

## **Wholetime and On Call (Retained Duty System) Performance Monitoring April 2018 – March 2019**

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

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### **1 Purpose of Report**

This report provides summary information, for the whole year 2018/19, 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 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). A further three 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 2018/19 has seen wholetime appliances achieve 99.97% availability. 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.

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 and 2018 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.

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

The overall availability of On Call fire appliances for 2018/19 was **97.7%**.

Support to the On Call stations through the Group Support Team (GST) continued through the year, predominantly at the stations of Minsterley, Cleobury Mortimer and Albrighton. The larger stations at Market Drayton and Wellington also required some additional GST cover during weekdays.

All of the On Call stations should be congratulated on maintaining a very high availability. The Service has experienced some transient primary employment issues such as On Call staff transferring to the 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 Response Drivers (ERD), 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, Shropshire 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**

The below table shows a station by station breakdown of GST cover provided and station availability April18-March19.

Stations	GST cover (hrs)	Availability (Apr-Mar)
Albrighton	289.5	90.0%
Baschurch	18	99.3%
Bishops Castle	59.5	99.3%
Bridgnorth	141.25	99.3%
Church Stretton	0	100.0%
Cleobury Mortimer	188.75	97.9%
Clun	50.5	98.1%
Craven Arms	27.75	99.6%
Ellesmere	9.75	99.9%
Hodnet	8.75	99.8%
Ludlow	100	98.6%
Market Drayton	297	98.5%
Minsterley	2280	86.0%
Much Wenlock	147.5	97.3%
Newport	25.75	95.5%
Oswestry	171.75	99.5%
Prees	80.75	94.0%
Shrewsbury	80	98.9%
Tweedale	34	97.1%
Wellington	411	97.5%
Wem	0	99.5%
Whitchurch	7.25	99.5%

### Key

Stations performing above the service average
Stations performing very close to the service average
Stations requiring considerable support

## 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 Group Support Team (GST) Cover

The table below shows end of year (2018/19) 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 facing local challenges and therefore require continual support from the Group Support Team

No Group Support Team (GST) support and maintained 100% availability	Stations performing above the Service average (97%) and had less than 60 hours GST support in the year	Stations requiring more than 60 hours GST support in the year
Church Stretton	Baschurch Bishops Castle Craven Arms Clun Ellesmere Hodnet Tweedale Amber Wem Whitchurch	Albrighton Bridgnorth Cleobury Mortimer Ludlow Market Drayton Minsterley Much Wenlock Newport Oswestry Prees Shrewsbury Amber Wellington Amber

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

The Group Support Team (GST) provided a total of **4196** hours of support across On Call stations during the reporting period April 2018 to March 2019. This is a decrease of 208 hours on the 2017/18 totals.

## 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.

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.

## **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:

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

## **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:

- Prees
- Minsterley
- Albrighton

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.

### **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 7 personnel Vacancies for 9 units.	<b>98.5% available at end of December 2018 but latest figures show availability dropped to an average of 89.8 Jan-Mar 19.</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.

## Minsterley Fire Station

Station profile	Reason for availability issues	Actions taken
13 units available 8.5 units filled 12 Personnel Vacancies for 3.75 units.	<b>89.9% available at end of December 2018 however, latest figures show an increase to 90.4% Jan- Mar 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 10.5 units filled 13 Personnel Vacancies for 2.75 units.	<b>95.9% available for quarter Jan-March 19.</b> Shortage of ERD drivers and level 1 Incident Commanders	One new recruit on Recruit course in June 2019.  One new recruit on November 19 course.  One new recruit passed interview.  One new Development Crew Manager.  Two personnel on ERD course.