



Home Office

Fire prevention and protection statistics: England, April 2017 to March 2018

Statistical Bulletin 21/18

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Further information

This release contains administrative statistics about prevention and protection activities carried out by fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England. This publication also draws from other sources such as the English Housing Survey and from the Home Office's online Incident Recording System (IRS), which allows FRSs to complete an incident form for every incident attended, be it a fire, a false alarm or a non-fire (sometimes known as Special Service) 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.

Guidance for using these statistics and other fire statistics publications can be found on or via the fire statistics collection page

www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-statistics

This publication is accompanied by reference data tables. All the fire statistics tables can be found at

www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables

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 Statistics. If you have any comments, suggestions or enquiries, please contact the team via email using FireStatistics@homeoffice.gov.uk or via the user feedback form on the [fire statistics collection page](#).

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This statistical bulletin is produced to the highest professional standards and is free from political interference. It has been produced by statisticians working in the Home Office Analysis and Insight Directorate in accordance with the Home Office's [statement of compliance](#) with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which covers Home Office policy on revisions and other matters. The Chief Statistician, as Head of Profession, reports to the National Statistician with respect to all professional statistical matters and oversees all Home Office National Statistics products with respect to the Code, being solely responsible for their timing, content and methodology.

Contents

	Further information.....	2
1	Key facts.....	4
2	Introduction.....	5
3	Fire prevention.....	6
	Smoke alarm ownership.....	6
	Home Fire Safety Checks.....	8
	Campaigns and initiatives.....	11
4	Fire protection.....	13
	Fire safety audits.....	13
	Short audits.....	19
	Building regulation consultations and other fire safety activity.....	19

1 Key facts

This release presents statistics which cover the financial year 2017/18 (1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018) for fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England. The results show:

Fire prevention:

- Overall, the number of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) that FRSs and their partners carry out have been on a **downward trend** except for a small increase between 2015/16 and 2016/17. In 2017/18, **FRSs completed 576,040 HFSCs**. This was a two per cent decrease compared with the previous year (590,198 in 2016/17) and 26 per cent fewer than in 2010/11 (775,019). **Partners carried out 24,248 HFSCs**, which was nine per cent fewer compared with 2016/17 (26,677) and 52 per cent fewer compared with 2010/11 (50,105).
- Although the number of HFSCs has been declining, the number of **targeted visits has fluctuated in number** but steadily **increased as a proportion of all HFSCs**. Of the 576,040 HFSCs completed in 2017/18, 54 per cent were targeted towards the elderly and 25 per cent were targeted towards the disabled.
- Overall, since 2010/11, the number of campaigns and initiatives and hours spent on campaigns and initiatives show **no clear trend and appear to fluctuate year on year**. In 2017/18 FRSs completed **140,560 campaigns and initiatives visits** which was a four per cent decrease compared with 2016/17 (145,689) and 11 per cent fewer compared with 2010/11 (157,636).

Fire protection:

- There has been a **general decline in the number of fire safety audits that FRSs complete** however this **figure has fluctuated** over some years. FRSs carried out **49,423 fire safety audits in 2017/18**, which accounted for three per cent of premises known to the authorities and was nine per cent fewer than in 2016/17 (54,247, 4% of premises) and 42 per cent fewer than in 2010/11 (84,575, 5% of premises).
- Against the background of generally declining numbers of fire safety audits was a **doubling of audits on purpose built flats of four or more storeys from 3,097 in 2016/17 to 6,586 in 2017/18** (an increase of 113%).
- In 2017/18 the **majority (68%) of fire safety audits were rated satisfactory**, the same as the previous year. However, the proportion of fire safety audits on purpose built flats of four storeys or more that were deemed satisfactory fell from 78 per cent in 2016/17 to 69 per cent in 2017/18.
- In 2017/18 the highest proportion of fire safety audits were carried out on **shop premises** (16% or 7,871), followed by **purpose built flats of four or more storeys** (13% or 6,586) and **care homes** (12% or 5,890).

2 Introduction

In order to improve the clarity of the Home Office's fire statistics, some of the previous releases have been replaced by more topic-focussed publications. This is the second year of the new publication schedule. This release brings together statistics on fire prevention and protection which were previously released in the [Fire and rescue authorities: operational statistics bulletin for England 2015 to 2016](#) and Fire Statistics England.¹ This publication covers smoke alarm ownership, Home Fire Safety Checks, campaigns and initiatives undertaken by fire and rescue services, fire safety audits and building regulation consultations.

[Fire and rescue workforce and pension statistics: England, April 2017 to March 2018](#) is published on the same day as this release. Also previously part of the operational statistics bulletin, this includes statistics on total workforce and leavers, workforce diversity, firefighter health and safety and firefighter pensions.

Information on prevention and protection activity is recorded by individual fire and rescue services (FRSs) and provided annually to the Home Office through a manual collection via excel spreadsheets.

Data from the [English Housing Survey](#) on smoke alarm ownership are also presented here.

This publication is accompanied by reference data tables. All fire statistics tables can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables

The following tables have been produced as part of this publication:

Fire prevention and protection [1201, 1202 and 1203 and the supporting table 1204.](#)

¹ Fire Statistics: England has been replaced by Detailed analysis of fires attended by fire and rescue services, England. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/detailed-analysis-of-fires-attended-by-fire-and-rescue-services-england-april-2017-to-march-2018>

3 Fire prevention

Fire and rescue services (FRSs) undertake prevention activities which provide information and advice and aim to encourage fire safety behaviours, educate people on the steps to be taken to prevent the occurrence of a fire and increase the survivability when involved in a fire. This section focuses on smoke alarm ownership, Home Fire Safety Checks (also known as Home Fire Risk Checks), and campaigns and initiatives.

Smoke alarm ownership

Box 1: Smoke alarm ownership data collection

Data on the proportion of households with a smoke alarm have been collected since the 1980s from a variety of sources and data on ownership of a **working** smoke alarm have been collected from 2001. Since 2008/09 the English Housing Survey² (EHS) has been the primary source of information on smoke alarm ownership. The exact questions asked change each year but have previously included ownership of a smoke alarm, ownership of a working smoke alarm, smoke alarm testing habits and carbon monoxide alarm ownership.

Data on smoke alarm ownership for 2016/17 were published in fire statistics table FIRE0701 alongside the [Detailed analysis of fires attended by fire and rescue services, England](#) publication but extended commentary is provided here.³

The latest available data show that in 2016/17, 90 per cent of households owned a **working** smoke alarm, a one percentage point increase compared with 2015/16 and an increase of 14 percentage points since 2001 (the earliest date for which these data are available). In 2016/17, 95 per cent of households reporting owning a smoke alarm: the highest level ever recorded. The five percentage points difference between households owning a smoke alarm and households having a **working** smoke alarm is the same as reported in 2014/15, the last time both questions were asked.⁴

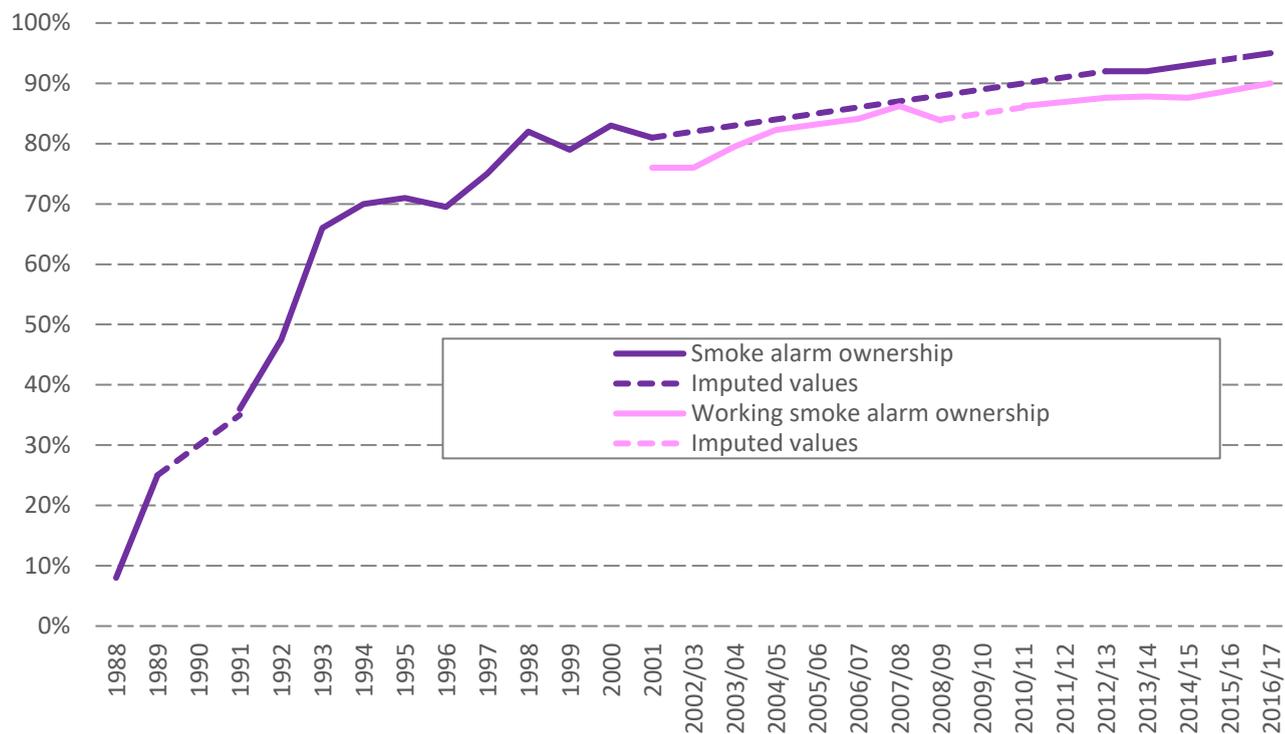
Figure 3.1 shows the sharp increase in smoke alarm ownership which occurred during the 1990s and the steady increase in smoke alarm ownership and **working** smoke alarm ownership thereafter.

² English Housing Survey, MHCLG. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>

³ The next headline figures from the English Housing Survey published by MHCLG are likely to be available in early 2019.

⁴ For more detail on increasing smoke alarm ownership see Home Office (2017) Focus on trends in fires and fire-related fatalities. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/650869/focus-trends-fires-fatalities-oct17.pdf

Figure 3.1 Percentage of households owning a smoke alarm or working smoke alarm, England & Wales or England, 1988 to 2016/17



Source: FIRE0701

Analysis of the EHS data shows that the types of households most likely to own a working smoke alarm are those living in properties built after 1990, those who are social renters (both local authority and housing association renters), and those households made up of couples with children. Private renters are least likely to own a working smoke alarm⁵ however we would expect to see coverage increase in this group in future as, since 1 October 2015, private sector landlords are required to provide smoke alarms in properties they let and test them on the first day of each new tenancy.⁶

Information about all incidents attended by FRs are recorded on the Home Office Incident Recording System (IRS) and this includes the presence and operation of smoke alarms at fires. Between 2010/11 and 2016/17, the highest proportion of fatalities occurred when there was no smoke alarm present.⁷

[Further information on smoke alarm ownership can be found in fire data table 0701.](#)

⁵ MHCLG (2018) English Housing Survey: Fire and fire safety, 2016-17. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/724327/Fire_and_Fire_Safety.pdf

⁶ The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1693/contents/made>

⁷ For more detailed information on the function of smoke alarms in fires recorded by the IRS please see the statistical release: Detailed analysis of fires attended by fire and rescue services, England, April 2017 to March 2018. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/detailed-analysis-of-fires-attended-by-fire-and-rescue-services-england-april-2017-to-march-2018>

FRS prevention work

FRSs have been conducting fire prevention work for a number of years and in a number of different areas. This work became a statutory duty for FRSs in 2004 with the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Services Act.⁸ Typical activities include: Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs), arson prevention, promotional work with young people and other vulnerable groups as well as other campaigns and initiatives.

It should be noted that FRSs carry out a wide range of prevention and protection activities and it is likely that data collected by the Home Office do not capture the breadth of all preventative activities that they undertake, e.g. road safety or water safety awareness campaigns, depending on local need.

Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs)

HFSCs are often targeted towards the more vulnerable members of the community, including older people and those with disabilities, and aim to offer bespoke fire safety advice based on their household and lifestyle which can mitigate the risk of fire. These visits can result in the installation of smoke alarms and safety recommendations such as moving/removing furniture which may be hazardous.⁹ Many FRSs now conduct HFSCs as part of a wider Safe and Well Visit, which can cover additional factors such as falls risk assessment, smoking cessation, cold homes and fuel poverty and a range of other health and community issues depending on local arrangements.

The Home Office collects data on the number of HFSCs that FRSs carry out and the number of personnel hours spent on them. At a national level, the number of HFSCs that FRSs complete has generally been declining since 2010/11, when records began. There was a slight increase between 2015/16 and 2016/17 but a return to the downward trend in 2017/18. By contrast, the number of personnel hours spent on HFSCs has increased each year since 2014/15.

Specifically:

- In 2017/18, **FRSs completed 576,040 HFSCs**. This was a two per cent decrease compared with the previous year (590,198 in 2016/17) and 26 per cent fewer than in 2010/11 (775,019).
- The number of personnel hours **FRSs spent on HFSCs in 2017/18 totalled 994,229**, a 13 per cent increase compared with the previous year (881,291 in 2016/17) and one per cent more than in 2010/11 (984,787).
- The **average personnel time spent on an HFSC was around 1 hour and 44 minutes in 2017/18**, approximately 14 minutes longer than in 2016/17.

⁸ Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents>

⁹ For more detailed definitions, see the Fire Statistics Definitions document. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-guidance>

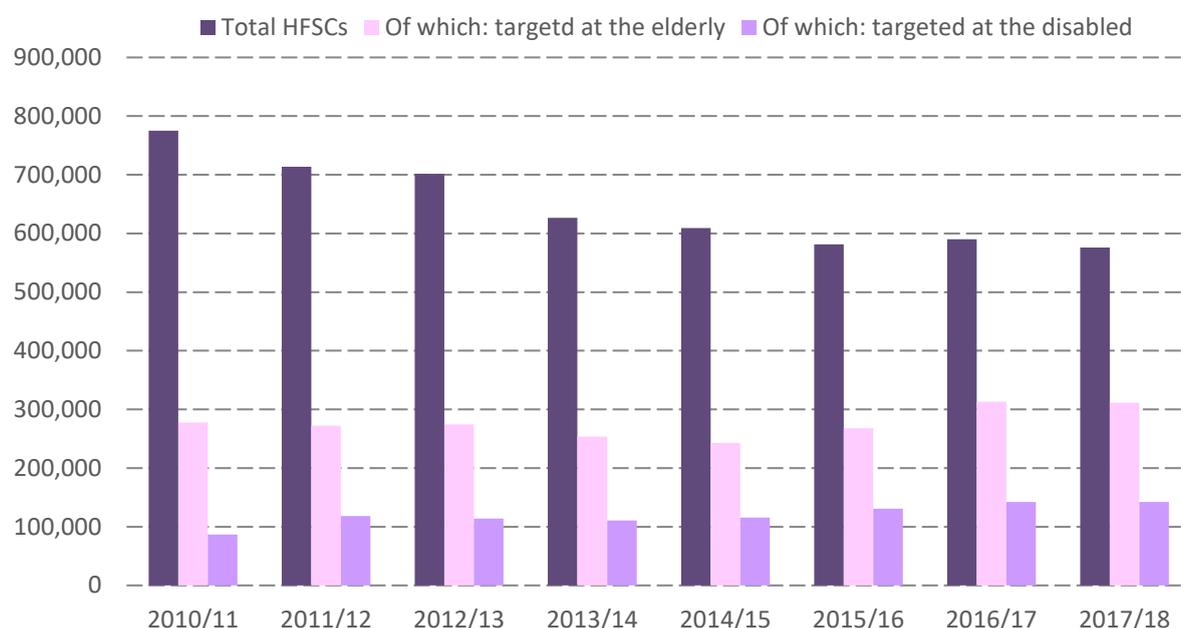
The Home Office also collects data on the number of HFSCs targeted at the elderly (age 65 and over) and the disabled. It should be noted that these two groups are not mutually exclusive; therefore, double counting occurs between categories. A further complication with these subsets is that some FRSs have been moving away from targeting elderly and disabled people *per se* and focussing specifically on those who have vulnerabilities associated with surviving fires (i.e. many elderly and registered disabled people do not have mobility or hearing issues, so the target groups have been narrowed beyond these broad categories). Therefore, some FRSs have recorded zero or 'N/A' for these categories, but this does not necessarily mean that they do not target their prevention activities at vulnerable people.

Although overall the number of HFSCs that FRSs undertake has been declining, the number of targeted visits has fluctuated but has generally increased in recent years and has increased as a proportion of all HFSCs every year since 2010/11. In 2017/18, around 311,600 (54%) HFSCs were targeted towards the elderly and around 142,000 (25%) were targeted towards the disabled.

Specifically:

- In 2017/18, FRSs completed **311,588 HFSCs targeted towards the elderly**. This was similar to the previous year (313,130 in 2016/17) but a 11 per cent increase compared with 2010/11 (277,773).
- The **proportion of HFSCs targeted towards the elderly was 54 per cent** in 2017/18. This has increased almost every year since 2010/11, when it was 36 per cent.
- **499,377 personnel hours were spent on HFSCs targeted towards the elderly in 2017/18**. This was a 14 per cent increase since 2016/17 (438,459) and a 46 per cent increase since 2010/11 (342,072).
- In 2017/18, FRSs completed **142,043 HFSCs targeted towards disabled people**, similar to 2016/17 (142,472), but a 64 per cent increase since 2010/11 (86,543).
- A quarter **of HFSCs were targeted towards disabled people** in 2017/18. This has increased in almost every year since 2010/11, when it was 11 per cent.
- In 2017/18, **302,002 personnel hours were spent on HFSCs targeted at the disabled** which was a 21 per cent increase compared with 2016/17 (250,280) and a 168 per cent increase compared with 2010/11 (112,683).

Figure 3.2 Total numbers of HFSCs and targeted HFSCs completed by FRSs, England, 2010/11 to 2017/18



Source: Table FIRE1201

FRSs also work with local external partners who carry out HFSCs on their behalf. Examples of external partners could include social services, the voluntary sector or housing authorities. Overall the number of HFSCs that partners carry out has declined since 2010/11, with some fluctuation year on year.

Specifically:

- In 2017/18 **partners carried out 24,284 HFSCs**, which was nine per cent fewer compared with 2016/17 (26,677) and 52 per cent fewer compared with 2010/11 (50,105). This represents four per cent of all HFSCs carried out in England in 2017/18; the same as for 2016/17 but down slightly from the previous years since 2010/11 where it fluctuated between six and seven per cent.
- Partners spent **23,888 personnel hours completing HFSCs** in 2017/18. This was 13 per cent fewer compared with 2016/17 (27,569) and 44 per cent fewer compared with 2010/11 (42,705).
- In 2017/18 **the average personnel time spent on an HFSC completed by a partner was approximately 59 minutes**. This was approximately three minutes shorter compared with the previous year, however since 2010/11 this figure has fluctuated year on year. This is notably shorter than the average personnel hours spent by FRSs (1 hour 44 minutes in 2017/18).

[Further information on HFSCs, and at individual FRS level, can be found in fire data table 1201.](#)

Campaigns and Initiatives

FRSs undertake a broad range of campaigns and initiatives aimed at preventing fires. The Home Office collects data on the total number of campaigns and initiatives visits and personnel hours and specifically about the following schemes:

- **Fire-setter and anti-social behavioural schemes and other youth diversion** - Youth initiatives designed to tackle and prevent fire-setting behaviour, involving a one-to-one intervention or targeting groups of young people who have been identified as at risk of offending, specifically arson and other youth diversion schemes, such as Local Intervention Fire Education (LIFE).¹⁰
- **Other youth schemes** - Other youth fire safety programmes include information on FRS involvement with schools, including visits to fire stations or school talks.

Some campaigns and initiatives may not directly fit into any one category, therefore the specific schemes that are categorised are not mutually exclusive to each other and double counting may occur. Furthermore, schemes may vary between FRSs. Consequently, the data that are collected are useful as indicative figures on numbers of campaigns and initiative visits however may not be useful for direct comparisons between FRSs or for further analysis.

Home Office statisticians are currently considering the future collection of the 'campaigns and initiatives' information with regards to the burden of collection and the use made of the data given its known limitations. If you regularly use this information then please let us know when and how you use it by contacting us at firestatistics@homeoffice.gov.uk.

Overall since 2010/11 the number of campaigns and initiatives and hours spent on campaigns and initiatives show no clear trend and appear to fluctuate year on year.

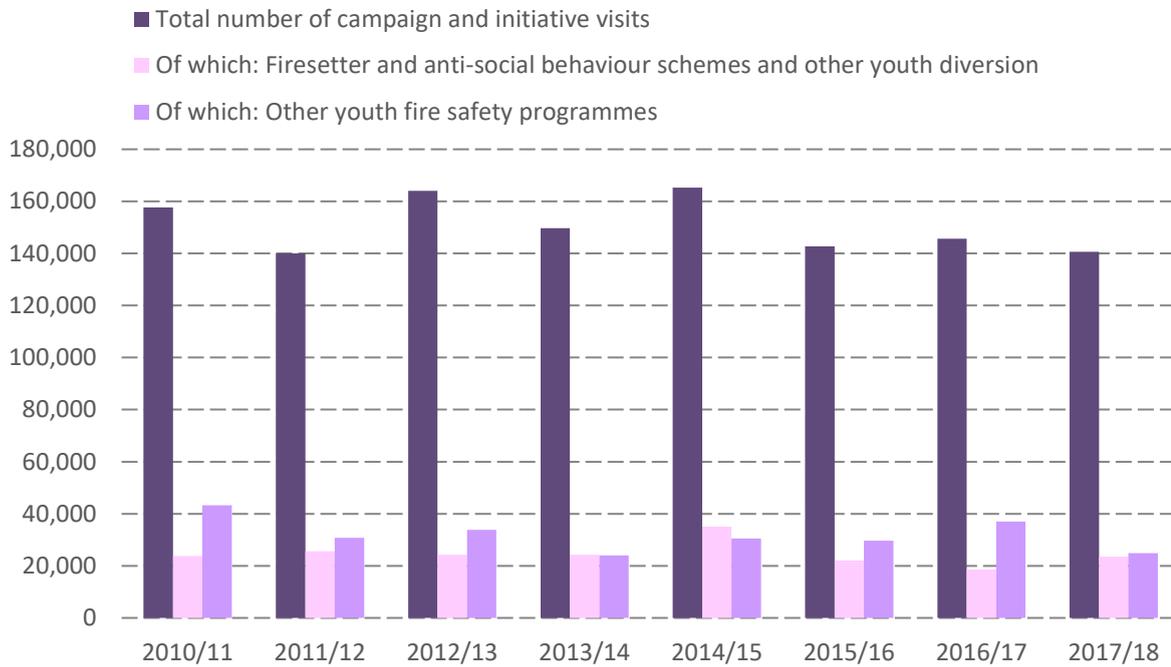
Specifically:

- In 2017/18 FRSs completed **140,560 campaigns and initiative visits**, which was a four per cent decrease compared with 2016/17 (145,689) and 11 per cent fewer compared with 2010/11 (157,636).
- In 2017/18 **625,837 hours were spent by FRSs completing campaigns and initiatives** visits, which was a one per cent increase compared with 2016/17 (618,953) and ten per cent fewer compared with 2010/11 (693,731).
- In 2017/18 the **average personnel time spent on** a campaigns and initiatives visit was approximately **4 hours and 27 minutes**¹¹, similar to that in 2016/17 (4 hours 15 minutes) and 2010/11 (4 hours 24 minutes).

¹⁰Information on LIFE courses available at: <http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/life.asp>.

¹¹ This includes administrative and travel time.

Figure 3.3 Total numbers of fire and rescue service campaigns and initiatives visits and specific campaigns and initiatives visits completed by FRSs, England, 2010/11 to 2017/18



Source: FIRE1203

[Further information on campaigns and initiatives, and at individual FRS level, can be found in fire data table 1203.](#)

4 Fire protection

Fire protection refers to FRS's statutory role in ensuring public safety in the wider built environment and involves auditing and, where necessary, enforcing regulatory compliance, primarily but not exclusively in respect of the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO).¹² This section of the release specifically focuses on fire safety audits, short audits and building regulation consultations.

Fire Safety Audits

Box 2: Details of fire safety audits

A fire safety audit is a planned visit by an FRS to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the level of compliance with the requirements of the FSO in a particular premises. The FSO requires a 'responsible person' for a workplace or premises to which the public have access to carry out and regularly review a fire risk assessment to ensure that the general fire precautions are adequate and appropriate, to reduce the risk from fire to employees and other relevant persons to as low as reasonably practicable. The FSO applies to the majority of non-domestic premises and the communal areas in residential buildings.

It is a matter for FRSs to determine how many audits they carry out per year but they must have a locally determined risk-based inspection programme and management strategy in place for enforcing the FSO.

Number of fire safety audits

Data collected by the Home Office for 2017/18 from FRSs shows that since 2010/11 there has been a general decline in the number of fire safety audits that FRSs complete with 42 per cent fewer completed in 2017/18 compared with 2010/11.

It is expected that the number of audits on different premises types in individual FRSs, and the personnel hours spent on them, will vary from year to year depending on the local need, targeting strategies and the complexity of the specific buildings being audited. However, at the national level, certain patterns have remained relatively stable. For example, the highest proportion of fire safety audits were on shop premises for all years on record between 2011/12 and 2017/18.¹³

The total number of fire safety audits conducted in England fell by nine per cent from 54,247 in 2016/17 to 49,423 in 2017/18, while the total personnel hours spent on them (including administration time) fell by 14 per cent over the same period.

Following the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017¹⁴, many Fire and Rescue Authorities reported in their fire safety data collection returns (see FIRE1204) changing their fire protection activities to increase focus on purpose built flats (see fire statistics table FIRE1204). Against

¹² The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1541/contents/made>

¹³ These data were not published for the year 2015/16.

¹⁴ June 2017 was at the end of the first quarter of the recording period of the financial year 2017/18.

the background of generally declining numbers of fire safety audits there was a doubling of audits on purpose built flats of four or more storeys from 3,097 in 2016/17 to 6,586 in 2017/18 (an increase of 113%). In 2016/17, purpose built flats of four or more storeys ranked 8th for fire safety audits and accounted for 6% of all audits but this proportion increased to 13 percent, ranking second in 2017/18 (Figure 4.1).

Specifically:

- FRSs carried out **49,423 fire safety audits** in 2017/18, which accounted for three per cent of premises known to the authorities.¹⁵ This total was nine per cent fewer than in 2016/17 (54,247, 4% of premises) and 42 per cent fewer than in 2010/11 (84,575, 5% of premises).
- In 2017/18 the **highest proportion** of fire safety audits were carried out on **shop premises** (16% or 7,871), followed by purpose built flats of four or more storeys (13% or 6,586), care homes (12% or 5,890) and licensed premises (11% or 5,243).
- Looking at these **top four ranking premises**, in 2017/18, FRSs carried out fire safety audits on 19 per cent of the care homes and 16 per cent of the purpose built flats of 4 or more storeys known to them, compared with only two per cent of shops and five per cent of licensed premises known to them.
- While the **total personnel hours spent on fire safety audits** decreased by 14 per cent from around 245,072 in 2016/17 to around 211,375 hours in 2017/18, the **average personnel hours spent per fire safety audit** decreased by five per cent over the same time, from around 4 hours 31 minutes in 2016/17 to 4 hours 17 minutes in 2017/18.

¹⁵ Premises known to authorities are the number of relevant premises known to the enforcing authority and listed in its fire safety database.

Figure 4.1 Total number of fire safety audits by FRSs, by type of building, England, 2016/17 and 2017/18 (ordered by 2017/18 figures)

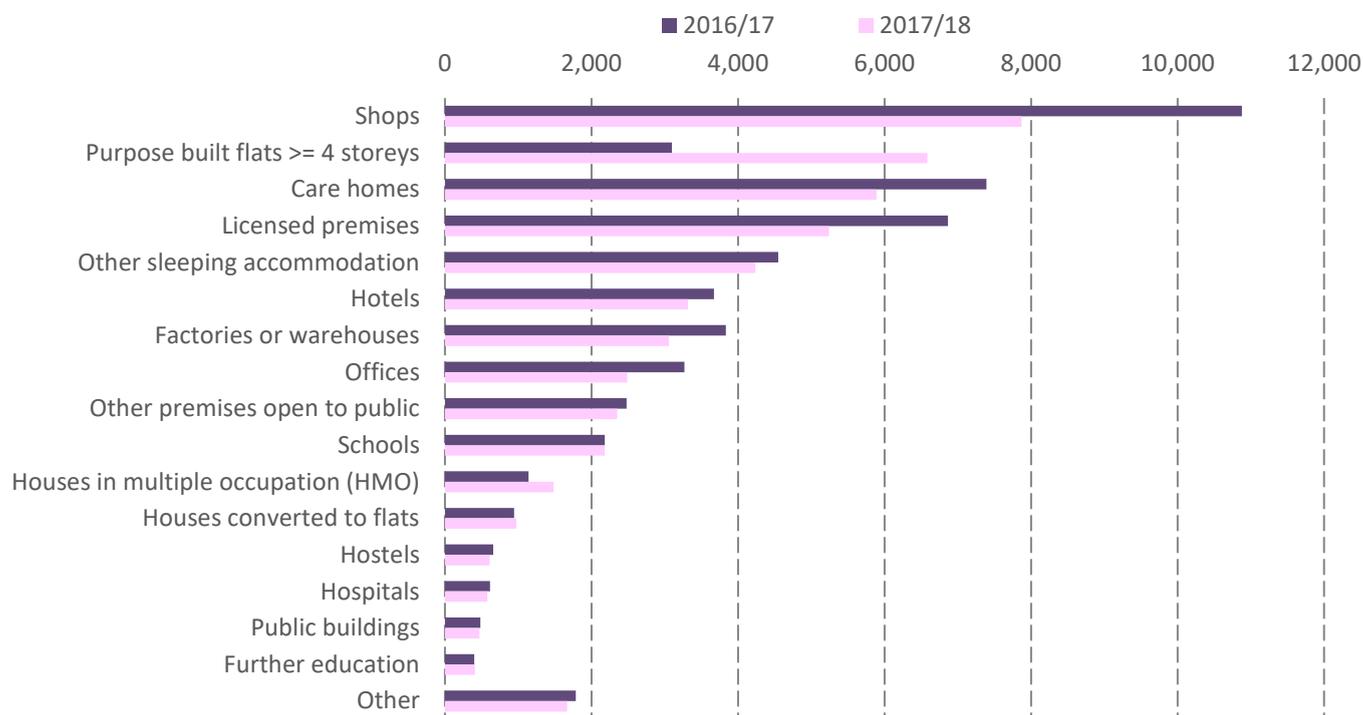
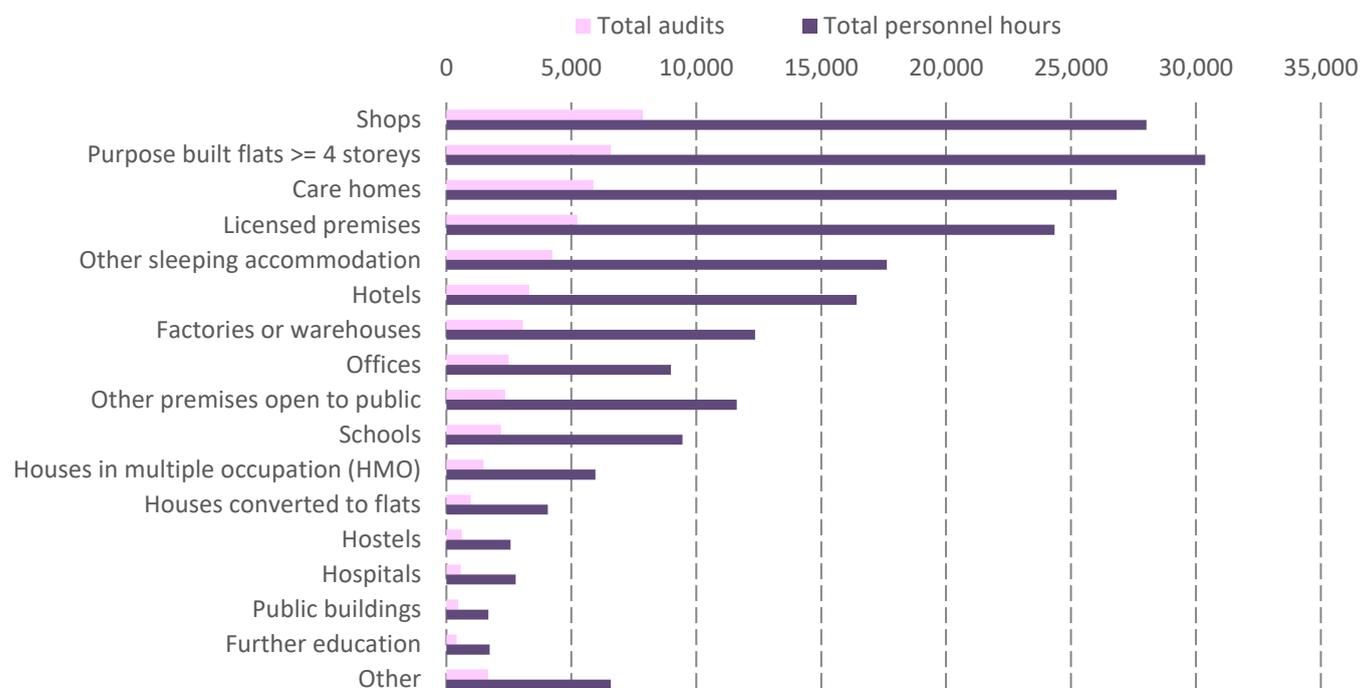


Figure 4.2 Total number and number of personnel hours spent on fire safety audits by FRSs, by type of building, England, 2017/18 (ordered by number of audits)



Source: FIRE1204

Outcome of fire safety audits

When a fire safety audit is completed the result is categorised as either satisfactory, when no further action is taken, or unsatisfactory, when the responsible person is non-compliant with the FSO. When an outcome is unsatisfactory and the risk to relevant persons is not significant and the responsible person is willing to comply, agreed action plans known as informal notifications may be issued instead of formal enforcement notice procedures.

Formal notifications are issued in the most serious of cases where less formal action has failed to resolve issues of non-compliance. These are categorised within the FSO as:

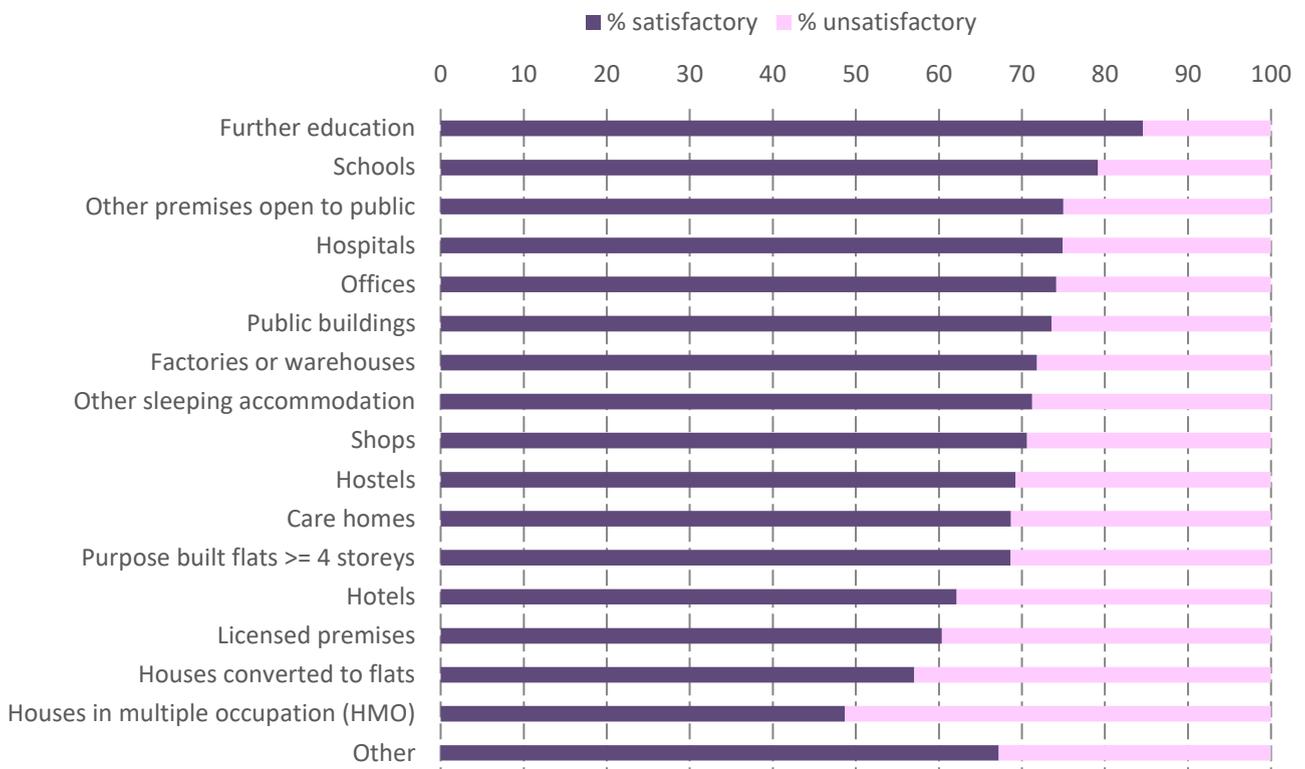
Box 3: Details of formal notifications	
Enforcement notices (Article 30)	These are served if the enforcing authority is of the opinion that the responsible person has failed to comply with any provision of the FSO or of any regulations made under it.
Prohibition notices (Article 31)	These are served on the responsible person or any other person, if the enforcing authority is of the opinion that use of premises involves or will involve a risk to relevant persons so serious that use of the premises ought to be prohibited or restricted.
Alteration notices (Article 29)	These are served on the responsible person if the enforcing authority is of the opinion that the premises constitutes a serious risk to relevant persons (whether due to the features of the premises, their use, any hazard present, or any other circumstances); or may constitute such a risk if a change is made to them or the use to which they are put.
Prosecutions (Article 32)	These are the number of convictions for failure to comply with an alteration, enforcement or prohibition notice, or any other matter for which it is an offence under Article 32.

In 2017/18 the majority (around 33,900 or 68%) of fire safety audits were satisfactory and the remainder (around 15,600, 32%) were unsatisfactory. These proportions were similar to the previous two years, following a period of increase in the proportion of audits deemed satisfactory from a low of 56 per cent in 2010/11. Notable against this background of recent stability is a decrease in the proportion of fire safety audits on purpose built flats of four storeys or more that were deemed satisfactory, from 78 per cent in 2016/17 to 69 per cent in 2017/18.

Specifically:

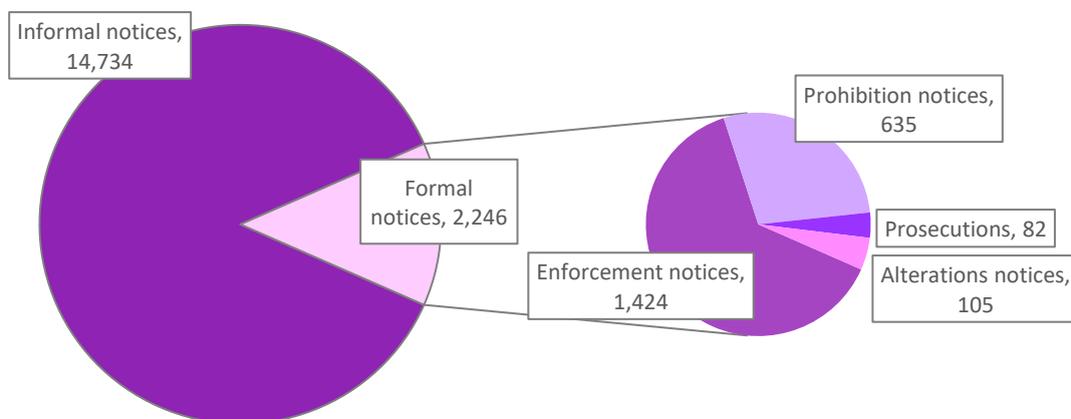
- In 2017/18 there were 49,423 fire safety audits and **33,851 (68%) were deemed satisfactory**. This compares with 54,247 audits in 2016/17, of which 37,096 (68%) were deemed satisfactory.
- There were 15,572 unsatisfactory fire safety audits in 2017/18 and this resulted in **14,734 informal notifications** (compared with 17,151 unsatisfactory fire safety audits and 14,200 informal notifications in 2016/17).
- For purpose built flats of four or more storeys, in 2017/18 there were 6,586 fire safety audits of which **4,521 (69%) were deemed satisfactory**. This compares with 3,097 audits in 2016/17, of which 2,431 (78%) were deemed satisfactory.
- The premises type with the **lowest proportion of audits deemed satisfactory** in 2017/18 was houses in multiple occupation (HMO), where there were 1,483 audits of which 722 (49%) were deemed satisfactory (Figure 4.3).
- While the **average personnel hours spent per fire safety audit decreased by five per cent** from around 4 hours 31 minutes in 2016/17 to around 4 hours 17 minutes in 2017/18, the **average hours per satisfactory audit decreased by 11 percent** (from around 4 hours to around 3 hours 34 minutes) but **increased for unsatisfactory audits by three per cent** (from around 5 hours 38 minutes to around 5 hours 50 minutes) over the same time period.
- While the **average personnel hours spent per fire safety audit on purpose built flats of four or more storeys** decreased by four percent from around 4 hours 48 minutes in 2016/17 to around 4 hours 37 minutes in 2017/18, the average hours per satisfactory audit decreased by 15 percent (from around 4 hours 27 minutes to around 3 hours 46 minutes) but increased for unsatisfactory audits by six per cent (from around 6 hours 4 minutes to around 6 hours 27 minutes) over the same time period.
- There were **2,246 formal notices** issued in 2017/18 (compared with 2,025 in 2016/17), comprising **1,424 enforcement notices, 635 prohibition notices, 105 alteration notices** and **82 prosecutions** (Figure 4.4).
- In 2017/18, the most common article of non-compliance to the FSO resulting in action of any type (excluding prosecutions) in England was **Article 14 (Emergency route and exits)** accounting for **7,365 instances (14%)** of non-compliance.
- In 2017/18, **3,500** premises were reported as **satisfactory following enforcement action**.

Figure 4.3 Proportion of fire safety audits deemed satisfactory or unsatisfactory by type of building, England, 2017/18 (ordered by per cent satisfactory)



Source: FIRE1204

Figure 4.4 Fire safety notices resulting from unsatisfactory fire safety audits (informal and formal) issued in England, 2017/18



Source: FIRE1202

Short Audits (experimental statistics)

Since 2016 FRSs have had the option of using the short audit form, designed by the sector¹⁶ to support the principles of better regulation and allow FRSs to focus their enforcement resources more effectively on higher risk premises. Increased use of this format may partly explain the 11 per cent decrease in average personnel hours per fire safety audit deemed satisfactory from 2016/17 to 2017/18, while the average personnel hours per audit deemed unsatisfactory increased by three percent over the same period. However, these changes are not consistent across all premises types.

In 2016/17, for the first time, the Home Office collected data from FRSs on the number of these short audits that they complete. The data were collected on a voluntary basis and were only indicative of the national picture as only eleven out of 45 FRSs provided data. In 2017/18, Home Office made this collection mandatory and received short audit figures from 22 FRSs.¹⁷ Due to the small number of responses the immaturity of the data collection, these figures are considered experimental statistics at present. Experimental statistics are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage. Collecting data on the number of short audits enables greater understanding of the protection work that FRSs undertake.

- In 2017/18, the 22 FRSs that provided data carried out **7,564 short audits**. This represents **30 per cent** of the total number of audits that were completed by these 22 FRSs who provided data. The premises type with the highest number of short audits recorded (18% or 1,332) were **shops**, followed by **care homes (17% or 1,286)**.

[Further information on fire safety audits, and for individual FRSs, can be found in fire data tables 1202 and 1204.](#)

Building regulation consultations and other fire safety activity

FRSs also provide data on the number of consultations received under Building Regulations; and any other fire safety activities they undertake to support business understanding of, and compliance with, the FSO.

Building regulation consultations are statutory consultations with FRSs by building control bodies under articles 45 and 46 of the FSO.

- In 2017/18 FRSs carried out **52,834 building regulation consultations**, with a total of **98,846 personnel hours**. This was a three per cent increase in the number of building regulation consultations compared with 2016/17 (51,259).
- Within the three per cent overall increase in building regulation consultations, the greatest increase for an individual building type (excluding 'other') was for purpose built flats of four or more storeys, with an increase of 19 per cent from 1,857 in 2016/17 to 2,210 in 2017/18.

¹⁶ Chief Fire Officers Association's short audit form. Available at: <http://www.cfoa.org.uk/19802>

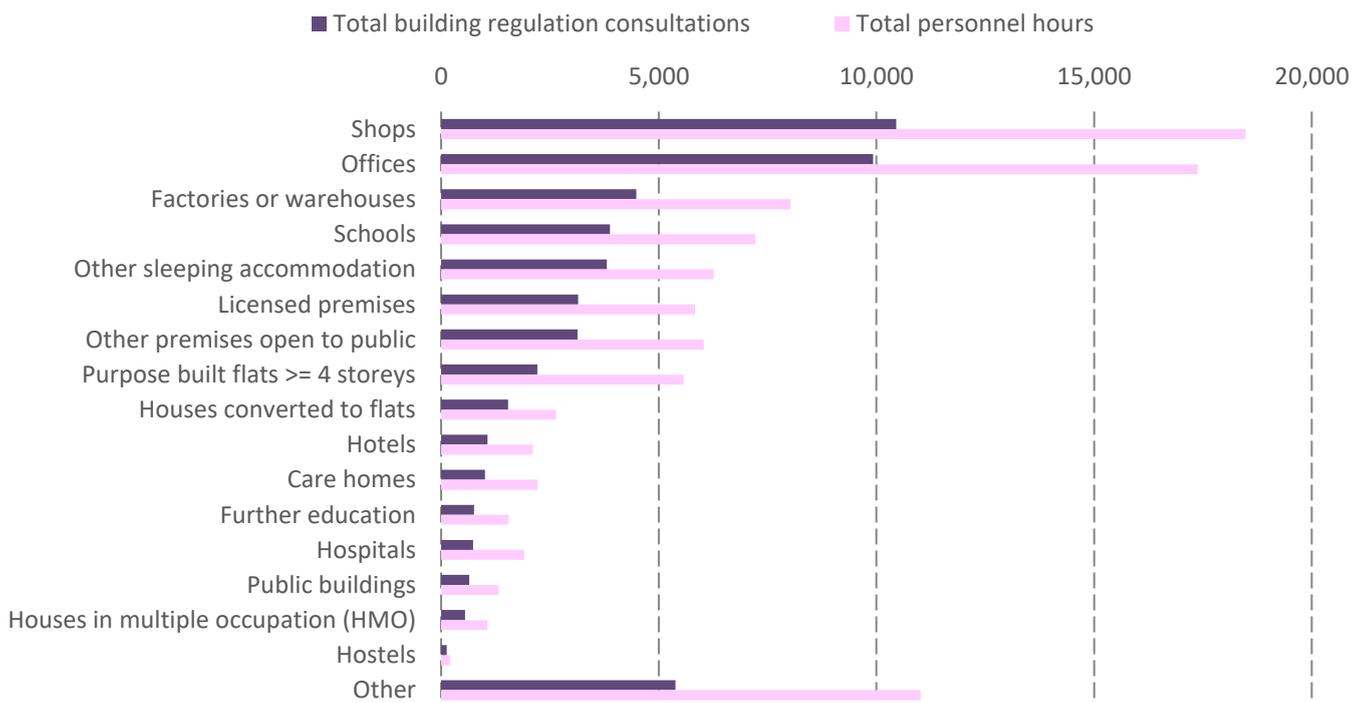
¹⁷ This may be because current IT systems are unable to capture information on short audits or that the FRS does not currently undertake short audits.

- Similarly to fire safety audits, the highest proportion of building regulation consultations in 2017/18 were on shops (20% or 10,452) however purpose built flats of four or more storeys accounted for just four per cent of the total. Figure 4.5 shows greater detail of the number of building regulation consultations.

Other fire safety activities include those generated by requests from others, i.e. approaches from other agencies or bodies, the public, and business representatives as well as any FSO related promotional/awareness raising activities generated within the FRS. These activities are not statutory consultations under the FSO.

- FRSs carried out **68,857 other fire safety activities** in 2017/18 (a decrease of 15% compared with 81,280 in 2016/17), which was a total of **108,868 hours**.¹⁸

Figure 4.5 Total numbers and number of personnel hours spent on Building Regulation consultations completed by FRAs, by type of building, England, 2017/18 (ordered by total consultations)



Source: FIRE1204

[Further information on building regulations and other fire safety activities available in fire table 1204.](#)

¹⁸ Data are also collected on enforcement activities under other legislations: Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 2014/Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR) and Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations 2005/ DSEAR. See FIRE1204 for further details.

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