



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

**S.J. Sharman
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**

**To: The Chair and Members of the People
Committee**

(see below)

**SERVICE HEADQUARTERS
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PEOPLE COMMITTEE
(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

Friday, 18th October, 2024

A meeting of the People Committee will be held on the above date, **commencing at 10.00 am in Committee Room B, Somerset House, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, Clyst St George, Exeter** to consider the following matters.

S.J. Sharman
Clerk to the Authority

AGENDA

PLEASE REFER TO THE NOTES AT THE END OF THE AGENDA LISTING SHEETS

1 Apologies

2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)

Of the previous meeting held on 26 July 2024 attached.

3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

PART 1 - OPEN COMMITTEE

- 4 **Performance Monitoring Report 2024-25: Quarter 2 (Pages 5 - 52)**
Report of the Assistant Director, Corporate Services (PC/24/09) attached.
- 5 **People Survey Actions (Pages 53 - 60)**
Report of the Director of Service Delivery (PC/24/10) attached.
- 6 **His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services: Action Plan Update (Pages 61 - 68)**
Report of the Chief Fire Officer (PC/24/11) attached.

MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Membership:-

Councillors Clayton (Chair), Atkinson, Carter, Coles, Kendall, Peart and Trail BEM (Vice-Chair)

NOTES

1. **Access to Information**

Any person wishing to inspect any minutes, reports or lists of background papers relating to any item on this agenda should contact the person listed in the “Please ask for” section at the top of this agenda.

2. **Reporting of Meetings**

Any person attending a meeting may report (film, photograph or make an audio recording) on any part of the meeting which is open to the public – unless there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chair - and use any communication method, including the internet and social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.), to publish, post or otherwise share the report. The Authority accepts no liability for the content or accuracy of any such report, which should not be construed as representing the official, Authority record of the meeting. Similarly, any views expressed in such reports should not be interpreted as representing the views of the Authority.

Flash photography is not permitted and any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting; focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard also to the wishes of any member of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chair or the Democratic Services Officer in attendance so that all those present may be made aware that is happening.

3. **Declarations of Interests at meetings (Authority Members only)**

If you are present at a meeting and you are aware that you have either a disclosable pecuniary interest, personal interest or non-registerable interest in any matter being considered or to be considered at the meeting then, unless you have a current and relevant dispensation in relation to the matter, you must:

- (i) disclose at that meeting, by no later than commencement of consideration of the item in which you have the interest or, if later, the time at which the interest becomes apparent to you, the existence of and – for anything other than a “sensitive” interest – the nature of that interest; and then
- (ii) withdraw from the room or chamber during consideration of the item in which you have the relevant interest.

If the interest is sensitive (as agreed with the Monitoring Officer), you need not disclose the nature of the interest but merely that you have an interest of a sensitive nature. You must still follow (i) and (ii) above.

Where a dispensation has been granted to you either by the Authority or its Monitoring Officer in relation to any relevant interest, then you must act in accordance with any terms and conditions associated with that dispensation.

Where you declare at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary or personal interest that you have not previously included in your Register of Interests then you must, within 28 days of the date of the meeting at which the declaration was made, ensure that your Register is updated to include details of the interest so declared.

	NOTES (Continued)
4.	<p><u>Part 2 Reports</u></p> <p>Members are reminded that any Part 2 reports as circulated with the agenda for this meeting contain exempt information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s). Members are also reminded of the need to dispose of such reports carefully and are therefore invited to return them to the Committee Secretary at the conclusion of the meeting for disposal.</p>
5.	<p><u>Substitute Members (Committee Meetings only)</u></p> <p>Members are reminded that, in accordance with Standing Orders, the Clerk (or his representative) must be advised of any substitution prior to the start of the meeting. Members are also reminded that substitutions are not permitted for full Authority meetings.</p>
6.	<p><u>Other Attendance at Committees)</u></p> <p>Any Authority Member wishing to attend, in accordance with Standing Orders, a meeting of a Committee of which they are not a Member should contact the Democratic Services Officer (see "please ask for" on the front page of this agenda) in advance of the meeting.</p>

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

26 July 2024

Present:

Councillors Clayton (Chair), Carter, Coles, Kendall, Peart and Trail BEM (Vice-Chair)

Apologies:

Councillor Atkinson

* **PC/24/1** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2024 be signed as a correct record.

* **PC/24/2** **Performance Monitoring Report 2024-25: Quarter 1**

The Committee received for information a report of the Assistant Director - Corporate Services (PC/24/8) detailing performance as at Quarter 1 of 2024-25 against those Key Performance Indicators agreed by the Committee for measuring progress against the following three strategic priorities as approved by the Authority:

- 3(a). Ensure that the workforce is highly trained and has the capability and capacity to deliver services professionally, safely and effectively;
- 3(b). Increase the diversity of the workforce to better reflect the communities we serve, promoting inclusion and developing strong and effective leaders who ensure that we have a fair place to work where our organisational values are a lived experience; and
- 3(c). Recognise and maximise the value of all employees, particularly the commitment of on-call firefighters, improving recruitment and retention.

In particular, the report provided information on performance against each of the following key measures:

- operational core competence skills (beathing apparatus; incident command; water rescue; safety when working at heights or in confined spaces; maritime; driving; and casualty care);
- fitness testing (including support offered for red and amber groups);

- health and safety (a general overview of the work undertaken on station audits and the risk from contaminants, accidents [including near misses]; personal injuries; vehicle incidents (together with the correlation to appliance mobilisation) and reporting against the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR));
- sickness and absence (including musculoskeletal, mental health and other absence) for wholetime, on-call, support, Control and casual staff, proportion of sickness absence per reason, details of the health and wellbeing support offered by the Service;
- summary on capability, disciplinary and grievance cases over the past 12 month period, and a comparison to the previous year;
- strategic workforce planning including details of staff turnover and attrition in all categories of the workforce; and
- an overview of the People Services Systems project.

These areas were expanded upon in more depth at the meeting as follows:

- operational core competencies - all performance measures were on or above target of 95% (green) with the exception of Working at Height (WAH) and Confined Spaces (SHACS) which was at 91.9% (amber). The Academy was about to separate out old WAH qualification standards from the existing figures and fully migrate to the new SHACS standards which should impact reporting of performance in this area making it more accurate;
- fitness - it was noted that 1504 staff had been tested as of 11 July 2024 and 1448 (96%) had met the required standard with 15 staff failing to meet the required fitness level with 8 staff on long term sickness. The question was raised as to the age groups of those failing the test and whether the tests were fit for purpose. The Clerk to the Authority advised that a presentation on fitness would be given at a future Members' Forum to provide such information;
- health and safety – following a Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) incident at the Academy Breathing Apparatus facility, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) had visited the site, reviewed the facility and accident investigation report and issued the Service with a notice of contravention. This had been acted upon swiftly by the Service and the requisite response had been issued to the HSE by 19 July 2024 which had been deemed suitable and sufficient;
- Accidents - there had been a decrease in the overall trend for accidents during the 12-month rolling period although the quarter 1 accident numbers for 2024-25 were up by 2 on the previous quarter and down 30 for the same quarter in 2023-24. There was 1 level 3 safety event which related to the RIDDOR report above;

- There were 13 near misses in Quarter 1 of 2024-25, representing a 13% (2 events) reduction in reporting from the previous quarter. The benefits of near miss reporting continued to be communicated by the Health and Safety Team;
- Personal injuries- there were 9 in quarter 1 of 2024-25 which showed an 18% reduction on the previous quarter. The injury figures in general remained low with the trend line showed a continuous reduction over the 12 month period;
- Vehicle accidents – there were 32 vehicle incidents in quarter 1 of 2024-25, an increase of 7 over the previous quarter. There were 7,136 mobilisations in the same period with 0.4% resulting in a vehicle related safety event with Medium Rescue Pumps more frequently involved in accidents than other appliance types;
- RIDDOR – there had been 2 reports during quarter 1 of 2024-25, 1 of which was an over 7 days” injury event and the other the reportable event at the Academy referred to above. The report also set out a 2 year comparison of RIDDOR reporting types compared against the final total for 2023-24. A five year comparison was also included which showed a notable downward trend since 2020-21;
- Sickness absence – the Cleveland report for 2023-24 had been published now and showed an increase in sickness absence at national level for different staff groups as follows:
 - On Call – 10% increase;
 - Wholetime – 13% increase; and
 - Support staff/Green Book – 24% increase.

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service was reported at an average of 11.09 days/shifts lost as compared to the national average of 9.54. Musculoskeletal (31.5%), mental health (19.5%) and “other” (29.2%) absence formed the main reasons for sickness absence within the Service. This reflected the enormous amount of work that had been undertaken by the Service to impact this area of concern with the number of cases at its lowest since August 2023;

- Health and wellbeing support – the report set out the breadth of support available including (but not limited to) physiotherapy, counselling, occupational health and wellbeing champions. There had been 44 physiotherapy referrals in quarter 1 of 2024-25 and it had been noted that there had been a slight increase in manual handling issues which was being investigated further;
- Capability, disciplinary and grievance cases were covered in depth for the 2023-24 year with the following noted:
 - 19 formal capability cases;
 - 17 disciplinary cases; and
 - 25 grievances.

The report set out the reasons behind the cases in each of these areas;

- The report provided an overview of the work being undertaken on diversity and inclusion issues within the Service;
- An update on strategic workforce planning was also included which set out an analysis of turnout and attrition rates together with starters and leavers. The Committee asked about the average length of time that On Call staff stayed with the Service which the Head of People Services indicated could be included in future reports.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.55 am

Agenda Item 4

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	PC/24/9
MEETING	PEOPLE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	18 OCTOBER 2024
SUBJECT OF REPORT	PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2024 – 2025: QUARTER
LEAD OFFICER	Assistant Director of Corporate Services
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The strategic priorities against which this Committee is measuring performance are:</p> <p>3(a) - Ensure that the workforce is highly trained and has the capability and capacity to deliver services professionally, safely and effectively;</p> <p>3(b) - Increase the diversity of the workforce to better reflect the communities we serve, promoting inclusion and developing strong and effective leaders who ensure that we have a fair place to work where our organisational values are a lived experience; and</p> <p>3(c) - Recognise and maximise the value of all employees, particularly the commitment of on-call firefighters, improving recruitment and retention.</p> <p>This report sets out the Services' performance against these strategic priorities for the period July to September 2024 (Quarter 2) in accordance with the agreed measures. A summary is also set out at Appendix A for ease of reference.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	N/A
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	N/A
APPENDICES	<p>A. Summary of Performance against Agreed Measures.</p> <p>B. Forward Plan</p> <p>C. People Strategy 2024</p>
BACKGROUND PAPERS	N/A

1. **BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The Service's 'People' strategic policy objectives are:

- 3(a) - Ensure that the workforce is highly trained and has the capability and capacity to deliver services professionally, safely and effectively;
- 3(b) - Increase the diversity of the workforce to better reflect the communities we serve, promoting inclusion and developing strong and effective leaders who ensure that we have a fair place to work where our organisational values are a lived experience; and
- 3(c) - Recognise and maximise the value of all employees, particularly the commitment of on-call firefighters, improving recruitment and retention

1.2. The performance in Quarter 3 of 2023-24 as measured against the agreed indicators is set out in this report for each of these policy objectives.

2. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING – STRATEGIC POLICY OBJECTIVE 3(a)**

Strategic Policy Objective 3(a) 'Ensure that the workforce is highly trained and has the capability and capacity to deliver services professionally, safely and effectively'.

Operational Core Competence Skills:

- 2.1. The Core Competence Skills recognised by the service are Breathing apparatus (BA), Incident Command (ICS), Water Rescue, Working at Height (SHACS), Maritime, Driving, Casualty Care (CC) and fitness.
- 2.2. The newly agreed (as per the October 2022 People Committee meeting, Minute PC/22/8 refers) Core Competency performance thresholds are:
 - 95% - 100% Green
 - 90% - 95% Amber
 - <90% Red
- 2.3. The below competence percentages are all green apart from SHAC's which is red and Maritime amber.
- 2.4. With some further investigation it is clear the SHAC's Level 2 continues to bring the overall SHAC's percentages into Red at 78.2%. SHAC's Level 1 this quarter is 93%, and SHAC's Level 3 88.1%. All SHACS are lower than last quarter, however this is due to the change on the reporting system from old SHAC's to new SHAC's competence standards.

- 2.5. The Academy have separated the old working at height qualification standards from the dashboard percentage figures and the transition will impact competence figures until all staff are fully migrated in the new training SHAC's standard. The changeover has several staff showing as red, as they have not yet started on the new standard but were competent in the old SHAC's standard. Therefore, until these colleagues are re-assessed in new SHAC's they will impact the overall competence levels as it is not possible to separate the data.
- 2.6. The advantage of having the new reporting system is it will contribute to more accurate reporting when staff are fully integrated and provide much easier access to competence standards for managers to manage performance.
- 2.7. Maritime has dropped into Amber for this quarter. This drop from green has only recently occurred mid-August and is a direct consequence of the on-going repairs to the hot fire training facilities. This drop will be back in the green by the next quarter as STC will back on the run from the 7th of October and the Airport expected to be back on the run a few weeks after.

Core Competence inc. subsections of competence.	Measure	Rationale	%	Impact and action taken
Breathing Apparatus (BA)	< 90% + Risk based impact identified	90% provides tolerance for course failures, personnel returning from long-term absence and non-attendance.	97.8 % Green	Within tolerance for each location. No remedial action required.
Incident Command (ICS) Inc.: Operational, Tactical, Strategic and JESIP	< 90% + Risk based impact identified	Only people required to assume operational command have this skill. This relates to 700 members of staff.	98.3% Green	Within tolerance for each location. No remedial action required.
Water Rescue Inc.: Water Rescue 1st Responder Water Rescue Technician	< 90% + Risk based impact identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of 2 trained people per appliance is required to enable a response. 1361 members of staff are competent across the various levels. 	95.9% Green	Within tolerance for each location. No remedial action required.

Core Competence inc. subsections of competence.	Measure	Rationale	%	Impact and action taken
Working at Height and Confined Spaces (SHACS) Inc.: Level 1, 2, 3	< 90% + Risk based impact identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% provides tolerance for course failures, personnel returning from long-term absence and non-attendance. SHACS competency is 92% across the 3 Levels. This does not impact service delivery and therefore does not require intervention. 	89.3% Red	In Red SHACS level 2 has the lowest competence . Monitoring attendance of planned training courses will continue. See explanation above 2.4,2.5, 2.6
Maritime Level 2	< 90% + Risk based impact identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 450 people, across 15 stations are required to maintain the Maritime Skill. 	92.9% Amber	In Amber. Remedial action is to recommence courses at STC.
Casualty Care (CC) Inc.Level 1, 2	< 60% + Risk based impact identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service policy states 60% of operational personnel trained to this standard. 60% is 839 people. Currently 1375 members of staff are trained in casualty care. 	97.0% Green	Within tolerance for each location. No remedial action required.
Response Driving Primary Response (PRDC) Fire Appliance (EFAD) Specialist Vehicles	< 90% + Risk based impact identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% provides tolerance for course failures, personnel returning from long term absence and non-attendance. 	98.6% Green	Within tolerance for each location. No remedial action required.

Fitness testing

	As of 20 th September 2024,	Percentage as of 20 th September 2024	As of 11 th July 2024	Percentage as of 11 th July 2024
Number requiring test (in scope)	1496	100%	1504	100%
Number passed	1496	97%	1448	96%
Red - Failures	10	0.6%	15	1%

Fitness details:

- 2.8. The actual failures and staff off the run for this quarter is 10 which represents 0.6% of those tested and improvement on last quarter.
- 2.9. There are also 28 other staff members currently out of date, but these individuals will be tested this month with their station annual test. There are an additional 8 staff members who are long term absents.
- 2.10. Off the run for fitness by group is:
- Barnstaple - 1
 - Yeovil- 1
 - Exeter - 2
 - Taunton - 3
 - Plymouth - 2
 - Torquay - 1
- 2.11. The Red and Amber (Fail) group who did not meet the required fitness standards are subject to a 3-month retest period and receive a development plan, including a fitness and nutrition plan and ongoing additional support from the fitness instructor.
- 2.12. At 6 months, if staff are still unable to achieve the required standard, then a capability process is started, working with the HR business partners.

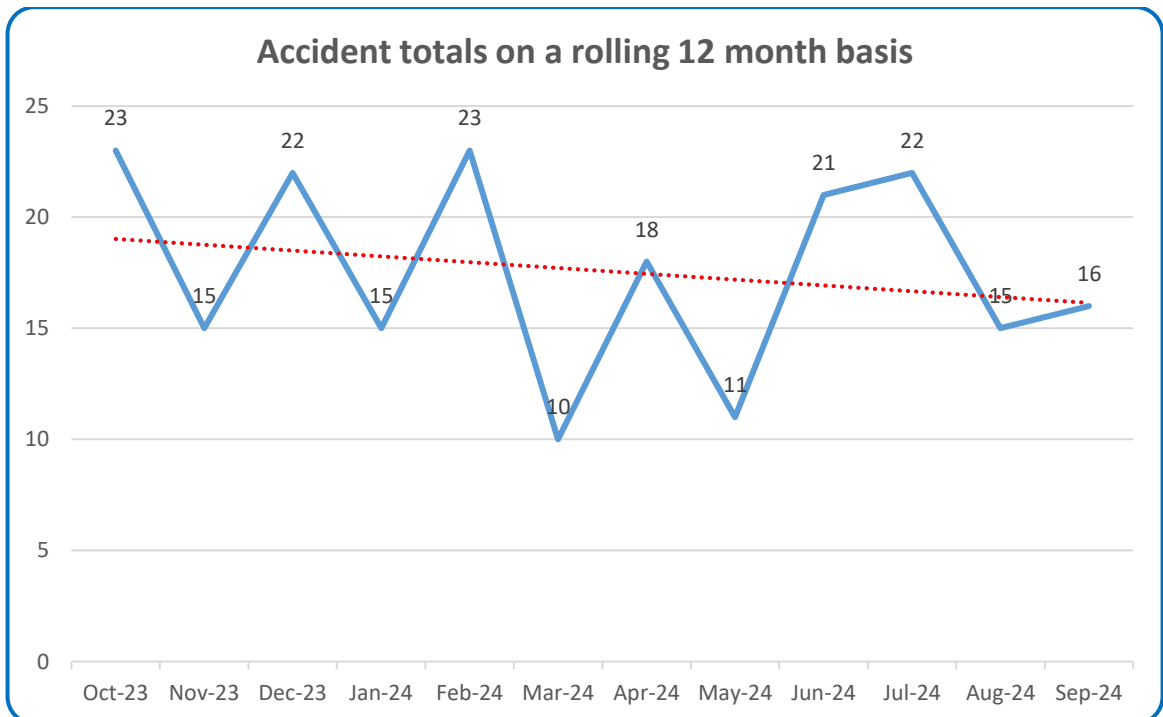
Health & Safety:

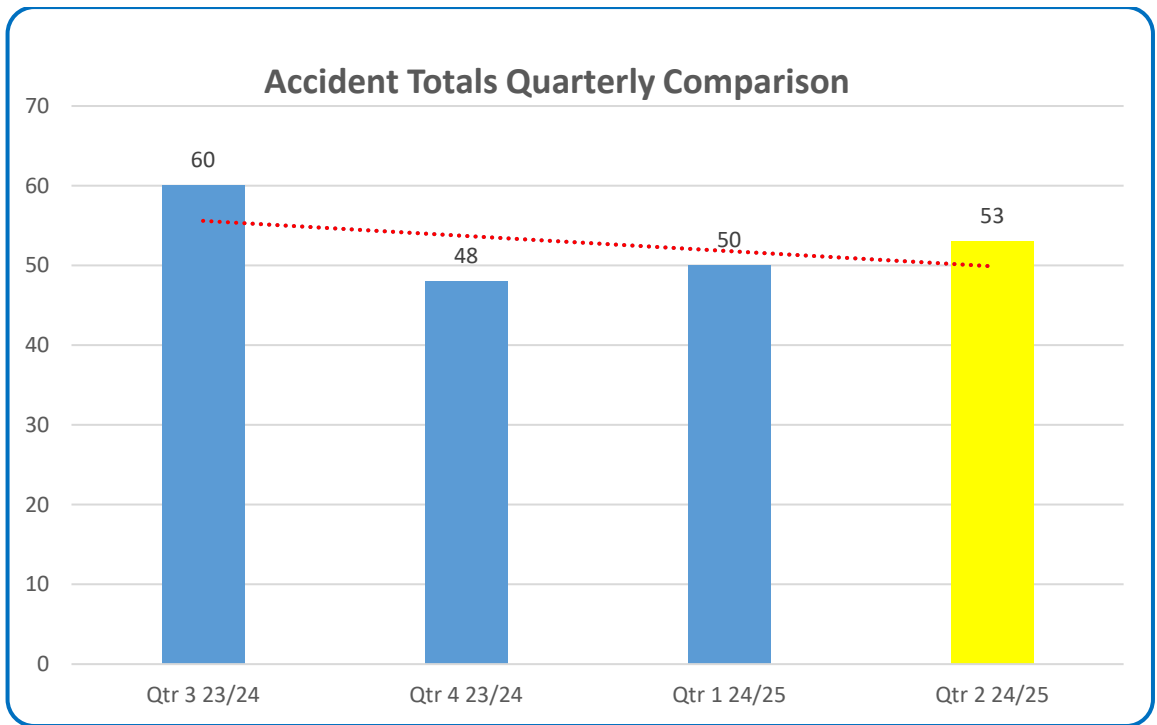
General:

- 2.13. Following a Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) reportable accident at the Academy BA facilities the Service conducted an internal investigation and were also visited by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The Service is continuing to work through the recommendations from the investigation and HSE visit. Good progress is being made with actioning the recommendations, 55% already completed.
- 2.14. Key learning from the internal investigation and from the HSE will be shared nationally via the National Fire Chief Council.
- 2.15. The Service is continuing to progress work to reduce the risk to staff from exposure to fire ground contaminants. Phase 1 focusing on decontamination is complete. Phase 2 is presently working on the financial appraisal for the various work packages. This will look to address station zoning, cleaning solutions for stations and vehicles, options for cleaning specific items of PPE, and provision of non-permeable easy clean benches for training facilities.

Accidents:

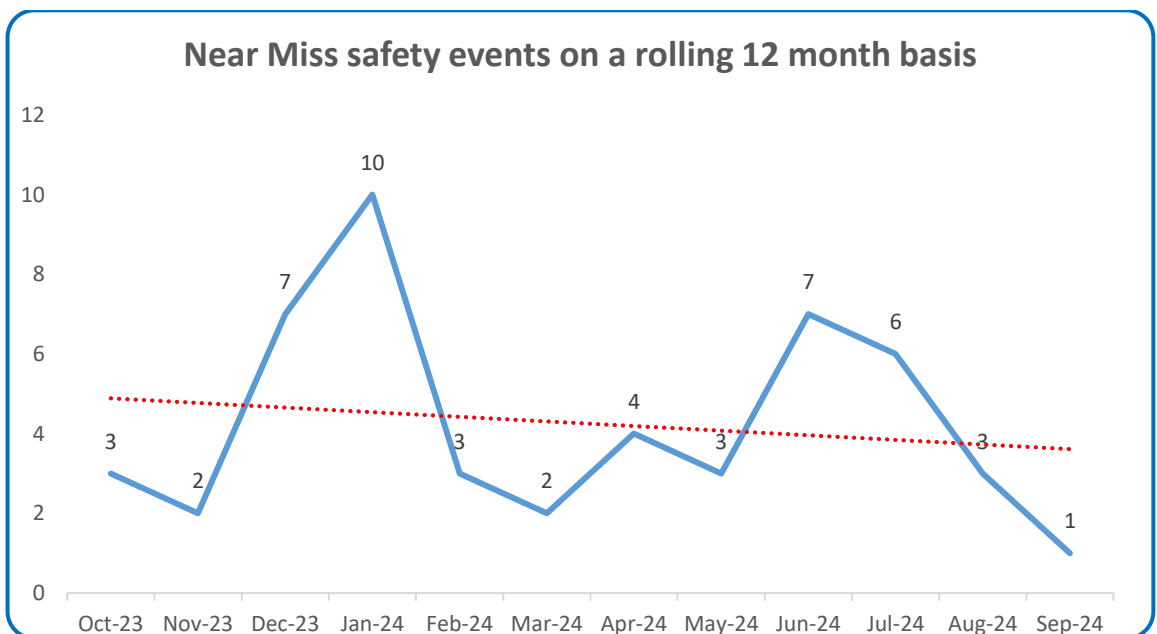
- 2.16. The overall trend for the rolling 12-month reporting period continues to show a positive position with a continued downward trend in accidents. The quarter 2 accident numbers are up by 3 on the previous quarter and up 2 for the same quarter in 2023. During Q2 there were no level 3 significant safety events. The proportion of incidents are 21 level 2 and 32 level 1 safety events.

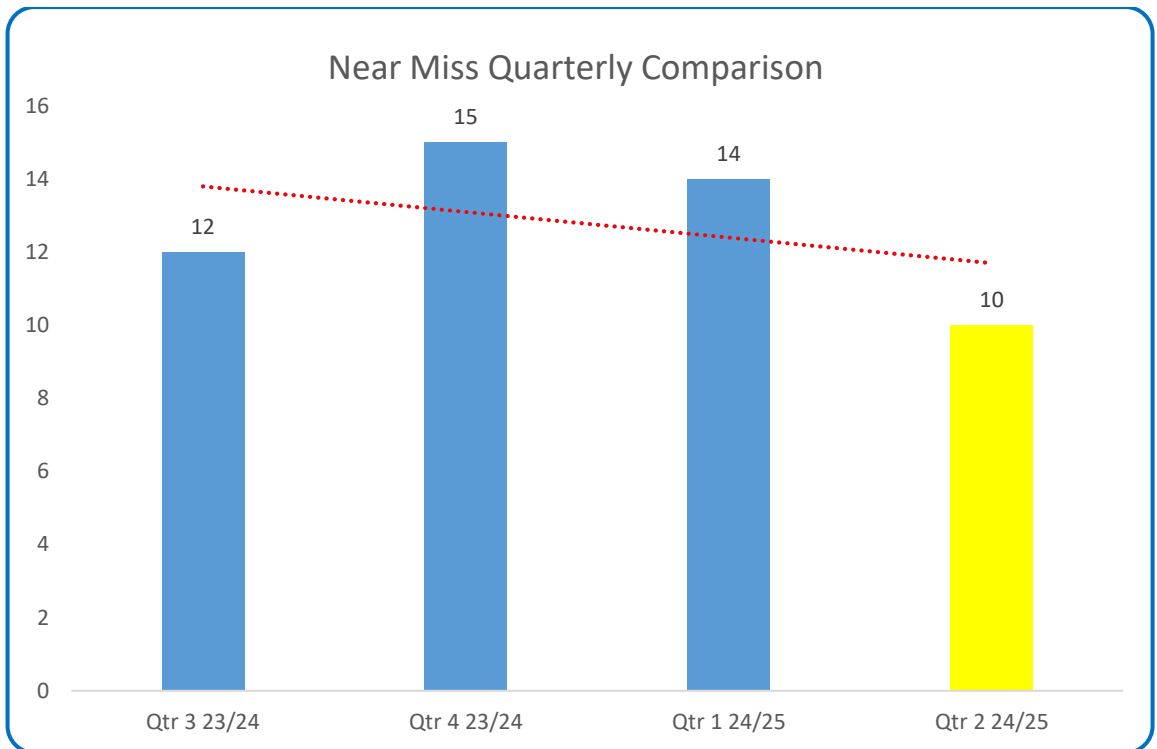




Near Miss:

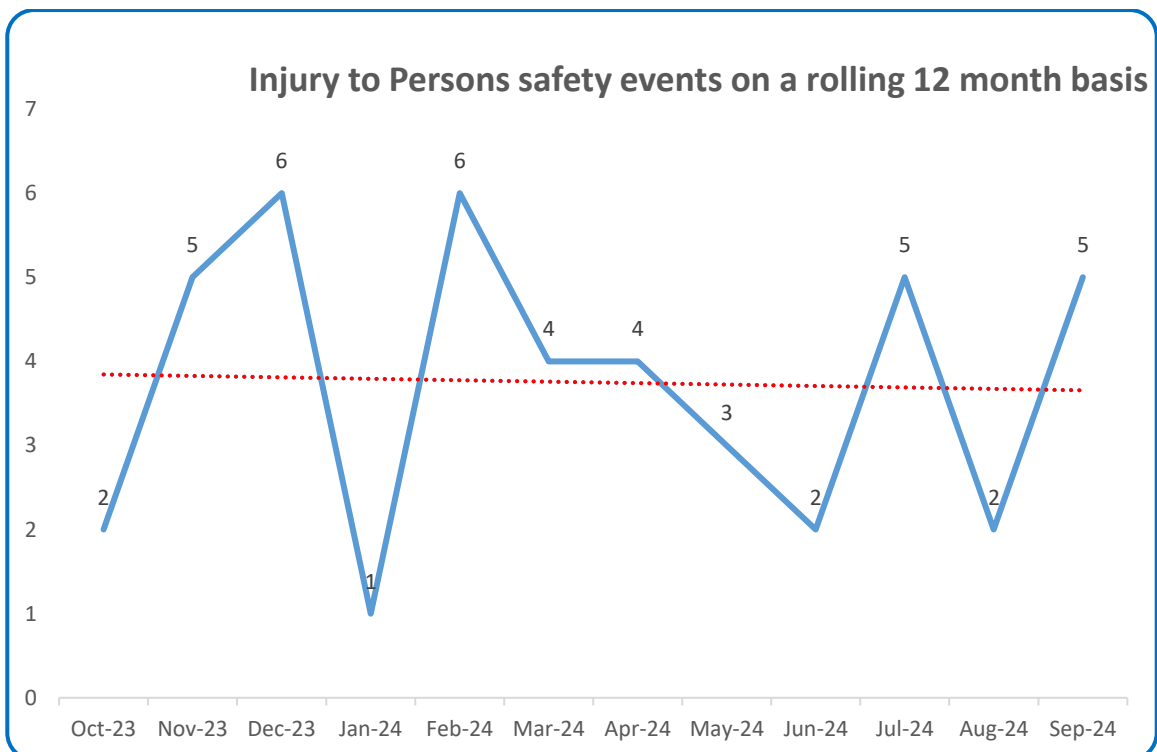
2.17. There were 10 near miss reports in Quarter 2 2024, this is down 4 on the previous Quarter, and down 4 on the same Quarter last year. Though the benefits of near miss reporting continue to be communicated by the Health and Safety Team there is still work to do to improve near miss reporting. A review of this area to establish a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) has identified options for measuring and driving improvement in this area. A suggested KPI is to monitor the percentage increase in near miss reporting per Quarter. The KPI remaining in place until near miss reporting has sufficiently improved. A suggested KPI of a 10% increase each Quarter is proposed (This Quarter is a 28.5% decrease on the previous Quarter).

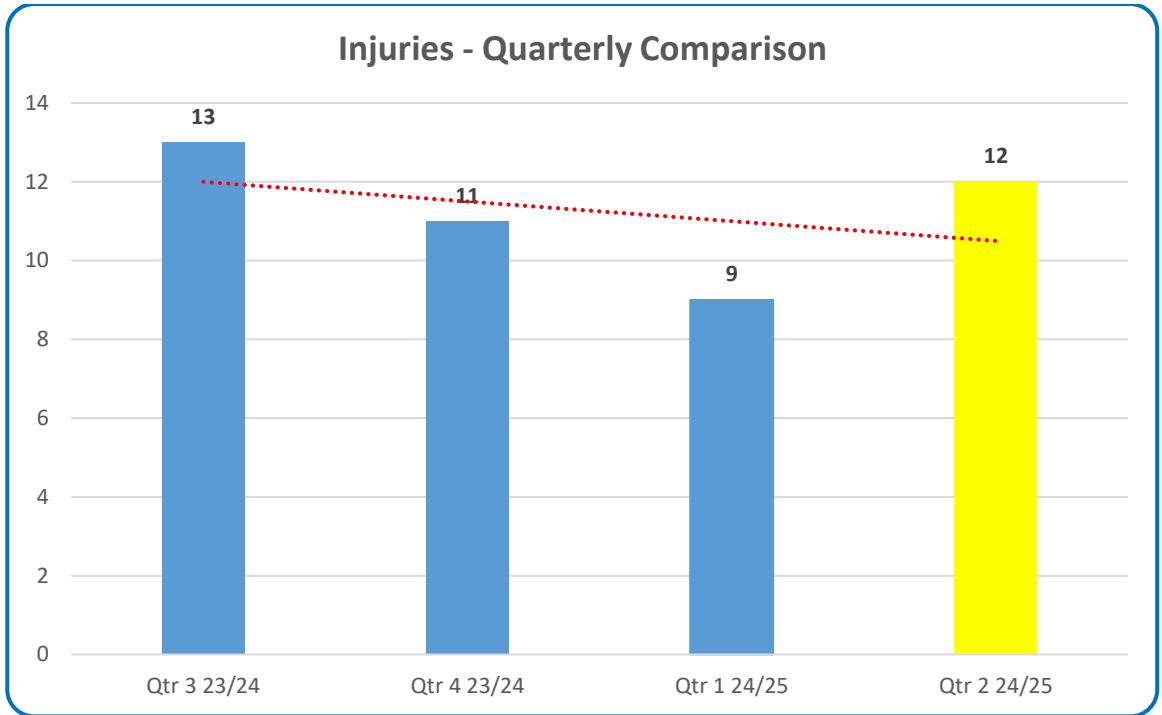




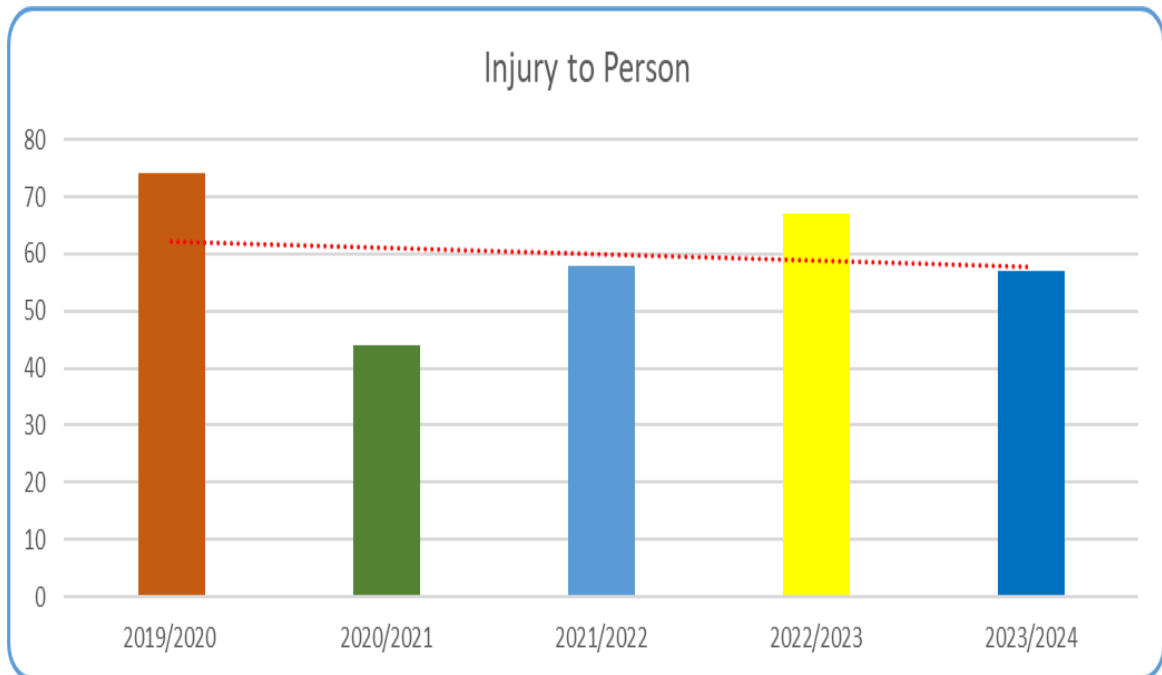
Personal Injuries:

2.18. During Quarter 2 there were 12 injuries, a 33% (3 injuries) increase on the previous Quarter. Injury numbers this Quarter are the same as for Quarter 2 last year. The injury figures in general remain low when compared to the size of the workforce and nature of the activities. The trendline showing a slight reduction over the 12-month period.



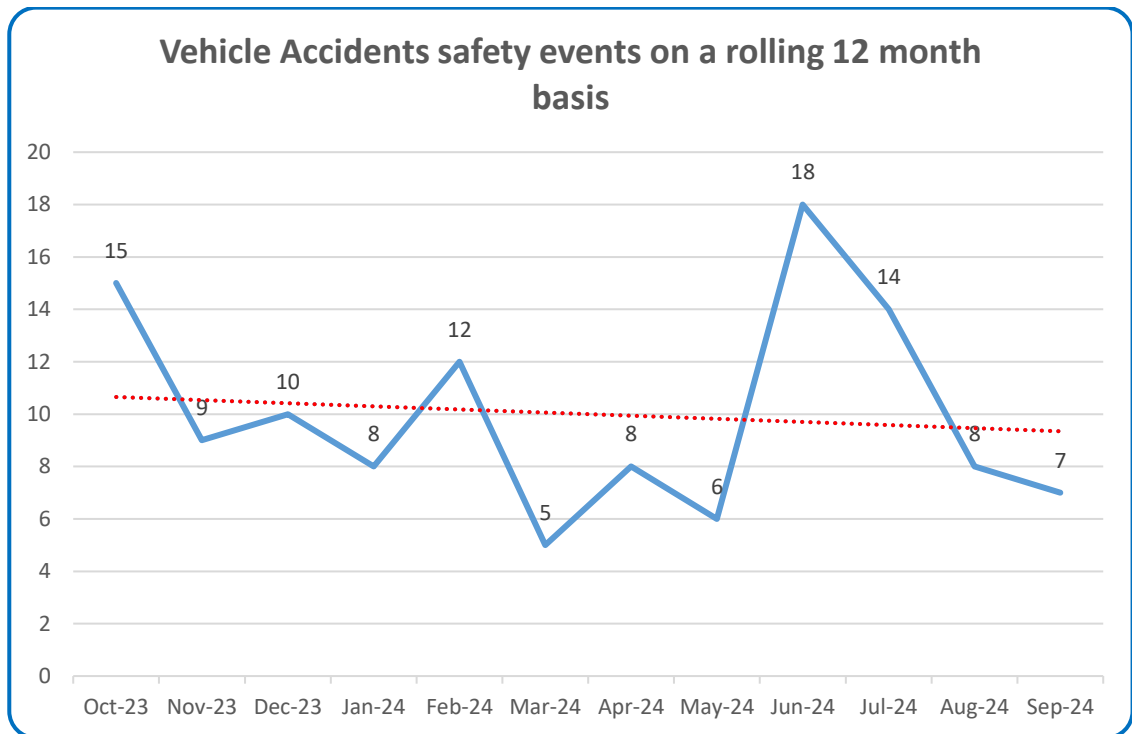


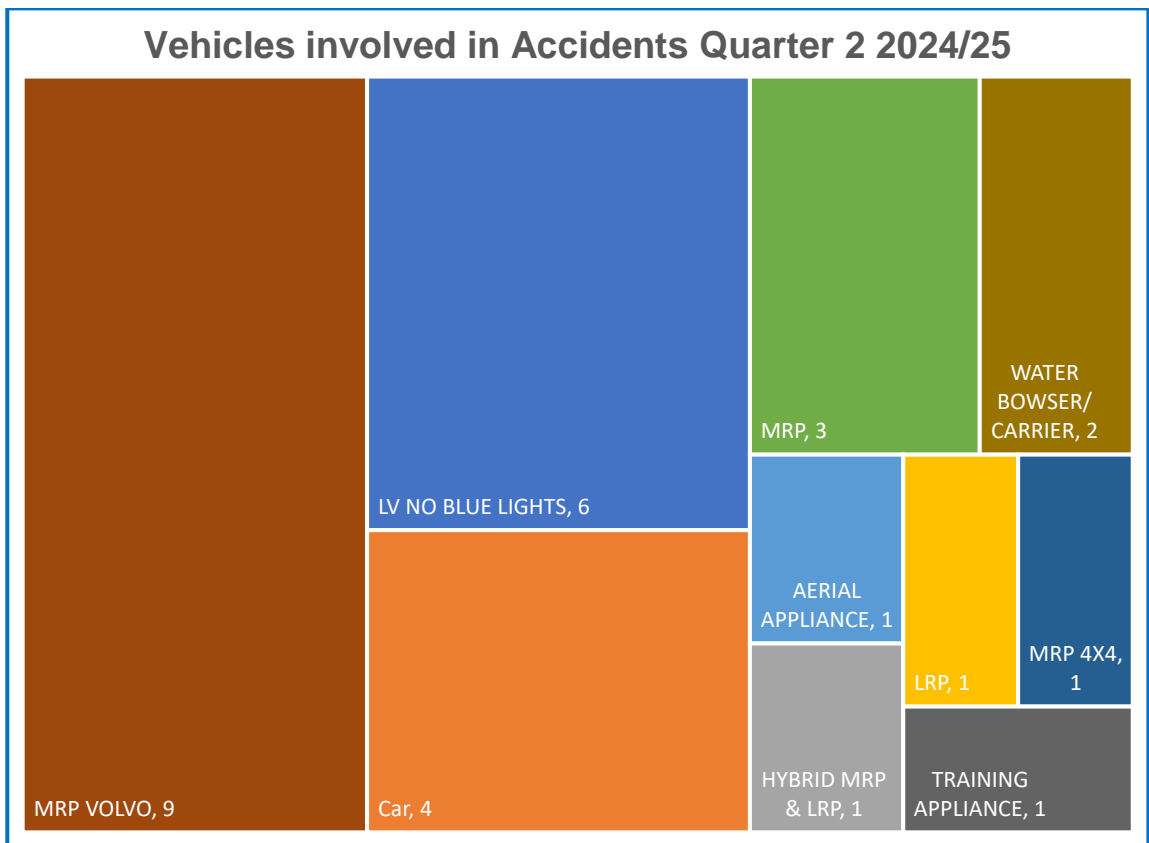
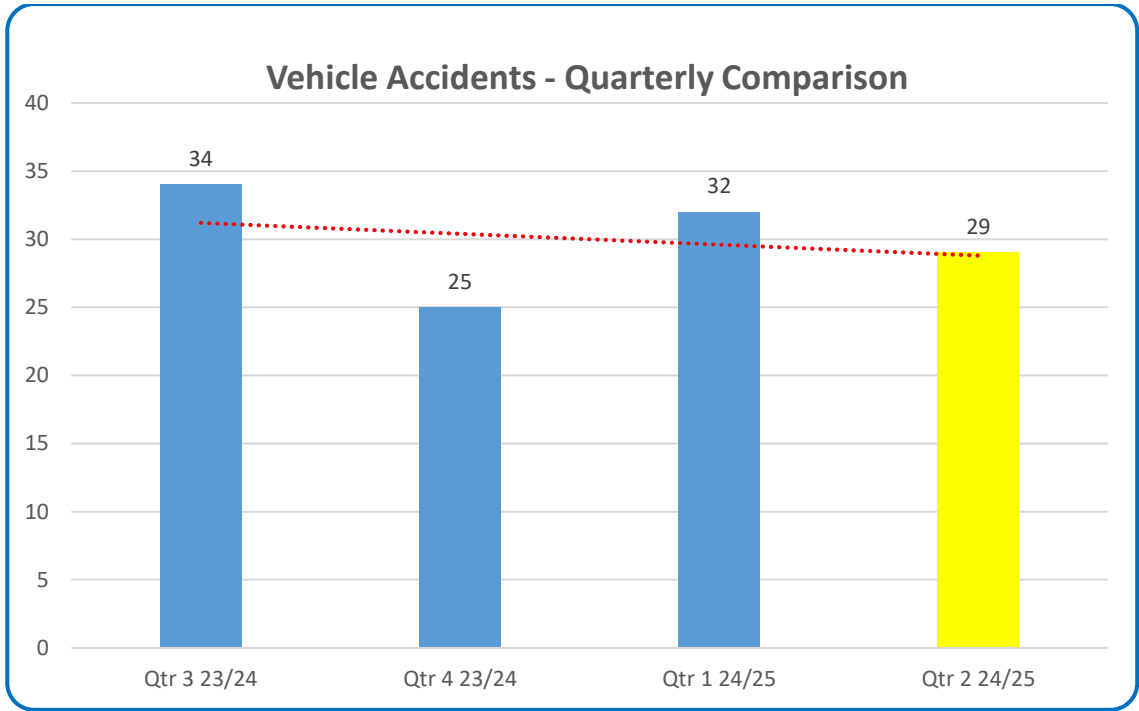
2.19. The annual trend over the last 5 financial years (2019/20 – 2023/24) indicates a slight reduction in injury related safety events.



Vehicle Incidents:

- 2.20. There were 29 vehicle incidents in the Quarter 2 reporting period, this is a decrease of 3 (9%) on the previous Quarter. There were 7,807 mobilisations in Quarter 2 of this 0.37% resulted in a vehicle related safety event. This is a slight decrease on the previous Quarter (0.4%). Vehicle related accidents are primarily during non-blue light activity, the majority related to slow speed manoeuvring, for example, clipping hedges and banks on tight lanes, or another vehicle in congested streets, as well as when manoeuvring at the incident. The Vehicles Involved chart indicates the MRP's are more frequently involved in accidents.
- 2.21. The Organisational Road Risk group meets monthly. The group are working to increase proactive communications to raise awareness of the areas where vehicle accidents are occurring. Whilst also providing supporting advice and guidance where required through useful SharePoint pages.

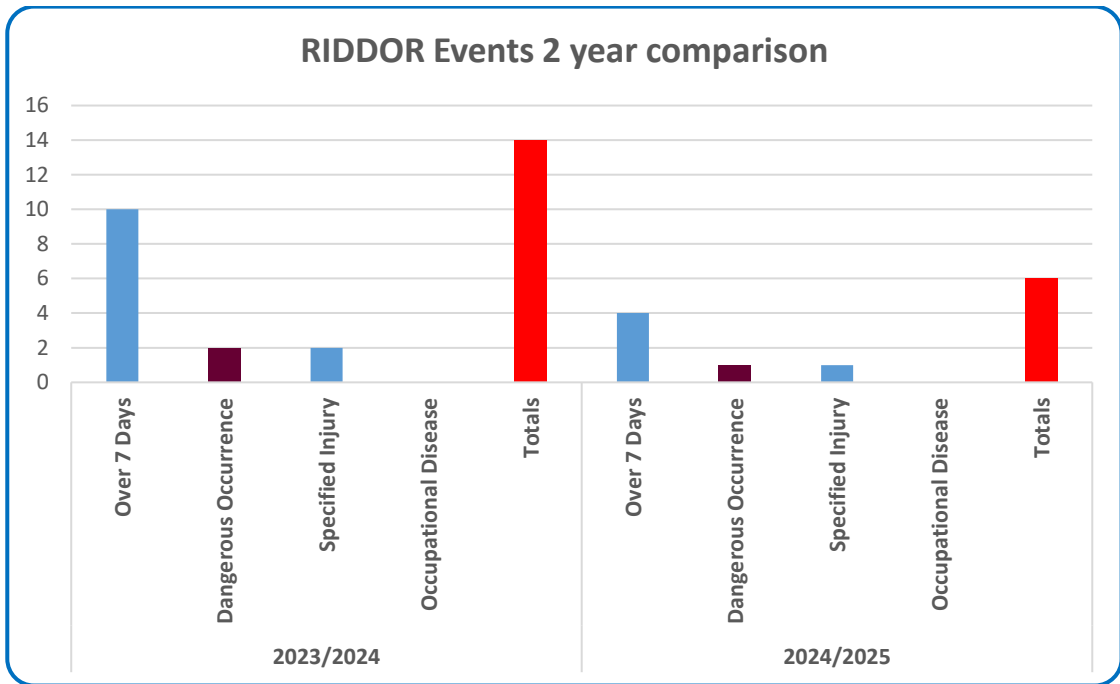




Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR):

2.22. There have been 3 reported RIDDOR incidents during this reporting period (Quarter 2), two ‘Over 7-day injury’ and a ‘Dangerous Occurrence’. The Dangerous Occurrence was a result of a BA failure whilst in an irrespirable atmosphere. The BA incident is under investigation.

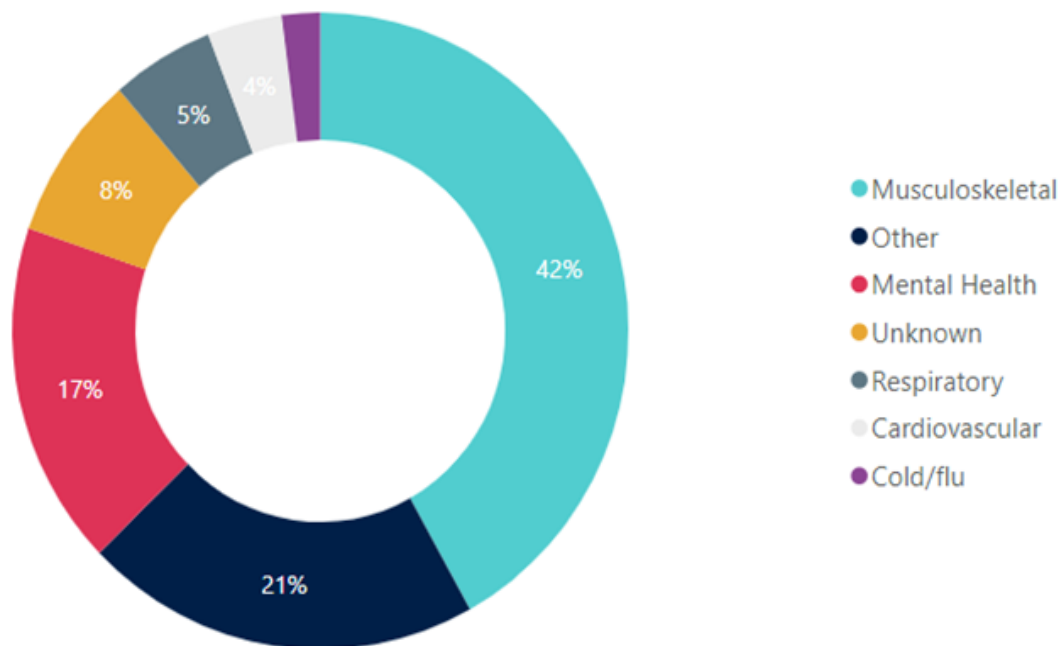
2.23. The 2-year comparison below provides a comparison of RIDDOR reporting by RIDDOR type for this year compared against the final total for last year.



Sickness and Absence:

Proportion of calendar days during Quarter 2 by sickness type

2.24. In terms of sickness types, ‘musculoskeletal’ continues to increase and now accounts for 42% of all absences, an increase of 10.51% since Quarter 4.

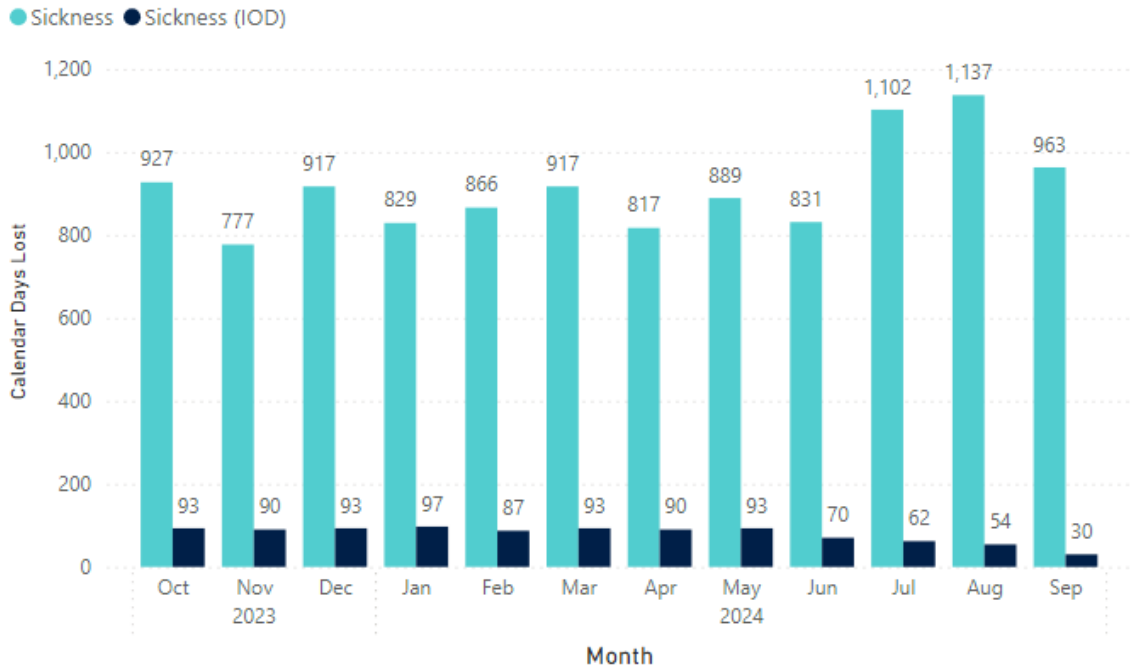


Sickness Type:	% of days lost in Q4	% of days lost in Q1	% of days lost in Q2
Musculoskeletal	31.5%	33%	42%
Other, including gastro, gynaecological, neurological and cancer	29.2%	24%	21%
Mental Health	19.5%	17%	17%

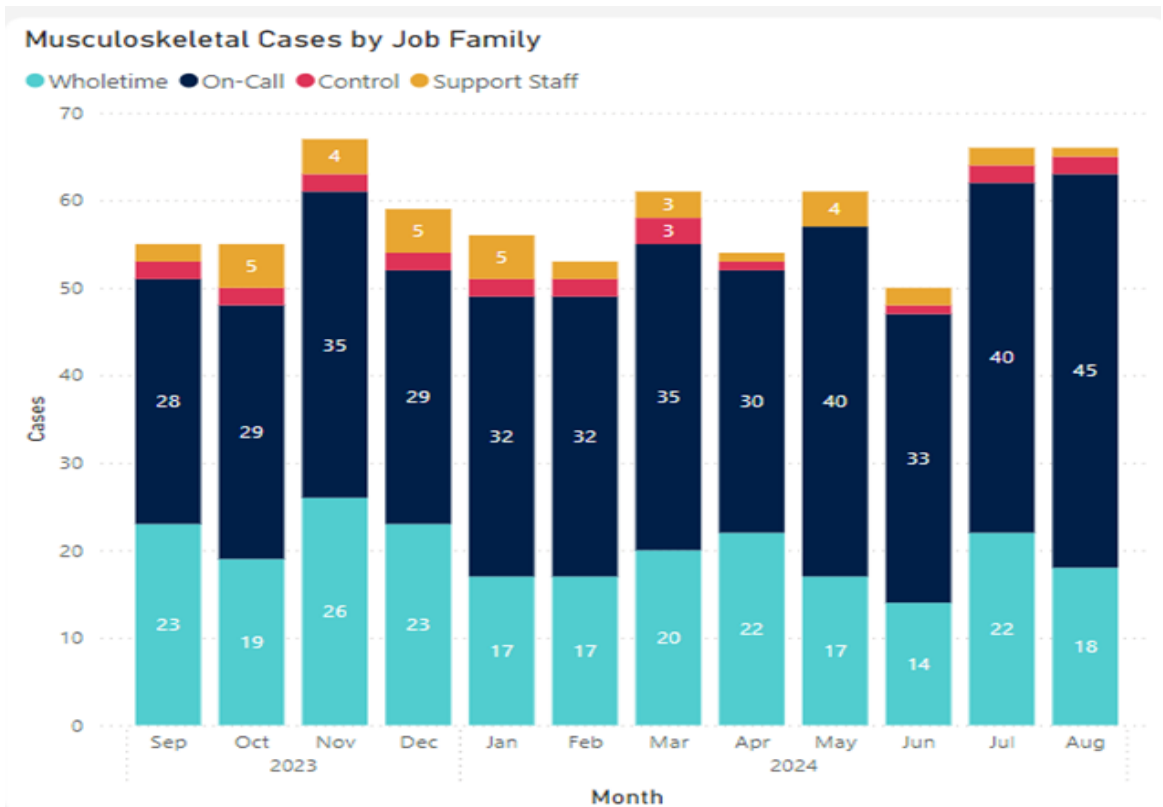
Musculoskeletal (MSK)

- 2.25. When reviewing the data for musculoskeletal, injuries overleaf, it can be observed that a significant majority of injuries continue to be not due to service-related work and are in fact at the lowest level for the last 12-month period.

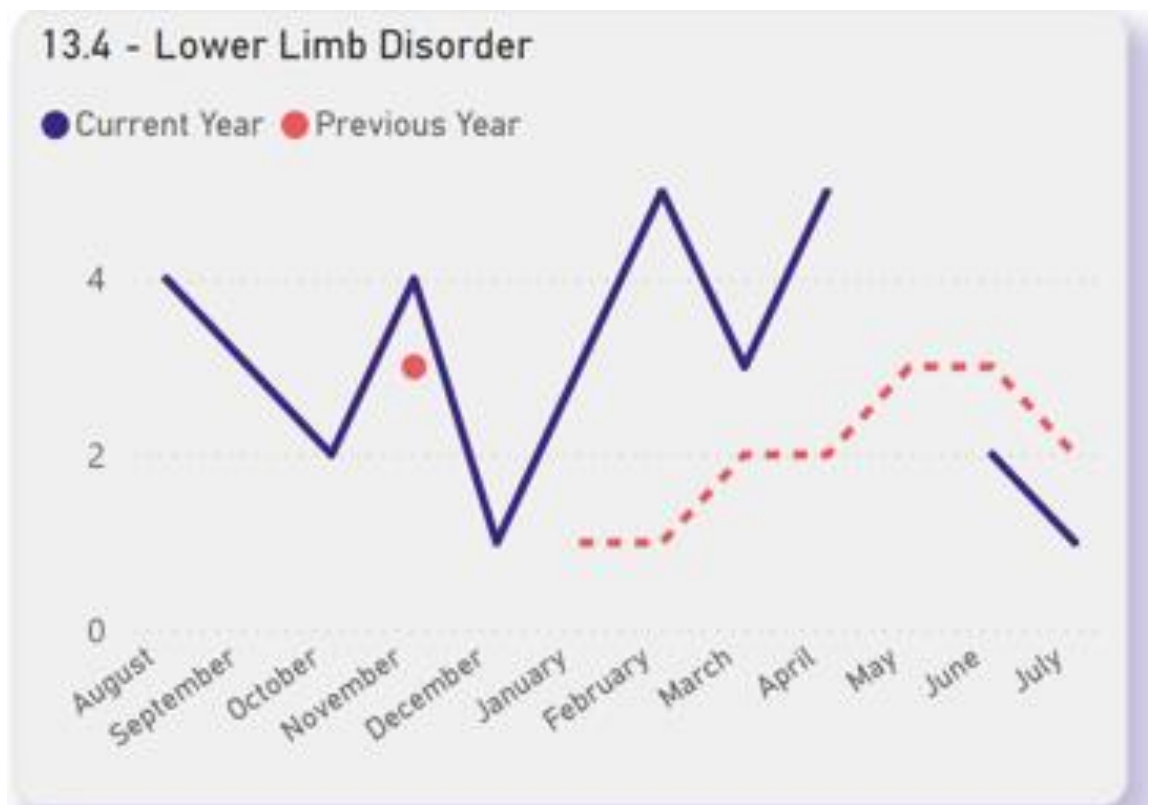
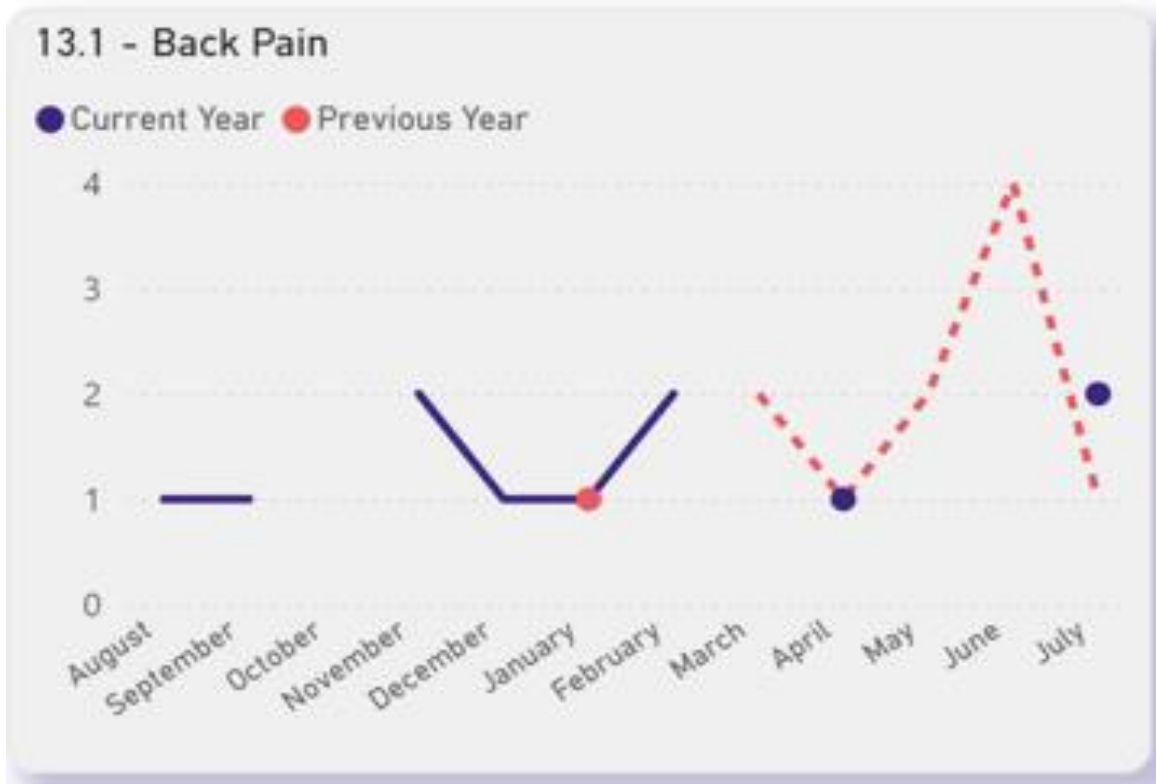
Musculoskeletal Injury on Duty by Month (calendar days)

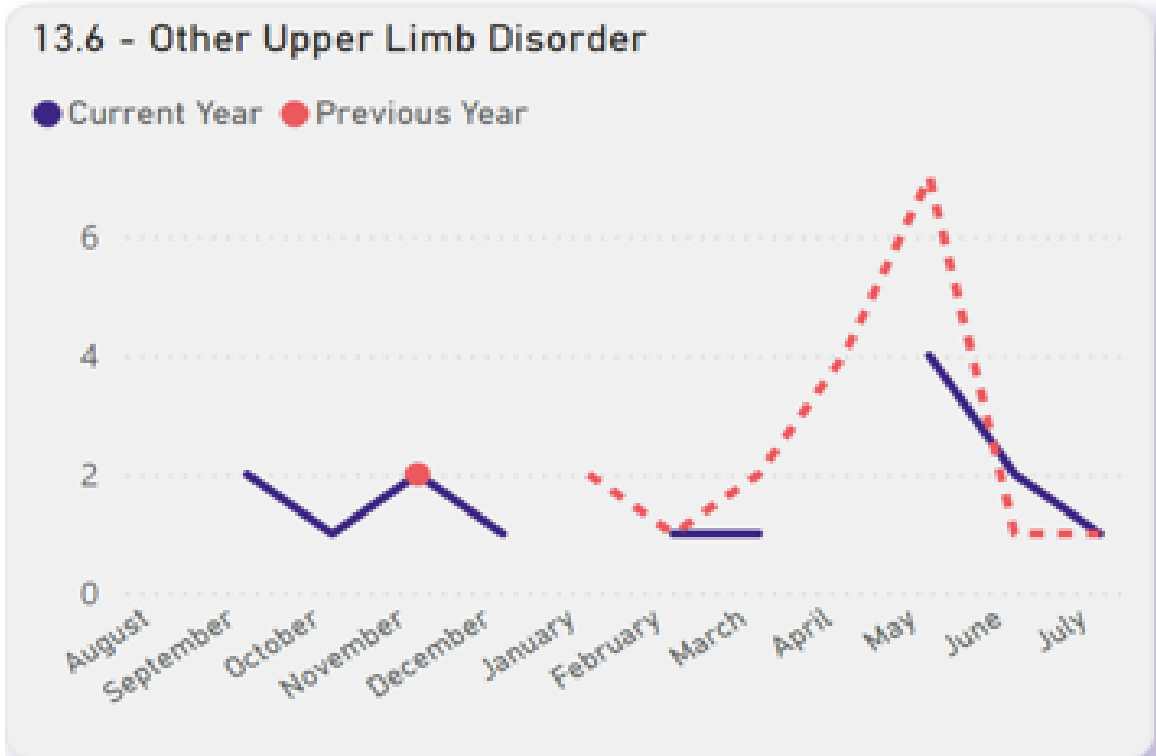


2.26. It can be observed, in the graph below, that there are significantly more MSK injuries/cases with the On-Call workforce. Over the last quarter this has increased from 2.76% - 4.13% in the On-Call workforce and has decreased from 4.14% to 3.38% of Wholetime.



2.27. When reviewing data from the Health Partners on Occupational Health referrals, it can be observed that the top 3 reasons for Musculoskeletal referrals are in the following areas of the body, with lower limb seeing a slight increase from last year.



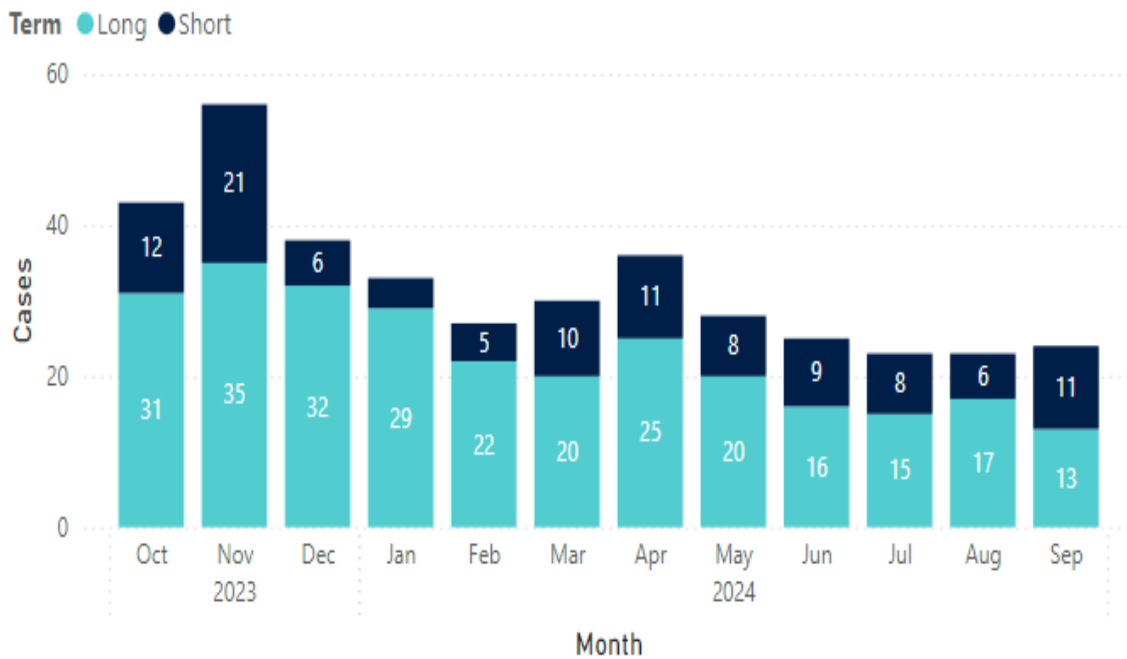


2.28. Physiotherapy support continues to be offered across the Service, with conditions varying, with Shoulder and Knees seeing more referrals, followed by back.

Mental Health

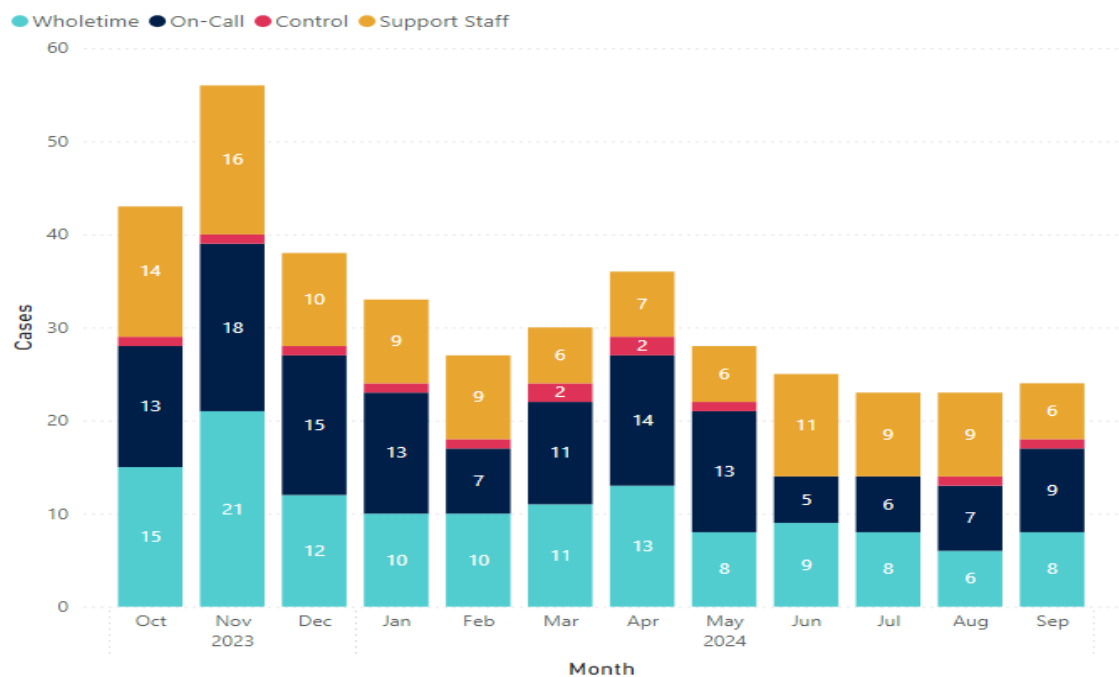
2.29. The graph overleaf identifies the number of open cases in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 are now at the lowest that they have been for the last rolling 12 months. It is positive to see that the spike of short-term mental health cases in Quarter 3 were managed effectively and did not transpire in all cases, into long term absence. After seeing an initial increase in Quarter 1 of both short- and long-term (over 28 days) Mental Health absence, it is reassuring to see this has started to decline.

Mental Health Cases by Absence Term



2.30. Looking at the mental health cases by staff groups, it can be observed that there continues to be a higher case of numbers of On-Call colleagues' absence, however this equates to 0.86% of the workforce. Across all staff groups, overall case numbers have reduced by 32% this quarter and remain significantly lower than this time last year.

Mental Health Cases by Contract Type



Year Job Family	2023					2024						
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Wholetime	15	21	12	10	10	11	13	8	9	8	6	8
On-Call	13	18	15	13	7	11	14	13	5	6	7	9
Control	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	1
Support Staff	14	16	10	9	9	6	7	6	11	9	9	6

- 2.31. Looking at mental health cases in relation to population of the workforce, it can be observed that despite having fewer cases, Control have a slightly higher percentage of the workforce experiencing mental health absence. Preventative support and increased communication in this area will now be a focus.

Job Family	Percentage of workforce
On-Call	0.86%
Support	1.25%
Wholetime	1.39%
Control	2.78%

- 2.32. There is still work to do with supporting colleague's mental health, something that should be a key focus as the Service progresses through the various change programmes underway, now and in the future.

Health and Wellbeing Support

- 2.33. Despite some improvements, the Service continues to experience difficulties with the Occupational Health (OH) provider, Health Partners. Regular (weekly) meetings are held with the provider to ensure the smooth running on the service received, however significant issues with clinic availability/reliability and quality of reports continues to be experienced. This has been raised with procurement, and pragmatic solutions are being explored. The contract is due to end in 2026.
- 2.34. The Service continues to collaborate closely with the Firefighters Charity to support the wellbeing provision it can offer.
- 2.35. The Service is collaborating with the charity to provide training to 2 Wholetime stations in Plymouth, on a new preventative therapy, in the belief that it may limit the traumatic effect incidents may have. It uses techniques that colleagues can use on their way to an incident to prepare their mind for what might be experienced. Thus, reducing the mind's traumatic response. The effectiveness of the therapy will be monitored, prior considering a roll out.

- 2.36. The Service has re-engaged with Specsavers for eye care solutions. Employees can request an eye test by emailing health and wellbeing, and an e-voucher will be emailed directly from Specsavers to the employee. This is a significant improvement on the paper-based system previously in place with Edenred.
- 2.37. The supplier of Breathing Apparatus (BA) inserts and safety spectacles has gone into administration and caused a delay in producing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for colleagues. The Service has now secured an alternative supplier (Specsavers) for this service.
- 2.38. Defusing continues to be hugely effective, and to improve the system, the Services has trained several new Diffusers, including 2 colleagues in the Operational Resource Centre (ORC), who will be able to conduct the co-responding defusing in a timelier manner. The approach will be evaluated, and consideration given towards any other staff groups that could support the defusing network. The Defusing Team won 'Team of the Year' at the 2024 People Awards.
- 2.39. An additional Health and Wellbeing Advisor, Blaize Dymond, has been appointed who will be starting as soon as pre-employment checks have been concluded.

3. PERFORMANCE MONITORING – STRATEGIC POLICY OBJECTIVE 3(b)

Strategic Policy Objective 3(b) - 'Increase the diversity of the workforce to better reflect the communities we serve, promoting inclusion and developing strong and effective leaders who ensure that we have a fair place to work where our organisational values are a lived experience.'

Diversity:

- 3.1. This is an annual measure looking to see a year-on-year improvement in addition to the separate Diversity and Recruitment Annual Report. The next report will be April 2025.

Promoting Inclusion, developing strong leaders, living the values, a fair place to work:

- 3.2. The new Leading Others development process has received excellent feedback, following the re-design earlier this year. Leading the Function is now planned to launch in January, with a trial to take place in November.
- 3.3. The Service has now run several 'Have-a-go' days for On-Call recruitment. There are more planned for November and into next year. Two (Yeovil and Middlemoor) are dedicated positive action events for underrepresented groups.
- 3.4. The Service has identified, through Strategic Workforce Planning, that Firefighter recruitment is now required. Several processes are running to achieve this; On-Call to Wholetime, Direct Transfer from another Fire and Rescue Services and next year an External Wholetime Firefighter recruitment drive, with a course planned in Sept 2025.

3.5. All recruitment processes have been reviewed to ensure they are accessible for everyone. This has resulted in several changes in how things are achieved, but have not hindered the overall effect or outcomes.

Update on Strategic Workforce Planning

Turnover and attrition:

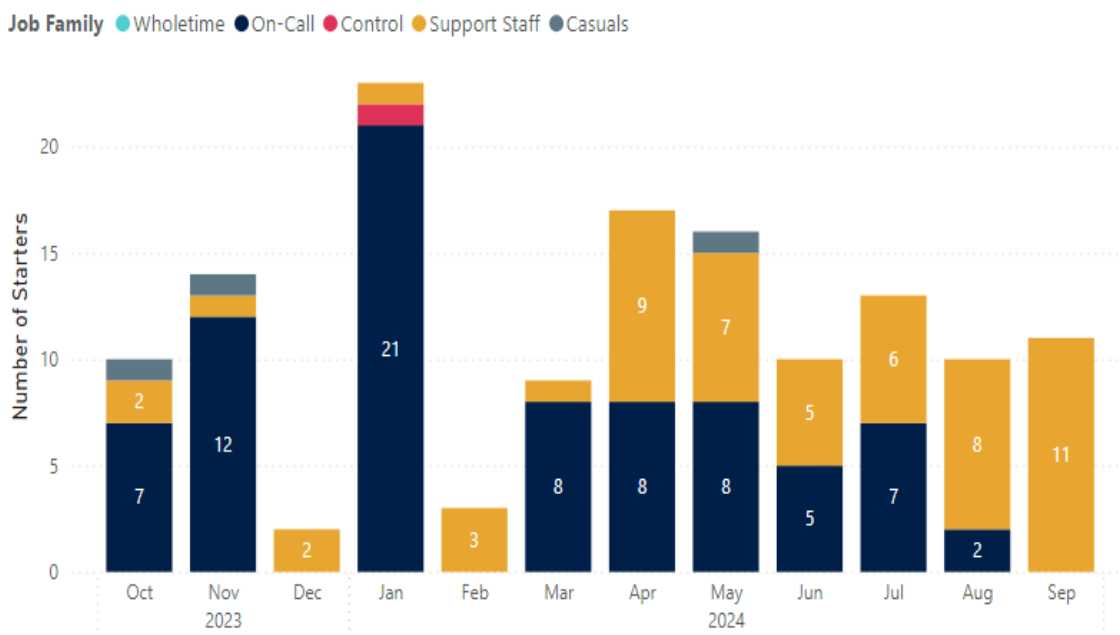
3.6. The attrition rate is reached by averaging the headcount staff population across a 12-month period and then dividing the number of leavers within the period by this average. (If a person leaves multiple positions, they are counted once for each position. This will also include people who have left a position but remain employed in another one although it will exclude transfers. The attrition rates for Q2 are below.

Staff Group	July	August	September
Wholetime	10.6%	10.4%	11.0%
On-Call	11.2%	10.8%	10.3%
Support	11.3%	10.3%	10.0%

3.7. Since the last People Committee meeting, it has been observed that the attrition rates across the Service reduced a little. While the wholetime staff attrition rate has increased a little in September, it has reduced for on-call and support.

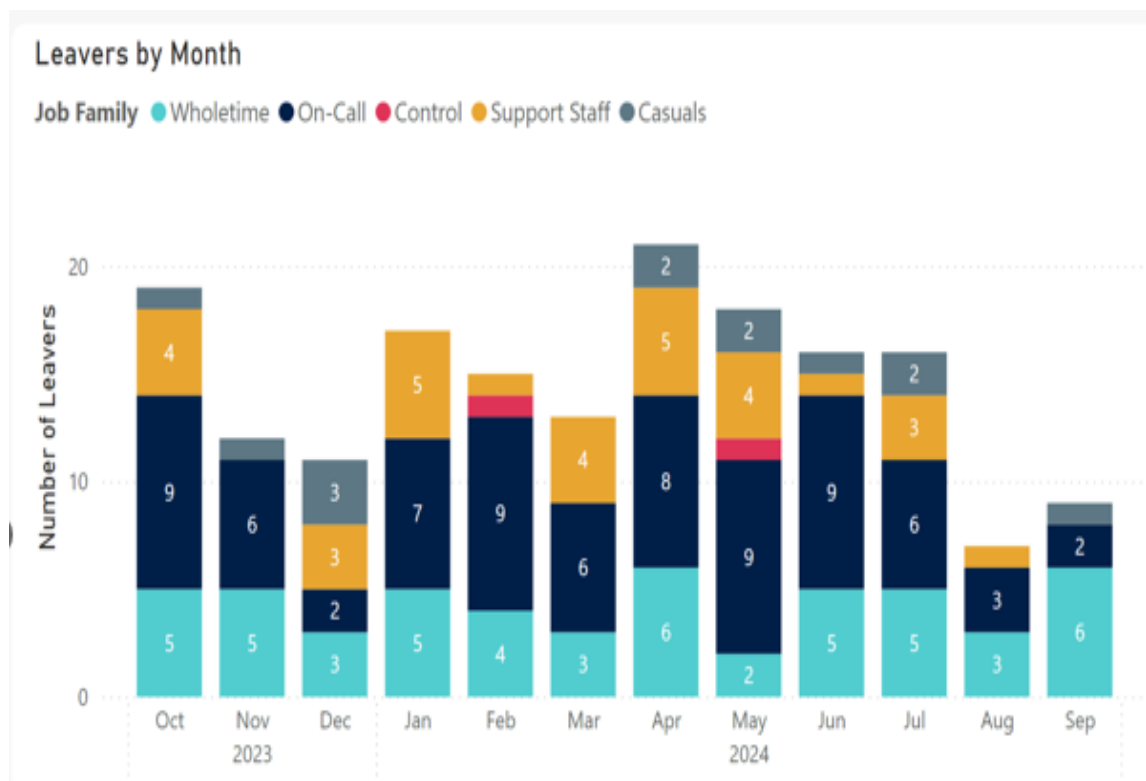
3.8. Work will continue to track and map these figures over the coming months as part of Strategic Workforce Planning activity and consider any appropriate interventions to address any concerns. An overview of starters and leavers month, on month are below.

Starters by Month



Job Family	2023			2024								
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Wholetime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
On-Call	7	12	0	21	0	8	8	8	5	7	2	0
Control	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Support Staff	2	1	2	1	3	1	9	7	5	6	8	11
Casuals	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Leavers



Job Family	2023			2024								
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Wholetime	5	5	3	5	4	3	6	2	5	5	3	6
On-Call	9	6	2	7	9	6	8	9	9	6	3	2
Control	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Support Staff	4	0	3	5	1	4	5	4	1	3	1	0
Casuals	1	1	3	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	0	1

People Services Systems Project

- 3.9 The build of the performance review module in iTrent is now underway, with testing having taken place. Due to an MHR/ iTrent systems update occurring in October which affects this build, the launch has been postponed until 1st November.
- 3.10 A number of the 'data dashboards' of management information have been handed over to People Services by the project team. In line with the reporting calendar, further dashboards are scheduled to be handed over in the coming months. This work has created efficiencies and greater consistency in what is being reported to different stakeholder groups including the Strategic Workforce Planning Group and the People Committee as well as HMI, the Home Office and the Office for National Statistics.

New People Strategy launch

- 3.11 The new strategy (2024 to 2027) sets out where the Service wants to be, how it will get there, and what the Authority will see along the way and the behaviours that are encouraged for everyone to promote.
- 3.12 It was created using focus groups, feedback from this year's People Survey, and input from leadership teams looking into what worked last time and what could be improved.
- 3.13 The strategy defines the culture that the Service aspires to create and how colleagues will support one another to uphold the Service values. This strategy builds upon the previous People Strategy and sets a clear direction for colleagues to perform at their best while meeting Service objectives and vision.

A copy the new strategy is attached for reference as Appendix C.

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING – STRATEGIC POLICY OBJECTIVE 3(c)

Strategic Policy Objective 3c) 'Recognise and maximise the value of all employees, particularly the commitment of on-call firefighters, improving recruitment and retention.'

Recruitment & Retention







- 4.1. Reported above within the update on Strategic Workforce Planning.

MARIA PHILLIPS

Assistant Director of Corporate Services

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST INDICATORS

Quarterly Reporting:

Target area:	Agreed performance measure:	Q3 (2023-24)	Q4 (2023-24)	Q1 (2024 -25)	Q2 (2024 - 25)	Trend
Firefighter Competence	90% (as of October 2022)	0 of 7 core competencies below 90%	0 of 7 core competencies below 90%	0 of 7 core competencies below 90%	1 of 7 core competencies below 90%	
Accidents	Decrease	60	48	50	53	 
Near Miss-	Monitor	12	15	14	10	
Personal injuries	Decrease	13	11	9	12	
Vehicle Accidents	Decrease	34	25	32	29	
Short term (average days per person, per month)	Decrease	2.0	-	0.83	0.73	
Long term (average days per person, per month)	Decrease	6.7	-	2.38	2.30	
Mental Health related absence (average number of cases per month)	Decrease	48	-	29.6	23.6	

(* Please note that due to the change in sickness reporting systems and processes the Service have needed to change how it captures this specific item. Historically the quarterly averages for long-term and short-term sickness absence were based of the 12-month rolling average for each month in that quarter. There is not currently a full 12 months of directly comparable data, but reference can be made against the quarterly returns that align to the Cleveland reporting process. This will mean that the reporting is more consistent and comparable to national datasets going forward.)

APPENDIX B TO REPORT PC/24/9

People Committee Performance Reporting Forward Plan

Meeting scheduled	Reporting on	Subjects
April 2024	Quarter 4	Performance Monitoring report including financial year data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIDDOR reporting, • Workforce planning • Annual Diversity data report
July 2024	Quarter 1	Performance Monitoring report including financial year data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National FRS Sickness comparisons • National FRS H&S comparisons, • Grievance, Capability & Disciplinary
October 2024	Quarter 2	Performance Monitoring report including 6 - monthly data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce planning • People survey action plan update
January 2025	Quarter 3	Performance Monitoring report including Calendar Year data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness testing, • Grievance, Capability & Disciplinary



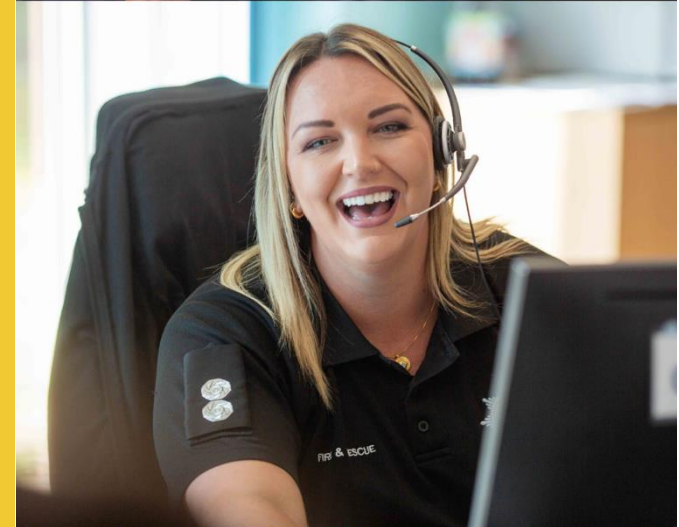
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APPENDIX C TO REPORT PC/24/9

People Strategy

2024 – 2027

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Introduction

This strategy has been developed with involvement from our staff, including focus groups attended by a broad cross-section of our workforce and engagement with leadership teams. This told us what was good about the previous strategy and where we want to put our focus going forward. Building on the staff involvement, and following the feedback from the consultation, this strategy has evolved further. It has also been informed by feedback from our People Survey and other routes where you have told us what is important to you. It incorporates existing and planned areas of focus designed to support a capable, happy and healthy workforce.

We know that colleagues want to feel included, feel safe to learn, safe to contribute and safe to challenge, and to know that they can make a difference and are growing within our organisation. While we continually work to improve our Service we need to make sure that we put people at the heart of any change and improvement that we do. We want to ensure that where there are difficult changes to be made that they experience a fair and considerate process.

This strategy gives us a narrative in terms of where we want to be, how we can get there, what people will see, how they will feel and the behaviours they will exhibit and promote. This strategy will be underpinned by theme roadmaps and key action plans to detail the tasks and actions to drive progress forward.

The People Strategy enables us to set out what it will be like to work here and how we will treat one another. It gives our overall direction in defining how we will ensure that our staff are able to safely perform at their best, to deliver on our Service objectives and achieve our vision.

Our purpose

We are here to protect and save.

We work every day with our communities and partners to prevent emergencies, to make people safer in their homes, their places of work and where they visit. However, emergencies do happen and when they do, we will respond as quickly as possible in order to help people and save lives.

Our vision

Together we will work to end preventable fire and rescue emergencies, creating a safer world for you and your family.

We will do this by:

- involving communities and colleagues in designing our services
- innovating, using new technologies and approaches to reduce or remove risk
- influencing behaviour, design and legislation, to make living and working environments safer.

Our Values

These values should be at the heart of everything we do, decision making, leadership, designing new ways of working, recruitment, induction, development and progression.

- We are proud to help.
- We are honest.
- We are respectful.
- We are working together



Code of ethics

The code of ethics has been set out by the National Fire Chiefs Council and applies to all fire and rescue services.

With our values in mind we will always:

- put the interests of the public, the community, and service users first
- act with integrity including being open, honest, and consistent in everything that we do
- treat people with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias be positive role models, always demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership. And be accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards
- recognise and promote the value of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, both within the Service and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.



Our culture

How we interact with each other daily is driven by our values, which are designed by our colleagues, and underpinned by the NFCC Core Code of Ethics.

We want a culture that's engaged and where everyone feels included, safe to challenge, safe to contribute and safe to learn from the good and bad things that happen during the course of our work .

We continue to work towards Nationally recognised frameworks including the Fire Standards published by the Fire Standards Board, NFCC Leadership Framework, Culture Action Plan and Code of Ethics as well as our own Service plans including our Target Operating Model always ensuring relevance to each of our priorities.

We will continue to work together to nurture an environment where we all feel worthy and can thrive and succeed.

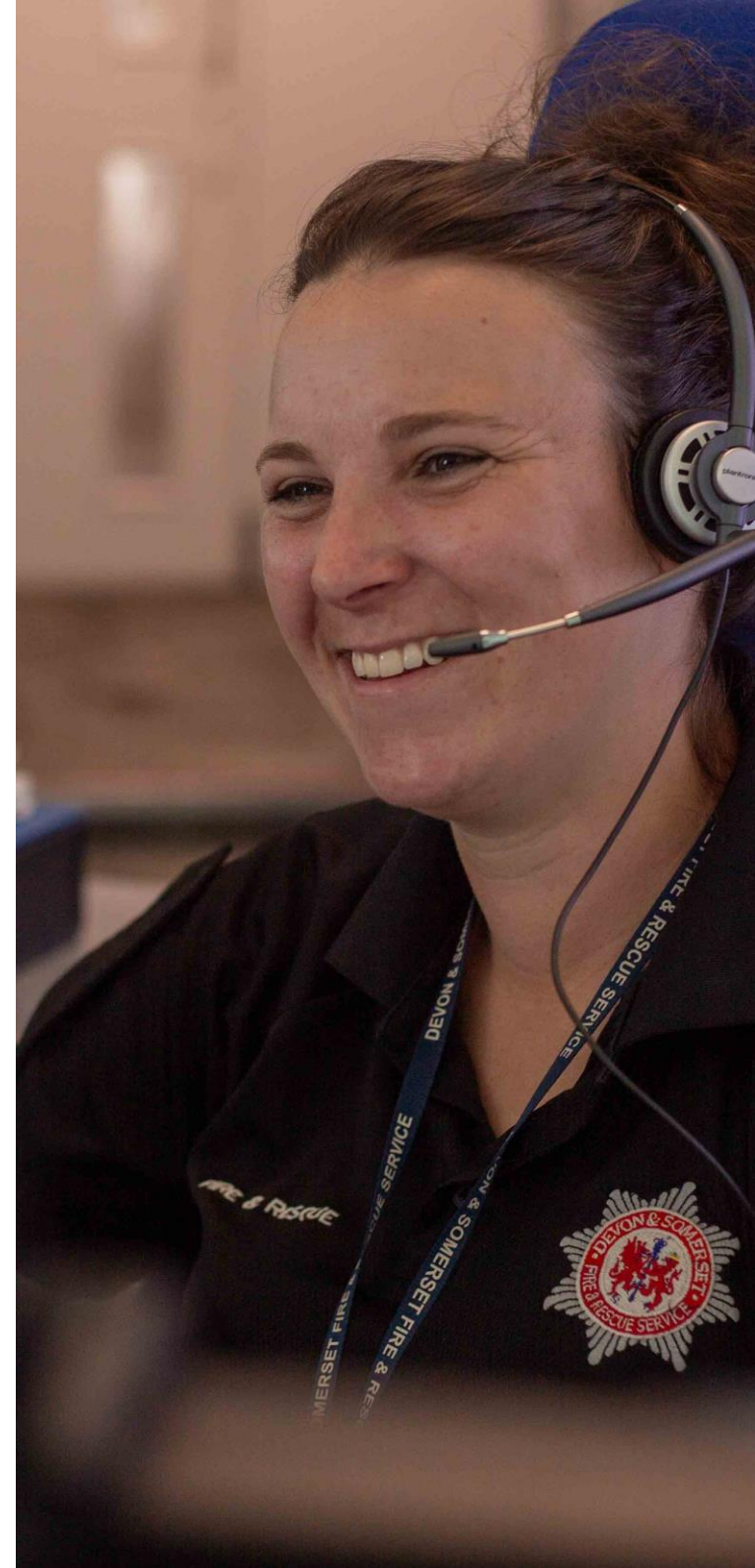


Our strategic people priority

Strategic Priority for People

The Service is recognised as a great place to work. Our staff feel valued, supported, safe and well trained to deliver a high performing fire and rescue service. Specifically, we will:

- a) Ensure that the workforce is highly trained and has the capability and capacity to deliver services professionally, safely and effectively.
- b) Increase the diversity of the workforce to better reflect the communities we serve, promoting inclusion and developing strong and effective leaders who ensure that we have a fair place to work where our organisational values are a lived experience.
- c) Recognise and maximise the value of all employees, particularly the commitment of on-call firefighters, improving recruitment and retention.



What have we done since the previous strategy?

The 2018-2022 People Strategy set out the principles to meet our Service Vision and Priorities and has enabled progress and change in many areas. During the lifecycle we have faced many substantial challenges, including a worldwide pandemic and financial impacts. However, work to continually improve has endured and we continue to adapt to changing landscapes to meet our future vision.

There have been several significant improvements which have been specifically driven by the last strategy.

“We want to collectively create and maintain a safe and healthy environment, where we are growing and embedding our health and safety culture. This is not only referring to our physical health and safety, but also our mental health and social wellbeing.”

Some notable areas of work that have been achieved are:

- We have focussed on the fitness and wellbeing of our staff, improving access to wellbeing interventions, fitness sessions, programs and testing.
- We have enabled access to personal and professional development through coaching, mentoring and a broad range of apprenticeship options for all staff.
- We recognise staff contribution and achievements through our rewards and benefits, including the People Awards and employee assistance program.

- We have introduced additional routes for staff to raise concerns to support staff to feel safe to contribute and challenge.
- We have reviewed and updated multiple policies that support people including a new alcohol and substance misuse procedure.
- We have streamlined recruitment, promotion and progression with new Leadership Potential Skill Build sessions, early access to development and Managers Skills Builds.
- We have developed the Safe To concept to support our staff to feel included, safe to learn, safe to contribute and safe to challenge.
- We have improved our technology hardware and software to support the working environment such as the introduction of MS365 and iTrent employee portal.
- We have introduced our People Impact Assessment process to ensure people are considered at every stage during change, new policies or projects.
- We have been proactive in our approach in the national contaminants project, keeping our staff and community safe and healthy.



People Strategy 2024

Our people strategy is made up of five key pillars that together will enable us to ensure the Service is a great place to work. Our pillars are:

A safe and healthy environment



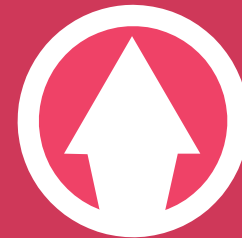
An inclusive environment



An engaged and collaborative workforce



Inspiring leadership



A high performing workforce





A safe and healthy environment

We want to ensure that the environment in which we all work is safe and healthy, and that the Service is a great place to work. Our focus areas include growing health and safety practices, embedding health considerations into projects, ensuring clear fitness policies, promoting fitness through sports and nutrition, supporting employees through change, encouraging mental health awareness, normalising mental health conversations, providing mental health training, increasing access to support services, boosting near miss reporting, supporting staff after challenging incidents, ensuring cyber and physical security.



We will continue to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment by:

- Prioritising the health and safety of staff through comprehensive training, equipment maintenance, and adherence to safety protocols.
- Creating a psychologically safe environment where staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to raise concerns about behaviour, and health and safety. Encouraging reporting of all safety concerns, ensuring events are followed up and outcomes and learning are shared.
- Encouraging managers to proactively support the wellbeing and attendance of their teams. Supporting them with the training, resources and information to deliver this.
- Ensuring the provision of wellbeing services that are accessible for all employees and these are actively promoted. These services will support and develop the physical, mental and social wellbeing of our staff.
- Maintaining fitness standards through clear and consistent application of the Fitness and Capability Policies and Procedures. Providing support and promoting fitness through activity and nutrition to all staff.
- Enhancing security measures to protect staff, equipment, and facilities from potential threats for now and the future.
- Ensuring that safeguarding is promoted to ensure colleagues are clear this is everyone's responsibility. Working with our partner agencies, and ensuring policies are applied to support staff and communities by providing a confidential, sensitive, and empathetic response to concerns.

These themes focus on creating a supportive and safe environment for all colleagues, promoting wellbeing, and improving communication and training.



An inclusive environment

We continue to develop a workforce that represents our diverse communities at every level where everyone can be themselves and work together, no matter their role or location. We will involve employees in planning, idea generation, and decision-making, to create better solutions using different perspectives and experiences. We will also work closely with our representative bodies and staff networks.

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We will continue to create an inclusive environment by:

- Creating a culture where everyone feels valued, included, respected and able to be themselves.
- Educating our people on specific EDI topics to increase awareness and foster inclusivity among all employees.
- Enabling attraction, selection, promotion and retention practices that have diversity and inclusion as a core focus, by:
 - introducing more robust and innovative positive action practices
 - identifying, understanding and removing barriers to recruitment, promotion, and between staff groups
 - removing bias from all areas of the employee life cycle
 - make better use of development opportunities – such as apprenticeships and high potential schemes, and ensure they are accessible to colleagues considering and supporting their development needs.
- Embedding the Equality Risks and Benefits Analysis and People Impact Assessment processes so that all staff understand the benefits and how to use them.
- Continuing to acknowledge and understand varying cultural conditions across the Service and work together to improve these where necessary.
- Engaging colleagues in the development of plans and decision-making processes, ensuring a wide range of perspectives, diverse thoughts and experiences are considered.
- Ensuring transparent communication, that it is prompt and inclusive at all levels of the organisation.

- Continuing to provide resources and support for the diverse needs of our staff and make improvements where we identify challenges.
- Creating and sustaining an EDI Strategy to support and prioritise Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for our staff and community in all that we do.

These themes emphasise the importance of promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of organisational culture, from recruitment and retention to decision-making and communication. They underscore the need for proactive measures to address biases, foster inclusivity, and create a workplace where everyone feels valued and respected.





An engaged and collaborative workforce

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We want to enable our people to be active, engaged and energised in the operation of the Service, and to enable individuals to bring their best selves to their role. Our focus areas include flexible on-call contracts, smarter recruitment and succession planning, exploring self-rostered working, increasing flexibility in core hours, introducing performance measures for continuous improvement, simplifying processes through digital transformation, and ensuring accountability through service planning frameworks. We will build a positive culture, improve work/life balance, and enhance the quality of working life.

We will provide more regular forums and mechanisms for engagement, setting out an engagement framework and programme which will set out our intentions, explain the benefits, provide examples of existing initiatives and show how we intend to implement, evaluate and report on our engagement activities.

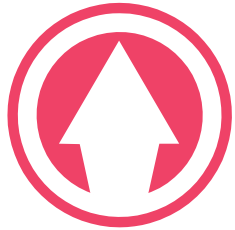
We will work collaboratively towards our vision, recognising and celebrating team successes.



We will continue to enable an engaged and collaborative workforce by:

- Enabling a positive working environment for all our people, being accountable for embracing our core values, and applying policies and procedure fairly and consistently.
- Encouraging a work/life balance through a focus on outcomes, offering flexibility in how and where people work. Ensuring workloads and capabilities are appropriate.
- Setting clear expectations for roles, providing support, feedback, coaching and training for success.
- Recognising and appreciating our people, acknowledging hard work and contributions.
- Encouraging continuous review, improvement, collaboration and engagement to support creativity and innovation.
- Reviewing and improving channels of communication keeping all employees informed about organisational updates, policies, and initiatives. Utilising technology to streamline and enhance communication within the organisation.
- Creating an environment where employees have a sense of belonging and are proud to work for the Service. This will be done through collaboration, understanding of roles, camaraderie, team-building activities and social events at both team and organisational level.
- Utilising our current schemes for recognising and rewarding exceptional performance, bravery, and dedication, whilst looking for new and innovative ways to do this across all sections of the service.
- Ensuring that rewards and incentives are fair and transparent, and that they align with the values, ethics and goals of the organisation.
- Celebrating milestones and achievements to reinforce a culture of appreciation and teamwork.

These themes highlight the importance of flexibility, trust, collaboration, and support in creating a work environment that meets the needs of both individuals and the organisation.



Inspiring leadership

We will create an organisation where our leaders will be accountable for delivering a clear vision, making decisions, and empowering others to drive change and improvement. Our leaders will be approachable, communicate openly and honestly while embodying our values, ensuring everyone is heard. They will role model inclusive leadership styles that value diversity, encourage collaboration, and create psychologically safe environments.

We continually develop leaders at all levels for our future, focusing on effective leadership styles, improving promotion processes, enhancing development programs aligned with the NFCC Leadership Framework. We will recognise those who uphold our values, ensure leadership accountability, promote a culture of continuous improvement, and implement consistent governance and decision-making processes.



We will continue to create inspiring leaders and managers by:

- Encouraging leaders to be transparent about mistakes, embracing feedback, accepting challenges and decisions, and fostering open dialogue within the organisation.
- Provide training programs, mentorship and development to leaders and managers at all levels. Building emotional intelligence and individual resilience to live our values, demonstrate inclusive behaviours, and create a psychological safe space for their team.
- Empowering leaders and colleagues alike to take ownership of their roles, strengthening a culture of shared accountability and autonomy whilst building trust across the whole organisation.
- Setting clear leadership expectations at all levels and maintaining consistency in communication and decision-making, whilst addressing poor behaviours promptly. Role modelling ethical behaviours at all times.
- Holding leaders accountable for their actions, promoting ethical decision-making, and addressing poor behaviours promptly.
- Engaging with all staff through honest communication, recognising achievements, and involving employees in decision-making processes.
- Providing a clear direction for the organisation, tracking progress, and celebrating milestones along the way.
- Recognising the need for leaders to adapt their leadership styles to different situations and challenges, fostering a culture of flexibility and resilience.

These themes highlight the importance of fostering a positive organisational culture, where trust, inclusivity, and continuous improvement are prioritised, and where leaders are accountable, transparent, and committed to the development and wellbeing of their teams.



A high performing workforce

We will create a learning culture which provides consistency and equality of opportunity to allow everyone to achieve their full potential.

We will be innovative and creative in offering various opportunities and career pathways for people to develop and to ensure they have the right skills for their role.

Colleagues will benefit from regular performance conversations and development will be tailored, easy to access and available throughout our careers.



We will continue to create a high performing workforce by:

- Providing ongoing training and development opportunities to ensure that all colleagues are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge. Identifying clear pathways for career growth.
- Establishing partnerships where we can to provide development programs through apprenticeships and other training opportunities.
- Making sure that everybody has access to training and development tailored to individual needs with clear communication about available courses and opportunities.
- Ensuring fair and consistent processes for learning, development and progression.
- Fostering a culture of learning and innovation across all areas of the organisation, with active engagement and support for staff.
- Enabling the capture and sharing of lessons learned in all areas of our work and use these to build a culture where we learn from our mistakes.
- Embedding a Personal Performance and Development (PPD) system and process that enables conversations about performance, progression and setting objectives.
- Creating clear processes, resources and guidance for performance management by way of a person-centred professional approach.
- Ensuring we have robust ways to continually identify, nurture and develop leadership potential through our development centres.
- Ensuring we have processes and pathways to identify, nurture and develop high potential.

- Design and embed clear and consistent standards for all staff across the organisation.
- Adopting and embedding a growth mind-set approach and establish the principles of continuous improvement across our Service.











These themes highlight the importance of investing in staff development, ensuring fairness and inclusivity, and creating a culture where learning is valued and supported for all.



How we will demonstrate and measure our progress

This strategy is important as it involves all of us, no matter what our role in the Service. It's about collectively creating the Service we all want to see, where we all feel proud to serve and excited to come to work and make a difference.

We will measure our progress and be accountable for delivering this strategy through various methods. Our key guiding measures will be:

-  Monitoring our progress against our key performance indicators (KPIs).
-  Feedback from internal forums including outcome of People Survey, Strategic Safety Committee, People Committee, Diversity and Inclusion Commission.
-  Feedback from external forums including inspection outcomes of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspection, Devon Assurance Partnership and other audits.
-  Monitoring colleague concerns through routes such as Speak Up Guardians, confidential reporting lines and HR Business Partners.
-  Delivering the Safeguarding strategy.
-  Providing assurance against the Fire Standards as defined by the Fire Standards Board.
-  Delivering the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and plan.
-  Delivering the Target Operating Model.
-  Achieving the vision of the NFCC Culture action plan.
-  Analysing people data including absence monitoring, recruitment data and equality, diversity and inclusion data.



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Agenda Item 5

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	PC/24/10
MEETING	PEOPLE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	18 OCTOBER 2024
SUBJECT OF REPORT	PEOPLE SURVEY UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	ACFO TAYLOR, DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The People Survey was carried out between April and June of this year. It is the second year of doing this staff survey. This paper provides the results and next steps in using the feedback to drive improvements in the organisation.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	None
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	An initial assessment has not identified any equality issues emanating from this report.
APPENDICES	None.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Service held a People Survey between April and June 2024, to gather insight from our workforce (including volunteers) about how they feel within their role at Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.
- 1.2. This is the second full People Survey the Service has carried out, following on from 2023's full survey

2. RESPONDENTS

- 2.1. The survey gave people a confidential space to give feedback and gained 797 responses, which represents 44% of the workforce, and similar response rate to 2023.
- 2.2. This number of responses is above the industry-recognised confidence rating of 95% confidence with a 2.5% margin of error.
- 2.3. The survey asked people to select their role. This question was multiple choice as it was recognised that many of our workforce have multiple roles:

	Number of people in Service	Primary role selection	Secondary role selection	Total selected this role	Response rate
On-call firefighters	1101	212	142	354	32%
Wholetime firefighters	374	302	28	330	88%
Support staff	340	247	41	288	85%
Control	30	15	4	19	60%

- 2.4. The response rate for on-call firefighters remains lowest at 32%. Based on 1,101 on-call firefighters, to meet the industry standard confidence level of 95% with 5% margin of error we'd need 285 respondents so meet this threshold.
- 2.5. The bigger impact comes when looking at smaller departments. For Fire Control to meet the same confidence rating there would need to be 28 responses. 18 responses gives an 80% confidence level with a 10% margin of error.

3. OVERALL FINDINGS

- 3.1. The recommendation score for the Service as a whole has increased by one per cent to 59% agreement. Other fire and rescue services, which People Insight - who provide the analysis platform for the survey - work with have seen a decline overall, although remain a higher scoring than Devon and Somerset at an average of 63%.

- 3.2. The recommendation score for support staff increased to 65% from 48% last year. Conversely, the agreement for wholetime firefighters reduced to 50% this year compared with 59% last year. On-call firefighters also saw a decrease in agreement, 59% this year compared with 69% last year.
- 3.3. There is a correlation between departments where actions have been recorded and shared and an increase in agreement (see table below).
- 3.4. Decision making and feeling listened to are some of the key themes emerging from the free text responses for the Service as a whole.
- 3.5. Fewer respondents have said that they have witnessed or experienced bullying and harassment in the past twelve months, 13% this year compared with 22% last year.
- 3.6. Of the people who have witnessed or experienced bullying or harassment, fewer people have reported this year. Of those who did report it, 24% said they were updated about the outcome, and 19% agreed that they had seen an improvement since reporting the instance.
- 3.7. Trust in leadership has declined, with 19% of wholetime firefighters answering in agreement that they trust our leadership team to make decisions that support them and their colleagues. This changes to 29% of on-call firefighters and 50% of support staff.
- 3.8. There remains a large difference between how respondents see our values demonstrated by line managers compared with the Extended Leadership Team.

4. KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

- 4.1. The Extended Leadership Team (ELT) agreed on five areas of focus in the 2023 survey. The following analysis is divided into those areas, namely:
 - Inclusion of thought;
 - Bullying and harassment including reporting;
 - Trust in leadership;
 - Support staff; and
 - Working well together.

4.2. These areas of focus from the survey are set out in more depth in the next section.

5. INCLUSION OF THOUGHT

- 5.1. Opinions and ideas being valued and receiving feedback on input is an area highlighted by the responses. Questions which indicated this include:
 - 'I will be asked for my opinion to give input before decisions and made' (38% agreement, 31% disagreement)

- 'I feel my ideas and opinions are valued and I have the opportunity to share them' (59% agreement, 18% disagreement).

5.2. There has been little to no change in agreement for either of these questions compared with the previous year.

5.3. Decision making, listening and acting on feedback are key themes coming from the free text responses.

“Quite a few occasions in recent years where feedback from people at my level has been ignored - only to then find the decision that was made was wrong and needs to be unpicked.”

“I understand the requirement to save money and become more efficient across the service. However, I feel that all projects start with the end product already in mind and sold as this is something "you" could do. Rather than set out the objectives for the project and let good people run with it, making people feel included and valued as they really are contributing.”

6. **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT, INCLUDING REPORTING**

6.1. The survey asked whether respondents have witnessed or experienced bullying or harassment in the last 12 months.

6.2. In 2023, 68% answered no, 10% prefer not to say and 22% said yes. This has improved in 2024 to 78% answering no, 13% yes and 9% prefer not to say.

6.3. The proportion of people reporting instances of bullying and harassment has decreased, despite a higher number agreeing that they know how to report behaviour. Of the people who had witnessed or experienced bullying or harassment, 55% said they had reported it this year, compared with 62% last year.

6.4. The question about whether the outcome was satisfactory was changed this year to find out whether people had received an outcome, and whether they saw an improvement since reporting the instance.

6.5. 19% of people who reported bullying or harassment stated that there had been an improvement since reporting it, and 24% said that they had received an update.

7. **TRUST IN LEADERSHIP**

7.1. The question 'I trust our leadership team to make decisions that support me and my colleagues' has seen a year-on-year decrease.

- 2024 33% agreement and 36% disagreement, with 31% neutral.
- 2023 43% agreement and 39% disagreement, with 28% neutral.
- 2021 (Covid-themed survey) 56% answered in agreement.

- 7.2. The largest change has come from wholetime firefighters, of whom 19% answered in agreement.
- 7.3. Senior management (defined clearly as Service Leadership Team and Executive Board) demonstrating our Service values is consistently lower than line managers displaying the values, with honesty and working together being the least favourable responses.
- 7.4. Free text responses show comments about values and culture and employee voice.

“I really appreciate the work culture here and the ease with which we can engage in discussions with senior management.”

“Possibly due to the size of the organisation, I feel that the logic behind making (and often delaying) decisions is not always communicated in a timely or effective manner.”

“A year ago, I was concerned that although the majority of the Service held our core values dear, the senior leadership team treated them more like guidelines. Recently things seem better although I remain slightly sceptical. Of particular concern, I have not seen an acknowledgment that trust was poor and perhaps it might have been caused by previous poor behaviour. Overall, the Service has an exemplary culture, if we are to retain it, the SLT must demonstrate their commitment.”

8. SUPPORT STAFF

- 8.1. Support staff recommendation scores have increased from 48% in 2023 to 65% in 2024. The largest change has been about ability to focus on the bigger picture (20% more agreement), and about understanding how to progress in the Service (17% more agreement).
- 8.2. Comments from support staff show people proud to work for the Service, but also affected by high workloads, and some changes the Service has proposed.

“Overall, I feel proud, honoured and privileged to work for the Service. I still smile every time someone asks me what i do for a living. We are not perfect. But I feel we are trying to be the best we can be, and are always striving to improve. I am immensely proud to work for DSFRS.”

“I really value my team and my manager as well as a number of colleagues across the service but almost everyone I speak to is overwhelmed and constantly in back-to-back meetings and feeling like they cannot meet their goals or proactively deliver to the standard they would like.”

- 8.3. Good scores for current leadership so far, but the handling of the review of my department has made me a little cautious.

9. WORKING WELL TOGETHER

- 9.1. The average responses for each theme of the People Survey show that 'ways of working' has the lowest agreement, and highest disagreement rates.
- 9.2. Within this section, the question 'I feel that different parts of the Service are working well together' has a disagreement score of 32% and agreement of 37%, compared with 31% disagreement and 42% agreement last year.
- 9.3. Free text comments highlight systems and processes, tools and equipment, employee voice and cross-function communication as key themes.

"Interdepartmental working is improving but I do think there is still scope to improve this. For example, information sharing between departments does take place but greater emphasis and communication on what is priority info and how best to share it could still improve."

"There isn't enough joined up understanding of the work done by departments or the various projects going on in the Service and the impact of this on other departments/wider service/partnership. Sometimes decisions are made which are irreversible or require a lot of work to unpick because impacts haven't been identified or opinions of the right people are sought too late"

"It's really difficult to work cross-functionally due to conflicting priorities and staff often already been too overloaded to work on priorities for other departments."

10. ACTION PLANNING

- 10.1. Following the analysis of the results, the Extended Leadership Team (ELT) has met twice to look at improvement areas.
- 10.2. Based on the results provided, we have renamed the first topic area from 'inclusion of thought' to employee voice.
- 10.3. The Service also added an extra area of focus, called 'people impact'. This is in recognition of the feedback around how people are affected by change in the organisation and how we can lessen the impact of change.
- 10.4. ELT added desired outcomes against each of the topic area. A member of the Executive Board will take overall ownership of a topic area, with department heads responsible for actions that support the outcomes.
- 10.5. In most cases, given feedback about high workloads across the organisation, the actions will be about what we can do differently, rather than adding more work.

10.6. The outcomes are:

Theme	Outcome	Key actions
Employee voice	People feel confident that their views are heard, considered, and are given an honest response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearer engagement plans for change - Further development and embedding of feedback process to close the feedback loop - Clearly articulate how feedback has been listened to
Trust in leadership	People have trust in leaders at all levels, feel connected to them and have confidence in the management and direction of the Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create stability at Executive Board level - Clearly articulate strategy and direction - Establish consistent leadership practices - Implement professional standards - Development for how leaders can consistently engage and deliver messages
Handling of bullying and harassment	A culture where bullying and harassment is not tolerated, rarely experienced, and any issues are taken seriously and managed appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at appropriate feedback around case outcomes - Explore how we assure ourselves around case management - Management training around core skills. - Further embed the Speak Up Guardians
Working well together	Departments that work collaboratively towards shared goals and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint department planning on future priorities - Service Leadership Team collective priority setting - Better stakeholder engagement planning for pieces of work. - Building better connections and understanding between teams

Theme	Outcome	Key actions
Support staff	An environment where support staff feel included, supported to be at their best, and have clear development and progression opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving progression and development by opening up development sessions to support staff - Improving training and development opportunities - Reinstating professional membership payments where required as part of role and responsibility
People impact	People feel empowered and part of the Service, its future and any changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robust change management plans - People Impact Assessments frequently reviewed through change process - Being clear on influence people have over change - Genuine listening facilitated by trained professionals. - Keeping to agreed messages, being aware of the impact of mixed messaging.

11. **CONCLUSION**

- 11.1. The People Survey is now fully established as a valuable listening exercise. People are feeling able and safe to give honest feedback.
- 11.2. The responsibility of the leadership team is to use this feedback to reinforce what is working well and look to put actions in place on areas identified for feedback.
- 11.3. The results of these will be evaluated in future People Surveys.

ACFO GERALD TAYLOR
Director of Service Delivery

Agenda Item 6

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	PC/24/11
MEETING	PEOPLE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	18 OCTOBER 2024
SUBJECT OF REPORT	HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY & FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) ACTION PLAN UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the Committee reviews progress in delivery of the action plan.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>On 27th July 2022, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published the DSFRS 2022 inspection report. The inspection report identified one Cause of Concern and 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs). Of these AFIs, eight have been linked to the People Committee.</p> <p>Since the inspection report, two national thematic reports have been published by HMICFRS. The first, published on 31 March 2023, examined the values and culture in fire and rescue services. The second, published on 01 August 2024, examined standards of behaviour and the handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services.</p> <p>A new approach has been implemented for all remaining Areas for Improvement (AFIs) from the 2021/22 inspection report and national recommendation from HMICFRS. This approach aligns the actions from each improvement area with the relevant Fire Standards criteria. This will provide continued assurance of the outcomes over time.</p> <p>This report outlines the progress that has been made against the HMICFRS Areas for Improvement and national recommendations since the last update to the committee in July 2024. The key highlights are that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three areas for improvement are currently marked as 'In Progress – Off Track'. This is due to the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The recruitment policy has been dependent on the People Strategy, current recruitment controls and the Safeguarding strategy (due to DBS and Safer Recruitment). It is expected that this will be out for consultation by the 31/10/2024. A further update will be provided by the People Services Team at the committee meeting.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Considered within the Action Plan where appropriate.

EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	Considered within the Action Plan where appropriate.
APPENDICES	A. HMI People Committee Update
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. On 27th July 2022 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published the DSFRS 2022 inspection report. The inspection report identified one Cause of Concern and 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs). Of these AFIs, eight have been linked to the People Committee.
- 1.2. On 31 March 2023, HMICFRS published a report into the values and culture in fire and rescue services. The report contained 35 recommendations, 1 specific for the police, 14 which required action at a national level and 20 which were specific for fire and rescue services
- 1.3. 01 August 2024 HMICFRS published a report into standards of behaviour and the handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services. The report contained 15 recommendations to chief fire officers, fire and rescue authorities and others.
- 1.4. This report outlines the progress that has been made against the HMICFRS Areas for Improvement and national recommendations since the last update to the committee.

2. ALIGNMENT TO FIRE STANDARDS

- 2.1. The Fire Standards Board oversees the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England. These are presented in a series of approved 'Fire Standards', developed in consultation with stakeholders from services across the country.
- 2.2. Each Fire Standard contains a number of criteria which services 'must', 'should' or 'may' implement in order to provide assurance against the required standard.
- 2.3. A new approach has been implemented for all remaining Areas for Improvement (AFIs) from the 2021/22 inspection report, recommendations from the HMICFRS report into values and culture and recommendations from the HMICFRS report into standards of behaviour. This approach aligns the actions from each improvement area with the relevant Fire Standards criteria.
- 2.4. This will support an assurance-based approach to the monitoring of actions, ensuring the Service has continued assurance of outcomes over time, rather than just a compliance assessment at the time of closure.

3. CAUSE OF CONCERN ACTION COMPLETION STATUS

- 3.1. The Cause of Concern is as follows:

The service has shown a clear intent from the executive board to improve the culture of the service. However, more needs to be done throughout the organisation. We have found evidence of poor behaviours that are not in line with service values. Some staff didn't have the confidence to report these issues. By 31st August 2022, the service should develop an action plan to:

- Make sure that its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation.

- Make sure that staff are trained and supported to identify and challenge inappropriate behaviour when identified and that they have clear mechanisms in place to raise their concerns.

3.2. All actions under the cause of concern have now been marked as completed. The recommendation for closure was approved by Executive Board on 19 March 2024.

3.3. The Cause of Concern has now been transitioned into Service business as usual. Progress on improving organisational culture will continue to be an area of focus

4. **AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN COMPLETION STATUS**

4.1. Areas for Improvement closed prior to this report: 2 (of 8)

4.2. Table 1 below lists the open Areas for Improvement linked to the People Committee and their individual status.

Table 1:

Reference	Description	Target Completion	Status
HMI-3.1-202208	Secondary Contracts	30/09/2024	In Progress – Off Track
HMI-3.2-202210	Temporary Promotions		
HMI-3.4-202213	Selection and Promotions Process		
HMI-3.2-202209	Workforce Planning	30/09/2024 31/12/2024	In Progress – On Track
HMI-3.4-202214	PDR Process	30/04/2024 30/06/2024 30/11/2024	In Progress – On Track
HMI-3.4-202215	High Potential Staff	TBC	Paused

5. **VALUES AND CULTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1. Values and Culture Recommendations closed prior to this report: 16 (of 20)

5.2. HMICFRS required services to provide a final update on the status and progress against each of the culture recommendations by Tuesday 19/03/2024. The recommendations outlined in table 2 below have remained marked as 'In Progress'.

Table 2:

Reference	Description	Target Completion	Status
REC09	Background checks	30/11/2024	In Progress – On Track
REC12	Staff disclosure, complaint and grievance handling standard		
REC14	Misconduct allegations standard		
REC32	Diversity in succession planning	01/01/2024 31/12/2024	In Progress – On Track

6. **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1. Table 3 below lists the recommendations made in the HMICFRS report on standards of behaviour and the handling of misconduct and their individual status.

Table 3:

Reference	Description	Target Completion	Status
REC02	Probationary Policy	01/02/2025	Closed
REC12	Welfare Support	31/08/2024	Closed
REC01	Code of Ethics (SB)	TBC	Not Started
REC03	Watch Movements	TBC	Not Started
REC04	Professional Standards	31/01/2025	In Progress – On Track
REC05	Raising a Concern	TBC	Not Started
REC06	Training for Managers	31/01/2025	In Progress – On Track
REC07	Misconduct Policies	31/10/2024	In Progress – On Track

REC08	Allegations of Misconduct		
REC09	Case Management	31/05/2025	In Progress – On Track
REC10	Misconduct Investigations	TBC	Not Started
REC11	Misconduct Investigation Training		
REC13b	Appeals Training		
REC13a	Appeals Process	01/11/2024	In Progress – On Track
REC14	Performance Against Misconduct Issues	TBC	Not Started
REC15	Learning from Misconduct	31/01/2025	In Progress – On Track

7. AREAS WHICH ARE 'OFF-TRACK'

7.1 Table 4 overleaf outlines three areas for improvement which are currently marked as 'In Progress – Off Track'.

Table 4:

Ref	Improvement Area
HMI-3.1-202208	Secondary Contracts
HMI-3.2-202210	Temporary Promotions
HMI-3.4-202213	Selection and Promotions Process
Description	
<p>The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure working hours are not exceeded.</p> <p>The service should address the high number of staff in temporary promotion positions.</p> <p>The service should make sure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open and fair, and that feedback is available to staff.</p>	
Factors impacting delivery	
<p>The recruitment policy has been dependent on the People Strategy, current recruitment controls and the Safeguarding strategy (due to DBS and Safer Recruitment). It is expected that this will be out for consultation by the 31/10/2024.</p> <p><i>A further update will be provided by the People Services Team at the committee meeting.</i></p>	

8. **ACTION DEADLINE EXTENSIONS**

The tables below outline three areas which have had a deadline extension since the last report to the People Committee.

Ref	Improvement Area
HMI-3.2-202209	Workforce Planning
REC32	Diversity in succession planning
Reason for deadline extension	
<p>Strategic workforce planning meetings continue on a two monthly basis. Key short term and medium-term actions are ongoing. However, longer term planning is required and a strategic work force plan is being drafted. Further information is required from the completion of the fire cover review (to be concluded by end of October). Completion date revised to allow for appropriate information to be collated.</p>	

Ref	Improvement Area
HMI-3.4-202214	PDR Process
Reason for deadline extension	
Testing has now been completed. The target completion date for this AFI has been moved to align with the 'go live' date for the PPD module.	

GAVIN ELLIS
Chief Fire Officer