



Safest People, Safest Places

## **Local Government Act 1972**

**A Meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington Performance Committee will be held in the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 2.30 pm to consider the following business:-**

### **PART A**

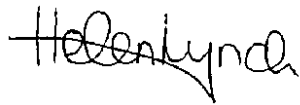
1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 6)
3. Performance Report Quarter 1 2023/2024 Report of Director of Community Risk Management (Pages 7 - 16)
4. Letters of Appreciation Report of Director of Community Risk Management (Pages 17 - 22)
5. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration
6. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of 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)**

7. Formal Complaints Report of Director of Community Risk Management (Pages 23 - 26)
8. 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



**H LYNCH**

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 Performance Committee**

**Durham County Councillors:**

Councillors J Blakey, C Marshall, R Manchester, S Quinn and K Rooney

**Darlington Borough Councillors:**

Councillors G Lee

**Minutes of the Performance Committee meeting held at CDDFRS HQ on Friday 30 June 2023 at 1000 hours.**

**Present:** Cllr J Blakey in the Chair

**Durham County Council:** Cllr R Manchester, C Marshall and S Quinn

**Darlington Borough Council:** Cllr G Lee

**Officers:** Director of Community Risk Management K Carruthers, Group Manager J Parry

### Part A

#### 1. Apologies

No apologies received.

#### 2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting that was held on 9 March 2023 were agreed as a true record and the action was noted as complete.

#### 3. Performance Report Quarter 4 2022/2023

K Carruthers introduced the report which provided Members with a summary of the organisational performance at the end of the fourth quarter of the 2022/23 financial year. The indicators were discussed in turn.

Cllr S Quinn thanked staff for their continuous hard work to support vulnerable members of our communities, and for the excellent preventative initiatives that have been put in place.

Cllr S Quinn asked if the Service are planning to issue comms to the public regarding fire hazards from discarded BBQs and accumulations of waste over the summer months. K Carruthers noted that awareness of the risks will be raised through social media posts and the website.

The Committee **noted** the report.

#### 4. Change in Response to Automatic Fire Alarms

K Carruthers introduced a report informing the meeting of an updated approach from 1 November 2023 to the Service's attendance policy to calls for assistance from Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) in non-residential premises.

The report highlighted that over the last three years, 98.5% of all mobilisations to AFA calls were false alarms with only 0.2% requiring the use of a portable extinguisher, hose reel or greater to extinguish the fire.

The new approach extends the hours to 08:00 and 18:00 hours, seven days of the week with several exemptions for premises listed in the report. It is estimated that the introduction of the new approach will reduce mobilisations by between 250 to 300 per year, saving 1,200 hours (50 days) of lost productivity per year.

Cllr C Marshall queried the proposed start date of 1 November as it is very close to one of the busiest times of the year for the service, and that the change may create a perception there is a capacity issue.

Cllr R Manchester queried that if a member of the public reported a fire alarm sounding, would this be responded to. K Carruthers explained that Control would ask pertinent questions to determine if an appliance is required.

Cllr R Manchester asked if industrial sites containing hazardous and toxic materials are included on the exemptions list. K Carruthers noted that COMAH sites, both top and lower tier sites were on the exemptions list.

**ACTION:** K Carruthers to consider change of implementation date for the revised attendance policy.

The Committee **discussed** and **noted** the report.

#### 5. Presentation on Target Setting for 2023/2024

The Committee received a presentation on the 2023/24 Target Setting Methodology covering incidents, home fire safety visits and deliberate fire reduction activities within the Service from Group Manager Emergency Response J Parry.

Cllr C Marshall asked if the deliberate fire reduction activities target aligns with those set by the Police and Durham County Council and if there is any further resource they can provide to support the fire service. J Parry explained that a lot of partnership working takes place through the Multi Agency Problem Solving Group, Darlington Community Safety Partnership, Safe Durham Partnership, Organised Crime Group, Arson Suppression Group and other partnership meetings. There is a real joint focus with a degree of ownership from all partners.

Cllr G Lee noted that deliberate fires are difficult to control and asked if there is an acceptance that the work done in hotspot areas isn't working. J Parry advised that the service continues to consider different way of working in response to the increase in deliberate fires.

Cllr J Blakey thanked the service for their work on arson and anti-social behaviour.

## **6. Letters of Appreciation**

The Committee considered letters of appreciation received by the Service for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023. In total 8 letters had been received for the reporting period.

The Committee **noted** the report.

## **7. Any other Business**

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

## **8. 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 as defined in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

## **9. Presentation on Response to Non-Domestic Fires**

The Committee received a presentation from Group Manager Emergency Response J Parry on non-domestic fires attended within 9 minutes, predominantly focusing on analysis of incidents that have failed to meet the response standards.

## **10. Formal Complaints**

Four formal complaints had been received by the Service for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023. No complaints had been forwarded to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Committee **noted** the report.

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## **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

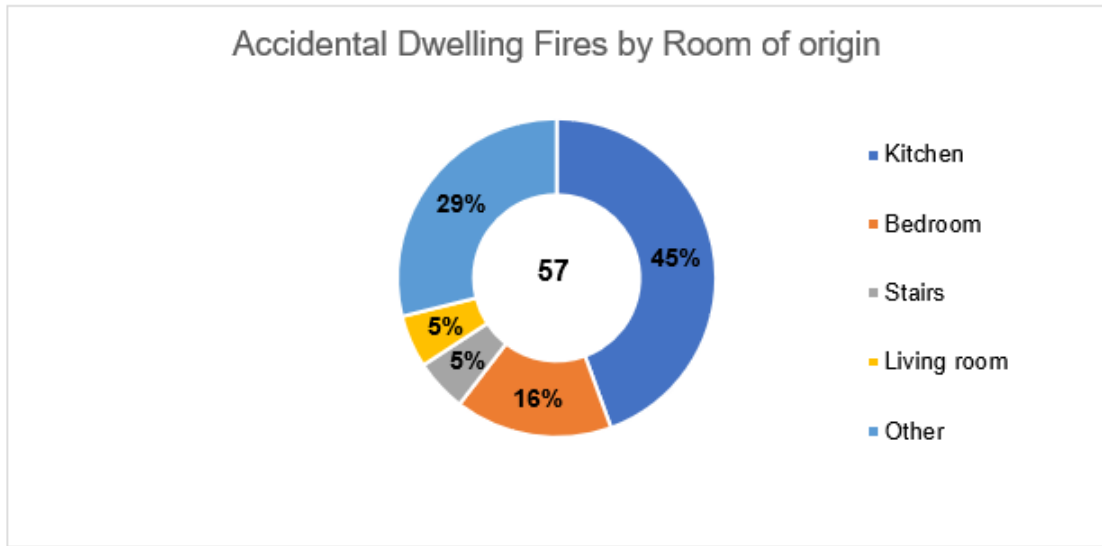


Chart 2 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Occupier Type

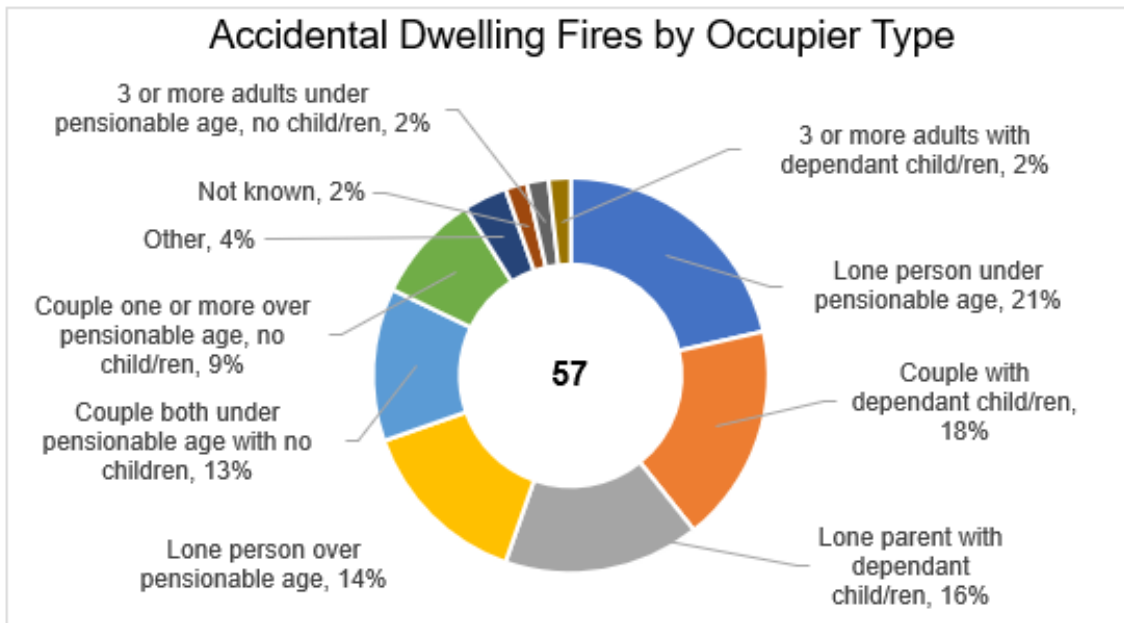


Chart 3 – Secondary Fires by Motive

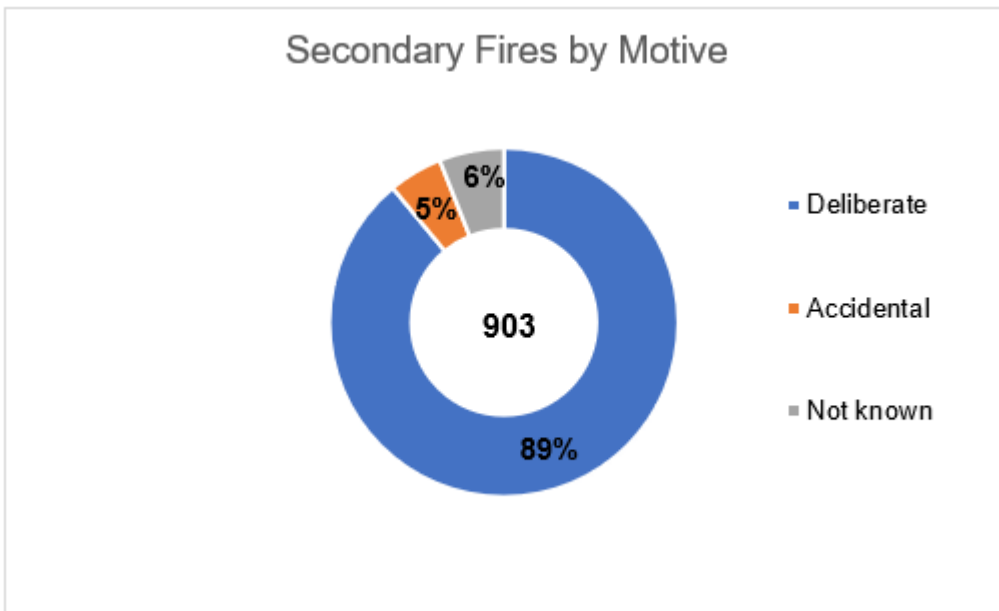


Chart 4 – Secondary Fires by Property Type

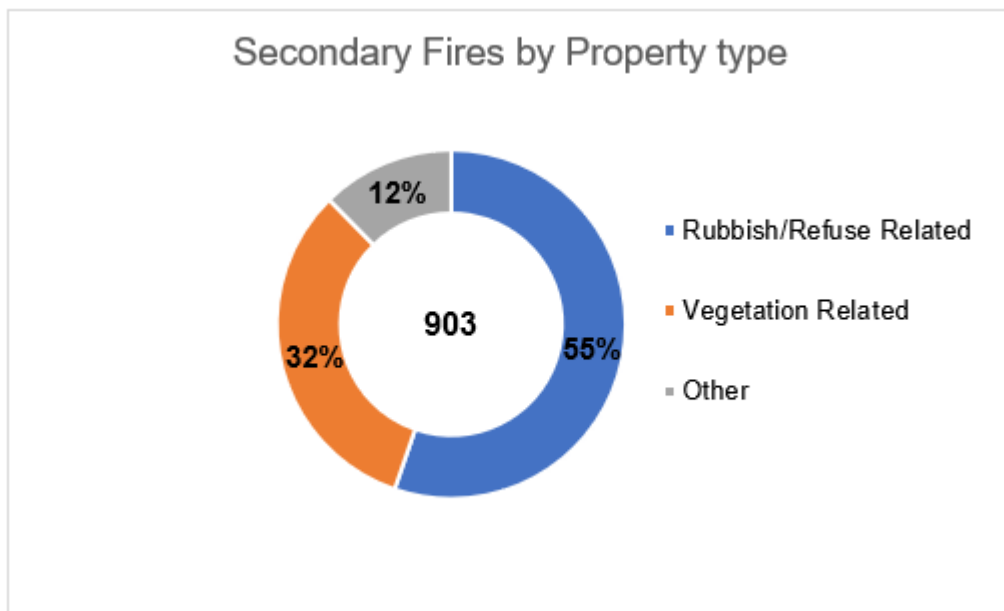


Chart 5 - Total Incidents

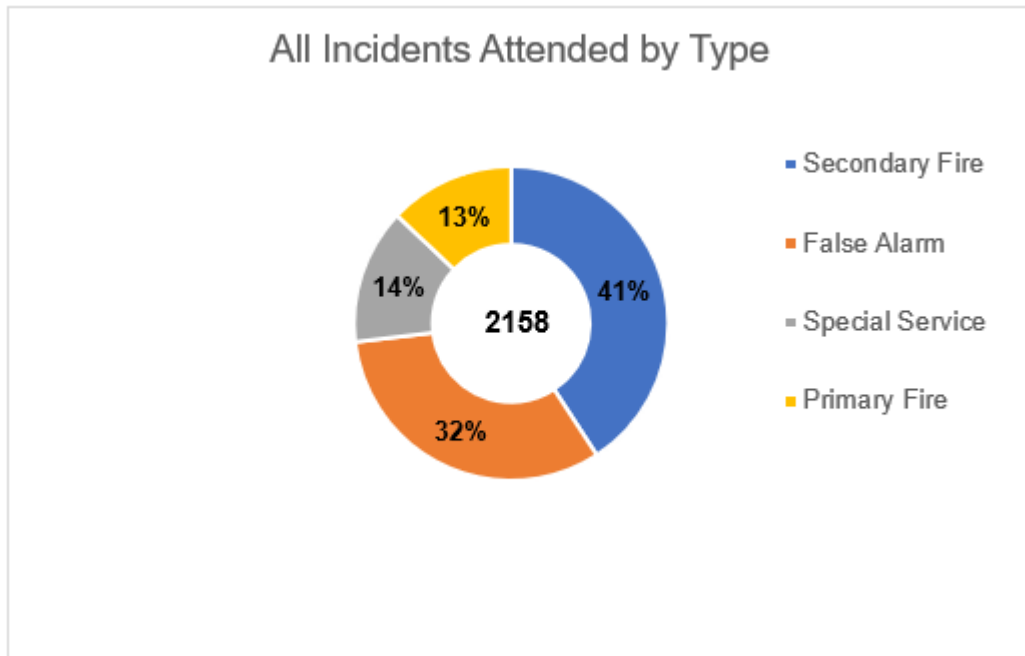


Chart 6 - Primary Fires by Motive

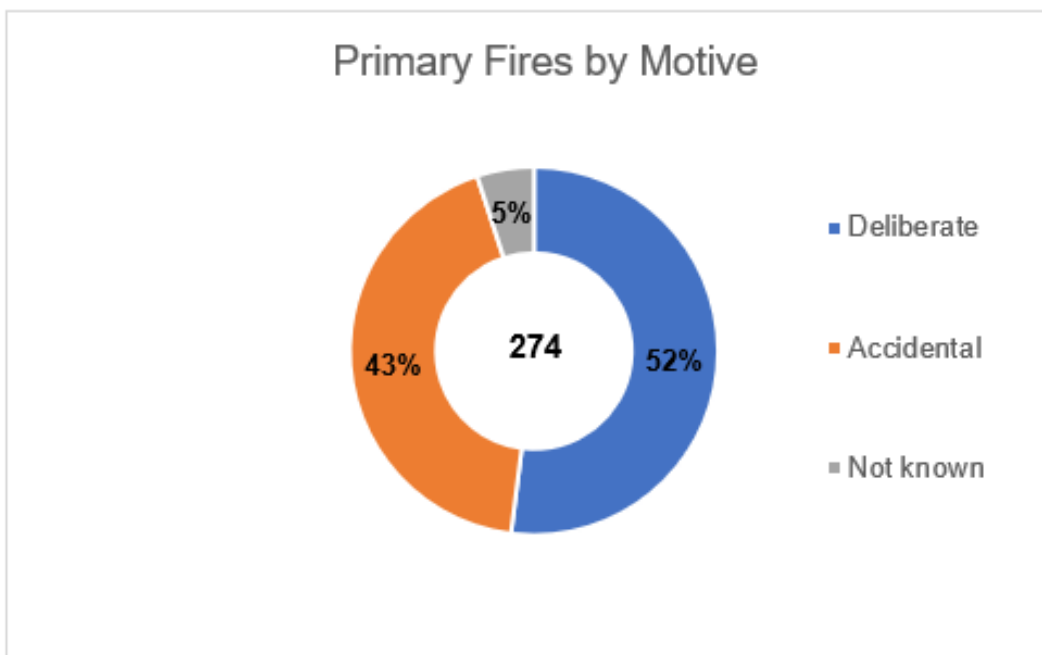
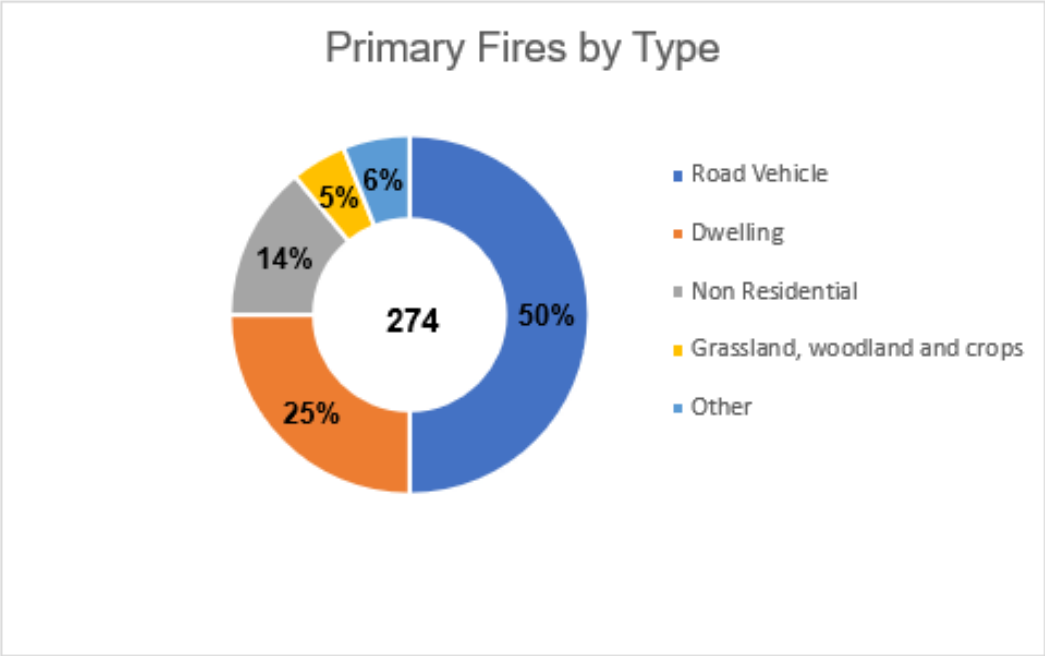


Chart 7 – Primary Fires by Type



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



**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Performance Committee**

**12 September 2023**

### **Letters of Appreciation**

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## **Report of the Director of Community Risk Management**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide details of Letters of Appreciation received by the Service for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023.

### **Letters of Appreciation Received**

2. 14 letters were received in the reporting period.
3. A summary of the Letters of Appreciation received for the period is attached to this report at Appendix A.

### **Recommendations**

4. Members are requested to note the report.

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

**County Durham and Darlington FRS**

**Letters of Appreciation – April 2023 to end of June 2023**

No	Date	Watch/Personnel involved	Brief Details
1	14/4/2023	Fire and Rescue Service	A thank you was received from #TeamOliver at TWFRS thanking everybody for the support they received during a recent fundraising run.
2	21/4/2023	Sedgefield RDS Crew	An email received thanking the Service for attending to a fire that broke out on their farm when they were away on holiday.
3	28/4/2023	Durham and Bishop Auckland Red Watches	A message was received all the way from Western Australia thanking the service for rescuing 'Lucky Lad' the bull when he fell in a ditch recently.
4	5/5/2023	Fire and Rescue Service	A thank you card was received thanking the service for all the help and support the family received during a recent fire. 'Thank You just doesn't seem enough' she said.
5	5/5/2023	Crook RDS Crew	A thank you card has been received at Crook Station from the residents of Crook saying 'Thank you for what you did for us last Monday' after a vehicle fire beside their house was dealt with swiftly.
6	5/5/2023	Fire Safety Team	Our business fire safety team received the below thank you for their work:  I would like to comment on how professional you were throughout the visit with excellent communication skills with your clear understandable explanations. Your advice was excellent and easy to follow which helps.

7	9/6/2023	Bishop Auckland Special Rescue Unit	We received a thank you card from the owners of 'Axel', a horse who was stuck, feet first in a ditch. Bishop Auckland Special Rescue team used specialist equipment to ensure Axel was released unharmed. His owners have reported he is making good progress with his recovery and want to thank everybody involved from the bottom of their hearts.
8	9/6/2023	Darlington Blue Watch	A telephone call was received from a Darlington resident thanking Darlington Blue Watch for attending her home and fitting smoke alarms. She said she feels so much safer now.
9	9/6/2023	Spennymoor Red Watch	An email was received from The Oaks School thanking crew from Spennymoor for showing them around the station on a recent visit. They did an outstanding job considering most of the pupils involved have varying difficulties with attention and communication. They completely engaged with them all. They are looking forward to a repeat visit.
10	16/6/2023	Consett Crew	A compliment was received from a couple who attended Consett station to seek help in getting a ring cut from one of their fingers. They commented on how professional and very welcoming the crew was and were delighted that they got the ring off with no problems.
11	16/6/2023	Durham Green Watch and Stores	A message of thanks from a resident received for Durham Green Watch, Stores and the wider circle of CDDFRS for all the help and support he received after his father sadly passed away recently.
12	23/6/2023	High Handenhold Green Watch	The Service has received the below thank you for their work:  <i>Just a further word of thanks to the crews that attended the fire at Stanley wood yesterday and got it extinguished. The prompt response surely stopped it from becoming much worse. Hopefully the forecast change in weather this weekend will dampen everything down. Many thanks again.</i>

13	30/6/2023	Fire and Rescue Service	The service received a thank you email after her little daughter was allowed to have her picture taken with a fire engine on her fourth birthday.
14	30/6/2023	Stanhope, Barnard Castle and Middleton RDS Crews	A letter of thanks received from individuals involved in an RTC at St Johns Chapel on 23 <sup>rd</sup> June. They both wanted to thank everyone involved in assisting them.

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