

Performance Report - Quarter 1

Finance & Audit Committee

1 April - 30 June 2021



DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE

Priority: Making every penny count

KLOE 6: How well do we use resources to manage risk?

KLOE 6 Summary

Business continuity plans were reviewed in line with local and national risk assessments and continue to be robust, ensuring maintenance of service delivery throughout the pandemic.

The plan to roll out the 19 new fire appliances remains on track, with ten delivered to stations. The remainder are being phased in over the year with completion expected in December 2021.

The Service has initiated a project to seek to mitigate the risks posed from any potential occurrence of a National Grid power outage for an extended period as described and highlighted in the Government's national risk register

Public Health England Covid-19 guidance continues to be followed with all personal protective equipment and cleaning regimes in place for staff across the Service.

ICT provision to maintain new ways of working continues to be resilient. Work continues to meet the requirements of Cyber Essentials Standard that the Services wishes to be accredited to and thereby further mitigate cyber security risks.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

To what extent are business continuity arrangements in place and how often are they tested?

The Service's requirements within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 include assessing the risk of emergencies occurring to inform contingency planning and to have in place emergency plans and business continuity arrangements. In support of this the Service has well embedded, robust and assured business continuity and significant event arrangements in place. These have ensured the continuation and resilience of the Service during the protracted coronavirus pandemic, along with managing the subsequent major incidents, challenges, and events since March 2020.

Our business continuity arrangements are aligned to industry best practice, through the Business Continuity Institute's Good Practice Guidance (2018). These arrangements were last audited by internal auditors with 'substantial' assurance provided in October 2019.

The Service undertakes a risk horizon scan annually, which helps to ensure that the Service's business continuity planning is aligned to any emerging, increasing or new threats and risks posed. The most recent scan was completed in March 2021 and is used, alongside the risks identified in the local and national risk registers, to aid the Service to set a clear annual programme of work. This ensures the continued resilience of our arrangements and enables further strengthening.

As part of the Service's business continuity management, testing, exercising and reviewing of plans is delivered against an agreed timetable and aligned to risk, this ensures that arrangements are robust, well embedded and up to date. During the past year, whilst there have been challenges with the Coronavirus pandemic, the Service has been able to undertake exercises virtually using technology. Due to the success of these exercises, moving forward, where appropriate a virtual approach may be used. This has enabled a wider involvement of partners and other agencies to our training and exercise arrangements.

The Service works with the Dorset and Swindon & Wiltshire Local Resilience Forums including sub-groups such as the Training & Exercising Group, to ensure appropriate and resilient planning for potential risks and threats. Following these meetings, debriefs including learning reports from significant incidents are shared with Officers.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

To what extent do we show sound financial management of non-pay costs, including estates, fleet and equipment through benchmarking, contract renegotiation and procurement?

The Service makes extensive use of national procurement contracts and actively promotes and partakes in regional procurement opportunities, particularly within the Networked Fire Services Partnership (NFSP).

Over the quarter work has included evaluating and participating in new national frameworks for emergency response vehicles with Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, and operational equipment with Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

The Service has joined a collaborative procurement framework with the Southwest Police Procurement Department and Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service for any future non-operational vehicles. Opportunities for using national frameworks for the procurement of smoke alarms, laptops, and insurance brokers and insurances are being sought.

Due to many suppliers and contractors being furloughed during the pandemic, some procurements have been delayed however the plan to address this remains on track.

The business case and value for money processes have been enhanced to ensure value for money and to track the targeted benefits. The benefits of good procurement continue to be realised with savings for the period of April to June 2021 of £48,966.

The review of the organisational supplier base continues to further improve the efficiency of procurement.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

To what extent do we understand what assets we are responsible for across the Service and how do we demonstrate effective management of these assets?

Both Fleet & Equipment and Estates have current five-year Integrated Asset Management Plans that are linked to the Medium-Term Finance Plan, the Strategic Assessment of Risk and the Community Safety Plan to ensure future asset provision matches longer-term strategic goals.

The Estates department has initiated a project to mitigate the risks posed to the Service from any potential occurrence of a National Grid power outage for an extended period. This is an identified national risk and is known as Operation Black Start. Investigative work has commenced to add photovoltaics (solar panels) to all key premises. This will have a double positive effect through the generation of electricity, thereby reducing revenue costs and carbon emissions, whilst providing backup power in the event of losing mains power.

The Fleet & Equipment maintenance plans to ensure all vehicle and equipment servicing meets legal and statutory requirements remain on track. The revised plan to roll out the 19 new fire appliances is on track, with ten already in service. The remainder are being phased in over the year with completion expected in December 2021.

The introduction of a new Asset Management System (AMS) database that will encompass all equipment across the Service remains on track for delivery in 2021. The AMS being adopted is also used by other fire and rescue services and a user group has been formed to enable the sharing of learning.

To ensure that, in line with the Authority's policy, the Service is working to the principles of the ISO 55001 Asset Management standard a review was conducted by the British Standards Institution. The Service demonstrated high levels of compliance with a minor recommendation to review the wording of the Asset Management policy. Full accreditation will be sought in 2022-23.

In line with Public Health England advice and guidance, all staff continue to receive the necessary personal protective equipment to carry out their roles effectively. Robust mechanisms are in place to ensure that staff and contractors alike follow mandatory hygiene guidance across Service premises to minimise risks of cross-infection.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

To what extent do we understand and manage our impact upon the environment?

The Service's Environmental Sustainability Plan was published in January 2020, encompassing areas such as waste, fleet and transport, water, purchasing and procurement, energy, carbon emissions, maintenance and improvement projects, and communication of environmental issues.

Green Champions are working across the Service to promote sustainability in the areas in which they work. Commitments include sharing best practices and implementing practical sustainability plans such as encouraging people to switch off lights and computer monitors, and ensuring recycling takes place.

The Service is committed to reducing its utility and fuel consumption through investment, monitoring and introduction of new practices. Investments in environmentally sustainable LED lighting are proceeding with stations being upgraded as part of the wider estate management plan.

Fuel consumption is monitored monthly, and in the year 2020-21 there was a reduction in the Service's carbon footprint of 20% on the previous year, largely because of smarter working resulting in significantly less travel. This reduction in fuel consumption is continuing into 2021-22.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

To what extent do we demonstrate effective management of Information and Communication technology?

The ICT department has a five-year delivery plan which is linked to the Community Safety Plan and supports the Medium-Term Finance Plan to ensure that the overall organisational intent, and the effective delivery of information and communication technology are met.

Some necessary changes have been made to project scheduling to better meet the needs of the Service during the pandemic but overall, the plan remains on track.

Over the quarter the department has achieved improvements in ICT, such as the wireless refresh at end user sites, increasing the ability for teams to work more flexibly and make better use of technology in areas where wireless access was previously limited.

To support new ways of working for a wider range of staff and achieve greater value for money, laptops are being refurbished to gain longer life and enable greater remote access to information.

New ICT asset management software has been introduced and subsequent changes made to processes to further improve cyber security.

The most recent ICT health check continues to show organisational improvement in reducing cyber security risks, and work is underway across the Service to address areas of concern and to strengthen our position in readiness for seeking the Cyber Essential Standard.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

To what extent do our plans address the risks identified in the integrated risk management plan?

The Service undertakes a biennial Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAR) to make sure we understand the operating landscape locally, regionally and nationally. This ensures the Service's Community Safety Plan (CSP) and associated priorities enable prevention, protection, response and resilience arrangements to be effectively prioritised and resourced through the Service's

Medium-Term Finance Plan (MTFP). The SAR is open to external challenge and feedback through the consultation process from interested parties.

The most recent SAR was published in April 2020 following consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders and partners. The document was developed taking account of local documents such as the local Health & Wellbeing Strategy, Community Safety Plans, Police and Crime Plan and Community Risk Register. The 2020 SAR ensured that the priorities and planning within the 2021-2024 Community Safety Plan, were current and informative, and that the subsequent Service delivery plans remain focused on maximising the impact the organisation has on improving public safety, health and wellbeing.

During 2021 the Service is undertaking work to further enhance the SAR. This is through the development of additional comprehensive risk analysis within each of our four community groups. This information will provide even more detail of the risks within our local communities and will support the development of the next SAR aiding decision-making and planning.

KLOE 7: How well are we securing an affordable way of managing the risk of fire and other risks now and in the future?

KLOE 7 Summary

The strategic risk around finance remains high, following an increase in risk during 2020, due to the continued uncertainty about future funding and added economic impact from the Coronavirus pandemic.

Through the work of the Resourcing and Savings Programme (RSP) we were able to make budget reductions of just over £1m per year in setting the budget for 2021-22 and the new Medium-Term Finance Plan. Further reductions or cuts will be needed if our funding position does not improve. Members will be updated on the continuing RSP work as we progress with setting a budget for 2022-23.

We are still waiting for confirmation on the timing of the 2021 Spending Review, with no formal announcement made yet by the Chancellor. We are aware though that the Home Office is already making progress in its Review submission. We expect to have sight of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)/Local Government Association Fire Sector proposal document in late July/early August.

Engagement with local MPs, the Home Office and NFCC to influence the debate on financial sustainability for fire and rescue services has continued in 2021, and we are still lobbying for council tax flexibility. We are waiting to see what the sector Spending Review proposition says about council tax flexibility.

The statutory reporting deadlines for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial statements have been extended once again this year, with final audited statements required by 30 September 2021. We published our draft financial statements for 2020-21 in June 2021 and our external auditors, Deloitte LLP, started their final audit work on 21 June 2021. Finance & Audit Committee members were provided with a progress update on 28 July 2021. There were no significant issues to raise.

KLOE 7 sub-diagnostic

To what extent do we understand and take action to mitigate our main or significant financial risks?

Despite our continuing engagement with local MPs, the Home Office and National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to influence the debate on financial sustainability for fire and rescue services, and lobby for council tax flexibility, the Final Settlement for 2021-22 only included a 2% referendum principle for Fire. We have continued this engagement work in 2021 and met with local MPs in March 2021. We are now waiting to see the NFCC/Local Government Association fire sector Spending Review proposition and content around council tax flexibility.

The statutory reporting deadlines for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial statements have been extended once again this year, with final audited statements required by 30 September 2021. We published our draft financial statements for 2020-21 in June 2021 and our external auditors, Deloitte LLP, started their final audit work on 21 June 2021. Deloitte provided a verbal progress update for the Finance & Audit Committee on 28 July 2021. There were no significant issues to raise.

South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) are progressing a scheduled internal audit of General Ledger controls in quarter 2.

KLOE 7 sub-diagnostic

To what extent do we have a track record for achieving savings and avoiding any residual future budget gaps?

Members approved the 2021-22 budget and new Medium-Term Finance Plan (MTFP) in February 2021. The MTFP shows a forecast deficit of £1.5m for 2022-23, rising to £3.1m for 2024-25. This was an improved position over that previously forecast following the work undertaken in 2020 through the work of the Resourcing and Savings Programme (RSP). This delivered budget reductions of just over £1m, with the potential for further reductions to be made, if our funding position does not improve.

The RSP work is continuing in 2021-22 and Members will be kept up to date with financial issues through the planned series of seminars that have been scheduled.

We are still waiting for confirmation on the timing of the 2021 Spending Review, with no formal announcement made yet by the Chancellor. We are aware though that the Home Office is already making progress in its Review submission. We expect to have sight of the National Fire Chiefs Council/Local Government Association Fire Sector proposal document in late July/early August.

KLOE 7 sub-diagnostic

To what extent is our use of reserves sustainable and promoting new ways of working?

The current Reserves Strategy was approved by Members in February 2021 and forms part of the Medium-Term Finance Plan (MTFP). The level of funding in each reserve was reviewed and updated as part of our work to set the budget for 2021-22 and in developing the new MTFP. The reserves position was further updated in producing the 2020-21 Statements of Account.

A new Reserves Strategy will be developed later in 2021 as we progress with setting the budget for 2022-23 and updating the MTFP.

KLOE 12: How effective is the Occupational Health and Safety management system in the Service?

KLOE 12 Summary

The Service continues to achieve the British Standards Institution's ISO 45001 standard in Occupational Health and Safety Management, which provides assurance that the Service's internal arrangements are appropriate, robust and well embedded.

Whilst the long-term trend for working days lost due to physical injuries and ill health continues to decrease, there has been a slight increase during quarter 1, which is being experienced due to a small number of staff (three) being off long term. These staff members continue to be supported as appropriate.

The reporting of Health and Safety events has seen a very slight decrease overall this quarter, with an increase of four physical injury or ill health reports received.

The Service has seen an increase from one to three in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) reportable events. After investigating these events there were no trends identified.

KLOE 12 sub-diagnostic

How well structured and embedded is the Health & Safety policy, practices, and culture to ensure a safe and legally compliant Service?

The Health and Safety Committee and the associated department continue to monitor the robust arrangements in place, which aims to keep our staff and the public we serve safe. Health and safety arrangements across the Service continue to operate well, with no causes for concern to raise.

The recent audit undertaken by the British Standards Institution (BSI), against the Service's compliance with the ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Management standard, reflected the positive position of the Service, only raising one minor non-conformity, that is being addressed by Officers. The next six-monthly BSI audit against this standard is due in quarter three.

Although the long-term trend for working days lost due to physical injuries and ill health continues to remain on a downward track, during quarter 1 the trend for the number of days lost due to physical work-related injuries and ill health absence quarterly is up

from 189 to 349 days, compared to the same quarter last year. Twelve people (incidents), including three long term recovery, are contributing to these figures. The embedded Service wide sickness reporting system and regular work-related absence alignment meetings between Health & Safety and HR continue to work well, with all cases receiving the appropriate support and intervention as part of the return-to-work process.

The total number of health and safety events reported this quarter has seen a small reduction from 109 to 106, when compared against the same quarter last year. In reviewing the type of events reported, the number of physical injury or ill health reports has risen from 27 to 31. This is largely due to the coronavirus pandemic, which continues to affect the Service. All staff are required to report positive test results to the Service to enable internal contact tracing to take place.

The number of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive, under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), has increased over the same quarter last year from one to three. These regulations require employers, the self-employed and those in control of premises to report specified workplace incidents.

KLOE 13: Are effective governance and decision-making arrangements in place?

KLOE 13 Summary

The Authority has robust governance arrangements, which are well detailed within the Members' handbook, located on Service's website.

Performance of the Service is overseen and scrutinised quarterly by Members through the four Local Performance & Scrutiny Committees and the Finance & Audit Committee. Furthermore, the full Authority receives a performance update six-monthly in June and December with an overall annual report received in September. Assurance of annual performance, against the Service's governance, financial and operational matters, is provided to the Authority in September through the Statement of Assurance. The Authority approved the new 2021-2024 Community Safety Plan at their meeting in June 2021, following a 12-week consultation process.

The Service's governance arrangements remain strong between the Service and Authority, with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services methodology embedded throughout.

The Service continues to robustly manage its information compliance requirements, with 96% of Freedom of Information requests dealt with within 20 working days during this quarter. Whilst two out of four of data protection requests were responded to within the legal timelines this quarter, which is lower than usual, this was due to difficulties in obtaining and reviewing all of the data requested. Fifteen complaints were received, with 13 due for a response within the quarter. Twelve out of 13 were resolved within the agreed time period and seven were not upheld.

Good progress has been made against the Cyber Action Plan, to ensure effective information security arrangements are in place and to achieve compliance against the national Cyber Essentials national security standard, which will support the reduction of the Service's current strategic level cyber risk. Four security incidents have been reported this quarter, all were minimal risk with no loss of data and related to phishing.

The Digital Transformation programme is progressing well, this includes a prioritised programme to move existing systems to Office365, whilst introducing automatic processes to replace those that are paper based to supports the requirements of remote working.

KLOE 13 sub-diagnostic

How well does the Fire and Rescue Authority have oversight and scrutiny to ensure that the Service is appropriately effective and efficiency in ensuring the safety of communities from fire and other risks?

The Authority has five key priorities and performance against these are overseen and scrutinised by Members on a quarterly basis. Priorities one, two and three are reviewed at the four Local Performance & Scrutiny Committee meetings which took place in May 2021 for quarter 4 performance and are due to take place in August and September 2021 for quarter 1 performance. Priorities four and five are reviewed at the Finance & Audit Committee which last took place in quarter 2, in July 2021. The performance reports and presentations at these meetings provide details on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Service, as well as looking at how the Service is supporting, developing, and ensuring the health and wellbeing of its people. A presentation of overall performance against each priority is provided to the Authority at six and 12-month intervals, with the latter delivered at the full Authority in June 2021. In addition, an annual report is provided and published each year in September, along with a Statement of Assurance providing assurance of the previous year's governance, finance and operational matters.

The Authority oversees and scrutinises the development and delivery of the Community Safety Plan (CSP), which includes the Service undertaking consultation and community engagement. Members approved the final CSP for 2021-2024 at their last meeting in June 2021, following a 12-week consultation programme.

The Authority has adopted a set of financial planning principles and assumptions on which to base its revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), this supports the budget planning process; with the principles kept under review and last updated in December 2021 following the provision settlement and local council tax financial collection rates and details. The MTFP is developed and aligned to the learning and outcomes within the Strategic Assessment of Risk and is used to support the development of the CSP and is scrutinised by the full Authority.

The Authority's governance arrangements have been assured through an independent peer review by the Local Government Association (LGA), who confirm that the Authority have appropriate arrangements. With the recent release of the Local Government Association's revised code of conduct, the Authority's arrangements will be updated and aligned as appropriate.

The 2021-22 programme of Member development seminars has been scheduled, mostly following the Authority meetings with some additional dates for financial preparations in the Autumn and early 2022. Awareness of the new Members of Code of Conduct was the subject of the seminar in June 2021, followed in September 2021 with an overview of Prevention, Protection, Response and community engagement and the role of the Local Resilience Forums within large multi-agency incidents.

There will be a seminar to discuss the joint Authority consultation response in relation to the expected White Paper on fire reform.

KLOE 13 sub-diagnostic

How effective and efficient are our governance arrangements?

The Statement of Assurance is comprehensively supported by a range of assurance processes which includes a full annual review of the Service's governance arrangements which are aligned to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) / Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) best practice for corporate governance.

The most recent Statement of Assurance (2019-20), required under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, was approved by the Authority in September 2020, and is now published on the Service's website. The process for its delivery has

been assured both by internal audit and through the Local Government Association (LGA) peer review. The 2020-21 document is currently being finalised and will be presented to the Authority in September 2021 for approval.

The Authority has strong governance arrangements which are well detailed within the Members handbook, which is published on the Service's website. These arrangements were last assured through the independent peer review undertaken by the LGA in June/July 2019, with the Authority achieving a positive assurance. To complement these arrangements and to ensure successful planning, performance, risk management and decision making, the Service's internal governance arrangements are aligned to those of the Authority.

The Authority and Service have embedded Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services methodology throughout its governance arrangements. This starts at the Policy level, through performance management and reporting to our assurance processes. This is to ensure that the Service continues to work within the inspectorates 'good' rating.

The Authority delegates responsibility for Internal Audit through the Finance & Audit Committee, who approve the Internal Audit Strategy and annual plan, which are both aligned to risk. Internal Audit provide Members with a quarterly update on the progress of audits and the delivery of any improvements identified through these. In addition, Internal Auditors provide an annual audit opinion to the Finance & Audit Committee each September.

KLOE 13 sub-diagnostic

How effective and efficient are we at managing data?

Members can be assured that the Service is robustly managing its information compliance requirements. In the first quarter, 96% (23 out of 24) of Freedom of Information requests were dealt with within 20 working days. Two out four of data protection requests were responded to within the legal timelines this quarter, which is lower than usual, but this was due to difficulties in obtaining and reviewing all of the data requested.

Fifteen complaints were received and 13 were due for a response within the quarter. Twelve out of 13 were resolved within the agreed time period and seven were not upheld.

Two of the complaints received related to the recruitment of Fire Control staff and specifically the minimum qualifications required and specified by the Service. This has prompted a review into the qualification requirements in our future processes so that we can continue to attract talent to the Service.

There were also 27 compliments received this quarter.

Good progress has been made against the Cyber Action Plan, to ensure effective information security arrangements are in place. This will enable final validation of our self-assessment for us to achieve compliance against the national Cyber Essentials national security standard. All staff are expected to complete Information Security/Data Protection e-learning to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities regarding data. The Service monitors the completion rate of this e-learning and escalates to Officers if required. Compliance is in a good and improving position at 81%.

Four security incidents have been reported this quarter, all were minimal risk with no loss of data and related to phishing. Staff awareness of these threats is being audited by conducting simulated phishing exercises. The new software asset management system has been installed which helps mitigate risks from the ICT Health Check and Cyber Action Plan.

Progress against the General Data Protection Regulations action plan is progressing well and the concept of privacy by design is being embedded into Service processes through Data Protection and Information Risk impact assessments. Work is continuing to manage retention periods for information held in archive and legacy systems and ensure these are applied to new systems and processes going forwards.

The migration workstream under the Digital Transformation programme is progressing well. Migrating department-based documents to SharePoint is enabling us to maximise the use of Office365 to make further efficiencies whilst effectively managing our data. A prioritised programme of work has been developed to move existing systems to Office365 whilst introducing automatic processes to replace those that are paper based which supports the requirements for remote working.

Priority: Supporting and developing our people

KLOE 8: How well do we understand the wellbeing needs of our workforce and act to improve workforce wellbeing?

KLOE 8 Summary

Positive performance has been made in quarter 1 in relation to the corporate target, with actual sickness absence below the targeted performance. Long-term absence was the primary cause of sickness absence in quarter 1.

Musculoskeletal was the highest causation of absence for wholetime and on-call staff groups in quarter 1. Mental health was the highest causation of absence for corporate staff, and neurological for Fire Control.

Ninety three percent of staff passed their fitness test. Fourteen members of staff were on fitness improvement plans and were provided with advice and guidance on fitness improvement including weight management and nutritional information.

KLOE 8 sub-diagnostic

How well do we understand the wellbeing needs of our workforce and act to improve workforce wellbeing?

The Service has a robust and audited health and wellbeing programme to support staff which is overseen by senior Officers. Health and wellbeing procedures are available to all staff and outline all the support mechanisms available which include counselling, physiotherapy, mental health and peer support.

Absence management continues to be a key focus for the Service and improvements identified by our internal auditors are being actioned and overseen by Officers. Long-term sickness is the largest contributing factor to the absence figures in quarter 1 across all staff groups. Management of long-term absence is more complex than short term absence as the illness/conditions may be serious and involve surgery and recovery time. With any long-term absence, staff are referred to occupational health from 28 days absence for advice and recommendations.

Musculoskeletal was the highest causation of absence for wholetime and on-call staff groups in quarter 1. Mental health was the highest causation of absence for corporate staff, and neurological for fire control. Through a cost benefit analysis, funding for private investigations is considered if NHS waiting times are delaying treatment and/or recovery.

The Service has a corporate target to achieve average sickness levels lower than the previous three-year average. The corporate target for quarter 1 is 1.8 shifts lost per person (wholetime/corporate/fire control) however, the actual absence figure is 1.3 shifts lost per person. Therefore good progress has been made against the corporate target in this quarter. The long term trend is decreasing, which again is a positive position.

Current guidance during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown is for commercial gyms to close, however, with our existing prevention control measures, gyms on stations remain open. In quarter 1, 93% of staff passed their fitness test. Fourteen members of staff were on fitness improvement plans and were provided with advice and guidance on fitness improvement including weight management and nutritional information.

The number of peer supporters and remit of the network is being evaluated to determine the future direction of the network and the level of support provided. Mental Wellbeing sessions are integrated into the Supervisory Managing Performance and Wellbeing training.

The Health and Wellbeing team participate in two regional groups: the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Northern and Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Service Occupational Health Group Meeting and the NFCC National Occupational Health Practitioners group. The intention of the latter group is to deliver evidence-based approaches that promote, prevent and detect workplace health issues known to impact on employee wellbeing including physical, psychological and societal elements. This enables us to share and learn elements of good practice.

KLOE 9: How well trained and skilled are staff?

KLOE 9 Summary

Embedding of our competence recording system, Gartan Expert, continues with weekly update reports showing a positive picture in terms of achievement of targets set for maintenance of skills competencies.

The Annual Training Action Plan and on-call quarterly training programme continue to adapt to accommodate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Risk critical training such as Breathing Apparatus and Fire Behaviour Training has continued throughout quarter 1 following Covid-19 Public Health England (PHE) guidance. Training delivery is being supplemented by additional e-learning and virtual course delivery.

The wholetime recruit basic skills course commenced in June 2021 and was developed in line with government guidance.

KLOE 9 sub-diagnostic

How well do we understand the skills and capabilities of our workforce?

All operational members of staff are required to maintain competence for their respective roles. Operational competence is demonstrated by satisfactory performance at real incidents, during simulations, exercises, drills or centrally run training courses with summative or formative assessments. The operational training programme continues to adapt to accommodate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. All risk critical training has continued throughout quarter 1 with the appropriate risk assessments, social distancing and PPE in place. In accordance with Public Health England advice, we have reduced the numbers of personnel attending courses to enable social distancing but have increased the number of courses provided to compensate.

Training delivery continues to be supplemented by additional e-learning and virtual course delivery.

Our competence recording system continues to embed well, with competence levels scrutinised by Officers to ensure that staff are allocated to appropriate operational license courses. Maintenance of skills training is delivered through localised training in line with the training planners. The training recording system has been further developed to include corporate staff competencies, ensuring at the entire workforce has competencies aligned to their roles and an effective monitoring system is in place to support their maintenance.

KLOE 10: How well do we ensure fairness and diversity?

KLOE 10 Summary

The Service has a structured approach to staff communications and engagement. An internal communications engagement plan is in place to ensure there are opportunities for all parts of the workforce to provide feedback and challenge to leaders. The Service continues to engage with unions on a regular and structured basis through liaison meetings attended by the Director of People and Director of Community Safety.

Successful applicants from the wholetime recruitment campaign commenced employment in quarter 1. Positive attraction for on-call vacancies continues via a virtual/social media platform, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Trends in leavers have not highlighted any areas of concern in terms of age, gender or other protected characteristics.

Work to strengthen community profile information continues to make good progress and will further assist in targeting localised community engagement and recruitment campaigns.

KLOE 10 sub-diagnostic

How well do leaders seek feedback and challenge from all parts of the workforce?

The Service has a structured approach to staff communications and engagement. An internal communications engagement plan is in place to ensure there is opportunity for all parts of the workforce to provide feedback and challenge to leaders.

In quarter 1, despite coming out of major incident in relation to the coronavirus pandemic, our communications and engagement with staff has continued to focus on this whilst staff remain working from home, as well as the draft Community Safety Plan. This has involved:

- monthly Question Time dial in sessions
- Chief Fire Officer staff video update after Authority meeting in June 2021
- regular one to ones and team meetings over the phone and using video calls, and
- leadership events with middle and senior leaders relating to Value for Money and the Community Safety Plan.

Two 'Teams Talks' have taken place to provide staff who currently work from home to input into the Service's approach to smarter working, as national and local restrictions ease.

The Service continues to engage with representative bodies on a regular and structured basis through liaison meetings attended by Directors. This enables effective and timely two-way dialogue between the Service and staff representatives.

KLOE 10 sub-diagnostic

How well do we identify and address potential disproportionality in recruitment, retention, and progression?

The wholetime recruitment process was completed at the end of quarter 4 2020-21. Twenty two new wholetime firefighters commenced employment in quarter 1, initially attending induction and training. Three further offers have been made to those in the pool to start in September/October 2021.

A Fire Control recruitment campaign was launched in April 2021 and received a significant number of applicants. Four offers of employment were made, and six individuals remain in a pool eligible for future vacancies.

The Service's recruitment processes are transparent and reviewed to ensure there are no unintentional barriers to recruitment. Examples of initiatives already in place to support a diverse workforce include:

- interviewers receiving unconscious bias training via the Leaders Forums and e-learning packages
- developing station level demographic profiling to enable better targeting of on-call recruitment
- attending a range of community and partnership events to demonstrate the diverse roles undertaken by the Service
- providing reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process and employment for those living with a disability to ensure equal access
- positive attraction tools such as 'have a go' days, Facebook live sessions, #BeOneOfUs and #NeedMore campaigns on social media
- representatives from our staff networks providing 'buddy' support to potential applicants, and
- staff testimonials on the Service's website to promote the benefits of working for the Service.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic and Government restrictions, we have not been able to hold any 'have a go' days or take part in school visit and careers fayres during quarter 1.

Of the 25 new starters in wholetime this quarter, all identified as male and 48% were in the in 25-35 age band; 76% identified as heterosexual; 92% white British; and 72% stated they had no religion. Of the four new on-call starters in this quarter, all identified as male and 50% were in the 25-35 age band; all identified as heterosexual white British.

Of the five new corporate starters in this quarter, there was no discernible disproportionality in age; 80% identified as female, white British with no disabilities. There were no new starters in Fire Control this quarter.

The Service has a corporate target to improve the diversity of our workforce as a whole compared to the last five years. Our target for quarter 1 was for 21.3% of the workforce to be from under-represented groups, which we have exceeded with 22.7%.

Our promotions processes have been designed to promote fair promotion opportunities for all. Thirty nine people entered the promotion process this quarter. Six people were successfully promoted this quarter (four Crew Managers and two Watch Managers), all identified as white British males from mixed age bands.

The development and testing of the new online leavers process is still ongoing.

KLOE 11: How well do we develop leadership and capability?

KLOE 11 Summary

Both the 1:1 process and promotions process were co-designed with representatives from across the workforce who are part of our Leadership Consultancy Group.

Ninety three percent of 1:1 reviews were completed within the expected timescales. Feedback on the new 1:1 process has been positive; a review of the process took place in quarter 1 and some system developments are scheduled. An internal audit carried out in January 2021 provided substantial assurance.

A review of the promotions process has resulted in the development of an action and communications plan that will be delivered by the end of the year. The process has been designed so that staff can join and progress at a time and pace that suits them.

Delivery of a range of incident command training, assessments and refreshers has continued during quarter 1.

The Service continually reviews and has updated development pathways, coaching and mentoring support arrangements. A wide range of apprenticeship opportunities are available to all staff with 24 members of staff currently undertaking apprenticeships.

KLOE 11 sub-diagnostic

How well do we manage and develop the individual performance of our staff?

All joiners are invited to a corporate induction and guidance is provided to line managers when inducting their new starters. Due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, the face-to-face corporate induction, which is usually held at Headquarters, was adapted to a new online format.

This quarter there was one corporate induction session and a subsequent survey regarding the effectiveness of the process is sent to participants. There was also an induction programme for wholetime firefighter new joiners.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, due to different working practices, probationary periods have been extended to support individuals further in their new roles.

An evaluation of the new 1:1 process has shown that 93% of reviews were completed in the expected timescale. Trend analysis shows that there has been a good take up of 1:1 review process with some managers using the process on a regular basis (not just annually). Staff are also using the recognition part of the system to provide positive feedback to other members of staff. A review of the process took place in quarter 1 and some system developments are scheduled.

KLOE 11 sub-diagnostic

To what extent are the career pathways of all staff effectively managed?

Following promotion, staff meet with the Learning & Development team to identify the development programme appropriate to their role. Relevant courses, mentoring, coaching and e-learning programmes are highlighted and progress against their development pathway is monitored. Fifty three managerial staff are now on development programmes an additional three completed programmes this quarter. For those at Station Manager level these have included a role induction. The role induction programme for supervisory managers is being developed for delivery in quarter 3.

The Service's Leadership Development Programme ensures leaders at each level in the organisation are equipped with the skills to successfully carry out their role. This programme has moved to an online delivery format and the Leaders Forum which consists of all middle and strategic managers has now recommenced. In response to an attendee survey, the Forum now consists of two hour 'bitesize' workshops on a bi-monthly basis and includes leadership topics that attendees indicated that they would find most benefit from discussing.

Incident command training also continues using the facilities at the Fire Service College, enabling our supervisory managers to be assessed at a range of incidents. Forty five command assessors have now been trained to develop and support our operational staff. Structured rota group training for Flexible Duty Officers ensures the opportunity to refresh skills and knowledge as well as providing a forum to share and learn from incidents recently attended.

Figures for quarter 1 show that 24 Service personnel are undertaking apprenticeships which represents 1.7% of staff. The public sector target stands at 2.3%. The Service apprenticeships cover a wide range of areas including Operational Firefighter, Emergency Contact Handler (Control Firefighters), Leadership Development, Finance, Human Resources and Facilities Management.

There are 11 coaches currently trained or in training for level 3 and ten coaches for level 5. Support provided for the coaches includes a procedure, forms and continuous professional development events from Wiltshire Council. In quarter 1 there have been 18 coaching sessions with up to 30 coaching hours within the Service and one reverse mentoring session took place with the Strategic Leadership Team.