



COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

17 MARCH 2020

EVALUATION OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE REVIEW TRIAL 2019-20

REPORT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER – SERVICE DELIVERY

Purpose of the report

1. This report evaluates the Emergency Response (ER) review trial which commenced on 1 April 2019 and recommends the next steps for the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to consider.

Background

2. In 2017-18, a comprehensive review of the Service's ER arrangements was undertaken which considered a wide range of data in relation to demand and risk.
3. Various options were discussed and developed with Members at the CFA planning days on 10 May and 8 October 2018 and then with staff at two Leadership Forums in November 2018 and during a round of station visits by the Service Leadership Team (SLT).
4. The proposed options were included in the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) public consultation which ran from November 2018 to February 2019. The results of the consultation were presented to the CFA on 22 February 2019 with the final options for the ER trial for approval. Members approved the trial which commenced on 1 April 2019.

Summary of the ER Trial 2019-20

5. Pre-trial, wholetime (WT) firefighters at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe fire stations were working day crewing plus which involved staff working a 24hr shift system providing 12 positive hours work between 07:00hrs to 19:00hrs, then 12 hours standby in the accommodation block next to the station between 19:00hrs to 07:00hrs. It was necessary to change this system due to the outcome of the employment tribunal involving the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, which ruled this shift system did not comply with the Working Time Regulations without a collective agreement with a trade union, supported by an appropriate risk assessment.
6. The ER trial involved the WT staff at these stations working a day crewing only shift system which provided 12 positive hours between 07:00hrs to 19:00hrs, Monday to Sunday. Outside of these hours the station is covered by staff working the retained duty system (RDS).

7. Pre-trial, Spennymoor WT appliance was working a day crewing system which provided positive hours between 08:00hrs to 17:00hrs, Monday to Friday only. For the trial resources were reallocated from Durham station which enabled Spennymoor to be increased to a WT four shift system providing 24hr WT cover, Monday to Sunday. The increased WT appliance availability would provide the benefit of support back into Durham station area if required, but it also provided improved cover into the North of Newton Aycliffe and Sedgfield station areas after 19:00hrs when the WT day crew at Newton Aycliffe went off duty.
8. Pre-trial, Durham station had two WT fire appliances staffed riding 4 + 4 WT firefighters. To enable reallocation of resources to Spennymoor, this was reduced to one WT fire appliance and one WT Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV) crewed with a total of 6 WT firefighters.
9. The analysis of these changes predicted an improvement in response standards to dwelling fires and a reduction in response standards to non-domestic premises and road traffic collisions, with the overall net effect being a slight improvement. The changes to staffing arrangements would also generate an efficiency saving in the Service's budget of £450,000.

Evaluation of the ER Trial

10. The software system 'Power BI' was used to create a dashboard of information to understand the impact of the ER trial, for example, this included data to show the number and type of incidents attended, the time and day of the week they occurred, which vehicles were being used and the number of standby moves required. The analysis in this report refers to the data between 1 April 2019 and 29 February 2020.
11. The Metrics Manager software system which is used as the Service's performance indicator platform was also used to analyse the impact on response standards compared to the previous year.
12. Data from the ER trial has been presented and discussed at the monthly Senior Management / FBU meetings, it has also been presented at the Leadership Forums to staff and progress was presented to Members at the CFA planning day on 11 October 2019.
13. The reduction of the second WT fire appliance at Durham station has resulted in the first WT fire appliance attending more incidents. It has also highlighted the benefit of providing Durham station with a WT crewed Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV) as it has attended 130 secondary fires and 170 false alarms which on many occasions has allowed the D06P1 fire appliance to remain available for incidents involving life risk. The TRV has also supported D06P1 on a range of other incidents which provided six firefighters at the scene rather than five on a single fire appliance.
14. Due to the change at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe to WT day crewing, there has been a greater demand for standby appliances to cover when the RDS appliance is unavailable in the early hours of the morning before the WT crew come on duty at 07:00hrs. The appliance impacted most by this has been D04P2 from Peterlee standing by at Seaham. Newton Aycliffe has been provided with cover from several surrounding stations. In both Seaham and Newton Aycliffe station areas, 62% of incidents have occurred between the day crewing hours of 07:00hrs to 19:00hrs.

15. Spennymoor's WT fire appliance D09P1 has been the second busiest appliance for providing standby cover, there has also been an increase in the use of this appliance for incidents due to its increased availability.
16. When assessing the impact on Service response standards they are broadly as predicted in the pre-trial analysis. Figure 1 below shows the response standards at the end of February 2020 compared to the previous year.

Figure 1 – Response Standards

PI 08a Dwelling Fires Attended within 8 Minutes Actual 71.0% Previous Year 67.2%	PI 08b Dwelling Fires Attended within 11 Minutes Actual 92.0% Previous Year 87.6%
PI 08c Non Domestic Property Fires Attendance within 8 Minutes Actual 61.2% Previous Year 72.6%	PI 08d Non Domestic Property Fires Attended within 11 Minutes Actual 83.8% Previous Year 89.3%
PI 08e Road Traffic Collisions Attended within 11 Minutes Actual 84.1% Previous Year 85.8%	PI 08f Road Traffic Collisions Attended within 15 Minutes Actual 95.2% Previous Year 96.2%

17. Deeper analysis of the response standards compared to the previous year show that although Durham have failed 5 more times in their first response standards, Spennymoor have reduced their failure rate by 9, this provides an overall positive impact on response standards. Seaham have increased their failed first response standards by 1 and Newton Aycliffe by 3. This shows an overall neutral net effect, as there has been an improvement of 9 by Spennymoor and a combined reduction of 9 between the other three stations.
18. The overall analysis of the ER review trial concludes that the reallocation of resources from Durham to Spennymoor with the introduction of a WT crewed TRV at Durham station provides a more efficient staffing model and it has had an overall positive impact on response standards.
19. The change to day crewing at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe was necessary due to the employment tribunal ruling, but this has created greater demand on other appliance to provide standby cover in the early hours of the morning which is less efficient. This has also had a slight impact on response standards which is mitigated by the improvements in Spennymoor.

Next Steps

20. The results of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) consultation on the trial crewing arrangements at Durham and Spennymoor fire stations, showed 60% supported the proposal for this to be implemented on a permanent basis. Due to the positive impact of the trial at Durham and Spennymoor, it is recommended to introduce this staffing model on a permanent basis from April 2020.

21. The Service's preferred position has always been to maintain day crewing plus at both Seaham and Newton Aycliffe but to achieve this a collective agreement would need to be in place. In terms of demand neither Seaham or Newton Aycliffe warrant a wholetime four shift system station and financially this is unachievable without making cuts to other higher demand stations.
22. The ER trial outcomes support the return to day crewing plus at both of these stations in terms of achieving the response standards and the disruption to other appliances being required to provide standby cover. It has, however, not been possible to persuade the FBU to enter into a collective agreement with the Service to achieve this.
23. At Seaham and Newton Aycliffe the staff have informed the Service that they are extremely keen to continue to work the day crewing plus shift system and due to this many have joined the Fire Officers Association (FOA) with a view to FOA entering into a collective agreement with the Service to reintroduce this. To allow time for this to be explored, it is recommended that the trial at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe is extended for six months then reassessed.

Recommendations

24. CFA members are requested to:
 - a) **note and discuss** the content of the report;
 - b) **approve** the implementation of the trial staffing arrangements at Durham and Spennymoor fire stations on a permanent basis from April 2020;
 - c) **approve** the extension of the trial at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe fire stations for six months, then receive a further report to update Members of the current position and reconsider the longer-term position.

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