



National Fire Incident Response Times April 2019 to March 2020 TWFRS Comparison

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Author: Pauline Avis

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*From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.*

Executive Summary

This report presents the headline findings of the **Fire Incident Response Times: April 2019 to March 2020, England statistical bulletin** – released by the Home Office on 14/01/2021.

This statistical bulletin has been published using the new Home Office statistical release template which does not include some previously reported data, as a result this report has been adapted.

Each time a fire and rescue service (FRS) attends an incident in England, details of that incident are uploaded to the Home Office's Incident Recording System (IRS) by the FRS. The IRS is used as the source of all the statistics in the statistical publication.

This statistical release presents statistics on response times to primary fires (dwellings, other buildings, road vehicles and other outdoor fires) and secondary fires, in England, for the financial year 2019/20.

The headline statistic reported is termed the **'total response time'**, which is the minutes and seconds taken from time of call to time of arrival at the incident by the first vehicle and is the time that is likely to be of main public interest. However, in response to user feedback, statistics on the component parts (call handling, crew turnout and drive times) of total response times were presented for the first time in the 2017/18 release.

Response times are published by the Home Office and presented in this comparison report as minutes and seconds rather than decimal minutes (e.g. '7.5' decimal minutes is now displayed as '7 mins 30 secs').

Some Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) have local definitions for response times which may not include the call time, however this does not affect records in the IRS. The IRS questions concerning when a vehicle is mobilised (the earliest instance in an incident being the time the station is alerted) and becomes mobile (leaves the station) are not mandatory for FRSs to complete, therefore a small number of FRSs have not supplied this data for some years.

A number of fire incidents were excluded for the purpose of analysis. The following incidents were excluded:

- a. Road vehicle fires, where the road vehicle was abandoned.
- b. Where the location of the fire was a derelict property.
- c. Where an FRS learned of the fire when it was known to have already been extinguished (known as 'late calls').
- d. Where the total response time for an incident was over an hour or less than one minute.
- e. Where the sequence of events are not recorded in a logical sequence, either through recording error or absence of data.

In previous years a further exclusion was applied:

- f. Where there was heat and/or smoke damage only (no flame).

However, after a public consultation, exclusion f) has been discarded for the main reported response times in this release (i.e. incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now **included** in the average response times calculations). This decision was based on responses to the consultation, all of which supported including these incident types.

This report focuses on the new method of reporting incidents (including heat and smoke damage only).

The full release can be found at: [Fire Incident Response Times - April 2019 to March 2020](#)

National summary:

- Overall, total response times to fires have increased gradually over the past 20 years. However there was a general plateau from 2014/15 to 2017/18 but following increases in 2018/19 the 2019/20 responses times have generally decreased. The average response time to primary fires in 2019/20 was 8 minutes and 43 seconds, an increase of 36 seconds over the past decade.
- The average total response time to primary fires (potentially more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property) in England in 2019/20 was 8 minutes and 43 seconds, a decrease of 6 seconds since 2018/19 but an increase of 6 seconds from five years previously in 2014/15.
- Three types of primary fires showed a decrease in average response times in 2019/20 (dwellings by 2 seconds, road vehicles by 3 seconds and other outdoor fires by 28 seconds), while the response time to other building fires increased by 2 seconds compared with 2018/19.
- The average response time to dwelling fires in 2019/20 was 7 minutes 45 seconds. Of these. The average response time to fires in flats was 7 minutes 0 seconds, compared with 8 minutes 13 seconds for houses/bungalows and 7 minutes 44 seconds for other dwellings.
- Average response times to secondary fires in 2019/20 (which can broadly be thought of as smaller outdoor fires, not involving people or property) decreased by 24 seconds to 9 minutes 18 seconds compared with 2018/19.
- Of the 45 fire and rescue authorities, 26 showed a decrease in average total response time to primary fires between 2018/19 and 2019/20, 18 showed an increase and one showed no change.

*From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.*

TWFRS summary:

TWFRS average total response times are:

- the fastest FRS in the country in response to primary fires and fastest responding MET.
- the fastest FRS in the country in response to dwelling fires, and fastest responding MET.
- the 2nd fastest to other building fires and 2nd fastest MET behind Greater London.
- the fastest FRS in England in response to road vehicle fires and fastest responding MET.
- the 3rd fastest responding FRS in the country to other outdoor fires behind Greater London fastest and West Mids FRS 2nd fastest.
- TWFRS are the top performing FRS in England and of the MET FRS in terms of response to primary fires, dwelling fires and road vehicle fires.
- TWFRS remain within the top three best performing FRS in England in terms of response in the featured categories.

The table below provides a summary of the trends in the last year for average total response times to fires.

Table 1 Average total response times to fires by type of fire with a summary of trends, TWFRS; 2019/20

Type of Fire	2019/20	Change since 2018/19	Change since 2010/11
Primary	6 minutes 29 seconds	-23 seconds ↓	+51 seconds ↑
Dwelling	5 minutes 55 seconds	-18 seconds ↓	+37 seconds ↑
Other building	6 minutes 43 seconds	-24 seconds ↓	+1 minute 18 seconds ↑
Road vehicle	6 minutes 34 seconds	-30 seconds ↓	+32 seconds ↑
Other outdoor	8 minutes 40 seconds	-26 seconds ↓	+2 minutes 5 seconds ↑

Please note: All figures used throughout this report to highlight TWFRS position are from the official data tables accompanying the statistical bulletin.

*From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.*

1 Primary Fires

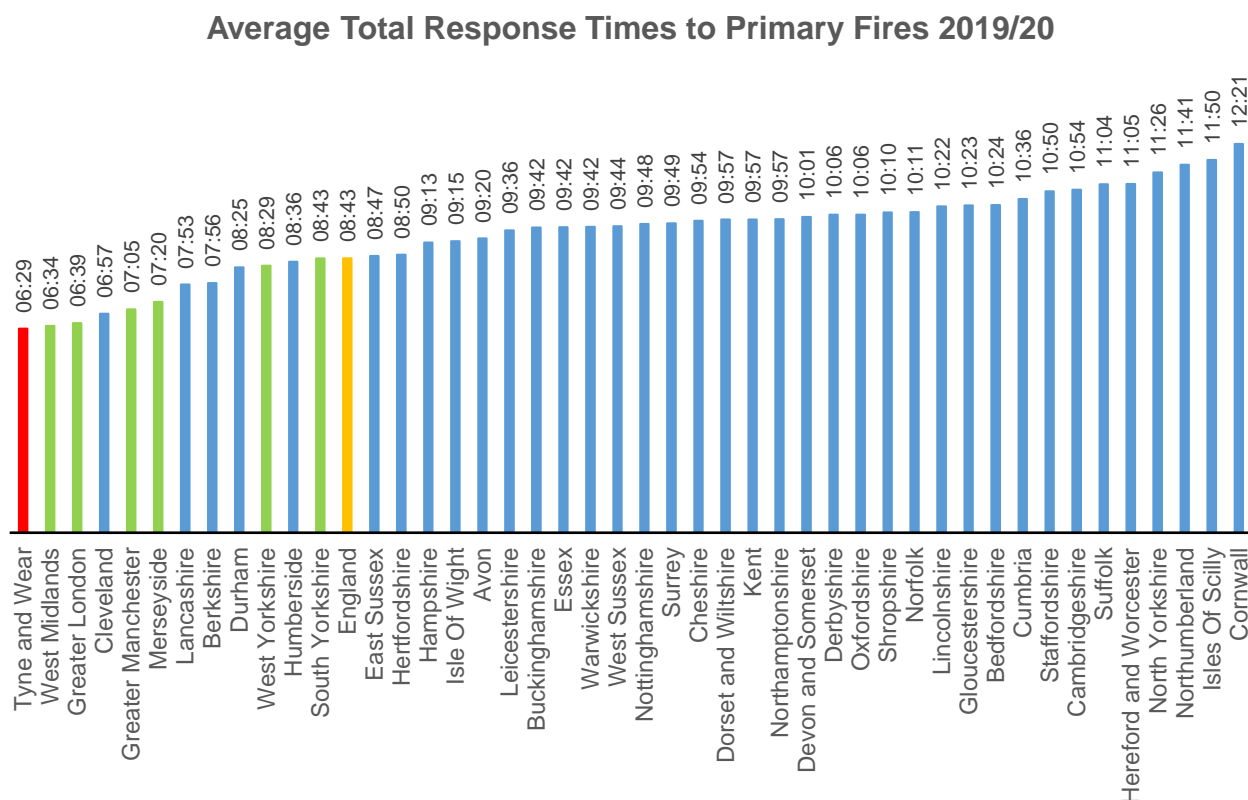


Figure 1 - average total response times to primary fires 2019/20

- Average total response time to primary fires in England is 8 mins 43 seconds – decrease of 6 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 36 seconds from 2010/11.
- Average total response time to primary fires for TWFRS is 6 minutes 29 seconds – decrease of 23 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 51 seconds from 2010/11.
- TWFRS are fastest of the MET FRS in response to primary fires.
- TWFRS fastest in England in response to primary fires.
- Of the MET FRSs, from 2018/18 to 2019/20, TWFRS and Merseyside saw the greatest reduction in average total response time with a decrease of 23 seconds. Greater London and West Yorkshire recorded increases in average total response times. The worst performing MET is South Yorkshire with an average total response time of 8 minutes 43 seconds.
- In England, Leicestershire saw the greatest reduction in the average total response time with a decrease of 44 seconds. Isles of Scilly had the greatest rise in the average total response time with an increase of 1 minute 2 seconds.

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
 Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

The graph below shows the average total response time to Primary Fires for the MET FRSs and England as a whole each year between 2010/11 and 2019/20.

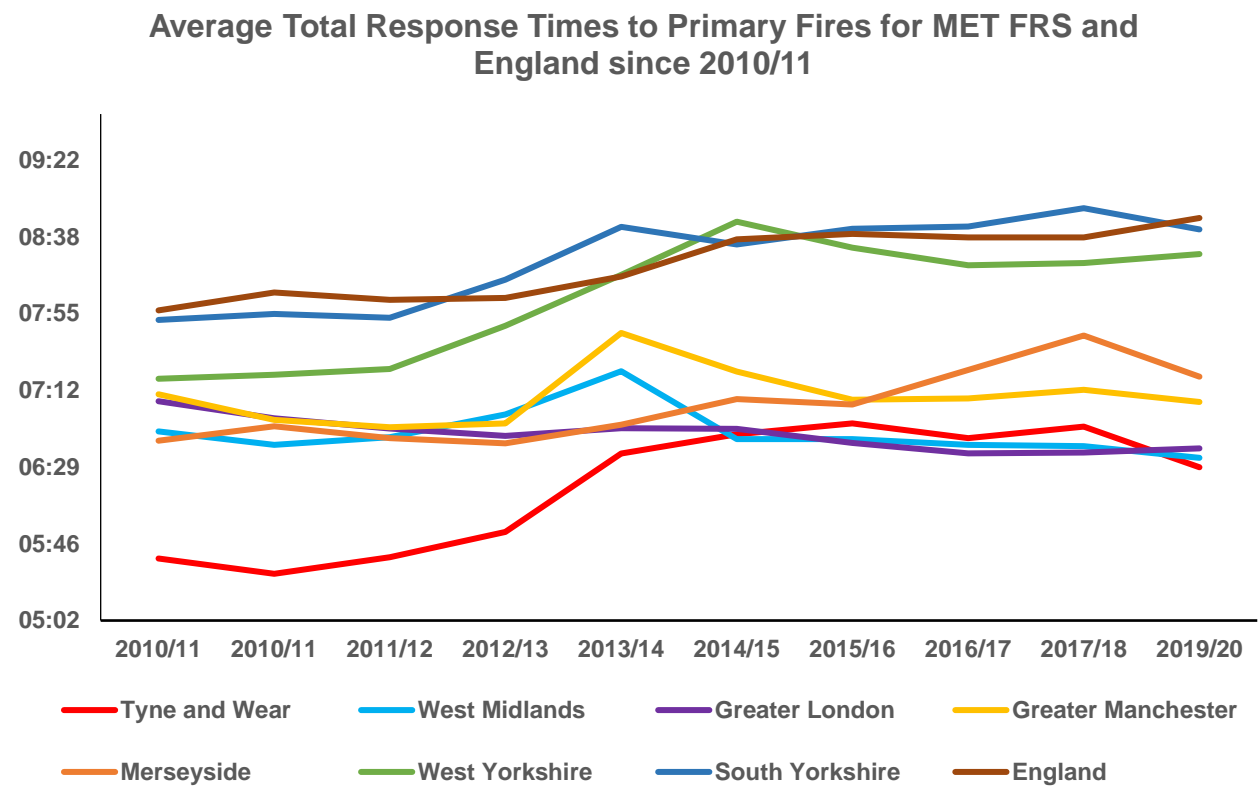


Figure 2 - average total response times to primary fires for MET FRSs and England since 2010/11

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

2 Dwelling Fires

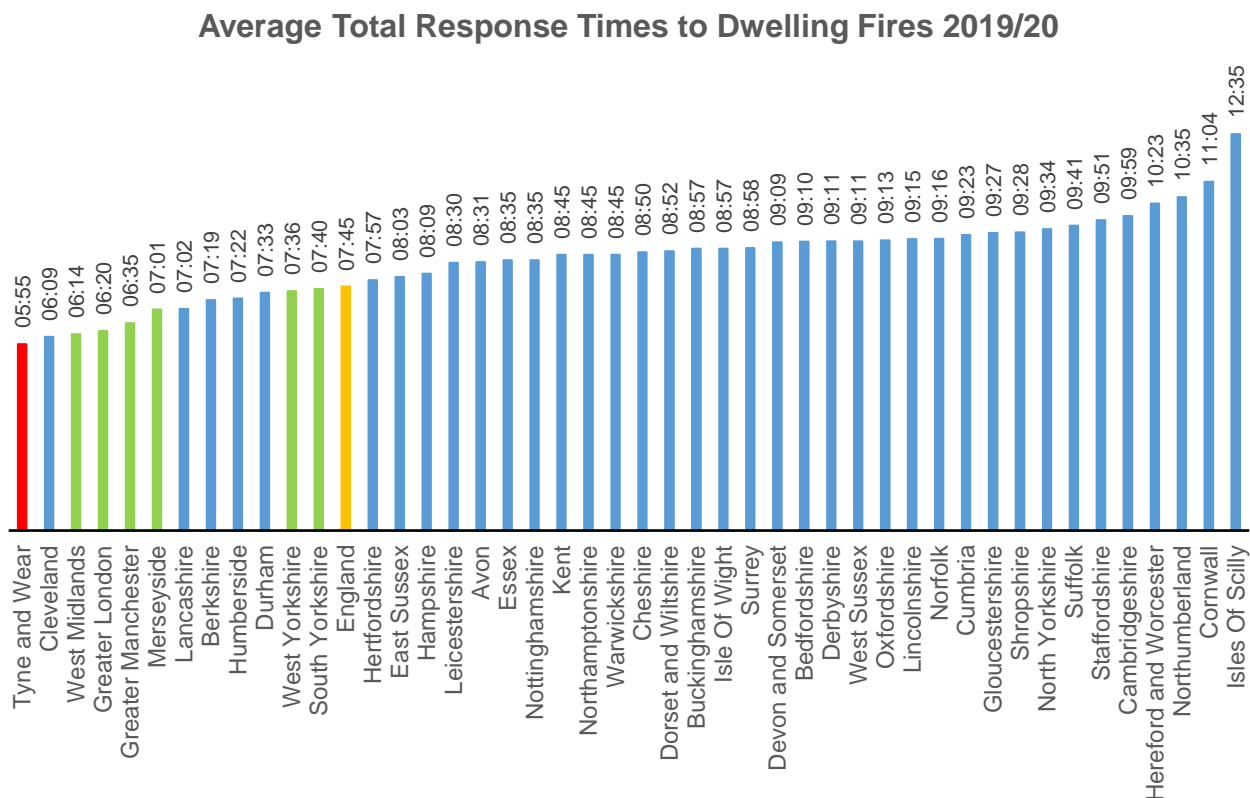


Figure 3 - average total response times to dwelling fires 2019/20

- Average total response time to dwelling fires in England is 7 minutes 45 seconds – decrease of 2 seconds compared with 2018/19 and an increase of 22 seconds from 2010/11.
- Average total response time to dwelling fires for TWFRS is 5 minutes 55 seconds – decrease of 18 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 37 seconds from 2010/11.
- TWFRS are fastest of the MET FRSs, in response to dwelling fires. The worst performing MET is South Yorkshire with an average total response time of 7 minutes 40 seconds.
- TWFRS are fastest in England in response to dwelling fires. The worst performing FRS is Isles of Scilly with an average total response time of 12 mins 35 seconds.
- Of the MET FRSs, from 2018/19 to 2019/20, Merseyside saw the greatest reduction of the METs in average total response time with a decrease of 20 seconds. West Yorkshire had the greatest rise in average total response time with an increase of 5 seconds. The worst performing MET is South Yorkshire with an average total response time of 7 minutes 40 seconds.

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
 Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

- In England, Buckinghamshire saw the greatest reduction in the average total response time with a decrease of 1 minute 6 seconds. Cambridgeshire had the greatest rise in the average total response time with an increase of 38 seconds.

The graph below shows the average total response time to Dwelling Fires for the MET FRSs and England as a whole each year between 2010/11 and 2019/20.

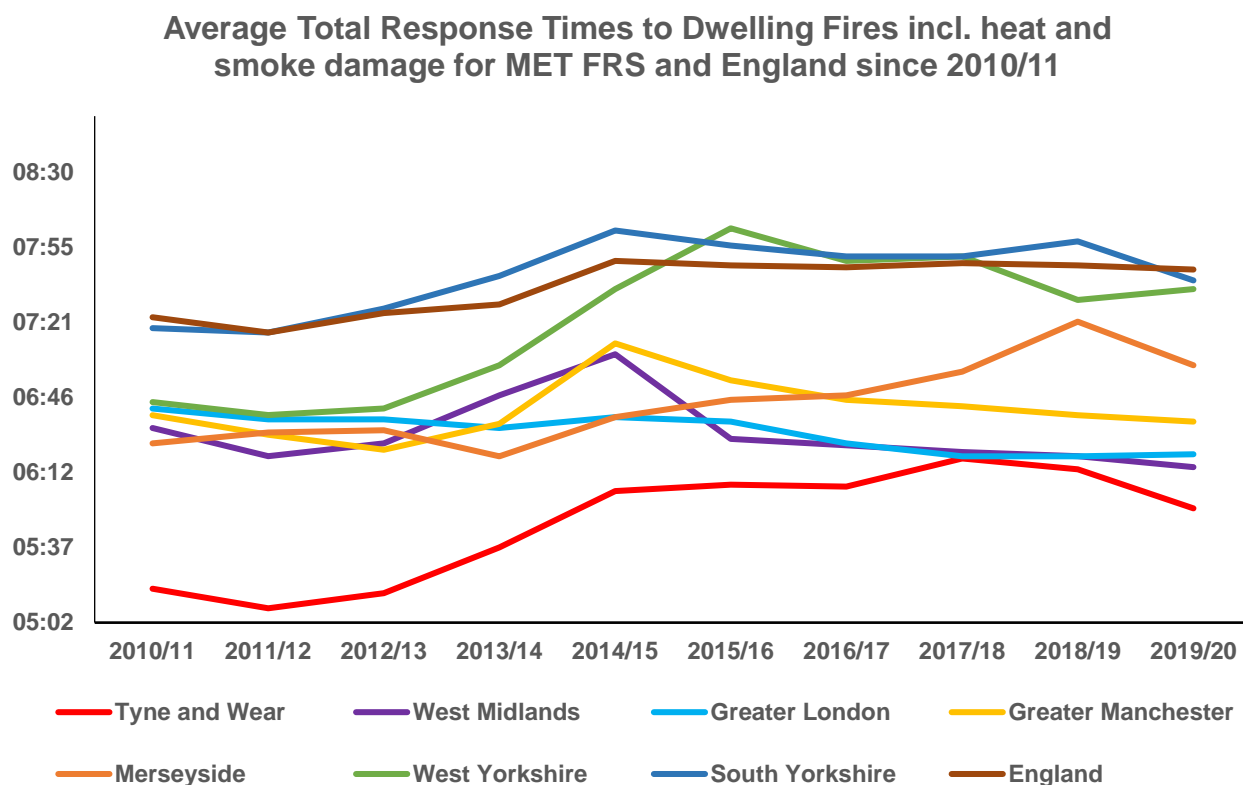


Figure 4 – average total response times to dwelling fires for MET FRSs and England since 2010/11

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations. Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

3 Other Building Fires

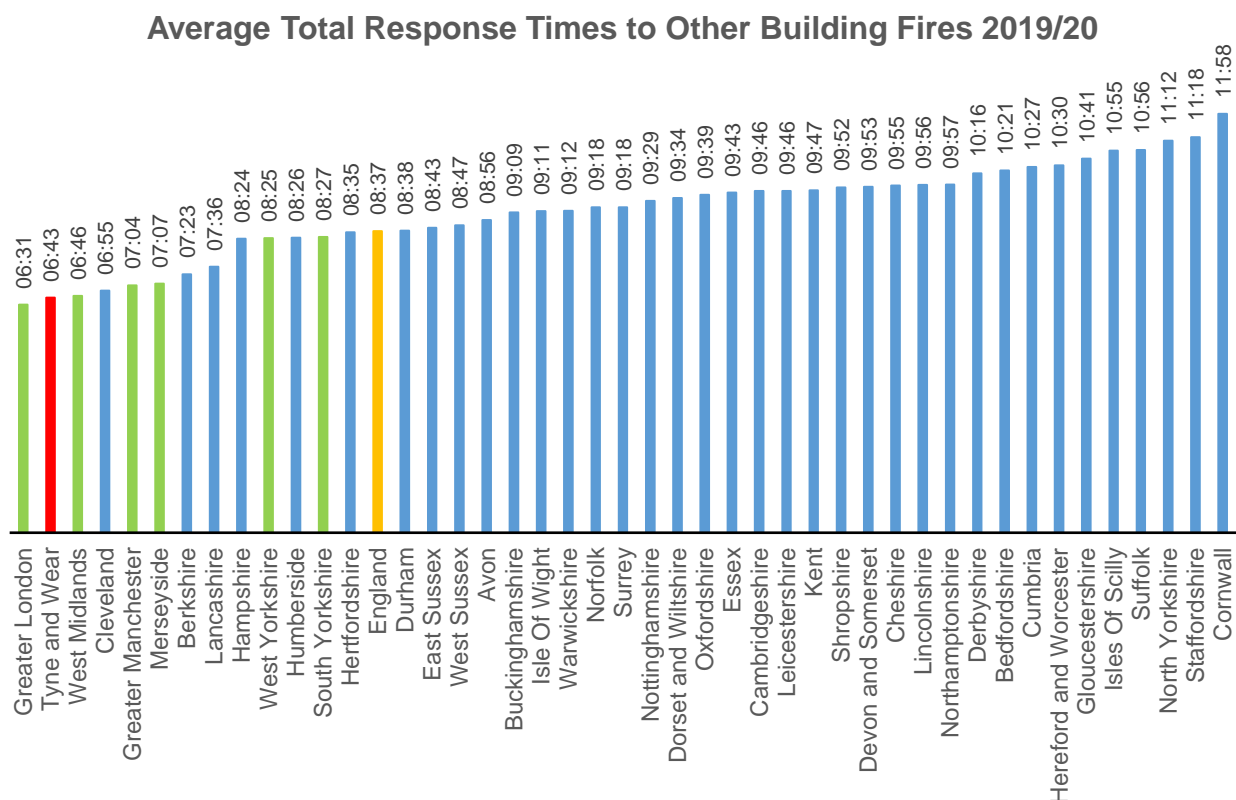


Figure 5 -average total response times to other building fires 2019/20

- Average total response time to other building fires in England is 8 minutes 37 seconds – increase of 2 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 46 seconds from 2010/11.
- Average total response time to other building fires for TWFRS is 6 minutes 43 seconds – decrease of 24 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 1 minute 18 seconds from 2010/11.
- TWFRS are 2nd fastest of the MET FRSs in response to other building fires. Best performing MET is Greater London with an average total response time of 6 minutes 31 seconds. Worst performing MET is South Yorkshire with an average total response time of 8 minutes 27 seconds.
- TWFRS are 2nd fastest in England in response to other building fires. Best performing FRS is Greater London with an average total response time of 6 minutes 31 seconds. Worst performing FRS is Northumberland with an average total response time of 12 minutes 12 seconds.
- Of the MET FRSs, from 2018/19 to 2019/20, South Yorkshire saw the greatest reduction of the METs in average total response time with a decrease of 32 seconds. West Yorkshire had the greatest rise in average total response time with an increase of 26 seconds.

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
 Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

- In England, Isles of Scilly saw the greatest reduction in the average total response time with a decrease of 1 minute 1 second. Gloucestershire had the greatest rise in the average total response time with an increase of 52 seconds.

The graph below shows the average total response time to Other Building Fires for the MET FRSs and England as a whole each year between 2010/11 and 2019/20.

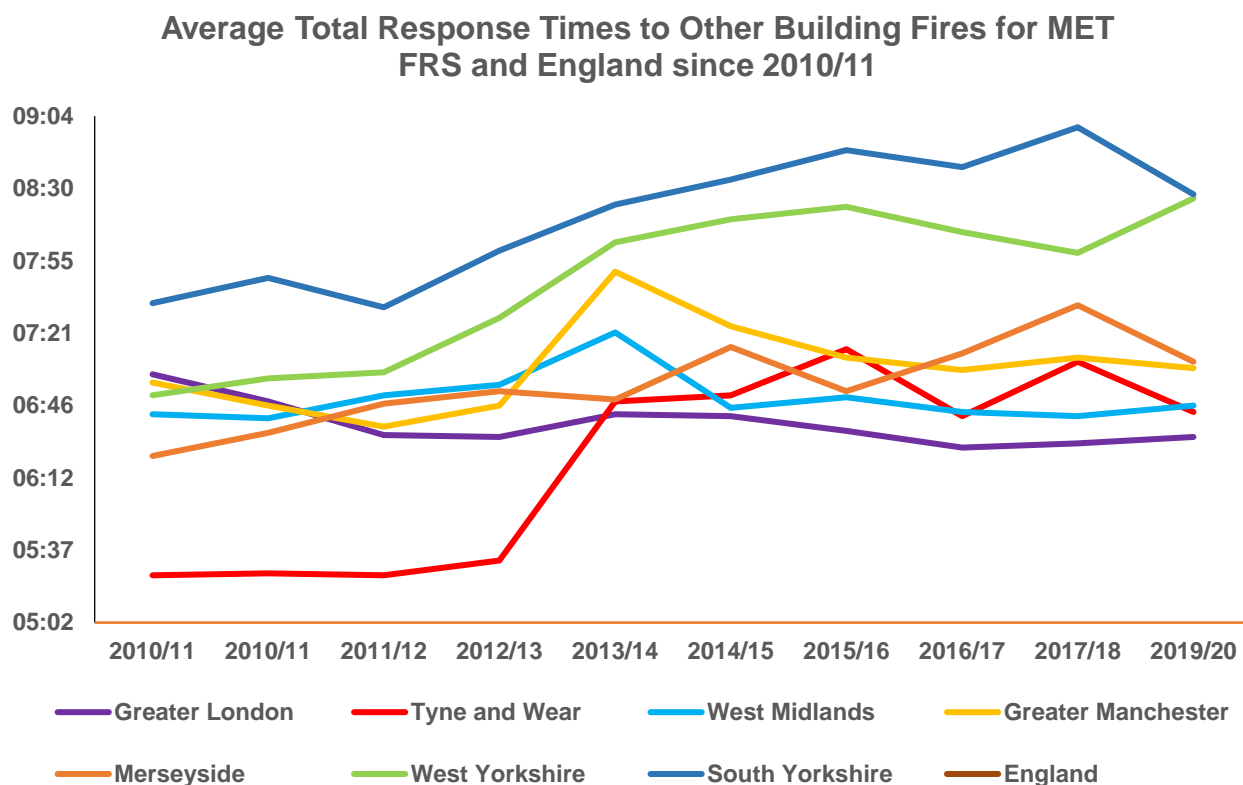


Figure 6 - average total response times to other building fires for MET FRSs and England since 2010/11

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations. Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

4 Road Vehicle Fires

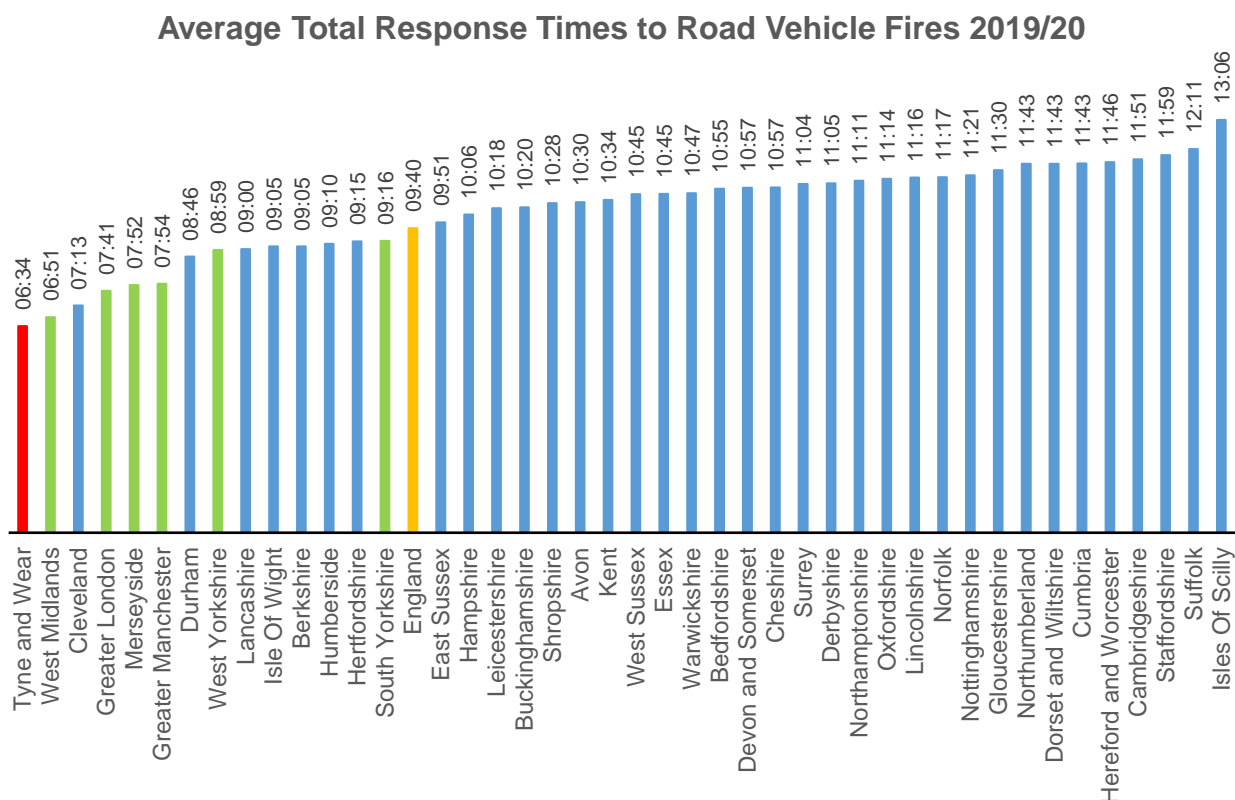


Figure 7 - average total response times to road vehicle fires 2019/20

- Average total response time to road vehicle fires in England is 9 minutes 40 seconds – decrease of 3 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 40 seconds from 2010/11.
- Average total response time to road vehicle fires for TWFRS is 6 minutes 34 seconds – decrease of 30 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 32 seconds from 2010/11.
- TWFRS are fastest of the MET FRSs in response to road vehicle fires. The worst performing MET is South Yorkshire with an average total response time of 9 minutes 16 seconds.
- TWFRS are fastest in England in response to road vehicle fires. Worst performing FRS is Cornwall with an average total response time of 13 minutes 21 seconds.
- Of the MET FRS, from 2018/19 to 2019/20, TWFRS saw the greatest reduction of the METs in average total response time with a decrease of 31 seconds. Greater London had the greatest rise in average total response time with an increase of 16 seconds.
- In England, Isle of Wight saw the greatest reduction in the average total response time with a decrease of 1 minute 40 seconds. Surrey had the greatest rise in the average total response time with an increase of 1 minute 1 second.

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
 Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

The graph below shows the average total response time to Road Vehicle Fires for the MET FRSs and England as a whole each year between 2010/11 and 2019/20.

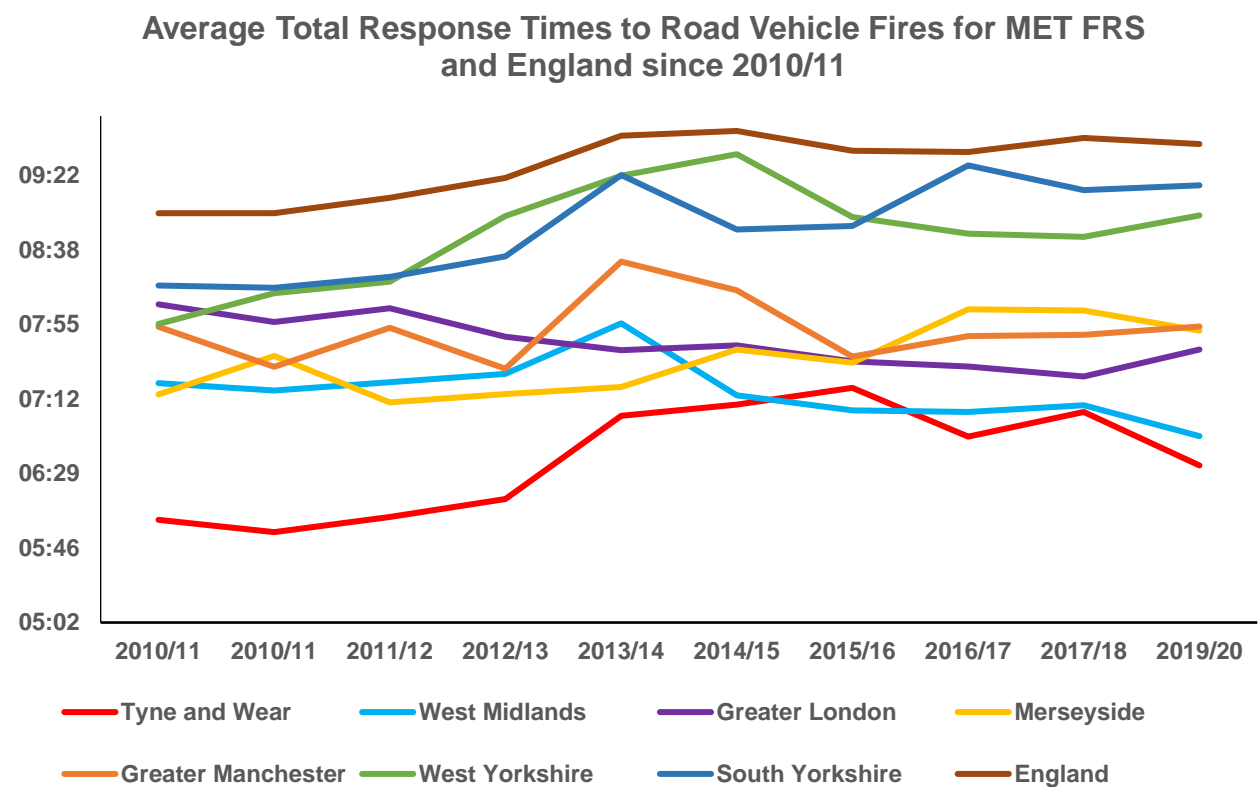


Figure 8 - average total response times to road vehicle fires for MET FRSs and England since 2010/11

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations. Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

5 Other Outdoor Fires

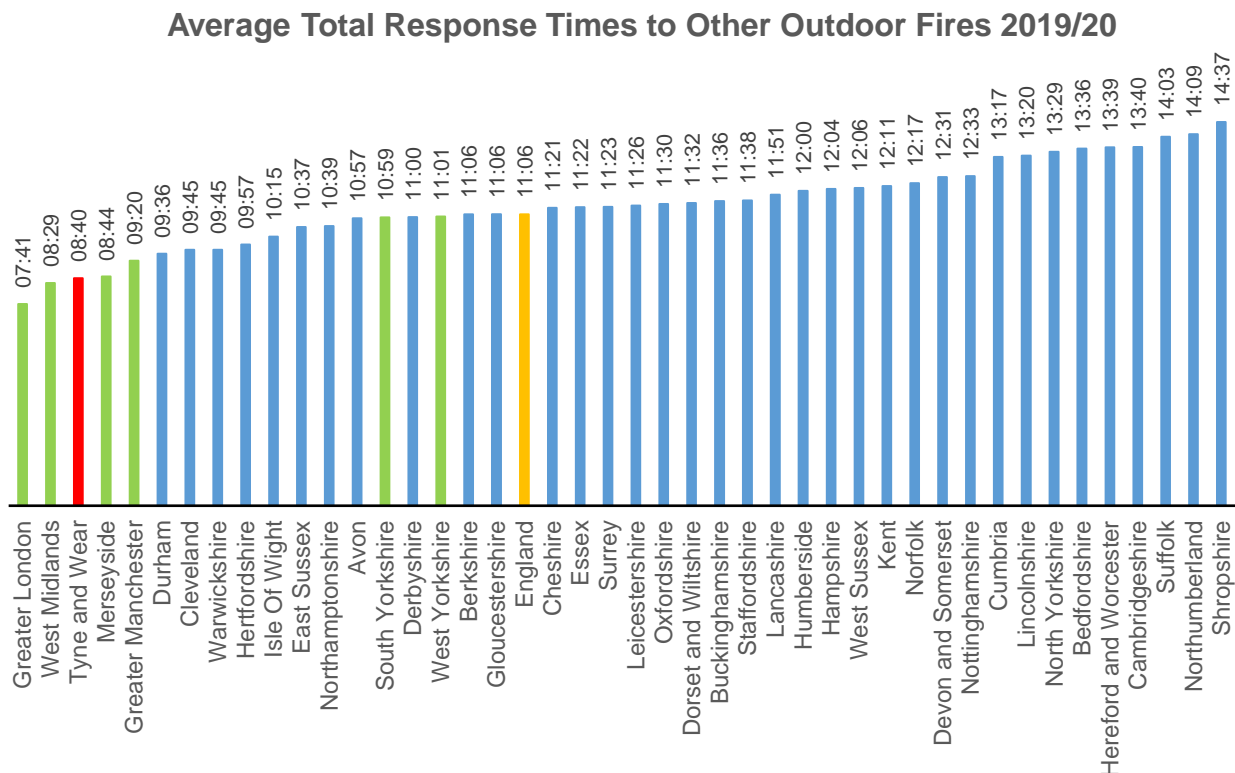


Figure 9 – average total response times to other outdoor fires 2019/20

- Average total response time to other outdoor fires in England is 11 minutes 6 seconds – decrease of 28 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 1 minute 20 seconds from 2010/11.
- Average total response time to other outdoor fires for TWFRS is 8 minutes 40 seconds – decrease of 26 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 2 minutes and 5 seconds from 2010/11.
- TWFRS are 3rd fastest of the MET FRSs in response to other outdoor fires. Best performing MET is Greater London with an average total response time of 7 minutes 41 seconds. Worst performing MET is West Yorkshire with an average total response time of 11 mins 1 second.
- TWFRS are 3rd fastest in England in response to other outdoor fires. Best performing FRS is Greater London. Worst performing FRS is Cornwall with an average total response time of 14 minutes 49 seconds.
- Of the MET FRSs, from 2018/19 to 2019/20, Merseyside saw the greatest reduction of the METs in average total response time with a decrease of 53 seconds. West Mids FRS had the greatest rise in average total response time with an increase of 27 seconds.

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
 Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

- In England, Leicestershire saw the greatest reduction in the average total response time with a decrease of 2 minutes 21 seconds. Shropshire had the greatest rise in the average total response time with an increase of 2 minutes 21 seconds.

The graph below shows the average total response time to other outdoor fires for the MET FRSs and England as a whole each year between 2010/11 and 2019/20.

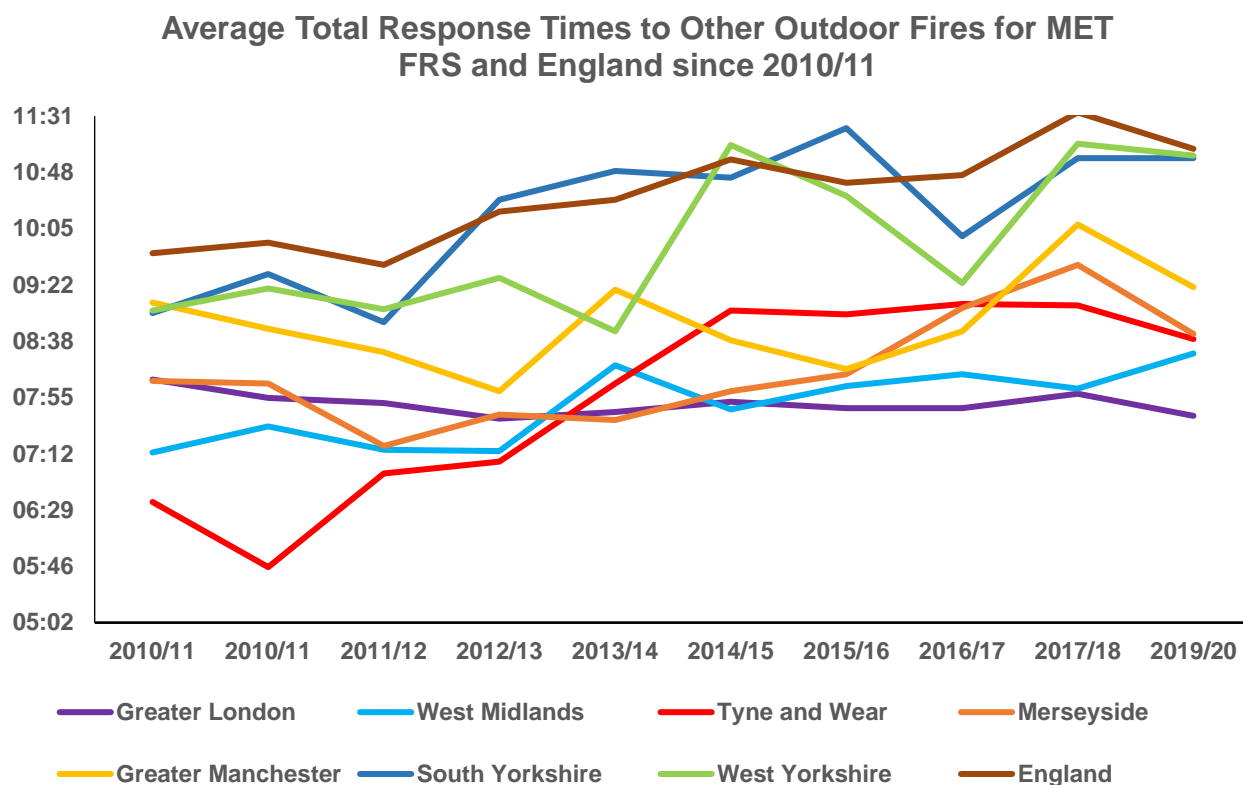


Figure 10 – average total response times to other outdoor fires for MET FRS and England since 2010/11

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations. Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

6 Response time components

The total response time (from time of call to time of first arrival) can be further divided into the following three components:

- **Call handling time:** from time of call to the station being alerted.
- **Crew turnout time:** time between the station being alerted and the time the first vehicle departs i.e. the time it takes for the firefighters to prepare to leave.
- **Drive time:** from the time the first vehicle leaves to the first vehicle arriving at the scene of the incident (not necessarily the same vehicle).

This is the third year that these breakdowns of the average response time have been published, in response to user need and to help explain which parts of the emergency response chain have changed over time.

National summary:

- Call handling times for primary fires decreased by one second in 2019/20 to 1 minute 22 seconds. Call handling times for secondary fires decreased by 6 seconds to 1 minute 41 seconds .
- Crew turnout times for primary fires decreased by three seconds in 2019/20 to 1 minute 35 seconds. Crew turnout times for secondary fires decreased 3 seconds to 1 minute 32 seconds.
- Drive times for primary fires decreased by three seconds in 2019/20 to 5 minutes 46 seconds for primary fires and 15 seconds to 6 minutes 5 seconds for secondary fires in 2019/20.

Whilst there has been a long-term upward trend in total response times over the past decade average call handling times and drive times have generally increased but average crew turnout time has decreased.













It is notable that dwelling fires have the quickest times in all three of the response time components, probably reflecting the relative ease with which a street address can be communicated on the telephone and the urgency with which an FRS responds to fires with the greatest potential risk to life. Other outdoor fires, by contrast, are typically among the slowest responses in all three categories, which could reflect the difficulty of describing an outdoor location without a street address (call handling) and the difficulty of finding it once mobile (drive time).

A range of possible factors could have contributed to the long-term increase in total response time to primary fires. These may include changing traffic levels and control staff typically asking more questions of the caller to better assess the risk and attendance needed. There may also be other factors, locally or nationally, which affect response times, such as urban sprawl and new housing developments outdating the strategic positioning of fire stations.

*From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.*

The table below provides a summary of the trends in the last year for response times to fires.

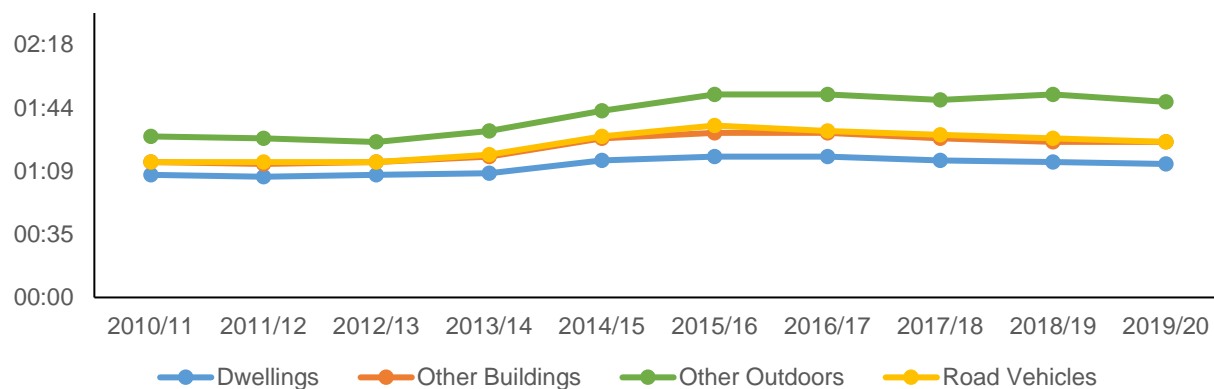
Table 2 Average response times to fires by response time component, type of fire with a summary of trends, England; 2019/20

Type of Fire and response time component	2019/20	Change since 2018/19	Change since 2014/15
Primary			
Call handling	1 minute 22 seconds	-1 second 	-1 second 
Crew turnout	1 minute 35 seconds	-3 seconds 	-10 seconds 
Drive time	5 minutes 46 seconds	-3 seconds 	+17 seconds 
Secondary			
Call handling	1 minute 41 seconds	-6 seconds 	-6 seconds 
Crew turnout	1 minute 32 seconds	-3 seconds 	-8 seconds 
Drive time	6 minutes 5 seconds	-15 seconds 	+29 seconds 

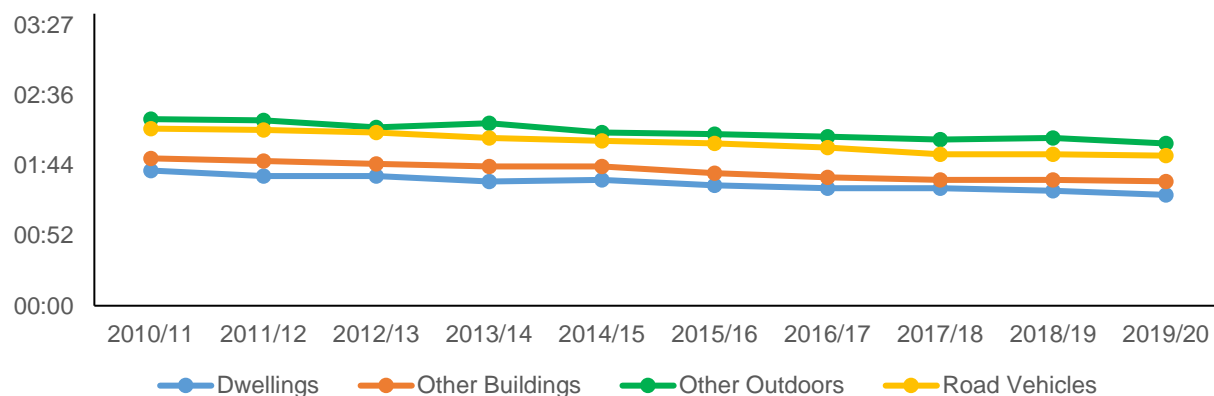
*From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.*

Figure 11 Average response times (minutes) by response time component and type of fire, England; 2010/11 to 2019/20

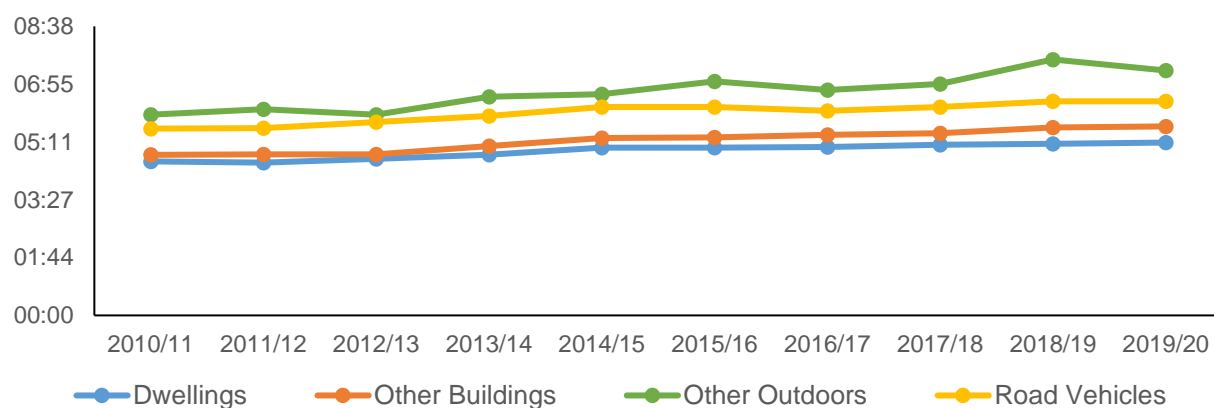
Call handling time



Crew turnout time



Drive time



From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations. Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

TWFRS summary:













- call handling times have consistently decreased from 2014/15 across all of the types.
- crew turnout times have consistently decreased from 2014/15 across all of the fire types.
- drive times have decreased from 2018/19 across all of the fire types.
- the **quickest average call handling** time of the MET FRSs in response to Primary fires.
- the **quickest average crew turnout** time of the MET FRSs and quickest in England in response to Primary fires.
- the 3rd quickest average drive time of the MET FRSs and 5th quickest in England in response to Primary fires.
- the **quickest average call handling** time of the MET FRSs in response to dwelling fires.
- the **quickest average crew turnout** time of the MET FRSs and quickest in England in response to dwelling fires.
- the 3rd quickest average drive times of the MET FRSs and 4th in England in response to dwelling fires.
- the **quickest average call handling time** of the MET FRSs in response to other building fires.
- the **quickest average crew turnout** time of the MET FRSs and quickest in England in response to other building fires.
- the 4th quickest average drive times of the MET FRSs and 7th in England in response to other building fires.
- the **quickest average call handling time** of the MET FRSs and 4th quickest in England in response to road vehicle fires.
- the **quickest average crew turnout** time of the MET FRSs and quickest in England in response to road vehicle fires.
- the 3rd quickest average drive times in England and of the MET FRSs in response to road vehicle fires.
- the 3rd quickest average call handling time of the MET FRSs in response to other outdoor fires.

*From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.*

- the **quickest average crew turnout time** in England and of the MET FRSs in response to other outdoor fires.
- the 4th quickest drive times of the MET FRSs in response to other outdoor fires.

The table below provides a summary of the trends in the last year for response time components to fires.

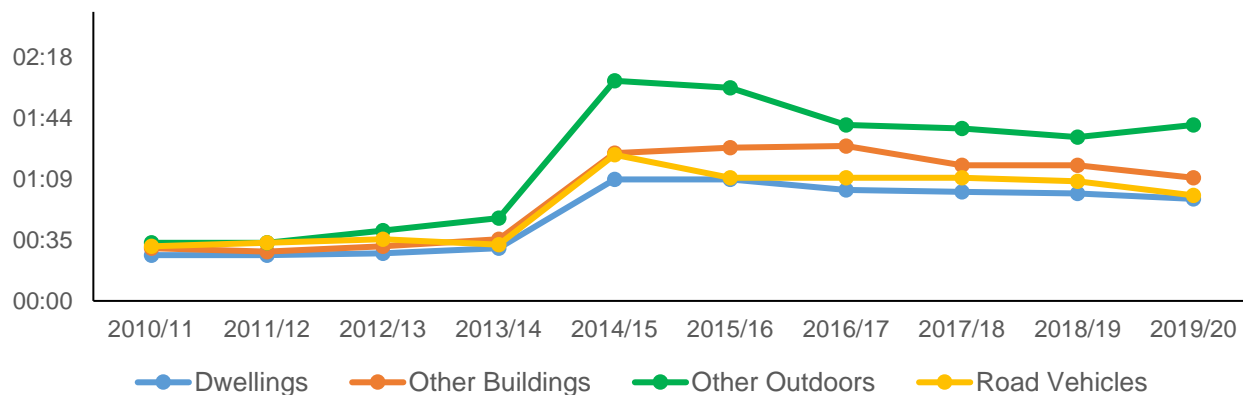
Table 3 Average response times to fires by response time component, type of fire with a summary of trends, TWFRS; 2019/20

Type of Fire and response time component	2019/20	Change since 2018/19	Change since 2014/15
Primary			
Call handling	1 minute 3 seconds	-5 seconds 	-16 seconds 
Crew turnout	39 seconds	-13 second 	-12 seconds 
Drive time	4 minutes 46 seconds	-6 seconds 	+20 seconds 
Secondary			
Call handling	1 minute 22 seconds	-8 seconds 	-14 seconds 
Crew turnout	42 seconds	-11 second 	-12 seconds 
Drive time	6 minutes 10 seconds	-26 seconds 	+1 minutes 23 seconds 

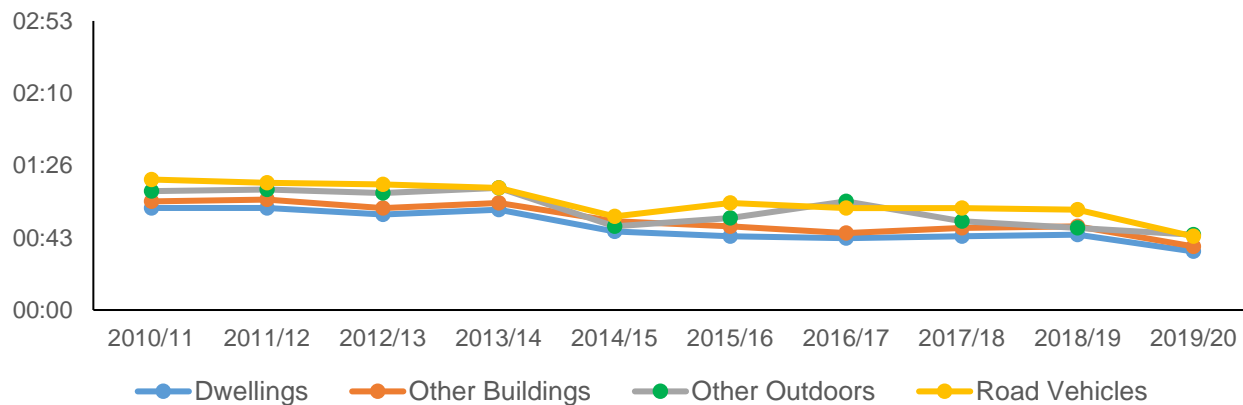
From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations. Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

Figure 12 Average response times (minutes) by response time component and type of fire, TWFRS; 2010/11 to 2019/20

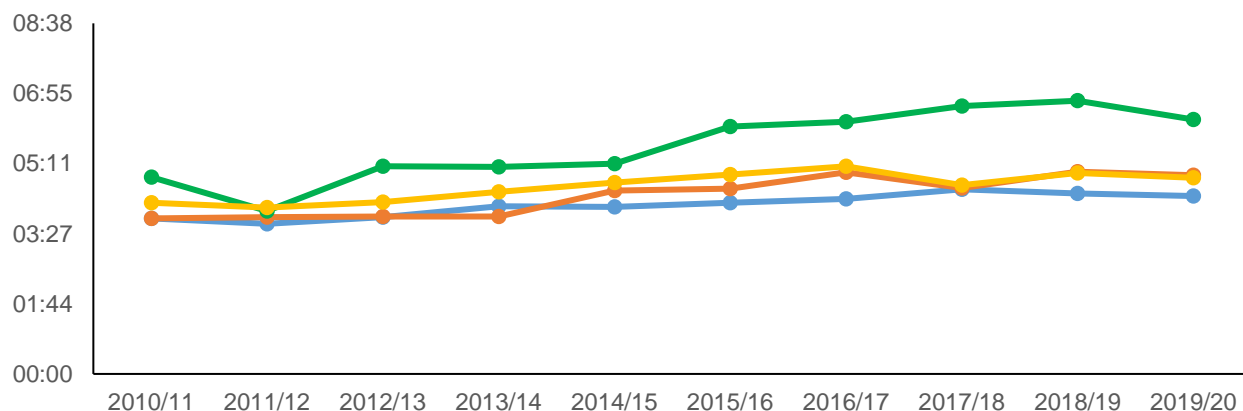
Call handling time



Crew turnout



Drive time



From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations. Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

7 Call handling time

Primary fires - average call handling time 2019/20

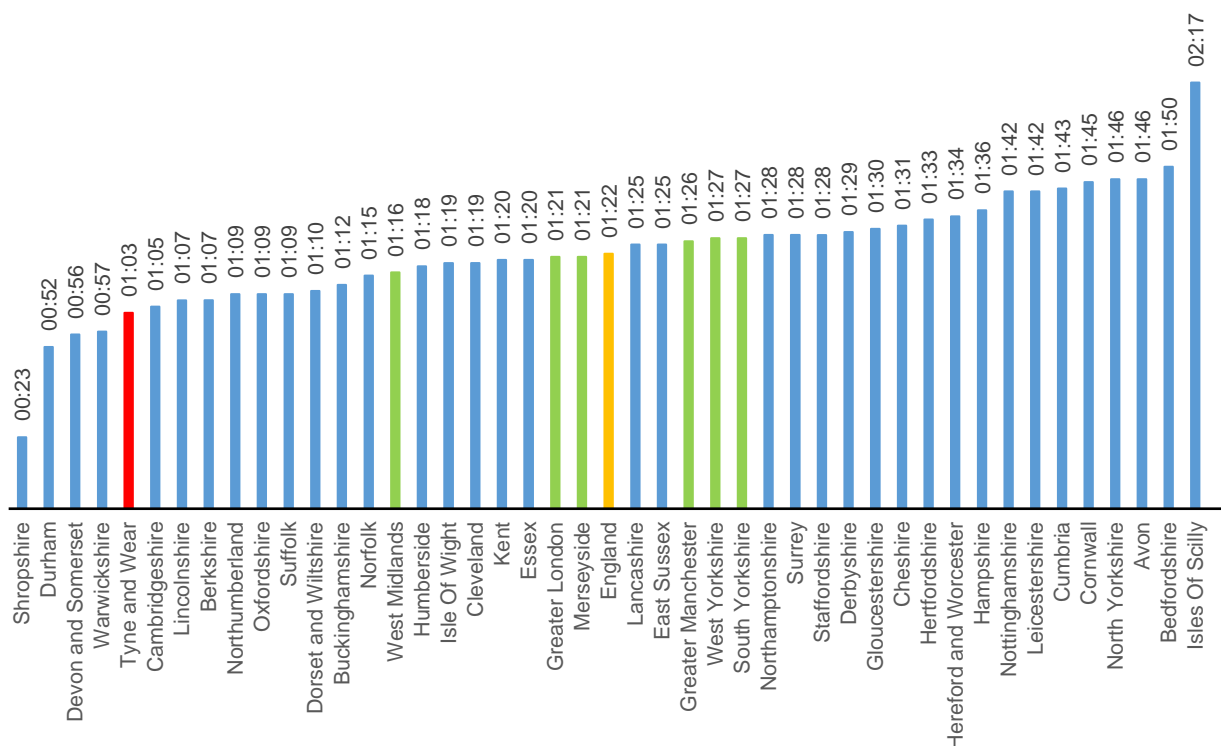


Figure 13 – average call handling times to Primary fires 2019/20

- Average call handling time to Primary fires in England during 2019/20 is 1 minute 22 seconds – decrease of 1 second from 2018/19 and increase of 10 seconds from 2010/11.
- Average call handling time to Primary fires in TWFRS during 2019/20 is 1 minute 3 seconds – decrease of 5 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 34 seconds from 2010/11.
- TWFRS are the best performing MET with an average call handling time of 1 minute 3 seconds. Worst performing MET is South Yorkshire with an average call handling time of 1 minute 27 seconds.
- TWFRS have the 5th fastest average call handling time in England in response to Primary fires. Best performing FRS is Shropshire with an average call handling time of 23 seconds. The worst performing FRS is Isles Of Scilly with an average call handling time of 2 minutes 17 seconds.
- Of the MET FRSs West Yorkshire had the greatest increase in average call handling time with an increase of 5 seconds.
- In England Isles of Scilly saw the greatest increase in average call handling time with an increase of 22 seconds.

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations. Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

8 Crew turnout time

Primary fires - average crew turnout time 2019/20

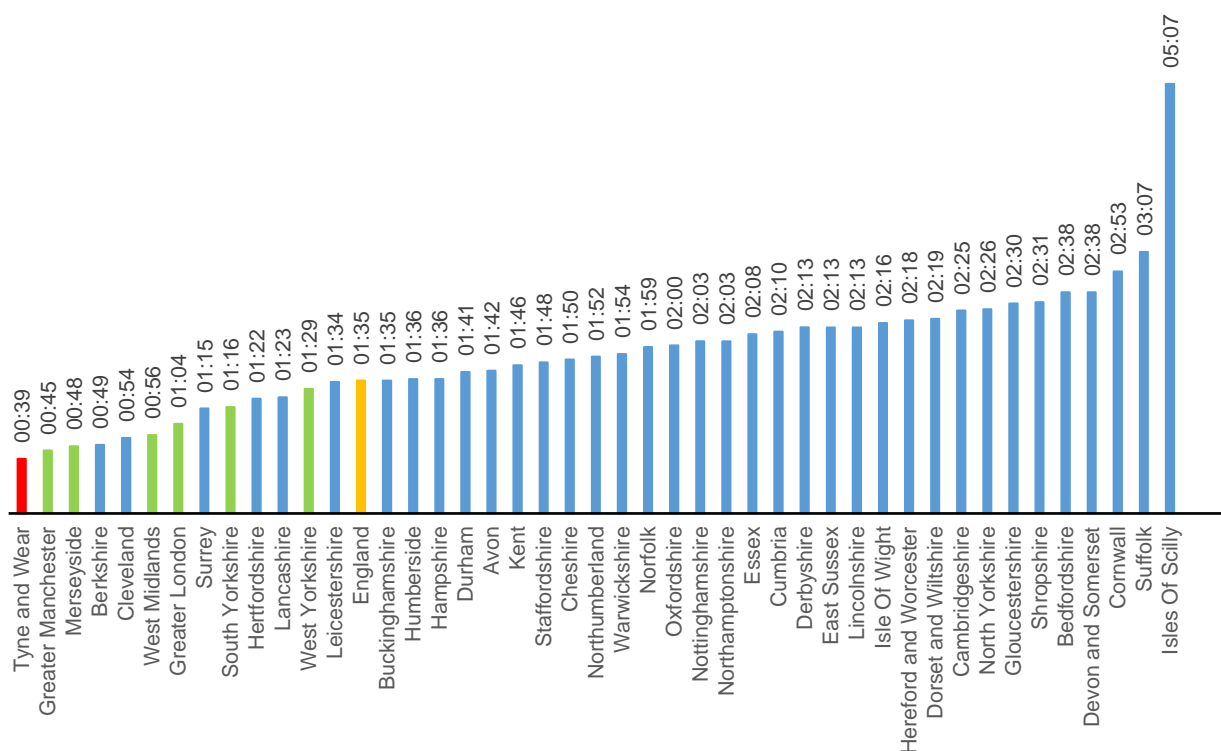


Figure 14 – average call handling times to Primary fires 2019/20

- Average crew turnout time to Primary fires in England during 2019/20 is 1 minute 35 seconds – decrease of 3 seconds from 2018/19 and decrease of 10 seconds from 2010/11.
- Average crew turnout time to Primary fires in TWFRS during 2019/20 is 39 seconds – decrease of 13 seconds from 2018/19 and decrease of 29 seconds from 2010/11.
- TWFRS are the best performing MET with an average crew turnout time of 39 seconds. Worst performing MET is West Yorkshire with an average crew turnout time of 1 minute 29 seconds.
- TWFRS have the fastest average crew turnout time in England in response to Primary fires. Worst performing FRS is Isles Of Scilly with an average call turnout time of 5 minutes 7 seconds.
- The majority of the MET FRSs saw a decrease in crew turnout times or there was no change.
- In England Cambridgeshire saw the greatest increase in average crew turnout time with an increase of 22 seconds.

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
 Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

9 Drive time

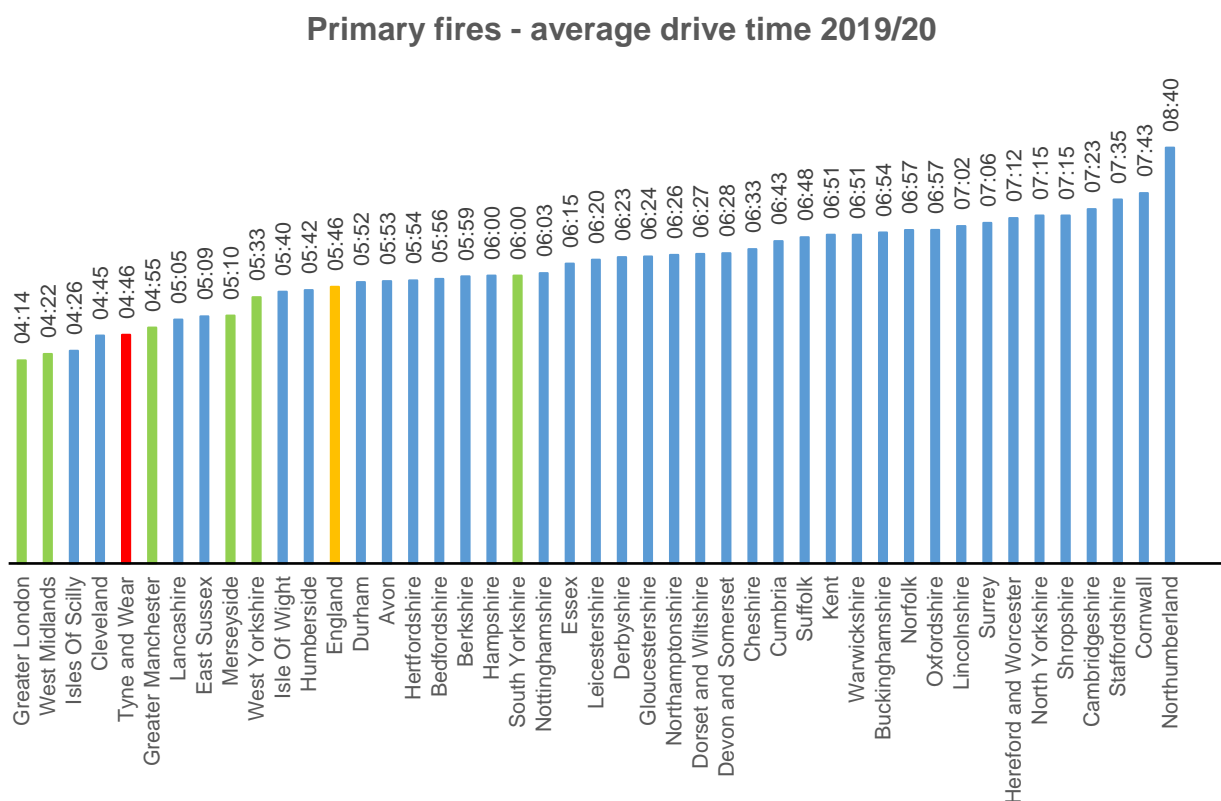


Figure 15 – average drive times to Primary fires 2019/20

- Average drive time to Primary fires in England during 2019/20 is 5 minutes 46 seconds – decrease of 3 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 45 seconds from 2010/11.
- Average drive time to Primary fires in TWFRS during 2019/20 is 4 minutes 46 seconds – decrease of 6 seconds from 2018/19 and increase of 45 seconds from 2010/11.
- TWFRS have the 3rd fastest average drive time of the MET FRSs. Best performing MET is Greater London with an average drive time of 4 minutes 14 seconds.
- TWFRS have the 5th fastest average drive time in England in response to Primary fires. Best performing FRS is Greater London with an average drive time of 4 minutes 14 seconds. Worst performing FRS is Northumberland with an average drive time of 8 minutes 40 seconds.
- Of the MET FRSs West Yorkshire saw a rise in average drive time with an increase of 1 second.
- In England Isles of Scilly saw the greatest increase in average drive time with an increase of 33 seconds.

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
 Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

10 Response times and outcomes

There is not a straightforward relationship between response times and the outcomes of a fire as the type of fire and the time elapsed before the fire is discovered (both outside the control of FRSs) as well as other factors will also have an influence on the outcome. However, it is sometimes assumed that slower response times would be associated with greater instances of casualties/rescues and larger areas of damage due to the later starting of firefighting activities.

National summary:

- The average total response time to dwelling fires involving casualties and/or rescues in England in 2019/20 was 7 minutes 37 seconds. This was unchanged compared with 2018/19.
- The average total response time to dwelling fires **not** involving casualties and/or rescues in England in 2019/20 was 7 minutes 46 seconds, a decrease of 2 seconds since 2018/19.
- In 2019/20 the average area of fire damage to dwellings (excluding those incidents with areas of damage over 5,000m²) in England remained unchanged compared to 2018/19. At the same time, the average response time to dwelling fires decreased by 2 seconds since 2018/19.
- In 2019/20 the average area of fire damage to other buildings (excluding those incidents with areas of damage over 1,000m²) in England increased by less than one per cent compared with 2018/19. At the same time, the average response time to other building fires increased by 2 seconds since 2018/19.

Dwelling fires with casualties (including fatalities) and/or rescues had consistently faster average response times than the majority of dwelling fires where no casualties and/or rescues were involved. Although these comprise a relatively small number of incidents so are potentially more susceptible to fluctuations in average response times, the pattern is consistent across all years in the series. This difference in response times to dwelling fires with casualties/and or rescues compared with those without is most strongly apparent in the drive time (six seconds faster in 2019/20). This suggests that, while dwelling fires are responded to most quickly of all primary fire types, response times appear to reduce even more for higher risk incidents which are likely to involve casualties or rescues, if it has been possible to collect this information from the caller.

The long term trend has been an increase in total response times, yet the average area of damage in both dwelling and 'other building' fires has been decreasing. It could be assumed that increased response time would lead to increased spread. However, this assumption may be being countered by improved early detection (the proportion of households with a working smoke alarm has remained high), the gradual replacement of old furnishings with newer materials and improved fire resisting properties, new buildings with sprinkler systems and numerous other factors which are difficult to quantify.

*From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.*

Figure 16 Average total response times to dwelling fires with and without casualties or rescues and average extent of damage (excluding 5,000+ m²) for dwelling fires, England; 2010/11 to 2019/20

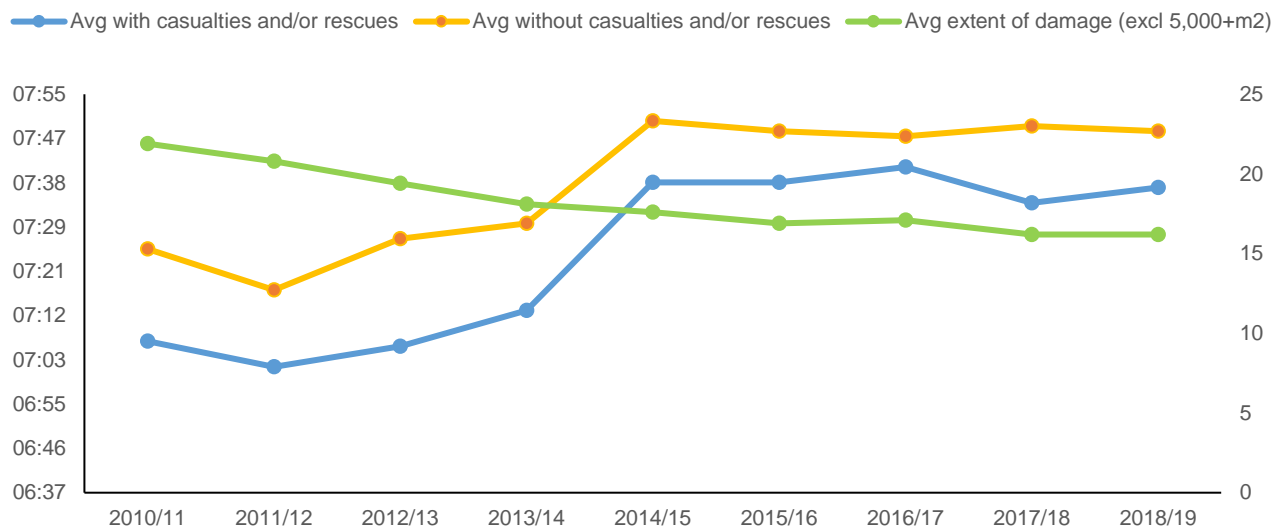
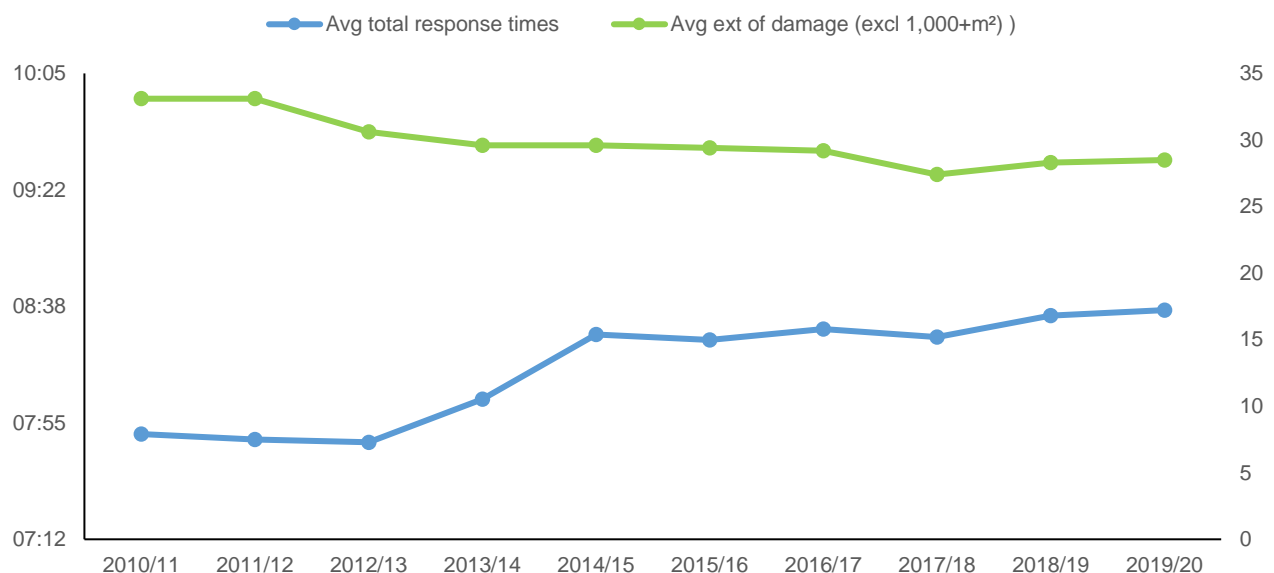


Figure 17 Average total response times and average extent of damage (excluding 1,000+ m²) for 'other building' fires, England; 2010/11 to 2019/20



From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations.
 Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

11 COVID-19 National Lockdown

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, lockdown restrictions came into effect from 23rd March 2020 and imposed strict limits on daily life. These included significant restrictions on freedom of movement and a requirement by law for a range of businesses to close.

The figures presented in this bulletin relate to incidents attended by FRSs during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, restrictions in England and Wales started from 12 March 2020 and the first national lockdown applied on 23rd March 2020. The start of the restrictions and the first eight days of lockdown are therefore captured in IRS data for the year ending March 2020.

Home Office statisticians have been monitoring incidents on the IRS since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown to ensure that data quality has not been reduced, and that all incidents are recorded. In addition, FRSs were asked to upload the information more quickly after attending an incident so that the IRS could be used to produce management information to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on FRSs capacity.

To gain an understanding on the effect on lockdown on average response times an upper and lower range using the mean and standard variation of the 2015-2019 baseline figures, was calculated. Any figures beyond this range would fall outside of what would be expected, although these results could be explained by various factors such as bank holiday dates, the weather and not simply the lockdown.

The average response times to fires attended by FRSs during the COVID-19 lockdown showed two phases:

National summary:

- In the first 8 weeks between 22nd March and 16th May 2020, five weeks showed an average response below what was expected. This could be explained by lower traffic levels resulting in quicker drive times.
- In the following six weeks between 17th May and 27th June 2020, two weeks showed an average response time below what was expected, possibly reflecting the hot weather and an increased number of outdoor fires in these weeks.
- The average response times to secondary fires attended by FRSs during lockdown were in the range that would be expected for nine of the 14 weeks, however for five weeks (10th May to 13th June 2020) the response time was above what was expected, again possibly reflecting the hot weather and an increased number of outdoor fires in these weeks.

From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations. Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.

Figure 18 Average total response times to primary fires, England; 22nd March to 27th June 2020 compared with the 2015-2019 baseline

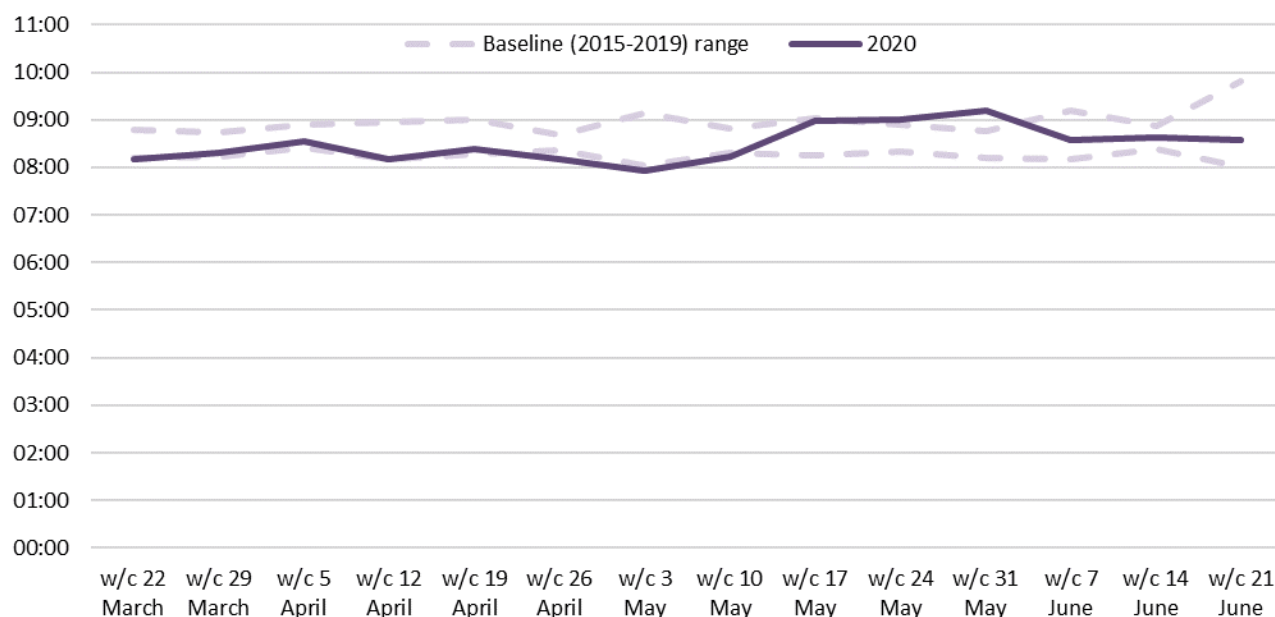
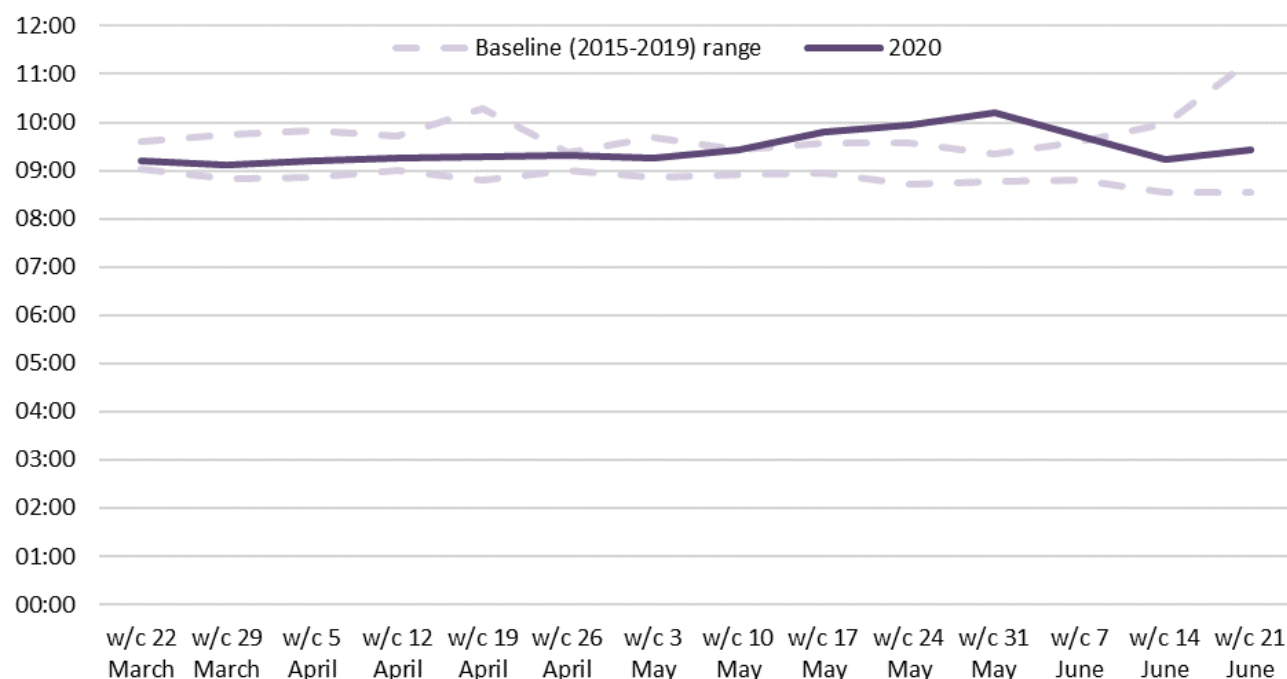


Figure 19 Average total response times to secondary fires, England; 22nd March to 27th June 2020 compared with the 2015-2019 baseline



From 1st April 2018, incidents where there was heat and/or smoke damage only are now included in average response time calculations. Note: West Sussex were unable to provide complete vehicle mobilisation data for much of 2019/20 therefore are not included in these totals.