

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Performance Committee

Wednesday, 13 December 2023, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room, Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

Minutes

Present:	
Councillors	
T Hurn (Chair)	
L Beavers	
Z Khan MBE	
M Salter	
D Smith	

Officers
J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) E Sandiford, Temp Assistant Director of HR (LFRS) M Hamer, Area Manager, Prevention and Protection (LFRS) J Rossen, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) N Taylor, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery (LFRS) G Basson, North West Fire Control L Barr, Member Services Officer (LFRS)
In attendance
G Fernandez, Fire Brigades Union

14/23	Apologies For Absence
	Apologies were received from County Councillor Peter Britcliffe, County Councillor Hasina Khan, County Councillor Paul Rigby, County Councillor Barrie Yates, and Councillor Jean Rigby.
15/23	Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
	None received.
16/23	Minutes of Previous Meeting
	Resolved: - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the 13 September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17/23

Performance Management Information

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a comprehensive report to the Performance Committee. This was the 2nd quarterly report for 2023/24 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027.

This quarter, one Key Performance Indicator (KPI), 2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks, was shown in positive exception and three Key Performance Indicators were shown in negative exception. These were 1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime (WT), 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook, and 3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability.

Members examined each indicator in turn focusing on those KPIs in exception as follows:

KPI 1 – Valuing our people so that they can focus on making Lancashire safer

1.1 Overall Staff Engagement

Members received an update on how staff were engaged during the period.

From July to September 2023, 29 station and department visits were carried out by principal officers, directors, and area managers as part of the service-wide engagement programme. One station visit, involving the HR department, was undertaken to engage with members of staff affected by duty system changes as part of the emergency cover review.

There were 29 wellbeing interactions undertaken ranging from wellbeing sessions with crews to support dog interactions. The Service engaged with staff over several topics relating to fleet and equipment, including facial hair coverings for use with breathing apparatus, helmet communications, and particulate flash hoods. Three focus groups were held with on-call firefighters over policy changes relating to operational response.

1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime

This indicator measured the cumulative number of shifts (days) lost due to sickness for all wholetime staff divided by the total average strength.

Annual Standard: Not more than 5 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 1.25

Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 4.252

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target for quarter 2.

During quarter 2, July to September 2023, absence statistics showed whole-time personnel absence above target for the quarter.

1,433 Wholetime absence shifts lost = 2.15 against a target of 1.25 which was 0.9

shifts over target. During the same quarter of the previous year 2.63 shifts were lost which was a decrease of 0.48 shifts lost per wholetime employee. Cases of long-term (greater than 28 days) absence over the whole quarter had increased by 0.53 shifts from the previous quarter.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that, as discussed previously, the data had been split between long-term and short-term absences.

The number of cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months had reduced from five cases in Q1 to three cases in Q2.

As a result of the three cases of long-term absences, 139 shifts were lost during Q2 compared to 208 shifts lost during the previous quarter. These cases accounted for 0.22 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

There were 34 other cases of long-term absence also recorded within the 3 months:

- Mental health – 14 cases
- Hospital/Post Operative – 6 cases
- Musculo skeletal – 7 cases
- Genitourinary/Gynaecological/Reproductive – 2 cases
- Cancer and Tumours – 2 cases
- Other absence types (single returns) – 3 cases

In Q2, 101 shifts lost were related to respiratory related absences, which included Coronavirus absence and equated to 0.167 shifts lost per person, which was in comparison to 121 shifts lost in Q1.

The Service had a robust Absence Management Policy which detailed the approach to managing periods of workplace absence to ensure that staff were supported back to work at the appropriate time based upon their individual needs and in a compassionate way.

The Human Resources (HR) system, I-Trent, automatically generated monthly reports to line managers and HR Business Partners in relation to employees and their periods and reasons for absence, and these were closely monitored. Where employees were absent due to mental health, or a stress related condition, they were referred to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) as early as possible. Employees returning to work had a return-to-work interview and stress risk assessment, or individual health risk assessments were completed where required.

The Service had several support mechanisms available to support individuals to return to work or be exited as appropriate including guidance from Occupational Health, access to Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and the Firefighters Charity.

Where an employee did not return to work in a timely manner, an absence review meeting would take place with the employee, the line manager and a representative from Human Resources. The meetings were aimed at identifying support to return an individual back to work which could include modified duties for

a period, redeployment, but ultimately could result in dismissal, or permanent ill health retirement from the Service.

The Absence Management Policy detailed when a formal review of an employee's performance levels would normally take place. In terms of short-term absence, a formal review would take place where an employee had 3 or more periods of absence in 6 months, or an employee had 14 days absent. In terms of long-term absence, a formal review would normally take place at 3, 6, 9 and 11 months.

A key challenge for supporting operational staff returning to work was that the threshold for fitness and returning to work for operational firefighters was higher than in other occupations due to their hazardous working conditions.

1.2.2 Staff Absence On-Call (OC)

This indicator measured the percentage of contracted hours lost due to sickness for all on-call contracted staff.

Annual Standard: No more than 2.5% lost as a % of available hours of cover.

Cumulative on-call absence (as a % of available hours cover) at the end of the quarter, 1.51%.

1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook

This indicator measured the cumulative number of shifts (days) lost due to sickness for all green book support staff divided by the average strength.

Annual Standard: Not more than 5 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 1.25

Cumulative shifts lost: 3.886

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target for quarter 2.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised Members that Wholetime Staff were those in a firefighter, uniformed, grey book role. Green book staff were typically those in non-uniformed, support roles such as Human Resources and Health and Safety etc.

The agreed target performance level was 5 shifts lost per employee per year for green book staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group of staff was 2.15 which was 0.9 above target. During the same quarter of the previous year, 1.72 shifts were lost which was an increase of 0.43 shifts lost per Greenbook staff.

During quarter 2, July to September 2023, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel above target for the quarter.

423 non-uniformed absence shifts lost = 2.15 against a target of 1.25

During the quarter there were no cases of long-term absence which spanned over the total of the 3 months. There were nine cases of long-term absence which were recorded within the 3 months:

- Mental Health – 5 cases
- Other absence types (single returns) – 4 cases

During quarter 2, 322 shifts were lost as a result of the above nine cases of long-term absences, in comparison to 212 shifts lost during the previous quarter. These cases accounted for 1.59 shifts lost per person over the quarter, which was an increase of 0.58 shifts lost from the previous quarter.

In quarter 2, 11 shifts lost were related to Respiratory related absences, this included Coronavirus absence and equated to 0.05 shifts lost per person. This showed a decrease of 0.5 shifts lost from the previous quarter.

The Service had an Absence Management Policy which detailed its approach to how it would manage absence ensuring that staff time was managed effectively, but also members of staff were supported back to work or exited from the Service in a compassionate way.

The Human Resources (HR) system, ITrent, automatically generated monthly reports to line managers and HR Business Partners in relation to employees, with the periods and reasons for absence, and those were closely monitored. Where Employees were absent due to a mental health, or stress related conditions, those employees were referred to the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) as early as possible. Employees returning to work had a return-to-work interview and stress risk assessment, or individual health risk assessments were completed where required.

Where an employee did not return to work in a timely manner, an absence review meeting would take place with the employee, the line manager, and a representative from Human Resources. The meetings were aimed at identifying support to return an individual back to work which could include modified duties for a period, redeployment, but ultimately could result in dismissal, or permanent ill health retirement from the Service.

The Absence Management Policy detailed when a formal review of an employee's performance levels would normally take place. In terms of short-term absence, a formal review would take place where an employee had 3 or more periods of absence in 6 months, or an employee had 14 days absent. In terms of long-term absence, a formal review would normally take place at 3,6,9 and 11 months.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the policies and procedures relating to absences were consistent for both green book and grey book staff.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer highlighted that sickness levels aligned with the national context and mental health was the primary cause in LFRS.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources informed Members that figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Chartered Institute of Personnel and

Development (CIPD) showed deteriorating attendance levels on a national scale since the Covid-19 pandemic, with absences rising by 2%, which was reflected at LFRS. The absence reasons were complex and reasons cited included societal issues, the cost-of-living crisis which added to stress for families and vulnerable people, ongoing problems from the pandemic including respiratory illness, and access to treatment in the NHS.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources advised that in relation to attendance, LFRS had always compared favourably to other Services. The Service had a robust application of policies and procedures which helped to manage absences and support staff. Reasonable adjustments could be implemented and tailored to the need and responsibilities of individuals, however, there were some cases with firefighter roles where reasonable adjustments were not possible and resulted in extended absence times.

Members were asked to consider whether the targets for the absence KPIs should be reviewed, or adjustments be made to the existing policies and procedures to ensure standards were achievable.

County Councillor Beavers stated that the absence targets needed to be adjusted as they were unrealistic and unachievable given the societal changes over the last few years and the mental health impacts of the firefighter role.

Councillor Smith agreed that there was a need to adjust absence targets and highlighted the effects of long covid and the impact of that on mental health.

In response to a question from Councillor Smith in relation to whether a firefighter could be given light duties when physically restricted by an operation, the Assistant Director of HR advised that a firefighter could be assigned to modified duties to facilitate their return to work. Other duties could be considered where possible, and alternatives were being investigated.

All Members agreed to a review of the targets for KPIs 1.2.1, 1.2.2 and 1.2.3, and/or further options to manage and improve staff absence. It was agreed that the Assistant Director of Human Resources would undertake work to develop proposals on this basis.

1.3.1 Workforce Diversity

This indicator measured diversity as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter, with the percentage within the brackets illustrating the same quarter of the previous year:

Gender:	Female 21%(19%)	Male 79%(81%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 3%(4%)	Not stated 3%(4%)	White 94%(92%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 4%(3%)	Heterosexual 54%(47%)	Not stated 42%(50%)
Disability:	Disability 3%(3%)	No disability 94%(94%)	Not stated

3%(3%)

Diversity percentage by Grey Book Staff and Green Book Staff. Counts included double counts if the member of staff was dual contracted between Grey and Green Book.

Separate diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff:

Gender:	Female	Grey book 9%	Green book 60%
	Male	Grey book 91%	Green book 40%
Ethnicity:	BME	Grey book 3%	Green book 5%
	White	Grey book 95%	Green book 88%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 7%
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT	Grey book 4%	Green book 3%
	Heterosexual	Grey book 53%	Green book 57%
	Not stated	Grey book 43%	Green book 40%
Disability:	Disability	Grey book 3%	Green book 3%
	No disability	Grey book 95%	Green book 90%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 7%

1.3.2 Workforce Diversity Recruited

This new indicator measured workforce diversity recruited as a percentage.

Combined diversity percentage of grey book (operational) and green book (support) staff. The percentages outside of the brackets represented the current quarter, with the percentage within the brackets illustrating the same quarter of the previous year:

Gender:	Female 37%(34%)	Male 63%(66%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 5%(0%)	White 85%(95%)	Not Stated 10%(5%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 5%(15%)	Heterosexual 85%(77%)	Not stated 10%(8%)
Disability:	Disability 2%(1%)	No disability 93%(96%)	Not stated 5%(3%)

During quarter 2, there were a total of 24 new recruits. It was noted that a further breakdown of the data would not be provided as it may enable the identification of individuals, due to the small numbers of recruits during certain periods.

1.4 Staff Accidents

This indicator measured the number of accidents which occurred to staff members at work within the quarter: Wholetime, On-Call and Greenbook.

Total number of staff accidents, 18 for quarter 2; year to date 34; previous year to

date 33. Quarterly activity decreased 28.0% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that there had been a spike in the number of accidents in the previous year due to one notable incident and he was pleased with the steady progress in the year to date.

KPI 2 - Preventing, fires and other emergencies from happening and Protecting people and property when fires happen

2.1 Risk Map Score

This indicator measured the fire risk in each Super Output Area, of which there were 942. Risk was determined using fire activity over the previous 3 fiscal years along with a range of demographic data, such as population and deprivation. The County risk map score was updated annually and presented to the Performance Committee in the quarter 1 reporting period.

Annual Standard: To reduce the risk in Lancashire – an annual reduction in the County risk map score.

$(\text{Dwelling Fires} \div \text{Total Dwellings}) + (\text{Dwelling Fire Casualties} \div \text{Resident Population} \times 4) + \text{Building Fire} + (\text{IMD} \times 2) = \text{Risk Score}$.

The current score was 31,170 and the previous year's score was 31,576 which meant that the fire risk continued to reduce.

2.2 Overall Activity

This indicator measured the number of incidents that LFRS attended with one or more pumping appliances. Incidents attended included fires, special service calls, false alarms and collaborative work undertaken with other emergency services i.e.: missing person searches on behalf of the Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) and gaining entry incidents at the request of the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

Incidents attended, year to date 9,526; previous year to date 10,283. Quarterly activity decreased 17.87% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In quarter 2, the Service attended 4,421 incidents. The report presented a chart which represented the count and percentage that each activity had contributed to the overall quarter's activity:

- Total False Alarm Calls (due to apparatus, good intent and malicious) – 2005, 45%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 439, 10%
- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 693, 16%
- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and other critical incidents) – 1278, 29%

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that the decrease in overall activity was due to several factors including ongoing work with call handlers at NWFC to reduce unnecessary and inefficient mobilisation to incidents, consistent reviews of NWFC action plans, and ensuring that the Service was mobilising the right resources to the right incidents.

In response to a query from Councillor Smith regarding the previous year's percentage of false alarms activity compared to the current year's percentage of 45%, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the previous year's percentage was approximately 50% as, although the new policy had been implemented, the Service still attended alarms for certain building types. It was explained that the percentage figure for false alarms was also affected by the volume of other activity types as the KPI was expressed as a percentage proportion. If the other activity types had lower figures, the percentage of false alarms would appear higher as a percentage of the whole figure. Area Manager, Matt Hamer, advised that since the application of the new policy, there had been a reduction in the number of false alarms attended and significant efficiency savings had been achieved.

2.3 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of the fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Members noted that a primary fire was one involving property (excluding derelict property) or any fires involving casualties, rescues or any fire attended by 5 or more pumping appliances.

Accidental Dwelling Fires, 170 in quarter 2; year to date 373; previous year to date 406. Quarterly activity decreased 15.84% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.3.1 ADF – Harm to people: Casualties

This indicator reported the number of fire related fatalities, slight and serious injuries at primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental or Not known.'

A slight injury was defined as; a person attending hospital as an outpatient (not precautionary check). A serious injury was defined as; at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient.

Fatal,	1 in quarter 2; year to date 1; previous year to date 4
Injuries appear Serious	4 in quarter 2; year to date 7; previous year to date 6
Injuries appear Slight	5 in quarter 2; year to date 13; previous year to date 6

Quarterly activity increased 11.11% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.3.2 ADF – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been

affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the 'stop' message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

Current quarter, combined percentage of 85% against same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 89%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore decreased 3.32% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.4 Accidental Building Fires (ABF) (Commercial Premises)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a building had been affected (which was other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling), and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

ABF (Commercial Premises), 58 in quarter 2; year to date 128; previous year to date 141. Quarterly activity decreased 20.55% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.4.1 ABF (Commercial Premises) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a building had been affected (which was other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling), and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known'.

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the 'stop' message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

- current quarter, combined percentage of 73% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 68%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore increased 4.7% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.5 Accidental Building Fires (Non-Commercial Premises)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a private garage, private shed, private greenhouse, private summerhouse, or other private non-residential building had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known.'

ABF (Non-Commercial Premises), 9 in quarter 2; year to date 49; previous year to

date 52. Quarterly activity decreased 60.87% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.5.1 ABF (Non-Commercial premises: Private garages and sheds) – Harm to property: Extent of damage (fire severity)

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a private garage, private shed, private greenhouse, private summerhouse, or other private non-residential building had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as 'Accidental' or 'Not known.'

Extent of fire, heat and smoke damage was recorded at the time the 'stop' message was sent and included all damage types.

The table in the report showed a breakdown of fire severity with a directional indicator that compared:

- current quarter, combined percentage of 0% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 22%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore decreased 21.7% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6 Deliberate Fires Total: Specific performance measure of deliberate fires

This indicator provided an overall measure of primary and secondary fires where the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – 460 in quarter 2; year to date 1,144; previous year to date 1,471. Quarterly activity decreased 37.92% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6.1 Deliberate Fires – Dwellings

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where a dwelling had been affected and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – Dwellings, 24 in quarter 2, year to date 48; previous year to date 36. Quarterly activity increased 20.00% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.6.2 Deliberate Fires - Commercial Premises

This indicator reported the number of primary fires where the property type was a building, other than a dwelling or a private building associated with a dwelling, and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

Deliberate Fires – Commercial Premises, 30 in quarter 2; year to date 72; previous year to date 56.

Quarterly activity increased 30.43% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that a number of incidents occurred in

prisons using electronic smoking materials as an ignition source. Managing these types of incidents fell within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and the Crown Inspectorate. The Service had made progress in terms of engagement with the relevant bodies and the KPI overall, was now out of exception.

2.6.3 Deliberate Fires – Other (rubbish, grassland, vehicles etc).

This indicator reported the number of primary and secondary fires where the property type was other than a building, except where the building was recorded as derelict, and the cause of fire had been recorded as deliberate.

The majority of deliberate fires were outdoor secondary fires and included grassland and refuse fires. Derelict vehicle fires were also included under secondary fires.

Deliberate Fires – Other, 406 in quarter 2; year to date 1,024; previous year to date 1,379. Quarterly activity decreased 41.83% over the same quarter of the previous year.

2.7 Home Fire Safety Checks

This indicator reported the percentage of completed Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC), excluding refusals, carried out where the risk score had been determined to be high.

An improvement was shown if:

- the total number of HFSC's completed was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year; and
- the percentage of high HFSC outcomes was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs completed, 5,840 in quarter 2; year to date 11,511; previous year to date 10,460. Quarterly activity increased 7.5% over the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, Quarter 2, 52%; previous year Quarter 2, 60%.

Quarterly activity decreased 8.0% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the volume of completed HFSCs was positive but that in terms of targeting those who were most vulnerable, the percentage of high-risk outcomes had decreased slightly. Area Manager, Matt Hamer reassured Members that the Service would continue to target those who were high-risk, and work was ongoing to strengthen partner referrals and the ability of the Service Contact Centre to translate these into appointments for staff delivering HFCSs.

It was noted that some data had not been received by the Service in relation to those individuals adopting/leaving the telecare system run by Lancashire County Council. The Chair and County Councillor Beavers confirmed that they would raise

the issue with Lancashire County Council.

2.8 Numbers of prevention activities such as Childsafe, wasted lives etc

Members received an update on the number of sessions delivered against the following prevention activities during the quarter:

ChildSafe,	36 sessions delivered to 1,012 attendees;
RoadSense,	35 sessions delivered to 989 attendees;
SENDSafe,	2 sessions delivered to 48 attendees;
Wasted Lives,	11 sessions delivered to 452 pupils;
Biker Down,	3 sessions delivered to 53 attendees;
FIRES,	52 referrals opened prior to Q2 and carried over. 18 referrals received in Q2. 48 referrals closed in Q2. 22 referrals carried into Q3;
Partner Training,	32 sessions – 324 staff.

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4), across 36 sessions, delivered in person to 29,586 attendees. 32 Teen Safe water Safety sessions delivered to 4,805 attendees. 15 BrightSparx delivered in September.

Arson Threat Referrals - 208.

2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks

This indicator reported the number of Business Fire Safety Check (BFSC's) completed and whether the result was satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If the result of a BFSC was unsatisfactory, fire safety advice would be provided to help the business comply with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. If critical fire safety issues were identified, then a business safety advisor would conduct a follow-up intervention.

- The pro rata BFSC target was delivered through each quarter.

A +/-10% tolerance was applied to the completed BFSCs and the year to date (YTD) BFSCs, against both the quarterly and YTD targets. When both counts were outside of the 10% tolerance they would be deemed in exception which enabled local delivery to flex with the needs of their district plan over the quarters.

BFSCs completed, 876 in quarter 2; Cumulative 1,696; YTD target, 1,250; previous YTD 589.

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being satisfactory, 760. Top 5 completed satisfactory premise types (Shops 300, Factories/Warehouses 100, Other workplaces 93, Licensed premises 77, Other public premises 63).

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being unsatisfactory, 116. Top 5 completed unsatisfactory premise types (Shops 64, Factories/Warehouses 16, Licensed premises 11, Other workplaces 10, Offices 4).

The positive exception report was due to the number of completed Business Fire Safety Checks (BFSCs) being greater than 10% of the quarterly target, and the cumulative year to date target.

Crews were continuing to embed built environment knowledge and understanding. New built environment virtual training had been delivered and supplemented initial BFSC training for crews to embed practically via BFSC targeting.

In response to a query from Councillor Smith as to whether private landlords' properties were treated as businesses or households, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that it was dependent on the type of property. Rented single dwellings fell under the Housing Act and the jurisdiction of the relevant Local Authority and for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), there was a dual responsibility between the fire service (for communal areas) and the Local Authority within each flat. LFRS worked alongside housing authorities for those properties with communal spaces as part of business-as-usual activities.

A discussion took place around the Serco company that owned and bought a large number of properties, some of which were HMOs. It was noted that the Service took part in partnership working regarding the settling of refugee and asylum seekers. The Local Authority would inspect properties and LFRS would carry out follow up activity if necessary to ensure buildings were safe and compliant. The Service also worked with Adult Social Care regarding vulnerable and high-risk individuals.

2.9.1 Fire Safety Activity (including Business Fire Safety Checks)

This indicator reported the number of Fire Safety Enforcement inspections carried out within the period which resulted in supporting businesses to improve and become compliant with fire safety regulations or where formal action of enforcement and prosecution had been taken for those that failed to comply.

An improvement was shown if the percentage of audits that required formal activity was greater than the comparable quarter of the previous year.

Total Fire Safety Enforcement Inspections, Quarter 2, 590;
Formal Activity in Quarter 2, 7%, same quarter of the previous year 9%.
Quarterly activity decreased 2% over the same quarter of the previous year.

Members noted the cumulative number of Business Fire Safety Check follow-up visits undertaken for 2023/24 was 1,120.

2.10 Building Regulation Consultations (BRC) (number and completed on time)

Where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applied to premises (or would apply following building work) the building control body must consult with LFRS for comments / advice regarding fire safety. LFRS should make any comments in writing within 15 working days from receiving a BRC.

This indicator provided Members with information on the number of building

regulations consultations received during the period together with improvement actions.

In Quarter 2, Building Regulation Consultations received 250, of which 243 were completed within timeframe (LFRS should make comments in writing within 15 working days of receiving a BRC).

Improvement Actions were noted as follows:

To comply with the NFCC Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators, consultations must be completed by Level 4 qualified Fire Safety Inspectors. It was the same inspectors who were required to complete the more complex audits required by the risk-based inspection program, consequently use of finite resources must be fully co-ordinated and balanced. To achieve this and ensure consultation timelines were achieved:

- Buildings regulations process was now centralised and built into the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS). A new buildings regulation team and centralised email had been created to signpost all building control bodies and approved inspectors to. A pan-Lancashire approach to building regulations had now been adopted, rather than an area-based approach due to the numbers of competent staff able to undertake building regulations.

KPI 3 - Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly

3.1 Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator reported the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident in less than the relevant response standard.

The response standards included call handling and fire engine response time for the first fire engine attending a critical fire, as follows: -

- Very high-risk area = 6 minutes
- High risk area = 8 minutes
- Medium risk area = 10 minutes
- Low risk area = 12 minutes

The response standards were determined by the risk map score and subsequent risk grade for the location of the fire.

Standards were achieved when the time between the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident, averaged over the quarter, was less than the relevant response standard. Expressed in minutes & seconds.

Critical Fire Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, Quarter 2, Very High 05:45 min; High 05:56 min, Medium 06:28 min, Low 08:26 min.

Q2 overall 07:06 min. Year to date overall 07:25 min. Previous year to date overall 07:10 min.

It was noted by Members that the response times for all critical fire response categories were substantially quicker than the Service response standards.

3.2 Critical Special Service Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance

This indicator reported the 'Time of Call' (TOC) and 'Time in Attendance' (TIA) of the first fire engine arriving at the incident in less than the relevant response standard.

The response standard included how long it took the first fire engine to respond to critical special service (non-fire) incidents where there was a risk to life such as road traffic collisions, rescues, and hazardous materials incidents. For these critical special service call incidents there was a single response standard of 13 minutes (which measured call handling time and fire engine response time).

Critical Special Service Response – 1st Fire Engine Attendance, 08:42 min in quarter 2; year to date 08:34 min; previous year to date 08:10 min. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer highlighted the exceptionally swift response to Critical Special Service calls attended in the year to date.

3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability

This indicator measured the availability of the 1st fire engine at each of the 39 fire stations. It was measured as the percentage of time the 1st fire engine was available to respond compared to the total time in the period.

Standard: to be in attendance within response standard target on 90% of occasions.

Total Fire Engine Availability, 87.84% in quarter 2; year to date 88.66%; previous year to date 88.82%.

Quarterly availability decreased 0.42% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The negative exception report was due to the 1st fire appliance availability percentage being below the lower control limit during quarter 2.

Overall availability across all stations for the quarter recorded 87.84%, which was 2.16% below the 90% standard.

The availability by each of the stations designated first pump crewing type:

Wholetime – 99.41%
Day Crewing Plus – 99.23%
Flexi Day Crewing – 99.12%
On-Call – 73.06%
Total – 87.84%

Whilst all of the Whole-Time appliances achieved exceptional availability, the 1st

appliance at the wholly On-Call stations contributed to the availability falling below the 90% standard. As such, the exception report was focused on On-Call availability.

A shortage of staff with the Officer in Charge (OIC), Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) and Emergency Response Driver (ERD) skill was a significant contributing factor to low On-Call availability. On-Call Support Officers (OCSO) were working with station-based staff and management, along with Training Centre, to support those in development and identify opportunities for high-performing individuals to acquire those skills earlier in their career.

The Breathing Apparatus (BA) skill was another factor contributing to low On-Call availability, however, a rolling programme of BA initial training combined with BA Team Leader courses was ensuring demand for those skills was met.

A new inter-service transfer policy would assist with On-Call recruitment, simplifying the process for transferees to join LFRS.

Actions being taken to improve performance:

- The Service would continue to deliver a recruitment strategy, which incorporated targeted recruitment. The upcoming recruitment campaign would close on 11 November. Circa 136 applicants would progress to the Saville and Holdsworth (SHL) testing.
- Increase visibility of On-Call units in the community which could include off station training, or community engagement events.
- Broadening the skills of On-Call staff (as per the Emergency Cover Review) in addition to exploring new opportunities or ways of working for On-Call or Dual Contract staff would further improve On-Call availability.
- Continued recruitment and development of On-Call Support Officers to enhance the Service's capability to attract, develop and retain On Call firefighters from communities across Lancashire.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that there had been a large number of On-Call applicants and 48 had been successful and would progress onto training, fully populating the available courses. HR were exploring the possibility of accelerated training for recruits and those progressing through their development stages.

KPI 4 - Delivering value for money in how we use our resources

4.1 Progress Against Allocated Budget

Members received an update on spend against the approved budget for the year.

The annual budget for 2023/24 was set at £68.5 million. Spend at the end of September was £32.8m, £0.4m less than budget. The majority was attributable to non-pay costs which included a shortfall on apprenticeship levy funding, an increase in repair and maintenance on operational vehicles, and an increase in external training.

Quarter 2 variance 0.58%.

4.2 Partnership Collaboration

Under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, blue light services were under a formal duty to collaborate to improve efficiency, effectiveness and deliver improved outcomes.

LFRS, Lancashire Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service had met at both tactical and strategic levels and had agreed and signed a strategic statement of intent which contained the following aims:

- **Improved Outcomes** – The collaboration maintains or improves the service we provide to local people and local communities;
- **Reduce Demand** – The collaboration should contribute towards our longer-term strategic objective of decreasing risk in communities and reducing demand on services;
- **Better Value for Money** – The collaboration produces quantifiable efficiencies either on implementation or in the longer term;
- **Reduced inequalities within our communities** – The collaboration contributes towards reducing inequalities wherever possible.

This indicator provided Members with an update on partnership collaboration during the period.

Missing Persons (MisPer)

LFRS continued to support LanCon with the successful collaboration and a closure report was now in development for this workstream. There were over 220 police requests into North West Fire Control (NWFC) for the specialist drone team within the last 12 month. Most of the incidents were for missing persons.

The Missing Persons project was being enhanced further with the aim of training teams from several 'On-Call' stations within Lancashire. The locations were identified from data and analysis that had shown where people were most likely to go missing from home and where LanCon's resources were limited. This enabled LFRS' specialist teams to search familiar ground in reduced time and improve the likelihood of a positive outcome. This training developed the knowledge of what was required by LanCon in the management of a missing from home incident which included intelligence gathering, record keeping, search areas, and ensuring a crime scene was not contaminated.

Training was also planned for the contact centre staff in LanCon to increase their knowledge of LFRS' search capabilities.

A Memorandum of Understanding had been developed to provide a framework to further support the collaborative use of LFRS and LanCon drones.

Estates and Co-location

This project was a longer-term work stream which could deliver significant efficiencies and effectiveness where co-location sites were identified.

A set of principles was being developed in relation to co-location sites and a mapping exercise of the current co-location sites and the benefits had commenced.

Blue Light partners were currently reviewing their strategic property asset plans to coordinate the future development plans over the next 5-10 years. The development plans would consider the potential for co-location, and with a view to further developing the integration of services at co-location sites to enhance the shared ethos and principles.

All Blue Light partners were included in the scoping work for the LFRS Preston area review.

First Responder

As part of the Annual Service Plan (ASP) priorities this year, the Service was running a trial involving staff volunteering as community first responders, supporting NWAS. Volunteers respond to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and administer first aid in the initial vital minutes before NWAS colleagues arrived. This collaboration aimed to save lives in Lancashire's communities.

Phase 1 of the first responder scheme involved 5 non-operational LFRS staff from various departments across the Service volunteering to take part in the scheme. At least one life had been saved by LFRS volunteers.

Phase 2 had commenced which had enabled operational staff to volunteer for the scheme. Eight of our Flexible Duty Officers (FDOs) had so far volunteered to be a community first responder and were currently progressing through the onboarding process with NWAS.

Leadership Development

The Learning and Development leads from each of the Blue Light partners were investigating leadership development collaboration opportunities.

An analysis of leadership development was ongoing between the three organisations with the Services currently exploring an additional mentorship programme for command and control.

Command Units

The aim of this project was to establish and deliver additional collaborative uses of the command units in LFRS to support effective multi agency working amongst emergency responders. The key objectives were to improve operational effectiveness and in line with the LFRS mission; 'Making Lancashire Safer.'

LFRS' Command Support Unit (CSU) project was listed in this years' Service Plan and aimed to upgrade not only vehicles, but to take advantage of recent technological advances to support operational incidents. It had been agreed that the first new Command Support Unit (CSU) would go live on 01 November 2023 and would be crewed by On-Call staff from Carnforth and Bolton-le-Sands fire stations. As part of the agreed capital vehicle replacement project, two larger command units would also be in Service by the end of 2023.

It was expected that the initial benefits to be realised would be technological advances that would further develop information sharing and situational awareness aligned to improving and embedding the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). Further scoping and development would be overseen by the Blue Light Collaboration board to ensure opportunities for joint working were effectively co-ordinated and delivered.

4.3 Overall User Satisfaction

People surveyed included those who had experienced an accidental dwelling fire, a commercial fire, or a special service incident that the Service attended.

The standard was achieved if the percentage of satisfied responses was greater than the standard.

Annual Standard: 97.50%

In quarter 2, 77 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 7. The running number of people surveyed for the year was 3,417 with 3,376 of those people being satisfied with the Service; 98.80% against a standard of 97.50%; a variance of 1.33%.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Fire Officer for his comprehensive report.

The Assistant Director of HR left the meeting.

Area Manager, John Rossen and Area Manager, Neil Taylor provided with an update on the ongoing incident on the Commercial Building Fire at SupaSkips site in Lancaster.

Members were given information on the preparation work that took place prior to the incident. Members were informed that LFRS had been involved in partnership work with Lancaster City Council for a number of years in relation to the potential risks that the SupaSkips site presented. The building contained large amounts of compacted commercial waste that had been abandoned following the removal of the site's permit.

On Sunday 03 December, 10 fire engines attended the fire at the Supaskips site that contained approximately 13,000 tonnes of compacted commercial waste. Firefighters had dampened down the fire that was accessible, however, the seat of the fire was beneath the large quantities of waste and pockets of fire continued to smoulder. LFRS were working with Lancaster City Council, the Environment Agency, Lancashire Police, UK Health and Security Agency and Lancashire County Council to tackle the incident and risks posed by the site.

Lancaster City Council had committed funds to assist in accessing the building with heavy plant and machinery and with the removal of waste. It was thought likely that the fire would continue to burn for some time. Significant funding was required to fund resources to fully remove all waste and extinguish the fire to bring the incident to closure.

A Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) and Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) had

been established to plan effective strategies and put tactics in place to effectively control the incident. The Communications Team was also involved in providing regular updates to the public and local businesses.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority would give a report on the incident to full council at Lancashire County Council and Members would continue to receive updates by the Service.

County Councillor Salter joined the meeting.

Resolved: - That the Performance Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 2 Measuring Progress report, including one positive and three negative exceptions.

18/23

North West Fire Control Presentation

The Chair welcomed Ged Basson, Senior Operations Manager, North West Fire Control (NWFC). Mr Basson, provided the Committee with a presentation detailing the performance of NWFC during quarter 2 (July – September 2023).

Emergency Calls in to NWFC

NWFC received 26,849 in quarter 2 compared to 37,462 for the same quarter of 2022/23. For the year to date, NWFC had received 135,455 emergency calls compared to 162,590 for the same period of the previous year. Emergency calls included 999 calls from members of the public and emergency calls from Lancashire Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service.

Emergency Calls for LFRS

A total of 7,752 emergency calls were received in quarter 2 for LFRS, compared to 9,299 for the same quarter of the previous year. For the year to date, NWFC had received 16,893 emergency calls for LFRS, compared to 19,835 for the same period of the previous year.

The call pattern was below average for the time of year which could be attributed to societal issues or the weather that had resulted in different types of emergency calls.

Admin Calls in to NWFC

NWFC had received a total of 27,740 admin calls in quarter 2, compared to 31,727 in quarter 2 of the previous year. The number of calls for the year to date was 59,607, compared to 61,452 for the same period of the previous year. Similar to emergency calls, there was missing data that was not retrievable for administrative calls for quarter 2.

Admin calls included crews and officers contacting NWFC for either guidance, or to offer advice such as notification of missing equipment, defective resources, liaising with NWFC regarding exercises or resources availability.

Admin Calls for LFRS

Within quarter 2, a total of 6,246 admin calls were received for Lancashire Fire and Rescue (LFRS), compared to 7,384 in quarter 2 of the previous year. For the year to date, NWFC had received 13,571 admin calls for LFRS compared to 14,405 calls for the same period of the previous year.

Calls for LFRS equated to 25% of the total calls for all 4 services (LFRS, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service).

Calls Challenged Resulting in No Mobilisation

In quarter 2, the percentage of calls challenged and not mobilised to was 48%, compared to 44% for the same quarter of 2022/23.

These were any calls where Control Room Operators asked additional questions provided by Fire and Rescue Services in order to determine if a response was required. Examples of these incident types were automatic fire alarms, animal rescues, bonfires and NWS gaining entry.

NWFC continued to support Fire & Rescue Services with call challenge questions, which determined whether there were resources mobilised to incidents such as automatic fire alarms. In supporting these initiatives, 42% of calls challenged were not required to be mobilised to, and therefore these resources were available for other emergencies/duties.

Fires: Average Response to Mobilise First Resource

For NWFC, mobilising performance times for fires in quarter 2 was 80 seconds which was under the 90 second target. This compared to 84 for the same quarter in 2022/2023. NWFC had continued to mobilise resources to fires under the 90 second target for the last 3 years.

All FRSs – Fires: Average Response to Mobilise First Resource

The call handling times for fires continued to be relatively favourable compared to other fire and rescue services (Cumbria, Cheshire, and Manchester). During quarter 2, the average time to mobilise the first response to fire related incidents remained within the 90 second target.

Special Service Calls – Average Response to Mobilise First Resource

Mobilising performance times for LFRS in quarter 2 for special service calls was 120 seconds compared to 125 seconds for quarter 2 of the previous year. LFRS mobilising times for special service calls for the year to date was 120 seconds, compared to 127 seconds for the same period of the previous year.

Action plans were constantly refined, and LFRS worked closely with NWFC to ensure call operators were trained on the types of questions to ask which improved response times.

It was noted that several incidents were exempted from the data which included those incidents where there was not an automatic response from NWFC, but when Lancashire FRS had asked that further clarification was sought from a specialist officer, e.g., NILO, prior to mobilisation due to the type of incident, such as suspect packages, and missing persons. Other incidents excluded were, when crews had proceeded to fix a defective smoke alarm several hours after being notified or where incidents had to be queued due to a depletion of FRS resources in a location.

All FRS Response Times – Special Service Calls

The average response times for all FRS Special Service Calls was similar to the other Fire and Rescue Services (Cumbria, Cheshire, and Manchester).

In response to a question raised by the Chair in relation to how calls for the different counties were managed by NWFC, Mr Basson explained that call handlers for all 4 fire services were based in the Control room and generally, call handlers would deal with calls for all 4 fire and rescue services. The exception to this was when a team of people would take ownership of calls for a large and complex incident.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Salter regarding calls for the 4 different fire and rescue services and their geographical areas, Mr Basson informed that all calls were answered within 5.7 seconds, however, call times for different areas could vary. Some areas were urban, meaning a quick identification of the location of the incident and subsequent mobilisation, and some areas were very rural which made locating the incident sometimes more difficult, however, NWFC had software that assisted with this. NWFC had new technology (999Eye) which also allowed operators to view live footage and facilitated them to pinpoint the caller's location and instantly message them to obtain images from the incident. 'What 3 Words' was also a useful tool in locating callers. NWFC worked to improve the time for special service calls as there had been an increase in the number of call prompts that needed to be asked by call operators following guidance from the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC). This had increased call handling time by a few seconds but had ensured that the right information was given to firefighters and callers.

County Councillor Salter asked why the number of emergency calls had dropped substantially and Mr Basson advised that there had been fewer calls due to fewer emergencies which could be attributed to the prevention and protection work in Lancashire. Not all calls were for incidents and multiple calls could be received for the same incident.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Salter in relation to calls for LFRS to support NWAS, Mr Basson explained that NWAS would call for help with access to a property although certain criteria had to be met for LFRS to attend. A tri-service agreement existed between LFRS, NWFC and NWAS, performance against which, was regularly reviewed by the DCFO and ACFO.

The Chair thanked Mr Basson for his interesting and informative presentation.

	Resolved: - That Members noted the content of the report.
19/23	Date of Next Meeting
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 06 March 2024 at 1000 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 26 June 2024 and 04 September 2024 and agreed for 04 December 2024.</p>

M Nolan
Clerk to CFA

LFRS HQ
Fulwood