

Performance Report - Quarter 2

Finance & Audit Committee

1 July - 30 September 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 are in line with local and national risk assessments and continue to be robust thereby ensuring maintenance of service delivery throughout the pandemic.

Through the recent national fuel disruption, the Service undertook early action by invoking our business continuity fuel plan, which provided further assurance of the arrangements.

The Service has initiated a project to install photovoltaic panels at key station locations in order to mitigate the risks posed from any potential occurrence of a National Grid power outage for an extended period.

The plan to roll out the 19 new fire appliances remains on track, with 16 already delivered to stations. The remainder are being phased in over the year with completion expected in late December 2021.

ICT provision to maintain new ways of working continues to be resilient. Further work is underway to meet the requirements of the Cyber Essentials Standard to further mitigate cyber security risks through robust accreditation.

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 and the concurrent risks, 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.

Each year the Service undertakes a horizon scan to review the emerging threats and risks posed to the Service, along with the community and national risk registers. This helps to inform the annual programme of work set for the business continuity team, which also includes the business continuity plans that need reviewing and exercising each year. Following the March 2021 horizon scan the 2021-22 programme of work was developed and this work is progressing well. This year there is a focus on industrial action, cyber-attacks, loss of power, as well as chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear incidents.

Supply chain management forms part of the Service's business continuity arrangements, which during the pandemic was further enhanced, ensuring appropriate review and management of our critical suppliers. Furthermore, through the recent national fuel disruption, the Service began early preparations aligned to our internal business continuity fuel plan arrangements, which have provided assurance of the Service's plans.

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. The Service is participating in collaborative procurements with:

- the Southwest Police Procurement Department and other Police and Fire and Rescue Services within the South-West region for self-drive vehicle hire
- Bluelight Commercial for the re-tender of our ICT resource management contract, and
- an aggregated procurement with Crown Commercial Services for the re-tender of our liquid fuel contract.

We are also collaborating with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service for the re-tender for Occupational Health services.

The Service is using national frameworks for several upcoming procurements including rescue tools for new fire appliances, tyres, re-tender of the fleet management system maintenance and support contract, and the insurance re-tender contract.

Following the exit from the EU and the current economic situation there has been an increase in issues with our supply chains and delivery schedules, with an increasing likelihood for future price increases. The Service is working with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Procurement Hub, legal team and suppliers to resolve any issues as they arise.

The Service is also participating in the next NFCC Procurement Hub spend analysis project. Using spend analysis from the past three years, opportunities will be identified nationally to potentially deliver further cost savings where they are available to us.

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 investments are limited to five-year Integrated Asset Management Plans that are aligned 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 Service 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 key station premises critical to our degradation arrangements. 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 remain on track to ensure all servicing meets legal and statutory requirements. The revised plan to roll out the 19 new fire appliances is on track, with 16 already in Service and completion expected in late December 2021.

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.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

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

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy encompasses 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 due to this programme and the effects arising from Covid-19. 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 programme remains on track and with some changes in delivery for key priority areas, as an outcome of changes to the new ways of working as a result of the pandemic. Completion against the 2021-22 ICT capital and revenue programmes are all on track, following a six-month review of organisational priorities.

Over the quarter the Service has achieved improvements such as:

- increased storage to ensure sustainability for increased use of Office365
- work to move Notes systems to Office365 is progressing well
- information management, infrastructure and security developments including the removal of redundant systems and servers
- server upgrades and network reviews, and
- new ICT asset management software is embedded into business as usual to further improve cyber security.

An ICT health check, reaccreditation of the Emergency Services Network Code of Connection, and Cyber Essentials work is ongoing and continues to show organisational improvement in reducing cyber security risks.

A server project is now underway to align functions across all fire stations and make better use of resources.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

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

The Service undertakes a 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 delivery of the next SAR. This has included the advancement of a comprehensive risk analysis within each of our four community groups. This information will support the development of the next SAR aiding decision-making and planning. Work will begin to develop a mid-term SAR, for the current Community Safety Plan, in early in 2022.

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 continues to score high. The risk score is unlikely to change until there is clarity on our full funding position for 2022-23 onwards. The Resourcing and Savings Programme work is continuing and we will discuss and review the most up to date financial position and plans with Members at the seminar planned for 15 December 2021.

The Chancellor announced the outcome of the 2021 Spending Review on 27 October 2021, alongside the Autumn Budget. There were no specific headlines for the Fire Sector, but we expect to receive a three-year, real terms Settlement Funding Assessment, when the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is announced in December 2021. It is not yet clear how this Settlement will deal with additional funding to meet the cost of the new Health and Social Care Levy, which we estimate will cost up to £300,000 per year.

Engagement with local MPs, the Home Office and National Fire Chiefs Council to influence the debate on financial sustainability for fire and rescue services continues. The Chair and Chief Fire Officer recently wrote to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury putting our case of local council tax flexibility. All of our local MPs were also encouraged to make contact with the Secretary of State. At present only a general 2% referendum principle for local government has been announced. If there is any further flexibility for the fire sector, we would expect this to be included in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement detail.

Our Statutory Statements of Account for 2020-21 were published on 30 September 2021, in accordance with the extended national deadline. Only 9% of audits were completed within this timescale.

KLOE 7 sub-diagnostic

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

Our engagement work around local council tax flexibility has continued in 2021 with useful discussions taking place with local MPs, the Home Office and National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The Local Government Association/NFCC joint Spending Review proposal document concludes that “Council Tax precept flexibility of £5 for all Fire and Rescue Services is the only viable option for addressing systemic local funding issues” at the present time. To further support this, we have recently written to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, once more putting our case of local council tax flexibility. All of our local MPs have also been encouraged to make contact with the Secretary of State.

The statutory reporting deadlines for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial statements were extended again this year, with final audited statements required by 30 September 2021. Deloitte LLP have been able to conclude their audit work on the 2020-21 financial statements and they were published on 30 September 2021. It has been reported nationally that only 9% of audits have been completed within this timescale.

South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) have completed their scheduled internal audit reviews on financial controls, with the General Ledger controls audit being completed in quarter 2, and a ‘Substantial’ opinion was provided.

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 during the year. We have a

Finance seminar planned for December 2021 where we will discuss and review the most up to date financial position and plans.

The timings for the 2021 Spending Review were confirmed by the Chancellor on 7 September 2021, with the Review scheduled to conclude on 27 October 2021, alongside the Autumn Budget. At the same time the Prime Minister also announced the Government's future plan for healthcare, 'Building Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care'. This Plan will be funded through a new Health and Social Care Levy which will be equivalent to a 1.25% addition to national insurance contributions. We expect the additional employer cost, estimated at £250,000 to £300,000 per year, to be funded by the Government through our funding settlement. We won't know the full details of this until the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is announced in December 2021.

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's Health & Safety arrangements continue to be robust and compliant with ISO45001.

The long-term trend for working days lost due to physical injuries and ill health continues to remain on a downward track. This quarter has seen a reduction from 182 to 151 days, compared to the same quarter last year.

The global coronavirus pandemic continues to affect the Service's performance data, which is expected to be the case for some time. This is reflective in the number of Adverse Occurrence Reports reported this quarter, where compared to the same period last year there has been an increase from 110 to 140 incidents.

The number of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive, under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), has decreased over the same quarter last year from four to one.

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 has been addressed by Officers. The next six-monthly BSI audit against this standard is due in quarter 3.

The long-term trend for working days lost due to physical injuries and ill health continues to remain on a downward track. During each quarter, fluctuations do affect short-term trends for the number of days lost due to physical work-related injuries and ill health absence. This quarter has seen a reduction from 182 to 151 days, compared to the same quarter last year.

In this quarter, of the six people (incidents) two are designated long-term sick or in long-term recovery and their days lost are 131 from the 151 days in quarter 2 total. All cases are receiving the appropriate support and HR intervention as part of the return-to-work process.

The total number of Adverse Occurrence Reports (AORs) reported in quarter 2 has increased from 110 to 140, compared to the same quarter last year. The category of 'injury/harm' shows an increase when compared to the same quarter last year. This is a rise from 39 to 69. However, to help put this into context, the global coronavirus pandemic will continue to affect the Service's performance data for some time. All staff are required to report positive test results to the Service, to enable internal contact tracing to take place. During quarter 2, coronavirus has accounted for 50 'injury/harm' AORs, which largely explains the rise. If the coronavirus cases are removed, this would show an only 19 'injury/harm' incidents this quarter, which would remain consistent with the previous year.

The number of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive, under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), has decreased over the same quarter last year from four to one. 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

There continues to be effective and efficient governance arrangements in place with robust oversight and scrutiny 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 through to our assurance processes.

The 2020-21 Statement of Assurance, required under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, was approved by the Authority in September 2021. This is now published on the Service's website.

Information management and cyber security practices are also in a good place and are continually evolving in a positive manner.

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 August and September 2021 for quarter 1 performance and are due to take place in November and December 2021 for quarter 2 performance. Priorities four and five are reviewed at the Finance & Audit Committee which last took place in September 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. The 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. A presentation of overall performance against each priority is provided to the Authority at six and 12-month intervals, with the former being delivered at the full Authority in December 2021.

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 2020 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. The Authority's arrangements have been aligned to the LGA's revised code of conduct.

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. September's Members' seminar provided an overview of the Services integrated approach to Prevention, Protection, Response. The forthcoming programme for 2022-23 will be approved at December's meeting.

KLOE 13 sub-diagnostic

How effective and efficient are our governance arrangements?

The Authority has strong and robust governance arrangements, which are well detailed within the Members' handbook, published on the Service's website. These arrangements were last assured through the independent peer review undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) in Summer 2019, with the Authority achieving a positive assurance.

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 be able to evidence it is working well within the inspectorates 'good' rating and to embed inspection into our business-as-usual practise.

The Statement of Assurance is comprehensively supported by a range of assurance processes. This 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 2020-21 Statement of Assurance, required under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, was approved by the Authority in September 2021. This is published on the Service's website. The process for its delivery has been assured both by internal audit and through the LGA peer review.

The Authority delegates responsibility for Internal Audit through the Finance & Audit Committee, who approve the Internal Audit four-year and annual plans. 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 year, with the most recent opinion of adequate assurance reported in July 2021.

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 quarter 2, 23 Freedom of Information requests were due for response, 22 (96%) of which were responded to within 20 working days. One late response was delayed owing to the complexity of the request, requiring discussions at a senior level to carry out the public interest test. The average response time was 13 working days, compared to 14 working days in the previous quarter.

A wider range of exemptions than usual were used in quarter 2, reflecting a seemingly wider variety of requests received. There were five requests that were likely prompted by the Grenfell Tower inquiry, particularly in relation to deficiencies and cladding of high-rise buildings. The number of requests of this nature appear to be increasing.

Seven Subject Access Requests were responded to in quarter 2, all of which were received from current or previous members of staff. Five of the requests were generated by the Station Manager promotion process. Six of the requests were answered within one month of receipt. One request was deemed to be complex and answered within three months of receipt. All disclosures were either made in full or with redactions made for third party personal data.

There were seven security incidents reported this quarter, all of which had a low-risk rating.

Seven complaints were received and eight were due for a response. Six were resolved within the 14-day timescale, one was altered and one was extended with agreement of the complainant. Twenty compliments were received in the same quarter.

Good progress has been made against the Cyber Action Plan to ensure effective information security arrangements are in place. This has enabled 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 closely monitors the completion rate of this e-learning and compliance is in a good and improving position at 86%.

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

The Service has a corporate target to achieve average sickness levels lower than the previous five-year average. Positive performance has continued this quarter with cumulative sickness of 3.9 shifts lost against the cumulative target of 3.9. The long-term trend is positive in that sickness level are decreasing.

Long-term absence was the primary cause of sickness absence in quarter 2 for all staff groups other than corporate staff. Long term sickness is well managed with established support mechanisms in place.

Musculoskeletal was the highest causation of absence for wholetime, on-call staff and corporate groups in quarter 2. Headaches/Migraine and respiratory issues were the highest causation of absence for fire control staff.

It is pleasing that we have yet to see a significant impact of sickness absence due to the coronavirus however this continues to be monitored. We have robust reporting and control mechanisms in place to support staff.

In quarter 2, 91% of staff passed their fitness test and 17 members of staff were placed on fitness improvement plans in place. These plans include advice and guidance on 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.

There are 26 staff providing peer support who promote national campaigns such as World Mental Health Day; International Stress Week and Time to Talk. Mental Wellbeing sessions are integrated into the Supervisory Managing Performance and Wellbeing training.

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 majority of staff groups in quarter 2. The exception being the corporate staff group where short-term absence was the highest contributing factor to sickness absence. 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, on-call staff and corporate groups in quarter 2. Headaches/Migraine and respiratory issues were the highest causation of absence for fire control staff. Through a cost benefit analysis, funding for private investigations is considered if NHS waiting times are delaying treatment and/or recovery.

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 2, 91% of staff passed their fitness test. Seventeen 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 Service has a corporate target to achieve average sickness levels lower than the previous five-year average. The cumulative target for quarters 1 and 2 is 3.9 shifts lost per person (wholetime/corporate/fire control). The average cumulative figure for quarters 1 and 2 is 3.9 shifts lost per person. Therefore, positive progress has been made against the corporate target in quarter 2.

In quarter 2 there were no days lost although the cumulative number of days lost in quarter 1 and quarter 2 is 165 days which is positive performance against the quarter 2 target of 182.

The Service participates in two regional groups: the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Northern and Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services Occupational Health Group who discuss topics such as long Covid, medical standards, and the NFCC National Occupational Health Practitioners Group who deliver evidence-based approaches that promote, prevent and detect workplace health issues known to impact on employee wellbeing including physical, psychological and societal elements.

KLOE 9: How well trained and skilled are staff?

KLOE 9 Summary

We continue to carry out training delivery in accordance with the Annual Training Action Plan and on-call quarterly training programme. All risk critical training resumed to standard class size in quarter 2 maintaining the hygiene measures that were introduced during the coronavirus pandemic. Our training delivery is supported by additional e-learning modules and virtual delivery.

Embedding our competence recording system continues to make positive progress with weekly update reports showing achievement of the targets set for maintenance of skills competencies. The recording system has been further developed to include control and corporate staff competencies. The integration of our e-learning product and our competence recording system has also progressed well during this quarter.

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.

The operational training programme continues to adapt to accommodate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. All risk critical training has resumed to standard class sizes during quarter 2 in line with the lifting of coronavirus restrictions. 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.

Twenty-five new wholetime firefighters commenced on station in August 2021.

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

KLOE 10 Summary

The opportunities for feedback from our staff are aligned to the internal communications and engagement plan and has included a range of channels and methods to ensure the involvement of all parts of our workforce. Communication plans are a standard element of the project management process to ensure that stakeholders are involved in Service projects.

We continue to use social media as a key part of our positive attraction work. Work to strengthen community profile information is progressing well which strengthens our community engagement enabling us to better target our recruitment and social media campaigns.

Our corporate target to improve the diversity of our workforce as a whole compared to the last five years continues to make positive progress with our actual workforce diversity in quarter 2 being 21.9% against a target of 21.3%.

The Service's promotions processes have been designed to promote fair promotion opportunities for all. The new process is now embedding and the number of people entering the promotion process continues to increase. An evaluation of the promotion process took place in quarter 2 and an action plan has been developed and is being implemented. Automating the leavers process development is on-going with an anticipated completion in quarter 3.

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 2, our communications and engagement has involved:

- Question Time dial in sessions in July and September
- Chief Fire Officer staff video update after the Authority meeting in September 2021
- station visits by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer
- regular one to ones and team meetings over the phone and using video calls, and
- leadership events with middle and senior leaders relating to the National Fire Chiefs Council Core Code of ethics.

Communication plans for Service projects are developed and monitored as part of the project management process and this has included for example communications and engagement opportunities for staff in relation to the HMI inspection.

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

- interviewers receiving unconscious bias training via Leaders Forums and e-learning packages
- 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
- stations taking part in school visits and careers fayres to help change the messaging around female firefighters
- providing reasonable adjustment 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
- staff testimonials on the Service's website to promote the benefits of working for the Service, and
- a new e-recruitment system with an improved user experience.

The diversity of our workforce is monitored on a quarterly basis. In quarter 2 there were 39 new starters and 32 leavers. Of the three new wholetime starters in quarter 2, all were male, White British. Of the 22 on-call new starters in quarter 2, 20 were male, White British and the majority (54%) were in the 25 to 35 age band. Of the four new starters in Fire Control in this quarter, all were female, White British and three were in the 25 to 35 age band. Of the 10 new corporate starters in this quarter, seven were female and eight were White British. There is a proportionate spread across the different age bands.

As a result, good progress has been made against the corporate target to improve the diversity of our workforce with our actual workforce diversity in quarter 2 being 21.9% against a target of 21.3%.

To address any disproportionality in recruitment, various positive action activities are carried out. The on-call 'Have a Go Days' aim to attract and support a more diverse applicant base, however, due to the pandemic and government restrictions, no Have a Go Days were held during quarter 2. Targeted social media information and recruitment campaigns were used as an alternative.

The Crew and Watch Manager promotion process has been designed to promote fair promotion opportunities for all. An increasing number of people are entering the promotion process, with 11 people successfully promoted this quarter.

The development and testing of a new online leavers process is nearing completion. It is anticipated that this will be concluded in quarter 3. The new process will make exit discussions mandatory enabling better analysis of trends. In the meantime, data which can be collected is being analysed for trend identification and appropriate action taken by Officers.

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

KLOE 11 Summary

Two corporate inductions took place this quarter, both receiving positive feedback. The sessions have been delivered virtually but will return to face-to-face delivery in quarter 3.

The 1:1 process has embedded extremely well. The new 12-month roll out period for the 1:1 process commenced in quarter 2 with a six-month evaluation to be completed at end of quarter 3.

Our Leadership and Development offering involves continuous improvements and updates to the development pathways, the learning hub along with coaching and mentoring support. Virtual delivery of Leadership Development Programme and Leadership Forums continued during quarter 2.

Delivery of a range of incident command training, assessments and refreshers has taken place during quarter 2. We have continued to use the facilities at the Fire Service College, enabling our operational supervisory incident managers to be assessed at a range of incidents.

Structured rota group training for Flexible Duty Officers is in place and ensures the opportunity to refresh skills and knowledge as well as providing a forum to share and learn from incidents recently attended.

We continue to make good use of our apprenticeship levy with 31 personnel undertaking apprenticeships during quarter 2 which represents 2.2% of staff against the public sector target of 2.3%.

KLOE 11 sub-diagnostic

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

In quarter 2 two corporate induction sessions were held. Attendees are asked to complete a survey regarding the effectiveness of the session with most attendees responding that the induction process 'meets' or 'exceeds' expectations.

The Firefighter Induction programme survey was received during quarter 2; again most attendees responded that the induction process 'meets' or 'exceeds' expectations. All feedback is reviewed to ensure continuous improvement for future induction programmes.

Another measure of success of an induction period for a new starter is through data from probation reviews. Year to date, 26 probation periods have been met, one has been extended and no staff contracts have been terminated during their probation period.

Our new 1:1 process has embedded extremely well. The new 12-month roll out period for 1:1 process commenced in quarter 2 with a six-month evaluation to be completed at end of quarter 3.

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. 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 and now consists of two hour 'bitesize' workshops on a bi-monthly basis. The programme includes leadership topics identified in our strategic assessment of risk as well as topics highlighted through an attendee survey.

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. 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 2 show that 31 Service personnel are undertaking apprenticeships which represents 2.2% 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.

Our coaching procedure also supports staff in their development. The Service have a number of coaches qualified at level 3 and level 5.