

Decision title

Annual Report of Fatal Fires and Accidental Dwelling Fires 2017/18

Recommendation by

Assistant Commissioner, Fire Safety

Decision Number

LFC-0166x-D

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Summary

LFC-0166x provides an overview and analysis of accidental dwellings fires in 2017/18 (1 April 2017-31 March 2018), including the fatalities and injuries that occurred. It brings together the outcomes of Fatal Fire Reviews and Accidental Dwelling Fire (ADF) Reviews with statistical data. It highlights focus areas for community safety work and initiatives whilst also acknowledging work underway, and is intended to support continued work at all levels to reduce fire risk to Londoners. This is the fifth year that an annual report on accidental and fatal fires has been produced. In future a new format is suggested to report back in line with other data sources.

Decision

That the Commissioner:

1. Supports the Brigade's approach to addressing accidental dwelling fires and fire fatalities as set out in the conclusion of this report (paragraphs 69 -71) including considering a new communications campaign on identifying vulnerable people and improving their safety from fire (paragraphs 54-55)
2. Notes the statistics and conclusions drawn from the new annual Fire Facts report Fatal fires in Greater London
3. Notes the move to reporting on fatal and accidental dwelling fires by calendar year from 1 January 2019 (rather than fiscal year) in line with the new annual Fire Facts report Fatal fires in Greater London
4. Supports an integrated annual report on fatal and accidental dwelling fires as part of Fire Facts (in line with Recommendation 2) rather than a separate report. This report in future would also provide a five year comparison rather than an annual look and use a different format in terms of presentation.

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London Fire Commissioner



Date 12-09-2019

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Report title

Annual Report of Fatal Fires and Accidental Dwelling Fires 2017/18

Report to

Fire and Resilience Board

Commissioner's Board

Operations Directorate Board

Corporate Services Directorate Board

Date

2 July 2019

24 April 2019

20 March 2019

19 March 2019

Report by

Assistant Commissioner Fire Safety

Report number

LFC – 0166x

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Recommendations

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provide a five year comparison rather than an annual look and use a different format in terms of presentation.

Introduction

1. This report reviews all fire deaths in 2017/18 and brings together statistical information and outcomes from fatal and accidental dwelling fire reviews. Overall, there were 108 fire related deaths in 2017/18 in London, which includes the deaths at the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017. This report concentrates on dwelling fires of accidental motive due to human cause as they are considered to be largely preventable. Human cause of fires include careless disposal, objects too close to ignition sources, playing with fire, accumulation of flammable material and cooking. In 2017/18 there were 5,226 accidental dwelling fires¹ attended by the brigade, resulting in 108 fire related fatalities and 884 serious injuries.
2. The conclusions in this report have been reached by a full exploration of the characteristics of those who die in the fire with the focus on those accidental dwelling fire deaths of human cause (and excluding those who died in the Grenfell Tower fire given the ongoing public inquiry), the circumstances of each fire and the Brigade's response, as well as any interaction with partner agencies. This report is based on reviews during 2017/18, although this annual report also considers longer-term trends. Longer-term analysis feeds in to the assessment of local risk which underpins the London Safety Plan.
3. The learning from this and previous annual fatal fire reports has helped to set the agenda of future community safety and prevention work as set out in both London Safety Plan and the new Community Safety and Prevention Strategy agreed by the London Fire Commissioner in October 2018.
4. The purpose of this report is to identify and analyse trends and patterns of accidental dwelling fatal fires, including those fires which result in injury. The report does not specifically deal with the deaths at the Grenfell tower fire on 14 June 2017 in terms of trends and patterns given the ongoing public inquiry, although those deaths are included in some of the numbers quoted.

Overview of fires in London

Fatal fires

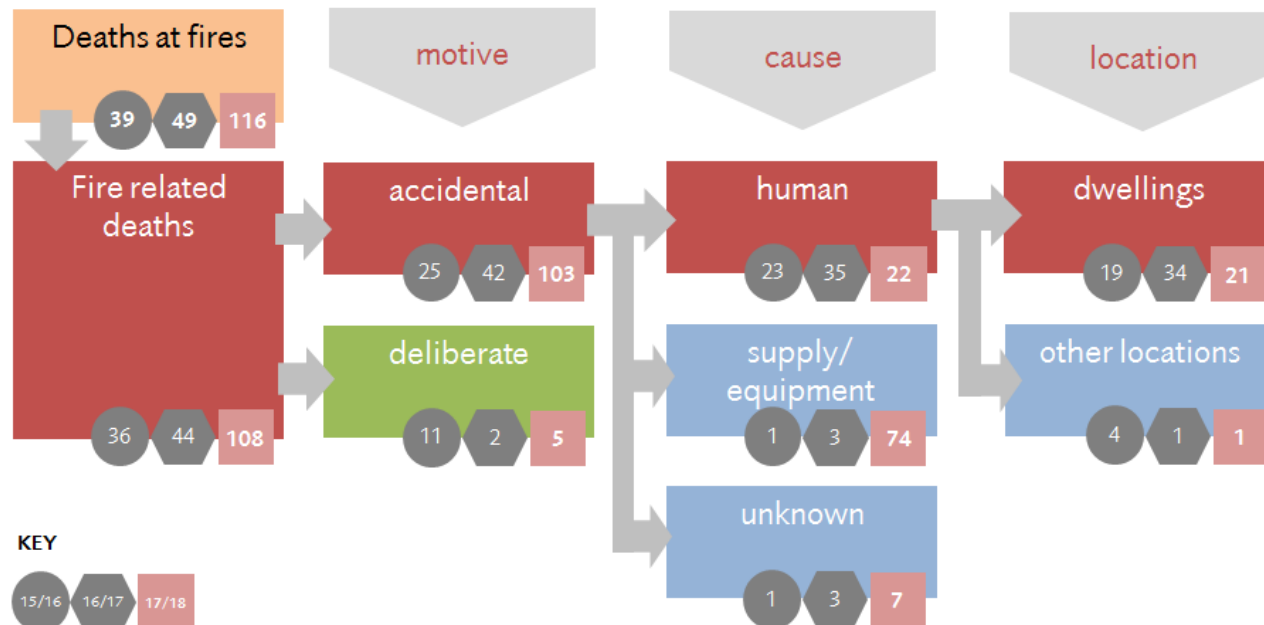
5. In 2017/18, there were 116 deaths at fires (including at Grenfell Tower). We know that the Coroner has found of the total figure, that eight of these deaths were not fire related, leaving 108 deaths which were likely to be the direct result of fire or smoke (some still awaiting the outcome of a Coroner's Inquest²). 103 deaths were of accidental motive (89 per cent). 21 deaths in dwellings were due to a human cause, with 74 due to supply or equipment faults (including those at Grenfell Tower). It was not possible to determine a motive in seven of the fatal fires, although Brigade policy is to count these as 'accidental' for statistical purposes. Of the deaths due to human cause, 20 were in dwellings. Therefore, the focus of this report is on the circumstances and trends emerging out of those 20 accidental dwelling fire deaths of human cause.

¹ An accidental dwelling fire is defined as a primary fire in a dwelling of accidental or unknown motive based on government national Incident Recording System (IRS) categories. This figure includes 'late calls'. A 'late call' is classified as a fire which is already extinguished by the time the Brigade was called.

² In these cases, where there has been no Coroner's Inquest, the determination of whether they were fire related will be based on the fire investigation work.

6. The chart below shows the different types of fire death due to motive, cause and location. Supply or equipment cause covers incidents such as faulty fuel supply, faulty wiring or equipment/appliance while of unknown cause includes those incidents of natural occurrence or awaiting fire investigation outcomes.

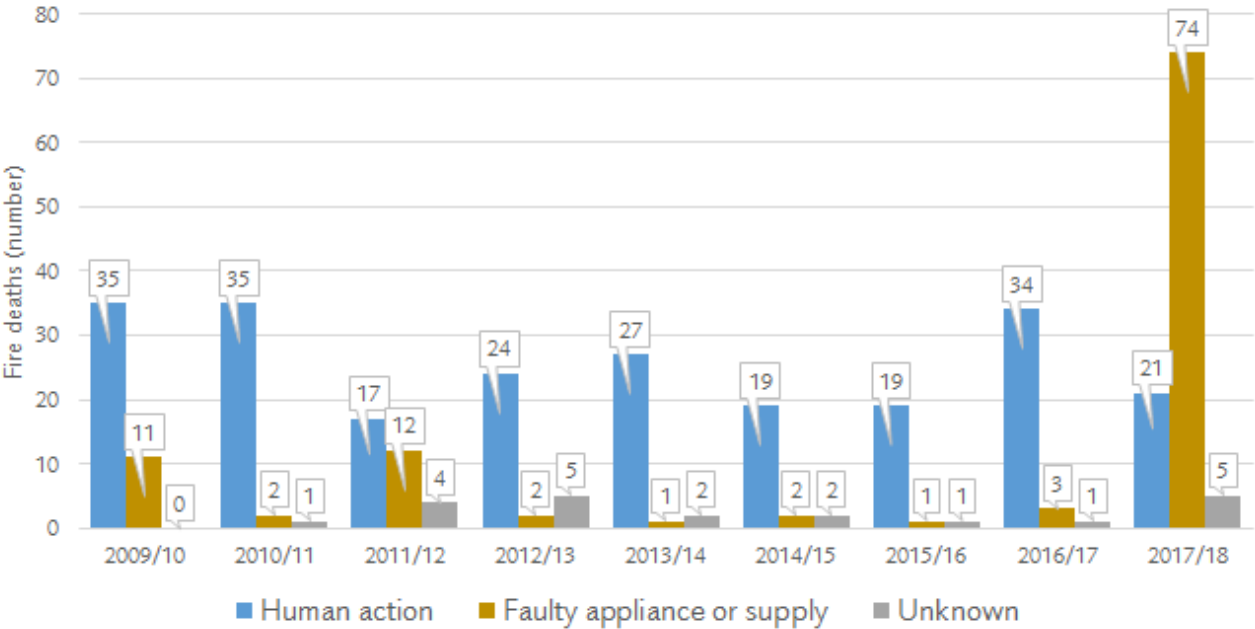
Chart 1: Fire deaths, 2017/18



7. There were five fires of deliberate motive resulting in death in 2017/18; four of these fires were where a heat source and combustibles were brought together deliberately and one was a suicide. The 74 fire deaths which had a supply or equipment cause were all due to faulty equipment (other causes could be faulty fuel supply, faulty leads). There were eight fires of unknown cause in 2017/18, and this is either because investigations continue, or that a cause cannot be determined.
8. Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) of human cause are deemed to be largely preventable as there are likely to be opportunities for intervention to reduce the risk of fire; whether this is through Brigade actions such as a Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV), a communication message or an intervention targeted at a vulnerable person, via a partner organisation or the resident themselves.

9. Data for accidental dwelling fires resulting in a fatality, by cause, since 2009/10, is shown in the chart below. This data shows that the annual number of fire deaths fluctuates year on year, but that the underlying trend, for ADF deaths of human cause (blue bars) is an overall reduction. The deaths attributed to faulty appliance or supply (yellow bars) in 2017/18 include those at Grenfell Tower.

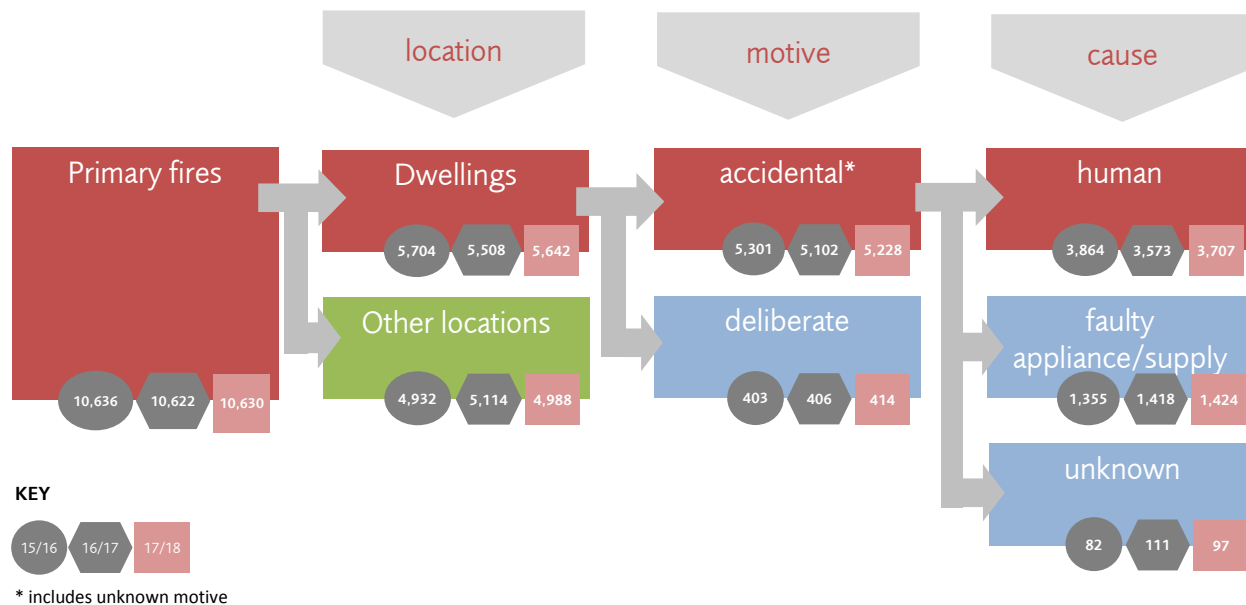
Chart 2: Fire related deaths, by cause of fire, since 2009/10



Accidental dwelling fires

10. In 2017/18, there were 10,630 primary³ (serious) fires in London; of these, 5,642 incidents (53 per cent) were in dwellings and 5,228 (92 per cent) dwelling fires were of accidental rather than deliberate motive (ADFs), with 3,707 (71 per cent) having a human cause.

Chart 3: Primary fires in 2017/18 with breakdown by property type



11. There were nearly 130 more accidental dwelling fires in 2017/18 than in 2016/17, although 73 fewer in the year before that in 2015/16.

12. For the analysis which follows, the circumstances of 21 fire deaths attributed to human cause have been examined. For the reasons outlined earlier, this analysis excludes consideration of the deaths resulting from the Grenfell Tower fire where the Public Inquiry and police investigation are still ongoing.

Profile and characteristics

13. Whilst the circumstances of some fatal fires are still under investigation, seven of the 21 fatalities had delayed calls in 2017/18. A delay in calling the Brigade to a fire can be attributed to a number of reasons, ranging from members of the public not reacting immediately or stopping to fight the fire themselves, as well as location of fire detection.

14. In 2017/18, 37 per cent of accidental dwelling fires, 42 per cent of serious injuries and 33 per cent of all fire fatalities, had an estimated delay of ten minutes or more between the time of ignition and the first call to Brigade control. Table 1 shows the numbers of incidents and casualties together with percentages.

³ Primary fires and dwelling fires (where appropriate) include 14 'late calls' (where an attendance is made although the fire was known to be extinguished when the call was made).

Table 1: How quickly the Brigade was called⁴ (in London), 2017/18

2017/18	Called immediately	Called within 5 minutes	Called within 10 mins	Called in more than 10 mins	Unknown
All ADFs	872	1455	835	1940	124
	17%	28%	16%	37%	2%
ADF serious injuries	40	86	98	176	18
	10%	21%	23%	42%	4%
All ADF fatalities	1	2	2	12	4
	5%	10%	10%	56%	19%

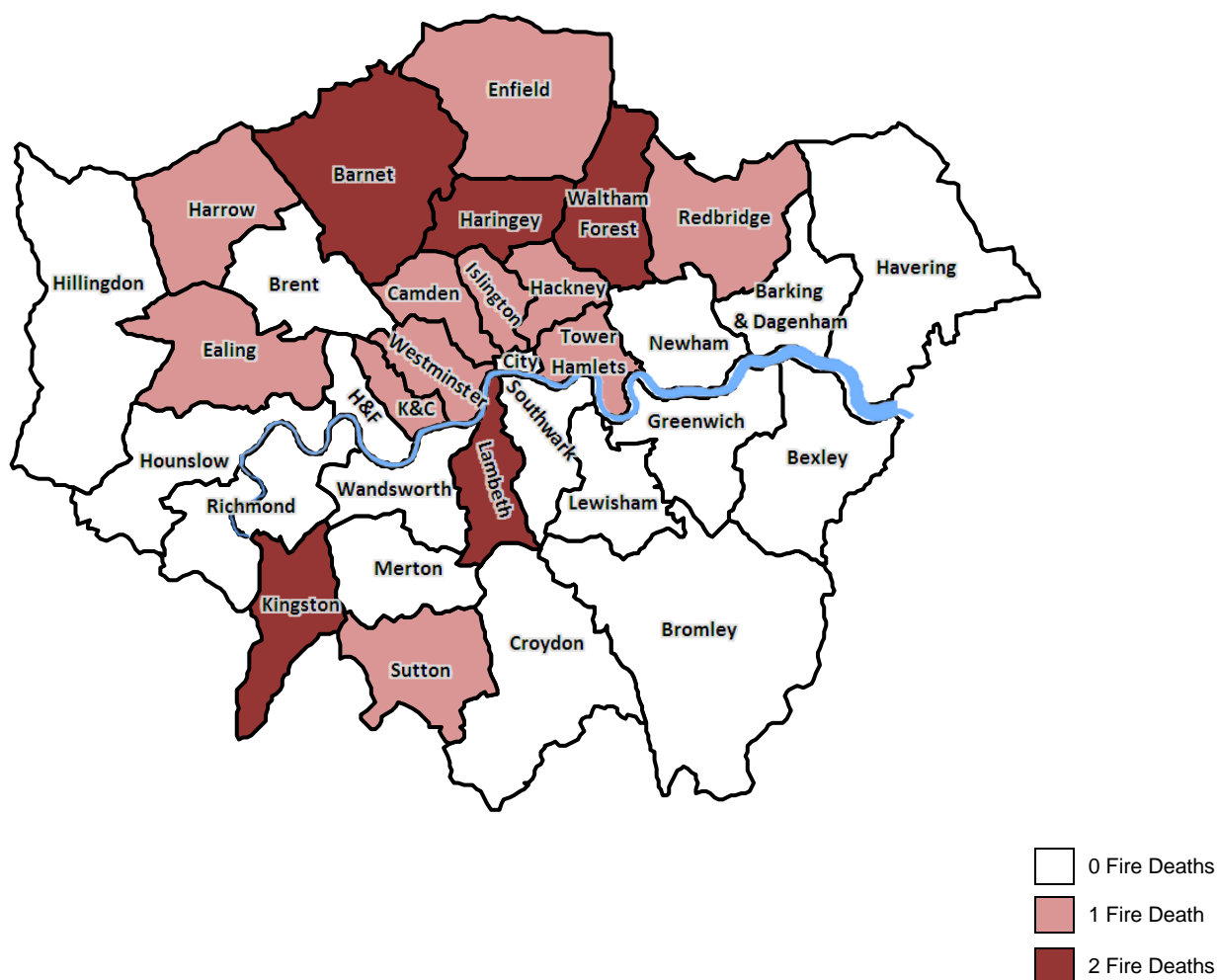
15. In total, there was a delayed call of ten minutes or more in nine of the fire fatalities that occurred in accidental dwelling fires of human cause. Using information on all the factors surrounding each fatal fire, such as nature of injuries, victim and fire location, it is a reasonable assessment that seven accidental dwelling fire fatalities had already sustained life threatening injuries by the time the Brigade was called.

⁴ Estimated time between fire ignition and calling the Brigade

Location of fire fatalities

17. Fire fatalities are spread across London and can happen in affluent areas as well as areas of social deprivation (see map 1 for ADFs by borough in 2017/18). The combination of high fire risk behaviours, such as smoking, along with mental or physical infirmity, increase the likelihood of fire, injury and death. However, the boroughs where fire deaths occur changes every year and there is no consistent pattern of likelihood by borough.

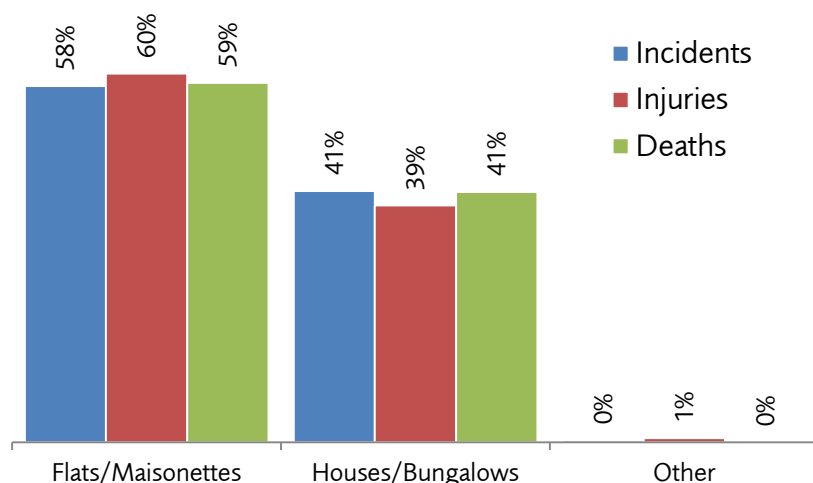
Map 1: Location of accidental dwelling fire deaths attributed to human cause, 2017/18



Type of dwelling

18. The 2011 Census recorded that half the population of London lived in flats and maisonettes. Dwelling fires by property type show that a slightly higher proportion of dwelling fires resulting in fatalities start in flats and maisonettes (59 per cent) with 41 per cent in houses in 2017/18 (Chart 4 below). These proportions are similar to 2016/17. However, fire fatalities are spread across London.
19. During 2017/18, seven of the 21 accidental dwelling fire deaths occurred in properties that were social housing properties. This figure includes properties that provided sheltered housing for residents. Nine of the fatal fires occurred in privately owned housing, and a further two occurred in privately rented accommodation. The high proportion of privately owned housing is a reminder that many asset rich older people may be cash poor and not receive the care and support they need to live safely in their own homes.

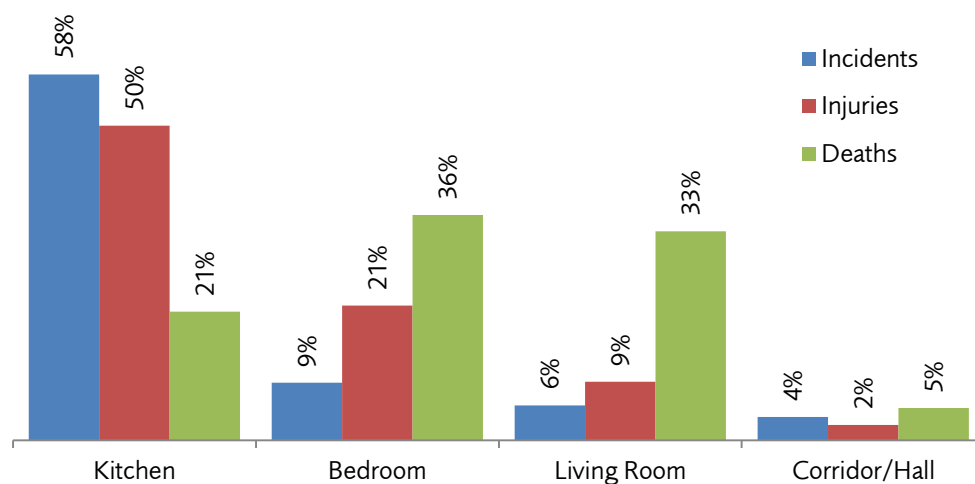
Chart 4: Accidental dwelling fires, deaths and casualties, by type of dwelling, 2017/18



Room of fire origin

20. Data for accidental dwelling fires continues to show that the most common cause of fire is human action – cooking. The majority of fires involving non-fatal casualties started in the kitchen (50 per cent). Twenty one per cent started in the bedroom and six per cent started in the living room and chart 5 shows the comparative percentages. When it comes to ADF fatalities, 36 per cent of fires started in the bedroom, 33 per cent in the living room and 21 per cent in the kitchen.

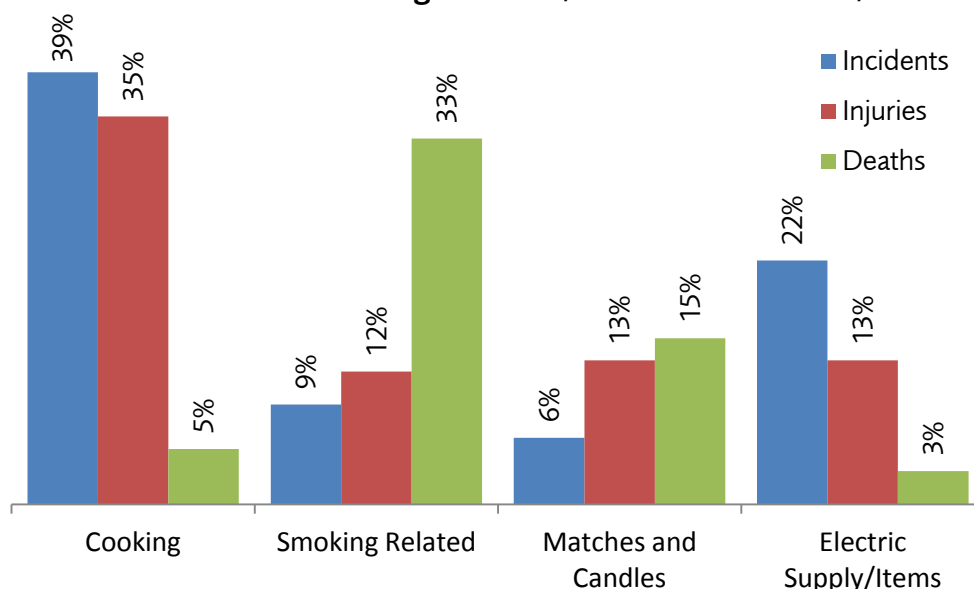
Chart 5: Room of origin, accidental dwelling fires, deaths and casualties, 2017/18



Cause of Fire

21. Given that 58 per cent of all ADFs started in the kitchen, it is not surprising that 39 per cent of fires (2,035 fires) were caused by cooking. This is closely followed by electrical items and then smoking, as outlined in Chart 6.

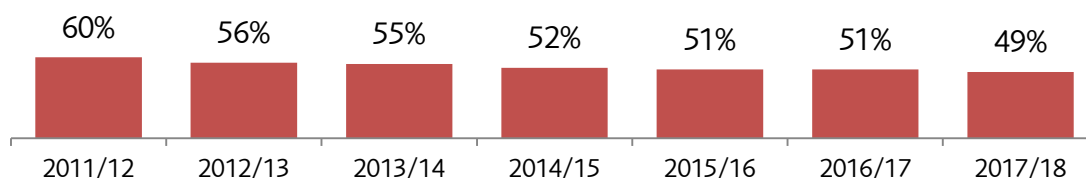
Chart 6: How accidental dwelling fires start, deaths and casualties, 2017/18



Fire detection

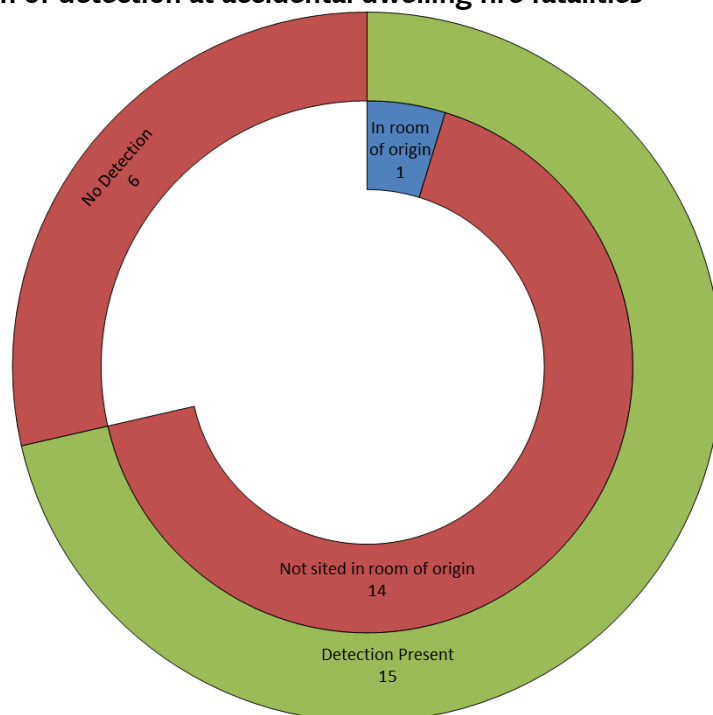
22. In 2017/18, 49 per cent (2,508) of homes where there was a fire attended by the Brigade did not have a working smoke alarm (in 2011/12 this was 60 per cent). The declining proportion of homes without a working smoke alarm where there was an accidental fire is shown in chart 7. Whilst the proportion of homes without a working smoke alarm is still too high, the proportion of dwellings fires attended without at least one working smoke alarm has been declining over time. This is due to a combination of factors, not least the Brigade's programme of home fire safety visits, Pilot Fire Safe and Well Visits in five London Boroughs (Waltham Forest, Islington, Merton, Greenwich and Ealing), the fitting of smoke alarms in all areas of risk and the 2015 smoke alarm regulations for the private rented sector.

Chart 7: Proportion of accidental dwelling fires with no working smoke alarm,



23. Smoke alarms only raised the alarm in 14 per cent of all accidental dwelling fire fatalities (three). Where detection is installed it is often to a basic standard and the provision is not reviewed when the resident or their support needs change. As per chart 8, of all ADF related fire fatalities attributable to a human cause, 15 had smoke detection yet in only one case, was a working smoke detector fitted in the room where the fire started, thus providing the earliest possible warning of fire. This evidence continues to support the case for increasing smoke alarm provision to cover all areas of fire risk rather than providing only a base level of cover for those who are at increased risk of fire.

Chart 8: Provision of detection at accidental dwelling fire fatalities



24. Telecare equipment was installed in three fire fatality cases but none were linked to smoke detection.

Age and gender of fire fatalities

25. Table 2 below shows the age and gender of those who died in accidental dwelling fires. The youngest person to die in an accidental dwelling fire in 2017/18 was 17 and the oldest person to die was 89. Advancing age and escalating care needs continue to be a predictor of increased vulnerability to fire.

Table 2: Age and gender of accidental dwelling fire fatalities, 2017/18

Age	Female	Male	Total
30 and Under	1	0	1
31-40	1	2	3
41-50	0	1	1
51-60	0	2	2
61-70	2	2	4
Over 70	6	4	10
Total	10	11	21

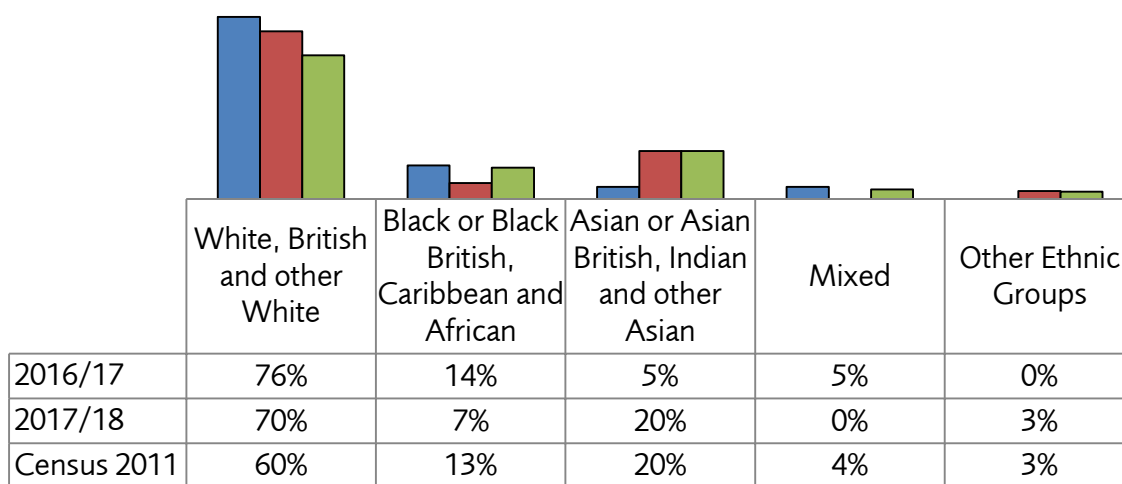
Mental Health

26. 2017/18 saw a further increase in the number of people who died at fires and were recorded as suffering from mental health issues. Eight of the 21 (38 per cent) individuals who died in an accidental dwelling fire were recorded as having a mental health issue. This includes 2 of the eight (25 per cent) individuals that were recorded as living in properties where the hoarded materials were recorded at Clutter Index Rating (CIR) of 2 and above, two of the individuals (25 per cent) that were known to be living with dementia.

Ethnicity

27. Chart 9 illustrates the distribution of accidental dwelling fire fatalities by ethnicity. The Brigade collects ethnicity data about those people who die in fires; but does not have this level of data for everyone who experiences a fire. Chart 8 below shows that White British, Irish or Other White people continue to be over-represented amongst fire fatalities when compared to the London population as recorded in the 2011 Census.

Chart 9: Ethnicity of ADF deaths compared to London population (2011 Census)



Analysis of trends and planned initiatives

Review Process

28. The fatal fire review process was introduced in 2010, and in 2012 a borough-based review process was established for qualifying accidental dwelling fires⁵. These reviews identify borough and pan London approaches to reduce fires and fire related casualties (both deaths and injuries).

29. From the ADF reviews carried out it was found that at fourteen fires the casualties were known to partner agencies but not to the Brigade. Additional partnership working is being pursued both at Borough and pan London level to ensure that local knowledge is shared and partners are aware of the prevention work the Brigade carries out. Four fire victims had experienced previous fires and nine had a previous home fire safety visit. This demonstrates the need to re-evaluate risk by all partners as an individual's circumstances change and to programme revisits to the most high risk residents.

⁵ To qualify for an accidental dwelling fire review a fire must meet at least one of the following criteria; a member of the public being taken to hospital as a result of injuries sustained at the incident, multiple people are injured (but not necessarily moved to hospital), it is determined by the officer in charge (OIC) that the severity of the fire has made the dwelling uninhabitable for at least 24 hours and/or where the OIC establishes a previous fire has occurred. A review can also be initiated at the request of the Area Deputy Assistant Commissioner.

30. These reviews have highlighted that many of the people who die in accidental dwelling fires share similar characteristics and are often within relatively easy grasp of better safety and protection, as most have been in regular contact with a public agency at some stage.
31. There also appears to be a trend forming whereby people are attempting to escape from fire by jumping out of windows. This has resulted in a number of deaths and injuries and needs further scrutiny to consider whether more external communications is necessary to re-iterate safe methods of escape.

What action has been undertaken to reduce risk?

Cooking

32. As cooking is still the most prevalent cause of all ADFs, the Brigade has developed and delivered messaging on the risks associated with cooking, especially when under the influence of alcohol, taking medication that may make them drowsy or have a health condition that affects the memory, such as dementia. In 2018, following the success of a heat alarm pilot conducted by the Brigade in 2015⁶, the project has been extended to all four Brigade areas so that heat alarms can be fitted during HFSVs where increased risk associated with cooking is evident. The installation of these alarms in the homes of vulnerable individuals will provide additional protection alongside smoke alarms. Working collaboratively with partner agencies, the Brigade identify vulnerable individuals and arrange pre-planned visits.
33. The Brigade is looking at the types and quantity of alarms it provides too. This includes investigating the feasibility of providing wirelessly linked hard of hearing heat alarms as part of pre-planned HFSVs and providing over 600 heat detectors as part of the Fire, Safe and Well Visit pilots.

Electrical

34. Electrical supply, domestic appliances and electric lighting caused 15 per cent of accidental dwelling fires and also resulted in three accidental dwelling fire fatalities. Officers continue to use the evidence from fire investigations to identify patterns and work with regulators and the industry to improve safety standards nationally and internationally.
35. The Brigade's Total Recalls campaign has been calling for changes to the UK product recall system and improvements to the manufacturing standards of white goods. The campaign has been rolled out nationally by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and has been in collaboration with other stakeholders including other fire rescue services, the Fire Brigade's Union, the Mayor of London, MPs and London Assembly Members, Which?, electrical Safety First and the British Retail Consortium.
36. The campaign has had significant successes, including convincing the manufacturer Whirlpool to change their advice to consumers on tumble dryers and the Government to set up the new Office for Product Safety (OPSS) and commit to setting up publically accessible single product recall register. The OPSS have published their action plan which includes delivering lots of the campaign aims – including plans to look at how white goods can be marked so they are identifiable after a fire, guidance on international collaboration about recalls and management of information sharing to inform trading standards about fires caused by faults.

⁶ Whereas it is too soon to show if a reduction in cooking fire injuries and deaths is linked to this pilot, the success has been defined by a large number of heat alarms being fitted in homes of those at high risk of cooking fires.

Smoking and smoking materials

37. In 2017/18, nine accidental dwelling fire deaths were caused by either the unsafe handling or unsafe disposal of smoking materials. Despite the introduction of fire safer cigarettes in November 2011 (sometimes called reduced ignition propensity cigarettes), smoking materials remain the most common cause of fire fatalities. It is clear that cigarettes and smoking continue to pose a serious fire risk, and that fire safer cigarettes continue to be involved in fire deaths. Similar to cooking, reducing fires and deaths caused by smoking is a key priority and the Brigade has promoted a number of high profile media campaigns to raise awareness
38. In seven of the nine cases there was clear evidence of previous unsafe disposal of smoking materials. Five of these people were either in receipt of care (either formal or informal care), and/or were known to a partner agencies who would have had the opportunity to see evidence of previous unsafe disposal of smoking materials that could have resulted in fires. In two cases, partners had identified the risk and a HFSVs were conducted.
39. In October 2017, the Brigade moved its position from promoting safer smoking to promoting non smoking and actively supported Public Health England's national 'Stoptober' campaign. Also as part of the Fire Safe and Well Pilots, our Community Safety Advisors (CSAs) are trained in providing smoking cessation advice to people we visit. The Brigade continue to promote vaping as an alternative to smoking due to the decreased likelihood of a fire occurring.
40. The Brigade has reviewed its policy around Fire Retardant Bedding to ensure people have access to it where smoking risk has been identified. The criteria for supplying this free of charge has widened to include anyone that the crew considers is at increased risk of fire.

Fire loading and fire development

41. At five properties where fire deaths occurred, the hoarding level was recorded at level 2 and above on the Clutter Image Rating scale⁷. Hoarding can obstruct escape routes and hinder firefighters' ability to access properties. In hoarding cases materials are more likely to be stored close to, or in contact with, heat sources such as candles and heaters and present an opportunity for fires to start and develop rapidly. Hoarded materials can also enable a fire to spread unseen.
42. The Brigade has a formal agreement in place with the London Ambulance Service (LAS) on identifying hoarding behaviour and working together to reduce risk. LAS crews refer patients with hoarding behaviour directly to the Brigade for HFSVs. When carrying out the visit if Brigade crews identify the hoarding level as five or above on the Clutter Image Rating, a safeguarding referral is made to the local authority for further intervention to reduce all risks associated with hoarding. In 2017/18, 884 referrals were received from LAS and all were offered the opportunity of a HFSV resulting in 333 HFSVs being carried out. The difference in referrals received and HFSVs carried out is due to the inability to get access to the property or the resident declining a visit. All residents are contacted on three occasions by letter and telephone to try and arrange a visit.
43. The Brigade is currently running a pilot support group in partnership with South London and Maudsley (SLAM) NHS Foundation Trust and Southwark Council at Dockhead Fire Station. Individuals with hoarding behaviour are able to access cognitive behavioural therapists, funded by Southwark Council in an attempt to tackle the root causes of hoarding behaviour. In the short time it has been running the number of those with hoarding behaviour attending has risen. The feedback from attendees is positive. The aim of the project is that the engagement with the

⁷ The Clutter Image Rating (CIR) scale is an internationally recognised document that provides a consistent standard for emergency services and partners to use when judging the severity of hoarding in premises.

Brigade and SLAM will lead to lasting progressive changes in behaviour. The pilot is due to be reviewed later in 2019 with a view to a larger rollout across London.

Detection

44. The message 'Get a smoke alarm' has changed to 'Fires can start in any room. Fit smoke alarms in your hallways and in any room where you: smoke, leave electrical equipment on or on charge, use candles, incense sticks or portable heaters and fit a heat alarm in your kitchen'. The case for more alarms in areas of fire risk is supported by the NFCC and the Home Office Fire safety campaign. The Brigade's HFSV training package and fire awareness package for carers include clear messages that detection must be fitted in all areas of risk. The Brigade continues to promote this message within the fire industry and with partners. Work must continue to ensure that domestic fire alarm systems take account of the fire risk profile of the occupier.
45. We communicate regularly throughout the year about testing smoke alarms as we regularly attend fires where smoke alarms have not actuated.

Telecare

46. The Brigade continues to use "Get Out, Stay Out, Call 999" as a core message. The follow up message is that calling the emergency services must be one of the first actions taken on discovery of a fire as any delay has potentially life changing consequences for those involved.
47. The Brigade promotes telecare and regularly engages with telecare commissioners, manufacturers and installers. Feedback from Borough Commanders (BCs) supports the view that partners are recognising the need for telecare installations to include linked fire alarms, however it is clear that it will take time for custom and practice to reach the standard required. Telecare fire detection must be designed, installed, maintained and monitored in accordance with the appropriate British (or EU equivalent) standards and the Brigade are key stakeholders in reviewing these standards.
48. An officer has been appointed to take forward work with the fire and telecare industries to ensure fire risk is recognised in standards, guidance and practice, linking of smoke alarms to telecare becomes a standard practice where telecare is already fitted, and remote monitoring of fire alarms is recommended where the risk profile identifies a need. This officer will also take forward recommendations for changes in fire alarm standards where a need is identified. The Brigade has a schedule of training events for telecare organisations throughout the year.

Automatic fire suppression systems (AFSS)

49. This annual review supports the need to consider personal fire risk profile along with vulnerability when ensuring an adequate level of fire protection. HFSVs including fire prevention advice and the fitting of smoke detection in all areas of risk have been proven to reduce fire risk, but some people will continue to undertake behaviours that put them at a higher fire risk. For a proportion of these people, specific tailored advice and the use of fire retardant bedding will reduce the fire risk to acceptable levels. However, where these behaviours are combined with a limited ability to respond and/or impaired mobility, AFSS (such as sprinklers and water mist systems) offer the only effective risk reduction alternative and have the potential to prevent death and injury. Officers continue to work with manufacturers to continuously improve solutions that work in real life situations, that are not actuated in non-fire situations but activate in time to prevent death or serious injury. The Brigade is a key stakeholder for any reviews of standards for AFSS.
50. Through the Community Safety Investment Fund (CSIF), the Brigade provided funding for 20 AFSS installations across London in partnership with Local Authorities. These included both large

scale AFSS which were installed throughout entire buildings to new Personal Protection Systems (PPS) which were fitted in specific locations in the homes of people especially vulnerable to the risks of fire. The CSIF enabled boroughs across London to take advantage of the new ⁸ standard and purchase equipment designed to control fires in the home of people identified as having a high risk of fire and not being able to escape. The combination of the CSIF funding availability and the newly published standard has created a market and motivated suppliers to develop their equipment where development had slowed considerably.

High risk people

51. Through a series of ADF and fatal fire reviews, the Brigade's high risk individual criteria were reviewed and amended. The new criteria below were agreed in September 2016. To be classified as a high risk individual, a person must meet two of the three listed criteria:

- Be at an increased risk of fire (due to smoking, unsafe cooking etc.)
- Have a reduced ability to react to fire (lack of appropriate smoke detection, deafness etc.)
- Have a reduced ability to escape from fire (mobility issues, congested escape routes etc.)

52. It is the combination of a range of factors that will determine whether or not a person becomes a casualty of fire. Those with reduced mobility and have high risk habits such as smoking in bed or not disposing of cigarettes properly, are particularly at risk from fire but the effect of serious or long-term illness on survival cannot be underestimated.

53. There is a continued need to focus our HFSV targeting on wider risk characteristics rather than location which is supported by local partnership working. The HFSV policy has been reviewed to reflect this and systems are currently being implemented to support this further, including a new database and a quality assurance process to ensure the right people are being visited⁹.

New Communications campaign

54. Using the information in this report and in the detailed ADF and fatal fire reviews officers are considering the development of a new communications campaign around vulnerability to fire and promoting HFSVs to high risk individuals. This would be designed to;

- help drive identification of high risk individuals to the Brigade
- enable meaningful interventions such as HFSVs and installation of improved smoke detection in the homes of people who need them
- raise awareness of key fire safety issues that lead to fatal fires

55. Key audiences are likely to be friends, family and carers of vulnerable people who are in a position to identify people with the high risk characteristics and the potential fire risks in their homes. Initial work on the viability of this will begin in April 2019 and if it is taken forward a future paper would be brought to the Board, which would include resource considerations with the campaign to be delivered by October 2019.

⁸ A personal protection system (PPS) is an Automatic Fire Suppression System (AFSS); it detects the fire, suppresses the fire and has the capacity to alert responsible people about the fire.

⁹ To ensure that the Brigade's HFSVs reach those most at risk from fire, the Brigade targets communities and individuals with characteristics that have been identified as recurring and being an indicator of fire risk. Currently we target households and individuals for prevention activity in two ways. Priority places (geographic risk or "P1 Places") – based on a combination of sociodemographic data and historic incident data. Priority people (high risk individuals or "P1 People") – This is a defined combination of characteristics identified as increasing the risk of fire, injury or death within a household.

Partnership working

56. The Brigade continues to work with care providers and commissioning agents to highlight the dangers of fire. Officers have distributed a fire awareness package to all BCs to aid them in raising awareness of fire risks amongst those receiving care, and ensure that carers know how to recognise the signs of fire risk such as cigarette and match burn marks on furniture, carpets and clothes, and take risk reduction action including a referral for a home fire safety visit. A centrally run training session was piloted for housing providers, carers and risk assessors in October 2018 covering these topics and a rollout of this with care providers is currently being considered due to the success of the pilot.
57. Resources have been developed centrally such as the 'Healthcare products' leaflet which covers emollient products, incontinence pads, airflow mattresses and oxygen, and the 'person centred risk assessment checklist' which supports local identification of risk. Letters highlighting these new resources were sent out to 2000 care homes, care agencies, housing providers and carer support charities.
58. The Brigade's website has recently been updated to include a page for carers and social workers. Information on the website includes detail of how to identify someone that is at risk from fire, advice on telecare systems and assistive technology, links to the person centred risk assessment checklist and advice on fire risk associated with healthcare products.
59. The Brigade has produced an online fire safety awareness package in conjunction with the Telecare Services Association (TSA) to provide carers with information on fire risk and what action can be taken to mitigate them.
60. The Brigade are working towards becoming a 'Dementia Friendly Organisation'. Front line staff are being made more aware of how dementia can affect behaviours in order to support those living with the condition in emergency and non-emergency situations.
61. A regular feature of accidental dwelling fire fatalities is that the victim was known to a housing provider and/or partner agency and displayed easily identifiable signs that there was a fire risk present, such as previous unsafe disposal of smoking materials. It is clear that despite work to educate partners in identifying fire risk, partnership fire awareness sessions must continue as a theme for officers. HFSVs had also taken place prior to seven fatal fires, although some were dated as far back as 2009, this continues to re-enforce the importance of reviewing an individual's fire risk profile and scheduling a revisit by the Brigade to those that have had near miss events.
62. The Brigade is working with partners such as registered social landlords (RSLs) to support them to implement a person centred approach to risk within their buildings. Many RSLs are now incorporating individual risk assessments within their housing checks and are then incorporating findings into fire risk assessments for their buildings and providing premises information boxes (PIBs) to support the Brigade to identify vulnerable people in an emergency.

Fire safety regulation

63. Where fatalities have occurred in premises or locations where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Fire safety Order) does not apply, no regulatory action was taken by officers; these include premises identified as private single family dwellings. Additionally, fatalities in vehicles, garages/sheds and on open ground would not have been investigated by fire safety regulation officers.

64. For the year 2017/18, two fatalities occurred in premises where the Fire Safety Order applies. In both cases, the cause and circumstances surrounding the fire are still under investigation by the Metropolitan Police Service, therefore no post fire inspection has taken place. These premises will be inspected once the investigation has concluded.
65. Fire safety officers are routinely notified of any premises where level 5 and above hoarding is identified. In these cases, where the Fire Safety Order applies, the responsible person will be contacted to ensure the Fire Risk Assessment for the premises is reviewed to take account of this additional risk.

Future reports

66. In August 2018, the Brigade published the new '*Fire Facts – Fire Deaths in London*' document under the UKSA code of practice on statistics. The Brigade's data which underpins the Fire Facts report also provides the statistical basis for this annual report. Fire Facts is based on a calendar year rather than a fiscal year. Future annual reports looking at ADF fire trends will, therefore, use the Fire Facts publication as the basis for analysis of trends and planning of community safety work so that the same data set is used, and the findings are the same. The target publication date for the Fire Facts document will normally be April each year so this annual trends report will be published earlier in the year.

Conclusion

67. This annual report on the review of accidental dwelling fires and fatalities has summarised key information and evidence that the Brigade requires to influence internal and external priorities. Whilst significant progress is being made to target risk and drive it down, it is clear that more can be done to further reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires and fatalities.
68. Key findings include the need for the Brigade to continue to:
- Support and influence a wide variety of partner organisations including the housing, care and voluntary sectors, through the provision of tools, fire risk awareness training, and ongoing advice on how to identify risk, implement fire risk control measures, take immediate action to lower fire risk themselves, and refer clients to the Brigade for HFSVs.
 - Engage with the public, fire industry and partners to promote the benefits of increased smoke alarm ownership and the fitting of smoke alarms in all areas of fire risk.
 - Work with the fire industry to lower the cost of heat alarms and wireless interlinked fire alarms (heat and smoke), encourage the wider adoption of smoke and heat alarms with 10 year, sealed for life batteries, encourage the wider adoption of wireless interlinked alarms and evaluate the case for the removal from sale of fire alarms with removable batteries to stop the consumer from removing the batteries, thus rendering the alarm useless.
 - Work with the fire industry to further develop Personal Protection System standards to increase their effectiveness in controlling and suppressing fires whilst not being prone to false alarms.
 - Work with the Telecare industry to improve standards and integrate fire detection and alarms to new and existing systems.
 - Influence behaviours through public facing messaging, innovative campaigns and community events, including the use of community fire stations. This includes considering a new

communications campaign on identifying vulnerable people and improving their safety from fire.

- Quality assure and improve the existing HFSV process to ensure effective targeting and intervention.

69. A further paper is being prepared for Commissioner's Board in 2019 around further technical interventions that the Brigade could provide to reduce fire risk. A fully costed proposal will include the business case for proving Carbon Monoxide and Heat Alarms and linked alarms.

Finance comments

70. The Chief Finance Officer has reviewed this report and has no comments.

Workforce comments

71. No workforce issues have been identified within this report that require staff side consultation.

Legal comments

72. Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (the "Commissioner") is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office. Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004) states that the Commissioner is the fire and rescue authority for Greater London. Under section 327D of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the Mayor may issue to the Commissioner specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.

73. By direction dated 1 April 2018, the Mayor set out those matters, for which the Commissioner would require the prior approval of either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (the "Deputy Mayor").

74. Paragraph 3.1 of Part 3 of the said direction requires the Commissioner to consult with the Deputy Mayor as far as practicable in the circumstances before a decision is taken on (inter alia) any "[c] decision that can be reasonably considered to be novel, contentious or repercussive in nature, irrespective of the monetary value of the decision involved (which may be nil)".

75. As the subject of this report could reasonably be considered to be novel, contentious or repercussive in nature, the Deputy Mayor will be consulted prior to the Commissioner before a decision is taken in relation to it.

76. In accordance with Sections 5A of the FRSA 2004, the Commissioner, being a 'relevant authority,' may do "anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying - out of any of its functions..." and in accordance with Section 6 of the FRSA 2004 the Commissioner "must make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety in its area". In making such provision the Commissioner must "in particular, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, make arrangements for ... the provision of information, publicity and encouragement in respect of the steps to be taken to prevent fires and death or injury by fire". The subject matter of this report falls within these powers and functions.

Sustainability implications

77. This report provides an update on actions to reduce the risk of accidental dwelling fires and fatalities. Community safety is recognised as one of the core Brigade activities that can support improved sustainability for the lives of Londoners.

Equalities implications

78. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the London Fire Brigade when it makes decisions. One of Community Safety's core roles is to work closely with individuals, and communities

from under represented groups, with protected characteristics to reduce accidental fires, injuries and fatalities, raising awareness through education and targeted projects.

79. The report explores age, mental health, gender and ethnicity, and it was suggested to collate data on other protected characteristics, such as disability, religion or belief. This information would be difficult to gather to ensure that it is completely accurate. Although we know that the majority of people dying in fires have issues around mobility and cognitive impairment they may not be classed as disabled under the Equalities Act. We target our prevention on these individuals and are further exploring opportunities for gathering additional data in order to target our prevention work effectively, including data on other disabilities, and religions and beliefs. Report to also be circulated to Brigade Equality Support Groups.

List of Appendices to this report:

- a) [List any appendices]

Consultation [Note: this section is for internal reference only – consultation information for public consideration should be included within the body of the report]

Name/role	Method consulted
Insert names/or roles of those consulted.	Insert how they were consulted – meetings, away day, by email or by draft circulation of this report.
Borough Commanders/Area DACs	Via Email
David Wyatt, Andy Mobbs and Apollo (IM)	Via Email
Finance, Legal, Equalities comments	Via Email
Communications (Caroline Davis)	Via Email