

# Performance Report - Quarter 4

Finance & Audit Committee

1 January - 31 March 2022



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE**

## Priority: Making every penny count

### KLOE (Key Lines Of Enquiry) 6: How well do we use resources to manage risk?

#### KLOE 6 Summary

The Service continues to have sound business continuity management arrangements in place, as assured by internal audit, with this arrangement achieving 'substantial' assurance from SWAP auditors. Understanding current and future risks to the Service, through horizon scanning helps to ensure that our well-established and embedded approach, continues to be strengthened. Exercising and testing forms part of the Service's approach, with learning opportunities enabling the further enhancing of arrangements. An overview of the exercising programme was provided at the Authority in June.

The Service's strategic planning arrangements received substantial assurance by internal audit, providing assurance of the Service's community risk management planning. The next iteration of the Service's Strategic Assessment of Risk is due to be completed by the end of the year. Work to strengthen its delivery, through the development of group level analysis, has been completed. The full national and local PESTELO analysis is due for completion in 2022, along with a risk and demand review and an organisational analysis.

Procurement procedural and managerial arrangements continue to remain in a good position, with a significant amount of collaboration taking place to support our approach to value for money. Officers are working hard, both internally and externally, to continue to strengthen relationships and planning with critical suppliers to meet the ongoing challenges resulting from the pandemic, EU exit, general uncertain economic position and the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. The Service is also working with legal teams and national leads to further assure and strengthen our procurement approach during this volatile period.

The project to deliver the new Asset Management system, to help the Service manage its 75,000 items of equipment and replace the current two legacy systems, is progressing well, but with some additional training required in the north of the Service, with expected implementation in May 2022. The delivery and use of this system will further support the Service's drive for accreditation of the ISO 55001 asset management standard by March 2023.

The Service has a clear medium-term approach for environmental sustainability, detailed within our environmental sustainability strategy, which encompasses areas such as waste, fleet and transport, water, purchasing and procurement, energy, carbon emissions, maintenance and improvement projects, and communication of environmental issues. Work is progressing well to

better manage, control and potentially reduce energy consumption. In addition, the Service is preparing to fit key stations with solar panel to improve environmental impact and the resilience of the Service. Procurement for this work is underway.

Information and Communication technology (ICT) capital and revenue programmes are all on track, following a review of organisational priorities. Some amendments to programming of activity have been required to accommodate worldwide ICT supply issues impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and the Ukraine situation.

### **KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic**

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

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 and assured business continuity and significant event arrangements.

These arrangements have been audited and assured and are aligned to industry best practice, through the Business Continuity Institute's Good Practice Guidance (2018). These were last reviewed by the internal auditors in October 2019, where substantial assurance was awarded. These robust arrangements have been key to supporting the resilience and continuity of the Service during some really challenging years. This includes the protracted coronavirus pandemic and its concurrent risks, the subsequent major incidents, for example Wareham Forrest fire, severe weather events and the Fisherton Tunnel rail crash, along with the supply chain challenges and impacts from the current crisis in Ukraine.

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 is due to be undertaken in April 2022, for the 2022-23 programme, following the publication of key documents, which support this work. This annual scan helps to shape and inform the annual programme of work set for the internal business continuity team. During 2021 this programme has ensured the strengthening of the Service's arrangements within industrial action, cyber-attacks, loss of power, as well as chemical, biological, radioactive, and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. In support of this, the Service has undertaken and attended several exercises and training events, this includes an in-Service Industrial Action tabletop exercise, a multi-agency national power outage exercise, an exercise at RAF Lyneham involving other agencies, an operational CBRN exercise held at Bournemouth Airport, observed by officers from the

national resilience team and a national inter-agency liaison officer information sharing exercise with ambulance and police partners, following learning from national significant events.

#### **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 process 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. These Strategic planning arrangements received a 'substantial' audit from Internal Auditors, providing good assurance of the approach.

The most recent SAR was agreed by Members and 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 2022 the Service will deliver its next SAR, which will aid decisions making and planning across the Service and support the development of the next iteration of the Community Safety Plan. To strengthen our previous approach, during 2021, the Service enhanced its approach to delivering a SAR, which included developing and delivering a comprehensive risk analysis within each of our four community groups.

## 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 continues to extensively use national procurement contracts and actively promotes and partakes in collaborative/joint procurements, including through the Networked Fire Services Partnership. The Service is participating in collaborative procurements with:

- station end equipment with Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (Lead)
- e-tendering system, including contract management, as part of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Bluelight commercials (Lead) procurement for a new system, and
- occupational health with Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (Lead), Avon Fire and Rescue Service and Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

The Service is using national frameworks for several upcoming procurements including training, information and communication technology, refurbishment works, vehicles and appliances.

The ongoing situation, with the coronavirus pandemic and the UK's exit from the European Union, along with the current crisis in Ukraine, provides challenges with procurements, contractors, suppliers, supply chains and delivery schedules, along with cost increases. Due to this, the Service, is continually monitoring the performance and management of relations with its critical suppliers. Following guidance through the National Fire Chiefs Council Procurement lead and Service legal teams, contract terms and conditions and the standard selection supplier's questionnaire for procurements have been further strengthened, providing added protection. In addition, where possible, contracts are being aggregated, to identify better value for money, with pricing volatility. The Service also continues to work with suppliers, contracting Authorities, our procurers and buyers, as well as our legal team, to continue the positive relationships held and effectively plan, where possible, to further mitigate these issues.

#### **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?**

In line with the Authority's policy, the Service is working to the principles of the ISO 55001 Asset Management standard. A review of our approach was conducted by the British Standards Institute in 2021, where the Service demonstrated high levels of compliance. The Service is currently strengthening arrangements by addressing the gaps through this review, with a view to achieving full accreditation to the standard by March 2023.

The fleet and equipment maintenance plans remain on track to ensure all servicing meets legal and statutory requirements. The rollout plan to introduce 19 new fire appliances has been successfully completed, with all in Service by the 31 March 2022. As part of the ongoing replacement programme the next six fire appliances are on order, with four of them arriving in May 2022. Furthermore, the programme for 2022-23 includes four 4x4 fire appliances, with the first expected in Service in quarter 1 2022-23.

The introduction of a new Asset Management System (AMS) database, that will replace the two legacy systems, encompassing all 75,000 pieces of equipment across the Service, remains on track for full implementation in May 2022. The chosen AMS is currently in use by other fire and rescue services and the Service is a member of a sector user group, which enables sharing of learning.

Furthermore, the Estates Team continues to be on-track with capital spending and is currently delivering a review to identify estate rationalisation opportunities, along with delivering options appraisals for future training provisions. A seminar for Members will be held in July to consider these proposals.

#### **KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic**

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

The Service's 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 identified across the Service to support the promotion of sustainability in the areas in which they work. Commitments include sharing best practices and implementing practical solutions to encourage people to switch off lights and computer monitors, and ensuring recycling takes place. The work with Green Champions will be enhanced by being able to supply them and station management with energy and utility consumption data. This has been achieved by the recruitment of a new member to the Estates Team, whose role it is to compile, manage and evaluate energy usage data and disseminating this information. Furthermore, this role will enable the Service to better manage, control and potentially reduce consumption.

The Service is also 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.

Photovoltaics (solar panels) are being programmed for key stations, that are critical to our degradation arrangements, and Officers are preparing for its delivery in 2022-23. This project is to support the Service's mitigations for any potential loss of national power and 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. This work is part of strengthening our business continuity arrangements and showing direct mitigation of a risk in the National Risk Register.

Annual monitoring of the Service's environmental impact has shown that our carbon footprint was 2,533 tonnes in 2021-22. Next year we will report to Members whether a reduction in our carbon footprint compared to the average in the last three years has been achieved. Annual electricity usage for the year has reduced by 6.4% and gas usage has reduced by 3% compared to 2020-21.

#### **KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic**

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

Information and Communication technology (ICT) capital and revenue programmes are all on track, following a review of organisational priorities. Some amendments to programming of activity have been required to accommodate worldwide ICT supply issues impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and the Ukraine situation.

Over the quarter the Service has achieved improvements such as:

- server upgrades and network reviews ongoing, including upgrades of historical systems to assure compliance with security and increase access to information

- implementation of mobile hardware security management from a single central source is now in place
- ICT asset management system is in place, with whitelisting of hard and software to easily identify any issues on the infrastructure and only to allow users the functionality necessary to fulfil their role. Review is underway to increase functionality and identify more automated ways of working
- new ICT Health check completed in January 2022, with a positive outcome, and evidence of progress in how we are managing our assets and security effectively
- Bitdefender to assist in management of external hardware and reduce Cyber Security risks, now in place
- Security Information and Event Management Tool in place and working well in identifying security vulnerabilities
- Server/Storage Area Network project in procurement ongoing to now include switches replacement to align functions across all stations, reducing risks and creating a more sustainable infrastructure
- comms audits underway across all Service sites to rationalise and align hardware, to increase security and assure consistency, and
- the Service's telephony provision is being rationalised and upgraded to increase the use of MS Teams. This will future proof the Service's telephony provision by moving to a hybrid approach of utilising Office 365 technology for corporate staff and a fully supported telephony option for stations that ensures no disruption to communications in the event of a Wi-Fi outage.

#### **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 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 16 December 2021, but only a further one-year Settlement was provided, the fourth one-year settlement running. The Settlement did include some additional funding, mainly in the form a new Services Grant, but this is only guaranteed for 2022-23. Future years are dependent on a general review of local government funding taking place in 2022. The Settlement included a core 2% council tax referendum principle for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs), but also a £5 flexibility option for the eight lowest charging FRAs. Dorset & Wiltshire is not in the lowest eight and our response to the consultation on the Settlement pushed for this flexibility for all. We engaged with local MPs over this response and sought their support in lobbying the Government but, unfortunately, the Final Settlement showed no changes to the proposals. All eight lowest charging FRAs approved precept increases of £5.



The local position on council tax base and collection fund has recovered slightly from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic with a 1.6% increase in tax base for 2022-23 and an overall net £340,000 net surplus on the collection fund. Business rates receipts and collections are still adversely impacted, but much of this is due to additional reliefs provided by the Government as this is compensated for through additional grant funding.

Overall, a balanced budget has been set for 2022-23 and a slightly improved funding picture is shown for future years. This has allowed us to utilise further reserve funds to support future capital investment requirements, particularly those associated with our training facilities.

We are keeping a close watch on the impact of rising prices caused by the general economic situation as well as new impacts being seen as a result of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It is highly likely that the additional provision made in the 2022-23 budget for rising costs will be insufficient. We will update Members on the latest position through the regular quarterly financial performance reports.

#### **KLOE 7 sub-diagnostic**

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

Throughout 2021-22 we continued to engage with local MPs, the Home Office and National Fire Chiefs Council to influence the debate on financial sustainability for fire and rescue services and lobby for council tax flexibility. This included briefing sessions for local MPs and letters from the Chair and Chief Fire Officer 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 contact the Secretary of State.

The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022-23 confirmed a general 2% referendum principle for local government for 2022-23, including Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). It also included flexibility for a £5 increase in precept for the lowest eight charging FRAs, all of whom agreed increases at that level. In our response to the consultation on the Settlement we argued for this flexibility to be extended to all FRAs but no changes were made in the Final Settlement. Members of the Fire Authority remain extremely disappointed that this flexibility is not available to them.

The statutory reporting deadlines for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial statements were extended in 2021, with final audited statements required by 30 September each year. With the help of our external auditors, Deloitte LLP, we were able to meet this

deadline in 2021, although it was reported nationally that only 9% of audits achieved this. The auditors presented their final report, including the new Value for Money conclusion work, to the Finance & Audit Committee in December 2021. They have now commended their work on the 2021-22 financial statements and their audit plan was approved by Members at the Finance & Audit Committee on 9 March 2022.

South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) 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 2022-23 budget and new Medium-Term Finance Plan (MTFP) in February 2022. Although the MTFP continues to show a forecast future deficit, this has improved over the position shown in the previous MTFP. The deficit forecast is now £1.1m for 2023-24, rising to £1.8m for 2025-26. This is an improved position over that previously forecast following the work undertaken in 2020 through the work of the Resourcing and Savings Programme (RSP), which delivered budget reductions of just over £1m, and some improvement in the funding position.

Unfortunately, the Local Government Finance Settlement only provided a further one-year settlement, so there is no clarity still over the longer-term funding picture beyond 2022-23. The RSP work continued in 2021-22 and will carry on in 2022-23. The Committee and Authority are kept up to date with financial issues during the year. A Finance seminar was most recently held in January 2022.

#### **KLOE 7 sub-diagnostic**

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

The current reserves strategy and general balances risk assessment were reviewed and updated for the 2022-25 MTFP. The strategy includes the movement of some surplus funding to support future investment in updated training facilities. The strategy was approved by the Authority in February 2022.

Reserves and General Balances will be reviewed further in compiling the 2021-22 Statements of Account.

The Reserves Strategy will then be reviewed and updated again through the 2023-24 budget setting process, ready for approval in February 2023.

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

### **KLOE 12 Summary**

The Service continues to exhibit a strong health and safety performance. There are no strategic issues to raise with Members. A recent audit against the Service's compliance with the ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Management standard by qualified health and safety specialists from the British Standards Institute, reflected the positive position of the Service with only six minor technical non-conformities, most of which have already been actioned. The long-term trend adverse occurrence continues to remain on a downward track (when the effect of Covid reporting is removed) and work-related absence due to "physical" injuries or ill health quarterly trend is up by 1%. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) was 12 this year, which was the same for the previous year.

### **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, and in accordance with externally accredited standards.

The last audit undertaken by the British Standards Institution, against the Service's compliance with the ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Management standard, reflected the positive position of the Service. The ISO 45001 Recertification and continual assessment audit took place in April 2022, which resulted in the Service being recommended for certification for another three years. The audit did identify six minor non-conformities which are being actioned and monitored through to

completion by the Health and Safety Committee. The next six-monthly continual assessment audit against this standard is due in November 2022.

The annual work-related absence due to “physical” injuries or ill health shows a slight increase in trend which has mainly been caused by long term sick or in long term recovery which has in some instances been hampered by long waiting lists within the NHS.

This year work-related absence due to “physical” injuries or ill health quarterly trend is up by 1% (1,078 to 1,088 days). This year, 30 people (incidents) are contributing to the annual figures. Seven people (incidents) are designated long term sick or in long term recovery and their days lost make up 77% of the total for days lost this year to “physical” injuries or ill health. 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 2021-22 has increased from 441 to 659, compared to last year. During this year, coronavirus reporting has accounted for 309 ‘injury/harm’ AORs, which explains the rise. If the coronavirus reports were removed, true injury/harm cases have seen a fall of 28 over last year (down 23%). 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 (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) was 12 this year, the same number compared to last year. Ten RIDDOR reports were classed as an ‘over seven days’ category with a manual handling event the cause of these injuries. All incidents are fully investigated with appropriate actions taken as required to limit the chance of the incident happening again. These regulations require employers, the self-employed and those in control of premises to report specified workplace incidents to the HSE.

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

#### **KLOE 13 Summary**

The Authority and Service has sound governance arrangements in place that are working well. Information management and security arrangements are operating well, and the Service has been accredited to the national Cyber security standard. The

Service was inspected in March 2022 by HMICFRS with results to be published in the 'winter' following national moderation of these tranche three reports.

### **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 efficient 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 February and March 2022 for quarter 3 performance and are due to take place in May and June 2022 for quarter 4 performance. Priorities four and five are reviewed at the Finance & Audit Committee which last took place in March 2022.

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 approved by Members 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 process of developing the Statement of Assurance received a 'substantial' assurance from Internal Audit and was commended by the Local Government Association (LGA) peer review team led by the Chair of the Authority.

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 latter being delivered at the full Authority in June 2022.

The Authority's governance arrangements have been assured through an independent peer review by the 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 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 February 2022 following the final 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. Members seminars are held to examine and discuss core issues before being presented to the Authority.

The 2022-23 programme of Member development seminars approved by Members is in place, mostly following the Authority meetings with the potential for an additional seminar should the White Paper on fire sector reform be published.

### **KLOE 13 sub-diagnostic**

#### **How effective and efficient are our governance arrangements?**

The Authority and Service have robust and well aligned governance arrangements with performance management, reporting and scrutiny arrangements well established. This has been assured through the Local Government Associations Peer Review in 2019. Performance reporting is linked through from the Community Safety Plan and the Authority's five Priorities, through to team and watch level. This is developed through our performance management system and through our comprehensive station level performance dashboards. The Authority and Service have ensured that from policy through to operational level, the Service is well aligned to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) methodology. This is highlighted through our key lines of enquiry, which are aligned to the inspectorate's judgement criteria and their 'good' rating. Performance reporting then ensures the continuation of appropriate evidence to support the Service in achieving 'good'. This approach was audited by our internal auditors, South West Audit Partnership, who awarded 'Substantial' assurance.

The assurance arrangements for the Service are robust, with a significant approach undertaken through inspection, internal audit, British standards institute (BSI) audits, external audit, and peer reviews. This, plus other internal assurance mechanisms, are undertaken on an annual basis to support the development of the Statement of Assurance. In September 2021, the Authority approved the 2020-21 Statement of Assurance, which for the first time, provides assurance against the inspectorate's methodology. This now means that the Service can demonstrate alignment from policy level through to our assurance framework.

Each year the Service reviews its position against Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) good governance principles as part of the delivery of the governance assurance statement for the Statement of Assurance, to ensure the continuation of strong governance arrangements.

Internal audit has provided ‘substantial’ assurance against several areas included within our governance arrangements, such as project management and business case approach as well as the performance management framework.

### **KLOE 13 sub-diagnostic**

#### **How effective and efficient are we at managing data?**

Members can be assured that the Service is proactively managing its information compliance requirements. There are strategic and tactical processes that broadly align to the principles of BSI 27001 and are detailed in the supporting documentation associated with the Statement of Assurance approved by Members in September.

27 Freedom of Information requests were due for response in quarter 4, 25 of which were responded to within 20 working days. The average response time was 11 working days. One full exemption was applied, and partial exemptions were also applied on five other occasions.

Six Subject Access Requests were responded to in quarter 4, all of which were received from current or previous members of staff. Three requests were responded to within one month of receipt. Three requests were deemed to be complex and answered within three months. All disclosures were either made in full or with redactions made for third party personal data.

There were five security incidents reported this quarter, all of which had a low rating. A cyber officer monitors and oversees a range of technical and procedural processes. Issues are quickly progressed to senior officers should they arise. Progress against the Cyber Action Plan to ensure effective information security arrangements are in place is on track and the focus is currently on out of date servers. The Service achieved compliance against the National Cyber Essentials security standard in December 2021.

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. As of 31 March 2022, 84% of all employees had completed their mandatory data protection and cyber security training.

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, 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 and improved efficiency.

## **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**

In contrast to previous quarters, short-term sickness is the largest contributing factor to the absence figures across all staff groups in quarter 4. Respiratory was the highest causation of absence for all staff groups. Of those respiratory absences approximately 90% were due to coronavirus.

The Service has a corporate target to achieve average sickness levels lower than the previous five-year average. The actual cumulative shifts/days lost for the year is 9.96 (wholetime/corporate/fire control) compared to the average cumulative target for the year is 8.82 shifts lost per person. This means that the corporate target for sickness levels has not been achieved. If coronavirus related absences were removed from only the quarter 4 data, our actual annual average sickness would be 8.78 against a target of 8.82. Therefore, coronavirus related absences were a significant factor in not achieving the target. Despite this rise there was not a significant adverse impact on service delivery, and we continue to have robust reporting and control mechanisms in place to support staff.

The long-term absence trend remains positive in that sickness levels are decreasing, although this is moving to a more marginal position going forward.

Sickness absence is well managed through our dedicated health and wellbeing team who work closely with line managers and HR business partners. Sickness procedures are robust and are augmented by support mechanisms such as counselling and physiotherapy treatment. Funding for private investigations is considered on a cost benefit basis if NHS waiting times are



delaying treatment and/or recovery, particularly when continued absence could have a significant impact on broader service delivery issues.

In quarter 4, 93.4% of staff passed their fitness test and eighteen members of staff were on fitness improvement plans which include 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 Officers. Health and wellbeing procedures are available to all staff which outlines all the support mechanisms available to staff including mental health support, peer support and other external self-service provisions.

Twenty six staff provide peer support and promote national campaigns such as World Mental Health Day, International Stress Week, and the Time to Talk campaign. Mental Wellbeing sessions are integrated into the Supervisory Managing Performance and Wellbeing training.

Short-term sickness is the largest contributing factor to the absence figures in quarter 4 across all staff groups. Respiratory was the highest causation of absence for all four staff groups, 90% of which was coronavirus related.

The Service has a corporate target to achieve average sickness levels lower than the previous five-year average. The year-end shifts lost (wholtime/corporate/fire control) is 9.96 shifts lost per person compared to a target of 8.82 shifts lost per person. The longer-term trend shows that sickness levels are decreasing.

Sickness absence is well managed through our dedicated health and wellbeing team who work closely with line managers and HR Business Partners. Robust sickness procedures and support mechanisms are in place to provide advice, guidance and support to staff and managers. 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.

Absence management continues to be a key focus for the Service and improvements identified by our internal auditors have been actioned with continued oversight by Officers. Through a cost benefit analysis, funding for private investigations is considered if NHS waiting times are delaying treatment and/or recovery.

In quarter 4, 93.4% of staff passed their fitness test. Eighteen 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 Key Performance Indicator to reduce the number of working days lost to non-physical work-related ill health by 5% each year. At year-end 161 days have been lost (data was rerun in quarter 4 and reduced from 165 days) compared to annual target of 367 days lost.

The Service participates in the Northern and Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Service Occupational Health Group who discuss topics such as long Covid, medical standards, and the National Fire Chiefs Council Occupational Health Practitioners Forum 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. The Service also attends the Pan Strategic Staff Wellbeing Group and the Public Health Workforce Campaign Group (Wiltshire).

## **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 operational training continued at standard class size in quarter 4, maintaining the hygiene measures that were introduced during the coronavirus pandemic. Our training delivery is supported by additional e-learning modules and virtual delivery.

Our competence recording system, developed with a private sector partner, has successfully embedded with competence levels monitored by Officers. The recording system has been further developed to include control and corporate staff competencies.

Seven new wholetime firefighters are due to conclude on their recruits training course at the end of April 2022.

## 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 has continued in standard delivery format in quarter 4. Training delivery continues to be supplemented by additional e-learning and virtual course delivery.

Our competence recording system, developed with a private sector partner, has successfully been embedded. Competence levels are systematically monitored 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 fire control and corporate staff competencies, ensuring that the entire workforce has competencies aligned to their roles and an effective monitoring system is in place to support their maintenance.

Seven new wholetime firefighters are due to conclude on their recruits training course at the end of April 2022.

## 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.

The diversity of our workforce is monitored on a quarterly basis. Our corporate target to improve the diversity of our workforce compared to the last five years continues to make positive progress with our actual workforce diversity in quarter 4 being 21.5% against a target of 20%.

We continue to use social media as a key part of our positive attraction work. Community profile information is available to crews and will strengthen our community engagement activities enabling us to better target our recruitment and social media campaigns.

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.

The development and testing of new online leavers process is nearing completion but further development is required before this process can go live. Go live has been delayed as a result of sickness absence and the revised 'go live' date of 1 April 2022 has not been met.

### **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 - a focus for the recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection.

In quarter 4, our communications and engagement has involved:

- Question Time dial in sessions for all staff including feedback sessions to look at how we can build on our comms and engagement after the pandemic
- regular one to ones and team meetings over the phone, in person and using video calls in line with our smarter working approach
- staff involvement in the HMICFRS survey during inspection
- re-launched the staff suggestion scheme which has already received suggestions from a range of teams in the Service, and
- Bitesized Leaders forum focussed on the Power of Inclusion and generated some open and positive discussions with our Managers.

Communication plans for Service projects are developed and monitored as part of the project management process.

The Service continues to engage with representative bodies 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 recruitment of a diverse workforce include:

- interviewers receiving unconscious bias training via 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
- stations taking part in school visits and careers fairs 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
- reviewing and refreshing the Service approach to positive action to improve engagement with potential applicants.

Promotions processes have been designed to promote fair promotion opportunities for all. Twenty-seven people entered the Crew and Watch Manager promotion processes in quarter 4. Area and Group Manager promotion processes also took place during this quarter. The diversity profile of candidates who go through all promotions processes is routinely monitored.

The diversity of our workforce is monitored on a quarterly basis. 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 4 being 21.5% against a target of 20%.

Equality data of our starters and leavers is monitored. Of the 55 leavers in quarter 4, 26 were wholetime (47%), 20 were on-call (36%), two were Fire Control (4%) and seven were corporate (13%). Of these leavers, 50 were male (91%) and five were female (9%). There were no significant trends in terms of age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin or religion and belief in leavers this quarter.

This quarter saw a higher percentage of retirements due to pension reform, with 33% of leavers (18) due to retirements. In addition to this a number of fixed term contracts ended in quarter 4. Of 55 leavers this quarter, 38 were offered leavers discussions (those on fixed term contracts were not offered an exit interview). Of those that were offered a leavers discussion, six declined. Analysis of the exit interviews has not identified any trends.

The development and testing of new online leavers process is nearing completion but further development is required before this process can go live. Go live has been delayed as a result of sickness absence and the revised 'go live' date of 1 April 2022 has not been met.

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

#### **KLOE 11 Summary**

All joiners are invited to a corporate induction. The inductions have returned to a face-to-face format and three corporate inductions took place in quarter 4.

The 1:1 process has embedded extremely well. Completion is monitored to ensure that all staff have at least one personal review during a twelve-month period.

Following promotion, staff meet with the Learning & Development team to identify the development programme appropriate to their role. 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. Middle and strategic managers attend our Leaders Forum which consists of two hour 'bitesize' workshops on a bi-monthly basis.

Supervisory managers undertake their initial incident command training using the facilities at the Fire Service College, this enables them to be assessed at a range of incidents. A comprehensive and structured rota group training programme is in place

for Flexible Duty Officers. This ensures skills are refreshed and provides a good practice forum to share and learn from incidents recently attended.

In quarter 4, 33 Service personnel were undertaking apprenticeships which represents 2.3% of staff. 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 several coaches qualified at level 3 and level 5. Our Learning Hub provides a one-stop blended learning resource and is widely used by staff having achieved over 48,000 views since its launch approximately eighteen months ago.

### **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. In quarter 4 three induction sessions were held. Feedback surveys shows 100% of attendees who completed the survey rated the induction as either 'met expectations' or 'exceeded expectations'.

We also evaluate how successful the induction period has been for a new starter with data from probation reviews. At year-end 56 probations have been met, three have been extended, and no staff contracts have been terminated during their probation period.

The personal review process ensures a discussion and appraisal takes place at least once a year and focusses on wellbeing, performance and development. Completion is monitored to ensure that all staff have at least one personal review during a twelve month period.

## 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 has been developed but delivery has been delayed to quarter 1 2022-23.

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 continued in an online delivery format and the Leaders Forum which consists of all middle and strategic managers, 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. This occurs every Friday morning to coincide with the on-coming duty group.

Figures for quarter 4 show that 33 Service personnel are undertaking apprenticeships. 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 several coaches qualified at level 3 and level 5. Our Learning Hub provides a one-stop blended learning resource availability including all e-learning and course materials and is widely used by staff having achieved over 48,000 views since its launch.