

Report of Head of Operational Support

Health and Safety Committee Update

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Audit and Standards Committee with an update on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the following issues, in particular, be noted:

- (i) Health and Safety performance information recorded during April to June 2020 (Quarter 1)*
- (ii) The involvement of the Service in Health and Safety initiatives*

Introduction and Background

2. A key aim of Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its employees and to reduce and prevent accidents and injuries at work as outlined in the People Strategy 2020-2022.
3. The Health and Safety Committee is established to provide effective arrangements for the liaison and review of matters of a common interest in regards to Health and Safety (H&S). The Committee provides the opportunity for the Service to discuss general H&S matters and to consult with the workforce via employee representatives. It is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and last met on 16 September 2020.
4. The Committee has the facility to task work to the Health & Safety Working Group, which sits beneath it and is chaired by the Area Commander Operational Service Support. The group meets as and when required.

Health & Safety Activities Update

National Activities

5. Following the Covid 19 outbreak, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) produced a website with key guidance for fire and rescue services to make use of as required. HWFRS have utilised this facility and adapted internal guidance, issuing regular updates to staff as appropriate.

6. In June, the NFCC issued updated death in the workplace guidance. Initial guidance was produced in 2005 to provide FRSs with a structure to manage such an occurrence. HWFRS currently has a robust process in place; however, the H&S Advisor and HR Department are reviewing the updated document to ensure our processes are following recommended guidance.

Regional Activities

7. Since the beginning of the Covid 19 outbreak regional H&S business plan activities have been deferred. However, H&S staff from the five regional fire services have been in regular contact with each other to discuss Covid 19 related concerns, and to share best practice.

HWFRS Local Activities

8. Following on from the last update that was provided in the Quarter 4 report, HWFRS have continued to monitor and implement safe systems of work to protect workers and members of the public from the risks of Covid 19, an update on all Covid related activities will be issued to Members at the next full Fire Authority meeting.
9. The Service fully utilised government and NFCC guidance and facilitated agile working for support departments, with additional PPE and social distancing measures being introduced for all staff who remained operational.
10. A Covid 19 Recovery Group was created to allow departmental managers the opportunity to ensure clear communication and decision making.
11. A key process during Quarter 1 was to ensure that all of HWFRS sites had Covid 19 secure risk assessments written in line with government guidance. The Service's H&S Advisor, with support from technical fire safety inspectors, undertook the initial assessments. This has ensured a robust standard of control measures has been introduced at all locations. Departmental managers took on the responsibility for reviewing these assessments ensuring control measures were implemented and adhered to, with assistance from the H&S Advisor as requested.
12. The following H&S related processes and actions have been introduced, and are reviewed regularly via the Service's Covid 19 Response Group:
 - Establishment of a full time 24/7 Primary Crewing Hub (PCH) to monitor and report twice daily on all staff absences, alongside the HR Department. The PCH also arranged and managed operational staff movements to cover locations and maintained optimum availability of fire engines, and staffing in departments.
 - Provision of extensive ICT arrangements for agile working.
 - Obtaining and issuing essential Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning agents, and the early procurement of additional stock.

- Liaising with the wider fire sector to identify best practice and interpret central Government guidance.
 - Issuing key operational response guidance and adapting guidance as new information was released.
 - Reviewing risk assessments and developing appropriate new risk assessments, new H&S arrangements and reporting protocols.
 - Steadily reducing non-essential activities and identifying where high-risk activities needed to continue.
 - Carrying out a full review to establish how to deliver essential risk critical operational training over a 3, 6 and 12 month period.
 - Liaising regularly with Representative Bodies to seek agreement and consensus regarding new critical H&S practices and procedures.
 - Providing regular reassurance and support to all members of staff via a variety of communication channels.
13. Risk Assessment Database: During Quarter 1 a total of 359 RAs were reviewed and 96 new RAs were created, see table below.
14. The database is now being maintained by the owners of the RAs, automatic email prompts are sent when the RAs are due to be reviewed. If they are no longer applicable they will be archived from the database.

	Quarter 2 (19/20)		Quarter 3 (19/20)		Quarter 4 (19/20)		Quarter 1 (20/21)	
Location	Reviewed	Created	Reviewed	Created	Reviewed	Created	Reviewed	Created
North District	116	19	70	116	19	70	36	5
South District	104	13	67	104	13	67	135	19
West District	87	13	84	87	13	84	123	57
Training Centre	47	0	43	47	0	43	8	0
Others	36	2	12	36	2	12	57	15
Total	390	47	276	390	47	276	359	96

Quarter 1 Performance Report

15. Appendix 1 provides details relating to all safety events that have been reported and investigated during Quarter 1 (April - June 2020) of the 2020-21 reporting year.
16. The total number of safety events reported in quarter 1 has decreased by 11 compared to the previous quarter. The key drivers in the decrease in accident reporting are; vehicle collisions (-13) and personal injuries (-6). The decreases are reflective of the more limited activities undertaken during the Covid 19 lockdown period.
17. Increases occurred in near hits (+4) and exposure incidents (+3).
18. The majority of the personal injuries happened during operational training, and near hits were mostly during routine activities.

19. There were 2 events reported to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) under the RIDDOR regulations these were both reported under the time lost requirements. These involved a back injury, and a stomach upset.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Contained within H&S budgets and departmental capacity.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Corporate Strategy: ensuring firefighter safety.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Reduces the overall impact for H&S management in the areas identified and safeguards the Services legal requirements.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Representative bodies attend H&S Committee and are fully consulted on H&S matters.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Quarter 1 (April – June 2020) Event Reporting and Summary