Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on Monday 17 July 2023

Measuring Progress – Fire Engine Availability – KPI review

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Executive Summary

Further to scrutiny of key performance indicators (KPI) by Members of the CFA Performance Committee, the Service was asked to reflect upon the ongoing suitability of the current 'Fire Engine Availability' KPI's in particular with reference to the On-Call measurement.

LFRS currently has one of the most challenging targets for availability of on-call fire engines of any fire and rescue service in the country and, whilst having a high aspirational target maintains focus on securing on-call fire engine availability, for some time now the Service has fallen short of delivering against this highly ambitious target. Work has been undertaken to compare our KPI's with those in use in other Services, with the ambition being to provide Members of the Performance Committee with a suitable KPI which would better reflect holistic fire cover across the county of Lancashire, considering both wholetime and on-call availability.

The approach is commensurate with the direction of travel towards optimising fire cover to ensure an efficient and effective operational response which is aligned to managing risk across the 39 fire station areas and is consistent with the Response Standards KPI which measures our 1st pump response time to incidents based upon the risk level within that area of the county. It is pursuant to the purchase and introduction of Dynamic Cover Tool software into service, which supports intelligent, risk-based decision-making around fire engine availability and provides for optimisation of emergency response coverage across the county.

Recommendation(s)

Changes to the current KPI (3.3) which will combine first pump availability of wholetime and on-call fire engines across the 39 fire stations in Lancashire, and provide a performance measurement against a revised overall availability target of 90%.

Removal of the sub-indicators 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 which will be encompassed within the newly revised KPI, although these indicators will continue to be monitored locally by Service Delivery Managers.

Information

The Service presently has 3 KPI measurements pertaining to appliance availability across the entire fleet:

> 3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability (combines wholetime and on-call)
> (No target – for information purposes only)
> 3.3.1 Fire Engine Availability – Wholetime Shift System (Target 99.5%)
> 3.3.2 Fire Engine Availability – On-Call Shift System (Aspirational Target 95%)

The On-Call appliance availability target is presently set at a demanding 95%. Whilst having such a high aspirational target maintains on-call availability as a perennial Service priority, setting unrealistic targets can have a negative impact on performance and can fail to recognise the improvements that some stations are making to availability, as they continue overall to fall short of the objective.

32 of 58 LFRS pumps, are crewed by on-call firefighters, many of these appliances provide fire cover in lower-risk, rural areas, whilst others provide a secondary layer of response to that provided by wholetime crews in urban areas of the county. The Service presently measures the availability of on-call appliances against the same 95% aspirational target across the county, irrespective of demand, risk levels or a wholetime resource being within that station area.

Nationally, on-call availability continues to be a challenge as highlighted by NFCC and HMICFRS; extensive work is ongoing both locally and nationally to address some of the key issues. Within Service, a significant volume of work is ongoing which aims to improve recruitment, training and development, retention, and broadening the utilisation of on-call staff, all balanced against realistic role expectations given the limitations on available training hours for them each week.

Having considered a number of options, this paper provides a proposal for Service KPI change which will provide the right balance of oversight and ambition for fire engines crewed by both wholetime and on-call firefighters, supplemented by further internal KPI's for use by local managers to drive contractual performance and ensure value for money.

Proposal

To Measure: 1st Fire Engine Availability (Wholetime & On-Call) across the 39 risk areas within Lancashire

The Dynamic Cover Tool software enables us to dynamically move resources according to risk and demand, optimising our ability to meet our published response times. The system will guide cover moves where operational incidents arise and appliance mobilisations then create gaps in fire cover. The system is designed to manage cover across the county based upon known risk and as such identifies the individual significance of each of our 39 base locations.

This proposal seeks to align our KPI reporting to this methodology, reporting performance based upon how effectively fire cover is provided across the 39 fire

stations (risk areas) within Lancashire at a fire station level, rather by each of the 58 fire engines.

The 'Availability KPI' will report on the combined availability of the primary asset at each of the 39 locations, in percentage terms, whether that be a wholetime or on call appliance. This aligns with the Response Standard KPI approach which measures 1st pump response times and gives a true indication of the speed of response and first intervention provided across each of the 39 risk areas.

As such the KPI will report availability by virtue of all first pumps at wholetime, flexi day crewed and day crewing plus stations in addition to the first pumps at the following stand-alone on call stations:

Area	Station	Callsign
Northern	Bolton le Sands	L13P1
	Carnforth	L14P1
	Silverdale	L15P1
	Hornby	L16P1
	Garstang	L18P1
	Preesall	L33P1
Western	Wesham	L34P1
	Lytham	L35P1
	Tarleton	L58P1
Eastern	Longridge	L59P1
	Great Harwood	L72P1
	Clitheroe	L91P1
Pennine	Haslingden	L75P1
	Padiham	L92P1
	Barnoldswick	L93P1
	Earby	L95P1
	Colne	L96P1

Based on the last 4 full years data, KPI 3.3 (combined WT and OC availability) annual availability would be represented as:

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
WT	99.51%	99.35%	99.34%	99.35%
On-Call	90.93%	92.83%	81.71%	76.97%
Overall	95.77%	96.51%	91.65%	89.60%

The deterioration in performance largely as a result of declining on call availability as detailed in the table above.

Going forward, the Service would continue to apply focus to recruitment activities centred around all on-call units, not just those which comprise the basis of the KPI calculation.

To underpin the proposed Service level KPI, an incremental 2% p.a. approach to increasing on call availability is to be implemented on a local level starting from the current baseline position.

Recommendations

That Planning Committee adopt the revised Service measure for combined fire station availability, based upon a realistic target of 90% for 1st pump availability across the 39 fire stations / risk areas.

Business risk

High – the Service presently has targets for On-Call availability that are unachievable and unrealistic at the present time. Future HMICFRS Inspections will consider how effectively LFRS performs against the performance targets set.

Local and national work is underway to address on-call challenges, meantime, KPI changes are proposed to ensure that fire cover distribution can be appropriately measured and reported, using KPI's that are specific, measurable and achievable, and tailored towards managing the risk the exists across the county.

Furthermore, the proposed approach is consistent with the measurement of 1st pump response times to incidents and the development of the Dynamic Cover Tool system which is based upon covering 39 risk areas within Lancashire.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

Negligible – overall appliance numbers remain, hence little environmental impacts, positive or negative, arise from these KPI change proposals.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Data Protection (GDPR)

None

HR implications

None

Financial implications

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:
Date:
Contact:
Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/a