

THE REPORT



Prevention Protection Response

Making West Midlands Safer

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

www.wmfs.net

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INTRODUCTION

Foreword from the Chief Fire Officer

At a time when we face unprecedented financial challenges, it can be easy to forget many of the great things we have accomplished during this past year. Whilst it will be tough to manage the severe budget cuts handed to us in the Comprehensive Spending Review, it is by exhibiting the innovation and skill featured in this report that we will pull through. While we may see a reduction in funding, the public will rightly expect even more of us, and we will need to take an open and flexible approach if we are going to meet their expectations.

Despite the economic downturn, we can take great pride in the reduction in both fire deaths and incidents, in particular property arson. This success comes through a combination of world-class response, proactive prevention and creative protection work, all of which will continue to play a vital role. Our change programme, Building upon Success (BuS), has begun to change the way in which we deliver our services. An example is our change in approach to addressing Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) and the trial of a new AFA vehicle to reduce the number of unnecessary false alarms. The BuS Programme is work in progress and will continue to allow us to improve our quality of service whilst making efficiencies.

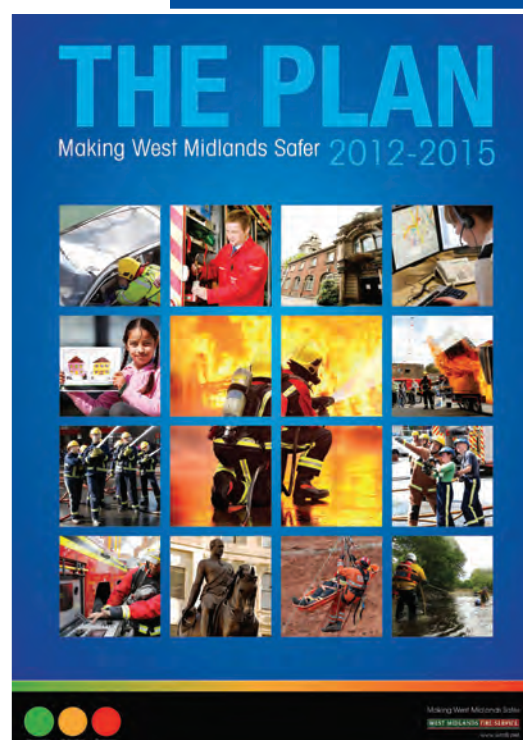
Our achievements go much further than just the excellent performance indicators, to the exceptional individual and team efforts, many of which we recognised at our Aspire awards. There are a great many reasons to feel proud about what we do; be it the efforts of the United Kingdom International Search and Rescue team, who were deployed to both the Christchurch Earthquake and the Japanese Tsunami or our excellent work with young people through the Young Firefighters Association and Safeside.

The next year will present us with an even greater challenge than before and our 'Plan' will guide us on that journey. We know that the staff of West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) possess the grit and determination to succeed. We are committed to making every effort to lobby against these reductions in funding. With your help and support, we are confident this can be achieved.



A handwritten signature in white ink on a blue background.

Vijith Randeniya OBE
Chief Fire Officer
West Midlands Fire Service





John Edwards

John Edwards
**Chair West Midlands
 Fire & Rescue Authority**

INTRODUCTION

Foreword from the Chair of the Authority

WMFS provides a first class service for our communities here in the Black Country, Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull. The amount of Council Tax that we ask people to pay is the lowest of any Metropolitan fire service and the comparisons show that we perform better than the rest. Everything your fire service provides costs each of us less than £1 a week in local tax.

It's not just the blue light emergency response that we provide, but the prevention based activity that we deliver that achieves a safer County for everyone. Our firefighters deliver this community based service in schools, communities and in peoples' homes every day. This is why we have fewer fires, and less deaths and injuries now than ever before. But all of this activity takes time and money. The Government's decision to reduce national cash grants for the fire service by an average of 25% over four years has not been fairly applied. Metropolitan areas like the West Midlands, which have the highest numbers of emergency incidents and vulnerable communities, are facing cuts in our funding that are twice the average figure, while more affluent areas of the country have done very well. If this unfairness continues then our ability to intervene will decrease and the risk to our communities will begin to increase again.

We need a fair financial settlement that reflects our local needs and circumstances and we will continue to put a strong case to Government on this issue. Our representations to Government so far have been based on a strong track record of first-class performance, and this is demonstrated throughout this report. I am personally delighted to see the many great achievements highlighting the individual and collective excellence of our staff. Thanks to the people who work for us, the WMFS is the most effective and efficient in the country and we want to keep it that way.

We are rightly proud of our fire and rescue service; we all want it to be there when we need it and we want to ensure that it continues to produce the fantastic results illustrated in these pages. The Fire Authority is strongly committed to that aim.

PROVISION OF SERVICES AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

WMFS serves a population of approximately 2.6 million people living in a million dwellings. It covers the cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton and the Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull and Walsall. (A detailed map of our community fire stations and fire safety centres can be found on our website www.wmfs.net).

Profile 2011/2012	
Area (in hectares):	91,276
Population:	2,655,200
Dwellings:	1,083,340
Non-domestic premises:	92,056
Fire Stations:	38
Wholetime Uniformed Posts:	1701
Control Staff Posts:	60
Non-Uniformed Posts (full time equivalent):	442
Operational Vehicles:	99

The following table provides an overview of headline numbers in relation to our core services of preventing, protecting and responding in 2011/12.

Operational Responses 2011/2012	
Fires:	16,557
Other Emergency Incidents:	5,925
False Alarms – Good Intent:	3,428
Automatic Detection Systems:	6,405
Malicious:	1,128
Total	33,443

Prevention activity	
Home Safety Checks (HSC):	33,592
HSC at high risk properties:	17,142 (51.03%)
Vulnerable People Cases undertaken	1300

Protection activity	
Fire Safety Inspections:	1314 audits

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The population served by WMFS is made up of the following proportion of ethnicities:-

White – 77%

Asian or Asian British – 14%

Black African/ Caribbean or Black British – 4%

Mixed Origin – 3%

Chinese – 1%

Other – 1%

Statistics taken from the Office of National statistics: June 2009 Experimental Statistics)

PROVISION OF SERVICES AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Each of the seven authorities that make up the West Midlands area has different population demographics including proportions and percentage of age groups. The West Midlands has a greater black and minority ethnic population in comparison to other regions and national levels, which has increased over the last five years.

WMFS is accountable to the public via the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA), made up of 27 Elected Members. This is headed by the Chair of the Fire Authority. WMFS is managed directly by the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and the senior management team.

WMFS detailed in our Corporate Strategy 2011 – 2015 (also known as 'The Plan') our vision of 'Making West Midlands Safer.'



PROVISION OF SERVICES AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

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Our four key priorities are:-

Communities and Partnerships –

We recognise that there are communities and individuals who are more at risk from safety related issues in the home, including fire.

By working with our partners we will tackle a range of issues including healthier living, anti-social behaviour, supporting independent living and safer business premises. This multi-agency approach will produce the best results for members of the communities we serve.

Response –

By making sure we have the right people in the right place at the right time, with the right skills and equipment, we will make a real impact on saving lives and protecting our local community in an emergency. We are able to plan and allocate resources to ensure we are managing risk effectively.

People –

We are an organisation that embraces diversity through our staff, the way we engage with the public, and how we build and deliver our services. By understanding and acknowledging individual difference, we can create environments and deliver services that include everybody.

Our people trust and respect each other and those we serve.

Value for Money –

We are committed to providing a high quality, Value for Money (VFM) service and already have a sustained track record of delivering service improvements. We recognise the need to place a greater emphasis on VFM if we are to respond to external influences and the challenges we face in delivering the high quality services expected by our communities with less resources.

The many examples in this document demonstrate our commitment to these priorities.

The Plan can be accessed via our website – www.wmfs.net. 'The Plan' continues to focus on the four priorities enabling the organisation to achieve our goals of:-

- Preventing fires and other emergencies by community involvement and education
- Protecting property and people by providing advice and enforcing appropriate legislation
- Providing an effective Emergency Response Service when needed

SUCCESSES OVER THE LAST YEAR



WMFS has worked hard over the past twelve months to ensure the reduction of risk to its communities on a local and conurbation basis.

The Plan 2011-2015 details the key outcomes of the Service. Some examples of success against these outcomes are highlighted below through the improvements we see in our key performance indicators, further examples are detailed throughout this document.

We have seen particular improvements in the following areas:

Accidental fires in dwellings have decreased by 6.1% (116 fires) in 2011/2012 compared to 2010/2011. Our performance in this area has improved by attending events during fire and road safety week. Firefighters discussed with members of the public the simple measures which can be taken to reduce the risk of accidental fires in the home and referred them, where appropriate on for a Home Safety Check.

Accidental fires in non-domestic premises has seen a decrease of 3.1% during 2011/2012 compared to 2010/2011. Work continues to utilise the commercial hot strike process to remind businesses of their responsibilities under the Fire Safety Order. A communications leaflet has been developed to assist in this process, highlighting fires in electrical supply and consumer units.

In 2011/12 WMFS attended 361 **arson fires in dwellings** which is a reduction of 10.6% on 2010/2011 (43 incidents). **Arson vehicle fires** continue

to decline with a 17.5% reduction on the previous financial year (152 incidents). In 2003 the Arson Task Force – a partnership between West Midlands Fire and Police was established having being tasked by Government to reduce levels of arson across the region. The reductions have been achieved thanks to a number of partnership collaborations and innovative ways of working. WMFS has worked with all seven local authorities in the West Midlands and the police to ensure that abandoned vehicles are towed away much quicker than before, that fly tipping is reduced and action

SUCCESSES OVER THE LAST YEAR

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taken against perpetrators; and that local residents and businesses do not put their rubbish out before collection day.

There has been a reduction of 18.9% in the number of **injuries from accidental fires in dwellings**; by

constantly targeting the most vulnerable people in our communities we recognise that we will have a greater impact on injuries. It is not possible to completely remove the risk of fire for vulnerable people. However, Home Safety Checks, including

the advice given and equipment fitted will significantly reduce this risk and lead to a reduction in deaths and injuries.



Vij Randeniya, CFO said: "I am delighted that these projects have been recognised for their inspirational value. We are committed to making the West Midlands safer and the work we do with individuals and communities across the region plays a significant part in us achieving that aim."

Seb Coe, Chair, London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympics Games said: "We want to use the power of the Games to inspire change. I congratulate everyone involved at the West Midlands Fire Service in securing the London 2012 Inspire award and wish you every success with your work."



COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

West Midlands Fire Service receives prestigious London 2012 Inspire award

The WMFS has been awarded the prestigious 'London 2012 Inspire award' - the accolade associated with the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which recognises exceptional and innovative projects, that engage young people in the local community.

The Inspire programme is designed to offer an opportunity for everyone to be a part of the London 2012 Games through sport participation, education, volunteering and business opportunities. The award is only given to projects which are considered exceptional, inspirational and which aim to build a local legacy using the spirit and values of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Two projects run by WMFS received the award - The Young Firefighters Association Sports project and One Body One Life project.

The Young Firefighters Association is open to young people aged 11 – 17 and runs from 11 community fire stations in the West Midlands area. Youngsters in the scheme are required to take part in fire and rescue service training drills where they learn about personal responsibility, team work and the importance of good communication.

One Body One Life is a family focused intervention co-ordinated by Coventry City Council. The project is aimed at improving health and well being through education and activity. The intervention is held over a six week period and includes advice on diet,

health, fitness and lifestyle choices. The project accommodates people of all ages with current members ranging from age 3 – 80 years.

Saleha Williams, Head of the London 2012 Inspire Programme said: "I am proud that with the help of the WMFS, we are delivering our vision to use the power of the Olympic and Paralympic Games to engage, educate and motivate young people to inspire change, not just in London, but here, in the heart of England."

COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

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Safety Education, Youth and Volunteering

Safeside

Is a state of the art, scenario based, experiential learning centre that provides an innovative, interactive and enjoyable learning experience, inspiring visitors to think and act safely. The overall visitor numbers reduced in 2011/12, from 11,236 the previous year to 9,914, following the withdrawal of local authority priority neighbourhood funding.

	Visitor Numbers	
Scheme	2010/11	2011/12
Junior Citizen	9255	7474
Lifeskills / NGAGE	1148	1775
Safeside Special Needs	405	616
Safestart (under 5's)	428	49
Total Visitors	11236	9914

In the current climate, the challenge remains how to attract the most vulnerable groups to the centre when they are the least able to afford the cost of attending. With this in mind we are focusing on developing new partnerships and initiatives.

The programme which saw the largest increase in numbers was Lifeskills/NGAGE, our Key Stage 3 programme, which saw an increase of over 50%. The

increase was largely due to opening up NGAGE to youth groups in out-of-school hours. Lifeskills includes dramatised muggings, anti-social behaviour, and court appearances that bring the consequences of crime to life, courtesy of students from Birmingham School of Acting, where the Safeside module is part of a community theatre course.

The Safeside Special Needs programme is

delivered by WMFS Special Educational Needs (SEN) Educators to both children and adult groups. It has seen a steady increase in numbers from 405 in 2010/11 to 616 in 2011/12.

Feedback from those who visit continues to be extremely positive. This helps to spread a positive message and ensures that schools who attend return with new pupils.



Find out more

For details of all our programmes please visit www.safeside.org.uk or phone 0121 380 6429. You can also follow @safesidecentre on Twitter, or on Facebook at facebook.com/safeside.wmfs

Safety Education, Youth and Volunteering

In Schools Education

A significant amount of fire safety education also takes place within schools.

The Key Stage 2 programme continues to be delivered by all our firefighters to year 5 pupils in nearly every school within the West Midlands (1,386 classes last year, equating to around 40,000 children).

The Great Fire Safety Pack based on the Great Fire of London continues to be developed and

piloted in Year 2 classes throughout the WMFS area, and at Foundation Stage, the Big Fire Engine Activity boxes continue to be popular within Nursery and Reception classes, delivering fundamental fire safety messages.

Key Stage 3/4 'Your Choice' Packages continue to be delivered by a total of 24 Key

Stage 3-4 Educators, firefighters and support staff. These Educators carry out work in targeted secondary schools, so meeting the specific needs of these areas. 18,720 young people did 'Your Choice on the Road'. 17,650 did other 'Your Choice' packages in 2011/12.



COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

School Children Triumph in Quiz Final

Pupils from eight schools across the West Midlands showed off their fire and community safety knowledge at the final of the WMFS Schools Quiz 2011, with Allens Croft Primary School, Kings Heath, Birmingham, crowned as this year's champions.

It was a close-fought contest, with strong performances from all of the finalists, but Allens Croft Primary School - representing the Birmingham South Command Area - took the top spot, with joint second place going to Richard Lee Primary School from Coventry and St Chads Primary School from Dudley. Woodthorne Primary, Wolverhampton and Whetstone Field from Walsall, shared third place.

The schools that won their local heats and competed in the Grand Final were:

- Allens Croft Primary School – Birmingham South
- Richard Lee Primary School – Coventry
- St Chads Primary School – Dudley
- Woodthorne Primary School – Wolverhampton
- Whetstone Field Primary – Walsall
- Bordesley Green Primary School – Birmingham North

- Blackheath Primary School – Sandwell
- Knowle School - Solihull

Teachers, families and friends all attended the final to cheer on the teams, with Lord Mayors from across the conurbation, the Chairman of WMFRA Councillor John Edwards, and CFO Vij Randeniya, also there to see the pupils in action.

Quizmistress Sam Burton said: "It was a good spirited battle from start to finish, with only a few points separating all three places. We update and add new questions each year, but the knowledge and understanding demonstrated by the children was amazing."

"Everyone from WMFS would like to congratulate the winners, and also say 'very well done' to everyone else who took part."



COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

"F.I.R.E." Project helps youngsters to learn life skills and fire dangers

Eleven youngsters from Holly Hall School in Dudley have been taking part in a special fire education programme with the aim of promoting team building and boosting their individual self esteem, as well as giving them the chance to learn more about fire safety.

The week-long Fire Intervention Reparation and Education (FIRE) Programme is run by staff from the Youth Services' Team and firefighters at WMFS and includes elements of the history of the fire service, the science of fire, as well as practical activities using hoses and ladders to help youngsters to learn

together and support each other.

The week culminates in the young people putting on a full display of all the skills they have learned, in front of their friends, families and invited guests, as part of a Fire Service Pass-out Parade at which the certificates of attendance and completion will be presented. The course

also carries with it accredited first aid and Open College Network qualifications.

The Passing Out Parade took place at Dudley Community Fire Station. The Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Michael Evans, watched the demonstrations and presented the certificates.



COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Boot camp hosted by Coventry fire station proves a success

Firefighters and staff at Coventry fire station have helped 14 youngsters who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to gain valuable work experience at a two week boot camp.

The majority of the sessions, which included practical techniques in hands on fire fighting to CV writing workshops, were hosted by WMFS at its Coventry and Foleshill community fire stations.

Working in partnership with Whitefriars Housing, Midland

Heart and Orbit Heart of England who all jointly funded the project, the bootcamp sessions offered the ultimate prize of six paid workplace apprenticeships to the most successful candidates.

A number of public, charitable and voluntary sector agencies took

part in the programme including Coventry City Council Entry to Employment Team, Open Door Employment Programme, The Cook and Eat Well Programme, the Youth Offending Service and West Midlands Police.

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Andrea Simmonds, WMFS' Local Area Liaison Officer for the Coventry area said, "Our involvement in this bootcamp programme demonstrates our ongoing commitment to the communities we serve. Many people think the fire service just respond to fires and road traffic collisions and that isn't the case – we do so much more.

"Community safety is at the very heart of our agenda and engaging youngsters who are most likely to become involved in criminal activity – such as arson – is a real priority for us".



Vulnerable People – and West Midlands Fire Service

The Department of Health defines a vulnerable person as someone who may be in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability and also may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against physical harm or exploitation.

It has been identified that vulnerable people are at significantly higher risk of fire and we are therefore dedicating more resources towards these at-risk groups to provide appropriate and effective interventions in order to deliver improved safety. Working with partner agencies, carers and other stakeholders WMFS have developed referral systems to identify those who may require our service.

Specially trained members of staff carry out visits, jointly with partners to assess the person's needs, increase their awareness of fire and safety hazards in their home, ensure individuals develop an escape plan and issue appropriate protective equipment.

In the last 12 months approximately 1300

vulnerable person cases have been referred to WMFS. These have all been dealt with by a range of responses sometimes a simple signposting to other partner agencies has sufficed, in some cases providing extra safety equipment and in particularly difficult and complex cases we have become involved in Serious Incident Reviews and Safeguarding Boards.

Typical examples of cases that we have dealt with are:

- An individual had a fire at his flat, involving the preparation of fried food when under the influence of alcohol. The gentleman was an alcoholic and was known to a number of agencies. Although smoke alarms were fitted in his property,

when a fire was started by cooking utensils being left unattended, the alarm did not wake him due to his drunken state. It was clear that unless action was taken a fatality in the future was a real possibility. Working with social services we were able to provide a deep fat fryer and fire resistant bedding and also provide him with a hearing-impaired alarm which he would be unlikely to be able to sleep through.

- A middle aged woman was identified to us as her property was almost totally filled with clothes, newspapers and magazines. This was a very dangerous situation for a number of reasons. There was a significant fire risk as all of the hoarded items were highly flammable



COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

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and the gas cooker had piles all around it. In addition entry to and exit from the property was almost impossible compromising her safety but also putting firefighters attending an incident at severe risk. Neighbouring properties were clearly also in danger of being affected if there was a fire at the property in question. Rodents were also evident throughout

the property posing a significant health and safety risk. We worked with the local authority housing department, environmental health and social services to give advice and guidance and the local authority assisted by providing some resources. The majority of the hoarded items were cleared and a number of outstanding repairs which had been

put on hold due to the state of the property were carried out.

In both of the above cases and many hundreds of others within the West Midlands the lives of vulnerable people have been enhanced by our actions and their safety has been significantly improved.



West Midlands Fire Service achieves Carbon Trust Standard

WMFS has been awarded the Carbon Trust Standard. The accolade recognises WMFS' long-standing commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and protecting the environment.

To secure the accolade, the organisation had to demonstrate that it met strict criteria laid down by the Carbon Trust. This included measuring energy, gas and fuel consumption, reducing its carbon footprint and providing evidence to demonstrate that it was managing carbon in an appropriate manner through:- effective governance procedures, accurate carbon accounting and carbon management programmes.

Throughout the period of assessment by the Carbon Trust (April 2008 – March 2011), WMFS has been able to provide evidence of a clear reduction in carbon emissions of 17% and that it has the structures and mechanisms in place to deliver on target for further reductions.

In practice, this means that WMFS has developed and put in place an environmental strategy which transcends the

whole organisation. The strategy, which is endorsed at the highest level by the CFO, continues to evolve and sets out the year-on-year targets to reduce carbon emissions and how to achieve them. It also documents the range of initiatives and schemes that are operating to encourage behavioural changes among employees and stakeholders in order to protect the environment.

WMFS' Safety Health



COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

West Midlands Fire Service achieves Carbon Trust Standard

and Environment (SHE) team delivers appropriate training to staff to facilitate such commitments and many community fire stations and sites have their own 'environmental champions'.

From the procurement of fuel efficient vehicles and recycled paper, to installing insulation, double glazing and photovoltaic solar panels on WMFS owned

sites, the commitment to protecting the environment is a major strategic aim.

Whether turning computers off when they are not in use, participating in the car share journey to work scheme or borrowing a bike from the cycle pool, everyone has a contribution to make. Such practices are encouraged in the community too, with

home safety checks also including advice on environmental best practice.

Vij Randeniya, West Midlands CFO and Elaine Debenham, SHE team manager, were also officially recognised recently as 'Green Leaders' by the organisation Sustainability West Midlands.

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Dave Walton, Acting Assistant Chief Fire Office, said "Gaining The Carbon Trust Standard means that our efforts in reducing carbon emissions have been independently verified and publicly recognised. It also shows that we are committed to making future reductions. In the long term, the taxpayer should also benefit, thanks to comparatively lower energy bills. All of our stakeholders should be proud of the achievement. With the environmental credentials of the organisation publicly recognised, WMFS can now make use of the Carbon Trust logo. The award can only add strength to a long established, trusted and progressive organisation."





RESPONSE

International Search and Rescue Team Hailed Local Heroes

WMFS' International Search and Rescue Team has been awarded a prestigious 'Local Heroes' award from the Birmingham Mail.

The team of 24 Firefighters and three Information Communication Technology (ICT) experts respond to international emergencies and disasters across the globe, putting their own lives at risk to help save others.

During 2011 the team has been deployed to New Zealand and Japan to deal with the aftermath of earthquakes and a tsunami in which thousands of people tragically lost their lives.

The team, which was first established in 1991, is registered with the United Nations and uses specialist equipment to break through concrete and elevate sections of collapsed buildings to enable search crews and specialist search and rescue dogs to locate survivors.

They provide assistance all over the world and are ready to go whenever they receive a call. Crew Commander Pete Shepherd said, "We feel really privileged to

be part of the team and are both shocked and delighted to receive this award."

Vij Randeniya, CFO, said "I am delighted that the ISAR team has been recognised for the outstanding contribution they make, not only in the West Midlands, but world-wide.

"I strive for the very best across the fire service and this award is testament to the fact that we have some of the most highly skilled Firefighters in the world."



Orchard Retail Park 15 Pump Fire

At 04:48 on the morning of 6 October 2011, more than 75 firefighters (15 fire engines) with supporting crews and specialist appliances, including two hydraulic platforms, were in attendance at the scene of a large fire at the Orchard Retail Park, London Road in Coventry.

A number of retail units on the single-storey site collectively occupied a space measuring approximately 100 by 150 metres; most were of traditional brick construction with metal roofing.

Two large shop/rental units - Dunelm Mill and Dreams – were destroyed by fire, with Dunelm suffering a partial collapse.

Neighbouring retail units, Currys, PC World, and Carpetright also suffered 10 per cent smoke damage.

Together with 15 fire engines and two hydraulic platforms at the incident, resources included 17 firefighters in breathing apparatus, deploying eight jets. Six fire engines were used to ensure an

adequate water supply and thermal imaging cameras were used in order to detect and prevent further fire spread. The skills of WMFS firefighters prevented greater loss to stock and livelihood.

Speaking at the scene of the incident, the CFO for the West Midlands said: “At a time when we face unprecedented cuts in our budget from central government, it is going to become increasingly difficult for us to respond to such large-scale incidents like this in this way.”

Currently there is no compulsion for organisations to fit fire sprinklers in business premises and in what was a resource hungry incident, senior officers stressed that sprinklers

could so easily have prevented such severe fire damage.



Hazardous materials

In addition to responding to fires, we also attend many other emergencies, such as collisions on the roads and rescuing people from floodwater. These incidents are known as 'Special Services' and our response to dealing with incidents involving hazardous materials (hazmats) forms a significant part of this work.



Hazardous materials incidents can occur for many different reasons, for example a fire may damage containers of chemicals leading to their release or a vehicle collision could damage a tanker spilling chemicals on the roadway.

WMFS has an additional capability for dealing with hazmats incidents, provided through the Government's National Resilience programme. This employs sophisticated technology to help detect, identify and monitor the presence of chemical and radiological hazards. These resources are used at a range of incidents to help ensure the safety of the public and to reduce harm to the environment.

These resources are used at a huge variety of incidents, for example:

- A house had been bought by a property developer who found containers of chemicals when clearing the contents of the property. Investigations conducted by the Detection, Identification & Monitoring team were able to determine that the substances were used in the manufacture of fireworks and firearms ammunition. These dated back many years to a legitimate business that had been conducted from the property and a detailed inventory of the explosives present was handed over to Army explosive ordnance teams for safe disposal.
- A fire appliance crew reported the presence of a large

quantity of a substance that could be used as a component of improvised explosives in a house following an unrelated incident. Investigations showed that the substance was not what it first appeared and presented no danger. This enabled early resolution of the incident that would previously have required laboratory analysis that would have taken several days.

- Following the discovery of a range of chemicals in suspicious circumstances in a hotel room, analysis at the scene was able to determine that there was no malicious chemical threat. The chemicals had been used in an attempt to clean dye from bank notes that had been stolen in a robbery.

Printing House Street, Fire in 9 Storey Building

Just before 13:45 on the afternoon of 5 October 2011, Fire Control received reports of a fire at the old Birmingham Post and Mail building at Printing House Street, Birmingham City Centre.

Two fire crews from Highgate and Aston stations quickly arrived on the scene and discovered a ruptured gas main within the basement area of a nine-storey premises – with four stories above ground level, and five below – undergoing demolition. A number of propane gas cylinders were also found.

Working with officers from West Midlands Police, crews erected appropriate safety

cordons and buildings nearby were evacuated as a precaution.

Gas engineers were requested to attend in order to isolate the supply and fire crews were also able to determine that associated gasses were burned off.

Amid reports of one casualty suffering from the effects of smoke inhalation an ambulance was also requested to attend.

Four fire crews worked extremely effectively throughout the afternoon to extinguish the blaze and cool the propane gas cylinders using jets.

Group Commander Pete Millane said: “Crews worked well to limit the spread of fire even though the gas main generated a severe flame which has damaged some of the concrete structure in the area affected.”



PEOPLE

West Midlands Fire Service remembers 9/11 victims

Firefighters and staff from WMFS were involved in a range of activities and events to mark the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 disaster.



Firefighters from Coventry Green Watch were actively involved in designing a commemorative t-shirt to mark the anniversary date and remember those who lost their lives.

Crews on duty at Coventry stations and Coventry Central Young Firefighters also marked the anniversary by observing a specific period of silence, attributing one second of silence for each member of the FDNY who lost their life on 9/11.

In a separate event, six firefighters from

stations across the West Midlands flew to New York to take part in the 'Tunnel to Towers' run. The run is set up by the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation in New York, established in memory of Stephen, who lost his life at Ground Zero.

Stephen had just finished a night shift and had left his station when he heard the news of the first plane hitting the twin towers. Voluntarily returning to duty and with vehicle access to the incident site closed, he abandoned his car and ran the remaining 5 kilometres in full fire kit to the incident scene at Ground Zero.

The popular run which follows the same route that Stephen took, has now become an annual event and in excess of 20,000 competitors from around the world took part including 80

firefighters from Fire and Rescue Services' around the UK.

Vij Randeniya, West Midlands' CFO, also headed a contingent of WMFS staff at the firefighters annual Service of Remembrance at St. Paul's cathedral in London on Sunday 11th September.

Speaking about the events, Vij said: "Several of my officers, past and present, had friends who died as a result of the dreadful events of 9/11 in 2001 and as fellow professional firefighters, they can relate to some of the dreadful conditions that their US contemporaries must have faced. The camaraderie among firefighters across the world is unique and the events that marked the 10th anniversary, give colleagues the opportunity to formally pay their respects."

West Midlands Firefighter receives MBE in New Year Honours List

Watch Commander Rudy Parkes has been awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List 2012.

Rudy, who has served with WMFS for 28 years and is a member of the International Search and Rescue team (ISAR) was recommended for the award by CFO, Vij Randeniya who said "Rudy is an extremely enthusiastic and energetic person whose work ethic is unquestionable.

"He is a credit to WMFS and an excellent ambassador for both our Brigade and the whole of the British Fire Service".

In addition to his role as a Firefighter, Rudy has worked tirelessly for over 20 years for the Romanian charity project, which focuses on supporting the forgotten children of Siret. He has organised countless fundraising

events and undertaken 50 trips overseas to plan and co-ordinate the project's volunteer programme.

Closer to home, Rudy has raised thousands of pounds for good causes including the renal unit of Birmingham Children's Hospital, CRAB (Cancer Research Around Birmingham), Cancer Research UK and the Bobby Moore Fund.

His commitment and determination to helping those less fortunate than himself has reaped financial reward for the many charities he supports.

Rudy is an key member of the WMFS' UK International Search and Rescue Team and has been deployed from the UK to assist in

rescues following the earthquakes in Turkey, Haiti and Japan.

Adding further praise, the CFO said, "His selflessness and willingness to go out of his way to help others is quite astonishing and inspirational. He is such a warm and genuine person, a true modern day hero".

On hearing he was to receive the award, Rudy said "I am in total shock!"

"This award is for everyone who has worked alongside me over the years and helped me to achieve my goals. My aim in life is to make those less fortunate than me smile and seeing that happen is just magic".



PEOPLE

Long Service Good Conduct Medals awarded

WMFS has honoured staff that have completed 20 and 30 years of exemplary service at three separate events held during the year. Long Service Good Conduct medals and awards were presented to uniformed and non-uniformed staff during ceremonies held at WMFS headquarters.



Members of the public and staff honoured at awards ceremony

Members of the public and staff from WMFS have been honoured for selfless acts of courage and bravery at a prestigious awards ceremony held in December.

More than 80 guests joined recipients at the Achievement and Recognition Awards ceremony and dinner held at St Martins Church in the Bullring, Birmingham. All awards are endorsed and presented by CFO Vij Randeniya.

Each of the award categories recognises a particular aspect of professionalism, courage or bravery.

These are:

The Chief Fire Officer's Commendation, the

Chief Fire Officer's Meritorious Action Award, the Chief Fire Officer's Certificate of Congratulations, the Chief Fire Officer's Certificate of Appreciation and the Chief Fire Officer's Recognition Award.

Vij Randeniya, Chief Fire Officer said: "I believe that these awards represent the spirit of the work of the fire service. They recognise what we do as modern professional firefighters and the knowledge that

we share with members of the community in order to make the West Midlands safer.

"Quite rightly they also recognise acts of selfless courage and bravery by members of the public who have shown little regard for their own safety in order to save others. All recipients thoroughly deserve their awards and I am proud to endorse them and everything they stand for."



PEOPLE

Members of the public and staff honoured at awards ceremony

Chief Fire Officer's Commendation:

This is the premier brigade award and is presented to personnel for displaying exemplary devotion to duty in situations above and beyond their normal duties in an effort to save people in extreme danger.

Chief Fire Officer's Meritorious Action Award:

This is presented to members of the public who have acted in a courageous manner to assist someone in danger. The nominees in this category often have no emergency life saving skills and selflessly put

themselves in danger to save a life.

Chief Fire Officer's Certificate of Congratulations:

This is presented to Firefighters or Fire Control personnel for displaying professional skills or excellence in teamwork whilst dealing with an emergency incident.

Chief Fire Officer's Certificate of Appreciation:

This category is open to both Fire Service personnel and members of the public and is awarded for displays of courage or professionalism, above

and beyond their normal duties, for the benefit of others.

Chief Fire Officer's Recognition Award:

This award is to recognise and praise work and achievements of individuals, both uniformed and non uniformed from within the Brigade for efforts in excess of that which is normally expected as part of that individual's role and that has directly contributed to improving the effectiveness of the Brigade.

For a full list of the recipients, please look on our website by clicking [here](#).



Members of the public and staff honoured at awards ceremony





PEOPLE

West Midlands Fire Service helps develop new emergency service degree courses

WMFS is one of the region's leading emergency services to have played a role in the development of two new innovative degree courses which were officially launched in February 2012 by the University of Wolverhampton.

Following the launch of the BSc Fire and Rescue course in September 2011, Firefighters and senior officers from WMFS have continued to share their knowledge and expertise with academics and professionals which has culminated in the development of two new higher degrees, an MSc Emergency Planning, Resilience and Response and a unique Postgraduate Certificate in the Management of Passenger Transport Emergency Incidents.

The two qualifications are designed for people working in the emergency services,

transport sector and local authorities, or those seeking careers in these areas, and will be delivered by the University's School of Health and Wellbeing from April 2012.

Vij Randeniya, CFO at WMFS, attended a special launch event at the University's Science Park Technology Centre. He was joined by Chief Officers from other blue light services across the region who have also made a significant contribution to the course.

Speaking about the course, Vij added, "I am delighted to be

working in partnership with Wolverhampton University and to see the commitment they have shown to developing professional qualifications within the emergency services field.

The modern day pressures of effectively planning and responding to a wide range of civil incidents and emergencies demonstrates the need for a highly skilled workforce, and I am confident that these degree courses will play a vital role in shaping the emergency services personnel of the future".



PEOPLE

West Midlands Fire Service in Double Award Win

WMFS' ICT section is celebrating after a double award win at the National Gazetteer Exemplar Awards.

The two awards were scooped up by the team in recognition of the excellent technology they created, known as "Chimp", which provides vital data to Firefighters as they arrive on the scene at emergency incidents.

By utilising mapping data supplied by key

organisations such as local authorities, the ICT team has developed a sophisticated system which highlights potential risks associated with buildings and premises in the vicinity of emergency incidents.

Whilst similar information systems

are in place at fire and rescue services across the country, it is an honour that the technology in place at WMFS has been recognised as being the very best".

Preith Shergill, Equality and Diversity Manager for WMFS said:

“Over the last three years, our employees have demonstrated that through effective leadership, communication and engagement we can deliver a positive and substantial change in organisational culture whilst at the same time improving our business performance.”

The award judges noted that the “targeted and innovative strategy”, underpinned by strong and clearly defined business case had “ultimately saved lives.”

PEOPLE

West Midlands Fire Service scoops top equality management award

WMFS has won a top award for change management at the prestigious People Management awards run by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).



WMFS recognised that change in its internal culture was required to deliver better organisational outcomes and as a result, made fundamental changes in its approach to equality and diversity.

A number of steps have been taken in order to promote the core values of the organisation.

This includes an International Women’s Day (IWD) conference and a series of events marking Black history month. Of the 120 people who attended the first IWD conference, which focused on personal development through shared experiences and a series of practical workshops,

98 per cent said the conference exceeded their expectations.

Conferences on gender equality, as well as multi-faith events have become popular firm fixtures in the Services calendar and are proactively supported by the management team.

PEOPLE

Community engagement has been strengthened too, with an ongoing series of initiatives, educational programmes and events, designed to raise awareness of the organisation and promote fire safety, especially amongst

high-risk groups. Notable successes include tailored safety messages on food packaging, targeted at communities identified as being at high risk from fire.

The CIPD accolade, which was presented at

a formal ceremony in London recognises and rewards WMFS for its achievements in creating a diverse workforce which is now more representative of the communities it serves.

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VALUE FOR MONEY

Building upon Success

Metropolitan Brigades were hit disproportionately hard in the first two years (2011 - 2013) of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2011 - 2015.

In 2011/12 WMFS made savings of £7.7m and is working hard towards achieving further efficiency savings of £2.5m for 2012/13. Despite these reductions we have been able to put in place efficiencies and innovations to save money while protecting frontline services.

However, if the central government imposes a similar cut when the next settlement is announced in December 2012 for the following years of the settlement,

we may be forced to make savings of up to £30m by 2015.

In 2010 we launched the BuS Programme which was set up to manage the complex changes needed to transform the Service with less financial resources.

The programme was established to seek greater value for money in services due to reduction in funding and was established specifically to:

- Deliver a stepped change in performance by improving service delivery and capacity.
- Deliver savings.
- Develop new ways of working.

The outcomes that arise from the programme will include:

- Defining tolerable levels of risk and putting in place arrangements to deliver agreed levels of performance.
- Safer and more effective firefighters.



Building upon
Success

Building upon Success

- Improved support for those who work on the front-line.
- Greater value for money including the delivery of a balanced budget.
- The further development of a culture that supports innovation and personal accountability at all levels.
- The delivery of services on behalf of others or through others.

The programme has comprised of a number

of projects and work streams aimed at delivering improvements in both operational and support areas across the Service as well as seeking opportunities to generate income. Throughout the Programme the senior management team have continued to lobby for a fairer settlement for years 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The Programme has operated the principles set out in a Strategic Intent document. Key to enabling the vision

and rapidly develop and enhance our current capabilities include:

- Personal accountability and responsibility by all staff, encompassing prevention, protection and response.
- Dynamic leadership with freedom to exercise judgement.
- A willingness to be bold with an imaginative approach across all departments, including exploiting the external market, commercial and sponsorship opportunities.



VALUE FOR MONEY

Building upon Success

We have continued to freeze recruitment of staff and have introduced more innovative ways of crewing fire appliances without impacting the service to the public. This has enabled us to reduce the size of our workforce without resorting to redundancy amongst frontline firefighters in 2011/12. We continue to manage sick absence levels which have dropped significantly over the last five years and are now amongst the best performing in the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

Faced with large reductions on budgets we continue to make every effort to make savings elsewhere, minimising the impact on frontline provision. More has been cut out of management costs and support functions and efficiencies have been found in procurement and building infrastructure. Functions such as Human Resources, Information, Communication and Technology, Finance and Workshops are continually being reviewed and streamlined.

The Service continues to consider outsourcing or collaborate with local and regional partners. An example of this is work that is currently underway to share Fire Control services with Staffordshire.

We have also:

- Introduced more robust arrangements to challenge calls to respond to for Automatic Fire Alarms unless a fire is confirmed. This has resulted in a reduction of approximately 35% of calls attended compared with a similar period in the previous 12 months.



Building upon Success

- Sent smaller response units to lower risk secondary fires with different response times and continue to trial more innovative response options.
- Been tougher on responding to non emergency calls and in some instances introduced charging for callouts such as lock-outs or domestic flooding.
- Introduced Dual Crewing on all specialist appliances, such as Hydraulic Platforms

(HP) and Prime Movers (PMs). This enables our firefighters to work across a range of vehicles and introduces greater flexibility when using our resources without impacting on our response capability.

- Reduced the number of Fire Safety Inspecting Officers by working more efficiently. We continue to meet our legal and statutory duties to support businesses with reducing the risk of fire and enforcing the Regulatory Reform Order when required to do so.

We continue to look at new and different ways of working by diversifying the fleet, the range and types of vehicles and equipment as well as the skills and the number of people that we sent to incidents. Prevention continues to be a priority area and as part of our BuS Programme we have introduced more efficient arrangements for supporting our prevention based activity.



VALUE FOR MONEY

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham Reducing False Alarm Equipment Activation, Reducing Costs!

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham is the city's new acute hospital for 70 years and has 30 operating theatres.



This new hospital was opened in phases, the first being in June 2010. Following the 2nd phase of the move in November 2010, a sharp increase in the number of False Alarm Equipment calls was identified initiating an

in depth look at the possible causes.

Issues identified were persons activating fire alarms mistakenly, little knowledge of the new site; and management of the building changing hands resulting in problems with fire alarm activation procedures.

The objectives of this exercise were to:

- Reduce the numbers of Automatic Fire Alarms primarily caused by mistaken actuation of manual call points
- Ensure that crews had the necessary site information
- Monitor the management of fire alarm activations and resulting response by the Fire Service

As part of our approach manual fire alarm call point covers and signs were fitted, extra training and education

was provided to staff to prevent actuations. Appropriate information and communications of procedures to Operational Crews, Fire Control, Communications and Data Management also took place.

This resulted in alarm calls due to call point activation decreasing from:

- 17 in November/ December 2010, to
- 5 during January/ February 2011 and
- On average 1 per month April -September 2011.

The possible extra cost if no intervention took place and turnouts remained at the November/December level, would have been approximately £85 k for months January-September 2011.

OUR PERFORMANCE

For the financial year 2011/12 the Audit Commission has provided independent assurance to our community that we use our budget in the right way and provide value for money.

Our financial and governance statements are an important means by which we account for our stewardship of public funds. The auditor has issued an 'unqualified' opinion, meaning we have followed accounting rules appropriately and our financial statements accurately represent our financial position.

We have also received an unqualified conclusion for our value for money arrangements stating we have proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of our resources.

More detailed information regarding the work undertaken by the Audit Commission is contained within our Annual Governance Report and Audit Letter, which is available on our Internet site at www.wmfs.net



OUR PERFORMANCE

Health and Safety



WMFS is committed to achieving high standards of health and safety and compliance with health and safety law and regulations. It is concerned for the health and safety of its employees and others who may be affected by its activities, e.g. public, visitors and contractors.

Attending fires and other emergency incidents is a risky occupation and WMFS has many safe system of work in place, supported by training and personal protective equipment (PPE), which minimises the risks to Firefighters and other staff who attend.

Safe systems of work are also in place for non-uniformed employees, visitors and contractors.

Our Annual Health & Safety Performance Report 2011/2012 includes the following:

- Supporting employees to enable them to achieve excellent health and safety at work
- Enabling activities to take place with suitable and sensible controls proportionate to the risk
- Taking a sensible common sense approach to health and safety
- Raising awareness to improve our safety culture and performance

Annual Health & Safety Performance Report 2011/2012 the full document can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

Our Annual Environmental

Performance Report 2011/2012 includes the following:

- Our commitment to the environment and climate change
- Becoming more energy efficient
- Raising environmental awareness
- Improving biodiversity
- Reducing our carbon emissions
- Reducing our waste
- Greening transport
- Adapting operationally for climate change

The full documents can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

OUR PERFORMANCE

Health and Safety Information Statement

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During the financial year April 2011 to March 2012, a total of 158 injuries were reported to the Safety, Health and Environmental Team relating to our activity in this period. This was a decrease of 17% on the previous year and our lowest number of injuries on record.

Of the 158 injuries, WMFS reported 24 injuries to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). There were no fatal accidents. The RIDDOR figure was one of the lowest levels achieved by WMFS.

	2000 performance	2012 target	2011/12 performance
Total injuries	400	172	158
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)	60	14	24

WMFS consults with the Representative Bodies on health and safety through a health and safety committee structure and on a routine basis. It has agreed a protocol for the joint investigation of any serious injuries or health and safety events.



OUR PERFORMANCE

Performance Indicator Number	Description	Actual 2010 – 2011	Target 2011 – 2012	Actual 2011 – 2012
PI 1	The number of accidental fires in dwellings	1,877	1,783	1,889
PI 2	The number of injuries from accidental fires in dwellings (taken to hospital for treatment)	99	94	95
PI 3	The number of deaths from accidental fires in dwellings	16	11	11
PI 4	The number of arson fires in dwellings	398	378	404
PI 5	The number of accidental fires in non-domestic premises	696	696	651
PI 6	The number of arson fires in non-domestic premises	280	280	223
PI 7	The number of arson vehicle fires	1,096	1,096	983
PI 8	The number of arson rubbish fires	4,398	4,266	4,098
PI 9	The number of malicious false alarm calls received by the Brigade	3,908	3,752	3,554
PI 11	The number of false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms in non-domestic properties	6,809	6,537	6,545
PI 12	The number of false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms in dwellings	3,217	3,185	3,363
PI 13	The percentage of dwelling fires where a working smoke alarm was fitted	64.7%	68%	65.6%
PI 14	The number of Home Fire Safety Checks conducted by the Brigade	41,119	40,000	40,908
PI 16	The percentage of Home Fire Safety checks delivered to those at high risk	69.2%	70%	66.1%
PI 17	The percentage of whole time uniformed duty system employees with a disability	1.87%	2.49%	1.96%

OUR PERFORMANCE

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Performance Indicator Number	Description	Actual 2010 – 2011	Target 2011 – 2012	Actual 2011 – 2012
PI 18	The percentage of non-uniformed and Fire Control employees with a disability	4.68%	6.79%	4.21%
PI 19	The percentage of all employees with a disability	2.50%	3.55%	2.57%
PI 20	The percentage of women firefighters	4.21%	4.50%	4.19%
PI 21	The percentage of uniformed staff from ethnic minority communities	13.01%	12.50%	12.86%
PI 22	The percentage of non-uniformed and Fire Control staff from ethnic minority communities	15.94%	15.50%	20.15%
PI 23	The number of all staff from ethnic minority communities	13.79%	13.00%	14.84%
PI 24*	The percentage of women recruited to operational roles	0%	7.20%	0%
PI 25	The percentage from ethnic minority communities recruited to whole workforce	7.70%	10.00%	19.00%
PI 26	The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness – whole time, uniformed (excluding Fire Control)	5.5	5.50	4.7
PI 27	The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness – non-uniformed and Fire Control staff	9.4	5.50	10.3
PI 28	The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness – all staff	6.5	5.50	6.0

* Due to budget constraints we are not recruiting at the moment.

PI means Performance Indicator

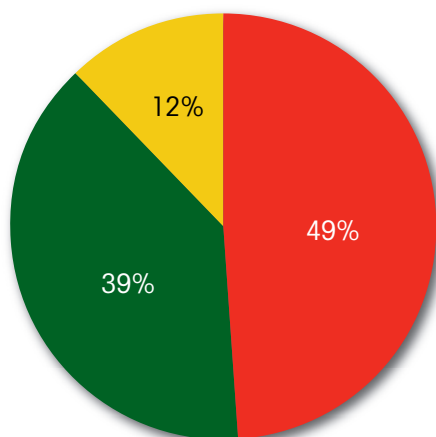
The majority of the Net cost of Fire Service expenditure relates to firefighting and rescue operations (£101m) and community fire safety work (£16m).

The total income of the Authority in 2011/12 was £122m.

The majority of funding comes from the Government in the form of a share of business rates and grant.

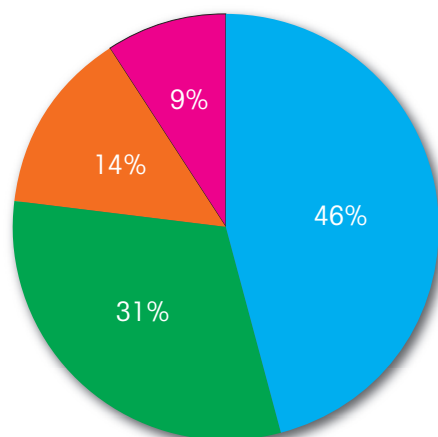
FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2011/2012

How much did the service cost and how was the service funded in 2011/2012?



Breakdown of costs

■	employees	49%
■	pensions	39%
■	running costs	12%



Various sources of funding

■	business rates	46%
■	council tax	31%
■	revenue support grant	14%
■	interest and other income	9%

Balances and Reserves

The Authority must consider the level of general balances it wishes to maintain before it can decide the level of council tax to charge in any year.

In order to set a balanced budget in 2011/12 the Authority assumed no movement in general balances. The level of general balances increased in the year by £0.945m, leaving £6.720m general balances at the end of the financial year.

The Authority holds general balances as funding to meet any unforeseen events which it may need to respond to. Interest is earned on any unused balances.

Balances and Reserves

In addition, as part of the closedown of accounts process, consideration needs to be given to the level of earmarked reserves required. These are amounts set aside to meet specific anticipated future demands. The level of earmarked reserves increased by the end of the year by £5.103m. This brought the total level of these reserves to £23.067m. Interest is earned on any balances until expenditure is committed against the demands identified.

Capital Expenditure and Funding

In 2011/12, the Authority spent £3.658m on capital projects.

The expenditure was incurred on the following:

	£m
Land & Buildings	1.705
Vehicles	1.771
Equipment	0.182

This expenditure was financed by capital grants (82%) and the balance by direct revenue funding (18%).

No borrowing was undertaken to assist with purchase of assets during 2011/12. Borrowing in earlier years meant that at the end of 2011/12, the Authority had total loans of £44.644m (the interest and principal on any loans needs to be met from future revenue budgets). The value of fixed assets held by the Authority as at 31 March 2012 which the loans had helped fund was £142m, of which approximately 92% related to land and buildings and 8% related to vehicles and equipment.

Further information is available in our Corporate Strategy (The Plan) available via our website www.wmfs.net

CONTACTS

If you would like to obtain further information about any aspect of this Annual Report, please contact us, using one of the methods shown below:

Strategic Planning Improvement and Risk Team
West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters
99 Vauxhall Road
Birmingham
B7 4HW

Tel: **0121 380 7015**

E-mail: **SPIRiT@wmfs.net**

If you have access to the Internet, **www.wmfs.net** provides everything you need to know about the services we provide, our performance, fire safety advice and recruitment.

For further information about your Fire Service, you can contact our customer care team by using one of the methods listed below.

Public Relations Team
West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters
99 Vauxhall Road
Birmingham
B7 4HW

Tel: Customer Care Hotline – **0121 380 7404**
(24 Hour answerphone)

E-mail: **contact@wmfs.net**

OTHER FORMATS

The Authority is committed to equality of opportunity but must demonstrate value for money. Whilst all requests for our leaflets and publications to be reproduced in alternative formats and languages will be considered, where possible we will seek other methods of communication.

Please call **0121 380 7015** (24 hour answerphone).