



# Do Response Times Still Matter?

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Ambulance Leadership Forum

20 March 2019



PLAN. PREPARE. PERFORM.

An aerial night view of a city, likely Dubai, featuring a complex highway interchange with light trails from traffic. The scene is overlaid with glowing blue arcs and lines that suggest a network or data flow. The city lights are visible in the background, and the overall atmosphere is futuristic and technological.

# Setting the Scene

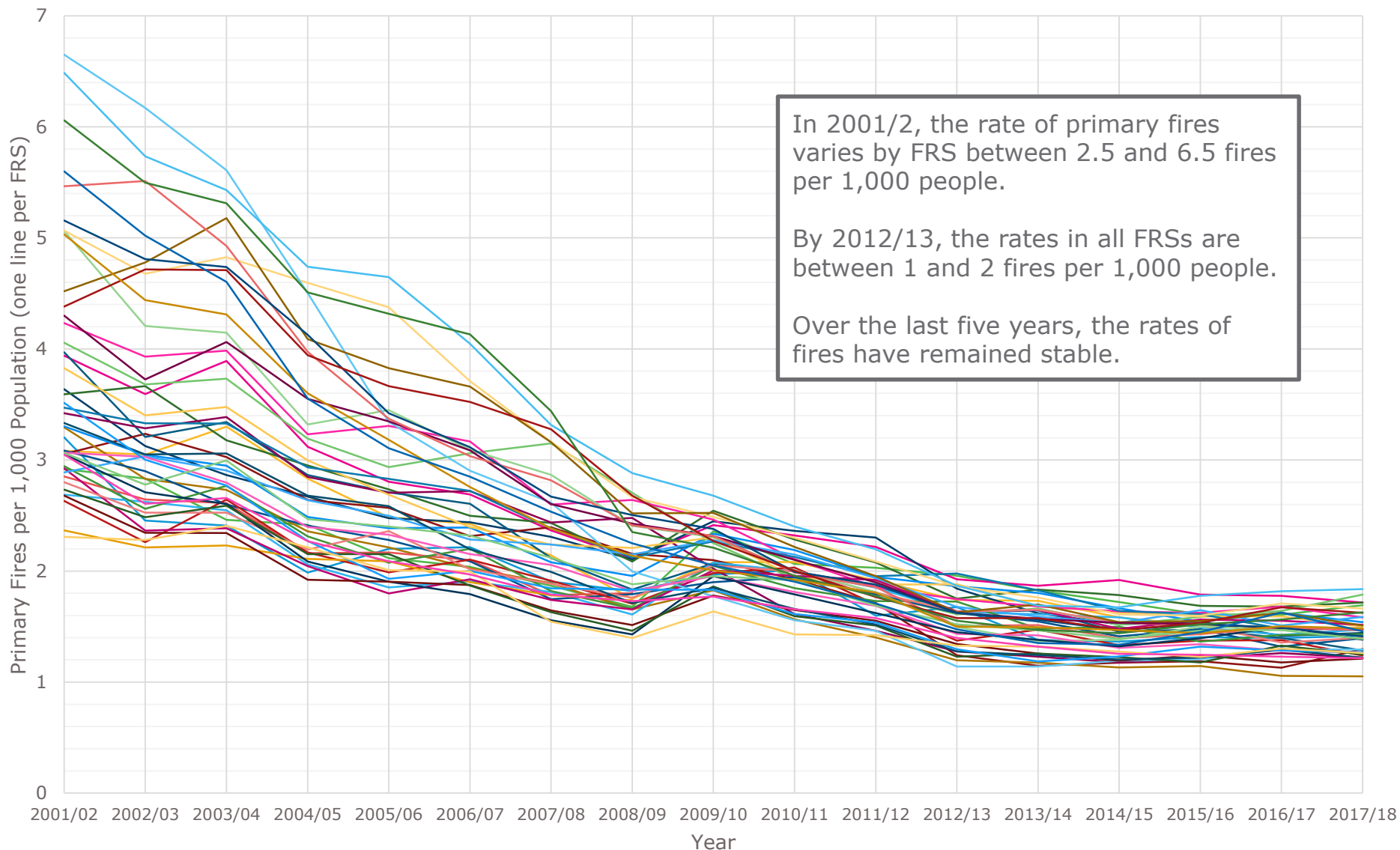




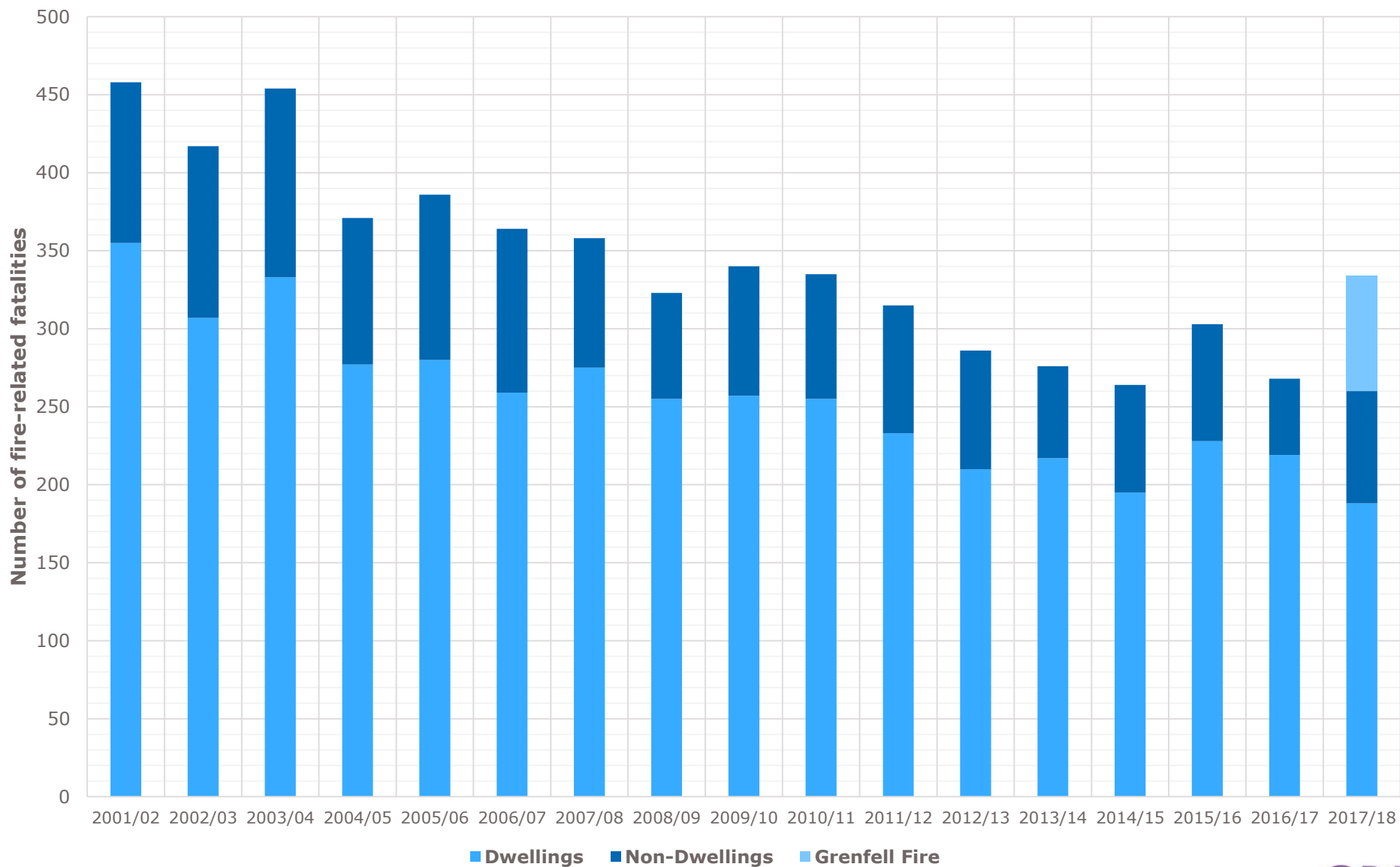
# Fire Sector Achievements



## Primary Fire Rates by FRS and Year



## Fire-related Fatalities in England by Year



Data Source: Home Office Incident Recording System ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

# Significant Challenges

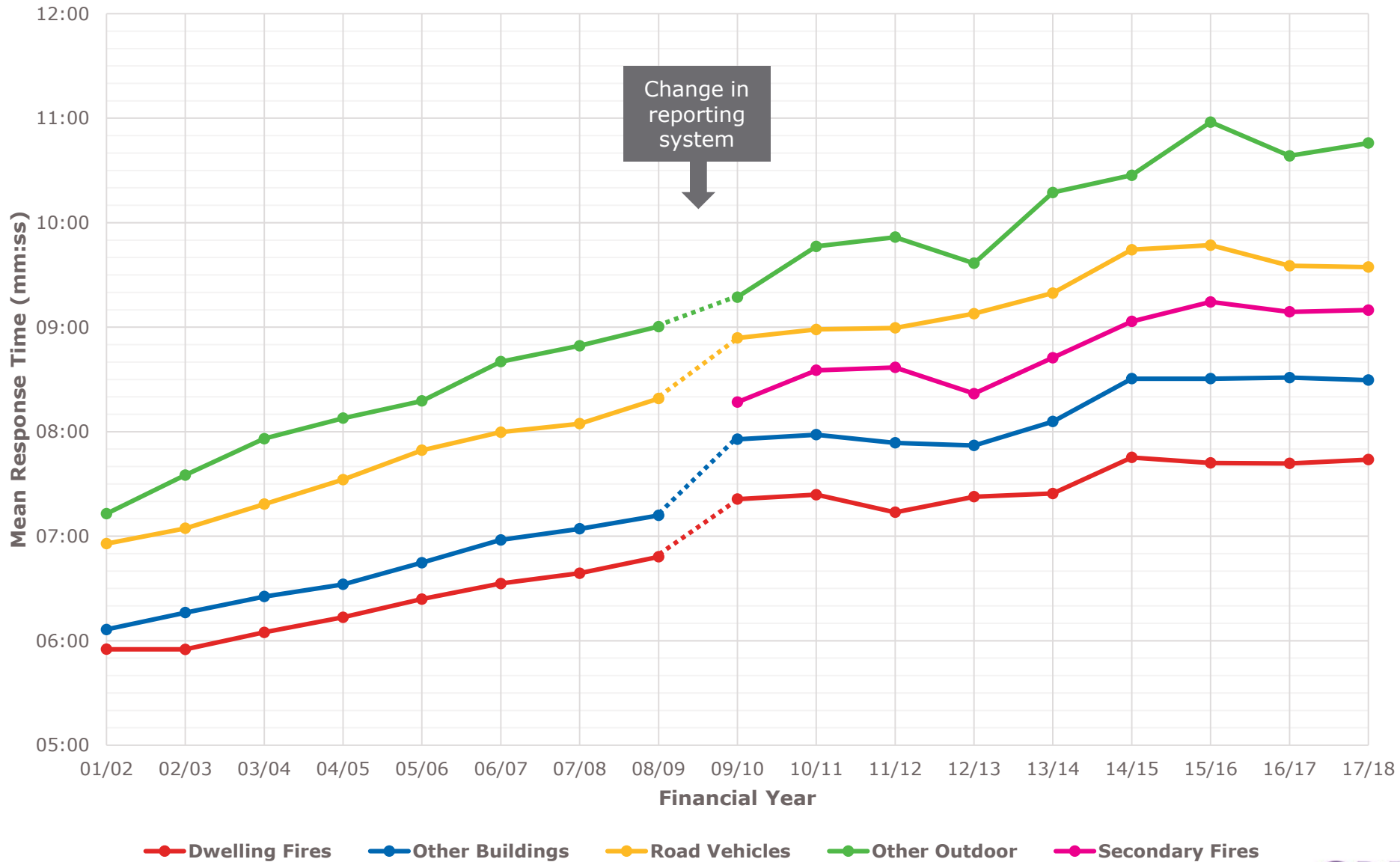




# Significant Challenges

- Financial budget restraints
- Public expectations
- Duty to collaborate (with various stakeholders)
- Less human and physical resources than before
  - 26% fewer wholetime firefighters now than in 2010
- Doing more with less:
  - Having the right people in the right place and at the right time to manage and respond to risk
- HMICFRS looking at evidence and intelligence led decision making

# Mean Response Times to Fire Incidents



Data Source: Home Office Incident Recording System ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

2009/10

2010/11

2011/12

2012/13

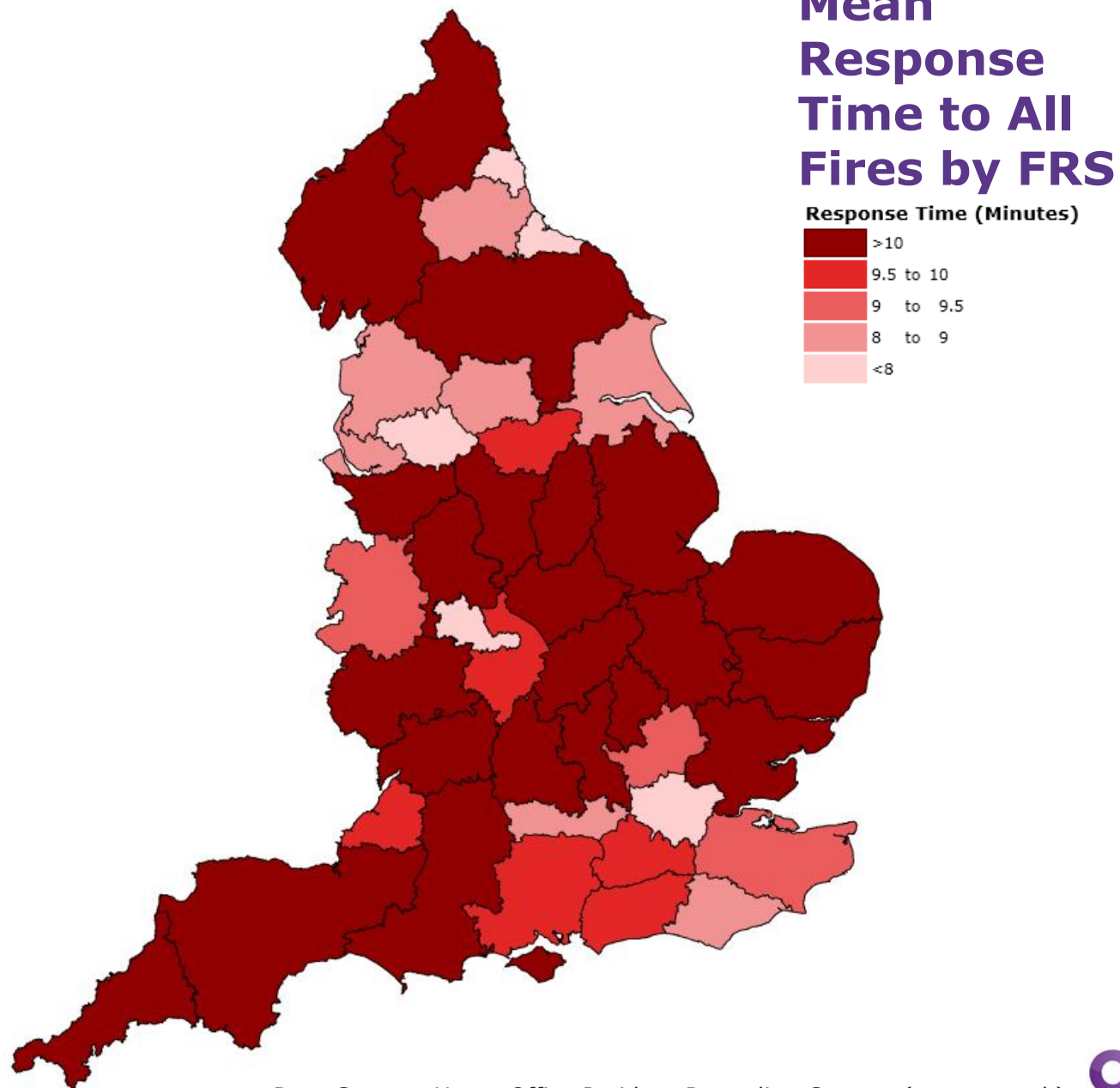
2013/14

2014/15

2015/16

2016/17

2017/18



Data Source: Home Office Incident Recording System ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

# UK FRS Attendance Standards



# Ambulance Response Programme



Category 1 is for calls about people with life-threatening injuries and illnesses.



These will be responded to in an average time of seven minutes.

# Ambulance Response Times

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### Health

## How fast is the ambulance service where you live?

By Nick Triggle and Christine Jeavans  
BBC News

8 hours ago

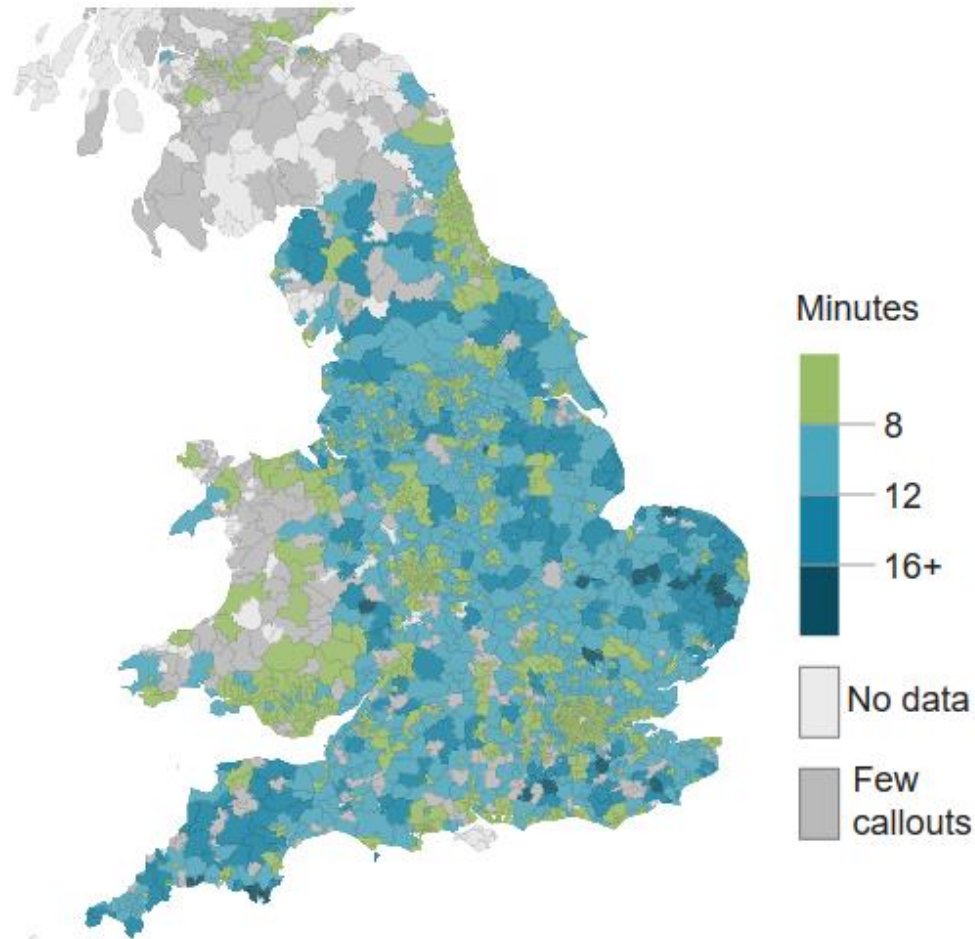
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GETTY IMAGES

**Critically injured patients in rural areas are at risk due to the time it takes the ambulance service to reach them, a BBC investigation has found.**

Those in some rural communities are waiting more than 20 minutes on average for help for cardiac arrests, seizures and life-threatening injuries.



Source: Ambulance trusts. Data is shown for postcode districts with more than nine highest category callouts in January-October 2018. Districts with 10-49 callouts are labelled "low numbers". Northern Ireland does not use comparable categorisation.

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-47362797>

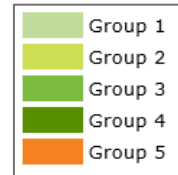
# UK FRS Attendance Standards

- Prior to 2004 there was common measurement across FRSs:

Risk Area	1 <sup>st</sup> Appliance	2 <sup>nd</sup> Appliance	3 <sup>rd</sup> Appliance
A	5 minutes	5 minutes	8 minutes
B	5 minutes	8 minutes	
C	10 minutes		
D	20 minutes		

- Now the responsibility lies with Fire Authorities to adopt appropriate response strategies
- Different standards across FRSs
  - Aim to reflect diversity of communities

# Standards Comparison



## Durham

8-minute response to Dwelling Fires with target of 70%

## Buckinghamshire

1<sup>st</sup> Response:  
- 80% of incidents attended in 10 mins  
- 99% of incidents attended in 20 mins

## Dorset & Wiltshire

Aim to arrive within ten minutes (1<sup>st</sup> appliance) and 13 minutes (2<sup>nd</sup> appliance) from the time the call is received by our Service Control Centre

## Cambridgeshire

1<sup>st</sup> Response:  
- Service-wide 95<sup>th</sup> Percentile: 18 mins  
- Urban Area Average: 9 minutes  
- Rural Area Average: 13 minutes  
2<sup>nd</sup> Response:  
- Service-wide 95<sup>th</sup> Percentile: 25 mins  
- Urban Area Average: 13 mins  
- Rural Area Average: 17 mins

## Suffolk

Meet the following targets on 80% of occasions:  
- 1<sup>st</sup> to a property fire in 11 mins  
- 2<sup>nd</sup> to a property fire in 16 mins  
- 1<sup>st</sup> to an RTC in 13 mins

## Berkshire

1<sup>st</sup> Response time to all incidents within 10 minutes (based on time of call)

## East Sussex

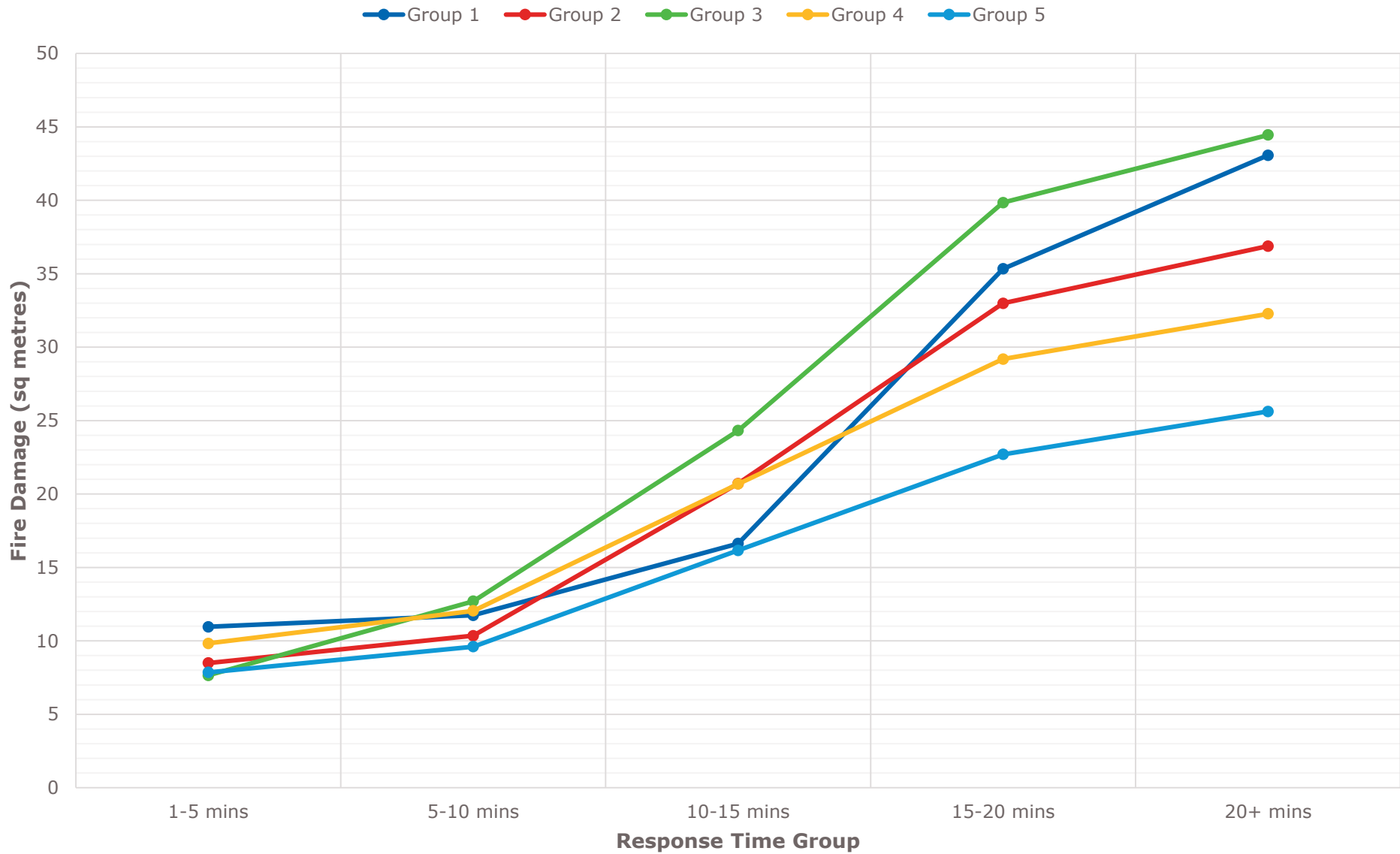
1<sup>st</sup> Response (based on time of call):  
- For on-station responses, arrive in 10 minutes, 70% of the time  
- For on-call responses, arrive in 15 minutes, 70% of the time



# Impacts of Longer Response Times

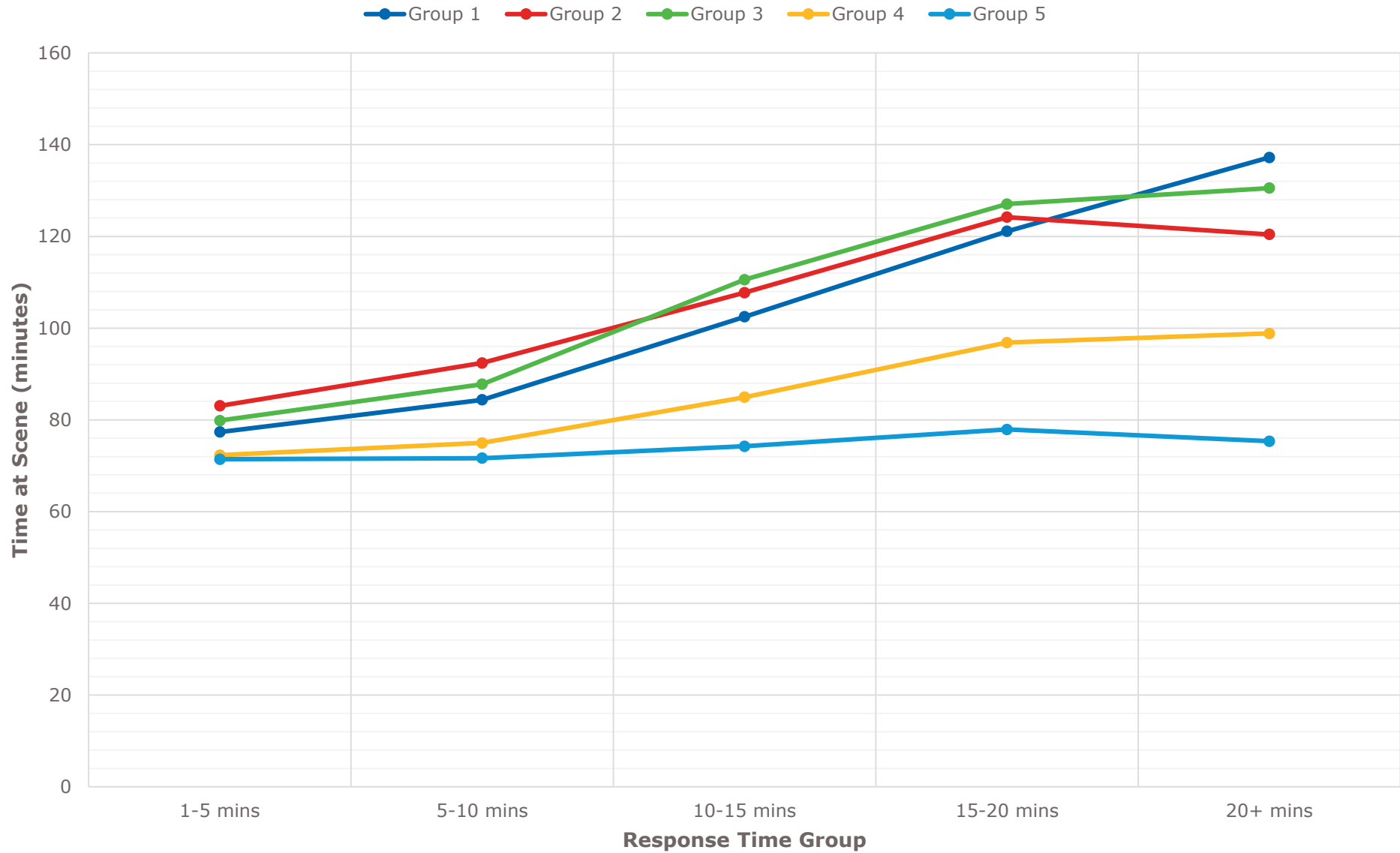


# Fire Damage by Response Time (Family Groups)



Data Source: Home Office Incident Recording System ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

# Time at Scene by Response Time and Family Group



# Impacts of Longer Response Times

- Suggestion that longer response times lead to:
  - Increased fire damage (dwellings and non-dwellings)
  - Longer time at scene
  - Greater number of responses to incidents
- Implications for the FRS:
  - Greater risk for firefighters at larger incidents
  - Increased salary/equipment costs for FRS
  - Attendance times to other incidents increase?
- Analysed fatalities and injuries arising from fire incidents, but found no relationship with response times

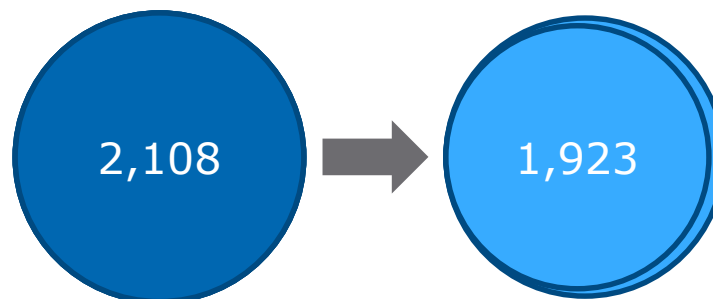
# Why are Response Times Increasing?



# Why are Response Times Increasing?

- Resource numbers?
- Turnout times?
- Availability?
- Traffic?
- Urban/rural?

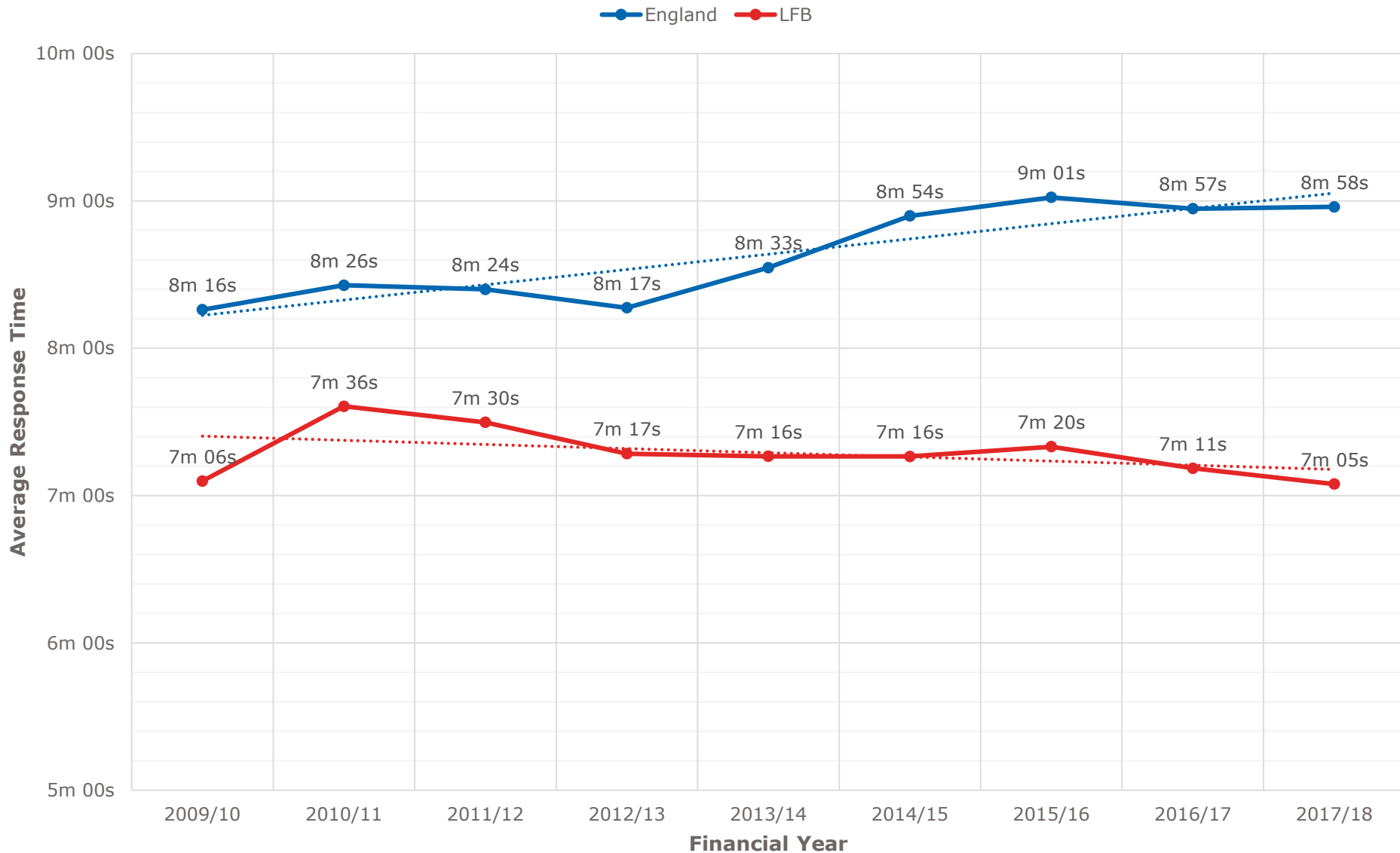
*Number of Stations*



An aerial night view of a city with light trails from traffic and glowing blue network lines connecting various points across the scene. The background shows a city skyline with illuminated buildings and a highway interchange with light trails from cars.

# Potential Options for Improving Response Times

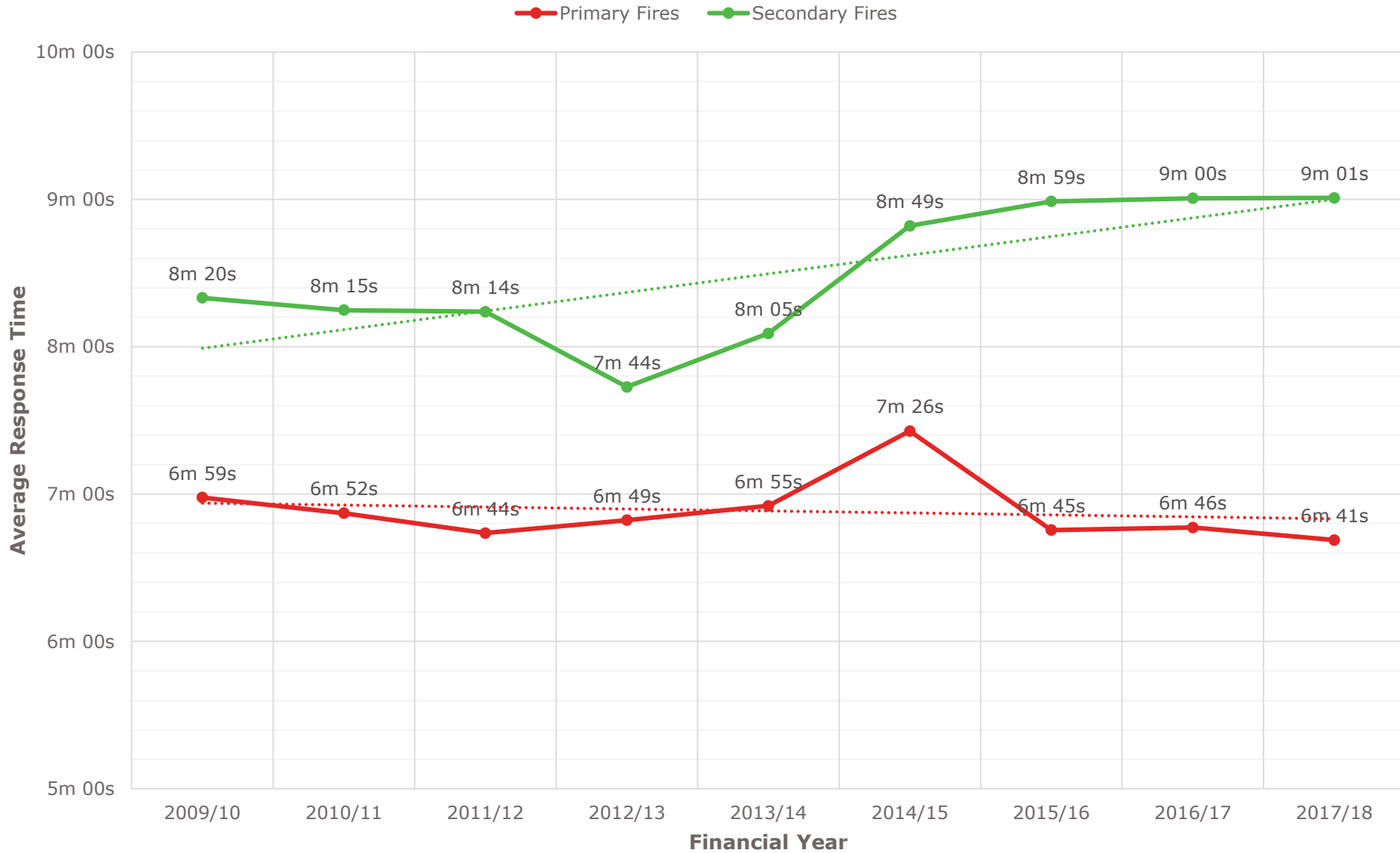
# LFB: Average Response Time by Year (All Fires)



Data Source: Home Office Incident Recording System ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

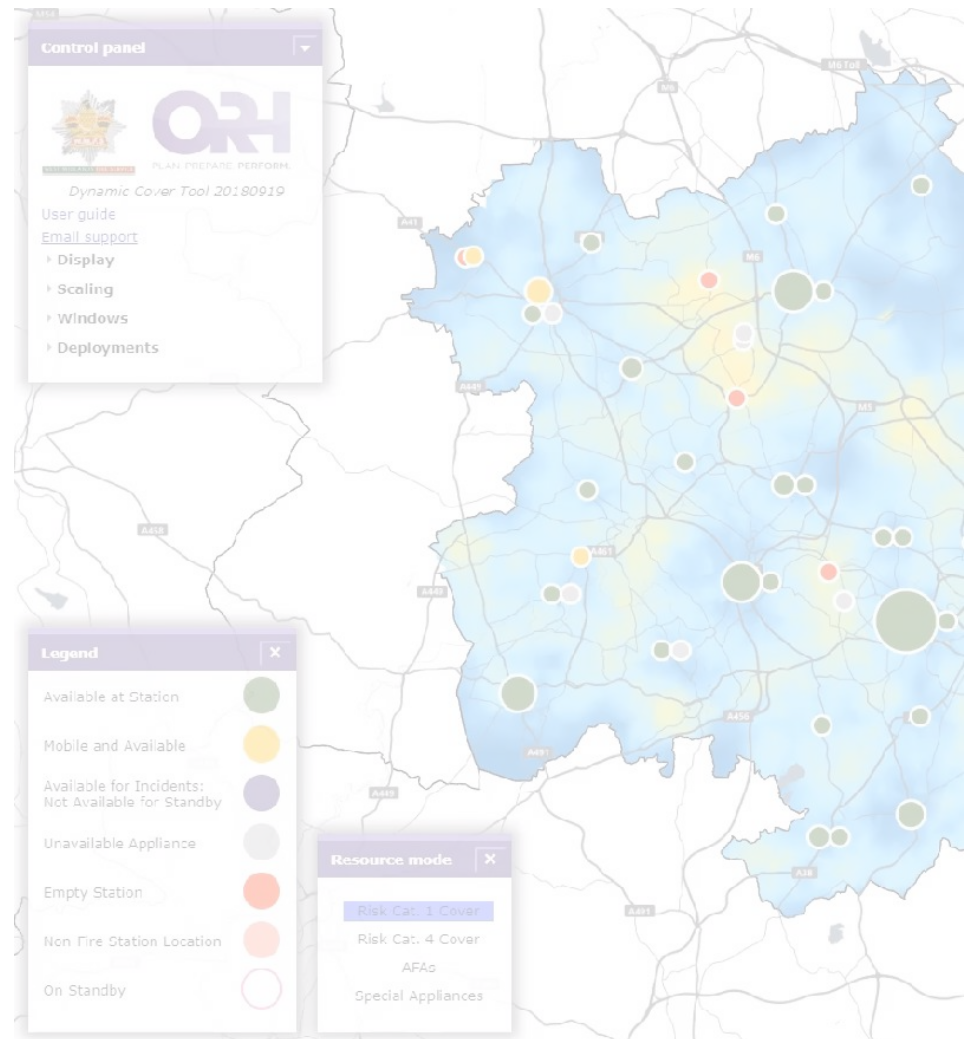


# WMFS: Average Response Time by Year



Data Source: Home Office Incident Recording System ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

# Case Study: WMFS



# Summary

- **Fire services** have seen a reduction in demand, however response times have increased. The inspection regime is placing more emphasis on evidence-led planning.
- **Ambulance services** follow different operating models and there are national standards for response, however both services are under pressure to do more with less.
- **ORH** supports fire and ambulance services by:
  - Analysing demand and response time trends
  - Modelling potential options for change
  - Benchmarking performance and sharing best practice

# Questions?

# Find Out More

- You can find out more about our range of services at:

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- If you would like to talk to one of our consultants please call:

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