

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

2019-20 Performance Report: Quarters 1-4

Introduction and Summary

During Quarters 1-4 2019 – 20 the total number of incidents attended by the Service has been heavily influenced by local weather conditions. The Service faced the wettest month on record in February when the UK was hit with three storms in quick succession resulting in unprecedented levels of attendance to incidents caused by the flooding during this month, when compared with the past 10 years. Weather conditions alongside a continued support to other Blue light Services at incidents requiring collaboration such as gaining entry and missing persons has mainly accounted for the 44.27% increase in Special Service incidents when compared to the same period last year. Whilst the total number of fires has decreased the attendance time standard continues to prove extremely challenging to achieve. False Alarms continues to rise, which is mainly accounted for by an increase in fire alarms due to apparatus, however the Service continues to work with businesses to lower this figure. Furthermore, the annual total days lost due to all staff sickness is at a five year low. Finally our On-call (Retained) availability has decreased slightly when compared to the same period last year, however station amalgamations alongside the novel Wyre Forest Emergency Services Hub has affected this percentage.

The Service has experienced some of its most challenging operational times, resulting in significant levels of varied operational activity, yet the Service continues to perform well and has coped with the resources available.

Background

1. The Service gathers data on a range of Performance Indicators covering response and prevention activity, absence management and On-Call (Retained) availability. This is reported on a quarterly basis to the Policy and Resources Committee and the Senior Management Board. The report includes commentary of any changes compared to the previous year and discussion of any exceptions to expected performance.

Tolerance Levels

2. Each Performance Indicator is tested against tolerance levels anticipated for the year, based on the average for the same Quarter over the three previous years. The tolerance levels provide a range between which performance is expected to fluctuate, and are generally 10% above and below the average levels for each specific indicator.

3. Total Fires, Primary Fires and Secondary Fires remained within the levels of tolerance for the majority of Q1-Q4 2019-20 but did peak in certain months. Total Incidents were above tolerance levels for six months of the year, False Alarms were above for four months of the year and Chimney Fires were above for five months. Special Service incidents continued to be outside upper tolerance levels for the majority of the year including a spike in February due to the extensive flooding. These indicators are analysed in more detail in Appendix 1, together with an overview of operational activity and an analysis of On-Call (Retained) appliance availability.

Quarters 1-4 Performance

4. Quarters 1-4 2019-20 saw 7,901 incidents, a 5.80% increase in the total number attended by the Service compared to the same period last year, and this was 10.30% (814 incidents) higher than the 5-year average.
5. In terms of Fires, there were 130 fewer Primary Fires, 325 fewer Secondary Fires and 14 fewer Chimney Fires in Quarters 1-4 2019-20, compared to the same period last year. There were 2 fatalities in Primary Fires during Q1-Q4 2019-20. The largest proportion of Primary Fire incidents were Building Fires (614 incidents), a decrease of 41 incidents when compared with the same period in 2018-19. The largest proportion of Secondary Fire incidents were Grassland, woodland and crop at 35.53%, even though there was a 42.78% decrease when compared to the same period in 2018-19. Overall, there was a 12.25% decrease (209 incidents) than the 5-year average.
6. The number of Special Service incidents (emergency incidents that are not fire related) in Quarters 1-4 2019-20 increased by 842 incidents to 2,744 when compared against the same period in 2018-19. This is a 31.45% increase (863 incidents) when compared to the 5-year average. Assisting other agencies increased from 195 to 431 incidents and Effecting entry/exit from 146 to 279. Flooding incidents also increased from 128 to 354 alongside a corresponding increase in incidents requiring Rescue or evacuation from water from 48 to 236 incidents when compared against the same period in 2018-19.
7. There were 14 fewer Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) in total, the majority of which involved making the vehicle safe (62.44%), which had an increase of 17 incidents when compared to 2018-19. The Service attended 12 fatalities in 11 RTC incidents during Quarters 1-4 2019-20 compared to 15 fatalities in 15 incidents in Quarters 1-4 2018-19.
8. There was a 1.77% increase (60 incidents) in the number of False Alarms in Quarters 1-4 2019-20 when compared with the same period in 2018-19. The majority of False Alarms (71.31%) were due to apparatus and 50.04% of all False Alarms involved a domestic property (dwelling or other residential). The most common cause for False Alarms was 'Cooking/burnt toast' followed by 'Other' and 'Faulty'.

9. For Quarter 4 2019-20 (January to March) the sickness level for all staff decreased to -0.70 days lost per head when compared to the previous year. The negative number for the quarter is caused by fluctuations in the number of employees from quarter to quarter or delays with the HR system; this is corrected at the end of the fiscal year. In Quarters 1-4 2019-20 the number of days lost to all staff sickness absence (5.71 days per head) is the lowest number of days lost when comparing to the previous five-year period and lower than Worcestershire County Council with 8.10 days lost per head. Herefordshire County Council figures are not yet available.
10. The percentage of Primary Building Fires attended within 10 minutes by the first fire appliance was 51.79% (318 incidents) during Quarters 1-4 2019-20 in comparison to 56.34% (369 incidents) for the same period in 2018-19.
11. The average Time of Call to Arrival at Scene for the first fire appliance to attend Primary Building Fires increased by 15 seconds from 10 minutes 12 seconds in Quarters 1-4 2018-19 to 10 minutes 27 seconds in Quarters 1-4 2019-20. Call handling time has decreased by 12 seconds; however turnout time and travel time have both increased by 13 seconds and 14 seconds respectively.
12. The average availability of the first On-Call (Retained) fire appliance decreased by 1.42% to 87.31% in Quarters 1-4 2019-20 compared to Quarters 1-4 over the same period in 2018-19. From the 1st March 2019 On-Call (Retained) cover from 18:00-08:00 has included Wholetime Staff for Droitwich, Malvern and Evesham stations, and therefore a comparison has not been shown for these stations for Q1-Q4 2018-19. Furthermore, Wyre Forest has been removed from the results due to the availability of data.

Conclusion/Summary

13. Further detail and analysis regarding the above headlines for performance in Quarters 1-4 2019-20 is included in Appendix 1.
14. The Senior Management Board will continue to receive reports based on the measures the Service is taking to stay within tolerance levels. Where improvements are required, any necessary action will be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Fire Authority 2019-20 Performance Report: Quarters 1-4

Appendix 2 – HWFRS Community Risk Activity: Quarters 1-4