

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Performance Committee

5 September 2024

Performance Report – Quarter One 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 first 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 one for 2024/25 shows 58% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 60% 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	Q1 2024/25 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 01 – Deaths Arising from Accidental Fires in Dwellings	Down	2	0	n/a	2	0%
PI 03 – Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	51	61	16.4%	57	10.5%
PI 04 – Injuries Arising from Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	6	3	-100%	4	-50%
PI 05 – Total Secondary Fires	Down	579	987	41.3%	900	35.7%
PI 07 – Number of Home Fire Safety Visits	Up	4660	4500	3.6%	4734	-1.6%
PI 42 – Proportion of Home Fire Safety Visits to High-Risk People/Properties	Up	99%	80%	23.8%	98.7%	0.3%

PI01 – There were two fire deaths in quarter one, with the spike in deaths arising from accidental fires in dwellings (ADFs) continuing into 2024/25. On 21 May 2024 a male died at a house fire in Murton and on 9 June 2024 a male died at a house fire in Darlington. Both incidents are believed to have been caused by a cigarette. Presentations on both fatalities have been delivered to the full CFA. Learning reviews have been conducted for both fatalities. A strategic problem-solving event was conducted by SLT in July with several actions including the addition of over 2,000 properties to the Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) targeting list due to the residents having similar vulnerability factors as recent fire deaths.

A presentation highlighting the increase in fire fatalities with a focus on partnership working have been delivered to strategic groups across Durham and Darlington with the focus on the following key areas:

- Opportunities for data sharing;
- Referrals of vulnerable people;
- Delivery of 'Eyes Wide Open' training to frontline partner staff.

PI03 – There has been 51 ADFs which is ten under the target of 61. Kitchen fires continue to be an area of focus for our targeted Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) with 50% of all incidents in quarter one recorded as starting in this room. Lone occupiers and lone parent account for 46% of all incidents.

As stated in PI01, the service has been engaging with many partners and delivering 'Eyes Wide Open' training to partners across Durham and Darlington. Engagement has been very positive with the Hospital Discharge Teams with the expectation of referrals of vulnerable residents as they are returned to their homes following a stay in hospital.

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 have been six injuries in quarter one, which resulted in the casualties attending hospital. April saw the highest number of incidents with four injuries, followed by two in May, and none reported in June.

April was marked by several serious incidents, starting with a fire on the 9th in Darlington, where a 29-year-old female suffered severe burns and was found unconscious due to smoke inhalation. She was rescued by fire service personnel and placed in an induced coma at the hospital. Another significant fire occurred on the 14th in Darlington, involving two occupants in their 30's who were overcome by smoke. Both sustained slight injuries and were hospitalised. The fire, which started in the kitchen, caused widespread smoke damage. Finally, on the 17th of April, an elderly woman in Leadgate suffered slight injuries after returning to a fire that began when she accidentally turned on a hob with an air fryer placed on top of it.

In May, two further injuries were reported. On the 3rd, a fire in Crook resulted in slight smoke inhalation injuries to a 61-year-old male who discovered the fire in his front bedroom. The fire caused extensive damage due to internal doors being left open. On the 5th of May, a fire in Murton led to a 44-year-old male suffering from breathing difficulties. He was suspected to be under the influence of alcohol at the time and was subsequently hospitalised with slight injuries from smoke inhalation.

Common themes in these incidents include fires originating in the kitchen or from unattended cooking appliances. In several cases, victims returned to the fire or attempted firefighting, resulting in additional exposure to smoke and toxic fumes. The incidents underline the importance of kitchen safety, especially regarding the use of appliances which is a key area covered in HFSVs.

PI05 – The positive performance seen in 2023/24 has continued into quarter one with performance at 579 incidents which is 41.3% better than the target of 987 and improved performance by 35.7% compared to the previous year.

Rubbish/ refuse is still the top fuel source with 57% of all secondary fires, with 33% being vegetation related. 92% 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. During the quarter, Emergency Response crews have delivered 2,093 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 one, 4,660 HFSVs have been delivered which is above the target of 4,500. 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 HFSV, 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 national risk methodology will support us to continue targeting the most vulnerable in our communities.

Protection

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q1 2024/25 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 10a – Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Premises	Down	35	29	-20.7%	21	-66.7%
PI 14 – False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment	Down	157	172	8.7%	172	8.7%
PI 17 – Number of Fire Safety Audits	Up	472	507	-6.9%	444	6.3%

PI10a – There has been 35 incidents during quarter one, which is six over the target of 29 and 14 more compared to the performance in the previous year. This poor performance has been influenced by 11 fires in prisons, compared to three fires in the same period in the previous year. 10 of these 11 fires were set deliberately. Overall, two incidents were at HMP Frankland, four at HMP Durham and five at HMP Deerbolt. The Service do not have legislative responsibility for fire safety in prisons although we continue to work with these establishments with the aim to reduce fires in these premises, as presented at the last full CFA meeting.

The other incidents were in a variety of premises types including six incidents in retail premises and five in education premises. 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 from 2023/24 has continued into quarter one, with 157 incidents which is 8.7% under the target of 172. This is also 8.7% improved performance compared to the same period in the previous year.

69.1% of all incidents are in four premises types, namely education (25.8%), residential homes (17.4%), retail (13.6%) and industrial manufacturing (12.3%). Mailshots have been sent to education premises and residential homes this quarter. 45.2% of all incidents were linked to system faults and 30.3% were caused by human intervention.

During the quarter there were 267 calls to Fire Control for automatic fire alarms which the Service did not attend.

PI17 – Performance of this indicator is slightly under target with 472 completed audits against a target of 507, although performance is 6.3% better than the same period in the previous year. The central team are slightly under their full establishment hence the slight under performance against target. During July, an external applicant who is qualified to Level 4 certificate will be starting in the central team which will improve capacity once they are inducted.

Positively 37.7% 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	Q1 2024/25 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
Total Emergency Calls Received	N/A	3744	N/A	N/A	4785	21.8%
Total Incidents	N/A	1762	N/A	N/A	2153	18.2%
Total Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	78	N/A	N/A	76	-2.6%
PI 02 – Total Primary Fires	Down	282	254	-11.0%	275	-2.5%
PI 06a – Dwelling Fires Attended within 8 Minutes	Up	70.0%	70%	0%	65.5%	6.9%
PI 06b – Non-Domestic Fires Attended within 9 Minutes	Up	55.6%	70%	-20.6%	64.7%	-14.1%
PI 06c – Road Traffic Collisions Attended within 10 Minutes	Up	76.0%	70%	8.6%	72.2%	5.3%
PI 16a Availability of on call appliances - 1st pump	Up	73.0	75	-2.7%	69.2	5.5%

See Appendix A, chart 5 for total incidents.

PI02 – There have been 282 primary fires which is 11% over the target of 254, and 2.5% more incidents compared to the previous year's performance.

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. Some valuable intel was recently received and shared with Durham Constabulary. 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.

52% (147) of primary fires are vehicle fires with the majority (71%) of these being set deliberately. Peterlee station area continues to be 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. Retirements in the central team have resulted in a reduced capacity, however a new Arson Reduction and Safety Campaigns Manager will be starting in July and will be able to provide more focus on deliberate primary fires.

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

PI06a, PI06b and PI06c

Two out of the three response standards have achieved their performance 70% target in quarter one.

PI06a – Response time performance when attending ADF's within 8 minutes on 70% of occasions is 70%, matching its target.

PI06b – Response time performance when attending non-domestic fires within 9 minutes on 70% of occasions is only 55.6%, 14.4 under its target.

PI06c – Response time performance when attending road traffic collisions attended within 10 minutes on 70% of occasions is 76%, 6 over 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.

PI16a – Performance in quarter one was 73% against its target of 75%. This has deliberately been set as a challenging target by the service, with 75% not being achieved for over four years, with the aim to motivate staff and the RDS Liaison roles to increase performance. This performance is 5.5% improved compared to the same period last year.

During the quarter, RDS 'true availability' (RDS staff only) was 70.1% in May. 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 2.9%, to its 73% performance.

Notable availability of RDS staff only is 97.3% at Middleton in Teesdale, 90.9% at Stanhope, 82.8% at Crook and 82.2% at Wheatley Hill.

Health and Safety

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q1 2024/25 Actual	Q1 Target	Actual vs Target	Q1 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 69 – Number of Accidents to Personnel	Down	3	2	-50%	1	-200%
PI 72 – Number of Vehicle Accidents classified as CDDFRS Driver's fault	Down	0	5	100%	6	100%

PI69 – During quarter one, there were three accidents which is one over the target of two. All accidents were minor in nature. In April a firefighter sustained a very minor cut to their hand during rapid extrication of a casualty at a road traffic collision and a Vehicle Technician sustained a minor graze to their forehead from an air tool that slipped during use. During June, a Fire Cadet sustained minor bruising to their arm during hose drills. All accidents have been investigated to identify any learning points.

PI72 – Positively there have been no vehicle accidents classified as CDDFRS Driver's fault during quarter one. Last year there were 20 accidents in total for the year for this indicator 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.

Keith Carruthers, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Ext. 5564

Appendix A

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

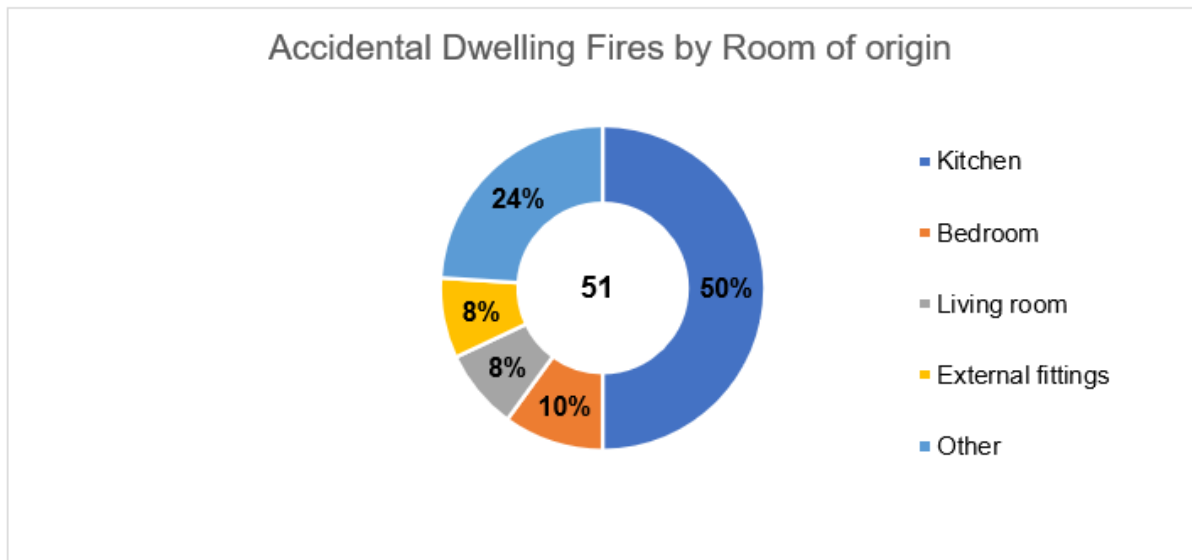


Chart 2 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Occupier Type

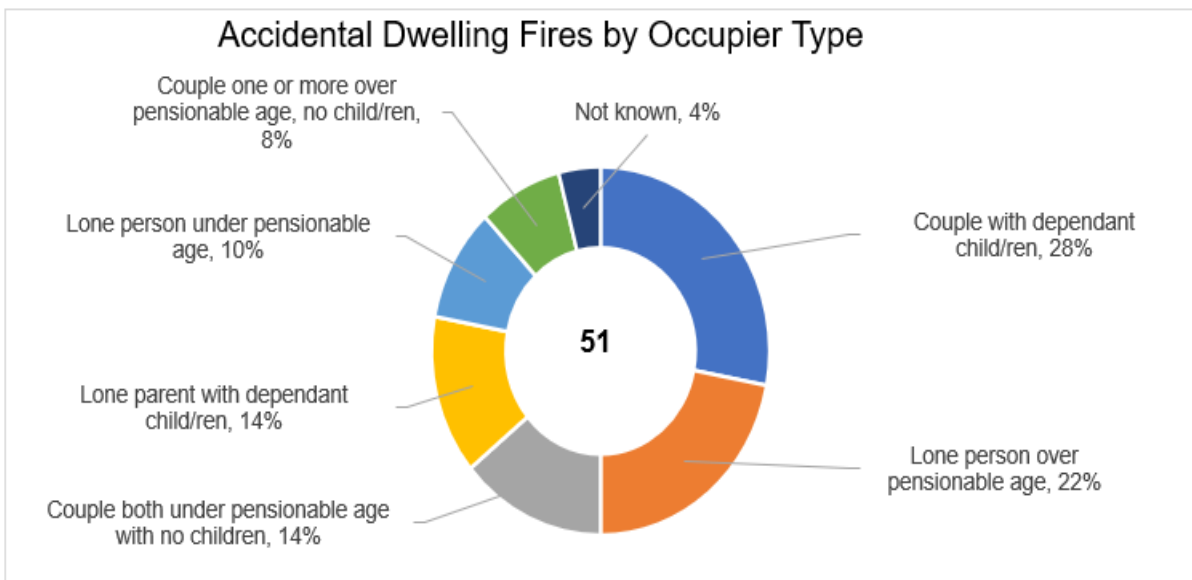


Chart 3 – Secondary Fires by Motive

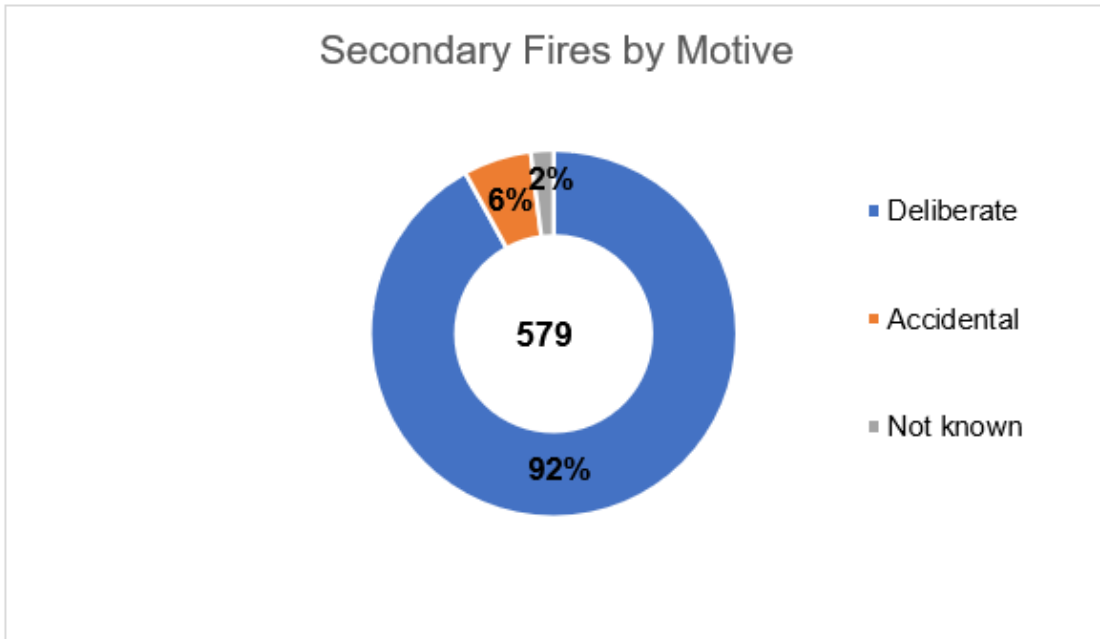


Chart 4 – Secondary Fires by Property Type

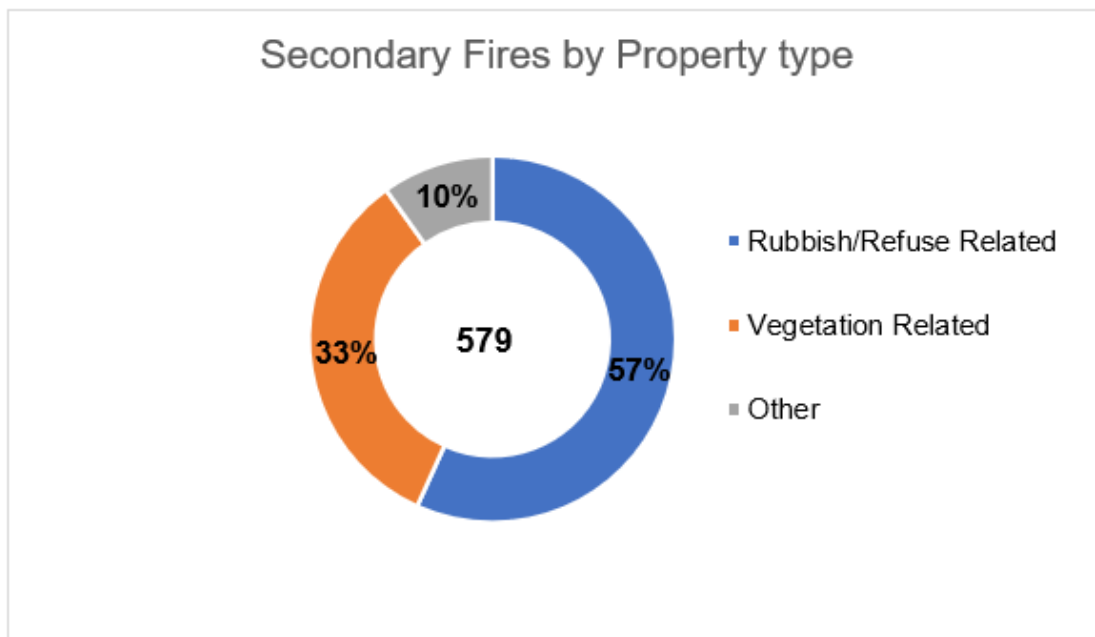


Chart 5 - Total Incidents

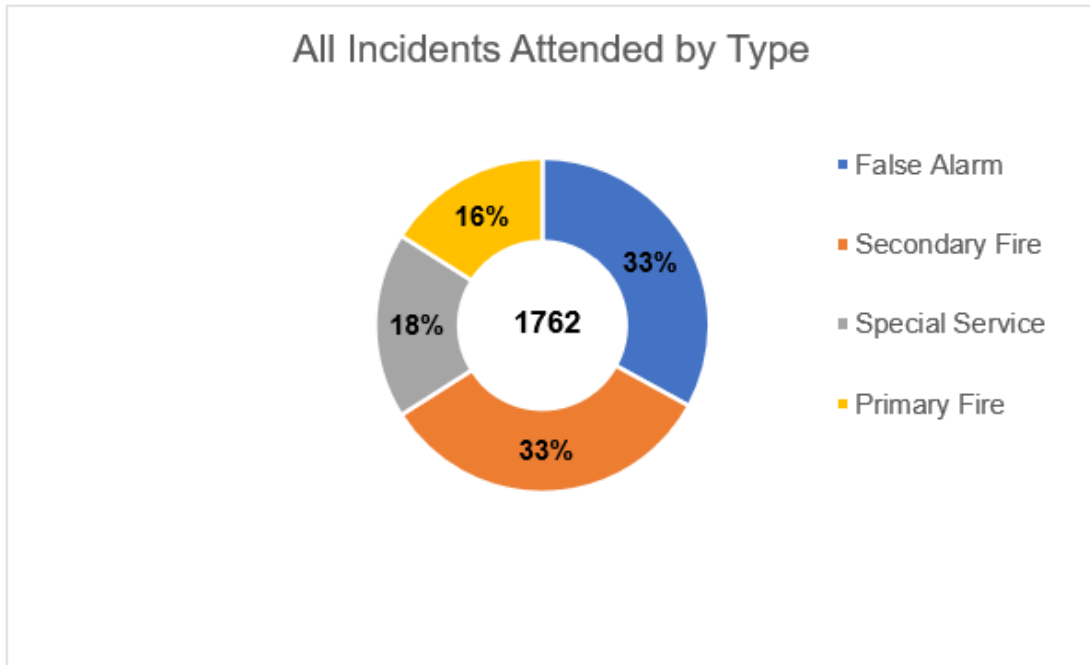


Chart 6 - Primary Fires by Motive

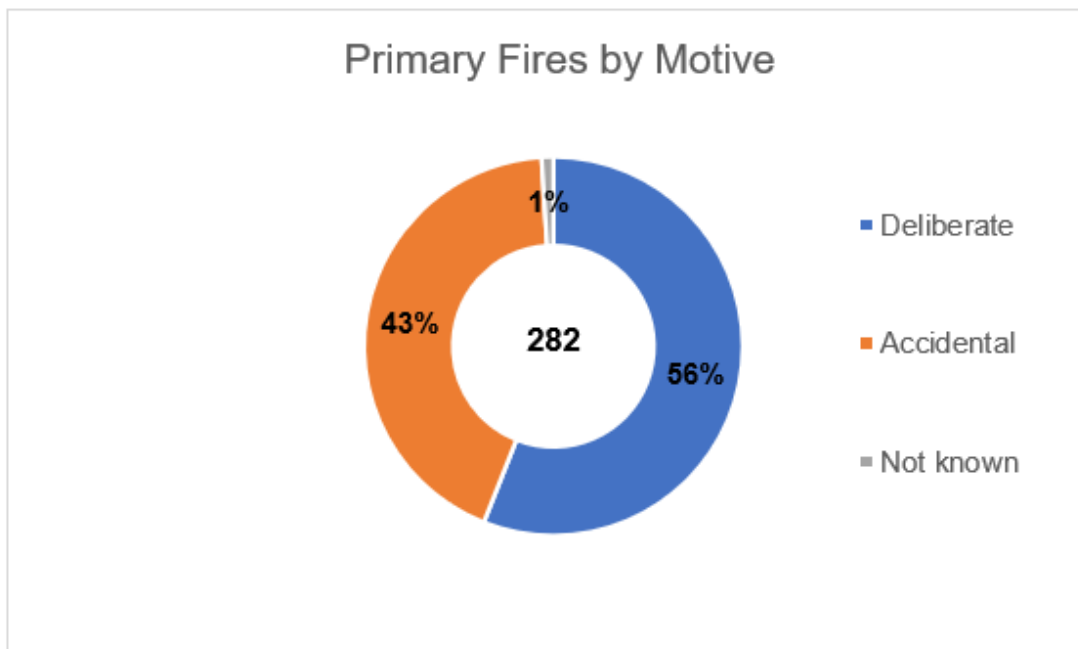


Chart 7 – Primary Fires by Type

