



Safest People, Safest Places

Performance Committee

20 June 2024

Performance Report – Quarter Four 2023/24

Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of report

1. This report presents a summary of organisational performance at the end of the fourth 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 four for 2022/23 shows 54% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 70% 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	Q4 2023/24 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	Q4 2022/23 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 01 – Deaths Arising from Accidental Fires in Dwellings	Down	7	0	n/a	1	-600%
PI 03 – Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	199	200	0.5%	199	0%
PI 04 – Injuries Arising from Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	17	14	-21.4%	10	-70.0%
PI 05 – Total Secondary Fires	Down	2218	2701	17.9%	3722	40.4%
PI 07 – Number of Home Fire Safety Visits	Up	18413	18000	2.3%	18387	0.1%
PI 42 – Proportion of Home Fire Safety Visits to High-Risk People/Properties	Up	98.2%	80%	22.8%	83.5%	17.7%

PI01 – There were three fire fatalities in quarter four, taking the annual total to seven. On 15 January a 93-year-old female passed away at an incident in Tow Law. On 27 February at Castledene Holiday Park, a 63-year-old male died in a caravan fire. On 7 March an 81-year-old male died in a fire in Darlington. All three fatalities lived alone. A presentation of the circumstances of the Tow Law fire has been delivered to CFA. Presentations of the circumstances of remaining two fires will be delivered to CFA in June 2024.

Internal learning reviews to identify improvements have been hosted for all fatalities with most resulting in partnership engagement. As a result, extensive partnership work is ongoing to promote referrals and improve targeting of the most vulnerable in our communities. The Safe Durham Partnership Board have signed up to the Safer Homes Protocol which focuses on delivery of the Eyes Wide Open training to partner's frontline staff to increase fire safety awareness and promote referrals.

PI03 – This year there has been 199 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) against a target of 200 resulting in the indicator performing at 0.5% better than its target. This performance is exactly the same performance in comparison to 2022/23 and is the lowest number of ADFs on record for the Service.

Kitchen fires continue to be an area of focus for our targeted Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) as 50% of incidents are recorded as starting in this room. Lone occupiers and lone parent account for 52% 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 – Despite the continued positive performance for ADFs, there were three injuries in quarter four resulting in the indicator performing three over its target of 14 and seven more injuries in comparison to 2022/23.

All injuries were slight, with two of those injured being male and one female. One of the injuries were sustained when the occupier, a 55-year-old male, attempted to fight a chip pan fire with water, sustaining burns to himself. The other two injuries were smoke inhalation and also occurred at kitchen fires. A 19-year-old male had left a pan on the hob and went to bed, whilst an 81-year-old female had switched on the incorrect ring on a hob setting fire to a plastic tray.

The ongoing work described in PI03, PI07 and PI42 should contribute to improvements in this indicator.

PI05 – The positive performance seen previously has continued into quarter four with end of year performance at 2,218 incidents which is 17.9% better than the target of 2,701 and improved performance by 40.4% compared to the previous year. Rubbish/ refuse is still the top fuel source, with 92% of all secondary fires deliberately set. Emergency Response crews and the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team continue to work with partners to reduce these incidents. During the year Emergency Response crews have delivered 9,419 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.

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 four 18,413 HFSVs have been delivered which is above the target of 18,000. 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 – The target continues to be surpassed, 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	Q4 2023/24 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	Q4 2022/23 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 10a – Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Premises	Down	104	100	-4.0%	133	21.9%
PI 14 – False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment	Down	706	716	-1.4%	807	14.3%
PI 17 – Number of Fire Safety Audits	Up	1716	2028	-15.4%	1946	11.8%

PI10a – Positive performance in quarter four has resulted in this indicator only being four over its target of 100, compared to 25% over at the end of quarter three and a 21.9% improvement compared to the previous year’s performance. There were only two fires in prisons during quarter 4, which is a significant improvement compared to 24 fires during the previous three quarters of the year. Noticeably only one of the fires in this quarter was at HMP Deerbolt, and hopefully this is a reflection on the ongoing partnership working between the Service and the prison.

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 new approach to mobilisations from automatic fire alarms commenced on 2 October 2023 and is having a positive effect on mobilisations to false alarms at non-residential premises with the end of year target being met by ten incidents. During the last six months of the year (October 2023 – April 2024) there has been a 61% reduction in false alarm incidents at education premises compared to the first six months of the year (April – September 2023) – 34 false alarms compared to 87. Significantly compared to the previous year, performance is improved by 14.3% (101 incidents).

There have been 706 incidents in total for the year with the four main premises types being education (20.9%), retail (13.2%), industrial manufacturing (12.5%) and residential homes (10.8%). Of all the incidents 28.8% were caused by human intervention and 27.3% caused by system faults.

PI17 – Performance of this indicator is 15.4% under its target of 2,028. The main reason for this performance was an issue with the Service’s reporting system that was only identified in March 2024, meaning that there was insufficient time to rectify the underperformance. The system was double counting some audits resulting in the belief that performance was on target. Reduced capacity in the central fire safety team has also contributed to some of this performance. The reporting system has now been corrected and will be closely monitored during 2024/25.

Positively 44% of audits have been unsatisfactory showing that the Service is targeting the correct premises and making a real difference to improving fire safety across County Durham and the Borough of Darlington.

Response

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2023/24 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	Q4 2022/23 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
Total Emergency Calls Received	N/A	15756	N/A	N/A	19369	18.7%
Total Incidents	N/A	6950	N/A	N/A	8833	21.3%
Total Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	332	N/A	N/A	297	-11.8%
PI 02 – Total Primary Fires	Down	963	947	-1.7%	1007	4.4%
PI 06a – Dwelling Fires Attended within 8 Minutes	Up	69.1%	70%	-1.3%	68.7%	0.6%
PI 06b – Non-Domestic Fires Attended within 9 Minutes	Up	67.9%	70%	-3.0%	63.3%	7.3%
PI 06c – Road Traffic Collisions Attended within 10 Minutes	Up	69.8%	70%	-0.3%	69.3%	0.7%

See Appendix A, chart 5 for total incidents.

PI02 – There has been 963 primary fires in total which is 1.7% over the target of 947, although a 4.4% improvement compared to 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. 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.

56% 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, PI06b and PI06c

All three response standards have improved compared to the previous year's performance, although have failed to meet their 70% targets.

PI06a, response time performance when attending ADF's within 8 minutes on 70% of occasions is 69.1%, only 0.9 under its target.

PI06b, response time performance when attending non-domestic fires within 9 minutes on 70% of occasions is 67.9%, only 2.1 under its target.

PI06c, response time performance when attending road traffic collisions attended within 10 minutes on 70% of occasions is 69.8%, only 0.2 under its target.

Each failure for any response standard 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.

Workforce

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q4 2023/23 Actual	Q4 Target	Actual vs Target	Q4 2022/23 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 40 – All Staff Sickness	Down	9.48	7	-35.4%	9.63	1.6%
PI 69 – Number of Accidents to Personnel	Down	7	12	41.7%	9	22.2%

PI40 – This indicator continues to perform over target, although it has improved compared to the same period in the previous year.

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 robust year to date performance, although there have been four injuries during quarter four. Overall year to date performance is seven accidents compared to its target of 12. This performance is 22.2% better than performance in the previous year.

Two of the four injuries in quarter four occurred during training and two at incidents. A fractured finger sustained whilst completing swift water rescue training was RIDDOR reportable as it resulted in over seven day's absence. The other accident during training was a firefighter twisting their ankle descending stairs during BA training at the Service Training Centre. The two accidents at incidents were minor with one a firefighter sustaining a slight knee injury whilst managing a hose reel at a house fire and the second, a firefighter twisting their knee whilst dismantling an appliance. All injuries have been investigated to identify any learning points.

Recommendations

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

Keith Carruthers, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Ext. 5564

Appendix A

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

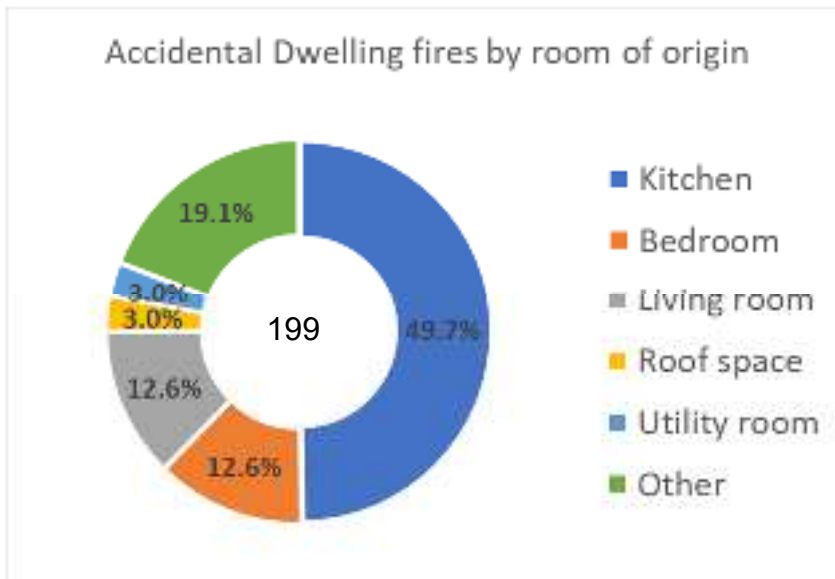


Chart 2 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Occupier Type

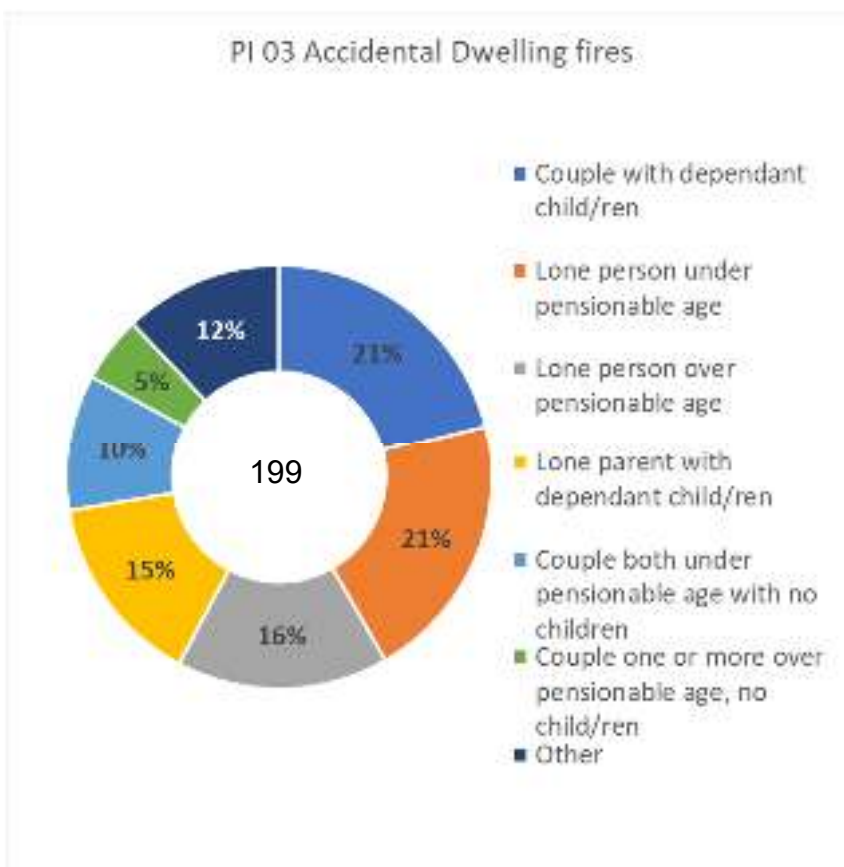


Chart 3 – Secondary Fires by Motive

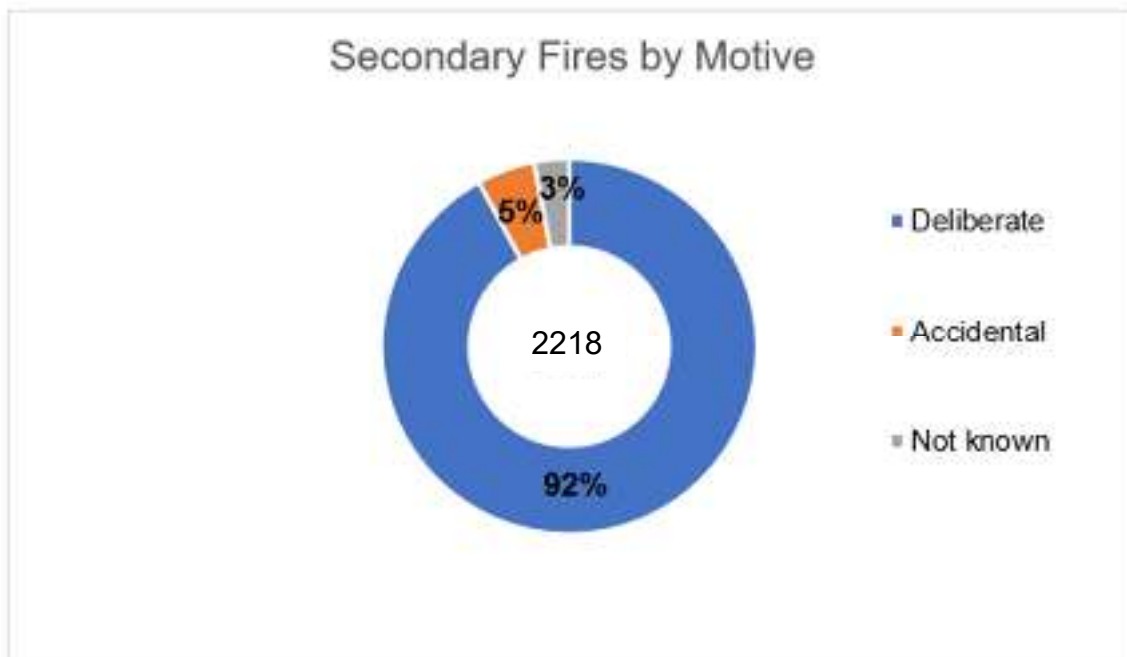


Chart 4 – Secondary Fires by Property Type

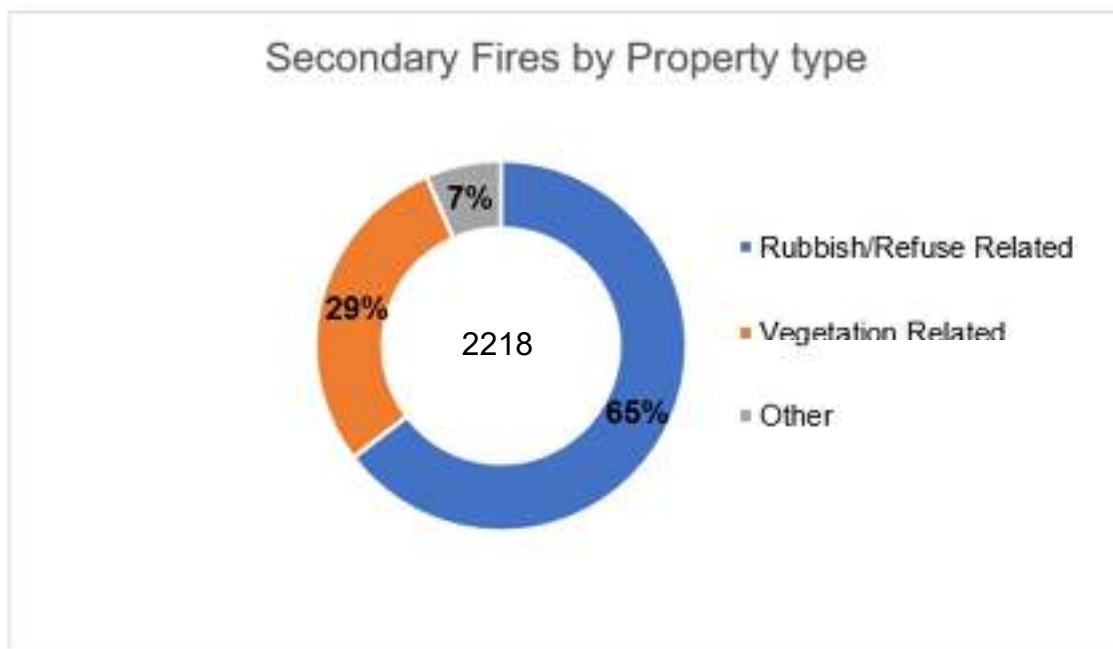


Chart 5 - Total Incidents

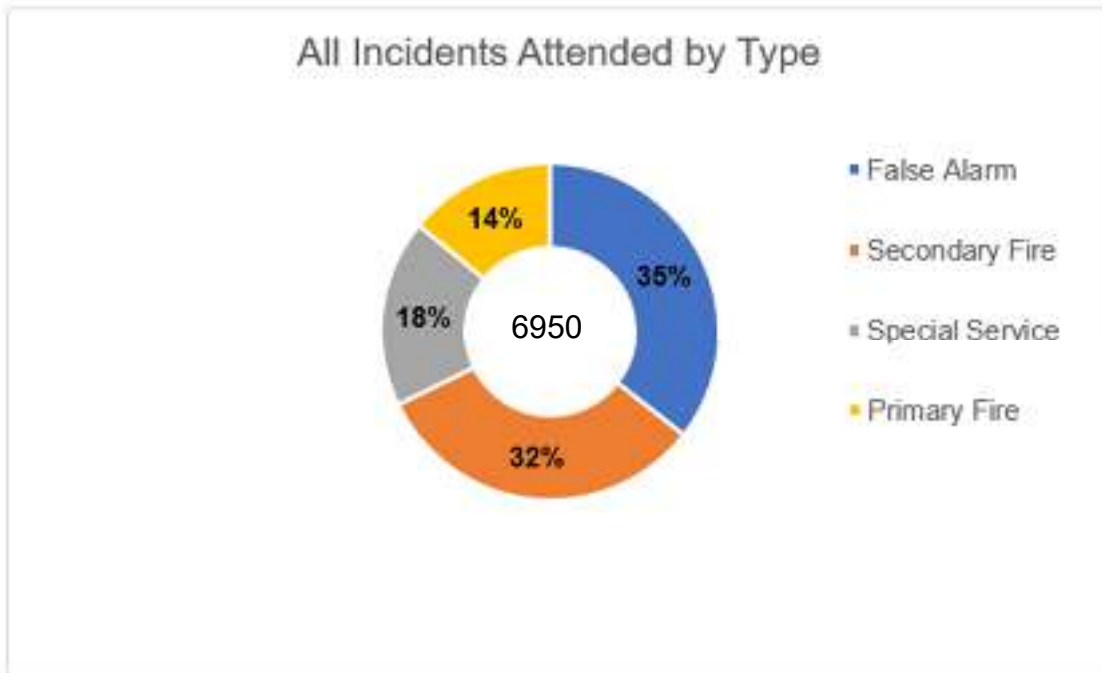


Chart 6 - Primary Fires by Motive

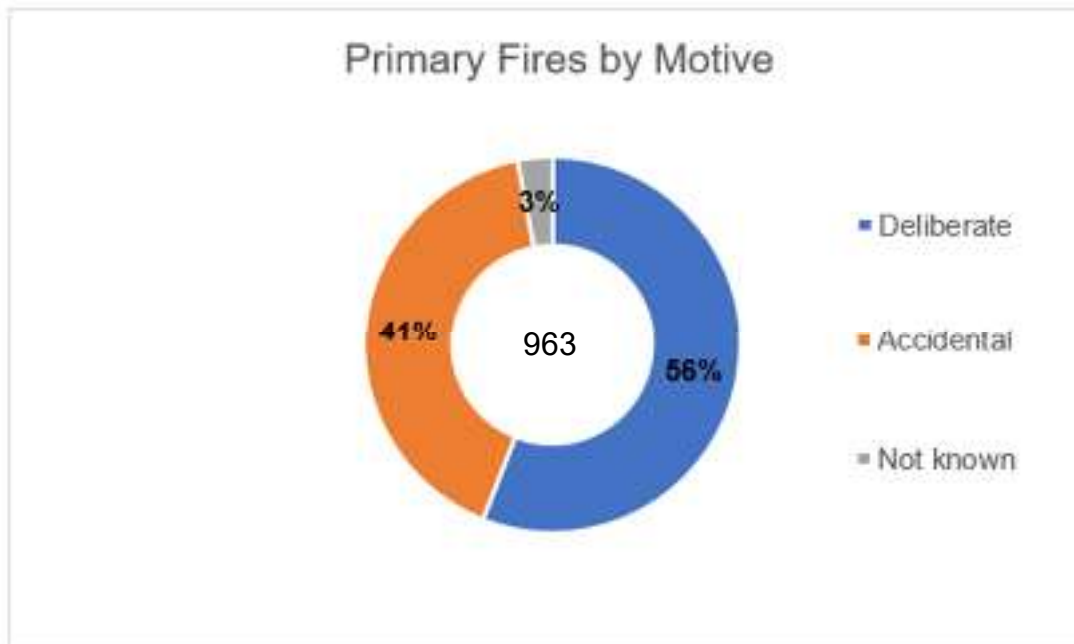


Chart 7 – Primary Fires by Type

