

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

C3. Information Update 17 October 2024



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A. Inspection update

October 2024

For further information please contact:

Nicola Harryman, Head of Data and Intelligence and KFRS Service Liaison Officer for HMICFRS



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1. The thematic inspection report into misconduct; [Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services](#) was published on 1st August 2024.
2. As a result of this report, HMICFRS have made 15 recommendations to the fire sector. The Authority is in the process of assessing progress against these recommendations and they will shortly be published on the website.
3. Our revised full round three inspection date, is currently scheduled to run through February and March 2025. The planned start date is 17th February with the inspection teams carrying out fieldwork through on site visits and remote interviews through the weeks commencing 10th March, 24th March and 31st March 2025.
4. We can expect our outcome report for the round three inspection w/c 4th August 2025 if this planned timetable remains accurate.
5. HMICFRS have recently consulted on the changes they are proposing for the round four inspection programme for 2025-2027. We will update at a future meeting of any changes to our 2027 inspection.



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B. Performance update

October 2024

For further information please contact:

Nicola Harryman, Head of Data and Intelligence and KFRS Service Liaison Officer for HMICFRS



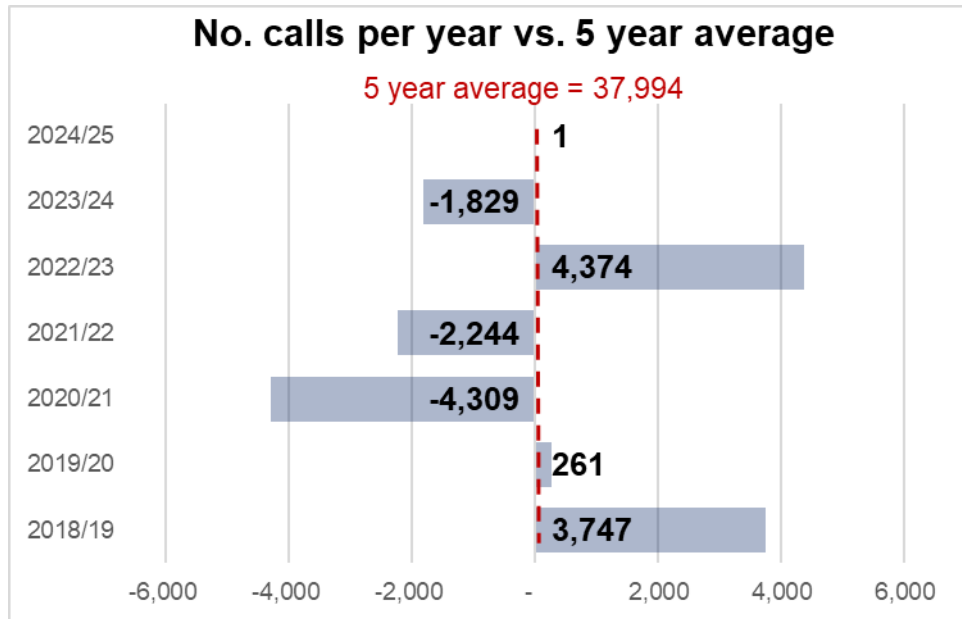
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Overview of the Authority's performance for April – August 2024

Emergency Calls

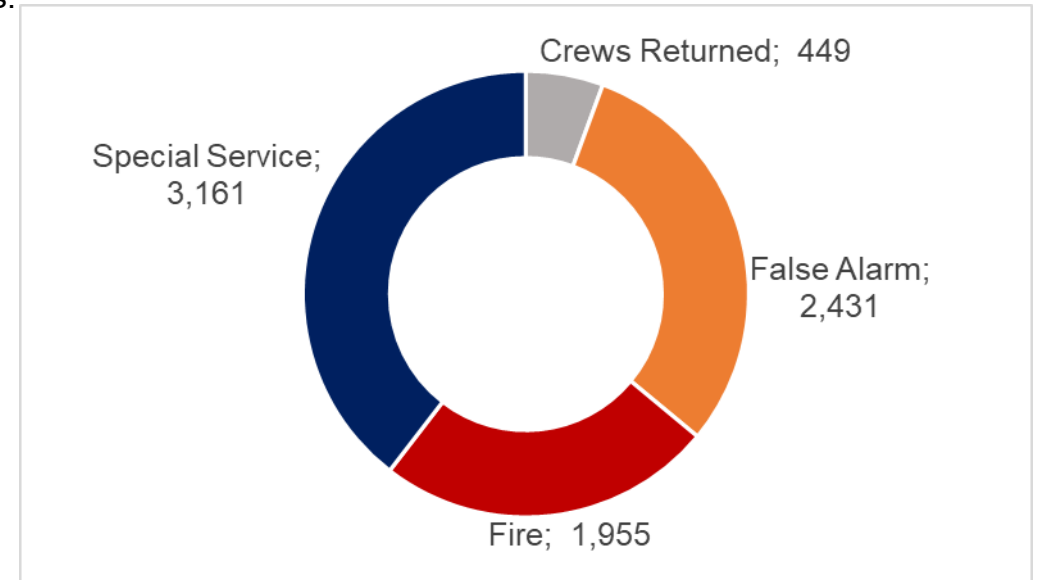
Between April and August 2024, 15,832 emergency calls were received in Authority's control room. It is evident that call volumes vary year to year. Low call volumes in 2020/21 and 2021/22 were affected by the pandemic. The high numbers recorded in 2018/19 and 2022/23 are linked to hot summers increasing outdoor fires and related calls. Predictions suggest that this year's call volumes will be higher than last year but in line with the five year average



Incidents Attended

The calls received into the Control room resulted in mobilising to 7,996 incidents between April and August 2024

- The majority of fires attended were outdoor and rubbish fires
- 22% of special service incidents were to gain entry, and a further 17% were to assist other agencies.
- Most of the false alarms attended were to automatic fire alarms in domestic properties.



Please note: these figures include over the border attendances which are not included in performance indicator reporting. They will not match the totals shown on subsequent slides

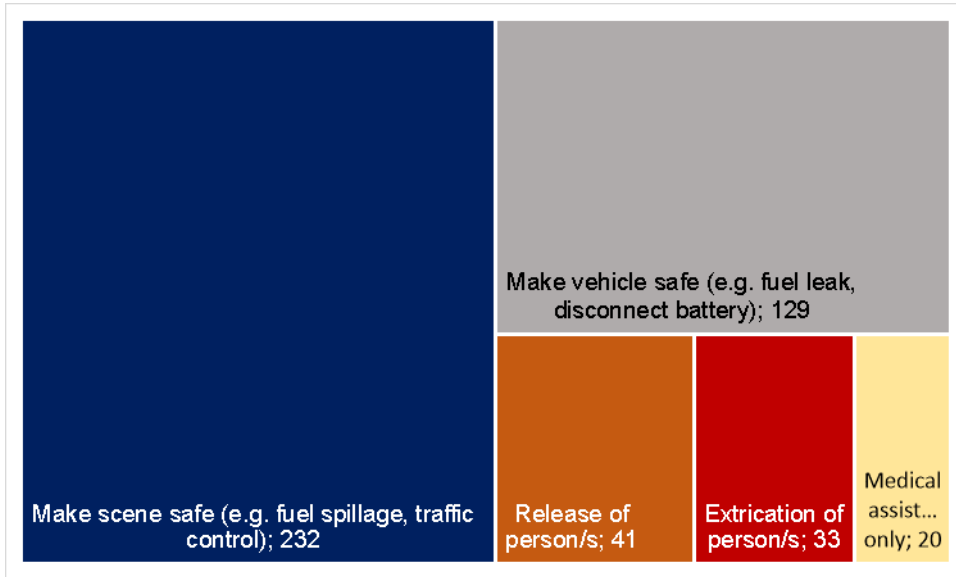


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Road Traffic Collisions

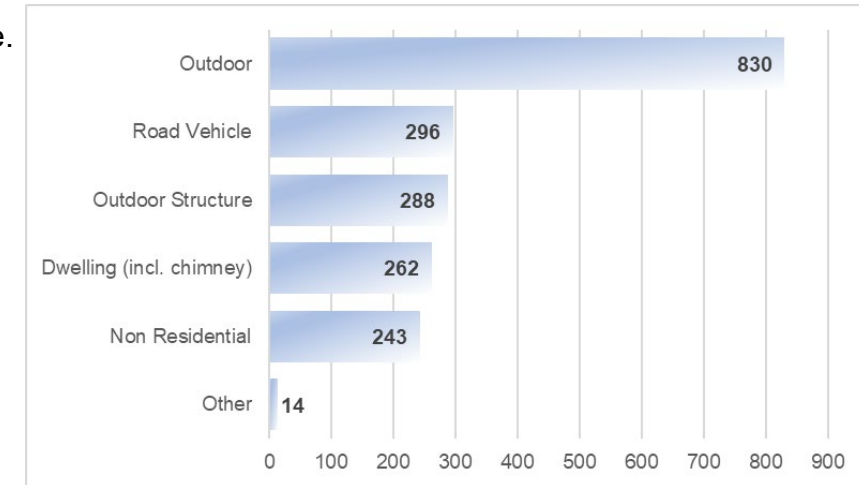
- 456 road traffic collisions have been attended (excluding those where no action was needed). The vast majority of incidents have needed our attendance to make either the scene or the vehicle safe only.



- As a result of these incidents four people have died and 44 have been seriously injured.

Fire Incidents

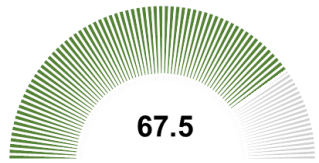
- Attended 1,933, fires of all types; which is 3% less than the same period the year before.



- Attended 220 accidental fires in the home (not including chimney fires); which is slightly higher than the number attended in the same period last year (200).
- Accidental fires account for 61.6% of the total fires attended. As a result of these fires, three people have died (all house fires), two people suffered serious injuries and 33 people have suffered 'slight' fire-related injuries.
- One person has also died in a suicide incident involving fire and four people have been slightly injured in deliberate fires



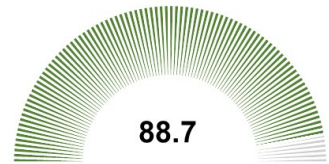
Response times



Life-threatening incidents within 10 minutes

Average time from call to attendance - 10 minutes 30 seconds

Average time from mobilisation to attendance – 8 minutes 44 seconds



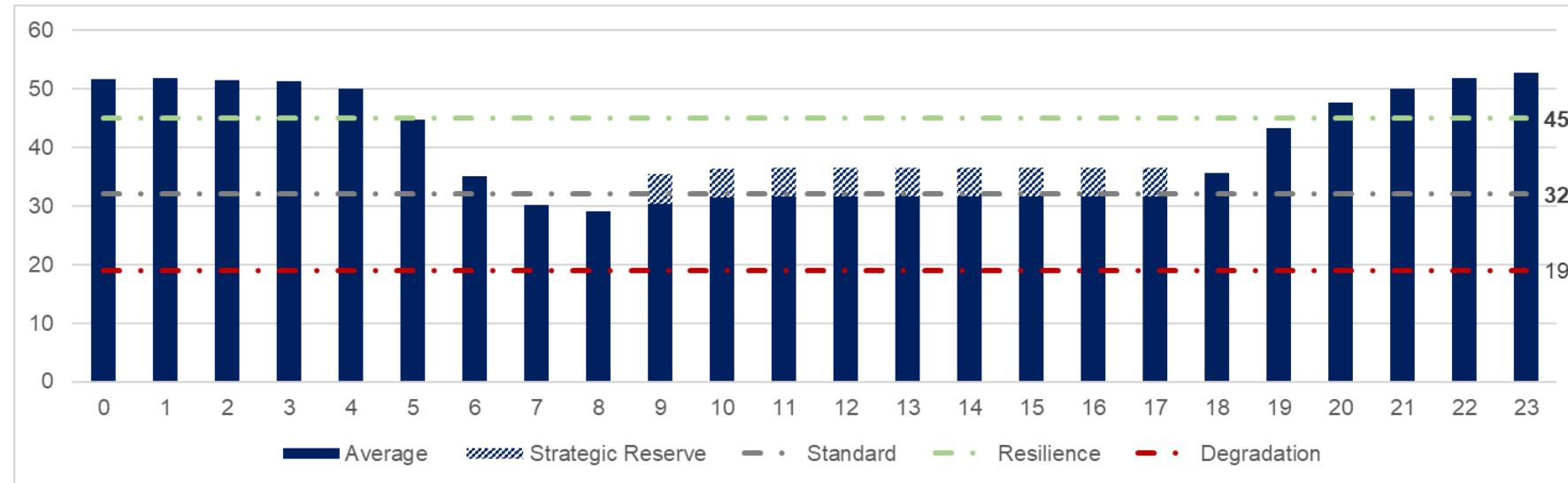
Non-life threatening incidents within 15 minutes

Average time from call to attendance - 11 minutes 13 seconds

Average time from mobilisation to attendance – 9 minutes 11 seconds

Availability

So far this year the average number of fire engines available has been 31 during the day (9am-6pm) and 45 in the evening (6pm to 9am). We aim to have 32-44 fire engines available, known as our standard operating level. We often exceed this level at night.



4.0% of all contracted hours have been lost due to sickness. Operational colleagues have lost 4.0% of contracted hours to sickness and employees in Customer Service teams have lost 3.9%.



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Home Fire Safety Visits and Safe & Well Visits



7,141 Home Safety Visits.



5,068 Safe and Well Visits

Building Safety

- 99.7% of building consultations received (894 of 897) have been completed within 21 days.
- 607 audits have been carried out in total so far this year, 395 of which were in business premises in line with the Authority's risk-based inspection programme.



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C. Response and resilience update

October 2024

For further information please contact:
Matt Deadman, Director – Response and Resilience



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Ashford Live Fire

- Demolition of the old fire training house is complete.
- We are conducting limited upgrades to our Training Centre facility to provide additional live fire capacity.
- In the interim we are using a third party location to provide live fire training.



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Equipment tagging



- We are moving into the rollout phase of our asset tagging project.
- This project will provide colleagues with an electronic means of testing and recording information on our operational equipment.
- Benefits will include better management information to support more informed buying decisions; reduced likelihood of equipment failure as a result of inadequate maintenance; increased legal compliance; and quicker replacement of faulty items.



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Lightweight fire kit

- £400k investment.
- Lightweight for wildfires / non-structural fires.
- Reduces wearer heat stress.
- Reduces wear and tear on more expensive structural PPE.
- Kit purchased, wearers sized, anticipated live late 2024/early 2025.



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Mobilising system replacement



- As previously briefed KFRS is now part of the Network Fire Service Partnership (NFSP) with Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Dorset and Wiltshire and Devon and Somerset Fire services. The partnership has just procured a new mobilising system, and the successful company was NEC Software Solutions UK.
- This new modern system will help us provide the best possible service to our customers and through the partnership we have achieved economies of scale with the Kent project team reducing the expected cost of the system replacement by £500K over 10 years.
- The system also ensures that every customer in Kent will have access to 4 separate control rooms – if we don't answer the call in 6 seconds it goes to another fire control room and if it is not answered in 10 seconds it goes to two further control rooms. This level of resilience is unrivalled across services outside the partnership.
- The system is expected to be live in quarter 3 of 2026/27.



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XVR Centre of excellence

- KFRS have been awarded Centre of Excellence status for the way we use and provide our XVR training – a fantastic result for our training team.
- XVR is a digital tool for simulating emergency incidents for the purposes of training firefighters and emergency responders.
- This approach allows commanders to develop their command skills in a safe and realistic environment.



XVR
simulation
Part of LearnPro Group



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Vehicles



- Over the summer we took delivery of 2 new nationally provided vehicles.
- Detection Identification and Monitoring (hazardous materials) van – replaces current capability.
- Enhanced Logistics Support vehicle – upgrade to previous capability.



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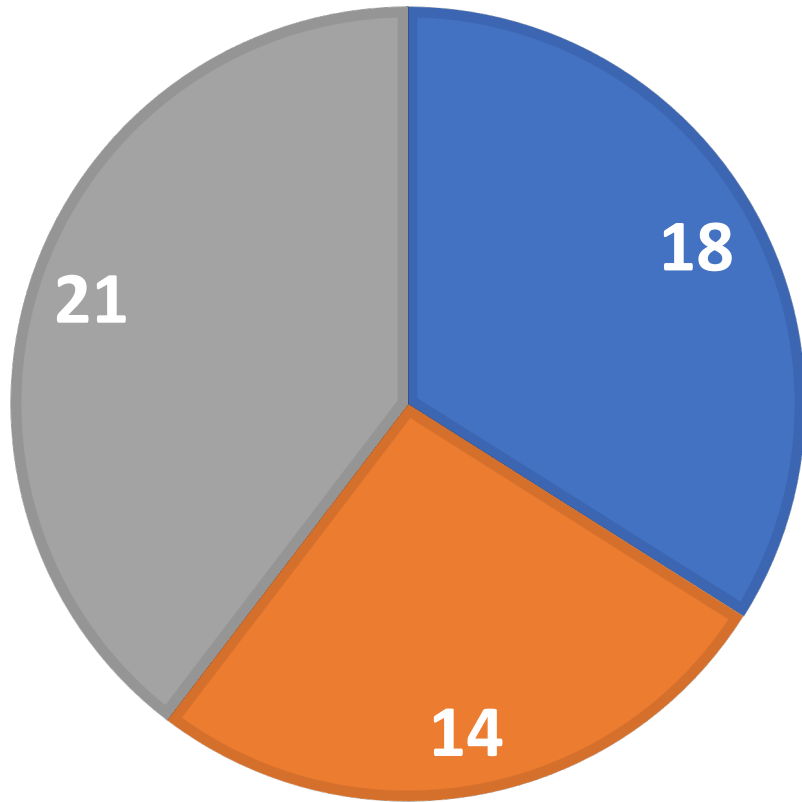
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Exercises July - October

Members Exercise: The next opportunity for members to attend a KFRS exercise is being planned for the end of February, beginning of March and is due to be held at Bluewater shopping Centre

EXERCISES JULY - OCTOBER 2024

■ Live play exercises ■ Tabletop exercises ■ Risk visits



Key exercises included:

- Leeds Castle
- Canterbury Cathedral
- Maidstone hospital (Orthopaedic unit)



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D. Protection, prevention and engagement update

October 2024

For further information: please contact
Jon Quinn, Director – Protection, Prevention and Customer Engagement

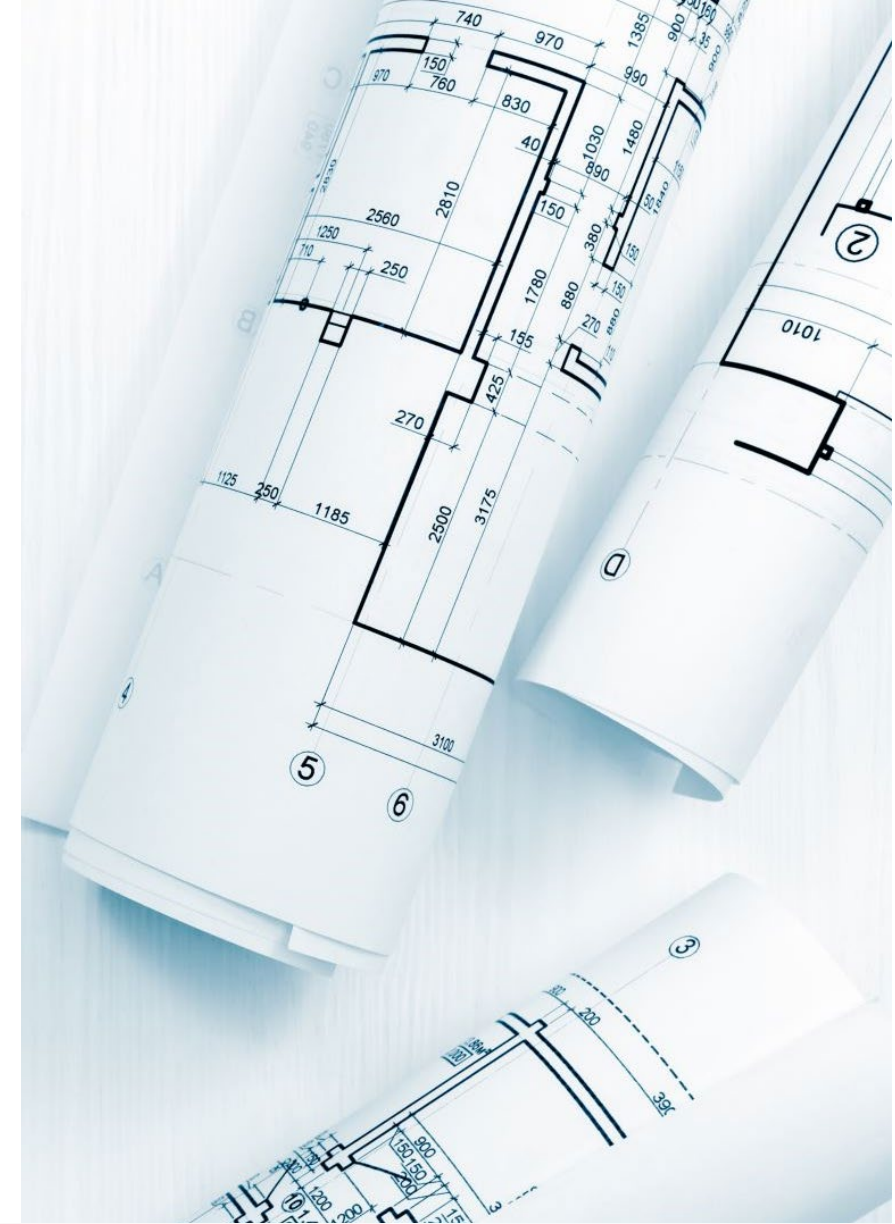


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Building Safety

- Work is progressing with the Building Safety Regulator (HSE). The Building Assessment Certification for tall buildings has commenced. The new process is taking shape including training of the team.
- We have recruited two trainee fire engineers, which is vital to the work of the department and the wider service. These roles offer entry-level opportunities for colleagues to progress into competent fire engineer positions, thereby enhancing resilience in these specialist skills.



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Building Safety

- The teams continues to gather information on derelict premises using the Service's 3D scanning capability. This enables crews and other agencies the opportunity to access risk information with an internal view of the premises and support firefighters responding to incidents
- Three Building Safety Inspectors are now registered on the Fire Risk Auditors Register, showing enhanced competency and recognition from the Engineering Council and the Institution of Fire Engineers.



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Customer Safety

- Education teams are now up to full establishment with all newly appointed colleagues having joined KFRS.
- The Aspire Programme, an early intervention initiative devised by KFRS Education, promotes aspirations and educates young people with regard to local risk. Alongside agencies such as Child Centre Policing and Young Lives Foundation, 152 young people participated in the Medway based sessions.
- The Fire Cadet Programme has seen 40 Cadets participate – with the Ramsgate cohort successfully completing the course in July.



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- Development work to integrate Customer Safety into the Dynamics 365 risk management system is complete. The 'Go-Live' will be on Monday, 18th November 2024. This is the last element of the project, which will ensure that risk information is shared across operational teams.
- A new Home Fire Safety Visit policy has been developed. The policy prioritises resources where the risk is greatest and details how we fulfil our legal responsibilities to provide fire prevention advice and promote fire safety.
- A new Safeguarding Officer has been recruited. We have attended NFCC Safer Recruitment training, which helps to ensure that colleagues and volunteers are suitable for working with vulnerable groups, such as children and adults at risk.



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Community Insight & Partnerships

- The team has developed a new process to more effectively identify trends within deliberate anti-social behaviour (ASB) fires. This new process allows for better tracking and analysis of our incident data, which in turn will enable the team to identify emerging patterns or trends in deliberate ASB fires at the earliest opportunity.
- We will provide 1,450 audible and 450 deaf alert accessible Carbon Monoxide alarms as part of an SGN-funded partnership. The alarms will be delivered during Home Fire Safety Visits, along with a CO awareness session and a helpful tips leaflet.



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- We have gone 'live' with a survey focusing on the device usage, safety knowledge, and disposal behaviors of rechargeable electricals and lithium-ion batteries. We have worked with local authority partners to promote this research. So far, we have received more than 1,000 responses since the launch on 29th. The data will help inform our safety and battery disposal messaging and is open until the end of October 2024.
- Throughout 2024, our Community Liaison Officers have completed 375 community insight forms, gathered from attending 188 individual events, which focused on engaging with seldomly heard and target groups within our community.



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If you use a mobile phone, laptop, or other device with a rechargeable battery, please take part in our lithium-ion battery survey.



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Engagement

Volunteers

- VRT have been successful in supporting at 68 incidents Jan-Aug and supported more than 145 customers who needed help with rehousing, salvage, landlord liaison and liaison with local authorities to meet their emergency support needs. The new welfare vehicle has been called upon to support 16 incidents providing a safe shelter and welfare for customers
- The amazing team of volunteers have supported with 261 events cross Kent and Medway and ensured members of the public are given great safety advice as well as ensuring the most needed customers receive a home fire safety visits
- Two teams are supporting successful Fire cadets programmes in Ramsgate (4 vols) and Rochester (6 vols) working closely with the Education team to review the service, training and needs to support the volunteers and wider team



Engagement

Communications and Marketing

- Our 'Make the Right Call' water safety campaign was launched and will run until September 2024. The campaign aims to educate runners and walkers about calling 999 for the fire service if they see someone in trouble in a lake, river, or other area of inland water in Kent and Medway.
- As part of the campaign, metal signs with the key message have been erected in water rescue hotspots across the county, and a wide range of digital tactics are being used to reach target audiences, including influencer marketing and Spotify advertising.
- We are developing plans for a smoke alarm campaign, set to go live in later in the autumn, which will focus on expiry dates as well as regular testing of smoke alarms. An out-of-date smoke alarm will be less effective at detecting smoke – even if the 'test' button is still working.



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Engagement

Events

- In early September the KFRS Graduation ceremony took place at the Gulbenkian Arts Centre in Canterbury. Our event was a new approach celebrating our new recruits in firefighting, control and building safety.
- This summer we delivered three Fire Station open days at Ramsgate, Paddock Wood and Thames-Side (over two days). Each event had an SEN hour before hand, which was well received. We had very positive feedback around the education value, friendly and helpful staff/volunteers and event organisation. Around 5k people attended.
- We have supported and delivered activities at Vaishaki in Gravesend, Margate Pride, Medway Pride and Canterbury Pride – working together with CIPs team and LGBTQ+ forum.



Engagement

Events

- Planning is underway for an October half-term event 'Spooky Spectacular'. It'll be a multi-agency event held in one of the boat slips at Historic Dockyard Chatham on 23 and 24 October. The event will be targeted at families living in high-risk areas in Medway and Swale, with the aim to support autumn and winter safety with fun for all the family.
- We trialled a new concept of holding a fire station open day in public spaces in June. The aim was to increase accessibility and visibility to a wider audience. 'The Neighbourhood Meet and Greet' in Ashford, Minnis Bay, New Romney and Shepherdswell were successful and were held during the week after school to target a specific audience.

BOOK FREE TICKETS

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Presents

A Spooky Spectacular

Fun for all the family

Engagement

Digital and Content

- We have installed new environmental graphics at Maidstone Training Centre - all part of the refurbishment - helping to create an inspiring, professional learning environment.
- Designed and installed new bay door graphics for 35 Thames-Side fire station, plans underway to do similar at 60 Maidstone are underway.
- Created a virtual reality (VR) version of the physical “hose down the house” firefighting activity for fire station open days, using commodity technology and in-house skills.
- We have redeveloped a new customer-focused approach to the building safety content on the KFRS website. It includes new research and best practice on improving user journeys applied.



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E. Freedom of information request update

October 2024

For further information please contact:
Owain Thompson, Head of Policy and Data Protection Officer



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Freedom of Information update 2024/25

*Q2 is currently incomplete as it covers the period from 01/07/2024 to 23/09/2024.

**Although this is not a requirement in the Cabinet Office Code of Practice for Freedom of Information Requests 2018, it is reported to Members as part of our commitment to transparency and good governance.

| | 2024/25 | | | | |
|--|---------|----|----|----|-------|
| | Q1* | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total |
| The number of requests received during the period | 38 | 25 | | | |
| The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed | 0 | 4 | | | |
| The number of the received requests that were processed in full | 38 | 21 | | | |
| The number of requests where the information was granted in full | 27 | 15 | | | |
| The number of requests where the information was refused in full | 2 | 0 | | | |
| The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part | 9 | 6 | | | |
| The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review | 2 | 0 | | | |
| Number of data subject access requests** | 4 | 3 | | | |



Freedom of Information end of year update 2023/24

**Although this is not a requirement in the Cabinet Office Code of Practice for Freedom of Information Requests 2018, it is reported to Members as part of our commitment to transparency and good governance.

| | 2023/24 | | | | |
|--|---------|----|----|----|-------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total |
| The number of requests received during the period | 45 | 40 | 25 | 46 | 156 |
| The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The number of the received requests that were processed in full | 45 | 40 | 25 | 46 | 156 |
| The number of requests where the information was granted in full | 30 | 26 | 18 | 31 | 105 |
| The number of requests where the information was refused in full | 3 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part | 12 | 9 | 7 | 14 | 42 |
| The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| Number of data subject access requests** | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 15 |



The Digital Information and Smart Data (DISD) Bill

The Data Protection and Digital Information (DPDI) Bill the previous Conservative government was seeking to introduce failed to make it through the Parliamentary wash up before the 04 July general election.

In relation to the Labour government's plans for data use and protection, in the King's Speech on 17 July the Digital Information and Smart Data (DISD) Bill was announced. The stated intention is to: *"harness the power of data for economic growth, to support a modern digital government, and to improve people's lives"*.

The DISD Bill will be accompanied by the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill, which aims to give greater powers to regulators to encourage organisations to implement better cybersecurity defences, thus further protecting individuals' data.

It is not yet known how distinct the drafting of the DISD Bill will be from that of the DPDI Bill, but it is likely to have implications for individuals, businesses and public sector organisations.

Members will be updated as more detail emerges.



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F. Annual update on Members' standards and allowances

October 2024

For further information please contact:

Marie Curry, Clerk to the Authority or Jenny Waterman, Independent Person for Standards



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Standards

- Under the Localism Act 2011 all local authorities ‘must promote and maintain high standards of conduct’ by their Members.
- As part of this the Authority receives an annual report on Members’ Standards.
- Pleasing to report that no complaints related to breaches of the Code of Conduct made since the last meeting.
- To date, the Authority has never received an allegation of misconduct by a Member.
- Regular contact is maintained between the Independent Person and the Clerk to the Authority. This includes:
 - being in receipt of electronic agendas for all meetings of the Authority and Audit and Governance Committee.
 - annual attendance at this meeting and any other relevant meetings
 - keeping the Authority updated on relevant information that is published in relation to Local Government Standards in Public Life



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Member Allowances

- **Allowances and Expenses Paid to Members during 2023/24 financial year** - In order to meet the requirements of the 2003 Regulations, it is a legal requirement that the Authority publishes each year details of the allowances and expenses which it has paid to each of its Members during the preceding year.
- A schedule which lists each Member and the allowances and expenses they were paid by the Authority in accordance with its Members' Allowances Scheme during the 2023/24 financial year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) can be accessed [here](#) for Members' information.



G. Pensions and Pension Board meeting update

October 2024

For further information please contact:
Matt Deadman, Director - Response and Resilience



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- In accordance with Public Service Pensions Act 2013, the Authority established a Pension Board for Firefighters' Pension Schemes.
- Board comprises representatives of both the employer and employees.
- To ensure Members are kept informed, and provide assurance of compliance with the Act, minutes of the Pension Board meetings are routinely reported to the Authority.
- The agendas and minutes for all Pension Board meetings are published on the Authority's website.
- The agreed minutes of the Pension Board meeting held on 23rd July can be viewed [here](#)
- Matthews Update:
 - 1,291 Letters sent out by end of Dec 2023 (900+ letters re-sent)
 - 556 Expression of Interest forms received back
 - 431 Statements issued to members who expressed an interest
 - 98 Statements in progress
 - 14 Statements due to be looked at shortly
 - 10 Cases referred to another FRA (last employment)
 - 3 Cases where member is not eligible

