



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

RESPONSE TIMES AND CALL HANDLING PERFORMANCE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 08 October 2021

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an overview of the Service's response times and call handling performance against the Home Office, April 2019 to March 2020, published data report.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of the report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the March 2021 Community Safety Committee it was reported to Members that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is above the English average for the total response times and above average for all three sub-reporting categories which make up the total response time, as reported by the Home Office in their annual response times to fire attended by fire and rescue services: England, April 2019 to March 2020 published official statistics (latest version).
- 1.2 It was agreed by Members that a more detailed report would be brought back to Community Safety Committee detailing further analysis.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 In January 2021, the Home Office published response times to fires attended by fire and rescue services: England, April 2019 to March 2020, the latest annual publication that shows the average response times to certain categories of fire by each English fire and rescue service.
- 2.2 This breakdown suggested NFRS have some of the longest total response times components, with NFRS showing longer average response times than the average English fire and rescue service, as shown in the table below.

Average Response times, England 2019/20									
		Total response time		Call handling time		Crew turnout time		Drive Time	
		England Average	NFRS	England Average	NFRS	England Average	NFRS	England Average	NFRS
		2019/20	2019/20	2019/20	2019/20	2019/20	2019/20	2019/20	2019/20
Response times (minutes and seconds)									
All Primary fires		7m 37s	9m 48s	1m 24s	1m 42s	1m 09s	2m 03s	1m 09s	2m 03s
Dwellings		6m 55s	8m 35s	1m 17s	1m 31s	1m 01s	1m 47s	1m 01s	1m 47s
	House/bungalow	7m 08s	8m 43s	1m 09s	1m 26s	1m 02s	1m 47s	1m 02s	1m 47s
	Flats	6m 38s	8m 15s	1m 25s	1m 39s	0m 58s	1m 38s	0m 58s	1m 38s
	Other Dwellings	6m 54s	8m 38s	1m 20s	1m 46s	1m 04s	2m 02s	1m 04s	2m 02s
Other Buildings		7m 29s	9m 29s	1m 31s	1m 44s	1m 05s	1m 42s	1m 05s	1m 42s
	Other Residential	6m 59s	9m 46s	1m 30s	2m 01s	1m 05s	1m 52s	1m 05s	1m 52s
	Non Residential	7m 32s	9m 26s	1m 31s	1m 41s	1m 05s	1m 41s	1m 05s	1m 41s
Road Vehicles		8m 28s	11m 21s	1m 24s	1m 52s	1m 21s	2m 39s	1m 21s	2m 39s
Other Outdoor		9m 58s	12m 33s	1m 54s	2m 03s	1m 29s	2m 46s	1m 29s	2m 46s
Secondary fires		8m 47s	10m 46s	1m 46s	2m 04s	1m 12s	2m 34s	1m 12s	2m 34s

- 2.3 Further analysis of Home Officer statistics (Appendix A) shows a breakdown of NFRS average response time performance over the past three reported years, compared to both the English average and a comparison between the geographical category classification in which NFRS are placed, the predominantly urban classification.
- 2.4 Geographical category classifications are based upon Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) 2011 census data sets, which compares NFRS to other Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) such as Manchester, London, and other large metropolitans. Nottinghamshire is classified as predominantly urban, due to having 74% or more of the area as 'urban' according to DEFRA's classifications. Comparing performance against

others by geographical category does not provide NFRS a 'like for like' comparable source of performance data, due to the significant levels of resources within metropolitan FRS, particularly when comparing total response times and drive times.

- 2.5 A more comparable data set to measure current performance, is against Tri-Service and regional partners, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). Not only do DFRS and LFRS use the same mobilising system as NFRS, but both counties are made up of similar urban / rural demographics, and not to de-similar population densities. The table below shows comparable levels of performance for the three Tri-Service partners when comparing the average response time for 2019/20.

Response times (minutes and seconds)		NFRS	Derbyshire FRS	Leicester FRS
All Primary fires ⁴		9m 48s	10m 06s	9m 36s
Dwellings		8m 35s	9m 11s	8m 30s
	House/bungalow	8m 43s	9m 21s	8m 51s
	Flats	8m 15s	8m 35s	7m 35s
	Other Dwellings	8m 38s	9m 15s	8m 37s
Other Buildings ⁵		9m 29s	10m 16s	9m 46s
	Other Residential	9m 46s	10m 31s	8m 48s
	Non Residential	9m 26s	10m 14s	9m 51s
Road Vehicles		11m 21s	11m 05s	10m 18s
Other Outdoor ⁶		12m 33s	11m 00s	11m 26s
Secondary fires ⁷		10m 46s	10m 15s	9m 50s

- 2.6 The Home Office report breaks down average response time into three components: call handling, crew turnout and drive times. A further comparison of NFRS performance against the English fire and rescue average is in Appendix B.
- 2.7 Appendix B shows that whilst not significant the English average for call handling and crew turn out time is also below that of NFRS.
- 2.8 When examining the various elements which make up the average response times and where the reported data is collected from, there are a number of 'touchpoints' in the process from emergency call receipt to incident attendance. The touchpoints are points in the mobilising system that capture the times which then inform the Incident Reporting System (IRS), from which the Home Office take their times and data. These touchpoints particularly impact on the reporting of call handling times.
- 2.9 The capturing of call handling times is taken from a fire and rescue service mobilising system; however, mobilising systems record the time of call received differently. An example being that a number of mobilising systems would record the time of call received once the control operator matches the address search; another system captures the time of call when the call is answered. Systel, the current mobilising system, captures the time of call from when the phone rings. From the research carried out, no mobilising system captures the call handling time earlier than Systel, thus one reason

why NFRS Tri-Services fire and rescue services call handling and total response times are reported to be above the English average.

2.10 Due the inconsistencies in how call handling times are captured and the reported, comparing NFRS performance to the English average is not comparable. The inconsistencies of capturing and recording call handling times will affect the overall average response time reported by NFRS, resulting in reported but incorrectly, longer than average response times.

2.11 Crew turn out times (Appendix B) show that NFRS are again above the English average. Over the reported time period of three years NFRS have made efforts to improve crew turn out times as detailed in the table below:

	Average overall turn out time	Average Wholetime turn out time	On-call average turn out time
2020/21	2:43	1:52	5:53
2019/20	2:46	1:56	6:01
2018/19	2:46	2:02	5:23

The above data is taken from NFRS internal reporting system and not the Home Office. Whilst only a small improvement, the Service has increased its overall crew turn out time.

2.12 Appendix B also identifies and compares the English average drive times and NFRS drive times. The reported English average is lower than the NFRS average by 17 seconds. It is believed due to the urban and rural nature of Nottinghamshire drive times will be above average, and when comparing times with other counties of a similar demographics there are no areas of concern to report.

2.13 There are currently other differences to the way that response time performance is reported internally and how it is reported by the Home Office. An example being that the Home Office will report on over border resources attending incidents in Nottinghamshire which NFRS have very little control over if they are from Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire, or Humberside.

2.14 With the time of call being reported differently this means that the Home Office figures do not allow direct comparisons. However, the mean average reported by NFRS and Tri-Service partners is slower than South and West Yorkshire who also use a Systel mobilising, which demonstrates further learning and performance improvements can be sought.

2.15 Whilst there are differences between the way the Home Office and NFRS report response time data, Members should be assured that officers maintain a focus and are commitment as detailed in the Services' 2019 – 20 Strategic Plan to ensure that incidents are attended in an average below 08:00 minutes. Table details the Service past three years response times:

	NFRS Average Response Times
2020/21	07:50
2019/20	07:55
2018/19	07:53

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the information contained in this report does not relate to a change in policy or procedure.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a duty on NFRS in respect of the delivery of its services to communities.
- 7.2 The Local Government Act 1999 places a statutory duty on NFRS to '*secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised*'. The reporting of Service Delivery's performance ensures that the Service is focusing on key objectives as set by the Fire and Rescue Authority and continuous improvement. This ensures that Members can apply effective scrutiny to be satisfied that statutory obligations are being met.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

An effective performance culture and regime ensures the Service focuses on key objectives which contribute to the management of strategic and corporate risks. Robust performance information and analysis supports effective decision making and efficient use of resources.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

The Service continually seeks opportunities to work closely with other partners' services to maximise efficiency and to provide the highest level of service to the public, with particular focus currently with Nottinghamshire Police.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

APPENDIX A

		English FRS Average			NFRS Average			Geographical Category		
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18	2018/19	2019/
Response times (minutes and seconds)										
All Primary fires		8m 38s	8m 49s	8m 43s	9m 57s	9m 50s	9m 48s	5m 37s	5m 49s	5m 46s
Dwellings		7m 48s	7m 48s	7m 47s	8m 42s	8m 42s	8m 47s	5m 06s	5m 08s	5m 10s
	House/bungalow	8m 15s	8m 13s	8m 13s	8m 53s	8m 53s	8m 43s	5m 33s	5m 36s	5m 38s
	Flats		7m 00s	7m 01s	8m 22s	8m 22s	8m 17s	4m 22s	4m 25s	4m 26s
	Other Dwellings	7m 49s	7m 46s	7m 44s	8m 10s	9m 20s	8m 38s	4m 55s	4m 52s	4m 56s
Other Buildings		8m 27s	8m 35s	8m 37s	9m 44s	9m 20s	9m 29s	5m 27s	5m 37s	5m 39s
	Other Residential	7m 56s	7m 55s	8m 07s	9m 20s	8m 46s	9m 46s	4m 57s	4m 59s	5m 06s
	Non-Residential	8m 31s	8m 40s	8m 41s	9m 48s	9m 25s	9m 26s	5m 31s	5m 42s	5m 44s
Road Vehicles		9m 35s	9m 43s	9m 40s	10m 55s	10m 41s	11m 21s	6m 14s	6m 24s	6m 24s
Other Outdoor		10m 46s	11m 34s	11m 06s	12m 56s	12m 24s	12m 33s	6m 55s	7m 39s	7m 19s
Secondary fires		9m 10s	9m 42s	9m 18s	10m 29s	10m 52s	10m 46s	5m 51s	6m 20s	6m 05s

APPENDIX B

Call Handling		English FRS Average			NFRS Average		
All Primary fires		1m 24s	1m 23s	1m 22s	1m 54s	1m 48s	1m 42s
Dwellings		1m 15s	1m 14s	1m 13s	1m 39s	1m 34s	1m 31s
	House/bungalow	1m 10s	1m 08s	1m 07s	1m 31s	1m 26s	1m 26s
	Flats	1m 23s	1m 22s	1m 23s	2m 01s	1m 53s	1m 39s
	Other Dwellings	1m 19s	1m 19s	1m 16s	1m 47s	1m 40s	1m 46s
Other Buildings		1m 27s	1m 25s	1m 25s	1m 55s	1m 44s	1m 44s
	Other Residential	1m 24s	1m 22s	1m 24s	1m 52s	1m 55s	2m 01s
	Non-Residential	1m 28s	1m 26s	1m 26s	1m 55s	1m 43s	1m 41s
Road Vehicles		1m 29s	1m 27s	1m 25s	2m 00s	2m 02s	1m 52s
Other Outdoor		1m 48s	1m 51s	1m 47s	2m 31s	2m 14s	2m 03s
Secondary fires		1m 44s	1m 47s	1m 41s	2m 06s	2m 02s	2m 04s

Crew turnout time		English FRS Average			NFRS Average		
All Primary fires		1m 37s	1m 38s	1m 35s	2m 12s	2m 05s	2m 03s
Dwellings		1m 27s	1m 25s	1m 22s	1m 57s	1m 53s	1m 47s
	House/bungalow	1m 32s	1m 30s	1m 27s	2m 03s	1m 54s	1m 47s
	Flats	1m 15s	1m 14s	1m 12s	1m 39s	1m 41s	1m 38s
	Other Dwellings	1m 35s	1m 35s	1m 31s	1m 59s	2m 09s	2m 02s
Other Buildings		1m 33s	1m 33s	1m 32s	1m 59s	1m 51s	1m 42s
	Other Residential	1m 35s	1m 35s	1m 37s	1m 47s	1m 49s	1m 52s
	Non-Residential	1m 32s	1m 32s	1m 32s	2m 01s	1m 52s	1m 41s
Road Vehicles		1m 52s	1m 52s	1m 51s	2m 35s	2m 26s	2m 39s
Other Outdoor		2m 03s	2m 04s	2m 00s	2m 46s	2m 26s	2m 46s
Secondary fires		1m 35s	1m 35s	1m 32s	2m 42s	2m 27s	2m 34s

Drive Time		English FRS Average			NFRS Average		
All Primary fires		5m 37s	5m 49s	5m 46s	5m 51s	5m 57s	6m 03s
Dwellings		5m 06s	5m 08s	5m 10s	5m 05s	5m 21s	5m 17s
	House/bungalow	5m 33s	5m 36s	5m 38s	5m 20s	5m 32s	5m 30s
	Flats	4m 22s	4m 25s	4m 26s	4m 42s	4m 43s	4m 58s
	Other Dwellings	4m 55s	4m 52s	4m 56s	4m 24s	5m 31s	4m 50s
Other Buildings		5m 27s	5m 37s	5m 39s	5m 51s	5m 45s	6m 03s
	Other Residential	4m 57s	4m 59s	5m 06s	5m 41s	5m 01s	5m 54s
	Non-Residential	5m 31s	5m 42s	5m 44s	5m 52s	5m 51s	6m 04s
Road Vehicles		6m 14s	6m 24s	6m 24s	6m 20s	6m 12s	6m 49s
Other Outdoor		6m 55s	7m 39s	7m 19s	7m 39s	7m 43s	7m 44s
Secondary fires		5m 51s	6m 20s	6m 05s	5m 41s	6m 23s	6m 08s