



**Gofynner am/
Please ask for:** Information Governance
and Compliance

Tel: 01443232000

E-bost/E-mail: DataProtection@southwales-fire.gov.uk

Our ref: IG000682

Dyddiad/Date: 08.01.2021

RE: Request for Information held by SWFRS

Your request ref: IG000682 has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

You asked us:

Please could you break down the below information per month (from the 1st to the 30th or 31st) for each month from April to December in 2020.

1. How many times did fire stations under the authority of your fire service fail to meet their minimum safe fire engine availability threshold over the specified year?
2. Please could you specify the stations which most frequently failed to meet this threshold, and state the number of times they failed to meet it.
3. How many full-time firefighters were employed by fire stations under the authority of your fire service over this period?

Clarification received from requester -

In relation to what I meant by "minimum safe fire engine availability threshold", I used the criteria as defined in the linked example from Surrey's IRMP 'Making Surrey Safer'. I appreciate that fire and rescue services do not hold uniform basic information on this, but It would be great if you could send the relevant information you do hold internally which is as similar as possible to what is in the table outlined on page 15 of this [document](#).

In relation to the question sent in another one of my FOI requests: "how many full-time firefighters were employed by fire stations under the authority of your fire service over this period?", I would like to clarify I mean the total number of whole-time firefighters employed by your fire and rescue service for each month (April to December 2020).

In your response to the question about how many times did the fire stations under your authority fail to meet their minimum safe fire engine availability between April and December (1st to 31st) 2020, please could you also tell me the same information broken down by month over the same period in 2019 as well.

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Parc Busnes Forest View, Llantrisant, Pont-y-clun, CF72 8LX.

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RAISING AWARENESS - REDUCING RISK



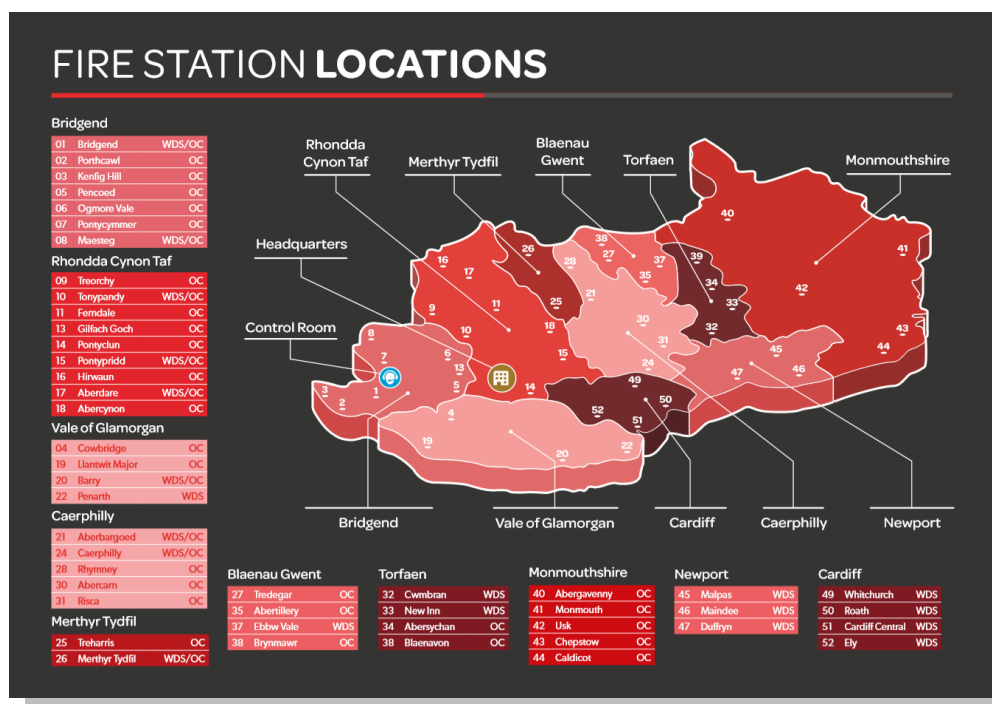
Our response:

1. How many times did fire stations under the authority of your fire service fail to meet their minimum safe fire engine availability threshold over the specified year?

The answer to this question is nil. Please see below information to help explain further.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service ("the Service") covers 10 unitary authorities and a population of 1.5 million. We cover a large geographical area made up of rural, coastal and urban communities. It covers an area of around 1,100 square miles (2,800 km²) with a population of around 1.5 million

The South Wales Service area is served by 47 Fire and Rescue Stations. These are made up of 11 Wholtime Duty Systems (WDS), 27 On-Call and 9 Wholtime/On-Call duty stations (OCDS). In total we have 60 front line water ladder (WRT/L) consisting of 21 WDS WRT/L and 39 OCDS WRT/L.



The Service maintains operational cover by following 'Key Station Protocols'

A key station or key area is a location where it is deemed necessary to maintain emergency cover. Therefore, whether these stations or areas are denuded due to normal mobilisation or during spate conditions, a standby appliance should be mobilised to cover that station and its geographical area.

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The responsibility for maintaining essential cover sits with the mobilising officer in Control. The mobilising officer will make a judgement call regarding the best action to take based upon the overall picture of appliance availability and incident rate at any given time. The key station policy covers a combination of:

- Static key stations (6)
- Key areas (6)
- Dependent key stations (4)

This combination balances the risks being taken through denuding one area to cover another, whilst lessening the risks being introduced, by decreasing the number of standby incidents being created and reducing appliance movements.

This procedure also allows Control to dynamically assess each occurrence allowing it to remain flexible. It allows Control Supervisors to use discretion and initiative, when making cover moves within the guidelines, through utilising the existence of better intelligence with regard to risks in a given area.

Mobilising Criteria, the key station policy is formulated around a thirty minute time target and the life risk, call rate and circumstances at the time, thus making the policy fluid and dynamic.

No standby should be created before an appliance confirms they are committed for over a thirty minute period, or conversely Control can initiate a standby move whilst in receipt of intelligence that indicates an incident or occurrence will be serious or protracted.

When a cover move is deemed necessary, cover will be provided by deploying, in the first instance, an appliance from a two appliance station. This will prevent station areas being denuded of any cover, thus maintaining the status quo. If the distance or situation at the time deems this move inadvisable, then Control will check the best possible station to use, without leaving an area completely devoid of cover, taking into account the dependency criteria for certain areas (dependency criteria will be developed by Control as the concept for dynamically assessing each occurrence evolves, through checking the Vision system for accurate timings).

The optimum ridership level for the Service is 120 on each shift. At this level all one pump stations will be riding five, Cardiff Centrals second appliance riding four and all other specials riding two.

If the ridership number drops below the optimum level, the availability of front line appliances can be maintained through riding minimum crewing levels on identified Water Tender Ladders WRT/L, i.e. riding four.

If all WRT/L were to ride at minimum crewing levels, the ridership total across the Service would be 100. This is deemed as the 'critical ridership level' as any number below this level would result in WDS appliances becoming unavailable.

The minimum staffing levels experienced between April to December 2020 was 107. Even at this level all front line WDS appliances remained on the run.

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In addition to the above procedures the Service has a salaried OCDS establishment which from April to December 2020 maintained an average availability of 91.85%.

To supplement the OCDS further, the Service establish a Strategic Reserve contingent. This is a flexible resource used to support the provision of operational response by covering shortfalls in RDS appliance availability.

2. Please could you specify the stations which most frequently failed to meet this threshold, and state the number of times they failed to meet it.

The answer to this question is nil, please see above.

3. How many full time firefighters were employed by fire stations under the authority of your Fire service over this period?

The WDS establishment for the Service is 644. During April – December 2020 the actual establishment figures were:

April	638
May	638
June	641
July	633
August	630
September	620
October	624
November	629
December	634

Q3 Cont... In your response to the question about how many times did the fire stations under your authority fail to meet their minimum safe fire engine availability between April and December (1st to 31st) 2020, please could you also tell me the same information broken down by month over the same period in 2019 as well.

This again is a nil return as operational cover was maintained using the procedures as detailed in question 1.

If you have any queries regarding your Freedom of Information request, please contact us at Dataprotection@southwales-fire.gov.uk quoting the reference number above in any future communication.

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If you are dissatisfied with the way that your information request has been handled, you can request an internal review by emailing Dataprotection@southwales-fire.gov.uk

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office-Wales,
2nd Floor,
Churchill House,
Churchill Way,
Cardiff,
CF10 2HH.

There is no charge for making an appeal.

Yours Faithfully

Information Governance and Compliance

UPDATE COVID-19: Information Requests

We are kindly asking that any data protection correspondence come to Information Governance & Compliance via email, as due to Government advice many of our support staff are working flexibly and we may not be in receipt of physical post as normal. SWFRS anticipates that it may take us longer than 20 working days to complete Freedom of Information Requests and Subject Access Requests. The Information Commissioner recognises that there might be delays as our services and resources may be being utilised in slightly different ways, under the current unprecedented circumstances. At current, we are no longer accepting physical postal cheques, however we can accept BACs payments for items that carry a fee (such as IRS Reports and Interviews, where appropriate following standard procedure and charges).

We would like to thank you for your patience at this time.

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