



Fire Safety Performance Report 2020/2021

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Introduction

One of the cornerstones of the work of the Fire and Rescue Service is in the area of Fire Safety. This work is focused on assisting those premises other than single private dwellings to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RR(FS)O) so that the buildings in which people live, work, visit and enjoy leisure time are provided with facilities that will ensure a safe means of escape in the event of a fire starting. In addition to the RR(FS)O the Service also enforces other legislation such as the Explosives Regulations 2014 and the Petroleum (Consolidation) Regulations 2014. Within the report the term non-domestic broadly refers to premises other than single private dwellings.

This assistance may take the form of educational events, signposting to relevant guidance, the checking or auditing of fire safety measures and enforcement where necessary. All of our fire safety activities are targeted at those premises that we perceive present the greatest risk to the community. We are committed to enforcing the law so that members of the public and local employees are protected from the risk of death and injury caused by fire. It is essential to us that the way in which we enforce fire safety supports our community, business and the Government's expectations of enforcers. The information below gives a high level overview of the cost of fire protection activities completed by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS), together with the outcomes of this work.

Our performance information is broken down into five easy to read categories. You can find the performance information below.

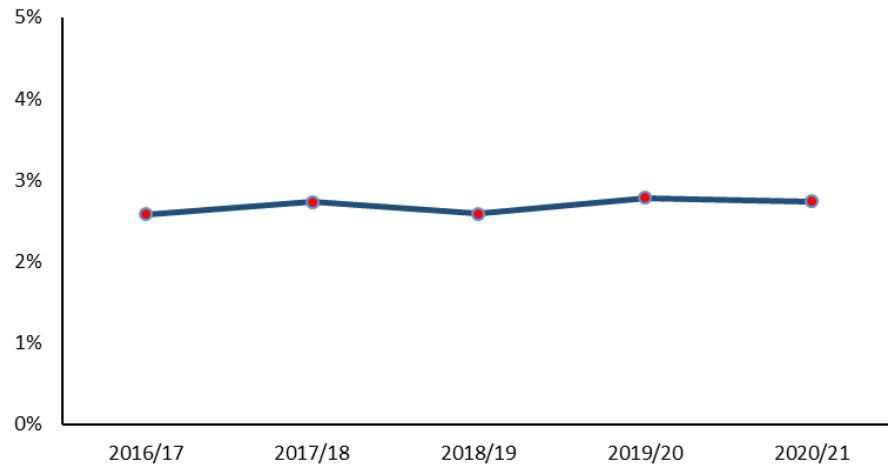
'By enforcing effectively against those premises that are not taking their responsibilities seriously and by providing advice and guidance to those who wish to do the right thing, TWFRS believes that it is contributing to the creation of healthier lives, supporting economic development and helping to ensure both public and fire fighter safety.'

These are also the Government's priorities in terms of regulatory outcomes (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulatory-delivery>) which we fully endorse and support, including the recognition of businesses that have entered into a Primary Authority Partnership as a Regulator for the Fire Safety, Explosives and Petroleum category. For more information on Primary Authority Partnerships or Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Services involvement as a Primary Authority with our business partners, please visit our Primary Authority webpage www.twfire.gov.uk/community-safety/business/primary-authority/ for more information.'

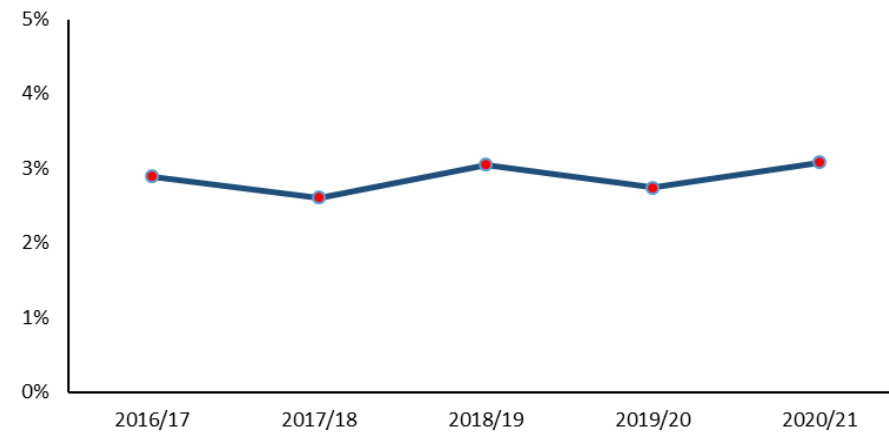
Inputs

The charts below show the resources used to carry out fire safety activity in Tyne and Wear.

% of total Service budget used for protection work



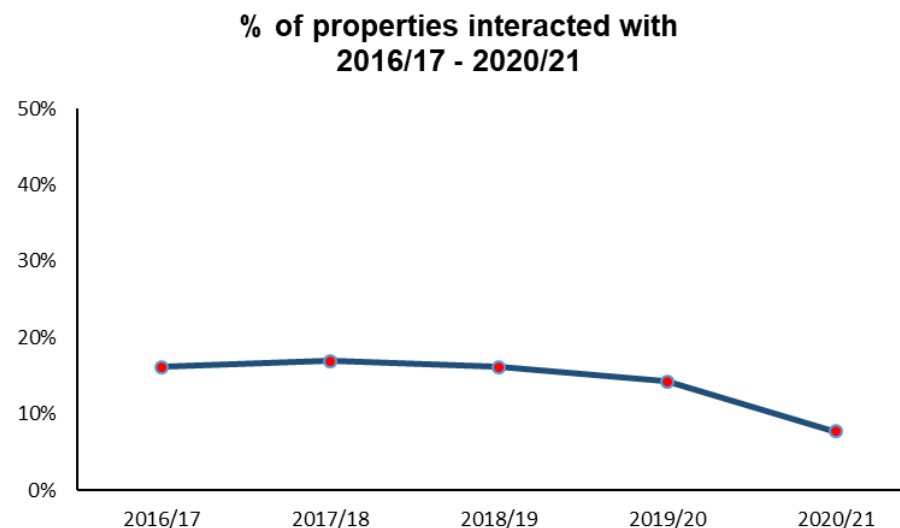
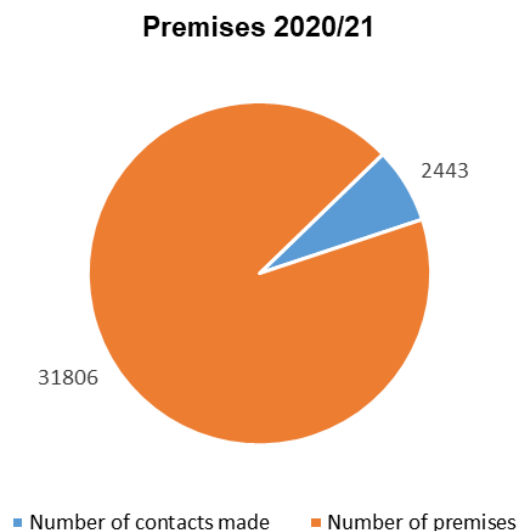
% of total Service workforce carrying out protection work



Activities

Contacts Made

In 2020/21, our engagement activity was greatly affected due to Covid restrictions. Businesses were closed during lockdown and strict restrictions that were put in place to reduce the transmission of the virus in the community. TWFRS made 2,443 contacts with the 31,806 active non-domestic properties within Tyne and Wear. This equates to 7.7% of the rate-paying non-domestic properties within the Service's area. These contacts may be in the form of a formal in-depth audit; a simpler, quicker inspection or education and/or advice to businesses. The charts below show the number of contacts made in 2020/21 and a percentage year on year comparison over the last five years.



We use a targeted approach when carrying out fire protection activities and ensure all dealings with properties are relevant and proportionate to the risk we perceive the property presents to the community.

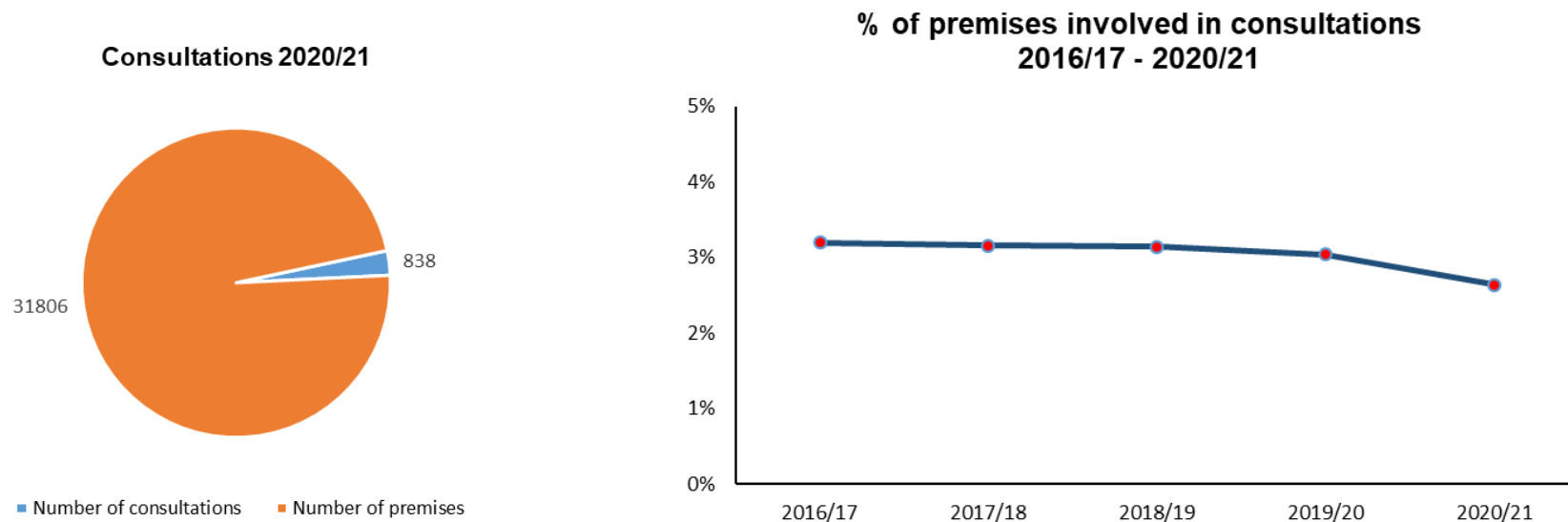
Business Continuity

During fire safety engagements Fire Safety staff encourage building owners and managers of businesses to prepare and produce a Business Continuity Plan for their premises, contact details of their respective local authority are provided for specialist advice.

A Business Continuity Plan should considers the potential impact of foreseeable incidents such as a fire, flooding, loss of essential utilities or any other major disruption that could affect a business. The plan assists the business in recovering as soon as practicable after such an event. To assist in the planning, information is available on our website <http://www.twfire.gov.uk/community-safety/business/business-continuity/>.

Consultations

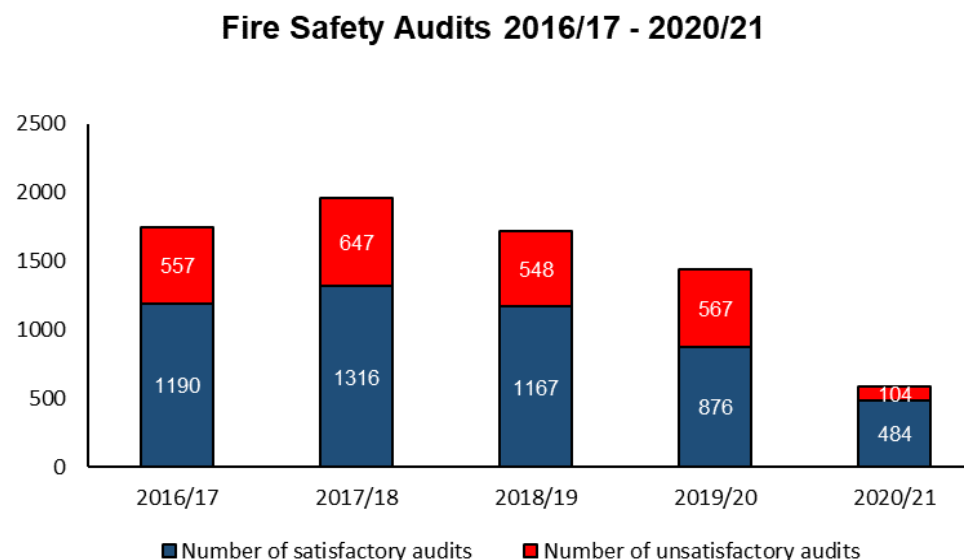
The charts below show the number of consultations responded to in 2020/21 and a percentage comparison year on year over the last five years.



Fire services respond to certain organisations when they require our expert opinion on fire safety matters. We receive consultation on Building Regulations applications for new buildings, alterations to existing buildings and planning applications. Additionally, we are also consulted in respect of licensing applications as set out in the Licensing Act 2003. The quantity of this work is driven by external demand.

Outputs

The chart below shows the number of fire safety audits (FSAs) carried out over the last five years.



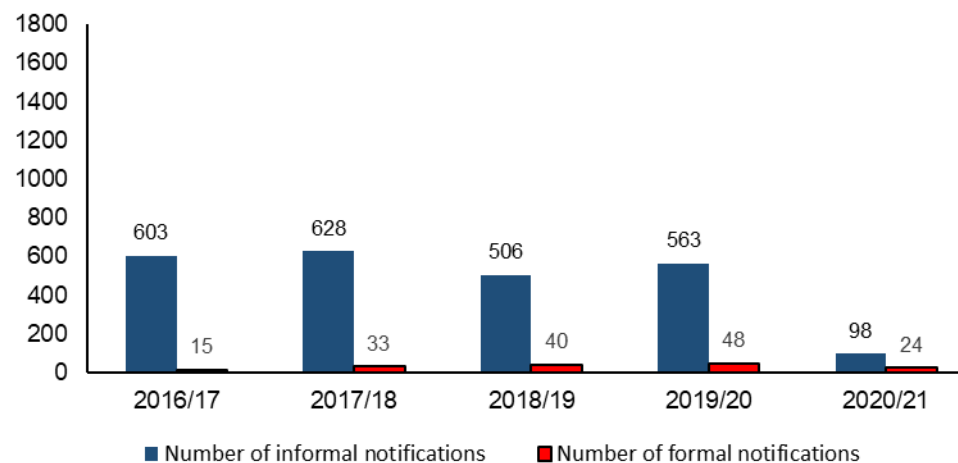
Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service uses the national fire safety audit process originally developed by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) to complete comprehensive audits of buildings. This process continues ensures consistent, auditable and transparent enforcement.

This audit system looks at the level of compliance across a range of areas required by the legislation and produces various enforcement options from verbal advice to the issue of an enforcement notice. In 2020/21 due to Covid restrictions TWFRS completed 588 fire safety audits compared to 1,443 the year before. Accurate targeting of our activity should ensure all premises we visit require some form of informal or formal action. Therefore, the highest risk properties are made safer and those premises that already comply with the law may

continue with their day-to-day business without disruption. If an audit has taken place and the premises is broadly compliant, with no written communication necessary, then a satisfactory audit is recorded

The graph below shows the type of activity undertaken as a result of a FSA over the last five years.

Number of Notifications Served 2016/17 - 2020/21



Informal activity means the premises has received a letter informing them of work required to comply.

Formal activity would mean that a 'notice' (<http://www.twfire.gov.uk/community-safety/business/enforcement-register/>) had been issued on the premises. This will include a timescale for completion of work when the areas of non-compliance are more serious than that required of an informal notification. In 2020/21 despite a 59% reduction in the number of fire safety audits being undertaken, 13% resulted in

Enforcement activity (not including Prohibition Notices served), this is compared to an average of 2% over the previous 4 years. This shows that non-compliance in high risk premises was still being addressed during the pandemic.

Examples of formal activity are:

Alterations notice; this is issued when it is believed that should an alteration be made to a premises, the occupants may be in danger of a serious risk in case of fire.

Enforcement notice; this would be issued when it is considered the risk to occupants in case of fire is more serious than can be dealt with by the sending of a letter. An enforcement notice will stipulate a time scale when remedial works must be completed.

Prohibition notice; This would be issued when despite our efforts to work with the responsible person for a property to achieve compliance, the condition of a building and the lack of fire safety provision mean that there is a significant risk of death or serious injury to persons within that building in the case of a fire starting.

If this is the case under the fire safety law we have the power, to serve a notice, to prohibit or restrict use of, part or all of the building until it is made safer.

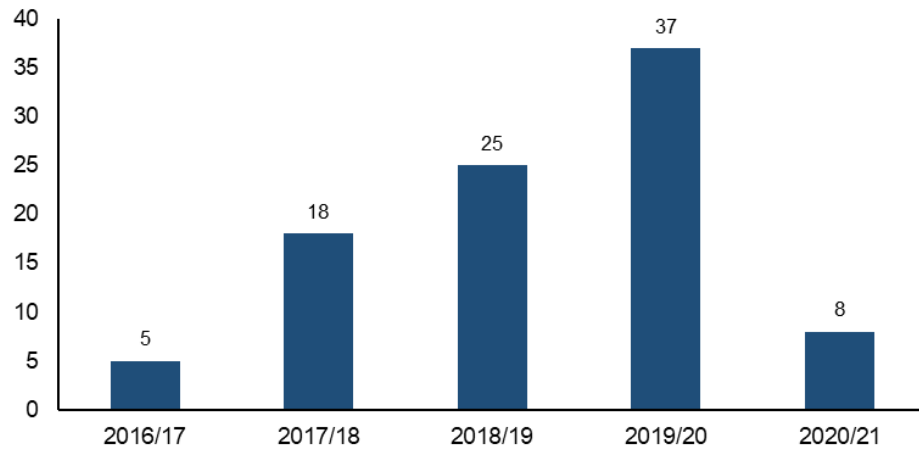
Prosecutions – if the responsible person for a building either refuses to comply with a legal notice or places persons at such serious risk of death or injury, we have the powers to prosecute. This action is not taken lightly with each situation carefully assessed against evidential and public interest factors. However, there are occasions when we feel that there are no options left to us and we will not hesitate to pursue this course of action in the interest of public safety.

TWFRS retains the services of legal counsel to provide advice and assistance when necessary.

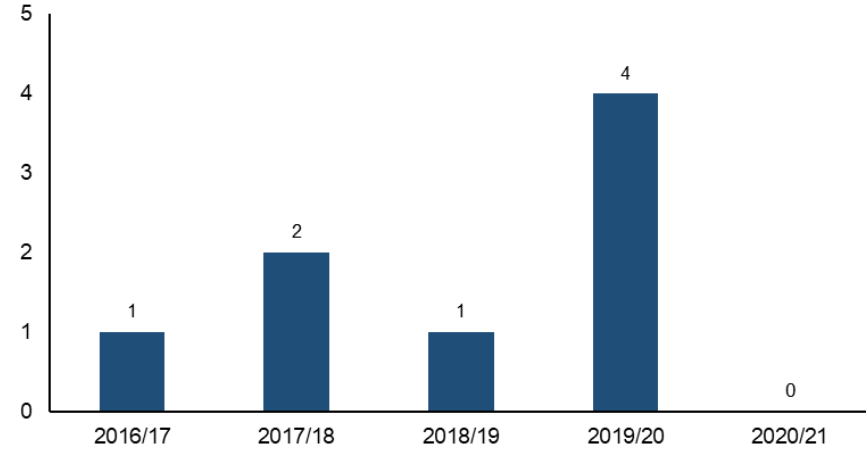
Please note; More than one notice can be issued on a single premises, for example an Enforcement Notice stipulating a time scale for work to be completed and additionally a Prohibition Notice, stopping use of a particular area of the building.

The graphs below show the number of prohibition notices served and prosecutions undertaken over the last five years.

Number of Prohibition Notifications Served 2016/17 - 2020/21



Number of Prosecutions 2016/17 - 2020/21

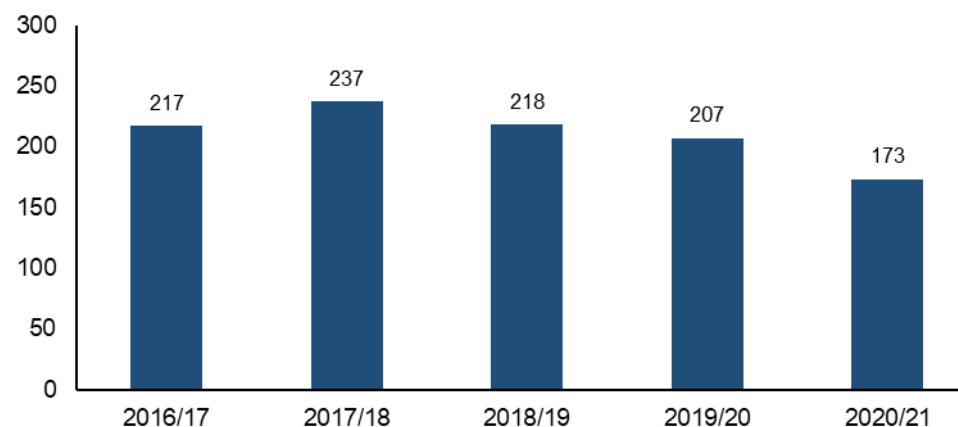


Outcomes

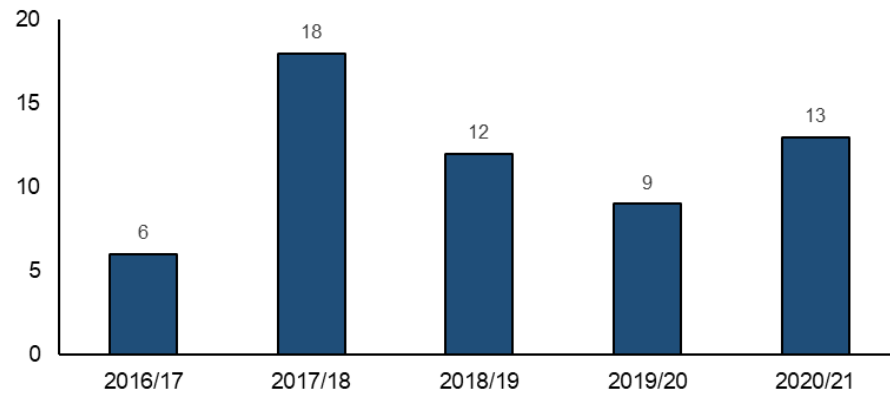
Despite the best efforts of our Fire Safety Officers to work with those properties we perceive present the greatest risk to the community, and enforcing the law where necessary, fires in non-domestic properties can still happen, and unfortunately, injuries can occur.

Over the last five years our fire safety work has contributed towards a 20.3% decrease in non-domestic fires but in 2020/21 there was an increase from 9 to 13 injuries. Unfortunately, there has been one death in this period. The graphs below show the numbers of fires, injuries and deaths that have occurred in non-domestic properties over the past five years.

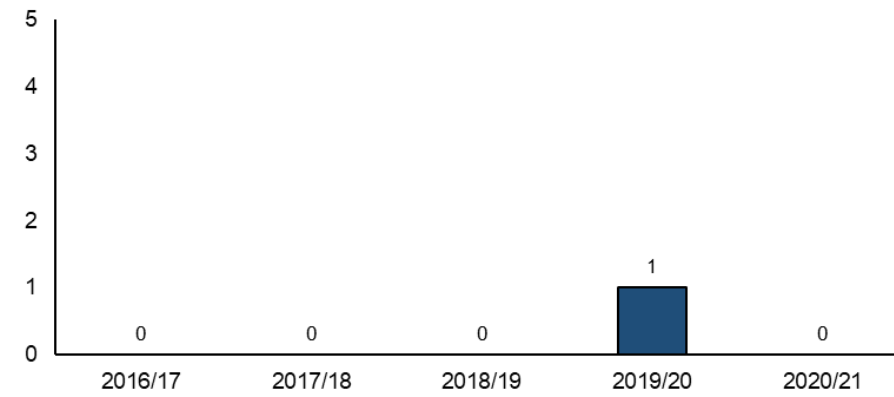
**Number of Fires in Non Domestic Properties
2016/17 - 2020/21**



**Number of Injuries in Non Domestic Properties
2016/17 - 2020/21**

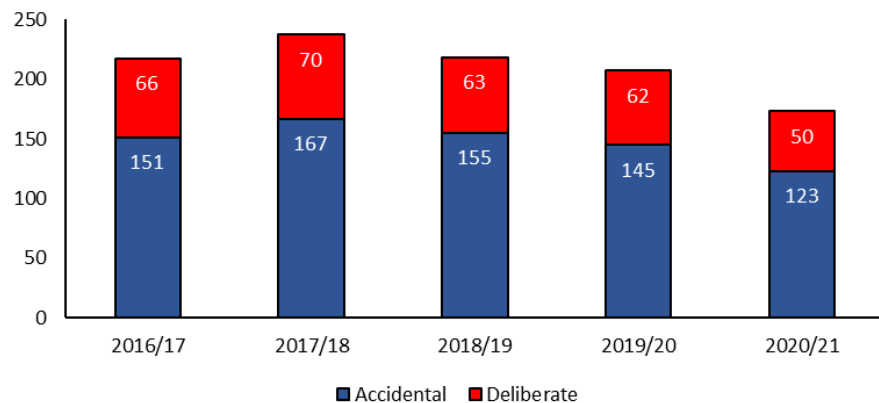


**Number of Deaths in Non Domestic Properties
2016/17 - 2020/21**

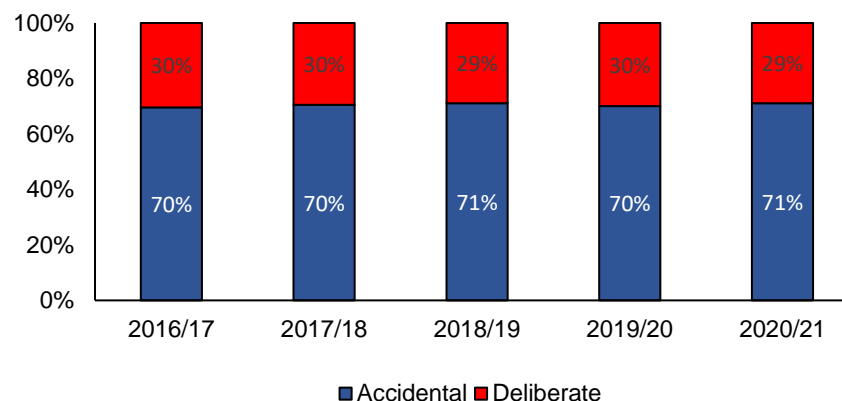


All fires, no matter how small are investigated to ascertain the cause, allowing us to target community safety activities and to work to prevent similar occurrences in the future. The outcomes of these investigations determine whether a fire was deliberate or started accidentally and these breakdowns are shown below.

Accidental and Deliberate Fires in Non Domestic Properties 2016/17 - 2020/21



% split of Accidental and Deliberate Fires in Non Domestic Properties 2016/17 - 2020/21



We will continue to work hard to maintain these excellent outcomes and strive to protect the communities of Tyne and Wear from the risk of death and injury caused by fire.

Impacts

These are the effects of our fire safety activities over a long-term period on the wider community/environment. We achieve this by assisting businesses to grow, thrive and prosper by the provision of education and advice and tackling poor compliance to ensure fair competition. Ensuring the public are confident in their own and others' safety in places where they live, work and visit. We aim to reduce the exposure of firefighters to the inherent risks that fires in non-domestic buildings bring.

We believe that all of the fire protection work that we complete has a positive impact on the community, businesses and people who pass through Tyne and Wear. We work closely with our partner agencies to reduce the risk to life from fire in buildings that are subject to fire safety law, and specifically target our resources at those premises that constitute the highest risk.

Everyone deserves to be confident that when they or their family stay in a hotel, go to their place of work, go shopping, go to the theatre or cinema, they are safe should a fire break out and that they are able to easily escape to a place of safety if they need to. There are life safety benefits of taking into consideration what facilities are in place and how you would deal with a fire should one occur. There are other benefits frequently not considered, for example, many businesses do not recover from a serious fire, naturally this can affect local employment with a direct impact on the local economy.

The availability of facilities used by the community, such as village halls and sports facilities may be severely affected. In the case of a school or college, years of pupils' work along with teaching resources would be destroyed possibly affecting future examination results. Additionally, through our work with architects, planners and building control bodies we work hard to ensure the risk posed to our firefighters is kept to a minimum and that they are able to fight a fire with certain physical safeguards in place.

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