

Wholetime and On Call (Retained Duty System) Performance Monitoring – Quarter 1 (April to June 2018) and July 2018

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report provides information regarding the ongoing performance and management in terms of the availability of Wholetime and On Call (Retained Duty System) appliances in Shropshire.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

3 Background

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has 23 fire stations, 19 of which are solely crewed by On Call staff working the Retained Duty System (RDS), and a further 3 stations have both a Wholetime and On Call complement. Only Telford Central Fire Station is solely crewed by Wholetime firefighters.

4 Wholetime Availability Update

Availability of Wholetime appliances remains at 100%.

Wholetime crews continue to provide an increased level of resilience across the specialist operational areas of the Service, including Breathing Apparatus guidelines, enhanced water rescue, Rope access and stabilisation, Aerial Ladder Platform, Rescue Tender, Immediate Emergency Care, Animal Rescue and the Firefighter Assistance and Safety Team (FAST).

The Integrated Crewing Model (IRMP1) was implemented in January 2017. Throughout 2017 and into 2018 the Fire Service Rota (FSR) model has developed into a smoother and more effective tool in managing Wholetime staff and appliance availability. Further refinements are in progress to enable intuitive and, in some cases, automatic recognition of shortfalls and notification to staff via the mobile app. This will ensure a far more responsive solution to covering shortfalls and ensuring appliance availability.

5 On Call (Retained Duty System) Performance

Overall availability of On Call (RDS) fire appliances (with a crew of 4 or more) to the end of July 2018 is **97.7%**. This represents an increase on the same month in the previous year of **2.2%**. From 1 April 2018, the overall annual figure is currently showing as **97.8%** which is a **0.7%** increase on the previous year.

Recruitment remains a constant challenge for station management teams and the Group Support Team (GST) and the process is constant and ongoing in order to maintain these levels.

Deployment of Retained Support Officer (RSO) support continued in July at Minsterley (84.4% with a crew of 4 available) and Albrighton (81.5% with a crew of 4 available), however, Albrighton required almost 50% less RSO support than in the previous month and these figures represent steady improvement being made. Stations such as Tweedale (94.4%) and Newport (91.6%) have also dropped just below the Service average of (96%).

No GST support and maintained 100% availability	Church Stretton Ellesmere Wem
Stations performing above the Service average (96%) and had no GST support in the quarter	Clun Shrewsbury Wellington Whitchurch
Stations performing above the Service average (96%) and had more than 10 hours GST support in the quarter	Albrighton Bishops Castle Bridgnorth Craven Arms Cleobury Mortimer Market Drayton Minsterley Oswestry Prees
Stations performing above the Service average (96%) and had less than 10 hours GST support in the quarter	Baschurch Hodnet Ludlow Much Wenlock
Stations performing below the Service average (96%) and had no GST support in the quarter	Tweedale Newport

Table 1. Q1 performance – Availability and GST cover

All stations should be congratulated on maintaining a very high availability percentage especially during the last few months when a significant number of On Call (RDS) staff have left the Service or changed their availability after joining the Defence Fire Risk Management Organisation (DFRMO) following their large recruitment campaign. When compared to other Services across the United Kingdom, SFRS continue to lead the way in terms of availability of On Call appliances.

To improve on the overall level of performance, the Service remains focused on those fire appliances / stations that are currently failing to meet the Service average. An outline of the factors affecting availability and the actions to improve performance is in the next section.

6 Background Station Specific Performance

Improvements in availability have been demonstrated at Cleobury Mortimer following successful recruitment and completion of development programmes. A range of interviews have been taking place in recent weeks to bolster management roles across the On Call stations.

7 Recruitment Campaign

Recruitment is a constant work stream for the Area Command teams. The GST are working with the Business Intelligence team to establish key information relating to specific stations such as:

- Number of times an employee could be expected to be called out
- Average time an employee may be away from work
- Average earnings in twelve months
- Number of hours commitment per week

This information will be used in promotional material to support future campaigns and to support discussions with employers.

Assistant Group Commanders for the three districts in Shropshire are currently prioritising two stations for recruitment initiatives in order to ensure the correct mix of recruits attend initial training courses to maintain adequate numbers across all our On Call stations.

For 2018 the service will continue to hold a minimum of three under-represented group taster sessions.

All aspects of the recruitment campaign, including the use of social media networking as a method of attraction, continue to impact positively on the Service's desire to achieve 100% availability.

In June 2018 the Service Management Team approved a paper outlining how an On Call Sustainability Project will be carried out in 2018/19. This project will involve extensive consultation with our On-Call fighters looking to the ever changing future of our rural communities and how we can best support their needs and maintain our high appliance availability.

A Home Office national On-Call Firefighter recruitment campaign has been designed through the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) On-Call Firefighters practitioner group. This campaign launched in mid-August 2018 and is providing a standard approach including television advertisements, social media “stings” and a specific outline brand that can be readily and easily associated with on call firefighters.

The Service has held open days at its 3 Wholetime stations in 2018, with On Call (RDS) recruitment information has being made available at all of these with a number of people expressing an interest.

Ann Millington, Chief Fire Officer for Kent Fire and Rescue Service recently appeared on Good Morning Britain to discuss the subject of under-represented groups across the UK Fire and Fire and Rescue Service, in particular women.

The Service is currently working with an outside contractor to facilitate a number of “boot camps” to support women who have previously expressed an interest in joining the Service. The “boot camps” will focus on improving key areas such as upper body strength, as it has been demonstrated that women generally do not perform as well as men in these areas of the Job Related Tests.

Further positive action taster days have been scheduled for the next three years; an initiative driven by our Equality and Diversity Department and Steering Group.

8 Retained Support Officer (RSO) Cover

The deployment of RSOs during the first quarter primarily supported availability at:

Albrighton, Bishops Castle, Bridgnorth, Craven Arms, Cleobury Mortimer, Market Drayton, Minsterley, Oswestry, Prees.

The following stations received less than 10 hours of RSO support during the quarter and still maintained above the Service average (96%) availability:

Baschurch, Hodnet, Ludlow and Much Wenlock

The Retained Support Officers provided a total of **1105** hours of support across all On Call (RDS) stations during the first Quarter reporting period April to end of June 2018.

However, the total number of hours of support provided in July 2018 was **297.25**. This represents a **40%** reduction on the **499.75** hours in the same month last year and is the lowest monthly number of hours in this fiscal year so far.

9 Availability System

The Fire Service Rota (FSR) system, which has been implemented into the Wholetime Crewing System, has recently been introduced for On Call (RDS) stations. It has been modified and piloted at Craven Arms Fire Station initially with two members of staff acting as “super users”.

There are clear benefits to adopting FSR across the On Call area of the Service. As well as bringing all of our response staff onto one system, FSR now allows individual On Call staff far easier management of their availability by utilising a smartphone app. The system will also greatly assist in the management of On Call (RDS) staff by providing instant, accurate and up to date availability of staff and appliances.

Initial feedback from On Call (RDS) staff is very positive with all stations now operating FSR since the end of July 2018. A global view has also been provided in the Fire Control suite to allow visual availability information at a glance.

The Service is currently working with FSR, Telford and Wrekin Council and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in developing the system by removing the current FB76 paper-based forms used for performance management and pay purposes.

10 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

11 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

12 Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

13 Appendix

Retained Duty System Fire Station Availability Analysis
Please note that the appendix will be tabled at the meeting

14 Background Papers

A quarterly RDS performance review summary is presented to the Fire Authority’s Audit and Performance Management Committee. Previous reports can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/managing-service/fra/meetings>