

H&S Highlight Report



Name & Role	Joanne Hellen Senior Health & Safety Advisor
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Period covered:

Date from:	01/01/21	Date to:	31/03/21
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Highlights / achievements this period

COVID-19 Department Work – Prevention, Protection & Response, develop and broaden the roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service, Collaborate with our partners.

This section of the report highlights the work that the Health and Safety department have undertaken for the last quarter in relation to COVID-19.

HSE COVID-19 Complaint in relation to Test, Trace and Isolate – In February, the HSE received a complaint in relation to Test, Trace and Isolate compliance within the Service. The Health and Safety department collated and submitted all the COVID-19 documentation that the Service had published/completed since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The extensive content lists the work completed and submitted below:

1. COVID-19 Handbook and Appendices

The handbook highlights the Service's response to Government guidance for COVID-19. The primary focus is to ensure we adopt COVID-19 safe workplaces and working practices, while we continue to function as a Fire and Rescue Service meeting the needs of the public we serve

2. COVID-19 Flow Chart and Guidance

Flow charts and guidance for employees that are symptomatic in the workplace

3. Lateral Flow Testing

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Service has continuously worked on control measures that have helped reduce the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus between colleagues. Now that Antigen Rapid Test Kits (otherwise known as Lateral flow tests) have become available, the Service has invested in securing an initially limited supply to further support us in preventing the spread of the virus

4. Prevention

Provided guidance on delivering prevention activities in a COVID-19 safe manner

5. Protection

Provided guidance on delivering protection activities in a COVID-19 safe manner

6. Safety Flashes

All Safety Flashes that were issued to personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic to date (9 in total)

7. Test and Trace

Information provided supporting the decision-making process for the Service's response to Test and Trace

8. Service Risk Assessments

- 8.1 Generic ECFRS COVID-19 Model Risk Assessments
- 8.2 Generic ECFRS COVID-19 Risk Assessments

9. Workplace Risk Assessments

All COVID-19 Workplace Risk Assessments for all Service sites 61 risk assessments in total

10. Internal and External Validation of the Service's COVID-19 Response

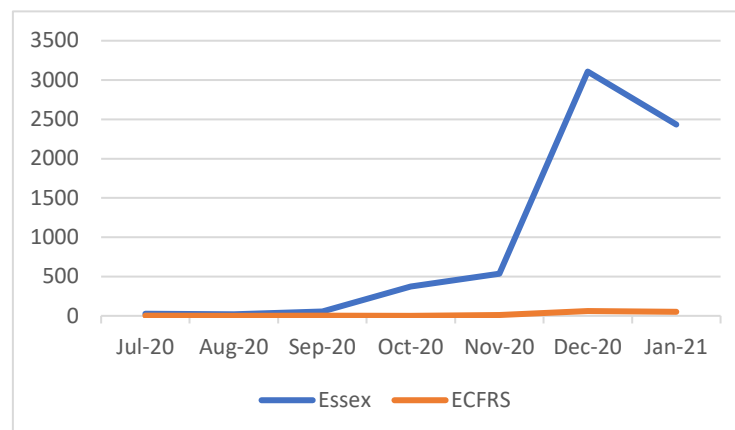
- **HMICFRS COVID-19 Inspection** - In August 2020, the HMICFRS were commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect how Fire and Rescue Services in England were responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The letter sent sets out the assessment of the effectiveness of the Service's response to the pandemic
- **Operational Assurance Report** – Evidence regarding testing the Service's COVID-19 procedures on the incident ground
- **Joint Inspections with Trade Union Safety Representatives** – The inspections were unannounced, at different times of the working day and covered the shift change over period. The inspections took place over 8 sites including Training venues
- **Bureau Veritas COVID-19 Workplace Assurance Assessment** – A Workplace Assurance Assessment has been commissioned utilising Bureau Veritas to undertake an assessment of the measures that we have taken as a Service to support COVID-19 safety in the workplace, both from an operational, and non-operational perspective. This will take place from January to March 2021

11. Absences due to COVID-19 March 2020 – February 2021

To date the Service has not had any occupational reportable COVID-19 RIDDOR cases. The data provided breaks down the number of positive test results from members of staff per month in comparison with the wider data for Essex as a region (direct from Essex County Council's website and figures are per 100,000). Timelines for Government led initiative of blanket LTF within our region and the introduction of LFT's within the Service have also been added to bring context to the data

	Essex	ECFRS
Jul-20	25	1
Aug-20	19.8	0
Sep-20	56.7	1
Oct-20	371.7	0
Nov-20	536.5	9
Dec-20	3107.6	61
Jan-21	2435.5	51

The graph shows the positive reported COVID-19 individual infections for the County of Essex which has 1.7 million residents on a month-by-month basis, from July 2020 to January 2021 and for the same period as a comparison for those reported from within Essex County Fire & Rescue Service which has 1448 staff across 50 fire stations, training venues, command hubs and headquarters.



LFT (Lateral flow testing) was introduced into the Service in December 2020, this may account for the increase in positive cases that were reported during the period from December 2020 to January 2021. LFT's have been successful in detecting asymptomatic individuals who were then able to self-isolate. However, during this period there was also an increase in positive cases within England and particularly within Essex as blanket testing was carried out across our region to determine the extent of the new variant of COVID-19 virus as it was causing an increase in transmission across communities.

In comparison, it shows that the control measures introduced by the Service were able to manage the infection rate amongst employees and keep them below those being reported in Essex and the rest of England during this time.

After thorough document inspection the HSE advised that the Service was following all Government guidelines and had sufficient control measures in place, so no further action was required from them.

Bureau Veritas COVID-19 Workplace Assurance Assessment – A Workplace Assurance Assessment has been commissioned utilising Bureau Veritas to undertake an assessment of the measures that we have taken as a Service to support COVID-19 safety in the workplace, both from an operational, and non-operational perspective. This will take place from January to March 2021. The Health and Safety department have been supporting the Service in preparing the documents required for the start of the audit visits that commenced in March. Audit visits through March included, Kelvedon Park, Service Workshops, Stores, Fleet Transport, USAR, Braintree, Ongar and Halsted.

Risk Assessments

- The department reviewed a number of workplaces to ensure COVID-19 workplace risk assessments have been applied appropriately and the control measures work in practice
- Risk assessments for Physical Assessment days in February – these were conducted so On-Call recruit assessment centres could be carried out in a COVID safe way at a number of workplaces
- Orsett Whole Time Assessment – this was conducted with the Fitness team and Station Manager at Orsett Fire Station so the Service could run the Whole-Time recruitment process in a COVID-19 safe way
- COVID-19 Risk Assessment review SHQ – this was reviewed due to outstanding actions that have now been completed. The actions outstanding were as follows, moving of vending machines, new access and egress doors to main building and out of hours access door was moved so employees no longer need to access the building through Occupational Health area.

Miscellaneous COVID-19 work - Prevention, Protection & Response, Develop and broaden the roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service, Make best use of our resources.

- A process was initiated for the Health and Safety team to provide 24/7 response to decontaminate workplaces using the fogging units following a member of staff falling unwell at a Service Premise with COVID-19 symptoms:
 - January - 11 deep cleans
 - February - 2 deep cleans
 - March - 0 deep cleans
- The Health and Safety department assisted the implementation of Lateral flow testing taking a risk-based approach for staff groups that move between different work environments, this work involved attending the Testing Management Group and supporting in ensuring clear guidance/instructions and updating the COVID-19 Handbook and Flow Chart
- Health and safety consultation took place with Rep Bodies on all COVID -19 work in accordance with the Services statutory duties within The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.

Non related COVID-19 Departmental Work - Prevention, Protection & Response, Develop and broaden the roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service, Make best use of our resources, Collaborate with our partners.

Significant Accident Investigations

OSHENS IN009480 USAR- This significant accident investigation relates to the death of a FF from USAR whilst on duty not work related but on Service premises (in Service gym). This was reported to the HSE as a RIDDOR report, and a full significant accident investigation was carried out by the Health and Safety department. This was sent to the HSE for review, and they advised they did not wish to investigate further as they were satisfied it was not a death relating to a Service activity. A significant accident investigation board is scheduled for April and the three recommendations included in the report (listed below) will be reviewed.

- Recommendation 1 - Reviewing all current risk assessments associated with this incident, including physical training at workplaces
- Recommendation 2 – Review of the Services Lone Working Policy
- Recommendation 3 – Research into an automated alerting system

OSHENS x2 Broken Seat belt Stalks - Following the discovery of two broken seatbelt stalks it was agreed that the Engineering Manager would take the lead on conducting a significant investigation. A safety flash was issued immediately after the first broken seat belt stalk was found Safety Flash 19 and a request that all appliances be checked for signs of damage. The Health and Safety department collated the results of checks and only one defect was found. Two other appliances had damage to the plastic seatbelt covers but no damage underneath. The Service is awaiting the report from Bureau Veritas to conclude the investigation.

OSHENS IN009569 Ceiling hook fell from moving appliance – A significant accident investigation is being undertaken to investigate a Ceiling Hook falling from a moving Fire Appliance. It was reported to the Service by Highways England, not noticed by crews at the time. The interim control measures that were introduced was a Service message was sent out via station printers to checks stowage of equipment carried on roof gantries and to account for any missing items. A check of the securing straps found no fault. The Station Manager also looked at station equipment standard check inventories and found no record of missing equipment (ceiling hook) suggesting the frequency of the check fell between the ceiling hook going missing and the next check. Frequency of checks to be reviewed. The significant accident investigation has commenced and a full significant accident investigation board will take place once the report is complete.

RSM Risk Assurance Services Audit

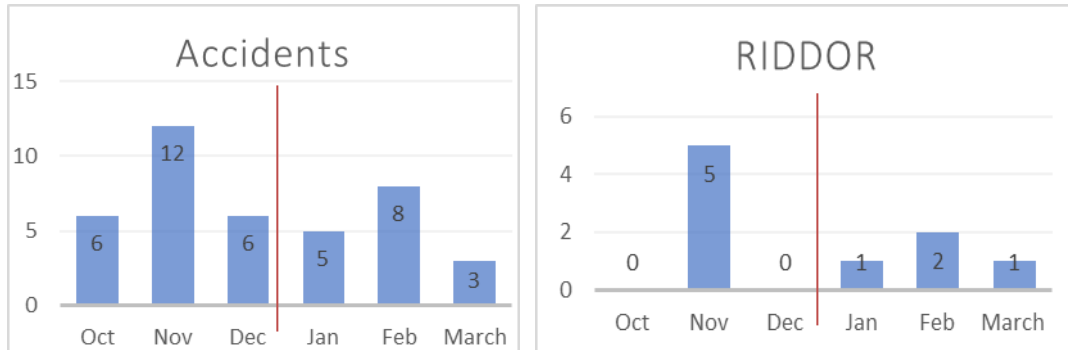
RSM Risk Assurance Services carried out an external audit on the Health and Safety department in May 2019. 13 action points identified in the initial draft report (all the high and medium risks) have been resolved and mitigated. There is 1 low action that remains outstanding relating to KPI's for training targets for relevant health and safety training and adequate documentation of completed training. The original target date, of 31st December 2019, and the revised date of 30st June 2020 have lapsed due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, the Health and Safety department is working with Learning and Development to close this action.

OSHENS Replacement

The provider of our online health and safety system, Optima has been taken over by a new company called Ideagen. Ideagen will phase out OSHENS out over the next 3 - 5 years and look to move current users onto their own health and safety management system Q Pulse. The team, in conjunction with ICT, are assessing if the Q Pulse system will be a suitable replacement for OSHENS.

Safety Event Figures Q3 October, November, December 2020 and Q4 January, February, March 2021- Prevention, Protection & Response, promote a positive culture in the workplace, Be transparent, open and accessible.

The graphs below show a comparison of Q3 safety event data with Q4 safety event data.

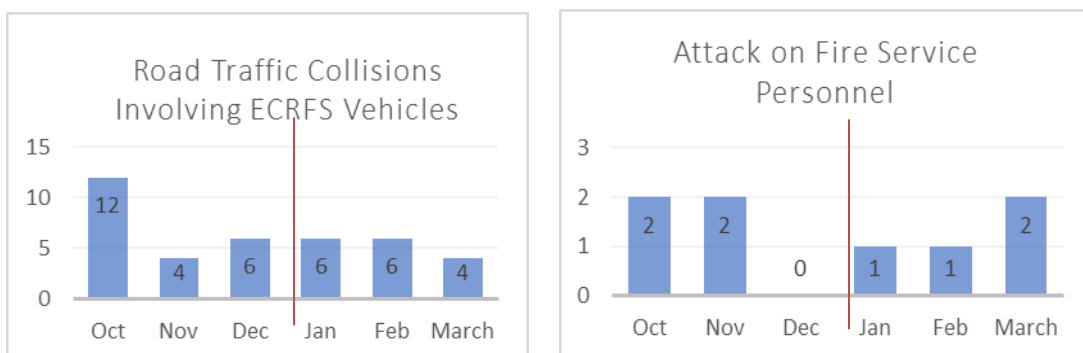


*Q3 accident data is reduced in this report in comparison to the last Health and Safety quarterly report due to 23 of those accidents/ill health reported in Q3 figures relating to COVID-19 and have now been removed.

Accidents – There were 16 accidents reported in Q4 against 24 accidents in Q3

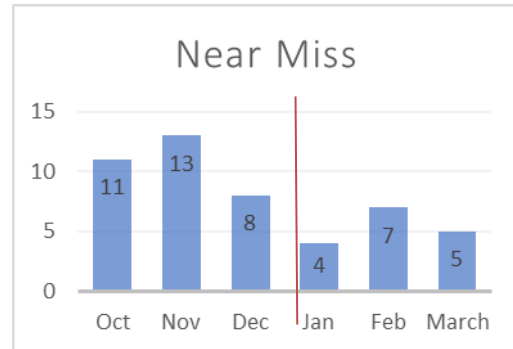
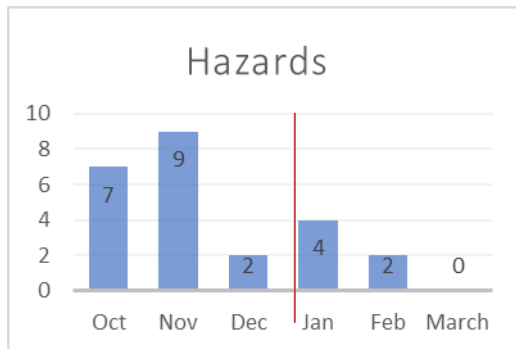
- **January 2021-** Of the 5 accidents at work reported this month, 3 are related to Physical training and consist of 2 musculoskeletal injuries and one fatality. 1 injury during an Operational incident where a FF experienced a temporary loss of hearing after the RSPCA discharged a firearm to euthanise an injured trapped deer and 1 injury during Operational training where a FF sustained a cut whilst pump operating (the immediate cause has been recorded as ‘incorrect use of PPE’)
- **February 2021** – Of the 8 accidents at work reported this month, 4 are related to Operational training and consist of 2 musculoskeletal injuries (1 during a ladder drill and 1 during a pump hose drill), 1 involved a slip during water rescue training and 1 injury during RTC training using the Holmatro cutting tool. 2 injuries were reported during routine activities, both of which were reported as slips (on ice and off of a step). There was 1 injury reported during an operational incident where a FF rolled their ankle whilst running out a hose and 1 injury during physical training where a FF sprained their ankle playing volleyball
- **March 2021** – of the 3 injuries reported 2 were during routine activities, 1 slip during a safe and well visit to a hoarders property and the other were a FF sustained a laceration to their thigh after striking it on the hose rack. 1 injury was reported during operational training were during a casualty care course a FF sustained a wound from a training EpiPen which still had the needle inserted – no adrenaline was released.

RIDDOR – there were 4 RIDDORS reported during Q4. 1 in January which was a fatality at USAR during physical training, 2 reported in February which were both over 7 day absences (musculoskeletal injuries), and 1 reported in March which was also a musculoskeletal injury resulting in an over 7 days absence.



Road Traffic Collisions – There were 16 reported RTCs during Q4 compared to 22 of Q3, most being minor at low speed whilst manoeuvring appliances at Operational Incidents

Attacks on FSP – In Q4 there were 4 attacks on Service personnel, 2 of which were verbal abuse and 2 were of threatening behaviour, no injuries were received



Hazards – 6 hazards were reported in Q4 against 18 of last quarter. The department has noticed a significant decline in hazards being reported by personnel. A Toolbox Talk is being worked on by the department ready for issue to remind personnel of the importance of reporting hazards

Near Misses – 17 near misses were reported during Q4 which is a significant reduction compared with 32 near misses in Q3. 6 of these near misses were reported from operational incidents, 3 near misses whilst responding, 2 during Operational training and 6 during routine activities. No common trends have been identified this quarter.