

Wholetime and Retained Duty System Performance Monitoring January to March 2016

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 retained duty system (RDS) 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 RDS staff, and a further 3 stations have both a wholetime and RDS complement. Only Telford Central Fire Station is solely crewed by wholetime firefighters.

4 Wholetime Availability Update

Availability of wholetime appliances remains at 100%.

To support continued high performance, the Service has appointed 3 qualified firefighters from other services, 2 from London and 1 from Lincoln, who completed their induction training in June 2016. Although the 3 transferees from Hereford and Worcester have helped to maintain staffing, the Service has also used 13 day shifts and 32 night shifts of overtime.

Additionally, the trial of “exchange of duty” to maintain minimum staffing plus 2 resulted in 31 exchanges of duty, with firefighters moving from shifts, where staffing was more than minimum plus 2. All of these actions have helped to maintain 100% availability.

The wholetime recruitment programme has commenced with all initial entry tests and physical tests completed and interviews now well underway. The Service will be taking on 12 successful candidates, who will begin their recruits’ course in September 2016 and will be “on the run” in December 2016.

The 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, line safety, aerial ladder platform, rescue tender, animal rescue and the Firefighter Assistance and Safety Team (FAST).

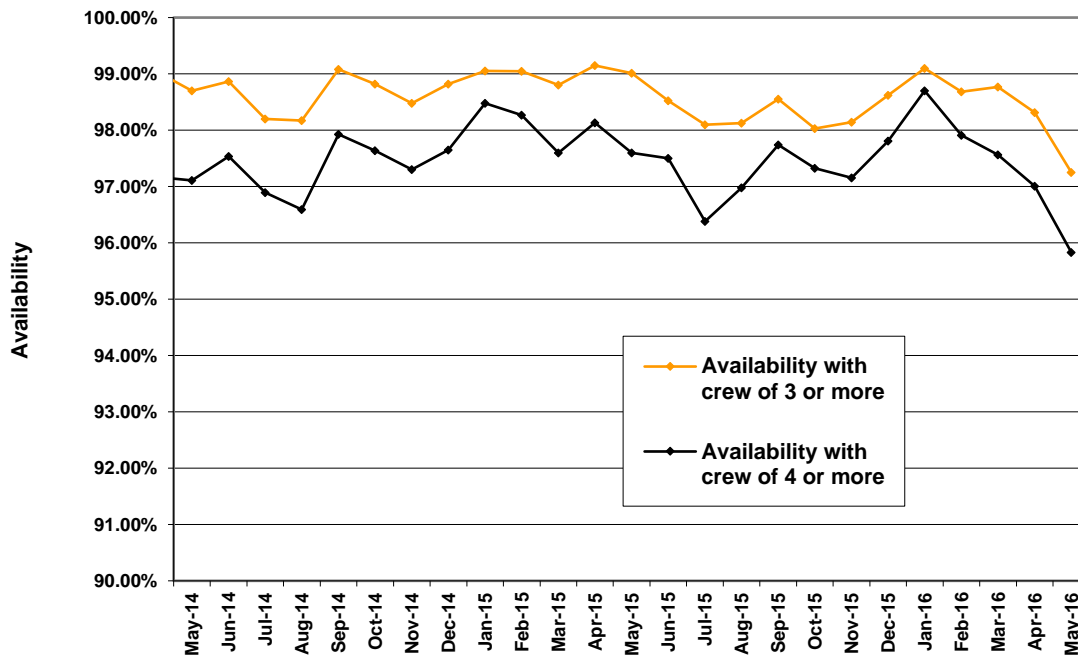
Integrated Risk Management Plan Project 1 has been finalised and will be implemented in January 2017, with stations having a flexible crewing arrangement. This will lead to optimum crewing levels across the Service, which should remove the requirement to use overtime in the future.

Retained Availability

Overall availability of RDS fire engines has fallen this quarter to 95.83%. This is a reduction from 97.81 % last quarter. Graph 1 over page shows the average performance for all 23 RDS engines. The decline has been since January 2016, caused by the reduction of staff at Minsterley and Albrighton.

These 2 stations have reduced the overall picture of RDS availability. If they were to be removed from the figures, then availability would still be above 98%. Of the 23 RDS fire engines, 18 are available for between 98% and 100% of the time, which is an outstanding level of performance. Ongoing recruitment is continuously trying to achieve the Fire Authority’s target of 100% availability.

Night-time cover remains at 99.3% availability between the hours of 6.00 pm and 8.00 am across all stations.



Graph 1 – Retained Duty System Crew Availability

5 Performance

Graph 1 reveals a steady performance since March 2014, fluctuating between 96% and 98%, only dropping down this last quarter. This is predominantly due to the staffing issues at Albrighton and Minsterley. A successful recruitment campaign has put at least 2 recruits for each of these stations on the next course, which will greatly assist in their availability. Much Wenlock and Cleobury Mortimer, who did have staffing issues in the past, continue to give excellent cover.

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

6 Factors Influencing Availability

RDS Working Group

The Group has now identified a number of areas to focus on, which include training, pay and recruitment. The report generated has already been shared with the Service Management Team in February 2016 and the Fire Authority's Standards and Human Resources Committee in March 2016 and can be accessed via the link below.

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/14-rds-working-group.pdf>

The next meeting of the Group will take place at the end of July.

7 Background Station Specific Performance

There are currently only six fire stations, whose performance during the last quarter falls below the mean of 98% achieved by the remaining stations (15 achieve over 99% availability). An analysis of performance is provided at the appendix to this report. This includes the Oswestry second appliance, Albrighton, Minsterley, Cleobury Mortimer, and Much Wenlock. With the exception of Albrighton and Minsterley at 52% and 72% respectively, all currently achieve over 97% availability.

8 Recruitment Campaign

The first course of 2016 had a full complement of recruits (10). The second course included Police Community Support Officer candidates from both Hereford and Worcester and Shropshire. The third course, which will start on 11 July, will have 12 candidates, with 2 recruits for Minsterley and, it is anticipated, 3 recruits for Albrighton.

Positive action taster days have been scheduled for the next three years, an initiative driven by our Equality and Diversity Department and Steering Group. A number of days were run prior to the wholetime recruitment campaign and the actual figures of applicants and successful applicants will be released after the recruitment has finished.

Recruitment is a constant work stream for Area Command teams but a number of stations, including Minsterley and Albrighton, are currently engaging with their local communities. Specific recruitment initiatives are taking place, including station open days.

All aspects of the recruitment campaign, including the use of social networking as a method of attraction, continue to impact positively on the Service's desire to achieve 100% availability. Similar recruitment tactics will, therefore, be employed in the future, along with increased engagement with local employers and seeking support from local councillors to raise the profile of "on-call" teams.

9 Joint West Mercia Police and Shropshire and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Services Venture

The Service has been working closely with West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service on a joint RDS training course. A number of recruits from both Services have been trained alongside Police Community Support Officers. The course was successful for all involved and has resulted in improvements in cover for Albrighton and Oswestry, although this cover is limited due to their dual role.

10 Retained Support Officer (RSO) Cover – Quarter 1

Table 1 over page shows the fire stations and the support they have required during the last four years and the first quarter of 2016.

The deployment of RSOs during the first quarter of 2016 was again significant in supporting performance at Albrighton and Minsterley.

Both of these stations are currently awaiting recruits to go through training. Albrighton, in particular, has 3 possible recruits on this course and at least 2 waiting for the next course. If required, it may be possible to complete some of the training with Hereford and Worcester.

A number of stations are maintaining near 100% availability, such as Church Stretton, Clun, Ellesmere, Shrewsbury, Tweedale, Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch. Their performance remains exemplary.

Even the 2 stations that are struggling for cover should be commended. They are still maintaining the appliance on the run most evenings and weekends at Albrighton and Minsterley with only 6 personnel on the station.

Table 1 – Retained Support Officer Cover

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17				
Stations	Total	Total	Total	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Albrighton	472.00	276.50	895.75	1006.5	209.75				209.75
Baschurch	0	0	0	12.8	4				4
Bishop's Castle	0	0	164.75	43.0	15				15
Bridgnorth	0	203.25	191.5	162.8	24				24
Church Stretton	0	0	0	0	0				0
Cleobury Mortimer	565.25	902.50	373.25	340.0	16.25				16.25
Clun	0	0	46	66.3	0				0
Craven Arms	0	0	0	118.3	15.75				15.75
Ellesmere	0	0	0	64.8	0				0
Hodnet	0	0	0	5.0	4.5				4.5
Ludlow	419.70	156.25	64.25	25.0	3				3
Market Drayton	240.75	88.50	25.75	35.0	52.75				52.75
Minsterley	371.50	449.25	1410.25	2693.3	423.5				423.5
Much Wenlock	194.75	226.25	107.75	71.3	5				5
Newport	0	0	0	43.3	1.5				1.5
Oswestry 16 (P4)	532.75	460.00	222	79.0	19.25				19.25
Prees	0	0	0	31.5	3				3
Shrewsbury	0	0	0	0	0				0
Tweedale	0	0	0	22.0	0				0
Wellington	0	0	39.25	19.5	0				0
Wem	0	0	0	9.5	0				0
Whitchurch	0	0	0	0	0				0
Totals	2,796.70	2,762.25	3,540.50	4,848.5	797.25				797.25
Total RSO hours	3,275.95	3,239.75	3,980.25	5,200.25					

11 Availability System

The Service is now using the SEED RDS Availability System on every station, which provides more flexibility and access to the RDS firefighters. They are now able to use mobile devices to book on and off. It also allows remote monitoring by managers and the Group Support Team to look at possible

cover requirements for RSO's through the portal, which shows a 'live' picture of appliance availability.

Work is continuing on Phase II of development of the system, which will provide Area Command managers with robust management reports, processed from data within the system.

12 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

13 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

14 Initial Impact Assessment

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

15 Appendix

Retained Duty System Fire Station Availability Analysis

16 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:

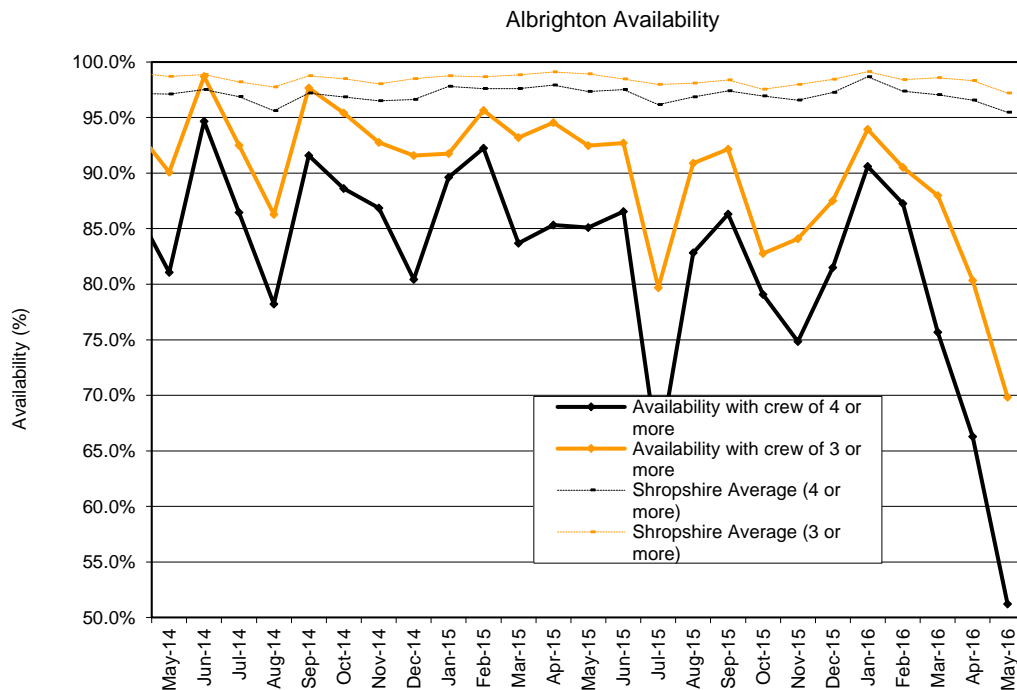
<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/managing-service/fra/meetings>

Retained Duty System Fire Station Availability Analysis

NB: One (1) unit is equivalent to one person being available for full cover (over 120 hours a week), so two crew members each committing three quarter cover (up to 120 hours but no less than 84 hours per week) would equate to 1.5 units.

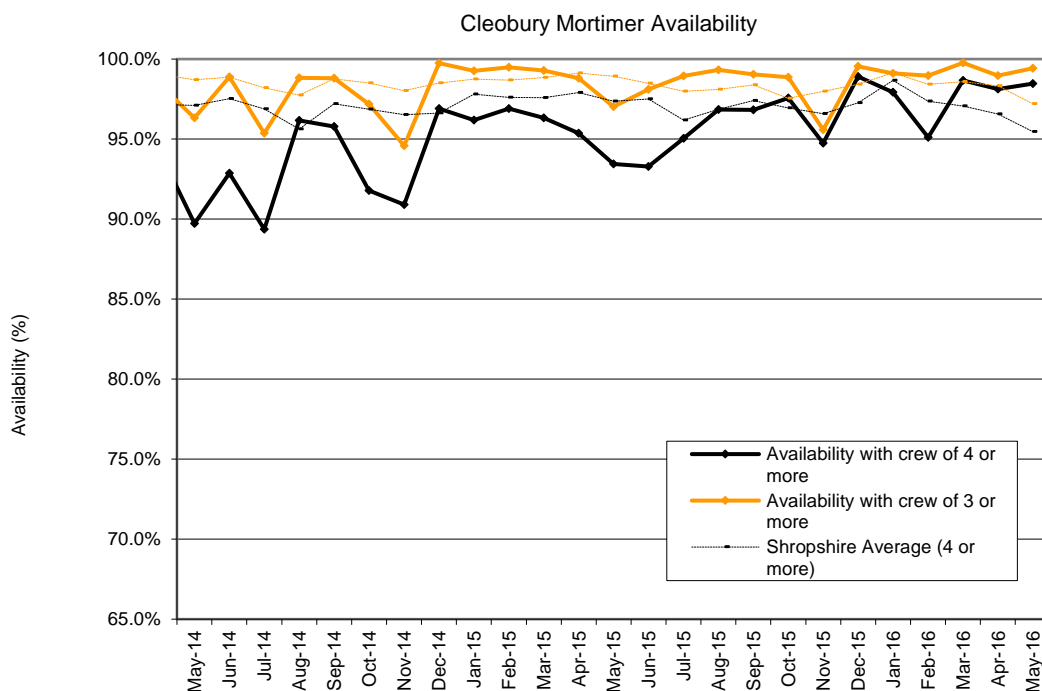
The same stations are included as the last report for comparison. As can be seen, 3 of the stations have improved their cover. However, Albrighton and Minsterley, because of ongoing issues, have worse availability.

Albrighton



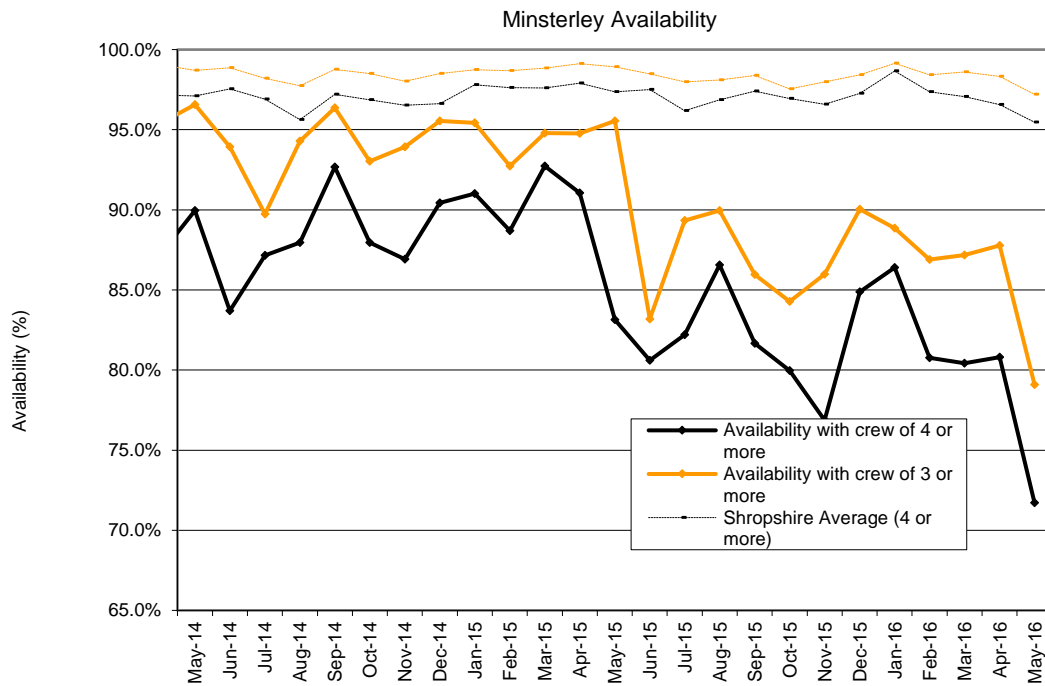
Station profile	Reasons for availability issues	Actions taken
<p>13 units (6.25 units available = 7 personnel)</p> <p>It remains extremely difficult to recruit in the Albrighton area, with daytime cover the key problem.</p>	<p>3 personnel left the Service in January 2016</p>	<p>The station was prioritised for recruitment - 5 possible recruits have been interviewed. 3 are expected to start recruit training in July and 1 on the course after that. 1 failed the medical with a 12-month return date. 1 possible recruit is due to be interviewed in July.</p>

Cleobury Mortimer



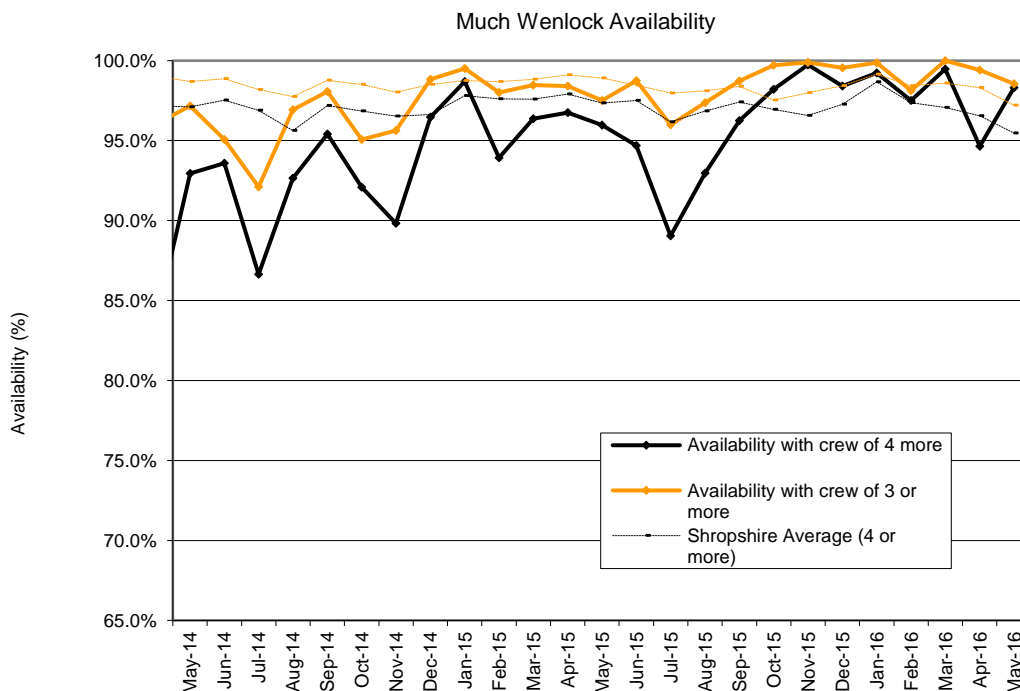
Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
Although 13 units are budgeted for, only 10 units = 12 personnel are currently on station strength.	The Station is still 3 units short. However, cover is being maintained at over 97%.	The 2 recruits this year have had a positive impact on the cover

Minsterley



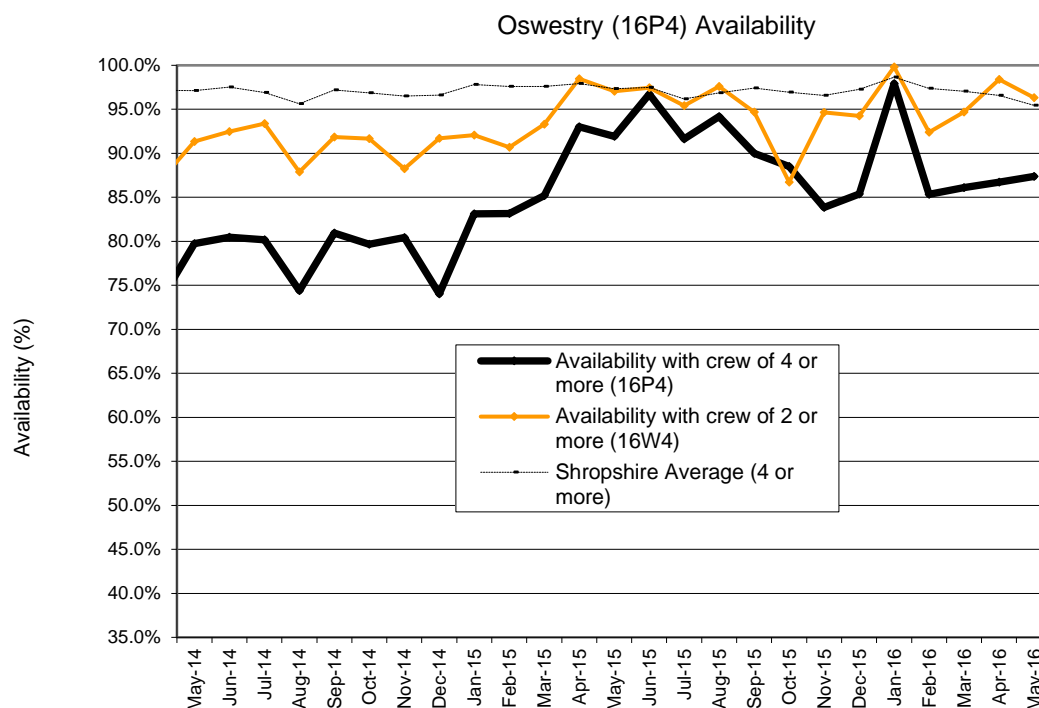
Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
<p>Although 14 units are budgeted for, only 6 units = 7 personnel are currently on station strength.</p> <p>Daytime crewing is presenting the greatest challenge.</p>	<p>Personnel relocating due to lack of work opportunities remains an issue.</p> <p>Added to this a key member of staff, who provided day cover, has left and one of the crew has a period of long-term sickness.</p>	<p>Two are on the July course, one of whom can provide vital weekday cover.</p> <p>A discussion around allowing applicants from Pontesbury may be required, if the current recruitment is not successful. This would delay the turn out of the appliance by a couple of minutes but may give access to more possible recruits and keep the station on the run during the day.</p>

Much Wenlock



Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
<p>Although 13 units are budgeted for, 12.25 units = 13 personnel are currently on station strength.</p> <p>Daytime crewing still remains the greatest challenge.</p>	<p>It is difficult to recruit from the local population, because of the high number working outside Much Wenlock.</p>	<p>There has been a significant improvement in cover from recruits, who have started in 2016.</p>

Oswestry



As of September 2012 Oswestry’s second appliance report shows availability with crew of 4 or more and availability with crew of 2 or more. The second appliance availability is still remaining at above 85%.

Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
The station is now at their level of 18 units = 21 personnel currently on station.	The first pump at Oswestry currently has 100% availability. The second appliance availability has remained above 85% and is steadily rising.	Recruitment was successful and allowed both pumps to be staffed.