

Performance report - Quarter 1

Finance & Audit Committee

1 April - 30 June



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 new Strategic Assessment of Risk (2023) has been finalised, following consultation with our key partners. This is now available on the Service's website and will support the development, during this year, of the Services strategic plan, our Community Safety Plan. In support of this the Service is also undertaking a full Fire Cover Review to support future decision making.

The annual horizon scan, undertaken by our Resilience Team, has been undertaken, to ensure that our Business Continuity programme of work is planned considerate of current and upcoming risks and threats. This will ensure a key focus continues on cyber, supply chain disruptions, loss of power as well as a national power outage.

The Authority is committed to eliminating discrimination and exploitation in all business dealings and through our supply chains. As such, and as a requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the Authority has now adopted a Modern Slavery statement, which is published on the Service's website. This will be reviewed annually, as part of the Statement of Assurance.

The Service continue to engage appropriately and work with legal teams and national leads to further assure and strengthen our procurement approach during this continued volatile period and also in preparation for the Government's procurement regime changes, which is likely to come into effect later this year. The challenges foreseen in relation to this is largely due to increased workloads, through further pre-engagement activities and wider transparency.

The Service were successfully accredited to the International Standards Organisation's ISO 55001 in Asset Management during May 2023. This has assured against the Service's robust and strong approach to its asset management. The Service will now be assessed twice yearly, to ensure it works to the levels required for continued accreditation.

The Service has taken delivery of a new plug-in hybrid car to undertake a trial with officers on the flexi-duty system. A second electric vehicle has been ordered for a wider trial for our white fleet, however, delivery has been delayed until November 2023. The 2023-24 capital programme includes five fire appliances and four water carriers and at present remains on track.

The Service's estates programme for cyclical refurbishment has been strengthened to improve the delivery of these projects within the appropriate financial year. The strengthened approach has meant that the procurement for 2023-24 began in quarter 1, with the hope for contractors to be on site in quarter 2.

The solar panel installations at the five key sites are due to be completed in the Summer 2023, following the contract award, following the procurement process. Furthermore, Swindon fire station requires a replacement roof, therefore the Service will take the opportunity to install solar panels at this location also. Further work to support carbon reduction is progressing as the Service has appointed a consultant to support the development of a heat decarbonisation plan.

Information and Communications Technology capital and revenue programmes remain on track, albeit with some amendments to the programming of activity to accommodate and plan for the worldwide supply issues resulting from the coronavirus pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine, as well as ongoing supplier price increases.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

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

Our business continuity arrangements and risk management arrangements remain well embedded and assured, aligned to the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act (2004). Business continuity and significant event arrangements in place to meet the requirements within the Civil Contingencies Act (2004).

The Service's corporate risk management arrangements were assured by internal audit in quarter 2 2022-23, with 'substantial' assurance awarded. Through these robust risk management arrangements, the Service has a healthy understanding of the current and future risks and threats to the Service. This approach to risk aids in the areas of focus and priority within our business continuity arrangements. Our business continuity provisions are well-established and embedded and along with our risk management approach ensures the continued maintenance of our critical activities and service delivery through challenging times.

Our last audit into our business continuity arrangements received substantial assurance in 2018, the Service has also had these arrangements assured by the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspectorate through both full inspections and also through the thematic 'response to covid' inspection. A subsequent full internal audit will be undertaken in quarter 4 this year. We continue to use Business Continuity Institute's (BCI) Good Practice Guidance (2018) to align to, ensuring that our arrangements are effective and strong.

As part of our business-as-usual practise, to ensure the preparedness of the Service we undertake a horizon scan on an annual basis, reviewing emerging threats and risks posed to the Service and its communities. This scan is cognisant of local and national risk registers and the National Security Risk Assessment. The most recent review was undertaken in quarter 1 and this provides the basis of our business continuity planning and work for the next 12 months. This year the BCI horizon scan is delayed until November, therefore the Service will review its internal scan against this, to ensure it continues to remain current.

The Service is identified as a Category 1 responder as part of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Through this, the Service is an active partner, along with the other Category 1 partner agencies, on both the Dorset and the Wiltshire & Swindon Local Resilience Forums. Through this the Service leads the training and exercising groups, supporting, undertaking and delivering the exercise and training programmes across the two counties. This quarter the Service has undertaken 14 multi-agency exercises across the two counties.

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 follow the national and local level regulations, including the Public Procurement Regulations, when procuring goods, services and works. As part of this we are required to ensure that the principles of transparency and fairness are applied throughout all stages of the procurement processes. Our approach is published on the Service's website.

Procurement procedural and managerial arrangements continue to be in a positive position, with a continued focus and approach to collaborative procurements to support our approach to value for money.

The Service makes good use of national procurement contracts, which includes actively promoting and partaking in collaborative/joint procurements. The Service is currently participating in collaborative procurements for:

- A command-and-control system with the Networked Fire Services Partnership, led by Hampshire County Council procurement team. This is currently out to tender. This procurement also includes Kent Fire and Rescue Service, due to them joining the partnership.
- Microsoft Aggregation Procurement, led by the Crown Commercial Services with several public sector bodies participating. We have now awarded a contract as a result of this procurement.

- Fuel Cards including electric vehicle cards and charging within the provision. The Procurement is being led by Bluelight Commercials, Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

The Procurement Manager is also engaging with Crown Commercial Services and the National Fire Chiefs Council to explore the opportunity for a collaborative for the procurement of our New Mobile Data Terminals, Android tablets with docking stations and services. In addition, the Service is using national frameworks for several upcoming procurements including training, information and communication technology, property, estates and fleet.

The Service is also currently transitioning to the new e-Tendering Procurement Hub, which goes live as of 1 April 2024, and ensuring they are kept up to speed with the progress of the new procurement legislation. At this early stage it is understood that there will be additional administrative and pre-engagement activities required, which the Service is keeping a keen eye on, due to the impacts of the changes and resources within our team.

Officers continue to work with both internal and external stakeholders, including suppliers, to strengthen relationships and planning to meet the ongoing challenges resulting from the pandemic, European Union exit and the general uncertain economic position.

The Authority approved its Modern Slavery Statement in February 2023, which is now published on the website and the Governments Portal. As agreed, this will be reviewed annually as part of the Statement of Assurance, which is planned for review in September.

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?

Due to the ongoing economic situation and challenges with regards to parts, materials and labour costs, increasing significantly, along with global supply chain disruptions and challenges, this continues to be a key focus area for the Service. As part of this the Service continues to keep ahead with planning, ordering timeframes and stock levels.

In line with the Authority's Asset Management policy, the Service aligned its working practise to the principles of the ISO 55001 Asset Management Standard. To strengthen this, during 2022-23 the Service began the formal process to apply for the full accreditation to this standard through the British Standards Institute. After the delivery of a full gap analysis and the successful

completion of the formal Stage 1 process, the Service went through the second stage in May 2023, with the Service being awarded the full accreditation to ISO 55001. The Service will now have a six-monthly review to ensure continue compliance and accreditation.

The Service's Asset Management System, used across the Service, forms part of the ISO55001 assessment. This system continues to be embedded, with further positive progress and engagement. The majority of the outstanding issues with the supplier have now been positively resolved and the Service continues to work with the supplier to strengthen the system further. The first meeting, initiated by the Service, with the supplier and users across the fire sector, was undertaken in May 2023. This was very positive and will be key to strengthening things further.

The majority of 2022-23 cyclical refurbishment programme has now been complete. However, as expected, some have gone into the 2023-24 year. This was largely due to the delay with the procurement, due to the increased budget provisions required. The enhancing of the engagement and sign off for our cyclical refurbishment programme has been very successful, with this year's programme being slightly ahead of previous year and onsite work due to start in quarter 2.

The Service has taken delivery of a new plug-in hybrid car to undertake a trial with officers on the flexi-duty system. A second electric vehicle has been ordered for a wider trial for our white fleet, however, delivery has been delayed until November 2023. The intention of these trials is to support the Service to begin its transition to a greener fleet. The 2023-24 capital programme includes five fire appliances and four water carriers and at present remains on track.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

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

The Service has a small team who are working to deliver against the Service's Environmental Sustainability Strategy. It is hoped this will be strengthened shortly with a building surveyor, to enable further progression at our sites.

Environmental impact assessments form part of everyday work across the Service, with these linked to our projects, decision making and procurement. This is aiding the Service to make sustainable decisions considerate of our impact and carbon footprint.

The commissioned energy audit, to develop a heat decarbonisation plan is now being undertaken by the appointed consultants with the Service due its report in the Autumn. Findings from this report will then be key to the planning for this team moving

forward and the development of the revised strategy due later this year. In addition, the Service having a heat decarbonisation plan, which should support future grant applications.

The contract has been awarded for the photovoltaics (solar panels) at five keys stations, these will be installed at all sites over quarter 2. Furthermore, due to the roof at Swindon fire station requiring replacements, solar panels will also be installed. The installation of these will be positive for our carbon footprint but also reduce energy costs. An evaluation will be undertaken following installation and use of the solar panels. This will include confirming that the expected pay-back periods are likely to be met. The Service intends to then extend the provision of solar panels wider, across the estate, taking account of the best site in the first instance.

Lots of awareness work has been undertaken this quarter, to support behaviour change and increase knowledge of our staff, this has included, waste audits undertaken at sites, promotion of the negative impacts of single use plastic, encouraging 'no mow May', sharing information on energy and running costs of our sites and delivering a survey to understand our staffs attitude and awareness regarding sustainability. These type of communications and campaigns are helping to move the Service forward, for example, our waste generation has reduced by 22%, compared to this time last year.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

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

The Service's undertakes a Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAR) as the first step in understanding the current and future risks and threats to the Service and its communities. This document is then used to help form our strategic plan, our Community Safety Plan (CSP). The most recent SAR was developed during 2022-23, utilising key local, national and global documents as well as Group Level PESTEL analyses, aligned to the four community groups. This information, along with our risk and demand data and an organisational review, helps to draw together the SAR. During quarter 4 (2022-23) the document went to consultation through our key partners and the final document was approved this quarter and is now published on our Service's website. Our SAR will aid decision making and planning across the Service and support the development of the next iteration of the CSP, which has begun to be developed, ready for Member approval and publication in 2024-25.

In the development of the new CSP the Service is ensuring that the approach continues to align to the Fire Standards Board's Community Risk Management Plan standard. The delivery of this revised CSP will also be supported with a wider Fire Cover

Review, which is currently being finalised. This will help the Service to make future decisions in relation to our operational approach.

KLOE 6 sub-diagnostic

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

Information and Communication Technology capital and revenue programmes are on track, following a review of organisational priorities. Some amendments to the programming of activity have been required to continue to accommodate worldwide supply issues impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine, as well as ongoing supplier price increases for hardware and services. The Service has achieved improvements such as:

- Server upgrades and network reviews, including upgrades of historical systems to assure compliance with security and increase access to information.
- Cyber Essentials Certification has been achieved for another 12 months.
- Telephony procurement has been completed to commence the call manager upgrade. The project has now moved into live development.
- Continued communications audits have been conducted across all Service sites to rationalise and align hardware, increase security, and assure consistency.
- Third Party support contracts are being aligned to assure value for money. Microsoft licence review for business requirements over next three years is complete and will move to procurement of a new contract to commence September 2023.

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

Financial management and governance remain strong and the Service is consistently rated highly in audit and inspection processes.

With inflation still stubbornly high and general economic pressures not showing signs of abating, we remain concerned about the medium to longer-term impact on the Authority's financial position. As well as additional cost increases, it is possible to foresee

that there will be further funding pressures on us as we move towards a General Election and new Parliament, with the Government needing to reduce the national debt and balance overall public spending.

The Service continues to engage with all relevant stakeholders to influence the debate on financial sustainability for fire and rescue services and, in particular, to maintain increased council tax flexibility. The Chief Fire Officer is influencing the national debate through his role as Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council Finance Committee. This includes detailed discussion around planning for the 2024-25 Local Government Finance Settlement and positioning the sector as we move towards a new Comprehensive Spending Review.

The £5 council tax flexibility included in the 2023-24 Settlement has helped, but on its own is not sufficient to mitigate the impact of rising prices and general cost pressures. The Service had to make more budget reductions in 2023-24 as outlined in the budget report to the Authority in February 2023, and it is likely that further savings will be required in setting budgets for 2024-25 onwards. Taking account of the operational pay awards for 2022 and 2023 that were agreed after the budget as set, and the 2023 pay offer made to corporate staff (as yet not agreed), the latest Medium Term Finance Plan deficit forecasts are £1m for 2024-25, rising to £1.8m for 2026-27.

KLOE 7 sub-diagnostic

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

For some time now, the Service have been engaging with local Members of Parliament, the Home Office and National Fire Chiefs Council to influence the debate on financial sustainability for fire and rescue services and, in particular, lobby for council tax flexibility. This has 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. It was therefore pleasing to see the inclusion of flexibility for all standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities to increase their B and D council tax precept by up to £5 for 2023-24. The general referendum principle was increased from 2% to 3% at the same time and covering 2023-24 and 2024-25. Unfortunately, even with this £5 flexibility cost pressures, particularly those arising from pay awards, have required the Service to make more budget reductions as outlined in the budget report to the Authority in February 2023. As the operational pay awards now agreed for 2022-23 and 2023-24 are more than what has been allowed for, and the corporate pay award for 2023-24 is expected to be higher than budgeted for as well, further savings are likely to be required to be identified in setting budgets for 2024-25 onwards.

The audited financial statements for 2021-22 were signed off by the Finance and Audit Committee in December 2022. Our auditors, Deloitte LLP, provided an 'Unmodified' opinion on the Statements and updated the Committee in March 2023 with the outcome of the Value for Money work. This also showed an 'Unmodified' opinion.

South West Audit Partnership have completed their scheduled internal audits for 2022-23, reviewing creditors and debtors in quarter 1 and budget management in quarter 3. Both reviews gained a 'Substantial' assurance opinion.

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 2023-24 budget and new Medium-Term Finance Plan (MTFP) in February 2023. 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 work which delivered budget reductions of just over £1m and some improvement in the funding position.

Unfortunately, although the Local Government Finance Settlement outcome was better than expected, it still only provided a one-year settlement, so there is real clarity over the longer-term funding picture beyond 2023-24. The Resourcing and Savings Programme work continued in 2022-23 and officers are reviewing future plans for 2023-24 onwards. The Committee and Authority are kept up to date with financial issues during the year. A Finance seminar was most recently held in January 2023 prior to budget setting.

KLOE 7 sub-diagnostic

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

The reserves plan and general balances risk assessment have been reviewed and updated for the 2023-26 Medium-Term Finance Plan. The strategy includes the movement of some surplus funding to support future investment in the capital programme, including updated training facilities. The plan was approved by the Authority in February 2023. Reserves and general balances will be reviewed further in compiling the 2022-23 Statements of Account.

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. The work-related absence due to physical injuries or ill health quarterly is up (416 days). In this quarter, 14 people are contributing to these figures. Of the 14 people, seven are designated long term sick or in long term recovery and their days lost are 87% of quarter 1 total days lost. The total number of Adverse Occurrence Reports reported in quarter 1 has slightly increased from 22 to 26. The number of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 has increased over the same quarter last year by 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, continues to monitor the robust arrangements in place. 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 next audit by British Standards Institute auditors is due in November 2023.

The work-related absence due to “physical” injuries or ill health quarterly trend is up now standing at 416 days. In this quarter, 14 people (incidents) are contributing to these figures. Of the 14 people, seven are designated long term sick or in long term recovery and their days lost are 87% of the total for quarter one.

Manual handling is one of the highest injury categories within the report, over a half (57%) of the days lost are due to this category. The next highest category is “slips, trips, and falls” makes just under a quarter of the rest of the days lost (19%) for this quarter.

The highest Adverse Occurrence Reports (AOR) reporting category this quarter is Vehicle damage, or failure. There has been a slight increase, 22 to 26 (18%) compared to same quarter in 2022-23. The second highest this quarter is the Injury or harm category, 32% (23 events). All AOR relating to vehicle damage or failure are reported directly to the Fleet assets department and all injury or harm directly to HR.

Our 'near miss' event reporting is still around 11% of the AOR's reported in this quarter. The Service can gain the greatest amount of learning from good investigations following any occurrence of a 'near miss.' Our training in the use of the AOR database has given most staff a good understanding of the requirement to complete reports as required by our Service procedures. This has reduced under reporting and supports the AOR submission process. There appears to be no real pattern emerging from these events and control measures have been implemented where possible to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence.

The number of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) has increased over the same quarter last year (one up to two). These regulations require employers, the self-employed and those in control of premises to report specified workplace incidents. Two were reported under injuries leading to 'over seven days' absence, both were ankle injuries from a slip, trip or fall on the same level. One injury occurred while undertaking a team sport fitness training session and the second injury was from walking on unstable/uneven ground at an operational incident at a farmyard. All incidents receive an investigation appropriate to the type of event and/or the injury severity. No pattern or common thread came to light within the investigations.

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. Both have been audited through a peer review and internal audit mechanisms with good levels of assurance being awarded. The Service has aligned its governance, from performance through to assurance to the Key Lines of Enquiry from HMICFRS.

The Statement of Assurance for 2021-22 was prepared, along with its supporting information, for the Authority meeting in September 2022. During this meeting Members approved the document and this has subsequently been published on the Service's website.

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 British Standards Institute 27001.

Information management and security arrangements are operating well and pleasingly the Service has been re-accredited to the national Cyber Essentials security standard, giving additional assurance of the robust arrangements in place.

The Digital Transformation Programme is progressing well and is on track to deliver migration of files and systems to Office 365 against the agreed timescale. This is enabling the Service to review and streamline its processes and systems to maximise efficiency and productivity in terms of workloads and licence costs, as well as strengthening data management.

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. These did not take place in May for quarter 4 performance and the next meetings for quarter 1 performance are held in August. Priorities four and five are reviewed at the Finance & Audit Committee at their meeting in July for quarter 4 performance and September for quarter 1.

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 rating from internal audit and was commended by the Local Government Association peer review team led by the Chair of the Authority. The internal audit annual report from South West Audit Partnership awarded the Service an overall grade of 'substantial assurance' following delivery of the 2021-22 audit programme.

The Authority oversees and scrutinises the development and delivery of the Community Safety Plan, which includes the Service undertaking consultation and community engagement. A reviewed plan will be brought to Members in February 2024. A presentation of overall performance against each priority is provided to the Authority at six and 12-month intervals.

KLOE 13 sub-diagnostic

How effective and efficient are our governance arrangements?

The Authority and Service continue to have well established and aligned, robust and well governed performance management, reporting and scrutiny arrangements in place. Performance reporting is linked through from the Community Safety Plan and the Authority's five priorities, through to team and watch level. This is collated and reported through our performance management system, Sytle, 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 HMICFRS methodology. This is well evidenced through our Key Lines of Enquiry, which are aligned to the inspectorate's judgement criteria and their 'good' rating. A review against the criteria of 'good' is undertaken annually, as a base line and performance reports are provided quarterly to ensure the continuation of appropriate evidence to support the Service in achieving 'good.' This approach was audited by our internal auditors, South West Audit Partnership (SWAP), who awarded it 'substantial' assurance.

The assurance arrangements for the Service are robust, with a significant approach undertaken through inspection, internal audit, British Standards Institute audits, external audit and peer reviews. This, plus our internal assurance mechanisms, are undertaken on an annual basis to support the development of the Statement of Assurance. In September 2022 the Authority approved the 2021-22 Statement of Assurance, which for the first time provided assurance against the inspectorate's methodology. The 2022-23 Statement of Assurance and supporting information is currently being drawn together ready for review and approval in September 2023.

The internal audit annual report, from SWAP, awarded the Service with an overall grade of 'substantial assurance' following delivery of the 2022-23 audit programme. The internal audit programme for 2023-24, developed between SWAP, the Service and the Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, was approved by Members in March 2023 with the first quarters audits reported to Members at the July 2023 Finance & Audit meeting.

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 British Standards Institute 27001 and are detailed in the supporting documentation associated with the Statement of Assurance, which was approved by Members in September 2022.

A mitigation plan from the annual information communication technology health check is being monitored to ensure all high and medium risks are prioritised.

There were 27 Freedom of Information requests due for response in quarter 1, 26 of which were responded to within 20 working days. The average response time was 11 working days. Two requests for further clarification were made and partial exemptions were applied on ten occasions. There were no trends identified in this quarter.

Five Subject Access Requests (SARs) were received in quarter 1. Seven SARs were responded to in the same quarter, all of which were received from current or previous members of staff.

In quarter 1, 12 complaints were due to be responded to. Of these 71% were resolved within 14 days (or within the date agreed with the complainant). Of these complaints, 43% were not upheld and none needed referring to senior management.

Pleasingly there were 22 compliments this quarter.

There were four security incidents reported this quarter, all of which had a low rating and related to data handling and a user account being breached on an online forum. We continue to monitor progress against our cyber action plan and our re-accreditation of cyber essentials was achieved at the end of December 2022.

The Service participates in a national working group to help author the data management framework to support the National Fire Chiefs Council standard which is now on consultation.

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 30 June 2023, 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.

The Digital Transformation Programme is progressing well and is on track to deliver migration of files and systems to Office 365 against the agreed timescale. The programme is enabling the Service to review and streamline its processes and systems to maximise efficiency and productivity in terms of workloads and licence costs, as well as strengthening data management.

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

Long-term absence was the largest contributing factor to the absence figures in quarter 1 across wholetime, on-call and corporate staff groups whereas short term absence was the largest contributing factor for fire control staff.

Musculoskeletal was the highest causation of absence for the wholetime staff group, on-call and fire control. Mental Health was the highest causation of absence for fire control and corporate staff groups. Musculoskeletal absences significantly increased this quarter when compared to previous quarters and this has resulted in an annual increase of 5%. Many of the musculoskeletal absences relate to fractures that have required a hospital intervention and our figures will have been negatively impacted by National Health Service (NHS) waiting times.

The Service has a corporate target to achieve average sickness levels lower than the previous five-year average. Our target for quarter 1 was 1.9 shifts lost per person, and actual figures were 2.55 shifts lost per person (excluding on-call), therefore the target for this quarter was not met. Longer term trend analysis shows average sickness levels are increasing.

While average sickness levels have increased, the actual number of shift lost for each staff group (wholetime/Corporate/Fire Control) in quarter 1 2023-24 are lower than the comparable quarter in 2022-23, particularly in relation to Fire Control which has reduced to 0.44 per person.

In quarter 1 91% of staff passed their fitness test and 11 members of staff were on fitness improvement plans, which include advice and guidance on fitness improvement, including weight management and nutritional information.

Sickness absence is well managed through our dedicated health and wellbeing team who work closely with line managers and Human Resources Business Partners. Sickness procedures are robust and a range of support mechanisms such as counselling and physiotherapy are in place to support staff including, through a cost benefit analysis, funding for private investigations if it is considered that NHS waiting times are delaying treatment and/or recovery.

The Service also promotes and participates in free preventative Wellness Workshops provided by the Firefighters Charity. The Workshops have been developed with the aim of empowering fire service staff to live healthier and happier lives; the Workshops cover topics such as physical, mental health and social health.

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. A range of health and wellbeing procedures are in place which outline all the support mechanisms available to all staff including mental health support, peer support and other external self-service provisions.

We have 26 staff who provide peer support and promote national campaigns such as World Mental Health Day, International Stress Week and the Time to Talk campaign.

Absence management continues to be a key focus for the Service with robust monitoring arrangements in place. Long-term absence was the largest contributing factor to the absence figures in quarter 1 across wholetime, on-call and corporate staff groups whereas short term absence was the largest contributing factor for fire control staff.

Musculoskeletal was the highest causation of absence for the wholetime staff group, on-call and fire control. Mental Health was the highest causation of absence for fire control and corporate staff groups. Musculoskeletal absences significantly increased this quarter when compared to previous quarters and this has resulted in an annual increase of 5%. Many of the musculoskeletal

absences relate to fractures that have required a hospital intervention and our figures will have been negatively impacted by National Health Service (NHS) waiting times.

The Service has a corporate target to achieve average sickness levels lower than the previous five-year average. Our target for quarter 1 was 1.9 shifts lost per person, and actual figures were 2.55 shifts lost per person (excluding on-call), therefore the target for this quarter was not met. Longer term trend analysis shows average sickness levels are increasing. While average sickness levels show an increase, the actual number of shift lost for each staff group (wholtime/Corporate/Fire Control) in quarter 1 2023-24 are lower than the comparable quarter in 2022-23 – especially Fire Control which has reduced to 0.44 per person.

In quarter 1, 91% of staff passed their fitness test and 11 members of staff were on fitness improvement plans and were provided with advice and guidance on fitness improvement, including weight management and nutritional information.

Sickness absence is well managed through our dedicated health and wellbeing team who work closely with line managers and Human Resources Business Partners. Sickness procedures are robust and a range of support mechanisms such as counselling and physiotherapy are in place to support staff including, through a cost benefit analysis, funding for private investigations if it is considered that NHS waiting times are delaying treatment and/or recovery. Management of long-term absence is more complex than short term absence as the illnesses/conditions may be serious and involve surgery and recovery time. With any long-term absence, staff are referred to occupational health from day 28 of the absence for advice and recommendations.

As part of the Dorset Public Health Workforce Campaign there is a collation of wellbeing initiatives across the public bodies. The Service is promoting the offer of free Wellbeing Workshops offered by the Firefighter Charity, who are rolling out a programme to operational staff. The Service is also a member of the National Fire Chiefs Council National Occupational Health Practitioners Group which delivers 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 conduct training delivery in accordance with the Annual Training Action Plan and on-call quarterly training programme. Our training delivery is supported by additional e-learning modules and virtual delivery. Our competence recording system, which covers all staff, developed with a private sector partner, has been successfully embedded with competence levels monitored by Officers.

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

Our competence recording system, which covers all staff, developed with a private sector partner, has been successfully embedded. Officers monitor competence levels 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 and the needs of the station.

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 have included a range of channels and methods to ensure the involvement of all parts of our workforce. Communications plans are a standard element of the project management process to ensure that stakeholders engage in Service projects.

Robust workforce and succession planning arrangements are in place that support each stage of the employment cycle. Heads of Department complete an annual department succession plan and a five-year retirement profile is monitored regularly to aid wholetime recruitment decision making.

We continue to use social media as a key part of our positive action work. Community profile information is available to crews, so that we can target our 'Have a Go' recruitment and social media campaigns. This information also enables us to better support and strengthen our community engagement activities.

The diversity of our workforce is monitored on a quarterly basis and 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 1 being 22.9% against a target of 21.9%.

Equality data of all starters and leavers is captured to monitor trends and of the 51 new starters in quarter 1, 24 were commencing employment as on-call firefighters; all were male.

There were 35 leavers in quarter 1 with the primary reasons for leaving for all staff was due to retirement. There were no trends in terms of sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin or religion and belief. Of 35 leavers this quarter, 31 were offered leavers discussions (86%). Of those that were offered a leavers discussion, seven declined. Analysis of the responses to exit interview questions has identified no particular trends. Of the nine leavers discussions outstanding, two members of staff are still employed by the Service, undertaking other roles.

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 which was a focus for the latest HMICFRS inspection.

In quarter 1, our communications and engagement has focused on analysing the feedback from our Internal review which will feed into the Independent Review. The Chief Fire Officer also produced a short video update for staff about the progress of the Independent Review.

On-call question time dial ins were held during this quarter and these were well attended and well received by crews as an opportunity to speak to managers and receive updates about the priorities for the Service.

We continue with structured and regular one-to-ones and team meetings over the phone, in person and using video calls in line with our smarter working approach.

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. Good local relationships are being maintained.

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. A wide range of initiatives are in place to support our work to increase the diversity of our workforce. We continue to use social media as a key part of our positive action work. Community profile information is available to crews, so that we can target our 'Have a Go' recruitment and social media campaigns. This information also enables us to better support and strengthen our community engagement activities.

The Service's promotions processes have been designed to promote fair promotion opportunities for all. The new process is embedded and the number of people entering the promotion process continues to increase.

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

KLOE 11 Summary

All joiners are invited to a corporate induction with one corporate induction taking place in quarter 1.

The 1:1 personal review process is embedded with completion monitored to ensure that all staff have at least one personal review during a 12-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 and cover a range of cultural and leadership topics aligned to our Strategic Assessment of Risk. Corporate staff are also encouraged to complete development pathway activities relevant to their role.

Supervisory managers undertake their initial incident command training using the facilities at the Fire Service College, which 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.

The Leaders' Forum, which includes all middle and strategic managers, now consists of two hour 'bitesize' workshops on a bi-monthly basis. The programme includes cultural and leadership topics identified in our Strategic Assessment of Risk as well as topics highlighted through an attendee survey.

The Service's apprenticeships cover a wide range of areas including Operational Firefighter, Emergency Contact Handler (Control Firefighters), Leadership Development, Finance, Human Resources and Facilities Management. Figures for quarter 1 show that 33 Service personnel are undertaking apprenticeships which represents 2.05% of staff.

Our coaching procedure also supports staff in their development. The Service have several coaches qualified at the Institute of Leadership & Management level 3 and level 5. Our Learning Hub provides a one-stop blended learning resource and is widely used by staff.

KLOE 11 sub-diagnostic

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

One corporate induction session was held in quarter 1. Following the corporate induction, a survey regarding the effectiveness of the process is sent out. All responses confirmed the induction either met or exceeded their expectations. Another way that we evaluate how successful the induction period has been for a new starter is data from probation reviews. Year to date, since 1 April 2023, 14 probations have been met, one has been extended, and no staff contracts have been terminated during their probation period.

A new starters network is in place and after individuals have been employed for six months we ask for feedback on their experiences within the Service and seek their views as to what we could do differently to improve our 'employment offer'.

The 1:1 personal review process ensures that a discussion and appraisal take place at least once a year and focuses on wellbeing, performance and development. One-to-one reviews are recorded over a rolling 12-month period and completion rates are monitored. Trend analysis suggests that reviews tended to be conducted quite evenly over the 12-month period.

KLOE 11 sub-diagnostic

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

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