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Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority Community Safety Committee

Date: Friday 7 October 2022 **Time:** 10:00am

Venue: Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Headquarters, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP

Members are requested to attend the above meeting to be held at the time, place and date mentioned to transact the following business

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Clerk to the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

Agenda	Pages
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**Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee**

Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Headquarters, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on Friday 17 June 2022 from 10:00am to 11:06am

Membership

Present

Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Chair)
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Nick Raine
Councillor Dave Trimble
Councillor Roger Upton

Absent

None

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Bryn Coleman - Area Manager for Prevention and Protection
Andy Macey - Area Manager for Response
Adrian Mann - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council
Craig Parkin - Chief Fire Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

None.

2 Declarations of Interests

None.

3 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2022 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

4 Service Delivery Performance Report

Bryn Coleman, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, and Andy Macey, Area Manager for Response, presented a report on the performance of the Service Delivery Directorate. The following points were discussed:

- (a) as at 31 May, the Service has attended 1,916 incidents. This represents an 8% increase overall when compared to the same period in the previous year, with 8.8% more false alarms, 5.7% more fires and 11.1% more special service calls (such as road traffic collisions). However, lockdown restrictions were still in place during April and May 2021, so this will have reduced the number of incidents during that period – meaning that incidents are now returning to pre-pandemic levels. Proportionally, the incident numbers per month remain largely consistent to those recorded for the preceding three years, with the highest levels in the City of Nottingham;
- (b) the number of fires continues to follow a pattern of peaking in the spring months, remaining relatively high throughout the summer, and then dropping down again during the autumn and winter. However, most of the fires that occur during the peak periods are of a relatively low level of severity. The instances of more dangerous fires (which represent a serious hazard or immediate threat to life) have remained stable across the period;
- (c) the number of special service and false alarm cases remained relatively constant across the last 12 months. The Service is considering its response to false alarms carefully, and has a target to achieve a 3% reduction in incidents. A risk-based approach has been taken to seek to ensure that the response to false alarms is as efficient as possible, to ensure that the best use can be made of the Service's limited resources. So far, the Service has responded to 418 false alarms (a 0.48% decrease on the same period last year), and is working closely with businesses to reduce the number of incidents further;
- (d) a key performance target is that all emergency incidents are attended within 8 minutes on average, from the time when the first fire appliance is mobilised. To date, the Service is achieving an average attendance time of 7 minutes 59 seconds overall, and the target has also been achieved in the majority of the previous 12 months;
- (e) to ensure that operational incidents are managed appropriately and safely, and for the purpose of continuous improvement, there is a performance target for the active monitoring of 10% of all operational incidents (which reflects the sector standard). The Service has consistently outperformed this target over the last 12 months, with active monitoring carried out for around 20% of incidents. This monitoring is important as the involvement of senior officers at operational incidents helps to improve preparedness at all levels, and the target for monitoring levels is reviewed annually. The Committee requested that the detail of the next review processes for the target levels of active monitoring for operation incidents is reported to the appropriate meeting;
- (f) in the year to date, twelve out of the sixteen on-call sections are performing above the target of 85% appliance availability, which represents an overall improvement (reaching 87.39% availability overall, on average). On-call availability at the Day Shift Crewing stations has been strong. However, availability at Southwell is below the Service's 70% minimum standard;
- (g) on-call recruitment and retention continues to be a challenge both in Southwell and across the sector, and this has a direct impact on availability. However,

people's working patterns have changed following the Coronavirus pandemic, and targeted recruitment activity is underway to seek to take advantage of this. A pilot scheme intended to improve retention through more flexible on-call contracts is also progressing well. The Committee requested that a report is provided to a future meeting to illustrate how the current recruitment activity is targeted and carried out;

- (h) the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Control Centre has three key performance measures. The first is that 96% of 999 calls are answered within 7 seconds. While performance slipped slightly in quarters 1 and 3 of 2021/22, the target has been met in four of the last six quarters. The second performance measure is that calls for the highest-risk incidents are handled within 89 seconds, on average. There was strong improvement in this area during 2021/22, with call handling times being as low as 82 seconds in the last two completed quarters;
- (i) finally, there is a performance measure that the availability of the computerised mobilisation system is 99%. Unfortunately, the performance of this ICT system has fallen short of the target for the last five quarters. Mitigations are in place and work is ongoing to address and manage the issues that this creates for effective mobilisation, and the Service is working closely with the system supplier to both identify and address the faults and concerns. The mobilising system is due for replacement in 2024, and a project to manage this began in March 2022. The Committee noted that, as a number of new members joined the Authority in May, it would be beneficial for a briefing note to be produced for all members on the background to any long-running issues such as this that are affecting the Service, currently;
- (j) a full training scheme is in place, with the 2022/23 exercise programme now underway. This includes practical exercises in the field, covering a wide range and scale of incidents, and all firefighters are expected to undertake at least one of these exercises each year. In addition, there is a new requirement for firefighters to complete two table-top training exercises per year;
- (k) 13,018 Safe and Well Visits were carried out in 2021/22, which exceeded the target of 12,000. The people most at risk during a fire are those with reduced mobility, so there is a particular focus on carrying out visits to those aged over 65 and those who consider themselves to have a disability. As part of the Service's person-centred approach, a new 'Vulnerable Persons' module has been added for teams carrying out Safe and Well Visits to record the details of each vulnerable person within a given residence, and this new system is being bedded in. An Occupational Therapist is in place to help engage with the people most at risk, and has helped to create strong links with the NHS and its databases. Work is underway with the NHS to help at-risk people improve their mobility;
- (l) 'Safety Zone' events for Year 6 school pupils are being developed as part of the engagement process with children and young people, with a particular focus on areas where incidents are high. The events are arranged for locations that are of a suitable size, but are also affordable and as easily as accessible as possible to the target attendees. The events will be multi-agency based and, as well as focusing on fire safety, will address rail safety, cyber safety, electricity sub-station

safety and stranger danger. The Service is also actively engaged in a multi-agency delivery of road safety awareness and intervention;

- (m) the Building Safety Act has now passed into law and expected to be fully operational by October 2023. This is likely to have resourcing implications as there is a requirement for the Service to support the new Building Safety Regulator. The Health and Safety Executive is investigating the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams across the country to support the Regulator, and the Service will make the case that Nottinghamshire would be a good location for one of these. However, although there will be a greater onus on Fire and Rescue Services to ensure that building fire safety is improved, there are a great deal of elements involved in the process of constructing a building that are outside their control. Ultimately, more investment is required in Fire Protection now, in order to be able to meet the likely future resourcing requirements – though this need sits within the context of reducing budgets, presenting significant challenges;
- (n) the Government is starting a consultation with the sector on the implementation of the Building Safety Act, and a response will be returned through the National Fire Chiefs' Council. The Committee suggested that a notification system to Local Authorities should be considered for property schemes falling under permitted development, as Local Authorities can often be unaware that the nature of a premises has been changed, which could have implications for fire safety;
- (o) 156 Fire Safety Audits have been carried out, so far. Inspectors review all non-residential premises where a fire has occurred, respond to complaints from the public, carry out any required safety enforcement activity, and engage in the Planning consultation process for new buildings. Ultimately, there are around 45,000 business premises that should be inspected over the next three years, and the number of premises subject to inspection is also likely to increase during this time;
- (p) a great deal of work is required to carry out the inspections, as part of ensuring that the built environment does comply with fire safety standards. As such, inspections must be targeted effectively and the top 10% of buildings of highest risk have been identified as a priority. Ensuring that all required buildings are inspected within the needed timeframe represents a significant challenge, but the current performance trajectory is moving in the right direction;
- (q) to support the inspectors' workload, training is underway for Crew and Watch Managers in Fire Protection so that crews can carry out Business Safety Checks for the lower-risk premises. A large number of business were closed during the Coronavirus pandemic, so it was not possible to inspect them during this time. However, the number of audits is now returning to normal levels. Overall, it is vital that all firefighters are trained to have experience in basic Fire Protection so that the specialist inspectors can focus on the most complex cases, and this will also increase the knowledge base available in responding to incidents. More investment is also being made in the training of Fire Engineers, and it takes at least two years to train staff in these specialist roles;
- (r) the Service has conducted 36 premises inspections (and 27 re-inspections) as part of the Joint Audit Inspection Team (JAIT). This is a collaboration with

Nottingham City Council whereby Environmental Health Inspectors and Fire Safety Inspectors work together to review high-rise residential buildings. These JAiT inspections have covered 59 buildings and 6,447 units of accommodation, but there are still 84 buildings over 18 meters high and 62 buildings below 18 meters high left to inspect – many of which are complex and resource-intensive, in the context of Fire Protection. It will take a number of years to complete these inspections, including any new buildings that are constructed in the meantime. As only the Service has the authority to carry out the relevant enforcement action where required, all inspections must be completed using internal staffing. However, it is possible that JAiT activity will form part of the work of the new Regulator, going forward;

- (s) many students live in complex, high-rise building and, although students often do not fit the CHARLIE profile for those most at risk in a fire, proactive work is carried out at their accommodation on what residents should do in the event of a fire. Work is also taking place with students on limiting the number of false alarms;
- (t) the Committee considered that developers have a responsibility to ensure that their buildings are constructed and operated safely. Ultimately, Fire and Rescue Services nationally must be funded sufficiently to achieve the right level of resourcing to address the important area of Fire Protection as effectively as possible.

The Committee noted the report.

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 07 October 2022

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an update on the performance of the Service Delivery Directorate.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Service Delivery involves the delivery of key functions to the communities in Nottinghamshire including prevention, protection, and response activities.
- 1.2 This report is based upon performance and activities undertaken by Service Delivery.

2. REPORT

RESPONSE

- 2.1 Between 01 April and 31 August 2022, a total of 5,561 incidents were attended by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS). This constitutes a 27% increase in incidents when compared to the same period in 2021/22. This increase has been driven by 13% more false alarms, 9% more special service calls and 52% more fires. The increases in false alarms and special service calls can be partly explained by the fact that lockdown restrictions remained in April and May 2021. The significant increase in fires has been driven by the unprecedented call demand experienced in July and August due to the period of extreme weather.
- 2.2 In 2021/22, NFRS attended a total of 10,096 incidents. This was a 12.28% increase on incidents attended during the more widely lockdown affected, 2020/21.
- 2.3 Figure 1 shows the incident numbers per month remain largely consistent to the preceding three years, apart from the exceptional demand in July and August.

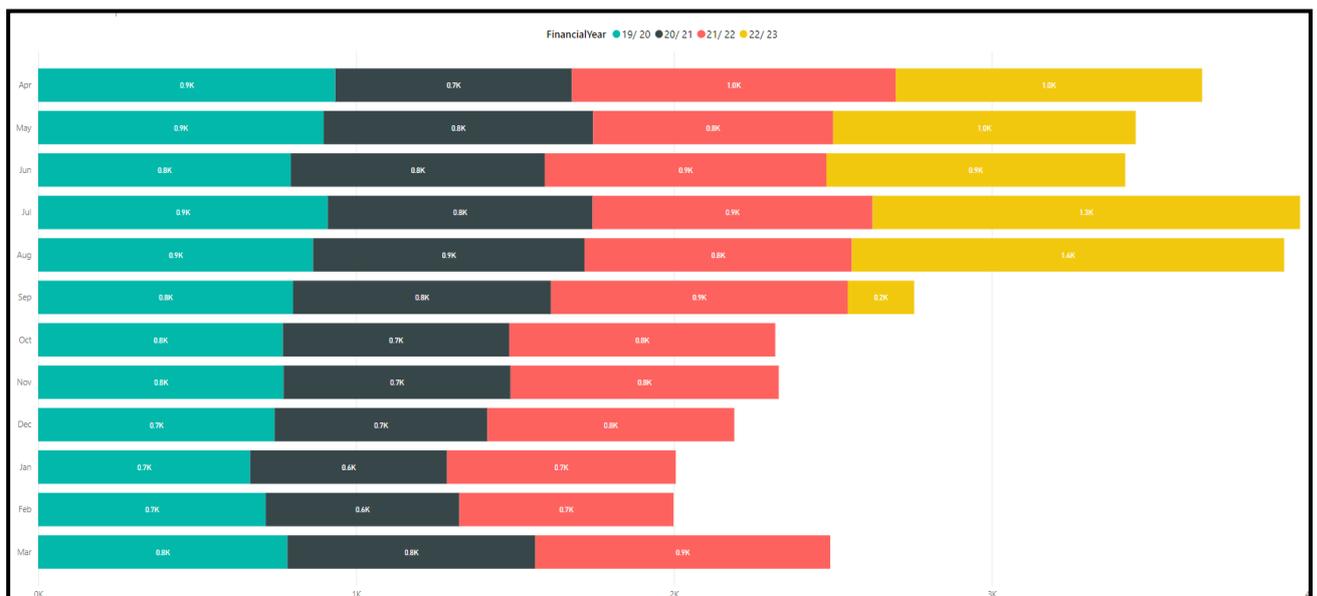


Figure 1: Incidents attended by month, 2019/20 – 2022/23

- 2.4 A breakdown of incident types attended over the last 12 months can be seen in Figure 2. The level of special service calls and false alarms remain largely

consistent throughout the 12-month period. Traditionally, fires follow a typical pattern of being relatively low in the autumn and winter, peaking in the spring and remaining relatively high throughout the summer. The unprecedented number of fire incidents in July and August have seen a change to this pattern this year.

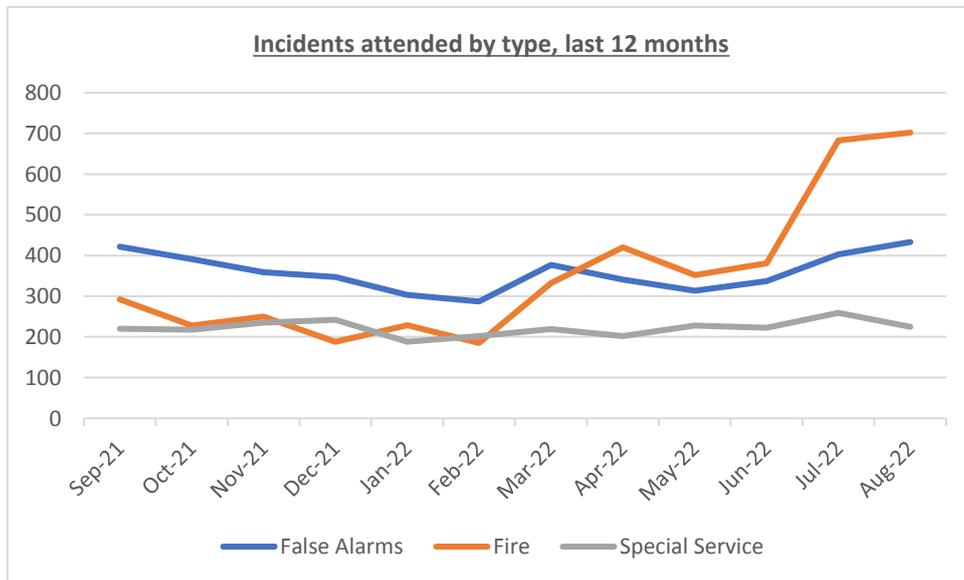


Figure 2: Incidents attended by type, last 12 months

2.5 Further analysis of fire incidents in July and August (see Figure 3) shows the scale of the challenges the Service encountered during the height of summer 2022/23. Every fire type incident increased with those particularly impacted by the hot weather, 'other outdoor', 'grassland' and 'refuse' increasing by 236%, 327% and 93% respectively.

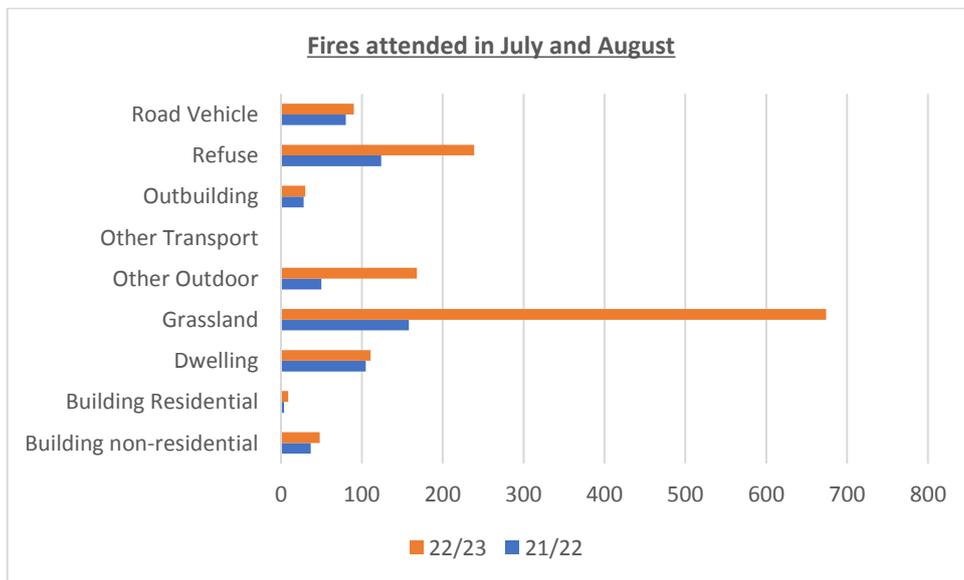


Figure 3, Comparison of Fire incidents in July and August 21/22 to 22/23

2.6 A breakdown of incidents by Priority Type (see below for definitions) for the last 12 months can be seen in Figure 4. Whilst P1 and P2 incidents have remained relatively stable over this period, the exceptional demand in July and August was largely driven by a significant increase in P3 fires.

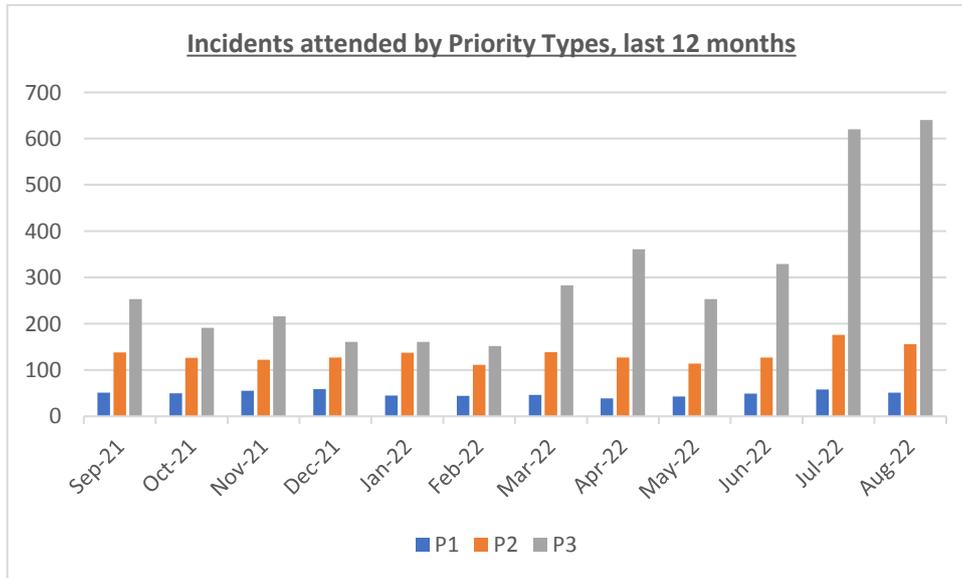


Figure 4: Incidents attended by Priority Type, last 12 months

- P1 incidents – pose an immediate threat to human life or pose a risk of severe human injury where intervention has the potential to save life and/or reduce the risk.
- P2 incidents – pose a serious hazard and high-risk threat to the environment, society, property, or heritage – and FRS immediate response.
- P3 incidents – pose a potential hazard to human life, the environment, society, property or heritage or incidents which pose a confirmed low hazard to human life.

2.7 A key Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) target is that all emergency incidents will be attended on average, within 8 minutes (480 seconds) from the time the first fire appliance is mobilised. As of 31 May, the Service was achieving an average attendance time of 7:59 minutes (479 seconds). However, the unprecedented demand in July and August has necessitated appliances to attend incidents much further from their local area and in more remote and difficult locations. For example, in August there were 413 mobilisations that took more than 10 minutes for an appliance to arrive and 81 incidents where further investigation was required due to 'no sign of fire' or 'difficult access' prior to the appliance being able to 'book in attendance'. This has resulted in the average attendance time rising to 8 minutes and 36 seconds (516 seconds) as of 31 August. Figure 5 shows the monthly average attendance times. The Service expects the average to reduce over the winter months (as it has done in previous years).

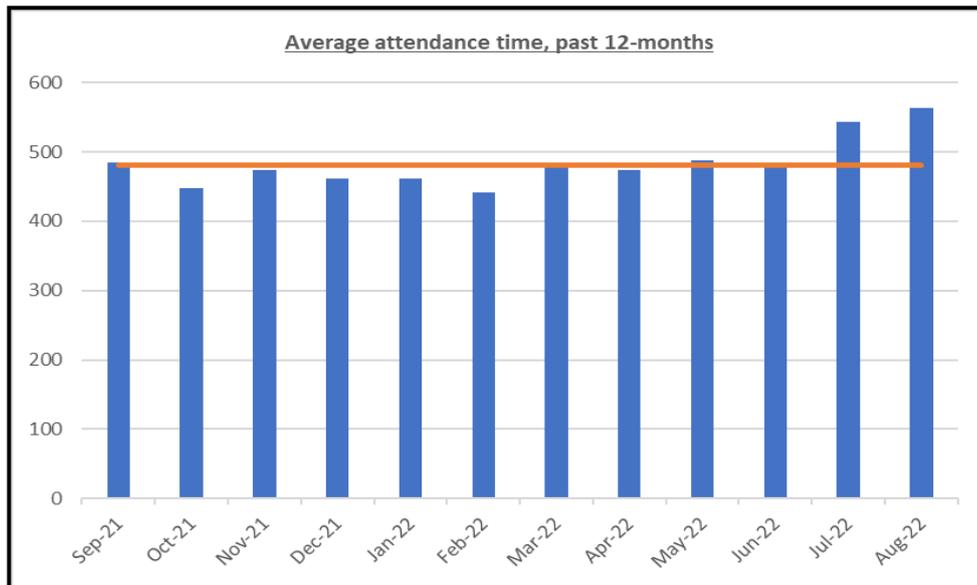


Figure 5: Average attendance time compared to target, past 12-months

2.8 On Call availability in 2022/23 is averaging 85.97%. This is above the Service target of 85%. Figure 6 shows a breakdown by station.

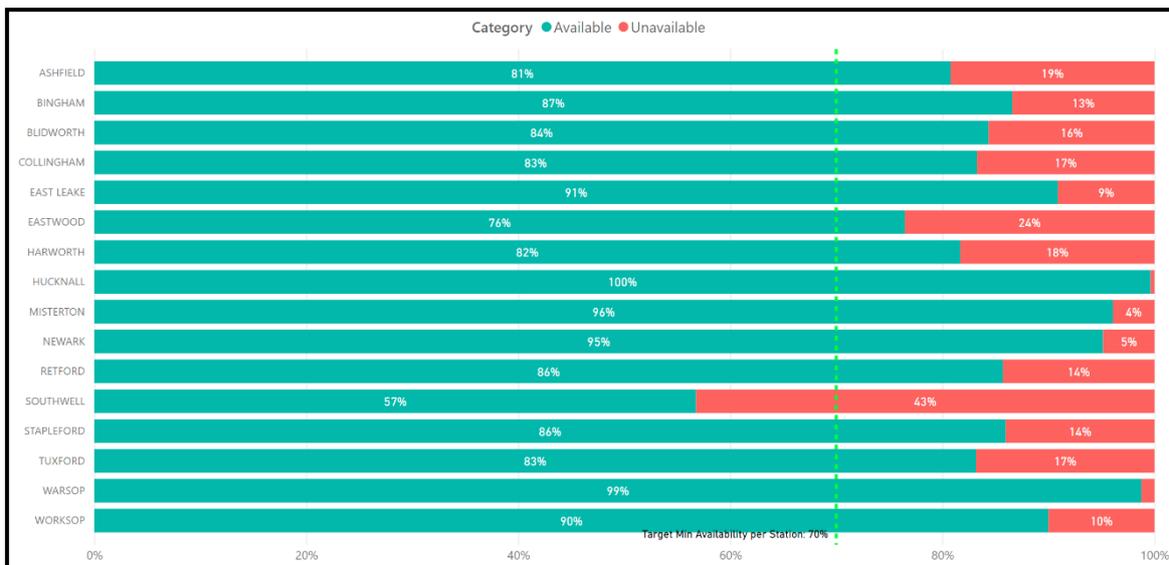


Figure 6: On-call Appliance Availability by Station, 2022-23

Since April, nine On Call sections are performing above the target of 85% availability (this is a slight drop on 2021/22 where 10 sections achieved this). The highest levels of availability have been at Hucknall (100%), Misterton (96%), Newark (95%) and Warsop (99%). However, availability at Southwell has been below the Service's 70% minimum standard. On Call recruitment continues to be a challenge, particularly in areas such as Southwell, and this has a direct impact on availability.

2.9 To provide a longer-term overview, Figure 7 shows On Call availability per quarter since the start of 2019/20. Over this period, with the exception of Q2, 2021/22, the 85% target has been consistently met.

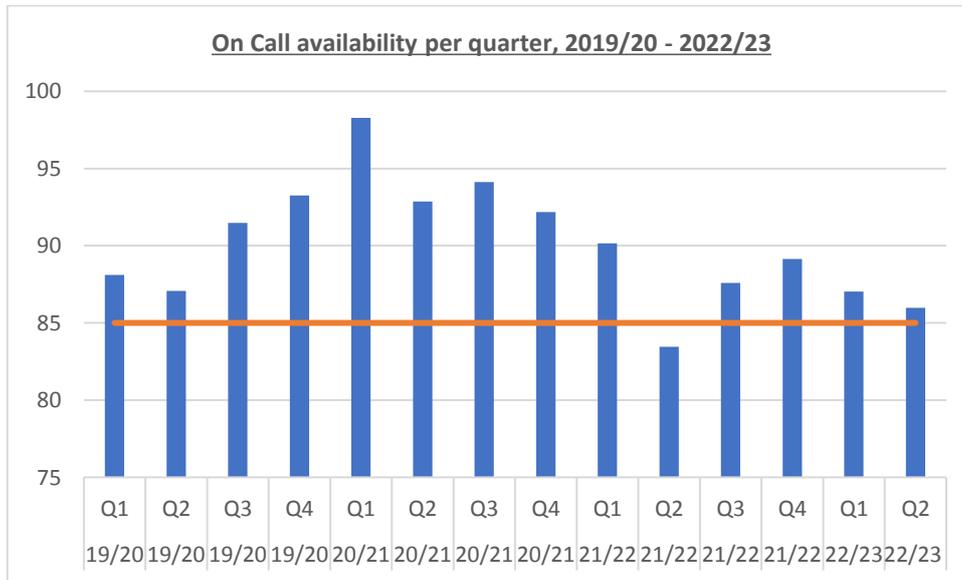


Figure 7: On-call Availability, per quarter since 2019/20

2.10 As previously requested by Members, a specific focus is given to On Call appliance availability at the Day Shift Crewing (DSC) stations. Both Ashfield and Retford operate one Wholtime and one On Call appliance between 08:00 - 19:00, and two On Call appliances between 19:00 – 08:00.

2.11 Year to date (31 August), Ashfield DSC reports:

- Over 24-hours one On Call appliance has been available for 80.78% of the time. (Average throughout 2021/22 was 78.65%).
- Between 08:00 and 19:00 one On Call appliance has been available for 67.53% of the time. (Average throughout 2021/22 was 64.23%).
- Between 19:00 and 08:00 at least one On Call appliance has been available for 90.24% of the time and two On Call appliances have been available for 19.76% of the time. (Average throughout 2021/22 was 88.91% and 20.47% respectively).

2.12 Year to date (31 May), Retford DSC reports:

- Over 24-hours one On Call appliance has been available for 91.36% of the time. (Average throughout 2021/22 was 87.90%).
- Between 08:00 and 19:00 one On Call appliance has been available for 83.85% of the time. (Average throughout 2021/22 was 80.37%).
- Between 19:00 and 08:00 at least one On Call appliance has been available for 96.72% of the time and two On Call appliances have been available for 33.05% of the time. (Average throughout 2021/22 was 93.26% and 27.46% respectively).

2.13 A key part of the Service’s ongoing commitment is to ensure resources are mobilised to emergency incidents in a timely manner. As part of the ‘Functional Collaboration Agreement’, between Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Services and the ongoing monitoring of Joint Control (JC), three key performance measures are monitored.

2.14 The first JC metric is the % of 999 calls answered within seven seconds. The target for this is 96%. Figure 8 shows performance over the last six completed quarters. Performance dropped below target in Q1 (22/23) due to the increased number of calls received (as evidenced in Figure 1 and Figure 3).

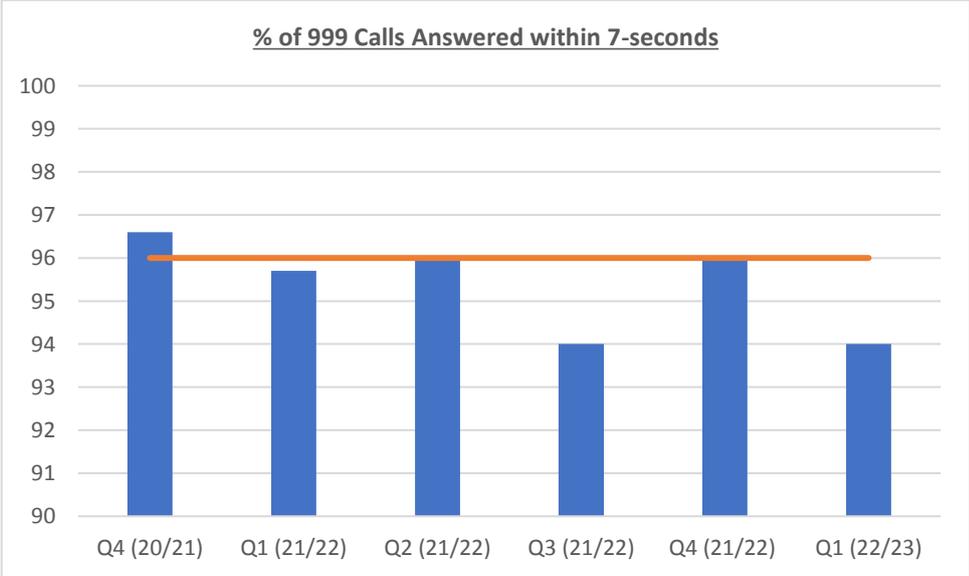


Figure 8: % of 999 calls answered within 7 seconds, previous six quarters.

2.15 The second JC metric is the average call-handling times for P1 and P2 incidents (described in Paragraph 2.6 above). The target for these is within 89 seconds. This performance measure was introduced in April 2021, Figure 9 shows performance over the last five completed quarters. There was strong improvement in this area over 2021/22, with call handling times for P1 and P2 incidents being as low as 82 seconds. Whilst Q1 (22/23) handling times have risen (due to the increased number of calls compared to the previous two quarters), they are still below the target and an improvement on the same quarter last year.

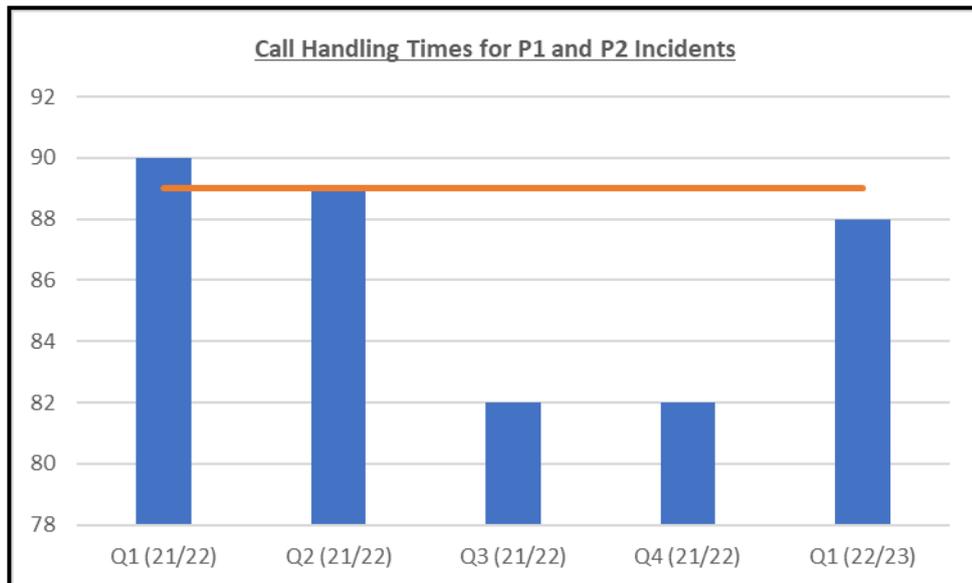


Figure 9: Average Call Handling Time for P1 and P2 incidents, previous four quarters

2.16 The final JC metric is mobilisation system availability. The target for this is 99.0%. Figure 10 shows performance over the last six quarters.

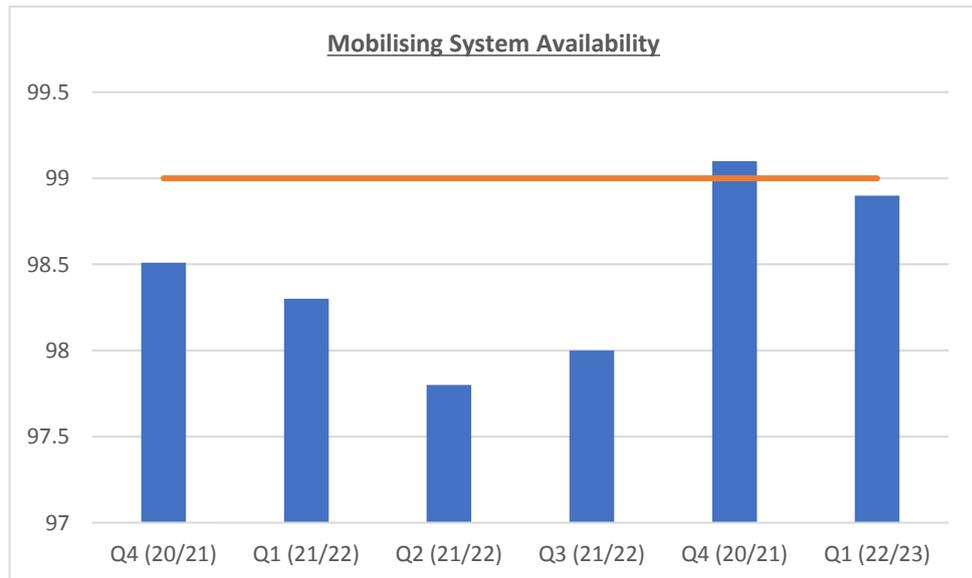


Figure 10: Mobilisation System Availability, previous six quarters

Availability of the mobilising system has improved significantly in the last two completed quarters. Work is ongoing to address and manage the Service's and Tri- Services' mobilising system availability. The Service works closely with its mobilising supplier, Systel, to both identify and address faults and concerns.

The Tri-Service mobilising system is due for replacement in 2024, and a replacement project began on 01 March 2022.

2.17 Exercises form a key part of the maintenance of competence of operational staff. Every Response Crew and First Call Officer (FCO) is expected to undertake at least one practical exercise per year. These vary in scale from 'District' to 'Service' level and typically involve known risk sites, targeted incident themes, special appliances, over-border resources and a multi-

agency response. In addition to the practical exercise programme, the Service has introduced the requirement for every Response Crew to undertake two tabletop exercises facilitated by an FCO. In 2021/22 a full exercise programme was completed and the 2022/23 exercise programme is underway.

PREVENTION

2.18 The Service completed 4,829 safe and well Visits (SWVs) between 01 April and 31 August 2022. The target for 2022/23 is 13,000 SWVs and the Service has now completed 37.15% of these.

2.19 Of the total number of SWVs carried out, over 54% have been to the over 65 age group and over 40% to disabled persons, all of which are more at risk of a fire in the home.

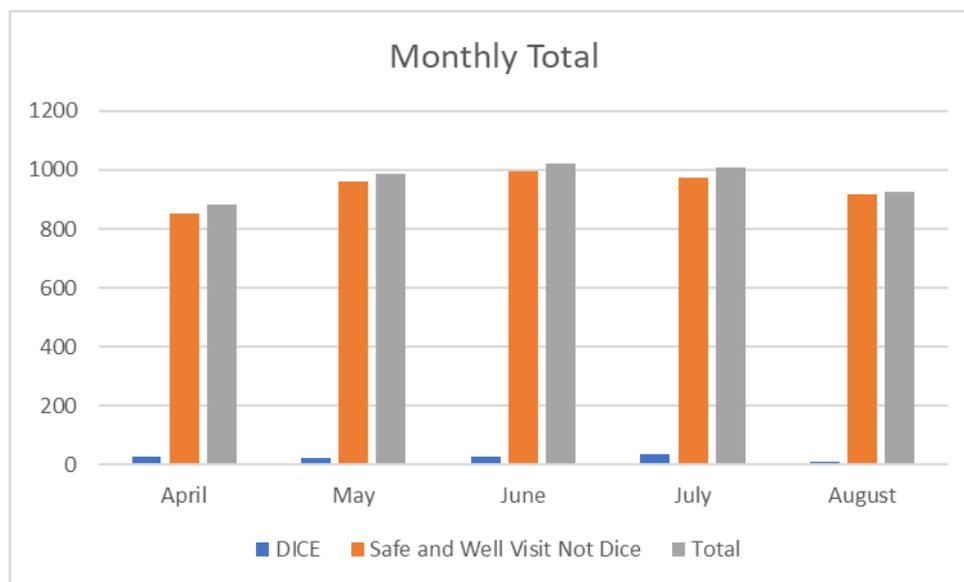


Figure 11, SWVs completed per month 22/23

2.20 The Service has delivered two Safety-Zone events during June at Ranby Preparatory School and Ashfield Fire Station, schools from the north of the County were invited on a risk priority basis. There are further Safety-Zone events planned for two weeks in September covering the south of the county.

2.21 Safety-Zone focuses on the provision of safety information for Yr6 school children with support from a range of partner organisations including Nottinghamshire Police, British Transport Police, Western Power, The Dogs Trust, Royal National Lifeboat Institution, VIA (County road safety team) and East Midlands Ambulance Service. Over the two events held in June, 1,442 Yr6 pupils attended.

2.22 In addition to Safety-Zone, between April and August 2022, the Education Team has delivered safety assemblies to over 500 secondary school pupils. These focus on the prevention of false alarms and hoax calls. The package that NFRS has created for this intervention has now been adopted by the National Fire Chiefs Council as part of their Stay-wise education initiative for key stage three pupils.

2.23 The Service is also actively engaged with road safety interventions such as Biker Down. Since April there have been four Biker Down courses with the next one planned at Mansfield Fire Station on 21 September. Other interventions being planned include joint Operation Highway events with Nottinghamshire Police and Multi-Agency Road Safety awareness days across schools and colleges in the City and County.

PROTECTION

2.24 The completion of 1,200 Fire Safety Audits (FSAs) in 2022/23 is a key CRMP commitment. Between 01 April and 31 August, the Service has completed 463 FSAs. Of these, 98 required informal action and 14 required formal notices to be issued. Figure 12 shows the number of FSAs that have been undertaken over the last three years as a month-by-month comparison.

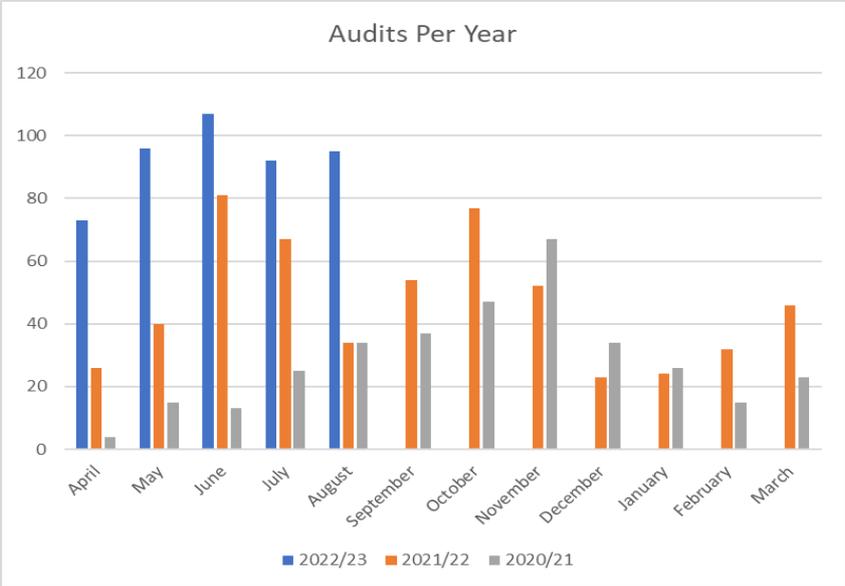


Figure 12, FSAs completed by month

2.25 The completion of 500 Business Safety Checks (BSCs) in 2022/23 is a key CRMP commitment. Between 01 April and 31 August, the Service has completed 156 BSCs, which is 34 below target. This below target performance is primarily caused by several supervisory managers still working towards qualification and competency.

2.26 In addition to FSAs and BSCs, the Service has also completed the following protection activities between 01 April and 31 August, compared to the same period during 21/22.

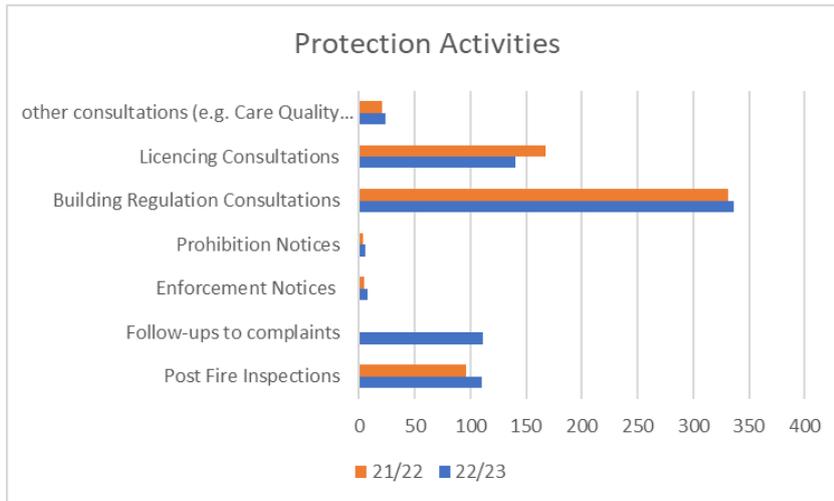


Figure 13, Number of UWFSs per month

2.27 The CRMP targets a 3% annual reduction in both unwanted fire signals (UWFS) and lift rescues in 2022/23. Between 01 April and 31 August, the Service has responded to 1,717 UWFS (a 4.63% increase on the same period in 2021/22) and 81 lift rescues (a 14.08% increase on the same period in 2021/22). Figure 14 shows the number of UWFSs month by month for the last 3 years.

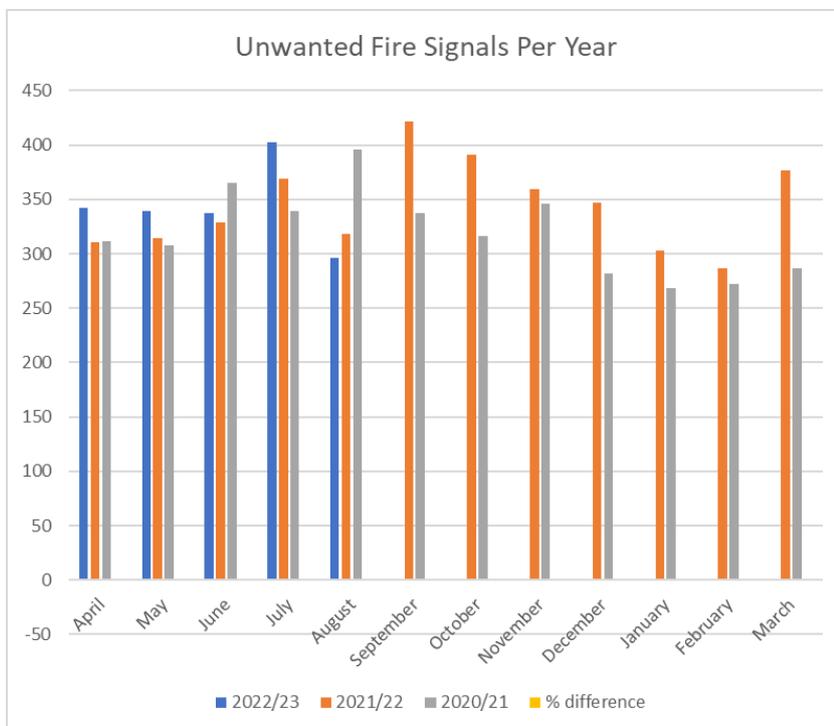


Figure 14, Number of UWFSs per month

A future report will be brought back to Members detailing options available to drive down UWFS to meet the agreed CRMP target.

- 2.28 Following every UWFS, the premises owner (for non-domestic premises) receives a letter from NFRS outlining their responsibilities in relation to fire safety. Following a fourth occurrence, the premises is contacted by the Service's Business Education Advocate and a sixth occurrence prompts a full audit from a Fire Safety Inspector.
- 2.29 Between 01 April and 31 August, the Service has conducted five (706 flats) inspections and 11 (788 flats) re-inspections as part of the Joint Audit Inspection Team (JAIT). JAIT is a collaboration between Nottingham City Council and NFRS which sees Environmental Health Inspectors and Fire Safety Inspectors working together to inspect high-rise residential buildings. To date, these inspections have covered 171 buildings. The JAIT still has 25 buildings over 18 meters and 339 buildings under 18 meters left to inspect.
- 2.30 The Building Safety Act has now passed into law. The Government is starting consultation with the sector on the implementation of the Act which is expected to be fully operational by October 2023. This may have resourcing implications for NFRS, as there is a requirement for fire and rescue services to support the new Building Safety Regulator.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the information contained in this report does not relate to a change in policy or procedure.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a duty on NFRS in respect of the delivery of its services to communities.
- 7.2 The Local Government Act 1999 places a statutory duty on NFRS to '*secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised*'. The

reporting of Service Delivery's performance ensures that the Service is focusing on key objectives as set by the Fire and Rescue Authority and continuous improvement. This ensures that Members can apply effective scrutiny to be satisfied that statutory obligations are being met.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

An effective performance culture and regime ensures that the Service focuses on key objectives which contribute to the management of strategic and corporate risks. Robust performance information and analysis supports effective decision making and efficient use of resources.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

The Service continually seeks opportunities to work closely with other partner's services to maximise effectiveness and provide the highest level of service to the public, with particular focus currently with Nottinghamshire Police.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

ON CALL RECRUITMENT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 07 October 2022

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an update regarding the challenges and recent efforts to increase On Call recruitment.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members requested an update regarding On Call recruitment at the Community Safety Committee on 17 June 2022. This report highlights the challenges faced, and progress made, between 01 April 2021 and 31 July 2022.
- 1.2 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) currently has 16 On Call sections. These comprise of 12 stand-alone sections and four that share a station with a wholetime crew.
- 1.3 On Call sections are crewed by firefighters who live and/or work within approximately five minutes of their local fire station. They offer availability to fit in with their home and work commitments and are alerted via a pager to emergency incidents when required. On Call firefighters meet the full breadth of a firefighter's role map in not only attending incidents, but also delivering the Service's prevention and protection priorities within their local communities.
- 1.4 County-wide campaigns to recruit On Call firefighters take place three times a year, with the aim of maintaining or increasing establishment levels at all sections. However, it is becoming increasingly challenging for the Service to recruit to On Call roles due to several factors that are highlighted in Paragraph 2.1 below. These challenges are issues which face the fire and rescue sector nationally and are not particular to NFRS.
- 1.5 The challenges facing the sector are recognised by the NFCC On Call Strategic and Practitioner Groups who prioritise improved recruitment and retention as the key to ensuring the sustainability of the On Call system.
- 1.6 In 2019, the NFRS On Call Support Team (OCST) became the Service lead for On Call recruitment, supported by Human Resources, Learning and Development, Occupational Health, and Corporate Communications. At the outset, a review of On Call recruitment was completed, and improvements were made to make the recruitment process more efficient and engaging for applicants. During the reporting period, approximately 600 hours have been dedicated by the OCST to On Call recruitment.
- 1.7 Appendix A shows the current establishment levels at each On Call section.

2. REPORT

ONGOING ON CALL RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES

- 2.1 As highlighted in Paragraph 1.4, the fire sector nationally faces On Call recruitment challenges which impact on the number of applications received. Challenges include the:
 - Requirement to live and/or work within approximately five minutes of the fire station;

- Societal changes, especially in more rural communities, such as ageing populations and less people working within their local community;
- Reluctance of primary employers to release staff during their contracted hours;
- High level of commitment required for initial training, including the need for time away from primary employment;
- Commitment to hours of availability required to maximise appliance availability, especially during the daytime;
- Perception of low rates of pay when compared to the level of commitment required;
- Perceived difficulty to suitably manage a work/life balance;
- Potential impact on primary employment.

2.2 Between 01 April 2021 and 31 July 2022, NFRS received applications for firefighter roles at all On Call sections. Whilst the application numbers are encouraging, the number of applicants rejected through the selection process remains disproportionate to those applicants starting trainee courses.

2.3 In total, the Service received 178 applications during the reporting period, which resulted in 34 (19%) starting one of four courses. A further 52 applications have been received for the trainee course starting in January 2023. Following the initial sift, 41 (79%) have been invited to attend the next stage of recruitment in September 2022.

2.4 The On Call recruitment process delivers a robust means of identifying the most suitable candidates. This process consists of the following elements, which must be passed before progression to the next stage:

- Initial sift based on proximity to station and proposed availability;
- Written tests (maths, English, memory recall and dictation);
- Practical job-related tests (JRTs) and fitness test;
- Formal interview with the section Watch Manager and the OCST Station or Watch Manager;
- Full medical with the Occupational Health team before being offered a position subject to DBS checks and references.

2.5 The rate of failure at each element varies. During the period, the failure rates were as follows:

Initial Sift	29%
Written Tests	12%
JRTs & Fitness Test	69%
Interview	18%
Medical	50%
DBS check & references	0%

2.6 The highest failure rate was during the fitness test. Of the 95 applicants invited to complete the fitness test, 32 retracted their application or failed to attend, and 36 failed to reach the minimum pass level.

PROMOTION OF ON CALL ROLES

- 2.7 The OCST, with the assistance of sections, Corporate Communications and the EDI Team, have planned and facilitated several 'try it' initiatives during the reporting period, to increase the understanding of the role of an On Call firefighter and encourage applications.
- 2.8 Such initiatives have afforded the opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions about the role, gain an understanding of the recruitment process, engage in fitness sessions, and observe demonstrations delivered by current On Call firefighters.
- 2.9 Throughout the reporting period On Call Sections were encouraged to promote their role to potential applicants by conducting leaflet drops, attending community events and job fairs, holding coffee mornings, and generally being visible in their community. Areas where these interventions worked particularly well were in Hucknall, Ashfield and Stapleford which attracted 23 applications between them (with 14 being successful).
- 2.10 The OCST and Corporate Communications hold at least two live webinars prior to each application closing date. These webinars are bookable events aimed at presenting a realistic view of the role of an On Call firefighter from both an organisational, and from a serving On Call personnel's perspective. These webinars also give many opportunities to engage and ask questions relevant to the role and the recruitment process.
- 2.11 Within the reporting period, the Service's website has been upgraded and now includes a specific On Call portal as part of the careers page. This has updated information, including case studies and videos about the role. A significant improvement has been the inclusion of an 'expressions of interest' link. This allows the potential applicant to register their interest via a simple form. This information is passed to relevant sections via the OCST to allow a direct contact to be made. This function enables early engagement with potential applicants prior to a recruitment window being opened.
- 2.12 Throughout the reporting period, the OCST has liaised with the primary employers of potential applicants to explain the On Call role, the potential implications of it on their primary employment, and the benefits it can bring in terms of individual development. Going forward the OCST is planning a series of roadshows to proactively target business owners who employ potential applicants. The first of these is due to take place in Tuxford in November 2022.
- 2.13 As highlighted in Paragraph 2.1 above, the demands of initial On Call training has been identified as a challenge for some applicants. During the reporting period the OCST has developed and introduced a new Safe-to-Ride (STR) Policy. Trainees now have the option to complete a modular programme over a 12-month period as opposed to a traditional 13-week course.

- 2.14 Since the introduction of STR, 50% of new trainees have opted for the modular programme and have reported that access to this was a factor that enabled them to apply for the On Call role.
- 2.15 Paragraph 2.1 also highlights that the commitment to hours of availability, especially during the daytime, presents a challenge for potential applicants. During the reporting period a Flexible Contract trial has taken place at two sections. The trial ended on 31 August 2022 and an evaluation report with recommendations will be presented to the CRMP Assurance Board in October 2022.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the information contained in this report does not relate to a change in policy or procedure.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a duty on NFRS in respect of the delivery of its services to communities.
- 7.2 The Local Government Act 1999 places a statutory duty on NFRS to '*secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised*'. The reporting of Service Delivery's performance ensures that the Service is focusing on key objectives as set by the Fire and Rescue Authority and continuous improvement. This ensures that Members can apply effective scrutiny to be satisfied that statutory obligations are being met.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There is an increased risk to service and the communities of Nottinghamshire, if On Call recruitment challenges are not sufficiently identified and resolved.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Service continually seeks opportunities to work closely with partner organisations to maximise efficiency and to provide the highest level of service to the public. Collaboration opportunities to deliver efficiency have been identified with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service to explore the feasibility of shared initial On Call training.
- 9.2 Nottinghamshire Police has been approached to collaborate in identifying and resolving common challenges linked to the recruitment of Special Constables and On Call firefighters. This has also enabled the potential to engage with Nottinghamshire Police as part of Employer Engagement activities.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**ON CALL SECTION ESTABLISHMENT
AS OF 01 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Section:	Establishment:
Ashfield	15
Bingham	13
Blidworth	11
Collingham	11
East Leake	15
Eastwood	16
Harworth	12
Hucknall	19
Misterton	13
Newark	18
Retford	15
Southwell	13
Stapleford	19
Tuxford	13
Warsop	16
Worksop	17

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – WORKING WITH ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 07 October 2022

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an update on the community engagement plan specifically working with BAME communities.

Recommendations:

That Members note the content of the report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's (NFRS) commitment to equality, diversity and inclusive service delivery is maintained in a variety of ways. The last Integrated Risk Management Plan (2019-22) and current Community Risk Management Plan (2022-25) (CRMP) both ensure a clear strategic direction for this work.
- 1.2 Whilst the Service has worked hard to promote race equality in the past, it recognises it still has work to do, both internally from an employment perspective and externally in engaging with ethnic minority communities. During 2020, the Service gained agreement to temporarily fund a Community Engagement Manager post to drive improvement.
- 1.3 This role is essential in helping the Service to reach out to ethnic minority communities and understanding the fire risks faced which may vary due to faith, background, culture, or personal circumstances.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Community Engagement Plan agreed in June 2021 aims to improve a range of aspects of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) community engagement via better involvement and dialogue with community groups and assists with tailoring initiatives to the needs of different communities. The key workstreams include:
 - **Understanding our Community** – improvement of data collection for prevention and protection activities including benchmarking this with 2021's Census data.
 - **Inclusive Services and Communications** – improving consultation and involvement of black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in the development and delivery of services – this includes the take-up of safe and well visits and other fire prevention/protection activities.
 - **Inclusive Workforce** – improving NFRS's reputation as an employer of choice across all job roles, as well as the training offered to employees.
- 2.2 The above workstreams all have activities sitting within them and progress has been made in pushing this agenda forwards. The following provides a synopsis of some the work delivered locally by the Community Engagement Manager and colleagues.

BERRIDGE WARD SAFE AND WELL VISIT PILOT

- 2.3 This initiative was delivered over eight days by the Community Engagement Manager, local Councillor, and personnel from the Service's Persons at Risk Team. Analysing the data on the Service's Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS), a gap was identified in service delivery, specifically low uptake of safe and well visits (SWV) within BAME

households in Berridge ward. A total of 120 SWVs were completed as part of this pilot.

- 2.4 The qualitative evidence gathered as part of this pilot highlighted a change in trend within these communities, for example, older people in some south Asian families have started to live on their own compared to 5-6 years ago, when they lived in an extended family. During this pilot, some communities, demonstrated a lack of trust in uniformed services. This can be a barrier when trying to generate community dialogue or attracting applicants to recruitment campaigns.
- 2.5 It was also apparent that the use of Shisha in certain households is more prevalent than the use of traditional smoking materials. The use of Shisha coals can smoulder over a long period of time so care must be taken that they do not reignite. Whilst it is recognised that businesses like Shisha bars exist in Nottingham, the prevalence of Shisha use in the home is less well understood. This targeted work helped in understanding these changes and establish a baseline for future targeted prevention work. More work is needed to identify vulnerable people from BAME households, using the Service's well-established CHARLIE matrix. The Service will be developing further links with third sector partners

RADIO INITIATIVES

- 2.6 During the last 18 months, stronger relationships with community radio stations, like Radio Kemet and Radio Dawn, have been developed establishing a schedule of regular programmes covering a range of topics relating to services and employment through live and pre-recorded material for all service sections of NFRS. This has included shows covering the work undertaken by NFRS to protect businesses from fire and what business owners need to do to be compliant with legislation as well as the home fire safety element of fire prevention.
- 2.7 All the shows on Radio Dawn were delivered in Punjabi/Urdu/Mirpuri to reach out to wider South Asian communities in the City and County. One of the aims is to be an employer of choice within these communities.

MULTI-FAITH CHAPLAINCY

- 2.8 The Service has worked with the Anglican church for a long time to provide chaplaincy services to employees. As the Service works to become a more inclusive employer and service provider, it is necessary to develop a more inclusive chaplaincy which serves those with faith and those without.
- 2.9 NFRS staff and service users are from a range of backgrounds and so it is important that the organisation reflects this diversity within its Chaplaincy. The Community Engagement Manager is working with the Service's current chaplain to expand the offering for staff and communities. The Service is beginning to talk to community and faith groups about this change and will be ready to recruit more Chaplains from different faiths before the end of the year.

WOMEN'S GROUP

- 2.10 The Community Engagement Manager is working with a wide range of diverse women's groups (underrepresented) like Kurdish, Sikh, Hindu, Arab and Pakistani, with the aim to build relationships and raise the profile of the fire and rescue service, ultimately promoting NFRS as an employer of choice. Currently the Service finds it difficult to attract women from black and south Asian backgrounds to apply as firefighters and so forging these links and working with these groups will assist in increasing representation. It is hoped that building trust within different groups will enable more ethnic minority women to engage with the Service as a provider of essential services as well as an employer.

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

- 2.11 Part of the Service's commitment to engagement with BAME communities is more targeted work with children and young people. A key driver for this work is to drive aspiration within BAME communities to see a career in the fire service as a positive option in the future. Relationships with the statutory (including schools) and third sectors are important in developing this interest.
- 2.12 The recent success of delivering a six-week pilot fire education programme at Stockhill Fire Station in partnership with the Pythian Club demonstrates the value of this engagement. Two of the young people who took part in the programme wanted to do a more intensive fire education programme and join the Service, while one of them wanted to be a Community Fire Ambassador for his community (Roma- Romanian) and raise the profile of the Service. It is envisaged that this type of educational engagement can eventually lead to work experience or an apprenticeship within the Service

WORKING WITH REFUGEES AND EMERGING COMMUNITIES

- 2.13 As the face of communities in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire continues to change, NFRS is working closely with the Refugee Forum, Community Cohesion Teams (in the City and County) and other third sector groups to raise awareness of NFRS, ensure services are inclusive and address the needs of each community.
- 2.14 This targeted work is essential in ensuring that families from Syria, Afghanistan and the Ukraine have equal access to, and awareness of, NFRS services. In many cases, refugees and other new arrivals have low expectations of uniformed and emergency services and so may fail to use them in an emergency. This work ensures that those expectations are raised and that all reasonable fire prevention measures are put in place to ensure safety in the home.

NEXT STEPS

2.15 The Service's CRMP 2022-25 maintains the Service's commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and community engagement. Over the next 12 months, the Service will work hard to:

- Gain a better understanding of BAME communities via a review of the new Census 2021 data and use this to work more effectively;
- Develop the multi-faith chaplaincy;
- Build better relationships with the third sector to build engagement opportunities and service uptake with ethnic minorities across the city and county;
- Work with schools and community groups to improve engagement with young people;
- Increase awareness and understanding of fire service careers within black, Asian and minority ethnic communities;
- Enhance the Service's profile across all comms channels to build greater engagement;
- Build on the Service's excellent EDI training provision to ensure BAME communities and multi-faith awareness have better coverage.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The work carried out helps the Service to meet its EDI objectives and promote the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The advancement of equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it is a key element of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A failure to represent the community being served can impact upon trust and confidence in public services. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is cognisant of this as a risk to its reputation and ability to engage with its communities and service users.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

The Service attends community engagement events in collaboration with Nottinghamshire Police and various statutory and voluntary organisations.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the content of the report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER