



Safest People, Safest Places

Local Government Act 1972

A Meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington will be held in the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on Wednesday 25 October 2023 at 10.00 am to consider the following business:-

PART A

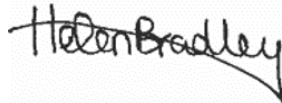
1. Declarations of interest, if any
If Members are aware of a private or personal conflict of interest in relation to any items on the Agenda, this should be disclosed at this stage or when the conflict of interest arises during consideration of an item in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2023 (Pages 3 - 6)
3. Current Correspondence - Report of Director of Emergency Response (Pages 7 - 14)
4. Notes of the Human Resources Committee - Report of Chair of Human Resources Committee (Pages 15 - 18)
5. Notes of the Performance Committee - Report of the Chair of Performance Committee (Pages 19 - 30)
6. Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee - Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee (Pages 31 - 34)
7. Firefighters' Pension Scheme - Immediate Detriment Update - Report of the Director of Emergency Response (Pages 35 - 38)
8. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgent to warrant consideration
9. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

Part B

Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)

10. Estates Update - Report of the Director of Corporate Resources (Pages 39 - 42)
11. Deputy Chief Fire Officer Appointment Panel - Report of Chief Fire Officer (Pages 43 - 44)
12. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

PURSUANT to the provisions of the above named Act, **I HEREBY SUMMON YOU** to attend the said meeting



Helen Bradley
Clerk to the Combined Fire Authority
for County Durham and Darlington

County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

TO: The Members of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors J Atkinson, A Batey, R Bell, J Blakey, J Cairns, C Hampson, N Jones, B Kellest, R Manchester, C Marshall, C Martin, I McLean, E Peeke, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, P Sexton, J Shuttleworth and S Zair

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors A Anderson, G Lee, D Ray and M Snedker

Minutes of a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held at **Fire and Rescue HQ, Durham** on **15 September 2023** at **10.00 am**.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors J Atkinson, A Batey, R Bell, J Blakey, C Hampson, N Jones, R Manchester, C Marshall, L Mavin (substitute for C Martin), S McDonnell (substitute for J Cairns), E Peeke, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, P Sexton, J Shuttleworth and S Zair.

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors A Anderson and D Ray.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Cairns, L Kennedy, G Lee, C Martin and M Snedker.

Independent Persons:

Independent Persons to be appointed.

Before the business of the day the Chair welcomed the service liaison officer for HMICFRS, Andy Blades, who would be observing the meeting.

The Chair noted that on 3 August the Apprentice Cohort 7 families evening had taken place, 11 new apprentice firefighters started their training with the service.

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A2 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (for copy see file of minutes).

A3 Current Correspondence

The Authority received an update from the Director of Emergency Response in relation to current correspondence received from government and other bodies relevant to the Authority and the status of each (for copy see file of minutes).

Members queried the financial settlement dates. The Deputy Chief Executive noted that the final settlement would not be received until February 2024 and that several scenarios would be planned whilst preparing the budget.

A4 Fire Standards

The Authority received a report of the Director of Community Risk Management which provided an update on the National Fire Standards and the alignment of CDDFRS against the published standards (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- a) Members **noted** the content of the report
- b) Further reports would be **received** as appropriate

A5 Draft Statement of Assurance

The Authority received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive which provided members with the 2022-23 Statement of Assurance for approval prior to publication (for copy see file of minutes).

Members noted that accidental dwelling fires had reduced and queried if this was sustainable. The Director of Community Risk Management noted how the service follows a data led approach to Home Fire Safety Visits and works closely with partners to assist with referrals.

The report was moved and seconded.

Resolved:

The Statement of Assurance 2022-23 was **approved**.

A6 Appointment of Independent Person to the Audit and Finance Committee

The Authority considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive which informed members of the appointment of an Independent Person to the Audit and Finance Committee (for copy see file of minutes).

Members noted the contents of the report.

A7 Business Fire Safety

The Authority received a report of the Business Fire Safety Member Champion which provided an update on the business fire safety activity delivered across the service area (for copy see file of minutes).

Members queried the reasons for resignations within the team, the Director of Community Risk Management noted that due to increased opportunities in the private sector staff had left the service. Robust succession planning had been put in place to alleviate some of these issues moving forward. The Director of Community Risk Management also noted that fire safety audits were still continuing via crews.

Members **noted** the contents of the report.

A8 Retained Duty System Member Champion Report

The Authority considered a report of the Retained Duty System Member Champion which provided an update into the business areas and performance of the retained duty system for the service (for copy see file of minutes).

Members queried any national work that was being undertaken on recruiting and retaining RDS staff. The Director of Emergency Response noted the work that was ongoing with the NFCC. Members also noted the RDS was a springboard into the wholetime which was a great success.

Members **noted** the contents of the report.

A9 Changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exemptions) Order 1975 and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) eligibility

The Authority received a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development which provided an update on changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exemptions) Order 1975 which has enabled fire and rescue services employees to be checked through the DBS at a standard or enhanced level (for copy see file of minutes).

Members queried how the changes could affect applicants. The Director of People and Organisational Development noted the work undertaken around spent and unspent convictions, costs and resource. Guidance is awaited to assist with the process. The Chief Fire Officer noted the practices already in place within the service.

Resolved:

Members **noted** the contents of the report and would await further updates from the FSB.

A10 NFCC Culture Statement and Action Plan

The Authority received a report from the Director of People and Organisational Development which highlighted the publication of the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Organisational Cultural Statement and Culture Action Plan.

Members **noted** the contents of the report.

A11 Government Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan

The Authority received a report from the Director of Community Risk Management which provided an update on the involvement of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) with the Government's anti-social behaviour (ASB) action plan.

Members queried referral routes for the courses. The Director of Community Risk Management explained the process of referrals through the Youth Justice Team. The Chief Fire Officer noted that if any members believed they had young people who could benefit from this type of course he urged them to speak to their member buddies as the service had many contacts with other agencies which may be able to assist.

Performance from these initiatives would be monitored through the Performance Committee.

Resolved:

- a) Members **noted** the contents of the report
- b) Members to **receive** further reports as appropriate

A12 Any Other Business

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Cllr Batey asked for thanks to be passed onto those involved in organising High Handenholds open day.

Cllr Quinn asked for thanks to be passed onto those involved in Bishop Aucklands open day.

A13 Exclusion to the Public

That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

Part B

B12 Any Other Business

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

CLOSE OF MEETING



Current Correspondence: September 2023 – October 2023

No	Release Date	Subject	Summary	Action CFA Report	Action CFA Response	Action Info
1	2/10/23	Letter from HMI Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM	Letter informing of progress of HMI's first thematic inspection of fire and rescue services Appendix A			X
2	5/10/23	Letter to Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State	Letter from Chair to Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State regarding Fire Funding for 2024/25 Appendix B			X
3	5/10/23	Letter to Members of Parliament for County Durham and Darlington	Letter from Chair to all Members of Parliament for County Durham and Darlington regarding Fire Funding for 2024/25 Appendix C			

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Promoting improvements
in policing and fire & rescue
services to make everyone safer

23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham B2 4BH
Direct line: 020 3513 0523
Email: roy.wilsher@hmicfrs.gov.uk

HMI Roy Wilsher
His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and
Rescue Services

Chief Fire Officers
Chairs of Fire Authorities
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners
Lead Fire Authority Members
Locally elected Mayors
Other FRS interested parties

2 October 2023

Dear colleague,

Fire and Rescue Service Update

Misconduct Thematic Inspection

I write to inform you on the progress of our first thematic inspection of fire and rescue services (FRSs).

To date three external reference group sessions have been carried out with representatives from the fire sector, HR experts, union and staff association leads. These meetings have been held to specifically consult with and inform colleagues on our plans for the misconduct thematic inspection. Additionally are holding an event for the Service Liaison Officers in all services to share information about the thematic and broader inspection programme on 18 October 2023.

Further engagement will take place as we progress through the inspection schedule and following that on our emerging findings and recommendations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and feedback.

Value and Culture Spotlight Recommendations

We continue monitor the progress being made against the recommendations detailed in our ['Values and culture in fire and rescue services' spotlight report](#). We ask that services continue to provide updates to each recommendation by the relevant deadlines. With that in mind the following are due:

- By 1 September 2023, chief fire officers should make sure there is a full, 360-degree feedback process in place for all other leaders and managers in service. The process should include gathering feedback from a wide range of sources including colleagues and direct reports
- By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should make sure their services provide a confidential way for staff to raise concerns and that staff are aware of whistleblowing processes
- By 1 October 2023, chief fire officers should put plans in place to monitor, including through the gathering and analysis of staff feedback, watch and team cultures and provide prompt remedial action for any issues they identify.
- By 1 October 2023, as a precursor to the development of the College of Fire and Rescue, chief fire officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council should work with the Home Office to consider how they can improve the training and support they offer to staff in management and leadership development. This should include authority members in respect of their assurance leadership roles and should ensure that opportunities are offered fairly across all staff groups.

Please note that it is inappropriate to provide details of specific misconduct allegations, or any personal or sensitive information within these updates. Please notify your HMI directly of information of this nature.

Should you wish to discuss any of the above detail please contact either me or your Chief of Staff, Mick Mason, michael.mason1@hmicfrs.gov.uk or Jo Hayden, jo.hayden1@hmicfrs.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



HMI Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

His Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services



This matter is being dealt with by: John Shuttleworth
 Ext: 5555
 Date: 5 October 2023
 Our Ref:
 Your Ref:

Clerk,
 County Durham and Darlington
 Fire and Rescue Authority
 County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UL

Lee Rowley MP
 Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Local Government and Building Safety)

The Rt Hon John Glen MP
 Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Dear Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,

Fire Funding for 2024/25

We are writing to you today to make the case for a fair funding settlement for the Fire and Rescue Service and to ask for your help to avoid the Combined Fire Authority having to make cuts to frontline services that will increase the risk to the communities in County Durham and Darlington.

Nationally Fire and Rescue Services across England are facing further inflationary pressures of c£139m in the coming year because of significant increases in utility costs, diesel and 'Green Book' salary costs as a result of increases in the national living wage. These unavoidable pressures mean that Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) will have to make unacceptable decisions if these cost increases are not matched by increases in the funding available.

For County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service specifically we have lost in the region of £10M in government funding over the last thirteen years, when inflation is taken into account. We are also disproportionately impacted by the council tax referendum limit due to the high number of properties in council tax band A and B across our area. This means that together with high levels of deprivation many residents are either exempt or qualify for discounts to their council tax bills.

The Service is recognised by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services as being high performing, efficient and extremely productive but unless the funding position improves, we will see a significant reduction in performance and an increased risk to the public.

If inflationary pressures are not covered by funding increases in the Local Government Settlement, the result will be a reduction in frontline wholetime and on-call firefighters with the removal of fire engines and a resultant degradation in service. This will increase response times and risk and reduce the level of vitally important prevention and building safety inspection work.

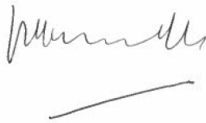
We are seeking a settlement that delivers an increase in the Settlement Funding Assessment that matches the rate of inflation to ensure our highly valued emergency service is still able to respond to incidents while maintaining our focus on prevention and protection post Grenfell. Over the last few years, the Service has also played a key role in supporting national resilience for either fire specific issues or multi-agency response, without sufficient funding this would no longer be possible going forward.

We are therefore seeking a continuation of the £5 band D precept flexibility for all standalone FRAs.

Services are facing very similar inflationary pressures again for the coming year which require an increase in precept above the standard 3%. A £5 precept would raise £28.6m over and above the standard 3% increase, this is a relatively low sum in comparison with the overall level of council tax.

We are copying this letter to The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, as well as to Members of Parliament for County Durham and Darlington.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr John Shuttleworth

**Chair of County Durham and
Darlington Fire and Rescue
Authority**



Steve Helps

**Chief Fire Officer
County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service**

Cc The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP - Secretary of State for Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
Members of Parliament for County Durham and Darlington



This matter is being dealt with by: John Shuttleworth
 Ext: 5555
 Date: 5 October 2023
 Our Ref:
 Your Ref:

Clerk,
 County Durham and Darlington
 Fire and Rescue Authority
 County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UL

Mary Foy MP
 Office No. 12
 Moor Chambers
 22a and Upper Floor 26 Front Street
 Framwellgate Moor
 DH1 5EJ

Dear Mary,

Fire Funding for 2024/25

Attached is a letter we have today sent to Lee Rowley MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Local Government and Building Safety, and to The Rt Hon John Glen MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury (and copied to The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities), to request support for funding next year.

We have been asking for your general support with our lobbying position around funding for the last couple of years, but we are entering a crucial period in this campaign. Over the next few weeks key decisions will be made by the Treasury and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities that could have a fundamental impact on the services we provide to the public in County Durham and Darlington.

If possible, we would ask that you take every opportunity to try to influence Lee Rowley MP, The Rt Hon John Glen MP and The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP as they consider levels of public spending and the envelope for council tax increases.

As always, we are happy to discuss this in more detail with you if you would find that helpful.

Yours sincerely

Cllr John Shuttleworth

**Chair of County Durham and
 Darlington Fire and Rescue
 Authority**

Steve Helps

**Chief Fire Officer
 County Durham and Darlington
 Fire and Rescue Service**

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County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

25 October 2023

Notes of the Human Resources Committee held on 5 September 2023

Report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee

Members Present: Cllr C Martin in the Chair

Cllrs A Batey, C Marshall, J Quinn and D Ray

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Human Resources Committee held on 5 September 2023

Sickness Absence Performance Report Quarter One 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023

2. K Metcalfe introduced the report which provided an update on sickness performance for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023.

Members discussed reasons for absence, the sickness absence management system and possible links between absence figures and culture with in Services.

Members **noted** the report.

Health and Safety Report Quarter One 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023

3. Members received a summary of the Service's health and safety performance for the end of the first quarter of the 2023/24 reporting period.

Members discussed testing following near miss reports, vehicle accidents and parked cars, insurance arrangements and appliance cameras.

Members **noted** the report.

Removal of A Roles from the Establishment

4. K Metcalfe introduced the report which advised the committee of a change in the Service establishment whereby Watch Manager and Station Manager A roles across the Service have been removed and replaced with that of B level.

Discussion took place around staff progression routes, moves and transfers.

Members **noted** the report.

Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services Spotlight Report Action Plan Update

5. K Metcalfe introduced the report which updated the committee on the progress made towards completion of the action plan relating to HMICFRS Values and Culture Report and the recommendations made.

Discussion took place regarding national guidance for DBS checks and it was noted that a further paper would be prepared for a future CFA meeting.

Members **noted** the report.

Additional Workforce Healthcare Benefit

6. K Metcalfe introduced the report which proposed an enhanced wellbeing offering in the form of a trial of an additional workforce healthcare benefit that is complimentary to NHS provision and our existing Occupational Health Service.

Members discussed staff feedback from other services, the referral process and the NHS position.

Resolved:

- a) The Committee **approved** the proposed trial for an 18 month period
- b) The Committee **agreed** to review the trial at 18 months with a view to adopting as a permanent employee benefit.

Part B

Flexible Retirement Application

7. K Metcalfe introduced the report which sought approval of a flexible retirement application from a control Watch Manager.

Following discussion and debate the Committee agreed to approve the flexible retirement application.

Recommendation

8. Members are requested to **note** the report.

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County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

25 October 2023

Notes of the Performance Committee: 12 September 2023

Report of the Chair of Performance Committee

Members Present: Cllr J Blakey in the Chair
Cllrs S Quinn and R Manchester

Apologies received: Cllrs G Lee, C Marshall

It was noted that the meeting would not be quorate but as there were no decisions to be made it would go ahead in line with page 16 paragraph 4 of the Constitution '*Quorum Decisions shall not be taken at a meeting of any Committee unless at least three members of the Committee are present including a representative of each constituent Authority. Provided that, in no case shall the quorum of a Committee be less than three members*'.

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Performance Committee held on 12 September 2023.

Performance Report Quarter 1 2023/24

2. The Committee were updated on the operational and corporate performance indicators for quarter one of 2023/24 which showed 43% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 66% of the strategic PIs either maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.

A copy of the report is attached at appendix A.

The Committee **noted** and **commented** on the report.

Letters of Appreciation

3. The Committee considered letters of appreciation that had been submitted to the Service. In total 14 letters had been received for the quarter one period.

The Committee **noted** the report

PART B

Formal Complaints

4. A total of 2 formal complaints had been received by the Service in the reporting period. No complaints had been upheld and no complaints had been forwarded to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Committee **noted** the report.

Recommendation

5. Members are requested to **note** the report.



Safest People, Safest Places

Performance Committee

12 September 2023

Performance Report – Quarter One 2023/24

Report of Director of Community Risk Management

Purpose of report

1. This report presents a summary of organisational performance at the end of the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year.

Background

2. Both operational and corporate performance is monitored and managed internally via the monthly Performance Board and Service Leadership Team (SLT) forums. Members of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) consider performance on a quarterly basis at meetings of the Performance Committee and the full CFA.
3. A comprehensive suite of performance indicators (PIs) is employed to measure both operational and corporate performance. Targets are set on an annual basis against SMART criteria and take account of longer-term trends and the potential for spikes in performance.
4. This robust approach to performance management enables action to be taken at an early stage if performance is not meeting expectations and provides assurance that resources are being directed towards the areas of greatest risk.
5. In addition to setting a target level for relevant PIs, the Service also employs a system of tolerance limit triggers that allow under or over performance to be highlighted to the Performance Board when the PI goes beyond set tolerances, which vary depending on the indicator. Each PI has a total of four tolerance limit triggers, two each for both under and over performance.
6. Performance is presented from two perspectives, by comparison against the annual target levels, and by comparison with performance at the same point last year.

Overview of performance across all indicator categories

7. An overview across both operational and corporate key PIs at the end of quarter one for 2023/24 shows 43% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 66% of the strategic PIs either maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.

Performance reporting by exception

8. The following sections of the report present details of specific operational and corporate indicators. An explanatory narrative is provided for each PI group along with information about how performance compares to the annual target and the previous year.

Prevention

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2022/23 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 01 – Deaths Arising from Accidental Fires in Dwellings	Down	2	0	-100%	0	-100%
PI 03 – Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	57	50	-14%	54	-5.6%
PI 04 – Injuries Arising from Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	4	5	20%	4	0%
PI 05 – Total Secondary Fires	Down	903	1043	13.4%	1324	31.7%
PI 07 – Number of Home Fire Safety Visits	Up	4929	4500	9.5%	4755	3.7%
PI 42 – Proportion of Home Fire Safety Visits to High-Risk People/Properties	Up	97.7%	80%	22.1%	86.2%	13.3%

PI01 – There were two fire deaths in quarter one at a house fire in Darlington. A presentation of the circumstances of the fire was delivered to June’s CFA.

PI03 – There have been 57 accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) this quarter compared to a target of 50 and a previous year’s performance of 54. Kitchen fires continue to be an area of focus for our targeted Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) as 45% of incidents are recorded as starting in this room. Lone occupiers and lone parent account for 51% of all incidents and the ‘Eyes Wide Open’ programme is engaging with agencies who interact with these occupier groups to try and increase referrals for HFSVs.

See Appendix A, chart 1 for number of ADFs by room of origin and chart 2 for number of ADFs by occupier type.

PI04 – There were four injuries arising from ADFs in this quarter, which is ahead of the target and in line with the previous year’s performance. All of the injuries occurred in April and resulted from only two incidents. The injuries were to three adults and one child and positively all the injuries were slight. Encouragingly, despite this spike in April, there has been no injuries in May or June.

PI05 – The positive performance seen in quarter three and four of 2022/23 has continued into quarter one of 2023/24. There have been 903 incidents which is 13.4% better than the target and improved performance by 31.7% compared to the previous year. The wet weather has undoubtedly assisted the Service and partners to reduce this incident type. Loose refuse is still the top fuel source, with 89% of all secondary fires deliberately set.

Durham and Darlington are part of the Government Anti-Social Behaviour Trailblazer and funding has been received to increase high visibility patrols in hotspot areas. The Service is using this funding for the Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV) to patrol hotspot areas for deliberate secondary fires. Tri-Service Community Safety Responders are also being recruited through this funding and they will receive training from the Police, Local Authorities and the Service so they are able to use the full range of powers and engagement of all three organisations.

See Appendix A, chart 3 for secondary fires by motive and chart 4 for secondary fires by property type.

PI07 – During quarter one 4,929 HFSVs were delivered which is above the target and above the previous year’s performance. This high number of visits is above the fire sector average and should continue to make the residents of County Durham and Darlington safer from fire.

PI42 – This indicator is currently performing at 97.7% which is well above the Community Risk Management Plan target of 80% and above the previous year’s performance. The ‘Eyes Wide Open’ programme and national risk methodology will support us to continue targeting the most vulnerable in our communities.

Protection

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2022/23 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 10a – Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Premises	Down	21	24	12.5%	36	41.7%
PI 14 – False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment	Down	172	146	-17.8%	217	20.7%
PI 17 – Number of Fire Safety Audits	Up	541	507	6.7%	473	14.4%

PI10a – Quarter one sees positive performance for this indicator with 21 incidents against a target of 24. This performance is substantially better, 41.7%, than performance in the previous year. Although there were three fires in prisons this is a positive reduction from the ten incidents in the previous year. Work continues with prisons to reduce the number of incidents.

The Business Fire Safety Team conduct post fire reviews of these incidents and combined with our high levels of fire safety audits aims to continue the improvement in the performance of this indicator.

PI14 – Performance of this indicator has continued to improve during quarter one, showing a 20.7% improvement compared to the previous year’s performance, however it is still over the target by 17.8%. There has been 172 incidents this quarter. The three main premises types are education (23.8%), residential homes (14.0%) and industrial manufacturing (12.8%).

Of all the incidents 37.2% were caused by system faults and 35.5% caused by human intervention.

The new approach to mobilisations from automatic fire alarms commencing on 2 October 2023 should have a significant effect on these high numbers.

PI17 – Performance of this indicator is 6.7% above the target and an improvement of 14.4% on the previous year’s performance. This improved performance is supported by increased capacity in the central team following completion of qualifications, alongside continued high performance by the Emergency Response crews. Positively 33.5% of audits have been unsatisfactory showing that the Service is targeting the correct premises.

Response

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2022/23 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
Total Emergency Calls Received	N/A	4785	N/A	N/A	5315	10.0%
Total Incidents	N/A	2158	N/A	N/A	2654	18.7%
Total Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	76	N/A	N/A	71	-7.0%
PI 02 – Total Primary Fires	Down	274	236	-16.1%	266	-3.0%
PI 06a – Dwelling Fires Attended within 8 Minutes	Up	65.5%	70%	-6.4%	70%	-6.4%
PI 06b – Non Domestic Fires Attended within 9 Minutes	Up	64.1%	70%	-8.4%	75%	-13.2%
PI 06c – Road Traffic Collisions Attended within 10 Minutes	Up	72.2%	70%	3.1%	72%	0.3%

See Appendix A, chart 5 for total incidents.

PI02 – There has been 274 primary fires in quarter one which is 16.1% over the target of 236, although only 3% worse than the previous year’s performance. 50% of primary fires are vehicle fires with the majority being set deliberately. Peterlee station area is still the highest across the Service area for vehicle fires, although there has been a developing trend of attacking vans and minibuses in the High Handenhold station area. This type of incident is difficult to prevent, though the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team continue to work with Police colleagues to target offenders.

52% of all primary fires are set deliberately and the Service continue to work with Firestoppers to raise awareness and try and gather intelligence on the perpetrators. As many of these incidents are linked to crime, work continues through the multi-agency Arson Suppression Group to identify ways to reduce deliberate fire incidents.

See Appendix A, chart 6 for primary fires by motive and chart 7 for primary fires by type.

PI06a – Response time performance when attending ADF's in 8 minutes on 70% of occasions is 65.5%. Divisional Managers are working with Watch Managers through the monthly performance reporting process to scrutinise and improve performance. Analysis shows that extended travel distances are the main reasons for failing response times.

PI06b – Response time performance when attending non-domestic fires in 9 minutes on 70% of occasions is 64.1%. This indicator’s performance has improved from the 2022/23 end of year figure assisted by a reduction of incidents at HM Prison Deerbolt, although is still performing under target and is below performance in the same quarter in the previous year. Scrutiny of any incident that fails

the response time is completed by the Divisional teams and reported to the Performance Board with the aim to identify opportunities to improve performance.

PI06c – Response time performance when attending road traffic collisions attended within 10 minutes on 70% of occasions is achieving its target with the standard met on 72.2% of occasions. This is improved performance compared to the same quarter in the previous year.

Workforce

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2022/23 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 40 – All Staff Sickness	Down	2.51	1.75	-43.4%	2.13	-17.8%
PI 69 – Number of Accidents to Personnel	Down	1	3	66.7%	2	50%

PI40 – This indicator continues to perform over target, heavily influenced by long term sickness.

The Human Resources (HR) Team continues to work with managers to ensure correct processes are followed. This indicator is scrutinised in detail by the HR Committee.

PI69 – This indicator continues its strong performance and there has only been one accident in this quarter, which occurred in May when a firefighter sustained an ankle injury while responding to a secondary fire.

Recommendations

9. Members are requested to:
 - a. **Note** the content of the report;
 - b. **Comment** on the reported performance.

Keith Carruthers, Director Community Risk Management, Ext. 5564

Appendix A

Chart 1 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Room of Origin

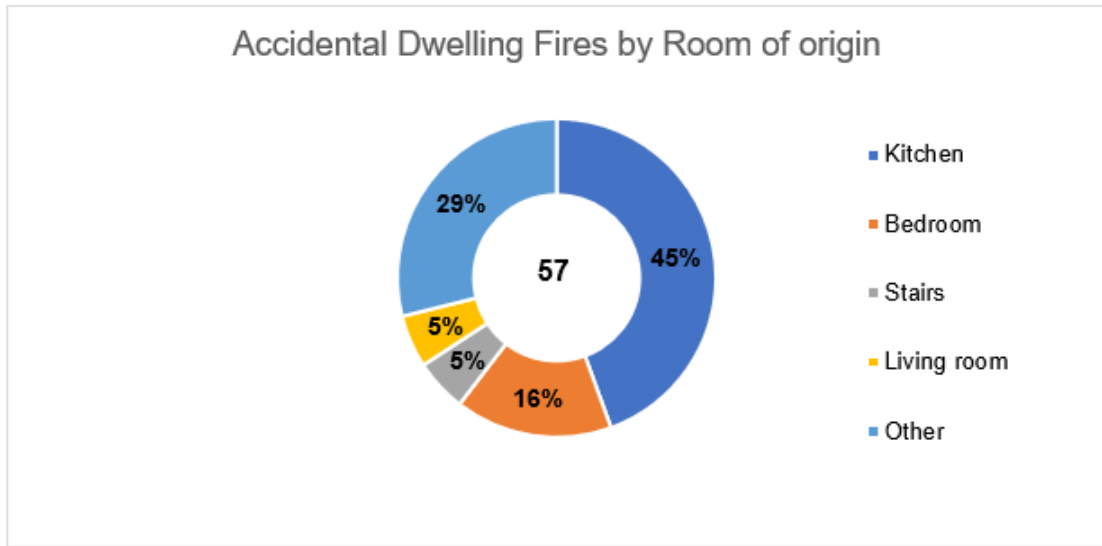


Chart 2 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Occupier Type

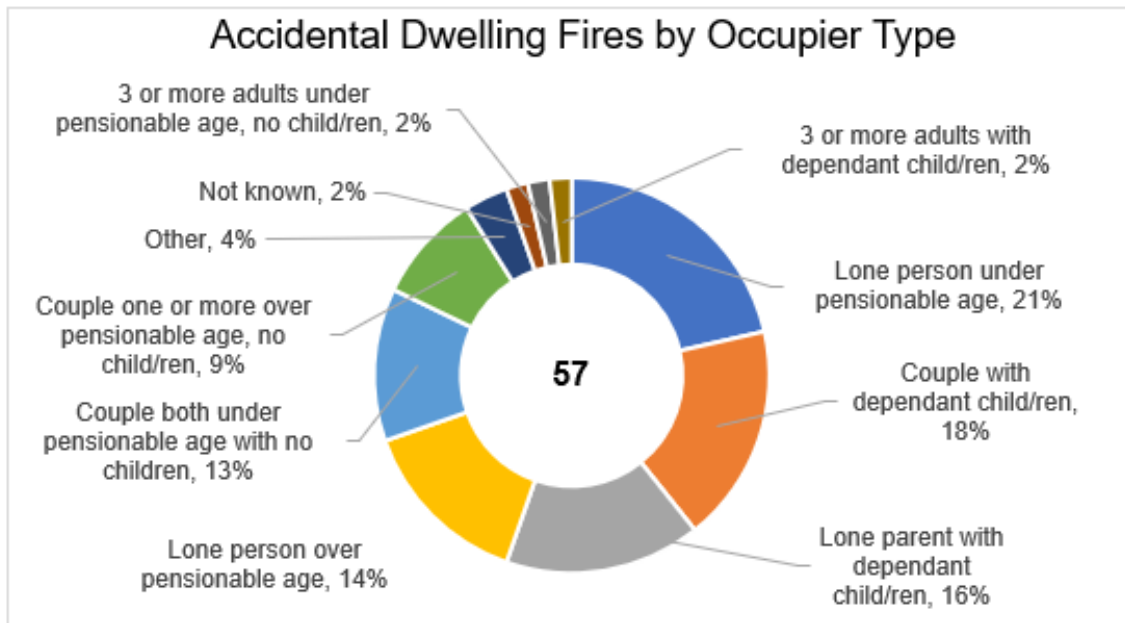


Chart 3 – Secondary Fires by Motive

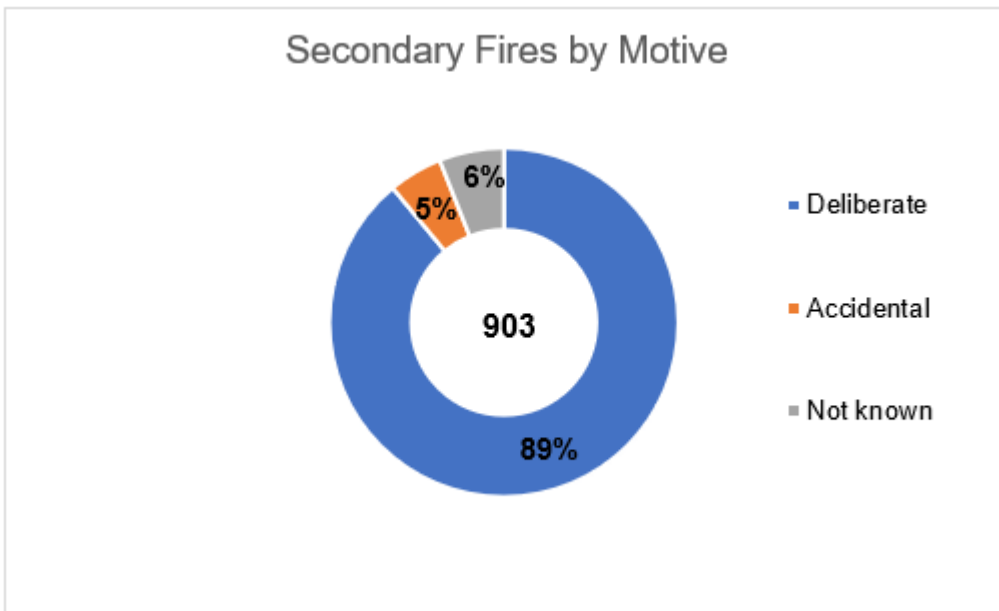


Chart 4 – Secondary Fires by Property Type

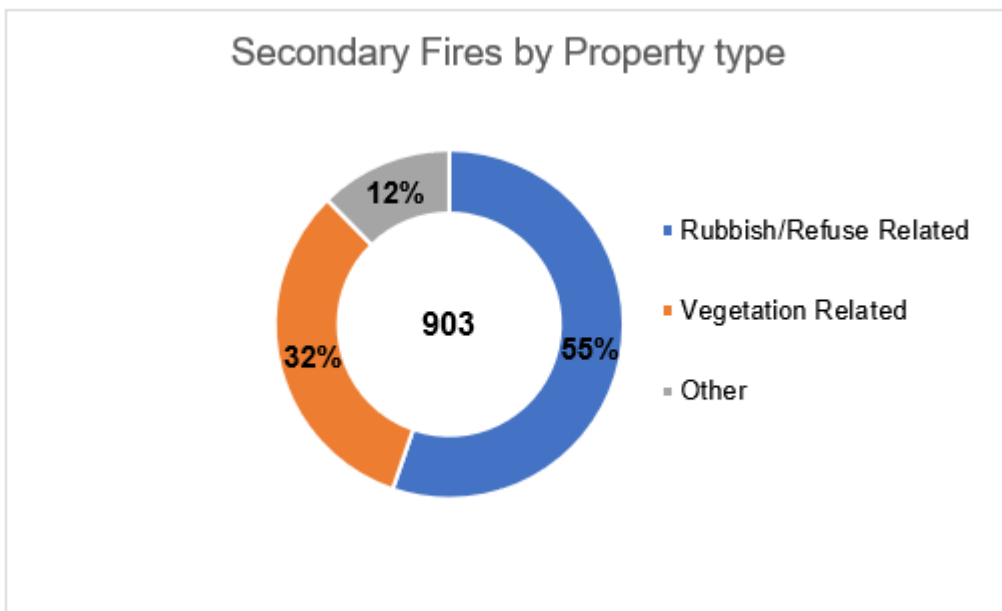


Chart 5 - Total Incidents

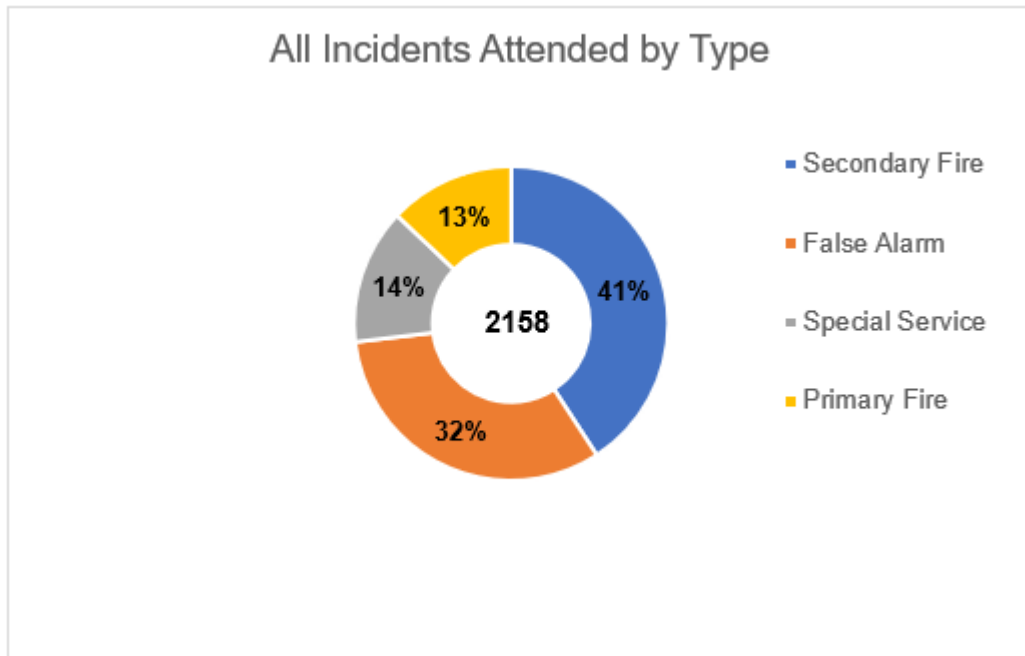


Chart 6 - Primary Fires by Motive

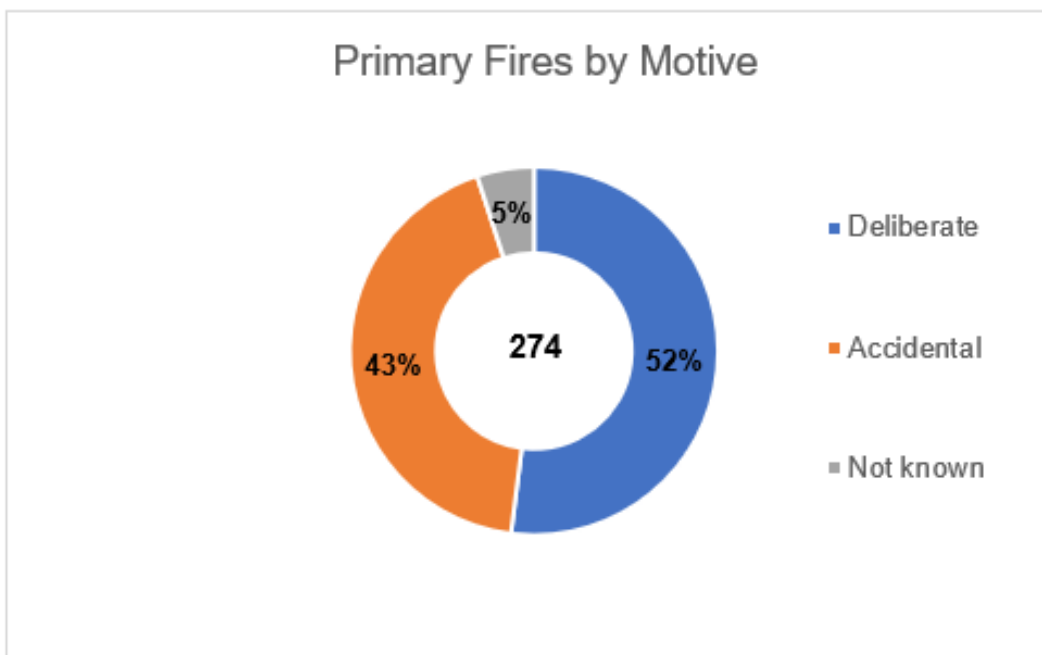
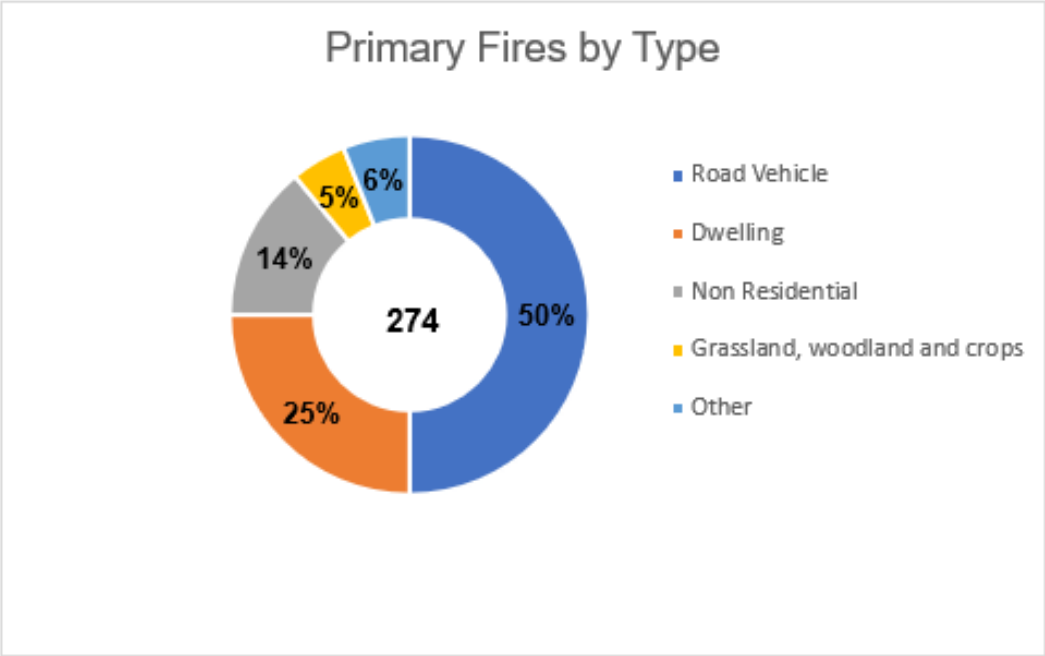


Chart 7 – Primary Fires by Type



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County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

25 October 2023

Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 27 September 2023

Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee

Members Present: Cllr R Bell in the Chair
Cllrs J Blakey and A Batey

It was noted that the meeting would not be quorate as there was not a Darlington member present but as there were no decisions to be made it would go ahead in line with page 16 paragraph 4 of the Constitution '*Quorum Decisions shall not be taken at a meeting of any Committee unless at least three members of the Committee are present including a representative of each constituent Authority. Provided that, in no case shall the quorum of a Committee be less than three members*'.

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 27 September 2023

Audit Completion Certificate for 2020/21

2. Members were updated that the Audit Certificate for 2020/21 has been signed, formally closing the audit.

Audit Strategy Memorandum 2022/23

3. Members received an update on the Audit Strategy Memorandum for year ending March 2023, summarising their audit approach, highlighting significant audit risks and areas of key judgements.

Audit Completion Report 2022/23

4. Members received an update on the Audit Completion Report for years ending March 2023.
C Deardon thanked the CDDFRS Finance team for their timely and detailed responses.

Cllr Batey expressed appreciation on behalf of the Audit and Finance Committee for the work carried out by T Hope, the CDDFRS Finance Teams and Mazars.

Annual Internal Audit Opinion and Report 2022/23

5. Members were updated on the Annual Internal Audit Opinion and Report 2022/23 advising that a Moderate overall assurance opinion has been provided.

The report was **considered** and **noted**.

Annual Review of the System of Internal Audit 2022/23

6. Members were presented with the findings and conclusions of the Annual Review of the System of Internal Audit 2022/23

The report was **considered** and **noted**.

Fraud and Corruption Annual Report 2022/23

7. Members were presented with the results and work being undertaken within the Authority in seeking to identify, control and prevent fraud and corruption.

The report was **considered** and **noted**.

Internal Audit Progress Report 2022/23

8. Members were updated on work undertaken by Internal Audit between 01 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.

The report was **considered** and **noted**.

Corporate Risk Register – Position at 31 August 2023

9. Members were updated details of the Corporate Risk Register at 31 August 2023.

Short Term Investments and Long-Term Borrowing – Period to 31 March 2023 (Quarter 4)

10. Members an update on the performance of the Authority's short-term investments and long-term loans for the period ended 30 June 2023.

The report was **considered** and **noted**

Short Term Investments and Long-Term Borrowing – Period to 30 June 2023 (Quarter 1)

11. Members an update on the performance of the Authority's short-term investments and long-term loans for the period ended 30 June 2023.

The report was **considered** and **noted**

Medium Term Financial Plan Update

12. Members were updated on the latest Medium Term Financial Plan position. T Hope explained that the overall financial position has improved but there remains a number of factors outside of our control that may have an impact on this moving forward.

It was explained that to assist in balancing the budget a full review of all budget headings has been undertaken to identify savings and correct any shortfalls in current budgets.

Work has commenced on preparing the 2024/25 budget and MTFP and the assumptions will be updated as information becomes available. Further reports will be presented to the Committee prior to approval of the 2024/25 budget and MTFP at the meeting of the Fire Authority on 16 February 2024.

The report was **considered** and **noted**.

Internal Audit Outstanding Actions

13. Members were presented with an update on the outstanding audit recommendations.

Recommendation

14. Members are requested to **note** the report.

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County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

25 October 2023

Firefighters' Pension Scheme – Immediate Detriment Update

Report of Director Emergency Response

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the position in relation to the immediate detriment cases under the McCloud/Sargeant ruling.

Background

2. In 2015 most public service pension schemes, including the Firefighters' Pension schemes (FPS) were reformed. These reforms included 'transitional protection' for people closest to retirement age.
3. The Court of Appeal ruled in 2018 that the transitional protection element of the 2015 public service pension reforms constituted unlawful age discrimination in the (FPS). The government respected the decision and confirmed it would remove the difference in treatment across all main public service pension schemes.
4. The Home Office (HO) issued updated guidance on 10 June 2021 to enable Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) to progress certain immediate detriment cases. The guidance aimed to deal only with cases where the pension benefits were not yet in payment (Category One or prospective cases).
5. Members agreed to adopt this guidance and progress immediate detriment cases to the extent that they were able at the Authority meeting on 20 July 2021.
6. A further paper was presented to the Authority seeking approval from Members to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Framework for dealing with immediate detriment cases. The MOU and Framework, published on 8 October

2021, had been developed by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and was based on the understanding of the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill (draft primary legislation). Scheme Managers were made aware that secondary legislation pursuant to the Bill (together, the Remedying Legislation) was required to provide affected pension scheme members with a remedy for the discrimination found in the McCloud/Sargeant claims. Members agreed to adopt the MOU and Framework at the Authority meeting on 12 November 2021, however, a final decision on progressing cases was delegated to the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Treasurer, Chair and Vice Chair once details of the settlement costs were known.

7. On 29 November 2021, the Service was informed that the HO had withdrawn its informal guidance on dealing with immediate detriment cases ahead of legislation with immediate effect. Albeit the decision on whether to process any immediate detriment cases lies with the Authority as Scheme Manager, the Government's advice was not to process any cases before the legislation was in place, given the associated risk and uncertainty.
8. In addition, Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) issued correspondence on 29 November 2021 on their best assessment on the advisability of processing immediate detriment cases before the new legislation was in place and the implications of this assessment on the HO guidance.
9. Prior to the new legislation being in place, it was initially thought that section 61 of the Equality Act 2010 would be sufficient to enable corrections to be made to an individual's pension arrangements using the guidance documents published, however gaps and uncertainties existed, and cases would need to be revisited once this legislation was in place.
10. Further work carried out by HMT and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) on drafting the remedy to support the legislation identified that the gaps and uncertainties referenced above were considerably greater than previously thought. In some situations, section 61 may not give all the powers required to operate the remedy without generating significant uncertainty for schemes and risking second or third adjustments for individuals.
11. Because of this, HMT's view was that all immediate detriment cases could not be processed before legislation was in place without considerable risk, uncertainty and administrative burdens for individuals, schemes and employers and the impact of section 61 was understood.
12. At the Authority meeting on 16 February 2022, Members were informed that the decision had been taken to pause the processing of any Immediate Detriment cases until further clarity was received to mitigate the legal and financial uncertainty facing the Authority. This had been communicated to affected members of the pension schemes.

Current Position

13. Following consultation, the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 came into force on 1 April 2022 to remedy the discrimination. Following further consultation, the Firefighters' Pensions (Remediable Service) Regulations 2023 were laid to come into force on 1 October 2023 to allow for respective remedy which covers the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.
14. The Authority and West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) who administer the pension scheme, have been working to implement processes and systems to ensure that remedy can be implemented as quickly as reasonably practicable following the Firefighters' Pensions (Remediable Service) Regulations 2023 coming into force.
15. On 1 October 2023, for all eligible members, their pension for the remedy period was automatically 'rolled back' to their legacy scheme. Information will be provided to the members about their benefit options through a Remediable Service Statement (RSS) for the remedy period.
16. The RSS must be sent to members between October 2023 and March 2025, it is likely that this will be included with individuals Annual Benefit Statement in the summer of 2024. The RSS will show any contribution adjustment and interest due; the contributions will also be subject to a tax relief adjustment. Before any pension arrears can be paid, the pension contribution adjustments need to be made.
17. For members retiring in the next 12 months, WYPF will provide an estimate containing their pension figures for both the legacy scheme and the 2015 reformed scheme to enable an informed decision to be made.
18. For pensioner members with remediable service who retired before 30 September 2023 and beneficiaries of deceased members with remediable service who died before 30 September 2023, a choice is to be offered to either roll back the remediable service into the legacy scheme or for this to remain in the reformed scheme. This choice will be offered as soon as practicable, but the RSS must be issued by 1 April 2025. Once the choice is offered, the member has to make an election of their choice within 1 year of receiving the choice. If no election for the reformed scheme is made, 'roll back' will occur at the end of the election period.
19. Communications have been issued to all active and retired members by WYPF to update members on the current position and the next steps specific to their individual circumstances. The Authority and WYPF will continue to provide support and guidance to all members affected.

Recommendations

20. Members are requested to:
 - a. **Note** the contents of the report.
 - b. **Agree** to receive further updates as necessary.

Sarah Nattrass, Director Emergency Response, 0191 375 5587

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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