



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 Thursday 6 March 2025 at 10.00 am to consider the following business:-**

### **PART A**

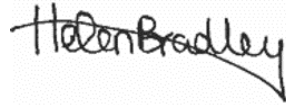
1. Appointment of Chair
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 6)
4. Performance Report Quarter Three 2024/2025 Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Pages 7 - 18)
5. Letters of Appreciation Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Pages 19 - 22)
6. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration
7. 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)**

8. Formal Complaints (Pages 23 - 26)
9. 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 Performance Committee**

**Durham County Councillors:**

Councillors R Manchester, S Quinn, K Rooney and S Zair

**Darlington Borough Councillors:**

Councillors A Anderson

**Minutes of the Performance Committee meeting held at CDDFRFS HQ on Tuesday 10 December 2024 at 1300 hours**

<b>Present</b>	Cllr J Quinn in the Chair
<b>Durham County Council</b>	Cllr S Quinn, K Rooney, R Manchester
<b>Darlington Borough Council</b>	Cllr A Andrews
<b>Officers</b>	K Carruthers, DCFO
<b>Secretariat</b>	E Walton
<b>In attendance</b>	J Bell

**Part A**

**1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr S Zair.

**2 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting that was held on 5 September 2024 were agreed as a true record.

**3 Performance Report Quarter 2 2024/25**

KCarruthers introduced a report providing members with a summary of the organisational performance at the end of the second quarter of the 2024/25 financial year. The indicators were discussed in turn.

*Prevention*

Cllr S Quinn stated that she had seen an increase in bin lorry fires, which was being put down to the lithium batteries within disposable vapes which can ignite if not disposed of properly. Cllr J Quinn said that there were not enough places to dispose of these properly and there needed to be an increase in availability of these, although disposable vapes were going to be banned soon.

Data sets of those most at risk of home fires such as blue badge holders and assisted bin collection, had now been received from Durham County Council (DCC) which was now being worked on pro-actively to identify these and offer home fire safety visits

(HFSV). Darlington Borough Council will be approached for similar information, Cllr AAndrews would be supportive of this. Cllr SQuinn also confirmed that people being discharged from hospital were being asked if they would be able to make their own way out of their home in case of a fire.

Cllr JQuinn asked if we would be targeting those hard to reach people from the data. JBell explained that the data we have received from DCC would be added to our profile of every house in Durham to enhance the risk scoring methodology based on methodology from the NFCC. Data from previous serious fire service reviews would also be taken into account. From this a risk list would be compiled with those most at risk being targeted by the fire service and offered a HFSV to try and reduce risk or identify areas for improvement. This was currently in development.

### *Protection*

Automatic fire alarm data, Cllr JQuinn asked if any of the incidents not attended had actually been fires. KCarruthers reported that none of these had been actual fires, they were mainly alarm system faults and human intervention being the cause of these alarms.

Cllr JQuinn queried if those education establishments that were reported in the paper were more primary or secondary schools? KCarruthers said that he received daily notifications of all incidents and they appeared to be evenly split.

### *Response*

When a response time is failed an automatic email goes to the officer in charge to notify them of this, to identify potential improvement. This could be down to a number of reasons, including distance, traffic. Cllr AAndrews asked if these were being looked at on an individual basis to see if our resources are in the right areas and whether the figures reported this quarter are routine numbers as previous quarters. KCarruthers said that some months the target is met and others it isn't, the percentage is an overall figure of this. Cllr JQuinn asked what the average response times were? KCarruthers confirmed the following:

- For responding to Dwelling fires, the indicator performance within 8 minutes is 61.3% against its 70% target, although the average response time is 7 minutes 34 seconds.
- For responding to non-domestic fires, the indicator performance within 9 minutes is 62.2% against its 70% target, although the average response time is 8 minutes 58 seconds.
- For responding to road traffic collisions, the indicator performance within 10 minutes is 74.7% against its 70% target, and the average response time is 8 minutes 44 seconds.

KCarruthers to provide this breakdown in future performance reports.

Cllr JQuinn asked if there had been a reduction in fires around bonfire night due to fewer fire work displays being put on by local councils? KCarruthers informed the committee that a paper was going to the CFA meeting in January with an evaluation of Bonfire Night and associated incidents. KCarruthers also informed the Committee that during bonfire night Police were present in the Control Room to relay information back to their service regarding any incidents.

The committee **noted** the report.

#### **4 Letters of Appreciation**

The committee considered the letters of appreciation received by the service for the period 1 July to 30 September 2024. In total, 8 letters had been received for the reporting period.

Cllr JQuinn asked if each watch receives the letters of appreciation directly? KCarruthers confirmed that they are forwarded to the relevant team/managers and the letters also go into the Staff Bulletin for all staff to see.

The committee **noted** the report.

#### **5 National Performance Presentation**

Jon Bell presented the committee with a benchmarking presentation on the National statistics for the first quarter of 2024/25. The slides were discussed in turn.

It was noted that deliberate road vehicle fires were high in County Durham and Darlington, and some of this could be linked to Organised Crime Groups in the area. Additionally, East coast road links contributed due to travel between neighbouring service areas where there were also high levels of vehicle fires.

JBell said that the fire service works closely with the Police, and they are notified daily of incidents so that they can look into these and links with other crime in that area.

The Committee **noted** the report.

## **Part B**

### **8 Formal Complaints**

Six formal complaints had been received by the service for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024. None of these complaints had been upheld and no complaints had been forwarded to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The committee **noted** the report.

County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Performance Committee**

**6 March 2025**

**Performance Report – Quarter Three 2024/25**

**Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

**Purpose of report**

1. This report presents a summary of organisational performance at the end of the third quarter of the 2024/25 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 two for 2024/25 shows 56% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 57% of the strategic PIs either maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.
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	Q3 2024/25 Actual	Q3 Target	Actual vs Target	Q3 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 01 – Deaths Arising from Accidental Fires in Dwellings	Down	2	0	n/a	4	40%
PI 03 – Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	125	155	19.4%	143	12.6%
PI 04 – Injuries Arising from Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	12	12	0%	11	-9.1%
PI 05 – Total Secondary Fires	Down	1983	2252	11.9%	1813	-9.4%
PI 07 – Number of Home Fire Safety Visits	Up	13545	13500	0.3%	13448	0.7%
PI 42 – Proportion of Home Fire Safety Visits to High-Risk People/Properties	Up	98.1%	80%	22.6%	99.1%	-1.0%

**PI01** – There have been no deaths arising from accidental fires in quarter three, meaning current performance remains at two for the year to date.

**PI03** – There has been 125 accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) which is substantially under the target of 155. Kitchen fires continue to be an area of focus for our targeted Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) with 53% of all incidents recorded as starting in this room. Lone occupiers and lone parent account for 46% of all incidents.

The service continues to engage with partners delivering ‘Eyes Wide Open’ training to their staff.

Work is ongoing to integrate local authority datasets, to further improve our risk identification framework. This will enable us to better identify those most at risk of fire, visit them, and



provide education and equipment to reduce the likelihood of them experiencing an accidental dwelling fire.

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 has only been two injuries in quarter three, resulting in the indicator being back on target with 12 injuries. Both injuries occurred in October and both resulted in minor smoke inhalation injuries to a resident. Both fires occurred in the afternoon with one being a kitchen fire in Tow Law, which was caused by a chip pan, and the second was a tumble dryer fire in a utility room in Darlington. Our ongoing targeting of HFSVs to vulnerable residents described in PI03 and PI07 will support this indicator's performance.

**PI05** – Year to date there has been 1,983 secondary fires which is 11.9% under target although 9.8% worse compared to the previous year. As reported to the January 2025 Combined Fire Authority Meeting, quarter three has been challenging for the service, particularly during the bonfire period which recorded the highest number of fires in the previous five years.

Rubbish/ refuse is still the top fuel source with 61% of all secondary fires, with 30% being vegetation related. 94% of all secondary fires were deliberately set. Emergency Response crews and the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team continue to work with partners to reduce these incidents. Year to date, Emergency Response crews have delivered 6,355 deliberate fire reduction activities.

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, although it should be noted this funding ceases in March 2025.

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

**PI07** – At the end of quarter three 13,545 HFSVs have been delivered which is above the target of 13,500. 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** – Alongside the delivery of high numbers of HFSVs, these continue to be focused on vulnerable residents with the indicator performing above the Community Risk Management Plan target of 80%. The 'Eyes Wide Open' programme and targeting risk methodology will support us to continue targeting the most vulnerable in our communities.

## Protection

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q3 2024/25 Actual	Q3 Target	Actual vs Target	Q3 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 10a – Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Premises	Down	98	79	-24.1%	90	-8.9%
PI 14 – False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment	Down	512	564	9.2%	577	11.3%
PI 17 – Number of Fire Safety Audits	Up	1522	1521	0.1%	1509	0.9%

**PI10a** – Poor performance has continued into quarter three resulting in a total of 98 incidents compared to a target of 79. Additionally, performance is 8.9% poorer compared to the same period in the previous year. This poor performance has been heavily influenced by 30 fires in prisons, with 27 of these being set deliberately. The Service do not have legislative responsibility for prisons although we continue to work with these establishments with the aim to reduce fires in these premises.

The other incidents were in a variety of premises types including eleven incidents in each of the categories – retail premises, permanent agriculture premises and food and drink. The Business Fire Safety Team conduct post fire reviews of incidents in premises enforced under the Fire Safety Order by the Service and combined with our high levels of fire safety audits aims to improve the performance of this indicator.

**PI14** – The positive direction of travel continues into quarter three, with 512 incidents which is 9.2% under the target of 564. This is also 11.3% improved performance compared to the same period in the previous year.

63.9% of all incidents are in four premises types, namely education (23.1%), residential homes (16.7%), retail (12.8%) and industrial manufacturing (11.4%). 54.1% of all incidents were linked to system faults and 23.7% were caused by human intervention.

Year to date, there have been 677 automatic fire alarms between 0800 – 1800 hours, not attended through the new approach to mobilisation.

**PI17** – Recruitment and short-term secondments in the central team mean that this indicator is now back on target, with 1,522 audits against its target of 1,521. Positively, 46.7% of audits completed were unsatisfactory showing that the Service is targeting the correct premises and making a real difference to improving fire safety across the Service area.

## Response

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q3 2024/25 Actual	Q3 Target	Actual vs Target	Q3 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
Total Emergency Calls Received	N/A	12723	N/A	N/A	12362	-2.9%
Total Incidents	N/A	5611	N/A	N/A	5507	-1.9%
Total Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	247	N/A	N/A	259	4.6%
PI 02 – Total Primary Fires	Down	803	743	-8.1%	736	-9.1%
PI 06a – Dwelling Fires Attended within 8 Minutes	Up	61.3%	70%	-12.4%	66.9%	-8.4%
PI 06b – Non-Domestic Fires Attended within 9 Minutes	Up	66.7%	70%	-4.7%	62.7%	6.4%
PI 06c – Road Traffic Collisions Attended within 10 Minutes	Up	75.4%	70%	7.7%	70%	7.7%
PI 16a Availability of on call appliances - 1st pump	Up	71.8%	75%	-4.3%	68.3%	5.1%

See Appendix A, chart 5 for total incidents.

**PI02** – There have been 803 primary fires which is 8.1% over the target of 743, and 9.1% more incidents compared to the previous year's performance.

58% of all primary fires are set deliberately. 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. There are currently two live Police Operations linked to OCGs (Organised Crime Groups) who use fire as a weapon to target others. The Service is linked and actively working with police to mitigate the risks and reduce the associated incidents. The Service also continue to work with Firestoppers to raise awareness and try and gather intelligence on the perpetrators.

52.1% (419) of primary fires are vehicle fires with the majority (71.3%) of these being set deliberately. Peterlee station area continues to be the highest across the Service area for vehicle fires with 27.7% of incidents occurring in their area. The deliberate incidents are difficult to prevent, though the new Arson Reduction and Safety Campaigns Manager is providing more focus on deliberate primary fires, engaging with Police colleagues to target offenders.

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

### PI06a, PI06b and PI06c

At the end of quarter three, only one out of the three response standards have achieved their 70% performance target.

PI06a – Response time performance when attending dwelling fires within 8 minutes on 70% of occasions is 61.3%, which is the same percentage as at the end of quarter two.

The average response time when attending dwelling fires is 7 minutes 20 seconds.

PI06b – Response time performance when attending non-domestic fires within 9 minutes on 70% of occasions is 66.7% which has increased from 62.2% at the end of quarter two. This standard continues to be affected by incidents at Deerbolt prison.

The average response time when attending non-domestic fires is 8 minutes 9 seconds.

PI06c – Response time performance when attending road traffic collisions within 10 minutes on 70% of occasions is 75.4% which has increased from 74.7% at the end of quarter two.

The average response time when attending road traffic collisions is 8 minutes 23 seconds.

Each failure for all response standards is individually reviewed and analysis shows that extended travel distances are the main reasons for failing response times. Divisional Managers continue to work with Watch Managers through the monthly performance reporting process to scrutinise and improve performance.

**PI16a** – Performance at the end of quarter three was 71.8% against its target of 75%. This is a slight increase from 71.3% at the end of quarter two. This has deliberately been set as a challenging target with the aim to motivate staff and the RDS Liaison roles to increase performance.

At the end of quarter three, RDS 'true availability' (RDS staff only) was 68.8%. The proactive utilisation of day duty, FDOs and surplus operational personnel including the use of the TRV and SRU has increased availability by an additional 3.0%. Notable availability of RDS staff only is 97.0% at Middleton in Teesdale, 89.3% at Stanhope, 83.3% at Barnard Castle, 80.5% at Crook and 75.6% at Wheatley Hill.

Further project work is planned through the RDS Liaison team with the aim to further improve availability.

## Health and Safety

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q3 2024/25 Actual	Q3 Target	Actual vs Target	Q3 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 69 – Number of Accidents to Personnel	Down	9	6	-50%	3	-200%
PI 72 – Number of Vehicle Accidents classified as CDDFRS Driver's fault	Down	8	14	42.8%	16	50.0%

**PI69** – At the end of quarter three, there were nine accidents which is three over the target of six and six more than the same period in the previous year. Although the indicator is over target actual numbers remain low.

There were two accidents during the quarter. In October a firefighter damaged his knee during water rescue training. This incident was reportable under RIDDOR due to an over 7-day absence. During November, a firefighter sustained a minor cut to their thumb whilst handling a positive pressure ventilation fan. All accidents have been investigated to identify any learning points.

**PI72** – At the end of quarter three there have been eight vehicle accidents classified as CDDFRS Driver's fault. Performance of the indicator remains strong, 42.8% under the target and 50.0% better than the same period in the previous year.

In October there were two accidents during slow speed manoeuvres that resulted in minor damage to appliances and in December an appliance sustained minor paintwork damage from contact with a foliage-covered wall on a tight approach to an AFA incident.

All accidents have been investigated and the Health and Safety Team have been working with Driver Training to stress the importance of vigilance during slow speed manoeuvres, where the majority of vehicle accidents occurred.

## Recommendations

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

## Appendix A

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

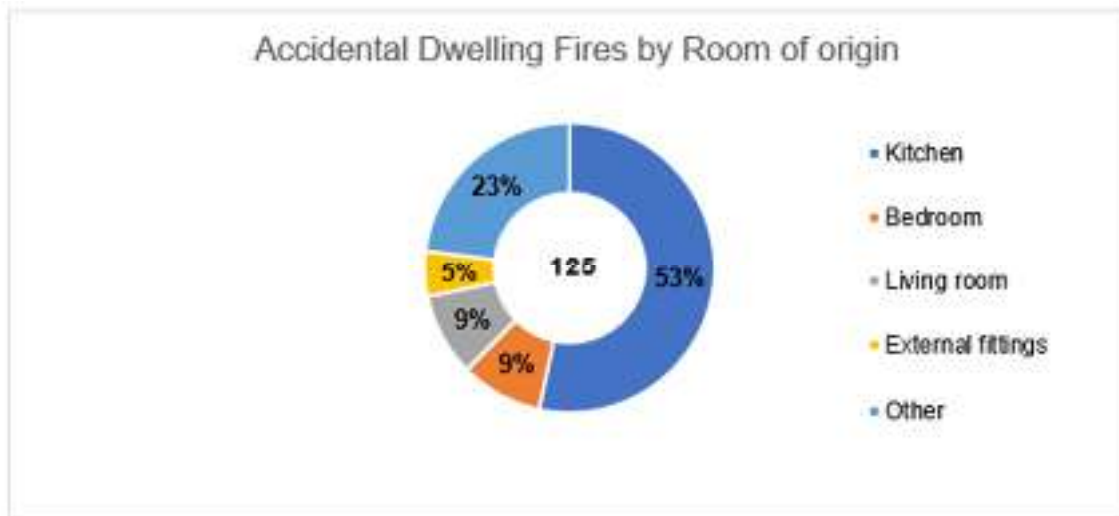


Chart 2 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Occupier Type

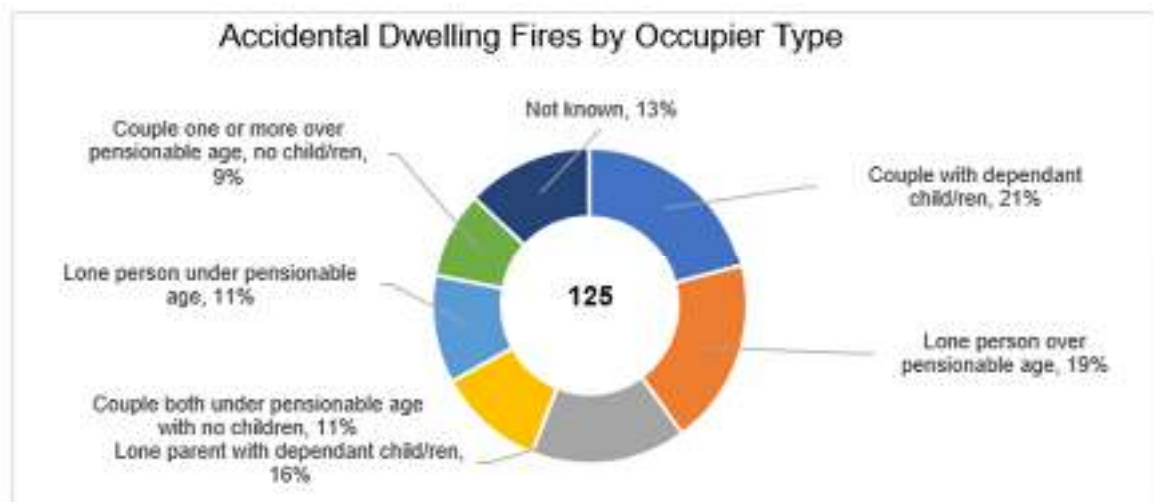


Chart 3 – Secondary Fires by Motive

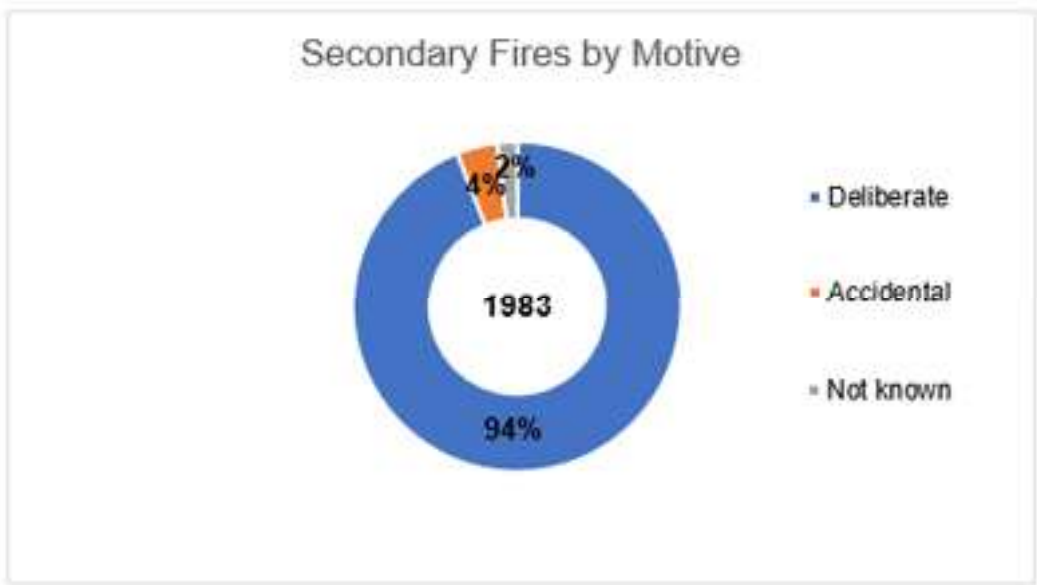


Chart 4 – Secondary Fires by Property Type

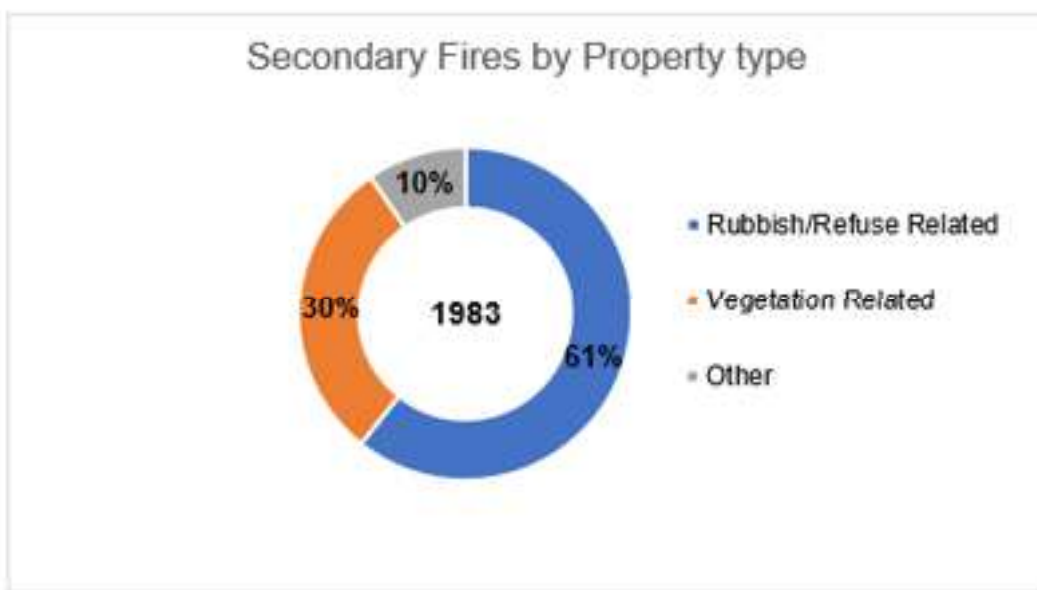


Chart 5 - Total Incidents

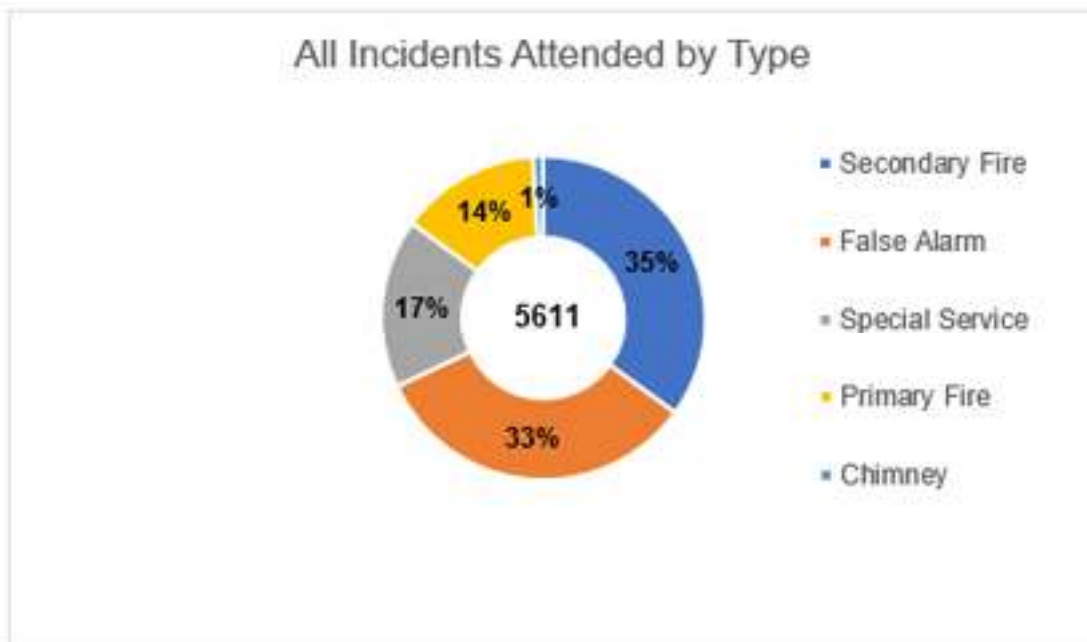


Chart 6 - Primary Fires by Motive

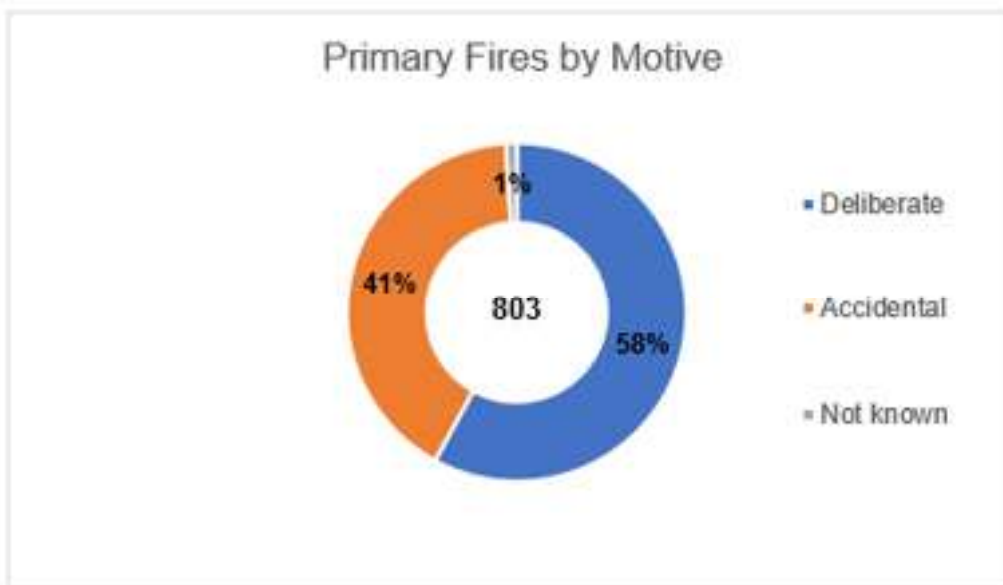
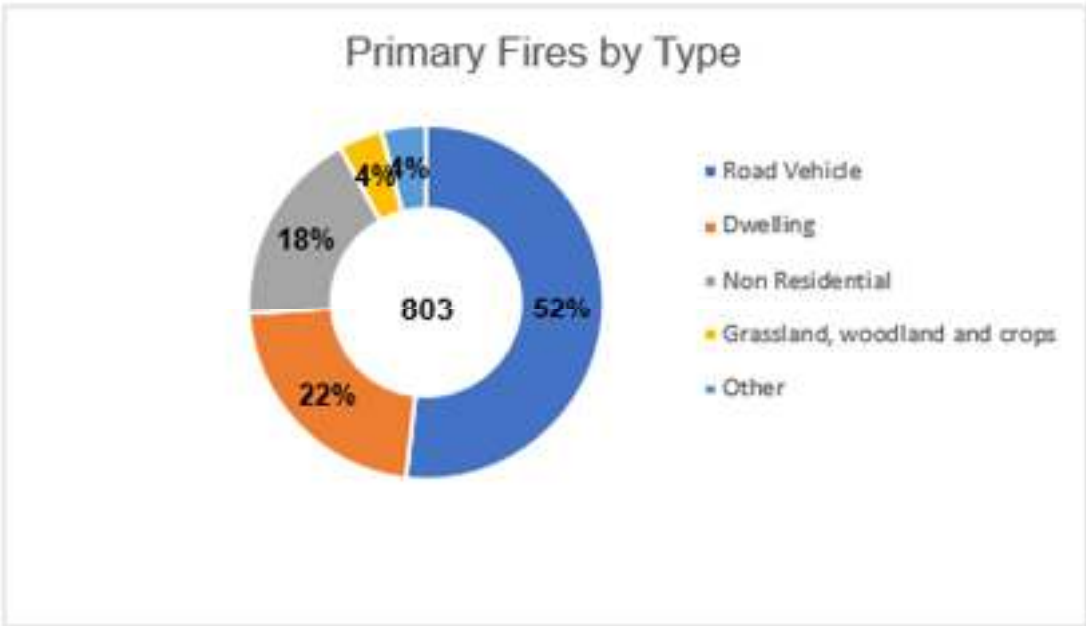




Chart 7 – Primary Fires by Type



This page is intentionally left blank

County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Performance Committee**

**6 March 2025**

### **Letters of Appreciation**

---

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

---

##### **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 October 2024 – 31 December 2024.

##### **Letters of Appreciation Received**

2. 12 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.

## Appendix A

### Letters of Appreciation – 1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024

No	Date	Watch/Personnel involved	Brief Details
1	25/10/2024	Spennymoor Green Watch	<p>Spennymoor Green Watch were sent the thank you letter below after attending Bowburn Fun Day.</p> <p>‘Dear County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service,</p> <p>We at the Bowburn fun day planning committee would like to express our thanks for your participation in our recent family fun day.</p> <p>Your support helped make the day a resounding success.</p> <p>All the attendees, especially the children and young people, really enjoyed the opportunity to explore the fire engine and talk with the firefighters.</p> <p>Thank you once again for your time and support.</p>
2	1/11/2024	Peterlee White Watch	Cotsford Primary School thanked Peterlee White Watch who delivered a brilliant Bonfire safety talk to youngsters at their school.
3	8/11/2024	Durham Green Watch	<p>Well done to Durham Green Watch who have been praised following a visit by young carers in County Durham last week!</p> <p>The crew gave the young people an insight into the day-to-day life of firefighters as they showed them around the fire station, including advice on fire safety in the home.</p>

4	21/11/2024	High Handenhold RDS	<p>A letter of thanks has been received from former MP Kevan Jones (now Lord Beamish) and his wife.</p> <p>The letter thanked High Handenhold RDS for their assistance following the Wreath Laying at the Remembrance Parade in Pelton Fell on the 10<sup>th</sup> November.</p>
5	22/11/2024	Peterlee White Watch	A thank you card was received thanking Mick Corfield for his kindness during an incident.
6	27/11/2024	High Handenhold Green Watch	We received an email from the British Transport Police asking us to pass on their thanks to High Handenhold Green Watch after they attended an incident at Chester-Le-Street. BTP mentioned specifically the professionalism and respect the crew showed during this time.
7	29/11/2024	Spennymoor RDS	<p>Our firefighters from Spennymoor RDS have received an adorable card from Year One pupils at Tudhoe Colliery Primary School. The children visited the station on Tuesday, November 19 and had such a great time they sent a handmade thank you card praising the crew. Well done to Crew Managers Jonny Sloan, Adam McHugh and Chris Amos and Firefighters Lee Purvis and Stephen Blakey for making the visit so special for the children!</p> <p>Teacher Mrs Winter wrote from the school to express her thanks:  Thank you so much for welcoming year one into the fire station yesterday.  The children had a fantastic morning and really enjoyed all the activities you had organised.  We even managed to complete the fire engines yesterday afternoon!  Please extend our gratitude to all your colleagues, the children really enjoyed their morning.</p>
8	6/12/2024	Crook RDS	<p>Well done to the Crook RDS who attended the Green Fair at Willington Open Door Methodist Church on 21 November.</p> <p>During the event, FF Sichert and FF Whitfield provided fire safety advice to the public and offered Home Fire Safety Visits.</p> <p>Organisers said the crew's involvement was greatly appreciated and sent the letter of thanks below to Watch Manager Gavin Meisuria:</p> <p>Hi Gavin,</p>

			<p>Thank you so much for arranging attendance at our Green Fair. The gentlemen were absolutely lovely, and we received a lot of positive feedback from the public regarding the information they provided. If you have any feedback about our event, we would love to hear it as we are always looking to improve what we do. Thank you again for coming, and I hope it was enjoyable.</p>
9	16/12/2024	Green Watch Durham, High Handenhold & Spennymoor	A thank you card was received from a member of the public following her involvement in an road traffic collision. She wanted to express her immense gratitude for the fantastic service and comfort the crews provided during the incident.
10	20/12/2024	Fire & Rescue Service	A letter was received from Cllr. Liz Brown, Mayor of Durham thanking the service for their attendance at the Durham City Remembrance Parade, she remarked on how 'very well turned out' they all were and said they conducted their duties with dignity and honour.
11	20/12/2024	Fire & Rescue Service	A letter was received from Mrs Sue Snowdon, Lord Lieutenant who asked for her thanks to be passed on to everybody involved in the Durham City Remembrance Parade, she said 'you were a great credit to your service and to your own profession.
12	23/12/2024	Fire & Rescue Service	<p>An email was received from two retirees following their Control Visit afternoon. It read: 'On behalf of Paul, myself and all the NARF members who attended the get together on Wednesday at Control, could you please pass on our sincere gratitude to everyone concerned, but in particular Steve for making the visit very interesting. We were made to feel very welcome and the atmosphere was relaxed and convivial. We sincerely hope that we can do this again in the future and strengthen the ties between the service and the retired members Thanks again for everything and we'd just like to wish you all a verry Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous 2025.</p>

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank