are underway. However it remains on the Corporate Risk Register for 2007/08.

8. Funding Shortfall

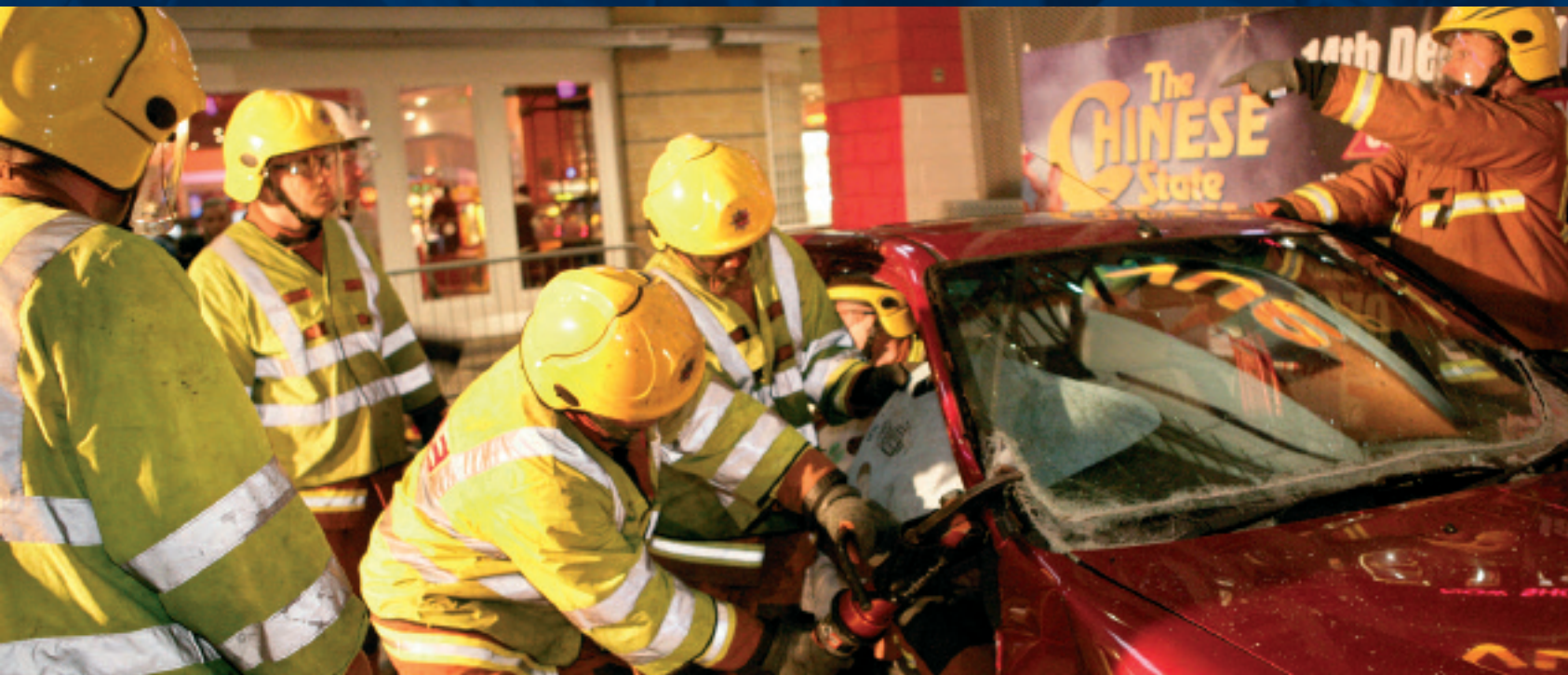
Steps have been taken to maximise cashable efficiencies without a detrimental effect on service delivery and to fully use available spend via virement. External funding opportunities being explored. However, it remains on the Corporate Risk Register for 2007/08.

9. West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB)

PRINCE2 Project methodology has brought systematic reporting to the WMRMB.

These next pages cover the Authority's Performance in respect of:

- **Action Plans from KPMG Audits;**
- **Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2006/2007;**
- **The Corporate Risk Register 2007/2008;**
- **Action Plans from 2007/2008 resulting from the Best Value Review of Training**



Working at a major incident

Action Plans for 2007/2008 resulting from Audit Commission Reports reported to the Authority in 2006/2007

Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2006/07

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

Fire and rescue performance framework 2006/07

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for Fire and Rescue Authorities was introduced in 2005 when each Authority was given a corporate assessment rating of either **excellent**, **good**, **fair**, **weak** or **poor**. Inspectors looked at issues like staff training, budget management and the way the service works within the community to make it safer and prevent fires from happening in the first place.

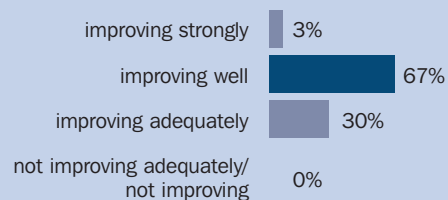
Additional elements published in February 2007 and April 2007 now give an overall assessment of services including how the Authority performs operationally:

Overall performance for this Fire and Rescue Authority

This is an Authority that is **improving well** having demonstrated **Good** overall performance in 2005.

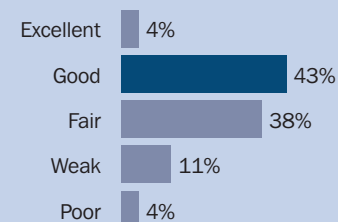


Direction of travel against other Authorities



Good

Performance against other Authorities



Action Plans for 2007/2008 resulting from KPMG Audits reported to the Authority in 2006/2007

In addition to Fire CPA 2005, Fire and Rescue Authorities were assessed under the 2006 performance framework on three elements:

- What progress West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority has made in the last year – direction of travel
- How West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority manages its finances and provides value for money – use of resources
- How West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority deliver its fire and rescue service – service assessment.

The use of resources and service assessments are scored on the following scale:

- 1 = Inadequate performance** – below minimum requirements
2 = Adequate performance – only at minimum requirements
3 = Performing well – consistently above minimum requirements
4 = Performing strongly – well above minimum requirements

Direction of travel

What progress has West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority made in the last year

Direction of travel	2006
This assessment indicates the progress being made, or otherwise, to achieve improvement	improving well

The following summary has been provided to support this direction of travel assessment:

“The Authority is significantly improving outcomes for the public through reduced injuries, deaths and fires. The Service was assessed as performing well in operational preparedness and emergency response, recognising that fundamental changes to service delivery have resulted in a focused approach to community safety. Its work is leading to reduced anti-social behaviour and arson. Working with older people is developing and there is a more structured approach to road safety. All of this has been achieved in an environment of difficult industrial relations, but much has now been done to tackle this underlying difficulty. It is improving access to services, its approach to equality and diversity and is developing more understanding of the communities it serves, through its work with partners. Performance on value for money is good and improving. There are clear actions to improve internal communication and the engagement of staff to bring about improvement. The restructure into boroughs is delivering organisational objectives more effectively, but there is more work to be done. The Authority is well positioned to make further improvements having strengthened its improvement planning.”

Action Plans for 2006/2007 resulting from Assessments carried out during 2006/2007

Use of resources

How West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority managed its finances and provides Value for Money

Use of resources	2006
This assessment looks at financial accounting and reporting arrangements, how well the Authority plans and manages its finances and whether the Authority achieves value for money.	3

This use of resources judgement is drawn from five individual judgments by the Authority's appointed auditor:

Auditor judgements	2006
Financial reporting	4
Financial management	2
Financial standing	3
Internal control	2
Value for money	3

Service Assessment

How West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority delivers its fire and rescue service

Service assessment	2006
The overall service assessment is the Authority's performance in delivering the fire and rescue service and is constructed from two elements: Performance Indicators (PIs) and the Operational Assessment of Service Delivery.	3

How West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority performed in Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2006

Service assessment	2006
We assessed the Authority on the way it was run and the delivery of its services. Our corporate assessment did not give an opinion on how well the fire and rescue service responded to emergency incidents. The assessment provided a baseline measurement that helps fire and rescue authorities focus on improvement. Fire and Rescue CPA 2005 was scored on the scale Poor/Weak/Fair/Good/Excellent.	good

Please visit the Audit Commission website www.audit-commission.gov.uk for the full version of this scorecard.

Corporate Risk Register 2007/2008

SCENARIO	RISK	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	RISK OWNERSHIP AT
A	Representative Bodies and Industrial Relations	2	4	Corporate
B	ICT Reliance (Integration) and Business Suite	2	4	Corporate
C	Fire Control National Project	3	4	Corporate
D	Funding Shortfall	3	3	Corporate
E	Terrorism	3	4	Corporate

Details of the action plans to either:

- Prevent
- Reduce
- Transfer
- Accept
- or have a contingency plan

How we determine our Risk Profile is set out on the following page.

Details of our Plans to deal with these risks can be found via the Authority's website **www.wmfs.net**.

Go to www.wmfs.net/committeinformation.xml and log on to Fire Authority Committee Management Information System (CMIS) to view the Fire Authority meeting for February 2007.

The Risk Profile

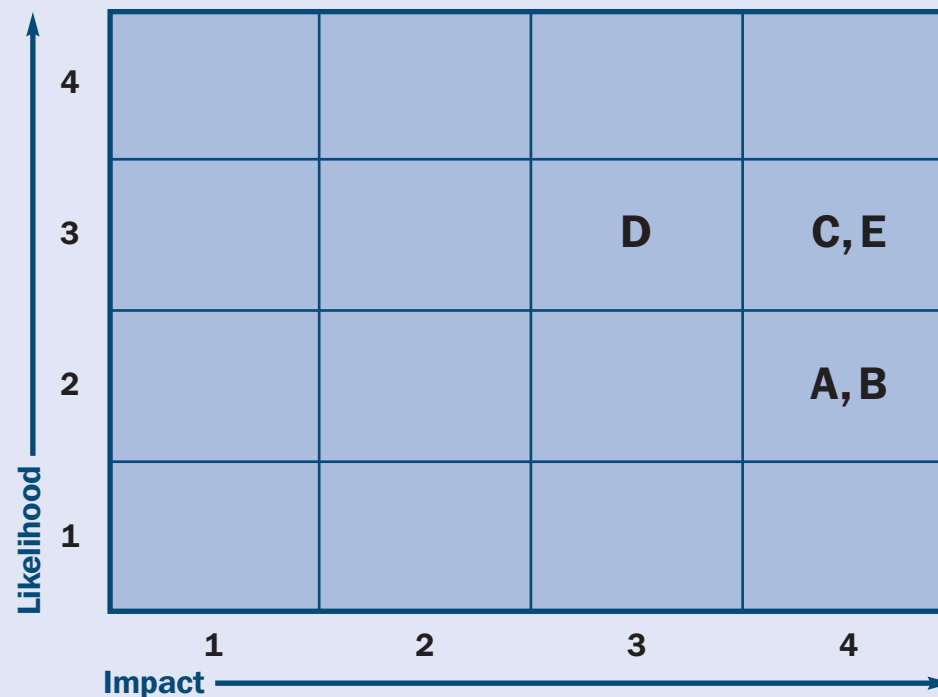
1. Is it a risk?

2. How likely is it to occur?

3. If it was to occur what would be its impact?

Scenario:

- A** Representative Bodies and Industrial Relations
- B** ICT Reliance (Integration) and Business Suite
- C** Fire Control National Project
- D** Funding Shortfall
- E** Terrorism



Likelihood:

- 4. Almost certain
- 3. Likely
- 2. Moderate
- 1. Unlikely

Impact:

- 4. Catastrophic/extreme
- 3. Critical/high
- 2. Marginal/moderate
- 1. Negligible/low

Action Plan for 2007/2008 resulting from Best Value Review 2006/2007

What are the main proposals?

Scope of the Review

The Best Value Review (BVR) of Training covered a number of functional areas within the current training structure as follows:

- Training Support
- Development Training
- Operational Training
- Command Training
- Phase 1 Trainee Training
- Competency Based Training (including Workplace Assessment)
- Technical Rescue
- Driver Training
- Integrated Performance and Development Review (IPDR)
- Commercial and Industrial Training Unit (CITU)
- Learning and Development

The BVR included training and guidance and support provided by training personnel. However, it excluded training delivered by station personnel at a local level.

Recommendations Arising subject to consultation*

1. Produce a learning and development strategy
2. Review and address the implementation of Individual Performance and Development Review (IPDR) across the organisation
3. Evaluate all courses undertaken to ensure that they continue to provide Value for Money (VfM)
4. Using existing performance measures as a basis, develop a suite of Performance Indicators for the Training Centre function
5. Carry out a review of the recruitment and selection process for Phase 1 Trainees
6. Carry out a review of the recruitment and selection process for Internal Trainers
7. Develop a business case for the Commercial & Industrial Training Unit (CITU) function in accordance with Fire Service Circular 1/2007
8. To improve communications and raise the profile and accessibility of the function

*At the time of writing this document the above proposals had been cleared by Corporate Board for a period of consultation to commence.

Regional Collaboration



The following page details our progress in developing a collaborative approach across the West Midlands region.

Erdington Fire Station

Regional Collaboration

West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB)

The Government's White Paper 'Our Fire and Rescue Service' required Fire Authorities to establish Regional Management Boards (RMBs) by 1st April 2004. This requirement involves existing Fire Authorities in the currently defined English regions.

The Boards take responsibility for delivering, in accordance with national policies, six strategic functions listed in paragraph 2.7 of The Fire and Rescue National Framework namely:

- integrate common and specialist services, for example fire investigation;
- put in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies;
- introduce regional personnel and human resource functions;
- develop a regional approach to training;
- establish regional control centres and as an operational priority;
- introduce regional procurement within the context of a national procurement strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service.

The West Midlands Region comprises the Fire Authorities of:

- Hereford and Worcester Combined Fire Authority
- Shropshire and Wrekin Combined Fire Authority
- Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Combined Fire Authority
- Warwickshire County Fire Authority
- West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

These Fire Authorities have been meeting for a number of years as a forum and this group became a shadow Regional Board in January 2004 and then formed the West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB) on 1st April 2004.

WMRMB is a joint advisory committee created in accordance with Section 102(4) of the Local Government Act. This means that, unlike a joint committee, all decision making resides with the constituent Fire Authorities. Each Fire Authority supplies three Members to the WMRMB, one of whom is the Chair and the five Chief Fire Officers act as advisors to the Board.

WMRMB has a model constitution and standing orders agreed by the constituent Fire Authorities and has a programme of public meetings.

It has appointed a Clerk, Treasurer, Legal Advisor, Assistant Legal Advisor, Programme Manager, Programme Accountant, Communications Manager and a Risk Manager.

Using the PRINCE2 project management system, the Board has a programme of projects to deal with the six strategic functions listed earlier. Each discrete project has been allocated to a Fire Authority, with a project manager and responsible owner appointed to each project.

Glossary



Young Firefighters' Association Training

Glossary of Terms/Abbreviations

Term/Abbreviation	Definition	Term/Abbreviation	Definition
AFA	Automatic Fire Alarm	CRO	Community Relations Officer
BFPSA	British Fire Protection Systems Association	DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
BLO	Business Liaison Officer	ESD	Electronic Service Delivery
BSL	British Sign Language	Executive Committee	A small committee of Councillors with delegated decision making power.
BV	Best Value	FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
BVT	Best Value Team	FSHQ	Fire Service Headquarters
BVPP	Best Value Performance Plan	FTE	Full Time Equivalent
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator	HFSC	Home Fire Safety Check
BVR	Best Value Review	HMOs	Houses in Multiple Occupancy
CB	Corporate Board	ICT	Information Communications Technology
CCA	Civil Contingencies Act 2004	Indicator	The measure of an Authority's Performance
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership	IPDR	Individual Performance Development Review
CFOA	Chief Fire Officers' Association	IPDS	Integrated Personal Development System
CFS	Community Fire Safety	IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
CFSC	Community Fire Safety Centre	JCP	Joint Consultative Panel
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Financial Advisors	LI	Local Indicators decided by the Authority, or set following Best Value Reviews
CLG	Communities and Local Government	LFS	Legislative Fire Safety
Corporate Health Indicators	Indicators relating to the general management of the Authority	Member	A Councillor who is a Member of the Authority
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment	Milestone	Intermediate Target
CP	Community Protection	MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan

Term/Abbreviation	Definition	Term/Abbreviation	Definition
OASD	Operational Assessment of Service Delivery	STEEP	Analysis to assess Social, Technological, Economical, Environmental and Political implications
OGC	Office of Government and Commerce	Strategic Reserve	Fire engines whose personnel are not immediately available to respond to 999 calls because of undertaking fire prevention and protection work and training.
PEST	Analysis of Political, Economic, Social and Technological influences	SWOT	Analysis to assess Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
Policy Planning Forum	A discursive meeting of the full Authority which submits policy changes to Authority or Executive Committee for approval	Target	The level of performance an Authority is expected to achieve
Programme Management Group	The group of officers responsible for keeping projects on track	Watch	Crew of firefighters on shift at a fire station
RBs	Representative Bodies	WMATF	West Midlands Arson Task Force
RBIP	Risk Based Inspection Programme	WMCRP	West Midlands Casualty Reduction Partnership
RES	Racial Equality Scheme	WMFRA	West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority
RIDDOR	The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995	WMRMB	West Midlands Regional Management Board
RMBs	Regional Management Boards		
RNID	Royal National Institute for the Deaf		
RTCs	Road Traffic Collisions		
Service Specific Indicators	Indicators relating to fire safety and firefighting		
SPARK	Schools Pack and Resource Kit		
SRT	Service Review Team		
Standard	The minimum acceptable level which must be met by an Authority		

All non-emergencies and general enquiries for the whole of the West Midlands call

0845 5009000

If you have any compliments, comments or complaints about our service please contact us.

Customer Care Hotline
0121 380 7404
contact@wmfs.net

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West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters,
Lancaster Circus Queensway, Birmingham B4 7DE

For a **FREE Home Fire Safety Check** call

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Our website provides everything you need to know about the services we provide including details on our performance, our future plans and fire safety advice

www.wmfs.net

For current recruitment opportunities go to

www.wmfs.net/jobsonline

The information contained in this document can also be provided in other formats including braille, audiotape and large print. Please call 0845 8009000.

