

## **Wholetime and On-Call (Retained Duty System) Performance Monitoring April to June 2019**

### **Report of the Chief Fire Officer**

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### **1 Purpose of Report**

This report provides summary information for April – June 2019, regarding the performance and management 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 (SFRS) 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**

The year 2019/20 has seen wholetime appliances achieve 100% availability.

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, Animal Rescue and the Firefighter Assistance and Safety Team (FAST).

The Integrated Crewing Model (IRMP1) was implemented in January 2017. The Service is waiting on final acceptance of the new negotiated Wholetime Shift System (Flexible Rostering), by the Fire Brigades' Union, which has now been running for two years. Throughout 2017, 2018 and 2019 the Fire Service Rota (FSR) software system has developed into a smoother and more effective tool in helping the Service to manage wholetime staff and appliance availability in accordance with the new shift system. 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 provide an even more responsive solution to covering shortfalls and ensuring appliance availability.

The Wholetime recruitment process has recently been completed with 9 new recruits being appointed. Induction has taken place on 30 August 2019 with the recruit course starting at the Fire Service College on 2 September 2019. Recruits are expected to start on operational duties around 15 November 2019.

## **5 On Call (Retained Duty System) Performance**

The overall availability of On Call fire appliances for April – June 2019 was **96.5%** (97.8% for the same period 2018/19).

Support to the On Call stations through the Group Support Team continues, predominantly at the stations of Minsterley, Market Drayton, Cleobury Mortimer, Albrighton and Prees.

All of the On Call stations should be congratulated on maintaining a very high availability. The Service is experiencing availability issues at Prees due to a number of staff retiring, this has left Prees with only 7 personnel. Prees should however be congratulated for continuing to maintain an average 80.7% availability, with such few staff, between April – June 2019. When compared to other Services across the United Kingdom, SFRS continue to lead the way nationally and locally in terms of availability of our On Call appliances.

To continually improve on the overall level of performance, the Service remains focused on those fire appliances / stations that currently fall below the Service average. An outline of the factors affecting availability and the actions to improve performance is in the remainder of this report.

## 6 Background Station Specific Performance

The below table shows a station by station breakdown of GST cover provided and station availability April – June 2019.

Station	GST hours	Availability
Albrighton	135	87.8
Bishops Castle	2	95.6
Bridgnorth	27.5	99.7
Baschurch	9.5	97.7
Craven Arms	2	99.9
Clun	5.5	96.8
Clebury Mortimer	134.5	95
Church Stretton	0	100
Ellesmere	0	100
Hodnet	7	99.5
Ludlow	5.75	98.7
Market Drayton	145.75	99.4
Much Wenlock	109	93.4
Minsterley	468.25	86.4
Newport	7.5	95.1
Oswestry	57.25	99.5
Prees	115.25	80.7
Shrewsbury	0	99.8
Tweedale	53.5	94.7
Whitchurch	2.75	99.6
Wellington	95.5	97.5
Wem	0	99.7

All statistics are worked on a minimum crew of 4

Stations performing above the service average

Stations performing very close to the service average

Stations requiring considerable support

The GST have provided a total of **1383** hours of support across On Call stations during the reporting period April – June 2019. This is an increase of 278 hours for the same period 2018/19.

## 7 Recruitment Campaign

Recruitment remains the single most constant challenge for station management teams, Human Resources and the Group Support Team. Processes are ongoing in order to maintain establishment levels. The national <https://oncallfire.uk/treadmill/> website is now live and our own recruitment process is managed through a cross departmental Task and Finish Group.

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

All On Call stations are encouraged to utilise a social media platform, such as Twitter or Facebook, to encourage recruitment. New Twitter signage has been procured for appliances and stations, encouraging followers and potential applicants. We are currently procuring new pop-up signage to encourage "walk in" enquiries when On Call stations are staffed by the Group Support Team, or during drill nights.

In June 2018 the Service Management Team approved a paper outlining how an On Call Sustainability Project will be carried out during 2018 and 2019. This project will involve extensive consultation with our On-Call Firefighters, looking to the ever changing future of our rural communities and how we can best support their needs and maintain the current high levels of appliance availability. Work on producing the Project Initiation Document and consultation questionnaire is underway, using a number of academic and research information sources.

## **8 Availability system**

The Fire Service Rota (FSR) system, which has been implemented into the Wholetime Crewing System, has now been successfully implemented at all On Call Fire Stations.

Although the change was largely driven by the need to overcome issues created by the change to the Service's HR and Finance systems, there have also been some 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 allows individual On Call staff easier management of their availability by utilising a smartphone app. The system will also greatly assist in the management of On Call staff by providing instant, accurate and up to date availability of staff and appliances and associated performance management information.

## **9 Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **10 Legal Comment**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **11 Initial Impact Assessment**

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

## **12 Appendix**

On Call (Retained Duty System) Fire Station Availability Analysis

## **13 Background Papers**

A quarterly RDS performance review summary is presented to the Fire Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee. Previous reports are available via Executive Management Support.

## On Call (Retained Duty System) Fire Station Availability Analysis

In the following tables one (1) unit is equivalent to one person being available for full cover (i.e. over 120 hours a week). Two crew members each committing three quarter cover (i.e. up to 120 hours, but no less than 84 hours per week) would equate to 1.5 units.

The following stations have been selected for comparison, demonstrating the sort of challenges they face, and the efforts being put into meeting those challenges:

- Much Wenlock
- Tweedale
- Newport

The data that produced the previous graphs used for comparison in this report, is no longer available since the Service moved from the SEED Retained Availability System to FireServiceRota. New data graphs and reports are currently being developed, by Area Command and the Business Intelligence team, which will utilise data from a range of systems via the data warehouse and will form the basis of future reports to this committee.

### Wenlock Fire Station

Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
13 units available 8 units filled 9 personnel Vacancies for 5 units.	<b>April – 95.25%</b> <b>May – 96.3%</b> <b>June – 88.8%</b>  Availability dropped During June 2019 due to two members of staff being long term sick.	GST continue to provide support during this challenging period. 1 x recruit has now withdrawn due to being offered Police post.

### Tweedale Fire Station

Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
17 units available 14.25 units filled 19 Personnel Vacancies for 2.75 units.	<b>April – 95.5%</b> <b>May – 95.1%</b> <b>June – 93.3%</b>  4 x Long term sickness. 2 x long term sickness have now returned , 1 x resigned	1 x recruit on current recruits course

## Newport Fire Station

Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
17 units available 11 units filled 14 Personnel Vacancies for 6 units.	<b>April – 97.6%</b> <b>May -96.6%</b> <b>June – 91.1%</b>  Availability dropped during June 2019 due to 1 x long term sickness and 1 x retirement.	Long term sick member of staff is now retraining. 1 x new recruit on Recruit course.