

Report of the Assistant Chief Officer: Director of Prevention

2023-24 Performance Report: Q1 (01 April – 30 June 2023)

Purpose of report

1. This report summarises the Service's performance for Q1, 2023-2024.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the details of the Q1 2023-24 performance headlines be noted, in particular that:

- i) a total of 1,966 incidents overall were attended in Q1 2023-2024 which was an increase of 6% on Q1 2022-2023;***
- ii) however, Fires (445) were 10% lower than Q1 2022/23 and lower than the five year average of 514;***
- iii) Special services (558) although higher than the corresponding quarter of the previous year were still in line with the five year average;***
and
- iv) False alarms (993) had also increased by 14%, which was due mainly to an increase in the number of false alarms with good intent.***

Introduction and Background

2. The Service gathers performance data relating to incidents attended and activities carried out, to report to the Policy and Resources Committee and the Strategic Leadership Board on a quarterly basis. The Q1 2023-2024 Performance Report is attached as Appendix 1 and provides information on the overall incident numbers, Prevention, Protection and Response activities with an overview of the Service workforce. A cumulative summary of performance is reported separately in the Annual Service Review.
3. The Performance Report relates closely to the Prevention, Protection and Response strategies as well as the Community Risk Management Plan 2021-2025.

Incident Overview

4. A total of 1,966 incidents were attended in Q1 2023-2024, an increase of 6% on Q1 2022-2023 and an increase of 8% on the five-year average of 1,825 incidents. The Service also attended 10 'Over the Border' incidents during this quarter. More context is provided later in this report. However, analysis shows that this is made up of:

- a. 445 Fires: The 445 fires attended in Q1 were 10% lower than Q1 2022-2023 and is lower still than the five-year average of 514.
- b. 588 Special Services: Although this is 10% higher than Q1 2022-2023, it is similar to the five-year average of 581 incidents.
- c. 933 False Alarms: The 933 false alarms attended in Q1 were 14% higher than Q1 2022-2023 and 15% higher than the five-year average of 810. These incidents fall into the following incident types: Fire alarm due to apparatus: False Alarm - Good intent and False Alarm - Malicious. This increase is mainly due to an increase of 29% in Good Intent False Alarms. Fire alarm due to apparatus had an increase of 10% compared to Q1 2022-2023.

Prevention

- 5. 1,988 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) were completed in Q1 2023-2024. Although this has not quite reached our new target of 2,125 HFSV per quarter, it is an 86% increase over the same period in 2022-2023. Out of 1,988 HFSVs, 547 were delivered by Prevention Technicians and 1,441 were delivered by Wholetime crews. HFSV's are targeted at those at greater risk of fire based on data and analysis as outlined in the Prevention Strategy. Trends are monitored on a monthly basis and fed into adjusting and focusing prevention activity as required.

Protection

- 6. The Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) has increased the number of inspections of business premises. In Q1 2023-2024, 451 inspections were completed compared to 209 in Q1 2022-2023. The increase of 116% is a result of operational staff undertaking comprehensive training and completing audits. The RBIP figures now include Intelligence Lead Inspection Programme (ILIP).
- 7. Total Enforcement Activities have remained at a similar level to Q1 in 2022-2023.

Enforcement Type	Q1 2023-2024	Q1 2022-2023
Alterations	4	4
Enforcements	6	7
Prohibitions	9	10
Total	19	21

- 8. All fires in commercial premises are subject to a Post Fire Audit and the number of audits has increased from 41 to 47 in Q1 2023-2024, when compared to Q1 2022-2023.
- 9. The department is proactively identifying business leads to highlight their fire safety responsibilities and offer support and signposting to other assistance where needed.

Response

Fires

10. The number of Primary Fires attended in Q1 2023-2024 were up by 3% and Secondary Fires were down by 21% over the same period in 2022-2023. The number of Primary Fires rose slightly to 242, due to the number of Primary Building Fires increasing by 9% and the number of Vehicle & Transport Fires increasing by 20%. However, this effect is counteracted by the number of Outdoor Fires decreasing significantly (39%).
11. Unfortunately, during this timeframe there were five fatalities in Primary Fires. Two of the fatalities were in single occupancy dwellings. The other three fatalities were from the same incident which was a fire resulting from a multiple vehicle RTC. Following an incident which has a fire related death or serious injury the Fire Death Serious Injury Review Panel (FDSI) will hold a meeting within five working days, where Fire Investigation Officer will present their findings. The panel will ascertain Prevention activities undertaken post incident and provide a plan for targeting neighbouring properties. An action plan will be agreed for managing immediate impact, capturing lessons learnt, ensuring findings are communicated appropriately and actioned accordingly.
12. Five victims went to hospital where an injury appeared serious. 77% of the Primary Building Fires were classified as accidental and the majority of them (39%) started in the kitchen area. 37% of the property type for these incidents were recorded as a house with single occupancy. For those incidents where occupancy type was recorded, 11% occurred in houses of a single occupancy with the person over pensionable age. 11% was also recorded for single occupancy with the person under pensionable age. This information is fed back into the Prevention and Protection departments to further focus relevant activity and for trend analysis.
13. There were 11 incidents in Q1 2023-2024 where more than five pumps attended, nine primary fires, one special service incident and one false alarm. Of these primary fires, one was in Bromsgrove, one in Droitwich spa, one in Evesham, two in Hereford, one in Pebworth, one in Redditch and two in Wyre Forest.
14. There was a 21% decrease in Secondary Fires from 246 to 194 in Q1 2022-2023. Overall, most of the property categories have seen decreases in the number of fires, except for a minor increase in the category of Outdoor Equipment & Machinery, by three incidents. This is largely due to the moderate and mild Spring weather this year.

Special Services

15. The largest increase to Special Service incident types were in flooding and water rescues. These incident category resulted in a 144% increase over Q1 2022-2023. This is mainly due to the widescale flooding events in April 2023. The majority of these incidents (64%) involved the rescue of people from buildings. Effecting entry/exit incident type was the next highest increase in incidents at a 28% increase over Q1 2022-2023.

Road Traffic Collisions

16. In terms of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), there were 137 incidents during the quarter, a 7% decrease compared to Q1 2022-2023. The number of RTC incidents remained similar to the previous two years, confirming that the number of RTC incidents are returning to pre-Covid levels. Q1 2020-2021 is an anomaly due to Lockdown 1.
17. The number of fatalities for Q1 2023-2024 are similar to the previous year, five fatalities for this quarter, whereas there were four in the previous year. The number of serious injuries has decreased slightly compared to the previous year. While the number of slight injuries has remained at a similar level. The number of first aid given to casualties slightly increased in Q1 2023-2024. Information related to RTC's is fed into the Response department for review and to inform future training and awareness activities.

Attendance Performance Measure

18. On 1 April 2023 the Service launched the new Attendance Performance Measure (APM). The Service now evaluates the time taken for the first appliance to get to a much wider range of incidents and compares that against the expected travel time over three time zones (10, 15 & 20 minutes). This quarter is the first time the Service is reporting on this new measure, therefore there may be a need to be to adjust the way data are collected and analysed which will be monitored and reviewed regularly.
19. Incident types that usually immediately attract an emergency response (blue light conditions) are mainly used for this report, and these are then split into three time zones based upon the expected travel time from the station to the incident location. The use of the new APM now means that Service examines attendance at a far greater number of incidents, providing a much larger range of useful data. The previous attendance standard only examined 134 incidents (primary building fires) in the same quarter last year, while the new APM has exceeded this by 514%.
20. Out of the 689 incidents examined, 190 incidents (28%) did not meet the APM. Initial analysis of the data shows that Service attended 72% of incidents within the expected timescales for respective areas. This is a very useful baseline for future analysis and comparison as Service progresses through this financial year. It also provides Service with accurate data to identify areas of improvement when responding to emergencies.
21. The three main reasons why the APM was not met this quarter were: road obstruction/traffic conditions (42 incidents); mobilisation time by the crews (39 incidents) and the incident location being outside Station Ground of responding appliance (32 incidents). The information has been passed on to Response managers who will review this data to ascertain which delays may be unavoidable, and also to determine what learning outcomes and improvement can be made. This will ensure the Service will understand the reasons, put in relevant mitigations and improve response times where there is scope to make a difference.

On-call Appliance Availability

22. The first On-call appliance availability has reduced by 2% to 80% during the quarter, compared to the same quarter of 2022-2023. Availability for all On-call appliances reduced by 3% to 69%. For the first On-call appliance 12 fire stations (48%) had over 85% availability. In comparison, 16 fire stations (64%) had over 85% availability in Q1 2022-2023. This information is fed back to managers in Response and directly links to the project work presently being undertaken with a strategic intent to improve On-call availability to build a sustainable model and duty system for the future.

People

23. In terms of workforce diversity, the proportion of female employees has increased slightly to 20% which is a 2% increase since Q1 2022-2023. This is likely to be attributed to an increase in the proportion of women in support staff roles and a small increase in the overall number of women in operational roles by 1% thanks to recent campaigns and processes.
24. The 2021 Census data has recently been released and this allowed a review of the Service's demographics. The population of ethnic minority within the community has increased from 7% to 10%. However, the ethnic minority representation in the workforce has not changed since Q1 2022-2023 and it is currently at 6%. The Service continues to monitor employment trends and in the coming year will focus on positive action for under-represented groups, as well as exploring development opportunities to support career progression for women.
25. Overall absence due to staff sickness increased to 4.27 days lost per person compared to 2.02 days in Q1 2022-2023. This is largely due to Covid-19 sickness now being recorded as Respiratory (Cold/Cough/Influenza) along with the reduction in testing being carried out. A new attendance management policy and training for managers is currently being delivered with an emphasis on managing absence at an earlier stage and putting measures in where necessary to support staff and tackle repeated absences.
26. All staff groups showed increases during the quarter. In terms of the split between long-term and short-term absence, long-term absence represents 60.31% of all staff sickness absence in this quarter. Mental Health – Stress, Mental Health – Other and Musculo Skeletal – Lower Limb were the most significant reasons for absence in this quarter. These figures and trends are monitored by the Health & Safety Committee who meet on a quarterly basis.

Conclusion

27. Further information on the headlines set out above is included in Appendix 1.

28. The Strategic Leadership Board will continue to receive performance reports and oversight of the measures being taken to address any issues arising. Where improvements are required any necessary action will be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The figures reported may change due to increasing scrutiny over the Command & Control, Incident Recording System, Community Fire Risk Management Information System and HR Connect, and improved data quality control measures put in place.
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	The areas included link with the Annual Service Review and Annual Service Plan and the strategic objectives of the Service as outlined in the CRMP and three core strategies. The data considered directly links with the ethical principle of Putting Our Communities First.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Relevant data is fed into the Health & Safety Committee as appropriate.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	None.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	No, the report concerns operational activity and other areas of general performance data.
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	Not required – no personal data is identified.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Performance Report: Quarter 1 2023-2024