Introduction

by Chief Fire Officer Sean Ruth and West Sussex County Council Member for Resident Services Lionel Barnard


This report covers the financial year from April 1st 2012 to March 31st 2013 and highlights how we performed in the key areas of protection, prevention and emergency response. It is designed to provide assurance to the public and our other stakeholders that we have met our financial, governance and operational commitments under the Fire & Rescue National Framework.

There is no doubt that 2012-13 has been a very challenging year for WSFRS, but it has also been an exciting one. Whilst the Service has operated in the toughest financial climate that it has faced in decades, this has brought out the very best in the people who work for it.

Over the past 12 months we have continued to redesign the Service to ensure we are meeting the changing needs of people in West Sussex as effectively as we can while still delivering the necessary financial savings. Making sure that we are doing the right things in the right places at the right time has been the driving force behind the planning and implementation of our ‘Fire Redesign’ change programmes and will continue to be our primary focus as we move forward.

It has been a busy year for the Service, one in which we have laid the foundations for a new combined Fire Control with East Sussex, changed fire cover in Horley to achieve a better balance of resources, reviewed how we crew our special appliances, modernised the delivery of our fire protection and investigation arrangements, continued to improve the safety and operational training of our firefighters, increased our capacity to protect our most vulnerable residents, appointed a new Chief Fire Officer, recruited volunteers into the Service for the first time to support our flagship Home Fire Safety Check campaign and delivered a £2.5m saving for the public.

This has only been achieved through the vision, innovation and resilience of our staff. As you read through this report you’ll find many examples of the passion, dedication and talent we have in all areas of our Service. We haven’t simply relied on doing things the way we have always done them, we have challenged ourselves to make improvements in every area of our work from the front line to the back office and where appropriate embraced new ways of working and a more flexible delivery of our Service to make the greatest difference to people in West Sussex.

Last year, overall there were fewer people injured in house fires, fewer people killed or seriously injured on the county’s roads and fewer fires being set deliberately, but we know there is more work to be done. Sadly, six people lost their lives in house fires and that is six too many. We believe the only way to make a long-term, sustainable difference to people’s safety and wellbeing and to help build stronger communities is to work even more closely with our county council colleagues, partner agencies and the public to support a much wider community safety agenda and help address the root causes of fires and other emergency incidents. For us, this means partnership, collaboration, sharing resources and becoming even more integrated into our communities is a must do, rather than a nice to do.

Undoubtedly, the impact of the Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review means that the financial climate is only going to get tougher in the foreseeable future, but we have already begun the longer term planning necessary to future proof the Service for the challenges of years to come and continue to deliver the first class fire and rescue service that people in West Sussex expect and deserve.
**April**

A hotel receptionist, a newsagent, a school escort and a house mum became WSFRS first Community Volunteers when the pilot scheme was launched in Littlehampton.

Meanwhile Bognor fire crews took over a school in Barnham to stage their ‘Big Incident Day’. Joined by 999 partners from the Ambulance Service and Police, firefighters helped 150 Year 7 pupils explore, amongst other things, the consequences of making hoax calls and learned basic first aid.

**May**

The crew at Shoreham beat the hosepipe ban by hosting a charity carwash day using just 22 14 litre buckets of water to wash 33 cars, raising a tidy £400 for the Fire Fighters Charity in the process.

WSFRS supported National Deaf Awareness week by promoting radio-linked smoke alarms and specialist detection equipment for the hard of hearing.

**June**

Unexpectedly heavy downpours cause widespread flooding across the county. We receive over 1,000 999 calls in just 24-hours and it’s all hands to the pump as our crews pump flood water and help evacuate hundreds of homes.

East Wittering Fire Station’s rescue boat proudly lined up alongside over 1,000 crafts on the River Thames in a spectacular nautical celebration for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.

**July**

The public consultation for Fire Redesign 2 got underway. WSFRS asked people for their opinions on cost saving proposals outlining savings of £2.5m.

Road safety was firmly in the spotlight when WSFRS teamed up with colleagues from East Sussex to support National Road Safety Day with an awareness event in Brighton.

**August**

A specialist smoke alarm fitted by WSFRS came to the rescue of a woman in her 60s when a fire started in her Horsham home.

A Home Fire Safety Check carried out the previous year meant she was protected by a Careline System with a ‘Firelink’ smoke alarm automatically connecting her to an operator at a 24-hour monitoring centre who raised the alarm and sent our fire crews on the way to rescue her.

**September**

Worthing Fire Station celebrated its 50th anniversary. The station on Ardsheal Road opened on 12th September 1962. A convoy of vintage appliances made the journey from the old site in Charlecotte Rd to the Ardsheal Road and the Fire Station hosted a party for former colleagues.

A record breaking 19 firefighters and officers were recognised for their dedication to their communities when they were presented with their Long Service & Good Conduct Medals by the Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex at Arundel Castle.
### October
WSFRS joined forces with Network Rail and Sussex Police to host a special awareness day to highlight the dangers of level crossing misuse in Crawley who have one of the highest rates of misuse in Sussex.

The clocks went back and WSFRS teamed up with B&Q to urge people to ‘DIY’ and test their smoke alarms when they turned back their clocks.

### November
Safe Drive Stay Alive hit the road again for another season of the hard-hitting show where real life collision stories are bravely brought to the stage in an effort to reduce the number of young people killed or injured on the road.

Eight people, including two children, were rescued by firefighters from a fire at a block of flats in Crawley. Fire Control operators who received the 999 calls gave vital fire survival guidance to people trapped in their flats by smoke in the stairwell before crews from Crawley arrived to rescue them and fight the fire.

### December
House fires started by cigarettes sadly claimed the lives of two elderly women in Crawley and Bognor Regis in the space of just 4 days. Smoking related fires are still the biggest killer when it comes to fires in the home – the message is put it out, right out.

Fire crew from Haywards Heath helped residents stay safe on the roads over the festive period with a free Car Health Check day outside the Orchards Shopping Centre. Firefighters, partnered by mechanics from Frosts Garage, offered free tyre safety, lights, washer fluid and windscreen wiper checks.

### January
The New Year started with a new Chief as Sean Ruth was appointed the new Chief Fire Officer for WSFRS following the retirement of Max Hood. Serving as Deputy since 2009 Sean had previously steered the Service’s successful Fire Redesign change programme.

It was a proud occasion for all when 10 young people from Fordwater School, which caters for pupils with a variety of learning difficulties, came through their FireBreak course with flying colours.

### February
Shoreham firefighters invited people into their bedroom on Valentine’s Day! The crew created a fire damaged bedroom in the Holmbush Shopping Centre to highlight an array of potential fire hazards including smoking, faulty electric blankets and hair straighteners.

With most house fires starting in the kitchen, Pancake Day on the 12th gave the Service a perfect opportunity to highlight the dangers of cooking with hot oil and promote safer kitchen fire safety.

### March
A firefighter from Haywards Heath became a star of the small screen when he appeared on BBC2 documentary ‘Toughest Place to be a Firefighter’ being put to the test fighting forest fires and getting a taste of tribe-life deep in the Amazonian rainforest.

Unseasonal snowfall in the north of the county caused travel chaos on the A23 with fire crews from Haywards Heath spending the night giving stranded motorists lifts.
Governance & Background

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) is the Fire Authority with the legal responsibility for delivering the Fire & Rescue Service to West Sussex.

The main duties of the Fire Authority are set out in the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004. They are to provide, train and equip the Service for:

- Firefighting
- Protection of people and property from fire
- Fire safety promotion
- Rescuing people from road traffic collisions

The Authority also has roles and responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to work in partnership to plan for and respond to civil emergencies.

WSCC Cabinet Member for Resident Services, currently Cllr. Lionel Barnard, has the responsibility for ensuring that West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS) is meeting the needs of communities in West Sussex in the most effective and efficient way.

Although WSFRS is financed and governed by WSCC, we are also subject to the national guidelines, priorities and targets set out in Government’s National Framework document.

Our service to the public

Our commitment to community safety and making a positive difference to the lives of everyone in West Sussex is central to everything we do.

We respond from 25 fire stations across the county operating a combination of wholetime, variable and retained crewing systems providing a first class 24-hour emergency response for the whole of West Sussex.

Operating a fleet of 40 fire engines and a number of specialist rescue and support appliances gives us the capability of responding to a range of emergencies including fires, road traffic collisions, floods, chemical spills, people or animals trapped and building collapses.

As part of the UK’s International Search and Rescue Team we also provide national and international resilience. Our Technical Rescue Unit provides 24/7 response to major national and international emergencies.

Of course, our contribution to community safety is much broader than simply reacting when things go wrong. We have an increasingly proactive role to play in prevention and intervention, working with our partners to reduce the need for a 999 response in the first place.
West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service crewing systems

**Wholetime:** Providing a 24/7 immediate response and range of community safety activity. Wholetime firefighters work on a shift system of two nine-hour day shifts and two fifteen hour night shifts.

**Retained:** Retained Duty System (RDS) firefighters primary employment is often outside of the fire service but they provide an agreed level of 'on call’ cover for 999 emergencies responding to a pager alert.

**Variable:** Providing an immediate response during the core hours of Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm. Retained firefighters provide nights and weekend cover. This system provides the flexibility to deliver a range of community safety activities.

The communities we serve

Understanding the changing social, economic and geographical landscape of the county is important in order to make a positive difference to our communities.

West Sussex is located on the South Coast of England and covers 768 square miles and has a population of 806,900. The county is bordered by East Sussex to the east, Hampshire to the west and Surrey to the north. The M23 corridor runs down the eastern side of the county and connects the capital with Brighton, while along the coast the A27/M27 provides westward links to Portsmouth and Southampton. West Sussex also has a major international airport at Gatwick, to the north of Crawley.

The majority of the population live in the main towns of Worthing, Crawley, Horsham and Chichester. West Sussex is classified by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as being ‘significantly rural’. The county is administered under a two-tier local authority system made up of West Sussex County Council and the seven district and borough areas of Adur, Arun, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Mid Sussex and Worthing.

WSFRS serves an increasingly ageing population. The 2011 Census revealed that 21% of people in West Sussex are over 65, which is higher than the national average and in the 10 years since the previous census the over 65s have increased by 13,750. This trend is set to continue and will have an impact for the future provision of many services linked to later life.

Read more about the social, economic and environmental profile of West Sussex in West Sussex Life 2013, available on the West Sussex County Council’s website.

Our Planning

All fire and rescue services in the UK are required to assess the risks to their local community and publish an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) on how they intend to reduce the number of people killed or injured in emergencies. In West Sussex we incorporate the principles of an IRMP into a 5-year Service Plan which provides details of our corporate objectives and the outcomes that we intend to deliver to the public and our other stakeholders. We take into account the requirements of the Government, partner agencies and local communities. We also look at the risks and pressures facing West Sussex and the Fire and Rescue Service as illustrated the County Profile.

From this assessment of risk we also set out what we want to achieve each year in an annual Action Plan.
Our approach to risk

We want to do the right things, in the right place at the right time to keep the community as safe as possible. However, understanding and identifying where the greatest risks are across the county and where we should be targeting our resources is not always a simple task.

Part of how we do this is to learn from what has happened previously – we record information about every 999 call we receive and by analysing where and why previous incidents occurred help us predict what might happen in the future. However, this is just a part of the picture. We also use the latest technology – modelling software, demographic profiling, as well as census data, intelligence from our partners and of course the local knowledge of our firefighters and officers. We also take into account wider influences for example population changes, the economic situation and climate change.

We use all this analysis to create a ‘risk map’, which we continually evaluate and revise, with different areas classified as very high, high, medium or low risk, helping us predict the prevention, protection and response needs of our community and target our resources in proportion to those needs.

WSFRS Critical Fire Risk Map 2012/13

Our staff

We currently employ 671 operational firefighters, 124 support staff and 25 Community Volunteers. Our achievements as a Service wouldn’t be possible without the dedication, commitment and hard work of our staff. WSFRS aims to match that commitment by creating a working environment that is open, supportive, embraces diversity and nurtures and develops talent.

The Service is led by Chief Fire Officer Sean Ruth, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Lee Neale and newly appointed Assistant Chief Fire Officer Gavin Watts. They are supported by a small team of managers drawn from the key strategic areas of the Service.

WSFRS Chief Fire Officer is also Director of WSCC Corporate Leadership Team ensuring that the Service is fully integrated into the County Council and that fire and rescue service staff work effectively alongside colleagues from across County Council departments to help build safer, stronger communities.
Our Mission

Our mission is to:

“Make West Sussex a safer place to live, work and visit.”

This mission is defined through a series of 5 associated strategic aims that outline what this means for how we deliver our services and determines all of our planning activity.

Our Strategic Aims:

- **Strategic aim 1** Reducing the number of emergency incidents and their consequences
- **Strategic aim 2** Working with our partners to build a safer, stronger, healthier and more sustainable community
- **Strategic aim 3** Safe, healthy and competent employees
- **Strategic aim 4** Value for money services
- **Strategic aim 5** Reducing our impact on the environment
Key Performance Statistics

Dwelling Fires
Fires in the home can devastate families and communities that’s why we put so much effort into preventing them from happening in the first place. Cooking is the leading cause of accidental house fires but most could be prevented by being vigilant and using common sense.

Want to talk to someone about how to reduce the risk of fire in your home? Talk to our Community Fire Safety team by calling 01243 642879.

Dwelling Fire Fatalities
Tragically, last year in West Sussex 6 people lost their lives in accidental house fires. Our aim is always for that figure to be zero. There’s a saying that fire doesn’t discriminate. Sadly, it does. Those over 65 living alone are by far at the greatest risk from fire.

Would you or someone you know benefit from a FREE Home Fire Safety Check? Call 0800 328 6487 or visit www.westsusse.gov.uk/fire

Dwelling Fire Injuries
Overall the number of people injured in house fires fell year on year from 37 to 33. Fire deaths and injuries have a strong link to social deprivation, mental and physical health and other societal factors. That’s why we now work with our partners to support a much broader community safety agenda helping to address the root causes of fires and other emergency incidents.

Hoax Calls
Hoax calls are when someone deliberately phones 999 and reports an emergency when there isn’t one. These calls are illegal, waste valuable time and resources and can affect our ability to respond to real life-threatening emergencies.

We use a variety of methods to catch those responsible and work hard to educate young people on the dangers of making hoax calls through our programme of school visits and intervention initiatives.

Deliberate Fires
Setting a fire deliberately puts lives at unnecessary risk. Deliberate fires tie up valuable resources and could mean crews are diverted from another life-threatening incident. Our Fire Investigation Officers work closely with the Police to assist them in prosecuting those responsible.

You can help! Anyone with information about deliberate fire setting or fire vandalism should call Crime Stoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.
...How did we do?

**Fires in non-domestic premises**
Ensuring local businesses keep their customers, staff and our responding crews as safe as possible in the event of a fire is a fundamental part of our protection role. We work with local businesses to promote understanding and awareness of fire safety regulations and businesses’ legal responsibilities for fire safety through face to face engagement and targeted education events.

Business owners and managers – do you know your legal responsibilities? If not visit the Business Fire Safety section of our website.

![219 fires in 2012/13](Up 7%)

**Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)**
Sadly, we deal with the consequences of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), and the impact they have on our communities, on a daily basis.

In West Sussex people are more than 4 times more likely to die in a road traffic collision than they are in a fire. That’s why we work tirelessly with both regional and national road safety partners to deliver effective and coordinated initiatives to help reduce the number of RTCs and their considerable human and economic cost.

![440 Killed or Seriously Injured in 2012/13](Down 9%)

**Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)**
False Alarms due to AFAs negatively impacts on our ability to attend other emergencies and on our capacity to deliver community safety work. Most AFAs happen in non-domestic buildings like care homes, hospitals and business premises so we have been working with them to ensure they have the right system and right management in place to reduce the occurrence of false alarms.

We reduced the number of AFAs we attended by 10% last year from 1851 in 2011/12 to 1661 in 2012/13.

![1661 AFAs in 2012/13](Down 10%)

**Response Times**
While we work very hard to make you safer and reduce the need for emergency response, we know that every second counts when it comes to reaching you in an emergency. We aim to get our first fire-fighting appliance to the most serious (critical) incidents within 8 minutes of receiving a 999 call at least 89% of the time and our second within 11 minutes 83% of the time.

In 2012/13 our first appliance arrived within 8 minutes 90% of the time and our second 87% of the time.

![We beat targets we set for attending critical incidents](Up)

**Retained Appliance Availability**
Recruiting new retained duty system (RDS) firefighters is an on-going challenge for all Fire Services. Retained Fire Stations are located primarily in rural towns and villages which are becoming more dormitory in nature with people commuting to more urban areas to work. This reduces the pool of people from which to recruit RDS firefighters and impacts on how often our retained fire engines are available to respond.

In 2012/13 our retained fire engines were available 81.82% of the time a decrease of 5% from 2011/2012.

Are you interested in becoming a retained firefighter? Call 01243 642134 or visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire
Prevention

Our overarching aim is to make West Sussex a safer place for everyone.

We know this cannot be achieved through operational excellence alone. That’s why we put considerable resource and effort into preventing fires, road traffic collisions and other emergency incidents from happening in the first place.

As a fire and rescue service we are in the privileged position where our staff are regarded as positive role models giving us a unique opportunity to engage, influence or intervene before things go wrong. Everyone working within WSFRS, regardless of their role, is an advocate for community safety.

Our Progress

We know statistically that some people are more at risk of injury from fire than others and so we have developed a targeted approach to our prevention activities ensuring we focus our resources, activities and messages at those who are most vulnerable.

In 2012/13, we increased the number of Home Fire Safety Checks we carried out in the homes of vulnerable people and considerably increased the number of specialist smoke alarms we fitted, so even more people had access to the extra protection they needed.

We ran a huge number of tailored prevention initiatives with our partners including kitchen safety, flood awareness, level crossing safety, road safety and drink-drive awareness, electric blanket safety, boat safety, chimney fire safety as well as a host of others.

Making a sustainable difference

While we work broadly on the notion that prevention is better than cure, we also recognise that fire deaths and injuries have a strong link to social deprivation, mental and physical health, low educational attainment and a range of other societal factors.

In order to continue to make a long term, cost effective and sustainable contribution to the safety and welfare of our communities, we are committed to supporting a much broader community safety agenda and helping to address the root causes of fires and other emergency incidents.

By working in collaboration with our partner agencies we have proactively sought new and innovative ways of addressing the issues faced by our community.

In 2012/13 we:

- Carried out 5478 Home Fire Safety Checks, 2770 were high risk, an additional 845 on the previous year
- Fitted 2277 telecare-linked smoke alarms, an increase of 26% on the previous year so that even more vulnerable people had the peace of mind of 24/7 protection
- We fitted 187 specialist deaf alarms – meaning those who might have difficulty hearing and responding to a standard alarm would be alerted to a fire in their home

Would you or someone you know benefit from a Home Fire Safety Check?

We particularly wants to hear from those who are:

- Over 65 and living alone
- Using a community alarm or monitoring service like Careline
- Having difficulty responding to a standard smoke alarm
- Disabled or with an impairment
- Immobile or without assistance

To request a Home Fire Safety Check call free on 0800 328 6487 or visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire
“Our smoke alarm saved our lives!”

“We know we’ve all had a very lucky escape. I feel like it’s my job now to spread the word on the importance of having a working smoke alarm in your home.”

Sarah Greenslade, Haywards Heath resident

West Sussex resident and mum of two Sarah Greenslade knows better than most the true value of having a working smoke alarm in her home.

In October 2012, when a fire broke out in the kitchen of her semi-detached house in Haywards Heath late at night while everybody was in bed, it was thanks to her smoke detector activating that she and her family were able to escape safely from the blaze. Sarah tells her story…

“My husband and I had just turned in for the night when we heard the smoke detector go off. My husband went downstairs to investigate, saw thick black smoke coming from the kitchen so immediately shouted ‘fire’ to raise the alarm.

“I leapt straight out of bed and ran to my daughter’s room to wake her while my son had heard the noise and was already up. We wasted no time and left the house together straight away, closing the internal doors behind us. With concerned neighbours placing a 999 call it wasn’t long before retained crews from Haywards Heath were at the house bringing the fire quickly under control.

“The firefighters were great. One even checked with my son to find out if we had any pets and went back into the house to save our hamster Nibbles!

“The fire, as it turned out, had been sparked by an electrical fault in the family’s dishwasher, which had been left to run overnight.

“We didn’t consider for one moment that there would be a risk associated with putting our dishwasher on overnight. When I think about it now, there were warning signs – there had been a slightly odd smell coming from the dishwasher for a couple of days, but at the time we just didn’t think about it” Sarah continued.

“We know we’ve all had a very lucky escape. I feel like it’s my job now to spread the word on the importance of having a working smoke alarm in your home. It was our first line of defence and I have no doubt that it saved our lives that night.

“We see testing our smoke alarm as a really important part of our normal household routine and I am now urging other families to do the same and make a regular time to test their smoke alarms.

“One of things we did do was close all the internal doors downstairs which helped to prevent the fire and smoke damage spreading. We only knew to do that because of advice given to us when we had previously visited our local Fire Station.

Crew Commander at Haywards Heath Fire Station, Phil Pierpoint, added: “Mrs Greenslade is now a fantastic advocate for home fire safety and we’re extremely grateful for that. She’s talking to friends, neighbours and colleagues and helping to raise awareness locally of the importance of having working smoke alarms and not leaving electrical appliances like dishwashers and washing machines on overnight.”

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Older People

The perceived wisdom is that a fire can happen to anyone, at any time. However, our statistics certainly suggest that some people are at much higher risk than others.

In West Sussex the majority of those falling victim to fires are over 65 and live alone. In 2012/13 all 6 people who died in house fires were in their 70s, 80s or 90s.

With 21% of the population over 65 and the age profile continuing to rise, the challenge of keeping some of our older, more vulnerable members of the community safe is increasing.

Reaching those at risk

We know that not everyone over the age of 65 is at risk and there is no single reason why some older people are more vulnerable to a fire than others. A combination of factors including mobility and sensory difficulties and lack of ability to respond to danger, a reluctance to seek advice, as well as the living conditions of some older people all increase risk.

That’s why much of our prevention activity during last year focused on working with our partners to protect vulnerable older people from fire and helping them to continue living safely in their own homes.

In 2012/13 we:
- Prioritised the over 65s with our Home Fire Safety Checks
- Put on cooking safety demonstrations at Older Person’s Day Centres
- Held free countywide blanket testing events
- Hosted free ‘one stop shop’ advice and information for older people
- Increased our engagement with agencies having daily contact with vulnerable older people

Making a difference with our Community Fire Safety Advisors

One of the ways we made a positive difference to the lives of some of our vulnerable older residents was by increasing our team of specialist Community Fire Safety Advisors in 2012/13.

The role of our advisors is to help the most vulnerable members of our community stay safer in their homes. Advisors receive additional training enabling them to easily identify and respond to a range of vulnerabilities including physical and mental health and sensory impairments. They are also trained to spot and reduce some of the most common fire risks in the home – for example signs of carelessly discarded cigarettes, overloaded electrical sockets, blocked exits, unsafe cooking or heating practices.

Community Fire Safety Advisors carry specialist fire protection and detection equipment for those who would have trouble reacting to a standard smoke alarm. For example vibrating pillow pads for the hard of hearing, or radio-linked smoke alarms which, when activated, automatically connect to an operator at a community alarm monitoring service who can raise the alarm if needed.

By working closely with partner agencies our Advisors are often able to reach and positively influence those who may previously have been resistant to help, not just reducing the risk of fires in their home but where appropriate signposting them to the additional sources of care and support that help them to continue to live safely and independently in their homes.

2012 saw the introduction of WSCC’s ‘Making a Difference Awards’; designed to highlight exceptional working practices by people across the whole of the County Council. Mark Holland, one of our Community Fire Safety Advisors was awarded for his work in identifying and supporting vulnerable people, particularly in partnership with the Prevention & Assessment Team in Horsham.

Community Fire Safety Advisor and winner of a ‘Making a Difference’ award, Mark Holland, displays the range of specialist alarms that are fitted free of charge by West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.
Early Education
You are never too young to learn about fire safety so our school education programme starts at primary school with resources tailored to both key stage one and key stage two pupils. Fire safety sessions are delivered by our dedicated schools education officer and our crews and visits are prioritised to schools in areas where there is a higher occurrence of fires in the home. The sessions, which are delivered in a fun interactive way, introduce basic fire safety awareness and an understanding of the actions to be taken in the event of a fire.

Early intervention
Our youth engagement role is much broader than simply promoting fire safety and reducing the number of hoax calls received from, or deliberate fires started by, young people. Firefighters are positive role models which gives us a unique opportunity to inspire disaffected young people struggling with wider societal issues and unable to break a cycle of negative behaviour.

Our intervention initiatives include Fire Cadets, Coaching for a Safer Community, working with Princes Trust and NEET (not in education or training) groups as well as our flagship FireBreak course which is run in partnership with county council colleagues in Youth Services.

In 2012/13 we:
- Delivered 13 Firebreak courses inspiring 121 students to success
- Carried out 442 fire safety education visits to Primary schools
- Reached 1983 students with our Junior Citizens programme
- Worked with 71 young people from the Princes Trust

Young People
Engaging with children and young people has been an important part of our prevention work for many years.

We have a valuable role to play not just in teaching children the importance of fire and road safety but also in working alongside our partners to tackle the wider social issues affecting young people, diverting them from anti-social behaviour and helping them to make a positive contribution to their communities.

Disability no barrier to FireBreak success
Ensuring that our youth engagement programmes embrace the rich diversity of the young people in West Sussex is central to the design and development of our initiatives.

In January, we invited a group of 10 students from Fordwater School in Chichester to take part in a specially adapted version of the FireBreak course. Fordwater School caters for pupils with a variety of specialist needs and learning difficulties including autism, cerebral palsy, global development delay and speech and language disorders.

The students, all aged between 16 and 19 spent a week at Bognor Fire Station accompanied by teachers and support workers. They took on hose drills, ladder challenges and a host of activities designed to test and develop their motor skills, team-working and communication. All ten students successfully passed out at a graduation ceremony at the end of the week showing off their skills in front of a very proud audience of family, teachers and fire and rescue staff.

“Our thanks to all the team for giving the students such a wonderful experience, teaching them so many new skills and giving them a real sense of achievement.”
Beryl Dryton, Chair of Governors at Fordwater School
And here’s what the schools have said...

“Football is an especially powerful vehicle to convey messages.”
White Meadows Primary School

“The children were engaged and excited throughout the sessions and already asked when they could do it again. I would highly recommend these sessions to anyone thinking of doing them.”
Warden Park Academy

“It was refreshing to see safety teaching being delivered outdoors through sport, Thank you!”
Bosham Primary School

“Many thanks for your time and effort. The children produced some excellent P.S.H.C.E work afterwards.”
St. Joseph’s Catholic Primary School

CALLING ALL TEACHERS!!!

Would your pupils benefit from a Coaching for a Safer Community session?

C4SC sessions are run from March through to October. For more information or to request a booking form contact Project Coordinator Chris Bowles on 0330 2226872 or email chris.bowles@westsussex.gov.uk

We look forward to coming to see you soon!

In the last 12 months C4SC has been delivered in 18 schools in Crawley, Haywards Heath, Worthing, Lancing, Littlehampton, Bognor and Chichester, reaching over 1300 young people.

**Inspiring safety through community football coaching**

One of the ways in which we inspired young people during 2012/13 was through the power of football using our Coaching for a Safer Community programme.

The Coaching for a Safer Community (C4SC) project, primarily funded by the football foundation, uses specially developed coaching practices and a range of themed football activities to encourage young people to take an active interest in their own safety and the safety of those around them.

C4SC is aimed primarily at Year 5 pupils and is delivered over two one-hour sessions during PE or P.S.H.C.E lessons by a diverse team of qualified firefighters who all hold a minimum FA Level 1 coaching certificate.

The project’s overarching aim is to drive down the number of fire deaths and injuries across Sussex and reduce the number of young people killed and seriously injured in Road Traffic Collisions. Because the sessions are delivered in an informal, fun and practical way they also encourage dialogue and discussion on a whole range of issues affecting young people, in addition to the importance of fire and road safety and helping them to understand the consequences of road traffic collisions, deliberate fires and hoax calls.

Originally launched as a partnership with East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club in 2006, Coaching for a Safer Community was refreshed and re-launched in 2012/13 as a stand-alone WSFRS project. Since then it has gone from strength to strength and broadened its reach right across the county.

“Football is a really powerful vehicle for inspiring young people. Coaching for a Safer Community gives us a great opportunity to channel a bit of that power into energising the delivery of our fire and road safety messages and ultimately keeping young people safer.”
Chris Bowles, Project Coordinator & Haywards Heath Crew Manager

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Chris Bowles, Project Coordinator & Haywards Heath Crew Manager
Road Safety
As a fire and rescue service we deal with the consequences of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), and the impact they have on individuals, families and communities on a daily basis. In West Sussex people are more than 4 times more likely to die in a road traffic collision than they are in a fire. Although engineering improvements continue to make both the road infrastructure and vehicles safer, road traffic collisions still happen, invariably because road users, either knowingly or unknowingly, take risks.

Who is most at risk?
Statistically, the groups that are most at risk of being killed or seriously injured on the road are:
- Young drivers between 16 to 24
- Older drivers over the age of 65
- Drivers of motorcycles and other powered two-wheelers

The Sussex Safer Roads Partnership
No single agency is or can be solely responsible for reducing the number and consequences of RTCs; so we work closely with our regional and national road safety partners.

One of the key local road safety collaborations is the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP). The partnership includes Sussex Police, East and West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, the Highways Agency, WSCC and Brighton & Hove City Council.

Coordinating our RTC reduction activities through the partnership we are able to develop and deliver effective coordinated initiatives to help to reduce the number of collisions and their considerable human and economic cost.

Sussex Safer Roads Partnership

Progress in 2012/13
The latest road safety statistics revealed that West Sussex got safer in 2012/13. 26 people lost their lives on roads in West Sussex – a reduction from 33 during 2011/12 and 414 suffered a serious or life changing injury, down from 450 the previous year. This downward trend was only bucked by an increase in the number of people injured from collisions in wet conditions and injuries to pedestrians and cyclists.

A grave message to summer drink drivers!
A recent national survey revealed that twice as many drivers think there are more temptations to drink-drive in the summer than in the winter and younger drivers, aged 18 to 24, are more likely than older ones to be lured into having summer drinks before getting behind the wheel.

The crew at Shoreham Fire Station, who are renowned for their highly creative and innovative approach to promoting fire and road safety messages, launched a summer drink drive campaign in 2012 that was simply impossible to ignore! Using a scrapped Ford KA, a bit of creative cutting and some decorative spray-painting, the Shoreham firefighters built an eye-catching gravestone to spearhead their summer campaign to discourage people from drink driving.

Displayed right outside the Fire Station the sobering sight served as a stark visual deterrent for those who may have been tempted to get behind the wheel after a tipple. It also demonstrated that there is more than one way of getting the message out – it was such a big hit with local residents that some even stopped to pose for pictures beside it!

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“Sometimes people can become immune to anti drink-drive messages so we are continually trying to find new and more memorable ways to reduce the risk to drivers and pedestrians on our local roads.”
Mark Ross, Shoreham Watch Manager

DONATE YOUR OLD CAR & HELP SAVE A LIFE!
Got an old car you want to scrap?
Help our fire crews practice their life-saving cutting and extrication skills by donating your old car to West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service for vital RTC rescue training.

It’s free. It’s easy.
It could save a life.
Call 01243 642880 (office hours)
Protection

Ensuring that businesses in West Sussex keep their customers, their staff and our responding crews as safe as possible by taking steps to reduce the risk from fire and enable people to escape in the event of a fire is fundamental to our protection role.

We carry out this role in three ways – by advising, by auditing and, where necessary, by enforcing.

Advice
The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 means that business owners and those responsible for business premises, are legally responsible for risk-assessing and making their places of work safe.

We know that for some this can be a daunting task so first and foremost we work with local businesses to increase their understanding of fire safety regulations and to help them comply with their legal responsibilities. We do this in a number of ways – through face to face engagement, by producing targeted fire safety literature, and by hosting targeted education events.

Audit
An audit is carried out by a fully trained Fire Safety Officer and is a thorough examination of a premises to ascertain how well it is being managed regarding fire safety. This can include, but is certainly not limited to, checking there is a sufficient risk assessment, checking that staff know what to do in the event of a fire and testing there is an adequate fire detection and warning system.

No fire service has the resources to visit every property in their coverage area. With 38,000 commercial premises in West Sussex we have developed a risk-based approach to carrying out fire safety audits ensuring we are targeting our resources effectively and prioritising inspections at those premises that we believe, using intelligence-led evidence, to present the greatest risk to the community.

Enforce
We know that most businesses want to comply with the law so wherever possible, we will work in partnership to help them achieve a satisfactory level of fire safety. However, where breaches of fire safety legislation occur we will issue formal enforcement notices.

If those breaches put the lives of their staff, the public or our firefighters at risk then we will take strong and decisive action including preventing the premises being used for certain things, for example sleeping, or prohibiting part or the whole of the premises being used at all. While it isn’t a decision we take lightly, where there is willful disregard of public safety and flouting of the law we will seek to prosecute.

During 2012/13 we carried 1,378 full fire safety audits at a range of non-domestic premises including care homes, hospitals, factories, schools, hotels and public houses. On the 469 occasions the fire safety provision was found to be unsatisfactory we issued either an informal notice or an enforcement notice.

In 2012/13 we:
- Carried out 1378 full fire safety audits on a range of non-domestic premises
- Issued 462 informal notifications where fire safety provision could be improved
- Issued 7 enforcement notices where fire safety provision was inadequate
- Successfully prosecuted Travelodge in Horley on 7 fire safety charges

Not sure what your legal responsibilities are?
Need advice on carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment then visit our website or call one of our Fire Safety Centres:

Horsham, Crawley or Mid Sussex: 01403 213280
Adur & Worthing: 01903 228430
Arun & Chichester: 01243 837785

Do Not Block
FIRE EXIT

In 2012/13 we:
Could your organisation benefit from expert fire safety training?

WSFRS offers high quality fire safety training courses to local, national and international organisations.

We offer the following high quality training courses to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform Order and current fire safety legislation including:

- Fire awareness training
- Fire extinguisher training, sales and servicing
- Fire warden training
- First aid

Bespoke training courses

We also offer a range of bespoke courses for industry including breathing apparatus, safe working at heights, confined space training, swift water rescue, powerboat training, ladder training and manual handling.

If our current course profiles may not be specific to your requirements, we are flexible in meeting and responding to client and industry needs by providing bespoke course options – just ask!

Why choose us?

All of our training courses are run by highly experienced operational firefighters, each an expert in their own field, selected for their depth of fire safety knowledge as well as their training skills and expertise.

We are a non-profit making organisation so we offer all our courses at a competitive rate. We also offer flexible course delivery – either at your own premises or at one of our monthly open courses at our training centre at Worthing Fire Station.

We thought we’d let our customers do the talking...

“I just wanted to say a big thank you to you for carrying out the Emergency Response Team Training over the last month or so. The response I have received from everyone has been positive and they have all thoroughly enjoyed the course. Elekta just need to carry on the good work.”

Sam Olive, Elekta Ltd

“Much better delivery and pace than the confined space course at Moreton. The course is not bogged down with regulations and legislation. Fantastic course with brilliant instructors, very supportive and a credit to the WSFRS”

South East Coast Ambulance’s Hazardous Area Response Team

“I should have done this years ago. An excellent course.”

Amanda Solomon, Sussex Wildlife Trust

For more information visit the fire safety training section of our website or to discuss your training requirements in person, please contact us directly:

☎ 01903 228400  ✉ frsct@westsussex.gov.uk
Emergency Response

A combination of targeted community fire and road safety initiatives, developments in road engineering, improvements in building and furniture safety regulations and a better awareness of health and safety mean that people in West Sussex are safer than they ever have been.

However, when things do go wrong we are committed to providing a first class response service to the county. Responding from 25 Fire Stations we provide an emergency response 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

Scale of demand

In 2012/13 there was a reduction in the overall number of incidents we attended from 9760 to 9504.

There was also a reduction in the number of Primary fires from 1238 to 1189 and a 10% reduction in false alarms (AFAs), although they still accounted for the highest percentage of our 999 calls.

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service crews respond to a much wider range of emergencies than simply putting out fires.

Our operational response includes:
- Firefighting and rescue from fire
- Safely extricating people trapped following road traffic collisions
- Carrying out non-fire rescues for example freeing people trapped by machinery or in lifts, or anywhere else it’s possible to get stuck!
- Specialist rescues from height, or from confined spaces or from the water
- Pumping and rescue during major flooding
- Assisting at serious transport incidents for example rail or air accidents
- Dealing with chemical leaks and spillages of hazardous materials
- Urban search and rescue for major national and international disasters

In 2012/13 we:
- Attended 9504 emergency incidents
- Rescued 69 people from fires in their home or work place
- Assisted our 999 colleagues at 441 road traffic collisions
- Safely rescued 147 people trapped in their vehicles
- Provided first assistance medical treatment at 178 ‘co-responder’ calls

In the event of a fire in your home dial 999 – our advice is not to tackle it yourself, but to get out, stay out and call the fire service out.
Rescued couple thank crews who saved them

A couple who were rescued by our firefighters following a car accident thanked the crews who saved them at an annual Car Safety Day in Crawley in November.

Mr and Mrs Whittome from Steyning, both in their 70s, had to be cut free from their vehicle by fire crews from Crawley and Horsham and flown to hospital by air ambulance, following a serious accident which took place near Handcross back in 2011.

“It was so nice to meet the people who rescued you. I felt it was important to say how marvellous the crew were. They do a wonderful job with people in that situation.”
Mrs Whittome, Steyning resident

The couple, who both sustained extensive injuries from the car accident, presented White Watch with a cheque for £100 for the Fire Fighters Charity at their annual ‘Car Health Check Day’ at Crawley Fire Station. The couple also presented a cheque for £100 to Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Trust.

The safety event encouraged drivers to bring in their vehicles for a range of free checks including tyres, lights, washer fluid and oil, windscreen and wipers.

Speaking of the crew’s actions following the accident Mrs Whittome said: “I was so appreciative of their kindness when we had the car crash and the support they gave while waiting for the ambulance was so wonderful and calming and I wanted to say thank you to them.”

‘Thank you!’ say pupils from Storrington First School

Firefighters from Littlehampton and Petworth were called into action in January when a coach carrying over 50 children caught fire.

Thankfully, all the children on board managed to safely evacuate the coach, which was travelling on the A29 near the Whiteways Lodge Roundabout in Arundel on its way to Beaulieu for a school outing.

Naturally, this was a very frightening experience for the children onboard but it wasn’t long before our fire crews were on the scene to reassure them and very quickly extinguish the fire which had started in the coach’s engine.

The school’s head teacher, Garry Smart, was quick to praise the actions of our fire crews. Of course, the pupils from Storrington First School had their own unique way of saying thank you to the firefighters!

“I am very grateful for the superb response to the situation by the emergency services and staff.”
Garry Smart, Headteacher of Storrington First School

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Garry Smart, Headteacher of Storrington First School
Partnership

If we are to achieve our aim of building a safer, stronger and healthier community we need to work effectively in partnership with other agencies and organisations.

Some of our key partnerships in 2012/13 were:

- Working with East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service on the new combined fire control project Sussex Control Centre
- Receiving high risk Home Fire Safety Check referrals from Telecare providers like Welbeing and Careline
- Safeguarding training with county council colleagues in Adult and Children’s Services
- Preparing for civic emergencies as part of the Sussex Resilience Forum
- Co-ordinated road safety campaigns through the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and Road Safety Action Groups
- Reaching vulnerable people through charities like Age UK, 4sight, Independent Living Association, Regaining Independence Service and Action for Deafness
- Supporting those displaced from their homes through partnership with The Red Cross’ Fire Emergency Support Service

Partnership working runs through everything we do as a Service, whether it’s with working with other emergency responders, local authorities, wider county council colleagues, care and support agencies, charities and the voluntary sector.

The Benefits

Whether it’s a statutory, a formal or an informal partnership, the benefits of working collaboratively with those organisations who share a common goal are numerous and wide-ranging – greater efficiency, idea and resource sharing, better access to information and increased capacity to deliver co-ordinated packages of services, particularly to those people who may be vulnerable or otherwise overlooked.

On the right track with Network Rail partnership

Who will you be leaving behind to pick up the pieces? That was the powerful tagline spearheading a level crossing awareness campaign run in partnership with Network Rail during autumn 2012.

As a fire and rescue service, we get called to deal with the consequences of accidents at level crossings. As firefighters we want to save lives, but sadly with level crossing accidents our role is usually body recovery rather than rescue.

The partnership campaign focused on two particularly notorious crossings in Crawley where pedestrians were regularly risking their lives by ignoring the red light warnings and racing through the crossing, even when the barriers were descending. Between 2009 and 2012 there were over a hundred incidences of misuse at the Horsham Road and High Street crossings in Crawley and, sadly, two people had lost their lives on the crossings.

A special multi-agency awareness day was arranged in October which coincided with the timing of a nationwide level-crossing safety TV ad campaign.

Firefighters from Crawley were joined by colleagues from Sussex Police, Network Rail and the British Transport Police who all spent the day at the level crossings talking to pedestrians and drivers about the potential consequences of ignoring the warning lights. Despite a camera positioned at the level crossing and the highly visible presence of the emergency services a number of people still openly took risks on the crossings during the day, including a car that nearly got trapped under the barrier.

During the campaign period there was a drop in the recorded number of misuses at both the crossings in Crawley.

“As it's been really beneficial working with West Sussex Fire & Rescue – the firefighters presence certainly meant that many more people were willing to stop and talk to us about level crossing safety.”

Nicola Dooris, Community Safety Manager Network Rail
Enabling independence through telecare partnership

As an organisation we understand that quality of life is about so much more than simply staying safe and we never forget how much the ability to maintain independent living can mean to older people and to their families.

Helping the county’s more vulnerable residents to stay safer as well as continue to live independently in their own homes was the driving force behind WSFRS’ partnership with telecare provider Welbeing during 2012/13.

Telecare assists those with a physical or sensory impairment who may have difficulty summoning help in an emergency. Using special technology and equipment users can get help from operators based in a call centre 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For those who find it difficult to respond to a standard smoke alarm and leave their home safely in the event of a fire, telecare can make a life-saving difference.

WSFRS currently offers free radio-linked smoke alarms for all telecare users. These special smoke alarms are programmed to the telecare units so that if they activate there is no need for the occupier to dial a number, lift a receiver or even push a button on a pendant to summon help.

Through our partnership with Welbeing, we now receive a Home Fire Safety Check referral for each home the telecare specialist installs their equipment in across the county. This means that we have not just the opportunity to enhance fire detection in the homes of some of our most vulnerable residents; it also means we play a small but important part in helping people remain independent.

Increasing our awareness of vulnerability through safeguarding training

Our opportunity to make a difference to people’s lives is not simply about extinguishing a fire or putting up a smoke alarm in someone’s home – we recognise that we have an important role to play in partnership with other agencies in improving adult and children’s safeguarding.

The range of our activities – responding to 999 calls, school visits, Home Fire Safety Checks, fire safety inspections and so on means that our staff access properties and encounter situations that no other agency may do. This puts us in a unique position to identify adults and children who may be at risk of suffering harm or abuse or those who are in desperate need of additional support services.

At the same time we began an 18-month programme of training for all our fire crews, delivered by our county council colleagues in Adult and Children’s Services, to increase our knowledge and awareness of safeguarding issues and our ability to identify those vulnerable residents who may need extra support or assistance.

Since the training began 17 different fire crews have received the training and the number of Safeguarding referrals to Adult & Children’s Services has increased considerably. From August last year until the end of March this year there have been 61 referrals by our crews for either safeguarding or vulnerable people. This is in addition to the referrals that our Community Fire Safety Advisors have been making for some time, often exceeding 30 per month.

Of course, our firefighters are not social workers and while our primary focus will always be on extinguishing fires, carrying out Home Fire Safety Checks, or whatever daily duty we are carrying out, simply by paying attention to what we see, hear and smell – this may be enough to identify someone who needs support and make that all important difference in their lives.
Working with our Community

Stronger Communities
We will always be there for people in times of emergency.

However, working alongside our partners to support our local communities in shaping their own safety and helping them prepare for emergencies is a key part of finding sustainable ways to make West Sussex safer.

Community Resilience
We can’t predict when major incidents are going to occur but we do know that even localised emergencies like heavy snowfall, or flooding can have a very serious impact on our community and the resources of the emergency services.

Developing community resilience by encouraging people to take steps both individually and collectively to prepare themselves in advance of an emergency has the potential to deliver a wide range of benefits for everyone in West Sussex and reduces the pressure and reliance on the fire service and our partner agencies.

Of course, community resilience is more than just preparing people to deal with major emergencies; it is also about working with individuals and groups to take control of their own safety on a day-to-day basis.

Projects like the Community Volunteer programme and the HeartStart training courses that our Youth education team and our crews deliver empower people to have a greater influence over the safety and well-being within their own communities.

The Sussex Resilience Forum
The Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) is a partnership that brings together all the organisations required to prepare for and respond to any major emergency within Sussex, including West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and all the other blue light services, the NHS, the Environment Agency, as well as other local authority and voluntary sector organisations.

Being part of the SRF enables our agencies to plan together and make sure in the event of a major emergency our response will be more coordinated and effective. To find out more about the Sussex Resilience Forum and how you can protect yourself and your family in the event of an emergency visit www.sussexemergency.info

Promoting community resilience through flood defence
Are you prepared? That was the key message to people in West Sussex when we took part in a multi-agency flood awareness campaign in October.

Encouraging people to be more prepared by understanding if their home or business is at risk, how to protect themselves and what to do should a flood occur was the driving force behind the 4-week campaign led by the Environment Agency and supported by partners that included the fire service, Southern Water, County and District Councils and Sussex Police.

Campaign events included a flood defence exercise in Shoreham and flood fairs in Bognor, Littlehampton and Bracklesham Bay where residents could get information and advice from the National Flood Forum.

Encouraging people to think about being flood prepared until the worst happens can be a challenge but the partnership approach paid off.

The campaign attracted widespread media coverage, the flood fairs were well attended and a huge number of people signed up for the Environment Agency’s Flood Warnings alerts during the campaign period. It was also a good opportunity to demonstrate how well our Service works alongside our partner agencies to protect the public during flood emergencies.

“The support of West Sussex Fire and Rescue is invaluable to us during times of response. Working together has enabled us to deliver a high impact campaign to local communities which we hope will reduce the impact of flooding.”

Jo Higgs, Environment Agency

What’s in your emergency grab bag?
- Warm clothes and a blanket
- Mobile phone, torch and extra batteries
- Shovel and windscreen scraper
- Tow chain and rope
- Jump leads
Volunteer scheme increases community resilience

In November 2012 WSFRS launched a pilot scheme to recruit Community Volunteers into the Service for the first time.

The scheme kicked off in Littlehampton with a group of 4 volunteers supporting the Service’s flagship Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) campaign using their local knowledge of the area to deliver fire safety leaflets and make follow up appointments for WSFRS firefighters and Community Fire Safety Advisors to carry out Home Fire Safety Checks.

The 6-month pilot has proved successful and the Community Volunteers are now a firmly established and valued part of WSFRS community safety output.

The team of volunteers has now grown to 24 and WSFRS has Community Volunteers at work in a number of areas of the county. The scope of the role has also been developed and volunteers are now trained to carry out medium risk Home Fire Safety Checks and support a much wider range of community safety projects.

Volunteer Manager, Emma Francis, who launched the scheme into the Service, explained the benefits of the programme’s development:

“There is a genuine willingness and appetite amongst people in West Sussex to help support the fire service community safety effort and that makes the potential for the programme very exciting. The driving force behind the scheme is to be able to give people the knowledge and skills to be able to shape and influence safety in their own communities.

“Volunteering is a fantastic way to bring communities closer together and getting people involved in delivering fire and road safety in the areas they live, know well and care most about makes sense on so many levels.

“Our volunteers come from diverse backgrounds, are different ages, have different life experiences and have different skills which is a real asset when they are engaging with the diverse communities we have in West Sussex.”

Community Volunteer Robin Dobbs talks about his experience...

When I first saw the article in the paper I thought I can do that – I like helping people and I can spare a few hours, so why not? The first 6 months have just flown by!

I have become much more aware of fire hazards around the home and I have learned to assess the situation while I talk to people, a lot can be learned from an informal chat such as a loss of hearing or a mobility problem. If it transpires that they are vulnerable and have more specialist needs, I pass this on to a Community Fire Safety Advisor.

I enjoy being part of the fire service team. There are always people on hand to advise me if I’m not sure of something. Since I have started the volunteering I have become more confident. I would recommend anyone with spare time to volunteer because it’s satisfying, you help people and you might just save a life.

Could YOU become a Community Volunteer for the Fire Service?

WSFRS is seeking community-minded people from across the county to join its growing team of volunteers. Becoming a Community Volunteer not only helps keep your community safe, it also gives you the opportunity to learn new skills and work as part of a knowledgeable, passionate and dedicated team.

If you are over 16, have at least 8 hours to spare each month and want to know more, then call WSFRS Volunteer Manager Emma Francis on 01243 752530 or email emma.francis@westsussex.gov.uk

Just a little of your time could save a life…
Value for Money

Providing value for money is one of the Service’s key Strategic Aims and has always been an essential part of our commitment to our communities, regardless of the financial climate we are operating in.

With the pressure on our budget only likely to increase in the foreseeable future, making sure we are delivering the best possible service with the resources we have will continue to be our primary focus.

Our Progress
We have an excellent track record for providing a value for money fire and rescue service, effectively matching resource to risk in our prevention, protection and response activity and achieving an improvement in many of our key performance indicators over recent years.

In 2012/13 we continued to see the recent downward trend in the number of incidents, deliberate fires, house fires, false alarms and hoax calls. We continued to build on progress made in reaching those vulnerable groups, like the elderly, who are at higher risk from fire. We worked with an even broader range of partners to increase efficiency and we continued to imbed a culture of innovation and improvement amongst our staff.

Safe, healthy and competent employees
Part of our commitment to delivering a value for money service is to ensure we have safe, healthy and competent employees.

Throughout the year we continued with our 18-month programme of core skills training with 85% of all our operational staff now having completed the course.

In 2012/13 we aimed for a ‘lost time rate’ through staff illness of 3.2% – we beat this target with time lost at just 2.79%.

Our financial performance
Overall spending 2012/13: £31.6m
Cost per year per head: £38.78

The vast majority of our budget is spent on front line services – firefighting rescue operations and our community safety activity. The following table shows exactly where we spent that money:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firefighting and Rescue Operations</td>
<td>£23,201,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Safety</td>
<td>£4,493,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Support Services</td>
<td>£2,514,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notional Capital Charges</td>
<td>£1,575,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire Service Emergency Planning and Civil Resilience</td>
<td>£433,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Benefit Costs Adjustment</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2012/2013 Spending
A more detailed breakdown of our expenditure for 2012/13 is available from www.cipfastats.net

You can also see information on our income and expenditure in the WSCC Budget Book which can be viewed online at www.westsussex.gov.uk
Fire Redesign: Cutting our costs without cutting our services

The government’s Comprehensive Spending Review and the reduction in public sector grants meant that we were required to identify savings of £2.5m by 31st March 2012 as part of the wider £79m that has to be saved by WSCC as a whole.

We have always been a lean organisation so delivering the necessary financial saving without impacting on the safety of the public or our firefighters was always going to be a significant challenge. By focusing on the key services we need to deliver and being flexible about how we deliver them we achieved it.

Importantly, we achieved it after full consultation with our staff and the public and without lowering our performance standards or reducing our frontline services.

A combined Fire Control for Sussex moves closer

West Sussex and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service continued to work closely together in preparation for combining their existing fire control rooms in Chichester and Eastbourne to operate from a new single control centre for Sussex.

The move towards a single control room for Sussex arose largely due to national government’s cancelled FiReControl project and the need to reduce costs in public spending, but also in a shared desire to deliver the best possible 999 service to communities across both counties.

In June last year the geographically-central Haywards Heath was announced as the location for the new Sussex Control Centre, with a base at the existing Fire Station. In April this year East Sussex Fire Authority become the employer for all Sussex Control Centre Staff.

Over the past 12-months a great deal of work has been taking place at Haywards Heath Fire Station, in both Fire Controls and behind the scenes to standardise ways of working between our Services, and to ensure the new Sussex Control Centre will be fully operational and ready to take 999 calls from both East and West Sussex from April 2014.

Operating from the new joint Fire Control will mean a long-term cost saving of around £425K a year for each Service. It will also give us greater flexibility, co-ordination and capability when responding to incidents across both counties, the opportunity to enhance our partnership working with the Police and other agencies and ultimately to keep the public and our fire crews safer than ever.

Through our ‘Fire Redesign’ programme in 2012/13 we:

- Successfully engaged and consulted the public, our staff and other stakeholders on our cost saving proposals and won broad public support for our programme of changes
- Streamlined the delivery of our fire safety enforcement and fire investigation arrangements moving from 5 fire safety centres to 3.
- Lowered the running cost and reduced the number of our non-operational fleet by 16 cars, 2 vans, 1 minibus and 4 other appliances
- Completed a review of our senior and middle management structure, reducing senior management posts by 25% and revising on-call arrangements to increase efficiency
- Reduced the number of operational posts by 8% and the number of support posts by 10% without the need for any compulsory redundancies
- Achieved a better balance of resources in the north of the county by working with Surrey Fire & Rescue Service to reconfigure response arrangements in the Horley area
- Changed the way we crew our Aerial Ladder Platform and Heavy Rescue Tender appliances freeing up resources but maintaining 24-hour availability
- Reviewed our support roles and the delivery of our HQ functions in line with our organisational restructure
Feedback & Contact Us

Your views count
We are committed to continuous improvement and providing a first class fire and rescue service. That's why the views and opinions of all of our stakeholders are very important to us.

We have a formal process for any feedback we receive and keep a central register of all comments, compliments or complaints. We review customer feedback as part of our internal evaluation and auditing process.

How was it for you?
We would welcome your comments or any feedback you have about this report and how we're letting you know about our progress and performance.

You can get in touch by phone, email, via our website or through our social media channels.

Thank you for your time!

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Alternative Formats
West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is committed to equality of opportunity. If you would like this information in alternative format and language please contact us at the address or number above.