

**OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE QUARTERLY REPORT**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> QUARTER 2018/19**  
**July – September 2018**

## SUMMARY

1. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2018/19 report on Operational Assurance. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the statistical data.
2. During the reporting period 112 incidents were operationally assured compared to 78 for the same period last year. This is a significant increase of 44%. As a result, the number of hot debriefs carried out has risen by almost one and half times. Structured, tactical debriefs have increased by four times, allowing for a more accurate picture and analysis to be obtained around more complex incidents. The quality of information gathered from incident debriefs allows for the key lessons to be captured in order to continually improve firefighter safety.
3. Each assessment undertaken is broken down into three key areas; **Safety Critical**, **Areas of Concern** and **Exceptional Practice**. Reports covering all three areas have significantly increased. These are all positive indicators in promoting continuous development through robust reporting.
4. The utilisation of appliance CCTV to assure operational incidents has highlighted a number of areas of concern, however, pleasingly the majority of incidents have been managed in accordance with the principles of National Operational Guidance and HFRS's standard operating procedures.
5. Over this reporting period, two thematic reviews have taken place. The message review is moving into business as usual following an extended assessment period and challenge. As a result of the review the operational assurance team have recommended that Service Control along with FDS Officers continue to challenge poor performance when necessary, with continuation training taking place to improve quality within this area.
6. The Site-Specific Risk Information review was completed on 30 September 2018. The operational assurance team are currently analysing the assessments and compiling a report which will highlight recommendations and areas of good practice arising as a result. One key area that has emerged is the need for timely risk critical information of buildings to be made available for crews. While systems are in place to capture and disseminate information, improvements are being explored to ensure a more robust process moving forward.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

7. That the Fire Authority considers this report and takes assurance that systems and procedures are in place to identify, capture, rectify and share lessons learnt in the operational arena.

## BACKGROUND

8. Over the last 12 months work has focused on highlighting the importance of operational assurance. Additional information has been disseminated to crews to help improve the understanding and crucial nature of recording and learning from even the smallest of incidents.
9. Most of the learning has been focused in the areas of Incident Command and Service Control. The main reason being the current themed operational assurance reviews centred around fire ground messages and access to risk critical information at incidents. It is also worth noting that as a result of increased engagement with crews, the quality of feedback from incident debriefs has also improved significantly affording a far greater opportunity to identify any areas of commonality emerging across the Service.
10. **Safety critical events** that were highlighted during operational activities focused around 3 broad areas:
  - Accurate recording of data
  - Incident management, communication of risk critical information
  - Suitability of equipment at road traffic collisions and concerns with working at height relating to safe systems of work
11. **Areas of Concern** were highlighted in 6 areas:
  - 31 within Service Control
  - 46 relating to incident management
  - 13 firefighting events
  - 7 road traffic collisions
  - 2 during water rescue incidents
  - 1 animal rescue event
12. The main trends centred around communication to Service Control as part of the themed message review and accessing risk critical information in keeping with the themes being reviewed for that period.
13. **Exceptional practices** have risen dramatically in this quarter compared to the same period last year. Areas giving rise to an exception practice report are as detailed:
  - 68 within Service Control
  - 42 relating to incident management
  - 6 during firefighting operations
  - 13 road traffic collisions
  - 1 relating to working at height.
14. The Operational Assurance Team will continue to capture learning and communicate/allocate appropriate actions where necessary in addition they will progress further developments in several areas reflecting the Service's proactive approach learning, these include:
  - Debriefs – further work is ongoing to ensure that the best practice is carried out in gathering information during debriefs. A training package accredited by the College of Policing has been sourced and four personnel have completed the course. This will be implemented as best practice for gathering information during structured debriefs and moving forward more personnel will be trained.
  - Operational learning – serious accidents and near misses are comprehensively investigated with resultant recommendations shared across the Service to constantly drive improvements in service delivery.

- Nationally, a new learning platform has recently been launched. The National Operational Learning (NOL) site is designed to share lessons learnt across all Fire and Rescue Services and the wider sector where appropriate to help reduce risk.
- Learning from incidents will continue to be consistently reviewed and any lessons acted upon and shared. This will underpin the Service's ambition to improve its operational performance and maintain the highest levels safety. This is particularly important in an environment where falling incidents mean a reduction in exposure to incidents for operational staff.
- The Head of Support Services is now the identified single point of contact for the Service. This role manages information received from various sources and recommends what further action should be taken, if any. This role will also act as an advisor to senior managers on what information the Service may want to share with the wider sector.
- Thematic reviews – the identification of significant organisational risks can occur at any time and therefore a flexible approach is applied to undertaking thematic reviews, ensuring operational assurance can remain sufficiently agile to respond to new developments. Future areas to be considered are the use of airbag protectors during road traffic collisions and the completion of breathing apparatus general checks.

15. Details of the Service's operational assurance outcomes for this Quarter 2018/19 are contained in Appendix 1.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN COMPATIBILITY

16. The monitoring of operational assurance information is a key part of the Strategic Plan; Maintain a positive health and safety environment, compliant with legislation and provide operational assurance.

#### FINANCIAL/RESOURCES/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

17. None.

#### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. Compliance with Health & Safety legislation linked to operational assurance is a legal requirement.

#### EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS

19. None.

#### CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

20. None.

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

21. Compliance with Health & Safety legislation linked to operational assurance is a legal requirement. This report provides the opportunity for an additional level of scrutiny of Operational Assurance activities relating directly to the health and safety of fire fighters.

#### COMMUNICATION ACTIONS ARISING

22. Leering from operational assurance activities are disseminated appropriately.

#### DETAILS OF CONSULTATION AND/OR COLLABORATION

23. None.

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS

24. Operational Assurance Policy Statement.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS RESTATED

25. That the Fire Authority considers this report and takes assurance that systems and procedures are in place to identify, capture, rectify and share lessons learnt in the operational arena.

**S TOPHAM**

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