Wholetime and On Call (Retained Duty System) Performance Monitoring June – August 2020

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1   Purpose of Report

This report provides a summary of information for June – August 2020, regarding the performance and management of availability across Wholetime and On Call (Retained Duty Systems) in Shropshire.

2   Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

3   Background

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has 23 fire stations, 19 of which are solely crewed by On Call staff working the Retained Duty System (RDS), and a further 3 stations have both a Wholetime and On Call complement. Only Telford Central Fire Station is solely crewed by Wholetime firefighters.

4   Wholetime Availability Update

Wholetime appliances achieved 100% availability for this reporting period**.**

Wholetime crews continue to provide an increased level of resilience across the specialist operational areas of the Service, including Breathing Apparatus guidelines, enhanced water rescue, Rope access and stabilisation, Aerial Ladder Platform, Rescue Tender, Animal Rescue and the Firefighter Assistance and Safety Team (FAST).

The Integrated Crewing Model (IRMP1) was implemented in January 2017. The Service is waiting on final acceptance of the new negotiated Wholetime Shift System (Flexible Rostering), by the Fire Brigades' Union, which has now been running for three years. Since its inception Fire Service Rota (FSR) software system has developed into a smoother and more effective tool in helping the Service to manage wholetime staff and appliance availability in accordance with the flexible working shift system. Further refinements are in progress to enable intuitive and, in some cases, automatic recognition of shortfalls and notification to staff via the mobile app.

FSR has also proved a very useful tool during the Covid-19 pandemic. The service has been able to create resilience stations within the FSR application which has enabled immediate distribution of shifts where staffing levels have been impacted upon.

Five Wholetime transferees have joined the service in July 2020 and five new recruits will begin their training at the end of September 2020.

The Service is now focusing on planning for a number of retirements and promotions during 2020/21.

5   On Call (Retained Duty System) Performance

The year 2020/21 has seen on call appliances achieve **98.45%** availability (April – August 2020) this is an increase of 2.25% for the same period 2019/20.

Monthly breakdown – June 99.02%, July 98.49%, August 95.59%.

The reduction seen in August 2020 is likely due to the easing of restrictions implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is still the leading fire and rescue service in mainland England with regards to availability, this includes metropolitan services that have no on call stations. Overall fire engine availability by fire and rescue service for 2018/19 is shown in Appendix B to the report.

Support to the On Call stations through the Group Support Team (GST) continues, predominantly at the stations of Minsterley, Much Wenlock and Prees.

The GST has provided a total of 1073 hours support during June-August 2020 (1453 for the same period 2019/20), 685 (63%) of these hours were at Prees, Minsterley or Much Wenlock Fire Station.

To continually improve on the overall level of performance the service remains focused on those appliances / stations that currently fall below the service average. Further detail about some of these stations can be found in Appendix A to the report.

6   Background Station Specific Performance

The table below shows a station by station breakdown of April – August 2020 availability:

	Apr 2020	May 2020	Jun 2020	Jul 2020	Aug 2020	Average
Albrighton	99.86%	99.43%	98.06%	93.18%	77.72%	93.65%
Baschurch	100.00%	100.00%	99.62%	98.22%	98.45%	99.26%
Bishops Castle	100.00%	100.00%	99.79%	100.00%	99.53%	99.86%
Bridgnorth	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	99.97%	99.66%	99.93%
Church Stretton	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Cleobury Mortimer	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Clun	100.00%	98.56%	98.06%	97.51%	97.48%	98.32%
Craven Arms	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Ellesmere	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Hodnet	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Ludlow	100.00%	99.93%	100.00%	98.02%	95.60%	98.71%
Market Drayton	100.00%	100.00%	99.44%	99.16%	96.27%	98.97%
Minsterley	100.00%	99.63%	99.13%	98.96%	94.02%	98.35%
Much Wenlock	100.00%	99.70%	98.68%	97.78%	92.04%	97.64%
Newport	99.79%	99.70%	99.55%	97.41%	93.45%	97.98%
Oswestry	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Prees	96.53%	88.81%	87.19%	90.22%	71.34%	86.82%
Shrewsbury	99.97%	99.73%	99.86%	98.42%	96.47%	98.89%
Tweedale	100.00%	99.66%	99.86%	99.19%	94.62%	98.67%
Wellington	100.00%	99.70%	99.86%	99.06%	99.03%	99.53%
Wem	99.90%	100.00%	99.41%	99.70%	97.85%	99.37%
Whitchurch	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	99.43%	99.89%
Average	99.82%	99.31%	99.02%	98.49%	95.59%	98.45%

7   Recruitment Campaign

Recruitment remains the single most constant challenge for station management teams, Human Resources and the Group Support Team. Processes are ongoing in order to maintain establishment levels. The national https://oncallfire.uk/treadmill/ website is live and our own recruitment process is managed through a cross departmental Task and Finish Group.

All aspects of the Service's recruitment campaign include the use of social media networking as a method of attraction. This form of advertising will continue to impact positively on the Service's desire to achieve 100% availability. All On Call stations are encouraged to utilise a social media platform, such as Twitter or Facebook, to encourage recruitment.

The On Call Sustainability project started on 1 September 2020 with a 12-month Watch Manager secondment supporting the project. A number of On Call 'champions' have volunteered to help shape our research and key areas to review. The Service had delayed the implementation of this during the Covid-19 outbreak to ensure value for money in this secondment.

8 Availability system

The Fire Service Rota system, which has been implemented into the Wholetime Crewing System, has now been successfully implemented at all On Call Fire Stations.

Although the change was largely driven by the need to overcome issues created by the change to the Service's HR and Finance systems, there have also been some clear benefits to adopting FSR across the On Call area of the Service. As well as bringing all response staff onto one system, FSR allows individual On Call staff easier management of their availability by utilising a smartphone app. The system will also greatly assist in the management of On Call staff by providing instant, accurate and up to date availability of staff and appliances and associated performance management information.

9 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

10 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

11 Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

12 Appendices

Appendix A
On Call (Retained Duty System) Fire Station Availability Analysis

Appendix B
State of Fire and Rescue Report 2019

13 Background Papers

A quarterly RDS performance review summary is presented to the Fire Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee. Previous reports are available via Executive Management Support.

Appendix A to report on
Wholetime and On Call (Retained Duty System)
Performance Monitoring June-August 2020
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Standards, Audit and Performance Committee
24 September 2020

On Call (Retained Duty System) Fire Station Availability Analysis

In the following tables one (1) unit is equivalent to one person being available for full cover (i.e. over 120 hours a week). Two crew members each committing three quarter cover (i.e. up to 120 hours, but no less than 84 hours per week) would equate to 1.5 units.

Prees Fire Station has been highlighted to demonstrate the sort of challenges they face, and the efforts being put into meeting those challenges:

Prees Fire Station

Station profile	Availability information	Actions taken
15 units available 4.5 units filled, 5 personnel Vacancies for 10.5 units	Availability Apr-Aug 2020 – 86.82% Annual availability 2019/20 – 84.67%	A number of innovative options are currently being looked at. Engagement with Prees personnel is key.

Albrighton Fire Station

| Station profile	Availability information	Actions taken
15 units available 9.5 units filled, 12 personnel Vacancies for 5.5 units	Availability Apr-Aug 2020 – 93.65% Annual availability 2019/20 – 87.26%	1 x recruit on the current course 1 x at Job Related Tests 2 x long term sickness

Minsterley Fire Station

Station profile	Availability information	Actions taken
15 units available 8 units filled, 10 personnel Vacancies for 7 units	Availability Apr-Aug 2020 – 98.35% Annual availability 2019/20 – 93.42%	1 x recruit on the next recruits course 1 x long term sickness

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State of Fire and Rescue Report 2019

Below is a table which was published in the State of Fire and Rescue Report 2019 following inspections from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS):

Overall fire engine availability percentage by fire and rescue service, 2018/19
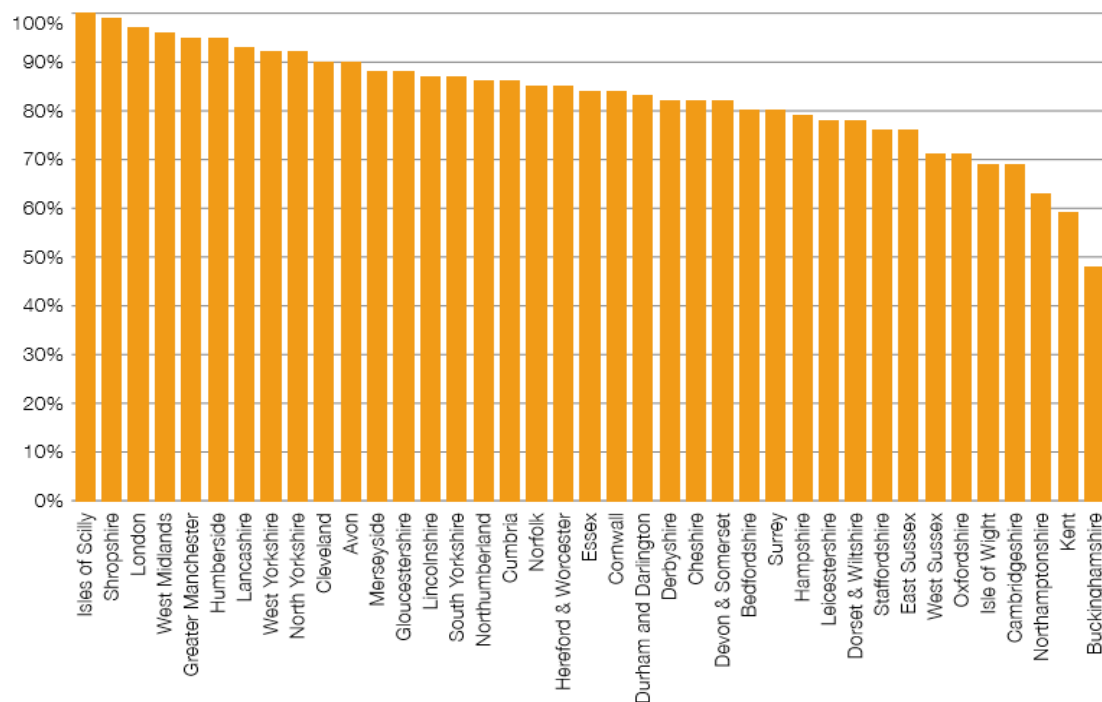
Source:
Overall fire engine availability percentage for the year ending 31 March 2019: HMICFRS data collection
Royal Berkshire, Hertfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Suffolk and Warwickshire FRSs did not provide data.
Tyne and Wear FRS did not provide data in the correct format.