



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Fire and rescue incident statistics, April 2020 to March 2021: summary

Data on fires, location, cause, motive, casualties and false alarms and Special Service Incidents attended for April 2020 to March 2021.

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Analysis of all incidents attended by the three Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in Wales. The most recent data relates to 2020-21 and is provisional as indicated in the charts and tables with a (p).

Impact of COVID-19

This report covers the financial year from April 2020 to March 2021, a period within the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Fire and rescue service incidents, and in particular Special Service Incidents (SSIs), are likely to have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Main points

- Numbers of fires have seen a downward trend since 2001-02, falling by more than 70%, and by 50% over the last 10 years. Recent years have seen less variation with numbers staying around the 10,000 to 13,000 mark. The number of fire false alarms has also fallen but to a lesser extent, only decreasing by 24% since 2001-02. Numbers of SSIs have fluctuated throughout the time series, and in 2020-21 were noticeably affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, seeing a 31% fall compared with 2019-20.
- Compared with 2019-20, numbers of fires fell by 2% in 2020-21; numbers of primary fires fell by 11% whilst there was a 4% increase in the number of secondary fires.
- There were 21 fatal casualties from fires in Wales in 2020-21.
- There were 408 non-fatal casualties in 2020-21, a decrease of 20% compared with 2019-20. All types of casualty e.g. those sent to hospital or people receiving first aid etc. saw decreases.
- There were 1,646 deliberate grassland woodland and crop fires in 2020-21, a decrease of 2% compared with 2020-21.

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All fire and rescue incidents attended

FRS's attended 32,228 incidents in the year ending March 2021. A decrease of 8% compared with 2019-20 and the fourth consecutive year to see a fall. This fall was driven by a decrease in the number of Special Service Incidents (SSIs), notably Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and medical incidents. It is likely that the number of these incidents was affected by COVID.

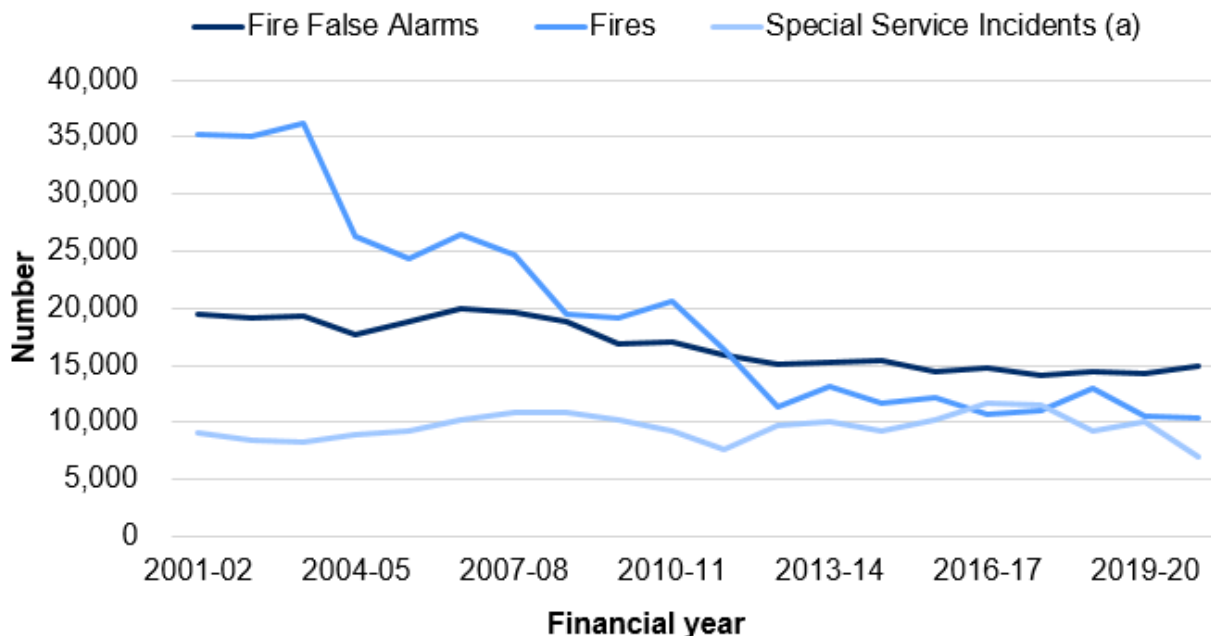
The number of incidents attended by FRSs peaked in 2002/03 at nearly 64,000 incidents.

The number of fires attended has seen a 71% 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 have also seen a downward trend over the time series.

Numbers of Special Service Incidents (SSIs) have been prone to fluctuation, though numbers in 2020-21 are likely to have been effected by the COVID 19 pandemic and the periods of restrictions that occurred.

Chart 1: All attendances by the Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales, 2001-02 to 2020-21(p)



Source: Incident Recording System
 (a) Including Special Service false alarms
 (p) Provisional data

Fire and rescue incidents data on StatsWales

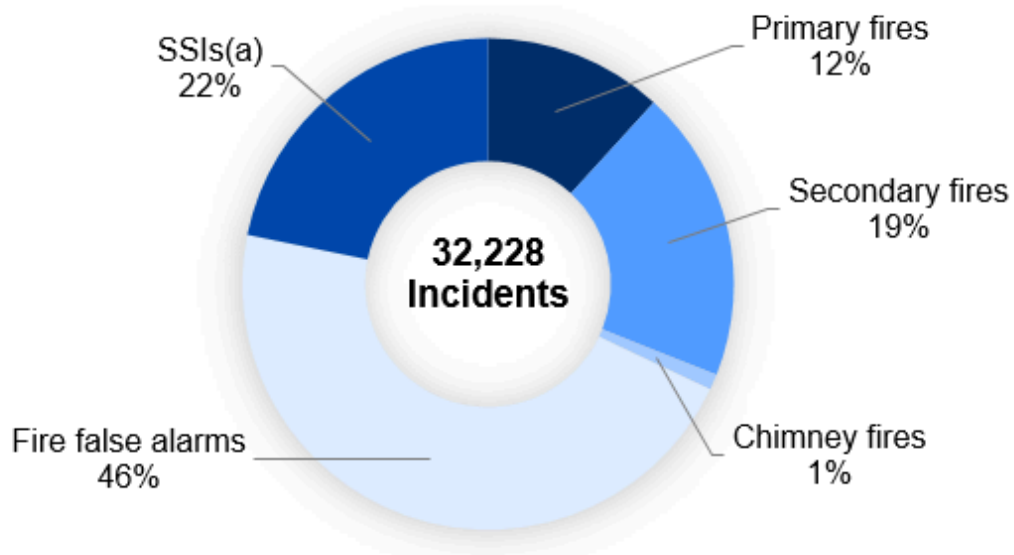
Of all attendances in 2020-21, 10,328 (32%) were at fires, of which 3,796 were primary fires (12%), 6,199 secondary fires (19%) and 333 chimney fires (1%). There were also 14,880 fire false alarm incidents (46% of attendances) and 7,020 SSIs including SSI false alarms (22%).

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Chart 2: Attendances at fire and rescue Incidents, April 2020 to March 2021(p)



Source: Incident Recording System
(a) Including Special Service false alarms
(p) Provisional data

Fire and rescue incidents data on StatsWales

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

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unless they involve casualties or rescues, or are attended by five or more appliances.

Chimney fires are those in occupied buildings where the fire was confined within the chimney structure.

Numbers of fires have seen a downward trend since 2001-02, falling by 71%, and by 50% over the last 10 years. Recent years have seen less variation with numbers staying around the 10,000 to 13,000 mark.

In 2020-21 FRSs attended 10,328 fires, a decrease of 2% compared with 2019-20.

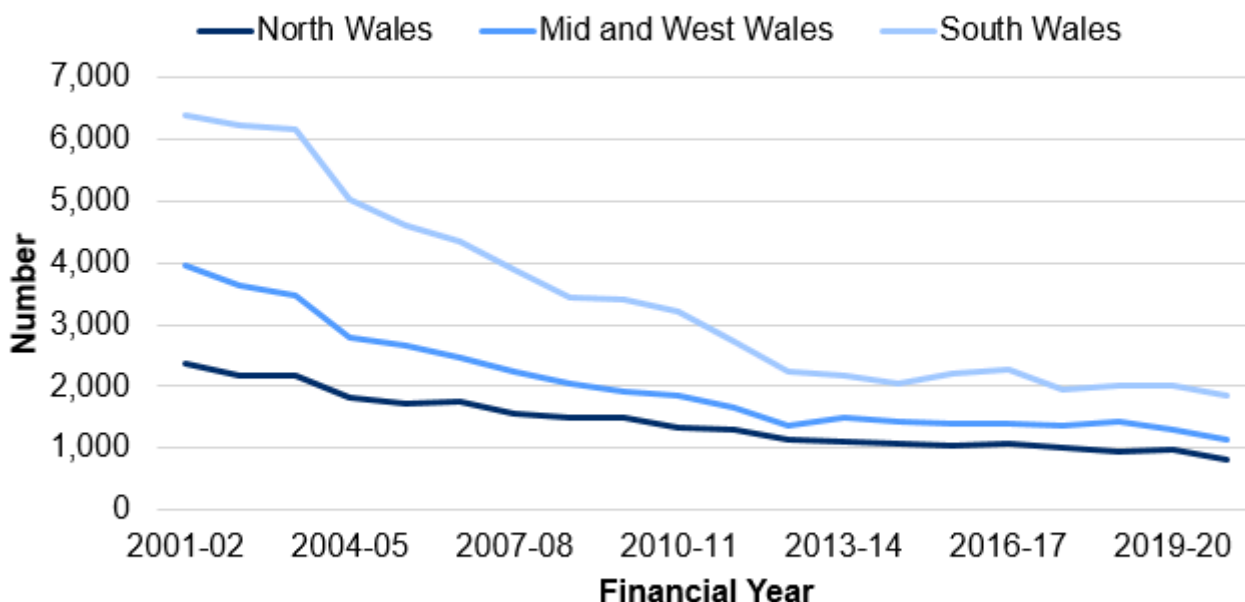
In 2020-21 secondary fires accounted for 60% of all fires, primary fires accounted for 37% and chimney fires 3%.

Primary fires

In 2020-21 the number of primary fires decreased by 11% compared with the previous year, to 3,796 (the lowest number in the time series). All three FRAs saw decreases in the number of primary fires; North Wales down 17%, Mid and West Wales down 11% and South Wales saw a fall of 9%.

Since 2001-02 both Mid and West Wales and South Wales have seen falls of 71% in the number of primary fires. In North Wales the number has fallen by 66%.

Chart 3: Number of primary fires by Fire and Rescue Authority, 2001-02 to 2020-21(p)



Source: Incident Recording System
(p) Provisional data

Fire and rescue incidents data on StatsWales

In 2020-21, 40% of all primary fires were in dwellings, 31% in road vehicles, 19% in other buildings and 10% were outdoor fires. All location types except outdoors saw decreases in the number of primary fires since 2019-20, with fire in dwellings down by 8%, in other buildings down 17% and road vehicle fires down 18%. Numbers of primary outdoors fires increased by 15% and was mainly due to an increase in those occurring accidentally.

In 2020-21 the number of dwelling fires was less than half the figure seen in 2001-02.

Numbers of primary fires in road vehicles in Wales have fallen by 82% since

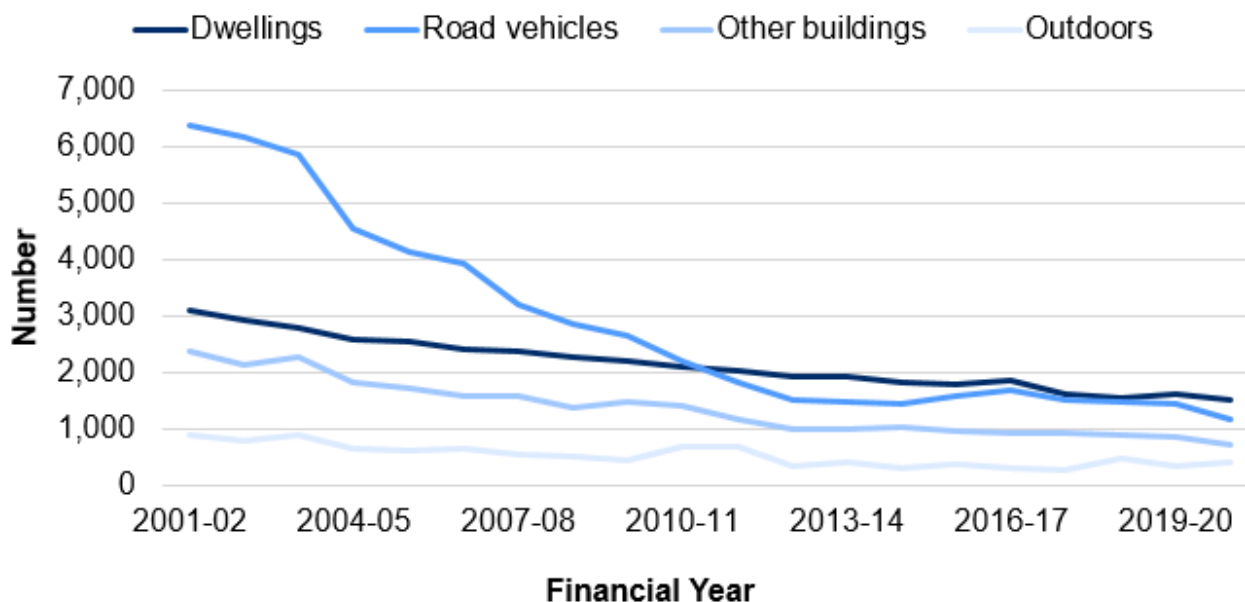
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2001-02.

Chart 4: Number of primary fires by location, 2001-02 to 2020-21(p)



Source: Incident Recording System
(p) Provisional data

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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 60% of those attended in 2020-21. In 2020-21 numbers of secondary fires increased by 4% compared with 2019-20. Only North Wales saw a decrease in the number of secondary fires (down 3%); Mid and West Wales and South Wales both saw increases of 5%.

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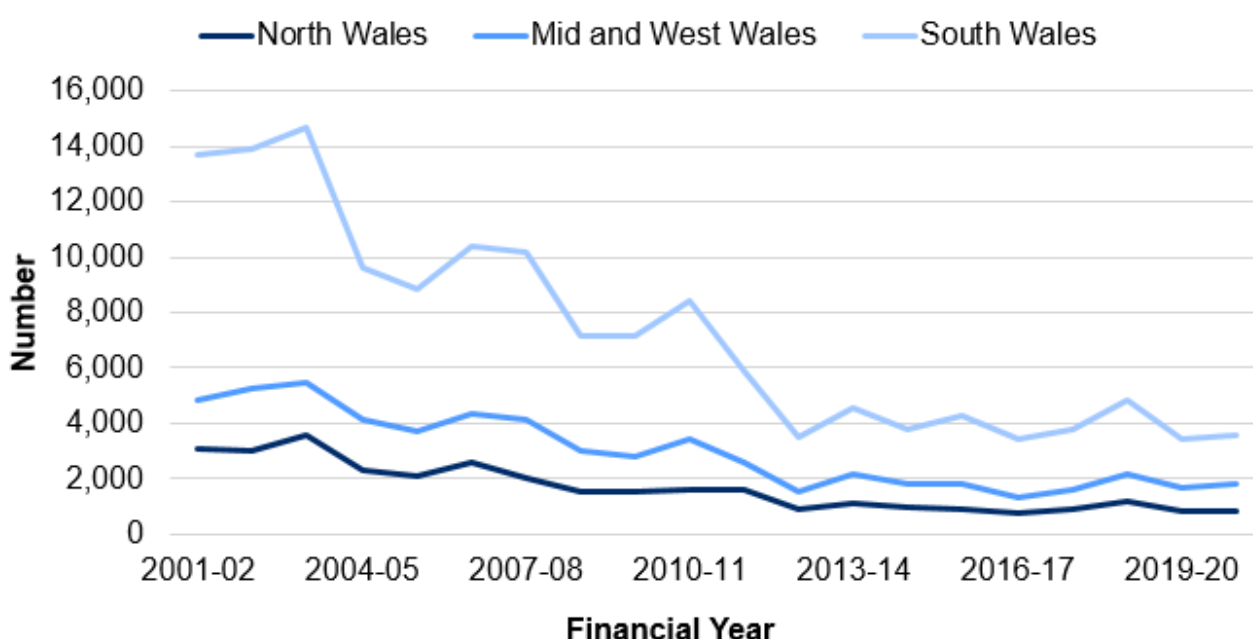
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The Welsh FRAs attended 6,199 secondary fires in 2020-21, an increase of 4% on 2019-20. This is the third lowest number in the time series.

Numbers of secondary fires in all 3 Welsh FRAs have seen substantial falls since 2001-02; 74% each in North Wales and South Wales and 63% in Mid and West Wales.

Chart 5: Number of secondary fires by Fire and Rescue Authority, 2001-02 to 2020-21(p)



Source: Incident Recording System
(p) Provisional data

Fire and rescue incidents data on StatsWales

In 2020-21, 2,051 (33% of) secondary fires occurred on grassland, woodland, cropland, a decrease by 1% compared with 2019-20.

In 2020-21, 58% of secondary fires were classed as refuse fires. The number of

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these fires rose by 7% from 3,380 in 2019-20 to 3,605 in 2020-21. Overall there has been a downward trend in refuse fires, falling by 30% since 2009-10.

Fires by motive

In 2020-21, there were 4,439 accidental fires, the lowest number in the available time series (since 2001-02). The number fell by 2% compared to the previous year, (equating to 94 fewer accidental fires), and since 2001-02 the number has fallen by over 50%. Accidental fires accounted for 72% of all primary fires and 22% of secondary fires.

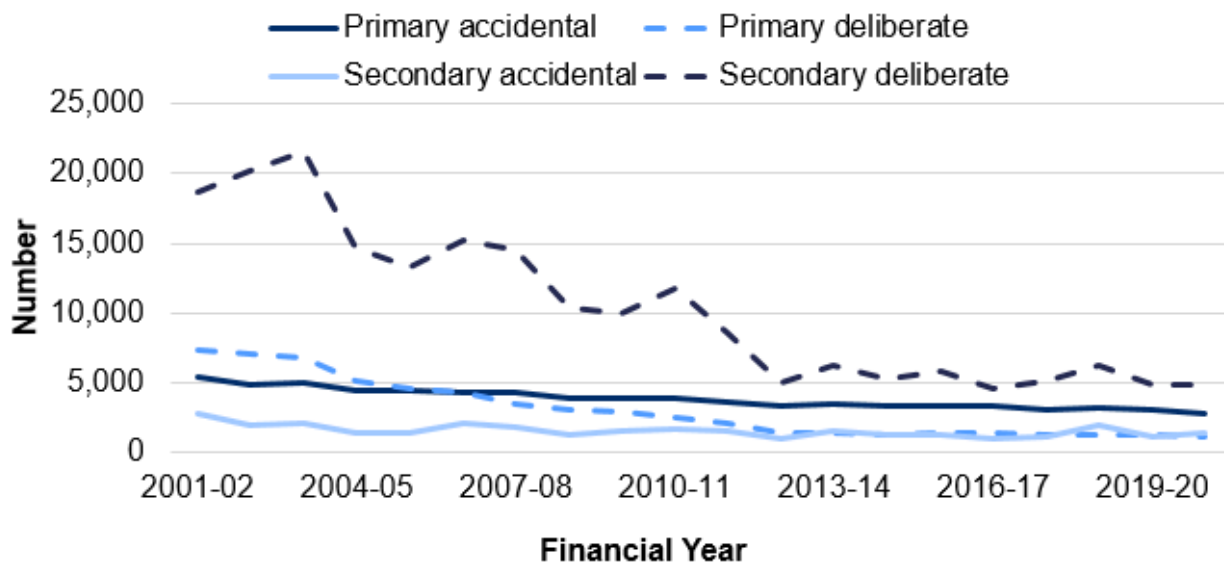
There were 5,889 deliberate fires a fall of 3%; 82% deliberate fires in 2020-21 were secondary fires.

The chart below shows that numbers of deliberate secondary fires have been prone to fluctuation, whilst the other categories shown are less volatile.

In 2020-21 the number of accidental primary fires decreased by 9% whilst the number of accidental secondary fires rose by 16% (compared with 2019-20). The increase in accidental secondary fires is mainly due to a rise in the number occurring outdoors.

Numbers of primary deliberate fires fell by 16%, whilst secondary deliberate fires increased 1%.

Chart 6: Number of fires by type and motive, 2001-02 to 2020-21(p)



Source: Incident Recording System
(p) Provisional data

[Fire and rescue incidents data on StatsWales](#)

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. Fire false alarms are categorised as follows:

Malicious

Where the call is deliberately for a non-existent fire-related event.

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Good intent

In which the call was made in good faith in the belief that there was a fire to attend.

Due to apparatus

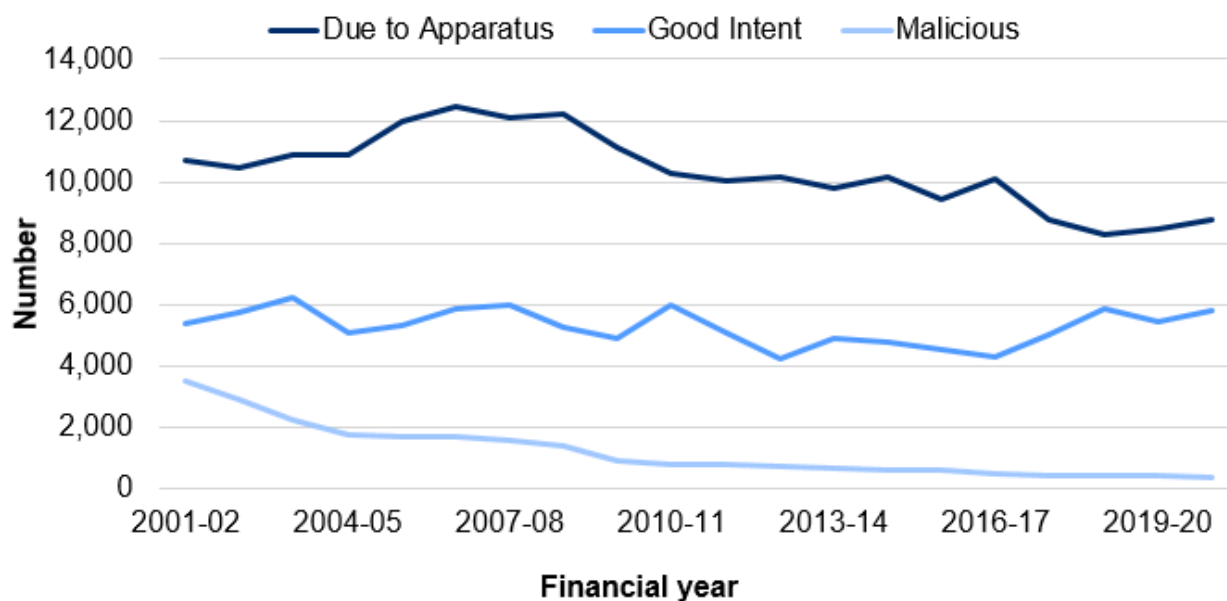
In which the call was initiated by the operation of fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment.

In 2020-21 there were 14,880 fire false alarms in Wales, up from 14,281 in 2019-20, an increase of 4%. Since 2001-02 the number of fire false alarms attended has fallen by 24%.

Numbers of good intent fire false alarms and those due to apparatus rose in 2020-21 compared with the previous year (7% and 3% respectively). Numbers of malicious fire false alarms fell by 14%.

Overall there has been a downward trend in the number of malicious fire false alarms, falling by 91% since 2001-02.

Chart 7: Number of fire false alarms by reason, 2001-02 to 2020-21(p)



Source: Incident Recording System
(p) Provisional data

Fire and rescue incidents data on StatsWales

Special service incidents

In 2020-21, 22% of all incidents attended by FRAs in Wales were Special Service Incidents (SSIs). These incidents include road traffic collisions (RTCs), flooding incidents, medical incidents etc. Unlike other incident types overall numbers of SSIs haven't seen a consistent downward trend and are prone to fluctuation. It is likely that the Covid pandemic and periods of lockdown have had an impact on the numbers of SSIs in 2020-21.

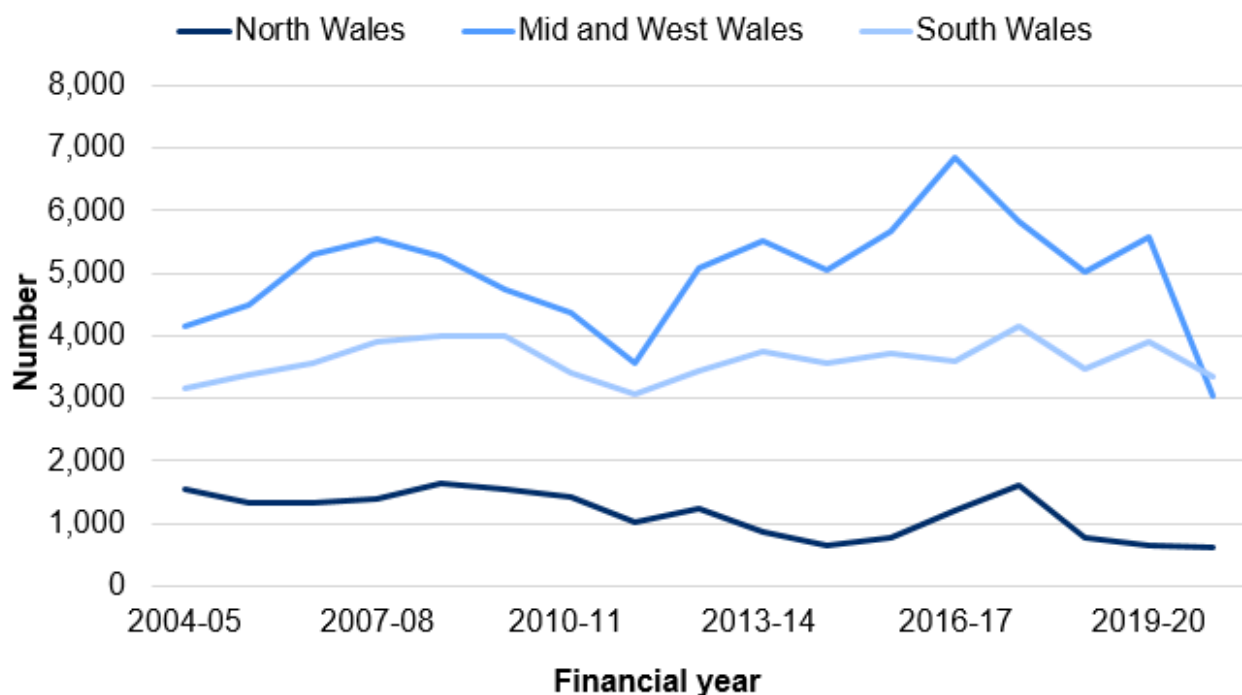
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Overall attendance at SSIs decreased by 31% in 2020-21; all 3 FRAs saw decreases in attendances at SSIs falling by 45% in Mid and West Wales, 14% in South Wales and 5% in North Wales. The drop in SSIs in Mid and West Wales is mainly due to a fall in the number of attendances at medical incidents, although many categories of SSIs saw a fall in numbers.

Chart 8: Number of SSIs attended by Fire and Rescue Authority, 2001-02 to 2020-21(p)



Source: Incident Recording System
(p) Provisional data

Fire and rescue incidents data on StatsWales

RTCs accounted for 20% of SSIs though attendance at these incidents fell by 40%. [Road traffic statistics](#) show that road traffic volume decreased considerably during year 2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions introduced at times during the year (a decrease of 23.4% compared

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to 2019).

Numbers of attendances at medical incidents fell by 82%.

Flooding incidents decreased by 12% following the large numbers seen in 2019-20. However these incidents still made up 14% of SSIs, occurrence being unaffected by the pandemic.

Table 1: Number of SSIs by type, 2018-19 to 2020-21

Type of SSI	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21(p)
Road traffic collision	2,202	2,122	1,278
Flooding	571	993	876
Rescue or evacuation from water	97	214	147
Other rescue/release of people	327	322	256
Animal assistance incidents	305	329	261
Making Safe	283	346	235
Lift release	360	359	217
Effecting entry	563	572	469
Removal of objects from people	278	276	337

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Type of SSI	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21(p)
Medical incident - Co-responder/First responder	1,809	2,117	390
Assist other agencies	1,098	1,034	954
Other	870	968	1,023
All Special Service Incidents	8,763	9,652	6,443
All Special Service False Alarms	515	469	577

Source: Incident Recording System
(p) Provisional data.

Fire-related fatalities and casualties

Fire fatalities

A fatal casualty is defined as a person whose death is attributed to a fire, even if the death occurred weeks or months later.

There were 21 fatal casualties during 2020-21. This is 5 more than in the previous year and the highest number since 2011-12. The overall trend since 2001-02 (when there were 38 fatalities) has been downward, however numbers are small and prone to fluctuation.

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Table 2: Number and rate of fatal casualties from fires, 2011-12 to 2020 21

Financial year	Number	Per million population(a)
2011-12	23	7.5
2012-13	17	5.5
2013-14	17	5.5
2014-15	20	6.5
2015-16	19	6.1
2016-17	19	6.1
2017-18	15	4.8
2018-19	20	6.4
2019-20	16	5.1
2020-21(p)	21	6.6

Source: Incident Recording System

(a) Population data are taken from ONS Mid-Year Estimates.

(p) Provisional data.

Since 2001-02, 77% of fatal casualties occurred in dwelling fires, equating to a

total of 342 out of 443 fatalities. In 2020-21 90% of fatalities were the result of dwelling fires; there were 8 more dwelling fatalities than in the previous year.

In 2020-21 18 of the 21 fatalities were aged 60 or over. For most of the available time series the age group '60 or over' had the highest fatality rate, and in 2020-21 the fatality rate for this group is far higher than the other age groups and almost double the rate 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 2020-21 there were 408 non-fatal casualties (a fall of 20% compared with 2019-20), to the second lowest number (and rate) in the time series. The overall trend over the last ten years has been downward, although in recent years the numbers and associated rates have fluctuated.

Table 3: Number and rate of non fatal casualties from fires, 2011-12 to 2020-21

Financial year	Number	Per million population(a)
2011-12	592	193.2

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Financial year	Number	Per million population(a)
2012-13	541	176.0
2013-14	626	203.1
2014-15	543	175.6
2015-16	592	191.0
2016-17	621	199.5
2017-18	526	169.0
2018-19	396	126.2
2019-20	509	161.4
2020-21(p)	408	128.7

Source: Incident Recording System

(a) Population data are taken from ONS Mid-Year Estimates.

(p) Provisional data.

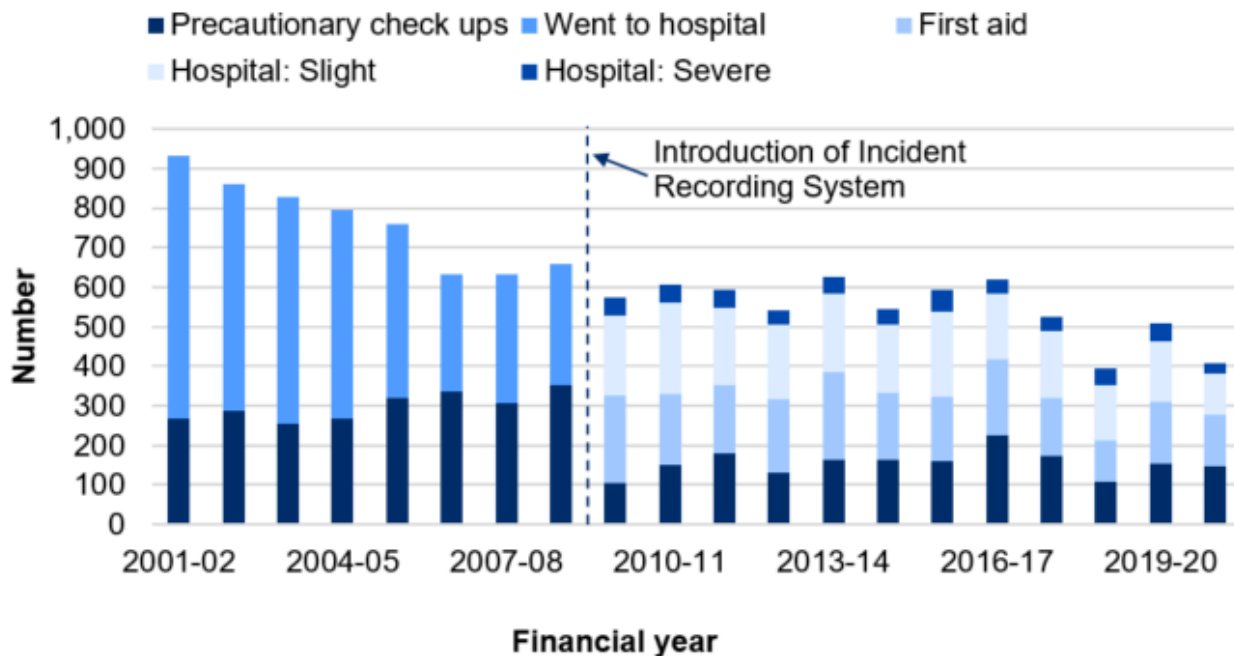
Although all casualty groups saw a decrease, the overall drop was driven by a fall in the numbers of those going to hospital with slight injuries, down 31% compared with 2019-20. In 2020-21, 68% of non fatal casualties received first aid or were advised to have a precautionary check up. A further 26% of non-fatal casualties were taken to hospital with slight injuries and the remaining 6% were taken to hospital with severe injuries.

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Chart 9: Number of non-fatal casualties from fires by severity of injury, 2001-02 to 2020-21(p)



Source: Incident Recording System
(p) Provisional data

[Fire and rescue incidents data on StatsWales](#)

Quality and methodology information

Context

The analysis in this report relates to fire and rescue service incidents between April 2020 and end March 2021 and therefore covers a period affected by the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, and the various COVID-19 related restriction which were introduced from 23 March 2020 onwards

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The **Fire and Rescue Incident report** provides further detail of key quality and methodology information.

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