



Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service

Strategic Assessment of Risk

2024 - 2026



Produced by:



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2 Suffolk Fire and Rescue Values

Our Values are the qualities that we believe are the most important to us and describe the expectations the public have of us and that we have of each other.

We use them every day to influence how we work to achieve our priorities and guide the professional behaviours that we expect from our staff.



Wellbeing – We look after ourselves each other and the planet

Equality – Respecting, valuing, embracing and celebrating everyone’s unique differences.

Achieve – We are the best we can be

Support – We work as one team

Pride – We are passionate about making a positive difference to the people and place of Suffolk.

Innovate – We believe in making every penny count and every minute matter and reducing the environmental impact.

Respect – We give and earn respect

Empower – We empower, encourage and motivate.

Our Culture and Behaviours

To make sure we do our very best every day, we need to continue to build a workplace that represents our community and ensures everyone who comes to work enjoys their time with us.

Whilst this isn’t always easy to achieve, if we have a happy workforce that is empowered, supported, respected and listened to, we will achieve our goals through innovation and have pride in everything we do.

To help us deliver an excellent service we should work within our WE ASPIRE values and follow the NFCC Code of Ethics. Both give clear expectations we must follow to make sure we improve diversity and make sure everyone enjoys coming to work every day.



National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Core Code of Ethics

The National Core Code of Ethics for fire and rescue services has been developed in partnership with the NFCC, Local Government Association (LGA), and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), to support a consistent approach to ethic. It helps to improve the organisational culture and workforce diversity of fire services across the country.



Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)

The primary role of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is to deliver effective prevention, protection and emergency response services. SFRS provides emergency services to the communities of Suffolk and its visitors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The work SFRS undertakes to reduce fires and fire-related deaths and injuries is a major contribution to reducing risk in the community and making Suffolk safer.

One of SFRS's main ambitions is that Suffolk continues to be '**a place where people live safe and fulfilling lives**'. Multiple factors, both national and local, influence what the SFRS does.

The 2018 [National Framework Document](#) for fire and rescue services sets out the Government's expectations. This framework, together with the fire service's statutory responsibilities, plays an important role in what the service does. The document notes the crucial role fire and rescue services play in making communities safer, whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks, or responding swiftly and effectively to the incidents and emergencies that occur¹.

The national framework document notes the significant decreases in the number of fires over the last decade, indicative that as a society we are becoming safer than ever from the risk and consequences of fire. However, at the same time fire and rescue services nationally have been responding to a growing number of non-fire incidents. Therefore, collaboration should be at the heart of how services operate, so that services can work with, or on behalf of, local providers to deliver a range of public safety activity. This should protect local communities where it is in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness for them to do so. The report notes that such activity must not be at the expense of core functions around prevention, protection and response.

In 2016, the Home Office outlined an ambitious programme of reform which is being delivered by the fire and rescue sector to support continuous improvement, enable more accountability, and continue to build on the successes achieved in prevention and collaboration. The 2018 revision of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England sought to embed these reforms, as well as continuing to provide an overall strategic direction to fire and rescue authorities across England. **However, it is to local communities, not government, that fire and rescue authorities are accountable.**

At a local level the [Suffolk Community Strategy 'Transforming Suffolk' 2008 to 2028](#) sets out how local authorities in the county, including Suffolk County Council (SCC) and SFRS, along with the police, health partners and other agencies will tackle the challenges and opportunities facing Suffolk between now and 2028².

As part of SCC, SFRS supports the larger organisation with working towards achieving the overarching objectives, shown in [Suffolk County Council corporate strategy for 2022 to 2026](#)³. These objectives are:

- Promoting and supporting the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk.
- Strengthening Suffolk's economy.
- Protecting and enhancing Suffolk's environment.
- Providing value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer.

The views of the community have a clear impact on the direction of SFRS. These views are captured through the consultation that supports the Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) process.

National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC)

The [National Fire Chiefs' Council \(NFCC\)](#)⁴ is the professional voice of the UK fire and rescue service, and Operates under the following [core code of ethics](#)⁵:

1. Putting our communities first – we put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.
2. Integrity – we act with integrity, including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.
3. Dignity and respect – making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.
4. Leadership – we are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexibility and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.
5. Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) – We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI both within the FRSs and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.

Executive summary

“Every fire and rescue authority must assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect their communities, whether they are local, cross-border, multi-authority and/or national in nature from fires to terrorist attacks. Regard must be had to Community Risk Registers produced by Local Resilience Forums and any other local risk analyses as appropriate”¹.

*“Fire and rescue authorities **must** put in place arrangements to prevent and mitigate these risks, either through adjusting existing provision, effective collaboration and partnership working, or building new capability. Fire and rescue authorities should work through the Strategic Resilience Board where appropriate when determining what arrangements to put in place”¹.*

- Suffolk is a large county covering approximately 1,466 square miles, mainly comprised of low-lying arable land with the wetlands of the Broads in the north east, the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the east, and the sandy heathlands of Breckland in the north west.
- Suffolk has a mix of vibrant market towns and includes Britain’s biggest and busiest seaport in Felixstowe. It is served by two international airports located outside the county and has many road and rail network links. There is also a significant military air force presence in terms of two large US Air Force bases in Forest Heath in Suffolk ([Lakenheath](#) and [Mildenhall](#)).
- SFRS runs 35 Fire Stations comprised of 4 wholetime shift stations, 29 on-call stations and 2 wholetime day-crewed stations. There is also the County Day Crewing Team - a watch of Wholetime Firefighters providing Fire Cover across the On-Call and Wholetime stations of Suffolk. Together these serve the population of Suffolk, which is estimated to number 776,442 people. There were 5,449 emergency service incidents in 2020/21.
- The [Suffolk Resilience Forum \(SRF\)](#) is a multi-agency group that provides strategic, tactical and operational guidance and support in relation on planning for a multi-agency response to a major incident. The forum consists of a number of different agencies and organisations, who all have the common aim of ensuring that Suffolk is prepared for emergencies. This includes SFRS, as a category 1 responder.

Place and people

- Suffolk is made up of five districts and boroughs; East Suffolk being the local authority with the largest population at an estimated 247,100 residents, Babergh has the lowest population (an estimated 95,872 residents).
- Suffolk has a higher percentage of adults aged 65 and over compared to national figures, and population forecasts indicate the proportion of people aged 65 and over is estimated to increase (see future demand section below).
- Life expectancy at birth in Suffolk for both males and females is statistically significantly higher compared to nationally.
- 2022 Annual Population Survey (APS) data indicates that 14% of the adult population, 18 years or over, in Suffolk smoke, a statistically similar proportion to both the East of England (13.2%) and England (12.7%). All districts across Suffolk had a statistically similar prevalence of smoking in adults (18 or over) with Babergh showing the highest prevalence and Mid Suffolk showing the lowest.
- 2020/21 data showed a lower number (205) of Road Traffic Collisions compared to previous years, which appears to have been a positive impact of the pandemic. Unfortunately, recent years have seen the numbers restored to the levels of earlier years (322 in 2022/23 and 318 in 2023/24).

Specific risks

- Suffolk is rural in nature, and access to certain areas can be challenging.
- Some properties such as thatched and heritage properties in Suffolk have a higher risk of fire and vulnerability compared to others.
- Blocks of flats in the county present extra challenges with prevention, protection and response. An example is St Francis Court in Ipswich, which is currently (2022) undergoing repairs and work to remove cladding.
- The Suffolk road network totals over 4,300 miles, the majority of which is Suffolk County Council's responsibility. Around 55,000 vehicles cross the Orwell bridge daily.
- The Port of Felixstowe is the biggest and busiest container port in Great Britain, as well as one of the largest in Europe.
- There are four upper tier Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites in Suffolk (in Haverhill, Stowmarket, Risby and Bury St Edmunds), and one Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information (REPPPIR) site, (the Sizewell B Nuclear Power Station near Leiston).
- Suffolk is subject to flooding from the sea, rivers, rain and ground water.
- The longer-term impacts of COVID-19 are beginning to emerge, but it will take some time for these to be fully understood.

Future demand

Population forecasts indicate that between 2021-2041 the population is expected to increase by 6.8% (approximately 52,000 people) to nearly 822,000 residents.

Over the next twenty years there is likely to be a change in the population of Suffolk, specifically the age of the resident population. Suffolk is expected to see a shift from approximately 1 in 5 residents age 65+ to 1 in 3.

Many more people are likely to have multiple long-term conditions in Suffolk in 20 years' time.

The demand for homes is likely to increase.

Risk summary

The following information provides a summary of some of the key potential risks in Suffolk in relation to SFRS. This table should not be used in isolation, and should be used in conjunction with local knowledge, and the data and information contained within the rest of this document.

	Current potential risk	Emerging potential risk
Suffolk as a place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rural nature of Suffolk can make some areas difficult to access. In addition, farms and rural businesses have specific fire risks. Port of Felixstowe. Flooding risk. Sizewell B (REPPiR site). 4 COMAH sites (upper tier). Orwell Bridge closures in high winds may impact accessibility. Annual Latitude festival attracts thousands to a singular venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans to build Sizewell C nuclear power station. As a result of climate change, both the chances and consequences of flooding and wildfires are likely to increase. The longer-term impacts of COVID-19 are beginning to emerge, but it will take some time for these to be fully understood. Solar farms are providing innovative and greener sources of energy in Suffolk (and nationally), but there are concerns around the risk of fire from battery storage.
Suffolk people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst fire fatalities and casualties are generally low in Suffolk (2 fire fatalities and 100 casualties in 2020/21), there may be opportunities for further prevention work. Fire fatalities are highest in older age groups. Suffolk has a higher proportion of older people compared to England. There are also an increasing proportion of older people living with dementia. 14% of Suffolk adults smoke, and smoking is a major cause of dwelling fires. Fire fatalities and casualties are highest in single occupancy residences (national data). Survey findings indicate that the public have low awareness of staffing arrangements in their local fire and rescue service stations (note: national survey with Suffolk included). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increasing population and increasing demand for homes is likely to also increase demand for services. An increasing older population means that in 20 years' time, nearly 1 in 3 Suffolk residents is likely to be aged 65 or over. An increasing older demographic may be at increased risk of fire, and if driving, may also face challenges with complex traffic environments and the cognitive demands of driving. Diversity in Suffolk is increasing, with increasing proportions of residents, having English as a second language. Communication/prevention messages will be needed in multiple language formats. Those affected by mental ill-health are likely to increase. Suffolk is likely to see higher number of people with multiple long-term conditions – this may result in higher numbers of housebound residents or residents with mobility limitations.
SFRS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nature of emergency responses are changing, with increased numbers of 'non-fire' incidents. Recruitment and retention of on-call and specialist staff is difficult, however it is recognised there are also general recruitment risks in all roles in the Service, both operational and non-operational. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFRS Fleet strategy supports the SCC climate Emergency declaration and whilst electrification of small fleet is underway, the larger fleet does not yet have the infrastructure in place. Training and retaining skilled employees, SFRS want to ensure they are seen as an employer of choice both locally and nationally.

Suffolk

Suffolk is a large county covering approximately 1,466 square miles, mainly comprised of low-lying arable land with the wetlands of the Broads in the north east, the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the east, and the sandy heathlands of Breckland in the north west. Suffolk has a mix of vibrant market towns and includes Britain's biggest and busiest seaport in Felixstowe. It is served by two international airports located outside the county, and has many road and rail network links⁴. There is also a significant military air force presence in terms of two large US Air Force bases in Forest Heath in Suffolk ([Lakenheath](#) and [Mildenhall](#)).

Suffolk has over 900 County Wildlife Sites (CWS), these play a key role in the conservation of Suffolk's biodiversity and are important links in Suffolk's Living Landscape⁶. The Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast and Heaths Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, are places in which the quality of landscape is formally recognised and given special statutory status to conserve and enhance natural beauty, and in the case of The Broads, an additional duty to promote open-air recreation⁷.

Suffolk is made up of 5 district and borough councils:

[Babergh District Council](#)

[East Suffolk Council](#)

[Ipswich Borough Council](#)

[Mid Suffolk District Council](#)

[West Suffolk Council](#)

On 1 April 2019 [East Suffolk Council](#) was formed, covering the former districts of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council. When this merger occurred, East Suffolk council became the largest non-metropolitan district council in the country in terms of population served⁸.

On the same day, Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were replaced by a single district council called [West Suffolk Council](#).

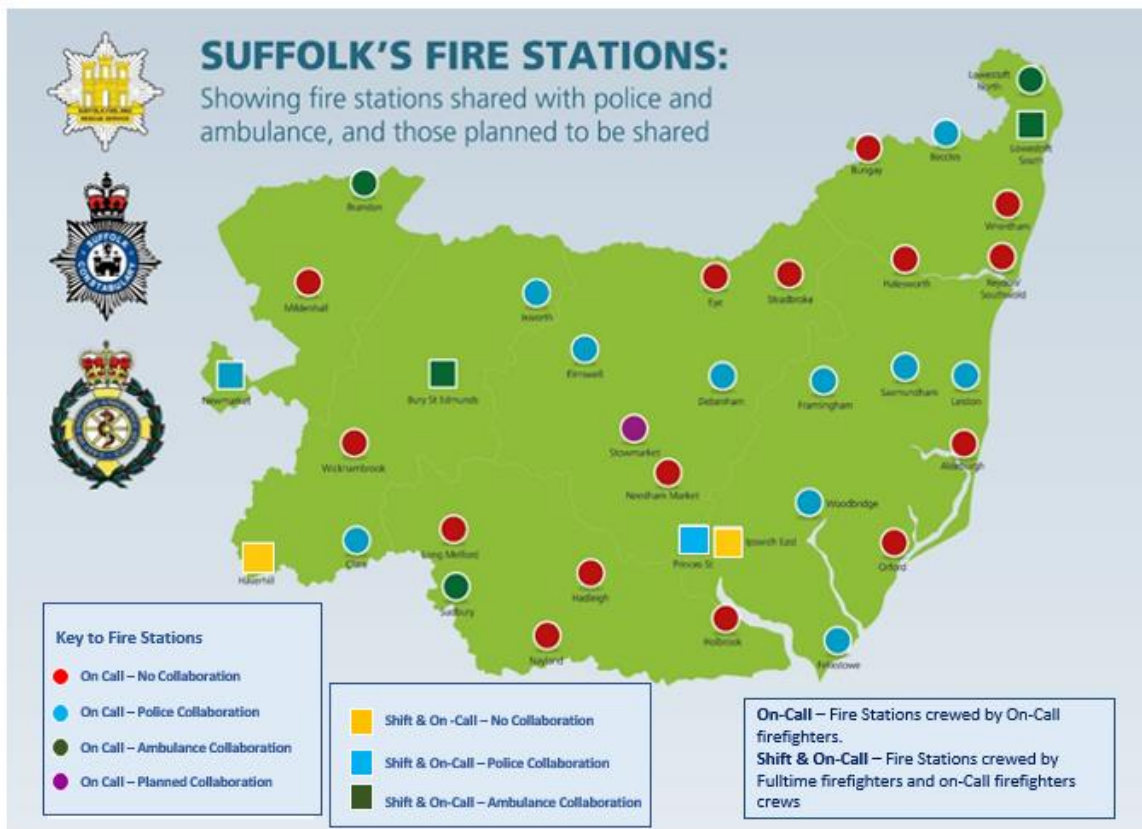
Suffolk fire stations

SUFFOLK FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE RUNS 35 FIRE STATIONS GROUPED INTO 3 AREAS. THEY CONSIST OF 29 ON CALL STATIONS, 4 WHOLETIME SHIFT STATIONS, AND 2 WHOLETIME DAY-CREWED STATIONS. ALL STATIONS HAVE ON-CALL CREW AVAILABILITY

TO ACHIEVE FINANCIAL SAVINGS AND CLOSER COLLABORATION, THE SERVICE HAS 17 STATIONS SHARED WITH POLICE OR AMBULANCE COLLEAGUES.

THERE IS ALSO THE COUNTY DAY CREWING TEAM - A WATCH OF WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTERS PROVIDING FIRE COVER ACROSS THE ON-CALL AND WHOLETIME STATIONS OF SUFFOLK.

Figure 1: Map of Suffolk fire stations⁹



You can also view [this map online](#), together with details of each station.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue key statistics

As of March 2024



606 Operational Staff



104 Support Staff



43 Fire Engines



£25.8m
Budget 2023/24



6056 Service Incidents

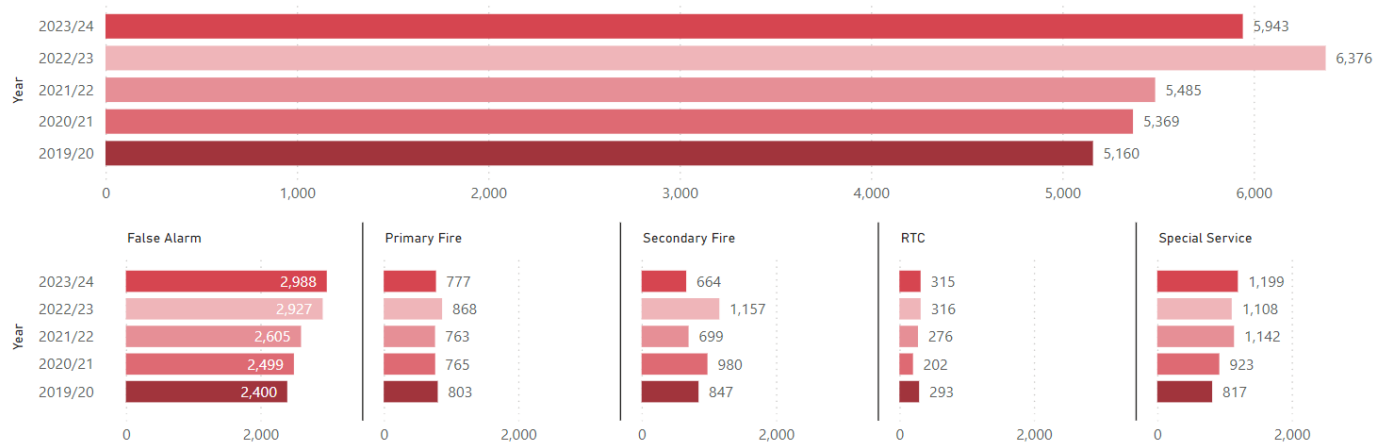


3762 Home Fire Safety Visits

Source: I-Sheet 2023/24¹⁰

Figure 2: Types of emergency service incidents attended 2019-2023¹¹

Incidents by Year



There are no nationally specified standards for fire services to respond to emergencies. Suffolk endeavours to meet the locally agreed standards on 80% of occasions.

Table 1: Response standards to callouts, 2023/24 (I-Sheet 2023/24)¹⁰

Response standard	Description	2023/24
1	First fire engine to a property fire in 11 mins	69%
2	Second fire engine to a property fire in 16 mins	73%
3	First fire engine to a road traffic collision in 13 mins	67%
4	First fire engine to all incidents within 20 minutes	95%

Table 2: Protection and prevention (Home Office returns)¹⁰

Financial Year	Planned audit (protection)	Home fire safety checks (prevention)
2023/24	980	3,552
2022/23	914	2,826
2021/22	930	2,791
2020/21	462	1,701
2019/20	782	2,970
2018/19	491	1,548

Table 3: Fire fatalities and casualties, 2023/24¹⁰

Area	Fatalities	Casualties
England	251	6,339
Suffolk	7	138
Average family group (Predominantly Rural)	3.9	66.1

In 2023/24¹¹:

- There were 5,943 recorded fire service incidents, a decrease of 433 from the previous year.
- For 69% of incidents, the first fire engine arrived at a property fire within 11 minutes.
- There were over 3,500 home fire safety checks.
- There were 7 fire fatalities and 138 casualties in Suffolk.

The following data is taken from Home Office returns and may not precisely correlate with the data provided in Figure 2.

Table 4: Fire statistics table 0102: Incidents attended by Suffolk fire and rescue services, by incident type¹²

Year	Total incidents	Total fires	Primary fires					Secondary Fires	Chimney Fires
			Total	Dwellings	Other Buildings	Road Vehicles	Other Outdoors		
2018/19	5,331	1,943	852	281	217	249	105	1,008	83
2019/20	5,107	1,641	790	303	213	209	65	773	78
2020/21	5,309	1,733	754	284	196	212	62	886	93
2021/22	5,425	1,453	751	338	169	183	61	639	63
2022/23	6,212	1,985	855	311	198	221	125	1,069	61
2023/24	5,841	1,405	767	334	192	184	57	582	56

Table 5: Fire statistics table 0102: False alarms and non-fire incidents by year and type for Suffolk¹²

Year	Fire false alarms					Non-fire incidents		
	Total	Due to apparatus	to Good intent	Malicious	Total	Non-fire false alarms	Special services	
2018/19	2,396	1,552	765	79	992	31	961	
2019/20	2,318	1,621	638	59	1,148	47	1,101	
2020/21	2,450	1,582	817	51	1,126	19	1,107	
2021/22	2,556	1,744	741	71	1,416	18	1,398	
2022/23	2,822	1,837	943	42	1,405	23	1,382	
2023/24	2,907	2,029	810	68	1,529	51	1,478	

Primary fires are defined as fires that meet at least one of the following conditions:

- (a) any fire that occurred in a (non-derelict) building, vehicle or outdoor structure,
- (b) any fire involving fatalities,
- (c) any fire attended by five or more pumping appliances.

Table 6: Fire statistics table 0903: Rate of non-fire incidents attended per 100,000 people, by type of incident, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority 2022/23¹²

Rate of non fire-incidents per 100,000 people	Suffolk	England
Road Traffic Collision (RTC)	37	55
Medical incidents	4	30
Assist other agencies	47	48
Flooding and rescue or evacuation from water	17	34
Effecting entry/exit	13	58
Lift release	2	22
Suicide/attempts	2	5
False alarm	3	14
Other	57	88
Total	183	349

- Home Office returns indicate 1,405 primary fires in 2023/24, over the last 10 years the average number of primary fires in Suffolk was 1,697 per year.
- When broken down by fire type, in 2023/24 dwelling fires were the most common type of fire attended. This is akin to England data.
- As previously noted, the pandemic-related dip in RTC numbers has now disappeared.
- There were 2,907 false alarms registered in 2023/24, 70% were due to apparatus, 28% were good intent false alarms, with 2% being malicious. Compared to all England, Suffolk has marginally less appliance-related alerts, marginally more good-intent alerts, and slightly less malicious alerts.
- When examining non fire incidents SFRS is most commonly called to assist other agencies, predominately the ambulance service. This was followed by attendance to RTC and flooding.
- Data for England indicates a callout rate of 30 per 100,000 population for medical incidents, this was much larger than the Suffolk rate of 4 per 100,000 population in 2023/24.
- National data indicates that a higher number of fire fatalities were in older age groups (age 65 and over) in 2023/24. Those aged 80+ have the highest fatality rate at 16.4 per million population¹².
- Nationally, both fatalities and non-fatal casualties were much higher in single occupancy dwellings¹².



National and local risks

The [National Risk Register \(NRR\)](#)¹³ provides a government assessment of the likelihood and potential impact of a range of national security risks. The risks are thematically grouped to bring together risks that share similar risk exposure and require similar capabilities to prepare mitigate and respond. The thematic groups and most pertinent risks identified by the NRR for SFRS are provided below.

Table 7: Pertinent risk identified by the NRR for SFRS¹³

Environmental Hazards	Human and animal health	Major Incidents	Societal Risks	Malicious Attacks	Risks occurring overseas.
Flooding	Human diseases	Widespread electricity failure	Industrial action	Attacks on publicly accessible locations	Risks occurring overseas.
Severe weather	Animal diseases	System failure	Widespread public disorder	Attacks on transport systems	
Severe space weather	Antimicrobial resistance	Major transport accidents		Attacks on infrastructure	
Poor Air Quality		Industrial accidents		Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks	
Earthquakes		Major Fires		Cyber attacks Disinformation	

Note: Table reused from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Strategic Assessment of Risk



Suffolk Resilience Forum (SRF)

A lot of the information in this document links to the [Suffolk Resilience Forum \(SRF\)](#). Local resilience forums (LRFs) are multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and others. These agencies are known as Category 1 Responders, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act. SFRS is classed as a Category 1 responder.



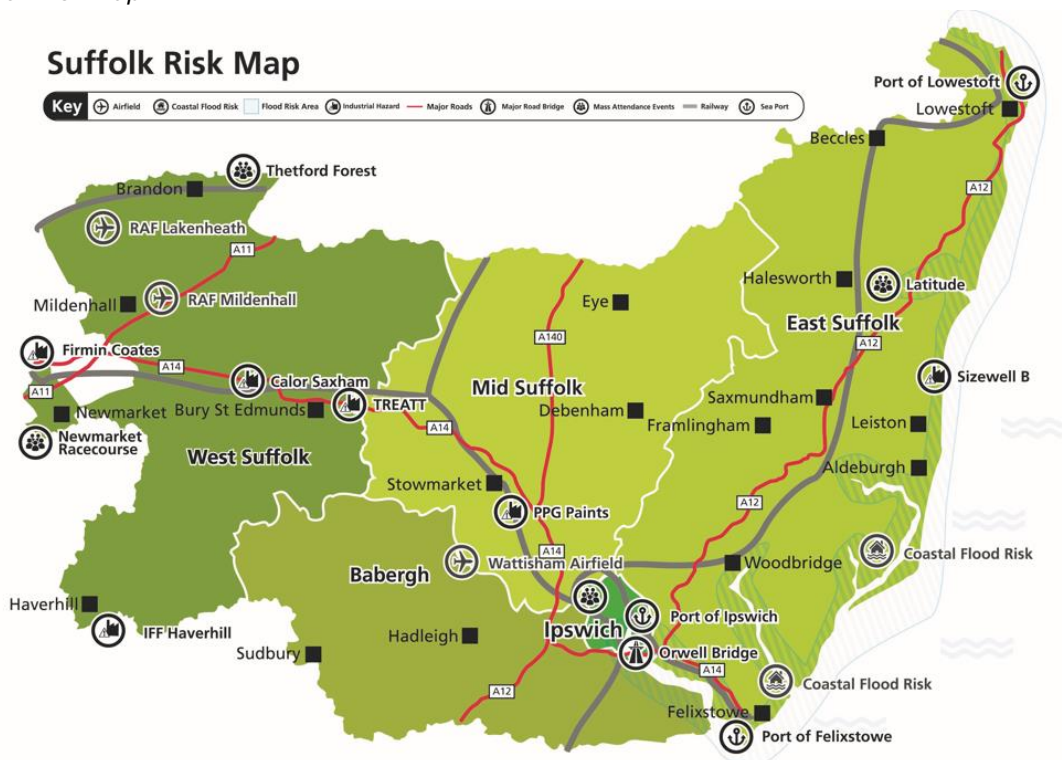
LRFs are supported by organisations, known as Category 2 responders, such as the Highways Agency and public utility companies. They have a responsibility to co-operate with Category 1 organisations and to share relevant information with the LRF. The geographical area the forums cover is based on police areas. The SRF agrees annually a [Community Risk Register](#)¹⁴ that allows a structure of standing contingency plans/protocols to be developed by a lead responding agency.

Suffolk community risk register

The Suffolk community risk register depicts risks that have been identified to affect Suffolk including the assessment of each risks impact and likelihood. The risks are presented in a [matrix that allocates a risk rating](#) (see appendix) according to government guidelines, it is a living document as the Suffolk Resilience Forum members review and update the risks in accordance with the National Risk Assessments produced biennially by the government¹⁴.

The Suffolk risk map below, summarises some of the core risks that impact Suffolk. This includes areas susceptible to flooding, major roads, mass attendance events (for example Latitude festival), sea ports, rail networks and airfields¹⁰. These risks are discussed in more detail later in this document.

Figure 3: Suffolk risk map¹⁴



Demographics

The places people live, their age, and other characteristics, can all play a role in risk, and risk mitigation in relation to the Strategic Assessment of Risk. This section presents information about Suffolk residents.



776,442

Suffolk Population



24%

Suffolk residents aged 65 and over (2023)



6.8%

Estimated population increase between 2021-2041

2023 estimates indicate Suffolk has a population of 776,442, comprising 382,665 males (49.3%) and 389,722 females (50.7%)¹⁵. Based on Census 2021 data the population of Suffolk has increased by 4.5% since 2011. Population forecasts¹ indicate that between 2021-2041 the population is expected to increase by 6.8% (approximately 52,000 people) to nearly 822,000 residents¹⁶. In 2022 there were 6,858 live births in Suffolk.

Suffolk is made up of 5 districts and boroughs; East Suffolk is the largest lower tier local authority (LTLA) in Suffolk, with 32.15% of Suffolk residents living in East Suffolk.

Table 8: Local authority population estimates, 2023¹⁵

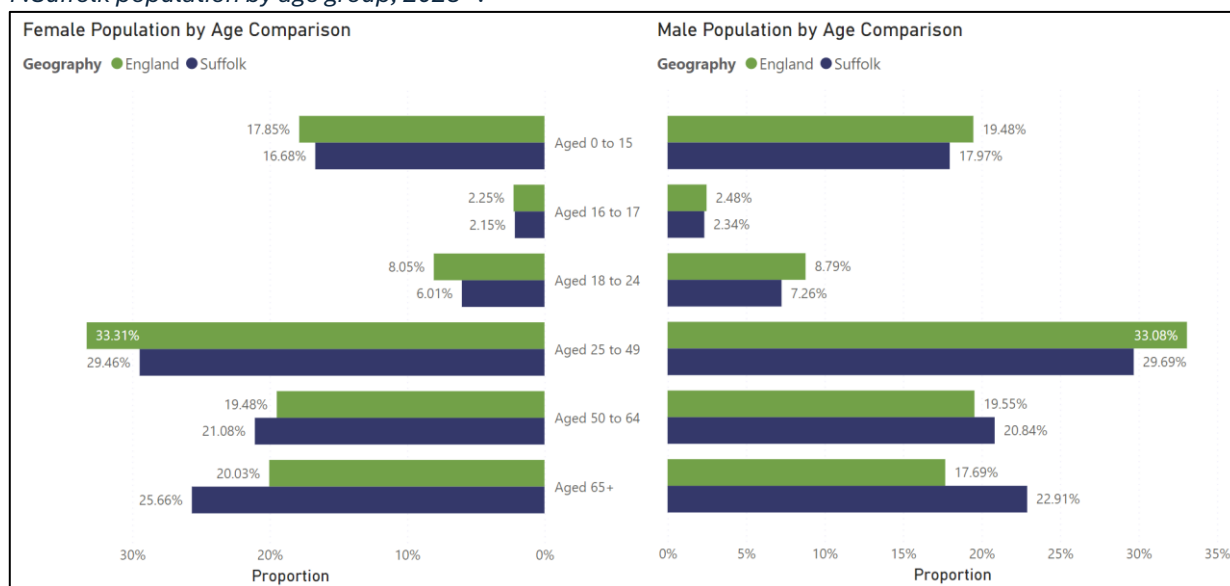
Local Authority	Female Population	Male Population	Totals	% of Females	% of Males
Babergh	49,437	46,435	95,872	51.57%	48.43%
East Suffolk	126,753	120,347	247,100	51.30%	48.70%
Ipswich	69,959	69,419	139,378	50.19%	49.81%
Mid Suffolk	54,740	53,289	108,029	50.67%	49.33%
West Suffolk	92,888	93,175	186,063	49.92%	50.08%



¹ Please note that the Office of National Statistics (ONS) population forecasts use different population bases to those that estimate the current population size.

The population pyramid below shows an older age demographic in Suffolk compared to England, with corresponding lower proportions in children and younger working age adults compared to England.

Figure 4 :Suffolk population by age group, 2023¹⁵:



Suffolk has an older resident population compared to England. In Suffolk approximately 24% of people are 65 or over compared to approximately 19% nationally. There is variation within Suffolk, with East Suffolk having the largest population aged 65 and over (38%).

Table 9: Residents by age band for local authorities in Suffolk 2023¹⁵

Local Authority	All Ages	Aged 0-15	Aged 16- 24	Aged 25-49	Aged 50-64	Aged 65+
Babergh	95,872	15,421	8,022	25,443	21,113	25,873
East Suffolk	247,100	38,789	19,634	63,082	54,621	70,974
Ipswich	139,378	27,926	14,277	48,145	25,332	23,698
Mid Suffolk	108,029	17,358	8,917	30,268	23,960	27,526
West Suffolk	186,063	33,602	17,350	60,358	39,046	38,707
Totals	776,442	133,096	68,200	227,296	161,072	186,778

A breakdown of the population of Suffolk by district and borough shows that there is variation around the county, with some local authorities having higher or lower proportions of each age group, compared to figures for the county overall. Those aged over 65 years comprise over 20% of the total population in four of the local authorities, but just 17% of the total population of Ipswich. Ipswich residents also show as the highest percentages in children and young people, 1 in 5 being 15 years of age or younger.

Table 1: Percentage of total local authority population by age band in Suffolk, 2022¹⁵

Local Authority	Aged 0-15%	Aged 16- 24%	Aged 25-49%	Aged 50-64%	Aged 65+%
Babergh	16.1%	8.4%	26.5%	22.0%	27.0%
East Suffolk	15.7%	7.9%	25.5%	22.1%	28.7%
Ipswich	20.0%	10.2%	34.5%	18.2%	17.0%
Mid Suffolk	16.1%	8.3%	28.0%	22.2%	25.5%
West Suffolk	18.1%	9.3%	32.4%	19.4%	20.8%

Ethnicity and diversity

Ethnicity

At the time of the last Census in 2021, 93.1% of the resident population in Suffolk identified as White, around 12.1% above the rate for England and 6.6% higher than the East of England. Suffolk has lower percentages of the other ethnic groups compared to national figures. All local authorities within Suffolk have higher percentages of White residents compared to the county overall. Forest Heath is more ethnically diverse, largely due to the presence of American airbases at Mildenhall and Lakenheath.

Table 2: Ethnicity by local authority in Suffolk, 2021¹⁷

Local Authority	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Other ethnicities
Babergh	96.7%	1.5%	0.9%	0.5%	0.4%
East Suffolk	96.2%	1.5%	1.4%	0.6%	0.4%
Ipswich	84.3%	4.6%	5.5%	3.5%	2.1%
Mid Suffolk	96.8%	1.4%	0.8%	0.5%	0.4%
West Suffolk	91.8%	2.7%	2.6%	1.6%	1.3%

Geography	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Other ethnicities
East	86.5%	2.8%	6.4%	2.9%	1.4%
England	81.0%	3.0%	9.6%	4.2%	2.2%
Suffolk	93.1%	2.3%	2.3%	1.3%	0.9%

Migration

Suffolk has persistently had a lower percentage of non-British residents as a proportion of the population as a whole, compared to regionally and England. 2021 Census data indicate, there were an estimated 51,000 non-British residents in Suffolk, and in 2020 the estimate was 56,000. This data publication has been discontinued therefore this is the latest available data¹⁸.

Just over 1 in 5 live births (22.7%) in Suffolk in 2022 were to mothers born outside the UK (1,557 out of 6,858. This is below the England average of 30.3%. Within Suffolk, the highest proportions of births to mothers born outside the UK were in Ipswich (36%) and West Suffolk (34%).

Table 3: Long-term international and internal migration mid 2010/11, mid 2018/19 and mid 2019/20 comparison¹⁸

Mid-2010 to Mid-2011					
Mid-2011 Population Estimate	Population	Long-Term International Migration		Internal Migration (within UK)	
		Inflow	Outflow	Inflow	Outflow
730,133		3,083	3,022	32,791	29,942
Mid-2018 to Mid-2019					
Mid-2019 Population Estimate	Population	Long-Term International Migration		Internal Migration (within UK)	
		Inflow	Outflow	Inflow	Outflow
761,350		3,320	3,251	26,969	23,500
Mid-2019 to Mid-2020					
Mid-2020 Population Estimate	Population	Long-Term International Migration		Internal Migration (within UK)	
		Inflow	Outflow	Inflow	Outflow
761,246		3,038	2,926	24,484	21,135

Gypsy and Traveller populations

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) communities encompass diverse groups with different histories, cultures, and beliefs. Generally, the term describes people from a range of ethnicities following nomadic ways of life. However, the number of 'settled' GRT people living in bricks and mortar accommodation has increased in recent years.

The long-standing persecution, displacement, and discrimination against the GRT community has contributed to their overall poorer health compared to the general population. At present, GRT communities are known to face some of the severest inequalities in health and care access and outcomes amongst the UK population, even when compared with other minority ethnic groups¹⁹. This includes:

- 10-25 years lower life expectancy
- poorer maternal and neonatal outcomes
- a higher prevalence of long-term illness and poorer mental health.

Across Suffolk a total of 1,892 GRT people disclosed their ethnicity in the 2021 Census (approximately 0.3% of Suffolk's population), this is an increase of 1,288 people compared to the 2011 Census (604 people). The first official population of Roma heritage in Suffolk was recorded at 987, and individuals who described themselves as 'White: Gypsies or Irish Travellers' was recorded at 905 (a 301 person increase from the 2011 Census).

When comparing districts and boroughs across Suffolk, Ipswich has the highest count of GRT people with 356 identifying as 'White: Gypsies or Irish Travellers' and 663 describing themselves as 'White: Roma'. Babergh has the smallest count recording 40 'White: Gypsies or Irish Travellers', a decrease of 11 compared to the Census 2011, and 26 identifying as 'White: Roma'¹⁹.

Across Suffolk there are a total of 32 GRT sites. Ipswich has two permanent GRT sites, both privately owned. East Suffolk has a total of 6 GRT sites. 3 of these sites are permanent and the remaining 3 are temporary unauthorised sites. Of the 3 permanent sites in East Suffolk one, Romany Lane Traveller Site, is owned by East Suffolk Council. The remaining 5 sites are privately owned. West Suffolk have 12 permanent GRT sites, all of which are privately owned²⁰.

The total number of the GRT population identified in the School Census in Suffolk has increased by 5.7% since 2022 from 665 people to 703 people in 2023 (54.1% males, 45.9% females). This is also a 17.0% increase compared to the January 2021 estimate (601 people) and a 191.7% increase compared to the January 2015 estimate (241 people)²¹.

Refugees and asylum seekers

At the end of 2023, nearly 117.3 million people worldwide had been forcibly displaced from their homes as a result of conflicts, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order, and of these, 31.6 million were refugees²². Among those displaced, an estimated 40% were children below the age of 18, many of whom would have been living in poor conditions, lost family members, and traumatised by their experiences. Refugees and asylum seekers have distinct needs and require appropriate services, and whilst many are likely to arrive in Suffolk in good health, this is not the case for everyone.

Suffolk is home to settled refugee communities, many of them established over the past 25 years with the majority living in Ipswich. For historical reasons, the largest community is Kurdish. Many of these people have British citizenship, refugee status or leave to remain in the UK.

There are also asylum seekers, predominantly in family groups, housed in Ipswich under the government's 'dispersal' system. These people come from a range of countries, and all are awaiting a decision on their asylum claim. In addition, over recent years Suffolk has hosted an increased number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASCs).

Suffolk is also taking part in the government's refugee resettlement schemes- the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) and ARAP/ACRS schemes for Afghan refugees. Suffolk Refugee Support is contracted to provide specialist casework for families and individuals arriving in Suffolk under both resettlement programmes as well as providing practical support and advice to Ukrainian refugees arriving in Suffolk under both the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine scheme²³.

In Suffolk there are currently:

- An estimated 2500-3000 settled refugees – with the largest community being Kurdish.
- Approximately 1100 Ukrainian refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme (plus those here under the Ukraine Family Scheme).
- Around 300 UASCs (unaccompanied asylum-seeking children) and care leavers.
- Approximately 60 people in asylum 'dispersal' accommodation in Ipswich, mostly families.
- Around 300 refugees here under UK government resettlement schemes – predominantly Syrian and Afghan and almost all in family groups.

Data is available on the numbers of confirmed visa applications, visas issued, and the number of persons that have arrived in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. The Sponsorship Scheme is for visa applications from Ukrainians who wish to travel to the UK and who have named people in the UK willing to sponsor them. As of 16 July 2024 in Suffolk, there had been²⁴:

- 2,277 visa applications
- 1,837 visas issued
- 1,595 arrivals

Housebound populations

There is no single indicator representing the number of housebound residents in Suffolk. However, the following data provides an overview of potential proxy for this indicator. For example, disabled populations may be less likely to leave their homes due to the severity of their disablement; carer populations may be indicative of a housebound resident being cared for, and the carer may also be housebound due to their caring commitments.

At the 2021 census 0.7% of the Suffolk population were residing in medical/care communal establishment (just over 5,600 people)²⁵. In 2021/22 there were 808 permanent admissions to residential and nursing care homes in Suffolk, a rate of 445 per 100,000 population aged 65 and over. This is statistically lower than the England rate (539 per 100,000 population aged 65 and over)²⁶.

Attendance allowance is given to those aged 65+ for personal care because an individual is physically or mentally disabled. Entitlement data (so including people that may have their payments suspended as they are in hospital), indicates 22,086 people entitled to attendance allowance in Suffolk, with the highest numbers in East Suffolk (8,583)²⁷.

- There are 294 people in Suffolk in receipt of incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance as of November 2023, and over 13,000 people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA).
- There are around 14,091 people entitled to carers allowance in Suffolk, with the highest proportion (39%) in East Suffolk.

Table 4: Disability Living Allowance (DLA), cases in payment, Nov 2023²⁸

Local Authority	Aged 0-17	Aged 18-64	Aged 65-84	Aged 85+	Total
Babergh	867	159	388	63	1,477
East Suffolk	2,817	261	1,392	240	4,710
Ipswich	1,873	115	575	128	2,691
Mid Suffolk	1,052	79	410	64	1,605
West Suffolk	1,755	52	678	131	2,656
Total	8,364	706	3,443	626	13,139

*Totals may not sum due to rounding

Health

Understanding the health of Suffolk's residents is also an important component of understanding risk. This is for multiple reasons, but a core factor is that the people most likely to die in a fire are the same people at increased risk of poor health²⁹.

Life expectancy

Life expectancy at birth gives the total number of years a person can expect to live from birth based on contemporary mortality rates. After decades of steady improvements in life expectancy in the UK, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported in 2018 on the slowdown in increases in life expectancy since 2011.

This trend has continued in the most recent data with life expectancy at birth decreasing in the UK. 2020 to 2022 the average life expectancy for males was 78.6 years and 82.6 years for females; compared with 2017 to 2019, life expectancy has fallen by 38 weeks from 79.3 years for males and by 23 weeks from 83.0 years for females³⁰.

Typically, Suffolk residents live longer than the England average and females live longer than males. Life expectancy at birth in 2020-22 was 83.9 for females and 80.4 years for males in Suffolk. Both figures are statistically significantly higher than the figures for England (82.8 for females and 78.9 for males). However, there is variation across Suffolk. Most districts and boroughs in Suffolk (including Suffolk as a whole) have a significantly higher life expectancy at birth for both males and females than England. However, life expectancies at birth for Ipswich males and females are statistically similar to life expectancy for England³¹.

Table 5: Life expectancy at birth 2020-22³¹

	Life Expectancy at Birth	
	Females	Males
Babergh	84.6	81.4
Ipswich	82.8	78.9
Mid Suffolk	84.6	81.1
East Suffolk	83.5	79.9
West Suffolk	84.1	80.6
Suffolk	83.9	80.4
England	82.8	78.9

Colour notes statistical significance compared to England:

Green=better, yellow=similar, red=worse

Quick statistics



18.3% Suffolk residents with a disability (2021)

7.9% Suffolk residents with a long-term health condition (2021)



21.6% Suffolk children in reception year that are overweight or obese (2022/23)



34.2% Suffolk children in year 6 that are overweight or obese (2022/23)



67.1% Suffolk adults that are overweight or obese (2022/23)



21.1% Suffolk adults that are physically **inactive** (2022/23)

Source: ¹⁵ & ²⁵

Falls

As people become older, they become increasingly likely to fall. About 1 in 3 people aged over 65 and 1 in 2 people aged over 80 will fall at least once a year²⁶. Women are more likely to fall than men. Falls can cause serious physical injury, for example, a fractured hip, and they can also make people fearful and anxious, which means that they restrict their activities and lose their independence²⁶.

In 2022/23 in Suffolk there were 2,840 emergency hospital admissions for injuries due to falls in persons aged 65 years and over, this equates to approximately 8 admissions per day²⁵. 66% of these admissions were for people aged 80 years and over. Suffolk has a statistically lower rate of falls compared to the East of England and England overall.

Smoking

2022 Annual Population Survey (APS) data indicates that 14% of the adult population, 18 years or over, in Suffolk smoke, a statistically similar proportion to both the East of England (13.2%) and England (12.7%).

Results show that in 2022 all districts across Suffolk had a statistically similar prevalence of smoking in adults aged 18 years and over compared to the England estimate. Babergh had the highest average prevalence of 17.6%, followed by East Suffolk with an average prevalence of 15.2%. Ipswich, West Suffolk, and Mid Suffolk had an average prevalence of 13.7%, 12.9%, and 10.1%, respectively.

Figure 5: Smoking prevalence in adults (18+) – Current smokers (APS), Suffolk districts compared to England, 2022

Area	Recent Trend	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	–	-	12.7	12.3	13.0
Suffolk	–	-	14.0	11.1	16.8
Babergh	–	-	17.6	8.7	26.4
East Suffolk	–	-	15.2	10.1	20.2
Ipswich	–	-	13.7	5.9	21.5
West Suffolk	–	-	12.9	7.8	18.1
Mid Suffolk	–	-	10.1	3.4	16.8

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS)

Smoking prevalence is also measured within the [NHS Quality Outcomes Framework \(QoF\)](#)³². This highlights the number of patients aged 15 years or over who are recorded as current smokers as recorded in patient records by general practitioners.

Ipswich reports the highest level of smoking prevalence amongst adults, 15 or over, with 18.1%, a higher level than the Suffolk average (15%) and national average (14.7%). Suffolk overall is also recorded as having a higher level of smoking prevalence amongst adults, 15 or over, than the national average.

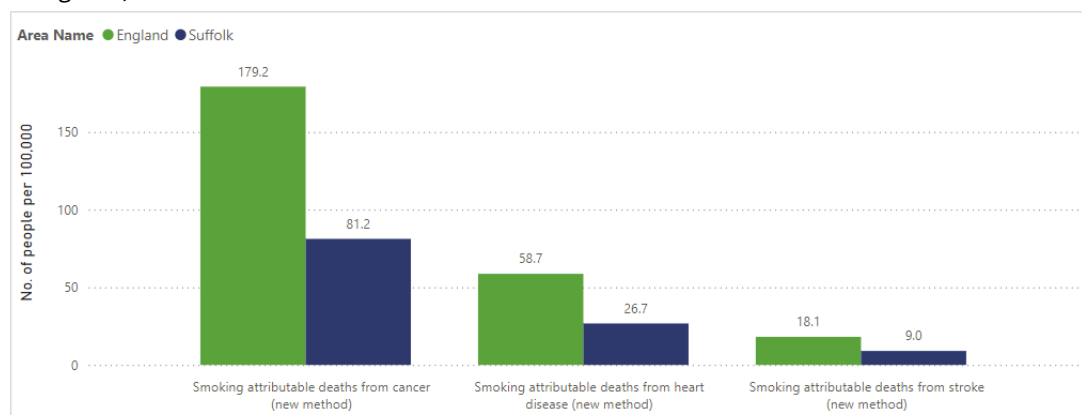
Figure 6: Smoking prevalence in adults (15+) – Current smokers (QOF), Suffolk districts compared to England, 2022/23.

Area	Recent Trend	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	↓	7,664,426	14.7	14.7	14.7
Suffolk	↓	104,287	15.0	14.9	15.1
Ipswich	↓	27,404	18.1	17.9	18.2
West Suffolk	↓	26,033	15.4	15.2	15.6
East Suffolk	↓	30,995	14.7	14.6	14.9
Babergh	↓	9,727	12.4	12.2	12.7
Mid Suffolk	↓	10,128	11.9	11.7	12.1

Source: Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), NHS England

Figure 17 shows the smoking attributable deaths for overall mortality and from cancer, heart disease and stroke for Suffolk, compared to England for 2017-2019. Results show that, in Suffolk, smoking attributable mortality was statistically significantly lower than the England estimate overall of 202.1 per 100,000, with an estimate of 178.9 per 100,000. Between 2017-2019, 2,912 deaths were attributable to smoking, equating to nearly 3 deaths every day. In 2019/20 there were 6,696 smoking attributable hospital admissions.

Figure 7: Smoking attributable deaths for overall mortality and from cancer, heart disease and stroke for Suffolk, compared to England, 2017-2019



Source: Fingertips - Mortality data from the ONS mortality file; ONS mid-year population estimates; Smoking prevalence data from Annual Population Survey; and relative risks from the Royal College of Physician's Report 'Hiding in Plain Sight'.

Mental health

Depression is a common and debilitating condition. Figures for 2022/23 indicate that 13.8% people aged 18 and over in Suffolk have been recognised by their GP as having depression (approximately 91,865 people)²⁵. This is statistically higher compared to England (13.2%) and the East of England (12.2%). Recorded prevalence of depression has consistently increased both nationally and locally over the past 10 years.

2022/23 data indicate Suffolk has a statistically significantly higher rate of emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm, and this has been the case since 2016/17. At LTLA level, self-harm emergency admissions are statistically significantly higher in Ipswich and East Suffolk²⁵.

Suicide

There were 225 deaths from suicide between 2020-22 in Suffolk, the majority being men (165). The age standardised suicide rate per 100,000 people is not significantly different from regional and national averages²⁵.

Drug and alcohol misuse

Prevalence estimates for 2019/20 remain the latest available for Suffolk. These suggest there are 2,901 opiate and/or crack cocaine users resident in Suffolk, giving an estimated prevalence rate of 6.4 per 1,000 population³³. Not all of these individuals will be in substance misuse treatment services, and many will be unknown to treatment services. 2022/23 data indicates that there were 1,724 people at specialist drug misuse services, and 951 people at specialist alcohol misuse services in Suffolk²⁵. 2022 Suffolk data on successful treatment (i.e. leaving treatment and not re-presenting to treatment again within 6 months) indicates²⁵:

- Opiate user successful completion of drug treatment percentage: 7.1% (statistically significantly higher than England: 5.0%)
- Non-opiate user successful completion of drug treatment percentage: 25.2% (statistically significantly similar to England: 31.4%)
- Alcohol successful completion of treatment percentage: 26.1% (statistically significantly lower than England: 35.1%)

Alcohol and related disease

Although many people consume alcohol without damaging their health, excessive consumption can cause severe physical and mental ill-health. 2019/2020 estimates (latest available) indicate that an estimated 6,801 people in Suffolk are alcohol dependent³⁴. This equates to a rate of 1.1 per 100,000 of the adult population, statistically similar to the England rate (1.38 per 100,000). There were 3,705 hospital admissions for alcohol related conditions (narrow definition) in 2022/23.

Housing

Some properties in Suffolk have a higher risk of fire and vulnerability compared to others (for example thatched properties). The following section provides an overview of buildings that may exhibit higher risk.

Overview of housing in Suffolk



357,160

Properties in Suffolk in 2023

Current housing stock in Suffolk is **predominantly old and inefficient to heat**



14.1%

Suffolk homes are in fuel poverty- **47,452 properties in 2021**

Source: ^{25, 33 34, 35}

In 2023, there were nearly 357,160 properties in Suffolk, and there are plans to build more over coming years. Household projections for Suffolk estimate an increase of 10.5% from 2023 to 2043, driven predominantly by growth in households with residents aged 65 and over. ³⁵.

2021 data indicates there were almost 50,000 households in Suffolk in fuel poverty. This equates to 14.1% of all households in the county (compared to 13.1% across England)³⁵. 2022 data indicates that in England 14.8% of properties were off the gas grid³⁶. Within Suffolk the percentage is much higher at 28.7% and varies greatly by district and borough.

Listed buildings

Services relating to conservation areas and the conservation of historic buildings is provided by [district and borough councils in Suffolk](#). Please log on to the [Planning Portal](#) for more information.

The Suffolk Register of Buildings at Risk provides details of listed buildings known to be at risk through neglect and decay, or vulnerable to becoming so. View the [buildings at risk webpages](#) for more information.

Thatched properties

Due to the history and heritage of Suffolk, there are many thatched properties in the county. Thatched properties have their own special fire safety issues. A thatched roof is always at risk from fire. Once a fire has taken hold in a thatched property it will spread rapidly. Although the most common cause of thatched fires is heat transfer from a chimney, electrical faults, sparks from chimneys/bonfires and lightning strikes can also cause thatched fires. SFRS have produced an [online guide to thatched properties](#).

Blocks of flats

2023 dwelling count data indicates there were 45,640 flats/maisonettes, representing approximately 13% of all properties. This is lower than both the East of England (18%) and England (24%)³⁷.

Suffolk data from the [Home Office Incident Recording System](#) indicates that in 2023/24 there were³⁸:

- 11 fires attended for converted flats/maisonettes (single occupancy)
- 62 fires attended for purpose-built low-rise flats/maisonettes (1-3 flats)
- 8 fires attended for purpose built medium rise flats and maisonettes (4-9 flats)
- 2 fires attended for purpose-built high-rise flats (10+ flats)
- 7 fires attended for dwellings of multiple occupancy

Since the Grenfell Tower fire, SFRS has visited and inspected all high-rise residential buildings in Suffolk to ensure that the owners have appropriate fire safety arrangements in place. One example that is currently undergoing repairs and updates to remove cladding is St Francis Court in Ipswich.

The Government have also made recent changes to the [Fire Safety legislation](#) that Responsible Persons (RPs) need to be aware of. The Act clarifies that Responsible Persons (RPs) for multi-occupied residential buildings must manage and reduce the risk of fire for the structure and external walls of the building, including cladding, balconies and windows, and entrance doors to individual flats that open into common parts.

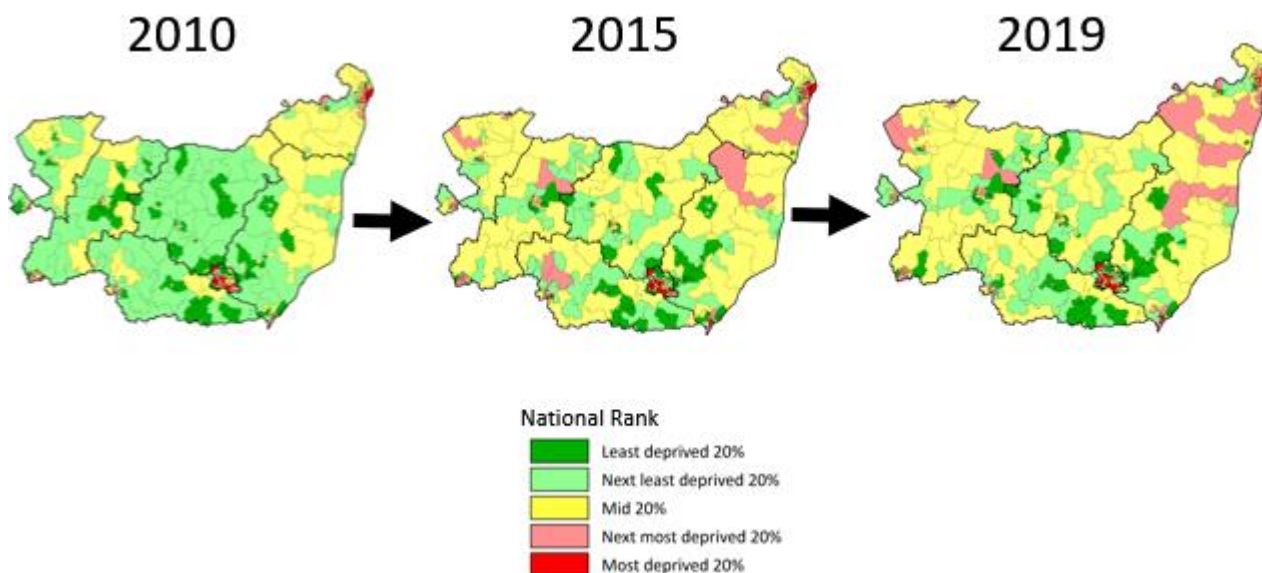
Deprivation

Deprivation is another important factor to understand, as there is a link between fire risk and economic and social disadvantage. The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (latest available data) measure relative levels of deprivation in 32,844 small geographical neighbourhoods, called Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs), in England. It is important to note that these statistics are a measure of relative deprivation, not affluence, and to recognise that not every person in a highly deprived area will themselves be deprived. Likewise, there will be some deprived people living in the least deprived areas³⁹.

Suffolk continues to experience below average levels of deprivation. The dramatic change in relative deprivation seen in Suffolk between 2010 and 2015 has not been repeated, but neither has there been much of a recovery in Suffolk's relative position. At the county level, Suffolk was in the least deprived third of LAs nationally in 2015; now Suffolk ranks just outside the least deprived third (53rd out of 151 Authorities).

11.3% of Suffolk's LSOAs are in the 20% most deprived in England. 96% of the 20% most deprived LSOAs in Suffolk are in either East Suffolk (20 LSOAs) or Ipswich (28 LSOAs). Ipswich has the highest number and proportion of LSOAs in the 20% most deprived areas nationally, when compared to other local authorities in Suffolk.

Figure 8: Deprivation by LSOAs in Suffolk comparative IMD distribution in 2010, 2015 and 2019



The impact of rurality and deprivation³⁹

Despite these relatively low levels of overall rural deprivation in Suffolk, small distinct pockets of rural deprivation do clearly exist; these can be hidden by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation being calculated at LSOA level. Suffolk’s rural population is older than its urban population, and the proportion of older people in Suffolk’s rural population is increasing faster than the proportion of older people in urban areas. This trend, combined with the higher cost of providing services in rural areas, housing stock which is often difficult to heat and maintain, poor transport, and more limited social networks, is likely to lead to high and increasing needs and costs for Suffolk’s rural population now and in the future.

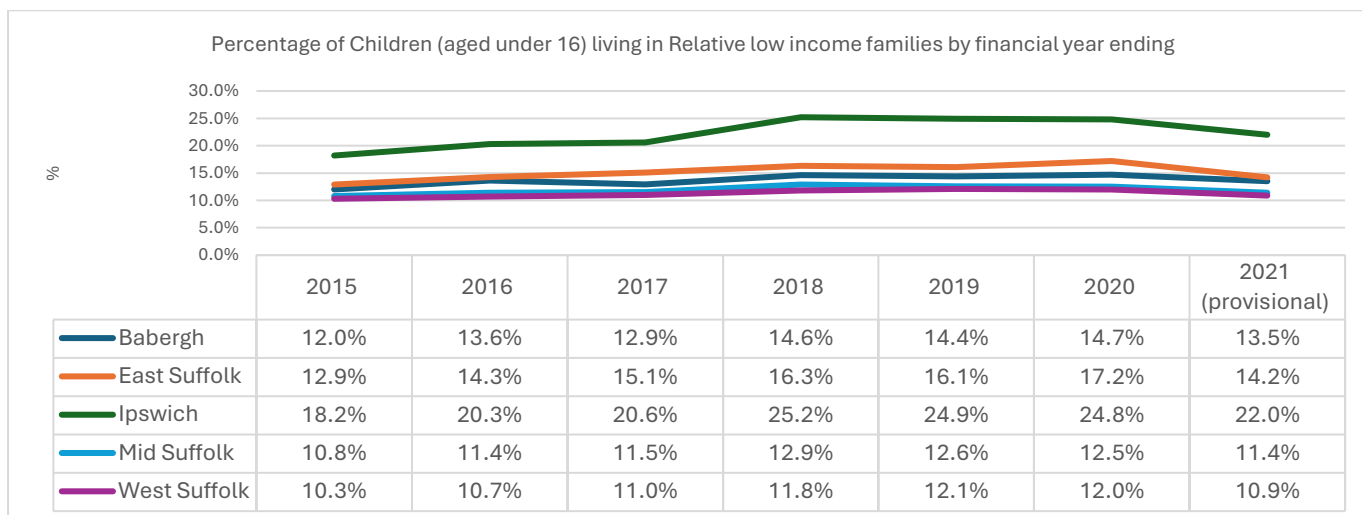
Child poverty

2021 data (latest available) for Suffolk indicates 19,829 children aged under 16 living in relative low income families⁴⁰. Relative low income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the reference year. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits, or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics.

The chart below shows variation in where children in low income families live in Suffolk. Over 1 in 5 (22.0%) live in Ipswich – equating to 6,130 children. The lowest number of children living in low income families in Suffolk is in Mid Suffolk (1,976), however the lowest percentage is in West Suffolk (10.9%).

Absolute low income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the reference year in comparison with incomes in financial year ending 2011. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits, or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics. 15,925 children under the age of 16 are estimated to be living in absolute low income families in Suffolk in 2021, again the highest number (4,956) and percentage (17.8%) residing in Ipswich³⁹.

Figure 9: Children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families³⁹



Crime and community safety

Crime rates in Suffolk are consistently lower compared to regional and national averages. However, 45,992 offences were recorded from June 2023 – May 2024⁴¹. The most commonly reported crimes were violence and sexual offences, followed by criminal damage and arson offences. Over the same period the three wards with the highest number of recorded crimes were: Alexandra ward in central Ipswich (3,031), Harbour and Normanston ward in Lowestoft (2,885) and Abbeygate ward in Bury St Edmunds (1,270)⁴¹.

[Safer Neighbourhood Teams](#) work closely with partner agencies to address the issues identified as priorities by the local community. Safer Neighbourhood Teams deliver a truly local policing style – local people working with local police and partners to identify and deal with issues of concern in their neighbourhood.

The Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner's [Police and Crime Plan 2022-2025](#) sets out strategic priorities for policing and how local resources will be managed to deliver the best possible policing service to communities in Suffolk.

As of March 2021, there were 1243.4 full-time equivalent police officer posts, 897.6 police staff, 118 special constables and 155 police support volunteers. In addition, the force funds 32.8 full-time equivalent police officers based in regional secondments⁴⁰.

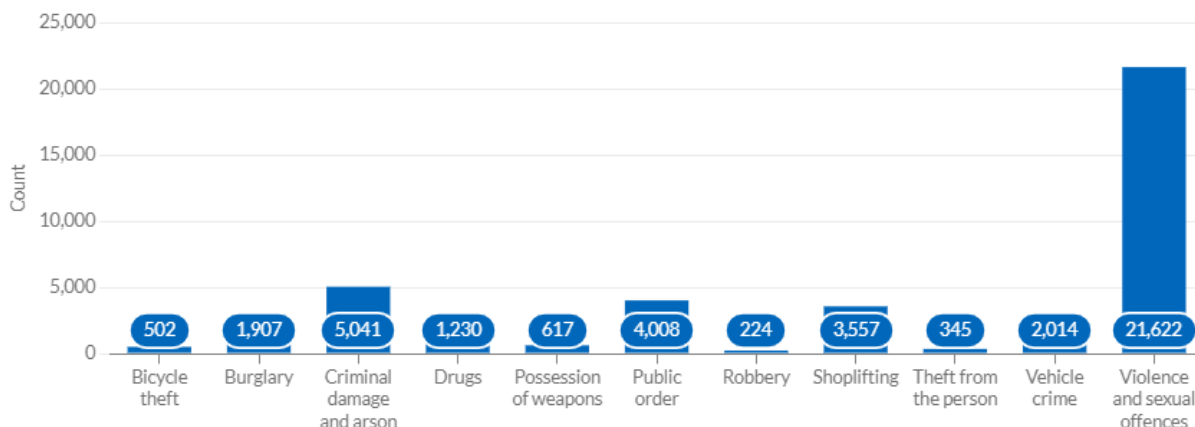
The Police and Crime plan notes that Suffolk Constabulary polices the ninth largest county area in England, and while the population is small compared to some policing areas, the rurality of the area and sparsity of the population, present challenges for policing visibility and emergency response. Similar challenges with rurality exist for SFRS.

Housing and commercial developments (including Freeport East and the proposed development of Sizewell C) in Suffolk will bring more people into Suffolk to work and live, which means more people that need to rely on policing services⁴⁰. This need will also be felt for SFRS.

Figure 10: Crime rates by type for Suffolk for June 2023-May 2024⁴¹

Crime by Type

Crime count by type for Suffolk (Jun-23 - May-24)



Need more information?



- Visit the [Suffolk Observatory crime profile](#)
- Read more about [community safety in Suffolk](#)
- Visit the [Suffolk Police website](#)

Economy and employment

A very high proportion of Suffolk’s working age residents’ work. Suffolk has a history of high levels of employment, and has maintained this even through the economic downturn since 2008/9⁴². Data for 2023/24 indicates that 79.2% of Suffolk residents aged 16-64 were in employment, compared to 80.1% in the East of England, and 78.8% for England overall.

Figure 11: Employment summary Suffolk, April 2023 – March 2024⁴³

Employment and Unemployment (April 23-March 2024)				
All People	Suffolk (Numbers)	Suffolk (%)	East (%)	England (%)
Economically active+	368,900	79.2	80.1	78.8
In Employment+	354,000	75.8	77.1	75.7
Employees+	298,100	65.3	67.6	66.2
Self Employed+	54,700	10.3	9.3	9.3
Unemployed*	14,900	4.0	3.7	3.9

Source: ONS annual population survey

+ - numbers are for those aged 16 and over % are for those aged 16-64

* - numbers are for those aged 16 and over. % is a proportion of economically active

However, for a proportion of Suffolk residents the outlook is more challenging. 2022 data indicates that there were 24,400 workless households in Suffolk (10.7% of households, lower than the East of England- 11.2% and England 13.4%). Rising house prices, a paucity of high paid employment, rural isolation and deprivation, and unemployment all contribute to a challenging living environment. In-work poverty is also a key issue in Suffolk.

2023 data shows that Suffolk residents working full time earn roughly £62 less per week compared to their East of England counterparts, and £40 less per week compared to England as a whole⁴³.

2023 data indicates that the proportion of Suffolk residents with ‘no qualifications’ is 5.6%, higher than the East of England 5.3% and England 6.2%. Longer term trend data (from 2006) has shown the proportion of residents with no qualifications has fallen considerably, but there have been fluctuations in the most recent years – further monitoring is required. Additionally, Suffolk has a lower proportion of the working age population qualified to RQF4 and above (equivalent to a degree) compared to the East of England and England⁴³.

Need more information?



- Visit the [Nomis labour market profiles](#)
- Visit the [Suffolk Observatory economy and employment profile](#)

Daytime population (commuter flows) and visitors

Census 2021 data for Suffolk local authorities indicates that East Suffolk has the highest commuter inflow and commuter outflow, resulting in the change of population during the daytime hours.

As well as workday movement, research by Visit England and Office of National Statistics estimated that in 2022 there were a total number of 37,331,344 visitors to Suffolk (day and staying). In 2022 there were 1,518,000 staying visitors in Suffolk, staying a total of 5,664,000 nights. The total number of day visitors was 35,813,344⁴⁵.

Figure 12: Local authority incoming commuter flow data, Suffolk, 2021⁴⁴

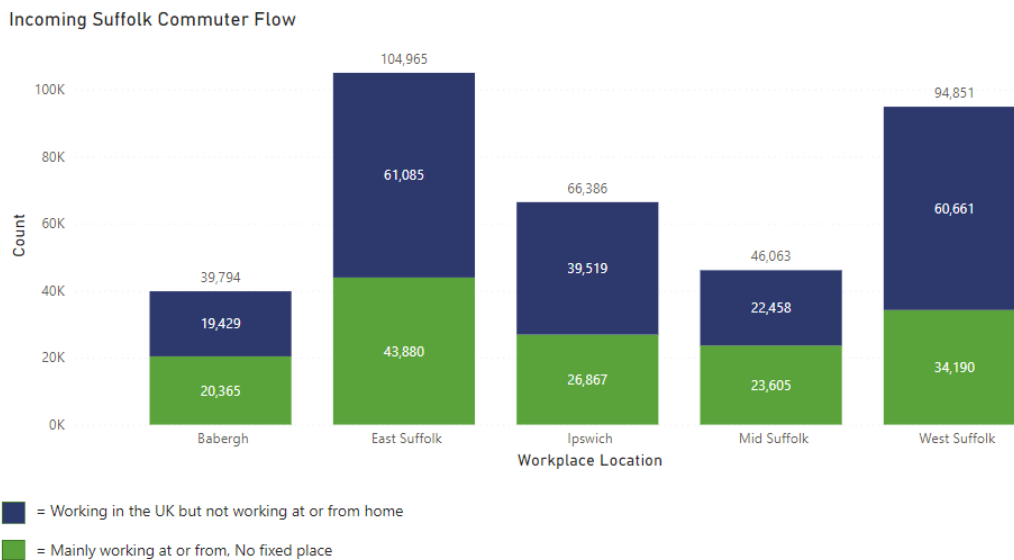
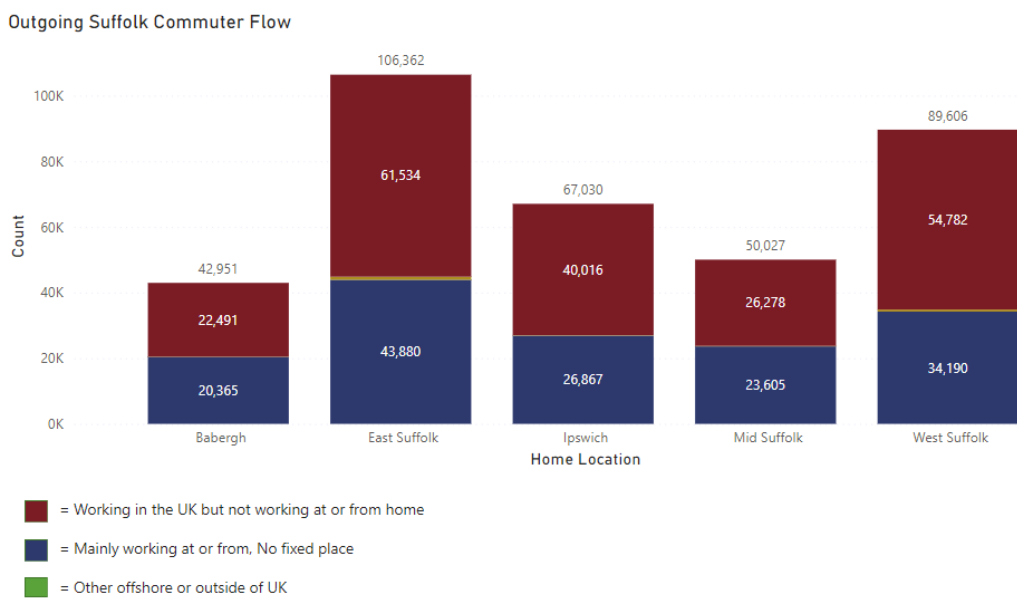


Figure 13: Local authority outgoing commuter flow data, Suffolk, 2021⁴⁴



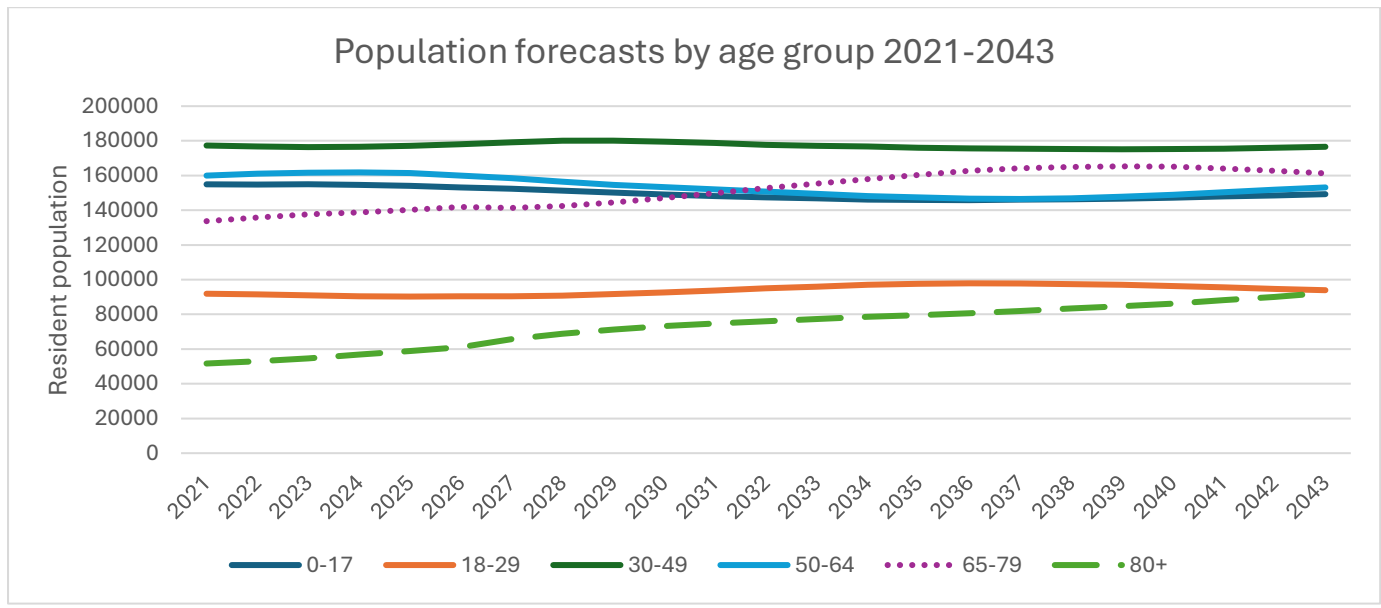
Changing Suffolk

Over the next twenty years there is likely to be a large change in the population of Suffolk, specifically the age of the resident population. Suffolk is expected to see a shift from approximately 1 in 5 residents aged 65 and over to approximately 1 in 3.

Predicted population growth

Population projections from the ONS suggest that the population of Suffolk is expected to increase to an estimated 785,000 by 2026 and 826,000 by 2043. The chart below shows how the different age groups are predicted to change over the coming years. Older age groups are set to increase, most notably those aged 65 and over, who will make up over 30% of the population from 2035.

Figure 14: Population projections by age group 2020 to 2043, Suffolk¹⁶



Other predicted changes in Suffolk include:



A higher number of people with multiple long-term conditions. As people age, conditions such as heart disease become more common; and some new age-related conditions appear. Many more people will have multiple conditions in Suffolk in 20 years' time – and multi-morbidity is a key driver of cost.



Those affected by mental health conditions are likely to increase. Suffolk's overall population is growing, and as many mental health conditions are 'common', the number of people experiencing these types of conditions is likely to increase proportionately. At the same time, prevalence of mental health conditions may also be increasing.



Increase in the number of people with dementia. The number of people living with dementia in Suffolk is likely to increase by nearly half (49%) by 2040⁴⁶.



The demand for homes is likely to increase. The number of households and demand for dwellings are forecast to increase over the next 20 years, and there are likely to be more older households.

Risk areas

Main roads

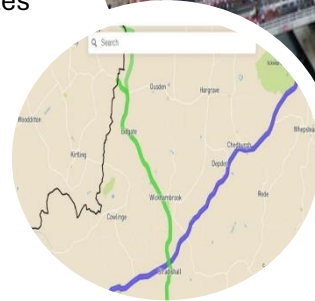


3.44 billion vehicle miles were travelled on roads in Suffolk in 2020, down from 4.36 billion miles 2019⁴⁷, this reduction is largely due to the restrictions in place because of the pandemic.

The Suffolk road network totals over 4,300 miles, National Highways maintain [trunk roads](#) (roads of strategic importance), but the rest is Suffolk County Council's responsibility. Included as trunk roads is the A14 linking the port of Felixstowe, to the Midlands. The other strategically important links are the A12 linking Yarmouth to London, the A11 from Newmarket to Thetford and Norwich and the A47 (North) from Lowestoft (River Waveney/Bascule lifting bridge) to Great Yarmouth. Both the A12 and A14 links bypass Ipswich via the south over the Orwell bridge, with 55,000 vehicles crossing the bridge on a daily basis⁴⁸. During 2021 [National Highways undertook work](#) to make changes to allow the Orwell Bridge to remain open more frequently during high winds, installing new electronic signs on the bridge which display changeable driver speed limits. This allows traffic to still use the bridge even during strong winds (of less than 60mph).

Construction has finished on a new highway crossing of Lake Lothing, Lowestoft known as the [Gull Wing](#). This will connect Riverside Road to the south of Lake Lothing with Peto Way to the north of Lake Lothing. The Gull Wing will reduce traffic congestion in the town, regenerate the area and attract new investment for the local economy.

The strategic lorry network gives the preferred links for lorries for haulage and distribution. It identifies not only the preferred routes within the county, but those same routes also interconnect to adjacent counties. In 2021, a technical and community led review of lorry routes that considered changes to the highway network commenced. The final review was published in 2022.



Road users

While accepting that all road users have a responsibility for road safety, several cohorts of specific concern have been identified in Suffolk⁴⁹:

- Motorcyclists - especially those riding bikes over 500cc.
- Young drivers/riders (16-24 years of age.)
- Pedestrians (especially school age children in deprived areas).

Other areas of concern are:

- Safety of work-related driving - including those commuting to work as well as for work purposes.
- Offending drivers – otherwise known as ‘the fatal four’, drink/drug driving, speeding, driver distraction and failure to wear a seatbelt.
- Older drivers.

[Suffolk Roadsafe](#) is a non-statutory Board which was created in May 2007. The partnership aims to make Suffolk’s roads safer for all. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service forms part of this partnership.

SFRS offer a variety of [road safety education](#) initiatives:

- The **FireBike team** attends events and biker gatherings throughout Suffolk and the Eastern Region, to talk to riders about road safety.
- As bikers tend to ride in groups or pairs, it is usually the case that when one is involved in an incident, the first person on the scene will be a fellow biker. **Biker Down** is a free awareness-raising course for bikers.
- **ItCanWait** is a pre-driver road safety intervention which aims to reduce the use of mobile phones by drivers, it is delivered by SFRS personal to 15 to 18-year-olds.



Suffolk Roadsafe’s 3-year review 2016-2018 (latest available), highlighted several potential areas to monitor in relation to horizon scanning:

- Changes in Suffolk’s home to school transport policy could result in an increase in walking and cycling on unlit rural roads, more young drivers from identified groups already overrepresented, increased ‘school gate congestion’ and associated issues around inconsiderate parking.
- Housing developments: there is a need to ensure that only the sites that contribute positively to road safety are allocated in the local plans.
- Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) offer the potential to significantly improve access for those who are unable to drive. This could be very positive in reducing collisions, but technology is still developing in this area and needs to be monitored.
- The changing and ageing population demographic is likely to result in an increase in older drivers on Suffolk’s roads. For many, due to the rural nature of the county, driving may be their only transport option. There is a need to ensure older drivers dealing with complex traffic environments and the cognitive demands of driving are both safe to drive and supported where necessary.

Winter planning

Suffolk County Council has a legal duty to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice and ‘Suffolk Highways’ delivers the winter service function on behalf of Suffolk County Council⁵⁰. The objective of the [Winter Service Plan](#) is to put in place the policy and processes to maintain the highway in a safe condition for the travelling public, free from snow and ice as far as is reasonably practicable. The plan is reviewed on an annual basis at the end of each winter period.

The plan notes:

- The winter period is from 1 October to 30 April.
- The core winter period and the main period of risk for the winter service is from 1 November until the 1 March.
- Forecasts are monitored daily during the winter period to ensure that a response can be provided should it be necessary.
- Suffolk Highways introduced a [COVID-19 Winter 2021/2022 Support Document](#) which forms part of the appendices to the main winter plan.
- Under the winter plan access to 24 hour fire stations is included under the ‘Priority 1 (P1) Network’.



Electric vehicle charging

Suffolk County Council, in partnership with Suffolk's district and borough councils, is working towards supporting and facilitating the uptake of electric vehicle (EV) charging opportunities across the county.

There are a range of benefits of electric vehicles, including air quality and economic benefits. As the up-take of electric vehicles increases, SCC need to ensure that a strategy is in place that reflects the role of the local authorities and explores the options for public charging across Suffolk.

There are already a number of electric vehicle charging points available to the public in Suffolk. These are provided by several different charge point networks. You can see an overview of most of the UK charging networks on [Zap-Map](#).

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils led a bid on behalf of councils in the East of England for 100% grant funding to install rapid EV charge points in East Anglia. The rapid charge point will have the ability to provide an 80% charge in 30 minutes which will help remove range anxiety for EV drivers.

The locations are:

- St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council (Central Bury St Edmunds)
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council (Great Yarmouth)
- Norwich City Council (UEA Norwich)
- Breckland District Council (Attleborough, Swaffham, Thetford, Dereham)
- Suffolk Coastal District Council (Felixstowe)
- Ipswich Borough Council (Central Ipswich)
- Tendring District Council (Harwich)
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council (Needham Market)

All 11 will have contactless payment facilities so there is no need to subscribe to a specific charging network.

SFRS has electric vehicle charging in place at various sites across the Suffolk fire stations to support our fleet of small vehicle EV's (mixture of officer response cars and non-operational support vehicles) this will include both fast and rapid charge points at Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich East, and Lowestoft South Fire Stations.

SFRS have gained additional knowledge in dealing with EV fires from site visits to garages in Suffolk, for example a visit to [Ipswich Volkswagen in September 2021](#). SFRS's equipment officer has been researching electric vehicle (EV) products to support fire service intervention at such events involving EV vehicles in fires, RTC's etc. SFRS has established and maintained several links within the [NFCC](#) attending meetings together, discussing this evolving subject, sharing best practice and updates.

Need more information?



- More information about Suffolk's policy, strategy and plans for maintaining highways assets in Suffolk can be found on the [Suffolk County Council roads and transport webpages](#).
- [Take part on the Biker Down course, or book an #ItCanWait session](#), which both aim to reduce the number of collisions on Suffolk's roads through education.
- More information about [Suffolk Road Traffic Collision Data](#) is available online.

Killed or seriously injured on the roads

Data for Suffolk indicates that in 2020, 265 people were killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the county’s roads and the rate of KSI in Suffolk is statistically significantly similar compared to England. Pooled data for Suffolk for 2018-20 indicates that 53 children under 16 years of age were KSI, again the rate was statistically similar to England. Emergency admissions to hospital for motorcyclists aged under 25 were statistically significantly worse compared to England, as were slight and serious casualties aged under 25 years.

Figure 15: Summary traffic accident data for Suffolk, mixed years²³

Indicator	Period	Suffolk		Region England			England		Best
		Recent Trend	Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst	Range	
Killed and seriously injured (KSI) casualties on England's roads (Persons, All ages)	2020	–	265	77.0	71.2	86.1*	456.1		24.1
Children killed and seriously injured (KSI) on England's roads (Persons, <16 yrs)	2018 - 20	–	53	12.9	14.5	15.9	55.0		2.6
Emergency admissions for car occupants (aged 0-24) (Persons, <25 yrs)	2016/17 - 20/21	–	160	15.6	15.0	14.1	25.2		3.7
Emergency admissions for motorcyclists (aged 0-24) (Persons, <25 yrs)	2016/17 - 20/21	–	135	13.2	10.6	10.4	23.4		4.0
Emergency admissions for pedal cyclists (aged 0-24) (Persons, <25 yrs)	2016/17 - 20/21	–	110	10.7	13.6	13.0	30.4		4.9
Emergency admissions for pedestrians (aged 0-24) (Persons, <25 yrs)	2016/17 - 20/21	–	75	7.3	8.6	11.7	24.3		4.3
Slight casualties from road traffic accidents (aged 0-24) (Persons, <25 yrs)	2016 - 20	–	2,399	233.9	212.6	205.0	381.5		92.7
Serious casualties from road traffic accidents (aged 0-24) (Persons, <25 yrs)	2016 - 20	–	408	39.8	39.2	35.7	66.7		12.8
Fatal casualties from road traffic accidents (aged 0-24) (Persons, <25 yrs)	2016 - 20	–	25	2.4	2.0	1.7	5.5		0.0

Compared with benchmark ■ Better ■ Similar ■ Worse Benchmark = England

Note KSI for adults is per billion vehicle miles travelled, all others are per 100,000 population.

Rail networks



Although major railway incidents in the UK are rare, they place significant demands on local fire and rescue services and often require resources and support from neighbouring fire and rescue services and emergency responders. Additionally, smaller scale incidents involving railways are more prevalent⁵². The [Fire and Rescue Service Operational Guidance – Railway Incidents](#) provides guidance that can be adapted to the nature, scale and requirements of the incident.

Passenger Train Services in Suffolk are provided by Greater Anglia. Passenger services run along the Great Eastern Main Line (GEML) between London Liverpool Street and Norwich in addition to the East Suffolk Line (Ipswich to Lowestoft and Felixstowe) and the West Suffolk Line (Ipswich to Cambridge/Ely via Bury St Edmunds). The GEML is electrified (25Kva Overhead Line) with services being provided by a mixture of electric and diesel traction. The East and West Suffolk lines are not electrified and are operated by diesel traction only.

There are 25 rail stations in Suffolk. The busiest stations in Suffolk are Ipswich (726,756 entries and exits in 2020/21) followed by Stowmarket (185,762) and Bury St Edmunds (151,515)⁵³. Statistics on station usage can be found [via the Office of Rail and Road website](#). The [Anglia route strategic plan](#) is also published online.

In addition to passenger services, Suffolk's railway carries a significant amount of rail freight which is primarily container traffic to and from the Port of Felixstowe. However, there are a smaller number of trains carrying aggregates from a number of sites and natural gas condensate from North Walsham. These freight services use the GEML to and from London and the West Suffolk Line towards Ely/Peterborough and are operated by several rail freight companies⁵⁴.

Airports, air bases and military presence

There are no public airports in Suffolk, however there are several in neighbouring counties:

- [London Stansted](#) (Essex)
- [Norwich Airport](#) (Norfolk)
- [Cambridge International Airport](#) (Cambridgeshire)
- The [Imperial War Museum Duxford](#) is also near to the Suffolk border.



There is a significant military air force presence in terms of two large US Air Force bases in Forest Heath in Suffolk ([Lakenheath](#) and [Mildenhall](#)). 2015 plans for the United States Airforce to withdraw from Mildenhall were scrapped in 2020. There are UK armed forces bases at [Honington](#), [Wattisham](#) and [Woodbridge](#).

Drones/small unmanned surveillance aircraft may pose a collision risk to an aircraft. More information is available on the [Civil Aviation Authority](#) website.

The current Suffolk Community Risk Register identifies the relative likelihood of an aviation incident as **LOW** risk. The Suffolk Resilience Forum's Aviation Incident Plan from 2016 identifies that particular attention must be paid in relation to crashed military aircraft as there are specific hazards associated with munitions. The 2016 aviation incident plan notes that in the event of an incident SRFS responsibilities will include:

- Early consideration of the effects the incident may have on the environment and potential action to be taken to minimise this.
- In conjunction with the police, participate in the aircraft crash investigations led by the AAIB and preparation of reports with supporting evidence for subsequent enquiries.
- Facilitate a coordinated Fire and Rescue/USAF response where appropriate, utilising specialist knowledge and equipment from both services.

United States Air Force Base Plans are restricted due to data sensitivity.



Need more information?

- A list of all UK units in Suffolk and their location can be found on the [Suffolk military covenant](#) website.

The Port of Felixstowe



The Port of Felixstowe is the biggest and busiest container port in Great Britain, as well as one of the largest in Europe. An estimated 3,000 ships use the Port every year, including the largest container vessels afloat, and the Port handles over 4 million containers (TEUs – twenty-foot equivalent units)⁵⁵.

The Port of Felixstowe provides some of the deepest water close to the open sea of any European port, with an estimated 30 shipping lines operating from it, that offer 90 services to and from 400 global ports⁵⁵.

Additionally, 70% of the containers that come through the port are delivered to the ‘Golden Triangle’. This is a region in the middle of Britain where a vast number of main high street and online retailers have their national distribution centres⁵⁵.

Harwich International

Although located in north-east Essex, Harwich International port is very close to the Suffolk border and is one of the UK’s leading multi-purpose freight and passenger ports. It is included here as there may be a need for SRFS to respond to a marine and/or shore-based incident.

Need more information?



- [Port of Felixstowe](#) website
- [Harwich International](#) website

Other ports and maritime

The Port of Ipswich is the UK’s biggest grain export port and handles approximately 2 million tonnes worth of goods each year. The Port of Lowestoft is the home of the Operation and Maintenance Base for Greater Gabbard Offshore wind farm and handles around 100,000 tonnes each year. Due to Suffolk’s coastal nature there are many sea fishing locations such as Aldeburgh and Southwold.

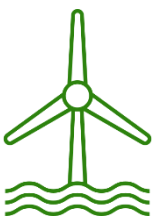
Need more information?



- [Ipswich port](#)
- [Lowestoft port](#)

Offshore wind farms

There are **several large wind farms** proposed or being constructed off the coast of Suffolk:



- The [Gallopier Wind Farm](#) and the [Greater Gabbard Wind Farm](#), 14 miles off the Suffolk coast from Orford are complete and in operation. Further development is planned in the form of [Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm](#).
- The [East Anglia Offshore Wind Farm](#), approximately 27 miles off the Suffolk coast is also now fully operational with 102 offshore wind turbines. Further development includes [East Anglia Two](#) and [East Anglia Three](#).
- The Suffolk County Council website has more information about [offshore wind energy in Suffolk](#).

Piers



Piers in Suffolk are key to tourism and part of Suffolk’s heritage. However, due to the exposed nature of the piers, they can be at risk of fire, storm damage and maritime incidents⁵⁶. There are four piers in Suffolk, one in Felixstowe, one in Southwold and two in Lowestoft (Claremont and South Pier).

Need more information?



- [Felixstowe pier](#)
- [Southwold pier](#)
- [Southwold South pier](#)
- [Southwold Claremont pier](#)

Other key tourism areas

Locations where large groups of people congregate for business, leisure or other reasons, have the potential to pose a variety of risks and hazards that SFRS may have to attend to. Key sites in Suffolk include:

- **[Ipswich Town Football Club](#)** – Portman Road in central Ipswich is home to the Ipswich Town football team. On matchdays, the stadium can accommodate just over 30,000 supporters seated in four separate stands⁵⁷.
- **[Center Parcs Elveden](#)** – The popular holiday village resort is located in 400 acres of Suffolk woodland, approximately 450,000 guests visit Elveden Forest every year.
- **[Foxhall Stadium](#)** – Situated in Kesgrave the Foxhall International Raceway hosts events such as the National Banger World Final and the National Hot Rod World Championship⁵⁸
- **[Go Ape](#)** – This popular tree top zip wire and high rope activity course is situated in Thetford Forest.
- **[Latitude festival](#)** – This annual event attracts thousands of festival goers over a weekend in Henham Park in Suffolk.



Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Sites

COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) sites are industrial sites which hold a quantity of dangerous substances over a certain level, the consequences of an incident involving these substances could potentially harm the public or the environment⁵⁹.

The Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations ensuring that businesses: "Take all necessary measures to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances. Limit the consequences to people and the environment of any major accidents which do occur"⁶⁰.

Public COMAH 2015 information (searchable by postcode) can be found on the [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) webpages.

Suffolk has 4 upper tier COMAH sites that require the production of offsite emergency plans, known as External Emergency Plans:

- **International Flavours & Fragrances (GB) Limited** - Duddery Hill, Haverhill CB9 8LG
- **PPG Industries (UK) Limited** - Needham Road, Stowmarket, IP14 2AD
- **Calor Gas** - Saxham Operations Centre, Newmarket Road, Risby, IP28 6QY
- **Treatt PLC** - Skyliner Way, Bury St Edmunds, Bury Saint Edmunds IP32 7FR

Suffolk COMAH External Emergency Plans are held by the Suffolk Resilience Forum.

Radiation sites (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) (REPPiR)

“REPPiR establishes a framework of emergency preparedness measures to ensure that members of the public are properly informed and prepared, in advance, about what to do in the unlikely event of a radiation emergency occurring, and provided with information if a radiation emergency actually occurs”⁶¹.

There is one REPPiR site in Suffolk, the Sizewell B Nuclear Power Station near Leiston in Suffolk. Sizewell B is the UK’s only Pressurised Water Reactor. The Sizewell Offsite Plan sets out the Multi-Agency strategic and tactical management arrangements for dealing with a nuclear emergency (i.e. an incident with off-site radiological implications) at either [Sizewell A](#) (shut down in 2006) or [Sizewell B](#) nuclear power stations⁶².

Plans have been approved to open a new nuclear power station in Suffolk – [Sizewell C](#). The scale and nature of this construction project (including a large workforce influx) may pose additional risks to SRFS that may need to be considered.

Fire safety for farmers and rural businesses



Suffolk is a rural county, with many farms and rural businesses. SFRS [produces advice](#) for farmers and businesses working in Suffolk's countryside on prevention, reducing arson and Avian flu. This includes advice on arson reduction, fertiliser storage and management.

Climate change and associated risk

Human activities emit carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. Along with other ‘greenhouse gases’, too much CO₂ in the atmosphere raises the global temperature. This rise in temperature is driving changes to our climate that will, if left unchecked, make the population’s current way of life impossible on the planet⁶³.

The 2022 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment report highlights that climate change has already caused irreversible damage to the planet⁶⁴. Many risks are highlighted in the report. However, eight priority risk areas have been identified as requiring the most urgent UK-wide action over the next two years. These are highlighted in the table below.

Table 6: Priority risk areas for the next two years⁶⁴

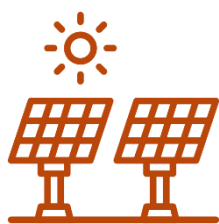
Priority Risk Area	Magnitude of Risk	Priority Risk Area
Risks to the viability and diversity of terrestrial and freshwater habitats and species from multiple hazards	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Soil and water protection and restoration Environmental land management Sustainable farming and forestry Net Zero Green finance
Risks to soil health from increased flooding and drought.	Medium but will increase to high by 2050.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Soil and water protection and restoration Environmental land management Sustainable farming and forestry Net Zero Green finance
Risks to natural carbon stores and sequestration from multiple hazards leading to increased emissions.	Medium but will increase to high by 2050.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Soil and water protection and restoration Environmental land management Sustainable farming and forestry Net Zero Green finance
Risks to crops, livestock and commercial trees from multiple hazards.	Medium but will increase to high by 2050.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Soil and water protection and restoration Environmental land management Sustainable farming and forestry Net Zero Green finance
Risks to supply of food, goods and vital services due to climate-related collapse of supply chains and distribution networks	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public procurement Business resilience Environmental land management Trade
Risks to people and the	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure Energy

economy from climate-related failure of the power system		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net Zero
Risks to human health, wellbeing and productivity from increased exposure to heat in homes and other buildings	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building regulations and strategies • Planning reform
Multiple risks to the UK from climate change impacts overseas	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National resilience • Overseas aid • Research and capacity building

These risks may have both direct and indirect impacts on SFRS for example:

- Increased flooding may result in increased emergency callouts.
- Water shortages or droughts could cause not only issues for the public water supply, but also in relation to extinguishing fires in emergencies.
- Droughts and high temperatures also increase the risk of wildfires.
- Supply chain shortages may cause issues with technology or fleet delivery.

Solar farms



Whilst solar farms are providing innovative and greener sources of energy, there are concerns around the risk of fire from battery storage. This is because whenever a large amount of energy is stored (whether in traditional liquid/gas forms or in batteries), there is a possibility that an uncontrolled release of the energy could result in a fire or explosion⁶⁵. Thermal runaway is a risk here – this is where a damaged battery begins to release energy in the form of heat, leading to further damage and a feedback loop that results in rapid heating⁶⁵. Examples of solar farms in Suffolk include [Toggam Solar](#) in West Suffolk, various sites in [Babergh and Mid Suffolk](#) and East Suffolk, with proposals approved for a new energy farm ([Sunnica](#)) on the Cambridgeshire/Suffolk border.

SFRS have been working closely with Cambridgeshire FRS regarding a large-scale project (Sunnica), which has seen large media interest and specialists on both sides offering opinions and objections. SFRS have also been working with additional companies looking at installing Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) within Suffolk and offering advice as to what the Service would require to support such developments. This has seen SFRS engaging with both engineers, developers and local crews feeding into the ‘Emergency Action Plan’ (EAP) for such sites. Several SFRS staff and crews have visited sites both in Suffolk and cross border in Cambridgeshire. SFRS has communicated with Merseyside FRS regarding a significant fire, supporting learning nationally on BESS sites, which is again supporting ongoing workstreams.

Suffolk County Council climate emergency

In 2019, Suffolk County Council declared a climate emergency. The council has pledged to become a carbon neutral authority by 2030. In order to start to drive this change, the council has set up a Policy Development Panel (PDP) to explore how Suffolk County Council's carbon and harmful emissions on a spend to save basis. Work will occur with partners both at a county and regional level, as well as working with Government to become cleaner and greener.

Whilst all efforts to reduce Suffolk’s carbon footprint are welcomed, there is an acknowledgement that the SFRS vehicle fleet still relies upon fossil fuels. However, new technology is constantly being explored. For example, SFRS has started Phase 1 of its fleet electrification which has seen the procurement of small vehicles being EV’s and this is supported by capital investment in strategic charging sites across the county with both fast and rapid chargers for dedicated SFRS use.

The new equipment and vehicles are also the latest innovations in green technology, supporting Suffolk County Council’s climate emergency declaration and ambitions to be net zero by 2030. The fire appliances are the first in Suffolk to be fitted with solar panels, have more fuel-efficient engines and also carry battery powered hydraulic rescue equipment.

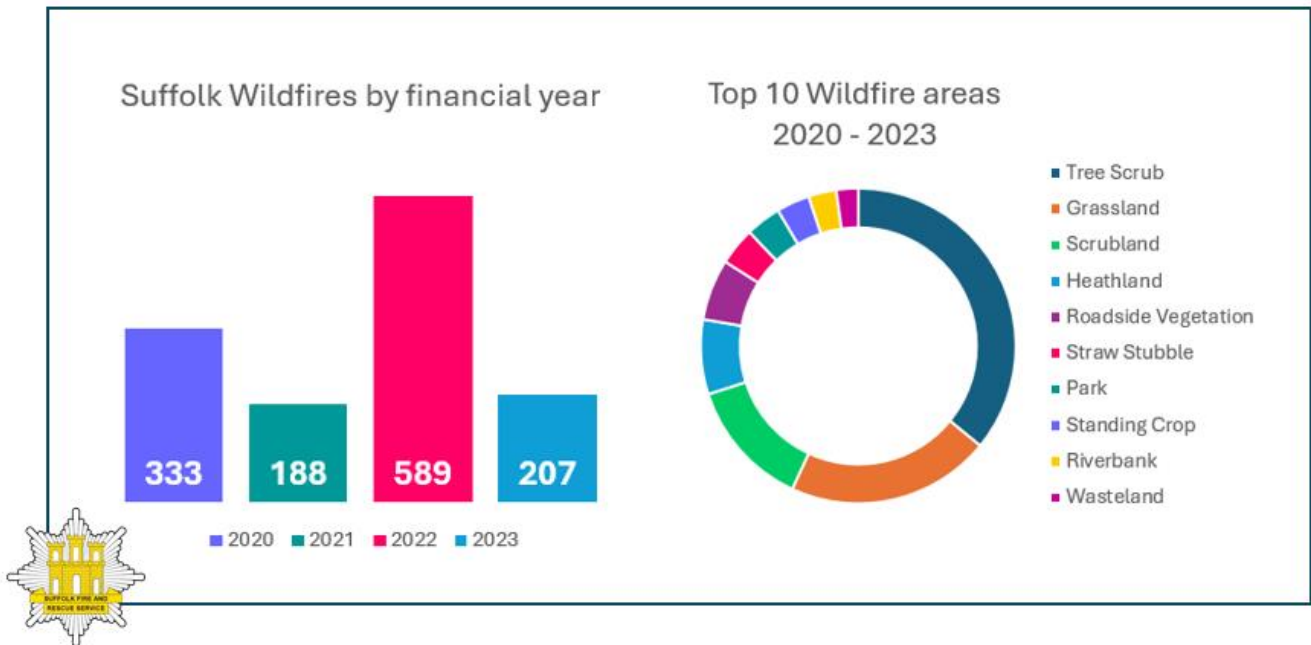
In addition, in November 2021, significant investment was made by [SCC to decarbonise buildings](#) and this includes fire stations.



Wildfire incidents

Wildfires not only endanger human life, but they also kill wildlife and destroy habitats and the natural environment. Climate change is a factor in the frequency and severity of such fires. SFRS publishes data on wildfire incidents attended. These are shown in the accompanying chart. Suffolk data indicates that over the last 4 years, there has been a mix of both deliberate and accidentally started wildfires in Suffolk.

Figure 56: Wildfire incidents by year



Source: Suffolk Fire and Rescue

Flooding and severe weather

Suffolk is subject to flooding from the sea, rivers, rain and ground water⁶⁸. As a result of climate change, both the chances and consequences of flooding are likely to increase⁶⁹. In February 2022, Suffolk declared a major incident in relation to storm Eunice, which caused major disruption in Suffolk⁷⁰. During the storm:

- Suffolk Constabulary received 339 calls to 999 and 431 calls to 101 – 150 of these were weather related.
- Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service attended 51 incidents.
- Suffolk Highways received 146 reports of fallen trees and road obstructions. Teams worked throughout the night to clear these.
- UK Power Networks reported 13,900 properties in Suffolk without power.

Suffolk County Council is a Lead Local Flood Authority as defined in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The council is responsible for coordinating a partnership approach to flood and coastal risk management with all risk management authorities in Suffolk. This is done through the [Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership](#).

The partnership has produced a [Flood Risk Management Strategy](#) to help everyone understand and manage flood risk within Suffolk. The [Green Suffolk](#) website provides more information about flooding.

Local authorities in Suffolk won't provide sandbags to try to protect individual properties, but instead use these limited resources in bulk to raise and repair defences or divert water away from groups of properties.

The Suffolk Resilience Forum produced a [Suffolk Flood Plan](#) in 2018. The Suffolk Community Risk Register matrix identifies the likelihood of coastal flooding as medium/high and fluvial flooding as medium (see appendix).



Need more information?



- Suffolk [Local Energy Asset Representation \(LEAR\) report](#)
- [GOV.UK Flood Risk Mapping](#) information service
- [Suffolk County Council flood reporting tool](#)

Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue

[Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue](#) (SULSAR) is a member unit of the UK's Lowland Rescue service. It is a voluntary specialist search team which helps the emergency services find missing vulnerable adults and children. SULSAR are normally called out by Suffolk Constabulary, but also respond to calls from SFRS and other search teams in neighbouring counties⁶³.

Preparing for, and responding to emergencies

Whilst 2019 research indicates that responding to fires is the duty that the public are most aware of⁷¹, the challenges faced by SFRS are evolving. This is reflected in the data, and throughout SFRS colleagues. Events such as road traffic collisions and rescues of both animals and people, from water or height are examples of such incidents.

It is vital that SFRS continues to effectively prepare for, respond to, and prevent emergencies. The following section gives an overview of wider factors that may all want to be considered within the Strategic Assessment of Risk. This information should be considered with wider contextual information, as well with strategic planning documents.

State of fire and rescue: The annual assessment of fire and rescue services in England 2024

This is His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services' second report to the Secretary of State under section 28B of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. It contains his assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of fire and rescue services in England, based on the inspection reports we published between 20 January 2023 and 31 March 2024.

This report draws on findings from inspections of fire and rescue services in England, to provide an overall view of the state of the fire and rescue sector. Whilst the local findings are most pertinent within this Strategic Assessment of Risk, it is also important to consider the national context. A selection of findings include⁷²:

- The pandemic and public health restrictions in place due to COVID-19 placed a strain on public services and on the inspection programme.
- Many services had done more to prioritise fire protection (which had previously been heavily criticised).
- In many respects, the sector is well prepared when it comes to responding to routine and major emergency incidents, and this has been the case throughout the pandemic.
- Most services we inspected are better at promoting a positive professional culture.
- However, more change is urgently required, too many services aren't taking enough action on prevention. A clear disconnect was observed between what is in public-facing service plans and what is actually being done by public-facing staff.
- Good intentions to promote equality, diversity and inclusion generally haven't resulted in tangible improvements, many services don't clearly define what they are working towards and there is a lack of representation (particularly women and those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds).
- Almost universally, the focus of fire staff is to protect the communities they serve. Their dedication to protect life and property is highly commendable, and their efforts throughout the pandemic have saved many lives.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service as part of Suffolk County Council

SFRS forms part of Suffolk County Council, and this is a key strength in terms of collaboration, coordination, and having a shared strategy and direction of travel. It also helps in mitigating some of the barriers seen nationally. Some examples include (but are not limited to)^{74,75}:

- As part of Suffolk County Council (SCC), the Service follows the council's financial procedures for budget setting, monitoring and the production of final accounts.
- Suffolk County Council, as Suffolk's Fire and Rescue Authority, is responsible for ensuring Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service operates in accordance with the law.
- The council publishes its Annual Governance Statement through the Audit Committee. The Statement sets out the Council's governance arrangements, which apply to, and include, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service.
- Suffolk County Council recognises the importance of its fire and rescue service and continues to invest in fire stations, vehicles, equipment, firefighter clothing and people to provide effective prevention, protection and emergency response services.
- There are opportunities for closer collaborative working with other council directorates, such as Adult Care Services and Public Health.

- The council’s constitution sets out the framework for political and managerial leadership. This framework, and the wider leadership of the council and fire and rescue service, is underpinned by the organisational behavioural values.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service 2022 inspection report

His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service Inspection for SFRS took place in February 2022. The inspection lasted six weeks, during which inspectors carried out an onsite and virtual inspection. The formal report was published in January 2023.

The Inspectorate reported that it was a pleasure to revisit Suffolk Fire and Rescue, and he was grateful for the positive and constructive way the service engaged with the inspection.

It was noted that we have made improvements since our last inspection. These are most notable in how the service protects the public through the regulation of fire safety, and how it gathers risk information and makes this available.

Innovative practice was highlighted for our use of QR codes which give staff instant access to record and review lessons learned from operational incidents, training, and exercises.

The inspectorate commended the changes made to improve our culture, values, behaviours, and wellbeing, noting that staff now feel more empowered.

Improvements are needed in allocation of staff across prevention, protection, and response, including how we identify, support, and ensure our development and promotion process is open transparent and fair.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is one of the top performing County Council Fire and Rescue Services and we are commended for the changes and improvements we have already made.



Need more information?

- [Read the HMICFRS inspection report on Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service](#)

Public Perception

National research by HMICFRS investigated the public's perceptions of local fire and rescue services across England⁷². The 2019 survey conducted across 44 local fire and rescue service areas found that both satisfaction with local fire and rescue services, and perceived value for money of these services is high.

The findings of this survey were national but included 150 surveys in Suffolk. Therefore, it is worth taking these findings into account when thinking about prevention and awareness opportunities within Suffolk. Clear and targeted awareness raising initiatives may help in increasing the public's understanding of their local fire service and help to engage them in prevention messages.

Respondents indicated that the top three most important statutory duties for local fire and rescue services to prioritise were responding to fires (85%), rescuing people from road traffic collisions (62%) and responding to emergencies such as floods and terrorist incidents (48%).

When respondents were shown a list of non-statutory response incidents, responding to medical incidents (either assisting the ambulance service or as a first responder or to serious medical calls) was the most commonly selected activity. This formed one of the top three most important areas for local fire and rescue services to prioritise (77%). This was followed by responding to storms and other natural disasters (74%) and responding to water rescue incidents (73%).

The report indicates that the public have low awareness of staffing arrangements in their local fire and rescue service stations.

Respondents were asked about their knowledge of the staffing arrangements for stations in their local fire and rescue service. Respondents have low awareness of this (42% gave an incorrect answer and a further 28% say they don't know). Whilst around one in five (21%) respondents have had contact with their local FRS in the past 12 months, over half of respondents (57%) do not feel informed about what their local fire and rescue service is doing. This percentage had increased from 52% in 2018. Respondents reported the main reason for feeling ill-informed was due to not any information about it (79%). Over three quarters of respondents (78%) were interested in knowing what the fire and rescue service is doing in their local area.

Additionally, nine in ten respondents (88%) say that they had **not** been asked about their views on the local fire and rescue service in the area where they live in the past 12 months.

A low proportion of respondents (19%) saw, heard or read something about fire safety in the last three months, this percentage increased to 24% when someone in the respondent's household smoked.

Service development

SRFS Prevention team

Prevention activity is a core element of SFRS. The SFRS prevention team deliver a range of interventions to identified risk groups, prioritising Suffolk's vulnerable residents. The aim of the team is for all Suffolk residents to live long, healthy and fulfilling lives. Some of their targeted work to prevent and mitigate risk includes:

- Continued collaborative work with external and internal agencies in Suffolk. Current partnerships add financial support such as the long-standing Rotary relationship and sensory team who offer additional financial resource to the department.
- Utilising data and analysis methodology to best allocate resource to the primary risk and risk groups. This will assist in delivering the best, most efficient service to the people of Suffolk.
- Utilising partners across Suffolk to help identify vulnerabilities and include SFRS in their invaluable work. An example of this is the work completed around care providers having the skills and knowledge to recognise fire risk and seek help and support from SFRS.
- Utilising Safelincs and online home safety referral tool, to maximise delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits to the most vulnerable.
- Champion 'Staywise' a national educational tool to help educate children in fire, water and road safety.
- Delivery of prevention courses including:
 - Biker Down – A motorcycle safety course as part of the FireBike scheme.
 - It Can Wait – A pre and young driver road safety intervention package aimed at 15-18yr olds to reduce the use of mobile phones by drivers.
- Delivery of Safeguarding training to ensure staff competence in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues to protect those at risk in our communities.
- Delivery of Rural prevention, reducing the risk across the county working with agricultural businesses, thatched and heritage property owners and hard to reach communities.



SRFS Protection team

The Protection team work with local businesses, authorities and individuals who are responsible for protecting people from fire in their premises, to ensure that they comply with fire safety regulations.

All commercial and many multi-occupied residential buildings require specific fire safety measures to protect employees, residents and other occupants. This legislation is used to enforce the regulations when necessary.

Some of their targeted work to protect and mitigate risk includes:

- A Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP). Premises are selected for audit based on the risk they may present to those who work, visit, or use the building.
- Continue to comply with the NFCC (National Fire Chiefs Council) national guidance for ‘Competency framework for Fire Safety Regulators’ and developed programmes for the Protection Officers to ensure they have the right skills, competency, and technical knowledge to carry out inspection audits to the highest standard.
- Hold multi-agency Impact Days which involve Protection, Prevention, Police and Local Authority Housing Officers regularly targeting premises in different Suffolk towns. Impact Days’ supply education, advice and support for premises owners and managers.
- Take legal action where building owners have not complied with the legislation.
- Implemented new government legislation; The Fire Safety Act 2021, the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and the Building Safety Act 2022. Making changes to the website to give up to date information to members of the public.

SRFS Response team

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is dedicated to responding swiftly, safely, and effectively to emergencies. We are prepared for a wide range of incidents, including fires, floods, road accidents, hazardous materials situations, and specialised rescues. To enhance our response, we collaborate closely with other agencies like the Ambulance Service, Police, and Coastguard.


In addition to reacting to emergencies, our crews work tirelessly to improve safety in Suffolk. We engage with both residential and business communities, focusing on prevention and protection measures. Our goal is to reduce the occurrence of incidents and minimise their impact on their lives and local community.

To ensure effective emergency response, we strategically position fire stations, fire engines, and specialised resources across Suffolk. These locations, supported by personnel working on-call and various duty shifts, enable efficient coverage for smaller towns, parishes, villages, and densely populated areas like Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, and Lowestoft.


Our highly trained firefighters rely on modern equipment and up-to-date risk information to respond safely and efficiently.



SRFS People



606
Operational Staff



104
Support Staff

On- Call Firefighters

On-Call firefighters make up the majority of our firefighters, responding to emergency calls within their local area either from home or their place of work.

Non station based firefighters

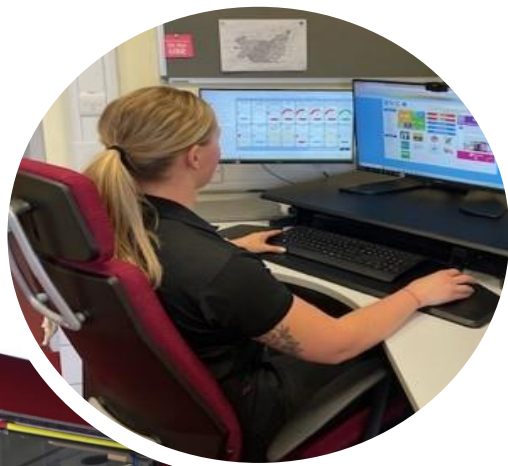
These fire fighters perform a number of roles including a whole time County Day Crew that work holistically around the county to increase coverage where required.

Wholetime firefighters

Wholetime firefighters are shift-based, some working days and nights and others working only day shifts.

Support Staff

Behind every firefighter is a dedicated support team. From maintaining our vehicles to managing our IT systems and ensuring our operational effectiveness, our support staff are instrumental in delivering our services to the community.



More information

There are lots of places you can look to find more information, data and statistics about Suffolk.

The Suffolk Observatory



The Suffolk Observatory contains all Suffolk's vital statistics; it is the one-stop-shop for data, statistics and reports all about Suffolk provided by a variety of organisations.

Through data, reports and analysis, the Suffolk Observatory provides a comprehensive picture of the County and is a great source for useful facts and figures.

Visit the [Suffolk Observatory online](#).

Open Data Suffolk



Find free data about Suffolk and the Council available to the general public and organisations.

Visit the [Open Data Suffolk portal](#).

The Healthy Suffolk Website



Find detailed reports and information. The Healthy Suffolk website is home to the Health and Wellbeing Board, as well as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

Visit [Healthy Suffolk online](#).

Gov.UK



The [Home Office](#) collects detailed information on incidents attended by Fire and Rescue Services

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Appendix: Suffolk Community Risk Register – Risk Matrix (last amended 21-11-2019)

Risk Rating	Definition
Very High Risk	<p>Primary risks requiring immediate attention due to potential consequences. Risk reduction or mitigation strategies should be developed.</p> <p>Hazard specific multi-agency contingency plans required, exercise and training for hazards in place.</p> <p>Risk monitored regularly.</p>
High Risk	<p>Sufficiently serious to warrant appropriate consideration after Very High Risks. Consider developing risk reduction or mitigation strategies.</p> <p>Generic multi-agency contingency plans required, exercise and training for hazards in place. Risk monitored regularly.</p>
Medium Risk	<p>Less significant but may cause upset or inconvenience in the short term. Consider being managed under generic emergency planning arrangements. Risk monitored</p>
Low Risk	<p>Managed using normal or generic emergency planning arrangements.</p> <p>Minimal monitoring and control unless risk assessment changes to move to a higher rating.</p>

The risk rating is devised from the impact of an incident resulting from one of the hazards and the likelihood of an incident occurring. Further information on the impact and likelihood scores is given after the table of risks below.

RELATIVE LIKELIHOOD	LOW (1)	MEDIUM LOW (2)	MEDIUM (3)	MEDIUM HIGH (4)	HIGH (5)
RELATIVE IMPACT					
CATASTROPHIC (5)				DISEASE – Pandemic Influenza – H23	
SIGNIFICANT (4)	HAZMAT - Civil nuclear – H61 (National assessment)		INFRASTRUCTURE / SYSTEM FAILURE – National electricity transmission - H41 (National assessment)		
MODERATE (3)	ACCIDENT - Aviation crash - H16	<p>Fire or explosion at a gas LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) or LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) terminal (or associated onshore feedstock pipeline) or flammable gas storage site - H1 / H7 / HL1 / HL25 / HL30</p> <p>Local industrial accident involving a toxic chemical release - HL2 / HL3</p> <p>Fire or explosion at a fuel distribution site or a site storing flammable and/or toxic liquids in atmospheric pressure storage tanks or at a onshore fuel pipeline - H4 / H5 / HL28</p> <p>High consequence dangerous goods – H60</p>	<p>Fuel tanker drivers – H31</p> <p>HAZMAT - Fires in waste sites - S-HL7</p> <p>DISEASE – Animal – H25</p>	<p>HAZMAT – Food supply contamination – H14 (National assessment)</p> <p>NATURAL HAZARD – Coastal Flooding – H19</p>	
MINOR (2)	HAZMAT - Maritime pollution – H15 (National risk assessment)	<p>INFRASTRUCTURE / SYSTEM FAILURE Gas supply infrastructure - H38 (National assessment)</p> <p>NATURAL HAZARD - Drought – H50</p> <p>NATURAL HAZARD - Wildfires – H58</p> <p>Industrial explosions and</p>	<p>INFRASTRUCTURE / SYSTEM FAILURE – Finance / banking -H59 (National assessment)</p> <p>Emerging Infectious diseases – H24</p> <p>NATURAL HAZARD – Fluvial Flooding – H21</p>	<p>NATURAL HAZARD - Cold and snow – H18</p> <p>Storms & Gales - H17</p> <p>NATURAL HAZARD - Heatwave - H48</p> <p>INFRASTRUCTURE / SYSTEM FAILURE – Regional electricity</p>	Major pollution of surface waters and groundwater – HL4

		major fires - HL7		transmission - H45 (National assessment)	
				HAZMAT - Biological substance release – H46 (National assessment)	
LIMITED (1)		INFRASTRUCTURE / SYSTEM FAILURE – Water supply infrastructure - H39 (National assessment)	INFRASTRUCTURE / SYSTEM FAILURE – Telecommunications - H40 (National assessment)	Prison officers – H33	
RELATIVE IMPACT	LOW (1)	MEDIUM LOW (2)	MEDIUM (3)	MEDIUM HIGH (4)	HIGH (5)
RELATIVE LIKELIHOOD					

* Multiagency plans have been developed for these risks as they are classed as some of the highest risks facing the East Coast on the National Risk Register. The Risk Assessment process conducted in Suffolk did not place these risks at the same level that they are accorded nationally but they remain credible risks.