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# Fire and rescue incident statistics: April 2023 to March 2024

Data on fires, location, cause, motive, casualties and false alarms and Special Service Incidents attended for April 2023 to March 2024.

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# Introduction

Analysis of all incidents attended by the three Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in Wales. The most recent data relates to 2023-24 and is provisional as indicated in the charts with a [p]. The statistics are sourced from the Home Office's Incident Recording System (IRS) and include statistics on all incidents, fire-related fatalities and non-fatal casualties from fires.

## Main points

- Numbers of fires have seen a downward trend since 2001-02, falling by over 70%. Over the last ten years numbers have been relatively stable staying around 10,000 to 13,000. The 2023-24 figure is the lowest in the time series at 9,700.
- The number of fire false alarms has also fallen but to a lesser extent, only decreasing by 10% since 2001-02 and recent years have seen annual increases; the 2023-24 figure (17,581) is the highest since 2008-09.
- Numbers of Special Service Incidents (SSIs) have fluctuated throughout the time series, 2023-24 saw a 4% increase compared with the previous year.
- Compared with 2022-23, numbers of fires fell by 12% in 2023-24; numbers of primary fires saw no percentage change whilst there was a 19% decrease in the number of secondary fires.
- There were 18 fatal casualties from fires in Wales in 2023-24. This is 4 more than in 2022-23.
- There were 366 non-fatal casualties in 2023-24, a decrease of 13% compared with 2022-23.

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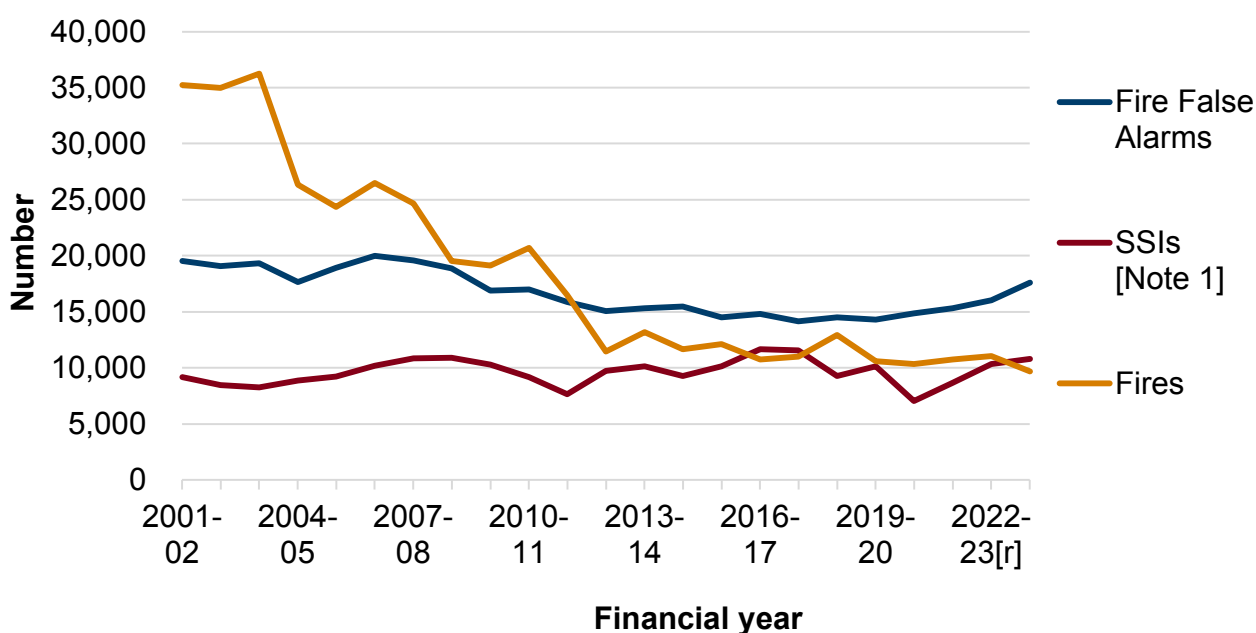
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# All fire and rescue incidents attended

FRA's attended 38,061 incidents in the year ending March 2024, an increase of 2% compared with 2022-23. It is the highest figure since 2013-14 and the third annual increase in a row. The number of incidents attended by FRAs peaked in 2003/04 at nearly 64,000 incidents, but has remained below 40,000 since 2011-12.

**Figure 1: All attendances by FRAs in Wales, 2001-02 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 1: Line chart showing a time series from 2001-02 for fires, fire false alarms and SSIs. The number of fires attended has seen a 72% decrease since 2001-02, with the largest decreases occurring before 2012-13; in recent years the numbers have levelled out somewhat. Numbers of false alarms

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have also seen a downward trend over the time series, although numbers have increased annually since 2019-20. Numbers of SSIs have fluctuated since 2001-02; overall there has been an increase of 18% since 2001-02. 2023-24 is one of three years in the timeseries where attendances at SSIs have outnumbered fires.

Source: [Fire incident data on StatsWales](#)

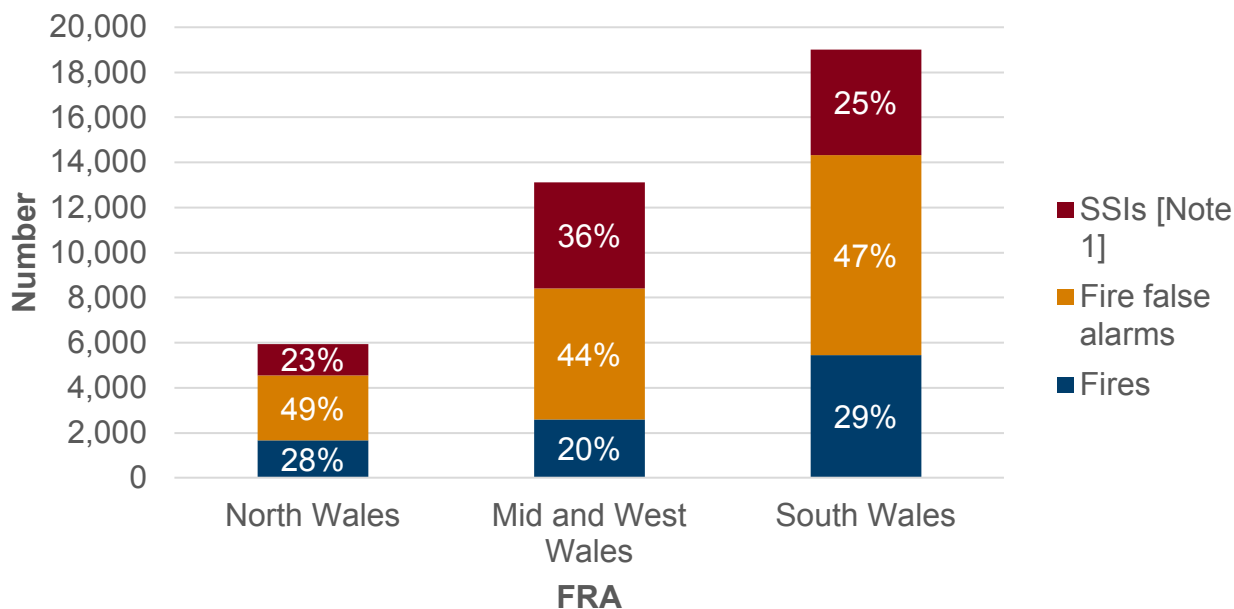
[Note 1] Including SSI false alarms.

[p] Provisional data

[r] Revised data

Of all attendances, 9,700 (25%) were at fires, 17,581 were fire false alarm incidents (46% of attendances) and 10,780 SSIs including SSI false alarms (28%).

**Figure 2: Attendances at fire and rescue incidents 2023-24, by FRA [p]**



Description of Figure 2: A stacked bar chart showing the proportion and number of fires, fire false alarms and SSIs attended in 2023-24 for each FRA. In all three FRAs the largest category of incident type were fire false alarms (around two fifths or more of attendances). In North Wales and South Wales, fires make up the second largest category but in Mid and West Wales SSIs are the second largest category.

Source: [Fire incident data on StatsWales](#)

[Note 1] SSI data include numbers of SSI false alarms.

[p] Provisional data.

# Fires attended

Fires are classed as primary, secondary or chimney fires.

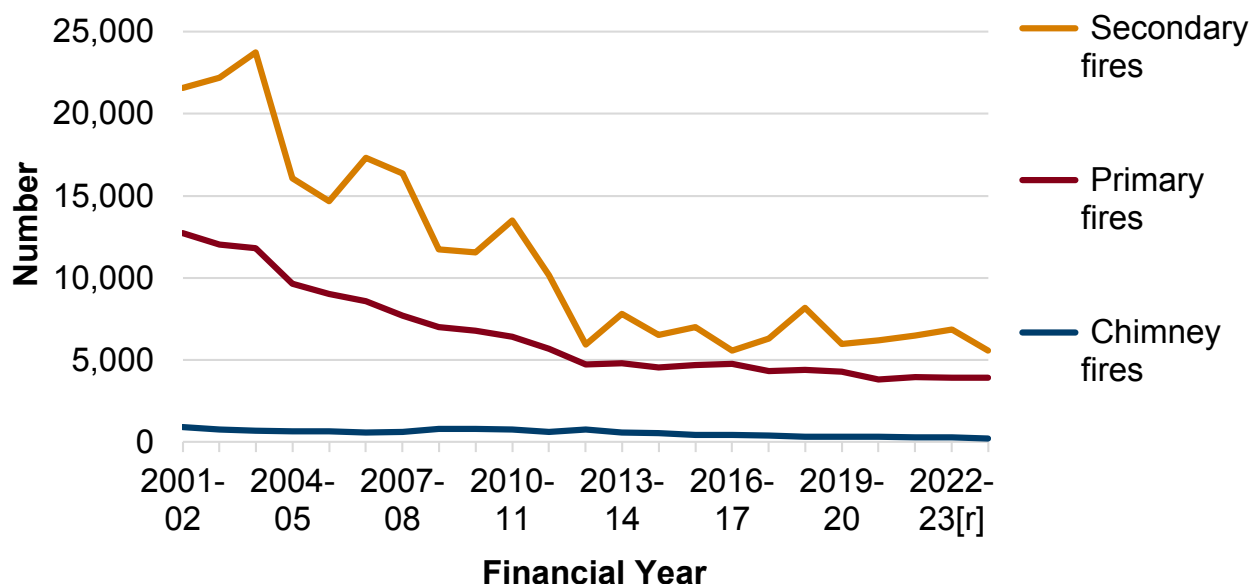
Primary fires include all fires in non-derelict buildings and vehicles or in outdoor structures, or any fire involving casualties or rescues, or fires attended by five or more appliances.

Secondary fires are mainly outdoor fires including grassland and refuse fires unless they involve casualties or rescues or are attended by five or more appliances. They include fires in single derelict buildings, derelict road vehicles and derelict outdoor structures.

Chimney fires are reportable fires in occupied buildings where the fire was confined within the chimney structure and did not involve casualties or rescues or are attended by 5 or more appliances.



**Figure 3: Fires by fire type, 2001-02 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 3: A line chart showing the number of primary, secondary and chimney fires since 2001-02. Most fires are classed as secondary fires and numbers have fluctuated over the years. However, there is an obvious downward trend in both secondary and primary fires. It is less obvious for chimney fires due to the relatively small numbers.

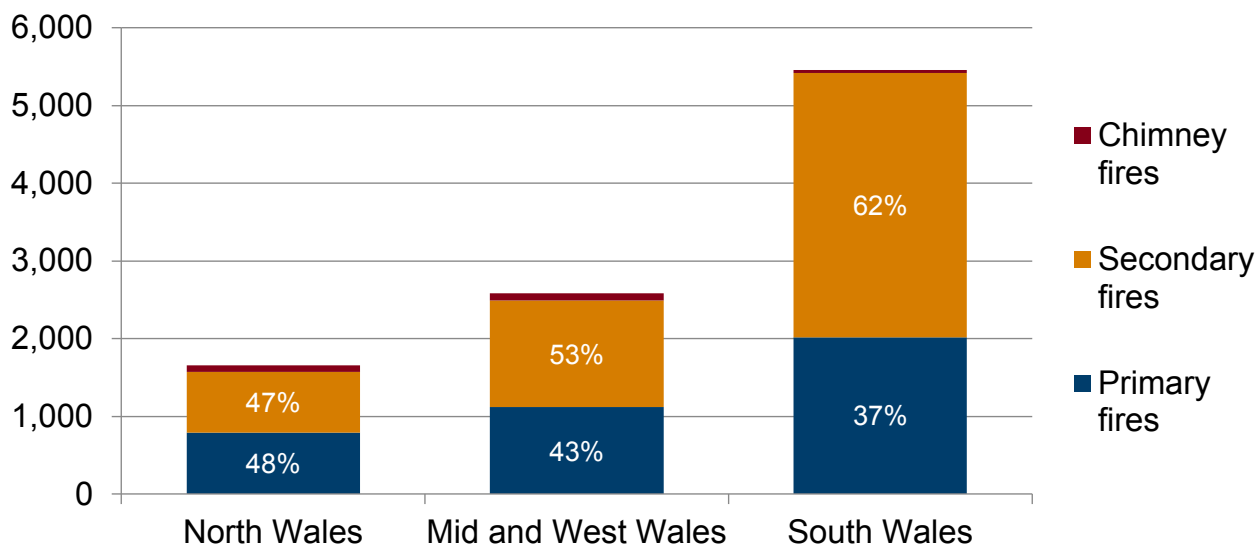
In 2023-24 there was no percentage change in the number of primary fires in Wales, compared with 2022-23. The number of secondary fires and chimney fires fell by 19% and 21% respectively compared with the previous year.

Source: [Fire incident data on StatsWales](#)

[p] Provisional data

[r] Revised data

**Figure 4: Fires by fire type and FRA 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 4: A stacked bar chart showing attendance for each FRA at chimney fires, secondary fire and primary fires in 2023-24. The chart shows in North Wales fires were almost a 50/50 split between secondary and primary fires. In Mid and West Wales there were more secondary fires (more than half of fires attended) and in South Wales around three-fifths were secondary fires. In all FRAs chimney fires made up the smallest proportion, between 5% (in North Wales) and 1% (in South Wales).

[p] Provisional data

## Primary fires

In 2023-24 there was a small increase in the number of primary fires compared with the previous year, to 3,924; this resulted in no percentage change. Only South Wales saw an increase in the number of primary fires (up 7% compared with the number in 2022-23) to the highest figure since 2016-17. Numbers in

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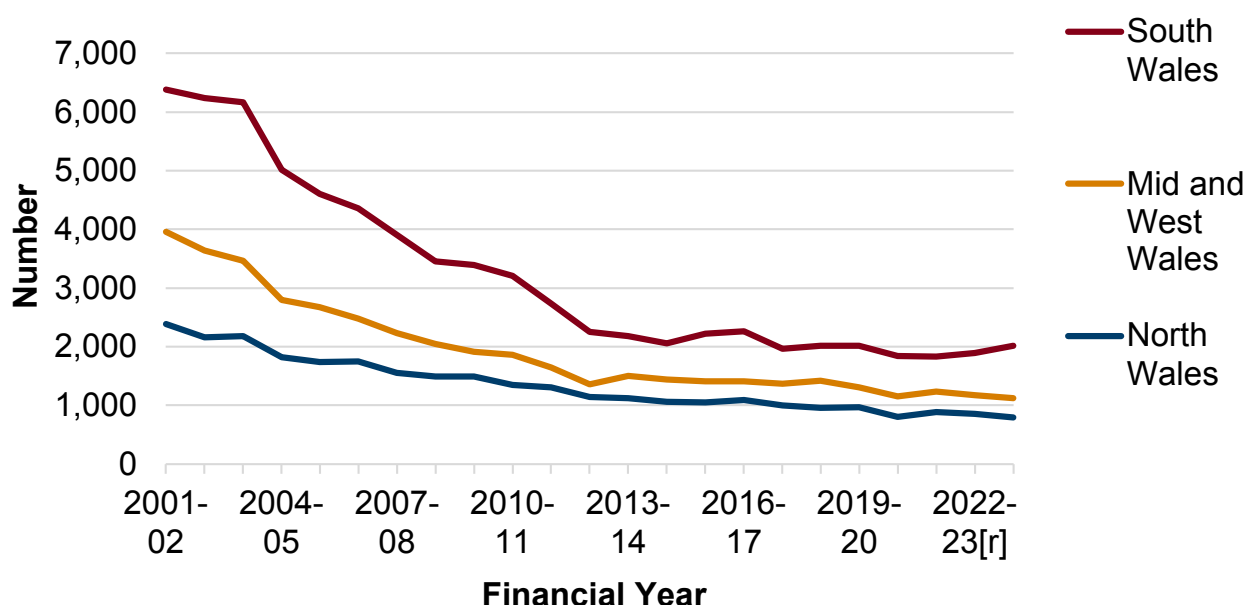
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North Wales fell by 7% and in Mid and West Wales there was a 5% decrease, both figures for 2023-24 were the lowest in the time series.

Since 2001-02 the number of primary fires has fallen by 72% in Mid and West Wales, by 68% in South Wales and by 67% in North Wales.

**Figure 5: Number of primary fires by FRA, 2001-02 to 2023-24 [p]**



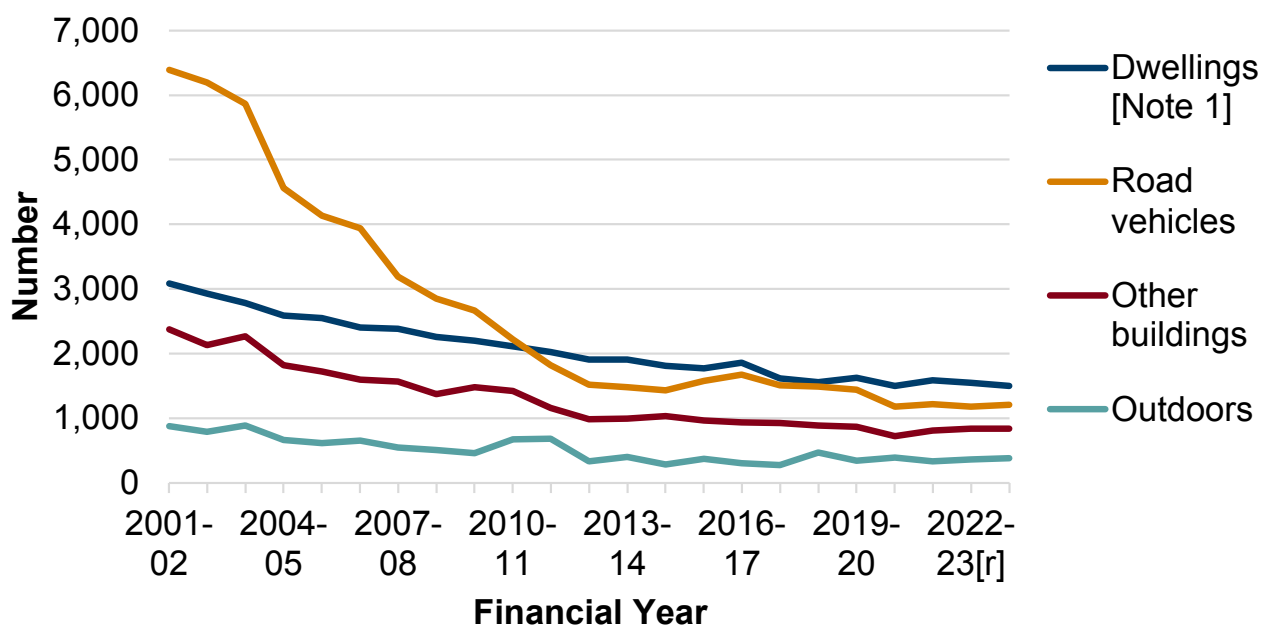
Description of Figure 5: A line chart showing the number of primary fires by fire and rescue authority since 2001-02. Numbers of fires in all three FRAs show a general downward trend. South Wales FRA have consistently attended the most primary fires whilst North Wales FRA attended the fewest.

Source: [Primary fires on StatsWales](#)

[p] Provisional data

[r] Revised data

**Figure 6: Number of primary fires by location, 2001-02 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 6: A line chart showing the numbers of fires in dwellings, other buildings, road vehicles and other outdoor locations each year from 2001-02 to 2023-24. The general trend is downward for all categories, but this is most noticeable amongst road vehicles which saw a particularly steep decrease between 2001-02 and 2012-13.

Source: [Primary fires on StatsWales](#)

[Note 1] Dwellings include caravans, houseboats and other non-building structures used solely as a permanent dwelling.

[p] Provisional data

[r] Revised data

In 2023-24, 38% of all primary fires were in dwellings, 31% in road vehicles, 21% in other buildings and 10% were outdoor fires. The number of fires in dwellings fell by 3% compared with the previous year. Primary outdoors fires increased by 5% whilst road vehicle fires increased by 2%. There was no percentage change in the number of fires in other buildings.

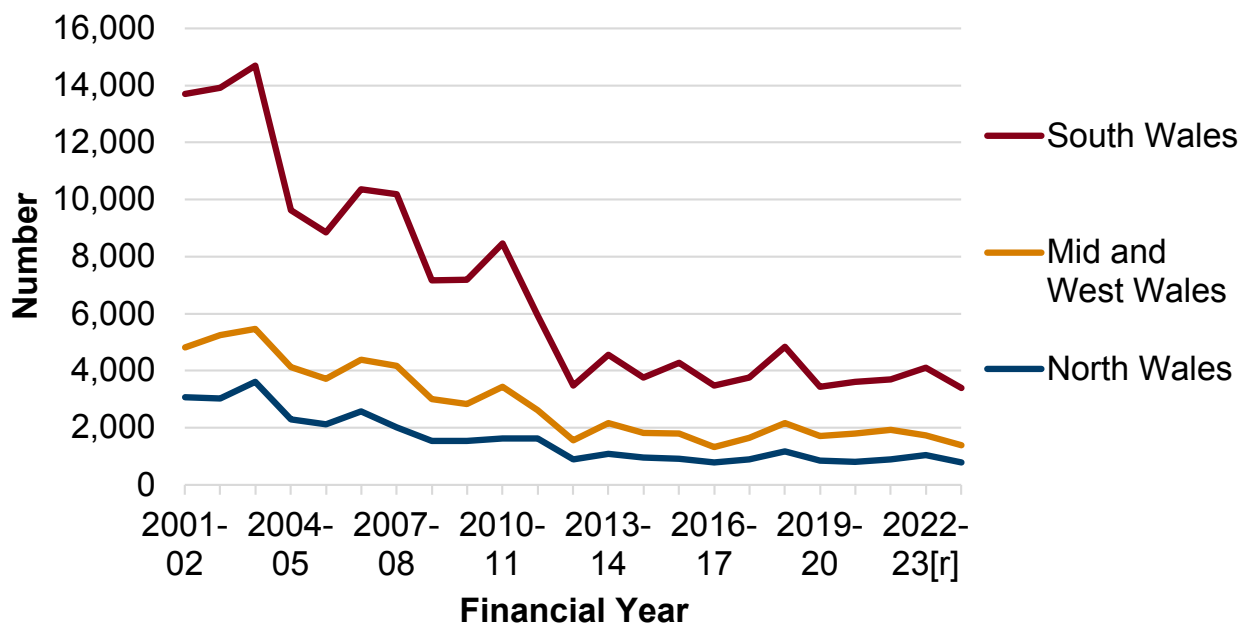
In 2023-24 the number of dwelling fires was around half the figure seen in 2001-02 and the lowest in the time series.

Numbers of primary fires in road vehicles in Wales have fallen by 81% since 2001-02.

## Secondary fires

Secondary fires are the most common category of fire attended by Welsh FRAs, accounting for 61% of all fires since 2001-02 and 57% of those attended in 2023-24. In 2023-24 numbers of secondary fires fell by 19% compared with 2022-23, to 5,558, the lowest number in the time series. All 3 FRA saw decreases compared with the previous year; in North Wales numbers fell by 25%, in Mid and West Wales by 21% and in South Wales by 17%.

**Figure 7: Number of secondary fires by FRA, 2001-02 to 2022-23 [p]**



Description of Figure 5: A line chart showing the number of secondary fires for each FRA in Wales from 2001-02. Numbers of secondary fires in all 3 Welsh FRAs have seen substantial falls since 2001-02; 75% in North Wales and South Wales, and by 71% in Mid and West Wales.

Source: [Secondary fires on StatsWales](#)

[p] Provisional data

[r] Revised data

In 2023-24, 63% of secondary fires were classed as refuse fires. The number of these fires fell by 7% from 3,754 in 2022-23 to 3,497 in 2023-24.

In 2023-24, 29% of (1,603) secondary fires occurred on grassland, woodland, and/or cropland, a decrease of 34% in the number of such fires compared with

2022-23.

## Chimney fires

During 2023-24, there were 218 chimney fires in Wales, a decrease of 21% compared with 2022-23 and the lowest number in the time series. Most of these fires occurred in dwellings (94%).

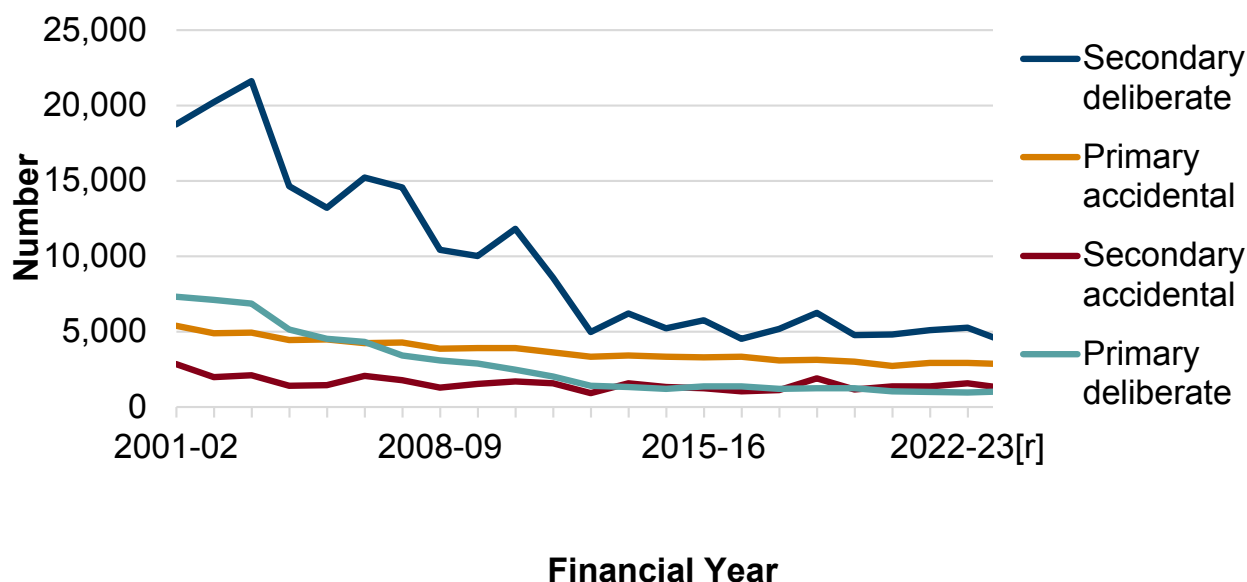
Mid and West Wales and North Wales saw numbers decrease by 22% and 28% respectively compared with the previous year. South Wales saw no percentage change.

## Fires by motive

In 2023-24, there were 4,321 accidental fires (including accidental chimney fires). The number fell by 10% compared to the previous year, and since 2001-02 the number has fallen by more than 50%. Accidental fires accounted for 45% of all fires, 73% of all primary fires and 22% of secondary fires.

There were 5,379 deliberate fires in 2023-24, a fall of 14% compared with 2022-23; 80% deliberate fires in 2023-24 were secondary fires.

**Figure 8: Number of fires by type and motive, 2001-02 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 8: A line chart showing numbers of primary and secondary fires by motive (accidental or deliberate) in a time series from 2001-02. The chart shows that numbers of deliberate secondary fires saw an obvious downward trend between 2001-02 and 2012-13 and have since been prone to fluctuation. The other categories shown are less volatile but also show a downward trend.

Source: [Fires by motive on StatsWales](#)

[p] Provisional data

[r] Revised data

In 2023-24 the number of accidental primary fires decreased by 2% whilst the number of accidental secondary fires decreased by 22% (compared with 2022-23).



Numbers of primary deliberate fires rose by 7%, whilst secondary deliberate fires decreased 18%.

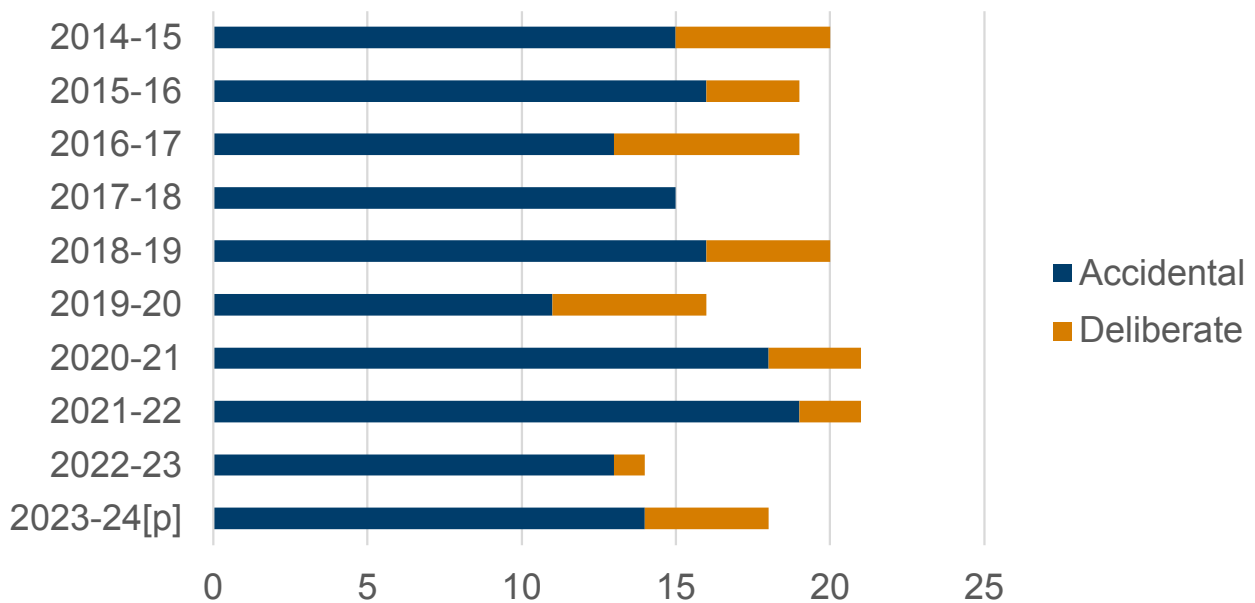
## Fire-related fatalities and casualties

### Fire fatalities

A fatal casualty is defined as a person whose death is the direct or indirect result of injuries caused by a fire incident, even if the death occurred weeks or months later.

There were 18 fatal casualties during 2023-24. This is 4 more than in the previous year although that had been the lowest number in the timeseries. The overall trend since 2001-02 (when there were 38 fatalities) has been downward, however numbers are small and prone to fluctuation.

**Figure 9: Number of fatal casualties from fires by motive, 2014-15 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 9: A bar chart showing numbers of fatalities from fires attended by Welsh FRA by motive (accidental or deliberate) from 2014-15 to 2023-24. The chart shows the majority of fatalities occur in accidental fires.

Source: [Fire related fatalities on StatsWales](#)

[p] Provisional data

Since 2001-02, 77% of fatalities have occurred in dwelling fires, equating to a total of 384 out of 496 fatalities. In 2023-24 78% of fatalities were the result of dwelling fires; there were 2 more fatalities in dwelling fires than in the previous year.

## Non-fatal fire casualties

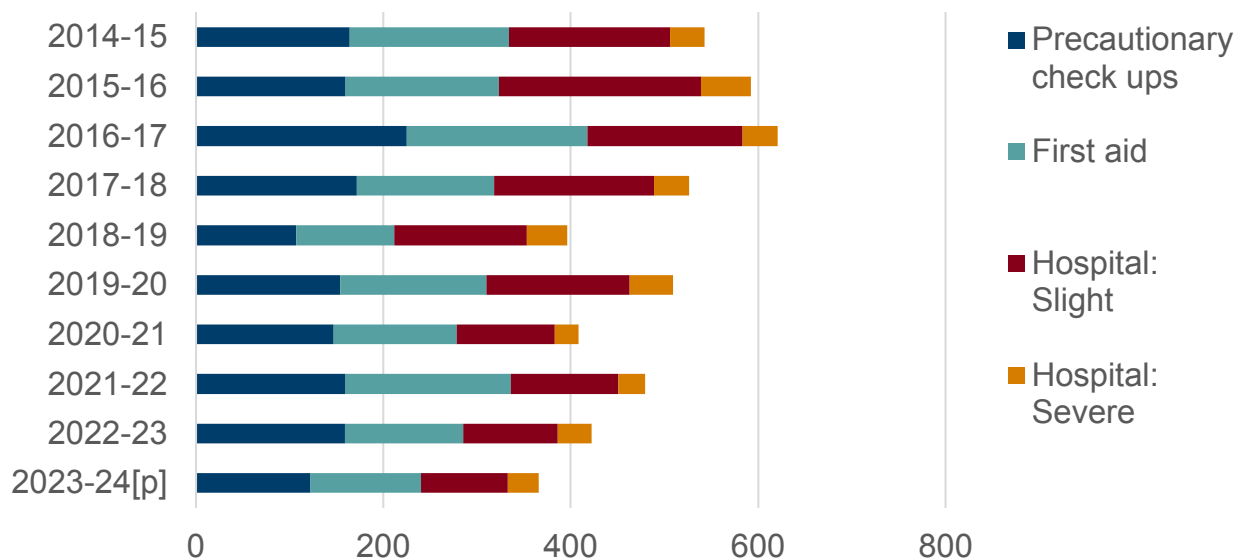
From April 2009 non-fatal casualties are recorded as being in one of four classes of severity as follows:

1. Victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be serious
2. Victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be slight
3. First aid given at scene
4. Precautionary check recommended. This is when an individual is sent to hospital or advised to see a doctor as a precaution, having no obvious injury or distress.

In 2023-24 there were 366 non-fatal casualties, a fall of 13% compared with 2022-23 and the lowest number in the available time series (from 2001-02). The overall trend over the last ten years has been downward, although the numbers have fluctuated.

All classes of severity saw a decrease compared with 2022-23. Those receiving first aid or sent for precautionary checks fell by 16% whilst both those sent to hospital with slight injuries and those with serious injuries fell by 8%. In 2023-24, 66% of non-fatal casualties received first aid or were advised to have a precautionary check-up. A further 25% of non-fatal casualties were taken to hospital with slight injuries and the remaining 9% were taken to hospital with severe injuries.

**Figure 10: Number of non-fatal casualties from fires by severity of injury, 2014-15 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 10: A bar chart showing the number of non-fatal casualties from fires by severity of injury. Data relates to 2014-15 to 2023-24. The chart shows a general downward trend, most noticeably in the number of those going to hospital with slight injuries.

Source: [Non-fatal casualties from fires on StatsWales](#)

[p] Provisional data

## Fire false alarms

A fire false alarm is defined as an event in which the FRA was called to a reported fire which turned out not to exist.

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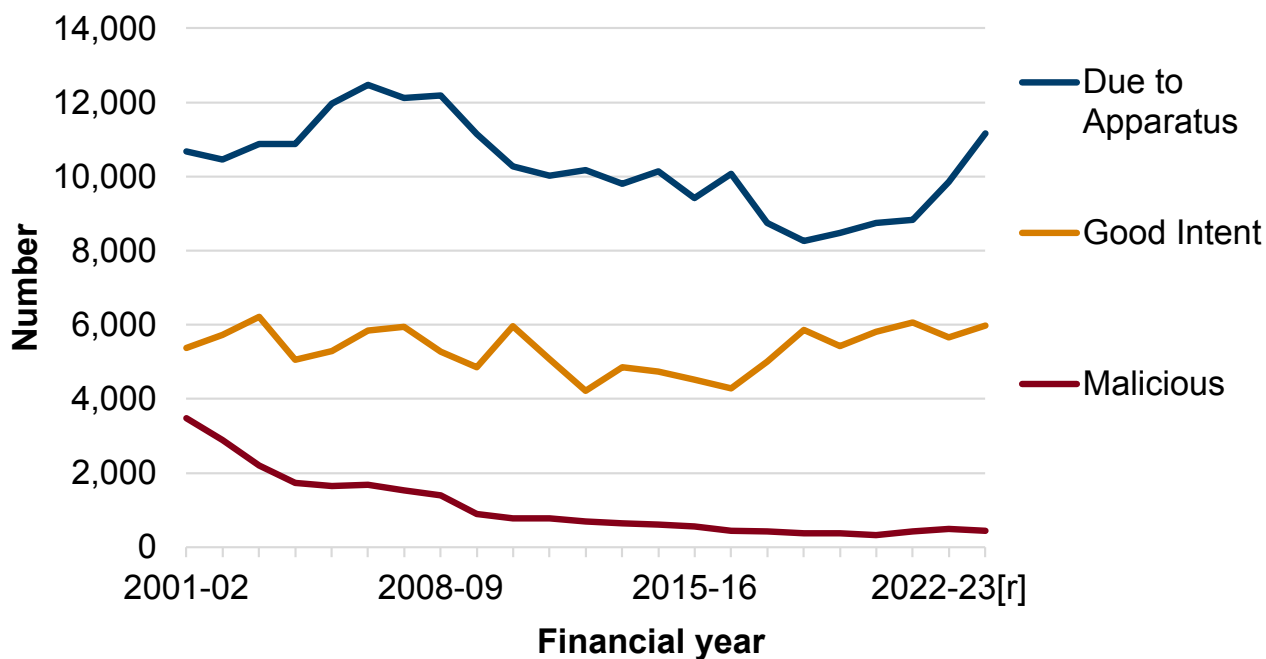
## Fire false alarm categories

- Malicious, where the call is deliberately for a non-existent fire-related event
- Good intent, in which the call was made in good faith in the belief that there was a fire to attend
- Due to apparatus, in which the call was initiated by the operation of fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment

In 2023-24 there were 17,581 fire false alarms in Wales, up from 16,008 in 2022-23, an increase of 10%. This is the fourth consecutive annual rise; the figure is the highest since 2008-09. However, this number is still 10% lower than that in 2001-02.

Only numbers of malicious fire false alarms fell in 2023-24 compared with 2022-23 (down 12%). False alarms due to apparatus rose by 13% whilst numbers of good intent fire false alarms increased by 6%.

**Figure 11: Number of fire false alarms by reason, 2001-02 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 11: A line chart showing numbers of false alarms, by type (malicious, due to apparatus or due to good intent). The chart shows most fire false alarms are due to apparatus. Numbers of these false alarms had seen a general downward trend since 2010-11 but in recent years have started to rise again; this is most evident in the increase in numbers of false alarms due to apparatus. Numbers of malicious fire false alarms have seen a more obvious downward trend.

Source: [Fire false alarms on StatsWales](#)

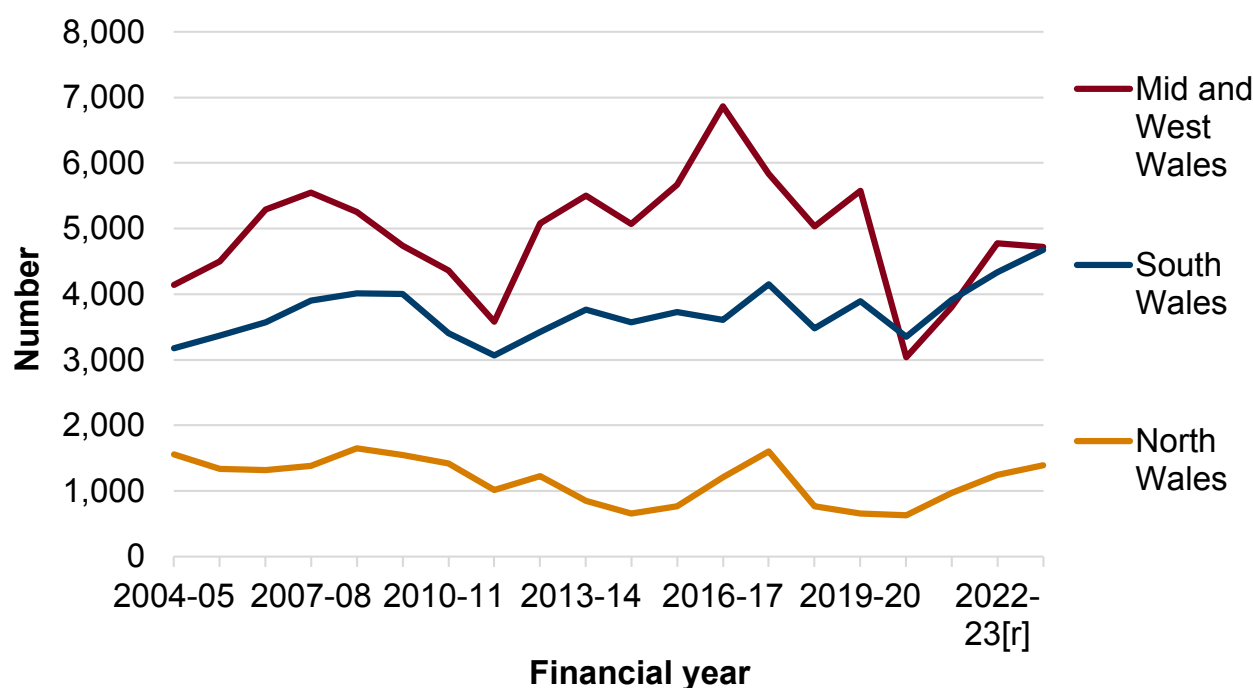
[p] Provisional data

[r] Revised data

## Special service incidents (SSIs)

In 2023-24, 28% of all incidents attended by FRAs in Wales were SSIs. These incidents include road traffic collisions, flooding incidents, medical incidents and so on. Unlike other incident types, overall numbers of SSIs haven't seen a consistent downward trend and are prone to fluctuation.

**Figure 12: Number of SSIs attended by Fire and Rescue Authority, 2004-05 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 9: A line chart showing numbers of SSIs, by FRA from 2004-05.

The chart shows throughout the time series that North Wales attend the fewest

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SSIs and in the last three years Mid and West Wales and South Wales have attended similar numbers of SSIs. Numbers of SSIs fell sharply at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21, particularly in Mid and West Wales but have since risen to pre-pandemic levels

Source: [Special Service Incidents on StatsWales](#)

[p] Provisional data

[r] Revised data

Overall attendance at SSIs increased by 4% in 2023-24; attendances at SSIs rose by 12% in North Wales and by 8% in South Wales; in Mid and West Wales numbers of SSIs fell by 1%. The increase in SSIs in North Wales is mainly due to a rise in the number of attendances at flooding incidents and assisting other agencies.

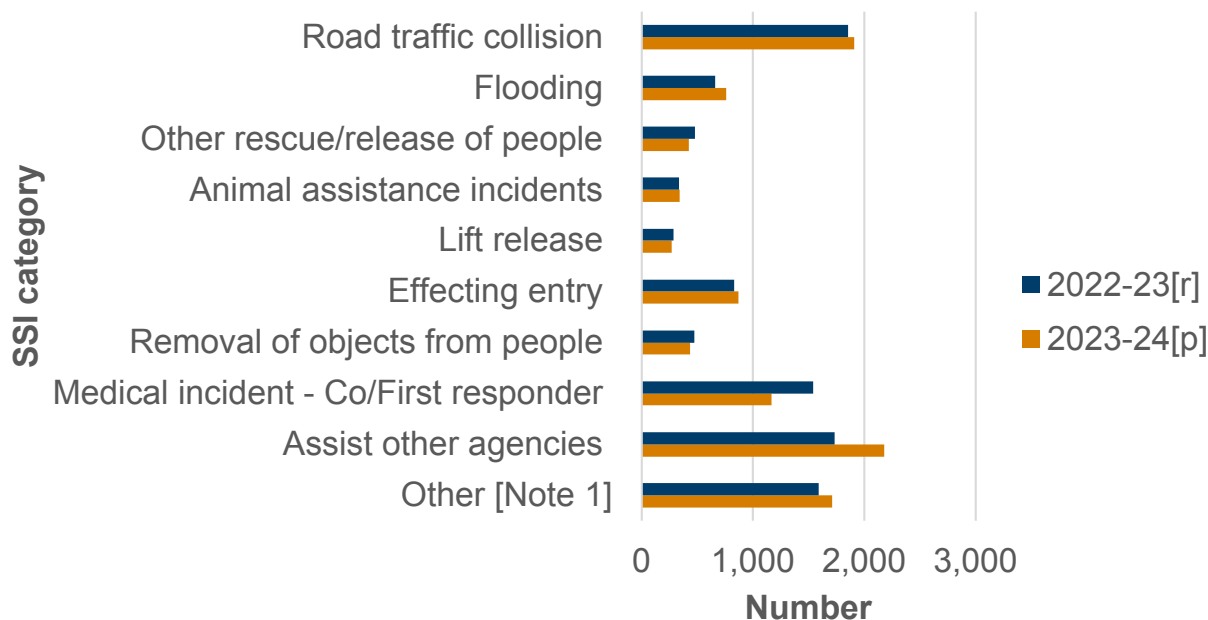
Road traffic collisions accounted for almost a fifth of SSIs and attendance at these incidents rose by 3% compared to 2022-23.

Numbers of attendances at medical incidents fell by 24% compared with 2022-23, although this follows a year when such incidents had more than doubled.

Flooding incidents increased by 15% and made up 7% of SSI attendances in 2023-24.



**Figure 13: Number of SSIs by type, 2022-23 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 13: A bar chart showing the number of SSIs attended by FRAs in Wales, by type of incident (for example road traffic collision, flooding and so on).

Source: [Special Service Incidents on StatsWales](#)

[Note 1] ‘Other’ includes ‘other transport incident’, ‘hazardous materials incidents’, ‘making safe’, ‘rescue or evacuation from water’ ‘spills and leaks’, ‘suicide/attempted suicide’, ‘evacuation’, ‘water provision’, ‘advice only’, ‘standby’ and ‘services not required’. SSI false alarms are not included in this chart.

[r] Revised data

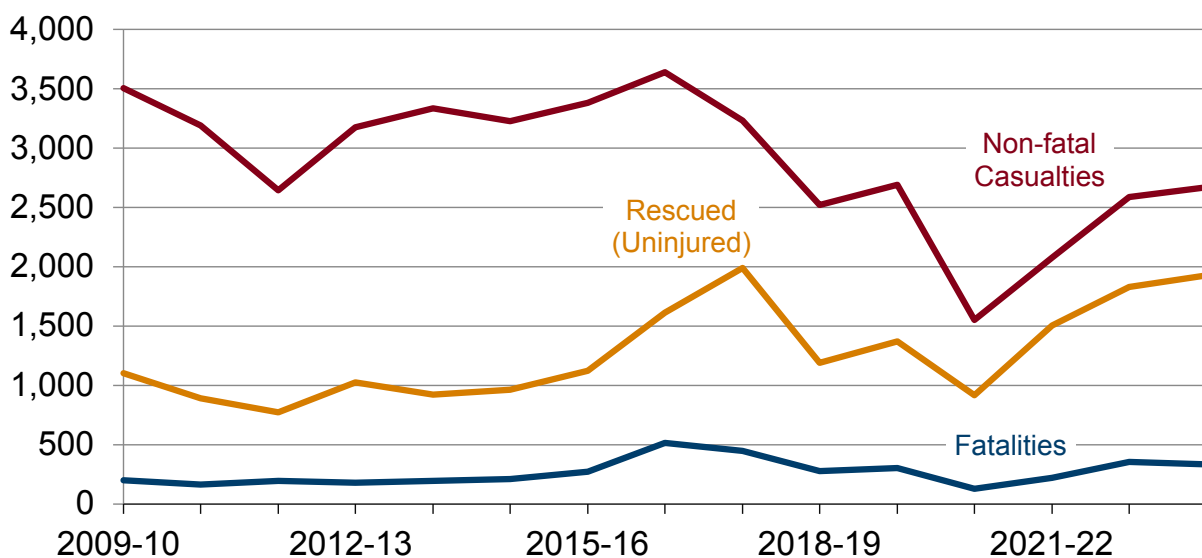
[p] Provisional data

## Casualties and rescues from SSIs

There are consistently more casualties and rescues from SSIs than from fires, though numbers of casualties in SSIs include where the fire service are assisting the ambulance services. In 2023-24 there were 330 fatalities from SSIs, a 6% decrease compared with 2022-23.

There were 2,668 non-fatal casualties from SSIs in 2023-24, a rise of 3% compared with 2022-23. Road traffic collisions accounted for 44% of non-fatal casualties in 2023-24 whilst medical incidents accounted for 13%.

**Figure 14: Number of SSI related fatalities, non-fatal casualties and rescues 2009-10 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 14: A line chart showing the number of fatalities, non-fatal casualties and rescues involved in SSIs for the years 2009-10 to 2023-24.

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There has been a noticeable downward trend in the number of non-fatal casualties over the time series. All categories of casualties fell at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21 but have since risen again.

Source: [Special Service Incidents attended by FRA](#)

[p] Provisional data

[r] Revised data

## Smoke alarms

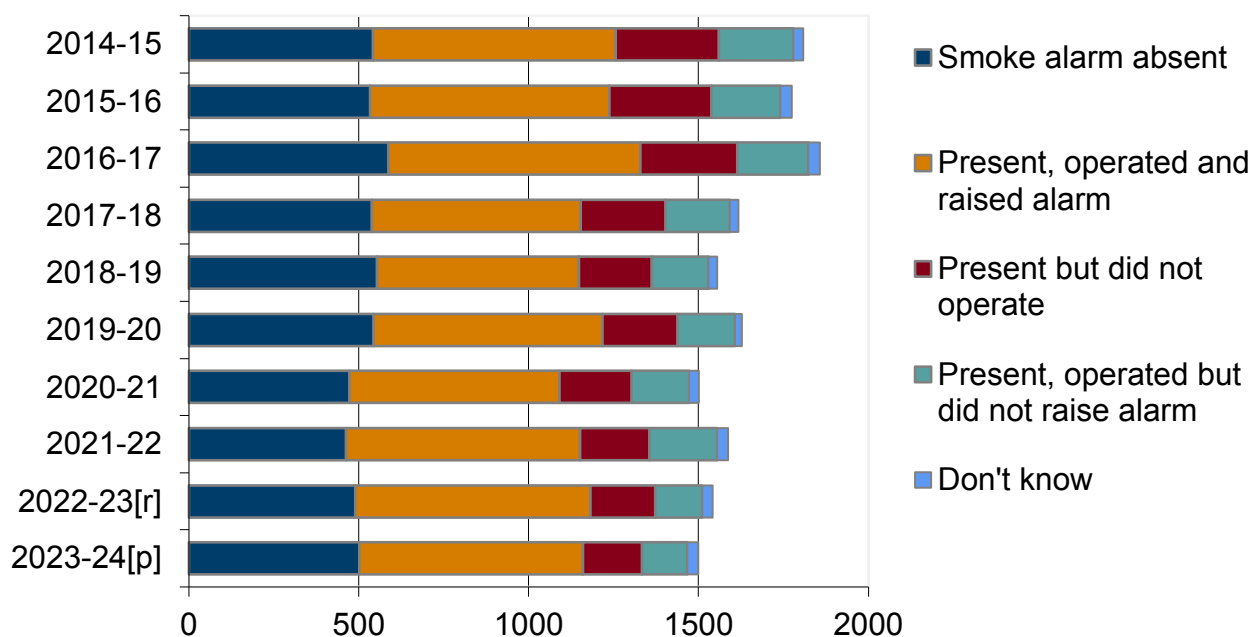
This section looks at the presence and operation of smoke alarms at fires in buildings attended by the FRA.

Some buildings have multiple smoke alarms and when considering the operation of the smoke alarm the following hierarchy has been applied:

1. Present, operated and raised the alarm
2. Present, operated but didn't raise alarm
3. Present but didn't operate

It should be noted that in many cases the reason a smoke alarm that operates does not raise the alarm is that the alarm has already been raised prior to the operation of this smoke alarm.

**Figure 15: Number of fires in dwellings by presence and operation of smoke detectors, 2014-15 to 2023-24 [p]**  
**[Note 1]**



Description of Figure 15: Bar chart showing number of fires in dwellings by presence and operation of smoke alarms. Data relates to 2014-15 to 2023-24. A smoke alarm was not present in around a third of dwelling fires in 2023-24, whilst in 44% of dwelling fires a smoke alarm operated and raised the alarm. In a further 12% of cases a smoke alarm was present but failed to operate. In 2% of dwelling fires, it was unknown whether there was a smoke alarm.

Source: [Number of building fires by smoke alarm operation \(StatsWales\)](#)

[Note 1] Dwellings include caravans, houseboats and other non-building structures used solely as a permanent dwelling.

[p] Provisional data.

[r] Revised data

Since 2001-02 the number of dwelling fires where there was no smoke alarm has fallen by 68%. For 2023-24, in only 12% of dwelling fires in North Wales a smoke alarm was absent; percentages are higher for Mid and West Wales and South Wales (49% and 35% respectively).

Of the 16 fires occurring in schools in 2023-24, a smoke alarm was present and operated correctly in 94% of incidents, this equates to all but one of the fires attended. In the remaining incident a smoke alarm was present but failed to operate.

In 2023-24 there were 27 fires in hospitals and medical facilities <sup>[footnote 1]</sup>, 7 fewer than in the previous year. A smoke alarm was present and operated correctly in 85% of fires in hospitals in 2023-24. In 15% of hospital fires a smoke alarm was present but failed to operate. Smoke alarms were present at all fires in 2023-24.

## Cause and source

The cause of fire is the defect, act or omission leading to ignition of the fire.

The source of ignition is the source of the flame, spark or heat that started the fire.

This information is collected for primary fires, but not secondary or chimney fires.

## Cause of fire

In comparison with 2022-23, there were decreases in the number of accidental primary fires for most categories of cause, the exceptions being faulty leads or

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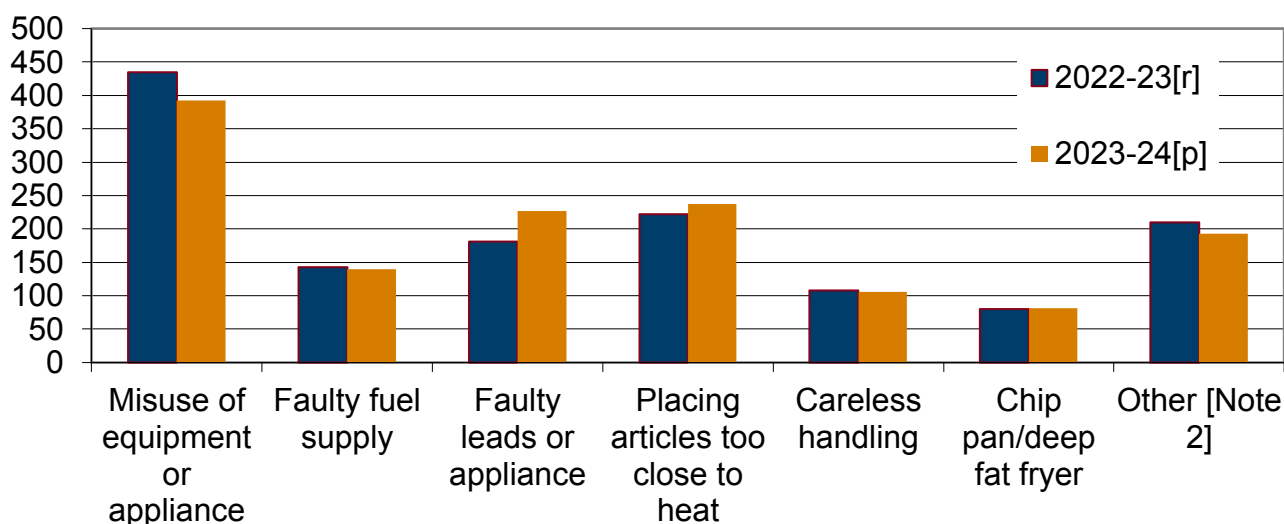
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appliances (up 6%), placing articles too close to heat (up 3%) and careless handling (up 18%).

Faulty leads or appliances was the largest single identified cause of accidental primary fires in 2023-24 (17%). Misuse of equipment or appliances accounted for 16% of accidental primary fires. Smaller categories have been grouped together as 'other accidental', accounting for 33% of accidental primary fires.

**Figure 16: Number of accidental dwelling fires by cause, 2022-23 and 2023-24 [p] [Note 1]**



Description of Figure 16: A bar chart showing the number of accidental dwelling fires by cause, years 2022-23 to 2023-24. The chart shows that for 2023-24 there were decreases in the number of accidental dwelling fires for most categories; those with increases were faulty leads of appliance, placing articles too close to heat and chip pan/deep fat fryers.

Misuse of equipment continues to be the biggest cause of accidental dwelling fires.

Source: **Accidental primary fires by cause and source of ignition (StatsWales)**

[Note 1] Dwellings include caravans, houseboats and other non-building structures used solely as a permanent dwelling.

[Note 2] 'Other' includes 'Accumulation of flammable material', 'Bonfire going out of control', 'Chimney fire', 'Natural occurrence', 'Other', 'Other intentional burning, going out of control', 'Overheating, unknown cause', 'Person too close to heat source (or fire)', 'Playing with fire (or heat source)', 'Vehicle crash or collision'.

[r] Revised data.

[p] Provisional data.

The misuse of equipment or appliances was the main cause of accidental fires in dwellings, with 392 cases recorded in 2023-24. This equates to 28% of accidental dwelling fires in 2023-24 although the number decreased by 10%. Accidental dwelling fires caused by faulty leads and appliances increased by 25%.

## Source of ignition

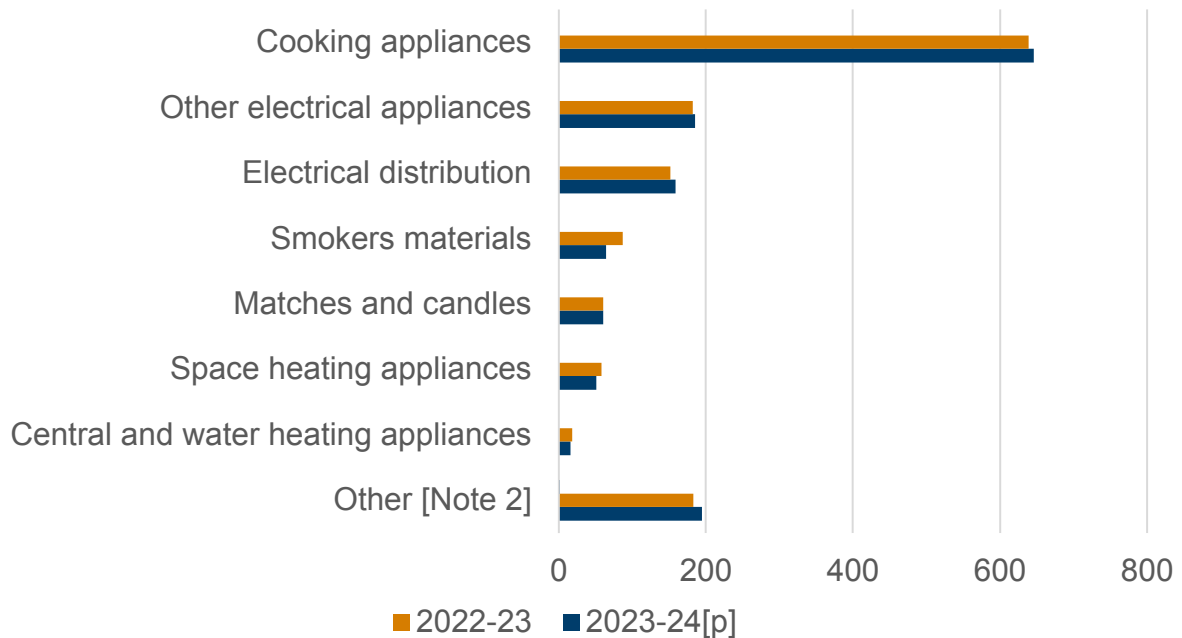
Cooking appliances were recorded as the main source of accidental primary fires and in 2023-24, there were 731 cases (26% of accidental primary fires), a similar number to the previous year. In 11% of accidental primary fires the source was recorded as electrical distribution. The larger categories such as cooking appliances, electrical distribution and other electrical appliances saw small changes compared with the previous year. All but one category with fewer than 100 incidents saw a decrease; central and water heating appliances saw no percentage change.

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**Figure 17: Number of accidental dwelling fires by source of ignition, 2022-23 and 2023-24 [p] [Note 1]**



Description of Figure 17: A bar chart showing number of accidental dwelling fires by source of ignition, years 2022-23 and 2023-24. The chart shows the largest single source of ignition in accidental dwelling fires is cooking appliances (47% in 2023-24).

Source: [Accidental primary fires by cause and source of ignition \(StatsWales\)](#)

[Note 1] Dwellings include caravans, houseboats and other non-building structures used solely as a permanent dwelling.

[Note 2] ‘Other’ includes ‘Blowlamps and welding equipment’, ‘Bombs and explosives’, ‘Chimney’, ‘Electric lighting’, ‘Fireworks’, ‘Fuel/Chemical’, ‘Industrial equipment’, ‘Oil and Incense burners’, ‘Naked flame’, ‘Natural occurrence’, ‘Office equipment’, ‘Other’, ‘Other appliance or equipment’, ‘Spread from



secondary fire', 'Vehicle related', 'Wet hay' and other electrical appliances where the power source is not recorded as electrical.

[p] Provisional data.

Accidental dwelling fires caused by smokers' materials in 2023-24 saw a fall of 26% (compared with 2022-23) and accounted for 5% of accidental dwelling fires.

In 2023-24 the number of accidental fires in dwellings caused by cooking appliances saw a small increase (up 1%) compared with the previous year but was still the second lowest number in the time series. Fires ignited by cooking appliances have been responsible for 13% of fatalities and 53% of non-fatal casualties in accidental dwelling fires since 2009-10. Over the same period 'smokers' materials' accounted for 33% of fatalities and 9% of non-fatal casualties in accidental dwelling fires. Numbers of fatalities related to any source of ignition are small and trends are difficult to determine, however it would appear there has been a drop in the number of non-fatal casualties in fires where the source was smokers' materials; a 37% reduction in 2022-23 and 26% reduction in 2023-24 (compared with respective previous years).

In 2023-24, 26% of accidental dwelling fires were caused by the misuse of equipment or appliances resulting in cooking appliances igniting. In the same year, 128 of the 185 accidental fires in dwellings where the source was recorded as 'other electrical appliance' were due to faulty leads (69%).

## Response times

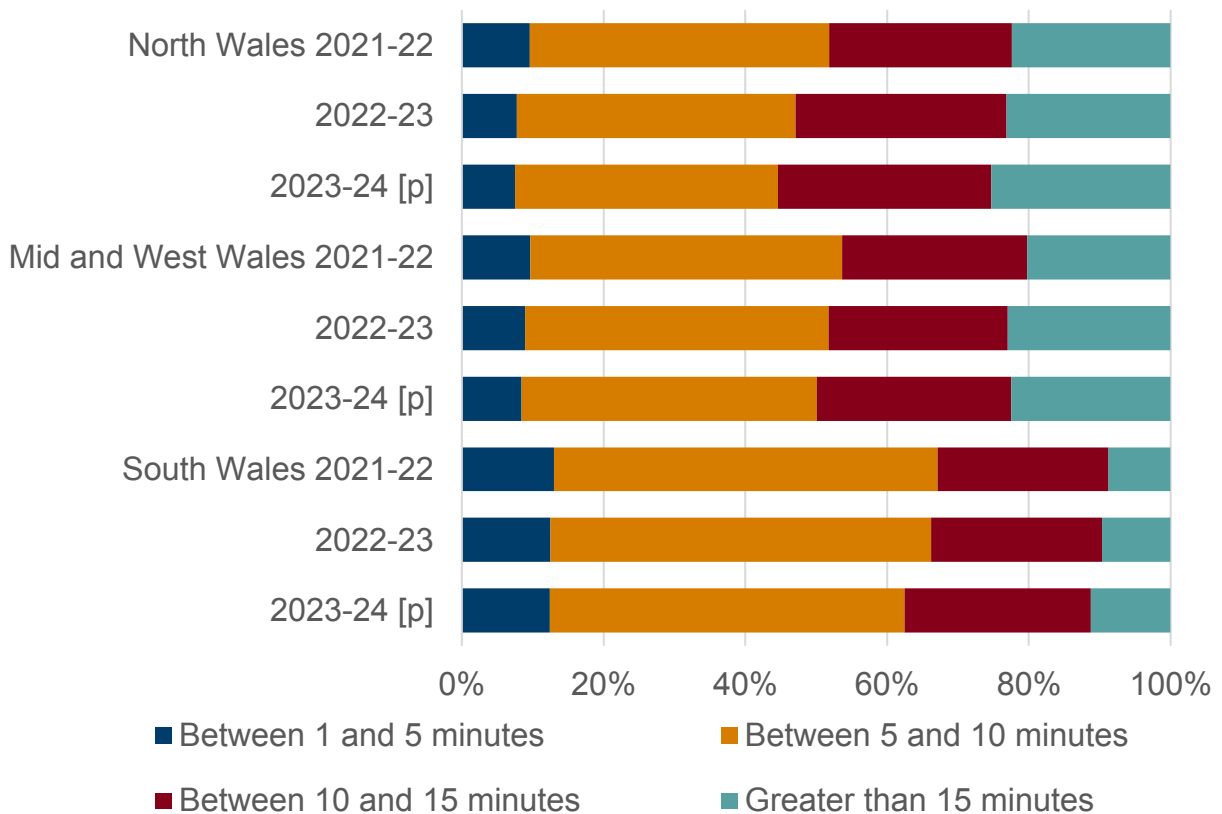
The response times presented here are based on comparisons between the time that the first vehicle was mobilised and the first vehicle arrived at the scene of an incident. This may not be the same vehicle.

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**Figure 18: Percentage of primary fires attended within specified time brackets, 2021-22 to 2023-24 [Note 1]**



Description of Figure 18: A stacked bar chart showing the percentages of primary fires attended in time brackets (Between 1 and 5 minutes, Between 5 and 10 minutes, Between 10 and 15 minutes or Greater than 15 minutes). Data are shown for each FRA and years 2021-22 to 2023-24.

The chart shows in all three FRAs the proportion of primary fires attended in under 10 minutes has fallen in recent years.

Source: Fire Incident Recording System, Home Office

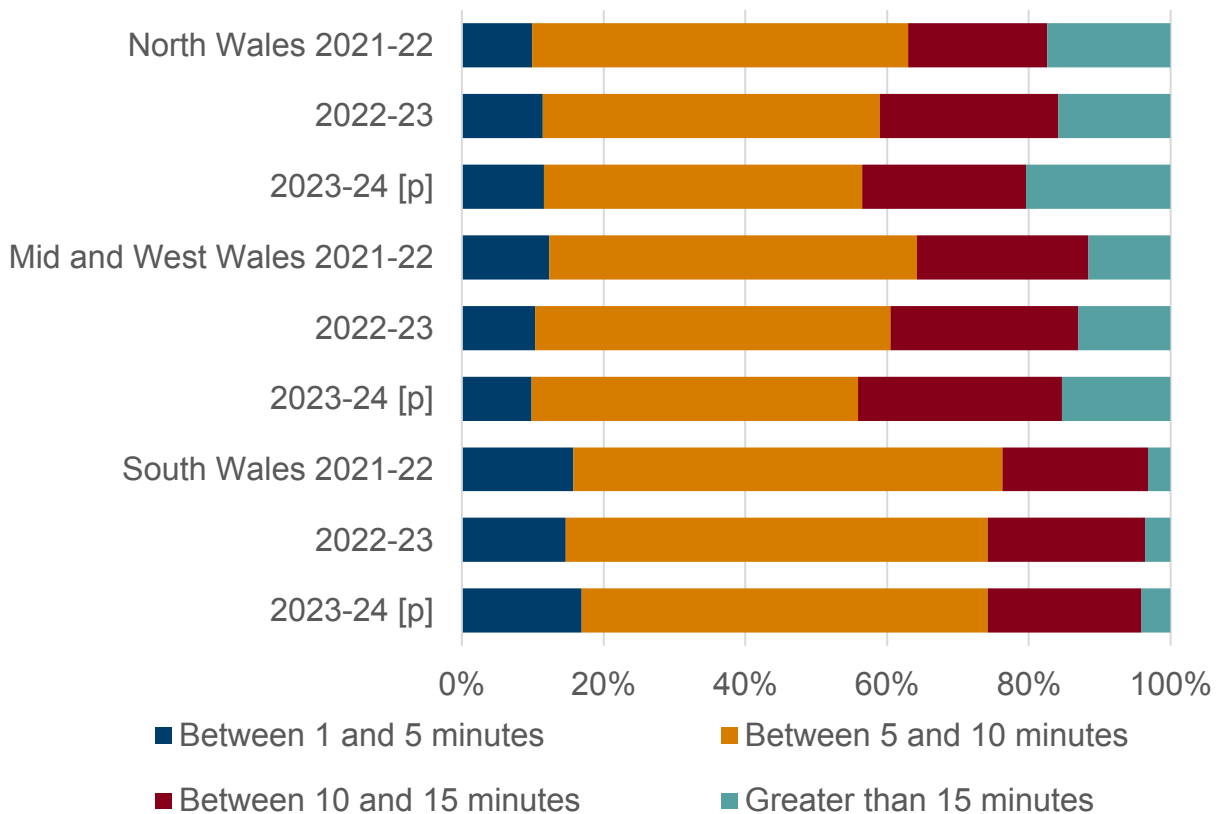
[Note 1] Excluded are late calls <sup>[footnote 2]</sup>, incidents with only heat and smoke damage and response times less than 1 minute or over one hour. Less than 1% of primary fires in each year were excluded due to the response time being less than 1 minute or over 1 hour.

[p] Provisional data.

In 2023-24 in South Wales 62% of primary fires were attended within 10 minutes; in Mid and West Wales 50% were attended within 10 minutes whilst in North Wales the proportion was 44%. Overall, in Wales 56% were attended within 10 minutes.

The urban geography of the area covered by South Wales FRA is likely to be a factor in the apparent faster response times to fires. Both North Wales and Mid and West Wales FRAs cover large areas of rural and agricultural land.

**Figure 19: Percentage of primary dwelling fires attended within specified time brackets, 2021-22 to 2023-24 [Note 1] [Note 2]**



Description of Figure 19: A stacked bar chart showing the percentages of primary dwelling fires attended in time brackets (Between 1 and 5 minutes, Between 5 and 10 minutes, Between 10 and 15 minutes or Greater than 15 minutes). Data are shown for each FRA and years 2021-22 to 2023-24.

As with all primary fires, the chart shows in all three FRAs the proportion of primary dwelling fires attended in under 10 minutes has fallen in recent years.

In 2023-24, 56% of primary dwelling fires attended in North Wales and in Mid

and West Wales had a response time of between 1 and 10 minutes; in South Wales the respective proportion was 74%. Overall in Wales, 65% were attended within 10 minutes.

Source: Fire Incident Recording System, Home Office

Note 1: Excluded are late calls, incidents with only heat and smoke damage and response times less than 1 minute or over one hour. Less than 1% of primary dwelling fires in each year were excluded due to the response time being less than 1 minute or over 1 hour.

Note 2] Dwellings include caravans, houseboats and other non-building structures used solely as a permanent dwelling.

[p] Provisional data

## GB comparisons

### Fires

The section shows the rate of fires and casualties by GB country. In 2023-24 the total number of fires attended fell by 22% in England, by 12% in Wales and by 10% in Scotland compared with 2022-23.

Numbers of primary fires in both England and Scotland decreased by 7% whilst in Wales there was no percentage change. Rates of primary fires per 100,000 population reduced by 8% in England, 7% in Scotland and 1% in Wales.

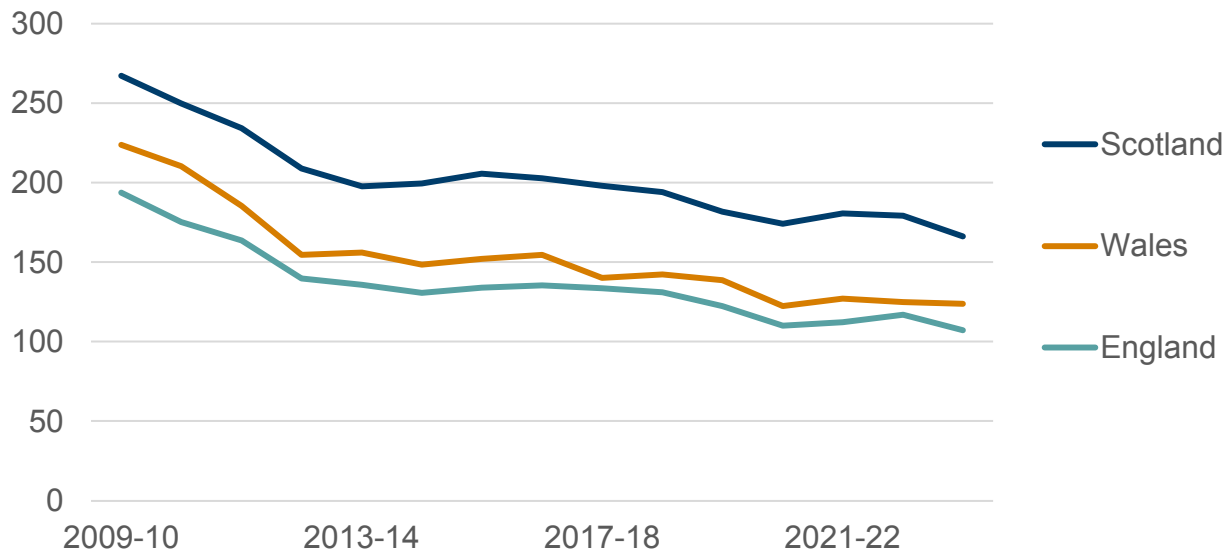
Numbers of secondary fires also fell, by 32% in England and 19% in Wales and by 13% in Scotland. Rates of secondary fires per 100,000 population reduced by 32% in England, 20% in Wales and 13% in Scotland.

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**Figure 20: Primary fires by GB country, rate per 100,000 population, 2009-10 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 20: A line chart showing the rate of primary fires per 100,000 population for England, Scotland and Wales. The chart shows Scotland has consistently had the highest rate of primary fires across the time series. England has the lowest rate across the time series and in Wales the rate is marginally higher than in England. In all three countries there is an overall downward trend.

Sources: [Fires, casualties and fatalities by area and financial year \(StatsWales\)](#); [Fire statistics England \(Home Office\)](#); [Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics 2023-24 \(Scottish Fire and Rescue Service\)](#)

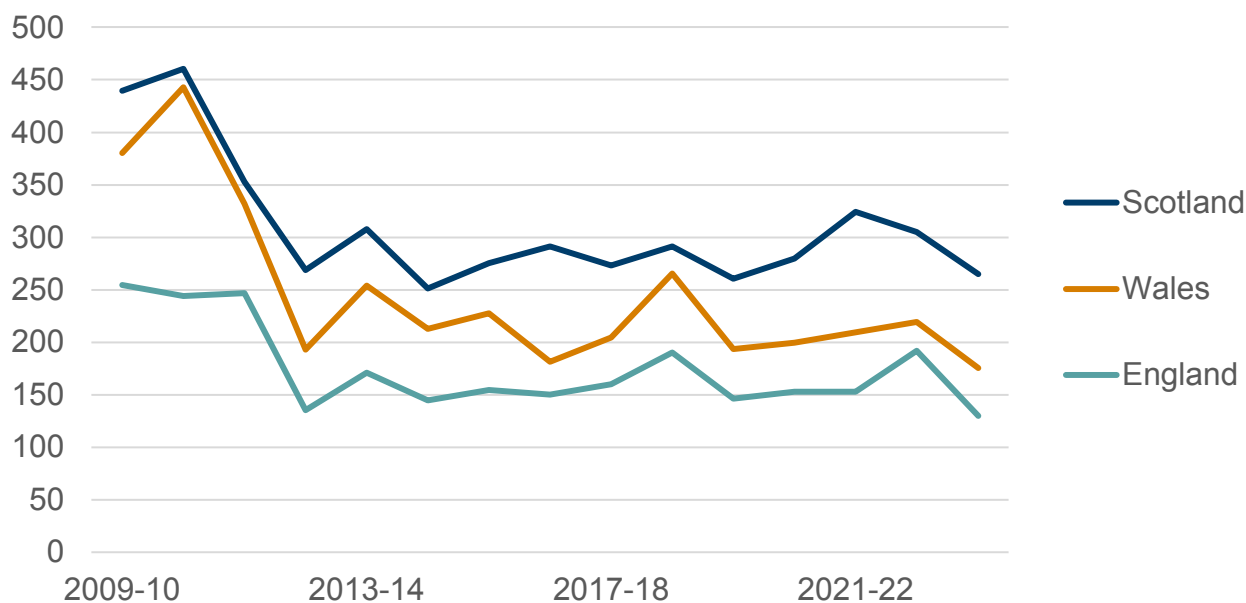
[p] Provisional data

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**Figure 21: Secondary fires by GB country, rate per 100,000 population, 2009-10 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 21: A line chart showing the rate of secondary fires per 100,000 population for England, Scotland and Wales. The chart shows the rate of secondary fires is more prone to fluctuation than for primary fires and this is true for all 3 countries. As with primary fires, Scotland has consistently had the highest rate of secondary fires across the time series. England has the lowest rate across the time series and Wales has a rate between Scotland and England.

Sources: [Fires, casualties and fatalities by area and financial year \(StatsWales\)](#); [Fire statistics England \(Home Office\)](#); [Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics 2023-24 \(Scottish Fire and Rescue Service\)](#)

[p] Provisional data

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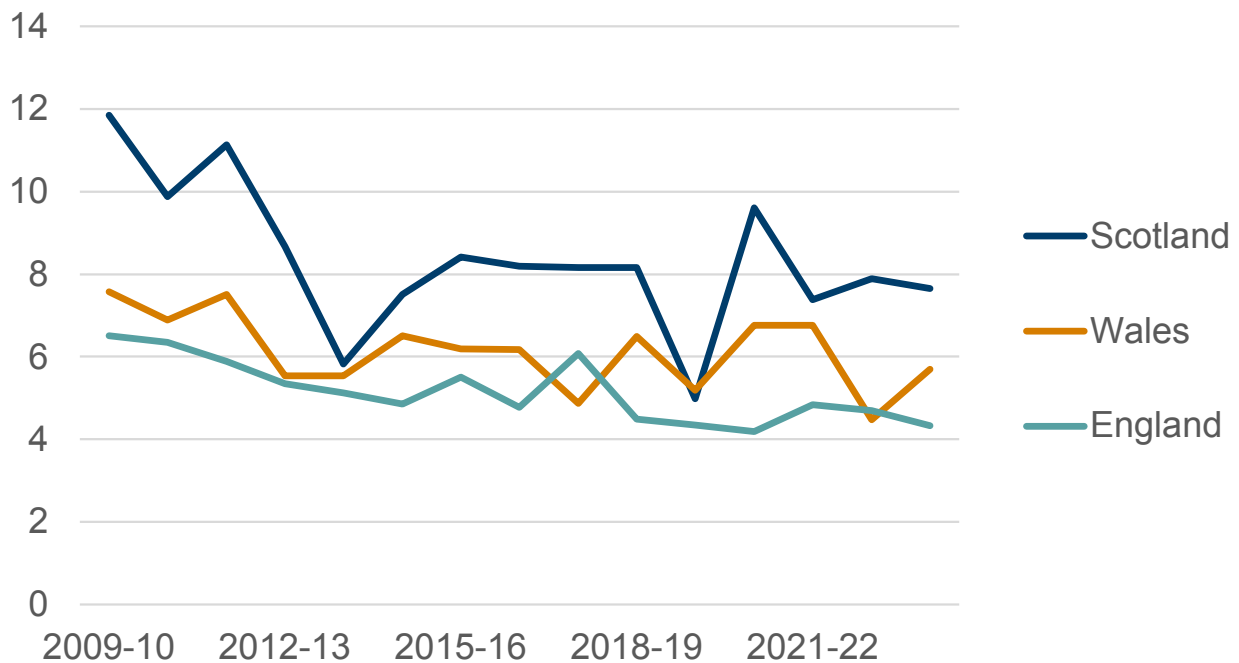
## Casualties

The number of fatalities in England fell by 7% and fell by 2% in Scotland compared with 2022-23, whilst in Wales numbers rose by 29% (although this equates to an increase of 4 fatalities). Rates of fatalities per million population reduced by 8% in England and 3% in Scotland. The rate in Wales rose by 27%, as noted numbers of fatalities in Wales are relatively small and this often results in greater percentage changes.

The number of non-fatal casualties in England rose by 2% whilst in Scotland and Wales there were falls of 12% and 13% respectively compared with 2022-23. Rates of non-fatal casualties per million population fell by 14% in Wales and 12% in Scotland. The rate in England rose by 1%.



**Figure 22: Fire fatalities by GB country, rate per 1,000,000 population, 2009-10 to 2023-24 [p]**

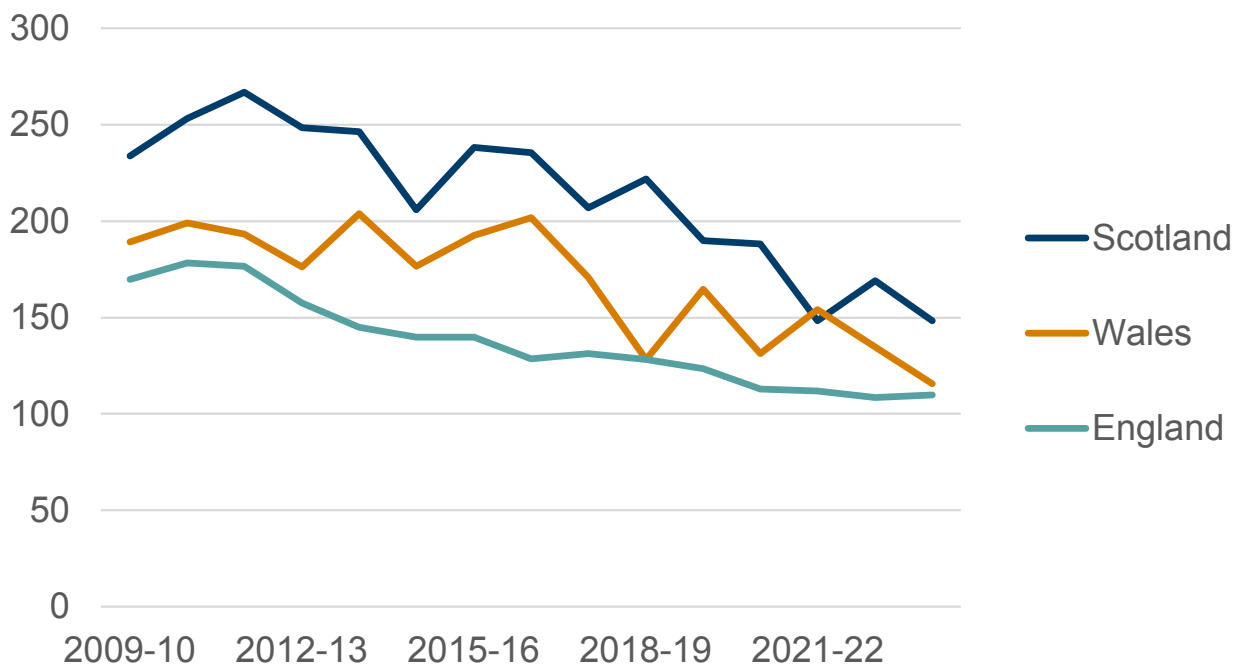


Description of Figure 22: A line chart showing the rate of fire related fatalities per million population for England, Scotland and Wales. The rates of fatalities are more volatile and whilst England has tended to have the lowest rate and Scotland the highest this isn't the case for all years.

Sources: **Fires, casualties and fatalities by area and financial year (StatsWales)**; **Fire statistics England (Home Office)**; **Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics 2023-24 (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)**

[p] Provisional data

**Figure 23: Fire non-fatal casualties by GB country, rate per 1,000,000 population, 2009-10 to 2023-24 [p]**



Description of Figure 23: A line chart showing the rate of non-fatal casualties per million population for England, Scotland and Wales. The rate of non-fatal casualties in all three countries has seen a general downward trend. In both Scotland and Wales lower numbers of casualties have led to a more spikey time series. Generally, England has had the lowest rate and Scotland the highest.

Sources: **Fires, casualties and fatalities by area and financial year (StatsWales)**; **Fire statistics England (Home Office)**; **Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics 2023-24 (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)**

[p] Provisional data

# Glossary

## Accidental fires

Includes those where the fire was ignited by accident or the cause was not known or unspecified.

## Buildings

Defined as all buildings including those under construction, but excluding derelict buildings, or those under demolition. Prior to 1994 'buildings' were referred to as 'occupied buildings'.

## Cause of fire

The defect, act or omission leading to ignition of the fire.

## Chimney fires

Reportable fires in occupied buildings where the fire was confined within the chimney structure and did not involve casualties or rescues or are attended by 5 or more appliances.

## Deliberate fires

Include those where deliberate ignition is merely suspected.

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## Dwellings

Defined as buildings occupied by households, excluding hotels, hostels and residential institutions. From 1988, mobile homes have been specifically included in the dwelling count. In 2000, the definition of a dwelling was widened to include any non-permanent structures used solely as a dwelling, such as houseboats. All analyses from 1994 to 1998 relating to dwellings were retrospectively revised to include the new categories of dwellings.

## False alarms

Events in which the Fire and Rescue Authority was called to a reported fire which turned out not to exist. False alarms are categorised as follows:

### Malicious false alarms

Calls made with the intention of getting the fire and rescue service to attend a non-existent fire-related event, including deliberate and suspected malicious intentions.

### Good intent false alarms

Calls made in good faith in the belief that the fire and rescue service really would attend a fire.

### False alarms due to apparatus

Calls initiated by fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment operating (including

accidental initiation of alarm apparatus by persons).

## **Fatal casualty (fire related)**

A person whose death is attributed to a fire even if the death occurred weeks or months later. There are also occasional cases where it becomes apparent subsequently that fire was not the cause of death. The figures for fatalities are thus subject to revision.

## **Fire Data Reports (FDR1 and FDR3)**

The method of data collection via paper forms prior to the Incident Recording System (introduced in April 2009). FDR1 was used to record primary fires, FDR3 for secondary fires, chimney fires and false alarms.

## **Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs)**

The statutory bodies which oversee the policy and service delivery of a fire and rescue service. The three authorities in Wales are North Wales, Mid and West Wales and South Wales.

## **Heat or smoke damage only incidents**

Reportable fires where there is no flame damage. The damage reported may be due to any combination of heat, smoke and other which will include any water damage.

## **Incident Recording System (IRS)**

The electronic based system for recording fires, false alarms and Special Service Incidents. IRS replaced the FDR1 and FDR3 paper forms in April 2009.

### **Late fire call**

A fire known to be extinguished when the call was made (or to which no call was made, e.g. a fire which comes to the attention of the Fire and Rescue Authority) and which the Fire and Rescue Authority attended.

### **Location**

The type of premises, property or countryside in which the fire started. This is not necessarily the type of premises in which most casualties or damage occurred as a result of the fire.

### **Non-fatal casualties**

Recorded as being in one of four classes of severity as follows:

1. Victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be serious
2. Victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be slight
3. First aid given at scene
4. Precautionary check recommended – this is when an individual is sent to hospital or advised to see a doctor as a precaution, having no obvious injury or distress.

Non-fatal casualties marked as 'not fire-related' have not been excluded due to widespread inappropriate use of this field.

## **Primary fires**

Includes all reportable fires in non-derelict buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures or any fire involving casualties, rescues, or fires attended by five or more appliances.

## **Reportable fire**

An event of uncontrolled burning involving flames, heat or smoke and which the fire and rescue authority attended.

## **Secondary fires**

The majority of outdoor fires including grassland and refuse fires unless they involve casualties or rescues, property loss or five or more appliances attend. They include fires in single derelict buildings. They are reported in less detail than other fires and consequently less information concerning them is available.

## **Source of ignition**

The source of the flame, spark or heat that started the fire.

## **Special Service Incidents (SSIs)**

Non-fire incidents which require the attendance of an appliance or officer and include:

- local emergencies e.g. road traffic incidents, rescue of persons, 'making safe' etc

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- major disasters
- domestic incidents e.g. water leaks, persons locked in or out etc
- prior arrangements to attend incidents, which may include some provision of advice and inspections

Where more than one activity is carried out, the incident is recorded under the most resource intensive part or what was the most appropriate e.g. a railway incident with persons trapped is likely to be recorded under 'railway accident' even though the FRA may be involved in 'first aid', 'other rescue' and possibly 'making safe'.

## Quality and methodology information

General information relating to data quality for fire and rescue incidents, operational fire data and FRA performance data can be found in the [quality report](#).

## Background

The analysis in this bulletin relates to fire and rescue service incidents between April 2023 and end March 2024 whilst making comparisons with April 2022 to March 2023 and earlier years.

On 10 November 2004 the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, which devolved fire and rescue services to the National Assembly for Wales (now the responsibility of the Welsh Government), was brought into effect. In Wales, these services are provided by three Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). The three FRAs cover varied geographical areas with a wide variety of risks including: fires in homes; outdoor fires; fires in business premises; road traffic collisions; rail or air crashes; chemical spills; building collapses; and trapped

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people or animals.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority provides cover for a population of almost 700,000 across a geographical area of 2,400 square miles. It employs over 900 operational and non-operational support staff from its headquarters and its 44 fire stations.

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority covers over half the area of Wales and a population of over 900,000. There are 58 fire stations and around 1,300 employees.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority serves a population of over 1.5 million people covering 1,085 square miles. It employs around 1,700 staff including over 1,400 fire-fighters who operate from 47 fire stations throughout South Wales.

## Fire safety initiatives

The FRAs in Wales have a number of ongoing fire safety campaigns and community fire safety work (such as home safety checks and school visits) as detailed on their respective webpages.

### North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

### Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service

### South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

These may be a contributory factor in the overall falling numbers of fires although no all-Wales evidence is currently available.

Over the years there have been a number of national programmes for dealing with deliberate fires. The **Wales Arson Reduction Strategy (WARS)** first reported in 2007, with a review in 2009, and updated strategies for 2012-15 and

most recently 2019. A delivery plan from WARS III resulted in a multi-agency taskforce 'Operation Dawns Glow' being established in 2015 and aiming to reduce the number of deliberate grassland fires.

In April 2015 **North Wales FRA introduced a new strategy which meant they didn't automatically attend Automatic Fire Alarm Systems (AFA)** in non-domestic properties. This led to a 78% drop in false alarms due to apparatus in 'other buildings' (non-dwellings) being attended in North Wales FRA in 2015-16 (when compared to the previous year). Following this, numbers have fluctuated.

In November 2011, a new EU directive required cigarettes to meet a reduced ignition propensity (RIP) requirement, they are now manufactured to be self-extinguishable, reducing the chance that they should set fire to combustible materials. However, we are not able to determine how many of the fires ignited by "smokers' materials" are related to cigarettes.

## Response times

Response time data only reflect part of the process of fighting a fire, not the outcome of doing so, and so may not be a reliable measure of the performance of an FRA or the effectiveness of a firefighting response.

## GB comparisons

Data for England (published by the Home Office since April 2016):

- **Fire statistics England (Home Office)**
- **Fire statistics monitor (Home Office)**

Data for Scotland (published by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service since 2015) – not currently badged as national or official statistics.

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- [Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics 2023-24 \(Scottish Fire and Rescue Service\)](#)
- [Pre 2014-15 data \(Scottish Government\)](#)

[Limited Northern Ireland data are available in an annual report from Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.](#)

## Official statistics status

All official statistics should show the standards of the [Code of Practice for Statistic \(UK Statistics Authority\)](#).

These are accredited official statistics. They were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) in June 2012. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of accreditation. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with OSR promptly. Accreditation can be cancelled or suspended at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

## Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR).

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OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

All of our statistics are produced and published in accordance with a number of statements and protocols to enhance trustworthiness, quality and value. These are set out in the Welsh Government's [Statement of Compliance](#).

These [accredited official statistics](#) demonstrate the standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and public value in the following ways.

## Trustworthiness

These statistics are compiled from administrative data systems in use in the Fire and Rescue Services in Wales.

These statistics are pre-announced on the [Statistics and Research area of the Welsh Government website](#). Access to the data during processing is restricted to those involved in the production of the statistics, quality assurance and for operational purposes. Pre-release access is restricted to eligible recipients in line with the [Code of Practice](#).

## Quality

Statistics published by Welsh Government adhere to the Statistical Quality Management Strategy which supplements the Quality pillar of the Code of Practice for Statistics and the European Statistical System principles of quality for statistical outputs.

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## Data collection and revisions

Since April 2009 incident data (relating to fires, false alarms and Special Service Incidents) have been submitted by the Fire and Rescue Authorities via the Incident Recording System (IRS). On 5 January 2016 responsibility for fire and rescue policy in England transferred from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to the Home Office, this resulted in IRS also being held by the Home Office (although there has been no change to the data collected). IRS records data submitted by FRAs in England, Scotland and Wales but does not currently collect data from FRAs in Northern Ireland.

The incident data are extracted from IRS annually (usually around July/August) and marked provisional at first publication. All bulletins and StatsWales tables excluding the 6 month data published in February/March are based on this dataset. Due to the nature of the live system, whilst accurate at the time of extraction, totals may change and therefore be revised due to updated information. 2023-24 data are currently marked as provisional and may be revised in future publications.

## Value

The Welsh Government uses the information in this bulletin to monitor the trends in fires occurring in Wales and provides information on FRAs' performance and activities to citizens and communities in Wales. This helps to monitor the effectiveness of current policy, and for future policy development. The data are also used as evidence for national fire safety initiatives and campaigns. The data are used by the fire and rescue services for comparisons and benchmarking. The data aids the allocation of resources and the provision of community safety projects.

We regularly review our data collections and outputs to ensure that they are

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relevant, collect reliable data and meet user needs. We also consult our users on a number of fire data collections issues. This is part of an ongoing exercise covering all fire and rescue statistics in order to better understand user requirements and priorities for the future. As part of this, Welsh Government policy colleagues, fire and rescue services and others have provided information on how they use fire statistics.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing [regulation@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:regulation@statistics.gov.uk) or via the OSR website.

## Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

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Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

## Footnotes

[1] Includes GP surgeries, day centres, dentists and vets.

[2] Late fire calls are fires attended by an FRA which were known to be extinguished when the call was made (or to which no call was made) and the fire came to the attention of the FRS by other means (for example, press report or inquest).

## Contact details

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