



East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

2024 - 25

IMPACT REPORT



EVERY CONTACT COUNTS



Each year, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service meets thousands of people, whether through our work to prevent emergencies, to protect buildings through fire safety work or when we respond to 999 calls.

For us Every Contact Counts - and that's not just contact with the public, but with our own colleagues, volunteers and cadets.

Our Impact Report shines a light on how our approach has affected peoples lives.

FACTS AND FIGURES



9,422 incidents attended – a decrease from the previous year's 10,562.



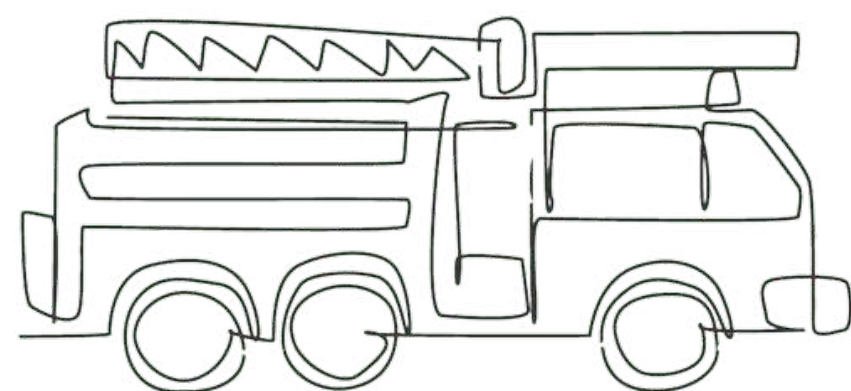
366 accidental dwelling fires – a decrease from the previous year's 436.



91.3% of accidental dwelling fires were confined to the room of origin.



The number of primary fires has decreased from 1,011 to 900, and the number of deliberate fires decreased from 707 to 673.



Whenever you call us in an emergency, your call comes into our Joint Fire Control, which then mobilises the quickest or most appropriate fire appliance, along with any other specialist vehicles/officers depending upon the problem.

Our response standards are as follows:

The first arriving appliances at any incident from an 'On-Station response' within 10 minutes 70% of the time

The first arriving appliances at any incident from an 'On-Call response' within 15 minutes 70% of the time

We continue to exceed these targets:

- 76.4% of the first arriving appliances at any incident from an 'On-Station response' within 10 minutes.

- 74.4% of the first arriving appliances at any incident from an 'On-Call response' within 15 minutes.

PREVENTING EMERGENCIES

HOME SAFETY VISITS

We visit people in their homes to offer advice, support and equipment including specialist smoke alarms.

In 2024/25 we carried out 9,017 HSVs. 91.7% of these home safety visits were to vulnerable people within our community

These visits are carried out by both our firefighters, and our highly trained specialists in our support teams.

“I HAD MY VISIT TODAY AND FOUND THE TWO GENTLEMEN WHO VISITED REALLY FRIENDLY, HELPFUL, AND KNOWLEDGEABLE.

I VERY MUCH APPRECIATED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN TO ME, ANSWER MY QUESTIONS, AND GIVE ME RELEVANT BUT NON-PRESCRIPTIVE ADVICE.

THEY WERE EVEN ABLE TO REFER ME TO MEALS ON WHEELS WHICH I WAS NOT EXPECTING BUT REALLY APPRECIATED.”

If you have any questions or concerns about fire safety in the home, we offer a free Home safety check service.

If you would like to find out more or do an online safety check, you can:

- Call us on 0800 177 7069
- Visit <https://www.esfrs.org/hsvs>
- Use the QR code.



CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

We have many stories about how working smoke alarms can avert a potential tragedy. Equally crucial are carbon monoxide (CO) alarms.

CO is a silent threat from unsafe gas appliances - you can't see, smell or taste it, but a working CO alarm can detect it and save lives.

On 6 February 2025, we were called to a property where the CO alarm was sounding. The caller reported the smell of gas and feeling dizzy.

Crews responded and assisted with a full evacuation of the property. A gas leak was identified and two people suffering from symptoms of CO exposure were handed over to the care of South East Coast Ambulance Service.

The scene was secured in collaboration with a Gas Engineer and the incident was handed over.



HERE'S HOW YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

If you think you have been exposed to carbon monoxide and feel unwell or are worried call NHS 111, contact your GP or in an emergency contact emergency services on 999.

CO ALARMS

Install CO alarms in all areas with fuel-burning appliances.

Schedule annual servicing for appliances with a qualified professional.

Test alarms regularly and keep them free from dust.

Replace batteries as needed to ensure they remain in working order.

Use only Gas Safe registered engineers for gas safety checks.

REPORT IT

If your CO alarm sounds or you suspect a gas leak:

Evacuate immediately – stop using all appliances and leave the property.

Call the National Gas Emergency Service at **0800 111 999** or the HSE Gas Safety Advice Line at **0800 300 363**.

Do not re-enter the property - wait for advice from the emergency services.

SYMPTOMS

Get to know the signs of CO poisoning so you can spot danger. These include:

- * A small headache.
- * Feeling dizzy.
- * Feeling sick.
- * Throwing up.
- * Feeling tired.
- * Feeling sleepy.



WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Can you sponsor a Fire Cadet?

Find out more: go to
www.esfrs.org/cadets



We currently have three Fire Cadet units – for Eastbourne, for Uckfield and for Hastings and Bexhill.

These give young people aged 13-17 a chance to learn a range of skills including:

- Fire Safety – how to keep themselves and others safe by understanding hazards, risks, and control measures.
- What to do in an emergency – about fire safety in the home and create a fire plan as well as how we work with other emergency services.
- Basic first aid – how to help people in an emergency.
- Firefighting skills – what firefighters do, the equipment we use, and how we help others.
- Life skills – how to be a positive citizen and an active member of your community.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play a vital role in our service, acting as key connectors and trusted community members.

They are pivotal in reducing risk by effectively delivering prevention and protection messages, helping to educate and empower the public.

Volunteering is a two-way exchange — offering not only support to the community but also meaningful personal benefits for volunteers, such as improved wellbeing, skills development, and greater employability.

There are currently 52 Community Volunteers actively supporting our efforts to build safer and more sustainable communities. Their contribution is invaluable, helping to deliver key prevention messages, participating in local campaigns, and engaging with the public at community events and initiatives.

12 new Community Volunteers have been recruited in 2024 – 2025.



FIRE CADET SUPPORT AT REMEMBRANCE DAY AT THE CENOTAPH

I wanted to say how proud I was to spend the day with your Fire Cadets at this year's Remembrance Day Service at the Cenotaph.

Your Fire Cadets represented your service and the UK fire sector with enthusiasm, professionalism, and enormous sense of pride. Despite several hours waiting in line before the parade started, they kept themselves in good spirits and took the opportunity to talk with several veterans, which I know was really well thought of by the veterans involved.

So please pass on my thanks to your Cadets for their hard work and continued support and help them recognise that their contribution to events such as Remembrance Day is much appreciated by everyone that they came into contact with.

Kind regards

Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, Chair of Lincolnshire Local Resilience Forum, National Fire Chief Council Lead for Fire Cadets



SAFETY IN ACTION – REACHING BEYOND SCHOOLS

Home educated children are now regularly invited to our highly successful Safety in Action programme.

The aim of this project is to teach children how to deal with, or avoid, life threatening situations.

Typically we invite schools to be part of our programme and now we are working hard to make sure that home educated children, aged around 10-11 years old, get involved too.

The emphasis during these events is learning lifesaving skills through participation – even if children make mistakes along the way, children will actively participate and learn how to deal with dangerous situations in a safe and controlled environment.

Working alongside other emergency services and other agencies, we create simulated scenarios to allow children to think about safe responses to a variety of different situations.

Each child taking part will receive a participation certificate and a safety activity book – and all this for free.



MAKING EVERY CONTACT COUNT

Volunteers have supported many events including Safety In Action which supports the Fire Authority's purpose of making communities safer and educating people.

Volunteers have assisted with the delivery of 52 Safety in Action sessions to various schools between April 24 - March 25 across 9 sites. Volunteers took part in all 52 sessions with some Volunteers undertaking 8 sessions in a week.

Now in its third year, the Telephone Befriending service is delivered by eight dedicated Community Volunteers. Currently, the team supports 25 clients.

Volunteers have completed 924 hours of telephone befriending calls April 24 – March 25 compared to previous years figure of 557 hours this is an increase of 66%.



SUPPORTING OTHERS

Every October, the Children's Burns Trust and British Burn Association raise awareness for National Burn Awareness Day.

In 2024, Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust worked with fire services in East Sussex, West Sussex, and Surrey to promote this important awareness day.

With thanks to our Engineering Team, burns first aid awareness stickers have been added to our fire engines at both Preston Circus and Bexhill. On 4th October, Alison Tweddle, Trustee at Children's Burns Trust, and Kristina Stiles, a nurse and Ambassador of Children's Burns Trust, met with the crew at Bexhill to discuss the importance of the day.



Hot drinks: Keep out of children's reach, as they are a common cause of burns.

Kitchen safety: Turn saucepan handles in and keep kettle cords out of reach.

Hair straighteners: These remain hot even after being unplugged, so store them safely.

Bath safety: Always run cold water first, test the temperature and supervise children.

Find out more at cbtrust.org.uk including the Cool, Call, Cover method and Stop, Drop and Roll should the worst happen.

Remember, these key actions can help significantly to reduce the severity of burns, and always call 999 in an emergency.

ENFORCEMENT - PROTECTION

INSPECTIONS AND FIRE SAFETY CHECKS

We have carried out:

- * 504 inspections of high-risk premises.
- * 1117 fire safety checks by operational crews.

LEGAL CASES

We completed 69 legal case investigations which resulted in:

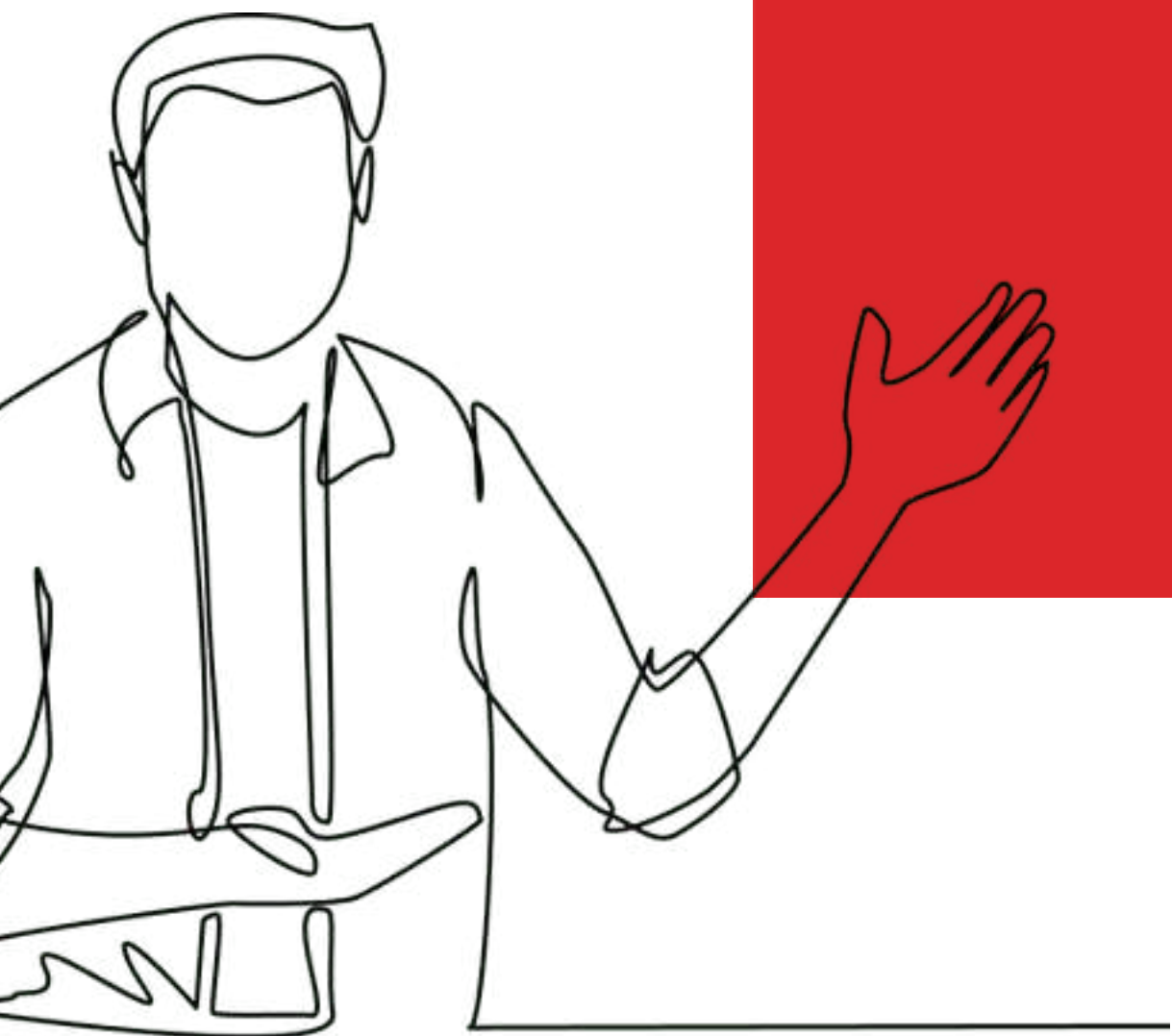
- * 50 informal cautions being issued
- * 2 Simple Cautions accepted as an alternative to prosecution
- * 4 cases were successfully prosecuted
- * 12 investigations resulted in no further action being taken by our Service.

PRIMARY AUTHORITY PARTNERSHIP

Our Primary Authority Partnership's function and to develop partnerships with the business community in order to promote consistent fire safety advice. These partnerships aim to improve compliance and reduce fire risk in the built environment.

The Service has more than 20 active partners, including care homes, trade associations, and the hospitality industry.

Activities include interactive workshops for staff, site visits and giving fire safety advice including coverage of fire alarm systems, and observed fire drills, and supporting them through FRS issued notices.



FIRE DOOR SAFETY WEEK CAMPAIGN



Fire safety legislation can rapidly change and be complex and difficult to navigate, particularly for those without legal expertise. That's why we aim to help business owners, especially small and new businesses, by putting on special events and campaigns.

Events include sessions for owners, landlords and managing agents of flats and for tenants, leaseholders and renters in flats.

We also held a webinar session in September 2024, tailored for business owners and "Responsible Persons" in workplaces and high-rise buildings. This covered essential fire safety topics including inspection procedures, recent legislative changes, and practical steps to ensure compliance and reduce risk. This was then shared across social media and our website alongside a detailed Q&A document during Fire Door Safety Week.

The social media campaign reflected an increased interest and active engagement with fire safety legislation with 30,977 overall reach and impressions and 70 engagements across our social media channels.

Press releases have also proved impactful following incidents or prosecutions including links to legislation and the [esfrs.org/workplaces](https://www.esfrs.org/workplaces) website. One particular prosecution received 543 unique page views alone over a one month period.

Find more advice on everything you need to know about fire safety law and your responsibilities as a business owner or a responsible person at:
www.esfrs.org/workplaces

HOME SAFETY CAMPAIGNS

CHRISTMAS SAFETY CAMPAIGN

As part of our Christmas Safety campaign, we launched a series of engaging social media videos featuring staff from across the service, sharing practical tips to help communities stay safe during the festive season.

The campaign not only highlighted key seasonal risks such as candle safety, overloaded sockets, and E-device charging, but highlighted these messages from the trusted faces and voices of our Service in order to connect with the communities we serve.

The campaign was well received with a reach of 28,736 on Facebook and Instagram, 68,380 impressions on Nextdoor, 7,279 views on TikTok and 418 engagements across all four social media platforms, reaching a broad and diverse audience.



HOME SAFETY CAMPAIGNS



ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Tackling the rise in fires related to E-devices such as E-Bikes and E-Scooters is a priority for Government and the Office for Product Safety Standards (OPSS) is continually assessing the most effective regulatory interventions to implement to tackle this problem.

On 29 August 2024, we responded to a residential fire on Woburn Way, Eastbourne. The cause of the fire was linked to a lithium-ion battery from a hoverboard charger.

Following a fire investigation, we identified the Tyzygmy Lithium-Ion Battery Charger, sold via Amazon, as the cause. We shared our findings with the OPSS which led to the product being recalled from end users by Amazon. All affected consumers have been notified and refunded by Amazon.

More safety information can be found at: www.esfrs.org/guide-to-fire-safety-for-e-bikes-and-e-scooters.

We continue to support safety campaigns including OPSS messaging, utilising resources such as NFCC and FireKills #ChargeSafe videos. We have supported campaigns such as Electrical Fire Safety Week which took place in January 2025, to raise awareness of electrical fire risks in the home, and Register My Appliance Week urging households to take action and register their appliances to stay up to date on product safety recalls.

This year we also worked with ESCC Trading Standards to produce information on E-bikes, E-scooters, their batteries & chargers and home conversion kits for the #BuySafeBeSafe campaign. These leaflets, packed with crucial safety advice will be shared with businesses and homes during our Fire Safety and Home Safety visits.

Find out more about the campaign at: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/trading-standards/consumer/product-safety

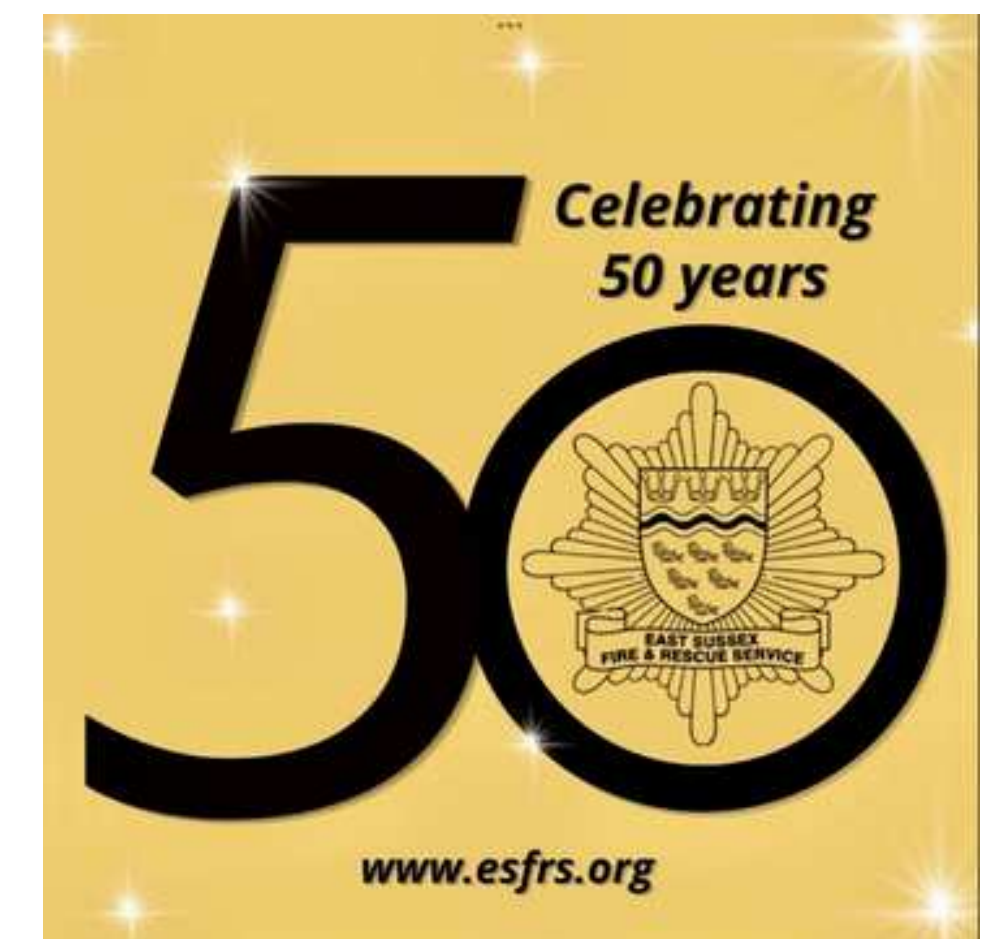
HISTORY — WEBSITE, EVENT, MERRYWEATHER

We began a year of celebrations marking 50 years since the Local Government Act 1972 brought about changes to the Fire and Rescue Service nationally, reorganising and amalgamating smaller brigades into larger ones.

The four Borough Brigades of Brighton, Eastbourne, Hastings, and East Sussex County Council Fire Brigade merged into one becoming East Sussex County Fire Brigade on 1 April 1974. As part of our celebrations to commemorate this golden anniversary year, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service launched its history website at <https://esfrshistory.org/>

On Thursday 4 July 2024, past and present staff, special guests, dignitaries, Fire Authority members and volunteers attended a milestone celebration and afternoon of history at Saltdean Lido in East Sussex. The Lido, iconic to Saltdean and East Sussex, has a history not only with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service but the Fire Service nationally, and therefore was deemed to be an ideal venue for such a meaningful occasion.

Furthermore, we collaborated with Bexhill College's media students, who filmed and edited a series of short videos to support the Merryweather Fire Engine restoration fundraiser. The project highlighted ESFRS's commitment to celebrating its rich history throughout the anniversary year and the videos shared across social media.



RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

We respond to a wide range of incidents and we always like to hear from those we have helped.



"My wife and I would just like to say a huge thank you to the crew who dealt with our chimney fire. We are fully aware that the fire could have easily spread into our roof, causing significant damage, however their prompt arrival and actions clearly prevented this from happening."

"My mother was very seriously ill and paramedics advised she was unlikely to survive. However all the emergency services worked together to get her into the ambulance and off to hospital very quickly on Friday. I am pleased to say that by Saturday morning she was sitting up in bed laughing and joking and disappointed to have missed all the excitement!"

"Please accept my eternal gratitude to you and all your amazing colleagues for saving my house from total annihilation – it's still standing!"

"Thank you so much for getting our horse Quinn (Harlequin) back on his feet. He is 32 and his back legs aren't so great now. He is a beloved member of our family for the last 27 years."



OUR PEOPLE — FIREFIGHTERS

We've trained and welcomed 12 new On-Call firefighters in 2024/25.

On-Call firefighters are ordinary people who combine their day jobs with being On-Call for Fire and Rescue situations and emergencies.

When the call comes in, they drop what they are doing and become part of the East Sussex Fire and Rescue team. It's a huge commitment, but an immensely rewarding way to serve the community, keep the public safe and earn an extra income.

All had to complete intensive training at our Service Training Centre. While there, they learnt and applied a wide range of practical skills including hose running, and safely pitching a variety of fire service ladders. They have also had input in First Aid, and the safe operation of fire extinguishers. In addition to the practical aspects, our trainee firefighters have had to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through a sequence of written assessments. Once they reached the halfway point in their training, they are trained in road traffic collision, working at height, water safety and culminating in a two-week breathing apparatus course.

It takes a huge amount of commitment and effort to be an On Call firefighter. Our new recruits should be proud of their achievements and will be an asset to the Service and their local communities.

In April 2025, we welcomed three new Wholetime (full time) firefighters. Their appointment comes alongside a Wholetime recruitment campaign, with plans to train the successful candidates later this year.

Find out more about joining us at www.esfrs.org/careers





Website: www.esfrs.org

Telephone: 0303 999 1000

Minicom: 01323 462 002 (available during opening hours)

Email: enquiries@esfrs.org

Headquarters

Church Lane

Lewes

East Sussex

BN7 2DZ