

Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters, Pirehill
Please ask for Kay Johnson
DDI (01785) 898670

SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 12 October 2010

2.00 pm

Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,
Pirehill

Please note the time change

A Chair and Vice-Chair's Preview (for Mr J. Francis and Mr W. Day) has been arranged for
1.30 pm)

Howard Norris
Secretary to the Authority
1 October 2010

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2010**
4. **Quarter 1 Performance**
Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer/ Deputy Chief Executive (Service Improvement)
5. **Operational Training**
Report of the Head of Safer Communities
6. **Statistical Process Control Performance Reporting Trial in Stoke Area Command**
Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Deputy Chief Executive (Service Improvement)
7. **Sickness Absence and Management**
Report of the Head of Human Resources

8. **Items for Future Meetings**

4 November 2010	Unwanted Fire Signals Update Report
	Support Staff Training
	Data gathering – work to facilitate the gathering of data
Future Items date not yet specified	Previous Working Group updates
	Benchmarking update report following further Developments
	Staff Wellbeing Strategy – Further Progress Report – Internal Audit Report on the Occupational Health, Fitness and Welfare Facility Occupational Health Unit Vehicle Update

9. **Date of Next Meeting** – The next meeting of this Committee will be held on Thursday 4 November 2010 at 2.15 pm

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 13 JULY 2010**

Present: Mr. J. Francis (Chairman)

Day, W.	Najmi, J.
Easton, R.	Oates, J.
Lawson, I.	Wells, J.
Morrison, G.	

Also in Attendance: Mr C. Enness, Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Deputy Chief Executive (Service Improvement), Mr D Stevens, Head of the Performance and Improvement Directorate, Mrs K. Bourne, Head of Performance and Planning, Mr A McEntire, Risk Reduction Manager, Mr M Adams, Head of Information Communications and Technology and Mr D. Steele, Central Risk Reduction.

Apologies: Burgess, J.

PART ONE

Documents referred to in these minutes as schedules are not appended but will be attached to the signed copy of the minutes. Copies, or specific information in them, may be available on request.

Membership of the Committee

1. The Membership of the Committee was outlined for Members information. The Chairman welcomed new Members to the Committee.
2. **RESOLVED** – That the Membership of the Committee be noted.

Minutes

3. Members discussed the problems caused by setting targets. Target setting had in the past not been scientific and resources were not always directed to meeting the targets. Last year the Authority improved performance on 21 of the 25 indicators but did not meet the ambitious targets. The Audit Commission marked the Authority down for not meeting its targets.

Targets were sometimes stretched to obtain the best performance but the Audit Commission examined whether targets had been met as opposed to whether performance had improved, which was not very satisfactory. Also there was also a lack of clarity in target setting.

The Statistical Process Control (SPC) method would move away from target setting and would set an upper limit and a lower limit for performance. This was a more accurate way of monitoring performance and this method had been used in the public sector for many years. This method would let the Authority know more quickly if it was doing well or poorly in a particular area. Members discussed the 23,000 Home Fire Risk Checks (HFRCs) carried out which had not improved the performance relating to fire deaths and injuries. Members discussed target setting issues at Stafford Hospital – the hospital had met all its targets to go to trust status but had failed the public in patient care.

4. **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee held on 19 May 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Terms of Reference of the Committee (Schedule 1)

5. The Terms of Reference of the Committee were presented to Members for their information. New Members were also circulated with a copy of the Scrutiny Framework.

6. **RESOLVED** – That the Terms of Reference be noted.

Quarter 4 Performance (Schedule 2)

7. The report provided Members with information regarding Service Performance for Quarter 4 (Q4) 2009/10 year. The table appended to the report outlined strategic performance information and a summary of data confidence.

The report identified that a number of key indicators had achieved target, whilst others had not. A number of positive performance trends could be seen even for those indicators that had not achieved their target at 2009/10 year end. Data quality had improved significantly over the course of the year and there were no significant business critical errors to report which would influence the year end assessment of performance.

Members discussed that although the number of Home Fire Risk Checks it had carried out had been high this had still not met the target which had been set by the previous Authority.

Sickness absence levels had concluded above target in most areas of the Service. There had been a number of long terms sicknesses that had contributed to the increased levels. Management of sickness absence was being undertaken by Human Resources in consultation with Occupational Health. Members discussed that the Service were currently looking to transfer the Occupational Health Service to Staffordshire Police under a Service Level Agreement which would lead to savings of up to £170,000 per annum. These discussions were still ongoing and were not yet finalised. The indications were that the transfer of Occupational Health Service to the Staffordshire Police would provide a better service for less money.

Sickness, self assessment forms were checked to avoid any abuse of the system.

Mr Enness suggested that a report be brought forward to a future meeting of the Committee by the Head of Human Resources outlining Occupational Health and the processes surrounding sicknesses.

8. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That a report be brought forward to a future meeting of the Committee outlining Occupational Health and the process issues surrounding sickness.

Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) (Schedule 3)

9. This Item was brought forward on the Agenda for early consideration. Mr Enness informed Members that Mr McEntire had been asked to contribute to the National Guidance on large events.

The report updated Members on the situation regarding Unwanted Fire Signals, the progress to date, the current initiatives, future options and possible future policy changes. For the benefit of new Members Mr McEntire explained UwFS.

Although the number of Unwanted Fire Signals rose steadily over several years, there had been a steady decline since 2006/7, dropping from 4,096 to 2,917 last year. Interventions were ongoing with problem premises and "Call Filtering" by Control had seen a reduction in the number of incidents responded to.

Further work to provide Area Command "champions" with training and improving the "Call Filtering" process was expected to provide further reductions. However, more dramatic reductions could be achieved by a change in policy to reduce the response during night time hours to one pump, as during the day, and consideration to also reducing the response to domestic premises. This change in policy, which could reduce the costs of the Service considerably, would be proposed and actioned at the next Safer Communities Directorate meeting.

The options facing the Service were to continue with existing policy with minor alterations, or consider a radical change to the policy and reduce all responses to unconfirmed fires caused by the actuation of alarm systems to one pump. Any decision to reduce the response to possible incidents would carry an element of risk, however, the "call filtering" process would already have ensured a response to those incidents that were definitely fires. There were no specific financial implications arising from this report, although substantial possible savings were indicated.

Consultation had been undertaken with other Fire and Rescue Services. Any change to fundamental policy would be reviewed by the Service Management Board prior to implementation.

The Service were working with repeat offenders and investigating the cause of the UwFS so that it would reduce repeat calls. UwFS came from a range of systems. Information was given to occupiers of premises and responsible persons were identified. Champions had been appointed at each Area Command. Since April of 2010 call filtering had been undertaken by control and they would establish with the premises whether they had a fire. If there was definitely not a fire then the appliance would be turned around. Only a one pump response was sent during the hours of 7 am and 7pm. The majority of calls were received during the day and premises were encouraged to look at their procedures once the warning system had activated to see if it was a false alarm and then duly notify the Service. When the premises were empty then they would rely on the fire alarm system. There were still further things that could be done. Further liaison could be undertaken with alarm receiving centres. There could be further strengthening of the call filtering system. In response to a question Members were advised that control always had the discretion to mobilise more pumps. These were matters that would be considered by the Safer Communities Directorate meeting such as having a one pump response to premises over a 24 hours period and a one pump response to domestic properties. There was currently a two pump response during the hours of 7 pm to 7 am. There was often less life risk in business premises at night. If the Service got a call to confirm that it was a fire then the response would be stepped up and further appliances would be sent. The cost of sending

the second appliance was likely to be £483,768 per annum. This estimate was based on the LGA agreed cost of sending out an appliance which was £286 and during 2009/10 the second pump was turned out on 1,688 occasions. Mr Enness advised Members that around 25% of the operational activity was down to UwFS. The Service faced financial challenges over the next five years and this was a significant cost. The Service faced frozen council tax and a decrease in revenue support grant. The Service was working towards a process where it responded on receipt of a call to confirm whether it was a fire. Any system developed would ensure the safety of firefighters and the public.

The response to domestic properties was at present two pumps. If this was reduced to one pump then based on the 2009/10 figures there could be a saving of £181,038.

Members discussed whether a TRV could be sent to these calls and was advised that TRVs were not designed to respond to property fires and the firefighters would not be able to have a safe system of working. TRVs carried out a lot of community fire safety work.

During 2009/10 there were 253 incidents where over the border appliances had been used and savings of £72,358 could be made. These were "real costs" to the Service. Members were advised that the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service regularly carried out over the border call for Staffordshire and Staffordshire rarely reciprocated.

Members held a discussion on the work which was ongoing with businesses. Members were advised that UwFS came in from across all types of systems

Mr Enness explained what the Oxfordshire policy on UwFS entailed. The policy was introduced following the industrial dispute in 2003. Oxfordshire FRS contacted businesses and advised them that the Service would not be responding if their fire alarms went off during the industrial dispute. This raised awareness with businesses and the policy continued after that industrial dispute. If fire control had any doubt then an appliance was sent and if there was a confirmed fire call then a pre determined response would be sent. They had told businesses that unless there was confirmed fire then the Service would not turn out. Mr Easton was a little concerned that if a detector panel picked up that there was a fire during the night and that there was no one to call it in as a fire then the property would burn down.

Members challenged whether the Service should be going to UwFS at all and whether it should be moving too the Oxfordshire model. Mr Enness advised Members that there was still a lot of work to be undertaken with businesses to ensure that businesses took responsibility. Mr Day indicated that the Service should be careful when considering this approach. The initial fears that were raised in Oxfordshire with regard to their policy on UwFS never materialised. Since the introduction of that policy there had only been two fires. Members were advised that the change to the Oxfordshire Policy would mean helping businesses to become more responsible and ensuring that they had the technical and management systems in place.

Mr Stevens commented that the current policy had shown some improvements and that there were still further measures to be taken. The Service would need to consider whether the policy was bold enough. He commented that he had carried out a peer review at another brigade and less than 0.5% of the call outs were actual fires – that brigade only sent out one pump. He commented that the transfer over to the Oxfordshire Policy could not be done overnight as there was still work to be undertaking with businesses. Businesses needed to be made aware that fire alarms were fitted to make people safe and were not about turning the fire service out.

The reduction of UwFS was not just about cost cutting but was about reducing risk to crews and road users whilst responding; committing resources that may be needed elsewhere; additional costs for retained turn out, reducing over the border responses by neighbouring brigades, reducing fuel consumption and appliance wear and tear and reducing the carbon footprint. For businesses it meant reducing disruption and loss of production costs and loss of confidence in the systems which would lead to complacency. The cost of responding the UwFS was also very important as the Authority needed to ensure that it had a balanced budget as well as ensuring the safety of firefighter and the public. Mr Enness advised Members that whilst the attendance at incidents was an operational matter Members should challenge whether the policy was going far enough. Mr Francis commented that the current Committee had been discussing the matter for the last 12 months and the attendance at these “non incidents” were costing the Service a great deal of money. He also indicated that whilst the pump was attending UwFS it could not attend any other incidents. He was advised that “cover moves” took place after 15 minutes.

An update report would be put to a future meeting outlining what the next steps would be with regard to UwFS.

Members thanked Mr McEntire for his presentation.

10. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That a further update report be put to the Committee in due course.

Data Quality 2010/11 (Schedule 4)

11. The report reviewed the Data Quality indicators to be used to monitor performance during 2010/11 and benchmarked current performance against these measures.

The indicator definitions were outlined in the report as follows:-

Month End Data Confidence Achieved for Incident Reporting System (IRS) - This indicator would measure all errors contained in IRS records which needed to be returned to the Area Commands for correction. The only errors not considered by the indicator would be mapping errors, which were largely generated by problems with the IRS system, rather than user errors. This measure would reflect the non value added activity expended on identifying and correcting data errors, and would support the drive to implement leaner, more efficient business processes into the organisation.

Right First Time Data Confidence for IRS - This was a new indicator which would illustrate for those records submitted to IRS, how many were correct and on-time at the point of submission. This would support the requirement to provide performance information based on live incident data, to enable Area Commands to manage performance more effectively.

Indicators would be monitored based on a rolling three month analysis, in order to address the appearance of increasing levels of data quality during the year, which were based only on users having had longer to correct the errors which had been returned to them. This was the impact of the year to date reporting approach which was adopted in 2009/10.

The current performance against these measures was outlined in the report. IRS Data Confidence averaged 96.9% for the Service for May 2010 and IRS Right First Time Data averaged 80.9% for the Service for May 2010.

Data Quality information – this would be submitted with all performance reports to the Scrutiny and Performance Committee. Specific Data Quality papers would be submitted to the Scrutiny and Performance Committee on an exception basis. When either of the above data quality measures had shown to have a worsening month on month trend at Service level, a paper would be submitted to the Scrutiny and Performance Committee to illustrate the level of performance achieved and to highlight known performance problems contributing to the worsening trend.

The Data Quality Indicators monitor all information returned through the Incident Recording System (IRS). It did not cover the data supporting Human Resources information which was currently contained in the SAP system, which was owned and managed by the Human Resources team. A project to review the data quality of the SAP system had been approved and would enable the organization to monitor the levels of data quality in this system in the future.

Members discussed whether some of the Data Quality issues related to training or whether they related to problems with the system. Ms Bourne advised Members that officers would be kept up to date with their training and that the Service were to shortly adopt a new IRS “front end”. The product developed by West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service was a much better product than the system currently in use. This product should improve performance on the “right first time” data.

Service Management Board at their meeting on 8 June 2010 had reviewed and approved the Data Quality indicators detailed in the report.

12. **RESOLVED** – That the data quality measures and benchmarks be noted.

Performance Reporting 2010/11 (Schedule 5)

13. The report provided Members with information regarding performance reporting for 2010/11. In 2010/11 the format of performance reports would change with the adoption of Statistical Process Control (SPC), as the method of monitoring levels of performance (as opposed to fixed targets). SPC was to be trialled at one Area Command (Stoke) during quarter 1 & 2 to determine if the method was suitable to be rolled out to the wider organisation at quarter 3, and during the period of the trial it would be necessary to use a method of interim reporting to monitor the performance of the Service as a whole. Proposed Interim and SPC based reports were provided at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Appendices showed examples of how SPC charts would look. The charts had an Upper and Lower Control Limit and performance should stay within these limits 98.9%. There may be times when the Upper and Lower levels were breached due to exceptional reasons eg arsonist released from custody. A Member commented that this was performance monitoring rather than performance management. Mr Enness advised that the process control would ensure that erratic measurements would prompt action to adjust the process ensure that the performance was steady and within the limits. He gave an example of the recent 0800 team study which showed that the increase in HFRCs had not reduced fire deaths and injuries and the process had showed a spike. The Service was now shaping the HFRC service to be delivered in a different way.

Mr Francis questioned why Deliberate Vehicle Fires and Accidental Vehicle Fires were being included in the performance statistics and was advised that these were not strategic measurements for us to look at nor were they a measure in the LAA and had been included for the benefit of the Area Commands and that there was a clear arson link.

These would be removed from future reporting to the Scrutiny and Performance Committee and would only be reported by exception.

Members were advised that the performance monitoring would not improve performance in itself and it was what the Service did with the information which was important.

14. **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

Family Group 4 Benchmarking (Schedule 6)

15. The report provided Members with information regarding Family Group 4 Performance Benchmarking Reports. The report identified the problems inherent with the benchmarking reports and also the potential benefits to be gained from considering the information, so that the Committee could decide if there was a suitable business case for presenting the information to the Scrutiny and Performance Committee for consideration. The report also outlined the work of the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), who was developing a suite of national performance indicators which would be used to benchmark performance. If the Service chose to adopt the national CFOA indicators then this information would be an alternative source of benchmarking intelligence.

Valid benchmarking information would assist in ensuring that the relative performance of the Service kept pace with peer authorities, and that the Service was meeting its statutory obligation to improve its performance at an acceptable rate.

Family Group 4 had developed a method to benchmark a number of agreed performance measures, since Best Value Performance Indicators (and the national benchmarking information) were disbanded in April 2009. There was no robust way to ensure that the measures used by different Services were based on exactly the same base data classifications or calculations. Very small differences in interpretations or assumptions could make significant differences to the comparative results. Family Groups were developed to have a membership based on fire authorities which could be considered to be similar in nature (in terms of their size and socio-demographic make up). Since the demise of many of the other Family Groups, Family Group 4 had allowed other authorities to join which were not necessarily as comparable to Staffordshire as the original membership was. The current membership of Family Group Four was outlined for Members information. This information included the population, number of domestic properties and the number of non domestic properties.

CFOA were in the process of agreeing a suite of performance indicators which could be used by Fire Services to assist in performance management and benchmarking. The indicators would cover the areas of Effectiveness, Efficiency and Equity. Indicator definitions had been devised and were undergoing consultation with fire and rescue services before they were finalised. The indicator definitions being consulted on related to Effectiveness. When these indicators had been agreed the measures from the other two categories would be consulted upon. It was proposed that the adoption of the measures would be voluntary for Services, therefore the usefulness of any benchmarking information would be dependant upon the numbers of authorities choosing to participate. The indicators would have detailed definitions similar to those of Best Value Performance Indicators, and should therefore produce reasonably comparable information, provided definitions were consistently adhered to.

Members were advised that another paper would be brought to the Scrutiny and Performance Committee when there was more information about the development of the CFOA performance indicators to discuss the relative benefits of available benchmarking

intelligence and to recommend how the information from the benchmarking reports could be used to inform performance monitoring.

Mr Oates commented that although the family group did not provide the Service with comparable information it was still useful to be a part of that group to be made aware of best practice in other brigades.

16. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That a further benchmarking report be bought back to the Committee in due course.

Presentation on the “Open Source” System

17. Mr Adams, the Head of Information and Communications Technology, gave a presentation to Members on the “Open Source” System which had been developed by a skilled team at West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service (WMFRS) over the last couple of years.

The software ensures that questions were supported by a relevant explanation of what information is required, which would ensure a better use of time. This would ensure accurate information is entered into the system and reduce any discrepancies. The system could create “to do lists” which the Area Commands could pick up. It could also store events and appointments eg for HFRCs. It would also have an email and a diary facility. The whole Service would be using the “Open Source” technology.

The incident recording system would be much improved and would define the interpretation of data. Information relating to incidents would be more accurate.

The Service was piloting this system to determine whether the concept could be adopted by other authorities who would be moving to the Regional Control Centre, which could improve the data that we are all collating. The system would go live on 27 September and would replace the current Incident Reporting System (IRS) system.

In response to a question Members were advised that the programme had been written in Linux. It was CLG funded project. It was hoped that the information would be able to be shared from one service to another. This would be a pilot for Staffordshire. If successful, CLG could offer this to other Fire and Rescue Services.

Members would be kept up to date on any developments.

Members thanked Mr Adams for his presentation.

18. **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

0800 Team Efficiency (Schedule 7)

19. A review of the 0800 team had taken place in February 2010 and the report highlighted the actions taken to date in response to the review and the recommendations made.

The Service had reviewed its existing arrangements for the delivery of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFRC's) to communities within Staffordshire. This looked at Fire Deaths and Injuries and Accidental Dwelling Fires. It was recognised (as an outcome of intelligence gained) that the Service needed to address the rising number of Accidental Dwelling Fires and drive down Deaths and Injuries and as a result of this three working practices had

been drafted that revised the way we deliver Community Safety Initiatives within our communities. These being:- 1. the After the Fire Initiative, 2. Delivery of Home Fire Risk Checks to vulnerable elderly via our 0800 team and 3. The Provision of Equipment supplied during an HFRC.

The after the fire initiative was designed to raise public awareness and confidence whereby operational crews would target, as part of their community safety duties, an identified area directly following an accidental dwelling fire. This is would increase the Fire Service presence in localities and improve engagement with people by raising their awareness of home fire safety and ultimately driving down accidental dwelling fires. It would also enable Area Commands to respond pro-actively to a wider range of community safety needs i.e. following an arson attack communities often experience a sense of vulnerability and insecurity. This initiative would contribute towards addressing those needs and through improved partnership working would actively by restoring public confidence and accelerating a return to 'normality' as quickly as possible. The arrangement commenced on 1 July 2010 and importantly it had the added value of improving the efficiency of the HFRC service.

A new Home Fire Risk Check (HFRC) policy had been drafted which identified the role of our 0800 team and technicians to target and deliver HFRC's to the most vulnerable 'at risk' members of the communities. A data sharing protocol had been established with both Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Adult Social Care Departments which had proved beneficial in accessing members of our communities at risk. The 0800 team were looking to build on this existing data sharing protocol to extend to other agencies and develop referral lines to access those identified at risk. The Service was contacting the elderly vulnerable to arrange visits. The policy would focus on vulnerable persons. Those HFRC's which did not meet this criteria would be referred back to Area Commands for their action. The 0800 team and Technicians would target those most at risk within our communities and deliver HFRC's to those groups. Area Commands would deliver HFRC's to those members of communities as a response to our 'after the fire' activities and other such areas which had been identified through risk profiling or via local intelligence.

The Service had looked at the provision of equipment and produced a draft document for consultation. This document identified the equipment that the Service would provide and the way in which the Service determine who it is issued to. Members discussed the provision of equipment to vulnerable elderly persons and were concerned that deep fat fryers were no longer being issued. A Member referred to one example where he thought that the issue of a deep fat fryer had prevented a fire. The Service was now looking at different ways of working and equipment such as CO2 indicators, extension leads and fat fryers were not being provided. The review looked at whether the provision of this equipment was in the Service's remit. The provision of the equipment was the householders own responsibility. The smoke alarm budget could be reduced by targeting vulnerable persons.

The revised policies gave a clear direction as to the Service's approach for Home Fire Risk Checks.

A single budget spread sheet for all costs was established at the start of the financial year in consultation with the Director of Service Delivery and Finance. This would be performance managed at regular budget team meeting held between Central Risk Reduction and finance.

The establishment of the 0800 team and technicians had been reduced as a result of a review of its operation and the current establishment is, One 0800 team Manager, Four 0800 team call operators, Nine Technicians, and Two Specialist Technicians who install

Deaf Alarms. All of these were managed by a Watch Manager. This revised structure had secured efficiencies for the organisation. Risk Reduction was currently being reviewed by Julian Hilditch (Head of Safer Communities) and this may result in further changes to the management structure within Risk Reduction and the 0800 team.

A performance management framework had been established within the 0800 team and technicians and records activity. All technicians were to complete 6 HFRCs per day. All R79 data was reported back to Social Care and Health on a quarterly basis. HFRC Audits would start from the middle of July. Work was underway to develop outcome based and qualitative approach over the next 3 months.

A project group has been set up to implement the use of mobile devices to support the work of the 0800 team. Trials had been undertaken using a laptop and a 'Panasonic' device. This sort of technology was the way forward as it took the administrative issues away from the Area Command. The Service was looking at collaborative working with the West Midlands and would meet up during September 2010.

Members were advised that a full copy of the review could be made available to Members on request.

Mr Stevens gave presentation on the review of the 0800 team and Mr Steele gave a presentation on the way forward and the work that had been undertaken after the review.

Members were advised that a record was kept of properties that had medical oxygen. This was recorded on the control data base so that crews knew of this in case of fire.

Members were advised that focus was being placed on quality HFRCs rather than quantity. The number of HFRCs would drop but there would be a narrower band of the community to target. 50% of technicians time was spend on replacing batteries, from 1 August the Service would not maintain the alarms and this would be down to the householder. Specialist referrals were not carried out by the technicians.

A discussion was held about the provision of data from the department of work and pensions. There were still some data protection issues and so this data was not yet forthcoming.

Members thanked the officers for their presentations.

20. **RESOLVED** – That the outcomes of the review and the way forward for the 0800 Team be noted.

Statistical Process Control – Pilot Scheme

21. Members discussed whether it was the appropriate time to review the Statistical Process Control method and concluded that it would be more appropriate to await the report from the pilot project before deciding on whether further scrutiny was needed.

22. **RESOLVED** – That a report on the pilot scheme be put to a future meeting of the Committee.

Items for Future meetings

23. Members discussed the items for future meetings.

24. **RESOLVED** – That the following items be brought to a future meeting of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee.

1 September 2010 (with a follow up report In April 2011)	Performance review Target setting – Review of the Performance Framework Pilot project
1 September 2010	Support Staff Training
	Operational Training
4 November 2010	Data gathering – work to facilitate the gathering of data
	Sickness Reporting and Occupational Health – Breakdown of short term and long term sickness – procedures implemented to reduce sickness
Future Items date not Yet specified	Previous Working Group updates
	Staff Wellbeing Strategy – Further Progress Report – Internal Audit Report on the Occupational Health, Fitness and Welfare Facility Occupational Health Unit Vehicle Update
	Benchmarking update report
	Unwanted Fire Signals Update report

Date of next meeting

25. **Date of Next Meeting** – The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 1 September 2010 at 2.15 pm

CHAIRMAN

STOKE ON TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Scrutiny and Performance Committee

12 October 2010

Quarter 1 Performance Report 2010/11

Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Deputy Chief Executive (Service Improvement)

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny and Performance with information regarding Service performance for Quarter 1 (Q1) 2010/11 year. The table attached to this paper reports strategic performance information and a summary of data confidence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The contents of the report are noted.

Financial Implications

The report contains indicators and commentary relating to financial performance indicators.

Legal Implications

The Service has a statutory obligation to improve performance.

Equality and Diversity

The Human Resources indicators support the equality and diversity monitoring processes for the organization.

Risk Implications

Failure to perform to expected standards has serious implications for the Service and therefore all performance should be scrutinized and improvement opportunities discussed.

Consultation and Engagement undertaken

Not applicable.

Other implications

There are no other implications

Background

The interim performance report compares performance during 2010/11 to performance during the same periods last year. A number of indicators can be seen to be improving compared to the previous year, whilst a number are not. The commentary explains known reasons for performance levels and highlights activities aimed at addressing key problem areas.

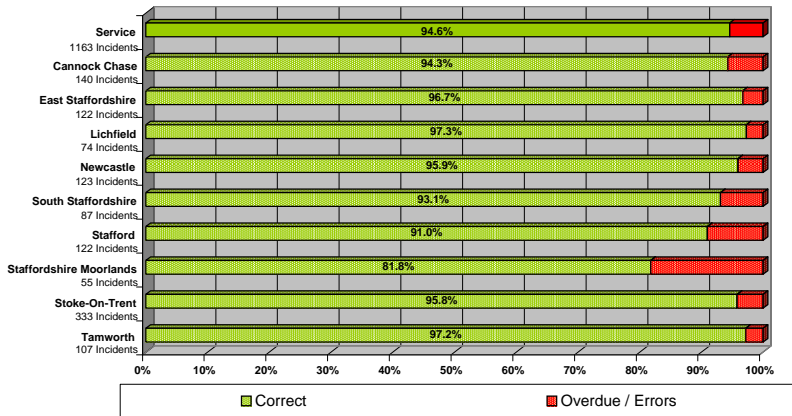
Report Author: - Kath Bourne

Telephone: - 01785 898606

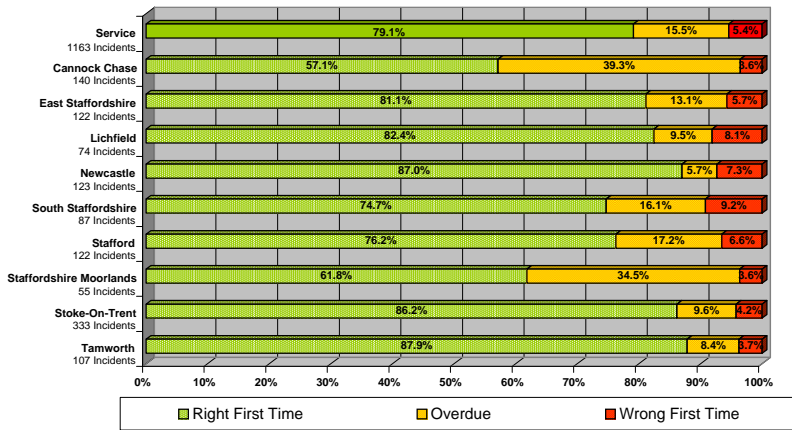
Email:- k.bourne@staffordshirefire.gov.uk

Performance Summary Report Quarter 1 2010-2011

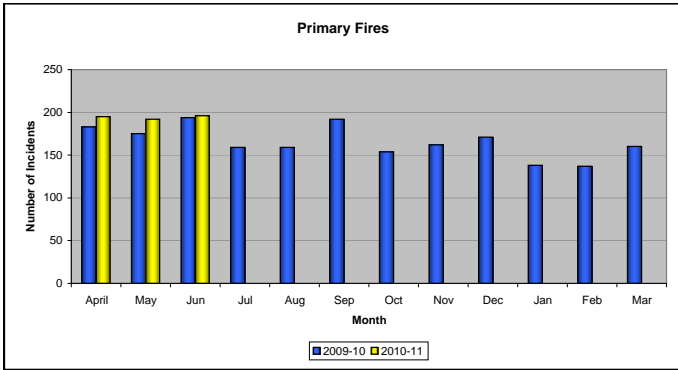
IRS Data Confidence : July
Run on 09/08/10



IRS Right First Time : July
Run on 09/08/10

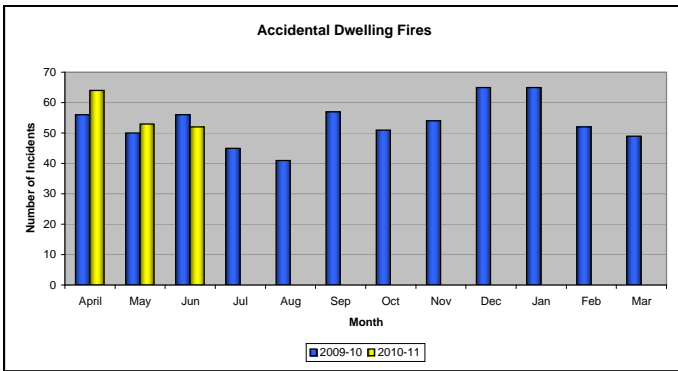


Performance Summary Report Quarter 1 2010-2011



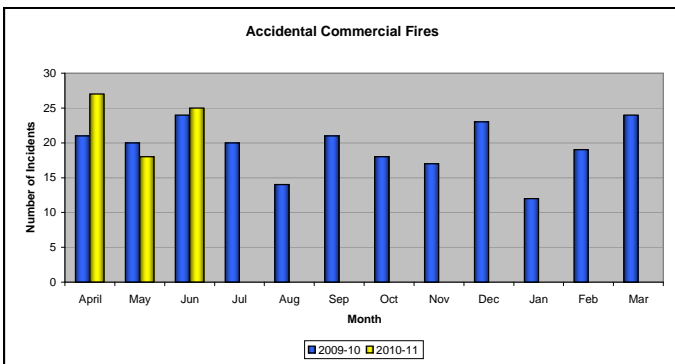
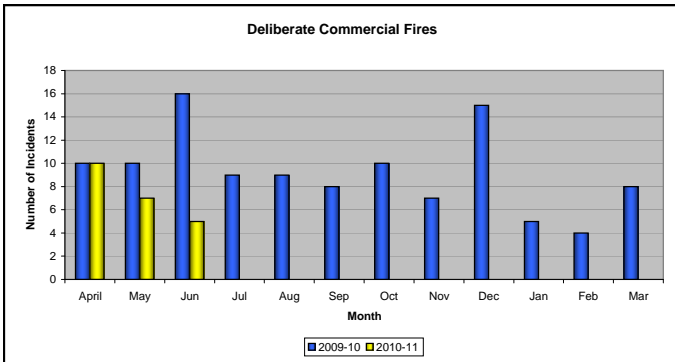
Smoke Alarms at Dwelling Fires April - June 2010

Month	Activated	Not Activated	None Fitted
	2010-11	2010-11	2010-11
April	27	14	43
May	29	6	28
June	24	8	27

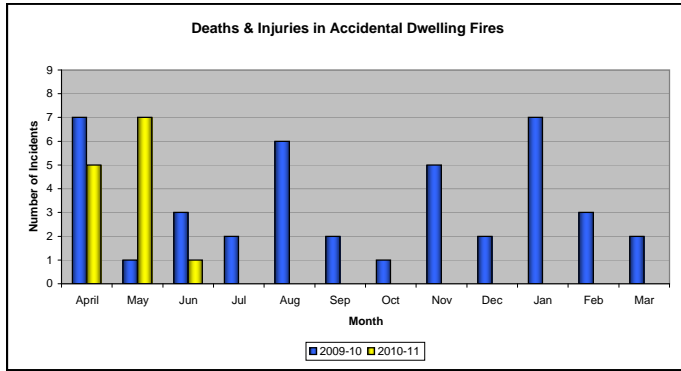


HFRCs Completed April - June 2010

Month	2010-11
April	1383
May	2299
June	1615



Performance Summary Report Quarter 1 2010-2011



Deaths and Injuries in Primary Fires

April 2010

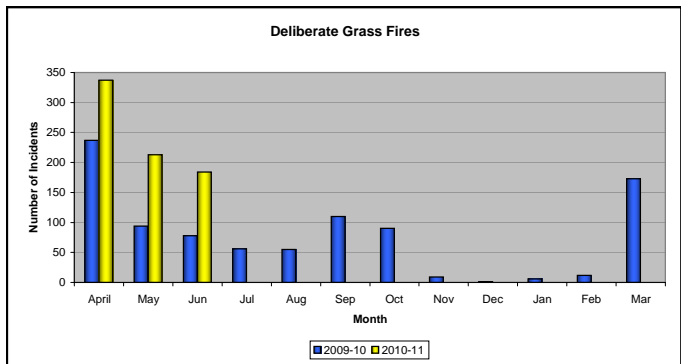
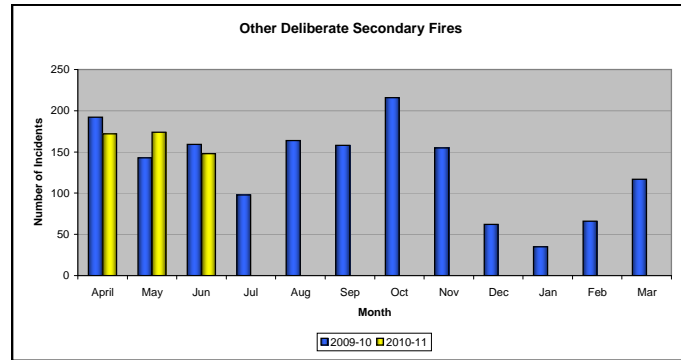
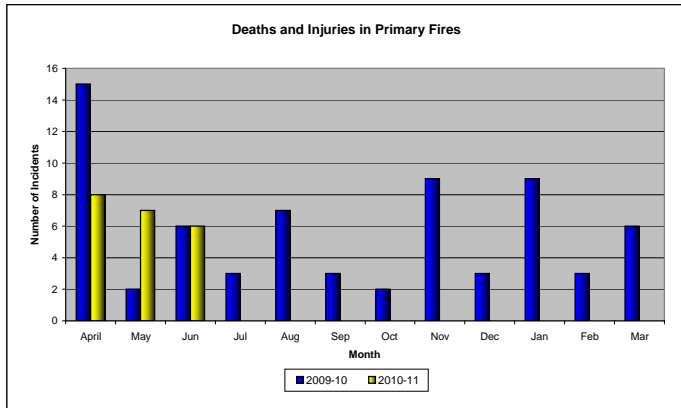
Cause	Injuries	Deaths
Accidental	5	0
Deliberate	1	0
Total	6	0

May 2010

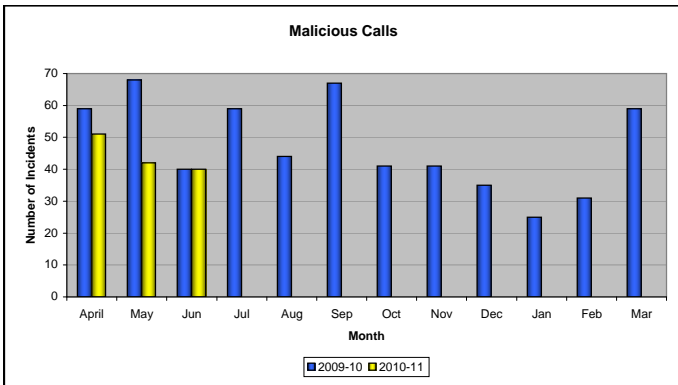
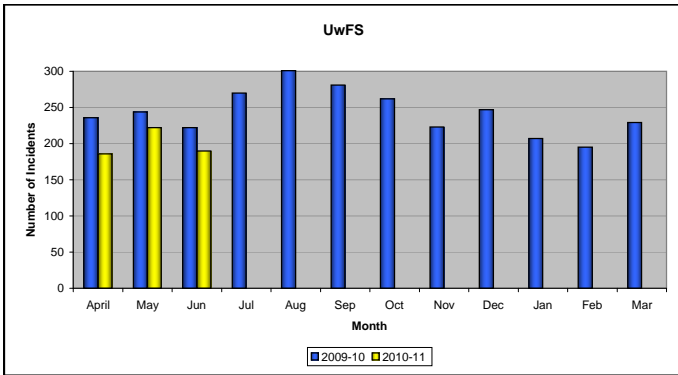
Cause	Injuries	Deaths
Accidental	7	0
Deliberate	0	0
Total	7	0

June 2010

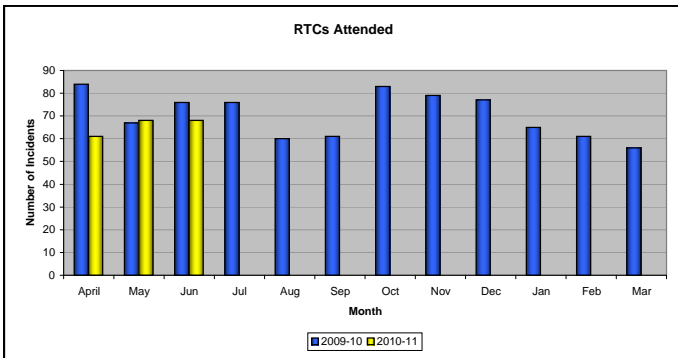
Cause	Injuries	Deaths
Accidental	1	0
Deliberate	5	0
Total	6	0



Performance Summary Report Quarter 1 2010-2011



	Attended	Not Attended	Total
April	17	33	50
May	13	29	42
June	17	23	40
Total	47	85	132



Figures for Killed and Seriously Injured in RTCs are not available for this quarter

Retained Availability	2009-10	2010-11
April	83.24%	89.44%
May	82.43%	88.66%
June	85.11%	86.12%
April - June	83.58%	88.08%

Attacks on Fire fighters	2009-10		2010-11	
	Verbal	Physical	Verbal	Physical
April	2	2	0	0
May	0	0	0	0
June	0	2	0	0

Response Standards

1st appliance in attendance	91.93%
-----------------------------	--------

Percentages of Life Risk incidents attended within Target Times (High Risk Areas – 8 min, Medium Risk Areas 10 min and Low Risk Areas – 18 min)

Comments:
 For the period 2010/2011 the Safer Communities Directorate has agreed four priority areas of performance which are Accidental fire deaths and injuries, Accidental domestic property fires, Unwanted fire signals and Fires in business premises. These areas have been determined by levels of activity for the preceding year and their impact upon communities and public service demand and dependency. Performance against fire deaths and injuries for the period shows fluctuations due to the low and fragile numbers involved. In our efforts to contain and reduce the number of fire deaths and injuries we will continue to target vulnerable elderly people by working in partnership with Adult Social Care across the City and County with the provision of HFRCs and Olive Branch Training for partner services. Early indications suggest that our After the Fire Initiative is starting to readdress the rise in accidental dwelling fires that we experienced during 2009/10. Good progress is being made to drive down Unwanted Fire Signals. Area Commands have identified their respective priority offending premises and by working closer with those premises solutions have been identified.

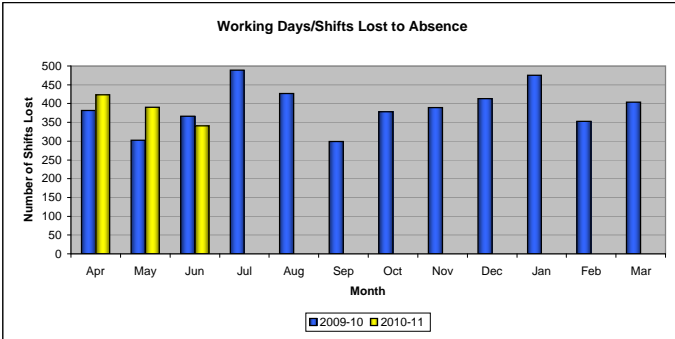
To further improve performance against this indicator a revised Unwanted Fire Signal procedure has been drafted and presented to SMB in September. The procedure was approved by SMB and the arrangements are to be implemented. Fires in business premises show a reduction of deliberate fires but an increase in accidental fires. The Service is actively working with businesses to improve this situation through our business support team. In September we launched an online e-learning partnership that will assist businesses with their staff training requirements and to comply with their statutory duties for fire safety and H&S. The business support team is also developing a post fire inspection regime for business premises. The rise in grass fires for this period was directly attributable to the dry early summer period that occurred which demonstrates the continued work we need to do with young people and educating our community on the demand impact on our Service.

Performance Summary Report Quarter 1 2010-2011

Assets and Resources

Invoices paid within 30 days	97%	95%
Invoices paid within 10 days	58%	60%
Resource control report issued within 10 working days of month end (from 01/04/10)		100%

Organisational Learning and Development



	Apr	May	June
Uniformed SM and Above	47	42	0
Uniformed up to WM	166	195	151
Control	16	8	5
Support	194	145	185
Leavers Due to Ill Health	0	0	0
Retirements (annual figure only)			

Comments:

Absence in all sectors of the business reduced over the quarter, although there was an increase in support absence for June from 145 days to 185 days. This was largely attributable to muscular skeletal problems (56 days) although of the employees affected, only one remains absent on a long term basis with on-going treatment. There was continued and increasing absence in Occupational Health which both contributed to the overall increase in support absence and reduced the Service's ability to undertake effective case management. There was a higher incidence of long term absence than short term and this was consistent throughout the quarter. Management of these cases was undertaken although this was limited due to the continued absence in Occupational Health and the unavailability of an Occupational Health Physician at that time. Levels of absence, whilst affecting all areas of the Service to some degree were noted to be considerably higher in a small number of areas. When comparing the total shifts lost against the shifts lost per FTE, this highlighted a number of primary areas affected by high absence levels over the quarter and closer liaison between HR, line management and OH was

Monitoring and Review Mechanisms: Absence is being actively monitored by HR with a dedicated team providing support and information to managers to enable them to take an active role in reducing the disruptive effects of absence. There have been a number of cases of long term absence which are dealt with on a regular basis through case conferences, involving HR and Occupational Health, with input from Payroll and Line Managers. The aim is to review all cases of absence with a view to supporting employees to make an early return to work. Employees who have returned to work on modified duties are also reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that efforts are continuing to support them to a full return to duty. It is anticipated that the closer and on going management of sickness will continue to reduce the levels of absence across the Service. In addition, as the Occupational Health Unit is now more able to support, this will also assist the Service to make progress in this area.

Planning and Performance

IRS Data Quality

Overall data quality	96%
% right 1st time	

No Data available for right 1st time indicator for the 1st quarter 2010-11

STOKE-ON-TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Scrutiny and Performance Committee

12 October 2010

Operational Training: Improving the Safety & Competence of our Firefighters

Ticket to Ride

Report of Head of Safer Communities

Summary

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service have a long and very proud record of delivering excellent community services. We work effectively in partnership with other organisations to deliver a well equipped; skilled and motivated workforce who are contributing towards achieving our vision of making Staffordshire the safest place to be.

As a Public Service we have a wide range of legal, political and moral obligations to our staff and communities. To ensure the Authority appropriately fulfils such obligations we continually evaluate and review all of our strategies, policies and procedures; and as a consequence of this practice we have recently identified a widening gap that has emerged between our training arrangements and operations.

The tragic deaths of Alan Bannon and James Shears in Hampshire earlier this year is a stark reminder of the operational risks that are experienced by our firefighters on a daily basis.

In response we have promptly taken the necessary steps to mitigate this risk to the organisation and our community by: re-structuring our corporate responsibilities, integrating Training and Development within the Safer Communities Directorate and reviewing our existing Learning and Development Strategy to ensure that our firefighters are safe and competent.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to refresh members of our statutory requirements pertinent to operational training and to share the progress we have made and the plans we have prepared that will enable the Service to close this gap.

Recommendations

The contents of this paper are noted by all Members

Financial Implications

The Services focus on operational training and development has begun and will continue into the future. This will create recurring costs associated with the provision of the training programme in the current financial year and the years ahead, which will be

subject to further financial planning following the Governments Autumn spending review.

Recurring

The provision of the Ticket to Ride initiative includes:

- Incident Command Foundation development
- Bi - annual Incident Command assessments
- Bi - annual Breathing Apparatus refresher training
- Water Awareness training
- Driver training

Recurring costs will be variable from year to year and will be dependent upon levels of recruitment. Associated costs will be forecast during the ongoing annual planning process. The Service is committed to providing training and development that is effective by fulfilling the needs of the individual and the organisation and efficiently utilises public money. One example of notable practice recently adopted by the Service, that meets these requirements, is our Incident Command Foundation Training purchased through the Fire Service College.

Non Recurring

In the main the financial implications of this training programme will be recurring costs.

Legal Implications

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service is obligated to discharge the duties set out in the Fire Services 2004. With particular reference to section 7(2) b of the Act we have to ensure that all of our staff in operational roles are appropriately trained. A failure to provide this level of training would be construed as a breach of this legislation. This position is further endorsed by the statutory obligations contained with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

The implications of failing to comply with these duties would include:

- Health & Safety Executive investigation and the subsequent issuing of improvement notices
- Corporate Manslaughter
- Compensation claims
- Loss of reputation
- The delivery of our Service by an alternative Authority

Equality and Diversity

Our Learning and Development Strategy has been equality impact assessed prior to consultation and reflects fair and equal treatment irrespective of gender, race, age, religion and sexual orientation.

Risk Implications

The primary risk implications associated with delivery of our operational training programme will include:

- Short term negligible reductions in operationally competent personnel
- Short term negligible reductions in appliance availability
- Potential impact on attendance times
- Negligible retention issues of personnel

However, the risk implications identified here within the provision of our operational training arrangements are considered to be of secondary importance when compared against the legal/political/moral implications of failing to provide appropriate operational training. Furthermore, actions to mitigate the impact of these risks have been identified and are being utilised. Mitigating actions include:

- The provision of pre-paratory learning materials
- The provision of Sector competent assessors and an assessment framework
- Agreed development programmes
- The provision of re-assessments
- Mobilisation of the next nearest appliance
- The provision of Service crewing policies
- The provision of Human Resource policies

Consultation and Engagement Undertaken

Fire Authority members have been consulted and approved the April 2010 re-structure of SFRS Executive team and the subsequent integration of Training and Development into the Safer Communities Directorate.

The Service Management Board approved the Services revised Learning and Development Strategy on 6 July 2010. The Strategy was impact assessed in August 2010 and circulated for consultation in September 2010.

Representative bodies have been consulted and approved the introduction of the Ticket to Ride initiative and are supporting the implementation of Incident Command Assessments and our Thematic Training Programme.

Progress of this initiative and its supporting arrangements are reported quarterly to the Services Operational Assurance Group.

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Additional Background Information

The Fire Service National Framework 08/11 places prevention at the heart of all Fire and Rescue Service activities and whilst this is suitably appropriate it must not detract from the fact that fires, vehicle collisions, acts of terrorism and environmental disasters will continue to occur; and as a consequence we must make provision for effective response arrangements to assist members of our community who are in need of our help.

When we are required to intervene, we will endeavour to provide the highest quality service, dealing with the incident and the people involved in a safe and professional way. We recognise that emergency response operations may present a high level of risk for those involved so we will ensure that we have safe systems of work embedded within our arrangements to minimise such risks.

The recent review we have undertaken of our operational training arrangements has identified an unacceptable and an unnecessary organisational risk that has presented a potential failure to comply with the requisite legislation. Subsequently, the Service has responded promptly by implementing the following actions:-

Revised Learning and Development Strategy (2010-2014) - Our revised Learning and Development Strategy, July 2009, now places primary focus upon operational skills and competence. The strategy sets out a range of strategic objectives and outlines the key responsibilities for all operational personnel.

Ticket to ride

- **Incident Command Assessment** - These assessments commenced in August 2009 and will assess operational competence at all levels in the organisation. Assessments are being carried out by sector competent assessors in line with agreed role specific constructs.
- **Thematic Training** – A structured on station training programme for all wholetime and retained firefighters has been designed to maintain their ongoing skills and competences. The programme includes risk critical competencies of BA, Haz Mats, Risk Inspections, Water Awareness, Driving and core skills.

Further information is available via our Learning and Development Strategy July 2010.

STOKE ON TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Scrutiny and Performance Committee

12 October 2010

Statistical Process Control Performance Reporting Trial

Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Deputy Chief Executive (Service Improvement)

SUMMARY

Statistical Process Control (SPC) has been trialed as a method of performance monitoring in Stoke Area Command between 1 June 2010 and 1 September 2010. An example of the performance information which has been provided is given at **Appendix I**. This method of monitoring performance has been trialed as an alternative to setting fixed targets for performance indicators as previously employed by the Service to drive performance.

Feedback from Stoke Area Command has been positive and they have stated that the reports have been useful. It is therefore proposed to roll out the use of SPC to all other Area Commands within the Service.

In order to implement the use of SPC to monitor performance, the Performance and Planning department will deliver a training package to all Area Commands, to enable them to interpret and use the information. Training will be delivered to Area Command staff during October 2010, in order for them to begin to use the information from November 2010. The management information system which the Service uses to disseminate performance information (TEN), has been developed to provide information in SPC format, and feedback has been given from Stoke Area Command regarding how the graphs should be formatted and linked to supplementary performance data.

The use of SPC to monitor performance will be reviewed Service wide at the end of 2010/11 financial year, in order to determine if this method of monitoring performance has been successful and should be continued.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the roll out use of Statistical Process Control to the wider Service and the review of this method of monitoring performance at 2010/11 year end.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications

Legal Implications

The Service has a statutory obligation to ensure that the service provided to the community is of the best standard possible, and that every effort is made to improve performance wherever possible.

Equality and Diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications

Risk Implications

If SPC is not used successfully by Area Command teams, performance monitoring may not be effective and performance may suffer as a result.

Consultation and Engagement undertaken

Consultation has taken place with Service Management Board, Safer Communities Directorate and Stoke Area Command (as part of the trial)

Other implications

SPC is the performance monitoring method which would be advocated by Systems Thinking, which is the methodology the organisation has adopted to review and develop proposals for remodelling the business.

Background

The Service is currently using Systems Thinking to review the business model for the organization, in order to identify efficiencies and cost savings in anticipation of coming budget cuts. An objective of this review is to develop a proposal for a new performance framework to support the organisation, in order to effectively monitor its performance and identify areas of concern. Systems Thinking does not support the use of fixed targets to drive performance, and would suggest that the use of fixed targets can have a detrimental effect on the performance of the business overall.

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Home Strategies Objectives Indicators People Reports

● Current Data ● Historical Data

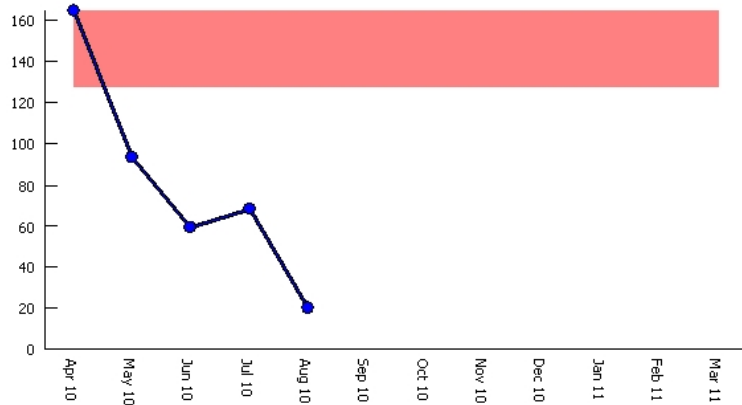
BVPI 206 Combined LA.xls

Indicator

Grass Fires

Description

All secondary grass fires



	Month	Actual	Lower Control Limit	Upper Control Limit
R	Apr 10	164	0	128
A	May 10	93	0	128
A	Jun 10	59	0	128
A	Jul 10	68	0	128
A	Aug 10	20	0	128
	Sep 10		0	128
	Oct 10		0	128
	Nov 10		0	128
	Dec 10		0	128
	Jan 11		0	128
	Feb 11		0	128
	Mar 11		0	128

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Home Strategies Objectives Indicators People Reports

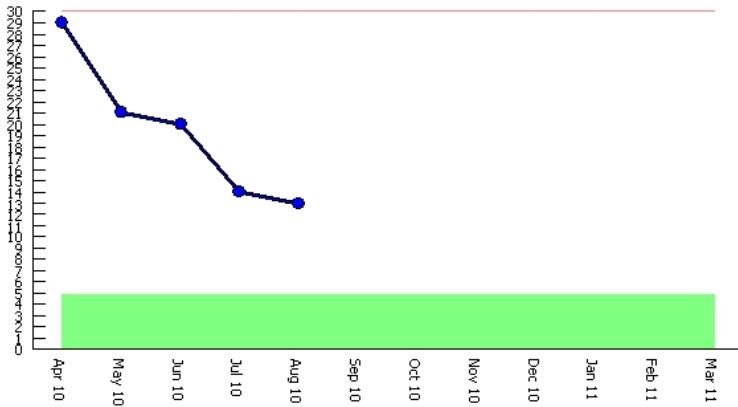
● Current Data ● Historical Data

BVPI 209 LA No Links.xls

Indicator

Dwelling Fires

Description
All primary fires in dwellings



	Month	Actual	Lower Control Limit	Upper Control Limit
A	Apr 10	29	5	30
A	May 10	21	5	30
A	Jun 10	20	5	30
A	Jul 10	14	5	30
A	Aug 10	13	5	30
	Sep 10		5	30
	Oct 10		5	30
	Nov 10		5	30
	Dec 10		5	30
	Jan 11		5	30
	Feb 11		5	30
	Mar 11		5	30

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STOKE-ON-TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Scrutiny and Performance Committee

12 October 2010

Sickness Absence and Management

Report of the Head of Human Resources

Summary

The report sets out in detail of the sickness absence of the Service since April 2010 and the actions taken by the Human Resources Team and Occupational Health to achieve a reduction in the sickness levels.

Sickness levels for this financial year have reduced month on month with the exception of July, where there was a slight rise which is line with previous seasonal absence patterns. August showed the lowest sickness absence level since April 2008. Year to date, the Service is showing a downward trend on previous years:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Shifts lost year to date	2032	1966	1814

The report also outlines the arrangements in place with Staffordshire Police to provide interim Occupational Health Support to the Service.

Recommendations

That the report on sickness absence and actions taken by the Service to reduce sickness be noted.

Financial Implications

High levels of absence represent a cost to the Service both in lost productivity and where additional support is required to continue to maintain Service delivery. Proactive absence management is key to reducing the burden of this cost.

Legal Implications

There are no specific legal issues arising out of the report. Sickness is managed in line with Service procedures to minimise any risk from legal challenge.

Equality and Diversity

Human Resources support the equality and diversity monitoring processes within the organization.

Risk Implications

Failure to adhere to the legal framework of Service policies has serious implications for the Service and therefore all non compliance should be discussed and actions to address agreed and understood.

Consultation and Engagement undertaken

Not Applicable

Other implications

There are no other implications

Background

Monitoring of sickness absence is now being undertaken by the Human Resources (HR) team and through a close working relationship with line management, on-going support is being given to achieve a reduction in sickness absence levels.

Sickness levels have reduced month on month in this financial year to date, with the exception of July which showed a small rise on the previous month. This position has been rectified for August which showed a significant drop in the shifts lost, actually recording the lowest monthly absence level since April 2008. As a comparator year on year, the Service is again showing a downward trend for the period April – August:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Shift lost year to date	2032	1966	1814

The number of shifts lost during the current financial year, together with the number of absentees is as follows:

	April	May	June	July	August
Shifts/days lost	423	390	341	365	295
No of people absent	59	56	58	62	59

Whilst the number of shifts lost shows a downward trend, the number of people absent varies only slightly. This would indicate that the trend is that the lengths of absence are shorter in duration.

As a ratio by full time equivalent (FTE), this equates as follows:

	April	May	June	July	August
Shifts/days lost per FTE	0.67	0.62	0.54	0.58	0.47
Shifts/days lost as a %age	4.40	4.08	3.56	3.81	3.11

Looking at the profile of absences, both long and short terms levels are dropping:

	April	May	June	July	August
Shifts/days lost - Short Term	173	112	163	178	169
Shifts/days lost - Long Term	250	278	178	187	126

Overall absence in the Service is showing a downward trend in most departments and is profiled by role as illustrated below:

	April	May	June	July	August
Uniformed Officers	47	42	0	0	0
Wholetime Shift Personnel	182	203	156	181	149
Support	194	145	185	184	146

Uniformed = Station Managers/Assistant Area Commanders and above
 Shift = Firefighters, Crew Managers, Watch Managers

There has been a continuing absence in Occupational Health which has both contributed to the overall increase in the level of support staff absence and reduced the Service's ability to undertake effective case management. This is now being addressed through the joint working with Staffordshire Police and closer internal liaison between HR and Line Managers and has resulted in a significant drop in long term cases in August. Management of these cases is on-going and becoming more robust through facilitation of a regular review of all cases of long term sickness. In addition cases where staff are currently undertaking modified duties are also continually reviewed to work towards an early return to their full role.

Retained staff absence is not included in the figures recorded as this is not reported on. Analysis of the data is difficult due to the lack of a shift pattern and regular days/hours worked. Some retained personnel will book "off call" and not report sick.

Cause of Absence

The main causes of absence during the year to date were stress related and musculoskeletal problems and the majority of these have been of a long term nature. This number is now reducing and the Service is actively working towards facilitating an early return to work.

At the beginning of the year a number of absences were recorded as miscellaneous due to the specific reason for absence not being available. This information is now being actively sought and the provision of management information is a priority. Closer monitoring of absence now identifies the need for intervention at an early stage and enables appropriate action to be taken in the form of preventative measures and support.

As a summary of the period, the most common conditions affecting absence levels are as follows:

	April	May	June	July	August
Anxiety/depression/other stress	22.46	21.28	22.29	27.12	31.52
Muscular Skeletal	33.57	42.31	42.23	27.67	23.05
Coughs/Colds/Flu	1.18	6.67	4.69	4.10	6.77
Stomach Upset	0.95	3.33	2.05	9.58	4.40
Miscellaneous	27.90	3.59	10.56	7.12	7.79

There is an increasing trend of absence attributable to stress/depression related conditions. It should be noted that not all of these cases are work related and over half of these have returned to work in September.

Absence Management and Monitoring

Close monitoring of absence by HR now results in the triggers in the policy being implemented in a timely manner and action taken to address potential problems. First day absence calls are not made as a matter of routine, for example in cases of coughs/colds, however where cases that may require or benefit from early intervention, e.g. muscular skeletal or psychological problems, then Occupational Health (OH) will make contact with the member of staff as soon as possible.

Through regular meetings between OH, HR and payroll, cases which are long term (28 days or more) or which are anticipated to become long are identified and an OH referral progressed to enable early intervention and support is available.

Records are now more complete with data indicating start and finish dates of a period of absence and return to work forms being chased if not completed by the line manager in a timely manner. Medical certificates are also chased when required and any implications on pay notified and actioned.

The Service has entered into an agreement with Staffordshire Police to provide interim Occupational Health Support. There is an on site administrator and OH Advisor with on-going management from an OH Manager from Staffordshire Police who is on site on a regular basis. An Occupational Health Physician is also available by appointment approximately 2 days per month.

This arrangement is working well to date and there has been a significant improvement in working relationships between OH and HR resulting in better management of sickness absence and modified duties throughout the Service.

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