

Highlight Report



Name & Role	Operational Assurance and Assessment GM David Reid
------------------------	--

Date from:	01/04/2021	Date to:	30/06/2021
-------------------	------------	-----------------	------------

Highlights/Achievements this period

1. Station Audits – *Make best use of our resources (benchmark our performance)*

The Operational Assurance department has carried out 12 audits in this quarter. In total 8 Whole Time and 4 On-Call fire stations have been audited with a spread through all 4 command areas. The station audits process provides an objective, evidence-based evaluation of workplace management. Using a structured process and systematic review, performance can be measured against policies and procedures to monitor and promote operational preparedness. The station audits programme will assure processes at watch and station level reporting on performance and compliance in relation to operational preparedness. Quarterly progress reports will be produced by the Operational Assurance team and shared with SLT, managers and colleagues to share good practice and learning opportunities.

- The Operational Assurance department use the station audit process to review and report on 14 of the Fire Service Standards Operational Preparedness and Competences (see table 1).
- In addition to conducting station audits phase three of the Covid-19 thematic review reporting on safe practices on fire stations is being conducted as part of the station audit process with Covid-19 safe practice is continually monitored during the audit (see section 5 Thematic review).

Table 1

1	Roll Call
2	PPE
3	Availability
4	Appliance & Equipment
5	Equipment & Testing
6	BA Equipment & Maintenance
7	Training & Development
8	Observed Training (Practical)
9	Health & Safety
10	Operational Risk
11	Mobile Data Terminal (MDT)
12	Analytical Risk Assessments (ARAs)
13	Risk Information
14	Premise Information Folder

Actions:

- The operational Assurance team will report the findings to command Group Managers.
- The Operational Assurance team will continue to monitor and report on Covid-19 safe practices at fire stations during the audit.

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

The Operational Assurance department will continue to examine the details of each FTR to identify trends across the Service. The Operational Assurance department identified alerter failures resulted in a large number of the FTR notifications in Q1. The Operational Assurance department have been communicated directly with ICT colleagues to establish the cause. The Operational Assurance department developed a simplified FTR notification process by creating a new standardised form to capture FTR details in collaboration with Service Control and station based Station Manager's. The new FTR notification procedure requires the Station Manager to conduct an initial investigation and document their actions. The form is then returned to the Operational Assurance department within 7 days for processing. This quarter has seen an increase in figures in comparison to the previous two quarters. The increase is being monitored by the Operational Assurance and 4i team and ICT:

Q3 – 6 FTR all failures resulting from a shortage of riders.

Q4 – 6 FTR 4 x alerter failures, 1 x shortage of riders, 1 x fire appliance incorrectly placed back on the run.

Q1 – 22 FTR with the main cause of the increase across the Service reported as an alerter failure (see table 2).

Table 2:

	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	Total for Quarter
North East	3	-	2	5
North West	3	2	1	6
South East	4	1	2	7
South West	2	-	2	4

NE - The five FTR notifications in this group were identified across four separate fire stations:

- Alerter failures x 4 and shortage of firefighters noted as the other reason.

NW – The six FTR notifications in this group were identified across five separate fire stations:

- Alerter failures x 2, shortage of riders x 2, shortage of Officers x 1 and mobilisation failure due to being site stuck following earlier training at another station.
- Following one incident of shortage of firefighters a development plan was put in place to assist the individual.

SE – The seven notifications in this group were identified across five separate fire stations:

- Alerter failures x 5, shortage of firefighters x 1, Vehicle Collision (on return to station) x 1.

SW – The two notifications in this group were identified at two fire stations:

- Alerter failure x 1 and shortage of riders x 1.

Actions:

1. Operational Assurance department to monitor the progress of the new FTR reporting procedure implemented to simplify the FTR notification process.
2. Continue investigating the increase in Service alerter failures with support from the 4i mobilising team and ICT. The ICT team to report all alerter failures directly to Remsdaq (the Service mobilising system).
3. Operational Assurance department will continue to monitor and report on the time taken to mobilise an alternative resource to the incident.
4. The ICT team have an action to conduct an aerial survey covering antennas and cabling at all On-Call sites following faults identified at 42 and 73 Waltham Abbey due to commence in Q2.

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

The Operational Assurance department have reviewed and updated the Monitoring Officer policy, which is now aligned to National Operational Guidance. Consultation with rep bodies and policy sign off was completed in Q1. The updated Monitoring Officer policy will go live in Q2 following a series of briefing sessions for level 2 and 3 officers. The MO recording process has been simplified by removing the MO form. From the go live date all incident data will be capture using the current FB272 form which is accessible via tablet. The Operational Assurance department have updated the FB272 to reflect the changes to the MO policy. The Operational Assurance department will review all FB272 forms submitted to extract any organisational learning and share learning and recommendations with department heads and senior managers.

Actions:

- The Operational Assurance department to schedule several briefing sessions outlining the updated Monitoring Officer policy and the changes in the incident organisational learning recording process.
- The Operational Assurance team to upload the updated MO policy to the intranet and set go live.

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

Overview:

The Operational Assurance department continue to conduct Tactical and Strategic debriefing via Microsoft Teams as a new way of working. The current debrief process enables both internal and external partners to contribute to the process of improve both operational and organisational learning. The operational Assurance department implemented a new Hot Debrief form in Q4. The simplified Hot debrief form is available to capture all operational learning and information immediately following an incident. The form is available on appliance tablets, Flexi Officer tablets, the Intranet and accessible through the homepage on the IRS system. The debrief information in this report cover incidents between the 1st April 2021 and 30th June 2021 (see table 3).

Table 3:

Debrief Type	Last Quarter	Current Quarter
Operational/Hot	31	16
Tactical - Incident	15	21
Strategic – Incident	0	0
JESIP	0	0
Cross Border (OTB)	2	6

Operational Assurance identified several trends and organisational learning trough the debrief processes adopted in Q1:

Strategic Debriefs:

The Operational Assurance department carried out one strategic debrief during Q1 following a chimney fire at Maltings Close Bures Hamlet. The fire investigation report concluded the likely cause of the fire – is the heat transfer from a metal flue pipe conducting heat to a combustible item, this being a structural timber member of the roof. The strategic debrief was held on the 10th May 2021 and identified organisational learning and several recommendations.

What worked well:

- Service Control reported that upon receiving the call from Suffolk and Cambridgeshire fire rescue services the 4i system matched immediately and initial mobilisation was undertaken with no handling issues.
- Once the Incident Command Unit set-up & support officers arrived, messages were timely & concise, with reliefs and other agencies arranged and ordered to incident.
- Early make up for resources and a request for an Aerial Ladder Platform.
- High work rate of initial breathing apparatus crews to try to prevent spread.

- Good positioning of crews at both the front and rear of property with committing of crews to neighbouring property to check for fire spread.
- BA entry point set-up in a good location.
- Once established the ALP was invaluable in reaching areas otherwise inaccessible.

Suggested improvements:

- Initial crews left incident without external firefighting from above.
- 4i mobilising system noted as being generally slow with only 1 control operator able to mobilise additional resources.
- Control noted lack of personnel available for level 2 responsibilities.
- Multiple appliances with blue lights left illuminated, made identifying the Incident Command Pump difficult.
- Anticipation of space for requested Aerial Ladder Platform not considered, however, the dynamic nature of incident may not have enabled this.
- Police requested for traffic management – did not attend – left to crews to manage whilst dealing with developed fire.
- Thermal image camera recording function not working (due to cell battery end of life).

Incident command operational learning points:

- Set-up support functions before undertaking Analytical Risk Assessment when low on resources.
- Ensure sector commanders are formally briefed and wear appropriate identification.
- Ensure situational updates are received regularly to ensure tactical plan is working.

Recommendations

- The Aerial Ladder Platform automatically mobilised to a confirmed roof fire.
- Look at the current chimney firefighting equipment used within service.
- Learning & Development to review and recirculate chimney fire training package to all crews.
- The issue guidance on the need to extinguish a chimney fire from both below and above.
- To recall all Thermal image cameras within service and renew cell batteries that are responsible for recording function.
- Issue all Fire Investigation Officers within Service data download cable for Thermal image cameras.

Actions:

- Internal battery in the Thermal Image Camera's replaced service wide following issue identified when downloading footage post-incident.
- L&D to circulate Chimney Fire training package to all crews.
- Notification to crews highlighting the importance of Handing Over forms and station revisit policy.

Tactical debrief:

The Operational Assurance department conducted 21 tactical debriefs in Q1. Several incidents of note are highlighted below including key organisational learning points, actions taken and any recommendations:

Incident 221142077 – Knox Road Clacton – Fire in derelict garage – Cylinders involved – Make Pumps 5:

Debrief findings:

- The Service were initially called at 12:14 to a fire in Old Rd, Clacton. The initial caller did not know what was on fire. Upon questioning, the caller stated it was possibly rubbish or a skip within an industrial yard.
- Initial mobilisation of Clacton was quickly increased to MPU+3 as further information and duplicate calls were received by control as a possible derelict building alight. Clacton & Frinton were then mobilised.
- Upon arrival it was confirmed to be a fire that this was a fire in a garage unit with cylinders involved.
- The incident progressed to MPU+5 with a level 2 fire investigation declared.
- Following the stop message at 14:20 and a revisit at 18:30, the incident was closed.

Actions:

- Crews reminded of importance of preserving scene if level 2 Fire Investigation is declared.

Incident 221142189 – Mornington Crescent, Hadleigh – Domestic house fire – Persons reported – Make Pumps 4:

Debrief findings:

- The Service were called by a neighbour at 07:07hrs to reports of a house fire, with Rayleigh and Leigh mobilised.
- Further information was then received, stating that an elderly male was believed to be inside the property with no response being heard. This was then escalated to a Persons Reported, with a further appliance mobilised Basildon.
- One male was quickly accounted for with efforts then focused towards saving property.
- The incident progressed to MPU+4 with a one pump revisit requested for 12:00hrs. Following the revisit, the incident was closed at 13:27.
- Good decision making identified with a change to the tactical plan to introduce Positive Pressure Ventilation offensively to the unaffected property.

Actions:

- L&D to review content of Positive PPV Training for crews.

Incident 221142357 – Pledgdon Green, Henham – Fire in the Open – Vehicles, fencing and tree scrub alight – Make Pumps 4:

Debrief findings:

- The Service were initially called at 22:16 to a small fire in the open, mobilising one appliance from Stanstead.
- Further information received from a caller stated the incident involved 2 x cars, 1 x van, fence, and trees alight. Control mobilised an additional appliance from Thaxstead upon receipt of this information.
- Shortly after arrival at the incident, the request to make-pumps 4 water bowzers 1 was sent due to lack of water supply. Due to multiple seats of fire, this incident was declared a level 2 fire investigation incident.
- The final extent of fire damage extended to 1 x building, 8 x cars, 1 x burger van, fences, and trees. Low level asbestos was confirmed involved in the fire.
- The police undertook a scene guard with the level 2 fire investigation completed in daylight hours, incident closed at 11:17hrs 13th April.

Actions:

- Circulate good practice information confirming the need for crews to wear half-masks when externally fighting a fire within a 25m hazard zone when a low-level asbestos incident has been declared.
- Share organisational learning good tactical plan and split attendance worked to great effect due to several properties being involved.

Incident 221142712 – Mayfield Park Lane, Tolleshunt Knights – Domestic house fire – solar panels involved – make pumps 6:

Debrief findings:

- The Service were initially called at 13:25 by a resident in the neighbouring property to reports of roof-fire involving solar panels. Tiptree & Colchester's appliance were initially mobilised.
- Upon arrival, it was clear this was a well-developed fire in a sizeable property, so the decision to MPU+6 was immediately made.
- Water supply was clearly going to become an issue so the request for a Water Bowser was made.
- Crews ordered the High-Volume Pump to assist which, once set to work, assisted greatly.
- Rapid fire-spread and early collapse of large sections of the property hampered crews' efforts to save any part of the main structure.
- However, fantastic efforts from crews involved contained the fire-spread to the main structure only, saving other outbuildings.
- Reliefs were first ordered for 17:30, with the stop message sent at 22:15.
- Revisits continued throughout the evening and next day, with the incident finally closed at 12:54 - 19th April.
- Good use of drones and early request for this asset taken into consideration.

- Good early make-up and RVP set for oncoming appliances.
- Crews demonstrated a good awareness of the abilities of specialist appliances.

Actions:

- Circulate good practice information confirming the need for crews to wear half-masks as minimum PPE.
- Circulate notification on water relay best practice due to 15 lengths used with no booster pump in place.

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

Station review of COVID compliance:

The Operational Assurance department are continuing with the COVID-19 Safe Workplace thematic reviews and are in the third phase. In addition all fire stations from the previous two phases are continually being monitored during the station audit. During phase three the remainder of On-Call locations will receive a COVID-19 Safe Workplace review as part of the station audit process. The findings from all three phases of the COVID-19 Safe Working Thematic review are highlighted below:

Trends identified across the Service:

- Control had their review and demonstrated strict guidelines and adherence to safe practice.
- Lateral Flow Tests are carried out with regular intervals by control staff and all visitors carry out Lateral Flow Tests before entering Control.
- A good level of discipline is being demonstrated during change of watch at all stations visited.
- Crews are still carrying out split drill nights to maintain social distances as required and working in well vented areas.
- Good knowledge of current information available (Risk Assessments/Safety Flashes, etc) – Crews reminded to check for updates online rather than share hard copies on station as the changes could be missed.
- Cleaning discipline was still maintained at all fire stations visited.
- Crews made several requests for additional training on safety flash 13 (CPR) in the trauma training.
- Good practice was noted at Corringham where crews have a grab bag to take on the appliance with personal PPE and spare trainers should they require decontamination.

Actions:

- Share good practice and organisational learning with department heads and senior managers.

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

The Operational Assurance department organised and facilitated headquarters the National Structured Debrief course run by the National College of Policing on Monday 28th June 2021. The structured debrief course is nationally recognised and the process used to debrief Grenfell Tower, Salisbury and Manchester Arena incidents. Completion of the National Structured Debrief course allows qualified individuals to facilitate formal debriefs within multiple emergency services and partner agencies.

In total 18 representatives from the Southeast region attended the one-day training course including Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Bedfordshire fire rescue services. The Operational Assurance department will pilot the new debrief process over a six-month period when debriefing operational incidents and training exercises and review the effectiveness of the process for the Service. The review will highlight how well the process works for the Service and if any additional support is required from the National College of Policing.

Actions:

- The Operational Assurance department to collaborate with regional fire rescue service colleagues to quality assure the National Structured Debrief process.
- The Operational Assurance department to collaborate with Essex police and East of England Ambulance Service to produce an operational debrief document based on the National Structured

Debrief process to crews in recording operational incident information and share multiagency organisational learning.