

Summary of Annual Performance against Service Targets

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Simon Hardiman, Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260196.

1 Purpose of Report

This report summarises performance against the Service Targets over the last year, the learning that has come from trying to meet them and the plans for continuing to do so.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

3 Background

In 2015, the Fire Authority agreed its strategic objectives and a number of service delivery targets as part of a 5 year plan. Performance against the targets is reported to, and managed through, the Service Management Team on a monthly basis.

The majority of the 5-year Service Delivery targets were set based on the aim of improving performance by 25% over the period; the only exception to this being that of meeting the response standard on at least 89% of occasions. It was recognised at the time that these were stretching targets; particularly against a backdrop of diminishing budgets and social change.

In 2017/18 the Service introduced an additional measure of how often fires were contained to the room of origin. This was considered to be a way of measuring the overall quality, and level of integration, of the Service's protection, prevention and response functions. Based upon the first full year's monitoring against this new target and wishing to drive improvements in this overarching measure of performance, the Fire Authority agreed to raise this from the original 89% target, to 89.5% for the remaining two years of the plan.

This report not only summarises how the Service performed against those targets over the last year, but also how our learning over the years since the Service Plan was published, can help us to improve the chances of delivering against the objectives set by the Fire Authority in 2015, within the extended 12 month Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) period to 2021.

4 Response

2019/20 Target	Actual Performance 2019/20
89%	84.1%

For the second year since the target was set, the Service has failed to meet the 15-minute Response Standard set in its 2015-20 Service Plan. As can be seen from figure 1, this is the third year that we have seen reduced performance against the target, which also coincides with three years of increase in the total number of incidents the Service attended each year as in figure 2 (up by 3% during 2017/18, up by 5% during 2018/19 and a further increase by 7% during 2019/20, year on year). These increases could be exacerbating the impact from other factors underpinning this issue, as outlined below.

There is growing evidence, supported by our own local analysis, that the most significant reason for this 'apparent' poorer performance, might actually be a perverse consequence of the excellent work the Fire Service has been doing nationally, to drive down the number of fires. This work has predominantly focussed in our wholetime areas, where the higher number of fires occur. The reduction in the numbers we have seen in these areas has resulted in the location of the 'average' incident being further away from our stations; therefore, increasing the travel time.

This standard will be further explored as part of the new IRMP process and in the meantime, it is likely that achievement of the current target will remain challenging going forward.

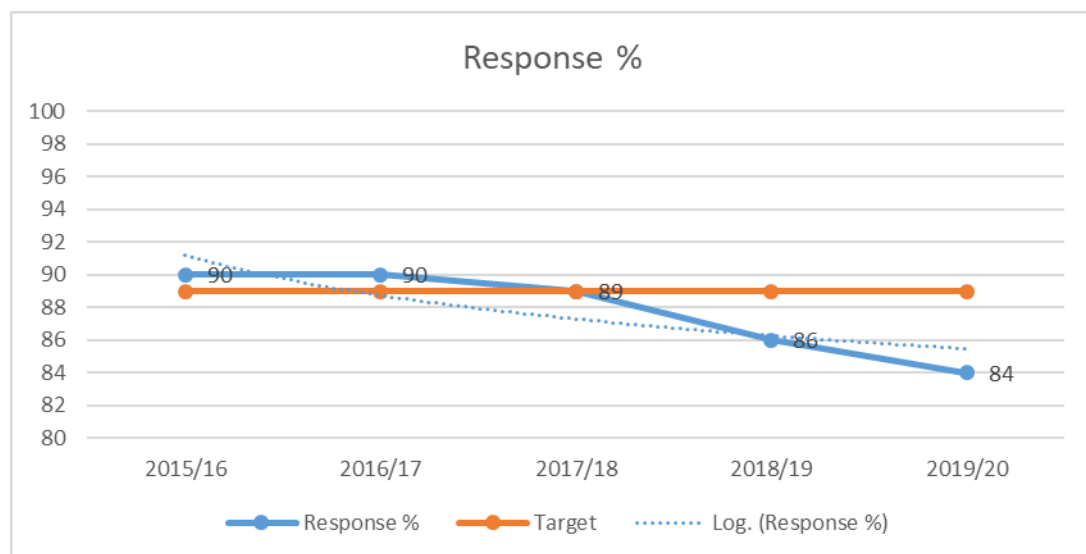


Figure 1 - Shropshire's annual performance against its 15-minute Response Standard

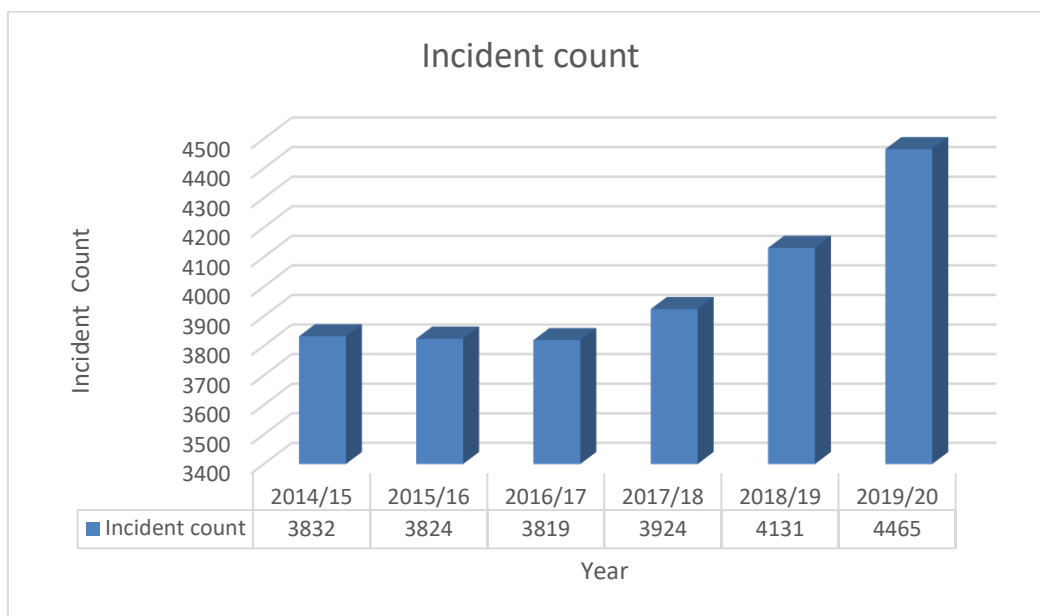


Figure 2 - Total number of incidents attended by SFRS between 2014/15 and 2019/20

Performance in this area is made up of three elements:

- 999 Call handling times;
- Response time for travel into the station for On Call personnel, plus the time to turnout from the station for Wholetime and On Call crews;
- Travel time from the station to the incident.

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) are not alone in experiencing a rise in Response standards and Figure 3 (below) illustrates the latest available data captured by Home Office and a significant rise across all incident types can be seen since 2012/13. The main contributory factor is cited in the report as travel time and that rising traffic levels was the primary cause.

Table 1 Response times to fires by type of fire with a summary of trends⁹, England; 2017/18

Type of Fire ¹⁰	2017/18	Change since 2016/17	Change since 2012/13
Primary	8 minutes 45 seconds	0 seconds =	+34 seconds ↑
Dwelling	7 minutes 44 seconds	+2 seconds ↑	+21 seconds ↑
Other building	8 minutes 30 seconds	-1 second ↓	+38 seconds ↑
Road vehicle	9 minutes and 35 seconds	0 seconds =	+27 seconds ↑
Other outdoor	10 minutes and 46 seconds	+8 seconds ↑	+1 minute 9 seconds ↑
Secondary	9 minutes 10 seconds	+1 second ↑	+48 seconds ↑

Source: FIRE1001

Figure 3- Home Office Data for all Fire and Rescue Services

Despite this rise in response times, it is pleasing to note that the apparent increase in risk, which could be expected to result because of this trend, is not apparent in terms of the numbers of fires and resultant casualties we are seeing either in Shropshire, or across England.

However, it is notable that the national report does not take any account of possible changes that may have occurred in 'where' the incidents are happening; instead assuming the incident profile has remained consistent. Local analysis has identified several other factors that may possibly be contributing to the change in performance over the last 12 months or more. These are summarised below.

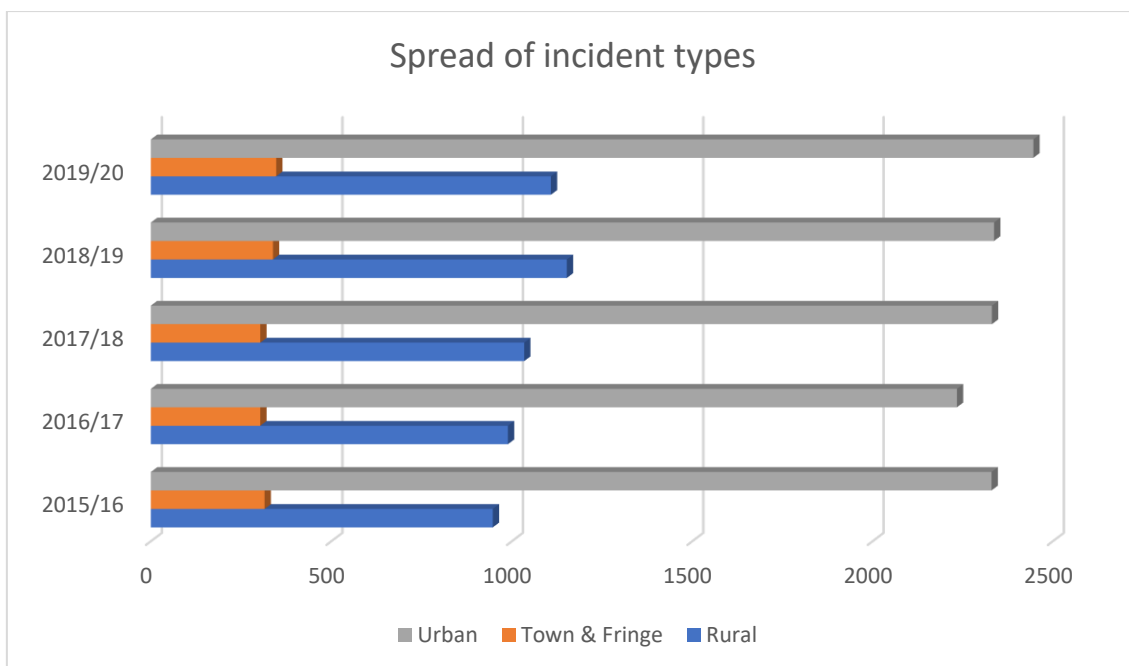


Figure 4 – Number of incidents occurring in different parts of the county

1. As illustrated in figure 4, the number of incidents occurring in different parts of the county has steadily changed since 2015/16; with a slight increase in incidents in the more urban areas for 2019/20 and a more pronounced increase in the most rural parts of the county over the last 3 years. The increase in rural incidents will by its location, increase the 'average attendance time' and this is believed to be the primary cause of performance against this standard.
2. A lesser factor relates to the fact that ALL incident types are included in this measure and therefore the way that our fire engines respond to different types of incidents can impact on their response time.

An example of this is the Service's response to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs), received from businesses and domestic properties. The Service is committed to attending all notifications of AFAs. However, our policy dictates that, in considering the most appropriate response to each incident (i.e. the appropriate weight and speed of response), account should be taken of the information received within the control room during that call for assistance.

A primary response (i.e. using blue lights etc.) is appropriate if there is no information available to suggest this could be a false alarm. However, if we receive confirmation from the premises that it is a known false alarm, crews will proceed for details about the alarm, but will do so under normal road and driving conditions, resulting in slower response times. Continuing to respond for details about the alarm ensures that the Service continues to play its role in making sure that premises are managing their alarm systems effectively (thereby helping them to reduce the risk and disruption to their business that comes from repeated false alarms) but has a negative impact on the average response time. Further examples of a graded response can be attributed to the Service approach to animal rescue incidents, whereby the speed of response will be dictated by the information gathered at time of call, for example if there is no risk to human life, the attending appliance will make progress, only utilising audible and visual warning systems to progress through heavy traffic areas, thus reducing road risk posed to our people and members of the public.

Unfortunately, our current method of collating data does not enable the Service to easily distinguish between the incidents that warranted a primary response and those that were for details only. AFA response is just one example of where the Service's response is varied, based on this type of risk assessed approach. However, with AFAs accounting for approximately a quarter of all incidents, a relatively small change in the ratio of these two types of responses will inevitably have an impact on the average response time overall. Additional data development work is needed to improve the Service's current understanding of how this factor may have impacted on the Response Standard results achieved over the last few years.

3. It is also worthy of note that during the reporting year, the Service experienced 2 significant periods of flooding (October 2019 and February/ March 2020). This caused an increase in demand, leading to requests for assistance being assessed and prioritised by Fire Control as demand at times outstripped our resources. This can be seen within figure 5 below.

4.

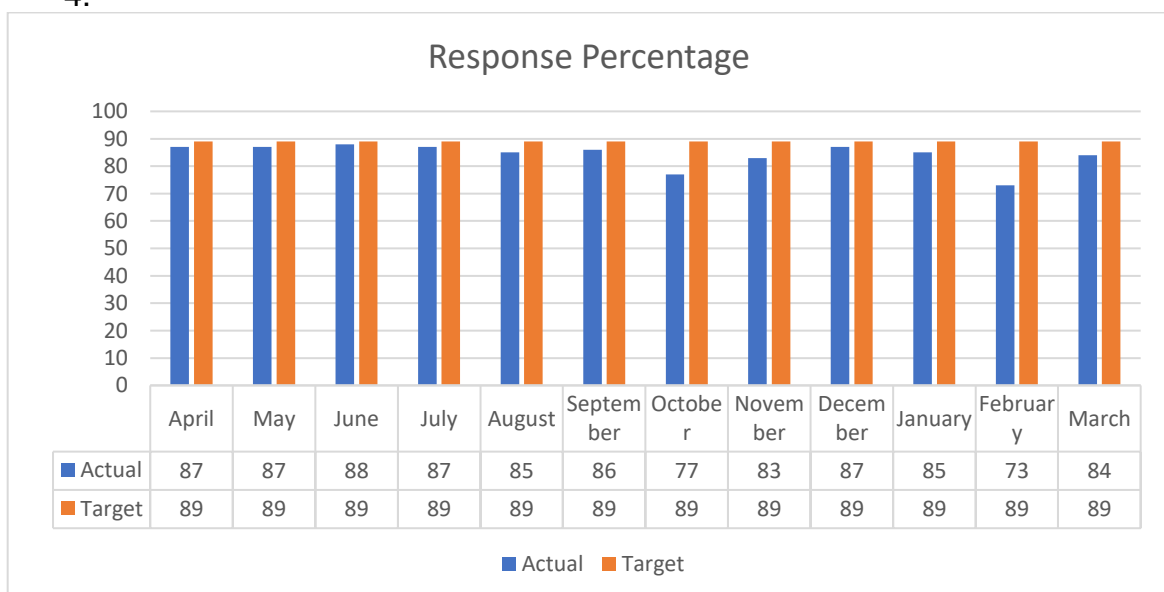


Figure 5- Monthly response standard percentage data

5. Finally, over the last 10 years both Unitary Authorities have experienced significant population growth and corresponding housing and other building development across their entire area; not just confined to the most urban areas. The Service is working with the data analysis teams within both Authorities to understand what, if any, impact this is likely to have on our incident profile into the future.

All of these factors could be impacting, to a greater or lesser extent, on the Service's ability to achieve its Response Standard. As highlighted above, further analysis is needed to ascertain the impact that each is having, perhaps in combination with the general rise in the number of incidents being experienced across the country as a whole. This analysis is being undertaken as part of the ongoing IRMP process and will be used to support a review of the Service's current prevention, protection and response strategies and the resources it commits to each. Any significant proposals for change, required to ensure the Service is having greatest effect against the changing risk profile, will be subject to appropriate wider consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

5 Accidental Primary Fires

2019/20 Target	Actual Performance 2019/20
433	422

Primary fires are generally more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property. Primary fires are defined as fires that cause damage and meet at least one of the following conditions:

- any fire that occurred in a (non-derelict) building, vehicle or (some) outdoor structures.
- any fire involving fatalities, casualties or rescues
- any fire attended by five or more pumping appliances.

Primary fires are split into four sub-categories:

- Dwelling fires are fires in properties that are a place of residence i.e. places occupied by households such as houses and flats, excluding hotels/hostels and residential institutions. Dwellings also includes non-permanent structures used solely as a dwelling, such as houseboats and caravans.
- Other buildings fires are fires in other residential or non-residential buildings. Other (institutional) residential buildings include properties such as hostels/hotels/B&Bs, nursing/care homes, student halls of residence etc. Non-residential buildings include properties such as offices, shops, factories, warehouses, restaurants, public buildings, religious buildings etc.
- Road vehicle fires are fires in vehicles used for transportation on public roads, such as cars, vans, buses/coaches, motorcycles, lorries/HGVs etc. 'road vehicles' does not include aircraft, boats or trains, which are categorised in 'other outdoors'.
- Other outdoors fires are fires in either primary outdoor locations, or fires in non-primary outdoor locations that have casualties or five or more pumping appliances attending. Outdoor primary locations include

aircraft, boats, trains and outdoor structures such as post or telephone boxes, bridges, tunnels etc.

As can be seen in the table above, the Service achieved the target set for this performance measure. This is a change of trajectory as this standard had not been achieved in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

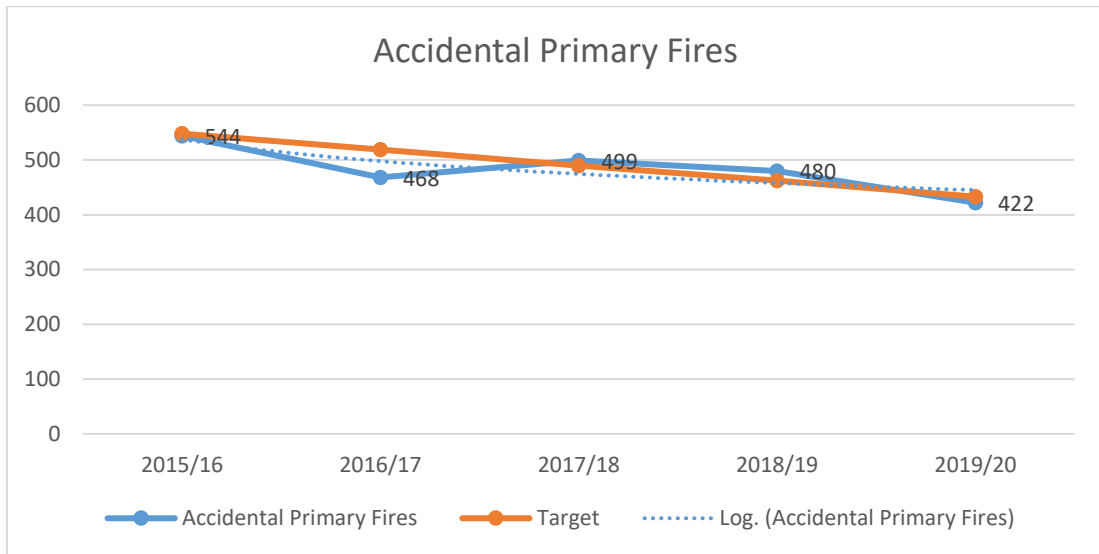


Figure 6- Yearly performance against target

Although the Service failed to meet this target for the previous two years, Figure 6 above illustrates that performance has been generally in line with the reduction year on year and it is pleasing to note that this year's success is below the required target of 433. When seeking to understand performance throughout 2019/20, figure 7 below, illustrates monthly performance against this target.

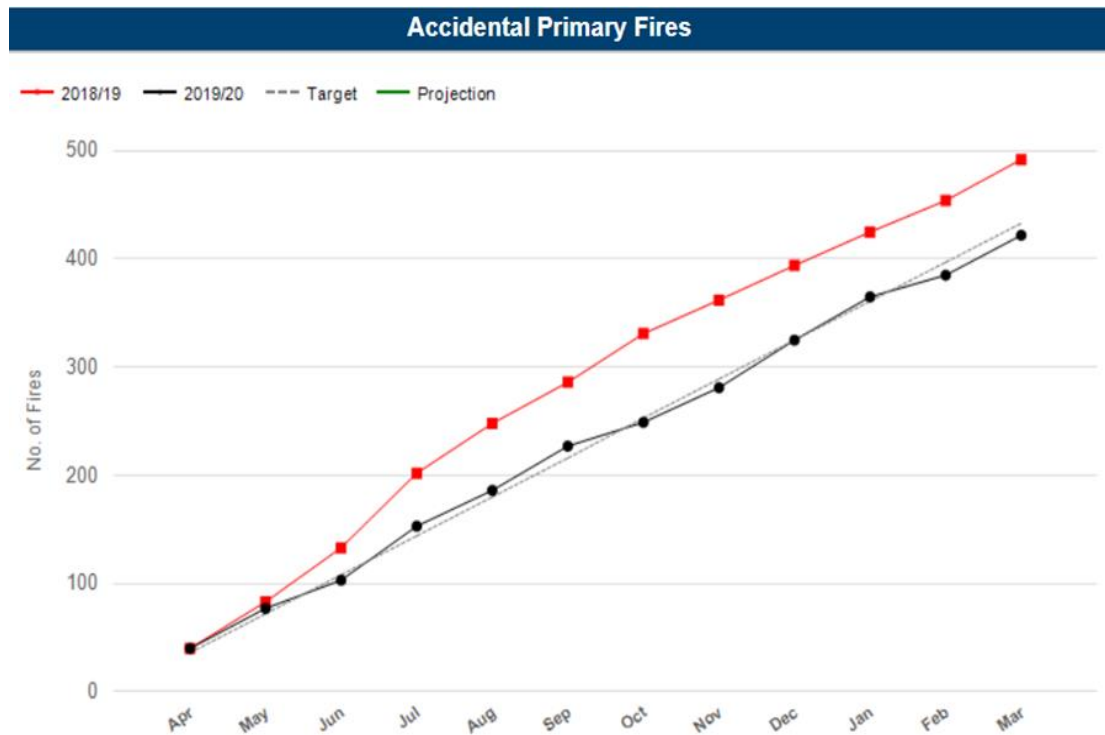


Figure 7- Monthly performance against annual target.

Performance throughout the year has been broadly in line with the target month on month with a reduction of 64 incidents when comparing to the total figure for 2018/19 (486 for 2018/19 compared to 422 for 2019/20)

The total of 422 was made up of the following incident types:

- Dwelling fires- 195
- Vehicle Fires- 103
- Other residential property fires- 26
- Commercial property fires- 83
- Other fires- 15

Next year's target of no more than 433 incidents, aiming to continue the downward trend, will no doubt prove to be very challenging. In addition to the continued work we intend to do around Accident Dwelling Fires (explained in the next section), based upon the learning from this year the Service will look to focus further work on prevention messages relating to Home safety, Vehicle safety and maintenance and fire safety within business premises in conjunction with the Protection Team who inspect and audit to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

6 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

2019/20 Target	Actual Performance 2019/20
186	195

Dwelling fires are fires in properties that are a place of residence i.e. places occupied by households such as houses and flats, excluding hotels/hostels and residential institutions. Dwellings also includes non-permanent structures used solely as a dwelling, such as houseboats and caravans.

The Service has failed to meet this target for four of the last five years, which indicates that this is a challenging target. However, this year has seen a significant improvement on the previous year (195 for 2019/20 compared to 210 for 2018/19) and continues a general downward trend in these fires over the period of the existing IRMP. The figure of 195 incidents is the lowest number of dwelling fires ever recorded in the County. The reduction from 254 fires in 2015/16, to 195 during this year, equates to a 23.3% reduction over the 5 year period against a target of 25%.

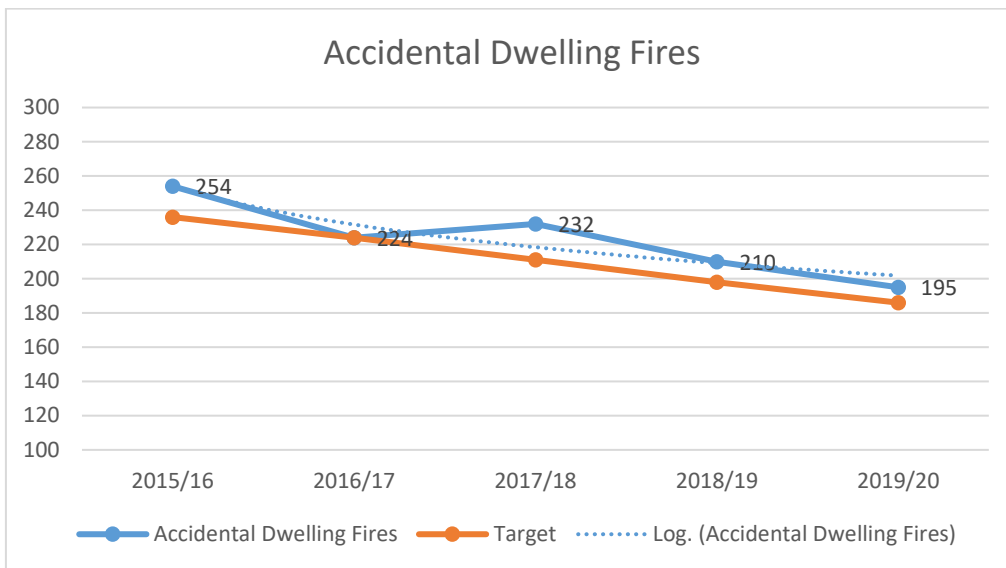


Figure 8- Performance against the 5- year target for ADF

The trajectory for the year on year data demonstrates the actual figures with the target set are broadly in line and it should be noted that the difference is marginal. This is also evident when seeking to understand the monthly figures for 2019/20, as illustrated within figure 9 below.

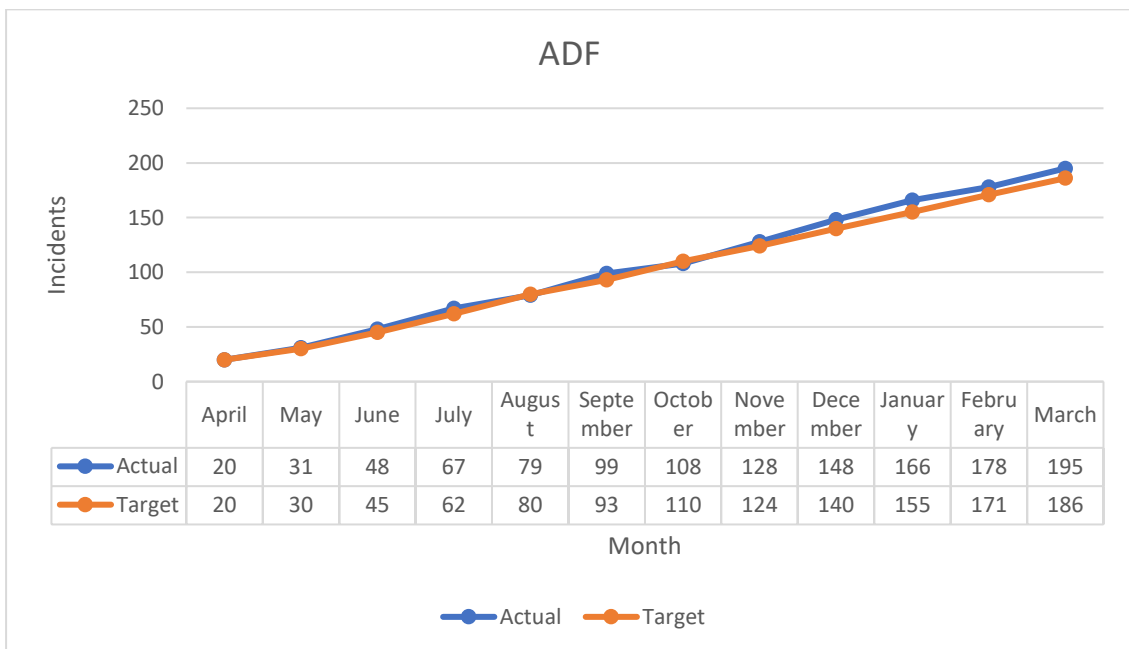


Figure 9- Monthly data for ADF 2019/20

This demonstrates that the Service’s target for the coming year of 186, is likely to be extremely challenging, but our performance over the last four years does provide some optimism about this being achieved.

In relation to where these fires are happening, in the Telford area we have seen quite significant drops across the southern and central areas, but fires have remained consistent with previous years in the Wellington area.

Across the more rural parts of the county, whilst the number of fires in Oswestry and Ludlow are showing a slight year-on-year increase, therefore warranting the additional effort we are putting into these towns, the numbers have remained stable, or are even reducing, in other towns across the county; most notably in Whitchurch and Bridgnorth.

Our ADF strategy, which is driving this work, was implemented during 2018, helping to ensure that the Service's limited resources are directed to the areas and people at most risk. The strategy achieves this through four steps:

- 1 Identify the areas of focus, based on their incident profile
- 2 Identify the specific risk profiles of the most vulnerable people in those individual areas
- 3 Use data to then locate the vulnerable people in each risk area; and finally
- 4 Target these vulnerable people with our ongoing prevention campaigns, including the 'Safe and Well' visits

The Service has progressed well in Telford, but there is still work to be done, especially in relation to steps 3 and 4, for the rest of the county.

The latest Home Office statistics suggest that there has been a steady decrease over the last 10 years in relation to dwelling fires, however this appears to be plateauing across all primary fires categories.

7 Deliberate Fires

2019/20 Target	Projected Performance 2019/20
547	396

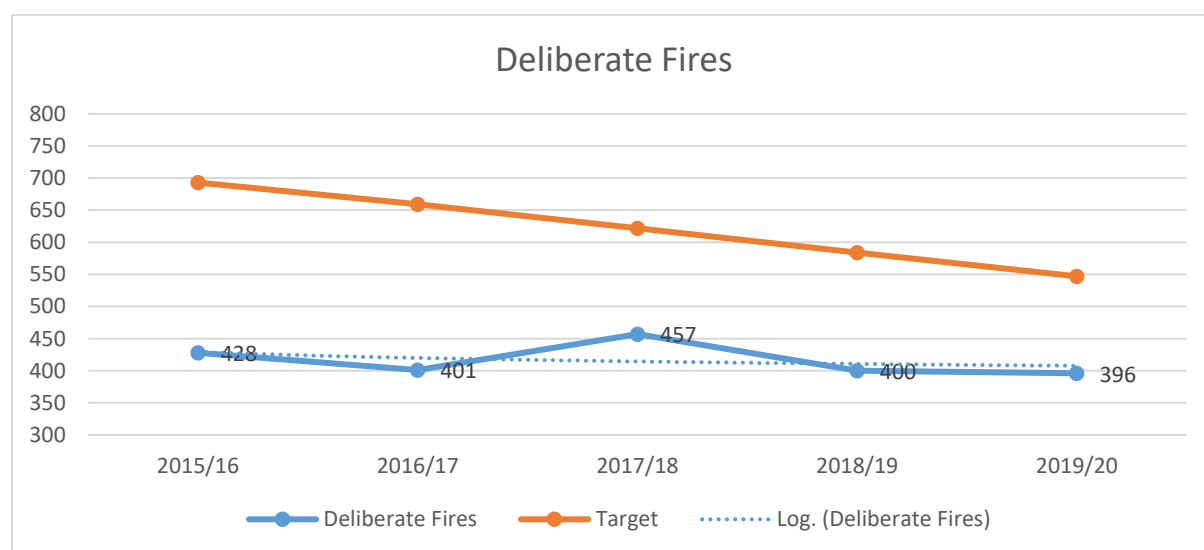


Figure 10 - Annual performance against the 5-year targets for Deliberate Fires

Performance across this target has been achieved for each of the last five years and the target of 25% over the five years has been surpassed. However, this indicator is susceptible to external influences and although the Service have achieved the target for 2019/20, it is clear that there has been a plateauing of incidents, with only a 1% decrease on 2018/19 figures.

The ignition of rubbish, possibly through fly-tipping, appears to be the greatest contributor to the number of deliberate fires in the county. This predominantly occurs in both Shrewsbury and Telford, but there appears to be a significant issue with it in the Wellington and south Telford areas. The Rogue Landlord Task Force, which has come into force across Telford, is looking at this type of issue as part of their work, although this is in its infancy.

Our deliberate fires prevention programme is coordinated by the Fire Crimes Officer (FCO). The professional trust fostered between the FCO, West Mercia Police and other partners has been key to the consistent success in arson reduction. Early intervention with partners has enabled SFRS to identify and proactively stop arson, including re-offending.

Our I-Learn programme has also been developed to cover 'Looked after Children' and support Children's Services. After dealing with several 'Looked after Children' cases, the Service has now modified its schools' education programme, to include specialist schools that support children placed in care. SFRS has also developed a bespoke package relating to 'Looked after Children' referrals. Our improvements in this area will further help the Service to play its part in helping to reduce many forms of anti-social behaviour, as well as arson.

Increasing domestic violence awareness has also resulted in SFRS carrying out greater numbers of risk visits and providing more safety devices to these very vulnerable people, including target hardening equipment (Letterbox protectors) and smoke detection. This proactive approach has ensured that the individual and their family have early warning and a basic defence against attack. The Service will continue to develop this work through working with the Safeguarding Board's Domestic Abuse Forums. The 'Safe and Well' visits also provide a framework for signposting such risk.

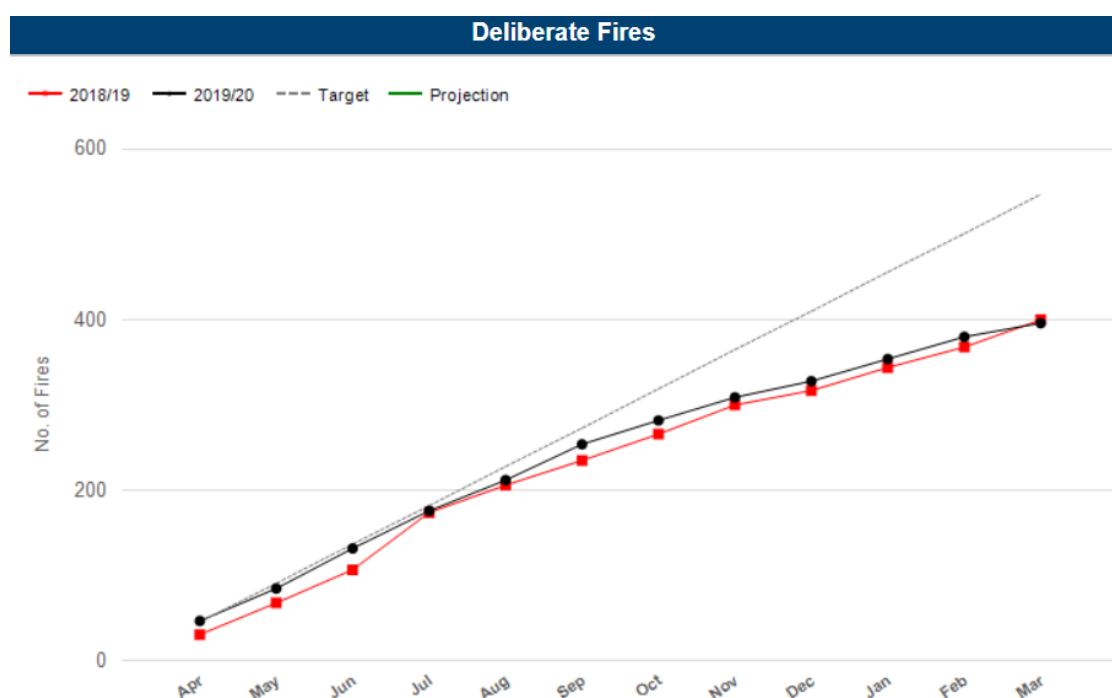


Figure 11- Monthly performance against Deliberate Fires target

As can be seen from performance throughout 2019/20, it was broadly in line with performance during 2018/19, with significant reduction when comparing with the target figures of 584 incidents 2018/19 and 547 incidents for 2019/20.

8 Fire related deaths and serious injuries

2019/20 Target	Actual Performance 2019/20
16	7

Below is the definition used by Home Office for the recording of fire related deaths and serious injuries:

Fatalities and Casualties

Fire-related fatalities are, in general, those that would not have otherwise occurred had there not been a fire. i.e. 'no fire = no death'. This includes any fatal casualty which is the direct or indirect result of injuries caused by a fire incident. Even if the fatal casualty dies subsequently, any fatality whose cause is attributed to a fire is included, sometimes following road traffic collisions. For the purpose of publications, published figures include the number of fatal casualties which were either recorded as 'fire related' or 'don't know', grouped together as fire-related deaths; thus, excluding only those that were recorded as 'not fire-related'. Non-fatal casualties have, since the introduction of the Incident Reporting System (IRS), been split into four sub-categories, defined as:

- Hospital severe – at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient
- Hospital slight – attending hospital as an outpatient (not a precautionary check)
- First Aid given – first aid given at scene (by anyone), including after a precautionary check
- Precautionary check – a precautionary check (to attend hospital or to see a doctor) was recommended (by anyone).

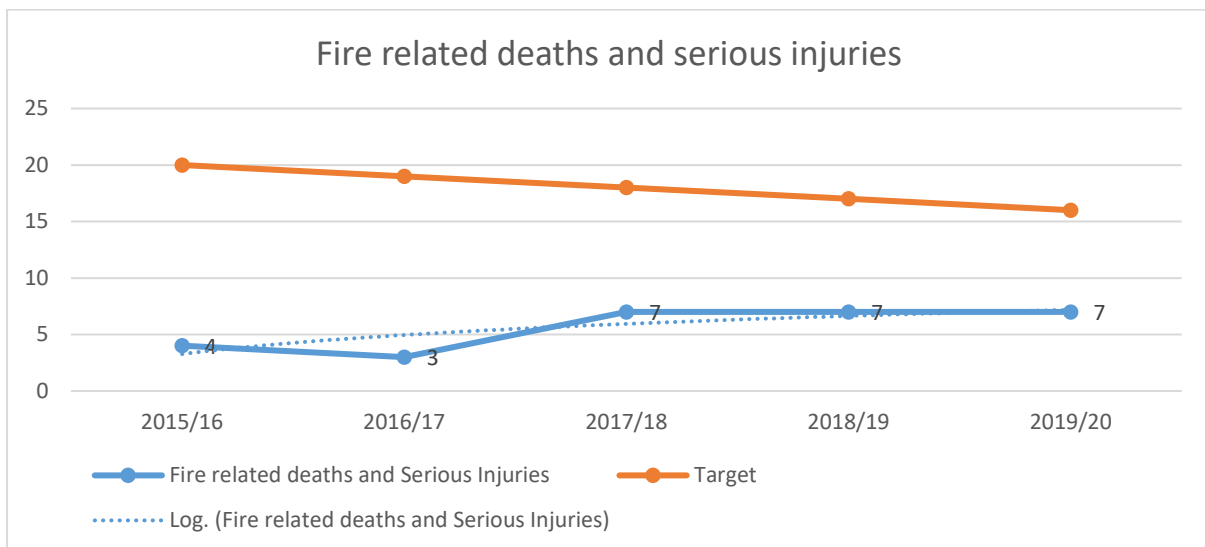


Figure 12- Annual performance against fire related deaths and serious injuries

As illustrated within figure 12 above, the Service have achieved the 5 year target annually. The incidents involving the 2 fatalities and 5 injuries, experienced over the last 12 months, were as follows;

- 2 Accidental Dwelling Fire fatalities - both involving fires in houses
- 5 Serious injuries in Dwelling Fires
- There have been no fatalities or serious injuries in commercial property fires.

The first of the two fatalities occurred in April 2019 and involved a significant fire in a first floor bedroom, of a property in Little Dawley area of Telford, resulting in the death of a 36-year-old male.

The Service had visited the property in 2007 to undertake a home safety visit, however it is the landlord details showing as present during this visit. The subsequent investigation confirmed that Adult Social care were not aware of the deceased and was not in receipt of any support from the Local Authority.

The second fatality resulted from a fire within a semi-detached house of multiple occupancy (HMO) in Oswestry. The deceased was a 50-year-old male, who was known to partners and was in receipt of support from Health partners. Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service had no prior involvement with the individual and he would not have been captured within any current Exeter data sets due to age.

In both cases, it is clear that neither of the individuals would have been in contact with the Service prior to the fatal incidents occurring. Organisational learning has included identifying methods of obtaining access to information sets that currently fall outside of our data sharing agreements with NHS England and NHS Improvement teams. The Prevention team continue to work with partners to encourage referrals, thus providing an opportunity to impart fire safety information to households and occupants.

Although the Service target has been met over the last 5 years, several external influences could further impact upon performance against this target in the future. One consideration is the change in demographics within the population residing in the County. In particular, the projected growth in the elderly population of Shropshire increases the risk of more fire related deaths and injuries. More people living independently (some fiercely independent), with multiple conditions, often in remote rural locations, will present challenges. To assist in addressing this, SFRS is constantly working with its partners to access risk data about where these vulnerable people live. This work will also inform the production of the 2021/25 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

9 Injuries sustained by staff through firefighting

2019/20 Target	Actual Performance 2019/20
21	13

The Service has performed well against this target in the last 12 months and achieved the 5-year Service Plan target. With such relatively low numbers of injuries occurring each year, it is easy for the Service to miss this indicator due to accidents that involve more than one person as witnessed in 2016/17, which involved an appliance road traffic collision (RTC) causing injuries to multiple members of the crew. (see figure 15 below.)

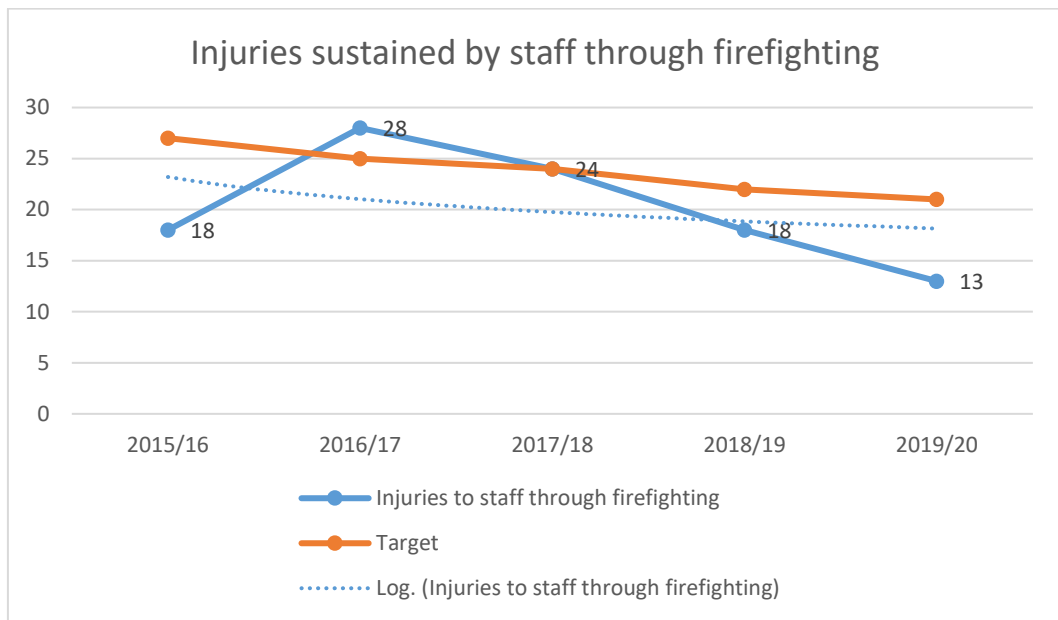


Figure 13 - Annual number of injuries sustained to staff through firefighting activities

The common causes, across the accidents to occur, continues to be relating to slips, trips and falls, either during training events or at actual incidents. This also continues to be the most common cause of accidents across all fire services in the West Midlands Region.

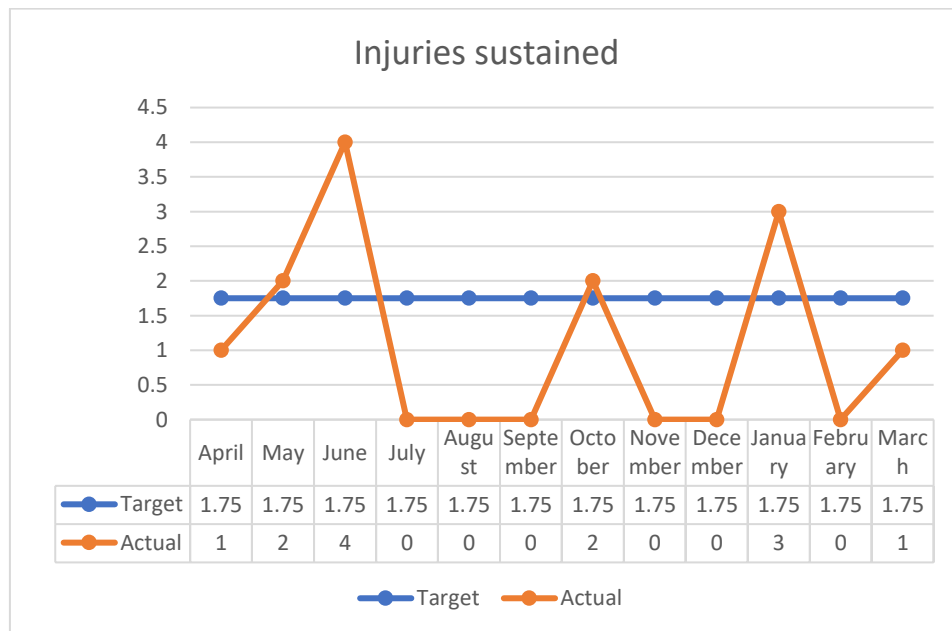


Figure 14- Monthly performance against target

When analysing the monthly data, none of the occurrences involved more than one person and were made up of the following types;

- Operational Fire / RTC- 6 injuries
- Operational training Fire / RTC- 4 injuries
- Operational not Fire / RTC- 1 injury
- Operational training not Fire / RTC- 2 injuries

Achievement of the target set for the coming year (No more than 19 for 2020/21) will require the Service to maintain the excellent performance achieved this year.

The Service will continue to actively encourage the reporting, monitoring and thorough investigation of all accidents and near misses. Best practice continues to be actively shared with neighbouring services through a well-established regional audit programme and network of health and safety professionals.

In addition to this local and regional sharing, learning is also shared across the fire sector as a whole, following any national incidents of significance. This is achieved through well-established National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Health and Safety Groups, National Operational Learning structures and also the Joint Operational Learning processes set up across all three emergency services.

10 Fires Confined to the Room of Origin

2019/20 Target	Actual Performance 2019/20
89.5%	89%

The Service have marginally missed meeting this target by 0.5%, with performance for the last 5 years ranging from 88.1% in 2018/19 to 91% in 2015/16.

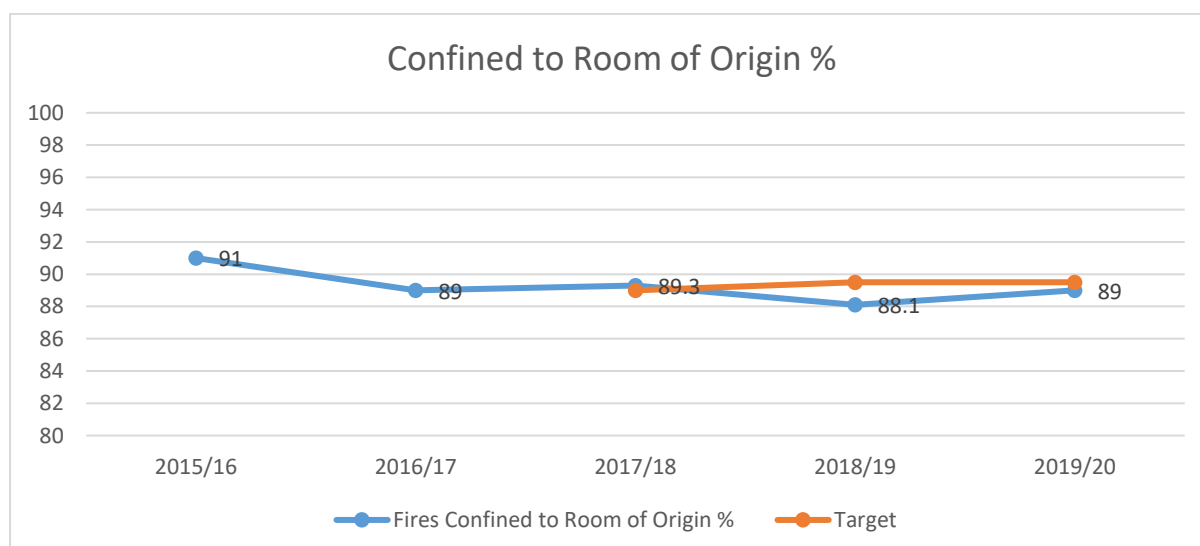


Figure 15 - Annual percentage of fires contained within the room of origin

The Service considers this measure to be an excellent way for it to get an overall view on the quality of the services it provides to the people of Shropshire, as its success depends on the effective integration of its prevention, protection and response activities. As such, many of the issues raised in the previous sections are also relevant here. This is only the third year that this measure has been monitored, however the analysis that can now be undertaken, especially on those incidents where the fire is not contained to the room of origin, is starting to identify some significant issues that will help SFRS to further improve its services to the communities of Shropshire in the coming years.

It is key to note that this target is an internal quality assurance measure, which provides analysis relating to a variety of occurrences such as effectiveness of firefighting actions, identifying trends in incident types and also methods of construction that may or may not contribute to fire spread.

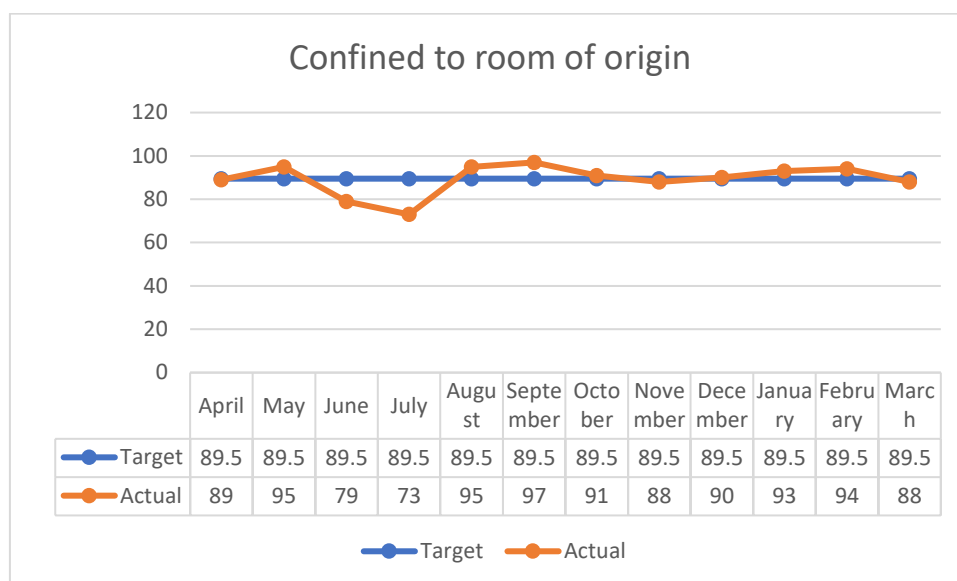


Figure 16- Monthly performance against target

As illustrated within figure 16 above, performance for the year was broadly in line with the monthly targets, however June and July witnessed several agricultural building fires that impacted upon performance over these two months. With most of these incidents involving fires in barns, with their significant fire loading, relatively light construction generally consisting of one large room, it is perhaps unsurprising that, when a fire does manage to take hold, it is more likely than not, to spread beyond the outer walls of the barn.

When analysing data for this performance target it is clear that although the measure includes both domestic and commercial buildings, there is disparity between the two, with commercial fires only accounting for approximately a third of the fires, they account for a higher number of the failures (Approximately half). This is comparable with findings over previous years and as previously stated, building construction and use of premises will factor heavily within the indicator.

With the agricultural industry being so important to the economy of Shropshire, it is imperative that the Service makes best use of the lessons it has learnt, especially in relation to the risk of fire in barns and also the risk from poor maintenance of agricultural vehicles, which also contribute to accidental primary fires. By working with our partners (e.g. the National Farmers Union) we hope to be able to play our part in helping the farming community to avoid the financial and other impacts that so often arise when a business is hit by fire.

Moving on to fires in domestic properties, investigations have identified some interesting points.

- 50% of these incidents are in owner occupied properties, which is a slightly higher ratio than would be expected from their ratio of all domestic fires.
- People are 2.5 times more likely to have a fire that gets out of the room of origin if they don't have a working smoke alarm.

- Usually, only 6% of the fires that spread, started in the kitchen, compared to typically 63% of all domestic fires starting in this area.
- Candles and fires starting in electrical equipment or wiring are a common cause of these types of fires.
- A fire starting between 10pm and 2am is three times more likely to spread beyond the room of origin.

The Service will use this learning to further inform its future campaign messages and interactions, through both Business Fire Safety for Commercial buildings and Prevention for the domestic environment.

11 Collaboration

Information relating to how the Service has worked in collaboration with other organisations, in an effort to achieve the Service's targets, has been provided in the relevant sections of this report.

12 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

13 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

14 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

15 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

16 Background Papers

[Service Plan 2015-20](#)