

Highlight Report



Name & Role	Operational Assurance and Assessment Manager Daron Driscoll
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Period covered:

Date from:	01/07/2020	Date to:	30/09/2020
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Highlights / achievements this period

Executive summary

Page 3. Station Audits

- Station Audits were suspended 18 months ago
- To reduce the risk to the Service, guidance has been provided to Station Commanders by the operational assurance department to maintain risk critical activities
- Discussions continue with the Group Commanders to agree new ways of working in COVID safe environments
- Stations Audits are set to begin again in quarter four

Page 3. Failure to Respond (FTR's)

- Alert system failures were attributed by 4i system failures across all three months which caused 7 of the 11 FTR's
- The Service have recorded a number of failings with the 4i system in the last 12 months, which have had an adverse effect on mobilisation responses
- October 2020 4i system upgrade is set to address these issues
- Communications and 4i departments to monitor improvements and report findings to Operational Assurance department. Monitoring throughout quarter three

Page 5. Monitoring Officer Reports (MO's)

- Monitoring Officer draft policy is complete
- Proposed changes include level 1 incident monitoring in response to HMICFRS recommendations
- Consultation with all rep bodies began in May 2020
- Feedback has been well received from CFOA, FRSA and the FBU
- Changes have been made throughout consultation to further align the policy with National Operational Guidance
- Consultation with the FBU is ongoing
- Post consultation, the draft policy and supporting information will be presented to SLT for approval

Page 6. Thematic Review

- The Hazmat Officer (HMEPA) review of COVID-19 PPE compliance began on 10th July 2020 for a three month period to confirm a safe understanding of COVID operational procedures by crews
- The review was suspended due to hazmat officer operational commitments at the Tilbury Grain Terminal and after re-commencing, the review concluded on 23rd October 2020
- HMEPA mobilisations to specific incident types continue to assist with decontamination and maintain COVID standards
- Areas of development that have been reported on have led to a review and re-publication of guidance
- COVID procedural compliance has improved with only 10% of reports highlighting development areas nearing the end of the review

Page 6. Analytical Risk Assessments (ARA's)

- Focus has been given to improving the ARA return rates
- Organisational risk. Evidence gathered by Ops assurance department confirms ARA's are being completed post incident
- An electronic ARA form accessible from the appliance tablet is being developed to provide creditability to the process and to date and time stamp completion
- Ability to share the incident or sector ARA between tablets and ICU console is being investigated

Page 7. Debriefs

- 27 Hot debrief returns have been reviewed and actioned
- 30 Tactical debriefs have been reviewed, actioned and reported on. Four of these also included a formal debrief process
- 1 Strategic debrief took place following the Tilbury Grain Terminal
- Hot debrief returns increased following the inclusion of the form on the Incident recording system (IRS)
- Formal debriefs are now being conducted over Microsoft Teams and is proving to be popular
- A change team has been set up in line with National Operational Guidance (NOG) between Ops Policy, Technical and Ops Assurance departments
- Over the border exercises have been included in the Station Business Plans and form part of the audit process
- Operational Assurance Officers are now notified of all exercises and attend where possible

Following debrief feedback Ops assurance implementations quarter two:

- Hot debrief forms are also accessible from the incident ground from the appliance tablets
- What3words has been included into the 4i upgrade and provides an additional mobilisation method to stations and flexi officers
- PPE can now be ordered from the incident ground via a link on the appliance tablets
- Multi-agency contact form is available on the appliance tablets to assist the debrief process
- Fire-ground radio compatibility testing with neighbouring stations has taken place and an aide memoire produced for all regional services that border Essex.
- A fire-ground radio end user survey has been issued to understand ongoing issues

Page 9. Key Risk / Key issues that are being prioritised:

1. Station Audit process
2. Monitoring Officer Policy in order to implement Level 1 incident monitoring
3. Electronic ARA's

1. Station Audits

Overview -

Station Audits have not been carried out for an 18 month period due to a number of departmental, local and national restrictions, these being:

- Watch manager positions advertised over a number of months both internally and externally with no applications received leaving insufficient resources
- Audit training was sourced for all new personnel but had to align with external provider course program
- Internal Assessor courses provided for all new personnel
- Audit policy was reviewed and re-written before going through the consultation process
- Audit process was reviewed and re-written before going through the consultation process
- Audit process suspended due to COVID-19

Due to COVID pandemic, the Station audit process is scheduled to resume in quarter four.

In order to maintain the expected standards on stations, the department provided all station managers with a list of risk critical areas that require maintaining to allow focus and reduce the risk to the service.

Progress –

- Risk critical list of activities provided to station managers
- The department has reviewed and revised all aspects of the Station Audit process and consulted with the representative bodies
- Reviewed the previous audit results and provided a clear schedule for the new audit process
- Filled all available positions
- Trained department personnel in all aspects of the audit process
- Set expectations and planned ahead to meet requirements
- Considered alternative ways of working during these unprecedented times
- Engaged with Group and Station managers to provide a shared understanding of challenges

Actions –

- Assigning the annual station audit to the respective station manager – this would be supported by way of a pre-check, dip sampling and unannounced attendance by an Operational Assurance Officer as support and to provide continuity
- Discussions continue with Group Managers to agree a solution
- The Station Audit process is set to begin in quarter four.

2. Failure to respond (FTR)

Overview -

Failure to respond notifications are recorded on each occasion where an appliance fails to mobilise. These figures include alerter failures, personnel shortages and mechanical defects prior to leaving the appliance bay. The figures do not include delayed responses by an appliance or mechanical failure while proceeding. All failed responses are backed up by alternative appliance mobilisations however; this may have an effect on the arrival time of the first and subsequent appliances.

There were 11 FTR notifications this quarter, as notified by Service Control. This quarter has seen an increase in notifications compared to the last two quarters however, a number of these were attributed to mobilisation system failures.

The 4i system failures were recorded over a number of days throughout the quarter and affected sporadic mobilisations to all duty type alerter systems across the county. The Service have recorded a number of failings with the 4i system in the last 12 months, which have had an adverse effect on mobilisation responses.

Encouragingly, the number of individual failed responses and shortage of riders remained low. The 4i system failures accounted for 7 of the 11-recorded failed responses. (see below for data and graphs)

Progress –

- Challenges are made for all failure to respond notifications
- Support is provided to managers to implement suitable action plans
- Action plans are monitored for progress
- Trends are identified across all groups and reported on

Actions -

- The 4i system has received recent updates which may reduce alert failures
- All alert failure notifications are shared with the Communications department to assist with fault finding
- Discussions regarding pager failures in remote areas continue to take place
- Control Operators to monitor mobilisation notifications closely

Areas for improvement across the service are:

- Reducing the time from mobilisation to notifying Control of FTR (average time for this quarter being 14 minutes. Increased from 8 minutes last quarter)
- Reducing the time from mobilisation to first appliance in attendance (average time this quarter being 18 minutes. Increased from 10 minutes last quarter)

The FTR notification times have increased this quarter due to a complete alert system failure therefore crews were not aware of a need to notify Control of a failure to respond. This in turn delayed the re-mobilisation process increasing the attendance times.

Reasons given by crews for FTR

Alerter failure	SOR	SOR - FF	SOR - OIC	SOR - DR	Appliance defect	MDT/Main scheme radio
7	0	3	0	1	0	0

SOR - Shortage of riders (unspecified)

SOR FF - Shortage of riders firefighter

SOR OIC - Shortage of riders officer in charge

SOR DR - Shortage of riders driver

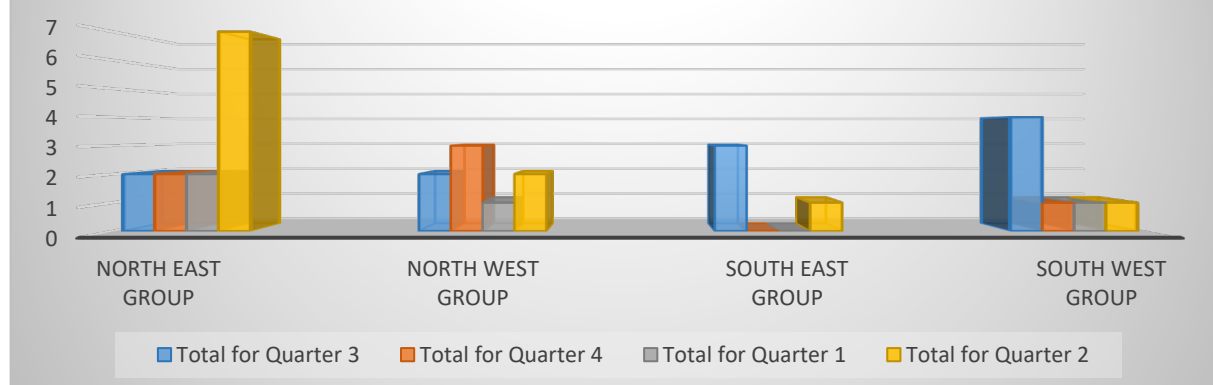
Quarter 2 group figures:

	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
NE group	3	1	3
NW group	1	0	1
SE group	1	0	0
SW group	0	0	1

Annual Group figures:-

	2019/20
	Total FTR's across all groups per quarter
2019/20	
Quarter 3	11
Quarter 4	6
2020/21	
Quarter 1	4
Quarter 2	11

Failure to respond figures 2019/20



3. Monitoring Officer reports (MO)

Overview -

In total, there were 68 Monitoring Officer mobilisations this quarter (Q2.), generating reports on 42 occasions. (see below for data and graphs)

Progress -

To meet the HMICFRS recommendations, the Operational Assurance department reviewed the current Monitoring Officer policy ensuring compliance with NOG. The revised Monitoring Officer Policy was completed in May 2020 and was forwarded for consultation to the rep bodies. Following the initial consultation with all rep bodies, further amendments have made.

CFOA consultation – A request was made to add Monitoring Officer mobilisations to all small vehicle RTC's persons trapped. The current criteria is 'More than three vehicles where persons are trapped'

FRSA consultation – A question was raised to ensure that level 1 incident monitoring for those in development and newly promoted was for all duty systems.

FBU consultation – The FBU comments related to:

- The document was aligned with National Operational Guidance – Compliance agreed
- The Monitoring officer role focuses on individual development – Compliance agreed
- Individual development and good practice is only to be shared with the individual, their line manager and Learning and Development where required - [All incident monitoring \(Monitoring Officer, Operational Assurance Officer and remote monitoring\) should influence organisational learning. This was a failure to agree and therefore consultation will continue.](#)
- The Monitoring Officer role should not be used for organisational learning - [All incident monitoring should be reported on to influence organisational learning. This was a failure to agree and therefore consultation will continue.](#)
- Concerns were raised regarding additional mileage costs for level 1 incident monitoring.

The revised policy provides Monitoring Officer support to level 1 incident commanders in development and those newly promoted.

Actions -

Ops Assurance and FBU to engage in further discussion to address their concerns. We have met with the FBU on a number of occasions and continue to make progress. The draft policy is scheduled to submit to SLT for approval once consultation has concluded.

Mobilisations that did not produce a report	No
Stop sent before/on arrival	21
MO attended - nothing to report	5

Stop sent before/on arrival – breakdown by incident type	No
Fire – Persons Reported	7
Rescue from Water	5
RTC – Persons Trapped	2
Rescue from Height	3
MP4+	2
Boat Fire	1
Aircraft Fire	1
Rescue from Collapsed Structure	1
Rescue from Unstable Surface	1
Persons on fire	1

	Current quarter	Previous quarter
MO mobilisations	68	75
Reports not required (please refer to table below for trends identified)	26	26
Reports expected	42	49
Reports received	35 (83%)	48 (98%)

4. Thematic Reviews

HMEPA review of COVID-19 PPE compliance

Overview -

In response to the Covid-19 Pandemic ECFRS introduced, a thematic review to provide assurance that operational colleagues were adhering to and understanding the new procedures and policies introduced (Safety Flash 11A).

The review commenced 15/06/2020, subsequently paused on 10/07/2020 due to the demand for HMPEA officers dealing with the Tilbury Grain Fire.

The review re-commenced on 24/08/2020 - until conclusion on 23/10/2020, with the period matching the original timeframe of approximately 3 months.

Progress –

- The review was supported by all 16 Hazardous Material Advisors
- A review of confirmation of knowledge
- Challenges made to those who had not provided a confirmation of knowledge through TASK
- A decontamination video was produced to assist alternative learning styles
- Areas of good practice shared with all Stations
- Additional COVID awareness training provided to crews requiring development
- Areas of development that have been reported on have led to a review re-publication of guidance
- COVID procedural compliance has seen an improvement from 83% to 10% of reports highlighting development areas over the course of the review

Actions –

- Hazmat Officer mobilisations will continue for specific incident types involving persons
- Monitoring of procedures in line with Safety Flash 11a to continue
- Local coaching and development through the 'Hot Debrief' process
- Areas of concern forwarded to the Station Manager and Operational Assurance department

5. Analytical Risk Assessments (ARA's)

Overview -

Return rates for this quarter improved due to a monthly chase being conducted as opposed to the usual quarterly chase.

The collation of ARA returns allows for an audit trail of completion and a review of the content for operational trends and compliance. (see below for data and graphs)

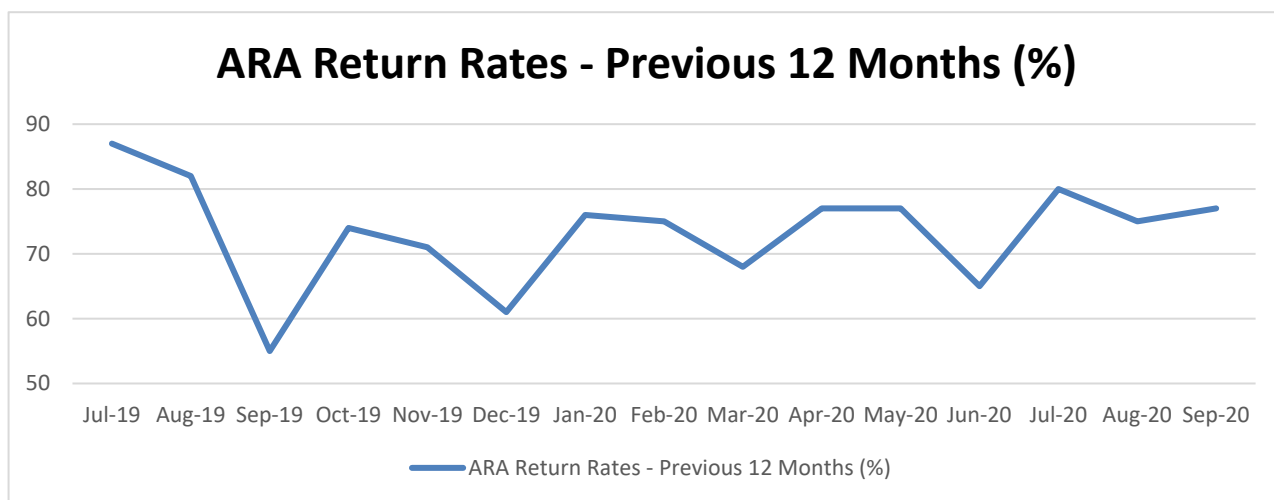
Progress -

The monthly chase has improved the returns however, the need to chase these documents has to be addressed to reduce departmental workloads and provide worth to the process. Concerns regarding compliance with the ARA process and sharing of risk information on the incident ground is key. Evidence gathered by the Ops assurance department confirms ARA's are being completed post incident to appease the returns process.

Actions -

Alternative methods of recording hazards to evaluate risks on the incident ground are currently being looked at in order to provide an electronic method of recording and submission through the appliance tablets.

An electronic application will provide a possible link to the Incident Command Unit, can be shared and viewed on the incident ground and can be submitted from the incident ground direct to the Operational Assurance department. This will also provide a time and date stamp, negating the need to chase returns.



Previous Quarter		Current Quarter	
April 2020	77%	July 2020	80%
May 2020	77%	August 2020	75%
June 2020	65%	Sep 2020	77%

6. Debriefs

Overview -

Tactical and Strategic debriefs are now being conducted via Microsoft Teams. This has shown to be useful for the following reasons:

- Recording the debrief for referral and minute taking at a later date

- Feedback that individuals find the process less intimidating
- More structured using Teams protocols
- No need to travel to a debrief location
- Improved attendance

(see below for data and graphs)

Progress -

Since last quarters report, we have also launched the following:

- A copy of the 'Hot debrief' form has been added to IRS to promote returns and to minimise the need to use multiple platforms.
- The Hot debrief form is now available on Flexi Officer tablets to promote operational learning at Cross Border incidents
- What3words is now fully imbedded into the 4i system allowing specific mobilisation to incidents without an address, postcode or landmark
- PPE can now be ordered from the incident ground via a link from the appliance tablets following a decontamination incident
- Fire-ground radio compatibility testing with neighbouring stations has taken place and an aide memoire produced for all regional services that border Essex.

All 30 of the Tactical debrief incidents have had an FB276 completed for them, all can be found on the Ops Assurance tactical debrief section on the service intranet.

Actions –

FB272 returns remain an issue. A great deal of time is taken to chase the returns therefore alternative methods of sending and retrieving the learning outcome are being sourced.

Return rates are improving from a range of:

- Q 3. 2019-20 - **14% to 58%**
- Q 4. 2019-20 - **52% to 65%**
- Q 1. 2020-21 - **80% to 86%**
- Q 2. 2020-21 – **70% - 100%**

An increase in the quantity of debrief returns and the timely manner in which they are received aid the debrief process in support of future learning and improvements.

Debrief Type	No
Operational/Hot	27
Tactical - Exercise	0
Tactical - Incident	30
Strategic – Incident	1
JESIP	0
Cross Border	4

Command	Tactical Exercise	Tactical Incident	FB272 Return Rate
NE	0	9	84%
NW	1	1	100%
SE	0	8	83%
SW	0	12	80%
OTB	0	4	70%

Key Risks (problems and opportunities predicted, not occurring)	Mitigating actions – how to prevent a problem or develop an opportunity
<p>1. Station Audit process</p> <p>2. ARA compliance and completion on the incident ground</p> <p>3. Draft Monitoring Officer Policy – Failure to agree on certain aspects. Consultation with the FBU continue.</p>	<p>1. Station Commanders to complete their own station audit supported by the Operational Assurance department</p> <p>2. Electronic ARA's are being investigated</p> <p>3. SLT to review the draft policy for approval following consultation</p>

Key issues (problems occurring now – needing action)	Actions required e.g. decisions needed