Foreword

Welcome to West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service’s (WSFRS) Annual Report and Statement of Assurance.

This report covers the financial year from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 and details how WSFRS performed in the key areas of protection, prevention and emergency response.

It highlights a year of huge change under our Future Fire and Rescue Programme.

Sadly, it also covers a year in which the county witnessed one of the greatest tragedies since the Second World War, with the Shoreham Airshow disaster.

We have always been proud of our fire and rescue service and we are confident the service will continue to provide the very best service possible for our communities, now and in the future.

West Sussex County Council firmly believes this is best delivered by the fire service continuing to play a key role at the heart of our organisation. However, in September 2015 the Government unveiled radical proposals to transform the way the police, fire and rescue and ambulance services work together.

For fire and rescue services this could include:

- Enabling police and crime commissioners (PCCs) to take on the duties and responsibilities of fire and rescue authorities (FRAs), where a local case is made.
- Where a PCC takes on the responsibilities of a fire and rescue authority, allowing them to create a single employer for police and fire staff, so it is easier for them to share back office functions and streamline management.
- Enabling a PCC to be represented on their local FRA in areas where they do not take on the responsibility for fire and rescue services.

The County Council is opposed to these possible changes but consultations will be continuing into 2017.

David Barling
Cabinet Member for Residents’ Services
Introduction

The period covered by this report is a particularly important one for West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

At the start of the year we implemented a new design for our service, as part of a programme known as Future Fire and Rescue.

This programme is a comprehensive review developed to ensure we can continue to effectively manage our resources in the midst of the toughest financial climate we have faced in years.

Our Annual Report recognises the key role we play at the heart of West Sussex County Council’s Communities and Public Protection Directorate, working to support the council’s Future West Sussex vision and to enable safe, strong and resilient communities.

It gives an over-view of some of our key areas of activity and highlights how the fire service, and our key partners, are striving to prevent incidents from occurring.

Lee Neale

Acting Executive Director Communities and Public Protection and Chief Fire Officer
Our main duties are outlined in the Fire & Rescue Services Act and are summarised under Our Structure (page 6).

The communities we serve

Our county

According to latest estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS, see page 6) West Sussex is now home to more than 836,000 residents.

Most people (480,000) are of working age. People around, or over, retirement age now number almost 187,000 and account for 22 per cent of the population, a percentage which grows in West Sussex year on year.

Most people live along the coast or close to the M23/A23 corridor.

Crawley and Worthing have the largest populations, with more than 100,000 residents living in each town. As you would expect, our fire stations here also see some of the highest levels of calls.

Our headquarters, as well as that of West Sussex County Council, are in Chichester.

The county boasts a wide range of scenery, including the Downs and our popular coastal areas.

It has a number of stately homes, including Goodwood, Petworth House and Uppark, alongside Arundel Castle and Bramber Castle.

More than half of our county is protected countryside, including the South Downs National Park.

As well as major road and rail links we have one of the UK’s busiest airports – Gatwick now helps take 42million passengers to 220 destinations every year.
Our responsibilities

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government’s priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England. Its high level expectations include:

- Identifying and assessing the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related activities their areas face, making provision for prevention and protection activities and providing an appropriate response to incidents.

- Working in partnership with communities and other relevant organisations.

- Being accountable to communities for the service they provide.

The framework describes clear roles and responsibilities for major incidents where local resources may require additional support and details the Government’s strategic role for national resilience.

The Fire Authority also has roles and responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Our fleet of fire engines and specialist rescue and support vehicles give us the capability to respond to a range of emergencies, including floods, chemical spills, trapped people and animals and building collapses.

Our Technical Rescue Unit (see pages 26 and 27) provides specialist skills that can be deployed locally, but also supports national and international resilience and has a key role in the UK’s International Search and Rescue Team.
Overview of Fire and Rescue

Our structure

West Sussex County Council is the Fire Authority for West Sussex and is responsible for:

- Firefighting and rescue
- Protecting people and property from fire
- Promoting fire safety in the home
- Providing special services emergencies, like serious road traffic collisions, flooding or incidents involving hazardous substances

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service carries out these functions as part of the Communities and Public Protection Directorate.

The Acting Executive Director for Communities and Public Protection and Chief Fire Officer, Lee Neale, is responsible for operational delivery. The Cabinet Member for Residents’ Services, David Barling, makes strategic political decisions.

Our people

Our Future Fire and Rescue programme came to fruition on 1 April 2015. This was a complex programme of interlinking projects and fundamentally changed the way we crew our fire stations.

We have eight immediate response engines crewed at six fire stations – Crawley, Worthing, Littlehampton, Bognor, Chichester and Horsham. These stations are crewed around the clock using a new system called Group Crewing. This system maintains our 24-hour response capabilities but with three fewer firefighters at each station.

There are also wholetime firefighters working an increased period of core hours, from 7am until 7pm from Monday to Friday, at Shoreham, Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead. They carry out immediate response and community safety work during these hours but with a reduction of ten firefighter posts across the four stations.

Like most services across the country many of our stations are crewed by retained firefighters, where the firefighters’ primary employment is outside of the fire service but they provide an agreed amount of time ‘on-call’ via a pager system.

From firefighter to Chief Fire Officer, at the end of this financial year we employed the full-time equivalent of 311 operational staff and 213 retained crew, along with our support staff and volunteers.

The excellent service we provide is thanks to the dedication and hard work of every member of the West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service team.

Management of risk

Our primary role is to keep West Sussex safe. We do this through a combination of prevention, protection and response activities coordinated via our Integrated Risk Management Plan which, locally, we now call our Community Risk Management Plan.

As a service we have to understand and identify our greatest risks in order to be able to effectively manage our resources.

We record information about every 999 call we receive and analyse where, why and how incidents have occurred to help us understand where incidents might happen in the future.

We also use the extensive local knowledge of our firefighters and officers, alongside the latest
modelling software, demographic profiling, census data and information from our partner agencies. All of this information is pulled together in a Critical Fire Risk Map (see below) which is updated every year based on rolling data from the previous three years.

This shows that, for the period covered by this report, most of the county is classified as low or medium risk. Where small pockets of high, or very high, risk are identified we can target our resources in proportion to those needs.
West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is a key part of the Communities and Public Protection directorate of West Sussex County Council.

The services the directorate delivers are fully aligned to the core priorities of the county council’s Future West Sussex Plan, which are designed to give children the best start in life, champion the West Sussex economy and promote independence in later life.

The strategic focus of WSFRS is to:

- Help Individuals, Communities and Businesses to become Safer, Stronger and more Resilient.
- Maintain and improve wellbeing.
- Deliver Statutory Duties.

**National Framework**

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government’s priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England.

It states high level expectations with priorities for fire and rescue authorities to:

- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related activities their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately.
- Work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners to deliver their service.
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

The framework describes clear roles and responsibilities for major incidents where local resources may require additional support and details the Government’s strategic role for national resilience, built on the basis of local professional expertise and understanding of risk.

**Management of risk**

During the period covered by this report a huge amount of work was carried out to research and prepare our next Community Risk Management Plan.

This document assesses the current and projected risk profile for West Sussex over the next five years and sets out how we plan to keep the county safe through a combination of prevention, protection and response activities.

The plan is based on current and historic data and information about emerging trends and is available via www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire.
Our performance

The total number of incidents we were called to continues to fall. Between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 we attended a total of 8,552 incidents.

More than half of these – 4,641 – turned out to be false alarms. These included 1,596 calls made with good intention and 110 malicious false alarms.

This compares to 8,566 total incidents in 2014/15 and 9,377 incidents the year before.

**Automatic Fire Alarms**
False alarms from automatic fire alarms (AFAs) can impact on our safety and emergency work so we work hard with the businesses, care homes and hospitals where these happen to reduce the number of false alarms we need to attend.
2015/16 – 1,622 AFAs attended in non-domestic premises; 2014/15 – 1,630 AFAs.

**Deliberate Fires**
Starting fires puts lives at risk. We work with the communities we serve to help stop deliberate fires being started and, when they do occur, our Fire Investigation Officers work closely with the police to support prosecutions. Although these figures can vary we are pleased to have seen a steady drop over the last five years from the 1,211 recorded in 2011/12 to 474 in 2015/16 (507 in 2014/15).

**Dwelling Fires (accidental)**
We work hard to prevent fires in the home but, sadly, they do still occur. Cooking is the leading cause. Many kitchen fires, and other incidents, like fires caused by smoking materials, could be prevented by vigilance. These figures fluctuate but we believe the prevention and safety work we carry out in the community is helping to reduce accidental dwelling fires. 2015/16 – 454; 2014/15 – 457.

**Dwelling Fire Injuries**
We work closely on community safety with a number of partners to help address the root causes of fire injuries in the home as many of the factors that increase dwelling fire risk are common risk factors for our partner agencies, such as deprivation, health and isolation. Last year saw the lowest number of recorded accidental dwelling fire injuries in recent years - 24 in 2015/16; down from 43 in 2014/15 - although this figure can fluctuate.
### Fire Fatalities
Tragically, three people were killed as a result of fires in 2015/16. One person was killed in an accidental dwelling fire. In another sad incident a man with mental health problems died after setting fire to his property. The third fatality followed a double murder when the man behind the killings suffered burns when he set fire to the property and died later in another location from the injuries he had sustained. We still await inquests into the deaths of the 11 men killed in the Shoreham Airshow tragedy. 2015/16 – 3; 2014/15 – 4.

### Fires in non-domestic properties
We work with local businesses to promote and support understanding and awareness of safety regulations and legal responsibilities. Last year we saw a particularly low number of such incidents – 145 in 2015/16; compared to 188 in 2014/15 (a figure closer to the average seen over recent years).

### Hoax Calls
– Hoax calls are illegal and can impact on our response to real emergencies. We carry out a great deal of work to educate people on the risks of hoax calls and, when they do occur, support prosecutions of those responsible. Again, these figures fluctuate - 2015/16 – 110; 2014/15 – 90.

### Road Traffic Collisions
Sadly, we deal with the consequences of road traffic collisions on a daily basis, that’s why we work tirelessly with partners through initiatives such as Safe Drive Stay Alive (see page 23). We don’t attend all RTCs but our data is in line with an increase in collisions nationally – 2015/16 – attended 505 collisions; 2014/15 – 462 collisions.

### Response Times
Our Critical Fire Risk Map on page 7 explains how we view likely critical fire risk in any given area. We aim to get our first appliance to the most serious (critical fire) incidents within 8 minutes of receiving a 999 call for a very high risk area, or 14 minutes for a low risk area. For the second appliance it is 11 minutes for a very high risk area and 17 minutes for low risk. Our target is to meet this 89 per cent of the time for the first appliance and 83 per cent for the second. Our 2015/16 performance was 87% (first pump) and 80% (second pump); 2014/15 – 88% (first pump) and 79% (second pump). Our appliances met the critical special services benchmark for 79% of calls (2014/15 77%).

### Retained Appliance Availability
Maintaining levels of retained resources is an ongoing issue nationally, particularly with many people travelling away from rural areas for their employment. We put a significant amount of work in to retained firefighter recruitment and always welcome enquiries on 01243 642134. 2015/16 – 67% of hours available; 2014/15 – 62%.
Financial performance

Funding for West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is provided by WSCC and comes from two main sources:

- Grant funding from central Government
- Council Tax

The fire and rescue budget is considered as part of the wider provision of county council services, so there is no additional precept on your council tax bill.

The cost of running WSFRS in 2015-16 was £25million.

What your money is spent on

Most of our £25million budget is invested in frontline services including firefighting, rescue operations and community safety activity. This breaks down in to:

- Firefighting and rescue operations – £19,614,425 (2014/15 - £21,855,361)
- Community Safety - £5,023,532 (2014/15 £5,381,109)

(There are also significant ongoing costs associated with our work following the Shoreham Airshow disaster. To the end of March 2016 these amounted to £369,000).

This year saw the implementation of our Future Fire and Rescue (FFR) programme, made up of numerous inter-related projects designed to meet the changing expectations placed upon fire and rescue while operating within a climate of reductions in Government grant funding.

Fire Redesign One and Fire Redesign Two delivered service efficiencies and a £4million budget reduction in 2011 and 2013 but without any significant changes to how the service operated.

FFR saw a more holistic approach, broadening the role of the fire service to deliver the best support to communities in a cost efficient manner.

The first phase of the programme helped support a budget reduction of £820,000. The more extensive changes implemented from April 2015 delivered a further reduction of £1.6million.
Moving an immediate response engine from a temporary base at Horsham to a permanent base at Littlehampton, leaving both stations with two engines – one crewed 24-hours-a-day by immediate response crews and the second crewed by retained (on-call) firefighters.

Introducing a new way of crewing our immediate response stations, using a system called Group Crewing, which maintains our immediate 24-hour response but with three fewer firefighters at each station.

Removing low activity second fire engines from Midhurst, Storrington and Petworth while providing new smaller specialist vehicles at Midhurst and Petworth.

Closing our retained unit at Crawley.

Changing crewing at Shoreham, Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead maintaining our immediate response and community safety work over an increased period of core hours, but with a reduction of ten firefighters across the four stations.

Increasing our capability to support communities during flooding and severe weather with increased equipment and training for our crews.

Reductions in management and administrative support.

Key elements included:
A tragic loss of life at Shoreham Airshow

It would be impossible to review the last year without reflecting on the tragic loss of 11 men in the Shoreham Airshow crash.

The incident, on 22 August 2015, has been described as the biggest peacetime disaster Sussex has ever seen. When a Hawker Hunter hit the main A27, next to the air show site, it killed drivers and passengers travelling past the show, and enthusiasts watching the planes taking part from the side of the road. The pilot survived.

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service had a number of staff at, or near, the airfield when the plane came down. Throughout the rest of that afternoon, and in the following weeks, the service played a key part in the recovery operation.

When a major incident was declared Sussex Police took the strategic lead in control of all first responders. That included the WSFRS fire crews, supported by colleagues from East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

WSFRS has an integral role at the heart of West Sussex County Council and while firefighters worked at the scene colleagues from social services were providing support.
to affected families at Worthing Hospital.

The disaster was above and beyond the scale of any incident a firefighter would normally expect to respond to during their career. The initial stages of the incident were extremely challenging and the scene for the first responders was truly appalling. Colleagues at the Sussex Control Centre also had a particularly difficult role.

In the following days we assisted the Police and Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) with the removal of the aircraft and in gathering evidence, which involved our Technical Rescue Unit meticulously searching large areas of undergrowth for some weeks after the crash.

As we entered the recovery phase of the incident our Communities and Resilience and Emergencies teams continued to play a crucial role ensuring support was available for all of those in need.

Firefighters and other first responders, including police and ambulance crews, along with volunteers who set to work in the immediate aftermath of the crash, were thanked by the Prime Minister when he made a private visit to Shoreham and Lancing.

On November 22, three months after the crash, representatives from all three emergency services joined the families of those killed for an official memorial service at Lancing College Chapel. The service paid tribute to the 11 men who died and recognised the role of the emergency services who responded to the tragedy.

Nobody in the service will ever forget the events of that afternoon – our hearts go out to all of those grieving for loved ones whose lives were lost that day.
Our year in review

April the 1st 2015 was a significant day for West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service as this was the day our Future Fire and Rescue programme (FFR) was implemented. Critical in all of the changes was to ensure we continued to serve the communities of West Sussex. The professionalism of our staff ensured it was very much business as usual against a background of widespread change. Incidents during the month included horse rescues in Heyshott and Horsham, and a hotel fire in Chichester.

May was a key month for reinforcing vital safety messages – promoting some of the specialist alarms available as part of Deaf Awareness Week; reminding businesses of the safest ways to use tumble driers; sharing information about our dementia awareness training and encouraging eligible residents to request one of our home safety visits; inspiring young people through our Firebreak scheme and raising awareness of Boat Fire Safety Week.

We took delivery of our new Midhurst appliance and successfully dealt with one of our most dramatic and difficult fires of the year.

June

We supported numerous events across the county to promote Road Safety Week. We also threw open the doors of our community fire station in East Preston with an open afternoon; welcomed another
May

intake of retained firefighters into our service at the completion of their initial training; and staged another successful Firebreak course in Crawley.

July

This month saw two of our stations trying new ways to engage with residents. In Chichester, firefighters held a special advice and information day to help older drivers stay safe on the roads. The event was set up in response to a number of serious crashes involving older drivers. Meanwhile, in Crawley, firefighters organised the first of two huge free barbecues in Tilgate Park to share a range of safety messages with local residents.

There was also success for some well-established favourites – with Worthing Fire Station’s Open Day, one of the biggest of its kind in the South of England, welcoming thousands of visitors through its doors.

August

We all know the stories about cats stuck up trees, and our Technical Rescue Unit is well-known for its large animal rescues, but in August there was an unusual incident, even by their standards, when they rescued a large grass snake stranded in a well.

September

Events in September included community days at The Triangle, in Burgess Hill; and Victoria Park, Haywards Heath; a community open day at Midhurst Fire Station; promoting safer driving habits to students at Chichester College and Haywards Heath; Steyning Fire Station open day and electric blanket testing drop-ins at a number of locations.

We welcomed new retained recruits to our service; staged a FireBreak course for a special needs school and began fire safety seminars in care homes.

We also responded to a number of incidents, including a large furniture store fire in Bognor.
October
In October we held our first ever live Twitter chat to encourage more people to apply to become retained firefighters. The event, which included Assistant Chief Fire Officer Gavin Watts, coincided with a ‘have a go’ day at Horsham. We also honoured a number of firefighters for their Long Service and Good Conduct at a medal ceremony at Arundel Castle.

November
November saw more honours with our Chief Fire Officer Commendation Awards, recognising three members of the public and five of our own colleagues. In a more sombre reflection, the service was represented at the memorial for the victims of the Shoreham Airshow Tragedy, held at Lancing College Chapel. At the end of the month there was a surge of enquiries when we opened recruitment for wholetime community firefighters for the first time in more than eight years. All 700 places for external candidates, plus 50 for existing RDS personnel, were snapped up within a day, with 400 external applications in the first hour alone.

December
In December we carried out a pilot partnership project in Crawley with UK Power Networks, which owns and maintains the electricity network in a large part of West Sussex, to identify households we could, jointly, help and support. Teams from both organisations called on more than 300 homes in part of Broadfield in an initiative later short-listed for a national award. New retained firefighters joined our ranks to serve at Haywards Heath, Lancing, Midhurst and East Wittering. Meanwhile, Worthing firefighters came up with one of the service’s most hard-hitting drink-driving campaigns by staging an accident with a car wrapped around the front of a tree at the station.
January
January saw the Fire & Rescue Service and our Resilience and Emergencies Team colleagues working in partnership with a wide range of agencies to protect residents in Arundel after a privately owned flood defence wall collapsed into the River Arun, putting a wider area at risk during seasonal high tides and bad weather. Crews across the county also took part in a variety of local campaigns ahead of Cooking Safety month.

February
We started February on a positive note, with fitness tests for our new wholetime recruits. However, with great sadness we lost one of our own with the sudden death of one of our serving colleagues, David Bennett, Crew Manager at Hurstpierpoint. He was 55.

In Chidham, a murder enquiry was launched after the bodies of a man and woman in their 70s were found by firefighters tackling a fire at a bungalow. Post-mortems later revealed their deaths had been caused by injuries prior to the fire starting.

March
In March it was announced that WSFRS had beaten bids from five other services to take ownership of a specialist High Volume Pump (HVP) unit. We also began rolling out water rescue PPE to selected stations. Six new RDS recruits joined stations at Lancing, East Grinstead, Henfield, East Wittering, Turners Hill and Bognor; and ten students passed out from our FireBreak training at Haywards Heath. Safe Drive Stay Alive was on the road again in East Grinstead, highlighting the risks to young drivers, while firefighters in Chichester held a Drive Confident event for older drivers.

The financial year ended with changes at the top of our organisation, with Lee Neale announced as Acting Executive Director for Communities and Public Protection and Chief Fire Officer.
Our local fire crews and schools education officer deliver education programmes from primary school age upwards.

We have a valuable role to play in teaching children about fire prevention and road safety.

We have developed specialist learning materials with an education adviser to ensure we engage with children at the most appropriate level and can communicate information that they will be able to retain and share with others.

Last year we had contact with 10,608 pupils through our programme of School Education Visits at well over 100 schools. We also saw 2,291 pupils through Junior Citizen events across the county.

Firefighters can be positive role models for young people and we work with partners to discourage anti-social behaviour.

Our Firewise programme helps children and young people understand the risks and potential consequences of experimenting with fires. Referrals to this service continue to grow and we saw 70 individuals last year.

We also run an innovative FireBreak programme, in partnership with County Council colleagues from Youth Services.

It is aimed at young people aged between 12 and 14 and actively encourages students to become positive role models within their communities.

Students attend a fire station over five consecutive days, working alongside uniformed firefighters on a structured programme of events that combine classroom-based activities and practical training to promote teamwork, social awareness, self-discipline and to help reduce negative influences.

We ran 12 of these courses during the year, working with a total of 125 students. We also delivered a tailor-made course for a special needs school.
Economy

We work with businesses across West Sussex to help them keep their customers, staff and our crews as safe as possible.

We carry this out by:
- Advice
- Audit
- Enforcement

Business owners, and those responsible for business premises, have a legal responsibility for ensuring their places of work are safe (Regulatory Reform- Fire Safety Order- 2005).

We advise businesses to increase their understanding of fire safety requirements and to help them comply with their duties and responsibilities.

Safe working businesses will help the economy thrive and prosper so we produce targeted information and support. We also host fire safety information events and offer face-to-face guidance.

When we audit a business we carry out a thorough examination to establish how well they are managing fire safety on the premises. This can include checking fire safety measures to ensure they are suitable and sufficient for the site and type of business, and that proper warning systems are in place.

We aim to work in partnership with our business communities to prevent problems from occurring. However, where significant breaches of Fire Safety legislation occur we issue formal enforcement notices and will prosecute where there is a wilful disregard for public safety or risk to life.

Last year we carried out 794 fire safety audits.

The vast majority of these (704) were satisfactory. 75 premises were found to be unsatisfactory with a notice of deficiencies and corrective action plan issued to ensure they became compliant.

We issued seven formal enforcements notices – these involved one care home, one house in multiple occupation (HMO), one hotel, one house converted to flats, two licensed premises and one office building.

One prohibition notice was issued to a hotel and two business owners were successfully prosecuted for breaches of Fire Safety legislation.

Further information on business responsibilities, and on the high quality training we can provide, are available on the Business Safety section of our website at www.westsussex.gov.uk.
Later Life

Community safety

Our safety and prevention work is helping to reduce the number of serious incidents we are called to attend.

We work with a variety of partners and constantly review the best ways of supporting the people we come into contact with to help build safer, stronger and more resilient communities.

Much of this work is concentrated on those who, statistically, are most at risk from fire injuries in the home. This can include the elderly and people with mental or physical health issues.

In the year ending March 2016 our operational crews, Community Fire Safety Officers and fire service volunteers carried out 3,683 High Priority Home Safety Visits, to those deemed most at risk.

The total number of all Home Safety Visits carried out over the year was 5,661.

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is a trusted organisation which can give us more open access to some individuals. To ensure we can provide the most appropriate help our staff have been given safeguarding training to help them identify a wide range of issues.

Where required, we can refer people to other organisations we work with, or other relevant departments within West Sussex County Council.

Last year we raised safeguarding concerns about more than 100 people and referred nearly 500 individuals for other services or sources of support.

That work is carried out alongside our traditional fire safety role, which in 2015/16 saw us installing 3,611 community fire links, or Careline alarms; fitting more than 5,000 standard ten-year smoke alarms and more than 200 specialist alarms for the hard of hearing, such as vibrating pillow alarms.

We also carry out drop-in events to deliver safety measures to wider audiences. These included testing 277 electric blankets last year, 39 per cent of which didn’t meet our safety standard.

Local crews also organise events when they identify particular problems in their station ground. For example, firefighters in Chichester teamed up with the AA to set up a special Drive Confident advice and information day for drivers over the age of 65 after statistics revealed that between 2011 and 2015 more than 500 people were injured, and ten people died, in their district as a result of a collision involving an older car driver.
Road safety

As a fire and rescue service we deal with the consequences of road traffic collisions on a daily basis.

We work closely with our national and regional partners to do everything we can to reduce the number, and severity, of such incidents.

One of our key road safety collaborations is the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP), a partnership which includes Brighton & Hove City Council, East and West Sussex County Councils, Highways England, East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services and Sussex Police.

All of the organisations in the SSRP work together to help make the roads of Sussex safer and, since April 2015, the SSRP has been fully funded through the Speed Awareness operational surplus, where drivers detected speeding are offered the opportunity to take an educational course rather than have a penalty fine and points on their driving licence.

In 2015/16 there were 2,762 casualties from collisions on West Sussex roads. Most of these, 1,731, were the occupants of cars and, in terms of the ages of casualties – 216 were children aged 15 or under; 251 were young car drivers aged between 17 and 24; and 336 were people aged 65 or over.

From all of these casualties 23 people were killed and 447 suffered serious injuries.

Working with young road users

One of our biggest regular road safety activities is Safe Drive Stay Alive - a dramatic and impactful live show that has been seen by more than 80,000 students in West Sussex since its launch in 2006.

Local schools and colleges send students to the theatre-style presentation, which includes personal accounts delivered from the stage by all of those affected by serious traffic collisions – including seriously injured victims, relatives of those who have been killed and emergency service staff – alongside a road safety film.

The show brings to life difficult messages to make young people aware of their responsibilities as new, and potential drivers, or as passengers travelling with their friends, and of the devastating consequences that can occur otherwise.

More than 8,000 young people attended Safe Drive Stay Alive events in West Sussex last year.

We also run Hard Hit – a classroom presentation by firefighters to those at most risk of being involved in a collision, or those who have already received a conviction, and Choices, which helps students aged 16 or over understand the costs of driving, including vehicle purchase, maintenance, insurance and the law.

Our Fire Bike promotes road safety at events across the county and helps make motorcyclists aware of the courses and advice available to them.

Advice and information for all drivers can be found on the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership website www.sussexsaferroads.gov.uk
What you said about our service...

We survey people we have helped with domestic and commercial property fires, except for sensitive incidents involving serious injuries or fatalities.

Learning points are acted upon immediately within WSFRS but all completed surveys are also copied to an external research company for independent analysis. On these pages we highlight some of the comments we received, and look at some of the data that was collated.

99%

Of those who responded, 99% were satisfied with our overall service at domestic incidents.

40%

40% of respondents said our arrival time was quicker than expected.

In your opinion was the arrival time of the Fire and Rescue Service -

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Do you feel the Fire and Rescue Service kept the effects of the incident to a minimum?

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Thinking about the FRS at the scene, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received? (Grouped)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>100% (97% Very satisfied)</td>
<td>100% (100% very satisfied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Were you given any general safety advice by the FRS at the scene?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Non Domestic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes – found it useful</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>74% (100% of these found it helpful)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes – did not find it useful</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Were you offered a Home Fire Safety check?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes – accepted it</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes – declined it</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Has any of the advice you were given (at the scene or in a Home Fire Safety Check) been adopted?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Non Domestic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice already in place</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No advice given</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service you received from the Fire and Rescue Service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Non Domestic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you were dissatisfied with any part of the service you received, please explain why.

**Domestic incidents:**
- My wife was very upset that her flower beds were trampled.
- Length of time to arrive. Lack of information given by operator.
- Everything was great at the time, but slightly disappointed that the bucket load of ash and burnt out wood, all very wet, was just dumped in one of our flower beds.
- Lots of muddy shoe prints throughout the house. Took quite a while to park and turn around. Not good if the incident had been worse.
- They burned a hole in the carpet, which wasn’t necessary, in my opinion, as it was with their bucket.

**Non-domestic:**
- 20 minutes between call out and the firemen arrival not very satisfactory. Fortunately it did not really matter as it was a small incident.
Our Technical Rescue Unit is regarded around the world for the expertise it can provide in the aftermath of natural disasters.

Closer to home the team’s specialist skills are used on a daily basis, particularly in rural areas of West Sussex.

The team is fully trained to carry out urban search and rescue, rope rescue, water rescue and large animal rescue. That means its work can vary from evacuating people from flooded sites one day, to lifting a cow or horse out of a ditch or river the next.

Since the team was formed in 2006 it has played a key part in international search and rescue missions in Indonesia, Haiti, New Zealand, Japan and Bosnia.

Last year it was sent to help following the devastating earthquake in Nepal. A team of six completed a ten-day mission carrying out vital humanitarian work in Nepal.

One piece of work they were involved with brought an important hospital back into operation after it had been left functioning at only ten per cent of its capacity due to the perilous state of the building.

As well as providing vital humanitarian aid, international missions allow our firefighters to bring back vital skills for incidents closer to home. As the West Sussex team leads on logistics for the UK they also arranged for a local vet to travel with them to care for the search and rescue dogs who travelled to Nepal.
How you can become involved
We would welcome your comments or feedback about this report and how we’re letting you know about our priorities and performance. Thank you for your time.

Access to information
If you would like this information in an alternative format or language please contact us using the following information.

Contacting us

Phone
01243 777100

Email
wsfrs@westsussex.gov.uk

Website
www.westsussex.gov.uk/
Follow us on Twitter @WestSussexFire or find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/wsfrs