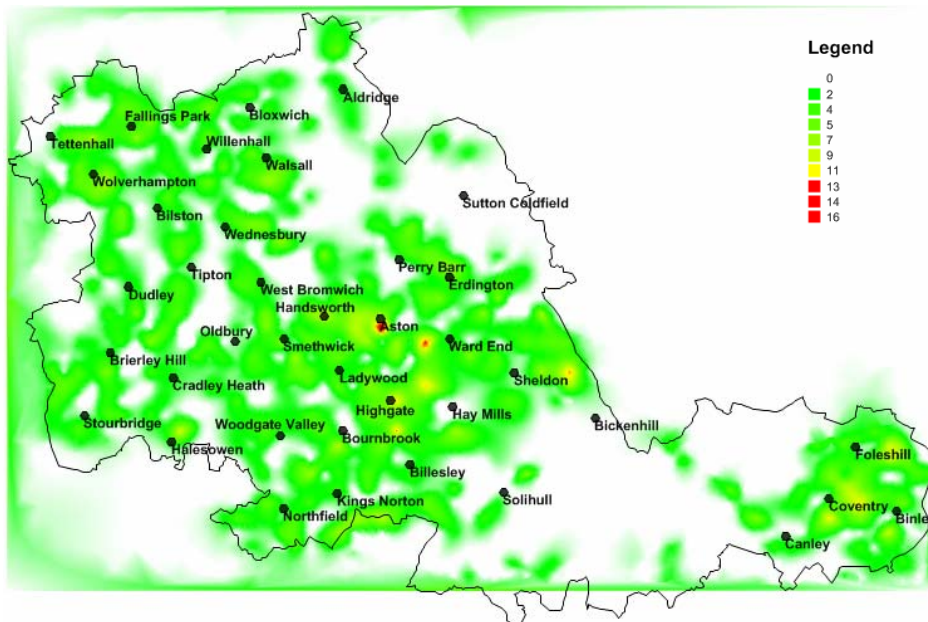


## Trends in Accidental Dwelling Fires 2007/8 and 2008/9

Each time a fire engine is called out to an emergency they collect valuable information about the nature of the incident. This allows us to monitor patterns and trends that emerge from the data. Patterns and trends help us to form a picture of how we can best utilise our time and resources and train for the most frequent type of emergencies and more importantly reduce the numbers of incidents occurring.

One way of analysing data is to map the information so we can see any geographical trends. For example are accidental dwelling fires occurring in the same areas year on year or do they move around the area?



(Map 1)

Accidental dwelling fires accounted for 4.66% (1,867) of all incidents in 2008/9 (40,088). The number of accidental dwelling fires WMFS attended in 2008/9 had reduced by 4.65% compared to 2007/8 where we responded to approximately 1,958 accidental dwelling fires.

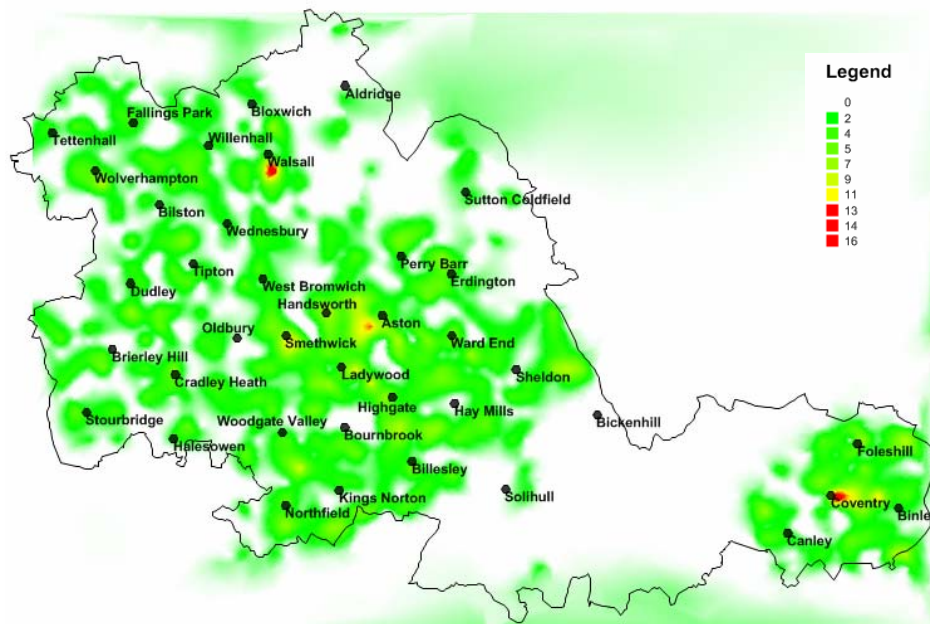
Dwelling fires pose significant life risk to the population as they can occur when people are at home. West Midlands Fire Service spends a considerable amount of time trying to prevent dwelling fires through education and increasing smoke alarm ownership.

Map 1 is a map of the West Midlands metropolitan district. This represents the area covered by West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS). The coloured areas on the map depict concentrations of accidental dwelling fires responded to by WMFS during 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008; the white areas show where there hasn't been a concentration of fires and the red areas are where the highest concentrations of accidental dwelling fires have occurred.

Map 1 shows us that the highest concentrations of accidental dwelling fires during 2007/2008 occurred in the Aston, Ward End and Sheldon areas of Birmingham.

Due to the high life risk in these areas the neighbouring stations currently have 2 wholetime fire engines (staffed 24 hours a day) based at the stations.

We can then compare this to the most recent financial year's data to identify any similarities or differences to the geographical location of accidental dwelling fires (Map 2).



(Map 2)

Map 2 is a replica of map 1 but illustrates the latest financial year's incident data (2008/2009). Again the red areas depict where the highest concentrations of incidents have occurred.

Map 1 and 2 reveal similar patterns. The red areas on map 2 have altered slightly from map 1; in 2008/9 the highest concentrations of accidental dwelling fires were in the areas of Aston, Walsall and Coventry.

Both Aston and Walsall have 2 wholetime fire engines based at their fire stations. Central Coventry has 3 fire engines in total; 1 is staffed on a wholetime basis and the other 2 fire engines are staffed on the 12 hour late shift between the hours of 10am and 10pm.

## Attendance Times

WMFS have established performance targets with regard to the time it takes for our fire engines to respond and to arrive at emergency incidents.

Response times are a critical factor for a number of reasons:

- The faster we can get to a fire or other emergency, the better chance our firefighters have, of bringing the incident to a safe conclusion, before it escalates.
- We need to employ safe working systems and for many incident types, there are minimum numbers of firefighters that we need to have on site, so that safe and effective procedures can be set up and maintained.
- Though our fire engines spend much of the day away from station, taking part in training and fire prevention work, they will still normally spend some time on station, especially overnight, so the location of fire stations is still an important influence on fast attendance times. We have in place an estates strategy, driven by the need to meet a high standard of performance in relation to response times and we monitor how well we perform in meeting the target attendance times.

The standards we have set are explained in the table below:-

	Average Fire Engine Attendance Times		Attendance as % of Occasions			
	1st Fire Engine	2nd Fire Engine	1st Fire Engine	2nd Fire Engine	3rd Fire Engine to High Rise	Minor (Secondary Fires)
Target Time	5 Minutes	7 Minutes	Attendance within 8 minutes on 80% of occasions	Attendance within 10 minutes on 80% of occasions	Attendance within 10 minutes on 80% of occasions	Attendance within 20 minutes on 100% of occasions
Current Performance	5 Minutes, 35 seconds	7 Minutes, 4 Seconds	88%	87%	86%	99.7%

This table explains our attendance time targets and our current performance against the standard.

(A PRL is a standard fire engine, or Pump Rescue Ladder). We normally send 2 PRLs to all high risk incidents such as dwelling fires, road accidents or chemical incidents, but we send a single fire engine to smaller fires such as those involving rubbish or grass.

We send 3 fire engines to fires involving high-rise flats and we always send an additional fire engine if we believe that people are trapped or in need of rescue.