



**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Combined Fire Authority**

**15 December 2020**

### **Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics: England, April 2019 to March 2020**

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#### **Report of Area Manager, Community Risk Management**

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#### **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 2019 to March 2020, published by the Home Office presents a range of statistics about the incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRS) across England in 2019/20 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.

## Total Calls and Total Incidents

7. Figure 1 shows in the past ten years the total calls and incidents attended by CDDFRS.

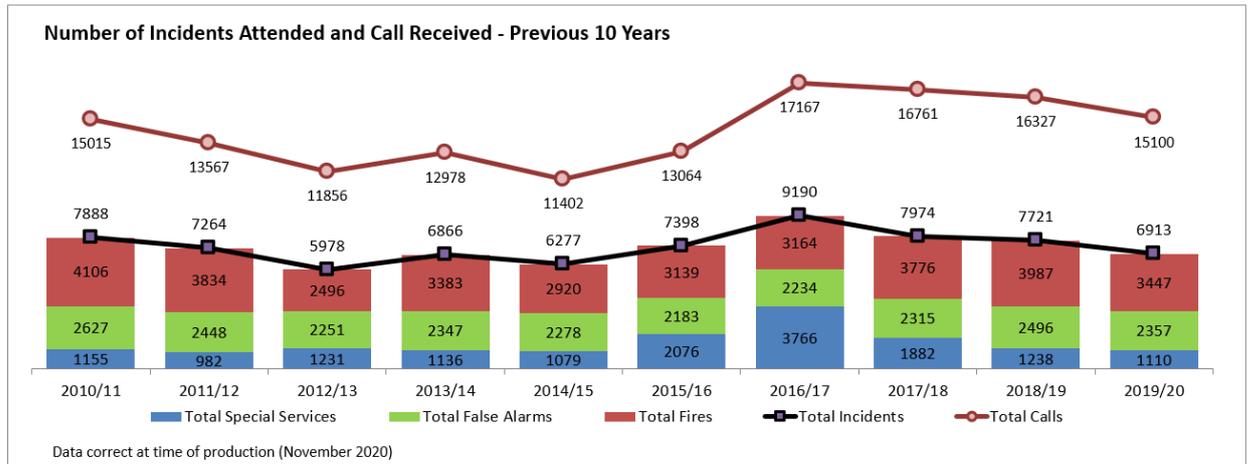


Figure 1 - Number of incidents attended and calls received - previous 10 years

8. Fire and rescue services nationally attended 557,299 incidents in England during 2019/20, this was a 3% decrease compared with the previous year (576,391). In CDDFRS, total incidents attended decreased by 10%, mainly due to a decrease in fires.
9. In terms of incident rate per 100,000 population, CDDFRS was 12% higher than the national average, placing us 10<sup>th</sup> busiest as figure 2 shows:

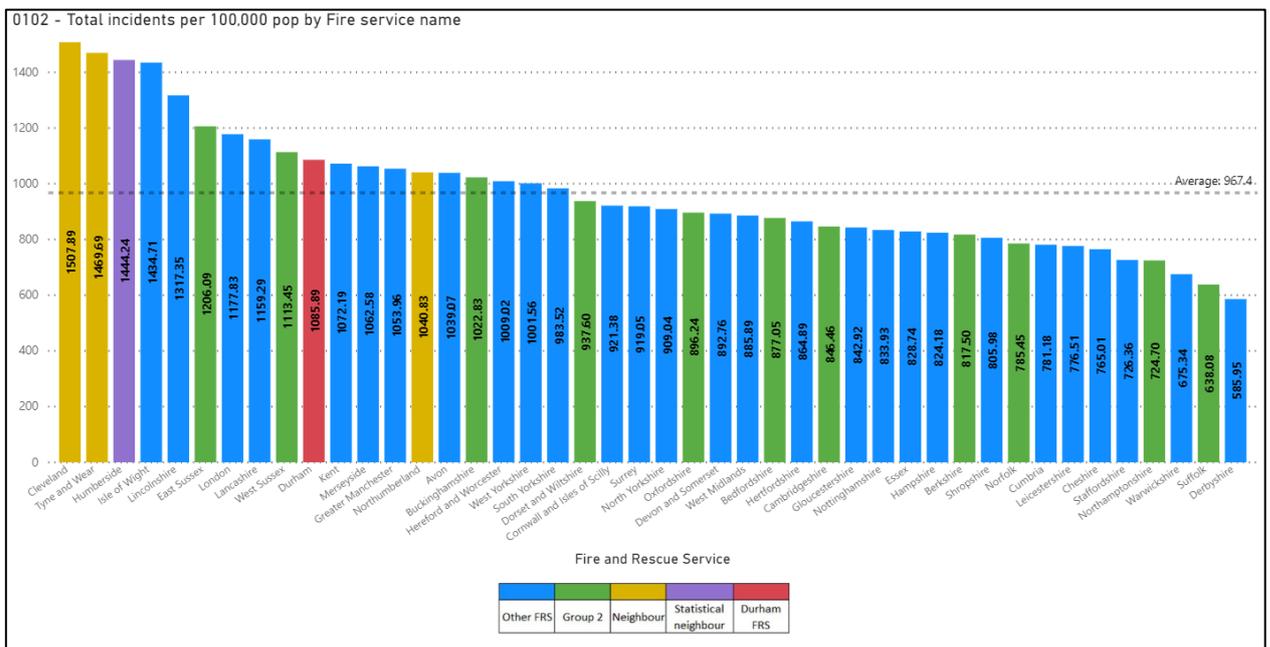


Figure 2 - Total incidents per 100,000 pop. by Fire and Rescue Service

## Total Fires Attended

10. In England, the total number of fires attended by FRSs has decreased for around a decade, falling from 474,000 in 2003/04 to 154,000 in 2012/13. Since then, the total number of fires has been slowly increasing to around 183,000 in 2018/19 but have fallen 16% in 2019/20 to 153,957.
11. In CDDFRS, as figure 3 shows, there is a similar picture with the number of fires attended reducing by 16% since 2010/11, falling to a low in 2012/13, with a slow increase to 2018/19 followed by a decrease of 13.5% in 2019/20.

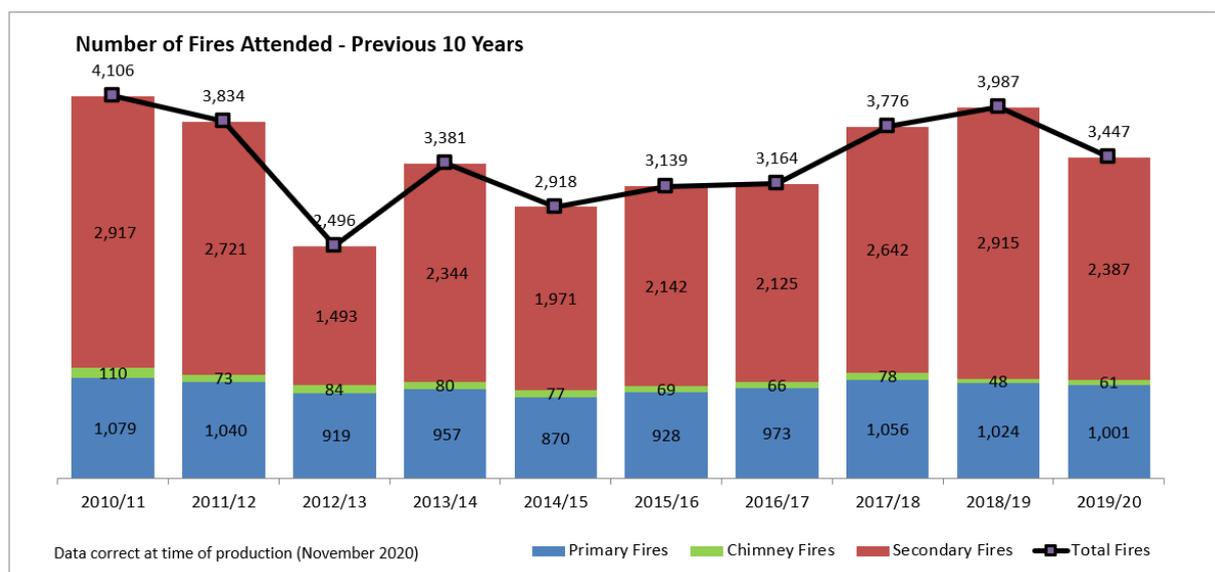


Figure 3 - Number of fires attended by CDDFRS - previous 10 years

## 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 with a decrease of 6% in 2019/20 to 68,677 compared to the previous year of 73,278 and a 32% decrease compared to 2009/10.
14. Overall, primary fires decreased by 6% although there was some variation across primary fire types, namely: a decrease in other outdoor fires (20%), dwelling fires (4%) other building fires (5%) and road vehicle fires (6%).
15. CDDFRS have seen a 21% decrease in primary fires since 2009/10 (1265 in 2009/10 to 1001 in 2019/20).

16. The number of primary fires per 10,000 population that occurred within CDDFRS was higher than the national average of 12.3 and placed us in the bottom quartile of FRS (as figure 4 shows). These incidents decreased from 1024 in 2018/19 to 1001 in 2019/20.

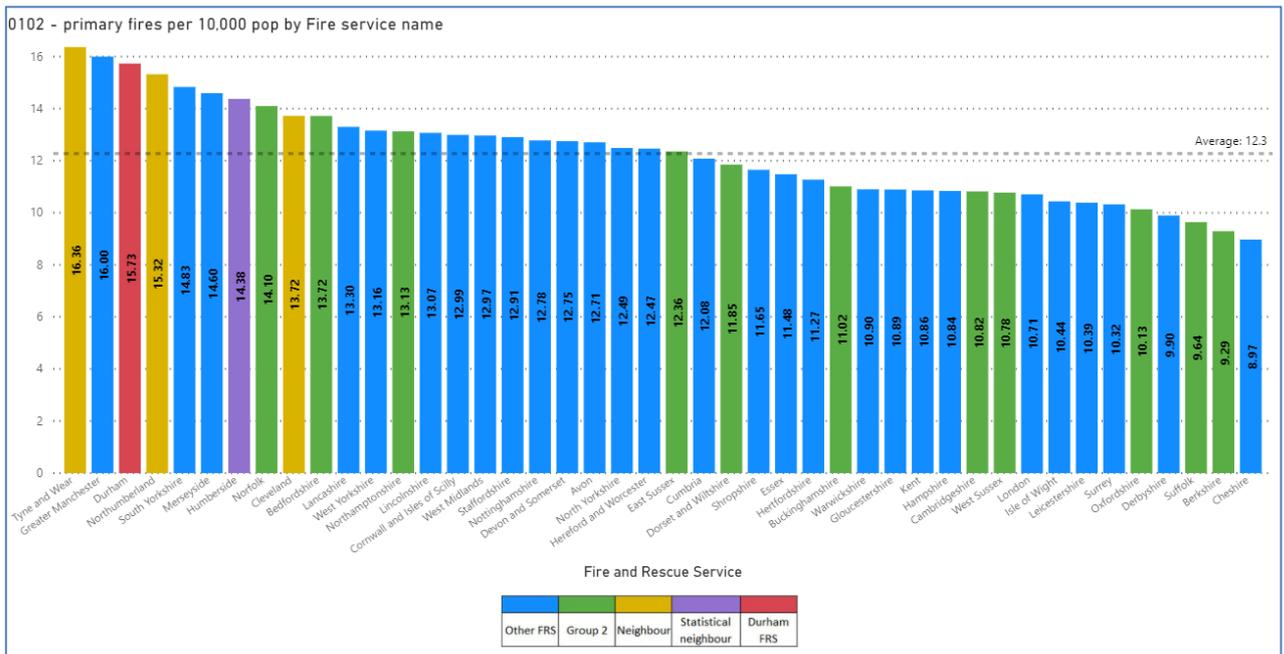


Figure 4 - Primary fires per 10,000 pop. by Fire and Rescue Service

17. The longer-term trend within CDDFRS remains downward but has risen steadily since 2014/15 with a slight decline from 2017/18 as figure 5 shows. The decline in 2019/20 was mainly due to a fall in the category of 'other' (not dwellings, road vehicles or non-domestic). Road vehicle fires accounted for 43% of all primary fires in 2019/20 within CDDFRS and of these road vehicle fires, 70% were deliberate.

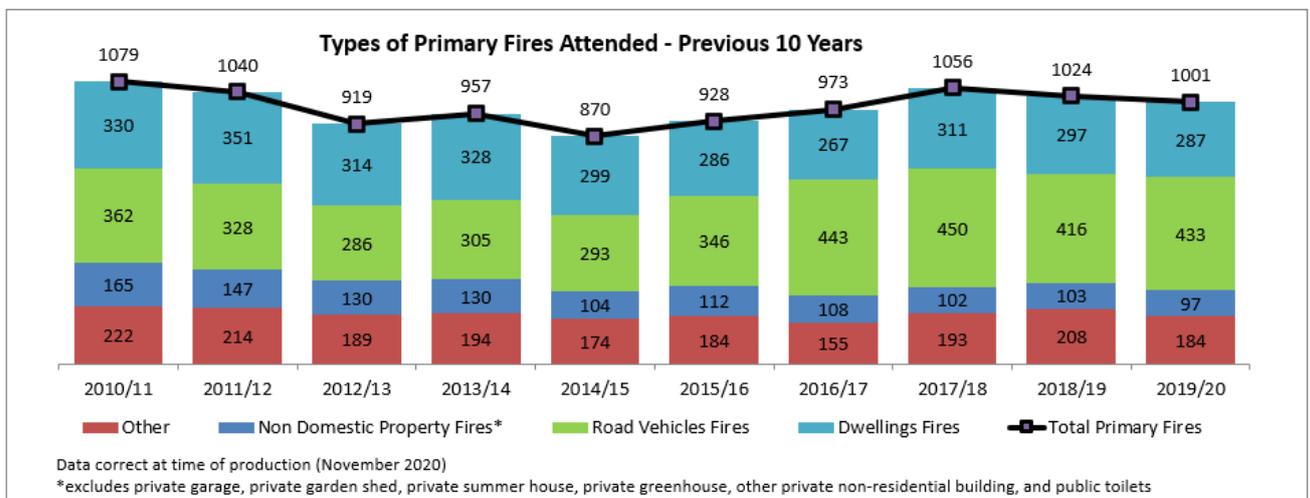


Figure 5 - types of primary fires attended by CDDFRS - previous 10 years

## Deliberate Primary Fires

18. There were 5.2% more deliberate primary fires in our area during 2019/20 than the previous year. The number recorded per head of population was 127% higher than the national average placing the service worst performing nationally, as shown in figure 6:

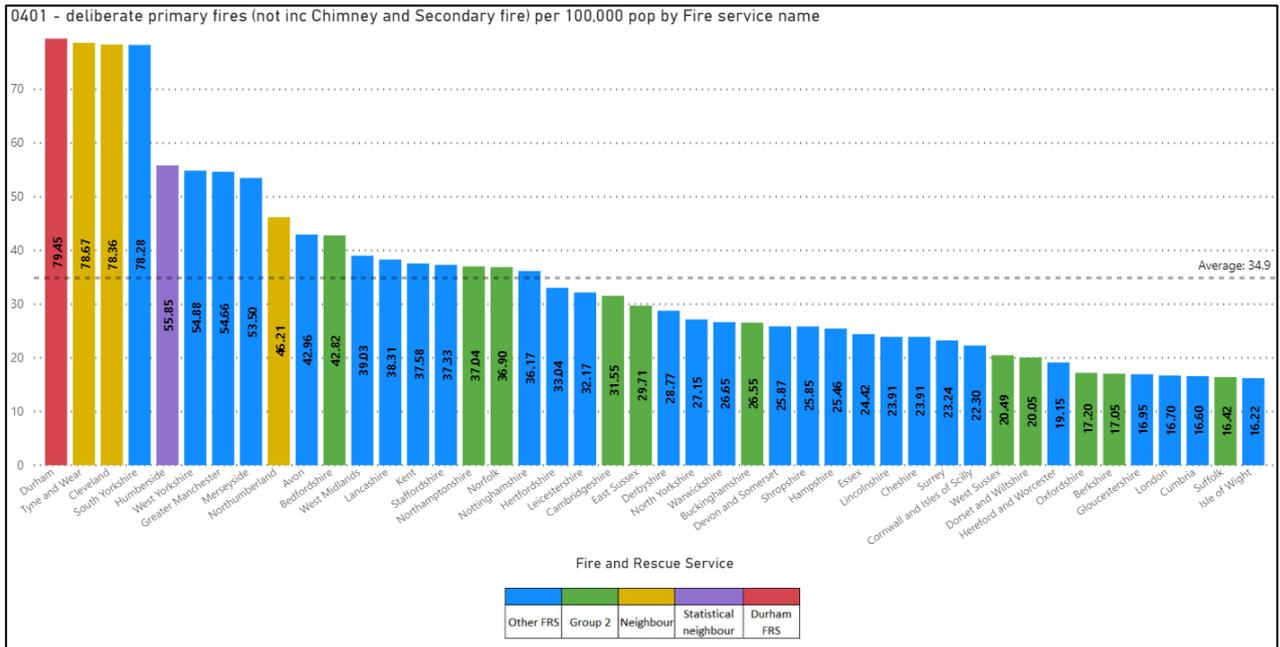


Figure 6 - Deliberate primary fires per 100,000 pop. by Fire and Rescue Service

19. When compared to 2010/11, deliberate primary fires in our area have risen by 58%, as figure 7 shows, compared to a 35% decrease seen across England (from 29,470 to 19,158). In CDDFRS a high proportion (60%) involved road vehicles (303) and are linked to anti-social behaviour and certain criminal activity in key areas of the Service area.

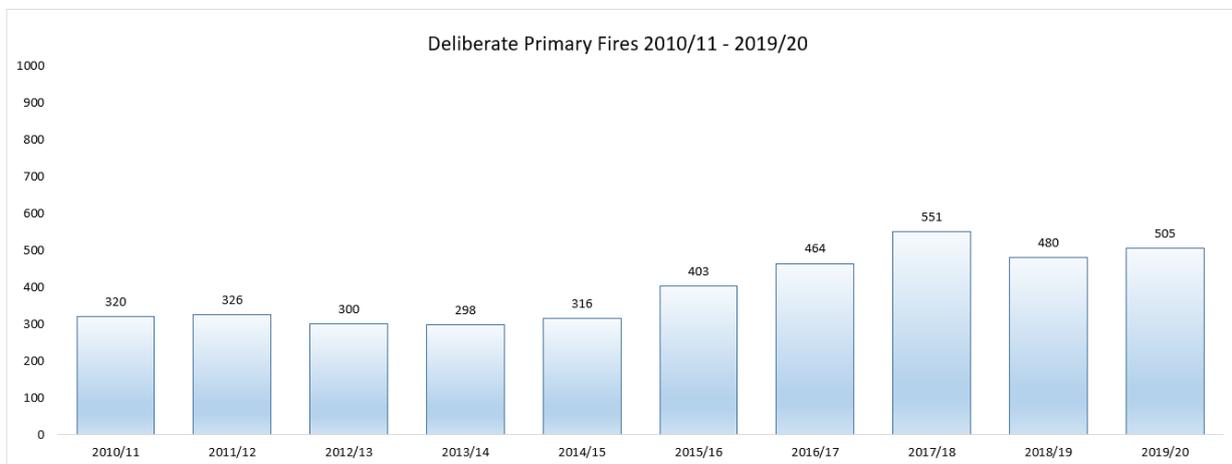


Figure 7 - Deliberate primary fires attended by CDDFRS 2010/11 - 2019/20

# Accidental Dwelling Fires, Injuries and Fatalities

20. The number of accidental dwelling fires in England decreased by 4% between 2018/19 and 2019/20 with CDDFRS showing a 7.7% decrease, placing us 10<sup>th</sup> best performing service in England, as figure 8 shows.

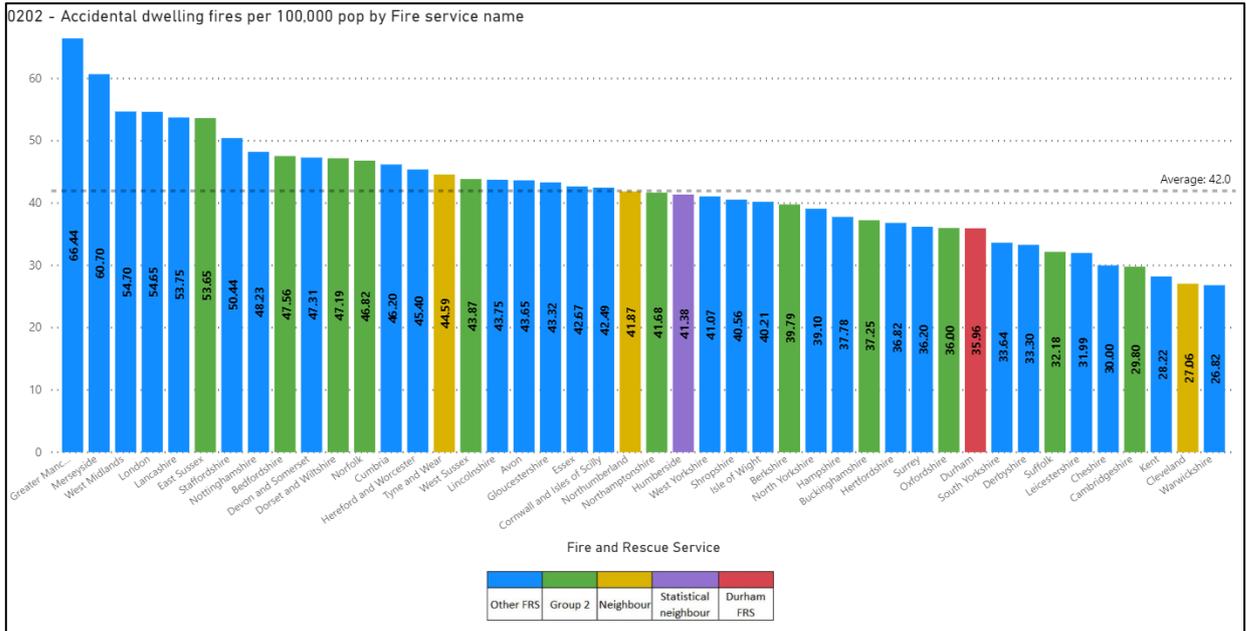


Figure 8 - Accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 pop. by Fire and Rescue Service

21. Nationally, accidental dwelling fires decreased from 2014/15 to 2019/20 by 10%, with a 4.6% reduction in CDDFRS as shown in figure 9 below.

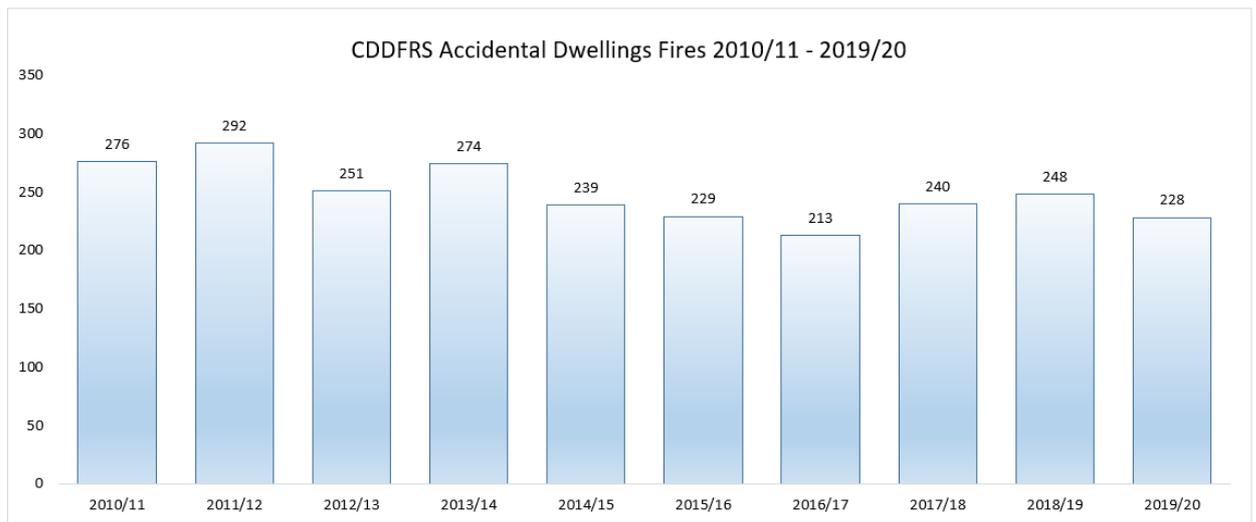


Figure 9 - CDDFRS Accidental dwelling fires 2010/11 - 2019/20

22. The accidental dwelling fire injury rate compared to head of population for CDDFRS is just above the national average, as shown in figure 10 below:

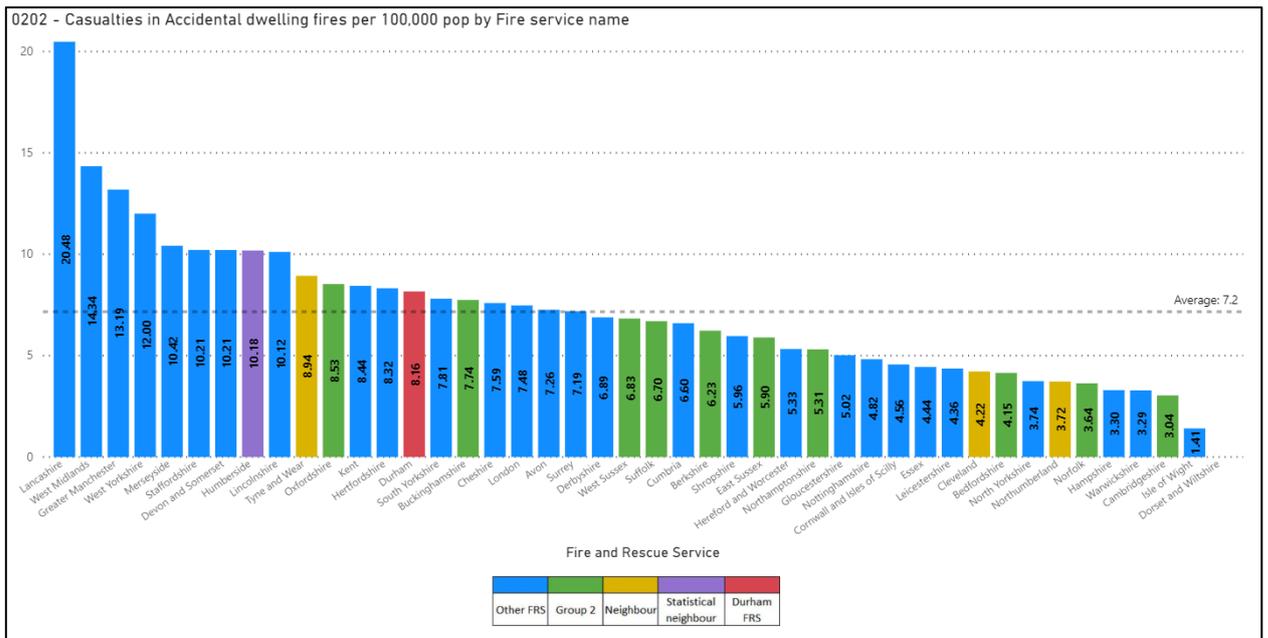


Figure 10 - Casualties in accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 pop. by Fire and Rescue Service

23. Compared to ten years ago there has been a 22% reduction in injuries arising from accidental dwelling fires nationally and a 34% reduction in our area as shown in figure 11 below.

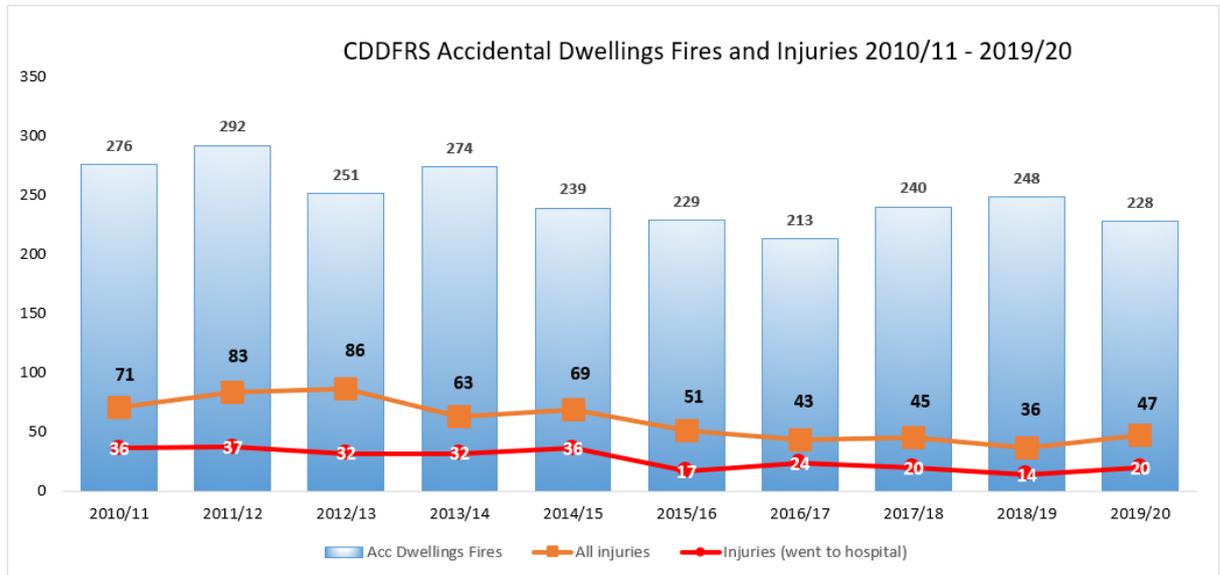


Figure 11 - CDDFRS accidental dwelling fires and injuries 2010/11 - 2019/20

24. The number of accidental dwelling fires nationally decreased by 4% in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19. There were 10 fewer fire-related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires in 2019/20 (243) than the previous year (253). Within CDDFRS, there were 0 accidental fire fatalities in 2019/20, a decrease of 200%. The ten-year trend is shown in figure 12 below:

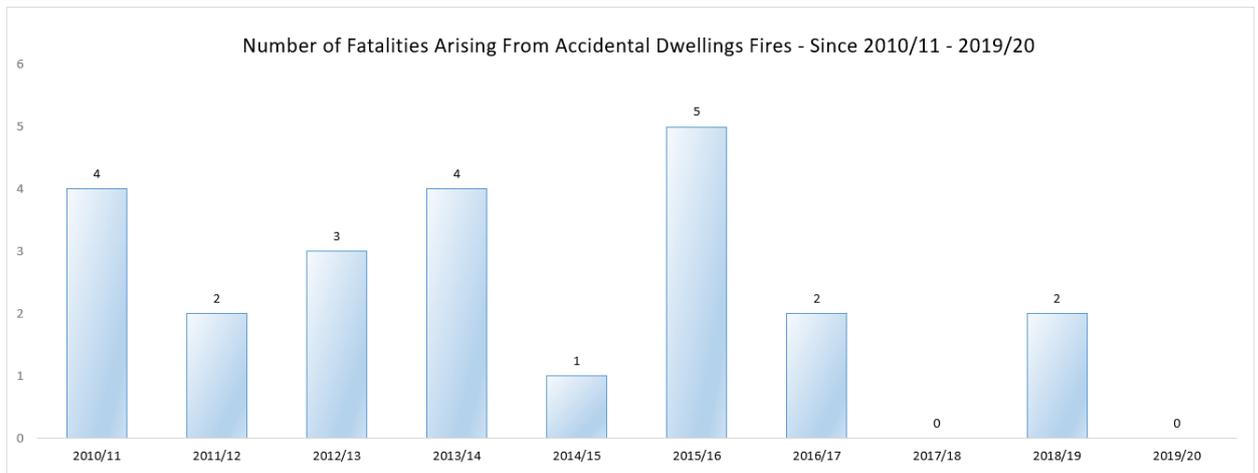


Figure 12 - Number of fatalities arising from accidental dwelling fires within CDDFRS - since 2010/11 - 2019/20

25. The fatality rate in accidental dwelling fires, per head of population, in our area is 0 with the national average at 0.3 as the chart below shows:

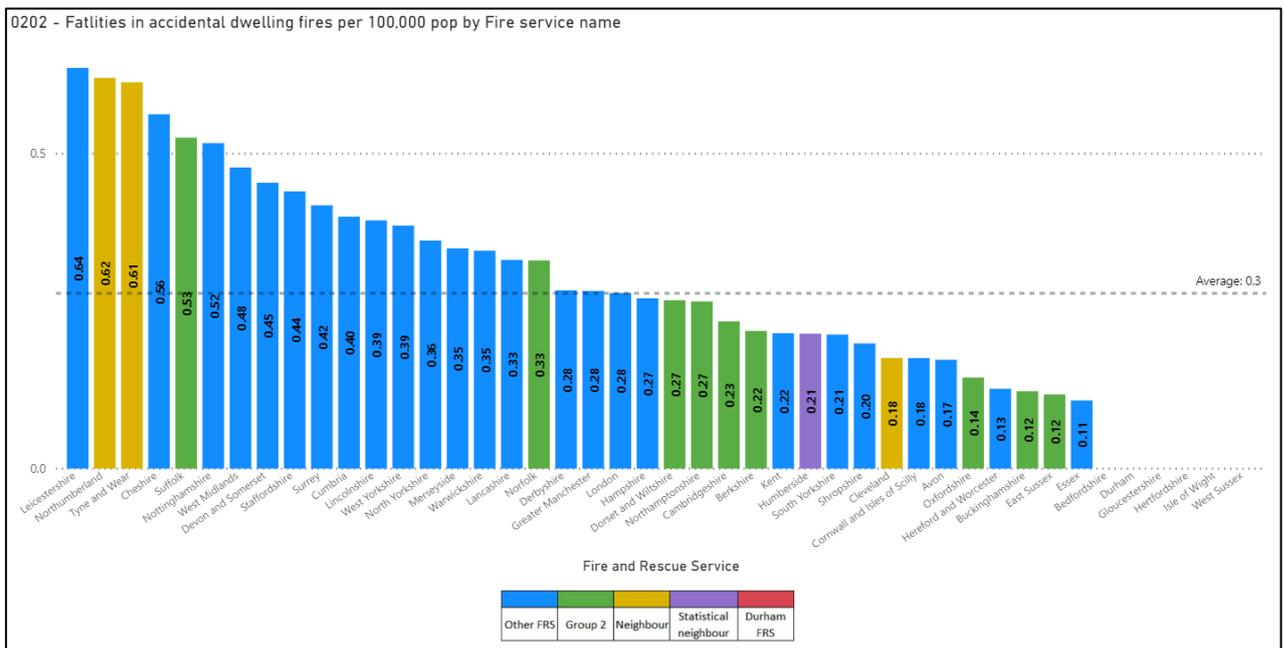


Figure 13 - Fatalities in accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 pop. by Fire and Rescue Service

## Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Properties

26. In CDDFRS, there was a 6% reduction in primary fires in non-domestic properties, compared to a 5% reduction nationally. The fire rate per 100,000 population is below the national average as shown in figure 14 below:

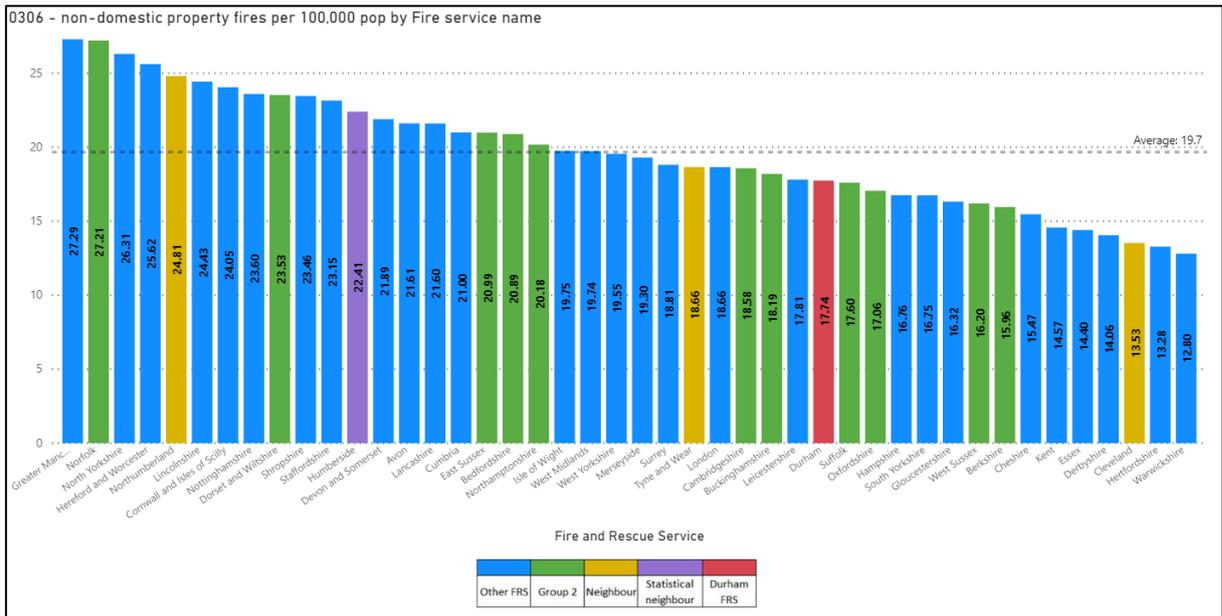


Figure 14 - Non-domestic property fires per 100,000 pop. by Fire and Rescue Service

## Secondary Fires

27. Secondary fires can broadly be thought of as smaller outdoor fires, not involving people or property. Of the 153,957 fires attended nationally in 2019/20, there were 82,150 secondary fires. For England, this was a 23% decrease on last year compared to an 18% decrease in our area. Nationally, secondary fires have reduced by 36% since 2010/11 and within CDDFRS an 18% reduction for the same period. In CDDFRS, secondary fires have increased annually since 2012/13 with a decrease in 2019/20 as figure 15 shows:

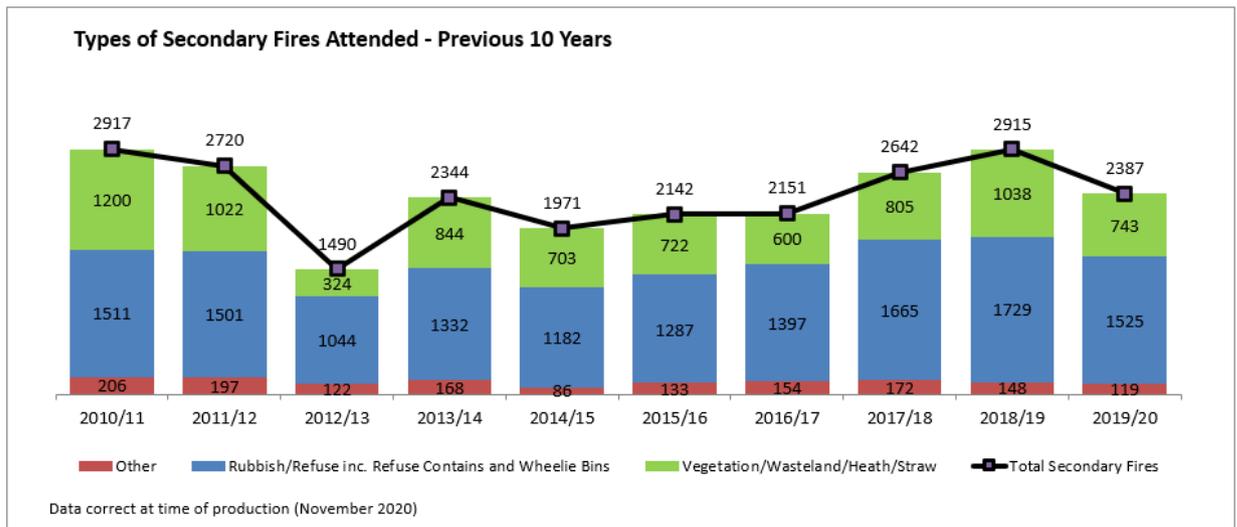


Figure 15 - Types of secondary fires attended by CDDFRS - previous 10 years

28. Secondary fires are an issue for all FRS in the North East, with CDDFRS the 3rd worst performing in England, behind Cleveland and Tyne & Wear, as shown in figure 16 below:

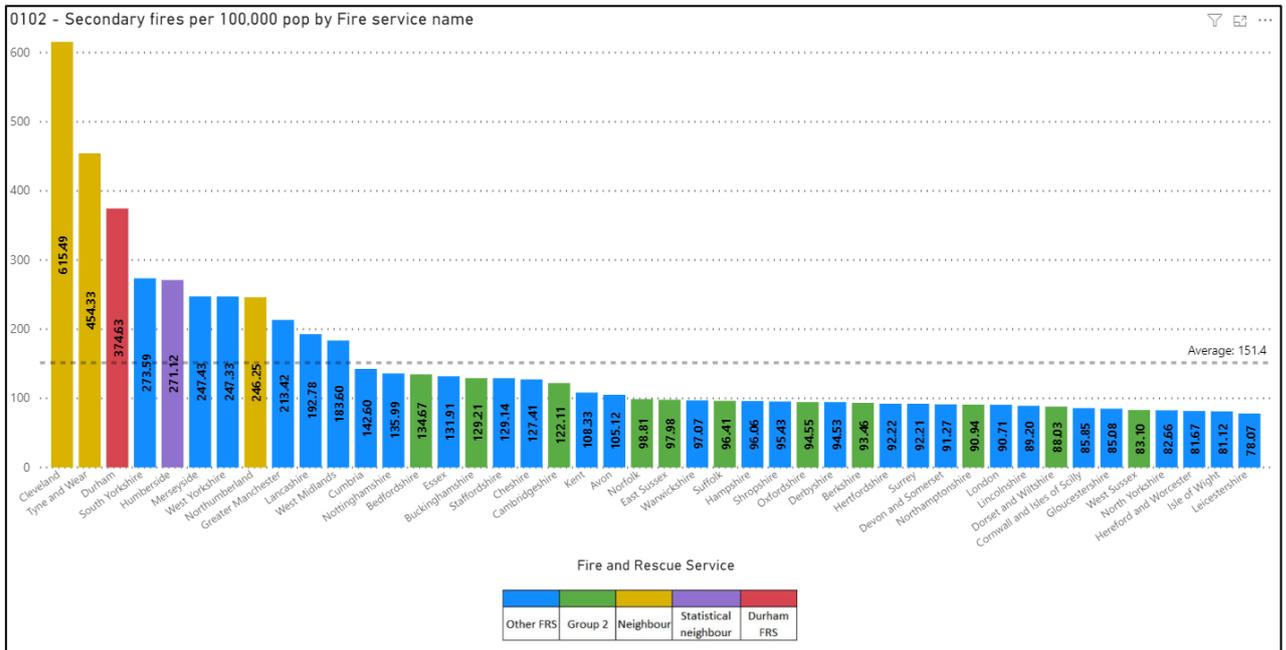


Figure 16 - Secondary fires per 100,000 pop. by Fire and Rescue Service

## Deliberate Secondary Fires

29. There were 16% more deliberate secondary fires in our area during 2019/20 than the previous year, compared to an annual decrease of 20% nationally. The number recorded per head of population was 230% higher than the national average placing the Service 3<sup>rd</sup> worst performing nationally as shown in figure 17.

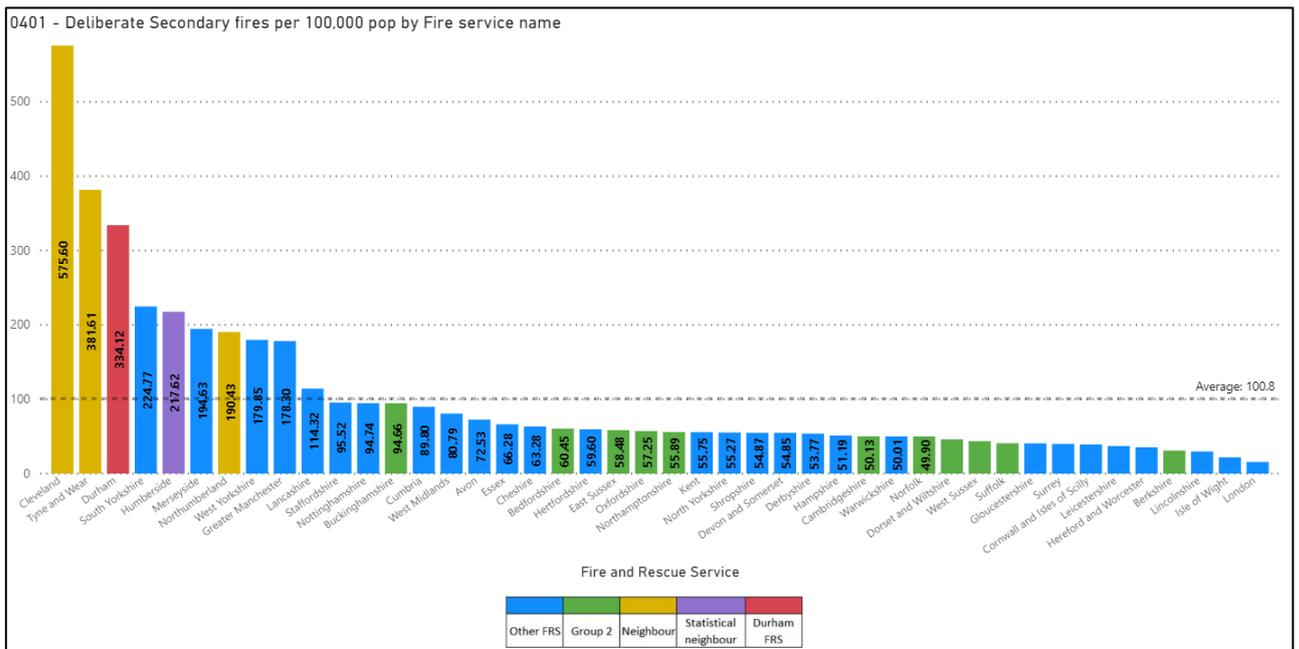


Figure 17 - Deliberate secondary fires per 100,000 pop. by Fire and Rescue Service

30. When compared to 2018/19, deliberate secondary fires in our area have decreased by 16% as figure 18 below shows.

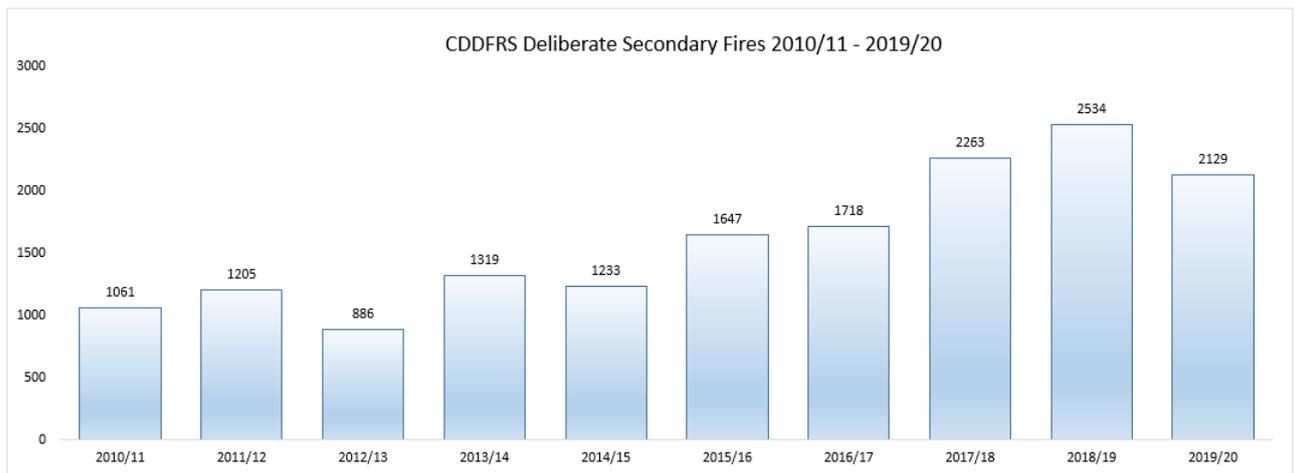


Figure 18 - CDDFRS deliberate secondary fires - 2010/11 - 2019/20

## Home Fire Safety Checks/Safe & Wellbeing Visits

31. FRSs completed 581,917 Safe & Wellbeing Visits (SWV) in 2019/20, 2.2% less than the previous year.
32. In contrast, CDDFRS completed 19,310 SWV in 2019/20, a 4% decrease on 2018/19 but 20.7% more than 2013/14 (15,993). In 2016/17, to reflect the move from HFSCs to the broader, more comprehensive safe and wellbeing visits which take longer to complete, 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 as the 5<sup>th</sup> best performing FRS in the country, in terms of SWV per 1,000 dwellings as figure 19 shows.

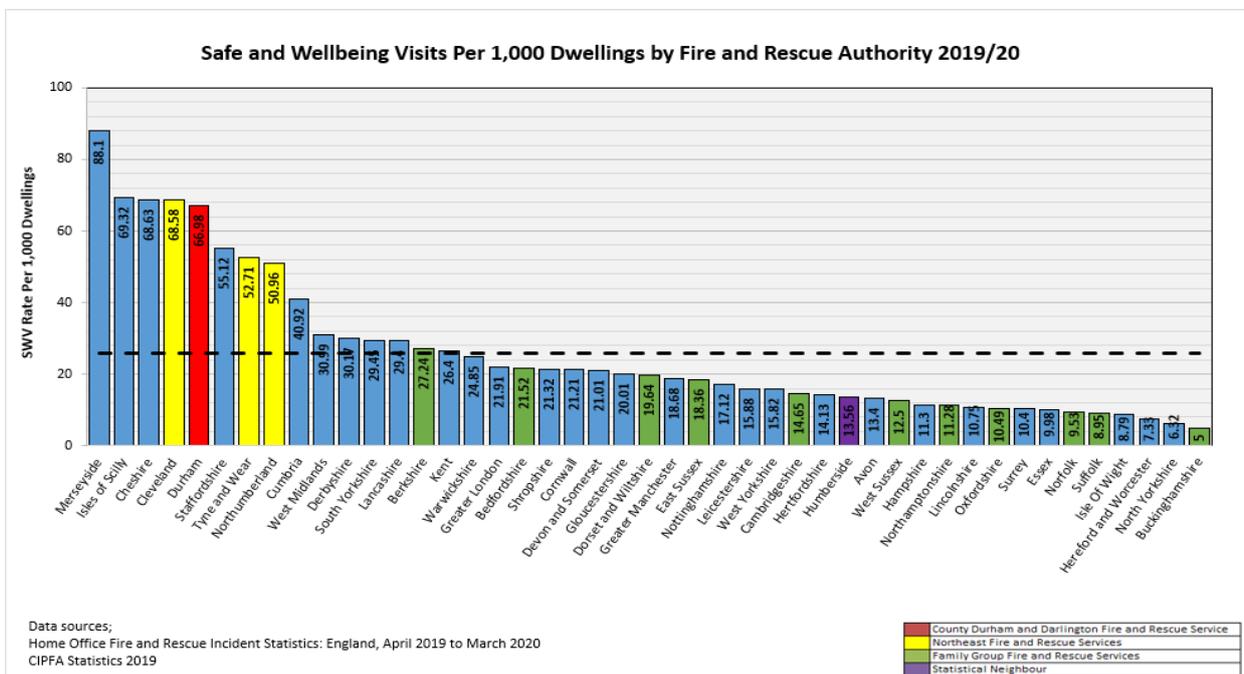


Figure 19 - Safe and wellbeing visits per 1,000 dwellings by Fire and Rescue Authority 2019/20

## 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 48,414 Fire Safety Audits (FSA) in 2019/20, slightly less than the 49,327 in 2018/19 and 40.9% lower than 2011/12. CDDFRS staff undertook 2,003 FSAs in 2019/20, 8.1% lower than the previous year but 136% more than 2011/12 (846 FSAs).
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 figure 20 below:

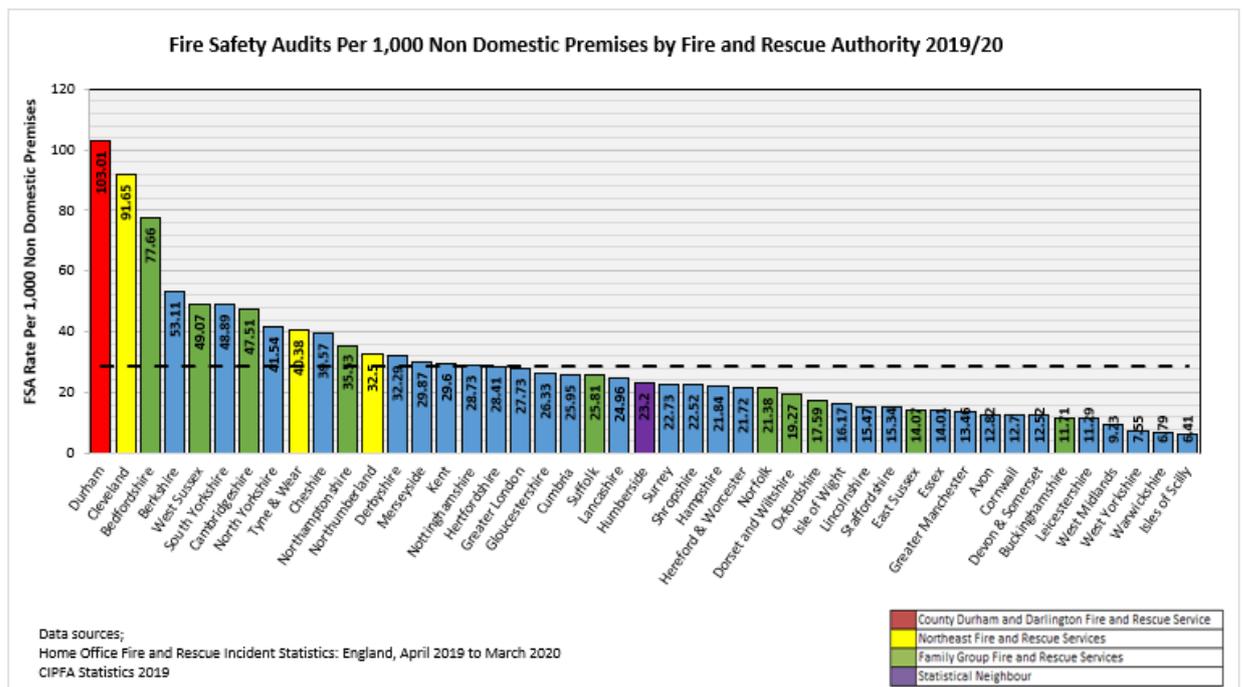


Figure 20 - Fire safety audits per 1,000 non-domestic premises by Fire and Rescue Authority

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. There has

been a 6% increase in the number of non-fire (also known as Special Service) incidents attended by FRSs from 162,251 in 2018/19 to 171,911 in 2019/20.

38. The national increase demonstrates a mixed picture with a decrease in medical incidents but an increase for assisting other agencies and effecting entry/exit, with smaller decreases or increases in other non-fire incident types. Between 2017/18 and 2019/20 however, there was a 45% decrease in the number of medical incidents attended falling from around 33,000 to around 18,000. In CDDFRS, non-fire incidents have decreased by 71% from 2016/17 to 2019/20, predominantly due to the reduction in emergency medical response incidents, as shown in figure 21 below:

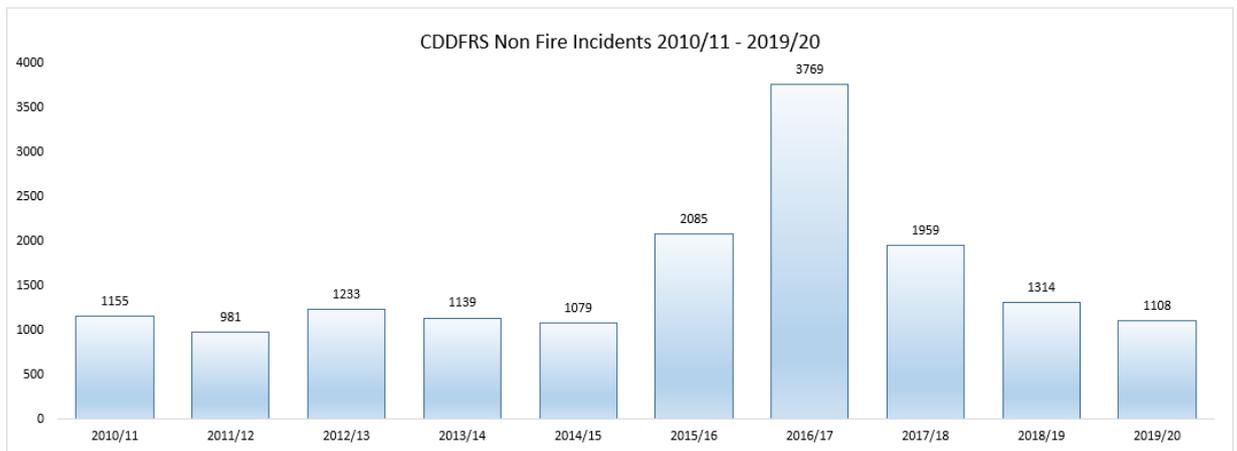


Figure 21 - CDDFRS non fire incidents - 2010/11 - 2019/20

39. In terms of non-fire incidents per 10,000 population, CDDFRS lies at 20.63 per 10,000 population as figure 22 shows:

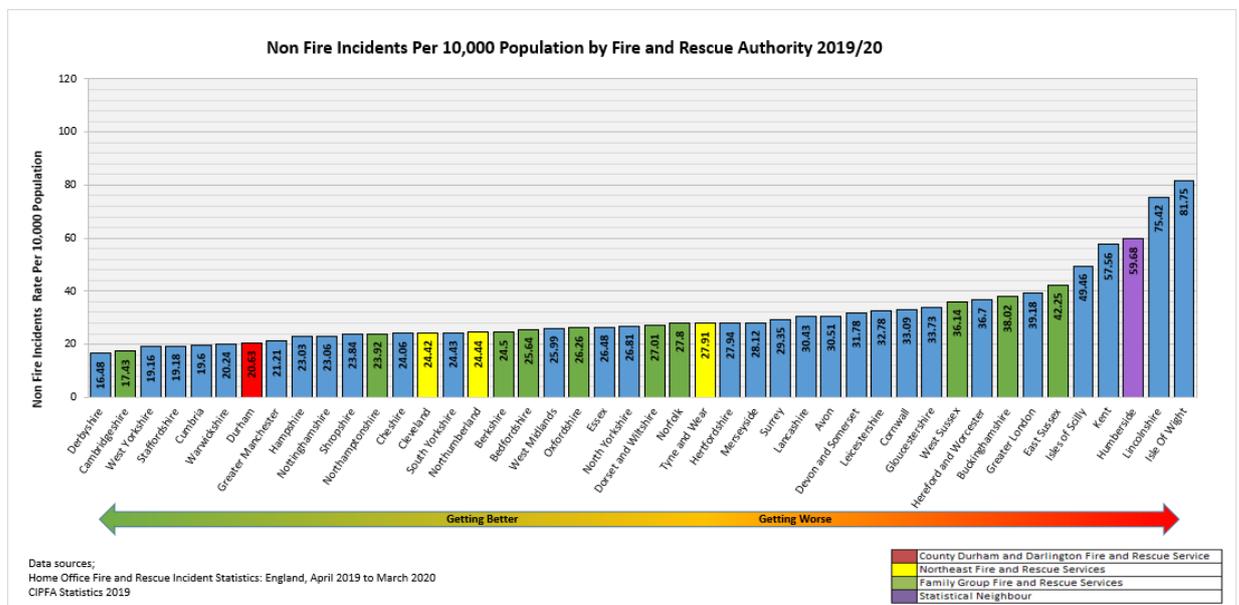


Figure 22 - Non fire incidents per 10,000 pop. by Fire and Rescue Authority

## 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 5<sup>th</sup> best performing in terms of SWV per head of population, an investment we believe has contributed to the reduction in accidental dwelling fires, making us the 10<sup>th</sup> best performing FRS in England and better than the national average for fires in non-domestic properties.
42. However, it also highlights the challenges we face in terms of deliberate primary and secondary fires, where we sit 3<sup>rd</sup> from the bottom nationally for deliberate secondary fires and at the bottom nationally for deliberate primary fires. The increase in deliberate fires in our area is something the Service has been aware of, and we are working hard to better understand the root causes and working with partners through the Safe Durham Partnership to address the problem.
43. CDDFRS have the 10<sup>th</sup> highest incident rate in England (per head of population). In CDDFRS, total incidents attended decreased by 11%, mainly due to a decrease in fire incidents.
44. Consequently, the outcomes from this analysis helps us to better understand the risks in our communities and how we are performing, it also informs us where best to invest our limited resources to improve performance going forward and supports our efforts to measure and improve staff productivity.

## Recommendations

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