

The Trend: Low Risk Incidents

Total Low Risk Incidents 2008/9 - 2010/11

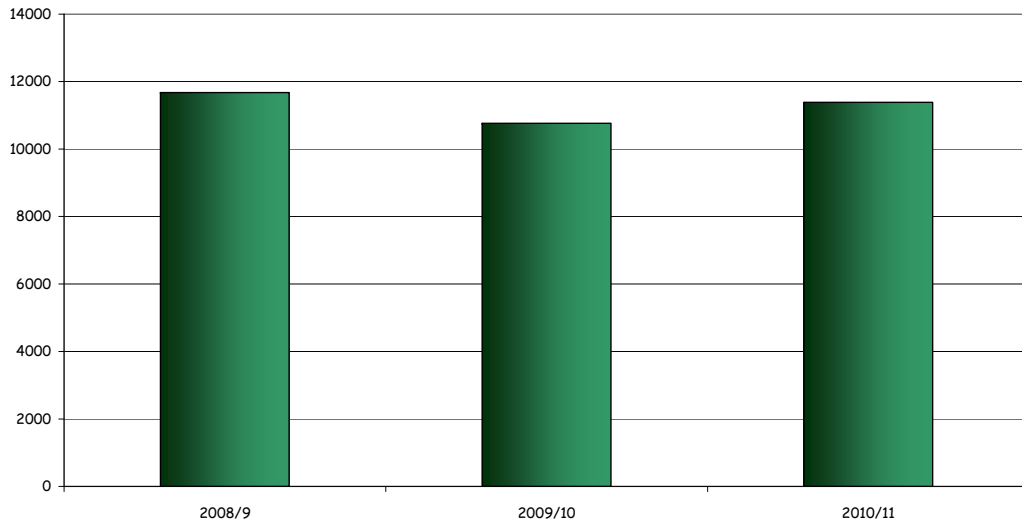


Figure 1: Number of Low Risk Incidents Reported to and Recorded by WMFS (Including Over The Border Calls) 2008/9 - 2010/11

Breakdown of Low Risk Category by Incident Type 2010/11

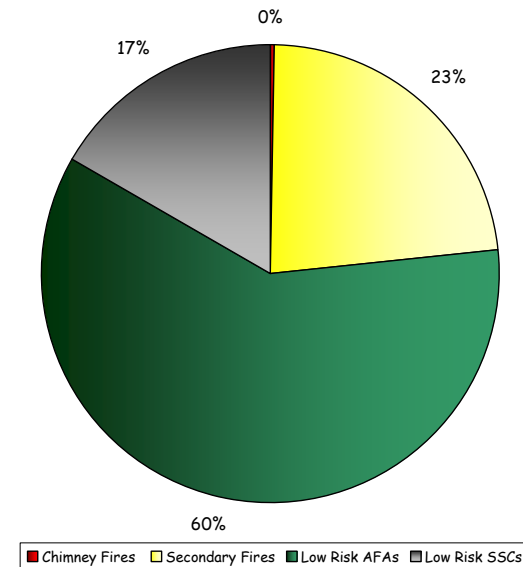


Figure 2: Total Low Risk Incidents Reported to and Recorded by WMFS (Including Over The Border Calls) 2010/11 Breakdown by Risk Category

- Low risk incidents have accounted for approximately 30% of total incidents and this has remained stable over the period analysed. By the end of 2010/11, total low risk incidents had undergone -3% reduction when compared to financial year 2008/9 although 2010/11 levels are 6% higher than those recorded in the previous year.
- Only two of the four composite incident types that make up the low risk category underwent a decrease in 2010/11 when compared to 2008/9, namely chimney fires (-19% reduction or -10 incidents) and low risk AFAs¹ (-17% reduction or -1,391 incidents). The latter trend is one that has been sustained since 2008/9 although the rate of reduction has slowed down significantly from approximately -14% in 2009/10 to -4% in 2010/11. Low risk AFAs accounted for 60% of all recorded low risk incidents in 2010/11 compared to 71% in 2008/9. The remaining low risk incident sub categories have both experienced increases over the same time period. Levels of low risk special service calls are at their highest for three years having undergone a 37% increment (507 incidents) in 2010/11 compared to 2008/9, the rate of increase however again appears to be slowing down from a rate of 31% in 2009/10 to approximately 4% in 2010/11. This has changed the total amount of low risk incidents that low risk special service calls account for, from 12% in 2008/9 to 17% in 2010/11. Low risk secondary fires too have risen by 30% (601 incidents) in 2010/11 compared to 2008/9 after a -10% decrease in 2009/10 pushing up the proportion of total low risk incidents that this incident grouping account for to 23% in 2010/11 as opposed to 17% in 2008/9.

¹ Automatic False Alarms

Low Risk Incidents 1st April 2008 - 31st March 2011
Temporal Analysis : Month

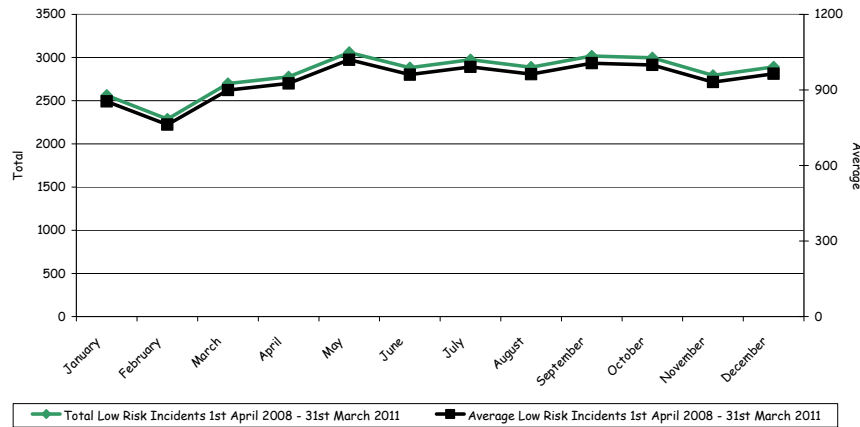


Figure 3: Total Low Risk Incidents Reported to and Recorded by WMFS (Including Over The Border Calls) 2008/9 - 2010/11 Temporal Analysis by Month

Low Risk Incidents 1st April 2008 - 31st March 2011
Temporal Analysis: Day

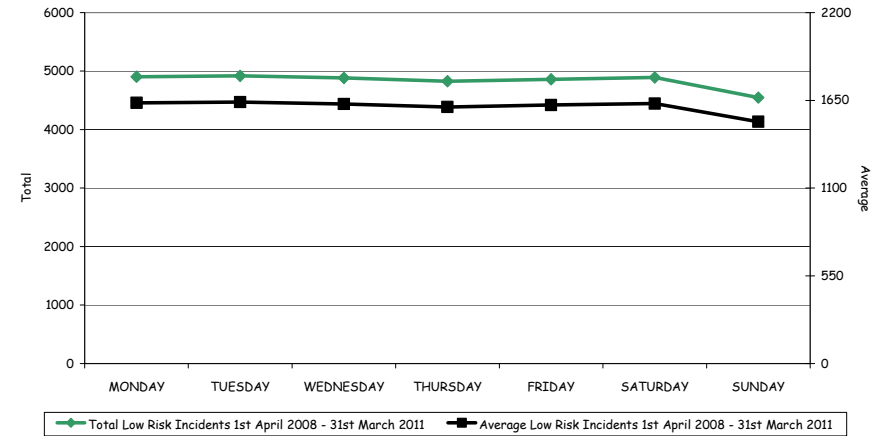


Figure 4: Total Low Risk Incidents Reported to and Recorded by WMFS (Including Over The Border Calls) 2008/9 - 2010/11 Temporal Analysis by Day

➤ After a low point in February, total low risk incidents reported to WMFS increase gradually to their highest levels in May, remaining at a consistent, elevated level until October. Levels are consistent throughout the week. After a sharp rise between 05.00 - 12.00hrs, reported low risk incidents plateau until 14.00hrs. Levels then rise again from 15.00hrs reaching their optimum reporting point at approximately 18.00hrs.

Low Risk Incidents 1st April 2008 - 31st March 2011
Temporal Analysis: Hour

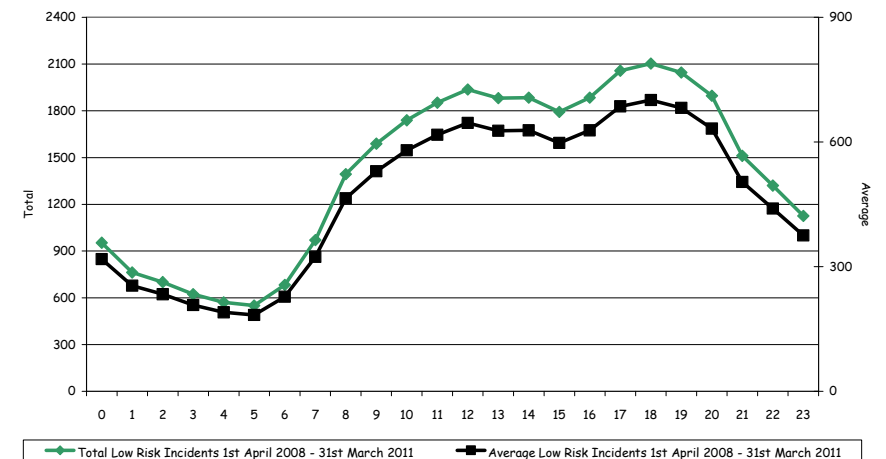
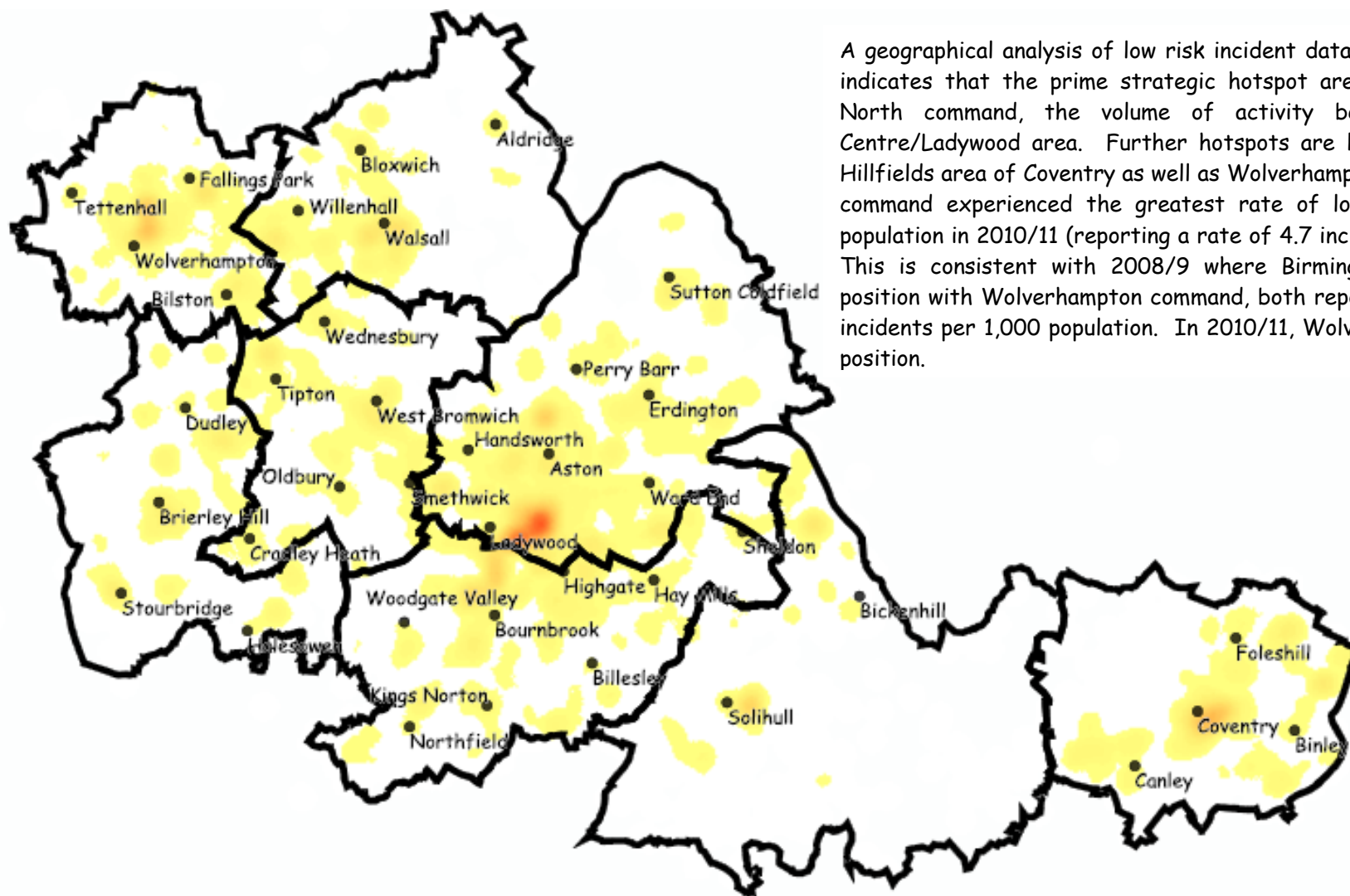


Figure 5: Total Low Risk Incidents Reported to and Recorded by WMFS (Including Over The Border Calls) 2008/9 - 2010/11 Temporal Analysis by Hour

Strategic Hotspot Areas 2008/9 - 2010/11: Low Risk Incidents



Commentary: Low Risk Incidents

- Secondary fires in the low risk category are at their highest for three years having increased by 30% in 2010/11 when compared to 2008/9. Levels of this incident category underwent a more significant rise however (45%) when 2010/11 is compared to the previous financial year. This is attributable to higher levels being recorded across all command areas (with the exception of Coventry), the most severe being experienced in Dudley (a rise of 122% or 262 incidents), followed by Sandwell (70% or 189 incidents), Birmingham North (47% or 152 incidents), Wolverhampton (42%, or 75 incidents), Birmingham South (36% or 92 incidents), Solihull (36% or 31 incidents) and finally Walsall (11% or 29 incidents). The prime incident types to have increased are bin fires (by 87%) and bon fires (by 30%).
- Secondary incidents of this nature have the potential to indirectly impact on WMFS response to high risk incidents. If WMFS resources are tied up dealing with incidents that pose a much lower risk to the immediate community, they may not be able to respond as effectively to those of a higher risk due to reduced capacity. This may, in some areas, lead to lengthened attendance times to high risk incidents as appliances from further afield are mobilised to respond. The potential impact of this could be greater in the future as WMFS strive to 'do more with less' resource in order to meet the financial restraints contained within the Comprehensive Spending Review. With this in mind, whilst it is acknowledged that the occurrence of these incidents is heavily weather dependant with long periods of hot dry weather resulting in higher reported levels of incidents of this type, further work will be carried out in order to identify any other factors that may have contributed to the rise in low risk secondary incidents (including any that are command specific) in order to help shape the delivery of targeted preventative initiatives.
- Levels of low risk special service calls are at their highest for three years having undergone a 37% increment (507 incidents) in 2010/11 compared to 2008/9. It is only possible however to compare 2010/11 with 2009/10 due to changes in recording (namely the introduction of the Incident Recording System from April 2009) which may have, in part contributed to the increase. The 4% rise in recorded low risk special service calls in 2010/11 (compared to the previous year) can be largely attributed to an increase in calls where on arrival at the scene of the incident, no WMFS service is required (these have risen by 25% from 194 incidents in 2009/10 to 243 in 2010/11). The majority of low risk special service calls in 2010/11 were composed of lift releases (24% compared to 29% in 2009/10), requests for advise only at incidents involving leaks and blockages (21% in 2010/11 compared to 17% in 2009/10), removal of objects from people, not involving injury, such as rings for example (19% in 2010/11, consistent with 2009/10) and incidents where WMFS services are found not to be required after an assessment of the incident (13% in 2010/11 compared to 11% in 2009/10).
- It was identified through analysis that there was a need and an opportunity to introduce changes to the way that WMFS currently handles and responds to calls arising from automatic fire alarm systems (AFAs). Even though it is identified that levels of low risk AFAs are reducing, it must be remembered that they still account for 60% of all incidents in the low risk category. By changing policy and procedures for how WMFS deal with predominantly low risk AFA's, a significant burden could be released from the workload of the frontline fleet, allowing them to respond more effectively to incidents of a higher risk.
- The 'AFA project' consisted of two phases. The first was the implementation of a more robust call challenge (for calls received from Alarm Receiving Centres) and the introduction of a pilot scheme within Birmingham City Centre (the centre of demand arising from AFA calls) to make use of a dedicated AFA response vehicle. This vehicle is staffed by 2 personnel who are not only able to respond to AFA calls (thus freeing up the capacity of the frontline appliances), but also dispense on the spot fire safety advice. This went live on the 31st January 2011. The second phase involved no longer responding to calls received through Alarm Receiving Centres (with the exception of a small number of life risk premises)² where no confirmation of the presence of a fire had been communicated. This went live on the 4th April 2011.

² Namely AFAS at Hospitals, Care Homes and Prisons. These fall under the Medium Risk Category.