



# Fire Facts

Incident response times

2015



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

## **About this publication**

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## **The London Fire Brigade**

The London Fire Brigade is run by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA).

For more information about LFEPA and the work of the London Fire Brigade visit [www.london-fire.gov.uk](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk).

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## Introduction

This *Fire Facts* report sets out the key information on our response times to the 999 calls we receive. Most of the data in this report begins from 2005, as before this period the data we captured about response times was less accurate and is not directly comparable to the most recent data.

### About the London Fire Brigade

The London Fire Brigade (LFB) is the Fire & Rescue Service for the Greater London area. The LFB is run by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA). The LFEPA has 17 members, all of whom are appointed by the Mayor. Eight are nominated by the London Assembly, seven are nominated by the London boroughs and two are appointed by the Mayor directly.

Over the period covered by this report (2005-2015) the London Fire Brigade has attended around 100,000 incidents each year within London of which just under half are false alarms. We also attended over 500 incidents each year in neighbouring county areas (at their request). In this report we focus on those incidents that happen within the boundaries of Greater London. Fire engines from neighbouring counties also attend some incidents in London (when requested); in this report we focus on the response provided by LFB fire engines as we don't have data for the incidents attended by fire engines from other Brigades.

The Brigade sets out how its prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities, in a cost effective way, in its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The Brigades' IRMP is known as the London Safety Plan, the most recent of which was approved on 12 September 2013 (LSP5) covering the period April 2013 to March 2017.

### Data sources and systems

Information about the 999 calls we receive is recorded in the LFBs mobilising system.

Between February 1990 and May 2004, the Brigade used a mobilising system that did not report attendance times by minute and second, so an incident where a fire engine was mobilised at 0850h 05s and arrived at 0855h 50s would record an attendance time of five minutes, even though the elapsed time was actually five minutes and 45 seconds. This means that reported performance against the attendance standards prior to 2004 was better than actual performance to incidents.

In May 2004 the Brigade changed to the ProCAD mobilising system which records times in minutes and seconds. Because of this discontinuity in data, this report shows the data from 2005 as this is the first complete year with accurate response time data. Data for call handling is also only available since May 2004 when the ProCAD mobilising system was introduced.

The Brigade changed mobilising system again during 2015 with a system based on the Fortek (Capita) Vision product. There is continuity of data between the Vision and ProCAD mobilising systems. The new system went live at 2am on 17 November 2015.

Data about the incidents we attend is recorded in our Incident Management System (IMS). IMS conforms to the requirements of the governments national incident recording system (IRS) which the Brigade adopted in November 2008.

We undertake a range of data quality checks and data improvement processes. However, there are still some data in our systems that we believe are errors, for example where times are obviously wrong (due to failure to use the fire engine recording systems at the appropriate time), or where times are not available. For this reason a small quantity of data is excluded from the analysis.

### Fire stations and fire engines

The London Fire Brigade's response to emergencies is provide by fire appliances (fire engines), other specialist vehicles and fire officers. This *Fire Facts*

publication focusses on the response by fire engines only. All fire engines are based at fire stations, and the number of fire stations and fire engines has fluctuated over the period cover by this report. The location of fire stations and fire engines will determine the Brigade's speed of response to emergencies.

The numbers of fire stations and fire engines in London (at end December each year) is set out below.

Year	Fire engines	Fire stations
2004	170	112
2005 <sup>1</sup>	168	111
2006	168	111
2007	168	111
2008	168	111
2009	168	111
2010 <sup>2</sup>	169	112
2011	169	112
2012	169	112
2013 <sup>3</sup>	169	112
2014 <sup>4,5</sup>	155	102
2015 <sup>5</sup>	155	102

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Manchester Square fire station closed, with two fire engines removed.

<sup>2</sup> A new fire station at Harold Hill opened, with one new fire engine.

<sup>3</sup> In August 2013, 27 fire appliances were temporarily removed from service to provide contingency cover in the event of strike action.

<sup>4</sup> The Brigade closed ten fire stations, removed 14 fire engines and moved five fire engines to other stations from 9 January 2014 in line with the agreed Fifth London Safety Plan (LSP5).

<sup>5</sup> An additional 13 fire engines remained temporarily away from stations during 2014 and 2015 to provide the contingency cover in the event of strike; 142 fire engines in place in both years.

## Symbols and conventions used

### Inner and outer London

Where we have made reference to inner and outer London we are using the classification used by the Office of National Statistics.

There are 14 inner London Boroughs which are; Camden, City of London, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster.

The 19 outer London Boroughs are; Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton and Waltham Forest.

### Symbols

The following symbols have been used throughout:

.. = not available or not applicable (also used where information has been suppressed to avoid disclosure)

– = nil

### Mapping tool

We publish information about the incidents we attend and the attendance times for the first and second fire engines to arrive via our online mapping tool. This tool displays information at borough and ward level.

To use this tool visit <http://maps.london-fire.gov.uk/>

# Chapter 1 | Responding to emergencies

The Brigade plans the allocation of its resources on a London-wide basis. This means that we plan the location of fire engines (and other resources) so they can arrive at incidents as quickly as possible, wherever the incident occurs in London.

Since our Second London Safety Plan (LSP2), which was approved by the Authority on 17 March 2005, the Brigade has adopted as a guiding principle the concept that Londoners should have equal entitlement to the fastest possible attendance times, irrespective of whether they live in an area in which there is a higher likelihood or a lower likelihood of fire occurring in the first place. The current standards for the speed of arrival of fire engines to all types of incidents, anywhere in London (i.e. first fire engine in an average of 6 minutes, second in an average of 8 minutes), were put in place by the Third London Safety Plan (LSP3) 2008-2011.

The Brigade's view is that in the event of a serious incident, each person should be entitled to expect a broadly similar response in terms of resources deployed and the time to arrive. Just because a person lives in an area with a lower likelihood of fire occurring, this does not mean that they should have a slower response time when a fire actually does occur. We now call this approach the "*principle of equal entitlement*". This is a guiding but not overriding principle when we plan our services because it is subject to a number of other objectives and operational constraints.

The Brigade may send a different number of fire engines and appliances to an incident depending on the nature of the incident and the type of building or location. The number of appliances sent to different types of incident as an initial response to an emergency ('999') call is called the "pre-determined attendance" (PDA). For example, the PDA for a dwelling fire is always two fire engines. For complex buildings, or where there are complicated firefighter logistics to take into account, the PDA might be higher. For example, a call to a fire at the British

Museum has a PDA of four fire engines, an aerial appliance and a command unit, and a fire at the Hospital for Sick Children in Great Ormond Street has a PDA of four appliances and one aerial appliance.

## Our response standards

So we can see how well we are performing, we set standards for various parts of the process for getting resources to emergency incidents. The current different standards were confirmed or put in place by the Fifth London Safety Plan (LSP5) which was the subject of public consultation from March to June 2013.

These indicators start at the time the emergency 999 call is answered by LFB Control to the arrival of a fire engine with crew at the incident scene.

Our response time targets for 2015/16 are:

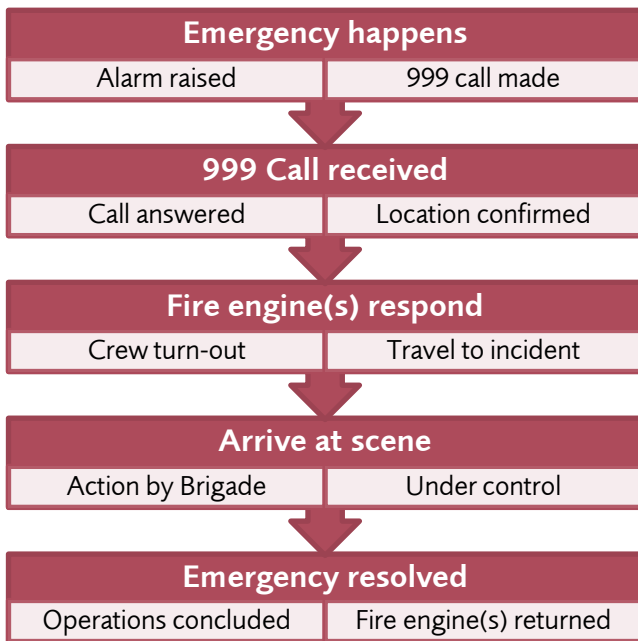
- (a) answer 999 calls within an average of **1.4 seconds**
- (b) answer 92 per cent of 999 calls within **7 seconds**
- (c) dispatch a fire engine to emergency incidents within an average **1min 40 sec** of answering the call
- (d) for the first fire engine to arrive within an average of **6mins** from being dispatched
- (e) for the second fire engine (if required) to arrive within an average of **8mins** from being dispatched
- (f) for first fire engine to arrive within **12mins** in more than 95 per cent of occasions.

## The emergency response process

For all emergencies, and particularly for fires, there is a period between the incident happening and the time the fire brigade is called which is outside the control of the fire brigade. This is an important period because an undiscovered fire which may have been burning for some time before discovery, can result in a worse outcome. It is during this period that smoke alarms and escape plans are very important so that early

warning of fire is given and occupants have the chance to escape.

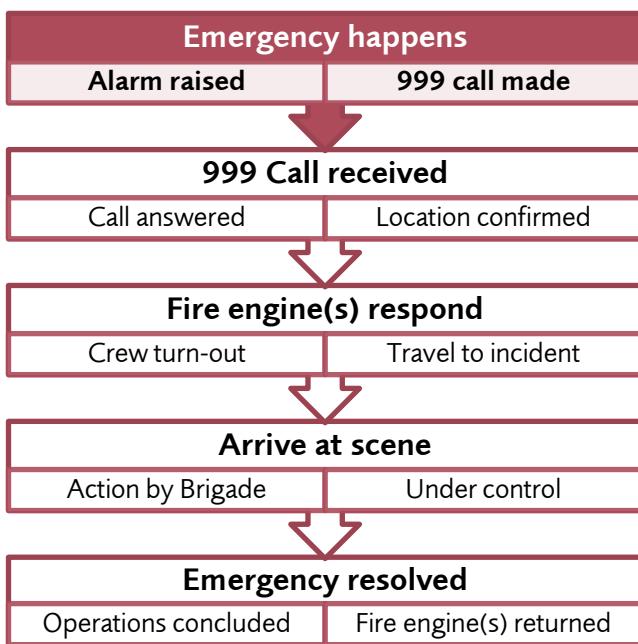
The diagram that follows shows the key stages in responding to and dealing with an emergency call from the time that an emergency happens to the time LFB arrives at the incident scene with vehicles and firefighters to resolve the emergency.



Getting to the incident quickly is important, but so is the work we do when we get there. Our crews carry out a dynamic risk assessment of the situation on arrival to ensure that they and any members of the public are safe. This assessment will also include a plan of operations to resolve the situation in the most effective way. When the incident has been brought under control the incident commander at the scene sends a 'stop message' to control which tells them that additional strengthening resources are not required. The incident may still continue for several minutes, hours or even days, but at the time of stop the incident is contained. The incident is closed when the last resource at the scene leaves and returns to its base location.

## Chapter 2 | Discovery of the fire and calling the fire brigade

This chapter looks at the key actions, in advance of calling 999, that are necessary for the swift attendance of the Brigade to deal with any emergency and are vital for the avoidance of casualties. These are, the discovery of the emergency/fire by a member of the public or an automated alarm system and the brigade being called via 999.



The actions which are outside the control of the brigade are (a) the time between the ignition of the fire to its discovery and (b) from the discovery to calling the fire brigade.

We don't always know how long it has taken for the Brigade to be called, but when we attend fires our crews and fire investigators use their knowledge of fire development and information from any people present to determine how long it was between the fire being discovered and the 999 call being made. The Brigade knows from analysis of this information that the time taken from the ignition of a fire to the time the brigade is called can have a greater impact on the fatality rate in dwelling fires than the arrival time of the fire appliances.

### The importance of calling the fire brigade early

Fires behave very differently and the rate of fire growth depends on a range of factors such as the material and quantity of items in the room and how big the room is. Some fires develop very quickly and others can smoulder for several hours before the fire fully develops. Those that do develop into more serious fires can do so very quickly and the fire can become very hostile in a few minutes from the start.

Fires in the home are not often serious, but when they are, early warning and evacuation (and fire suppression systems such as sprinklers) are vitally important.

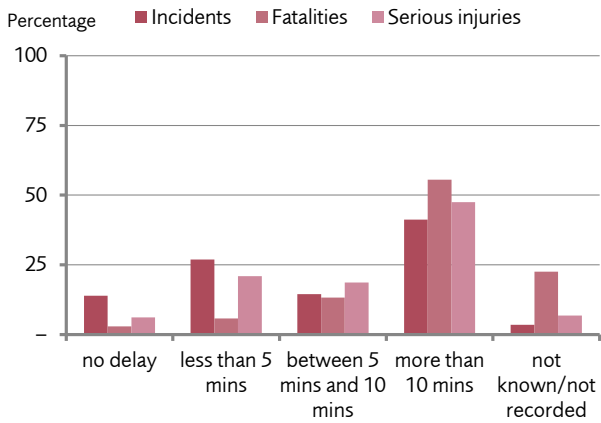
Smoke alarm ownership in London is good with around 80 per cent of homes saying they have a working alarm. However, in more than half of the home fires we attend there is no alarm or it did not operate.

### Delay between fire start and 999 call

(Table 2.1)

Only a small proportion of fires in the home are discovered immediately with there being no delay in the Brigade being called (14 per cent). In a much larger proportion of occasions, the delay between discovering the fires and calling 999 is more than 10 minutes (41 per cent).

**Chart 1: Delay between fire start and 999 call for dwelling fires (5yr average)**



When there is a delay in the Brigade being called, there is a corresponding increase in the number of fatalities and number of casualties. Nearly two-thirds of the fatalities at dwelling fires are when there has been a delay in calling the Brigade of 10 or more minutes. Nearly half of all serious fire casualties, where the casualty is taken to hospital and the injuries appear serious, happen when the delay is 10 or more minutes.

**Table 2.1 Delay between fire start and 999 call for dwelling fires**

<i>number &amp; percentage</i>	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	5 year total
<b>Delay from ignition to 999 call</b>						
no delay	906	896	877	839	840	4 358
less than 5 mins	1 833	1 765	1 717	1 570	1 546	8 431
between 5 mins and 10 mins	912	894	897	944	910	4 557
more than 10 mins	2 849	2 781	2 532	2 376	2 396	12 934
not known/not recorded	233	209	247	212	196	1 097
<b>Delay from ignition to 999 call (%)</b>						
no delay	13	14	14	14	14	14
less than 5 mins	27	27	27	26	26	27
between 5 mins and 10 mins	14	14	14	16	15	15
more than 10 mins	42	42	40	40	41	41
not known/not recorded	3	3	4	4	3	3
<b>Fire fatalities, by delay</b>						
no delay	2	–	1	–	2	5
less than 5 mins	2	4	2	1	1	10
between 5 mins and 10 mins	10	2	3	3	5	23
more than 10 mins	24	23	26	13	10	96
not known/not recorded	8	9	7	9	6	39
<b>Fire fatalities (%), by delay</b>						
no delay	4	–	3	–	8	3
less than 5 mins	4	11	5	4	4	6
between 5 mins and 10 mins	22	5	8	12	21	13
more than 10 mins	52	61	67	50	42	55
not known/not recorded	17	24	18	35	25	23
<b>Fire casualties - serious, by delay</b>						
no delay	31	26	33	48	41	179
less than 5 mins	149	145	119	96	100	609
between 5 mins and 10 mins	114	112	124	101	91	542
more than 10 mins	348	307	268	230	225	1 378
not known/not recorded	61	46	19	19	52	197
<b>Fire casualties - serious (%), by delay</b>						
no delay	4	4	6	10	8	6
less than 5 mins	21	23	21	19	20	21
between 5 mins and 10 mins	16	18	22	20	18	19
more than 10 mins	50	48	48	47	44	47
not known/not recorded	9	7	3	4	10	7

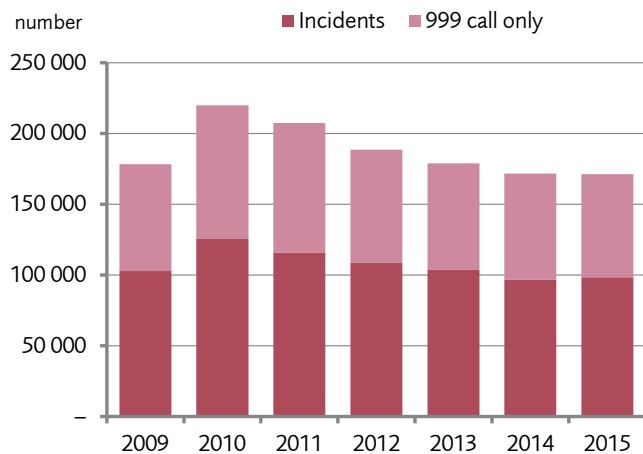


## Chapter 3 | Emergency call handling

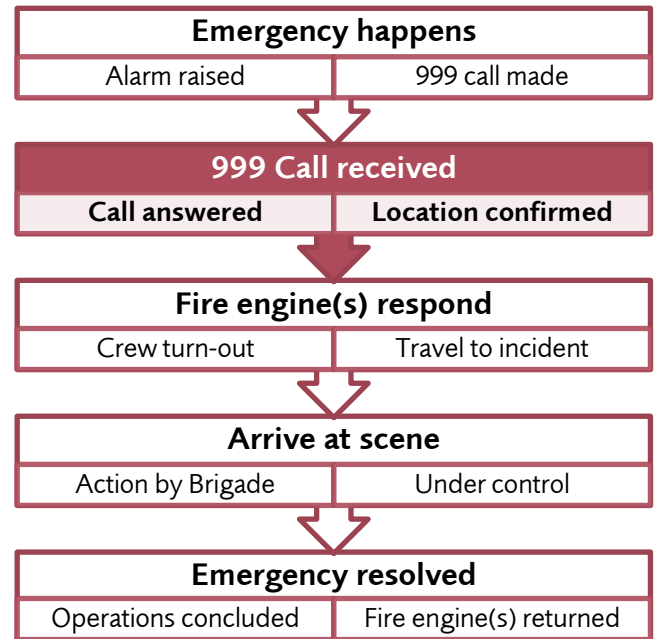
This chapter deals with activity undertaken by LFB control room staff, who take and deal with emergency (999) calls and mobilise resources to deal with emergencies.

Our control room handles many more emergency calls than turn into actual emergencies that we need to attend. In recent years, around 40 per cent of these calls did not result in an emergency response as the call was either not an emergency, or the call was a duplicate report of an emergency we were already dealing with. The overall number of calls we handle has been falling over recent years.

**Chart 2: Percentage of 999 calls answered within seven seconds**



This chapter covers the interval marked **in bold** on the chart below.



When a member of the public dials 999 they are first connected to the Public Telecommunications Operator (PTO) who asks "Emergency. Which service?". The PTO's for the UK and London are BT and Cable & Wireless and they provide the 999 (or 112) emergency call handling service. They are obliged, under the terms of their licences, to provide a public emergency call service by which any member of the public (without charge) can contact any of the local emergency authorities (police, fire, ambulance, coastguard).

If the 999 caller asks for "Fire Brigade", the call is transferred from the PTO to the LFB control operators based at our London Operation Centre in Merton.

Our response time targets for answering emergency calls for 2015/16 are:

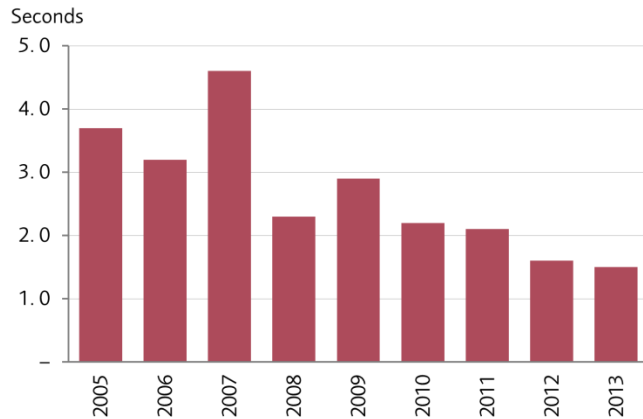
- answer 999 calls within an average of **1.4 seconds**
- answer 92 per cent of 999 calls within **7 seconds**
- dispatch a fire engine to emergency incidents within an average **1min 40 sec** of answering the call.

## Answering a 999 call

(Table 3.1 and 3.2)

In 2013, it took one and a half seconds, on average, for an LFB control operator to answer the 999 call when it was passed from the PTO. Call answer times have been getting quicker since 2007 when the average time taken to answer the call was 4.6 seconds.

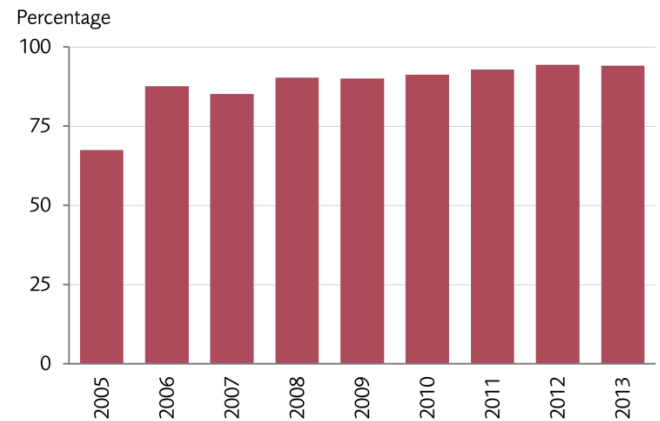
**Chart 3: Average time taken to answer a 999 call**



To ensure that we don't have many calls that have unusually extended call answering times we monitor the percentage of calls that are answered within 7 seconds.

The occasions when it takes longer than 7 seconds to answer a call are those when we have exceptionally high call demand which can happen during very bad weather. For example, on Monday 28 October 2013 control officers received 412 emergency calls in a three hour period (0600 – 0900) as a result of the adverse weather conditions brought about by the 'St Jude's day storm'. This was 13 times the usual number of calls for a typical Monday morning.

**Chart 4: Percentage of 999 calls answered within seven seconds**



## Handling a 999 call

There are two stages to handling a 999 call; understanding the nature of the call and confirming there is a real emergency; and confirming the address or location and then dispatching a fire engine(s).

Control operators will handle calls that do not require an attendance. A large number of these are duplicate calls to incidents which are already being handled. Others will be people who do not require a service the Brigade offers, or where the Brigade has decided to not make an attendance. Examples of these are abandoned/hoax calls from public call boxes and some calls to shut in lift releases or to automatic fire alarms sounding where it is confirmed there is no emergency, in line with our call filtering policies.

## Confirming the location

(Table 3.3)

In recent years, it has taken, on average, just under a minute to establish the details of the 999 call, confirm the nature of the emergency and establish its location. This time has been consistent over recent years.

## Mobilising fire engines

(Table 3.4)

The average time taken to dispatch a fire engine to an incident once the location has been confirmed is shown in table 3.4.

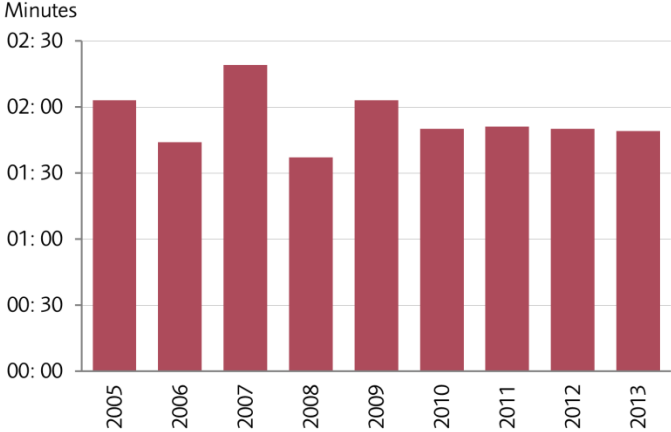
## Call handling time

(Table 3.5)

The overall time taken to deal with an emergency 999 call, including the time to confirm the location of the

incident and the dispatch of a response, is called the 'call handling time'. The total call handling time has fluctuated in recent years, as it includes the time taken by our Control staff, to filter or 'challenge' calls certain to ensure they need a Brigade emergency response.

**Chart 5: Average call handling time**



**Table 3.1 Average time taken to answer an emergency 999 call**

*seconds*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Average time taken to answer a 999 call</b>	3.7	3.2	4.6	2.3	2.9	2.2	2.1	1.6	1.5	..	..

**Table 3.2 Emergency 999 calls answered within seven seconds**

*percentage*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>999 calls answered within seven seconds (%)</b>	67.5	87.6	85.2	90.3	90.0	91.3	92.8	94.4	94.1	..	..

**Table 3.3 Average time from 999 call answer to confirmation of location**

*minutes*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>999 calls time answered to address select</b>	00:56	00:53	00:52	00:52	00:55	00:57	00:58	00:58	00:57	..	..

**Table 3.4 Average time from confirmation of location to fire engine mobilisation**

*minutes*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>999 calls address select to mobilisation</b>	01:07	00:50	01:26	00:44	01:07	00:53	00:52	00:52	00:51	..	..

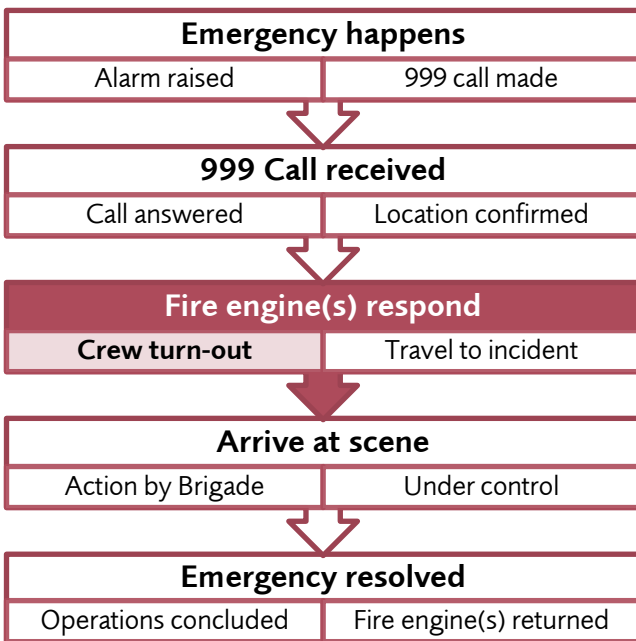
**Table 3.5 Average emergency call handling time**

*minutes*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>999 calls time answered to mobilisation</b>	02:03	01:44	02:19	01:37	02:03	01:50	01:51	01:50	01:49	..	..

## Chapter 4 | Crew turn-out times

This chapter looks at the time it takes fire engine crews to leave the fire station once they are mobilised; we call this the "crew turn-out" time. It deals with the parts of the process marked on the chart below. As can be seen from the chart, the crew turn-out time is a key component (alongside travel time) of the overall time it takes to get to an emergency incident.



The time it takes crews to leave a station is an important part of the process of getting to emergencies as quickly as possible. We record and measure the time it takes from the LFB control operator (a) sending a mobilising message to the fire station and (b) the firefighter crew getting the message, putting on their fire gear (their personal protective equipment), the driver to determine the best way to the incident location and then leaving the fire station with blue lights and sirens.

The time it takes for crews to turn-out does vary between crews at different stations and this is because the layouts of stations vary; it taking longer to get from some parts of an older station to the fire engine than other more modern stations.

Not all mobilisations happen from the station. Our crews can be mobilised whilst they are out and about

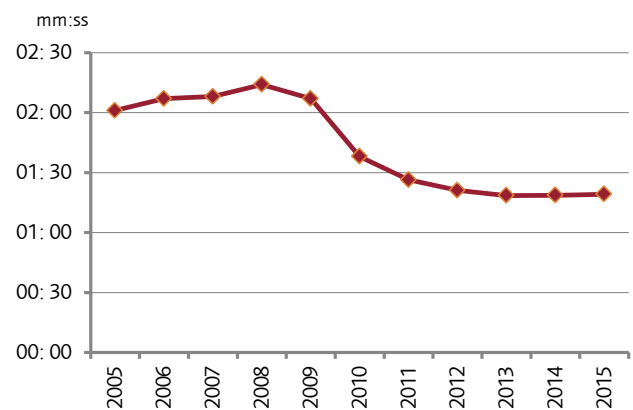
in their local area carrying out other work such as home fire safety visits and familiarisation inspections. Around 15 per cent of mobilisation are from locations other than a fire station.

### Turn-out times

(Table 4.1)

The time it has taken a fire crew to turn-out from a fire station is shown in the table below. Turn-out times have been getting quicker since 2008. This reflects increased performance management action to ensure faster crew turnout since that time.

Chart 6: Average crew turn-out times



When we measure turn-out times for a fire station we look at all incidents that station attends regardless of where the incident is located. Turn-out times for the London boroughs are therefore the times for the firefighter crews located at stations in the borough and not for the incidents that happen in the borough which could be attended by crews from outside the borough.

Although the layout of stations are different, the turn-out times across London are similar. The average turn-out time for stations by borough is shown in the table below.

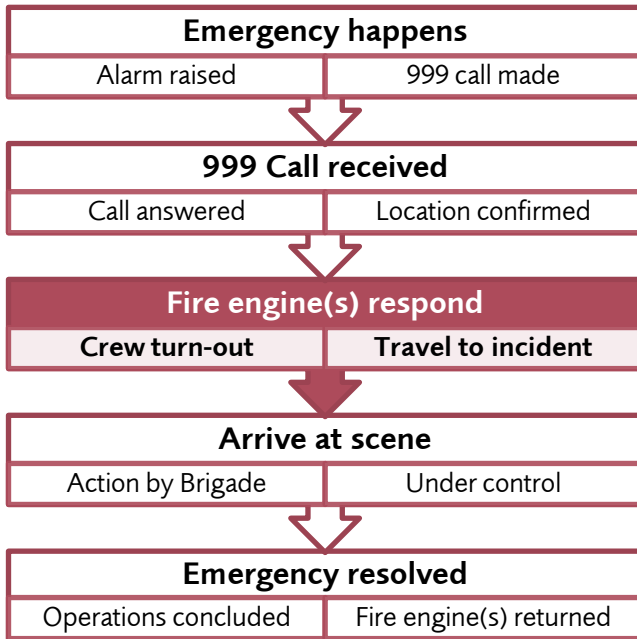
**Table 4.1 Average crew turn-out time**

*minutes*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>London Total</b>	<b>01: 38</b>	<b>01: 26</b>	<b>01: 21</b>	<b>01: 18</b>	<b>01: 19</b>	<b>01: 19</b>
<b>Inner London</b>	<b>01: 38</b>	<b>01: 27</b>	<b>01: 21</b>	<b>01: 20</b>	<b>01: 20</b>	<b>01: 19</b>
Camden	01: 37	01: 31	01: 29	01: 19	01: 19	01: 21
City of London	01: 28	01: 12	01: 05	01: 27	01: 26	01: 25
Hackney	01: 45	01: 34	01: 27	01: 24	01: 19	01: 18
Hammersmith and Fulham	01: 48	01: 27	01: 13	01: 25	01: 25	01: 23
Haringey	01: 44	01: 28	01: 24	01: 20	01: 14	01: 15
Islington	01: 39	01: 32	01: 27	01: 10	01: 11	01: 10
Kensington and Chelsea	01: 36	01: 18	01: 18	01: 20	01: 16	01: 19
Lambeth	01: 36	01: 22	01: 16	01: 18	01: 18	01: 16
Lewisham	01: 41	01: 32	01: 24	01: 17	01: 21	01: 23
Newham	01: 34	01: 22	01: 05	01: 02	01: 03	01: 03
Southwark	01: 31	01: 28	01: 25	01: 27	01: 27	01: 22
Tower Hamlets	01: 31	01: 22	01: 16	01: 11	01: 10	01: 08
Wandsworth	01: 38	01: 22	01: 13	01: 22	01: 22	01: 21
Westminster	01: 38	01: 27	01: 26	01: 30	01: 32	01: 32
<b>Outer London</b>	<b>01: 38</b>	<b>01: 26</b>	<b>01: 21</b>	<b>01: 17</b>	<b>01: 17</b>	<b>01: 19</b>
Barking and Dagenham	01: 38	01: 26	01: 30	01: 22	01: 19	01: 29
Barnet	01: 41	01: 25	01: 19	01: 10	01: 17	01: 21
Bexley	01: 38	01: 34	01: 27	01: 15	01: 17	01: 18
Brent	01: 40	01: 31	01: 26	01: 19	01: 19	01: 19
Bromley	01: 49	01: 24	01: 13	01: 11	01: 19	01: 22
Croydon	01: 44	01: 37	01: 30	01: 19	01: 19	01: 23
Ealing	01: 31	01: 22	01: 15	01: 13	01: 13	01: 14
Enfield	01: 43	01: 34	01: 27	01: 22	01: 15	01: 21
Greenwich	01: 34	01: 26	01: 21	01: 20	01: 20	01: 18
Harrow	01: 23	01: 11	01: 13	01: 09	01: 14	01: 13
Havering	01: 37	01: 24	01: 14	01: 07	01: 13	01: 12
Hillingdon	01: 25	01: 20	01: 15	01: 17	01: 19	01: 21
Hounslow	01: 41	01: 27	01: 21	01: 21	01: 22	01: 23
Kingston upon Thames	01: 41	01: 29	01: 22	01: 24	01: 09	01: 12
Merton	01: 40	01: 24	01: 12	01: 09	01: 11	01: 16
Redbridge	01: 27	01: 21	01: 17	01: 17	01: 12	01: 14
Richmond upon Thames	01: 29	01: 16	01: 11	01: 10	01: 16	01: 13
Sutton	01: 56	01: 32	01: 30	01: 26	01: 26	01: 23
Waltham Forest	01: 39	01: 22	01: 25	01: 22	01: 23	01: 24

## Chapter 5 | Fire engine response times

This chapter looks at the time it takes for fire engines to arrive at emergency incidents. It deals with the parts of the process marked on the chart below.



As explained in Chapter 1, our aim is to get to emergencies as quickly as possible.

To measure our effectiveness at doing this, we have three attendance standards that we monitor our performance against. These standards have been in place since 2008 (as part of LSP3) and are:

- for the first fire engine to arrive within an average of **6mins** from being dispatched
- for the second fire engine (if required) to arrive within an average of **8mins** from being dispatched
- for a first fire engine to arrive within **12mins** in more than 95 per cent of occasions

Our fire engine response standards are measured from the time LFB control operators mobilise the first (and subsequent) fire engine to an incident to when the fire engine arrives at the incident location. This time therefore includes the crew turn-out time detailed in Chapter 4 of this report.

We have used the time mobilised as the reference point for attendance times for more than 20 years. Attendance times have traditionally been counted from the point that resources are mobilised, and this dates back to at least 1993 when the Government's performance indicators measured speed of response by reference to "assigning appliances by control".

The advantage of using the time mobilised as the starting point for measuring the attendance time of fire engines is that attendance standards are calculated by reference to the period over which the Brigade has most control.

Whilst the time between crew turn-out and arrival at an incident may vary depending on traffic conditions and marginal differences in crew turn-out times at different stations, the time taken for the Brigade to attend an incident will principally be determined by the physical location of fire stations and fire engines.

Generally inner London boroughs have faster attendance times than outer London boroughs. This is a consequence of a pre-existing (and continuing) clustering of resources in inner London as a result of the former Government standards (see Annex A). This point highlights that the historical position is that attendance times are faster in inner London, and a move towards equal entitlement is more likely to result in attendance times increasing in inner London and decreasing in outer London. However, in terms of relative performance the inner London boroughs still generally have faster attendance times.

### Response times for the first fire engine

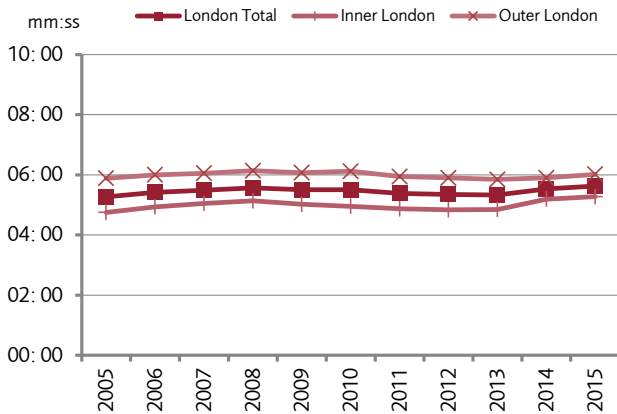
(Table 5.1)

The standard for the first fire engine is to arrive at an incident, on average, within six minutes of being mobilised. The standard applies to London as a whole, although we try to achieve it in each London borough area, but at no other lower geography (e.g. ward).

Our London-wide performance is comfortably within the standard, but a few boroughs fall outside the

target. The average time for inner London is slightly faster than the time for outer London. The average time by London borough will vary with most boroughs within our published standard and some outside.

**Chart 7: Average response time for the first fire engine**

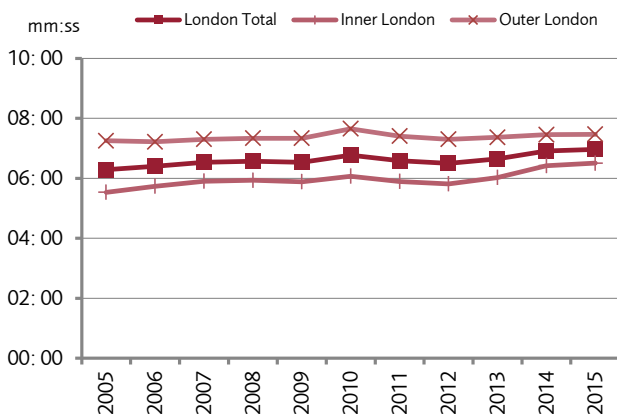


**Response times for the second fire engine.**

(Table 5.2)

The standard for the second fire engine is to arrive at an incident, on average, within eight minutes of being mobilised. The standard applies to London as a whole, although we try to achieve it in each London borough area, but at no other lower geography (e.g. ward).

**Chart 8: Average response time for the second fire engine**



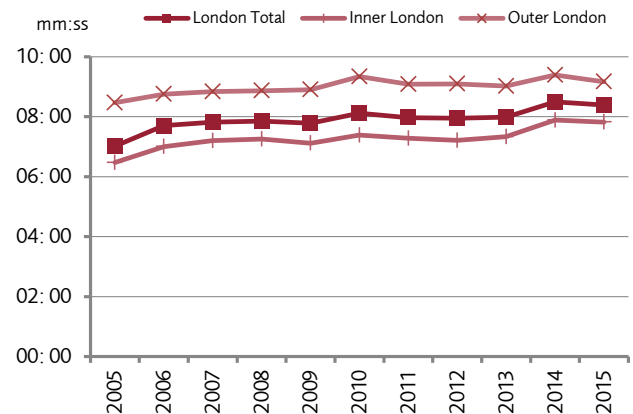
Our London-wide performance is comfortably within the standard, but a few boroughs fall outside the target. The average time for inner London was faster than for outer London. The average time by London boroughs will vary, with most boroughs within the published standard.

**Response times for the third fire engine.**

(Table 5.3)

Most incidents are quickly resolved by only one or two fire engines. A third fire engine is sent to incidents on about one in ten occasions<sup>1</sup>. Other than the overarching intention that all our fire engines arrive as quickly as possible, there is no standard for the third fire engine to arrive.

**Chart 9: Average response time for the third fire engine**



On average it took 8 minutes for a third fire engine to arrive at an emergency incident in London in recent years. The average time for inner London was faster than the time for outer London. The average time by London boroughs will vary when the average time was 8 minutes and 7 seconds.

**First fire engines arriving within 12 minutes**

(Table 5.4)

Our third attendance standard is to get a fire engine to an incident anywhere in London within 12 minutes on 95 per cent of occasions. This standard is to ensure that no incident has an exceptionally protracted attendance time.

London wide we have achieved this standard on over 97 per cent of occasions in each of the last 10 years.

<sup>1</sup> LFB Fifth London Safety Plan Supporting Document No.24

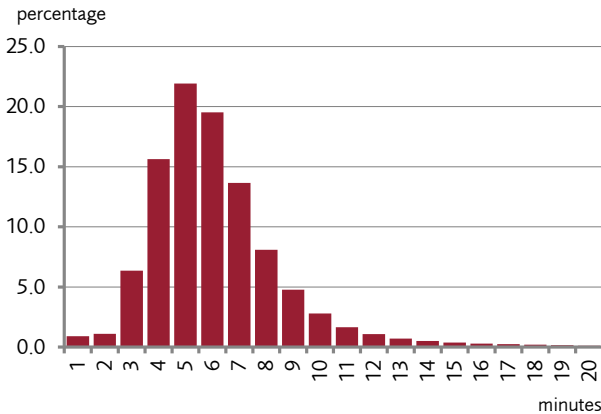
### Attendance time distributions

(Table 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7)

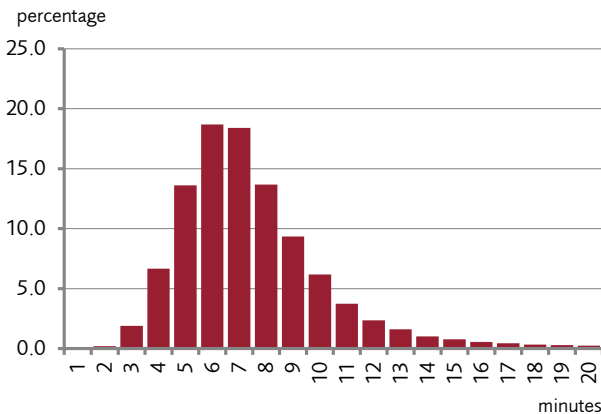
Measuring arrival times using an average is a useful way of summarising our response to incidents. Another way is to look at the distribution of response times by minute intervals. These distributions help to understand the range of response times.

There were some mobilisations (around 500) that were over 20 minutes. These times are excluded from performance attendance calculations as they represent errors in the data; either due to human error, or failure with the systems, to record a correct time of arrival at the incident.

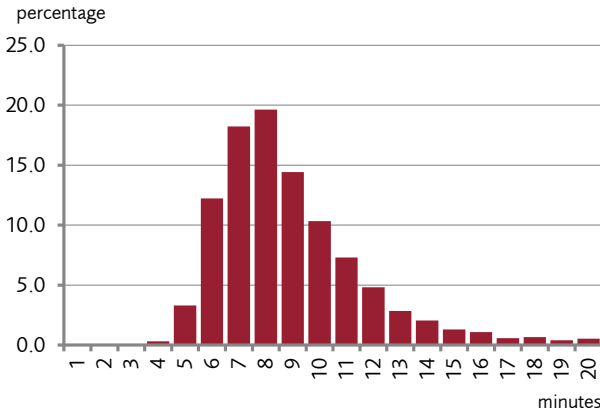
**Chart 10: First fire engine arrival time distribution**



**Chart 11: Second fire engine arrival time distribution**



**Chart 12: Third fire engine arrival time distribution**



**Table 5.1 Average first appliance attendance time***minutes*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>London Total</b>	<b>05: 30</b>	<b>05: 23</b>	<b>05: 21</b>	<b>05: 19</b>	<b>05: 32</b>	<b>05: 38</b>
<b>Inner London</b>	<b>04: 57</b>	<b>04: 52</b>	<b>04: 50</b>	<b>04: 51</b>	<b>05: 11</b>	<b>05: 16</b>
Camden	04: 46	04: 40	04: 39	04: 35	04: 59	05: 12
City of London	04: 46	04: 55	04: 54	04: 42	05: 00	05: 06
Hackney	05: 00	04: 45	04: 46	04: 48	05: 08	05: 17
Hammersmith and Fulham	05: 18	05: 10	05: 05	04: 53	05: 02	05: 08
Haringey	05: 49	05: 41	05: 37	05: 36	05: 35	05: 42
Islington	04: 47	04: 44	04: 44	04: 41	05: 02	05: 09
Kensington and Chelsea	04: 36	04: 32	04: 28	04: 30	04: 46	04: 44
Lambeth	04: 40	04: 35	04: 35	04: 41	04: 47	04: 54
Lewisham	04: 51	04: 51	04: 46	04: 51	05: 16	05: 20
Newham	05: 12	05: 05	04: 57	05: 12	05: 49	05: 42
Southwark	04: 49	04: 45	04: 43	04: 52	05: 32	05: 38
Tower Hamlets	04: 35	04: 30	04: 29	04: 35	04: 54	05: 04
Wandsworth	05: 15	05: 09	04: 59	05: 01	05: 15	05: 12
Westminster	05: 04	05: 08	05: 07	05: 02	05: 23	05: 26
<b>Outer London</b>	<b>06: 07</b>	<b>05: 57</b>	<b>05: 54</b>	<b>05: 51</b>	<b>05: 54</b>	<b>06: 01</b>
Barking and Dagenham	05: 54	05: 41	05: 41	05: 37	05: 53	06: 51
Barnet	06: 36	06: 17	06: 16	06: 12	06: 02	06: 07
Bexley	06: 06	05: 47	05: 44	05: 49	05: 53	06: 05
Brent	06: 03	05: 50	05: 59	05: 49	05: 53	06: 04
Bromley	06: 25	06: 21	06: 18	06: 19	06: 15	06: 05
Croydon	05: 39	05: 40	05: 37	05: 36	05: 32	05: 40
Ealing	05: 51	05: 34	05: 26	05: 26	05: 33	05: 45
Enfield	06: 32	06: 26	06: 23	06: 17	06: 21	06: 19
Greenwich	05: 23	05: 22	05: 14	05: 10	05: 32	05: 27
Harrow	06: 27	06: 13	06: 17	06: 08	05: 59	06: 02
Havering	06: 03	05: 42	05: 42	05: 38	06: 00	06: 07
Hillingdon	06: 40	06: 34	06: 42	06: 36	06: 43	06: 45
Hounslow	06: 16	05: 55	05: 53	05: 55	05: 56	05: 59
Kingston upon Thames	06: 11	05: 58	06: 00	06: 06	05: 56	05: 56
Merton	05: 53	05: 37	05: 33	05: 35	05: 42	05: 42
Redbridge	05: 48	05: 40	05: 47	05: 40	05: 54	06: 09
Richmond upon Thames	06: 39	06: 20	06: 19	06: 08	05: 56	06: 03
Sutton	06: 08	06: 09	06: 02	05: 55	05: 50	05: 49
Waltham Forest	05: 47	05: 43	05: 08	05: 06	05: 05	05: 22

**Table 5.2 Average second appliance attendance time***minutes*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>London Total</b>	<b>06: 46</b>	<b>06: 35</b>	<b>06: 30</b>	<b>06: 39</b>	<b>06: 55</b>	<b>06: 58</b>
<b>Inner London</b>	<b>06: 04</b>	<b>05: 54</b>	<b>05: 49</b>	<b>06: 01</b>	<b>06: 25</b>	<b>06: 30</b>
Camden	06: 14	06: 00	06: 02	05: 57	06: 10	06: 21
City of London	06: 04	06: 01	05: 54	05: 49	06: 40	06: 38
Hackney	06: 00	05: 32	05: 28	05: 39	06: 02	06: 11
Hammersmith and Fulham	06: 33	06: 14	06: 03	06: 07	06: 19	06: 29
Haringey	06: 31	06: 18	06: 09	06: 35	06: 22	06: 31
Islington	05: 47	05: 42	05: 42	06: 03	06: 44	06: 52
Kensington and Chelsea	05: 46	05: 40	05: 28	05: 54	06: 19	06: 18
Lambeth	05: 21	05: 15	05: 06	05: 30	05: 34	05: 49
Lewisham	06: 18	06: 23	06: 19	06: 36	07: 09	07: 05
Newham	06: 25	06: 09	06: 01	06: 26	07: 15	07: 24
Southwark	05: 50	05: 52	05: 46	05: 59	06: 47	06: 54
Tower Hamlets	05: 54	05: 33	05: 37	05: 50	06: 33	06: 42
Wandsworth	06: 28	06: 22	06: 12	06: 11	06: 51	06: 36
Westminster	05: 59	05: 58	05: 55	06: 02	06: 08	06: 04
<b>Outer London</b>	<b>07: 39</b>	<b>07: 24</b>	<b>07: 18</b>	<b>07: 22</b>	<b>07: 27</b>	<b>07: 28</b>
Barking and Dagenham	07: 05	06: 46	06: 36	06: 36	06: 59	07: 46
Barnet	08: 39	08: 18	08: 20	08: 13	07: 40	07: 45
Bexley	07: 09	06: 44	06: 46	07: 02	07: 55	07: 44
Brent	06: 58	06: 47	06: 49	06: 57	07: 21	07: 18
Bromley	08: 22	08: 08	08: 06	08: 11	07: 53	07: 36
Croydon	06: 58	06: 57	06: 48	06: 46	06: 47	06: 52
Ealing	07: 03	06: 38	06: 33	06: 40	07: 09	07: 22
Enfield	07: 57	07: 40	07: 39	07: 25	07: 28	07: 45
Greenwich	06: 59	07: 01	06: 52	06: 58	06: 54	06: 44
Harrow	08: 49	08: 26	08: 22	08: 18	07: 23	07: 20
Havering	07: 43	07: 29	07: 20	07: 40	08: 10	08: 21
Hillingdon	08: 11	08: 05	07: 56	07: 59	08: 32	08: 24
Hounslow	07: 48	07: 24	07: 08	07: 12	07: 06	07: 10
Kingston upon Thames	08: 19	08: 01	08: 14	08: 27	08: 10	07: 45
Merton	08: 02	07: 53	07: 51	07: 42	07: 56	07: 20
Redbridge	07: 21	06: 57	07: 03	07: 12	07: 46	07: 42
Richmond upon Thames	08: 31	08: 30	08: 31	08: 35	07: 27	07: 27
Sutton	07: 43	07: 21	07: 21	07: 07	07: 11	07: 19
Waltham Forest	06: 55	06: 40	05: 59	06: 13	06: 34	06: 38

**Table 5.3 Average third appliance attendance time***minutes*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>London Total</b>	<b>08: 07</b>	<b>07: 58</b>	<b>07: 57</b>	<b>07: 59</b>	<b>08: 30</b>	<b>08: 23</b>
<b>Inner London</b>	<b>07: 23</b>	<b>07: 17</b>	<b>07: 13</b>	<b>07: 20</b>	<b>07: 53</b>	<b>07: 49</b>
Camden	07: 21	07: 13	07: 12	07: 11	07: 47	07: 36
City of London	07: 22	07: 21	07: 27	06: 50	08: 07	07: 16
Hackney	07: 25	07: 28	07: 19	07: 32	07: 52	07: 43
Hammersmith and Fulham	07: 40	07: 16	07: 15	07: 18	07: 57	07: 34
Haringey	08: 20	08: 15	08: 03	08: 11	08: 23	08: 25
Islington	07: 09	07: 15	07: 13	07: 18	07: 36	08: 06
Kensington and Chelsea	07: 28	07: 08	07: 04	07: 06	07: 39	07: 15
Lambeth	07: 08	07: 00	06: 54	07: 22	07: 31	07: 23
Lewisham	07: 39	07: 53	07: 42	07: 44	08: 09	08: 00
Newham	07: 38	07: 26	07: 28	07: 52	08: 37	08: 10
Southwark	07: 04	06: 54	07: 02	07: 13	07: 59	08: 02
Tower Hamlets	07: 10	06: 47	06: 40	06: 57	07: 56	08: 10
Wandsworth	07: 25	07: 21	07: 16	07: 23	07: 57	07: 47
Westminster	07: 17	07: 29	07: 17	07: 13	07: 42	07: 54
<b>Outer London</b>	<b>09: 20</b>	<b>09: 05</b>	<b>09: 06</b>	<b>09: 01</b>	<b>09: 23</b>	<b>09: 10</b>
Barking and Dagenham	08: 51	08: 19	08: 28	08: 16	09: 12	08: 32
Barnet	10: 35	09: 38	09: 29	09: 18	09: 25	08: 42
Bexley	08: 31	08: 41	08: 38	08: 55	10: 46	09: 10
Brent	09: 00	08: 26	08: 52	08: 48	08: 44	08: 56
Bromley	09: 54	09: 53	09: 37	09: 39	09: 46	09: 52
Croydon	08: 38	08: 54	08: 56	08: 48	08: 46	08: 34
Ealing	08: 44	08: 35	08: 17	08: 10	08: 50	09: 25
Enfield	09: 29	09: 18	09: 35	09: 43	09: 45	09: 11
Greenwich	08: 48	08: 31	08: 15	08: 06	08: 54	08: 14
Harrow	10: 50	10: 59	10: 00	10: 40	09: 10	09: 15
Havering	08: 56	09: 01	08: 50	08: 35	09: 39	09: 06
Hillingdon	09: 49	09: 33	10: 05	09: 47	10: 40	10: 42
Hounslow	10: 08	09: 50	09: 37	09: 35	09: 43	08: 54
Kingston upon Thames	09: 06	08: 54	09: 39	09: 48	08: 53	09: 24
Merton	09: 49	09: 38	09: 47	09: 03	10: 25	09: 08
Redbridge	09: 05	08: 55	09: 01	09: 10	09: 52	10: 01
Richmond upon Thames	10: 13	09: 24	09: 40	09: 33	09: 40	09: 17
Sutton	09: 30	09: 17	09: 46	08: 47	08: 42	08: 58
Waltham Forest	08: 59	08: 15	07: 56	07: 43	08: 27	08: 29

**Table 5.4 First appliance within 12 minutes**

<i>percentage</i>						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>London Total</b>	<b>97.3</b>	<b>97.1</b>	<b>97.2</b>	<b>97.3</b>	<b>97.4</b>	<b>97.1</b>
<b>Inner London</b>	<b>98.4</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>98.2</b>	<b>98.0</b>
Camden	98.6	98.5	98.3	98.8	98.4	97.8
City of London	98.5	98.6	98.3	98.7	98.2	97.9
Hackney	98.0	98.2	98.3	98.1	98.1	97.9
Hammersmith and Fulham	98.1	98.0	98.2	98.7	98.6	98.6
Haringey	97.1	97.1	97.4	97.5	98.1	97.5
Islington	98.6	97.7	98.6	98.4	98.6	98.6
Kensington and Chelsea	98.7	98.5	98.4	98.5	98.4	99.0
Lambeth	98.6	98.1	98.0	97.8	98.8	98.5
Lewisham	98.8	98.2	98.2	98.3	98.3	98.1
Newham	98.2	97.9	98.3	97.5	97.4	96.9
Southwark	98.4	98.0	98.2	98.0	98.0	97.4
Tower Hamlets	98.8	98.2	98.6	98.1	98.1	97.9
Wandsworth	98.0	98.3	98.1	98.4	98.1	97.9
Westminster	98.4	98.0	98.1	98.1	98.0	98.2
<b>Outer London</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>96.0</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>96.6</b>	<b>96.0</b>
Barking and Dagenham	96.9	97.1	96.6	96.9	96.6	95.3
Barnet	94.5	95.3	95.3	95.6	96.2	96.3
Bexley	96.4	96.5	96.2	96.6	96.9	96.0
Brent	96.5	96.9	96.1	96.9	97.7	96.1
Bromley	95.2	94.6	95.2	94.1	95.7	95.9
Croydon	97.4	96.4	97.0	96.1	97.3	96.8
Ealing	96.4	96.7	97.3	97.2	96.8	96.3
Enfield	94.6	94.6	94.9	94.8	94.4	95.0
Greenwich	97.8	96.9	97.5	98.1	97.4	98.3
Harrow	95.7	96.1	95.8	96.5	97.2	96.4
Havering	96.4	97.3	96.5	97.1	96.9	95.5
Hillingdon	94.8	93.8	94.5	95.0	94.7	94.1
Hounslow	94.8	95.5	95.6	96.1	96.3	95.4
Kingston upon Thames	95.8	96.3	95.7	96.0	96.4	95.6
Merton	97.0	97.0	96.6	96.6	96.9	96.2
Redbridge	97.4	96.8	96.3	96.9	96.6	95.5
Richmond upon Thames	95.5	95.2	95.2	94.7	96.0	96.0
Sutton	96.7	95.8	96.5	97.0	97.3	97.1
Waltham Forest	97.1	96.7	97.6	97.7	98.3	97.1

**Table 5.5 Distribution of first appliance attendance times**

<i>number &amp; percentage</i>						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Within x min</b>						
1	904	855	916	772	723	726
2	1 586	1 534	1 388	1 356	1 089	885
3	9 031	8 612	8 164	7 969	6 037	5 128
4	20 494	19 811	18 901	18 089	14 907	12 630
5	24 430	23 791	22 460	21 954	19 855	17 706
6	19 731	18 731	17 477	17 161	17 217	15 771
7	13 557	12 394	11 717	11 155	11 774	11 031
8	8 388	7 385	6 884	6 579	7 046	6 539
9	5 031	4 205	3 992	3 656	4 187	3 846
10	3 080	2 541	2 311	2 148	2 340	2 256
11	2 011	1 563	1 331	1 295	1 373	1 334
12	1 286	1 050	914	808	816	870
13	910	640	624	595	555	577
14	648	485	419	418	389	400
15	396	375	314	289	277	294
16	341	277	243	208	210	224
17	278	222	200	176	187	193
18	166	150	162	139	150	156
19	153	129	112	123	109	121
20	116	111	97	101	83	88
>20min	675	681	599	550	353	327
<b>Within x min (%)</b>						
1	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9
2	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.1
3	8.0	8.2	8.3	8.4	6.8	6.3
4	18.2	18.9	19.2	19.0	16.7	15.6
5	21.7	22.7	22.8	23.1	22.2	21.9
6	17.5	17.9	17.7	18.1	19.3	19.5
7	12.0	11.8	11.9	11.7	13.2	13.7
8	7.5	7.0	7.0	6.9	7.9	8.1
9	4.5	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.7	4.8
10	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.6	2.8
11	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.7
12	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.1
13	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7
14	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
15	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
16	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
17	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
18	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
19	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
20	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

**Table 5.6 Distribution of second appliance attendance times**

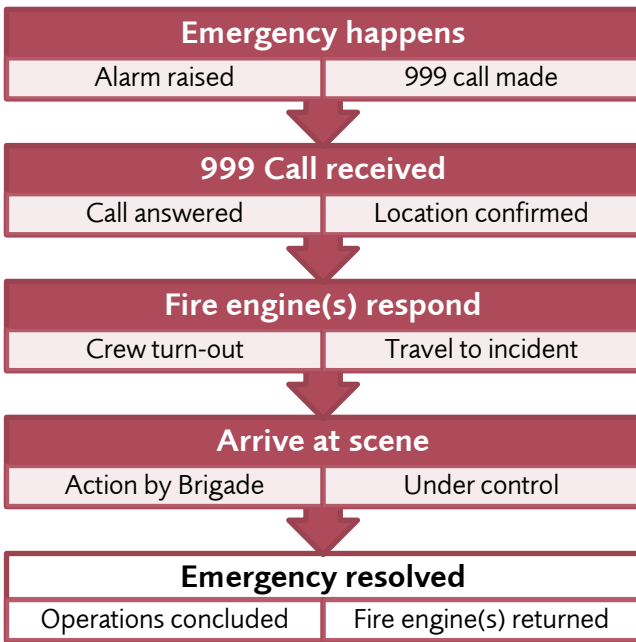
<i>number &amp; percentage</i>						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Within x min</b>						
1	21	6	9	7	11	4
2	139	105	102	95	64	60
3	1 313	1 304	1 316	1 013	646	588
4	3 832	4 021	4 098	3 387	2 441	2 078
5	7 087	7 101	7 062	6 140	5 001	4 245
6	8 092	7 751	7 562	7 159	6 513	5 831
7	7 000	6 659	6 119	6 225	6 019	5 738
8	5 291	4 807	4 618	4 566	4 714	4 266
9	3 819	3 171	3 013	3 033	3 189	2 913
10	2 383	2 051	1 889	1 873	2 008	1 930
11	1 627	1 347	1 172	1 168	1 261	1 164
12	1 093	832	776	718	818	736
13	690	570	546	505	494	500
14	497	421	359	375	375	317
15	367	284	263	270	237	242
16	276	212	210	183	182	172
17	212	159	146	165	172	138
18	146	139	130	132	103	103
19	123	117	95	108	126	91
20	93	73	68	81	76	78
>20min	723	816	825	777	323	331
<b>Within x min (%)</b>						
1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2
3	3.0	3.2	3.3	2.7	1.9	1.9
4	8.7	9.8	10.4	9.1	7.1	6.7
5	16.1	17.3	17.9	16.5	14.5	13.6
6	18.3	18.8	19.1	19.2	18.9	18.7
7	15.9	16.2	15.5	16.7	17.5	18.4
8	12.0	11.7	11.7	12.3	13.7	13.7
9	8.7	7.7	7.6	8.2	9.3	9.3
10	5.4	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.8	6.2
11	3.7	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.7	3.7
12	2.5	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.4	2.4
13	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.6
14	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.0
15	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8
16	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6
17	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4
18	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3
19	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3
20	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3

**Table 5.7 Distribution of third appliance attendance times**

<i>number &amp; percentage</i>						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Within x min</b>						
1	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	1	1	3	1	-
3	4	5	9	5	4	2
4	113	115	140	99	19	15
5	753	813	734	522	198	162
6	1579	1479	1484	1090	647	601
7	1786	1797	1686	1331	934	897
8	1479	1509	1454	1034	1007	966
9	1195	1120	1072	892	817	710
10	825	766	736	595	576	508
11	600	489	544	401	359	359
12	446	327	361	250	245	237
13	276	263	221	169	184	139
14	218	173	154	136	133	101
15	144	136	108	83	75	64
16	91	90	96	60	66	53
17	89	80	83	50	48	28
18	85	67	61	62	40	32
19	56	51	46	35	29	20
20	44	44	38	30	28	26
>20min	351	338	321	261	144	160
<b>Within x min (%)</b>						
1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
4	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.4	0.4	0.3
5	7.7	8.7	8.1	7.6	3.7	3.3
6	16.1	15.9	16.4	15.9	12.0	12.2
7	18.3	19.3	18.7	19.4	17.3	18.2
8	15.1	16.2	16.1	15.1	18.6	19.6
9	12.2	12.0	11.9	13.0	15.1	14.4
10	8.4	8.2	8.2	8.7	10.6	10.3
11	6.1	5.2	6.0	5.9	6.6	7.3
12	4.6	3.5	4.0	3.7	4.5	4.8
13	2.8	2.8	2.4	2.5	3.4	2.8
14	2.2	1.9	1.7	2.0	2.5	2.1
15	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.3
16	0.9	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.1
17	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.6
18	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.7
19	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4
20	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5

## Chapter 6 | Incident response times

So far, this report has looked at each stage of the incident response process. In this chapter we look at the combined effect of stages undertaken by the Brigade; the response from the time the 999 call is answered until the arrival of the first fire engine.



Times for the process between call answer and first fire engine response are only available from November 2008. The data for the times for 999 call handling (to the point of selecting the incident locations) and the times for the mobilisation and arrival of fire engines, are held in separate systems before this time, and it has not been possible to join the historic data together.

Whilst it is possible to calculate the target for the overall incident response time, we do not routinely publish performance on this basis. However, the combined targets (as outlined earlier in this document for call answer (1.4 secs), call handling (1m40s) and fire engine attendance (6m)) would be 7m 41s.

(Table 6.1)

The data in table 6.1 shows that , the average time taken to respond to an emergency incident from the time the 999 call was answered, until the time the first fire engine arrived on scene, was over 7 minutes in recent years.

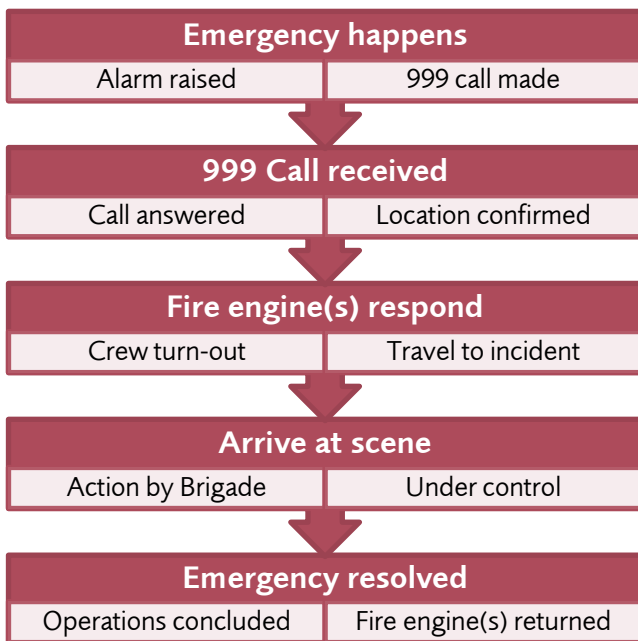
The average incident response time in inner London was faster than in outer London. The time also varies by borough.

**Table 6.1 Incident response times**

<i>minutes</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>London Total</b>	<b>07: 23</b>	<b>07: 05</b>	<b>07: 04</b>	<b>07: 02</b>	<b>07: 11</b>	<b>07: 16</b>
<b>Inner London</b>	<b>06: 50</b>	<b>06: 35</b>	<b>06: 33</b>	<b>06: 34</b>	<b>06: 50</b>	<b>06: 57</b>
Camden	06: 35	06: 17	06: 20	06: 12	06: 32	06: 51
City of London	06: 34	06: 39	06: 38	06: 18	06: 38	06: 57
Hackney	07: 04	06: 29	06: 36	06: 34	06: 43	07: 01
Hammersmith and Fulham	07: 19	07: 02	06: 43	06: 38	06: 48	06: 52
Haringey	07: 46	07: 31	07: 24	07: 30	07: 18	07: 25
Islington	06: 44	06: 31	06: 23	06: 24	06: 41	06: 42
Kensington and Chelsea	06: 33	06: 12	06: 03	06: 11	06: 25	06: 20
Lambeth	06: 36	06: 26	06: 14	06: 26	06: 34	06: 35
Lewisham	06: 42	06: 31	06: 35	06: 30	06: 48	06: 59
Newham	07: 01	06: 45	06: 40	06: 47	07: 26	07: 27
Southwark	06: 43	06: 32	06: 29	06: 42	07: 16	07: 23
Tower Hamlets	06: 28	06: 10	06: 15	06: 20	06: 30	06: 54
Wandsworth	07: 01	06: 44	06: 40	06: 44	06: 48	06: 51
Westminster	06: 57	06: 48	06: 48	06: 41	07: 01	07: 01
<b>Outer London</b>	<b>08: 03</b>	<b>07: 41</b>	<b>07: 39</b>	<b>07: 35</b>	<b>07: 36</b>	<b>07: 38</b>
Barking and Dagenham	07: 43	07: 35	07: 19	07: 28	07: 47	08: 21
Barnet	08: 39	08: 05	08: 02	07: 59	07: 52	07: 54
Bexley	07: 53	07: 31	07: 19	07: 32	07: 29	07: 54
Brent	08: 03	07: 37	07: 54	07: 32	07: 37	07: 41
Bromley	08: 19	08: 02	08: 11	08: 09	07: 58	07: 47
Croydon	07: 31	07: 24	07: 17	07: 27	07: 16	07: 16
Ealing	07: 56	07: 11	07: 11	07: 06	07: 06	07: 26
Enfield	08: 30	08: 09	08: 08	08: 04	07: 54	08: 01
Greenwich	07: 19	07: 16	07: 00	06: 59	07: 11	07: 00
Harrow	08: 23	07: 54	07: 59	07: 48	07: 35	07: 41
Havering	07: 46	07: 23	07: 27	07: 23	07: 49	07: 52
Hillingdon	08: 35	08: 14	08: 26	08: 17	08: 24	08: 14
Hounslow	08: 20	07: 44	07: 40	07: 39	07: 49	07: 25
Kingston upon Thames	07: 56	07: 30	07: 43	07: 49	07: 35	07: 31
Merton	07: 49	07: 23	07: 13	07: 14	07: 26	07: 19
Redbridge	07: 52	07: 23	07: 31	07: 32	07: 34	07: 42
Richmond upon Thames	08: 36	08: 16	08: 04	07: 59	07: 49	07: 38
Sutton	08: 03	07: 40	07: 43	07: 34	07: 28	07: 22
Waltham Forest	07: 35	07: 27	06: 54	06: 40	06: 42	06: 56

## Chapter 7 | Incident durations

This chapter looks at the overall time it takes from a 999 call being made to the incident being fully resolved and all the fire engines and fire investigators leaving the scene.



The time taken to fully conclude operations cannot always be taken as a sign of how severe an emergency was. There are many actions we carry out after the emergency has been resolved but before we leave the scene. For example after a fire we will stay to help an occupier restore or secure their property. Incidents where we carry out investigations will also have longer durations.

### Fire incidents

(Table 7.1 and 7.2)

On average it takes around an hour to conclude a fire incident. Some fire types, such as small outdoor fires (which typically involve rubbish and bin fires), can be concluded in around 20 minutes; other fires, such as those that involve a large number of fire engines, can take many hours to resolve and we will remain on scene for more than a day.

Most of the fires we attend are small and require little or no firefighting. Around 20 per cent of the fires we

attended in recent years required no firefighting when we arrived. About a third were small fires and only required minimal firefighting.

### Fire size categorisation

We have classified fires by the amount of firefighting required to bring them under control. These categories are:

- *None* – no firefighting required on arrival
- *Small* – minimal firefighting required; extinguished by physical means (eg. stamping, smothering or immersing in water) or a small portable extinguisher.
- *Medium* – These fires required the use of the hose reel attached to a fire engine
- *Large* – These fires required the use of a main jet supplied from a fire hydrant
- *5+ fire engines* – These are large fires, attended by 5 or more fire engines.

Fires where there is no firefighting required are typically concluded in around 30 minutes when the fire is outdoors (outdoor and transport fires), and in around 50 minutes when the fire was in a building. These times will include the time taken to investigate where the fire was and may involve us securing the scene if we had to gain access.

Small fires take a similar amount of time. Those that happen outdoors take around 30 minutes to conclude, whilst those in buildings range from 39 minutes in other residential buildings to over an hour in non-residential buildings. The longer time in non-residential buildings is likely to be the time taken to identify someone responsible for the premises to consider any fire safety issues.

Medium sized fires account for around 46 per cent of the fires we attend, with most of these (28 per cent of all fires) being vehicle fires. A medium vehicle fire will take around 45 minutes to conclude, whilst a medium sized building fire will be concluded in around two hours.

Large fires and those that have five or more fire engines on scene take significantly longer to conclude. A large dwelling fire will take around 5 hours to conclude and those that have five or more fire engines in attendance take around seven and a half hours to fully conclude. These times represent the additional work in dampening down and making the building safe as well as the time to investigate the cause of the fire. Fortunately these larger incidents are infrequent with large dwelling fires accounting for around six per cent of dwelling fires and 5+ fire engine fires accounting for only two per cent of dwelling fires.

Other property types have similarly long times for large and 5+ fire engine fires. Again these size fires are infrequent, with large fires accounting for less than five per cent of fires and 5+ fire engine fires less than two per cent of fires.

We deal with a small number of protracted incidents where we are on scene for more than 24 hours. This can be due to (a) continued firefighting, as can happen with fires at large waste sites (b) us keeping the area safe to monitor the situation or while heated gas cylinders cool down or (c) due to our continued investigations. There were 122 such protracted fires in 2013.

## **Special services**

(Table 7.3 and 7.4)

Special service is the name given to the range of emergencies we attend that are not fires or false alarms. These include, for example, attending road traffic accidents, water rescues and incidents involving hazardous chemicals.

On average a special service incident takes around half an hour to conclude. However, there are some types of special service that take considerably longer to resolve than others.

In recent years, the longest incident durations were for batched calls which had an average duration of just over four hours. We 'batch' calls together when we get a high number of 999 calls from within a very small area; as can happen when there is very localised flooding.

Hazardous material incidents have longer incident durations (around one and half hours). These incidents not only involve additional precautions but we also ensure that the scene is safe and we do our best to minimise the effect of chemicals on the wider environment.

There will be some special service incidents in any year where we were in attendance for more than 24 hours.

**Table 7.1 Average time taken to conclude operations at fires (time of close), by fire size**

*hours: minutes*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>0: 59</b>	<b>0: 57</b>	<b>0: 56</b>	<b>0: 56</b>	<b>0: 57</b>	<b>0: 59</b>
<b>Dwelling</b>	<b>1: 41</b>	<b>1: 38</b>	<b>1: 26</b>	<b>1: 27</b>	<b>1: 26</b>	<b>1: 33</b>
5+ fire engines	8: 18	8: 17	7: 42	7: 49	7: 42	8: 37
Large	4: 42	5: 05	4: 43	4: 56	4: 42	4: 49
Medium	2: 27	2: 19	2: 07	2: 00	2: 03	2: 07
Small	0: 53	0: 52	0: 48	0: 46	0: 46	0: 48
None	1: 02	0: 57	0: 50	0: 47	0: 53	0: 50
<b>Non Residential</b>	<b>1: 56</b>	<b>1: 59</b>	<b>1: 50</b>	<b>1: 51</b>	<b>1: 54</b>	<b>1: 53</b>
5+ fire engines	7: 51	10: 00	10: 41	9: 26	9: 43	9: 38
Large	4: 25	3: 48	4: 20	4: 03	4: 01	3: 43
Medium	1: 56	1: 45	1: 34	1: 43	1: 39	1: 33
Small	1: 10	1: 17	1: 00	1: 07	1: 10	1: 07
None	1: 07	1: 05	0: 53	0: 52	1: 01	1: 02
<b>Other Residential</b>	<b>1: 11</b>	<b>1: 26</b>	<b>1: 01</b>	<b>0: 56</b>	<b>1: 04</b>	<b>1: 18</b>
5+ fire engines	3: 54	10: 40	11: 14	4: 04	9: 25	7: 35
Large	3: 34	4: 15	3: 57	4: 30	4: 02	3: 56
Medium	2: 58	3: 17	1: 55	2: 21	1: 43	2: 24
Small	0: 51	0: 58	0: 44	0: 37	0: 46	0: 46
None	0: 48	0: 42	0: 40	0: 43	0: 49	0: 49
<b>Outdoor</b>	<b>0: 30</b>	<b>0: 27</b>	<b>0: 26</b>	<b>0: 27</b>	<b>0: 28</b>	<b>0: 30</b>
5+ fire engines	8: 15	6: 26	5: 12	7: 18	6: 08	6: 28
Large	1: 43	1: 52	1: 37	1: 46	1: 49	2: 11
Medium	0: 28	0: 26	0: 24	0: 26	0: 27	0: 30
Small	0: 23	0: 23	0: 20	0: 20	0: 20	0: 20
None	0: 31	0: 30	0: 32	0: 29	0: 32	0: 35
<b>Transport</b>	<b>0: 51</b>	<b>0: 50</b>	<b>0: 52</b>	<b>0: 46</b>	<b>0: 47</b>	<b>0: 48</b>
5+ fire engines	3: 41	4: 38	7: 02	2: 31	5: 30	2: 48
Large	2: 19	2: 26	2: 41	2: 49	2: 27	2: 42
Medium	0: 51	0: 48	0: 48	0: 44	0: 45	0: 47
Small	0: 36	0: 31	0: 45	0: 32	0: 36	0: 30
None	0: 34	0: 38	0: 34	0: 30	0: 33	0: 33

Time calculated from time of 999 call answer to the time the incident is closed

Times excludes protracted incidents over 24 hours

**Table 7.2 Number of fires with durations over 24 hours, by property category and fire size**

<i>number</i>	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Dwelling</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>39</b>
5+ fire engines	22	29	22	22	19	14
Large	12	9	15	7	14	7
Medium	21	12	11	7	5	11
Small	4	2	1	5	6	3
None	2	5	8	2	6	4
<b>Non Residential</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>
5+ fire engines	25	27	16	16	18	30
Large	4	6	1	4	6	
Medium	8	1	8	5	5	7
Small	2			2	5	4
None	2	3	1	3	7	6
<b>Other Residential</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
5+ fire engines	3	2	1	1	–	1
Large	–	–	–	–	1	–
Medium	1	1	1	–	–	–
Small	–	–	–	1	–	–
None	–	1	1	1	–	1
<b>Outdoor</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>
5+ fire engines	2	5	3	8	5	2
Large	–	2	–	3	6	–
Medium	5	4	4	10	8	8
Small	3	3	–	5	3	7
None	3	5	2	4	5	3
<b>Transport</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
5+ fire engines	–		1	3	1	2
Large	–	2	3	1	–	–
Medium	5	5	2	4	4	2
Small	–	–	–	1	1	3
None	–	–	–	2	2	3

**Table 7.3 Average time taken to conclude operations at special services (time of close)****7.3 Average time taken to conclude operations at special services (time of close)***hours: minutes*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>All special service incidents</b>	<b>0: 32</b>	<b>0: 30</b>	<b>0: 31</b>	<b>0: 31</b>	<b>0: 32</b>	<b>0: 33</b>
Advice only	0:30	0:31	0:33	0:27	0:27	0:36
Animal assistance incidents	0:38	0:37	0:38	0:36	0:35	0:36
Assist other agencies	0:45	0:45	0:46	0:47	0:53	0:50
Effecting entry/exit	0:23	0:22	0:22	0:22	0:22	0:23
Evacuation (no fire)	1:09	1:12	1:03	1:09	1:03	1:19
Flooding	0:38	0:35	0:37	0:35	0:36	0:36
Hazardous materials incident	1:49	1:30	1:33	1:25	1:36	1:30
Lift release	0:23	0:22	0:23	0:23	0:24	0:24
Making safe (not RTC)	0:46	0:45	0:45	0:46	0:49	0:49
Medical incident	0:37	0:38	0:35	0:37	0:38	0:37
No action (not false alarm)	0:24	0:21	0:21	0:21	0:21	0:21
Other rescue/release of persons	0:43	0:37	0:40	0:43	0:41	0:47
Other transport incident	0:34	0:36	0:34	0:37	0:40	0:41
Removal of objects from people	0:26	0:27	0:29	0:29	0:34	0:29
Rescue or evacuation from water	0:50	0:49	0:49	0:47	1:02	0:57
Road traffic collision	0:40	0:41	0:42	0:41	0:42	0:43
Spills and Leaks (not RTC)	0:31	0:28	0:28	0:26	0:27	0:26
Stand by	0:50	1:01	0:56	0:59	1:09	0:53
Suicide/attempts	0:50	0:56	1:14	1:02	1:02	1:03
Unclassified	..	..	..	..	..	..
Water provision	0:43	0:40	1:36	2:11	0:26	

Time calculated from time of 999 call answer to the time the incident is closed

Times excludes protracted incidents over 24 hours

**Table 7.4 Number of special services with durations over 24 hours, by type****7.4 Number of special services with durations over 24 hours, by type**

*number*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>All special service incidents</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>41</b>
Advice only	–	–	–	1	–	1
Animal assistance incidents	–	–	1	1	–	–
Assist other agencies	–	–	2	–	3	2
Effecting entry/exit	–	–	2	1	–	3
Evacuation (no fire)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Flooding	4	–	8	2	5	13
Hazardous materials incident	–	–	1	2	1	2
Lift release	1	–	4	–	–	3
Making safe (not RTC)	–	–	1	1	–	–
Medical incident	–	–	–	–	–	1
No action (not false alarm)	2	2	–	–	1	1
Other rescue/release of persons	–	–	1	–	1	1
Other transport incident	–	–	–	1	–	1
Removal of objects from people	–	–	3	–	–	1
Rescue or evacuation from water	–	–	–	–	1	–
Road traffic collision	2	–	3	1	–	7
Spills and Leaks (not RTC)	–	1	–	–	1	4
Stand by	1	2	–	–	–	1
Suicide/attempts	1	–	–	1	–	–
Unclassified	–	–	–	–	–	–
Water provision	–	–	–	–	–	–

## Annex A | Former national and London standards of response

Prior to the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Government recommended national standards for arrival times at incidents was based on a broad categorisation of risk posed in particular geographical areas. Guidance was published by the Home Office in 1947 in the form of Fire Service Circular 7/1947 (following a review in 1944) which recommended six broad categories of risk (A – F) for particular localities. These were revised (by Fire Service Circular 4/1985) in 1985 following a recommendation by the former Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (pursuant to which London was subdivided into four categories of risk (Categories A – D) based on government guidance on property characteristics).

Category A represented the highest risk to property and Category D represented the lowest risk to property. Between these categories there were widely differing target attendance times. For example, an area within Category A, which constituted 2 per cent of London in geographical terms immediately prior to the removal of these standards in 2004, demanded a fast response (5 minutes for the first two appliances and a third appliance within 8 minutes). By contrast, parts of London in Category D, which constituted 17 per cent of London in geographical terms, could expect to wait up to 20 minutes for a response from one fire engine.

Category A areas were generally focussed on parts of inner London which had main shopping centre and business buildings, theatres and other entertainment venues or high risk industrial property; significantly, there was no mention of housing in the Government's 'A' risk category. In contrast to the Brigade's current guiding "*principle of equal entitlement*", the Government standards prioritised particular geographical areas which had the effect that people living in different areas could not expect similar attendance times, but rather particular areas were prioritised over others. The effect of the Government's targets was that prior to 2004, London's emergency response and station locations were configured to provide a faster response in

central and inner London than outer London and there was a cluster of resources in the inner London boroughs.

The Brigade campaigned against the Government targets for a number of years and for the replacement of the targets with local integrated risk management planning, and the flexibility to determine the speed and weight of response to different types of incident. The Brigade wished to see a move towards integrated risk management plans which considered a range of factors and prevention activities rather than simply responding to incidents.

In 1995 the Audit Commission published a report 'In the line of fire' arguing that there was scope for radical changes to the standards so that future risk categorisation would be based on empirical evidence and there would be more local flexibility. The former Central Fire Brigades Advisory Councils set up a Joint Committee to respond to this and published a report in 1998 "Out of the Line of Fire" recommending that the standards be reconsidered. In the light of these representations, the Government established The Independent Review of the Fire Service chaired by Professor Sir George Bain which resulted in the report "The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives" in December 2002 (The Bain Report). This recommended changes to the fire and rescue service including removal of the national recommended standards of fire cover. The government responded positively to the recommendations of the Bain report and published a white paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service" presented to Parliament in June 2003 which led, in turn to the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004.

Following the enactment of the 2004 Act (one of the main purposes of which was to confer greater autonomy and flexibility on what became fire and rescue services) and the removal of the Government recommended national standards, the Brigade had the opportunity and flexibility to formulate its own overriding policy objectives in terms of the deployment of resources.

Our first London Safety Plan for 2004/2005 (LSP1) stated that the Brigade would continue using the former recommended attendance times on a temporary basis whilst consideration was given to what the appropriate standard should be. This recognised that some consideration was needed to formulate the right policy for London.

LSP2 (the second London Safety Plan for 2005/2008), gave specific consideration to the principle of seeking to achieve more even response times across London. This represented a desire to see that people in similar types of buildings (presenting similar risks) anywhere in London can expect to wait a similar amount of time for fire engines to arrive when an emergency happens. This approach was described at the time in the following way:

*"There is a powerful argument that at the point when a fire actually breaks out (notwithstanding those control measures that have been put in place) the risk is broadly the same whatever its location. In other words a fire in a bedroom in Westminster has the same potential consequence as a fire in a bedroom in Sutton or Bromley. In risk terms it is also difficult to argue that, just because one person is less likely to have a fire that it follows they should receive a slower response if they do have one. If this logic is accepted it moves us towards developing a single set of attendance standards across London."*

LSP2 set clear objectives to promote the concept of equal entitlement to ensure that there would be more similar times for how long people could expect to wait for fire engine(s) to arrive and to reduce the current differences in performance in different parts of London. The purpose of this is that people in similar types of buildings anywhere in London could expect to wait a similar amount of time for fire engines to arrive when an emergency happens. This principle was crucially dependent on looking at the best place to locate fire engines in order to improve performance against the new standards and was not constrained by the locations of fire engines that had been determined under the former national recommended standards.

LSP2 proposed that the Brigade would maintain the existing attendance times but set targets to achieve

them on a London-wide basis namely (i) attendance of the first appliance within five minutes 65 per cent of the time and within eight minutes 90 per cent of the time; and (ii) attendance of the second appliance within eight minutes 75 per cent of the time and in 10 minutes 90 per cent of the time.

### **Introduction of 6 minute and 8 minute attendance standards**

LSP3 (2008/2011) explained that the Brigade had narrowly missed its response targets under LSP2 (namely five minutes and eight minutes for the first and second appliance attendance respectively). The reasons included: (i) the impact of traffic calming measures; (ii) poor or unlawful parking; (iii) the time it takes a crew to leave the station once mobilised ("crew turnout times"); and (iv) the introduction of arrangements for crews to carry out training and community safety work. LSP3 took the opportunity to review whether the LSP2 attendance standards (particularly the first appliance standard of five minutes), which had reflected the fastest attendance times under the Government's recommend standards, were still relevant and achievable on a London-wide basis and provided the most useful and realistic measure of how quickly the Brigade mobilises resources in response to calls for assistance.

It was noted that the historic location of fire stations meant that attendance times are longer in some parts of London than they are in others and the move to using average attendance times as performance indicators at borough level would provide a clearer picture of these differences and a more reliable picture of how long someone could expect to wait for a fire engine to arrive.

LSP3 considered the level that was achievable in the circumstances prevailing at the time for the first fire engine to respond (i.e. 6 minutes rather than 5 minutes). As a result LSP3 adopted three attendance standards. These were: (i) to get the first fire engine to an incident within an average of six minutes, (ii) to get the second fire engine to an incident within an average of eight minutes, and (iii) to get a fire engine to an incident anywhere in London within 12 minutes on 95 per cent of occasions.

## Annex B | How we calculate attendance time performance

### Crew turn-out times

Crew turn-out times are calculated for London fire engines (pumps) only. We only look at the times where the fire engine is mobilised from the fire station and we exclude times where the appliance is sent as a relief crew for an ongoing incident.

This means we count:

- London pumps
- Turned out from a fire station
- Where the mobilisation 'plus code' is "nil", "iup", "mob" or "add" (excludes reliefs).

### Fire engine response times

Attendance times for fire engines are measured from (a) the time an appliance is mobilised to (b) the time the appliance arrives at the incident scene. No special appliances (e.g. aerial appliances, fire rescue units) currently have published attendance times. The standard applies London-wide to any type of emergency incident.

The following criteria are used to calculate published attendance time performance:

- Arrival times for all pumping appliances regardless of location of the appliance at time of mobilisation and will include appliances from other station grounds.
- First appliance and second appliance is determined by the order of arrival at the incident, i.e. the first appliance will be the first to arrive not necessarily the first to be mobilised.
- Mobilisations included in the calculation are for:
  - Incidents in London only;
  - London pumping appliances only; pumping appliances from neighbouring brigades that attend in London are not included.
  - Appliances on the initial mobilised attendance only (e.g. not reliefs, incident upgrades).
- Mobilisations where a time value is present in the data; sometimes 'time arrived' is missing due to a failure (human or technical) to record the time.
- Mobilisations are excluded where:
  - The incident is a 'shut in lift' release not attended as an emergency (i.e. not on 'blue light')) [around 5 per cent of mobilisations].
  - The calculated attendance time is greater than 20 minutes (because this generally reflects a failure (human or technical) to record a time of arrival in a timely manner [around 2 per cent of mobilisations].
  - The mobilisation is to a batch mobilised flooding call [less than 1 per cent of mobilisations].