



**HAMPSHIRE
FIRE AND
RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Purpose: Noted

Date: **22 September 2020**

Title: **HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT: APRIL 2019 TO MARCH 2020**

Report of Chief Fire Officer

SUMMARY

1. The Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) Safety Plan 2020-25 was published on 1 April 2020. It outlines our purpose, values and priorities. One of our priorities is a focus on *Our People*, looking after each other by creating great places to work and promoting the health, wellbeing and safety of our people. An important part of this is the focus, activity and work on health and safety.
2. All employers have a legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and all associated legislation, to put suitable arrangements in place for the management of health and safety. Failure to comply with these arrangements may result in incidents which impact the Service staff, visitors and contractors, whom the organisation owes a duty of care to.
3. The report provides assurance through a summary of the health and safety management arrangements, activities and performance over the financial year, April 2019 to March 2020, building upon what was explored in the 2019/20 end-of-year performance report which went to HFRA in June 2020; and in previous Health and Safety Annual Reports.
4. The report provides assurance that there are adequate policies, systems and procedures in place to manage, monitor and drive improvement across HFRS.

BACKGROUND

5. The aim of our Health and Safety Department is to set and maintain sensible and proportionate standards of health and safety management that ensures the wellbeing of our people and others that may be affected by our activities. This supports the overarching Safety Plan for HFRS and IWFRS.

6. A positive health and safety culture is essential to good safety management. HFRS manage this through a holistic approach to achieve the high-performance standards which enable continuous improvement through our values and behaviours.
7. We have a progressive approach to health and safety, and must respond to an ever-evolving dynamic workplace and wider environment. This is crucial to sustain and maximise the positive impacts and outcomes of a robust and sustainable health and safety programme. A recent example of our response to the wider dynamic environment would be our response to the COVID-19 pandemic – for example, but not limited to, significant additional risk assessments and commissioning an internal audit to provide external assurance in this area.
8. Furthermore, the Health and Safety Statement of Intent (Appendix A), as signed by the Chair of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority and the Chief Fire Officer, outlines the principles and intentions of the organisation regarding health, safety and welfare. The organisation's Health, Safety and Welfare Policy builds on this, identifying measurable objectives to be implemented to maintain a safe and healthy working environment. These in turn are reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee, to drive continuous improvement and support delivery of aspects of the Safety Plan.
9. Health, safety and wellbeing forms an integral part of all organisational work streams. The Health and Safety Team takes a central role in ensuring this process is informed and aligned with the aims of the Statement of Intent and through the objectives of the Safety Plan.
10. Performance is monitored through various proactive and reactive indicators and processes on which the Health and Safety Team reports monthly. These include safety events (accident, incident, near miss, cause for concern), workplace inspections, and health and safety audits.
11. The information gathered in the processes detailed above is utilised to review performance and identify learning points. This helps to ensure everyone plays their part to support a proactive, robust health and safety management system that meets its statutory obligations and reduces risk to those affected by our work activities.

Organisational arrangements

12. The Service's Health and Safety Policy and Statement of Intent specifies HFRS's approach to the management of all health and safety; including roles and responsibilities, and the commitment to keep our people safe and well whilst performing their duties. The Service ensures its legal responsibilities are met by employing a competent Health and Safety Team. The team comprises of:

- Health and Safety Manager CMIOSH.
 - Two Health and Safety Advisors.
 - Health and Safety admin support.
13. The Health and Safety Team constantly strive to meet the diverse and continually changing nature of activities to see the benefits of appropriate and proportionate health and safety management as a positive enabler to ensure legal compliance and organisational high performance.

Planning and implementation

14. We continue to monitor, review and update the policy and procedures to ensure the highest level of compliance in line with legislation changes. This year we have just completed our first year of the Service's new Operational Improvement Plan (OIP) framework and continue to address key themes for further development with a priority on our positive health and safety culture and progressive staff engagement. Over the last 12 months the Health and Safety Team has delivered a wide range of significant activity to support key priorities and improvements around health, safety and wellbeing (which now support delivery against the Safety Plan) including, but not limited to:
- New Green/Grey Book H&S induction.
 - Re-defining of the training matrix for the training needs across the Service in relation to H&S.
 - Improved internal transparency of safety reporting.
 - Workplace sickness absence reporting.
 - Generic risk assessments for stations.
 - Workshop safety (workplace inspections and Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)).
 - Increased support and engagement by H&S team to a wide variety of teams across HFRS and IWFRS.
 - Face fit testing to support other agencies.
 - Improved process for safety investigations and working with operational learning following investigation outcomes.
 - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).
15. The Health and Safety Team continue to work closely with Service areas to provide advice, bespoke training and monitor activities to ensure that risks are being managed sensibly and proportionately.

Monitoring service performance

16. This annual health and safety report provides information and assurance to the Service that we are meeting our obligations for workplace safety for colleagues and partners. The analysis and use of the performance information presented below demonstrates the organisation's proactive and reactive monitoring emphasis, with tools that enable a focus on continual improvement through proactive measures.
17. The Health and Safety Team reports regularly on leading (proactive) and lagging (reactive) indicators through monthly reports covering HFRS and IWFRS. The reports contain detailed dashboards which analyse these indicators and places them within the organisational context. All reports are accessible via the internal network or on request.
18. A proactive approach focuses on eliminating problems before they have a chance to appear. We monitor and use workplace inspections, audits, cause for concerns, near misses and reviewing of risk assessments as proactive measurements to reduce the likelihood of an adverse safety event occurring and to provide learning points that are of direct relevance to safety events. This enables corrective actions prior to failure in a system which could then cause an adverse event. This has a positive knock-on effect in relation to reduced legal and insurance claims costs and reputational damage.
19. A reactive approach, which is not desirable, is based on responding to events after they have happened. These are predominately injuries and investigations.
20. When focusing on safety event reporting, it is desirable to aim for a position where reported leading indicators outweigh reported lagging indicators, with the ultimate aim being that proactive (leading) measures outweigh reactive (lagging) measures by a significant amount.

Proactive measurements – leading indicators

Health and safety audit and workplace inspections

21. Annually, the Health and Safety Team undertakes a site audit which, where possible, has been undertaken with the site manager and the appointed workplace safety representative(s). The team produce a report of the audit with a list of any significant findings identified, which is to be communicated to relevant parties for actions to be addressed.
22. The workplace manager is responsible for undertaking an annual workplace inspection which, where possible, is to be accompanied by the relevant appointed workplace safety representative.

23. During 2019 we identified areas of non-compliance across the organisation regarding completion of audits and workplace inspections against guidelines. In response, there has been an increased emphasis on accountability for site managers and this data is reported monthly to the organisation. Increasing visibility and transparency of accountabilities has encouraged the organisation to maintain standards and improve a proactive safety culture across all sites.
24. We have now structured a new programme over a 14 month cycle to ensure every site undertakes the required inspections.

Third-party assurance

25. An internal audit by Southern Internal Audit Partnership was carried out in June 2019 to provide assurance that the Service had robust health and safety management systems in place to monitor, review and improve. This audit examined the effectiveness of our identification of risk and the controls implemented, additionally they audited our safety management processes. The audit provides an adequate assurance opinion and concluded that, as a Service, we are operating at a sufficient level of effectiveness to provide evidence and assurance that the control environment is being managed to meet legislative and compliance requirements.

Risk assessments

26. The risk assessment template has been reviewed, improved and shared across the Service.
27. This has aligned risk assessment templates to ensure consistency across the Service. Through alignment and further in-house training to key stakeholders there has been increased understanding and acknowledgement of the required standards.
28. Across the reporting period we have implemented a new suite of generic risk assessments for fire stations, that have been made site specific according to the sites risk profile. The documents provide assurance for key site risks following collaborative development with subject matter experts. Supporting this approach, fire stations have now established a review schedule to ensure compliance. This will now be completed annually and forms part of the H&S audit to ensure we can capture performance moving forward.
29. Improvements in the audit reporting tool will allow for additional qualitative sampling of risk assessments via desktop samples, and will ensure consistency of content and regularity of reviews.

30. Both the proactive approach by station management and improved availability of documentation for H&S Team appraisal is anticipated to lead to a trend of reduced accidents and RIDDOR reportable events at our sites.

Culture and behaviours

31. Culture and behaviours are monitored through positive indicators; commonly referred to as leading indicators. These are used to assess elements of our safety management system which, over the last few years, we have continued to use to monitor effective implementation of our priorities around health and safety policy and processes.

32. The two measures monitored by the H&S Team are cause for concerns and near miss reported events:

- A cause for concern is any situation causing concern for the health, safety or wellbeing of staff or others.
- A near miss is an adverse safety event that did not cause an injury but had the potential to do so.

Leading indicators

33. Leading indicators allow organisational and personal learning to take place before an adverse safety event occurs and provide learning points that are of direct relevance to safety events. This makes it desirable to aim for a position where reported leading indicators outweigh reported lagging indicators. It is impracticable to work towards defined margins, as these risks are impacting on the unbiased and accurate reporting of safety events. The aim is for proactive (leading) indicators to outweigh reactive (lagging) indicators by a significant amount.

	2018	2019	2020
Total recorded events:	199	230	244
Near miss and cause for concern (leading indicators) %	52%	51%	49%
Injuries (lagging indicators) %	48%	49%	51%

34. The data shows that HFRS is still working towards a position where leading indicators (near miss event reporting) exceed the number of lagging events (injuries) over the long-term monitoring period.

35. The reporting of cause for concern and near miss events is common throughout the Service. This positive indicator highlights a shift in Service safety culture to proactively report before the safety event can occur. However, there is of course room for improvement

36. Although currently our leading performance indicators are not outweighing accidents, the H&S Team will be proactively working with all sites to ensure a shift toward a proactive safety culture within HFRS. The changing tide is partly being achieved through the H&S Team working closely with all site managers and teams to reinforce understanding and emphasis on reporting leading indicators and safety events, but also through a new communications strategy including information posters and a refined reporting process to aid efficiency and simplify the process.

Reactive Measures

Lagging indicators

37. The lagging indicators present an overall picture of our reported incidents. Performance in this area can be influenced by a strengthening culture of our internal processes for reporting rather than an arbitrary indication of success or failure to manage risk effectively.
38. The data below summarises reported safety events (also referred to as incidents or accidents), across the previous three year period. The data demonstrates that these incidents account for 51% of the total reported safety events and is broadly comparable to the last two years. While the overall number of injuries did increase by 14 over the last 12 months, this can largely be attributed to a push for improved recording.

HSMS safety events records [Apr-Mar]	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total recorded events:	199	230	244
Total Injuries %	48%	49%	51%
<i>Lost time injury % of total injuries</i>	37%	45%	34%
<i>No lost time injury % of total injuries</i>	63%	55%	66%

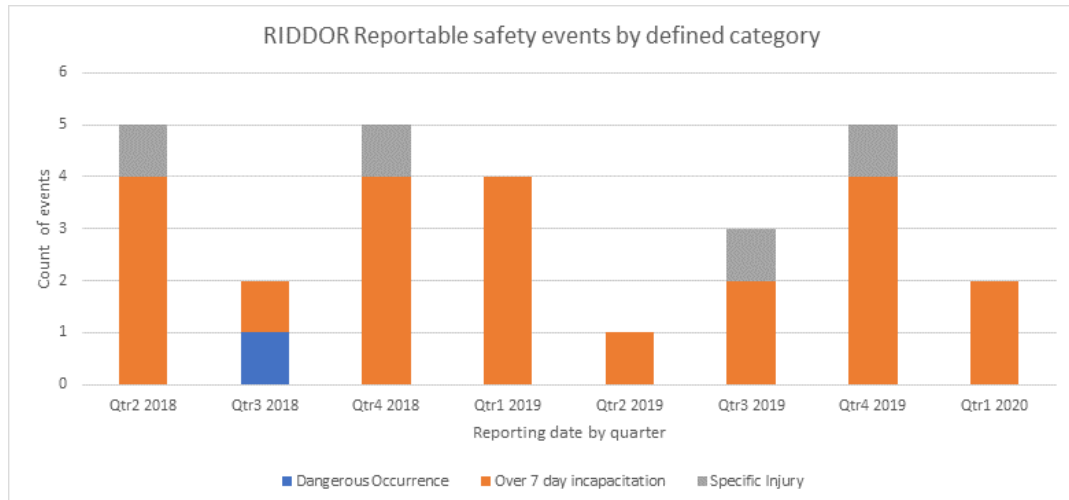
39. Through more detailed evaluation of the data it can be shown that training activity accounts for over one third of all reported injuries.
40. Where occurrences have been of a similar nature the Health and Safety Team have proactively engaged with departments to alter working practices where applicable. This focused engagement is further enhancing Service-wide awareness and engagement, improving the overall safety culture.
41. In our approach to reduce re-occurrence in relation to physical training injuries, we have worked with the Academy and stations by enhancing our risk assessment procedure. The refined approach puts an emphasis on the lead trainers to ensure documentation is in place and shared with those taking part. We are actively monitoring this through desk top sampling and exercise observations.

Lost time injury measures

42. Total injuries have increased by 12% in comparison to the previous year. Although there has been an increase in reported safety events (both leading and lagging, as noted above), the Service are cognisant that this trend is the result of an organisational drive to refine reporting procedures and promote the benefits of reporting events.
43. The Service's cultural improvement has been a success because of good leadership, everyone playing their part across all levels of the Service, good communication and enhanced staff involvement to deliver a safe work environment. The largest influences on the Service's culture has been from the management style with a drive to deliver against the Annual Statement of Intent and integrating organisational learning to reinforce safe behaviour and re-educate where practices demonstrate unsafe behaviours.
44. In addition, the severity of reported incidents is a key metric in the successful embedding of health and safety practices. The figures highlight that the increase is a result of 'no lost time injuries' increasing by 21 reported safety events in 2019-2020. The positive indicator is a reduction in lost time injuries compared to the previous year. This implies that the number of serious or significant injuries is reducing.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)

45. RIDDOR is a set of regulations that requires organisations to report the most serious types of injuries or incidents to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). There were 11 RIDDOR reportable incidents for 2019-2020, a reduction of 31% since the previous reporting year.
46. This is a positive performance metric as it demonstrates the safety measures being implemented by us under the departmental OIP are having a positive influence on behaviours and cultures.
47. As seen in the data below, the majority of RIDDOR reportable events are due to 7 day+ incapacitation. However, when comparing the number of lost time injuries against this performance measure, only 21% of injuries are resulting in sustained absence. This highlights that 79% of injuries were associated to less than 7 days incapacitation and therefore a majority of lost time injuries were not reportable to HSE.



Next Steps – Action Plan

48. Good progress has been made during 2019/2020, however, as we continually look to improve there are key areas of performance that will be focused upon throughout 2020-2021. These are documented in the departmental OIP but a brief synopsis of key priorities are as follows:

- Align the current safety strategy objectives and OIP to the new Service Safety Plan.
- Invest and develop in a new H&S management platform for safety events to enhance our performance, assurance and accountabilities for proactive and reactive reporting.
- Raise awareness of work station assessments to reflect the changing nature of the Service, in particular the introduction of the Agile platform in August 2020.
- Review of previous years GAP analysis to identify and further enhance performance and increase our effectiveness.
- Identify air quality risks within our sites through a contaminants survey.
- Collaborative working with other occupational health stakeholders, including Wellbeing, HR, Inclusion & Diversity and Occupational Health providers.
- Improve scope for risk assessment monitoring – create a tool to facilitate risk assessment monitoring of review schedules to ensure organisational compliance and improved safety awareness.

CONCLUSION

49. During 2019/2020, the Health and Safety Team has sought to further enhance and develop the organisation's approach to health and safety, sometimes in challenging circumstances – including the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of the financial year. HFRS is a large complex organisation with certain areas being high risk, meaning increased incident reports are to be expected. HFRS has a number of areas that the Health and Safety Department recognise require improvement on an ongoing basis identified in the OIP Framework 2019-2022.
50. The Health and Safety Team will continue to promote the importance of health and safety to support the priorities of the Safety Plan and ensure the safety of our people and others using the organisation's sites and facilities. Creating a positive health and safety culture, and the organisation's ongoing focus on wellbeing, will mitigate risks, ensure compliance with statutory duties, and lead to high performance throughout our Service.
51. In terms of the key performance points, while there has been a 6% increase in health and safety events (from 230 to 244) in the last year, this is reflective of our continued focus on increased reporting. Furthermore, compared to 2016/17, there has been an improvement in the percentage of leading indicators (near misses and cause for concern) compared to lagging indicators (injuries); and there was a 31% reduction in RIDDOR reportable incidents for 2019/2020 compared to the previous financial year. Finally, in terms of the percentage of sickness absence owing to accidents at work in 2019/20, at 3.6%, we compare well to other fire and rescue services.
52. The report provides assurance that there are adequate policies, systems and procedures in place to manage, monitor and drive improvement across HFRS. For example, the internal audit by Southern Internal Audit Partnership found that the Service had robust health and safety management systems in place, providing an 'adequate' assurance opinion.

RECOMMENDATION

53. That this report be noted by Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.
54. That the Authority support cessation of the production of an annual Health and Safety Report owing to the introduction of greater health and safety data into the revised mid-year and end-of-year performance reports into the Authority, which enable more timely and relevant reporting.

55. APPENDICES ATTACHED

[Appendix A](#) – Statement of Intent

Contact: DCFO Steve Apter, Director of Policy and Planning,
steve.apter@hantsfire.gov.uk, 07918 888057