

Highlight Report



Name & Role	Operational Assurance and Assessment Group Manager David Reid
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Period covered:

Date from:	01/10/2020	Date to:	31/12/2020
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Highlights/Achievements this period

- **Station Audits – *Make best use of our resources (benchmark our performance)***
- The station audit process has been suspended since April 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. This has allowed the Operational Assurance team to focus on developing new debrief processes (see section 4 Debrief).
- The Operational Assurance team developed interim procedures to support the review and maintenance of risk critical activities during COVID-19 and promulgated guidance to all Station Commanders.
- A proposal was put forward for Station Manager's to conduct an Annual Station Performance Review in addition to the station audits carried out by the Operational Assurance department. This is planned to commence in April 2021.

Progress:

A consultation meeting took place between the Operational Assurance team and Group Commanders to discuss the new station audit proposals in December 2020. Ongoing consultation is taking place with rep bodies and is due to conclude in February 2021. The station audit process is planned to begin in April 2021 following training support for Station Manager's.

Action:

- Conclude consultation and reach agreement on implementing an Annual Performance Review process with rep bodies.
- Provide training and support Station Manager's before implementing the Annual Performance Review process.
- Implement the Annual Performance Review and station audit process in April 2021.

2. Failure to Respond (FTR's) – *Make best use of our resources (benchmark our performance)*

- There has been a 45% reduction in FTR's compared with quarter two.
- There has been a reduction in FTR's notifications following the 4i system upgrade in October.
- This quarter there were six FTR's notifications, five of these related to a shortage of a firefighter at three locations in the North East and twice at the same location in the North West. The sixth notification was made due to a shortage of Officer in the North West.
- Initial call to first appliance in attendance average time for FTR's was 16 minutes for this quarter.

Progress:

The Operational Assurance department work closely with Station Commanders to review the details of each FTR and take appropriate actions to reduce the number of 'failure to respond' notifications going forward.

Actions:

1. Continue promoting the requirement to notify Service Control of all FTR's at the earliest opportunity.
2. Continue monitoring the time taken to mobilise an alternative resource to the incident.

Reasons given by crews for FTR

Alerter failure	SOR	SOR - FF	SOR - OIC	SOR - DR	Appliance defect	MDT/Main scheme radio
0	0	5	1	0	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

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

3. Monitoring Officer (MO) Policy and reports – *Make best use of our resources (ensure there is an effective risk management process in place)*

Overview -

In total, there were 67 Monitoring Officer mobilisations this quarter, with 44 incidents attended and 31 operational learning reports completed by flexi officers.

Examples of operational learning:

- Feedback following a water rescue incident has resulted in an ongoing review of current PPE and findings will be reported in the next quarter.
- Feedback from multiple incidents has resulted in revised guidance being promulgated to improved stowage of decontamination PPE on appliances.

Progress:

Policy consultation with rep bodies is ongoing to implement an improved the Monitoring Officer Policy which is now aligned with National Operational Guidance (NOG) and also provides incident monitoring and support at all operational levels.

Actions:

- Conclude ongoing rep body consultation on the revised Monitoring Officer policy by March 2021.
- Explore multiple opportunities to share organisational learning with operational colleagues.

Mobilisations that did not produce a report	No
Stop sent before/on arrival	23
MO attended - nothing to report	5

Stop sent before/on arrival – breakdown by incident type	No
Fire – Persons Reported	5
Rescue from Water	6
RTC – Persons Trapped	5
Rescue from Height	2
Rescue from Unstable Surface	2
Aircraft Fire	1

Rescue from Collapsed Structure		1
Animal Rescue		1
	Current quarter	Previous quarter
MO mobilisations	67	63
Reports not required (please refer to table below for trends identified)	28	24
Reports expected	39	39
Reports received	31	32

4. Debriefs – *Make best use of our resources (benchmark our performance)*

Overview:

The debrief process continue to show improvements with the frequency and quality of submissions, reviews and completed actions. The Operational Assurance department continue to conduct Tactical and Strategic debriefing via Microsoft Teams and have included both internal and external partners in the process to improve both operational and organisational learning. This new debrief format due to new COVID working practice requirements has transformed the way the Operational Assurance department operates and made the debrief process more effective and efficient (see below for data and graphs).

Progress:

Since last quarters report, Operational Assurance have facilitated:

- **Tilbury Grain Terminal - Tactical and Strategic debrief and a Strategic Command Review have taken place.**

Initial areas of good practice highlighted:

- Level of trust and cooperative working between ECFRS and partner agencies throughout incident.
- Use of Police thermal imaging drone in early stages.
- Early arrangements for CIT to be set up.
- Petrochemical team advice and expertise.

Initial organisational learning identified:

- A need to establish a Service wide tactical plan template.
- Review the requirements of Service drone. Limitations of sub-400 degree readings when assessing building (Silo) integrity.
- Lack of consistency of Incident Commander on site at protracted incidents. Lead to frequent updating of Situational awareness, raised by external partners.
- Full understanding of scale and size of incident by initial officers.

Actions

A full and comprehensive report to be submitted and a Service wide action plan to be held and overseen by the Operational Assurance department. **Ongoing**

- **Completed a further 2 Strategic debrief (Kent Foods, and Akhter Computers)**

Organisational learning and trends identified through these debrief processes include:

Service Control

- Continued issues with 4i mobilising system crashing due to larger incident types.
- Lack of instant appliance availability available to control operators.
- Minimum crewing level of control operators during larger incidents causing welfare and role issues.
- Location accuracy of 4i when mobilising to remote locations.

Operations

- Effectiveness of Incident command unit functionality.
- Ability to communicate at Cross border incidents with neighbouring FRS's.

- Lack of Pre-incident intelligence for operational crews.
- Limitations of equipment carried on appliances to gain entry to premises.
- Benefit to flexi officers carrying airwave radios to gain situation awareness.
- Welfare resources for operational crews at protracted incidents.
- Hydrant and risk information when working at Cross border incidents.

Actions - Control

- Although issues have improved since the upgrade the Operational Assurance department are recording all issues associated with 4i mobilising. These records cover the period 03/09/20 - 23/12/20. Passed to 4i team to progress. **Ongoing**
- In conjunction with data analyst a service wide appliance availability wall map has been produced and is now in use in service control. **Closed**
- In conjunction with Station Manager Control Training a review of minimum personnel on each Control Watch has been started. **Ongoing**
- What3words location app has been fully integrated into the 4i mobilising system and onto appliance tablets. **Closed**

Actions – Operations

- ICU working group set up to look at functionality and effectiveness of current ICU arrangements. **Ongoing**
- A review of cross border communications initiated by the Operational Assurance team in conjunction with all neighbouring FRS's. Guidance released to all operational crews. **Closed**
- Review of current risk arrangements carried out by Prevention and Operations departments. Manual process of data transfer between departments to be replaced by automated CFRMIS software. Expected timeframe 6 months. **Ongoing**
- All appliances to be issued with new method of entry kits by technical services department. **Ongoing**
- Review of flexi officer airwave requirements. **Ongoing**
- Welfare policy reviewed by Operational Policy. Agreement for Salvation army vehicle to be based at Clacton Fire Station. Contracts due to be signed in February. **Ongoing**
- Updated risk and hydrant information uploaded onto resilience direct between Essex, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk FRS. Arrangements in place to add London Fire Brigade (LFB). **Ongoing**

Attended two high rise exercises conducted with LFB over the border on 8th and 10th December to support learning (objectives – Command and Control/Fire Survival Guide/BA procedures and Communication).

Initial Organisational learning identified.

- Lack of fire survival guidance (FSG) policy and understanding by operational crews.
- BA communication channel clashes between ECFRS and LFB.
- Use of airwave radio to triangulate information between control-OIC-Bridgehead. This area is covered in the Grenfell findings.
- Lack of system to record FSG and evacuation/search information at high rise incidents.

Actions

- Operation policy and National Operational Guidance department to align FSG policy to National Operational Guidance. **Ongoing**
- Alternative BA channel has been identified to be used by ECFRS crews at cross border incidents. Guidance to be released to operational crews in conjunction with BA training. **Closed**
- Development of high-rise incident board. To align with board developed in Service Control. **Ongoing**

Debrief return rates are improving from a range of:

- Q 4. 2019-20 - **52% to 65%**
- Q 1. 2020-21 - **80% to 86%**

- Q 2. 2020-21 – **70% - 100%**
- Q 3. 2020-21 – **70% - 100%**

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

Debrief Type	No
Operational/Hot	35
Tactical - Exercise	5
Tactical - Incident	15
Strategic – Incident	1
JESIP	1
Cross Border	0

Command	Tactical Exercise	Tactical Incident	FB272 Return Rate
NE	0	2	100%
NW	0	3	70%
SE	0	3	77%
SW	3	7	78%
OTB	2	0	N/A

5. Thematic Reviews - Make best use of our resources (ensure there is an effective risk management process in place)

HMEPA review of COVID-19 PPE compliance

Overview -

The COVID-19 PPE compliance review which began on 15th June 2020 concluded on 23rd October 2020.

The review mobilised Hazardous Materials and Environmental Protection Advisor (HMEPA) Officers to specific incidents where potential contact between Fire Service personnel, other emergency responders and the public was expected on 694 occasions over a three-month period (review was suspended for a short period in July 2020).

The review provided feedback from all 16 HMEPA officers and supported new and revised operational guidance for the safety of our crews.

Progress:

Overall, compliance with COVID-19 PPE and procedure guidance was good. However, some areas of the Service did not demonstrate a full understanding of procedures. Any COVID-19 PPE concerns identified resulted in Station Manager's being informed for action to be taken at local level.

Actions:

- COVID-19 PPE compliance will continue to be monitored at incidents. The Operational Assurance department will continue to provide guidance and support to Monitoring Officers encouraging the reporting of PPE compliance via the debrief process.
- Continued Monitoring of procedures through the Monitoring Officer role and debrief process in line with Service guidance.
- Local coaching and development through the 'Hot Debrief' process.
- Areas of concern forwarded to the Station Manager and Operational Assurance department for action.

Fire Investigation thematic review

Overview -

A thematic review was carried out between 17th June – 31st December 2020 to look at the effectiveness and use of a fire investigation dog at operational incidents. A fire investigation dog is currently mobilised via USAR to aid fire investigation officers in their role. The review looked at areas and investigations where a fire investigation dog could support a successful resolution of an incident.

Some areas noted during the review were:

- Hours saved not waiting for an out of area K9 to attend.
- Operational hours saved by utilising K9.
- K9 indications identified.
- Safety of officers not entering unsafe structures.

All the findings in the review have been submitted into a separate SLT report to consider the services future need for a permanent fire investigation dog.

6. Analytical Risk Assessments (ARA's) – *Make best use of our resources (ensure there is an effective risk management process in place)*

Overview:

This quarter has seen some of the lowest return rates for operational Analytical Risk Assessment's (ARA's) in twelve months. . Many of the returns being chased appear to be completed on return to station, therefore do not represent the hazards and control measures being evaluated at the time of the incident.

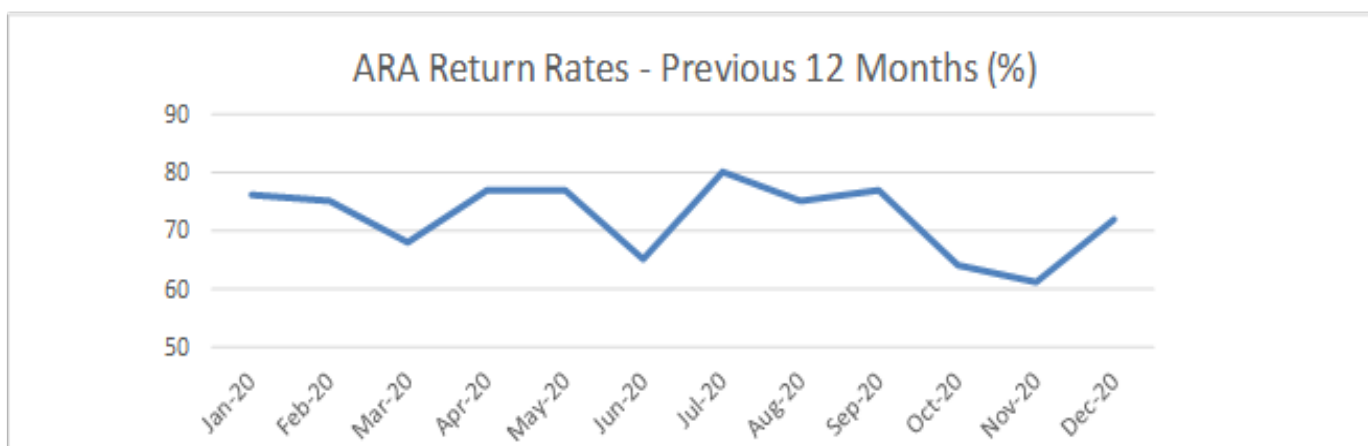
Progress:

The Operational Assurance department have developed an electronic version of the ARA that can be completed via the appliance tablet at the time of the incident where date and time stamping can be regulated. The ongoing goal is to simplify the ARA submission process to support the accurate understanding of risks on the incident ground. Crews will still need to justify why an ARA was not completed through the incident recording process.

Actions:

- Continue collating ARA returns audit trail data and identify the content for operational trends and compliance (see below for data and graphs).
- Conclude the review of the current ARA recording process used to identify hazards and evaluate risks on the incident ground.
- Create an electronic method of ARA recording and submission through the appliance tablets.

Schedule a meeting in Q4 with Staff Officers and IT to discuss ARA completion improvement options.



Previous Quarter		Current Quarter	
July 2020	80%	October 2020	64%
August 2020	75%	November 2020	61%
September 2020	77%	December 2020	72%

7. JESIP – Collaborate with our partners (continue the good practice on the implementation and application of Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles)

Overview:

The Operational Assurance team are currently working with the Collaboration team, Essex Police and East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST) to produce an operational debrief document to assist crews in recording operational and organisational learning at all multi-agency incidents.

A multi-agency contact app has been placed on all fire appliance tablets to enable crews to obtain a contact name and email address for other emergency Service representatives to enable direct sharing of information between service. This is for operational learning and details are deleted once learning has been received.

USAR carried out exercise “Academia” on the 11th and 12th of December, at St Peters School, Chelmsford, this exercise involved our partner agencies and simulated Search and rescue activities following a large explosion at the school.

Progress:

A dedicated multi-agency ‘Hot Debrief’ form has been formulated by the Operational Assurance department to simplify and compliment the JESIP process for smaller incidents. This has been agreed by Essex Police and we are currently awaiting a response back from the EEAST before implementation.

Action:

A meeting will be schedule in quarter 4 with EEAST to confirm and finalise the multi-agency Hot Debrief process.

Risks (problems and opportunities predicted, not occurring)	Mitigating actions – how to prevent a problem or develop an opportunity
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Station Audit process 2. Draft Monitoring Officer Policy – Potential for failure to agree on certain aspects. Consultation with the rep bodies is still ongoing. 3. ARA compliance and completion on the incident ground. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Station Commanders to complete their own station audit supported by the Operational Assurance department. 2. A simplified process for completing an ARA at incidents is being investigated.