



## **Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Combined Fire Authority**

**20 July 2021**

## **Performance Report – Quarter Four 2020/21**

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### **Report of Area Manager, Community Risk Management**

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#### **Purpose of report**

1. This report presents a summary of organisational performance at the end of the fourth quarter of the 2020/21 financial year.

#### **Background**

2. Both operational and corporate performance is monitored and managed internally via the monthly Performance and Programme Board (PPB) 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) are 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 PPB 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 four for 2020/21 shows 59% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 74% 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 where performance was notably strong or where additional work is required to secure improvement. 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	Q4 2020/21 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	2019/20 Q4 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 01 - Deaths Arising from Accidental Fires in Dwellings	Down	0	0	0%	1	100%
PI 02 – Primary Fires	Down	974	975	0.1%	1002	2.8%
PI 03 – Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	219	219	0%	228	3.9%
PI 04 - Injuries Arising from Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	15	17	11.8%	20	25%
PI 05 - Total Secondary Fires	Down	2327	2219	-4.9%	2386	2.5%
PI 07 – Number of Safe & Wellbeing Visits	Up	4840	7919	-38.9%	19316	-74.9%
PI 42 - Proportion of Safe & Wellbeing Visits to High-Risk People/Properties	Up	62.6	80%	-21.7%	88.6%	-29.3%

**PI01** – The fire investigation report from the dwelling fire in Seaham in February 2021, which involved a female adult fatality, has been sent to HM Coroner. The inquest is set for the 1 July 2021 at 14:00hrs which will determine the cause of death.

**PI02** - A review of primary fires during the 2020/21 shows that although non-residential fires and dwelling fires have reduced, road vehicle fires have increased. A range of interventions are used to reduce the risk from primary fires, such as Safe and Wellbeing Visits (SWV) for dwelling fires and Fire Safety Audits for non-domestic premises. Operational crews are also creating local station area arson profiles which will help to identify local hotspots and target resources for different types of deliberate fires. During the year there has been increased work with partner agencies to address deliberate fires. Arson and deliberate fires have been raised through the Safe Durham Partnership and has resulted in establishing a multi-agency Arson Suppression Group and a three-year strategy to address deliberate fires in our most prevalent areas in the East Coast enclave.

See Appendix A, chart 1 for primary fires by motive and chart 2 for primary fires by type

**PI03** – There were 219 accidental dwelling fires (ADF) at the end of the reporting year, achieving the predicted target for reduction from the previous year total of 228. Approximately 38% of accidental dwelling fires are caused in premises where the occupant lives alone, with the most frequent occurrence in kitchens (59%), bedrooms (7%) and living rooms (9%). The main causes of accidental

dwelling fires continue to be cooking related then smoking materials. A new initiative agreed this year was to install an additional smoke alarms outside of kitchens, where the kitchen does not exit onto the hallway with an alarm. This should give earlier warning to kitchen fires and help to reduce injuries and fire damage.

See Appendix A, chart 3 for number of accidental dwelling fires by room of origin and chart 4 for number of accidental dwelling fires by occupier type.

**PI04** – Injuries arising from ADFs continue to be mainly minor in nature and involve smoke inhalation and minor burns from fires that have started in kitchens with cooking appliances. Due to this, during SWVs crews have focused on education around kitchen safety and the dangers of distraction for many years, this combined with the central Community Safety team support for national campaigns around kitchen safety and a broad range of media campaigns by the Communications team, has continued to have a positive effect. At the end of 2020/21, the Service had 15 injuries from ADFs where the casualty went to hospital compared to 20 the previous year. This good performance continues a longer-term reduction in injuries from ADFs.

**PI05** – Total secondary fires have reduced slightly in the 2020/21, with a total of 2327 against a previous year total of 2386, with slight reductions of secondary rubbish/refuse fires (1487 in 2020/21 against 1516 in 2019/20), vegetation and wasteland (727 in 2020/21 against 737 in 2019/20) and other secondary fires (114 in 2020/21 against 133 in 2019/20). Some of the recent initiatives to reduce total secondary fires include the creation of local station social media accounts to provide local communications in areas with a high prevalence of secondary fires. Bicycles patrols were introduced across several RDS locations experiencing secondary fires to engage with youths in key areas and Service wide communications were used to reinforce the awareness of the impact on both the Service and the community of secondary fires.

See Appendix A, chart 5 for secondary fires by motive and chart 6 for secondary fires by property type.

**PI07** – The delivery of SWVs during 2020/21 was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Service followed national guidance on taking a risk based approach, which resulted in physical SWVs being mainly replaced by telephone SWV advice and delivery of smoke alarms. Community Risk Officers continued to support the most vulnerable with physical SWV in the home using additional control measures and personal protective equipment. Referrals from partner agencies into the Service was significantly reduced due to similar restrictions within their own working practises. Telephone SWVs were also limited by the quantity of telephone numbers available to contact occupiers, this also impacted on our ability to target resources effectively as shown in PI42. Several communications initiatives were used to try and encourage residents to self-refer; we also submitted a request for contact details for those registered on the 'Clinically Extremely Vulnerable' list using the Local Resilience Forum information sharing protocol. Although partner agencies tried to support this, the guidance was clarified by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government which prevented the information from being shared for this purpose. Full physical delivery of SWVs recommenced during April 2021.

## Protection

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2020/21 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	2019/20 Q4 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 10a - Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Premises	Down	73	112	34.8%	114	36%
PI 14 - False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment	Down	677	657	-3%	692	2.2%
PI 17 – Number of Fire Safety Audits	Up	984	1218	-19.2%	2002	-50.8%

**PI10a** – There has been a large reduction in primary fires in non-domestic premises this year, some of which can be attributed to more premises being closed due to Covid-19 restrictions. The 10a indicator has seen a large decrease in prison fires which have reduced by 14 from the previous year. 10b which measures fires in non-domestic premises regulated by the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) under the Fire Safety Order has also recorded a decrease of 23 incidents (29%) from the previous year. Most fires were in retail premises, a total of 16 incidents, however they were all small fires with little damage. There was one incident at a factory which could have resulted in a significant fire, however sprinklers were fitted, which activated and extinguished the fire before arrival of the FRS. Permission is to be sought from the company to use this incident in some publicity work to promote the benefits of sprinklers.

**PI14** – When compared to the previous year, there has been a reduction of 15 Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) in 2020/21. 50 cost recovery letters for chargeable UwFS were sent to 40 different businesses / premises. The cost recovery process has continued to have a positive effect on reducing UwFS over the past 2 years since the policy was introduced, however the reduction has slowed this year. Further work is being carried out by the central Business Fire Safety team to try and reduce this more, including a focus on UwFS in any fire safety forums that are planned over the coming year and working with businesses who have UwFS during testing or maintenance of the system which alerts the FRS, as these do not meet the criteria for cost recovery but do place an unnecessary demand on Emergency Response resources.

See Appendix A, chart 7 for false alarms caused by automatic fire detection equipment

**PI17** – There Service has followed national guidance in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic which has resulted in the number of Fire Safety Audits being down on previous years as physical access into premises was restricted and a large proportion of premises have been closed. The central team however have continued to fulfil our statutory duties, they also introduced desk top audits and contacted all care homes and schools during the first lockdown, to offer advice and support in adjusting fire risk assessments where they may have reduced staff or changes in working practises. This helped to ensure the safety of all staff and residents of care homes as well as teachers and pupils in schools and gave the Responsible Persons an opportunity to gain advice regarding their fire safety procedures from the central team of experts. Full face to face audits resumed in April 2021.

## Response

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2020/21 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	2019/20 Q4 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
Total Emergency Calls Received (including EMR)	N/A	15420	N/A	N/A	15101	-2.1%
Total Incidents (excluding EMR)	N/A	6717	N/A	N/A	6882	2.4%
Total Fires	N/A	3360	N/A	N/A	3447	2.5%
Total False Alarms	N/A	2419	N/A	N/A	2358	-2.6%
Total Special Services (excluding EMR)	N/A	935	N/A	N/A	1075	13%
Total Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	219	N/A	N/A	298	26.5%
Total Emergency Medical Response (EMR)	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	33	93.9%
PI 06 – Number of Response Standards Met	Up	5	6	-16.7%	4	25%

See Appendix A, chart 8 for total incidents (excluding EMR)

**PI06** – Dwelling fires and road traffic collision response standards were met, unfortunately non-domestic property fires attended within 8 minutes failed to meet the target of 70% - actual performance for the year was 67.3%. Total number of non-domestic incidents attended to the end of March 2021 is 52, with 35 of these achieved in under 8 mins and 17 over 8 mins. Where station have failed to meet the response times, this has been largely due to non-domestic fire calls with the main causation being travel distance or an appliance mobilised from a neighbouring station area. Work to improve on-call fire-fighter availability has helped to improve this area as well as specific issues such as working with Durham County Council in relation to traffic light priority management systems at Barnard Castle. Focus on watch-based performance meetings continues to raise awareness and ensure repeat locations are scrutinised to identify any actions available to implement. A full review of the response standards is underway as a major project during 2021/22.

## Workforce

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2020/21 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	2019/20 Q4 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 40 - All Staff Sickness	Down	7.26	6	-21%	8.5	14.6%
PI 69 – Number of Accidents to Personnel	Down	12	15	20%	17	29.4%

**PI40** – Overall, the number of shifts lost in total this year has decreased year on year by approximately 15% from the reported figure at the same time last year. It is pleasing to report that Wholtime (WT), Flexible Duty Officer (FDO) / Day Duty (DD), Non-uniformed and Retained Duty System (RDS) have seen a reduction in shifts lost in comparison with last reporting year. However,

there has been a significant increase in absence levels within Control in quarter 4 in particular, a number of which are specifically linked to C-19 long term issues. All reportable staff groups have had an increase in shifts lost from quarter 3 to quarter 4 in this year however this has been impacted by introduction of lateral flow testing in Service venues and the increase in Covid cases nationally.

HR review all long-term absences and are in frequent discussions with relevant managers what support mechanisms are available including occupational health referrals, EAP support etc. The closer, weekly, sickness monitoring which is now in place is assisting with the monitoring and recording helping to predict long term absences and identify trends which can be acted on quicker. People Business Partners are now in post to assist managers with issues around sickness and support staff in their return to work.

See Appendix A, chart 9 for sickness by category of staff.

**PI69** – We had one personal accident in each month of the last quarter to make a total of 12 accidents to personnel for the reporting year. This end of year performance is 20% under target and a 29.4% reduction when compared to the previous year’s total of 17. Of the 12 accidents reported during the 2020/21 reporting period, three resulted in an absence from work, totalling 188 days lost. These consisted of 183 Wholetime and five Corporate days lost. Two accidents were reported as RIDDOR during the year.

## Finance & Governance

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2020/21 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	2019/20 Q4 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 34 - % of Invoices paid within 30 days	Up	97.2%	95%	2.3%	90.8%	7%

## Recommendations

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

AM Keith Wanley, Ext. 5630

**Appendix A**

Chart 1 - Primary Fires by Motive

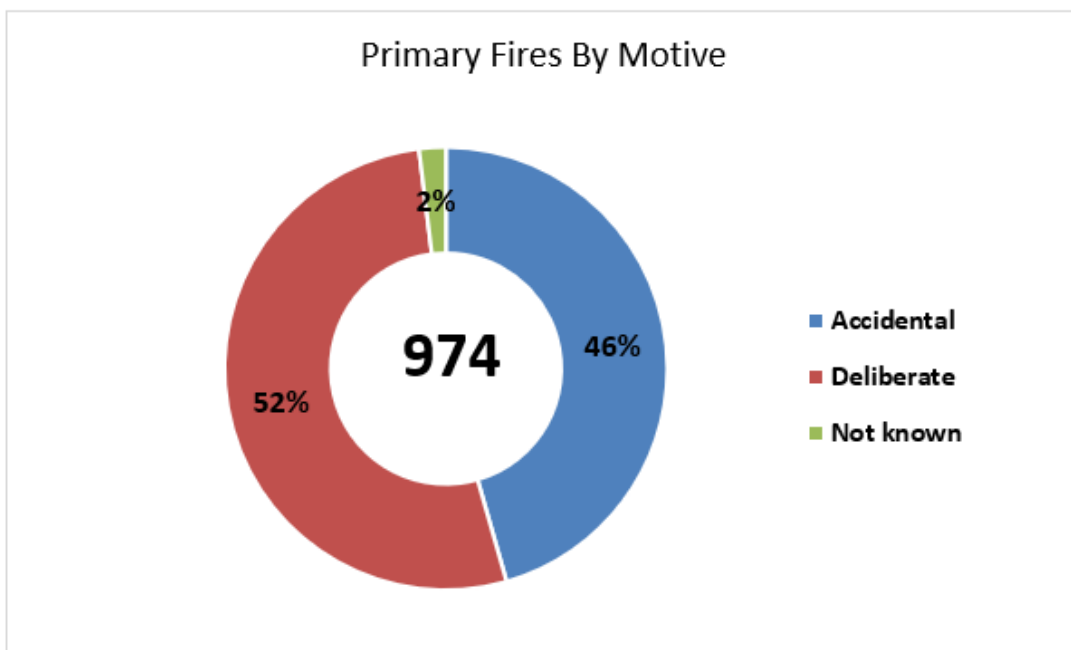


Chart 2 – Primary Fires by Type

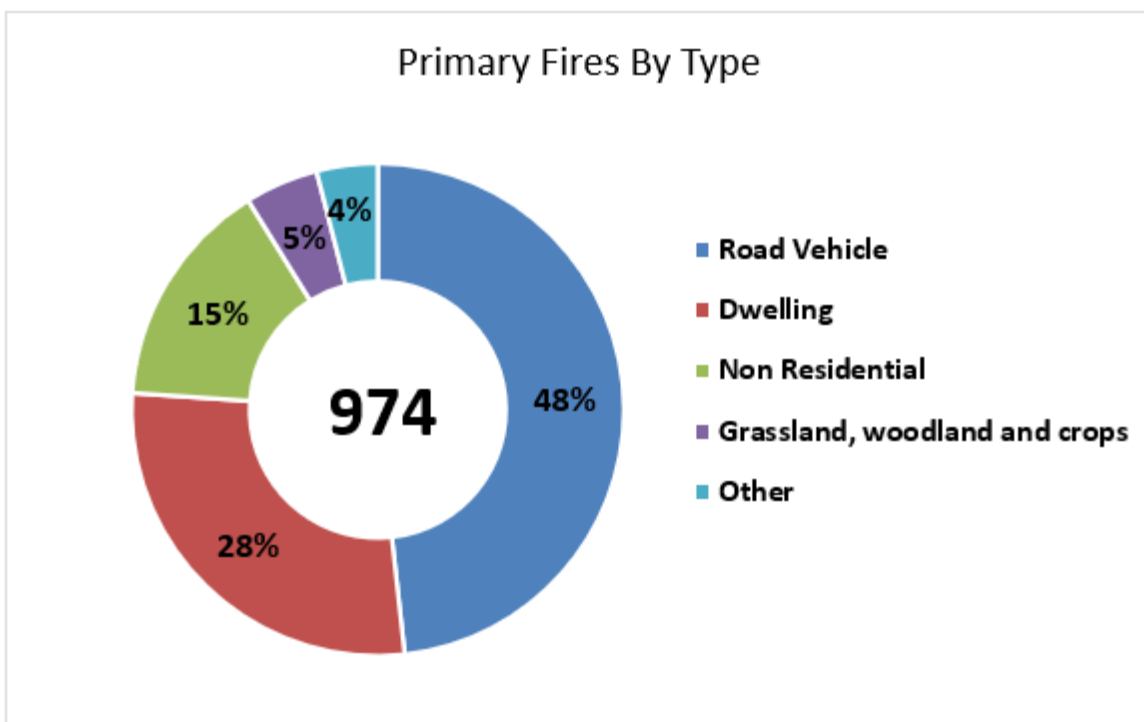


Chart 3 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Room of Origin

### Accidental Dwelling Fires By Room of Origin

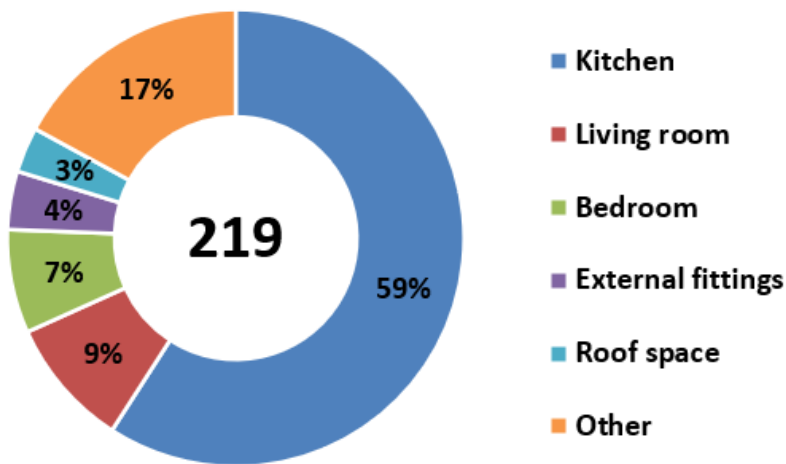


Chart 4 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Occupier Type

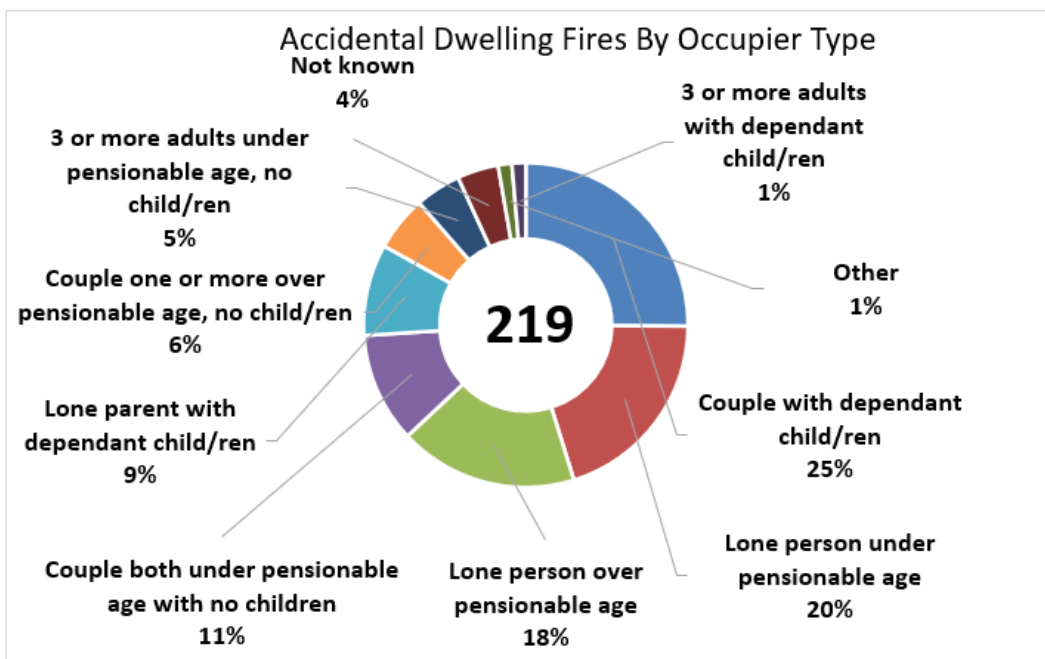




Chart 5 – Secondary Fires by Motive

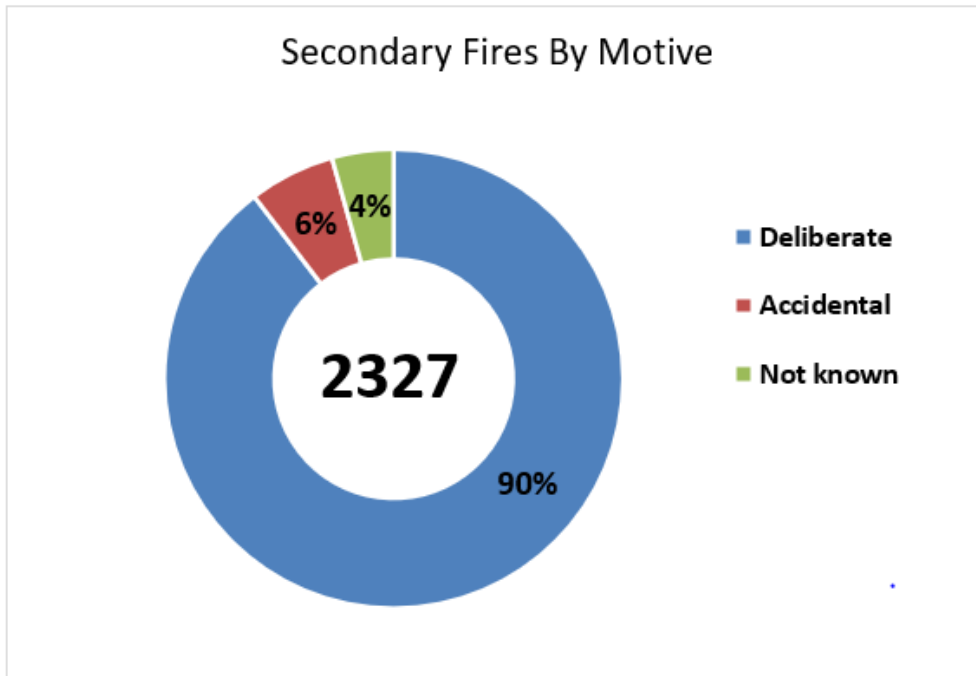


Chart 6 – Secondary Fires by Property Type

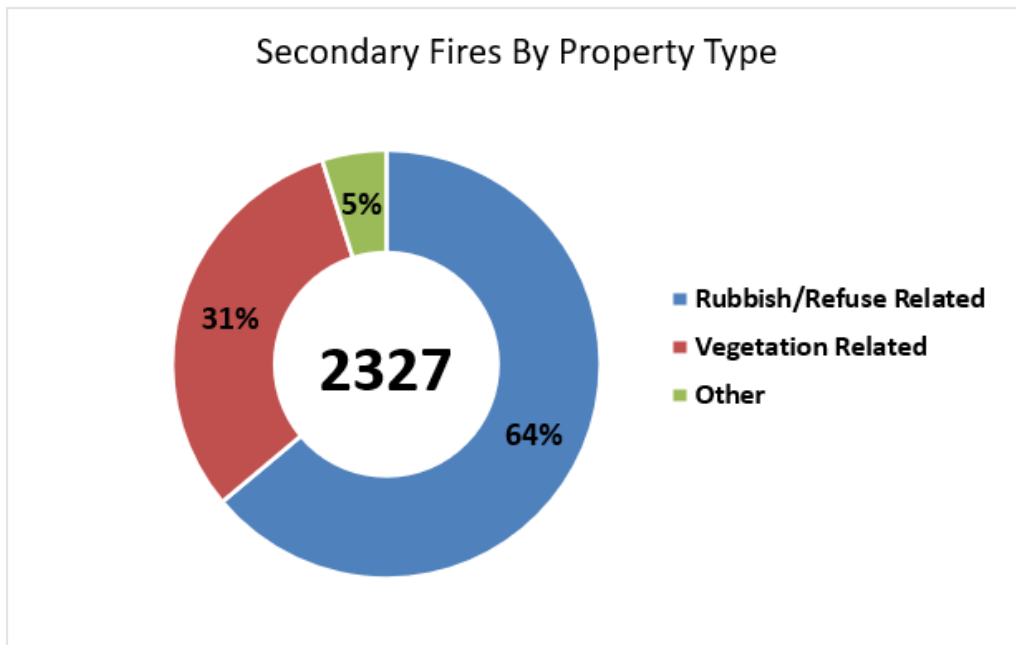


Chart 7 - False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment

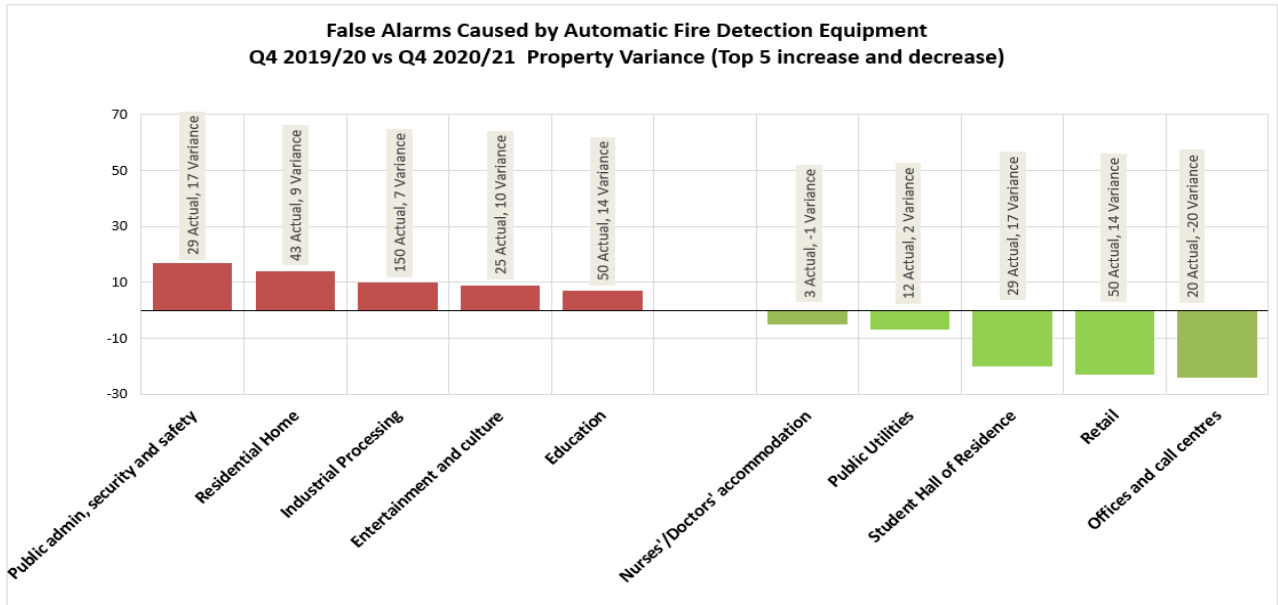


Chart 8 - Total Incidents (excluding EMR)

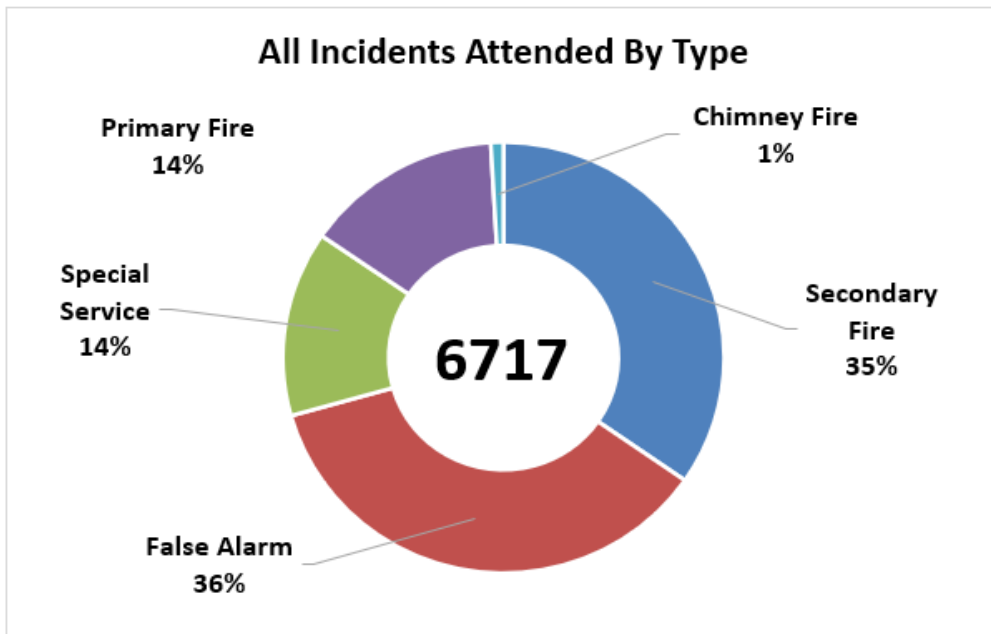


Chart 9 - All Staff Sickiness

