



Home Office

Fires in purpose-built flats, England, April 2009 to March 2017

An ad hoc statistical release

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1 Introduction

Due to the exceptional circumstances after the Grenfell Tower fire, and the need for timely and appropriate statistics, independent Home Office statisticians have produced this ad hoc statistical release focusing on fires, fire-related fatalities and non-fatal casualties in purpose-built high-rise flats. Detailed data on fires in purpose-built flats are not routinely published as they are subsumed into an all dwelling category. Future publications will include these sub-categories.

Routine figures on numbers of fires attended, fire-related fatalities and non-fatal casualties for 2016/17 are due to be released in summer 2017, however in the public interest it has been decided to include relevant figures in this ad hoc release. We will update the provisional 2016/17 figures in the summer release.

This release also includes information on fire safety audits of purpose-built high-rise flats carried out by fire and rescue services (FRSs), covering the period 2009/10 to 2015/16. Data for 2016/17 are not yet available.

The majority of the data included in this release are for England only, however, data from the [English Housing Survey](#) (EHS) show that two-thirds of purpose-built high-rise flats are in London, and so some London specific data are provided.

It should be noted that this release provides factual information on the number of fires, non-fatal casualties and fire-related fatalities by dwelling type and does not relate them to the number of purpose-built flats or the number of people living in them, and any changes in population over the time period.

Data sources

Each time an FRS attends an incident in England, details of that incident are uploaded to the Home Office's Incident Recording System (IRS) by the FRS. More information on the IRS can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/incident-recording-system-for-fire-and-rescue-authorities

The IRS is a continually updated database, with FRSs adding incidents on a daily basis. The figures in this release refer to records of incidents that occurred up to 31 March 2017 that had reached the IRS by 7 June 2017 when the database was "frozen" for the purpose of analysis.

Because of the dataset being "frozen" on 7 June 2017 the statistics published may not match those held locally by FRSs and revisions may occur in the future. This can be particularly apparent for statistics with relatively small numbers, such as fire-related fatalities.¹

IRS data are available on the number of storeys in a purpose-built flat from 2009/10.

The Home Office carry out a separate annual data collection for [operational statistics](#) which includes information on fire safety audits.

¹ For more detailed technical definitions of fire-related fatalities, see the Fire Statistics Definitions document. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/610453/fire-statistics-definitions.pdf

Definition of purpose-built flats

The IRS includes a field for property type, with categories for purpose-built flats as follows:

Purpose-built flat/maisonette:

- Up to 3 storeys
- 4 to 9 storeys
- 10 storeys or more

For the purpose of this release, these are referred to as low-rise, medium-rise and high-rise respectively. We are aware that there are other definitions of high-rise, for example the EHS also gives an estimate of the number of different types of dwellings in England, but defines 'high-rise' as six storeys or more.

2 Dwelling fires in purpose-built flats

Number of fires

Of the 30,296 dwelling fires attended by fire and rescue services in England in 2016/17 around three-quarters (75%) of dwelling fires attended by fire and rescue services (FRSs) were in houses, bungalows, converted flats and other² properties and a quarter (25%) were in purpose built flats. Of these, 16 per cent were in purpose-built low-rise flats (1 to 3 storeys); six per cent in purpose-built medium-rise flats (4 to 9 storeys) and two per cent were in purpose-built high-rise flats (10 storeys or more).

FRSs attended 1,261 fires in purpose-built high-rise flats in England in 2009/10 compared with 714 in 2016/17 (a decrease of 43%).

The number of fires in other types of dwelling fell more slowly: fires in houses, bungalows, converted flats and other properties fell by 20 per cent (from 28,512 in 2009/10 to 22,840 in 2016/17), fires in medium-rise purpose-built flats fell by 14 per cent (from 2,156 fires in 2009/10 to 1,848 fires in 2016/17), and those in low-rise flats by 24 per cent (from 6,447 in 2009/10 to 4,894 in 2016/17).

Table 2.1 Number of dwelling fires attended by FRSs by dwelling type, England, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of dwelling fires	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	28,512	27,166	26,155	24,931	24,107	23,651	23,647	22,840
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	6,447	6,324	6,111	5,490	5,050	5,015	5,095	4,894
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	2,156	2,102	2,072	2,013	1,943	1,894	1,878	1,848
Purpose Built Flat - 10 storeys or more	1,261	1,003	1,063	845	799	772	757	714

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE0202](#). Table contains provisional figures for 2016/17 which are subject to change in future releases.

The IRS also collects information on how far the fire damage had spread, although it is not possible to identify whether the fire has spread outside the 'flat of origin'. However, of the 714 fires in purpose-built high-rise flats in 2016/17, 56 fires had spread further than the 'room of origin' (8%).

² Other includes sheltered accommodation, caravan/mobile home, HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) etc.

3 Non-fatal casualties and fire-related fatalities

Non-fatal casualties³

There were 139 non-fatal casualties in fires in purpose-built high-rise flats (defined as 10 storeys or more) in England in 2016/17, compared with 214 in 2009/10 (a decrease of 35%). It should be noted that a casualty includes people not requiring hospital treatment (e.g. given first aid at scene or precautionary checks recommended).

Table 3.1 Number of non-fatal casualties in dwelling fires attended by FRSS, by dwelling type, England, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of non-fatal casualties	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	4,576	5,318	5,329	5,003	4,582	4,388	4,256	3,968
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	1,274	1,504	1,344	1,208	1,044	1,061	1,052	951
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	371	424	395	353	338	334	298	300
Purpose Built Flat - 10 storeys or more	214	252	237	177	156	140	157	139

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE0202](#). Table contains provisional figures for 2016/17 which are subject to change in future releases.

There were 63 non-fatal casualties requiring hospital treatment from fires in purpose-built high-rise flats in 2016/17. This figure was 87 in 2009/10.

Table 3.2 Number of non-fatal casualties needing hospital treatment in dwelling fires attended by FRSS, by dwelling type, England, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of hospitalised casualties	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	2,041	2,412	2,416	2,206	1,956	1,829	1,723	1,658
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	600	673	590	549	469	437	461	381
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	213	218	165	174	182	144	130	175
Purpose Built Flat - 10 storeys or more	87	90	100	65	57	66	67	63

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE0502b](#). Table contains provisional figures for 2016/17 which are subject to change in future releases.

It is possible to calculate the percentage of fires involving casualties in different types of dwellings. In 2016/17, there were non-fatal casualties requiring hospital treatment in 6.9 per cent of fires in both medium- and high-rise dwellings and 6.5 per cent in low-rise dwellings, compared with 5.7 per cent of fires in houses, bungalows, converted flats and other properties.

³ For more detailed technical definitions of fire-related non-fatal casualties, see the Fire Statistics Definitions document. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/610453/fire-statistics-definitions.pdf

Table 3.3 Percentage of dwelling fires attended by FRSs with a casualty requiring hospital treatment, by dwelling type, England, 2016/17

	House, bungalow, converted flat, other	Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	Purpose Built Flat - 10 storeys or more
Number of dwelling fires	22,840	4,894	1,848	714
Number of fires with casualty requiring hospital treatment	1,301	320	127	49
Percentage of fires with casualty requiring hospital treatment	5.7%	6.5%	6.9%	6.9%

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE0202](#). Table contains provisional figures for 2016/17 which are subject to change in future releases.

Fire-related fatalities⁴

There were three fire-related fatalities in high-rise purpose-built flats (defined as 10 storeys or more) in England in 2016/17. In 2009/10, this figure was 12. It should be noted the number of fire-related fatalities fluctuates year-on-year due to the relatively low numbers.

Table 3.4 Number of fire-related fatalities in dwelling fires attended by FRSs, by dwelling type, England, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of fire-related fatalities	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	197	195	195	178	174	156	185	168
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	36	38	22	20	30	27	32	27
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	12	12	7	8	10	8	9	15
Purpose Built Flat - 10 storeys or more	12	10	10	3	2	4	3	3

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE0202](#). Table contains provisional figures for 2016/17 which are subject to change in future releases.

In 2016/17, three of the 714 fires in high-rise purpose-built flats had fire-related fatalities (0.4%) compared with 0.8% of fires in medium-rise flats, 0.6% of fires in low-rise flats, and 0.7% of fires in houses, bungalows, converted flats and other dwellings.

Table 3.5 Percentage of dwelling fires attended by FRSs with a fire-related fatality, by dwelling type, England, 2016/17

	House, bungalow, converted flat, other	Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	Purpose Built Flat - 10 storeys or more
Number of dwelling fires	22,840	4,894	1,848	714
Number of fires with fatality	151	27	14	3
Percentage of fires with fatality	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%	0.4%

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE0202](#). Table contains provisional figures for 2016/17 which are subject to change in future releases.

⁴ For more detailed technical definitions of fire-related fatalities, see the Fire Statistics Definitions document. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/610453/fire-statistics-definitions.pdf

4 Fire safety audits

Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) deliver their enforcement duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the [FSO](#)) through locally determined, risk-based programmes of audit/inspection visits. The FSO concerns the fire safety management of a building following its construction or major works and applies to non-domestic premises and the common parts of residential buildings.

A fire safety audit is a scheduled or planned visit by an appropriately skilled fire safety officer to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the level of compliance with the requirements of the FSO by a responsible person. Fire safety officers check the fire risk assessment and fire prevention measures are appropriate and they should help with understanding the FSO provisions and compliance with them, including checking that the risk that lives will be lost in the event of a fire in or on the premises is removed or reduced to as low as reasonably practicable. They can also take action if they think fire safety measures aren't adequate, for example, by issuing an informal notice suggesting improved safety measures or servicing a formal fire safety notice requiring improvements. These Fire Safety Audits form part of each FRA's Integrated Risk Management Plan ([IRMP](#)).

FRSs carried out 63,201 Fire Safety Audits in England in 2015/16, seven per cent more than the previous year (58,827) but 18 per cent lower than in 2009/10 (77,532).

Table 4.1 Fire safety audits, England, 2009/10 to 2015/16

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Number of fire safety audits	77,532	84,575	81,998	75,543	67,266	58,827	63,201

Source: Table [FIRE1202](#).

In addition, FRSs provide information on the number of fire safety audits carried out on different building types including purpose-built flats with 4 storeys or more. In 2015/16, 3,534 such audits were carried out, a figure that varies year-on-year.

Table 4.2 Fire safety audits on purpose-built flats with 4 storeys or more, England, 2009/10 to 2015/16

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Number of fire safety audits, purpose built flats, 4 storeys or more	2,944	4,023	3,188	3,149	3,925	2,872	3,534

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE1202](#).

5 Data tables for purpose-built flats in London

The majority of the data included in this release are for England only, however, data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) show that two-thirds of purpose-built high-rise flats are in London, and so some London specific data are provided below.

Table 5.1 Number of dwelling fires attended by FRSs by dwelling type, London, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of dwelling fires	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	3,738	3,642	3,561	3,435	3,362	3,345	3,197	2,976
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	1,417	1,403	1,468	1,460	1,176	1,127	1,136	1,179
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	1,240	1,242	1,225	1,196	1,139	1,135	1,120	1,118
Purpose Built Flat - 10 storeys or more	556	424	402	325	286	244	252	236

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE0202](#). Table contains provisional figures for 2016/17 which are subject to change in future releases.

Table 5.2 Number of non-fatal casualties in dwelling fires attended by FRSs, by dwelling type, London, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of non-fatal casualties	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	607	673	619	659	547	542	517	437
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	265	289	220	227	150	188	142	187
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	217	242	202	197	182	193	186	170
Purpose Built Flat - 10 storeys or more	72	87	83	32	57	39	57	36

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE0202](#). Table contains provisional figures for 2016/17 which are subject to change in future releases.

Table 5.3 Number of non-fatal casualties needing hospital treatment in dwelling fires attended by FRSs, by dwelling type, London, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of hospitalised casualties	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	350	383	413	422	331	297	291	247
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	147	174	125	127	81	83	77	86
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	141	154	97	111	113	93	88	101
Purpose Built Flat - 10 storeys or more	33	36	54	16	26	23	35	22

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE0502b](#). Table contains provisional figures for 2016/17 which are subject to change in future releases.

Table 5.4 Number of fire-related fatalities in dwelling fires attended by FRSs, by dwelling type, London, 2009/10 to 2016/17

Number of fire-related fatalities	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
House, bungalow, converted flat, other	19	31	22	22	18	18	20	22
Purpose Built Flat - 1 to 3 storeys	11	7	6	7	10	3	2	7
Purpose Built Flat - 4 to 9 storeys	10	9	4	6	7	3	3	10
Purpose Built Flat - 10 storeys or more	11	7	7	2	0	1	1	2

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE0202](#). Table contains provisional figures for 2016/17 which are subject to change in future releases.

Table 5.5 Fire safety audits, London, 2009/10 to 2015/16

	<u>2009/10</u>	<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
Number of fire safety audits	14,091	14,651	13,374	12,260	13,275	9,296	13,709

Source: Table [FIRE1202](#).

Table 5.6 Fire safety audits on purpose-built flats with 4 storeys or more, London, 2009/10 to 2015/16

	<u>2009/10</u>	<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
Number of fire safety audits, purpose built flats, 4 storeys or more	1,307	1,919	1,649	1,723	2,472	1,775	2,507

Source: Further breakdown of Table [FIRE1202](#).

6 Further information

This release contains statistics about incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England. The statistics are sourced from the Home Office's online Incident Recording System (IRS), which allows fire and rescue services to complete an online incident form for every incident attended, be it a fire, a false alarm or a special service (i.e. other) incident. The online IRS was introduced in April 2009, previously paper forms were submitted by FRSs and an element of sampling was involved in the data compilation process.

Information on fire safety audits are collected annually by the Home Office as part of a manual data collection for [operational statistics](#).

Fire statistics monitor and other Home Office statistical releases are available from the [Statistics at Home Office](#) pages on the GOV.UK website. The dates of forthcoming fire and other Home Office publications are pre-announced and can be found via the [Statistical: Release calendar](#). For further information about the statistics in this publication, email firestatistics@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Data tables for other fire statistics releases can be found on the Home Office's 'Fire statistics data tables' page here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables>

Guidance for using these statistics and other fire statistics outputs can be found on the fire statistics collection page, found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-statistics>

The information published in this release is kept under review, taking into account the needs of users, burdens on suppliers and producers, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Feedback on the changes detailed below, and proposals for future changes, are welcome. If you have any comments, suggestions or enquiries, please contact the team via email using firestatistics@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or via the user feedback form on the [fire statistics collection page](#).

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/about/statistics>

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