

# Attendance Performance Measure Consultation Document



HEREFORD & WORCESTER  
**HWFR**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



Hereford & Worcester  
Fire Authority





We are seeking your views on a proposal to update our Attendance Performance Measure to ensure it remains a meaningful performance measure for our emergency response. This consultation is not about moving the location of fire engines or fire stations, merely about how we record and measure the time taken to attend certain types of incidents.

This consultation document outlines what the current Attendance Performance Measure is, explains why we consider it is no longer appropriate and sets out a proposal for a new Measure.

Your views on the proposal will inform our decision making and help us to shape the new Measure.

The current Attendance Performance Measure was introduced in 2009, and in our Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25, we said we would consult on what a new Attendance Performance Measure should look like, including looking at the potential to have the same Measure as our Fire Alliance partner, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. The result of that consultation showed that there was support for moving to a measure similar to that of Shropshire FRS.

To help us to gather your views, we have engaged Opinion Research Services (ORS), an independent specialist research organisation to carry out the consultation for us. They will meet with a cross-section of residents and engage with a range of stakeholders to gain views on the proposal. To complement this and to give everyone an opportunity to comment, there is a separate questionnaire document and an online version, which we encourage everyone to complete. There are just a few questions and it should only take about 10 minutes to complete. You can access the online questionnaire by following this link [www.opinionresearch.co.uk/HWFire](http://www.opinionresearch.co.uk/HWFire)

The consultation closes on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Following your feedback, ORS will analyse the results and present these in a report to the Service's Strategic Leadership Board, which will then consider what the new Attendance Performance Measure should look like, and make a recommendation to the Fire Authority to authorise implementation of the new Measure in December 2022.

*Note that the Attendance Performance Measure was formerly referred to as the Attendance Standard in the Community Risk Management Plan.*



## What is an Attendance Performance Measure?

In short, it's a measure of how long it takes us to reach an emergency incident. To do this, we currently record the time taken from the moment we receive an emergency call to the time we arrive at the incident. We break this down into three main parts.

### Call handling time

This is the time taken between receiving a 999 call and alerting a fire station to respond. Our Fire Control firefighters are trained to take the details of the emergency quickly, assess the potential risk and then send an alert to the best placed fire station. Over the last three years, this has usually taken, on average, just over one and a half minutes (1 min. 35 secs.).

### Turnout time

This is how long it takes to send a fire engine out of the fire station once they've received the alert. When the fire station is alerted, the firefighter crew get ready to go to the incident. How long this takes depends on the type of fire station receiving the alert and the time of day. For our wholetime (permanently crewed) stations, we usually allow up to 90 seconds to turn out. At our on-call fire stations, which are crewed part-time, we usually allow six minutes for the crew to get into the station and get ready before the fire engine leaves the station.

### Travel time

This is the time it takes for the fire engine to reach the incident after leaving the fire station. This depends on a lot of factors including how far away the incident is, the season and weather conditions, the time of day, different types of roads being driven on and whether there's any traffic congestion or roadworks. Over the last three years, the average travel time has been just under six and a half minutes (6mins. 19 secs.).



## What's the current Attendance Performance Measure?



The current Attendance Performance Measure was introduced in 2009 to assess performance against expected travel time. It applies to fires in buildings only, and is defined as the Service trying to ensure the first fire engine attending an incident is within 10 minutes from the time of receipt of an emergency call on 75% of occasions.

Over the years the measure has become less useful for assessing performance and only looks at fires. Also, having a target built into the measure has never been able to give us a realistic picture of our performance in attending a broader range of incidents. We will always aim to get to incidents as quickly and safely as we can, so we consider a target is not necessary.

The next section explains why we consider the current Measure is no longer appropriate.

## Why isn't the current Attendance Performance Measure appropriate anymore?

There are a number of reasons why we consider the current Measure is out of date.

1

It only measures the time taken to attend fires in buildings. In 2021-22, for example, this meant that the Service only reported on 7.2% of all incidents attended. We attend a much broader range of incidents than just building fires. While fires in buildings, especially people's homes, have a risk to both life and property, other incidents we attend can be just as serious, including road traffic collisions and flooding. We believe the new Measure should now apply to a much broader range of incidents than just fires in buildings.

2

It is a blanket 10 minutes Measure for all fires in buildings wherever they are in the two counties. This doesn't account for distances to incidents, which can vary considerably between urban and rural areas. Nor does it accurately reflect the different ways in which we crew our fire stations, with our wholetime stations in the more populated urban areas and on-call stations in the less populated rural areas.

3

Other significant changes, such as increasing traffic congestion, roadworks, road network changes and traffic calming measures, have led to longer journey times for fire engines to reach incidents. Journey time can also be affected by other factors, such as the time of day or season and weather conditions. We have also a new way of asking our drivers to risk assess the use of blue lights and the need to exceed the speed limits on our roads to improve the road safety of our staff and the public. Having said that, in the last three years, travel times have slightly decreased due to the pandemic and the move from office to home working by many.

# What are we proposing?

We want our communities to have a clearer and more realistic picture of the response times they can expect in relation to where they live.

To help us to develop a new measure, we have examined the road network across the two counties and estimated how far a fire engine is likely to be able to travel to an incident within 10 minutes, 15 minutes and 20 minutes of a Hereford & Worcester FRS fire station. The calculation takes account of the location of each fire station and how they are crewed.

It produces a map that looks like this, where the light blue shaded area is the estimated 10 minutes travel area from a fire station, dark blue is 15 minutes and green is 20 minutes.

We have also assessed how many households currently live in each time zone and found that 73.76% of households are within 10 minutes of a fire station, 95.69% are within 15 minutes and 99.98% are within 20 minutes. This means that nearly all our residents can receive an attendance within around 20 minutes, but the majority are within 10 minutes. Therefore, it is important that we measure and monitor how we are performing in all areas and no longer just within a 10 minutes area for one type of incident.

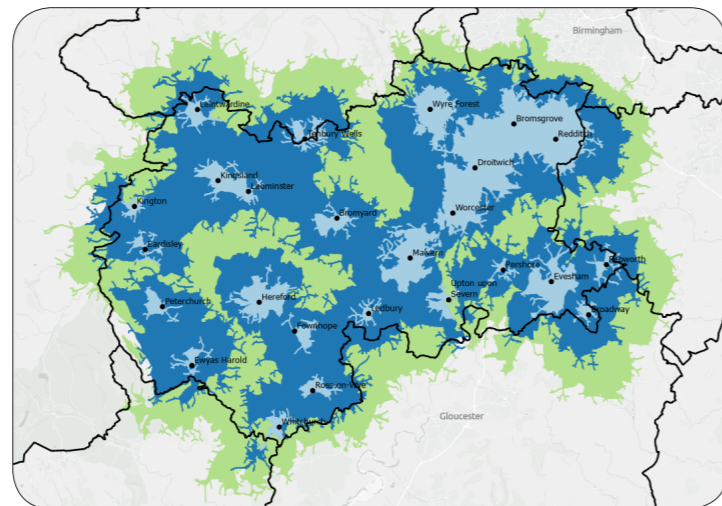


Fig 1: Travel Time Zones

Note that a very small number of areas lie outside the 20 minutes travel zone, and these areas have already been prioritised for additional prevention work and community safety activities.

By overlaying the map with historic incident data over the last three years, analysis suggests that we should be able to reach the majority of future incidents, if we also reflect the mix of urban and rural areas as well as the location and type of fire station.

We are proposing that these times are measured from the time the fire station is alerted by Fire Control, to the time the fire engine arrives at the incident scene. This follows current national guidance on attendance times. It takes the 'call handling time' out of the calculation, and this will be measured, monitored and reported separately.

We are not proposing to include a target for the percentage of times the Measure should be met. Instead, we will carry out a travel-time analysis of a broad range of incidents that do not align with expected times, in order to identify any areas for improvement or to better understand the reasons why we did not get to an incident in the time we would reasonably expect.

Using this analysis, we have proposed the following Performance Measure for attending a broader range of emergency incidents that have a potential to cause harm to life, property or the environment.

| Proposed new Attendance Performance Measure            |                  |  |
|--|------------------|--|
|  | Travel Time Zone | First fire engine arrival at the scene within: |
| Emergency Response Time (excluding call handling time) | Light Blue       | 10 minutes                                     |
|  | Dark Blue        | 15 minutes                                     |
|  | Green            | 20 minutes                                     |

The proposed Attendance Performance Measure is simply a way of measuring and assessing our performance and looking for improvements. It is not a target – it's just a way of helping us to understand our performance in getting to emergency incidents, wherever they are, and to identify areas where we can't meet the Measure so we can focus our risk reduction work in those areas.

We will continue to provide the same emergency response as before, responding to all incidents as quickly and safely as we can with the closest available and most appropriate resources.

# Supporting information about our emergency response service

Emergency response is one of our three core responsibilities, alongside prevention and protection. Our aim is to respond to and deal with fires and other emergencies promptly, safely and effectively.

We provide an emergency response service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, across Herefordshire and Worcestershire with an area of around 1,500 square miles. We serve a resident population of around 792,000 people, three-quarters of whom live in Worcestershire, with over 100,000 people living in the city of Worcester, the largest urban area in the two counties. Herefordshire is more sparsely populated with a largely rural population in small towns and villages around the city of Hereford.

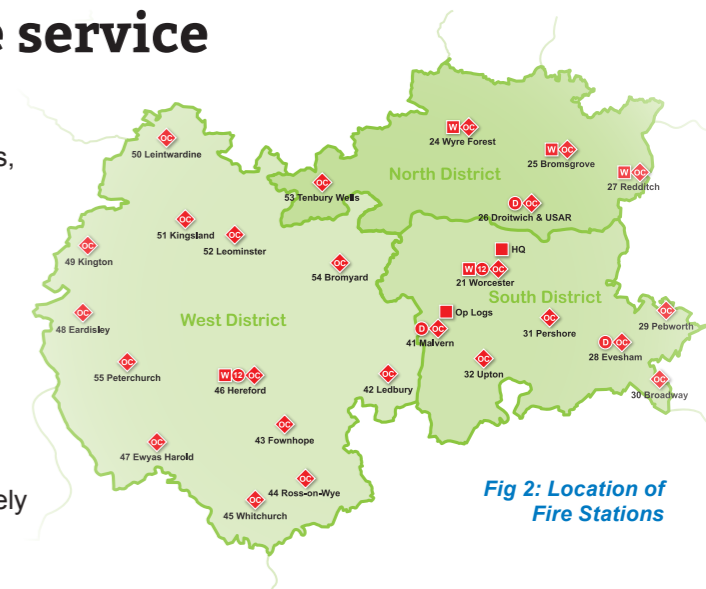


Fig 2: Location of Fire Stations

We deliver our response services through a network of 25 fire stations with 41 front-line fire engines based in key locations across the two counties. Five fire stations have wholtime crews who are on a station and available to respond immediately to emergencies, three other stations operate the same way from 7am – 7pm, and by On-Call firefighters at night, and the other seventeen stations are crewed solely by On-Call crews. On-Call staff respond to emergencies from home or work into the fire station, and this can take up to six minutes to mobilise the fire engine.

### Wholtime firefighters

Wholtime firefighters work shifts on a full time contract. During their hours of work, they are available to make an immediate response to emergencies. They can also deliver a wide range of protection, prevention and community engagement activities during the day and evening.

### On-Call firefighters

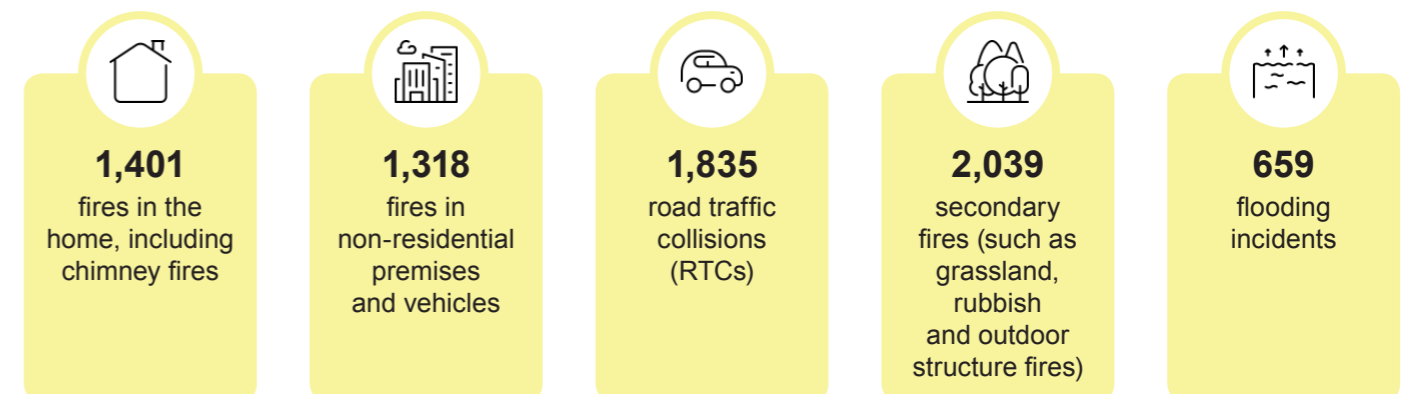
On-Call firefighters work on a part-time basis and are paid to be 'on call' to respond to an emergency. They often have other jobs outside of the fire service, but they carry a pager and when it sounds they go to the local fire station to respond to the emergency.

The Service has 251 Wholtime and 368 On-Call firefighters, who are all fully trained to provide a professional emergency response service. There are also 24 Fire Control firefighters based centrally, who take the emergency 999 calls and alert crews to respond to incidents. (Figures correct at April 2022 and may change subject to vacancies)



Fig 3: Staff Roles as a percentage of Total Staff

In the three years up to 7 June 2022, our firefighters have responded to 22,335\* incidents. Some of those that could pose a threat to life, property or the environment are shown below:



You can read more about our Service in the latest [Annual Service Review 2021-22](#) document available on the Service website: [www.hwfire.org.uk](http://www.hwfire.org.uk)

# Contacting us

To help you to comment on this proposal, a short questionnaire has been prepared, which we encourage everyone to complete. You can access the online questionnaire by following this link: [www.opinionresearch.co.uk/HWFire](http://www.opinionresearch.co.uk/HWFire)

If you require a paper version, or information in an alternative language or format such as large print or audio, please contact us on 0345 122 4454.

If you have any queries about the consultation, you can email HWFRS on [consultation@hwfire.org.uk](mailto:consultation@hwfire.org.uk) or Catherine Wall at ORS on [catherine.wall@ors.org.uk](mailto:catherine.wall@ors.org.uk)

If you have any general enquiries, please call 0345 122 4454 or email us at [info@hwfire.org.uk](mailto:info@hwfire.org.uk)

You can also follow us on:

 @hwfire |  @hwfire

Alternatively, you can write to us at:  
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