

**SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
8 NOVEMBER 2010**

**OXFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE – RESPONSE
STANDARDS PERFORMANCE 2009/10**

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Introduction

1. Since April 2005 Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) has had local Response Standards for attending emergency incidents in the county. The Cabinet approved these standards on 22 June 2006 (see Refer CA11). Additionally, the Chief Fire Officer was required to report annually on the F&RS's performance against these standards and bring forward any recommendations as appropriate for future improvements, particularly to address life-threatening situations. This report fulfils that requirement.

Response Standards

2. Local Response Standards are based on the historical location and status of our current fire stations and are used as a basis for improvement planning in the future. The Standards provide a common performance target across the county based on risk and acknowledging that fire deaths and casualty reduction is a national performance target which will drive future improvement options. The standards are as follows:
 - 80% of all emergency incidents will be responded to within 11 minutes
 - 95% of all emergency incidents will be responded to within 14 minutes.
3. The above is measured by the time it takes to get the first fire appliance to the scene from the time at which the fire station is first alerted.
4. In addition to the Response Standards for the first attending appliance, the Fire and Rescue Service will despatch a sufficient number of vehicles and personnel to safely and effectively deal with the type of incident reported, as determined by national and local risk assessments.
5. OFRS attends a wide variety of incidents and not all are emergencies. Therefore, it is necessary to categorise incidents to enable improvement plans to concentrate on the highest priority areas. All Incident Commanders classify incidents they attend into one of three categories:
 - (a) Life threatening emergency
 - (b) Serious, but non-life threatening emergency
 - (c) Damage to property/heritage/environment.

6. Our operational effectiveness is measured against these three categories (a, b and c), which all require an emergency response.

2009/10 Performance – Response Standards - Monthly Summary

(Further geographical breakdown and specific commentary is detailed in Appendix 1)

	Incidents in scope	No in 11 mins	% in 11 mins	No in 14 mins	% in 14 mins
Apr-09	289	242	83.7%	275	95.2%
May-09	282	227	80.5%	258	91.5%
Jun-09	305	239	78.4%	283	92.8%
Jul-09	340	269	79.1%	316	93.0%
Aug-09	300	246	82.0%	281	93.7%
Sep-09	304	238	78.3%	288	94.7%
Oct-09	333	266	79.9%	305	91.6%
Nov-09	270	202	74.8%	244	90.4%
Dec-09	255	190	74.5%	233	91.4%
Jan-10	303	212	70.0%	259	85.5%
Feb-10	235	180	76.6%	213	90.6%
Mar-10	272	210	77.2%	256	94.1%
Totals for year 2009/10	3488	2721	78.0%	3211	92.1%
Totals for Year 2008/9	3605	2852	79.1%	3318	92.0%
Target Figures			80.0%		95.0%

7. There are a number of general factors that have affected our performance against these targets:

Weather:

8. In January 2010 the response figures were affected by the heavy snowfall for three weeks and poor weather conditions at various times. This is marginal in terms of overall percentages for the year, but still had an effect on our emergency response times across the county.

Traffic Management:

9. The ongoing traffic measures put in place in a number of towns and villages have had a significant affect on attendance times. A case in point is the new one way system in Henley which both hampers arrival of personnel to the station and then their travel to any incident on the South/East side of the town.

Motorway:

10. On the Motorway and to a lesser extent the A34, there are some long travel distances between junctions (e.g. J11 to 12 – Banbury to Gaydon, J9 to 8A – Bicester to Thame, A34 – Southbound towards Newbury.) For some incidents it is necessary to traverse the whole section between two junctions and then return to get to the incident (e.g. an incident between J9 and 10 or J11 and 12.) The result is that some of the incidents are physically impossible to reach within the allocated target times. This also applies to a number of the remote areas within the County such as the Downs around Faringdon and Wantage and the villages on the County border with Berkshire in the Henley area (e.g. Sonning Common etc.)

Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

11. Community Safety activities are targeted in areas known to be outside the 14 minute attendance times. Every 'failure' against the standards is analysed by the relevant Station Manager, who then reports this to their Fire Risk Manager (FRM) and, where possible, appropriate action is taken. The performance management of response times is monitored and viewed weekly by Fire Risk Managers on our Scorecard performance management system.
12. The Senior Leadership Team receives a quarterly performance review against the response standards. Where there are discrepancies, further detail is sought of the action taken or justification for delays in attendance.
13. The Response Standards remain stretching, with the slight increase in attendance times for 2009/10 reflecting the National Trend*. OFRS, through effective management, aims to achieve the most effective possible response, whilst ensuring the safety of both crews and other road users.
14. *Attendance times are increasing as traffic volumes increase and traffic management systems become more widespread. The new 20mph speed restrictions within Oxford are monitored regularly to ensure that they do not have a direct effect on the speed of response of retained personnel to Rewley Road and Slade Fire Stations and in accordance with national guidance will reduce attendance speeds from 50mph to 40mph (it is recognised that emergency vehicles exercising due care and attention may proceed to incidents at a speed 20mph above the posted speed limit).

DAVID ETHERIDGE
Chief Fire Officer

Background Papers: Nil

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October 2010

Breakdown of response standards by district, area and station and associated graphical information

Oxfordshire Response Standards for 2009-2010

Response Standards by Fire Risk Area					
April 2009 - March 2010					
Area	Incidents in Scope	Number in 11 minutes	% in 11 minutes	Number in 14 minutes	% in 14 minutes
Oxfordshire	3488	2721	78.0%	3211	92.1%
City	1320	1237	93.7%	1304	98.8%
West/Cherwell	1151	835	72.6%	1039	90.3%
South/Vale	1017	649	63.8%	868	85.4%

Response Standards by District					
April 2009 - March 2010					
Area	Incidents in Scope	Number in 11 minutes	% in 11 minutes	Number in 14 minutes	% in 14 minutes
City	1220	1181	96.8%	1215	95.6%
West	485	327	67.4%	451	93.0%
Cherwell	766	564	73.6%	677	88.4%
South	692	435	62.9%	581	84.0%
Vale	325	214	65.9%	287	88.3%

Response Standards by Station					
April 2009 - March 2010					
Station	Incidents in Scope	Number in 11 minutes	% in 11 minutes	Number in 14 minutes	% in 14 minutes
Abingdon	157	115	73.25%	147	93.63%
Bampton	47	30	63.83%	44	93.62%
Banbury	356	319	89.61%	344	96.63%
Bicester	244	122	50.00%	179	73.36%
Burford	23	8	34.78%	20	86.96%
Charlbury	37	25	67.57%	30	81.08%
Chipping Norton	54	37	68.52%	52	96.30%
Deddington	32	13	40.63%	24	75.00%
Didcot	234	202	86.32%	222	94.87%
Eynsham	72	38	52.78%	65	90.28%
Faringdon	94	51	54.26%	72	76.60%
Goring	30	8	26.67%	19	63.33%
Henley	130	65	50.00%	94	72.31%
Hook Norton	30	23	76.67%	29	96.67%
Kidlington	104	87	83.65%	101	97.12%
Rewley Rd	569	555	97.54%	565	99.30%
Slade	651	626	96.16%	650	99.85%
Thame	56	40	71.43%	51	91.07%
Wallingford	115	66	57.39%	101	87.83%
Wantage	74	48	64.86%	68	91.89%
Watlington	62	29	46.77%	50	80.65%
Wheatley	65	25	38.46%	44	67.69%
Witney	224	171	76.34%	216	96.43%
Woodstock	28	18	64.29%	24	85.71%
Totals	3488	2721	78.01%	3211	92.06%

Narrative Relating to specific Stations (stations chosen on the basis of poor performance and/or no improvement in 209/10 over the preceding year):

Bicester

1. 2008/9 figures were 64% (11 mins) and 83% (14 mins)
2. 2009/10 figures were 50% (11 mins) and 73% (14 mins).

Bicester has historically had longer attendance times in comparison with other Oxfordshire Fire Stations. This is in part due to the extended travel distances when responding to the M40 and more remote rural areas (e.g. Finmere.) Any increase in calls to the motorway or remote rural areas can distort the attendance times as these are areas that cannot be reached within the 11 and 14 minute attendance times.

During peak periods, traffic congestion in the Bicester area has extended the turn in time for retained personnel (when they are required to comply with the full requirements of the Road Traffic Act). The responding crew then has to negotiate the traffic congestion to reach its destination. Congestion in Bicester is, according to staff reports, of increasing significance, with specific comments often made in relation to the congestion connected with the large volume of traffic to and from retail premises located at the edge of town. Reduction in this congestion would enhance Fire Service response performance.

Burford

1. 2008/9 figures were 64% (11 mins) and 76% (14 mins)
2. 2009/10 figures were 34% (11 mins) and 86% (14 mins).

For 2009-2010 of the 23 incidents that were in scope, 11 of these were in a "yellow*" area (11-14 minutes) and one of these was in a "red area*" (more than 14 minutes), so we would not expect them to reach these within 11 minutes. This would mean that we would expect them to reach the remaining 11 incidents within 11 minutes. Burford managed to reach eight of these within 11 minutes, leaving three incidents that they didn't.

We had to extend their turnout time to eight minutes approximately one year ago due to temporary crewing difficulties when one firefighter badly injured his leg in a motorcycle accident, and another did not achieve the necessary competencies in incident command. Thus, we were relying on firefighters responding to the station from further away.

We are dealing with small numbers of incidents at Burford; therefore, minor changes have a greater overall affect on the percentages.

** Response times are mapped for Oxfordshire and colour coded accordingly. For green areas we aim to respond in 11 minutes, yellow areas in 11 -14 minutes and remote rural areas are classified as red, with a response time of >14 minutes.*

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It is pleasing to note that Burford have actually improved their response standards for attending within 14 minutes from 76% in 2009-09 to 86% in 2009-10. It is also worth adding that for this year (2010/11) to date, Burford have achieved attendance times of 78% of their emergencies in 11 minutes and 89% in 14 minutes. Thus, indicating that the figures for 2009/10 were a short-term issue rather than a trend.

Goring

1. 2008/9 figures were 34% (11 mins) and 47% (14 mins)
2. 2009/10 figures were 26% (11 mins) and 63% (14 mins).

The geographical area covered by Goring is largely classified as yellow or red areas; therefore, in many cases they cannot achieve a sub 11 minute attendance time to calls. However, it is pleasing to note a 16% improvement in their ability to respond to incidents within 14 minutes when compared to the preceding year.

Wheatley

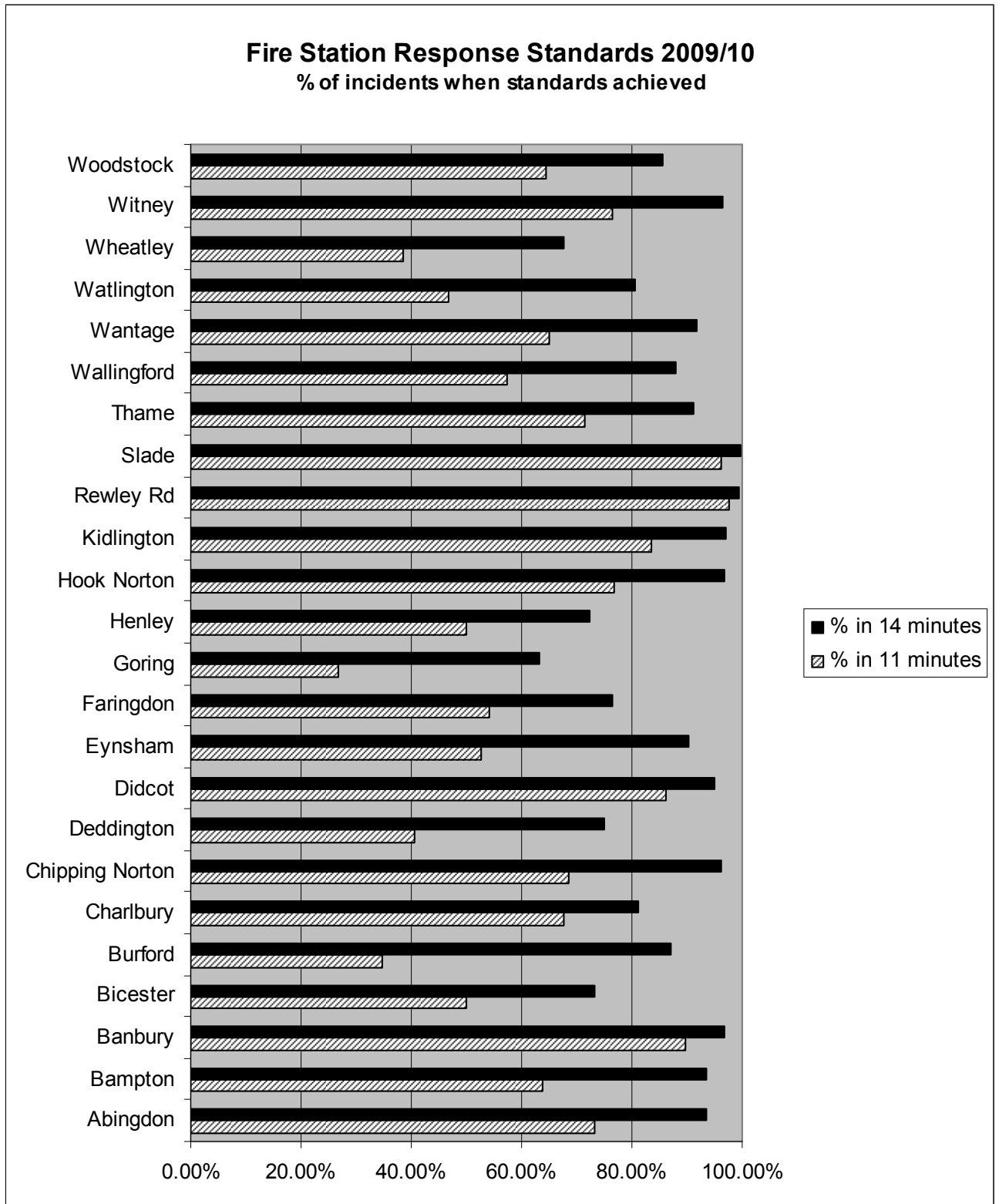
1. 2008/9 figures were 41% (11 mins) and 76% (14 mins)
2. 2009/10 figures were 38% (11 mins) and 67% (14 mins).

This is a small change since 2008/9. Wheatley, like Bicester, responds to the M40 and, therefore, has extended travel distances. Any increase in calls to the motorway can distort the attendance times as there are areas that cannot be reached within the 11 and 14 minute attendance times.

General

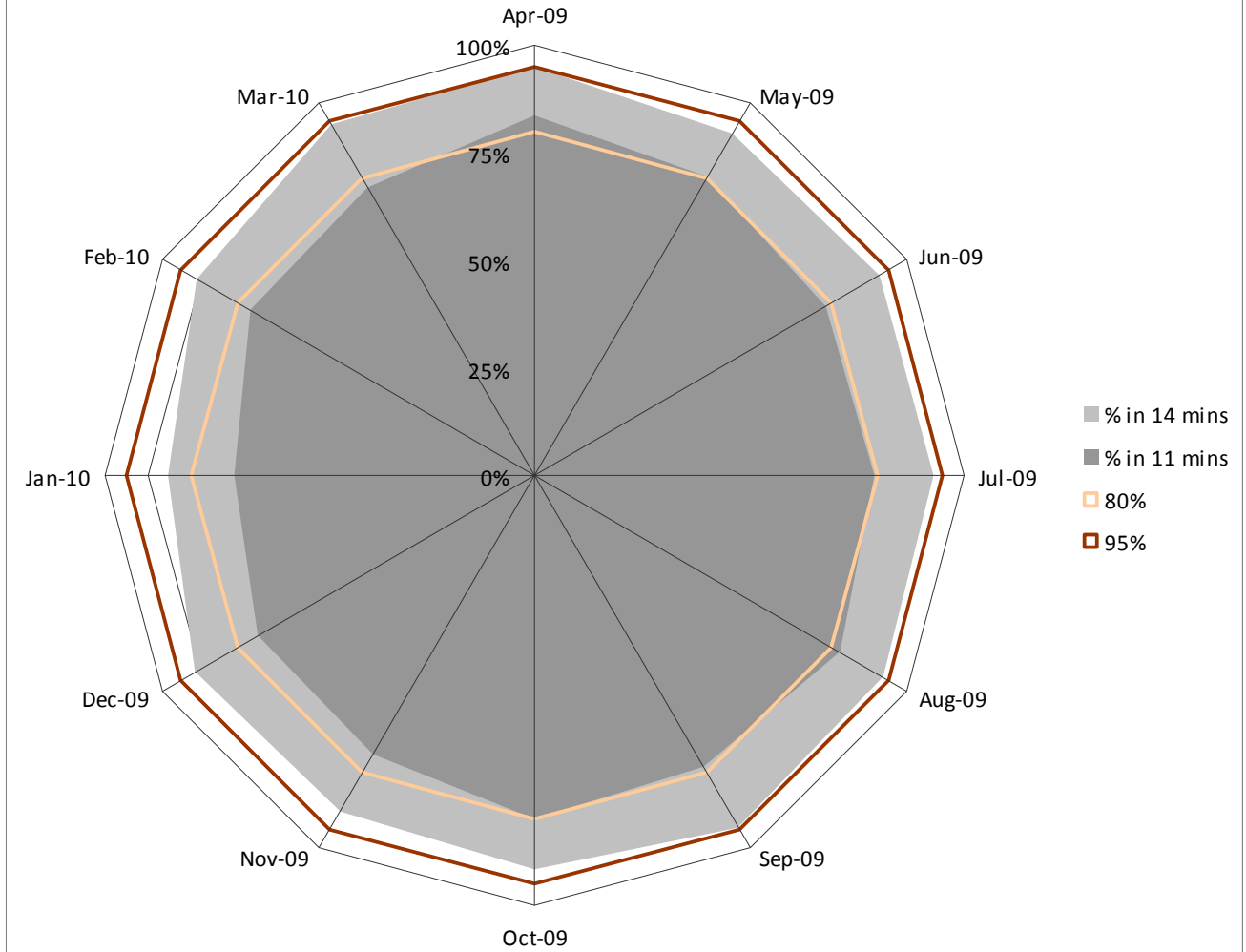
The management recognises that overall performance for the 11 minute target has declined and continues to address this both locally and strategically. The Cabinet endorsed programme of providing dedicated watch managers for selected stations is already having a positive effect on station availability and it is anticipated that this will generally improve response standards.

Response Standards Graphical Information



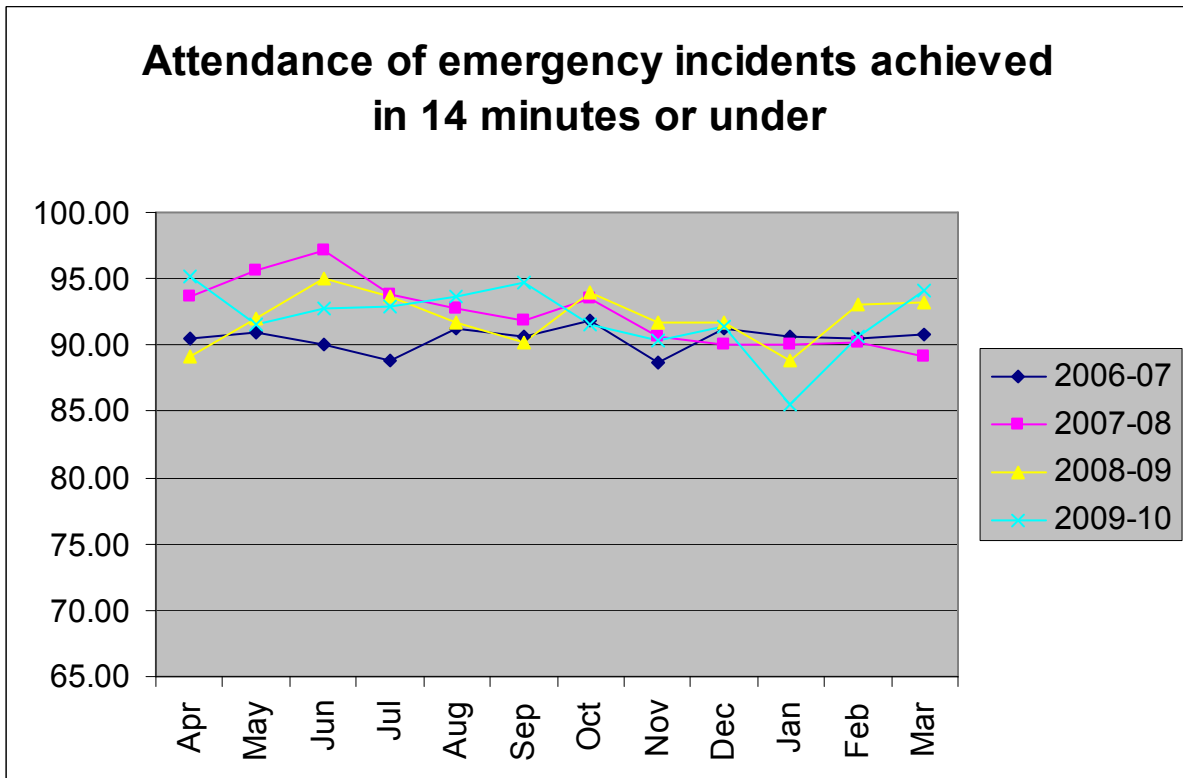
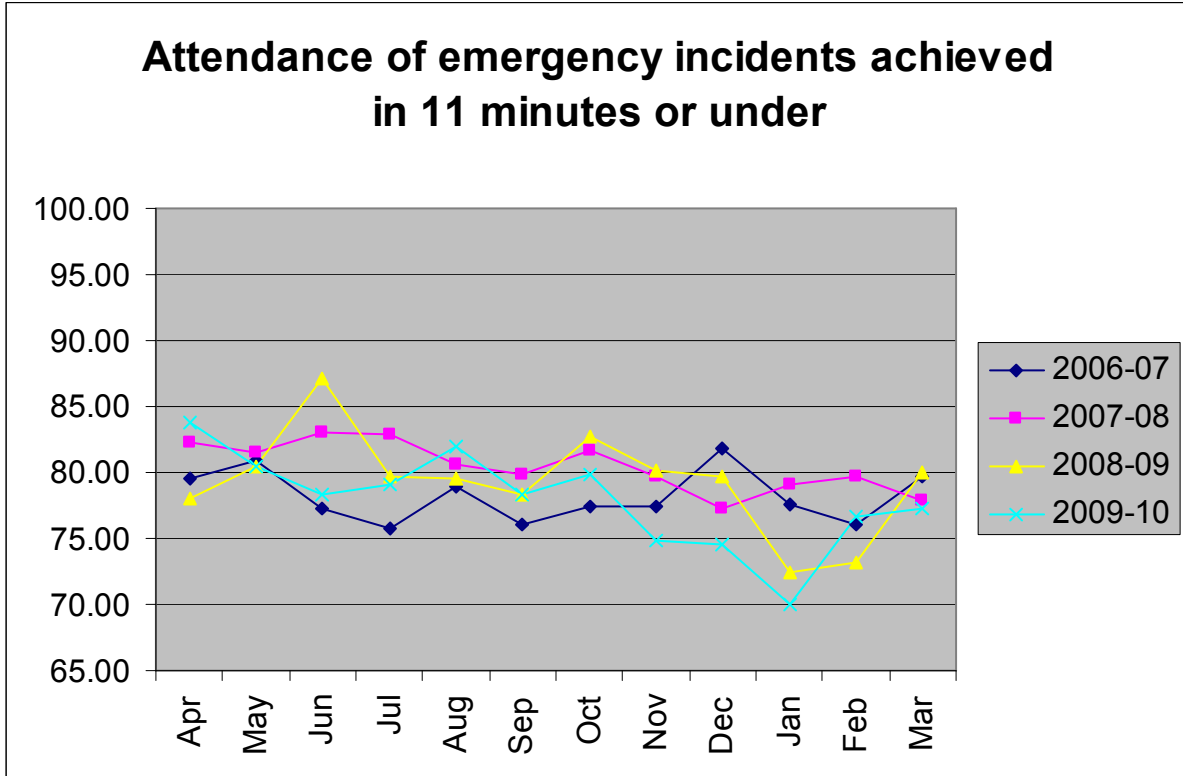
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Response Standards

Monthly Performance against Response Standards 2009/10



Response Standards – Historical Data 2006 to 2010

Line graphs showing response performance for the previous four years. The apparent downturn in performance across the financial year may be due to seasonal variation.



Oxfordshire Response Standards for 2008-2009

Response Standards by District

April 2008 - March 2009

Area	Incidents in Scope	Number in 11 minutes	% in 11 minutes	Number in 14 minutes	% in 14 minutes
City	1342	1286	95.8%	1330	99.1%
West	359	256	71.3%	331	92.2%
Cherwell	783	596	76.1%	706	90.2%
South	765	470	61.4%	637	83.3%
Vale	356	244	68.5%	314	88.2%

Response Standards by Station

April 2008 - March 2009

Stn No. and Station	Incidents in Scope	Number in 11 minutes	% in 11 minutes	Number in 14 minutes	% in 14 minutes
1.Banbury	344	312	90.70%	330	95.93%
2.Hook Norton	28	20	71.43%	26	92.86%
3. Chipping Norton	77	56	72.72%	70	90.91%
4.Charlbury	23	12	52.17%	22	95.65%
5.Woodstock	35	20	57.14%	28	80.00%
6.Kidlington	110	82	74.55%	105	95.45%
7.Bicester	238	153	64.29%	198	83.19%
8.Deddington	28	9	32.14%	19	67.86%
9.Eynsham	58	40	68.97%	55	94.83%
10.Witney	132	107	81.06%	125	94.70%
11.Burford	25	16	64.00%	19	76.00%
12.Bampton	44	25	56.82%	40	90.91%
21.Rewley Rd	539	527	97.77%	536	99.44%
22.Abingdon	180	135	75.00%	170	94.44%
23.Faringdon	95	57	60.00%	79	83.16%
24.Wantage	81	52	64.20%	65	80.24%
25.Goring	38	13	34.21%	18	47.37%
26.Henley	124	58	46.77%	81	65.32%
27.Thame	69	55	79.71%	66	95.65%
28.Wheatley	65	27	41.54%	50	76.92%
29.Watlington	103	53	51.46%	83	80.58%
30.Slade	803	759	94.52%	794	98.88%
31.Wallingford	94	45	47.87%	81	86.17%
32.Didcot	272	219	80.51%	258	94.85%
Totals	3605	2852	79.11%	3318	92.04%