

West Sussex
Fire & Rescue Service

Annual Statement of Assurance 2024-25



PREVENTION



PROTECTION



SERVICE DELIVERY



PEOPLE



ASSETS

Contents

Contents	2
Foreword from Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue	3
Introduction from the Chief Fire Officer	4
Community Risk Management Plan	5
What is a Statement of Assurance?	6
Governance	7
Service Executive Board	8
His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services	9
Financial Performance Report 2024/25	12
Our People	13
Performance Assurance Framework	14
Progress against our CRMP Strategic Priorities	16
Strategic Priority 1: Preventing fires and emergencies from happening	16
Strategic Priority 2: Protecting people, firefighters and property by making buildings as safe from fire as they can be ..	20
Strategic Priority 3: Responding to fires and emergencies quickly and effectively	22
Strategic Priority 4 Have a safe and valued workforce	26
Strategic Priority 5 Making best use of resources	34
Supporting Appendices	40
Appendix A - Service Performance and Assurance Framework– Core Measures over last 3 years	40
Appendix B – Framework Requirements	42

Foreword from Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue



Welcome to West Sussex Fire Authority's Statement of Assurance which provides details on how the authority has met the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, during the period of 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

This annual report is designed to provide assurance to the communities of West Sussex that the fire and rescue service's resources are properly managed and accounted for, business is conducted lawfully, and the authority is fulfilling its statutory duties.

Since the publication of the previous Statement of Assurance, I am confident that West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service has continued to provide outstanding services to the communities it serves. In October 2024, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services published their third full inspection report, and the service was rated as 'good' or 'adequate' in all areas, with inspectors removing any previous causes for concern.

The inspectorate also stated that service has improved the way in which operational staff prioritise and undertake prevention activity, leading to increased community engagement and a substantial increase in the amount of Safe and Well Visits delivered to those most vulnerable. Since the last inspection, the service has delivered a record number of Safe and Well Visits in a single quarter with 1,552 residents now living safer in their homes.

I strongly believe that West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service does an excellent job of putting the people of West Sussex at the centre of everything they do, and teams across the service work extremely hard to keep those living, working and visiting West Sussex safe from harm. These values are rooted in the service's five strategic priorities which are set out in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP); a plan which sets out the direction of the fire and rescue service over the course of four years – until 2026. A lot of work is going on behind the scenes to prepare the next CRMP, and I look forward to seeing it become published and embedded in the service's delivery plans next year.

As the Cabinet Member, I am satisfied that West Sussex Fire Authority's business was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money was used efficiently, effectively and in accordance with The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018.

Duncan Crow, Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue

Introduction from the Chief Fire Officer

Welcome to West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service's Statement of Assurance for 2024/25. This report provides details on the service's performance throughout the previous year regarding our finances, governance and operational responsibilities.

The most notable event during this year was the publication of our latest inspection report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, which evidenced the huge transformation journey the service has been on since its first inspection in 2018.



We also launched our latest wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign which saw around 1,000 people apply for a role. At the time of publication, the first cohort of successful candidates are being put through their paces as they embark on their 13-week residential training course – the first to be held at Platinum House, our award-winning training centre and fire station in Horsham.

Other significant events during this timeframe include the major training exercise at Chichester Cathedral which tested our emergency procedures in the event of a fire at the landmark, a record-breaking summer of fire station open days with more than £18,000 raised for local charities, and several large-scale flooding incidents in Bracklesham, Earnley and Littlehampton on 9 April 2024.

Throughout 2024/25 we continued to make great strides towards completing the five strategic priorities set out in our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). We have also been able to evaluate the success of previous projects we have completed during this CRMP's lifecycle, such as responding to the lowest number of unwanted fire signals since records began.

Making West Sussex a safer place to live, work and visit is at the heart of everything we do. Looking ahead, we will continue to build on our successes, and we are firmly committed make improvements wherever we can.

Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, Chief Fire Officer

Community Risk Management Plan

It is a statutory requirement that all fire and rescue authorities produce a [Community Risk Management Plan](#) (CRMP). The plan identifies the risks present in our communities for those who live, work, visit and travel in West Sussex.



The plan is owned by the Fire and Rescue Authority and is delivered by WSFRS. The plan sets out how we address all foreseeable risk across our county and also provides an overview of what influences our service in terms of our national and local obligations. To address the foreseeable risk the plan ensures it is aligned to the priorities set out in the WSCC Plan 2021-25.

1. Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations.
2. A sustainable and prosperous economy.
3. Helping people and communities fulfil their potential.
4. Making best use of resources.

We will always seek to be efficient and effective and to achieve good value for the local community. This means working collaboratively with neighbouring fire and rescue services and other blue light services as well as by maximising our position within WSCC by actively participating in partnership opportunities including tackling the social causes of fire and other emergencies.



What is a Statement of Assurance?

Fire and rescue authorities must provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their CRMP.

Statements of assurance should be open and transparent, demonstrating accountability to communities who expect to know how these services are being provided. This document outlines the way in which the Fire Authority and its fire and rescue service delivered the requirements contained in the National Fire and Rescue Framework and the authority's CRMP during 2024/2025.

The West Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority set strategic priorities for the period of 2022-26 based on thorough risk analysis:

1. Preventing fires and emergencies from happening.
2. Protecting people, firefighters and property by making buildings as safe from fire as they can be.
3. Responding to fires and emergencies quickly and effectively.
4. Have a safe and valued workforce.
5. Making best use of resources.



Where there are competing priorities, we will focus resources on the area of greatest need. At times this may mean that the order in which we do things is subject to change. This report will look at each area of our service delivery; Protection, Prevention, Service Delivery, Strategic Risk and People and then summarise the progress against the five strategic priorities through projects.

Governance

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) is the Fire Authority for West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) responsible for;

- Firefighting and rescue
- Protecting people and property from fire
- Promoting fire safety in the home
- Providing special services for emergencies

WSCC is made up of 70 Councillors who are each elected to represent one division every four years. Functions are allocated across the Full Council, the Cabinet and a range of committees. Full Council is the Fire Authority and has delegated executive powers of the Fire and Rescue Authority to the Cabinet.

The council's constitution explains how the county council operates and decisions are made, and the procedures which are followed to make sure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. All members meet as the full council, and they are responsible for deciding some of the overall policies and setting the budget each year.

The Cabinet proposes the key policy decisions of the council, which are subject to agreement by the full county council. Each cabinet member is allocated a portfolio of work for which they take personal responsibility. The Cabinet Member that holds responsibility for the fire and rescue service is the Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue. During the period the WSFRS Statement of Assurance refers, the Cabinet Member role has been undertaken by Cllr Duncan Crow, who has been supported by the Chief Fire Officer, Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, in making operational decisions aligned with the County Council's Constitution. Key decisions (decisions that amount to over £500,000 in value or significantly affects more than one division) relating to the fire and rescue service and transformation plans of the service have been subject to endorsement by the cabinet member as well as subject to scrutiny by the Fire & Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee which was established at the full meeting of the County Council on 17 December 2019.

The Council's Cabinet, the FRS Scrutiny Committee and Full Council meet in public as a demonstration of accountability to the residents of West Sussex. These meetings can be attended in person or viewed via the council's website. As a Fire Authority the fire and rescue service is linked to a range of the council's key strategic planning areas that aids a holistic approach to keeping residents safe. These include emergency management, transport and spatial planning, the design of support for vulnerable people, flood risk management and the overall place shaping and democratic ownership of an area.

Service Executive Board

Our Service Executive board is made up of our Principal Officers, supported by strategic advisors from Organisational Assurance & Governance as well as WSCC corporate functions representatives from HR and Finance.

These are:

Chief Fire Officer Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Gary Ball, Interim Assistant Chief Fire Officer Dave Bray and Interim Assistant Chief Officer Sabrina Pennington-Down.

Strategic Advisors to Service Executive Board include Senior Finance Business Partner and Senior Human Resources Business Partner.



Sabrina Cohen-Hatton
Chief Fire Officer



Gary Ball
Deputy Chief Fire Officer



Sabrina Pennington-Down
Interim Assistant Chief Officer



Dave Bray
Interim Assistant Chief Fire Officer

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services

In April 2024, the service welcomed [His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary of Fire & Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\)](#) into service to carry out our round three inspection programme. The inspectorate delivers their function as detailed within [part three, Section 28 of the Fire Services Act 2004](#)

The ten-week programme focused on three areas, effectiveness, efficiency and how we look after our people. The inspectorate spent time meeting colleagues from several areas of the organisation to establish a holistic view of the how we are performing our statutory obligations and delivering our strategic objectives as set out within the service's CRMP.

The inspection team visited the following areas:

- Service Delivery
- Protection
- Prevention
- Development & Operational Training
- Strategic Risk & Improvements
- Fleet

The programme also included financial, partner agency and Fire Control interviews along with several focus groups involving WSFRS employees from both uniformed and non-uniformed roles.

In October 2024, HMICFRS published our report which demonstrated the progress made since the last inspection in 2021. The inspectorate identified improvements relating to a positive work culture, aligning our financial, workforce plans and resources in-line with our CRMP. As a service we acknowledge that we have more to do to continue and strengthen improvements for our communities and workforce and we endeavour to manage these areas through staff engagement, internal governance, delivery plans and our CRMP.

WSFRS Judgement outcomes 2024

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Understanding fire and risk	Responding to fires and emergencies		
	Preventing fire and risk	Responding to major incidents		
	Public safety through fire regulation	Future affordability		
	Best use of resources	Promoting values and culture		
	Right people, right skills	Promoting fairness and diversity		
		Managing performance and developing leaders		



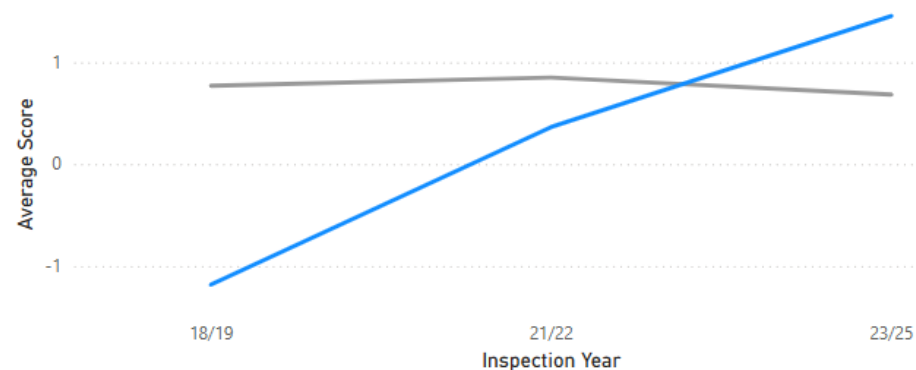
As we look ahead, the service continues to attend national HMICFRS engagement opportunities as well as more service level meetings between the Service Liaison Officer (SLO) and Service Liaison Lead (SLL) for HMICFRS. WSFRS will welcome the HMICFRS back into service in 2026 for the next round of inspection programme.

Below demonstrates West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS improvement journey and comparison to other Fire and Rescue Services showing a positive trajectory which we are proud to share in Year 3 of this CRMP.

Year	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Getting the right people with the right skills	Making best use of resources	Making the FRS affordable now and in the future	Managing performance and developing leaders	Preventing fires and other risks	Promoting the right values and culture	Protecting the public through fire regulation	Responding to fires and other emergencies	Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	Understanding Risk of fire and other emergencies
2018/19	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement
2021/22	Requires Improvement	Good	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Good	Requires Improvement	Good
2023/25	Adequate	Good	Good	Adequate	Adequate	Good	Adequate	Good	Adequate	Adequate	Good

Average Score by Inspection Year and Service

Service ● Others ● West Sussex



Top 10 Average Scores

18/19	Avg. Score	21/22	Avg. Score	23/25	Avg. Score
Lancashire	2.09	Kent	2.36	Merseyside	2.00
Staffordshire	2.09	Dorset and Wiltshire	2.18	Greater Manchester	1.91
Cambridgeshire	2.00	West Midlands	2.18	Nottinghamshire	1.91
West Yorkshire	2.00	Lancashire	2.09	Staffordshire	1.73
Merseyside	1.91	Cleveland	2.00	Cambridgeshire	1.55
Cleveland	1.73	Humberside	2.00	Cheshire	1.55
Dorset and Wiltshire	1.73	Merseyside	2.00	West Sussex	1.45
Royal Berkshire	1.73	Nottinghamshire	2.00	West Yorkshire	1.45
South Yorkshire	1.73	Royal Berkshire	2.00	Hereford and Worcester	1.36
Derbyshire	1.55	Shropshire	2.00	Northumberland	1.36
Oxfordshire	1.55				

Financial Performance Report 2024/25

How your money is spent

The budget 2024/25 (including grant funding) was £37,245,482.

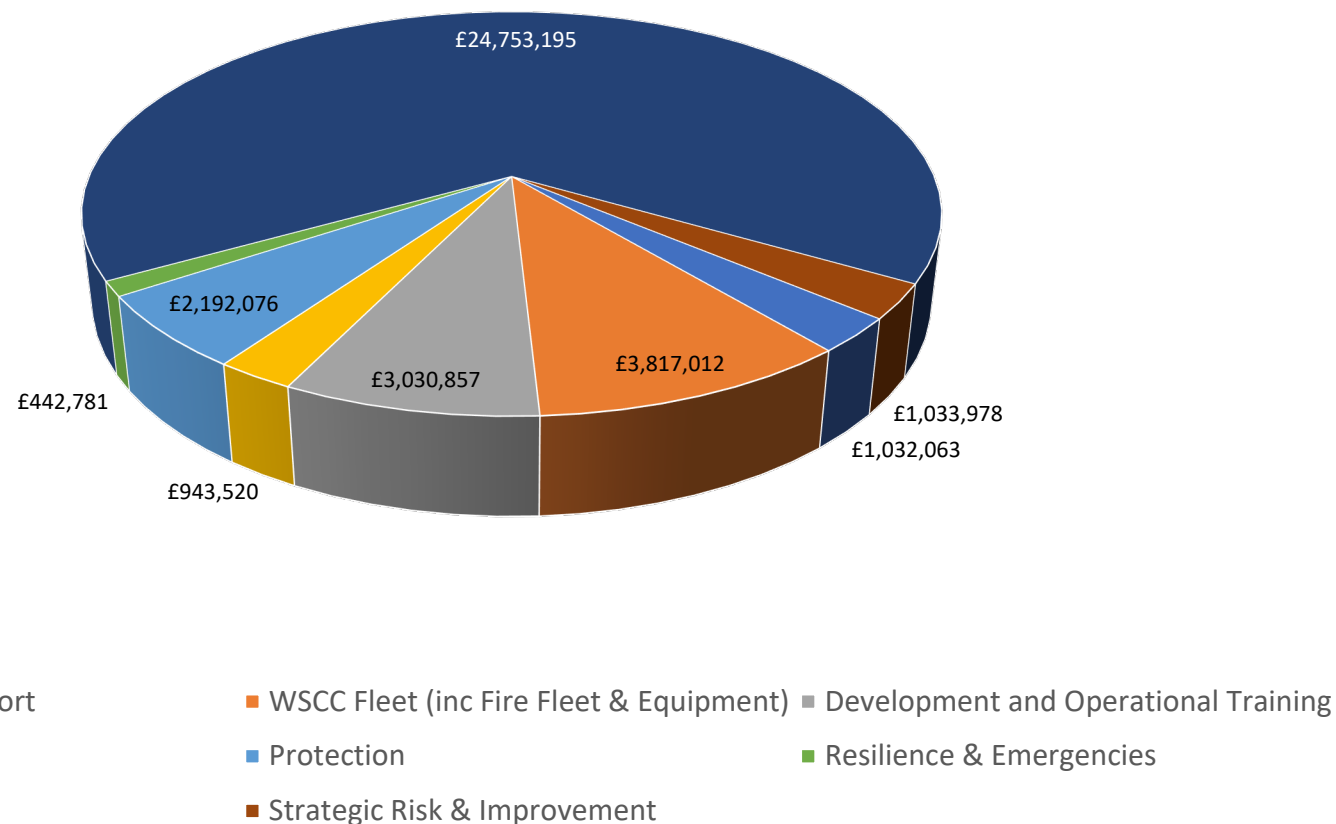


Figure 1 – FRS Expenditure 2024-25

Our People

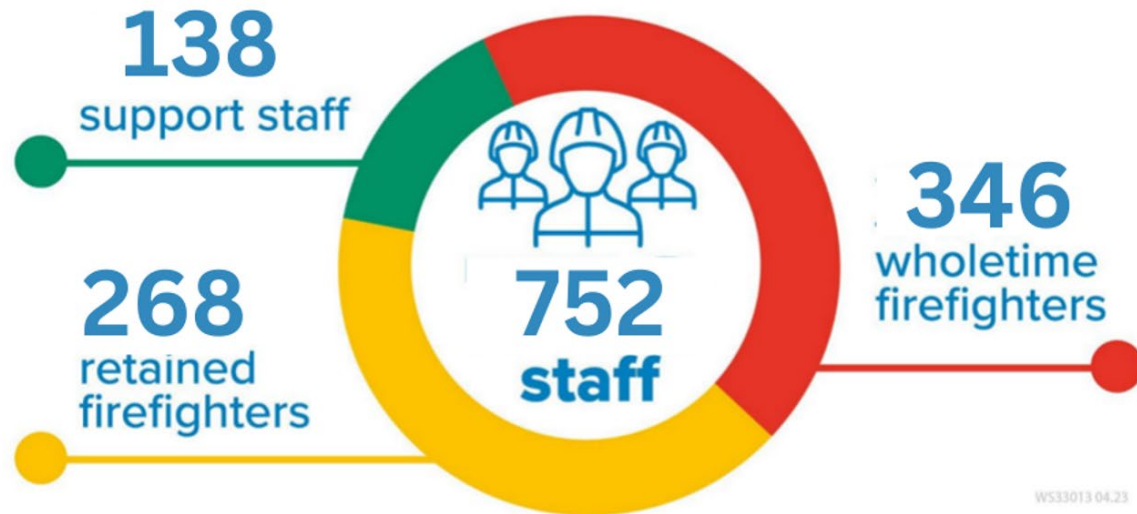
At the end of March 2025 our workforce total of 752 included 346 wholetime firefighters, 268 retained duty system firefighters (on-call) and 138 support staff working for WSFRS.

When reviewing the diversity of our workforce, in the past year:

Gender diversity in the service has improved by just over 1%, with 18% of the workforce are women.

Colleagues of an ethnic minority account for 4.46% of the workforce, a 0.23% increase since 2024.

Within this time, our total number of employees has reduced due to turnover of retained duty system firefighters.



WS33013 04.23

Performance Assurance Framework

Our Performance and Assurance Framework (PAF) provides structure and governance arrangements to ensure that the statutory obligations, functions, and strategic commitments of the service are being suitably scrutinised and delivered. As part of the [Our Council Plan](#) we ensured a clear link to our PAF with four key measures highlighted to provide assurance. This golden thread continues through our core performance measures and through to service objectives into team plans and individual performance objectives.

Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations.

OUTCOME - A timely and proportionate approach to prevention through fire safety inspections of business premises

OUTCOME – Support to people when they need it through Safe & Well Visits to those at highest risk.

	24/25 Target	Performance
Number of Safe & Well Visits delivered to those at highest risk	5000	5948
Fire safety inspections of business premises (as determined by the Risk Based Inspection Programme) carried out per year	1000	1235

Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential.

OUTCOME - Safe and connected and cohesive communities measured through first appliance attendance to both critical fires and critical special service incidents.

	24/25 Target	Performance
Percentage of critical fires where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard	89%	90.24%
Percentage of critical special service incidents where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard	80%	81.9%

A critical incident is defined as one that is likely to involve a significant threat to life, structures, or the environment. The PAF examines performance on a quarterly basis across the four elements of service provision, corporate health, priority programmes and risk through a suite of core and service measures. In the reporting year 2024-25, we tracked the performance of 30 core measures against quarterly and end of year targets (detailed in Appendix A). These core measures are subject to scrutiny at our Strategic Performance Board, Service Executive Board and by the FRS Scrutiny Committee, ensuring organisational aims and objectives are achieved.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Annual Review



We have continued to make significant progress against our CRMP 2022-2026. Most notably, this year saw the publication of [our latest inspection report](#) from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). We received no "requires improvement" or "inadequate" ratings. Six areas were graded under a new criteria of "adequate", while five received "good" ratings. The cause of concern relating to people from the July 2022 report was also removed. The report is evident of our continuous improvement, demonstrating that we are providing the efficient and effective delivery of our service across all our Strategic Priorities.

Our progress includes: exceeding our target on the number of Safe & Well Visits delivered to those at highest risk, exceeding our target on the number of Fire Safety inspections of business premises (As determined by our Risk Based Inspection Programme), exceeding our target on the percentage of critical fires where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard, and exceeding our target on the percentage of critical special service incidents where the first appliance in attendance meets our emergency response standard. Across the year we delivered 5948 Safe & Well Visits, and 1235 Fire Safety inspections.

We continue to maximise the best use of our resources, where in 2024/25, Platinum House was named the Building Project of the Year at the SECBE Constructing Excellence awards ceremony. Incident Command Suite based at Platinum House by using state of the art technology to simulate emergencies and high-pressure situations for our Incident Commanders.

Our overall Performance remains strong across our 30 core measures. We continue to see an improvement in our productivity and efficiency through an increase in our protection and prevention activities on Fire Stations as a result of the delivery of our CRMP commitment to transition four-day crewed fire stations to operate seven days a week.

We continue to have a safe and valued workforce by strengthening our leadership, and continued development of our cultural values and behaviours, creating an environment of psychological safety which makes WSFRS a great place to work. Our focus for the year ahead is to continue our strong level of performance and following the publication of the second Grenfell Tower Inquiry report, as a service we have already considered the recommendations made under Phase 1 and have begun the same assurance work surrounding the Phase 2 recommendations. Finally, we will finalise and launch our next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2026-2030.

Gary Ball, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Progress against our CRMP Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 1: Preventing fires and emergencies from happening



We continue to place our communities at the centre of our activities and to prioritise those identified as being at a high risk of an accidental dwelling fire. We have carried on our crucial work supporting children and young people to develop their resilience and become fire safe adults. The prevention team have also continued to support our service delivery colleagues through the delivery of their Local Risk Management Plans.

Our strong performance has been recognised by HMICFRS who awarded us a Good grade in the latest round of inspections for our prevention work. However, we remain committed to making further improvements to the service we provide to the community of West Sussex and strive for Outstanding.

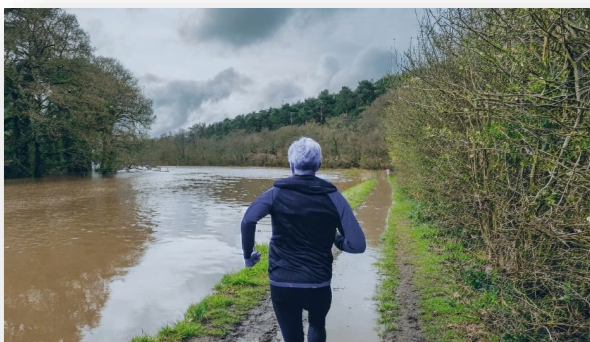
Throughout the past year our community fire safety officers and firefighters have been working hard to deliver Safe & Well Visits to those persons with the highest level of risk. We have completed 5948 Safe & Well Visits. These visits are completed in the customer's home and are an opportunity to identify potential fire hazards and provide fire safety advice and equipment to help keep people safe. In addition to Safe & Well Visits we have completed a further 987 Home Fire Safety Interventions to supply and fit fire safety equipment where needed. In total this year we have fitted 5539 smoke detectors and 2869 carbon monoxide detectors into people's homes.

Our teams understand the need to make every contact count and will offer additional support to those that need it most. This will often require them to signpost or refer a customer to partner agencies to help them live safely and independently. Where the need is most urgent, we will work with our partners to safeguard an individual. We made 44 safeguard referrals in the last year and 41 of these were submitted within 24 hours of the incident occurring. We aim to submit 100% of our safeguard referrals within 24 hours and recognise that more work needs to be done in this area. In the upcoming year we will provide enhanced safeguard training to our incident commanders to ensure that the right decision is made on every occasion to keep someone safe.



Place the public and communities at the centre of our activities.

Our internal quality assurance and evaluation framework continues to identify areas that we can make improvements to ensure that the customer is receiving the best possible service. Learning identified has led to subsequent improvements being made to the products we provide. We have begun a project to deliver a Community Engagement Plan which will enable the fire service to understand how our community perceives risk in their local area, as well as how we can better meet their needs.



**Enjoy time near water safely.
Stay away from the water's edge.**



BE WATER AWARE

We continue to support the NFCC Campaigns Calendar which highlights specific risks throughout the year. These campaigns are presented through our media channels in conjunction with our central comms team. This messaging is also supported by stations as part of their Local Risk Management Plans and by our partners through relevant channels. Additional safety campaigns are also undertaken where emerging risks are identified. Risks such as emollient creams, lithium-ion batteries and wheat bags are recent examples of targeted campaigns focussed on emerging risks.

This year we have introduced a new process to ensure that all customers who have received a referral to a partner organisation have received the help they needed. During a Safe and Well Visit our staff may identify that a customer would benefit from support from another agency and make a referral for them. We now return to these customers to check that the partner agency has engaged with the customer and that they are receiving the support needed.

Develop our capacity, through our frontline staff, volunteers and the frontline staff of partner agencies.

Our volunteers are an asset to the fire service, and they continue to play a significant role in supporting their local fire stations and community engagements. In the past year, our volunteers have provided 2333 hours of their time to help us keep our communities safe from fires and other emergencies.

If you are interested in joining our incredible team of volunteers, please visit our [Fire & Rescue Service Community Volunteer](#) page

The fire service has continued to work with our partner agencies to strengthen and grow our network. Whilst we recognise the impact that health and wellbeing does have on a person's risk of fire, we are simply not specialists in those

areas. We collaborate closely with our partner agencies to provide and receive specialist support, information, and training. We form one part of a wider network of agencies working together to keep people safe.

We continue to work closely with Public Health to identify and support vulnerable people, including those susceptible to falling, and those who choose to continue smoking. This work ensures that the customer remains safe from fire and are able to escape if needed, whilst supporting the wider goals of the health agenda.

Provide school children with fire safety education and deliver programmes so children and young people can make safer decisions and fulfil their potential.

We continue to support children and young people with their fire safety education and have completed 241 school visits in the past year, including those made to alternative education establishments. Those children that have received and understood our fire safety message, carry this with them into adulthood and their future homes.

The prevention team have delivered 12 youth engagement courses to 140 children and young people. Using techniques traditionally found on the fire service drill ground to help develop teamwork, build resilience, and increase their fire safety awareness.

We continue to support children and young people that have demonstrated fire-setting behaviours. The team work closely with the individual through our FireWise programme to highlight the dangers of fire and to promote positive change. We have worked with 42 children & young people under this programme.

You can find lots of exciting and informative educational information for children, parents, carers and teachers on [WSFRS's Learning Zone](#)



Strengthen and grow our partnerships, working together to keep the individuals and communities safer.

We work closely with Public Health to ensure that we are supporting the wider health agenda. This is particularly relevant as those individuals with poor health and wellbeing are more likely to suffer an accidental dwelling fire. Engaging with these individuals at the earliest stage ensures that they are safe from fire.

We have signed a regional agreement with neighbouring fire and rescue services to ensure that we have a standardised process for managing safeguard concerns. This ensures that those persons who need the greatest help are supported.

We continue to support the Safer West Sussex Plan and continue to look for opportunities to work across the county council to ensure that the customer receives the right care, from the right agency.

Deliver targeted community safety campaigns to address the risks identified

We continue to work closely with our partners in the Safer Sussex Road Partnership. This partnership works to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads. Through support of the partnership, we have been able to deliver 10 Adult Biker Down & 5 Young Biker Down sessions with a total 446 spectators attending Biker Down events across the county to promote safe road use and instruct bikers on how to react to a road traffic collision.

We have also delivered Safe Drive, Stay Alive roadshows to 5 Colleges, presenting to 3530 young people. These roadshows are crucial to raise awareness of the Fatal Five: Excessive speed, Drink or drug driving, Distracted driving, Not wearing a seatbelt and Careless Driving.

For more information visit our [road safety webpage](#).

We have tested 286 electric blankets and identified 105 as defective. Ensuring that these fire risks are removed and that new blankets are provided.

We also continue to support the NFCC campaign calendar through central campaigns and those undertaken by fire station as part of their Local Risk Management Plan.



Strategic Priority 2: Protecting people, firefighters and property by making buildings as safe from fire as they can be



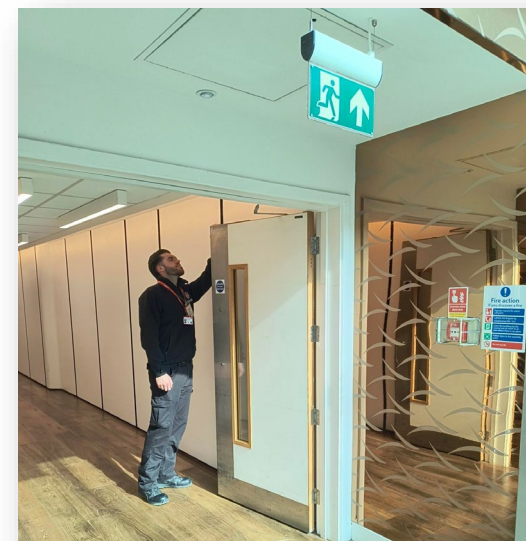
The highlight for Fire Protection in 2024/25 was receiving a "Good" rating from HMICFRS. This recognition reflects the positive impact of the changes we've implemented over the past few years, ensuring effective use of our legislative powers and appropriate fire regulation activities to protect the public. Back in 2018, during the first round of HMICFRS inspections, WSFRS was one of only three Fire & Rescue Services (FRSs) in England rated as inadequate for Fire Protection. Now, in the latest round of inspections, WSFRS stands out as the only one among those three to achieve a "Good" rating.

Throughout the year, our team of fire safety inspectors has worked efficiently and effectively carrying out fire safety audits on 1235 premises from our Risk Based Inspection Programme and using their enforcement powers proportionately to build legal cases against Responsible Persons (RP) who have placed members of the public at a risk of death or serious injury in the event of a fire.

This is activity that we only take in the most serious of cases. During 2024/25 we have progressed two cases through the courts, both of these resulted in guilty verdicts. The Responsible Person for one of these [cases](#) was sanctioned to more than £9000 in fines and costs, whilst the RP in the other [case](#) received a six month custodial sentence, suspended for 12 months, 150 hours of unpaid community work, and £1000 in fines.

Our Water and Access team have evaluated 1988 planning applications, raising 354 conditions on these schemes to ensure that fire hydrants are installed in appropriate locations, and that road widths are adequate for fire engine access. Additionally, our Hydrant Inspectors have surveyed and tested 7581 fire hydrants to ensure that they are fully operational for firefighting needs. This work keeps us on track to inspect every single fire hydrant across West Sussex on a three yearly cycle.

Our complex building team has reviewed over 500 building regulation consultations, responding to every single one of these within the 15 working day time limit, to ensure appropriate firefighting safety systems are being installed in new builds and refurbishments. This year the team has also started receiving workloads from the Building Safety Regulator relating to assessing high-rise residential buildings as part of their applications for



Building Assessment Certificates. This new responsibility stems from the implementation of the Building Safety Act 2022, enacted following the Grenfell Tower fire.

Our Operational Risk Information Management Team have reviewed a total of 302 site specific risk information cards to ensure their accuracy and appropriateness. This work guarantees that our firefighters and Incident Commanders have access to detailed information about building risks, enabling them to make informed, risk-based decisions during incidents. Additionally, the team has begun rolling out training and templates for the Service Delivery crews to complete Tactical Fire Plans for those premises within the county that pose the highest level of risk to our firefighters. This represents the next step in enhancing our operational risk information management, in line with the plan that we set out to HM Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services during our 2024 inspection.



This past year, we expanded our Primary Authority Scheme by partnering with Pilgrims Friend Society, who provide residential care and independent living housing for older people. By assisting them with their fire safety management policies and processes, we can better protect some of the more vulnerable members of our communities across England.

We have made an exciting advancement in succession planning for the Fire Safety department while also increasing capacity for our Fire Safety Regulators. Several Service Delivery personnel have commenced their training to attain a Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety, marking the beginning of their journey as Fire Safety Advisors. This qualification will allow them to conduct fire safety audits in simple premises. This means that some of our front line crews will be able competent to undertake tasks that will free up our more experienced and qualified Fire Safety

Regulators to focus on higher-risk premises within our Risk Based Inspection Programme.

In line with our commitments in the 2022-2026 Community Risk Management Plan, this past year we have delivered Tier 1 fire investigation training to every Crew Manager and Watch Manager across the service. This training enhances their ability to determine the cause of fire, improving our understanding of fire risk across the county. It also equips them to identify those fires that have been started deliberately, which are then defined as crime scenes. Preserving evidence at these scenes is crucial to support future investigations alongside our Sussex Police colleagues, ensuring offenders are brought to justice.

Strategic Priority 3: Responding to fires and emergencies quickly and effectively



As part of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's (WSFRS) commitment to community safety, our fire stations develop Local Risk Management Plans (LRMPs) which are reviewed annually. These plans are created in collaboration with stakeholders to set locally focused objectives that help mitigate risks to residents, businesses, and infrastructure. This approach aligns with our Vision - Proud to Serve - and our Mission Statement:

"We work with our communities and partners every day to prevent emergencies, helping everyone stay safe and improving lives in West Sussex. While emergencies are inevitable, we stand ready to respond swiftly, offering assistance in times of need and saving lives. We empower and support our teams to excel, uphold our values, and deliver the highest standards of service."



WSFRS adopted a Local Risk Management approach in 2019 as part of its broader strategy for managing community risks. LRMPs are built on data-driven risk assessments, combining local and national intelligence to identify, analyse, and evaluate potential threats. Fire station teams work closely with internal and external stakeholders to develop a clear understanding of local risks and needs. These assessments inform strategic decision-making, ensuring alignment with the organisation's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Priorities. We continue to review and strengthen our LRMPs, creating valuable internal and external relationships and improving collaboration.

In 2024/25, as a service we were rated as 'good' or 'adequate' in all areas from HMICFRS. Highlights from this report for Service Delivery included responding to fires and other emergencies and responding to major and multi-agency incidents which received ratings of 'adequate'.

Over the past year, WSFRS has responded to numerous incidents while collaborating with multi-agency partners. Notable incidents include the multiple hybrid and electric vehicle fire at Gatwick Long Stay car park, a mud bank rescue in West Wittering, a major multi-vehicle RTC on the M23 Northbound involving 40 casualties, a large-scale fire at a wood recycling plant in Albourne, various flooding incidents, and the fire at the Arun Waste Services Facility in Climping where the impact to residents meant that a multi-agency approach was needed and crews worked over several days in collaboration with partners supporting this incident, with the wider community impacted with roads, and businesses closed with media warning and informing messages shared.

As a service we review learning from a range of sources. Nationally through Organisational learning and Joint Organisational learning, regionally working with our neighbouring FRSs in the south east area as well as our local partner agencies and internally through our feedback and structured debriefing process. Our Operational Learning and Assurance team monitor and assure that lessons identified become lessons learnt and that we feedback to partners to consider impact at all levels both nationally and locally so that a process of continuous improvement is supported.





In addition to responding to incidents, we also work closely with our blue light partners to complete exercises at some of our risk premises, of which some were multi-agency events with our blue light partners. A standout moment of 2024 was the Chichester Cathedral exercise, the largest training event WSFRS has conducted in years and truly one for the history books. Hundreds of spectators lined the streets to watch as synthetic smoke billowed from the iconic landmark, setting the stage for a dramatic multi-service, multi-rescue incident response.

We have also successfully delivered the Welfare at Incidents project and begin other projects in our CRMP commitment.

These include: Developing a firefighting and rescue strategy that builds upon the previous introduction of new firefighting equipment and tactics (3.1). Co-developing an operational response model to maximise retained availability (3.5), and Enhancing and modernising COG provision to seven days a week

7am - 7pm (3.6). In addition we have continued to address and remedy the observations made by Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) across the different audits that have been carried out.

The service supports and provides representation at a number of events across the UK including the Annual Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas Staffordshire amongst many more, demonstrating our commitment to be part of the community and for serving local people.

In 2024 Service Delivery completed a realignment of roles to support teams, individuals and projects more effectively, also providing an opportunity to align Service Delivery Managers to support this as well as their own development.

Our commitment to ethical service delivery is reinforced by the Code of Ethics, which underpins our meeting structure supported by our Team Charter. In addition, our success and vision for the future comes down to these five P's which were implemented and embedded in 2024:

1. People: Supporting and valuing each member of our team.
2. Professional Standards: Upholding integrity and the expectations of our role.
3. Performance: Striving for excellence in everything we do.
4. Pennies: Managing resources responsibly and effectively.
5. Projects: Being innovative and embracing new ideas to improve and streamline our work.

Our efforts in delivering our protection and prevention duties within Service Delivery are demonstrated by conducting a total of 2,885 safe and well visits, with 2,431 targeting individuals in the medium to high-risk category, highlighting our risk-based approach in assisting the most vulnerable members of our communities. Additionally, we completed 521 fire safety checks for local businesses, providing invaluable fire safety advice and support.

Service Delivery Assurance Visits (SDAVs) continue to raise the importance of maintaining professional standards by identifying strengths and areas for improvement while reinforcing the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Leadership Behaviour Framework and the Code of Ethics, through our supportive, coaching-led assessments designed to uphold core response standards at our fire stations.

Through continuous improvement and strategic collaboration, WSFRS remains dedicated to protecting lives, reducing risks, and enhancing resilience within our communities.

Strategic Priority 4 Have a safe and valued workforce

Our People



As part of our people strategy, we have continued to foster an inclusive culture with psychological safety at its core.

Our people are extremely important to us, and our aim is to have a diverse, flexible, highly skilled, and agile workforce. During 2024/25, we made significant progress on our People Service Plan to support Strategic Priority 4 within our CRMP: 'Have a safe and valued workforce'. We are committed to empowering and supporting our people to deliver the highest standards when serving our communities and upholding the values of our fire and rescue service. The key priorities in our People Service Plan are:

- Strengthen Leadership and Line Management skills to support organisational cultural change, talent management and service delivery to the public.
- Develop our cultural values and behaviours, creating an environment of psychological safety which makes WSFRS a great place to work.
- Provide high quality training and development opportunities that respond to the needs of our staff, our desired culture, our service model needs and ensures performance improvement of services to the public.
- Strengthen our ability to provide an excellent service by diversifying our staff.
- Continue our work on creating a fair and equal place to work.
- Continue to support the health, wellbeing and ways of working for all our staff.



Values and culture



WSFRS prides itself on its values and the positive culture in the Service and want to assure the communities of West Sussex that we are fully committed to continually improving the culture of our Service. Following our HMICFRS inspection in 2024, we were extremely proud to have the 'Cause of Concern' around how staff understood and displayed the service's expected values and behaviours, formally removed, and it was noted by the HMI that: *"We found significant progress had been made around our recommendations and a detailed action plan had been put in place... a culture of psychological safety has been developed and displayed across the service."*

In WSFRS, we have values-based conversations at the start of all formal meetings regarding examples of recent best practice observed. In the past year, we have recorded 334 different instances of practice across these conversations. The 2024 Sector-wide [thematic inspection report](#) by HMICFRS into the handling of misconduct provided 15 recommendations, which we have made strong progress in implementing. These include training for managers on managing staff performance and welfare, robust welfare arrangements for staff involved in misconduct

processes, and a process for sharing learning from misconduct cases.

We have continued to build a culture of psychological safety where every aspect of our work aligns with the aspirations set out within the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Core Code of Ethics and the WSCC values. Following the completion of our team coaching programme of work, our core priority in the past 12 months has been to implement team charters across every team in the Service to ensure we continue to develop the right culture in WSFRS. We have used the output of this work, and our HMICFRS inspection report to inform the next phases of our culture development plans.

We have also enabled all of our colleagues to understand more about our Service through the introduction of a 'People & Culture Dashboard' which provides a visual overview of the make-up of our service, and the culture work being carried

out. This in turn, informs us of where/who may need more support, and which actions we should focus on taking next to further improve our culture.

Health & Wellbeing

Driving a positive Health & Wellbeing culture remains a key priority. We have continued to ensure we adopt best practice from the fire and rescue service sector research findings including mapping wellbeing provision to career and life stage transition points to ensure we provide a variety of effective avenues of support. In 2024, we created our Wellbeing action plan to ensure our wellbeing approach remains appropriate and targeted.

We offer a range of services to support all employees to maintain healthy lifestyles. We have a network of Wellbeing Champions who are all volunteers from throughout the service and play a vital part in our wellbeing approach. We also have a trained group of staff as mental health first aiders, to ensure they can work alongside the wellbeing champions in supporting our workforce. Alongside our Occupational Health provision and Employee Assistance Programme. We also continue to develop a close partnership with the National Fire Fighter's Charity to tailor our organisational wellbeing interventions to our Service.

We held a successful Wellbeing month in October, where we encouraged everyone to focus on their health and wellbeing and to increase healthy habits during the month and beyond. Our Wellbeing Champions and colleagues from across the service put together a package of activity covering physical, mental and emotional health.

We continued to develop and strengthen our wellbeing support dogs for staff, which we partner with the National OK9 network for this support. A Wellbeing Support Dog has been a proven concept across blue light services. This model of delivering additional wellbeing support to colleagues shows the significance in staff wellbeing and the dogs are another resource that can be used alongside current provisions.

We also have a Trauma Support Team who are trained in Trauma Incident Management (TRiM) as Practitioners. TRiM is a peer support programme which began in the British Military and is a recognised accreditation used by other blue light emergency services. We have



continued to grow this team further in 2024, with the addition of new team members and in providing support and advice for other areas of West Sussex County Council. Our service strongly promotes and supports openness of mental health which is underpinned by our ethos 'its ok not to be ok'.

We also continue our focus on ensuring high levels of fitness across our operational firefighters in their annual fitness testing. Fitness testing results are monitored by the Strategic Performance Board and have remained consistently high in 2024/25. All our operational colleagues are supported in their fitness through our network of Physical Training Instructors.

We were really pleased to see our Wellbeing supported recognised in our inspection, where the report noted the work of our Trauma Support Team, and our Wellbeing Champions, stating that we have "well-understood and effective well-being policies in place" and "a wide range of well-being support is available".

Equality, Diversity and inclusion: Why it's so important for our service

In West Sussex, we understand that a diverse workforce with individuals who can offer different skills, experience and knowledge, will benefit us as an organisation and ensure we are able to meet the needs of the communities we serve. We are passionate about creating a welcoming and inclusive workplace, which celebrates difference and attracts the best candidates from the widest talent pool, ensuring they feel psychologically safe and included and want to stay with our Service.

We have therefore committed ourselves to wide-ranging positive action initiatives, aiming to attract candidates from diverse groups to join us, and ensure they then feel psychologically safe to stay with our Service. We were proud to see this recognised in our section report as "Staff told us that they feel a sense of inclusion/belonging at work".

We recognise the scope and responsibility of our duty as a public authority to comply with the general equality duty, considering all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different people. People Impact Assessments are consistently conducted, monitored and tracked for completion across all internal governance decisions, to ensure we are proactive in meeting this duty. In the past year, we have refreshed the training for all of our managers who are required to complete People Impact Assessments and have introduced a new Screening Tool to support decision making when it comes to analysing the impacts of our decisions on people.

Within the past year we have also launched our Inclusive Behaviours team training. The training is part of our continued work in being an inclusive service, through an ongoing programme of learning & development on Dignity & Respect and follows on from our wider cultural work including our service-wide Team Coaching programme and Team Charter work. In addition, we continue to ensure staff are confident in how to raise concerns and receive support should they need it. To this end, we have a confidential reporting line, which ensures staff have an opportunity to report anonymously if they wish to. This resource complements our ongoing efforts to support and develop the culture of our Service.

In the past year we have continued to increase colleagues understanding across areas of identity, including development on; Neurodiversity; Menopause; LGBTQ+; and Celebration & recognition of Black History Month. We have also created more internal bitesize guides for all colleagues to understand what inclusivity means for specific groups.

Our Diversity Champions group and Diversity & Inclusion Steering Board remain key to our success in continually shaping and improving our inclusion work and ensuing West Sussex is a great place to work for all our people.

Leadership and Development

We recognise the significant contributions our managers and leaders make to our organization. To support their growth, as well as that of emerging managers, and to meet the evolving needs of the organization, we dedicate time to their development. Over the past year, we have completed our Leadership & Culture Development programme, which has seen every leader attend a series of workshops covering various aspects of their role, ensuring we lead our service consistently, and in alignment with our Code of Ethics. The programme commenced in 2022, and completed in 2024/25 with a focus on performance, development, conduct & consolidation. This programme is just the beginning of our leadership development offering in the service, with further plans now in place for induction to leadership and continual leadership development seminars.

Further support to develop our leaders has continued in the past year, with our implementation of 360 degree feedback and coaching. This programme of work has been rolled out to a further 2 levels of management across 2024/25. The feedback is structured around our Core Values, of which Inclusivity is a core component, enabling managers to develop themselves and in turn support colleagues in their team to be inclusive.

We have also completed the 3rd year of our Development Centres which develops and assesses readiness in individuals in progressing into, and through, leadership roles. These are running annually and are scheduled for a repeated programme of centres in 2025. We have put considerable effort into developing our promotion and progression processes so that they are fair and all staff can understand them, which was also recognised by the inspectorate in their visit. They confirmed we

do have a clear process with clear and objective selection criteria as well as an effective system to understand and remove the risk of disproportionality in recruitment processes.

Learning at all levels is supported by programmes of coaching, mentoring and underpinned by opportunities of shadowing, performance conversations, secondments, training and e-learning.

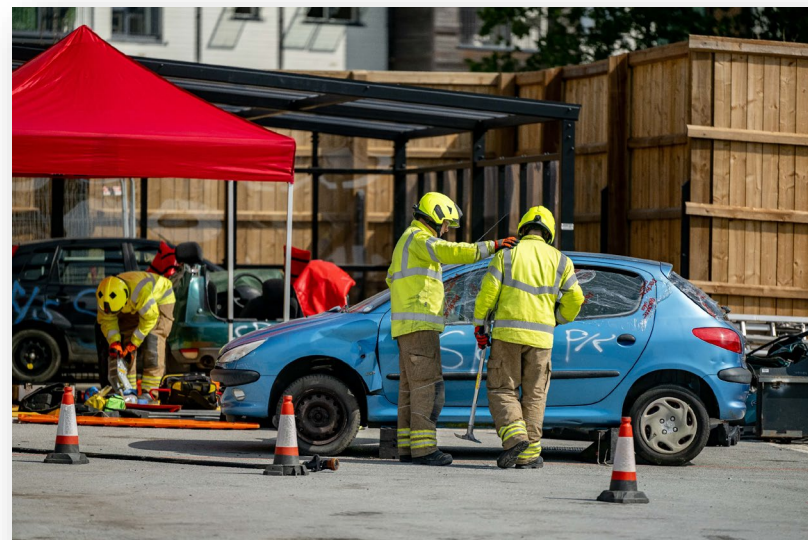
Our Development & Training Steering Group ensures we continue to provide supportive, inclusive and aligned development activity across the Service. We support colleagues to undertake continued professional development, by following a role specific apprenticeship, or nationally accredited programme, in a variety of different key skills and disciplines.

We have also completed the first year of running our new Service-wide induction programme, for any new colleague joining WSFRS. It is held twice a year and will be a complimentary programme to the Operational training induction sessions for our new wholtime and retained new recruits as well as our colleagues in our specialist support functions.

Operational Training

WSFRS places great importance on operational staff being highly skilled and knowledgeable, enabling them to respond safely to different types of emergencies at any time. In 2024/25, we completed our first year of delivering operational training courses at WSFRS Platinum House Training Centre, including a new, annual, 3-day Maintenance of Competence model for all Firefighters to cover off their core training requirements. The success of prevention work has led to a long-term reduction in fires, which does mean that firefighters are more reliant on training and simulation to develop experience instead of gaining experience during operational firefighting. Our Training Centre provides firefighters with realistic and immersive training to safely and effectively deal with a wide range of incidents that may occur across West Sussex. To comply with the elements of Fire & Rescue, the Service provide training in:

- Breathing Apparatus and Fire Behaviour Training
- Incident Command
- Blue Light Driving
- Road Traffic Collision
- Firefighter Core Skills



In relation to Emergencies other than Fires and Road Traffic Collisions, our Operational Training plan identifies Emergency Special Services to include Flooding & Water Rescue Incidents, Animal Assistance Incidents, Rescue from Height, Maritime, Wildfire and Hazardous Materials / Spills. In 2024, we also continued the full roll out of our Immediate Emergency Care training to all Firefighters. Our 2024 HMICFRS inspection noted that we have “good oversight of skills of staff and appropriate action taken if competence is not maintained”.

Operational training is delivered through a range of methods ranging from on station firefighting practice to major exercises involving blue light partners, emergency planning officers and specialist advisors. Firefighters are exposed to wide ranging training scenarios ranging from those created using virtual reality modelling at our state-of-the-art Incident Command suite in the new training centre, to road traffic collision scenarios, and water rescue training. Training Instructors have nationally recognised teaching and assessing qualifications and our training team has enhanced its capability to assess at nationally accredited levels too. We provide in house training and assessment from firefighter to station manager level.



All of our Officers are trained, assessed and revalidated for their skills, knowledge and understanding in Incident Command. A dedicated Incident Command & Professionalism Team plan, deliver and assess these training programmes. The quality of the Incident Command Training within the Service has been recognised this year both by the Inspectorate who noted our effectiveness of our training, and by Incident Command training organisation, XVR simulation, who awarded us with 'Centre of Excellence' status. This was awarded due to our innovative use of the software, our collaboration with XVR and with other FRSs and sharing of the work we have created. This sees us become one of only a few centres around the world to receive this status.

All new firefighters attend basic training which is broken down into modules and each module is assessed. In the past year, we have completed 3 new Retained recruits' courses. Amounting to 16 new

Firefighters joining our Service. Our wholetime recruitment process began at the start of 2025 and we will be aiming to recruit 12 new firefighters within 2025/26. These firefighters will be in our communities carrying out vital prevention, protection and service delivery work by December 2025, whilst developing in their roles.

The Operational Training team ensure all training delivered is NOG (National Operational Guidance) compliant, has the JESIP (Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme) principles woven throughout and adheres to the appropriate Fire Standards and relevant legislation. We align with our local FRS partners for areas including Incident Command, Operational Training & Development, Command Support standards, and associated equipment.

Our commitment to continuous improvement ensures that our operational staff are always prepared to respond effectively and safely to any emergency, maintaining the highest standards of service for the communities we serve.



Strategic Priority 5 Making best use of resources



Develop and deliver an Estates Improvement Plan and improve the layout of our buildings to support equality and diversity

2024-25 has seen WSFRS take significant steps forward in delivering its Estates Improvement Plan. Following the successful allocation of funding for the Estates Improvement programme to continue, WSFRS has agreed the final designs for improvements at four of its fire stations. These improvements will see fire stations upgraded to enable them to accommodate a modern diverse workforce with gender neutral facilities, accessible areas for collaboration and community engagements and welfare facilities to continue to mitigate the risks of posed by contaminants to firefighters and other staff.

We are confident that physical work will start at the priority sites in 2025 with delivery of the improved fire stations planned for 2026. However, in light of the wider estate we have plans to improve all of our fire stations, review security and ensure they meet the newly published worker protection act. We have already commenced work on the next phase of the improvement programme which will include a focus on our other whole time fire stations where staff work 24/7 as well as latterly our retained stations. This work will be delivered over the course of the next five years so that by 2030 the majority of our fire stations will be all to the same high standards as Horsham Fire Station as funds allow.

We will continue to work to minimise any risk from contaminants to our firefighters

Our work over the last year to minimise the risk from contaminants to our firefighters has continued to see improvements brought in and embedded in normal business. Our seven-step process, which minimises the risk of fire contaminants making their way back into a fire station, has now been embedded in normal business. We have continued to monitor and learn from the process we have put in place and continued to improve it.

We have introduced red, amber and green zones to all our sites which have contaminant risks on them. This has led to changes on fire stations from where the washing machines and gym equipment are located to the flow of personnel through the fire station.

Our future vehicles have also been designed with contaminants in mind and incorporate the learning from across the sector to ensure that firefighters are not exposed to contaminants when travelling in Service vehicles.

Our Health and Safety team will continue to develop our long-term strategy for reducing the risk of contaminants to firefighters through the introduction of things like health screening and monitoring.

A risk-based review of our specialist capability and asset requirements

During 2024/25 a new operating model for TRU aligned to the Service's Day Crewing 7 working pattern was agreed and will be fully implemented at the start of 2025/26. This will give the Service confidence that it has the necessary capabilities available during times of highest demand. To support the services ability to adapt to changes in demand resulting from climate change a new multi-capability 4x4 has been specified with the vehicle due to come into the Service in 2026. This vehicle will provide dual water rescue and wildfire capabilities. The full review across all specialist capabilities is still ongoing throughout 2025/26 with the review due to report at the end of 2025.

We will maintain our existing ERS while we undertake a review & consult on any significant changes to our response arrangements

Over the course of 2024/25 we have worked hard to introduce new Emergency Response Standards (ERS). This has led to the new proposed ERS being validated and agreed. A full Public consultation has been undertake to understand the views of people who live, work and visit West Sussex. The consultation received 132 responses, with 61 percent of respondents agreeing with our proposals and a further 14 percent neither agreeing or disagreeing. This means we are proceeding to fully implement the new ERS by August 2025/26.

Continually update understanding of risk

WSFRS's understanding of risk was assessed as Good in the latest inspection of the Service by HMICFRS. WSFRS has subsequently continued to enhance its risk management processes through the introduction of the Incident risk matrix and risk management matrix PowerBi reports, to support organisational decision making. As part of the development of the Service next Community Risk management Plan we have reviewed our Strategic Assessment of Risk to ensure that we have an up-to-date understanding of risks which may impact WSFRS. The Service has taken steps to align its risk management processes to the ISO 31,000 standard including improved qualifications. We have also embedded the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Definition of Risk (DoR) products for dwelling fires, road traffic collisions and other building fires. These have supported the development of our Local Risk Management Plans (LRMP). This helps us better target our services at those who need them the most and continue to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies.

Our Health and Safety Team have continued to deliver the highest standards to ensure that WSFRS is compliant with its duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Using the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach the team has worked across the service and South-East regional partners to maintain the services duties towards employees and members of the public and continually remind colleagues of the duties they have to themselves and to each other by ensuring that all risk assessments remain up to date and more serious injuries are investigated and learnt from.

Using operational assurance to be a learning organisation

Over the course of 2024/25 WSFRS has fully embedded an Operational Bulletin, aimed at closing the learning loop so that all firefighters are able to learn from every incident through our 162 operational debriefs which we have been completed over the last year, including five tier 3 debriefs. The service has also introduced the College of Policing debriefing process alongside its 3F partners and other blue light services. Further improvements are planned to support organisational wide learning so that the service learns from everything it does so that we can continually improve.

Fit for purpose training and equipment

Six National Operational Guidance product packs have been completed this year meaning the service is halfway through the project to delivery joint operational guidance notes for Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex FRSs. The project is on track to complete all Risk Assessments, Joint Operational Guidance documents, Action Cards, and Training Packs by the end of 2025. Full implementation and alignment is underway across all three Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services. Each partner is working independently to implement the new guidance and once complete will come back together to achieve full alignment. The projects to introduce new Breathing Apparatus and Incident Command Units which also includes Kent Fire and Rescue Service will support the full alignment across services. A project has been initiated to mitigate risks in fire ground communications. Early signs indicate a positive impact on improving fire ground communications.

Deliver the WSFRS Community Risk Management Plan 2026

Plans for our new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) covering 2026-2030 are progressing well. WSFRS included public engagement survey in the development of its next CRMP. This is the first time WSFRS has undertaken a pre-consultation with the public to help shape our future strategy. This has helped us understand the levels of trust which the public have in our ability to keep them safe from fires and other emergencies, as well as their confidence in each of our strategic priorities. We also asked the people who live, work or visit West Sussex to tell us what risks they were most concerned about. This has enabled us to put communities first and listen to what they want to tell us and act on their

feedback. Our draft objectives have now been developed and agreed internally. The service is planning a full public consultation on our plans between July-September 2025 with the full CRMP available to the public in April 2026.

Commercial Activity

In 2024/25, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service's commercial activities supported local businesses, schools, care homes, and other organisations across our community by delivering a range of fire safety training courses and maintaining portable fire-fighting equipment - helping them stay safe, informed, and compliant with fire safety legislation.

Over the year, we ran over 170 training courses for more than 1,800 people and maintained over 12,000 pieces of equipment across 540 customer sites. We also delivered training to other emergency services, including fire, ambulance, and highways teams, as well as bespoke courses for organisations such as the RSPCA. These services help protect lives, property, and business continuity by improving fire awareness and emergency response.

To support our income targets, we are continuing to develop new ideas and opportunities by maximising use of our existing resources and embracing professional training delivery at our new training centre in Horsham. At the same time, we have explored cost efficiencies to ensure our operations remain financially sustainable and value driven.

Future Improvements

White paper

In 2023 the government published its response to the Fire & Rescue reform white paper consultation. The Fire Reform White Paper consulted on the government's vision for fire reform, centred around three main themes:

1. People - improving systems, flexibility and culture.
2. Professionalism - helping fire professionals to best serve their communities.
3. Governance - strengthening oversight and leadership.

WSFRS will continue to monitor the government and sectors progress relating to this paper.

Devolution

Devolution is the term used to describe the process of transferring power from the centre (Westminster) to the nations and regions of the United Kingdom. In the English Devolution White Paper, the government set out its policy for the creation of new Mayoral Strategic Authorities (similar to arrangements in Manchester and the West Midlands) for the whole of England.

WSFRS is continuing to engage with West Sussex County Council and central government colleagues as the government continues to provide guidance around devolution.

Oracle

The WSCC SAP system has been our go-to for many key activities like Finance, Payroll, Procurement, and HR for nearly 20 years. However, SAP will no longer be fully supported after 2027, and the system is no longer as future proofed for the organisation and therefore it was proposed to replace it with a new, modern system.

This will be a new system called Oracle Fusion, it is cloud-based, meaning it can be accessed from anywhere, including on tablets and mobile phones. The system updates automatically and regularly, using the latest Cloud technologies to ensure security and reliability.

Digital and Cyber safety

As a fire and rescue service we must deliver excellence to the public by using information and communications technology (ICT) safely, effectively and efficiently to deliver prevention, protection and response services. We use ICT to provide appropriate access to information and facilitate vital communications when and where it is needed, contributing to the safety of communities.

WSFRS approach to investment and development of ICT enables us to meet both our statutory obligations to our communities and take proactive steps to maintain sustainable technology and provision of service. That investment is driven by a clear strategic approach to bring about necessary continuous improvement in using and evaluating technology.

WSFRS and WSCC will be taking part in a full day's exercise funded by the Home Office and run by external experts in July 2025 that will test several cyber attack scenarios and provide feedback and advice on our response.

Grenfell phase 2

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry has published its second and final report into the circumstances leading up to the tragic fire in 2017. WSFRS have set up a board to review all of the recommendations from the GTI phase 2 report, to provide assurance that the actions required to address the recommendations are embedded and where appropriate exercised.

RDS availability – 3.5 project

WSFRS has commissioned a project with the aim of addressing key challenges whilst driving transformation within the Retained Duty System (RDS) to enhance operational efficiency and staff performance.

Breathing Apparatus (BA) roll out

WSFRS continues to lead the delivery of a project in collaboration with our three FRS partners – Surrey, East Sussex and Kent, known as the 4Fs, to implement new BA and ancillary equipment. The new rollout of equipment will provide state of the art respiratory and ancillary equipment for operational crews across all four services.

Vehicle roll out

WSFRS has a rolling programme of fleet replacement and is proposing to commence a tender process to replace six appliances and an Incident Command Unit. The appliance replacements will reap several benefits:

- Improved vehicle and firefighting technology;
- Introducing a clean-cab concept that reduces firefighters' exposure to contaminants;
- Meeting higher Euro 6 emission standards;
- Supporting the WSCC Net Carbon Neutral 2030 goals;
- Reducing the cost of maintenance of old vehicles; and
- Critically, reducing the risk of failure of emergency response vehicles.

The Incident Command Unit is being developed in collaboration with our 4F partners.

Appendix A - Service PAF- Core Measures over last 3 years

CM #	Measure	Tolerance / Targets	CRMP YR1 2022-23	CRMP Y2 2023-24	CRMP Y3 2024-25
CM1	Number of accidental dwelling fires in West Sussex over a year period	Green <381 Amber 381-398 Red >398	338	379**	330
			↘	↗	↘
CM2	Number of fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires in West Sussex over a year period	Green 0 Amber 1- 3 Red >3	3	0	0
			↗	↘	→
CM3	Number of fire casualties in accidental dwelling fires in West Sussex over a year period	Green <20 Amber 20 – 30 Red >30	14	10	32
			→	↘	↗
CM4	Number of deliberate primary fires in West Sussex over a year period	Green <180 Amber 180 – 199 Red 200+	160	101	107
			↗	↘	↗
CM5	Number of deliberate secondary fires in West Sussex over a year period	Green <350 Amber 351 - 375 Red >375	299	218	205
			↗	↘	↘
CM6	Percentage of safeguarding referrals made within 24 hours of discovery	Green 100% Red <100%	98%	84%	93%
			↗	↘	↗
CM7	Number of Safe and Well Visits delivered to households with at least 1 vulnerability or risk factor	Green 5000 Amber 4800 – 4999 Red <4800	4680	5335	5948
			↗	↗	↗
CM8	Percentage of very high risk Safe and Well referrals contacted within 1 working day	Green 100% Amber >98% Red <98%	100%	100%	100%
			↗	→	→

CM #	Measure	Tolerance / Targets	CRMP YR1 2022-23	CRMP Y2 2023-24	CRMP Y3 2024-25
CM9	Percentage of high risk Safe and Well Visit referrals contacted within 7 working days	Green 100% Amber >98% Red <98%	99.8%	99.96% *	99.9%
			↗	↗	↘
CM10	Number of FSO regulated buildings having received an audit in each financial year	Green 1000 Amber 850-999 Red <850	1009*	1041*	1235
			↗	↗	↗
CM11	Percentage of unsatisfactory fire safety audits	>40% green 35%-40% amber <35% red	28.7% *	55.5% *	66.2%
			↘	↗	↗
CM12	Percentage of successful prosecutions under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	>75% green <75% red	100%	100%	100%
			→	→	→
CM13	Percentage of statutory fire safety consultations completed within the 14-day time period	100% green <100% red	100%	100%	100%
			↗	→	→
CM14	The number of unwanted fire signals attended in West Sussex over a year period	Green <700 Amber 700-800 Red >800	1305	523	412
			↘	↘	↘
CM15	Percentage of SSRIs that are currently in date (high risk last 12 months, medium risk last 36 months)	Green >90% Amber 60% - 90% Red <60%	99.3%	99.5%	99.9%
			↗	↗	↗
CM16	Percentage of emergency calls answered within 10 seconds by Joint Fire Control	Green >=95% Red <95%	97.8%*	98.1%*	98.3%
			↗	↗	↗
CM17	Average time taken between Joint Fire Control receiving the emergency call and the station being notified	Green <1m 45s Amber 1m45s - 1m55s Red >1m 55s	Measured Differently Previously	00:01:26	00:01:26
					→

Please note some of these figures may have amended due to refinement of data as we review annually these are identified with an * if they have improved and ** where they have declined

CM #	Measure	Tolerance / Targets	CRMP YR1 2022-23	CRMP Y2 2023-24	CRMP Y3 2024-25
CM18	Percentage of notifications of a level 2 Incident Commander to life risk calls within 5 minutes by Joint Fire Control	Green >98% Amber 95% - 98% Red <95%	100%	100%	100%
			↗	→	→
CM19	Percentage of occasions the first fire engine meets its emergency response standard at a critical fire incident.	Green >89% Red <89%	89.2%*	91.4%**	90.2%
			↗	↗	↘
CM20	Percentage of occasions the second fire engine arrives at a critical fire incident within its emergency response standard.	Green >83% Red <83%	84.8%*	85%*	84.3%
			↗	↗	↘
CM21	Percentage of occasions the first fire engine meets its emergency response standard at a critical special service incident.	Green >80% Red <80%	80.7% **	84.4% *	81.9%
			↗	↗	↘
CM22	Percentage of availability on all wholetime frontline pumping appliances	Green 100% Amber 95% - 99% Red <95%	97.6%	97.6%	97.9%
			↘	→	↗
CM23	Percentage of availability on all retained frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)	Green 75% Amber 65% - 75% Red <65%	48.6%	47.4%	44.1%
			↘	↘	↘
CM24	Percentage of all FRS survey respondents satisfied with the overall service from WSFRS	Green 95% Amber 85% - 95% Red <85%	98%	98%	99.4%
			↗	→	↗
CM25	Percentage of staff who are not sick across all staff groups	Green 95% Amber 90% - 95% Red <90%	96.7%*	95.3%*	95.6%
			↗	↘	↗

CM #	Measure	Tolerance / Targets	CRMP YR1 2022-23	CRMP Y2 2023-24	CRMP Y3 2024-25
CM26	Percentage of eligible operational staff successfully completing fitness test	Green 95% Amber 85% - 95% Red <85%	94.7%	96.7%	98.5%
			↗	↗	↗
CM27	Percentage of eligible operational staff in qualification	>95% green 85% - 95% amber <85% red	91.9%	91.5%	94.92%
			↗	↘	↗
CM28	Percentage of RIDDOR accidents that are investigated and reported on time	100% green <100% red	85.7%	100%	100%
			↘	↗	→
CM29	Percentage of Health and Safety Risk assessments within date	100% green >95% amber <95% red	100%	100%	100%
			↗	→	→
CM30	Occasions where a Fire Engine in the fleet was made available for each West Sussex crew in operational service	100% green >95% amber <95% red	Not measured	100%	100%
					→

Appendix B – Framework Requirements

WSFRS operates as part of WSCC, which sets a clear framework for the work the service does. The key documents relating to this area are the West Sussex Plan - which sets out how the county council plans to shape its services for the next five years supported by the corporate services including how the county council spends your money.

WSFRS also operates under broader corporate policies on:

- Fraud & Corruption Policy
- Equality & Inclusion Policy
- Pay Policy

The FRS works within a clear legislative context. Key legislation documents are as follows:

The National Fire and Rescue Service Framework for England 2018 Under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (the 2004 Act), the Secretary of State must prepare a [Fire and Rescue National Framework](#).

The Framework:

- a) Fire and Rescue National Framework for England published May 2018.
- b) Must set out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions.

c) May contain guidance to fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of any of their functions.

d) May contain any other matter relating to fire and rescue authorities or their functions that the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 This Act came into effect on 1 October 2004.

It clarifies the duties and powers of fire authorities to:

- Promote fire safety
- Fight fires
- Protect people and property from fires
- Rescue people from road traffic incidents
- Deal with other specific emergencies, such as flooding or a terrorist attack
- Respond to the needs of our communities and the risks they face.

Fire and Rescue Service (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007 -The Fire and Rescue Service Emergencies (England) Order 2007 outlines the additional statutory duties of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 for fire authorities. The duty requires authorities, where provision of resources has been made by central government, to respond to incidents, both within and outside the authority area, involving Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear hazards (CBRN) and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR). 40 The Order complements the National Mutual Assistance Protocol, to which this Authority is a signatory. This requires fire authorities to make a reasonable response to requests for assistance in relation to any large-scale emergency outside their area.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 -This Order is a statutory instrument, applicable only in England and Wales, which places the responsibility on individuals within an organisation to carry out risk assessments to identify, manage and reduce the risk of fire. It became law on 1st October 2006.

Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Fire and Rescue Authorities are 'Category 1 responders' under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This Act sets out the full set of civil protection duties, including assessing the risk of emergencies happening (ranging from widespread flooding to terrorist attacks) and using this to inform contingency planning. Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure that emergency plans and business continuity management arrangements are in place.

The Equality Act 2010 -This Act is designed to reform and harmonise equality laws, to increase equality of opportunity and to have regard to the desirability of reducing socio-economic inequalities. It is designed to legally protect people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 -The Act makes three key provisions pertaining to the FRS:

1. It places a duty on the emergency services, Police, Fire and Ambulance, to collaborate, when there is a proven benefit to operational effectiveness or efficiency.
2. It established an independent inspectorate for the Fire and Rescue Service, the HMICFRS
3. It enables transfer of Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) duties to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) where a case for change is made. Further legislation which applies to the Fire Authority can be found within our CRMP.

Contact us in an emergency you should always dial 999.

To find out more on West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service please follow the link to our website:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire> Your views and comments on this Statement of Assurance are very welcome.

If you have feedback or any questions, please get in touch with us.

By email: wsfrs@westsussex.gov.uk

By telephone: 01243 777100

Or write to us at: West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ