

## Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Performance Committee

Wednesday, 26 June 2024, at 10.00 am in the Main Conference Room,  
Service Headquarters, Fulwood.

### Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	
<b>Councillors</b>	
T Hurn	
P Rigby	
M Clifford	
F De Molfetta (Chair)	
N Hennessy	
D O'Toole	
D Smith	
B Yates	

<b>Officers</b>
J Charters, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (LFRS) S Hunter, Member Services Manager (LFRS) L Barr, Member Services Officer (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
<b>In attendance</b>
G Fernandez, Fire Brigades Union

1/24	<b>Apologies For Absence</b>
	Apologies were received from County Councillors Peter Britcliffe, Hasina Khan and Matthew Salter.
2/24	<b>Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</b>
	None received.
3/24	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	<b>Resolved:</b> - That the Minutes of the last meeting held on the <b>06 March 2024</b> be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4/24

**Performance Management Information**

County Councillor Frank De Molfetta introduced himself as the new Chair of the Performance Committee and welcomed new Member County Councillor Mark Clifford, and County Councillor David O’Toole to the meeting.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a comprehensive report to the Performance Committee. This was the 4th quarterly report for 2023/24 as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2027.

This quarter, four Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), 1.2.3 Staff Absence Greenbook, 2.3 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF), 2.3.1 ADF – Harm to people: Casualties, and 2.9 Business Fire Safety Checks were shown in positive exception and two Key Performance Indicators were shown in negative exception. These were 1.2.1 Staff Absence Wholetime (WT), 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 January to March 2024, three station visits were carried out by principal officers as part of the service-wide engagement programme. Six station visits involving the HR department had also taken place to engage with members of staff affected by duty system changes as part of the emergency cover review.

Sixty-four wellbeing interactions were undertaken ranging from coffee and chat sessions with crews, to support dog interactions. The Service also engaged with staff over several property projects which included improvements at Preston, Blackpool, and Bacup fire stations, and consultation on body worn cameras continued.

The staff focus group was consulted on employee recognition to gain further insight into feedback on the topic, received in the staff survey and on-call communications.

As reported in the previous quarter: A comprehensive staff survey was undertaken periodically to gain insight from all staff on a range of topics which included leadership, training and development, health and wellbeing, and equality, diversity, and inclusion. The feedback was used to shape future activity and bring about improvements and new ideas. The survey included a staff engagement index which was a measure of overall staff engagement based on levels of pride, advocacy, attachment, inspiration, and motivation. The current staff engagement score index was 74% (2023).

Year	Engagement Index	Response Rate
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2023	74%	49%
2020	79%	44%
2018	70%	43%
2016	64%	31%

The engagement index was calculated based on five questions that measured pride, advocacy, attachment, inspiration, and motivation; factors that were understood to be important features shared by staff who were engaged with the organisation.

For each respondent, an engagement score was calculated as the average score across the five questions, where strongly disagree was equivalent to 0, disagree was equivalent to 25, neither agree nor disagree was equivalent to 50, agree was equivalent to 75 and strongly agree was equivalent to 100. The engagement index was then calculated as the average engagement score in the organisation. This approach meant that a score of 100 was equivalent to all respondents saying strongly agree to all five engagement questions, while a score of 0 was equivalent to all respondents saying strongly disagree to all five engagement questions.

During the survey period, the corporate communications department visited wholetime and on-call crews on 51 occasions to encourage participation in the survey. Five focus groups were held with on-call units by the Service's independent researcher to obtain qualitative feedback on on-call specific matters, to complement the survey data.

### **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 8 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters = 2

Cumulative total number of shifts lost: 8.721

The negative exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being above the Service target of 8 shifts lost per person per annum.

The element of that section of the report referred to sickness absence rates for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The agreed target performance level was 8 shifts lost per employee per year for wholetime staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for that group of staff was 8.72, which was 0.72 shifts over target.

To benchmark Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's (LFRS's) sickness absence levels and performance against other Fire and Rescue Services, the Service utilised the National Occupational Health and Performance report on a quarterly basis.

When benchmarking the number of shifts lost for wholetime employees against the performance of other Fire and Rescue Services (FRAs) between the periods 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 (Q1-Q4), the highest shifts lost reported was 17.30 and the lowest 4.12, with an average of 11.43 wholetime shifts lost nationally. LFRS reported 8.72 wholetime shifts lost due to sickness and were in the lower third of FRAs for absence rates in the UK.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported the number of working days lost due to sickness per employee had increased to 5.7 in 2022, but this had been impacted by furloughed workers.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) data report, indicated in October 2023 that sickness absence rates were the highest reported in a decade and had climbed to the equivalent of 7.8 days per employee.

Sickness absence rates for public sector workers had been consistently higher than private sector workers for every year on record. There were several factors which included: the difference in the types of jobs between sectors, some jobs had higher likelihood of sickness than others and remuneration arrangements.

During quarter 4, January to March 2024, there were 1,284 wholetime absence shifts lost = 1.82 against a target of 2.00.

The number of cases of long-term absence (over the whole quarter) had reduced from five in Q3 to three in Q4.

- Mental Health – Other
- Cancer and tumours

158 shifts were lost during the quarter as a result of the above cases of long-term absences, this was in comparison to 261 shifts lost during the previous quarter. These cases accounted for 0.24 shifts lost per person over the quarter.

There were 26 other cases of long-term absence also recorded within the 3 months:

- Mental health – 10 cases
- Musculo skeletal – 10 cases
- Hospital/Post Operative – 3 cases
- Other absence types (small or single returns) – 3 cases

154 shifts lost were related to Respiratory related absences, which included Coronavirus absence and equated to 0.24 shifts lost per person on Q4, in comparison to 302 shifts lost in Q3.

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.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer went on to advise Members that Planning Committee had agreed changes to KPI's 1.2.1 and 1.2.3 as discussed at the last meeting of the Performance Committee which were enacted from quarter 4. Quarter 4 had experienced lower absence figures than the other quarters in 2023/24 which, in part, was attributed to staff returning from long term absences.

In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy regarding the measures Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service had in place to achieve the lowest absence rates in the UK, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that complexities in sicknesses, absence types and lengths could affect statistics. The Service had policies and procedures in place to deal with absences, as detailed in the report. Any measures that could be learnt from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would be shared with the Committee.

Councillor Smith commented that learning could be taken, however, suggested that it would be useful to compare the Service's position over a number of years to chart progress.

The Chair explained that FRAs in the chart could be different sizes and LFRS had experienced some cases of long-term sickness which could distort the figures.

County Councillor Hurn asked if Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service was as large as LFRS. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed there was some similarity such as work patterns, although Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service was slightly smaller.

County Councillor Rigby stated that he was pleased with the absence figures for Q4, and the Service should be congratulated as it was a step in the right direction.

The Chair highlighted that the comparative figures had only recently become available, and he was pleased that the Service had some comparison even if the other FRAs were not necessarily similar. It was good news that LFRS was in the bottom third of the comparative chart.

### **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, 1.33%.

### **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 8 shifts lost.

Annual Shifts Lost ÷ 4 quarters: 2

Cumulative shifts lost: 7.039

The positive exception report was due to the number of shifts lost through absence per employee being below the Service target for both the year and quarter 4.

It was noted by 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 8 shifts lost per employee per year for green book staff. The actual shifts lost for the period for this group of staff was 7.04, which was 0.96 below target.

To benchmark LFRS's sickness absence levels and performance against other Fire and Rescue Services, the Service utilised the National Occupational Health and Performance Report on a quarterly basis.

When benchmarking the number of shifts lost for Green book employees against the performance of other FRAs between the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024, the highest shifts lost reported was 15.32 and the lowest was 2.75, with an average of 9.77 Green Book shifts nationally. LFRS sat in the upper quartile and reported

7.04 Green book shifts lost due to sickness for the same period.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported the number of working days lost due to sickness per employee had increased to 5.7 in 2022, but this had been impacted by furloughed workers.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) data report, indicated in October 2023 that sickness absence rates were the highest reported in a decade and had climbed to the equivalent of 7.8 days per employee.

Sickness absence rates for public sector workers had been consistently higher than private sector workers for every year on record. There were several factors which included: the difference in the types of jobs between sectors, some jobs had a higher likelihood of sickness than others, and the remuneration arrangements.

During quarter 4, January to March 2024, absence statistics showed non-uniformed personnel below target for the quarter.

257 non-uniformed absence shifts lost = 0.82 against a target of 2.00

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 – 3 cases
- Musculo Skeletal – 3 cases
- Other absence types (small or single returns) – 3 cases

During quarter 4, 93 shifts were lost as a result of the nine cases of long-term absences, in comparison to 267 shifts lost during the previous quarter. These cases accounted for 0.44 shifts lost per person over the quarter, which was a decrease of 0.94 shifts lost from the previous quarter.

In quarter 4, 28 shifts lost were related to Respiratory related absences, this included Coronavirus absence. This was compared to no shifts lost in Q3. This showed an increase of 0.135 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.

### 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%(20%)	Male 79%(80%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 4%(3%)	White 94%(94%)	Not stated 3%(3%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 4%(4%)	Heterosexual 57%(53%)	Not stated 39%(43%)
Disability:	Disability 3%(3%)	No disability 94%(95%)	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 10%	Green book 60%
	Male	Grey book 90%	Green book 40%
Ethnicity:	BME	Grey book 3%	Green book 5%
	White	Grey book 95%	Green book 89%
	Not stated	Grey book 2%	Green book 6%
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT	Grey book 4%	Green book 3%
	Heterosexual	Grey book 57%	Green book 60%
	Not stated	Grey book 39%	Green book 37%



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 32%(21%)	Male 68%(79%)	
Ethnicity:	BME 5%(4%)	White 90%(93%)	Not Stated 5%(3%)
Sexual Orientation:	LGBT 8%(8%)	Heterosexual 87%(85%)	Not stated 5%(7%)
Disability:	Disability 4%(2%)	No disability 94%(96%)	Not stated 2%(2%)

During quarter 4, there were a total of 49 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.

County Councillor O'Toole commented positively on the last Passing out Parade.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that Area Manager, Tom Powell, hosted the Regional IFE (Institute of Fire Engineers) Junior Lecturette Final where, out of 8 Cadets, Lancashire Fire Cadet, H Salisbury, won first place for their presentation on 'Impacts of Modern Technology' which covered Electric Vehicles (EV) and Lithium-Ion batteries. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer suggested, and Members agreed, to invite the Cadet to a future committee meeting to give the presentation to Members.

### 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, 24 for quarter 4; year to date 70; previous year to date 61. Quarterly activity increased 41.18% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the spike in Q4 was a seasonal issue and related to Swift Water Rescue Training and Manual Handling. Risk Assessments were in place, however, the nature of the training was slightly more hazardous as it took place in open water - 3 accidents were from boat lifting, 3 were from the training, and 1 was due to sickness.

## **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.

It was noted that the Risk Map would be updated for the next quarter (Q1), and it was expected that the risk score would reduce.

County Councillor Clifford requested the area data for the red areas on the Risk Map as it was difficult to decipher. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that, at the meeting for the next quarter, the data could be broken down to lower levels to provide more detail to Members.

### **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 17,395; previous year to date 18,841. Quarterly activity decreased 4.76% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In quarter 4, the Service attended 3,679 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) – 1715, 47%
- Total Primary Fire Calls (accidental dwelling / building and deliberate dwelling / commercial fires and other primary fires) – 395, 11%
- Total Secondary Fire Calls (deliberate and accidental fires) – 372, 10%
- Total Special Service Calls (critical incidents, gaining entry, RTCs, Flooding and

other critical incidents) – 1170, 32%

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that the reason for fewer incidents than the previous year was due to less secondary fires (accidental and deliberate), and the revised Automatic Fire Alarms policy which had removed some unnecessary mobilisations.

Members notes that Special Service incidents when supporting partner agencies had increased 10% on the previous year with gaining entry requests increasing, and Road Traffic Collisions had increased 5%, although flooding incidents were seasonal and had decreased by 5%.

### **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, 153 in quarter 4; year to date 706; previous year to date 771. Quarterly activity decreased 8.38% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The positive exception report was due to the number of Accidental Dwelling Fires being below the lower control limit during the month of February.

During the month of February 2024, there were 39 recorded accidental dwelling fires. Whilst it was not unusual for that month to record a lower number of fires – due to there being fewer days than other months, February was in a leap year, so that in itself could not be the sole reason for such a low number.

February's count was the lowest individual monthly count over the last 10 years, and had no doubt contributed to both the quarter, and the 2023/2024 year, to also be the lowest annual count over the previous 10 years too.

It mirrored the national picture, although data for the nation was only currently available up to the end of December 2023.

Over the previous 5 years, accidental dwelling fires averaged 69 per month, whereas in 2023 24, the monthly average was just 59, a 14.5% decrease. A decrease in certain cooking, heating, and spread from secondary fire incidents could still be related to the higher domestic incidents recorded that occurred during the Covid era, hence the current lower number of fires.

Preliminary figures for April 2024 indicated that the downward trend would continue into the early part of 2024/25.

Although it was sometimes difficult to evidence a direct correlation, during quarter 4, LFRS had remained committed to delivering HFSC advice and providing

interventions to the most vulnerable within communities.

District intelligence Profiles and District plans were used to target prevention activity towards the demographic groups and specific geographical areas where there was a higher incidence of dwelling fires. Understanding the demographic could facilitate understanding of the 'cause behind the cause', which allowed for proactive and effective risk reduction.

District teams continually worked to build working relationships with local partners to enhance understanding of the communities across Lancashire and, subsequently, how to deploy the Service's risk reduction activities to best effect.

Data allowed the Service to understand the prevalent causes of dwelling fires, which allowed specific advice and campaign planning around the commonly identified causes. Cooking was an example of this. Campaign planning was evidence led and specific to Lancashire, linking into national campaigns where appropriate. Campaigns were targeted towards specific risk groups across a multitude of platforms, which were used at key times of the year in line with the Service's Campaigns calendar.

All prevention activity was driven by the principles of the Equality Impact Assessment to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness across Lancashire's diverse communities. Evaluation was also key for an understanding of what was working and identification of what could be improved.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that high quality Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) for the most vulnerable members of the community were likely to have contributed to the reduced number of ADFs.

County Councillor O'Toole stated that, in previous years, the Service had provided free smoke alarms to the community (50,000 in the first year), then the policy had changed, and only certain localities were entitled to the alarms. He commented that people often placed the fire alarms in the wrong place and would eventually need to be replaced due to a limited lifespan.

County Councillor Clifford advised that a replacement part could be bought for Fire Angels Fire Alarms. He had noticed that there were different specifications for England and Scotland with Scottish fire alarms possessing the ability to be linked.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that the type of fire alarm provided free by the Service, at that time, were those where batteries needed to be replaced. More recently, the Service installed fire alarms with a 10-year lifespan and had a contract with the suppliers to replace end of life or defective alarms. Hard wired alarms were also available but those provided by the Service were standalone. Technological advancements meant that some fire alarms had systems whereby they could communicate with each other.

Area Manager, Matt Hamer, added that some fire alarms had the ability to operate over a Wi-Fi network. The alarms provided by the Service had a 10-year life span, however, those located in very cold locations, sometimes had a 6/7-year lifespan. As part of HFSCs, homeowners were reminded to contact the Service after 10

years for a replacement to be fitted either themselves or by the Service. Innovations in technology meant that fire alarm detection for types of smoke, i.e. between fires and cooking, had improved.

### **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	0 in quarter 4; year to date 3; previous year to date 8
Injuries appear Serious	4 in quarter 4; year to date 12; previous year to date 16
Injuries appear Slight	1 in quarter 4; year to date 15; previous year to date 19

Quarterly activity decreased 50.00% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The positive exception report was due to the number of Accidental Dwelling Fire casualties that met the lower control limit during the month of February.

During the month of February 2024, there were no recorded ADF casualties, although it was unusual to have no casualties within a single month, with the last one occurring in May 2022.

The average monthly count for the year to date was 2.5 casualties, which was an improvement on the previous 5-year average of 3.8 casualties per month.

The cumulative casualty figure to the end of the year was 30 which was a notable improvement on the previous year’s 43 and was the lowest number of the last 10 years.

The actions taken to reduce Accidental Dwelling Fires naturally affected the likelihood of a casualty arising and, as such, the activities detailed within KPI 2.3 were applicable to this KPI.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed the meeting that the 5 casualties for quarter 4 were related to inhalation of toxic fumes and not burns. The casualties were mainly from single occupancy dwellings.

### **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 93% against same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 87%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore increased 6.04% 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), 50 in quarter 4; year to date 235; previous year to date 250. Quarterly activity decreased 7.41% over the same quarter of the previous year.

It was noted that the decrease in the number of Accidental Building Fires could be partly attributed to the successful delivery of BFSCs.

### **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 68% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 81%.

Combined quarterly percentage had therefore decreased 13.5% over the same quarter of the previous year.

In response to a question from County Councillor Rigby in relation to the categorisation of the SupaSkips fire in Lancaster, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the incident was still under investigation and therefore could not be discussed, however, the results would be presented through a future Authority meeting.

## **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), 10 in quarter 4; year to date 72; previous year to date 85. Quarterly activity decreased 41.18% 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 20% against
- same quarter of the previous year, combined percentage of 6%.

Combined quarterly activity had therefore increased 14.0% 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 – 304 in quarter 4; year to date 1,812; previous year to date 2,293. Quarterly activity decreased 24.00% 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, 14 in quarter 4, year to date 84; previous year to date 79. Quarterly activity decreased 33.33% 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, 40 in quarter 4; year to date 145; previous year to date 118.

Quarterly activity increased 37.93% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that 17 out of the 40 incidents during the quarter occurred in prisons, as did 55 out of the 145 incidents for the year, and often featured 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 whereas other commercial premises types fell within the regulatory responsibility of the Service. If prison related incidents were set aside, the Service performance against this KPI was highly positive and showed a marked reduction. The Fire Safety Team were engaging with prisons in relation to risk reduction measures.

County Councillor Hennessy requested that data regarding prisons be included in future reports.

In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy regarding the NFCCs involvement with prison fires, Area Manager, Matt Hamer explained that the NFCC were aware of the problem and there were issues with access to materials subjected to Deprivation of Liberty and Human Rights. The Ministry of Justice and Crown Inspectorate had long term strategies in place to tackle deliberate fires in prisons and although fires using electronic materials were a risk factor, prisons were complex environments with conflicting demands and the Service would continue with support. The Ministry of Justice were also working with the Fire Investigation Team as data collected from fire investigations could be used to extend prison sentences which could act as a deterrent.

### **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, 250 in quarter 4; year to date 1,583; previous year to date 2,096. Quarterly activity decreased 28.57% over the same quarter of the previous year.

County Councillor Clifford questioned how Lithium-Ion Battery fires would be categorised as they were not necessarily deliberate. Area Manager, Matt Hamer, explained that although there was a national trend of increasing Lithium-Ion Battery fires, at present, there was no standard reporting mechanism in place. In Lancashire, the Service had amended the Incident Reporting System to include a specific category for battery and Electric Vehicle (EV) fires. The data in Lancashire showed a rise in the number of these types of fires and the Service were tackling this with a number of campaigns informed by the Data Intelligence Group, which focused on the correct disposal of Lithium-Ion batteries and any identified trends. The NFCC was involved with raising awareness which could influence legislative



changes around the production, disposal and recycling of batteries and Local Authorities reported data collected from waste centres back to the Service. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that approx. 40% of fires in waste recycling plants nationally, were believed to be related to Lithium-Ion batteries.

## **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, 5,830 in quarter 4; year to date 23,239; previous year to date 22,284. Quarterly activity decreased 1.8% over the same quarter of the previous year.

HFSCs with high-risk outcomes, Quarter 4, 54%; previous year Quarter 4, 57%.

High risk outcomes decreased 3% against the same quarter of the previous year.

In response to a question from County Councillor Hennessy regarding the number of people who experienced a fire after receiving a HFSC, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the information was captured and tracked, as those who had experienced a fire could require further guidance, as was those who had declined a HFSC and had gone on to have a fire. Area Manager, Matt Hamer, explained that HFSCs were used to establish behavioural changes in occupants that had resulted in a reduction in high-risk fires which would be evident next quarter in the updated Risk Map. At present, the data was recorded against an address, however, the Service would be investing in new systems which would shift towards person centred recording in the future.

## **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,	166 sessions delivered to 5,330 attendees;
RoadSense,	171 sessions delivered to 5,499 attendees;
SENDSafe,	1 session delivered to 18 attendees;
Wasted Lives,	16 sessions delivered to 1,349 pupils;
Biker Down,	6 sessions delivered to 111 attendees;
FIRES,	41 referrals opened prior to Q4 and carried over. 31 referrals received in Q4. 38 referrals closed in Q4. 41 referrals carried to 2024-25;
Partner Training,	117 sessions – 136 staff.

Specific Education packages – delivered Water Safety, BrightSparx, ASB, Deliberate Fire Setting etc (Covers key stages 2, 3 and 4). 4 in school safety sessions delivered to 56 students & 11 virtual sessions delivered to 7,595 students.

Arson Threat Referrals – 188.

## **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, 790 in quarter 4; Cumulative 3,348; YTD target, 2,500; previous YTD 962.

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being satisfactory, 2,897. Top 5 completed satisfactory premise types (Shops 1,123, Other workplaces 350, Factories/Warehouses 306, Offices 245, Licensed premises 238).

Cumulative YTD BFSCs being unsatisfactory, 451. Top 5 completed unsatisfactory premise types (Shops 234, Licensed premises 47, Factories/Warehouses 39, Other workplaces 36, Schools 24).

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 continued to embed built environment knowledge and understanding. The first of two Built Environment Virtual Training (BEVT) sessions were delivered in 2023 and the second phase of BEVT roll out was due to begin from in summer 2024.

Protection grey book staff would commence with strengthening operational awareness days in Q2 which would see them quality assure the BFSC delivery and support the transition of crews starting to undertake BFSCs in more sleeping risk premises types.

County Councillor Clifford queried the level of seriousness of the unsatisfactory BFSCs for 24 schools. Area Manager, Matt Hamer, explained that, with most schools, data was not held at the premises but centrally, within the Local Authority

and could result in an unsatisfactory BFSC, albeit low level.

Of the 451 premises deemed unsatisfactory, a number had subsequently been issued with enforcement notices with others advancing in terms of prohibitions, being issued.

### **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 4, 577;  
Formal Activity in Quarter 4, 5%, same quarter of the previous year 5%.  
Quarterly activity remained static 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 2,149.

### **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 4, Building Regulation Consultations received 210, of which 208 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, Level 4 qualified Fire Safety Inspectors must complete consultations. It was the same inspectors who were required to complete intervention work in considerable risk, complex premises identified by the risk-based intervention program, consequently use of finite resources must be fully co-ordinated and balanced. To achieve this and ensure consultation timelines were achieved:

- The implementation of centralised building regulations onto the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) and assigning dedicated resource to consistently input new applications, continued to improve the Services efficiency at responding to the majority within statutory timescales.

In response from County Councillor Hennessy as to how many officers were Level 4 qualified Fire Safety Inspectors, Area Manager, Matt Hamer, confirmed that approx. 20 Inspectors were qualified with a number of courses having taken place within the Service. The Service response to Building Regulation Consultations within the statutory timescales had improved over the past year with an improvement to 95.6% completed within the timeframe of 15 days in quarter 4. A very small number of consultations were out of the timeframe due to being complex in nature or awaiting further information from the relevant local authority.

### **KPI 3 - Responding to fire and other emergencies quickly**

#### **3.1 Critical Fire Response – 1<sup>st</sup> 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 – 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Engine Attendance, Quarter 4, Very High 05:42 min; High 05:38 min, Medium 07:05 min, Low 09:49 min.

Q4 overall 07:50 min. Year to date overall 07:30 min. Previous year to date overall 07:12 min. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer highlighted that LFRS response times for this KPI remained very strong.

#### **3.2 Critical Special Service Response – 1<sup>st</sup> 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 – 1<sup>st</sup> Fire Engine Attendance, 08:19 min in quarter 4; year to date 08:31 min; previous year to date 08:17 min. Again, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer highlighted that LFRS response times for this KPI remained very strong.

### **3.3 Total Fire Engine Availability**

This indicator measured the availability of the 1<sup>st</sup> fire engine at each of the 39 fire stations. It was measured as the percentage of time the 1<sup>st</sup> 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, 88.88% in quarter 4; year to date 88.66%; previous year to date 89.60%.

Quarterly availability decreased 1.55% over the same quarter of the previous year.

The negative exception report was due to the 1<sup>st</sup> fire appliance availability percentage being below the lower control limit during quarter 4.

Overall availability across all stations for the quarter recorded 88.88%, which was 1.12% below the 90% standard.

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

Wholetime – 99.38%

Day Crewing Plus – 99.33%

Flexi Day Crewing – 99.43%

On-Call – 75.30%

Total – 88.88%

Whilst all of the Whole-Time appliances achieved exceptional availability, the 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

On-Call recruitment, development, and retention was a national challenge which had seen a downward trend in availability over several years.

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 (OCSOs) were working with station-based staff and management, together with Training Centre, to support those in development and identify opportunities for staff to acquire those skills earlier in their career.

Actions being taken to improve performance:

- The On Call Improvement Programme (OCIP) was driving transformation across the Service with several workstreams to improve recruitment, development, and retention.
- The Service had worked with an external software designer to develop sector-leading innovative software for On-Call Availability, Recruitment and Skills (OARS). This would support managers across the Service with workforce planning for On Call firefighters.
- A new recruitment vehicle had been introduced, equipped with mobile tablets, and monitors to display recruitment videos. The vehicle was positioned around the county to work within targeted geographical areas. Potential applicants could practice their practical skills using a range of firefighting equipment.
- Twenty-one recruits from the February/March courses were now on stations.
- The number of leavers during quarter 4 was 16. A Net increase of 5 On-Call firefighters.
- OCSOs were supporting firefighter development to assist with OIC and LGV development training.
- Units were being encouraged to be more visible in the community, with off-station training, and engagement at community events.

## **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 2023/24 outturn position was £0.4m more than budgeted, spending £68.6m against a £68.2m net annual budget. The majority was attributable in non-pay which included a shortfall on apprenticeship levy funding and a cost increase in repairs and maintenance on operational vehicles earlier in the year.

Quarter 4 variance 0.58%.

County Councillor O'Toole congratulated the Service on the management of its budget. There were many unknown variants which could occur with expenses in the Fire Service and cover across the county was always ensured.

### **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.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (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)**

The Service had increasing experience and could provide local or specialist advice for consideration by LanCon. Searches had become streamlined which allowed for a more structured and effective approach to locating a high-risk missing person. The Service's drone development (aerial and sub-surface), for which LFRS had the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) lead role, had further enhanced the Service's capabilities for Missing Person Searches.

LFRS had provided significant support to Lancashire Constabulary (LanCon) with its aerial drone assets, supported by an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Further investment in 2023/ 24 led to LFRS strengthening sub-surface rescue/ recovery capability of persons, with an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV). This asset had been deployed locally, regionally, and nationally and delivered improved outcomes in incident resolution. LFRS received around 200 drone requests last year from LanCon, with most requests for Missing Persons searches.

### **Estates and Co-location**

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

A set of principles were being developed to identify high level areas of opportunities. Blue Light partners were currently reviewing their strategic property asset plans to identify areas for co-ordinating future development plans over the next 5-10 years.

All Blue Light partners were included in the discussions and options in relation to future opportunities. All current locations for each organisation had been mapped, with focus being moved to the understanding of longer-term plans for each service, consideration of site sharing opportunities at existing locations, along with a procedure to facilitate site sharing.

In addition to the physical estate and site sharing, Blue light partners had identified other areas for learning, development and sharing of information in support of the provision of efficient and effective estate management within respective organisations.

### **Community First Responders**

A trial had commenced in 2023 that involved LFRS volunteering as Community First Responders (CFR) to support NWS. LFRS staff volunteers undertook an initial CFR training programme at LFRS Training Centre. Once qualified, they could shadow existing CFR practitioners to develop their clinical abilities and build confidence in their newly acquired skills.

Five LFRS staff volunteers were now responding to life threatening emergencies in their communities from the workplace and would administer first aid in the initial vital minutes before NWS colleagues arrived. The Service was expanding its support to NWS as it was a successful, lifesaving initiative and several LFRS Flexible-Duty Officers (FDOs) were due to begin CFR training in early July.

### **Leadership Development**

An analysis of leadership development was ongoing between the three organisations with the Services currently exploring three leadership development days.

### **Command Units**

The aim of the 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.'

The Command Support Unit (CSU) project aimed to upgrade the vehicles and adopt technological advancements to support operational incidents. On-Call firefighters crewed a CSU, and as part of the agreed capital vehicle replacement project, two new larger Command Units (CUs) were now operational and had been deployed to several incidents, with excellent feedback received from the firefighters, FDOs, and partner agencies. LFRS continued to demonstrate the unit and software to other fire and rescue services with a recent visit from Northern Ireland FRS which took place in May. The Service were also carrying out multi-agency familiarisations in June for the Blackburn-with-Darwen Emergency Planning Team.

It was expected that the initial benefits to be realised would be improved information sharing and situational awareness aligned to improving and embedding the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).

Members noted that Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and John Rossen, Area Manager, Head of Service Delivery led partnership collaboration on behalf of LFRS.

### **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 4, 76 people had been surveyed and the number satisfied with the service was 74. The running number of people surveyed for the year was 3,568 with 3,523 of those people being satisfied with the Service; 98.74% against a standard of 97.50%; a variance of 1.27%.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Fire Officer for a positive report.

**Resolved:** - That the Performance Committee noted and endorsed the Quarter 4 Measuring Progress report, including four positive and two negative exceptions.

5/24

### **NWFC Q4 Performance 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 4 (January – March 2024).

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).

#### **Emergency Calls in to NWFC**

NWFC received 27,937 in quarter 4 compared to 26,849 for the same quarter of 2022/23. For the year to date, NWFC had received 127,789 emergency calls compared to 135,452 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.

There had been a low number of calls in February, which had resulted in a positive exception, as explained in LFRS's Performance Management Report.

#### **Emergency Calls for LFRS**

A total of 5,783 emergency calls were received in quarter 4 for LFRS, compared to 6,036 for the same quarter of the previous year. For the year to date, NWFC had received 29,759 emergency calls for LFRS, compared to 33,446 for the same period of the previous year.

#### **Admin Calls in to NWFC**

NWFC had received a total of 25,383 admin calls in quarter 4, compared to 25,917 in quarter 4 of the previous year. The number of calls for the year to date was 113,328, compared to 115,299 for the same period of the previous year.

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 4, a total of 5,637 admin calls were received for Lancashire Fire and Rescue (LFRS), compared to 5,873 in quarter 4 of the previous year. For the year to date, NWFC had received 26,272 admin calls for LFRS compared to 26,385 calls for the same period of the previous year.

It was noted that interactions during extended incidents, such as SupaSkips in December, resulted in spikes in activity on the graph between LFRS and NWFC.

## **Calls Challenged Resulting in No Mobilisation**

In quarter 4, the percentage of calls challenged and not mobilised to was 48%, compared to 42% 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, and NWAS 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, 48% 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 4 was 84 seconds which was under the 90 second target. This compared to 79 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 FRs – 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 4, the average time to mobilise the first response to fire related incidents remained within the 90 second target against a national average mobilising time of 126 seconds.

## **Special Service Calls – Average Response to Mobilise First Resource**

Mobilising performance times for LFRS in quarter 4 for special service calls was 116 seconds compared to 119 seconds for quarter 4 of the previous year. LFRS mobilising times for special service calls for the year to date was 118 seconds, compared to 122 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.

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.

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).

Mr Basson informed Members that a great deal of work had taken place over the previous 12 months and an update would be brought to a future meeting. He extended an invitation to Members for a visit to NWFC and it was confirmed that a future visit would be arranged through Democratic Services.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor Hennessy in relation to whether Mr Basson had any areas of concern at NWFC, Mr Basson explained that he would like to continue having increased engagement with all 4 fire and rescue services. Governance arrangements at NWFC had been strengthened recently with the Steering Committee sitting, consisting of 4 Chiefs and advisors which set the Strategy for the organisation. The creation of the Operations Management Committee, which the Assistant Chief Fire Officer led, and comprised the Principal Officers (POs) from the 4 FRSs, oversaw operational performance and ensured work on areas such as the Fire Control Fire Standards was achieved. Furthermore, areas of ongoing focus included staff sickness and retention, which was a national focus for control room managers. The mobilising systems would come to the end of life in March 2025, however, Members were assured that NWFC had received investment from FRS budgets.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer emphasised that there were 2 large projects taking place at NWFC. The first project was the replacement of the mobilising systems for which a Board had been established which was Chaired by the ACFO at Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and included himself, the ACFO at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, the ACFO at Cumbria, Sarah Wilson (Senior Operations Manager), and Ged Basson. The Operations Management Committee was Chaired by himself along with the POs and directed work arising under the Annual Delivery Plan for NWFC, and the People, Development and Assurance Programme (PDAP) which addressed matters such as staffing and retention issues.

In response to a comment from County Councillor Hurn, Mr Basson advised that

	<p>NWFC received approximately 30,000 calls per quarter, 127,000 calls per year, and 250,000 admin calls per year, which averaged around 1,000 calls per day. The number of appliances dispatched was dependent on the incident type and size. The mobilising system would identify the nearest available resources to the location of an incident.</p> <p>It was agreed that Ged Basson would attend the next meeting of the Performance Committee to present the findings of the Annual Report from the Annual Delivery Plan, and People and Development related information.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Basson for his interesting and informative presentation.</p>
6/24	<p><b>Annual Report on Road Safety Intervention Activity 2023/24</b></p>
	<p>The Chair thanked County Councillor Woollam for his work as the Member Champion for Road Safety and welcomed Councillor Fred Jackson to the role.</p> <p>Area Manager, Matt Hamer, provided the meeting with an annual report regarding Road Safety Intervention Activity which explained the Service’s core prevention offer and also the challenges on Lancashire’s roads.</p> <p>Members noted that, through the previous Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-2022 (IRMP), prevention and protection services and the structure for delivery were reviewed to ensure that the Service was delivering appropriate services in line with the changing operating environment. As a result, working practices had changed with a strategic focus on the quality of the services that continued to be delivered. The services were delivered around key themes: helping people to start safe, live safe, age safe and be safe on our roads with a focus on working collaboratively with other organisations. To ensure constant improvement in all parts of prevention delivery, the Service had dedicated thematic groups whose priorities aligned to the more recent Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-2027 and the Prevention Strategy.</p> <p><b>Road Safe Thematic Group</b></p> <p>The Thematic Road Safety Group continued to meet every quarter during 2023-2024 with an option of in-person and virtual meetings. Area Manager, Matt Hamer, was currently the Chair of the group and membership came from all areas of the county and was a mix of Community Safety and Operational Staff. Road Safety Champion, County Councillor Ron Woollam, had close links with the group and was in regular communication with Clare Burscough, the Prevention Support Officer for Road Safety.</p> <p>An annual plan aligned to the terms of reference had been developed alongside a priority work programme which supported the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP) ‘Towards Zero’ strategy. An ambition of the group was to improve communication between strategic and practitioner levels and also to send clear messages out to Service Areas with key road safety priorities. The Service sought to deliver focused activities in areas identified as having issues and evaluate</p>

effectiveness.

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the Service had developed new ways of working and some of those working practices had been adopted as business as usual and offered a greater choice of delivery methods for the community, improving the Service's reach and efficacy. The offer of virtual delivery remained part of the service's plan and continued to be selected by schools as a delivery method across the county.

### **Lancashire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP)**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service continued to be a proactive member of LRSP and had representatives at both Strategic and Operational group level. The partners worked closely with each other and delivered the partnership strategy 'Towards Zero' Lancashire: Road Safety Strategy for Lancashire 2016 – 2026', in an attempt to reduce those killed or seriously injured on Lancashire's roads.

LFRS played an active role on the Children and Young People workstream and the Powered 2 Wheelers Workstream. The Joint Operations Group (JOG) brought partners together to look at what was currently delivered, what worked well and where the gaps were so that resources could be pooled to work efficiently and without duplication.

The LRSP continued to work through the action plan following the review of the partnership completed in 2022. There had been significant change in the year 23/24 with the loss of both members of staff (the Coordinator and Manager). The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner continued to hold the Chair with LFRS Area Manager, Matt Hamer, holding the position of Deputy Chair.

### **LFRS Road Safety Core Prevention Offer**

1. Road Sense
2. Wasted Lives – Young Driver Road Safety Education Programme
  - 2.1 The Crashed Car
3. Safe Drive Stay Alive
4. Biker Down
5. Alive to Drive Events

#### **1. Road Sense**

Road Sense was the name given to the road safety education programme delivered to Year 6 pupils. The session was mixed and started with a 20-minute fire safety recap followed by 40 minutes of road safety input. It provided the opportunity to draw on a previous session the pupils would have received in Year 2 and explored the consequences of hoax calls and deliberate fires.

The Package focused on five key road safety themes which were selected to reflect Lancashire's issues with young people:

- In Car Safety;
- Pedestrian Safety;

- Cycle Safety;
- Be Safe Be Seen;
- Bus Safety.

Staywise had now adopted the package. Staywise was an online resource website for Fire and Rescue Services across the country.

Evaluation of the package provided positive feedback from schools with 90% of teachers selecting that they 'strongly agreed' the session was age appropriate. The remaining 10% 'agreed' with this. Out of the teachers that responded, 73% said they 'strongly agreed' the session would positively affect pupils' behaviour, with the remaining 27% selecting 'agree'. The Service had not received any negative feedback. Utilising the QR code allowed the teachers to give more honest feedback and improved the efficiency of the process.

The following feedback had been received from teachers following a Road Sense delivery:

"The year 6 class were thoroughly engaged in this session. The information on fire and road safety was extremely useful. Great to link the session to the specific age of the class by talking about their journey to high school."

"Very informative and knowledgeable delivery and information was relevant to our children and setting. Our children always respond better when information comes from experts with experience rather their usual teacher."

The Road Sense Fact Sheet continued to be popular, with a recent change being the inclusion of a QR code for the pupils to fill in following a session. This would assist the Service to better evaluate the behaviour change effectiveness of the session as the pupils would fill it in at home.

The following were examples of pupils' remarks in the free text box:

"My most memorable safety message was to be careful when crossing roads because if you have headphones on while crossing you wouldn't notice a car."

"Never walk out on to a road without looking and always wear a helmet when you are riding a bike."

There were 6 questions on the form and the correct responses ranged between 91% and 99% of answers. It was extremely positive that the pupils were retaining such a high percentage of the information they had received as the feedback was not always submitted on the day the session took place. To date, the delivery figures were looking higher than ever before. During the reporting period, 16,603 Year 6 pupils had received the input which was an increase of 1000 on last year's figures.

## **2. 'Wasted Lives' Young Driver Road Safety Education Programme**

LFRS was now the only delivery partner for Wasted Lives on behalf of LRSP. The

programme was aimed at young people and pre-drivers which aimed to influence behaviour and change attitudes either as a driver or a passenger, thereby reducing risk to that specific group and to other road users.

By actively engaging with the age group of 15 - 25 year olds, Wasted Lives aimed to maximise the opportunities for people to evaluate and reflect on their own attitudes and behaviour behind the wheel and as a passenger. Extensive evaluation had demonstrated how the package promoted real and lasting changes in how each participant behaved in a car. Since the introduction of Wasted Lives in 2010, LFRS had delivered road safety education to over 130,000 young people throughout Lancashire, including Blackpool, and Blackburn with Darwen. For the period 2023-2024, LFRS had delivered the programme to 9,965 young people, mainly face-to-face delivery but with some virtual sessions. This was an increase of over 7,000 pupils compared to the last financial year. In part, this was due to schools recovering from the pandemic and also an increase in the uptake of the newer assembly format.

A suite of assembly session had been developed which could be adapted in length to fit in with schools' timetables. As the Service had developed different ways of working and now offered a short 15-minute virtual version of Wasted Lives during Road Safety Week. Schools had 3 delivery option and with the Service being more flexible in what it could deliver and how, more young people would be reached. Whilst the focus was primarily on delivery in high schools, there had been an increase in the number of requests for delivery to apprentice groups and colleges following the removal of Safe Drive Stay Alive through LRSP.

On the run up to the Christmas break, 2000 students from Blackpool and Fylde College received the input. The college carried out a short evaluation of the delivery and 95% of students reported it had raised their awareness of not driving safely. They also provided the following positive free text feedback:

"It got me to learn what not to do and what to do to drive safely. The presentation was great and the activity was good as I got to communicate on my opinions."

The feedback from teachers also continued to be very positive with a similar theme about behaviour change and an engaging session being received:

"The delivery was pitched perfect for Y10 and Y11 students delivered in an engaging and professional manner."

"Yes, absolutely relevant to the age group who can start to develop their own inaccurate and preconceived opinions at that age so it was really effective to have colleagues from real world situations to offer clarity and dispel myths. This will very much help keep them safe in the long term."

## **2.1 The Crashed Car**

The Wasted Lives package also had the option of being complemented by a 'crashed car', which was a vehicle from a real incident where, tragically, there had been a fatality. Alternatively, the car could be used as a standalone resource at a community event. The Service now completed a full year with Corey Hudson's

vehicle where the circumstances of the collision were solely speed related. He had no alcohol or drugs in his system, and he made a wrong decision to speed which cost him his life. Corey's story had been well received by communities across the county as most drivers recognised at some point in their driving career, they had made similar mistakes. There were 2 passengers in the vehicle who were not wearing seatbelts and both sustained serious, life changing injuries during the Road Traffic Collision (RTC). Due to their own decisions not to put their seatbelts on, they had not received substantial payouts from Corey's insurance. This strengthened the seatbelt message as it was a real example of the lifelong implications that poor decision making had.

Over the last year, the crashed car had increased in use at Mosques during Friday Prayers. In Central, Eastern and Pennine, staff had worked alongside the Imam to deliver key messages prior to prayers and then delivered bespoke sessions to young people at the Madrassas. This activity had been increased around Ramadan where commonly high-powered vehicles were rented to young inexperienced drivers and shared amongst friends and family.

### **3. Safe Drive Stay Alive**

Safe Drive Stay Alive was a road safety initiative where the audience heard real life stories from the emergency services and families who had all been affected by road traffic collisions in an auditorium setting. The delivery was aimed at college aged students.

It was currently on hold. Considerable work had been carried out nationally to compare a number of packages aimed at that age group and LFRS had been involved, alongside LRSP members, in evaluating the best fit for Lancashire.

### **4. Biker Down**

Biker Down was a course that was aimed at motorcyclists and pillion riders of all ages and experience. The free 3-hour course offered members of the public a chance to learn practical skills which could be put into practice anywhere at any time.

The 3 modules covered were:

- Incident Management;
- First Aid;
- The Science of Being Seen.

The initiative started in Kent and LFRS had signed a memorandum of understanding with Kent Fire and Rescue Service to allow the Service to use the logo and delivery material.

LFRS had worked with LRSP to ensure that delivery was complementary to Bike Safe, which was a Police-led initiative. Anyone who attended Biker Down was encouraged to book onto Bike Safe which was seen as the next step in training as it involved a ride out with an Advanced Police Motorcyclist. Biker Down was seen



as the start of a motorcyclists 'learning journey'.

During the reporting period, there had been 146 motorists killed or seriously injured (KSI). This was 14% of the total KSI figure. Lancashire's statistics showed that someone was 72 times more likely to die on a motorcycle than in a car on the road, higher than the national average of 60. These statistics were very concerning as motorists made up less than 1% of Lancashire's total road user population.

There had been 483 attendees in the last 12 months over 26 sessions. Appetite for the courses had grown significantly over recent months with the Facebook page reaching over 1,100 likes and the reach of posts sometimes exceeding 1500 people. All attendees took part in a practical element of the course which included helmet removal and CPR. There were really important skills which might be needed should they be faced with a road traffic collision involving a motorcyclist. Feedback from attendees mirrored how important this part of the course was and how valuable they felt it was.

Feedback included:

"Great course, been attending first aid courses for over 50 years, the rules change, really pleased to learn how to remove helmet".

"Having been a first aid instructor for 8 years I still learnt new skills especially the removal of a helmet."

The Pre and Post questionnaire maintained very positive feedback about the behaviour change impacts of the session. One of the questions the attendees were asked was around their confidence to remove a motorcycle helmet following a road traffic collision. The scale they used was 1-5 (1 not confident – 5 very confident). Prior to the session, the average rating was 2.4 but increased to 4.7 following the session.

With support from County Councillor Ron Woollam, a portion of the CFA Road Safety Champion budget was utilised to provide all attendees with a First Aid kit that complemented the skills they were taught.

The delivery model was flexible so courses could be hosted for individual motorcycle clubs or advertised using an online booking platform for members of the public to book on independently. The Biker Down team aimed to run 12 courses per year but were exceeding that aspiration due to such a high demand for courses.

## **5. Alive to Drive Events**

Alive to Drive was a long-standing road safety event initiative. The event initially started as a partnership between LFRS and Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) in Chorley 15 years ago. Since its inception the event had grown from strength to strength and the partners who attended had grown. During the reporting period, 4 events took place in South Ribble, Preston, Blackpool, and Blackburn. These events were free to members of the public and allowed them an insight as to what

happened at an RTC. There was an RTC demo at each event which involved LFRS, Police, North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) and National Highways.

The events were very well attended and 2 of the events made national press. The South Ribble event was used to launch 'Project Edward' - Every day without a road death and Alive to Drive on the Prom in Blackpool which made both BBC and ITV news. As well as looking to educate members of the public of all ages and road user types, there was particular emphasis based on signing young drivers (17-25yrs) up to the Institute of Advanced Motorists Course at a reduced rate, which was partly funded by LRSP. The plan for these events next year was to run 1 per geographical area due to the success and high attendance. The partners involved included Police, Lancashire County Council (LCC), NWAS, National Highways, IAM, South Lancs Advanced Motorcyclists, Blood Bikes, Mountain Rescue, Tyre Safe, Pro Tyre, Fresh Drivers, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Blackpool Council and Wincanton.

## **Summary**

The 12-month period had been a really positive period for Road Safety Education and the Service's ability to engage with the communities of Lancashire. Many schools were now out of the 'recovery' period loosening constraints on their timetables. The Service had continued to adapt offerings and, with increased use of technology and innovative ideas by members of the Road Safety Thematic Group which meant that the education package had been delivered to over 30,000 people, an increase of 11,500 last year.

The Service continued to be an active member of the LRSP and, building on the review, looked forward to continuing to be involved in a collaborative approach. This would have an emphasis on the strengths that the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service brand could bring to the partnership working to deliver the collaborative ambition of a safer road system.

Focusing on the Service's priorities for 2023/24, some notable progression and successful outcomes had been achieved, from getting back into primary schools, post pandemic, to engage with pupils and deliver the improved Road Sense package to re-launching Wasted Lives and Biker Down. The Service's action plan for the forthcoming year would build on that. The figures had significantly improved, and the Service would continue to build on the successful year.

Over the next 12 months, the Service would be focusing on further evaluation of Road Safety initiatives, campaigns, and educational packages. The evaluation would look at 4 distinct areas; Is our targeting correct and appropriate, are we delivering according to end user expectations, are we influencing a positive behaviour change, and are we delivering value for money (i.e. for every £1 spent on prevention, what does that save in terms of prevention of an incident). The Service would also look to refresh all the education packages over the summer of 2024 to ensure a fresh approach for the new academic year.

County Councillor O'Toole referenced a radio programme which stated that 12.5% of all serious accidents involved young drivers and highlighted the expense of

insuring a driver in that age group. Area Manager, Matt Hamer, emphasised the importance of education and the danger of distractions.

County Councillor Clifford expressed an interest in attending a Wasted Lives event referencing his own experience of attending a presentation involving motorbike safety when he was an apprentice with Leyland Trucks, and stated that, for young drivers, smaller cars were more expensive to insure than larger cars. Area Manager, Matt Hamer informed Members that the Service engaged with companies through Wasted Lives and the Crashed Vehicle where apprentices might have access to fleet vehicles. He advised that Insurance companies used data which raised risk flags for young drivers in certain types of vehicles that were at higher risk of an accident which increased insurance costs. The LRSP advocated the advanced motorist qualification to young drivers.

County Councillor Hennessy requested and Area Manager, Matt Hamer agreed that the dates of upcoming Wasted Lives events would be shared with Members.

County Councillor Yates stated that there were numerous accidents and near misses on rural roads and asked if LCC would be supportive of a reduction in the speed limit in these areas. Area Manager, Matt Hamer, advised that approx. 125 reports a day were made on the LRSP website from concerned members of the public around excess speed. A lot of complaints were received regarding rural roads where Mobile enforcement vehicles could be used as deterrent, especially where the speed limit changes from 60mph to 30mph. Work was taking place with Community Speed Watch Groups, around near misses to apply enforcement and to install calming measures, in conjunction with engineers.

**Resolved:** - That the Committee endorsed the Annual Road Safety Intervention report.

7/24

### **Annual Review of KPI 3.3**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report on the annual review of the Fire Engine Availability Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 3.3.

At a resolution of the Planning Committee of 17 July 2023 (08/23), the decision was taken to adjust the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) relating to overall fire engine availability, to report against how effectively fire cover was provided across the 39 fire stations (risk areas) of the county.

The decision approved the proposal to report on the combined availability of the primary asset at each of the 39 stations in percentage terms, whether that be a wholtime or retained duty system fire appliance, with a revised overall target of 90%. Furthermore, that this target would be reviewed annually aligned to the continued work being delivered to strengthen on call appliance availability.

Work took place over the summer of 2023 to make the relevant system changes to support the provision of information under the revised KPI, which was implemented into the Measuring Progress Report from quarter 2 onwards.

	<p>Under the resolution approved at Planning Committee, the KPI change would be subject to annual review with an intention to incrementally increase the standard, if and when appliance availability performance was sustained above the agreed standard. The Service deemed the business year-end to be the most suitable point to conduct this exercise each year and, as such, the report formed the basis of the 2024 review.</p> <p>Since introduction of the 90% target, Service performance had seen a gradual but sustained improvement, reporting 87.84% availability in Quarter 2, 88.46% in Quarter 3 and most recently, 88.88% in Quarter 4. As wholetime appliance availability remained exceptionally high, the work delivered through the On Call Improvement Programme was the key mechanism through which overall appliance availability could be improved. Each of the stations had a bespoke Action Plan which considered current staffing establishments, retirement/leaver forecasting, skills matrix (for both skills held and planned for acquisition by staff) and intended recruitment and selection activities to support improvement in appliance availability.</p> <p>Since current performance remained in pursuance of the 90% standard and sustained investment and focus towards strengthening on call appliance availability were yielding steady progress, the Service proposed a no change position to the KPI for 2024/25 with a further review to be undertaken at the next business year end.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> - That the Performance Committee endorsed no changes to KPI 3.3 further to the year-end review of the standard.</p>
8/24	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The next meeting of the Committee would be held on <b>04 September 2024</b> at 10:00 hours in the Main Conference Room at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Fulwood.</p> <p>Further meeting dates were noted for 04 December 2024 and agreed for 05 March 2025.</p>

**M Nolan**  
**Clerk to CFA**

**LFRS HQ**  
**Fulwood**