ESSEX POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

Meeting	Service Leadership Team	Agenda Item	4a
	Performance & Resources Board		15
Meeting Date	12 May	Report Number	20- 101
	29 May 2020		
Report Author:	Karl Edwards		
Presented By	Karl Edwards		
Subject	**Introduction to Recovery**		
Type of Report:	Decision		

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. P&R members are asked to approve the approach being taken to the "Recovery Phase" through the central co-ordination of Business Impact Assessments led by the Recovery Working Group.

2. P&R members are asked to review the adoption of measures being recommended and taken to support the safe return of employees to the workplace in line with the latest Government advice. The measures are not exhaustive and will need to be reviewed and adapted where further guidance and legislation is received.

3. P&R members are asked to review the other sub headings of the paper to ensure that there has been an adequate assessment and briefing of the current situational position and to make any further recommendations to be included within future update reports.

BACKGROUND

The coronavirus pandemic has had an indelible impact upon many of the habits and customs that underpin our society, with few places as disrupted as the workplace, where many of us have been confined to our homes and attempted to maintain business as usual to the best of our abilities.

Will this transition endure? Indeed, what is the workplace likely to look like when we move out of the lockdown procedures in place around the Country?

How has work changed during the pandemic? Media reports and feedback from our people suggests that one of the first major groups to be impacted of the shift to home working has been the traditional 9-5 office hours. With many of us juggling home and family responsibilities, especially with school closures placing expectations of home schooling onto working parents. People are having to adapt and there are many examples of work being completed outside office hours.

However it should be recognised that digital collaboration is growing, not least in the public sector, where collaboration has risen by 142%. This digital workflow has seen growth in the number of apps we're using, including services for video conferencing, chat and messaging, cloud storage and sharing tools.

Are these changes likely to continue when we are no longer confined to our homes by government regulations? It is likely and pragmatic that employees will return to offices in waves rather than all at once.

Most public sector services are planning on staggering the return of employees to the office, beginning with those who have the greatest need to be office based. This is likely to coincide with a longer work period to allow for fewer numbers to be in the office and therefore maintaining social distancing.

This could mean changes in work patterns and with additional cleaning protocols being in place, with a continued emphasis on hand-washing and limited group meetings, limiting the number of workers in the office at any one time.

Our leadership style will need to adapt to get the best out of our virtual teams. Evidence suggest that virtual employees operate best when working in bursts and as such, maintaining a constant stream of contact and information can be counter-productive.

Alternating between periods of contact and periods of leaving people to get on with their work are widely recognised as the most productive ways of virtual working.

It is not yet clear or fully understood what normal will look like after COVID-19 but it is important that we embrace the learning from this period of time and adopt the new ways of working that have demonstrated that we can be more efficient and effective.

It is likely that people will not want to work remotely all the time, but rather have the option to pick and choose, so the ability to successfully manage remote teams will be a key skill that we need to consider.

As part of our return to the workplace, we will need to consider detailed risk management approaches to safeguard our people's health and minimise the risk of infection. It is therefore essential that we continue to base any plans for returning to the workplace on up-to-date Government and public health guidance in relation to COVID-19.

The health and safety executive has published advice and guidance relating to COVID-19 on its website which may be useful when considering health and safety measures.

https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19#social-distancing-in-the-workplace---principles

The priority for ECFRS should be managing a safe return to the workplace for staff and therefore crucial we work in close collaboration with our health and safety and occupational health teams wherever possible.

Communication is key in ensuring that we are talking to staff on a regular basis to help reassure them that their health, well-being and safety is our top priority. Making sure we are clear about what procedure they should follow if they begin to feel unwell, both in the workplace and at home.

We will need to undertake a review your workplaces and consider how we can ensure that staff are able to maintain a 2m physical distance between each other. We will to set out how we manage meetings, interviews and other interactions. Communal areas such as canteens, kitchen areas need to be considered.

Key protection and hygiene measures will need to be applied to minimise the spread of infection, such as reminding staff about regular and effective handwashing, and providing hand sanitiser. It may be that premises that have been closed for a period of time, should have a deep-clean before reopening. Our cleaning arrangements will also need to be reviewed, for example ensuring all phones/keyboards etc are wiped daily with anti-viral cleaner or assigned as a piece of personal equipment.

Depending on the working environment, we may need to consider providing PPE, such as masks and anti-viral hand gel. If a decision is to adopt the wearing of masks, then we will need to think about training/briefing staff on their correct usage, since both can be ineffective if used inappropriately.

It is also likely that more large-scale testing for COVID-19 infection will form a key part of facilitating a safe return to the workplace for larger numbers of employees. This could be in the form of temperature tests at all sites or asking each employee to confirm their wellness to operate in the workplace prior to arriving.

ECFRS recognise that remote meeting facilities and video-conferencing should be encouraged wherever possible to minimise the need for staff to travel and we have put a number of support structures in place to ensure that this is made possible. The link below provides an example of the useful sites that we have been able to signpost our staff to ensure they have access to the all the information they need. We have also provided Webinars to our people that have had good uptake and positive feedback.

https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/remote-working-top-tips

The risks to our people's health from this pandemic maybe psychological as well as physical. These may include anxiety about the ongoing health crisis and fear of infection, as well social isolation due to the lockdown. Many will have experienced challenging domestic situations, such as juggling childcare or caring for a vulnerable relative, as well as financial worries if a partner has lost their income. Some will have experienced illness, or bereavement. Even if staff have carried on working and participating in video meetings, they will still need to adjust to working in a shared environment with colleagues. Some may take more time than others and it's likely that most people will need a period of readjustment. Some members of staff may have concerns about returning to the workplace, whilst others are keen to return as soon as possible. Many may find that they are still coming to terms with the significant change which society and the familiar workplace routines could feel very different.

It is recommended that we have a re-orientation or re-induction process for returning staff. Encourage and support every manager to have a one to one return meeting with every employee, where a key focus is on their health, safety and well-being. Managers should be equipped to have a sensitive and open discussion with every individual and discuss any adjustments and/or ongoing support they may need to facilitate an effective return to the workplace.

It will be important that the organisational culture is inclusive, and that every employee feels they are returning to a supportive, healthy and safe environment. The pandemic has had an unequal impact across the workforce in many ways, as different groups of employees, and individuals, will have been affected in diverse ways according to their job role and individual circumstances.

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Whilst we are still operating within an unknown environment it is imperative that we plan as far in advance to understand what activities, workstreams and projects have either had to be completely placed on hold or have continued to progress, albeit at varying paces.

We have therefore formed a **Recovery Working Group** that has been undertaking an assessment of these activities and what this looks like so that we can better understand what we need to start to prioritise in taking us forward to a "New Normal". A Terms of Reference is attached (Appendix 3).

The Recovery Working Group is attended by each Head of Department and they have completed Business Impact Assessment (Example - Appendix 1) for their area of responsibility. This assessment, evaluated areas such as, the different priorities (High, Medium, Low), Financial Impact, interdependencies etc that has allowed us to pull all of this information into a central reporting tool (Appendix 2) (Diagram 2 & 3). From this we have been able to create a high-level dashboard that articulates the number of different activities in each Department/Work Area, which will allow us to track progress and assess risk.

Following the Government Briefing held at 1900hrs on the 10th May 2020, the message continues in that where employers are able to continue to support Home Working then

they should remain doing so. Only those employees that cannot work from home, should return to the workplace under guidance from their employer. Below (Diagram 1) illustrates the **five steps** that are on the Government Website.

(Diagram 1)

Based on the latest Government advice, ECFRS will continue to adopt a working from home practice where possible to do so. Risk Assessments are underway to establish and review areas such as Training, Fire Protection Inspections, Home Safety Visits etc. Further detail and information on this will follow from the Recovery Working Group update reports.
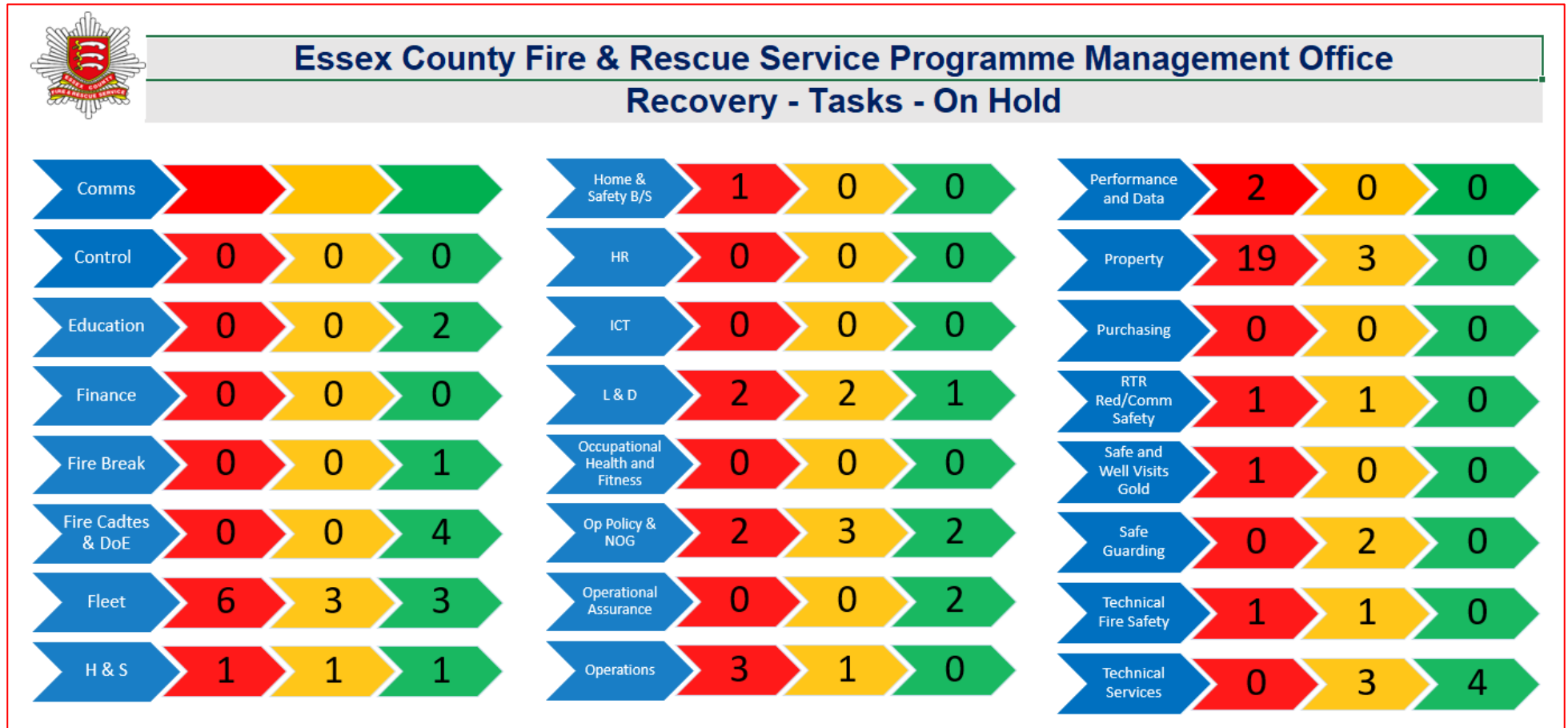
(Diagram 2 – Please See attachement - Appendix 2 for full details)

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service Programme Management Office : Recovery TASK

Department	Lead	Department	Task Status	Task	Scheduled	Priority High, Medium, Low	Business Activity	Update - In Progress/Complete	Risk Register	Impact Statement The impact to the risk categories if activity delayed? Green – Insignificant Yellow –Minor Amber Significant Red –Major Dark Red – Critical	Impact Statement The impact to the risk categories if activity cancelled Green – Insignificant Yellow –Minor Amber Significant Red –Major Dark Red – Critical	Impact Assessment (If project paused?)					
												Returning to BAU and Working Differently? *Up to 4 Months	Returning to BAU and Working Differently? + 6 months	Key Deliverables *Up to 4 Months	Key Deliverables + Up to 6 months	Financial Impact - Short Term	Financial Impact - Long Term	Dependencies
Technical Services	Steve Foster	Operational Personnel	On Hold	Face Fit Half Mask Retests Area	March to May 2020	Medium	Face fit retests on hold, ideally in line with RPE guidelines we need to ensure that everyone is face fit tested every 3 years, however their masks will still protect them providing they haven't had any facial surgery or have had extreme loss or gain in weight		None	Public Value - Insignificant People - Significant Infrastructure - Insignificant Reputation - Significant Compliance - Insignificant	Public Value - Insignificant People - Major Infrastructure - Insignificant Reputation - Major Compliance - Major	Minimal Impact New opportunities have been realised by working remotely Working differently i.e. proven use of video conference calls and team meetings, After the initial effect of COVID-19 and sourcing additional PPE & RPE Technical Service team are now pretty much running or near to BAU.	Minimal Impact New opportunities have been realised by working remotely Working differently i.e. proven use of video conference calls and team meetings, After the initial effect of COVID-19 and sourcing additional PPE & RPE Technical Service team are now pretty much running or near to BAU.	No Impact	No Impact	TBC - Possible on additional budget		Technical Services manages the provision of equipment, PPE & BA for the operational element of their service. Therefore delays in the provision of new or replacement equipment may be experienced, although the projects will be completed by year-end.
		New Joiners	In Progress	Bristol PPE sizing	April to December 2020	Low	Sizing is being carried out by completion of a form remotely by personnel and are issued on the measurements given, accepting exchanges will be likely.										
		Operational Personnel	On Hold	In house face fit test	April to December 2020	Medium	We are currently unable to face fit test anyone for half mask, we have issued some masks without test, but the fit can be tested by holding the palm of the hand over the pre-filter cover to confirm a seal.										
		Operational Personnel	On Hold	BA Workshops General Servicing	April to December 2020	Low in the short term	BA General Servicing is not being carried out. We are 3 months in advance of test dates for BA Sets. We are operating social distancing by only having one BA Technician in the Workshop at any one time.										
		National Framework	On Hold	Specialist PPE Project	April to October 2020	Low	Specialist PPE National Project has been put on hold for the time being. No impact to business										
		Technical Services	In Progress	Recruitment of Permanent WM Post	April to July 2020	Low	Recruitment of Watch Manager Post, no impact to business as currently have temp Watch Manager in post.										
		Operational Personnel	On Hold	TIC Repairs	April to December 2020	Medium	TIC Repairs are currently on hold. Each frontline appliance has 2. We don't have any spares available. We don't get high numbers of repairs; therefore, the impact should remain in medium flow providing we closely monitor.										
		Operational Personnel	In Progress	Fire Escape hood roll out	April to December 2020	Low	The Fire Escape Hood is a new piece of equipment that has been purchased or an outcome of the Grenfell Report; therefore, the delay in roll out is of low impact										
		Operational Personnel	On Hold	Casualty care bag roll out	April to July 2020	Low	The Casualty care Bag is also a new addition to the fire appliance; therefore, the delay in roll out is of low impact.										
		Operational Personnel	In Progress	RD1 equipment suggestions and new projects	April to December 2020	Low	Equipment suggestions and new projects on hold. The impact of this is low										
		Operational Personnel	On Hold	Method of Entry equipment	April to December 2020	Low	Method of Entry equipment (MOE) is also a new addition to the fire appliances; therefore, the delay in roll out is of low impact.										
							The proposed merging of CRT into Service Control has			Public Value -	Public Value -							

(Diagram 3 – Dashboard)

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service Programme Management Office
Recovery - Tasks - On Hold

Department	Red	Amber	Green
Comms			
Control	0	0	0
Education	0	0	2
Finance	0	0	0
Fire Break	0	0	1
Fire Cadtes & DoE	0	0	4
Fleet	6	3	3
H & S	1	1	1

Department	Red	Amber	Green
Home & Safety B/S	1	0	0
HR	0	0	0
ICT	0	0	0
L & D	2	2	1
Occupational Health and Fitness	0	0	0
Op Policy & NOG	2	3	2
Operational Assurance	0	0	2
Operations	3	1	0

Department	Red	Amber	Green
Performance and Data	2	0	0
Property	19	3	0
Purchasing	0	0	0
RTR Red/Comm Safety	1	1	0
Safe and Well Visits Gold	1	0	0
Safe Guarding	0	2	0
Technical Fire Safety	1	1	0
Technical Services	0	3	4

Running in parallel with this programme of work is a more bespoke item that is being progressed into a project format, which is specifically looking at how we can start to return our people back to the workplace in a safe and healthy way which supports their wellbeing and also their productivity. Clearly this will be guided by Government advice.

To pre-empt this a list of considerations has been developed to establish our thinking as to the measures that we will need to take. It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and will require further amendment/additions to. It does however provide a framework in which we need to commence as soon as possible to ensure that all of our workplaces are safe, healthy environments for our people to undertake their duties.

RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE
ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

We will create a safe working environment that allows our people to flourish and work in the most effective and efficient way.

HEALTHY WORKPLACE

It is important that we all practice the adoption of a healthy workplace with good infection prevention and control

SUPPORTIVE CULTURE

We recognise that this continues to be a challenging time for all of our people and we want to ensure that we support your health and wellbeing in the workplace

WORKING SMARTER

Since lockdown began we have adopted a number of new ways of working. We want to harness and take forward these new ways to become the new normal.

- Desk Clearance into 1M high personal storage
- Portable Handwashing Sinks
- Signage to be produced to give clear instruction to all personnel entering the building
- Perspex shield to be installed across reception area
- Canteen arrangements – i.e. pre-booked meals / menu change / seating arrangements / Contactless payments
- Kitchen Areas to be free from all items – including non-provision of Tea/Coffee
- Designated access points to KP
- Risk assess all Exit Points
- Communications Plan to go out to staff regarding return to KP plan
- Returning to work induction
- Desk Booking System to be set up – Numbering of desks
- Desk layout drawing to be completed so we have a floor plan of each area to understand which desks will be designated for use – each desk to be one desk space apart from each other.

- Consideration / Review of cleaning schedule to be increased in frequency – for all desks/work areas to be sanitised at end of day.
- Review on contract cleaning arrangements to assess if any increases in cleaning/deep cleaning are required.
- Decision regarding meeting room usage and arrangements i.e. first three months no external visitors – no face to face meetings – utilise meeting rooms as additional working space.
- Consider health declaration of staff to confirm fit & well to be entering a workplace (legal considerations)
- Consider one way walking systems ensure social distancing
- Hand sanitation stations
- Consider face mask requirements whilst working within the workplace
- Prioritisation of who needs to work within each department / by person
- Car Parking arrangement – distancing between each space.
- Use of common pieces of equipment – printers, communal kitchen areas etc
- Communal facilities, drinking stations, toilets, showers etc
- Regular Air Quality checks to ensure ventilation/heating/cooling systems are adequate
- Process for external visitors
- Deep Cleaning of site – frequency
- On-Site/Remote Wellbeing facilities

Good practice for employers

It is good practice for employers to:

- keep everyone updated on actions being taken to reduce risks of exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace
- ensure employees who are in a vulnerable group are strongly advised to follow social distancing guidance
- ensure employees who are in an extremely vulnerable group and should be shielded are supported to stay at home
- make sure everyone's contact numbers and emergency contact details are up to date
- make sure managers know how to spot symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and are clear on any relevant processes, for example sickness reporting and sick pay, and procedures in case someone in the workplace is potentially infected and needs to take the appropriate action
- make sure there are places to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, and encourage everyone to do so regularly
- provide hand sanitiser and tissues for staff, and encourage them to use them

Social distancing in the workplace - principles

Social distancing involves reducing day-to-day contact with other people as much as possible, in order to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). Businesses and workplaces should encourage their employees to work at home, wherever possible.

If you cannot work from home then you can still travel to work. This is consistent with the Chief Medical Officer for England's advice.

The advice on social distancing measures applies to everyone and should be followed wherever possible. Workplaces need to avoid crowding and minimise opportunities for the virus to spread by maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) between individuals wherever possible. This advice applies both to inside the workplace, and to where staff may need to interact with customers. Staff should be reminded to wash their hands regularly using soap and water for 20 seconds and particularly after blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing. Where facilities to wash hands are not available, hand sanitiser should be used. Workers should cover any coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then dispose of the tissue in a bin and immediately wash their hands.

The practical implementation of this advice will depend on the local circumstances.

A few general indicators will be relevant to the majority of business settings:

- make regular announcements to remind staff and/or customers to follow social distancing advice and wash their hands regularly
- encourage the use of digital and remote transfers of material where possible rather than paper format, such as using e-forms, emails and e-banking
- provide additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities if possible, providing soap, water, hand sanitiser and tissues and encourage staff to use them
- where it is possible to remain 2 metres apart, use floor markings to mark the distance, particularly in the most crowded areas (for example, where queues form)
- where it is not possible to remain 2 metres apart, staff should work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face if possible
- where face-to-face contact is essential, this should be kept to 15 minutes or less wherever possible
- as much as possible, keep teams of workers together (cohorting), and keep teams as small as possible

BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

Whilst the pandemic has been a big change for the population in terms of how we live our daily lives there have been benefits to working differently. These benefits include things such as:-

- ➢ Ability to work remotely and successfully
- ➢ Employees working in a more productive way around their home life
- ➢ Environmental impacts through reduction of travel
- ➢ Delivering Training in a different way
- ➢ Fast Tracking Technological changes
- ➢ Making quicker and more effective decisions whilst still maintaining governance

- ➢ Connecting with people in a new way
- ➢ Sharing of ideas and best practice both internally and with other Fire & Rescue Services.
- ➢ Health & Wellbeing Support across the service
- ➢ Working with partner agencies to provide essential support and services to the public.

It does not however go unrecognised that there are equally new risks emerging that we have to be cognisant of and act on to ensure that we are able to maintain our core services to keep our people and communities safe. These risks include area such as:-

- ➢ Mental Health & Wellbeing – The impact on our people has to be considered in that working from home is not an ideal situation for everyone. Equally for our Firefighters who continue to respond on the frontline will have anxieties about their own Health and Safety in the workplace. Measures have been put in place to maintain a welfare check where possible across our workforce, but we must recognise that this may not be captured in its entirety. We are ensuring that there is good signposting information for all of our people who may be struggling to adapt to the current climate.

- ➢ Financial Hardship – It is recognised that we may have employees who are experiencing financial hardship and we have ensured where possible to provide opportunities to assist where possible, through increasing their availability to work other duties that have been adopted from NFCC guidance.

- ➢ There are activities such as Training, Home Safety Visits and Fire Protection Inspections that have had to be undertaken in a different way. We are regularly reviewing these areas to ensure that they are adequate in keeping our communities safe within the current constraints of how we respond to these essential needs.

- ➢ There are a number of workstreams in areas such as Property and Fleet that have had to be placed on hold during the Pandemic and these areas are captured within the Recovery Work Plan to ensure that as we progress further forward and lockdown measures decrease, we are able to pick up an maintain these activities in a planned and prioritised method.

- ➢ The return to the workplace is a key risk that is emerging daily and we will focus on this as it is imperative that we ensure everyone returning can do so in a safe and supportive way. There are a number of on-going actions to ensure that we comply with Government Advice.
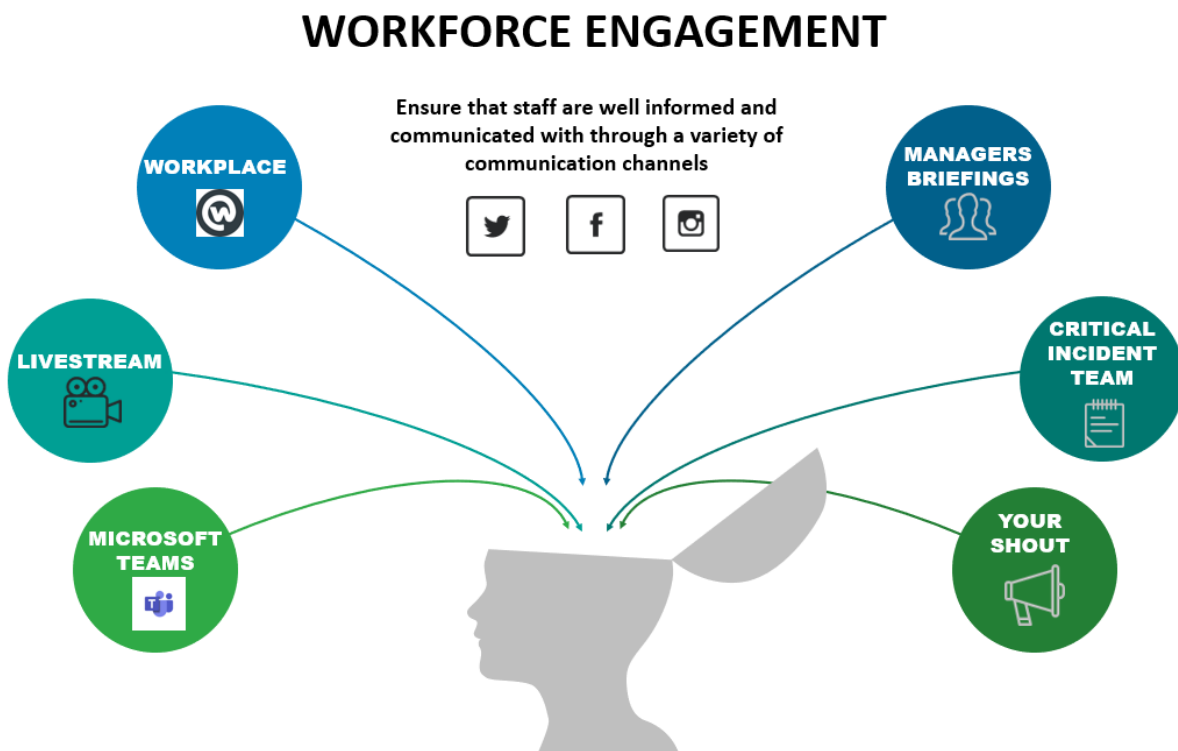
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

ECFRS has received Government funding that has enabled expenditure to be allocated to all COVID-19 activities. All expenditure is being closely tracked and monitored against a specific account code. Regular reporting of this allocation is being taken through SLT and to our PFCC Performance & Resources Board. The Recovery Phase will require investment to enable a safe and healthy return to the workplace for all employees.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

We want to ensure that all employees are supported within their workplace to enable them to work safely and effectively. We will ensure that those employees who are most vulnerable are identified and provided with an individual risk assessment undertaken by their line manager.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

ECFRS has been using a number of communication channels during this period and below is an illustration of those channels that have been the most effective. We will continue to ensure that our people receive the most up to date information at all times. Following the latest Government Briefing a communication will be going out to update everyone on what this message means to them and what actions they need to take. For many this will be for them to remain working as they have been, particularly for those that are office based and have been able to work at home. For others, risk assessments are being undertaken to establish whether they will be able to undertake their working activities safely. Further Government advice is being developed for employers that will provide more detailed guidance and expectations.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Throughout the Pandemic consideration to legal implications continue to be assessed on an individual criteria against the activity/workstream concerned. For Example those employees who are working for partner agencies to ensure that we have the right insurance measures in place.

Where legal advice and guidance is required, these items are being logged and recorded in a way that will ensure we are receiving the most up to date and best advice in line with legislation.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The health and safety of our people is paramount and we want to ensure that when they return to the workplace they return to an environment that supports them in the right way. The Health & Safety Team have already undertaken a number of risk assessments across the service and will continue to review these to ensure that we have active measures in place to mitigate where possible and appropriate. There are a number of Health & Safety considerations already mentioned within this paper and these will be captured and assessed through the Health & Safety representatives on the Recovery Working Group.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1

Covid-19%20Recove
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APPENDIX 2

Property%20Service
s%20Impact%20Asse

APPENDIX 3

Recovery%20-%20T
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