

COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

21 DECEMBER 2017

Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics: England, April 2016 to March 2017

Report of Area Manager, Assurance and Assets

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To present a comparative analysis of key operational performance indicators within County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) against national performance data contained within one of the national reports published annually by the Home Office.

BACKGROUND

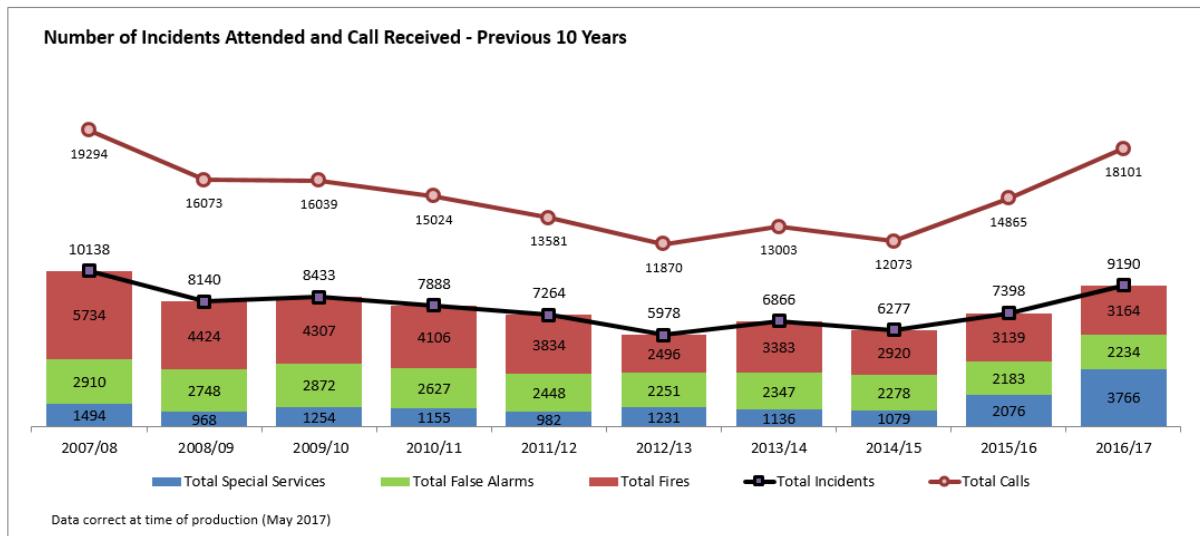
2. The report 'Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics: England, April 2016 to March 2017', published by the Home Office presents a range of statistics about the incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRS) across England in 2016/17 including both fires and non-fire incidents and details on fatalities and non-fatal casualties arising from those incidents.
3. This report compares our strategic PIs relating to key aspects of the operational performance of the service against the national data published by the Home Office.
4. This report only covers the incident related statistics from the Home Office report but fire prevention data from the Home Office data tables released in November are also included. Comparative analysis of trends in workforce and workforce diversity will be the subject of a separate report.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

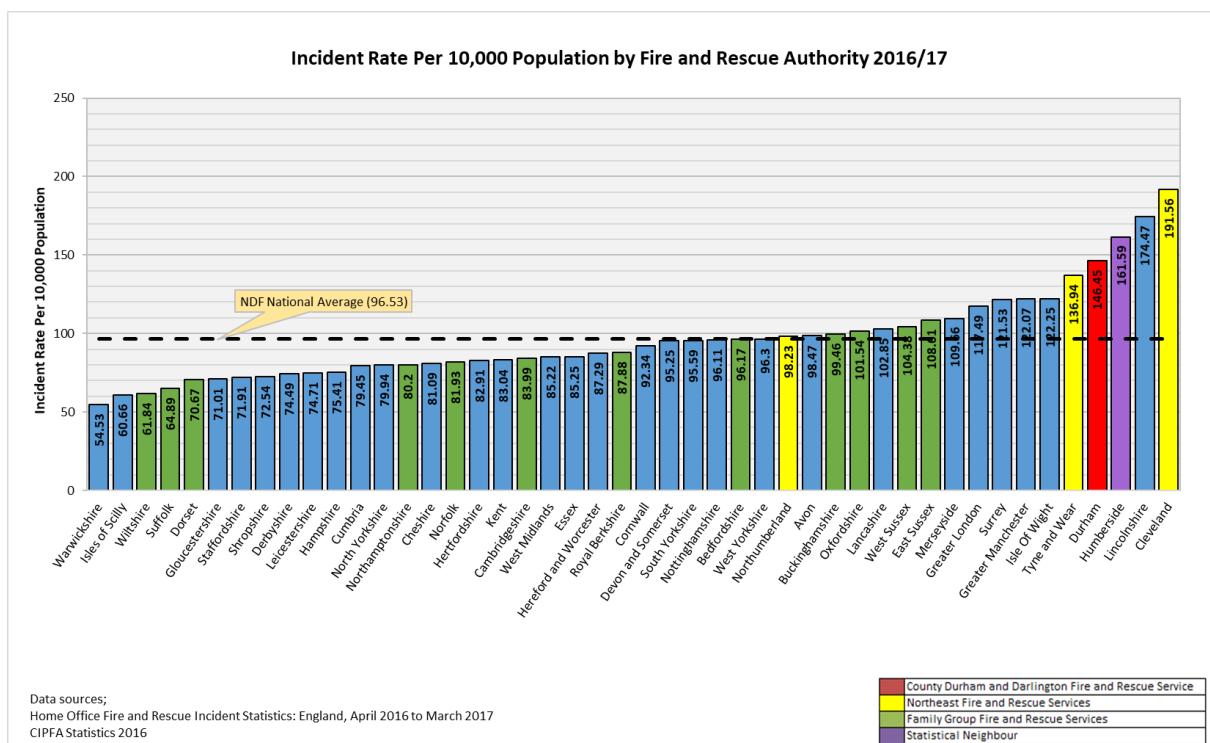
5. An overview of key strategic operational performance indicators that are readily comparable to the data within the national reports are presented within the report. Some datasets are not directly comparable with our performance measures but noted where this is the case.
6. To make it easier to compare CDDFRS with other FRS, the data is expressed either as a value per head of population or number of property types (e.g. per 10,000 population).

Total Calls and Total Incidents

7. The chart below shows the total calls and incidents attended by CDDFRS the past 10 years.

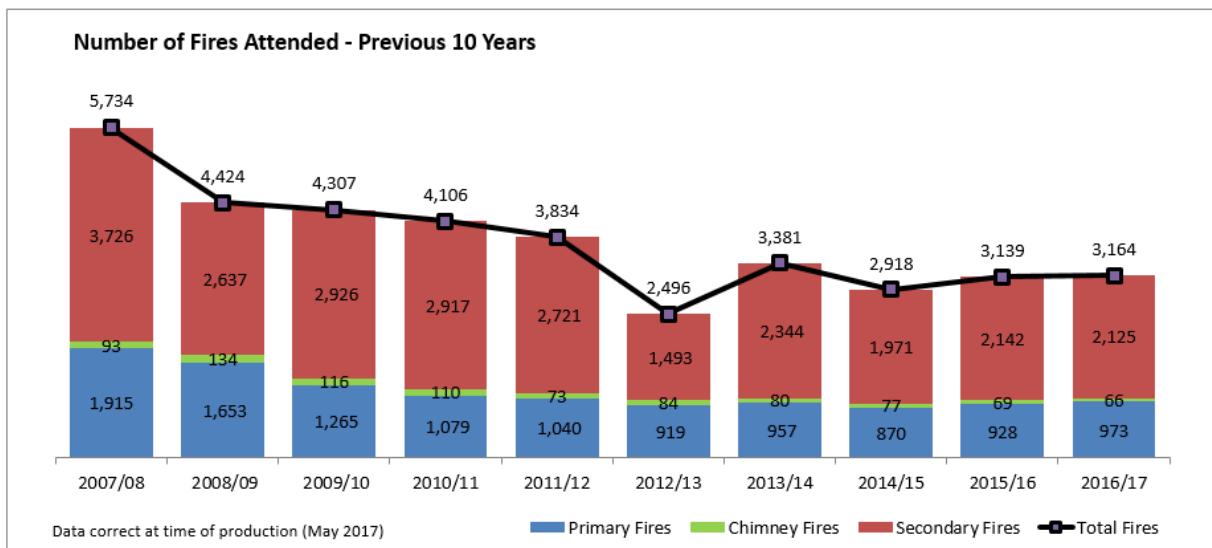


8. Fire and rescue services nationally attended 558,693 incidents in England during 2016/17, 6% higher than the previous year. In CDDFRS, total incidents attended increased by 25%, mainly due to an increase in non-fire incidents, the majority being emergency medical response (EMR) calls.
9. In terms of incident rate per 10,000 population, CDDFRS was 51.7% higher than the national average, placing us 4th busiest as the chart below shows:



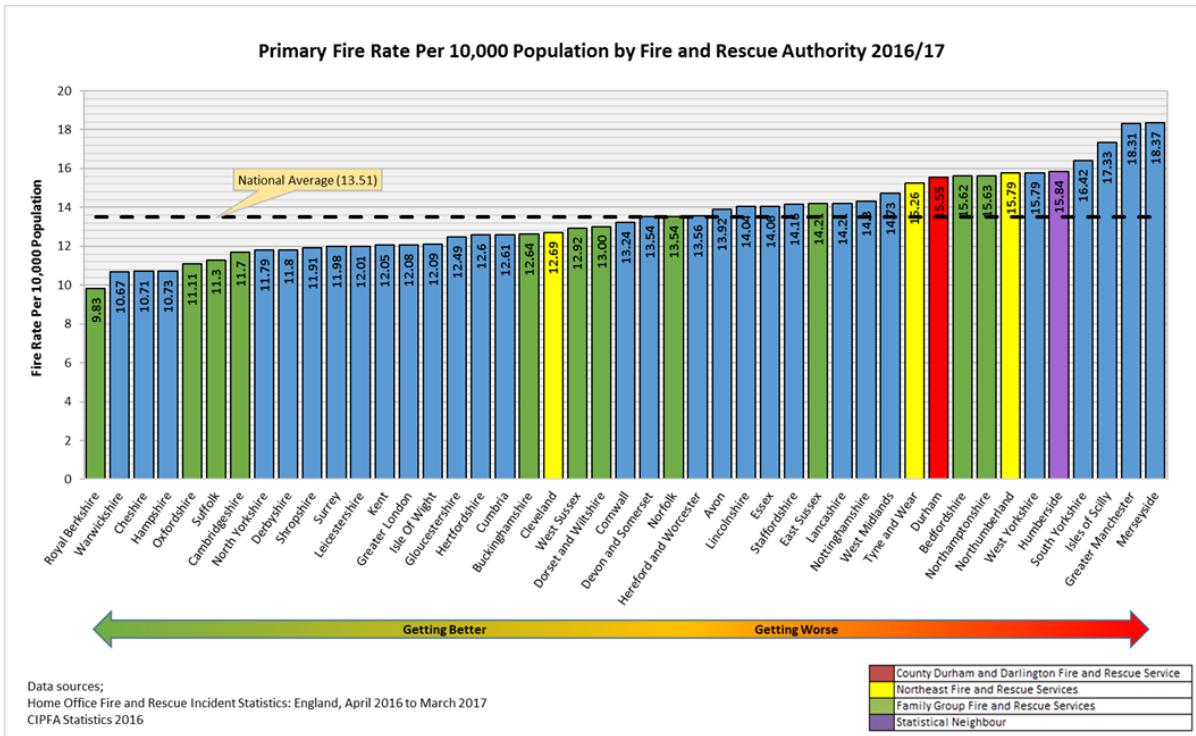
Total Fires Attended

10. The total number of fires attended by FRSs has decreased for around a decade – falling 44.9% from 293,920 in 2007/08 to 154,445 in 2012/13. Since then the total number of fires has been broadly stable ranging from 171,329 in 2013/14, 155,042 in 2014/15, 162,273 in 2015/16 to 161,903 in 2016/17.
11. In CDDFRS, as the chart below shows, there is a similar picture with the number of fires attended reducing by 44.9% since 2007/08, falling to a low in 2012/13, with a slow but steady increase since then.

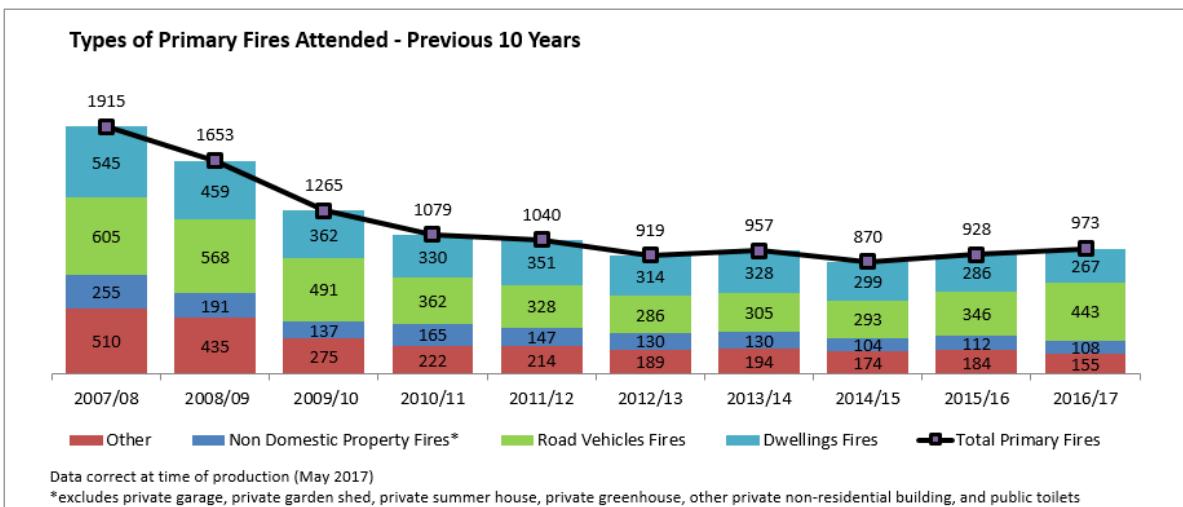


Primary Fires

12. Primary fires are fires with one or more of the following characteristics:
 - all fires in buildings and vehicles that are not derelict or in some outdoor structures;
 - any fire involving casualties or rescues;
 - any fire attended by five or more appliances.
13. Nationally, primary fires have also been on a long-term downward trend but increased slightly, for the second consecutive year, by 2% from 73,477 in 2015/16 to 74,803 in 2016/17.
14. The annual increase in primary fires in England covers a mixed story with decreases in dwelling fires (-3%), other building fires (-1%) and other outdoor fires (-1%) being outnumbered by an increase in road vehicle fires of 13%. Over the same time, total accidental fires decreased by 3% while deliberate fires increased by 3%. The increase in deliberate fires was driven by a 25% increase in deliberate road vehicle fires.
15. Looking further back, since 2011/12 there has been a 14% decrease in England compared with a 6.2% decrease in our area.
16. The number of primary fires that occurred within the CDDFRS area was higher than the national average, and placed us in the bottom quartile of FRS (as the chart overleaf shows) these incidents increased by 4.8%, compared to the 1.9% annual increase seen nationally. The majority of this rise was also due to vehicle fires.

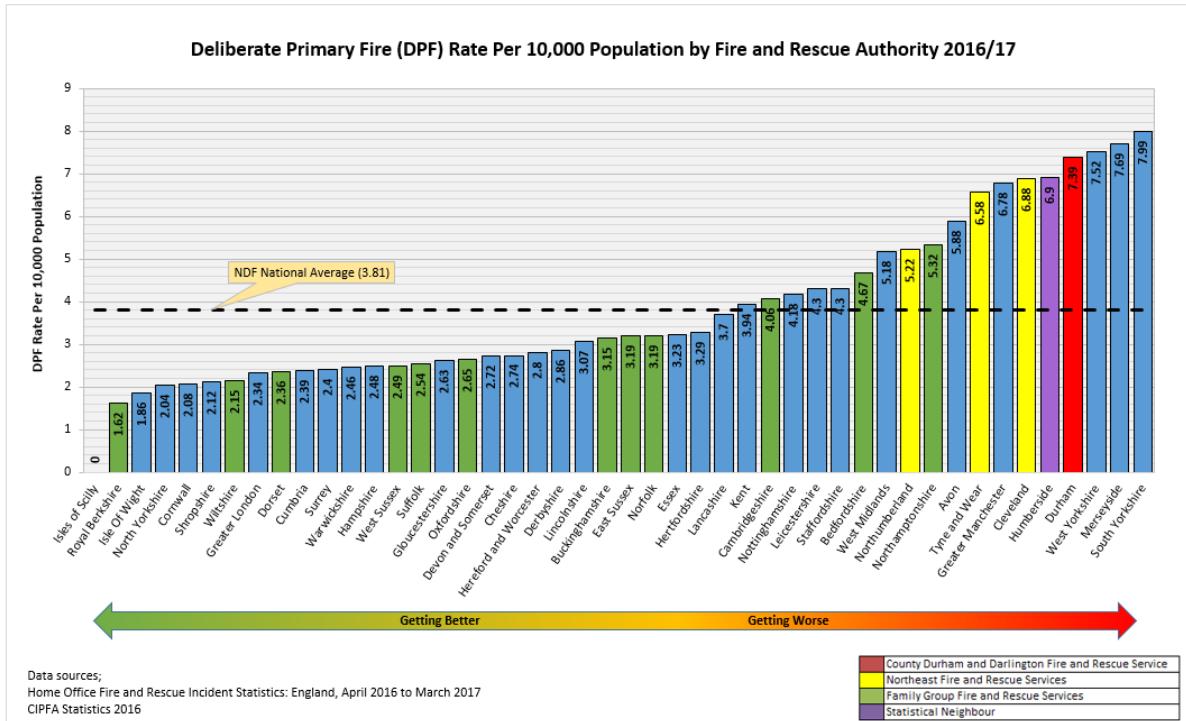


17. The longer term trend remains downward but has risen steadily over the past 3 years as the chart below shows. The rise was mainly due to a rise in road vehicle fires which accounted for 44.4% of all primary fires in 2016/17. 64.9% of our road vehicle fires were deliberate.

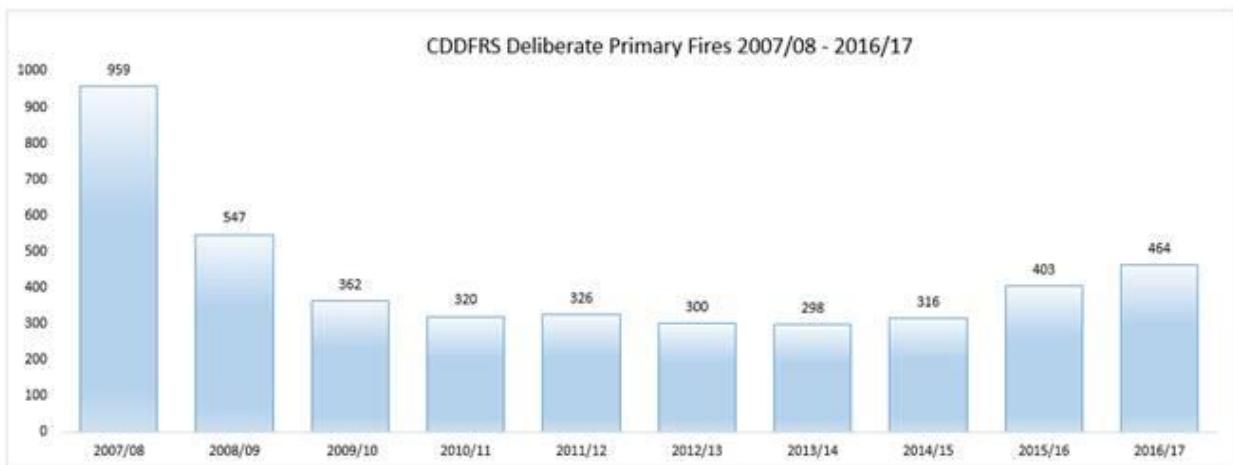


Deliberate Primary Fires

18. There were 14.3% more deliberate primary fires in our area during 2016/17 than the previous year, compared to an annual rise of 13.9% nationally. The number recorded per head of population was 99.9% higher than the national average placing the Service 4th worst performing nationally, as shown below:

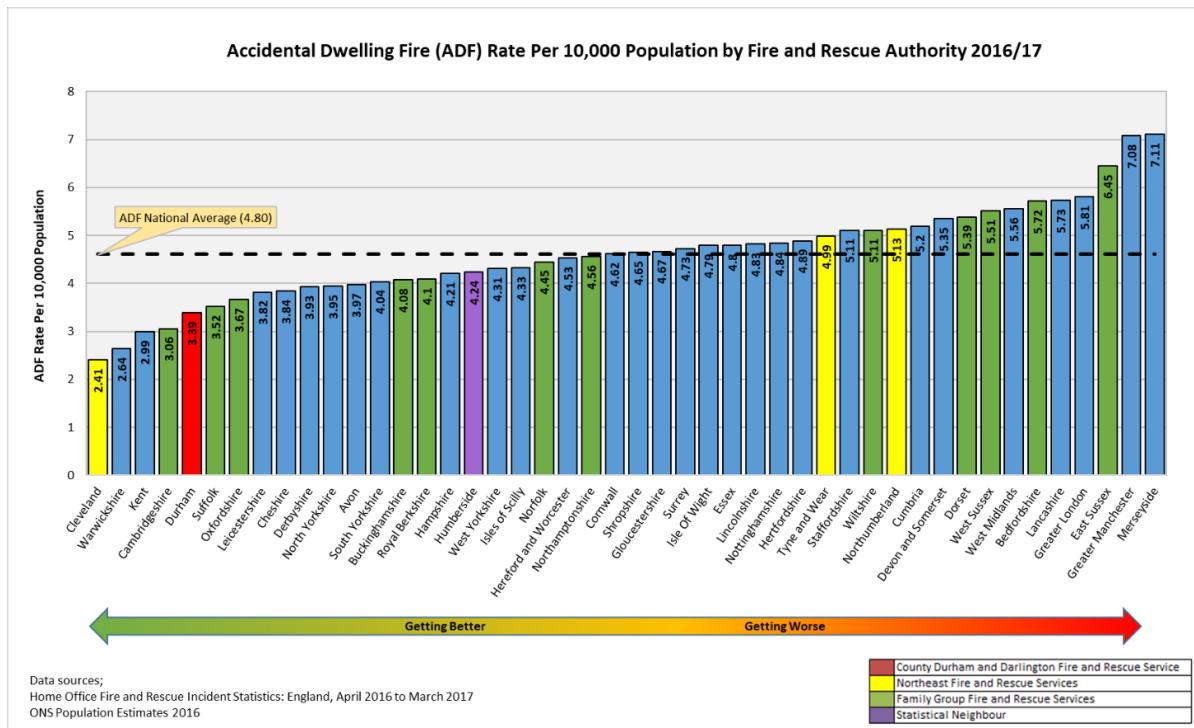


19. When compared to 2011/12, deliberate primary fires in our area have risen by 42.7%, as the chart below shows, compared to a 17.5% reduction seen across England. A high proportion (64.9%) involved road vehicles and linked to anti-social behaviour and certain criminal activity in key areas of the Service area.

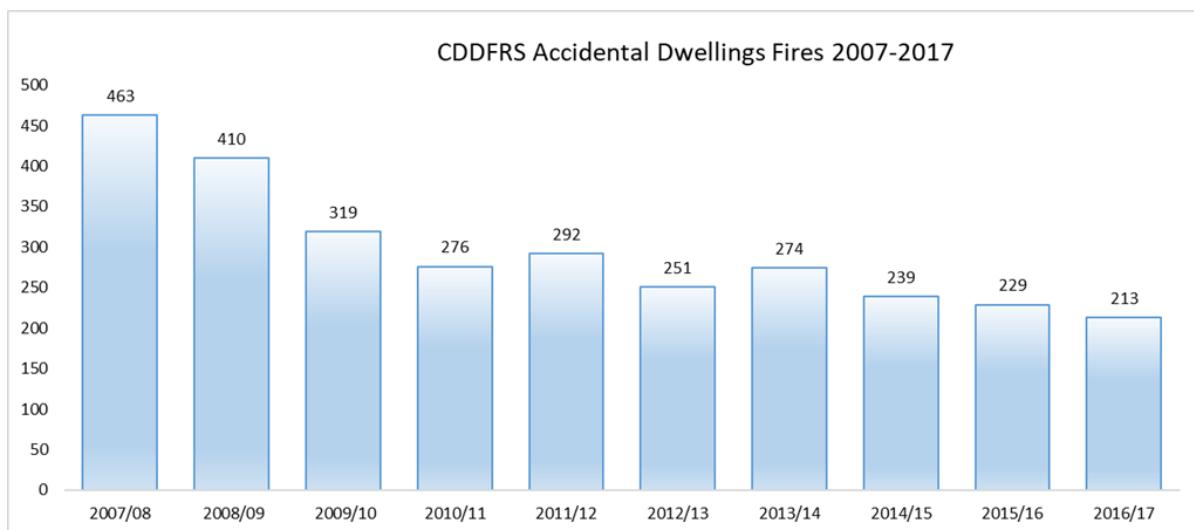


Accidental Dwelling Fires, Injuries and Fatalities

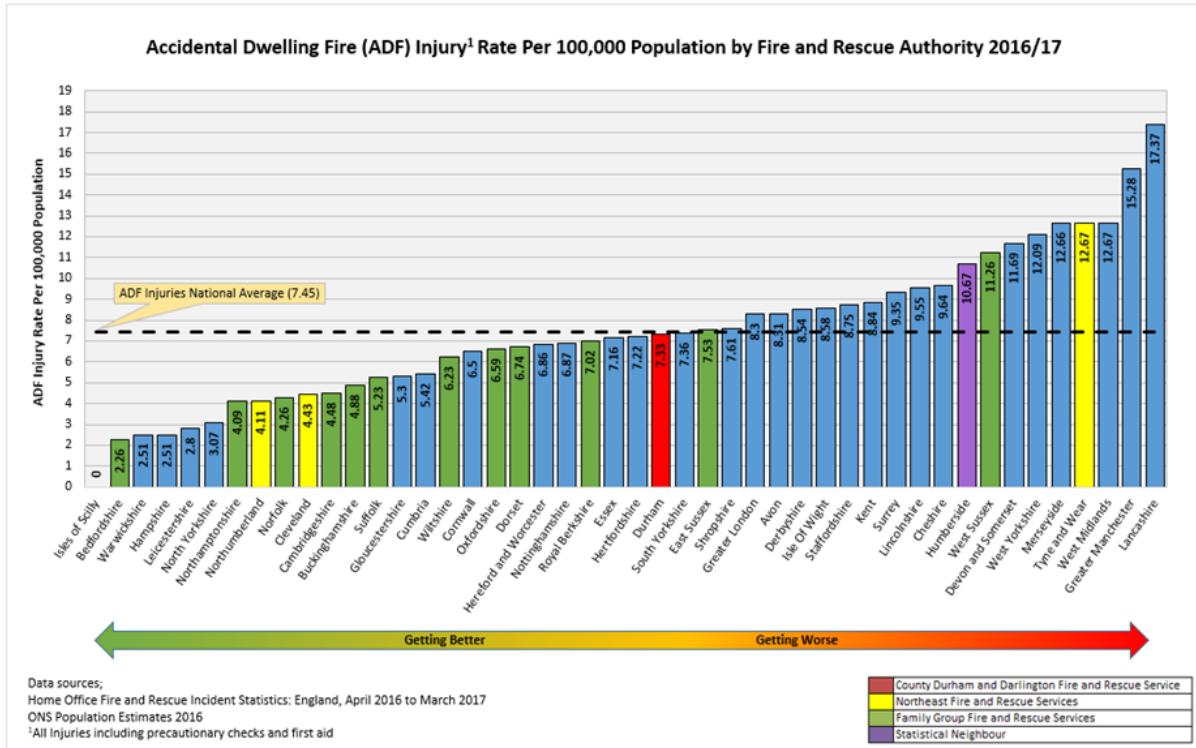
20. Despite the slight increase in primary fires nationally, the number of accidental dwelling fires in England decreased by 4% between 2015/16 and 2016/17 compared to 7% decrease in our area, placing us 5th best performing service in England, as the chart below shows.



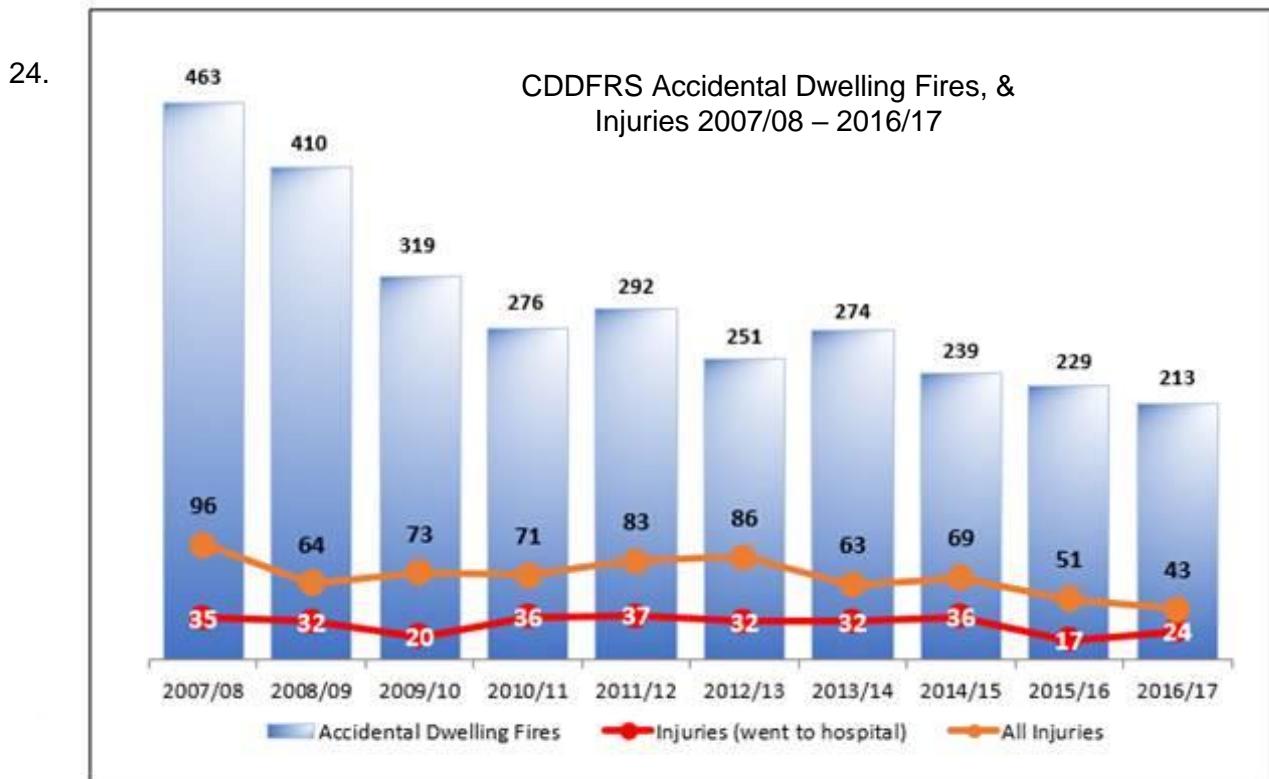
21. The longer term trend within CDDFRS continues to outperform the national trend. Compared to 2011/12, there was a 12% decrease nationally, compared to a 27.1% reduction in our area as shown in the chart below.



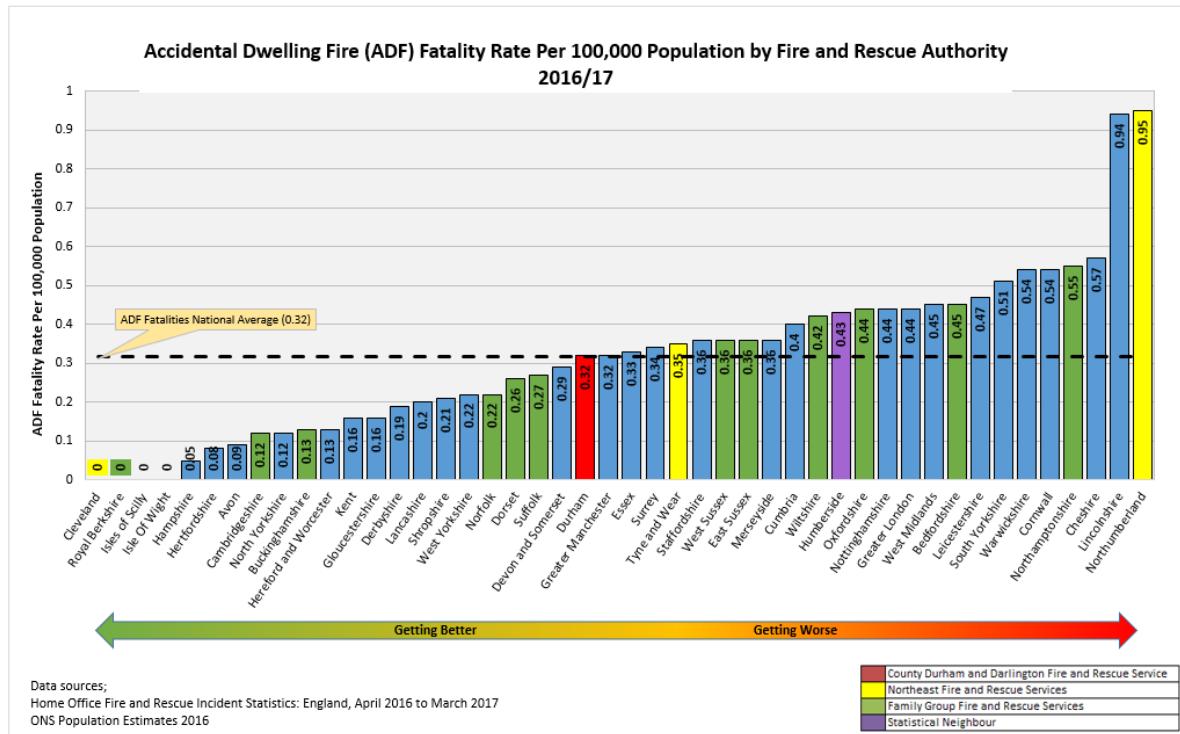
22. In CDDFRS, the number of all accidental dwelling fire injuries reduced by 15.7% between 2015/16 and 2016/17 compared to the 4.7% decrease seen nationally. The injury rate compared to head of population is just below the national average, as shown below:



23. Compared to 2007/08 there has been a 34.9% reduction in injuries arising from accidental dwelling fires nationally and a 53.4% reduction in our area as shown in the chart below.

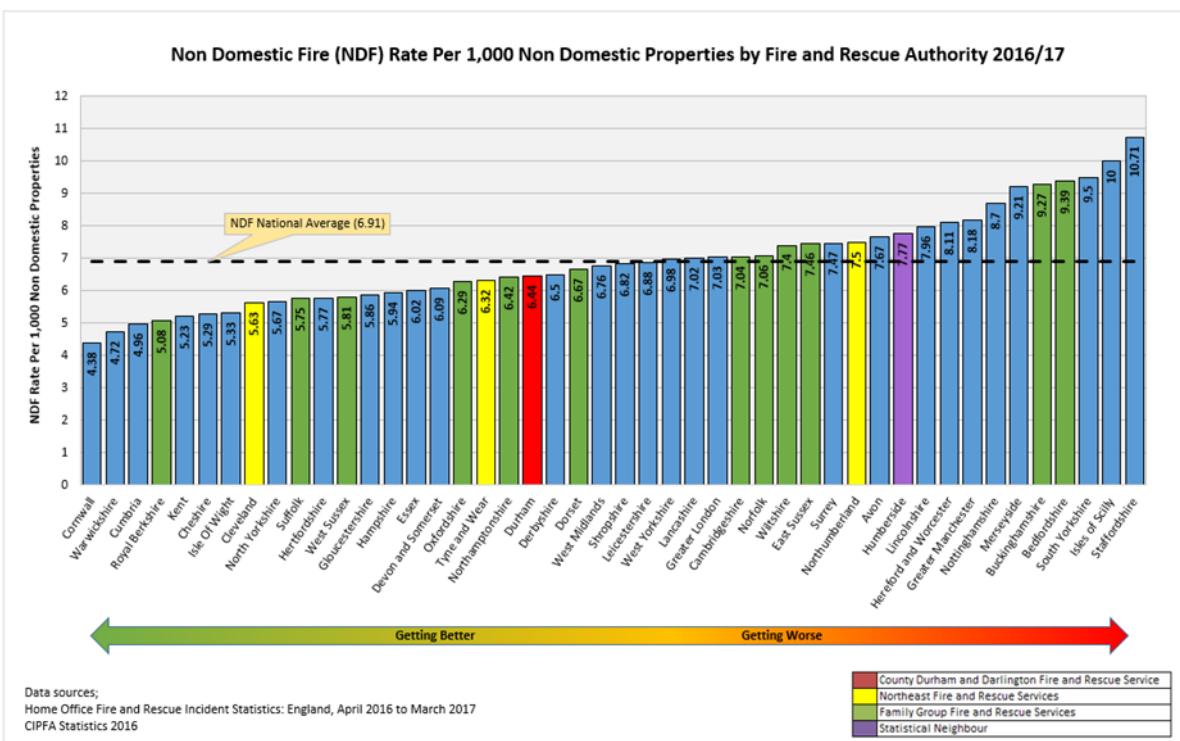


25. The fatality rate in accidental dwelling fires, per head of population, in our area is the same as the national average and places us 22nd nationally as the chart below shows:



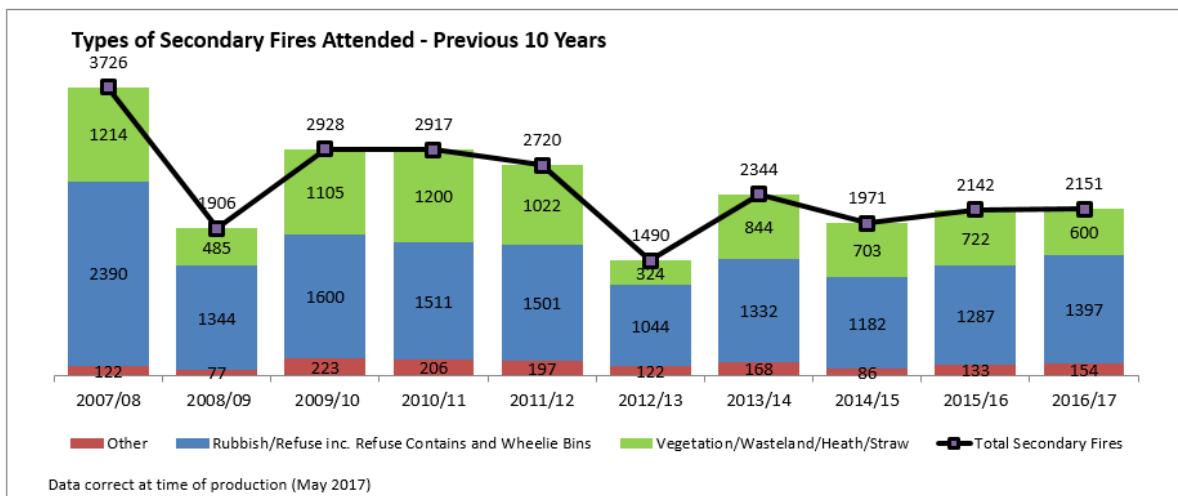
Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Properties

26. In CDDFRS, there was a 3.4% reduction in the number of all categories of primary fires in non-domestic properties, compared to a 1.1% reduction nationally. The fire rate per head of population is below the national average and places us 27th nationally, as shown below:

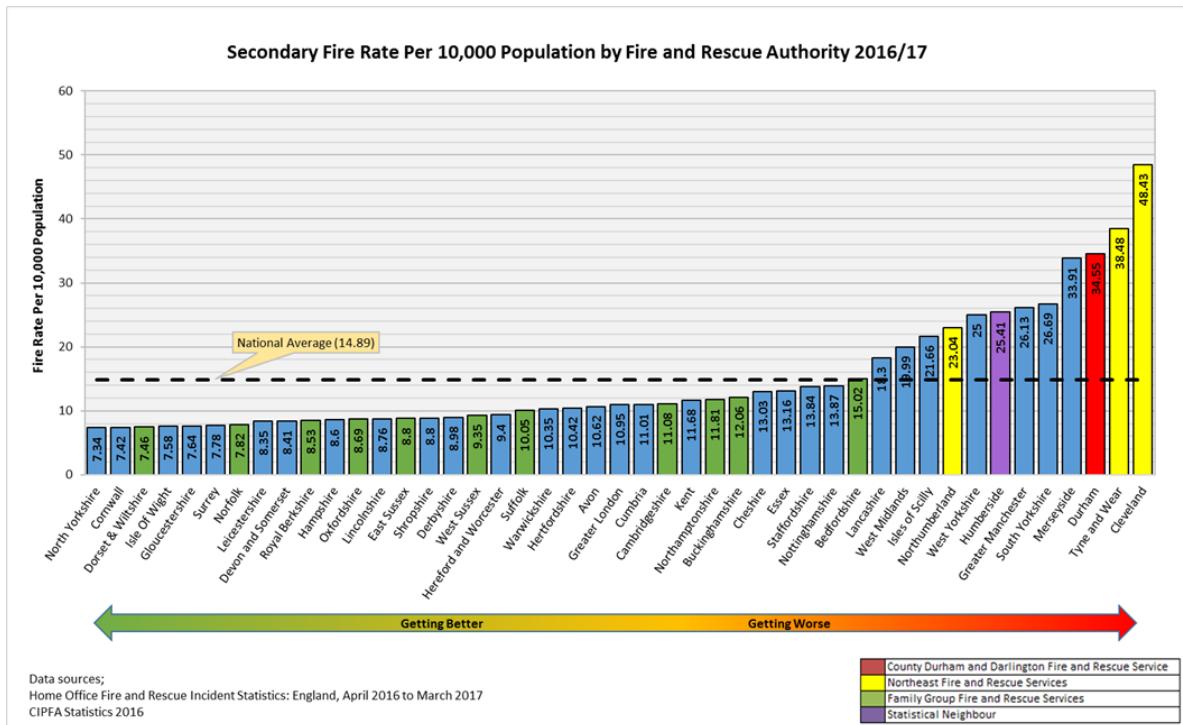


Secondary Fires

27. Secondary fires can broadly be thought of as smaller outdoor fires, not involving people or property. Of the 161,903 fires attended in 2016/17, 82,746 were secondary fires. For England, this was a two per cent decrease on last year compared to a 0.4% reduction in our area. Nationally, secondary fires have reduced by 51.9% since 2007/08, they have reduced by 36.9%. In CDDFRS, secondary fires reduced by 30.2% since 2007/08 and 20.1% since 2011/12 as the chart below shows:

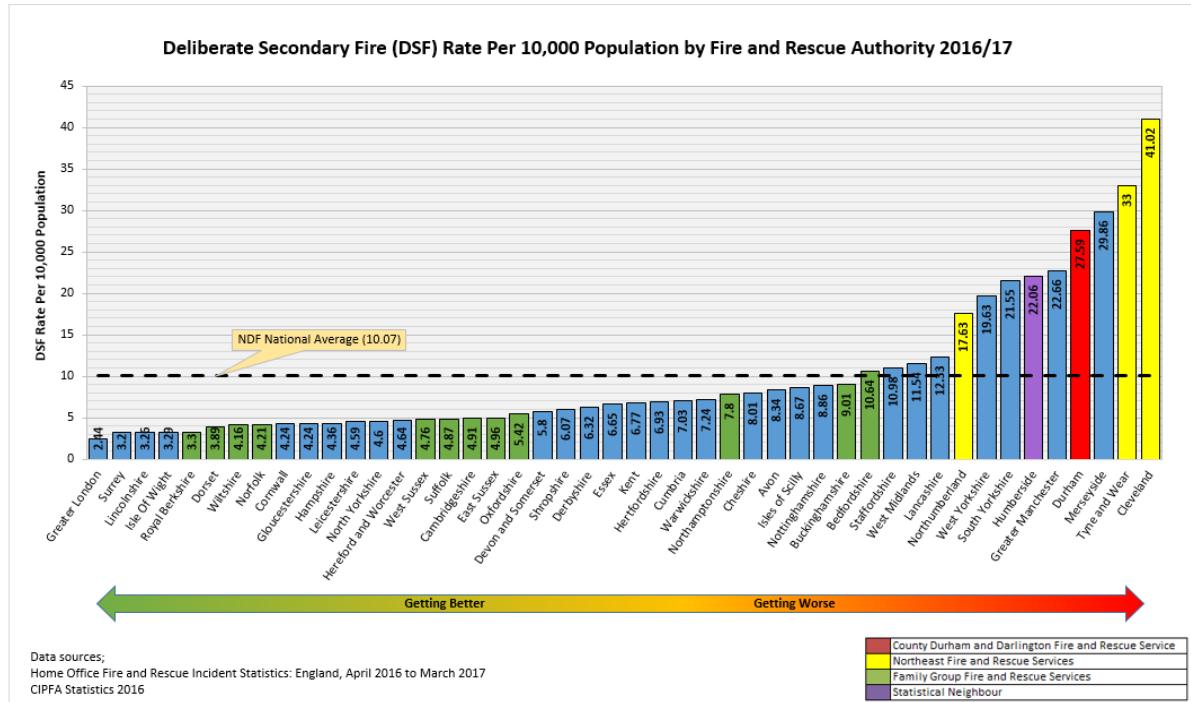


28. Secondary fires are an issue for all FRS in the north east, with CDDFRS 3rd worst performing in England, behind Tyne & Wear and Cleveland, as shown below:

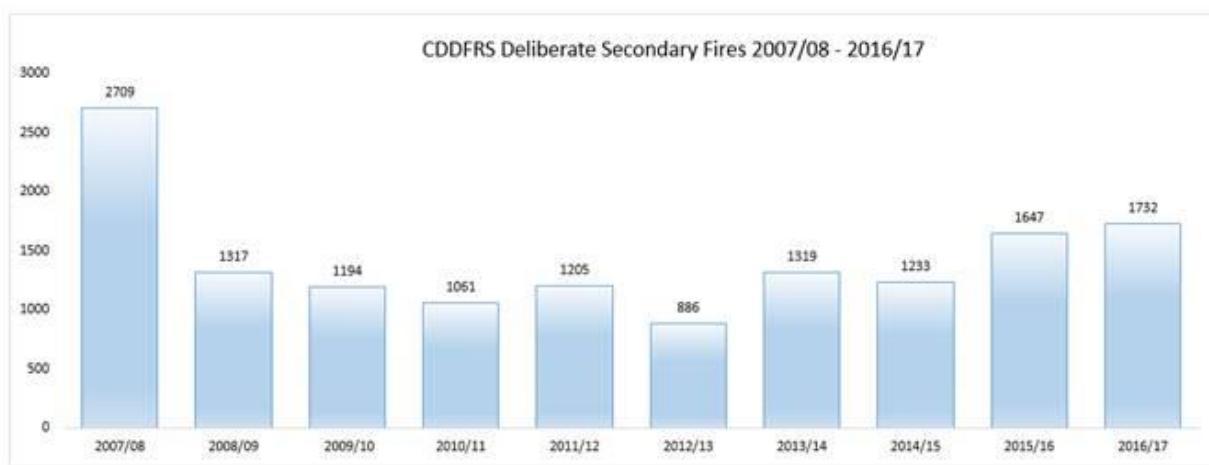


Deliberate Secondary Fires

29. There were 5% more deliberate secondary fires in our area during 2016/17 than the previous year, compared to an annual decrease of 0.41% nationally. The number recorded per head of population was 175.9% higher than the national average placing the Service 4th worst performing nationally.

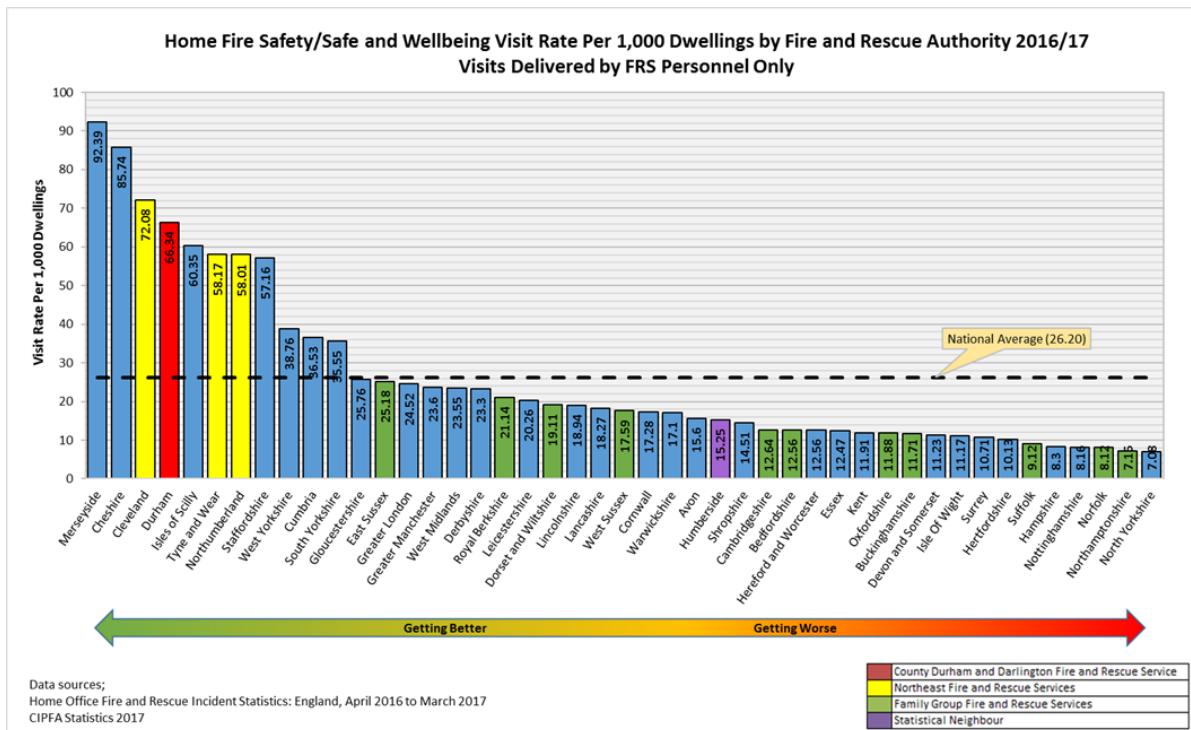


30. When compared to 2011/12, deliberate secondary fires in our area have risen by 43.7% compared to a 39.3% reduction seen across England as the chart below shows.



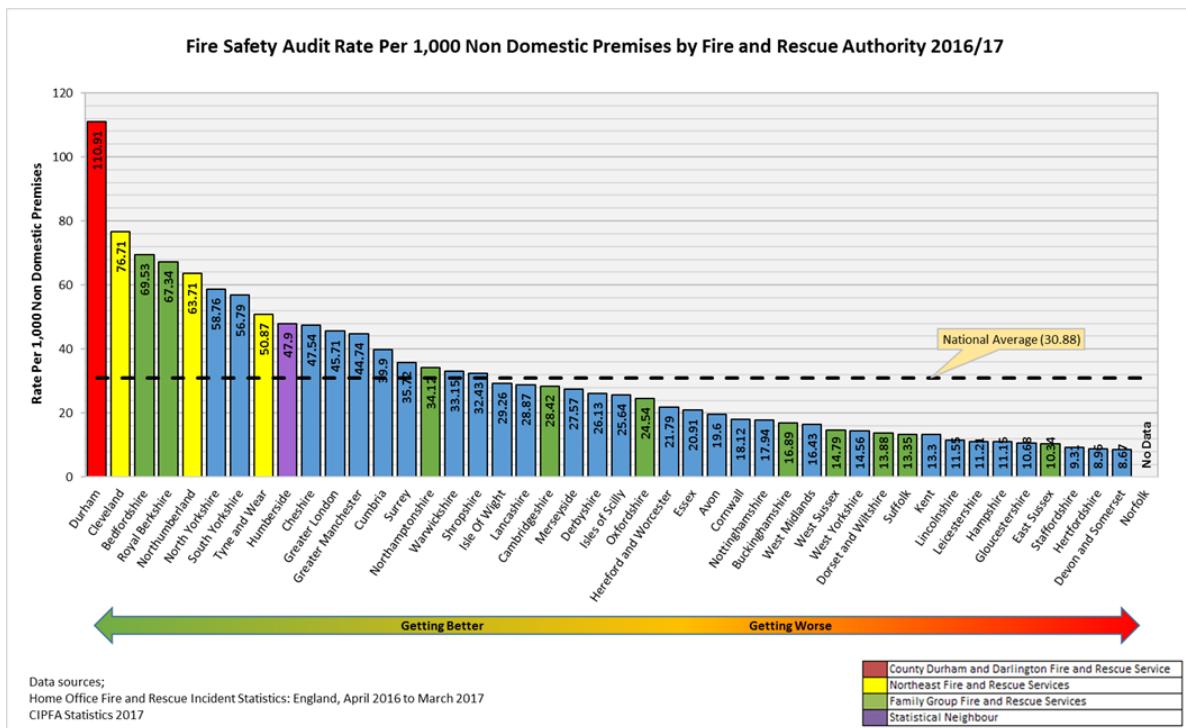
Home Fire Safety Checks/Safe & Wellbeing Visits

31. FRSs completed 590,198 Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) and/or Safe & Wellbeing Visits (SWV) in 2016/17, 1.6% less than last year and 17.4% lower than 2011/12.
32. In contrast, CDDFRS completed 18,915 HFSC/SWV in 2016/17, a 7.9% decrease on 2015/16 but 92.2% more than 2011/12. In 2016/17, to reflect the move from HFSCs to the broader, more comprehensive safe and wellbeing visits which take longer to undertake, the annual target was reduced from 20,000 to 18,000, accounting for the small 7.9% decrease on 2015/16. Despite this lower target, this still placed us 4th best performing FRS in the country, in terms of HFSC/SWV per 1,000 dwellings as the chart below shows.



Fire Safety Audits

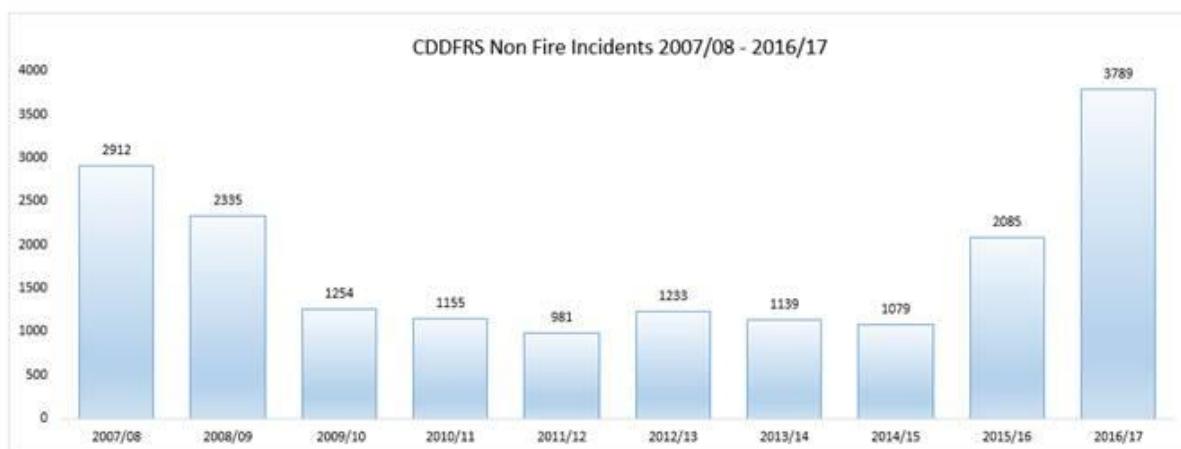
33. Fire and Rescue Authorities deliver their enforcement duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO) through locally determined, risk-based programmes of audit/inspection visits to non-domestic premises.
34. Nationally, FRSs carried out 54,247 Fire Safety Audits (FSA) in 2016/17, 14.2% less than the previous year and 33.9% lower than 2011/12. CDDFRS staff undertook 2066 FSAs in 2016/17, slightly lower (9.5%) than the previous year but 144.2% more than 2011/12.
35. This rise is because in previous years, the volume of fire safety audits undertaken in CDDFRS was limited by the capacity of staff working in the Fire Safety Team. The strategy to utilise operational crews to undertake fire safety audits has proved successful contributing to CDDFRS becoming the best performing service in the country with regard to the number of FSAs carried out on non-domestic properties, as shown by the chart below:



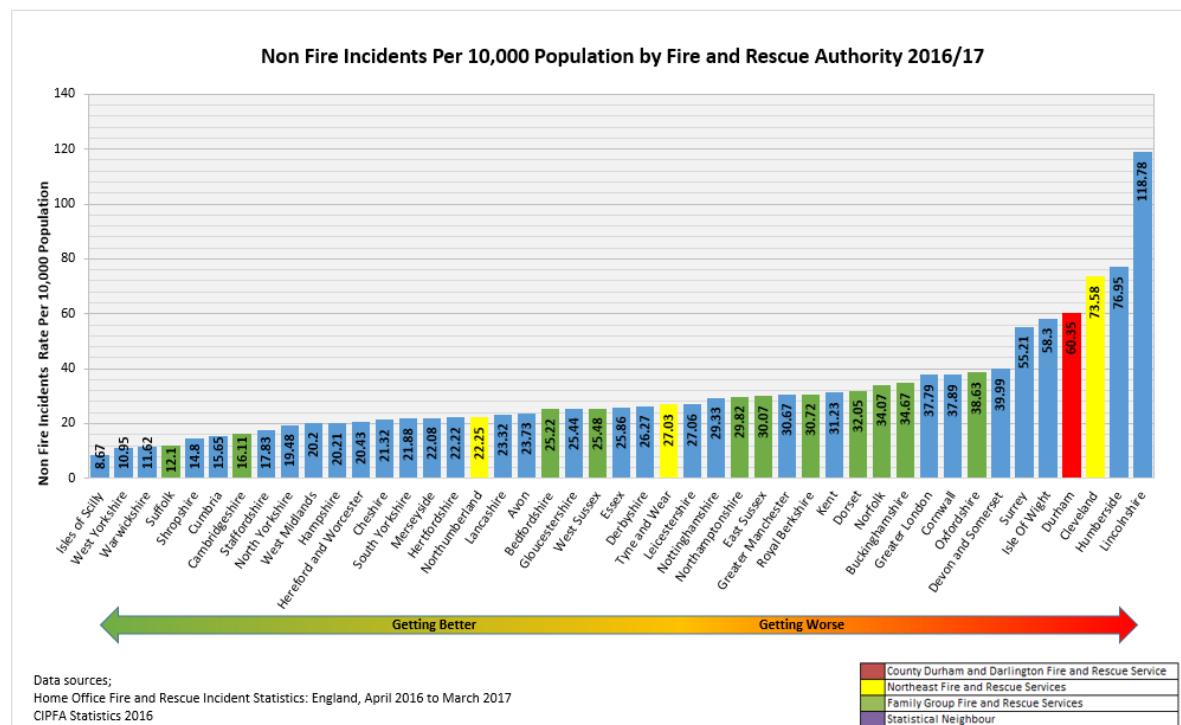
36. This achievement reflects the Service's extensive work with businesses and organisations to help keep people safe at work or when visiting a workplace such as a hotel or shop. CDDFRS does this by offering fire safety advice to businesses and conducting an audit programme on workplace fire safety risk assessments.

Non-Fire Incidents

37. FRSs attend many types of incidents that are not fires, for example flooding incidents, road traffic collisions, rescuing animals and effecting entry/exit. For the first time, in 2016/17 FRSs attended more non-fire incidents than fires. The rise in total incidents attended nationally was predominantly driven by a 14% increase in the number of non-fire (also known as Special Service) incidents attended by FRSs from 152,813 in 2015/16 to 173,579 in 2016/17.
38. The increase in non-fire incidents nationally was driven to a large extent by increases in medical co-responding or emergency medical response (EMR) incidents, which accounted for 14,000 of the additional 21,000 additional non-fire incidents in 2016/17 compared with the previous year. In CDDFRS, EMR incidents accounted for 45% of non-fire incidents attended in 2016/17, contributing to 286% rise since the low of 981 in 2011/12 as shown below:



39. In terms of non-fire incidents per 10,000 population, CDDFRS was 4th busiest as the chart below shows:



SUMMARY

40. The comparative analysis presented in this report highlights the advantages of considering performance compared to other FRS as well as against our own targets or against previous years.
41. The analysis has reinforced where we know we are performing strongly, such as being the best performing FRS for Fire Safety Audits and 4th best performing in terms of HFSC/SWV per head of population, an investment we believe has contributed to the reduction in accidental dwelling fires, making us the 5th best performing FRS in England.
42. However, it also highlights the challenges we face in terms of deliberate primary and secondary fires, where we sit 4th from the bottom nationally. The increase in deliberate fires in our area is something the Service has been well aware of, with the Performance and Programme Board scrutinising it in depth after ‘calling-in’ it in early in the year. We are working hard to better understand the root causes and working with partners to invest resources where they will have the biggest impact on performance.
43. With CDDFRS having the 4th highest incident rate in England (per head of population), we recognise that the 25% increase in total incidents, due in part to the rise in deliberate fires but also EMR activity, has impacted upon our discretionary capacity that we utilise to undertake our prevention and protection activities.
44. Consequently, the outcomes from this analysis are not only helping us to both better understand the risks in our communities, how we are performing and informing where best to invest our limited resources to improve performance going forward but also support our efforts to measure and improve staff productivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

45. CFA members are requested to:
 - a. **Note** and comment on the content of the report;

Andrew Hopkinson, Area Manager, Assurance & Assets, 0191 375 5586