

## Wholetime and On Call (Retained Duty System) Performance Monitoring October - December 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

The year to date availability of wholetime appliances currently stands at **99.98%**. The small deviation from 100% is due to one wholetime pumping appliance at Tweedale coming off the run for a single day shift in August 2018. This was due to operational watch moves and honouring subsequent annual leave.

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 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 year to date availability of On Call fire appliances is **97.6%**.

Supporting our On Call stations through the Group Support Team (GST) continues predominantly at the stations of Minsterley, Cleobury Mortimer and Albrighton but Prees and a number of our larger stations at Market Drayton, Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Wellington are all requiring additional GST cover during weekdays.

All our On Call stations should be congratulated on maintaining a very high availability percentage. We are experiencing some transient primary employment issues such as On Call staff transferring to Ministry of Defence Fire Service and/or other Services as Wholetime firefighters. This often translates into less stable hours of availability for affected individuals. If these individuals are Emergency Fire Appliance Drivers (EFAD) drivers or perform a Level 1 Incident Command role, this can negatively impact on appliance availability. However, when compared to other Services across the United Kingdom, SFRS continue to lead the way nationally and locally in terms of availability of On Call appliances.

To continually 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

### Example Prees - On Call

The service is experiencing some significant staffing issues at Prees Fire Station and recent performance has dropped to bring their overall availability down from 98.5% at the end of December 2018 to 92.2% at the end of January 2019, according to the most recent data. This is primarily due to:

- Loss of three Incident Commanders through retirement and the impact of the EU driver rules
- Loss of EFAD Drivers –due to moving house /change of job

## Action taken:

- One new recruit awaiting next Initial Recruit course in June 2019.
- Despite extensive social media and leaflet drops, recruitment is continuing to prove challenging in this particular area.
- One transferee from West Midlands Fire Service has been interviewed and is moving to the area in May 2019.
- An Open day was also held at the local Cricket Club which was attended by local residents, Group Support Team, Diversity and Inclusion, Area Command officers and Fire Authority Member Councillor Paul Wynn.

Despite this sudden reduction in staff (Prees have gone from 12 staff to 6 in the last few months); the overall availability percentage is still high, especially in comparison to other stations with more staff. This is largely due to the resilience and commitment of the team at Prees who passionately want to ensure the appliance and the specialist High Volume Pump remain available.

Group Support Team attendance to cover when staffing deficiencies occur at Prees has started to increase but this only represented 24.75 hours during Q3 (December 2018). Latest figures for 2019 show 11.25 hours for the month of January.

## 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.

A number of stations, including Bishops Castle and Cleobury Mortimer, are currently engaging with their local communities through specific recruitment initiatives. A Taster Day is due to be held at Bishops Castle in June and the exploration of Fitness “Boot Camps” to facilitate more female participants is currently being planned with the firefighters at Cleobury Mortimer, the Diversity and Inclusion team and our fitness Associate Trainers.

All aspects of our 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 is being procured for appliances and stations encouraging followers and potential applicants. We are also 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 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.

Work on producing the Project Initiation Document and consultation questionnaire is underway using a number of academic and research information sources.

## 8 Group Support Team (GST) Cover

The table below shows end of December 2018 On Call station performance who are either,

- Performing excellently and have required no support from the Group Support Team
- Performing very well and have required little support from the Group Support Team
- Performing well but require continual support from the Group Support Team

No Group Support Team (GST) support and maintained 100% availability	Stations performing above the Service average (96%) and had less than 10 hours GST support in the month	Stations requiring more than 10 hours GST support in the month
Baschurch Bridgnorth Craven Arms Church Stretton Ellesmere Shrewsbury Amber Wem Whitchurch	Bishops Castle Cleobury Mortimer Clun Newport Oswestry Tweedale Amber	Albrighton Ludlow Market Drayton Minsterley Wellington Amber

*All statistics are worked on a minimum crew of 4*

The Group Support Team (GST) provided a total of **1181.25** hours of support across On Call stations during the reporting period October – December 2018. This is an increase of 12.5 hours on the same reporting period in 2017.

The appendix contains further details about four stations selected as they have the lowest availability % for this reporting period.

## 9 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.

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 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.

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 paper-based forms used for performance management and pay purposes. An anticipated move to electronic payments is predicted to be April 2019.

## **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

## **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:

## **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:

- Prees
- Wellington
- Minsterley
- Albrighton

The data that produced the traditional 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 planned with Area Command and the BI team which will utilise data from a range of systems via the data warehouse.

The data below provides a more granular view of the breakdown in personnel and reasons for performance of the four stations with the lowest availability percentage. It is worth noting that all but one are still above 90% availability.

Of further note is the comparison with our neighbours in **Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service** where the overall availability of the first On-Call (Retained) fire appliance remains at **85.21%** for the same reporting period; however, this has decreased by 3.14% when compared to the same period in 2017-18.

### **Prees Fire Station**

<b>Station profile</b>	<b>Reason for availability issues</b>	<b>Actions taken</b>
15 units in total available 6 units filled 6 personnel Vacancies for 9 units.	<b>98.5% available at end of December 2018 but latest figures show availability dropped to 92.2% at the end of January 2019.</b> Severe and sudden lack of crew members, especially during week day time period 0900-1800. This is due to retirements and staff leaving for employment or a house move. Lack of large employers willing to let staff respond to emergency calls.	Small, experienced cadre of staff still maintaining excellent levels of performance. Increasing amount of GST support required since recent retirements and staff leaving.

## Much Wenlock Fire Station

Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
13 units in total available 11 units filled 12 personnel Vacancies for 2 units, daytime cover only.	<b>97.2% available at end of December 2018 but latest figures show availability dropped to 94.8% at end of January 2019.</b> Lack of crew members, especially during week day time period 0900-1800. Lack of large employers willing to let staff respond to emergency calls.	New station refurbishment and Open Day due in April and May 2019. New recruit joined on last recruit course.

## Minsterley Fire Station

Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
13 units available 8.5 units filled 11 Personnel Vacancies for 4.5 units.	<b>89.9% available at end of December 2018 however, latest figures show an increase to 91.2% at end of January 2019.</b> Lack of crew members, especially during week day time period 0900-1800. Lack of large employers willing to let staff respond to emergency calls. Lack of domestic dwellings in immediate 5 minute turn out area.	No new recruits at present Station classed as priority for Recruitment and Attraction Task and Finish group. Consideration being given to increasing turn out areas or response status.

## Albrighton Fire Station

Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
13 units available 9.75 units filled 10 Personnel Vacancies for 3.25 units.	<b>93% available at end of December 2018 however, latest figures show an increase to 96.9% at end of January 2019.</b> Lack of crew members, primarily drivers and L11C especially during week day time period 0900-1800. Lack of large employers willing to let staff respond to emergency calls Lack of domestic dwellings in immediate 5 minute turn out area.	Station classed as priority for Recruitment and Attraction Task and Finish group. Most recent recruit dropped out of training course after Day 1.