

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19TH FEBRUARY 2024

1. **COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENT**

Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

THAT Fire Authority members approve the content of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) as outlines in Appendix 1 of this report.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1. To inform members of the upcoming CRMP publication in April 2024.
- 2.2. To inform members of the suggested content for the CRMP document and enable opportunity for feedback.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. In line with the National Fire and Rescue Framework for England, each fire and rescue authority are required to produce a Community Risk Management Plan (previously called an Integrated Risk Management Plan). West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA) must therefore produce a CRMP which must:
 - reflect up to date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the authority;
 - demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources;
 - outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;

- set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat;
- cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework;
- reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners; and
- be easily accessible and publicly available.

3.2. The CRMP content (Appendix 1) meets these requirements by detailing:

- What Community Risk Management is and our approach
- An overview of the West Midlands Conurbation to provide context for the document
- An overview of our understanding of risk, including;
 - demonstrating our understanding our communities and the links between health, vulnerability and increased risk to fire and other emergencies
 - how we use data and business intelligence to ensure an evidence based and intelligence driven approach throughout our community risk management planning process
 - how we identify trends, use research and use our Organisational Intelligence function to support our understanding of risk and identify future development opportunities in how we allocate resources and target risk mitigation interventions
 - our use of international, national and local risk registers to help identify key risks and proportionally plan to mitigate risks within our community
 - our analysis of the external environment and how this may impact the delivery of our services. This includes horizon scanning and looking beyond the 3-year CRMP cycle.
- An overview of new and emerging risk themes identified through our continual analysis of risk, including business continuity and resilience, emerging technologies, cost of living crisis and the drive for sustainability.

- The document then focuses on how we use our resources to effectively manage risk, with sections on Prevention, Protection, Response and People which cover what we currently do to manage risk effectively, how we are continually improving in each area and also consultation results and our commitments as a result.
- 3.3. The CRMP must reflect effective consultation, therefore, consultation results across the five themes of Prevention, Protection, Response, People and Sustainability will be included throughout, with associated commitments we will be making as a result.
- 3.4. The CRMP document will be published in April 2024 and will be available and accessible via our website. Corporate Communications will be developing the content to ensure it is easily understandable and engaging for our staff and communities.
- 3.5. It is important to note that although our CRMP will be a public facing document, it is a technical document and the content will reflect this. The target audience being the Fire Authority, our partners, other Fire and Rescue Services, and informed members of the public.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

A full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed to ensure the CRMP document is accessible. Each associated project or intervention will go through the Equality Impact Assessment process separately in line with WMFS policy.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The CRMP document within Appendix 1, meets the Authority's requirements under the National Fire and Rescue Framework for England 2012.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications to the approval of recommendations in this report, however the risks identified do determine how Authority funding is allocated.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct environmental implications to the approval of recommendations in this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, 2018](#)
- [Community Risk Management Planning Fire Standard](#)
- [NFCC Community Risk Programme](#)

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JO BOWCOCK
DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDIX 1

Community Risk Management Plan

Introduction

What is a Community Risk Management Plan?

Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) sets out how we plan to mitigate foreseeable fire-and-rescue-related risk using available, but finite, resources. Resources include people, skills, money, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and data.

The National Fire and Rescue Framework 2018 requires all Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) to produce a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) that:

- Reflects up to date risk analyses of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks
- Demonstrates how response, prevention and protection activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, in a way that makes best use of available resources;
- Outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;
- Set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the authority can deliver the requirements set out in the framework
- Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners;
- Is easily accessible and publicly available.

In addition to this, we also know that the best way to keep our communities safe is to ensure that our decision making is based on sound evidence base and effective risk analysis as well as feedback from our communities through our rigorous and inclusive consultation process. Our CRMP is the process through which we review our understanding of risk and identify opportunities to continually evolve and adapt our approach to meet the everchanging needs of our communities. This understanding of risk is the foundation of our strategy and it informs everything we do.

As outlined in the duties placed on us under the National Fire and Rescue Framework, a key element of our CRMP journey is effective consultation with our communities, workforce, and our partners. In July to September 2023, we launched our CRMP consultation campaign, this saw over 5,600 people share their views on key themes across prevention, protection, response, sustainability and our people. Within this document you will find an overview of the outcomes from our consultation and our commitments to you as a result.

Our Approach

Our research and data help us understand who's most at risk from fire and other incidents, and when and where they happen. This data also helps us to identify opportunities to improve, use our resources more effectively and efficiently to help those who need it most.

But there's a lot more to consider- things like climate change, building and infrastructure developments, technology, world events, changes in health, social or economic issues. These all shape the risks our communities face now and are likely to face in the future.

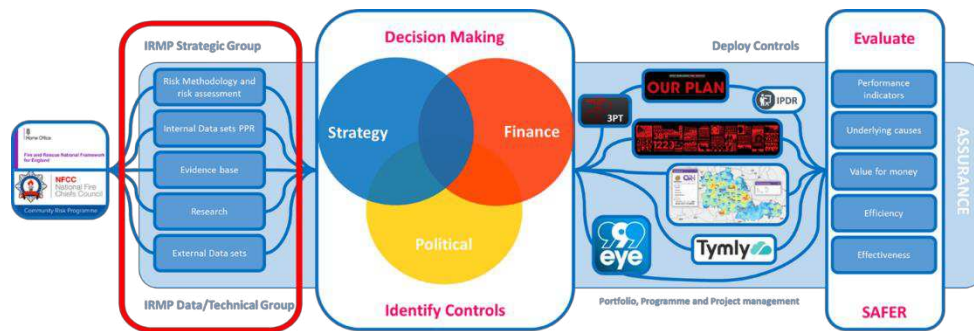
We use the [NFCC Community Risk Management Planning strategic framework](#) to shape and inform our approach. This includes:

- Defining scope - we are seeking to identify, assess and effectively manage foreseeable risks facing our communities.
- Hazard identification – we use risk registers, incident data and horizon scanning to build a picture of foreseeable hazards that may impact our communities.
- Risk analysis – we determine the level of risk an identified hazard may have, this is done by considering the likelihood and the consequences of the hazard occurring.
- Decision making – CRMP based decisions are made to ensure control measures are in place to prevent or mitigate identified risks.
- Evaluation – we must then understand if the CRMP is achieving the desired outcome, we therefore carry out monitoring and evaluation of all risk management decisions to determine their effectiveness.
- Data and business intelligence – we use data to support all elements of the CRMP process, to support evidenced based and intelligence driven decisions.
- Stakeholder and public engagement – how we manage risk directly impacts our community and stakeholders, it is therefore key to be transparent and seek feedback and raise awareness of our CRMP process with our communities. We carry out extensive public, partner and staff consultations at least every 3 years.
- Equality impact assessments – how we manage risk within the community must be fair, support equality and not discriminate. We therefore complete equality impact assessments throughout all relevant steps of the CRMP process, from public consultation to risk management decisions and control measures.

Building on this and other best practice to shape our own methodology, we have developed the following CRMP principles:

1. To continue to evolve our delivery of risk-based services aligned to the needs of local communities
2. To create opportunities and make the best use of our resources to effectively manage changing risk
3. To sustain our delivery of risk-based services to local communities
4. Maintain and enhance our 'outstanding' response services
5. To enable sustainable and resilient services for now and the future
6. Maintain and expand our offer to partners and communities, delivering services which are in the communities interest.
7. Manage Health and Safety considerations within existing arrangements, ensuring safe systems of work
8. Deliver the most effective CRMP working with our staff

The CRMP 'Jet engine', this captures and summaries the process we follow, placing a key emphasis on the review of risk that informs everything we do:



Throughout this process we:

- Use **data** going back several years to understand and model which sections of our communities are most at risk from fire and other incidents.
- work out where certain types of incidents happen most across the west midlands, to **map** out where we locate our resources and where to focus our prevention and protection activities.
- monitor trends in the types of incidents we attend, and when and where they happen. This data helps us to spot potential opportunities to adapt our services, to allocate resources differently and to focus our interventions.
- keep up to date with studies and **research** taking place around the world and commission our own. We apply our professional judgement and incorporate relevant findings into our own planning.
- keep a close eye on many **external factors** which might affect or influence how we deliver our strategy. These include social issues, technology, politics, the economy and environmental issues, as well as legal and ethical considerations.
- undertake **future forecasting**, this helps us to look beyond our three-year planning cycle. For example, how might the population grow and change? What are the emerging social or health issues? And what can we learn from global risks, such as climate change or pandemics, or from unprecedented events and international emergencies?
- use tried and tested industry standard **risk management tools** to inform our decision making throughout
- **constantly assess** whether the measures we have in place match events and incidents to which we're likely to respond. Are we targeting our prevention activities where we need to? And, if the worst does happen, are our response arrangements and resources appropriate? This process allows us to identify any potential gaps and future development opportunities.

This document, our CRMP, will outline our approach to community risk management planning, provide an overview of the key evidence and data sets that we have considered when assessing risk, how this informs our approach, and the commitments we will make to continual improvement in the delivery of our strategy based upon our ever-evolving understanding of risk.

West Midlands Fire Service

West Midlands Fire Service is the second largest fire and rescue service in England, serving an area of 902km² and a population of over 2.9 million people.

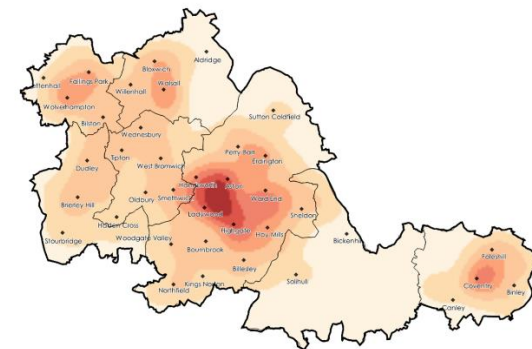
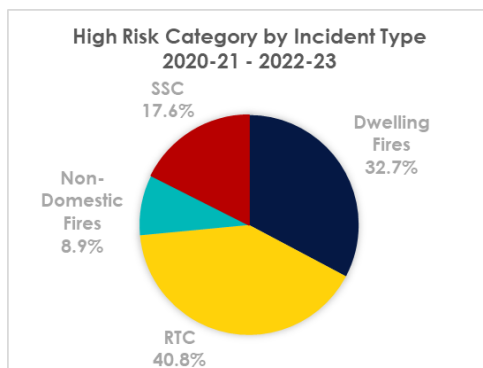
We have 38 fire stations situated strategically across the West Midlands, as well as our Headquarters based in Birmingham. These are staffed by over 1,350 firefighters and officers, supported by over 60 fire control staff and around 400 specialist support staff.

We make use of a range of different vehicles and specialist equipment to ensure we are able to respond to emergencies, including 41 Fire Engines (PRLs), 19 Brigade Response Vehicles and several specialist vehicles such as Hydraulic Platforms.

We respond to much more than just fires, with rescues, road traffic collisions and other emergencies now making up a bigger proportion of our responses than fires.

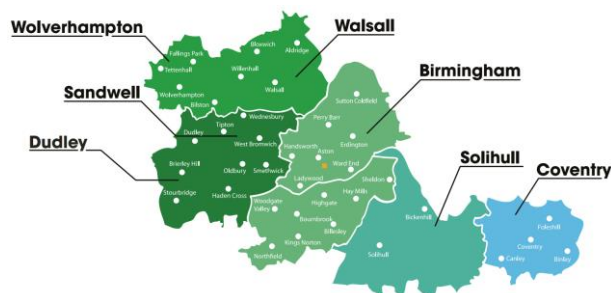
Summary infographic to contain:

- 38 fire stations
- Over 1,800 staff (1380 operational, 416 support staff, 62 Fire control)
- Incident data breakdown (pie chart below)
- Safe and well & Safe and strong
- Highrise buildings (18m)
- Average response time
- Strategic hotspot (map below)



About the West Midlands Conurbation

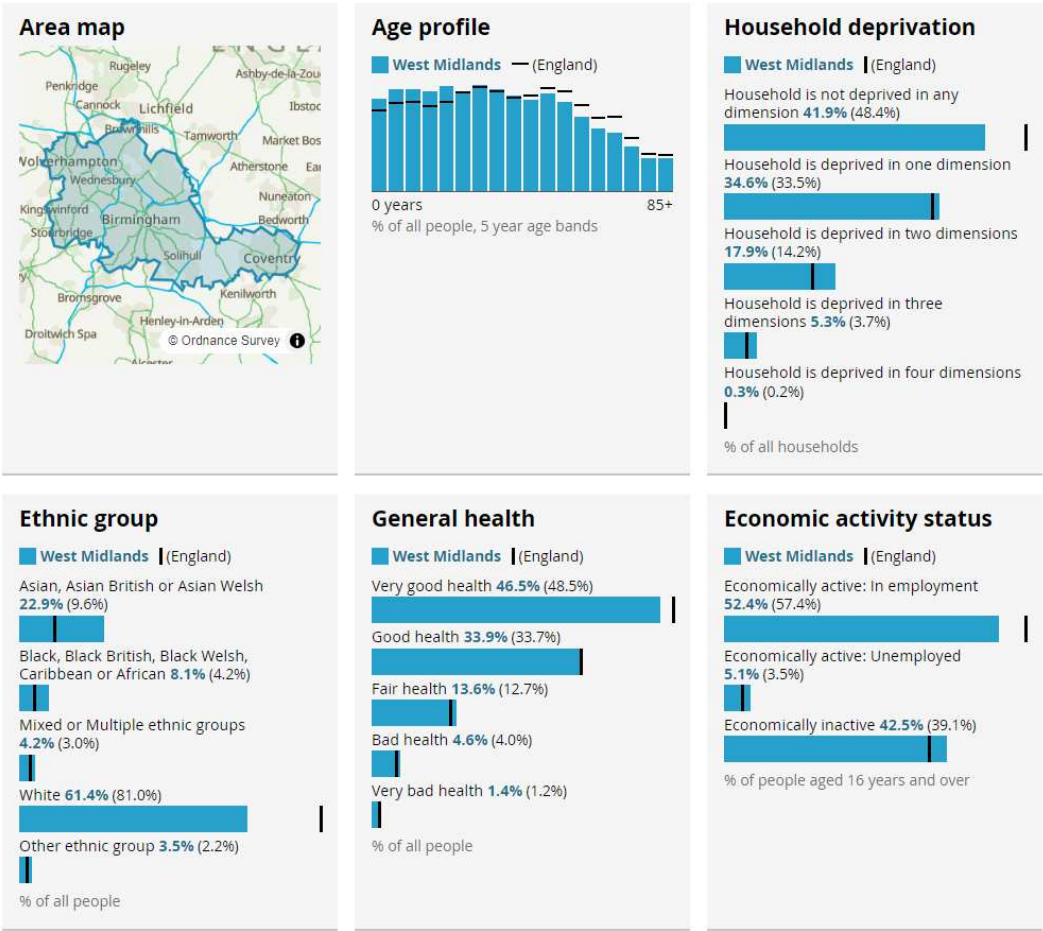
We serve one of the most diverse and multi-cultural communities in the country, spread across seven local authorities – Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.



Our region contains some of the most deprived communities anywhere in the country, where socio-economic and health factors mean the risk of fire and other emergencies is particularly high. At the same time our major urban centres and industrial areas contain some of the highest risk infrastructure in the UK. There are over 1,190,900 homes and 101,000 non-domestic properties within the West Midlands, these could be workplaces or commercial buildings.

Infographic to contain:

- [ONS](#) images below
- 7 local authority areas – Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Dudley, Coventry, Walsall, Solihull
- Over 2.9 million people
- Neighbouring brigades - Hereford and Worcester FRS, Staffordshire FRS, Warwickshire FRS and Shropshire
- Birmingham has the highest population density in the West Midlands and Solihull has the lowest
- The West Midlands population is more ethnically diverse than that of England
- The West Midlands is the fastest-growing tech economy in the UK
- Six higher education institutions - four ranked among the best in the world
- 132,000 students studying core subjects at West Midlands universities,
- 1 international airport
- 1,478,700 vehicles registered in the West Midlands
- Health
 - Most areas in the West Midlands have a greater level of socioeconomic deprivation than the national average
 - Almost 1 in 5 people in the West Midlands Metropolitan area has a limiting or long-term illness or disability. This is higher than England overall.
 - People in the West Midlands are more likely to smoke, drink too much alcohol, be overweight or obese, and be physically inactive.
 - Inequalities are particularly high among urban and industrial communities
 - COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities in both risk factors and outcomes.
 - Overall smoking prevalence in the West Midlands continues to decline.



Our understanding of risk

We need to consistently evolve and adapt to meet the ever-changing needs of our communities, therefore the most important element of our CRMP process is the reviewing and understanding the risk. Our risk analysis process is fully integrated within our strategic and resource planning to ensure key priorities are informed and driven by evidence. This understanding allows the Service to adopt suitable methodologies to identify, assess and profile risk and vulnerability against the population. Following this we address the risk within different sections of society by employing a range of risk reduction measures which are proportionate and tailored to the needs of the individuals and groups targeted. The level of support we offer to individuals and businesses is driven by the presence of known factors which increase vulnerability, with greater prevention and protection measures being offered to those who we can evidence are at a greater risk of fire and other emergencies. All of this will help to create a West Midlands that is Safer, Stronger and Healthier.

There are a number of methods and tools we use within this stage of our CRMP process to continually increase our knowledge of risk and build an evidence base, some of which are detailed below.

Understanding our communities

To help understand risk within the West Midlands and identify those who are most vulnerable from fire and other risks we need to understand our communities. The conditions in which we were born, grow, live, work and age impact our physical and mental health ([WMCA, 2020](#)). It is important to understand the underlying causes of poor health and inequalities (the 'causes of the causes'). These could include getting a good start in life, educational attainment, our jobs and incomes, our homes and where we live, our friendships and sense of purpose and belonging. These wider determinants of health have been shown to be the main drivers of health inequalities which in turn have led to some communities being more badly affected by risks, such as Covid-19.

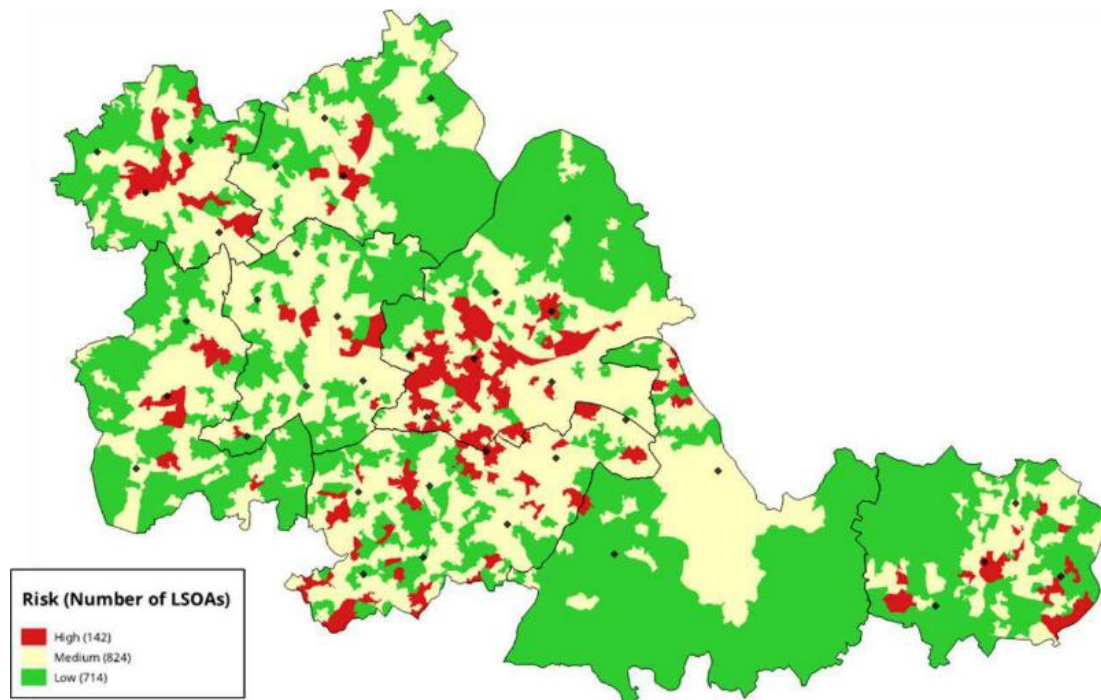
Understanding vulnerability and the 'causes of the cause' can therefore help to determine the level of risk which exists. This includes looking at historic incident data alongside a range of other people and place datasets to identify characteristics present within our communities that have the strongest relationship with an incident occurring.

We know there is a significant overlap between the health inequalities and social determinants that reduce life expectancy and those that increase risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies. We consider key factors including age, income, employment status, health deprivation and education in line with the [indices of multiple deprivation](#), which measures relative levels of deprivation of small areas or neighbourhoods. We can then map this to predict where our highest through to the lowest risk areas in our communities exist. This helps us to understand whether our resources are in the right place and where to target our prevention, protection and response activities.

Greater prevention measures are then offered to those who we can evidence are at a greater risk of fire and other emergencies. This approach enables risk control measures to be effectively targeted at the right people and will have the maximum effect in reducing the vulnerability and risk present.

We determine high, medium and low risk areas of the West Midlands through Area Risk Mapping (ARM) based on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and census variables which we can evidence contribute to the level of vulnerability and risk. This forms part of our planning

assumptions when determining the highest risk communities in certain areas of the West Midlands which allows us to put in place suitable prevention and protection measures in these areas to reduce the risk. We also use incident data alongside this to ensure the ARM is validated through using real incident data such as fire deaths and injuries.

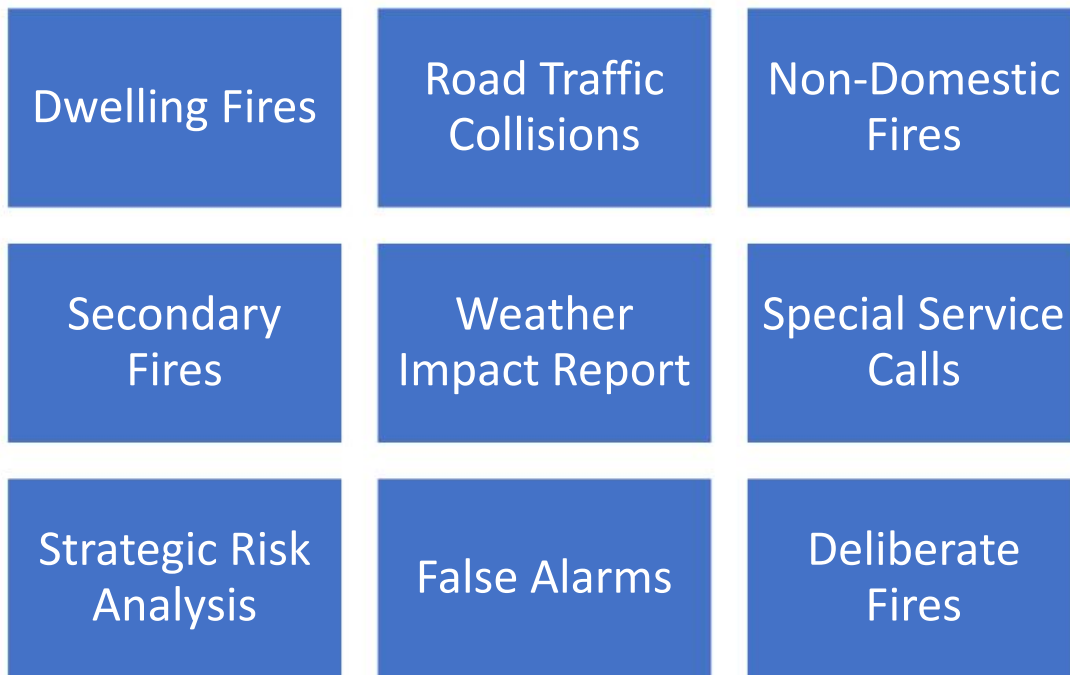


Data and business intelligence

Data and business intelligence is utilised to ensure decision making throughout the community risk management planning process is evidence based and intelligence driven. Our data team provide data analysis, modelling, mapping and research. We use extensive data sets, both internal and external to help continually assess and inform our understanding of risk and use our resources effectively. Our [Risk Explorer](#) tool let you interact with some of the key data we use to develop our CRMP. Users simply need to enter a West Midlands postcode to access several of the data sets we use to analyse and manage risks where they live or work.

We have adopted risk analysis methodologies and learning from the NFCC definition of risk project which formulated evidence based and consistent national risk methodologies for assessing and understanding community risk, including [domestic dwelling fires](#) and [road traffic collisions](#).

1/2 page infographic summaries of our key risks and analysis - what is the risk/who is at risk/significant changes. In development with Corporate Comms from the below data analyst reports (links included)]



Identify trends

Through our strategic risk analyses, incident reports and performance dashboards [consider link to public performance dashboard] we are able to identify annual and temporal trends in all incidents reported to WMFS. This enables us to identify potential opportunities within the data which may suggest future development opportunities in how we allocate resources and well as target interventions that will assist in risk mitigation.

Our strategic risk analysis helps us to identify annual and temporal trends in all incidents reported to West Midlands Fire Service as well as trends across different incident types, including peaks in activity. Strategic risk analysis summary infographic to be included.

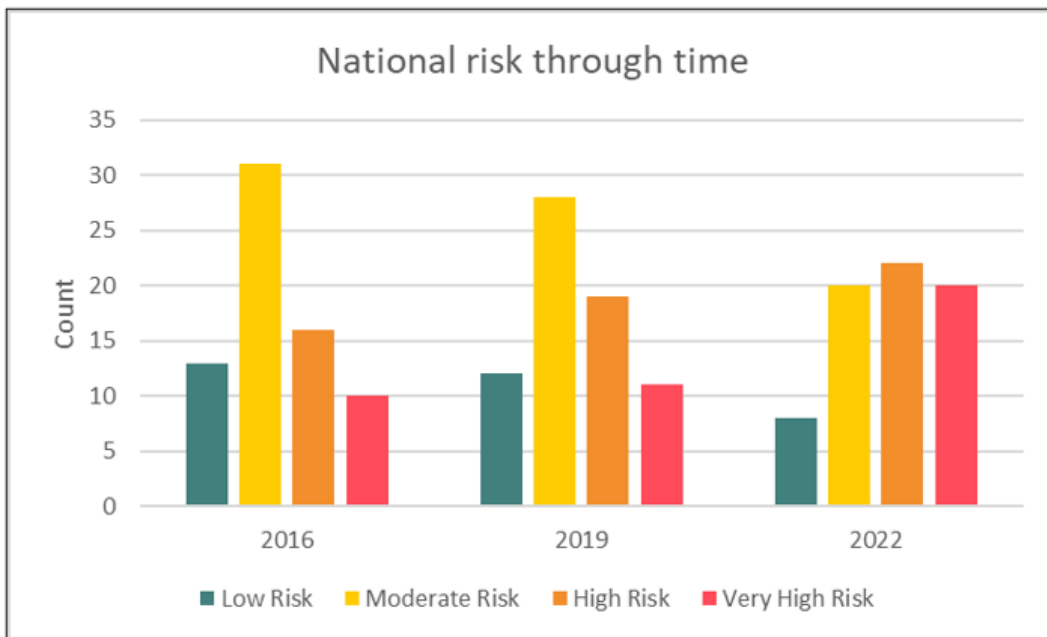
Risk Registers

We use local, national and international risk registers and reports to help identify key emerging risks, assess capability, identify emerging themes and prioritise resources, risk preparation and mitigation. These documents include the local [West Midlands Local Risk Assessment](#), The [National Risk Register](#) and the [Global Risk Report](#).

The National Risk Register is a key component of the UK's emergency preparedness framework. By identifying, assessing, and prioritising risk over time, the NSRA highlights potential hazards ranging from natural hazards, such as wildfires and floods, to man-made incidents like industrial fires or terror-related events.

Drawing from historical incidents, expert opinions, and predictive simulations, the risk register provides insights to enhance strategic planning, resource allocation, and operational readiness. This ensures that we are proactive in our training, equipment, and preparedness efforts to address the most likely and impactful threats identified in the assessment. Risks are often represented using a colour-coded system, indicating their severity based on a

combination of likelihood and impact. A risk's likelihood identifies the probability of its occurrence, while its impact describes the potential consequences. The severity of national risk is intensifying, transitioning from Low and Medium levels to High and Very High categories, as shown in the bar chart below.



The purpose of the risk assessment process is to identify, analyse and evaluate risk in order to inform how we need to plan and prepare. A crucial element of the risk management process is to carry out a capability assessment to understand if there any capability gaps in preparing for or responding to the identified risks. We do this with multi-agency partners as part of the Local Resilience Forum risk assessment group, as well as internally for more fire specific risks.

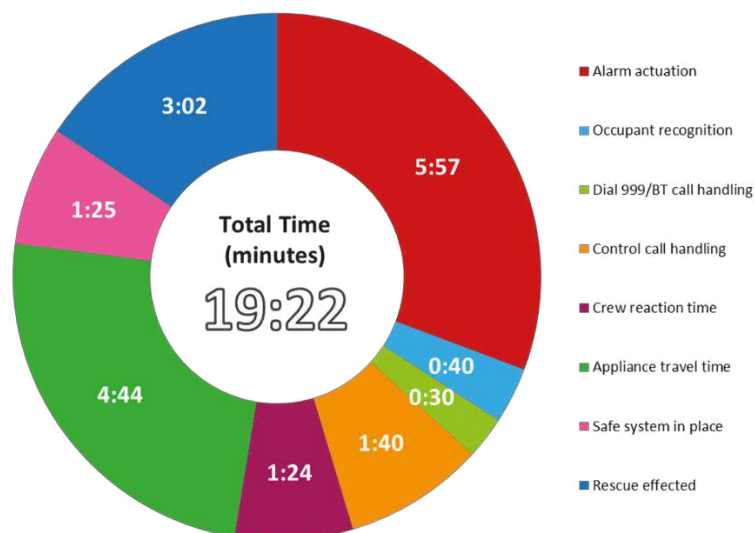
Research

We seek to compliment findings from our analysis with credible research. This includes conducting a literature review of academic work to understand the research which exists globally across the world in relation to community risk. This, along with professional judgement, will be applied to research findings which will be incorporated into CRMP where appropriate.

Research on survivability has highlighted the importance of responding to high-risk incidents in a timely manner. We have been able to put this research alongside our own data to determine that a 5-minute attendance time is critical to the likelihood of survival in a fire, or any incident where significant trauma has been incurred. This is reflected in our service delivery model and 5-minute risk-based attendance standard for high-risk incidents.

The 'Fire and Rescue Timeline' is detailed below and explains the different elements of an incident, and on average, the timeframe for each, from fire alarms actuating to dialling 999 and crews being mobilised and travelling to the incident.

[Corporate comms 4 - Insert simple visual explanation of the fire and rescue timeframe based on the below]



5min text

External environment

In developing our CRMP it is important we have a good understanding of the external environment and how this may influence our impact on WMFS and the delivery of our strategy. Within this element we consider the social, technological, economic, environmental, political, legal and ethical factors that may impact on, or present opportunities within the CRMP process. [Corporate Comms 5]

Area	Detail
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local and National Elections Fire Reform White Paper WMCA/PCC WMCA Trailblazer Devolution Deal Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 Recommendations Manchester Arena Bombings Inquiry Recommendations
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Change (Including CCC Risk Assessments) Environment Act 2021 (and Office for Environmental Protection) WMCA Net Zero Five Year Plan and 2041 Target WMCA Air Quality Framework and Implementation Plan National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing Population Health Inequalities Cost of Living Crisis HMICFRS Spotlight Report on Culture and Values
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI National Data Strategy Electric vehicles/Lithium-Ion Batteries Modern Methods of Construction
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Safety Act Levelling Up and Regeneration Act Procurement Act

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious Violence Duty • Minimum Service Level Act • Independent Public Advocate (Victims and Prisoners Bill) • Social Housing (Regulation) Act and Renters (Reform) Bill
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Local Government Financial Settlements • Inflation and recession/slow economic growth • Overall Public Spending Impacts • Birmingham City Council S114

Organisational Intelligence

We make sure we capture and share learning, both internally, and nationally to enable continuous improvement in service delivery. We continually debrief incidents and policies and identify organisational themes at the earliest opportunity and adapt proactively to ensure we act on learning identified. This helps us to effectively manage emerging risks and keep our staff safe.

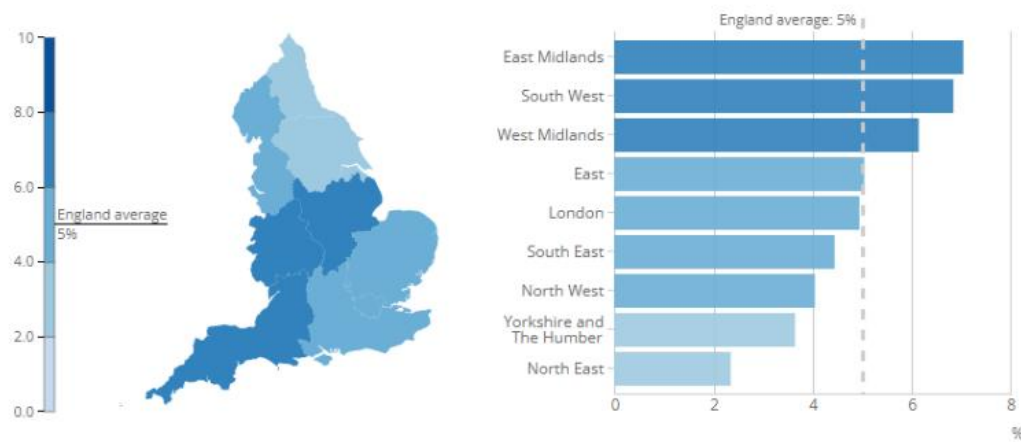
A recent example of this is intelligence gathered in relation to an increase in lithium-ion battery incidents. This information was gathered from our staff, as well as from national learning and meant we were able to gain a better understanding of the risk and develop training for our staff and educational resources for the public to help mitigate this risk.

Horizon Scanning and Forecasting

In this section we look beyond our three-year planning cycle to understand the potential future requirements of our CRMP. This includes understanding the population demographics, social, economic and health conditions along with analysis of attendance. In addition, we consider longer term risks where we may experience increasing impacts in the future, such as climate change.

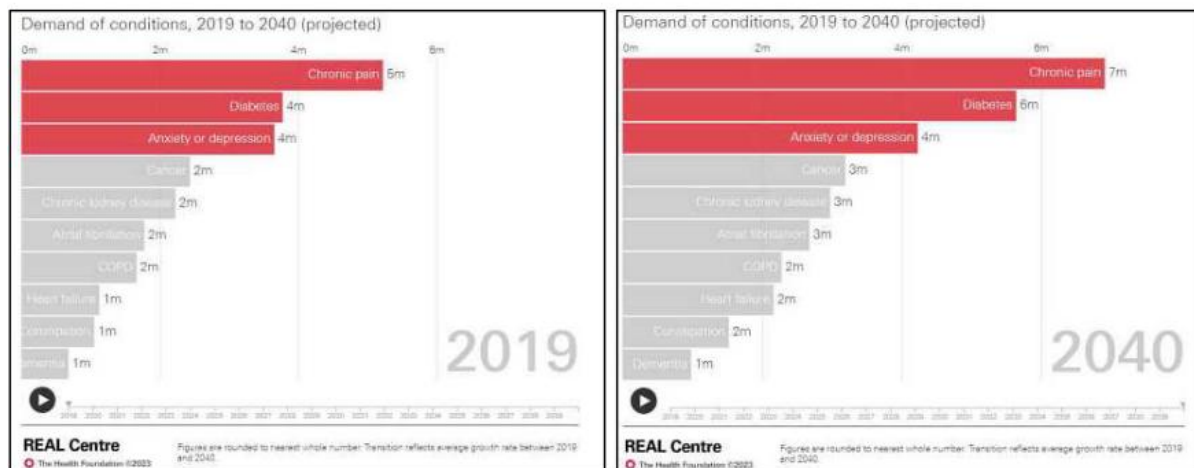
[climate change – weather report]

For example, ONS projections show the populations of all regions within England are projected to grow by mid-2028. All regions are projected to have a greater proportion of people aged 65 years and over by mid-2028. The West Midlands region is in the top 3 highest projected population changes, with a 6.1% change over a 10 year period. Statisticians have commented that *"Over the next decade, the population of most areas is set to continue growing, particularly in the south and Midlands. Our projections also show the share of people aged 65 years and over will increase almost everywhere. This information is particularly important for anyone planning local services – for example, opportunities and services for older people."*



Source: Office for National Statistics – [Subnational population projections](#).

In England, 9.1 million people are projected to be living with major illness by 2040, 2.5 million more than in 2019. This is an increase from almost 1 in 6 to nearly 1 in 5 of the adult population. This will be particularly significant knowing the strong link between the health inequalities and social determinants that reduce life expectancy and those that increase risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies.



The Health Foundation; 2023.

New and Emerging Risks

Our understanding of risk continues to evolve, we continually assess risk as a service to inform our decision making and throughout our CRMP process our risk analysis phase is integral. Our latest risk analysis has identified the following key themes:

- Business continuity and resilience
- Emerging technologies
- Cost of living crisis
- Sustainability and Net Zero

The majority of people who responded to our consultation agreed with our assessment of emerging risk.

Business Continuity and Resilience

We have seen an increase in disruptive events which may impact the West Midlands in a range of ways. These could be local, national or international events including protests, international disputes, social disruption, supply chain issues, loss of utilities, climate change and cyber-attacks.

The UK Government Resilience Framework highlights the changing risk landscape, stating *“We live in an increasingly volatile world, defined by geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts, rapid technological change and a changing climate. This context means that crises will have far reaching consequences and are likely to be greater in frequency and scale in the next decade than we have been used to. We have a responsibility to prepare for this future.”*

The UK report of the Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning depicts a similar outlook, stating *“The UK’s risk management system must adapt to ensure that we are prepared for the evolving extreme and systemic risks on the horizon to protect us today and into the future and concludes that the UK must be better at anticipating, preparing for and responding to a range of challenging risk scenarios, including those which it has never experienced before.”*

In line with the Fire and Rescue National Framework, we must put in place arrangements to prevent and mitigate these risks as well as having effective business continuity arrangements in place to ensure these risks do not impact our ability to deliver our key services. Locally, we have strategic business continuity plans in place to minimise risk and manage the impact of disruptive events, many of which we have used extensively over the last 5 years including:

- April 2018 Industrial Action Planning (local re contracts)
- March 2019 EU Exit Planning
- Jan 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic
- April 2021 Op Forth Bridge
- July 2022 Heatwave and Drought
- Sept 2022 Op London Bridge
- Nov 2022 Industrial Action planning (national re pay)
- June 2023 National 999 outage

Our strategic risk analysis has also shown how climate change is bringing about greater uncertainty and creating more volatile and unpredictable weather, with resulting fluctuations in demand for emergency response. The increase in secondary fires in 2022/23 was likely due to the prolonged heatwave during the summer months.

In addition to an increased likelihood of disruptive events, National and global risk registers also appear to show the severity of existing risk intensifying. We can therefore expect the risk landscape to continually evolve, with disruptive events continuing to increase in frequency, scale and impact within the West Midlands. To effectively assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning, we need to assess our existing capability and identify any gaps as part of the risk management planning process. This is something we continually do, however we will now be completing a comprehensive review of all of our resilience arrangements to ensure we can meet the resilience landscape of the future.

Emerging Technologies

The drive for sustainability to negate climate change is creating emerging technologies such as Lithium-Ion Batteries, hydrogen, Large Energy Storage Systems and new building construction methodologies in the built environment.

We know lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries are becoming an increasing risk, an NFCC report in 2021 stated lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries are responsible for around 48% of all waste fires occurring in the UK each year, costing the UK economy £158 million annually.

Lithium-ion batteries in electric and hybrid vehicles, can present a challenge to Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) if they are involved in road traffic collisions (RTC) or catch fire due to the collision/faults etc. The NFCC is supporting FRS across the UK, to identify a suitable solution to deal with the issues associated with lithium-ion batteries, which is anticipated will become a significant risk in the future.

The RAC estimates that there are currently around 980 zero-emission Battery Electric Vehicles (EV) on the UK's roads, along with over 600,000 plug-in hybrids totalling 804,000 vehicles.

The growth of the EV and alternate fuel market is expected to accelerate in the coming years as the UK prepares itself for the 2030 ban on new petrol and diesel vehicle sales.

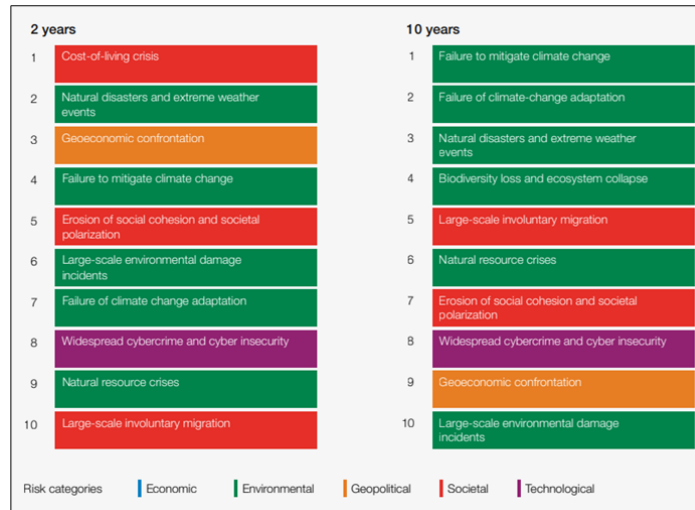
Projected UK figures are 23.2 million by 2032 (55% of all vehicles), and by 2050 increasing to 49.0 million (100%).

Cost of Living Crisis

The cost-of-living crisis is exacerbating underlying social inequalities that we know increase our communities risk to fire and other emergencies. This will see vulnerability continue to rise leading to increased community risk and a potential increase in frequency and severity of incidents incident we attend.

The global risk report serves as a crucial tool for identifying and understanding significant threats on a worldwide scale, vital for both national stakeholders and emergency services. It outlines the most severe risk anticipated in the immediate two-year period as well as over a longer ten-year timeframe, encompassing challenges from natural events to complex man-made situations.

Most of the severe risks identified globally from the 2023 GRR impact upon WMFS. Specifically, the cost-of-living crisis and extreme weather identified on the two-year time span are of concern, along with the climate change related risks in the ten-year timespan.



Global Risk Report, 2023.

Sustainability and Net Zero

WMFS recognises that not only do our activities impact on the environment, but changes in the environment may impact on the type, frequency and severity of incidents we attend. Sustainability is not solely focused on the environment but is a service wide eco system where opportunities are founded by working together, streamlining processes and ways of working, leading to a more effective and efficient service. As role models within our communities and to meet external targets, we see sustainability becoming an overarching theme across all elements of our Strategy, enabling all areas of the Service to adapt or adopt new approaches to safer communities.

[Summary, key themes from sustainability strategy]

Assessing our current capability

In this step we aim to review our existing capabilities in terms of the control and mitigation measures we have in place, and whether they are proportionate to the foreseeable hazardous scenarios we are likely to respond to. A key tool we use in making this assessment is the bow tie risk assessment. This allows us to place the hazardous scenario at the centre, and at one side assess whether our prevention activities are targeted to the underlying causes that may contribute to a hazardous scenario being realised, and on the other side, make an assessment as to whether our response capabilities are appropriate to effectively mitigate the risk should the hazardous scenarios occur. This process allows us to identify any potential gaps and highlight future development opportunities.

Effectively Managing Risk

We manage and reduce the risks and vulnerabilities posed to communities and businesses, from fire and non-fire emergencies, through delivery of prevention, protection and response activities and services. We apply an integrated and evidence-based approach to community safety (prevention), fire safety inspection and enforcement (protection), and emergency response arrangements (response) to support our vision. In delivering our services, we take into account the diverse needs of the community.

The outcomes of our Community Risk Management Plan delivered through our PPR activities are designed to;

- reduce loss of life in fires and other emergency incidents;
- reduce the number and severity of injuries in fires and other emergency incidents;
- reduce the number of fires and other emergency incidents occurring;
- reduce the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents;
- Give the greatest opportunity for people and the region to prosper.

This will be through:

- Managing the level of risk and vulnerability in our communities;
- ensure compliance with Health and Safety Laws;
- safeguarding the environment and heritage (both built and natural);
- providing value for money;
- Identifying opportunities to work collaboratively or in partnership with other agencies to reduce demand on wider public services.

And achieved by:

- Identifying and assessing existing and potential risks to the community within the West Midlands area;
- Identifying the most vulnerable and at-risk individuals within the West Midlands;
- Ensuring that appropriate risk control measures are in place;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of Prevention, Protection and Response arrangements;
- Identifying and assessing existing and potential risks to our employees to ensure they have the resources to perform their roles;
- Identifying opportunities for improvement and determining policies and standards for Prevention, Protection and Response
- Determining resource requirements to meet these policies and standards;
- Dealing with incidents in an assertive, safe and effective way.

The following sections will detail how we use our Prevention, Protection and Response functions to effectively manage risk.

Prevention

What is Prevention?

Prevention is about preventing fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies, by providing targeted education and interventions to reducing vulnerability and support safer and healthier communities.

How do we identify risk?

We know there is a significant overlap between the health inequalities and social determinants that reduce life expectancy and those that increase risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies. These overlapping issues include:

- Smoking
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Hoarding Behaviour
- Alcohol / substance dependency
- Mobility
- Dementia
- Obesity
- Degenerative or long term medical condition
- Sensory impairment
- Living in an area of deprivation
- Access to community services
- Poor housing
- Poverty
- Worklessness
- Fuel poverty
- Isolation

Every contact that WMFS has with the community is an opportunity to reduce health inequalities. In 2010 Professor Sir Michael Marmot published his [Fair Society Health Lives](#) report. The report highlighted that underlying health inequalities, social determinants, poverty, and deprivation has a significant impact on life expectancy. The review concluded that reducing health inequalities would require action on 6 policy objectives:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Ensure healthy standard of living for all
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention.

During 2012-14 there was a growing understanding within WMFS that the same social determinants have an impact on risk of fire and other emergency incidents. Therefore, tackling the underlying environmental, social and life-style choices i.e. the “cause of the cause” will contribute to reducing the risk and vulnerability to fire and other emergencies.

In 2014 WMFS published the report "[Improving Lives to Save Lives](#)" that detailed the contribution the service makes to reduce health inequalities. The report was launched alongside an [accompanying short film](#) at a conference where Professor Sir Michael Marmot was the keynote speaker. This work was recognised by Professor Sir Michael Marmot when he gave "Marmot Status" to WMFS in 2016. Our work was also recognised by Royal Society for Public Health who awarded WMFS in 2016 for our wider health inequalities work.

During 2020 The Health Foundation published the 10 year update to the Marmot Review. Titled [Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On](#) The report provides updated figures and analysis of the progress against the measures used in the 2010 report. It concludes that:

"England is faltering. From the beginning of the 20th Century, England experienced continuous improvements in life expectancy but from 2011 these improvements slowed dramatically, almost grinding to a halt. For part of the decade 2010-2020 life expectancy actually fell in the most deprived communities outside London for women and in some regions for men. For men and women everywhere, the time spent in poor health is increasing."

The service has the following strategic prevention objectives:-

We will:

- Prevent fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies.
- Focus on reducing health inequalities for our most vulnerable as a means of reducing risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies.
- Educate the community to reduce their risk and vulnerability to fire and other emergencies.
- Collaborate and work in partnership with other organisations to reduce the risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies.

We use a collaborative partnership approach to engage with a wide range of individuals, groups, and professionals to support, guide and educate our communities. It will use a targeted and evidence-based approach in the delivery of prevention activities to enable the organisation to achieve its aim of making the West Midlands safer, healthier, and stronger.

We take a 'life course' approach to targeted and universal services that seek to reduce risk and vulnerability to fires and other emergencies which we attend and improve health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

How we manage the risk through our Prevention activities?

The prevention activities we deliver set out the way we apply universal, targeted and evidenced based approach to reduce people's vulnerability to the types of emergencies we attend.

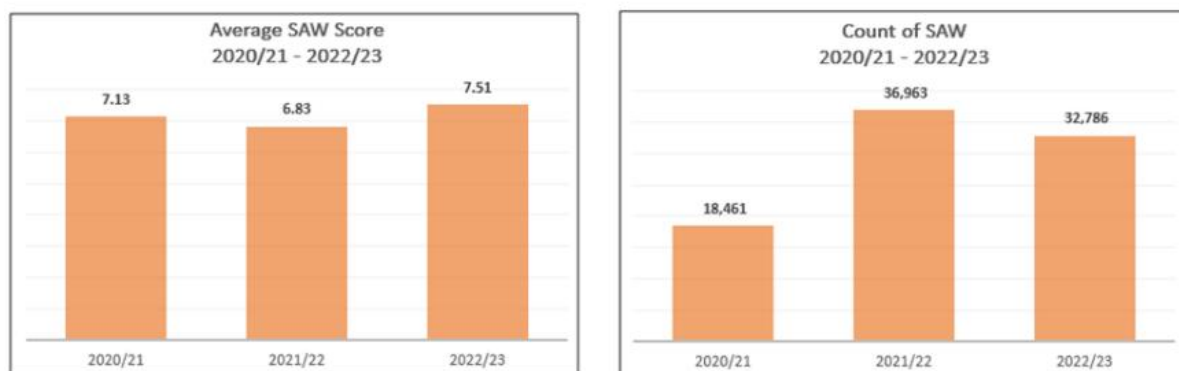
Our Prevention Activities	Overview
Safe and Well (Universal and targeted)	Online, telephone and face to face visits providing vital fire safety information, general safety and health or well-being advice
Fire Safety Tutoring (targeted)	Qualified Fire Safety Tutors who work with children and young people who show an unhealthy interest in fire
Foundation Stage Education - The Big Fire Engine Activity Box (universal)	An activity box is designed to provide teachers with a range of resources to help them deliver their own fire safety sessions
Key Stage 2 Education – SPARKS (universal)	SPARKS presentation is delivered by firefighters to Year 4 pupils, covering smoke detectors, escape plans, emergency calls, fire hazards, pedestrian and car safety and more.
Key Stage 2 Education - Smart Choices (universal)	A programme that teaches children about life skills, personal safety, travel safety, good citizenship, water safety, road and car safety and staying safe in the home.
Key Stage S3/4 Education Your Choice: Feel The Heat (universal and targeted)	Training aims to explore deliberate fire setting and the consequences to the environment and to society
Key Stage S3/4 Education Your Choice: On The Road (universal and targeted)	Training aims to consider the consequences of anti-social driving behaviours and features discussions around driving under the influence, recognising peer pressure and more.
Key Stage 4 Every Choice Counts (universal and targeted)	This session is to empower young drivers/passengers to develop their own coping strategies to handle risky situations as well as becoming a responsible driver/passenger
SEND Education (targeted)	Tailored sessions for children and adults with Special Educational Needs (SEND) and disabilities
Fire Cadets (universal)	This group aims to provide young people with the opportunity to develop their skills and coordination through training and discipline. Covering a range of practical skills.
Safeguarding (universal)	It is out policy to protect, safeguard and promote the welfare of the children, young people, and adults with whom we come into contact
WMFS Website (universal)	Our website has a comprehensive range of information and guidance available to support citizens, organisations and

	professionals, formal and informal carers in reducing risk and vulnerability
Fire Safety E Learning for Professionals and Carers and Fire Safety Guidance for Professionals and Carers (universal)	This is predominantly for those working with adults with care and support needs, to provide professionals that work outside of the fire sector with the knowledge and understanding of risk and vulnerability to fire, how to assess and mitigate this, including making referrals to WMFS for professional support.

Prevention – Continual improvement

In 2022, to more effectively manage risk through Safe and Well visits, we started to monitor 'risk points' identified during a safety visit rather than the total number of visits completed - the higher the risk points the higher the risk that household may be from fire or other emergencies. This approach means we are targeting higher risk households and have a greater opportunity to reduce risk and health inequalities.

By targeting households with greater potential risks and tailoring interventions to their specific need we maximise the effectiveness of our Prevention work, as evidenced by the rising average risk score over the last 3-years.



Consultation

We continue to develop to use our resources and manage risk more effectively, this includes listening to your feedback to help shape what we deliver. We found from our consultation that the most common reasons for not using our Prevention services included not knowing what is available followed by not knowing how to access services.

As part of the consultation, we also asked what risks you thought we should consider as well as how we could make you safer. You highlighted increased community engagement, climate and environmental advice, the cost-of-living crisis, electric/battery safety, and water safety. We are doing the following to address your feedback;

- We have reviewed our Safe and Well content, to include additional information and advice in relation to heatwave, battery safety, flooding and wildfire risks. This will be published in April 2024.
- We have already launched new battery charging safety advice on our website, which can be found [here](#)

- We are developing a 'Proactive Prevention Policy' which will mean we will be able to use the latest data to target those we think would benefit the most from our services – without the need for everyone to know about the services we offer.
- We are reviewing and developing our community engagement plan. We know this has been impacted by Covid-19 so we will now re-build our local community relationships and networks to deliver more valuable community engagement.
- Cost of living crisis – potentially made vulnerable people more vulnerable, advice, guidance, tailored based on what we've found – heating etc.

Protection

What is Protection?

Our protection work is all about protecting life and property (including heritage sites), making businesses and the economy stronger, and communities safer. We also advise companies on fire safety legislation, to keep their staff and customers safe and help their businesses to grow. Where necessary we can go further and take enforcement action, including prosecution where we feel the risk is significant.

How do we identify risk?

West Midlands Fire Authority is one of the Enforcing Authorities for the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and other associated fire safety legislation within the West Midlands. We proactively audit higher risk premises and apply enforcement principles to reduce risk. These include tall buildings, residential flats, hospitals, schools and high-risk businesses. We also consider historical fire statistics and the likelihood of a fire occurring in specific types of premises/occupancies.

There are many factors that may influence risk in these premises, these are identified and evaluated during visits. We consider any past enforcement action and intelligence/concerns from internal and external agencies and use our regulatory powers to reduce risk.

Enforcement from intelligence led audits considers Prevention and Response to manage the risk through an integrated approach. This includes community objectives e.g., safeguarding.

How we manage risk through our Protection activities?

To manage risk effectively, we use targeted risk-based protection activities and interventions, these are summarised below.

Our Educational Protection Activities	
Safe and Strong	We assist businesses to reduce the risk from fire, support them to keep their businesses in business and support strengthening the economy whilst providing public reassurance and confidence. S&S Web page
West Midlands Fire Safety Training	We provide training for businesses to support and enhance awareness of their requirements under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
Website	Our website provides a suite of information to educate businesses on their responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and practical advice on how to reduce risk from fire.
Primary Authority Partnerships	We develop effective partnerships with businesses to improve fire safety enforcement advice https://primary-authority.beis.gov.uk .
Campaigns	We undertake prevention campaigns in line with the NFCC Campaign schedule and using local intelligence
Sprinklers	We encourage the installation of Automatic Fire Suppression Systems (AFSS) where persons or premises are identified as being 'high risk'.
Safety Advisory Groups (Events)	We advise on fire safety at public events to support both firefighter and public safety.
Water	We inspect, test, and repair hydrants, so that water provision is available for use in event of a fire.

Heritage	We engage in reducing vulnerability to fire by supporting the protection of heritage risk. We advise on risk-based solutions to balance fire safety and heritage conditions in buildings.
Our Enforcement Protection Activities	
Fire Safety Audit	This is the primary activity we undertaken to reduce risk in the built environment. Audits will be identified through a proactive <u>risk-based inspection programme</u> or reactive via Fire Safety Concerns.
Campaigns (Audit Sampling)	Intelligence is used to target audits, e.g. information that a particular type of premises/occupancies is at risk from fire.
Licensing	We work to reduce risk through managing all aspects of licence applications and ensuring compliance with relevant legislation
Planning and Buildings Regulations	We reduce risk through carrying out consultation activity aligned to the responsibilities of a statutory consultee.
Fire Engineering	We are responsible for supporting the work of the Planning and Building Regulations Team where applications consist of complex developments and fire engineered solutions
Case Management	We are responsible for the effective management of all fire safety investigations and preparing legal cases
Out of Hours	We provide an a 24/7 capability to deliver our statutory obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Protection – Continual Improvement

We use a digital system to evaluate the service being delivered through the Safe and Strong visit and audits. This collects quantitative and qualitative information to support the improvement of delivery and ensure the service are being delivered in the most appropriate way. Where necessary and appropriate thematic reviews of risk-based intervention delivered by Protection will take place to ensure the desired outcome is being achieved and risk in the built environment is being reduced.

Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) Project

Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) are required to be installed in certain premises to give early warning of a fire to the occupants so they can evacuate. We know the majority of AFAs are false alarms and have taken steps to ensure we respond proportionately to such calls to reduce wasted time and keep resources available to respond to real emergencies. Where we do respond to an AFA, we want to utilise the flexibilities offered by our blended fleet to send a smaller vehicle with fewer staff.

We have re-categorised our AFA incident types based on risk, Fire Control have been able to use our existing dynamic mobilisation process to send a proportionate response to AFA incidents, not sending a fire engine where possible.

AFA next steps

We will develop our approach based on continual analysis. We have found there were over 1,000 AFA calls for incidents at care homes between April 2019 and March 2023, 99.1% of which were false alarms and none of the fires resulted in casualties or in people being rescued. Therefore, our approach to AFAs will now extend to Residential Care Homes, where we will dynamically mobilise to AFAs 24/7, maintaining a proportional level of response. All changes take place with extensive engagement and training with all relevant stakeholders.

[Construction methodologies]

Consultation

We found that the majority of those who have used our Protection services have rated them as either excellent or good.

During our consultation, we asked members of the public living in high-rise buildings if they were aware of the new Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. We found that most residents living in high-rise buildings haven't heard of these new regulations. Of those who have heard of the regulations, the majority thought they made them safer. Our staff also felt the new regulations have made high-rise communities safer.

When asked how we can keep high-rise communities safer from fire, the most common answers were community engagement, advice leaflets, new legislation and sprinkler systems.

As a result of this feedback, we will;

- Educate and inform residents of High-Rise Buildings of the fire safety measures in their building through a targeted campaign.
- Prioritise education of vulnerable residents in High-Rise Buildings through our Safe and Well visits.
- Prioritise fire safety in High-Rise Buildings through auditing and regulation, reflected in our Protection auditing strategy.
- Engage with the Housing Association Forum and Local Authorities to make them aware of the outcomes of our public consultation, in particular the thoughts of their residents.
- Regularly inspect Residential High-Rise Buildings to gain operational information and check basic fire safety measures through our site-specific risk information inspection strategy.

Response

What is Response?

Our Response function aims to continuously improve and meet the expectation of our community by delivering a highly skilled, competent response, that enables incidents to be resolved assertively, effectively and safely.

Our Service Delivery Model (SDM) ensures we can meet the performance requirement to get the right resources to the right place at the right time. It is also flexible enough to adapt to changing risk overtime whilst being resilient to consider foreseen and un-foreseen events which may limit our available resources.

Our response to fires and other emergencies continued to be graded 'outstanding' by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. We were delighted that our understanding of risk of fire and other emergencies, and overall effectiveness, were also rated 'outstanding' for the first time.

This result highlights how our professional, highly skilled, and highly trained firefighters respond assertively, effectively and safely to a wide variety of incidents, 24/7. They protect lives and properties, keep businesses in business and help keep the West Midlands' transport networks flowing.

Our consultation showed that the majority of those who have used our Response services rated them as excellent or good and did not highlight any barriers to accessing our Response services.

To determine our resource requirements to meet the needs of the community and reduce risk and vulnerability, we consider several factors which are discussed in this section.

How do we identify risk?

Risk Categories and Attendance Times

Using our survivability research, we know the importance of getting to high-risk incidents within 5 minutes. This helps to inform our attendance standards for a range of incidents we attended based on risk. These are detailed in the table below.

[corporate comms 6]

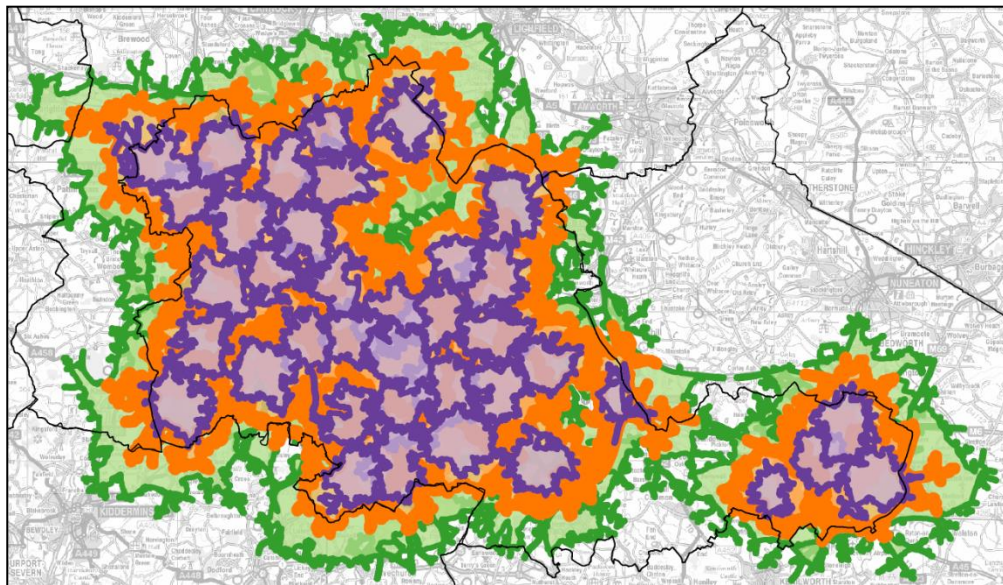
Incident Risk Category	Description	Fire Appliance Attendance Standard
Category 1 High Risk	This category is composed of those incidents that present the most significant risk to life, for example house fires, road traffic collisions and water rescue incidents.	5 minutes
Category 2 Medium Risk	The Medium Risk category comprises those incidents where there is a potential life risk (either through incident severity or the type of property affected), but there is a reduced likelihood of this risk being realised	7 minutes
Category 3 Low Risk	The Low-Risk category is made up of those incidents where there is a significantly reduced	10 minutes

	risk to life for example the provision of advice only or animal rescues.	
Category 4 Secondary Fires	These include fires in the open or fires where houses are not involved e.g. fires in fields, gardens, woods, grass, rubbish and skip fires.	20 minutes
Category 5	False Alarms	

Resource Locations

Now we know how quickly we need to respond to incidents in order to increase the chance of survival, we can make sure our fire stations are located in the right places, to enable us to manage risk effectively. The map below shows our 38 fire stations across the West Midlands, the colours around the stations show different travel times based on historical vehicle data to show projected coverage that can be achieved from these locations.

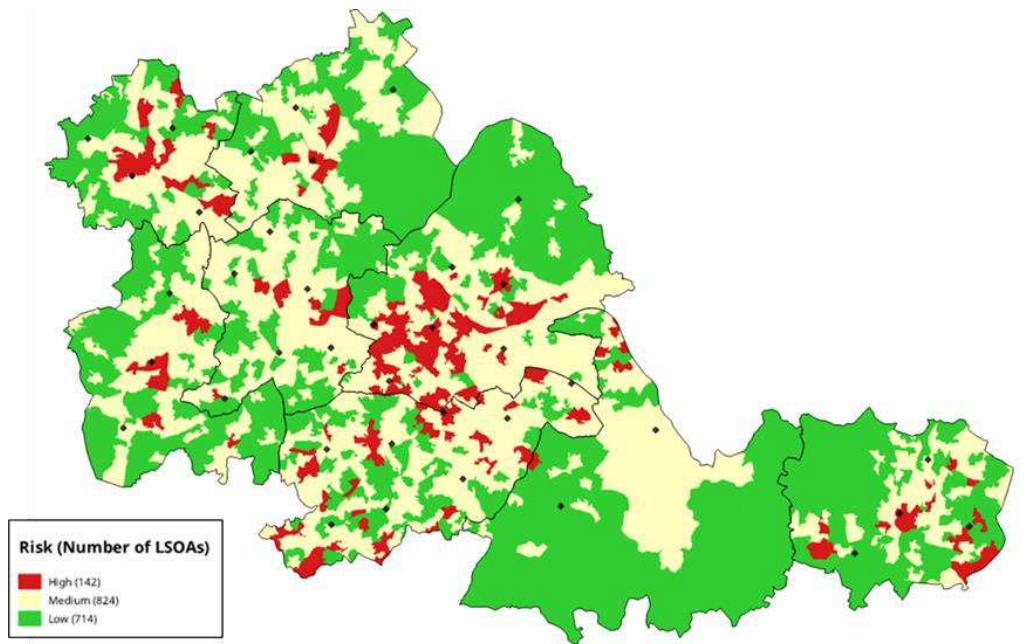
[Map below currently being updated with latest vehicle data and WMFS corporate branding colours]



- Purple isochrones denote 5-minute response times
- Orange Isochrones denote 7-minute response times
- Green Isochrones denote 10-minute response times
- Pink Isochrones denotes 20-minute response times

We know where our most vulnerable communities are based on our risk analysis. The map below shows how our highest risk areas are covered by our 5-minute attendance times.

[Comparison with risk map to show our 5-min response times are aligned to risk]



How we manage risk through our Response activities?

Our Resources

- 38 fire stations
- 41 fire engines
- 19 4x4 brigade response vehicles
- 3 business support vehicles which attend automatic fire alarm activations, providing advice and support to businesses to make them safer.

Based on local and national risk and capability assessments, we host a number of specialist capabilities including:

- High Volume Pumping Unit – this enables us to move large volumes of water in a short space of time, this could be to support incidents such as major fires or flooding.
- Detection Identification and Monitoring teams – at some incidents, it is vital to know if hazardous materials present, where they are, and which materials are involved. This information will enable early, accurate decisions to be taken about the decontamination and/or treatment of involved people, as well as levels of Personal Protective/Respiratory Equipment for responders.
- Mass decontamination - the Mass Decontamination (MD) Capability provides the ability to decontaminate members of the Public that may have been contaminated following the release of a hazardous substance. Each decontamination sector can decontaminate up to 300 people per hour.
- Hydraulic Platform (HP) [Response to insert summary]
- Drones – unmanned aerial systems that improves situation awareness at incidents.

Some of our staff have additional skills including;

- Hazardous Material Advisers (HMA) provide specialist advice in relation to any incident involving a hazardous material, such as chemicals.

- National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILO) are specially trained to provide advice and support to multi-agency partners on our capability and capacity to safely resolve incidents.
- Scientific Advisor provide additional specialist advice in relation to incidents that involve chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials.

Technical Rescue Unit

Our Technical Rescue unit deals with local, regional and national incidents that require additional equipment, training and knowledge. There are three Technical Rescue stations strategically located across the West Midlands to ensure that we have the right staff with the required skills and competencies available to respond 24/7. Many of the skills that the technical rescue teams provide are delivered to recognised standards which require constant maintenance.

This includes:

- Technical Rescue Advisors
- Rope Rescue
- Water rescue and flooding
- Terrorist attacks
- Animal rescue
- Bariatric rescue
- Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

Fire Control

WMFS provides a Control Centre with a reliable mobilising system. Resources will be mobilised using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to support the mobilisation of the nearest appropriate resources. Resources will be mobilised dynamically to ensure a correct level of response.

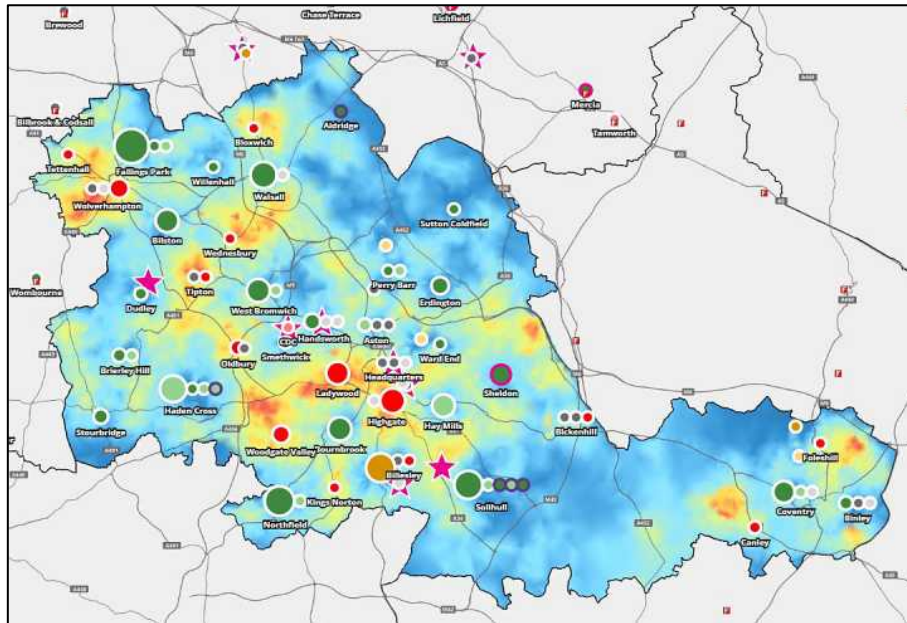
We work collaboratively with other responders and partners to achieve interoperability and intra-operability to effectively respond and assist at incidents. Appropriate resources will be mobilised depending on the incident type, National Resilience Assets and specialist advice will be available via [National Coordination Advisory Framework](#) (NCAF) protocols and Fire Control Action Plans. Arrangements are in place for Emergency Call Management (ECM) and communicating with responding resources.

Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT)

The Dynamic Cover Tool helps us to manage risk on a daily basis by providing a real-time visual aid for Fire Control resource managers to support their decision making around deciding on appropriate positioning of resources to improve emergency cover dynamically. The DCT uses thousands of historical incidents and other data to determine a base layer of risk.

By effectively distributing our resources in relation to risk we can achieve an average median attendance time of under 5 minutes for high-risk incidents. The tool allows us to assess the potential impact of moving a resource before making the decision to move it. The tool

therefore helps us minimise risk, monitor coverage, maintain or improve response times and make efficient and effective use of available resources.



Dynamic Mobilising

Resource requirements to deal with a range of incidents are set out in mobilising policy or national guidance. We recognise that not all incidents will be the same and therefore allow flexibility in what resources we send. Fire Control can dynamically mobilise to increase or reduce the resources attending based on the level of risk following intelligence from the caller or other sources, this supports a proportionate level of response for all incidents.

Last year, we used 999eye 1268 times to help support increased situation awareness and a proportionate response. Fire Control dynamically reduced attendance to incidents on 1252 occasions last year, meaning those resources could remain available for other high-risk incidents or prevention activity. Fire Control also dynamically increased attendance to 659 incidents last year, meaning more resources could get to the incident more quickly. This is important as we know there is a correlation between not only attendance time and survivability, but also damage sustained. In addition to the importance of attendance time, we also know the importance of the sending the right volume of resources to effectively manage the incident and reduce damage sustained.

999eye

999eye enables 999 callers, with compatible mobile devices, to securely send video footage or images of incidents to WMFS Fire Control. The 999eye live footage offers instant 'on-scene eyes' to our operators, helping us assess the situation and to send the appropriate resources.

It works by sending, with the 999 caller's permission, a text message to their smartphone containing a link. Once clicked, a one-use-only live stream is established that allows footage or images to be sent directly to the control room. Last year, 999eye was used over 6,800 times to

Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI)

Our inspection process allows for crews to provide local risk assessments around the hazards, response requirements, safety considerations and operational information. SSRI is one process we adopt to manage operational risk. The SSRI does not manage the prevention or likelihood of an incident but helps us to understand the risks and hazards a site may present and in turn, puts mitigation plans in place to reduce the consequences should an emergency incident occur.

We use intelligence, data analysis, horizon planning and process operational risk information effectively to evidence that we have the ability to, intelligently mobilise dynamically, mobilise a level of response that is relevant to the risk and mitigate consequence.

Provision of Operational Risk Information System (PORIS) is the process we have adopted to generate a Risk Rating during SSRI. This risk rating is an indication of the level of risk a site will present to us in the event of an emergency incident. PORIS splits the risk into six main categories:

- Firefighter.
- Individual/societal.
- Environment.
- Community.
- Heritage.
- Economic/other.

Dependant on how each of these categories is graded during PORIS, an overall Risk Rating is then generated. The risk rating will determine how frequently the site is re-visited.

Technology

We are always seeking to provide intelligent services to our communities through our digitally empowered workforce. We continually enhance and transform services to our communities, underpinning them with innovative and digital solutions, enabling the delivery of our strategy.

Simulated incidents through exercising

WMFS schedule regular exercises to provide an opportunity to test the capability of the organisation, teams and individuals in a controlled environment to achieve Operational Excellence. Simulated incidents ensure that the policies and procedures employed mirror a real incident and provide staff with the opportunity to respond safely, assertively and effectively to emergencies. These exercises range in scale and could include single or multiagency partners.

Our exercises are informed by a number of factors to ensure they are intelligence and risk led, factors include;

- organisational intelligence
- learning from post event analysis;
- community and Site Specific Risk information (SSRI);
- joint work with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF);
- joint working with other Emergency Service partners;
- emerging opportunities;

- new or significant revisions to operational policies and procedures;
- local and/or individual development needs; and
- national, regional and cross border.

Following all exercises, a debrief will take place to highlight learning opportunities to enable us to continually improve.

Transport Engineering Workshops

Transport Engineering Workshops provide daily maintenance and repairs to all Fire Service vehicles and equipment. The is available 24hrs a day, 365 days of the year enabling maximum operational fleet availability to keep our communities safe.

Collaboration

We know that working collaboratively can help effectively manage risk, build resilience and provide an efficient and effective service to our communities. We work with multi-agency partners within the West Midlands Local Resilience Forum, as well as regional and national fire and rescue services. Some examples of our collaborative working include:

- Fire Control 'Buddy' resilience arrangements are in place with a number of UK fire and rescue service control rooms. These arrangements mean that we can redirect calls to another control room if call volume exceed our own call handling capacity.
- 'Operation Willowbeck' is the name for a national call redistribution process that enables an affected fire control to receive support from other control rooms when call volumes exceed their own call handling capacity.
- Section 13 and 16 arrangements are in place with our neighbouring fire and rescue services, which means we will support each other in the event of large-scale incidents.
- The West Midlands Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is a multi-agency partnership that plans and prepares for incidents and emergencies. We are an integral part of the LRF and support all workstreams and sub-groups.
- National Resilience arrangements are in place across fire and rescue services to provide specialist capabilities, personnel and resources which enhance the ability of the sector to respond effectively to large-scale or critical incidents across the UK.

Response – Continual Improvement

Risk Based Crewing

As part of our last community risk management planning cycle, we identified that a large proportion of the incidents we respond to were low risk - for example, relatively minor traffic collisions or outdoor fires. This enabled us to explore a new, more proportionate way of responding and a more flexible way of mobilising to incidents. Innovatively, this enabled staff to select right number of crew and vehicle to send to low-risk incidents based on their knowledge and experience. We call this risk-based crewing (RBC), as it means the incident is resourced appropriately and proportionately, based on risk.

Our new approach was rolled out as part of our business-as-usual operations. As well as allowing us to better match our resources to risk, RBC reduces disruption for our staff, keeps more of our appliances available to respond to high-risk incidents and frees-up time for vital training, prevention activity and protection interventions. Since RBC was introduced, there has been a significant increase in the total number of appliances that are available to respond to incidents across the West Midlands.

Road Traffic Collisions

We identified that Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) have increased over a 3-year period, however, our response to extricating casualties has reduced by approximately 20%. Whilst road incidents are increasing, the majority of RTC incidents that we responded to did not require a rescue. Based on extensive data analysis, we updated the risk category and the resources that are sent to lower risk RTC incidents where we are confident no-one is injured or trapped.

The resources sent to lower risk RTC incidents was changed to support a proportionate level of response. Evaluation of these changes over a 12-month period shows that we are now using our resources more effectively. For almost 70% of low risk RTC incidents, we now effectively dealing with them with one vehicle, whereas previously, we would send at least two vehicles for 65% of RTC incident.

Consultation

It was reassuring to find that in our most recent consultation, you agreed with our assessment of emerging risks. In particular you highlighted the below as risks we should consider;

- Electric Vehicles and charging
- Climate and environmental concerns
- Li-ion battery and storage

As part of our consultation, we also asked you to prioritise a number of sustainability factors. Based on the average ranking, how we prepare for the future scale and frequency of climate related emergencies ranked in the top position. We also found that, the public generally felt unprepared for disruptive events such as energy shortages, mobile network disruption and power outages.

We are doing the following to address your feedback;

- We have completed analysis of 10 years' of weather-related incidents to identify trends and impacts on the brigade and provide a more in depth understanding of climate and environmental change. This will help us to understand long term trends and adapt accordingly.
- To ensure we manage emerging risks and future risks effectively, we are establishing an Emerging Risk Stakeholder group. This group will be formed of key functions from across the organisation and draw on external expertise where required. The group will monitor and respond to emerging risks to ensure we are coordinated and proactive in anticipating, assessing, preparing, and responding to these new risks.
- We have developed operational procedure guidance, risk assessments and training material for batteries, electric vehicles, battery energy storage systems (BESS) and hydrogen. We now have an electric vehicle containment unit which will be used to safely manage road traffic collisions (RTC) involving electric vehicles with damage and potential to enter thermal runaway. This resource will be used within the West Midlands as well as supporting our regional fire and rescue services.
- We will work with our Local Resilience Forum partners to understand how we can support community preparedness and increase resilience to disruptive events.

People – Staffing our Service Delivery Model

Having the right people, with the right skills and behaviours is a vital part in maintaining our Service Delivery Model (SDM). At the core of our work, we aim to deliver the best possible level of service to the people of the West Midlands in order to make them safer. Our staff receive specialist training, personal protective equipment and resources to keep them safe and deliver the best service to the community.

Our strategic approach not only prioritises physical health and safety, but it also nurtures mental and emotional wellbeing. To create a happier and more supportive workplace culture the promotion of health and wellbeing is embedded throughout everything we do. We aim to foster a resilient and positive work environment.

Firefighters face a unique set of challenges and pressures. From demanding physical tasks to witnessing traumatic events, the nature of their work and colleagues that support them, can take a toll on their overall wellbeing. It is crucial we support our staff in maintaining positive mental health, which will effectively enhance their ability to effectively serve and protect our communities.

West Midlands Fire Service is fully committed to meeting the diverse needs of the communities we serve, and we recognise that having an inclusive and diverse workplace is a vital part of achieving this. The business case for a diverse work force at all levels has been long established. Research has shown that teams and organisations with a good level of diversity are more creative, flexible and effective.

We are committed to making sure that equality and diversity is integrated into all areas of the service and risk reduction strategies within our communities. We will ensure that we provide suitable, accessible and effective services and facilities free from unlawful discrimination, prejudice or stereotyping.

People – Continual Improvement

Trainee Firefighter Development Programme

To ensure we are setting our staff up to succeed, and after an internal review, we have extended our Trainee Firefighter Development Programme from 8 weeks to 12 weeks to ensure our firefighters are equipped to meet the needs of society. The increase in duration of the course allows us to spend longer with trainee firefighters understanding and honing the skills required to begin their journey in our communities.

Inclusive Recruitment

Organisations can take steps to encourage applications from underrepresented groups and can undertake activities to prepare potential candidates for selection if a group has been underrepresented in the organisation for at least 2 years – this is called positive action. We have introduced two posts within our People function to ensure a sustained, diverse recruitment pipeline now and into the future. These staff members are responsible for positive action and community outreach, which involves:

- Initiating and managing positive action interventions and identifying new recruitment opportunities.

- Developing targeted recruitment activity to raise awareness of employment opportunities and support potential applicants, providing advice and guidance.
- Building networks of both internal and external partners to support firefighter recruitment.
- Working alongside station personnel to manage and drive attendance at taster days and meet and greet sessions.

Consultation

As part of our consultation, we asked you to prioritise a number of sustainability factors. Honesty, integrity and ethical behaviour was the ranked first most frequently (and finished second on average overall). We are pleased that over 90% of the public either completely or largely trust us.

We know that having a workforce that is representative of the community we serve helps us manage risk and deliver our services more effectively. Having a diverse workforce gives us an opportunity to offer a wide range of skills, ideas, knowledge, and abilities, that will benefit the communities within the West Midlands. When we asked you how we could attract more people from groups that are currently under-represented in our workforce. The top three options you suggested were;

- 'Have a go' taster sessions
- Improved information on the role of a firefighter
- Attendance at job fairs

Alongside this, we also asked you if you thought there were any perceived barriers for people wanting to join the fire service. Most respondents did not think there were any barriers, however of those who did, the most common barrier was the perception of the role of a firefighter. We are doing the following to address your feedback;

- Running 'Firefighter Insight' workshops for women to find out more about the role of a firefighter, fitness requirements and get chance to hear from existing female firefighters.
- We will continue to deliver 'taster sessions' to provide an opportunity to find out more about the role and requirements of a firefighter.
- Increasing our attendance at careers and jobs fairs and will trial hosting our own careers fair.
- We have developed meet and greet sessions for those who are considering the role which will provide an opportunity to find out more about the role of a firefighter.
- We will further develop our relationships with colleges across the West Midlands that run public service courses.
- We are updating the information on our website and 'Become a Firefighter' portal with more information about the role of a firefighter.
- We have created a West Midlands Fire Service Recruitment Facebook page – so we can regularly share updates about the role of a firefighter and recruitment.
- We are developing a Firefighter apprenticeship scheme.
- We are trailing female only fitness sessions.

Other

- **Economic and Social Value**
- **EIA**
- **Legislation**
- **Linked documents/references**