

# Scrutiny Meeting

## Performance Report Quarter 4 2022/23

### Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS)



#### Achievements / Successes

#### Positive Direction of Travel

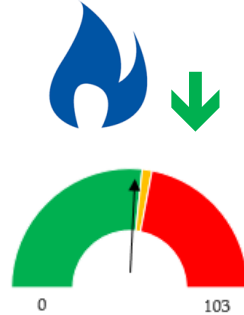
#### Areas of Focus

Firefighter 7.2d Premises Visits	Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Rate of Safe and Well visits per 1,000 population	Completion of Fire Service Inspection Plan	Average Response Time to Dwelling Fires
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**100%**

Of the premises receiving a 7.2 d inspection (visit to a premise to learn about the area and prevent injury or death to firefighters if an incident was to occur at the location) in Quarter 4, all inspections were reported as being within required frequency (100%, 31 visits). This is an improvement compared with last quarter (82%, 28 out of 34) and meets target.



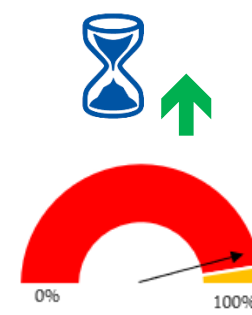
**55**

There has been a decrease in accidental dwelling fires this quarter, down 21% from Quarter 3 (70) and 8% compared with the same period last year (60). Achieving a year-on-year reduction in accidental dwelling fires continues to remain a challenge but is better than target this quarter (55.6).



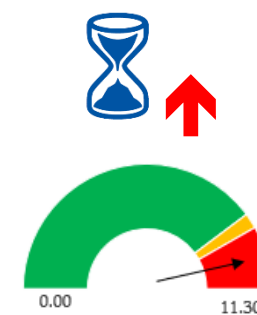
**1.10**

More Safe and Well visits were completed than last quarter (706 visits compared to 0.87 per 1,000 population, 559 visits). The target is being reviewed for 2023/24 and will be based on comparator benchmarking.



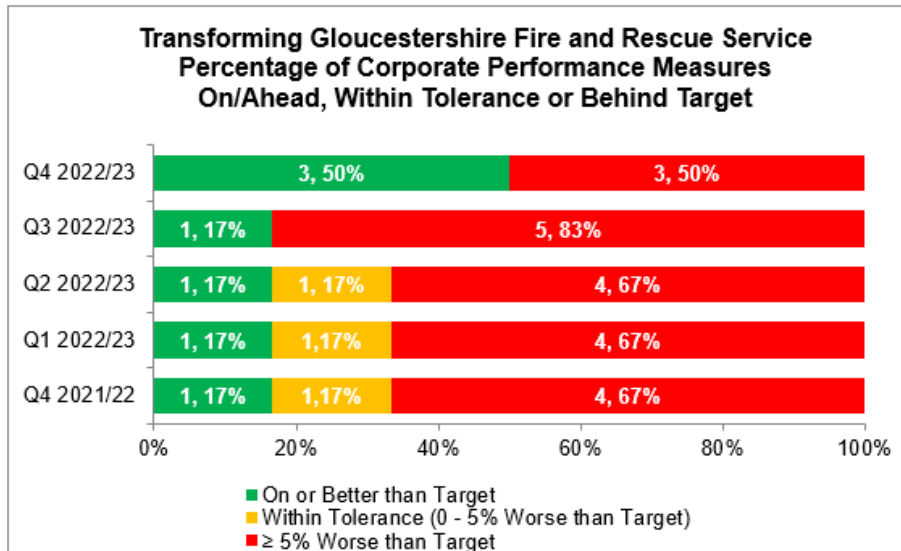
**84.6%**

Annually, a Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) is undertaken which incorporates the highest risk premises identified through risk profile work. Delivery of the programme has not met target this year, with 1012 premises inspected since April 2022 (84.6% against a target of 100%)



**10:31**

Timeliness of responding to all attended accidental dwelling fires has followed an increasing trend over the last year (9 minutes 14 seconds in Quarter 4 2021/22). Timeliness has worsened from a within tolerance of the target position at the same time last year to worse than target this quarter.



1. Half of the measures within the corporate performance dataset were better than target in Quarter 4. The change in performance against target this quarter relates to a reduction in the number of Accidental Dwelling Fires and the proportion of familiarisation premise inspections completed within required frequency. Performance has improved from worse than target to better than target for both measures.
2. We completed a higher rate of Safe and Well visits per 1,000 population than last quarter (1.1 per 1,000 population, 706 visits compared to 0.87 per 1,000 population, 559 visits). Performance remains below target (2.35 per 1,000 population - 1,500 visits per quarter) and the comparator group average (1.3 per 1,000 population). The target is being reviewed for 2023/24 and will be based on comparator benchmarking.

Of the 706 visits completed this quarter, 50% were completed by Wholetime Watches, and 50% were completed by Community Safety Advisors (CSAs) (with a fairly even split between Core CSAs and On Call CSAs: 24% and 26% respectively). This is not in line with the expected 60/40 split between Wholetime (WT) Watches and CSAs. All roles completed more visits compared to the previous quarter, with On Call CSAs completing 31% more visits, WT completing 28% more visits and Core CSAs completing 18% more visits.

In Quarter 4, the number of Safe and Well visits waiting more than 28 days improved by 15% (149 from 175 in Quarter 3). We continue to work on addressing visits that have been waiting the longest (more than 3 months) but have seen a slight increase (16 up from 14 in Quarter 3) this quarter as some pending visits become significantly overdue.

Quality assurance of Safe and Well records has identified areas where there are lengthy delays; these are being raised at performance management meetings. It is however acknowledged that most cases waiting longer than 3 months are due to the person due to receive the visit not being available (for example, due to being in hospital). Support and training are being provided across the service to ensure that visits are recorded in a timely way so that reporting is reflective of the work being done.

In order to increase the number and timeliness of Safe and Well visits, two additional Core CSAs have been appointed (bringing the team up to 4.5 staff from June 2023) and On Call CSAs have been funded from the Prevention budget instead of the On Call budget, to allow additional work hours.

3. The service continues its positive work to reach the most vulnerable people in our community, with 86.1% of Safe and Well visits undertaken to people in vulnerable groups. This is in line with performance from the previous quarter, with performance levels better than the same time last year (79%). Performance remains better than target (75%) and our comparator group average (69%, 2021/22). This is the result of raising awareness of the service to other agencies who work with people most at risk of fire incidents. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) have created a Safe and Well evaluation tool which is currently being piloted by four services and is expected to be rolled out imminently. The aim is that this will give us a consistent standard for Safe and Well visits and aid a revision of the risk categories, as per the Person-Centred Framework.
4. Timeliness of responding to all attended dwelling fires (National definition) was 10 minutes 31 seconds during Quarter 4. This has followed an increasing trend over the last year (9 minutes 14 seconds in Quarter 4 2021/22). Timeliness has worsened from a within tolerance of the target position at the same time last year to worse than target over the last two quarters.

There were 61 dwelling fires in Quarter 4. Three-fifths of these were attended by Wholetime firefighters (37, 62%), while 24 were attended by On-Call firefighters (39%). Response times to the majority of the fires attended by Wholetime firefighters were within target time (9 minutes) (79%), while only 12% of fires responded to by On-Call firefighters were within target time. The overall result of this means that just under half of the dwelling fire incidents in Quarter 4 had a response time that was worse than the target in Quarter 4 (44%).

Response time includes call time (time taken to take the emergency call), turnout time (time taken for the crew to dispatch) and travel time. Of the incidents which were worse than target, the travel time alone was higher than the target for total response time in 37% of cases. Of the incidents with the highest travel time, this was due to distance between the station and incident, either because of geography (more common in On Call areas due to their size) or the nearest station being unable to attend due to 'Crew Doubtful' (minimum number of crew members not met – more common in On Call areas due to recruitment, sickness and crew member's full-time job being out of the area).

Of the incidents which were worse than target and attended by On Call stations, 79% had a turnout time of over 5 minutes (including 16% with a turnout time of over 8 minutes 30 seconds). There are inconsistent standards across the On Call stations in terms of turnout time. This is also not always accurately reflected in the response management system, to aid response decision making around the best station to turnout. Consideration should be given to tightening consistency of standards relating to turnout time to 5 minutes for all On Call firefighters. If the current arrangements are retained, the response management system should reflect information appropriately.

Where it was clear during the initial emergency call that the fire related to a dwelling, the average response time improved to 9 minutes 57 second. This is worse than the previous quarter and performance has declined from within tolerance to worse than target. Within the quarter, the average response time was better in March (9 minutes 3

seconds) compared to January and February (11 minutes 42 seconds and 11 minutes 7 seconds).

During Quarter 4, there were three fire-related fatalities. This is highly unusual; we generally have a low level of fire-related fatalities (0.2% of all fire incidents in 2021/22 which places us in the upper middle quartile compared to the significantly rural comparable group). It should be noted that none of these fatalities were due to the time taken to respond to the incident but were due to the type of incident concerned i.e. sleeping risk in vehicle/caravan.

5. There has been a decrease in accidental dwelling fires this quarter (55), down 21% from Quarter 3 (70) and 8% compared with the same period last year (60). Achieving a year-on-year reduction in accidental dwelling fires continues to remain a challenge but is better than target this quarter (55.6). In addition to the issuing of slow cookers via social prescribers, the team have also started issuing electric blankets to help reduce the use of faulty equipment. Campaigns around smoking, cooking and smoke alarms have taken place this quarter and following a caravan fire fatality the team have begun additional prevention work liaising with other agencies to identify unofficial caravan sites to which Safe and Well visits will be offered.
6. Annually, the service has a Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) which incorporates the highest risk premises identified through its risk profile work. Just under 1,200 premises required inspection during 2022/23. Delivery of the programme has not met target this year, with 1,012 premises inspected since April 2022 (84.6% against a target of 100%). Issues impacting performance include staffing, extra unforeseen support to operational crews conducting Business Safe and Well visits and preparation work for the implementation of new legislation. The remaining audits from the 2022/23 RBIP will be completed in 2023.

To align Gloucestershire with other Fire Services and national guidance, a new methodology has been written to widen the range of premises in the new RBIP. Additional factors will be taken into account including incident response data, previous audit history, levels of compliance and distance from fire stations. The aim is to align the new RBIP with the Protection Plan timescales. From 2023/24, this will be a 3-year inspection programme rather than a 1-year programme.

7. Of the premises receiving a 7.2 d inspection (visit to a premise to learn about the buildings and surrounding areas to prevent injury or death to firefighters if an incident was to occur at the location) in Quarter 4, all inspections were reported as being within required frequency (100%, 31 visits). This is an improvement compared with last quarter (82%, 28 out of 34) and meets target. Performance has fluctuated from quarter to quarter over the last two years; this is due to staffing and recording issues. These have now been rectified and the performance level is expected to be sustained.

The Protection Plan for 2023-26 includes a review to be undertaken of how the service will gather, store and publish operational risk information. The review will consider operational crews playing a greater role in gathering and completing operational risk information, with the central team maintaining oversight and quality assurance. The current terminology of risk levels will also be reviewed to ensure it is more easily understood.

8. Just under half of Fire Service staff have had an appraisal discussion in 2022/23 which was recorded on PDRpro (46% FYtD). This is in line with performance for Community Safety overall (46.9%) but lower than the organisation overall (71.1%) and the top performing directorate (94.4%).

9. Rolling Year Turnover has reduced for a third quarter (12.4%, down from 14.6% in the 12 months to the end of June 2022). Turnover for Community Safety overall has also reduced for a third quarter (11.7%, down from a high of 13.6% in the 12 months to the end of Quarter 1). This is better than for the organisation overall (12.7%). Of the 13 leavers from Community Safety during Quarter 4, only 1 individual completed the on-line exit interview survey.
10. Sickness absence levels have increased this quarter, rising from 3.24 days lost per fte to 3.54 days. Last year we also saw a seasonal increase in sickness levels during Quarter 4. However, sickness absence is worse than the same time last year (3.48 days) and worse than target (2.21 days). Sickness/absence levels for Community Safety overall have also increased to 3.38 days lost per fte (compared to 3.24 in the previous quarter). This is worse than the organisation overall (2.04).

Long-term sickness has followed a worsening trend throughout 2022/23 (2.79, up from 2.0 days per fte in Quarter 1) remaining worse than target (1.52), Community Safety overall (2.66) and GCC (1.13). A high proportion of days lost are due to sickness caused by musculoskeletal and back/neck injuries (further detail is provided in the absence management report).

Sickness due to stress increased from 0.72 to 0.85 days per fte which is now worse than target (0.77) and remains worse than Community Safety overall (0.78) and GCC (0.65).

11. The risk of *failure of the Council or a key partner to effectively deliver their statutory services, resulting in community disruption and failure of corporate objectives* **has improved and is now rated as High 15, down from High 20**. However, this remains worse than the target of Moderate 9. The decrease in risk score is attributed to a reduction in likelihood due to:
  - Despite the additional time allotted by CLT for completion of the BCM programme of work (an additional six months through to the end of December 2022), the work required has not been completed by many business continuity plan (BCP) owners across the council (66% up to date, an improvement from 53% in the previous quarter). However, because of the delays in completing BCPs, minimal BCP exercising has been undertaken meaning few plans have been validated. There is also a continuing trend of plans having been written in the corporate format, based on a business impact analysis (BIA), but then not being kept up-to-date by plan owners.
  - CLT clearly had an appetite to accept this risk as having a '4 Major' impact until the end of December 2022, that appetite has now been breached because we are not where we should have been on BCM by the project deadline.
  - As we move into the warmer months of Spring there is a reduced likelihood of disruptive incidents taking place e.g. reduced threat of rota disconnection of electricity supplies in the UK given the potential for gas-fired generation capability being insufficient over Winter. Additionally, the threat of industrial action at GFRS has also reduced, with a national settlement having been reached with the Fire Brigades Union.
12. The risk relating to *insufficient workforce capacity and/or instability adversely impacting on pace and sustainability of improvement and contributing to increase to firefighter safety or capability to deliver emergency services to the community* **remains rated as Moderate 12** against a target of low 4. Recruitment and selection processes have taken place to fill the substantive post for Deputy Chief Fire Officer. Operational Staff posts have largely been filled, and the service are starting to see more success in filling Support Staff posts. However, further retirements and leavers are expected in

the next quarter, leading to no improvement in the current risk rating. Additional funding is providing the finance needed for extra resource and training. Nevertheless, turnover of staff adds to ongoing work pressures and the creation of short term gaps in teams. The service aims to support staff through the continuation of recruitment, appraisals and training, including a refresher in managing absence.