



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Report title

Unwanted Fire Signal s

(UwFS)

Introduction

The questions that arose from the chair were

- A. Provide information in relation to the number of enforcement notices issued by the service over the last year that then led to a court case
- B. Historic figures for false alarms, and provide information on trends on the various types of false alarms (including how the service has sought to address them, the types of responses and co-operation the service has had from establishments

A. Enforcement – Prosecutions

These figures were supplied from the Regulatory Fire Safety Department (RFS) that covers the Camden area. Between 1st April 2021 to 30th April 2022, LFB issued 18 Enforcement notices. None of these at this time are being processed for legal action. There is only 1 legal process being moved forward in Camden and this is from a previous incident before this date range.

I have only included the figures for Camden. If the Chair or Panel would like information for London as a whole, I can supply these figures.

B. **Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS)**

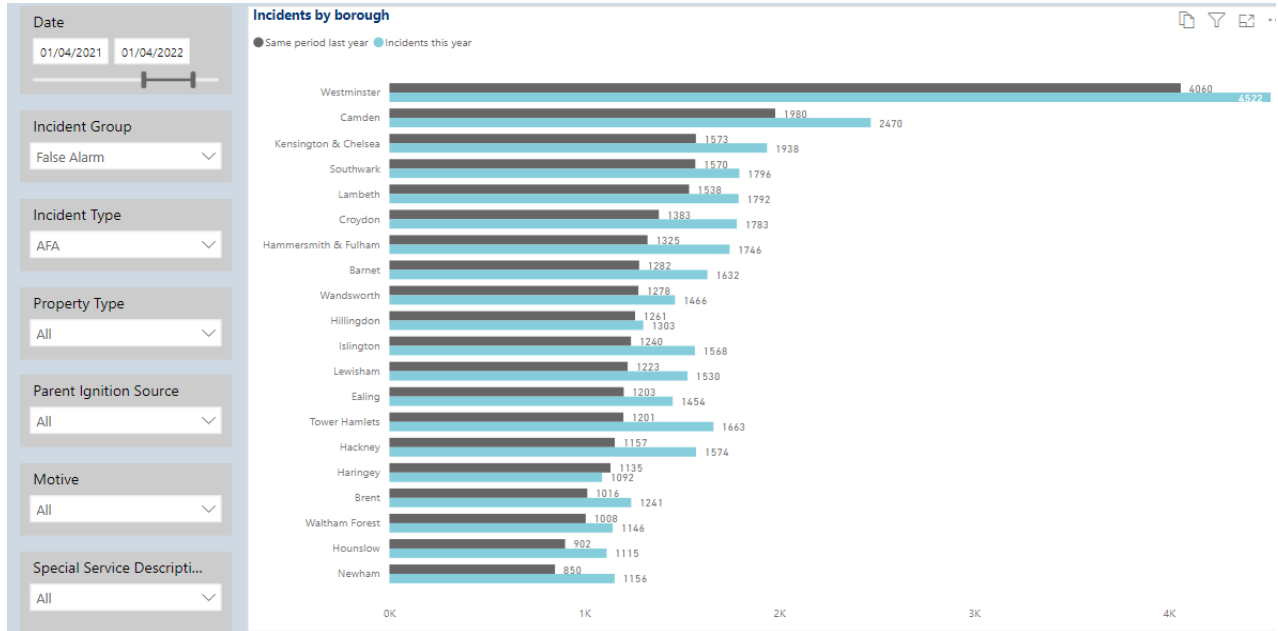
The issue of unwanted fire signals has been ongoing for several years. The London Fire Brigade has been working with its partners to reduce the number of UwFS that are generated from premises protected by fire detection and alarm systems. However, this number continues to rise. The upward trend was reversed during the period of COVID.

If designed, installed, and maintained properly, AFA systems provide early warning in the event of fire and can greatly reduce the risk to life and limit damage to property. Where the use and maintenance of these systems is less than optimal UwFS can occur. In London, the number of UwFS from AFAs has been increasing, which drains our resources responding to incidents of this type.

These figures are taken between 1st April 2021 and 1st April 2022. To give members some background False Alarms are classed into 3 different sub sections. Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA), False Alarm Good Intent, individual has reason to believe there is a fire but on investigation it was something else for example steam. Then there is False Alarm Malicious, an individual calls for an attendance and there is no fire or likely hood of an incident.

In this report we are only looking at AFA and there creation of Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS)

Camden ranks 2nd in the AFA chart for London but to put some context to that we are roughly half of the borough in first. This compares April 2021-2022 to previous 12 months.



Historically there was an individual or team within the Fire Safety section that looked at and worked with partners to reduce the number of UwFS. There was also a method of cost recovery that was trialled. The LFB made the decision to scrap cost recovery and instead focus on working with partners to reduce numbers of attendances.

Within Camden we have watches at every station that look at high volume buildings and then engage with the owners to drive down UwFS. Looking at building we are frequently called to. These may be public buildings our partners are responsible for or privately owned

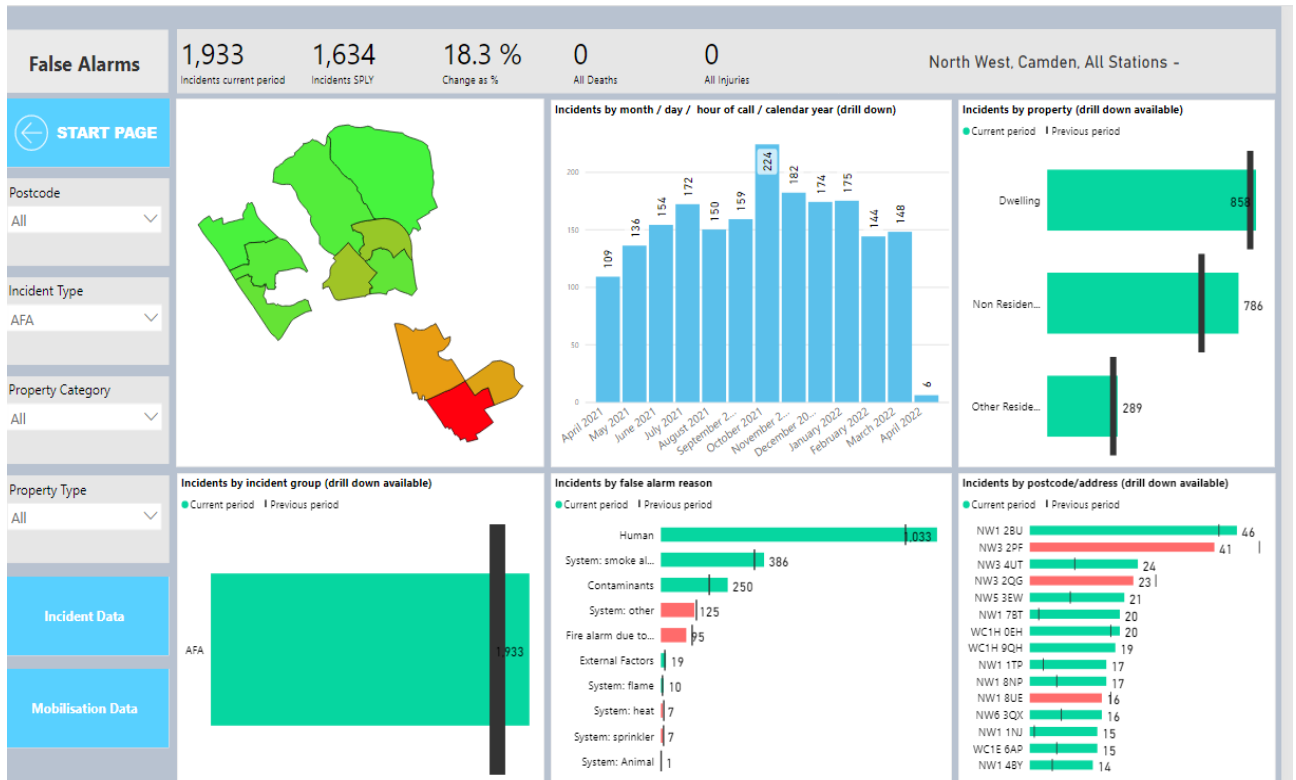
The role of the teams is to ensure engagement with persistent offenders and their operations teams; for example, West Hampstead Fire station has a high offender, Royal Free Hospital. This engagement, education and relationship building ensures that guidance and understanding of the operational and financial impact of these calls is given. It also provides the opportunity to reduce calls due to better housekeeping.

We work in conjunction with control staff to understand what the call filtering criteria is and how that impacts our effectiveness.

C. Camden

In Camden we have a high number of incidents that are AFAs. You will see from above how we address them. In this section we look at trends and the reduction work we have completed over the previous years.

Trends in Camden



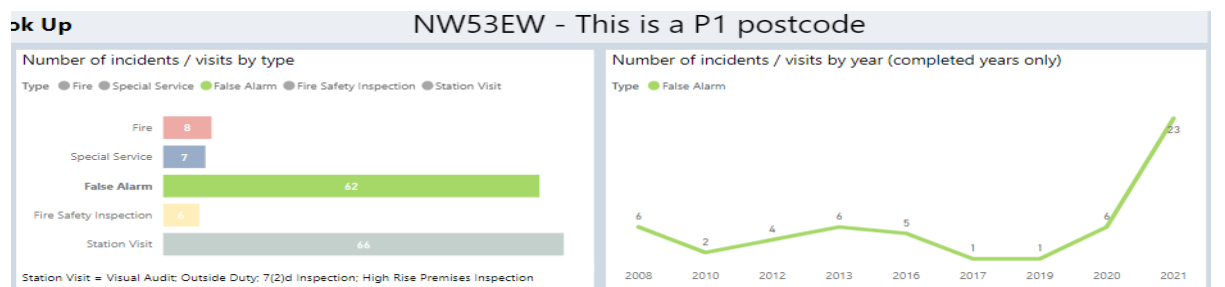
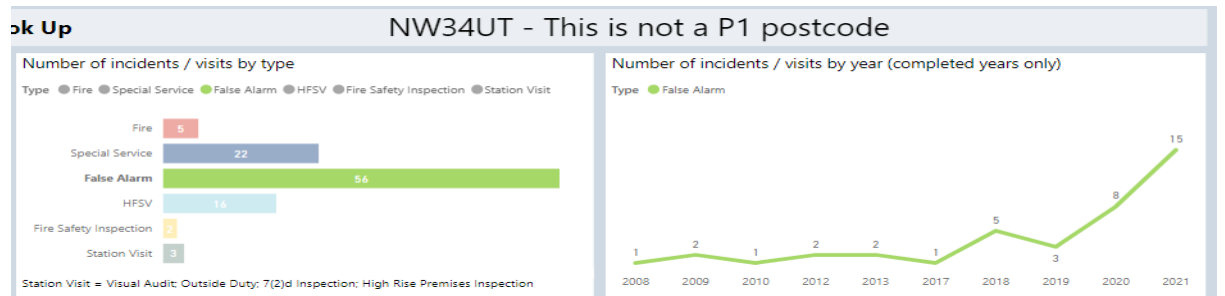
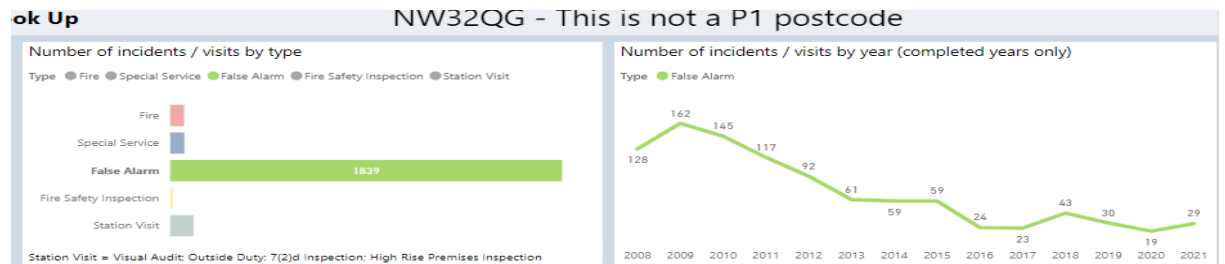
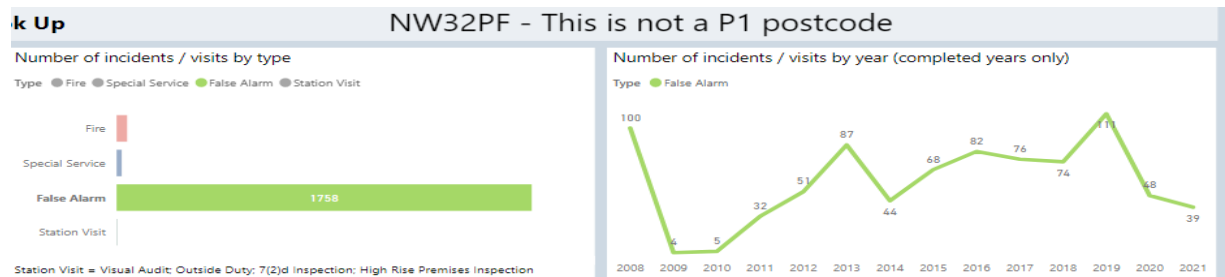
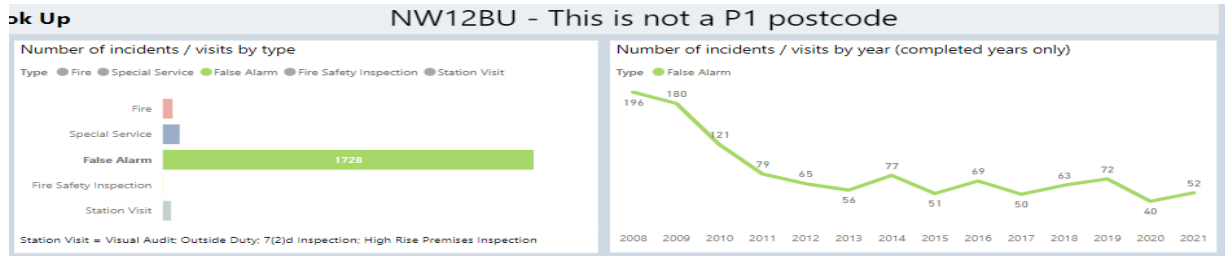
(In this table red isn't bad and green good. These colours dictate the performance against previous years.)

This covers the period April 2021-April 2022. You can see the largest amount are caused by a human. This covers a multitude of possibilities but is broadly around an individual operating an alarm or by omission setting off the alarm smoking/cooking.

You can also see from these figures that the highest amount are in Dwellings, individual private homes, there is a spike in that there are more people at home, but it demonstrates that addressing the problem becomes more complex as this involves engaging with a landlord. We will see later in this report that although Dwellings provide a high number of incidents they are spread over a large geographic area and therefore rarely make it into the top 10 of AFAs. This means that the devoted watches within Camden rarely address these buildings.

Top 5 Offenders in Camden 2021-2022

If we look at the worst 5 Offenders in the time period above, we can see the success we have had in reducing number and how we with joint working have addressed the high-risk buildings.



You can see from these 5 charts of the worst offenders. It should be no surprise that 1,2 and 3 are the UCH and Royal Free, Royal Free has 2 postcodes for different parts of the site, you can also see that overall, it is a downward trend from almost 200 a year down to 50.

This is in part to the overall work completed by crews in engagement with staff to improve the housekeeping and training of staff.

No 4 and 5 a residential premises and a commercial/industrial site. We can see in No4, residential, that there have been consistent low numbers then a large spike, this is driven by individuals in their own homes. As you will see we have conducted more visits there and we are seeing in this financial year a return to normal levels.

For building No 5 again a large spike in numbers with an increase in station visits. The spike was caused by a new tenant moving in with a different manufacturing process. With engagement with crews the numbers so far this year are returning to normal levels and the new tenant has had no AFA since April 2022.

Conclusion

Overall False Alarms still contribute many attendances but as the LFB in Camden we are taking measures to reduce to zero the number of alarms. We challenge ourselves to reduce AFAs and in large public premises, hospitals, universities we have made significant progress over several years.

The challenge going forward is to reduce the AFA in dwellings. This is a big challenge due to these buildings consisting of multiple "single private dwellings" but working with landlords we should hopefully work together to reduce UwFS.

I submit this update to the panel
Mark Davidson

BC LFB Camden