Welcome to the second quarterly newsletter (2019/20) for Birmingham North and South Commands.

Our teams have been extremely busy during this quarter, not only in attending and training for operational incidents but also preventing fires along with our dedicated Fire Safety teams and our partners including Birmingham City Council.

We have continued to deliver a significant number of Safe and Well home visits to ensure vulnerable members of our community are safe in their home from fire; we have also commenced our regular schools programme to key stage 2, 3 & 4 following the start of the new academic year; this seeks to educate children and young people in Fire and Road Safety.

Due to the emphasis that we place on getting to you in an emergency; our average response time to serious incidents (property fire or road traffic collision) within Birmingham is 4 minutes 35 seconds.
West Midlands Fire Service is committed to an average risk-based attendance time of **5 minutes**. We know through academic studies on survivability that if we can get to someone within 5 minutes the chances of them surviving a significant incident increases.

Throughout July to September we have consistently over performed against our average risk-based attendance time, with the brigade average being **4 minutes and 41 seconds**; which is really great news.

West Midlands Fire Service is the only Fire & Rescue Service inspected to-date by HMICFRS to receive outstanding for the response element of the service.

Our response priorities focus on dealing excellently with emergency incidents:

- Through risk management, the most serious emergency incidents in high-risk areas will be attended within five minutes, to save life, protect homes and businesses, and keep our transport networks moving.
- Risk to life and property will be reduced through our commitment to operational excellence, enabling an assertive, effective and safe emergency response to all incidents whilst supporting firefighter safety.
- At all incidents attended, rescue operations will be led and coordinated by WMFS whilst working collaboratively with other agencies to deliver an excellent response and meet public expectations.
- National Resilience will be enhanced through delivery of a local, national and international response to major incidents, new risks and humanitarian situations through our specialist response teams.

**FIRE CONTROL**

Fire Control are the resources managers for both Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service and receive all the emergency 999 calls for both services.

Between April and September Fire Control received a total of **37,175** calls; 71% of these calls were attributed to West Midlands Fire Service and 29% to Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

A key performance measure within Fire Control is the speed in which they mobilise a fire engine to a serious incident e.g. a house fire; impressively throughout April to September Fire Controls average time to mobilise to a house fire was **58 seconds**.

999Eye is a tool which we use to get ‘eyes on’ to an incident though the mobile phone of those who are reporting the incident; 999Eye a critical asset in how we use intelligence, such as mobile phone footage, to ensure we mobilise the right resources. 999Eye has been used an impressive 3000 times since April 2019.
The hydraulic platform based at Highgate Fire Station has attended a total of 92 incidents in the last twelve months which demonstrates what a vital piece of equipment this is, supported by highly trained teams.

Crews from Highgate have used its hydraulic platform at several incidents throughout July - September. They were able to support crews when dealing with a fire in a high-rise building, offering both external firefighting options as well as being able to affect a rescue if required.

Ladywood were first in attendance at a significant fire in a derelict factory. The smoke was said to have been visible from 15 miles away. The great work by crews from across Birmingham prevented the fire from spreading and impacting other businesses.

There were real fears the smoke could infiltrate City Hospital on the other side of the Dudley Road, but quick and assertive actions tackling the fire prevented any disruption to the hospital.

This incident required a multi-agency attendance with representatives from Police, Ambulance, Birmingham City Council, Public Health England and Environment Agency working closely together to bring the incident to a safe conclusion.

After the heavy down pours at the end of September, Ward End Firefighters attended a flooding in which members of the public had to be lead to safety by fire service personnel.

As this area has previously been flooded, teams from Ward End Fire Station will be attending a residence meeting with the local MP and Councillors to look at what can be done to prevent this from happening in the future.
**SUTTON ANIMAL RESCUE**

An unusual incident attended by Sutton Coldfield was an animal rescue, where crews responded to a small deer stuck in railings. The animal was released using hydraulic equipment and returned to its natural habitat.

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**ASTON PROPERTY FIRE**

Crews from Erdington and Aston responded to a severe fire in Aston. The first fire appliance arrived within 5 minutes and very quickly got the fire under control, this quick and assertive action prevented extensive damage to the property and minimised the disruption to other residents.

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**HANDSWORTH RAILWAY INCIDENT**

Handsworth Fire Station were recently called to an incident on the railway - the overhead line equipment on the main line in Soho had failed resulting in a number of passengers being stranded.

Network Rail were unable to get a train alongside because the location was effectively cut off to the front by another incident and to the rear by the damaged overhead wires which were in contact with the track, resulting in a trackside evacuation having to take place.

In total 52 passengers were evacuated.
**PREPAREDNESS**

West Midlands Fire Service are committed to undertaking 104 large exercises every year, these exercises test our response and procedures to a variety of complex incidents in some of our high risk premises.

**WATER RESCUE LEVEL 2**

Members of Perry Barr Fire Station completed their water rescue level 2 course in Llangollen ensuring we can provide a water rescue capability - were you aware that our water teams have in the past been deployed for national incidents.

**BARBERRY HOUSE**

Billesley and Kings Norton have run several high-rise exercises at Barberry house throughout July and September.

Procedures were tested to the max, with the stay put policy and fire survival guidance being of high importance. Birmingham City Council also took part in the exercise in their role as housing resilience officers ensuring that the exercise was a true to life as it could possibly be.

We are to continuing to work very closely with Birmingham City Council, as there are lot of high rise properties that will soon be void within the Birmingham area which will offer us more training opportunities.

**HAZMAT EXERCISE**

Perry Barr organised an exercise to test our response and operational procedures to a hazardous material incident; the exercise included specialist response from our technical rescue teams, hazardous materials and detection identification monitoring teams as well as national incident liaison officers.
Our prevention work focuses on reducing people's vulnerability to the type of emergencies to which we respond.

Our firefighters carry out thousands of 'Safe and Well' visits every year, and our crews give advice on health and wellbeing where it will reduce the risk of a fire. This means vulnerable people are safer in their own homes and we can get them extra help if they need it.

We also provide fire safety education in hundreds of schools and colleges and at our interactive 'Safeside' learning centres in Handsworth and Eastside, as well as at public events and through our popular Fire Cadets programme.

Our prevention priorities focus on making safer, healthier communities:

- the number of people killed or seriously injured by fire related incidents will reduce as we focus, with our partners, on reducing the risks faced by the most vulnerable people in our communities
- the safety, health and well-being of the most vulnerable people in our communities will improve by targeting ‘radical prevention’ interventions that are directly linked to vulnerability from fire
- arson-related incidents will fall, supporting safer and stronger communities, as a result of our partnership working
- fewer people will be killed or seriously injured on West Midlands roads and we will keep our transport networks moving, as we work with the West Midlands Combined Authority and other organisations to develop and deliver interventions that support the West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy.

Teams from across Birmingham supported the Eid festival at Small Heath Park in August. More than 100,000 people visited the park for the celebration, so was a great opportunity to promote safety in the home and on the road.
Kings Norton Engagement

Kings Norton have run several parent engagement sessions which have seen parents in need of support getting safety advice, first aid training and S&W’s from crews also projects for the parents who decided to do garden work and planted flowers and created hanging baskets at the station to make it stand out in the community.

Beautiful Birmingham Project

Crews from across Birmingham have been using several different ways to support local communities and engage with its partners by supporting a Beautiful Birmingham Project, here teams are undertaking a community litter pick, removing rubbish also helps to prevent deliberate rubbish fires.

Fire Station Open Days

Our specialist community safety resources were put into action over the summer as a number of Fire Stations from across Birmingham hosted open days which were attended by hundreds of people from the local community.

Front room fires, car crash demonstrations and home fire safety advice were all on offer to ensure that our communities are as safe as possible.
Our protection work focuses on helping businesses to thrive, making the West Midlands stronger. We assess high-risk buildings including residential high-rises to ensure public safety and provide reassurance about the risks of fire. We also advise companies how best to comply with fire safety legislation, to keep staff and customers safe.

If fire does strike, we help them to get back up and running as soon as possible. As a large organisation ourselves, we know the importance of business continuity.

Derelict Building Fires Reduction

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Birmingham Central Mosque who invited representatives from the West Midlands Fire Service, along with representatives from the Police and Ambulance Service, to join them for an awards evening to thank them for the work they do across Birmingham.
SPECIAL THANKS

Lynn Bow who is a volunteer fundraiser for the Firefighters Charity, Lynn has attended the majority of the open days in Birmingham and has taken £1000's for this very worthwhile cause.

SPECIAL THANKS

Teams from Highgate Fire Station, Hay Mills and Northfield who recently were successful in winning the National Breathing Apparatus competitions and winning the Best Overall Heavy Rescue team for dealing with an incident involving a heavy goods vehicle.

LOOK FORWARD

For the second quarter we are extremely pleased with the performance of our teams across all stations in Birmingham.

Our focus as we move forward into the 3rd quarter is to not only concentrate on the performance indicator that is within exception (Injuries in accidental dwelling fires) but focus on other areas such as accidental dwelling fires that are within tolerance but increased number of incidents compared with the previous 3 year average.

Birmingham stations will also be preparing for seasonal campaigns such as bonfire / firework safety and winter pressure campaigns, ensuring that those who we come into contact with, who are most at risk / vulnerable receive all the help and support that we and our partners have to offer.

As we continue to move forward, we will continue to evaluate our interventions to ensure we are succeeding in what we set out to achieve; we will also be proactively seeking new partners who work with those who are extremely vulnerable and at risk of fire to ensure that we can make them healthier and safer within their home.